Beyond the Curriculum and the Classroom: A Case Study of a Curriculum Enhancement Programme in an English Secondary School

Copyright © 2018
PRISM: Casting New Light on Learning, Theory and Practice
http://prism-journal.blackburn.ac.uk/
ISSN 2514-5347
Vol. 2 (1): pp. 44-64

RACHEL JACKSON
Liverpool John Moores University
r.m.jackson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk

Abstract
This paper reports on findings from the author's Masters of Education project in which Classics as an after-school curriculum enhancement programme was offered to Year 9 pupils (aged 13-14) in a maintained school in Salford. The programme also incorporated excursions to supplement the extracurricular lessons delivered by the researcher (a qualified English and Classics teacher) whilst working as a teacher of English at the secondary school. Qualitative and quantitative data from a questionnaire (n=14), a focus group (n=5) and observations are presented here as a case study into the perceived impact of this curriculum enhancement programme on the participants, half of whom were identified by the school as 'disadvantaged'.

1. Background and aims

1.1 Policy context

Since the introduction of the National Curriculum in the 1988 Education Reform Act made it too difficult for many maintained schools to justify Classics (the study of Ancient Greek and Roman civilisations) on the more limited timetable of subjects to be taught (Forrest, 1996, p. 44), it became typical for only academically selective schools to offer the subject. Classics as

a school discipline, therefore, became typically associated with elite educational institutions such as grammar and fee-paying schools (Hall, 2015).

At the time this research was conducted (2015), the Department for Work and Pensions had proposed that it was the education system's responsibility to ensure that 'all children – irrespective of their background – have the foundations they need to realise their potential' (DWP, 2015, p. 1). However, England's education system, consists of several different kinds of school (maintained, academy, free, grammar, fee-paying), meaning that children start their educational journey on unequal grounds. As Reay points out, the hypocrisy of 'the current policy status quo is one that valorizes choice whilst recognizing that choices come with resources that remain very unequally distributed' (2012, p. 2). More recent research in grammar schools found that children need access to the educational opportunities (Sardoc and Mason, 2016) and resources (Peterson, 2017) that many children from poorer backgrounds do not get. This explains why only 2.4% of grammar school places are assigned to those eligible for free school meals (Andrews et al., 2016), used as a proxy for socio-economic disadvantage.

Young people able (or enabled) to attend these prestigious schools, if available in their geographical vicinity, are offered more curricular opportunities (such as the opportunity to study Classics) and have more educational opportunities beyond the classroom, that put them at an advantage in the future (Cochran et al., 2011). It is precisely these 'opportunities' which were offered as part of this project, specifically the opportunity for Year 9 (aged 13-14) pupils in a non-selective maintained school to study Classics during an after-school class and go on excursions.

1.2 Background

My own attendance at a non-selective maintained secondary school that did not offer Classics meant that I only discovered it as a discipline at sixth-form college. I was then inspired to take English and Classical Literature at a Russell Group university, followed by a teaching diploma in English and Classical studies (as it is known in Scotland), again at a university in the Russell Group. Although I qualified as a teacher of both English and Classics, the two maintained schools I taught at did not offer Classics, so I was unable to teach the subject that inspired me so much.

I did however offer an after-school curriculum enhancement programme of Classics, originally targeted at pupils identified by the school as 'more able' according to their academic attainment. Encouraged to be a more reflective practitioner during my Masters of Education (MEd), however, I began to see how 'this may reinforce the stereotype of Classics as a particularly elitist subject' (Gibbs, 2003, p. 38), which Wilkinson (2003) blames on Classics teachers themselves. With the National Curriculum already 'narrow and elitist' (Gillborn, 2001, p. 110) further privileging those marked out as 'gifted and talented' (as they have been known as in the past) adds to the sense that education is 'rationed'. So as not to deepen the stereotyping of Classics as elitist, the revised curriculum enhancement project reported in this paper was open to all Year 9 students.

1.3 Aims of the research

As part of the practitioner research that formed the MEd dissertation, I generated some insights into the potential of offering Classics as a curriculum enhancement programme taught after school and off-site. Although the after-school class, branded CLASSics CLASS, was offered to all Year 9 pupils, the research focused upon young people experiencing some form of disadvantage. The academic attainment of young people characterised as 'disadvantaged' is a government priority (DfE, March 2013) and had a personal relevance for me as someone from an economically disadvantaged background, as identified by eligibility for free school meals.

The label for disadvantage used in schools now is called 'Pupil Premium' or referred to by the (rather loaded) term 'Deprivation Pupil Premium' (Education Funding Agency, March 2015). The Pupil Premium Indicator (PPI) has its limitations; children may be in receipt of Pupil Premium for reasons other than economic deprivation, for example if they have spent some time in care, and identification often requires parents to apply for financial aid in the form of free school meals. Hence there will be unidentified children experiencing 'deprivation' as defined by the Department for Education (DfE, December 2013).

