Agency and belonging: What transformative actions can schools take to help create a sense of place and belonging?

Kathryn Riley

Aim: *Schools represent one of the few points of continuity and stability in the lives of many children and young people today. Yet for a growing number, schools are not places where they feel they belong. Using the conceptual filters of agency, trust and social capital, this article draws on findings from two qualitative research inqutiiries to ask: What transformative actions can schools take to help increase young people's sense of place and belonging?*

Method/rationale: *The article synthesises findings from two studies about place and belonging – undertaken with a gap of some fifteen years – which involved ninety children and young people. Study 1 used a range of data gathering activities to find out the views of the young people. Study 2 drew on the traditions of collaborative research inquiry to engage the young people as student researchers. Using an educational design research to construct a common framework for analysis, the article offers a fresh perspective on how young people experience school-life, and on the relationship between the design of the research and its impact.*

Findings: *There are two key findings: (i) School cultures that foster trust and draw on the strengths of communities contribute to the development of young people's sense of agency and belonging. (ii) Engagement in collaborative research inquiry about place and belonging helps develop that sense of belonging and is a powerful tool for positive school transformation.*

Limitations: *The analysis drew on two studies undertaken with a significant time gap.*

Conclusions: *Research inquiry can be constructed as an activity for collecting data to contribute to understanding, and/or as a transformative activity. Evidence indicates that a process of collaborative inquiry involving young people as student researchers can contribute to their sense of agency and belonging.*

Keywords: *place; belonging; agency; trust; social-capital*

'When you come from somewhere very different, it's important to feel welcomed.' (student researcher)

BELONGING is that sense of being somewhere where you can be confident that you will fit in and feel safe in your identity, a feeling of being at home in a place and of being valued (Flewitt et al., 2017; Riley, 2017). In a world in which social and economic divisions are widening and more people are displaced – exiled and homeless – than at any time since the end of the 1939–1945 war (Putnam, 2015: UNHCR, 2017), schools need to be places of belonging. Yet across OECD countries, young people's sense of belonging in school is declining, with one-in-four feeling that they do not belong (OECD, 2017). Young people from socio-economically disadvantaged communities are twice as likely as their more advantaged peers to feel that they don't belong in school and, in the UK, four times more likely to be excluded (Fair Education Alliance, 2017)[1].

National policies and practices shape the climate for belonging or exclusion in school. In the UK, a climate of diminishing resources – coupled with pressures on schools to achieve results at any cost – has constrained

what schools can do and led to an increase in formal exclusions, as well as a behind-the-scenes practice of 'offloading'[2] students (Hutchinson & Crenna-Jennings, 2019). With some inevitability, the happiness of young people in the UK is at its lowest ebb since 2010 (*The Good Childhood Report*, 2017).

A sense of place and belonging is a central element of the human psyche, a 'bedrock of human meaning and social relations' (Creswell, 2004, p.32). In the 1940s, American psychologist Abraham Maslow developed his list of primal human needs. These included love and belonging (Maslow, 1943). More recently, Ivan Tyrell and Joe Griffin have argued that humans have nine essential or primal needs (Tyrell & Griffin, 2013). These are more a 'cocktail' of needs than a hierarchy, as Maslow had suggested (Coates, 2018). Their list includes: having fun and feeling that life is enjoyable; feeling part of and belonging to a wider community; feeling safe and secure day-to-day; and having a sense of some control and influence over life's events – all relevant to the business of schooling.

Schools are communities, 'political entities' in which children and young people learn how to become part of society (Alexander, 2013, p.3). Schools are also one of the few shared social institutions which can create a sense of belonging – or exclusion.

Awareness of the impact of young people's experience of schooling on their sense of self, as well as on their academic outcome, is far from new. A positive sense of belonging has been linked to higher academic outcomes, increased student motivation, lower absenteeism and improved health and wellbeing (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Louis et al., 2016). Recent evidence from the International Study in Maths and Science (TIMMS) shows a significant link between children's sense of physical and emotional 'safety' in school – a key aspect of belonging – and their academic performance in maths and science (IEA, 2019).

Young people's sense of belonging in school is shaped by what they bring to it – their histories, their day-to-day lived realities – as well as schools' practices and expectations (Riley, 2013, 2017, 2018). This is illustrated in Xin Ma's Canadian study of some 14,000 Grade 6 and 8 students (Ma, 2003). Expectations, assumptions and relationships all matter. Young people's relationships are not only with their peers and teachers but with other staff and play out in the dining room, the corridors, the playground, as well as in the class-room. The most significant factor for young people, in terms of whether they experience a sense of belonging or exclusion in school, is how they perceive their relationships with their teachers (Allen et al., 2018).

