



*Working Papers in*

# Urban Language & Literacies

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## **Paper 53**

### **Urban Classroom Culture and Interaction: End-of-Project Report**

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# URBAN CLASSROOM CULTURE AND INTERACTION

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## A. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

**Background:** What's going on in contemporary urban classrooms? Education policy advocates whole-class teaching fronted by the teacher, but just how workable are traditional forms of pedagogy? What's the influence in school of popular culture and the new media, and how much does ethnic diversity matter? UCCI seeks a balanced and realistic answer to these questions. It draws on close observation and radio-mic recordings of the everyday lives of adolescents at school, studies the details of their talk, and sets these in the multi-layered context of policy imperatives, cultural change, friendship relations, classroom dynamics and the trajectories of individuals.

**Aims:** To provide a new view of contemporary urban classrooms by:

- charting the links between ethnic, popular-cultural and educational identities in school-based interaction, connecting this to wider processes of cultural and educational stratification
- building new links between sociolinguistics and cultural studies/sociology
- fostering a debate among education professionals that is constructively tuned to the reality of urban classrooms

**Methods:** The project focused on 5 girls and 4 boys aged 13-15 in a multi-ethnic London comprehensive school in 2005 and 2006, and fieldwork involved 100+ days of participant-observation, radio-microphone recordings (180 hours), interviews and playback sessions where informants commented on extracts from their recordings. We also elicited responses to extracts of our recordings from 7 groups of experienced teachers.

UCCI involves specialists in linguistics, sociology, education and media studies, and connects four topics seldom studied all together – talk, ethnicity, education, popular culture. The project also feeds into an ESRC research methods training programme in 'Ethnography, Language & Communication' ([www.rdi-elc.org.uk](http://www.rdi-elc.org.uk)).

### Key findings so far:

- *Popular and new media culture (PNMC) permeates many urban classrooms.* In a survey of 80 hours of natural interaction, pupils could be heard engaging with new media and popular culture on average 7 times an hour, and they hardly ever linked it to the curriculum. But heavy involvement in popular culture didn't necessarily entail a rejection of school – there were individuals who excelled in both.
- *Digital media culture is increasing as an unofficial influence at school.* When survey findings from 2005/06 were compared with findings from 1997/98, there was a lot more use and talk about digital media than before. Classrooms weren't 'swamped' by mobiles, mp3s etc, but in 2006 adolescents used portable digital hardware during lessons more often than in 2005. Music was steady as a major interest among kids, both in 1997/98 and 2005/06, but proportionally, there was a lot less talk about TV in 2005/06.
- *Popular media culture gets drawn into the negotiation of individuals' peer-group relationships and status in many different ways.* Of the two girls who engaged most fully with popular media culture, one was popular and successful and the other struggled socially and academically. For the first, new media and popular culture involved networking and enhanced sociability, with e.g. song allusions picked up by friends and closely bound into ongoing talk. With the second, popular cultural references were often cumbersome and unreciprocated, and new media talk often focused on prohibition and lack of access. Both, though, were interested in boys, and as well as making them a source of 'breaking news', this fuelled lots of talk about strategies and proprieties for the use of mobiles, texting and MSN.
- *Other teachers recognize these trends.* When we played radio-mic extracts to other teachers (to see whether the classes we studied had been atypical), they indicated overwhelmingly that the recordings were either 'very' or 'fairly' recognisable. At first, they criticised the teachers in the recordings, but then described their own experience in contemporary classrooms: classroom culture had changed, communication with pupils relied on negotiation rather than authority, pupils knew their rights, lessons needed to entertain, and digital culture was an ongoing challenge.
- *Instead of causing trouble, racial and ethnic difference were treated as uncontroversial and ordinary.* 'Race' and ethnicity are generally seen as 'trouble' in public and policy discourse, but there was nothing to corroborate this in 100+ days of observation and radio-mic recording in the very multi-ethnic London comprehensive we studied. Adolescents recognised ethnic differences

but treated them as secondary in conversations about far more insistent matters (friendship responsibilities, male-female relations, popular media culture etc).

- *'Mainstreaming' for students with English as an additional language is different from what policy imagines.* The educational consensus is that second language development works best through direct participation in the ordinary school environment alongside English-speaking pupils. But what if ordinary mainstream pupil conduct involves nonchalance about learning-as-instructed and an ongoing interest in popular media culture? We studied a recently mainstreamed EAL student who progressed over the year to top sets and the 'Gifted & Talented' programme. She stood out as an 'outsider' in (a) her assertive, purposeful and cooperative approach to curriculum learning, and (b) her lack of involvement with popular media culture.

**Policy implications:** Education policy tends to see these kinds of classroom as the chaotic product of incompetent teaching. In fact, though, they are sites of major cultural change that reaches far beyond questions of individual teaching proficiency, and require open and intelligent discussion tuned to the realities of the urban working environment. This needs to build on the recognition that, in many (but not all) secondary classrooms

- new media and popular culture are here-to-stay, and they're not inevitably undermining
- whole-class teacher-talk is often unsustainable
- 'race' and ethnic difference aren't automatically problematic, and
- in the 'mainstream', the progress of learners of English as a second language may often depend more on their struggling *against* the 'flow' than with it.

The Teachers Project pointed to all sorts of pressing practical issues: How important is classroom silence for intellectually challenging work? How far do pupils have a right to opt out of participation in whole class dialogue? Is it okay if they listen to mp3 players on headphones as they work? But productive discussion of these issues depends on a policy and political environment in which it is acceptable to speak of these matters.

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## B. FULL REPORT

### 1. BACKGROUND

Contemporary classrooms are a major focus of public debate, and have been subject to intense central government regulation in England since 1988. Government seeks to direct both curriculum and pedagogy, supporting this with an extensive programme of assessment and inspection, linked to an ideal of teaching in which the teacher has a monopoly of knowledge in class and acts as the centre and arbiter of acceptable modes of communication. There is some concern that it may be difficult reconciling this ideal with young people's involvement with popular culture and the new and mass media, but the default assumption is that schooling should provide the necessary counterweight to any undesirable cultural influences (e.g. Orr 2007).

*Urban Classroom Culture and Interaction (UCCI)* gives a more balanced and realistic view of the contemporary urban classroom. It interrogates the separation of schooling and popular & new media culture (PNMC) propounded in policy and public debate, investigates their intermingling, and explores the implications of this mixing for the social relations of students and teachers. To counteract the reductive simplifications produced in headline and 'single-issue' treatments of education, our project examines schooling and popular culture *in context*, locating the moment-to-moment articulation of specific identities and practices within ecologies that encompass wide-spread cultural change, policy imperatives, friendship relations, biographical profiles, classroom dynamics, and discursive genres. Looking at schooling contextually like this, we are also able to *put ethnicity into perspective*, again counteracting distortions that often emerge when this is the central focus of debate (cf Harris 2006; Rampton 1995/2005).

This kind of situated analysis demands an unusual combination of methods and disciplinary perspectives (see 'Methods' below), but its viability is attested in our earlier (ESRC/Spencer/Leverhulme-funded) research on the interplay of schooling and PNMC (Rampton, Harris & Dover 2002/2005; Rampton 2006), which, according to one reviewer, "accomplishes a Copernican

revolution in the study of classroom discourse, and... has profound implications for what [research] is able to show us about talk in classrooms, about student life in schools more generally, and... about issues in social theory as well" (Erickson [at press]).

## **2. PROJECT AIMS**

Taking ethno-linguistic difference and popular culture as two of the most salient features in the urban landscape, this project seeks a new view of contemporary schools and classrooms by

- i) charting the inter-animation of ethnic, popular-cultural and educational identities in school-based interaction (see below, Sections 4.2,4.3,4.4 & 4.5);
- ii) linking interactional processes of accommodation, conflict, fusion & refusal to wider processes of cultural and educational stratification (4.3.1,4.5).

In the process, we will

- iii) build new links between sociolinguistics and cultural studies/sociology (4.2,4.3,5d,5e)
- iv) foster a debate among education professionals that is constructively tuned to the reality of contemporary urban classrooms (4.1,4.5).

## **3. METHODS**

### **3.1 *Fieldsite and principal informants***

9 students (5F, 4M) in two tutor-groups over 2 years (2005:Yr 9 [13-14 yrs]; 2006:Yr10) in a large, very multi-ethnic, London comprehensive ('London Community School'/LCS)

### **3.2 *Data collection and initial processing***

- a) *Participant observation*: 100+ field-site visits by the Research Assistant in two phases (2005 & 2006), recorded in a field-diary (85+ (single-spaced) A4 pages). School documentation collected: Yr9 and 10 demographics & achievement, staff & parent handbooks, lesson handouts etc)
- b) *Radio-microphone recordings of spontaneous interactions of 9 focal informants in 2005 & 2006*: 180+ hours of radio-microphone recordings (38 days). Annotated on standardized protocol; sections transcribed for playback.
- c) *Interviews and playback*: 8 (mainly one-to-one) interviews; 10 (mainly group) playback sessions with radio-mic extracts. Broad transcription of all sessions
- d) *Video-recording*: 10+ hours focused around three informants.
- e) *Survey of informants' popular media engagements over 80 hrs of radio-microphone data*: Scrutiny of 16hrs of radio-mic data on 5 informants (2005:8hrs each; 2006:8hrs), leading to the annotation and quantification of episodes orienting to PNMC.
- f) *Mediated ethnographic observation*: All team-members not conducting (a) to (e) immerse themselves in data-subsets (radio-mic recordings, interviews etc) on 1-3 individuals each (⇒ case-study analyses).
- g) *Interviews with staff*: 4 interviews with school staff (Headteacher, senior management team, mentor for Caribbean pupils)
- h) *Feedback from education professionals ('Teachers Project', January-March 2007)*: Discussion with 39 experienced urban secondary schoolteachers of 4 short episodes from the classroom recordings, replayed in seven 2-2½ hours small group sessions, supplemented with a very brief questionnaire (see Annex A). Broad transcription of all sessions.