The project delivered in the final term of 2015, aimed to have a positive impact upon a group of Year 9 students in two ways. Firstly, via curriculum enhancement in the form of a CLASSics CLASS delivered after school using my own expertise as a qualified teacher as well as visits from a Classics PhD student at the University of Manchester and a Greek actor at the University of Salford who had recently played the Ancient Greek poet, Sappho in a play.

Secondly, through excursions to educational establishments: Manchester museum, Manchester Art Gallery and the University of Cambridge, including their Cast Gallery and Fitzwilliam Museum.

2. Cultural capital

The Bourdieusian concept of 'cultural capital' was useful for this study, though not without its flaws, as Hannon et al. (2017) also identify in their study of a similar project. They acknowledge that valuing the mores of the dominant class at the expense of the those of lower 'socio-economic groups' as they put it (p. 1227) could reinforce inequality. A similar sentiment is expressed by Giannakaki et al. (2018) who advance that the hegemony of 'high culture' discourages young people of 'low-status households' (p. 194) from embracing their own cultures. This is a rather stereotypical view of the interests of disadvantaged children which the curriculum enhancement programme, CLASSics CLASS challenges.

Rather than starting with the notion that children from disadvantaged backgrounds begin with a 'deficit' that is somehow their fault and not the societal reproduction of inequalities (as Hannon et al. (2017) warn) this project merely offered cultural opportunities which participants would not have ordinarily due to the inequalities of the school system. It is acknowledged that more affluent children enjoy economic as well as cultural advantages (Sullivan, 2002) and simply offering a course usually taught in privileged educational arenas will not correct this imbalance. Giannakaki et al. (2018, p. 197) go further, theorising that it could actually prove damaging if the ''have-nots' are exposed to the benefits enjoyed by those possessing legitimate culture/power, they will aspire to become like them, reinforcing the oppressive regime weighted against them'. This is only a possibility if participants are led to believe that possessing the cultural capital gained as part of the course would be an automatic means of upward social mobility. It was not the intention to perpetuate the misconception that the education system is so meritocratic, as Sullivan (2002) warns could be the case with interventions aimed at enhancing cultural capital.

The intention was not to claim that this curriculum enhancement programme would act as a panacea to the inequalities of the school system; rather, it offered 'cultural participation', which Sullivan's (2002) review of empirical studies has shown to be generally advantageous.

The benefits of Classics as cultural capital and the different contexts in which this extra-curricular programme was taught are now outlined.

2.1 The Benefits of Classics

Classics 'used to be seen as "the secret garden" of the curriculum' (Gay, 2003, p. 21), implying that the subject was considered exclusive in the past, but various initiatives have instigated a 'democratic turn' (Paul, 2013, p. 143). The Cambridge Online Latin Project, for example, was deemed successful (Department for Education and Employment, 2001) in providing material to teach Latin in non-selective schools. Gay (2003) focuses upon why some primary schools have adopted the Latin Minimus project and concludes that the course has intrinsic value: it complements History and English work, and contributes to the 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural' (SMSC) development of a child as recommended by Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted 2004), which was also noted by Shannon (2003). However, he also found that the inclusion of Classics in the state sector was thought to raise the status of schools (Gay, 2003), therefore perpetuating the elitism of the subject.

Other initiatives have redressed the perception of Classics as elite by highlighting that it can be inclusive. Paul (2013) found that the Cambridge Latin Course (CLC) 'offers a kind of empowerment' (Paul, 2013, p. 148) and The Cambridge School Classics Project (CSCP), also, aims 'to make the classical world accessible to as many students as possible, whatever their age, whatever their ability' (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 113). Classics is identified by Hubbard (2003, p.53) as, in fact, more accessible, 'not because the subject is easier but because the thought, forms and structure of the ancient world, being early precursors of our own, embody them in their most direct and simple form'. Classics as the subject content of the curriculum enhancement programme is therefore justified. In those schools where Classics is offered, Shannon (2003) found that extra-curricular activities and visits to museums made some Classics departments more successful and provided examples from a fee-paying school and a comprehensive school. The potential benefits of excursions more generally is now outlined.

2.2 The benefits of excursions

A review of studies into field trips highlights that opportunities for such trips has decreased (DeWitt and Storksdieck, 2008) despite having some academic benefits as well as

affective impact, if well designed. Features of successful trips according to DeWitt and Storksdieck's (2008) review can be identified as:

a) structural (teacher input and planned activities before during and after the visit)
b) socio-cultural (the novelty of the destination and social interactions whilst there).

Taking heed of this advice, my excursions were structured, with focused tasks planned that did not inhibit freedom to explore the two museums and galleries. The visit to Manchester Art Gallery took the form of a treasure hunt whereby students had to work in groups to find the answers to questions about mythology located in the paintings or their descriptions. At Manchester Museum, iPads were made available so the students, again working in groups, could photograph material they thought answered questions assigned to them by museum staff.

