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International Journal of Educational Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedures

Pupils' voices in teachers' collaborative professional learning in Lesson Study

Anne Mette Færøyvik Karlsen^{a,*}, Stein Erik Ohna^b

^a Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

^b University of Stavanger, Norway

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Pupil voice
Lesson Study
Teachers' collaborative learning

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to contribute to efforts to reduce the gap between rhetoric and practice in the field of pupil voice by illustrating how teachers' recognition of pupils' responses can meet the needs for voice, space, audience, and influence. Through a close analysis of teacher conversations in the context of Lesson Study, the results provide different scenarios that represent how pupil voice is acknowledged. The scenarios also illustrate different dimensions of teachers' collaborative learning. In conclusion, the arrangements for pupil voice at the classroom level have the potential to meet the needs for listening to and recognising students' points of view as well as expanding the concept of teachers' professional learning, which can be considered as a fortunate coincidence.

In the Norwegian context, the curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education & Training, 2020) emphasises that pupils' voices must be heard in democratic processes in schools. The background for this is Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), which underlines children's rights to express their views and to be heard. The term *pupil voice* has been used widely and is applied to strategies in which pupils are invited to discuss their views on school matters (Arnot, McIntyre, Pedder & Reay, 2004). However, Lundy (2007) argues that phrases, such as 'pupil voice' and 'the right to be heard', must be contextualised and given deeper meanings. This study aims to explore how pupils' views on teaching and learning are reflected in teachers' discussions and how the pupils' responses contribute to the teachers' professional learning. This also reflects an interest in the importance of students' participation in educational discussions about teaching and learning and in exploring which conditions are necessary to ensure that pupils' voices are heard.

Collaborative professional learning is emphasised as a prerequisite for teachers to be able to teach and deal with an increasingly complex school day. This view is supported by Stoll, who argues that teacher learning 'can no longer be left to individuals' (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006, pp. 221–222). Collaborative professional learning departs from traditional out-of-school settings with opportunities for individual updating of competence. It also challenges previous individual traditions wherein teachers learn to 'sink or swim' (Lortie, 1975, p. 237) by their own efforts. Professional learning communities are highlighted in the literature as suitable forums for teacher learning (Hord, 1997; Qvortrup, 2018; Stoll et al., 2006). Unlike teacher cooperation in which traditions are coordinated and reinforced, the purpose of professional learning communities is to reinvent practice (Little, 1999; Stoll & Louis, 2007), guided by the collective purpose of enhancing student learning (DuFour & DuFour, 2010, 2012; Hord, 1997; Stoll & Louis,

Abbreviations: LS, Lesson Study; RL, Research lesson.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: amfk@hvl.no (A.M.F. Karlsen).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101877>

Received 21 December 2020; Received in revised form 31 August 2021; Accepted 1 September 2021

Available online 25 September 2021

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2007). Hence, the current study leans on a social understanding of learning wherein teachers' learning is viewed as an active collaborative process 'in which teachers engage in activities that lead to change in knowledge and beliefs (cognition) and/or teaching practices (behaviour)' (Bakkenes, Vermunt & Wubbels, 2010, p. 536).

The context of the study is Lesson Study (LS), a collaborative approach to teacher learning that has grown in popularity since the publication of *The Teaching Gap* (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). A LS group constitutes a professional learning community wherein teachers collaboratively plan, conduct and evaluate one or more lessons. Emphasizing teachers' collaborative learning linked to a cycle of enquiry, LS can be seen as a type of action research (Lewis, Perry & Friedkin, 2009) or collaborative action research (Messiou, 2019). The main goal of LS is the understanding and expanding of students' learning through teacher learning and improving of instructions, as emphasized by Quaresma and Winsløw (2017): "the ultimate goal of LS is to further students' learning, even if it passes through teachers' learning" (p. 677). In LS, lessons are called research lessons (RLs). Hence, each RL is designed for the purpose of contributing to the exploration of the connection between teaching and pupil learning, through observations of student learning. In the post-RL discussions, the LS group shares and reflects on pupil data when planning a new lesson. The next, revised lesson is either focused on teaching to a parallel group or a subsequent lesson to the same group (Wood, Cajkler & Jacobsen, 2020, p.87). The LS model proposed by Dudley (2013), which involves pupil reflections collected through interviews after RLs, has inspired the LS cycles of the present study (see Section 2.1.).

Our interest concern how pupil voice can be understood and how it relates to pupils' own learning, understood as participation. Additionally, the article investigates whether teachers' cognisance of and willingness to engage with pupils' perspectives on teaching and learning can promote teachers' professional learning. These interests lead to the following two research question (RQ), each underpinned by a sub-question:

1. *How does emphasizing pupil voice contribute to pupils' learning?*
 - a) *What is the nature of pupil participation in this project?*
2. *How does teachers' discussions on pupils' perspectives contribute to teachers' professional learning?*
 - a) *How do the teachers reflect upon pupils' responses from interviews and questionnaires?*

To investigate the nature of pupils' participation, including the changes during the project, data from interviews and questionnaires were analysed. Further, teachers' interactions in LS discussions were examined to explore the dimensions of professional learning linked to pupils' responses. The specific contributions of this paper include documenting how the model of Lundy (2007) facilitates the analysis of teachers' recognition of pupils' responses and investigating how this connection illuminates the concept of professional learning.

1. Theoretical perspectives and concepts

This section reviews the concept of *pupil voice* and discusses how Article 12 (UNCRC, 1989) might be conceptualised. Second, relevant perspectives on teachers' professional learning will be outlined. Finally, this section points to the state of the art regarding the relationship between student perspectives and teacher learning.

1.1. Pupil voice

The terms 'pupil voice' (UK and Australia) and 'student voice' (US and Canada) emerged from the first wave of increasing pupil participation during the 1990s and early 2000s, realised by researchers, such as Ruddock and Flutter (Cook-Sather, 2014). The concept of *pupil voice* reflects a willingness to open up to pupil participation by facilitating, listening to and acknowledging pupils' responses. However, as emphasised in a recent review, this is not a clear concept with a singular definition (Robertson, 2017). We can distinguish at least three different perspectives: the 'citizenship' perspective (Welply, 2019; Devine, 1998; Sandström Kjellin, Stier, Einarson, Davies, & Asunta, 2010; Roche, 1999), the educational benefits perspective (Beaver, 2017; Flutter & Ruddock, 2004; Warwick, Vrikki, Færøyvik Karlsen, Dudley & Vermunt, 2019) and the human rights perspective (Kennan, Brady & Forkan, 2019; Lundy, 2007). In this study, all three perspectives are involved and related to teachers' learning.