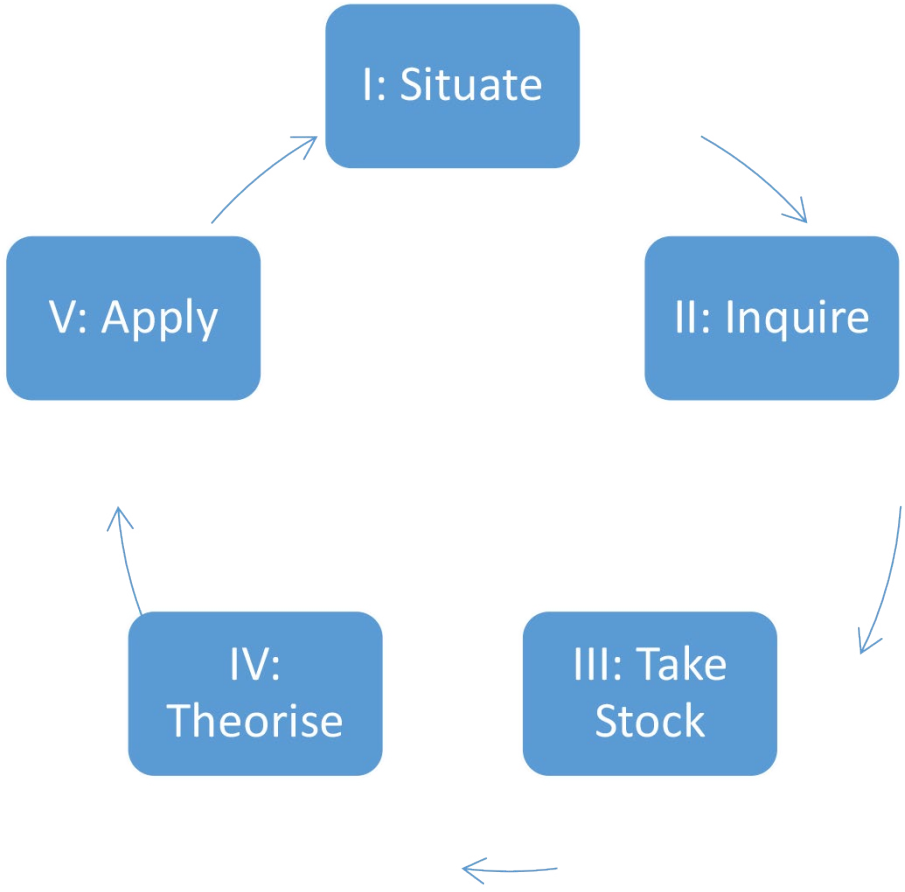
Belonging is a dynamic concept shaped by relational, cultural, historic, geographic and contextual factors. It has been linked to notions of participation, citizenship and entitlement (Yuval-Davis, 2006). A sense of belonging can shift rapidly into 'not belonging', with damaging consequences for individuals and society (Riley & Rustique-Forester, 2002; Riley & Docking, 2004). Health experts have pointed, for example, to the rise in the number of children self-harming, attributing this to a range of factors, including low body image, fears of abuse and pressures to succeed in school (Campbell, 2016). There is also growing evidence that young people who experience a feeling of exclusion from school or society seek 'belongingness' elsewhere: through forms of extremism, self-harming, gang membership.

We live in a global context which has witnessed what Zygmunt Bauman has described as a shift from *solid* times (when people knew their place, good and bad) to *liquid* times, which are fluid and unbounded

[1] Researchers have also concluded that five times more children are being excluded from school in the UK than official figures indicate, with strong links between school exclusion and social exclusion (Gill et al., 2017).

[2] 'Off-loading' is a process by which schools pressurise young people who are unlikely to reach the top grades to leave. This issue hit the headlines in 2017 when the 'off-loading' practices of a seemingly top performing state school in England (St Olaves Grammar School, Bromley) were exposed (Coughlan, 2017; Weale & Fishwick, 2017).

Figure 1: A framework for analysing research into place and belonging



(Bauman, 2006). Uncertainty characterises the lives of many children and young people today. Their growing sense of social isolation, fears about what is 'going down' on the street all serve to reinforce the importance of schools as places of belonging (Riley et al., 2016; Naicker et al., 2014). This article explores how to create school cultures which enable this to happen.

