Children's lived experiences of 'ability' in the Key Stage One classroom: Life on the 'tricky table'

Catherine Gripton, University of Nottingham

Abstract

Within the wealth of research on 'ability' in education, there is a missing perspective: the perspective of the child. Whilst 'ability' informed practices such as 'ability' grouping are commonplace in the UK, how these are experienced by the young child has previously received only limited attention in research. Using case study evidence, this article demonstrates that children's lived experiences of 'ability' are highly individual and shaped by a broader range of social, structural and pedagogic aspects of classroom life than previously thought. Implications are that a wide range of teaching choices can potentially affect a child's experience of 'ability' and that the impact of these are particularly profound for some children, shaping their perception of themselves and others. Children's perspectives therefore offer a challenge to the hegemonic discourse of 'ability' in education and the classroom practices upon which it is based.

Introduction

The considerable body of research into the impact of 'ability' in schools predominantly considers group allocation, attainment and attitude (Marks, 2014a) and shows reasonably consistent results (Higgins et al,. 2018) but fails to significantly account for the perspective of the child. The lack of traction of this research evidence in the United Kingdom (UK) is clear in the dominance of 'ability' thinking in classroom practice (Boylan & Povey, 2014) which has led to widespread 'ability' grouping despite research findings that it does not raise attainment and can have negative non-academic outcomes for children. Francis et al. (2017) identify the enormity of the challenge in attempting to move practice away from 'ability' informed approaches and suggest large-scale randomised controlled trials as a potential solution. This study takes an alternative approach in suggesting that children are uniquely knowledgeable about the impact of 'ability' upon children in classrooms and therefore provide the missing piece in understanding 'ability' in schools.

‘Ability’ in Education

‘Ability’ is an educational phenomenon that exists as a socially constructed, more palatable term for ‘intelligence’ (Stobart, 2014; Gillborn & Youdell, 2011) and is pervasive in education in the UK (Marks, 2016). It stems from what Collins (2003) terms ‘ability profiling’ where children are deemed to be functioning, or capable of learning, at a level somewhere along a linear continuum from low to high ‘ability’.

Academic positions about the nature of ‘intelligence’ or ‘ability’ are entrenched with social, political, ideological and religious beliefs (White, 2005; Deary, 2006) and have promoted ‘intense and often bitter public debate’ (Laosa, 1996, p155) due to being rooted in societal economic and class structures (Oakes, 2005). Practice in schools is influenced by institutionalised notions of ‘ability’ as fixed and hierarchical which reinforce and reproduce social inequalities (Brantlinger, 1990). This IQism (Gillborn & Youdell, 2001) is prevalent in UK education policy where labels such as ‘more able’ (DfE, 2012; Ofsted, 2013, 2015), ‘the most able’ (DfE, 2018), ‘bright’ (Gibb, 2018) and ‘high ability’ (the Teachers’ Standards for all teachers in England and Wales, DfE, 2011, p.12) are commonly used. Dorling (2010) suggests that international comparison measures within an increasingly globalised educational market (Ball, 2012), the ‘datafication’ of education (Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016) and significant economic pressures (Hamilton & O’Hara, 2011; Flint & Peim, 2012) create an educational environment in the UK where ‘ability’ thinking pervades and ‘ability’ informed practices flourish. In this sense, schools fit and support the existing social order (Oakes and Guiton, 1995).

For educators and policy makers, the notion of ‘ability’ or ‘intelligence’ as a single faculty on a linear scale is alluring in its simplicity (Lucas & Claxton, 2010). It reductively deems children’s learning predictable and ‘unproblematically known’ (Drummond & Yarker, 2013, p.5). Applying this linear notion of ‘ability’ to practice, ‘ability’ grouping has become the ‘natural’ choice for teachers (Spina, 2018) despite meta-analyses concluding that ‘ability’ grouping overall does not raise achievement (Hattie, 2012; Kutnick, Sebba, Blatchford, Galton, & Thorp, 2005; Higgins et al., 2018; Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, & Major, 2014). Indeed, teachers often express a preference for it (Ansalone, 2010) or see it as a ‘necessary evil’ within a performative system (Bradbury &

Roberts-Holmes, 2017; Marks, 2014b). Conversely, teachers feel that 'ability' grouping actually raises attainment (Oakes, 1986; Hamilton and O'Hara, 2011), helping them to meet children's needs (Chorzempa & Graham, 2006) and to nurture children deemed lower 'ability' (Mazenod et al., 2019), leading to its widespread use.

'Ability' grouping has been an almost universal practice in UK primary schools[1] for some years (with some exceptions such as schools following the 'learning without limits'[2] approach). Approaching 80% of seven year olds are in 'ability' classes (sets) for some subjects at school according to Campbell (2013). Furthermore, Campbell estimates that more than 16% of 6-7 year olds are in 'ability' classes for all of their schooling (streaming) which is an increase of over 14% from the percentage reported by Hallam, Ireson, Lister, Chaudhury, and Davies (2003) 10 years earlier. Where 'ability' classes are not used, within-class 'ability' grouping is commonplace (Campbell 2013). As Francis et al. (2017) identified, research in this area is clearly failing to have a significant impact upon practice in schools.

The overall null impact of 'ability' grouping, in terms of children's academic attainment, is not evenly distributed across 'ability' groups. 'Ability' grouping across classes (setting) is generally academically advantageous to higher attaining pupils (Kulik & Kulik, 1982; Steenbergen-Hu & Moon, 2011) and detrimental to the lower attaining (Kutnick et al., 2005; Blatchford, Hallam, Ireson, Kutnick, & Creech, 2008; Sukhnanden & Lee, 1998). Similar attainment outcomes occur when within-class 'ability' grouping is used (Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2017; Catsambis, Mulkey, Buttaro, Steelman, & Koch, 2011) although the research basis is much smaller (Baines, 2012) and less secure due to the potential for conflation with the impact of small group work per se. For within-class 'ability' grouping, there is some evidence to suggest that the differential attainment gains for higher attainers and losses for lower attainers widens the attainment gap (Parsons & Hallam, 2014) with effects increasing over time (Tach & Farkas, 2006). Attainment

[1] 4-11 years

[2] Learning without limits is an approach that began as part of a research project led by the University of Cambridge and is now a network of schools that reject 'ability' labelling.

patterns are therefore established early with children continuing to have low attainment in the long term when deemed to be lower attaining at four years (Alvidrez & Weinstein, 1999) or eight years of age (McGillicuddy & Devine, 2018). This is perhaps due to young children being more susceptible to internalising 'ability' labels into self-concept (Weinstein, Marshall, Sharp, & Botki, 1987) and points to the particular importance of studying how younger children experience 'ability' in schools.