Researchers, such as Cook-Sather (2006, 2020) and Robertson (2017) relate pupil voice to student *agency*. Cook-Sather (2020) argues that pupil voice can foster agency, when "students are working with teachers and researchers to analyse classroom practice, engage in research through various methods, and author and coauthor texts, all with the goal of maximizing and democratizing education for everyone involved" (p. 182). She points at the importance of working step-by-step towards a *cultural shift* that see students as partners in educational practice (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 363). Our study intends to show that this shift requires students' participation in discussions about teaching and learning.

Various models illustrate the meaning of pupil participation. The literature has discussed whether student participation should be understood as a linear development or if the scaffolding and dialogue related to student contributions must be emphasised (Mikalsen, Nes & Dobson, 2013). Hart's ladder of participation (1992) and Shier's pathways to participation (2001) both capture different levels of pupil contributions, whilst the model of Lodge (2005) distinguishes between active and passive pupil roles. For the current study, we have chosen the model of Lundy (2007) to highlight the distinct facets of Article 12 and to emphasise the importance of active participation and dialogue.

As mentioned by de Leeuw, Little and Rix (2020), there is a gap between rhetoric and practice in the field of pupil voice. Several studies suggest that, in practice, schools provide disappointingly few opportunities for pupils to express their views and contribute

meaningfully to shaping school life (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Lundy, 2007; Wyse, 2001). From a children's rights perspective, the concept of *pupil voice* has been criticised for the inherent possibility of an instrumental function. As Lundy (2007) argues, '... it is easy for adults to comply with the various outward signs of consultation and ultimately ignore children's views' (p. 938). These *outward signs of consultation* can be associated with *decoration* and *tokenism*, which represent external symbolic functions, including *non-participation* (Hart, 1992) or a *passive participant role* (Lodge, 2005). However, as argued by Lundy (2019), the critique against schools practicing a tokenistic approach must not be an excuse for not doing anything. If schools fail to engage their pupils, 'schools will miss out on valuable opportunities to develop young people's skills, improve provision, and promote citizenship and social inclusion' (Fielding & Bragg, 2003, p. 3).

Lundy (2007) proposed a model, 'Conceptualising Article 12' (p. 932), which includes four critical elements for the successful implementation of Article 12 (UNCRC, 1989): *space*, *voice*, *audience*, and *influence*. The original version of the model illustrates the connection of these elements to other human rights. Fig. 1 represents an adapted and simplified version of Lundy's model.

This figure shows how the four elements relate to the two dimensions of Article 12. *Space* and *voice* represent the right to express a view. *Audience* and *influence* relate to the right to *have one's views given due weight*, whilst the elements of *audience* and *influence* represent the importance of listening to students' perspectives and taking these into account. To realise this, Lundy (2007) emphasises that young people should be informed as to what decisions are made, how their views are considered and the reasons why actions proceed in a certain way. Whilst Lundy's conceptualisation (Lundy, 2007) has been widely referred to in the literature, there is a dearth of examples on how the model can be operationalised (Kennan et al., 2019). The current study aims to fill this gap in the context of *pupil voice* in LS and in relation to teachers' professional learning.

1.2. Teachers' professional learning in a community of practice

Teachers' professional learning is likely to develop in different situations (Webster-Wright, 2009), such as in meetings with parents or pupils, in informal conversations with a colleague or upon reading professional literature. However, when talking about teachers' professional learning and development, the literature primarily speaks about planned approaches that are organised to enhance student learning. Several researchers have described the characteristics of effective approaches to the professional development of teachers, which are directly linked to improvements in children's learning and social experiences in schools (Desimone, 2009; Postholm, 2012; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007). Some key points highlighted are active learning, connection to practice, connection with the curriculum, relevant academic content, a certain duration and cooperation in the workplace.

The idea of learning as a social process has informed the current study, including the notion that language is the most important tool for human thinking and learning (Vygotsky, 1986). In the present study, learning is integrated into social practice through teachers' participation in a professional learning community as a type of community of practice (Wenger, 1998/2008). The term 'professional' suggests that the group's work is underpinned by professional criteria (e.g., a specialised knowledge base and ethical orienting), whilst 'learning' connotes a shift from processes towards the objective of improvement (Stoll & Louis, 2007) in order to make a difference for pupils.

In his model, Wenger (1998/2008) describes three dimensions of a community of practice: *mutual engagement*, *joint enterprise*, and a *shared repertoire*. Social practice in such a community involves explicit and tacit aspects, which are respectively understood as referring to what is said and represented (e.g., tools, procedures, and specified criteria) and what is unsaid, assumed, and taken for granted (e.g.,

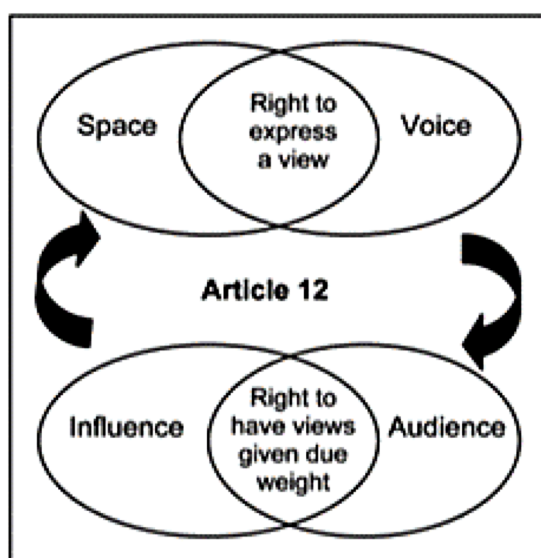


Fig. 1. The model of (Lundy, 2007), retrieved from (Lundy, 2007) and adapted by the authors of this article.

untold rules and recognisable intuitions) (Wenger, 1998/2008, p. 47). Learning is a process of social engagement or participation in the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and meaning is what learning aims to produce: 'Learning is, first and foremost, the ability to negotiate new meaning' (Wenger, 1998, p. 226). This social understanding of learning can be related to the pattern of 'meaning-orientated learning' (Bakkenes et al., 2010; Vermunt, Vrikkki, van Halem, Warwick & Mercer, 2019), which entails teachers looking for explanations for why things work as they do in the classroom and trying out new practices based on that understanding.

