Chapter 6: intergenerational student-led research

I now focus upon how I take forward the values shared between my husband and I into intergenerational student-led research. This Chapter explores the journey undertaken by the student researchers and myself over the past four years, in which I believe to be living out the values that I bring from the personal into the professional and vice versa. It looks at the effects of student-led research upon the school community previously described to you in Chapter 5, including the emergence of shared living standards of judgment between participants in this enquiry. This evolvement of student research has seen students move from active participants in practitioner-led research to embracing student-led intergenerational research. This work moves beyond Kellett's[8] (2005a) suggestion that '*children as active researchers'* may be a new research paradigm through moving into enquiry that is embraced by the school community in which a shared language of learning emerges between student and teacher.

I look first to explore the motivation for student-led research and student-voice work within schools, taking into account the current national and international debate. I share with you how I believe to offer a sustainable, intergenerational approach to student-researcher work that brings about a change in school culture.

6.1 Students-as-researchers: the call for a shared language about learning

Learning is a term that excites and challenges me. I talk about the learning made by teachers and the social formation of the school through student-led research. I talk of

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Kellett, M., 2005a. *How to Develop Children as Researchers: a step by step guide to the research process*. London: Sage.

Kellett, M., 2005b. *Children as active researchers: a new research paradigm for the 21st Century?. London: Sage.*

the excitement that this brings me in my educational life. I talk of the role of others in bringing this about:

"I have argued that we come into the world as unique, singular beings through the ways in which we take up our responsibility for the otherness of the others, because it is in those situations that we speak with our own "voice" and not with the representative voice of the rational community. I have shown that the world in which we come into presence is a world of plurality and difference, because we can only come into the world if others, who are not like us, take up our beginnings in such a way that they can bring their beginnings into the world as well. I have therefore argued that the educational responsibility is not only a responsibility for the coming into the world of unique and singular beings; it is also a responsibility for the world as a world of plurality (p. 117) and difference. The creation of such a world, the creation of a worldly space, is not something that can be done in a straightforward manner." (Biesta, 2006, p.117)

Biesta talks of the worldly space within which we live, and the importance of the other in changing this space. Shared learning is a response to the environment of which we are a part. The desire by the student researchers to better understand their educational environment, so that it may accept and embrace their work, is a reaction to the space they share with the school community. They have learnt about their environment so that they may change and enhance it through enquiry. They have acquired this knowledge in order that they can respond and subsequently be recognised as unique human beings who can contribute much to this social formation. Biesta (2006) also perceives learning as a response:

"We can, however, also look at learning from a different angle and see it as a response. Instead of seeing learning as an attempt to acquire, to master, to internalize, or any other possessive metaphors we can think of, we might see learning as a reaction to a disturbance, as an attempt to recognize and reintegrate as a result of disintegration. We might look at learning as a response to what is other and different, to what challenges, irritates, or even disturbs us, rather than as the acquisition of something we want to possess. Both ways of looking at learning-learning as acquisition and learning as responding – might be equally valid, depending, that is, on the situation in which we raise questions about the definition of learning. But as I will argue ...the second conception of learning is educationally the more significant, if it is conceded that education is not just about the transmission of

knowledge, skills and values, but is concerned with the individuality, subjectivity, or personhood of the student, with their "coming into the world" as unique, singular beings." (Biesta, 2006, p.27)

In recent years there has been a significant move towards the rights of young people to be involved in decision making with regards their own lives; empowering them to become active members of society to whom appropriate services and provision can be tailored. The educational environment is there to assist their coming into the world. Enquiry undertaken by students is a move towards learning in the responsive sense. Children acquire knowledge about their educational environment and their own position within it so as to change it for the better. UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund) guided in its work by the provisions and principals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, defines the empowerment of children in the following way:

"Children are neither the property of their parents nor are they helpless objects of charity. They are human beings and are the subject of their own rights. The Convention offers a vision of the child as an individual and as a member of a family and community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of development." (UNICEF, 1990, p.1)

I believe however that "*rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age*" pre-determines the extent of the child's role in society purely as a result of physiological age. This does not take into account the responsibility of the child in learning about and responding to his/her environment outside of pre-determined boundaries imposed by age. The intergenerational approach to student-research that I offer has allowed the empowerment of children through different ages learning together. This has allowed younger researchers to hold more responsibility than those older, and newer, researchers joining them.

As part of the children's emerging role as co-creators of knowledge, education is evolving into something that is done *with* them as opposed *to* them. In this enquiry I support a responsive way of children working *with* the school in which there are:

"High expectations of every child, given practical form by high quality teaching based on a sound knowledge and understanding of each child's needs. It is not individualised learning where pupils sit alone. Nor is it pupils left to their own devices - which too often reinforces low aspirations. It means shaping teaching around the

way different youngsters learn; it means taking the care to nurture the unique talents of every pupil." (Mlliband, 2006, p.2)

Miliband highlights the high expectations that the school should hold about each child. I see this high expectation as two-way, in that children may have high expectations of what learning opportunities they are provided with, yet alongside this they must recognise their own role as knowledge providers about learning. This is in order that they can respond to their educational environment for improvement.

I believe that involving young people in their education is a means to improve the educational environment provided by the school; a view supported by the Department for Children, School and Families (DCSF) in its *personalised learning* agenda in support of the pupil voice:

"In addition, there is powerful emerging evidence in the area of improving pupil voice and consulting learners about their education." (DCSF, 2005, p.1)

The DCSF further brings the involvement of young people in their education to the forefront by stating:

"Personalisation is a very simple concept. It is about putting citizens at the heart of public services and enabling them to have a say in the design and improvement of the organisations that serve them. In education this can be understood as personalised learning - the drive to tailor education to individual need, interest and aptitude so as to fulfil every young person's potential." (DCSF, 2005, p.1)

Children and young people are therefore seen as citizens, able to offer opinions on their own education. The expectation of the student researchers is that these opinions are heard and have a purpose in the school i.e. that the school has the capacity to listen to their voice:

"*Voices are nothing without hearers."* (Noyes, 2005)

This is reflected in the United Nations agenda for the rights of a child and also in the "*Every Child Matters*" (2005) agenda proposed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families:

“Children are entitled to the freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their social, economic, religious, cultural and political life. Participation rights include the right to express opinions and be heard, the right to information and freedom of association. Engaging these rights as they mature helps children bring about the realization of all their rights and prepares them for an active role in society.” (United Nations, 1990, p.1)

“The government strongly supports the effective involvement of children, young people and their families or carers in the development and running of all children's trusts. Increasingly acceptance of the principal of children's involvement is being turned into practice through a variety of participation activities across a range of organisations. However, sometimes it is difficult to translate commitment into practice that is meaningful for children and young people, effective in bringing about change and which becomes embedded within the organisational ethos.” (DCSF, 2003, p. 5)

The call for children to live out an active role within society is a living standard shared between my husband and I which has emerged as a result of our life of enquiry with students. This viewpoint has given, and continues to give me, the motivation to develop the role of student researchers accessing their right to be heard and using this voice to respond to the social formation of which they are a part. I recognise however that both school and student researchers need to respond together in order for the international agenda for the empowerment of young people to be fulfilled. Both need to work together to transform the social formation within which they are found, in order that the school is able to listen to its students and respond to their needs. The students themselves need to develop a way of working with their school that places conversations *with* teachers at the forefront of its work. A shared language needs to emerge which is understood by all involved, in order that true learning conversations can take place between student and teacher. The General Teaching Council (GTC) fails to recognise the fluidity of these conversations, or the fact that learning here is a two-way endeavour between student and teacher:

“A learning conversation is a planned and systematic approach to professional dialogue that supports teachers to reflect on their practice. As a result the teacher gains new knowledge and uses it to improve his or her teaching."
(General Teaching Council for England, 2004, p.1)

The Qualifications and Curriculum Alliance (QCA) recognises the importance of a more responsive way of working in its call for a "*21st century curriculum*" that reflects the needs and interests of young people. Alongside the GTC it does however not recognise how much young people themselves bring to this environment:

"QCA has developed a curriculum big picture to reinforce the concept of curriculum as the entire planned learning experience of a young person. This would include the lessons that they have during the school day, but also recognizes how much young people learn from the routines, the events, the extended school day and activities that take place out of school. These are as much a part of the curriculum as the lessons. The curriculum needs to be living and dynamic, responsive to the needs and interests of young people" (GTC, 2003, p.1)

Through working together with students, who can explicate their classroom learning experience, I believe that the curriculum can be enriched and enhanced as it becomes a dynamic space with intertwining roles of teaching and learning shared between participants. This call for student voice has emerged through the work of researchers such as Fielding & Bragg (2003) and Kellett (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b) and is a concept that has evolved from the participation of students through student-voice to the role of students-as-researchers themselves.

"The notion of 'students-as-researchers' (Fielding & Bragg, 2003, p.6) has its roots in traditions of teacher inquiry and action research that are characterised by principals of inclusivity, participation and grass roots development. Thus, despite the general tendency in traditional research practices to ignore the 'student voice', these research discourses and practices embody a spectrum of ways in which students are actively engaged in school and classroom action inquiries, working alongside teachers, in order to generate knowledge and so improve learning and teaching and the conditions necessary in schools to support these." (Leitch, Gardner, Mitchell, Lundy, Odena, Galanouli, Despina & Clough, 2007, p.3)

Leitch et al. continue by stating the limitations of many pupil voice enquiries, recognising that these reports still talk of research *about* students as active participants rather than *with* students in the emergence of shared language of learning:

"The majority of reported studies illustrate constructive ways in which students are being actively engaged in school and classroom inquiries for change. These are inspiring and, yet, Hadfield and Hawe (2001, p.86) would argue that few problematize the 'inclusive ideal' of students engaged in action research and even fewer published articles report on research with students in more conventional educational research designs" (Leitch et al., 2007, p.4)

Leitch et al. (2007) look towards more conventional educational research designs as something to aspire to in student voice work. I argue that this brings students' work into the domain of established research paradigms; a world over which they have no ownership. I argue that it is more rewarding for students, H.E. Researchers, teachers and the school to work together to own the research design and language used within it. Only then will such research have true benefits for its intended audience.

Alongside this argument is the consideration of who owns the research. There are many fears that all too often adults "*own*" the enquiry led by students and that the results and worth of this work is therefore limited. I argue that ownership of the student-researcher enquiry needs to be agreed between students and the school, in order that student-enquiry has a true purpose and value in changing this social formation. As much as the student researchers need to have ownership over their enquiry, so the stakeholders within the school have a right to understand the enquiry and to see how it will have worth for them. A culture of "t*hem*" and "*us*" needs to develop into a culture of *"we*" that respects the other and that shares a common language about learning.

In order for this *we* to emerge, student-led enquiry must be sustainable over time. I consider how an intergenerational approach to student-research can provide sustainability for this culture of enquiry within a school, an issue that has been raised by Leitch et al (2007) as part of their responsibility as researchers working with student researchers:

"Ultimately, we are left with some ambivalence about issues of power and our responsibility as second order action researchers with respect to intervening briefly in the lives of students and championing student voice and agency in schools." (Leitch et al., 2007, p.18)

I argue that the support of the school's leadership team is crucial in allowing this work to develop and become integrated into the social formation of the school, as is the continued support of a "teacher advocate" to provide space and time for the student researchers. This support needs to be sustained in order that student-led enquiry becomes integrated into the school. The work of student researchers is therefore championed in a responsible way, so that it may enhance the lives of the student body alongside the other stakeholders within the school.

Sammons et al. (2007) call for the need to ensure that:

"Continuing professional development provision is relevant to the commitment, resilience and health needs of teachers" (Sammons, Day, Kington, Gu, Stobart & Smees, 2007, p.699)

I believe that student-led research can enhance the CPD provision within schools through offering something back to teachers expending energy in the call for learning in the classroom. The students who have undertaken this enquiry have recognised the commitment and dedication shown by many teaching colleagues:

"*Before I just thought they turned up and taught. I can't believe the amount of planning involved.*" (comment by second-generation researcher in May, 2005)

Rué (2006) calls for students to be recognised in their role as consumers, yet also calls for cooperative action between themselves and the school community as vital in enhancing what the school can offer:

"It is especially paradoxical that our students should have a wide choice as consumers, both in quantity and diversity as in technological sophistication, and should have, on the other hand, a very low possibility for discernment regarding what to do and how to be involved as agents within our schools: whether in different aspects of their own education, in the development of their own agendas or in the creation of social fabric through the participation and development of different projects. It is also paradoxical that our schools should occupy the students' whole educational agenda without allowing for opportunities to see themselves as individual and collective agents with initiative and powers of discernment for the proposal and development of cooperative action." (Rué, 2006, p.125)

As Schon (1995) calls for a new epistemology in the way in which research is presented, Kellett (2005a, 2005b) considers the debate of whether student-led research can develop within the traditional parameters of academic research or whether this requires a new paradigm:

"Children's competence is 'different from' not 'lesser than' adults' competence (Waksler, 1991; Solberg, 1996). The claim that children do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding does not stand up to close scrutiny (Kellett, 2005, p.3) Undoubtedly adults have greater knowledge than children in many areas of life but with regard to childhood itself - in the sense of what it is like to be a child - it is children who have the expert knowledge (Mayall, 2000; Christensen and Prout, 2002) If the research areas that interest children emanate directly from their own experiences then no adult, even the most skilled ethnographer, can hope to acquire the richness of knowledge that is inherent in children's own understanding of their worlds."(Kellett, 2005a, p.9)

In consideration of this debate, I agree wholeheartedly that when researching issues from the students' perspective, then it is through the students' eyes that this is best understood. This allows the research to consider viewpoints from the "*inside, looking-out*" (Rayner, 2006b) that offer richness and truth-value to the research.

I consider here a shared language between student and adult-researcher, with each validating the other's claims to know. The origin of certain words is a debate that detracts from this purpose. How words and phrases effectively communicate between the participants is the most important aspect. Authenticity comes through the sharing of an enquiry between all involved and the inclusion of their viewpoints throughout.

Kellett (2005a) considers however the need for student researchers to be trained as effective researchers before this shared language can emerge. I argue that this means inviting student researchers into the academic arena of research without considering what they have to offer first.

