CAN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY GIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN VOICE AND

INFLUENCE OVER THEIR WRITING LESSONS?

An exploratory multiple case study of three classes of primary children and their teachers

using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to: facilitate pupil participation; create new learning

experiences in writing lessons; and help to evaluate the AI process in schools.

By

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Abstract

This multiple case study explored the potential for Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to give three classes of primary children voice and influence over decisions that affect their learning, and facilitated their involvement in evaluating AI. Using mixed methods, it examined changes in: children and teachers' beliefs about the value of pupil participation; curriculum activities for writing; and children's attitudes, progress and attainment. The children and teachers suggested improvements to the AI process so that it can be as inclusive as possible.

The results indicated that AI has the potential to shift the culture of pupil participation in the class, but needs time (and good timing) to be effective. Children devised innovative curriculum activities, often for real purposes, which were highly motivating and engaging. However, standardised measures of pupil attitudes and attainment provided no evidence of positive change. An important finding from the children was how challenging group work can be within AI, especially for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). This study makes an original contribution to the literature on pupil participation and AI, with the expectation that the AI process may now be developed further within schools.

This work is dedicated to my parents:

John and Iris Dickens

Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are people of today. They have a right to be taken seriously, and to be treated with tenderness and respect

(Korczak, 1929, cited in Woodhead, 2010, p.xx).

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Abbreviations

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BPS	British psychological Society
CMO	Context-Mechanism-Outcome
DECP	Department of Educational and Child Psychology
EP	Educational Psychologist
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PASS	Pupil Attitudes to Self and School
PE	Physical Education
RQ	Research Question
SATs	Standardised Assessment Tests
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SMT	Senior Management Team
TA	Teaching Assistant
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
USA	United States of America

Chapter 1: Overview

1.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of: the background to and significance of this research; the personal beliefs and experiences underpinning its integrity; the position of the research within theories of pedagogy and the nature of childhood; the research literature relating to the two key themes of pupil participation and Appreciative Inquiry (AI); the approaches and methodology selected; and a summary of the research focus and emergent research purposes. Finally, I will present an outline of the subsequent chapters.

1.2   The research background and significance

I have a longstanding interest in pupil participation (i.e. enabling all children to take an active part in decisions about their learning) and also in solution-focused or strengths-based approaches in schools. During the taught elements of the EdPsychD course at the University of Birmingham, I had the opportunity to study both of these in depth by completing assignments on personalised learning and student voice, children as researchers (arguably one of the highest levels of pupil participation) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a strengths-based organisational change model. I became curious to know whether AI might provide an effective structured process for teachers to use in order to engage *all* children within the class in decisions about their learning. At the same time I was leading a task group in my local authority (consisting of educational psychologists, school improvement advisers and specialist teachers) focusing on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes at Key Stage 2 using evidence-based practices. If AI has the potential to improve pupil participation in lessons, I wondered whether it might also have a positive impact on pupil progress and attainment.

My research has therefore been designed to explore the potential outcomes of using AI with primary children and their teachers, focusing on an area of the core curriculum, and starting to build an original evidence base for the effective use of AI in schools, with recommendations informed by the children themselves. Ultimately, it moves towards the empowerment of all children to have a voice in society by facilitating genuine collaboration between children and their teachers; thereby addressing power inequalities for children in schools.

1.3   Personal values and beliefs

> Educational research is always framed in terms of certain values. Yet researchers are often not explicit about what those values are, and their implications (Hammersley, 2006, p.279).

One of the reasons I became interested in pupil participation was because of its affinity to my understanding of child-centred education. This is not nostalgia (Hartley, 2009), but rather an opportunity to develop my interest in active learning, where the learner actively constructs new meaning from educational experiences rather than passively receiving information and ideas that have been processed for them by didactic teaching approaches and a fixed curriculum. Prior to becoming an educational psychologist, I worked as an advisory teacher for maths and explored ways in which teachers might develop a pedagogy that empowers pupils to be actively engaged in decisions about their learning (Lewis, 1996).

A belief in all children's ability to be active learners (Holt, 1989) and their participation rights (United Nations, 1989; Roose and Bouverne-De Bie, 2007), led to specialist educational psychology work on the child's voice.

> Ideally people work on research which, in all its dimensions, accords with their beliefs and values and which matches their philosophical position/s with regard to ontology, epistemology and human nature and agency. When this happens researchers can believe in what they are doing and maintain their integrity (Sikes, 2006, p.107).

It is recognised that 'the methods we choose to understand children's perspectives can have institutional or researcher bias' (Kanyal, 2014a, p.2) and that reflexivity is needed in order to identify and overcome the limitations of research that is based on personal and professional beliefs (Willig, 2008). Nevertheless, MacKay (2006, cited in Greig et al, 2013) recommends embracing a researcher's enthusiasm in projects that have an emancipatory intent.

1.4   Pedagogy and the nature of childhood

Theories about the nature of childhood and adult roles in teaching and caring for children are relevant to my research. Rather than seeing children as generally 'helpless', needing protection and direction, I believe that children should be seen as assertive, independent and often resilient. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989) is differentiated in terms of protection rights, provision rights and participation rights, with different countries emphasising different aspects of these rights according to their culture, circumstances and beliefs about the nature of childhood (Roose and Bouverne-De Bie, 2007; Kellett et al, 2004). A libertarian approach emphasising participation developed in the West 'in the wake of a broader emancipation movement. This movement viewed children as an oppressed group…The underlying assumption is that all people are equal, irrespective of their age' (Roose and Bouverne-De Bie, 2007, p.432) and that children are already human beings, not becoming human.

It is now much more common to find acknowledgement that childhood should be regarded as part of society and culture rather than a precursor to it; and that children should be seen as already social actors not beings in the process of becoming such (Prout and James, 1997, p.4, cited in Kellett et al, 2004, p.34).

This view of children as already competent social actors and active learners resonates with the 'ideal' of child-centred pedagogy described in The Plowden Report (DfES, 1967), which became much maligned and misunderstood over time (Kerry, 2001; Coe, 2010; Milstein, 2010). Child-led pedagogy is currently seen as an effective tool in the development of an innovative curriculum (Brundrett and Duncan, 2014) and evidence is accumulating to support pupil participation as part of an effective 'shared pedagogy' of teachers co-constructing the curriculum with children and facilitating children's 'independence, proactivity and critical inquiry' (Hargreaves, 2014, p.295). This creates significant challenges for many teachers as they renegotiate a shared power with children in their classrooms (Catling, 2014; Pascal and Bertram, 2009; Coppock, 2011; Stephen et al, 2010; Bragg, 2007). Perceptions and beliefs about the importance of pupil participation therefore form part of my research purposes.

Children's emancipation will only be achieved through wider structural change in power relationships between adults and children (Coppock, 2011, p.445).

1.5 Key research literature in relation to pupil participation

A growing awareness and acceptance of the rights of children has paved the way for involving children in educational decisions that affect them (Todd, 2003), leading to a desire for children to have genuine influence (Lundy, 2007). One way to facilitate this has been to explore the idea of children becoming actively involved in educational research.

Kellett (2010) and Bucknall (2012) have both worked extensively in the field of children as researchers at the Open University Children's Research Centre devising programmes to teach research methodology to children. They both advocate the role of adults in children's research as children's 'research assistants'. Whilst this empowers children to take an active role in research, it is often difficult for teachers to find space for this work within the curriculum (Bucknall, 2012) and ultimately, in my view, may limit the effect it has upon pedagogy, even though it is possible for children to research aspects of the curriculum independently (Kellett, 2009). A shared AI at the class level is arguably more likely to facilitate deep curriculum and pedagogical changes to participation within the classroom by necessarily bringing adults and children together to *co-research* and improve the very nature of their teaching and learning practices.

McLaughlin (2006) provides important cautionary notes about how well the facilitation of students as co-researchers needs to be done in order for the work to be effective: 'There is a justifiable concern that this type of research, if undertaken poorly, is at best tokenistic and at worst harmful to young service users' (p.1408).

One potential difficulty is that the whole class involvement of children in research and development with their teacher does not necessarily facilitate their full inclusion. Children should not be treated as a homogenous group in research (Todd, 2012). Lomax (2012) suggests that 'children may deliberately or inadvertently exclude or diminish the participation of other children' and that 'some children's contributions are more highly valued by their peers than others' (p.113). Thus in my research design, the children themselves were invited

to reflect upon and suggest adaptations to the AI process in order to ensure it is as inclusive as possible.

I believe that AI has the potential to involve children in co-researching and developing aspects of the curriculum, without the necessity of teaching research methods. In this study, AI was able to structure and facilitate the children's systematic investigation into times when they were most inspired by their learning, reaching conclusions about the type of activity that they find most motivating and engaging. So in this sense, they were researchers into their own learning experiences. The children's critical evaluation of their experiences of the AI process discovered not only the strengths of the process from their perspective but also ways in which the AI process might be improved for other children in future. So in this sense too, children were arguably 'researchers'. Whilst they were not involved in initiating their own individual or small group research projects into various subjects of their own choosing, as in Kellett (2010) and Bucknall (2012)'s work, they were instead actively involved in co-researching, developing and evaluating their learning experiences with their teacher as a whole class.

1.6   Key research literature in relation to AI

AI was developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva in 1987 (Ludema and Fry, 2008) but has only recently been applied within educational studies relating to pedagogy and student involvement. Filleul and Rowland (2006) reported one of the first educationally based AIs, which aimed to enhance learning experiences in a Vancouver School District over a year. Bushe (2010c) reported a comparative case study of eight AIs involving twenty-one schools all within the same urban school district in Canada, discovering that the level of change in

each of the school sites was related to how *generative* the inquiries were but not to ratings of *positive affect*, which was surprising considering that AI is frequently characterised by its positivity (Bushe, 2010b). However, only about 20% of the AI participants were student representatives in this study, so it was not fully inclusive of all children and young people. Further analysis of the AIs described by Filleul and Rowland (2006) and Bushe (2010c) reveal that these authors are writing about the *same* AI intervention, confirmed in private correspondence (Bushe, 2015).

Bushe and Kassam (2005) conducted a meta-case analysis of twenty AI cases, examining evidence of transformational change, defined primarily by changes to the culture of the organisation. My own pilot study of using AI with a whole class of primary school children (Davies and Lewis, 2013) began to explore the potential of AI to transform pedagogy in a UK classroom. Although the AI facilitated some highly creative outcomes, the class teacher *already* believed in a child-led pedagogy, so it was not possible to claim 'transformational change' in terms of the culture of participation in the classroom.

There is very little else in the literature that describes student involvement in an authentic AI focusing on learning experiences. Other school-based studies claiming to use AI have either not followed the full AI process or have not facilitated the involvement of children in the change process.

Bushe (2010a) claims that contextual variables and the effectiveness of facilitation have not been examined in published AI studies. Bushe (2011) calls for exploratory studies to

investigate the 'moderators and contingencies that influence AI outcomes' (p.21). My research was therefore positioned as an exploratory study that sought to find out whether AI could be a useful approach to facilitate pupil participation and develop a shared pedagogy between teachers and pupils within the primary school core curriculum. By involving three different classes in two schools, contextual factors and teacher beliefs about the importance of pupil participation could be explored.

1.7 Approaches and methodology

My ontological belief is that the culture of participation within the classroom is real, although inevitably interpreted in varying ways by different people, and therefore could be appropriately explored using constructivist epistemology and a mixture of methods. This critical realist approach is primarily located within an interpretative paradigm aligned with critical theory (i.e. an aspect of critical educational research), seeking emancipation by providing all children with genuine *influence* to improve their learning experiences and potentially shift the culture of participation and the balance of power within the classroom.

> By emphasizing the emancipatory aspirations of critical theorists, with a deep appreciation for the complexities to be encountered in the processes of social investigations such as appreciative inquiry, embedded influences such as power may be highlighted, better understood, and where desired, transformed to serve the emancipatory aspirations of participants (Grant and Humphries, 2006, p.414).

My chosen research design is an exploratory case study, enabling an in-depth, holistic investigation of AI in three specific contexts and gathering multiple sources of evidence using mixed-methods (i.e. embracing both qualitative and quantitative data) that sought to explain,

describe, illustrate and/or enlighten theoretical propositions derived from the literature (Yin, 2009).

1.8 The research focus and emergent research purposes

Using AI as an organisational change process in primary classrooms is new and innovative. By applying the AI process at a whole class level, it was expected that each of three classes would create curriculum ideas and approaches based on their best experiences of learning in the past, giving children voice and influence over the activities that form part of their writing lessons. My research tested two key theoretical propositions derived from the literature: AI can improve the culture of pupil participation in the classroom; and pupil participation in turn is associated with improvements in pupil attitudes, progress and attainment. In keeping with the philosophy of AI, pupils' and teachers' reflections on the strengths or high points of using AI were explored. Both AI and pupil participation research literature calls for all children to be equally included. Children's own ideas for improvements to the AI process formed part of the study so that the future use of AI in schools could be as inclusive and effective as possible. The purposes of my research, therefore, related to an interest in exploring:

1. changes to the culture of pupil participation in the classroom associated with AI;

2. the effect of an AI on the curriculum, pedagogy and pupils' attitudes and attainment;

3. the high points or strengths of using AI with a whole class; and

4. children's and teachers' views about how to improve the AI process.

1.9   Outline of the chapters

A critical review of the relevant literature is presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 2 examines the literature relating to child-led pedagogy within the primary curriculum. Chapter 3 explores the literature relating to pupil participation, with particular reference to the idea of children and teachers as co-researchers. Chapter 4 explores the literature relating to AI as a model of organisational change that *may* have the potential to transform the culture of participation in schools. My research brings these ideas together by exploring how AI might be used and developed in schools to enable children to be actively involved in decisions relating to the nature of learning within their writing lessons.

Chapter 5 begins with my four research questions (derived from consideration of the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 to 4), and examines: the nature of educational research; the rationale for my methodology; and my choice of an exploratory multiple case study design. Chapter 6 provides a critical discussion of my chosen methods of data collection and analysis, with an account of their potential trustworthiness. Chapter 7 focuses on ethical and practical considerations, including a critical account of: the sample; data collection and analysis; and research chronology and procedure.

Chapters 8 to 11 present, summarise, and discuss critically the findings associated with each of the four research questions in turn, focusing on themes derived from the teacher interviews and the theoretical propositions from the literature.

Chapter 12 initially provides: an overview of the key findings of the study in relation to theory; recommendations for the future use of AI in primary schools; and a discussion of the dissemination of the results. The overall trustworthiness of the findings is then critically discussed in relation to the research design and methodology, focusing on: the multiple case study design; the data collection tools chosen; methods of data analysis; and epistemological and personal reflexivity. I conclude by reflecting critically on using AI with children and the original contribution this study makes to their empowerment in primary schools.

Chapter 2: Pedagogy and the Primary Curriculum

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines recent changes to the primary school curriculum with associated influences on pedagogy. Evidence from the literature for an effective pedagogy in terms of outcomes for children is examined in general terms and with a specific focus upon writing, as this was the area of the curriculum chosen by both of the schools in the study. It is suggested that the use of AI at the whole class level offers a structure to enable all of the children in a class to become actively involved in creating and making decisions about writing activities as an exemplification of child-centred learning. The challenges to teachers of moving towards an increasingly child-led pedagogy are explored, leading to a suggested need for a culture of learning at the level of the whole school.

2.2 Changes to the primary curriculum and associated shifts in pedagogy

Throughout the past half-century, primary school pedagogy in England has shifted backwards and forwards along a continuum between child-led and teacher-led approaches. The first significant shift towards child-initiated learning occurred following the publication of The Plowden Report (DfES, 1967), which proposed a child-centred, cross-curricular 'ideal' pedagogy that many teachers found difficult to accept and understand, leading to poor imitations of the new 'progressive' teaching style and ultimately to decades of largely undeserved vilification (Kerry, 2001; Coe, 2010).

The National Curriculum was introduced by the UK Conservative Government as part of the Education Reform Act (Her Majesty's Government, 1988) to contribute to a standardised 'entitlement' for children, and moved primary education towards a stronger teacher-led curriculum and pedagogy that was widely criticised for its rigid subject-structure (Boyle and Bragg, 2008). The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were then introduced in 1998 as part of the UK Labour Government's target-setting culture in education, which further inhibited attempts to provide more flexible, child-led, cross-curricular learning experiences for children.

However, personalised learning was announced by the UK Labour Government in 2004 (DfES, 2004a) within the personalisation of public services, and was almost entirely focused on the active personal engagement of the learner within the learning process (Leadbeater, 2005), despite claiming that it was *not* a return to a child-centred pedagogy.

> Personalising learning…is used metaphorically, pointing to the need for learners to be much more profoundly engaged in the process of learning…The point is to engage them far more in designing, producing and creating the learning they seek… The aim is to turn passive recipients into active participants (Leadbeater, 2005, p.3-5).

Effective personalised learning invariably is characterised by very high levels of pupil engagement and participation (Sebba et al, 2007). Many researchers and commentators referred to student voice as the most powerful gateway of all for personalising learning (Hargreaves, 2004; Martin et al, 2006; Ruddock and Flutter, 2003; Vacher, 2007; Worrall and Noden, 2006; Jeffery, 2006; Caldwell, 2005). But studies showed that the concept of personalised learning was not always understood in schools (Sebba et al, 2007). There needed

to be a fundamental shift in pedagogy for many teachers, from directing to facilitating learning (Wedell, 2005).

> We might see a real shift in the role of teachers. Their key role would be less about standing at the front 'delivering', and more about working with students to facilitate their learning (Leadbeater, 2004, p.18).

Tutt (2006) described the tensions at the time between the positive effects on children of complementary initiatives relating to *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2004b), personalised learning, inclusion and collaboration, and the negative effects caused by the increased focus on testing and league tables, which put schools in competition instead of collaboration with each other.

> How do we return to the innovation and creativity of the 1960s and 1970s, yet avoid unacceptable inconsistencies in professional competence and quality? How do we preserve and promote the commitment to high standards that marked the reforms in the 1980s, while evading the dead hand of standardization? How can we retain the rightful sense of urgency about immediate improvement of the 1990s without perpetuating target-driven tyranny? (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009, p.49).

The Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (Rose, 2009) then recommended that excessive prescription within subjects should be replaced by broader and more flexible cross-curricular 'areas of learning', which would be conducive to personalised learning. Coe (2010) noted that this shift was already being attacked as a potential return to the child-centred pedagogy of the sixties and warned that this time teachers must guard against a lack of attention to progression in learning and be 'confident and assured in their new and more

demanding role. This will not be easy after 20 years of being cast as technicians who are required to deliver pre-packaged instruction' (Coe, 2010, p.401).

Unfortunately, the national push for personalised learning in schools ended when the UK Government changed in 2010. Over the past five years, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat UK Coalition Government tried to shift the focus away from child-centred approaches (Fisher, 2014), although a creative and innovative curriculum was still promoted (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010). Indeed, the new National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) provides merely an 'outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum' (DfE, 2013, p.6). Even the Children and Families Act (Her Majesty's Government, 2014) and the associated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) focus strongly on children's participation.

Although the political rhetoric is so often focused on 'standards' and testing, national educational policy and research evidence continues to promote pupil participation. For example, Brundrett and Duncan (2014) conducted a research project investigating how curriculum innovation can be led successfully in schools, finding that distributed forms of leadership are required within an ethos of empowerment for teachers to experiment. A major conclusion from their research was that 'children were an essential part of the process with respect to decision-making and involvement in the early stages of innovation. Heads and school leaders were united in their view that to fail to canvas the opinion of children and to listen seriously to what they were saying would be missing an important opportunity and

might risk the success of the innovation project' (p.7). A major criticism of this research is, in my view, that no children were consulted at all.

> For effective curriculum change to take place, the whole staff need to be involved in a shared activity that also recognises from the outset that pupil voice must be respected and encouraged so that children share in the success that leads from managed change in the most vital area of a schools activity, that of teaching and learning (Brundrett and Duncan, 2014, p.9).

2.3 Evidence for effective pedagogy

James and Pollard (2011) specify ten principles for effective pedagogy, the sixth of which promotes the active engagement of the learner, affirming 'the importance of developing active engagement, positive learning dispositions, self-confidence and learning awareness' (p.299). Husbands and Pearce (2012) also suggest effective pedagogy gives serious consideration to pupil voice, although Coe et al (2014) do not consider that the evidence from the studies cited in support of this claim are robust enough to link it causally to improvements in pupil outcomes. However, they do suggest that pupil voice may indeed be an element of effective pedagogy; it just does not yet have the strength of evidence to support it.

Pupil voice in pedagogy implies a level of child autonomy: their 'independence, proactivity and critical inquiry in the classroom – which by their nature centre around the individual's capacity for self-directed learning and meta-learning in their lives' (Hargreaves, 2014, p.295). Hargreaves (2014) links this to evidence of the power of effective teacher feedback in promoting children's autonomy. The evidence was collected through video-taping lessons and interviewing several Year 5 children and their teacher. Feedback that encouraged children to

think of different ways of arriving at answers and to share ideas and mistakes with peers helped to develop children's capacity for autonomous learning, although interestingly, the pupils hinted that ''low attainers' received different – less autonomy-promoting – feedback compared to other groups' (p.308).

Sharing ideas and mistakes with peers requires collaboration and group work. There is strong evidence to support inclusive, mixed-ability, collaborative learning in lessons (Higgins et al, 2013). Collaboration between peers as well as collaboration between children and their teacher has a positive effect on motivation and well-being (Thoonen et al, 2011; Greig et al, 2014), although group work can be challenging for pupils to manage effectively so that all children are actively learning whilst at the same time taking other children's perspectives into account within the group (Kershner et al, 2014; Lomax, 2012). This is particularly true for vulnerable children and those with SEND (Baines et al, 2014; Feinstein et al, 2010), who, some suggest might respond better to traditional, more structured and teacher-led practices (Thoonen et al, 2011).

In order for collaborative group work to be successful, Baines et al (2014) suggest that 'teachers must get used to having less control over the class generally and over what children learn. Similarly, children need training and guidance in developing the skills that can help them engage in constructive and positive interactions' (p.12). Davison et al (2008) initiated a primary school project to promote cooperative learning, where children were taught skills of cooperation through a series of lessons and structured activities. Although positive adult and child perceptions of progress were reported, for example 'children sought to actively help

each other with their work' and 'relationships between pupils improved', there were no robust measures of pupil outcomes.

Both the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (Rose, 2009) and the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2009) conclude that 'active, interactive and collaborative learning experiences would be of benefit beyond the preschool years' (Stephen et al, 2010, p. 315). Group interaction and adult intervention are necessary for consolidating learning and extending thinking, which has been demonstrated repeatedly through social constructivist research (Burton, 2007, p.15).

> Embracing interaction in the true meaning of the word requires a shift of emphasis from professionals eliciting the pupils' actions, decisions and thoughts to using the pupils' actions, decisions and thoughts as a basis for shared actions (May, 2005, p.32).

Siraj-Blatchford et al (2010) promote group interaction and adult intervention by focusing on the effectiveness of dialogic teaching, where both the teacher and the children learn from each other through discussion in literacy lessons (but only in a learning environment where everyone feels safe enough to take risks). Oral language is heavily emphasised in the new National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) because of compelling evidence for a connection between oral development, cognitive development and educational attainment (DfE, 2011; Duncan, 2010). It is argued that speech and language capabilities are strong predictors of attainment and should be promoted more widely in *all* subjects.

The core curriculum in Finland (internationally renowned for its impressive record in literacy attainments) promotes purposeful learning, where children are seen as 'problem-solvers and active participants in their own learning' (Korkeamaki and Dreher, 2011, p.110).

> The core curriculum emphasizes that students should experience the joy of creating and that the content should come from a variety of sources such as the students' own experiences (Korkeamaki and Dreher, 2011, p.125).

Rantala and Maatta (2012) explore 'the joy of learning' in Finland, arguing that children need to participate in decision-making and children and teachers should *jointly* create the curriculum in order to experience the active joy of learning. The authors promote cooperative work methods, project work and drama pedagogy.

The role of affect within pedagogy is emphasised for both teachers and learners in the work of Le Cornu and Collins (2004), where learning is co-constructed by teachers and learners who both feel secure and valued enough to take risks. For teachers to have this confidence to reinvent their practice, Le Cornu and Collins argue that they need to be 'supported emotionally and intellectually' (p.32).

In summary, the evidence suggests that an effective pedagogy is likely to include: serious consideration of pupil voice; autonomy or self-directed learning; inclusive, mixed ability, collaborative work; dialogic teaching; working for real purposes; using children's own ideas; and working in an emotionally secure (even joyful) learning environment that enables

children and teachers to take risks. I believe that all of these features were present in varying degrees during the AIs in this study.

2.4 Evidence for an effective pedagogy for writing

The evidence for an effective pedagogy for writing rehearses many of the features of effective general pedagogy summarised above in Section 2.3. For example, Jesson and Cockle (2014) argue for a need to challenge accepted models of teaching writing in order to allow children to make more use of their own experiences and ideas. Kellett (2009) took this much further by training children to research 'aspects of literacy which interest them or concern them' (p.400). A strong theme emerged from the children's research that linked literacy attainments with confidence levels, particularly in writing. Children wanted to be able to practise writing privately or by helping younger children, in order to build their confidence before writing more publicly.

Writing for pleasure and for real purposes is promoted strongly in several Ofsted reports (Ofsted 2011b, 2012). Similarly, creative approaches and curriculum innovation have both been highlighted by Siraj-Blatchford et al (2010) and by a series of Ofsted reports as highly effective ways to inspire good writing and raise attainments (Ofsted 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011b, 2012).

Duncan (2010) welcomes the renewed emphasis on 'drama, role play, visual and the performing arts to help enrich and enliven children's spoken language' (p.353) as a mechanism to raise attainment in literacy, noting that several references are made in the

Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (Rose, 2009) to the importance of screen narratives such as film scripts. In order to support *all* children's inclusion in writing tasks, teachers need to focus on developing an inclusive pedagogy for writing and not think of inclusion simply in terms of place and philosophy (Moni et al, 2007).

Fisher (2011) explored over a hundred Year 6 children's feelings about their literacy lessons over an academic year, finding that most dissatisfied children concealed their feelings from their teacher 'behind a veil of compliance' (p.121). The children's dissatisfaction was often based upon a desire for greater autonomy in their learning and also for more drama (Fisher, 2014, p.399-400). Fisher suggests that some pupils may state they are 'satisfied' because they have not yet experienced 'shared power' between pupils and their teachers so do not know what they are missing. There is a need for honesty between pupils and their teachers, based within a classroom climate that promotes autonomy and respect for all (Fisher, 2014).

> Power dynamics in children's participation are much messier than is often explicated…power isn't something that children either possess or do not possess, but something that is fluid, dynamic, negotiated and contextual (Malone and Hartung, 2010, p.26).

In summary, there are strong arguments for a 'shared pedagogy', a balance of child-led and teacher-led writing activities that are jointly devised within a culture of trust and respect. Writing activities should be pleasurable, purposeful and make good use of art and drama to enrich the language and discussion involved. Inclusive, mixed-ability, collaborative group work is likely to facilitate this type of learning best, but the teacher will be required to help children develop their skills of cooperation as well as giving children effective feedback to

promote all children's autonomy as active learners. These ideas are entirely congruent with the AIs in this study, which focused on children and teachers jointly creating ideas for children's writing.

2.5 The teacher's role in moving towards a shared pedagogy

Catling (2014) makes a powerful argument for children's agency in schooling, drawing upon critical pedagogy and *strengthening* the teachers' role, 'not simply in terms of power or as a facilitator but because it demands greater responsibility when teachers and children learn together, mutually engaged and supportive, with shared respect for each other as people, regardless of age' (p.352). This argument of joint learning, or a shared pedagogy, resonates with my own learning as a teacher, educational psychologist and researcher. For an adult to act as a *co-researcher* with children is arguably a greater skill than teaching children research skills so that they can act independently (as in Kellett, 2005), for power has to be constantly negotiated and adjusted as the children's and teachers' ideas are jointly facilitated and brought into being.

> Children's voices, when given a key place in pedagogy, provide vitality, essence, focus and centrality for pedagogy…Critical pedagogy, put succinctly, is emancipatory, based, among other aspects, in seeking equality and justice, in question making and problem orientation, in critical thinking, in its challenge to dominant power and hegemony, in working democratically, in freedom to debate and argue and in providing voice for the learner (Catling, 2014, p.364).

Walsh et al (2011) describe a 'playful' culture of learning that is defined by the *interaction* between pupils and their teachers, rather than characteristic of either child- or adult-initiated activities. This playful pedagogy creates a relaxed culture for learning, where it is safe to

make mistakes and try things out. Flores (2008) shows that joint adult-youth playfulness and creativity can have a powerful effect on the culture of participation. Some teachers, however, found it harder than others to adopt a playful tone: 'these teachers often seemed reluctant to relinquish any control of the proceedings to the children: they had trouble resolving the tension between providing appropriate structure and allowing children sufficient autonomy' (p. 113).

> Embracing the child-centred, child-enabling and child-empowering values underlying participation is one thing. Putting these values into practice is another (Woodhead, 2010, p.xxi).

Pascal and Bertram (2009) found that 'the process of redistributing power was harder than…anticipated' (p.258). It is a complex task for adults to maintain a serious interest in understanding how learning looks from a child's perspective and to be able to 'work out when to 'step back' both figuratively and physically from the discussions, allowing the children's voices to become more dominant and their deliberations more independent at each stage' (Coppock, 2011, p.442). Adults can nevertheless find this rewarding and empowering, when they 'enter into a reflexive process, where they become co-learners and co-interpreters…, making it a mutual and worthwhile experience' (Kanyal, 2014a, p.3).

> It is not enough to work with children. Investment needs to be made with adults if children's participation is to be attainable as a goal (Lansdown, 2010, p.16).

Tammi (2013) questions how free teachers really are to try different pedagogies based on dialogue and negotiation, when there is currently such a strong emphasis on pupil progress and attainment. Kanyal and Gibbs (2014) have explored the tensions in children's

participation and the barriers that still remain, including: concerns about children's vulnerability; a prescriptive curriculum; differences between home and school cultures and practices; a common misconception that children's decisions must take precedence; and how to document and understand children's contributions. They suggest that it is 'equally important to give opportunities not only to children to participate and express their views but also to the adults who work in that education setting. This consistent approach towards staff and children helps to create a culture of participation' (Kanyal and Gibbs, 2014, p.54). Adults need to know that their own views are respected as part of this shared culture of participation, defined as 'the development of a culture where *all* participants respect and adopt participatory practices and develop more egalitarian ways of working. It focuses on the development of democratic relationships not only between an adult and child but also on a child-child and adult-adult basis' (Kanyal and Gibbs, 2014, p.62).

> The idea would be that the empowering relation between adult and child is symmetrical (Earnshaw, 2014, p.13).

2.6 A culture of learning at the whole school level

> Relational pedagogy supports the building of a supportive learning environment which is rich in trust, understanding and acceptance, and which enables children to express themselves freely (Kanyal, 2014a, p.3).

The social interaction in a classroom between pupils and their teacher and between the pupils themselves, based upon shared values and beliefs about everyone being a learner, creates a collaborative culture for learning that will be 'incompatible with school systems in which decisions about curriculum and evaluation are highly centralized' (Hopkins et al, 1994, p.94).

It begs the question: how can pupil autonomy be encouraged when teachers themselves, arguably, have limited autonomy? (Fisher, 2011, p.137).

Teachers who create their own shared pedagogy with the children in their class in a school that does not adopt the same culture of participation can create some difficulties or even disaffection for the children when this disappears. Bragg (2007), for example, found that the children in one class eagerly embraced the pupil voice work with its shared pedagogy, but then reacted badly to the more formal and structured teaching methods they encountered in the next class.

Teachers need to reflect upon and discuss the pedagogic function of the adult in facilitating learning in order to make good use of any flexibility within the curriculum for increasing pupil autonomy, for 'changing pedagogy involves not only changing practices but also thinking differently about the process of learning and the role of the learner and teacher' (Stephen et al, 2010, p.328). Bragg (2007) explored the perceptions of teachers during their introduction to pupil voice initiatives in one school, finding that some teachers felt that their existing practise was being criticised and that they were expected to shift their identity as a teacher, even though they had stated at the outset that they 'subscribed to a philosophy of child-centred pedagogy' (p.515).

Walker (1998) suggests that educational psychologists should be involved in exploring pedagogical hypotheses and researching adults' and children's perceptions of learning.

In order to understand how people act in the world, we have to take account of the world as they [learners/children] see it. We cannot assume that the text is the same for each learner, since they each read it in their own ways and from their own perspectives, against the background of their own lives. The aim is to see learning through the eyes of the learner (Walker, 1998, p.27).

The perspectives and beliefs of pupils about learning strongly influence the development of the whole class, including the teacher, as a learning organisation (Stoker, 2000; Fetherston, 1997). Arhar and Buck (2000) discovered that their teaching practice was actively shaped by the perspectives of their students within their action research projects. Where an educational psychologist is working with a teacher at a whole class level, Stoker (2000) believes that their own personal constructs and beliefs will also have an effect on the culture of learning within the class. The idea of the class or school as a learning organisation (where both teachers and pupils are seen as learners) is often linked directly to notions of school effectiveness and school improvement (Stoll and Fink, 1996). A culture of learning means that everyone will be visibly learning (and energetic or enthusiastic about learning) at every level in the organisation (Brighouse and Woods, 1999).

It was not possible to set up the current research project at the whole school level, using AI in every class. Therefore, tensions may have been experienced between the teachers involved and the demands of the whole school in terms of curriculum flexibility and teacher attitudes. However, it is hoped that the experience of using AI stimulates and inspires debates within each school about pupil participation that will work towards the increasing empowerment of all children in future years.

Decades of calls for educational reform have not succeeded in making schools places where all young people want to and are able to learn. It is time to invite students to join the conversations about how we might accomplish that (Cook-Sather, 2002, p.3).

Chapter 3: Review of the Literature in Relation to Pupil Participation

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research and theory base of pupil participation is critically analysed in terms of: theories concerning the nature of childhood; children's rights; theoretical frameworks of participation; children's competence as researchers and decision-makers; the empowerment of *all* children as researchers and decision-makers; the role and power of adults within a shared pedagogy; and the process of transformational change that is needed for children's emancipation in schools. Implications influencing my own study are highlighted throughout and a summary provided at the end. I conclude that AI can be effective in facilitating the active involvement of a whole class of children and their teacher in a shared process of change.

3.2 Brief overview of the history and nature of childhood

Kellett (2014) traces child-centred education back to a notion of innocence in childhood that was developing in the 18th century, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theories on how he thought children should be educated. He argued that children needed a natural environment where they could develop at their own pace. By the beginning of the 19th century, this idealised, romantic construction of childhood was fully accepted by the wealthy middle classes, whilst the young children of poorer families continued to be put out to work. The 1842 Mines Act banned employment of children under the age of ten and then the 1844 Factory Act introduced half-time working for school age children, substantially reducing the number of working children leading up to compulsory schooling in 1880. In the 20th century, compulsory schooling and the rise of the Welfare State meant that local authorities had

increasing control and influence over childhood. There were now new opportunities for the study of childhood, initially dominated by developmental psychologists. Jean Piaget's (1896-1980) work was pivotal in outlining stages of cognitive development in childhood, maintaining that all children passed through this sequence of stages, although at different rates. Kellett et al (2004) argue that 'much of Piaget's work has been misunderstood and there is often a failure to credit him with emphasising a child's active role in his or her cognitive development…What such critiques fail to acknowledge is that Piaget had a deep respect for children. He listened to them closely and did not belittle their explanations as examples of inferior (non-adult) ways of thinking' (p.31). Vygotsky (1896-1934) is then credited with developing the first social constructivist model of learning, which has strong connections to the theories of Freire (1996); both emphasising the need for children's active participation. Despite the continuing promotion of constructivist approaches to learning, such as metacognition (Higgins et al, 2013) and thinking skills (Claxton et al, 2011), these have very little impact on pedagogy (Hobbs, 2005). Anthropological research has demonstrated that culture and environment shape childhood at all stages (Kellett et al, 2004), and it is likely, in my view, that the current school culture of teacher-led instruction (in order to raise attainment) inhibits children's active participation in decisions about their learning.

3.3 Children's rights as people

> For far too long traditional research has not viewed children and young people as people in their own right (O'Brien and Moules, 2007, p.387).

Children's right to be listened to and to have their views taken into account in matters that affect them is stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989). The UK has ratified the convention, undertaking to publicise it to adults and children, to implement it in law, policy and practice and to report regularly to the United Nations on its progress. Article 12 links consideration of children's views to a combination of their age and competence: 'State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child'. Article 13 provides for the child their right: 'to freedom of expression (including) freedom to seek, review and impart information and ideas of all kinds…through any other media of the child's choice' (Article 13, United Nations, 1989). These Articles recognise the child as a full human being with integrity and the ability to participate freely in society (Lundy, 2007; Such, 2014). It is concerning that the UK Government's Draft Periodic Report to the UN on the Rights of the Child (Her Majesty's Government, 2013) reports on 'strengthening children's participation in all matters of school, classroom and learning that affect them' (p.96) mainly in terms of school councils, which have been widely criticised in research for attracting only the more active and able young people, and focusing often on the school's needs rather than being actively driven by the pupils themselves (Hadfield and Haw, 2001; Kirby et al, 2003; Hartas, 2011; Lewars, 2010). Youth councils have been similarly criticised for consisting of hand-picked young people who work on 'safe' issues that do not challenge adult agendas (McGinley and Grieve, 2010, p.258). There is very little focus on children' participation influencing their learning (Hobbs, 2005).

Lundy (2007) proposes a new model for conceptualising Article 12, with 'four elements of the provision:

- Space: Children must be given the opportunity to express a view

- Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their views

- Audience: The view must be listened to

- Influence: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate (p.933)'.

Creating *space, voice* and *audience* for children has been the focus of a wide range of pupil participation research, which nevertheless continues to neglect *influence* (Hartas, 2011; Aston and Lambert, 2010; Tew, 2010). Ravet (2007) exemplifies this by returning disengaged pupils to 'the classroom conditions they had just been analysing in the absence of any plan to engage them in further action or dialogue that might lead to the transformation of their circumstances' (p.240). AI not only hears everyone's views but also allows the children to take a major role in devising new approaches to teaching and learning.

> If we talk with children and ask them for their understanding but then do not offer them a way to contribute to their learning, then are we misleading them? (Hobbs et al, 2000, p.113).

The UNCRC emphasises that particular attention needs to be paid to the participation of children with disabilities as they may be doubly disadvantaged by adults who find it difficult to accept their competence (Lundy, 2007, p.935). The 'space' for participation must therefore be inclusive. Having any kind of 'label' of special educational needs is only a small part of the child as a person, who should be seen as part of the normal diversity of human beings (Giangreco, 2003). Similarly, being young is only one small aspect of who children are: 'they

are also young men and women: they come from different ethnic and social class backgrounds, have a different range of abilities, live in different family structures and come from a range of communities' (Hadfield and Haw, 2001, p.495). In effect, all children have a right to be respected as people.

> We have opened their eyes so that they can see us and look at us in a different way than just students. They look at us as people (Mitra, 2001, p.94).

Danby and Farrell (2004) state that viewing children's abilities developmentally means that adults see them as 'underdeveloped' and 'lacking in power and knowledge' (p.36). A sociological approach instead sees children as actively constructing meaning in their lives and already competent interpreters of their own worlds. Roose and Bouverne-De Bie (2007) describe children's rights as a mechanism to ensure children are 'accepted as co-actors in dialogue about their best interests' (p. 438), creating a space for 'meaning making' (p.441).

> It is important that our conceptions of children do not diminish their status as competent social actors in their own right by causing them to be seen as future adults, 'becomings' not 'beings' (Frost, 2007, p.443).

Contemporary constructions of childhood acknowledge that children are both developing *and* competent in constructing social meaning in their lives (Kellett, 2014). A unifying theme is the current focus on children's rights.

In my view, AI is a very promising mechanism for providing *all* children in a class (not just the privileged few) with space, voice, audience *and* influence. However, Article 12 is a right,

not a duty (Lundy, 2007) and any whole class intervention may not easily afford the child

their right *not* to take part (Spyrou, 2011, p.153; Todd, 2012).

3.4 Theoretical frameworks of pupil participation: the emergence of children as researchers (or decision-makers in their learning)

> 'Student voice', in its most profound and radical form, calls for a cultural shift that opens up spaces and minds not only to the sound but also to the presence and power of students (Cook-Sather, 2006, p.363).

There are several categorisations of types of pupil participation, most of which place children as researchers or decision-makers at the highest, most developed end of the spectrum or continuum (Fielding, 2004; Martin et al, 2006) and sometimes explicitly including reference to children's rights (Thomson and Gunter, 2005, cited in Cook-Sather, 2006). Increasing levels of pupil participation have been depicted on the rungs of a ladder (Arnstein, 1969 and Hart, 1997; cited in Alderson, 2001, p.145) with the lowest levels representing non-participation such as manipulation, decoration and tokenism; the next levels involving actual participation (assigned but informed, consulted and informed, adult-initiated but sharing some decisions); and the highest rungs of the ladder reflecting projects that are more fully initiated and directed by children. However, Kirby et al (2003) and Treseder (1997, cited in Kellett, 2010) both argue that pupil participation at the higher levels should not be seen as hierarchical, as they are different, but equal forms of participation that will be needed in differing circumstances (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Kirby et al's (2003, p. 22) model of effective pupil participation

	Children's views taken into account by adults.	
Children make autonomous decisions.		Children involved in decision-making together with adults.
	Children share power and responsibility for decision-making with adults.	
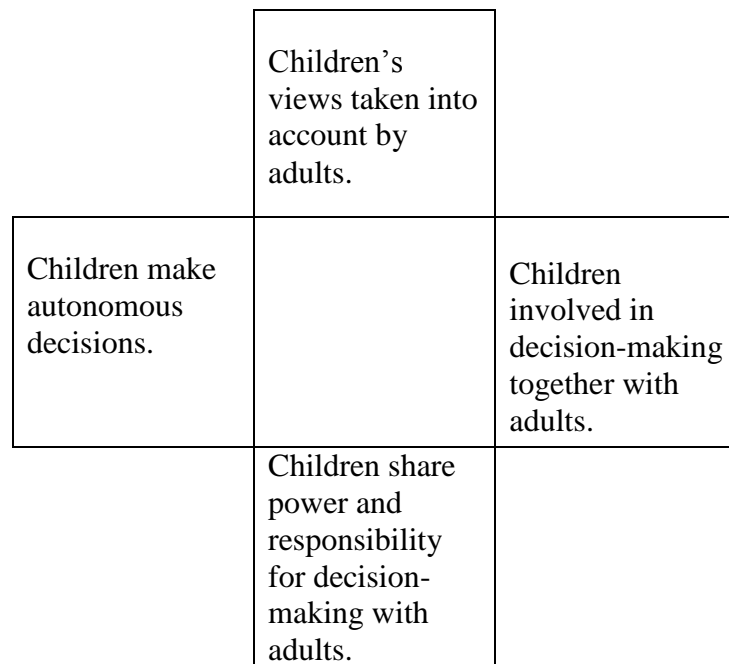
A combination of the hierarchical Ladder of Participation (Arnstein, 1969 and Hart, 1997; cited in Alderson, 2001, p.145) with Kirby et al's (2003) more equal model of participation at the higher levels of the ladder (see Figure 1), led me to conceive of the idea of a Tree of Participation, shown in Figure 2.

The Tree of Participation (Figure 2) has been used for the first time during the semi-structured interviews with teachers that have formed part of my research, as a tool to aid their reflections on how far up and into the tree they believe they are in terms of facilitating pupil participation within their classes, both before and after the AI intervention.

Bucknall (2012) has developed a circular model of good practice for enabling children to work effectively as researchers in primary schools, which is based around seven interacting central themes: participation, voice, ownership, resources, outcomes, set-up and power. Power

Figure 2: The tree of participation

	Children's views taken into account by adults	
Children make autonomous decisions	**Tree of Participation**	Children involved in decision-making together with adults
	Children share power and responsibility for decision-making with adults	
	Adult initiated but sharing some decisions	
	Consulted and informed	
	Assigned but informed	
	Tokenism	
	Decoration	
	Manipulation	
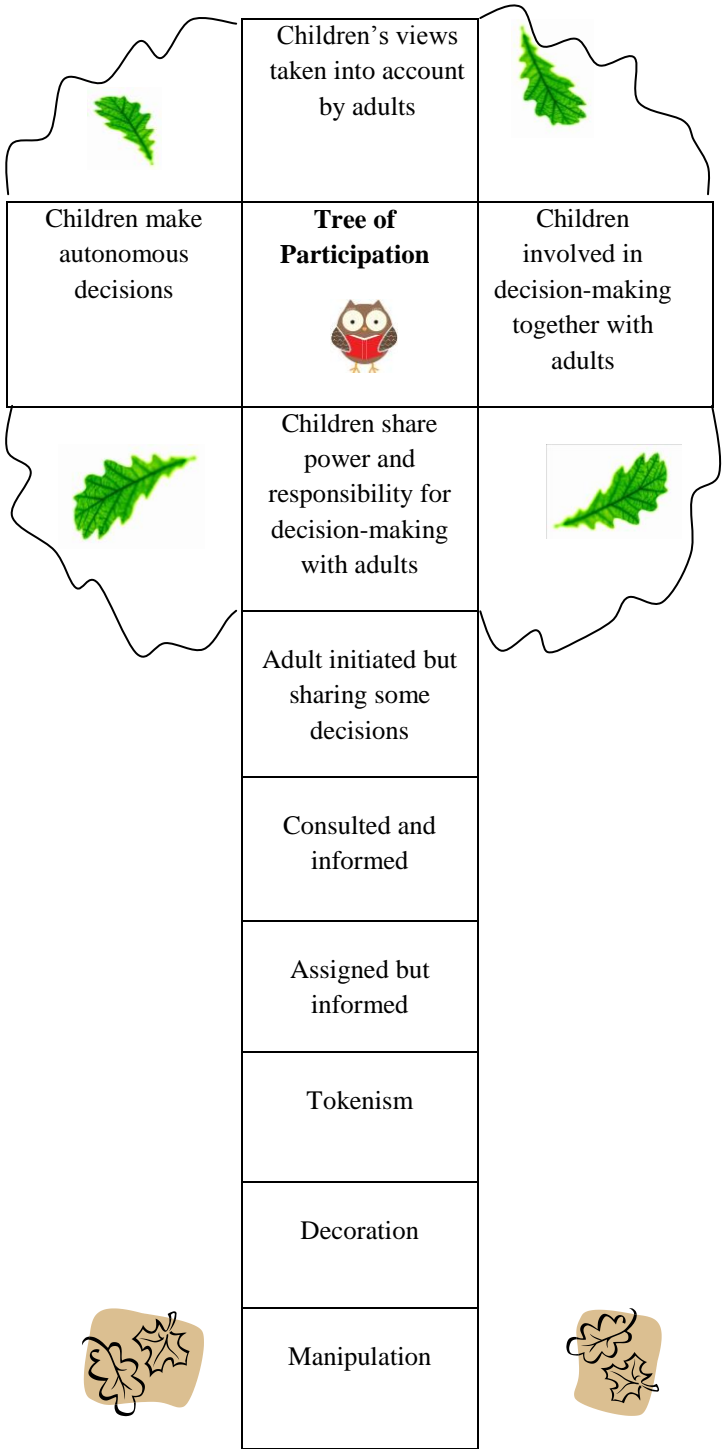
is placed in the centre to emphasise its influence on every aspect of the model. This is the first published model that has been created using the ideas and experiences of young researchers

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themselves and was formulated through Bucknall's doctoral research using a multiple case study design involving five primary schools, where children who had been trained to work as researchers reflected on their involvement (Bucknall, 2009).

Shier's model of participation (2001 and 2006, cited in Kanyal, 2014b, p.72-73) also emphasises the importance of collaboration and shared power between children and adults in bringing about the most effective participation, reflecting a Vygotskian approach to scaffolding outcomes (Kellett, 2010). In my view, this calls for adults and children working together as co-researchers and collaborating within a shared pedagogy rather than children necessarily working independently of adults. Indeed, Flutter and Ruddock (2004) place the notion of children as co-researchers at a higher level than children as researchers.

Bucknall (2012) and Kellett (2010) have worked together at the Open University Children's Research Centre devising programmes to teach research methodology to children and both advocate the role of adults in children's research as children's 'research assistants'. Whilst this empowers children to take an active role in research, it is often difficult for teachers to find space for this work within the curriculum (Bucknall, 2012) and ultimately this may limit the effect it has upon pedagogy in the classroom, even though it is possible for children to research aspects of the curriculum independently (Kellett, 2009). Kellett's work has also been criticised for adopting a deficit approach to participation (by assuming that children lack research skills, which need to be taught), and attempting to fit children into adult ways of working (Malone and Hartung, 2010, p.30; Michail, 2014). A shared AI is arguably more likely to facilitate deep curriculum and pedagogical changes to participation within the classroom by necessarily bringing adults and children together to evaluate and improve the

very nature of their teaching and learning practices. This may provide a process of pupil participation that enables children to contribute towards and take more ownership of their learning environment (Hobbs, 2005). Kanyal et al (2014) calls for more research 'to develop more creative methods of attending to collective participation and collective decision-making with children' (p.122), ensuring that all children and adults participate equally.

Kellett (2010) recognises the limitations of child-led research projects that require extensive training for pupils, need 'free time' apart from the curriculum and may privilege more articulate and able children (p.202). An AI with the whole class potentially overcomes the first two of these limitations but will similarly need careful planning and support in order to facilitate the authentic involvement of vulnerable or less able children.

> Assumptions about the universal developmental vulnerabilities and incapacities of children have been used to legitimate children's social oppression and restrict their emancipation (Coppock, 2011, p.436).

3.5 Children's competence as researchers and decision-makers within their learning

> Adult researchers note their surprise at child researchers' competence, and describe plans to do more complicated work with children as well as to work with younger children in future (Alderson, 2001, p.151).

Alderson (2001) reminds us that research is part of everyday life in schools: from five year olds making pictograms to sixteen year olds researching local allotments. 'In such examples, learning, the main occupation for everyone at school or college overlaps with research' (p.143). Children are natural researchers (Yardley, 2014); in my view, it is how they learn,

from birth onwards, until adults start to take control of their learning and opportunities for independent inquiry are neglected.

Older primary school children (aged 9-11) are increasingly being offered training in research methodology (Bucknall, 2012; Kellett, 2005; Burton et al, 2010) and are embarking upon their own successful research projects in schools. Frost (2007) worked in a similar way with even younger children and Aoslin et al (2008) have shown that young people with learning disabilities can direct their own three year research project, suggesting that age and ability need not be a barrier to participation in research.

> Children frequently enquire, scrutinise, accept unexpected results, revise their ideas, and assume that their knowledge is incomplete and provisional (Alderson, 2001, p.144).

Alderson (2001) showed that young people can be very creative when devising research methods, can hold and manage respectful meetings with adults and are also able to disseminate research findings memorably.

Not only are children competent researchers, who can effect change from the outcomes of their research, but they also learn from the processes involved. A number of researchers have demonstrated that the research process can develop a variety of skills in children, illustrated in Table 1.

Furthermore, child researchers add a perspective on childhood experiences that is not readily available to adults. For example, Hannon et al (2002) describe two young 'looked after'

researchers adding new interview questions and interviewing other 'looked after' children with great empathy and understanding. They felt that they 'provided expertise and knowledge that perhaps researchers and practitioners have limited understanding of' (p.82). Adults may not be sufficiently aware of the factors that significantly affect children's lives at school (Gunter and Thomson, 2007a).

Table 1: Skills developed in children by their involvement in research

Research literature	Evidence of skills developed in children
Kellet (2005)	Metacognition; critical, logical, lateral and higher order thinking; organisation and management; writing and communication; perseverance; and enhanced motivation, ownership, and self-esteem (especially when children are able to choose their own topics for research).
Bucknall (2012)	Increased skills in mathematics, literacy, speaking and listening, higher order thinking and information and communications technology (p.16) were all identified by both children and teachers, who were often surprised by the competences they witnessed.
Malone and Hartung (2010)	Increased self-esteem; personal and collective efficacy; greater self-control; greater sensitivity to the perspectives of others; greater hope for the future; preparation for young people to be democratic decision-makers and active citizens (p.33).
Kranzl-Nagl and Zartler (2010)	Being taken seriously; building self-confidence; having more respect for equipment when involved in decision-making; learning from each other more; development of skills for working as a team; development of personal and social skills.
Naylor and Worrall (2004)	Working as a team; applying research skills to subject learning; self-confidence giving presentations; managing time effectively and sharing new ideas and tasks.
McLaughlin (2006)	Better rapport and mutual respect with adults; increased confidence, self-esteem and belief that their views matter; ability to take on more responsibility; can bring new ideas and new solutions to old problems.

When children are allowed to take a lead in research activities, they often become extremely motivated, especially when they are allowed to choose their own topics (Passe, 1996; Burns and Schubotz, 2009).

> Having influence and choice can improve empowerment, leading to a raised sense of self-efficacy and increased self-esteem (Lindsay, 2004, p.195).

There is no doubt that children of all ages and abilities can bring fresh enthusiasm, innovation and commitment to the research process when they are actively involved (McLaughlin, 2006). Crane (2001) describes the genuine mutual respect that developed between the staff and students during her involvement in a students-as-researchers project and Harding (2001) states that being a student researcher transformed his engagement with education and helped him to remain at his secondary school. He argues that it is the *process* of being involved that far outweighs any resulting outcomes. Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010) also emphasise 'the importance of the *process* of participation, as well as the *outcome* (p.361).

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

The literature therefore suggests that children are competent researchers, can bring new perspectives and insights into childhood research and typically develop a vast range of skills in the research process. Kranzl-Nagl and Zartler (2010) summarise the benefits for adults as: better awareness of children's needs, opinions and wishes; learning how to share power with children; learning how sophisticated, knowledgeable, sensible and thoughtful children are;

and more tolerance and respect towards children, all helping to develop positive attitudes and relationships.

Nevertheless, there are dissenting researchers who reject the idea that children can make a significant contribution as co-researchers, particularly when they are unable to articulate reflexively how their world appears to them (Montgomery, 2014). Whilst childhood researchers are discovering innovative ways in which to listen to even very young children's views, as in the Mosaic approach (Fraser et al, 2014), AI relies on participants being able to reflect at a meta-cognitive level in articulating their experiences within an organisation. As such, I have been concerned that it may be more suited to the participation of older children or young adults.

Crowley and Skeels (2010) argue that there is now a need for much more *evidence* about the impact of participation work and that 'we need a stronger focus on application to embed participation in all areas of children's lives' (p.185). The process of involving whole classes of children and their teachers in AI is an example of one application that could be reasonably expected to lead to a range of positive outcomes, which my study has explored.

> Inquiry can be the 'engine' to enable the distribution of leadership that is needed in order to foster participation in learning, and the 'glue' that can bind a community together around a common purpose (Ainscow et al, 2014, p.26).

3.6 Including *all* children as researchers and decision-makers in learning

> Children with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and challenging behaviour were all included…Some children worked together to ensure their ideas came across, for example, one child wrote while another drew the same idea (Ashton, 2008, p. 178).

Children with complex special needs have some very powerful messages about their inclusion and/or segregation in education (Thomas et al, 2005; Cook et al, 2001; Nind et al, 2003; Rieser, 2003). Hadfield and Haw (2001) argue that student voice has an interior authenticity and is able to favour excluded, silenced or sub-ordinated 'voices' over dominant 'voices' in terms of initiating or guiding change (p.487). Paradoxically, Norwich et al (2006) describe children with special needs noticing how much they were consulted compared to the other children in the class: 'I'd like to see it expanded to people who aren't with special needs, so their opinions could be voiced too' (p.263).

> Research that focuses on children who are defined as having special needs tends to deflect attention from wider contextual factors that have an influence on children's lives…research should be conducted in ways that promote agency, mastery experiences and inclusion (Tangen, 2008, p.165).

Bland and Atweh (2007) found that the involvement of students as researchers created opportunities for the more marginalised and disaffected students to become engaged after they have 'been silenced or devalued within traditional schooling systems' (p.339), improving social justice and inclusion. The research outcomes enabled pupils' perspectives about racism and teacher attitudes to be presented to staff in a legitimate forum, giving messages that are very unlikely to have been made directly to teachers.

The novelty and immediacy of children's research reports can attract greater publicity and interest in using the findings than much adult research does. Doing research helps children (perhaps disadvantaged ones especially) to gain more skills, confidence and possible determination to overcome their disadvantages than adult researchers working on their behalf could give them (Alderson, 2001, p.151).

The selection of pupils as researchers has been difficult and ethically challenging in a number of studies (Rogers and Frost, 2006; Leitch et al, 2007; Jones and Stanley, 2008; O'Brien and Moules, 2007) and the children themselves believe such a powerful experience should be available to all students (Naylor and Worrall, 2004). O'Brien and Moules (2007) recruited nine young researchers between the ages of seven and thirteen in a project that was to last over two and a half years, providing a highly privileged experience but for a very small number of pupils. Using AI in my study facilitated the inclusion of *all* members of the class as an organisation.

Frost (2007) worked with a whole class of seven and eight year old researchers, introducing them to research processes and supporting them in conducting their own group research projects. She argues for children to be seen as competent social actors in their own right and that all children, not just those who are most articulate, literate or confident, should experience this sense of power and voice. Frost taught research skills to the whole class during one afternoon per week for six weeks, prior to embarking on their choices of group research projects. The class consisted of thirty mixed ability children, including three pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school had a strong tradition of consulting pupils about their views and was therefore receptive to her proposals. All the children were

found to be able to use research skills and often made 'the same kinds of judgement and experience the same kinds of feelings as adult researchers' (p.453).

Whole class involvement was also facilitated in a participatory action research study with one hundred and fifty primary aged children (one class of 5-6 year olds and four classes of 9-10 year olds) working in child-focused workshops with an urban developer in the design of their own new neighbourhood, thereby instilling real purpose to their work (Malone, 2013). The 9-10 year olds were particularly committed and motivated by their sense of agency and responsibility in contributing to a real development.

> Children's capacities and talents as innovators, researchers and designers, realised in partnership with professional practitioners, has come to be generally regarded as a legitimate and valuable factor in shaping and influencing the school of the future (Burke, 2007, p.364).

In an ethnographic study in a primary school in Cyprus, Messiou (2008) found that involving *all* children inclusively in research activities helped both teachers and children to develop more inclusive attitudes towards the everyday participation of marginalised children.

However, children are not necessarily all equally included in whole class research activities (Lomax, 2012). Bucknall (2012) argues that reflection by children and teachers is essential if children's research is 'to evolve in a sustainable way' (p.166). Thus in my research design, the children were invited to reflect upon and suggest adaptations to the AI methodology as well as their teachers, in order to ensure it is as inclusive as possible.

3.7 The role and power of adults in children's research and in shared pedagogy

> How and when children participate depends mainly on the attitudes and behaviours emanated from adults (Kanyal and Gibbs, 2014, p.45).

O'Brien and Moules (2007) discuss the unequal power relations between adults and children and argue that in participatory research, power can be seen as 'dynamic and fluid, a moving force' (p.397).

> Power moves between different actors and different social positions, it is produced and negotiated in the social interactions of child to adult, child to child and adult to adult in the local settings of the research (Christensen, 2004, p175, cited in O'Brien and Moules, 2007, p.397).

It is not necessary to level out the power inequality or take power away from the adult. Instead, the relationship between the adults and children in the project is changed so that children see adults as being 'fun, participatory and non-judgemental rather than directing and monitoring' (O'Brien and Moules, 2007, p.398).

It is helpful for teachers to position themselves as co-learners with students (Davis and Morrow, 2010), constructing educational knowledge and understanding collectively, with the teacher providing 'scaffolds' and support (Campbell et al, 2007).

> Children's participation does not diminish adults' roles and responsibilities. On the contrary, it increases the challenges to scaffold children's participation effectively and appropriately in respect to their situation and capacities (Woodhead, 2010, p.xxi).

The pupils in a case study exploring metacognition in forty-one schools as part of the Learning to Learn project (Wall, 2012) were 'able to think about not only their own learning, but also how the community in which they learn needs to operate for the best outcomes' (p.303). The teachers genuinely learned from their feedback, shifting the balance of power towards more democratic classroom interactions.

> Power must recognise the subtleties of difference in status, knowledge, privilege, class, gender and ethnicity that inform our interactions at every level inside our schools (Rudman, 2013, p.190).

Achieving a balance of power between adult and child in children's research is not straightforward. Frost and Holden (2008) devised a collaborative research project with a hundred students, investigating students' perceptions of learning environments. The students collected and presented their own data, using photographs. However, the adults in this project did almost everything else. This study did not involve any teachers (except by sending a written report to the schools) and so did not facilitate joint reflection between students and teachers, which the authors argue is 'the key to developing an approach to genuine student participation' (p.87). In their introduction to the research, Frost and Holden argue that 'the project offers the opportunity to consult with young people about areas of practice that are frequently over-looked in pupil voice work: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment' (p.85). However, pupils' perceptions were only gained about the physical learning environments and spaces around school, with no link to pedagogy or curriculum. The student evaluations suggested that they would like to know what was found out from the day – so they were excluded from both the analysis of their data and the results. It is unclear how many of the research activities young people need to be involved in before collaboration can be claimed

(McLaughlin, 2006). My own study has sought to maximise all opportunities to facilitate genuine collaboration with the children and their teachers at every stage.

In a study of Assessment for Learning by Leitch et al (2007), fifty students as co-researchers were involved in advising on and adapting research methods, videotaping lessons and co-interpreting the data from video-recordings and pupil drawings. Some pupils had difficulties coping with teachers who tried to control the filming or open confidential evaluation envelopes 'presuming a right or need to know the contents of the research encounter' (p.469). The teachers' understanding of and alliance to the research was not as strong as the students. This was an important factor in designing my own research with pupils, so that the teachers would feel fully engaged with the research process, understanding its purposes.

A group of student researchers in Bland and Atweh's (2007) study felt that the adult researchers had over-edited their work in the final report. Whilst the students understood that this was done with the best of intentions to create a professional report, they complained that 'it's meant to be in our words, that people like us can understand and not like a university assignment' (p.344). Bland and Atweh argue for a democratic dialogue between students and their teachers during collaborative action research, warning that students' voices should not be automatically privileged over the voices of other stakeholders. In my role as research facilitator, I sought to ensure that democratic dialogue and joint reflection and learning was managed carefully.

> The crucial issue appears to be that adults engaged with student research continue to listen to young people with sensitivity and challenge each other in ways that ensure manipulation of children and young people is minimised (Frost, 2007, p.454).

The relationship with the class teacher can have a huge effect on children as researchers. In David et al (2001, p.360)'s research report, there is a striking account of an enthusiastic teacher expecting her pupils to welcome the adult researcher and comply with the requests for information, inadvertently manipulating pupil consent, and even steering their responses in the research itself, wanting the pupils to give the answers that reflect the positive ethos of the school. The potential for this type of inadvertent bias was addressed at the planning stages with teachers in my own study.

> The sensitivities of listening to young children in ways that respect their competence, on the one hand, and recognise the power differentials between adults and children, on the other, require ongoing consideration and negotiation (Danby and Farrell, 2004, p.41).

Gillen et al (2011) conducted a mixed methods case study focusing on pupil perceptions of a positive learning climate in Year 7 and 8. One of the themes emerging from the pupil focus groups was 'teacher attributes' but this was omitted from further investigation, potentially an abuse of adult power. Discussion and preparation with the teachers involved in my own study addressed the possibility that children may offer ideas that do not seem relevant to the adults involved, but will need to be given space to explore their ideas without judgement.

> Although there are numerous accounts of education-based projects aimed at supporting young people's 'voice', these were often participation projects, which were bounded by the agendas and structures of professionals, rather than truly collaborative (Hadfield and Haw, 2001, p.492).

Bucknall (2012) suggests that 'the willingness of adults to take on a supportive rather than a managerial role is crucial in order for young researchers to feel empowered and in control'

(p.15). In Bucknall's study, one teacher who facilitated research projects with her whole class is described as creating 'a 'community of practice' where traditional power differentials and boundaries were moderated' (p.18). Power is a central concept in the model of good practice for children's research devised by Bucknall (2009). When children are working as researchers or co-researchers in school, a culture of respect and trust between adults and children develops, which can have a powerful effect on the culture and ethos of the classroom (Cook-Sather, 2006; Bragg, 2007; Raymond, 2001; Mitra, 2012).

> Authentic and meaningful child participation requires a radical shift in adult thinking and behaviour – from an exclusionary to an inclusionary approach to children and their capabilities (UNICEF, 2003, cited in Malone and Hartung, 2010, p.33).

In conclusion, the nature of the relationship between teachers and children is a highly significant factor in children's research and shared pedagogy. Malone and Hartung (2010) propose that practitioners, children and researchers need to be 'more playful and creative in the relationships they form, to acknowledge that children's culture exists independently of adults, and to think of new ways to interact with children where we are opening up rather than closing down dialogue, and so building an environment that includes all the possibilities of children's participation, even those we haven't thought of' (p.35-36).

3.8 Towards emancipation: achieving transformational change

> One of the most profound, positive aspects of the term (student voice) - and one of the clearest indicators of the beginning of a cultural shift – is its insistence on altering dominant power imbalances between adults and young people (Cook-Sather, 2006, p.366).

Katsenou et al (2013) used action research to explore the factors affecting the active participation of two classes of primary school pupils in a programme of sustainable waste management. The pupils were reluctant to engage in pupil-led actions relating to the whole school or local community because they did not believe that anyone would listen to them or take their ideas seriously. Although encouraged to persevere, they were disappointed by the lack of response of the school and community. Joint reflection with their teachers led to general acceptance of the worth of their endeavours and the realisation that encouraging participation is a slow, gradual and long-term process for both pupils *and* teachers. The research demonstrated that 'pupil participation is inseparable from the school culture within which it takes place' (p.255). Involving the pupils in reflection as co-researchers helped both teachers and pupils to build confidence in developing participation activities, acknowledging *both* as learners. Teachers begin to learn from the children in 'professional development that is more open, reciprocal and indicative of a flexible, dialogic form of democratic practice in which the interdependency of teaching and learning is explored and enhanced' (Frost, 2007, p.443).

Kirby et al (2003) identify three different cultures of participation in organisations: consultation-focused; participation-focused; and child/youth-focused. In the last of these, 'children and young people's participation is central to these organisations' practice and they establish a culture in which it is assumed that all children and young people will be listened to about all decisions that affect their lives' (p.6). The inclusive culture of participation for all children infuses the whole organisation, with positive relationships between adults and children based on trust and respect.

> Meaningful participation should be accessible and inclusive, a dialogue which involves both listening to the voices of children and young people and responding constructively to them (Hatton, 2014, p.44).

It is significant that the school reported by Frost (2007) already had a culture of genuinely listening to pupils and facilitating pupil participation. Student researchers in schools without such an ethos might find it more difficult to be given autonomy and to report potentially uncomfortable findings back to an unreceptive staff. Rogers and Frost (2006) found that some of the teachers who were not directly involved in their student research project 'reacted strongly as they felt a little threatened by the empowering of students' (p.2).

> Adult belief in student voice is essential to realise its potential (Bragg, 2007, p.506).

Cobbett et al (2013) found that participatory spaces do not automatically redistribute power between participants of unequal status and that a lengthy period of time was needed for change to occur. Martin et al (2006) and Hargreaves (2004) argue for incremental changes in the extent of student involvement and innovation because the culture of respecting students' ideas and participation needs to be nurtured in order to become transformational. Children need time to get used to and accept new responsibilities in shared research (Michail, 2014) and adults need to feel some ownership in developing new approaches they can believe in (Tew, 2010). The senior management team in schools need to support this work, helping to provide evidence of its effectiveness (Kirby et al, 2003; Gunter and Thomson, 2007a).

Leitch and Mitchell (2007) demonstrated that there is often a great dissonance between pupil images of the culture of school and their head teacher's perspective, even in those schools that

are working hard to create a culture of participation. There is evidence of democratic and highly innovative pupil participation in other countries, for example, Brazil (McCowan, 2010), but 'the vast majority of schools in countries like the USA and UK have not as yet moved beyond the 'thin' democratization of the student council' (p.23).

> That children and young people's participation is part of international law or public policy is not always enough to convince those who work with children and young people to engage in this work…more convincing is seeing evidence that participation works through tried, tested and evaluated ways of involving children and young people. This can ease the anxiety of adults who are engaging in participation work for the first time (Kirby et al, 2003, p.30).

Greig et al (2013) encourage us 'to consider what tools, methods and approaches can best enhance true participation' (p.209). Classic tools of participation such as tours, maps and photos generate good data but may not lead to emancipation. According to Lansdown (2001, cited in Greig et al, 2013, p.234), 'effective participatory research has a minimum standard of:

- real relevance to the participants;

- the capacity to make an impact;

- adequate time and resources;

- realistic expectations of the participants (clear and agreed targets and goals);

- values of trust, respect and equity; and

- training and support for the participants to contribute to the planning.'

Involving children as researchers has to be a facilitation of genuine inquiry and not used by adults as another means to achieve their goals. It means that children need to be listened to with respect and allowed to have the power to investigate for themselves issues of genuine

concern to them. It means that teachers have to have the confidence to open the adult world to scrutiny by children and be prepared to act upon their findings. Ultimately, children's involvement in research will, I believe, have the power to change teachers' attitudes and relationships with children, creating more democratic and respectful classrooms (Fielding, 2004).

> The process of participation…is truly empowering for children and young people because they become partners in research, co-owners or co-researchers, who can initiate ideas and actions, make and contribute to key decisions and carry out key research tasks. In participation, we need to respect children and young people as experts in their own lives who have a unique and powerful contribution to make to the research (Greig et al, 2013, p.205).

May (2005) calls for more classroom-based research that allows pupils to initiate ideas and actions within the research context and have some control over their own participation whilst interacting with professionals. Facilitating teachers to work jointly in this way with children during the AIs in this study is, I believe, new to the research base on children as researchers.

> Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators. In this way, the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for their liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement (Freire, 1996, p.51).

3.9 Summary of implications for my own research study

Table 2 shows the implications for my own research taken directly from the critical analysis of the research and theory relating to pupil participation discussed above.