The trip to the University of Cambridge was especially justified by its unique nature that could not have been replicated in the classroom or any local context. The artefacts of the Fitzwilliam Museum allowed students to see examples of what they had learned about during classes and the Cast Gallery provided an idea of the scale of the statues that they had only previously seen in pictures. The social interactions advised in the literature were particularly noticeable at the University of Cambridge. The young people were given a tour of accommodation by a current student, who encouraged them by telling them how she was the first in her farming family to go to university. They also enjoyed lunch at Selwyn College with two recent Classics graduates who told them about the collegiate system of the university and regaled them with tales of dinners in academic dress etc.

3. Methodology

Fichtman Dana and Yendol-Silva (2003), who study the classroom research of a reflective practitioner, asserted that it was the:

> juxtaposition of…different data sources, and her reflexions upon them, as much as the understandings generated by each in isolation, that helped to free up her thinking and gain new perspectives upon her particular area of concern (p.248)

Similarly, my practitioner research uses a multi-method approach, recommended for 'the teacher-as-researcher movement' by Cohen et al. (2002). Qualitative data was gathered via a focus group, observations and a survey of open-ended questions, although answers to these were then quantified according to the socio-economic background of the respondents, as identified by the PPI. Other quantitative data on programme attendance was also helpful in interpreting the impact of the curriculum enhancement project.

3.1 Methods

It was thought that a focus group would be the best way to capture the all-important child's perspective (Punch and Oancea, 2014). The main focus was whether they thought participation in the programme had changed their opinion on anything, with a particular emphasis on 'university' and 'careers' prompted as it was originally hoped that exposing the participants to some of the opportunities enjoyed in elite schooling would raise their career aspirations. Although I now realise that 'it is optimistic to think that education provision alone can overcome structural inequalities in society' (Pollard, 2014, p. 481), it was a starting point for the research.

Taking inspiration from Watson's (2012), *Learning to Liberate,* in which the education of the disadvantaged in community-based organisations in the United States was studied, a questionnaire 'to probe how they experience the program and whether or not they find it beneficial' (p. 181) was also issued. This anonymous paper questionnaire also served to uncover perceptions that the participants may feel uncomfortable sharing as a group. The survey consisted of open-ended questions 'giving appropriate weight to the views of the child' in line with The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (Pollard (2014, p. 481). Although the questionnaire was completed anonymously, I was careful to keep those completed by PP students separate to see if there was any difference for these individuals who are deemed officially 'disadvantaged'.

As a teacher at the school, I had the additional method of observation at my disposal (Tillema et al., 2008), which is a standard practice that pupils are aware of. These reflections, as a teacher-researcher, were recorded in a journal and the participants and their guardians were aware of the use of these written observation notes. The additional method of observation offered another layer of insight into the impact that the curriculum enhancement programme had on participants that maybe even they were not aware of, thus would not

appear in the questionnaire or focus group. These observation notes supplemented the information gathered in the focus group and questionnaire, allowing for the multiple views of 'reality' that are favoured in the 'interpretive zone' (Tillema, 2008). These observations were mainly used to supplement the voices of five main 'case pupils' from the focus group, allowing me to construct 'portraits' (Watson, 2012) of these individuals.

3.2. Ethical considerations

In accordance with the ethical guidelines published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in 2011 (as this was the most up-to-date version at the time) approval for pupils to participate in the research was sought from guardians as well as the young people themselves. The consent and assent forms were approved by the ethics committee at the University of Glasgow, the awarding institution of this MEd. As required by the ethics committee, a plain language statement detailing the use of survey, focus group and observation was also provided. This document explained the purpose of the research, emphasising the right to withdraw without consequence. Parents and participants were also assured that the only potential 'harm' might occur from missing lessons to attend the excursions. Disruption to schooling was, however, kept to a minimum by visiting local sites during lunch time on Wednesdays when core lessons (i.e. English and math) were not taught that afternoon. Furthermore, pupils were also only permitted to participate in the excursions if their overall school attendance was above 90%.

As a teacher at the school, I was aware that the power dynamic may have led the young people to participate out of obligation, which was not the intention. To mitigate against any sense of coercion, I did not press pupils for completed forms (as I did with the consent forms for the excursions, as required by law). No coercion was apparent, as not all members of the voluntary after-school class participated in the MEd investigation. Only 14 returned their parental consent forms out of the 28 Year 9 students who attended at least one after-school session voluntarily. Despite interesting observations of some of the other 14 attendees, these could not be included.

Whist it was acknowledged in the consent form that participation in the focus group would reveal the identities of the assenting pupils, all other measures to protect privacy were put into place when reporting of the findings. Confidentiality was assured via the use of pseudonyms, explained next.

