

**EMOTIONAL LITERACY: AN INVESTIGATION INTO CHANGES IN OUTCOMES
AND MECHANISMS FOLLOWING A SMALL GROUP TARGETED
INTERVENTION. A CASE STUDY WITH PRIMARY AGED CHILDREN.**

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Volume one of a thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
APPLIED EDUCATIONAL AND CHILD PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORATE

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August 2016

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore what changes happen to a group's outcomes and mechanisms, in relation to emotional literacy, following a small group targeted emotional literacy intervention. This was achieved through the use of a single case study design which employed the use of semi – structured group interviews and numerical data. The qualitative and quantitative measures were used prior to and after the intervention to allow for consideration of change over time. The statistical analysis indicates that access to a needs led targeted intervention is effective in producing positive outcomes in relation to emotional literacy levels for the pupils that access it. The thematic analysis provided a rich and in depth insight into the mechanisms that facilitate this change and demonstrated a positive movement in the group's emotional literacy thoughts, skills, knowledge and practices. This study provides an original contribution to the existing research into emotional literacy by taking an exploratory and explanatory approach.

Dedication

To my dad, Kev Holmes

You taught me what it truly means to be determined, strong and brave.

Loved and Missed Always x

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the school, parents and most importantly the young people who kindly took part in this research.

Thanks to Nick Bozic and Dr Huw Williams, my academic supervisors, for your guidance, support and calming approach.

To Dr Linsey Share, my placement supervisor, I truly appreciate all of your continuous support, guidance and encouragement.

Deepest thanks to Mum for always supporting the choices I make.

To my sisters (Donna and Kelly) and the very special little people in my life (Brooke, Izzy, Kyle and Bailey) thank you for your patience and support. I am looking forward to spending more time with you.

Endless thanks to my partner, Bridget, for all your support, understanding and patience.

Thank you to my dear friend, Becca, for being so understanding and supportive.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Research and the Researcher

The Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate requires completion of a substantive original empirical study (Volume One) to gain the academic award and professional qualification in educational psychology.

Whilst working in local primary and secondary schools as a teaching assistant, I was afforded the opportunity to work with children and young people with a variety of special educational needs. Reflecting on these experiences, it was evident that throughout their education each child and young person is frequently faced with transition and change, including copious new and challenging social and emotional experiences. For some, this process is extremely challenging.

During my time in primary schools, supporting children with social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, there was a frequent reference to behaviour and how we could change the behaviour of individual pupils. Reward and consequence played a dominant role in not only each staff's approach to managing behaviour but also my own, and was often the main content of any behaviour policy. Although in some cases this approach was effective to some degree, in others it was not; this led me to question my own practice.

Whilst completing my undergraduate psychology degree I continued to volunteer in primary education; this allowed me to explore the area in more depth as my skills and knowledge increased. One pivotal deliberation that kept resurfacing was how

the school's approach to cognition and learning difficulties contrasted significantly to that of behavioural difficulties. If a child was experiencing difficulties with their learning we would consider their individual strengths and needs. On the most basic level each child would then be provided with additional support to develop their understanding, skills and knowledge in the areas of difficulty to provide them with the necessary tools to facilitate progress. However, I felt that for the children with behavioural difficulties we did not do sufficient exploration of their needs or provide them with the same opportunities to increase their understanding, skills and knowledge in the areas they found challenging. We were implementing systems and approaches that attempted to eradicate and change behaviours rather than supporting the children to develop the skills and knowledge to manage and understand difficult social and emotional situations and expectations.

Following a conversation with the SENCo in one of the primary schools it was agreed that a new approach would be trialled: Emotional Literacy. This was a popular and fairly new concept within the educational arena at the time and provided a method to address the development of the practice within the school. A six week intervention programme was implemented by me with a small group of pupils who were categorised as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The intervention led to positive outcomes for each of the children including a more positive school experience, a reduction in disruptive behaviours, better peer relationships, higher levels of motivation and engagement and academic progress. Confidence in this new approach was heightened when teachers saw that not only had the positive outcomes transferred to the classroom environment but parents would comment on a positive

change within the home context. As a result the school continued with the implementation of an Emotional Literacy approach and my interest in this area increased.

After completing my undergraduate degree I began working as a teaching assistant in a secondary school, working 1:1 with a young person with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. This pupil found social and emotional situations extremely challenging in every aspect of his education. His high level of SEMH needs was impacting on his ability to access and engage in learning and consequently meant he was not reaching his full potential. With increased awareness of not only the literature but also practice based evidence of Emotional Literacy, I drew on these approaches and strategies to inform my practice to meet the pupil's individual needs.

Working 1:1 provided me with the opportunity to facilitate an increase in the pupil's emotional literacy, initially focusing on his self-awareness and self-regulation of emotions. This was achieved through targeted intervention sessions and by supporting the application of the skills and knowledge being developed into the classroom context, when challenging situations arose. As his emotional literacy increased he was able to understand and manage social and emotional situations better; this helped remove the barriers to learning, resulting in a more positive educational experience for the young person.

These experiences have fuelled my interest and motivation in the area of emotional literacy; using this approach in my practice enabled the children and young people to progress and promoted an increase in positive outcomes for the individuals. Now, working in an educational psychology service and completing my doctoral studies, I

am motivated to explore the area of emotional literacy further. In my current practice it is evident from working in a wide variety of educational settings that there are still a large proportion of pupils with SEMH needs who staff are expected to support. Emotional literacy is an approach that has been suggested to enable staff to meet these needs by increasing a pupils understanding and providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge. However, it needs to be acknowledged that in order for schools to achieve this, support from professionals is paramount and a solid evidence base is needed.

This research contributes to the evidence base of emotional literacy in an educational setting, investigating the changes in outcomes for primary school children after accessing a needs led targeted intervention. The principal aim of this research is to investigate the changes that occur in relation to the children's emotional literacy levels and provide a richer and in-depth account of what possibly contributes to these changes.

I acknowledge that the length of my interest in this area and the positive experiences I have had with applying this approach to practice means there is possible bias towards emotional literacy for me as a researcher when striving to identify an effective method that educational settings can adopt to meet the needs of their pupils. However, I view practice based evidence as an essential component of professional development and have experience and knowledge of alternative approaches; therefore, the decision was not biased through ignorance. Bias could also arise due to the level of investment I have in this area and the value I think emotional literacy holds: an expectation and desire for positive outcomes in regard to this approach. Although the desire for positive outcomes from research is often a given, I am also

extremely mindful that opposing results also provide empirical evidence and therefore can direct the most effective route for professionals. I will aim to address these possible biases, and others that may arise throughout the research process, by maintaining a high level of critical reflexivity.

1.2 Rationale and Aims of the Research

For decades there has been a continuous upsurge in pressures and expectations placed upon educational settings, primarily focusing on their accountability for academic attainment. Some traditional and conventional perspectives still maintain that core national curriculum subjects are ample to prepare children for future obstacles in adulthood (Woolfolk, Hughes & Walk-up; Humphrey, 2007; Park, 1999). However, over the past two decades a movement towards a more holistic approach to meeting pupils' needs has seen an emphasis being placed on the importance of children and young people's social and emotional development.

Initiatives such as the government's publication of the green paper 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2004), which was consequently included in the Children Act (2004), signified that the scope of teachers' responsibilities are becoming much more diverse. Woolfolk, Hughes & Walk-up (2008) suggest that a 'good teacher' (p.9) consists of an individual that must be able to navigate through curriculum targets whilst managing the 'emotional needs' (p.9) of their class. The expectations of school to 'promote the well-being' of their pupils was formally introduced in the Education and Inspection Act (2006) (Coleman, 2009, p. 285). This legislation prompted Ofsted (2008) measures to assess the contribution schools were making to pupil well-being.

It could be argued that more recent changes in government have again altered educational priorities. The latest ‘National Curriculum’ (2013) has seen the removal of Personal Social and Health Education as a statutory subject and although the new Ofsted Framework (2015, p. 14) has an area of inspection titled ‘personal development, behaviour and welfare’ the majority of these indicators are still related to learning and achievement. This shift however does not mean there is no longer an expectation for educational settings to promote well-being and meet social and emotional needs but how this is achieved is no longer prescribed giving educational settings more flexibility in their approach.

Some (Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth, 2013) suggest this flexibility places greater levels of accountability on staff as those who choose to invest in the social and emotional needs of their pupils have to evidence their effectiveness and its impact on learning and achievement. The statutory guidance ‘Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years’ (DfE, 2014) emphasizes that continuing to promote well-being and support social and emotional development continues to be important and necessary. One area of need is ‘social, emotional and mental health difficulties’ and it is acknowledged that needs in this area can impact on the pupils’ access to education and learning (DfE, 2014, p. 87). This statutory guidance outlines an extensive list of organizations who need to have regard for the publication and therefore all professionals working with children have accountability for supporting and meeting their needs.

Educational psychologists are in a prominent position in being able to support educational settings to meet the social and emotional needs of children and young

people. Their professional skills and knowledge means they can advise staff and support them in identifying evidence based approaches and interventions but more specifically identify individual strengths and needs of pupils. Additionally, they can contribute to research and practice based evidence which could promote positive outcomes for children and young people's social, emotional and mental health.

One 'humanistic framework' (p.34) suggested to aid a multifactor teaching approach, and recently popularised, is the implementation of emotional literacy interventions (Bentham, 2002). Goleman's (1996) publication 'Emotional Intelligence' has been associated with the rise in awareness of well-being due to the bold and enticing claims he made about its impact on academic achievement (Coleman, 2009, p. 282). The implementation of emotional literacy interventions and programmes is happening across educational settings to support pupils' social and emotional development and remove barriers to learning. However, the evidence base in the area of emotional literacy is inconsistent and currently requires further investigation to understand the value it has in providing positive outcomes for children and young people.

1.3 Historical Context of Emotional Literacy

Many state that the first roots for a concept such as emotional intelligence, surfaced due to movements within and challenges to the traditional conceptualisation and measurement of intelligence (Bradberry and Su, 2006; Fineman, 2004). Thorndike is acknowledged as being one of the first to step away from the much established view of intelligence, as early as the 1920s, by proposing the existence of 'social intelligence: the ability to understand others and act wisely in human relations' (Goleman, 1996, p.42).

However, this notion was ‘problematic’ from its ‘inception’, the nature of emotions alone, means social intelligence is difficult to define and measure (Bradberry and Su, 2006, p.60). Thorndike’s early attempts at introducing ‘social intelligence’ were met with cynicism with some seeing this concept as containing elements of ‘manipulation’ (Goleman, 1996, p42.). With neither perspective of social intelligence having much weight or influence with other IQ theorists, elaboration and refinement temporarily declined. However, Goleman (1996) states it was not surprising this phenomena was not dismissed completely as ‘it makes both intuitive and common sense’ (p.42).

Another frequently cited figure (Fineman, 2004; Kelly et al, 2004), in this field is Gardner (1983), who contributed to the phenomenon with his theory of multiple intelligences, where he detailed two branches of ‘personal intelligence: interpersonal and intrapersonal’ (Bradberry and Su, 2006, p.60). Some suggested these two elements are the ‘precursors’ of a concept such as EI (Kelly et al, 2004, p. 3). More contemporary psychologists (e.g. Sternberg, Salovey and Goleman) have adopted similar stances to that of Gardner; advocating that traditional perceptions of IQ are too narrow and only signify success within academic schooling or professions, but do not take into account alternative paths.

Later the term emotional literacy was first detailed in Steiner’s (1979) work, which drew heavily but not solely from Berne’s ‘transactional analysis’ theory (Coppock, 2007, p.405). Steiner viewed EL as being a ‘tool of human emancipation’ (Coppock, 2007, p.405) and following extensive systematic research on traits and skills of intelligent people he was led back to Thorndike’s early deductions. Thus, the concept of social intelligence is a separate entity to that of IQ and an essential element in determining

how well people do in the real life ‘practicalities’ (Goleman, 1996, p.42). Steiner (2003, p. 1) describes emotional literacy as ‘intelligence with a heart’.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) are credited with one of the first ‘explicit formulations of emotional intelligence’. Their research centred on investigating the relationship between ‘affective (emotional) and cognitive (intellectual) domains’ (Coppock, 2007, p.405). This research led to an influential article (Salovey and Mayer, 1990) bringing EI to the attention of the research community, proposing that this concept was a unique cognitive ability based on emotion (Bradberry and Su, 2006).

The popularisation of EI within the public domain however, was accomplished by Goleman (1996) after reviewing the work of Mayer and Salovey. His bold and luring claims attracted and heightened the interest of both academic and general audiences. The most notable and controversial claim detailed in his widely known book being that emotional intelligence is more important than IQ in relation to educational and professional progression. Following this an influx of research into this area was published towards the end of the 1990’s and still continues at present.

1.4 The Structure of Volume One

There are five chapters within this volume. Chapter One provides an introduction to the research area and researcher; rationale for the research area; an historical account of emotional literacy and an outline of the thesis structure.

Chapter Two contains a literature review with three distinct sections:

1. Exploration of definitions and terminology used within the literature.
2. An overview of three dominant models within the area of emotional intelligence/emotional literacy.

3. Interventions and empirical research linked to emotional intelligence/emotional literacy and children of primary school age.

The methodological approach and research design are outlined and extensively discussed in Chapter Three; this is followed by the results in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five, the discussion, further explores the findings before outlining possible limitations, the role of reflexivity and the implications for practice and future directions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review contains three distinct sections:

1. Exploration of definitions and terminology used within the literature.
2. An overview of three dominant models within the area of emotional intelligence/emotional literacy.
3. Interventions and empirical research linked to emotional intelligence/emotional literacy and children of primary school age.

Search Methods

To gain a comprehensive account of the available literature a variety of search engines were used:

- Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)
- The British Education Index
- Education Research Abstracts Index
- Psychinfo
- SwetsWise
- PsychArticles
- Educational Research Information Centre

The key words and their synonyms used for the searches are listed below (Table 1).

Table 1: Key words and terms used for the literature review search.

Initial Terms	Emotional Literacy and... Emotional Intelligence andof emotional literacyof emotional intelligence
Emotional Literacy Emotional Intelligence	Children Young people Pupils School Education Interventions Programmes School	Theoretical models Effectiveness Evaluation Development

Working with the knowledge that the first formal definition of emotional intelligence was made by Mayer and Salovey in 1990, the date range was limited to 1990 until June 2016. Once the initial search had been completed the literature was screened by title, then abstract and then full articles; this allowed the most relevant literature to be identified and included. Further to this, a snowballing effect was utilised to allow key literature, research and approaches to be incorporated.

For part three of the literature review further inclusion/exclusion criteria were incorporated:

- Only literature related to primary school children (aged 4-11 years)
- Only literature related to the educational context
- Only studies/research that had included the children as participants in some capacity
- Only literature from the UK
- Only literature where the authors made explicit links/reference to emotional literacy or emotional intelligence

2.1 Terminology and Definitions

In the historical account of emotional literacy, one complexity and inconsistency faced is the number of terms utilised to describe the concept. Providing clarity in this area is challenging as there are numerous factors which contribute to the definitions and conceptual frameworks provided by differing authors, researchers and psychologists. However, to proceed without attempting to provide a foundation and give consideration to available definitions would be insupportable; therefore, the following section will provide an overview of what is detailed in the literature before outlining key influential factors.

2.1.1 Terminology within academic and professional arenas

Firstly, it is important to highlight that there are several terms utilised with relevance to the area of emotional literacy (EL), within the overarching area of children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing. Others include but are not limited to:

- Behaviour
- Emotional Intelligence (EI)
- Emotional Resilience
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Social and Emotional Competence
- Mental Health
- Emotional and Social Intelligence

(Weare and Gray, 2003, p. 14)

It is essential to acknowledge these differences to gain a more holistic picture of the area and acknowledge the differing terms that may be in use within the educational arena and related literature. However, to incorporate all literature in reference to these terms is out of the scope of this literature review and therefore it has been limited to those which directly reference links to the concepts of EI and EL.

2.1.2 Emotional Literacy vs. Emotional Intelligence

Even more concerning is that clarity and consistency do not heighten when narrowing down the field to focus in on EL, especially when some authors use this and emotional intelligence (EI) as interchangeable terms (Haddon et al, 2005). EI is argued to be the most commonly and widely accepted term and in line with the most prominent theoretical models (Humphrey et al, 2007). However, others offer more contextual explanations, suggesting that EI or EL will be used depending on location. EI is frequently used in the US, whereas EL appears more dominant in UK literature (Carnwell and Baker, 2007).

Furthermore, it has been proposed that the words literacy and intelligence have different implications and meanings to the author and audience which may influence the choice of language used. Humphrey et al (2007, p239) explain how the ‘word intelligence carries its own disadvantages’ and this term has been suggested to be ‘responsible for the controversy and hostility’ received from some psychologists. Reasoning for this antagonism is dual faceted: from the psychological perspective some argue it is not a true representation of ‘intelligence’; secondly, the term intelligence within the educational arena and to its audiences, including parents and carers, can carry assumptions and unfounded implications.

Authors differ on whether these two concepts are the same or separate entities. Some suggest there is little to distinguish between the two:

'When the terms are unpacked both conceptually and practically, there seems little to differentiate emotional literacy from emotional intelligence'

(ATL, 2005 as cited in Haddon et al, 2005, p.6)

Others argue they are differing concepts:

Emotional intelligence addresses the difficulties of those who are seen as lacking the basics of emotional understanding. It is a way to control the social environment in schools and other organisations.'

Emotional literacy is seen as a process of enriching the awareness and understanding of every child through paying attention to their emotional experience and skills.'

(Park, 1999, p.20)

Key authors (Goleman, 1996; Steiner, 1997) within this field make reference to both terms within their publications but the differences between these concepts are not easily identifiable or explicit and therefore the reader is left to draw their own distinctions. Interpretation of these accounts suggests that EI is a concept made up of several components to refer to the capacity or competence an individual has, whereas EL symbolises both the teaching and development of these components as a practice rather than ability.

An in depth consideration of the definitions and explanations within the available literature only serves to prevent clarity, rather than aid it. Taking a holistic approach and identifying similarities of explicit definitions provided by a variety of key authors

(see Table 2), appears to be a more informative method. Here we can see that there are several key aspects that are associated with the construct of EI/EL:

- To be able to recognise and understand one's own emotions
- To be able to recognise and understand others' emotions
- To be able to manage and regulate your own emotions/behaviour
- To use the above to inform responses, thought and interactions

This is not an attempt to simplify the multi-faceted factors that have determined varying authors' definitions of the phenomenon but to provide the reader with a certain degree of clarity about the construct that is the subject of this paper. Acknowledgement and consideration of these differing perspectives and theoretical stances which lead to informed definitions will be observed throughout.

Table 2: Definitions of EI/EL

Author and Date	Term Used	Definition
Brackett and Salovey (2006, p. 34)	Emotional Intelligence	The mental processes involved in the recognition, use, understanding and management of one's own and other's emotional states to solve problems and regulate behaviour
Salovey and Mayer (1990, p.189)	Emotional Intelligence	The ability to monitor one's own feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action.
Mayer and Salovey (1997, p.5)	Emotional Intelligence	The ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.
Goleman (1996, p. 34)	Emotional Intelligence	Abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's mood and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope.
Sharp (2001 p. 1)	Emotional Literacy	The ability to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions.
Faupel (2003, p. 3)	Emotional Literacy	The ability of people to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express their own emotions and to recognise, understand and respond appropriately to the expressed emotions of others.
Steiner (1997, p. 12)	Emotional Literacy	Being emotionally intelligent means that you know what emotions you and others have, how strong they are, and what causes them. Being emotionally literate means that you know how to manage your emotions, because you understand them.
Steiner (2003, L241)	Emotional Literacy	Being emotionally literate means that you know what emotions you and others have, how strong they are, and what causes them; it means that you know how to manage your emotions, because you understand them.
Antidote (2003, p. 18)	Emotional Literacy	Emotional literacy is an activity. It is not something you are but something you do. And it is something you do with other people. It is a way of managing your interactions with others so that you can build an understanding of your own emotions and those of others, then find a way of allowing this understanding to inform your actions.

2.2 Theory and Conceptualisation

2.2.1 Mayer and Salovey's Theory of Emotional Intelligence

Mayer and Salovey have been influential and prominent in the area of EI and the development of a conceptual and theoretical framework. The authors' theoretical approach is credited with engendering further research and suggested to be of interest

to the ‘scientific community’ due to its ‘solid and justified’ basis , the original measurement, ‘systematic evaluation’ and empirical evidence base (Fernandez-Berrocal and Extremera, 2006, p.8).

Their first proposal and formulation of EI was presented in 1990:

‘The ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action’

(Mayer and Salovey, 1990, p.189)

Later, a more refined and detailed definition of the mental ability was provided as a result of the authors feeling the above was ‘vague’ and ‘impoverished’ (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, p.10):

‘Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.’

Mayer and Salovey (1997, p.10)

To accompany the revised definition was a revised conceptualisation presented as a four branched model (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). This encompasses four broader abilities:

1. The ability to perceive emotion
2. The ability to use emotion to facilitate thought
3. The ability to understand emotions

4. The ability to manage emotion

(Brackett and Salovey, 2006, p.35)

A hierarchical order is integrated into the diagram from ‘basic psychological processes’ to ‘higher more psychologically integrated processes’ (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, p.10). The lowest branch is suggested to relate to ‘simple abilities’ and the highest representative of ‘conscious and reflective regulation of emotion’. Ordinal stages are presented within each branch working from left to right; progression through these stages is suggested to be quicker for those with high levels of EI but age is also suggested to be a determining factor with higher order abilities said to ‘emerge within a more integrated adult personality’ (p.10). One difficulty that is likely to arise from this is being able to ascertain what expectations there can be of children and young people with regards to the mastery of all the abilities with no clear ‘cut off’ age stages being provided by the authors.

2.2.2 Goleman’s Theory of Emotional Intelligence

In his influential book Goleman (1996, p.34), focusing heavily on young people and the educational context, defines EI as:

‘...abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope.’

Goleman (1996, p. 32) dedicates a chapter to each of the domains, where he provides an extensive and in depth neurological account of each, detailing several emotional aspects and the ‘nature of emotional intelligence’. Each of the domains are briefly

outlined below but this by no means provides a full appreciation of the extensive account provided by Goleman.