Francis et al. (2017) identified seven key problems that lead to poor outcomes from 'ability' grouping. The impact upon children's perceptions, experiences and identity development was one of the issues that they identified. Many such negative non-attainment outcomes have been identified over time including social grouping (Boaler, 1997) and self-concept (Ireson & Hallam, 2009; Preckel, Gotz & Frenzel, 2010; Brantlinger, 1990). Indeed, there has been growing concern over the potential harm that 'ability' grouping can do to children with McGillicuddy and Devine (2018) recently describing allocation of children to 'ability' groups as Bourdieusian acts of 'symbolic violence' towards children.

Concerns about the impact of 'ability' on children extend beyond 'ability' grouping alone. Research with older pupils indicates that they experience 'ability' in the classroom through the learning environment (Eder, 1981), curriculum (Oakes and Guiton, 1995), 'ability' labels (Schrank, 1968, 1970), type of feedback (Cooper, 1979) and teacher behaviour (Kususanto, Ismail & Jamil, 2010). In 2012, Beth Hatt's study of a Kindergarten class revealed that children begin to adopt notions of 'ability' (or 'smartness') from their teacher. In her study, teacher perception of a child's 'ability' determined the child's classroom experiences such as access to specific activities. Children, therefore, experience 'ability' through their teachers and their teaching strategies, which change depending upon the perceived 'ability' of the children (Macqueen, 2010). Of these teaching strategies, differentiation strategies, in particular, are entwined with 'ability' (Park & Datnow, 2017) with educational tasks matched to pupils' perceived 'ability' levels (what McNamara, Moreton & Newton, 1996, term 'differentiation by task'). This leads to children labelling themselves in these terms according to James, Oates, Pollard, and Wiliam (2011).

The early labelling and categorisation associated with 'ability' are not supportive of children's learning, according to Donaldson (1978) and Holt (1982), and are often confused with language development where this is misinterpreted as 'ability' (Vygotsky, 1978; Hatt, 2012). Such early 'ability' judgements favour young children from more language rich home environments and are therefore unfair to children at the earliest stages of schooling (Dewey, 1910, p38), particularly as early 'ability' judgments tend to endure throughout schooling (Alvidrez & Weinstein, 1999). 'Ability' therefore has the potential to significantly impact children's experiences of school.

Children's experiences of school

Children's school experiences are influential to their identities and development in general (Pollard, 1996). Early experiences are vitally important as they predict children's future school experiences (Rubie-Davies et al., 2014; Viljaranta, Tolvanen, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2014) and are personally so important to children and parents (Benn, 2011; Freeman & Mathison, 2009). There is, however, little empirical evidence about young children's experience of school education (MacDonald, 2009) and children feel that they have little influence over what happens at school, perceiving it to be a place of compliance to teachers who hold the power (Einarsdóttir, 2010).

Asymmetric adult-child power dynamics are similarly apparent in educational research (Burke, 2010; Atkinson & Delamont, 1990) where adult voices take the focus in research about 'ability' in schools with grouping and organisation dominating the field. As the experts in the experience of being children (Harcourt, 2011), children offer highly valuable perspectives in terms of the impact that 'ability' has upon them. Through researching children's lived experiences of 'ability', we can 'harness the wisdom, authenticity and currency of children's lived experience in order to effect change' (Lundy, 2007, p.940) to practice and challenge the dominance of 'ability' thinking and associated practices such as 'ability' grouping. For the purposes of this study, lived experience is defined as layered emotions, actions and conceptions (Løndal, 2010), essentially an internal construct (Pring, 2015) requiring research design which support participants to externalise this internally constructed meaning.

Research Design

Case study was clearly the most appropriate strategy for providing contextualised 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of children's lived experiences within the life worlds (Husserl 1970) of classrooms where 'ability' is so deeply embedded. This research used a non-comparative collective case study (Stake 1995) of two classes in different schools, providing two classroom contexts to support the stability of the study. Within each class, there were multiple embedded cases - the individual children (convenience sampled). Data were collected and analysed for each child individually to preserve the integrity of each child's case (Stake 1995).

Perhaps due to the dominance of quantitative research into the attainment outcomes of 'ability' grouping, there are fewer small-scale case studies of 'ability' in schools and more are needed (Blatchford et al. 2008). Indeed, as Flyvbjerg (2006) points out, all disciplines and areas of study need such case study exemplars as they illuminate human experience, providing an essential perspective. Seeking knowledge of human experience of 'ability', this study was an inquiry into children as 'living, acting and knowing' human beings (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.56) with perspectives presented as of significant human value (van Manen, 1990). Through conscious participation (Greene & Hogan, 2005), children's individual lived experiences of 'ability' were researched through accessing individual children's constructed meaning (Van Manen, 1990) of the everyday world of their classroom (Van Manen, 2017).

Children lack agency in school decisions (Davey, Burke & Shaw, 2010; Denzin, 2008; Einarsdóttir 2010) and indeed power in general compared to adults (Shaw, Brady & Davey, 2011). In educational research children are often researched 'on' rather than 'with' (Harcourt & Einarsdóttir, 2011). This study, instead, embraced the perception of children as competent, capable and responsible (Harcourt, 2011) and this shaped research design. As there is no one set of participatory methods for listening to children, ethical praxis was more important that method choices per se (Palaiologou, 2014). Within this ethical praxis, data collection methods were designed which utilised activity (Winstone, Huntington, Goldsack, Kyrou, & Millward, 2014) and symbolic representation (Harcourt, 2011; Bruner, 1986) to intentionally remain faithful to the

world of the child as well, with the humility to attune authentically to younger children (Sumsion et al., 2011).

Case Study Classes

All Saints Primary School

All Saints Primary School is a faith school with seven classes and a nursery. It is located in a large housing estate in a suburban area of a city. More than half of the children have ethnic minority heritages and English is an additional language for approximately one third of the children in the school. Lucy had been teaching for seven years and was currently the year 2 teacher for a class of 30 6-7-year-old children at All Saints School. There were four identified within-class 'ability' levels in the class. Each child was in three different groupings with a specific chair to sit in for each (but no group names). Lucy explained that two of these groupings were 'ability' related (one for maths and one for English) and one was mixed 'ability' which was used for all other subjects. There were five tables in the classroom. For English and maths (more than half of the time), the lower attaining group was sat at the two tables to the left of the teacher chair and the two higher attaining groups to the right, with the very highest attaining of these on the table nearer the teacher's chair (Figure 1). Children had set places to sit on the carpet (a mat on the floor) where they were in mixed ability pairs.