3.3. Participants

The programme was offered to the target population at an assembly delivered to all 199 Year 9 pupils, so the project could be as inclusive as possible. Although only a small sample of 14 self-selecting young people consented to participate in this study, consenting individuals did have discrete and identifiable characteristics, by chance, divided equally between those in receipt of Pupil Premium and those not. Once the regular attenders were analysed in terms of the data held by the school and shared with teachers as standard, it became clear that there were four distinct categories:

1. Pupil Premium (PP)
2. Higher Attainers (HA)
3. PP AND HA
4. non-PP/HA.

Though not representative, this range added to the breadth of the data gathered to allow comparisons between different demographics. Coded pseudonyms have been assigned according to these identifiers and adhering to gender-specific names. Students on the **P**upil **P**remium (PP) register were assigned a name beginning with the letter '**P**' (n=5). If these individuals are also classed as Higher Attainers, their pseudonym begins with '**B**' for '**B**oth' (n=2). **H**igher Attainers (HA) begin with '**H**' (n=2). Students who are not in these categories were given names starting with '**N**' for '**n**on-PP/HA' (n=5).

3.4 Limitations

Nelson and O'Beirne (2014, p.29) assert that practitioner research is often 'observation or small-scale qualitative studies, and therefore is unlikely to be replicable. It provides a starting point for discussion however'. As a novice teacher-researcher, I acknowledge the limitations of my methods but maintain that the presentation and analysis of the findings I gathered offer insights into the benefits of the CLASSics CLASS programme. For example, in hindsight, a focus group with 14 teenagers becomes rather *un*focused for some and more focused upon the loquacious individuals of the group (Robson, 2005). As a consequence, I was able to construct more in-depth portraits of five individuals from the group rather than presenting superficial findings of all of them. Like Hannon et al. (2017, p.1231), who in a

similar study had a small sample of 14 year-olds, the findings are 'illuminative rather than generalisable'.

There were also limitations to using a questionnaire, which is why this method was not relied upon and only formed part of this research. Attempting to quantify perceptions in questionnaires is problematic, as 'attitudes' are difficult to capture in surveys (Silverman, 2013). Also, although clarity of questions was carefully considered (Gilbert, 1993), the final main question (before the section for 'final comments') had clearly been misunderstood. There were, however, observation data to supplement the limited survey findings.

There is, however, the danger of a magnified 'Hawthorne effect' due to not only the researcher being physically present (Robson, 2005), but also being the teacher of the programme, and of English in the school, though many of the participants were not my pupils. Observations can always be critiqued as being subjective, but this is to be embraced in the interpretive paradigm where it is acknowledged that 'the researcher is a unique individual and that all research is essentially biased by each researcher's individual perceptions' (Pollard, 2014, p. 7).

3.5 Analysis

Content analysis was employed to categorise the latent content of questionnaire answers in a high-inference system (Robson, 2003) of grouping similar answers to identify possible trends. Survey data was also quantified according to how many respondents gave similar answers and whether they were considered 'Pupil Premium' by the school. Using quantitative data in this way 'expands upon qualitative data and effectively deepens the description' (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006, p. 3) as it was then possible to detect any differences in effect upon students of differing backgrounds.

An attendance register was also kept, as is routine procedure, and this provided helpful quantitative data to be analysed using the RAG (red, amber, green) system common in schools. This basic code displays poor attendance (less than 90%) as red, acceptable attendance (90-96%) as amber and high attendance (above 97%) as green. A similar system was employed when calculating attendance at the after-school class, although because there were only twenty sessions available (including the excursions) and the class was competing

against other activities (see Table 1), 50% attendance was coded amber and attendance above and below this coloured green and red respectively.

This analysis was helpful when sampling participants for the portraits, which were used to present the qualitative data from the focus group and observations. Paula (PP), Beth (both PP and HA), Hannah (HA) and Nick and Niamh (non-PP/HA) were chosen as they were high-attenders in the programme (see Appendix) and vocal in the focus group, therefore sufficient observation data was available to analyse. They also provided a range of 'voices' from different backgrounds, though it is not the intention to suggest that these are representative. The qualitative data from observations and the focus group were collated in 'portraits' that merely describe a sample of five participants. The way I have presented these inevitably reflects what I think is important (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984) but my analysis is broadly descriptive to allow the reader to draw their own conclusions from my findings.

4. Findings

Findings from the questionnaire are displayed in tabular form divided into the effect of the curriculum enhancement programme on the two different types of consenting attendees i.e. whether the respondents were identified by the school as 'Pupil Premium' (PP) or not (non-PP). The accompanying narrative is separated into what was said about the curriculum content of the classes and about the excursions. Some observations of the excursion element of the programme are then shared, followed by 'portraits' of the five case pupils from the group, which focus upon how the curriculum enhancement project may have altered their aspirations.