Table 2: Implications of the pupil participation literature review for my research

Pupil participation literature review	Implications for my research
All children have a right to participate in research about matters that affect them in school and are competent to do so, regardless of age or ability.	My research needed to be *inclusive* rather than selective, involving a whole class, year group or whole school. AI works at an organisational level and is able to facilitate whole classes or schools working together, but may need adapting to ensure equal access for all children. The children were invited to act as researchers and developers, reflecting upon and offering their own suggestions for ensuring that the process is inclusive.
The research topic should be negotiated with children and their teacher(s), enabling children to be involved in decision-making.	Whilst the general topic of writing was the focus of the AI (chosen by the adults), children were able to negotiate and develop ideas for any aspect of these lessons. The children also took part in deciding how the activities could be adapted to ensure they are motivating and inclusive.
Children's participation in research must have influence (as well as space, voice and audience).	My research needed to enable children to take part in creating actions to improve their lives at school, genuinely. AI has the potential to allow children to take a major role in devising new and better learning experiences, but needs sufficient time (Davies and Lewis, 2013).
The research should be developed as collaborative research with the children and their teacher(s) working as co-researchers.	Teachers were involved as participants in the shared AI and research process, whilst preserving the children's power to have a voice and a genuine impact. Involving children as co-researchers arguably requires greater skill for adults than supporting independent children's research projects as issues of power and control have to be constantly negotiated and renegotiated. Teachers and children needed to work collaboratively at every stage of the AI. My role was to facilitate the whole process and allow space for collaborative dialogue and joint reflection, providing training and support as necessary.
The school chosen should be one that is responsive to the idea of children as co-researchers and ready for the challenge of taking student voice work to this next step.	It was important to work with teachers, who were able to affect changes by empowering the young researchers in their classes (May, 2005; Fielding, 2004). The work needed to have relevance to the participants and the capacity to make an impact (Greig, 2013).

Chapter 4: Review of the Literature in Relation to Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

4.1 Introduction

> Appreciative inquiry is…based on the premise that knowledge can enlighten and empower those who strive to change the environment in which they work and live…Appreciative inquiry is purposely not value free. As human inquiry with transformative and emancipatory intent…it joins others in their visions of world betterment (Zandee and Cooperrider, 2008, p.192).

In this chapter I will: explain the rationale for using AI in this study; outline the process and philosophy of AI; critically evaluate its distinctiveness and potential as an organisational change model; explore its applications across a range of contexts; critically analyse the research literature relating to its emergent use within education; and summarise the expected potential of AI to transform participatory practices in the primary school classes in this study.

4.2 Rationale for using AI in this study

The literature concerning pedagogy and the curriculum in Chapter 2 and pupil participation in Chapter 3 led to the conclusions listed below, showing that my research activities needed to:

- allow for a balance of child-led and teacher-led activities that are jointly devised within a culture of trust and respect;

- help ensure any writing activities are pleasurable, purposeful and make good use of art and drama to enrich the language and discussion involved;

- enable children to work in mixed-ability, collaborative groups (with teacher support);

- be inclusive of *all* children (not a select few);

- involve all children in *decision-making* about aspects of the research topic and process;

- enable all children to have *influence* on the curriculum, creating new activities;

- provide a mechanism to support *collaboration* between children and adults; and

- occur in a school that is already responsive to the idea of pupil participation.

To fulfil these aims, it might have been possible for the children in a class to work in mixed-ability collaborative groups designing their own research into aspects of their literacy (or writing) curriculum, as in Kellett (2009). Whilst this would be likely to uncover children's feelings about their writing and could have real influence on the teacher's future design of curriculum activities, it is far less likely to generate a creative range of writing activities from the children themselves and would need to be preceded by a programme of training for the children in research skills, for which there was insufficient time available. This approach would also have been less likely, in my view, to lead to transformative changes in the nature of the pedagogic relationship between adults and children within the class, as the children's research activities would be taught and practised within existing pedagogy. AI, in contrast, required adults to share power with children during its process and led to a range of new curriculum activities and ideas generated by the children. The power of AI lies in this generative aspect rather than its more well-known focus on the positive (Bushe, 2010b; Reed, 2007). It is, after all, primarily an organisational *change* process rather than a research methodology, and will be explained more fully in the following sections of this chapter.

Other organisational change processes such as models of Continuous Improvement (Deming, 2000), Organisational Learning (Argyris and Schön, 1996) and Learning Organisations

(Senge, 2006) were not selected because they do not typically facilitate the involvement of children as key stakeholders in the change process (see Section 4.3.6). A limitation of AI was the lack of continuous reflection alongside actions (Dewar, 2011); however, it was the only model I found that was explicitly strengths-based as well as providing a practical structure for the empowerment of all involved, including children.

4.3 What is AI?

4.3.1 Definitions

To *appreciate* means: to value; recognise the best in people or the world around us; affirm past and present strengths, successes and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems. Appreciate is synonymous with value, prize, esteem and honour.

To *inquire* means: to explore and discover; to ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Inquire is synonymous with discover, search, systematically explore and study.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has variously been defined as a philosophy and/or a process:

> Appreciative Inquiry is a philosophy that incorporates an approach, a process (4-D Cycle of *Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny)* for engaging people at any or all levels to produce effective, positive change (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.xv).

> Appreciative Inquiry is a group process that inquires into, identifies, and further develops the best of 'what is' in organisations in order to create a better future (Preskill and Catsambas, 2006, p.1).

4.3.2 Origins

AI began in the 1980s when David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva were using a problem focused approach to organisational change at a clinic in Ohio and noticed how discouraged everyone became. Instead, they turned the process into a shared *inquiry* into what was working well. 'The results were immediate and dramatic. Relationships improved, cooperation increased, and visible commitments by the physicians to change initiatives ensued' (Ludema and Fry, 2008, p.281). In 1987, their classic article 'Appreciative Inquiry into Organizational Life' was published (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987, cited in Ludema and Fry, 2008). Cooperrider resisted creating a specific method for AI for many years, preferring to articulate a set of principles to guide attempts to inquire appreciatively (Bushe and Kassam, 2005). This led many researchers to remain unclear about how AI might be applied within their organisations (Carter, 2006; Robinson et al, 2012; Trajkovski et al, 2013).

4.3.3 Principles and assumptions

In developing AI, Cooperrider was strongly influenced by research studies that demonstrated the power of positive images (Coghlan et al, 2003). Cooperrider and Whitney (2001, cited in Bushe and Kassam, 2005, p.166), summarise the following set of principles for AI:

1.   the constructionist principle;

2.   the principle of simultaneity;

3.   the poetic principle;

4.   the anticipatory principle;

5.   the positive principle.

The *constructionist principle* relates to organisations being socially constructed, so that AI should involve as many members of the system as possible. The *principle of simultaneity* refers to inquiry and intervention occurring simultaneously in AI, so that as we inquire into human systems we change them. The *poetic principle* relates to the belief that the language of the inquiry will have an impact of its own and needs to be inspirational. The *anticipatory principle* indicates that we are guided by our visualisation of the future. The *positive principle* states that momentum and sustainable change require positive affect and social bonding. Based on these principles, eight assumptions form the foundation of AI philosophy and process:

1. In every society, organization, or group, something works.

2. What we focus on becomes our reality.

3. Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.

4. The act of asking questions of an organisation or group influences the group.

5. People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).

6. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.

7. It is important to value differences.

8. The language we use creates our reality (Coghlan et al, 2003, p.10).

4.3.4 The Appreciative Inquiry Process

The Four 'D's model of Appreciative Inquiry

The most commonly used model for AI is the 4-D cycle depicted in Figure 3 (Ludema and Fry, 2008).

Figure 3: The 4-D cycle of AI
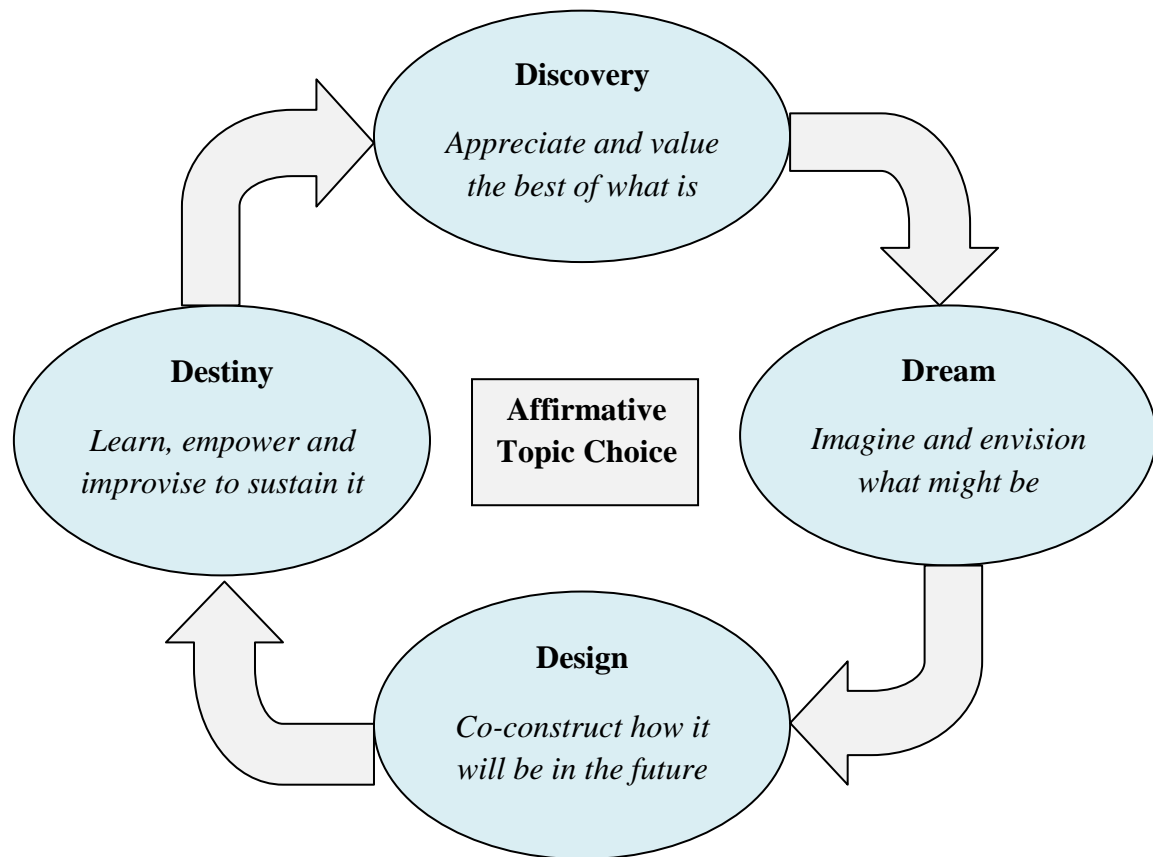
AI is a dynamic process and the 'D's' simply represent different, intentional sets of activities and conversations, all linked to an affirmative inquiry topic.

Topic Choice

AI begins with carefully worded topics that will focus attention on the desired outcomes of working together. This often involves rewording until the inquiry attracts genuine curiosity and interest. At this stage, a negative topic choice will be turned into what everyone wants to see instead.

Discovery

All participants are paired with people they know least well, mixing levels and areas of work. They have a set of questions to focus their conversations, sharing personal stories about times

when they have experienced the best of the organisation and their contribution to it. Ludema and Fry (2008) argue that it is important to begin with these paired interviews because they '(1) give everyone equal voice; (2) establish a model of both sharing and listening in a deeply focused way; (3) offer every participant a chance to explore their own thinking in the relative safety of a one-on-one dialogue; (4) quickly generate a deep sense of connection among participants: and (5) draw out the appreciative foundations of the work to be done' (p. 286). The Appreciative Interview usually starts with four simple, powerful questions (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.xix):

1. What would you describe as being the high-point experience in your organization, a time when you were most alive and engaged?

2. Without being modest, what is it that you most value about yourself, your work, and your organization?

3. What are the core factors that give life to your organization, without which the organization would cease to exist?

4. Imagine your organization five…years from now, when everything is just as you always imagined it would be. What has happened? What is different? How have you contributed to this future? (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.36).

The pairs then form small groups, share stories, look for themes and decide on the most powerful ones to report back to the whole group.

Dream
The same small groups share their greatest hopes and wishes, referring to the common themes from the stories and creatively developing some images of the future e.g. in the form of art, song, skits, poems, newscasts etc. The ideas are presented to the whole group, who then vote

for a small number of the most powerful and attractive of the ideas presented. These form the focus of the next two stages.

Design

The participants choose which of the selected ideas they feel most interested in, passionate or knowledgeable about and form new groups, each dedicated to a particular area for development. The new teams create 'provocative propositions' that describe what the dreams look like, as if they are already operating successfully. These are shared with the whole group and revised and improved so that all are involved.

> It is the stories of the future that create the present more than the stories of the past (McAdam and Mirza, 2009, p. 180).

Destiny

The groups create short-term targets and key actions for implementation based on the provocative propositions. Volunteers from each group are often asked to form a steering group that will monitor the implementation of the ideas over the next six months. Sometimes the event ends with participants giving feedback on what it has meant for them to be part of the whole process.

4.3.5 Theoretical influences

> The AI model is based on the assumptions that organizations are socially constructed phenomena, which have no tangible reality, and that ways of organizing are limited only by human imagination and the agreements people make with each other (Bushe, 2013, p.1).

AI emerged from theoretical shifts within organisational psychology, where the idea of organisations as machines with problems to be fixed by managers started to give way to the idea of organisations as living human systems (Lewis et al, 2008; Checkland, 2000). Lewin's development of social psychology, where human thought and self-awareness are made possible by language and social interaction, led to the early development of Action Research in the 1940s and Gergen's work on social constructionism then provided the theoretical underpinnings for AI (Lewis et al, 2008), which is primarily located within social science's generative capacity i.e. generating social actions (Bushe, 2011). More recently, Seligman's work on positive psychology from 1998 onwards shifted the focus of organisational psychology towards what is right (rather than wrong) with people, and solution-focused or strengths-based approaches to consultation have since gained in popularity (Wilding and Griffey, 2015). However, AI has unfortunately become defined more by its positivity than its generative capacity for change (Bushe, 2010b).

Bushe's (2010c) meta-analysis of eight AIs into school learning (involving twenty-one schools in a large urban district in Canada) found that 'there was no relationship between how "positive" the participants rated their experience of AI…nor how positively they felt afterwards, with the degree of change…whilst generativity does significantly differentiate degree of change' (Bushe, 2010b, p.5). This suggests that the generative component of AI may be far more important than positivity, although the initial focus on strengths is still a necessary part of the process.

Theoretical accounts are no longer judged in terms of their predictive capacity, but instead are judged in terms of their generative capacity…Instead of asking, 'Does this theory correspond with the observable facts?' the emphasis for evaluating good theory becomes 'To what extent does this theory present provocative new possibilities for social action?' (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1999, cited in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.359).

Burke (2011) argues that organisational development attempted to 'loosen-up' tightly hierarchical systems (with over-controlling leadership) and introduce models of 'bottom-up' management that are about 'humanizing the workplace' (p.145). Pupils in schools are still too tightly managed, in my view, by over-controlling teachers, head-teachers and systems currently designed to measure academic progress above all else (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009). There is very little space for children to have 'voice' and 'audience', let alone 'influence' as is their human right (Lundy, 2007). My research sought to explore the potential for AI to open-up the culture of teaching and learning to pupil participation and influence.

4.3.6 Comparison with other organisational change models

Four major theories of organisational change are presented in Table 3 below for comparison (including AI) 'because of their emergence within the field of education, possible adaptability to school systems, and potential to support organizational change' (Evans et al, 2012, p.156). The comparison reveals that all models of effective organisational change in schools are likely to need the active involvement of staff as collaborative learners and a distributed style of leadership that facilitates and enables staff teams to take actions based on their own inquiries. Hay McBer (2000, cited in Rudman, 2013) discovered that authoritative styles of leadership can be helpful only in the short-term and that long-term success requires more active staff involvement, decision-making and experimentation.

Table 3: Four major theories of organisational change (adapted from Evans et al, 2012)

Theories of organisational change	Theory/model	Strengths/Limitations
Continuous Improvement model by Deming (2000)	• Plan-do-study-act cycle • Based on effective use of data • 14 strategies, several directly relevant to education • Promotes distributed leadership and collaborative self-directed inquiry, decries inspection and seeks to eliminate fear	• Involves all teachers as stakeholders with a shared vision and job-embedded professional development (for leaders too) based on self-identified problems • Leaders need to be skilled at enabling teacher teams to take ownership of learning from data and provide resources/encouragement • Likely to affect school ethos and culture • Not readily feasible to involve pupils in data scrutiny or teacher development processes within the model
Organisational Learning by Argyris and Schön (1996)	• Organisational and individual learning linked • Single-loop learning: errors detected in system and addressed; no change to core beliefs of organisation • Double-loop learning: core beliefs/values/policies of organisation questioned and tested leading to new learning and shift of values • Deutero-learning: leaders create structures for staff learning	• System-wide approach to growth and learning promoted • Needs good lines of communication and procedures for engaging in inquiry • Leaders need to be committed to learning process of staff and create structures for learning • Likely to affect school ethos and culture • No direct pupil involvement/actions explicitly identified within the model that could inform individual teacher learning, but potentially could create these

Learning Organisations by Senge (2006)	• Personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning all interdependent and surrounded by systems thinking so that members are attuned to each of the components and can respond to an ever changing environment • Needs vision as well as accurate view of current reality. Vision is co-created by staff teams, enhancing commitment • Leaders support personal development of staff	• Leaders need to encourage challenges to status quo and continually enable comparison of vision with reality • Leaders need to model personal learning • Need data and space for dialogue in collaborative inquiry and reflection about complex issues in holistic context • Needs 'safe' environment to explore and challenge individual beliefs • Likely to affect school ethos and culture • Systems thinking enables better awareness of factors affecting pupil's lives • No direct pupil involvement or actions specified, although potentially could create new mechanisms within the model in order to include pupils
Appreciative Inquiry by Cooperider et al (2005)	• Inquiry into strengths of organisation using 4 D model of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny • Solution-focused rather than problem-solving. Tackles problems from position of strength • Involves *all* stakeholders • Builds shared vision for future based on past successes • Can be used iteratively over time	• Can be a shift in thinking for some staff • Commitment to action is high • Needs facilitator to understand philosophy as well as process and leader may need training to do so • Leader needs to allow stakeholders to decide on actions and contribute to school development plan • Space for reflection not as explicit as space for action • Pupils can (or should) be directly involved as equal partners in the process

AI has been criticised for the lack of continuous reflection alongside actions (Dewar, 2011), which could act as a limitation unless it is built into the process (as in Conkright's 2011 study). However, it is the only model in Table 3 that is explicitly strengths-based. It does not look for interventions to solve problems within the organisation; instead it uses a focus on existing positives and strengths to 'look to *innovations* to create a better future design' (Fiorentino, 2012). AI is also the only model that directly facilitates the involvement of children as key stakeholders in the change process.

> A crucial aspect of AI is that it tries to get as much of the system working together as possible; aiming to be both 'top-down and bottom-up'…In AI the 'right people' are a group that can critically reflect on practice together, consider new solutions, *and* initiate change (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012, p.364).

AI therefore needs particularly careful facilitation in order to manage the equal contribution of all participants working in authentic collaboration (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012, p.368), simultaneously conveying confidence in a collaborative process whilst holding back from controlling the outcome (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011, p.719).

> Its unique significance has been in bringing social constructionist theory into widespread consideration in managerial practice, identifying the power of possibility centric versus problem centric change strategies, forcing an examination of the impact of positive emotions on change processes, and offering generativity, instead of problem-solving, as a way to address social and organizational issues (Bushe, 2013, p.5).

4.3.7 What organisational contexts and issues are most appropriate for AI?

Curato et al (2013) suggest that AI is particularly useful in creating meaningful discussions between people who are often antagonistic, requiring them to 'forge a new social relationship built on a shared vision for the future' (p.4). This implies that AI might be especially good for building good working relationships and inventing new ways to work together, but less effective in organisations that already have a positive ethos and culture. My own pilot AI study (Davies and Lewis, 2013) supports this idea as the class teacher already believed in children's active participation and did not think that the AI had 'brought about anything new' (p.70), even though there were positive changes in the classroom. Bellinger and Elliott (2011) suggest that AI can have a 'strengthening effect…on networks that are fragile and where there is a high risk of conflict, blame and mistrust' such as within 'state-regulated social work and education in the UK currently' (p.722).

> In a system where there has been little appreciation, an AI process may be transformational, but over time as the system becomes appreciative, AI becomes less useful as a change process (Bushe, 2010a, p. 236).

Bushe (2010a) claims that 'virtually none of the published cases examining AI take contextual variables into account' which are 'critical in untangling what kinds of changes can be attributed to the elements that are unique to AI…and what is more likely the result of effective (or ineffective) facilitation' (p.236). Researchers need 'to be clearer about the types of problems for which this approach is likely to be useful' (Normand, 2010, p.496). Van der Haar and Hosking (2004) studied the extensive literature on AI and found very few evaluation studies or critical reflections on AI, calling for 'more narratives of AI that are written in ways

that open up the multiple realities of participants and give readers greater space to form their own judgements' (p.1032).

4.4 Themes emerging from a critical study of applications of AI

4.4.1 Being inclusive

> The principle of wholeness is central to appreciative inquiry…If anyone is missing, there is much less potential for new discoveries, learning, cooperation, and innovative action (Ludema and Fry, 2008, p.286).

AI needs the active and genuine involvement of a wide range of stakeholders within an organisation, working together (Cooperrider et al, 2008). This means ensuring the presence and participation of managers as well as enabling any marginalised or vulnerable members to feel comfortable and able to contribute.

> Getting the stories of marginalized members of the system can sometimes be the most generative thing you can do. This allows the really new ideas, which always exist at the margins of social systems, voice (Bushe, 2010b, p.8).

An AI that cuts across different organisations cannot be used as an organisational change process, in my view, unless the 'organisation' is defined more widely and includes everyone from all of the different sub-organisations. Hart et al (2008) used AI with fifty managers from six different organisations, who were randomly assigned to mixed groups that remained together for all four AI stages, denying them the opportunity to focus on their own organisation and to *choose* an area of interest in the last two stages. Although the managers

made *individual* commitment statements and developed greater *self*-awareness, they were prevented from inquiry and action at an *organisational* level.

Akdere (2005) negated the inclusive principle of AI in a different way: by involving only a small research team to conduct the AI and then simply presenting their findings to the stakeholders, thus losing the structure needed for the organisational members to be active in *transforming* the way they work for themselves.

> An important premise of appreciative inquiry is that high quality inquiry depends on the presence of all participants in full voice (Zandee and Cooperrider, 2008, p.191).

It is particularly important that managers are included so that they can support and resource any agreed future changes within the action plans (Richer et al, 2009; Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012). Liebling et al (2001) used AI with the staff of two prisons but did not include the Governor and senior managers (or the prisoners themselves) in the inquiry. At Manchester Prison, 'the workgroup members were proud of what they had produced, and looked forward to their meeting with the Governor with eager anticipation. The meeting was a disaster. The Governor… 'asked for the names' of those members of his senior management team the group had hinted were 'not supporting the prison'. This was wholly in opposition to the spirit and practice of the AI process' (p.172–173).

> In any AI process it is essential to include people who bring dramatically different points of view to the process. In this way all the voices get heard, new connections and relationships are made, and innovative solutions that were previously unimaginable get created (Ludema and Fry, 2008, p.292)

Aldred (2009) questions how status and power differentials between participants affect outcomes both within and outside the AI process (p.68), suggesting that 'it might be best to use these methods only where there are limited power inequalities among those participating' (p.69). But Fitzgerald et al (2010) describe an AI where unequal power between participants privileged some voices over others and addressed this directly and sensitively by drawing attention to it and asking one person in each group to act as a 'steward' to ensure effective and respectful inclusion of all ideas (p.230), demonstrating that power-sharing in AI can be facilitated.

> One of the key strengths of AI is that it holds the potential for the integration of shared goals with shared activities and relationships (Fitzgerald et al, 2010, p.224).

4.4.2 Focusing on strengths

AI's positive stance has been criticised for failing to allow negative learning experiences and possibly inadvertently silencing critical voices in an organisation (Fineman, 2006; Barge and Oliver, 2003; discussed in Zandee and Cooperrider, 2008, p.191). Curato et al (2013) argues that AI should not, and does not need to, silence contestatory ideas, which can be helpful with skilful AI facilitation. AI should not be interpreted as a process that *enforces* only positives, otherwise it would be 'just another form of oppression' (Bushe, 2010a, p.234).

> A common criticism of Appreciative Inquiry is that it ignores or even denies problems…Appreciative Inquiry does address issues and problems, but from a different and often more constructive perspective: it reframes problem statements into a focus on strengths and successes…participants are also asked to state their

specific wishes for the organization. This implicitly raises and addresses problems. (Coghlan et al, 2003, p.6).

Ludema and Fry (2008) emphasise that AI's focus on strengths is much more than being positive: 'it is a robust process of inquiry and anticipatory learning that enables participants in social systems to shape the world they most want' (p.280). Zandee and Cooperrider (2008) believe it is important to avoid positive/negative dichotomies and to 'wholeheartedly engage with the complex, messy, and emergent nature of organizational and societal life (p.191)'. Michael (2005) explains: 'AI practitioners do not believe that it turns a blind eye to the negative and difficult experiences that are part of all organisational experiences…opting to use AI is to choose a starting point from which to work, rather than to choose some naïve and idealistic end point…an appreciative approach can often yield a more nuanced understanding of both the positive and the negative' (p.223). Naaldenberg et al (2012) found that 'the positive approach…did not prevent negative stories and experiences from emerging in conversations' (p.729).

> Problems and weaknesses can and do emerge in an appreciation-centered inquiry. Moreover,…some problems and weaknesses can be easier to address and surface when evaluation takes an appreciative stance…An Appreciative Inquiry process that is open, inviting, and trusted can generate plenty of data about perceived weaknesses and concerns (Patton, 2003, p.91, 92).

Previously unknown weaknesses and negative experiences emerge and are addressed when participants 'dream' of a preferred future for their organisation (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011). This 'bottom-up' approach uncovers aspects of the organisation only known to the participants themselves. In schools this means that children have an opportunity to raise issues that their teachers may never think are important.

Ludema and Fry (2008) believe that 'a deep connection with strengths…creates energy for action by boosting positive emotions and increasing an organization's overall intelligence, creativity, resilience, and cooperative capacity' (p.294-295). Bushe (2013) describes AI's unique significance in 'forcing an examination of the impact of positive emotions on change processes' (p.5). AI creates the conditions for people in organisations to be directly involved in imagining and making better systems. It unlocks the energy and drive for this by ensuring that everyone feels genuinely appreciated for the contributions they have made and are able to make in the future. It is a solution-focused approach applied to organisations.

> When you ask people appreciative questions, you touch something very important to them. They don't give politically correct answers, they give heartfelt answers (Hammond, 1996, p.48).

4.4.3 Using the full AI process

AI critics have argued that its flexibility and transferability can render the methodology unclear (Carter, 2006; Robinson et al, 2012) and the AI literature describes many applications of AI that do not use the full AI process (i.e. all four 'D's). Trajkovski et al (2013) found that the process 'takes shape differently in different contexts' (p.1228), making evaluation of its effectiveness difficult to assess.

> Some caution is needed when reviewing interventions described as AI in that some interventions follow through the whole 4-D process while others describing their interventions as AI in fact just appear to be applying the spirit (Onyett, 2009, p.501).

Although Smart and Mann (2003) acknowledge that they have not used the full application of AI, Rogers and Fraser (2003) are critical of their study for reducing AI to a series of open-ended questions in an interview schedule, 'neither discussing how this fell short of comprehensive Appreciative Inquiry nor explaining why this was done (p. 80)'. Scott et al (2012) used only the first two stages of AI to investigate perceptions of older people's safety and did not therefore involve them in working towards organisational change.

> A 'partial' deployment of the approach does open up the possibility of generating false hope: empowering participants on the one hand (not least by enabling them to imagine 'what could be'), while being powerless to make those desired changes happen (Robinson et al, 2012, p.16).

Many studies only use appreciative questions in interviews and yet claim to be using AI (e.g. Spence et al, 2012; Boerema, 2011; Goldie et al, 2010; Fergy et al, 2011). Some claim to have used AI when they have simply cast a positive lens on what works (Sieminski and Seden, 2011). However, using AI principles to frame research questions can lead to some surprisingly good results. For example, Michael (2005) does not claim to use AI for organisational change, but instead used a series of carefully devised Discovery Stage AI questions within her interviews. The questions were so positively received that she found her respondents being naturally drawn into the Dream Stage of AI as the interviews progressed. The results were extensive, both in quality and quantity of information gained, with a level of openness not often achieved in more formal interviews. But Carter (2006) warns that using AI only as an interview tool to gather stories is likely to 'dilute the ability to raise organisational consciousness (p.55)', although it should be acknowledged, in my view, that 'questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hope, and dreams are in themselves transformational' (Moore, 2008, p. 214).

> Appreciative Inquiry meets a deep-seated need in each one of us, to be respected, to be listened to and to have the opportunity to shape the future (Lewis et al, 2008, p.42).

Boyd and Bright (2007) provide a good example of all four stages of AI being used effectively within a local community group established to help injured workers. The personal storytelling about high points within the organisation occurred in the Dream Stage rather than the Discovery Stage but this did not seem to affect the positive outcomes, indicating that there can be some flexibility in the application of the process, as long as the underlying philosophy is authentic.

In 2002, the BBC conducted an AI involving over ten thousand employees (approximately forty percent of the total BBC) in more than two hundred meetings across the UK and around the world, over 6 months (Berrisford, 2005). The process had a profound effect on some people (unlocking emotions of affection, pride and loyalty) and led to thirty-five types of initiatives for positive change. Berrisford attributes a powerful culture change at the BBC to the AI process, which 'created a powerful momentum, people felt that their opinions mattered and that they could make a difference (p.4)'. The BBC did not use the full range of AI stages, although Berrisford predicts that if they had, the ownership of the changes would have stayed at team level and been even more powerful and long-lasting.

In facilitating AI, the process must not become more important than the people (Fitzgerald et al, 2010). People need to be given 'the freedom to choose whether and how they will participate; this is fundamental to nurturing authentic and full appreciation' (p.231). Being

authentic and respectful is therefore far more important than fidelity to a fixed AI process, which may need to be adapted to suit different groups of people. For example, Bellinger and Elliott (2011) suggest that the language of AI '(miracles, dreaming, provocative propositions) is unhelpful and serves to reinforce scepticism' (p.720), so alternative vocabulary could be developed. In my study, the children and teachers were encouraged to adapt the process so that it was meaningful and inclusive.

4.4.4 Transformational change

Bushe and Kassam (2005) conducted a meta-case analysis of twenty AI cases, looking for evidence of transformational change and the use of specific AI principles and practices. Transformation was defined as 'changes in the identity of the system and qualitative changes in the state of being of that system (p. 162)'. The analysis suggested that creating a collective sense of what needs to be achieved and aligning this with personal motivation could lead to a great deal of change as long as people are allowed and encouraged to take the initiative and make things happen for themselves. Collecting positive stories was found to be necessary but not sufficient for transformational change in the organisation, although this stage could lead to profound transformations in relationships.

Ludema and Fry (2008) argue that 'at its best, AI is less a science than an art, less a prescriptive method than a dynamic commitment to engage with others' (p.290). They propose five factors that influence the effectiveness of AI in achieving transformational change:

- 'agreeing on a clear, relevant, and compelling task;

- engaging the 'whole system';

- emphasising inquiry and learning;

- focusing unconditionally on strengths; and

- pushing beyond discovery and dream to design and destiny' (p.290).

Grant and Humphries (2006) warn that 'despite increased applications and scholarship, appreciative inquiry remains a research method with little self-reflection or critique (p.401)'. There is a risk that the application of social constructivism within AI leads to 'improvements' within the organisation without consideration of the wider social, economic and political landscape. Transformation *may* not, therefore, contribute to human emancipation and justice.

Fitzgerald et al (2010) describe an unethical outcome of an AI where positive stories were used to justify and sustain the salaries of those in power (p.228). Critical theory draws attention to the political and emancipatory elements of AI processes and leads researchers to reflect critically on whether the commitment to the positive could silence a 'potentially emancipatory critique'? (Grant and Humphries, 2006, p.415). Boje (2010) believes that critical theory needs to be aligned with AI so that potentially important 'acts of resistance' to the 'vortex of positivity' in AI can be brought out of the shadows and into the inquiry (p.239-240).

Whilst I am interested in working towards an 'emancipatory ideal' in relation to children's active participation within decisions relating to their learning and would like to see a transformation in teachers' beliefs about the value of participation, the primary focus of my

research remained exploratory. It was judged important, initially, to find out whether AI has the potential to empower all children to take part in decisions relating to their learning, and to discover what the effects might be in terms of any changes to children's and teachers' attitudes to and beliefs in participation. Depending upon the expressed beliefs of the teachers involved, a secondary focus on transformation may have become possible if the pedagogic relationship between a teacher and his or her class in the study was not conducive to pupil participation before the implementation of the AI. However, it would have been premature to make transformational change the primary focus of this research.

4.5 Critical study of the emerging use of AI within education

4.5.1 Introduction

> We have an ethical and moral responsibility to create people in appreciative, growth-giving ways. This is particularly true for children and young people (McAdam and Mirza, 2009, p. 182).

AI is beginning to be applied in educational studies relating to pedagogy; student involvement; teacher development and professional teams. In this section, each of these areas is briefly examined in relation to my research.

4.5.2 Pedagogy

> Children especially thrive and learn faster when they feel valued and seen…looking for what works, spotting abilities and strengths, nurturing the discovered strengths and visualising wondrous worlds can bring about significant changes in the lives of children (McAdam and Mirza, 2009, p.184).

Yballe and O'Connor (2000) created the term 'appreciative pedagogy' to describe their adaptation of AI to models of teaching and learning for students in higher education, concluding that 'an appreciative mindset has been a positive force in the classroom…for all members of the classroom learning community' (p.483). But an *appreciative mindset*, whilst very positive, is not an example of AI adapted to pedagogy, which would have needed all students and staff to *inquire* into their best experiences of teaching and learning, developing ideas about new ways of functioning together in the classroom each year.

Neville (2008) designed a course for undergraduate students based upon the principles of AI to teach her students *about* AI and involved them experientially by conducting mini-appreciative interviews with each other to inquire into their own peak learning experiences, discerning key themes, but did not then use this information to inform organisational change.

Carnell (2005) claims to use the first three stages of AI in a qualitative research project aimed at investigating young people's views about what helps them learn. Again there is no evidence of the young people being involved in any AI activities except small group discussions using AI questions. The young people's views are reported under themes devised by the researcher, who also devised the provocative propositions (in the Design Stage of AI) herself based upon the information gained in the interviews. No teachers were involved and the pupils came from four different schools, meaning that there was little or no chance of any organisational change or transformation in learning practices within any of their schools.

The only AI intervention I have found that has used the full AI organisational change process focusing on pedagogy was reported separately by Filleul and Rowland (2006) and Bushe (2010c), who conducted nine AIs across twenty-one schools within the Vancouver School District over a year, with the aim of enhancing learning experiences. There were two main topics shared across all sites:

1. What do educators do that create exceptional learning experiences?; and
2. What choices and options offered in educational settings most enhance learning?

Stakeholders included trustees, district administration and representatives of students, parents, teachers, administrators and all other employee groups. There were nine inquiry sites: three single schools; five groups of combined schools; and one district group. The site coordinating teams received two days of training in AI. The whole process was followed carefully and appropriately, leading to 'a profoundly empowering effect upon the majority of people who have taken part in the change initiative' creating an 'upbeat feeling for educators about the power of the work they do and, for many, reaffirms their commitment to the profession' (Filleul and Rowland, 2006, p.4). Filleul and Rowland (2006) focus particularly on adolescent learning in their report and show that a wide range of actions was implemented, all based around the key ideas of: adolescents learning best when there are strong relationships between staff and pupils in safe and supportive learning environments; teachers being passionate about their subject; experiential learning (including beyond the classroom); and diverse learning styles recognised in a flexible environment with a high degree of choice.

> The Appreciative Inquiry process offers a positive "shot in the arm" as it redirects
> thinking towards valuing the many, many things that are working well in our

classrooms, every day, as we participate in an enthusiastic dialogue with students and colleagues about what engages and excites us in our learning (Filleul and Rowland, 2006, p.8).

Bushe (2010c) focused on evaluating the process of change in eight AIs. Four of the AIs were found to have achieved transformational change, two were associated with incremental change and two showed little or no change. A transformational change meant that there had been 'a clear, compelling change in the normative routines of teachers in the site and the changes were seen as discontinuous – that is, they were not changes that had been simmering before the AI process began' (p.13). An incremental change meant that 'any observed changes were consistent with change processes already in action' (p.13). Differences within each AI site were studied in an effort to explain the differences in levels of change. Overall, levels of change were not associated with measures of positive affect but were instead much more closely aligned with how *generative* the AIs were of new compelling ideas. Important AI related factors associated with transformative change were: the quality and management of the Discovery Stage; the quality of the Design statements (or provocative propositions); an explicit focus on student engagement in learning; and a need to address a shared problem, issue or concern. Other significant factors related to the degree of change were the relationships between teachers and leaders and the commitment and passion of the leadership team.

My own pilot study using AI with a class of children to improve talking and listening within their learning (Davies and Lewis, 2013), began to explore the potential for AI to have an influence on pedagogy in the classroom. Seven- and eight-year-old children created new approaches to planning and reviewing their work, as well as devising innovative curriculum

activities, including experiential learning and activities beyond the classroom as in the Vancouver study. One group designed a system for inviting guest visitors into their class so that they could be interviewed by the children and another group developed an idea for regularly going into the school's forest to use and apply their maths. Further children's ideas included creating planning systems and artwork, rhymes, songs and poems to summarise their learning at the end of a project. The teacher, already an advocate of pupil participation, supported the children in building all of these ideas into the curriculum.

4.5.3 Student involvement

The principles of AI and solution focused thinking guided Doveston and Keenaghan (2006) in devising their action research project supporting teachers involving their students as co-researchers. The four stages of AI were used to guide the teachers through their interactions with the class, but only in solving *the teacher's problem* of getting the group to work cooperatively. As a philosophy, the AI process was able to guide the teacher to maintain a positive stance with her class but the pupils were not invited to share stories about times when they had been at their best working together (high points) and were not part of a genuine AI process of organisational change.

Morsillo and Fisher (2007) completed a student-led community project using all four stages of AI in a school within a socially disadvantaged area. However, the students did not work with their teachers and other stakeholders using AI to improve the *school* as an organisation even though the authors claimed that these young people were in danger of disengaging from school. Instead, the four stages of AI were simply used by staff to structure the content of the

students' *project* work. The students had no involvement in the improvement of the school or their project work.

Conklin (2009) claims to have used all four stages of AI in a whole class exercise with business students to design their 'preferred classroom' and involved the students in an active and democratic process of developing aims for how they should work together, based on peak learning experiences in the past. However, the final two stages simply served to vote on these aims and develop 'declarations' of intent, with no-one empowered to take any responsibility for actions to ensure these things happen.

> To categorise a study as an exercise in Appreciative Inquiry requires more than the use of a few basic procedures (Rogers and Fraser, 2003, p. 80).

However, as noted earlier, the interviews alone can still be a powerful experience. Bonham (2011) describes this early part of AI as a powerful therapeutic intervention for youth in detention due to its focus on the life story of the young person and their hopes for the future, where 'the experience for the youth becomes both transformative and healing' (p.127).

In contrast to these examples of incomplete applications of AI, McAdam and Mirza (2009) used the full process with marginalised young people who used drugs and alcohol in South Africa. The report is told as a powerful story about a two day workshop with young people in a local community centre. Pairs of young people who had not met before interviewed each other and labelled each other with post-its containing positive information drawn from the story telling about episodes of pride and competence. The pairs then joined into groups of six

or eight and the stories were shared and witnessed, with more abilities spotted and added to the post-its. With these new-found abilities, the young people dreamed of their futures in ten or fifteen years' time and created action plans to achieve their dreams. On the second day of the workshop, the young people focused on their hopes and dreams for their local communities, with a number of important community members and leaders present to help their dreams to be realised. 'This brought about the most amazing projects of altruistic thoughtfulness and care' (p.177). There was no focus upon these young people's mental health, social difficulties or drug use. The stories of their lives became about their competence and success.

> We have to engage in an active process of ability spotting as people recount the stories they have lived. Our questioning is aimed at appreciating and putting into language people's abilities, skills, resources and values…By ability spotting, skills that have never been recognised and valued before become part of a person's identity and new resources for the future (McAdam and Mirza, 2009, p. 186).

4.5.4 Teacher development

AI has been applied at the individual level as a tool for self-reflection on adult role and identity within education (Kinash and Wood, 2013; Rudman, 2013; Luckcock, 2007). It has also been used in initial teacher training as a reflective process to structure assignments (He, 2013). These applications can change thinking, attitudes and ways of working but do not represent organisational change.

Clarke et al (2006) describe their use of AI with teachers from sixteen different schools, encouraging and motivating teachers to create case studies of good practice in science with

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very young children. Despite quoting extensively from AI texts and studies, they also do not use AI as an organisational development tool. Although the results are positive, they are not *transformational* in any of the schools involved (Bushe and Kassam, 2005).

Doveston and Keenaghan (2010) used the principles of AI effectively with a focus group of teachers and educational psychologists to promote more effective interpersonal relationships in classes using a consultation framework. Although much of the language of AI was used and the teachers learned about collaborative, appreciative forms of consultation, there was no collaboration with pupils in developing this approach and again, AI was not used as an organisational change model.

Byrne-Jimenez and Orr (2012) describe an AI approach being used to guide aspiring head teachers towards effective models of school improvement, arguing that it can be used successfully for reflection and learning, without necessarily using the whole process as an organisational change model. I have not come across any research that involves whole school staff in an AI except for the teachers involved in the Vancouver studies (Filleul and Rowland, 2006; Bushe, 2010c) discussed above.

4.5.5 Professional educational teams

Doggett and Lewis (2013) used the full AI process with an educational psychology service, which was found to enhance feelings of agency and control during an unsettled period of restructuring within the local authority and facilitated better communication with managers.

However, it also created some negative effects relating to increased demands on time and questions were raised about ownership of the initial topic choice.

Van Vuuren and Crous (2005) used all four stages of AI effectively with all staff members of an academic department in a large university in order to transform the management of ethics into a positive opportunity to initiate ethical change that is meaningful and aligned with the personal and collective beliefs of the staff.

It is possible to use AI successfully with a range of professionals who work in multi-agency teams. Carter (2006) used AI to research and develop best practice in multi-agency working for children with complex needs and their families. The participants in the study came from a range of services (health, social care, education and voluntary) across two counties, across many different organisations and different management structures, as well as a range of parents and carers. He found that 'each stage of the data generation was accompanied by a buzz, a sense that things were indeed possible and that change could and would happen…The energy that was created within the interviews and workshops, the commitment, motivation and support we received from the participants was staggering (p.60)'. Carter acknowledges, however, the potential alienation and frustration of energised staff if senior managers have not been involved in the AI process and do not support the staff in building on this work, a difficulty with all multi-agency work.

4.6 Criticisms and limitations of AI

Table 4 summarises all of the criticisms and limitations of AI that have been discussed in the current and preceding chapters, alongside responses and/or strategies to overcome these difficulties where appropriate.

4.7 Summary of implications for my own research study

> As Appreciative Inquiry becomes fashionable, 'any inquiry that focuses on the positive in some way gets called appreciative inquiry…The result will be that the unique power of this idea gets corrupted and lost' (Bushe, 2000, quoted in Rogers and Fraser, 2003, p. 81).

Table 5 summarises the implications for my own research from the critical analysis of the research and theory discussed above.

The literature reviews in Chapters 3 and 4 identified the *same* key themes of: inclusion for *all* children; generating actions and positive outcomes; empowerment; sharing power between adults and children; and contextual factors in relation to the pre-existing culture of participation in the classroom. Table 6 shows how these themes relate to one another and led to implications for my research.

4.8 Conclusions and research questions

It was interesting that the only key theme in Table 6 that indicated *differences* between the two literature reviews was the theme of contextual factors i.e. the pre-existing culture of participation in the classroom. The literature relating to pupil participation suggested that there should *already* be a culture of participation, or a readiness and belief in this work, for

the AI to be successful. In contrast to this, the literature relating to the use of AI suggested that there was likely to be a greater transformative effect when the pre-existing culture of participation was *less* developed or involved less positive relationships.

The research purposes arising directly from the critical synthesis of the literature and research implications in Table 6 were refined into the following three main research questions:

- How does an AI affect the culture of pupil participation in the classroom? In particular, is it an effective way to give children voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning and does it affect the adults' and children's beliefs about the value of pupil participation?
- How does an AI that is focused on writing lessons change the curriculum and affect pupils' attitudes, progress and attainment?
- What can children and their teachers tell us about how to improve the AI process in primary schools so that it is as inclusive and effective as possible?

A fourth was added in accordance with the philosophy and approach of AI:

- What are the high points or strengths of developing and using AI with a whole class, from the perspectives of both the children and their teacher(s)? What has been appreciated most by the people involved?

Bushe (2010a) argues that 'those concerned with the practice of AI need to translate the growing body of AI research and theory into guidelines managers and consultants can make sense of and use' (p.236). My research aimed to involve children and teachers in beginning to develop guidelines for using AI effectively in schools.

Table 4: Summary of criticisms and limitations of AI with responses and/or strategies to overcome the difficulties presented

Criticisms/Limitations of AI	Responses/Strategies to overcome difficulties
Lack of continuous reflection alongside actions (Dewar, 2011).	Reflection can be built into the process at key points (Conkright, 2011). In my study, planning and review meetings with teachers enabled joint reflection.
Its positive stance can inadvertently silence (or even oppress) critical voices in an organisation (Fineman, 2006; Barge and Oliver, 2003; discussed in Zandee and Cooperrider, 2008, p.191).	Positives should never be forced or enforced as part of the process (Bushe, 2010a). Contestatory ideas can be helpful with skilful facilitation (Curato et al, 2013). Strengths and visions for the future are the drivers for change, not positives (Ludema and Fry, 2008). Positive/negative dichotomies should be avoided in favour of appreciating and valuing everyone's perspectives (Zandee and Cooperrider, 2008). Negative experiences and stories are not prevented (Michael, 2005; Naaldenberg et al, 2012). A process that is open, inviting, and trusted can generate plenty of data about perceived weaknesses and concerns (Patton, 2003). Critical theory can be aligned with AI so that potentially important 'acts of resistance' to the 'vortex of positivity' in AI can be brought out of the shadows and into the inquiry (Boje, 2010; Grant and Humphries, 2006). In my study, reflexivity and professional educational psychology (EP) consultation skills ensured openness to critical or negative views and concerns.
Appears to ignore or fail to tackle problems (Coghlan et al, 2003). Risks 'papering over substantive problems' (Rogers and Fraser, 2003).	Problems are addressed both in the initial topic choice (often something requiring improvement) and in the dreams and wishes of the organisation for a better future, where the problems people are experiencing have been solved (Coghlan et al, 2003). Some problems and weaknesses can be easier to address and surface when an evaluation takes an appreciative stance (Patton, 2003), including those that were previously unknown (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011). In my study, the problem of poor writing skills was addressed by the adults making this the topic of each AI and the children devising more motivating writing activities. The evaluation of the AI process surfaced further barriers to participation.
The language of AI (e.g. miracles, life-giving, dreaming, provocative propositions, envision) can be unhelpful and reinforce scepticism (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011).	Alternative vocabulary could be developed (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011) to suit different cultures and groups of people. In my study, the children in Classes B and C decided to call their AI activities 'Superschool'. Class A liked the new

	term: 'provocative propositions'. All vocabulary was adapted as required.
Outcomes may not be emancipatory, beneficial or even ethical for people *outside* the organisation (Grant and Humphries, 2006; Fitzgerald et al, 2010).	Critical theory can draw attention to the political and emancipatory elements of AI and can be aligned with AI so that critical reflection prevents potentially unethical outcomes (Grant and Humphries, 2006; Boje, 2010). This is part of my stance as a researcher.
It could be difficult for a member of the organisation to choose *not* to take part.	The process must not become more important than the people e.g. people must be free to choose whether and how much to participate (Fitzgerald et al, 2010). This is potentially difficult in a classroom setting, which typically relies on the teacher's planning for activities from which children are rarely able to opt out. However, children were informed they could observe if they preferred.
The AI may not be fully inclusive and may not involve managers and leaders, which then compromises the potential outcomes (Akdere, 2005; Liebling et al, 2001). It can be difficult to define the organisation and include all the stakeholders (Hart et al, 2008). Multi-agency teams may not be able to include the managers of each of the teams involved (Carter, 2006).	High quality inquiry depends on the presence of all participants (Zandee and Cooperrider, 2008). It is particularly important that managers are included so that they can support and resource any agreed future changes within the action plans (Richer et al, 2009; Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012). In any AI process it is essential to include people who bring dramatically different points of view to the process (Ludema and Fry, 2008). Managers and leaders need to be passionately committed to the AI process (Bushe, 2010c). In my study, the headteachers and staff were all involved and highly supportive of the process. SEND children were supported so that they were able to be as fully included as possible.
The topic for the inquiry may not be motivating for all participants in the AI (Doggett and Lewis, 2015). It is not yet clear what types of problems are best suited to an AI (Normand, 2010).	The topic for the inquiry needs to address a shared concern (Bushe, 2010c) and be framed in language that attracts genuine curiosity and interest (Ludema and Fry, 2008). In my study, the topic was selected by the headteacher for Classes B and C and by the teacher and head teacher together in Class A. The title of 'Superschool' was motivating in the former and 'Literacy Project' became so in the latter. All children were interested in the idea of devising new writing tasks.
There could be unequal power in relationships between people in AI that privilege some voices over others (Aldred, 2009). For AIs in schools, it can be difficult for teachers to share power with children, either taking too much control or providing too little support (Catling, 2014; Pascal and	Unequal power can be addressed directly and sensitively by drawing attention to it and asking one person in each group to act as a 'steward' to ensure effective and respectful inclusion of all ideas (Fitzgerald et al, 2010). School teachers may need supervision and support to understand the principles of AI, especially the empowerment of the children's ideas. Children may raise issues that the teacher

Bertram, 2009; Coppock, 2011; Stephen et al, 2010; Bragg, 2007).	or researcher may not believe are important, but which should nevertheless be accepted, respected and included in the inquiry (Gillen et al, 2011; Fisher, 2014). In my study, the planning and review meetings with staff enabled discussion, supervision and support to be given.
The AI process is heavily reliant upon oral/verbal processes and group work so it may favour the most articulate and socially confident participants at the expense of others (Dyson and Meagher, 2001; Lomax, 2012).	This is a particularly important consideration when using AI with children or vulnerable groups. The AI needs careful facilitation and possibly adapted using new inclusive techniques (McLaughlin, 2006; Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012). The teachers and children in my study were involved in devising inclusive techniques.
AI facilitation requires great skill. The facilitator needs to understand the philosophy and the process of AI and may need training in order to do so (Evans et al, 2012; Rogers and Fraser, 2003).	The contributions of all participants need to be managed so that there is authentic collaboration (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012, p.368). The facilitator needs to simultaneously convey confidence in a collaborative process whilst holding back from controlling the outcome (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011). In my study, this formed part of the research purposes and was addressed in the teacher interviews.
Some studies do not use the full AI process or implement AI as an organisational change process (e.g. Smart and Mann, 2003; Scott et al, 2012; Yballe and O'Connor, 2000; Neville, 2008). This risks generating false hope and being powerless to make those desired changes happen (Robinson et al, 2012).	Questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hope, and dreams can be therapeutic and transformational in terms of relationships but not in terms of organisational change (Bonham, 2011; Moore, 2008; Bushe and Kassam, 2005). Need to push beyond discovery and dream to design and destiny to achieve transformational change (Ludema and Fry, 2008). Being authentic and respectful is, however, far more important than fidelity to a fixed AI process, which may need to be adapted to suit different groups of people (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011). The full process was used in my study.
The flexibility and transferability of the process can render the methodology unclear (Carter, 2006; Robinson et al, 2012) and make evaluation of its effectiveness difficult to assess (Trajkovski et al, 2013; Onyett, 2009).	Those concerned with the practice of AI should translate the growing body of AI research and theory into guidelines managers and consultants can make sense of and use (Bushe, 2010a). Studies should be taking contextual variables into account (Bushe, 2011). This has formed part of my research purposes.
Advocates of AIs are often the ones who write studies and reports for publication, which may create an imbalance within the critical evaluations of the literature (Van der Haar and Hosking, 2004). Rigorous randomized controlled trials of AI are not likely to be feasible (Onyett, 2009).	More narratives of AI are needed that are 'written in ways that open up the multiple realities of participants and give readers greater space to form their own judgements' (Van der Haar and Hosking, 2004, p.1032). More comparative studies are needed that evaluate a series of AIs with varying contextual factors (Bushe, 2010b). My study was a multiple case study to facilitate comparisons.

Table 5: Implications of AI literature review for my research

AI literature review	Implications for my research
All children need to be fully and equally included.	The process was likely to need adapting to ensure that all children, including those who are vulnerable children or have special educational needs can participate fully. The language used and the activities chosen to facilitate each stage needed to be appropriate and motivating for the age of the children.
The AI should involve all stakeholders in the organisation.	The 'organisation' for the purposes of my research was at the class level. It was intended that all those regularly working together in the class would be involved as stakeholders i.e. children, teachers and teaching assistants. Children had the option of observing if they felt uncomfortable participating.
The AI needs careful facilitation so that all children and adults have an equal voice.	The teachers were supported to understand the principles of AI, especially the empowerment of the children's ideas and that the children may raise issues that the teacher did not believe to be important, but which should nevertheless be accepted, respected and included in the inquiry. All contributions were valued. The inquiry needed to be person-centred.
The children and teacher(s) should decide on a compelling topic choice.	It was important that everyone felt interested in and motivated by the inquiry, having been involved in deciding its focus.
All four 'D's need to be included in the AI in order to generate actions.	It was important that the actions were self-directed by the stakeholders. Plenty of time needed to be allowed for each stage of the inquiry.
The planning and implementation of the AI should involve the children and teacher(s).	The children and teacher(s) were involved in reflecting on the factors that positively influence the AI and in making recommendations for its future use in schools. The teacher(s) needed to be actively involved in all aspects of the AI alongside the children, including its planning and evaluation.
The class context does not have to be participative and built on good relationships for the AI to be transformative.	The contextual variables of the class needed to be explored and described.

Table 6: Key themes from the literature reviews in Chapters 3 and 4 linked to each other and to their implications for my research

Children as Researchers (Chapter 3)	Appreciative Inquiry (Chapter 4)	Implications for my research
Inclusion All children have a right to participate in research about matters that affect them in school and are competent to do so, regardless of age or ability.	All children need to be fully and equally included. The AI should involve all stakeholders in the organisation.	The AI process was likely to need adapting to ensure equal access for all children. Children could tell us how to improve the activities (and language) of an AI so that it is as inclusive and motivating as possible.
Positive Outcomes Children's participation in research must have influence (as well as space, voice and audience).	All four 'D's need to be included in the AI in order to generate actions.	The outcomes of an AI with children focusing on their writing lessons should be explored and reported.
Empowerment The research topic and aspects of the process should be negotiated with children and their teacher(s), enabling children to be involved in decision-making.	The children and teacher(s) should decide on a compelling topic choice. The planning and implementation of the AI should involve the children and teacher(s).	Children and their teacher(s) could reflect and feedback information about their involvement at each stage of the AI process and how it might be improved.
Shared power The research should be developed as collaborative research with the children and their teacher(s) working as co-researchers.	The AI needs careful facilitation so that all children and adults have an equal voice.	Adults may have changed their perception of the power children could or should have as a result of participating in an AI, which would be interesting to explore.

Context/culture		
The school chosen should be one that is responsive to the idea of children as co-researchers and ready for the challenge of taking student voice work to this next step.	The AI is more likely to be transformative in a class context that is not participative and is not built on good relationships.	It would be interesting to explore whether AI shifts the children and teachers' perceptions of the participative culture of the class and their beliefs about the importance of participation, with particular reference to the perceptions of vulnerable children and those with SEND.

Researcher-participant relationships are being given some of the attention I think they deserve. Democracy and empowerment are much talked about, if less often achieved (Dick, 2010, p.134).

Chapter 5: Research Methodology: Theoretical Considerations

5.1 Introduction and research questions

The literature review in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 informed the following four research questions:

1. How does an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) affect the culture of pupil participation in the classroom? In particular, is it an effective way to give children voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning, and does it affect the adult's and children's beliefs about the value of pupil participation?

2. How does an AI that is focused on writing lessons change curriculum activities and affect pupils' attitudes, progress and attainment?

3. What are the high points or strengths of developing and using AI with a whole class, from the perspectives of both the children and their teacher(s)? What has been appreciated most by the people involved?

4. What can children and their teachers tell us about how to improve the AI process in primary schools so that it is as inclusive and effective as possible?

In order to answer these research questions, my study used a multiple case-study design, where an AI was implemented in each of three primary classes; two Year 4 classes in one school and a Year 6 class in another school. This chapter explores the theory underpinning this choice of methodology.

In this chapter I explore: the nature of educational research; my identity as a practitioner and researcher; mixed-methods research; the involvement of children in research processes; and arriving at my choice of methodology.

5.2 The nature of educational research

Educational research encompasses three main types of inquiry or paradigms: positivism and the scientific method; naturalistic and interpretative approaches; and critical theory approaches (Cohen et al, 2007). The positivist paradigm (often quantitative) has been criticised in educational research because it 'fails to take account of our unique ability to interpret our experiences and represent them to ourselves' (Cohen et al, 2007, p.18). Its focus on objectivity does not sufficiently acknowledge the subjective nature of human experience, with its individuality, free choice and moral responsibility (Foreman-Peck and Murray, 2008). Educational researchers question whether it is ethical to treat people as objects, to talk about people in a language that excludes them, or to make decisions for people without their knowledge and involvement (Cohen et al, 2007).

The interpretative research paradigm (often qualitative) validates the study of people's perceptions and interpretations as social constructions that can be understood in their context, but can be limited by a potential lack of generalisability and also by the bias introduced by the perspectives of the researcher (Cresswell and Plano Clarke, 2011). Interpretative research often fits naturally into the school context, where there is co-creation and collaboration between the researcher and the researched, preserving its integrity (Gibbs and Costley, 2006). Above all, educational research needs an ethic of *care* for the people involved:

> To strip our researching of care is to strip our researched of their humanity and our findings of authenticity (Gibbs and Costley, 2006, p.243).

Both positivist and interpretative paradigms are concerned with understanding the world: positivism by objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability, patterns and laws; interpretivism by the meanings people give to their experience of the world. Critical educational research adds political and ideological concerns, so that the purpose of inquiry is not just to understand the world but to question and change it, to emancipate the disempowered and transform us into a more inclusive, democratic society (Cohen et al, 2007). Critical theory can help us reflect on both positivist and interpretative understandings and bring enlightenment that *may* lead to emancipation but it is critical educational research that has the ability to *transform* educational practices because it involves *action* (Hartley, 2008). 'Action research developed out of critical theory, and went beyond it' (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011, p.47), aiming to change the social practices it studies (Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

My research is located primarily within an interpretative paradigm aligned with critical theory (i.e. an aspect of critical educational research), seeking emancipation by providing all children with genuine *influence* to improve their learning experiences and potentially change the culture of participation and the balance of power within the classroom.

The studies in the literature on AI and pupil participation discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 are all interpretative: mostly case studies; but also participatory and collaborative action research; narrative and some ethnographic accounts. However, where children are involved in studies of AI they are invariably the 'objects' of research rather than actively engaged participants, with the exception of some student involvement in the Canadian school study (Filleul and Rowland, 2006; Bushe, 2010c) and my own pilot study (Davies and Lewis, 2013). The studies

of pupil participation also mainly involve children as 'objects', where their views are sought; it is only the innovative work of children as researchers or co-researchers that begins to achieve emancipation by enabling children to take actions that directly improve their lives (Kellett, 2005; Bucknall, 2012). There is very little exploration of ways to include all the children in a class working together to improve their own experiences of learning, which is the focus of my research.

> Children and young people have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect them. This right extends from decisions affecting them as individuals, to decisions that affect them as a collectivity (Wall and Higgins, 2006, p.40).

5.3 My identity as a practitioner and researcher

> I see our scientific theories as human inventions – nets designed by us to catch the world… Yet they will never be perfect instruments for this purpose. They are rational nets of our own making and should not be mistaken for a complete representation of the real world in all its aspects (Popper, 1982, p.42, cited in Straker and Hall, 1999, p.431).

Educational researchers need to make their educational standpoint and their understanding of education explicit before any meaningful discussion of research methodology can take place (Carr, 2007). In Chapter 1, Section 1.3, I describe my personal values and beliefs about children and adults as learners, exploring my experiences of pupil participation. In summary, I believe that all children are able to engage actively in, reflect on and make decisions about their learning when given the pedagogical space to do so.

> If it is accepted that educational researchers have to engage with ontological issues, and more precisely with the relationship between structure and agency which characterises social life, then explanations have to in part refer to beliefs, intentions, emotions and the like (Scott, 2007, p.9-10).

Ontological assumptions concern beliefs about the nature of what is being investigated. Social reality may be seen as external or internal to individuals i.e. imposing itself on individuals from the social world outside or located within their interpretations and perceptions of the social world (Cohen et al, 2007; Moore, 2005).

Epistemological assumptions concern beliefs about how to acquire knowledge in research. These depend on the researcher's ontological beliefs. If social reality exists externally, it may be studied, and knowledge acquired objectively as in positivist research. If the researcher believes that reality exists primarily in an individual's perceptions of personal, social experiences, then an interpretative approach enables a better understanding of this social reality. Knowledge of social behaviour will be sought through observation and experiment in the former and by involvement with people through participatory research methods in the latter. As an educational psychologist, my own ontological beliefs are positioned towards the internal subjective experience of social reality, which means for me that all people (including children) are actively making sense of their social world and acting intentionally upon it.

> Our practice…must be based upon some theory…this theory must inevitably be an expression of our practitioner view of the world, our ontology, and include what we take to be true, real and of significance (Moore, 2005, p.107).

The nature of educational psychology practice is centred on relationships with others and it is inevitable that we interact with people (including children and young people as well as teachers and colleagues) who hold different ontological beliefs to our own. Understanding this prepares us to work with difference and diversity, and becomes an ethical issue of acceptance and respect for others, which helps us to appreciate 'the ability of others…to contribute to and guide their own process of change and development' (Moore, 2005, p.114). It also ensures that we question the extent to which we introduce our own beliefs and priorities. This epistemology of educational psychology practice is congruent with my own values in recognising that others may view the world very differently and that it is the facilitation of *their* thinking and learning that informs my research interest.

> The primary role of the expert is one in which they facilitate, with others, the construction of a contextually relevant truth, one that may not generalise to other contexts… more as an art than as a science, as it entails the ability to work within the tangled complexities of the social world (Moore, 2005, p.111).

My research purposes are ultimately emancipatory. I am seeking to facilitate and systematically explore an organisational change process with classes of children, with the intent of giving children voice and influence over the learning activities they encounter at school. Ontology relating to an emancipatory approach to research recognises multiple realities and the subjective nature of reality, but is critically aware of the influence of oppressive forces within that construction of reality. An emancipatory epistemology is then concerned with methodologies that empower those without, or with less power, and examines how the research benefits or does not benefit the participants involved in the research processes (Mertens, 1998).

However, my background as a scientist leads me to believe that there are also likely to be observable and measurable outcomes of the AI intervention, which might reasonably be predicted on the basis of theory and research about its effects on human functioning within a variety of contexts. Predictions of outcomes (or hypotheses) are not generally seen as meaningful in qualitative research (Willig, 2008), although Maxwell's (1996) view, in contrast, is that 'there is no inherent problem with formulating qualitative research hypotheses…Many qualitative researchers explicitly state their ideas about what is going on as part of the process of theorizing and data analysis. These are often called propositions rather than hypotheses…but they serve the same function' (p.53).

I am interested in conducting pre- and post-AI intervention measures as part of my exploration of the effects an AI may have on the culture of participation in the classroom. This shift towards the positivist paradigm is accompanied by an acknowledgement that the 'culture of participation' in a classroom is real and can be explored using interpretative reflections of the research participants with the researcher. So it is appropriate to consider my ontological beliefs as realist as well as an interpretavist.

> For the realist researcher, objects of research such as 'culture', 'the organization', 'corporate planning' exist and act quite independently of the observer. They are therefore as available for systematic analysis as natural phenomena. Hence, knowledge is advanced through the process of theory-building in which discoveries add to what is already known (Gray, 2004, p.25-26).

Critical realism has been described as an integration of realist ontology with constructivist epistemology i.e. that our understanding of the world is inevitably constructed from our own perspectives (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.45) and is positioned between the two

extremes of positivism and relativism, combining 'the realist ambition to gain a better understanding of what is 'really' going on in the world with the acknowledgement that the data the researcher gathers may not provide direct access to this reality' (Willig, 2008, p.13). Critical realism admits that knowledge is subjective and socially constructed, so that multiple viewpoints may be studied using a variety of methods (Gray, 2004). Critical realism then, admits there are gaps between reality and the subjective interpretation of reality; causal links are not always observable and will rely to some extent on the interpretations of participants.

Critical realism has advantages over other interpretative approaches as it allows us to reflect upon cause and effect (Grix, 2004). However, unlike positivism, the effects caused cannot be expected to be predictable as they will always depend on the influence of a range of contextual factors (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). My research focuses upon three different classes, each with varying contextual factors that are likely to have an impact upon the implementation of AI. Taking a critical realist perspective enables me to study a wide range of factors that may influence the outcomes of each AI, so that theory may be generated through consideration of cause and effect that is set alongside the interpretations of the children and teachers within each context. The type of data likely to be useful will be critically evaluated in the next section.

> The particular strength of qualitative research, for both researchers and practitioners, is its ability to focus on actual practice in situ, looking at how social interactions are routinely enacted (Silverman, 2000, p.283).

5.4 Mixed-methods research

In order to answer the research questions (see Section 5.1), I believe that a 'mixed methods' approach is needed that involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. With almost a hundred individual children involved, quantitative data sources enable perspectives to be gained from all children in relation to specific questions at different points in time, alongside additional qualitative information. Conversely, with only three teachers involved, their individual perspectives can be explored more fully using primarily, but not exclusively, qualitative methods. It is the combination of both types of data that 'provide[s] a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach by itself' (Cresswell and Plano-Clark, 2011, p.8).

> The fact that simple quantitative measures are a feature of good qualitative research shows that the dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative measures is unhelpful (Silverman, 2000).

A pragmatic, or eclectic, approach enables me to mix methods according to the type of data source I believe is likely to help in exploring the outcomes of the AIs in three different classes and any changes in the perspectives of those involved.

Mixed methods research has come to be seen as a distinct research method in its own right, alongside quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2009: Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). It is recognised by some researchers as the third major research approach or paradigm (Johnson et al, 2007). As a working definition, mixed methods is an approach to enquiry in which the researcher collects, analyses and links both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a unified understanding of a research problem (summarised from Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Its six core characteristics are defined in Table 7.

Table 7: The six core characteristics of mixed methods research (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.5)

	Core characteristics of mixed methods
1	The researcher collects and analyses persuasively and rigorously both qualitative and quantitative data (based on research questions).
2	The researcher mixes (or integrates or links) the two forms of data concurrently by combining them (or merging them), sequentially by having one build on the other; or embedding one within the other.
3	The researcher gives priority to one or both forms of data (in terms of what the research emphasises).
4	The researcher uses these procedures in a single study or in multiple phases of a program of study.
5	The researcher frames these procedures within philosophical worldviews and theoretical lenses.
6	The researcher combines the procedures into specific research designs that direct the plan for conducting the study.

Mixed methods research presents a number of significant challenges and limitations, including: researchers need to be skilled in using both types of data; the quantity of data can be excessive and time (and resource)-consuming to collect and analyse; it is relatively new and some people may not see its value; some may object to mixing different paradigms; and it may still be difficult to locate mixed methods research in the literature (Cresswell and Plano Clarke, 2011).

In terms of its advantages, Greene et al. (1989) argue that mixed-method inquiry develops more complete portraits of our social world through the use of multiple perspectives and is therefore more comprehensive. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) highlight that mixed methods research aims not to replace either quantitative or qualitative approaches but rather to

draw from the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of each in single research studies and across studies. Yin (2009) argues that mixed methods research can facilitate the collection of 'a richer and stronger array of evidence than can be accomplished by any single method alone' (p.63). Mixed methods research is often seen as pragmatic and is consistent with my stance as a critical realist. In the context of my research with children, this type of pragmatic approach:

> …seeks a philosophical middle ground; accepts the natural world as being as real and valid as the psychological world and the social world; acknowledges the powerful influence of both internal and external forces in shaping observable human behaviour and understanding; sees that knowledge is both objectively observable and socially constructed and relative; has a cautious approach to certainty; finds the best theoretical fit for the research purpose; uses an eclectic approach to theories and methods; seeks a strongly objective approach even in qualitative methods in terms of making choices in research accountable; and, finally, takes action, links to practice and produces change for individuals, groups and societies (Greig et al, 2013, p.78).

5.5 Involving children in educational research

The empowerment of children brings particular challenges for emancipatory research. There is strong evidence for 'insider epistemology' within feminist and disability research (Tangen, 2008), which could call into question whether the researcher should even *be* a child in order to understand children's perspectives. The basis of the AI intervention itself does involve children interviewing each other to find out about their best experiences of learning, from their own perspectives. Tangen (2008) argues that adults working as co-researchers with children at least help the children to be part of the research process, which creates an 'open' version of insider epistemology. Researchers should see children both in terms of their individual agency *and* in terms of their interactions with peers and adults within their social

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and cultural contexts (Fay, 1996, cited in Tangen, 2008, p.164). But it can be difficult to separate out the child's voice 'from the researcher's when data are collected by relational, participatory approaches' (Tangen, 2008, p.164).