The process of collaborative learning in a LS group is situated within and understood as intertwined in the practice of the community. It also depends on the participants' engagement in the social negotiations of meaning, including related dilemmas. A LS group has to deal with problems in practice linked to student learning, which constitutes the group's joint enterprise. The challenge of dealing with problems or questions related to practice requires new ways of meaning making within the group. Dewey (1916) argues that we learn through problem solving, which is a process of *inquiry* wherein we reflect on the consequences of doing. Hence, *breakdowns* have an inherent opportunity for learning (Säljö, 2016).

Vrikkki, Warwick, Vermunt, Mercer and Van Halem (2017) identified two types of learning processes that teachers were observed to engage in whilst participating in LS discussions. When engaging in *descriptive learning processes*, teachers represented what was known (from observations in the RL or from pupils), thus contributing to the explicit co-construction of knowledge. Engaging in *interpretative learning processes*, teachers attempted to go beyond what was given (observations or pupils' views) by unpicking the information, evaluating teaching and learning, and considering the next steps in teaching.

1.3. Previous research connecting pupil voice and teacher professional learning in the context of LS

Useful understanding about the contribution of pupil voice to teacher learning has been provided in several studies (i.e., Arnot & Reay, 2004; Ferguson, Hanreddy & Draxton, 2011; Lundy, 2007; McIntyre, Pedder & Ruddock, 2005; Pedder & McIntyre, 2004). Yet, there are few studies within the context of LS that have investigated the connection between pupil voice and teacher learning (Warwick et al., 2019). In the following, some relevant studies will be described.

The LS model¹ of Dudley (2013) includes the selection of three to four *case pupils* who represent or typify learner groups that are important to observe and understand in the RLs. According to this model, access to student learning includes student interviews after the RLs. Dudley (2013) found that case pupil interviews helped teachers understand pupils' conceptions of the RL and gathered the pupils' views on how the lessons could be improved. Hence, pupil views contributed to innovative improvement actions at the classroom level. These findings correspond with those of a LS project concerning pupils with moderate learning difficulties (Norwich, Dudley & Ylonen, 2014). In that project, post-RL interviews with case pupils provided valuable information that teachers subsequently used in adjusting lessons and teaching plans. Likewise, the study of Warwick et al. (2019) indicated that teachers considering pupil voice in the post-RL discussions contributed to their descriptive and interpretative learning, with the latter including changes in planning of further teaching. Hence, pupil voice has been found to be a trigger for teacher learning in the context of LS (Warwick et al., 2019).

In a study on how to develop more inclusive practices, Messiou and Ainscow (2015) took the LS process a step further by engaging the students' views not as a separate component but as a collective idea that should permeate the whole process. Their study provided evidence about how changes in teachers' beliefs and practices were stimulated through an engagement with the students' views. Students provided discrepant data ('interruptions'), which have been identified as one of the critical conditions for teachers' revised schemas (Timperley & Robinson, 2001). According to Ainscow and Messiou (2018), students' views, more than anything else, make the difference as far as responding to learner diversity is concerned. They argue that students' views can add a distinctive perspective for developing changes in learning and teaching, which go well beyond traditional views of effective practice. Further, they regard such changes as the result of an interruption to continuing thinking and practice. In turn, this interruption brings about a transformation from incremental learning to learning that shifts the assumptions upon which practice is based.

Notably, insights from previous research served as the starting point for the design of the current study. As we comment on our findings, we will return to some of these studies.

2. Methods

This study was conducted in a lower secondary school in the western part of Norway. The first author attended one of the school's LS groups as a participant observer. This researcher role included participating in meetings, observing the lessons, and interviewing pupils after lessons.

2.1. Participants and data collection

The LS group consisted of four teachers from different subjects and the assistant principal who facilitated the meetings. The aim of the LS was to promote pupils' skills in interdisciplinary reading by using reading strategies. This approach was inspired by the Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies (CRISS) project of Carol Santa (Santa & Engen, 2003). These strategies include pupils' analysis of questions regarding whether it is possible to find the answer to a question by referring directly to the text, by thinking for yourself or by combining both approaches.

¹ Pete Dudley called it 'Research Lesson Study' (RLS) to distinguish it from other approaches.

The LS process consisted of three LS cycles, namely, planning, conducting, and reflecting on a RL. All three RLs were conducted in the same 8th grade class (pupils aged 13–14 years old), followed by group interviews with five case pupils. This LS structure was chosen by this particular school, inspired by the LS model of [Dudley \(2013\)](#).

[Fig. 2](#) illustrates the LS process of this study, including the data events. The post-RL1 and post-RL2 discussions included planning of the subsequent RLs (RL2 and RL3, respectively). The pre-RL1 discussion (stripped circle) was not included in the analysis.

Data for this study include the following:

- A : Pupils’ written answers to individual questionnaires distributed to 25 pupils after each research lesson (25 × 3 questionnaires),
- B : Transcripts of audio-/video-recorded group interviews with five case pupils after each RL (three interviews), and
- C : Transcripts of audiotaped teacher discussions after each RL (three discussions).

Pupil interviews were the basis for the analysis of pupil responses together with a questionnaire distributed to all 25 pupils at the end of each RL. The pupils were asked what they had learnt in the lesson, what elements of teaching worked best for them and what they would change. The design of the questions was adapted from the interview guide of a LS workbook ([Dudley, 2016](#)).

In the post-RL discussions, pupil data were shared in the LS group. An overview of pupil answers from the questionnaire was provided by one of the teachers (only for the post-RL3 discussion) or distributed in the LS group so that the teachers could read the data for themselves. As the teachers were new to the idea of interviewing case pupils, Author 1 acted as go-between ([Ruddock, 2007](#)), inviting comments on RLs from the group of five case pupils and feeding back the comments to the teacher group. The process of ‘feeding back’ was organised through an oral paper (group interviews 1 and 3) or written transcript (interview 2). All pupil data were normally shared at the beginning of the post-RL discussions. An exception to this was made in the post-RL2 discussion wherein the transcript of the group interview was provided in the middle of the teacher discussion—a change caused by technical issues.