"While children's knowledge and understanding of childhood and children's lives is evident, a genuine barrier to children engaging in research is their lack of research knowledge and skills, not least because of issues about validity and rigour. Reflecting on the skills needed to undertake research it soon becomes apparent that these

attributes are not necessarily synonymous with being an adult, they are synonymous with being a researcher, and most researchers have undergone some form of training. Many, perhaps most, adults would not be able to undertake research without training. It would appear, therefore, that a barrier to empowering children as researchers is not their lack of adult status but their lack of research skills. So why not teach them?"(Kellett, 2005b, p.10)

It should not be taken for granted the wealth of knowledge that young people already have with regards conducting research, or indeed the vocabulary of research-related terms already at their disposal:

"We've already done this in Science-I even remember doing investigations at my Primary School. We had a hypothesis, and we had to come up with methods to prove it right or wrong before writing up our results and presenting them. This seems similar" (second-generation researcher during their initial meeting, 2004)

Frost (2007) highlights effective research undertaken by primary-school children:

"The following report describes a research project chosen and carried out by a small group of seven and eight year old students as part of a whole class project developing thirty students-as-researchers in an Essex primary school (Frost, 2006). Their training and research took place over a period of seven afternoons within normal curriculum time. The class worked in six groups on their own choice of topics with research questions as diverse as 'How was God made?', 'Why do people like football more than saving trees from being cut down?', 'Why are people cruel to animals?' and 'Why was the shed taken away?', (referring to the removal of a shed in the school playground that the children were particularly fond of). The pupils gained experience of a range of data collection methods and then chose to use interviews and questionnaires to collect data from relevant children and adults inside and out of the school setting. T*he research experience was deemed enjoyable and beneficial by the young researchers while raising questions regarding issues of time management, the role of adults in young children's research and ethical concerns regarding young pupils researching inside and out of the school setting and handling adult data." (Frost, 2007, p.8)*

Kellett supports the capacity of even young children to undertake complex and rigorous research:

"Interim evaluation findings are extremely positive about the ability of children as young as ten to undertake rigorous, empirical research and the impact of such participation on child self-development." (Kellett, 2005b, p.10)

Instead of needing to provide students with official teaching relating to research methods, we should instead look to draw upon their existing knowledge and ask other student researchers to share their examples. This approach has allowed a new generation of researchers to improve upon what has already been done, and to develop their research methods and understanding alongside student and adult mentors whose role has been to challenge, support and most importantly, be listeners to their voice.

Another issue related to the validity of student-led research, as raised by Frost (2007) and Kellett (2005a) surrounds the extent to which student-led research can be autonomous in its own right, or whether adult control over the research is an omnipresent factor that distorts its authenticity. Frost writes:

"Our differing views of learning affect our views of teaching and the nature of the classroom, its tasks, resources and the interactions that take place within it (Watkins, 2005). The way learning is understood, constructed and practiced in schools also cannot be separated from the purposes and priorities of those holding power, (John, 2003; Griffiths, 1998)." (Frost, 2007, p.3)

The students' enquiry has been centred on learning with the school whilst retaining the traditional roles of student and teacher within the classroom. One of the central remarks by students within the school has been the desire to retain this dynamic in order to feel safe, to trust the other and to know what to expect. In the researcher-led student forum, one student commented:

"I want my teacher to be my teacher-I want to feel safe when I go into the classroom that (he) can help me to learn and can control the class…I want to do the best that I can in my exams, and I want to trust my teacher...that (he) can let me do this. The school bell still rings and we still get homework-this all helps me to feel safe when I come to school-I know what to expect." (Year 8 student, December 2006)

I consider the "*purposes and priorities*" of schools to be shared between students and teachers. Raising academic success, safety, teaching and learning that interests and inspire have all emerged through the student researchers' work. The purpose of education is to deliver these aspects to students as its core stakeholders, and the core purpose of the student-led research has been to support the school in being able to provide the best learning experience for them. The power relations between student, teacher and Headteacher remain intact in the traditional sense, yet dialogue between these groups has been opened up. This invitation to dialogue has come from the "bottom up" in terms of the students opening up the school stakeholders' ears and eyes to the possibility of student-research. The boundaries between these groups have become fluid in terms of an ongoing learning debate that has added to the richness of what the school can offer:

"Although power in schools is often perceived as a 'top down' phenomenon, in Foucault's terms power does not need to be seen as such but can be regarded as a way of acting to produce reality. Institutional power can therefore be understood as fluid, shifting according to who is present and negotiated through a wealth of social practices, (Foucault, 1980)." (Frost, 2007, p.4)

6.2 Setting the scene for student-led research: What has happened in the past four years?

The development of student-research around which this research is founded, is the culmination of a lifespan of more than seven years. This time period has seen the research move location from Westwood St. Thomas Upper School in 2003 to Bishop Wordsworth's Church of England Grammar School for boys. As my previous enquiries have focussed on the first three years at Westwood St. Thomas (Collins, 2003), I now turn to the onward emergence of student research that has occurred in the last four years at Bishop Wordsworth's School. These four years have seen students move from active participants in adult-led research to intergenerational student-led enquiry. They have seen the development of receptive space for student-research in a potentially hostile environment that embraces four generations of student researchers working alongside the other. This space has expanded to include the active support of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, the

school council[9], an H.E. Researcher, practitioner-researchers and classroom teachers. The strength of working in this intergenerational way has been the sustainability of student-led enquiry beyond individuals: new generations bringing *fresh eyes* and motivation to this shared life of enquiry.

"Because students are not merely educational shoppers in the marketplace; they are creators of their own educational experience; and their voice can help shape provision. Both as a means of engaging students in their own learning – the co-producers of education. And as a means of developing their talents – using their voice to help create choices." (Miliband 2004 p.2)

[9] Student bodies such as School Councils provide a medium for dialogue between the school and its students. The School Councils UK organisation define the role of such councils in the following way:

"School Councils are about involving young people in the life of their school. Traditionally pupils were viewed as passive learners, with their sole purpose being to get their qualifications and move on. In recent years, this role has been changing as society begins to recognise the rights of young people. Schools are beginning to listen to the views of pupils, and this has been seen to have a number of benefits to both staff and pupils.

In schools of several hundred pupils, 'listening to their views' is easier said than done. School Councils are the term given to structures which facilitate this communication, and enable young people to take responsibility for aspects of school life previously considered 'out of bounds'.

While every school is different – and therefore every school council is different – we would give the following definition to describe a school council.

"An elected body of pupils whose purpose is to represent their classes and to be a forum for active and constructive pupil input into the daily life of the school community."

The term 'school council' is used as an inclusive term for similar student representative bodies such as pupil or student council, school parliament or school forum" (retrieved from http://www.schoolcouncils.org/whyandhow/structures-definitions#school on 19.11.2007)

The role of Schools Councils defined here is as an empowering force for students to be heard which recognises that this journey is ongoing. Trust between the school and School Council must first be developed on both sides in order for each to comprehend how they can benefit the other. As Biesta (2006) talks of learning as acquisition and learning as a response, the School Council needs to develop a responsive way of learning with the school. If the Council has been given space within the school, then students within that Council have a role to make their work and space valued. The council needs to develop relationships with adults within the school that ask them to listen. Although the Headteacher or other Senior Leader(s) may have initially initiated and supported a School Council, as I initially supported the development of students-as-researchers, this does not guarantee that other stakeholders within the school hold the same value for its work. Although some of my colleagues were ready to listen, others needed to recognise that it was worth listening to. It is therefore the work of the student body (including School Council and Student Researchers) to gain listeners for their voice through the quality of the work they produce and the quality of relationship that they hold with others in dialogue and action.

Student voice needs to be developed for a purpose i.e. to enhance the quality of education for students both as *receivers* and *co-producers* of education. If students wish to be acknowledged as co-producers, they must choose the way in which they use their voice for maximum impact.

In 2003, the process of gaining support for the creation of receptive space to student research began within my school. At that time, there were limited listeners ready to engage with the student voice, and the role of the classroom teacher was to *provide* his or her knowledge in order that students could *gain* examination success. On joining the school, I was informed that my "*principal role was to continue to ensure this examination success*" (comment made by Headteacher in my first meeting with him in September 2003).

Two student researchers (who had previously engaged as active research participants) moved from my previous school to join my current school's sixth-form in 2003. This move was significant as these students became the first generation of researchers to work within the school. Upon joining the school, they commented upon the lack of research being undertaken by students:

"Perhaps students here have not tried to research because they don't see any need to improve their education. They trust their teachers to support them in achieving their potential and don't see the need to challenge or explore what makes this learning process work well. At (our former school) we saw a need for this type of work...here they do not. When we asked our friends about joining a learning debate together with their teachers, they were literally shocked!" (Shane first-generation researcher, October 2003)

The first role of the student researchers, in which the first generation recruited the second from the Year 7 cohort assemblies, was therefore to convince school stakeholders that there was a need for this type of enquiry. Working alongside myself as teacher advocate and an H.E.-researcher who supported the development of this receptive space for student research, the group's first enquiry focussed on my own classroom practice, working to see the effectiveness of the recently introduced "*National Strategy*" (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2003) on classroom learning. I asked the researchers to enquire into this area, as I wanted this first enquiry to be a springboard for school-wide and subsequently student-led research. I laid my own classroom practice open to the group so that the worth of

student enquiry could begin to be valued within the school. I hoped in this that other stakeholders would see what this type of enquiry could bring to the school. This small-focus enquiry had the advantage of allowing school stakeholders to stand safely on the sidelines and watch the process unfold, whilst providing an example of what student-enquiry provides the school in learning about itself.

The H.E. Researcher working alongside the group reflects on her involvement:

"I had worked with Karen for several years as her MA tutor and as a research mentor funded by the DfES Best Practice Research Scholarships Scheme. She had asked me to support her work in mentoring with Able and Gifted students where I met Shane and Alex (the first generation of researchers). I later photo chronicled their participation in a teacher development day. I looked to mentor and coach the first-generation so that they in turn may research mentor the group of five KS3 students who would undertake co-research. "(electronic mail received, May 2004)

Figure 20 ***Shane (first-generation researcher) aged 14 and me at Westwood St. Thomas School co-hosting an INSET session in 2002. This was at a time when the students were working as active participants in adult-led enquiry.***
In these images Shane and I are co-leading this session. His voice combined with my own to provide the teacher-student perspective on gifted and talented learning in the classroom. I believe here that everyone involved in that session valued the other, be it student or teacher, and that the learning conversations held between us were of real value to all.

Following the completion of their first small-scale enquiry, the student researchers presented their findings in a validation exercise to a sample group of teachers and stakeholders. The invitation to the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher to

participate and comment upon the outcomes of this enquiry was crucial in gaining their support to move towards school-wide student-led enquiry.

"*"Very good...interesting comments at the beginning of the presentation...but I just sat here wondering what they (the students) are making of my lessons now...I don't think that I've written an objective up this year!"*

"*Wouldn't it be a good thing if we could say that Bishop's was leading the field in this type of work?" (comments by the Headteacher, March 2004)*

The support from the Headteacher following this presentation was crucial in giving them the space to engage in a whole-school enquiry of their choice. This receptive space was made possible through first proving the worth of student-led enquiry. The Headteacher and Leadership Team's support was crucial to the continuation of student enquiry at the school, as it gave the students themselves motivation and energy for the value of their work.

"When (the Headteacher) became involved and asked us to focus on a whole-school enquiry to be presented to the staff, it felt as if this was "proper" work that we were undertaking. It wasn't something that only a few people knew about..it was becoming a part of the schoo.l" (second generation researcher in conversation January 2005)

The students chose to enquire into assessment practice within the school for this whole school enquiry. They recognised that in order for student-research to be relevant to teachers and students, they would need to prove that they could offer real learning outcomes valued by the school and its stakeholders:

"Through our research we aim to share good learning between pupils and teachers in the school. Our recent focus was to share the good practice of assessment throughout the school. We believe that assessment related not only to one teacher or Department, but to them all, and that therefore more teachers would find this interesting and relevant to their own work. The scope for our research was wider. We also believed that this would help our fellow students understand what assessment involves, and in doing so, ask them to be aware of what is going on in the classroom as well as what teachers do to really make this a good process" (Harry, second generation researcher, March 2005)

For this enquiry, the first and second-generation students actively sought to bring in more individuals who shared their receptive space. They firstly sought to recruit a third generation of researchers to research alongside them, recognizing that the enquiry needed new ideas from fresh eyes and that the workload was about to increase dramatically if this enquiry were a success. They also sought to recruit teachers to work alongside them in a review of assessment practice. The students were asking teachers to see them in a different light and to affirm them as equal members of the school society. They were asking that the teachers treat them as individuals who can move the work of the school forward through highlighting best learning practice.

Day (2004) considers the need for passionate learning communities to:

"...(seek) to understand the classroom from the students' perspectives, focusing in the process of teaching upon building self-esteem through the knowledge and understanding of the student." (Day, 2004, p.141)

For this enquiry, the students began to examine the methodology that they were developing to respond to their enquiry, taking forward the learning from the first small-scale enquiry into my practice. Alongside classroom observations undertaken by the student researchers, they also asked students within lessons to film from the students' viewpoint. The video camera was becoming a living witness of the classroom learning that was taking place, given to a student to film from their viewpoint. They also began to develop "*learning diaries*"[10] that looked at both the teacher and student view of what learning was taking place during a lesson.

"*How can we know what they are learning in each lesson...we need some sort of written evidence...and this needs to go with what the teacher thinks they are learning each lesson..say over a period of two weeks...that will allow us to see if both sides "match up"-we can then use these in the interviews to follow."* (comments by Chris, second-generation researcher, March 2005 during a meeting of the group)

When they had collected this evidence, they then examined their findings alongside the teacher and students in a semi-structured interview before drawing up their initial findings. These formed the first draft of their presentation and were shared with the

[10] In Appendix 2 the methodologies developed by the students researchers, including the learning diaries, are explicated

teachers with whom they had been working for comment as well as the Headteacher and Leadership Team. These findings were then presented to their peer groups via whole-year assemblies and student learning forums for validation before being presented to the whole staff during a teacher-training day.

The H.E. Researcher, observing the training day, then interviewed a sample of teachers involved either directly (being involved as active participants) or indirectly (through the training day) with the enquiry, including members of the school Leadership Team. It was felt important that these interviews be conducted by someone from an outside perspective rather than by the student researchers themselves. It was hoped through this interview, that an objective review of the effectiveness of the student researchers' presentation could be established.

The main points of these interviews were then collated and shared with the interviewees before being fed back to the researchers themselves. This process provided a valuable critiquing of the enquiry. It allowed the students to consider what improvements could be undertaken to improve the quality of their research outcomes. The main critique of the findings was that not all students had been given the opportunity to respond to them. At the initiation of the Deputy Headteacher the student researchers then presented their initial findings to the entire school via a series of year-group assemblies. They also asked for representatives from each year group to join a student learning forum during which the findings were discussed.

Another critique of their enquiry was that learning objectives featured heavily in the good learning practice offered by the researchers. This, colleagues felt, was a heavy overlap with their previous research into the National Strategy and therefore offered limited new suggestions. Theo, a second generation researcher responded to these comments:

"We talked about objectives a lot in the first piece of research, I know, and since then there seems to have been an objective fever in the school with more teachers telling us or writing down what we are going to learn. It used to be unusual to see this...now it is unusual not to see it-this kept being mentioned in the interviews and learning diaries that we did, and it seemed right that we shared these views now." (November 2005)

Increasingly e-based methodology has played an important role in supporting the student-led research. At the time of writing the group is developing their own websites using the KEEP Toolkit Snapshot profiles (Carnegie Foundation) to share their results with a wider audience[11]. They hope to utilize this method in the near future to share their journey with other students in other schools about initiating student-led research.

Alongside the KEEP Toolkits, the use of still and video image has allowed the students to capture and record events that may otherwise be lost. Weblogs have provided a forum for sharing ideas and for those working in a research mentoring capacity, the opportunity to provide online support. The use of e-based technology supports the sustainability of student-led research, providing a forum through which the events and learning outcomes can be shared and recorded.