1. Know Thyself (Self-Awareness) (Goleman, 1996, p.46)

Self-awareness is the frequent term of reference, in regard to an individual paying continuous thought ‘to one’s internal states’. Competence is represented by having the ability to process our temperament and thinking in varying states of emotion, at the same time, being able to contain these ‘inner states’ (p.47).

2. Passion’s Slaves (Self-Regulation) (Goleman, 1996, p. 56)

This domain signifies how it is essential for individuals to achieve the goal of ‘balance’ when managing feelings and emotions. Although, it is appreciated that no feeling lacks ‘value and significance’ and thus expression of each is desired; success is determined by displaying ‘...appropriate emotion, feeling proportionate to circumstance’.

Master Aptitude (Motivation) (Goleman, 1996, p.78)

Our attention here is drawn to how emotions can be disruptive in everyday life and preoccupy our thoughts. Goleman argues that the ‘emotional brain’ can be dominant and override and eradicate the activity of the ‘thinking brain’. Thus, emotional intelligence is a ‘capacity’ that can ‘facilitate or interfere’ with other abilities such as problem solving, planning and goal setting. To compensate for overwhelming effects it is suggested that ‘positive motivation’ may act as an antidote (p.79).

3. The Roots of Empathy (Empathy) (Goleman, 1996, p. 96)

This domain is viewed as an extension to self-awareness, with competence in being aware of our emotions, increasing the level of skills likely to promote empathy. Those

possessing these skills will be able to ‘weave through people’s words and actions’ by unpicking social cues and communication such as pitch and tone of voices, posture, silences, physical expressions. Failure to acknowledge others’ emotions and feelings is considered a ‘major deficit in EI’ and will be detrimental to the capacity to build relationships and care.

4. *The Social Arts (Handling Relationships) (Goleman, 1996, p.111)*

Goleman touches on several components that are required to successfully navigate through relationships:

1. The aptitude to manage emotions in others: understanding others’ emotional state and responding in a way that further forms those feelings.
2. Being able to ‘attune to others demands’ and manage our own emotions in response to this e.g. being patient (p.112)
3. Development of ‘emotional skills: self-management and empathy’ (p. 112)
4. Management of the exchange of emotional signals we send during interactions.
5. Displaying our own emotions that are in accordance with ‘display rules’ e.g. hiding feelings that may hurt the individual who will receive them

Effective practice of all of these ‘social competencies’ is proposed to aid the ability to interact with others and develop ‘intimate relationships’ (p.113).

Goleman’s Reference to Emotional Literacy

Goleman (1996, p. xiii) then proceeds to ‘explore what hazards await those who, growing in maturity, fail to master the emotional realm’, in which both education and emotional literacy become major foci. He dedicates an entire chapter to EL which

would suggest that he supports the position that both terms are closely linked. It appears when referring to EI Goleman is conceptualising the phenomenon, explaining what skills, abilities and traits are necessary to be successful and what a deficit in each of the areas can mean. While EL represents an individual's understanding and implementation of each of these components, those lacking this are labelled as 'emotionally illiterate' (Goleman, 1996, p. 231) and those who are emotionally literate viewed as possessing a high degree of emotional intelligence.

2.2.3 Steiner's Theory of Emotional Literacy

Steiner's (1997; 2003) theoretical framework and conceptualisation of EL is influenced and built upon an alternative position to the majority of authors within this field. Eric Berne is attributed to as greatly influencing the basis and foundations of Steiner's work, in particular the theory of transactional analysis.

Both of Steiner's books dedicate the first chapter to 'What is Emotional Literacy?'. Steiner's (1997, p.11) definition of EL is conceptualised as being constructed of three abilities:

1. The ability to understand your emotions
2. The ability to listen to others and empathize with their emotions
3. The ability to express emotions productively

As with many other concepts of EL he then proceeds to explain what it means to be emotionally literate; how it appears in practice and impacts on an individual's daily life. Steiner (1997, p. 11) argues that an emotionally literate individual has a better 'quality of life' as a result of being able 'to handle emotions in a way that improves your personal power'.

As expected there have been revisions to certain aspects within this chapter although the core elements have remained the same. A key difference to be noted in Steiner's theoretical conceptualisation is the noticeable shift in defining the terms EL and EI.

In his first publication Steiner refers to both the terms EL and EI when providing a definition and conceptualisation of his stance, yet, in his later publication the term EI is disassociated from his work. Steiner emphasises that love is at the core of EL and therefore distinguishes itself from EI: 'emotional literacy is heart-centred emotional intelligence' (Steiner, 2003, L.110).

One consistency does remain, the five core skills, which Steiner proposes encapsulates EL and are the focus of his proposed training framework.

1. Knowing Your Own Feelings (Steiner, 2003, L417)

This principle involves an individual being able to identify and define a variety of feelings. Not only is it important to recognise these feelings but also be adept to differentiate their strength and discern what caused them.

2. Having a Heartfelt Sense of Empathy (Steiner, 2003, L417)

Having the ability to 'recognise other people's feelings', 'understand why others feel the way they do' and 'identify with another's situation or motives'. Steiner suggests that being 'empathetic' means others' emotions reverberate with us and we possess an instinctive sense of understanding.

3. Learning to Manage Our Emotions (Steiner, 2003, L431)

Having control is central to this principle and also being emotionally literate. He claims that having an awareness of our own and others' emotions is not enough, we need to understand 'when and how' to express both 'negative' and 'positive' emotions.

4. Repairing Emotional Damage (Steiner, 2003, L431)

Steiner stipulates that there are several facets to being able to 'repair emotional damage'. Firstly, an individual has to acknowledge they have made a mistake before then taking responsibility, seeking 'forgiveness' and fixing it. Steiner proposes that this element is crucial to having successful relationships.

5. Putting it All Together (Steiner, 2003, L431)

Reference is made to an ability termed as 'emotional interactivity', which is about applying the 'emotional skills' we have and putting them into practice. This could be likened to the commonly used term of 'social skills'. Steiner provides an example of this, describing how one individual uses and applies the skills from each principle within social interactions to create a more harmonious and pleasant environment. He proceeds to suggest that these 'emotional literacy skills' can be learnt at any age stage, even in adulthood.

2.3 Interventions and Empirical Research

2.3.1 Small Scale Research

Trait Emotional Intelligence

Mavoreli et al (2009) investigated the role of trait EI with primary aged school children. The study focused on exploring the construct of the phenomenon through examining the predictability relationship with ‘cognitive ability’, ‘emotion perception’ and ‘social behaviour’ (p.259). The sample population included 140 children between the ages of 8-12 years, recruited from two schools within London.

Statistical analysis of the results led to conclusions that trait EI does not have a significant association with ‘cognitive ability’, however, it is a strong predictor of ‘emotional and social criteria’ (Mavoreli et al, 2009, p. 259). All statistical analysis measures for ‘emotion perception’ and ‘social competence’ were indicative of a positive significant relationship with trait EI (Mavoreli et al, 2009, p.267). This directional relationship was also true for trait EI and peer ratings of social competence.

A central factor that contributed to these positive ratings was ‘being kind’, with other descriptors being in the ‘expected direction’ but not reaching statistical significance (p.265). The peer rated measurement ‘Guess Who’, was adapted, with four original descriptors being removed (disrupts, acts shy, starts fights and seeks help) and two more integrated ‘is kind’ and ‘is a bully’. Hence, if the authors had not included a descriptor for being kind there would have been no significant association present. Mavoreli et al (2009, p. 263) also only utilised the ‘facial expressions’ component, as opposed to the whole assessments for ‘social skills’ and ‘emotion skills’. Although the results for social and emotional competence presented could be considered symbolic

of a positive association with trait EI, the correlation coefficient obtained for each of these was between .193 and .265 and therefore would be considered weak.

It is questionable whether the conclusions drawn from this study provide evidence to support the enormity of the claim that trait EI is a strong predictor of emotional and social competence. Another point of contention is that the measures selected may not adequately encompass social and emotional competence as a whole.

Mavoreli and Sanchez-Ruiz (2011) carried out an extension of this investigation but altered the focus to exploring the associations between trait EI and school outcomes. The sample population included 565 children between the ages of 7-12 years recruited from three schools within London.

Conclusions drawn mirror those from Mavoreli et al (2009), suggesting that there is no evidence of a correlation between trait EI and 'academic achievement' but there is a significant association between trait EI and 'social competence and behaviour' (Mavoreli and Sanchez-Ruiz, 2011,p. 124). Interpretation of the results reported is challenging as the boundaries of statistical significance appear to differ between variables. For the analysis of academic achievement a value of $p > 0.05$ is reported to be non-significant, yet, in the relationship between trait EI and leadership qualities, the same value is deemed as evidence for supporting an association. Reasons for this movement in statistical boundaries need to be explicitly explained by the authors.

Further to this analysis, Mavoreli and Sanchez-Ruiz (2011, p. 124) investigated the differences in trait EI scores between three categorical groups: 'cognition and learning difficulties (CLD)', 'behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)' and 'control'. The ANOVA revealed a 'significant main effect' of group; however, this effect was

small (p. 124). Post-hoc analyses conducted showed that those in the control group had higher trait EI scores than those categorised as having CLD or BESD. To draw implications from these results requires further exploration as no causal or directional explanation can be implied and a number of interacting factors could be at play within this relationship.

Local Authority Emotional Literacy Project Evaluation

Coppock (2007), carried out a small-scale evaluation of an emotional literacy project taking place in schools in England aiming to:

'facilitate positive mental health in the children and young people in the local education authority' (p.407).

The project had been established since 1999. During this time the programme had been delivered over 80 times. A wide variety of approaches were incorporated e.g. circle time, anger management and EL workbooks, training and resources (Coppock, 2007, p. 407).

This is one of the limited studies available that had a universal qualitative methodological approach. Coppock (2007, p. 408) argues that if an evaluation is to investigate an 'intervention centred on complex human relationships' the researcher should select an approach which is 'capable' of embracing this. Additionally, a quantitative approach is argued to be considered inferior and unable to encapsulate the 'complex world of practice'.

From the children's perspective there were several positive aspects that were reported:

- Improvements in self-esteem
- Improvements in self-confidence
- Learning about other people's feelings/points of view
- More friends
- Better relationships
- Helping others

(Coppock, 2007, p. 413)

The year six pupils, who acted as peer researchers, also reported observing application of emotional literacy skills by those directly involved with the programme:

- Listening to others
- Not interrupting
- Overcoming shyness to speak up
- Respecting each other

(Coppock, 2007, p.414)

Although this provides evidence to support the author's claims that 'emotional literacy work' is valuable in 'promoting positive mental health' (Coppock, 2007, p. 418), several aspects of EL e.g. understanding emotions, are only referenced in the self-reports about development and not supported by observations, therefore, not necessarily seen as transferring to practice.

Qualitative analysis of the parents' data also suggested that the project aims were being met. Interestingly, a large proportion of the reported data signified how the programme had supported the parents' individual development of EL but with limited mention of how it had helped them support their child's contextual environment. This could have been determined by the content of the input parents received or the interview schedule, but this is not made explicit. Regardless, it has been acknowledged and argued that key adults require an understanding of EL to enable them to support the development of their child's own levels of EL and therefore these results suggest a positive movement in the right direction (Coppock, 2007).

Themes presented from the 'professionals' data provide a more holistic view of the impact of the programme. The children are reported to have improved 'behaviour and emotional well-being' and relational aspects with peers e.g. respect, empathy, inclusion (Coppock, 2007, p. 415). Professionals felt that it had developed their confidence in being able to apply EL approaches, promoted the effectiveness of the roles of project workers by increasing their EL 'skills and knowledge' and had viewed the collaborative approach to delivering EL programmes as a positive experience. Further to this, professionals also reported a positive shift in 'capacities of parents/carers' and within the school context as a whole (p.415).

Overall the qualitative analysis goes some way to support the author's claims that the programme does meet the aims it proposes to address, although to what extent is not clear. The reports from all participants demonstrate that a positive movement was present across all groups. Coppock (2007, p. 417) did acknowledge several barriers that are likely to diminish the level of good practice and therefore need to be addressed. Firstly, and not surprisingly, she details that there was 'confusion' around

the definition of EL. Not only were there different ‘conceptual’ perspectives but also fragmentation between labels associated with those specific and targeted approaches being implemented. These inconsistencies have already been alluded to in the literature review and are not simple to rectify but professionals working in this field need to strive to promote consistency with regards to the theoretical model and approaches they are drawing upon, even if this starts within individual projects before spreading to the wider community.

Practitioner roles also required further clarity and agreement. Different services within one local authority were involved which contributed to the confusion. Weare and Gray (2003) suggest this can be minimised by the local authority implementing a strategic approach and location to provide clarity. Finally, Coppock (2007, p. 417) explains ‘five structural barriers’ that professionals reported:

1. Demands of the national curriculum on schools and teachers’ time
2. Dominant concerns with traditional approaches to learning and educational achievement
3. Some schools and teachers are suspicious of EL initiatives, seeing them as just another passing ‘fad’
4. Schools and teachers do not recognise any strategic approach to EL within the LEA to facilitate whole-school approaches
5. There is little recognition of the emotional support needs of the practitioners working within the LA

These findings are corroborated by other authors (Antidote, 2003; Weare and Gray, 2003) suggesting the factors presented require some further consideration and

exploration. Further support, guidance and training are being called for from the LA to enable and facilitate an effective whole school approach.

2.3.2 National Initiative - Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

Curriculum

The primary SEAL curriculum is a national initiative which was introduced in the UK in 2005 by the Department for Education, to support the social, emotional and behavioural development of children (DfES, 2005). Within the publication it is noted that SEAL is one of numerous terms utilised to label this aspect of development and learning and that emotional literacy and emotional intelligence are two of these. Interestingly, although an alternative term was selected, the theoretical model that the curriculum is based upon is that of Emotional Intelligence proposed by Goleman (1996). The foundations of the curriculum are based upon the five domains that make up Goleman's construct of EI:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Empathy
5. Social skills

(DfES, 2005, p. 6)

With the then New Labour government promoting this national initiative and with government publications such as 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2004), the holistic approach to education and the needs of a child became a key focus in schools. Although this picture has now changed, since the introduction of the Coalition

government in 2010, the need to support social, emotional and behavioural needs has not diminished and some schools still utilise SEAL materials to meet this need. Both national and empirical evaluations were conducted on the SEAL curriculum and therefore to exclude the literature would disregard any evidence base for a curriculum built around a model of EI (Goleman 1996), which is the subject of this paper.

Application and Effectiveness of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Curriculum

National Evaluation of a Whole School Approach

The evaluation of Primary SEAL was incorporated as part of the 'Behaviour and Attendance Pilot' (Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw, 2006, p1). As part of the pilot 25 local authorities had the opportunity to trial the primary SEAL resources and 'training in improving behaviour' (p.3). Consideration here has been given to one chapter of this national evaluation; 'The SEAL curriculum materials strand' as this was the only chapter which provided an insight into the effectiveness of the programme (Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw, 2006, p. 2). Here the authors focus on evaluating the implementation of the programme within '16 good practice schools' (p. 65).

The data collated from professionals was broken down into two main sections: impact on staff and perceived impact on children. A summary of the areas reported are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of themes from professional data.

Impact on Staff	Impact on Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased staff understanding of the importance of social, emotional and behavioural skills for children • Teacher confidence • Approaches to dealing with incidents • Teacher stress and workload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on children's behaviour and the ethos in school • Impact on relationships in the classroom • Impact in the playground and at lunchtime • Whole school ethos • Impact on children's well-being and social, emotional and behavioural skills • Impact on children's work

The interview extracts detailed in the evaluation suggest that the SEAL programme had a positive impact across the majority of the areas outlined in table 3. Questionnaire data, however, provides a more complex and mixed view especially when considering the views of teachers. Although the percentage of weighting for their responses indicates positive effects and improvements across a number of the above factors, this is not universal, for example, 53% of teachers disagreed that it reduced management time in school spent on discipline matters for pupils and 39% disagreed with the statement 'improving the behaviour of pupils out of the classroom' (Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw, 2006, p.84).

Comparative analysis of the pre and post responses from pupils also revealed mixed results. In order to analyse the results the data was separated into categories for both key stages. With each category, two factors were considered: change and interaction. A summary of the results are presented in Table 4.

These results suggest that the claim by the authors that the primary SEAL programme ‘had a major impact on children’s well-being, confidence, social and communication skills, relationships.....’ (Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw 2006, p.95) are not supported by the statistical analysis. There were only 6 statistically significant results reported across both key stages and all categories, and, even more concerning, 4 of these were in a negative direction. Within the school context the most disconcerting could be considered the decline in ‘academic work’ for both KS1 and KS2.

Table 4: Summary of results for KS1 and KS2 pupils' responses

KS 1 Categories	Change	Interaction	KS 2 categories	Change	Interaction
Self- esteem and motivation	Non-significant	Significant .002 Reception = negative direction Yr1 and 2 = positive direction	Self-esteem and motivation	Non-significant	Significant .001 Difference across ages at pre and post stages
Emotions and awareness of them in self and others	Non-significant	Significant .021 Significant age differences at both pre and post stages	Perceptions of own emotions	Significant .014 Negative direction	Non-significant
Social skills and relationships	Non-significant	Non-significant	Awareness of own emotions	Non-significant	Non-significant
Attitudes towards school and relationships with teachers	Non-significant	Significant .0001 Significant age differences at both pre and post stages	Awareness of emotions in others	Significant .046 Positive direction	Non-significant
Academic work	Significant .03 Negative direction across all ages	Non-significant	Anxiety about school work	Non-significant	Non-significant
			Social skills and relationships	Significant .03 Positive direction	Non-significant
			Attitudes towards school and relationships with teachers	Significant .0001 Negative direction	Significant .01 Difference across ages at pre and post stages
			Academic work	Significant .0001 Negative direction	Significant .029 Difference across ages at pre and post stages

There were only 2 positive significant changes in relation to the development of ‘social and emotional and aspects of learning’ or the model of EI adopted, which were also only present within the KS2 population. Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw (2006, p. 100) conclude the chapter by proposing several ‘factors’ and ‘issues’ which may have contributed to the effectiveness of the programme:

- Lack of commitment from the senior management team
- Some schools were implementing several initiatives which led staff to being overloaded
- Staff resistance
- Extensive staff training required to encourage engagement and understanding of the key concepts

Evaluation of a Small Group Approach

Humphrey et al (2008, p.10) evaluated the use of the SEAL curriculum as a small group intervention, specifically for pupils who are identified as needing ‘additional support to develop their social and emotional skills’. A mixed method approach was utilised including; interviews with ‘SEAL leads’ across 12 LAs, statistical analysis of outcomes for 624 pupils within 37 primary schools and 6 case studies of ‘nominated lead practice schools’ (p.6).

The statistical analysis revealed a ‘complicated picture’ in regards to the evaluation of the impact of the SEAL programme (Humphrey et al, 2008, p. 6). There were no statistically significant findings from the parent outcomes. Staff reports only resulted in significant changes over time as a result of the intervention, in two domains; ‘self-regulation’ and ‘peer problems for pupils’. The most promising results were present in

the pupil data, which suggested significant changes over time in relation to the intervention for ‘self-regulation’, ‘social skills’ and ‘overall emotional literacy scores’ (p.6). However, this means there were several dimensions that did not reach significance. These findings suggest that pupils’ ratings may increase due to them now having an understanding of expectations around social and emotional learning but staff and parent reports would indicate this is not being observed in practice.

From the interviews with LA professionals and case study analysis it was suggested that effectiveness was influenced by a number of factors:

- Success was increased when a school had already established the implementation of approaches/interventions to develop social and emotional skills
- Group facilitators with ‘skills, knowledge and experience’ were essential
- Barriers to success included: ‘attitudes to staff’, staff members understanding about the SEAL programme and ‘initiative overload’
- Generalisation of social emotional skills spread to the wider school context especially in schools which used ‘explicit strategies’ to promote sustainability
- Success was influenced by a number of elements: reachable goals, positive reinforcement for appropriate and desirable behaviour, children being able to express their emotions and promoting a ‘sense of fun’.
- The majority of the good practice cases followed the guidance provided closely

(Humphrey et al, 2008, p. 6)

Evaluation of a Mixed Approach

Knowler and Frederickson (2013) conducted an investigation that was more targeted and explicit. Here, the SEAL programme was implemented on a whole school and class level but paired with the use of the ‘Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention’ (Faupel, 2003) as a targeted intervention. The evaluative study aimed to explore the effects of these on three aspects: ‘bullying behaviour’, ‘trait EI’ and ‘behavioural adjustment’ (Knowler and Frederickson, 2003, p.866). The sample consisted of 45 children (aged 8-9 years) who were randomly assigned to either an ‘intervention’ or ‘wait-list comparison’ group (Knowler and Frederickson, 2003, p.869).

To aid the implementation of the targeted intervention the staff were provided with a programme of work which was written by one of the authors. This was based on four out of the five domain areas that Faupel (2003) suggests EL comprises of:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Empathy
4. Social skills

(Faupel, 2003)

As with the SEAL studies previously discussed, the Emotional Literacy Assessment (Faupel, 2003) was viewed as an appropriate measure. A prominent use of this measure was to categorise the pupils into a ‘high’ or ‘low’ EL group. This was determined by using the median score of the whole sample. This could be considered as an ineffective method of categorical allocation considering Faupel suggests five categorical cut offs which would be considered more reliable having been subjected

to standardisation, reliability and validity testing. Additional to this measure, a Likert scale measure of trait EI (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire- Child Form (TEIQue-CF Mavoreli et al, 2008) was administered.

Statistical analysis of the results of these outcome measures revealed mixed results. For investigations into bullying behaviour, Knowler and Frederickson (2013, p.872) report that interpretation of the main effects was not possible due to the ‘significant three-way interaction effect’ for time, group and EL level and therefore ‘simple effect analysis’ was conducted. There were two statistically significant time and group interactions for the low EL group, with both ‘peer nominations of bullying’ and ‘engagement in bullying behaviour’ decreasing. Both the analysis of the high EL group and comparative wait-list group revealed no significant effects of intervention and time.

