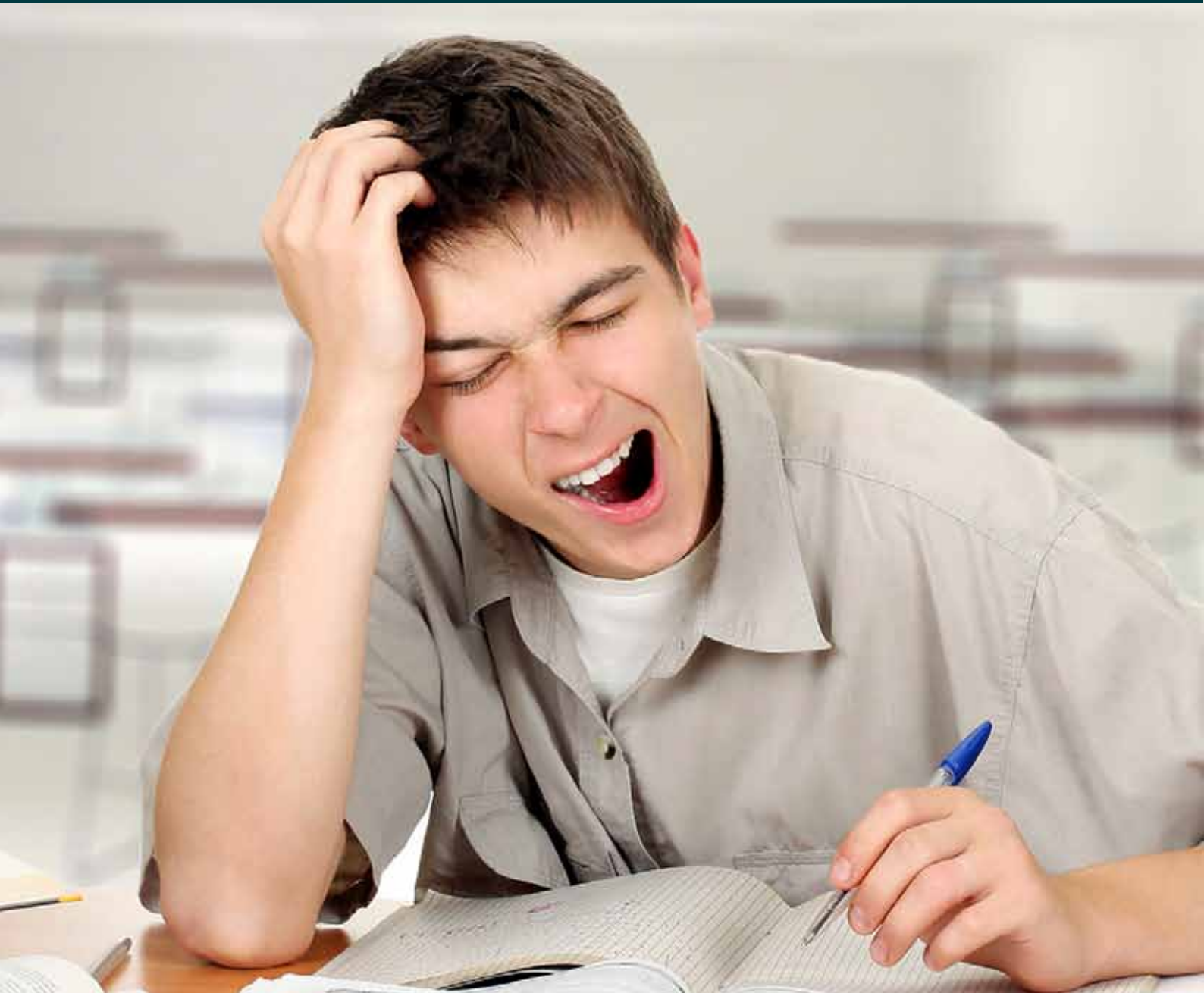


THE SOCIOLOGY TEACHER

THE JOURNAL OF THE BSA TEACHING GROUP



Learning about engagement:

A case study of white, working-class boys in a large rural comprehensive school.

Sociology AS Visit

To the Museum of Childhood and London Dungeon

Setting S.M.A.R.T targets

for Sociology
Patrick Robinson

In this Issue: Learning about engagement • Setting S.M.A.R.T targets for Sociology • Just in case Book Reviews

BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



Patrick Robinson

***New Term.***

New term starts and it seems as busy as ever. Resourcing and planning for the new 2015 specifications has been an extra task to think about, especially with regard to changes in assessment. My college plans to enter all students for external exams at the end of year one, even though their results won't count under the new Linear A Level assessment rules. This is expensive (we will have to enter students for the same exams in their second year) but the college needs an external measure of whether the students show enough academic ability to progress to year 2 or not. If the students pass the end of year 1 exams, they can progress to year 2 (just like in the old AS system). If students don't show they can pass the end of year 1 exams, then they won't continue to year 2.

I'd be interested to hear from readers of The Sociology Teacher about what plans for assessment they have for the new linear

assessments, especially on what policy your schools/colleges are taking regarding progression to year two: enough to pass with an E grade? Or a certain minimum mark from the year 1 exams?

Many thanks to all the contributors for the first journal of the academic year. There is an advert regarding the next BSA Teacher Group conference to be attended: University of Brighton on 24 October 2015. Well worth attending for the interesting sessions and a great chance to meet fellow Sociology teachers and share best ideas regarding teaching etc.

All the best, Patrick Robinson.

Patrick Robinson

Patrick prs@cadcol.ac.uk

Co-editor of the

BSA Teacher Group Journal.

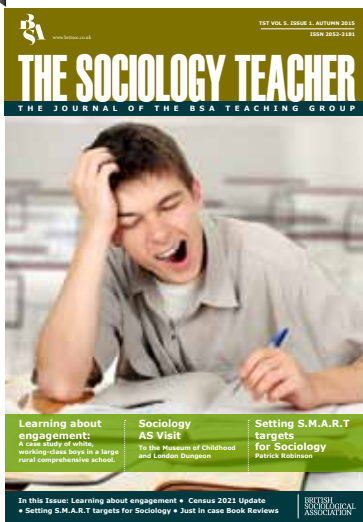
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If you're a BSA Teaching Group member with an idea for something we could include in the journal, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Any aspect of teaching and learning in the Social Sciences can be suitable, but we'd be especially interested in material relating to GCSE and/or KS3, which are currently under-represented in the publication. Articles, classroom resources or offers to provide regular features will all be considered, as will any other ideas for suitable copy. In the first instance please contact commissioning editor, prs@cadcol.ac.uk and we will pass your proposal to the editorial board.

