Student Voice: Listening to students to improve education through digital technologies: Special issue call for papers

Guest editors: Dr Valentina Grion, Dr Stefania Manca, Dr Cristina Devecchi and Dr. Ale Armellini

Overview
This special issue on Title, BJET Volume 48, Issue 3, will be published in May 2017.

This issue seeks to explore the synergy between Student Voice approaches and digital technologies in creating a space for student voice.

Around two decades ago, a movement within the field of education known as “Student Voice” started spreading internationally. The first developments date back to the 90s and the first years of the 2000s when some researchers, coming mostly from English speaking contexts, focused on school children’s perspectives on their teaching and learning experience. Children and young people, therefore, became legitimate and necessary co-participants of change processes and reforms of education. More recently, and due to major changes in the context of higher education, students’ voice has also undergone a process of legitimisation as central to developing a university fit for students’ experience and expectations, but also useful and fitting social and economic expectations and needs. At the same time, the use of technology has disrupted the traditional model of frontal teaching and opened the way to pedagogical and curricular innovation. One of the consequences of such innovation has been the redefinition of who the student is and the expectations related to the two key concepts of participation and engagement. However, there is no consensual agreement on what the two terms refer to, thus leading to a lack of conceptual clarity on the nature, limits and possibilities of the student engagement and participation.

Within such developments the original expressions “Student Voice” and “Pupil’s Voice” now include terminology such as “student participation”, “youth-adult partnership”, “youth activism” among others, reflecting the widespread development of initiatives based on this perspective, and the resulting variety of readings and of practices that have developed in different contexts and according to three trajectories.

The first trajectory is mostly tied to the initial developments of research on Student Voice oriented towards listening to the voice of students at schools and universities, as a key tool to improve teaching and learning practices. Within this perspective students represent “unique” points of view with regard to what takes place in classrooms, precious sources of information, providing precise and constructive considerations on teaching.

The second trajectory concerns the direction taken by Student Voice with regard to its Deweyan origins: the purpose of education is to build the democratic citizen and schools cannot take any other shape than that of a laboratory of democracy. This is a genuinely basic and pervading principle only where there are contexts in which joint efforts are made by every member of the community to reach the common good by means of the complete sharing of powers and responsibilities. Likewise, calls for universities to play a more “civic” role and a new agenda on social impact, demand a re-definition of the use of technology and the involvement of students.

A third path concerns the research methodologies used. Due to the fact that approaches have been shifted from doing research on students to doing research with there is a need to rethink roles and to create structures and processes to support students in the development of the skills required to become research collaborators and leaders within such processes.
Next to these claims, in the last years there has been an increasing emphasis on the potential of the Internet as a means for improving students’ and young people’s participation to digital public spaces. The Internet has been recognised as a technology enabling participatory aptitude, facilitating content creation and supporting civic engagement. The raise of Web 2.0 tools and of social network sites has also been viewed as a driver for young people’s participation: from discussing in a web forum to creating content in a wiki, from sharing useful resources to using information in every field of life – education, politics, economy, society. Indeed, new digital media are offering young people opportunities to undertake participative roles with positive implications on the development of their abilities (empowerment) enabled by the use of social media and inspired by the principles of the “participatory culture”.

**About the call**

Although the literature on the Student Voice perspective is nowadays quite broad and expanding, there is a need for further in-depth analysis on the specific role played by digital technologies in creating a space for student voice.

This Special Issue aims at promoting scholars’ and practitioners’ reflection with particular reference to the three trajectories of development of Student Voice in any educational context from primary to higher education. How are students heard? How are their views taken into account in the design, monitoring and assessment of their learning? How is technology, and digital technology in particular, used to enhance their participation and engagement?

The call is open to theoretical, empirical studies, reviews of the literature or critical analyses carried out in the area.

**Important dates and submission process**

Deadline for submissions: 1 March 2016
First decision from the review process: 1 May 2016
Final copy from authors to guest editors: 5 January 2017
Accepted papers available online: from: 15 May 2017
Publication: May 2017

Manuscripts should not normally exceed 4000 words, including references. All contributions should be prepared following the BJET Guidelines for Authors and submitted via the BJET manuscript submission system (see [http://bit.ly/1lZUupy](http://bit.ly/1lZUupy)). All submissions will go through the usual process of blind peer-review. The editors will select papers for the special issue on the basis of their academic merit, quality and overall coverage of key learning design and teacher-led inquiry themes in the volume.

For further information and initial advice about the appropriateness of your proposed paper for this special issue, contact the Guest Editors, Valentina Grion, Stefania Manca, Cristina Devecchi and Ale Armellini.

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Call for Papers:

Special BJET Issue on Student Voice: Listening to students to improve education through digital technologies

You are invited to contribute to this Special Issue of The British Journal of Educational Technology

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This Special Issue aims at promoting scholars’ and practitioners’ reflection with particular reference to the three trajectories of development of Student Voice in any educational context from primary to higher education:

- Student Voice as a key tool to improve teaching and learning practices
- Student Voice as a key tool to play a more “civic” role and a new agenda on social impact
- Student Voice as a key tool to support students in the development of the skills required to become research collaborators and leaders within such processes

Contributors are encouraged to provide in-depth analysis on the specific role played by digital technologies in creating a space for student voice: how are students heard? How are their views taken into account in the design, monitoring and assessment of their learning? How is technology, and digital technology in particular, used to enhance their participation and engagement?

The call is open to theoretical, empirical studies, reviews of the literature or critical analyses carried out in the area.

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For initial advice about the appropriateness of your proposed paper for this special issue, contact the guest editors:

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