> In participatory research, the dichotomy between the researcher and the researched begins to break down. The researcher is no longer the expert whose interpretations are the only ones which matter, but instead, is a facilitator. The construction of knowledge becomes a collective process for all of the participants (Kane et al, 2008, p.107 and 108).

My research involves an inclusive range of children as co-researchers alongside myself and their teachers, with emancipatory intent to investigate whether AI has the potential to shift the balance of power within classroom curriculum and pedagogy. My role within this research is primarily as a facilitator; empowering the teacher and children to trial the use of AI and reflect with me on its process and impact.

> Participatory approaches to research do not comprise simply another set of techniques. They are fundamentally to do with a stance towards power in the research process and towards the position of young people – particularly disadvantaged young people – in society as a whole (Dyson and Meagher, 2001, p.71).

Participatory research is seen as a step on the way towards emancipatory research, but rarely (yet) allows child participants to have very much control (Chappell, 2000). As discussed in Chapter 3, Kellett (2005), Frost (2007) and Bucknall (2012) have answered this charge by training children to act as researchers in their own right, although the topics for research remain at an individual or small group level and rarely have any influence on pedagogy. My

research explores a mechanism that might help children to be involved in pedagogic decision-making at the whole class level.

In the literature review of pupil participation in Chapter 3, the right and ability of children to take part in educational research and the sharing of power with adults was explored in depth. The main implications for my research methodology are summarised in Table 8, together with methodological decisions to address the issues raised.

5.6 Methods of inquiry: refining the choice of methodology

As a critical educational researcher seeking to involve children and their teacher(s) as co-researchers in exploratory (and potentially emancipatory) research, each of the following methods of inquiry was considered: reflective practice; action research; realistic evaluation; and case study. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith et al, 2009), a further method of interpretative (and potentially emancipatory) inquiry, was discounted because it does not feasibly enable large numbers of children to be involved. All types of inquiry benefit from reflexivity, which is discussed in Section 6.5.

5.6.1 Reflective practice

Being aware of my own learning has led to a long-standing interest in the epistemology of being a 'reflective practitioner' (Kinsella, 2007). Reflective inquiry was first outlined by John Dewey in the 1930s as 'intentional, systematic inquiry that is disciplined and that will ultimately lead to change and professional growth for teachers' (Farrell, 2012, p.13). The term

'reflective practitioner' was then used by Donald Schön in the 1980s and has been widely quoted throughout my educational career. Schön contends that 'by observing and reflecting on our actions we can sometimes formulate constructions that account for the tacit knowledge revealed in what we do… Such knowledge is integrally tied to an artistry of practice' (Kinsella, 2007, p.401). Another way to stimulate professional reflection and challenge to practitioners' tacit knowledge and beliefs is by attending to emerging contradictions, but trust is needed for these to surface (Hartley, 2007). It is possible that in conducting an AI with the class, a teacher would confront contradictions in his or her theory of practice that may lead to transformations in beliefs and ensuing actions.

Listening to children's perspectives about their learning experiences can provide a powerful stimulus for professionals to reflect upon their practice, in my view. It is one way in which teachers can become more aware of the impact of their actions and develop empathy and authentic care for the children they teach (Gibbs and Costley, 2006). It could potentially be enlightening for the teacher(s), children and myself as research facilitator just to focus on reflection as our main research and learning tool throughout the AI, capturing our interpretations of working together to create new understandings and applications of pedagogy.

Critical reflection can lead people to make changes within their professional lives (Gardner, 2009), especially when the reflection extends to deeper levels of core professional identity and mission (Korthagen and Vasalos, 2005). However, I judged that reflection alone would not support the robust gathering and analysing of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data as part of an exploratory study.

Table 8: Implications from the pupil participation literature review (see Section 3.9) for my research methodology

Key principles emerging from literature review	Implications for research methodology	Methodological decisions and actions
All children have a right to participate in research about matters that affect them in school and are competent to do so, regardless of age or ability.	• The research needs to be inclusive and involve the whole class. • The AI methodology and language may need to be adapted – children should be involved in this too.	• All children in each of the three classes were invited to participate. I gave a presentation to each class to inform them of the intervention and the research processes. Children were also informed about their right *not* to participate. • The teachers were involved in planning the AI so that adaptations could be made to include all vulnerable children and those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). • The children were asked for their ideas for improvement to each part of the process to ensure all were equally included.
Children's participation in research must have influence (as well as space, voice and audience).	• The outcomes of an AI with children, focusing on writing lessons, must lead to real curriculum and pedagogic changes in the classroom. • The AI must be given sufficient time for ideas to be developed and implemented.	• The teachers were supported to understand and allow time for the creation and implementation of real activities that the children devised as part of the AI. • The time given for each part of the AI was at least one lesson, but remained flexible within the constraints of each school. • Teachers, supported by the facilitator (myself), negotiated and shared power with children regarding what was possible in the time available.

The research topic and methodology should be negotiated with children and their teacher(s), enabling children to be involved in decision-making.	• Children need to be involved in decisions relating to the planning and implementation of the AI. • Children can be involved in decisions about any aspect of the writing curriculum.	• The topic of inquiry was discussed and refined at the outset with each of the teachers and their classes. • Aspects of the AI were negotiated with the teachers and children at the planning stage and throughout its implementation. • The children made their own decisions about the curriculum as part of the AI.
The research should be developed as collaborative research with the children and their teacher(s) working as co-researchers.	• Careful facilitation would be needed, with support for adults who would be adapting their stance. • It would be important to investigate the issue of power sharing between teacher(s) and children in the research.	• The aims of the research were made explicit to teachers and children at the outset. • My own beliefs about participation were acknowledged alongside genuine and explicit respect for others who do not share my views. • Individual interviews with each of the teachers aimed to help them to explore their beliefs about pupil participation. • Support was provided throughout the facilitation of the project to enable issues relating to power-sharing to be discussed and negotiated.
The school(s) chosen should be responsive to the idea of children as co-researchers and ready for the challenge of taking student voice work to this next step.	• The schools approached should have some interest in developing pupil participation, with leadership support. • The children and their teacher(s) would be invited to take part in an AI that involves investigating best learning experiences *as well as* evaluating the AI in order to develop this way of working.	• The head teachers were approached opportunistically after they had expressed an interest in pupil participation within professional contexts unrelated to this research. Early checks were made to ensure congruence between school values and the use of AI. • A set of 'contracts' were devised, making explicit the commitment needed by each of the stakeholders, including myself as research facilitator, so that the research participants could give (or withhold) their informed consent.

5.6.2 Action research

There is a long tradition of action research as an approach to support professional development in schools from the 1920s onwards (Carr, 2006). Foreman-Peck and Murray (2008) suggest that 'it is not so much the 'research findings' that are significant but rather the action research approach to professional development itself' (p.148). It is a form of critical social science where teachers engage in critical theorising with emancipatory intent, and can transform practices (Kemmis, 1993, cited in Bryant, 1996, p.110). It can also provide a rigorous framework for innovative professionals to 'insert their experiences into a consistent professional discussion' (Altrichter, 1993, p.53).

But AI is 'quite different from action research' (Bushe, 2010b, p.3). The distinction lies in generating new actions based on uncovering and using the very best experiences of the past, rather than starting from ideas about how to tackle an area of weakness or a shared problem.

Participants reflecting upon each stage of an AI in order to improve its future application in schools could fall into a collaborative action research model of practice. At each stage of the AI, the children and teacher(s) would act as 'action researchers' by doing AI activities and then reflecting on the process in order to learn how AI may be improved for future use. But each stage of the AI is distinct and separate: reflection and improvement would not necessarily change how the next stage would be presented. I consequently judged that cycles of action research and learning might afford a more appropriate research methodology for a much longer term study of the implementation of several AIs over time.

5.6.3 Realistic Evaluation

Realistic Evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) was given careful consideration as a potentially helpful structure to enable identification of contexts and mechanisms that help to facilitate successful outcomes of an AI with children. It would enable the construction of programme theories (Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) configurations) that could be tested and refined. Initial programme theories based on CMO configurations were even derived from the literature and written into child-friendly language in order to experiment with the feasibility of using this approach. A Realistic Evaluation of an AI particularly would enable contextual factors to be explored: for example, how the culture of pupil participation in the class or school at the outset may influence the outcomes of an AI.

However, there is no evidence in the literature of Realistic Evaluation being used to evaluate an AI and very little (as yet) exploration of children's capacity to engage meaningfully in such an evaluative process (the focus groups of children in the doctoral research of Webb (2011) being a notable exception). With both AI *and* Realistic Evaluation being new processes in terms of the involvement of children, I was concerned that there would not be a sufficient evidence-base from which to form a robust study, and the limitations of each could compromise the study as a whole. I considered it more appropriate to investigate *whether* AI is a useful approach to empowering all children within a class to be involved in decision-making and exploring its potential impact, rather than attempting to use Realistic Evaluation with the children to investigate why or how it works, for whom and in what circumstances.

5.6.4 Case study

> Research that involves children and young people and the social worlds in which they live needs to be seen from as many angles as possible (Greig et al, 2013, p.62).

In the literature, case study designs are the most common for both AI work and involving children as co-researchers. A case study approach can illuminate or deepen understanding (Strake, 1995). Evers and Wu (2006) argue that an impressive amount of knowledge is contained within the theories that are used to make and interpret observations in case study research. The knowledge from the case study is added to this, creating a slightly new group from which to generalise, and a new opportunity to modify previously held theories and generalisations (p.514).

> Epistemologically there is no doubt about the generalisability of case study…the study of an individual case can be made to illuminate the general concerns of an entire population (Elliott and Lukes, 2008, p.105 and p.108).

In my research with children, knowledge was to be tested, built and even transformed through interaction with others, driven by a sense of social responsibility (Edwards, 2004). I judged that listening to children and enabling their active participation would be likely to provide 'a profoundly challenging alternative dimension to our knowledge and understanding of…what shapes the lives of young children. It is clear that supporting and catching children's voices is complex, challenging and multi-layered, involving a profound paradigm shift in the values, actions and thinking of researchers and practitioners' (Pascal and Bertram, 2009, p.260).

My chosen research design is therefore an exploratory multiple case study, enabling an in-depth, holistic investigation of AIs in three specific class contexts and gathering multiple

sources of evidence using mixed-methods (i.e. embracing both qualitative and quantitative data) that would seek to test theoretical propositions derived from the literature (Yin, 2009). The nature of the case study design is explored more fully in the next chapter, together with an analysis of the trustworthiness of this approach.

Chapter 6: Research Design: Theoretical Considerations

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I: provide an overview of the research design; explore the benefits and limitations of case study design; critically examine the potential trustworthiness of the findings; and conclude by highlighting the importance of reflexivity, and how this was addressed.

6.2 Overview of research design

My research design is structured around a multiple exploratory case study, focusing on using AI within two classes of Year 4 children in one school and one class of Year 6 children in another school. The children's part in the research involved investigating when their learning was at its best, as part of the AI itself, and evaluating the AI activities after experiencing them in order to improve their inclusivity and effectiveness for future use in schools.

Maxwell (1996) describes research design as an iterative process involving repeated interaction between five components (each influencing the others): research purposes; conceptual contexts of the research; research questions; methods used; and issues of validity. These are outlined in Table 9.

Table 9: Five interacting components of research design (summarised from Maxwell, 1996)

Component	Issues to address
Purposes	The ultimate goals of the study; the issues it intends to illuminate; the practices it may influence; why the researcher wants to conduct the study; why the results matter; and why it is worth doing.
Conceptual Context	The phenomena, theories, findings, and conceptual frameworks that will guide the study; the literature and personal experience to draw on; the theory focused on to develop or refine (from experience, existing theory or research, results of pilot studies and thinking).

Research Questions	Specifically what understanding is sought; what is *not* known about the phenomena; what the research will attempt to answer; how the questions are related.
Methods	The approaches and techniques to collect and analyse the data and how these integrate; the relationship with the people involved; and the site and sample.
Validity	Plausible alternative explanations and validity threats; how these will be dealt with; how the results might be wrong; why the results can be believed.

I have summarised my research design using these components in Figure 4.

6.3 Case study design

6.3.1 What is a case study?

> Case studies are a qualitative strategy in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Cresswell, 2009, p.227).

Yin (2009) argues that case studies provide a research design that enables an in-depth study of an intervention within its holistic context, using multiple sources of evidence or mixed methods to expand and generalise theoretical propositions that have been developed in advance. Case studies can explain, describe, illustrate or enlighten the implementation of an intervention in its real-life context, such as an AI intervention within the classroom.

The class is the subject of my case study, but the work's purpose and direction comes from its analytical frame (Thomas, 2011), in my case the application of AI.

Purposes
- To find out whether AI can help to provide the structure for all children in a class to make real decisions about the curriculum
- Ultimately to challenge and change the culture of pupil participation in the classroom
- To find out whether AI is beneficial in terms of other outcomes (e.g. improved engagement, raising attainment)
- To find out how best to use AI with children so that all are included, using feedback from the children and teachers
- To build an evidence base for using AI in schools (towards development of training and a book on AI for schools) leading to traded work and career development

Conceptual Context
- Child-centred learning and a shared pedagogy – own experiences as teacher, advisory teacher and EP
- Literature on pupil participation and empowerment – a legal right
- Emancipation of children in schools and society
- AI as solution-focused approach to organisational change
- Pilot studies completed using AI with class and with EP team

Research Questions 1 and 2
- How does an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) affect the culture of pupil participation in the classroom?
- How does an AI that is focused on writing lessons change curriculum activities and affect pupils' attitudes, progress and attainment?

Research Questions 3 and 4
- What are the high points or strengths of developing and using AI with a whole class, from the perspectives of both the children and their teacher(s)?
- What can children and their teachers tell us about how to improve the AI process in primary schools so that it is as inclusive and effective as possible?

Methods
- Facilitate implementation of an AI in three different classes (in two schools); sharing aims and planning each one with the teachers
- Use of simple rating scales, interviews, PASS questionnaires (see Section 7.3.2), participant observation, evaluation forms, discussions with classes
- Multiple case study for triangulation of data within and across contexts

Validity
- Triangulation of sources, methods and theories
- Reflexivity – personal and epistemological
- Feedback, comparisons and checking with others
- Description, interpretation, theory and generalisation
- Authenticity

Purposes — Conceptual Context — Research Questions — Methods — Validity

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Figure 4: An interactive model of research design (Maxwell, 1996, p.5), applied within the current study

Yin (2009) defines a case study in two parts:

1. A case study is an empirical enquiry that

   o   investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when
   o   the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

2. The case study inquiry

   o   copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
   o   relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
   o   benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009, p.18).

Simons (2009) also defines a case study as 'an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context' (p.21). Most definitions emphasise a commitment to studying the complexity of a specific real life situation, understanding its activity within important and well-defined circumstances (Thomas, 2011; Strake, 1995).

> A case study is about seeing something in its completeness, looking at it from many angles. This is good science. In fact it is the essence of good science (Thomas, 2011, p.23).

6.3.2 Types of case study

All case studies should begin with clear research questions, be based on theoretical propositions developed from existing research, incorporate logical methods for linking the data to the propositions, and use clear criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2009). However, there are many choices to be made about the type of case study that will best suit a researcher's aims.

Thomas (2011) presents a model of case study design that encompasses the main choices, represented in Table 10. I have added a transformative purpose i.e. to empower individuals for ideological reasons (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011), as this is an important aspect of my own research design. Using Table 10 as a framework, Figure 5 maps out my own case study design.

My study is based on developing knowledge and understanding of applying AI within my role as an educational psychologist in local schools. The cases selected are known locally (selected opportunistically) and are not chosen because they are exemplars of good practice or anything different from the norm. The study is instrumental in that it uses evaluative and exploratory methodology, aiming to discover a range of outcomes that may ensue following the use of an AI with whole classes of children developing ideas for improving their lessons, based on theories derived from the literature. It is *potentially* transformatory (hence the dotted arrow in Figure 5) because of my expressed desire to use AI as a mechanism to improve the culture of pupil participation within these classes. The evaluative component of the study seeks to discover whether AI is a useful way to promote pupil participation, testing theories about how AI may improve pupil participation within the classroom, change beliefs about the value of children taking part in decisions about their learning, change pupil attitudes to learning and raise attainment. The exploratory component of the study seeks to investigate the views of participants concerning their experiences of AI, building theories about how adults and children (including specifically those with special educational needs) might make best use of AI within primary classrooms. It is a multiple case study because there are three separate classes (or cases) all operating in parallel and diachronic because I am investigating changes over time.

Table 10: Types of case studies, adapted from Thomas (2011, p.93)

Subject (choice of focus)	Purpose (explaining or evaluating or exploring and so on)	Approach (describing or interpreting or trying to build or test a theory)	Process (how to actually go about it)
Special or outlier case (something different from the norm) **Key case** (a good example of something) **Local knowledge case** (something in own experience about which you want to know more)	**Intrinsic** (enquiring simply out of interest and curiosity) **Instrumental** (serving a particular purpose) **Evaluative** (seeing how well something has worked or is working) **Explanatory** (explaining how something relates to something else) **Exploratory** (finding out more about what is happening and why) **Transformative** (changing something)	**Testing a theory** (testing ideas from elsewhere) **Building a theory** (developing a framework of ideas to explain something) **Drawing a picture, illustrative** (showing what a phenomenon looks like in different ways) **Descriptive** (describing an event or occurrence) **Interpretative (or ethnographic)** (seeking a rich, intensive understanding) **Experimental** (trying something out)	**Single or multiple; then:** (characteristics of a case or phenomenon across cases) **Nested** (subunits within with larger unit) **Parallel** (happening at the same time) **Sequential** (happening one after another) **Retrospective** (relating to a past phenomenon) **Snapshot** (looked at in one period of time) **Diachronic** (i.e. show change over time)

Figure 5: Mapping out the design for my own case study (adapted from Thomas, 2011, p.93)

Subject	Purpose	Approach	Process

Subject:
- Special or outlier case
- Key case
- **Local knowledge case**

Purpose:
- Intrinsic
- **Instrumental**
- **Evaluative**
- Explanatory
- **Exploratory**
- **Transformative**

Approach:
- **Testing a theory**
- **Building a theory**
- Drawing a picture, illustrative
- Descriptive
- **Interpretative**
- Experimental

Process:
- Single or **multiple**; then:
- Nested
- **Parallel**
- Sequential
- Retrospective
- Snapshot
- **Diachronic**

6.3.3 Benefits of case studies

Case study methodology has many benefits. Case studies can be used to examine current practice and provide a flexible and adaptive means of understanding how and why practice is effective (or not) (Corcoran et al, 2004), partly because they enable the researcher to follow unexpected leads. Case studies are often: 'strong in reality', immediately intelligible and easily understood; able to attend to subtlety and complexity, allowing for unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables; and a 'step to action', where insights from real events may be directly interpreted and put to use (Cohen et al, 2007, p.256). Case studies provide an opportunity to 'drill down' deeper to get extensive evidence from many different angles and perspectives, including the researcher's own understanding as an 'interpreting inquirer' (Thomas, 2011, p.7). There is a commitment to studying the complexity that is involved in real situations (Simons, 2009) and an acceptance of an ecological viewpoint that does not 'attempt to oversimplify the richness of the ways in which these contexts interplay' (Thomas, 2011, p.54). Studying different layers of contextual influences within a case or system makes it possible to investigate causal links within case studies (Anaf et al, 2007; Cohen et al, 2007). Children are affected by their context and can also change their context (Johnson, 2014).

> A distinguishing feature of case studies is that human systems have a wholeness or integrity to them rather than being a loose connection of traits, necessitating in-depth investigation. Further, contexts are unique and dynamic, hence case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance (Cohen et al, 2007, p.253).

Multiple case study designs can often achieve even more compelling evidence than single case study designs due to greater analytical benefit, and are therefore considered more robust

(Yin, 2009), providing the researcher with the opportunity to generate new theories (Willig, 2008). An advantage of multiple case studies is that two or more cases might support the same theory (and not support a rival theory), or enable the researcher to predict similar or different results for a *reason*. My study is structured around two classes in the same school and another class in a different school, in order to benefit from the advantages of multiple case study design, whilst remaining practical and feasible within the constraints of practitioner research. It is possible that there will be measurable differences in the culture of pupil participation within the three classes (and possibly across the two schools) that will enable theoretical propositions to be tested about the effect of applying AI on the culture of pupil participation within each of those classes.

6.3.4 Limitations of case studies

There are differing opinions about whether it is possible to generalise from a case study. Researchers cannot generalise directly from their findings within one case (Thomas, 2011) and certainly cannot achieve 'statistical generalisation' (Yin, 2009), but they can achieve an *analytical generalisation* from their developing theories, tested and modified through their application within and between case studies (Evers and Wu, 2006; Elliott and Lukes, 2008; Yin, 2009) and connecting researchers' insights across cases, using wide-ranging evidence to support developing arguments (Thomas, 2011). Alasuutari (1995, cited in Willig, 2008) recommends that the term 'generalisation' should be replaced with 'extrapolation' to demonstrate how the theoretical analysis within a case study may lead (or 'generalise') to wider applications 'without importing claims associated with statistical or experimental research into our arguments' (Willig, 2008, p.90).

Case studies have been criticised for attempting to capture an excessive amount of data and for simply being descriptive and having no purpose (Corcoran et al, 2004; Walker, 1993). They can be accused of lacking rigour, being time-consuming and producing too much unreadable data (Yin, 2009). This can be addressed by developing systematic procedures and keeping a research diary of all activities carried out throughout the research process (Robson, 2011). Theoretical propositions, systematically linked to relevant research questions, guide the data analysis and allow theories to be generated and refined (Yin, 2009). The results of my study will be reported in a way that endeavours to be useful to other teachers using AI in their classrooms.

Case studies are not easily open to cross-checking and may therefore be personal and subjective (Cohen, 2007), biased by the researcher's beliefs (Yin, 2009, p.69). They have been criticised for being selective in order to highlight good practice (Stevenson, 2004). This is clearly a risk in my study because the AI intervention has arisen from my own interests in pupil participation. The qualities of the case study investigator are therefore important in ensuring impartiality and genuine interest in the perspectives of the research participants. However, the focus of this study is to explore whether AI provides a useful way to give children voice and influence over decisions that affect their writing lessons at school and is designed to promote children's emancipation and call for pedagogical change. It is therefore potentially a transformative case study, which 'involves the researcher taking a position, being sensitive to the needs of the population being studied, and recommending specific changes as a result of the research to improve social justice for the population under study' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.96). The purpose of a transformative case study is to empower individuals, and the methods are mixed for value-based and ideological reasons that

are best suited for advancing the transformative goals. The research includes participants in an active, participatory role and uses 'a collection of methods that produces results that are both useful to community members and viewed as credible to stakeholders and policy makers' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.99). Reflexivity is crucial, so that my own views do not limit my openness to alternative explanations for the results and so that my co-researchers (adults and children) are able to be completely open and honest about their own views where these differ from mine.

Using a multiple case study design with three classes of children is a highly effective method of gaining a rich picture of AI implementation in classrooms, from a range of angles (Thomas, 2011), but the views of each individual child are arguably less easily explored than they might have been using other approaches within the interpretative paradigm, such as phenomenological approaches (Smith et al, 2009). However, it was not considered feasible to gain a large number of individual views in depth, given that the proposed study is built upon the premise all children in the class should have equal access and involvement in research processes.

6.3.5 Doing case study well

The quality of a case study depends upon how well the case is chosen, how well the context for the study has been explained and justified, and how well the arguments and rival explanations have been explored (Thomas, 2011, p.67-68). Triangulation of evidence, or viewing from several points, 'is almost an essential prerequisite for using a case study approach' (Thomas, 2011, p.68) and these multiple sources of evidence should converge (Yin, 2009). Triangulation can be at the level of data, investigator, theory and/or methods used. A

mixed methods approach in which the researcher collects, analyses and links both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a unified understanding of a research problem is promoted (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), creating a strong array of rich evidence (Yin, 2009).

6.4 Validity

> Validity can be defined as the extent to which our research describes, measures or explains what it aims to describe, measure or explain (Willig, 2008, p.16).

Validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research and is concerned with the findings being accurate from the perspective of the researcher and the participants, ensuring that they are trustworthy, authentic and credible (Cresswell, 2009). It is 'addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved' (Cohen et al, 2007, p.133). Maxwell (1996) argues that we need to test our accounts against the world, 'giving the phenomena that we are trying to understand the chance to prove us wrong' (p.87). The acknowledgement or identification of threats to validity helps to explain why we may be wrong, by offering alternative explanations or rival hypotheses. Placing validity as part of the research design means that strategies can be developed to overcome *particular* threats. Multiple strategies will enhance the accuracy of the findings and help to convince readers of that accuracy (Cresswell, 2009). In this section I have examined a range of particular threats to validity within my multiple case study design, with associated multiple strategies to address these.

6.4.1 Description

The main threat to the validity of the *description* of a case study is incompleteness or inaccuracy (Maxwell, 1996). Audio recording of the teacher interviews largely overcame this in terms of accuracy. In terms of completeness, the prompts devised for the semi-structured interviews covered all of the key issues in relation to the research questions, but could still have produced incomplete data if the teachers did not feel able to be totally honest in their replies, or if insufficient time was allowed to discuss and develop their thinking during the interview. Videotaping all of the activities relating to the AI in all three classes was not practicable and even if it were, it would not have been possible to listen to every voice of every child during each whole class activity. Detailed notes made during and immediately after the participant observations produced a rich range of data, but cannot ever be a complete record of all that happened for each individual, within each group and across all three classes. Taking notes about what 'stands out' in relation to the research questions relied upon my skill as a researcher to capture relevant information, and what is relevant can often change during the course of the study in participant research (Willig, 2008). I was not able to observe all activities in all three classes, especially as two of the classes were implementing their AIs at the same time, so observational data could not be complete. Important issues may have arisen and been missed; I would then have to rely upon 'second-hand' descriptions of events by the children and teacher, which risked compromising accuracy in reporting.

The rating scales, evaluation forms and questionnaires were devised or chosen to maximise completeness of information relating to the research questions, but risked a lack of accuracy in the responses if children did not understand how to read and complete them or if they felt constrained in any way from giving honest replies. They also risked perhaps being accurate only on the particular day they were completed, affected by how the children were feeling at

the time and not necessarily representative of more general views. The evaluation forms were less susceptible to this potential inaccuracy as they were completed immediately following each stage of the AI and were therefore intended to be time-dependent.

Many of the artefacts produced by the children as part of the process were photographed or collected for later study, so that their authenticity was preserved. However, these records could not be comprehensive, as not everything was available, especially where artefacts were needed for school purposes and then dispersed amongst books, displays and assessment folders.

Cresswell (2009) suggests that using 'rich, thick description to convey the findings' can help the results of research be more realistic and better understood in the contexts within which they arose (p.191), although the data cannot be too voluminous (Willig, 2008). I therefore attempt to give as full a description as the thesis length will allow in conveying information about the three classes and the range of perspectives that are brought together within any particular theme.

6.4.2 Interpretation

The main threat to the validity of *interpretation* in a case study is the imposition of the researcher's own framework of meaning rather than understanding the meanings that the children and teachers attach to their words and actions (Maxwell, 1996). This is particularly important when the researcher has a strong viewpoint or belief system of their own, which forms the stimulus for the research. High quality reflexivity (see Section 6.5) can guard against this to a large extent, but it remains a significant threat to the validity of my research.

Cresswell (2009) suggests that reflexivity 'creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers' and is 'a core characteristic of qualitative research' (p.192). Another way to guard against the threat of researcher bias is to make conscious use of my professional skills in facilitating and being highly attentive to the perspectives of others throughout all research activities.

Cresswell (2009) also suggests that 'the more experience that a researcher has with participants in their actual setting, the more accurate or valid will be the findings' (p.192). I knew one of the schools, where two classes took part in the study, extremely well, as I was the educational psychologist (EP) for the school. Prior to the start of the research activities, I had much less knowledge of the second school in the study, having visited only briefly as coordinator of a local authority literacy project, and talked with the head teacher and separately with the EP for the school. However, during the planning and implementation of the AI and its associated research activities I was able to spend time working alongside the participants, which helped me to develop an 'understanding of the phenomenon under study' and to 'convey detail about the site and the people that lends credibility to the narrative account' (Cresswell, 2009, p.192). Checking my interpretations of the data with the teachers (see Section 6.4.8) further reduced the risk of researcher bias.

6.4.3 Theory

Theoretical validity refers to how well the theory explains the phenomena studied or the constructs of all the participants, making it similar to the notion of construct validity (Cohen et al, 2007, p.135). In my research, it is possible that each teacher understood the construct of pupil participation in a different way, each or all of which could be different from my own

construct of participation. Using a theoretical model of participation as a reference within the teacher interviews helped to address this. Similarly, using the construct of participation in different ways within the study (e.g. as described in the model, represented on the rating scales and as discussed in the interviews) helped to give the construct *convergent validity* (Cohen et al, 2007, p.138). For the children, it may have been unclear whether the rating scales used after the AI to elicit how much they think children in their class participate in decisions about their learning referred to the curriculum generally or to the participation they experienced within the AI itself, threatening construct or theoretical validity. (Indeed some children sought to clarify this during completion of the scales.)

A serious threat to the validity of the theory in research is not paying attention to discrepant data, or not considering alternative explanations for phenomena studied (Maxwell, 1996). It is important to try to *disprove* the propositions made. Therefore negative or discrepant data were sought, presented and discussed in the conclusions of the study. 'By presenting this contradictory evidence, the account becomes more realistic and hence valid' (Cresswell, 2009, p.192).

6.4.4 Generalisation

Generalisability, or *representativeness,* may be an issue where a study aims to explore phenomena that are relevant to more people than are involved in the study (Willig, 2008). Generalisability is then interpreted as comparability and transferability (Cohen et al, 2007). In my research, I was interested in exploring something I judged relevant to all children in all schools: i.e. their participation in decision-making within the curriculum at school. Once the potential for AI to facilitate this type of participation had been identified and trialled, I would

know that it is at least *available* as an intervention that can be used in schools. Accumulation techniques, where an observation made in one context is checked against observations of the same phenomenon in other contexts, can help to integrate findings and inform wider conclusions (Willig, 2008). The multiple case study design facilitated these checks across classes.

6.4.5 Two specific validity threats: researcher bias and reactivity (or participant bias)

An important threat to validity in qualitative research is in selecting data that fit with the researcher's existing theories or that 'stand out' to the researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In order to preserve the integrity of research, the researcher must explain any possible biases and how their beliefs or values may have influenced the research process and conclusions. The researcher is the instrument, deciding 'which questions to ask and in what order, what to observe, what to write down' (Mertens, 1998, p.175), and 'hence great sensitivity and personal skills are necessary for worthwhile data' (Robson, 2011, p.320).

The influence the researcher has on the participants is known as reactivity, but this is generally not considered a serious threat within participative research, except within interviews, where it is 'a powerful and inescapable influence' (Maxwell, 1996, p.91). Clearly leading questions should be avoided, but far more significantly, the researcher must seek to understand and explain how else they might be influencing what the interviewee is saying, and how this might in turn affect the results and conclusions drawn.

My presence within the class during the intervention and research activities may have affected the *ecological validity* of implementing AI within an actual and natural classroom setting (Cohen et al, 2007). Not only did my presence add a further adult to facilitate the work, but it

is possible (even likely) that the reactions of both the children and the other adults within the class were different *because* they had a visitor in their midst (Robson, 2011). It could have been a difficult balance to manage being present as an observer and facilitator, whilst also minimising my influence on the relationship between the children and their teacher. My professional role as an EP helped to achieve this, as I am used to observing in classes without interrupting or influencing the usual flow of lessons, reassuring and explaining to the class and the teacher why I am there and that it is important that everything happens just as it would normally, with no special arrangements made. My facilitation role within the AI intervention was primarily focused upon helping the teachers to plan the process but within the classroom my role became much more of an observer, gathering data and providing reassurance where I judged this necessary.

6.4.6 Catalytic validity

Catalytic validity is related to critical theory, helping to ensure that research leads to actions that are ultimately emancipatory (Cohen et al, 2007). Lincoln and Guba (1986, cited in Cohen et al, 2007) suggest that research should 'not only augment and improve the participants' experience of the world; but also improve the empowerment of the participants' (p.139), focusing on 'what *might* be (the leading edge of innovation and future trends) and what *could* be (the ideal, possible futures)' (Schofield, 1990, cited in Cohen et al, 2007, p.139-140). These phrases are very similar to those used within the field of AI, helping to confirm the construct validity of AI as an agent of innovation towards a better future, and the catalytic validity of using AI in research that aims to empower children. But catalytic validity is not solely concerned with the researcher's emancipatory intentions towards those researched; it is to do with helping participants to understand their worlds in order for them to transform their

oppressed situation (Cohen et al, 2007). For children to understand their oppression and be able to do something about it in school *requires*, in my view, their teachers to understand children's oppression and want to do something about it. So, in my study, catalytic validity focuses upon shifts in the beliefs of teachers about how much children *should* participate in decisions about their learning.

6.4.7 Triangulation

Although data or methodological triangulation is frequently cited as an effective strategy in combatting threats to validity, especially in case study research, Fielding and Fielding (1986), cited in Maxwell (1996), warn that because the methods are chosen by the researcher, they may only serve to confirm or strengthen a researcher bias, and that it is therefore important to triangulate in terms of each method's *threats to validity*. Being explicit about the threats to the validity of each of my data sets helped to ensure that these were not all subject to a similar type of researcher bias.

Triangulation can help to establish themes and theories arising from several converging sources of information from a variety of participant perspectives and methods, thus adding to the validity of the study (Cresswell, 2009; Cohen et al, 2007). Cohen (2007, p.143) argues that triangulation is particularly useful when:

- a more holistic view of educational outcomes is sought;
- a complex phenomenon requires elucidation; or
- a researcher is engaged in case study.

Triangulation is, I believe, appropriately used within my data analysis as all of these factors are features of my research.

6.4.8 Feedback, comparisons and checking with others

Asking for feedback from a range of people (including research participants, professional colleagues and others unrelated to the research) is an effective way to identify threats to validity and to focus the researcher's reflexivity on their own assumptions, methods and critical thinking. When feedback is sought from the people being studied this is sometimes called 'member checking' (Cresswell, 2009; Maxwell, 1996) or 'respondent validation' (Cohen et al, 2007, p.136), and also provides an opportunity for participants to add further information as well as checking for accuracy. Mertens (1998) argues that member checks are the most important criteria in establishing credibility. At the end of my study the participants were consulted about the results in order to seek their opinions and check for any potential misinterpretations of the data. Having two separate schools and three teachers conducting three separate AIs enabled specific comparisons to be made and exceptions to be explored making reference to relevant knowledge about each of the sites, again discussed with each of the teachers in the study. Peer debriefing and external auditing, both recommended by Cresswell (2009) as strategies to enhance the overall validity of the study, were provided through supervision, peer support and ultimately examination of the thesis at the University of Birmingham.

6.4.9 Reliability

Reliability is 'a necessary precondition' of validity and, although primarily considered within quantitative research, is still applicable within qualitative research (Cohen et al, 2007, p.133). Reliability in case studies can be checked by documenting as many steps as possible within

the procedures used, checking transcripts for accuracy, making sure that any coding is consistent and that it is cross-checked by another person (Cresswell, 2009).

Quantitative validity refers to the scores obtained being meaningful measures of the constructs being studied and how far they can reliably be associated with any cause and effect (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Cresswell (2009) identifies three specific types of threat to the validity and reliability of quantitative measures, summarised in Table 11.

6.4.10 Validity in mixed-methods research

When qualitative and quantitative data are used together in mixed-methods research design, there is concern about the validity of merging (or connecting) data of different types (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

> The very act of combining qualitative and quantitative approaches raises additional potential validity issues that extend well beyond the validity concerns that arise in the separate quantitative and qualitative methods procedures (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.239).

Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011) make a distinction between data that are merged and connected, providing tables of the potential validity threats and strategies for minimising this for both types of data. Those judged relevant to my research design have been collated and personalised for my own research in Table 12.

Table 11: Three specific threats to validity and reliability of the quantitative measures used (adapted from Cresswell, 2009, p.164-165)

Type of threat	Outline of the threat	Application to my study
Instrumentation	The instrument changes between pre- and post-test, which may affect the scores. The same instrument should be used in the same way	Almost all pre- and post-test measures were identical in this study, thus minimising this threat. However, the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) questionnaire used (see Section 7.4.2) can be administered either manually or using a computer. Class A used a computer for the pre-test and a paper version of the PASS questionnaire (due to time constraints) for the post-test, which may have affected the validity of the findings.
Testing	Participants become familiar with the outcome measure and remember responses for later testing. A long time period should occur between administrations or different items used each time, where two versions of the same standardised test exist	There was a long time (i.e. several months) between the pre- and post-testing in my study, so earlier responses are unlikely to have been remembered, especially in the PASS questionnaire, where there are fifty items in the test. In the second teacher interview, the participants were *not* reminded how they had responded to the same questions in the previous interview before the intervention started, including their ratings for how much they believe the class participates in decisions about their learning and how much they believe children should participate in decisions about their learning. Whilst this ensured that the teachers and children responded freshly to these questions each time, it could be argued that the rating scale is so subjective that their ratings would reflect more accurately the scale of any changes in their perceptions if they had been able to see what they had said before.
Interaction of selection and/or setting with treatment	Because of the narrow characterisations of participants…the researcher cannot generalise to other groups of individuals. Claims should be restricted to groups of people with the same characteristics	The two schools and three classes and teachers all have many different characteristics. What unites them is: whole classes of Key Stage 2 children; teachers who are willing and interested in using AI; head teachers who are supportive of using AI to facilitate increased pupil participation; Ofsted reports that suggest both schools require improvement; educational psychologist facilitation of AI; and late timing of AI (towards the latter half of the school year). Any findings that relate to all three schools *may* potentially be generalisable (or at least worth testing) in other schools that share some of these characteristics. Claims from the study cannot, however, be made directly about using AI with: smaller groups of children within a class; much younger or older children; teachers or leaders who are not receptive to the idea of using AI; schools that have been judged by Ofsted as outstanding, good or in special measures; facilitation without an EP; earlier timing in the year etc. However, new research can/should be instigated in these very different groups and contexts.

Table 12: Strategies for minimising threats to the validity of merged or connected data in my study

Potential validity threats	General strategies for minimising the threat	Strategies for minimising the threat in my study
Making illogical comparisons of the two results of analyses	Find quotes that match the statistical results.	I used transcripts of teacher interviews and the children's evaluation forms to match qualitative data with the results of quantitative analyses.
Giving more weight to one form of data than the other	Present both sets of results equally or explain why one provides a better understanding of the problem.	I used high quality reflexivity (see Section 6.5) to ensure that one set of data is not privileged over another according to my own beliefs and aspirations for the study.
Not relating the stages or projects in a multiphase study to each other	Consider how a problem or theory might connect the stages or projects in an overarching way.	I ensured that data were analysed and compared across all three classes as well as within each case.
Using inappropriate sample sizes for the qualitative and quantitative data	Use a large sample size for quantitative data and a small sample size for qualitative data.	I used PASS questionnaires and simple rating scales for the large number of children involved, with semi-structured interviews reserved for the small number of adult participants.
Choosing inadequate participants for the follow up who cannot help explain significant results	Choose individuals for the follow up who participated in the quantitative first phase.	The teacher for each class commented on the quantitative results for their class. The children could not easily be consulted as they had left the class by the time the results were analysed. The timing of this study was a significant limitation in this respect.
Choosing weak quantitative results to follow up on qualitatively	Choose the results to follow up that need further explanation.	The final teacher feedback meetings were focused on the quantitative results that suggest clear outcomes (either in support of or discrepant from the expected outcomes).
Including qualitative data in an intervention trial without a clear intent of its use	Specify how each form of qualitative data will be used in the study.	Teacher interviews were designed to explore any changes in beliefs about pupil participation and to allow the possibility of using direct quotes to illustrate key findings.
Not taking full advantage of the potential for "before" or "after" qualitative data findings for an intervention	Consider the reasons for using qualitative data in an intervention trial.	Pre and post teacher interviews allowed for self-assessment to be explored in terms of shifts within a theoretical model of pupil participation and any changes in ratings to be discussed.
Not interpreting the	Return to the lens used in	Interpretation of the results relates

mixed methods results in light of the advocacy or social science lens	the beginning of the study and advance a call for action based on the results.	heavily to my original research purposes of facilitating shared power between children and teachers.

6.5 Reflexivity

> *Reflexivity* requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research (Willig, 2008, p.10).

Reflexivity recognises that researchers themselves, their beliefs, their values, their past history, their relationships with participants and their intentions are always part of their research and that this 'reflexive' perspective needs to be critically analysed throughout (Cresswell, 2009). Similarly, the same is true of every other person taking part as co-researcher. This is particularly important to acknowledge and explore within interpretative research but is even more significant in research that aims to be emancipatory (Usher, 1996).

> Reflexivity suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research…Highly reflexive researchers will be acutely aware of the ways in which their selectivity, perception, background and inductive processes and paradigms shape the research. They are research instruments' (Cohen et al, 2007, p.171-172).

Researchers need to be self-consciously and critically aware of the effects they are having in a participative research process and how their attitudes, perceptions, opinions and feelings may be affecting other people involved (Cohen et al, 2007, p.310). Nind and Todd (2014) applaud the reflexivity of educational researchers who 'address the messy detail and sticking points in

the reality and rhetoric of doing research that is intended to be participatory or emancipatory (p.2). Reflexivity may even open up new lines of action within the research (Bryant, 1996).

> By showing that a statement is grounded in reflexive interpretative judgements, rather than in external facts, I make it possible to review other possible interpretative judgements concerning that statement, and thus to envisage modifying it (Winter, 1989, cited in Bryant, 1996, p.113).

At every stage of my research, I was aware of my influence as an EP and as a promoter of pupil participation. My status as the school's EP in one school and as a literacy project co-ordinator in the other school is likely to have exerted an influence on participants' perception of the freedom they had to express views different from my own. Additionally, it was not possible (or desirable) to hide my enthusiasm for AI or my passion for pupil participation. However, I have been equally passionate about my authentic desire for the teachers and children to feel able to be totally honest about their own beliefs, which may be very different from my own. From the very first introduction to the last interviews, I emphasised this total acceptance and respect for other people's views. Indeed, after reading that the greatest effects of an AI are likely to be seen within organisations that do *not* share a participative culture (Bushe, 2010b), it became *preferable* to enlist teachers who did not share my views. I was therefore able to be completely genuine in my expressed desire for teachers to hold a variety of different beliefs at the start of the study.

> In education, we need to be aware of reflexivity because even when we think our research is useful or even emancipatory we are still 'objectifying', still speaking for others, and education is full of people who speak for others in the name of doing good by them. Thus an awareness of reflexivity enables us to interrogate our own practice of research, in terms of how it can become part of dominant and oppressive discourses through a 'reflexive' acceptance either of the neutrality of research, of its 'pragmatic' usefulness or its 'emancipatory' potential, and in terms of how we contribute to such discourses despite our best intentions (Usher, 1996, p.49).

Willig (2008) and Usher (1996) make a distinction between *personal* reflexivity and *epistemological* reflexivity. Personal reflexivity means thinking about not only how the researcher's own beliefs and interests shape the research but also how the research in turn changes or influences the thinking of the researcher. Epistemological reflexivity means reflecting on the assumptions the researcher has made about knowledge and the influence of this on the research questions, the design of the study and the data collected; asking questions such as:

> How has the research question defined and limited what can be 'found'? How has the design of the study and the method of analysis 'constructed' the data and its findings? How could the research question have been investigated differently? To what extent would this have given rise to a different understanding of the phenomenon under investigation? (Willig, 2008, p.10).

Reflexivity, in this way, strengthens the integrity of the research and is 'key to the research act' (Usher, 1996, p.42).

Chapter 7: Research Methodology: Ethical and Practical Considerations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical account of the ethical and practical aspects of my research in relation to the: sample; data collected; chronology of procedure; and methods of data analysis. The research questions (RQs) are given below for ease of reference:

RQ1: How does an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) affect the culture of pupil participation in the classroom? In particular, is it an effective way to give children voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning, and does it affect the adult's and children's beliefs about the value of pupil participation?

RQ2: How does an AI that is focused on writing lessons change curriculum activities and affect pupils' attitudes, progress and attainment?

RQ3: What are the high points or strengths of developing and using AI with a whole class, from the perspectives of both the children and their teacher(s)? What has been appreciated most by the people involved?

RQ4: What can children and their teachers tell us about how to improve the AI process in primary schools so that it is as inclusive and effective as possible?

7.2 Main ethical considerations

This study has strictly adhered to the University of Birmingham's School of Education Research Ethics Protocol for Staff, Postgraduate and Undergraduate Students, which has a robust 'code of conduct for researchers' (University of Birmingham, 2009). The University of Birmingham ensures the highest standards of ethical care and adopts as its principal set of

guidelines the British Educational Research Association's Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2004). This study also complies with the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2009) and the Data Protection Act (Great Britain, 1998). The main ethical issues are summarised and were addressed as described in the sections below.

7.2.1 Consent

This study involved the direct participation of three classes of primary-aged children. The AIs were led by their teachers during several literacy lessons. As with any approach to curriculum delivery and pedagogy, implementation decisions reside (through the head teacher and governing body) with the class teacher. Consent was therefore sought for me to *report* individual children's progress data and their reflections on the AI process and its outcomes, but not for each child's participation in the intervention and its evaluation. The data collected in this study was used by the class teachers in informing decisions about developments to pedagogy and it would not have been ethically acceptable to reduce the inclusion of these pupils' voices in the decision-making within their classrooms. However, informed consent to *participate* in the study was obtained from the head teachers, teachers and teaching assistants involved (see Appendices 3 and 4). The presentation, letters and forms used with the children and their parents/carers to request their informed consent for me to *report* the children's data can be seen in Appendices 6 to 13). Children with SEND were supported to ensure that they could access and understand the information presented. Further information for teachers was provided about seeking pupil consent (see Appendix 5). At every stage of the consent procedures, the right for any adults to withdraw from the research at any time and for any children to withdraw their data from the research report was stated clearly.

7.2.2 Confidentiality

The names of individual teachers and children were coded in order to keep sensitive information relating to the effective inclusion of vulnerable children and those with SEND, as well as specific information relating to changes in individual teachers' beliefs about the importance of pupil participation, confidential. The local authority and the schools are not named. Individual children and teachers are not identifiable from the information in this thesis.

7.2.3 Protection from harm

Each AI began by identifying strengths and then moved on to creating even better learning activities, all within the children's familiar classroom environment. Differentiation and additional support for children with SEND was planned in the usual way, perhaps even enhanced by the involvement of the EP in the planning process. It was therefore not expected that any harm could arise from the AI intervention itself.

A range of strategies were devised to prevent any possible detrimental effects of the study upon any of the participants. These are summarised in Table 13.

7.3 The sample

The criteria for selection of the sample were that: two or three classes of children would be needed in order to establish a multiple case study (that would nevertheless be feasible in the time available); the classes should be between Year 4 and 6 so that the children would be

more likely to manage the metacognitive, reflective and linguistic demands of AI; and a variety of teacher experiences and views about the value of pupil participation, including a variety of contextual factors, would be beneficial.

Table 13: Possible detrimental effects of the study and associated strategies

Possible detrimental effects	Strategies
Head teacher wanting to use classroom observation information for purposes other than the study (e.g. assessments of professional practice), which may have created professional vulnerability for teachers and/or teaching assistants.	Clear protocol provided at the outset about only the teachers and researcher having access to observation data in this study. Other risks to reputation and status of workers were contained through the attention given to confidentiality.
Specific children wanting their data to be part of the research project but whose parents/carers decline their consent.	Head teacher to hold a mediation meeting with parents/carers and then make a decision that is in the child's best interests.
Teacher or teaching assistant may feel threatened by being requested to give increased control to the children in making decisions about learning activities.	I have supported the teachers with any shifts in the balance of power between children and teacher, providing reassurance that the teacher's views must also be taken into account in an AI.
Children's ideas not all used in the AI, as some group work and voting may preclude them.	Children were made aware at the outset that each group would need to decide on their favourite ideas, which may not always be their own, but that each person's ideas would always be valued.
Vulnerable children or those with SEND may not have equal voice and influence over decisions.	The adult participants planned carefully to ensure all such children were effectively supported to participate alongside their peers (using EP expertise where necessary).
Some children may have been disparaging or unkind about other children's ideas.	Ground rules were devised together at the outset about listening to and respecting each other's contributions.
Children may have felt vulnerable doing something new if not with their friends.	Children had the option to remain with a friend in any group work.
Teachers may feel under pressure to conduct a new intervention on top of everything else they are being expected to do, and may experience stress.	I continually monitored the implementation of the intervention, providing support and reminding staff that they could withdraw at any time. However, within the AI, teachers were able

	to modify the intervention itself if needed. Activities and interviews were conducted at times suggested by the teachers as best for them.
During interviews with staff they may have felt unable to share views about participation that differ from the researcher's stated beliefs and may have felt oppressed by perceived power imbalances between the researcher and themselves.	In the individual interviews, in my role as researcher, I attempted to redress any possible power imbalance by actively seeking to empower the participant, value their points of view, demonstrate active listening, and enable them to lead the discussions.
The researcher may have found that the amount of time required to support the project had an impact on other duties as an educational psychologist e.g. supporting other schools, supervising a trainee, leading specialist work etc.	I had regular access to both professional supervision and support from a Senior EP every three weeks as well as regular peer supervision and access to support and research supervision from tutors at University of Birmingham. The time available to devote to the project was negotiated in advance.

As my study was primarily exploratory, the classes were selected opportunistically: one school was known to me professionally and sought to develop pupil participation as part of its school development plan; and the other school had chosen AI independently from a range of interventions offered by a colleague within a local authority literacy project. The head teacher of the former school selected two Year 4 teachers in parallel classes to be approached for the study. The head teacher of the other school had already chosen AI jointly with the Year 6 teacher, who volunteered to participate in the research.

Table 14 provides a summary of the main similarities and differences between the teachers, the schools and the classes, including information about the number of children with SEND in each class (as recommended by Thoonen et al, 2011). The number of children with SEND and the type of SEND categorised by their primary need was described by each teacher at the planning stages of the project. I did not seek further information about severity or complexity

of need as I judged that the teachers' perceptions about the *nature* of the children's special educational needs would be sufficient when investigating these children's participation and their ideas within the AI intervention.

Table 14: Similarities and differences between the three case study samples

Information		Case Study A (Teacher A and Class A)	Case Study B (Teacher B and Class B)	Case Study C (Teacher C and Class C)
Key Stage		2	2	2
Year group of pupils		Year 6	Year 4	Year 4
Number of pupils in the class (Girls (G):Boys (B))		30 (16:14)	30 (14:16)	31 (17:14)
Number of pupils with SEND (G:B)		4 (2:2)	10 (5:5)	12 (5:7)
SEND profile by primary need (G:B)	ASD	0	0	2 (1:1)
	General learning	1 (1:0)	2 (1:1)	4 (1:3)
	Specific learning	2 (0:2)	3 (2:1)	5 (2:3)
	Social, emotional	1 (1:0)	5 (2:3)	1 (1:0)
Number of pupils <u>with consent</u> for data to be used (G:B)		29 (16:13)	26 (12:14)	28 (17:11)
Number of consenting pupils with SEND (G:B)		4 (2:2)	7 (3:4)	10 (5:5)
SEND profile of pupils with consent (G:B)	ASD	0	0	1 (1:0)
	General learning	1 (1:0)	2 (1:1)	4 (1:3)
	Specific learning	2 (0:2)	2 (1:1)	4 (2:2)
	Social, emotional	1 (1:0)	3 (1:2)	1 (1:0)
Characteristics of class (as described by their teachers and observed by me)		Mostly very able and creative. Not always very focused on their work. One or two children with social,	Mixed ability. Fairly noisy and creative class. Several very dominant characters that take initiatives	Mixed ability. Quiet class mostly. Several children shy, anxious about making mistakes and will

	emotional and behavioural difficulties that often disrupt learning. Cooperative work only good in friendship groups.	and act as leaders. Cooperative work challenging but usually successful.	follow others or wait for directions. Cooperative work often difficult and unresolved.
Teacher characteristics (as described by their head teachers and observed by me)	Older male, disillusioned with educational changes. Very positive about participating in the research. Desires more creativity and freedom in teaching.	Young female, recently moved from a school with very high levels of pupil participation. Ambitious and enthusiastic about teaching and participating in the research.	Young female, newly qualified. Eager to learn and a competent teacher. Sceptical about pupil participation but interested in being part of the research.
Years of teaching experience	Approximately 25	6	First year of teaching
SMT judgement on teaching ability	Requires improvement	Good (outstanding at previous school)	Good (with features of outstanding)
Ofsted judgement on school overall	Requires improvement		Requires improvement
Ofsted judgement on Writing	Attainment and progress both in bottom 20% when compared with similar schools. Maths results better		Attainment and progress both in bottom 20% when compared with similar schools. Reading and maths results better
Number on roll	212		482
My relationship with the school	Coordinator of new EP literacy project where staff selected AI from a range of possible EP support and intervention. No previous knowledge of the school or teacher.		Named EP for the school. Already worked with both teachers in relation to assessment and intervention for children within their classes and at staff training sessions.
EP role in AI	Facilitator. Present for all AI stages. Active support for one group of pupils at Discovery and Dream Stages		Facilitator. AIs occurred at same time in both classes so observation and active support shared between the two classes. Teachers therefore took more responsibility for leading the AIs than the teacher in Case Study A
Support of head teacher for AI and participation in research	Very supportive		Very supportive (although dictated the topic for the AI rather than allowing the teachers and pupils to choose)
Teacher and TA consent to	100%		100%

participate and for data to be reported		
Parent/carer consent for data to be reported	100%	100%
Timing of AI	February to July 2013	May to July 2013
Topic of AI	Writing	Writing

7.4 Methods of data collection

7.4.1 Overview

A variety of tools were chosen or designed that would help to provide information before and

after the AI. These are summarised in Table 15.

Table 15: Measures chosen or designed for the study

Information to explore	Measures chosen or designed
Perceptions and beliefs of all participants in relation to pupil participation in decisions about learning	• Two simple pupil and teacher scaling questions about perceptions of pupil participation in decision-making and beliefs about the importance of pupil participation (pre- and post-AI). (See Appendix 14) • Teacher self-assessments relating to a model of pupil participation called the Tree of Participation (pre- and post-AI). (See Figure 2) • Semi-structured interviews with teachers, transcribed for ease of reference and accurate quoting (see Section 7.4.8). • Notes taken in class and during discussions with teachers, including any notes written in the class research diaries and emails.
Attitudes of the children towards themselves as learners and to school	• Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) scales (W3 Insights, 2002): an individual questionnaire made up of simple ratings for fifty statements (pre- and post-AI). (See Appendix 15) • Notes taken in class and during discussions with teachers, including any notes written in the class research diaries and emails
Progress and attainments of the children in literacy and numeracy	• National Curriculum sublevels of progress at six points throughout the year • Class discussions at the end of the study, based on three questions discussed in small groups and ideas fed back for general class discussion (see Section 7.4.6).
Perceptions of the children about their enjoyment of and participation in each	Pupil evaluation sheets (completed after each stage of the AI) with two simple scaling questions for enjoyment and participation (see Appendix 28).

stage of the AI	
Pupil evaluations about what they enjoyed most at each stage of the AI	• Pupil evaluation sheets (completed after each stage of the AI) with space for comments on what each child enjoyed most (see Appendix 28). • Class discussions at the end of the study, based on three questions discussed in small groups and ideas fed back for general class discussion (see Section 7.4.6).
Suggestions from all participants about how each stage of the AI might be improved for future classes, so that it is as inclusive as possible	• Pupil evaluation sheets (completed after each stage of the AI) with space for comments about how they believe that particular stage of AI could be improved (see Appendix 28). • Class discussions at the end of the study, based on three questions discussed in small groups and ideas fed back for general class discussion (see Section 7.4.6). • Notes taken in class and during discussions with teachers, including any notes written in the class research diaries and emails.
Children's ideas for writing tasks	Examples of children's ideas and activities and my own field notes, informal observations and research diary.
Contextual information	Documentation relating to the classes and schools involved e.g. Ofsted reports.

An outline of each of these measures, with their associated strengths, potential limitations and steps taken to overcome the potential limitations, is given in Sections 7.4.2 to 7.4.11.

7.4.2   Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)

The Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) questionnaire (W3 Insights, 2002) was chosen as an exploratory measure and administered to all children before and after the AI intervention. It is a standardised tool that can be used to measure nine factors, shown in Table 16. There are fifty short statements referring to a range of school and learner issues, with a four point rating scale for each item e.g. in relation to the statement 'I think carefully about my work': Yes a lot; Yes a bit; No, not much; No, not at all. (The fifty questions are listed in Appendix 15). PASS has been standardised involving over thirteen thousand children and young people between the ages of eight and eighteen years old.

Table 16: Nine standardised factors measured using PASS

	Standardised Factors measured by Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)	
1	Feelings about school e.g. how happy or safe they feel at school
2	Perceived learning capability e.g. how positive and successful they feel in their specific capabilities as a learner
3	Self-regard in the learning context e.g. the impact of their learning on their self-concept generally
4	Preparedness for learning e.g. perceptions of their ability to use meta-cognitive and study skills
5	Attitude to teachers e.g. perceptions of the teacher-pupil relationships within school
6	General work ethic e.g. general motivation and associated feelings including anxiety
7	Confidence in learning e.g. perseverance when presented with challenging tasks and problem-solving
8	Attitude to attendance e.g. what they feel about attending school
9	Response to curriculum demands e.g. motivation to undertake and complete specific work set in school

PASS is administered individually either on a computer or using paper-based questionnaires and takes approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The children in Class A took turns to complete the initial PASS questionnaire using a single laptop stationed at the back of their classroom. Following this, a paper version of the PASS questionnaire became available and was subsequently used for the post intervention measure in Class A and for both pre- and

post-intervention measures for Classes B and C. The children were asked to put their names or register numbers on the PASS questionnaires so that the pre and post questionnaires could be matched. However, they were reassured that none of their peers or teachers would know what they had said and that the results would be reported in such a way that their responses could not be identified. Table 17 summarises the strengths, potential limitations and steps taken to overcome the potential limitations of using PASS as a pre- and post-measure of pupil attitudes in this study.

Table 17: Strengths, potential limitations and steps taken to overcome the potential limitations of using PASS

Strengths of using PASS in this study	Structured, numerical data can be obtained (without necessarily needing the presence of the researcher) and analysed in a straightforward manner using the PASS software. Detailed information can therefore be obtained and analysed from 182 questionnaires (i.e. 91 pupils, administered twice).
	PASS is very quick to administer (about fifteen minutes) and easy to organise as pre- and post-measures, whether on paper or computer.
	Changes to a variety of different pupil attitudes can be explored over the time in which the AI intervention took place.
	The questionnaire has already been robustly developed and standardised for the age of the children to whom it was administered.
Potential limitations of using PASS in this study and steps taken to overcome these	Changes in attitudes could be explained by a wide range of changes within the classroom and not necessarily related to the AI. It is not possible to overcome this limitation. However, contextual factors and hypotheses that might help to explain any changes in attitudes were discussed with each individual teacher in their feedback meetings as part of the case study triangulation process.
	The attitudes measured may relate primarily to the specific day on which is administered rather than representing a more general view. Children's attitudes are likely to alter from day to day. This would be expected to have been taken into account during the standardisation process. However, one

child with ASD completed the questionnaire very rapidly and in a particularly angry mood, rating every item at the extreme right hand side of the questionnaire, regardless of whether the statement was positive or negative. The teacher did not consider this to be reliable or representative of the child's general attitudes and was therefore discounted from the study.

Some of the children with SEND may not be able to complete the questionnaire reliably, especially those who may have reading difficulties and prefer not to draw attention to this by requesting support. In order to overcome this limitation, the planning process identified the children who may need additional help and the teachers planned to provide this discreetly, either by providing additional adult support (at the time or during another individual time) or by pairing the children in such a way that they supported each other, whilst emphasising that each person must respond for themselves and that everyone will have different views.

Where adult support is provided for children with reading difficulties or special educational needs, the presence of the adult is likely to influence the children's responses, even when reassured that the answers will be kept confidential. This was partly addressed by the adult reading the question and respectfully ensuring that no comment was made about each response.

The four ratings are not nuanced enough for some children, who may not wish to say 'yes' or 'no' to some items and prefer a neutral response, which is not available to them. It is not possible to overcome this, except to reassure children that they should choose the nearest response possible to reflect how they generally feel or may have felt on one occasion.

One item is a negative statement which is very confusing for children to rate: 'I'm not good at solving problems'. If the child believes they are not good at solving problems, do they say 'yes' because the statement is true or 'no' because they are not good at solving problems? It is expected that the standardisation process will have accounted for this to some extent, but the teachers supported the children by helping them to understand that 'no' means they *are* good at solving problems; that they are not 'not good'.

The questionnaire does not facilitate any additional information that some children may want to give to 'qualify' their responses. In this study, the children would sometimes say 'it depends' but they would still have to select one of the options. Therefore, some potentially helpful qualitative information may have been lost. Whilst it is important for them to choose an option for the purposes of the PASS analysis, the provision of research diaries in each class allowed for some of these discussions to be captured

	where the teacher or child felt that it was important.
	The questionnaire includes some potentially sensitive items e.g. I'm lonely; I like my teacher; I'm clever. Some children may not like to make such judgements. In Class A, there were some children who asked advice about whether to say they are 'clever', as they thought it might sound 'big headed'. In order to overcome this limitation, the children were reminded several times that it is important their answers are honest and that no-one (i.e. their teacher, parents or friends) would know what they have said, except me as the researcher.
	The layout of the paper questionnaire is quite 'busy' with lines of small squares in which to make the responses. Some children may make errors completing the correct line of boxes. In order to overcome this limitation the children had access to rulers or books as markers. At the data analysis stage it became apparent that some children had missed a line of boxes and it was agreed with the PASS data analysts that the answer would be taken as the same answer given on the other questionnaire (pre- or post-AI), which would indicate no change and therefore have the least influence on the results.
	With the paper questionnaires all being completed at the same time, it is possible that some children might rush their responses when they see that others have finished. To help overcome this limitation the children were reminded to take their time and that completing the questionnaire carefully was far more important than finishing quickly.
	The software presents the results as percentiles, which makes data analysis across subgroups of children difficult. For example, it is meaningless to compute averages of percentiles. To overcome this limitation, the PASS data support analysts helpfully converted the percentiles to percentages in order to facilitate the scrutiny required.

7.4.3 Pupil and teacher rating scales about perceptions of participation in lessons and beliefs about the importance of participation

Rating scales can be useful and appropriate to measure the attitudes and opinions of a large number of people because they are straightforward to write, easy for people to respond to, can show the strength of a belief or feeling and have good reliability and validity (Cohen et al,

2007). It is particularly important for the children to be able to use a scale that is readily accessible to them.

Some researchers suggest that it is too simplistic to measure attitudes, beliefs or feelings in a straight line and that a level of statistical sophistication is required in order to design rating scales so that they provide statistical validity and norms (Spector, 1992). However, the ratings used in this study are extremely simple and straightforward, comprising only two questions pre- and post-AI (see below) and a choice of numbers on a scale between one and ten (see Appendix 14).

How much do you think the children in this class take part in decisions about their learning?

How much do you think that children should take part in decisions about their learning?

These took approximately one to two minutes to complete each time. The adult scaling sheets were the same as those used for the children but were completed and discussed as part of individual semi-structured interviews.

The pupil evaluation sheets used after each of the four stages of AI also included two questions on rating scales (see below); using numbers from one to ten (see Appendix 28).

How much did you enjoy this stage of the AI?

How much were you able to participate in this stage of the AI?

The teachers explained the rating scales to their classes extremely carefully to help all children understood how to complete the scales, rehearsing in advance what each end of the scale meant and showing the children an example. Children with SEND were given additional support where needed, whilst being careful not to lead their responses and at the same time maintain the children's confidentiality.

> Rating scales are widely used in research, and rightly so, for they combine the opportunity for a flexible response with the ability to determine frequencies, correlations and other forms of quantitative analysis. They afford the researcher the freedom to fuse measurement with opinion, quantity and quality (Cohen et al, 2007, p.327).

No participant had access to their previous scaling sheet when they made their second ratings, several weeks or months later.

Some children wanted to express the strength of their views by exceeding the scale and recording numbers such as a hundred or ten thousand instead of ten. In analysing the data numerically such extremes were taken as ten. However, where the data is triangulated with qualitative information, these answers have been reported.

7.4.4   National Curriculum sublevels of progress

Both schools already collect pupil progress data six times per year for every child in Reading, Writing and Maths using National Curriculum (NC) sublevels of progress. These were scrutinised after the AI intervention in order to examine any changes in the rate of pupil progress throughout the year, particularly during the implementation phase of the AI.

The advantages of using existing school measures of progress are that:

- the data is typically readily available and does not incur any additional testing; and

- measures of progress are made six times per year and therefore theoretically allow an exploration of rates of progress before, during and after the AI.

However, there are potential limitations regarding the use of NC sublevels as a measure of progress:

- the NC levels and sublevels may not be robustly moderated, especially when teachers change during the year, but also from one year to the next, which may make the baseline NC data unreliable at the start of the year;

- the NC levels and sublevels may not be assessed regularly and promptly by each teacher throughout the year;

- the NC levels may not be stored securely or in an accessible form;

- there may be a mixture of teacher assessments using sublevels and whole levels recorded from standardised tests, so that rates of progress cannot be compared;

- the effects of the AI intervention may build over time and not be seen readily in immediate results;

- there may be variation in teacher confidence regarding the assessment of levels.

It was not possible to overcome these limitations prior to the study but it was considered a reasonable expectation that this data would be available towards the end of the final term, when the full set of NC data for the whole year from each teacher was requested. The teachers had agreed at the outset to share this information as part of the study.

7.4.5 Evaluation sheets completed after each stage of AI

Pupil evaluation sheets were devised and presented after each stage of the AI, using rating scales (see Section 7.4.3) to indicate how much each child participated and enjoyed it and two comments: what the children liked most; and how the stage might be improved for children in future. Children were offered a scribe, Dictaphone or computer for any writing (or a drawing option instead) and to work in twos if they preferred. These evaluation sheets took approximately five minutes to complete. The evaluation sheets used for each stage of the AI are shown in Appendix 28.

7.4.6 Class discussions

At the end of the AI intervention and its implementation phase, each class held a discussion facilitated by myself and their teacher in which three questions were addressed in small groups before feeding back to the whole class each group's ideas and discussing the issues raised as a class:

> *Question 1: What have you enjoyed most, what stands out as the high point?*
>
> *Question 2: How do you think this way of working might improve the quality of children's writing?*
>
> *Question 3: How do you think the Appreciative Inquiry could be improved to make sure everyone is equally included?*

Each group had a set of these questions, with space to record some of their ideas. I also made extensive contemporaneous notes during these discussions in order to capture the children's views as accurately and as comprehensively as possible, adding any further information recalled to these notes immediately after the session.

7.4.7   Examples of children's ideas and activities

Examples of children's stories, ideas, provocative propositions and action plans were collected, using photographs as well as field notes and the collection of real artefacts (subject to gaining consent). Examples of children's ideas and provocative propositions can be seen in Appendix 38. Yin (2009) suggests that these offer an insight into the cultural and technical features of the case, although it can be difficult to decide what to select from what is available.

7.4.8   Semi-structured interviews with teachers

> Interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs or behavioural events (Yin, 2009, p.108).

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the teachers before and after the AI intervention. The initial interview focused upon the teachers' views about pupil participation, making reference to their completed rating scales (see Section 7.4.3) and the Tree of Participation model of pupil participation (see Figure 2), which was carefully explained (see Appendix 16 for an example of this explanation in the transcript of the initial interview with Teacher B). Then each teacher was asked to judge their class's level of participation in decision-making with reference to the model, giving examples and elaborating their views.

The purpose of the interview was to explore the teachers' perceptions of the culture of pupil participation currently existing within their class and their views about the importance of children making decisions about their learning. Teachers were encouraged to elaborate on

their views and give examples from their teaching practice. An outline of the initial interview prompts is given in Table 18.

Table 18: Outline of initial semi-structured interview prompts used with teachers

Part of interview	Planned features
Introduction	• Thank the teacher for agreeing to be interviewed • Clarify that the interview is likely to take less than fifteen minutes • Check that the teacher is happy for the interview to be recorded, reminding them that this is only to aid my memory and for accuracy in reporting any quotations • Remind the teacher that comments will be reported anonymously
Rating scales	• Completion of rating scales for how much the teacher believes their class generally participates in decision making about their learning at the moment and how much the teacher believes the children *should* take part in decisions about their learning • Discussion based on an elaboration of the numbers chosen e.g. why the teacher went for those numbers and what they were thinking, giving any examples from their teaching experiences
The Tree of Participation model of pupil participation	• Explanation of the Tree of Participation model (see Figure 2), giving examples for each stage of the model and emphasising that the higher levels of participation are not hierarchical • Teacher judgement about where they would place their own teaching practice generally, emphasising the importance of their honest views (i.e. that there are no right or wrong answers) • Discussion based on the teacher's responses and in relation to any curriculum activities mentioned
End	• Invitation to express any concerns about the project or any questions about it or to add any further thoughts • Thank the teacher for participating in the interview

Initial semi-structured interviews were also completed with the two teaching assistants in Classes B and C, but unfortunately these adults (and the teaching assistant in Class A) were not able to be fully part of the AI and were unavailable for interview following the intervention, so these results have not been included.

The second semi-structured interview with the teachers, following the AI intervention, repeated the teachers' judgements and discussion about pupil participation using the same tools (i.e. rating scales and Tree of Participation model) and then moved onto further questioning about the AI process, including seeking the teachers' views about: what they have most appreciated and enjoyed (i.e. their 'high points'); any improvements they would make to the process in future; the inclusion of vulnerable children and those with SEND; whether all four stages of AI are needed; and how they may use AI in future. The teachers voluntarily reflected upon these questions after their interviews and sent further thoughts via email and during follow-up meetings when the results were shared. An outline of the second semi-structured interview is given in Table 19.