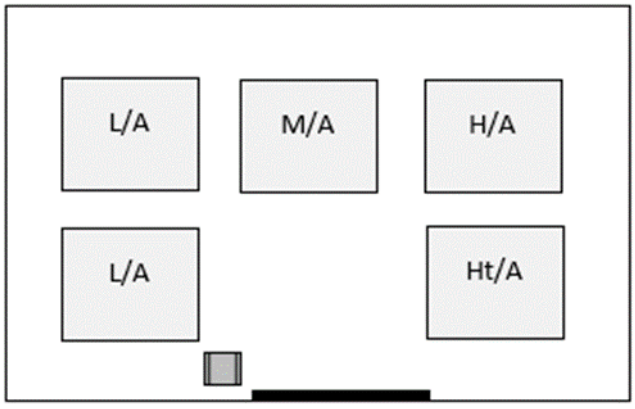

Figure 1. Layout of classroom at All Saints School, used for maths and English lessons

Field Lane Primary School

Field Lane is a small primary school of four classes in a village location. The number of children

in the school with ethnic minority heritages is very small and there are no children in the school for whom English is an additional language. The class teacher, Helen, had been teaching for 14 years and taught a year 1/2 class of 29 5-7-year-old children. In her classroom, the children were in the same 'ability' group for all lessons with a specific chair to sit in at one of the five tables. The table for the lower attaining Year 1 and Year 2 children was in the far right corner of the classroom (green group) with the middle/high attaining year 1 children at the table in front of this (red group). The year 2 middle attaining group table was in the far left corner (yellow group) with the higher attaining group table in front of this (blue group) and the highest attaining group table in front of this (purple group), to the left of the teacher's chair (Figure 2). The children sat in these groups on the class carpet area (one row for each group) when not at the tables.

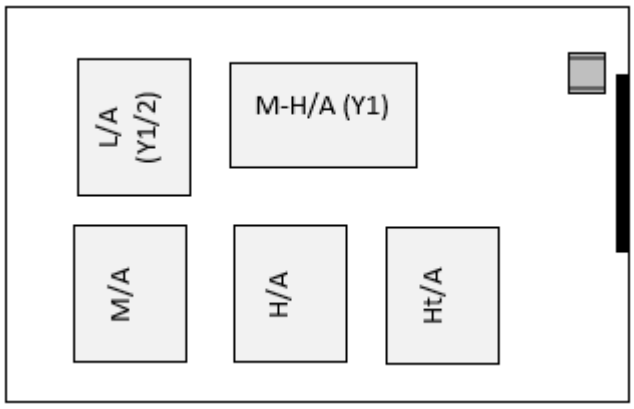

Figure 2. Layout of classroom at Field Lane School for all lessons

Methods

Each child was categorised into one of four broad 'ability' bands within their class (these codes are used in Figure 1 and Figure 2): 'highest attaining' (3) HtA; 'higher attaining' (2) HA; 'middle attaining' (6) MA; and 'lower attaining' (4) LA. These arose from teacher assessment and the grouping structures in place within the classrooms. Each child, teacher and school was assigned pseudonyms to be used in all records to provide anonymity to participants throughout the research process.

The use of four different data collection methods enabled sufficiently rich representation of the child's classroom world and methodological triangulation within data analysis. To ensure that

the research focus remained securely upon the children, the two main methods exclusively involved child participants. These are methods 2 and 3 in the data collection sequence.

(1) Non-participant observation of everyday classroom life (written)

(2) Classroom tour by individual child (video)

(3) Classroom representation by individual child with researcher (photograph and video)

(4) Semi-structured interviews between individual child/teacher and researcher (video)

Drawing upon findings from a small pilot study, the order of the methods for each child participant remained stable and was sequenced so that researcher participation increased from lower levels initially as this is how children appeared most confident and at ease.

Non-participant observations provided knowledge of the world of these classrooms including language, practices and culture to support later interactions with children and more accurate interpretations of data during analysis. Following a short demonstration about how to operate the video camera (including playback so that they were clear that this was to be saved), each child conducted a video tour of their (empty) classroom showing the camera what was important in the classroom and explaining why. These video tours ranged from 38 seconds to 26 minutes in duration and revealed children's different perspectives on their shared spaces. The video tour provided insight into more than just what the children attended to or felt was important within their classrooms but also crucially what made it meaningful to them within their lived experiences.

The third data collection method revealed the most about the children's lived experiences of 'ability'. The researcher gave the child a box of small world toys (Playmobil®) and asked them to make a classroom. The toys offered manipulability compared to alternatives such as drawings that have provided powerful data about children's lived experiences in previous

studies (MacDonald, 2009). Discussion between researcher and child was video recorded throughout the process (to capture verbal and non-verbal communication) and a photograph taken by the child when the representation was complete.

The fourth and final data collection method involved individual semi-structured interviews with each participant. These were video recorded to capture verbal and non-verbal communication including 'the minutiae of social interaction' (Knoblauch and Schnettler 2012, p.335) between interviewee and interviewer, the significance of which becomes within analysis (Mavers, 2012).

Data were analysed following a grounded approach and a staged inductive data analysis process ensured that all evidence was duly considered with respect for case integrity. Thus, the data from each participant were analysed separately to consider lived experiences in their entirety (Løndal, 2010) and to prevent the voices of those who provided the most data from being the most listened to within the research (Einarsdóttir, 2010). The stages of analysis were a gradual and deliberate progression (child then teacher then class) to ensure that children's perspectives remained the key focus throughout. Initial stages involved transcription of verbal and non-verbal communication in all video recordings for each participant alongside visual analysis of classroom representations. The staged approach ensured that non-verbal evidence was retained throughout data analysis as this is often lost within the analysis process and therefore underrepresented in research findings (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). The themes identified and formalised throughout the data analysis process led to three broad categories of classroom life: structural, social and pedagogic. The meaning the children had made of a unique combination of structural; social and pedagogic aspects of classroom life shaped their lived experiences of 'ability'.

Discussion

The research showed that children's lived experiences of 'ability' are highly individual. Some teaching choices or situations seem particularly significant in shaping the lived experiences of 'ability' of some children but hardly seem to register with others. What determines this is the

interplay between the aspects of classroom life that they particularly attend to or notice. How they internalise what happens within the classroom in these aspects of classroom life that are particularly significant for them, shapes their individual lived experience of 'ability'.