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C O N T E N T S

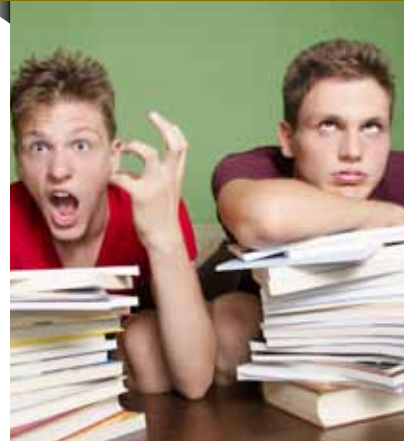
- 2 Foreword**
Patrick Robinson
- 4 Learning about engagement:**
A case study of white, working-class boys in a large rural comprehensive school.
Stuart MacDonald (2012)
- 12 Syntax saturation in sociology – Embedding literacy into sociology lessons**
About me – My name is Sarah McLaughlin.
I am an Access to Higher Education lecturer in sociology, business studies and education.
- 16 Sociology AS Visit to Museum of Childhood and London Dungeon**
Kate MaGee
- 18 Setting S.M.A.R.T targets for Sociology**
Patrick Robinson
- 20 S.M.A.R.T Targets: Sociology 2015**
Patrick Robinson
- 22 Just in case**
If you are looking for ideas or inspiration to liven up your sociology teaching.
Book Review, Online Application, Forcoming Events and Posters
- 24 BSA Teaching Group National Sixth Form Sociology Autumn Competition**
Win yourself and an iPad Mini and £250 for your School
- 25 BSA Teaching Group Regional Conference**
Friday 24 October 2015 University of Brighton
- 26 BSA Teaching Group Membership**
Sociology teachers in schools and sixth form colleges, are now offered full BSA membership at the concessionary rate of £57pa (Jan to Dec), See page 30 For Benefits Details.

The BSA Teaching Group is a network of anyone keen to further the interests of sociology teaching from secondary to tertiary education.

The aim of the Group is to encourage and promote the teaching of the Social Sciences in Primary, Secondary, Further and Higher Education.

The Group therefore provides opportunities for those teaching in Sociology to develop and share ideas and strategies for the promotion and delivery of the teaching of the Sociology. To this end, one on the main activities of the BSA Teaching Group is the dissemination of information relating to teaching materials and teaching methods. The Group is also active in promoting the interests of Sociology teachers to examination boards, academic bodies, governmental and political agencies and the wider public.

Members of the Group can be found in every sector of education, but the majority are teachers of Advanced Level Sociology. Members are encouraged to be active in the running of the Group, either nationally or through local activities.

LEARNING ABOUT ENGAGEMENT**SETTING S.M.A.R.T TARGETS FOR SOCIOLOGY****SMART TARGETING**

Learning about engagement:

A case study of white, working-class boys in a large rural comprehensive school.

Stuart MacDonald (2012)

Introduction

From my experiences of teaching at a large, high attaining, rural upper school, it is my opinion that the pupils' journey in education is as a whole positive and rewarding. However, this is not the experience for all pupils. Since joining Highfield Upper School I had become interested in pupil engagement and the barriers and challenges pupils face.

Specifically, I have taken an interest in the engagement of working-class boys. I consider this area of personal interest to myself as I had a secondary school experience at a large, successful, single-sex, comprehensive school who faced challenges in achieving engagement.

Secondly, nationally collected statistics on GCSE attainment identify that a range of social groups achieve at a lower rate than their peers, including white, working-class boys and some pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds (DfES, 2006; DfS, 2010). However, there is only limited research on engagement, motivation, and attainment amongst working-class pupils (Fredericks *et al*, 2004; Ridge, 2005). The research aims to explore why male working-class pupils are not as engaged, motivated, and attain at a lower level than their middle-class counterparts.

For the purpose of this piece of research, working-class refers to those pupils who have parent(s) employed in low-paying wage occupations and will also include those who are in unemployment and receiving welfare from the state (Mey, 2009). These pupils receive Free School Meal (FSM) and are consequently categorised as working-class (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007; National Equality Panel, 2010). Class has been historically notoriously difficult to measure (National Union of Teachers, 2007). Additionally, 'white' is a multi-ethnic description in itself as it is composed of people of different ethnic and religious heritage (Dunne, 2006).

Official statistics show that nationally FSM pupils attain at a lower

level in comparison to their non-FSM counterparts. For instance, at KS2, 53.5% of pupils eligible for FSMs reach the expected level 4 in English and maths, compared with 75.5% who are not eligible (DCSF, 2009). Although statistics can be flawed for not providing detail or reason for these levels of attainment (Lawson *et al*, 2000) they are useful in identifying a clear difference in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils.

Highfield Upper School is a predominately white-British school in an affluent area. Male pupils who are entitled to FSMs are all white and form only a small percentage of the school's population (3 per cent overall, boys 2.25 per cent).

Internally available data produced by RAISE online for the 2010-2011 academic years identified a negative contextual value added (CVA) for pupils entitled to FSMs in this school compared to the national average. Thus, statistical data indicated that pupils entitled to FSM attained at a lower level than their non-FSM counterparts both nationally and at Highfield Upper School.

Gathering the perceptions from FSM boys from year 9 and 10 and the retrospective accounts from year 13 pupils on how higher levels of engagement could be achieved, is of significant importance for classroom practitioners, the senior management team, and future pupil cohorts at both Highfield Upper. Other schools with similar demographics could also benefit from this research. The insights gained from my research would be disseminated to the school senior management team.

For this piece of research there are five key questions:

- How do white, working-class boys respond to teaching styles?
- How critical are the teacher-pupil relationship in engaging pupils at Highfield Upper School?
- How affiliated are pupils to Highfield Upper School?
- How influential are material factors in the pupils'



experience of education at Highfield Upper School?

- How influential are cultural factors in the pupil's experience of education at Highfield Upper School?

Methodology

The primary research conducted in this report was an ethnographic case study (Denscombe, 2005) of the school with the fictionalised name of Highfield Upper School. A case study was considered the most effective approach when researching the five aims identified.

Wilson (2009) defines a case study as the search for detailed knowledge about a single case using approaches such as semi-structured interviews that often involve researching both teachers and pupils. The aim of a case study is to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the group (white, working-class, boys on FSM) under study (Becker, 1963).

A case study was chosen as it provides a specific insight into the school and pupils in question. It offers the possibility of obtaining information that other research methods may struggle to extract, for example questionnaires. The case study aimed to

uncover accurately reflect the experience of the selected white, working-class boys at Highfield Upper School and demonstrate findings that can play a role in explaining why white, working-class boys may not engage in school, what successes the staff and school have had in addressing this issue, and what barriers have existed and still exist for these selected pupils. The primary focus was to explore the engagement of the selected sample of white, working-class pupils at Highfield Upper School.

The case study had three methods of enquiry:

Firstly an exploration of internal quantitative assessment data available in

the school. This internal data demonstrated whether white, working-class boys lacked engagement in school. For instance, the data had the capability to identify the individual and overall attainment of the selected pupils in core subjects (English, maths, and science) through KS2, KS3, and KS4.

Secondly, using interpretivist approaches, to obtain the teachers' perspectives of the boys in the sample (form tutor, Heads of House (HOH), subject teachers). The teacher perspective was a very useful angle as these are individuals who have had direct association with the selected pupils for a significant period of time. The perspectives of the teachers were obtained through three

It is difficult to see quantitative and qualitative methods as being mutually exclusive due to the differences in what they offer the researcher.

different data collection methods. Initially, through sending out an email enquiry to members of staff who had direct association with the selected pupils; secondly, non-respondents, were approached to attend an informal, semi-structured interview; finally, where gaps were still evident on some pupils, qualitative data was obtained by extracting teaching staff comments from the end of school year reports to fill the profile of each selected pupil.

The professionally constructed accounts of teaching staff will potentially provide valid points about how successfully the selected pupils engage. Although these accounts may be subjective (Lawson *et al*, 2000) and will require the potential of interpretation (Wilson, 2009) the data has the potential to be valuable in obtaining evidence in exploring how successfully the selected pupils perceive their own engagement at Highfield Upper



School.