### **3.3 *Analysis***

UCCI integrates 4 fields of enquiry seldom studied all together – discourse, ethnicity, education and popular culture – and methods of analysis have varied with particular lines of enquiry. The project team of six included established academics specializing in sociolinguistics & linguistic anthropology (Rampton); sociology, cultural studies & education (Harris); media studies (Dover); discourse & narrative analysis (Georgakopoulou); educational linguistics (Leung). So our policy has been for team-members to address their analyses to the disciplinary/professional constituencies they know best, at least in the first instance. But we have also held 65+ whole-team or sub-group meetings,

discussing, *inter alia*, different disciplinary perspectives, extract selection for playback, first-draft analyses etc.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. RESULTS SO FAR

##### 4.1 Secondary classroom relations in London at large (Harris with Small)

Our earlier work in two other London secondary schools had suggested that a ‘new classroom settlement’ has emerged in some but not all urban classrooms (Rampton, Harris & Dover 2002/2005; also Rampton 2006a:85-6 on similar developments abroad [Australia, Mexico, USA]). The LCS participant observation and radio-microphone recordings indicated that here too, authority was much more decentred than in the policy ideal, with pupil-teacher relations often much more informal, and a commitment to learning no longer associated with deference to the teacher. But were the two schools where we had now found classrooms like this simply exceptional? How far could our claims carry beyond these case-study sites?

We designed the ‘Teachers Project’ to assess this. First we selected four 2-4 minute extracts from our radio-mic recordings which raised issues about the boundaries between teachers and students, and/or involved teachers trying to elicit class- and task-participation from pupils who didn’t offer immediate compliance. We deemed these interactions relatively routine, and deliberately excluded more spectacular episodes (e.g. watching music videos during Art; looking at internet porn during IT). Then we played the extracts to 39 professionals with an aggregate 514 years of classroom experience in predominantly urban areas (mean: 13yrs; median: 11), eliciting their reactions in 7 groups (cf 2.iv).

Our questionnaire revealed that *the episodes were not untypical in these London teachers’ experience* – 86% of the 149 responses indicated that they were either ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ recognisable.

Table 1: Summary of teachers assessments of the recognisability of the 4 interactional episodes

“In my experience I find the scenario in Extract __ (A/B/C/D)				
very recognisable”	fairly recognisable”	not sure if I recognise it”	fairly unrecognisable”	very unrecognisable”
65 responses (42%)	69 (44%)	2 (1%)	9 (6%)	4 (3%)

The qualitative content analysis elaborated on this, forcefully pointing to the tensions felt at the intersection of dominant educational discourses, first-hand everyday practice and much wider cultural change (see Annex B). Our informants’ immediate response to these recordings was to criticise the teachers involved for their classroom management shortcomings, but this soon gave way to the admission that the episodes were not unusual. Although traditional order might still be found in some schools, classroom relations had changed over time, and in the classrooms they now experienced, communication with pupils relied on negotiation rather than authority, pupils knew their rights, lessons had to entertain, and the presence of digital devices presented a continual challenge.

The contemporary classroom presented these teachers with a host of practical dilemmas: How important, was classroom silence for intellectually challenging work? How far did pupils have a right to opt out of participation in whole class dialogue? Was it okay if they listened to mp3 players on headphones as they worked? More generally, there now seemed to be wide-ranging uncertainties about identities in education. What was the teacher’s role? – authoritative instructor or entertaining enabler, equal and friend? How should pupils be treated? – as obedient and subordinate learners, or as sociable young adult consumers alert to their rights? And what was school for, how did it differ from a social club, and what should be its governing rules?

So the Teachers Project indicated the wider resonance of our earlier claims about the informalisation of pupil-teacher relations and the influence in school of a consumer culture made

<sup>1</sup> See Section 5.2 in our 2006, 2007 & 2008 Interim Reports 5.2 for more detail.

ever more accessible by digital technologies. In another strand of UCCI, we strengthened the observational and comparative base for this argument, also indicating that there was indeed far more to these teacher-informants' views than any moral panic provoked by a mischievous selection of data-extracts.

#### 4.2 Survey of media engagement (Dover with Small)

In media consumption studies, there has been relatively little empirical work looking at how media products permeate everyday life beyond the context of immediate audience-text encounter (Moore 2000, Bird 2003, Dover 2007). But both our own prior work and the Teachers Project indicated that classrooms were an important setting for the reanimation of media outputs (Rampton, Harris & Dover 2002/2005), and so we replicated the innovative survey method from our earlier study.

We examined the first 8hrs of the radio-mic recordings of 5 informants (3F,2M) in both 2005 and 2006 (8x5x2=80hrs), and identified 531 episodes<sup>2</sup> in which these five informants audibly used, referred to or performed music, TV, mobiles, mp3s, PSPs, PCs, internet, electronic games, magazines, newspaper, fashion, body-care, 'recreational food' and sport. These were annotated on protocols which recorded main participants, location, +/- physical use of PNMC object, topic, mode of performance, +/- links to classroom activity, and other relevant specifics. Overall, the survey (a) drew out differences in the media engagements of individuals, feeding into educational and socio-linguistic case-study analyses; and (b) provided a broad indication of how and how far PNMC really did penetrate everyday classroom discourse (Project Aims (i),(iii)).<sup>3</sup>

Across 2005 and 2006, PNMC engagements averaged out at at least 7 an hour, but there were considerable differences between individuals:

Table 2: Number of episodes recorded inside & outside class during 16 hrs per informant (2005 & 2006)

INFORMANT	PNMC features as a TOPIC	PNMC is PERFORMED (humming, singing & mimicry)	Personal (rather than curriculum directed) use of HARDWARE/SOFTWARE	TOTAL
Nadia (f; Armenian/African mixed race)	122	91	24	237
Habibah (f; Pakistani descent)	63	59	0	122
Husain (m; Pakistani descent)	42	12	9	63
Otis (m; African Caribbean descent, born in Jamaica)	61	5	19	85
Sairah (f.; Kurdish refugee from Iraq)	16	8	0	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	304	175	52	531

There were also many other contingencies in play –opportunities to talk in class, access to computers, ownership of mobiles etc.

Nevertheless, it was still very clear that in their routine activity, these pupils constructed curriculum learning and PNMC as separate realms, even though they featured in the same spatio-temporal environments:

##### 4.2.1 Separate realms: PNMC and the curriculum

There were several occasions of varying duration when teachers referred to popular culture in lessons. But there were only nine episodes in 80 hours where students themselves volunteered a link between the curriculum and PNMC. In addition, with over 140 episodes of non-authorized humming, singing

<sup>2</sup> An episode was defined as a sequence of talk introducing and often sustaining a popular or new media cultural theme, bounded by periods of talk and activity devoted to other matters. As silent media engagements (e.g. reading text-messages) might well be undetected in our radio-mic recordings, the total figure could be greater.

<sup>3</sup> In qualitative work involving sustained observation, researchers often refer to particular practices being 'frequent', 'regular', or 'only occasional'. Our survey was designed to bring more precision to frequency claims like this, but the overarching framework is ethnographic, and the survey was not intended to produce statistical generalizations about a systematically sampled population. Instead, we designed the Teachers Project to assess the wider relevance of our account.

and mimicry over the c.70 hours of class-time recording (averaging out at c. 2 episodes an hour), students regularly expressed themselves in performance modes that their teachers hadn't invited. The classroom influence of PNMC had seemed unsettling for the professionals in the Teachers Project, and our survey confirmed that kids seldom used PNMC to complement the curriculum. But how far was it actually a subversive distraction?

#### **4.2.2 PNMC versus school success?**

Nadia was the informant most frequently involved in PNMC episodes (c. 15 episodes per hour), but she was seldom challenged or reprimanded by teachers, and she was also the highest school-achiever among our informants, included in the 'Gifted and Talented' programme for the top 10%. So inter-individual comparison contradicted any simplistic assumption that school success and PNMC engagement might be antithetical.<sup>4</sup>

Because we used the same survey methods in our earlier 1997-98 study of PNMC in two schools, we could also make some cross-school comparisons. The earlier work had indeed suggested an inverse relationship between the amount of PNMC in class and a school's overall achievement profile (cf Rampton 2006:Ch 2). At inner city Central High, only c.20% of students achieved 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs in our informants' school-leaving year, and here a survey of 4 students over c.37 hours recorded an average of 4.1 PNMC engagements per hour. In contrast, at suburban Westpark, more than 60% got A\*-C GCSEs when our informants left school, and there was an average of only 2.3 PNMC engagements per hour (in c.46 hours of radio-mic data on 5 informants). But the data from LCS disrupted this picture of greater PNMC involvement in weaker academic schools. LCS GCSE results were twice as good as those at Central High, and yet when the criteria are adjusted to allow the comparison, the rates of PNMC engagement were higher (5.3 per hour).<sup>5 6</sup>

So although teacher-informants worried about it, our survey contradicted the idea of a necessary link between popular culture involvement and a lack of school success. What of their perceptions of cultural change in society at large?

#### **4.2.3 Popular media cultural change**

Cultural change emerged as a major theme in Teachers Project, as did the classroom impact of innovations in digital technology. Again, our survey provided opportunities for some comparison over time.

In one respect, kids' classroom orientation to PNMC remained unchanged. Despite some differences across the two 1997/98 schools, humming, singing and references to music constituted just under half of all PNMC engagements (130/c.275). Similarly, in 2005 and 2006, music remained a central focus of popular culture interest, involved in 43% of PNMC engagements (117/415).<sup>7</sup> There was, though, clear evidence of the growing influence of digital technologies.

In 1997-98, there were only 19 episodes where informants oriented to digital media (PCs, pagers, mobiles, email, internet, electronic games) – 7% of c. 275 PNMC engagements, averaging out at about once every 4 hours. This was a year before the explosion of uptake of mobiles among young people.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, in the combined datasets on 2005 & 2006, there were 138 references to digital media (mobiles, mp3s, PCs, internet, MSN, electronic games) – a quarter of all popular cultural engagements, on average about once every half-hour.<sup>9</sup> In fact, this was mirrored by a decline in the proportional salience of TV in young people's talk. In 1997/98, about 25% of PNMC-oriented episodes referred to TV (68 out of 275 episodes), whereas in 2005 & 2006, this dropped to just 7% (36/531). When 2005 and 2006 are compared, there was also a noticeable shift in the classroom

<sup>4</sup> See Rampton 2006a:116-7 for a comparable case.