What follows is a discussion of the key themes referenced to selected children's stories, carefully chosen to exemplify the findings. The themes are:

(1) The individual nature of children's lived experiences of 'ability'.
Georgia and Harry

(2) The social, structural and pedagogic factors that shape children's lived experiences of 'ability'
C*hristopher, Petey and Freya: Social aspects of classroom life*
Olivia, Rachel and Jasmin: Structural and pedagogic aspects of classroom life

(3) Children's awareness: the scope of their world
Joseph and Diya

The individual nature of children's lived experiences of 'ability'

Of the children in this study, Georgia and Harry's experiences appeared to have the greatest number of similarities. They were both in the same class at Field Lane School and in the same 'ability' group in the classroom (deemed middle attaining by the class teacher). Remaining faithful to the case study strategy and intention to create contextualised 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), Georgia and Harry's stories are summarised here to demonstrate the individual nature of their lived experiences of 'ability' despite the similarities in their perceived 'ability' and the teaching choices made for them.

Georgia

Georgia seemed to be keen on play-based experiences and quieter or more orderly learning spaces. She seemed to feel that her 'ability' group (red group) was too large and too noisy and said she would like to move groups. Tables were quite prominent in Georgia's lived experiences, featuring in her video tour and her interview with her pointing her finger expressively to emphasise her point about desiring to move table groups. In her interview, she

explained a two-tier system of work (easier and harder) for the children in her class and that she would like to be on the purple group table (highest attaining) as it was “quite small and loads of people aren’t on it so the chatting won’t come from there”. Her experience of ‘ability’ seemed shaped by the group and physical spaces she was assigned to with dissatisfaction arising from a desire for a quiet, orderly space.

Georgia noticed classroom systems and so assimilated ‘ability’ through ‘ability’ informed classroom systems. Her classroom representation (Figure 3) was highly structured with smaller and larger children in rows and one child with their hand up to answer a question from the teacher. She was clear, in her interview, that the seating in her class was fixed. When creating her representation, Georgia initially spread the tables out more but moved them saying “they need to be closer together and a bit more scruffier” before putting walls around using barriers. She expressed feeling somewhat restricted by the systems and physical spaces associated with ‘ability’. Her attention to systems in the classroom included noticing how other children fitted into these systems and she talked about many different children from her class. She demonstrated an understanding of their individual skills and included 14 children in her classroom representation. Georgia was praised and helped by the Teaching Assistant during the non-participant classroom observation but a teacher was the only adult included in her classroom representation. The teacher seemed important to her as the person directing the learning. She explained: “the teacher tells us and then we know what to do and then our learning, we do it the first time and then we have to copy that first learned”.

Figure 3. Georgia's classroom representation

Harry

Harry seemed to evaluate his school experiences and appeared to express preferences with ease in his interview. His awareness of his school surroundings seemed quite extensive from his classroom representation (which included two classrooms, a bathroom and the head teacher's office) and from his explanation of his group (red group) being 'massive' compared to the other groups (interview). He seemed to have interpreted the groups as being age-related with the oldest children being in the highest attaining group. He explained that the purple group (highest attaining) get the hardest work as they have to do counting in twos and his group has to do counting in ones and twos, demonstrating his awareness that different tasks were set for different groups. Harry's experience of 'ability' seemed to be through his awareness of the different task set which he related to grouping and age.

Harry engaged in frequent interaction with adults during observations of the classroom and received a number of behavioural reminders. Despite this, adults and behaviour did not feature strongly in his interview, classroom representation or classroom tour. Harry seemed to focus upon curriculum breadth within his lived experiences, mentioning many varied curriculum subjects, topics and activities. Indeed, he seemed to perceive school as somewhere with highly varied activities where "you learn really nice stuff". This curriculum breadth is apparent in Harry's classroom representation (Figure 4) where he included geography and music learning (children playing guitars although no guitar toys were provided) as well as mentioning assemblies. Harry seemed content with his 'ability' group as it is somewhere where he experienced a wide range of curriculum activities, suited to his age range (as he perceived it).

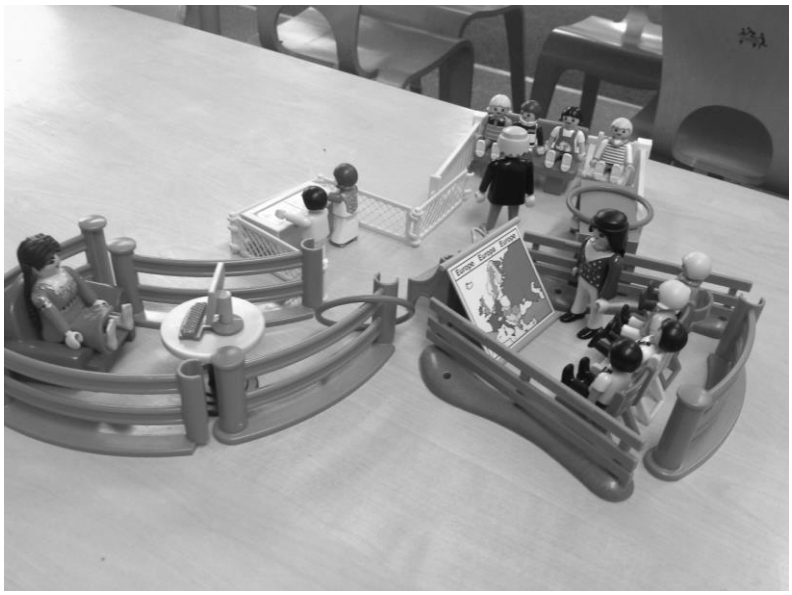

Figure 4. Harry's classroom representation

Harry and Georgia's different lived experiences of 'ability'

Harry and Georgia were both in the same 'ability' group in their class at Field Lane School where children typically stayed in this group for all lessons, so on a superficial level could be said to have the same experiences. They also attended to similar aspects of classroom life. Harry and Georgia both displayed a wider awareness (beyond immediate experiences) and an understanding of the systems and structures in place within their classroom. Georgia, however, seemed to take greater account of the physical environment than Harry who seemed to attend more to curriculum. This seemed to contribute to them wanting and attending to different things within the classroom. Harry was apparently happy with his group, commenting positively on the range of activities he experienced within it (from guitar lessons to phonics and data handling to box modelling). Georgia seemed to want a different, less chaotic learning space so wanted to move to a smaller, quieter group where there was less 'chatting'. The influence of 'ability' for Georgia seems to be the positive creation of order but a mismatch between the resulting learning environment and her needs. She seemed to feel somewhat overwhelmed in her 'ability' group, experiencing dissatisfaction with her group allocation, which she deemed to be fixed. Harry seemed much more satisfied with his group placement as his attention to structures and systems was more on transitions and variety of activity, which he viewed positively perhaps perceiving freedom within this.

The results from this research indicate that children's lived experiences of 'ability' can be highly varied. As Georgia and Harry's experiences demonstrate, each child attended to slightly different things within each aspect of classroom life and these combined differently for each individual child within their lived experiences. Even where children are present for the same classroom activities and notice many of the same things, they can still attend to very different aspects of classroom life and make their own meaning of their experiences based upon this.