The results obtained from the measure of ‘trait EI’ revealed there was no significant main effect for ‘intervention group’ or ‘time’. However, there was a main effect for ‘EL category’ (Knowler and Frederickson, 2013, p.874). The authors suggest that those in the high EL group consistently score higher on the TEIQue-CF than those categorised as the low EL group, hence, the intervention did not have an effect on ‘emotional intelligence’. It could be argued here that the theoretical basis of the intervention and assessment measures are not compatible. Both the SEAL programme and the targeted intervention were designed utilising concepts and domains from Goleman’s (1996) model of EI, yet, the assessment selected consists of ‘nine facets’ of trait EI and therefore the compatibility of this measure is questionable. Additional to this the Emotional Literacy Assessment (Faupel, 2003), also based on Goleman’s model of EI, was only used to categorise groups when it could have been used as a reliable

and valid pre and post measure to explore the hypothesis of the effect of the intervention on emotional intelligence.

2.4 Summary of Findings

All studies considered provide a mixed picture with regards to the effectiveness of the programmes/interventions in developing levels of EL for children in educational settings. This was true regardless of approach: whole school, small group or targeted. There was evidence of some positive movement across several aspects but this was restricted to only reaching statistical significance for certain measurement components.

The evidence base does indicate that none of the approaches so far have been adequate enough to meet the diverse needs of all young people. Also, there were numerous systemic and implementation factors that contributed to the fidelity and effectiveness of the programme being implemented.

Some (Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth, 2013, p.251) have argued that more rigorous methodological approaches are required, such as ‘randomised control trials’, on the basis that this is viewed as the ‘gold standard’ for intervention evaluation. Nevertheless, this will not eliminate the emergence of ‘black box’ evaluations which fail to provide an understanding of what mechanisms are present to create movement in outcomes. A mixed methods approach is required to achieve this and although some of the evaluations did use this methodological approach the focus was on evaluating the ‘intervention’ and not investigating why some changes occurred and others did not.

Changes in government have altered priorities and the number of ‘school improvement strategies’ have reduced. Even though there has been more emphasis placed on the call for evidence based approaches and a continued expectation for educational settings to promote young people’s social and emotional well-being, those who invest in this area are accountable for selecting their approach and then supplying evidence to demonstrate positive outcomes. This flexibility may be welcomed by some but one common thread was a call for professional and LA support, for staff and educational settings, to be able to achieve this desired outcome.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by outlining the rationale for this research before detailing the specific research aims and questions. It then proceeds to provide an account of the research and researchers' positioning in regards to epistemological, ontological and paradigm approaches. The case study design and both research methods used are introduced and justified, making links to their applications and purposes within this study. Consideration is given to ethics, reliability, validity, triangulation and generalisability before finally detailing the data analysis methods of statistical and thematic analysis. The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive, coherent, consistent and explicit account of the purposes of the research and how the approaches adopted meet these.

3.2 Rationale for Study

Integral to social science research is the ability to reflect, adapt and modify as a research study progresses. The complexities of social research call for a 'recursive' opposed to a 'linear' plan (Thomas, 2013, p. 19). It is therefore inevitable that the research questions were refined throughout the research process. Initial aims and questions predominantly stem from our own curiosity, interest and educational or professional background, which have already been explicitly outlined in the introduction.

The next step requires consideration of the existing literature; Thomas (2011, p. 58) states, 'You are not an island. Your work must occur in the context of what is already known'. The benefits of this are multifaceted, not only does it highlight current 'gaps' within the research of EL but also indicates steps that could be taken to increase robustness and effective practice. To organise my thoughts during this process I outlined the limitations and findings from existing literature, to illustrate the current context and then utilised these to guide and inform the aims and research questions for the present study (see appendix 1).

Following refinement, the following aims and research questions were constructed:

Research Aims:

- To design and deliver a targeted intervention based on the individual needs of the group to develop their Emotional Literacy.
- To see what changes happen to a group's outcomes and mechanisms, in relation to emotional literacy, following a small group targeted emotional literacy intervention.

Research Questions

Table 5: Research Questions

What happens to emotional literacy levels when a small group targeted emotional literacy intervention is implemented?	
Do outcomes and mechanisms change following a small group targeted emotional literacy intervention?	
Outcomes	Mechanisms
Does a small group targeted emotional literacy intervention increase emotional literacy outcomes for the group?	What mechanisms are at play, for the group, which contribute to the emotional literacy outcomes?
Does a small group targeted emotional literacy intervention increase overall emotional literacy scores for the group? Does a small group targeted emotional literacy intervention increase scores across all dimensional areas? Do parent and teacher emotional literacy scores increase following a small group targeted intervention?	Do these mechanisms change following a small group targeted emotional literacy intervention?

3.3 Epistemology and Ontology

Thomas (2013, p. 118) states that considering your position as a researcher, in relation to epistemology and ontology, can be a challenging concept but it is essential within social sciences due to the complexity of the questions posed. This process encourages the researcher to address ‘fundamental issues’ and seek answers to ‘basic questions’ (p.118). Ontology is referring to ‘what you are looking at – the kind of events that exist in the social world’, whereas, epistemology ‘is about how you look and find out about these’ (Thomas, 2013, p. 120).

Hence, we are concerned with ‘reality’ in regards to values that underlie particular forms of knowledge but also the relationship between the researcher and the creation

of knowledge (Sobh and Perry, 2006, p. 1194). Our frameworks for research and practice are influenced by the epistemological and ontological positioning we adopt and consequently inform the methodological approach we take. The overall ‘conceptual framework’ is referred to as a ‘paradigm’ described by Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.105) as ‘the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator’.

The two extremities of these paradigms, which are influential in social science research, are positivism and interpretivism (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Positivists claim that it is conceivable to ‘describe what is out there’ and if we investigate the relationship between ‘the world’ and ‘our perception and understanding of it’ we can find the truth (Willig, 2001, p. 3). Interpretivists suggest that it is not that straightforward as each individual may perceive the phenomena in a different way. Thomas (2013, p. 108) claims the key principle in interpretivism is focusing on people and how they interact, considering what individuals ‘think’ and how they ‘form ideas’ and ‘construct their worlds’.

Sobh and Perry (2006, p. 1195) describe two more prominent paradigms: ‘realism’ and ‘critical theory’. The first being the conceptual framework for this research study. Within this paradigm, the philosophical position is that there is an obtainable ‘reality’; however, this is ‘only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible’ (Sobh and Perry, 2006, p. 1200). Bhaskar (1978, as cited in Sobh and Perr, 2006, p. 1199) proposes that realists believe that there is an ‘external reality’; hence, truth exists ‘independently of the researcher’s mind’. This external reality, in realism, comprises of ‘structures’ which interact through the use of ‘mechanisms’ (Sobh and Perry, 2006, p. 1200).

In recognising that their own perspectives and reality contain disparities, realists attempt to create a picture that takes account of the relativity of ‘time and place’ (Sobh and Perry, 2006, p. 1200). Investigation of the ‘structures and mechanisms’ underlying phenomena allows the researcher to identify ‘patterns in experiences’, whilst appreciating these patterns may not always be present (Sobh and Perry, 2006, p. 1200). Thus, core to the philosophy of realism is to form ‘a family of answers’ that illustrates a variety of perspectives and contexts (Cook et al, 1992; cited in Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p.152). Realists are seeking to understand why a result is present by gaining a deeper and richer insight.

One key feature of realism that encapsulated the aims and questions posed in the current study, is the connection or relationship between ‘an action’, ‘mechanism’, ‘outcome’ and ‘context’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p.58). To exemplify this I have detailed and then adapted the figurative illustration provided by Pawson and Tilley.

Figure 1: ‘Generative Causation’ Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p. 58

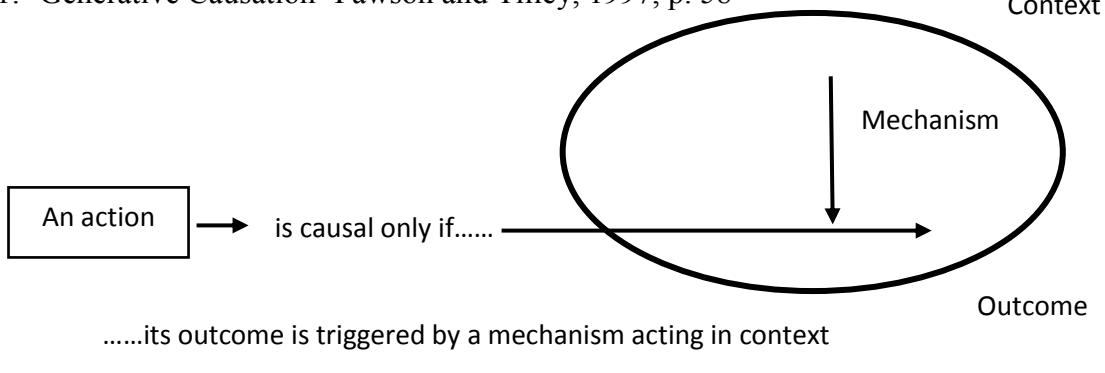
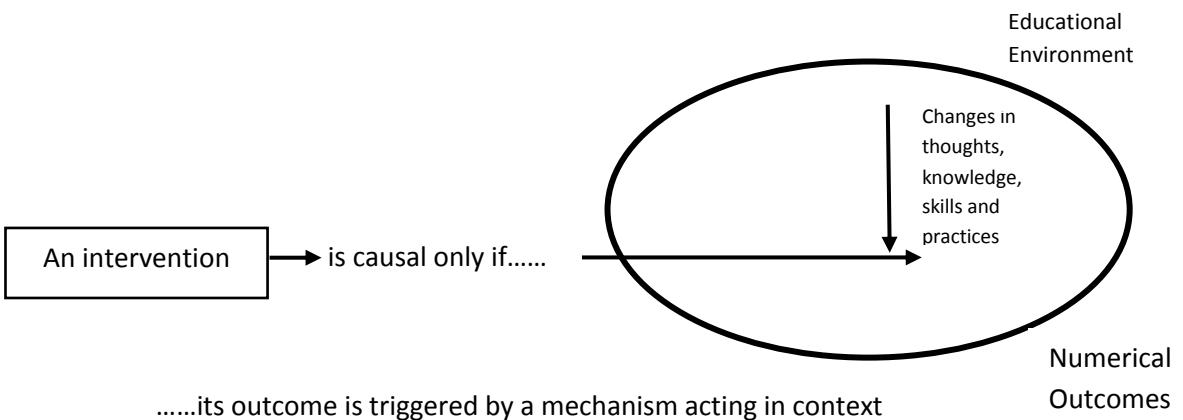


Figure 2: Adaption of Pawson and Tilley's 'Generative Causation' for the current study



In other words, an action (the intervention) is causal only if its outcome (numerical data) is triggered by a mechanism (changes in thoughts, knowledge, skills and practices) acting in context (educational environment). Therefore, it is necessary to consider the mechanisms in play and go beneath the surface to gain a truer picture of what is happening within this context, to gain a greater understanding of the phenomena.

3.4 Design Frame - Case Study

3.4.1 Rationale

'The design frame is like a scaffold that holds your research in shape and helps you to structure it. The design frame you choose will be the one that best helps you to answer your research questions'

(Thomas, 2013, p. 133)

Considering the research questions for this study, the case study was deemed the most appropriate methodological approach in being able to provide answers to these. Both the research questions and realist paradigm suggest that it is essential to go beneath the surface and explore underlying ‘mechanisms’ to provide an in-depth account of the phenomena being investigated. This proposition is mirrored and is a key principle within the case study approach:

‘A case study involves an in-depth, intensive and sharply focused exploration of such an occurrence.’

(Willig, 2001, p. 70)

It allows us to take into account the complexity of social sciences research but also that of the phenomena within a real life context. To achieve his holistic insight case studies recruit a diverse range of methods, however, Willig (2001, p. 70) claims a number of ‘defining features’ still remain stable. These are outlined below.

1. An idiographic perspective -The research is focused on the ‘particular’ not ‘general’.
2. Attention to contextual data – A holistic approach is taken considering the context within which the case study takes place. Consideration is given to how multiple factors ‘relate’ or ‘interact’.
3. Triangulation – In order to gain a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomena different methods and analysis will be adopted.
4. A temporal element – There is an emphasis on ‘change’ and ‘development’ therefore time is a key concept.

5. A concern with theory – Intricate investigation of the particular allows theories to be built upon or tested.

Willig, 2001, p. 70-71.

Each of these core features has a dominant presence throughout the context of this research. Adopting a case study approach fulfils the principles of a realist approach, which in turn, provides an effective way to meet the aims of the research and answer the research questions.

3.4.2 Features of this Case Study

To provide a structured, organised and clear account of the ‘case’ within this research the ‘kinds of case study’ framework proposed by Thomas (2011, p.75) has been adopted.

Purpose

Case studies take on one of two forms of inquiry: intrinsic or instrumental (Stake, 2005). The purpose of an intrinsic study is to solely investigate the case itself; there is no additional interest in focus. Whereas, the instrumental case study used in this research, is a ‘tool’ (Thomas, 2011, p.98). The case allows us to gain an insight into the phenomena of interest; helping us to understand it better. Consequently, the case used in this research provided a ‘tool’ to enable and develop the researchers thinking and understanding around EL in an educational context.

Further purposes can also be drawn when considering ‘exploratory’ and ‘explanatory’ concepts of case studies (Thomas, 2011, p.99; Yin, 1994, p.1). It is difficult to compartmentalise the current case study into one of these categories as elements of

both are present as is commonly the case. The exploratory element stems from attempting to understand what happens to outcomes and mechanisms in relation to accessing a targeted EL intervention. However, there is also an explanatory component considering the interaction between the outcomes, mechanisms and intervention.

Approach

Thomas (2011, p. 109) suggests there are a range of different approaches within case studies that may be taken to fulfil the purposes of the research: ‘testing a theory’, ‘building a theory’, and ‘drawing a picture’, ‘experimental’ and ‘interpretative’. To subscribe to a pure approach in its entirety, in this case, has not been obtainable with links to two approaches being identified, yet, not necessarily completely fulfilling the brief of each. Yin (1994, p. 4) suggests that ‘boundaries’ between each approach are not always clear cut and although each possess ‘distinctive characteristics’ there is a large proportion of cross over.

In regards to testing or building a theory, neither plays a prominent role within this research. It is not seeking to formulate a theory or provide an alternative explanation to those that already exist in the area of EL; neither is it testing the theoretical framework of EL that is being utilised. Both the interpretative and experimental approaches are considered to be reflected in the current case study with elements of each featuring in the approach adopted. It is interpretative in nature, with the aim of gaining ‘an in-depth understanding’ to answer the research questions and being utilised to support ideas and promote understanding of the phenomena (Thomas, 2011, p. 126). However, it also has an experimental component focusing on how

things change over time, in response to change being imposed, in the form of the intervention with the case study acting as its own control comparison (Thomas, 2011).

Process

A single case study design was selected for a dual purpose; firstly, this case was of ‘intrinsic interest’ because it provided an example of the phenomena under investigation and secondly, it allowed for ‘application of existing theories to real world data’ (Willig, 2001, p. 74). Additionally, time was a core element opposed to comparison. Thomas (2013, p.153) notes that in a single case study design the researcher ‘notices change as it happens and seeks its antecedents and consequences’. This embodies a key element of the present study, looking at how not only outcomes change over time but which mechanisms also change and contribute to this development. This means it is possible to look at how these aspects are related and establish a degree of knowledge about ‘how cause and effect change with time as other elements of a situation also change’ (Thomas, 2013, p.153).

Central to the process of this case study is the ‘diachronic’ nature, with time and change again being key aspects (Thomas, p. 2011, p.149). The case is being used to investigate and explore an element of change that occurs over time in response to the targeted intervention. As previously acknowledged in the discussion around ‘approach’, this process takes on experimental form, yet, at the same time has a predominant interpretative element.

3.4.3 Case Study Selection

Identification of the primary school was undertaken in collaboration with line managers within the Educational Psychology Service. A decision around which school to invite

to participate was also informed by the Local Authority's needs led service delivery model. The school identified had requested support from the Educational Psychology Service, in the previous academic year, to provide advice and guidance around how they could meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of some of their pupils.

Identification of the participants was done through 'purposive sampling', thus, the pupils selected met certain criteria and provided a 'case' of the phenomena under investigation (Willig, 2001, p.58). This was completed through a collaborative process with the head teacher and SENCo. Using the literature on EL from Goleman (1996) and Faupel (2003) and practice based evidence, the staff were introduced to the area of EL and what low levels of EL may look like in practice/how the child may present in the educational setting. The literature review indicates that EL interventions are more effective and beneficial for children who have the lowest levels of EL and therefore the school was asked to think about which pupils had the highest level of need.

Initially it had been agreed that the 'case' would include 6 pupils from years 5 and 6. These year groups were selected as research suggests that EL plays an important role in transition (Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson and Pope, 2007). Due to the timing of the intervention the school felt it was no longer appropriate for the year 6 pupils to attend due to SATs.

The final case included 4 pupils; a pen portrait of each of the children is provided below. This information is based on discussions which took place with the Head teacher and SENCo in relation to the suitability and selection of participants.

Child A - Male, Aged 9 years 11 months

Child A has developed meaningful friendships with a small and consistent group of peers. He can find it taxing to cope with challenging social situations involving his peers. If there are disagreements he will make no attempt to resolve the problem or reach a compromise and he is unable to see it from another's perspective. This can lead to Child A becoming verbally and physically aggressive towards his peers and unresponsive to adult mediation. These issues cannot always be addressed immediately as it can take Child A time to calm down and be ready to reflect on the event. Although he will accept the consequences for his behaviours, there is no evidence that he understands what would be the appropriate response in those situations or how to communicate his feelings

Within the school environment there is limited evidence of motivation and engagement in relation to learning tasks across all subjects. Child A will often engage in distractive behaviours to avoid learning tasks e.g. getting out of his seat, throwing paper, especially if writing is involved. Extrinsic rewards sometimes act as a facilitator but this is not consistent. However, if presented with a task of high personal interest, engagement and motivation are present and the work Child A produces demonstrates that he has a variety of cognitive skills and is able to access the learning tasks independently.

It takes time for Child A to establish a rapport with class teachers and other adults; he is reluctant to initiate or engage in interactions with adults until he feels comfortable, confident and secure with them.

Child B - Male, Aged 10 years 3 months

Child B is very conscious of what his peers think about him and feels it is important to be liked by them. He is happy to go along with his peers' choices in relation to play, even if this is not an area of interest to him. When incidents occur with peers he finds it very difficult to move on, regardless of the level of gravity, and he requires extensive time and discussion before being able to re-engage in his learning. Child B can also have an extreme perception of the context of challenging social situations, e.g. if he has been called a name by a peer he will often state that he is being bullied. Child B can anticipate events will have negative outcomes and this can lead to an increased sense of worry but this does not appear to be based on any prior negative experiences.

On the whole Child B is engaged and attentive during lessons but he can be easily distracted by his peers' behaviour and this can take him off task. Child B is able to access the majority of learning tasks but sometimes confidence can act as a barrier; if the task is new or challenging he can become worried and has a fear of getting things wrong. However, with positive encouragement he will persist with tasks he perceives as difficult.

Child C - Female, Aged 10 years 1 month

Child C frequently expresses her emotions through physical aggression; this applies to social situations with peers and within the learning context. If there is any form of confrontation in her interactions with peers or adults, her response is viewed as disproportionate. She is often off task during lessons, usually talking to peers about unrelated topics. Child C finds it difficult to access some learning tasks, especially

literacy based activities, and her attention and focus are very limited. When issues are addressed or staff attempt to get her back on task she will refuse to comply and on occasions has thrown items e.g. ruler, rubber.

Child C's responses to a variety of situations and interactions with peers can be extreme and physical, both within the classroom and social contexts. Child C can often initiate the interaction and confrontation but will always associate her emotional expressions with something her peers have done. Even if a peer has initiated a confrontation Child C cannot respond to the situation appropriately and manage her emotions, it always escalates to physical aggression. Child C can be very caring, especially towards her friends. She is a confident individual and is a very sociable child with both peers and adults.

Child D- Female, Aged 10 years 6 months

Child D is very quiet within the classroom environment. It is difficult to build a rapport with her as she is quite reluctant to engage in interactions with adults. This can impact on her engagement in learning; she will not ask for help when it is needed and responds with minimal communication when asked questions to check her understanding. It is evident when Child D is finding a task difficult as she will begin to play with different items e.g. equipment or just sit quietly not working. Child D is eager to do well with her learning and produces a good standard of work across all lessons. She listens well during learning tasks and always takes pride in her work.

Child D is happy to interact with peers in her friendship circle who she has known for some time and has been observed to be very animated and 'chatty' during social times. She does however need support to develop positive social interaction and play

skills. Child D can often be quite bossy and controlling with her friends. She finds it very difficult if they want to play with other children and will become upset with them, which often leads to them falling out. At these times Child D is very rigid in her thinking and cannot see matters from the others' perspectives. When the issue is being addressed by an adult she will either insist that she was right or shut down and refuse to communicate.

3.5 Methods

3.5.1 Triangulation

Both the realist paradigm and case study approach assert and promote the use of multiple methods and sources of information to gain a holistic and informed picture of the phenomena being researched (Yin, 1994). The use of multiple methods or sources of information is often referred to as triangulation or a mixed methods approach. Triangulation is an essential part of research and practice and involves 'looking at things from different angles and using different methods for looking' (Thomas, 2013, p. 145). Some argue (Thomas, 2013; Yin, 1994) that triangulation is a core principle within social science research to increase confidence in the data gathered and to promote reflective and critical explanations.

The case study approach provides the opportunity to adopt this triangulation of methods, which is required to gain an insight into both the outcomes and mechanisms, allowing a richer and more comprehensive picture to be told. The mixed methods approach included a numerical outcomes measure and a group semi-structured interview to investigate the mechanisms that may contribute to these outcomes.

3.5.2 Semi-structured Group Interview

Rationale

'One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview'

Yin, 1994, p. 84

In social science research we are frequently seeking to develop our understanding of 'human affairs' and therefore the interviews provide us with a method of gathering information, knowledge, interpretations and perspectives from those who have direct experience of these phenomena (Yin, 1994, p. 85). This was an essential requirement for the present research as it was concerned with what mechanisms may be at play which contribute to certain EL outcomes; hence, consideration needed to be given to the children's internal processes which can only be effectively accessed by gaining qualitative insights from the children themselves.