Method/rationale

The article synthesises findings from two studies, undertaken with a gap of some fifteen years. The somewhat unorthodox decision to do this was taken for two reasons: The first was to provide a fresh perceptive on how children and young people experienced their schooling – what, if anything, had changed over the intervening period? The second was to create an opportunity to reflect on the significance of the research design. Can the design influence impact?

The two qualitative studies – Study 1: 'Bringing disenfranchised young people back into the frame' (Riley & Rustique-Forester, 2002) and Study 2: 'School: A place where I belong?' (Riley, 2017) – focused on issues of belonging and exclusion. Ninety children and young were involved. Both studies explored the perspectives of adults, as well as young people. However, the analysis presented in this article focuses on young people's responses, using educational design research to create a common framework for analysis.

Educational design research has been described as a strategy for developing and refining school-based interventions that draw on theory and seek to track and build on knowledge gains over time (Cobb, 2001). It has witnessed many developments (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012), with growing interest in how this approach can be used as a knowledge-building tool – part of a process of engagement that involves young people (Bodong & Huang-Yao, 2016) – and as a way of targeting specific 'problems', and discovering and sharing new knowledge (McKenney & Reeves, 2012). The educational design research framework used in this article (see Figure 1) contains five elements (Riley et al., 2018):

- *Situate:* Contextualise the study and develop the rationale for the research design: Who are we going to engage in the research process? How are we going to do this?
- *Inquire:* Collect the data and identify gaps: What are we trying to find out? Can the findings be interpreted in different ways?
- *Take stock:* Evaluate and reflect: What have we learned so far? How robust are the conclusions given the evidence?
- *Theorise:* Build the conceptual knowledge: What have we learned about key concepts? How do these ideas travel?
- *Apply:* Share findings and encourage implementation: How can we share what we have learned beyond this school/these schools? What have we to say about the research design and process?

1. Situate

'Bringing disenfranchised young people back into the frame' was a two year study (2001–2002) conducted in partnership with a large local authority, Lancashire. It explored the causes and dynamics of pupil disaffection and disengagement from school, seeking to explore the complexity of young people's experience of learning and identify what could make a positive difference to the experiences of pupils on the margins of school-life (Riley & Rustique-Forrester, 2002).

'School: A place where I belong?' set out to understand more about the dynamics of belonging in schools in challenging urban contexts, from the perspectives of school leaders, teachers and young people: How was it experienced? How was it generated? The Study drew on the traditions of collaborative inquiry (Timperley & Earl, 2011). This approach has been used to foster greater equity, and strengthen children's rights and their sense of engagement (Ainscow, et al., 2016; Osler, 2010; MacBeath,et al., 2001; Pollard et al., 2000).

2. Inquire

Study 1: Forty-five young people (25 girls and 20 boys, aged 11–16) – all of whom had been suspended or excluded from school –were involved, as well as 140 teachers, school leaders and parents. The research with the young people was undertaken in day-long sessions with five panels of students. These sessions were held in a range of non-school settings, including the local football club. Research inquiry activities included a card sort and a drawing exercise, followed by individual and group discussions linked to these activities.

Study 2: This two-year inquiry (2014–2016) involved thirty-five primary and secondary school student researchers (aged 10–16: 23 girls and 12 boys) from five schools (and their headteachers), and thirty-six teacher-researchers (newly qualified teachers) from a further seven London schools. The inquiry was focused around a shared research question: Is 'our' school a place where everyone feels they belong? And if not, what are we going to do about it?' The young people were invited to participate in the study and were trained and supported as student researchers by the UCL Institute of Education team.

3. Take stock

Study 1: A key finding from 'Bringing disenfranchised young people back into the frame' was that for the majority of the young people school was a fragmented, inconsistent, lonely

Figure 2: 'No escape' (Riley & Rustique-Forrester, 2002, p.97)

and interrupted experience. Their re-entry into school after a gap in attendance could reinforce their sense of loneliness and isolation. One boy described how, on his return to school, his form teacher had encouraged his class-mates to 'welcome' him back – with a slow hand clap.

For these young people, relationships with their teachers were key. Encounters with one or two hectoring teachers who drew on their repertoire of sarcasm or humiliation could tip the balance of their behaviour. 'Bad' teachers were mean and unfair, inflexible and disrespectful of pupils, judgemental of pupils' parents and families, physically intimidating and verbally abusive, unwilling to help or explain ideas, unchanging in their ways of teaching.