2.2. Considerations regarding the data collection

Since the RLs were primary organised as group work, the LS-group found group interviews, including one pupil from each group, to be an appropriate approach to get insight into pupils’ experiences, both on group and whole class level. Concerning this technique, some problems have previously been identified ([Fontana & Frey, 2000](#)), for example that the emerging culture of the group may interfere with individual expressions, that the group can be dominated by one person and that *group thinking* takes place (p. 652). In addition, participants can choose not to present their own experiences, if differing from the group’s view ([Silverman, 2014](#)). These critical perspectives give attention to the fact that the “collective voice” that may occur in group interviews does not necessarily represent the reflections and views of the individual pupils. In this study, individually questionnaires were introduced, to contribute to fill this gap. However, the benefits of group interviews include the production of rich data that can be both cumulative and elaborative, and additionally, participation in a group interview can be stimulating for respondents ([Fontana & Frey, 2000](#), p. 652). A collective approach to pupil interviews can also be linked to the view that learning is a social process which includes interactions between teachers (teaching) and pupils (learning), as well as interactions amongst pupils, and that it is valuable for both teachers and pupils to reflect on these interactions, together.

The pupil group interviews of this study can be described as *formal field interviews* ([Frey & Fontana 1991](#), p. 184), given the location in school and the preset purpose of getting insight into pupils’ experiences connected to teaching and learning in the RLs. Conducting pupil interviews underlines the educational purpose of strengthen pupils’ social agency in activities linked to teaching and learning.

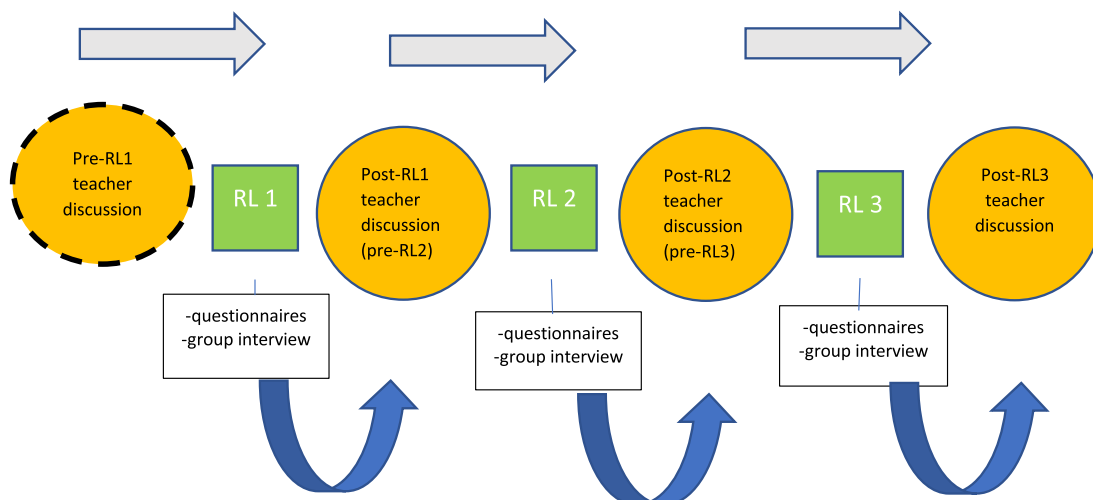


Fig. 2. The LS process of this study.

2.3. Analytic approach

Central interests of this study are pupil participation in LS and how pupil perspectives are reflected in the LS group's post-RL discussions. For this purpose, pupil and teacher data were analysed. Initially, pupil group interviews and teacher discussions were transcribed. Further, transcripts and pupil questionnaires were read through and studied by both researchers in several rounds.

The analytic approach was based on thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which consisted of six steps: 1) familiarising yourself with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming and 6) producing the report. Through an inductive approach, the two researchers worked closely with 'the nature of the data'. This process included iterative rounds of sharing and comparing notes and preliminary analyses they previously conducted separately. The combination of the researchers' individual and collaborative analyses strengthened the reliability of the analytic work.

To prepare the data for further analysis, a synthesis was made by compressing the data. Pupil questionnaires were arranged, to provide a comprehensive overview. Additionally, the teacher discussions were divided into episodes—understood as meaningful units—that included teachers' reports, interpretations and/or discussions related to student inputs. An episode started when one of the teachers referred to students' inputs from the questionnaires or group interviews and ended when a new topic emerged in the discussion.

The researchers' intention was to have open, flexible working hypotheses (Fangen, 2017). Therefore, the data were not measured against fixed theoretical concepts. Instead, *sensitizing concepts* (Blumer, 1954; Bowen, 2006) were used to illuminate data and open new relations, questions, and perspectives. For this study, the sensitizing concepts of *student agency* and *teacher recognition* contributed to the emergence of new themes. To theorize *agency*, we draw on Biesta (2012), acknowledging the child as being "subject of speech", related to the educational aim of "subjectification" (p.2). Further, Biesta (2012) emphasizes listening and *recognition* as "reaching out" to the other. He suggests that the recognition of being addressed is a "moral demand" upon which education becomes possible (Biesta, 2012, p. 11). *Student agency* became a catalyst for the analysis of data related to pupils' opinions about teaching and learning, thereby highlighting how pupils expressed their views. The interaction patterns within the pupil group interviews were analysed in terms of their participation in the processes of evaluation of teaching and learning. With *student agency* as a lens, the researchers looked for changes in the type and frequency of pupil inputs from the first up to the second questionnaires and interviews. The concept of *teacher recognition* illuminated how pupils' perspectives were reflected in teacher discussions and whether the teachers perceived the value of pupils' contributions and suggestions. This included an investigation of whether pupil inputs had an influence on planning of further teaching. Analysis of the episodes explored different types of teacher recognition, identified as *scenarios*, which will be presented in the result chapter. In the further analysis, the concept of *teacher recognition* helped discover the idea that the central characteristics of teacher data, referred to as different *scenarios* in this study, could be reflected in Lundy's (Lundy, 2007) model. The connection between the scenarios and the concepts of *space*, *voice*, *audience* and *influence* will be further explained and discussed in the discussion chapter.

3. Result

This chapter presents the results of the analysis regarding pupils' participation and how pupils' contributions are reflected in the teachers' post-RL discussions. Section 3.1 explains how the nature of the pupils' contributions and participation changed during the three LS cycles, which connects to the first RQ. We aim to answer the second RQ in Section 3.2, by presenting three scenarios, which are illustrations of how the LS group responded to pupils' perspectives.