4.1. Questionnaire answers

Curriculum content of classes

Whilst six of the seven non-PP respondents mentioned subject-specific reasons why they had joined the programme (Question 1), compared with only three PP students, in Question 3, subject-specific content was most frequently mentioned by PP respondents as what they 'enjoyed the most'. In answer to this question, learning about 'mythology' was only mentioned by one non-PP respondent, whereas two PP students stated this, with another one being more specific about one particular lesson we did on 'oracles'. These respondents

had clearly gained subject knowledge and, interestingly, it was 'learning' that was mentioned most frequently by PP participants as either what they enjoyed the most (n=3) or what would appeal to others (n=5). Other interventions that seek to redress socio-economic inequalities have been critiqued as merely 'improving a narrow set of skills' (Giannakaki, 2018, p. 194), but this programme evidently provided something 'new', which was frequently mentioned in answers from the PP cohort.

All participants said that they would recommend the scheme to friends or younger relatives (Question 5) and the curriculum content of the classes can be identified as a factor in this. Some pupils evidently enjoyed the classes as they requested additional lunch time sessions because they did not want to miss out if they were unable to attend all after-school classes due to the conflicting activities mentioned in answer to Question 2. Attendance overall is displayed in the appended register.

Excursions

For the non-PP respondents, it was the 'trips' that were (n=5) enjoyed the most, compared to two PP students who said something similar (Question 3). However, Question 4 revealed that going on trips appeared most frequently (n=3) by PP respondent in the answer to what they would like to do more, whereas only one non-PP said something similar.

Nespor (2000), who ethnographically studied school contexts in the United States of America, identified a feeling that working class students miss out most on opportunities for learning beyond the classroom, which could explain why this cohort were keen to have more of these experiences.

Unfortunately, Question 7, which could have cast some light on this theory, was not answered accurately enough by those who were permitted by the school to participate in the excursions (according to their attendance). The survey therefore could not determine whether the excursions provided the students with experiences they would not otherwise have had access to. Fortunately, observations were also made to supplement this data.

Table 1. Answers pertaining to curriculum

Questions	**Themes from Main Answers Given**	**Pupil Premium**	**Non-Pupil Premium**
Q1. Why did you voluntarily join CLASSics CLASS?	Wanted to learn about ancient history/ Classics/ myths.	3	6
	Friend was doing it.	1	1
	Sounded fun/ 'ok'.	2	0
	Wanted to try something new.	1	0
Q2. If you missed any session, can you explain why this was?	Busy/ couldn't go or simply 'things'.	3	2
	Absence from school.	1	2
	Other school activities.	1	0
	Detentions.	2	0
	Thought they had not missed any.	0	2
	Not answered.	0	1
Q3. What have you enjoyed the most?	Learning about mythology.	2	1
	Learning new things.	1	1
	Trips.	2	5
	Classical QI.	1	0
	Oracles.	1	0
Q5. Would you recommend the class?	Yes.	7	6
	Definitely.	0	1
Q6. What in particular would appeal to others?	Learning new/ interesting things.	5	3
	Trips.	1	1
	Interactivity.	0	1
	Listening to stories.	0	1
	Quizzes.	0	1
	Not answered	1	0

Table 2: Answers pertaining to trips

Questions	Themes from Main Answers Given	Pupil Premium	Non-Pupil Premium
Q4. What would you like to do more of?	Trips	3	1
	Learn more about fictional characters/ lifestyle of real people from that era.	2	4
	Working with more visitors.	0	1
	Classes more often.	0	1
	Not answered.	2	0
Q7. Had you been to any of the places we visited before?	Misunderstood question e.g. 'went on trips'	3	4
	Had been to Manchester Museum.	1	1
	Had been to Manchester Museum and Art Gallery.	0	1
	Had not been to any.	2	0
	Not answered.	1	1
Further comments.	Have enjoyed Classics.	2	3
	Really liked trip to Cambridge.	0	1
	Not answered.	5	3

4.2. Observations

Observation provided the means of gauging just how new the other contexts of learning were for the participants, although it was difficult to differentiate between the disparate categories of students (PP/ HA/ PP + HA/ non-PP/HA). From a simple show of hands when organising the three excursions away from school, it would appear that: seven out of the eleven participants who attended the Manchester Museum excursion had been before; four out of ten had been to Manchester Art Gallery; and only one pupil, Natalie (non-PP/MA), said they had been to Cambridge before. It can be inferred from these observations that many members of the group have, for whatever reason, not experienced some of the cultural opportunities even within their own geographical vicinity. Giving members of the CLASSics CLASS the opportunity to visit what have been identified as 'high culture' sites, i.e. arts and history museums (Nespor, 2000), gave participants more opportunities to inhabit these public spaces than are ordinarily taken up.