However, the support of one or two teachers could keep them on track. 'Good' teachers were helpful and supportive, friendly and understanding, willing to reward students for their progress, took the time to explain material in depth, knew their subject well, used a variety of approaches. Girls were more likely than boys to identify with at least one teacher who they felt knew and understood them.

The drawing exercise pinpointed young people's anxieties and frustrations: 'I am very sad', 'stressed out', 'lonely, 'depressed', 'on my own'. In one bleak drawing, a boy depicted himself in the middle of a torrent of words from teachers ('You're stupid', 'You're thick') and from the headteacher ('Get out of my school', 'You don't belong here'). Of the 45 drawings completed all were broadly negative and only 15 included any positive elements. School was typically experienced as a prison, as is depicted in Figure 2. The girl who drew this picture told us, 'This is me with the crying eyes. I'm locked in and I can't escape.'

Caught up in a cycle of bad behaviour these young people could find themselves 'on ice' (in isolation), physically separated from their peers, as part of their school's behaviour policy. One mother told us about her son's experience in the following terms:

> *I went up to the school. He was in isolation in a tiny room on his own. I said to them, 'You can't put him in here, it's like a prison. You have to punish him but not like that '…They never had anything good to say about him. It was them and us.* (Riley & Rustique- Forrester, 2002, p.45)

We asked our interviewees to provide a 'wish list' of what needed to change to help them feel a part of school life. While the majority recognised the stresses and pressures on their teachers, once they had fallen into the downward spiral of bad behaviour, it was difficult to climb back. Their wish lists included being respected, being listened to and getting support for their work. For them, school was a largely hostile environment. The bonus was that you could meet your friends. However, if you were 'different' or gay, you could be bullied, ridiculed or ostracised.

Study 2: In this study, the research activities revolved around five student researcher teams. (Summary findings from three teams are presented here.) At the first student researcher conference, Team A (who were

Figure 3: Me in the playground

from a secondary co-education school) introduced themselves in their own first languages, beginning as follows: 'Welcome to our student researchers' team. Students in our school speak 68 different languages. Roona speaks German, Rebecca speaks Italian, Bazul speaks Bulgarian, Abraham speaks Yoruba and Nora speaks Lithuanian.'

'Half of our college students are bilingual. I speak four different languages: Tamil, French, English and Sinhala. Every year, there are about 100 new arrivals in our school, and I was one of them two years ago.'

As relatively new arrivals to the UK, Team A student researchers were highly motivated to be part of the project, wanting to compare their own experiences with those of other arrivals and to improve the transition experience for them. As student researchers, they developed their own nuanced research question about belonging: How good is our school at welcoming newcomers?

Team B student researchers were from a primary school. They adopted two data gathering approaches: children's drawings – about how they felt in the classroom and playground (good and bad) – and a mapping exercise in which children indicated where they felt safe and unsafe within the school. The student researchers worked with some 30 younger children (aged 5–6), recording their research findings in their own individual research journals, discussing these as a group, and making recommendations based on their research to their school.

Team C members were from a girls' secondary school in Tower Hamlets. Their research inquiries focused on the connections between a sense of belonging in their community and a sense of belonging in school. Student researcher Nusrat reported on her research journey in the following terms:

> *I began with my local community because my research team felt that this was the place where we belonged: Tower Hamlets and the East End is our 'place'. Through researching the history of my community, I learned about how diverse it has been throughout the years – the Jamme Masjid mosque on Brick Lane, which was formerly the Machzike Hadath Synagogue for the Brick Lane Jewish community, is proof of this great cultural diversity… (making) it easier for later groups of immigrants to settle in the area and to achieve a sense of belonging. We can see this in our own close-knit Bengali community.*
>
> *We also looked at place and belonging in our school, and we thought carefully about whether it is important to feel like you belong in school, and whether students feel like we belong… We decided that it was crucial to feel at home in your school… We found out (through our research) that some students felt a bit lonely because there was no one to talk to because they were new, spoke different languages and no one really understood them. They were embarrassed about the way they sounded and how they looked.*

The consensus from the five student researcher teams was that the features of a sense of belonging included feelings of safety; a sense of being included and involved; having friendship networks to draw on; and experiencing mutual respect and kindness.