3.1. The nature of pupil participation

Pupil contributions included individual answers in the questionnaires sent to all 25 pupils (Appendix A) as well as transcripts of group interviews with the case pupils (Appendix B). The pupils gave responses and participated in dialogues on what they had learnt in the previous research lessons, including what activities promoted their learning. They were also asked for suggestions for further teaching.

3.1.1. Changes in pupil contributions

Changes in pupil contributions were observed during the three LS cycles in relation to frequency, depth, and nature of pupil contributions. Firstly, when the first questionnaire only contained four suggestions from pupils, questionnaires two and three included 17 and 10 suggestions, respectively. This *increased frequency of suggestions for changes in teaching* indicated that the pupils became more familiar with the questionnaires and, perhaps, more confident that their ideas were considered by the teachers.

Secondly, group interviews 2 and 3 included *more concrete details and more reasons for opinions and suggestions* than interview 1, which can be understood as *change in participation*. Pupil contributions became more directly related to the content of the previous and future RLs. This culminated in interview 3, wherein the pupils proposed a new classroom game. These changes in depth indicated that the pupils had gradually become more accustomed to the interview context and, perhaps, also more confident that their perspectives were being acknowledged.

Thirdly, the analysis of group interviews 2 and 3 exposed different *interaction patterns* compared to the interactions in interview 1. In the first interview, a traditional I-R-E pattern (initiation-response-evaluation) between interviewer and individual pupils was identified. This later changed in interviews 2 and 3, wherein the pupils started to *follow up on* each other's responses, identified as IRF (e.g., I-R-F1-F2-F3). The new pattern included a more complex structure, which contained *dialogic interactions* wherein pupils *responded to each other's ideas*. These changes in interactions illustrate increased pupil participation and engagement in dialogues.

Interestingly, in group interviews, the pupils used the pronoun ‘we’ just as often as the pronoun ‘I’. This indicated that the pupils seemed to constitute a more ‘collective voice’ on behalf of the pupils in class.

These changes in pupil participation will be further discussed in the discussion section (4.3).

3.2. Voices of teachers: how the teachers reflected upon pupil contributions

In the three post-RL discussions, 26 episodes related to pupil expressions were identified. In these episodes, the teachers referred to pupil inputs from group interviews (21 episodes) or from individual questionnaires (five episodes). An overview of the 26 episodes is given in Appendix C.

Pupil responses that were reflected in the episodes included feedback from pupils concerning how they had understood the reading strategy, responses to different ways of working in the classroom, identification of challenges in teaching and suggestions for change. Most of the episodes were related to pupil suggestions regarding working methods or organisation for teaching and a desire for more student activities, including hands-on tasks, cooperation amongst pupils and play-centred activities. Mainly, the pupils asked the teachers to do *more of* some activities that had been conducted in the previous RLs.

The 26 episodes were grouped into three *scenarios*, each representing different ways in which the teachers responded to pupil inputs. Table 1 provides an overview of the scenarios, including a key word regarding whether pupil contributions were *shared*, *discussed*, or *acted upon*. Each entry in the column to the right gives a description of how pupil views were reflected on according to the different scenarios.

In the following section, we provide more detailed descriptions of the three scenarios.

3.2.1. Scenario 1: shared

This scenario implies that the teachers share pupil responses from group interviews or questionnaires without discussing the inputs in more detail, neither within the episode nor later in the discussion. For example, one of the teachers read aloud a part of the transcript from a group interview, which contained pupils’ suggestions for more group work and fun things (episode 3). These were suggestions that were not followed up by the teacher group. Out of the 26 episodes, eight represented this scenario.

3.2.2. Scenario 2: discussed

In this scenario, pupil responses were *discussed* in relation to the teachers’ own experiences, including three different approaches. The teachers expressed that pupil inputs either confirmed their own experiences, thus adding information that was interesting, or challenged their own views. Out of the 26 episodes, eight represented this scenario.

In four of these episodes, the teachers expressed that pupil contributions *confirmed* their assumptions. The teachers referred to pupil inputs concerning the new reading strategy in general, which led to discussions regarding whether the pupils had understood and used the new strategy. Based on pupil responses, along with the teachers’ own experiences from the research lessons, the teachers concluded that the pupils had understood the new teaching strategy satisfactorily. The LS group added that some pupils were able to express this understanding through academic language (e.g., by using terms like *category* and *acronym*). The teachers all acknowledged this observation.

In two of the episodes, the teacher group reflected on pupil inputs that they found *interesting* or *impressing*. For example, pupils’ responses regarding a tricky task in the previous RL provided information that was discussed later in the teacher group (episode 22). The teachers expressed that these responses *provided new insights* about how this specific task was perceived and experienced by the pupils, which in turn, made them recognise that the task could cause the pupils to stumble. However, it was unclear from the teachers’

Table 1

Three scenarios illustrating how the teacher group responded to pupil inputs.

| Scenario | Key words | How the teacher group responded to pupil input |
|----------|---|---|
| 1 | SHARED Pupil inputs were <i>shared</i> in the LS group (eight episodes) | One of the participants read aloud or referred to pupil inputs from the questionnaire or group interviews (monologue). There was no further interpretation, discussion or change of practice. <i>Episodes 3 (post-RL1); 12, 15 (post-RL2); and 17, 18, 19, 21, 23 (post-RL3)</i> |
| 2 | DISCUSSED Pupil inputs were <i>discussed</i> in the LS group (eight episodes) | Pupil inputs were discussed (dialogue). This scenario contained three different teacher responses. Confirmative The teachers communicated that pupil inputs had confirmed their own assumptions. <i>Four episodes: 11, 13 (post-RL2) and 16, 26 (post-RL3)</i> Interesting The teacher group considered pupil inputs as interesting or impressive. <i>Two episodes: 20 and 22 (post-RL3)</i> Challenging Pupil inputs challenged the teachers. Different teacher views came to the surface. <i>Two episodes: 8 and 10 (post-RL2)</i> |
| 3 | ACTED UPON The teacher group decided to <i>change teaching</i> in the next RL, based on pupil input (10 episodes) | Pupil inputs influence teachers’ future practice. The teacher group acted upon pupil responses by deciding to change their teaching methods in the next RL. <i>Episodes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 (post-RL1); 9, 14 (post-RL2); and 24, 25 (post-RL3)</i> |

conversation whether or how this insight might influence later revisions of this task in future lessons. In another episode (episode 20), the teachers were *impressed* by the pupils' suggestions, with one teacher exclaiming, 'This is substance enough for a whole new lesson'! This utterance was linked to pupils' creative suggestions, including new activities and classroom games, provided in an interview. These suggestions were recognised and applauded. However, because this teacher discussion was not followed by a new RL, it remained uncertain whether these proposals were followed up.