4.3. Portraits

Nick

In the focus group, Nick talked a lot about 'the trip to Cambridge' and how it 'really like opened my eyes', adding that it made him realise 'how good some universities are'. He said that he 'really enjoyed the visit' and because of this 'I might want to go someday'. Although Nick was not a 'higher attainer' according to the school's data, he was a dedicated learner, as demonstrated by his being the highest attendance at the class (Appendix).

Whilst Nick's contributions to the focus group seem to suggest that CLASSics CLASS was positive for him, one wonders whether he did actually believe that anyone in the group would actually make it to the University of Cambridge as he was observed provocatively telling other members of the class that his sister thought the trip to Cambridge was cruel in giving them false hope as it is unlikely that they will ever get to study there (paraphrased). The trip, and perhaps programme overall, had been interpreted as what Berlant (2006) termed 'cruel optimism'.

Hannah

Hannah, categorised as a 'higher attainer' by the school, told of how she 'would like to be an animator or a writer coz I'm really passionate about writing and drawing', going on to say 'that's not really changed', although what has changed is that 'before Classics I wanted to go to Manchester University but now I could try to go to Cambridge'. Hannon et al. (2017) told of how one of their participants gained a sense of hope from a visit to HE but 'some students were still reluctant to see themselves as belonging within universities that they deem 'higher-class'' (p. 1238). Hannah also displayed this reluctance by adding 'that's highly not likely', swiftly followed with 'I could try.'. Rather than the 'cruel optimism' implied by Nick's comments, what Hannah added to her positive comments about the trip to Cambridge University can be identified as 'reluctant optimism'. She seemed conflicted between what the trip led her to aspire for and a reluctance to believe she could achieve this.

Paula

The most frequent attender from the Pupil Premium category was Paula, who talked a lot in the focus group about her ambitions, which did not include university. Observation notes point to Paula's increased confidence in answering questions on the course. For example,

when a Classics PhD student from the University of Manchester visited the school to deliver a session and asked, 'why learn about history?', Paula answered with an enthusiastic ''cause it's interesting!' Having taught history to Paula when she was in the first year of secondary school, her confidence appeared to have increased during the programme. Of course, this may be due to natural maturation but anecdotal evidence from a colleague, who had known her in both a pastoral and an academic capacity for the duration of her schooling thus far, suggested that it had only been since starting the course that she had noticed Paula's increased confidence in English lessons. This colleague had not been asked to provide any evidence of this sort but felt compelled to approach me with her observations, such was her belief that the curriculum enhancement programme should be credited for the change.

Beth

Beth was a key student for me as she was on the Pupil Premium register *and* considered a 'higher attainer'. During my own school days, I was identified using similar labels as 'free school meals' and 'gifted and talented' so I wondered whether she would, like myself and her fellow higher attainer, Hannah, have aspirations to go to a prestigious university. She said that she 'wanted to be a hairdresser at first but then I thought my mum works in a doctors' surgery, so I thought maybe I could work as a child's nurse'. Although a noble profession that does require a degree, I was perplexed as to how she reached that decision from her mother working at a *doctors'* surgery. When asked 'not a doctor…?', she responded with 'no' and could not explain why she had been inspired to be a nurse from her experience of a parent working in a doctors' surgery. Of course, nurses are located in doctors' surgeries and it might be that the more caring role of a nurse appeals to her; but it could also be that her 'higher attainment' label is overshadowed by her socio-economic background, making her feel that being a doctor is out of her reach, despite displaying the academic aptitude that could get her there.

Niamh

Unlike Beth, Niamh was not categorised by the school as being a higher attainer, nor was she on the Pupil Premium register. Niamh, again, unlike Beth, spoke of being inspired by the trip to Cambridge University: 'seeing the different things you can do… and the beautiful scenery as well'. It is interesting that both Nick and Niamh spoke highly of the trip to Cambridge University, when one might have expected the two higher attainers, Hannah and

Beth, to be most affected by a visit to a university they could more realistically aspire to attend. Although it did have some impact upon Hannah, Beth was not as interested.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Reay (2012, p.2) proposed a 'totally different way of envisioning education' which include 'a revaluing of vocational and working-class knowledges and a broadening out of what constitutes educational success beyond the narrowly academic'. I am not sure what these 'working class knowledges' are but presumably the implication is that poorer people know different things that are equally as valuable. This study disrupts this notion by presenting evidence that young people identified by the PPI gained knowledge of a subject beyond the curriculum they were taught in school and furthermore, they enjoyed this new learning. Disadvantaged children, therefore, can gain a lot if they are only given the chance to experience the cultural capital enjoyed by their more privileged peers in elite schools.