Use of interviews with children historically was sparse until the 1990's, with some stating there were concerns around the 'trustworthiness in children's ability to act as informants' (Gibbison, 2012, p. 149). However, there has been a significant change in the value seen in eliciting and hearing the child's voice, especially with matters relating directly to or about them and therefore attempts should be made to include and represent their views. It is essential that if the research is trying to ascertain what happens to children's levels of EL after accessing an intervention then the children should be the ones to provide this insight.

A semi-structured approach was adopted as it combines structure with flexibility. The structuring of a 'list of issues' ensured that there was coverage of the prominent areas

to be explored; the flexibility element allows the researcher the freedom to follow directions they feel they wish to (Thomas, 2013, p.198). This approach was viewed as valuable because it meant that questions could be formulated based on the theoretical model of EL being used in this study, whilst also appreciating that any contribution the interviewees make are valuable and insightful.

There are several elements that contributed to the decision to conduct the semi-structured interview in a group format. The primary reason being that it was the group as a whole that represented ‘the case’ of interest; the research aims and questions revolved around a targeted small group intervention. Additional considerations only served to confound this decision as opposed to altering it. Taking into consideration the information gathered from the head teacher and SENCo (pen portraits in section 3.4.3) it was considered that a group format may be advantageous for Child A and D, allowing them to participate in adult interaction alongside their peers. During the pilot of the semi-structured interview it was evident that the group format not only facilitated the thinking of the group but also heightened their sense of security and comfort within this unfamiliar context. Lewis (1992, p. 414) supports this view stating that one prominent reason for conducting a group interview rather than individual interviews is ‘breadth and depth of responses’ in that it encourages ‘stimulation of new ideas’, ‘challenging and clarification of others responses’ and a ‘greater range of responses’.

Interview Framework

The interview framework (Appendix 2) was informed by two primary sources of literature (Goleman, 1996; Faupel, 2003), as these theoretical models formed the basis of the targeted intervention and outcomes measure. The primary reasoning for

this was to ensure that a consistent, explicit and comprehensible approach was adhered to throughout the research process. This also ensured that the topics covered in the interview resembled those suggested to be integral to this model of EL, which also forms the foundations of the targeted intervention.

As the conceptual basis of EL is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon the five dimensional areas suggested by both Goleman (1996) and Faupel (2003) were utilised to provide a structured framework. The questions within each of these dimensional sections were informed by the knowledge gathered from the literature, which involved repeated digestion of the text, developing understanding and reflecting on key concepts proposed by both authors.

A pilot run of the interview framework was conducted with a small group of children who already had involvement from the Educational Psychology Service due to social, emotional and mental health needs. It was felt that there were no indications from this pilot that any adaptions needed to be made to the interview framework.

Interview Process

Time and change have already been signified as key elements within the research questions, realist paradigm and case study approach. Therefore, the interviews were conducted before and after the targeted intervention to allow for changes in mechanisms that may contribute to a change in EL outcome measures to be identified. The first group interview took place a week before the intervention began and the follow up interview was conducted a week after the final intervention sessions.

Ethical considerations and aspects, which were addressed throughout the interview process, have been outlined in the ethical considerations section within this chapter.

Other elements, that were fundamental to the interview process, have been outlined in Table 6 below. These were informed by recommendations and considerations from existing literature (Lewis, 1992; Gibson, 2007).

Table 6: Good practice considerations taken within the interview process

Aspect	Application in Interview Process
The Researcher	<p>The purposes of the interview were discussed along with the role of the group and the interview format.</p> <p>Any questions, anxieties or concerns addressed.</p> <p>Researcher took the lead but also followed new directions.</p> <p>The presentation of the group was monitored to make sure any discomfort was acknowledged and addressed.</p> <p>All parties were provided with the opportunity to contribute.</p>
Physical Arrangements	<p>The interview took place in the school setting which is a familiar environment for the group.</p> <p>A comfortable sized room in a quiet location was used.</p> <p>The group and researcher sat in a semi-circle.</p> <p>Due to the small size of the group the researcher was in a good position regardless of which seat they used, so let the children choose their seats first.</p>
Timing	<p>Both interviews took place in the afternoon. Sessions were planned to not coincide with core academic subjects.</p> <p>The time protected for each interview was two hours to ensure all parties did not feel any pressure to move through the content at an increased pace.</p> <p>Each interview lasted approximately 1 ½ hours.</p>
Creating the right environment/Building Rapport	<p>Role of the researcher explained to inform the group that they are part of this process and not present as an authority figure.</p> <p>Remain non-judgemental and open to all perspectives that are offered.</p> <p>Create a comfortable and secure atmosphere – active listening, supportive, friendly, patient.</p> <p>The group discussed what 'ground rules' were appropriate e.g. listening to each other, taking turns, being respectful of each other's views.</p> <p>The group were all from the same class and therefore already knew each other fairly well.</p>
Recording session	<p>Dictaphone placed in a position to clearly pick up all contributions from the group.</p> <p>Recording ceased during breaks.</p>

3.5.3 Outcomes Measure

To measure the outcomes the emotional literacy checklists were used from Faupel's (2003) Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention resource: Ages 7-11. The

assessment includes a checklist to be completed by three parties: parent, teacher and child. They include between 20-25 statements that are scored on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from very true to not at all true. They take approximately ten minutes for parents and teachers to complete and about fifteen minutes for the children to complete, dependant on age and reading ability.

Both the assessment and intervention are based on an adapted version of Goleman's (1996) model of EL and therefore have a prominent theoretical basis. As well as providing an overall assessment of EL it also provides a measure of the five dimensional areas: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The checklists from all parties provide an overall standalone EL score but only the parent and teacher checklists provide a score for each dimensional area. All scores can then be compared to a 'nationally representative sample' which includes a 'score range' indicating in which descriptive category the score falls (Faupel, 2003, p. 28).

All parties completed the checklists one week prior to the intervention beginning and within a time frame of three days, following the intervention. One parent/carer for each child completed the parent checklist. The SENCo, who was also their class teacher, completed the teacher checklist for each child. The pupils completed the checklist as a group, during a session with the researcher in a quiet space. The group were walked through the example provided then instructed to continue with responding to the remainder of the statements. They were told that if at any point they had any questions they were welcome to ask the researcher for support.

Concerns around the validity of self-reports as a measure are frequently cited in research literature even though these are frequently adopted to measure EL. Questions are raised around how able individuals are in rating their own levels of competence, especially in relation to emotional concepts (Fineman, 2004). Criticisms include the possible levels of dishonesty, social desirability and attempts to maintain a positive image (Zeider, Roberts and Matthews, 2002). In an attempt to overcome the biases that can emerge when completing self-rating scales, the children were informed that it was not a test and to answer honestly and only the researcher would see their responses. Also, the parent and teacher checklists have been included as additional outcome measures.

The robustness of this measure was readily available, with aspects of reliability and validity, addressed and explicit within the content of the resource. To assess reliability Cronbach's Alpha was used for each checklist, including overall and dimensional results. Following this the only aspect considered unreliable was the dimensional results for the pupil checklists; hence, dimensional scores are not available for this checklist. Validity was assessed through the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlations; this analysis revealed results that indicate the checklist items in the dimensional areas and overall EL scores were highly correlated. The checklists were also found to 'fit quite well' with the 'underlying dimensions' outlined in Goleman's model (Faupel, 2003, p. 39).

3.6 Targeted Intervention

The targeted intervention was based on the theoretical model proposed by Goleman (1996) and an adapted version of this model by Faupel (2003); both have been

outlined within the literature review. Goleman's model was selected as it is a prominent model within the field of EL but most importantly because the work is based on children and the educational context. Faupel's model was deemed appropriate because its foundations are based on Goleman's framework of EL and the resource, Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention, was created for use within school settings. Additionally, Faupel's assessment and intervention are the only ones readily available within the UK and easily accessible to school settings.

To ensure that the conceptual framework of EL, that forms the basis of this intervention, is explicit, the five dimensional areas of EL have been outlined below.

Table 7: Description of the five dimensional areas used within the targeted intervention based on the work of Goleman (1996) and Faupel (2003).

Emotional Literacy	'The ability of people to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express their own emotions and to recognise, understand and respond appropriately to the expressed emotions of others' (Faupel, 2003, p.)
Dimensional Area	Description
Self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understanding your own feelings -Recognising and understand different feelings -Recognise our strengths and limitations -Label different emotions -Understand how emotions can impact on what we do and say
Self-Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Managing our own feelings -Expressing emotions in the appropriate way -Containing emotions when required
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Remain focused during times of emotional upset -Have self-motivation to achieve -Persist when finding things difficult -Attempting to achieve personal goals -Engage in and be attentive to learning
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understand others' emotions -Recognise emotions being expressed by others -Acknowledge and respond appropriately to others' feelings -Being sensitive to others -To notice physical and visual cues

Social Skills / Handling Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Respond to others' emotions in a way that provides comfort and support -Manage the emotional expressions we display during interactions -To inform others that you have heard them and can see their perspective -Engage in interactions effectively to meet our own needs and those of others
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Although Faupel's (2003) work provides ideas for interventions that could have been used to guide this targeted intervention, it only made up a small proportion of the session content used within this research. Instead, a diverse number of resources (see appendix 3.1) were used and the sessions delivered were designed by the researcher.

There are a variety of reasons for this decision. The intervention resource provided by Faupel (2003) can be used as a whole school, small group or individual approach but this research was focusing solely on a targeted small group intervention. For this reason there were several elements that could not be implemented or not considered relevant e.g. strategies to be applied in the classroom environment or whole school context. Other elements were general e.g. the use of stories, calming techniques, where general guidance was provided. There were also some worksheets included but these were not extensive enough to form the basis of an intervention session.

Most importantly, it was felt that to ensure good practice the targeted intervention should be based on the EL needs of this particular group to increase the level of effectiveness. This was supported in the literature review where the findings indicate that a universal approach, that does not take into account individual needs, is not always effective. Designing each intervention session also meant that an interactive approach could be incorporated which included a focus on the richness of the discussions that took place, rather than completing set tasks.

It is important to highlight that a copious amount of time was invested in the organisation and creation of the intervention and that it was based on EL literature and knowledge. The foundations of the intervention remained true to and within the theoretical framework of EL proposed by Goleman (1996) and Faupel (2003), with the researcher being conversant with both works. Professionally there have also been numerous opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in the area of EL contributing to practice based evidence.

Overall the group attended 12 intervention sessions, over a six week period; two sessions were delivered each week lasting for one hour. Outcomes from the initial emotional literacy assessment (Faupel, 2003) were calculated to provide an indication of what proportion of sessions were needed in each dimensional area. An outline of these sessions and a detailed example of one can be seen in Appendix 3.1 and 3.2. Each session was delivered by the researcher. Considering the findings from the literature review, in relation to systemic and staff barriers to effectiveness, it was felt that without addressing each of these possible limitations and providing the staff with an in-depth understanding of EL it was not good practice or in the interests of the group for staff to deliver the intervention. An open invitation was made for a member of staff to attend the sessions but this opportunity was not taken up by the school.

3.7 Validity, Reliability and Generalisation

Validity is concerned with the degree to which the research ‘describes, measures or explains what it aims to describe, measure or explain’ (Willig, 2001, p. 16). To promote a high degree of validity in the current research, possible methodological limitations have been identified and addressed (see appendix 4). Validity has also been

maintained with regards to the consistency of the approach running throughout the research. The same theoretical model has been utilised as the basis of both methods and is also the basis of the targeted intervention.

Reliability is concerned with the ability to 'yield the same answer on different occasions' (Willig, 2001, p.2001). This aspect of research is more commonly considered and questioned in quantitative research as opposed to qualitative. This is due to qualitative research investigating a phenomenon in-depth to gain rich data; usually there is no aim to be able to generalise these findings to a large population.

Within a case study approach Yin (1994, p.31) proposes 'analytic generalisation' where an existing theory is used as a comparison for the results of the 'case' and if a theory is reinforced by two or more cases the notion of 'replication can be claimed'.

Thomas (2011, p.151) argues that generalisation is not a concern in case study research as there is no precursor claim of being able to generalise from one case to another, 'you are not studying this case to understand others. You are studying it in order to understand itself'.

3.8 Ethics

Prior to beginning the research the universities application for ethical review was completed and approved (see appendix 5) by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee as part of the universities Code of Practice for Research (2015-2016). Additional to this further guidance was sought and adhered to:

- The British Psychological Society (2009) Code of Ethics and Conduct: Guidance Published by the Ethics Committee of the British Psychological Society.

- British Educational Research Association (2011) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research.

The following sections discuss what ethical considerations were made and steps taken to address these.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Parent/carer consent was gained due to the age of the participants; however, it is deemed that the children are also capable of providing fully informed consent with facilitation (BERA, 2011; BPS, 2009).

Firstly, verbal consent from the parent/carer was gained through the SENCo at the school. If they stated that they agreed then the school provided them with an invitation to participate (see appendix 5.1) and a consent form (see appendix 5.2). These were returned to the school SENCo who then passed them onto the researcher.

Following parental/carer consent the children were invited to attend an introductory session with the researcher to gain voluntary informed consent (BERA, 2011).

During this session there were open discussions around the purposes of the research, what this would involve and explanations and guidance of the invitation to participate (see appendix 5.3) and the consent form (see appendix 5.4). The children were asked to provide written consent during this session and then throughout the intervention sessions verbal consent was gained at the beginning of each session. If the child remained silent or stated they did not wish to participate at any stage then it was considered that consent had not been obtained.

3.8.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All the EL assessments and consent forms contained a unique identity code. The only person who had access to the corresponding names was the researcher. The parent/carer forms were all distributed and returned in a sealed envelope marked private and confidential. The assessments and consent forms completed by the children on both occasions were done in the presence of the researcher who then immediately collated them. As the SENCo was completing the assessments for all pupils this was done in the presence of the researcher so they could verbally communicate which form was for which pupil, rather than allowing them access to the list of names and corresponding codes. All documents in hard copy were stored in a locked filing cabinet with no names. The only person who had a key to this filing cabinet was the researcher.

The group interview took place in a quiet space with no access to others. The recordings of the group interview were stored on an encrypted memory stick which was transferred into a zip file. The responses from the group interview were used, analysed and reported in a collective form, therefore no names or pseudo names were required.

It was not possible to provide anonymity as the assessment scales were matched for each participant from the different parties (child, parent/carer, and teacher). Due to carrying out pre and post measures the scales were also matched for analysis purposes. Identification of the participant's contributions to the group interview within the results section, may be possible for school staff who know the individuals well.

Due to the group format it was not possible to guarantee confidentiality as the children within the group will know which individual made specific contributions. In the

introductory session and the beginning of the group interview sessions ground rules were outlined which detailed the purposes and limitations of confidentiality. The research data will also be accessible to my academic supervisor. The data available however will not contain any names.

3.8.3 Withdrawal

All parents/carers were informed of the rights to withdraw within the invitation to participate (see appendix 5.1). The children were informed of their right to withdraw during the introductory session both in a written (see appendix 5.3 & 5.4) and verbal format. The children were reminded of their right to withdraw at the beginning of each session. There were no consequences if a participant wished to withdraw from the group interview interviews, completing the emotional literacy assessments or the intervention sessions. If withdrawal from the group interview/completing the emotional literacy assessments was requested, then they were still be able to access the intervention sessions if they wished.

All numerical data was coded with a unique identity and therefore removal was possible if there was a request for withdrawal. Before the beginning of each group interview, the participants were asked to state their unique identity (this was placed in front of them to read out). This allowed me to be able to identify their contributions and remove them from the transcripts and not include in the analysis if required. It would not be possible to remove the contributions from the recording.

All participants were informed of the cut-off date at which point it would no longer be possible to withdraw. This was scheduled for one week after the final group interview.

3.8.4 Safeguarding

Confidentiality agreements around safeguarding issues were highlighted to both parents/carers and the children themselves, explaining that if there is risk of harm or potential harm to the child or others that the school/Local Authority safeguarding policy would be followed (BPS, 2009). The national guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) was also adhered to.

3.8.5 Well - being

There was a minimal risk to the participants due to the study revolving around the area of emotions. The intervention sessions did involve talking about past emotional situations relating to anger, sadness etc. The researcher was available after each session if the children wished to discuss anything further. If it was anticipated there was possibly a need for further support, the school SENCo would have been informed. Parents/carers would also have been informed if there were any concerns. The SENCo and parents/carers were provided with the researcher's contact details so they could make contact if they felt additional support was required between sessions and after the intervention was complete.

3.8.6 Data

All documents in hard copy (assessment scales, SPSS data, group interview notes, analysis) were stored in a locked filing cabinet with no names. The only person who has a key to this filing cabinet is the researcher. The recordings of the group interviews will be stored on an encrypted memory stick which will be transferred into a zip file. All data will be destroyed after a period of ten years (Data Protection Act 1998, BERA, 2011 & BPS, 2009).

3.9 Data Analysis

The following section will outline the data analysis procedure followed for both the numerical (outcomes) and qualitative (mechanisms) data analysis. In the following chapter the results from both methods of data analysis will be presented.

3.9.1 Outcomes – Statistical Analysis

The Emotional Literacy Assessment (Faupel, 2003) checklists were all scored manually using the relevant scoring key provided within the resource. Overall emotional literacy scores were gained from all parties and dimensional scores were obtained from both the parent and teacher checklists. Following the initial scoring the outcomes were then subjected to statistical analysis using IBM SPSS (statistical package for the social sciences) 19 software.

3.9.2 Mechanisms – Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data recordings, collated from the semi-structured group interviews, were analysed using thematic analysis (TA). TA is advantageous due to its flexible nature; unlike many other methods of data analysis it does not advocate particular methodological approaches.

Rationale and Approach

Within the realist and case study approach of this research one key aim emphasised is being able to gain a richer and deeper insight into the phenomena and the outcomes related to this. In a realist approach it is essential to investigate the ‘mechanisms’ that are present and thematic analysis allows this to be achieved by reporting ‘experiences, meanings and the reality of participants’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.9). Thematic

analysis provides a' systematic approach for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns – themes – across a dataset' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.178); thus, capturing a key realist concept, outlined earlier in this chapter, of identifying 'patterns in experiences' as the result of investigating mechanisms that underlie a phenomena.

An 'inductive' approach was taken allowing the researcher to be guided by the data opposed to theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.12). This approach encourages consideration of the whole data set and consideration of new directions which can consequently provide a richer holistic picture due to not being constrained by a pre-determined coding frame. However, it is acknowledged that it is impossible for the researcher to completely disconnect from their theoretical knowledge.

Identification of the themes are at a 'semantic' and 'explicit' level. As previously outlined in Figure 2, the qualitative element of looking at mechanisms involves consideration of the group's thoughts, knowledge and skills in relation to EL and therefore there is no requirement to consider beyond what was actually said. Again this approach allows an insight into the 'patterns of experience' represented by 'patterns in semantic content' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.13). Interpretation in this analytic process then allows the researcher to theorise what these patterns mean and their relevance to broader aspects.

6 Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

The thematic analysis conducted in this research followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) comprehensive framework, which has been outlined below (Table 8). It is important to emphasise that this process was followed for each data set: pre and post interview.

Each of the interview transcripts were analysed independently; however, each phase of the thematic process occurred simultaneously.

Table 8: Six phases of thematic analysis and application to this research

Phase	Description	Application in Present Study	Location of Evidence/Process
Braun and Clarke, 2006 as cited in Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 121-122			
Familiarisation with the data	Researcher must immerse themselves in, and become intimately familiar with their data; reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Researcher manually transcribed interview data. -Orthographic transcript created. -Checking transcript against audio for accuracy. -Reading transcript repeatedly. -Note taking whilst reading. 	Sample of transcript (appendix 7.1) Transcription notation system (appendix 7.2) Sample of initial coding (appendix 8.1) List of initial codes (see appendix 8.2)
Coding	Generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the research question guiding the analysis. The researcher codes every data item and ends this phase by collating all their codes and relevant extracts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Manually noting initial codes throughout the entire transcript. -Transcript cut up to allow for movement into groups according coding. -Extracts photocopied if included in more than code. 	Example of initial coding (appendix 8.1) Example of grouping/cut up extracts (appendix 8.3)
Searching for Themes	Coding the codes to identify similarity in the data. This searching is an active process the researcher constructs the themes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Transcripts previously cut up for coding then used to identify themes. 	Example of a theme (appendix 8.3) List of initial themes before refining (see appendix 8.4)
Reviewing themes	Involves checking that the themes work in relation to both the coded extracts and the full data set. The researcher should reflect on whether the themes tell a convincing story and then begin to define the nature of each individual theme and the relationship between the two.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Time taken out after phase 3 and then returned to and reviewed placement of extracts and themes proposed -Thematic map created to provide visual illustration 	Example of active process for refining and checking themes (see appendix 8.5) Thematic map presented in results section
Defining and naming themes	Requires the researcher to conduct and write a detailed analysis of each theme, identifying the essence of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Theme names reviewed -Description and interpretation of themes written. -Identification and selection of extracts to illustrate each theme. 	Results chapter
Writing up	Writing- up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualising it in relation to existing literature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reflecting on how the description, interpretation and extracts relate to existing literature. -Consideration given to any original contributions present in the data/results. 	Discussion

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the results gained from both the quantitative and qualitative data gathered. To maintain a consistent and comprehensive approach it has been divided into two sections: outcomes and mechanisms. This approach is in keeping with the distinction made between outcomes and mechanisms in the research questions and the methodological approach taken. Firstly, the outcomes section details the results of the statistical analysis for the numerical outcomes; the mechanisms section outlines the thematic analysis results for both the pre and post intervention interview data.

4.2 Outcomes – Emotional Literacy Assessment (Faupel, 2003)

To analyse the numerical outcomes from the Emotional Literacy Assessment checklists (Faupel, 2003), the raw data (appendix 8) was subjected to comparative statistical analysis (IBM SPSS 22). Due to the small sample size this involved the use of nonparametric testing: Wilcoxon Tests. All of the results presented are one-tailed. The level of statistical significance used was $p < 0.05$.

4.2.1 Pupil Checklists

As stated in the previous chapter, the pupil checklist only provides an overall EL score. The Wilcoxon test revealed there was a significant difference between the pre and post intervention scores ($z = 1.857$, $N = 4$, $p = .0315$, one-tailed). This indicates a

statistically positive effect of intervention for overall EL scores, as rated by pupils (pre mean = 47.25, post mean = 83.25).