Scenario 2 also implies that the teachers' perspectives were *challenged*, which led to a discussion amongst them. This was the case in two of the episodes (8 and 10). In episode 10, one of the teachers referred to the questionnaire wherein pupils argued that the teachers talked too much at the beginning of a lesson. This is illustrated by the following excerpt:

Teacher 1: *They argued that there was a lot of teacher talk at the beginning of the lesson. However, the pupils needed instructions on the reading strategy. They had to learn about the strategy. I do not quite understand it.*

Several teachers: *Mm*

Teacher 3: *They are year 8 pupils. They are not meant to understand everything.*

Teacher 1: *No.*

Teacher 2: *What they really say is that when we dictate and control, they lose a little ownership.*

Teacher 1: *Mm*

Teacher 2: *But then, they do not quite see the connection, that what they do afterwards is an extension of what we started together. So that's the way it is.*

Teacher 4: *Mm*

Teacher 2: *But I totally agree with them. I also think that the most boring thing is when someone is [just] standing and talking.*

This example shows that pupil contributions challenged the teachers and led to a discussion in the LS group in which two different teacher perspectives emerged: responses from pupils were both dismissed and appreciated. Further in the discussion, Teacher 2 came up with concrete suggestions on how to engage more students at the start of a lesson, illustrating this point by sharing personal teaching experiences. In the following discussion, teacher 3 contributed with similar examples, picking up the idea that pupils learn better by being active themselves.

3.2.3. Scenario 3: acted upon

In *scenario 3*, the teacher group decided to make either small or extensive changes regarding the teaching of the next RL. This scenario was identified in 10 of the 26 episodes. In these episodes, the teachers mostly referred to and discussed pupil responses about more student activities, hands-on activities and physical movements and tasks. The teacher group considered pupils' responses regarding working methods, which can motivate and promote their learning of reading strategies. Further, they took pupils' suggestions into account and chose to include more pupil activities and physical movement in the next RL. This included changes in teaching for RL2 and RL3.

Some episodes occurred as a *chain of episodes* wherein the teacher group returned to previously mentioned pupil contributions to dig deeper into the topic. Hence, the teacher group's processing of pupil responses became a *recurring process* in the discussion, as exemplified in the following findings: in the post-RL1 discussion, the teachers referred to and recognised pupil contributions from the group interviews regarding pupils' need to learn more about how to read graphs and charts and suggestions for more physical movements in the next lessons (episode 2). When planning RL2, the teachers reiterated the pupils' need to learn more about how to read charts, graphs, and tables (episode 5). The teacher group noted the relevance of pupil inputs regarding this need and proceeded to search for a solution to solve this problem. For this purpose, the teachers decided to set off a lesson in between two RLs, which was dedicated to the reading of charts and tables. Further in the discussion, the teachers repeated and followed up on pupil responses regarding more physical movement (episodes 4, 6 and 7). The teacher group discussed how they can operationalise this pupil contribution and decided to include a workstation activity in the next RL to promote pupil activity and physical movement. Hence, four episodes (4, 5, 6 and 7) are follow-up episodes, rooted in pupils' responses referred to in a previous episode (episode 2). During a process of repetitive and recurring discussions, informed by pupil inputs, the teacher group decided how to design RL2.

The teachers' willingness to revise the next RL based on contributions from pupils was clearly illustrated in one of the episodes (episode 14) wherein a *turn* appeared during the post-RL2 discussion. For practical reasons, the transcript was not available to the teachers until they were in the middle of the discussion. Consequently, the teachers had already made plans for RL3 without considering the pupil responses from the interviews. When reading the transcript, the teacher discussions showed that pupil contributions provided the basis for a total change of the next RL. This change included a repetition of one of the previous activities, the introduction of working stations and an activity that the pupils had been unable to complete due to time constraints. Another suggestion that was considered was the idea of not introducing any new tasks, but rather using the same type of tasks in relation to new texts. This input contributed to the teachers' choice of organising the lessons in a totally different way.

In the following chapter, these scenarios will be illuminated by perspectives presented in the theoretical section.

4. Discussion

The analyses revealed three scenarios documenting how the LS group of teachers responded to pupil contributions in their post-RL discussions. These scenarios will be discussed in Section 4.1 related to the concepts of *voice*, *space*, *audience* and *influence* (Lundy, 2007), which contributes to a needed operationalisation of Lundy's model (Kennan et al., 2019). Further, the result will be linked to a

social understanding of teachers' professional learning in order to explore how the model of Lundy (2007)) can contribute to expanding the concept of teachers' professional learning (Section 4.2). The nature of pupils' participation during the LS cycles will be discussed in Section 4.3. Finally, the article provides a conclusion (4.4) and some implications of the study (4.5).

4.1. Space, voice, audience, and influence

The teacher group created a *space* in which pupils could express their ideas and experiences after the RLs. This was facilitated through individual questionnaires and group interviews, which corresponded with the concept of *voice*. However, as Lundy (2007) argues, *space* and *voice* are not enough; rather, the voices of pupils must be listened to (*audience*) and acted upon (*influence*). The three identified *scenarios* differed regarding whether the teachers *shared*, *discussed*, or *acted upon* the pupil responses. The links between the different scenarios and the model of Lundy, 2007 are illustrated in Table 2.

In *scenario 1*, pupil contributions were *shared* in the LS group without further discussion or change in practice (identified in eight of 26 episodes). Pupils had been invited and facilitated (given *space*) by the teachers to express their *voices*. However, it was not apparent in the teacher discussion whether pupil responses were listened to, discussed, or acted upon. This scenario can be related to the concepts of *space* and *voice* (Lundy, 2007).