[11] The student researchers' webpages are all collated in the student researcher pages of the Bishop Wordsworth's School webcite at the following address:
http://www.cfkeep.org/html/snapshot.php?id=83796166240979#

The H.E. Researcher working with the group has provided them with a webpage in which she seeks to explain the learning undergone through their enquiries:
http://www.cfkeep.org/html/snapshot.php?id=83796166240979#

This page forms part of her presentation on students-as-researchers presented to BERA during their annual conference in 2005. The webpage to accompany this presentation can be found at:
http://www.cfkeep.org/html/snapshot.php?id=78801916892456

The student-researcher's first webpage, related to their small-scale enquiry can be found at:
http://www.cfkeep.org/html/snapshot.php?id=83796166240979#

Figure 21: Three generations of student researchers including (from left to right) the first generation, the second and the third in 2007
Each generation brings to the enquiry a different perspective as a result of their values and experiences. Intergenerational work brings these perspectives together in a medium not previously undertaken in the school. Each perspective is unique and it is this richness that strengthens the enquiry undertaken.

The testament to visual image as a record of significant events is no better demonstrated than by the two images of Shane (first generation researcher) (see Figure 27 of Shane in 2004) that highlight the length of his sustained commitment to student enquiry.

After first siting the journey of student research undertaken within my current school, I now bring you to the most significant part of my story. In this story I have brought the standards that I hold in the personal into the professional i.e. valuing the other, recognising the best that one can be and recognising work well done. This journey has seen students move from working as active participants in research (as at Westwood St. Thomas school) to students undertaking and leading enquiries themselves i.e. having their contribution and work recognised. Through this evolution both attitudes and ultimately policy have changes in the traditional setting of a boys' grammar school.

The capacity for understanding learning shown by the students with whom I have engaged has been astounding, and I believe to have taken from them a new sense of knowing as a classroom practitioner. I do not believe this experience to be exceptional in any way; moreover it is representative of what any group of students in any educational context are capable of. This is providing that the school takes the time to *listen* and provides the space for them to enquire. Bragg (2007) acknowledges the crucial role of the school as a learning community that supports the development of multiple voices capable of speaking and listening to each other:

"A final point concerns the significance of 'teacher voice' or, more accurately, the voices of all those in a learning community, including support staff and teacher voice, has to be developed alongside pupil voice for the dialogue to be truly meaningful within a whole-school situation." (Bragg, 2007, p.116)

Bragg also acknowledges the difference in pace between the development of these multiple voices. Similarly to this enquiry, she has found that the teacher voice emerged at a slower pace than that of the student voice:

"It shows that, whilst children seemed to rise quickly to the challenge of pupil voice ways of working and being, the perceptions, experiences and reactions of the teachers tell a more ambiguous story of the complexities that emerge as intentions are implemented." (Bragg, 2007, p.55)

This journey is about these multiple voices and generations working together in a pluralistic learning society. In my transfer seminar in October 2005 at the University of Bath, I was asked the question:

"*Isn't this work more about cohorts of students rather than generations working together?"*

At the time, I conceded that the three groups of student researchers in Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 respectively are classed traditionally as cohorts. They are however generations as well, sharing different values and expectations as a result of their life experience and of the culture in which find themselves. In the *Collins Concise Dictionary* (1993), a generation is defined as:

"*All the people born at a particular time, regarded collectively (my generation, the rising generation.*" (Collins Concise Dictionary, 1993, p.813)

It is also defines "*generation gap*" as:

"*Differences of outlook or opinion between those of different generations*."(Collins Concise Dictionary, 1993, p.813)

The definition does not define a number of years between generations. The definition of "*generation gap*" shows outlook and opinion as a defining factor in separating

generations. In this account of the students' work, you will see many examples of differences in opinions and outlook between the students, yet alongside this you will see the merging of opinion through shared enquiry across generations. Intergenerational research therefore seeks to recruit student researchers of different ages, experiences and background; yet acknowledges that through these generations working together they begin to share boundaries as shared values emerge between them.

Generation 1, Shane and Alex, have undertaken an incredible journey in their research life for the past four years, and have a wealth of knowledge to share. They both carry a confident air in their ability as researchers. This has been recognised by the Headteacher of the school and by my tutor Jack Whitehead alike. After researching together with me for seven years, they have now both moved into Higher Education. This seven-year span has seen them move from passive to active participants in teacher-led research before becoming research mentors themselves. In this sub-chapter, their story is brought to light.

6.2.1 From one generation to the next: The first-generation Shane and Alex story

Figure 21: ***Shane (left) and Alex (right) in their second year at Bishop Wordsworth's sixth-form***
I believe this image highlights the sustainable nature of intergenerational research as we see Shane move from active participant in adult-led enquiry in Figure 27 to the role of mentor for a second generation here three years later.

A wealth of opportunity was available in September 2004 with the arrival of Shane and Alex, two of the former student researchers from the Westwood St Thomas programme. Shane and Alex had previously been involved in much of the student research developed at Westwood St. Thomas as active participants. It was Shane

who instilled in me the value of recognising the other that has since become a standard shared out between my husband and I. Shane discovered anonymous quotations that belonged to him included within my own previous research on the website: www.actionresearch.net in 2001. These quotations were used without his permission or consultation and related to an action-research enquiry I had undertaken on the use of learning objectives with students. I had asked the students their views as active participants in teacher-led research, but this was the point at which their "*active*" role ended. The research was done *to* them and *about* them instead of *with* them.

I commented in previous research on the enjoyment that working alongside students such as Shane and Alex had afforded me:

"I have also discovered my "life-affirming energy" (Whitehead, 2003) perhaps for the first time; that which is reflected in a moment of time, an engagement with individuals, a feeling of pure joy at that in which one is engaged. This I feel when working with the student researchers, this I feel when I am engaged in real-value teaching and learning; the purest form of pride in my professional practice." (Collins, 2003, p.109)

The following comments made by these two students are taken from a video transcript in September 2005, during the first session in which they began to work with the second generation of student researchers:

Shane: "*My name is Shane Garvin, you might recognise me as one of the Year 12 students here. Basically I used to go to Westwood St. Thomas before I came here. That is where Mrs. Riding used to teach French before she became Head of French here"*

Alex: "*My name is Alex Dunning, and I used to work with Mrs. Riding at Westwood St. Thomas on the student research programme before she came here. We didn't work by ourselves as students as you are doing here, but we worked with her on the student research work which she was doing then*"

I remember thinking about how many students I had referred to in my research writing, but how little I had actually worked with them as co-researchers up to that point. It was an embarrassing situation where I was a living contradiction to the value

that I hold of recognising the other. This episode bought about much discussion within the Westwood St. Thomas teacher-researcher group on the ethical issues relating to research with students. This debate continues with the recent comments made by Kellett (2007), upon which I later reflect:

"There are still many unresolved ethical issues relating to children as active researchers. Who takes ethical responsibility for a child-led study? The child? The supporting adult? An independent body? And should the ethical standards be designed and policed by adults or by children? Would children regard adult policing as interference or a necessary framework in which to operate?" (Kellett, 2007, p.21)

Alex: "*At our previous school (Westwood St. Thomas) teachers and students had much closer relationships. We were a lot more relaxed and closer to the teachers than we are here. Here there is not the right atmosphere for that...it is a different type of place. There I think we needed to get involved in the teachers' research because we knew (or thought we knew) how to make things better. Here the students trust the teachers to get them through the exams; they don't see a need for research by students"*

Shane: "*After I read (Mrs. Riding's) comments on the web, I was disappointed. I wanted to know why she hadn't spoken to me about what she was trying to do-it was about our class after all. I had been involved in the research, yet I wasn't involved at all if that makes sense. After that, we then started to be involved with the teacher-researchers. We went to the meetings after school; we saw them fighting over the biscuits and cakes and stuff. Therefore (addressing Year 7 students) as a result of your research, you might form closer bonds with your teachers. You won't see lessons in the same light again"*

In May 2005, when Shane had been involved with the Year 7 researchers for over one year, he reflected on how the process of student research had come full circle for him. From the beginning of the process, whereby a websearch led to a discovery about teacher-led research, to webspace becoming a vehicle for him to share student-led as opposed to teacher-led enquiry.

Seeing Shane and Alex working alongside the second generation of researchers to deliver their first whole-school research presentation was a moment when I felt *fully present*. It went beyond them having confidence or speaking eloquently about

student voice and its merits. It was the pride I felt at the passion with which they were speaking and communicating their work. I was sharing their passion with them. When the time arose for questions and the room fell silent, Shane continued to ask until the first colleague raised his hand. He was adamant in asking my colleagues to engage with the student researchers in their work; so that their work was recognised.

6.2.2 Moving to student-led research with the second generation

Figure 22: ***2004 The second generation: (from left to right) Fred, Paddy, Chris, Harry and Theo in their first year as researchers***
This image was taken before a breakfast meeting in 2005 and reflects the shared motivation that the group had to meet and enquire together.

"If the effects of policies are presented through measures that suppress the individuality of experience, then it is easy to mislead. We need, in particular, to hear the voices of students and to give attention to their perspectives on being a learner in school." (Ruddock, 1994, p.8)

The above statement by Ruddock, during her presidential address to BERA (British Educational Research Association) reminds me that I am an educator, a learner and a researcher, yet within my professional life it is the students that matter most. They are my *raison d'être*. I propose this research as a reminder that as well as a teacher, I am a learner learning to improve my classroom practice. Through this writing, I hope to show how teachers can learn from students and most importantly embrace the oft forgotten word of "enjoyment" in this process. As partners in a school, both students and teachers have the right to learn and to use engagement with the other

as a means to (re) discovering their own passion for learning. I see learning as the fundamental reason why schools exist.

"*At a time when teachers are concentrating on raising expectations, and enhancing academic performance, they might be helped by more attention being given, through research, to some of the fundamental structures and relationships of schooling. A comment from a secondary school student comes to mind: "School's not labour and not play, so what is it?" That is a question that we need to work on.*" (Ruddock, 1994, p. 9)

In McGregor's (2007) exploration of current practice and theory related to "*Students-as-researchers*", she provides the following explanations behind the benefits of collaborative enquiry with students:

"*Collaborative enquiry has been shown to raise morale, efficiency and a sense of agency for teachers (which might be expected to relate to attainment) through the engagement and motivation of students. In their first year review a significant proportion of Network Learning Communities identified enquiry with students as a major achievement and 80 percent planned more activities for year two."(McGregor, 2007, p.87)*

She continues:

"*The identification of student involvement as a significant dimension of Network Learning Communities development mirrors the currently considerable and growing interest in policy circles, nationally and internationally, around needs of young people in an increasingly complex society.*" (McGregor, 2007, p. 87)

McGregor highlights the two sides of learning proposed by Biesta (2006) that I relate to the work of students-as-researchers. Although I find many accounts speaking of the benefits to students of this type of work, I find little evidence of the impact of these enquiries. I wonder who are the individuals involved and what difference their involvement as researchers has made to their school. I also ask about the longevity of such projects, and how current trends develop into a school culture that embeds students-as-researchers as a mechanism for whole-school learning. Bragg (2007) recognises the demands that student-voice work place upon the adults in the school:

"Whilst adult support for pupil voice is crucial in ensuring its success and sustainability, it is important to recognise the demands it places on teachers, for instance in changing their identities as professionals and their relations both with children and with other staff." (Bragg, 2007, p.1)

Through offering a sustainable approach through intergenerational student research, I hope that the school culture can be enhanced through learning about the intricacies of teaching-learning:

"Through seeing students' capacity for quality research, and the usefulness of it for its insights into aspects of school life, changes in cultural attitudes to students can be brought about. Such insights can also form part of a differently constructed approach to professional development that is more open, reciprocal and indicative of a more flexible, dialogic form of democratic practice in which the interdependency of teaching and learning is explored and enhanced." (Frost, 2007, p.3)

Part of the work of the student researchers must therefore be *learning as a response* (Biesta, 2006) to their environment, seeing how their work can creatively integrate into the existing school culture. They have asked for their contribution to the school to be recognised. Teachers have stood on the *outside, looking in* (Rayner, 2005) to their work, until they too are ready to engage with the researchers. This is a long-term journey that will not be achieved by one student-led enquiry alone, hence the strength offered by an intergenerational approach to this type of enquiry. Ruddock (1994) talks of the long haul nature of this work:

"*We can take some inspiration from the work of some teachers who have been trying to unfreeze their schools and transform the traditional culture through whole-school policies on equal opportunities. They have struggled on, often with little support apart from their own commitment and that of their colleagues, and the task has been complex and personally harrowing .But they are realistic and acknowledge that it will be a long haul.*" (Ruddock, 1994, p.9)

Adults within the school need extended opportunities to realise the potential that student-enquiry has to offer them. McGregor asks:

"*It is not just the power to speak and the right to be heard that are so critical in themselves, but also engaging with the purpose of the process. Student voice for what?" (McGregor, 2007, p.88)*

Linked to this in the first presentation that the student researchers made within the school, a colleague asked the most valuable question that could have been asked of their work:

"*What's this all for?"*

It is a question that I hope to have responded to within this enquiry. I believe that intergenerational work by student researchers allows the precious resources of teacher time and energy to be saved. This approach brings enhanced results for teacher and school learning, in supporting the sharing of good learning practice.

This intergenerational approach enhances relationships across the divide of traditional year groups and shapes dialogue from which a school-based community can learn. The immense capacity of students to relay information regarding best learning practice in the school has been crucial to the success of the student-led enquiry. Students are best-placed to analyse the learning experience in the classroom. It is they who can relate their own and their peers' experiences in order to give the school a true view of learning through different eyes:

"Children's competence is 'different from' not 'lesser than' adults' competence (Waksler, 1991; Solberg, 1996). The claim that children do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding does not stand up to close scrutiny." (Kellett, 2005b, p.3)

"Undoubtedly adults have greater knowledge than children in many areas of life but with regard to childhood itself - in the sense of what it is like to be a child - it is children who have the expert knowledge." (Mayall, 2000, p. 35)

"If the research areas that interest children emanate directly from their own experiences then no adult, even the most skilled ethnographer, can hope to acquire the richness of knowledge that is inherent in children's own understanding of their worlds." (Kellett, 2007, p. 9)

Generations of students working together in a collaborative way can support learning and enhance relationships not only between student-student, but also student-teacher and teacher-teacher:

"Research has reflected changing legislation and has been shifting its focus on to children as subjects rather than objects of research." (Kirby, 2001, p.76)

The word "*with*" in this research is extremely important. It demonstrates the nature of the co-enquiry that is taking pLACE during this writing. I am learning. The students are learning. They are learning from me, and I from them. There is a new hierarchy that reflects the evolving position of student and teacher within this relationship. Kellett (2005) suggests that "*children as active researchers"* is a new research paradigm, yet I argue that students have always held the capacity to actively enquire. They have been waiting for the space within their school to develop that allows this capacity to be fully realised. The national and international agenda of student voice previously discussed is at last realising what the student as consumer can bring to the educational environment. It would seem that schools have been *missing a trick* for a long time in developing the capacity to listen.

I am not "*giving*" the students a voice, as Ruddock and Flutter (2004) would appear to suggest in their publication of this title. I am recognising their capacity for influence and insight into the work of the school. The students already have the voice; it is now the work of the school and of the students to promote this as a vehicle for real learning and to create the space for hearers of their words.