The two studies

Despite the gap of fifteen years between the two studies, there were strong commonalities in terms of young people's views about the key components which contributed to a sense of belonging. These included physical and emotional safety, being seen and understood by teachers, and positive relationships with their teachers and their peers. A sense of alienation and 'not' belonging were exacerbated by bullying, feelings of isolation, and poor relationships with teachers. Young people needed to feel that they were known, seen and befriended.

The striking difference between the two studies was in the narrative. For Study 1 this was about humiliation, boredom, frustration

and bullying, and for Study 2 – challenge and adventure, opportunity and welcome. Clearly there were significant differences between the cohorts of students in the two studies. All of the young people involved in Study 1 were on the margins of school life, the majority having experienced some form of isolation in school (related to their behaviour), suspension, or exclusion. While the students involved in Study 2 were from a wider spectrum of the school population, the majority were vulnerable to marginalisation for a range of reasons: their status and experience as refugees; socio-economic factors; and their previous sense of themselves as outsiders to school life, as was the case for most of Team C. Participation in the project helped generate a sense of agency and belonging, and connectedness to their communities.

3. Theorise

Theorising is a key step in educational design research. Three conceptual filters emerged from the data presented in this article: trust, agency and social capital. They are used here to re-appraise findings.

Trust

Trust is a key component of successful educational reforms: a dynamic concept based on a complex set of interrelationships. Social trust is manifested as institutional trust (the expectations and norms of an organisation) and as relational trust: the interactions between individuals (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Louis, 2007). Scholars have argued that as trust is the basis of positive and deep-rooted changes in schools, school cultures need to be trust-based (Louis, 2007; Kruse & Louis, 2008). Teachers' trust in parents and students is critical to school success, as low levels of trust in their turn lead to low levels of student performance (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997).

Study 1 was constructed around the notion of bringing to life the 'stories' of disenfranchised young people on the margins of school life and setting these against the 'accounts' of their families, teachers, headteachers and other professionals. The aim was to develop a shared understanding about what could be done and to challenge what Seymour Sarason has described as the cycle of blame which gets in the way of successful educational reform: 'Inadequate teachers, irresponsible parents, irrelevant or inadequate curricula, unmotivated students an improvement defeating bureaucracy' (Sarason, 1990, p.13)

Looking afresh at this research from the distance of many years, two things emerge: the lack of trust between the different parties, and the lack of voice and agency of the young people. School was a prison, and survival depended on following the rules. Parents were occasional visitors, invited in because of their children's poor behaviour. As a pupil you couldn't change it, you could only endure it. One-in-three of the interviewees from Study 1 felt that nothing would be done to improve their situation. As one girl concluded, 'I'm seen as part of the awkward squad… It's too late for me'. The blue-print for change which was an outcome from the project was unlikely to benefit those young people who had contributed their stories.

Agency

The notion of agency, defined by Anthony Giddens as an ability to 'intervene in the world' to 'make a difference' (Giddens, 1984, p.14) is well developed in the literature. For Giddens, agency was about purpose, knowledge and competence. More recently, scholars have introduced the notion of 'agentic action' – that is, action which is purposeful – as a way of looking at how people 'construct' aspects of their own lives, a key part of their identity (Richardson, 2015). The literature on school leaders' sense of agency is well developed (Clarke & Wildy, 2011; Lovett at al., 2015), as is that of teacher agency (Pantic, 2015). The notion of student agency, empowered student voice, has also been explored, on moral, physiological, social, educational, pragmatic, and

democratic grounds, and linked to issues about self-efficacy and exclusion and children's rights (Levin, 2000; MacBeath et al., 2001; Pollard et al., 2000; Riley, & Docking, 2004; Riley et al., 2006; Osler, 2010).

A major finding from Study 2 was about the ways in which engagement in the research as student researchers had contributed to the development of young people's sense of agency (Riley, 2017; Riley et al., 2018). The student researchers had developed their skills, built their confidence, found their voice. Nusrat from Team C expressed this as follows:

> *(As a group) we found a significant link between belonging and confidence – if you feel like you belong in a place, you feel at ease, and are more confident there. We think that confidence is crucial to good learning.*

Involvement in the project had led primary school student researcher Zanali from Team B to reflect on the legacy she would leave behind when she moved to secondary school:

> *By asking people whether they feel like they belong and getting all this information, it makes us feel like we belong in this school. And it's quite good to do this at Year 6 because we're going to be leaving in one a half weeks, so it's quite good to make sure that we belong in this school, and we know that when we leave.*

Confidence, a sense of being trusted were strongly anchored to the notion of agency, as is illustrated by the example of Team A. On completion of their research, Team A members presented their research findings to senior staff; developed a welcome booklet for new arrivals to the school which they translated into 13 languages, helped shape the school's policy on new arrivals, set up and trained a team of students to act as hosts to new arrivals, and visited other schools to train other young people to be student researchers.

