

# Listening to Students' Voices

## Students' Perspectives on Teaching and Learning



THE CENTRE FOR



COMMONWEALTH  
EDUCATION

## The Raising Students' Achievement Project

The Ministry of Education, Antigua and Barbuda  
and

The Centre for Commonwealth Studies, University of  
Cambridge, UK



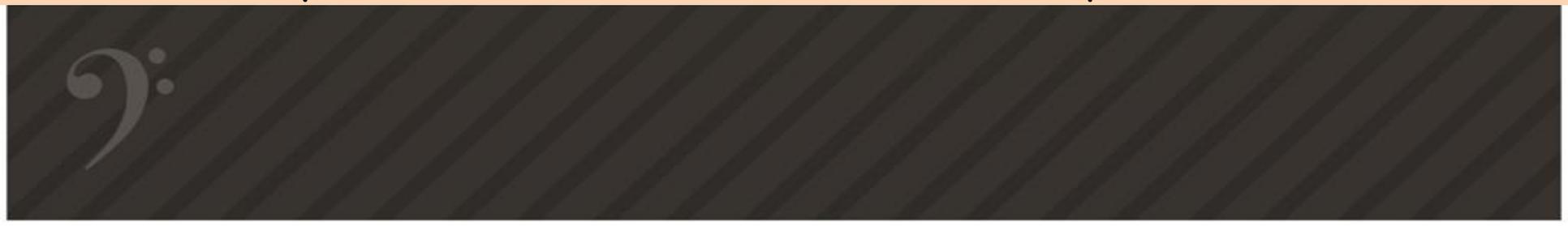
UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

Faculty of Education



young people are **observant**, are often capable of **analytic** and **constructive comment**, and usually respond well to the **responsibility, seriously entrusted to them**, of helping to identify aspects of schooling that get in the way of their learning.

(Ruddock, Chaplain & Wallace, cited in Boaler, 2000, p4)



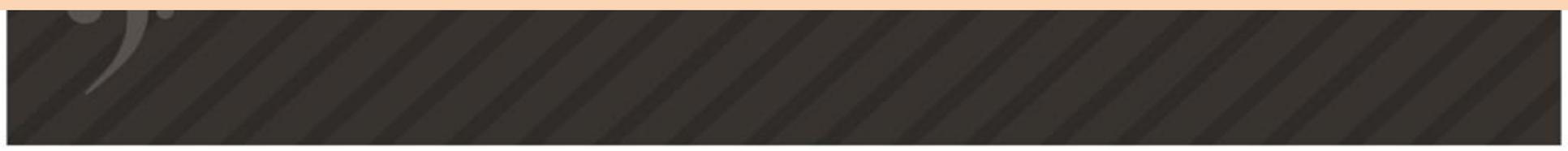
# *Students offer us...*

- ◆ Rich insights into their own experiences of schooling and learning
- ◆ Factors which (de)motivate, (dis)engage, challenge/bore them as learners
- ◆ Offer their own constructions of the reality in which they exist





# The Research Process...

- ◆ In each school: 2 single-sex focus groups, each with 4 grade 6 students
  - ◆ Groups meet half-termly with researcher to discuss learning and teaching
  - ◆ After the 2 school-based meetings, 2 students (one girl, one boy) from each school meet with researcher to discuss findings (Student Council)
- 



# What makes a good teacher?

- ◆ To help you when you are in need for help
- ◆ Are person who is very listing to people
- ◆ Tell the students don't be afraid to asked the student asked if they don't understand
- ◆ A person who is patient
- ◆ Being prepired for school

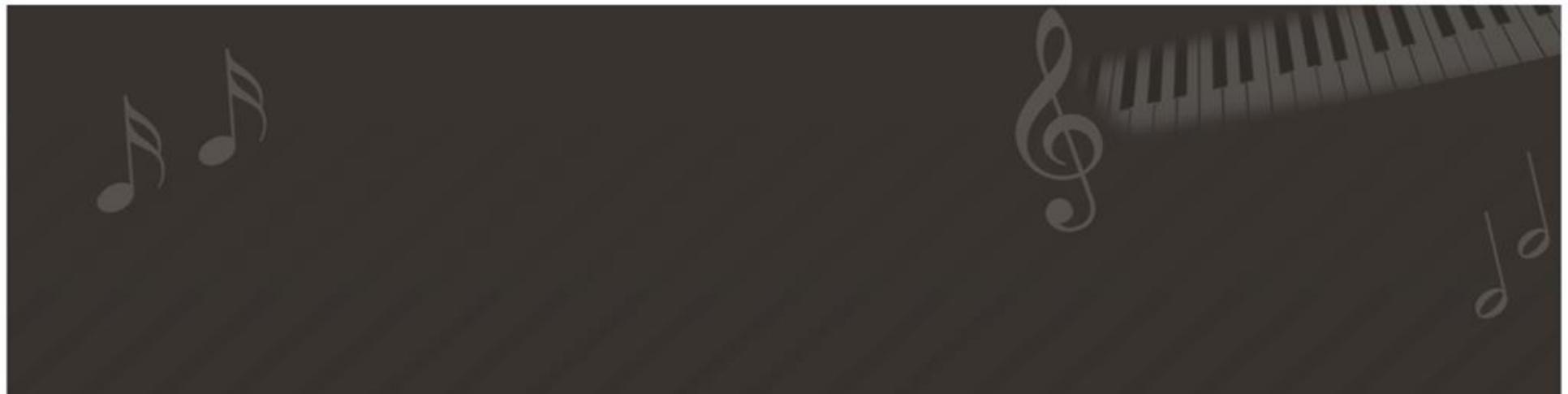
# What makes a good teacher?