A BECTA[12] researcher asked me in March 2005:"*Why are you engaging in student-led research, and for whom?"*

To which I responded: *"for the school, hoping that student-led research will support school-wide learning across generations and across traditional boundaries; I'm learning with them and enjoying the feeling of gaining new knowledge alongside"*

In Ruddock and Flutter's (2004) publication "*How to improve your school*: *Giving pupils a voice",* they give snapshots from their field notes, including comments made by students. I recognise here that the word snapshot as essential, as the work of H.E. Researchers is often finite in nature. My own perception is that H.E.

[12] BECTA: British Educational Communication and Technologies Agency

Researchers such as Ruddock and Flutter therefore miss out on the real benefit of seeing the long-term effects of student voice. This is my privilege as a practitioner-researcher. I can see how far the first generation of researchers with whom I have worked, have come insofar as they are now capable of mentoring other researchers in similar work. The intergenerational nature of student-led enquiry has allowed me to become a long haul learner.

Here, I empathize with Senese (2005), who recognises himself as a learner within the classroom as a result of his interactions and relationships with his students. I also identify with him his willingness to talk with his students. He appears to be approaching his work from a dialogic perspective; making meaning from the responses he receives outside of pre-determined categories:

"*As I studied the documents, I stopped looking for evidence in predetermined categories and attempted to see what was actually there. I strove not only to hear what the students were telling me, but also to listen to them because "the outcomes of the learning processes are varied and often unpredictable."* (Walker & Lambert, 1995, p.18)" (Senese, 2005, p.44)

Unlike Ruddock and Flutter (2004), Senese enjoys longevity of relationship with the students that allows him to project a path backward through the years of research he has undertaken with them. After the door closes behind H.E. Researchers engaged in schools during a finite period, the space they leave continues to develop. I believe that this space shared between student-researcher and practitioner-researcher is akin to Cho's definition of shared love:

"In the love encounter, the teacher and student do not seek knowledge from or of each other, but, rather, they seek knowledge from the world with each other." (Cho, 2005, p.3)

As Biesta (2006) proposes *learning as a response*, I too needed to understand the space that students shared within the school before beginning to engage with them as researchers. I believe that I first need to seek knowledge of the other before the journey with the other can begin. My own reflections on the world of students are narrowly based on the images and sounds that I hear and see in the school day. Each day I enter my teaching room, a tutor base for two tutor groups, in order to set up for the morning lessons. This is before the majority of students arrive. There is a

calm and sanity in the room at the very beginning of the day, a feeling that it is *my* space. I feel this space evolve when Year 11 students (most of who are taller and louder than me!) arrive, as they begin to take over this space, excluding me from it.

This process of transformation of this space each morning allows me to become a voyeur in the sense of students' interactions with each other. They see me as invisible and unwanted at this time of day. I feel uncomfortable, almost an intruder, in their space. Their shared language, gestures and humor are their own. I recognize that as a teacher I stand outside of this space, and indeed need to in order to maintain my professional role. Trying to understand this space is key in the first steps to recognizing that a strong and personalized student voice already exists, before a journey together can be established:

"*There is an alternative learning agenda outside of the classroom, although many students may not recognize these learnings and do not talk to them as such: learning how to initiate activities and work out rules for shaping the behaviors of participants in games, learning how to mediate in disputes and so on. The value of these social learnings may go relatively unnoticed by adults in the current climate of concern about performance and academic standards.*" (Ruddock and Flutter, 2004, p.87)

The development of the student voice at my previous school, Westwood St Thomas, had been organized and advocated largely by the practitioner-researchers working within the school community. Whilst there was no formal training for the students whose voice we sought, there was strong evidence of participatory research on an equal level between the students and their teacher-researchers. A voice shared between teacher and student had begun to emerge, although the agenda set for this voice was adult-led. This was echoed in the research writing of co-researchers such as Potts (2002) and Bell (2002) at the time:

"In evaluating lessons, observers are asked to comment on whether students are supportive of each other. In evaluating students' work a question is asked about the existence of evidence of peer assessment. When interviewing students they are asked; "Are students supportive of each other in lessons in this subject?" This is derived from Fielding's (1996) comments about the importance of students feeling supported by each other. Another question to ask students to gain some insight in to the effectiveness of learning in the subject is "How often do you get to engage in discussion with other students about what you are learning"?" (Potts, 2003, p.10)

"The majority of boys who participated in the survey claimed that they enjoyed Food Technology, but definitely preferred practical to theory lessons. Why then do I only offer 50% practical lessons? Why do the students have to do so much writing? At least half of those surveyed do cooking at home, yet only 1/3 prepared their own materials for school. Too little preparation time, too many ingredients to collect together, issues with money, not very macho to be seen wandering around the supermarket? All of these issues could contribute to a lack of enthusiasm. Virtually all those questioned claimed to enjoy food-tasting activities – not a great surprise, since all teenagers especially, seem to graze their way through life!" (Bell, 2002, p.7)

At that time the practitioner-researchers at Westwood St. Thomas displayed enthusiasm and an unending thirst for the raw insight and knowledge that the students in their school could share. At one teacher-researcher forum at Westwood St. Thomas, I invited students to join us and there was a sense of learning conversations taking place without hierarchical boundaries between researchers and students. This was extended as the students then joined my colleagues on a staff training day to examine classroom-based practice in 2003.

As advocated by Kirby (2001) and Ruddock (2001), a shift of focus has occurred, moving students from passive participants in research to becoming true agents of research itself:

"*Students-as-researchers" takes the practice of improving education for all one stage further than many other attempts. It relies on the fact that not only can the students come to school to learn; but that they can and indeed must be an integral part of the school's own learning. Schools cannot learn how to become better places for learning without asking the students."* (Crane, 2001, p.54)

Within my current school, I sought to build upon the values shared between the Westwood practitioner-researchers with regards the worth of the student voice. I sought to move this forward from a dialogue with students on teacher terms to a dialogue between students and teachers based on shared values. I was looking to develop hearers for this shared voice, which I define as those with the capacity to recognize student-voice through enquiry. An individual needs to become a *listener* with the capacity to not only recognize but also respond to the student voice. Within

the presentations that the student researchers have given to the staff, some colleagues have had the capacity to respond to what has been presented. Hearing is passive reception, whilst listening demands active engagement. I put my own practice up for scrutiny, in the hope that this would allow colleagues to sit on the sidelines, able to listen to the students before becoming part of this voice when and if they were ready.

On a personal level, I was anxious when faced with the honest critiquing of my classroom practice. I was convinced as to the worth of objectives-based teaching[13] as a key-learning tool, which was the very focus of the first student researchers' enquiry. I was leading my Department in this initiative, and still needed to win my colleagues over to its benefits. I had a lot to lose, but also a lot to gain through hearing the students' views.

On a professional level, I also realized that I would be breaking new ground at the school by asking the students to respond to the teaching and learning within it. If the critique received was damaging, then I stood to lose the respect from my colleagues in this type of work. I had two conflicting ideas of how to "*sell*" this idea within the school in my role as teacher advocate for the students' work. The advice from the Sharnbrook *Students-as-researchers* Project (2001) was explicit in needing the support of staff within the school *before* embarking on this type of project:

"*Students-as-researchers actually led part of one of our Staff Days when we first set up the project to enable staff to engage, raise questions, query and challenge the principals under which the project operated. This has proved to be extremely important in terms of supporting students and staff involved in this work. Sensitivities have been broken down and we have been able, over a period of time, to share the positives that have undoubtedly arisen for staff and students engaged in this work.*" (Raymond, 2001, p.60)

Sensitivities sit alongside trust. Trust is needed so that dialogue about learning can emerge as a result of shared space. In Chapter 3 I shared a narrative with you that

[13] Objectives-based teaching has been one of the main focuses of the National Secondary Strategy, formerly the Key Stage 3 strategy, offered by the Department for Schools, Families and Children in 2003. Within this strategy, a number of key objectives are defined, to be introduced and re-enforced in the classroom. With regards Modern Foreign Languages, these objectives cover areas such as speaking & listening and cultural awareness. Each lesson is therefore designed to deliver one or more of these objectives to students, hoping to increase student awareness of their own learning in the MFL classroom.

looked at the breakdown of trust between my colleagues and me as a result of the sixth-form feedback project in my first year in post. This was a process that both sides were unprepared for and in which conditions of trust had not been established. I now therefore had to convince my colleagues not only to trust the students involved but also to trust me.

*"At the time, I remember being extremely excited at putting these very simple recommendations into practice, but the culture and climate of the school at the time was just not right." (*Raymond, 2001, p.60*)*

I was open in explaining to my colleagues the nature of the students' intended enquiry. I asked them to be first observe the process, validating the findings that the students were making. I hoped this would allow them to feel comfortable in their role, in which their own classroom practice was not under scrutiny. They reacted with more enthusiasm than I could have hoped for, and I tentatively suggested that in the future, if the project proved fruitful, they might wish to allow the student researchers into their own classrooms for observation and feedback. My heart beat faster as I suggested this, but my colleagues nodded and said that this could be interesting. The bonhomie of free cake on a Friday breaktime was working its magic.

"*The pressures of needing rapid results may lead us to listen most readily to voices that make immediate sense. I want to make a plea to take our time with the anomalous, to allow what doesn't fit or produces unexpected reactions in us to disrupt our assumptions and habitual ways of working – because I believe that it is from these that we may, in the end, learn the mos.t*" (Bragg, 2007, p.73)

Bragg emphasizes the need to listen, and to make sense of the dialogic around us before acting. I could not afford to turn my colleagues' enthusiasm into mistrust again. I also listened to the voice of my colleague, Graham Lloyd[14], in the promotion of the student voice at the school:

"*My advice would be, start with your own groups, that way no one's fingers get burnt apart from your own. Successes can then be crowed from the rooftops later, showing*

[14] In Appendix 1 I explore the relationship that I have shared with Graham Lloyd, a practitioner-researcher working with Jack Whitehead at the University of Bath. Graham has recently moved from the position of Head of Middle School to that of Deputy Headteacher at the school.

others through real practice how this can aid them in their classroom practice. Start small, and then it snowballs." (December 2004 in conversation)

I hoped that by demonstrating how students working as researchers could support the development of the teaching and learning within the Department, I would encourage others to follow suit. I listened to the students beginning to research, the first two weeks of their work dogged by uncertainty that they were not being directed or told what to do. They needed this time to find their own direction, and to reflect upon what they were saying. Although desperate to intervene and offer advice, I stepped back and waited. I would not lead the research for them. Senese noted the following about liberation through research and the fear of uncertainty that it can bring:

"*Most students found the freedom of these classes to be both liberating and frightening. I can document quite clearly that the vast majority of the students appreciated being treated as adults, being given choices (even within boundaries), and being self-reliant.*" (Senese, 2005, p.47)

"*In the most recent classes that I taught, I acted more like a learner. When students wrote "slam" poetry..I write a poem and performed it in public to. If these students could see me as a learner, it was because I allowed them to see me in that way. To be a learner, I needed to act like one*" (Senese, 2005, p.52)

Senese shows here how he has been able to place himself in the position of a learner alongside the students with whom he is researching. He has placed himself in the position of unknowing, waiting to discover with them. He has opened the space shared between the students in the hope of new knowledge. I share Senese's way of working as I believe myself to be a learner in shared enquiry with the students. I come to this space in my role as classroom teacher, whilst the students come to it from their own perspective. Each of us offers a new dimension and ways of knowing. The important thing was that as researchers we are able to share this space on an equal footing, all stepping forward together along a new path as the enquiry progresses.

As the second generation of researchers began to undertake their shared enquiry alongside the first generation, the unfolding of generational differences that each person brought to the space of enquiry began to emerge. Students' differing religious

beliefs, native language and family background were all brought to the space that we shared. My hope was that we could learn to embrace these differences as lending strength to the enquiry as opposed to them becoming barriers to ways of knowing. This was a view expressed by Crane in her experiences with student researchers at Sharnbrook:

"Working with fellow students and staff on a genuinely equal level, tangibly building on the basic notions of respect and value discussed in the training, provided me with a unique experience. Staff and students alike learnt to respect the other individuals in our group for the exact qualities that might usually cause contention. For example: that somebody else holds a different point of view to your own, or everybody holds a different view to each other, helps a group to get the most out of their research." (Crane, 2001, p.54)

All students volunteered to participate in the student-researcher work. Anyone had the right to leave the space when they wished, and since 2004 the group has lost five original members for various reasons. One student-researcher left almost immediately as he did not feel that the research had a clear direction. I could not begin this project under false assumptions as I did not know the direction that their work together would take, and felt that I needed to be honest about this from the outset:

"Students must participate because they want to. We need to be really up front about the nature of the research, the process of what we are doing and how we hope to achieve it. By teachers being honest and up front about engaging students in this way, and having the courage to say 'I don't really know where this will lead to' can gain a lot of respect from students. Students feel engaged and involved as equals from the outset." (Raymond, 2001, p.59)

As the enquiry into my classroom practice began, the students began to find their feet as researchers. They were beginning to look with new eyes at the world around them:

"*We are filming this lesson and others to try out different ways of saying or writing the lesson objective... filming again at the end we'll see how well the class have understood each time.*" (second generation researcher during a lesson in February 2005, explaining to his peers why the lesson is being filmed)

Alongside their emergence as researchers, their associated methodology began to emerge[15]. Although aware of research methodology through their work in Science, they only drew upon this knowledge briefly as a source for their own enquiry. There were no pre-set methods that they engaged with; instead seeing this part of the enquiry as emerging in response to their needs. Clark and Moss (2001) in Kirby (2001) highlight the way in which young people can draw on their creativity and sense of fun to develop ways of enquiring that best fit the context in which they find themselves:

"*Over recent years the development of qualitative and participatory research methods for children and young people has enabled them to express their views and experiences using familiar means of communication, many of which they use in their everyday lives. These tend to rely less on just formal methods of talking (such as traditional interviews) and instead include more creative and visual techniques, which help them to discuss their experiences and views in an interesting and fun way, and build on their existing capacities. These include drawing, photography, e-mail, role-play, visualisations (such as mapping and time lines) and group work."* (Clark & Moss, 2001in Kirby, 2001, p.75)

It was at this point that the research was already taking on a very different approach to the one adopted at Westwood St. Thomas. There, I led the research drawing upon established research methodology, not allowing the student researchers to have a voice in this part of the process. Even though I believed to previously have engaged in participatory research with students, I do not believe that it engaged or gave voice to the people with whom I was trying to research. I, as teacher-researcher, only sought the voice of students to validate and not to challenge the enquiry undertaken. Raymond sets out the limitations of working in this way:

"Limitations with this approach relating to the quality of data collected and the scope for school improvement as a result. Often, this is to do with a lack of student involvement in the design stage. A teacher-designed question is a good example of this. They often leave teachers feeling frustrated because they sense that they have not fully understood the responses that the students give. Whichever model is chosen, what is particularly important is that starting small is fundamental. It is great

[15] In Appendix 2 the methodology that the student researchers developed is described in detail

to empower students by asking them to provide feedback, but the reality is that there are numerous questions and answers and teachers have different styles and ways of interpreting the results." (Raymond, 2001, p. 58)

Alongside the emergence of the students' methodology, the participants were emerging in new roles. I was becoming co-researcher alongside the students, a role in which the hierarchy of teacher-student shared in the classroom is put aside. The first generation of researchers was emerging as a critical friend and mentor. The H.E. Researcher was emerging as a listener to this emerging student voice. Kirby (2001) talks of the need for teacher-researchers to evolve in their role through enquiry with regards the dichotomy between their traditional role and their emergent role as researcher alongside students:

"For teachers involved in research there is a potential conflict between their role as a teacher and that of a researcher. The first is an established position of power, which includes the education and development of young people, imposing decisions and maintaining discipline. A researcher is classically expected to be a detached and impartial observer, encouraging voluntary rather than enforced participation, and records rather than challenges opinions. The participatory researcher working with young researchers demands a further redefinition of their role, where one shares knowledge and facilitates young people's critical awareness, but does not impose views and ideology" (Kirby, 2001, p. 75)

I believe to be able to maintain the integrity of my original role as classroom practitioner, yet be in a position of heightened awareness as a result of my contact with the student researchers. This feels a powerful position to hold in terms of knowing, allowing me to reflect upon and refine my practice in order that I may support learners better. In a cover lesson in 2005, one of the student researchers was clearly not on task. I referred to him as I would any student in asking him to return to his work, and he responded in kind. The boundaries between us, impermeable in this original context, become fluid within the space created through enquiry.