The social, structural and pedagogic factors that shape children's lived experiences of 'ability'

Children's lived experiences of 'ability' in these two classrooms were highly individual. Each child attended to a different combination of structural, social and pedagogic aspects of classroom life and this range was broader than anticipated at the outset of the research (Figure 5). Structural aspects of grouping (including 'ability' grouping) were expected to influence children's experiences of 'ability' according to existing research. Aspects of classroom life such as the perceived absence of play shaped the lived experiences of 'ability' of some of the children in the study and these were less expected.

Aspects of classroom life that shaped children's lived experiences of 'ability' included:

Social	Structural	Pedagogic
Social learning	System	Work (school work)
Child/child relationships	Curriculum	Play
Adult/child relationships	Physical Environment	Behaviour

Figure 5. Social, structural and pedagogic aspects of classroom life that shaped children's lived

experiences of ‘ability’

Christopher, Petey and Freya: Social aspects of classroom life

Christopher at All Saints School and Petey at Field Lane, who were both deemed to be lower attaining by their teachers, seemed unaware of the grouping systems in their classrooms or that they were in the lowest ‘ability’ groups. Both reported that all children received the same classroom tasks and neither seemed attentive to relationships with adults in terms of their experiences of ‘ability’. Petey seemed to connect behaviour and ‘ability’, explaining “I am clever cos I can do work all done and put my hand up and didn’t shout.” Petey experienced ‘ability’ as completing ‘work’ (classroom tasks set by adults) independently (“all have to work on [by] themselves”) and conforming to particular behavioural conventions such as putting his hand up (Figure 6). For him, it seemed that being ‘clever’ was exhibiting these behaviours in the classroom.

Figure 6. Petey’s classroom representation

For Christopher, his peer relationships seemed particularly important within his experiences of ‘ability’ and he seemed to notice what his friends were doing most of the time. When asked what helped him to learn at school, he named his friends and he reported that the groupings in his class were based upon social skills, stating that he sits with the ‘kind’ children. As his

friends were in the same 'ability' group as him, he seemingly had little cause to notice what others in the class were doing and reported that all children received the same tasks when asked about it in interview. Freya at Field Lane School, on the other hand, reported having questioned her teacher directly about her group placement, stating "Once, I said to the teacher, um, why can't I go next to them cos they're my *friend* friends? [Freya's emphasis]." Freya seemed dissatisfied with her allocated group due to the separation from her friends, which Robinson and Fielding (2007) point out can occur with 'ability' grouping systems. Just as Christopher noticed what his friends were doing in the classroom, Freya did too but her friends were in other 'ability' groups so she was acutely aware that different groups were assigned different tasks and adult interaction.

Social learning and peer relationships seemed particularly important for Freya who sat children in pairs in her classroom representation and showed work done in pairs in her video tour (emphasising "we did it in pairs" several times). This seemed more important than simply a desire to be with her friends: it seemed that Freya valued collaborative learning and saw the 'ability' groups as a barrier to that. Her experience of 'ability' had been significantly shaped by her keen attention to differences in classroom tasks (between her and her friends) and by the lack of opportunity (as she perceived it) for social learning in her allocated 'ability' group. As she explained it:

> "I would rather sit next to someone to help me. Chloe, Grace and Amy sit next to each other so they're like helping each other all the time and I'm like Hi, eeeeh [mimed waving and failing to get their attention]".

Her lived experience of 'ability' includes segregation and frustration due to her attention to social aspects of classroom life.

Olivia, Rachel and Jasmin: Structural and pedagogic aspects of classroom life

Structural factors that contributed to children's lived experiences of 'ability' included curriculum, classroom systems and physical environment. Olivia and Rachel at Field Lane School seemed to have interpreted their experiences of curriculum and made connections with their understanding of their own and others' 'ability' from this. This is evident in their discussion of their classmates, particularly how they connected cleverness to success in English and

mathematics specifically. Olivia associated 'ability' with reading and writing. She explicitly connected 'cleverness' with the coloured stages (levels) of the reading books in her video tour and in her interview where she stated that a child from the highest attaining group was "the best reader because he is on the highest reading book". Rachel provided the title for this paper when she explained 'ability' in levels (or stages) and connected it with the grouping system in the class: "I am at the stage that's harder than blue group so purple group is the tricky table and this [blue group] isn't that tricky [gesturing with hands to physical arrangement of table groups]." She used mathematics as an example to explain that she needs to engage in more challenging learning that others do and connected this to table 'ability' groupings: "If I went on blue group and I did twenty when I was meant to do a hundred work I would find it really really easy." Jasmin, at All Saints, seemed to attend to classroom systems more than curriculum but included in her explanation of class groupings that "it is how clever you are at maths or English." In Jasmin's class 'ability' groups were used for English and Maths whereas Olivia and Rachel's class were in such groups for all of the curriculum; however, all three connected 'ability' to groupings through English and mathematics. This was shaped by their attention to English and mathematics in combination with other factors such as systems for Jasmin, adult/child relationships for Rachel and school 'work' for Olivia.

Pedagogic aspects of classroom life that contributed to children's lived experiences of 'ability' included the type of tasks set for the children. Seemingly, a pedagogic strategy or approach does not need to be used regularly for it to be significant within children's lived experiences of 'ability'. Having 'ability' levelled A, B and C questions in a mathematics task was used only very occasionally as a differentiation strategy in the class at All Saints school but three of the six children in that class had assimilated it within their lived experiences of 'ability'. Jasmin explained that "where you sit" depends on how good you are at maths or English, so

> "if they think you are um like the seco…well on B yeah B you would be on my table if you were on C table you would be on the table across from mine and the table across from the hardest table."

She did not mention the specific mathematics task but used the letters A, B and C to explain the 'ability' grouping system in her class more generally. This rarely used differentiation strategy seems to have shaped these children's lived experiences of 'ability' through their attention to the schoolwork tasks they were asked to complete or the systems in place in the classroom.

Decisions regarding grouping, tasks, activity types and curriculum were crucial in shaping the child's lived experience of 'ability' where they resided within an aspect of classroom life that was significant for that child (and much less important when they did not). As such, the frequency or extent to which a practice occurred was not as important as whether it was an aspect of classroom life that the child particularly attended to, within the scope of their awareness.