The third dimension of the case study used primarily interpretivist approaches to obtain the perspectives of engagement from the selected white, working-class, boys from year 9, 10, and year 13. The pupil perspective was obtained through conducting focus group interviews. This research method obtained data that has the potential to gather why and how pupils engage at Highfield Upper School (Bryman, 2001). The interviews were semi-structured with the focus on all five of the research aims.

The interviews allowed for clarification on points pupils make and opened the

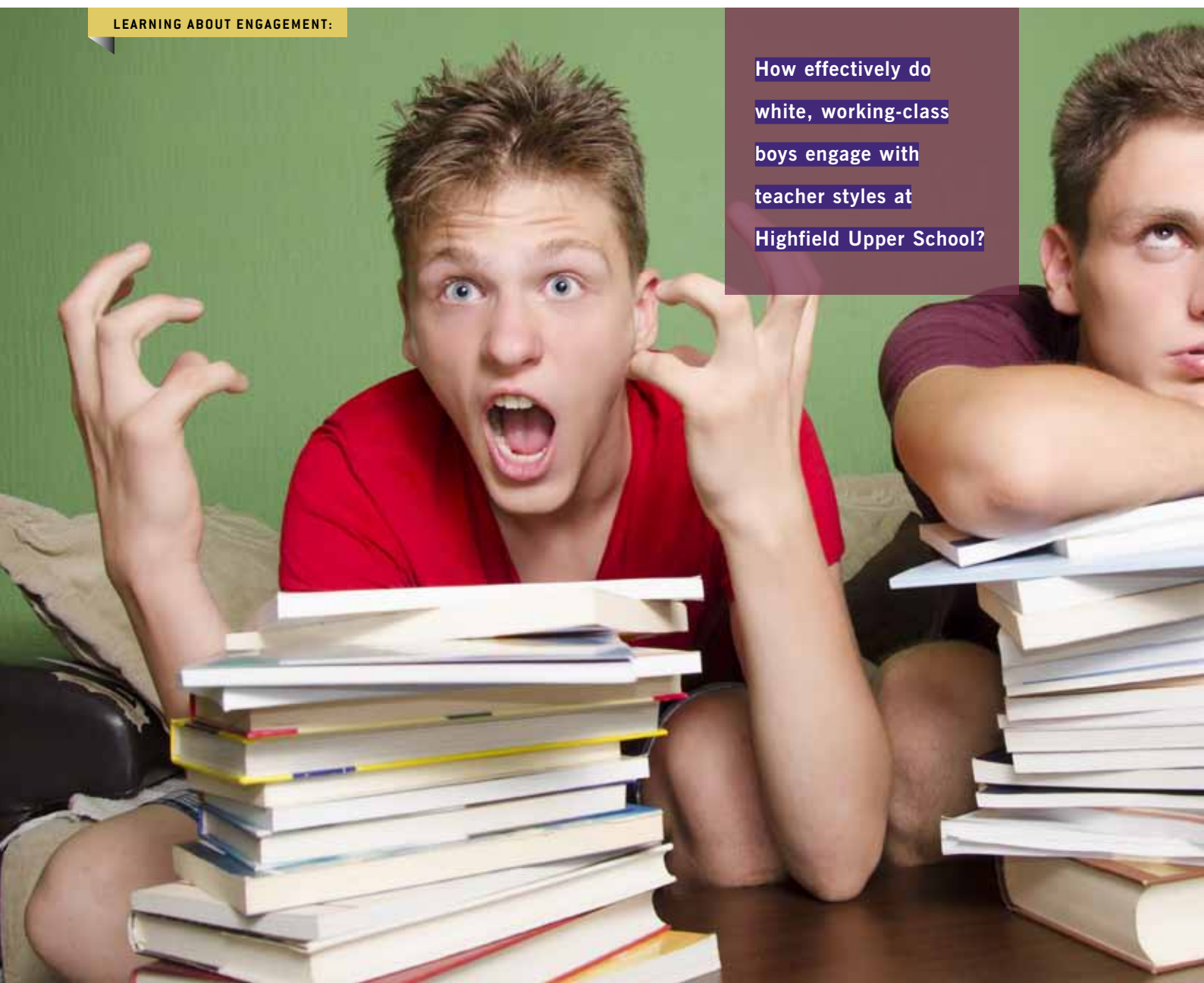
opportunity for the researcher and pupils to interact and reflect upon their experiences (Lawson *et al*, 2000). However, there is the obvious risk of pupils lying or exaggerating experiences, not fully understanding or being able to express

their experiences (Wilson, 2009), and the possibility that the pupils may act to the demand characteristics of the focus group (Lawson *et al*, 2000). There is also the possibility of the researcher being subjective in recording responses during the interview process (Wilson, 2009).

Methodological pluralism

It is difficult to see quantitative and qualitative methods as being mutually exclusive due to the differences in what they offer the researcher. Predominately quantitative data offers the researcher the macro picture which shows correlations

How effectively do
white, working-class
boys engage with
teacher styles at
Highfield Upper School?



and patterns into more quantifiable aspects of social life, whilst, in contrast qualitative data tends to offer the researcher the micro picture which offers explanations and detail (Hammersley, 1996; Bryman, 2001).

Bryman (1988) claims that increasingly due to specific differences between the two approaches, educational researchers are increasingly combining both approaches in single studies. It is the intention of this piece of research to incorporate methodological pluralism with the ambition of using both sets of data to check findings produced and to complement each other (Hammersley, 1996). However, methodological pluralism does not solve all research problems. Although it may provide a better understanding of a phenomenon than if one single method has been used, it is subject to similar constraints and considerations as research relying on a single method (Bryman, 2001).

Sampling method

The teaching staff were identified for the research and selected through using a purposive sample. Subject teachers, tutors,

and heads of house were all identified due to their various direct and indirect working relationships with the sample of pupils and were asked to comment on their perceptions of the engagement of the participating pupils.

Teaching staff perceptions were gathered initially through a questionnaire sent to teaching staff, following this, non-respondents were invited to take part in an individual informal semi-structured interview. Qualitative data from any non-respondents, either from refusal, non-return, or as a result of the member of teaching staff no longer being at the school, were obtained by extracting teaching staff comments on the selected pupils from the end of academic year reports between year 9 and 11. Permission to initially seek this information and to include the findings in the research was sought by the Head of School prior to commencement.

Pupils were also identified through using a purposive sample. Nine pupils were 'handpicked' as prior knowledge about their individual backgrounds was carefully considered before including the individuals

in the research process (Denscombe, 2005). Individuals were handpicked to ensure that they were all boys in receipt of FSM. However, like other non-probability sampling techniques, the approach along with the sample size is criticised for showing subjectivity from the researcher and for the sample not being fully representative of FSM boys at of Highfield Upper School or of the entire population (Black, 1999; Browne, 2009).

From the initial pupils identified, careful decisions then had to be made about which pupils would then be included in the research process. In total fifteen male pupils in the school were at the time entitled to FSMs. From this the group of fifteen, two year 11 pupils could not be used for the research as there was direct professional involvement with the researcher. Only three pupils from year 9 were suitable, with two pupils from year 9 and one pupil from year 10 deemed unsuitable to be research for ethical reasons.

Nine pupils were consequently identified, with three pupil groups being created that consisted of three participants. The



did not attend the interview was a year 13 pupil who after the interview date informed me that he had simply forgot to attend.

Three semi-structured focus group interviews all took place in one location and took 45-50 minutes in length. The interviews had a limited number of pre-determined questions that were associated with engagement that was highlighted in the literature review and were also identified

from, the first data collection from teaching staff.

