

Review of the Book *Children's Experiences of Classrooms: Talking about Being Pupils in the Classroom*, by E. Hargreaves

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While marketed towards both student and practitioner teachers, *Children's Experiences of Classrooms* is a book that anyone working with children could and should read. Educational psychologists (EP) have for a long time been at the forefront of child voice advocacy, so the topic will not be new to us. However, Hargreaves' book provides accessible and compelling evidence as to how child voice and behaviour can be impacted in the classroom that not only would be of great interest to teacher practitioners but also to all individuals working with young people with relation to their education.

The book provides an insightful overview of the way young people themselves understand their classroom experiences and how they feel they are (and in several cases, aren't) listened to at school. Using her research experience both in the UK and abroad, Hargreaves skilfully identifies classroom attitudes in a way that neither chastises nor admonishes the reader. Instead, she highlights common behavioural practices and uses pupil voice to suggest alternatives to practice, in order to ensure young people in the classroom feel they are involved and listened to. Indeed, Hargreaves ends each chapter with activities the reader can complete by themselves or with their class (assuming they are a teacher) as a way to develop their learning and practice further.

Throughout the book, Hargreaves presents a balanced discussion on how individuals working with young people can ensure that a child's experiences of the classroom are positive and inclusive while maintaining a safe and efficient learning environment. Chapters on "Authority and Authoritarianism in the Classroom", "Autonomy in the Classroom" and "Teacher Feedback in the Classroom" discuss pros and cons of various classroom techniques, with evidence from young people themselves and from schools in the UK, North Africa and the Middle East. This cross-cultural examination of pupil voice gives the work an extra layer of understanding of how universally important child voice advocacy is and provides insightful reading for anyone interested in education. Throughout the text, Hargreaves also highlights the importance of providing opportunities for and enabling students to design their own strategies when dealing with stresses or concerns — something that I am sure will sound familiar to many EPs.

For me, however, while the final chapter, "Social Class in the Classroom", was truly fascinating, it did not feel quite the next step in the dialogue but rather inserted onto the end of the book as an important post-scriptum. Within this chapter, Hargreaves does briefly discuss ability grouping in schools and the impact that this has on a child's experiences of the classroom, and it is my opinion that this is where the highlight of the chapter should have focused as it felt like the natural continuum from the previous chapters. Instead, however, Hargreaves discusses the role social class plays in pupil involvement in the classroom and how it can impact a student's participation and self-belief. This is not to say that I do not think what Hargreaves is saying is important. On the contrary, as EPs, a lot of our work is with disadvantaged children, and it is of vital importance that we understand not only how these pupils view themselves in terms of their own social positioning in the classroom but also how other pupils and even teachers view them and listen to them. However, this information should warrant further development in its own book, rather than feeling "slotted on" to the end of an already fascinating and informative work.

Possibly the greatest strength of Hargreaves' book is her recording of pupil voice throughout. This isn't a book that dictates the importance of listening to and involving children having never spoken to a real-life child before; rather, Hargreaves refers to quotes and diagrams from and by students throughout her book, providing effective illustrations for the ideas she is portraying. As EPs, we understand the importance of listening to children and young people, and *Children's Experiences of Classrooms* provides an accessible and stimulating evidence base as to why it is vital we, along with everyone else who is involved with a young person's education, continue doing so.

Overall, *Children's Experiences of Classrooms* provides a thorough and well-written argument for the importance of involving children and young people with their education to ensure that classrooms are enjoyable and inclusive. Teachers, EPs and other professionals are all likely to learn something new from reading this work, and it is hoped that what only now is being published as a textbook soon becomes textbook for all education training schemes.