Children's awareness: the scope of their world

A mediating factor for how aspects of classroom life combined within each child's constructed meaning of their lived experiences of 'ability' was the scope of their awareness. This scope was the breadth of experience within which the pertinent social, structural and pedagogic factors interacted for the individual child. Approximately half of the children from each class seemed to have a larger scope to their awareness. They demonstrated an awareness of the whole class and perhaps beyond, evident in their discussion and representation of their peers and classroom activities. This included activities throughout the classroom (where they were within the aspects of classroom life that the individual child particularly attended to) such as classroom tasks, teacher questions, children's question responses and resources.

Children with a more localised scope of awareness seemed focused on their immediate experiences and the people in their close proximity. At Field Lane School, Joseph (deemed higher attaining) focused mainly upon the five children in his 'ability' group. His classroom representation is of five children seated at desks doing work on paper and the teacher doing a 'demonstration'. This exemplifies the narrower extent of his awareness when compared to Jasmin's representation (Figure 7), for example, whom we met earlier. The scope of their awareness significantly shaped the children's lived experiences of 'ability' as it was within this scope that dominant features interacted to form the individual lived experiences for each child.

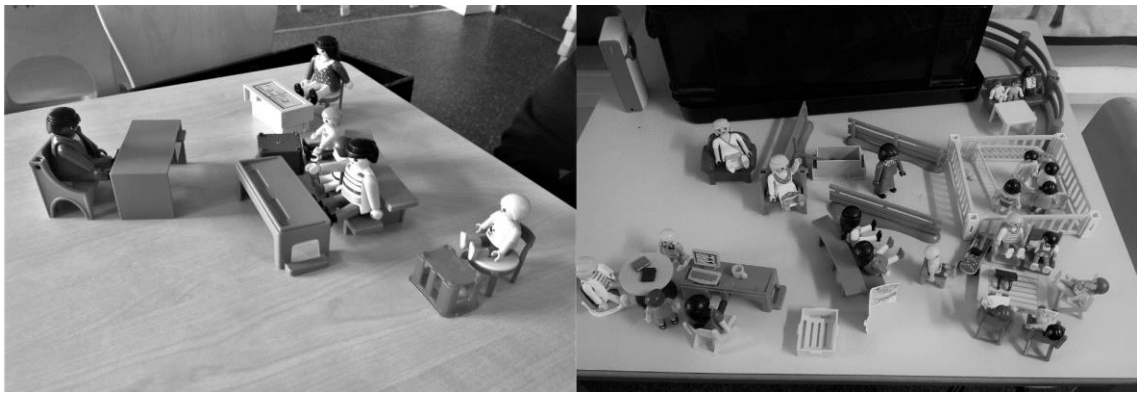

Figure 7. Joseph and Jasmin's classroom representations

The A, B and C levelled maths questions, discussed earlier, significantly shaped some children's understanding of themselves and others but this was not the case for all children who attended to classroom systems and the 'work' (classroom tasks) that children were given. Diya, for example, seemed to have a strong sense of both of these, explaining in detail the differences between the 'harder and easier work' and using the A, B and C questions as examples. She interpreted harder and easier 'work' as fluidly available to everyone in the class rather than indicative of levels of 'ability' as other children had. Diya's awareness was more focused on the immediate so she encountered the levelled questions but interpreted them for how they were assigned to her (being deemed middle attaining by her teacher) rather than noticing how they were assigned to others.

The scope of the children's awareness is significant as it *contains* the children's lived experiences of 'ability'. It can intensify (as we saw earlier with Freya's attention to the different experiences of her friends in other 'ability' groups) or mitigate the influence of particular social, structural or pedagogic aspects of classroom life within an individual child's lived experiences of 'ability'.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have summarised the pervasive nature of 'ability' in education in the UK and made the argument for the significance of children's perspectives in researching 'ability' in the classroom. Through evidence from two case study classes, I have argued that children's lived experiences of 'ability' can be highly individual and shaped by a combination of a wide range of

aspects of classroom life. The classroom stories portrayed in this article, as 'living' cases of education (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier 2013, p.179), show how the children involved were individually internalising and making meaning of the same classroom contexts. Homogenous 'ability' labels did not lead to homogenous lived experiences of 'ability'.

Anticipating the impact of specific teaching choices upon children can be quite challenging. In this study, All Saints School used within-class 'ability' grouping less than Field Lane however, this was not reflected in the children's lived experiences in these classes. It therefore seems that it is not the extent of the use of an 'ability' related practice that impacts upon children so much as the sense they made of it when assimilating it into their individual lived experience (in combination with the features of classroom life that they paid greatest attention to). Evidence of children's experiences presented in this paper suggest that educationalists should consider a wide range of social, structural and pedagogic factors as potentially shaping children's perceptions of themselves and others in terms of 'ability'. Indeed, the findings of this study support the wealth of existing literature that calls for us to challenge the existence of 'ability' within schools as it can potentially have a significant impact upon every child. Further research is needed that explores children's perspectives in UK classes where between-class grouping (setting) is used with 5-7 year olds. Additionally, research is also needed which explores how the perspectives of children in this age group develop over time, considering changes in maturity and schooling as they grow older.

'Ability' thinking pervades educational discourse in the UK with the practice of 'ability' grouping stubbornly embedded within practice despite significant research evidence of ineffectiveness or harm (Francis et al., 2017). The 'close-up' nature of this study has provided insight to the inside of the black box of 'ability' in the classroom. It has provided insights into the missing perspective of the child which challenges the dominant 'hegemonic narratives that produce 'ability' grouping' (Francis et al., 2017, p.13) as a 'taken-for-granted' practice (Oakes, 2005, p.6). Children clearly offer significant insight into the impact of 'ability' in schools and their perspectives are crucially important in future research in the field of 'ability' in education.

References

Alvidrez, J., & Weinstein, R. S. (1999). Early teacher perceptions and later student academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91(4), pp. 731-746.

Ansalone, G. (2010). Tracking: Educational differentiation or defective strategy. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 34(2), pp. 3-17.

Atkinson, P., & Delamont, S. (1990). Writing about teachers: How British and American ethnographic texts describe teachers and teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 6(2), pp. 111-125.

Baines, E. (2012). Grouping pupils by ability in schools. In P. Adey & J. Dillon (Eds.), *Bad education: Debunking myths in education* (pp. 37-56). Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.

Ball, S. J. (2012). *Global Education Inc: New policy networks and the neo-liberal imaginary.* London: Routledge.

Benn, M. (2011). *School wars: The battle for Britain's education*. London: Verso Books.

Blatchford, P., Hallam, S., Ireson, J., Kutnick, P., & Creech, A. (2008). *Classes, groups and transitions: Structures for teaching and learning [Primary Review Research Survey 9/2].* Cambridge: The University of Cambridge.

Boaler, J. (1997). Setting, social class and survival of the quickest. *British Educational Research Journal*, 23(5), pp. 575-595.