Nespor advocated that 'field trips are signs of status. Visiting and consuming exotic spaces are forms of symbolic capital and means of acquiring it' (2000, p. 30). This project provided opportunities for young people to visit 'exotic' sites in the sense that many participants had not had the chance to experience them before. Simply acquiring this capital, however, is not enough and some participants were aware of this, as evidenced in the 'reluctant optimism' of the higher attainer who remained unconvinced that she would gain a place at Oxbridge, though the Cambridge trip had inspired her to try. Although some participants gained confidence, others, like the higher attaining PP student, remained unmoved, suggesting that access to opportunities does not affect the social inequalities inherent in society.

It has recently transpired that at least three of those involved (Nick, Natalie and a pupil who did not return her consent form to be included in the study) have subsequently chosen Classical Civilisation as an A-Level subject. As none are considered 'disadvantaged' by the PPI, however it would appear that young people in this demographic are still underrepresented in this subject. This is corroborated by the most recent available data on A-Level uptake provided by one exam board, Cambridge Assessment. In 2011, 0.7% of students identified as 'high deprivation' took their classical civilization A-Level but this dropped to 0.6% in 2016 compared with those identified as 'low deprivation' and 'medium deprivation', which remained at 0.8% for both categories (Gill, 2012; Carroll and Gill, 2016). Although this

difference may seem negligible, it does suggest that there is still a socio-economic divide in this discipline.

5.1 Concluding thoughts

What is evident from this study is that the curriculum enhancement programme had a positive impact upon the participants in the project and although this does not come close to counterbalancing the inequalities elsewhere in society, it still made some difference. The impact, though not quantifiable, has attracted the interest of other parties and a similar initiative has been repeated in a non-selective academy in Liverpool, though this just went beyond the curriculum, not the classroom. It is possible for non-specialists to teach Classics, too, and funding is available from the charity, Classics for All, to facilitate teachers in the state sector who wish to try this.

References

Andrew, J., Hutchinson, J. and Johnes, R. (2016). 'Grammar schools and social mobility' [pdf]. Retrieved from: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Grammar-schools-and-social-mobility_.pdf

Berlant, L. (2006). 'Cruel optimism'. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 17(3), 20-36.

British Educational Research Association (2011). 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research'. Retrieved from: https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf?noredirect=1

Carroll, M. and Gill, T. (2017). 'Uptake of GCE A level subjects 2016', *Cambridge Assessment*. Retrieved from: http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Images/420520-uptake-of-gce-a-level-subject-2016.pdf

Cochran, D. B., Wang, E. W., Stevenson, S. J., Johnson, L. E. (2011). 'Adolescent Occupational Aspirations: Test of Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise'. *Career Development Quarterly*, 59 (5), 412-427. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*: http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=fdf10d5b-9ff0-4698-97b2-ab0b2c56fbe8%40sessionmgr114&crlhashurl=login.aspx%253fdirect%253dtrue%2526db%253dtfh%2526AN%253d66638145%2526site%253dehost-live&hid=101&vid=0&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=tfh&AN=66638145

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2002). *Research Methods in Education*, [e-book]. Retrieved from: https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780203029053

Department for Education and Employment (2001). *The Result Cambridge Latin Course – changing the face of Latin?* [pdf] London: Department for Education and Employment. Retrieved from: http://www.cambridgescp.com/downloads/evalrep.pdf

Department for Education (December 2013). 'Pupils not claiming Free School Meals' [pdf] London: Department for Education. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/266339/DFE-RR319.pdf

Department for Work and Pensions (2015). *Indicator 2: Realising Potential in the Education System* [pdf] London: Department for Works and Pensions. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/402157/sjof-2-feb-15.pdf

Dewitt, J. and Storksdieck, M. (2008). 'A Short Review of School Field Trips: Key Findings from the Past and Implications for the Future'. *Visitor Studies*. 11(2), 181-197.

Education Funding Agency and Department for Education (March 2015). 'Pupil premium final allocations 2014 to 2015 by school in England' [Excel] London: Education Funding Agency and Department for Educaiton. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-2014-to-2015-final-allocations

Fichtman Dana, N. and Yendol-Silva, D. (2003). *The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research.* Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Forrest, M. (1996). *Modernising the Classics*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Gay, B. (2003). 'Classics Teaching and the National Curriculum' In: Moorwood, J. ed. *The Teaching of Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.20-33.

Giannakaki, M., McMillan, I. D. and Karamichas, J. (2018). 'Problematising the use of education to address social inequity: Could participatory action research be a step forwards? *British Educational Research Journal, 44(2), 191-211.* doi:10.1002/berj.3323

Gibbs, M. (2003). 'The Place of Classics in the Curriculum of the Future' In: Moorwood, J. ed. *The Teaching of Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 36-42.