Table 19: Second semi-structured interview prompts used with teachers

Part of interview	Planned features
Introduction	• Thank the teacher for all they have done in the project (acknowledging all their other commitments) and for agreeing to be interviewed again • Clarify that the interview is likely to take about twenty minutes this time • Check that the teacher is happy for the interview to be recorded, reminding them that this is only to aid my memory and for accuracy in reporting any quotations • Remind the teacher that comments will be reported anonymously
Rating scales	• Completion of rating scales for how much the teacher believes their class generally participates in decision making about their learning now and how much the teacher believes the children *should* take part in decisions about their learning • Discussion based on an elaboration of the numbers chosen, checking that any changes from their previous ratings feel right
The Tree of Participation model of pupil participation	• Teacher judgement about where they would place their own teaching now, explaining any changes in their thinking or teaching practices following the AI experience • Discussion based on the teacher's responses

Evaluation of the AI process	Discussion based on the following evaluative questions: • What have you most appreciated and enjoyed about the AI? What would be your 'high points'? • What improvements could be made to the AI process in future? • Any thoughts about the inclusion of vulnerable children and those with SEND in the AI? • Do you think all four stages of AI are needed? • How might you use AI in future? • Is there anything else you think needs saying about this type of work that we haven't covered already?
End	• Thank the teacher for participating in the interview

Semi-structured interviews have a number of strengths and potential limitations, identified in

Table 20.

Table 20: Strengths, potential limitations and steps taken to overcome the potential limitations of using semi-structured Interviews

Strengths of using semi-structured interviews in this study	**Flexible** An interview schedule covers a list of issues with potential questions, follow-up questions and probes, with the freedom to go through these in any order and to follow up points as necessary (Thomas, 2011). It can allow for historical information to be provided (Cresswell, 2009).
	Targeted Can be targeted and focused directly on case study topics (Yin, 2009). The researcher has control over the line of questioning (Cresswell, 2009).
	Insightful Provides perceived causal inferences and explanations (Yin, 2009) and can achieve greater depth (Cohen et al, 2007). Researcher has to balance control of the interview and where it is going with space for interviewee to redefine topics and generate new insights (Willig, 2008, p.24).
	Personalised Can be personalised and matched to individuals and circumstances, any individual misunderstandings can be easily clarified and additional information can be sought in response to specific ideas raised in the interview (Cohen et al, 2007).
	Comprehensive Outline of interview increases comprehensiveness of data collection for each respondent (Cohen et al, 2007).
	Relaxed Conversational and relaxed as long as the interviewer is adept at active listening and able to manage the pace and style of the encounter so that the respondent is at ease (Cohen et al, 2007).

	Attentive Transcribing a taped interview allows the researcher to avoid taking notes which can distract and interfere with rapport (Willig, 2008).
	Accurate Recording interviews and transcribing them allows passages to be quoted accurately. 'I respect the power of the direct quotation to capture succinctly and vividly what could only be expressed dully and less economically in the researcher's own words. Some statements carry a remarkably rich density of meaning in a few words' (Ruddock, 1993, p.19).
	Interpretative Transcribing can lead to multiple interpretations of the text, may highlight points that went unnoticed during the interview, relationships and the interview process itself can be scrutinised, and can be revisited as many times as necessary (Cohen et al, 2007).
Potential limitations of using semi-structured interviews in this study and the steps taken to overcome them	**Honesty** It may be more difficult to achieve honest replies than an anonymous questionnaire because the interviewer is known to the teacher professionally (Cohen et al, 2007) and the interviewee may give what the interviewer wants to hear (Yin, 2009). To overcome this limitation, I emphasised to each teacher the importance of honesty in the context of confidentiality, saying that I am particularly interested in views that are very different to my own and how these might shift and change throughout the project. I have used consultation skills developed over many years as an EP to ensure that the teachers' own views were always appreciated and validated with authenticity.
	Bias The interview is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer (Cohen et al, 2007; Cresswell, 2009). In order to overcome this limitation, reflexivity is crucial. I needed to be particularly vigilant about the potential for bias as I hold strong views about the value of pupil participation and my research has an emancipatory aim. On the part of the interviewee, information about the class is filtered through the views of the teacher (Cresswell, 2009). This potential limitation is reduced by the triangulation of evidence, where my observations and the children's own responses also form part of the information gained about each class.
	Comparability Flexibility in the way questions are phrased can reduce comparability of responses (Cohen et al, 2007). Also, not everyone is equally articulate and perceptive (Cresswell, 2009). Using the same measures in each interview (i.e. the rating scales and the Tree of Participation model to structure the conversations) helps in enabling comparisons to be made between the three cases.
	Interviewer skills

	Successful interviewing depends on the interpersonal skills of the interviewer, for example their ability to listen and use prompts to deepen responses (Cohen et al, 2007) and to articulate questions clearly (Yin, 2009). It also depends on developing and maintaining rapport between the interviewer and interviewee e.g. balancing how much to reveal about self (as researcher) with what the interviewee is revealing (Willig, 2008). I am aware of and have developed these skills throughout my work as an EP.
	Inaccuracy Inaccuracies can be due to poor recall (Yin, 2009). But recording only helps with the words, not the non-verbal aspects of the interview (Cohen et al, 2007). Transcripts are 'decontextualised' and will not be a true account of the interaction, nuances can be misinterpreted when read out of context and the researcher is likely to need to listen to the tape again and to take notes (Cohen et al, 2007). Information may be taken at face value instead of working out what someone might have meant by what they said and how they said it; the interviewer mustn't assume the interviewees words are 'simple and direct reflections of their thoughts and feelings' (Willig, 2008, p.23). To overcome this limitation I have recorded the interviews and listened to them again even though I have accurate transcripts for reference. I have also kept my own notes during and immediately following each interview.
	Integrity/ethics It is important not to 'abuse the informal ambience of the interview to encourage the interviewee to reveal more than they may feel comfortable with after the event' (Willig, 2008, p.25). I have acted with professional integrity in this regard and, as promised at the beginning of the study, I have not shared information concerning the beliefs or actions within the classroom of any of the teachers with their head teachers or with other staff at either of the schools.
	Openness/flexibility If only the topic headings are used to formulate questions in a less open way (more directive), potentially important information may be missed (Willig, 2008). To avoid this limitation, the questions devised for the interviews in this study have been constructed and delivered in an open and enquiring manner.

7.4.9   My own field notes, informal observations and research diary

Contemporaneous notes were made during or immediately after any discussions with the teachers and any class or group discussions that I participated in during the AI. My own field notes and research diary form part of the evidence collected and were referred to in the analysis and interpretation of the data. A research diary was left within each of the classes for

the pupils or teachers to record any reflections or discussions that they may have in relation to the AI when I was not present.

However, research diaries and/or note-taking can be a challenge for both the researcher and participants (Willig, 2008). It can be hard for the participants to keep; perhaps due to the effect they may have on daily routines and the time available to complete them. Participants may also need guidance on what and how to record and how frequently and in how much detail. Despite these factors, the strengths of research diaries are that: it is possible to obtain some good personal information at the time the thoughts occurred; and the researcher can benefit from teachers' and pupils' reflections that are not readily available later in interviews (Willig, 2008). They can also be good for the annotation of dates, recording thoughts and feelings, narratives and events (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011).

Robson (2011), Willig (2008) and McNiff and Whitehead (2011) all argue that research diaries must serve the researcher's purpose. My main purposes in using research diaries are: to create an accurate log of events; and an accurate record of participants' thoughts and feelings at the time they occur, when they may not be able to be captured retrospectively. Ethical issues and confidentiality needed to be considered as the diaries would be placed openly within each classroom. If a participant wished to communicate information to me confidentially, they were encouraged to write it down and keep it safely to themselves until I next visited. Some children did indeed use this suggestion and the teachers used email communication and private conversations when they wished to communicate any ideas in confidence.

7.4.10 Documentation relating to the classes and schools involved.

Yin (2009) argues that the strengths of looking at documentation relating to each of the cases are that this type of evidence is: stable and can be reviewed repeatedly; unobtrusive and not created as part of the study; exact e.g. containing names, references and details of events; broad in its coverage e.g. a long span of time, many events and settings; good for corroborating and augmenting evidence from other sources; and helpful in providing further information to ask about. Cresswell (2009) adds that the information can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher and that people have generally given attention and thoughtfulness in compiling them.

The potential limitations of using additional documentation as part of the study include: irretrievability (i.e. they can be hard to find); selective bias if the collection is incomplete; reporting bias (potentially reflecting an unknown author's bias); accessibility (some documentation may be deliberately withheld); and accuracy if written for other reasons/audiences and therefore not reflecting the 'truth' (Yin, 2009). Cresswell (2009) adds that it can be hard to track down *relevant* documentation.

In this study, I have examined the latest Ofsted reports for each of the schools, including the Ofsted Dashboards, and have looked at various school newsletters as part of my regular EP work in the school where Teachers B and C are based. I have examined the information that is posted on each schools' websites for parents/carers and the community. Available documentation relating to the NC levels of the children in each class has also been scrutinised, but was incomplete.

7.4.11 Observations

A series of classroom non-participant observations in writing lessons within each of the three classes (pre and post the AI intervention) was considered but discounted due to the large amount of time that would be needed to gather meaningful data. Yin (2009) confirms that: observations can be time-consuming; broad coverage can be difficult without a team of observers; and the event may be different *because* it is being observed. However, I conducted participant observations during each of the AIs in my role as a facilitator. It was helpful to see the event in real time and this provided important contextual information regarding each case study, including insights into interpersonal relationships within each class, whilst acknowledging the potential bias involved due to my own manipulation of events.

During these participant observations, it was necessary to balance keeping notes with my absorption within the activities, writing up my observations as soon as possible afterwards in order to remember: what was happening (e.g. descriptions, quotes); positive or negative relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and their teacher; the access and inclusion of children with SEND; reflections on my role; and any emerging themes, connections, patterns, beginnings of data analysis and theory-building (Willig, 2008). Cresswell (2009) promotes this first-hand experience, where information can be recorded as it occurs and unusual aspects can be noted that may not be brought up by the teachers themselves, whilst being mindful that the researcher could be seen as intrusive and may see things that the teacher prefers not to be recorded.

In Class A, I was able to be a participant observer and joint AI facilitator with the teacher and a teaching assistant throughout all stages of the AI, further supported by a trainee educational psychologist for the first two stages. The implementation phase of the AI then continued in my absence for several weeks before I returned to complete the post-intervention measures. In Classes B and C, the teachers facilitated the AIs and I was only able to observe intermittently between the two classes, as they were both conducting the AI stages on the same days and at the same time. I was therefore able to have more influence in shaping the AI within Class A than in Classes B and C, where the teachers devised and led many of the activities themselves. This had the benefit of enabling more direct ownership of the intervention in Classes B and C but the potential limitation of being less knowledgeable and faithful to the AI process and its philosophy. Indeed, Teachers B and C did take more control from the children in the latter stages of the AI, which may not have occurred were I able to have more influence within each class. All classes completed the implementation phase in my absence.

7.5 Chronology of research activities

Before providing a detailed chronology of research activities, Table 21 separates the AI project activities from the data collection activities, in order to show how they are related. Table 22 shows the chronology of research activities within each class, prior to, during and after the AI intervention.

Table 21: Outline of data collection activities associated with each stage of AI

AI Project	Data collection
Preparatory Phase • Meetings with head teachers and teachers to offer project and seek consent (see Appendices 1-5) • Planning meetings with teachers and other adults (see Appendix 20) • Letter/meeting with parents to outline project and seek consent for data to be used in thesis (see Appendices 6-11) • Meetings with all children to outline project and seek consent for data to be used in thesis (see Appendices 12-13)	• Semi-structured interviews with each teacher, focusing on perceptions and beliefs about pupil participation using scaling questions and Tree of Participation model (see Section 7.4.8) • PASS for all children involved (see Section 7.4.2) • Pupil scaling activity re perceptions and beliefs about pupil participation (see Section 7.4.3)
Discovery Stage • Children interviewing each other to collect stories (see Appendices 21-22). Option of drawings and Dictaphones offered • Small groups to share favourite stories and feedback to class	• Observations (see Section 7.4.11) • Field notes (see Section 7.4.9) • Class research diary (see Section 7.4.9) • Pupil evaluation sheets (see Section 7.4.5)
Dream Stage • Group work and creative presentations • All children sign up for whichever dream they'd like to help make happen (see Appendix 24)	• Examples of children's ideas (see Appendix 38) • Field notes (see Section 7.4.9) • Class research diary (see Section 7.4.9) • Pupil evaluation sheets (see Section 7.4.5)
Design Stage • Composing Provocative Propositions in groups with someone to scribe, with option of access to ICT offered (see Appendices 25-26) • Sharing and refining them together	• Provocative propositions (see Section 7.4.7 and Appendix 38) • Field notes (see Section 7.4.9) • Class research diary (see Section 7.4.9) • Pupil evaluation sheets (see Section 7.4.5)

Destiny Stage • Group work making action plans (see Appendix 27) • Sharing and refining them together	• Action plans (see Section 7.4.7) • Field notes (see Section 7.4.9) • Class research diary (see Section 7.4.9) • Pupil evaluation sheets (see Section 7.4.5)
Implementation Phase • Meeting with staff to plan implementation activities • Class teacher facilitates implementation of children's ideas over next few weeks	• Teacher and children's joint research diary/log/emails to collect any reflections or ideas throughout this phase (see Section 7.4.9 and Appendix 39)
Post-intervention Review Phase • Meetings with each teacher • Class discussions (see Section 7.4.6 and Appendix 30)	• NC Levels of progress throughout the year for all children involved • Semi-structured interviews with each teacher (see Section 7.4.8) • PASS for all children involved (see Section 7.4.2) • Pupil scaling activity (see Section 7.4.3) • Class discussion notes (see Appendix 31)
Communication of results/outcomes • Meeting at each school to feedback results of study and decide on dissemination (see Section 12.4) • Celebration of outcomes and learning from involvement in AI	• Children's and teachers' ideas for communicating results • Research notes/reflections (see Section 7.4.9)

Table 22: Chronology of research activities in each class prior to, during and after the AI

	Research activity	Class A	Classes B and C
PRIOR TO THE AI			
1	Consultation with head teacher to outline and offer the AI project (see Appendix 2 for Outline of Project).	21.01.14	26.03.14
2	Meeting with head teacher to obtain formal consent for the research activities (see Appendix 3 for Consent form).	30.01.14	06.05.14
3	Meeting with class teachers and teaching assistants to explain the project and seek formal consent (see Appendix 4 for Consent form).	30.01.14	08.05.14
4	Planning meetings with teachers and teaching assistants.	04.02.14 07.03.14	15.05.14 12.06.14
5	Letters to parents from head teacher and me (see Appendices 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 for letters to parents).	05.02.14	23.05.14 02.06.14
6	Presentation to parents with open discussion and seeking of consent (see Appendices 7 and 8).	Not offered	02.06.14
7	Presentation to the children to outline the project and its aims, discussing consent and ensuring equal access to all information (see Appendices 12 and 13).	07.02.14	13.06.14
8	Semi-structured interviews completed with each adult individually (see Section 7.4.8 for outline of interview prompts).	07.03.14	12.06.14
9	Children completed the PASS questionnaire and scaling questions (see Appendices 14 and 15).	05.03.14	12.06.14
10	Meeting with a small representative group from Class A (including some who were vulnerable or with SEND) to help devise the AI questions for the Discovery Stage.	05.03.14	Did not occur due to time constraints
DURING THE AI			
11	**Discovery Stage** Children interviewed each other in pairs and then were organised into small groups to share their stories before gathering for a whole class feedback and discussion. Evaluations were then completed. Class A: Children spread into different areas of the school for their paired interviews and group discussions, moving back into their classroom for class feedback and discussion. Classes B and C: Children completed their interviews in the school hall (rain prevented these from taking place outdoors) and moved back into	10.03.14	18.06.14

	their classrooms for the group discussions and class feedback and discussion.		
12	**Dream Stage** In the same small groups as the Discovery Stage. Based on their stories, new ideas were developed and presented creatively to the whole class. Evaluations completed.	10.03.14 and 12.03.14	20.06.14
13	**Planning**: Meeting with teaching staff to structure the next two stages based on the children's preferences for group work and the favourite activities they selected.	21.03.14	20.06.14
14	**Design Stage** Writing provocative propositions, reviewing these and refining them with the whole class. Evaluations completed.	04.04.14	26.06.14
15	**Destiny Stage** Action plans drawn up and fed back to the whole class for review. Evaluations completed.	04.04.14	26.06.14
16	**Implementation** Class teacher facilitates implementation of children's ideas over next few weeks/months.	20.05.14 AI observation; 16.06.14 Meeting with head teacher	23.07.14 AI observation
AFTER THE AI			
17	**Post-intervention Review** • Semi-structured interviews completed with each teacher. • Class discussions focusing on what the children had enjoyed most, how they think the AI may work in improving their writing and how AI could be improved to ensure all children are equally included. • Re-administration of PASS questionnaires and scaling questions.	17.07.14	23.07.14
18	**Discussion of results** Meetings with teachers to feedback the results of the study, discuss hypotheses to help explain the results and decide on ways forward to share the outcomes of the study.	10.09.14	23.10.14 (Teacher C) 13.11.14 (Teacher B)
19	**Dissemination of results** • Staff meetings • Letter to pupils • Case study report	10.09.14 Planning. 15.09.14 and 29.09.14: Staff meetings.	Letter to pupils

7.6 Methods of data analysis

7.6.1 Introduction

The methods of data analysis were guided by the purposes of the study, the research questions, theoretical propositions and the exploratory nature of the inquiry. Data was collected before, during and after the AI intervention and during the implementation phase.

Each set of data was analysed separately and then connected in order to answer the research questions as fully as possible and from differing perspectives. Quantitative and qualitative data were compared, related and merged to inform a larger and deeper understanding (Creswell, 2009).

In this section I: provide a summary of the initial analyses conducted within each data set; outline the procedures undertaken to analyse quantitative and qualitative data; and finally discuss how both types of data were brought together in order to answer the research questions.

7.6.2   Initial analysis of each data set

Yin (2009) suggests 'playing' with the data initially, creating arrays of information according to various analytical themes until 'stories' emerge that are linked to the research questions. These analyses are summarised in Table 23 and linked to the four research questions (see Section 5.1).

Table 23: Analyses within each individual data set linked to the four research questions (see Section 5.1)

Data set	Analyses undertaken	Links to Research Questions (RQs)
Initial semi-structured interviews	A thematic analysis was conducted (Braun and Clarke, 2006) across all interviews: • Full transcription of recordings obtained • Listened and checked for accuracy of transcription several times, making amendments as necessary • Highlighting used to identify and code significant features of the interviews, particularly in relation to beliefs about pupil participation and children being involved in making decisions about their learning as well as perceptions of current level of pupil participation in each class • Themes identified from highlighted/coded text • Search to identify potential illustrative quotes and discrepant data	**RQ 1** Exploration of teacher perceptions of pupil participation and beliefs about the value of pupil participation.
Final semi-structured interviews	A thematic analysis was conducted (Braun and Clarke, 2006) across all interviews: • Full transcription of recordings obtained • Listened and checked for accuracy of transcription several times, making amendments as necessary • Highlighter pen used to identify and code significant features of the interviews, in relation to: changes in perceptions about levels of participation in the class and beliefs about the value of participation; and evaluative comments regarding the implementation of AI in terms of enjoyment, suggested improvements, inclusion of children with SEND and the need for all four stages of AI • Themes identified from highlighted/coded text • Search to identify potential illustrative quotes and discrepant data	**RQs 1,2, 3, 4** Changes to perceptions and beliefs (RQ1), accounts of children's responses (RQ2) and evaluative comments regarding strengths (RQ3) and suggested improvements (RQ4).
PASS questionnaires (pre and post)	• The initial questionnaire data for Class A that had been completed on computer were transferred to paper questionnaires by hand • The full set of questionnaires was then checked twice, photocopied and the originals sent to the PASS Team data analysts for processing. Decision made in consultation	**RQ 2** Exploration of potential changes in a range of pupil attitudes following the AI.

	with analysts that if one of the 50 items is not completed, the answer will be taken from the pupil's other questionnaire, indicating no change for that item, thus enabling the rest of the pupils data on the other 49 items to be included • Results returned electronically using coloured banding based on percentile ranks • 'Playing' with this data. Looking for trends and the numbers of children who have moved up or down a band following the AI • Difficulty analysing data to compare groups of children meaningfully so PASS data analysts agreed to convert percentile scores to percentages so that the mean for each sub group of the data can be calculated • Statistical analysis of changes for each group of children, 'playing' with ideas in relation to SEND/non-SEND, gender, strand and item analysis for each class • Decision not to focus on gender as this does not relate to research questions or purposes of the study • Calculation of statistical significance for all changes in PASS data sets (pre- and post-AI) • Experimentation with charting the results to illustrate changes according to each of the 9 attitudes measured by PASS for each of the groups in each case: whole class; SEND group and non-SEND group	
Two rating scales (0 to 10) for perceived participation and belief about importance of participation (pre and post)	• Two sets of ratings (perceived participation and belief about importance of participation) recorded on Excel spreadsheet for each child and teacher in each class, pre- and post-AI • Two sets of averages calculated for each class pre- and post-AI • Two sets of data for each teacher charted • Two sets of children's data sorted into SEND and non-SEND and averages calculated for each of these subgroups for each class pre- and post-AI • Statistical significance calculated for all changes in all data sets • Experimentation with charting the results to illustrate changes on both rating scales for each of the groups in each case study: whole class; SEND group and non-SEND group	**RQ 1** Exploration of children's and teachers' perceptions of participation and beliefs about the value of participation.

Four rating scales (0 to 10) for children's enjoyment and perceived participation at each stage of the AI	• Two ratings (enjoyment and participation) recorded on Excel spreadsheet for each child in each class for each of the four AI stages (Classes B and C completed ratings for the last two stages as one as these stages ran together) • Averages calculated for each class in relation to both ratings (enjoyment and participation) • Children's data sorted into SEND and non-SEND and new averages calculated for each of these subgroups for each of the four stages on both ratings (enjoyment and participation) • Statistical significance calculated for all changes in all data sets • Experimentation with charting the results to illustrate perceptions of participation and enjoyment of each stage of the AI for each of the groups in each case study: whole class; SEND group and non-SEND group	**RQ1 and 3** Children's perceptions of participation (RQ1) and their enjoyment of the AI process (RQ3).
Children's evaluative comments on what they had enjoyed most and what could be improved at each stage of the AI	• Two sets of evaluative comments (what they had enjoyed most and their suggested improvements) for each stage of the AI were typed into summaries for each class • Simple thematic analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994) led to the grouping of comments in each class according to themes, with the number of children mentioning each theme recorded • Identified themes were compared across each of the three classes and summarised in comparative grids (two-dimensional matrices) • Experimentation with visual representation of the results	**RQ3 and 4** What the children enjoyed most (RQ3) and how they believe the AI process could be improved (RQ4).
Examples of children's ideas at each stage of the AI	• A variety of artefacts, including some children's interview notes from the Discovery Stage, some children's planning sheets and ideas recorded on paper at the Dream, Design and Destiny Stages and some children's writing at the implementation phase, were analysed for illustrative purposes i.e. potentially to be photographed and included in the case study report	**RQ2** Children's ideas for changes to the curriculum.
Class discussions	• The notes made by groups of children on paper and my own researcher notes taken during and after the class discussions were scrutinised for information about what the children believed worked well, how changes	**RQ2,3&4** Curriculum ideas (RQ2), enjoyment (RQ3) and improvements to

	to the curriculum might improve their writing and what they thought could be improved about the AI process so that everyone is equally included	the AI process (RQ4).
Research notes and email communication with teachers	• Research field notes and written communication from teachers were scrutinised for illustrative purposes and to contribute to developing hypotheses in relation to each of the research questions	**RQ1,2,3&4**
National Curriculum Data	• Data relating to National Curriculum (NC) levels and sublevels of progress in Reading, Writing and Maths were recorded by hand for each child in each class where this data was made available • Progress across the year was then analysed by comparing progress before the AI began with progress during the time in which the AI took place. This was done in different ways for Classes A and C due to the nature of the data presented by the teachers. No comparative analysis of NC progress data in Class B was possible because only one set of NC progress data was made available • Data for Classes A and C were charted	**RQ2** Changes in attainment and rates of progress in Writing.
Documentation	• The Ofsted reports for both schools were used in order to provide information about each school context, the quality of teaching and the number of pupils on roll	**Background information**

7.6.3 Quantitative data analysis

The PASS and rating scale data sets in Table 23 contained a variety of quantitative measures taken pre- and post-AI. After 'playing' with arrays of data and charting various average scores per group and subgroup, I was interested to discover whether the differences in the scores could be described as statistically significant. Robson (2011) warns, however, that 'statistical significance is not related to the size or importance of an effect or relationship, which is in many cases what we are really interested in. The chance of obtaining a statistically significant result increases as the sample size increases, because, you then get a more sensitive test…Paradoxically, if one is relying on statistical significance, there is much to be said for

keeping the sample small so that only robust effects are going to be picked up' (p.447). Robson (2011) recommends that a paired two-group t-test should be used when there are pairs of scores obtained under two conditions e.g. pre- and post-AI. This analysis was conducted on all of the paired quantitative data sets in order to inform my interpretation of the results, bearing in mind that there are likely to be important results that are not statistically significant. Robson (2011) explains that 'eyeballing' the data i.e. 'looking at a comparison, in graphical form, of the participant's performance (sometimes called 'charting') in the different phases of the study' (p.461) often reveals important effects that can be particularly useful in exploratory work.

7.6.4 Qualitative data analysis

> There is no clear and universally accepted set of conventions for analysis corresponding to those observed with quantitative data. Indeed, many 'qualitative' workers would resist their development, viewing this enterprise as more of an art than a science (Robson, 2011, p.466).

Coding qualitative data in order to categorise it helps to provide structure; typically and most usefully in relation to the research questions (Robson, 2011). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest two levels of coding: the first attaches labels to initially categorise the information; and the second groups these codes or categories into a smaller number of themes or patterns that seem to be emerging. This enables the data to be explored analytically and flexibly (according to theoretical propositions and research questions) and reduced so that it can be more easily displayed (Robson, 2011). Miles and Huberman (1994) focus on the use of matrices (or tables) to transform the data into a form that becomes quantifiable (e.g. how many times a particular theme is raised by participants) and allows comparisons to be made

across cases in a multiple case study (Robson, 2011). I completed two-dimensional matrices (the simplest and most useful according to Robson) for the children's ideas for improvement at each stage (see Tables 31-34).

Braun and Clarke (2006) have outlined a robust approach to the thematic analysis of qualitative data, which was applied to the extensive data collected in the teacher interviews in Table 24.

I have also experimented with organising the data according to the four research questions, maintaining the themes and subthemes identified using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. This enabled me to draw more easily upon sections of the data that were relevant to each of my research questions during my discussion of the results.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that it is not necessarily the number of times a theme is mentioned that matters, but instead how significant the data is in relation to the research question: 'a 'theoretical' thematic analysis would tend to be driven by the researcher's theoretical and analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven' (p.84). An inductive theoretical analysis would build from the data towards a new research question. Although I have explored the data initially in an inductive manner, I found that my theoretical analysis of the data was ultimately more useful.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that the advantages of thematic analysis are: flexibility; relatively easy to learn; results are generally accessible; useful for participatory research; can

Table 24: Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis of qualitative data related to my own study

	Phase	Description of the process	Application to my study
1	Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing the data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.	All six teacher interviews were transcribed verbatim, read and re-read several times in order to check for accuracy and to note down initial interesting ideas.
2	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.	Fourteen initial codes were generated, already at a basic thematic level. Every transcript was marked up according to these codes, with extracts from the text highlighted accordingly (see Appendix 17 for an example).
3	Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.	Codes refined into eight themes and twelve subthemes. All data were reorganised under these new themes/subthemes (see Appendix 18 for an example).
4	Reviewing themes	Checking that the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.	Review of themes and subthemes in relation to extracts and whole data set, beginning to connect to research questions and organise into a diagram/map showing how they relate to one another in the context of this study (see Figure 8).
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.	Each theme named clearly (defined) in relation to its category on the flow-chart/diagram and the subthemes (where needed) within each category. Clear cross referencing and reordering of data in relation to research questions (see Appendix 19).
6	Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.	Selection of smaller number of extracts that illustrate each theme and subtheme most compellingly across the three case studies, particularly helping to identifying similarities and differences between the cases and providing examples of negative or discrepant data. These examples were then related to other data (e.g. quantitative data) and the children's qualitative data as part of the triangulation process and linked to theoretical propositions from the literature reviews.

summarise data helpfully and/or provide detailed descriptions; can highlight similarities and differences across the data; and can produce unanticipated insights. The disadvantages are that: it can be difficult to make specific claims from a broad range of possible commentary on the data; its interpretative power is limited unless it is informed by engagement with theory; and it can be difficult to retain a sense of continuity or contradiction within one person's account when it the data is divided into themes. I have addressed these potential limitations by ensuring that my thematic analysis of the teacher interviews is tightly related to the theoretically derived research questions and reported in matrix form so that each individual's account can be scrutinised separately or in relation to other teachers' data for any specific theme or research question.

7.6.5 Comparing, contrasting and merging quantitative and qualitative data

At this stage of the analysis, Yin (2009) suggests that rival explanations need to be rigorously pursued, predicting and matching any patterns seen in the results before relating the most significant findings back to prior knowledge and theory. Triangulation 'is a valuable and widely used strategy involving the use of multiple sources to enhance the rigour of the research…it opens up possibilities of discrepancies and disagreements between different sources' (Robson, 2011, p.158). An extensive exploration of threats to the validity of both the qualitative and quantitative data, with steps taken to address these, can be found in Section 6.4.

This stage of the data analysis involved comparing sets of data and bringing data together from different sources in exploring each of the four research questions, and associated theoretical propositions, as shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Comparison and merging of data in relation to research questions and theoretical propositions

Research Question (RQ)	Theoretical propositions	Data analysis
RQ1: How does an AI affect the culture of pupil participation in the classroom? In particular, is it an effective way to give children voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning and does it affect the adults' and children's beliefs about the value of pupil participation?	AI has the capacity to shift the culture of participation in schools, even if only incrementally (Martin et al, 2006; Hargreaves, 2004). AI is more likely to be transformative in cases where the adults are *not* already predisposed to this way of working (Bushe, 2010a). AI needs careful facilitation to manage shifts in power between children and their teacher (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012).	The adult and pupil ratings for their *perceptions* of levels of participation before and after AI were compared for each class and also for the SEND/non-SEND subgroups of the children's data. This largely quantitative analysis was enriched by the qualitative information gained through the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews with teachers, my own participant observations and contemporaneous notes. For further triangulation, I compared this with the children's perception of their participation within each stage of the AI for each class and for the children with and without SEND in each class. The pupils' and teachers' *beliefs* about the importance of pupil participation were examined alongside changes in perceptions of participation. Any differences in the pupils' or teachers' *beliefs* about the importance of pupil participation were contrasted with the overall outcomes of the AI intervention in all three classes in terms of: perceptions of levels of participation; children's ideas and responses; and the teachers' reflections about any potential changes to pedagogy and shared power, taking curriculum constraints and contextual factors into account. Theoretical replication and discrepancy across the three cases was sought. Rival explanations were rigorously pursued in order to determine what *else* may explain the changes observed (Yin, 2009).
RQ2: How does an AI that is focused on writing lessons affect the curriculum and pupil attitudes, progress and	AI is able to facilitate children's direct involvement in devising curriculum activities that support the evidence for an effective pedagogy for writing (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010; Duncan,	The children's ideas for curriculum changes to writing activities as a result of the AI were reported in relation to the evidence for an effective pedagogy for the teaching of writing in primary schools. National Curriculum data were analysed quantitatively (where available) and supported by an analysis of any changes in pupil attitudes to themselves and school gained through the PASS questionnaire results. This evidence enabled exploration of changes in attitudes and the potential

	2010).	effects of these on progress and attainment. Qualitative information from: the teacher interviews; the children's evaluative comments; the class discussions; and my own participant observations and notes provided further enrichment and triangulation of these results, whilst acknowledging the strong influence of contextual factors. Theoretical replication and discrepancy across the three cases was sought. Rival explanations were rigorously pursued in order to determine what *else* may explain the changes observed (Yin, 2009).
attainment?	Attitudes to learning generally improve due to increased engagement (Leadbeater, 2005; Sebba et al, 2007) and has the potential to raise attainment.	
RQ3: What are the high points or strengths of developing and using AI with a whole class, from the perspectives of both the children and their teacher(s)? What has been appreciated most by the people involved?	Increased participation is associated with increased motivation and enjoyment (McLaughlin, 2006; Kellett. 2005; Bucknall, 2012). Children appreciate the generation of ideas more than AI's focus on positivity (Bushe, 2010b). AI can have a strengthening effect on working relationships (Carter, 2006; Curato et al, 2013).	The pupil evaluations of AI in relation to their ratings for enjoyment of each stage were examined quantitatively, alongside qualitative information gained from: the thematic analysis of the teacher interviews; the written evaluations completed by pupils following each stage of the AI (about what the children liked most about each stage of the AI); the class discussions at the end of the implementation phase; and my own research diary notes. All of this information was also scrutinised for any differences in enjoyment between children with and without SEND. Theoretical replication and discrepancy across the three cases was examined.
RQ4: What can children and their teachers tell us about how to improve the AI process in primary schools so that it is as inclusive and effective as possible?	AI may not be inclusive for children with SEND (Lomax, 2012) and may privilege more articulate, socially confident children (Kellett, 2010; Dyson and Meagher, 2001). Children should work with people they know least well (Ludema and Fry, 2008). AI needs to occur early in the year (Davies and Lewis, 2013).	The thematic analysis of the children's and teachers' qualitative data concerning the improvements that could be made to the AI process (ensuring it is as inclusive and effective as possible) was examined, with a particular focus on the views of vulnerable children and those with SEND. Differences in the quantitative data between children with and without SEND were summarised and triangulated with the merged qualitative data. Theoretical replication and discrepancy across the three cases was examined.

Chapter 8: Results and Discussion Relating to the Culture of Pupil Participation

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research findings are presented and discussed critically in association with the first research question (RQ), exploring any discernible changes in the culture of pupil participation in each class as a result of AI.

> *RQ1*: *How does an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) affect the culture of pupil participation in the classroom? In particular, is it an effective way to give children voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning and does it affect the adults' and children's beliefs about the value of pupil participation?*

I will present the relevant data sets separately before connecting or merging with other data according to themes derived from the teacher interviews. A summary of the merged and/or connected data will then be given before critically discussing the results in relation to associated theoretical propositions from the literature.

8.2 Teacher ratings

Before and after the AI intervention, each teacher was asked to rate on a scale of one to ten how much they think that the children in their class take part in decisions about their learning (see Figure 6) and also how much they believe children *should* take part in decisions about their learning (see Figure 7).

Figure 6: Teachers' ratings (from 1 to 10) for how much they think the children in their class take part in decisions about their learning
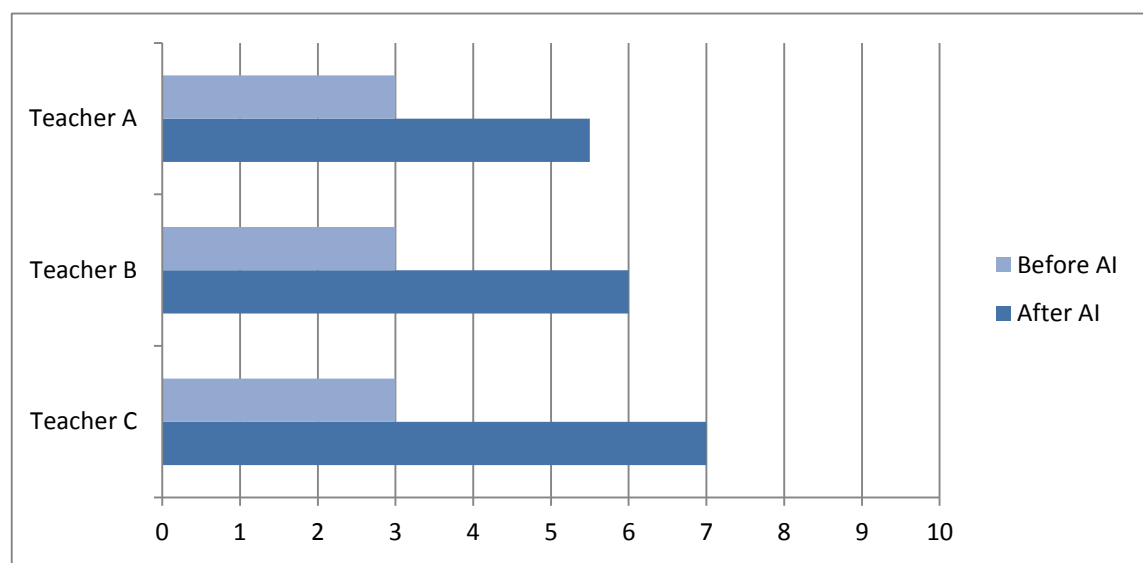
Figure 6 shows that all three teachers rated their children's participation in decision making significantly higher following the AI intervention.

Figure 7: Teachers' ratings (from 1 to 10) for how much they think children *should* take part in making decisions about their learning
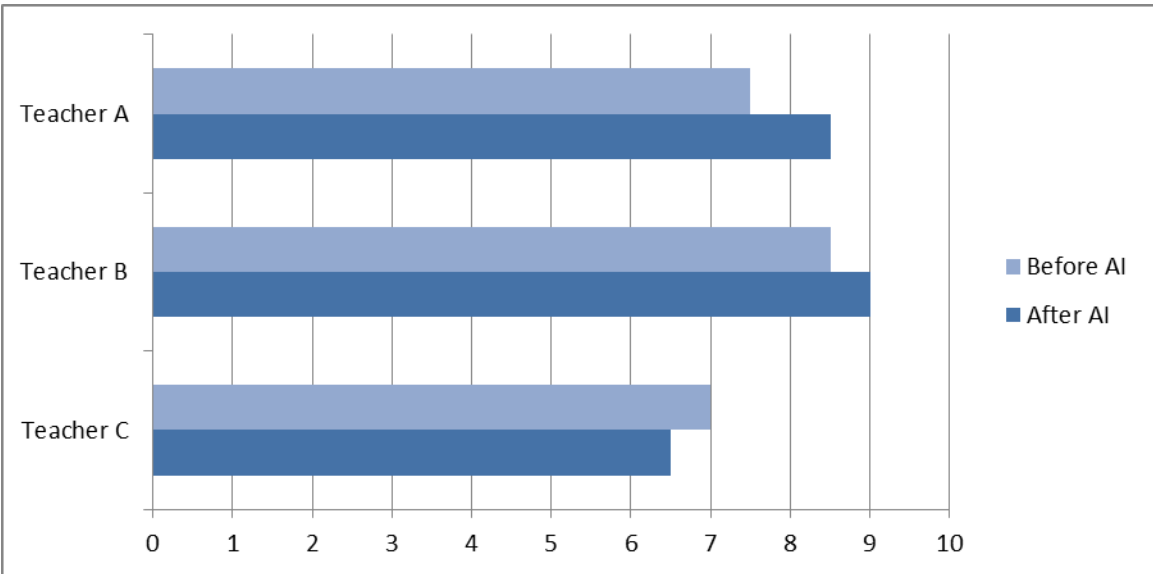
Figure 7 shows that Teacher A and Teacher B both believed even more strongly in the value of pupil participation following the AI intervention. Teacher C's belief in the value of pupil participation fell back slightly following the AI intervention. The teachers were not shown their previous ratings when they were making their judgements following the AI, and all teachers agreed immediately afterwards that these shifts were accurate indicators of the changes in their views.

8.3 Teacher interviews

A thematic analysis of the data revealed eight key themes and twelve associated subthemes, which are each linked to the research questions in Table 26 and presented as a conceptual map in Figure 8.

Table 26: Themes and subthemes from the teacher interviews related to each of the four Research Questions (RQs)

	Themes	Subthemes	Links to RQs
1	The culture of pupil participation	1a. Beliefs and values 1b. Experiences of participation	1a. RQ1 1b. RQ1
2	Barriers to pupil participation	2a. Curriculum constraints 2b. Contextual factors	2a. RQ1 2b. RQ1
3	Teaching and learning	3a. Pedagogy 3b. Power sharing	3a. RQ1 3b. RQ1
4	Attainment and quality of work		RQ2
5	Children's ideas and responses	5a. The curriculum 5b. Attitudes to learning	5a. RQs2 and 3 5b. RQs2 and 3
6	Children's needs	6a. SEND and vulnerable children 6b. Group work	6a. RQ1,2,3 and 4 6b. RQ4
7	Evaluation of the AI process	7a. Positives and negatives 7b. Timing	7a. RQs 3 and 4 7b. RQ4
8	Future use of AI with improvements		RQ4

Figure 8: Conceptual map of themes derived from a thematic analysis of the teacher interviews

The Culture of Pupil Participation: Beliefs and values (pre-AI)

The Culture of Pupil Participation: Experiences of participation

The AI Process

Children's ideas and responses: The curriculum and attitudes to learning

Barriers to Pupil Participation:

Curriculum contraints and contextual factors

SEND and vulnerable children

Group work

Teaching and Learning:

Pedagogy and power sharing

Attainment and quality of work

Evaluation of the AI process: Positives, negatives and timing

Future use of AI with improvements

The Culture of Pupil Participation: Beliefs and values (post-AI)

Table 26 shows that the first three main themes relate directly to RQ1 (with some aspects of Theme 6 proving relevant). These are now presented in turn.

8.3.1 The culture of participation: beliefs, values and experiences (Theme 1)

After completing the rating scales (see Section 8.2), the teachers were initially asked to explain their ratings and to expand on their beliefs about pupil participation and their experiences of it. The Tree of Participation model was presented (see Figure 2) and each teacher asked to consider where they would place their general teaching practice at the moment in terms of pupil participation, again explaining their choice. In the second interview, following AI, the teachers were again asked to complete the rating scales and to judge where they were now in terms of the Tree of Participation model.

Figure 9 shows where each teacher placed themselves before and after AI, with qualifying comment.

The results show that all three teachers believed that they had 'moved up into the tree' in terms of the pupil participation in their class as a result of the AI, although Teachers B and C qualified their judgements as seen in Figure 9 and Box 1.

Figure 9: Teacher self-evaluation according to the Tree of Participation model

Children's views taken into account by adults

Teacher B 'far up into the tree (until the action plan)'

Children make autonomous decisions

Tree of Participation

Children involved in decision-making together with adults

Teacher A 'right up into the middle of the tree'

Children share power and responsibility for decision-making with adults

Teacher C 'into the tree (but with scepticism)'

Adult initiated but sharing some decisions

Teacher C before the AI

Consulted and informed

Teacher A before the AI

Assigned but informed

Teacher B before the AI

Tokenism

Decoration

Manipulation

Box 1: Changes in teacher beliefs, values and experiences of pupil participation

Teacher A

In the initial interview, Teacher A expressed feelings of guilt that children were not taking part in decisions about their learning as much as he thought they should be. He talked enthusiastically about some work he had done previously called Community for Enquiry, where the children were involved in 'steering the learning' by formulating questions that they placed into a hierarchy according to their perceived significance. He liked the idea of increasing pupil participation and looked forward to the AI project. Using the Tree of Participation, Teacher A initially rated himself at the top of the trunk but not yet in the tree, at the 'adult initiated sharing some decisions' stage. On further reflection, he thought he was probably not even as high as this. He *wanted* to be at a much higher level of participation, saying 'that's why this project is exciting'.

Apart from the Community for Enquiry work, Teacher A also talked about his role as a music co-ordinator and his involvement with the end of year productions, where 'there's more of a participatory role with the children'. He talked about his background as a musician and his love of poetry, both leading to successful work that has involved the children more in decision-making and facilitated creativity. He reflected on the possibility that teacher confidence and enthusiasm for a subject might make it easier to let go and 'draw out … ideas from the children'.

In the second interview, after the AI project, Teacher A increased both his rating of the pupil participation in the class generally and his belief in the importance of it. In terms of

the Tree of Participation, he commented: 'In relation to the literacy project [AI] we've been right up in the middle of the tree, it has been completely child-led with the investigations. They have consulted with me for advice…I've had some input with for example,…my editorial decision saying 'we can't send the letter like that'….So there has been that degree of decision making on my part…But really it has been right in that tree. And every time they've had the opportunity to carry out work on the project the general feeling of focus and balance within the class has been very good.'

Teacher B

In her initial interview, Teacher B explained that she believed strongly that children *should* be involved in decisions about their learning: 'because of my background…at my old school we were incredibly child-centred, so we would give the children the learning objectives…and say to them, 'What would you like to do to ensure we cover these?'…So I'm used to the children being really involved in their planning and here, in terms of long term and medium term planning, the children aren't at all in charge of anything…In one lesson they can choose their own level of differentiation…so there is *some* ownership.' Teacher B explained that she had recently been involving her class in decisions about the level at which they work, but not about the curriculum activities presented at each level. In terms of how much children *should* be involved in decisions about their learning, she commented: 'it depends what you think about 'should' because in an ideal world if children understand learning, the children understand their own abilities and their next step, then it would be 10 out of 10, they definitely should control everything themselves. However…they aren't always aware of their strengths and weaknesses in their next steps or where they currently are sometimes…they still need guidance'.

Using the Tree of Participation with reference to her literacy lessons, Teacher B commented: 'I think probably flitting in between 'tokenism' and 'assigned but informed', because the only bit of the 'assigned but informed' bit that I haven't done I feel is the ownership…they don't feel ownership really because they don't have any at the moment. So that's the only thing that stopped me from saying absolutely that.' In maths, Teacher B believed that she was at the 'assigned but informed' stage, saying: 'I think maths would be in here because it's so much clearer for them to know whether they're able to do something or not because there's an immediate right and wrong answer so then they can own it and move on. So in maths it's more here [assigned but informed] and probably in other areas of the curriculum… much more here [tokenism].'

In the second interview, after the AI project, Teacher B increased both her rating of the pupil participation in the class generally and her belief in the importance of it. In terms of the Tree of Participation, Teacher B commented: 'I think there's a shift but I think it started off shifting and it went really far up into the tree when they were setting up their action plans and this is what we're going to do and we're going to ask these people this, and we're going to ask these people this, and we're going to speak to them about this and I was thinking, 'Wow! This is just going to run itself!' And then I said to them, 'Your deadline for your action plans is 9 July. If you need any help with it come and find me. If you don't come and find me I'll assume you don't need any help with it.' Teacher B talked about her surprise that most groups had not completed their action plans by the deadline of 9 July. She still believed that in terms of the Tree of Participation, 'it shifted

quite a lot up into here [into the tree] and their views definitely were taken into account, absolutely…the children were involved in the decision making. I don't think it was entirely autonomous but I think it was all, every element of being in the tree until the action plan and then when the action plan didn't happen, I then…had to do it. So it then became initiated by me.'

Teacher C

In her first interview, Teacher C commented: 'Initially I knew that I thought they *should* have more of a say in their learning, but I was trying to really go over the times when they do have a choice. I think, when I plan I try to include it sometimes. For example, in science they could choose to do a drama activity, a writing activity or a poster to show how they learned, to show what they understand about the digestive system. And they do make choices about what they want to learn each term in that we all make a spider diagram of what do you want to find out about…I put seven, not ten, for how much *should* they, because it is true that we do have coverage, and I do think it's more about the way children show how they best learn. However, if they always chose to do drama, for example…they wouldn't choose writing and they wouldn't practice it. So although sometimes it's really good I think to say, you can show me your learning in these three ways pick your favourite and then have fun learning, I think actually they wouldn't practice something they didn't enjoy….I think per subject per lesson it would change, definitely, but that's kind of my average feeling.'

Using the Tree of Participation with reference to literacy lessons, Teacher C commented:

'So, when they have to do any piece of writing, usually I would give lots of examples or the children would think of examples we write up, and especially if it's in-depth writing where they're actually going to write for a long time independently, they will usually all come up with their own idea. So I wouldn't tell them you need to write this whole story and you just now go and write it. They do choose, so when we were writing fairy tales we thought of all the different fairy tales we knew and then they thought, 'Okay, I'm going to change characters now.'…So when we had Three Little Pigs we had things like Three Little Monkeys or they've had three people and an animal. So they all made their own choice however obviously I told them to write a fairy tale. So I'd say 'adult initiated but sharing some decisions' because actually in lots of cases I need them to show me what they've just learnt…Other times when it's more creative writing, which I do really enjoy, we do a big brainstorm all together, big ideas all together, write them on the board and then they can kind of be free.'

In the second interview, after the AI project, Teacher C increased significantly her rating of the pupil participation in the class generally, whilst *decreasing* slightly her belief in the importance of it. She commented: 'actually their ideas were lovely, and some of them really liked getting involved and helping out, others didn't like having the responsibility…Their ideas were really nice. However also reading their writing, I don't think their writing was better than their literacy writing because when they have the choice to do lots of text types they don't get the modelling and the input on it as much as they could, but that's only this time. I think their ideas can be incorporated into real lesson plans, but I think it should be teachers deciding if it's the right thing to do.'

In terms of the Tree of Participation, Teacher C commented: 'Well, I don't know if it's from doing it or whether it's because we're coming to the end of the year, I've been asking lots of 'What do you like about the classroom, what do you think classrooms should be like?' They said they didn't like carpets, and actually teachers… I love them sitting on the carpets, that's going to be a bit of a change if I've got to try and take that into account, because I understand the reasons they don't like it. But it's easier to see who's behaving…and to talk to them because they're on the carpet'. When asked whether she would have done that anyway, before the AI intervention, Teacher C commented: 'I don't know…I'm really not sure. I definitely was interested in what they thought of the room and the way we do things. I don't know if I'd have done it necessarily like that.'

Teacher A reflected that during the AI, the children 'actually weren't committed to their ideas at all…so long as it's fun and engaging they seem to be liking it, even if it wasn't their idea…Yeah, I think they've got some nice ideas. I'd hope to keep asking children what they want to do, then be really almost sceptical...I'd say I'm more here now [more in the tree]…but still there's scepticism there too. Just because obviously there is meant to be a balance so it's not really with scepticism - it's the balance isn't it?'

8.3.2 Barriers to participation: curriculum constraints and contextual factors (Theme 2)

Teacher A talked about increased pressure due to Ofsted's judgment that the school requires improvement, which had diminished teachers' freedom to be flexible with the curriculum. His own teaching was also under scrutiny, with a local authority literacy adviser observing many

of his lessons and informing him what he needed to improve. These contextual factors, not to mention the curriculum constraints related to preparing the class for SATs, all acted as barriers to participation activities in Class A. The head teacher and Teacher A had wanted to engage with AI in Year 6 as a mechanism for improving the engagement and motivation of the pupils for their learning. Whilst this was supportive and encouraging, the timing of the AI created other barriers towards the end of term as the class needed to plan and prepare for their end of year production, which significantly decreased the amount of freedom for children to be making their own decisions about their learning.

Teacher B talked of significant differences between her previous school context, which was highly participative, and the current one, where 'in terms of long term and medium term planning the children aren't at all in charge of anything'. Class B is characterised as a loud and confident class, which may have helped the children to feel relaxed about participating in interviews and presentations within the AI. Teacher B is currently described as an experienced and good teacher, and was an outstanding teacher at her previous school.

Teacher C talked about being 'really restricted by the curriculum' and after the AI, having to negotiate the demands of another new school curriculum, which had recently been invested in. Class C is characterised as a shy and quiet class, with limited confidence to perform in front of their peers. Teacher C is described as an inexperienced but good teacher (with some features of outstanding).

Both Teachers B and C are affected by a school culture of limited freedom and 'safety' for teachers to be innovative. Like School A, the Ofsted judgement is that the school requires improvement and the senior leadership team puts pressure on teachers to ensure pupils are making progress.

8.3.3 Teaching and learning: pedagogy and power sharing (Theme 3)

All three teachers reflected extensively upon changes in the balance of power between themselves and the children as a result of AI and how this may affect the way in which they teach i.e. their pedagogy. These are described in Box 2.

Box 2: Teachers' reflections on pedagogy and power sharing

Teacher A

Teacher A described the children leading the investigations within the AI and just consulting him for advice and guidance and next steps where needed. Alongside this, he made editorial decisions about whether a letter was good enough to be sent to outside agencies. He was facilitating their learning by providing guidance but felt that the children were leading the activities. He had experienced a 'shared pedagogy' with the class during his Community for Enquiry work, where he had facilitated the children making their own decisions about the order of importance of questions the children generated. During the AI, he thought it was important that the children were clear that 'it's a real life experience' and 'it's just not guaranteed it's going to work…You try to do these things, they're not going to happen, okay you've just got to get on with it and try to find another way round it.' With some of the children with SEND, he thought it was

important to keep 'that awareness as one does as a practitioner anyway' about how they are getting on and step in to support, shape or pace their activities where necessary. He liked the way that 'writing for a purpose, a real purpose I think has with this cohort shown it can really inspire them'.

Teacher B

Teacher B reflected particularly on the implementation of the action planning stage of the AI, where the children stopped taking ownership of their activities and she had re-taken control. She had successfully facilitated the children's devising of action plans and felt extremely pleased that the children seemed to know exactly what they were going to do. Where children had asked for support she had negotiated what each would do e.g. 'Okay, well, I'll email her if you just tell me what to write'. But many of the children did not complete their action plans independently of her by the deadline.

During the implementation phase, Teacher B acknowledged that she 'didn't coach them massively in terms of saying, 'There's the clay, it's lunchtime, do you want to make those trophies?'' and wondered if 'maybe I should have done more at the end of the day or as they were going out to play of saying…"Don't forget Super School!" She wondered whether she had made the deadline clear enough, with sufficient reminders. She reflected that perhaps she had 'just got carried away with the whole child initiated side of it' and assumed too much because they had been so prepared. She thought perhaps they were just too used to relying on people to do things for them.

In terms of the writing, Teacher B thought on reflection that she should have given them more direction e.g. 'what I didn't do was **really** say to them, 'I am expecting to see this, this, this, this and this in your report''. She thought she should have given the children more modelling and good examples from which to work. The child-initiated nature of the AI seems to have prevented her from offering the sort of teaching direction she would normally provide.

Teacher B also talked of her exploration with the children about allowing them to choose the levels at which they work: 'In my class I will say to them, 'This is a level four skill, this is a medium level three skill, this is a low level three skill, decide where you want to work and have a go and move around if you need to' and they will. That's just how I'm used to teaching.' She finds it easier for the children to have this ownership in maths than writing, although she commented: 'it's taken quite a long time for them to able to choose the appropriate – they all want to do the highest level that you present and then they find they can't do it and really wobble, whereas now they tend to pitch right on the whole. Not exclusively'.

Teacher C

Teacher C focused strongly upon power sharing in all of her reflections on AI. She genuinely liked the children's ideas and wanted to incorporate them in her planning, having seen the benefits of increased pupil engagement. But she also wanted to maintain

control of the range of activities from which children choose, rather than giving them complete freedom to invent and create. She commented for example: 'I do think certainly with choosing their activities as long as it's within a frame of things I'd normally do then that's really good fun and…they're so passionate about it and so that's good, the engagement is there. So they can choose the activities to engage them but the teachers need to frame it for them.' She hoped 'to keep asking children what they want to do, then be really almost sceptical and then say, well how am I going to change that **really**?'

Teacher C was concerned that if the children had the power to choose what they wanted to do, then they wouldn't choose to practice things that they didn't enjoy. She believes that the children still need modelling and support for their writing activities and, like Teacher B, had omitted to provide this for the writing activities in the AI. She believes that it is good for children to be creating and choosing activities because of the resulting passion and engagement but that this should all be entirely within the teacher's framework and control.

8.4 Pupil ratings

8.4.1 Changes in the children's perceptions of the level of participation

Before and after the AI intervention, each pupil in each class was asked to rate on a scale of one to ten how much they think that the children in their class take part in decisions about their learning and also how much they believed that children *should* take part in decisions about their learning. Figure 10 shows the average ratings for each class before and after the

intervention in answer to the first of these questions i.e. how much they think they take part in decisions about their learning.

Figure 10: Average ratings for each class for much they think their class takes part in decisions about their learning (from 1 to 10)
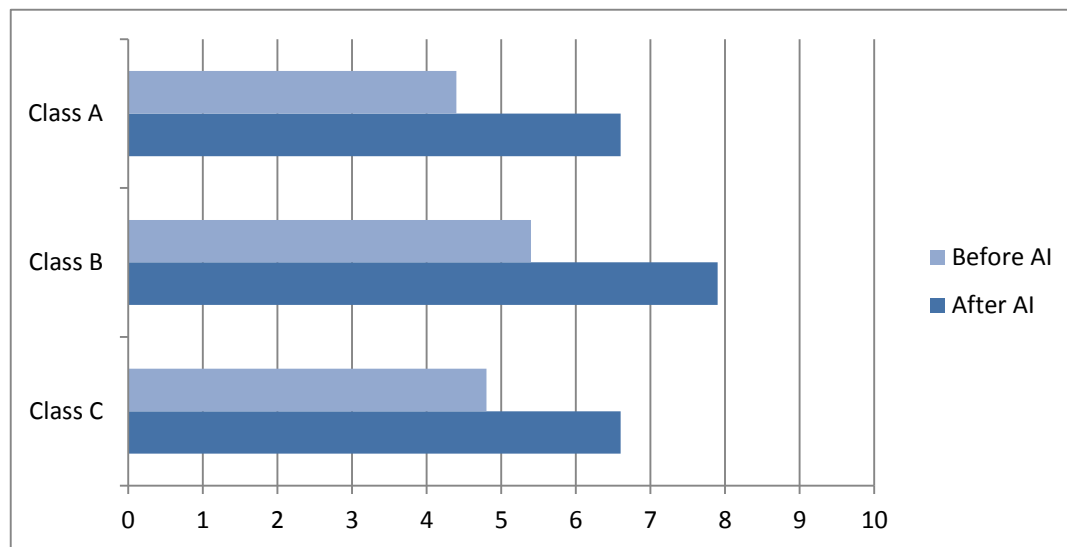
In general, it can be seen that all three classes believed that they took a greater part in decisions about their learning following the AI intervention. The results are highly significant for Classes A and B ($p<0.01$) and significant for Class C ($p<0.05$). In order to explore whether there are any significant differences of perception between children with or without SEND, further analysis of the data was undertaken and can be seen in Figure 11.

Figure 11 indicates that for Classes A and B, children with and without SEND have a similar shift in perception of their class's participation of decision-making after the AI, with a particularly large shift in perception for the children with SEND in Class A. (All of the shifts for Classes A and B are statistically significant except for the children with SEND in Class B. The changes for the children without SEND in Classes A and B are highly significant ($p<0.01$)).

Figure 11: Average ratings for children with and without SEND in each class regarding how much they think their class takes part in decisions about their learning (from 1 to 10) before and after the AI
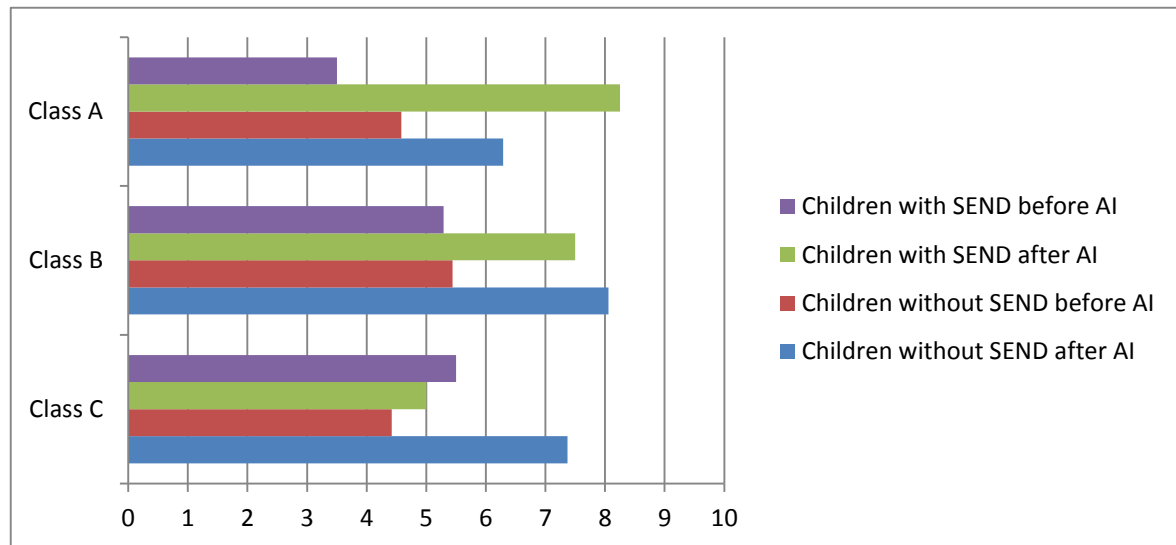
However, the pattern is different for the children with SEND in Class C, who seem to feel that the children in their class participated in decision-making slightly less after the AI, although this result is not statistically significant. It is possible that this less positive result relates to significant difficulties encountered by Class C when working in groups, making the children with SEND feel especially vulnerable (evidence for this can be found in the pupil and teacher comments reported in Section 11.2 and 11.3). The positive shift in perception of participation for the children without SEND in Class C is highly significant (p<0.01).

8.4.2 Changes in children's beliefs about the importance of pupil participation

Figure 12 shows the average ratings for each class before and after the intervention in answer to the question of how much each child thinks children *should* take part in decisions about their learning.

Figure 12: Average ratings for each class for how much they think children *should* take part in decisions about their learning (from 1 to 10)
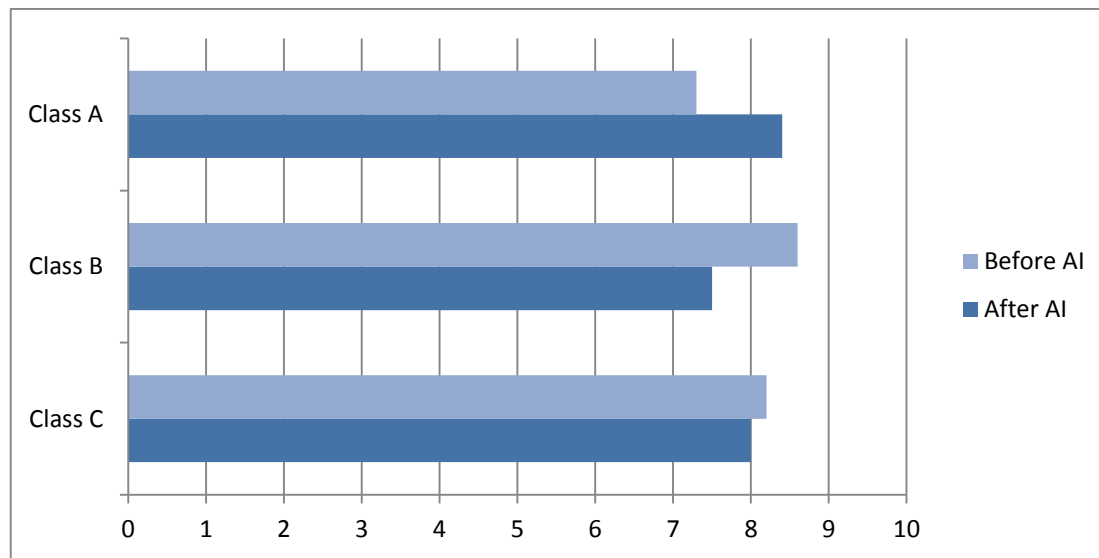
Although the average rating for Class A indicates an increased belief overall that children *should* take part in decisions about their learning, the average rating for Class B indicates a lessening of this belief following the AI intervention, although none of these results is statistically significant. The average rating for Class C was very slightly reduced. It is possible that Class A's pupil engagement in bringing their ideas to fruition had enhanced their belief in increased participation, whereas Classes B and C had both experienced difficulties at the implementation stage of the AI that had required their teachers to take back some of the decision making and control. An analysis of the differences of opinion between children with and without SEND in each class is shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 indicates that in general, the children with SEND believe *less* in the value of children's participation in decision-making following the AI, particularly for those children with SEND in Class B, which is highly significant ($p<0.01$). The results are not statistically significant for the children with SEND in Classes A and C.

Figure 13: Average ratings for children with and without SEND in each class regarding how much they think children *should* take part in decisions about their learning (from 1 to 10) before and after the AI
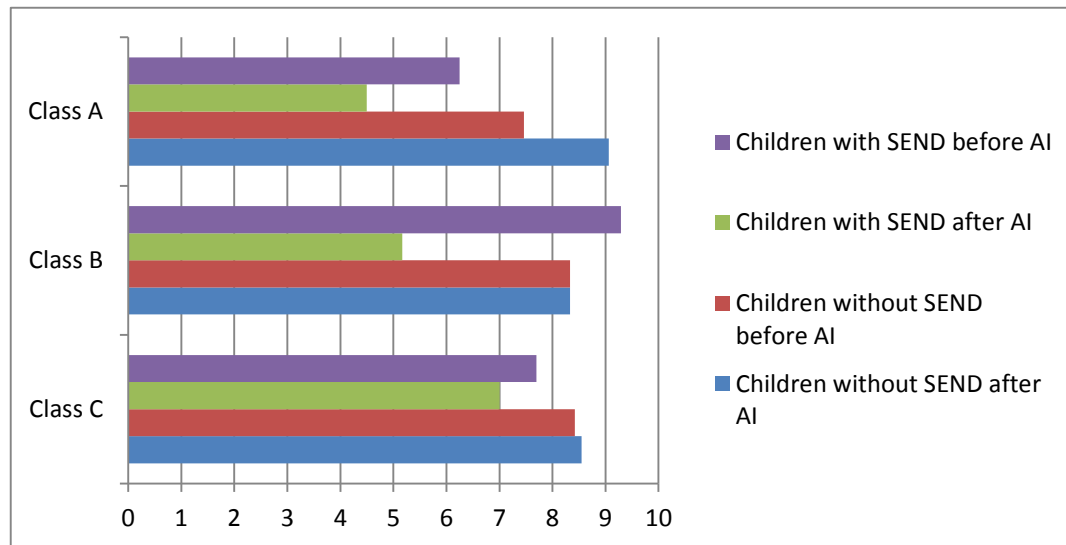
Belief in the value of pupil participation increased for children in Class A without SEND (this result is highly significant at p<0.01) and remained broadly the same for the children without SEND in the other two classes.

It is interesting to note that for Class A, the average improvement in the pupils' ratings overall disguises a significant drop in the SEND children's belief in the value of participation following the AI. Although the culture of participation within Class A may have improved (according to Teacher A's ratings in Figures 6 and 7, his comments reported in Boxes 1 and 2 and the pupil ratings in Figures 10 and 12), the four pupils with SEND in that class perceived that there had been a very large increase in participation (see Figure 11) and potentially may have felt threatened by the increased expectation to work more with their peers and with less adult direction. Although the pupils with SEND in Class A made no specific comments about this, Teacher A's views about the inclusion of children with SEND in Chapter 11 (Box 7) provide some evidence in support of this hypothesis.

Whilst Teacher B believed even more strongly that the children in her class *should* participate in decisions about their learning after the AI (see Figure 7), and both the teacher and pupils (with and without SEND) reported higher levels of participation in Class B after the AI (see Figures 6 and 11), the pupils generally reduced their belief in the value of their participation after the AI (see Figure 12), particularly so for those with SEND (see Figure 13). It is likely that this relates partly to the implementation difficulties noted in Section 8.3.3 (Box 2) above as well as the difficulties encountered with group work noted in Section 11.6.

For Class C, pupils generally remained the same in their beliefs about the value of their participation in decision making before and after the AI intervention (see Figure 12), although the SEND pupils' belief in the amount and importance of participation had slightly decreased (see Figure 13). As for Class B, this may relate partly to the implementation difficulties noted in Section 8.3.3 above as well as the difficulties encountered with group work noted in Section 11.6.

8.5 Children's views about their participation at each stage of the AI

As part of the investigation into whether the AI process is an effective way to give all children voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning, the children in each class were asked to rate from 1 to 10 how much they felt they had participated at each stage of the AI. Classes B and C completed one evaluation for both of the Design and Destiny Stages combined as these occurred together, so these have been repeated to facilitate comparisons with the data from Class A.

Figure 14: Average ratings for how much each class felt they participated in each stage of the AI
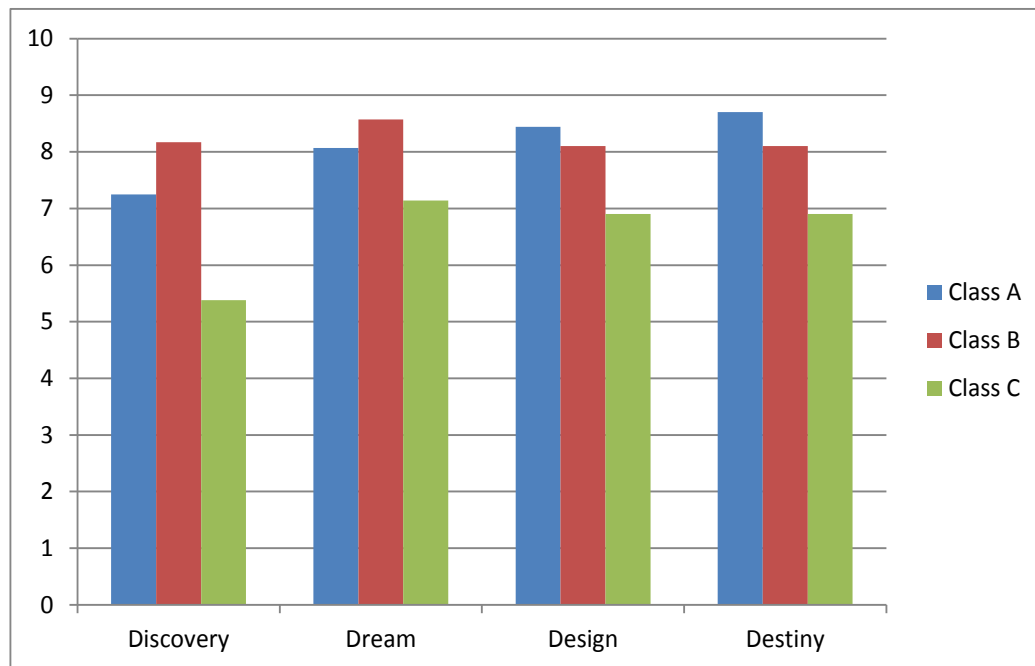
Figure 14 shows that Class A generally felt that they increased in their participation throughout the project. Class B felt that they participated most in the Dream Stage of the AI. Class C improved in participation after the initial Discovery Stage and then stayed at approximately the same level of participation throughout the remaining stages. Class C generally reported lower levels of participation than the other two classes. This could relate to their shyness as a class (reported in Table 14) or possibly to the inexperience of their newly qualified teacher (NQT), and her confidence in allowing children to feel in control of their activities.