4.2.2 Parent and Teacher Checklists

Due to conducting statistical analysis on not only the overall EL scores, but also on the dimensional sub-scales, the results have been presented in tables to provide a clearer picture of the outcomes. This includes the outcomes from the individual Wilcoxon tests and mean scores (pre and post intervention).

Each test revealed a statistically significant effect of intervention across both parent and teacher checklists, with mean scores increasing in a positive direction at the post intervention stage. This statistically significant positive effect was found across overall EL scores and all five sub-scales.

Table 9: Results of the Wilcoxon Tests and Mean Scores (pre and post) for Parent Checklists.

	Wilcoxon Test Outcomes		Mean Scores	
	Z Score	Statistical Significance	Pre Intervention	Post Intervention
Overall EL	1.841	p=.033	46.75	63.50
Self-awareness	1.826	p=.034	8	12
Self- regulation	1.841	p=.033	6.25	11
Motivation	1.841	p=.033	10.75	12.5
Empathy	1.890	p=.0255	10.5	13
Social Skills	1.841	p=.033	11.25	14

Table 10: Results of the Wilcoxon Tests and Mean Scores (pre and post) for Teacher Checklists.

	Wilcoxon Test Outcomes		Mean Scores	
	Z Score	Statistical Significance	Pre Intervention	Post Intervention
Overall EL	1.826	p=.034	44.5	70.5
Self-awareness	1.841	p=.033	9	13.25
Self- regulation	1.841	p=.033	6.75	13
Motivation	1.841	p=.033	9.5	13.5
Empathy	1.890	p=.0255	9.25	14.5
Social Skills	1.841	p=.033	9.75	16.75

4.2.3 Means and Score Bands

To provide further insight into the ‘outcomes’, the group means and corresponding score band descriptors (Faupel, 2003) have been included. This is to ensure that the statistical analysis above can be subjected to further interpretation.

Pupil Checklists

Table 11: Pupil Checklist – cut offs for score bands for the overall EL score (Faupel, 2003, p. 28).

Note: Colour key added by researcher.

Score Band	Description	Score Range
1	Well below average	62 or below
2	Below average	63-68
3	Average	69-81
4	Above average	82-87
5	Well above average	88 or above

Table 12: Pupil Checklist Outcomes – Pre and Post Intervention

	Pre Intervention	Post Intervention
Overall EL Mean	47	83

Parent Checklists

Table 13: Parent Checklist – cut offs for score bands for the overall EL score and subscale scores (Faupel, 2003, p. 29). Note: Colour key added by researcher.

Score Band	Description	Score range for overall EL and subscale scores					
		Overall	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
1	Well below average	42 or below	8 or below	6 or below	6 or below	8 or below	9 or below
2	Below average	43-50	9-10	7-8	7-8	9-10	10-11
3	Average	51-69	11-13	9-14	9-13	11-14	12-14
4	Above average	70-75	14	15	14-15	15	15
5	Well above average	76 or above	15-16	16	16	16	16

Table 14: Parent Checklist Outcomes – Pre and Post Intervention

	Total EL Score		Self-Awareness		Self-Regulation		Motivation		Social Skills		Empathy	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Mean	47	64	8	12	6	11	11	13	11	14	11	13

Teacher Checklists

Table 15: Teacher Checklist – cut offs for score bands for the overall EL score and subscale scores (Faupel, 2003, p. 29). Note: Colour key added by researcher.

Score Band	Description	Score range for overall EL and subscale scores					
		Overall	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
1	Well below average	60 or below	10 or below	8 or below	9 or below	11 or below	14 or below
2	Below average	61-67	11-12	9-11	10-11	12-13	15-16
3	Average	68-80	13-14	12-15	12-16	14-17	17-19
4	Above average	81-86	15	16-17	17	18	20
5	Well above average	87 or above	16-20	18-20	18-20	19-20	

Table 16: Teacher Checklist Outcomes – Pre and Post Intervention

	Total EL Score		Self-Awareness		Self-Regulation		Motivation		Social Skills		Empathy	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Mean	45	71	9	13	7	13	10	14	10	17	9	15

4.2.4 Summary

The statistical analysis indicates that the targeted intervention had a positive effect on the pupils EL levels, with all overall EL scores across all checklists increasing. There was also a positive effect on all subscale scores rated by both the teacher and parents.

The inclusion of mean and band scores provides a richer picture of the changes that occurred following the targeted intervention. The pupil ratings for overall EL moved from the ‘well below average’ band to the ‘above average’ band. Parent checklists indicated overall EL in the ‘below average’ range prior to the intervention and ‘average’ range following the intervention. Two of the dimensional areas (motivation, empathy) rated by parents, fell in the ‘average’ range prior to the intervention and remained in this range following the intervention. Both the self-awareness and self-regulation dimensions were rated as ‘well below average’ pre intervention and ‘average’ post intervention. Parent ratings for social skills were in the ‘below average’ range prior to the intervention and in the ‘average’ range following the intervention.

The checklists completed by the teacher placed the overall EL, self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills and empathy scores in the ‘well below average’ range before the intervention and ‘average’ range after the intervention. The motivation subscale mean score was in the ‘below average’ band prior to the intervention and in the ‘average’ range following the intervention.

4.3 Mechanisms – Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

The results of the thematic analysis from the data gathered during the interviews will be presented in two sections: pre and post intervention. As stated in the data analysis section, each data set was analysed independently, providing two separate sets of

results. Each section will begin by providing a visual representation of the themes identified, along with any corresponding sub-themes, before exploring each theme in turn.

4.3.1 Thematic Analysis Results – Pre Intervention Data

Themes	Sub-Themes			
Defining and Labelling Emotions				
Physiological and Physical Aspects of Emotions				
Expression of Anger	Through Physical Action	As an Escalation Cycle	In Response to Others'Actions	Negative Emotion
Asking for Adult Support	In Theory	In Practice		
Motivation in the School Environment	Factors that Suppress	Factors that Facilitate		
Friendships	Being Funny	Things in Common	Me First	

Figure 3: Final themes and sub-themes for pre-intervention data set

1. Defining Emotions/Feelings and Labelling Emotions

A key focus, for three of the group, when providing definitions of what emotions/feelings are was what happened to cause them or a consequence of them, rather than defining the actual concept.

'Emotions are feelings; feelings are when someone calls you a name and you go sad or just walk away.' (Child A)

'Feelings are like when someone hurts you, you get all sad, and if someone's made you happy you smile.' (Child D)

'.....and emotions are like if someone called you a name and you threaten them back.' (Child B)

The whole group were able to label some basic and complex emotions:

'I've got happy, sad and angry.' (Child D)

'Unhappy' (Child B)

'Jealous' (Child C)

'Nervous' (Child C)

'Frightened, shy' (Child A)

'Confused, joyful' (Child B)

'Discombobulated' (Child D)

Reflexive Box:

The quotes in this theme surfaced through responses to the initial questions: asking the group to define emotions/feelings and label any they could think of.

When posing these questions there was an assumption by me that the whole group would be able to provide an explanation of what emotions/feelings are, in some form. Although the term may be everyday language to me, and possibly to the pupils, this may have been the first time they were asked to define the concept. I anticipated some hesitation when asking them to define emotions/feelings but the majority of the group responded immediately; therefore, I consider that at that time individual experiences were how Child A,B & D were able to understand this concept.

During the analysis I noted the use of both emotions and feelings within the interview questions which may have led to the use of both terms in the children's responses. It is evident this was a conscious decision as it is detailed in the interview framework. The reason for including the word feelings is that it is likely to be more familiar to children than the word emotions. I felt that when the children had been exposed to emotional language they were more likely to have heard the word feelings in everyday conversations e.g. how are you feeling? How do you think this madefeel?

Child C did not provide a response for this question. I noticed that whilst the other children were responding she lowered her head. I was mindful that there could be numerous reasons for this including: being in the interview context, being in a group context, her level of confidence and security with me and that the subject area could be a challenging area to discuss. When I found an appropriate opportunity I asked Child C if she was alright. Child D responded by stating that she thought Child C was feeling a bit nervous: Child C raised her head and smiled. I asked her again if

she was alright and she responded 'yes'. From the observable shift in her physical positioning and engagement with me I felt it was appropriate to continue while monitoring her levels of engagement and comfort. For the remainder of the interview Child C presented as secure and confident which lead to the supposition that the initial question may have been perceived as challenging in some way.

2. Physiological and Physical Aspects of Emotions

When discussing their understanding of a variety of emotions there was a dominant communication of the physical and physiological aspects. There was a heavy reliance on physical or visual cues to recognise others' emotions and descriptions of how we express our own emotions.

'People have their lips like this [[puts bottom lip down]] and they are wide eyed and they just [[pause]] and sometimes they tuck in their neck.' (Child B - talking about sad)

'They frown or smile to show it.' (Child A)

'When you put your hands in the air.' (Child C - talking about excited)

Physiological affect in response to emotions was also a dominant thread in recognising and understanding emotions.

'I sometimes get watery eyes or sad when people call me rabbit or not nice things.' (Child C)

'Sometimes they can have like red cheeks.' (Child A - talking about sad)

'When I'm angry I get really hot.' (Child D)

'Like when we do plays and I have to stand in the middle of the stage and I go red even when we're practising then I go even more red when we're actually doing it.' (Child B - talking about nervous)

When reflecting on personal experiences to support the understanding of emotions, some of the group used a combination of physiological and physical aspects to provide a greater depth of description.

'Because you go hot and my mouth just closes up and I want to walk away, but I can't I put my head down.' (Child A - talking about being angry)

'Cos you may like get watery eyes, you make a frown or walk off with your head down if someone calls me a name.' (Child B - talking about being sad)

'It's like because I get a grin on my face and my eyes open up more, it's like there're hairs on the back of my back that just stick up.' (Child D - talking about being happy)

There was also a use of physical and physiological analogies to describe how the group felt when they were experiencing different emotions.

'I know when I'm sad and not happy because I sometimes feel like my heart has gone a little black.'

(Child D)

'I know when my heart has gone black because my heart kind of delivers a message to my brain.'

(Child A - talking about being sad)

'And also I felt my heart and it goes [[pushes hands together]] and like quieter and less powerful then it's because it's squeezed up.' (Child B - talking about being sad)

'I don't know when I get angry, but when I start to get angry it feels like without me knowing there's another me inside my body.' (Child C)

'It felt like I felt like floating.' (Child A - talking about being happy)

Reflexive Box:

The children were asked to describe how they felt when experiencing different emotions: what it looked like and how they knew which emotion it was. It was evident here that the groups' self-awareness was more in depth when referring to the three core emotions: happy, sad and angry. Only two of the children provided responses when asked about other emotions, e.g. nervous, excited, guilt, jealous.

Additionally, it was apparent from the transcript that the prompts and some rephrasing were needed throughout this section, to encourage the children to elaborate on their responses. All of the children found it challenging to describe how the emotions felt and what they looked like and frequently provided a concrete example of when they felt the emotion. I used the examples the children provided to attempt to get them to reflect on the event/experience/ situation and provide us with further insight. Having reflected on this point I realise that the content of the interview was very abstract and this content can sometimes present as very challenging for children to access and engage in.

This was evident with Child A, who on several occasions acted out/demonstrated either with noises e.g. sniffing or physical actions e.g. tensing his body, to support what he was trying to communicate. As I was conscious not to exclude his views I asked him to try and describe what he had just done, which he did. Within my practice I am continually recommending that teachers monitor the level of concrete vs abstract content with learning, yet, I have not been actively mindful of this myself prior to conducting the interview. However, internal aspects of emotions have no concrete existence and therefore this predicament feels unavoidable but prompts thinking on whether we need to find alternative methods e.g. drawing, to support children to express and understand their emotions.

3. Anger

Anger was the most frequent and prominent theme through the entire data set. The group perceived this emotion as one that they experience most frequently.

Expression through Physical Action

A noticeable way the group suggested they would express their anger is through physical actions. This was directed either at property by damaging it or being physically aggressive to another person.

'I threw a shoe at **** because I got really angry.' (Child C)

'I'd punch them.' (Child D)

'I'd either punch them in the face, put them on the floor, and keeps punching them.' (Child A)

'I go to my bedroom and I pull everything off my bed and I wreck my bed. I get a screwdriver and unscrew everything and Mum has to come back up and fix it and I smashed my picture.'

'I've broke my wardrobe, I've broke my cabinet and I've broken my drawer.' (Child D)

'I start screaming and kicking off and start running round.' (Child B)

In Response to Others' Actions

When discussing triggers for their anger, the group always associated this with another person's actions.

'When someone has called me a name.' (Child D)

'If someone annoys me at school then I get angry; if they kick me or hit me, I get angry.' (Child B)

'One time I felt angry was when people kept calling me names and eventually they stepped on my foot.' (Child B)

'I try to play with him and he comes near me and like stops me from playing with **** so I'm becoming angry and annoyed.' (Child C)

'I would sit next to them, ask why they were crying and when they tell me I would just go and sort that person out who made them upset.' (Child A)

They also explained how they may respond to the actions of others and express their feelings of anger. There was an element of anticipating events, with two of the group having an expectation that the person carrying out the actions would do so more than once, and therefore they explained the approach they would take each time the individual continued to act. In each situation physical expression of anger was a key aspect, especially if an alternative approach had not been deemed successful.

'I would walk away, but if like, they started to punch me I would punch them back and then we would get into a fight and I would punch them in the face.' (Child A)

'I would tell them to back off but if they wouldn't do that I would punch them twice and try and calm them down, I would grab this hand or his arm up to there.' (Child C)

As an Escalation Cycle

The group's reflections and experiences of anger included different stages and intensity levels of escalation, which increased the duration of the incident. Two of the group expressed how they felt annoyed and as a result of incremental factors this then resulted in feelings escalating to anger. At the initial stages, where they reference feeling annoyed, they explain how they have attempted to respond appropriately through verbal communication or gaining adult intervention/support. However, when this does not resolve the situation it continues to escalate and then results in physical action.

'First I tell my brother to go away if my brother is annoying me. I tell him to go away nicely and I say please and everything, then he just stands there and watches me. And then I get a little angry. Then I tell my Mum but that doesn't work. So I get angry. I stand up then run away then I come back in about ten minutes and get really angry and start breaking things up.' (Child D)

'When you're annoyed you're like can you go away please and if they just keep annoying you and following and you're like I'm going to tell the teacher and they go away and then they come back like five minutes later then you get angry and you think you're going to get into a fight and you do get into a fight and then the next time you're annoyed again because they are doing it all over again and you're going to get even more and you can get expelled or something.' (Child C)

Often the escalation was communicated as being in response to others' actions, but each time some of the group expressed their feelings in response to the action it increased in intensity.

'I know how it feels to be angry because this boy in reception kept messing with my hair while trying to listen to the teacher. So I got up and because we had to do this thing when we were making necklace things with beads I got up and threw a bead at his head. He kept messing with my hair so I sat down again and luckily I had a block right near me. I turned round with the block and hit him and he got angry and he hit me so we had a fight on the carpet; I rolled round with him and I kept hitting him.' (Child C)

'When I get angry when I'm playing out the front, I either chase them or I go and jump on their back and then flatten them or I just ignore them and if they keep following me I chase them to a point they are worn out, or I flatten them and I kick them.' (Child A)

Even in hypothetical situations there was a predetermined assumption from Child A that the incident would escalate.

'If someone hit my friend like ***** or **** I would be like 'back off! If they don't back off I'll tell my friends to run, I'll push him out the way and I'll get them on the floor keep kicking and kicking until they say 'alright, back off' and if he still keeps doing it I'll push him and push him until he falls over.'

(Child A)

Negative Emotion

Anger was perceived by all of the group as a negative emotion. This was both in terms of how they felt when they are experiencing anger and the consequences due to the method of emotional expression they choose. In some cases it also caused them to feel secondary emotions with some of the group reporting feelings of remorse and regret following their expression of anger.

'It felt wrong; it felt like I was going to die.' (Child C)

'I feel guilty if I beat someone up when I'm angry.' (Child A)

'I feel depressed when I've done something to my room.' (Child D)

'No, it makes me feel like [[pause]] you shouldn't have done it. Yeah I don't know how to say it.'

(Child B)

Reflexive Box:

The decision to physically cut up and move the extracts from the transcript provided me with a clear and visual image of the significant role that anger had within the data set. Although from professional experience and the pen portraits provided of Child A and Child C I was expecting this to be a dominant emotion, I was still surprised by the proportion of extracts that were subsumed under this heading. Whilst grouping the extracts I considered whether I had facilitated this focus on anger as I believe it to be a key concept within the self-regulation dimension and therefore may have given it more emphasis within the interview.

Having referred to the interview framework and transcripts I feel that the questions directly related to anger were proportionate to those including other emotions but when discussing anger the responses

provided by all four pupils were more extensive. One contributing factor that did emerge during my critical reflection is that the content of this theme is not confined to the questions related to self-regulation and did not always surface in response to direct questions about anger. It is important to highlight that my interpretation of anger will have influenced what I included within this theme which may not necessarily match that of individuals within the group.

I was surprised all of the children referenced the commonality of physical action when they are angry, as this was not included in the pen portraits for Child B and D. Exploring this further illuminated the differences between the individual voices and experiences of anger. Although Child D did make a direct comment about punching someone in response to a situation, the rest of her contributions detailed situations that happened in the home context so would not have been observed within the school environment and the anger that was communicated through physical aggression was linked to property and not other people. Contributions from Child B are not as recurrent as the other three children and half of his comments report how peers have been physical towards him which then resulted in him being angry. However, Child B did express feelings of anger and from our interactions during the interview it was still evident that he requires support to support his understanding of anger and possible strategies to support him.

The most dominant children in this theme are Child A and C. This aligns with their pen portraits suggesting that self-regulation of emotions is a primary area of need for these children. I noted during the interview that Child A and Child C presented as being more animated and engaged when discussing anger. The pen portraits would suggest that these two children may experience this emotion more frequently which in turn may mean there was an increased sense of knowledge and self in this area. Child C's accounts of her experiences were interesting and prompted further critical reflection during the interview and analysis process. The detail and extent of the physical aggression and anger was similar to that of Child A's, however, she presented differently when communicating her views. She was focused on the groups' responses and appeared to enjoy the feedback she got from them, I felt this led to her extending and exaggerating some of the anecdotes and responses she provided. Whilst analysing these extracts I contemplated whether these should be included as her views but felt they provided a valuable insight into what Child C viewed as appropriate behaviours, responses and a way to express her emotions.

4. Asking for Adult Support

In Theory

The group felt that asking for adult support provided them with a possible solution to resolve a variety of situations:

'Tell the teacher rather than punch them back.' (Child D)

'Ask for help from a teacher.' (Child B)

'I would run over, grab them, run over to the teacher and say that I found this boy or girl that was crying on a bench.' (Child C)

'I would take them somewhere, like a school counsellor or a teacher or anyone that's around that would listen.' (Child A)

In Practice

When the group explained what happened in practice when they had previously asked for adult support, it was not viewed as a positive experience. They felt that the support they were seeking was not received and that the adults did not view the situation as important as they did:

'Sometimes I do but when I tell Mum she says, "Oh just get over it".' (Child C)

'Because they just tell you off and say "oh get over it" and she just didn't do anything about it.' (Child B)

'***** hurt her foot on a dodgeball and I told Miss ***** because she was quite upset and she just didn't do anything about it. She just says "Let it recover".' (Child D)

'She didn't help because she thought ***** was making the entire thing up.' (Child A)

Reflexive Box:

The views of the children in this theme were consistent across the group. When the children were presented with social scenarios they all viewed adult support as a possible solution and the appropriate way to respond within the contexts provided. However, when asked directly if they would

tell an adult if they were upset they all felt it was not a desirable approach: their experiences in their opinion were not positive and the adults did not provide the response they were seeking.

5. Motivation in the School Environment

Factors that Suppress

There were several factors that suppressed the group's motivation at school. Sometimes this was expressed through a dislike for certain subjects which would limit their engagement in those lessons:

'I don't like literacy, R.E, science.' (Child A)

'I don't like doing literacy, history, science.' (Child C)

Some of the group provided more specific explanations for a reduction in motivation, with regards to learning tasks. One common factor was when the task involved a writing component, especially if this was extensive. Another reason was assigned to having limited comprehension of the instructions or how to complete the lesson content.

'Everything I don't enjoy when we have to write really big stories.' (Child C)

'I don't enjoy literacy because you have to do big writes, like on a Friday, there's too much story you have to do.' (Child B)

'Literacy and things like that where we have to write; not so bad when just answer questions but when we have to write really really really long answers just gets worse.' (Child A)

'Oh maths, when it says what there is or how you're supposed to do it but not what we're exactly supposed to do. So I'm like, "I don't like this!".' (Child B)

'I hate lessons where confusing to me. I try listen to what Miss ***** says but just don't make sense nor do the writing telling you what to do.' (Child D)

Engagement in a variety of distractive behaviours was also reported as a common reason for reduced motivation in the classroom.

'Because we get distracted quite a lot of the time.' (Child A)

'I don't do my work sometimes because most of the time I chatter on.' (Child C)

I will try and get on with it but if someone is doing something funny I can't help it I just want to have fun and laugh. Yeah, I like laughing.'(Child B)

'Sometimes I just like to play with something on the table; you know sometimes get bored.' (Child D)

The group also expressed that worry played a role in their level of motivation and engagement in school due to predicting what events may occur in the future. This worry was present during term time, but one group member also reported having concerns about returning to school after the school holidays.

'I don't like coming sometimes 'cos I don't want people to bully me.' (Child D)

'I get too worried about what's going to happen the next day because sometimes I get really annoyed about what people say and I don't know what's going to happen if we are doing P.E. because tomorrow I may forget me P.E. kit.' (Child A)

'Well I've been worried for exactly the same reason at exactly the same time every year since year two because after like the holidays or six weeks off the last day I'm really worried because like I'm agh it's going to be really different and people are going to tell me to shut up again.' (Child B)

Factors that Facilitate

There were a variety of factors that the group thought facilitated their motivation in school. The first focused on whether the learning task included their strengths and interests.