Scenario 2 revealed that pupil contributions were *discussed* in the teacher group. These discussions were mainly characterised by teachers' recognition of pupil engagement, whilst the teachers expressed that pupils' responses either *confirmed* their own perspective or made a positive contribution to it (*interesting* or *impressive*). However, in two episodes, pupils' perspectives were found to be *challenging*. This led to a deeper discussion that revealed tensions in the LS group regarding attitudes towards the pupils' role. In summary, this scenario highlighted that the teachers were listening to and reflecting on pupils' expressions. They also took a stand on the pupil statements by actively relating to them. This scenario relates to the concept of *audience* (Lundy, 2007). Yet, pupils' views were not acted upon, and their perspectives appeared to have had no influence on further practice.

In *scenario 3*, the teacher group changed plans for the next RL based on pupil responses. Changes in teaching especially concerned working methods. This scenario is characterised by *chains of episodes* in the teacher discussions wherein pupil responses were discussed and included in the planning of the next research lesson. In one of the episodes, a *turn* appeared during the post-RL2 discussion when the teachers decided to change teaching in RL3 after reading the transcript. Pupils' expressions from one of the interviews provided the basis for a total change of teaching, thus exemplifying how pupils' views were taken seriously and acted upon by the teachers. Hence, *scenario 3* relates to the concept of *influence* (Lundy, 2017).

4.2. Teachers' professional learning

As identified in the three scenarios, the teacher discussions developed in different ways. Sharing of pupil expressions was the starting point for all episodes of the three scenarios. However, the discussions diverged into three directions, which followed diverse paths or trajectories (Wenger, 1998), at the group level. The three scenarios explored different dimensions of teachers' professional learning.

To connect with teachers' professional learning, *scenario 1* can be identified as a way of sharing resources as a contribution to the group's joint repertoire (Wenger, 1998). This can be connected to descriptive learning processes (Vrikki et al., 2017; Warwick et al., 2019). One explanation for the lack of follow-up can be that the pupil response was understood by the teachers as implied or taken for granted. Whether this sharing process provided insight, further reflections or changes in practice was not evident in the analysis.

In *scenario 2*, interactions in the LS group showed an active process of negotiating meaning (Wenger, 1998) based on ideas or suggestions provided by pupils. This process can be described as interpretative learning (Vrikki et al., 2017; Warwick et al., 2019). In the episodes wherein the teachers found pupils' perspectives challenging, the interactions led to a discussion, which exposed tensions in the LS group regarding their attitudes towards the pupil role. These discussions led to the discovery of explicit experiences that may have been tacit otherwise.

In summary, in *scenario 2* the participants engaged in connecting the past (own experiences) to the future (the next RL). In a social view on learning (Wenger, 1998), this connection relates personal histories to the history of the practice (of the LS group), which may potentially strengthen both the individual and collective becoming.

Scenario 3 involved an enquiry-based approach to pupil input, which generated discussions and decisions concerning changes in teaching for the next RL. These changes were based on longer or shorter processes of agreement and decision-making, with pupil contributions serving as the starting point and a catalyst for subsequent changes. Such changes involved the teachers' active contributions to processes of negotiating and producing new meaning, which constitute learning as a social process (Wenger, 1998). Access to pupil contributions informed the group's discussions and decisions, and learning was contextualised as a process of meaning making at the group level. The mutual engagement in this collaborative process contributed to the creation of the joint enterprise, as

Table 2
The links between the three scenarios and (Lundy, 2007) model.

| Scenario | | The concepts of Lundy (2007) |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Sharing | Space-voice |
| 2 | Sharing and discussing | Space-voice-audience |
| 3 | Sharing, discussing and acting upon | Space-voice-audience-influence |

represented by the teaching of the next RL. The LS group's process of negotiating and producing meaning involved listening to pupil contributions and taking these into account in order to strengthen pupils' learning in the next RL. The community of practice, as represented by the LS group, made alignments in practice and created emergent structures in teaching based on engagement in the pupil responses. The pupils provided discrepant data, which challenged the teachers' assumptions. This interruption or 'collapse' (Säljö, 2007) served as a catalyst that led to the emergence of new ways of creating meaning within the group. These processes reveal that pupil voice can open new trajectories in teaching and serve as a catalyst for teachers' professional learning by triggering the process of negotiating new meaning in a teacher group.

In line with these findings, we support the argument of Soo Hoo (1993), who argued that we must not overlook the voices of our students, 'the treasure of our very own backyards' (p. 390). Students represent authentic sources of first-hand experiences from our classrooms, experiences that can contribute valuable perspectives regarding teaching and learning. We also support the view that pupil voice can be a trigger for teacher learning: 'establishing a *meaningful dialogue* between teachers and pupils through the use of pupil voice strategies offers an important starting point in developing the art of teaching' (Flutter, 2007, p. 344).

However, for teacher learning to happen, pupil contributions must be taken seriously, as illustrated in *scenario 3*. In this scenario, the teachers shared, discussed, and acted upon pupil perspectives, which can be related to the concepts of *space*, *voice*, *audience*, and *influence* (Lundy, 2007). The teachers' deep engagement in pupils' perspectives challenged their assumptions, which in turn, resulted in important changes in their teaching plans.

4.3. The perspective of the learner

In this study, we also highlight the importance of pupil voice for pupils' own learning. Given the opportunities to participate in dialogues about teaching and learning, pupils can gain experience to have a voice, be listened to and having an influence.

The result shows that some changes in pupil responses were observed during the three LS cycles, including a development concerning the frequency and nature of pupil participation. These changes can be explained in different ways. One explanation is that during the LS process, the pupils were familiarised with the setting of being given the opportunity to participate in dialogue about teaching and learning. Gaining the opportunity to express a view on teaching and learning gives pupils *space* and *voice*, thereby implying a pupil role that differs from more traditional ones, such as providing the right answers to questions or being obedient to the teachers. It seemed like the pupils needed to get used to the opportunities and expectations linked to active engagement in dialogues about teaching and learning. However, the analysis indicated that 'the message was taken' already in the second interview and the second questionnaire, thus revealing that the pupils quite quickly became used to being given a space and voice with which to share their ideas. A possible Hawthorne effect (French, 1953) may also be considered, understood that being studied and given attention to in a study in itself can bring about behavioural changes.