- ◆ Will give second chances
- ◆ A teacher who is not judgemental
- ◆ Helps students to work together
- ◆ Be kind, be good
- ◆ Makes the lesson interesting
- ◆ A teacher who will always stop fighting
- ◆ Stop bringing cell phones to school



# Issues Students Raised in FG

- ◆ Anger management for students/fighting
- ◆ Bullies
- ◆ Teachers need to listen
- ◆ Forms of punishment
- ◆ Going on fieldtrips; doing group-work
- ◆ Things that disturb the class/concentration (e.g. lawnmowers, building work, other classmates' talking)
- ◆ Peer relations/influence
- ◆ Cell phones in schools - teachers, students



◆ In their own words...



Anarchy

Understand

Games

Explain

Better education

Fieldtrips

Group work



# *The Best thing about lessons*

◆ I think that the most important thing is that when a teacher teaches a lesson, I like when a teacher teaches her lesson she happily teaches it and we understand and I like to see when she's happy that she accomplish that we understand what she just taught. And sometimes the teachers they're very nice but when they realize that you're not getting what they are teaching they get frustrated and they feel very down so if they're angry they will take out their anger on you and make you feel very bad. Yes, so the best thing I like about lessons is when the teacher's there and she teaches her lesson and everybody understands and when everybody understands the lesson she would be happy that she accomplish something. (girl)



## *The Best thing in lessons...*

- ◆ When you have a great idea and they are inspiring you to do more better.
- ◆ When I get all my work right and when we have a little fun.
- ◆ When we put our like our learning into fun games and activities.

(boys)

# An Interesting Lesson...

A really interesting lesson, is when... I have such a lot of interesting lessons I don't even know where to start. My best interesting lesson - [...] - is Science. 'Cause it's the first time I ever saw litmus, blue paper can turn red in mayonnaise. It's kind of really funny, but it's the first time I know that mayonnaise have acid and alkali and those kind of stuff, those kind of stuff in it, especially shampoo, and all those kinds of stuff. So that was a very interesting lesson, an interesting lesson for me [...] it was very fun. The whole class, we worked together. And we write up the experiment but we put it in our own words so that we can be more civilised. (boy)



## *An Interesting Lesson...*

That, 'ahm...good things like  
ahm...like ahm...What the thing  
name again? Election. The other  
day, we had a election between  
Sunshine and Rainbow, and  
Sunshine won... [...] They had  
ballots. (girl)



# Going on fieldtrips

- ◆ Because it's a fun way to learn.
  - ◆ Because sometimes you don't know what they're talking about and you'd like to see what she's talking about.
  - ◆ You discover many other things.
  - ◆ ...you'd like to have a first-hand experience of what they're saying.
  - ◆ You will learn more about your history and what is happening in the country.
-



# Going on fieldtrips

- ◆ You will learn more about your history and what is happening in the country.
- ◆ I think that we shouldn't get a lot of fieldtrips. If we want fieldtrips I think the teacher should like make a programme where we do our school work and we earn our fieldtrips depending on how we do our school work.