Boylan, M., & Povey, H. (2014). Ability thinking. In D. Leslie & H. Mendick (Eds.), *Debates in mathematics education* (pp. 28-37). London: Routledge.

Bradbury, A., & Roberts-Holmes, G. (2017). *Grouping in early years and key stage 1: "A Necessary Evil"?* Retrieved from https://neu.org.uk/media/3191/view

Brantlinger, E. (1990). Low-income adolescents' perceptions of school, intelligence, and themselves as students. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 20(3), pp. 305-324.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.

Bruner, J. S. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. London: Harvard University Press.

Burke, T. (2010). *Anyone listening: Evidence of children and young people's participation in England*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Campbell, T. (2013). *In-school ability grouping and the month of birth effect*. Retrieved from https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Ability-grouping-and-the-month-of-birth-effect-T-Campbell-March-2013-FINAL.pdf

Catsambis, S., Mulkey, L. M., Buttaro, A., Jr., Steelman, L. C., & Koch, P. R. (2011). Examining gender differences in ability group placement at the onset of schooling: The role of skills, behaviors, and teacher evaluations. *Journal of Educational Research*, 105(1), pp. 8-20.

Chorzempa, B. F., & Graham, S. (2006). Primary-grade teachers' use of within-class ability grouping in reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(3), pp. 529-541.

Coe, R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S., & Major, L. E. (2014). *What Makes Great Teaching? Review of the underpinning research.* Retrieved from https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Makes-Great-Teaching-REPORT.pdf

Collins, K. M. (2003). *Ability profiling and school failure: One child's struggle to be seen as Competent*. Oxon: Routledge.

Cooper, H. M. (1979). Pygmalion grows up: studies in the expectation communication process. *Research on teaching monograph series*, 49(3), pp. 389-410.

Davey, C., Burke, T., & Shaw, C. (2010). *Children's participation in decision-making: A children's views report*. Retrieved from https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Childrens_participation_in_decision-making_-_A_childrens_views_report.pdf

Deary, I. J. (2006). Intelligence, destiny and education: The ideological roots of intelligence testing. *Intelligence*, 34(6), pp. 621-622.

Department for Education. (2011). *Teachers' standards*. London: Department for Education.

Department for Education. (2012). *Academically more able pupils*. Retrieved from https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130104124247/https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/a00205083/academically-more-able-pupils

Department for Education. (2018). Schools that work for everyone: Government consultation response. Retrieved from https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130104124247/https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/a00205083/academically-more-able-pupils

Denzin, N. K. (2008). *Symbolic interactionism and cultural studies: The politics of interpretation*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Dewey, J. (1910). *How We Think*. Boston, MA: D C Heath & Co.

Donaldson, M. (1978). *Children's Minds*. London: Croom Helm.

Dorling, D. (2010). *Injustice: Why social inequality persists*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Drummond, M. J., & Yarker, P. (2013). The enduring problem of fixed ability: but is a new conversation beginning? *FORUM*, 55(1), pp. 3-7.

Eder, D. (1981). Ability grouping as a self-fulfilling prophecy: A micro-analysis of teacher-student interaction. *Sociology of Education*, 54(3), pp. 151-162.

Einarsdóttir, J. (2010). Children's experiences of the first year of primary school. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 18(2), pp. 163-180.

Flint, K., & Peim, N. (2012). *Rethinking the education improvement agenda: A critical philosophical approach*. London: Continuum.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), pp. 219-245.

Francis, B., Archer, L., Hodgen, J., Pepper, D., Taylor, B., & Travers, M. (2017). Exploring the relative lack of impact of research on "ability grouping" in England: A Discourse Analytic Account. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 47(1), pp. 1-17.

Freeman, M., & Mathison, S. (2009). *Researching children's experiences*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. London: Fontana.

Gibb, N. (2018). *Fund for bright disadvantaged pupils launched*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fund-for-bright-disadvantaged-pupils-launched

Gillborn, D., & Youdell, Y. (2001). The new IQism: Intelligence, 'ability' and the rationing of education. In J. Demaine (Ed.), *Sociology of Education Today* (pp. 65-99). Hampshire: Palgrave.

Greene, S., & Hogan, D. (2005). *Researching children's experience: Methods and approaches.* London: Sage.

Hallam, S., Ireson, J., Lister, V., Chaudhury, I. A., & Davies, J. (2003). Ability grouping practices in the primary school: A survey. *Educational Studies*, 29(1), pp. 69-83.

Hamilton, L., & Corbett-Whittier, C. (2013). *Using case study in education research.* London: Sage.

Hamilton, L., & O'Hara, P. (2011). The tyranny of setting (ability grouping): Challenges to inclusion in Scottish primary schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 27(4), pp. 712-721.

Harcourt, D. (2011). An encounter with children: Seeking meaning and understanding about childhood. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 19(1), pp. 331-343.

Harcourt, D., & Einarsdóttir, J. (2011). Introducing Children's Perspectives and Participation in Research. European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 19(3), pp. 301-307.

Hatt, B. (2012). Smartness as a cultural practice in schools. *American Educational Research Journal,* 49(3), pp. 438–460.

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. London: Routledge.

Higgins, S., Katsipataki, M., Kokotsaki, D., Coleman, R., Major, L. E., & Coe, R. (2018). *Teaching and learning toolkit*. Retrieved from https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Toolkit/complete/EEF-Teaching-Learning-Toolkit-October-2018.pdf

Holt, J. (1982). *How children fail* (2nd ed.). London: Penguin.

Husserl, E. (1970). The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Ireson, J., & Hallam, S. (2009). Academic self-concepts in adolescence: Relations with achievement and ability grouping in schools. *Learning and Instruction*, 19(3), pp. 201-213.

James, M., Oates, T., Pollard, A., & Wiliam, D. (2011). *The framework for the National Curriculum: A report by the expert panel for the National Curriculum review.* London: Department for Education.

Knoblauch, H., & Schnettler, B. (2012). Videography: Analysing video data as a 'focused' ethnographic and hermeneutical exercise. *Qualitative Research*, 12(3), pp. 334-356.

Kulik, C., & Kulik, J. A. (1982). Effects of ability grouping on secondary school Students: A meta-analysis of evaluation findings. *American Educational Research Journal*, 19(3), pp. 415-428.

Kususanto, P., Ismail, H. N., & Jamil, H. (2010). Students' self-esteem and their perception of teacher behavior: A study of between-class ability grouping. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 8(2), pp. 707-724.

Kutnick, P., Sebba, J., Blatchford, P., Galton, M., & Thorp, J. (2005). *The effects of pupil grouping: Literature review.* Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills.