'I really enjoy P.E. I'm good at football and lots of sports.' (Child A)

'I do well in art because I really like that kind of stuff and I can draw really good too.' (Child C)

The teaching approach adopted and subject content also influenced their level of interest and motivation. Lessons which incorporated interactive and practical elements were viewed as preferable.

'I like doing science, art and history the most because when we do science we do different experiments and sometimes things going bang. Like before, when we used that like gun powder and these like lids with the bottles just went BANG!.' (Child B)

'I like lessons where we get to do pair work and not just writing and writing and writing. Means we get to chat with friends and this can be more fun.' (Child C)

'My best ones are when there's lots of different stuff to do like making stuff or using white boards or getting up, not just sitting all the time and writing.' (Child A)

Other people were also stated to play an important role for different reasons. One child described how they use peer support to keep them on task. Another child had taken on board advice given by her dad which encouraged them to remain motivated and persist with tasks.

'Whenever someone flicks me in the arm or something and then goes "poppety do dah" because I've told everyone to do that if I don't concentrate on my work.' (Child C)

'I like trying my best to do it myself because my dad always says if you keep on asking for help and for other people to do it for you, you will never learn. So I keep trying even if it's really hard.' (Child D)

The teacher was considered to play a more dominant role in increasing motivation in school by providing positive feedback in both a verbal and written format.

'I do more when I know I've done well. The way I know I've done well is when my teacher's reading my writing and she smiles whilst she's reading it and then says "Well done" because it looks well and I'm like "Yay".' (Child C)

'I like it when I check my book and it's all green pen 'cos it means my work is good and then know I can do it really. Sometimes teachers even put a smiley face.' (Child B)

'I think it's nice when the teacher comes to my table and says what's done well not always what's done wrong.' (Child D)

Reflexive Box:

When responding to the questions exploring motivation, all of the children were very clear and confident with their responses. There was no need for prompting or follow up questions; they were all able to communicate immediately what acted as motivators and barriers for them as individuals.

Writing was a barrier to motivation for Child A, B and C, as detailed in their pen portraits. This is a common barrier reported to me in my profession, by both the children and the adults they work with. In my everyday practice this would be addressed by exploring alternative methods with the child and staff, but it is challenging to address within an emotional literacy intervention without considering the pedagogical approach being used.

There is evidence here of Child B anticipating events as stated in his pen portrait. It appears that some of his worry stems from change, e.g. new class teacher after the summer break. I did ask Child B why he thought people would tell him to shut up and he replied 'don't know'.

6. Peer Relationships

Being Funny

When discussing friends and friendships the most desirable trait wanted in peers, by the group, was being funny. They felt that being funny would also mean peers wanted to be their friend too.

'Friends like me because sometimes I'm funny.' (Child C)

'I like my friend; he can be fun and sometimes he's really funny.' (Child A)

'If say like ***** and ***** make me laugh really bad I would want to be their friend.' (Child D)

'The thing I do that makes people want to be my friend is like make really good animal noises because I'm really good at making them and they're soooo funny. It's like "oh cool" that's really good "you're so funny.' (Child B)

Having Things in Common

Having shared interests and similar ‘taste’ in different areas with friends was important to the majority of the group in forming a meaningful friendship.

‘The thing I like about people which makes me want to be their friend is actually what they like. Nearly all of my friends like the stuff I like.’ (Child B)

‘If they are exactly like you, if they’ve got the same taste buds in music, fashion and everything then they should be your friend.’ (Child D)

‘Sometimes people want to be your friend because you’ve got good taste like in music, in clothes or like you’ve got a really good personality. They like what you do cos if you like same you get on.’ (Child C)

Me First

There were a few occasions when the group emphasised that the extent to which they were willing to support other peers or interact with them in the school environment, was determined by the impact it may have on themselves.

‘Some people can’t do every single thing for every single person in the classroom.’ (Child C)

‘I would leave them because I might have something else more important to do because I may not have time to help them.’ (Child D)

‘Because sometimes what people say is like “aaaggghhh come on hurry up and finish” it can be really boring and long; I have better stuff to do.’ (Child A)

In relation to play, the majority of the group were very clear that they only wanted this to involve their circle of friends and that going outside of this had detrimental consequences for them as individuals. This was due to other peers altering the game format and also an increased number of peers being considered overwhelming. There was no consideration of what the rest of the group wanted to do nor did the group think about the impact it may have on the peers they were excluding from their play.

'I would just say just my friends because it gets too much and then I wouldn't feel like playing. If there were loads of people then I say only us three play because last time there was seven or eight people in it and it was too much for me so I had to go and then it lost everything.' (Child D)

'I think it should be my friends like because I don't really like year sixes or fours playing the year five games. Because if we are playing acky one, two, three they just decide to come without asking and they just ruin the game and make up their own rules so I don't want to play anymore.' (Child B)

'I don't want anyone new to come and play because they will take over and change what we always do; we know how to play it. If they're on their own I might feel bad for 'em but not my fault.' (Child C)

Reflexive Box:

All of the group except for Child A felt it was important to have things in common with their friends and this was desirable in their friendships. Child A only referred to the characteristic of being funny when we discussed what they seek in a friendship; this would suggest that he does not view similar interests as being important. This is likely to contribute to the role he plays with the circle of friends, shown in his pen portrait, where he likes to be the one making the choices and deciding what the group will play.

Reflecting back on the transcript, when the group were asked whether play should include anyone or just their friends, Child A only made a slight contribution to this discussion stating 'don't mind'. Whereas, Child B, C and D were very clear that they wanted play to remain within their friendship group. This surprised me because the discussions were very centred on the impact it would have on them as individuals, which led me to follow this up with the group; but even after questioning whether this would remain true if it was a peer who was alone and had no one to play with, the three children expressed that their perspective remained the same. There was no acknowledgement of the other peer's feelings or positive social skills. Child C did show some degree of empathy but this did not transfer to what her actions would be.

Some of the characteristics, provided by the SENCo and Head teacher in the pen portraits for the three children, can be seen within their individual responses:

Child B – He likes things to be predictable and have routine.

Child C – She likes to take a lead role during social times and guide the direction of play. She is able to understand someone else's perspective but this does not alter her responses.

Child D – She is very controlling within friendships. She finds it very difficult if her friends want to play with others or develop new friendships, this can lead to her falling out with them or shutting off.

I do feel that this provides evidence that the children were not seeking to provide answers that were socially desirable or given in an attempt to gain my approval, but that they were communicating their true perspective on the areas discussed.

Reflexive Box:

To provide the reader with a further insight into the dynamics within the group, I have considered the interactions which took place within the pre-interview context and how these may have impacted on the responses provided.

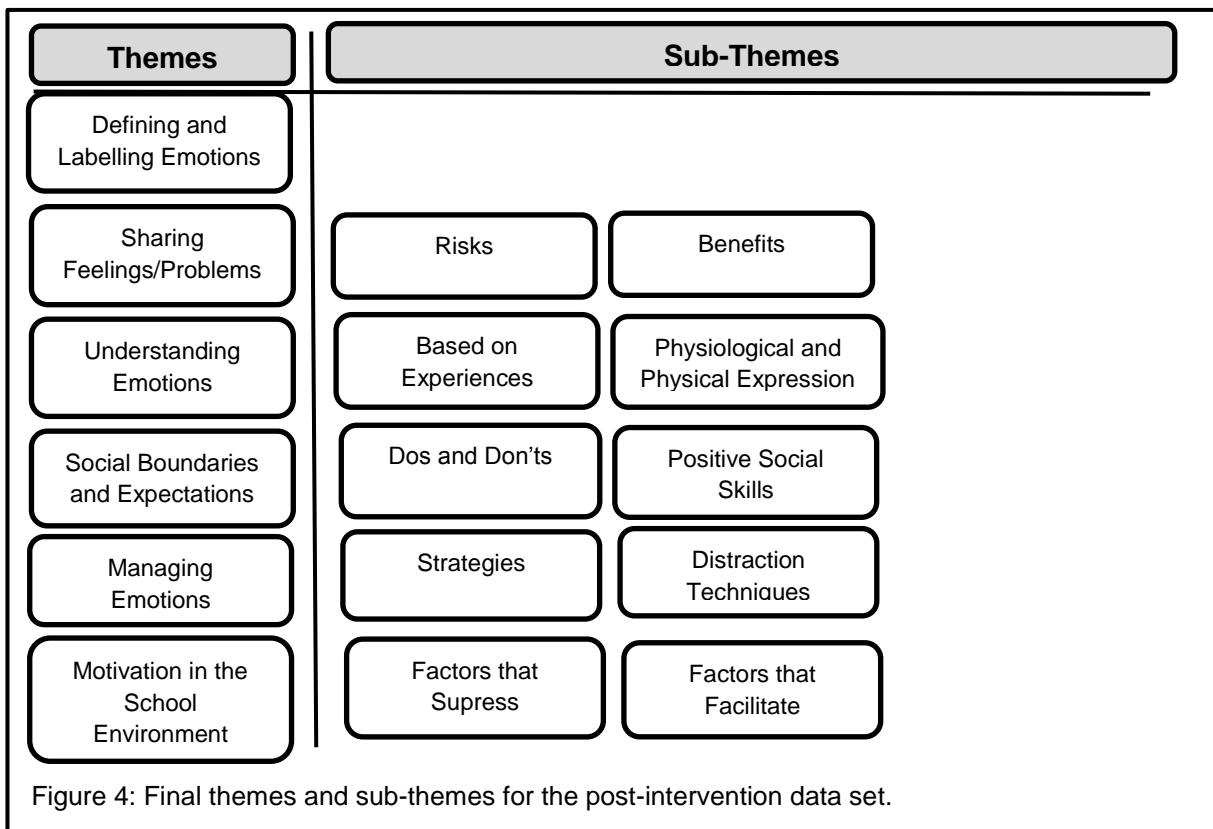
It was evident that the group felt comfortable and confident with each other throughout the introductory session and pre-interview. They already knew each other quite well as they were all in the same class and this heightened their sense of security during this new context. I did not feel that anyone in the group was more dominant than the others and there was no evidence of anyone's views being overshadowed. There were occasions where I felt that one child's comments either enabled another child's thinking or prompted opposing views/challenges but this facilitated the discussion rather than resulting in any of the children changing their mind or limiting their participation.

There were times when Child A and C were louder during the interview but this did not appear to have any impact on the contributions from Child B and D. On two occasions Child B asked Child A to listen because he talked over him and Child A responded immediately. Child C did mention Child D directly when she was responding to one of the questions but this was a passing comment and Child D did not respond to this. Although it needs to be acknowledged that these group dynamic factors may have had some bearing on the interview process, I do not feel they had a significant impact and the frequency of the behaviours was not as high as I had anticipated, after considering the information outlined in the pen portraits.

All of the children became slightly disengaged at some point and I took this as cues to break and allow the children some time out of the interview content.

The children had met me prior to the pre-interview for an introductory session but I would still be considered as an unfamiliar adult at the time of the pre-interview. Apart from the previously mentioned behaviour of Child C at the beginning of the interview, all of the children presented as confident in my presence and were all willing to engage in interactions with me. I was unsure how Child A and D would respond to this unfamiliar context with a new adult, due to the information gained from the Head teacher and SENCo in the pen portraits, but they were equally secure and comfortable. A possible contributing factor to this is that they were in the company of three familiar peers.

4.3.2 Thematic Analysis Results – Post Intervention Data



1. Defining and Labelling Emotions

The group were able to provide clear and informative definitions of what they thought feelings and emotions were. To communicate their understanding Child B and D used examples of different emotions:

'Emotions are different things you feel such as anger and depression.' (Child B)

'They are what we feel like being happy or sad.' (Child D)

Within some of the more complex definitions Child C and A saw emotions and feelings as having individual meanings and distinguished between the two:

'Well I think that emotions are kind of different to feelings because emotions are like for instance if you cry so emotions are like when you are crying but feelings are like what happens why you cry so like you feel sad. Yeah you feel sad so you cry emotion.' (Child C)

'I think emotions are the words to them feelings the words like angry and that and the feelings are what's happening to us you know how it feels.' (Child A)

The group were able to label a variety of basic and complex emotions:

'Sad, excited, happy, depressed, loved.' (Child C)

'Excited, worried, frustrated' (Child A)

'Angry, left out, surprised.' (Child B)

'Upset, lonely, desperate, confused.' (Child D)

Reflexive Box:

I found that prior to the post interview I was anticipating whether the responses to the first questions would have altered in comparison to the pre interview. This encouraged me to consider if there were any steps I needed to take to address this and how I could ensure this did not alter the approach I adopted and the role I played in the post interview process. The decision was made not to transcribe or analyse any of the pre interview data prior to conducting the post interview; additionally the data collated at the pre-interview stage was naturally less vivid after the time lapse between each stage. I contemplated the possibility of wanting to prompt the group to recall specific topics and sessions in order to facilitate their thinking but as this was a conscious thought I would be mindful not to do this and using the same interview framework would prevent this bias occurring. Having transcribed, analysed and reflected on the data gathered during the post interview I am confident that the desire for the intervention to have increased the children's levels of emotional literacy did not impact on my role during the post interview process.

It was evident that this time the whole group thought more about what the terms emotions/feelings meant to them and the definitions they were going to provide. Evidence was noted during the transcription of the interview in the sense that there was more time between being presented with the questions and when the children started to provide their responses.

It was evident that Child A and C had really reflected on what the terms meant to them and they were confident enough to highlight that they saw them as having separate meanings to them. All of the group defined the concept from their perspective in comparison to the pre interview where they detailed causes and consequences of emotions/feelings.

Within this theme there is some evidence of the content of the self-awareness intervention session coming through. The additional emotion labels (frustrated, left out, loved, depressed, lonely) provided were all included in one session which used characters expressing each of the emotions; each child included at least one of these new emotions.

1. Sharing Feelings and Problems

Risks

There was a certain degree of reluctance from the group as to whether they would share their feelings or problems with another person. A main barrier for the group was the potential risk that this could pose. The primary concern for the children was that other people would overhear or find out about what they had shared which could result in different consequences for them as individuals.

There were some reports about fear or worries that others may join in with the behaviour that had caused the initial upset:

'I'm in the middle because sometimes if someone like calls me names I don't tell anyone that I'm upset because quite a lot of people like doing that and they may actually join in.' (Child B)

'Others might get involved. They sometimes hear and then they might start doing it to you while you are upset, they might do it to you.' (Child C)

Another concern described by two of the group was the risk that more people would become involved and there would be no sense of containment. They also felt this would then lead to them being presented with questions from different individuals.

'No because when you tell them, if you are at school, one person gets involved then another comes along and says "What's wrong?" and then another gets involved and then probably the whole school gets involved.' (Child A)

'Because if you tell the teacher more people would get involved. If you tell your Mum and brothers they will ask "What's wrong, what's wrong, what's wrong" and everyone in the family gets involved.' (Child D)

Benefits

There was also some acknowledgement of reasons why the group thought that sharing their feelings and problems may be beneficial. One contributing factor for this was when the situation would be considered quite serious and therefore likely to require adult support:

'When like you are in trouble or a friend is hurt. For instance if **** fell off a cliff, if she got hit by a rock then you would have to go and tell a teacher but nothing like "**** stole my pen lid".' (Child D)

'You can tell a teacher or and adult or somebody when you are upset of someone dying; speak about it.' (Child A)

The group also explained that they feel that sometimes sharing feelings or a problem helps and can be viewed as a solution or that expressing their feelings through talk is an appropriate and effective approach.

'Yeah, sometimes it can help to talk about it. Makes me feel better just talking.' (Child B)

'I would prefer to tell someone because I don't usually like keeping a secret because if my guinea pig dies, which I really hate, if I didn't tell someone then I would just keep scribbling all over my walls.' (Child A)

'I would just tell a teacher what happened and like we can solve it together and like make sure everything is fixed ok.' (Child C)

Reflexive Box:

In comparison to the pre interview I felt there was a shift in perspective from the whole group in relation to adult support. Previously, the views from the children were consistent across the group. I feel that the responses prior to the intervention may have indicated that the children felt that seeking adult support was the right thing to do when faced with a challenging situation, but they felt let down by the result of this action. In this theme the responses become more individualised and are accompanied by more in depth reasons and how this may impact on the child, indicating a heightened level of self-awareness.

There is some evidence of self-regulation from all of the children in the responses they provide under the sub theme of 'Risks'. They describe how they are trying to contain the situation and prevent it from escalating due to the impact it may have on them if they share their feelings and problems. For Child A and D it appears they are attempting to avoid further questioning whilst they are experiencing upset. When I reflected on this and considered how I would feel about sharing my feelings and problems I agree with the children to some extent. When upset I personally find being asked what's wrong and to elaborate on the situation quite challenging and often respond with a response to communicate I am 'ok' to avoid further discussions and upset. However, with children I often find we will question until we find the underlying cause of their upset, this is likely to be due to concern and caring for the child but I feel maybe sometimes we need to allow them to talk when they are ready to and provide them with some degree of control that they appear to seek with their responses.

I did note that Child D's response made reference to the home environment again.

Child C acknowledged that speaking to an adult is not just about telling them what has happened but a two way process of working together to reach a solution.

I was drawn to Child B's comment about how talking makes him feel better and thinking about his pen portrait considered whether this was a strategy he has always used to cope with difficult situations.

There is evidence that Child A now appreciates that adults can play a supportive role and he is now open to exploring these relationships.

2. Recognising and Understanding Emotions

Based on Experience

The group provided clear examples of when they had recognised and experienced a range of different emotions. Past experiences and situations were used to demonstrate the clear understanding the group had of each of the emotions they chose to discuss.

'One time I felt confused was when someone said what we were supposed to be doing but not how to do it.' (Child B)

'I felt left out when I was invited to a football match with my cousin and then he said to his manager to leave me aside.' (Child A)

'I got upset when ***** had a go at me and then she didn't want to be my friend until lunchtime.'
(Child D)

'I felt lonely when my friends just left me out of a game and that's where I felt lonely because I had no one to play with.' (Child C)

'I know when I've felt love because my mum spends time with me and takes me out to nice things.'
(Child C)

Physiological Reactions and Physical Expression

Both physiological and physical aspects were dominant methods, the group commented on, when they explained how they express and respond to different emotions. There were a number of physiological responses that the group identified with in relation to experiencing emotions.

'Your body heats up.' (Child A)

'You go bright red.' (Child D)

'Your eyes open up more' (Child B)

'Your heart beats faster.' (Child D)

'You breathe more heavily.' (Child C)

'Your eyes begin to water.' (Child B)

They also described what physical cues may be present when expressing different emotions and in some cases linked these explanations to specific emotions:

'You grit your teeth,' (Child C)

'You might clench your fist.' (Child D)

'Your nose scrunches up.' (Child B)

'I know I'm a bit confused because my eyebrows go up, my eyes close a bit and I'm scratching my head.' (Child B)

'You know you're excited because you jump up and down really high.' (Child A)

Reflexive Box:

The 'based on experience' sub theme emerged from the group being asked to describe when they had experienced different emotions and how this felt. Although the group were provided with prompts of happy, sad and angry, as in the pre interview, they all opted to discuss a more complex emotion. This suggests there was an increased sense of self-awareness within the group and they felt more confident with their understanding of a variety of emotions. All of the children provided very concise and clear responses which also took account of the social context leading to this emotion rather than just the actions of others.

Reflecting on the content of the 'Physiological Reactions and Physical Expressions' sub theme it includes a high proportion of the ideas the group came up with during two sessions on self-regulation when we explored anger. These sessions contained a high level of discussion and included an outline of a character which the children labelled to show what happens to our bodies when we are experiencing anger. The group were really engaged during these sessions and due to the length of the discussions it was extended into the next session. I feel the use of a character allowed the children to separate themselves from anger and reflect on it without feeling it was a reflection on themselves. It is likely that the conversations in the educational centre, which involve talking about anger, are focused on exploring why they are angry and the consequences of this, rather than providing the children with the opportunity to explore the emotion in depth: what it looks like and how it feels.

One significant shift that has occurred is the way the children talk about anger, especially Child A, C and D who had all previously reported extensive incidents of aggressive and physical behaviour. Yet, when anger was raised within the post interview they all responded with aspects that were discussed in the intervention sessions, demonstrating their increased understanding of the signs of anger which could in turn facilitate their ability to self-regulate. This is further evidenced with Child C who stated in the pre interview that she didn't know when she was getting angry and felt like it wasn't her, but was able now to describe the signs of getting angry and what effect this has on her body.

3. Social Boundaries and Expectations

Dos and Don'ts

The social boundaries and expectations communicated by the group contained some very clear dos and don'ts with regards to the school environment. Some of the don'ts described were linked to types of behaviour that would be deemed as inappropriate across a variety of contexts, whereas some reflected 'typical' school rules.

'Slapping someone around the face; can't do that.' (Child A)
'Not have a tantrum or answer back.' (Child C)
'Not allowed to steal someone's homework, that is wrong.' (Child B)
'Don't shout out.' (Child D)
'No eating sweets or bubble gum in class.' (Child A)

This was also mirrored in the dos where the group explained what behaviours they felt were desirable and appropriate in the school environment.

'Try and remember everything they said.' (Child C)
'Sit still and quiet on the carpet.' (Child B)
'Wait for an adult to stop talking before you start saying what you want to say.' (Child D)
'Listen carefully when adults are talking.' (Child A)
'Put your hand up when you want to say something.' (Child A)
'Always, always, look at an adult when they are talking to you; they get annoyed if you don't.' (Child C)
'Do what adults tell you to do.' (Child D)

Positive Social Skills

There were a number of behaviours that the group perceived as desirable within a variety of social situations which would be considered positive social skills. A number of these were centred on being polite.

'Holding doors.' (Child B)
'Manners.' (Child D)
'Politeness.' (Child A)
'You should always say please and thank you.' (Child C)

The group also discussed a number of active listening skills.

'Listen to people.' (Child C)

'Look at people when they are talking.' (Child B)

'Eye contact.' (Child B)

'Remember to let them talk.' (Child A)

'This one is hard but try and look interested in what they are saying.' (Child D)

One member of the group recalled a session, which took place during the intervention, which revolved around thinking about things people could do to make themselves and others happy.

'Oh yeah, be a Bucket Filler!' (Child A)

Following this comment the whole group started to reflect on this session and provide a variety of ideas. A high proportion of these focused on social situations that involved peers and how the group thought they could make them happy and show them support. This included general approaches they would use.