<sup>5</sup> 415 episodes over c. 80 hours. Since they were not counted in the Westpark and Central High surveys, this comparison involves excluding 116 references in the LCS data to 'body care', 'clothes', 'food' and 'sport'.

<sup>6</sup> With 121 episodes in 70 hours of classtime recording, figures for humming and singing in class at LCS were also closer to inner city Central High than to suburban Westpark. LCS averaged 1.7 episodes per hour, compared with 2.5 per hour at Central (67 episode in 26.5 hours), and 0.3 at Westpark (13 episodes in c.39 hours).

<sup>7</sup> 116 LCS references to body care etc are excluded from this count, as in Note 4 above.

<sup>8</sup> "In October 1999, one in three young people aged 13-16 had their own mobile, up sixfold on the previous year" Annual Childwise Monitor (*Childwise Insights: Boys Kick the Reading Habit*. [www.childwise.co.uk/reading/htgm](http://www.childwise.co.uk/reading/htgm). Consulted 9/5/02)

<sup>9</sup> If we use the narrower definition of PNMC, excluding body-care etc (see Note 4), this rises to a third (138/415).

presence of portable digital hardware. In 2005, a mobile phone was audibly used just a couple of times in class for texting (by one informant). In 2006, there were 22 instances of the non-coursework use of mobiles, PSPs, mp3 in class (3 informants), and this shift can be attributed to the availability and uptake of media products on the market.<sup>10</sup>

So although classrooms did not appear to be ‘swamped’ by new digital hardware, there was clear evidence that innovations in communications technology work their way into young people’s classroom lives, validating the attention professionals gave to this in the Teachers Project.

Whilst speaking directly to public, policy and professional concerns, our survey account has been broadly drawn. To explore the multiplicity of ways in which kids wove PNMC into the fine-grain of everyday interaction, and how they did (and didn’t) use it in their own negotiations of identity, we also conducted case-study analyses of individuals (see 3.2.f above).

#### **4.3 Popular media discourse practices and identities in interaction** (Georgakopoulou with Small & Dover)

Our first case-study examined the two informants who oriented most frequently to PNMC, Nadia and Habibah (Table 2), and involved discourse micro-analysis, drawing on all their data (c.37 hours: 2005 & 2006 radio-mic recordings, 2 interviews, 2 playback sessions) (Project Aims (i),(ii),(iii)).

##### **4.3.1 PNMC in the discursive negotiation of peer relations**

Talk plays a big part shaping social status and relations, and differences in these girls’ audible PNMC engagements linked to their profiles and positions in the peergroup prestige hierarchy.<sup>11</sup>

Nadia was the leading figure in the popular girls’ group in the class; was part of the school’s ‘Gifted & Talented’ programme; had looks that others aspired to; and was chased/desired by boys. Her family allowed extensive access to new media (MSN/internet/mobiles), and she was a heavy consumer of popular culture, with trend-setting tastes. In contrast, Habibah maintained rather fraught relationships in a relatively isolated girls’ group; was academically weak and frequently disciplined by teachers; struggled with the categorisations ‘fat’ and ‘ugly’; and was generally unsuccessful with boys, despite strenuously seeking their attention. Her parents prohibited MSN and refused her a mobile, and she was a follower rather than a leader in popular culture, with tastes that were sometimes mocked.

Both girls articulated their popular cultural interests in a range of interactional moves,<sup>12</sup> but for Nadia, PNMC entailed a predominantly empowering discourse about self that stressed networking and enhanced sociability, while in Habibah’s talk of self and PNMC, regulation featured prominently, with much more emphasis on lack of access, risk and prohibition. Quantification of a subset of PNMC-linked discourse practices point to the difference in the local social influence of these two girls:

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<sup>10</sup> 3G mobiles have been available in the UK market since 2004 but did not become very popular or affordable until 2006, after the first phase of our fieldwork. Similarly, PSPs (PlayStation Portables) became available in the UK at the end of 2005. In fact it was also during the second phase of fieldwork that social network sites started to take off amongst young people in the UK in the latter period of our fieldwork - Hi5 (referenced by one student) launched in 2004, Bebo launched in 2005 and Facebook became available to everyone in 2006

<sup>11</sup> cf Georgakopoulou 2008c

<sup>12</sup> Initiating, assessing, and getting feedback on their own and others’ performances of e.g. some song; introducing references that connected to what had just happened/been said; taking up other people’s references and having their own references taken up by others; elaborating a story about an experience, event or a media figure etc; spreading catchphrases; displaying recognition/non-recognition and knowledge/ignorance of popular media topics.

Table 3: *Comparison of Nadia and Habibah's interactional practices around PNMC in the 2005 recordings*

<b>Popular cultural references and performances are...</b>	<b>Nadia</b> (132 PNMC engagements in Phase 1)	<b>Habibah</b> (82 PNMC engagements in Phase 1)
... initiated by the informant	92% (121)	71%* (58)
... taken up by other participants (e.g. positively assessed, elaborated, sang along with)	93% (123)	28% (23)
...built up into stories	30% (40)	16% (13)
... topically linked to prior talk	91% (120)	5% (4)
Involvement in positive assessment sequences (e.g. 'I love this song')	66% (29/44)	29% (12/42)
Involvement in negative assessment sequences (e.g. 'that's horrible')	34% (15/44)	71% (30/42)

\* a lot of Habibah's initiations involved eliciting e.g. some singing from others

Beyond this analysis of how PNMC-talk linked to more enduring local peer-group profiles,<sup>13</sup> we also examined the ways PNMC fueled/sustained collaborative talk and sociability, zeroing in on Nadia and friends with the 'small stories' perspective pioneered by Georgakopoulou.

#### **4.3.2 Popular & new media culture in the ongoing co-narration of everyday life**

In contrast to the well-formed stories of past and non-shared events typical in interviews, 'small stories' are closely integrated into ordinary conversation and are realized in turns and utterances that situate not only past but also future and ongoing experience in a narrative frame. 'Small stories' include breaking news, tellings of hypothetical and shared/known events (as well as ongoing and future ones), allusions to previous tellings, deferrals and refusals to tell (Georgakopoulou 2008d). Whereas stories of remote past events – e.g. 'when I was little...', 'in primary school...' – were astonishingly rare (fewer than 10 in over 30 hours of the girls' radio-mic recordings), small stories were very common. They formed a continuing state of incipient talk, generating lines of engrossing interest that ran parallel to the curriculum, and that kids could exit and re-enter with minimal generic framing marking (e.g. "anyways yeah, he text me yesterday"). So on one of Nadia's radio-mic days, there were 30 different story-lines during Periods 1 & 2. While 12 story-lines related to boys with whom there was sexual/romantic interest, ten referred to popular culture.

Indeed more generally, even in small stories about boys, popular digital technologies featured prominently. Rather than simply being taken-for-granted as background 'settings' or 'props' through which protagonists communicated, technological objects figured in small stories as instruments of moral transgression (where e.g. boys flouted the proscriptions and norms of conduct associated with MSN & mobiles), as foci for collaborative development of a projective narrative (as when for example, girls rehearsed together what to say to a boy on the phone), as clearly marked stages in the plot development of 'stories-in-the-making' (with e.g. text-messages being read as they are received, and collective witnessings of 'missed-call' replies), and as evidentiary resources, with text-messages used to corroborate narrative claims.

Overall, small story analysis represents our most fine-grained account of how PNMC gets woven into routine adolescent life at school. Indeed, it also gets closest to our informants' ongoing negotiations of identity, carrying wider implications for interview-based identity analyses.

#### **4.3.3 Identity claims in small stories versus interviews**

Instead of analyst/observer definitions of identity, our analysis of small stories addressed the 'identity claims' produced by participants, focusing on self- & other- categorizations, characterizations and

<sup>13</sup> For some comparable analysis, see Rampton 2006a:Ch.3.5

assessments that referred to people and personality traits (e.g. physical appearance, modes of conduct). Identity claims occur in many types of talk – arguments, games, tickings-off etc – but ‘small stories’ are particularly significant (a) because they are very conspicuously co-constructed, with claims, characterizations and imaginings contested and reformulated collaboratively as they emerge, and (b) because they are developed and repeated over time, with certain stances and characterisations solidifying in relatively durable local consensus.<sup>14</sup>

Identity is a major concern in social science research on interview narratives, but research interviews seldom serve as sites either for the contestation of identity claims against a background of shared knowledge, or for their intensive collaborative reformulation and/or reiteration over time/across settings. In addition, the links between actions, events and identity characterizations were constructed differently in interviews and conversations between friends. In conversational small stories, identity claims normally *followed* reports and projections of actions and events (conversation: narrative ⇒ identity claim) – identity claims featured as necessarily provisional attempts to link relatively stable features of personhood to recent, newsworthy and potentially multivalent events that interlocutors were now being invited to assess together. Overwhelmingly in interviews, the sequence was reversed: identity claim ⇒ narrative.<sup>15</sup> Rather than breaking news or projecting hypothetical scenarios pregnant with possibility, interview narratives covered habitual, generic and/or representative ‘once’ actions and events, and these served to settle and attest the typicality and generalisability of the identity claims being disclosed. Interviews, one might say, made social action subordinate to identity, whereas in conversational small stories, it was action that mattered more. Compared with their *in vivo* development in small stories, interviews pushed towards a reification of identities.

This linked to our perspective on ‘race’ and ethnicity.

#### **4.4 ‘Race’ and ethnicity in adolescent interaction** (Harris, Rampton, Small & Georgakopoulou)

Dominant public and policy discourse about ‘race’ and ethnicity – circulating in government, media, CRE etc, coalescing in themes like ‘Race, Ethnicity and Achievement’ – emphasises racial conflict, (institutional) racism/anti-racism, and e.g. hostile name-calling. With four minority ethnic researchers in our team of six, we were well-tuned to this, but in over 100-days’ participant-observation, our fieldworker – Lauren Small, who has a black Caribbean background – noticed hardly any episodes which corroborated the dominant discourses, and racial/ethnic ‘trouble’ was never mentioned in the Teachers Project.