The decision not to use a

case study led research especially when researching a school based on the responses of children and teachers. The selected school has been provided with a generated name 'Highfield Upper School' and all participants in the research process have not had their true name mentioned and anonymity was ensured (Wilson, 2009; Lawson *et al.*, 2000).

Teachers were fully debriefed about the purpose of the research and consent was sought before the research process begins. Teachers needed to 'opt in' to take part in the research. However, before the process began permission was sought from the head teacher to allow the research to take place. Following the completion of the case study the findings of the research were be made available to participants who were be provided with the opportunity to discuss or clarify findings further. A debrief was also be made upon request of the participants before the research findings were published.

Analysis and discussion

How effectively do white, working-class boys engage with teacher styles at Highfield Upper School?

The findings have shown that pupils in the three focus groups wanted to engage with subjects in both KS3 and KS4 but it is the teacher style that was influential as to whether this was achieved or not. Pupils highlighted a preference for lessons that encouraged pupils to take independent control over their learning and had moved away from traditional teacher led lessons (Murray *et al.* 2004; Younger *et al.* 1983). Such approaches were not as effective at engaging pupils in comparison to lessons that encouraged creativity, variety, and interaction (Younger *et al.* 1983; Williams, 2011).

Their preferred teaching style was frequently implemented when pupils were in year 9 but as the pupils entered year 10 and moved onto KS4, levels of engagement, especially in English, appeared to decline. Teachers described that pupils in the focus group faced frustrations with the curriculum by struggling to conform with and apply themselves to the expectations of the classroom practitioner. In English, both subject teachers and pupils themselves commented on how prolonged periods of reading and writing disengaged them from learning as they saw no motivation in completing such tasks and consequently this hindered their academic progress (Rocca, 2010; Fassinger, 1995). The pupil experience draws similarities to Ball's (1981) study who argued that pupils enter school eager to learn but it was the teacher who is instrumental to whether pupils 'warmed' or 'cooled down' to education.

Interestingly, it was vocational qualifications that were praised by pupils in the focus group. Pupils in the focus group appreciated the opportunity to work independently and to have control over their own learning (Murray *et al.*, 1994).

structured interview

was to gather more

naturalistic and realistic perspectives of pupil engagement (Morgan, 2006).

Social action research such as a semi-structured interview focuses on interpretation and interaction and as there are only a small number of participants with an emphasis on using interpretation and interaction between the researcher and pupils and between pupils (Denscombe, 2005; Weber, 1978). There was the potential for the researcher to influence and guide respondents (Becker, 1963), through developing a rapport, encouraging honesty and openness amongst participants and from the researcher (Denscombe, 2005; Willis, 1977). For instance, the researcher reflected upon his own experiences of material disadvantage in order to stimulate discussion.

The qualitative findings obtained from teaching staff and pupils in the focus groups were categorised by pupil name into the five themes outlined in the literature review. This thematic approach was chosen as a simple approach to initially categorise qualitative findings and then to analyse results (Lawson *et al.*, 2000). Pupils were categorised individually to ensure that all pupils were individually investigated to avoid more broad assumptions in the findings.

Ethical considerations

Confidentiality is a significant issue for

groups consisted of a year 9 and 10 group who focused on their current perceptions of engagement with the final group being year 13 group which had a focus on their reflections of engagement in KS3 and KS4.

Year 11 pupils were not included as they were at the time in their final term of the academic year making. Whilst, year 12 pupils were intended to be initially used in the research but could not be finally included in the research due to all potential participants leaving school after completion of their compulsory education at the end of year 11 consequently leaving no year 12 pupils to study.

Semi-structured Interviews

The primary research method used was a semi-structured focus group interview. Wilson (2009) states that a focus group is useful in providing and revealing qualitative data through interactions that focuses on the beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and feelings of the participants. In total eight of the nine pupils selected to participate in the research attended the interviews. The individual who

Pupils considered such lessons as an escape from academic GCSE lessons and saw intrinsic satisfaction in completing work that encouraged initiative and creativity (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

When considering why classroom practitioners do not use approaches to cater for the needs of the focus group it could be as suggested by Smyth and Fasoli (2007) that there is a prioritisation from teachers that provision in lessons should be specifically catered for examinations and as a consequence teachers are not prepared to take as many creative risks as they are prepared to take with pupils in younger year groups. Such decisions made by the classroom practitioner, as a consequence, discourage pupils from engaging in the classroom (Fassinger, 1995).

FSM boys in the focus groups all embraced the principles of meritocracy and shown a desire to want to achieve academic success and eventually establish a successful career. Pupils generally enjoyed lessons in year 9 but as they

entered KS4 their lack of understanding of the curriculum, examinations, and controlled assessments hindered their academic progress and enjoyment of lessons. Consequently, pupils began to lose confidence in their ability and this became more challenging as teaching styles were reported to change as they entered KS4 towards more traditional approaches.

How important were the teacher-pupil relationships in engaging pupils at Highfield Upper School?

Pupils valued the experience of an established positive pupil-teacher relationship and understood how the teacher was instrumental in enhancing their attitude to learning, improving engagement, self-esteem, and consequently attainment (Appleton *et al*, 2006; Murray *et al*, 2004; Smyth and Fasoli, 2007; Williams, 2011; Gove, 2012; Crombie *et al*, 2003; Ofsted, 2008).

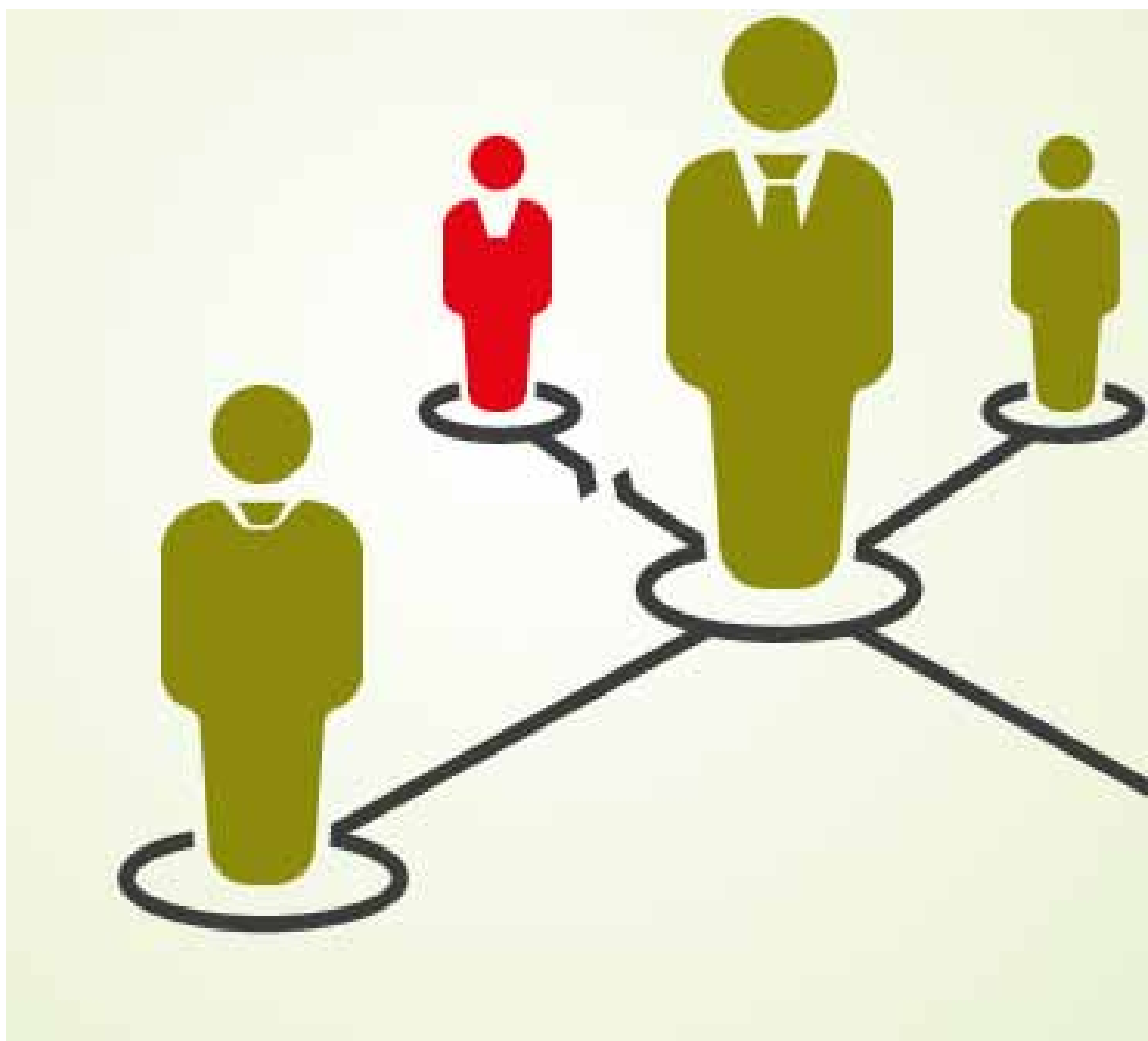
Ball (1981) claimed that working-class boys, such as those pupils in the focus