'Being nice.' (Child A)

'Do jokes and funky dances.' (Child C)

'Be kind to them.' (Child B)

When explaining what a bucket filler would do, being welcoming to and including new peers who entered their school were also considered important positive social skills.

'If the new one feels that they are lost anywhere you help them you ask them where did they want to go.' (Child A)

'Introduce them to your friends as they won't have any yet.' (Child D)
'Show new people around.' (Child C)

The group also explained how they felt there were ways they could include peers in social interactions and play. Alongside this they also reported different positive play skills, such as turn taking and sharing.

'If people are on their own you could ask them to play with you at break. Or how about ask questions about them.' (Child C)

'Let other people play with you because if someone is upset because their other friend has gone to play with their friend it's only kind to let them play with you.' (Child D)

'You could ask them if they wanted to play out with you after school.' (Child A)

'Let other people have a go with your things if they come into your house.' (Child B)

'It's better to share the toys and games and take turns than keep it on your own.' (Child A)

Reflexive Box:

A notable reflection for this theme is that the extracts included were spread across various parts of the interview and not concentrated in one particular area. The responses emerged from questions about friendships, relationships with adults and when the group was presented with different social scenarios. This has highlighted that all of the group are now taking account of different contexts and relationships and how we adapt our social skills in accordance with this.

Again, the content of the intervention sessions has been drawn upon to support the groups thinking, with Child A making reference to being a 'bucket filler'. This session used a book as the core theme to discuss happiness and how this extends to the impact we can have on others. It is evident from the extracts in the 'positive social skills' sub theme that the whole group, based on each child's contributions, really understood this concept and had thought about how they can now apply these skills in real life.

The most significant shift for me is when I consider the discussion the group had about a new peer and social times in this section, which is a stark contrast to the responses they provided in the pre-interview, detailed in the 'Me First' sub theme. Previously, Child B, C and D were quite rigid with their thinking about integrating a new peer into their friendship circle's play, yet all of them now demonstrate an increased sense of empathy, self-awareness and social skills towards others. Similarly, Child A, C and D at the pre-interview stage talked about how they would not be willing to support a new peer due to their own priorities but here the same three children talked about the role they could play in supporting new class members.

I noted during the post-interview that all of the children in the group demonstrated more active listening skills and were more attentive to what the other children were saying. The group naturally

took turns to speak in both interviews but this time they were not just waiting for a pause to speak, it was evident they were actively listening and responding.

4. Managing Emotions

Strategies

There were frequent occasions where the group spoke about different strategies they could adopt to try and manage situations and attempt to regulate their emotions.

Ignoring the individual displaying the behaviour rather than responding to it, was viewed as a possible option.

'Because sometimes you could just get annoyed with someone just keep saying your name and then you are like "Oh I'm so annoyed with this! Oh oh wait I could just ignore it!".'(Child B)

'Annoying can turn out to be ignoring it.' (Child C)

Some of the group felt that having some time out allowed them to escape from the situation or gave them time to calm down.

'Walk away.', 'Just time on my own; yeah time away from it.' (Child A)

'Find a spot that no one goes to and have a bit of alone time to think about it.' (Child D)

'To calm down you cannot think about the problem or you can just when you go home, if it happens at school, you can just lock yourself in your room and think about what they've done and sort it, you know, in your head.' (Child C)

Physical expression of emotions, strategies or activities was a preferable option for the group which provided them with an appropriate way to manage and respond to challenging social situations.

'Like if she was sad then she could just draw her feelings.' (Child C)

'Breathe harder and lower.' (Child C)

'I would get one of those stress things, squishy fish.' (Child D)

'What calms me best is because I have this like stress stick and I bend it.' (Child B)

'Playing some sport helps me feel better, like running or something.' (Child B)

'Well this is kind of strange. I would get them to put their fingers together and then get them to put it behind their head because when you put your hands behind your head, relaxing.' (Child A)

There was also a consensus that the group would seek to resolve the issue or find a solution using different strategies. One key element some of the group identified was that they would attempt to attack the problem rather than the other individual involved. They also shared some ideas about how they might find possible solutions.

'You can tell a teacher.' (Child A)

'I thought of read a book about anger see how see what makes the best way to calm you down. Look for ideas. Like when we had that book about anger and you could look at a page of that and seen what you wanted to do to help you calm down and sort things out.' (Child B)

'You don't attack the person you attack the problem because if you attack the problem you are not going to get into trouble if you are at school.' (Child A)

"If you are angry about that you can't do something. Instead of tackling the problem with your body you could just use your head and try and memorise how you used to tackle the problem without using your body.' (Child C)

'If someone probably slapped me before, instead of tackling the person I would now tackle the problem and saying "No I'm not going to get into this". I went in my head and looked at what I did before.' (Child D)

Distraction Techniques

Seeking out a distraction, by engaging in an alternative activity or interacting with peers, was also viewed by the group as a way to manage difficult social situations and emotions.

'Get another friend to try and help you not think about it.' (Child A)

'Go off and start playing to forget.' (Child D)

'Try and help your friend not think about it and get your friend to not feel the pain.' (Child C)

'I would give them something they could have fun with like some toys or something.' (Child A)

'I would try and cheer them up by telling them nice god jokes like "Knock, knock".' (Child B)

'If you play with a friend it distracts them as well as you. As they do funky acts to you, you do funky acts to them.' (Child C)

'I usually do star jumps for ages then I get sweaty and it like "Oh I don't like sweat" cos then it's like a distraction because I'm trying to get the sweat away.' (Child B)

Reflexive Box:

The responses in this theme emerged when the group were presented with different social scenarios and asked what they would do in these situations, what they do when they are feeling angry or what helps to calm them down. In the pre-interview the responses to these same questions formed a high proportion of the content for the 'Expression of Anger' theme. Referring back to the post interview transcript allows the conclusion to be drawn that all of the group provided responses that would be viewed as possible and appropriate solutions. This is a significant shift in perspective for Child A, C and D whose previous responses were highly focused on the use of physical aggression, indicating the children have developed an increased ability to self-regulate their emotions by identifying alternative approaches to help them manage difficult situations.

When the group were discussing anger they distinguished between this emotion and feeling annoyed. When Child B provided an example and stated that ignoring the behaviour might be an effective strategy Child C then reinforced this approach.

Child A and C commented on one of the intervention sessions which had the theme of 'attacking the problem not the person'. I was aware from the pre-interview and the pen portraits that 'attacking the person' was a key issue for both of these children; therefore, seeing them refer to this session signified their individual progress and gave me confidence that the intervention had been successful in addressing their individual needs.

Progress has also been seen with Child B's emotional literacy within this theme. Although there was no evidence that he expresses anger through physical aggression, in the pre-interview he did explain that he frequently experiences anger in response to challenging social situations. In this post interview theme he frequently identifies not only effective strategies to help with self-regulation but shows an increased level of self-awareness by explaining what works best for him as an individual.

It was encouraging to see that all four of the children made significant and individual contributions and the variety of approaches they discussed to support the management of emotions. Some of their

approaches were not covered within the intervention, meaning the children had developed their own individual ideas.

5. Motivation in the School Environment

Factors that Suppress

The group highlighted a number of factors that suppress their levels of motivation and engagement in the school environment. One barrier for the group, with regard to learning tasks, was a concern that they don't understand what they need to do or that they might make mistakes and get things wrong. They felt that further instruction was required to support their understanding. There were some occasions where the group felt that these situations could also lead to negative consequences for themselves. Some learning tasks were also perceived as being too difficult to complete.

'I don't choose to do my work when it comes to writing. It's too hard.' (Child A)

'I usually choose not to do my work in science investigation with equipment because it takes too long to do and when you ask people to recap what you need they don't.' (Child B)

'When the teacher hasn't said it clearly or when you ask the teacher to recap they don't and you ask a person and the teacher tells you off because they think you are talking.' (Child C)

'Because you know the teacher might ask you why you've spelled it wrong, why you crossed it out. And if you're in high school you will get probably a detention and are super worried about making mistakes.' (Child D)

Further to the factors above was the group's communication of how worry can play a significant role in and have a detrimental effect on motivation in school.

'People might worry when they are in tests.' (Child B)

'When you feel worried when for example when you've got a test and you are like "Oh I'm not going to be able to do this" and you get given your levels and you are like "No, you are an idiot!".' (Child A)

'Worry is like someone not liking the thing that they are doing and they are worried they won't be able to do it.' (Child C)

'Worrying in school makes people feel if they can't do anything or they are rubbish at something.' (Child D)

Factors that Facilitate

Motivation and engagement were reportedly increased for the group in relation to academic work, when they found the subject of personal interest and enjoyment.

'When it comes to Maths because it's my favourite subject I do more.' (Child A)

'History because I love learning about the past.' (Child B)

One factor which facilitated motivation was achieving and gaining positive feedback on the work they had produced.

'Getting your work right and doing it well feels good.' (Child D)

'When you do punctuation and similes. When the next day you open your book for reflective marking you've got green and good notes.' (Child A)

'From when I just can't stop smiling when I get reflective marking and then suddenly it just pops into my head "I've done well!".' (Child C)

The group discussed a variety of short term and long term benefits that are likely due to being motivated and engaged in the school environment. This was in the form of rewards, work becoming easier to understand and what opportunities it opened up for the future.

'When Mum says I will get spoilt after school.' (Child C)

'You might get class champion and get some house points.' (Child A)

'The more you work the more it makes sense the more it makes sense the more improvements you will make.' (Child D)

'We do it so when you get older you can get a good job.' (Child A)

'Or it means you can go to University.' (Child D)

'Working hard means I will do well in a test.' (Child B)

Reflexive Box:

This theme remained from the pre-interview to post-interview stage. Child A still reported that writing was a barrier to learning for him, but this was not mentioned again by Child B and C. Comprehension of and the ability to complete the learning task and instructions was still viewed as a factor that suppresses motivation and engagement but this was now reported by all of the children in the group. This again emphasises the importance of differentiation and pedagogical approaches within the classroom context.

The inclusion of 'worry' as a contributing factor also remained within this sub theme. However, in the pre-interview worry was linked to relationships and people and in the post interview it was in relation to access to the task and academic performance. It appears that the groups worry no longer stems from their relationships with peers and social situations but how they perform in learning tasks e.g. tests. I feel that this is an area that was not addressed within the intervention and requires further exploration and support. This made me think about my own approach to the motivation intervention sessions and I feel that I focused on making the children solely accountable for their levels of motivation. Reflecting on the content of these sessions now I would incorporate more of an emphasis on the children's individual strengths and needs in the area of cognition and learning and discuss how we could support and use these to make learning more accessible and enjoyable.

One notable difference, which may have materialised from the 'pathway' intervention session, in which the children were encouraged to think about what paths they would like to take in the future and how they can get there, is that Child A and D reported that future goals and outcomes play a role in factors that facilitate motivation. They felt that doing well in school could lead to better and wider opportunities in their adulthood; it was positive to see that some of the children were thinking about the future and the wider context.

Reflexive Box:

Being critically reflective throughout the research process and having outlined the changes that have occurred for the group and individual children at the final analysis stages, I contemplated how I was sure that the responses did not materialise as a result of social desirability. At the post-interview stage I had established a positive rapport with all members of the group and been the one to provide them with the intervention input. Having built this relationship with the group they may have had the desire to please me; a need to show me what they had learnt and retained and a wish to gain my approval or positive feedback. Even though I would not refute the possibilities, I am confident that this did not influence their responses for the following reasons:

- From my interactions with all of the children I would argue that they all felt confident and secure enough to be honest and share their individual thoughts and opinions, in both interviews and during the intervention sessions.
- Unless the children are emotionally literate they are unlikely to have developed a level of understanding to know what answers would be deemed socially desirable.
- I am confident that the children are now applying the EL skills and knowledge they have acquired into a real life context because they are talking about EL within their individual contexts and experiences. Within the intervention sessions the children also told me about strategies they had trialled or used since our last session.
- All of the children were engaged and attentive in all of the intervention sessions and actively participated each week. They also chose to attend each time, suggesting they were invested and wanted to develop their EL, rather than merely complying.
- Most importantly, in the post-interview some of the children's responses were linked to the intervention content but they had extended their thinking and thought of new ideas/strategies which had not been discussed previously.

Summary

The results from the thematic analysis have provided a rich and in-depth insight into the children's perspective on EL and the mechanisms that are present which contribute to numerical outcomes. It is also evident from the results that there has been a shift in the themes identified pre and post intervention. Interestingly, some themes were present within both data sets, yet, at the same time there were some significant changes. The outcomes and mechanisms results presented in this chapter will be given further consideration in the subsequent discussion chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will further explore the results of the study by reflecting on these in relation to the research questions, previously reviewed literature and the theoretical models used. It will then address any possible limitations and provide an account of aspects considered within the researcher's critical reflexivity. Finally, implications for practice and future research directions will be outlined before concluding.

5.2 Findings

This section will provide further interpretation and analysis of the results, answering questions that have not yet been addressed. The results need to be explored further in relation to the research questions to highlight any changes that occurred with both the outcomes and mechanisms following the targeted intervention. There also needs to be consideration given to the previous literature to draw out any disparities and similarities. Finally, there will be discussion around the application and relevance of the results to the theoretical basis of EL.

5.2.1 In Relation to the Research Questions

Outcomes

The statistical analysis and descriptive statistics presented in the results chapter support the claim that a small group targeted intervention increased the EL numerical outcomes for the group. Consequently, it could be argued that the targeted

intervention had a positive effect on the group's EL levels, as measured by the Emotional Literacy Assessment (Faupel, 2003). The results indicate that there was a significant effect, in a positive direction, for the group's overall EL scores. It is important to highlight that this significant effect was not only present in the pupils' ratings but also in the parents' and teacher's ratings. This suggests that the targeted intervention had a significant effect on overall EL levels as rated by all parties.

Further to this, the targeted intervention is suggested to have had a significant effect in a positive direction across all dimensional areas, with all scores increasing at the post intervention stage. Again, this effect was present in both parent and teacher scores, suggesting the change in EL dimensional levels is observed by both parties and across contexts.

Interestingly, consideration of the means and score bands underlines that the teacher scores at the pre-intervention stage indicate that the group have lower levels of EL in comparison to the parent scores. Thus, it is likely that the perspectives of these two parties differ in relation to the same child. This disparity could represent differing presentations of behaviour across the home and school context. Parent scores at the pre-intervention stage for motivation and empathy fell in the 'average range'; this would indicate there are no concerns in this area and the group have acquired the necessary skills in these areas. However, the teacher scores for the group fell in the 'well below average' or 'below average' range for all dimensional scores, suggesting support is required across all areas.

Following the intervention, all scores from both parent and teacher checklists were in the 'average' range. This outcome is promising and supports earlier claims that the

targeted intervention had a significant effect on the outcomes for the group, with a positive change across all dimensional areas. Still, it is important to acknowledge that due to the higher ratings at the pre-intervention stage from parents, the shift in scores was not as noteworthy as the movement in scores from the teacher. This would suggest that concerns or behaviours that were present in the school context are not generalised to the home context, or the positive impact of the intervention was not transferrable at the same level across contextual environments.

Overall EL scores for the group, from parents and teacher, fell in the ‘average’ range at the post intervention stage. Again, there was a less significant shift with the parent scores which were in the ‘below average’ range at the pre-intervention stage, compared to the teacher score which was in the ‘well below average’ range. The largest movement was seen in the pupil scores, moving from the ‘well below average range’ to the ‘above average range’ following the targeted intervention. Previous literature (Zeider, Roberts and Matthews, 2002) would suggest that this is probably due to those rating themselves providing socially desirable answers, but when you consider that the pre-intervention range was in line with that of teacher and parents it would suggest this is not a true justification.

One limitation was the absence of any follow-up assessment. Ideally the checklists would have been completed again, some weeks after the group had stopped accessing the intervention; this would have allowed the suitability of the effects to be measured. However, due to the intervention ending a week before the summer break this would not have been appropriate. The main reason being that the teacher who completed the checklists would no longer be able to provide an accurate account of

the group's EL levels as there would be no contact over the break and she would not be continuing as their class teacher the following academic year

Mechanisms

The presentation of the thematic analysis in the results chapter provides evidence that there are a number of possible mechanisms at play which contribute to the EL outcomes for the group. Alongside this, comparison of the pre and post interview data shows there were some themes that remained constant but shifted in content, and some themes that changed, signifying that the mechanisms present for the group changed following the targeted intervention. This would suggest that a shift in numerical outcomes, following a targeted intervention, is represented by a change in mechanisms; in other words, the group have become more emotionally literate.

To provide an explicit account of the evidence that signifies how the group and individuals have changed as a result of participation in the intervention, I will reflect on the changes and similarities between the pre and post qualitative data. To highlight how this translates into the theoretical model of EL that was adopted, indicating an increase in the children's' EL levels, it will be explored in relation to each dimensional area.

Self-Awareness

The theme of 'defining and labelling emotions' provides us with an insight into the levels of self-awareness the children have. This theme was represented in both data sets but there is a shift in the way the group defined, labelled understood and recognised emotions. All of the children contributed equally to the lists of emotion labels at the pre and post interview stage. Both contained a similar level of complex

and basic emotions. There were some changes in the emotions named, which could be linked to different or unfamiliar emotions being covered within the intervention content. Although this would imply the group have now increased their emotional vocabulary they did not reiterate all the emotions named in the first data set; this may indicate that they retain and recall those that are learnt most recently.

Initially the group did not provide a clear definition of this concept and Child A, B and D solely focused on the antecedents and consequences of different emotions. Later, the group were able to demonstrate they had developed their self-awareness and provided a more sophisticated and clearer account of what emotions are. Child B and D showed their progress by using clear and concise examples, whereas Child A and D demonstrated their increased EL by showing they understand different emotions and that they have an impact on how we feel. All of the children have changed from simply describing observable factors to considering internal processes.

To evidence the changes in self-awareness for the group it is helpful if we reflect on two themes: physiological and physical aspects of emotions (pre) versus recognising and understanding emotions (post). Reference to physiological and physical aspects of emotions were in both of these themes; however, in the pre-interview this was the only source of information the group relied on to communicate their ability to recognise and understand different emotions. This suggests that prior to the intervention the group relied on the physical cues that are observable and the physiological responses they experienced to understand and recognise emotions. In the recognising and understanding emotions theme, all four of the children demonstrated that they could now not only provide a more extensive and detailed account of the physical and physiological aspects but they were able to provide clear and comprehensive

examples of when they experienced specific emotions. A fundamental shift here is that the group were taking into account context as opposed to relying on physical and visual cues from an individual.

Confidence in the positive change that has taken place can also be seen if we compare the emotions the children were happy with and able to explore. Previously, they all focused on the most common and basic emotions, happy, sad and angry, but at the post –interview stage they showed their understanding of more complex emotions and all discussed a different one to highlight their individual experiences.

Self-Regulation

Comparison of the two themes: anger (pre) and managing emotions (post) signifies the most significant progress and development in the group's thoughts and approaches to emotional expression, containment and regulation. Before engaging in the intervention anger played a dominant role in the group's emotional experiences and contributions during the pre-interview. Physical and aggressive behaviour was the primary method of expressing anger for Child A, C and D, who reported that situations escalated and became more intense. For all four children experiences of anger left them with negative feelings, such as remorse and guilt.

At the post-interview stage none of the children made any reference to the use of physical behaviour or actions in response to experiencing emotions. Instead, the most dominant topic was the employment of strategies or approaches they had or would use to manage and regulate their emotions. All of the group were now able to identify appropriate and effective ways to express, manage and regulate their emotions and also attempt to find possible solutions. Further support for this was provided during

discussions with staff members who explained that there are no longer any concerns with physical aggression for any of the children.

Although Child B had never referenced the use of physical and aggressive behaviours to express his emotions, evidence of an increase in his ability to self-regulate is still present. In the post-interview he identified several strategies that work for him as an individual. There have also been positive staff reports about his progress in relation to this area; his teacher stated that the worry he used to experience has dramatically decreased and he has an increased ability to manage his emotions in challenging situations; whereas, previously the teacher would have needed to offer a high level of support.

Motivation

The dimension of motivation was clearly represented within the 'motivation in the school environment' theme. This, along with its sub-themes, factors that suppress and factors that facilitate, was also a commonality across the pre and post intervention data. Within the factors that suppress there were some elements that remained stable, such as writing and having limited comprehension of the task presented; however, the frequency of this reduced. This suggests that this is still a barrier to learning and motivation for some of the group but it is not a component that could be effectively addressed in an EL intervention, unless completed in collaboration with the class teacher. It would also require some exploration of the group's cognition and learning approaches.

Worry also remained as a factor that contributes to the suppression of motivation. However, the basis of these worries appeared to shift from social incidents that may occur with peers, to worry about the ability to achieve and access their learning. It is acknowledged that even though the group engaged in a whole session concerning worry, this is still an emotion they feel is likely to impact on their educational experience. Consideration would need to be given to the group's confidence and access to learning to promote further progress in this area.

The inclusion of factors that could be considered self-determining, e.g. dislike of the subject and engagement in distractive behaviours in the pre intervention data, were no longer present in the post intervention results. Interestingly, all of the children expressed some form of distractive behaviour which corresponds with the details outlined in their individual pen portraits. The class teachers had all commented that the children were motivated and engaged during and after the intervention stage and although there were still times that all four children engaged in these behaviours the frequency had reduced significantly. This indicates that all of the group had developed their ability to contain these behaviours and modify their perspectives which prevented them impacting on the group's motivation.

The facilitating factors did not have much movement between the pre and post stages which is possibly reflected in the numerical outcomes, with the dimensional area of motivation not showing as much change as the others. Feedback and interest were factors in both: the most noticeable change being in the post interview where Child A and D commented on the long term benefits for their future; this had not previously been acknowledged.

Empathy and Social Skills

These two dimensional areas of EL have been placed together as I feel there is some considerable overlap within the qualitative data that signifies a shift in the children's skills and abilities in this area.