Macbeath et al. discuss the use of language as one of the important considerations for participatory research with students alongside the following considerations:

- *"age (taking account of students' competence and their attitude to the medium)*
- *ethical issues and how these differ with age and with the medium of the consultation*
- *whether the information is consciously or unconsciously given by the students*
- *whether students' ideas are authentically interpreted by adults*
- *whether students know what happens as a result of the consultation (feedback and action)*
- *what language for talking about learning students have."*

(Macbeath et al, 2001, p.81)

For the intergenerational group now learning to work together in our shared space, we are learning to find a common language between us that is inclusive and allows the other in. MacBeath et al appear to hold the students they refer to here at arm's length, unwilling to engage with them in a position that denies a participatory way of researching. One of the first activities undertaken by the research group was conceptualizing research itself, so that a common language was shared, as the H.E. Researcher asked:

"What is research?"

Second generation student-researcher: *"Finding out information about a particular subject"*

"Experimenting to see what different results you get in a particular subject"

H.E. Researcher: "What is the difference between high quality research and 'finding out'?"

Second generation student-researcher*: You can go onto the Internet and just print off a whole page, that's finding out - but research? You find the answers for yourself-there is no page to print off. Finding out is a homework, something you've been asked to do, here we want to find out for ourselves." (November 2004 during the first meeting of the student researchers with the H.E. Researcher)*

It was important to establish a common ground in understanding research itself alongside why the students were undertaking this. I talked with the

students about research as a means to improvement, with the outcomes supporting learning, in line with Whitehead's question:

"*How do (we) improve what (we) (are) doing?"* (Whitehead, 1995)

The language we were beginning to share alluded to participatory research, in which *I* moved towards *we* in an inclusional way. The students understood the need to know a given situation before they could research into it: being aware of classroom language such as objectives, learning outcomes and plenaries. They needed to be aware of the language with which they were to come into contact in order to understand what they were looking for. In this they were undertaking learning as a response (Biesta 2006). They believed that this language excluded their peers from knowing what they were researching into, and that a shared language known between teacher and student would need to develop as the enquiry progressed.

The emergence of this shared language began in February 2005, when the H.E. Researcher worked alongside the first and second generation of researchers for the second time. This created a circle of support for the second-generation of students emerging as researchers: She offered them an outside perspective to their enquiry whilst the first generation provided mentoring advice based on their own experiences as researchers and I provided the practical support in terms of the space that the enquiry would need. Each of us was learning to find our own role within the enquiry, wanting to bring our experience and views to each other about how to make this process work best.

In this way one of the second generation researchers stated:

"(In Science) it is about facts...there is a right or a wrong answer..we are given a question, and we find out the answer to it...we do experiments as part of this..Here it is not about being right or wrong, but we still need to do practical things to find out about our own learning in class."

Student researchers introduction.WMV

Figure 23 ***This clip shows the first simple introductions between the second generation researchers and the H.E. Researcher***
This clip, taken in the first five minutes of the second-generation researchers meeting with the H.E. Researcher, shows the absence of shared values in this initial phase of their work together.

Jack (Whitehead) responds to the above comments:

"*Can some evidence be provided that shows change in this young person's understanding of research or the appreciation of the nature of enquiry that is beyond replicating the answer towards creating an answer. Is there any evidence showing movement in what is understood to be learning or research?" (Electronic-mail received 19.03.07)*

In response to Jack's question, I share with you one of the second-generation researcher's responses some two years later, when considering the impact of student-led research with which he has engaged:

"We have noticed quite a big change in some of our lessons as a result of working with teachers in this way. This was an excellent result that shows even though we are students we can still make a difference to the classroom. For example, some teachers now use a black background on the interactive whiteboard, making it easier for us to see. We now see more teachers moving around the classroom to help us with work instead of sitting at the front. More teachers now write up objectives for us to help us know what we should be learning. We have also notice that more teachers are telling us what is coming up and why-the big picture again-so that we are not being led in the dark. We hope that this evidence shows that we have made a difference-to our teachers and importantly to other pupils. These ideas all came from them when we asked them what really helped them to learn." (written comments produced by e-mail, 2007)

I believe strongly that this student-researcher is demonstrating his capacity in *creating* research which is responsive and has a purpose in supporting the school. He acknowledges here what he feels has been the impact of his shared work with the

student researchers, using language that has emerged as part of the shared understanding of classroom practice such as the “big picture”. He talks of the difference that he has made through this shared enquiry and the evidence that exists to support his claim to supporting learning in the school.

Further in response to Jack’s question, I offer this transcript of a subsequent meeting between the student-researcher group, in which I sensed that the quality of dialogue emerging *between* the first and second-generation researchers:

Key: (1) denotes first-generation researcher (2) denotes second-generation researcher

Paddy (2) to Shane and Alex (1): “*When you were at Westwood, did you have a favourite type of research that you were involved in?”*

Shane (1): “*It was when there five or six of us, and there were no fixed questions, it could go one way or another, quite unexpectedly. It was a very open and honest discussion. I had some control over the direction of the discussion, I wasn’t just led along.”*

Harry (2): “*I think that before I just thought that a teacher would come into the lesson and just start talking without thinking their lesson through. I have come to appreciate that they do actually think things through a lot, and that they are looking to improve what they do that can only be beneficial to us. It made me think of what I really liked in terms of my own learning, and this helped me further on in terms of revision and stuff*”

Shane (1) “*You are so lucky to be doing this kind of stuff in Year 7. We didn’t have the chance until we were in Year 11. You will be so helpful to your school and to the teachers here in years to come, and this will help you learn how to work with them.. .to have this confidence”*

Shane (1) was considering here the two-way benefits of student-led research for school and student-researcher, recognizing that both needed to benefit from the process for the process to hold value. MacBeath et al. make the following comments in relation to this:

"*We also have to remember that the potential of student voice to make a difference depends not only on who is talking but also on who is listening and whether their attentiveness is genuine; students need to be sure that what they say about matters that concern them is being taken seriously by teachers in the school.*" (MacBeath et al., 2001, p.4)

Chris (2): "*It's more about giving constructive feedback than negative, then we can support teachers in their work and benefit from this ourselves."*

Working in this intergenerational way has allowed academic-researcher, practitioner-researcher and student-researcher to work alongside each other. This is where I feel that as a practitioner-researcher, I need the *outside, looking-in* (Rayner, 2005) perspective offered by a researcher not previously connected with the school. The H.E. Researcher has allowed us to view the enquiry from the objective perspective of other teachers and stakeholders in the school. This concept goes further than MacBeath et al. suggest below, in asking the enquiry to provide worthwhile results for those involved alongside the need for stakeholders to have confidence in its worth. There is a marrying together of the needs of both participants and stakeholders:

"*It is important to think whether the topics "permitted" for discussion with students in schools are ones that they see as significant. Consultation is less likely to be seen as credible if teachers always identify the issues on which students are consulted. Students soon tire of invitations to express views on matters that they do not think are important.*" (MacBeath et al., 2003, p.43)

This need was highlighted by Shane and Alex (1) in the same meeting as they asked:

"What do you think will be the most important points of your research?"

Harry (2): "I think the most important part will be earning the respect of others that our research is worth doing. Only if we can prove that this is useful to the school, will we be able to continue working in this way. I mean students thinking our work is useful as well as teachers. We've got a lot to prove."

6.3 Intergenerational tension and shared values through enquiry

Part of the immense learning curve undertaken through this enquiry has been the development of relationships between the student researchers themselves. The group has experienced difficulties in relating to the other both *inter-generationally* and i*ntra-generationally*. In this way, in the initial phase of the group working together, Shane's (1) concern was that two members of the second-generation group were becoming increasingly dominant in the research process to the exclusion of one individual. This led to long pieces of dialogue with only two students involved from this new generation. Shane (1), Alex (1) and I discussed how to involve this quieter individual to a greater extent. They suggested a role within the research group in which this student provided ideas about the next steps of the enquiry, thus giving him the space for his own voice to develop and be heard. Through this, we hoped that the more dominant characters would listen to the quieter students.

Later within the enquiry, as the second generation recruited the third to support the whole-school development of student-led research, further problems became evident. This third generation, being older than the second, began to dominate the enquiry leading to the disillusionment of the younger yet more-established researchers. Too many voices tried to be heard at once, and the group began to fracture into sub-groups that could not see the benefits of coming together to strengthen their enquiry. This was a time when Alex & Shane (1) and I worked hard to develop empathy for the other within the group. Through drawing on the strengths that each individual brought to the shared space, we asked for trust in the other to fulfill his role. As with the factitious relationship between my colleagues and I during my first year in post, this group also needed time for trust to be established. The third generation needed to prove they were *trust worthy* before being allowed to develop this shared space with the established researchers, as I had needed to do during my first year at the school.

"*It's not that they can't get on, it's more that they haven't yet learned to. They can't yet see the benefits of the older students joining their project-even though it was their own decision to do so. The younger, more established boys are finding it hard to let go of the complete ownership of this project, and to hand it over in part. They, I don't think, have ever seen Alex or me as a potential threat in this way. I can only conclude that this lack of trust is because they are much closer in age than us and the second generation."* (Shane (1), June 2006)

I compare the younger boys' sense of loss of ownership, as highlighted above by Shane, as being similar to the sentiment that I shared when my husband and I first began to enquire. At that time we acted as two individuals engaging with similar fields of enquiry, yet choosing to do so apart. We both felt that the other was invading our enquiry, and did not openly invite the other in. It is only as we have learned to merge our boundaries as husband, wife and co-enquirers that our enquiries have moved closer together. The development of a feeling of trust for the other has been the overriding factor in allowing this movement together to occur. I believe that the student researchers could also only gain this trust over time. Through showing their worth in terms of what they could offer the enquiry, the third generation could begin, not just to participate, but to move the enquiry forward. Leat (2005) states the following when looking at new people entering an established group:

"It is hard to bring new people into this bonded group. They feel like sore thumbs and the dynamics can feel awkward..It takes deliberate work on the part of the new group to engage and hang onto new recruits. They need to be given a role and responsibility fairly quickly to help them become part of the group." (Leat, 2005, p.6)

The latter half of the issue raised by Leat was quickly in place within the group, as each third-generation student was assigned a specific Department to work with. There was however a certain tension that I felt as I reviewed the video footage from the first training session with them. When discussion was taking place, the older third generation students were comfortable to raise points without putting a hand up, whilst the second generation felt this was necessary. There was more than one "*put-out*" face from the younger researchers as their hand was raised and then lowered in frustration at others "*butting in".* It appeared that, whilst the second generation wanted the third to join their enquiry group, they needed to establish a clear way of working with them. They perceived themselves as the lead researchers in this initial phase, and wanted to have ownership over the enquiry's direction. Whilst this third generation was welcome to participate and give energy to the enquiry, the boundaries between new and old researcher had not yet been permeated. The values shared between the first and second generation had also not been explicated in terms of the norms of the working of the group. The other, in terms of the third generation, had not yet been invited into these shared values.

As the group learned to trust each other anew, then the value shared between my husband and I of being *worthy of the other* became crucial in the development of the students' co-enquiry. Each participant looks to give to the enquiry, yet also to gain something in exchange for their time and effort expended, asking "*What's in it for me?"* Each asks if the enquiry will produce new ways of knowing that support the school in knowing itself better, yet also seeks new ways of knowing themselves. When consulting with Shane and Alex (1), their primary concern was whether the enquiry would have any benefits for myself as a classroom practitioner. They were concerned as to whether the students' enquiry would allow my own understanding to move forward. In doing so they were testing if their involvement was worthy of the enquiry itself.

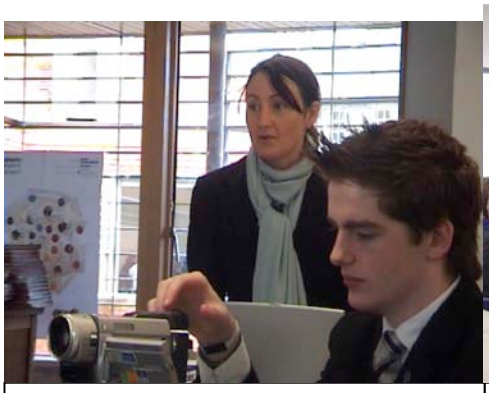


Image July 2005: I listen to comments from the second generation of researchers whilst Shane (1) conducts and films the session.

I*mage July 2005: Shane and Alex(1) lead the second generation of researchers in the use of multimedia technology to support their enquiry. I sit at the back in the role of observor.*

Figure 24 Two images that reflect the evolving nature of the roles within the research group

Figure 25a.WMV

Figure 25b.WMV

Figures 25a and 25b
These clips highlight Shane and Alex's ability to lead the second-generation in a mentoring capacity. They show the evolving nature of the roles taken within the group and the immense learning journey undertaken by Shane and Alex as they have moved from active participants to research mentors.

As the enquiry progressed, Shane and Alex (1) took on increasing responsibility for moving the enquiry forward. The second generation was gaining in confidence to undertake enquiry, and the trust of the other was emerging. I allowed myself more

time to enjoy the enquiry as an observer and felt less pressured to support the direction of the research itself. For me, the benefit of intergenerational student-led research was becoming ever clearer. It allows teachers their time back. It allows them to enjoy the unfolding of the enquiry alongside the students instead of feeling pressured to find a direction forward. I felt that I was able to hold onto my role as practitioner-researcher more comfortably. There was no longer the same pressure and guilt attached to devoting time to the enquiry in school as opposed to my primary role as Middle Leader. The one role was supporting the other, allowing me to be a more reflective practitioner and still have the time and energy needed to lead the Department.

MacBeath et al. (2001) highlight the recurrent problem of practitioner-researchers finding time to research within their professional roles as a common issue:

"*Teachers who have successfully introduced opportunities for consultation are often worried about making the most of it given competing demands on their time. Priorities at school level are not necessarily determined by what is most important or most valued by teachers and students but by the urgency of external demands.*"
(MacBeath et al., 2001, p.43)

In order therefore for teachers to allow themselves time to engage with student-led research, they must know what potential value it holds for them. There must be a return in the creation of new knowledge that supports them as classroom-practitioners. Within this enquiry, I refer to Cho's definition of knowledge creation together:

"Knowledge is by definition the inquiry we make into the world, which is a pursuit inaugurated by a loving encounter with a teacher. With love, education becomes an open space for thought from which emerges knowledge.