Social capital

Social capital has been defined as 'networks, together with shared norms, values, and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups' (OECD, 2007, p.103). A focus on social networks and relationships enables educators to look for the positive features of the cultures of newcomers, rather than on those that emphasise what they lack (Bourdieu, 1999; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Brunn & Delaney-Barmann, 2001). Social capital, as applied in an approach to school community engagement, takes as its starting point that networks and relationships, even in the most disadvantaged contexts, can have a positive impact on schools. An understanding of the importance of building social capital leads to an identification of the processes that can exclude families, a critical issue for refugee families and those who have experienced major dislocations (Koyama & Rwehumbiza Bakuza, 2017; Das Gupta, 2006).

The young people involved in Study 1 felt and believed that the school looked down on their families. Their experience of the school's engagement with their parents revolved around their bad behaviour as pupils. However, the student researchers involved in Study 2 experienced a positive affirmation about their community. For example, members of Team C were encouraged to research the history of their local community, a process that strengthened their sense of belonging in the community, and their identity as young women of Bengali heritage: a rich example of how

Figure II: Student voice – The continuum of involvement in research

to harness social capital. The five school leaders involved in the study each had their own positive narrative about community. For example, one explained why the school had become involved in the research in the following terms:

> *We are trying to finds ways which we can relate on a much more meaningful level with communities. Schools become an agent of community, and the community itself becomes an agent of change within the school itself. Our students are representative of that community. They are in this research and participating about it. They are not only benefiting themselves. But they are actually benefiting the school.* (Riley, 2017, p.12)

5. Apply

'Belonging means that you're a part of something. You're not just sitting around on the other side and you're not just left out and lonely.' (Student researcher)

Applying the learning is about understanding the contribution of the studies to knowledge in the field. For the young people in Study 1, a feeling of 'not belonging' remained a pervasive experience. However, for the student researchers involved in Study 2, engagement in the research had released their creative potential, enabling them to find their voice, explore, reflect and act, a process that promoted their personal growth and feelings of wellbeing.

Young people's involvement in research can be viewed as a continuum from being research subjects to becoming change agents: See Figure II. The young people involved in Study 2 were data sources: conduits of information about their experience of school, collected to contribute to knowledge about change and improvement. Young people can also be active respondents in research: identifying issues about their own learning, or about matters they are unhappy about. The student-researchers involved in Study 2 were engaged in a journey of discovery which led to purposeful ('agentic') actions.

Agency is key. Agency is more than belief that if you act, what you do – on your own and with others – makes a difference. It is also about having the 'tools' to act (through cultivating your skills, talents and capacities to make that difference), and the 'opportunities' to act. School leaders are critical here, as discussed elsewhere. By stepping into the role of place-maker, they can enact the agency of young people, staff and communities (Riley, 2017). School leaders can also initiate the enjoyable and creative process of collaborative inquiry around place and belonging.

A key conceptual reflection from reviewing the findings from the two studies is about the interconnection between trust, agency and social capital. Schools which build on connections by fostering trust, seeking to grow young people's sense of agency, and drawing on the strengths of communities help embed feelings of place and belonging.

A school is just a building. Schools become places of belonging and agency when all the different voices are heard (Flutter, & Rudduck, 2004; Kellet, 2010). In a climate that encourages schools – as American researcher Dana Mitra (2018) has described it – to obey mandates, and young people to master facts, schools need to recognise the importance that student voice can play in school transformation. The process of collaborative inquiry used in Study 2 can be applied across countries and contexts (see Appendix I) . It is a transformative activity which has the potential to generate a school culture characterised by a sense of place and belonging for children, young people and adults.

Note: Videos in the 'Art of Possibilities' series and the booklet *Place and Belonging in Schools: Unlocking possibilities* can be accessed at www.theartofpossibilities.org.uk and www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe-placeand-belonging-in-schools

Kathryn Riley, UCL, Institute of Education; kathryn.riley@ucl.ac.uk

References

Ainscow, M., Dyson, A., Goldrick, S. & West, M. (2016). Using collaborative inquiry to foster equity within school systems: opportunities and barriers. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 27*(1), 7-23. doi:10.1080/09243453.2014.939591

Alexander, T. (2013). *Citizenship schools: Learning democracy, raising attainment, building community.* Manchester: Cooperative College.