Figure 15: Average ratings for how much the children with SEND in each class felt they participated in each stage of the AI
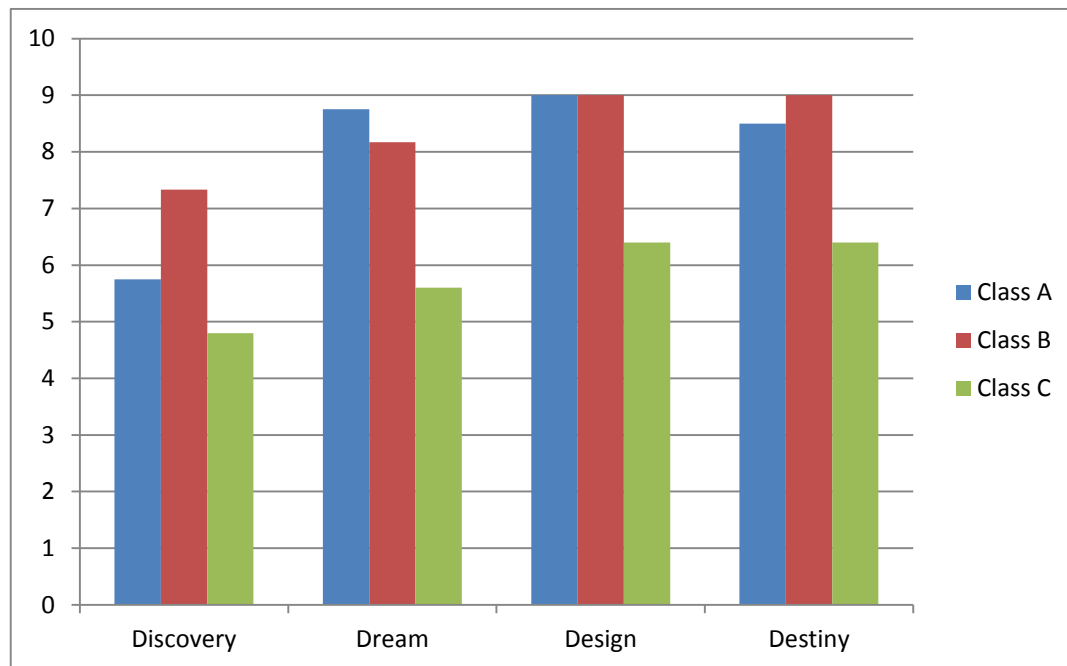
Figure 15 indicates that generally, children with SEND felt that they participated more as the AI progressed, although for Class A, there was a small decrease in participation at the Destiny Stage, when action plans were being created in their groups. It is interesting that the children with SEND in Class B appeared to feel more confident than their counterparts in the other two classes about their participation at the Discovery Stage. Class B are characterised by their teacher (and by Teacher C at the same school) as a rather loud and confident class, able to relax and enjoy interviewing each other perhaps more readily than the other two classes.

Figure 16 indicates that for the children without SEND, those in Class A gradually increased their participation as the AI progressed, whereas for those in Classes B and C their participation decreased during the final two stages of their AIs. So whilst the children with SEND in these two classes felt more involved (see Figure 15), their classmates felt less

involved after the Dream stage. This could relate to both Teacher B and Teacher C having to step in and take more control of the process during the final two stages as the timescales became tighter, helping to scale down some of the children's ideas, organise the groups andsupport their action planning as this was so new to their classes (evidence for the difficulties these classes experienced with group work is reported by the children in Section 11.2.5, Box 6). The SEND children may have benefitted from this increase in adult control (which perhaps facilitated their inclusion within groups), whereas the rest of the class may have felt slightly disempowered.

Figure 16: Average ratings for how much the children without SEND in each class felt they participated in each stage of the AI
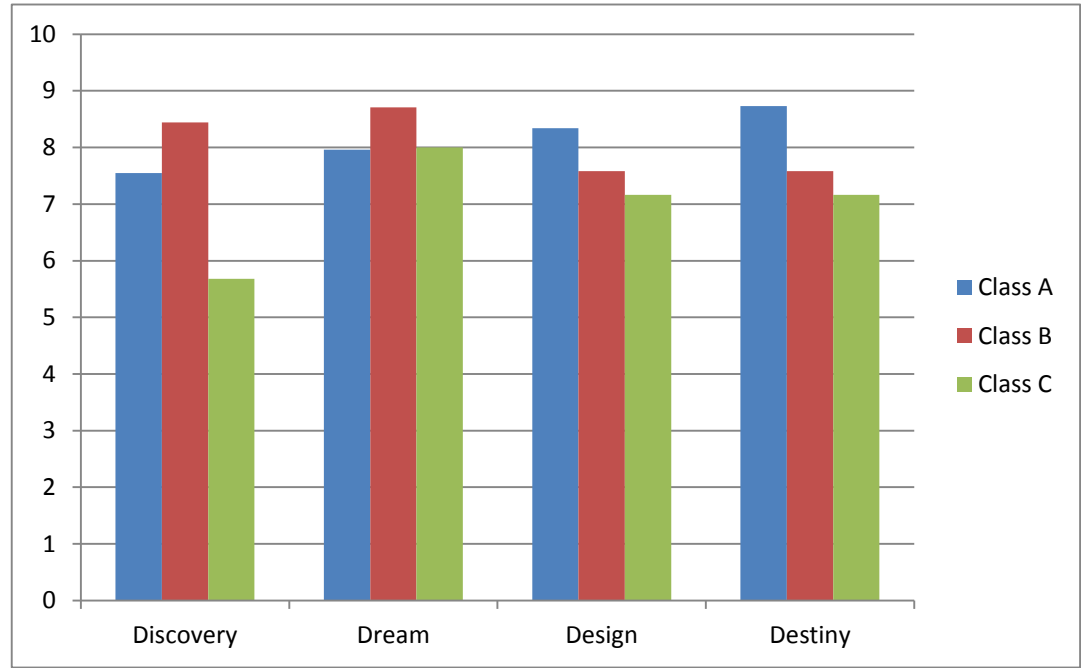
8.6 Summary of triangulated, connected or merged data

The results suggest that AI has successfully increased all three teachers' and all three classes' perceptions of their class's participation in decisions about their learning. Participation

generally increased for Class A as the AI progressed through the four stages, except for the four children with SEND who slightly dipped in their reported participation at the final Destiny Stage. For Classes B and C, their greatest level of participation was generally at the Dream Stage of the AI, except for the children with SEND who felt that they participated most during the final two stages of Design and Destiny. All three classes reported that their lowest level of participation was at the initial Discovery Stage, which seems surprising when the children were all talking to each other in pairs. Class C generally rated themselves at lower levels of participation than the other two classes at every stage.

For Class A, both the teacher and the children without SEND believed even more strongly in the value of pupil participation following their AI, whilst for the four children with SEND their belief in the value of participation decreased.

For Class B, whilst their teacher increased the strength of her belief in the value of participation following the AI, the class generally were less sure that children should be involved in decisions about their learning, particularly those children with SEND.

For Class C, the children with SEND and their teacher lessened their beliefs in the value of participation slightly after the AI, whilst for the children without SEND the value of their involvement in decision making remained unchanged.

Both Teachers A and B are experienced teachers who had previously involved children successfully in decision-making within other contexts and were very keen to promote pupil participation within AI. Using the Tree of Participation, Teacher A initially rated his class's

participation at the 'adult initiated sharing some decisions' stage. After the AI project, Teacher A believed he and the class had been 'right up in the middle of the tree' with 'completely child-led' investigations, providing his advice and guidance when needed. Teacher B initially rated her class's participation as between 'tokenism' and 'assigned but informed'. Following the AI, she also felt they had gone 'really far up into the tree…every element of being in the tree until the action planning stage…when the action plan didn't happen…So it then became initiated by me.'

Teacher C is an NQT and although she believed that the children perhaps '*should* have more of a say in their learning', she was less confident that increasing their participation would enable coverage of the curriculum and ensure children practised the things they didn't enjoy. However, she likes to give children choices (from a range she has presented to them). She felt she was at the 'adult initiated but sharing some decisions' part of the tree. After the AI, she felt more strongly that the teacher needs to lead the children's learning, providing structure and modelling as well as choices. But she had seen the passion and engagement of the children in the AI and liked their ideas. She was higher in the Tree of Participation but wanted to maintain a balance between children's ideas and adult-led teaching. There was evidence, however, of a tentative shift in Teacher C's thinking. She had independently started to consult the children about issues unrelated to the AI, such as how to improve the classroom environment, and was genuinely interested in their views. She was not sure that she would have done this before the AI.

8.7 Critical discussion of changes to the culture of pupil participation in relation to theoretical propositions from the literature

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How does an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) affect the culture of pupil participation in the classroom? In particular, is it an effective way to give children voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning and does it affect the adults' and children's beliefs about the value of pupil participation?

The key theoretical propositions tested were that:

- AI has the potential to shift the culture of participation in schools, even if only incrementally (Martin et al, 2006; Hargreaves, 2004);

- AI is more likely to be transformative in cases where the adults are *not* already predisposed to this way of working (Bushe, 2010a); and

- AI needs careful facilitation to manage shifts in power between children and their teacher (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012).

Three key themes were identified from the teacher interviews in relation to RQ1:

- The culture of pupil participation: beliefs and experiences (Theme 1);

- Barriers to participation: curriculum constraints and contextual factors (Theme 2); and

- Teaching and learning: pedagogy and power sharing (Theme 3).

8.7.1 The culture of pupil participation: beliefs and experiences (Theme 1)

The culture of participation in this study was measured in terms of children's and teachers' perceptions of, and beliefs in, the importance of pupil participation. Whilst there is evidence of significant shifts in the first of these measures (perceptions) in all three cases as a result of

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AI, it could be argued that this only applied temporarily to the AI activities themselves and did not affect the general culture of participation in any of the classes or lead to any lasting change. However, the literature suggests that increasing children's participation in decision-making can have a powerful effect in *developing* a culture of respect and trust between adults and children (Cook-Sather, 2006; Bragg, 2007; Raymond, 2001; Mitra, 2012). Martin et al (2006) and Hargreaves (2004) argue that the changes in the perceptions and beliefs of teachers *should* be incremental so that a culture of respecting children's ideas is nurtured towards becoming transformational (Martin et al, 2006; Hargreaves, 2004). It is teachers' *belief* in the importance of student voice and participation that is 'essential to realise its potential' (Bragg, 2007, p.506).

In this sense, the evidence in this study affirms the theoretical proposition that AI has the *potential* to shift the culture of participation in schools, even if only incrementally. All three teachers and all three classes experienced significantly increased levels of pupil participation during the AI implementation. However, only Teachers A and B and the children without SEND in Class A increased their *belief* in participation as a result of this study.

McLaughlin (2006) warns that the facilitation of pupil participation (or involving children as co-researchers) must be done *well* in order for the work to be effective. Although I was able to support the facilitation of the AI in Class A to ensure fidelity to the AI philosophy and process, I was not able to be as actively involved in Classes B and C, where time pressures also acted as barriers to the enabling of the children's ideas. The results also suggest that many children with SEND found the experience of increased participation in groups with their peers difficult and perhaps *preferred* the class to be more 'controlled' by the teacher. Indeed,

all SEND groups appeared to decrease their belief in participation after the AI (although the result was only statistically significant for the children with SEND in Class B). Children without SEND in Classes B and C may have been disappointed that their teacher(s) had to step in and take more control during the latter stages of their AIs. (I will discuss critically the responses of the SEND children to the AI in relation to the literature in Section 11.7.1).

The experience of the AIs in Classes B and C therefore did not help to increase beliefs in the importance of participation except for Teacher B, who was already highly committed to pupil participation beforehand and could see the potential for this type of work, perhaps reawakening in her the importance of it.

The theoretical proposition that AI is more likely to be transformative in cases where the adults are *not* already predisposed to pupil participation (Bushe, 2010a) was perhaps tested most by the responses of Teacher C, who was very new to this way of working as an NQT. Teacher C perceived a greater increase in pupil participation in her class than the other teachers (see Figure 6), which may have felt more uncomfortable and unfamiliar. There is evidence of a great deal of reflection concerning her beliefs about pupil participation in Teacher C's second interview. For example, when considering whether she had moved up into the Tree of Participation (see Figure 2), she said: 'Yeah, I'd say so, but still there's scepticism there too. Just because obviously there is meant to be a balance so it's not really with scepticism it's the balance isn't it?' There were signs that she was tentatively shifting her stance about pupil participation when she reported that she had found herself asking the children for their views about the classroom and what they believe classrooms should be like, which had challenged her thinking. She had seen the passion and engagement of the children

in the AI and liked their ideas but wanted to maintain a balance between children's ideas and adult-led teaching. Overall, large increases in participation using the AI activities had led to a small *decrease* in her belief in pupil participation, which does not support the theoretical proposition that AI can be transformative in terms of teacher beliefs. However, none of the teachers were against the idea of pupil participation at the beginning of the study and the slight decrease in Teacher C's belief about the importance of participation may have been influenced by contextual factors (e.g. pressures relating to timing) and negative experiences of facilitating the implementation of AI (e.g. difficulties with power sharing), rather than attributed to the AI itself. A critical analysis of these factors within studies of AI applications is exactly what Bushe (2010a) has called for, and follows in the next two sections.

8.7.2 Barriers to participation: curriculum constraints and contextual factors (Theme 2)

All the teachers in this study experienced pressure due to their school's unsatisfactory Ofsted judgements and the drive to raise standards, which can act as barriers to innovation and creativity (Tutt, 2006; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009; Tammi, 2013; Kanyal and Gibbs, 2014). Curriculum innovation and creativity is widely promoted by Ofsted itself (Ofsted 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011b, 2012) and by educational researchers (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010; Brudrett and Duncan, 2012). Coe (2010) argues that teachers need to be confident to manage both innovation and raising standards. It is unlikely, in my view, that Teacher A derived very much confidence from the negative focus of the intervention by the local authority literacy adviser to 'improve' his teaching.

This study has empowered all three teachers to experiment with the curriculum, as promoted by Brundrett and Duncan (2014), in school contexts that have restricted their freedom to be flexible and innovative by providing very prescriptive curricula in the drive to raise standards. Katsenou et al (2013) found that pupil participation is inseparable from school culture. However, the context of this research as exploratory has enabled or 'authorised' all three teachers in both schools to have the autonomy needed within their schools to create more flexibility in their writing curricula (as recommended by the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (Rose, 2009)) and to feel safe to take the risk of increasing pupils' autonomy and participation through the application of AI (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010; Fisher, 2011).

The characteristics of each class were significant contextual factors in the facilitation of the AI. Class A was originally described as lacking in engagement and motivation, with some difficulties maintaining positive working relationships amongst peers and between the teacher and the pupils. The successful engagement of Class A with AI confirmed the theoretical proposition that AI might be especially good for building good working relationships and inventing and strengthening new ways to work together (Curato et al, 2013; Bellinger and Elliott, 2011). Class B were 'loud and confident', which supported the social and performance aspects of the AI. Class C were 'shy and quiet', which limited their confidence to interact with and perform in front of their peers. Lower levels of participation perceived in Class C during AI (see Figure 14), especially for children with SEND (see Figure 15), support the theoretical proposition that the AI process favours articulate and socially confident children because of its heavy reliance upon oral/verbal processes and group work (Dyson and Meagher, 2001; Lomax, 2012; Spyrou, 2011).

Both Teachers B and C are described as good teachers, although Teacher C is an NQT and therefore lacked experience. Teacher A's teaching requires improvement but he has plenty of experience. AI facilitation requires great skill. The literature suggests that the facilitator needs to understand the philosophy and the process of AI and may need training in order to do so (Evans et al, 2012; Rogers and Fraser, 2003). In particular, the facilitator needs to simultaneously convey confidence in a collaborative process whilst holding back from controlling the outcome (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011). There is no clear link between the quality and experience of the teachers and the success of their facilitation of AI in this study. For example, there is evidence that Teacher B has the quality of teaching *and* experience needed, as well as a good understanding of pupil participation, but still experienced difficulties facilitating the implementation phase of the AI. However, it is likely that the timing of the AI created these difficulties rather than the expertise of the teacher. The success of all three AIs was limited by the unfortunate late timing of the AI interventions, which was also a barrier in my pilot study (Davies and Lewis, 2013). This is critically discussed in Section 11.7.4.

8.7.3 Teaching and learning: pedagogy and power sharing (Theme 3)

All three teachers embraced the values of pupil participation at the start of the AI, but the literature suggests that it can be much harder than anticipated putting it into practice (Woodhead, 2010; Pascal and Bertrum, 2009), especially being able to judge when to step in and when to step back (Coppock, 2011; Pascal and Bertrum, 2009). A fundamental shift is needed from directing to facilitating learning (Wedell, 2005; Leadbeater, 2004). Teachers A and B seemed comfortable with this and were largely able to negotiate tasks in a fluid, dynamic way (Malone and Hartung, 2010) so that the children were actively in control, only

stepping in if something was not good enough or if children with SEND needed support to be included. Both of these teachers still found plenty to challenge their thinking e.g. whether to step in earlier if something is not working or if the children have 'stalled' in order to avoid failure or having to take over completely. Teacher C appears to have been more troubled about relinquishing control to the children and resolving the tension between providing structure (or a framework) and allowing autonomy (Walsh et al, 2011).

> Young people might be encouraged to participate more, or be more empowered, if adults were to give them a sense that power-sharing (or democracy) between adults and young people in research is possible, that the knowledge they bring with them is respected (Hughes, 2014, p.153).

All teachers reflected on how much teaching, directing and modelling to give within the AI activities, particularly at the writing stage. Teachers B and C gave less modelling than they would normally, Teacher B saying she had become 'carried away with the child-initiated side of things'. When children are active learners and engaged in decisions about their learning (Lewis, 1996; Holt, 1989; Korkeamaki and Dreher, 2011), they still need their teacher to: scaffold their learning (Woodhead, 2010); consolidate learning and extend their thinking (Burton, 2007); discuss their learning with them (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010); build on and use their experiences (Korkeamaki and Dreher, 2011; Jesson and Cockle, 2014); and provide *new* experiences (Fisher, 2014). Children's autonomy is not just about children's ideas, which Teacher C focused on in her reflections, it is about their: independence; proactivity; and critical inquiry (Hargreaves, 2014). This requires a genuine sharing of power (Bucknall, 2012). Lansdown (2010) suggests that adults need help to do this. They need opportunities to discuss the implications of participation for their role as it involves *thinking* differently; not just changing practices (Stephen et al, 2010). This study has provided opportunities for the

teachers to reflect on and discuss participation and shared power, which EPs can generally support (Walker, 1998; Hobbs et al, 2000).

Teacher C felt more comfortable sharing the generation of ideas with the children, for example, when making a 'spider diagram' of what the children might like to find out about each term and 'when it's more creative writing, which I do really enjoy, we do a big brainstorm all together, big ideas all together, write them on the board and then they can kind of be free'. Jointly creating the curriculum can be relaxed and playful (Walsh et al, 2011), leading to a joy of learning and a sense of freedom (Rantala and Maatta, 2012). Co-learning or co-creating with children can be rewarding and empowering for adults (Kanyal, 2014a; Davis and Morrow, 2010), helping the adult to have their own voice in class in a reciprocal or symmetrical manner (Kanyal and Gibbs, 2014; Earnshaw, 2014).

Facilitating children's autonomy requires honesty and trust (Fisher, 2011). Teacher B talked about helping her children to learn to judge the level of work for themselves, reporting that they had initially all wanted to do the highest levels of work until some of them found it was too difficult. She thought her children might have previously learned to rely on others and may have got used to being passive learners, although she was now challenging this. Trusting children to make judgements and decisions about their learning needs children and adults to feel secure and valued enough to take risks (Le Cornu and Collins, 2004). Teachers need to increase the responsibility they give to children and the trust they have in them (Catling, 2014), but adults consistently underestimate children's capacities (Lansdown, 2010). Teacher C believed that the children would never choose something they don't enjoy and would therefore not practice it. These beliefs were not challenged by Teacher C's experience of AI

in this study, although in her email communication following the AI (see Appendix 39), she began to talk about the development of trust: 'I enjoyed hearing the children's ideas. In lots of ways it allowed me to trust that they can make choices for their learning'.

Teacher A believed that writing for a real purpose helped the children to remain inspired and motivated and Teacher C noticed the improvement in the children's engagement when they were involved in fun activities that they had devised or chosen. She thought it didn't matter where the ideas came from as long as the activities were fun. However, the literature suggests that it is primarily the increase in children's autonomy that increases the children's engagement (Fisher, 2014). Just as the generative aspect of AI is deemed more important than its positivity (Bushe, 2010b), in my view, children's autonomy is likely to be more important than 'fun'.

8.8 Conclusion of results in relation to theory for Research Question 1 (RQ1)

For RQ1, the status of the key theoretical propositions is judged by the evidence presented in this chapter as: 'affirmed'; 'not affirmed'; or 'newly generated' (see Table 27).

Table 27: Outcomes of the study in relation to key theoretical propositions for RQ1

Theoretical proposition	Affirmed, not affirmed or newly generated
AI has the *potential* to shift the culture of participation in schools, even if only incrementally (Martin et al, 2006; Hargreaves, 2004).	Affirmed
AI is more likely to be transformative in cases where the participants are *not* already predisposed to this way of working (Bushe, 2010a).	Not affirmed
AI needs careful facilitation to manage shifts in power between children and their teacher (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012). AI requires teachers to shift their pedagogy from directing to facilitating learning (Wedell, 2005; Leadbeater, 2004).	Affirmed

Chapter 9: Results and Discussion Relating to Changes to the Curriculum, Pupil Attitudes, and Progress and Attainment

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research findings are presented and discussed critically in association with the second research question (RQ), exploring any changes to the curriculum, pupil attitudes, and progress and attainment in each class as a result of AI.

> *RQ2: How does an AI that is focused on writing lessons change the curriculum and affect pupils' attitudes, progress and attainment?*

I will present the relevant data sets separately before connecting or merging with other data according to themes derived from the teacher interviews. A summary of the merged and/or connected data will then be given before critically discussing the results in relation to the associated theoretical propositions from the literature.

9.2 Changes to the curriculum

9.2.1 Curriculum ideas

Box 3 gives an overview of the children's ideas for new curriculum writing activities as a result of their AIs. A more detailed account of each class's activities, with children's comments, is provided in Appendix 38.

Box 3: Children's ideas for new curriculum writing activities

Class A

Many of the groups in Class A devised writing activities around scripting and acting in short films and plays. For example: an episode of Top Gear using a real car in the playground; a runaway train drama with specially designed soundtrack; a cartoon animation; a ghostly presence film; a scary murder film; a drama about a lost child (with a real message for young children about how to stay safe); an animal detective film; and a comedy interview with someone trying to publicise their new movie.

Class B

Originally, the groups in Class B devised the following curriculum activities for writing: a pupil-designed PE lesson with associated report writing; a 'Gruesome Body Parts Model' instruction manual for younger children, linked to science; a Mini World Cup in school with associated football match reports; Brazilian dancing instructions; and a Nature Walk with drawings and writing about nature (including researching, making and using natural materials for writing equipment). During voting before the Design Stage of the AI, it became apparent that the vast majority of the class were particularly inspired and excited by the Mini-World Cup football idea, which then eclipsed many of their other ideas.

Class C

Class C created the following range of creative and varied ideas for new curriculum writing activities: inviting a favourite author into school for an interview and then writing

reviews of the author's books; making a replica Tutankhamun Tomb (with writings and carvings on the side) in which to post any worries, memories or ideas for the teacher to read; writing and then acting out stories and poems from a Magic Book, making them come to life; researching, writing and creating a wildlife house or habitat for Gary (the class soft toy), linked to science; and writing about a variety of Minecraft characters designed by the children (either writing a story about the character or describing how it was made).

9.2.2 Teacher interviews

The teachers' reflections on the children's ideas and responses (Theme 5, see Table 26) gave further information from the teachers' perspectives about changes to the curriculum for writing, in each of the three classes (see Box 4).

Box 4: Teachers' reflections on the children's responses and ideas

Teacher A

Teacher A thought that the children were really inspired and that their enthusiasm was mainly because they were able to choose what they were going to write about. He thought that they enjoyed their independence and the flexibility to create very varied projects, which 'all had the potential of being extremely successful ideas'. He was surprised that it was all so fresh in their minds after the break they had experienced for SATs: 'a lot fresher in their minds than it was with me. And they'd kept the ideas there.'

However, one group were 'very disenchanted with things' because they had 'a fantastic idea' to make their own episode of *Top Gear* and had written to a range of local garages to ask if a car could be brought onto the playground, with local newspaper publicity to entice them, but no one had responded to their request. Teacher A thought that the children needed help to overcome real world problems like this as part of the inquiry as they did not have the skills to cope. Another group had written to a college for support in making a short film animation and 'had the response back from the college about coming in and we phoned back and left messages but nothing more materialised from that. But they did sit down and they did work out an alternative, so I think those children had that determination, that resilience to overcome those problems and get on with it'.

Teacher B

Teacher B was very pleased with the positive and enthusiastic children's responses and ideas until it came to implementing their action plans, when most groups 'just hadn't done their actions plans' by the deadline. The Mini World Cup group had been better organised and she thought perhaps they had been more motivated but they still didn't do everything they had planned e.g. making the clay trophies, organising the teams, writing a letter to parents. They had, however, come to her for support to write an email requesting permission from the head teacher for the event.

Teacher C

Teacher C talked about the ideas children had come up with: 'their ideas were really nice… Yeah, I think they've got some nice ideas…Actually their ideas were lovely.' The children had been very happy to work on any of the ideas as long as it was a fun activity.

But similarly to Class B, there had been problems when implementing their action plans, when 'some of them really liked getting involved and helping out, others didn't like having the responsibility…No, the girls wrote the letters; that was fine. People didn't bring anything in from home apart from two children. In one group just one person had a job and they did it…There just wasn't the ownership.'

9.3 Pupil attitudes to themselves as learners and to school

9.3.1 Changes in pupil attitudes within Class A

Class A is regarded by school managers and by local authority advisers as a group of generally compliant Year 6 children with more ability than they are demonstrating in their current progress and attainment, which was why the AI had been initiated as part of a literacy project designed to inspire and motivate these learners.

Teacher A reported very positive responses from the children generally, saying that 'every time they've had the opportunity to carry out work on the project the general feeling of focus and balance within the class has been very good…it's something I've commented on a lot with you in the sessions we've met, that there is that buzz about them whenever we've gone to, this literacy project, they've tended to react with, 'Oh yes,' and they've just picked up every time, the mood's picked up. 'Let's get on with that one. We can't wait to get on with it.''

Figure 17 shows the changes in Class A's pupil attitudes to themselves and school following the AI intervention. (One child did not give consent for their data to be used in the study and has therefore not been included. Another child left the school during the project and therefore could not complete the second PASS questionnaire.)

Figure 17: Changes in Class A's Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) average percentages (28 pupils)
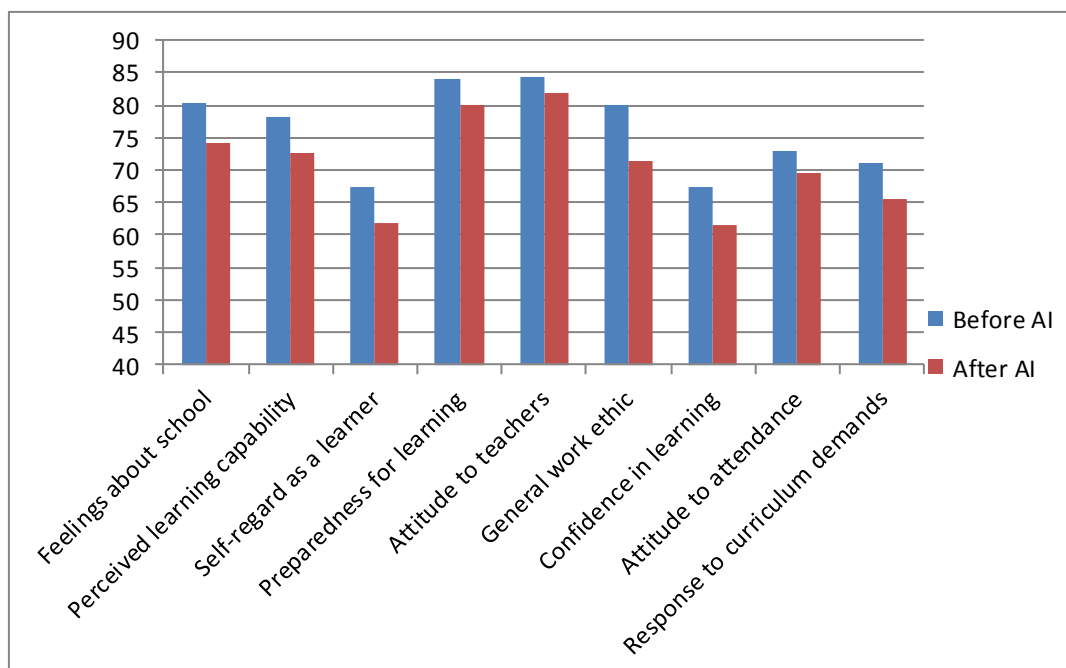
Figure 17 shows that there is a drop in *all* of the pupil attitude measures when the questionnaire was completed towards the end of the school term, particularly in terms of 'general work ethic', which is the only statistically significant change. The pattern of pupil attitudes is unchanged: the class's 'self-regard as learners' and their 'confidence in learning' remain low, whilst their 'preparedness for learning' and their 'attitude to teachers' remain high.

Further analyses of the changes in attitudes for children with and without SEND are shown in Figures 18 and 19.

Figure 18: Changes in Class A's PASS average percentages for children with SEND (4 pupils)
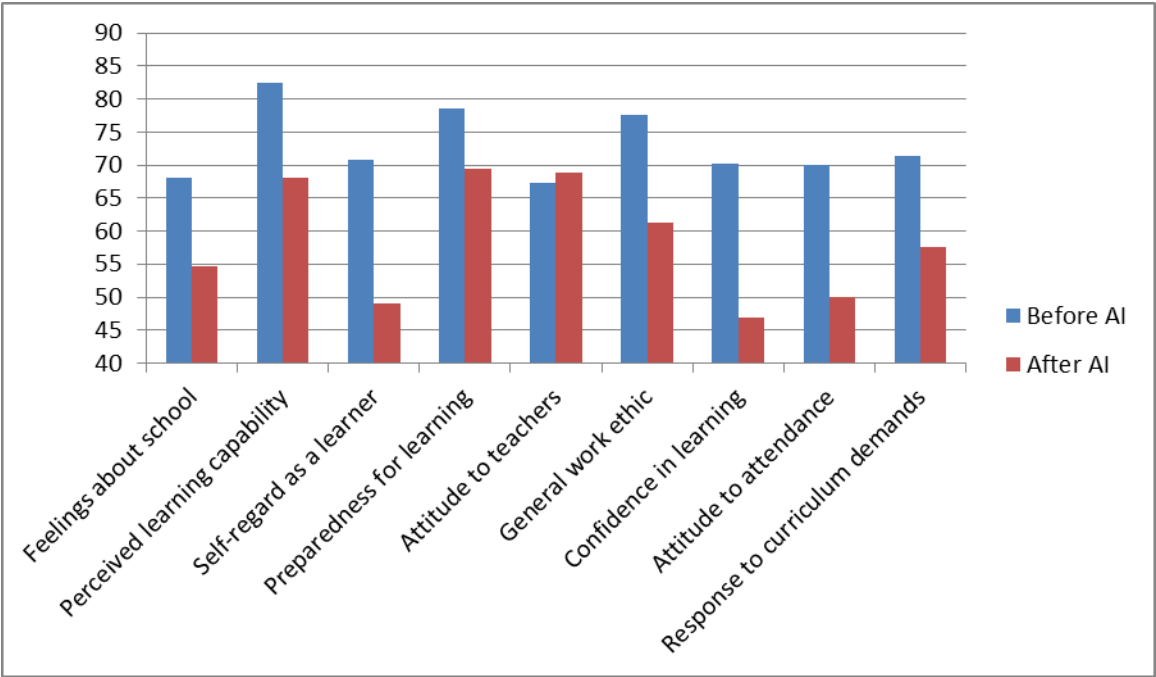
Figure 18 appears to show significant drops in pupil attitudes for the pupils with SEND in Class A, particularly in terms of their 'self-regard as learners', 'confidence in learning' and 'attitude to attendance' and only their 'attitude to teachers' appears to have improved slightly following the AI. However, none of these results is statistically significant (possibly due to the very small sample).

Figure 19 indicates that for the majority of the children without SEND, all attitudes deteriorated slightly after the AI, but especially the pupils' 'general work ethic', which was the only statistically significant result.

Figure 19: Changes in Class A's PASS average percentages for children without SEND (24 pupils)
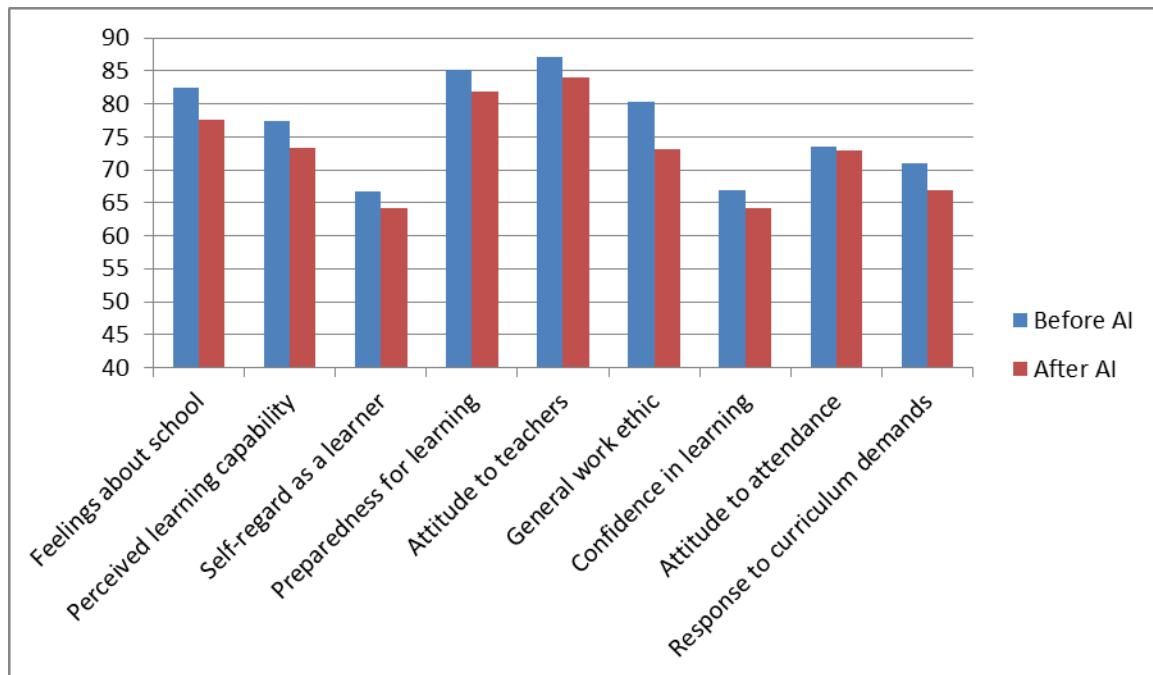
From the evidence presented in Figures 17 to 19, it could be argued that the experience of taking part in an AI has potentially had a negative impact on these children's attitudes to themselves as learners and to their school, significantly so for their 'general work ethic'. However, the evidence from their evaluations of each stage of the AI and from the teacher interview suggests that they thoroughly enjoyed it, gaining even more value from it as the intervention progressed. This anomaly is difficult to understand, particularly as the children might be expected to feel nostalgic and positive about their primary school as they prepare to leave it. At the time of completing the PASS questionnaire for the second time, the class had recently rehearsed and performed their end of year assembly; a celebration of all that they had enjoyed and achieved at the school.

There are several possible hypotheses that may help to explain this class's overall dip in attitudes:

- When the PASS questionnaire was re-administered, the class had recently received their SATs results and a large majority of pupils (and their teacher) had been disappointed with the results. This may have had a significant effect particularly on their self-regard and confidence as learners.

- The initial questionnaire for Class A was completed individually on a laptop computer. The final questionnaire was completed on paper with all children completing it at the same time and in close proximity to each other. The teacher reflected that it might have been preferable to have set up the room in a similar way to the completion of SATs papers so that there would be no potential influence from other children. It is also possible that the children did not enjoy completing the paper questionnaire as much as the electronic version.

- The initial computer-based questionnaire was completed privately with plenty of time for individual reflection before answering each question. The paper-based final questionnaire was slightly rushed and all were completed at the same time.

- The initial PASS assessment occurred during a time of concentrated classroom learning as the children prepared for SATs. The final questionnaire was administered within the context of a relaxed end-of-term classroom environment, where the focus had ceased to be about learning.

- Attitudes associated with the AI perhaps do not generalise into attitudes towards self and school, unless a shift is facilitated in the culture of teaching and learning within the class. Such a shift may not have occurred or may not yet have had the time to influence other learning opportunities.

- Positive attitudes and empowerment experienced in the AI may inadvertently lead children to be *less* satisfied with their experiences of school generally. One child in Class A, when rating from one to ten how much children in the class participate in decision-making following the AI intervention, commented that if it were in the AI then it would be ten out of ten but for the class generally it would now be one out of ten.

- Children may *care* less about how they are portrayed as learners when their investment in their learning environment has ceased.

9.3.2 Changes in pupil attitudes within Class B

Class B is characterised as a fairly confident and demonstrative group, generally extravert and comfortable with performances. Figure 20 shows the changes in pupil attitudes to themselves and school following AI. (Although there were 30 children in Class B, one child was absent and another had left the school when the PASS questionnaire was re-administered at the end of the term. Four further children did not give their consent for their data to be used in the study.)

Figure 20 demonstrates decreases in five of the attitudes measured after the AI, with slightly larger decreases in the pupils' 'feelings about school' and their 'attitude to teachers', which were both previously high. 'Attitude to attendance', 'response to curriculum demands' and 'general work ethic' also decreased. There was an increase in 'perceived learning capability' and only very slight increases in 'self-regard as a learner' and 'confidence in learning'. However, none of these changes are statistically significant except for the decrease in 'feelings about school'.

Figure 20: Changes in Class B's PASS average percentages (24 pupils)
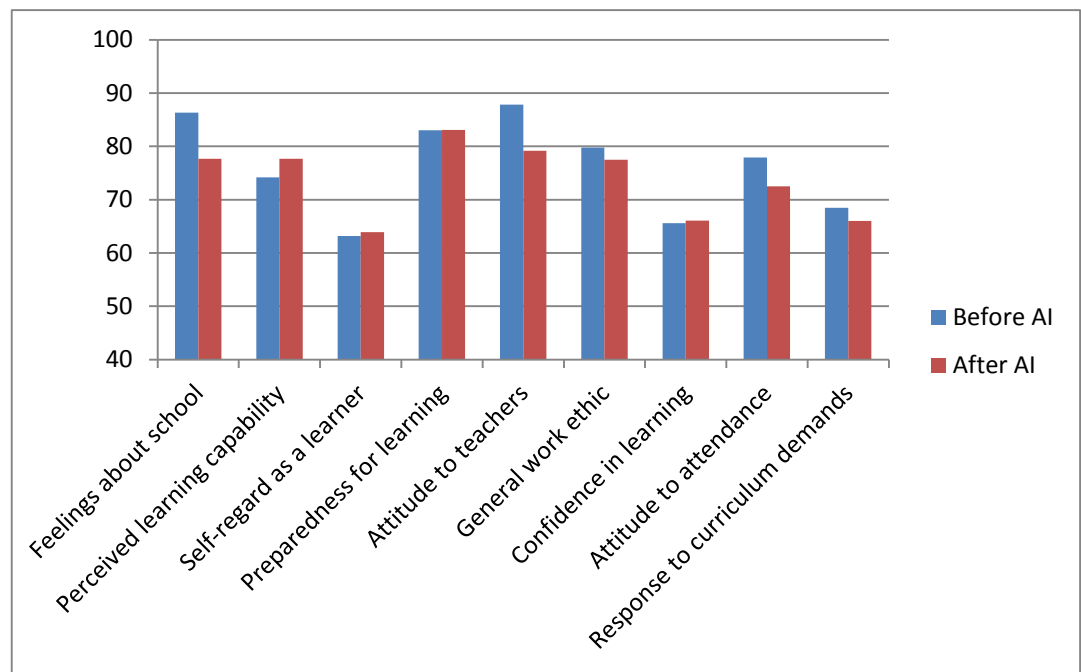
Figure 21: Changes in Class B's PASS average percentages for children with SEND (7 pupils)
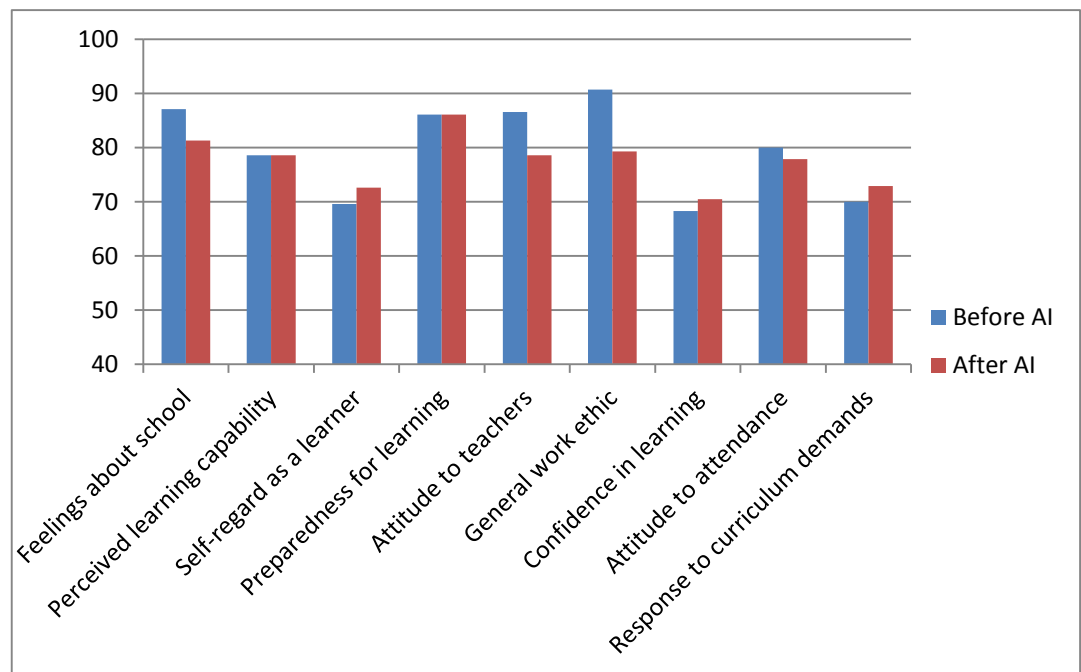
Figure 21 shows that the attitudes of the children in Class B with SEND appear to have improved after the AI in terms of their 'self-regard as learners', 'confidence in learning' and

'response to curriculum demands'. Their 'perceived learning capability' and 'preparedness for learning' stayed the same. Four other factors decreased after the AI: 'feelings about school', 'attitude to teachers', 'general work ethic' and 'attitude to attendance'. However, only the result relating to the children's 'general work ethic' is statistically significant.

Figure 22 shows that for the children in Class B without SEND, four factors appear to have decreased following the AI: 'feelings about school', 'attitude to teachers', 'attitude to attendance' and 'response to curriculum demands' and only the scores for 'perceived learning capability' and 'general work ethic' improved after the AI. However, only the result for 'feelings about school' is statistically significant.

Figure 22: Changes in Class B's PASS average percentages for children without SEND (17 pupils)
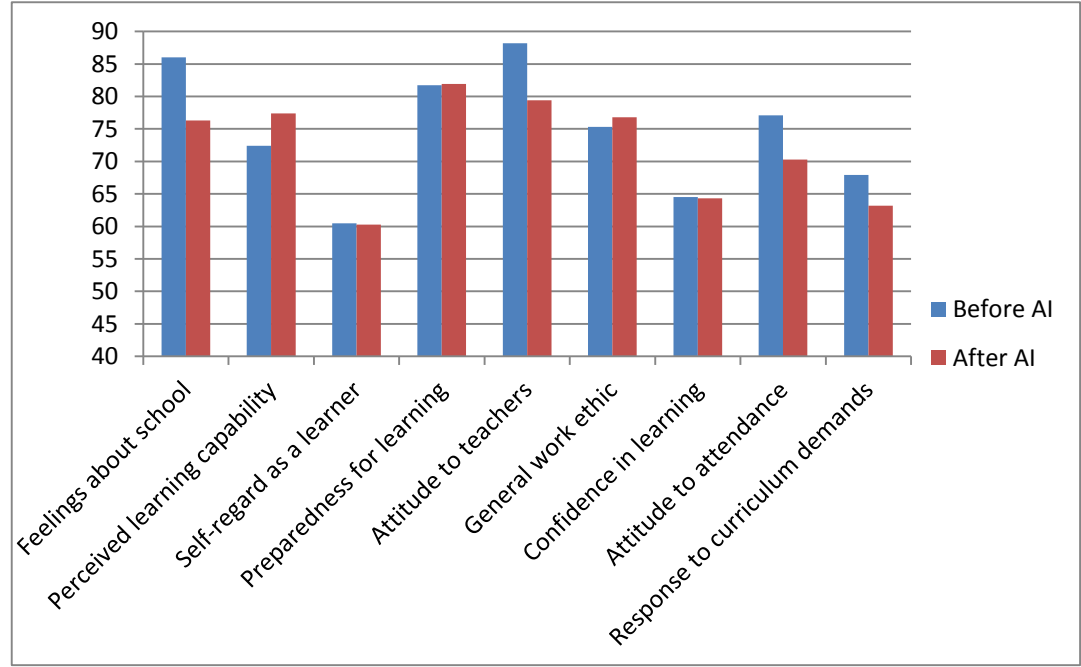
The negative outcomes overall are surprising as Class B had thoroughly enjoyed their AI activities (see Section 10.2.1). Possible hypotheses to help explain these results are:

- The final PASS questionnaire was completed on the very last day of term, when there was no longer any focus upon learning in the classroom. It was a busy day filled with games, activities, organising belongings and the leavers' assembly. It is possible that the children did not respond to the questions as concentrated learners.

- Teacher B commented that although she did not administer the PASS questionnaire any differently 'second time round', everyone was exhausted at the end of the year and there are always more behavioural incidents in the last week of every term (she had just completed a study of this across the school). This may have influenced the children's responses in terms of their attitudes towards school.

- Control for the final implementation stage of the AI shifted significantly towards the teacher and away from the children. The teacher had been disappointed that the children did not follow through with their action plans sufficiently well in their own time and by the deadline she had set. Her reflections are that the children are not yet used to taking such responsibility and that she thought she had perhaps expected too much of them. This may have affected the perceptions the children consequently had of themselves as learners.

- The idea of one of the groups to create a Mini World Cup in school (the World Cup for Football was being shown on television at the time) was so exciting that the majority of children in the class wanted to join that group for the Design and Destiny Stages of the AI. This meant that the planning group became enormous and needed to be subdivided and organised by the teacher. The children may have lost confidence in their ability to plan and organise the event for themselves, although they undoubtedly enjoyed the event itself.

9.3.3 Changes in pupil attitudes within Class C

Class C is characterised by their teacher as a much quieter, more introverted and less confident group of children than Class B, often reluctant to perform and needing more reassurance and support generally.

Figure 23 shows the changes in pupil attitudes to themselves and school following the AI intervention. (Although there were 31 children in Class C, three children did not give their consent, one child did not complete the second PASS questionnaire, and another child joined the school during the AI intervention so had not completed the initial PASS questionnaire.)

Figure 23: Changes in Class C's PASS average percentages (26 pupils)
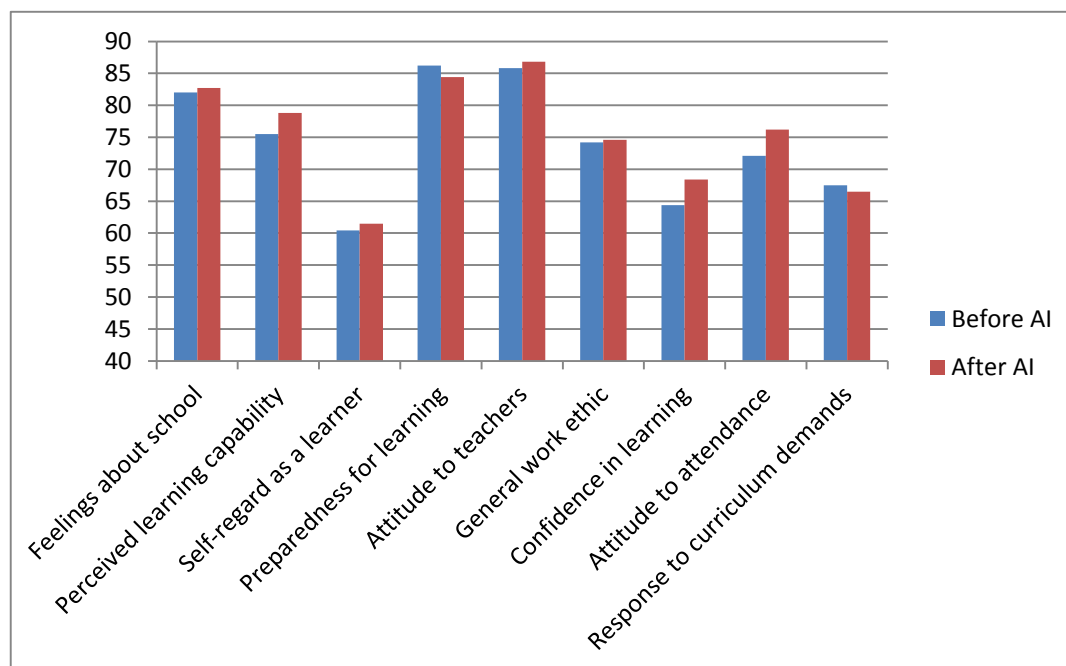
Figure 23 shows the changes in Class C's attitudes to themselves and school following the AI intervention. The majority of the measures indicate a slight increase in positive attitudes. Only

their 'response to curriculum demands' and 'preparedness for learning' decreased slightly. However, none of these changes are statistically significant.

Figure 24 shows that the children in Class C with SEND improved their attitude to themselves as learners and to school in seven of the measures completed. Only the children's 'self-regard as learners' and 'response to curriculum demands' decreased after the AI. However, none of these changes are statistically significant.

Figure 24: Changes in Class C's PASS average percentages for children with SEND (7 pupils)
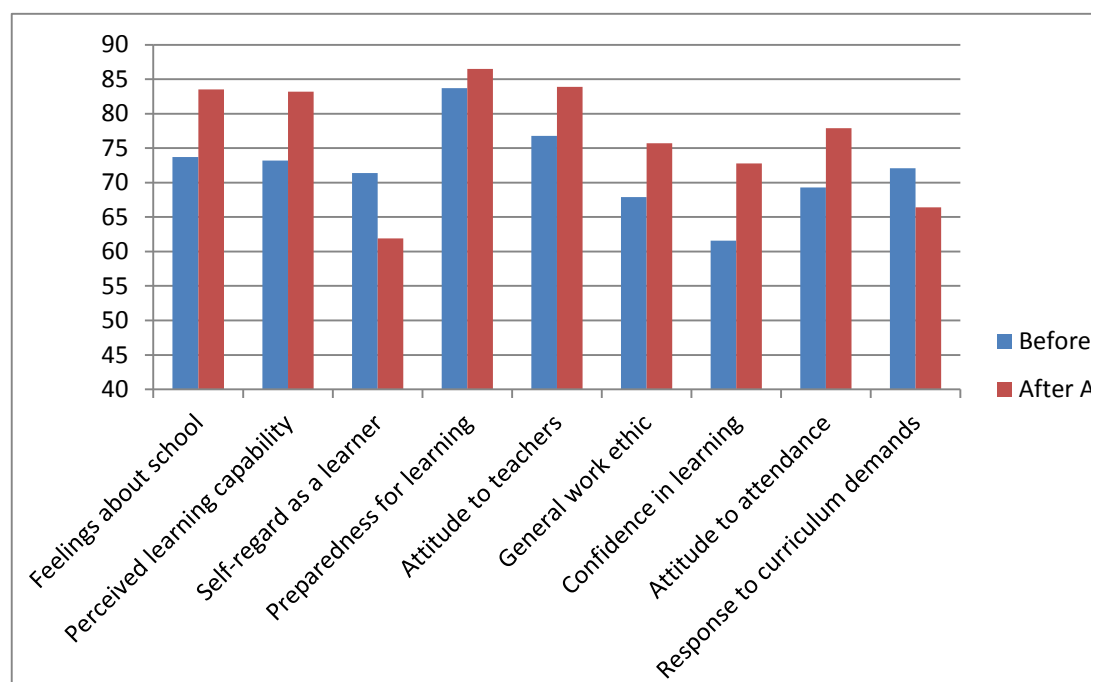
Figure 25 shows that the children in Class C without SEND appeared to improve slightly in their attitudes to themselves and school in five of the measures and to have decreased in attitude slightly for the remaining four measures. However, none of these changes are statistically significant.

Figure 25: Changes in Class C's PASS average percentages for children without SEND (19 pupils)
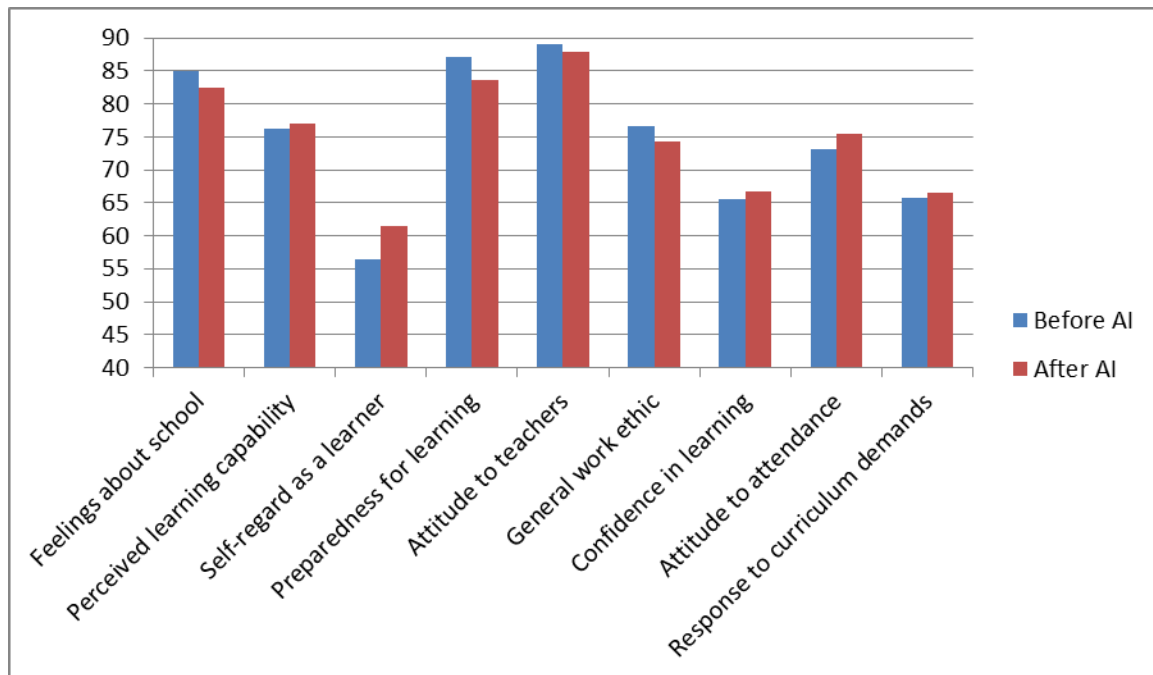
In summary, the children in Class C generally appear to have slightly improved attitudes to learning following AI, although these small shifts are not significant. The children with SEND in Class C demonstrated slightly larger positive shifts in attitudes, but again these are not statistically significant.

9.3.4 Comparison of PASS results across the three classes

The results of the PASS survey are surprising overall. Comparing the results of all three classes, the following trends are evident:

- Class A decreased in all nine attitude measures, except for the children with SEND's 'attitude to teachers', although only the decrease in 'general work ethic' is statistically significant;

- Class C's attitudes generally improved more than the other two classes (especially the SEND children) but the changes are not statistically significant;

- 'Feelings about school', 'attitude to teachers' and 'preparedness for learning' were generally rated highly by all children in all classes (except for the four SEND children in Class A);

- 'Self-regard as a learner' and 'confidence in learning' were generally rated at a low level by all children in all classes. 'Self-regard as a learner' improved in Classes B and C. 'Confidence in learning' improved for the SEND children in Class B and for all the children in Class C but none of these changes are statistically significant;

- 'General work ethic' and 'response to curriculum demands' generally decreased across the three classes. The deterioration for 'general work ethic' was statistically significant for the whole class and the children without SEND in Class A and the SEND children in Class B;

- 'Feelings about school' deteriorated most in Classes A and B, the deterioration in Class B being statistically significant for the whole class and for children without SEND;

- The greatest gains overall were made in: 'perceived learning capability', 'self-regard as a learner', 'confidence in learning' and 'attitude to attendance' in Classes B and C but these changes are not statistically significant.

9.4 Pupil progress and attainment

Each teacher was asked for the National Curriculum (NC) data for the children in their classes throughout the academic year in Reading, Writing and Maths. This data is typically collected

six times during the year, at the end of each of six short terms (corresponding to the six half-terms of many English schools). Unfortunately, this data is not complete for every class. Comments about the quality of children's writing were made in the teacher interviews and the children suggested reasons why AI might improve their writing in the class discussions.

9.4.1 Progress, attainment and quality of writing in Class A

Class A's data was recorded by the teacher using NC sublevels for Terms 1, 2, 4 and 5 and only NC Levels (without sublevels) for Terms 3 and 6, which unfortunately did not enable meaningful comparisons to be made with the progress in other terms (the local authority school year was organised into six short terms). The AI project took place primarily during Term 4. Term 5 was mainly taken up with preparation for and administration of SATs. Term 6 included the implementation phase of the AI. The results were analysed by comparing the progress children made in the first two terms with the progress made in the next two terms, which included the majority of the AI project work (see Figure 26).

Whilst Figure 26 indicates that the children in Class A made greater progress in all subjects during the period of time between Term 2 and Term 4 (when the majority of the AI intervention took place), their progress was better in reading and maths than it was in writing. However, there would be no expectation for writing to improve more than reading or maths, since the children's curriculum writing activities were not implemented until Term 6. It is possible that this improvement overall may relate in part to the increase in participation and enjoyment of school experienced as part of the AI project, but there are likely to be many other reasons to account for such progress, not least the intensity of the class's preparation towards SATs. Teacher A also told me that he would generally expect the children to make

the most progress during Terms 2 to 4, when he and the class have got to know each other and the Christmas disruption is over.

Figure 26: Total NC sublevels of progress made by Class A
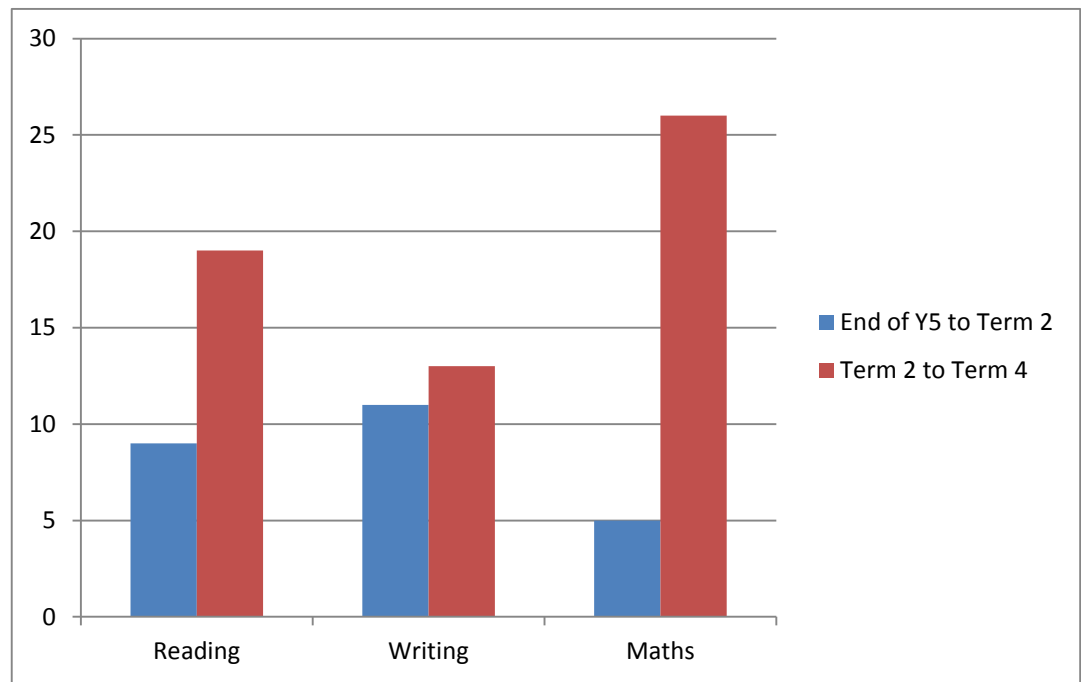
However, in Theme 4 of the teacher interviews (attainment and quality of work), Teacher A commented that the AI had 'made them think an awful lot about the writing'. He was very pleased to report that the assistant head teacher from the local secondary school 'commented on the quality of the pupils' work here that she saw while she was working with them. And that was very encouraging to see, that these Year 6 children were working at a very good level, as assessed by a secondary school teacher. So that was positive'.

The following quotations from the children in Class A suggest that the quality of children's writing would improve as a result of AI because it facilitates imagination, creativity and 'basically freedom', demonstrating their appreciation of being allowed to make decisions about their learning in AI.

Children will find it more interesting because you can ask a website/company to come

It helps them express their ideas and give them confidence.

We agreed that the enjoyment of the work would improve the writing standard.

Imagination and creativity.

It will help with others writing because they will have more freedom.

They could use their imagination a lot more (Basically Freedom).

9.4.2 Progress, attainment and quality of writing in Class B

The NC progress data for the year were not submitted by Teacher B, who joined the class part way through the year and experienced significant difficulties obtaining earlier data. The assistant head teacher responsible for progress data across the school was approached several times for this information but could not, or preferred not to, supply the data.

However, in Theme 4 of the teacher interviews (attainment and quality of work), Teacher B commented that generally, the quality of the writing wasn't as good as she had expected: 'because of a few things, because it's the first time we've done it...I mean they have written quite nice pieces of writing and they worked hard'. She thought she should have modelled what a good report should look like, which she would normally have done. However, one child who finds writing difficult usually 'just struggles to remain on top and motivated' but

had produced 'by far the best piece of writing that he's done'. She showed me his work with real pleasure, reading: ''the game ended a draw because [Child's name] in the fourth minute of the game pulled it back. So the game ended in a tie.' And there are just some really nice…'Just in the nick of time when I,' there's just some really, really lovely…at the end he put, 'In the end England came fourth, France third, Germany second and the brightest star in the bunch, Brazil, came first.' Lovely'.

The following quotations from the children in Class B suggest that the quality of children's writing would improve as a result of AI because they are seeing and actively doing things as a stimulus for writing, using their own ideas to make it more exciting:

…we can write what we *see* and if we write stories our minds would be blank. Writing by seeing is easier.

Having fun and writing reports about it.

We could do something active and write about it.

It's more exciting.

You've done football and you're writing the match

Ideas.

9.4.3 Progress, attainment and quality of writing in Class C

The NC sublevels of progress in Reading and Writing for Class C were provided for Terms 1 to 6 (see Figure 27). Their progress for Maths was not available because the year group is divided according to ability for Maths and many children in Class C are taught by Teacher B.

Figure 27 indicates that by far the least progress was made in Term 6, which was the period of time in which the majority of the AI project took place. Teacher C explained, however, that Term 6's data was requested by school managers only *two weeks* after she had assessed the children's Term 5 progress and very few of the children would have been expected to make any sublevels of progress in such a short period of time. Unfortunately, this data does not therefore provide any useful information in relation to the potential effects of the AI project on pupil progress and attainment.

Figure 27: Total NC sublevels of progress made by Class C
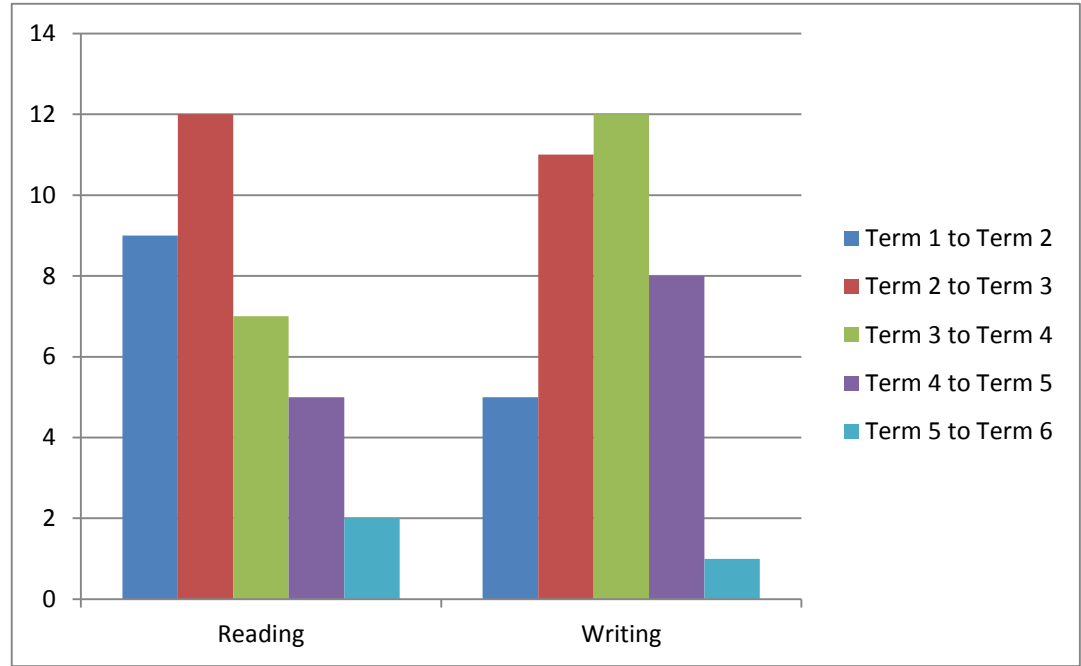
In Theme 4 of the teacher interviews (attainment and quality of work), Teacher C commented: 'Reading their writing, I don't think their writing was better than their literacy writing because when they have the choice to do lots of text types they don't get the modelling and the input on it as much as they could, but that's only this time….We didn't really get time to write about it yesterday, we were supposed to…We would have done and then I think that would have inspired some good writing because everyone was involved in something and they knew

what they were doing and they knew what parts were part of the habitat and they'd been researching it so it was good….The engagement was really there, but the quality maybe wasn't….Yes, definitely worth doing. Not always for the quality but just for the experience I guess….Although that [the writing] was the aim, they were more keen to do other things.'

The following quotations from the children in Class C suggest that the quality of children's writing would improve as a result of AI because writing becomes fun, exciting, and inspired by imagination, ideas and choices:

It will improve children's writing skills by inspiring their imagination.

Includes everyone.

More exciting so people try their best.

It makes your learning fun. Better because it's fun. Because it was fun so that it was easy.

Because it helps.

Gives you ideas. It will have choices.

Because we get to think about it then writing about it. Gives more to write about. Good.

Because they get practice.

It would be easy if we act it out then write about it.

9.5 Summary of triangulated, connected or merged data

Using AI with whole classes of children has certainly facilitated the creation of a wide variety of imaginative ideas for writing tasks in all three classes, generated by the children, giving them voice, choice and influence over curriculum activities and involving them directly in decisions about their learning. Many of their ideas involved writing for a purpose (e.g.

creating the scripts for films), writing about favourite activities (e.g. Minecraft characters) or writing about real events (e.g. writing match reports). Most writing activities involved the children themselves in creating, making or doing something they were inspired by.

During the course of the AIs, the qualitative evidence from the children and their teachers suggests that the children's attitudes were generally very positive. However, the quantitative results of the PASS survey were surprising, indicating a general decrease in positive attitudes within Classes A and B following the AI, particularly in terms of 'general work ethic' for Class A and 'attitudes towards school' for Class B. It might have been expected that the children would generally report more positive attitudes to themselves as learners and to school after being so motivated and engaged in devising their own exciting curriculum activities. There is certainly evidence of increased participation in decision making and of enjoyment in the AI process. Indeed, a limitation or criticism of completing the PASS survey at the end of the year was that potentially relaxed and happy pupils might have artificially elevated the results. A further anomaly is that the SEND children generally lessened their belief in the value of participation following the AI and yet reported more improvements in their attitudes to learning than children without SEND, particularly for Classes B and C (although these shifts were not statistically significant).

The children in Class A made significantly greater progress in all subjects during the period when the majority of the AI intervention took place, but Teacher A generally expects the children to make the most progress at that time of the year. The progress data for Class B was not available and for Class C unfortunately does not provide any useful information in relation to the potential effects of the AI project on pupil progress and attainment. The

children's writing was generally high quality in Class A but less than the usual standard in Classes B and C, due to less direction and modelling by their teachers.