If education is to be a space where teacher and student search for knowledge, then we must strongly affirm that a teacher and student can and must love." (Cho, 2005, p.4)

When Jack Whitehead highlighted Cho's work on "*Lessons in Love*" (2005), I was sceptical at the title given the educational climate within which I work. This is a climate that shuns the word love with fear of retribution. I have however grown to

embrace this sense of love in the shared work that both teacher and student are carrying out together. The students, my colleagues, co-researchers and I are all engaged in this enquiry because we want to. Without this shared personal commitment to the project, the shared sense of love for what we do, then the project would not enjoy the motivation that it does. I share a love for the work of the student-voice in creating new knowledge within schools and for the excitement that student-led enquiry can bring to the classroom practitioner. Cho's notion of "*a loving encounter with a teacher*" is lived out through this enquiry.

Cho has looked at the place of *love* in the workplace (teacher-student) in the light of political climate and scandal. He argues for a relationship of two, in which knowledge is not simply transferred from teacher to student in line with the traditional profile of the classroom. Instead knowledge is the enquiry that student and teacher undertake together. If education is to be a space where teacher and student can search for new ways of understanding, then I must affirm that:

''*Yes, a teacher and student can and must love.*" (Cho, 2005, p.3)

Each day I believe that the encounter between student and teacher should lead to the furthering of knowledge and understanding on both sides. Teachers acting as learners and students acting as teachers, as they share their experiences with those who have the capacity to listen. I wish to leave school knowing that the encounters I have experienced today have allowed me to learn. I ask for something in return. I am not the same person for I carry new knowledge within me.

Since working at my previous school in which Cho's (2005) notion of the shared pursuit of knowledge could be seen through the work of the in-house teacher-researcher group, I have been aware of a need for recognition of the other and for a shared loving relationship between colleagues, teachers and students in the pursuit of improving the school. I believe in the recognition of *work well done* by these individuals coming together in enquiry, a value instilled in me by the Headteacher of Westwood St. Thomas School. Encounters with individuals such as these are to be cherished, as they allow practitioner-researchers to move forward in their understanding of themselves and their work.

The student researchers have struggled with the parole *love* in the political climate of UK education. They have come to accept the definition of such as aptly describing

the journey we are taking together, yet cannot embrace the word itself. It is a word which sits uncomfortably between us and cannot be embraced by all concerned:

"You first showed us this definition, and I thought, yes this describes what we are doing. Then you mentioned how this is described as "love", and I started to become worried. No one speaks about love at school; it seems to be a forbidden word. Yet I do agree that I love doing this, being a researcher and working with the others. I accept this definition, but do not know how we could talk comfortably of love between student and teacher. It is a sad world in which we live where such taboos exist." (Shane (1,) November 2005)

I was subconsciously idealising the joint pursuit of knowledge that my students and I shared, although I have only come to make sense of this as the research has progressed. In the selection of a title for their initial enquiry, the student researchers chose "*It's not all cameras and cookies!"* I feel that this reflects the warmth of relationship in the simple sharing of food at research meetings that we have had.

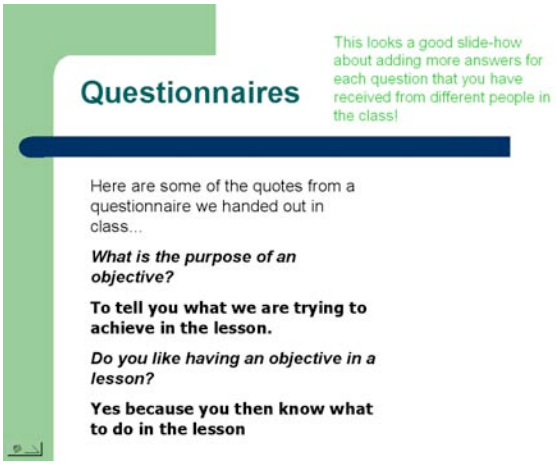
During an interim meeting about the project in March 2005, Shane (1) was feeling drained with the pressure he was facing with his workload and the approaching interview for Head boy. For the first time, he took a back seat during the session, and the others needed to find the creative energy without his input. The second generation commented upon the level of tiredness that Shane showed during this session. They were appearing to empathize with him, and were realizing that they needed to lead more at that time. There was a sense that they were the experts now as well. They held the capacity to undertake research themselves and were becoming equals in their relationship with Shane and Alex (1) for the first time.

This confidence I was convinced came through the realization that the project was being valued by the school. The students were concerned about the sustainability of working as researchers within it for they now saw the classroom through new eyes. They could not simply *switch off* and become passive unknowing learners. It is this realization that is profound. I consider how the classroom could have become a more frustrating place for them:

"Before I could just enter a lesson, sit down and get on with whatever I was asked to do…Now I get so annoyed if no-one explains to me why I am there...don't I deserve to know?" (Chris, second-generation researcher, May 2006)

It is the fundamental duty of the school, I believe, to make efforts to integrate student-led research into the school once the process has been started. This sustainability will partially come from the teacher(s) involved with the enquiry who create the space and conditions for shared learning in this way, yet is also the duty of the students involved to continue pushing for more involvement in this way. Intergenerational student-research provides this continued motivation to enquire. People leave and others join, yet through an evolving network of participants, the process itself becomes embedded as part of what the school does.

Figure 26 ***Three slides from the initial enquiry that the student researchers undertook.***
You will note within the slides where I have inserted my comments into this first draft (highlighted in green), asking the students to become reflective in what they doing. The title of the first slide was particularly poignant as to the ownership of this first enquiry.



This second slide shows me asking the student researchers to consider a wider range of viewpoints received from their peers.

This third slide highlights how I tried to manipulate the language employed by the student researchers in this first small-scale enquiry. I was not aware of my misguided influence in influencing their language until the conclusion of this first enquiry.

This embedding can however only be achieved through the involvement of the Senior Leadership Team within the school and crucially the support of the Headteacher. The Headteacher's and two Deputy Headteachers' involvement as co-researchers in the Westwood St. Thomas teacher-researcher group, was crucial in supporting the significance of the group's work, as well as opening the necessary space and time in order to progress. This continued support allowed the group to become sustainable, to become embedded in the school culture and to evolve as some members left and others joined. Even with the departure of the Headteacher in 2004, the Deputy Headteachers were able to provide the group with the continuing support and space that it needed. The group had grown outside of its original participants, although sustained and built upon the shared values created together within the space. The presence of the absence was felt. These shared boundaries between the practitioner-researchers gave the group sustained motivation beyond individual enquiries:

"*What this group has become has grown outside of my expectations. The energy that it has been given by different individuals at various points in time have provided the group with an energy that has meant it is grown into a sustained part of what this school does.*" (comments by the Deputy Headteacher at Westwood St. Thomas School, May 2003)

Within my current school, the role of the Headteacher and Deputy in supporting the enquiry has been vital. These two significant individuals approached the space shared by the group in very different ways, and provided me, in my role as teacher-advocate, with a means of beginning to embed this work within the school. Graham Lloyd, as Deputy Headteacher[16] and practitioner-researcher enquiring into the school, was able to offer the group an *inside, looking-out* (Rayner, 2005) view of the impact of the enquiry. He has played a significant part in supporting the group through providing them with an honest critique of their work. He has asked them to consider how their enquiry is perceived and responded to by other colleagues within the school. He has also allowed me to see the enquiry through the eyes of colleagues not directly involved in it. This correspondingly opened me to an *outside, looking-in* (Rayner, 2005) view of the enquiry as seen by my colleagues. From this perspective I am more clearly able to ask "*What's in this for the school?"* recognizing this aspect as fundamental in giving the group's work significance and the lifeblood to

[16] Please refer to Appendix 1 for a fuller discussion of Graham's involvement with the enquiry

continue. Whilst recognizing the student voice and giving this a forum is invaluable to the students involved, there must also be a return for the school in terms of knowing itself better. The involvement of both these senior colleagues has given the enquiry value. The students are being recognized for their efforts and can realize the significance of what they are doing:

"*When (the Headteacher) became involved and asked us to present our work to the staff, it felt as if this was "proper" work that we were undertaking. It wasn't something that only a few people knew about...it was becoming a part of the school.*" (second generation researcher in conversation, January 2005)

The Headteacher has been responsible for recognizing and valuing the work of the boys within the school. He has provided the group with the space that it needed and has indicated to my colleagues that this work is something to be valued. As opposed to Graham Lloyd who became directly involved, the Headteacher gave the boys the space within which to work. He then stood on the sidelines waiting to see the match that would play out as a result. He chose against active participation, preferring to see if this would provide real benefits for his school before committing himself and the school to it.

6.4 Moving onto school-wide research, developing responsive methodology and third generation tension

As already mentioned, during the second phase of the project, the group wished to expand to work alongside a wider range of teachers and bring a third generation into their enquiry space. They chose to recruit students from Years 10 and 11 (15-16 years of age) which would bring students from Key Stage 4 into the enquiry and therefore allow the enquiry to span the three parts of the school: Lower, Middle and Upper. They also looked to re-evaluate the methodology that they had previously employed and to add more rigor into their research processes:

"We need to use the same questions in our interviews each time, otherwise this may bias the results that we obtain...we need to give all our interviewees the same diet in effect."

"*When we are videoing the focus lessons for this project, we should ensure that each has a similar style in terms of length and focus. It's not up to us to pick and choose what we film, we should agree this beforehand."*

(comments by second generation researcher Harry, September 2005)

"*Reliability is essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. For research to be reliable, it must demonstrate that if it were carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar results would be found." (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p.117)*

"If we add in a questionnaire alongside the video and interviews, we can see whether the results and comments are the same or whether they come up with completely different results..Surely we need more than one way to prove a point." (comment by second generation researchers, September 2005)

"*Triangulation is characterized by a multi-method approach to a problem in contrast to a single method approach..methodological triangulation (is where one uses) the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of a study*." (Cohen et al, 2000, p.113)

I explained the definition of reliability and triangulation to the group at this point and went on to explain that I thought they were developing an awareness of both in response to their enquiry. The student researchers were beginning to develop their methodology in response to the needs of the enquiry:

"If we just stick to a set amount of questions in our interviews, we could miss the point altogether. We need to be flexible enough to add in others in response to what is being said; otherwise we might miss a huge chunk of information that could be useful."

"We must ask the teachers whose lessons we have filmed to view the tape before we interview them. They need a chance to see what we have, and to consider what they are learning through seeing themselves on screen."
(comments by second generation researchers, September 2005)

Part of this responsiveness was the recognition when certain methodological choices needed to be modified in order to best fit the purpose for which they were intended. A key example of this was the researchers' first attempt to interview their peers in July 2005, during which they rigidly stuck to a pre-supposed set of questions and were

unable to creatively respond to the comments that they were hearing in order to develop these to a greater extent. Their own focus in this interview was also noticeably lacking. Their eyes kept flitting to the football games taking place outside, and their responses to what they were hearing were cursory. They seemed uninterested in their interviewees who were quick to pick upon this and responded in kind.

Interview First attempt.WMV

Figure 27 Video clip of the first unsuccessful interview
This clip highlights a situation in which the second generation researchers were not valuing the other students that they had invited into the room.

"I don't know about you, but I felt embarrassed in there. They just didn't seem interested in the other guys in the room. If it had of been me sat there, I think I would have left." (comment by first generation researcher Alex immediately following the first interview)

They decided to try again the following week.

This time, the first generation researchers asked the second generation to respond to the issues that had arisen in the first set of student-interviews. They asked them to take ownership over the improvement of their employed methodological choice. The second generation responded by saying that they needed to first outline the context and purpose of the research before "launching" into their questions. They also felt that the interview should become more open-ended, leaving opportunities for discussion.

The differences a week later were remarkable. There was real warmth in the room that transcended the "*froideur*" of the previous week's interview. Everyone clearly looked and felt more relaxed, and gained courage from the other. The second generation made their interviewees feel valued which allowed them to develop their answers to a much greater extent.

Alex (1) highlighted the relative success of the second interview as he commented:

"The first group discussion meeting with the other year 8 students was not useful for them or for the enquiry. The meeting followed the format of a very dull series of questions, asked only by one of the researchers, who did not particularly intrigued or excited in any way by what they were doing. Questions were asked too sequentially and there was no real attempt to link them together. This proved an uninspiring research technique for all involved.

The second session found the boys much more eager to discuss. This may have been a fluke due to the mood they were in, it also may have been due to the fact that there were more of them taking part – an environment where they may have felt more comfortable or been encouraged to show off. This time they allowed their interviewees to open up to their questions, and then to discuss their feelings as a group.

One point to take into account may be the fact that the camera was in a discreet place the second time, and many of the boys looked noticeably more relaxed as a result." (electronic mail, September 2005)

I felt enlightened at the level of Alex's response, in which I felt that he had been able to capture the space in which the second interview took place. It shows me the extent to which Alex was now aware *of the other* as a researcher, able to relate to the relationships between individuals looking from the *outside-in (*Rayner, 2005*)*. The next stage of the enquiry was now to link Alex's observations in the wider context of working alongside teachers and a new third generation, as the first two generations presented their enquiry findings to the whole staff during the November 2005 during the In-service Training Day.

The following narrative highlights my reflections after the whole-school presentation to my colleagues in 2005.

Make or Break: It was one of those mornings

By the time that break time arrived, my heart was pounding with anxiety. The morning had not gone well. It was as simple as that. The focus on teacher learning through listening to others had not been clarified by the Leadership Team at the outset of the training day. If we were doing OK as a school, my colleagues asked, then why did we need to change, why did we need to now listen to our students to

improve? These were the views throughout the morning. Just before the break, in which the students were due to set up, there was a comment from one colleague stating*, "We are teachers... they are students. It's up to us to know... and them to follow."* This preceded rapturous applause and hollers of delight. Was this really the right time for the student researchers to present to the staff, I asked myself.

I had no fears that the students were capable of delivering an effective and engaging summary of their research project. I felt as a parent seeing her offspring grow their wings and fly. During that time, I felt that I was working wholeheartedly within Cho's (2005) notion of love in the pursuit of knowledge together. I felt confident in their ability to deliver to my colleagues, although I was unsure of my colleagues' capacity to listen to their voices.

"*Voices are nothing without hearers.*" (Noyes, 2004)

During the presentation, I deliberately sat to the side so that I could watch the reactions of my colleagues. Two colleagues played cards at the back of the room, and several had a fixed gaze on the passing traffic outside yet the majority were attentive. There was an atmosphere of quiet engagement, a feeling that my colleagues were giving the students their undivided attention. Quite literally, you could have heard a pin drop.

When the students opened their presentation up to questions, my heart sank when I saw no hands go up. The Headteacher then began to ask a question. In doing so, he was stating that he valued this work and that he wanted my colleagues to engage with it. The questions that followed were at first a series of questions focussing on student learning:

"*Do you feel that objectives could be set over a series of lessons i.e. is there flexibility in the current system?"*

"Can you see the point of having a lesson if there is no objective involved?"

These were followed by:

"What's the point of all this?"

