

COLLABORATIVE PURSUIT OF FLOURISHING

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Abstract

This research explored two under-researched core positive psychology constructs: flourishing, and positive or enabling institutions, using twin methodologies: appreciative inquiry and case study (Seligman & Csikszentimihalyi, 2000; Cooperrider, 2012, Thomas, 2015). The research is organized into three, interrelated empirical studies. Study One explored dimensions of flourishing children through multiple lenses of staff, parents and children perspectives, using different methods of data collection (repertory grid method, semi-structured interview, and drawing/talking/colouring the 'best possible child'). The developmental-ecosystemic model of flourishing derived from analysis of findings from Study One was further developed in Study Two; its most distinctive component was a focus on children's entitlements. A nested design frame was used in Study Two. This study involved collaboration with a group of teaching staff and support staff as well as representatives from these groups to determine what universal interventions would support flourishing in Faith Primary School. The resultant draft flourishing programme consisted of systemic innovations and repairs. Study Three focused on a process-based evaluation, which indicated this nested appreciative inquiry was mostly transformative in its impact (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). Possible implications for educational psychology practice are discussed through consideration of 'phronesis', drawn from findings from the three studies.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my loving parents:

Avtar and Harbhajan Pahil.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALTAS	Active Teen Leaders Avoiding Screen-Time
CDS	Child Development Supplement
CHOICE	Capacity building, human rights, organizational sustainability, institutional accountability, contribution and enabling environment
CP	Creative Partnerships
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ECM	Every Child Matters
EPOCH	Engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, happiness
EPs	Educational Psychologists
OD	Organizational development
PERMA	Positive emotion, engagement, relationships (positive), meaning, accomplishment
PPD	Postgraduate professional development
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RGT	Repertory grid technique
SDT	Self-determination theory
SI	Special Issue
siSEND	Self-identified Special Educational Needs and Disability

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background to this thesis from a personal perspective. I then introduce the positive psychology framework as proposed by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000). It is relevant to examine critically positive psychology in relation to humanistic psychology given both psychologies are focused on exploring and cultivating well-being, optimal functioning and healthy organizations (Rich, 2001; Taylor, 2001; Rathunde, 2001; Robbins, 2008; Friedman, 2003; 2008; Mruk, 2006; 2008; McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008). This chapter discusses some of the divisions and debates between positive and humanistic psychologies, and closes with ways forward as proposed by Robbins (2008), Mruk (2008), and McDonald & O'Callaghan (2008).

1.1 Background/Context

The impetus for this inquiry stems from my frustrations of operating within an educational system that predominately conceptualizes mental health in deficit terms, for both children with and without additional/special needs. The latter has been particularly evident when in my role as an educational psychologist, my inquiry about groups of children who have not been raised by the special educational needs coordinator has been met typically by a 'they are fine, they are not showing major signs of distress' response. This passive-reactive response has been a recurring discourse during at least ten years of educational psychology practice, possibly in part due to the conceptualization of well-being in the traditional sense, that is, as the absence of psychopathology.

The positive psychological perspective conceptualizes well-being as the presence of positive subjective and psychological states (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This positive frame of reference is particularly appealing as it means that I can continue to alleviate distress and address developmental needs as well as facilitate well-being and build strengths in all children. Similarly, numerous educational psychologists in the UK (Baxter & Fredrickson, 2005; Cameron, 2006; MacKay, 2011) have asserted that educational psychologists (EPs) should be advocating positive development outcomes for all children. Cameron (2006), in his examination of innovation in educational psychology research, raises the possibility of positive psychology having the potential to 'open people's minds to what they can do, rather than creating the illusion of helping by offering complex explanations for why they cannot do it' (Cameron, 2006, p. 298).

