Title:

Facilitating the expression of learner voices in the participatory design of technology to support inquiry learning

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Abstract: (Your abstract must use **Normal style** and must fit in this box. Your abstract should be no longer than 300 words. The box will 'expand' over 2 pages as you add text/diagrams into it.)

Chin (2004) argues that in order for technology to become embedded into curricula activities, it is important that institutional contexts, as well as pupil needs, are considered in the design process. However, this can be a significant challenge as opportunities for learners to express opinions are bound by institutional and research parameters, such as the curriculum, assessment criteria, organisational logistics, technology, pedagogical method and research agenda.

So, how can learners voice their opinions and contribute to participatory design?

The question is of fundamental concern in the Personal Inquiry project, funded by the EPSRC/ESRC. Its goal is to develop an innovative toolkit, running on an Ultra-Mobile PC, which provides 'scripts' in the form of dynamic lesson plans that guide the learners through the inquiry. Both the scripts and their implementation are designed in participation with pupils and teachers.

In this paper, we present the findings from our research to date. Four participatory design workshops have been carried out with two schools in Nottingham and Milton Keynes. Each had a teacher and 6-8 pupils (in single year grouping from years 8-10). Two workshops were designed to provide pupils' reflective accounts of their inquiry-based experiences with prototypes. Two workshops were more forward thinking as pupils were invited to think of interesting ways to investigate their subject and to help create a framework for the inquiry process.

These workshops have enabled us to explore several ways to facilitate the expression of learner voices in the participatory design of technology to support inquiry learning. The outcomes of the workshops have informed the design of ongoing inquiry-based activities and technologies and are being implemented in future studies.

Chin, G. (2004), A case study in the participatory design of a collaborative science-based learning environment, unpublished PhD thesis, Blacksburg, Virginia.