9.6 Critical discussion about changes to the curriculum, pupil attitudes, progress and attainment in relation to theoretical propositions from the literature

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How does an AI that is focused on writing lessons change the curriculum and affect pupils' attitudes, progress and attainment?

The key theoretical propositions tested were that:

- AI is able to facilitate children's direct involvement in devising curriculum activities that support the evidence for an effective pedagogy for writing (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010; Duncan, 2010); and

- attitudes to learning generally improve due to increased engagement and have the potential to raise attainment (Leadbeater, 2005; Sebba et al, 2007).

Two key themes were identified from the teacher interviews in relation to RQ2:

- Attainment and quality of work (Theme 4); and

- Children's responses and ideas (Theme 5).

9.6.1 Attainment and quality of work (Theme 4)

The qualitative data from the teacher interviews and children's comments indicates that AI has the *potential* to raise attainments in writing due to the increased engagement and motivation of the children, inspired by their perceived 'freedom'. Teacher A was very pleased with the visiting secondary school assistant head teacher's comments about the quality of the

writing. He also commented that the children remembered everything so much better than usual because they were so keen. Teachers B and C also appreciated the engagement of the children whilst both realising that they still need to model or scaffold writing tasks rather than leaving it all up the children (Coe et al, 2014). The motivation Teacher B had seen in one child had produced the best quality of writing she had ever seen him produce. Whilst Coe et al (2014) argues that there is not yet enough robust evidence to show the positive effect of pupil participation on attainment; there is compelling evidence that increasing oral work and discussion (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010; Ofsted, 2011a), creating literacy tasks for real purposes e.g. drama (Korkeamaki and Dreher, 2011) and maintaining positive relationships between the teacher and children i.e. class climate (Coe et al, 2014), all have a direct causal effect on attainment and have been evident in the three AIs in this study. The resulting theoretical proposition that an AI that is focused on writing would have a positive impact on attainment is partially supported by the qualitative data in this study for Class A. The quantitative data relating to attainment and NC sublevels of progress is only tentatively meaningful for Class A, but the positive results could easily be explained by factors other than the AI (e.g. the preparation for SATs).

9.6.2 Children's responses and ideas (Theme 5a): The Curriculum

This study has demonstrated that primary school children are certainly *able* to devise exciting curriculum activities for their writing lessons, based on their best experiences of learning in the past. A creative, innovative curriculum for writing is widely promoted in the literature (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010) and the AI empowered the teachers to experiment with enabling the children to create new ideas (Brundrett and Duncan, 2014). This active personal engagement of the learner in designing, producing and creating their own learning captures

the essence of personalised learning (DfES, 2004a; Leadbeater, 2005; Sebba et al, 2007). The resulting curriculum ideas for writing that the children designed are entirely congruent with the types of activities promoted strongly by Ofsted and in the literature, for example: cross-curricular tasks (Rose, 2009); writing for pleasure and real purposes (Ofsted 2011b, 2012); making good use of drama, role-play, screen narratives and film scripts (Duncan, 2010).

Teacher C questioned whether the ownership of the ideas was as important as the creativity, novelty and fun of the ideas themselves, as many children were just as keen to work on a different idea to their own. Rantala and Maatta (2012) suggest that children and their teacher should experience the freedom and joy of jointly creating the curriculum as a class. In this way, the children's personal ideas within the AI can be seen as contributing to the whole class's exploration of new ways of working.

The new National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) is designed to allow increased flexibility and choice for teachers so that in theory, it is currently possible to engage the children in devising new and innovative curriculum activities using AI. This is true for Teacher A, who has been asked by his head teacher to help facilitate increased pupil participation and pupil-initiated curriculum ideas at his school. Unfortunately for Teachers B and C, their head teacher has invested in an expensive new scheme of work that has been designed and published to help schools cover the new National Curriculum, and which is likely to reduce the flexibility needed for them to include pupil-devised curriculum activities. A prescriptive curriculum acts as a barrier to pupil participation (Kanyal and Gibbs, 2014), although there is some evidence that children with SEND may respond better to structured teacher-led activities (Thoonen et al, 2011).

9.6.3 Children's responses and ideas (Theme 5b): Attitudes to learning

The theoretical proposition that attitudes to learning would generally improve as a result of AI, because it engages children in exciting new curriculum activities of their own devising (Leadbeater, 2005; Sebba et al, 2007), whilst supported by some of the qualitative data, has not been indicated by the quantitative results of the PASS survey.

During the course of the AI activities, the children's attitudes were generally positive. For example, Teacher A reported an extremely enthusiastic response whenever the AI was mentioned, Teacher B was very pleased with the positive and enthusiastic children's responses and Teacher C loved seeing the children's engagement. The teachers' 'high points' related to the positive attitudes of the children (see Section 10.4). The children's evaluations of each stage of the AI, as well as their comments in the class discussions, demonstrate that they: enjoyed the freedom, imagination, activity, excitement and 'fun' of the AIs; were positive about working together as a group (despite the difficulties they experienced); and liked making and creating things within their AIs. This is supported by evidence that: having influence and choice improves pupils' self-esteem (Lindsay, 2004; Malone and Hatung, 2010) and raises enthusiasm (McLaughlin, 2006); and collaboration between peers and between teachers and pupils (such as within the AI) improves motivation and well-being (Thoonen et al, 2011; Greig et al, 2014).

After the AI, however, it is possible that having experienced the power of pupil participation within the AI, children became less satisfied with their general school experience, which may then have been reflected in the PASS survey results. One pupil in Class A indicated strongly

that this was the case. Disaffection has been known to occur when autonomy disappears (Bragg, 2007).

But the PASS scores may simply have been affected by the lack of focus on learning and the children's negative feelings at the end of the term. Year 6 children have generally been found to become increasingly dissatisfied as the year progresses (Fisher, 2014). Class A had received poor SATs results and all classes were experiencing sadness about breaking up with friends and anxiety about the transition to new teachers and/or schools. The only statistically significant changes in the PASS factors were deterioration in 'general work ethic' for Class A and in 'feelings about school' for Class B, which could plausibly be implicated in these 'end of term' events. 'General work ethic' is exemplified in the PASS handbook as 'general motivation and associated feelings including anxiety'.

The attitudes of children with SEND might have been affected by the increased challenge of group work, change and more child-led rather than teacher-directed work in the AI (Baines et al, 2014; Feinstein et al, 2010). Generally, low attaining children receive less autonomy-promoting feedback in lessons than more able peers (Hargreaves, 2014) and may not experience sufficient confidence in themselves as learners to take risks (Le Cornu and Collins, 2004). Kellett (2009) found that children's confidence has a significant effect within writing activities. Teacher C talked about the SEND children's lack of confidence in sharing their ideas within the AI. Paradoxically, there is evidence that participation activities can improve children's self-confidence (Kranzl-Nagl and Zartler, 2010) and the SEND children in Classes B and C generally reported more improvements in their attitudes to learning than children without SEND.

But generally, the pattern of scores across the nine PASS factors did not change significantly for any of the classes, indicating that the AI did not transform how pupils see themselves as learners.

Reflexivity has enabled me to confront the discrepant PASS data with the possibility that AI may have a *detrimental* effect on pupil attitudes to learning. AI's reliance on participation could lead children to feel less able to achieve good results on their own, without the leadership and structure their teachers usually provide (at least initially). The evidence that increased participation was not associated with an increase in children's belief in its importance within Classes B and C (see Figures 10 and 12) may support this new theory, although there were difficulties in these classes with the teachers taking back more control in the implementation phase (see Section 11.3). However, the positive association between increased participation and increased enjoyment within each AI (see Figures 14 and 28) does not support the theory that AI might have a detrimental effect on pupil attitudes. Further research will be needed in order to explore how children's attitudes to learning and to school might change over time as a result of participating more in decisions about their learning.

9.7 Conclusion of results in relation to theory for Research Question 2 (RQ2)

For RQ2, the status of the key theoretical propositions is judged by the evidence presented in this chapter as: 'affirmed'; 'not affirmed'; or 'newly generated' (see Table 28).

Table 28: Outcomes of the study in relation to key theoretical propositions for RQ2

Theoretical proposition	Affirmed, not affirmed or newly generated
AI is able to facilitate the children's direct involvement in devising a writing curriculum that is: creative and innovative (Siraj-Blatchford et	Affirmed

al, 2010); cross-curricular (DSCF, 2009); designed for real purposes (Ofsted, 2012); playful (Rantala and Maatta, 2012); and makes good use of drama, role-play, screen narratives and film scripts (Duncan, 2010).	
Attitudes to learning generally improve as a result of AI due to increased pupil engagement and have the potential to raise attainment (Leadbeater, 2005; Sebba et al, 2007).	Partially affirmed by qualitative data but not by quantitative data

Chapter 10: Results and Discussion Relating to the 'High Points' or Strengths of AI

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research findings are presented and discussed critically in association with the third research question (RQ), exploring the 'high points' or strengths of the participants' experiences of AI in terms of what they have most appreciated and enjoyed.

> *RQ3: What are the high points or strengths of developing and using AI with a whole class, from the perspectives of both the children and their teacher(s)? What has been appreciated most by the people involved?*

I will present the data sets separately before connecting or merging with other relevant data according to themes derived from the teacher interviews. A summary of the merged and/or connected data will then be given before critically discussing the results in relation to the associated theoretical propositions from the literature.

10.2 The children's views of the strengths of using AI in the primary classroom

10.2.1 Enjoyment of each stage of AI

Figure 28 shows how much the children rated their enjoyment of each stage of the AI. (The results are reported as averages for each class at each stage of the AI.) The results indicate that the initial Discovery Stage was less enjoyable for each of the classes than the other stages of the AI. The Dream Stage was particularly enjoyable for Classes B and C. Whilst Class A clearly enjoyed the Dream Stage it was the Destiny Stage that they enjoyed most of all, taking ownership of the plans to ensure their ideas really happen.

Figure 28: Average ratings (from 1 to 10) for how much each class enjoyed each stage of the AI
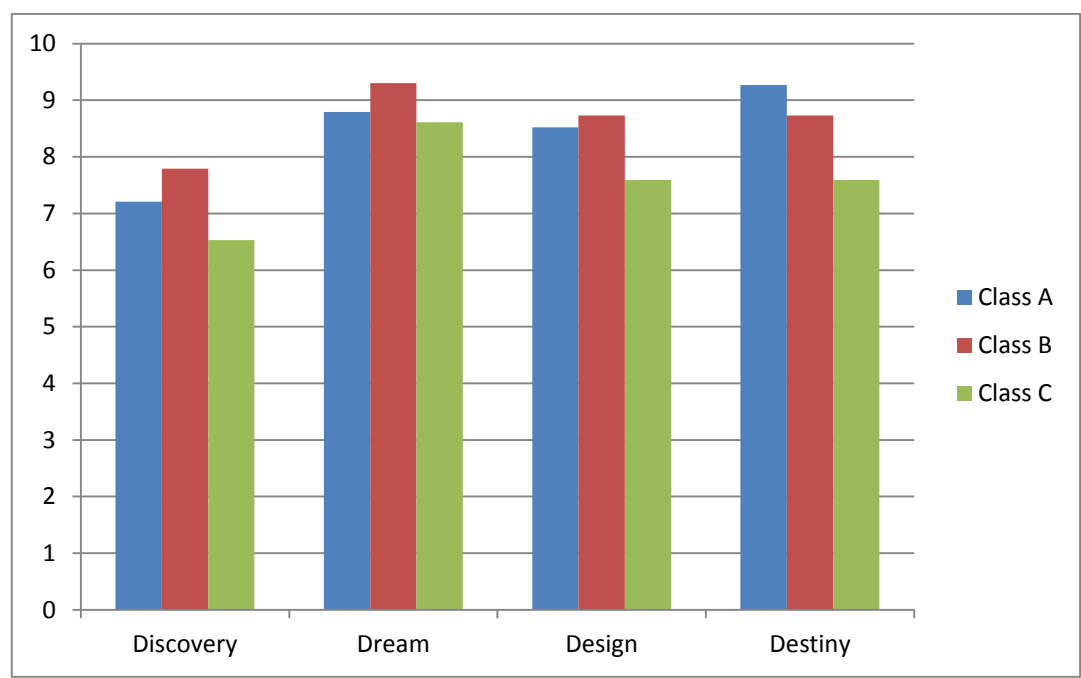
Figure 29: Average ratings (from 1 to 10) for how much the children with SEND in each class enjoyed each stage of the AI
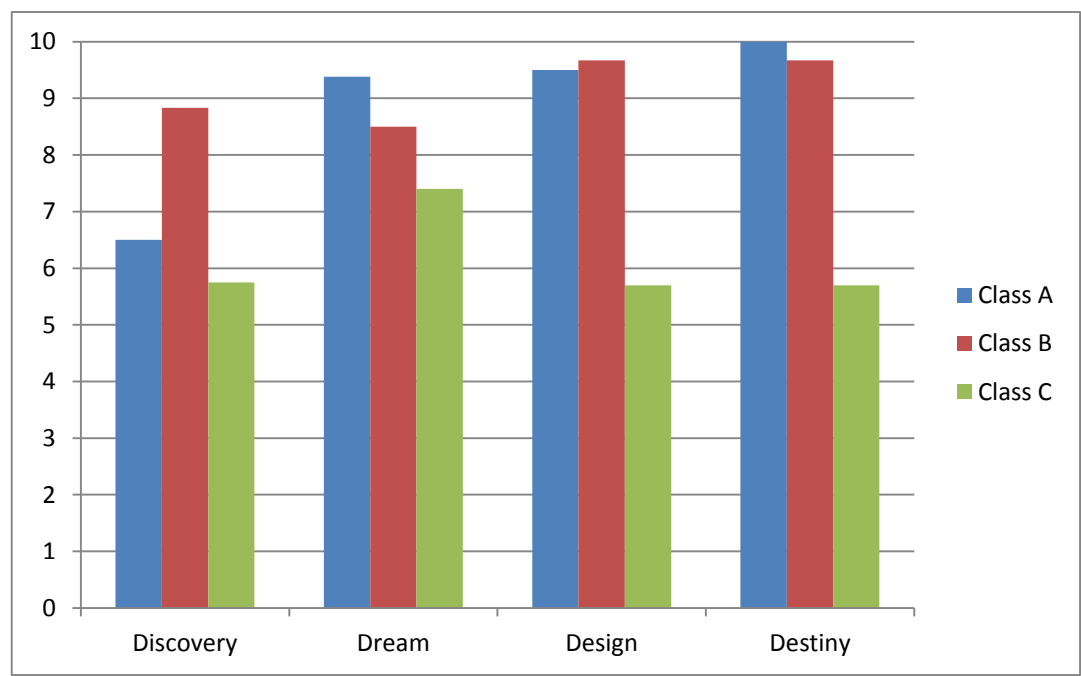
Figure 29 shows how much the children with SEND rated their enjoyment of each stage of the AI. The results indicate that whilst the children with SEND in Classes A and B particularly enjoyed the last two stages of the AI, the children with SEND in Class C did not enjoy the final stages as much as the Dream Stage. It is interesting that the SEND children in Class C have not enjoyed the AI stages as much as the other two classes, especially when their attitudes to themselves as learners and to school increased more than those of the SEND children in the other classes, although this trend was not statistically significant (see Section 9.3.3). It is possible that this relates in part to the group work involved, which may have increased their feelings of vulnerability and anxiety. In Section 11.2.6, the SEND children's ideas for improving the AI process included more support for group work.

Figure 30 shows how much the children without SEND rated their enjoyment of each stage of the AI. The results indicate that for children without SEND, the Dream Stage was the most enjoyable for Classes B and C. Children in Class A without SEND enjoyed the Destiny Stage even more than the Dream Stage. The Discovery Stage was the least enjoyable for children without SEND in all classes.

10.2.2 Children's comments about the strengths of each stage of the AI

The children in each class recorded comments on their evaluation sheets about what they enjoyed most at each stage of the AI and these were organised into themes. As an example of this process, Table 29 shows Class B's comments and themes in relation to the Discovery Stage.

Figure 30: Average ratings (from 1 to 10) for how much the children without SEND in each class enjoyed each stage of the AI
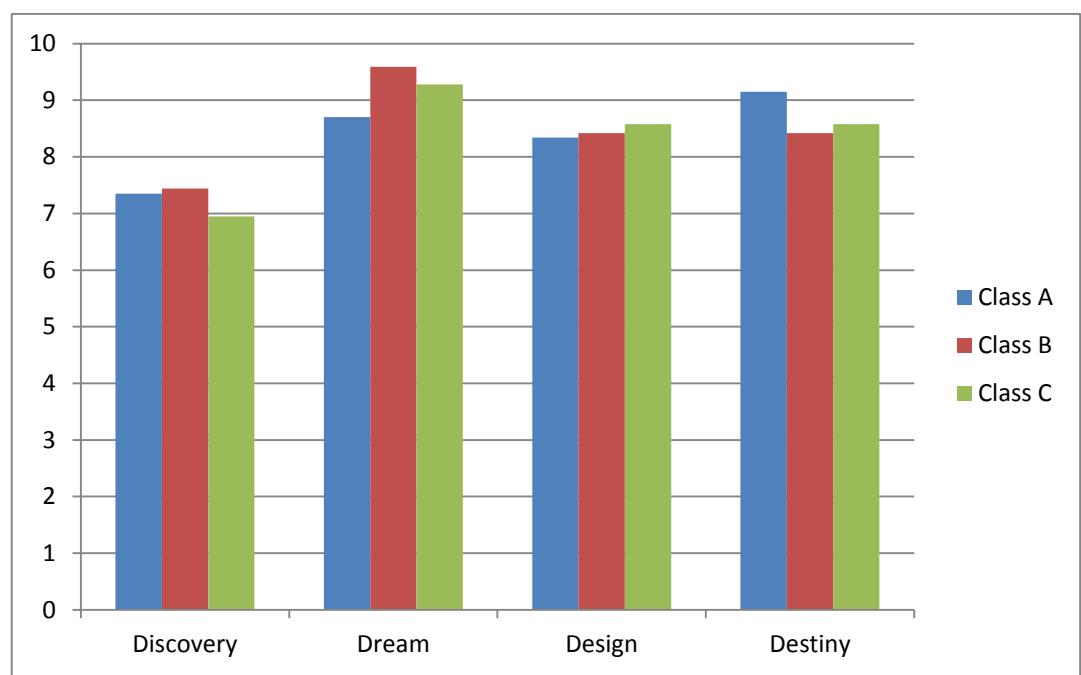
10.2.2a Children's appreciative comments about the Discovery Stage

The most common themes emerging from all classes in the evaluation comments for the Discovery Stage of the AI are summarised in Figure 31. An examination of each class's comments and themes revealed very similar responses, with 'telling stories' and 'conducting interviews' being the most popular themes in each class. (Appendices 32-37 show the full set of comments and themes for each class associated with the Discovery Stage).

10.2.2b Children's appreciative comments about the Dream Stage

The most common themes emerging in the evaluation comments for the Dream Stage of the AI are summarised in Figure 32. An examination of each class's comments and themes revealed very similar responses, with 'performing ideas' and 'developing ideas' being the most popular themes in each class.

Table 29: Class B's appreciative comments about the Discovery Stage of the AI

Comments about what Class B liked most about the Discovery Stage	Themes emerging
Eight children focused their comments on interviewing each other, with comments such as: *Working in pairs and asking what their favourite time was/When I asked the questions/ Interviewing/The interviewing/When we interviewed each other/When we interviewed each other to find out what our favourite lesson [was]*	Conducting interviews
Eight children said that they particularly liked telling stories, with comments such as: *Telling [child's name]/The talking bit in the hall/The story telling/The story telling because [child's name] now knows that I like food chains/Telling stories to my partners/Telling the stories/That we got to tell stories/Talking about our stories/ I liked it where we all had a chance to say what we liked in learning*	Telling stories
Four children said that they liked recording what their partner had told them, with comments such as: *Writing what my partner said and drawing pictures to explain/Writing about what could make learning fun/I liked it when we wrote it on the post-its/When we done the writing*	Recording stories
Two children focused on researching or finding out about other people's opinions, with the following comments: *I liked hearing what my group's favourite lesson is/ Finding out what the people in my class like doing*	Finding out about other people's experiences
Other comments included: *We got to talk with our friends [friendships]/Where you have to say what lesson they liked [reporting back]/Open mind*	Friendships/ reporting back

Figure 31: Themes in the evaluation comments about what children liked most in the Discovery Stage overall
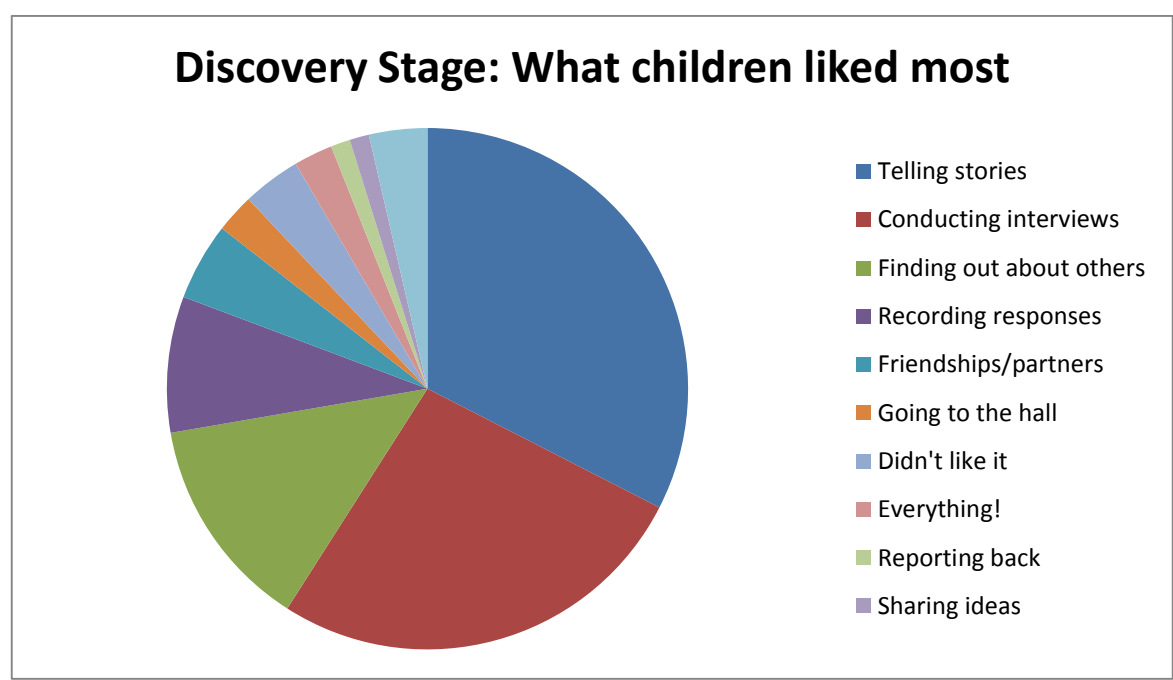
Figure 32: Themes in the evaluation comments about what children liked most in the Dream Stage overall
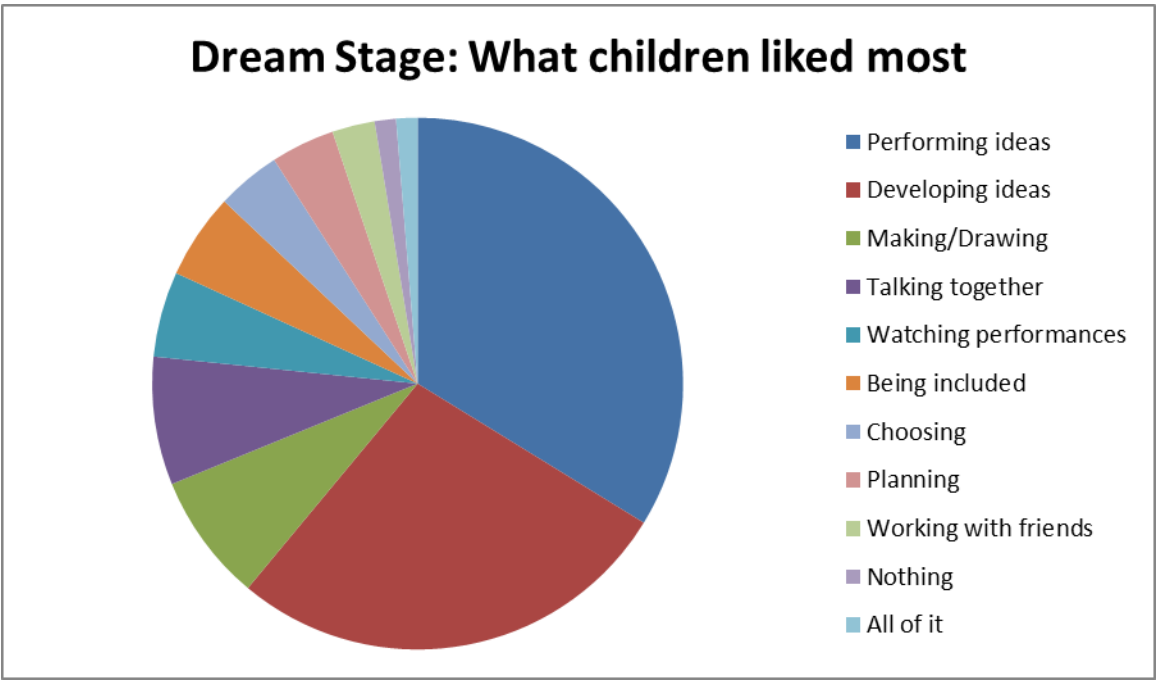
10.2.2c Children's appreciative comments about the Design Stage

The most common themes emerging in the evaluation comments for the Design Stage of the AI are summarised in Figure 33. Classes B and C evaluated the Design and Destiny Stages together, so their comments have been included in the Destiny Stage. For Class A, the strongest positive theme at the Design Stage was found in children's comments about creating their 'ideas as a group'. They also enjoyed 'researching' their ideas and 'working together' to 'make and create' what they needed.

Figure 33: Themes in the evaluation comments about what children liked most in the Design Stage (based on Class A's comments)
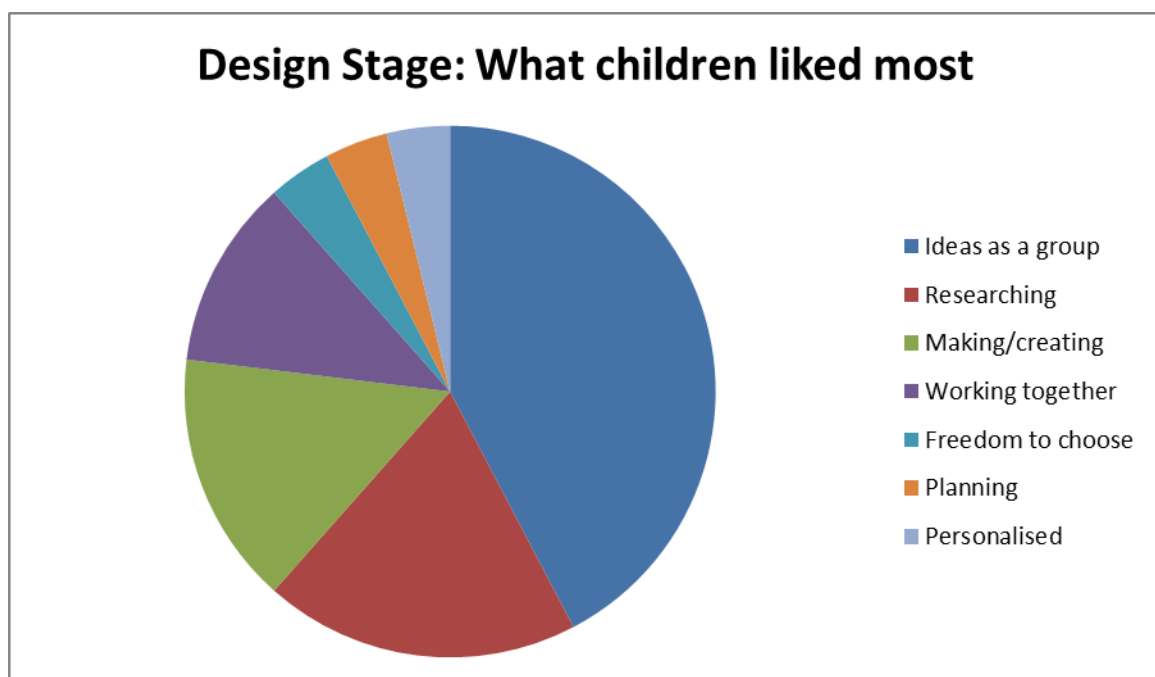
10.2.2d Children's appreciative comments about the Destiny Stage

The most common themes emerging in the evaluation comments for the Destiny Stage of the AI are summarised in Figure 34.

An examination of each class's comments and themes revealed very similar responses, with 'planning' and 'the ideas' as the most popular themes in each class. Again, the classes also generally enjoyed 'working as a group', 'talking together' and 'making and creating'. Seven children (five from Class C, one from Class A and one from Class B) commented that they had liked everything.

Figure 34: Themes in the evaluation comments about what children liked most in the Destiny Stage overall
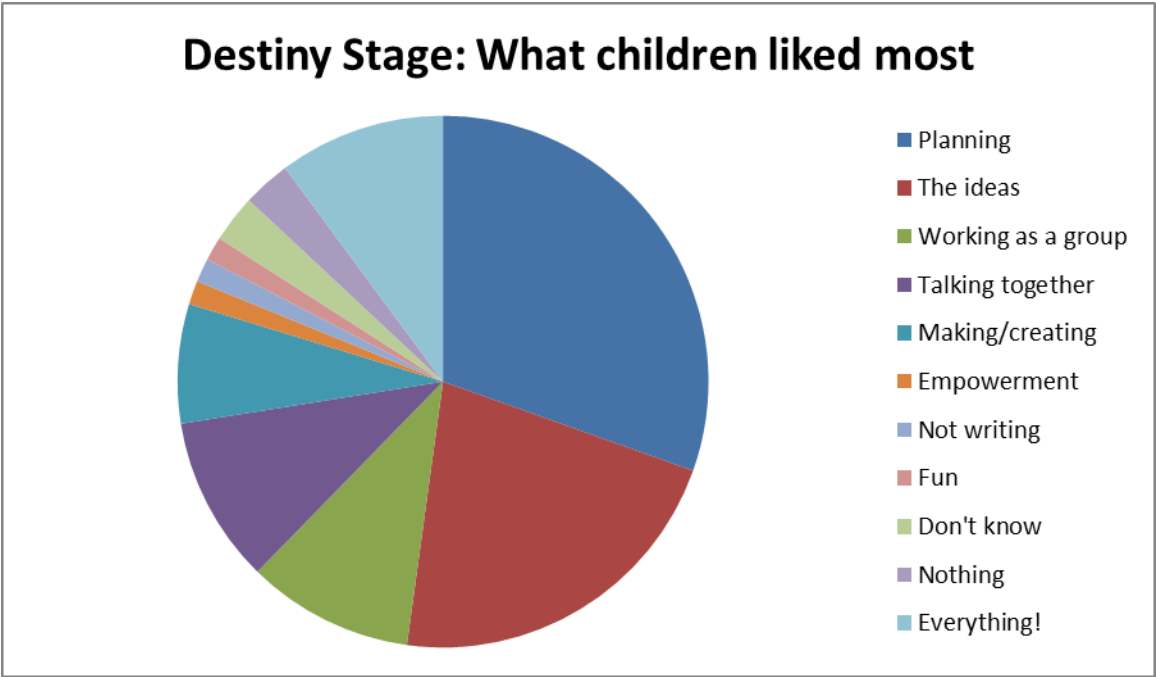
10.3 Teachers' views about the strengths or 'high points' of using AI

In their second interviews, the teachers were asked to think about their own personal high points of using AI with their classes (see Box 5).

Box 5: Teachers' appreciative comments about using AI

Teacher A

Teacher A's high points were: 'seeing that independence with the children, seeing the way the ideas were flowing', using their imaginations and being able to choose what they were going to be writing. He frequently noticed and commented upon 'that buzz about them' whenever they returned to the AI work, reacting 'with 'Oh yes' and they've just picked up every time, the mood's picked up'. He particularly liked it that 'writing for a purpose, a real purpose I think has with this cohort shown it can really inspire them'.

Teacher B

In terms of high points, Teacher B commented: 'I think that actually doing the activity [Mini World Cup] was the best bit…Yeah, the doing was really lovely. There were lots of other children, because we did it on the playground when it rained. We were doing it on the field and then it rained and I did say to my group half-jokingly, 'What's your Plan B then?' (Laughter) And their looks! So we did on the playground and then we had to stop for playtime but we still had the flipchart up with all the scores and we had a football out there and the water bottles all out there, so then the other children came up, 'What's going on out here?' And the children really enjoyed saying, 'Oh we're doing Super School,' and they were 'What's this?' and listening to the children say, 'Well, we're getting to play football for the whole morning and we're going to write about it this afternoon,' and that was really lovely. That was the high point, them being, boasting about it.'

> *Teacher C*
>
> Teacher C thought the high point for her was: 'I think just seeing them engaged at the end with being proud of the work they've just shown this person. So the performance they did, the end result of that lesson was good…I think actually it was really fun as a whole class making and going into habitats…they'd been researching it so it was good. I think it's just the engagement of them is really beneficial….Yes, definitely worth doing.'

10.4 Summary of triangulated, connected or merged data

The initial Discovery Stage was less enjoyable for each of the classes than the other stages of the AI. The Dream Stage was particularly enjoyable for Classes B and C, whilst Class A enjoyed the Destiny Stage most of all, making their ideas become a reality. Children with SEND in Classes A and B increasingly enjoyed each stage of the AI, whilst those in Class C did not enjoy the final stages as much as the initial stages. For children without SEND, the Dream Stage was the most enjoyable of all, especially for Classes B and C. Children in Class A without SEND enjoyed the Destiny Stage most.

In triangulating this data with children's perceptions of participation at each stage of the AI, it is apparent that children enjoyed those aspects of the AI process most when they reported participating most (i.e. increasingly so for Class A throughout the AI and at the Dream Stage for Classes B and C). Conversely, lowest levels of enjoyment were associated with lowest levels of participation (e.g. in the Discovery Stage) and for Class C generally.

In the Discovery Stage of the AI, the children most liked 'telling stories' and 'conducting interviews'. For the Dream Stage of the AI, the children most appreciated 'performing ideas' and 'developing ideas'. At the Design Stage of the AI, Class A particularly liked creating their 'ideas as a group', but also enjoyed 'researching' their ideas and 'working together' to 'make and create' what they needed. Most appreciated in all classes for the Destiny Stage of the AI were 'planning' and 'the ideas'. The classes also generally reported enjoying 'working as a group', 'talking together' and 'making and creating'.

Teacher A's high points were related to seeing the children's independence, imagination and ideas. He liked seeing the children's positive attitude to the work and how inspired they were when writing for a purpose. Teacher B particularly liked seeing the children actually doing the activities they had devised and 'boasting' about it to children in other classes. Teacher C also thought the high point for her was seeing her class so engaged in their work and proud of their results.

10.5 Critical discussion about the strengths or high points of using AI with classes of children

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the high points or strengths of developing and using AI with a whole class, from the perspectives of both the children and their teacher(s)? What has been appreciated most by the people involved?

The key theoretical propositions tested were that:

- increased participation is associated with increased motivation and enjoyment

  (McLaughlin, 2006; Kellett. 2005; Bucknall, 2012);

- children appreciate the generation of ideas and activities more than AI's focus on positivity (Bushe, 2010b); and

- AI can have a strengthening effect on working relationships (Carter, 2006; Curato et al, 2013).

Two key themes were identified from the teacher interviews in relation to RQ3:

- Children's responses and ideas (Theme 5); and

- Children and teachers' evaluation of the process (Theme 7): Positives.

10.5.1 Children's responses and ideas (Theme 5)

The finding that increased enjoyment is associated with increased participation affirms the theoretical proposition that these factors might be causally related (McLaughlin, 2006). Levels of enjoyment matched levels of participation throughout each AI, in different ways for each class.

At the Discovery Stage, children enjoyed investigating each other's best experiences of learning by conducting interviews, indicating that they are motivated by being actively involved in research processes (Kellett, 2005; Bucknall, 2012). The children were able to 'research' each other's favourite learning times by interviewing each other in pairs and reporting back within small groups. Although they enjoyed the other stages of the AI even more, all three classes reported that they had particularly liked telling stories, conducting the interviews and finding out about other people's views. McLaughlin (2006) suggests that in shared research, children enjoy beginning to participate actively in issues affecting their lives, particularly when they are focusing on abilities and interests rather than problems, and may be more willing to talk openly with their peers than with an adult. This 'bottom-up' approach to

investigating children's experiences of school allows children to focus on what is most important to them (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011) and promotes their engagement and motivation (Passe, 1996; Burns and Schubotz, 2009).

Teacher A commented positively on the energy in the class whenever the AI activities took place, saying: 'there is that buzz about them whenever we've gone to, this literacy project, they've tended to react with, 'Oh yes,' and they've just picked up every time, the mood's picked up'. Carter (2006) also described 'the buzz' and energy involved in participants' commitment and motivation within AI. Ludema and Fry (2008) argue that this is caused by 'a deep connection with strengths' that 'creates energy for action by boosting positive emotions and increasing an organization's overall intelligence, creativity, resilience, and cooperative capacity' (p.294-295). For Class A, I believe this had a strengthening effect (Bellinger and Elliott, 2011) and helped them to work together, focused on their shared vision (Curato et al, 2013). This had been lacking before the AI and was the reason for requesting educational psychology support as part of the local authority's literacy project.

10.5.2 Children's evaluation of the AI process: the positives (Theme 7a)

It is interesting that many children mentioned they liked working together as a group or team best, particularly at the Design and Destiny Stages, when this had also caused some of the problems they'd experienced. (The children's ideas for improvement of the AI process frequently focused on support for effective group work - see Section 11.2.5). The children particularly liked sharing ideas within a group and then performing their chosen idea to the class. It did not matter whether the ideas performed were their own. Naylor and Worrall (2004) describe the benefits to children of working as a team in research activities, sharing

new ideas and tasks, whilst developing self-confidence regarding presentations. The children in all three classes also loved making and creating things together for a real purpose. Purposeful work improves motivation in participation activities (Malone, 2013).

The theoretical proposition that the children would particularly appreciate the generation of ideas in AI, even more than its positive focus (Bushe, 2010b), is partially affirmed by the children's professed enjoyment of working together as a group and generating ideas the most, even though group work could be a challenge for them (see Section 11.2.5). They enjoyed the Discovery Stage the least, which is almost entirely focused on their own positive experiences of learning.

10.5.3 The teachers' evaluation of the AI process: the positives (Theme 7a)

The teachers' high points related to: seeing various qualities in the children e.g. independence, imagination, ideas, positive attitudes and inspiration when writing; and seeing the children's engagement and pride in their self-devised activities. The literature suggests that pupil participation (or involving children as 'researchers') can develop many skills, such as: co-operation and teamwork (Kranzl-Nagl and Zartler, 2010; Naylor and Worrall, 2004); higher order thinking, speaking and listening, perseverance (Kellett, 2005; Bucknall, 2012); and personal and collective efficacy (Malone and Hartung, 2010). In retrospect, it would have been interesting to ask the children and their teachers about what they think they have learned through their involvement in their AI.

10.6 Conclusion of results in relation to theory for Research Question 3 (RQ3)

For RQ3, the status of the key theoretical propositions is judged by the evidence presented

in this chapter as: 'affirmed'; 'not affirmed'; or 'newly generated' (see Table 30).

Table 30: Outcomes of the study in relation to key theoretical propositions for RQ3

Theoretical proposition	Affirmed, not affirmed or newly generated
Increased participation is associated with increased motivation and enjoyment (McLaughlin, 2006; Kellett, 2005; Bucknall, 2012).	Affirmed
Children appreciate the generation of ideas and activities even more than the positive focus in AI (Bushe, 2010c).	Affirmed
AI can have a strengthening effect on working relationships (Carter, 2006; Curato et al, 2013).	Affirmed (Class A)

Chapter 11: Results and Discussion Relating to AI Improvements

11.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research findings are presented and discussed critically in association with the fourth research question (RQ), exploring how the AI process might be adapted or improved for future use in schools.

RQ4: What can children and their teachers tell us about how to improve the AI process in primary schools so that it is as inclusive and effective as possible?

I will present the data sets separately before connecting or merging with other relevant data according to themes derived from the teacher interviews. A summary of the merged and/or connected data will then be given before critically discussing the results in relation to the associated theoretical propositions from the literature.

11.2 Children's ideas for improvements to the AI process

At the end of each AI stage and in the class discussions at the end of the AI intervention, children were asked to record or discuss their views about how the AI could be improved for children in future. This was not compulsory and many children left that part of the evaluation form blank if they could not think of any suggested improvements.

11.2.1 Children's ideas for Discovery Stage improvements

Figure 28 indicated that the children generally enjoyed the Discovery Stage less than the other AI stages. Their views about how to improve the Discovery Stage are presented in Table 31.

Table 31: Children's ideas for improving the Discovery Stage of the AI
(The numbers in brackets refer to the number of children suggesting the improvement.)

Theme	Class A	Class B	Class C
Telling stories (14)	*Being able to say what we think about school (1)*	*Move and swap partners so that we can tell other people our stories (1)* *To have acting for one story (1)*	*Tell other people our stories. Tell everyone. Tell next door (2)* *Write stories on paper and share randomly instead of telling friends (2)* *Quieter (3)* *Go outside (2)*
Group work (11)	*Ensure participation and sharing (3)*	*Bigger groups (2)*	*Choose partners (5)* *Improve confidence [of children with autism] (1)*
Time (7)		*More time (6)*	*More time (1)*
No improvements needed (4)		*Nothing to improve (2)*	*Nothing to improve (2)*
Recording stories and ideas (3)	*Make sure children know they can choose what to write/record together (1)* *An adult with every group so that ideas are noted down well (1)*	*Not so much paper (1)*	
The questions (3)	*Different questions. Add 'Why' to the questions (2)*	*More questions (1)*	

Figure 31 shows that in the Discovery Stage, the children in all three classes particularly liked

telling stories to each other. In terms of improvement, fourteen children made reference to

telling stories. One child in Class B and two children in Class C suggested that it would be even better if children could tell their stories to more people. Perhaps when the children move from paired story-telling into small groups, emphasis should be placed upon sufficient time to listen to each person's stories. Indeed, six children in Class B and one in Class C suggested that more time may be needed for the Discovery Stage. Two children in Class C felt that they would prefer to tell their stories anonymously instead of to their friends, so an option to respond to the questions in written form or to pair up with someone they know less well might be helpful for some children in future. If stories are written down anonymously, however, they would need to be read to one of the groups in order for the stories to help inform the creation of new curriculum activities at the Dream Stage.

The teachers of Classes B and C had planned to take both classes outside for their paired story telling but rain had caused the plans to change so that both classes went into the school hall instead. Four of these children suggested that the story telling really needed a quieter environment and two children commented that the Discovery Stage would have been better had it occurred outside. Teacher C commented in the class research diary that mixing the two classes is always more disruptive and that it may have been better to conduct the story-telling in their separate classes, perhaps with clear prompts (see Appendix 23).

One child from Class A suggested that it would be better if children were able to say what they really think about school, possibly referring to the positive focus of the story-telling and wanting to talk about negative experiences. Another child suggested acting out a story at the Discovery Stage, without realising that this was about to happen at the next stage of the AI.

Eleven children made reference to the importance of working well in groups (two children in Class B preferring even bigger groups), including: choosing their own partners, ensuring that children listen to each other and participating with confidence. One child with autism in Class C suggested that she needed to improve her confidence in order to contribute effectively to the Discovery Stage.

11.2.2 Children's ideas for Dream Stage improvements

The children's views about how to improve the Dream Stage are presented in Table 32.

Table 32: Children's ideas for improving the Dream Stage of the AI
(The numbers in brackets refer to the number of children suggesting the improvement.)

Theme	Class A	Class B	Class C
Working as a group (19)	*Ensure children can work well together in groups (4)*	*Help children to work well together as a group (3)* *Provide more help (2)*	*Put an adult in each group (2)* *Teacher to choose groups to stop arguments (1)* *Make sure everyone listens and takes part (7)*
Nothing to improve (10)	*Nothing! It can't be improved (3)*	*Nothing! It can't be improved (4)*	*Nothing at all (3)*
Actions (7)	*Do more of it (3)*	*Rehearse more (1)* *More thinking (1)*	*Let everyone get their own equipment (1)* *Do this for maths (1)*
Time (6)	*More time (3)*	*More time (1)*	*More time (2)*

Although ten children made strong comments about the Dream Stage not needing any improvement at all, nineteen children made comments about the importance of improving their ability to work together well as a group. Several children, particularly in Classes B and C, suggested that an adult may need to help all the children in a group to listen to each other so that they can all take part. The AI relies quite heavily upon group work and there were several instances throughout the project in all classes where children had disagreements that were difficult for them to resolve without support. Six children suggested that more time would be useful.

11.2.3 Children's ideas for Design Stage improvements

Class A's views about how to improve the Design Stage are presented in Table 33. Although all children took part in this stage, Classes B and C evaluated the Design and Destiny Stages together, having completed them both within one longer lesson, and mainly referred to the Destiny Stage in their evaluations (which is where they have been reported).

Table 33: Class A's ideas for improving the Design Stage of the AI
(The numbers in brackets refer to the number of children suggesting the improvement.)

Theme	Class A
Activities (4)	*Do more of it (3)* *Children to be more imaginative (1)*
Time (3)	*More time (3)*
Nothing to improve (1)	*Nothing (1)*
Group work (1)	*Personally choose groups (1)*

There were very few comments specifically about improving the Design Stage, where children were writing provocative propositions to capture their visions for future activities, frequently with some adult prompting and support.

11.2.4 Children's ideas for Destiny Stage improvements

The children's views about how to improve the Destiny Stage are presented in Table 34.

Table 34: Children's ideas for improving the Destiny Stage of the AI
(The numbers in brackets refer to the number of children suggesting the improvement.)

Theme	Class A	Class B	Class C
Nothing to improve (11)	*Nothing (2)*		*Nothing at all! (9)*
Group work (10)		*Make sure everyone listens, works well together and stops arguing (3)* *Not such big groups i.e. less than 10 (2)*	*Make sure everyone joins in and shares jobs (4)* *A grown-up to help (1)*
Children's qualities (6)	*Children to be more imaginative and think out of the box more (2)* *Children to be more confident and believe in their writing (3)*		*Children to be less noisy (1)*
Activities (4)	*Do more of it (2)*	*More of it (1)*	*Make it more fun (1)*
Time (3)	*More time (3)*		

At the Destiny Stage, the children were generally taking ownership of their planning activities. A very large group had developed in Class B in response to the Mini World Cup

idea, hence their comments about not having groups larger than ten. The younger Year 4 children in Classes B and C make reference at all stages of the AI to the need for additional adult support, whereas the Year 6 children in Class A have focused more on the need to develop their own qualities.

Nine children in Class C commented strongly that the Destiny Stage could not be improved at all (only two of these children have SEND). This is surprising when there is also evidence that Class C did not enjoy the final stages of the AI as much as the Dream Stage (see Figure 28). However, the lower levels of enjoyment may have particularly referred to those children in Class C with SEND (see Figure 29).

11.2.5 Children's ideas for improvements shared in the class discussions

The class discussions at the end of the implementation phase of the AI gave further information about how the process might be improved (see Box 6).

Box 6: Children's discussion ideas for improvements to AI

Class A

Class A emphasised that they thought everyone was already equally included in the AI process, but wanted to focus on peer relationships within the groups in order to ensure children are able to contribute equally. They felt strongly that children should be able to work with people they already get on well with, which had been largely facilitated during the project after attending to their feedback during the initial stages of the AI. (Despite this, one or two of the girls managed to fall out with each other and requested a change of

group.) Class A's suggestions for improving group work were to:

- 'give everybody something to do and what they would like to do';

- 'everyone should have their voices heard and be given particular jobs'; and

- 'make sure that everyone's ideas are discussed equally'.

The class also wanted to emphasise that there should always be 'back-up plans' for children's ideas in case of unforeseen problems e.g. lack of response from outside agencies. One group suggested: 'you could add in a mascot to make others laugh and make it more enjoyable'.

Class B

Class B also focused on ensuring the group work 'includes everyone' and that 'everyone joins in', suggesting that introducing voting within the groups might ensure that everyone agrees on the most popular ideas. Having the 'option to pick your own group' or the 'option to work in pairs' was suggested. Once the groups were in operation, some children thought 'practice runs' for their ideas would be helpful and that children should always be reminded to 'listen to your team and make sure everyone takes part or is included'. The class emphasised that they had thought of ways to include everyone in their Mini World Cup idea, by suggesting that 'people spectated if they didn't want to play' and that 'the people who are not joining in can be the judges'. Some children wanted to emphasise that they thought the AI process worked well and could not be improved.

11.2.6 The views of children with SEND regarding how the AI process might be improved

During the planning stages with the teachers and the introduction of AI to the children, emphasis was given to the idea of AI being as inclusive as possible. I am therefore particularly curious to know what the children with SEND thought about their experience of AI, and to explore their specific comments for its improvement.

The SEND children in Class A did not record any comments about improving the process in their evaluation sheets. It was striking that one girl with significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties engaged so wholeheartedly with the AI process.

The children with learning difficulties in Classes B and C suggested: 'more stories'/ 'let everyone have a part'/ 'more drawing'/'drawing the interview'/'I accidentally went on the back of the sheet and we swapped over too soon'/ 'to know to dream and maybe come true'/

'be a little less noisy'. These comments indicate more support may be needed for them with the process, particularly when recording their ideas on paper.

The children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in Classes B and C suggested: 'longer time'/'nothing'/'make a bigger group'/'working as a team because some people didn't join in'/'it would be even better if we were outside'/'everybody gets to use their ideas'/'I think it could be improved by everyone shares the jobs as a whole group – like having jobs that everyone works on together instead of having loads of people doing their own jobs like writing letters'. Their comments suggest that working fairly with clear jobs and responsibilities within group work would be particularly supportive of the AI process.

The children with specific learning difficulties in Classes B and C suggested: 'choosing partners'/ 'improve more if there was a person that they are easy to speak to'/ 'include everybody's ideas e.g. go round the table'/ 'people could listen more'/ 'I could be in the Minecraft group'/'nothing'/ 'it can't be improved'. These comments suggest that a greater emphasis on the importance of speaking and listening may help to facilitate their inclusion.

One child with autism in Class C commented: 'I did not want to say my story. I [would have] liked to improve my confidence'. This child repeated at every stage of the AI that she did not like it *at all*. She did not like change and did not enjoy trying to work with other children. The evidence suggests that children with autism need a high level of preparation and support in order to engage fully with AI. As a social constructionist organisational change model, AI necessarily involves social interaction, collaboration and change, aspects of particular difficulty for children with autism.

11.3 Teachers' ideas for improvement

In the teacher interviews, the teachers were asked to reflect on any difficulties encountered and how they thought the process might be improved, with particular reference to the inclusion of vulnerable children and those with SEND (see Box 7).

Box 7: Teachers' reflections on difficulties and how the AI process might be improved

> *Teacher A*
>
> Teacher A discussed the difficulties getting responses from some of the outside agencies the children had written to and on reflection thought he could have encouraged some groups to prepare a 'Plan B' if they had not heard back within an agreed timescale. 'When [the children] did hit that wall or problem, the skills to overcome it weren't necessarily there'. However, one group 'did work out an alternative' and had 'that determination, that resilience, to overcome those problems and get on with it. And that's something perhaps I wish all the groups had picked up'. In future applications of AI, he expressed a desire to 'just make sure that they're clear, it's just not guaranteed it's going to work. It's a real life experience'.
>
> In terms of inclusion, Teacher A commented on the importance of involving vulnerable children and those with SEND in the planning of the project but noted that these children still found the group work hard and weren't as involved as they should have been, even though the other children in their groups tried to include them. In contrast, a pupil with special needs who is usually very difficult to manage had become 'very involved with it. She had a good idea with the project and she was very keen on doing it. I think her issue

was more monitoring to keep her on task because sometimes the ideas were going too quickly and the project was accelerating away out of control'. Another SEND child found it very difficult to get involved: 'she is a pupil that will sit on the fringes of things and just watch and doesn't engage too well'. Teacher A thought these pupils and the groups they belonged to simply needed guidance and support, as he would normally provide. Teacher A reflected that the effective inclusion of vulnerable children and those with SEND is facilitated by 'keeping that awareness as one does as a practitioner anyway, about [how] they are getting on' and guiding them or the group whenever needed.

Teacher B

Teacher B encountered some difficulties during the implementation phase of the AI, when the children had devised action plans that many did not complete by the agreed deadline. She thought this might have been because she had assumed and expected too much of young children that were not used to being so self-directed and that some of their actions may have been quite intimidating for them to complete, such as approaching the head teacher or other members of staff. If the AI had occurred earlier in the academic year, she thought: 'We would have had more time to say, 'Okay, we'll have another talk about it on Friday and on Friday we'll rewrite the action plan and we'll make sure'. We just ran out of time because there are so many things thrown at you in the last, you know, [weeks of term].' She thought 'they didn't seem to enjoy the action plan stage…They didn't want to do that bit…and they didn't on the whole'. She reflected that she didn't prompt them or 'coach them massively in terms of saying, 'There's the clay, it's lunchtime, do you want to make those trophies?" and that 'maybe I should have done more at the end of the day or as they were going out to play of saying…'Don't forget Super School!'

Teacher B also reflected upon the balance between facilitating children's decision making and teaching the writing skills that children need to learn: 'The thing that I don't think I did well enough was the actual piece of writing…what I didn't do was really say to them, 'I am expecting to see this, this, this, this and this in your report'…they didn't get an awful lot of modelling of what a report should look like…So they aren't the best pieces of writing they've ever done….I think I just got carried away with the whole child initiated side of it and just thought, 'They know what to do,' and actually they just didn't quite. I mean they have written quite nice pieces of writing and they worked hard.' In response to ideas about shared power between children and their teacher and achieving a balance between child-initiated work and the coaching and shaping (or teaching) needed, Teacher B replied: 'Yeah. Yeah. That's exactly it. So I think my big thing if I went back retrospectively, the thing that I would change would be to give them direct modelling and maybe a few good examples of reports for them to then write their reports rather than just assuming because they've played football they'll know how to write a good report.'

Teacher B did not think any improvements needed to be made to include vulnerable children and those with SEND more effectively, instead talking enthusiastically about the work produced in the project by one pupil who normally 'produces brief sentences…of questionable quality…very lacklustre…In maths he's wonderful…In reading he's wonderful. In writing he is Mr Bare Minimum…It's not because he can't, it's because he finds it difficult.' As a result of the AI, this pupil had produced 'by far the best piece of writing that he's done'.

Teacher C

At the initial interview, Teacher C had been concerned about the number of 'shy' children in her class and the group dynamics that may prevent some from participating fully. She wanted to make 'sure that everybody has their say and it's going to be me really thinking about how they will best share their idea…I've got some very creative, very shy children…Two shy people in a pair together, you never know they could think, 'Finally I've got someone I can actually say something to, they're not going to just talk all over me.' That might be a way to do it, but yeah, that's a worry'.

In the second interview, after the AI, Teacher C reflected that the process may need more structure and shaping, as well as more modelling and teaching of skills: 'Yeah, in terms of what's happened so far…the engagement was really there, but the quality maybe wasn't. So if I was to do it again I would do it in a much more structured way having specific things they were allowed to choose rather than choosing everything. So, you're allowed to choose between this and this here and this and this there. Do something like that.' When asked if she would still have children coming up with ideas themselves, she commented: 'Yeah so at the beginning of the topic possibly. However, we've bought a new curriculum so it's more, not necessarily rigid, but it tells you how to do each thing.'

In terms of the children who are more vulnerable and who have SEND, she thought it was important to consider all children who do not work well in groups, proposing that some may need more adult support. She commented that some children 'can't be sort of like

serious and let themselves be vulnerable in front of others. At least that's what I've learnt from doing this, that there's three that maybe can't do it…Well I'd say two, yeah, I'd say two…those two find it difficult to share their own idea or to get along with others. I think there's a lot of confidence in sharing your own idea, especially if your idea actually makes it and then you've got to go through with it. It's a bit scary…and then they find it difficult to work in any group. So that's my own diagnosis.'

11.4 Proposed future use of AI by the teachers

For future use of AI, Teacher A was asked to lead two staff meetings to introduce AI to other teachers and help plan how they might use it to improve pupil participation, motivation and engagement across the school.

Teacher B proposed that AI would be a good way to build relationships with a new class of children, saying: 'it would be one of those things that would work really, really well at the beginning, you know, when you're getting to know your class…That's how I can see it working.' But she reflected that her next class will be Year 3: 'They will be quite young. I think what I might do is just take a few elements of it. I think I will definitely get them to talk about their favourite bits of learning…And I'll definitely see if I can glean out some common themes which I will then use in my planning.'

Teacher C thought that next year, she would have a discussion about the type of learning her class like and then: 'I think from then they could come up with their idea, then they get to write it, or maths or science, and maybe even stay in the same groups from there …So the

people that come up with the idea should be the people to see it through, I think, possibly because it was the people who were really keen for it to happen.'

11.5 Teacher reflections about whether all four stages of AI are needed

During the AI interventions, I became curious about whether all four stages were actually needed in order to gather and implement children's ideas for curriculum activities and so I asked the teachers' for their views about this at the end of their second interview. Their responses are recorded in Box 8.

Box 8: Teachers' reflections on the need for all four AI stages

Teacher A

Teacher A believes that all four stages of the AI are needed: 'I think the storytelling is a really good way into a project. It's that oral literacy; it's that opportunity to talk about, without any constraints, their wildest ideas…I really liked the provocative propositions…and the Dream Stages are so important as well because they've got the imagination and then it gives it that steering.'

Teacher B

Teacher B thought that the Discovery Stage was needed because: 'it needed them to discuss about really exciting bits of learning'. She wondered whether the presentation of their ideas to the class was necessary, then qualified this by saying: 'however, some children did move groups as a result of that, and if it hadn't been presented to the class those children would have stayed in their existing groups and maybe not have been

enthused.' But she questioned the amount of time needed for this part of the process: 'I'm not sure…because the amount of time that went into it, when your timetable's so restricting and you've got so much to cover, the amount of time that went in was quite a lot and I think in a way the outcome wasn't as best as it could have been because of a few things, because it's the first time we've done it…because it's the tail end of the academic year so not only are we really short of time but they're also quite tired…So it's difficult to know whether it would have been better if we'd done anything different…I think… you know when you are, at the beginning of the academic (year) and really what you're doing is just getting to know your class and your timetable isn't in demand as much and I think that would be the optimum time for it.'

Teacher C

Teacher C commented: 'I would say it felt like it was a longer process and at the end it was rush but that was only because we didn't have very much time. The ideas weren't the same, they didn't turn out to be the same, so although it's really good to have the discussion and coming up with a plan of ideas, actually I think if it's done quicker the ideas might come to fruition better, possibly…As in… I think have a discussion about the type of learning they like and then I think from then they could come up with their idea, then they get to write it…and maybe even stay in the same groups from there…So the people that come up with the idea should be the people to see it through, I think, possibly, because it was the people who were really keen for it to happen.'

11.6 Summary of triangulated, connected or merged data

In terms of improvement to the Discovery Stage, fourteen children made reference to telling stories more widely and providing increased time for this, within a quiet environment. A suggestion was made that some children may prefer to write their stories anonymously instead of telling them directly to friends. Eleven children made reference to the importance of working well in groups.

Although ten children made strong comments about the Dream Stage not needing any improvement at all, nineteen children emphasised the importance of improving working together well as a group, possibly with more adult support to facilitate this for younger children. Again, some children suggested that more time would be useful.

There were very few comments specifically about improving the Design Stage, except doing more of it and perhaps being more imaginative.

At the Destiny Stage, the facilitation of group work was again highlighted for improvement, with younger (Year 4) children believing they needed more adult support and older (Year 6) children focusing more on the need to develop their own qualities. Nine children in Class C commented strongly that the Destiny Stage could not be improved at all.

The class discussions at the end of the implementation phase of the AI gave further information about how the process might be improved, by:

- focusing on peer relationships within groups in order to ensure that children listen to each other and are able to get on well with each other;

- ensuring that everyone contributes equally within group work, perhaps introducing voting to make sure that everyone in the group agrees on the most popular ideas;

- allowing children to select their own group or to work in pairs if they prefer;

- providing a range of jobs and activities for people within the group to choose from;

- having 'practice runs' for the group's ideas;

- having 'back-up plans' for children's ideas in case of unforeseen problems e.g. lack of response from outside agencies;

- providing adult support for the groups that need it;

- making sure there are plenty of fun activities and sufficient time.

Children with SEND made specific suggestions about the support that may be needed to facilitate their full inclusion within the AI. Children with learning difficulties indicated that more help may be needed with the process, particularly when recording their ideas on paper. Children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties suggested that it would help them if there was an emphasis on fairness, with clear jobs and responsibilities within group work. Comments by children with specific learning difficulties indicated that a greater emphasis on speaking and listening may help to facilitate their inclusion. Comments by a child with autism indicated that a high level of preparation and support would be needed in order to engage fully with AI.

The teachers' ideas for improvements include:

- promoting resilience, problem-solving and alternative 'back-up plans' when children are engaged in such real-world activities;

- involving vulnerable children and those with special needs in the planning of the project and remaining aware of each child's needs throughout the project;

- prompting children, reminding and supporting them with action plans and deadlines;

- maintaining a balance between facilitating children's decision making and modelling tasks or teaching the skills children need to learn;

- structuring some of the children's choices within the AI project; and

- providing access to more adult support for vulnerable children.

In terms of future use of AI, Teacher A has already led two staff meetings to introduce AI to other teachers and help plan how they might use it to improve pupil participation, motivation and engagement across the school. He plans to use the whole process again with his next class at the beginning of the academic year. Teacher B also proposes using AI again at the start of the academic year, as a good way to build relationships with her new class of children and when the timetable isn't so pressured. Teacher B then reflected that her next class will be quite young (i.e. Year 3) and that she might just take a few elements of AI e.g. getting the children to talk about their favourite bits of learning and seeing if she can 'glean out' some common themes which she will then use in her planning. Teacher C intends to have a discussion about the type of learning the children in her new class like and then involve the class in coming up with ideas for activities (within the constraints of the new curriculum).

The teachers thought on reflection that the four stages of the AI are generally needed in order to facilitate real curriculum changes, inspired by the children's experiences and ideas. The Discovery Stage was seen as particularly important to start children talking about 'exciting bits of learning' but the amount of time needed for the performances in the Dream Stage was questioned by Teacher B, although needed if children were to choose their favourite ideas to work on. With younger (Year 4) children, it was proposed that perhaps the ownership of the ideas was less important than simply being excited by wonderful new ideas for curriculum activities. In a subsequent email (see Appendix 39), Teacher C questioned the 'multi-staged' element of AI, reflecting that this made it 'very intensive and standalone whereas if it was subtly introduced (or if I now subtly introduce it to my next class) then it won't seem as much of a novelty and will, hopefully, become a natural part of the classroom environment'.

11.7 Critical discussion about children and teachers' ideas for improving the AI process

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What can children and their teachers tell us about how to improve the AI process in primary schools so that it is as inclusive and effective as possible?

The key theoretical propositions tested were that:

- AI may not be inclusive for children with SEND (Lomax, 2012) and may privilege more articulate, socially confident children (Kellett, 2010; Dyson and Meagher, 2001);

- People should interact with others in the organisation that they know *least* well in order to allow everyone to have 'equal voice' and build relationships (Ludema and Fry, 2008); and

- AI needs to occur early in the year (Davies and Lewis, 2013) and must be given adequate time (Lansdown, 2001).

Three key themes were identified from the teacher interviews in relation to RQ4:

- Children's needs (Theme 6): SEND and vulnerable children (6a); and Managing group work (6b);

- Children and teachers' evaluation of the process (Theme 7): Positives and negatives (7a); and Timing (7b); and

- Future applications and improvement ideas (Theme 8).

11.7.1 Children's needs: Including children who are vulnerable or have SEND (Theme 6a)

The children and their teachers have made recommendations for improving the AI process so that it is as inclusive and effective as possible, based on their experiences as part of this study (see Sections 11.2 and 11.3). Although AI is celebrated in the literature as an inclusive process (Ludema and Fry, 2008), which needs all participants in 'full voice' (Zandee and Cooperrider, 2008), this case study included the theoretical proposition that AI may not necessarily be inclusive for children who are vulnerable, lacking in confidence or who have SEND, and who therefore could be paradoxically further disenfranchised (Lomax, 2012). Partly this is because of the reliance of the AI process upon group work but also because of its reliance upon participants taking ownership of self-directed activities, which some children may find difficult when their teacher usually makes learning decisions for them.

> Children are not exempt from power differences that are ascribed to different groups of children (class, age, linguistic skill, physical ability or popularity) and which are likely to shape the research encounter (Spyrou, 2011, p.155).

The teachers all agreed that children who are vulnerable, lacking in confidence or who have SEND need to be prepared for their engagement with the AI process, particularly so for children with autism. Children with autism need to know what to expect as the process will be different to their usual learning times. Teacher A promoted the idea of involving vulnerable children in the planning stages, which was very helpful initially for some of the children with SEND in Class A. Additional adult support was also planned for a child in Class A whose behaviour is usually very challenging, although this child became extremely engaged in the AI from the outset, thoroughly enjoying the freedom to create something of her own (with the support of a trusted friend) and discovering that she could demonstrate a high level of skill writing and performing her dialogue. Ludema and Fry (2008) celebrate the fact that new voices are often brought into the inquiry from people who may usually be on the side-lines. Teachers B and C prepared and supported the pupils in their classes with SEND in the same way that they usually do, which unfortunately left one pupil with autism feeling extremely threatened by the whole AI process and who, although participating alongside her peers, gave consistent feedback that she did not enjoy it at all.

> Given that autism is primarily a social communication disorder with an inherent barrier to the voice 'being heard', this client group are especially vulnerable to disempowerment (Greig et al, 2014, p.8).

Children need to feel secure and valued enough to take risks (Le Cornu and Collins, 2004) and adults need to tackle the contextual factors that affect children's inclusion (Tangen, 2008), ensuring that AI doesn't privilege more able and articulate children, as Kellett (2010) has expressed concerned about in her work with children as independent researchers. *All* children, regardless of age or ability, need to have space, voice, audience and influence (Lundy, 2007) and need to be viewed as competent social actors in their own right (Frost,

2007; Aoslin, 2008) if they are to participate at the higher levels of the Tree of Participation (see Figure 2) i.e. at the levels identified by Kirby et al (2003). There is strong evidence to support the effectiveness of inclusive, mixed-ability, collaborative learning in lessons (Higgins et al, 2012), which AI facilitates. In this study, the children in all classes generally felt they had participated more as a result of the AI, but their belief in the value of participation differed depending on whether they had SEND or not. The children with SEND in all classes generally believed less in the value of participation after the AI, whereas children without SEND either believed significantly more in the value of participation or stayed approximately the same. This suggests that although the SEND children generally enjoyed their participation in the AI (see Figure 29), particularly in Classes A and B, they are likely to have found it much more of a challenge than they expected.

> The development of more inclusive approaches does not arise from a mechanical process in which any one specific organisational restructuring, or the introduction of a particular set of techniques, generates increased levels of participation. Rather, the development of inclusive practices requires processes of social learning (Ainscow, 2007, p.5).

11.7.2 Children's needs: Group work (Theme 6b)

Group work is an important part of the AI process and is not easy for young children to manage effectively (Kershner et al, 2014; Lomax, 2012), although all classes generally enjoyed it (see Figure 33). This is particularly true for children with SEND (Baines et al, 2014; Feinstein et al, 2010), whose contributions may not be as highly valued as their peers (Lomax, 2012) and who may need more teacher direction (Thoonen et al, 2011).

The children in all classes made a number of suggestions to improve group work in AI (see Tables 32 and 34), with younger Year 4 children suggesting more adult support and older Y6 children recognising the need to improve their own abilities to manage collaborative work fairly. The development of cooperative learning skills may be one area of learning that could be facilitated using an AI, with teachers providing training and guidance (Davison et al, 2008; Baines et al, 2014). Successful collaborative group work consolidates learning and extends children's thinking (Burton, 2007).

The AI process may therefore be improved if attention is given to structuring and supporting group work. Children suggested giving children specific jobs within groups and providing mechanisms such as simple voting to ensure fairness. Teachers B and C made good use of structured activities for group discussion that they had previously used in other contexts e.g. using post-its and timed turn-taking (see Appendix 24). AI needs careful facilitation in order to manage the equal contribution of *all* participants in authentic collaboration (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012). An important outcome of this study is that the successful management of group work is an essential feature of facilitating an effective and inclusive AI with primary school children.

11.7.3 Evaluation of the AI process: Positives and negatives (Theme 7a)

For many children, there was a professed need for a quiet environment when story-telling in the Discovery Stage and for sufficient time. The process of participation is important for children (Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010). AI is typically set up for story-telling with pairs of people who know each other *least* well. This is so that members of the organisation get to know each other, hierarchies within the organisation are crossed and everyone has equal voice

(Ludema and Fry, 2008). But Davies and Lewis (2013) found that with young children, it is important that they feel comfortable talking with each other and that perhaps it may be better that they interview their friends.

Negotiating any social difficulties with peers as well as managing the work of the group may be a step too far for some children, although the theoretical proposition that AI can have a strengthening effect on working relationships (Carter, 2006; Ludema and Fry, 2008; Bellinger and Elliott, 2011) would encourage perseverance in mixing children who don't usually work together. But this should not be at the expense of 'silencing' certain children who feel socially vulnerable. Individual teachers should feel able to adapt the AI process, including social groupings, to suit the needs of the class (Fitzgerald et al, 2010).