The students chose to respond to this question in a positive light that strengthened the value of what they were undertaking:

"*Before we did this research, we weren't really aware of what was happening in the classroom. Things like learning objectives and the bigger picture were an unexplained mystery. It was only through doing this research project that we now understand what these things are... It's as if we're learning to learn alongside doing this research. Most of the other pupils that we interviewed don't really have a clue about these terms either, although know what they are in reality. We can now say not just what is good, but why it's good. This has been really important in understanding learning and how it occurs, and we hope that this is something, that through sharing, we can make lessons as good as they can be."*(response by Harry, second generation researcher, to the preceding question)

I began to recognize the significance of my colleague's challenging question after reflection with the research group. Through this I realised the juxtaposition that I found myself to be in. Whilst the student researchers had already begun to embrace their potential enemy as a challenge to prove their worth in supporting the school, I still needed to learn to embrace this critical friend. She was asking that this enquiry team become the best that it could be in having a solid purpose and in being worthwhile. In this, I learned from them.

"When I come across someone challenging my position, I become bull-headed. I want to face them head on. There is no room for negotiation. My viewpoint is the one I see. I head into a problem, I find it very difficult to creatively work my way around it as you seem able to do." (comment by my husband in May 2006)

Throughout this enquiry, I have advocated the strength of working in an intergenerational way in order for student-led research to become sustainable within the school. This way of working has allowed the boundaries between new and old researchers and different generations to evolve in a continuous way. It has allowed the enquiry to draw strength from new directions as it has progressed, and to feed upon the motivation given to it by new members. I believe that it is only through this strength that the group could respond in such a way to the potentially harmful question above.

As the group now entered its third year in 2006, Shane and Alex (1) quietly sat on the sidelines, content in their diminishing role as they prepared for Higher Education. It was clear that the group needed to grow to include new researchers and that the second generation, who only six months ago were unsure of research and research processes, wanted to take on the challenge of training a new third generation. They recognized that with the diminishing input of both Shane and Alex, new blood was needed in order for the group to grow into its emerging whole-school role. They also looked to expand to work alongside teachers in the classroom in order to answer their research question:

"*How can learning best take place within lessons?"*

A second-generation researcher stated at this time:

"*This is relevant for all teachers across the school...It is something that is relevant to everyone and hopefully will allow them to learn with us"* (Harry, second generation researcher, January 2006)

They saw that only if they could engage the interest of a range of teachers in their project, would it then be considered of relevance to the wider school community. For this project they gained the support of my colleagues in order to focus on three Departments within the school, working closely in sub-groups with teachers within these Departments. They also proposed that this ongoing project become part of the school's Internet site, therefore allowing other colleagues and stakeholders, if they wished, to be aware of the research process and to respond to it:

"*We know that maybe only the teachers involved will read this...but that's enough..at least we are communicating with them and offering all the chance to comment on what we are doing.*" (second generation researcher, January 2006)

The students first began to write to the teachers with whom they wished to work (after seeking permission by the Headteacher) outlining the aims of their research and how they wished the teacher to be involved. They each approached one teacher and inevitably received a varied response. Although one declined to take part, five others agreed. The sheer enormity of the workload they were taking on in this project began to sink in. The answer to this increased workload was to recruit a third generation of researchers amongst the Year 10 cohort, students two years older than

themselves. This would give them the scope they needed to work across Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 5 and would allow them to form Department based teams to work with individual and groups of teachers.

Each team was then to take on the following[17]:

- Set up and coordinate a two week student learning diary for an individual class within a Key Stage (sample of students from a target group)
- Film two key lesson extracts to include the lesson outline and the plenary (focusing on how students were given time to think)
- Share the video evidence and the learning diaries with the teacher(s) involved in an interview
- Set up and conduct a Department interview of a range of teachers within the Department, looking at how students are given opportunities to learn and how they do so
- Keep all stakeholders updated with the ongoing research project via the school website, allowing opportunities for feedback
- Share the results of their findings with year group assemblies in a validation exercise
- Validate these findings through an intergenerational student learning forum
- Revise and present summative findings to the whole staff

This was an enormous undertaking and commitment for the students involved, which would take place in addition to their full timetable of lessons, homework, extracurricular pursuits and lives outside of school. This was indeed not a project for the fainthearted.

When Harry and Theo (2) addressed the Year 10 students within an assembly, asking for volunteers to join them, I was surprised at how confident they felt addressing older students within their school. Appealing to the "*What's in it for me?"* factor, they outlined the benefits of working as researchers.

At the end they waited. Four students approached them.

[17] Please refer to Appendix 2 for more detail of the methodology employed by the student researchers and how these were developed/chosen.

The initial training session with the third generation involved the students dividing themselves into intergenerational groups that would each focus upon a different Department within the school. I led this discussion initially, until the students were able to take over. The engagement and active listening from the Year 10 students showed how they realised that this was a time for them to listen and learn from the younger students. I had a warm feeling towards the end of this session, as it felt that with “the new blood” their enquiry had a realistic chance of success. Afterwards shared smiles began as researchers chanced upon each other around the school; there was a feeling of something special being shared between us as a group.

Figure 28
In the following video clips, focussing on the initial meeting between second and third generation, the absence of shared trust is evident as they all talk through me to each other.

Year 10 researchers.WMV

Discussing together.WMV

After trust had later been established, I felt that the group had reached a level of autonomy where I could begin to step back from my previous role as mediator and enjoy seeing the project unfold and develop. I felt this to be a very privileged position, where we as classroom practitioners can sit on the sidelines occasionally and enjoy the game without knowing the result. I still however recognise the energy I continue to give to the research and the individuals within it.

I believe that by recognising my own role and influence in my shared life with others, I am supporting others in developing their own *shining light* (Mandela, 1994). I am taking responsibility for this role, and in doing so giving ownership to this account. Without my presence, the student-researcher group would not have an unswerving ally whose presence allows them to discover their own capacity as researchers, nor someone to record their journey. Through this role, I have been able to recognise the cycles that the research has undergone.

Leat (2005) outlines the need to recognise cycles in networks where collective enquiry is undertaken. He recognises that there can be a lull when key players leave the group and that there is real value in allowing breathing space and a chance to reflect between projects. The summer vacation provided the group with a natural breathing space between the first small scale project and this whole-school one. By mid July in 2005, it was clear that we all needed a break, and that a tiredness and loss of focus had occurred; not just between the researchers themselves, but also by myself.

In the new academic year, the younger researchers began to dominate the project with the first generation becoming peripheral members, attending meetings as and when they could. With their A-Level courses now entering their final year, both students were under a great deal of pressure and could no longer afford the time to the research project.

Over the following weeks, the new group began to form a purposeful identity that was orientated towards meeting its own deadlines and to reviewing its methodological choices as it grew. We had found a new, smaller and quieter room in which to meet. This was a space that became our own on a Wednesday lunchtime when everyone appeared with sandwiches and coke. For the first time, I began to bring my own lunch to these meetings. Whilst this may seem insignificant in the context of this research, it showed that I was now relaxed enough to eat together with the others. The project progressed over these lunchtimes: interviews were arranged and discussed, video evidence was reviewed and learning diaries were collected. The project was shared with the colleagues within the school via the website. There was purpose and there was progress. This was a time in which to enjoy the shared love that we brought to the meetings.

Ethical issues related to the research have become an increasing concern for the student researchers[18]. These issues related not only to the participation of the student researchers themselves: they also extended to how the researchers were dealing with working with these other individuals:

"I know that I am involved. You get us to read what you have written...and we want you to use our names...we want to have our work recognised as being by us...I

[18] A full discussion of the ethical considerations of this enquiry is undertaken in Chapter 8

remember Shane telling us about when he discovered his comments in your research on the web." (Chris' (2) comments in a meeting, March 2006)

"*We need to share everything with them before we share it with the others around the school. The (teachers) who are involved and the pupils need to have a chance to discuss with us what we have written.*" (Chris' (2) comments in a meeting, March 2006)

As the research has progressed, the need for clarity over naming research participants (both students and teachers) has become vital. Within the first small-scale enquiry undertaken by the students, the group agreed that they felt uncomfortable including comments about others without informed consent. As shown above, the agreement to therefore share their ongoing research with participants for comment has become a foundation of the way in which they have continued to enquire.

In order however for the researchers themselves to enquire, the school first needed to seek parental consent for their involvement. Although this was readily received and welcomed by the parents (I have had several informal conversations with parents during consultation evenings about the ongoing research), the need to first gain this consent takes away the right of the child to make their own decision about becoming involved. Kellett (2005b) refers to this debate:

"Tensions can ensue when some children want to become active researchers but are refused parental consent (e.g. parents may want to protect their children's leisure time or be suspicious about possible exploitation). Equally, some parents might put pressure on their children to participate because they decide the experience 'will be good for them' or there will be 'educational benefits' when the children themselves have no real interest in or motivation for research activity." (Kellett, 2005b, p.20)

Parents are however stakeholders of the school, entrusting the school with the welfare and education of their child. Seeking to involve parents, not solely through gaining their consent, but furthermore inviting parents into the research space via web-based technology, allows a relationship of trust between the school and parents to build. Parents are empowered through knowing what their child is undertaking and dialogue between parent, school and child emerges as a result. In this way, when

one of the second-generation researchers began to find his time commitment to the research stressful, it was his parents who talked with him to find a solution.

I believe that working with parents in this inclusional way allows the receptive space between those involved in the research to expand to include these parents. Potential "enemies" to the research process, like the example of my colleague earlier, are thereby included and may become critical friends who ultimately support the research. It has been the role of the student researchers to explain the research that they are undertaking and their role within it to their parents. This is part of their emerging responsibility as young researchers.

In addition, the students need to consider how they were evolving as ethical researchers themselves with regards their research participants. Kellett states:

"Child researchers must themselves conform to rigorous ethical standards when undertaking their own research… There are still many unresolved ethical issues relating to children as active researchers. Who takes ethical responsibility for a child-led study? The child? The supporting adult? An independent body? And should the ethical standards be designed and policed by adults or by children? Would children regard adult policing as interference or a necessary framework in which to operate?" (Kellett, 2007, pp.20-21)

As part of the emerging living educational standards of judgment considered by the research group, ethical considerations have formed a large part of the discussion within the group. Very early on, in their initial small-scale enquiry, the student researchers decided that filming lessons should be conducted from the rear of the classroom, therefore allowing their peers to act more naturally and not be limited by the camera within the room. When filming lessons in their whole-school enquiry, they first sought permission of the teacher and pupils involved: explaining to them how the material was to be stored and then used in the research. In addition, when setting up their website to share their research results, they sought permission to include the video clips that included teachers with whom they had worked. This showed that through dialogue, they hoped to reach a shared understanding with the research participants about how their involvement and comments were to be recorded and subsequently shared.

Another agreement was the anonymous use of comments that they wished to include from interviews, questionnaires and learning diaries. They believed that referring to comments by year group (i.e. Student 10A) rather than by name was a less intimidating process for their peers. Before moving to share the comments that they wished to include via their webspace, they also performed a validation exercise with the student-learning forum at the school. In this they asked a wider range of pupils to substantiate or discuss the comments already gathered by the researchers. Of this process, the third-generation researchers commented:

"This was something I really enjoyed-listening to a wider range of students discussing the findings we already had. Time flew by, and I felt we had only just scratched the surface. We (the researchers) were really interested by what they (the forum participants) were saying, and this really helped us to enjoy being researchers again." (during a meeting in June 2006)

Kellett (2007) asks above who takes ethical responsibility for a child-led study, and whether this should be the children themselves, a supporting adult or an independent body. In this enquiry however, ethical issues have been agreed *between* the participating bodies in the research, and therefore individuals involved have shared ownership of the agreed ethical standards by which the group lives. The H.E. Researcher and the first-generation researchers have challenged the group to consider an ethical way of being from the earliest opportunity. The students have responded to this debate in an inclusional way. These standards are not upheld by solely one group within the research process; they are instead a consideration of all involved.

6.5 Learning with the school

Throughout the four years of the student-led enquiry at my school, I have combined my own role to act as both a research mentor and advocate for student-led enquiry. I look to further provide space for the group, alongside seeking opportunities for their voice to be further recognised. My role as mentor to the group has diminished as established generations of the student researchers have been able to take on this role. The first and second generation are now confident to mentor the third and forth and to find their own direction for enquiry. The established student researchers are much more capable of providing appropriate mentoring as their view from the *inside, looking out* (Rayner, 2005b) is invaluable.

I consider myself at this time to be what Meyerson and Scully (1995) describe as a "*tempered radical*". I am a change agent within this forum, much as my husband has been in his school with regards the creation of a teacher-research group. I wanted to change the balance of relationship between student and teacher, and I knew that I needed the widened support of the Leadership Team (outside of that already gained with the Headteacher and Deputy) within the school to be able to do this. I was seeking change in a creative way. I was drawing upon the motivation that the group's work was giving me, drawing upon the shared values with the students themselves to show how this change could be beneficial to the school:

"*Tempered radicals-people who work within the mainstream organizations and professions and also want to transform them...These people seek moderation, they have "become tougher" by being alternatively "heated up" and "cooled down" and they are angered by incongruities in values and perceived lack of social justice.*" (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p.586)

The differences in the two cultures at my previous and current school are marked. At my previous school a large number of students were disengaged in both their academic work and the wider school community, displaying characteristics that would define them as "*passive negative*" in Ruddock and Flutter's (2004) definition. I felt that this was due to the fact that there was no sense of purpose to them becoming actively involved in the school's life. No space existed in which purposeful dialogue between teacher and student could emerge:

"On the other hand, the passivity displayed by students, and all its consequences, is the manifestation of an attitude which reveals the effect of the absence of the three conditions already mentioned: what can I do, how does it affect me, and what for? This attitude, furthermore, is the reflection of something deeper: the inability of the model of instrumental rationality to direct and give meaning to the schooling of many people in an extraordinarily important stage of their lives." (Rué, 2006, p.126)

Inviting students to work alongside practitioner-researchers proved to be a very positive experience that brought them into the school community as active participants. This provided the space and feeling of being valued that students needed to become more active participants in the school. The Deputy Headteacher at Westwood St. Thomas stated the following at the time:

"I believe giving students within the school a voice to express their thoughts on issues connected with learning and also with the wider school community could allow this school to build a positive ethos with more students within the school. This type of work could be seen as a way forward for the school." (Mark Potts, Deputy Heateacher, comments made during a practitioner-researcher meeting, November 2003)

Within my current school, my immediate concern when setting up the student-researcher group, was that active student involvement was not part of the inherent culture of the school. There was a real shift between the expectation of the student role at Westwood St. Thomas, where I felt that students were given more opportunity to voice their opinions and engage with staff through the practitioner-researcher group. The "*Bishop's boy*", where a culture of "*teacher knows best*" prevailed heavily in the light of high academic expectations, was however prevalent at my current school. The boys at Bishop's could be defined as "*passive positive*" [19], in that they undertake many additional responsibilities within the school life[20], yet they are not asked to enter into a debate on teaching and learning. This view of acceptance and conforming by the boys was seen as a positive side of the school ethos, which had the results of public examinations to support this. When I first arrived at the school, I was struck by the willingness of the students to help a visitor to the school, by the ordered nature of the students going to and from lessons and by the fact that students could remain largely unsupervised in classrooms at breaktimes without significant incident. Discipline by teachers was rarely challenged. This is an objective view that I developed when first joining the school.