group, were at risk of teacher labelling and it is this relationship that contributes to pupil disengagement. However, at Highfield Upper School there was minimal evidence to suggest that pupils in the focus group had been victims of negative labelling that had been detrimental to their levels of engagement in school.

How affiliated are pupils to Highfield Upper School?

The semi-structured interview with pupils in the focus group as a whole had a sense of identity, wellbeing, and engagement at Highfield Upper School (Finn, 1989; Goodenow, 1992). Pupils show an expectancy of success, pride in the school environment, and a focus to achieve success (Goodenow and Grady, 1993). Pupils were aware that the academic and sporting success can lead to social mobility. However the culture of success and achievement also intimidated a number of pupils in the focus group.

Pupils generally showed affiliation to



their form tutor and tutor group but outside of this environment pupils indicated a general feeling of social exclusion both within the house system and across the wider school (Williams, 2011). As a result, they recalled experiences of feeling isolated and lacking motivation at school (Reay, 1999; Jackson, 2010).

Consequently the pupils in the focus group were at risk of becoming disengaged at school. However, all pupils in the year 13 focus group expressed how their affiliation to Highfield Upper School played a role in

compulsory education. The research findings indicated that this was not the case at Highfield Upper School. Pupils were aware of the importance of working hard at school, obtaining qualifications, and had aspirations to work in occupations that indicate social mobility.

Pupils in the focus group did not undervalue the importance of education as suggested by Burgess *et al* (2008). Pupils expressed a clear desire to remain in education post-16 and were not seeking instant gratification, as Sugarman (1970) suggested. Nor were they seeking 'laddish' behaviour or ways to escape the classroom (Willis, 1978; Stanton-Salazar, 2001) in fact pupils had a focus on achieving social mobility and establishing a successful career (Francis, 2011).

Cultural disadvantage was most apparent when pupils were asked about parents evening. It appeared that some of the parents of pupils did not understand the purpose or benefits of such school based events. Interestingly, pupils did not expect their parents to support them in their learning and they described this as an individual responsibility. Additionally, it was evident that pupils do not fully understand the culture of examinations and controlled assessments at Highfield Upper School and consequently this lack of understanding has impeded academic processes and attainment.

It appeared that by the time pupils enter KS4 they have been provided with limited opportunities both at home and in the classroom to develop their verbal and written skills and consequently found the classroom a very challenging environment (Bourdieu, 2004; DfES, 2007). As a result pupils did not engage with opportunities to learn. The findings from this piece of research indicate that subject teachers in subjects such as English do not meet the needs that will maximise the learning capability of white, working-class, boys.

It is important to note that from the findings of the research there was no evidence to support the claims made by Murray (1994) or Marsland (1996) who concluded that the pupils had been poorly socialised by their parents.

Future lines of enquiry

Due to the practical restraints of this piece of research it was impossible to explore every angle opened up during the research process. The following points identify future lines of enquiry that are associated with pupil engagement:

- How does the home environment influence the engagement of white, working-class, boys.
- How successful is the teaching style in engaging white, working-class boys.
- What curriculum programme at Key Stage 4 could increase engagement among white, working-class, boys.
- What can be done to strengthen the understanding of the education system among white, working-class boys.

establishing their identity and developing their self-belief and for being pivotal in allowing them to achieve academic success at KS4. Responses from pupils provided evidence to show that tutors and subject teachers were instrumental in replacing the cultural disadvantage faced at home (Archer *et al*, 2007).

How influential were material factors in the pupils' experience of education at Highfield Upper School?

Some of the indicators of material deprivation noted by Smith and Noble (1995) for instance, a lack of household computer and not possessing a family car were identified by pupils. Additionally, subject teachers indicated that two pupils had housing conditions that were considered to hinder their academic attainment.

However, that the nature of the focus group interviews created the possibility that pupils may not admit to material disadvantage when in the presence of peers. Additionally, pupils may have been genuinely unaware of the disadvantage they faced at home.

How influential were cultural factors in the pupil's experience of education at Highfield Upper School?

Willis (1977) study concluded that working-class boys in his sample did not engage with the education system because they assumed that there was the guarantee of a manual job after completing their



LITERACY

Syntax saturation in sociology – Embedding literacy into sociology lessons

About me – My name is Sarah McLaughlin. I am an Access to Higher Education lecturer in sociology, business studies and education.

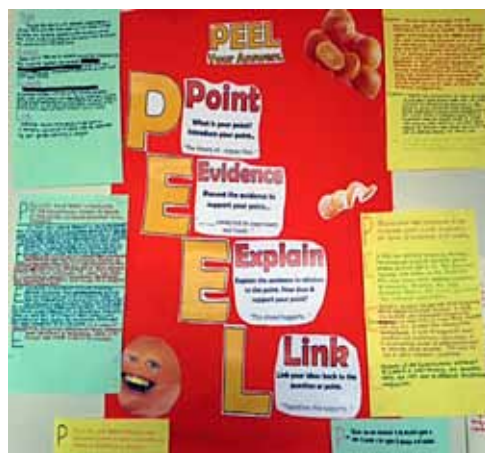
You can find me on twitter @graduatesarah

With the changes to the A level structure, teachers of all subjects are discussing how to implement these changes and are preparing new schemes of work in order to adjust to and accommodate, the transitions to the linear programme. This period of change is an opportune time to audit the literacy embedment in your lessons; we must ensure we must not forget the continued importance of embedding literacy into our sociology sessions. Ensuring that all students are able to understand and employ good literacy skills is the responsibility of us sociology teachers and should not simply be left to our colleagues in the English department.

Interpretation of meaning is the backbone of sociology, so a highly literate sociology student is a sociology student able to confidently present coherent arguments. Literacy presents a lifelong intellectual process of gaining meaning from a critical interpretation of written material; so literacy complements the teaching and learning of sociology. Literacy embedment is an opportunity and an asset to our subject. Rather than explicitly teaching literacy lessons in isolation, we can embed learning into sociology classes enhancing the learning whilst providing assessment of learning strategies. Imagination is the key; maybe C Wright Mills was referring to the challenge of embedding literacy into sociology classes when he spoke about the sociological imagination!