Allen, K., Kern, P., VellaBrodrick, D., Hattie, J. & Waters, L. (2018). What schools need to know about belonging: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review, 30*(1), 1–34. doi:10.1007/s10684-016-9389-8

Anderson, T. & Shattuck, J. (2012). Design-based research a decade of progress in education research? Educational Researcher, 41(1), 16–25. doi:10.3102/0013189X11428813

Bauman, Z. (2006). *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bodong, C. & Huang-Yao, H. (2016). *Organizations: Thirty years of design research. Schools as knowledge-building organizations. Educational Psychologist, 51*(2), 266–288. doi:10.1080/00461520.2016.1 175306

Bourdieu, P. (1999). Site effects. In P. Bourdieu., A. Accords, & P.P. Ferguson (Eds.) *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society* (pp.123–129). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Brunn, M. & Delaney-Barmann, G. (2001). Migrant children and language policies. *Rural Educator, 22*(3), 8–16.

Byrk, A. & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Campbell, D. (2016, 23 October). NHS figures show 'shocking' rise in self-harm among young people. *Guardian.* Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/society/2016/oct/23/nhs-figures-show-shocking-rise-self-harm-young-people

Children's Society (2017). *The good childhood report.* Retrieved from www.childrenssociety.org.uk/the-good-childhood-report

Clarke, S. & Wildy, H. (2011). Providing professional sustenance for leaders of learning: The glass half-full? In T. Townsend & J. MacBeath (Eds.) *International handbook for leadership in learning* (pp.673–690). Dordrecht: Springer.

Coates, M. (2018). *It's doing my head in: Leading complex organisations with a palaeolithic brain.* Woodbridge: Joan Catt Educational.

Cobb, P. (2001). Supporting the improvement of learning and teaching in social and institutional context. In S. Carver & D. Klahr (Eds.) *Cognition and instruction: 25 years of progress* (pp.544–478). Mahweh, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Coleman, J.S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology, 94,* S95–S120.

Coughlan, S. (2017, 19 October). Grammar school A-level row head suspended. *BBC News* [website]. Retrieved from www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-41683012

Creswell, T. (2004). Place: A short introduction. Oxford: Blackwell.

Das Gupta, M. (2006). *Unruly immigrants: Rights, activism, and transnational South East Asian politics in the United States.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Fair Education Alliance (2017). *Report card 2016–2017.* Retrieved 27 October 2017 from www.fair-education.org.uk/report-card

Flewitt, R.S. (2017). Equity and diversity through story: A multimodal perspective. In Cremin, T., Flewitt, R.S., Mardell, B. & Swann, J. (2017). *Storytelling in early childhood: Enriching language, literacy, and classroom culture* (pp150–168). London & New York: Routledge.

Flutter, J. & Rudduck, J. (2004). *Consulting pupils: What's in it for schools?* London: Routledge.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* California: University of California Press.

Gill, K., Quilter-Pinner, H. & Swift, D. (2017). *Making the difference: Breaking the link between school exclusion and social exclusion.* Retrieved from www.ippr.org/publications/making-the-difference www.ippr.org/publications/making-the-difference

Goodenow, C. & Grady, K.E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education, 62*(1), 60–71. doi:10.1080/00220973.1993.9943831

Hutchinson, J. & Crenna-Jennings, W. (2019). *Unexplained pupil exist from schools: A growing problem?* Working paper. London: National Education Union and the Education Policy Institute.

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (2019, 5 February). *Do both boys and girls feel safe at school and does it matter?* IEA Compass Briefs in Education. Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Kellet, M. (2010). *Rethinking children and research: Attitudes in contemporary society.* London: Bloomsbury.

Koyama, J. & Rwehumbiza Bakuza, F. (2017). A timely opportunity for change: Increasing refuge parental involvement in US schools. *Journal of Educational Change,18*(3), 331–336.

Kruse, S.D. & Louis, K.S. (2008). *Building strong school cultures through intensified leadership.* California: Corwin Press.

Levin, B. (2000). Putting students at the centre in education reform. *Journal of Educational Change, 1*(2),155–172.

Louis K.S. (2007). Trust & improvement in schools. *Journal of Educational Change, 8*(1), 1–25.