Cooperrider himself resisted specifying an AI method for many years as this is not as important as the AI principles (Bushe and Kassam, 2005). The AI process certainly takes shape differently in different contexts (Trajkovski et al, 2013). So the teachers were asked to organise the pairing of the children so that they would be comfortable talking with one another at the Discovery Stage and after the children in Class A emphasised the importance of working in groups with friends or children with whom they are able to get on well, this was facilitated for them. However, the evaluative feedback from some children in Class C suggested they would prefer to tell their stories more anonymously i.e. *not* with their friends. This issue is currently unresolved.

11.7.4 Evaluation of the AI process: Timing (Theme 7b)

The teachers all thought on reflection that all four stages of the AI are needed in order to facilitate real curriculum changes, inspired by the children's experiences and ideas. But the timing of the AI and the time involved in completing an AI are both salient issues. Effective participation work must be given adequate time (Lansdown, 2001). Many children talked about needing more time within the AI stages and the teachers talked of the need to start earlier in the year. Davies and Lewis (2013) found that AI needs to be planned, prepared and implemented early in the academic year if the children are to benefit from changes to curriculum activities and new ways of learning. This was unfortunately not possible in the current study because of the timing of my doctoral studies.

The time taken to complete an AI in the classroom is a minimum of four one-hour lessons, with time allocated after that to facilitate the implementation of the children's ideas. The curriculum planning and schemes of work in a school would need to have the flexibility to accommodate these AI lessons if the children are to benefit from participation in decision-making about their learning that AI can facilitate. A partial approach may generate false hope if the children's ideas have insufficient time in which to come to fruition (Robinson et al, 2012).

Inadequate time in this study created difficulties at the implementation phase of the AIs in Classes B and C, where the teachers felt they needed to step in and take more control in order to ensure that the children's curriculum ideas happened before the end of the term. Ideally, the implementation stage of the AI would be supported by volunteers from each group forming a steering group to monitor the implementation of the children's action plans (Cooperrider et al,

2008), which was not organised in any of the classes. The late timing of the AIs is a serious weakness in this study.

11.7.5 Applications and future use (Theme 8)

The AI process needs facilitators (i.e. teachers in schools) to be able to balance and manage shifts in power between teacher and child-led activities (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012). This study has shown that this is not straightforward and that some teachers may require coaching and support (Lansdown, 2001; Le Cornu and Collins, 2004). It can be very challenging to redistribute power in the classroom (Pascal and Bertrum, 2009; Danby and Farrell, 2004) and some teachers may even feel threatened by the empowerment of children (Rogers and Frost, 2006; Lundy, 2007), needing the support of the senior management team before they experiment with this complex task (Gunter and Thomson, 2007a). Children need to be given sufficient freedom to devise and develop their own activities but there are times when the adult (or teacher) needs to structure or shape the work so that it is feasible, or prompt and lead the children when necessary so that their ideas come to fruition. It cannot be totally child or adult-led but instead requires a complex interplay between the two (Coppock, 2011). Power is 'fluid, dynamic, negotiated and contextual' (Malone and Hatung, 2010, p.26).

This study has explored the *potential* of AI to help shift the balance of power between children and their teachers during the development of curriculum activities and as such may facilitate (to some degree) children's emancipation at school. The teachers in this study have certainly moved from their first experience of AI towards a renewed or greater interest in seeking and acting upon young children's views.

11.8 Conclusion of results in relation to theory for Research Question 4 (RQ4)

For RQ4, the status of the key theoretical propositions is judged by the evidence presented

in this chapter as: 'affirmed'; 'not affirmed'; or 'newly generated' (see Table 35).

Table 35: Outcomes of the study in relation to key theoretical propositions for RQ4

Theoretical proposition	Affirmed, not affirmed or newly generated
AI may not necessarily be inclusive for children who are vulnerable, lacking in confidence or who have SEND (Lomax, 2012). The AI process may privilege more able, articulate and socially confident children because of its heavy reliance upon oral/verbal processes and group work (Kellett, 2010; Dyson and Meagher, 2001; Lomax, 2012).	Affirmed
Group work can be difficult for young children to manage within AI (Kershner et al, 2014; Lomax, 2012).	Newly generated
People should interact with others in the organisation that they know *least* well in order to allow everyone to have 'equal voice' and build relationships (Ludema and Fry, 2008).	Not affirmed
Individual teachers should feel able to adapt the AI process, including social groupings, to suit the needs of the class (Fitzgerald et al, 2010).	Newly generated
AI needs to occur early in the academic year if the children are to benefit from its outcomes (Davies and Lewis, 2013) and must be given adequate time (Lansdown, 2001).	Affirmed

Chapter 12: Conclusion, Recommendations and Critical Reflections on the Trustworthiness of the Study

12.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the potential of AI to give all children in a class voice and influence over decisions that affect their learning, focusing on an area of the core curriculum, and starting to build an original evidence base for the effective use of AI in schools, with recommendations informed by the children themselves.

This chapter initially summarises the key findings of the study in relation to theory, makes recommendations for the future use of AI in primary schools and discusses the dissemination of the results. The overall trustworthiness of the findings is then critically discussed in relation to the research design and methodology, focusing on: the multiple case study design; the data collection tools chosen; methods of data analysis; and epistemological reflexivity. I conclude by reflecting critically on using AI with children and the original contribution this study makes to their empowerment in primary schools.

12.2 Summary of key findings in relation to theory

Table 36 summarises the findings in relation to the theoretical propositions in this study, with a judgement to show whether each has been affirmed, partially affirmed, not affirmed or newly generated for further study.

Table 36: Summary of the status of the theoretical propositions in this study

Research Question	Theoretical proposition	Affirmed, not affirmed or newly generated
1	AI has the *potential* to shift the culture of participation in schools, even if only incrementally (Martin et al, 2006; Hargreaves, 2004).	Affirmed
1	AI is more likely to be transformative in cases where the participants are *not* already predisposed to this way of working (Bushe, 2010a).	Not affirmed
1	AI needs careful facilitation to manage shifts in power between children and their teacher (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012). AI requires teachers to shift their pedagogy from directing to facilitating learning (Wedell, 2005; Leadbeater, 2004).	Affirmed
2	AI is able to facilitate the children's direct involvement in devising a writing curriculum that is: creative and innovative (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2010); cross-curricular (DSCF, 2009); designed for real purposes (Ofsted, 2012); playful (Rantala and Maatta, 2012); and makes good use of drama, role-play, screen narratives and film scripts (Duncan, 2010).	Affirmed
2	Attitudes to learning generally improve as a result of AI due to increased pupil engagement and have the potential to raise attainment (Leadbeater, 2005; Sebba et al, 2007).	Partially affirmed by qualitative data but not by quantitative data
3	Increased participation is associated with increased motivation and enjoyment (McLaughlin, 2006; Kellett, 2005; Bucknall, 2012).	Affirmed
3	Children appreciate the generation of ideas and activities even more than the positive focus in AI (Bushe, 2010c).	Affirmed
3	AI can have a strengthening effect on working relationships (Carter, 2006; Curato et al, 2013).	Affirmed (Class A)
4	AI may not necessarily be inclusive for children who are vulnerable, lacking in confidence or who have SEND (Lomax, 2012). The AI process may privilege more able, articulate and socially confident children because of its heavy reliance upon oral/verbal processes and group work (Kellett, 2010; Dyson and Meagher, 2001; Lomax, 2012).	Affirmed

4	Group work can be difficult for young children to manage within AI (Kershner et al, 2014; Lomax, 2012).	Newly generated
4	People should interact with others in the organisation that they know *least* well in order to allow everyone to have 'equal voice' and build relationships (Ludema and Fry, 2008).	Not affirmed
4	Individual teachers should feel able to adapt the AI process, including social groupings, to suit the needs of the class (Fitzgerald et al, 2010).	Newly generated
4	AI needs to occur early in the academic year if the children are to benefit from its outcomes (Davies and Lewis, 2013) and must be given adequate time (Lansdown, 2001).	Affirmed
4	In order to facilitate an AI effectively and manage shifts in power, teachers are likely to need professional support, coaching and time for reflection and learning (Coe et al, 2014; Lansdown, 2001; Le Cornu and Collins, 2004; Gunter and Thomson, 2007b).	Newly generated

12.3 Recommendations for the future use of AI in primary schools

For AI to be effective in giving *all* children in a class voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning, the results of this study have contributed to the preliminary guidelines for teachers and other AI facilitators given in Table 37.

Table 37: Preliminary guidelines informed by the results of this study for the effective implementation of AI with primary school children

	Guidance informed by the study
1	AI needs to be implemented early in the academic year and to be given sufficient time (i.e. at least one hour for each AI stage plus implementation time) in order for its benefits to be maximised.
2	Children with SEND need careful preparation and additional support in order to manage the group work and be genuinely included in the inquiry. It is helpful to include these children in the planning of AI.
3	Teachers should feel free to experiment with the development of new and innovative AI activities that will help to ensure all children are equally included.

4	All children need support and guidance in order to develop the skills needed for effective collaborative group work within AI. Structuring turn-taking and voting within group activities may sometimes be helpful.
5	The teacher generally needs to use a facilitative, rather than a directive, pedagogy so that children are empowered to be active in decision-making within the AI. However, the teacher should also feel able to provide guidance and modelling where needed.
6	AI can help to build positive working relationships between children, but teacher judgment will be needed in organising groups so that vulnerable children feel socially comfortable and confident to participate.
7	Teachers should support each other professionally, reflecting upon how they manage shifts in power between child-led and teacher-led activities.
8	The story-telling in the Discovery Stage should be in a quiet environment, with ground rules about respecting each other's stories. Children should be allowed to choose whether to pair up with a friend or someone they know less well. Children should be encouraged to draw, write or record stories in imaginative ways to help remember what they've talked about before feeding back to a small group.
9	Everyone should have a chosen role or job as part of the Destiny action planning. Teachers need to steer this implementation stage to ensure children achieve successful outcomes when they encounter problems (e.g. by encouraging back-up plans and providing time for the AI activities). It may help for a representative group of children to form a steering group, who can monitor developments and seek adult support where needed.
10	It would be helpful to organise AI at a whole school level where possible. The professional skills of an EP would be particularly suited to facilitating and leading AI initiatives in schools.

12.4 Dissemination of research findings

It is intended that the outcomes of this study will be shared with the teachers, the head teachers and the local authority educational psychology service, using an abbreviated narrative case study report, in the style promoted by Thomas (2011): '*retaining* the fibres that bind a whole story together' concerning 'time, place, meaning, intention and much more, all interrelating' (p.184).

> …a case study seems to be the ideal vehicle for…insight, as long as it is enabled by a spirit of curiosity and not snuffed out in a relentless search for generality (Thomas, 2011, p.185).

The children in Class A transferred to a variety of different secondary schools and the children in Classes B and C moved into different classes within their school immediately following the AI intervention, before the results could be analysed. This unfortunately prevented their direct involvement in the dissemination of the results. However, all children were thanked for their involvement and all three class discussions at the end of the research celebrated the positive outcomes from their experiences within the study and the children's own ideas for further improvement to the AI process. Indeed some children's curriculum ideas had already created links with their future teachers and form tutors, which facilitated a positive transfer (e.g. the form tutor from the local secondary school visited Class A to help a group with their film making and the Year 5 teachers dressed up as various characters to facilitate the activities devised by the children in Class C).

In September 2014, just after the project had ended, I supported Teacher A in leading two staff meetings in School A, where his learning from the AI intervention at a pedagogical level was shared with other members of staff. After experiencing a series of brief AI activities, the teachers and support staff were then invited to reflect upon the implications of the study for their own teaching practice before deciding on changes they would like to make across the school to develop pupil participation.

Until February 2015 (i.e. for a further six months), I continued working as the EP for the school in which Teachers B and C work, but unfortunately the head teacher resigned abruptly

before this approach could be more widely discussed and/or disseminated throughout the school and Teacher B left the school shortly afterwards.

Having left the local authority myself in March 2015, I wrote a letter to the children of Classes B and C (now in the next year group with new teachers) to thank them for their involvement in the project and to summarise the key findings (see Appendix 40). During a subsequent impromptu visit to the school, I met with Teacher C, who explained enthusiastically how the project had influenced her work as a teacher now responsible for the development of writing across the school. She told me that she is now regularly seeking children's ideas and involving children of all ages in decisions about the English curriculum, demonstrating a positive shift in her belief about the value of pupil participation.

A presentation of the findings will be made to EP colleagues (including 'taster' AI activities) so that other EPs may consider the use of AI in their schools, offering EP time and support. As part of the local authority's traded services model, a package of training and EP support may be developed for schools to purchase. A centralised course may also be developed and offered through our Traded Services website.

> In creating constructive training in children's participation, we may also need to shift our understanding of pedagogy…Training needs to address how local realities and action planning are embedded in cultural contexts and how children's participation can seek to transform not only individuals and organisations, but also attitudes and beliefs about children in broader society (Johnson, 2014, p.99).

Further dissemination of the findings is likely to be shared through academic and professional outlets such as the British Psychology Society (BPS)'s Department of Educational and Child

Psychology (DECP) Conference and professional journals, as well as presenting at trainee educational psychology courses.

In all of the reporting opportunities outlined above, it was and is my intention that the voice and influence of the children is whole-heartedly promoted and celebrated.

12.5 Critical reflections on using a multiple case study design

The multiple case study design enabled a rich variety of quantitative and qualitative data to be contrasted across three separate classes, achieving a deeper understanding of the complex contextual factors that appear to influence the successful application of an AI at a whole-class level (Thomas, 2011; Anaf et al, 2007; Cohen at al, 2007). I believe that the ability to test theoretical propositions derived from the literature against three different experiences of AI at the whole class level, triangulating different levels of evidence, provided a deeper understanding than could have been gained from a single case (Willig, 2008, Yin, 2009). The three cases had a range of contextual similarities and differences at the outset, summarised in Table 14. Initial teacher interviews then identified further differences in terms of the teachers' experiences of pupil participation and beliefs in its importance. The facilitation of the three AIs also differed in terms of my availability to support and observe the whole process. With Classes B and C, my involvement was more indirect than with Class A, which meant that Teachers B and C were potentially less faithful to the AI process e.g. taking back more control in the later stages. Taking these contextual factors into account was critical in exploring 'what kinds of changes can be attributed to the elements that are unique to AI…and what is more likely the result of effective (or ineffective) facilitation' (Bushe, 2010a, p.236). This allowed greater critical analysis, and even tentative generation, of theories (Willig, 2008;

Yin, 2009), by connecting insights across all three cases to support or refute developing hypotheses (Thomas, 2011).

A potential weakness of the multiple case study design is the generation of an excessive amount of data (Corcoran et al, 2004; Walker, 1993) and the time required to gather and analyse it all. In this study, I found it helpful to structure the data according to theoretical propositions derived from the literature and themes derived from the teacher interviews, in relation to each of the four research questions, as proposed by Yin (2009). But I maintained the distinctiveness of each case's data throughout, so that continuity or contradiction within one teacher's account would be preserved (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Notwithstanding the extensive amount of data in this study, I am still likely to have missed important data because I was unable to be present in all of the classes during all of the AI activities. And the large numbers of children involved meant that the views of individual children have been less easily accessed and explored.

The timing of the three AI case studies was a major weakness of this study, occurring so late in the academic year. This exerted pressure that caused Teachers B and C to take more control from the children towards the end of the AI and prevented the children in all classes from benefitting fully from the outcomes of their AI. It also prevented me from engaging the children directly with the results of the study, relying instead upon a final discussion with Class A before the results were fully analysed and a letter to the children in Classes B and C (see Appendix 40).

A major advantage of using a multiple case study design was that it enabled a holistic study of the complexity of applying AI in different contexts and from multiple perspectives (Simons, 2009; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2009), effectively reducing my own influence to one voice amongst many and limiting my direct involvement. It has enabled me to confront discrepant and contradictory data, which I believe has enhanced the integrity of the results (Cresswell, 2009), by leading me towards a range of alternative explanations (Maxwell, 1996). For example, I was surprised by the general lack of positive attitudes in the children towards themselves as learners and to school following the AIs. After seeking a range of possible hypotheses to explain these results, I began to confront the possibility that AI may have a *negative* effect on children's perceptions of themselves as learners, generating reasons why this might be.

12.6 Critical reflections on the limitations of the data collection tools chosen

There are several limitations of the research tools and measures used in the study, which were identified in Section 7.4, with the strategies I used to try to address them where possible. It would not have been sufficient to rely on the triangulation of a range of methods to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings because the methods were all chosen by me, which may have reinforced researcher bias (Maxwell, 1996).

12.6.1 Measuring the culture of pupil participation

Mixing quantitative and qualitative data collection methods helped to provide a richer and stronger evidence-base (Yin, 2009), from which to build a unified understanding (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The 'measure' of changes in the culture of pupil participation within

each class was built by examining the teachers' assessment of the level of pupil participation in their class using: the unifying structure of the Tree of Participation model (although this was only explained briefly within a short semi-structured interview); discussion in the teacher interviews; and the children and their teachers' individual ratings for how much children participate in decision-making and how much they believe children *should* participate in decision-making.

However, all teachers in their second interview made far more reference to the AI itself than the culture of participation generally within each of the classes, which may have artificially elevated their responses. On reflection, this distinction needed to be made clearer for all participants, although the timing of the AI being concluded right at the end of the academic year meant that the distinction between the two was unavoidably blurred and has inevitably limited the theoretical validity of the construct of pupil participation in this study (Cohen et al, 2007). This would have potentially had an impact on the ratings for pupil participation given by teachers and children but less so for judgements about whether children *should* be involved in decisions that affect their learning. I would suggest that it is primarily the teachers' *beliefs* about the importance of pupil participation that provide the most reliable measure of the culture of participation within all aspects of classroom life, as it is the teachers who have the power to decide how much to consult with the children and how much to act upon the children's ideas in every lesson.

12.6.2 Observations

Structured classroom observations may have provided further data to enrich the results about the culture of participation within each classroom, perhaps enabling me to make my own

judgements in relation to the Tree of Participation model. However, in order to gain a reliable measure of the general levels of participation in each class, I believed that it would be important to observe each class more than once in different types of lessons both before and after the AI intervention. This was considered unfeasible within the timescales of the project. Yin (2009) argues that observations can be time-consuming, broad coverage can be difficult without a team of observers and the lessons may be different *because* they are being observed. The participant observations completed as part of the AI process in each class were also subject to bias due to my presence, but helped in seeing the event in real time and providing contextual information regarding the case study (Yin, 2009).

12.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews enabled teachers to reflect openly upon and discuss their beliefs about pupil participation with reference to their own experiences. Whilst I was open about my own beliefs, I was careful to share these in a tentative manner as a consequence of personal reflections and experiences leading towards my research, acknowledging that all teachers hold differing views about participation and that I am particularly interested in their honest views. It didn't matter if their views were different to my own, in fact I emphasised that this would even be beneficial, as it would enable me to test whether the AI had the potential to challenge or change teachers' beliefs in any way. My experience as an educational psychologist enabled me to set up the interview in a non-judgemental manner, putting teachers at their ease and conveying a genuine interest in their views (Cohen et al, 2007). Recording the interview enabled me to focus on the developing conversation, following unexpected leads whilst still maintaining coverage of the main issues, knowing that I would be able to quote teachers accurately in the study (Thomas, 2011; Willig, 2008).

However, a limitation of using semi-structured interviews is that the teachers were known to me professionally and *may* have felt more comfortable sharing views that are similar to my own than views that are contrasting (Cresswell, 2009; Willig, 2008; Yin, 2009; Cohen et al. 2007). They may also have felt obliged to support the notion of pupil participation because of its promotion by their head teacher.

12.6.4 Rating scales

The rating scales were a simple and effective measure of children and adults' views of the general level of pupil participation in the class and of the strength of their beliefs in the importance of participation. It was made very clear to the children what a score of one or ten would mean so that they knew which end of the scale represented the greatest participation or strongest beliefs. Nevertheless, there were some children who still needed support with the scale and even one teacher felt she needed to confirm which way round the scale worked before responding in her interview. Although the use of the scales was successful generally, it might have been helpful to add a symbol or image at either end of the scale to help ensure clarity and to rehearse the use of the scale with an unrelated and straightforward statement such as 'How much do you like playtime?'

The evaluation sheets used after each of the four AI stages were effective in capturing immediately how much children enjoyed and participated in each stage of the AI, but the two spaces for comments about what they had enjoyed most and how they thought the stage could be improved were not given sufficient time or space for their considered completion. The evaluation sheets were presented at the end of the lesson, when time was already limited and

there may sometimes have been a pressure to rush through the sheets in order to go out to play. In my research design, I had originally wanted to hold a class discussion at the end of each stage based on their comments but there was not time available for this and it was not possible to interrupt the beginning of the next lesson in order to hold these discussions.

On reflection, I would have liked to use the same evaluation sheets for a series of 'typical' writing lessons before and after the AI, so that the children's participation and enjoyment could be measured against that of the AI work. Although a sheet was prepared and given to the teachers during the project (see Appendix 29), none of the teachers used it. This is likely to be because of the amount of time already taken for project activities and the pressure of other demands on the teachers' time as well as perhaps a lack of clarity about which lesson to use it for and when.

12.7 Critical reflections on methods of data analysis

Case studies rely on the trustworthiness of the researcher (Robson, 2011). Underpinning all my data analyses, the strength of my belief in pupil participation made personal reflexivity paramount to the integrity of my research (Cresswell, 2009). I have been careful not to privilege some data over others when searching for themes and when merging or connecting data (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). In particular, I became aware that in looking for possible reasons to explain the unexpected lack of positive results relating to changes in pupil attitudes to themselves as learners and to school, I was avoiding the conclusion that AI might be causally implicated. I then became curious to explore theories that might explain a negative effect of an AI on pupil attitudes. By searching for data that might support such

theories, I was acting *against* my belief in the potential for AI to improve attitudes to learning and thereby enhancing the study's authenticity.

Triangulation of evidence, whether supportive or not to my expressed beliefs, was constructed logically (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011) so that multiple sources of evidence converged (Yin, 2009) and helped to: affirm (or not) theoretical propositions from the literature; or establish new themes and theories (Cresswell, 2009). 'Member checks' were used (Cresswell, 2009) in the feedback meetings with each teacher in order to allow for the generation of new information as well as checking for accuracy. It was at this stage that tentative theories to explain the lack of positive change in pupil attitudes were discussed and re-formulated with each teacher, thus enhancing the data's interpretative power (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

12.8 Epistemological and personal reflexivity

> A critical, reflexive approach to child voice research needs to take into account the actual research contexts in which children's voices are produced and the power imbalances that shape them (Spyrou, 2011, p.152).

I wanted my research to lead to actions that are potentially emancipatory for children, giving the study catalytic validity (Cohen et al, 2007) by improving pupils' learning experiences and empowering them to have voice, choice and influence in decisions about their curriculum activities (in this case, writing). An emancipatory epistemology *requires* research activities and methods that empower participants and examines how the research benefits the participants (Mertens, 1998). It was my belief; having studied the literature on pedagogy,

pupil participation and AI (see Chapters 2, 3 and 4) that AI was likely to provide an effective structure to enable *all* children to be actively involved in decisions about their learning and to improve their experience of writing at school. But children with SEND found its reliance of group work and verbal processes a barrier to their effective inclusion (Spyrou, 2011).

AI facilitated an 'insider epistemology' (Tangen, 2008), where children took part in researching each other's best experiences of learning at the Discovery Stage. By the children co-working with their teachers during the rest of the AI and its evaluation, an 'open' version of insider epistemology was achieved (Tangen, 2008), acknowledging that 'an adult can never become a 'native' in children's worlds' (Spyrou, 2011, p.156). Catalytic validity in my study required positive shifts in the beliefs of teachers about how much children *should* participate in decisions about their learning, which occurred in two cases but not in the third.

> Reflexivity in research…is…fundamental to understanding *how* we use relationship over time to build spaces for children and young people to lead (Michail, 2014, p.135).

My perspective as a critical realist means that, for me, the culture of pupil participation in a classroom is real and can be 'measured', whilst recognising that others may interpret the concept differently and have varied beliefs about its importance. This called for a mixed methods approach to facilitate an investigation of any changes in the teachers' beliefs and joint reflection and interpretation of the data in terms of potential causal links. What has been missing in this study has been the facilitation and capture of individual children's views with the same richness and depth as the adult data. Individual or even group interviews with almost one hundred children were not practicable and I believed it was important that all children

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were equally included in the research processes. But the experiences of children with SEND were particularly salient and their views could have been explored using a small number of carefully planned focus groups.

> Being reflexive about the processes by which knowledge about children is produced can elevate research discussions to a more sophisticated level which is informed by the dynamics of research and its production rather than simply the methods adopted and their use (Spyrou, 2011, p.161).

The empowerment of children to have voice and influence over pedagogy in this study has highlighted tensions between notions of inclusion, participation and consent. AI is a process that calls for all participants to be equally included (Fieldhouse and Onyett, 2012; Ludema and Fry, 2008) and is led by a class teacher with their whole class. Curriculum delivery and pedagogical decisions reside with the teacher and it is difficult to see how individual children can opt out. In this study, therefore, the children's consent was sought for me to report research data relating to their participation but not for the participation itself (although I did suggest to all teachers that individual children should be allowed to observe AI activities if they felt uncomfortable participating in them). A paradox was created between children's right to be listened to and to have their views taken into account in matters that affect them (United Nations, 1989) within the AI, and their right *not* to take part in a whole class intervention (Spyrou, 2011; Todd, 2012).

12.9 Concluding reflections on the original contribution made by this study

> Securing change requires a culture shift in school life in which children's views are not just valued and respected but seen to be integral and embedded within decision-making…pupil involvement in decision-making is a permanent, non-negotiable human right (Lundy, 2007).

This study has explored the potential of an AI to shift the culture of pupil participation within the primary school classroom, enabling children to have voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning (in this case, their writing). It has explored changes in: children and teachers' beliefs in the value of participation; the curriculum; and children's attitudes and attainment. It has investigated the high points or strengths of using AI in primary schools and involved the children, alongside their teachers, in suggesting improvements to the process so that all children, including those who are vulnerable or who have SEND, can be equally included in the AI process.

The results indicated that AI may have the potential to begin shifting the culture of pupil participation, but needs time (and good timing) to be effective. The ideas generated by the children in their AIs seemed more important than its focus on positivity. Children have demonstrated that they can devise innovative curriculum activities, often for real purposes, which are motivating and engaging. The study has not demonstrated any particular benefits in terms of changes to standardised measures of pupil attitudes to learning or attainment as a result of participation in an AI, but has indicated that children are more motivated and engaged by their participation.

However, this study has found that children who are vulnerable or have SEND can be further disenfranchised unless careful preparation and support is offered for them, especially to ensure their effective inclusion in group work. A significant finding from this study is the children's focus on the importance of group work, which they enjoyed but found challenging, especially for children with SEND. The children have suggested how group work within an

AI may be improved to ensure that children are included more effectively in future applications of AI.

> There is a long way to go to address the variability in participation and especially for those with a complexity of need…It is a long journey because it requires a cultural change in the way we work…It is a process not an event (Greig et al, 2014, p.10).

To my knowledge, this exploration of the potential for AI to facilitate primary children's involvement in curriculum decision-making and involving children in its evaluation makes an original contribution to the literature on pedagogy, pupil participation and AI. It has affirmed several theoretical propositions from the literature and not affirmed others. It has tentatively created new theory for testing in future research (see Table 36).

> Appreciative Inquiry can be a useful and valuable technique in the right circumstances and when well-implemented, but it is not always appropriate and it requires special skills and abilities to be done properly (Rogers and Fraser, 2003, p.75).

Finally, the balance of power between a teacher and his or her class of children has been highlighted in this study, and the facilitation of children and adults working in collaboration is a further original dimension of this research. If all children are to have voice, choice and influence in decision making about their learning, then teachers need to relinquish some of their power in the classroom, whilst still maintaining structure and leadership of learning. A limiting factor in this study has been my own understanding of, and belief in, pupil participation, and discovering how difficult pupil participation can be for teachers to embrace.

This study has shown that AI can be a good vehicle for setting the challenge and beginning to debate pupil participation with staff, whilst developing relationships between teachers and their pupils that are increasingly based on genuine listening, trust and respect for children's views.

> Giving youth the opportunities to produce knowledge reshapes these power dynamics. The activity of empowering young people to have a voice in society can ultimately transform society, creating new roles for both young people and adults (Flores, 2008, p.15).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: What is Appreciative Inquiry? A Summary for Schools

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

To **appreciate** means: to value; recognise the best in people or the world around us; affirm past and present strengths, successes and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems. Appreciate is synonymous with value prize, esteem, and honour.

To **inquire** means: to explore and discover; to ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Inquire is synonymous with discover, search, systematically explore, and study.

Definitions

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has variously been defined as a philosophy and/or a process:

AI is a collaborative search to identify and understand the organisation's strengths, its potentials, the greatest opportunities, and people's hopes for the future (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.151)

Appreciative Inquiry is a philosophy that incorporates an approach, a process (4-D Cycle of *Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny)* for engaging people at any or all levels to produce effective, positive change (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.xv)

The basic philosophy underpinning AI is that every organisation has something working well and that those strengths can be the starting point for creating positive change. Instead of looking at problems to solve, AI looks at what works and how the people in the organisation can feel energised and motivated to do more of it.

The Appreciative Inquiry Process

The most commonly used model for Appreciative Inquiry is the 4-D cycle depicted below:
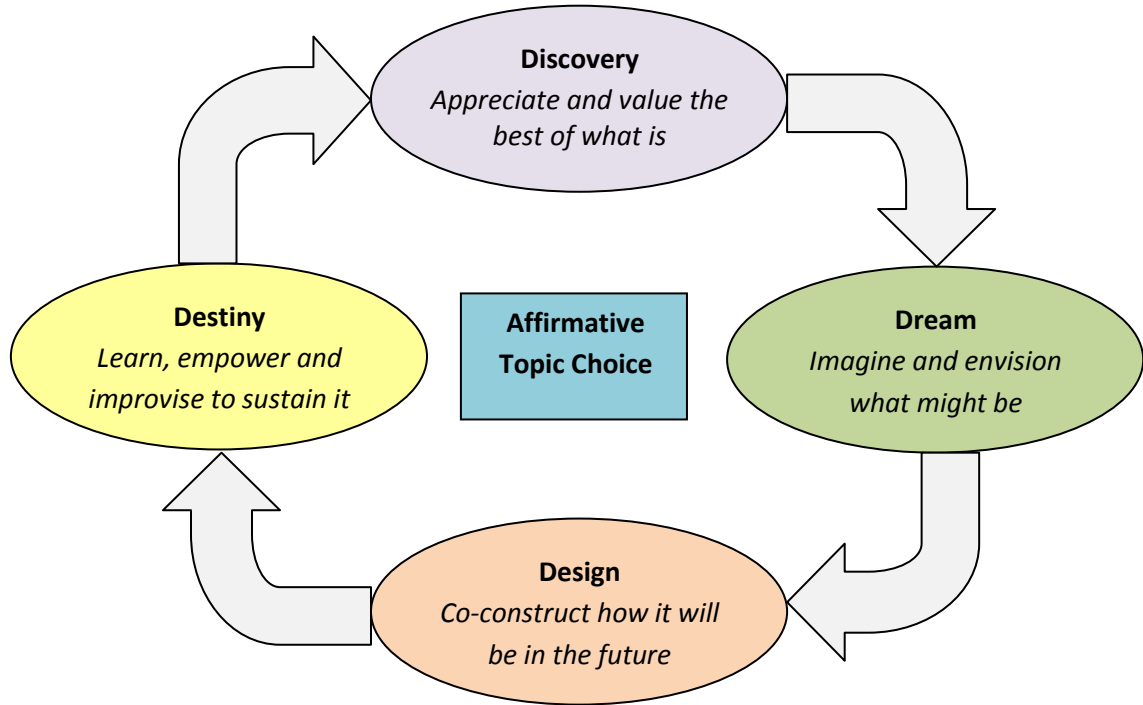
Topic Choice

AI begins with carefully worded topics that will focus attention on what the desired outcomes are of working together. This often involves reframing and rewording until the inquiry attracts interest and captures what people are curious about. At this stage, a negative topic choice will be turned into what everyone wants to see instead. A planning team may be formed with representatives of all levels and sections of the organisation in order to work on the desired topic and the wording of the questions to be used in the Discovery Stage. Topics should always be driven by genuine curiosity.

Discovery

Everyone is paired with people they know least well, mixing levels and areas of work. They have a set of questions to focus their conversations, sharing personal stories about times when they have experienced the best of the organisation and their contribution to it. Ludema and Fry (2008) argue that it is important to begin with these

paired interviews because they '(1) give everyone equal voice; (2) establish a model of both sharing and listening in a deeply focused way; (3) offer every participant a chance to explore their own thinking in the relative safety of a one-on-one dialogue; (4) quickly generate a deep sense of connection among participants: and (5) draw out the appreciative foundations of the work to be done' (p. 286).

The pairs then form small groups of 6 to 10 participants, share stories and decide on the most powerful ones to report back to the whole group. They begin to find themes in the key success factors that are embedded in the stories.

Dream

The same small groups share and analyse their greatest hopes and wishes for the future of the organisation, referring to the common themes from the stories and creatively developing some images of the future e.g. in the form of art, song, skits, poems, newscasts etc. The ideas are presented to the whole group, who then votes for a small number of the most powerful and attractive of the ideas presented. These will form the focus of the next two stages.

Design

People choose which of the selected ideas they feel most interested in or passionate about and form new groups that are each dedicated to a particular area for development. This invariably results in people gravitating towards activities where they have the highest level of expertise and can make the greatest contribution. Ludema and Fry (2008) argue that this regrouping around areas people most want to work on is essential to the Design and Destiny phases of appreciative inquiry. The new teams work together to create 'provocative propositions' that describe what the dreams would look like when operating successfully. Drafts are commented on appreciatively by the whole group e.g. what they like about other groups' provocative propositions and any suggestions they may have for further improvements to make them even more powerful. Revisions are made as appropriate.

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> It is the stories of the future that create the present more than the stories of the past (McAdam and Mirza, 2009, p. 180)

Destiny

The groups start working on the provocative propositions, creating short-term targets and key actions for implementation after the event. Volunteers from each group are asked to form part of a steering group that will monitor the implementation of the ideas over the next 6 months and share best practices, creating 'a time of continuous learning, adjustment, and improvisation (like a jazz group)' (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.46).

Appreciative Questions

Think of a time when you really felt part of a team working here, a particular episode or incident (Topic: Team-working)

Basic questions:

1. What would you describe as being the high-point experience in your teaching career, a time when you were most alive and engaged?

2. Without being modest, what is it that you most value about yourself, your work and school?

3. Assume you go into a deep sleep tonight, one that lasts ten years. But while you are asleep, powerful and positive changes take place, real miracles happen, and this school becomes what you want it to be. Now you awaken and come into school. It is 2022, and you are very proud of what you see. As you take in this vision and look at the whole, what do you see happening that is new, changed, better, or effective and successful?

This last 'miracle' question is sometimes replaced by: *Imagine your organisation five…years from now, when everything is just as you always imagined it would be. What has happened? What is different? How have you contributed to this future?* (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.36).

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Anna Lewis

Educational and Child Psychologist

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Appendix 2: AI Project Information for Staff

Appreciative Inquiry Project Information

Project title: Using Appreciative Inquiry to help all the children in a class to participate in creating some new ways to learn in literacy or numeracy lessons.

Background

Anna Lewis (Educational and Child Psychologist) discovered Appreciative Inquiry (AI) during her doctoral studies at The University of Birmingham. It has been used successfully in a wide range of contexts (e.g. businesses, the police, nursing, the BBC, community developments etc) but rarely in education. The basic idea is to ask everyone in an organisation to talk about when they have been most motivated and inspired and then to devise new ways of working so that those times happen more often (please see Appendix 1: What is Appreciative Inquiry? Information for Schools). Anna's studies suggest that AI is likely to provide a good structure for children to become involved in investigating their best learning times and deciding how they could contribute to making their literacy or numeracy activities even more engaging and motivating for everyone. She would like to conduct a doctoral research project to explore the potential for AI to: improve pupil participation in decisions that affect their learning; improve pupil attitudes to learning; and raise attainments in literacy or numeracy. She would also like to involve the pupils and their teachers in evaluating their use of AI so that the process can be improved for other classes and schools.

Aims

- To give everyone in the class an opportunity to reflect on and talk about their best learning times, before devising some new activities together
- For the adults in the class to listen to the children's experiences/ideas and help to make some of their ideas actually happen
- For children to make even better progress in literacy or numeracy because they are more motivated and engaged
- For the children and adults to help improve the process of AI so that it is even more inclusive and successful when used by other classes in future.

AI Activities

The main AI process takes place across approximately four lessons:

1. The children will all talk to each other in pairs using a prepared set of questions and then tell their favourite stories to each other in small groups
2. Based on the storytelling, the groups will create ideas for literacy or numeracy activities in future and then plan and present their ideas to the class creatively (e.g. using role-play, posters, news casts...)
3. Children can choose which idea they are most interested in and change groups if necessary. Then each group works out how to describe their ideas for literacy or numeracy in the present tense as if they are already happening
4. Finally, each group thinks through what will need to happen to make their ideas into a reality and decides who is going to do what.

An implementation phase follows over the next few weeks/months, where children and adults work through their action plans and start to enjoy some of their ideas in action.

Research activities

In order to explore the potential benefits of using AI in this way, a number of data gathering measures will be used:

- Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) scales will be administered before and after the AI implementation. This takes about 15 minutes for the children to complete as a multiple choice activity on paper
- The school already collects pupil progress data six times per year for every child in the class for Reading, Writing and Maths using National Curriculum sublevels of progress. These will be scrutinised after the AI intervention
- Examples of children's stories, ideas and action plans will be collected, possibly using photographic evidence of children's work (subject to gaining consent) as well as the researcher's diary notes
- Short 15 minute interviews with each teacher and teaching assistant before and after the intervention, recorded to facilitate accuracy in any quotations used
- A classroom observation before and after the intervention with reference to a newly devised model of pupil participation. Teacher, teaching assistant and researcher make evaluations of classroom practice in relation to the model
- Informal observations during the researcher's facilitation of the AI process and during the evaluation activities that involve the class, with research diary notes
- Pupil and adult evaluation sheets after each stage of the AI, using rating scales to indicate how much pupils participated and enjoyed it and two comments: one for what they liked most; and one for how the stage might be improved for children in future. Children will be offered a scribe, Dictaphone or computer for any writing (or a

drawing option instead) and to work in twos if they prefer. A short plenary will follow where children's ideas for improvements to the process can be discussed together

- A class research diary will be introduced in which to capture notes, feelings, thoughts and ideas from adults or children throughout the study
- The researcher's diary notes will form part of the evidence collected and will be referred to in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Management of data collected

The names of individual teachers, teaching assistants and children will be protected by a confidential assigned coded so that they will not be identifiable in the thesis or in any case study report for the Local Authority.

However, the children and adults will be involved in decisions about the nature of the dissemination of the results, which could involve assemblies and staff meetings at the school. Where any individual may be identifiable in creative ideas for dissemination, individual consent will then be sought specifically from the individuals involved and not used otherwise.

Should a request be made for the data to be used within a wider forum e.g. for training purposes within the Local Authority, separate consent will be sought in that eventuality.

Data will be kept on a secure Local Authority Educational Psychology system and transferred using an encrypted memory stick onto a secure University system to ensure data are backed-up. Data will be stored for the required duration of ten years, following which they will be destroyed. Information will always be kept confidential. Participants will be assigned an ID code. I will have access to the data, and may share confidential coded data with my University tutors and Local Authority managers.

Benefits and risks

The evidence suggests that the pupils are primarily likely to benefit from their involvement in this project in the following ways:

- Increased enjoyment and empowerment within lessons
- Improved motivation and engagement in learning activities
- Better progress in literacy or numeracy.

The adults involved in the study are likely to benefit from: the development of creative new curriculum ideas to supplement their planning; knowledge and understanding of a new approach to facilitate pupil participation; and a class that is more motivated and engaged.

However, there are potentially some risks to pupils and adults that are outlined in the table below alongside strategies to minimise or overcome these concerns:

Possible risks	Proposed strategies
A child may decide not to participate in the research activities and then regret their decision	All children who decide not to participate will be given the option of observing or re-joining the research activities at any time
Children's ideas not all used in the AI, as some group work and voting may preclude them	Children to be aware at the outset that each group will need to decide on their favourite ideas, which may not always be their own. But that each person's ideas will be valued
Vulnerable children or those with SEN may not have equal voice and influence over decisions	Researcher and adults will plan carefully to ensure all such children are effectively supported to participate alongside their peers
Some children may be disparaging or unkind about other children's ideas	Ground rules will be devised together at the outset about listening to and respecting each other's contributions
Teachers may feel under pressure to conduct a new intervention on top of everything else they are being expected to do and may experience stress	The researcher will continually monitor the implementation of the AI, providing support and reminding staff that they can withdraw at any time. Activities and interviews will be conducted at times suggested by the staff as best for them
During interviews with staff they may feel unable to share views about participation that differ from the researcher's beliefs	In the individual interviews the researcher will actively seek to empower staff, value their points of view, demonstrate active listening, and enable them to lead the discussions
Teacher or teaching assistant may feel threatened by being requested to give such control to the children in making	Researcher will support staff with any shifts in the balance of power between children and teacher, providing

decisions about learning activities	reassurance that the teacher's views and ideas are an equal part of the AI
Head teacher may ask for classroom observation information for purposes other than the study (e.g. assessments of professional practice), which could create professional vulnerability to teachers and/or teaching assistants	Clear protocol at the outset about only the teachers and researcher having access to observation information. All information will be confidential and coded so that individual staff are not easily identified

Informed consent

Everyone involved in this project will be asked to give their informed consent to take part, including the children. They will also be able to withdraw from the project at any time for any reason.

Head teacher and members of staff

The project will initially be presented to the head teacher with all relevant information and a consent form outlining the expectations and responsibilities of each person involved. The project will then be presented to the selected staff, again with all relevant information and a similar consent form. Both meetings will allow plenty of time for questions, queries and any clarification needed. If a member of staff prefers not to be involved there will be no pressure, persuasion or coercion to do so and they will not be asked to explain their reasons.

Parents/carers

When the members of staff have given their informed consent, the head teacher will be asked to write a letter to the parents/carers (a draft will be offered containing the key points to assist the head teacher) outlining the project proposals and inviting parents/carers to a meeting after school when the researcher will make a presentation about the project, including the expected benefits and potential risks and then provide opportunities for further discussion and clarification. Statements of agreement and consent will be talked through and either completed immediately or taken away for further reflection before signing and sending in to school over the coming two weeks.

Children

The researcher and teachers will present the project to the children as part of a whole class session, taking care to ensure that any absent children are consulted fully on their

return to school. The presentation will use child-friendly language and be supported with pictorial information and short activities. Opportunities to discuss the project in pairs and then in small groups will facilitate their genuine involvement in reflection and in clarifying anything about the project that they may not fully understand. A child-friendly agreement and consent form will be provided for the children to sign in confidence when they are ready. Time will be allowed for reflection and discussion in school and at home before confirming decisions about consent. There will be no pressure for them to give their consent and they will already be aware of the alternatives if they prefer not to be involved (to be discussed and agreed with the class teachers and head teacher).

Vulnerable children and those with special educational needs will be supported by ensuring that they can access the information provided in the class session and have friends and trusted adults to help to interpret, summarise and/or simplify the information as necessary. Parents will be asked to ensure that their children fully understand the project proposals.

Withdrawing from the project

Everyone involved in this project needs to know that they can withdraw their consent at any stage. The adults involved (i.e. head teacher, teachers, teaching assistants and parents/carers) simply need to contact the researcher directly (see contact details below). Their request to withdraw will be accepted at any time, either for themselves or for any child who has expressed to them their desire to withdraw. The children simply need to tell their parent/carer or teacher at any time that they would like to stop being part of the research measures in the project and this will be arranged straightaway.

Anna Lewis   Sue Morris and Nick Bozic

Educational and Child Psychologist   University of Birmingham Tutors

Tel: xxxx   anna.lewis@xxx.gov.uk   Tel: xxxx

Appendix 3: Head teacher consent form

Appreciative Inquiry Project: Headteacher's Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Appreciative Inquiry Research Project at your school. This consent form outlines important information about the project and both of our roles in supporting this work. It is designed to follow a discussion and sharing of information contained in the supporting documentation.

The researcher (Anna Lewis, Educational and Child Psychologist) agrees to:

- Meet with teachers and teaching assistants identified by the head teacher as possible participants in the project, explaining the proposals and seeking their informed consent
- Draft a letter that the head teacher can use to inform parents/carers about the project, inviting them to a meeting after school where Anna will make a presentation, answer questions and seek parental/carer consent for their children to take part
- Explain the project to the children involved, seeking their consent to participate in the research measures and providing further information about obtaining consent from pupils in schools
- Facilitate the Appreciative Inquiry intervention, working jointly with the teachers and teaching assistants to plan, prepare and implement the AI activities
- Organise the collection of data before, during and after the intervention so that the project can be robustly evaluated. Then present the results to the participants and involve the children and adults in decisions about how to share the outcomes with others, both within school and possibly for wider audiences in the Local Authority and beyond. Separate consent will be sought for any sharing of information within and beyond the school community
- Keep all data on secure Local Authority and University of Birmingham systems for the required ten years (after which it will be destroyed), transferring data as necessary using an encrypted memory stick. Anna will have access and may share coded data with her tutors and line managers
- Maintain confidentially (using assigned codes) so that the names of individual teachers, teaching assistants and children will not be identifiable in the thesis or in any case study report for the Local Authority
- Write a summary of the findings for the school and support any further work within the school in relation to the project e.g. facilitating staff meetings or further project work in other classes as requested within the time allocated to the school

- Provide educational psychology time to support the implementation of the project at a reduced rate of one day (two sessions) per class. All other time devoted to the project both within the school and for preparation and report writing will be provided free of charge
- Ensure that you are aware of any risks and that all aspects of the project follow the highest standards of professional ethics and care for all participants at all times, supervised by tutors at The University of Birmingham.

xxx (Head teacher of xxx Primary School) agrees to:

- Consult the teachers and teaching assistants identified as possible participants, inviting them to meet with Anna to hear more about the project and ensuring they understand that their participation would be entirely voluntary
- Write to the parents/carers of the children involved (using the draft letter supplied as required), inviting them to meet with Anna to hear more about the project and providing a suitable room and date for this meeting
- Understand that anyone can withdraw from the project at any time without giving reasons. If a teaching assistant wishes to withdraw the head teacher will help to facilitate a change of duties during project activities, possibly offering project participation to another teaching assistant as a replacement and informing Anna of the changes so that appropriate informed consent can be gained from the new member of staff. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the project at any time then the project activities will cease within that class. No coercion, persuasion or pressure will be placed upon that teacher to continue and there will be no professional harm as a result of withdrawal from the study. If the head teacher decides to withdraw consent for the project at any time and for any reason, the project will immediately cease within the school and all data will be destroyed
- Ensure that suitable arrangements are made by the teacher for any child who chooses to withdraw from the research measures at any time
- Make any reasonable adjustments necessary to support the children and their teachers' ideas for agreed curriculum changes resulting from the project work
- Support and facilitate the dissemination of the results of the study, so that the children's ideas can be shared within the school and possibly within the Local Authority or beyond.

Signed:…………………………………………(Headteacher)…………………………………………(Researcher)
Date:…………………………………………..

Appendix 4: Teacher and teaching assistant consent form

Appreciative Inquiry Project: Teacher and Teaching Assistant Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Appreciative Inquiry Research Project. This consent form outlines important information about the project and both of our roles in supporting this work. It is designed to follow a discussion and sharing of information contained in the supporting documentation.

I, the researcher (Anna Lewis, Educational and Child Psychologist), agree to:

- Present the project to the parents/carers of the children in your class at a meeting after school, answering any questions or queries and seeking their consent
- Explain the project to the children involved, seeking their consent to participate
- Facilitate the Appreciative Inquiry intervention, working jointly with you to plan, prepare and implement the AI activities. Planning meetings will be arranged at times and dates that are most convenient for you
- Organise the collection of data before, during and after the intervention so that the project can be robustly evaluated. As part of this I would like to informally interview you separately for 15 minutes before and after the intervention, observe the class and complete other measures (see supporting documentation)
- Present the results to you and together involve the children in decisions about how to share the outcomes with others, both within school and possibly for wider audiences in the Local Authority and beyond. Separate consent will be sought for sharing information within and/or beyond the school community
- Keep all data on secure Local Authority and University of Birmingham systems for the required ten years (after which it will be destroyed), transferring data as necessary using an encrypted memory stick. Anna will have access and may share coded data with her tutors and line managers
- Maintain confidentially (using assigned codes) so that the names of individual teachers, teaching assistants and children will not be identifiable in the thesis or in any case study report for the Local Authority
- Write a summary of the findings for the school and support any further work within the school in relation to the project e.g. facilitating staff meetings with you or helping you to support any other classes using Appreciative Inquiry
- Ensure that you are aware of any risks and that all aspects of the project follow the highest standards of professional ethics and care for all participants at all times, supervised by tutors at The University of Birmingham.

The teacher/teaching assistant…………………………………………………agrees to:

- Plan the intervention with Anna, agreeing dates and times for all project activities
- Come to the parent/carer meeting after school if at all possible, in order to be aware of any parental concerns and help to answer any queries
- Understand that he/she can withdraw from the project at any time without giving reasons. If a teaching assistant wishes to withdraw the head teacher will help to facilitate a change of duties during project activities. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the project at any time then the project activities will cease within that class. No coercion, persuasion or pressure will be placed upon anyone to continue and there will be no professional harm as a result of withdrawal from the study
- Ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the education of any child who chooses to withdraw from research measures
- Help to plan for the fullest possible inclusion of vulnerable children and those with special educational needs
- Make any reasonable adjustments necessary to support the children and their ideas for curriculum changes resulting from the project work, adapting their ideas with them as necessary so that as many of their ideas as possible can be incorporated into future literacy or numeracy lesson planning
- Support and facilitate the dissemination of the results of the study, so that the children's ideas can be shared within the school and possibly within the Local Authority or beyond
- Provide feedback alongside the children about how the process can be improved for other classes and schools to use.

Signed: ……………………………………………………………………………(Teacher/teaching assistant)

      ……………………………………………………………………(Researcher)

Date: ………………………….

Appendix 5: Further information for teachers about obtaining informed consent

Obtaining Informed Consent from Children in Schools

David et al (2001) question the ethics of obtaining consent in the school setting because of the differential power relations and the expectations of teachers. Pupil research located in schools sets the context for the research as educational, compulsory, and adult-led. When children are engaged in ethical research in school this means that different rules and relationships with adults must apply, allowing children to opt out of research activity in a way that is currently not allowed in other aspects of their learning. David et al (2001) argue for consent to be an ongoing process throughout the research and not a one-off event at the outset, so that children can keep asking questions as they understand more about the research and are reminded that they can withdraw at any time.

The nature of the Appreciative Inquiry project is such that it begins with identifying strengths and then moves on to creating even better learning activities, all within the children's familiar classroom environment. Differentiation and additional support for children who are vulnerable or who have special educational needs will be planned in the same way as all classroom lesson planning with the class teacher, perhaps even enhanced by the involvement of the educational psychologist in the planning process. It is therefore not expected that any harm could arise from the intervention itself. However, if a child (or their parent/carer) decides not to participate, then it is possible for that child to feel excluded from a potentially exciting intervention that their friends are likely to be talking about, which could lead to feelings of social exclusion within the class. This risk will need to be balanced by the parent/carer and child with their reasons for not participating. However, should a parent/carer decide not to give their consent or to withdraw their child *against* the child's wishes, important and difficult ethical issues are raised, which are discussed below.

Jones and Stanley (2008) present evidence that the problem of informed consent for children is fraught with difficulty for the following reasons:

- Children under 16 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are not automatically presumed to be legally competent

- The child cannot participate without parental consent and the parent cannot volunteer their child without the child's approval, making it difficult to see whether one can override the other
- By stipulating parental consent as essential, children are deprived of their rights to make their own decisions about their participation in research and whether their voices can be heard
- Head teachers can fulfil the role of 'ethical guardian' of the children in their school

Wiles et al (2005), cited in Jones and Stanley (2008), argue that parental consent can be waived where a child understands what participation in research will involve and that parents have no right to override the child's wishes in these circumstances. Parents and teachers need to be fully informed of children's rights and competence to make their own decisions as well as being fully informed about the nature of the proposed research (Kirby, 2001; Silva, 2001). Should parents/carers hold a different view to their children regarding consent to participate in the proposed study, the head teacher will be requested to hold a mediation meeting with the parents in order to arrive at a decision that is in the best interests of the child.

Appendix 6: Draft letter to parents/carers for head teacher to use if desired

Dear Parents/carers,

Our Educational Psychologist, Anna Lewis, is planning to help your child's class to use a new initiative called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) over the coming weeks. AI starts with the children telling each other stories about when they have been at their best as learners and then involves the children in creating some new ideas for curriculum activities based on these best learning experiences. The project is expected to lead to the following outcomes for your child:

- *Increased enjoyment and empowerment within lessons*
- *Improved motivation and engagement in learning activities*
- *Better progress in literacy or numeracy.*

Anna is planning to evaluate the project as part of her doctoral studies based at The University of Birmingham and would like to complete some simple measures of your child's attitudes to their learning and to school both before and after the project activities. All the project activities will take place as part of the children's usual school lessons and Anna will be helping the teacher and the teaching assistant in your child's class to make sure that every child is included. We hope to be able to hold a special assembly towards the end of the year so that the children can tell you about their ideas and the results of the project.

I would like to invite you to a short meeting after school at xxx on xxx in the school hall so that you may hear more about this project and have an opportunity to ask Anna any questions. If we do not hear from you we will presume you are happy for your child to be part of this project. Please complete and return the slip below to indicate whether you can attend the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (Head teacher)

_____

I will/will not be able to attend the meeting on xxx about the Appreciative Inquiry project in my child's class

Name of child:………………………Name of parent(s)/carer(s)…………………………….

Appendix 7: Parent/carer consent form

xxx Primary School Appreciative Inquiry Project: Parent/carer Consent Form

I understand that:

- My child's class are using Appreciative Inquiry to find out about those times when the children enjoy their learning most and then to create some new ideas for literacy or numeracy learning with their teacher, teaching assistant and Anna Lewis, the school's Educational Psychologist. All the activities will take place in my child's usual learning times and are likely to take approximately four lessons
- My child will be taking part in short research measures that will help the school to evaluate the effectiveness of this way of working
- Information about my child will be coded and kept confidential at all times. Only the teacher, teaching assistant and Anna will know what my child has contributed to the project and how the project may have affected my child's attitude to their learning and their progress in literacy or numeracy. However, I can ask the teacher for information about my child at any time
- Anna will keep all information coded on secure systems of data storage at The University of Birmingham, where it will be held for ten years and then destroyed. A password-protected encrypted memory stick will be used to transfer data. Only Anna, her University tutors, Local Authority managers and administrators will have access to the information
- If I have any questions or queries about the project or the data storage I can contact Anna on xxxx or via email: anna.lewis@xxxx.gov.uk

I give consent for the research measures relating to my child to be used in Anna's thesis and in any research report relating to the project.	
I do not give consent for the research measures relating to my child to be used in Anna's thesis and in any research report relating to the project.	

Name of child:……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Name of parent/carer:………………………………………………………………………………………….

Signed:……………………………………………………………………………………………………….(Parent/carer)

Date: …………………………………………………….

Appendix 8: Power Point presentation to parents/carers

The Four 'D's model of AI

DISCOVERY
Inquire into our best experiences

DESTINY
Make it all happen

Topic Choice

DREAM
Imagine more good times like those

DESIGN
Capture your ideas

Children's participation

- Children being involved in decisions that affect them e.g. their learning activities
- Must allow everyone to have a say
- Children and their teachers can and should share some decisions
- Children's ideas should lead to some real changes, real things happening as a result of their ideas
- Children often know what works best!

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

- Children's right to be listened to and to have their views taken into account in matters that affect them
- The UK has ratified the convention, undertaking to publicise it to adults and children, to implement it in law, policy and practice and to report regularly to the United Nations on its progress

A quick taster of AI in action

Think of a family time that really stands out in your mind as a high point, one of the best times you can remember. What made it so good?

Tell the person next to you about it.

Let's hear one or two...

Imagine you go into a deep sleep tonight and when you wake up and take your child to school everything is like you've always wanted it to be. What's changed? What is school like now?

PASS: Pupil Attitudes to Self and School

10-15 minutes on a laptop or on paper answering 50 very short questions about what your child thinks about themselves as a learner and their school

Both before and after the AI project

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Your consent for me to use the following information:

- Your child's ideas about how much children **are** and **should be** involved in decisions about their learning
- A short evaluation form completed after each part of the AI about what they enjoyed and how they think it could be improved
- The PASS measures before and after the AI
- Any comments your child records in the class research diary
- Your child's ideas about how to tell other people (e.g. other classes, parents, schools) about the results
- A short questionnaire on the computer

Benefits

- Enjoying learning
- Thinking about best ways to learn
- Being creative
- Making real decisions about learning
- More motivated
- More included
- Make better progress
- Feel responsible and helpful to others

Risks

- Wanting to take part when you say no
- Changing their mind either way
- Ideas not used
- Other children dominating the ideas
- Children being unkind
- Feeling excluded
- Feeling shy or anxious

What I will do to make sure your child is safe and happy during project activities

- Work with the teacher and teaching assistant to make sure everyone is included
- Do some 'ground rules' with the children
- Regularly remind the children that they can opt out (and back in again) at any time
- Keep information on your child confidential and secure
- Help the teacher to make your children's ideas into real activities that will motivate and inspire them!

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CHILDREN AND ADULTS – LEARNING AND CARING

Questions and Consent forms

Any questions/queries/concerns?

Please take a consent form and sign it if you are happy for your child to take part

Please come and ask me if you'd like a bit more information

You can contact me on xxxx
anna.lewis@xxxx.gov.uk

Appendix 9: Letter to parents/carers of Classes B and C

Parents of Year 4 children
xxx Primary School

<div style="text-align:right">

Children and Adults Directorate
Address

Telephone: xxxx

Direct line: xxxx

e-mail: anna.lewis@xxxx.gov.uk

</div>

Date: 02.06.14

Dear Parents/Carers of Children in Year 4,

Year 4 Appreciative Inquiry Writing Project

Thank you to those parents who were able to attend the meeting at school on 02.06.14 about the forthcoming Appreciative Inquiry project. I am sorry that the letter inviting you to the meeting was unfortunately not sent to you before the midterm break as anticipated. For those unable to attend at such short notice, I am writing to explain the project and my reasons for consulting you.

I am the Educational Psychologist for xxx Primary School and am currently studying for a doctorate with the University of Birmingham. As part of my studies I have discovered Appreciative Inquiry, which is a very positive way to improve the work of any group of people. It focuses on what is working well and involves everyone in creating more of those good times. It has been used successfully across the world in large organisations and in the UK within nursing, prisons, universities, businesses, and even within the BBC. It has rarely been used yet in schools, except for a good example in a school district in Vancouver and with young people in South Africa.

I believe that Appreciative Inquiry has the potential to improve learning in our classrooms and would like to find out how effective it can be. The Year 4 classes are going to be using Appreciative Inquiry over the next few weeks to focus on improving their writing. I will be helping them to use the Appreciative Inquiry process and to measure its effectiveness.

The Appreciative Inquiry process involves approximately 3 to 4 lessons led by your child's teacher. Children will work with their friends, interviewing each other to help remember specific times when they have really enjoyed writing. They'll talk in small groups about the types of activities they like most in school and then create some ideas of their own that will make writing more fun. Their ideas will be presented to the class and the teacher will then help to make their ideas actually happen in the remaining weeks of the year (making any adaptations necessary). We hope to show you some of the children's work at a class assembly or at a parent's meeting towards the end of the term.

Before and after the project, your child will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about what they think about themselves as learners and what they think about their school. After each of the project lessons they'll be asked to say on a scale of 1 to 10 how much they enjoyed it and how much they felt able to participate. They'll be asked what they enjoyed most and how the lesson could be improved in future.

The project is expected to lead to the following outcomes for your child:

- *Increased enjoyment and empowerment within lessons*
- *Improved motivation and engagement in writing activities*
- *Better progress in National Curriculum levels for writing.*

Appreciative Inquiry starts by focusing on what your child enjoys and then involves your child in creating ideas to make things even better so it is very unlikely that there could be any risk of harm. However, some children may feel anxious about a new way of working or that their ideas might be dominated by other stronger characters in their group. I will be working with the teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that every child has the help they need to be as fully included as possible in the process. We will set some 'ground rules' with the children and provide plenty of adult support and guidance for each group. We will also be asking the children themselves for strategies to ensure that everyone is equally included.

For the purposes of my research, I would like to use all of this information to demonstrate how Appreciative Inquiry can potentially make such a positive difference to children's learning. For confidentiality, all of the children's questionnaires and ideas will be given number codes so that your child will not be identifiable in the research report. Only the teacher, teaching assistant and myself will know how the project may have affected your child's attitude to their learning and their progress in writing. However, you can ask the teacher for information about your child at any time.

All of the coded information will be kept on a secure system of data storage at The University of Birmingham for the required ten years and then destroyed. A password-protected encrypted memory stick will be used to transfer data. Only my University tutors, Local Authority managers and administrators will have access to the information. If you have any questions or queries about the project or the data storage you can contact me on xxxx or via email:

anna.lewis@xxxx.gov.uk

If you would prefer your child's coded information **not** to be included in my research please complete the slip below and return it to your child's teacher. If we do not hear from you we will assume that you are happy for your child's coded information to be included.

With many thanks,

Anna Lewis (Educational and Child Psychologist)

I do **not** give consent for the coded information relating to my child to be used in Anna's thesis and in any research reports relating to the Appreciative Inquiry project.	

Please note: If we do not hear from you we will assume that you are happy with the research and confidentiality arrangements. You only need to return this slip to school if you do **not** give your consent.

Name of child:……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Name of parent/carer:………………………………………………………………………………………….

Signed:……….

Date:……….

Appendix 10: Initial letter to parents/carers of children in Class A from Teacher A

5 February 2014

Dear Parents

Class 6 has been invited to take part in the [____] Literacy Project. The project is led by members of the [____] Educational, Child and Community Psychology Service and is intended to focus on developing a range of thinking approaches to support Literacy work and foster a wider range of skills which are essential for many areas of the curriculum.

The project will be taking place in March, but there will be an introductory session this Friday which will be led by a member of the team leading the project in school. As part of the process, the [____] Educational, Child and Community Psychology Service may need to collect anonymised data from us in order to gauge the success of the project. If you have any questions regarding this, please do make an appointment to see either [____] or myself.

I would be grateful if you could return the consent slip at the bottom of this letter before Friday.

Yours Sincerely

[____] Class 6

Child's name: _____

I agree/do not agree to allow my child to take part in the [____] Literacy Project.

Signed

Appendix 11: Letter to parents/carers of children in Class A

Dear Parents/Carers of children in Year 6,

Year 6 Appreciative Inquiry Writing Project

As you are aware, I have been working alongside xxx with Year 6 recently using Appreciative Inquiry as a way to improve children's motivation and engagement in their writing. This work is part of the xxx Literacy Project, which is currently being evaluated.

Appreciative Inquiry is a very positive way to improve the work of any group of people. It focuses on what is working well and involves everyone in creating more of those good times. The children in Year 6 have been highly imaginative in their ideas for writing.

I am studying for a doctorate with the University of Birmingham and would like to include the evaluation data from xxx Year 6 Literacy Project work in my research. This data includes:

- Pupil questionnaires completed at the start and end of the project, which focus on children's attitudes to learning
- Simple rating scales to show how much the children believe they participate in decisions about their learning and how much they believe children *should* be involved in decisions at school
- Evaluation sheets completed by the children after each Appreciative Inquiry lesson, showing how much they enjoyed it and participated in it before giving suggestions about how the lesson could be improved
- National Curriculum progress data throughout Year 6.

For the purposes of my research, I would like to use all of this information to demonstrate how Appreciative Inquiry can potentially make such a positive difference to children's learning. For confidentiality, all of the children's questionnaires and ideas will be given number codes so that your child will not be identifiable in the research report.

All of the coded information will be kept on a secure system of data storage at The University of Birmingham for the required ten years and then destroyed. A password-protected encrypted memory stick will be used to transfer the data. Only my University

tutors, Local Authority managers and administrators will have access to the information.

If you would prefer your child's coded information **not** to be included in my research please complete the slip below and return it to school before the end of term or to me at the address above. If I do not hear from you I will assume that you are happy for your child's coded information to be included in the study. If you have any queries please contact me using the telephone number or the email address at the top of this letter.

With many thanks,

Anna Lewis (Chartered Educational and Child Psychologist)

………

To Anna Lewis, Educational Psychologist

I do **not** give consent for the coded information relating to my child to be used in Anna's thesis and in any research reports relating to the Year 6 Appreciative Inquiry project	

Please note: If we do not hear from you we will assume that you are happy with the research and confidentiality arrangements.

You only need to return this slip to school (or to Anna) if you do <u>not</u> give your consent.

Name of child:………

Name of parent/carer:………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Signed:

………..

Date:

………

Appendix 12: Power Point presentation to children

CHILDREN AND ADULTS – LEARNING AND CARING

Year 4 Children as Researchers

xxxx Primary

Anna Lewis
Educational Psychologist

13th June 2014

CHILDREN AND ADULTS – LEARNING AND CARING

Appreciative Inquiry
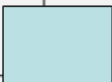
- Helps children to research and find out about each other's best ever learning times at school

- Helps children to create some new ideas for learning based on their best times

- Helps children and adults to work together to make their favourite new ideas actually happen!

CHILDREN AND ADULTS – LEARNING AND CARING

The 4D Stages of Appreciative Inquiry

Discovery	Dream
Design	Destiny

Appreciative Inquiry

Discovery

- Starts by talking with a friend about your best times learning
- Then talking about you and your friend's best stories in a small group
- Someone from each group tells the class about all your stories

Research

- I ask you what you enjoyed and how the lesson could be made better for others

Appreciative Inquiry

Dream

- Starts by making some wishes about how you'd like lessons to be
- Then your group dreams up a new idea for learning based on all your stories
- Your group decides how to show the idea to the class and practices it
- Everyone has fun watching the ideas

Research

- I ask you what you enjoyed and how the lesson could be made better for others
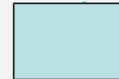
Appreciative Inquiry

Design and Destiny

- You choose which idea you like best and change groups if you'd like to
- Your group then describes their idea in a few sentences
- Then plan what is needed to make their idea actually happen
- Decide who will do what and when

Research

- I ask you what you enjoyed and how the lesson could be made better for others
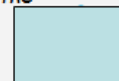
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What do you think?

- How much do you think the children in this class take part in decisions about their learning at the moment?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- How much do you think children *should* take part in making decisions about their learning?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I hope you will:

- Enjoy finding out about everyone's best times
- Have some new ideas
- Make some of your ideas actually happen
- Feel really included
- Make better progress
- Help to make Appreciative Inquiry even better for other children in future

I hope you won't:

- Think that your ideas are not being used enough
- Have other children taking over too much
- Have anyone being unkind to you
- Feel left out, shy or worried about what to do
- Think nothing much has changed afterwards

What I will do to make sure you feel safe and happy during project activities

- Work with your teacher and teaching assistant to make sure everyone is included
- Do some 'ground rules' with everyone
- Keep reminding you that you can just watch if you prefer and join in again at any time
- Keep any information on you private
- Help you, the teacher and teaching assistant to make some of your ideas into real activities that you can enjoy for the rest of this term
- Make sure you have any help you need

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Anna's research

- Your questionnaires now and at the end
- How much you think children **are** and **should be** involved in decisions about their learning
- Your ideas for even better lessons!
- What you enjoyed and how you think each lesson could be improved for other children
- Anything you write or draw in the class research book about the project
- Your answers to a computer survey at the end
- Your National Curriculum levels
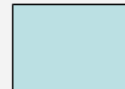
Keeping information safe

- A number code will be used instead of your name when Anna writes about this project
- Your teachers will not read what you've said (unless you ask them to)
- Your parents/carers can ask Anna to see your questionnaires if they want to
- Anna will keep all the coded information about you safely on the University of Birmingham's computer for ten years
- If you tell me you don't want me to use your information I won't and you can change your mind about this at anytime
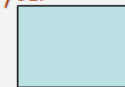
Questions and Consent forms

Any questions/queries/concerns?
(Talk in pairs first)

Please take a consent form and sign it if you are happy to take part

Don't forget you can change your mind

Please come and ask me if you'd like a bit more information

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Appendix 13: Pupil consent form

Xxx Primary School Appreciative Inquiry Project

Pupil Consent Form

I give my consent for Anna Lewis to use the following information about me in her research project:

- My questionnaire responses about what I think about myself as a learner and what I think about school
- What I think about how much children can and should make decisions about their learning
- How much I enjoyed each Appreciative Inquiry lesson, how much I felt able to really participate, what I liked most and how I think it could be improved
- My ideas throughout the project
- My National Curriculum levels

I understand that:

- Anna will use a number code for me so that my information will always be kept private and confidential
- Only my teacher, teaching assistant and Anna will know what I have said. But if my parents/carers ask my teacher she will tell them the information about me
- Anna will keep all the coded information about me safely on the University of Birmingham's computer for ten years (then it will be destroyed)
- It is absolutely fine if I prefer Anna not to use my information. All I have to do is give the form back without my name/signature
- If I change my mind I can ask my teacher or parents/carers to contact Anna at any time and she will say 'yes'.

Name/Signature:……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Date:…………………………………………………………….

Appendix 14: Rating scales for perceptions and beliefs about pupil participation

What do you think?

How much do you think the children in this class take part in decisions about their learning at the moment?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How much do you think children *should* take part in making decisions about their learning?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Name: ………………………………………………………   Date: Friday 7th February 2014

Appendix 15: The fifty PASS items

Appendix 16: Extract from transcript of Teacher B's initial interview, explaining the Tree of Participation model

Anna Lewis: Okay. That's absolutely brilliant, thank you very much. I just want to ask you about this because – this Tree of Participation has been developed out of a long-standing, this has been known about for ages, for about 20 years, the Ladder of Participation, so some of these names for things are a bit hard to understand I think: manipulation, decoration, tokenism, assigned but informed, consulted and informed, what it all means. But I just brought this along because it explains - it gives examples of what some of these things are. So you can see at the bottom level you're manipulating children, you might be organising them to participate in something that they have no idea what they're participating in, you're manipulating them because children perhaps will have an effect by carrying some placard or whatever. Decoration, they might be just performing but they have no idea what it's all about really, they're just being used because it's nice to see children doing things.