For many of us sociology teachers we do not feel confident with explicitly teaching literacy; we fear students pointing out a mistake, making us look very foolish and therefore the very thought of teaching literacy may fill some teachers with dread. But the reality is that we are not English teachers, we are sociology teachers embedding literacy into our lessons. We are excellent sociology teachers because our sociology knowledge and teaching is engaging and our subject is relevant to every career.

Nurturing our student's literacy application within sociology adds value to their education and creates employable sociologists of the future and developing our ability to teach literacy develops our own skills and confidence. A sociology teacher who embeds literacy into their lessons is a teacher who cares for the future of their students; us sociology teachers know more than anyone the impact of poor education and the negative impact on employability in later life. We therefore must take our responsibility seriously, but how do we do this?



There are a number of fantastic books written for teachers, like me and possible you too, who dread the thought of the truth being uncovered; some of us do not really understand the rules of the comma or when to use a semi-colon. Maybe some of us just need to brush up on our prior learning. How to Teach Literacy by Phil Beadle and Eats, Shoots and Leaves by Lynne Truss are two books which helped me (a lot!). Once you feel confident with the rules of grammar you just need to be creative and hey presto.....your



lessons are fun, relevant and meaningful.

Linguistic devices such as alliteration may be embedded in order to consolidate understanding of theories. Students may create newspaper front covers which summarises a topical news-story through the perspective of one of the theories. Challenge the students to create catchy headlines using alliteration, for example applying theoretical perspective to the creation of headlines such as "Functionalists Flip

out over Failing Families". The application of skill enables assessment of learning and so learners widen the sociological knowledge, interpretation

and application skills alongside literacy comprehension and development.

When reading articles and research studies challenge students to identify metaphors and emotive language in order to analyse meaning and standpoint of the writer or researcher. This makes critical analysis comprehensible. Take time to discuss semantics and allow learners to provide their own interpretations.

Essay frames can be an extremely useful tool for providing an essay writing guide. Structure is essential for cohesive writing and this can be made easier with instruction about how to use connectives and conjunctions. Most of us have used the PEEL structure (Point, Evidence, Explain, Link) in some form, however sometimes we forget this little nugget of wisdom and do not utilise it. Setting students the task of writing a paragraph plan and then discussing

and sharing their work in pairs, or as a group, promotes confidence and articulation. Students can then suggest ways of adding conjunctions and provide substance to the frame. A list of essay connectives on the class wall and a copy given to students is extremely helpful, and when peer reviewing essays challenge students to add more connectives than they have already included. Explaining the purpose of conjunctions will enhance their use

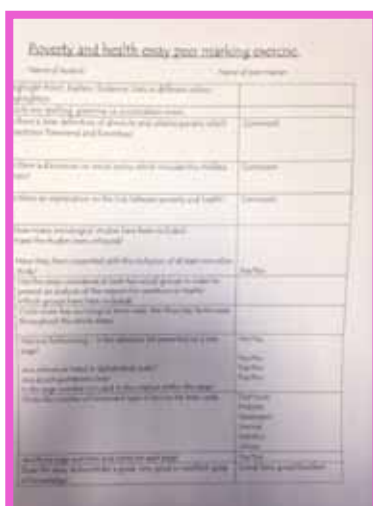
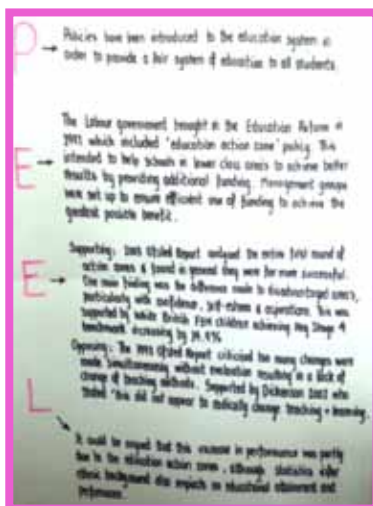
because they understand why and how rather than just having a list of prewritten starters which they may not know how to utilise in other subject areas.

Literacy is not just about teaching grammar; speaking and listening are important facets which develop good literacy skills. Interview role plays whereby students take the role of a mystery sociologist who allows their partner to ask five questions in order to ascertain their identity, requires listening and speaking skills. Key terminology speed dating, presentations and debates all require speaking and listening practice whilst demonstrating comprehension and application.

Peer reviewing of essays reduces marking for the teacher, and encourages self-assessment, whilst facilitating the perfect opportunity to embed literacy. Explain the rules of apostrophes using examples relevant to the topic, for example phrases such as 'Parsons' study' or 'Marx's beliefs' often cause confusion. Clarifying these in class means less errors to mark when essays are submitted. Providing students with a peer assessment check list which includes some literacy checking, such as checking the correct use of apostrophes, stretches their skills and helps with their understanding of punctuation and the mark scheme. Having a friend spot check any errors can be less daunting than having their teacher point them out.

Sociology is a breeding ground of tricky spellings, and it is particularly difficult to master good spelling habits with the reliance of predictive text and spell checkers - Bourgeoisie, bureaucracy, hegemony, lumpenproletariat - the list goes on. Taking time to learn commonly misspelt terms will boost vocabulary, enhance essay fluency and lead to more articulate discussions. Displaying key terms around the room and playing key term bingo as a starter, providing glossary sheets and reminding students to add terms as they arise will foster a culture of literacy awareness. Using the glossary sheets to write essays, with the challenge of incorporating a given number of key terms, will assesses comprehension and application skills. Tweeting, texting, blogging and Facebook profile creating are all tools for reading and writing which are contemporary and appeal to younger students. Creating 'Fakebook' pages for theorists or researchers can be a way to assess their understanding and application. They make the lesson fun too!

Embedding literacy into the context of sociology is not a new approach and is probably part of your sociological pedagogy already, however explicit literacy teaching means being more aware and deliberately planning English instruction within a sociology backdrop. Planning for literacy brings more creative scope to our classrooms and what better way to teach literacy than in the context of the sociology class?!



Peer reviewing of essays reduces marking for the teacher, and encourages self-assessment, whilst facilitating the perfect opportunity to embed literacy.



Sociology AS Visit to Museum of Childhood and London Dungeon

Kate MaGee

Sixth formers are always up for a visit to the 'Big Smoke'. Luckily, the school where I teach: Yateley School and Sixth Form in Hampshire, is a short train journey away from London. So, as an end of AS year jolly, I organised a trip to the London Dungeon, under the vague guise of an introduction to SCLY4.

However, I also included a stop off at the Museum of Childhood. This was at the suggestion of a psychology teacher

colleague. However, the Museum of Childhood is really more suitable for visits by primary school children. But for the bargain price of £40, they put on a very good PowerPoint presentation and mini-lecture on the social construction of childhood, illustrated through paintings and photography. Needless to say, after wading through weeks of AS exams, the students weren't that enthusiastic about this bit of the day

out. But it served to reinforce their knowledge of this area of SCLY1 and that can't hurt.