Instead, our data pointed to the emergence of a culture of low-key conviviality among many adolescents, in which “racial and ethnic difference ha[d] been rendered unremarkable... and ha[d] become... ‘ordinary’” (Gilroy 2006). Adolescents certainly recognised ethnic differences – in e.g. Nadia’s friendship group, whiteness had lesser value in popular culture contexts, and in looks, mixed race and light brown rated highest. But this didn’t present a crisis. Allusions (e.g. through accent stylisation) and references to ethnic difference emerged and remained as subsidiary issues in conversations addressed to far more insistent concerns with e.g. heterosociability and friendship responsibilities,<sup>16</sup> and this points to evidentiary deficits sustaining the dominant ‘race’ and ethnicity discourse.

The meanings of ‘race’ and ethnicity depend on the situated contexts in which they become salient, on the institutional and network relations in which ethnifying acts and utterances are produced, on the kinds of activity they occur in, on the broader plurality of circumambient discourses, ideologies and moralities, and on the immediate details of exactly when and how they’re delivered and received. Both ethnographic observation and the sociolinguistic analysis of radio-mic recordings can pick up on this, but ‘race trouble’ discourses thrive in the neglect of such accounts. Indeed, if we follow 4.3.3, then researchers relying on interviews may find it hard to reach beyond the ‘crisis’ idiom if they are drawn by genre convention to place social identity before situated action, to overlook the ongoing co-construction of meaning among everyday associates, and/or to confine their context

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<sup>14</sup> Georgakopoulou 2008a

<sup>15</sup> In Nadia’s interview, for example, this was the pattern with 38 of the 45 events narrated.

<sup>16</sup> See Georgakopoulou 2008d; Rampton, Harris & Small 2006

analyses to the ways that informants position themselves within (only the most obvious) discourses at large (intertextuality).

Empirical observation of everyday practice is vital to understanding the dynamics of ethnicity and 'race', and our second empirical case-study interrogates a strand in ethnic policy discourse that centres not so much on race conflict as on the educational remediation of ethnic/linguistic difference.

#### **4.5 'Mainstreaming': Language and ethnicity in education policy** (Leung with Small)

Official discourses have recognized the presence of immigrant school-children whose first language isn't English since the 1960s, and from the mid-1980s, the consensus has been that learners of 'EAL' (English as an additional language) are best accommodated in the 'mainstream', separate language teaching provision being viewed as racist and denying full curriculum access/equal opportunities. The belief is that language development is optimized through direct participation in the normal school environment alongside 'English-speaking' pupils (DfES 2003:29; Leung 2007b).

To explore how these discourses linked to ordinary classroom life, we focused on c.20 hours of radio-mic data on Sairah (2005:8.5hrs,2006:12hrs; cf 3.2.f), who came to the UK with her mother in 2001 as a refugee from Iraq, lived in northern England, and joined LCS in April 2005. The school had assessed her English proficiency and classified her as now no longer in need of specialist EAL support.

Sairah was completely mainstreamed, staff treated her with full teacherly seriousness, and there was no evidence of any curriculum attention to her bilingualism or EAL. But she still stood out as different. First, she was very purposeful about curriculum work, cooperated willingly with instructions, volunteered answers, and regularly initiated one-to-one task-focused exchanges with the staff. Contrary to the assumption that (recent) EAL pupils are 'ignored' or 'diffident' in class (DfES, 2007:6), Sairah was very assertive about learning, and this set her apart in a mainstream environment where non-chalant about learning-as-instructed was the norm. Second, Sairah seldom oriented to popular & new media culture (see Table 2), and there was no indication of change over time (2005:17 PNMC engagements ⇒ 2006:7). Her appearance (hairstyle and jewellery) distinguished her from peers and during 2005, often drew unfavourable comment. She didn't interact freely with the rest of the class, and instead she associated with other youngsters who had come to the UK relatively recently.

Sairah's example is problematic for any educational policy which prioritises mainstream 'integration' as the route to achievement while simultaneously ignoring the routine practices in so much mainstream classroom life. If Sairah had conformed to the ideal and been more fully mainstreamed in the conditions where she actually found herself, she would have shown less commitment to learning and been much more immersed in the popular culture which teachers generally find unsettling. The reality was that Sairah's continued 'outsiderness' may well have contributed to her educational progress – indeed, in 2006 she moved into the school's 'Gifted & Talented' programme.

## **5. ACTIVITIES**

We have participated in 27 ISA Programme events (presenting at 14); arranged 9 non-Programme workshops/data-sessions on UCCI; and so far presented 17 papers at non-ISA conferences.

UCCI has also served as an arena/resource for research training and interdisciplinary development (Project Aim (iii)):

- a) Small, our RA, is completing a two-year PT (ESRC-recognised) MRes, drawing on UCCI for assignments and dissertation, gaining credits for practical experience through the APEL procedure we specifically set up for RAs;
- b) PhD students have participated in 10 UCCI events at King's, with two officially affiliated to the project (attending team meetings, contributing to analysis etc; Tremlett, 2005-7, Lefstein, 2006);
- c) a one-minute extract of UCCI data has been focal in 10 sessions of a new 'Analysing Spoken Discourse' BA module, teaching CA, Goffman, & trans-contextual analysis (Rampton)

Building on links developed through ISA:

- d) we have established a 3-year ESRC/RDI training programme for social scientists UK-wide on "Ethnography, Language & Communication" (2007-09; £100,000; [www.rdi-elc.org.uk](http://www.rdi-elc.org.uk); Rampton

(Director) with KCL&IoE colleagues). UCCI perspectives, data and/or analyses are extensively used here as training materials;

- e) we held an inter-disciplinary colloquium on ‘Linguistic Ethnography & the Social Sciences’ (Sept 2005, Bristol), resulting in a *Journal of Sociolinguistics* special issue on ‘Linguistic Ethnography: Links, problems & possibilities’,<sup>17</sup> with assessments from linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics, psychology and sociology.

## 6. OUTPUTS

Our outputs include 20+ conference presentations, 25+ publications, training materials for two courses (5c:King’s-based; 5d:UK-wide), and the Teachers Project elicitation materials will be used in teacher professional development.

## 7. IMPACTS

The Teachers Project attests to the resonance of our account of contemporary urban classroom culture, and we will take opportunities to broaden this debate in the period ahead. Research methodology has been another central concern, and by establishing courses (5d,5c) and using the resources of the UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum (5e) to consolidate training and debate about our methods, UCCI’s methodological innovation will continue/spread beyond the project itself.<sup>18</sup>

## 8. FUTURE RESEARCH PRIORITIES

- The linguistic and cultural practices facilitating convivial ethnicities among London adolescents (building on data from UCCI and Harris (2006)).
- The role of PNMC within peer hierarchies, using UCCI case-studies in media ethnography. (Dover)
- ‘Small stories’ and the relationship over-time of identity claims produced inside and outside the tale-world (Georgakopoulou)
- Achieving understanding by pupils in one-to-one pupil-teacher interaction as a site for EAL development (Leung)
- Linguistic ethnographic analysis of the negotiation of popularity and marginalization among teenage girls (Small [MRes dissertation]).
- The sociolinguistic dynamics of social class among pupils recently arrived in the UK (building on Rampton 2006 and case-studies from the UCCI and 1997/98 datasets. Rampton)

(Main text: 4,935 words)

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<sup>17</sup> Rampton, Maybin & Tusting (eds) 2007

<sup>18</sup> High demand for places on our ESRC/RDI course attests to the trans-disciplinary resonance of our methodology, as does extremely positive feedback on the first 5-day programme.

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## **ANNEX A:**

### **ELICITATION MATERIALS FROM THE TEACHERS PROJECT**

#### **URBAN CLASSROOM CULTURE AND INTERACTION TEACHERS' PROJECT 2007**

#### **Information on the project**

This 3 year project is one of twenty-five currently running as part of the ESRC Identities programme. Taking ethno-linguistic difference and popular culture as two of the most salient features in the urban landscape, this project aims to produce a new view of contemporary schools and classrooms by charting the inter-animation of ethnic, popular-cultural and educational identities in school-based interaction; linking interactional processes of accommodation, conflict, fusion & refusal to wider processes of cultural and educational stratification. The project uses the methods of ethnographic sociolinguistics in order to produce an intimate view of everyday life, and also draws on school policy and media documents to set this in a wider context

#### **The School (At the time that the data was collected)**

The school participating in our study is an inner London comprehensive and is currently attended by approximately 1000 students. Each year group is divided into eight classes of between 25-30 students and there is also a sixth form. The student population is extremely diverse and a large majority of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, with South Asian and African-Caribbean ethnicities forming the two largest groups. The students also have a variety of social class backgrounds, with both above average numbers on free school meals, and a recent increase in the number of middle class students entering the school. The school has received a positive Ofsted report and has seen steady improvements in its exam success rates. It also maintains close connections with the local community, often hosting evening performances and events for parents, allowing students to showcase their work and extra curricular talents.

#### **Data Collection**

We have completed two phases of data collection in two classes, following nine students from year nine and into year ten. During the study, the focal students, 5 female and 4 male, were 14-16 years old. The students are from a range of ethnicities and vary greatly in their academic performance. In total we have approximately 180+ hours of radio-microphone recordings, 8 focal student interviews, 10 (mainly group) playback interview sessions, 10+ hours video recordings, and an observational field diary covering, among other things, impromptu conversations with staff, and have assembled supplementary documentation covering Year 9-10 demographics and school performance, staff & parent handbooks, lesson handouts etc.

#### **Teachers' Project**

We have selected a number of extracts from our data, which we feel might accurately reflect some aspects of contemporary school experience. All the extracts are taken from within the classroom and show instances where students may or may not be engaged with the curriculum. The extracts we have chosen serve as examples of displays of a range of student behaviour, from cooperative to transgressive, which are recurrent in our data. We are interested in ascertaining whether or not the themes we have come across in our own work relate, in a representative way, to students across London and to what extent, and in which ways they are experienced and handled from a teacher's perspective.

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## **EXTRACT A**

**P2Herm1a 115.58-118.30 – (118.53) Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 06 Period 3 – English**

#### **Focal Student**

- Focal student - Habibah (wearing the radio-microphone)
- 15 years old at the time of the recording
- She is of South Asian descent, born in India but has lived in the UK since her early years.
- Her mother tongue is Urdu but she uses English as her first language.