Laosa, L. M. (1996). Intelligence testing and social policy. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology,* 17(2), pp. 155-173.

Løndal, K. (2010). Children's lived experience and their sense of coherence: Bodily play in a Norwegian after-school programme. *Child Care in Practice,* 16(4), pp. 391-407.

Lucas, B., & Claxton, G. (2010). *New kinds of smart: How the science of learnable intelligence is changing education*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.

Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal,* 33(6), pp. 927-942.

MacDonald, A. (2009). Drawing Stories: The power of children's drawings to communicate the lived experience of starting school. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood,* 34(3), pp. 40-49.

Macqueen, S. (2010). Primary teacher attitudes in achievement-based literacy classes. *Issues in Educational Research,* 20(2), pp. 118-136.

Marks, R. (2014a). The dinosaur in the classroom: What we stand to lose through ability grouping in the primary school. *FORUM*, 56(1), pp. 45-54.

Marks, R. (2014b). Educational triage and ability grouping in primary mathematics: A case-study of the impacts on low-attaining pupils. *Research in Mathematics Education,* 16(1), pp. 38-53.

Marks, R. (2016). *Ability grouping in primary schools: Case studies and critical debates.* Northwich: Critical Publishing.

Mavers, D. (2012). *Transcribing Video [working paper 05/12].* London: National Centre for Research Methods.

Mazenod, A., Francis, B., Archer, L., Hodgen, J., Taylor, B., Tereshchenko, A., & Pepper, D. (2019). Nurturing learning or encouraging dependency? Teacher constructions of students in lower attainment groups in English secondary schools. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 49(1), pp. 53-68.

McGillicuddy, D., & Devine, D. (2018). “Turned off” or “ready to fly”: Ability grouping as an act of symbolic violence in primary school. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 70, pp. 88-99.

McNamara, S., Moreton, G., & Newton, H. (1996). *Differentiation.* Cambridge: Pearson Publishing.

Oakes, J. (1986). Keeping track, part 1: The policy and practice of curriculum inequality. *The Phi Delta Kappan,* 68(1), pp.12-17.

Oakes, J. (2005). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality* (2nd ed.). London: Yale University Press.

Oakes. J., & Guiton, G. (1995). Matchmaking: The dynamics of high school tracking decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(1), pp.3-33.

Ofsted. (2013). *The most able students: Are they doing as well as they should in our non-selective secondary schools?* Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/405518/The_most_able_students.pdf

Ofsted. (2015). *The most able students: An update on progress made since June 2013*. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408909/The_most_able_students_an_update_on_progress_since_June_2013.pdf

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Byers, V. T. (2014). An exemplar for combining the collection, analysis, and interpretations of verbal and nonverbal data in qualitative research. *International Journal of Education*, 6(1), pp. 183-246.

Palaiologou, I. (2014). "Do we hear what children want to say?"' Ethical praxis when choosing research tools with children under five. *Early Child Development and Care,* 184(5), pp. 689-705.

Park, V., & Datnow, A. (2017). Ability grouping and differentiated instruction in an era of data-driven decision making. *American Journal of Education*, 123(2), pp. 281-306.

Parsons, S., & Hallam, S. (2014). The impact of streaming on attainment at age seven: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study. *Oxford Review of Education*, 40(5), pp. 567-589.

Pollard, A. (1996). *The social world of children's learning: Case studies of pupils from four to seven.* London: Cassell.

Preckel, F., Gotz, T., & Frenzel, A. (2010). Ability grouping of gifted students: Effects on academic self-concept and boredom. *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* 80(3), pp. 451-472.

Pring, R. (2015). *Philosophy of educational research* (3rd ed.). London: Bloomsbury.

Roberts-Holmes, G., & Bradbury, A. (2016). Governance, accountability and the datafication of early years education in England. *British Educational Research Journal,* 42(4), pp. 600-613.

Robinson, C., & Fielding, M. (2007). *Children and their primary schools: Pupils' voices.* Cambridge: The University of Cambridge.

Rubie-Davies, C., Weinstein, R. S., Huang, F. L., Gregory, A., Cowan, P. A., & Cowan, C. P. (2014). Successive teacher expectation effects across the early school years. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 35(3), pp. 181-191.

Schrank, W. R. (1968). The labeling effect of ability grouping. *The Journal of Educational Research,* 62(2), pp. 51-52.

Schrank, W. R. (1970). A Further Study of the Labeling Effect of Ability Grouping. *The Journal of Educational Research,* 63(8), pp. 358-360.

Shaw, C., Brady, L., & Davey, C. (2011). *Guidelines for research with children and young people*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Spina, N. (2018). *'Once upon a time': examining ability grouping and differentiation practices in cultures of evidence-based decision-making.* Cambridge Journal of Education, pp. 1-20.

Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. London: Sage.

Steenbergen-Hu, S., & Moon, S. M. (2011). The effects of acceleration on high-ability learners: A meta-analysis. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55(1), pp. 39-53.

Stobart, G. (2014). *The expert learner: Challenging the myth of ability*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Sukhnandan, L. & Lee, B. (1998). *Streaming, setting and grouping by ability: A review of the literature.* Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.

Sumsion, J., Harrison, L., Press, F., McLoud, S., Goodfellow, J., & Bradley, B. (2011). Researching infants' experiences of early childhood education and care. In D. Harcourt, B. Perry & T. Waller (Eds.), *Researching young children's perspectives: Debating the ethics and dilemmas of educational research with children* (pp. 113-127). London: Routledge.

Tach, L. M., & Farkas, G. (2006). Learning-related behaviors, cognitive skills, and ability grouping when schooling begins. *Social Science Research*, 35(4), pp. 1048-1079.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London: Suny Press.

Van Manen, M. (2017). Phenomenology in its original sense. *Qualitative Health Research,* 27(6), pp. 810-825.

Viljaranta, J., Tolvanen, A., Aunola, K., & Nurmi, J.-E. (2014). The developmental dynamics between interest, self-concept of ability, and academic performance. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 58(6), pp. 734-756.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* London: Harvard University Press.

Weinstein, R. S., Marshall, H. H., Sharp, L., & Botki, M. (1987). Pygmalion and the student: Age and classroom differences in children's awareness of teacher expectations. *Child Development*, 58(4), pp. 1079-1093.

White, J. (2005). Puritan intelligence: The ideological background to IQ. *Oxford Review of Education,* 31(3), pp. 423-442.

Winstone, N., Huntington, C., Goldsack, L., Kyrou, E., & Millward, L. (2014). Eliciting rich dialogue through the use of activity-oriented interviews: Exploring self-identity in autistic young people. *Childhood*, 21(2), pp. 190-206.