The visit to the London Dungeon, however, ticked all their adolescent approval boxes. It now has two rides (I do realise I'm drifting further and further away from this visit being of any academic merit, but I did say it was 'a jolly') plenty of 'frightful' events, a shop and some quite good actors delivering



V&A Museum of Childhood
Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9PA
<http://www.vam.ac.uk>

The London Dungeon:
County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road,
London SE1 7PB.
<http://www.thedungeons.com>

[26 June]

the whole shebang. There is also a fair degree of audience participation required, which always go down well as students were locked up and caged, illustrating earlier forms of punishment - a bit of relevance there. The actors, delivering the tour, do include historical context of events. So, it does have some genuine academic significance.

The good news, however, is that while tickets for adolescents are generally very

expensive, as part of a school group they are only £10 a head. Furthermore, entrance to the Museum of Childhood is free, although talks are extra, as mentioned. Train tickets, however, whacked the price up. But, if you decide to stay in London and kill time until after 7pm, they can be a lot cheaper. I managed to do the entire day out for just under £35, which wasn't bad.

The students enjoyed some free time

to get lunch and do a bit of shopping around the South Bank. It was a lovely day and I will definitely do it again.

Just one further point on payment, the London Dungeon must be paid for upfront. You can't make a booking and pay later. Something which may be difficult getting past some school bosses. So you may like to have some idea of definite numbers before getting out your school or college credit card.



Setting S.M.A.R.T targets for Sociology

In the spirit of developing a student's ability to be an independent learner, my college uses the last week of September to allow subject teachers to meet their students and set S.M.A.R.T targets for the rest of their academic year ahead.

My experience shows that students need a good amount of training on what S.M.A.R.T targets actually are, something that they may well come across in paid work in later life. S.M.A.R.T stands for:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time Linked

Personally, i'd say that "Specific" and "Measurable" are really the same thing: can the target be quantified in detail?

"Achievable" and "Realistic" are also very similar. "Time linked" refers to a deadline/date by when the target should be achieved.

Students will often think of targets such as:

"Revise more"

"Go over notes every week"

but, for many reasons, these do not cover the S.M.A.R.T criteria: I often find the need to write these on the board in a classroom in order to describe why they are not S.M.A.R.T targets.

In the target setting discussions I have with students, it's useful to write a list of suggested targets that students can pick from, depending on their favourite study habits etc. This is a good opportunity for differentiation: some targets might be more challenging than others. See the example of the sheet that I used this year on the following page: hope it's of use as a starting point if you need to set S.M.A.R.T targets for your own students.

Patrick Robinson

Sociology Teacher
Cadbury Sixth Form College
Birmingham

- 
- ☒ **S**pecific
 - ☒ **M**easurable
 - ☒ **A**chieveable
 - ☒ **R**ealistic
 - ☒ **T**ime

S.M.A.R.T Targets: Sociology 2015

S.M.A.R.T targets are:

- **Specific** and **Measurable**: a particular task/skill to address
- **Achievable** and **Realistic**: based on a sensible amount of work, current grade level?
- **Time** linked: by WHEN will you achieve the target?

Sociology Specific ideas:

Attendance and Punctuality

Only relevant if attendance is less than 90% and a student has had too many lates:

- Raise attendance to at least 90% by October half term.
- Raise punctuality to at least 95% by October half term.
- Catching up: students that have joined Sociology later than others: Complete all gaps in (classwork and assessment: state SPECIFIC tasks) by _____ (certain date).

Standard Target setting

- Spend at least 1 hour a week reading, making summary notes from **on-line materials** on Sociology Moodle pages eg: revision Powerpoint files, on-line quizzes
- Spend at least 1 hour a week attempting on-line **quizzes at Quizlet** website: record scores in a small notebook to monitor improvement
- Spend at least 1 hour a week reading and summarising extension articles saved on **@cadburysoc Twitter account**. Store notes in Sociology folder.
- Spend at least 1 hour a week reading, attempting activities and summarising notes from **Sociology textbook**. Store notes in Sociology folder.
- Set your own S.M.A.R.T target based on specific comment/feedback from assessed work eg: improve use of key concepts and names of Sociologists in exam questions. (see PRS for specific details depending on level: AS, A2, GCSE).
- Spend 1 hour a week keep a note book of Sociology specific terms and definitions to record new words as they appear.

Extension Target Setting: for students that should be "stretching themselves"/aiming high

- For AS and A2 students: Complete an entry for the BSA Sociology competition, deadline December 4th 2015 (see BSA advert for full details).
- For GCSE students: Spend at least 1 hour a week reading and summarising notes from an **AS LEVEL** Sociology textbook (need to borrow from Cadbury library: recommend blue Langley book).

Just in case

If you are looking for ideas or inspiration to liven up your sociology teaching, in each issue we review ICT related activities, guides, website and book reviews for you to explore.

Review by Patrick Robinson: Sociology Specific posters from Day Dream Education.

LINK

<http://www.daydreameducation.co.uk/subjects/sociology/posters>

Day Dream Education have created a series of well written posters for Sociology classrooms covering a wide range of topics. The posters have been written with consultation with teachers that are delivering current Sociology courses in the classroom which means the content is up to date and written at the right level for the target audience. There are a wide range of topics that the posters cover including: Wealth and Poverty, Class structure, History of Feminism, Family Demographics and History of Education. For the poster on the History of Education, I particularly liked the timeline style and suitable "blackboard" backing. In many ways, the material in the poster makes an excellent revision handout for classes to have.

The posters regarding the Family topics are up to date, written in a way that engages the reader and has good images/pictures to convey the meaning of the material. BSA journal readers can make use of a 15% discount code if they decide to purchase the posters from the Day Dream Education website: BSA15. The website from which the posters can be purchased does allow you to see a good preview of what the posters look like before purchase:



Book:

New textbook for OCR Sociology: OCR A level 1, Sociology Included AS Level.

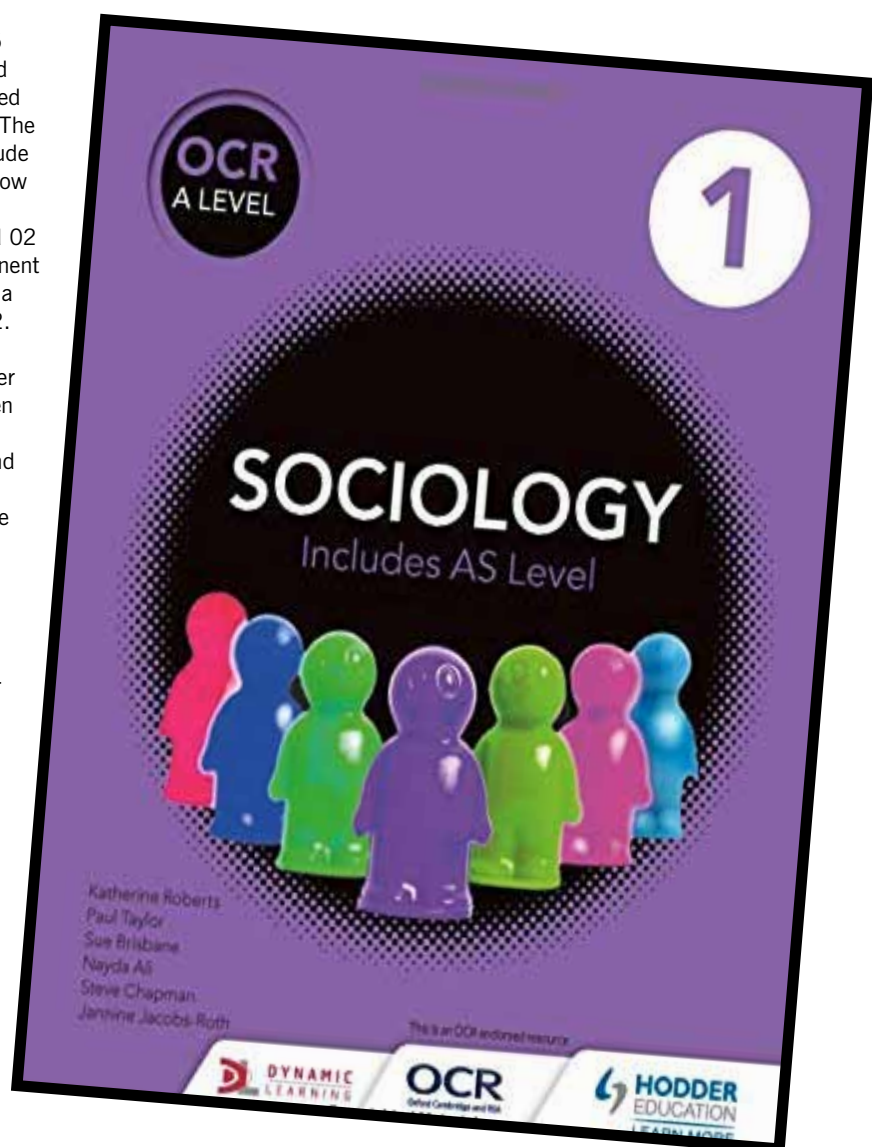
By Roberts et al.