- She initially had trouble with bullying and was frequently absent.
- She is marginalised within her class and is often ridiculed by classmates
- She achieved a level 5 at the end of key stage three
- She is close friends with a group of girls of South Asian descent from her class. Habibah’s friends are far more educationally focussed than her. She still continues with transgressive behaviour, such as ‘bunking’ off lessons
- She tends to conduct private conversations, not paying attention to the lesson content and as a result gets very little work done.
- She avoids being chosen to speak in lessons and is usually unable to respond when a teacher selects her to speak.

### Extract context

- Year 10 GCSE English lesson
- Thursday morning. Period 3
- Students have five English lessons a week and are taught by two different teachers.
- At the time of recording, lessons were being covered by a trainee teacher Mr Norman
- The students were a few weeks away from their mock GCSE exams
- The lesson is being taught by both their regular teacher Ms Mackenzie and Mr Norman.
- The extract begins approximately 13 minutes into the lesson
- Throughout the extract, Habibah is having a separate conversation with a boy, Unmesh, sitting opposite her.
- Habibah makes sporadic remarks about the lesson content, but for the most part she shows no interest in the curriculum subject matter.
- Two girls in particular, Laura and Nadine, are somewhat engaged in the lesson, though their comments are limited.

Prior to the start of the extract the students have been asked to read through a passage from Bill Bryson’s ‘Travel Stories’. Mr Norman introduces the text by saying “I can’t guarantee that [your exam texts] are gonna be fascinating texts that you’re gonna be immediately interested in... and to that end I’ve found one with no pictures, just writing, about the Yorkshire Dales...” After asking for volunteers to read and receiving no response, Mr Norman offers to read the text to the class and subsequently does so. He stops intermittently trying to persuade some of the students to take over but is unsuccessful. After reading the text, Mr Norman turns to the questions on the board reminding the students that they must get some writing done in the lesson. In this extract he is trying to elicit responses to the first question, “What reason does the writer give for finding the dales “captivating beyond words”?”

## EXTRACT A

### Participants in extract

H – Habibah (Focal Student)      L – Laura (Student participating in lesson)  
 MrN – Mr Norman (Teacher)      N – Nadia (Student participating in lesson)  
 U – Unmesh (Habibah’s interlocutor)

1.	MrN:	What we need to do this morning	0.00/115.58
2.		is you’re gonna be assessed on::	
3.		following an argument	
4.	H:	(( <i>taps on desk continuously</i> ))	
5.	MrN:	Now this writer’s argument	0.07
6.		this is Bill Bryson	
7.		(.) travel writer	
8.		His argument is that Yorkshire dales	
9.		is ‘captivating beyond words’	0.14
10.		<u>that’s</u> his argument	
11.		<u>that’s</u> what he’s saying	
12.		what <u>we</u> need to do	
13.		is to pull out the <u>main</u> points that he makes to	
14.		(1) back that up	0.22/
15.		so for that first (.) question	
16.		we need to find (.)	
17.		at <u>least</u> three reasons that he gives	

18.	H:	Miss changed her hair	
19.	MrN:	Any ideas folks	0.30
20.	L:	What <u>is</u> the question	
21.	MrN:	What is the /first question	
22.	L:	((reading))/(what reasons) does the writer give	
23.	MrN:	What reasons does the writer give	
24.		for finding the dales captivating beyond (.) words	0.41
25.	H:	((stylised)) I don't know	
26.		(2)	
27.	MrN:	What reasons does he give↑	
28.		(3)	
29.	L:	>What's the question again<	0.52
30.		what	
31.	MrN:	((bemused voice)) the question is	
32.		right so he says (.)	
33.	L:	Oh:: ok	
34.	MrN:	This place the Yorkshire dales	0.57
35.		up in the North of England	
36.		((student coughing))	
37.	MrN:	is captivating beyond words	
38.		what- >what does that mean someone<	
39.		>what does that mean<	1.01
40.		it's captivating beyond words	
41.	Boy:	((whispers)) captivating	
42.	MrN:	Captivating	
43.	U:	/You can't	
44.	N:	/You can't (.) explain it	1.06
45.	U:	yeah you can't explain it	
46.	MrN:	Yeah .>yes it is<	
47.		like it was beyond words um::	
48.		there ar- the words aren't there to describe	
49.		how <u>captivating</u> it is	1.13
50.		what's captivating	
51.		>what does that mean<	
52.	H:	((tuts))	
53.	L:	Capturing	
54.	U:	/Yeah (like boom)	1.17
55.	H:	/He just ask that	
56.	MrN:	And what's it captured captured	
57.	H:	didn't he↑ didn't he just ask that	
58.	L:	His (.) his um /attention	
59.	U:	/(to Habibah)) you fat /(pig)	1.22
60.	MrN:	/Yeah uh i-it's got his heart	
61.		it's got his love	
62.		it's uh:: yeah:: he adores the place	
63.	H:	((mocking)) mm mm	
64.	MrN:	He's captured by it	1.28
65.		it's stronger than-	
66.	N:	small ( )	
67.	Students:	((laughter))	
68.	U:	((to Habibah)) /did you say ( )	
69.	N:	/why do they actually <u>like</u> a place yeah	1.33
70.	H:	Such a rude-	
71.	U:	That you're fat↑ / you know dat	
72.	N:	/when (.) people poke their big 'eads	
73.		round your door every five minutes	
74.	MrN:	right we'll lets take <u>that</u> as a first reason	1.30
75.	U:	(don't look at me)	
76.	MrN:	guys (2)	
77.		He describes the Yorkshire dales	
78.	H:	( )	
79.	MrN:	Uh and one of the things he says is that the people there	1.47
80.		((chuckling)) >what did you say< poke their heads around	
81.	N:	Poke their <u>big</u> heads	
82.	MrN:	Poke their big /heads around	
83.	H:	((low voice)) stop it fuck off	1.51
84.	MrN:	They don't- they don't knock	

85.		they just come into your house	
86.		(4)	
87.	MrN:	does he give that as a reason why he finds it captivating↑	
88.	L:	((reading)) um it's a exhilarating contrast between the high fields	2.03
89.		and the ( ) view	
90.	H:	((to Unmesh)) why you laughing	
91.	MrN:	Right now we're dealing with two points simultaneously	
92.		hang on to that thought	
93.		because that's the first point /he makes	2.09
94.	H:	/are you gonna finish (your task )	
95.	Girl:	(Mhmm)	
96.	MrN:	But what about (.) the people	
97.		in the Yorkshire dales	
98.		what does he say about them	2.14
99.	L:	oh they're ( )	
100.	H:	Adam	
101.	MrN:	But does he like it↑	
102.	H:	(sexy)	
103.	MrN:	is that what makes it-	2.18
104.	L:	Yeah yeah	
105.	N:	Yeah	
106.	MrN:	Captivating↑	
107.	L:	Yeah	
108.	MrN:	Yeah (.) he goes on for quite a long time about-	2.21
109.		((quiet murmuring from students))	
110.		(4)	
111.	MrN:	No not listening↑	
112.		you wanna just do this on your own is silence↑	
113.	Boy:	yep	2.29
114.		(10)	
115.	H:	I spelt that wrong	
116.	MrN:	Alright well	
117.		you can do that bit on your own	
118.		he talks about the people=	2.45
119.	H:	/is the heater on	
120.	MrN:	=and and how>how much he likes them<	
121.		how friendly they are::	
122.		they don't (.) they don't even knock	2.49
123.		they just come in and they chat	
124.		a::nd he finds this kind of	
125.	MrN:	Endearing he finds this captivating	2.54/118.53

## EXTRACT B

P2SRrm2b:25.22 – 27.42

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 06

Period 3 – English

### Focal Student

- Focal Student - Sairah (wearing the radio-microphone)
- 15 years old at the time of the recording.
- She is of Iraqi descent.
- She is classified by the school as having been an EAL student.
- She joined the school in April 2005, moving from Bradford where she had lived for two years after claiming asylum from Iraq.
- Her progress in English meant she was quickly integrated into mainstream classes.
- She initially suffered constant teasing and bullying from classmates and is seen as an outsider.
- She has recently become more accepted by her classmates, particularly her female peers.
- She achieved a level 3 when she first joined the school but is now in the gifted and talented programme and is in the top set for science.
- She does not receive any extra tuition as she was doing so well in mainstream classes.
- She is extremely bright and a keen learner who enjoys classical music.

## Extract Context

- Year 10 GCSE English lesson
- Thursday morning. Period 3
- Students have been simultaneously working on a piece of literature coursework based on the novel 'Jekyll and Hyde' and a piece of creative writing coursework in previous weeks
- They have previously handed in their first drafts for both and have had them returned with comments from their teacher Mr Maguire
- The extract begins approximately 8 minutes into the lesson.
- Students have been told to continue working individually on either piece of coursework and have been reminded that the 'Jekyll and Hyde' coursework is due in the following day.
- Mr Maguire is going around the classroom assisting individuals in turn.
- Ms Wilson, An EAL support teacher, has been helping two other EAL students and approaches Sairah at the beginning of the extract offering assistance.

Throughout the extract, Ms Wilson aids Sairah with the improvements she needs to make in her coursework. About a quarter of the way through the extract Mr Maguire addresses the class, slightly annoyed that none of the students he has been working with so far have the essay plan he set out for them. He asks the students if it would be a better use of his time to go through the essay plan again with the entire class. After receiving a confirmatory response from six students, he opts to go ahead with reviewing the plan, advising the rest of the class to continue with their work. Sairah continues going through her own essay with Ms Wilson, paying close attention to the advice she is given; and taking a cue from a religious theme in the curriculum content she develops a quite sophisticated inquisitive discussion with the support teacher. Later on in the lesson, after the extract, she is able to respond to questions posed to the entire class by Mr Maguire, based on the conversation she has had with Ms Wilson.