Another explanation for the changes in participation is that the pupils were encouraged by the discovery that the teachers responded positively to their requests for changes in the next RL. The planning of RL2 and RL3 was influenced by pupil input, which eventually led to changes in teaching. This might have positively influenced the pupils' further contributions, even if the teachers did not explicitly express whether and why changes in teaching had been made. However, this explanation is not obvious. Regarding audience and influence (Lundy, 2007), the pupils were not told how their inputs were processed by the LS group of teachers. This issue can provide a potential opportunity to elaborate on pupils' influence, as it is important for young people to see the outcomes of their participation (Lundy, 2007; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010).

Hence, Lundy's model (2007) mediates the preconditions for pupil voice, by framing student participation through the concepts of voice, space, audience and influence, an arrangement which support student agency. Pupil voice, as presented in this study, positions pupils as being *subjects of speech* (Biesta, 2012). However, to promote *student agency*, there is a need for teachers' recognition or *reaching out* (Biesta, 2012).

4.4. Concluding marks

We draw on the view that education should support people to develop their agency (Biesta, 2012; Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Ecclestone, 2007). In this study, student agency includes student participation in fruitful dialogues about teaching and learning, an engagement that influenced on teachers' discussions and decisions linked to teaching and learning in the RLs. This study shows that when teachers make space for, listen to and give influence to pupils' voices, pupils' perspectives can serve as a catalyst for teachers' professional learning. Our conclusion is that *this fortunate coincidence* of pupil participation and teacher learning emphasises the value of teachers inviting pupils into productive dialogues about learning and teaching, because both pupils and teachers can benefit from such arrangements. Hopefully, the findings of this study will inspire more studies on the relationship between pupil participation and teachers' professional learning.

4.5. Implications for pupil voice in LS

Incorporating pupil voice systematically into LS procedures can strengthen the central intention of LS, which is to view the classroom experience from the perspective of the learner (Warwick et al., 2019). We suggest including pupils' perspectives as an element of all LS cycles to elaborate on the *space*, *voice*, *audience* and *influence* of pupils' perspectives in the context of LS.

Regarding the concept of *audience* (Lundy Lundy, 2007), the LS procedures must facilitate teachers' access to the pupils' perspective. The current study shows that group interviews *at the classroom level* have the potential to create a *space* within which

dialogues about teaching and learning can be conducted between adults and children as well as between pupils and within the group of teachers. To expand the space for pupil voice in LS, one idea is to include pre-RL interviews. By adding pupil interviews into the planning phase of an LS cycle, the pupils' perspectives can permeate the entire LS process, a point that is suggested by [Messiou and Ainscow \(2015\)](#). From a broader perspective, this can also contribute to efforts to reduce the gap between rhetoric and practice in the field of pupil voice.

Supplementary materials

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at [doi:10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101877](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101877).

Appendix

A. Questionnaire sent to all the pupils in the 8th grade class (translated from Norwegian)

| | Name | Date: |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | <p>What did you learn from this lesson? (What can you do now? Do you understand something now that you did not understand before?)</p> | |
| 2 | <p>What aspect of the teaching worked best for you? (Did the teacher or peers do anything that helped you to learn?)</p> | |
| 3 | <p>If the same lesson is being taught to another group, do you have suggestions for changes?</p> | |

B. Interview guide for the pupil group interviews

| | Name | Date: |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | <p>What did you learn from this lesson? (What can you do now? Do you understand something now that you did not understand before? What do you think about this lesson?)</p> | |
| 2 | <p>What aspect of the teaching worked best for you? (What did the teacher or peers do to help you to learn?)</p> | |
| 3 | <p>If the same lesson is being taught to another group, do you have suggestions for changes to make the pupils learn better?</p> | |

C. Table. An overview of pupil utterances that were referred to in the teachers' post-RL discussions

The title of each episode relates to pupil utterances from interviews/questionnaires, as they were referred to by teachers in the current episode. Mostly, pupil responses were referred to directly. When referred to indirectly, a star (*) is added in the Q/GI column.

The labels Q and GI indicate whether pupil inputs originated from questionnaires (Q) or group interviews (GI). The column to the right shows whether the episode occurred in teacher discussions post-RL1, post-RL2 or post-RL3.

Table. Pupil utterances from interviews/questionnaires as they were referred to in the teachers' post-RL discussions

| Episodes | Pupil utterances as they were referred to in the teacher discussions | Q/GI | Discussion |
|----------|---|------|------------|
| 1 | When doing group work, we did agree too much. | GI | Post-RL1 |
| 2 | We need to learn more about how to read charts and graphs. We would like more activity and physical movement. | GI | Post-RL1 |
| 3 | I need to know the meanings of the terms. | GI | Post-RL1 |
| 4 | To make it more physical | GI* | Post-RL1 |
| 5 | To learn more about how to read charts, graph and tables | GI | Post-RL1 |
| 6 | More student activity and physical movement | GI* | Post-RL1 |
| 7 | More student activity and physical movement | GI | Post-RL1 |
| 8 | Too much reading and writing; repetition of working stations | GI | Post-RL2 |
| 9 | When doing the task, we did not get support. | GI | Post-RL2 |
| 10 | The teacher talked a lot at the beginning of the lesson. | GI | Post-RL2 |
| 11 | To understand the question helps finding the answer | GI | Post-RL2 |
| 12 | We tried to listen. | GI | Post-RL2 |
| 13 | The challenge is to put the question in the right category. | GI | Post-RL2 |
| 14 | We have only finished two of the posts on the activity. | GI | Post-RL2 |
| 15 | We did some mistakes on all parts of the task. | GI | Post-RL2 |
| 16 | She said she had learned how to identify and group a question. | GI* | Post-RL3 |
| 17 | He enjoyed the group discussions, the activities on the floor and the repetitions. | GI* | Post-RL3 |

(continued on next page)

(continued)

| | | | |
|----|--|-----|-----------|
| 18 | They liked that we started with the workstations. | GI* | Post-RL3 |
| 19 | They would have liked more repetitions. | GI* | Post-RL3 |
| 20 | I have a suggestion for a new game. | GI | Post-RL3 |
| 21 | Now we have understood it. | GI | Post-RL3 |
| 22 | The tricky task...we learnt to read properly through a text. | Q | Post-RL1 |
| 23 | To do more funny tasks | Q | Post-RL1 |
| 24 | To make the workstation more physical | Q | Post-RL1 |
| 25 | More activity and physical movement | Q | Post-RL1 |
| 26 | The name of the reading strategy is an acronym. | Q | Post-RL 2 |

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