ISBN: 9781471 839481

Hodder Education have released the OCR endorsed resource for Sociology OCR 2015 specifications. This is a well presented and well written textbook, created by experienced authors in this subject and level of study. The cover of the book refers to “Sociology: Include AS level”. On page vi, the book explains how it covers the content required for OCR AS Sociology (H180) and Components 01 and 02 of OCR A Level Sociology (H580). Component 03 for A level Sociology OCR is covered in a different book: OCR Sociology for A Level 2.

I have made use of the Socialisation chapter in lessons and students find it a well written textbook that they can study from with ease. Sentences are written with clarity and focus, allowing the student to gain good understanding of Sociological material. The textbook makes excellent use of pictures to act as starting points for thinking about issues to do with identity: a good way to start class discussions. There are regular “gap fill” worksheets that act as useful summary notes for students. Each chapter offers some examples of exam style questions.

The book is supported by “Dynamic Learning”, an on-line subscription service that allows the book to be available as a Whiteboard eTextbook which can be used for front-of-class teaching. There is an additional Student etextbook option, more details available at: www.hoddereducation.co.uk/dynamiclearning. The book comes with a thorough list of References, easy to use index and clear glossary of some of the key words on the OCR Sociology course.



Review: Patrick Robinson.

BSA Teaching Group National Sixth Form Sociology Competition Autumn 2015

Win yourself an iPad Mini and £250 for your school!

If you are aged 16-19 and would like to take part in a project which potentially can be included as part of your course work, you could win yourself a fabulous Apple iPad Mini as well as £250 for your school!

We invite you to conduct and submit research on the following:

'What is the most important topic for sociologists to study over the next 20 years?'

What are you interested in? How does this relate to the above and use sociology to answer the question as part of a research project.

Entries are expected to refer to results obtained from their own primary method of research using a suitable sample. This could be an observation, an interview, a questionnaire based study. All research carried out for this competition has to abide the ethical guidelines of research, as stated at: <http://www.britsoc.co.uk/about/equality/statement-of-ethical-practice.aspx>. If you have any questions regarding the competition criteria, please contact: n.davison@queenelizabeth.cumbria.sch.uk



Our National Sixth Form Competition, sponsored by Polity, is open to anyone currently studying at A-level, A/S level, Scottish Higher Level or equivalent post-16 qualification in Sociology and we encourage you to be as creative as possible with your answers!

The closing date for entries is **Friday 4 December 2015**.

How to enter:

Please email your entry with a completed entry form to bsatg@britsoc.org.uk or post it to:
BSA Teaching Group, Bailey Suite, Palatine House, Belmont Business Park, Belmont, Durham DH1 1TW.

Entry details

Title Surname First name(s)

School / College name

School / College address Postcode

School / College Year Contact Email address

Tel. no. (Day) Mobile No. Date of birth

Entry format: Essay ☐ Podcast ☐ YouTube clip ☐

Teacher's name Teacher's Email address Date

Terms & Conditions:

- Entries must be accompanied by confirmation from a Sociology teacher that it is the work of the pupil.
- Entries must be lone submissions (not joint)
- Essays must not exceed 2,000 words (excluding bibliography, figures, tables etc.)
- Filming for podcast / YouTube entry may not exceed 10 minutes.
- We reserve the right to check submitted works for plagiarism using online tools.
- Reference to other scholars (including teachers, books, articles and web sites) should be acknowledged.
- All work must be written or presented in the English language.
- The judges' decision is final and we reserve the right to publish your entry with your permission.



BSA Teaching Group Regional Conference

Saturday 24 October 2015

University of Brighton

Grand Parade Building

Provisional programme

- 9.30 Registration, tea & coffee
- 9.45 Introduction and welcome
- 10.00 Dr Christopher R Matthews, University of Brighton:
Embodied Learning – Teaching and Learning Sociology with the Body
- 10.45 Examination board presentation – OCR
- 11.15 Break, tea & coffee
- 11.30 Rhys Jones, Cardiff University: ‘Quantitative Methods’
- 12.15 Lunch with networking time – delegates will be invited to bring at least one resource-
with them which they find useful in the classroom.
- 13.15 Sarah McLaughlin, Access to Higher Education lecturer in sociology, business and
education at Weston College: ‘Strategies for flipping sociology’
- 13.45 Examination board presentation – AQA
- 14:15 Ian Luckhurst, A Level sociology teacher and advanced practitioner and course leader
at Bridgwater College: “Strategies for student engagement”
- 15:15 Examination board presentation – WJEC Eduqas
- 15:45 Dr Tamsin Hinton-Smith, Sussex University: Teaching Sociology – Disciplinary
insight and responsibility for discrimination in teaching practise
- 16.30 Close

Delegate rates (include lunch & refreshments):

BSA Member £50; Non-member £70

BSA Concessionary (student) member £35; Non-member (student) £40

Registration: <http://portal.britsoc.co.uk/public/event/eventBooking.aspx?id=EVT10445>

For further information please contact the BSA: bsatg@britsoc.co.uk or Tel: (0191) 370 6639

For academic enquiries please contact: C.Matthews2@brighton.ac.uk

Sociology teachers in schools and sixth form colleges, are now offered full BSA membership at the concessionary rate of £57pa (Jan to Dec), with the following benefits:

- Exclusive access to the BSA members area <http://www.britsoc.co.uk/>
- Huge discounts on conference and event registration
- Up to 50% discount on selected SAGE Publications books and journals
- FREE access to SAGE Sociology Full-Text Collection with over 45,900 articles
- Choice of international BSA journals, 'Sociology' or 'Work, Employment & Society'
- Three issues per year of the BSA's popular magazine, 'Network'
- Exclusive eligibility for BSA National Sixth Form Sociology Competition and funding opportunities
- And of course existing, valued Teaching Group member benefits, which include:
 - FREE subscription to The Sociology Teacher, the online journal published three times a year which includes articles written by leading academics in the Social Sciences, reviews of recently published books and other informative editorial.
 - Regional staff and student events which include member discount
 - Regular news and views, ideas and proposals for lessons and a range of useful resources
 - Support enabling you to raise the profile of Social Science teaching in your own region



www.britsoc.co.uk

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