# Other things that enable learning

◆ more pictures and charts of the lesson (boy)

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

Language Art

## Punctuation

Punctuation Mark	Rule	Examples
• Period	Used at the end of sentences that aren't questions or exclamations. Used after abbreviations and initials.	The dog wagged his tail. Dr. J. Wang is our veterinarian. Her address is 123 Doggie St.
? Question Mark	Used to end sentences that are questions or that express doubt.	Did you walk the dog?
- Hyphen	Used to join two syllables or words or divide words into parts.	My dog is one-half poodle and one-half beagle.
’ Comma	Used before the conjunction in a compound sentence. Used to separate items in a list or series. Used to separate a date and a year, and a city and a state. Used before dialogue in a sentence.	I'd hoped to give my dog a bath, but I'm not sure that's possible. I bought my dog a dish, a collar, a leash, and some treats. My dog was born in Boise, Idaho, on June 1, 1998. Then Min told me, "I really would love to own a dog."
: Colon	Used to introduce a list or series. Used to separate the elements of time.	It's easy to list the things dog ownership can bring: love, friendship, and companionship. Walk the dog at 9:00 a.m.
' Apostrophe	Used for contractions and possessives.	Lucho's dog isn't named Spot.
“ ” Quotation Marks	Used for direct quotations.	Abby said, "I actually prefer cats to dogs."
! Exclamation Point	Used after interjections that show strong feeling and sentences that show excitement.	Wow! What a huge dog!

**NOUN**  
is the name of any person, animal, place, thing or idea

HE I  
SHE WE YOU  
They It

HIM ME  
HER US  
you Them

## Friendly Letter

123 Bellevue Court  
Anytown, Ohio 45678  
August 1, 2002

Dear Natalia:

How are you? I am happy that you are my pen pal.

Are you excited that school will be starting soon? I sure it will be great to see all my friends again.

Do you collect anything? I collect action and superhero figures. My collections are growing and growing.

Heading  
Greeting/Salutation  
Body

## Parts of Speech

The boy yelled, "Look out!" and he saw a brave dog quickly run to the rescue.

<b>Noun</b> A name for a person, place, thing, or animal.	<b>Pronoun</b> A word that takes the place of a noun.	<b>Verb</b> A word that shows an action or a state of being.
<b>Adjective</b> A word that describes a noun.	<b>Article</b> A word that introduces a noun.	<b>Adverb</b> A word that describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

quantity  
Adjective  
Many

# Teachers need to listen

◆ sometimes when they go through a lesson and they don't go clearly and then someone says "I don't understand" they would like say hush and they don't want to hear what you say. (girl)





# *Teachers need to respond...*

**B2:** Stop ignoring us when we want to know more information about a subject.

**B3:** And when you don't understand she don't answer us.

**B4:** Sometimes when we ask them questions, they allowed to 'ah walk away.

**B1:** They act like they didn't hear when you come.

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# Things that get in the way of learning

## ◆ Work used as punishment

I hate when the children make a lot of noise and the teacher just comes in, give us all kind of work we don't know yet, and the teacher usually says if you don't finish the work and if you get some wrong you going to get licks. (boy)

# Things that get in the way of learning

◆ Other students/noisy environments

Teacher but I'm not finished. Less noise from the children. (boy)

You still doing your work but the other children in the class making noise, singing, running up and down. When they run up and down, they hit on the desk which makes noise. Sometimes, they, they have they hand rubbing on the desk and it make a funny squeaky sound. It feel like it running up your blood pressure. I don't like that. (girl)

# Things that get in the way of learning

I would like more discipline. Like if they do anything wrong they'll put a cone on their head and face the corner[...] They wear the cone of shame. [...] They have nobody to talk to and they'll feel ashamed of what they've done. [...] And less anarchy. [...] Less unruly power. Like if a teacher says don't do this and they don't listen, they just don't listen so the teacher does not know what to do so I want less of that. (boy)

# Anger Management...

G1: We need some anger management in [School Name] because we have a lot of angry children.

I: But, why are the children angry? They are angry at school or they come to school angry?

G2: They come to school with it.

G1: They come to school angry...

# Summary...

- ◆ Route map of a lesson which is clear to class: sharp beginning, coherent structure, 'point' of doing the activity explained; to show children that lesson is worthwhile and purposeful.
- ◆ Pace and variety: t-p interactions need to be fast and energetic; a disengaged teacher is an ineffective one, giving the wrong messages about the value of learning.
- ◆ Children need space / time for activity, exploration and talk, to 'talk themselves into understanding'; sometimes teachers' input can be too heavy and counter-productive.

# Summary...

- ◆ Constant reinforcement of high expectations of all children, regardless of gender, home background, island of origin.
- ◆ A proactive and assertive approach, which does not become negative or confrontational.
- ◆ Establishment of absolute 'base line' rules which, when broken, incur known and consistent sanctions.
- ◆ Use of public praise when the teacher knows that this can be received and acknowledged by individuals; but private praise can be easier for some students to accept.

# Summary...

- ◆ Use of humour, informality and discussion of topics with which the students identify (fashion, sport, music, technology), to consolidate rapport.
- ◆ Mutual respect



# Student Voices