Exploring the contributions in the 'friendships' theme from the pre-interview and the 'social boundaries and expectations' theme from the post-interview are closely associated with establishing and maintaining positive social interactions and relationships. Before accessing the targeted intervention Child B, C and D communicated very clearly that their own friendship circle was very important to them and they were not willing to extend beyond this during social times. Any interactions outside this social circle were perceived by these three children as impacting on them negatively as individuals; there was no consideration of the context or emotions for the other peers who were excluded at this point. Another component exhibited by all of the children was putting themselves first; their responses to the social scenarios did not take into account others' emotions in a way that would provide comfort or support.

Following engagement in the targeted intervention the whole group's perspective, thoughts and contributions in relation to social situations and interactions had become more widespread and varied. Every child demonstrated their knowledge and use of positive social skills to meet not only their own needs but those of other peers and adults. The most affirmative indication of progression was the inclusion of new peers. Previously, Child B, C and D were quite exclusive, while Child A expressed a neutral opinion in this situation. At the post-interview stage all of the children demonstrated an increased understanding of others' emotions, sensitivity, appropriate responses

and the ways in which they could support and comfort peers. Each child provided their own ideas on how they could achieve this through the use of social skills and by showing empathy.

Overall the thematic analysis has provided evidence that there has been a change in mechanisms that contributed to the positive change in outcomes and an increase in EL levels for each individual child. Evidently the children's thoughts, knowledge and skills have progressed and developed in relation to EL.

5.2.2 In Relation to Previous Literature

It is challenging to make distinctive links between the current research and some of the studies presented in the literature review for a variety of reasons. This is partly due to the breadth of models presented within EL literature and the differences these contain and also the aims of the individual studies. For example, Mavoreli et al (2009) focused on trait EI and investigated its predictability outcomes in relation to cognitive ability and emotional and social competence. For this reason and the concerns raised about the outcome measures utilised, it is not possible to draw out any comparative or contrasting conclusions.

With regards to Coppock's (2007) findings, although these were evaluative in nature, the current research would support general claims that:

- An EL programme has a positive effect on those who access it
- There is evidence of the children applying EL skills as a result
- There is evidence of improved relational aspects with peers

One key difference is the method on which these results were founded. Coppock (2007) gained the insights above through observations and reports from other peers and adults, whereas, the current research supports these findings from the perspective of the children themselves.

The most relevant and applicable literature to the current research is that which is focused on the SEAL curriculum, as this is based on the theoretical foundations of Goleman (1996). Other authors (Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw, 2006; Humphrey et al, 2008) presented mixed results with positive effects being evident in a limited number of domains within EL, as informed by pupil responses. Furthermore, Humphrey et al (2008) reported no significant changes across dimensional areas from parent outcomes and only significant changes in two domains (self-regulation and peer problems) from parent outcomes. The results of the current research provide a more effective account of change with significant changes present across all dimensions from all parties. If explored in greater depth it is evident that the parental outcomes represent a less significant change which is in line with the outcomes from previous literature.

One key difference, which is likely to have contributed to the results, and therefore the effectiveness of the intervention, are the approaches adopted to the intervention. This research utilised a targeted intervention that was based on the group's individual needs, whilst others subscribed to an approach that would possibly suggest that 'one size fits all'.

Knowler and Frederickson's (2013) study contains a comparative link as they integrated the use of Faupel's (2003) Emotional Literacy Assessment and

Intervention, meaning the theoretical basis of the intervention were matched. Results from their statistical analysis suggested that there was no significant effect of intervention on EL which again, in contrast to the current findings, suggests that a small group targeted EL intervention did not result in positive changes for the group. However, these results may be considered unreliable due to the discrepancy between the intervention and assessment. The study's intervention was based on a theoretical model of EL, yet, they used a trait EI assessment measure and therefore this was arguably not compatible.

Taking all of this into consideration, the consistency in approach and commitment to a theoretical basis in the area of EL needs to be addressed and adhered to. There also needs to be acknowledgement that 'ready-made' curricula need to contain a high level of flexibility to ensure individual needs can be met.

5.3 Original Contribution to the Existing Literature on EL

Exploratory and Explanatory Vs Evaluative

This research is exploratory and explanatory as opposed to the evaluative and predictive studies that already exist. The mixed methods approach here was utilised to gain an in depth and rich insight into EL by investigating possible mechanisms and therefore reducing the presence of 'black box' results. Previous research predominantly focused on evaluating the interventions which resulted in mixed findings and a complex picture which, therefore, provided little insight into understanding EL. The aim of this research was to attempt to not only provide numerical outcomes but to try to discover why these results occurred.

Child's Voice

Although there was inclusion of the child's perspective in prior research, I felt it should play a more dominant role in order to be able to access and gain an insight into the group's knowledge, skills, thoughts and practices. The previous qualitative contributions from the pupils focused on their personal evaluations of the interventions rather than their knowledge, skills and thoughts in relation to EL. So often there can be an over reliance on the assumption that key adults can provide a true reflection and comprehensive account of a child's strengths and needs, although these are integral to gain an holistic view, the child themselves often provides access to underlying reasons and a refreshing, unique perspective.

Emotional Literacy as a Practice rather than Capacity

As suggested by Goleman (1996) EL in this research is conceptualised as a practice, something that individuals demonstrate in 'real life', an active process that is to some extent observable through actions, yet, further accessible by considering internal thoughts and understanding. The aim of this research was to gain some insight into EL as a practice not a capacity. Inclusion of the parent and teacher checklists allowed me to consider what 'practices' were being observed by key adults. The self-reports from the group and the group interviews allowed me to gain access to the children's perspectives, reflections and experiences of EL in context and practice, as well as understand the reasons for progress and development.

5.4 Limitations and Reflexivity

5.4.1 Methodology

Within any research the methodological approach taken will inevitably contain limitations, some of which are widely known and associated with specific approaches and methods. Possible limitations of case studies, semi-structured interviews, self-report measures and thematic analysis, which are frequently cited in research literature, have already been discussed or outlined in the appendix. There are nevertheless further limitations that need outlining.

Firstly, the possible implications of conducting the interview in a group as opposed to individually; reasons for this have already been detailed (p.58) but there are difficulties not yet considered. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) outline an extensive list of factors to be considered when interviewing children, and in groups, some of which have already been addressed in the good practice considerations (p.60). One risk that may emerge with the group format is that some individual voices may not always be heard due to the possibility of others 'dominating the conversation' or an individual being of a 'hesitant or nervous' disposition (Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 287). To address this there were clear ground rules set with the group during the initial session, a rapport was established before beginning the interview to try and ease any anxieties and the researcher also ensured all group members had the opportunity to contribute if they wished to.

The researcher was also conscious that there was a possibility of eliminating individual voices and opinions during the analysis process if they were inconsistent with others' views and therefore did not form part of a dominant code/theme. During the reflective

and active thematic process there was only one occasion where this was apparent and duly noted and highlighted by the researcher. By the end of the thematic process the extract had been placed with other data and subsumed under an alternative heading. Individual voices have also been illuminated by detailing which extracts were provided by Child A, B, C or D. Additionally the reflexive boxes within Chapter Four provides further interpretation and insight for the reader.

Another factor noted during the interviews, that appeared to be exacerbated by the group format, was the provision of answers from Child C that seemed to be exaggerated, especially in relation to anger and their expression of this emotion. Confirmation of these incidents could not be sought from staff due to confidentiality but they were viewed as integral to the data and so remained within the data set. Due to the research area being EL, it was felt that exemplifying her emotional expressions for the benefit of her peers was in fact relevant rather than being detrimental to the validity of the data. It is worth noting that to the knowledge of the researcher this was not evident in the post intervention interview.

5.4.2 Identification of Participants

Identification of the pupils to form the small group could be questioned as this did not take a systematic or structured approach. To identify those with the lowest EL levels, the Emotional Literacy Assessment (Faupel, 2003) could have been utilised which would have provided a standardised and universal measure. However, this would not have been a practical method and it would also have been likely that a higher proportion of children would have fallen below the average range. This would have had ethical implications when selecting from this reduced sample.

This process was completed collaboratively with careful consideration given; once the SENCo and head teacher had jointly identified a small group a further discussion took place to clarify the level of need. Another factor discussed with the staff was that needs in the area of EL can take on a variety of forms; it is not only evident in children who present with challenging behaviour but can also present in those who are quite reserved, shy or anxious. Although retrospective, the level of need observed by the staff was later supported by the scores obtained on the pre-intervention checklist, increasing confidence in the group selection.

5.4.3 Restricted to UK Research

Although explicitly stated in the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature review, only literature from the UK was included when considering empirical research. Initially searches were completed on a wider scale to ensure there were no substantial or novel findings that were not being taken into account. This led to discovery of a very limited amount of literature from places such as Australia and the Netherlands; however; the majority of this would have later been excluded based on the remaining criteria. The only literature that was given further attention was that from America, a major reason for this being the dominant contributions American research has provided to theoretical and conceptual models of EI. However, after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria the only studies remaining were those focussing on the PATHS Curriculum. There are links that could have been made between this and EL but these would have been loosely made and inclusion would only have served to complicate an already complex picture.

5.4.4 The Intervention

This section aims to critically reflect on the targeted intervention that was used during the research and to highlight decisions and thinking that informed the design. It is important to provide further detail to outline possible strengths and limitations of the intervention and to provide the reader with further insight into the approach taken along with influencing factors that I feel have facilitated the successful outcomes.

Design and Creation

The theoretical basis and reasoning for not implementing an existing intervention have already been outlined in section 3.6. When creating the intervention I began by taking into account the outcomes of the EL checklists completed by the parents and teachers as these provide dimensional scores that give an indication of the greatest areas of need for the children. There were some slight differences between the scores for the individual children in the areas of empathy, social skills and motivation. However, the areas of self-awareness and self-regulation were considered primary areas of need for all of the four children. The proportion of sessions afforded to each dimensional area was in line with the outcomes of the checklists to meet the individual needs of the children.

As can be seen in appendix 3.1 there are some sessions which covered more than one dimensional area but this is reflective of the concept of EL. When being emotionally literate it is likely that we will be using skills from different dimensions within one situation, e.g. if we are angry we need to be self-aware to recognise that emotion, draw on effective strategies to help us self-regulate our emotions and possibly have the capacity to incorporate empathy and social skills.

Prior to the intervention I gathered existing and new resources which I thought would allow me to explore the different dimensional areas of EL with the group (see appendix 3.1). Resource selection was based on my knowledge and experience of EL and my professional experience within schools and the educational psychology service. The most important aspect to note is that each resource has a key theme, concept or character which I then extended so it was a recurrent point of reference throughout the whole session, an example of this can be seen in appendix 3.2.

Having immersed myself in the literature I had some general ideas about how I would use the resources and which dimensional areas they allowed us to explore. I intentionally started with sessions on self-awareness as I believe without having this ability it is difficult to fully develop and understand the other dimensions; for example, how can we effectively self-regulate our emotions if we are not aware of and unable to understand the emotion we are feeling? Following this I designed the intervention sessions on a weekly basis, once the two sessions in the preceding week had been delivered.

Limitations, Strengths and Facilitating Factors for Success

It is difficult to separate the limitations, strengths and facilitating factors as some aspects of the intervention may fall under more than one of these areas; therefore, each area that arose during the critical reflection will be considered in turn.

In the literature review there was frequent reference to 'structural barriers' (Coppock, 2007, p.417; Weare and Gray, 2003; Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw, 2006; Humphrey et al, 2008) that impacted on the effectiveness of interventions and programmes. All of these staffing, professional and systemic factors have inadvertently been eliminated

due to me personally designing and implementing the intervention; this meant there were no expectations placed on the staff or any reliance put on the school to actively support the implementation of this approach. Although it would have been ideal to take an active role in reducing these factors and involve staff in the process, the setting did not have sufficient staffing resource to take advantage of the opportunity. This presents a quandary, because while my role in the intervention has removed these barriers, and consequently facilitated the success of the intervention, I have not provided any solutions for addressing these concerns. I do however feel that this is a wider issue that is evident across the board when it comes to making changes within an educational setting and promoting alternative practices to foster positive outcomes for children. Each educational setting has different priorities, improvement plans, skill sets and approaches they adopt. So, although I consider that an effective EL intervention has a purpose and place within all of these settings, professionals working directly with individual schools and the Local Authority have to play some role in addressing these structural barriers, e.g. supporting and providing staff with training to facilitate progress.

What I would like to explore further are the skills and knowledge of the individuals delivering interventions. I strongly believe that these are crucial elements and ones which contributed to the positive results evidenced in this research. While my level of professional training and experience have provided me with a vast array of skills and knowledge that I can draw upon when working with children and young people to develop levels of EL, it would not, in my opinion, have led to the degree of positive outcomes seen in this research without investment in developing my awareness and practices, specifically in relation to this concept. Frequently, within my professional

roles I have seen staff members, notably teaching assistants, being given the responsibility of delivering interventions to support and meet areas of need for a group of children. Many of these staff members are extremely skilled and creative and take these roles on board and fulfil with them; rarely are they provided with the opportunity to outline what input they require to ensure they can meet the expectations and goals of the intervention and meet the target area of need. Having the opportunity to understand the area of EL in great depth meant that I was emotionally literate and therefore able to fully understand the area and the objectives of the intervention. I was able to respond to, recognise, understand and explore different aspects of EL that arose within the actual sessions as they occurred. It also meant that I had confidence when entering each of the sessions and did not feel the need for a structured programme of work to inform each of the one hour sessions. This again emphasises the importance of training for staff within schools in order to ensure that they have the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to support the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of the pupils. I find it surprising that we would not expect someone to teach academic subjects without having completed the appropriate training but we do not have the same expectations or opportunities available when it comes to other areas, e.g. SEMH, that educational settings are given some accountability for.

From my perspective there are several elements that facilitated the success of the intervention, specifically in relation to the intervention design and content. Firstly, as previously mentioned each session was centred on a core theme, character or concept. The whole group responded well to this in each session and by raising some of these, e.g. bucket filler in the post-interview, suggests this approach supported

engagement, thinking and retention of the session content. I believe this had a positive effect for several reasons:

1. Having a character allowed the children to distance themselves, especially when discussing complex and difficult emotions such as anger.
2. It made the sessions more engaging and animated
3. It reduced the level of abstract content and provided them with a concrete concept as a starting point which they could contribute to and explore further.

I would suggest that the level of creativity, planning and thought that went into the intervention materials and approaches heightened the level of engagement for all of the children. There was a wide variety of pedagogical and elicitation approaches used within the interventions: role play, discussion, painting, drawing, brain storming, white boards, post-its etc. and only a limited amount of writing required. From the interview data it is evident that writing acted as a barrier for three of the children; therefore, the reduction of this expectation is likely to have increased participation. One of the main aims of the intervention was to develop the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding to improve their levels of EL, which I felt could not be done through a structured and rigid set of tasks which the children would be expected to complete and record by the end of the session. I observed that by using this approach it allowed the group to work together more often and the opportunity for conversation gave them a chance to discuss their ideas. An emphasis was placed on the importance of the discussion and the methods above facilitated this process.

Careful planning ensured that the content and materials within each session were accessible to all of the children in the group; although there was no need to

differentiate these further in the session there were times when I felt it appropriate to extend conversations in consideration of how individual children were responding. On reflection there were only a few times when I felt that one child needed further input or support and only once when I continued this on a 1:1 basis within the session; at all other times I brought it back to the group and included the other children to facilitate thinking, develop ideas and support their peers. There were two occasions when I felt that not enough time had been allocated to certain topics or that the children needed further support to develop their understanding; this was extended and resumed in the next session. Being flexible and adapting to the group's needs is paramount to facilitate positive outcomes; staff delivering interventions need to actively monitor when they need to respond to the needs of the children.

From the post-interview data and by remaining critically reflective throughout the course of the research I acknowledge that there are some limitations to the intervention I delivered and there are further adaptions that I feel need to be made. When considering the references Child D made to the home context and the numerical outcomes from the parent checklists indicating that their levels of EL may not be as high in this context, it would be beneficial to consider how the children could be supported to generalise and apply the new skills they are learning to different environments. On a small scale this could include designing activities that sensitively embrace aspects of home within the intervention sessions, or affording the children the opportunity to complete small or brief activities/discussions with their parents/carers. Ideally, it would be beneficial if the parents/carers were aware of the content of the sessions and then invited to participate in some capacity to allow

reinforcement of the EL content within the home context. This would require further exploration to consider the purposes and aims extensively.

Finally, the barriers in the school environment, raised by all the children in relation to their motivation, left me feeling that there are additional steps and adaptions required in this area. This would be addressed, to some extent, in the typical school context as usually it would be a member of staff implementing the intervention and they would be able to follow upon the barriers raised with the class teachers, or respond to these themselves. However, on the whole I feel that the dimensional area of motivation within EL requires participation from a wider circle of staff and stakeholders. Some of the aspects raised by the children, e.g. pedagogical approaches, 'big writes', lack of comprehension, need to be unpicked further by the staff working directly with the children on an individual, whole class and possibly even systemic level. As previously highlighted within the analysis section, there needs to be more emphasis within the intervention sessions on the individual strengths and interests of the children. This will enable children to adapt their approach and manage their response when faced with learning tasks they perceive as difficult and consequently increase their levels of motivation within the school environment.

5.4.5 Role of the Researcher

Within qualitative research it is acknowledged that subjectivity exists but more importantly is 'positively valued', as is objectivity within quantitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 36). Any form of research could be considered a 'subjective process' with the researcher being unable to separate themselves from their own 'perspectives, values and assumptions' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 36). It is not

possible to eliminate the element of subjectivity and nor would many want to, but to ensure a high quality throughout the research process there needs to a high level of critical reflexivity, thinking about possible biases and what impact the role of the researcher may have had (Willig, 2001, p.10).

There are several areas in which I felt my role as a researcher could have determined the outcomes of the process; this is not to say that the research is invalid in any way, just that I acknowledge the role I've played. Critical reflexivity played a dominant role throughout the research process and consequentially has given me increased confidence in the practices followed within the current research. There are a variety of factors that I feel should be explicitly stated to not only highlight possible biases but also to show how each of these were addressed through critical reflexivity.

The first, 'epistemological reflexivity' (Willig, 2001, p.10), is concerned with the decisions we make in regards to the research design and methods. An extensive account of the decisions made and justification for this has already been detailed in chapter three. It is important to acknowledge that during this process, other research designs and methods were considered (see appendix 11) and there was not a predetermined route that was simply followed without consideration of alternatives.

This next part takes into account 'personal reflexivity' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 37) by making my participation within the research 'visible'. Firstly, the interview framework was constructed by the researcher and therefore to some degree the content of the interview was predetermined based on the researcher's knowledge and interest in EL. One factor which heavily influenced the questions was the theoretical models and literature I had selected and which informed the questions; commitment

to a model promoted consistency and provided the audience with an insight into the topics covered. Constructing questions based on literature also increases the validity of the interview framework in that it is covering the phenomenon it is attempting to investigate. The interview was also semi-structured, meaning if the group took the interview in a new direction there was flexibility to follow this.

The data gathered during this process was then subjected to thematic analysis. McCracken (1988) suggests that the researcher uses their own individual knowledge, skills and experiences in order to make sense of the data. An ‘active role’ is taken in making decisions about coding, assigning themes and the way in which these are reported (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.7). Here, the decision which involved a high degree of critical reflexivity was whether this research included a deductive or inductive approach. As outlined in chapter three (p.71) an inductive approach was adopted to allow the whole data set to be incorporated into the analysis. Acknowledging that I had immersed myself in the area of EL by reading literature, sticking to a particular theoretical model and creating the content of the intervention there were several points where I questioned whether my approach had remained inductive. This was especially true when analysing the post intervention data and identifying that some themes created mirrored the dimensional areas of EL. However, the fact that there was a continuous presence of critical reflexivity in this area only served to ensure that I frequently reflected on my own knowledge and assumptions in relation to the themes and analysis I had conducted. If anything I had to ensure that I did not make changes to the results, purely to dissociate the themes from the theoretical model, because they had truly been informed by the data.

5.5 Implications and Possible Future Directions

This research indicates there is value in the inclusion of EL within an educational setting in promoting positive outcomes for children. The in-depth analysis suggests that a change in mechanisms, the children's thoughts, knowledge and skills, contributes to producing positive numerical outcomes. Having the ability to understand, manage, express emotions and engage in positive interactions and friendships is an essential part of development and the educational experience. Hence, this area should be of importance to all professionals working with children and in promoting positive social, emotional and mental health.

This research was not evaluative in approach and therefore no explicit claims can be made but it is felt there were several approaches that contributed to the positive changes and therefore it is important to consider the implications of these for practice. Firstly, there was a commitment to a specific theoretical model which promoted consistency, increased validity of the measures and consequentially reduced the uncertainty and disparities often observed in EL research. It is imperative that professionals working together within local authorities work collaboratively to deliver a shared model and perspective of EL to educational settings to promote understanding.

Further to this, the ability to deliver and design a needs led intervention was possible because of the researcher's professional background, knowledge and skills. Previous research on national strategies emphasised that one size does not fit all; hence, those implementing EL interventions need to have the knowledge, skills and training to understand EL and how to identify and meet individual needs. This would mean that staff have the ability to be flexible and adapt their approach so the sessions are

interactive rather than task orientated whilst working rigidly through a programme of work. Educational psychologists and other professionals are in a prime position to be able support this if local authorities invest in the professional development of school staff.

Personally, there are several future steps that have been given some thought. Primarily this involves dissemination of the research; staff, parents and pupils involved in the research have already been presented with preliminary findings and have been invited to attend a further session with the researcher where there will be a final presentation of the research. Due to the positive outcomes it is considered beneficial to share the research with a wider audience which initially will focus on the educational psychologists working within the local authority.

It is also felt that the intervention utilised within this research could be of value to educational settings. Although an evaluation of the intervention was not included in this research the outcomes presented suggest it could be effective in promoting the EL levels of primary aged school children. Therefore, as part of my own professional development I will aim to refine, extend and assess the validity and reliability of the intervention.

5.6 Conclusion

Meeting and developing the social and emotional needs of children and young people is still a necessity and expectation of educational settings. This research would suggest that Emotional Literacy is an approach that can promote this.

An in-depth investigation suggests that access to a needs led, small group targeted intervention can produce positive outcomes that are facilitated by a change in

contributing mechanisms. In other words, progress and development in the EL knowledge, skills and practices of the group.

Further research in this field is required to provide a solid and consistent evidence base and consequently provide guidance for professionals and schools to support the children and young people they are working with.

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