Louis, K.S., Smylie, M. & Murphy, J. (2016). Caring leadership for schools: Findings from exploratory analyses. *Education Administration Quarterly, 52*(2), 310–348. doi:10.1177/0013161X15627678

Lovett, S., Dempster, N. & Fluckiger, B. (2015). Personal agency in leadership learning using an Australian heuristic. *Professional Development in Education, 41*(1), 127–143. doi:10.1080/19415257.2014.891532

Ma, X. (2003). Sense of belonging to school: Can schools make a difference? *Journal of Education Research, 96*(6), 340–349. doi:10.1080/00220670309596617

MacBeath, J., Myers, K. & Demitrou, H. (2001). Supporting teachers in consulting pupils about aspects of teaching and learning, and evaluating impact. *Forum, 43*(2), 78–82.

Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4), 370–396. Washington: American Psychological Association.

McKenney, S. & Reeves, T.C. (2012). *Conducting educational design research.* London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.

Mitra, D. (2018). Student voice in secondary schools: the possibility for deeper change. *Journal of Educational Administration, 56*(5), 473–487. doi:10.1108/JEA-08-2018-173

Naicker, I., Chikoko, V. & Mthiyane, S.E. (2014). Instructional leadership practices in challenging school contexts. *Education as Change, 17*, pp.S137–S150. Retrieved from www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-84890647044&partnerID=40&md5=5cc9b21290c4d5cf-019932c81e1432ba

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2007, 20 February). *Human capital: How what you know shapes your life.* Paris: Author.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017). *PISA results 2015* (Vol.3). Retrieved from www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2015-results-volume-iii_9789264273856-en

Osler, A. (2010). *Students' perspectives on schooling.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Pantic, N. (2015). A model for study of teacher agency for social justice. *Teachers and teaching; Theory and practice, 21*(6), 759–778. doi:10.1080/13540602.2015.104433

Pollard, A. & Triggs, P., Broadbent, P., McNess, E. & Osborn, M. (2000). *What pupils say: Changing policy and practice in primary education.* London: Continuum.

Putnam. R.D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Putnam, R.D. (2015). *Our kids: The American dream in crisis.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Richardson M. (2015). Agentic action in context. In R. Young., J. Domene, & Valach L. (Eds.) *Counseling and action* (pp.51–68). New York: Springer.

Riley, K. (2013). *Leadership of place: Stories for schools in the US, UK and South Africa.* London: Bloomsbury.

Riley, K. (2017). *Place, belonging and school leadership: Researching to make the difference.* London: Bloomsbury.

Riley, K., Coates, M. & Martinez, S.P. (2018). *Place and belonging in schools: Unlocking possibilities.* London: UCL Institute of Education. Retrieved from www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-centres/centres/london-centre-for-leadership-in-learning

Riley, K. & Docking J. (2004). Voices of disaffected pupils: Implications for policy and practice. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 52*(2), 166–179. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8527.2004.00261.x

Riley, K., Ellis., Weinstock. W.,Tarrant, J. & Hallman, S. (2006). Re-engaging disaffected pupils in learning: Insights for policy and practice. *Improving Schools, 9*(1), 17–31.

Riley, K., Montecinos, C. & Ahumada, L. (2016). Effective principals serving in high poverty schools in Chile: Managing competing realities. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 237*, 1–8. Retrieved from doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.181

Riley, K. & Rustique-Forrester, E. (2002). *Why children lose interest in school and what we can do about it.* London: Chapman Sage.

Sarason, S. (1990). *The predictable failure of educational reform.* San Francisco & Oxford: Jossey-Bass.

Tschannen-Moran, M. & Hoy, W. (1997). Trust in schools: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of Educational Administration, 36*(4), 334–335.

Timperley, H. & Earl, L. (2011). *State of the art – Teacher effectiveness and professional learning.* Paper presented at the 24th International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Limassol, Cyprus.

Tyrell, I. & Griffin, J. (2013). *The human givens: A new approach to emotional health and clear thinking.* Chalvington: Human Givens Publishing.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2017). Figures at a glance. Retrieved from www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html

Weale, S. & Fishwick, C. (2017, 27 October). Schools around England ejecting 'underperforming' sixth-formers. *The Guardian.* www.theguardian.com/education/2017/aug/30/mps-attack-ejection-of-underperforming-sixth-formers, accessed 27/10/2017

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice, 40*(3), 197–214. doi:10.1080/00313220600769331

Appendix 1: A guide to researching for place and belonging

Copyright of Educational & Child Psychology is the property of British Psychological Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.