Teacher B: Yeah, yeah.

Anna Lewis: Tokenism - you might have some articulate children who are selected to sit on some discussion panels and things, but they have no preparation and they don't consult with their peers. So it's just a token that you've got the child there, it's not really involving children.

Teacher B: Yes.

Anna Lewis: Assigned but informed is a group of children organised to do some work, perhaps it's community work or something around school. They are informed of its purpose and they do feel ownership of what they're doing. So you've organised something and they know what they're doing and they're enjoying it, they know the purpose of it. This means they're consulted about something, about a question, and their opinions are taken seriously. Then here we get into the higher levels where children are asked to participate in planning something. So it's adult initiated but some of the decisions are shared with children so they're participating in that. Here you've got children producing their own newspaper or radio program, all child-initiated and directed, so they're coming up with the idea of what they want to do and they're doing it. And this is where they come across something that they'd like to change or a problem in their school and they start a project to solve that problem and make things better and they convince the adults to run it. What some people, the reason it's developed into a Tree of Participation is that some people have argued in the research that these higher levels shouldn't be hierarchical because it depends on the type of activity you're doing.

Teacher B: Yes, definitely.

Anna Lewis: So you'll move around these and it's not that that's better than that, depending on what you're doing. So you end up with this kind of thing where these are all equal really, once you're up in this tree all these things can happen at any time depending on what the activity is. So what I want you to think about is just where do you think you are in your class at the moment on here, are you down here somewhere or nearly up in the tree or already up in the tree? Where you think *you* are in terms of your classroom practice with this Year Four class generally?

Appendix 17: Example of initial coding within first interview with Teacher A

Anna Lewis: So do **you** think, how much do **you** think the children in this class take part in decisions about their learning at the moment, what would your assessment be?

Teacher A: I think I'm guilty of actually not giving them that much of an input, glancing at their responses and seeing they're in the four to six range, I think it's more down to the three, yeah.

Anna Lewis: You said guilty, is that because you think they should or…

Teacher A: I think they should be but I think there are constraints perhaps with the use of curriculum that are preventing that involvement, with the situation the school is in at the moment as well with the Ofsted inspection that says it Requires Improvement so therefore there's this –

Anna Lewis: Pressure.

Teacher A: Pressure going on which is perhaps reducing that...

Anna Lewis: Flexibility to…

Teacher A: Freedom to be flexible, yeah.

Anna Lewis: Freedom to do things differently.

Teacher A: Well, I do like the idea of them being involved in some of the decisions about their learning, we spoke about the Community for Enquiry tasks didn't we previously and I **like** that sort of involvement with the children, their having that say in steering the learning. I'm not going to go for a 10 but seven, eight.

Anna Lewis: Is where you think it should be?

Teacher A: Is where I'd **like** it to be so they have got that degree of (inaudible 0:01:52.0).

Anna Lewis: (laughs) Thank you. And I'll remember. Do remind me - the Community for Enquiry, what is that?

Teacher A: That starts off with either a stimulus which is either a question or an image or an object and with that the initial stage is discussion around that object either as a group or as a series of subgroups. Which is then leading to coming up with or formulating a series of questions linked to that, for example "What is it for?", "Who would have used it?", "What's in the picture?", "Why is that person doing that?" And then those questions are then shared with the class, they're displayed on the board and then the next phase is putting a hierarchy to the questions.

Anna Lewis: Oh, okay.

Teacher A: Either linking questions, some questions will link together, others will be perceived as being more significant, more of a link to an area of enquiry whereas others may not be so relevant so for example one we had recently was that there was some images of the South Pole and the polar region there. One of the photos I've shown the class had a picture of an iceberg with a hole in, and one group picked up on that, "Why is there a hole in the iceberg?" which is probably not as relevant as another question which came up along the lines of, "Are the icebergs all melting?" So the children were then asked to group the questions, form a hierarchy and then –

(overspeaking)

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Teacher A: Yeah, and then as a class they can then, they're involved in that moving the questions around and then from that we can go to the list of questions and agree that the one at the top of the list is the one that forms the main enquiry. We've done it [Community for Enquiry] a few times with various classes, again curriculum restraints have prevented me doing as much as I would like to but it is a really good way of involving the class in decisions of getting them to think about that learning –

Anna Lewis: And make judgements about what matters most or what the priority is. Where on here do you think you are – roughly - on the Tree of Participation? (laughs)

Teacher A: (inaudible 0:04:30.0) I would like to think that I'm closer towards (inaudible 0:04:40.7) at the top of the tree, I think I'm closer to the adult initiated and sharing some decisions.

Anna Lewis: Yeah. (laughs) Why do think that? Did you say you'd like to think you're above there?

Teacher A: I would like to think I'm above there and I don't think I am and I think –

Anna Lewis: Well, some of this depends on what you do –

Teacher A: To a certain extent..

Anna Lewis: That's why it's not putting them higher up, it depends what the activity is really.

Teacher A: However, I'd say that's where I'd like to think where I think I am, I think reflecting more about it, I'm probably not even at the adult initiatory sharing some decisions. But I think that's other factors that are causing that rather than necessarily –

Anna Lewis: How you'd like it be.

Teacher A: How I'd like it to be, yeah. I think that's why this project is exciting, why it appealed to me, the idea of the enquiry element is something I like.

Anna Lewis: And it gives permission almost to form a structure that takes us into the realm of children's views, bottom up rather than top down I suppose. Okay, that's wonderful, thank you. Is there anything you want to ask me about or is – actually, is there anything that stands out in your mind where, I know you have talked of the Community for Enquiry you've said, anything else that you've done with children in your teaching career that has been very, very participative or involved the children a lot?

Teacher A: Yes, my music co-ordinator has this sort of – for example, I'm involved with the end of year productions and there's more of a participatory role with the children, for example, putting together the performance of their dance routine or whatever with the music, that's –

Anna Lewis: And they have a role in that, that –

(overspeaking)

Teacher A: That's not decided by me, that's with the children involved in that and there's a lot of enjoyment and (inaudible 0:07:01.1) says, "Oh, that might be a good idea", they go off and come up with it. I think I've got on the computer, I'll show you in a minute, there's a video of some dance rehearsal during this class earlier on this year which is bringing that creative element in and that's – they were using War of the Worlds as a stimulus, the Jeff Wayne version, (inaudible 0:07:26.3) I was really impressed with a couple of the groups, one of which was an all boy group which is.. dance, not

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necessarily everyone expects boys to excel at but on this occasion this group of seven really achieved something so yeah, I am a musician by training and I guess that creative element comes out a lot with a lot of the successes that we've had.

Anna Lewis: Yeah. That's really interesting, thank you. It makes me think, the thing – whatever we're confident in ourselves it's often easier to let go and marshal the children's ideas and take them in because you're comfortable with that area. But it's the same for maths for me, that's what I feel more comfortable with and then I love getting children's ideas.

[0:08:21.2]

Teacher A: It's the same with the poetry ideas as well, so I'll be passing comment on the study we're in but (inaudible 0:08:26.9) the poetry and get this, again, with many classes we've used an image of a tree as a piece of poetry just to draw out those ideas from the children, we're going to see some of (inaudible 0:08:41.1), again I've got some examples of what we've done, we do a poetry book every year, this is where they can – I think the enthusiasm is rubbing off as I believe you've alluded there and it comes out with what the children are doing.

Anna Lewis: That's great. Right, well, thank you very much indeed, that was wonderful. That's it. (laughs)

[End of Transcript]

Key

Blue type: Teacher's feelings, reflections, self-assessments, experiences of pupil participation

Green type: Curriculum constraints that prevent pupil participation/other school events

Purple type: Contextual difficulties e.g. Ofsted, leading to pressure which decreases flexibility

Maroon type: Teacher beliefs, views, values, examples of, likes and dislikes

Green highlighting: Pedagogy, teaching skills, teacher's role

(5 of 14 initial codes illustrated)

Appendix 18: Example of organising teacher interview codes into themes

Children's Needs: SEND and vulnerable children (Theme 6a)		
	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Teacher A</th><th>Teacher B</th><th>Teacher C</th></tr>
<tr><td>**Pre**</td><td></td><td></td><td>But I think the children will really enjoy it. I do have shyer children, which is it's just making sure that everybody has their say and it's going to be me really thinking about how will they best share their idea.

Two shy people in a pair together, you never know they could think, "Finally I've got someone I can actually say something to, they're not going to just talk all over me." That might be a way to do it, but yeah, that's a worry, but I think… I don't think it's…,</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Post**</td><td>Well I think we tried to address that, didn't we, at the early stages with the planning groups because we'd identified [name] and [name] as members of that planning team. Those two pupils have been identified with, or at least one of them has been identified with specific needs, the other with questioning whether they should be assessed as such. But the assessments have not yet come up with any further information that we can use. But that gave them a chance to be involved in a small group situation with the planning. The drawback comes, I think, with some of the group work with the children. [Name] especially is finding it very hard to get on with the group, to involve herself with the group. She's a pupil that will sit on the fringes of things and just watch and doesn't engage too well. And I think that aspect of inclusion perhaps wasn't so successful because try as we might she wasn't engaging herself as much as we wanted. And to be fair the</td><td>I think actually some of the children really, I mean [name]… I wonder if I can show you. It's a shame because their books have all got stuck so I can't show you a piece of work that's typical for them. *Yeah.* But there, normally he reproduces brief instances or say, and it's of questionable quality. *Yeah.* And it's very lacklustre. *So you're saying [name] normally only would do three sentences at most?* He is, in maths he's wonderful. *Yeah, yeah.* In reading, he's wonderful. In writing he is Mr Bare Minimum. *Yeah.* He just is. (*Laughter*) It's not because he can't, it's because he finds it difficult. *Yeah.* But he just struggles to remain on top and motivated. He brought me this and he had written a few sentences and I said to him, "That is really good, but you need to write</td><td>It's those who really do not work well in groups. *Yes* I think they might need to be one on one with the teacher because they work fine with adults. *Or just with a pair? Or what that… no?* Some children really *They can't do that?]*Can't be sort of like serious and let themselves be vulnerable in front of others. At least that's what I've learnt from doing this, that there's three that maybe can't do it. *Are those… did you say there's three, three children?]* Well I'd say two, yeah, I'd say two. *Is that because of any special needs of theirs?* One, (inaudible 0:09:59), those two find it difficult to share their own idea or to get along with others. I think there's a lot of confidence in sharing your own idea, especially if your idea actually makes it and then you've got to go through with it. It's a bit</td></tr>
</table>

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But it still, eventually, I think came to a point where [name] wasn't as involved as she should have been compared to the other pupils, that degree of involvement

But thinking in general about the pupils with specific needs, it's keeping that awareness as one does as a practitioner anyway, about they are getting on, just perhaps ensuring that you're focusing a little bit more on what that group is doing with that pupil to try to either get that engagement as we've seen with one group here where that engagement wasn't always forthcoming. Or just to put the brakes on some of the ideas and just think well just take a step back, can we do that or would it be better to do it that way. And that discussion needs to be with the group so that they've got that influence and input on where it should perhaps go to instead.

me a bit more than that and it needs to be in the same, in the same quality," because it's just…*Hmm.* It is by far the best piece of writing that he's done. *Yeah.* With, you know, some of his use, I mean the commas I've put in so he hasn't used commas appropriately, but you know, "The game ended a draw because [name], in the fourth minute of the game, pulled it back". *Yeah. Yeah. Brilliant!* Yeah "So the game ended in a tie." And there are just some really nice "Just in the nick of time when I," there's just some really, really lovely, at the end he put, "In the end England came fourth, France third, Germany second and the brightest star in the bunch, Brazil, came first". *That's fantastic!* Lovely.

scary, [inaudible 0:10:15] and then they find it difficult to work in any group. So that's my own diagnosis.

Key

Blue highlighting: SEND and inclusion

Grey type: Group work

Olive green type: Attainment/quality of work

Green highlighting: Pedagogy, teaching skills, teacher's role

(4 of 14 initial codes illustrated)

Appendix 19: Examples of theme and subtheme data reordered in relation to the research questions

<table>
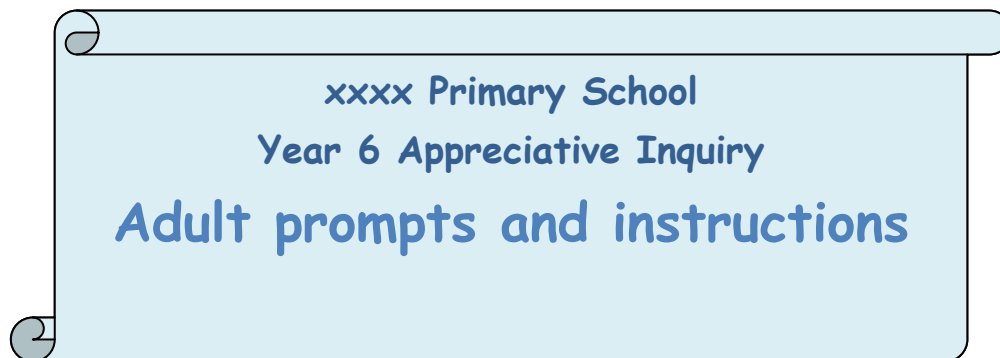<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">**RQ1: How does an AI affect the culture of pupil participation in the classroom? In particular, is it an effective way to give children voice and influence in decisions relating to their learning and does it affect the adults' beliefs about the value of pupil participation?**</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">**Teacher A**</td><td align="center">**Teacher B**</td><td align="center">**Teacher C**</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>*Beliefs and values (Theme 1a) Pre*
I do like the idea of them being involved in some of the decisions about their learning, we spoke about the Community for Enquiry tasks didn't we previously and I **like** that sort of involvement with the children, their having that say in steering the learning…

Beliefs and values (Theme 1a) Post
… I can't remember if we were saying last time about the inquiring minds project and my enthusiasm for that, and this is linking to that and it's just shown how much that…Enquiry type work can really bring learning together with children….</td>
<td>*Beliefs and values (Theme 1a) Pre*
Because I think it depends what you think about "should" because in an ideal world if children understand learning, the children understand their own abilities and their next steps, then it would be 10 out of 10, they definitely should control everything themselves. However…</td>
<td>*Beliefs and values (Theme 1a) Pre*
Initially I knew that I thought they **should** have more of a say in their learning, but I was trying to really go over the times when they do have a choice. However, if they always chose to do drama, for example they wouldn't get to choose other things and they wouldn't choose writing and they wouldn't practice it…

Beliefs and values (Theme 1a) Post
I think their ideas can be incorporated into real lesson plans, but I think it should be teachers deciding if it's the right thing to do. So I do think they've got lovely ideas, but to try and link it in to what we're already doing…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Self-evaluation and experiences (Theme 1b)Pre*

I think I'm guilty of actually not giving them that much of an input.

I think I'm closer to the 'Adult initiated and sharing some decisions'…I would like to think I'm above there and I don't think I am [in relation to Tree of Participation]…I think reflecting more about it, I'm probably not even at the 'Adult initiated sharing some decisions'.

My music co-ordinator has this sort of – for example, I'm involved with the end of year</td>
<td>*Self-evaluation and experiences (Theme 1b)Pre*

I think because of my background, I said to you before at our last meeting that at my old school we were incredibly child centred so we would give the children the learning objectives. We didn't so much for literacy and maths but for curriculum we would give them the learning objectives and say to them, "What would you like to do to ensure we cover these?" And we'd do that on the last day of term so they know over the holiday we can plan things in for the following term. So I'm used to the children being really</td>
<td>*Self-evaluation and experiences (Theme 1b)Pre*

When I plan I try to include it [pupil decision making] sometimes. For example, in science they could choose to do a drama activity, a writing activity or a poster to show how they learn, to show what they understand about the digestive system, and they do make choices about what they want to learn each term in that we all make a spider diagram of what do you want to find out about.

So, when they have to do any piece of writing, usually I</td>
</tr>
</table>

productions and there's more of a participatory role with the children, for example, putting together the performance of their dance routine or whatever ...That's not decided by me, that's with the children involved in that and there's a lot of enjoyment…

Self-evaluation and experiences (Theme 1b) **Post**

Very pleased that the local secondary school…were able to take part.

In relation to the literacy project we've been right up in the middle of the tree, it has been completely child-led with the investigations. They have consulted with me for advice. They have consulted with me for perhaps the next steps with that advice, where they go to…Really it has been right in that tree…

involved in their planning and here, in terms of long term and medium term planning the children aren't at all in charge of anything. They are in charge within lessons, from lesson to lesson, in one lesson they can choose their own level of differentiation for example so there is some ownership…

Self-evaluation and experiences (Theme 1b) **Post**

Yeah. I think there's a shift but I think it started off shifting and it went really far up into the tree when they were setting up their action plans and this is what we're going to do and we're going to ask these people this, and we're going to ask these people this, and we're going to speak to them about this and I was thinking, "Wow! This is just going to run itself!" And then I said to them, "Your deadline for your action plans is 9 July…"

would give lots of examples or the children would think of examples we write up, and especially if it's in-depth writing where they're actually going to write for a long time independently, they will usually all come up with their own idea….

Self-evaluation and experiences (Theme 1b) **Post**

Well, I don't know if it's from doing it or whether it's because we're coming to the end of the year, I've been asking lots of "What do you like about the classroom? What do you think classrooms should be like?" They said they didn't like carpets, and actually teachers… I **love** them sitting on the carpets, that's going to be a bit of a change if I've got to try and take that into account, because I understand the reasons they don't like it. But it's easier to see who's behaving and things like that, and to talk to them because they're on the carpet…

Power sharing (Theme 5b)

I've had some input with for example, there was one group earlier on today talking about the letters, the issue they had writing letters and that was my editorial decision saying 'we can't send the letter like that.'

So there has been that degree of decision making on my part *which is the sharing responsibility really, isn't it?* It is indeed.

Step in and then perhaps follow up more with the organisations..

Power sharing (Theme 5b)

"Okay, well, I'll email her if you just tell me what to write".

But I think that they probably would have been happier if they had planned these things and the Gross Body one as well, and the Nature Walk as well, and then said, "There's your action plan, Mrs ▇▇▇ that's what we want to do, you need to plan it and we're going to do it in two weeks". I think they would have been happier with that.

I mean, I didn't coach them massively in terms of saying, "There's the clay, it's lunchtime,

Power sharing (Theme 5b)

I do think certainly with choosing their activities as long as it's within a frame of things I'd normally do then that's really good fun and they've been so passionate about… (Inaudible 0:03:48) they're so passionate about it and so that's good, the engagement is there. So they can choose the activities to engage them but the teachers need to frame it for them.

I'd hope to keep asking children what they want to do, then be really almost

	do you want to make those trophies?"…	sceptical and then say, well how am I going to change that **really**? …
Pedagogy (Theme 5a) **Pre** [Community for Enquiry] starts off with either a stimulus which is either a question or an image or an object and with that the initial stage is discussion around that object either as a group or as a series of subgroups. Which is then leading to coming up with or formulating a series of questions linked to that, for example "What is it for?", "Who would have used it?", "What's in the picture?", "Why is that person doing that?" And then those questions are then shared with the class, they're displayed on the board and then the next phase is putting a hierarchy to the questions… Yeah, and then as a class they can then, they're involved in that moving the questions around and then from that we can go to the list of questions and agree that the one at the top of the list is the one that forms the main enquiry.. *Pedagogy (Theme 5a)* **Post** Just make sure that they're clear, it's just not guaranteed it's going to work. It's a real life experience. You try to do these things, they're not going to happen, okay you've just got to get on with it and try to find another way round it. Because writing is still an issue in the school and this opportunity to write in a range of different genres, that writing for a purpose, a real purpose I think has with this cohort shown it can really inspire them…	*Pedagogy (Theme 5a)* **Pre** Yes. And not really what they want to do at all because I'm going to say to them for example, "Today you're going to be finding fractions, if you want to work at level four then you might be finding fractions of quantities and if you're working at level three it might be fractions of shape, have a go, you need to be pushing yourselves". And it's taken quite a long time for them to able to choose the appropriate – they all want to do the highest level that you present and then they find they can't do it and really wobble, whereas now they tend to pitch right on the whole. Not exclusively… *Pedagogy (Theme 5a)* **Post** The thing that I don't think I did well enough was the actual piece of writing…. I think looking back I could have brought them in and said, "So, a report needs to look like this. Now you're going to…" I think I just got carried away with the whole child initiated side of it and just thought, "They'll know what to do," and actually they just didn't quite. I mean they have written quite nice pieces of writing and they worked hard. So I think my big thing if I went back retrospectively, the thing that I would change would be to give them direct modelling and maybe a few good examples of reports…	*Pedagogy (Theme 5a)* **Post** So new ideas that we come up with – *Will be just as good?* Yeah, so long as it's fun and engaging they seem to be liking it, even if it wasn't their idea. I think actually it was really fun as a whole class making and Gary's habitats So it was just making sure they'd got fun things to do whether they come up with them or not…

Curriculum constraints (Theme 2a) ***Pre***	*Curriculum constraints (Theme 2a)* ***Pre***	*Curriculum constraints (Theme 2a)* ***Pre***
I think there are constraints perhaps with the use of curriculum that are preventing that involvement, with the situation the school is in at the moment as well with the Ofsted inspection that says it Requires Improvement so therefore there's this… pressure going on, which is perhaps reducing that…freedom to be flexible	So I'm used to the children being really involved in their planning [at previous school] and here [in this school context], in terms of long term and medium term planning the children aren't at all in charge of anything.	However, we are really constricted by the curriculum as well so actually we try and tease it and make it look like we've done it more than we really have…
We've done it [Community for Enquiry] a few times with various classes, again curriculum constraints have prevented me doing as much as I would like to…	*Curriculum constraints (Theme 2a)* ***Post***	*Curriculum constraints (Theme 2a)* ***Post***
Curriculum constraints (Theme 2a) ***Post***		However we've just bought a new curriculum so it's more, not necessarily rigid but it tells you how to do each thing.
I think the biggest problem we had with it was that by the time we got to the letter stage and then the Plan Bs, we were then into the rehearsal for the play and other issues had precluded focusing on that.		
As I say by that time other things had got in the way with the productions…		

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Appendix 20: Example of planning sheet for Class A

xxxx Primary School
Year 6 Appreciative Inquiry
Adult prompts and instructions

Inspired to Write

Timings	Activity	Who does what?
9.10-9.30	Adult preparation meeting whilst children in assembly	• xxx to explain groups and who takes which children and where they can work • Anna to go through the AI process and aims
9.30-9.45	Whole class introduction to the morning and discussion of first few questions	• Anna to outline the morning • xxx to lead the class discussion, reminding children of high points from his point of view and broadening perspective of writing beyond literacy • Anna/xxxx to help class to agree on some ground rules
9.50-10.55	Discovery session in small groups	Adult to: • organise children into pairs to facilitate the interviews • listen to some of the stories and make notes if needed • ensure children swop roles after about 20 minutes • give children 5-10 minutes to decide on the best story or two ready to feedback • bring the group together to hear

11.15-12.15	Dream Stage Part 1	Adult to help the group to: - start thinking about an idea for the class that they'd like to really happen based on their stories (something they'd be excited by and seems feasible). It could be a project for after SATs, a club or even just a way of working when they are writing at school – anything! Try to ensure all children participate equally - decide how to present their idea to the class as if it's already happening e.g. role play, TV interviews, poster, game, any kind of performance - plan, prepare and rehearse
	Dream Stage Part 2	# Whole class presentations Dream Stage evaluations for all.

Thank you for helping to facilitate this inquiry

<div style="text-align:center;">

xxxx Primary School
Year 6 Appreciative Inquiry

Interview Guide

</div>

<div style="text-align:center;">
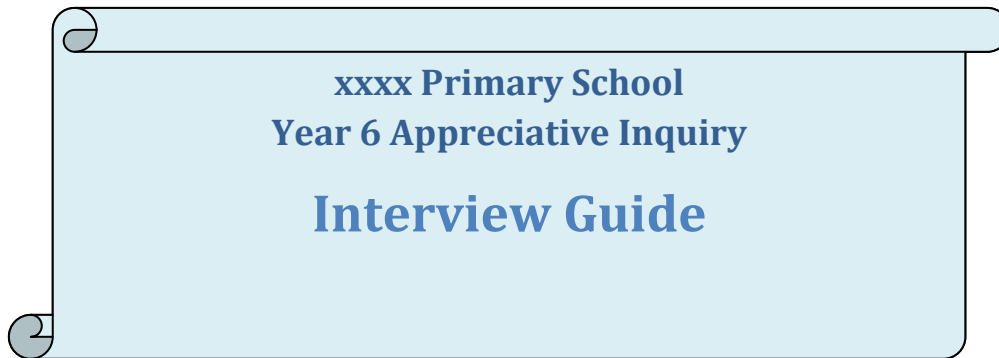
Inspired to Write

</div>

Thank you for taking part in this inquiry. We are interviewing each other to find out about our best ever experiences of writing so that we can create new ways to be inspired to write in Year 6.

We need real stories of writing or learning that has really happened!

Please allow 20 minutes each and jot down some notes or make some drawings to remind you of the stories you tell each other.

You don't have to answer all the questions, just use them to help you get to a good real story. One detailed story is much better than lots of short answers to the questions.

The first questions don't have to be about writing at all – just your best ever experiences of learning activities at school. We are going to start by discussing these as a class.

Big Questions

- Have you ever taken part in a project that you really enjoyed or looked forward to? What was it? What was good about it?

- Think of a time when you've felt really enthusiastic about your work? What was happening? What made it so good?

- Think of a time when you really liked writing about something. What made it so good?

Quick questions

- Do you prefer writing with a pen or pencil and paper or typing on the computer?

- Do you enjoy *calligraphy* or fancy writing?

- Do you enjoy writing in a group? Have you shared your ideas with other people? When has group writing been good?

- Have you ever put humour into your writing? What was it about? What made it funny?

- What is your favourite writing genre e.g. horror, poster, stories, non-fiction, poem, letter, list, news report etc

- Do you prefer to write on your own? What helps you to concentrate on your writing?

- How do you bring your stories to life? How do you plan your stories?

- Can you think of a time when you've been imaginative in your writing?

- Have you ever written a script for a scene or a play?

- Can you think of a time when you've had lots of freedom to write?

- When have you done some writing for a real purpose or reason that you were excited about? E.g. planning for an art or craft activity, writing to a special person, writing a script or directions/instructions for something good, writing news

- How do you plan your writing? Where do the best ideas come from?

- Can a short amount of writing be even better sometimes? When? How?

- Without being modest, what do you like most about yourself as a writer?

Future dreams questions

- If you could have three wishes right now to make learning even better at xxxx Primary School, what would they be?

- Imagine xxx Primary School has just been awarded a new top prize for outstanding writing. What is said at the award ceremony? What is happening that everyone likes so much?

Appendix 22: Appreciative Inquiry Interview Response Sheet

Xxx Primary School
Year 4 Appreciative Inquiry
18.06.14

Interview Response Sheet

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Story Teller	

Notes and drawings to remind you of the best stories
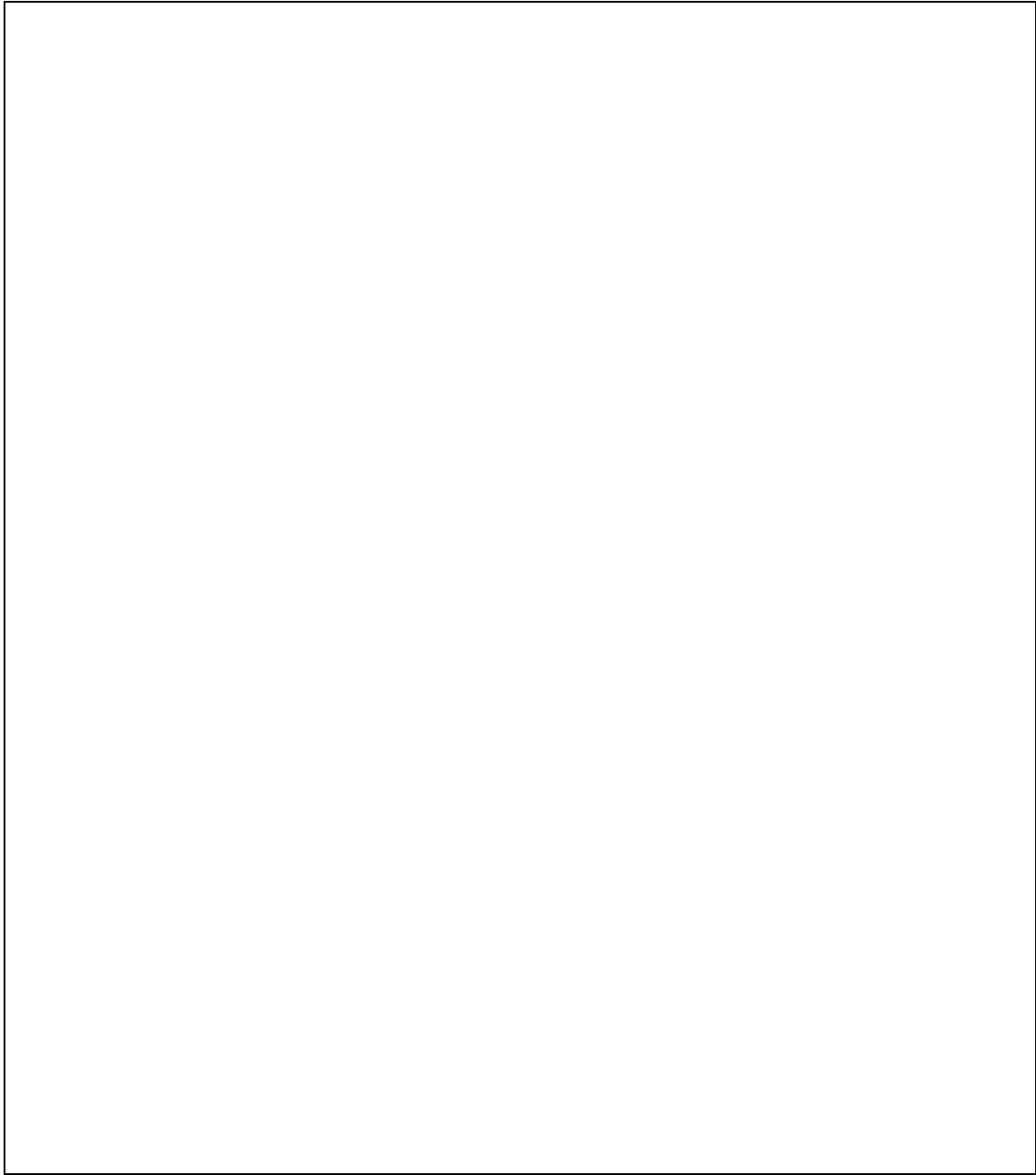
Thank you for participating in this inquiry. Please be ready to share your favourite stories.

Appendix 23: Example of Teacher C's comments in the class research diary

→ Not enough time to feedback for all.

→ Mixing the whole year group is always more disruptive – discovery stage in class.

→ To better prompt for children could have a template.

eg.

| My favourite lesson is: | → | I liked it because : | → | So I like lesson where I get to : |

→ Children will still accidentally say mean things – even usually nice ones! (⬚ cried because ⬚ said that the space ship he was describing didn't sound good)

Appendix 24: Example of Teacher B and C's planning for the Dream Stage

<u>Dream Stage</u>

PART 1
In the same groups:

Each group –
1 group models - Feedback each idea – ask class what do they have in common? Try to select main themes from them (getting messy/DVD/coloured pens).
How can we change the idea a little bit so that everyone likes it?

Groups on their own [Adults will need to help with this.]

Big flipchart
SCRIBE
As a group, we all enjoy lessons that are WRITE ON BIG POST IT

PAIRED RELAY
We can do this in a writing lesson by   POST IN MIDDLE

DISCUSS AND AGREE AND SCRIBE
Our favourite idea of these is: CIRCLE BEST IDEA

Adults go to each group and check their idea –
Adult to negotiate the idea into something that can really happen. Write down idea.
[Children might limit themselves – ideas can be scaled up or down to make them realistic and fun – visitors and resources can happen!]

PART 2

Coming up with a way to show like it's just happened
Now the idea needs to be presented to class in a fun way so they can really understand and see for themselves your idea in action (like it would happen).

Ideas
You COULD role play a bit of an example lesson.
You COULD role play running home to tell your parents about your fun day of learning.
You COULD pretend that you're on the news showing what Super School ended up with (describing it)
You COULD make it game show style like the X factor
You COULD write a diary entry

Practise

PART 3

All watch and enjoy and think about which ideas they feel most passionate about and explain that they will be able to change their group next lesson.

Thinking time – then they vote:

Big flip chart on piles on the floor and children have their names on 2 post it notes with 1 and 2 for first vote and second vote. Then vote by sticking on.
Take a picture of votes.

Appendix 25: Class A's instructions for Design Stage

Appreciative Inquiry

Design Stage

xxxx Primary
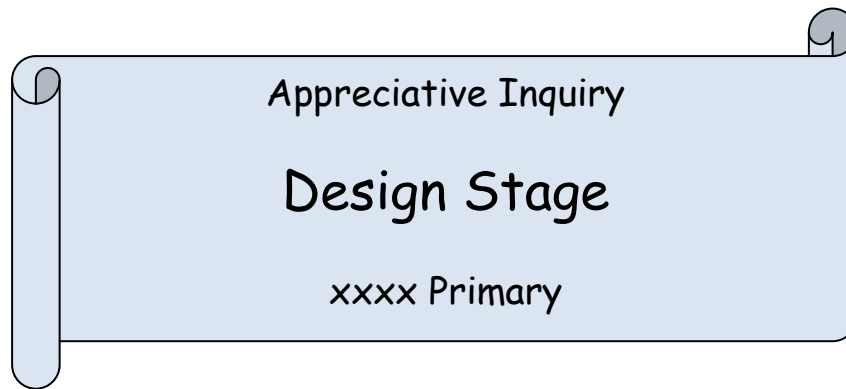
The Design Stage is in two parts:

1. Being clear about your 'dream', your idea, including all the details e.g. who is involved, how you'd like it to work
2. Writing provocative propositions that describe exactly what is happening in the future, written in the present tense

Part 1: Clarity

- Refresh your memories about your vision from last time
- Be really creative in discussing and describing just what you'd like to see happen

Part 2: Provocative propositions

- Agree on some words that best capture what matters most about your dream
- Try writing a statement that captures your vision as if it is already happening i.e. in the present tense

Be ready to share your provocative proposition with the whole class as a working document, inviting any comments...

Appendix 26: Examples of provocative propositions to support the Design Stage

Appreciative Inquiry

Design Stage

Provocative Propositions
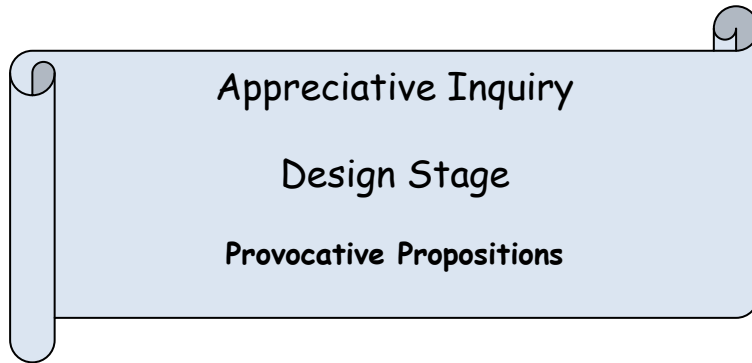
What is a provocative proposition?

- A provocative proposition describes what is desired as if it is already happening

- Provocative propositions are written in the present tense

- When creating provocative propositions, it is helpful to go back to the original stories for inspiration about words that best capture what matters most about your dream

- Each member of the group has a go at writing a draft statement using the words that the group have identified as significant. These drafts are used to construct an agreed proposition

- A good provocative proposition will be positive, affirmative, bold, challenging, and desired by everyone

- It can be anything between a simple sentence and a paragraph.

Examples

- Our classroom is arranged so that we can work on our own at study desks or in small groups around a table. We can decide where we sit depending on the work we need to do
- We are creating and designing our own performances for assembly
- New topics always start by listening to everyone's ideas about what they would like to learn more about, with suggestions from the children about the types of activities they'd like to be involved in. There is often a lot of choice about what to do and who to work with…

Appendix 27: Class A's instructions for the Destiny Stage

Appreciative Inquiry

Destiny Stage

xxxx Primary
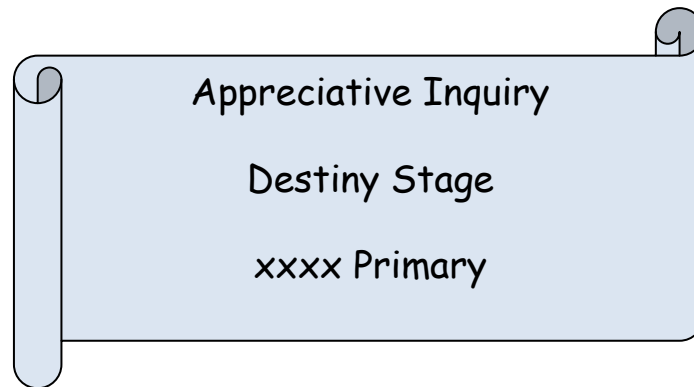
The Destiny Stage ensures that the designs can be realised. The provocative propositions can be revised and updated if needed. Action plans are created with people taking on specific responsibilities.

There is no 'best way' to move through the Destiny Stage, but here are some ideas:

- There may be clear categories of actions, for which individuals or pairs could volunteer to create ways forward

- Create a flow chart

- Just make a list of what needs to be done and who will do what

You may need to check with xxxx whether your ideas are possible.

Be ready to feedback your plans to the whole group.

Appendix 28: Children's evaluation sheets for each stage of the AI

xxx Primary School
Year 4 Appreciative Inquiry

Discovery Stage Evaluation

From 1 to 10, how much did you enjoy interviewing each other and telling stories about your best learning times?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

From 1 to 10, how much did you feel able to really participate?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What did you like most?

How could the Discovery Stage be improved for children in future?

Name: ………………………………………………

xxxx Primary School
Year 4 Appreciative Inquiry

Dream Stage Evaluation

From 1 to 10, how much did you enjoy dreaming up and presenting your group's ideas for writing?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

From 1 to 10, how much did you feel able to really participate?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What did you like most?

How could the Dream Stage be improved for children in future?

Name: ……………………………………………

xxx Primary School
Year 6 Appreciative Inquiry

Design Stage Evaluation

From 1 to 10, how much did you enjoy writing provocative propositions?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

From 1 to 10, how much did you feel able to really participate?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What did you like most?

How could the Design Stage be improved for children in future?

Name: ……………………………………………

From 1 to 10, how much did you enjoy creating the action plan to make your new writing activity really happen?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

From 1 to 10, how much did you feel able to really participate?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What did you like most?

How could the Destiny Stage be improved for children in future?

Name: ………………………………………………

Appendix 29: Lesson evaluation form

xxxx Primary School
Year 4

Lesson Evaluation

From 1 to 10, how much did you enjoy this lesson?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

From 1 to 10, how much did you feel able to really participate?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What did you like most?

How could this lesson be improved for children in future?

Name: …………………………………………Date:………………

Appendix 30: Class discussion prompts

Xxx Primary School
Year 4 Appreciative Inquiry

Class Discussion
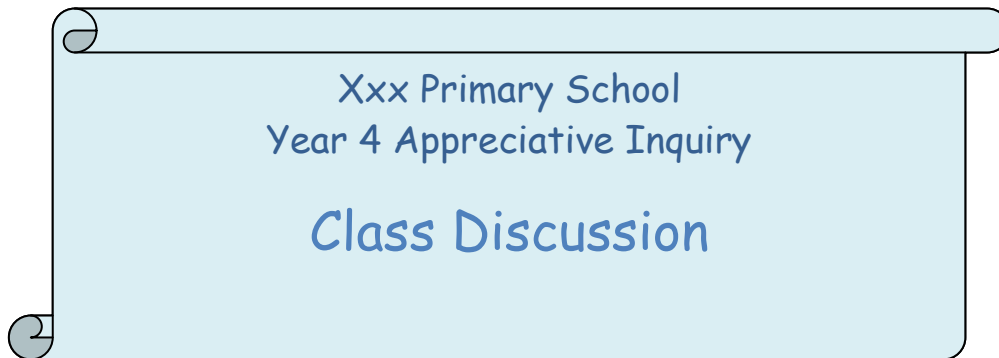
Super School

In pairs or small groups, talk with each other about our Super School project and be prepared to tell the class:

1. What you have enjoyed most, what stands out as the high point

2. How you think this way of working might improve the quality of children's writing

3. How you think our Super School Appreciative Inquiry could be improved to make sure everyone is equally included

Make notes and be ready to feedback to the class

Appendix 31: Group discussion notes recorded by children on sheets provided

	Class A	Class B	Class C
What have you enjoyed most, what stands out as the high point?	The animations. Filming/acting. Acting and filming. Getting the ideas. Making the Power points and the posters. One high point is working as a team and having more choices. Our fight scene because we put a lot of effort into it.	We enjoyed watching the football and making posters about it. Football was amazing because they scored a lot. The football x7 Mini World Cup x3 When it went intense sometimes when they were going to get a goal. Doing the actual football. Telling our ideas to the class.	I did not like it. Doing drama Minecraft. Our dream point. It was quite fun. It was awesome. All activities. Minecraft writing x2. Where we got to tell the stories. Making the ideas happen. Working as a team and getting your ideas down. Making the lessons happen. Dream! (Picture) Gary's house because it is creative and fun Lesson designing. It's brilliant we got to share our ideas.
How do you think this way of working might improve the quality of children's writing?	I think that children will find it more interesting because you can ask a website/company to come in and help. Imagination and creativity. It helps them express their ideas and give them confidence.	Because we can write what we see and if we write stories our minds would be blank. Writing by seeing is easier. By writing the match report x2. Ideas.	Good. Because they get practice. It will have choices. Because it was fun so that it was easy. It would be easy if we act it out then write about it. Gives more to write about.

	We agreed that the enjoyment of the work would improve the writing standard. It will help with others writing because they will have more freedom. They could use their imagination a lot more (Basically Freedom).	Having fun and writing reports about it. You've done football and you're writing. Focusing on your work. We could do something active and write about it x2. It's more exciting.	Better because it's fun. Because we get to think about it then writing about it. It will improve children's writing skills by inspiring their imagination. Gives you ideas. Includes everyone. More exciting so people try their best. It makes your learning fun. Because it helps.
How do you think Appreciative Inquiry could be improved to make sure everyone is equally included?	We all think that everyone is equally included. Make sure you work with people you get on with. Give everybody something to do and what they would like to do. Everyone should have their voices heard. You could add in a mascot to make others laugh and make it more enjoyable. Make sure that everyone's ideas are discussed equally. Have back up plans.	Listen to your team and make sure everyone is included. Have a vote and make sure everyone agrees. x2 Include everyone. People spectated if they didn't want to play. Everyone joins in. I don't. Do it up on the field. The people who are not joining in can be the judges. Have the option to pick your own group. Have the option to work in pairs.	Don't know x2 More fun. Nothing – all good. Teacher put in groups. Nothing x4 It doesn't need to be improved. More time. By making sure everyone has something to do. Help people more often. Make sure all are taking part. Make sure everyone gets involved. More activities.

Appendix 32: Class A's appreciative comments about the Discovery Stage

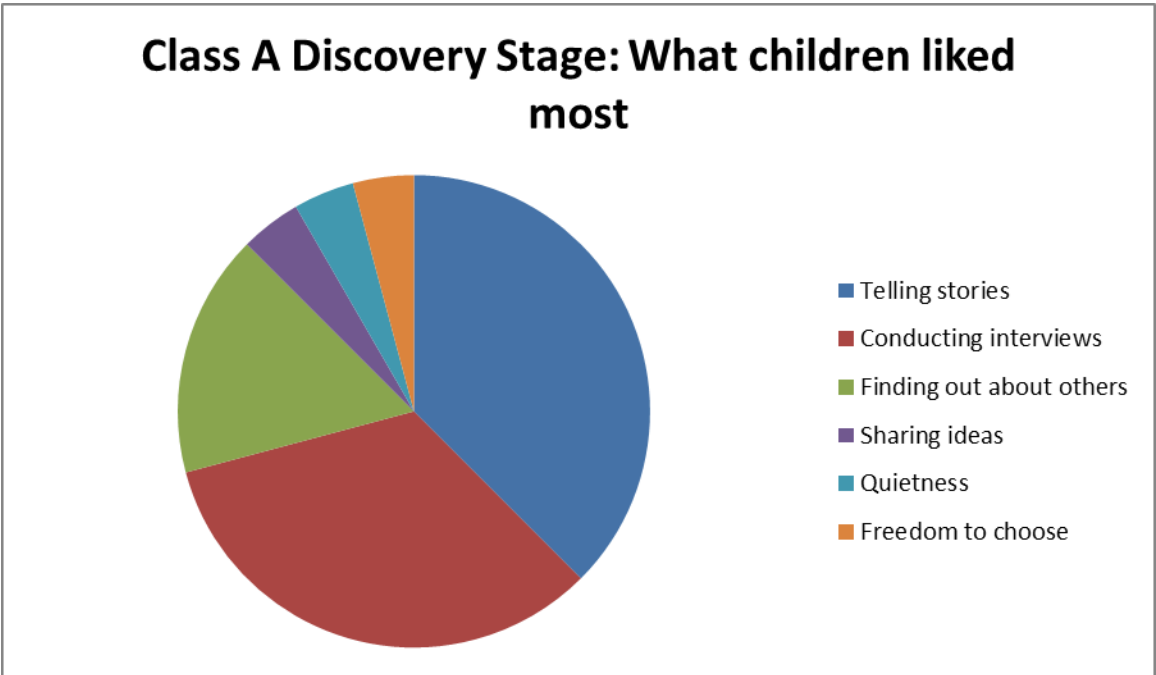| Comments about what Class A liked most about the Discovery Stage	Themes emerging
7 children focused on conducting the interview, with comments such as: *I liked interviewing each other most/ I liked talking about the interview/ Being able to say what I want and being interviewed/ Liked telling the questions and hearing the answers/ Being interviewed and telling the stories.*	Conducting interviews
5 children said that they particularly liked telling stories, with comments such as: *Talking through our thoughts and what is making us comfortable/ I like talking through our ideas and planning/ I liked telling my partner about what I enjoy in my literacy/ I liked being able to say what I liked instead of it in my head/ You got to tell your partner answers you would not say to the teacher.*	Telling stories
4 children enjoyed finding out about other people's experiences, with comments such as: *Because it's good to find out about people/ To find out what other's like/ Listening to other people's ideas and seeing their point of view and seeing how different they are to mine/ I liked finding out what [child's name] liked when he writes his stories.*	Finding out about other people's experiences
2 children focused on answering questions, with these comments: *Answering the story questions/ Liked answering the questions most*	Answering questions
2 children liked the focus on their past, with these comments: *Having to try to remember my past so taking a trip down memory lane/ I liked talking about what we did in the past*	Focusing on the past
Other comments: *I liked sharing my ideas with a group of children/I enjoyed the quietness/Being able to write without being told what to write*	Sharing ideas/quietness/freedom to decide

Appendix 33: Class B's appreciative comments about the Discovery Stage

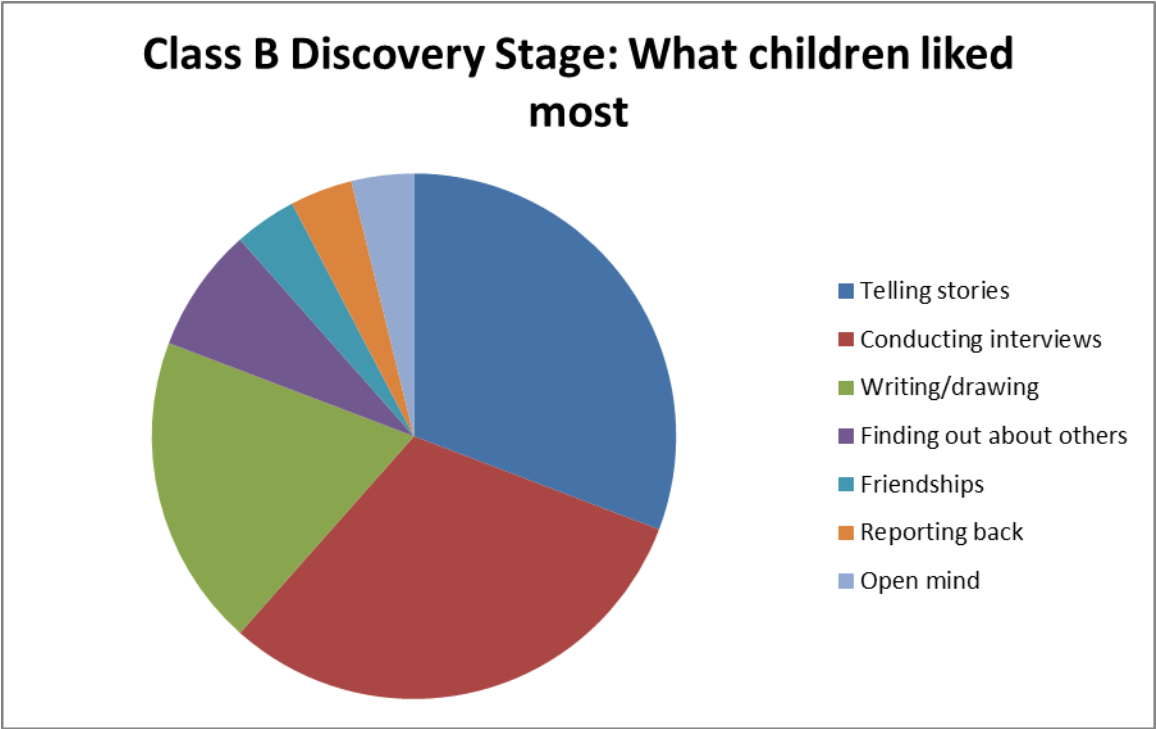| Comments about what Class B liked most about the Discovery Stage	Themes emerging
8 children focused their comments on interviewing each other, with comments such as: *Working in pairs and asking what their favourite time was/When I asked the questions/ Interviewing/The interviewing/When we interviewed each other/When we interviewed each other to find out what our favourite lesson [was]*	Conducting interviews
8 children said that they particularly liked telling stories, with comments such as: *Telling [child's name]/The talking bit in the hall/The story telling/The story telling because Tia now knows that I like food chains/Telling stories to my partners/telling the stories/That we got to tell stories/Talking about our stories/ I liked it where we all had a chance to say what we liked in learning*	Telling stories
4 children said that they liked recording what their partner had told them, with comments such as: *Writing what my partner said and drawing pictures to explain/Writing about what could make learning fun/I liked it when we wrote it on the post-its/When we done the writing*	Recording stories
2 children focused on researching or finding out about other people's opinions, with the following comments: *I liked hearing what my group's favourite lesson is/ Finding out what the people in my class like doing*	Finding out about other people's experiences
Other comments included: *We got to talk with our friends [friendships]/Where you have to say what lesson they liked [reporting back]/Open mind*	Friendships/ reporting back

Appendix 34: Class C's appreciative comments about the Discovery Stage

Comments about what Class C liked most about the Discovery Stage	Themes emerging
6 children liked conducting interviews best, with comments such as: *Interviewing/ I liked interviewing my partner/ I like the interview/Getting interviewed/When you had to interview/I liked interviewing my friend*	Conducting interviews
8 children liked telling stories best, with comments such as: *I liked to be in partners to tell your story/When we did telling stories to our partner/ I liked that I got to tell my friend what I did/That we were able to tell a partner and it was enjoyable/Telling each other/Telling something that happened in the past/I liked telling my favourite time of school/That I got to tell someone my [?] story and someone that I feel comfortable with*	Telling stories
5 children liked sharing stories together, with comments such as: *Sharing stories/When we shared what our best lesson was/When we shared our best lessons/I liked sharing my fort/ I liked when we heard other people's stories*	Sharing stories
3 children focused on friendships and partners, with these comments: *My partner/Where my partner was helping me remember my favourite lesson/ Picking a friend*	Friendships and partners
3 children took the opportunity to say that they did not like it at all, with comments such as: *I didn't like it. Sorry/I didn't like it at all/I did not want to say my story* (One of these children has autism and another child reportedly has significant friendship difficulties). One other child commented: *I liked it a little bit*	Did not like it
2 children liked talking about feelings, with these comments: *That you could talk about your feeling/That you could talk about how you feel*	Talking about feelings
2 children particularly liked going into the hall, with these comments: *Going to the hall and talking with friends/Going in the hall*	Going to the hall
2 children liked drawing their responses, with these comments: *Drawing pictures/Drawing the interview*	Drawing
2 children said that they liked everything, with these comments: *All of it/Everything*	Everything

Appendix 35: Themes in Class A's evaluation comments about what children liked most in the Discovery Stage

Class A Discovery Stage: What children liked most

- Telling stories
- Conducting interviews
- Finding out about others
- Sharing ideas
- Quietness
- Freedom to choose

Appendix 36: Themes in Class B's evaluation comments about what children liked most in the Discovery Stage

Class B Discovery Stage: What children liked most

- Telling stories
- Conducting interviews
- Writing/drawing
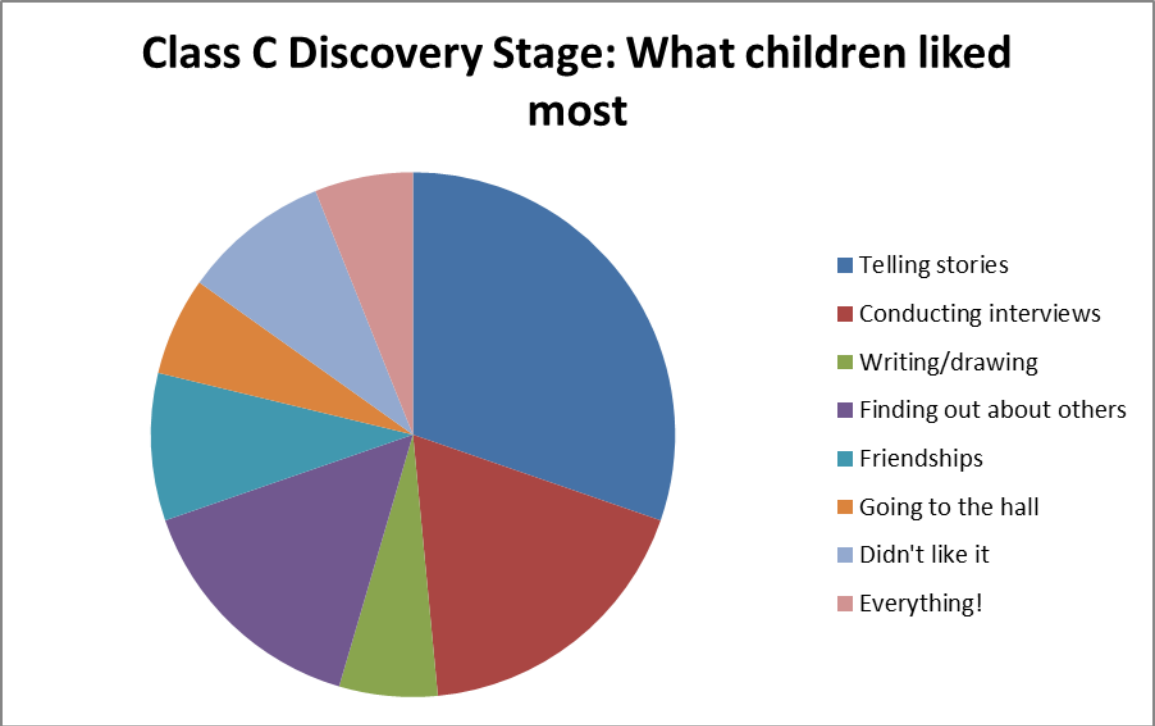- Finding out about others
- Friendships
- Reporting back
- Open mind

Appendix 37: Themes in Class C's evaluation comments about what children liked most in the Discovery Stage

Appendix 38: Examples of children's ideas, provocative propositions and activities

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Class A

Top Gear Group

The idea

To create and film an episode of Top Gear, using a real car in the playground. The group decided to write to local Car Sales Garages to request a good quality car to be brought into the playground for the episode instead of using parents' and teachers' cars, as originally planned (the teaching assistant talking with the group at one stage helped them to think big). Potential local publicity was mentioned in the letter as a way to hopefully entice a response. The draft letters were sent to the head teacher for authorisation and then posted. In the meantime the group researched ideas for the episode and interesting information about cars using the class netbooks.

Comments from the group

- Fantastic ideas and production stages enjoyable but didn't get that far!

- Enthusiasm went downhill when didn't get a response from the companies

- In future, the group thought it would be helpful to have an equally exciting back-up plan in case outside agencies and companies don't respond

- Class teacher liked the idea of getting companies/outside agencies involved

Train Crash Film Drama

The idea

Initially thought of a plane crash drama but adapted this to a runaway train drama after deciding what would work well. It is a murder mystery drama. We have designed the music for the soundtrack. We have written the story and practised the fighting.

Original Provocative proposition

We are acting a Murder/Mystery drama performance. The performance includes a murderer, a victim, a detective and a train. We are expressing our ideas in picture form on 'Paint'. We are only acting with two people so please forgive us if we make a mistake. Our performance is named as Run-a-way Train.

Comments from the group

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- Best bit was practising the fighting – we put a lot of effort into this

- Class teacher liked seeing the drama practice, which was very good

- Unfortunately there are only two people to do all the parts!

Cartoon Animation

The idea

To create our own cartoon animation. Wrote to xxx College and Cartoon Network to ask for support but received no reply. Letters to head teacher first for authorisation. xxx College phoned the school and left a message. The group called back and left a message. No further response. The group found an online site to help them make their cartoon and enable them to upload it onto You Tube.

Comments from the group

- Best bit was finding the online site to help make the cartoon

- Downside was getting the script done. They had already started their story and needed to fit a script to it. It was hard work!

Ghost Film

The idea

To script, act and film a short drama about a ghostly girl in the basement of a house. Wrote to xxxx School to ask for support with film editing. xxxx responded and has supported the project. She was very impressed with the quality of the writing in the letter.

Original Provocative Proposition

We are making a short mystery/horror film about a young woman moving into her first house by herself. In the basement she finds an old chest which hides many secrets within. Who will help her discover what's hidden inside?

Comments from the group

- Best bit was filming and acting it out

- Worst part was having to re-film so much of it! People kept making mistakes and not managing it. It was frustrating but very pleased with it in the end

'The Dark Woods' Film

The idea

Wanted to go to the woods and film a scary film but in the end couldn't be supervised so had to design the filming to take place in school. We had to re-think some bits. Finished now – just needs some editing.

Original Provocative Proposition

We are being given responsibility and freedom to film our own movies that we have designed and created. We are filming a horror movie and scaring the living daylights out of everyone. We are performing it in front of our class. It is the scariest movie you have ever seen. Our movie is called 'The Murder'. xxx stands at the dark crooked old squeaky door of her new house. She is unsure whether to go in or not. Will she go in or won't she…

Comments from the group

- Best bit was the acting and running onto the set!

- Worst bit was having to change the film because of the target audience (school assembly) and having to do about five takes when we were laughing so much

'The Lost Child' Drama

The idea

A theatrical production of a child being kidnapped on holiday. Originally she was with her sister but this had to change when one person in the group dropped out. A new script was then needed.

Comments from the group

- Best bit was getting to act it out

- Worst bit was trying to re-write the script and losing a person after falling out

'The Animal Detectives and The Coke Bomb' Film

The idea

This was going to be a film with animal masks and acting at first and the group were going to send a letter to the University of xxx for support with its creation but lots went wrong with the

letter writing and the letter was never sent. A new film project emerged focusing on two teddy bear animals trying to take over the world. Still need to finish off the last scene

Original Provocative Proposition

We are performing a film called The Animal Detectives and the Coke Bomb with Jack as The Talking Elephant, Sam as The Talking Sheepdog, Louie as The Talking Pug and Kyle as The Talking Eagle. We express this using masks and acting.

Comedy Interview for Film Publicity

The idea

An interview with someone wanting to publicise a new movie. The interviewer goes wrong and then right again, creating humour. We've got the script and we know what we're doing. We still need to film it though.

Comments from the group

- Best bit is the good script

- Worst bit was one girl abandoning the group to go to another group and then coming back again

Class B

Pupil Designed PE Lesson Report

We are planning our own PE lessons, voting on the best one, doing it and writing about it. We are writing about our favourite part and what we've learned.

Awesome Body Parts Instruction Manual

We are writing a booklet of instructions for younger children (Years 1, 2 or 3) to show how to construct a model of an 'Awesome Person' with body parts on view e.g. bits of the brain, lungs, muscles and bones in the hands, feet and arms. It is bloody and gross. It links to science lesson and uses boxes for the basic construction.

Mini World Cup Match Reports

We are making up teams from different countries, perhaps 5-a-side, and organising a Mini World Cup on the school field for all of Years 3 and 4. We are writing our match reports afterwards. Anyone who prefers not to play can be a spectator. Class teachers can decide on the captains.

Brazilian Dancing Instructions

We are researching Brazilian Dancing on You Tube and practising how to do it in a dance lesson at school, before writing instructions for other people to do it.

Nature Walk and Writing using Natural Materials

We are going on a Nature Walk and doing drawings about nature. We are then researching and learning how to write using natural materials and making our own writing tools (e.g. quills) and inks/paints. We are experimenting writing on leaves and twigs, making it fashionable so people say: 'Wow, Pow, Amazing, Cool, Brilliant'.

Voting and refinement of ideas at Design Stage

The vast majority of children voted for the Mini World Cup idea (18 children made it their first choice). The Nature Walk was the next most popular idea (9 children voted for this) and The Awesome Body Parts idea received 2 votes.

The large Mini-World Cup group was broken into three smaller groups and given specific action planning tasks:

1. Organising the classes involved

2. Preparing the clothes and shirts

3. Organising all the other details such as the time and place etc

The children came up with the idea of having a Project Manager i.e. 'someone who is going to check that everyone is doing what they've signed to do and by when'.

The teacher expressed some concern with me about the sharing of power with the children at this stage so that their ideas could be realistic. She decided to give the children an absolute deadline of 9th July to complete their action plans. She told them that she would offer support for any of their actions at lunchtimes when she would always be available but not during curriculum time. She made her email account available for them to draft and send letters to staff.

(For the Mini World Cup writing, children were allowed to work in partners or on their own and encouraged to discuss their writing and share ideas. A bare minimum of half a page of writing was expected. The class teacher believed that the immediate effect of the action upon writing really helped some children and one boy wrote much more high quality writing than he had ever written before. Partner work also helped the children learn from each other.)

Class C

<u>Author into school and writing book reviews</u>

We are voting for our favourite author and writing to invite them into school so that we can interview them and write reviews or comic strips of their books.

(The outcome of the voting was for Jeff Kinney 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid'. The idea became refined because of timescales to asking a teacher to dress up as an author and visit the class. The group wrote to all the male members of staff asking if any of them would dress up as the author and be interviewed by the class. Later the author changed to Michael Rosen and the class acted out the poem 'No Breathing in Class'. Two teachers volunteered: one dressed up Michael Rosen and another was dressed as The Hulk for another purpose and was also interviewed.)

<u>A Tomb for Worries/Ideas</u>

We are making a replica Tutankhamun Tomb in which we can post any worries, memories (happy or sad) or ideas at any time for the teacher to read later. It will have writings and carvings on the side to describe what it is designed for.

(This became a 'Creeperhead' from Minecraft and was designed as something to go with the class next year and be used in Year 5)

<u>Magic Book</u>

We are acting out stories and poems from a Magic Book we are writing, watching the best stories (with a beginning, middle and end) become true and come to life.

<u>Wildlife House or Habitat for Gary</u>

We are creating a house or habitat for Gary (the class soft toy), linked to a science lesson. Everyone in the class will have a small part of the habitat to create and it will be assembled in the lesson.

<u>Minecraft Writing</u>

This started out as a Dr Craft project (the entire group liked Dr Who and Minecraft). They wanted to watch a different episode of Dr Who each week and make models of the Tardis and shelters from materials/blocks on Minecraft. The class teacher had access to a PS3 so that it might have been possible to work together to create a Minecraft model as a class. The teacher negotiated with the children what was possible, realistic and feasible in the time available and the idea was quickly refined to the one described below.

We are bringing in photos (or a memory stick) of Minecraft characters we have designed at home or found on the internet for children to write a story about or describe how it was made.

Some children are making their characters using Lego and writing about those.

(Everyone selected a Minecraft picture or model and then decided whether to write a story, a descriptive piece of writing, instructions or any other genre stimulated by it.)

The class teacher helped the class to focus on making their ideas happen in one lesson each during a week of literacy lessons towards the end of term. Each group needed to adapt their idea if necessary so that it could be completed in one lesson. The refinements are shown in brackets above.

Appendix 39: Extracts from email communication with Teacher C

Sent: 25 June 2014

We're feeling quite nervous about the rest of the project actually as, with the time restriction, I don't know how many ideas are going to be actually possible! We'll have to really dumb them down during the lesson. I've pretty much just typed up what you just sent because that's clear enough.

It's such a shame as we only have 3 weeks and 3 days of literacy left and lots to achieve in literacy. It's such bad timing. We'll try to make their ideas more usable and pass the rest onto their new teachers in year 5. I have just asked about the timing. Do you need it to be 9:30 instead of 10:45?

Sent: 08 August 2014

NC Progress

Well I levelled all their writing in term five and then handed that data in and they asked for term six data in two weeks later so I just went through and checked for improvement between those two weeks. Super school hadn't really got started so it's just the fact that they had just been done I guess. They were moderated too so I was fairly confident in my term five levels which is why there was little movement two weeks later. For reading, their level came from an end of ks2 test which some of them couldn't access as it was for year six. I was asked to do that but it meant that the reading material wasn't best suited to some children. Again these results were given in two weeks after the previous set so there'd be little change as well.

Influence on curriculum and pedagogy/evaluation of AI

In terms of my thoughts of the project, I think I'd potentially gotten myself carried away along with the children and their ideas which made them very stand alone and awkward to fit in. I think I would consider the ideas the children have at the start of the year or term and then myself plan how I could get these ideas in. Like they do the interview stage but possibly I do the rest /or I give them a subject (like we are doing the Romans) and then they come up with ideas to make sure they are relevant.

Potentially, you could tell them the text type for English and do the interviews and then they could write ideas for lessons they they think could fit (world cup to write a report on). This way I could be sure that the ideas are relevant, ensure coverage and I can structure in teaching time. Also, it's an easier way for them to constantly be drip feeding in their ideas rather than taking lots of lesson time out or allowing them too much responsibility for the organizing of it.

That's probably how this will influence my practise. I think the children were certainly engaged during super school and excited at the novelty of it. My problem is that, maybe because of the end of term, I couldn't make the ideas fit into a week or be relevant so there was a lack of input for them to learn the skills needed. If they worked out lessons they wanted which would fit into a series of lessons which were already planned (as I said earlier with topic or text type) then I think it would work well.

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The problem with this being a project is that it is very intensive and stand alone whereas if it was subtly introduced (or if I now subtly introduce it to my next class) then it won't seem as much of a novelty and will, hopefully, become a natural part of the classroom environment.

I enjoyed hearing the children's ideas. In lots of ways it allowed me to trust that they can make choices for their learning. The Minecraft lesson where they basically chose how they present their ideas (poem or story etc) worked well as a stand alone and could be applied to topic lessons but not to literacy. Perhaps just continuing as I do with choosing the topic to write about but giving no choice about text type.

I was apprehensive around the design stage of the project as I thought the ideas were too abstract and I worried about how they would pan out. Although they didn't all happen as planned, it was simple enough to alter their ideas when they fed back to me. This made me feel better. Another teacher came to watch a performance of a Michael Rosen poem which I had showed them a lot but they chose to perform and it was commented on how well they had organised themselves and been motivated.

I would say that the multi-staged element of appreciative enquiry wasn't appropriate but including children's views in other ways would work. Maybe even an ideas box which they could contribute to near the topic board?

I hope these ideas and feedback comments are helpful. It's been an eye opening experience :)

Sent: 22 August 2014

Overall evaluation

My high point was when the children were enjoying the lessons they had created.

I think, when organised alongside more input and in context, the improved engagement would lead to better writing.

For my class, some of the children don't work well in groups or even in pairs, next time ensuring that the teacher or familiar adults can work with these children.

Appendix 40: Letter to children in Classes B and C

Dear xxxx,

I am writing to thank you for taking part in Super School at the end of Year 4. You had some fantastic ideas for writing activities. Do you remember: the Mini-World Cup and writing match reports; the Minecraft character writing; asking a teacher to dress up as an author and come to visit the class; and designing and making a habitat for Gary? You were testing out something called Appreciative Inquiry, which started with interviewing each other in the hall to find out about your favourite learning times. Then you used those ideas to invent some new activities for writing, performing your ideas to the class. Your teachers let you make a lot of the decisions and you showed just how exciting learning can be when you are writing for real reasons and using your own ideas.

You kindly gave me a lot of information about what you liked and what you thought could make Appreciative Inquiry better in future. The results showed that:

1. Your teachers can trust you to use your own ideas and make decisions

2. Your ideas were exactly the sort of writing activities that have been found to help children make the best progress e.g. writing for real reasons, having practical experiences to write about and being very creative

3. You told me that you really liked having more fun and freedom when writing, which you thought helped your writing improve

4. Some children need a bit more help when working in groups so that they can be fully included. You suggested that an adult should sit with the groups to make sure everyone listens and that everyone has a job to do

5. It is best to do Appreciative Inquiry really at the start of the year instead of at the end, so that you and your teacher can use your ideas for much longer.

I hope that you are still enjoying writing and that you carry on using your own ideas when you can. You were very impressive in Super School, and I am very grateful for everything you told me about what you liked and how much you believe children should take part in decisions about their learning at school.

With very many thanks,

Anna Lewis (Educational Psychologist)