It was easy to understand why stakeholders within the school would be reluctant to make changes to the students' role within the school, and how any attempt to involve them as active participants and enquirers would be met with a high level of resistance from some colleagues and stakeholders alike:

"*There are still some dinosaurs here. Not as many as before, but we still need to consider their viewpoint.*" (comment by the Headteacher in January 2008)

[19] Ruddock and Flutter (2004) identified four categories of students within schools, with regards their attitude and motivation to participate within their school. The four types were: active positive, active negative, passive positive and passive negative

[20] This is highlighted through examples such as the sixth-form prefect system, the Young Enterprise group and the mentoring of younger students by older boys.

However, I persisted with the view that:

"*Education is not something that should be done to you, but something that you should be a part of.*" (Harding, 2001, p.56)

I needed another viewpoint to compare to my own of the role of the students at the school. Shortly after his arrival in my current school's sixth-form, I asked Alex (1) to comment upon the differences, to which he responded:

"*I believe there are two extremes in the two schools concerning student-teacher relationships. These extremes being, i) a very relaxed, very friendly environment which will ultimately lead to a negligence of academic 'push' by teachers, and ii) an environment where there is no friendship with students coming from teachers, but only an emotionless, old fashioned, text-book style of teaching."*

Alex continues:

"I believe however that a line can be drawn between these two extremes, where there is an equal mix of friendship, seriousness and in-depth learning, and also importantly a large amount of feedback between students and teachers on their views on each others' successes/weaknesses in practice. This would seem to be the position that student researchers would promote." (e-mail received, September 2004)

When I first asked Shane and Alex (1) to talk about their views on the student role within the two schools, they talked about trust as an important factor in determining teacher-student relationships. They felt that at Westwood St. Thomas they could not trust some of the teaching and learning that was taking place. This led them to want to become more involved in supporting teachers in their research, as they hoped that this would help improve aspects of the school's work.

Their academic experiences at Bishop Wordsworth's School however have led to them not feeling *a need* to become involved. They trusted the classroom practitioners in their delivery of the syllabus and in supporting them to achieve the high academic standards they needed to continue onto their chosen university course. Shane (1) commented:

"Perhaps Bishops students have never thought about evaluating or questioning teachers because they have never felt the need to." (conversation held in September 2004)

This passive yet positive acceptance by students was highlighted when Alex commented:

"*At the moment there is certainly no structure or framework through which students can develop their classroom researching skills, and help teachers improve. In fact mentioning the idea to some of my peers has lead to mostly confused and shocked faces. They don't see a need for it.*" (conversation held in September 2004)

Therefore, the change in school culture that was needed to accept student-led research as a positive contribution to the school, needed to be recognised by students as well as teachers.

I asked Shane and Alex (1) if this perception of trust between teacher and student was one that they considered before entering the school, or if it was an area that they had considered since being in the sixth-form. They responded by saying that it was both; the reputation of the school within the community was trusted in meeting academic expectations and the reality they experienced confirmed this. This therefore led me to question how I would bring about a culture of participating student researchers into the school that would be valued by colleagues. It needed to avoid eroding the trust which the Bishop's students have for the school: changing them from "*passive positive*" participants in the school to "*active positive*" participants (Ruddock and Flutter 2004) and "*change agents*" (Rué, 2006):

"For someone to become an agent, that is, to be 'the person to act and work for change whose progress can be evaluated according to his/her own aims and values', according to Sen (1999, p. 19), several requirements must be met. The sense of agency, in the first place. That is to say, the sense that one's actions have a meaning, an effect, within the context of the action. Secondly, to be an agent also assumes—to whatever degree—moral responsibility for one's actions. What I do, somehow, has an effect on me. Thirdly, it requires a certain degree of control over one's own agenda, to know what I intend to do and why, that is, be capable of evaluating progress achieved in the light of one's own aims and objectives"
(Rué, 2006, p.126)

For me, the key to this sense of agency lies in the actions undertaken having a meaning and a sense of purpose. The students have acted as agents with meaning and purpose through student-led enquiry. Through the development of their research ethics (discussed in Chapter 6) they are undertaking moral responsibility for their actions.

The students first needed to prove however that they were capable of undertaking this moral responsibility through enquiry. I felt therefore that showing the impact and worth of student-led research by example was crucial. This facilitated the move towards students becoming change agents. Many colleagues were fearful of a breakdown of trust that would lead to lower standards of respect between teachers and students. They were also fearful that consulting students would bring about a wave of criticism directed at their classroom pedagogy. The Senior Tutor summed up this fear in an impassioned statement:

"There is a general fear here that if we let the boys near anything...they will mess it up. Why aren't we asking them more? They can often prove to be insightful, and in some cases appear to know a lot more than we think they know." (comments made in November 2004)

I asked him to comment further on this statement. He in turn informed me that he had previously engaged in practitioner-research and saw the access to the students' reflections on learning as paramount to the development of the work in the school.

He commented:

"Most boys here wouldn't say boo to a goose...They would be terrified of saying anything too negative against us for fear of retribution. We should be embracing what they can offer us, instead of stifling their voice." (conversation, November 2004)

It is significant to mention at this point, that the Senior Tutor is responsible for the running of the School Council and also the tutor group forums, in which students have an opportunity to express their thoughts and to bring forward issues that they would like to work upon. This work however extended more to the non-academic involvement of students in the school life. There was no voice within this existing forum for academic work and development, asking questions of the nature: "*How we*

can improve the quality of teaching and learning opportunities?" There was a belief amongst my colleagues that there was no need to discuss these aspects, for "*all is well*" and the school's academic work was "*work well done*" (Whitehead, 2003). If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

"*Treating students-as-researchers in their own schools and classrooms surpasses the boundaries of formal Councils which may simply be a way of containing voice within parameters of time, place and representative advocacy.*"
(Macbeath et al., 2001, p.79)

Alderson (2000), in her paper on students' views on school councils, recognizes the two-way dynamic that needs to exist in an effective council. She talks of giving the students the right to express their views on matters concerning them through bodies such as school councils, yet also highlights the responsibilities that accompany this right. I argue that only if students can consider and live out agreed moral and ethical values created through school councils and similarly through student-led research, can the parameters of representative advocacy be extended and altered:

"Rights are often contrasted with responsibilities. Yet civil rights are mainly about taking on more personal and shared responsibility and decision making, being trusted, and helping one another, as shown in the many practical issues raised in the survey. All the groups talked about wanting to be heard more and respected, not so much to make demands as to contribute ideas and helpful suggestions."
(Alderson, 2000, p.131)

My own poorly-judged exercise to ask for feedback from sixth-form students within the Department[21] had taught me that I needed to exercise caution in approaching the work of students-as-researchers within the school. Cuninghame et al's research highlighted this concern:

"Adults who control research knowledge are in a powerful position to censor or selectively disseminate findings. For example, in one school some staff were unhappy with student researchers' research findings, which critiqued teacher student

[21] Refer to Chapter 3 in which I consider my first year in post. Part of this year was spent asking sixth-form students within my Department about their views on lessons, without first creating the acknowledged trust between teacher and student to do this.

communication, and as a result they refused to display the posters that summarised the research." (Cuninghame et al., 1999, p.177)

As I sat in the leadership meeting in January 2006, in which I was acting as teacher-advocate for intergenerational student-led research, the school's inherent culture with regards student participation was at the forefront of my mind. *Je voulais être ailleurs.* I wished to promote the "*what's in it for us as a school*" aspect of students working as researchers and referred to two examples illustrated by Naylor and Worrall (2004) that I felt highlighted this:

"Over a period of 2 years at an LEA all-girls 11-19 comprehensive school in London, a "students-as-researchers" initiative was developed to enable young people to investigate, analyse and present student perspectives on learning and school life. An academic gave 150 students from Years 8-12 three days research training; identifying research questions, research ethics and methods and the analysis of data and the presentation of findings This were supported by a teacher-researcher. The groups' write-ups of the projects and outcomes were presented to the school council, a selection of staff and governors and also at two education conferences.

The main question was "How does being a student researcher affect learning?" The majority of students experienced their election and training to be positive and were overwhelmingly in favour of giving their peers the opportunity to undertake research, although they identified and expressed concerns over methods and criteria for selection, suggesting that students should be volunteers. 90 percent of respondents saw benefits from the programme in terms of their <u>academic</u> and social skills." (my own notes for the meeting adapted from Naylor and Worrall, 2004, p.7)

"In Bedfordshire, the "students-as-researchers" project is now entering its fourth year, involving students in all upper schools within the County. An original student research project asked whether students could be part of exploring teacher trainee placements and what benefits would arise from this. Students have helped develop a process of working closely with trainees and their mentors to provide feedback on lessons. Training has been provided to deal with sensitivity and boundaries, but all those involved feel that they have benefited greatly. Different schools now operate different programmes, some focussing on Newly Qualified Teachers, some on trainees and others open to all staff interested in developing new ways of working with students, in

order to develop and gain feedback from classroom practice" (adapted from Naylor and Worrall, 2004, p.8)

After I had presented my case for widening the support of student-led research, one colleague asked two valuable questions in terms of the value of the project as a whole:

"*If we are asking students about their knowledge as learners, and asking them to evaluate which of these experiences is best in their opinion...are we not then excluding potential strategies that have not been tried out in the school? We cannot ask them to judge what they have not experienced.*" (Assistant Headteacher in a Leadership Team meeting, November 2004)

*"What is the value gained in students researching aspects of their learning in terms of a measurable value?"(*Assistant Headteacher in a Leadership Team meeting, November 2004)

I found myself considering the African idea of "Ubuntu" as introduced to me by my tutor Jack Whitehead. I was essentially being asked "*What's in it for us?"* and "*Is this a gain that we can measure and turn into veritable evidence?"* The researchers were being asked to become a vehicle for school improvement, one that could be quantified and measured. There was little sense of humanity and recognition of the other, yet my colleague was responding perhaps necessarily to the political drive for contextual value-added[22]. The students wanted to achieve improvement as a result of their research. They saw their enquiry as supporting the other in their community, recognising that teachers have limited time to research into best practice, and that this could be role taken up by students.

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22 The Department for Children, Families and Schools define KS2-KS4 Contextual Value Added (CVA) in the following way:

"*CVA is a measure of the progress made by students from their starting point (prior attainment in Key Stage 2 tests) to their GCSE results, taking into account a number of factors that are outside the schools control such as movement between schools and ability range in the school.*

The expected CVA of a school is 1000 – this assumes the progress of each child is in line with national progress.

Figures higher than 1000 indicates that students made more progress than that expected." (retrieved from www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/performance on10.03.05)

"Teachers haven't got the time to do this, and perhaps aren't best placed to do so, as the view of good learning in the classroom is best recognized by the students within it. If we can, through our research, support teachers through showing them how we learn best, then we can share this with them without asking acres of their time. If our lessons improve as a result then surely we've answered "what's this all for?"" (Shane (1), in a meeting, March 2006)

"The principal of caring for each others' well-being… and a spirit of mutual support …. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the individual's humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being."(Tutu, 1996, p.1)

The students' enquiry was therefore also a way of promoting a more loving way of being between teachers and students within the school, in which the contribution that the other could make is recognised. These intelligent and aware young people were asking the teachers within the school to recognise them as such:

"A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed." (Tutu, 1996, p.1)

The students are asking that teachers affirm them as equal members of the school society. They ask that they do not feel threatened by the research being undertaken into learning, but feel excited by it instead. They ask that teachers treat them as individuals who can move the work of the school forward, whilst maintaining the traditional teacher-student role in the classroom. One of the student researchers' findings from their interviews with their peers was the importance of a sense of security and knowing the boundaries within the classroom.

I believe that the student researchers, through their evolving awareness of how to work with their school, are providing evidence for their disposition to learn. Referring to Perkins, Jay & Tishman's (2003) consideration of a "*dispositional theory of*

thinking" the students are displaying the key dispositions needed for good thinking and the development of, in this case, their work as enquirers:

"Most views of good thinking and its development hold that good thinking depends on general and specific abilities. We propose a theory of good thinking based on the concept of dispositions. Dispositions are often considered to be a matter of motivation. However, we define an expanded concept called "triadic dispositions," which emphasizes (1) inclinations, which may reflect motivation, habit, policy, or other factors, (2) sensitivity to occasion, and (3) abilities themselves."(Perkins et al, 2003, p.2)

In the first of these concepts, the researchers have the motivation to enquire and to sustain this enquiry through an intergenerational approach. In the second, they have needed to be sensitive to the school environment in which they propose to research; working creatively with it. Thirdly I believe their work shows ability for research and research mentoring. This is evident in their methodology, research ethics and a common language emerging between those who enquire.

What Perkin et al.'s definition does not recognize is the importance of the environment itself in allowing these dispositions to develop. Without the opportunity to enquire and the space to do so, the students would not have been able to develop their potential as researchers.

In this way, Day (2004) considers the need for passionate learning communities to:

"...understand the classroom from the students' perspectives, focusing in the process of teaching upon building self-esteem through the knowledge and understanding of the student." (Day, 2004, p.141)

In stating this, Day supports the inclusion of students as an integral part of a learning community which can build self-esteem. He also defines the need for teachers to sustain their vocational passion:

"...*active learners by their own sense of moral purpose to do the best they can under all circumstances, and by the sense of common purposes shared with colleagues.*"(Day, 2004, p.177)

"I am not asking for every lesson to be seen as "fun", this is unrealistic, and teachers don't have the time to plan these sorts of lessons all the time. Sometimes, learning needs to be done in a "dull" way, and as this still helps us to pass our exams, we need to respect this" (comments by a Year 8 student during a student-forum on learning 12.12.2006)

Through inviting students to work with the school community and supporting teachers in learning about it, students become aware of the pressures and courage of the teachers in their school. They build empathy towards teachers whilst working with them through research. Indeed the very title of Day's book "*A passion for teaching*" (2004) could equally be entitled "*A passion for learning*" as teachers like myself look for the reward of personal learning to build our self-esteem as classroom practitioners.

Conclusion to this Chapter

This Chapter has sought to clarify the process of student-led enquiry developing within the social formation of my current school over the past four years. I have looked to explain how an intergenerational approach has emerged through this time, and how this can lead to sustainable student-led enquiry. I have also explained how, through this shared enquiry, the student researchers have developed living methodology that has responded to the enquiry and a loving way of working together in our shared pursuit of knowledge. This is shown in the development of their research ethics that look to recognise the other.

I talk of the importance of the shared living values between my husband and I in our educational lives. These values I believe to be reflected and lived out in my shared life with the student researchers. I bring the values from the personal into the professional, yet I also take the pleasure from the professional into the personal. To deny the pleasure I gain from the professional would be to deny my own pleasure in learning alongside others.

Lohr (2006) talks of "*love at work*". Love I see as a pursuit of knowledge undertaken with others, as defined by Cho (2005). *Work* is defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1995) as a:

"Physical or mental effort or activity directed toward the production or accomplishment of something." (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1995, p.816)

This definition leads to a merging of the boundaries between love and work, as they both become a pursuit and a productive activity. *Love* brings motivation to this enquiry, whilst *work* allows this energy a space in which to be lived out.

I refer in the abstract to the living standards of judgment shared between my husband and I. I state that these give me energy and motivation in my professional life. Having focussed in this Chapter on how this energy is lived out in the co-creation of intergenerational student-led research, I now return to explore the source of this motivation.