## EXTRACT B

### Participants in Extract

S – Sairah (Focal Student)

MsW - Ms Wilson (Support Teacher)

MrM – Mr Maguire (Class Teacher)

- |     |      |  |            |
|-----|------|--|------------|
| 1.  | MsW: | Do you need any help   | 0.03/25.22 |
| 2.  | S:   | Uh I just need to speak to sir about it                            |            |
| 3.  |      | about the improvements↑ I need to do↑                              |            |
| 4.  | MsW: | Do you want (.) to ask me about it at all or-                      |            |
| 5.  | S:   | Yeah cos he he's /got  | 0.13       |
| 6.  | MsW: | /this is a:: ((makes a correction to Sairah's work?))              |            |
| 7.  | S:   | (3) is it↑   |            |
| 8.  | MsW: | mhmm   |            |
| 9.  | S:   | he's got some comments and um::                                    |            |
| 10. |      | (2) yeah but=  | 0.23       |
| 11. | MsW: | ((reading)) =what is Stevenson <u>really</u> saying about humans   |            |
| 12. |      | so what do you think he-   |            |
| 13. | S:   | He's- every human has a bad- a bad side and a good side            |            |
| 14. | MsW: | mm   |            |
| 15. | S:   | yeah   | 0.32       |
| 16. | MsW: | And what is he saying about Victorian Christians                   |            |
| 17. |      | (4)  |            |
| 18. |      | Ok ((reading from Sairah's essay?)) at the time of the novel novel |            |
| 19. |      | <u>most</u> people that lived in London were Christians            |            |
| 20. |      | in />in in< in England=  | 0.47       |
| 21. | MrM: | /Right folks please  |            |
| 22. | MsW: | =as well   |            |
| 23. | S:   | Yeah   |            |
| 24. | MrM: | Right  |            |
| 25. | MsW: | ((lowered voice)) /definitely need to improve (the )               | 0.51       |
| 26. | MrM: | /I did a lesson where I put up the 'Jekyll and Hyde' essay plan    |            |
| 27. |      | right and we went through:: if you remember                        |            |
| 28. |      | >I mean< this this seems to be a waste of time ( )                 |            |
| 29. |      | remember that  |            |

30. and we went through / and said what we need to write= 1.02

31. Girl: /( )

32. MrM: =in each section

33. do you remember that

34. boy: ((*mumbling*)) no

35. MrM: It- would it help if I spend ten minutes 1.07

36. /and do that with the whole class

37. MsW: ((*low voice*)) use ( )

38. MrM: Is there more people that need me to do that

39. Boy: yeah

40. MrM: How many how many would find that useful 1.15

41. if I did that

42. Student: mm:::.....:

43. MrM: one two three four:: (.) five:: (.) six

44. right so if I go through that now

45. if I spend five:: ten:: minutes going through that 1.27

46. I can address six people um

47. (.) (like I said) rather than doing it one at a time

48. does e- we've done this in class

49. this is a waste of flaming time

50. Boy: no it's not 1.35

51. Boy: No

52. MrM: y-y-y you shouldn't- I shouldn't have to be doing this again

53. and I I'm disappointed

54. right those of you (.)

55. those of you who are working and don't need this 1.44

56. folks just crack on=

57. MsW: ok

58. MrM: =with your own stuff ok yeah

59. MsW: so /the theory=

60. MrM: /and I I apologise

61. I shouldn't have to do this again 1.49

62. MsW: =/of creation suggests that all men are created by god

63. MrM: /I should be spending time in class

64. /with individuals

65. MsW: /in his own image

66. S: /Ok

67. MrM: /who have done a good job on the essay 1.54

68. MsW: /so people believed that

69. MrM: /right ok

70. MsW: /God looks like a human

71. so when you made i- made human beings

72. MrM: right (.) / (it says) 1.59

73. MsW: /that they were

74. we are /the image of God

75. MrM: /What you are answering is this folks right

76. S: Is that /what Christians believe

77. MrM: /it's about the divided nature

78. of human personalities 2.05

79. MsW: believed

80. S: Oh I /thought (.)um

81. MrM: /and it's about Victorian society

82. / being divided ok

83. S: /I thought they believed

84. MrM: Um 2.09

85. S: that God created people as he wanted them to be

86. MsW: No as- in / as the image of him

87. MrM: /divided nature of pers- uh /uh

88. S: Oh::

89. MsW: Image /can be like reflection so- 2.16

90. MrM: /of a group of personalities

91. S: Oh::

92. MrM: (How is) the human personality /divided in-

93. MsW: /so they believed that / God is like-

94. MrM: /what's it divided into 2.18

95. Girl: good and bad

96. MrM: good and bad

97. S: ok ok  
98. MsW: so he just made a copy↑  
99. S: mhmm

2.23/27.42

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## EXTRACT C

BI2a 131.44 – 136.36      Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 05      Period 3: Humanities

### Focal Student

- Focal student - Basheera (wearing the radio-microphone)
- 14 years old at the time of the recording
- She is of Moroccan descent but has always lived in the UK
- She received a level 5 at key stage three.
- She is extremely outspoken and seen by her peers as the leader amongst the girls in her class
- She has strong relationships with both boys and girls, dividing her time equally between her male and female friends.
- She also works particularly well in English lessons and is usually the first person to volunteer to read in those classes.
- She is always ready to challenge teachers and teases them jokingly. Although she is often reprimanded for her behaviour she is usually able to appease teachers and avoid further punishment.
- She often attempts to rally the entire class, initiating rounds of applause for teachers after they have introduced the lesson. Her classmates often join in and she questions those who do not get behind her.

### Extract Context

- Year nine single humanities lesson
- Wednesday morning. Period 3
- The extract begins approximately half an hour into the lesson
- The students have been doing a project on World War 2 for one lesson the previous week and are continuing with the project in this lesson.
- The lesson is being taught by Mr Ross, a long term supply teacher from Australia
- At the beginning of the lesson, he reminds the students about the groups of three they had divided themselves into the previous week and that each group has a topic to work on (Basheera's group has been given rationing)
- The students are talking very loudly and Mr Ross is forced to stop several times in order to get their attention.

The students are left to work in their groups while Mr Ross attends to each group individually. Basheera has been listening to music through her headphones and chatting to her friends while working. After about 10 minutes of the students working in their groups, Mr Ross stops the lesson realising that several students are unsure of what they are supposed to be doing. He makes several attempts to get quiet so he can go through the instructions again with the class. At the beginning of the extract, Mr Ross has taken Basheera's group as an example in order to explain the work the students should be doing. Basheera begins to antagonise him, making several derogatory comments and getting other students on her side.

## EXTRACT C

### Participants in Extract

B – Basheera (Focal Student)

MrR – Mr Ross (Class teacher)

L – Lola (close friend of Basheera's. In her group)

Z – Zane (Classmate)

J – Joel (Classmate. Close friend of Basheera)

1. MrR: Each girl here has a rationing workbook      0.05/131.44
2.      so their (.) project is going to be entirely on rationing

3. so what they need to do is discuss  
4. who's >going to be< looking at what part of rationing  
5. (4) 0.15  
6. For their written and for their visual  
7. (.)  
8. um::  
9. (1)  
10. pieces 0.22  
11. (.)  
12. So for instance  
13. Nita might be doing  
14. the need for rationing  
15. (.) ok so she'll 0.27  
16. (.) produce some sort of written piece of work↑  
17. and some sort of visual  
18. Student: ((coughs))  
19. MrR: /Lola might be doing  
20. B: /Do you get this boo- 0.35  
21. MrR: /(healthy eating and )=  
22. B: / do you get these assessments from Australia  
23. MrR: =can I finish speaking without having you interrupt me please Basheera  
24. (3)  
25. B: .hhhh yes 0.44  
26. MrR: ((raised tone)) is that unreasonable that I speak  
27. without having you /interrupt  
28. B: /I said yeah 0.48/132.27

-----  
1. MrR: Alright Nita might do her:↑ 0.03/133.44  
2. uh part of rationing  
3. (.) through:: a diary entry  
4. Girl: ((giggles))  
5. MrR: /ok 0.10  
6. B: /Why:: do we have to do /that  
7. MrR: /Shh::::  
8. B: Ms Barrett we had to do just like a normal essay  
9. why do you keep making it harder for us  
10. MrR: This is what every other= 0.18  
11. J?: It's true  
12. MrR: =This is what every other /class is doing  
13. Boy: Where's Mrs Barrett man  
14. (.)  
15. Z: She got pregnant 0.22  
16. B: ((laughs))  
17. MrR: Thank you::  
18. B: ((laughing)) she had a baby  
19. J: (oh my days)  
20. B: The baby's a boy 0.27  
21. Girl: What's his /name  
22. MrR: /Guys I wanna  
23. Girl: /(  
24. MrR: /see some work actually done today  
25. or you're not going to lunch 0.31  
26. B: It weighs a stone  
27. L: You want it finished↑  
28. B: It has blue eyes  
29. blonde hair  
30. MrR: ((raised voice)) and again 0.38  
31. you're wasting my time  
32. you're wasting your time  
33. during the lesson  
34. B: ((humming loudly)) hm hm hm hm hm (.) hm hm↑:::::  
35. MrR: Basheera you are seeing me at lunch 0.49  
36. B: Sir no:: PLEASE PLEASE:: ((laughs))  
37. MrR: (you're going to) detention  
38. Right so Lola /uh::

39. B: ((*laughs loudly*))

40. MrR: Nita might do it as a diary entry 0.57

41. Lola might do her part of rationing as a letter

42. and Basheera might do hers

43. B: ((*stylised posh*))Sir please: don't=

44. MrR: As a::

45. B: =use my name in public 1.04

46. MrR: Interview style or a cartoon strip

47. B: ((*laughs*))

48. MrR: Something different

49. so each person has some sort of different

50. writing style 1.11

51. are there any questions

52. Boy: (are )

53. Girl: (( *low tone to Basheera*)) you've gotta move your hand

54. MrR: Yes

55. B: hm↑ 1.17

56. MrR: that's why I've asked you to do it=

57. Girl: ((*low tone*)) go round ( )

58. MrR: =that's why I'd like you to do it

59. Boy: this is long

60. MrR: It's long 1.21

61. school is long

62. B: It's a long=

63. MrR: it's a long process

64. B: =thing

65. MrR: Are there any questions with respects to this 1.30

66. L: No:::

67. MrR: This project

68. L: No::

69. MrR: Right I wanna see some work being done

70. I need you to produce for me 1.35

71. Students: ((*general chatter and noise*))

72. MrR: ((*raised voice*)) I haven't finished speaking yet

73. thank you year nine

74. B: hhh

75. (9)