Gill, T. (2012). 'Uptake of GCE A level subjects 2011', *Cambridge Assessment.* Retrieved from: http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Images/109931-uptake-of-gce-a-level-subjects-2011.pdf

Gillborn, D. (2001). 'Raising standards' or rationing education? Racism and social justice in policy and practice'. *Support for Learning,* 16(3). Retrieved from: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9604.00200/pdf

Hall, E. (2015). 'Classics for the people – why we should all learn from the ancient Greeks' in *The Guardian.* Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jun/20/Classics-for-the-people-ancient-greeks

Hannon, C., Faas, D. and O'Sullivan, K. (2017). 'Widening the educational capabilities of socio-economically disadvantaged students through a model of social and cultural capital development'. *British Educational Research Journal* (43), 1225-1245. doi:10.1002/berj.3309

Hubbard, T. (2003). 'Special needs in Classics'. In: Moorwood, J. ed. *The Teaching of Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.51-59.

Mackenzie, N. and Knipe, S. (2006). 'Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology', *Issues in Educational Research*, 16(2), 193-205.

Nelson, J. and O'Beirne, C. (2014). 'Using Evidence in the Classroom: What Works and Why?' [pdf] Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research. Retrieved from: http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/IMPA01/IMPA01.pdf

Nespor, J. (2000). 'School field trips and the curriculum of public spaces'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 32(1), 25-43.

Office for Standards in Education (2004). *Promoting and evaluating pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.* [pdf] London: Ofsted. Retrieved from:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/filedownloading/?file=documents/surveys-and-good-practice/p/Promoting%20and%20evaluating%20pupils'%20spiritual,%20moral,%20social%20and%20cultural%20development%20(PDF%20format).pdf&refer=1

Paul, J. (2013). 'The Democratic Turn in (and through) Pedagogy' in: Hardwick and Harrison. ed. *Classics in the Modern World: A Democratic Turn?* [e-book] Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online. Retrieved from: http://www.oxfordscholarship.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199673926.001.0001/acprof-9780199673926-chapter-11

Peterson, A. (2018). 'Civic Republican Social Justice and the Case of State Grammar Schools in England', *Studies in Philosophical Education,* 37, 167–179 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-017-9580-5

Pollard, A. et al. (2014). *Reflective Teaching in Schools.* 4th edition. London: Bloomsbury.

Punch, K. F. and Oancea, A. (2014). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education.* 2nd edition. London: SAGE.

Reay, D. (2012). 'What Would a Socially Just Education System Look Like?' [pdf] *Centre for Labour and Social Studies*. Retrieved from: http://classonline.org.uk/docs/2012_Diane_Reay_-_a_socially_just_education_system.pdf

Robson, C. (2005). *Real World Research.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell

Sardoc, M. and Mason, A. (2016). 'Fair equality of opportunity and selective secondary schools'. *Theory and Research in Education*, 14(3), 295-312.

Shannon, R. (2003) 'Effective teaching and good practice in Classics'. In: Moorwood, J. ed. *The Teaching of Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.43-50.

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGA Publication.

Sullivan, A. (2002). 'Bourdieu and education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers?' *The Netherlands' Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(2), 144-166.

Taylor, S. J. and Bogdan, R. (1984). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for meanings.* New York: Wiley.

Tillemma, H. H., Orland Barak, L. and Mena Marcos, J.J. (2008). 'Articulating choice and deliberation in conducting research – researchers 'working in the interpretive zone''. *Ethnography and Education,* 3(1), 49-62.

Watson, V. (2012). *Learning to Liberate: Community-Based Solutions to the Crisis in Urban Education*. Oxon: Routledge.

Wilkinson, J. (2003). 'Working at the Chalk Face' In: Moorwood, J. ed. *The Teaching of Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch13.

Appendix

Attendance at Sessions

Penny	Peter	Phil	Naomi	Harry	Polly	**Niamh**	**Beth**	**Paula**	Natalie	Nicole	**Hannah**	Ben	**Nick**	Pseudonym		
X	X	X			X		X	X				X		PP		**Pupil Premium?**
				X			X				X	X		HA		**Higher Attainer?**
			X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X			**Classical QI**
X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			**Gods Charades (lunch time session)**
X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			**Oracles**
				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			**Apuleius (lunch time session)**
	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			**Museum Trip**
		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			**Who Wants to be a Millionaire**
								X		X	X	X	X			**Guess the God (lunch time session)**
				X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X			**Myths**
			X		X		X	X		X	X	X	X			**Homer's Iliad (lunch time session)**
			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			**Art Gallery Trip**
				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			**University of Manchester Talk (visitor)**
			X					X		X		X				**Which God are You? (lunch time session)**
					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			**Homer's Odyssey**
			X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			**Laocoon**
			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			**Roman Numerals (lunch time session)**
			X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			**Herakles**
			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			**Cambridge Trip**
				X					X	X	X	X	X			**Troy**
			X									X	X			**Sappho (actor visited at lunch)**
												X	X			**Alexander the Great**
2	2	3	10	10	13	13	14	15	15	16	16	18	19			**Total**