76. MrR: you need to produce for me 1.50

77. by the end of

78. (3)

79. this lesson

80. (1)

81. I wanna see 1.57

82. a cover sheet f-for your groups work

83. saying who's doing what

84. um: with respect to y-um::

85. with respect to your topic

86. so for instance 2.07

87. B: sir we know::

88. MrR: If you look at- excuse me Basheera

89. B: hhh

90. MrR: If you look at the possible questions um::: section

91. what was it why did it happen when did it happen 2.17

92. and how were people affected

93. how did people feel

94. ok you need to tell me who's doing

95. (.) who's doing

96. (.) which of these questions↑ 2.24

97. and what style of writing they will be doing them in

98. (2)

99. Ok=

100. B: =Thank you sir for explaining ((*gives Mr R a round of applause*))

101. Boy: (one nine) 2.23

102. MrR: It's- it is quite ridiculous=

103. B: ((*giggles as she continues clapping*))

104. MrR: =that I need to spend-

105. B: Joel why didn't you join in

106. MrR:	Half an hour on this	2.39
107. L:	Sir	
108. B:	Joel	
109. L:	Is <u>that</u> what you want	
110. B:	Why didn't you join in	
111. MrR:	Yes	2.44
112. L:	Then we're done	
113. MrR:	Ok now you need- can start working on it please	
114. B:	Sir when are you getting your hair cut	
115.	your hair's kind of going into /a girls haircut	
116. MrR:	/yeah I know	2.52
117.	it's going berserk	
118. L:	Its gone all fluffy sir	
119. B:	>why don't you just<-	
120.	if you can't afford it just go to the hospital	
121.	tell 'em you have nits	3.00/136.42

## EXTRACT D

p2OMrm1a: 60.15 – 62.15    Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 06    Period 2 – Maths

### Focal Student

- Focal student – Otis (wearing the radio-microphone)
- 15 years old at the time of the recording
- He is African-Caribbean and was born in Jamaica. He came to the UK at the age of ten
- He is the lowest achiever in his class, only achieving a level 2 at the end of key stage 3 and currently receives learning support
- He is often frustrated and feels he is treated unfairly, which causes him to react angrily when challenged.
- He is well liked by his classmates, but often provoked by his male peers, particularly his 'close' friend Jerome.
- He was often engaged in social activity unrelated to the curriculum focus of the lesson with Jerome and another boy, Jermaine. The boys quite often discuss or utilize computer games, hardware, software and websites in class.
- More recently, Otis has distanced himself from the other boys and shown a greater interest in learning. Although he still has confrontational moments, he has become much calmer and more focussed

### Extract context

- Year 10 GCSE maths class
- Thursday morning, Period 2
- The students have five maths lessons per week and are taught by two different teachers.
- This lesson is being taken by his regular teacher Miss Hunter (white British) who is the head of the maths department, and a trainee teacher Mr Graves (black African/Caribbean).
- The lesson began 10 minutes prior to the extract and Otis entered the classroom 4 minutes ago.
- Upon entering, he sits at a desk in front of Jerome and Jermaine who have both recently purchased Sony PSP (Play Station Portable) games consoles.
- They have been talking in low voices and Otis is especially aware of the teachers' presence, repeatedly reminding the boys to keep the machine well hidden.
- Otis is particularly interested here as he has plans to purchase a PSP and is trying to gather information about how the machine works from the two boys.

At the beginning of the episode Otis, Jerome and Jermaine are gathered around looking at an image of the fictional serial killer character, Michael Myers, from the film Halloween, on Jermaine's PSP and discussing how to use a computer programme called Photoshop<sup>19</sup> to import images to the console. Otis is particularly keen to

<sup>19</sup> Adobe Photoshop. Described as, "the professional standard in desktop digital imaging".

learn how to import images for his own website. The boys are so engrossed in the machine that none of them has taken his workbooks or equipment out of his schoolbag. After about five minutes they are interrupted by Mr Graves, who reminds them that they are supposed to have their coursework out, as he had advised students at the beginning of the lesson that they were to continue with the assignment they had been given by their other teacher earlier in the week. As the episode continues, Otis and the other boys, most notably Jerome, come up with several excuses as to why they do not have their coursework. There is an escalation towards the end of the episode as Mr Graves becomes increasingly frustrated by Otis and his colleagues' lack of focus on their work, but he avoids a potentially serious incident by quickly regaining his composure, and walks away.

## EXTRACT D

### Participants in Extract

O- Otis (Focal student)

MrG- Mr Graves (Trainee teacher)

JA – Jerome (classmate and friend of Otis's)

JW - Jermaine (classmate and friend of Otis's)

1. *((Otis, Jerome and Jermaine gather around looking a picture/video?? On Jordan W's PSP))*
2. *((Otis, Jerome and Jermaine gather around looking a picture/video?? On Jordan W's PSP))*
3. JA: Urgh 0.00/60.15
4. O: Let me see *((some feedback noise as Otis shifts to look at image??))*
5. JA: Urgh::: that's scary man
6. O?: let me see *((O shifting in chair))*
7. JW: (it's dat picture / )
8. JA: /Michael Myers
9. JW: It looks better when it's on computer *((O shifting in chair))* 0.07
10. JA: Yeah ( ) shit look at dat picture (.)
11. look at dat picture man
12. (3)
13. JW: yeah I think we should /(plug it in)
14. *((background: conversation between two classmates Nadia and Shonelle))* 0.17
15. O: What *((shifts again))*
16. JA: ( )
17. (2)
18. JA: How do you do- how do you /do that
19. Boy: *((side conversation?))* yeah that's ( ) group 0.23
20. JW: *((excited))* Ghetto innit
21. JA: How do you do↑ that
22. U: (How do you) make it
23. O: So how come you didn't put my name you shit'ead
24. JW: You don't hang round with us no more 0.28
25. /Na I'm jokin' I'm jokin'
26. JA: /Innit you don't even-
27. you don't hang around with us no more
28. why not=
29. JW: I didn't know your name that's the thing 0.32
30. I couldn't have just called you Otis
31. (that was flopping)
32. O: *((shifts))* >When did you do that<
33. >when did you do that<
34. >when did you do that< 0.38
35. MrG: Shh::: guys↑ (.)
36. get your coursework out
37. ( )
38. O: *((shifts as he looks in his bag for his work??))* Coursework↑ (.) 0.47
39. but we done it though
40. JW: >yeah I know< we done it
41. but we gotta do the next part
42. O: *((kisses his teeth. Zips up bag))* where do yo-
43. where do you do that
44. JW: Huh↑ 0.53
45. where did you get that Photoshop
46. (1)
47. JW: Photoshop↑

48. O: Yeah where did you-  
49. JW: I done it / ( ) 0.58  
50. /((mobile phone reception noise))  
51. MrG: ((loudly. To whole class)) Oh guys I wanna sign where you've got to today  
52. ((some side comments from students))  
53. Student: ( writing)  
54. Shonelle: It's coursework sir 1.03  
55. How you meant to sign anything ( )  
56. O: I wanna do Photoshop  
57. do some graffiti writing on my thing innit  
58. (2) for my-  
59. MrG: Guys (.) 1.12  
60. /I've asked you (.) ((moving closer to Otis and co))  
61. JW: /((if we can get in your website we can sort it out))  
62. MrG: three times now to get your coursework out  
63. if you don't you'll all be staying behind at break ok↑  
64. JA: Sir-/( ) 1.18  
65. O: Oh:: sh- don't tell me I lost my coursewo-  
66. Nadia: ((background)) urgh::: (she cheated on man)  
67. ((as Otis rifles through his bag looking for his coursework, Mr  
68. Graves approaches Jerome whose voice is mostly inaudible))  
69. JA: ( ) 1.26  
70. MrG: I just said I said I've asked you three times  
71. to get your coursework out  
72. JA: I don't have my coursework ( )  
73. Mr G: you're always making excuses  
74. JA: you're making excuses 1.36  
75. MrG: you're making excuses  
76. JW: Stop arguing you two  
77. MrG: ((Coming closer to Otis but still talking to JA)) stop  
78. JA: /I handed in my coursework yeah-  
79. MrG: /just stop just carry on 1.40  
80. I'm not gonna carry this on any further  
81. JW/JA: ((burst into laughter))  
82. O: I never had my coursework  
83. I don't have my coursework  
84. You're not supposed to go in my bag Sir 1.45  
85. ((Rustling noise as O snatches bag back from Mr Graves??))  
86. my property  
87. JW: Stop (pitching) on him  
88. MrG: ((calm voice)) where is your coursework  
89. O: I don't have it 1.51  
90. MrG: Why  
91. O: I don't know  
92. MrG: S-  
93. O: Oi Jermaine did Mr:: Lizimba took my coursework↑  
94. JW: (Mr who) 1.57  
95. O: Mr Lizimba  
96. Unmesh: Wait man  
97. O: I don't have it 2.00/62.15  
98. ((Mr Graves walks away))

**Transcription conventions:**

/	the point in a turn where the utterance of the next speaker begins to overlap
=	two utterances closely connected without a noticeable overlap, or different parts of a single speaker's turn
( )	speech that can't be deciphered
(text)	analyst's guess at speech that's hard to decipher
(( <i>italics</i> ))	stage directions
(1.)	approximate length of a pause in seconds
** <u>speech</u>	emphasised speech
> <	faster than normal speech
:::	extended speech

**Could you please provide the following information:**

<b>Your name:</b>	<b>School:</b>	<b>No. of years teaching experience:</b>	<b>No. of years in current post</b>
<b>Subject(s) taught</b>	<b>Post Held:</b>	<b>Age range (optional)</b> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 60+ <input type="checkbox"/>	

**Contact details (Optional)**

**e-mail address:**

**phone number:**

---

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Circle the number of the statement below which is closest to your own position.*

In my experience I find the scenario in Extract A

1. very recognizable    2. fairly recognizable    3. not sure if I recognise it

4. fairly unrecognizable    5. very unrecognisable

*Any additional comments about EXTRACT A?*

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Circle the number of the statement below which is closest to your own position.*

In my experience I find the scenario in Extract B

1. very recognizable    2. fairly recognizable    3. not sure if I recognise it  
4. fairly unrecognizable    5. very unrecognisable

*Any additional comments about EXTRACT A?*

---

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Circle the number of the statement below which is closest to your own position.*

In my experience I find the scenario in Extract C

1. very recognizable    2. fairly recognizable    3. not sure if I recognise it  
4. fairly unrecognizable    5. very unrecognisable

*Any additional comments about EXTRACT A?*

---

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Circle the number of the statement below which is closest to your own position.*

In my experience I find the scenario in Extract D

1. very recognizable    2. fairly recognizable    3. not sure if I recognise it  
4. fairly unrecognizable    5. very unrecognisable

*Any additional comments about EXTRACT A?*

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## ANNEX B: ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS FROM THE TEACHERS PROJECT

Here are a selection of comments made by our 39 teacher-informants when we played them the four 2-5 minutes audio-extracts from our radio-microphone recordings of interaction between pupils and teachers in class:

### **There was initial criticism of poor teaching:**

“I don’t see much humanities teaching, but [here] you see somebody battling, not getting anywhere, making the wrong moves all the time” (Paul aged 60+. English. 18 years classroom experience).

“There should be a point where you say ‘okay, let’s settle down, get on with it’. Where do we see that? We don’t. He’s still talking over – he talks over her, which says ‘it’s okay for you to talk when I’m talking’ which I was always told was the wrong thing, you know, you stop if they’re talking, you wait for them to be quiet (*murmurs of agreement from others*)”. (Saul, 20-30. English & Media Studies. 4 years experience)

### **This gave way to a perception that the (new) realities of classroom life might be more important than poor teaching:**

“I think he was clearly struggling, and you could understand why, and I’m not sure it’s just experience because I think experienced teachers have this problem as well, I think, with trying to engage young people today” (Tom, 40-50. MFL (Asst. Head) 17 years experience)

“You get to a certain stage with certain classes where you- where you have such a good relationship with them and they trust you enough for you to be able to stand up in front of them and talk at them for 10 minutes, and they will do exactly what you want them to. But that is rare and that has only happened a couple of times to me with a couple of classes in my time here” (Samantha, 30-40. English & Media Studies, 5 years experience)

“I think we’re into a new- I don’t know - generation has shifted I think ... we need to look very hard at how we um educate young people today. We cannot do it anymore from standing in front of the classroom I believe” (Tom, 40-50. MFL (Asst. Head) 17 years classroom experience)

“I recognise students who wanna get on with their own thing, who just are- who aren’t engaged, who aren’t going to be no matter what you do. You could stand on your head and it’s just so hard - they wanna be looking at Photoshop and engaging in the social banter, and you know that anyway- you just know that it’s just very difficult” (Jessica, 40-50. English. 16 years experience).

### **There was a perception that classroom relations had changed over time:**

“It’s become more acceptable for a child to say ‘no ... no I’m not doing it’ and then, you know, twenty thirty years ago it was almost unheard of. That would be the one child that basically spent the rest of the year outside the class, but now you have a class of thirty children and twenty of them are telling you ‘no’ and it’s acceptable you know. I shouldn’t hear people being defiant every day every lesson (*murmurs of agreement*) and it’s the norm.” (Carmen, 40-50. Supplementary School, 16 years classroom experience)

“[the relationship between] staff and students is so different than it was ten years ago. The difference is that you can’t get in their faces. I remember when I started teaching ... seventeen years ago and you got in [a] kid’s face and that was accepted as the norm. You could not do that here and I’m so glad they would be- they’d be quite entitled to go and complain about you. You would lose respect, you would lose all- you know, that would spread and you would be seen as this person and would stand out amongst this school as this- as someone who tried to rule by fear and we cannot do that again” (Tom, 40-50. MFL (Asst. Head) 17 years classroom experience)

“I think when I was at school in the 70s, the teachers were totally different to what they are now. There were a lot of military blokes who would really er command a level of obedience that teachers today

wouldn't dream of commanding ... and the punitive measures like getting you to stand in the bin which you wouldn't dream of doing today" (Samuel, 40-50. MFL. 18 years experience)

"I can remember teaching at grammar school humanities, you know. You could have lively discussions but they'd be as strict as hell and once the discussion's over you work in silence and nobody's gonna mess about you know. Nobody would be leaning over the radiator or anything like that" (Joe, 50-60. English 31 years experience)

"I think it [the relationship between adults and children] has become far less formal. You know, the idea that, you know, the adult is right and the students do what they are told has broken down in wide areas of society - certainly in my little bit" (Caroline, 40-50. EAL 24 years experience)

### **Communication with pupils relies on negotiation rather than authority:**

"I don't think that we can have discipline, um, we can maintain discipline in schools any longer simply by us keeping- you know, laying down the law, and you know, keeping them under the thumb I think it is consensual, (*murmurs of agreement*) there is a negotiation that has to happen" (Olive (age n/a) Science. 20+ years classroom experience)

"If you gave me this and said where this extract comes from, I might not even guess it is from a classroom ... It's not like a lesson, is it? ... they could have been on a bus they could have been (*laughing*) anywhere" (Catherine, 30-40 English & Music. 12 years classroom experience)

### **There is a feeling that lessons have to be entertaining:**

"I think the idea of teachers as entertainers is kind of worrying but there is an onus on teachers certainly at this school. You would be frowned upon if you were to take on a traditional role, if you were at your desk for example" (Gethin, 20-30. English. 3 years classroom experience)

"Children are bright now. You know, we have got a whole different climate now. Children know what they are entitled to. Children will tell you 'that was a crap lesson, it was boring, you read that story with no feeling'. But they are right to do that if we are crap, you know, whereas I wouldn't have dreamed of saying anything. I would have sat and be bored" (Deborah, 50-60. R.E./Humanities. 20 years' classroom experience)

"I've just returned from grammar school and there I could have taught this [to the whole class] but [urban comprehensive & secondary modern students] don't engage with it and they don't get it, and I've got to the conclusion myself rightly or wrongly that it's better to do 15 minutes of entertainment almost, and you will get half an hours work, mm whereas if you go along and pull out the work you will get nothing" (Harriet, 20-30. English. 3 years classroom experience)

"I think pupils come to school with the view that they're there to be entertained, and um and there's an extent to which you um you can't make everything they do in the classroom, you know um, whizz bang and high powered exciting. So sometimes you have to do- you have to be rigorous ... young people... they don't want to do that it has to be immediate the excitement and the buzz has to be now and they will- and I've heard um them say 'oh well that wasn't a very good lesson' or you know 'you didn't have a very good plenary'" (*laughter*) (Olive, age n/a. Science 20+ years classroom experience)

"In my experience, any lesson in which the students come in and you start off saying 'we are going to pick up from the last lesson' is bound to be unsuccessful in this school, in an environment where teachers are have to be most of the time redhot. You have to be- it is all a continual performance. My unsuccessful lessons this week (*laughter*) are ones where I am quite happy to say 'right we'll continue from last lesson'" (Gethin, 20-30. English 3 years experience)

### **Pupils know their rights:**

"Children do have the power now I fear ... for example the children in my class all decided they didn't like the maths teacher ... I went up and she was standing there and they were all standing up and a couple of them were crying, and obviously it wasn't a good lesson and then afterwards they all went en masse and complained to the deputy head, and next thing is the teacher is suspended. So the next lesson I had with

them, and I said you know ‘could you put that Ipod away’ - whatever I said - and it was like ‘you better watch yourself miss otherwise it just takes us to go to the deputy head and you’re sacked’ ... I think now we have got to the point with children that they do and I think it’s great that they have all these rights, you know, that they do need rights and they do need protecting from things, but I think it’s gone so far the other way ... there’s no repercussions there’s just there’s just nothing now. You can’t- if you shout too loud then you’re a (inaudible), you can’t do it, you can’t you can’t really do anything. I tried to keep the whole class in a class detention for somebody wasting time - I got in trouble for that. There doesn’t seem to be any sanction that you can actually have now I feel very powerless a lot of the time” (Harriet, 20-30. English 3 years classroom experience)

“There’s been a shift um from when I was at school, when the teacher had complete authority. I think there is a shift in the way in which um young people perceive themselves in relation to adults, and they’ll all tell you what their rights are” (Olive, age n/a. Science. 20+ years classroom experience)

“I think very much there is definitely yeah a sense that you have you know a right to something without any responsibilities to go with it with some students” (Letitia, 30-40. Media Studies & Drama. 4 years classroom experience)

### **And the new digital culture presents a continual challenge:**

“I had a class today and the deal was they’d been working really well – quite a low ability... group but working really well. I got them into the IT room - the deal was that they could work but on French websites playing French games, and I mean the struggle to keep them on those websites was just exhausting. [They were going] everywhere, you know MSN. But we do learn and I see the little bars at the bottom [of the screen]. I said ‘I see that, I see that, I see that, get ‘em off or you’ll sit in the middle and I’m gonna get you something to write out’. But at the end you could just feel ‘this is a struggle’ – I was not winning, so I gave them ten minutes at the end on their own – whatever they wanted to do. Luckily most of the websites were on the filters – you could tell anything bad – but it’s that battle again” (Tom, 40-50. MFL (Asst. Head) 17 years classroom experience)

“They are allowed to have mobile phones in the school [but] they have to be switched off in the classroom ... Try and take the phone off the student – some teachers, usually Heads of Year and senior teachers, are successful and other teachers don’t always succeed – what’s the scenario [for other teachers]? A little bit of, you know, argument, then either call the Head of Department to do it or give up” (Caroline, 40-50. EAL. 24 years classroom experience)

“I have seen situations where teachers have confiscated [mobile phones and] where parents have come into school irate and given the teachers a hard time for taking their phones. ‘Blah blah blah’ despite the fact that they weren’t supposed to have them in the first place” (Carol, 40-50 MFL & English. 10 years classroom experience)

“They just use their phones or they’ll have um one earpiece which will go up one side and through their jumper and it will just be up here (*murmurs of agreement*) and um their hair will cover it” (Jonathan, 50-60. English & Media Studies. 25 years experience)