Moreover MacKay (2011), in his position paper entitled 'the place of health interventions in educational psychology', argues that educational psychology must have central relevance to the needs of society by committing to a 'universal psychology aimed at addressing well-being of all children and young people' with a principal focus on 'the whole population rather than those with additional support needs and disabilities' (MacKay, 2011, p.11). He proposes a health agenda for educational psychology services whereby services should, in consultation with schools, plan the design and evaluation of feasible health interventions. MacKay (2011, p.11) argues that this is a 'greenfield site' on the basis that few studies were generated when he conducted searches in the British Journal of Educational Psychology, Educational Psychology in Practice and School Psychology International over a ten-year period (2001-2011). The implication of enhancing all children's positive subjective and psychological states would involve working at a whole school level, something that I am keen to do more of.

My growing interest in the field of positive psychology resulted in my attendance at the First World Congress in Positive Psychology in June 2009, Philadelphia, USA sponsored by the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). I, alongside fifteen hundred delegates from fifty two countries waited eagerly for the opening special lecture by Martin Seligman, one of the co-founders of positive psychology. Seligman began with a new vision for education in that happiness should be taught to school children alongside traditional academic skills. He argued that the three modes of 'happiness' - positive emotion, positive engagement and positive meaning - could be separately measured and learnt and made a case for 'Positive Education for Achievement and Well-Being'. By the end of the lecture, Seligman announced a major goal for the IPPA is for 51% of the world to be flourishing by 2051.

1.2 Introduction to Positive Psychology

The current positive psychology movement can be tracked back to Seligman's presidential speech to the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1988 (Seligman, 1999). According to Seligman (prominent clinical psychologist who developed the theory of 'learned helplessness' and contributed to thinking on depression), psychology was predominately a healing discipline based upon an illness and disease model (Maddux et al., 2004). The focus of this pathology has yielded considerable understanding, prevention and treatment of psychological disorders. In addition, this had led to the development of classification manuals – the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) funded by the American Psychiatric Association (2000) and the International Classification of Disease (ICD) funded by the World Health Organization (1990). The fourth edition of the DSM (DSM-IV) calls humour

and altruism as 'defense mechanisms' (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 752). Seligman criticized this view and asked:

"How has it happened that that social sciences view the human strengths and virtues – altruism, courage, honesty, duty, joy, health, responsibility and good cheer – as derivative, defensive or downright illusions, while weakness and negative motivations – anxiety, lust, selfishness, paranoia, anger, disorder and sadness – are viewed as authentic? (Seligman, 1999, p. 559)"

Seligman teamed together with Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (known for his seminal work on 'flow', an optimal experience that individuals feel when they act with total involvement) (1975), and put together the millennial special issue (SI) edition of the American Scientist dedicated to positive psychology. They asserted that the field of psychology 'was not producing enough knowledge of what makes life worth living' (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5). The co-founders of positive psychology advocate that mainstream psychology shifts to a dual model that studies what is right about people whilst complimenting traditional psychology's focus on pathology. This claim is supported by a citation study that examined psychological publications from 1872 onwards in the PsycINFO database through the use of dialectic pairs such as optimism-pessimism and happiness-sadness, found a ratio of 2:1 in favour of the negative subject area (Rand and Synder, 2003). The fundamental assumption of positive psychology is that goodness and optimal functioning are as valid as disease and distress.

Therefore the co-founders of positive psychology propose that three concerns or pillars of positive psychology investigate: positive subjective experiences (Pillar One); positive personality or positive traits (Pillar Two); and positive institutions (such as families, schools, businesses, communities). The third pillar recognizes that both experiences and people are rooted in a social context. This positive psychology framework is illustrated in Figure 1. Seligman (2003) argues that the field of sociology 'languished in the same way as psychology' in that sociology has been 'mostly about disabling conditions, the "isms" racism, sexism, and ageism—and how the isms ruin lives' and even 'if we were able to get rid of all those isms, we would still only be at zero' (Seligman, 2003, p. xvii). Thus Seligman posits that 'positive psychology and positive sociology need to ask, 'What are the institutions that take human beings *above* zero?' (Seligman, 2003, p. xvii). The co-founders of positive psychology question whether there will be a rise of 'a social science of positive community and institutions' during the next couple of decades (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.12).

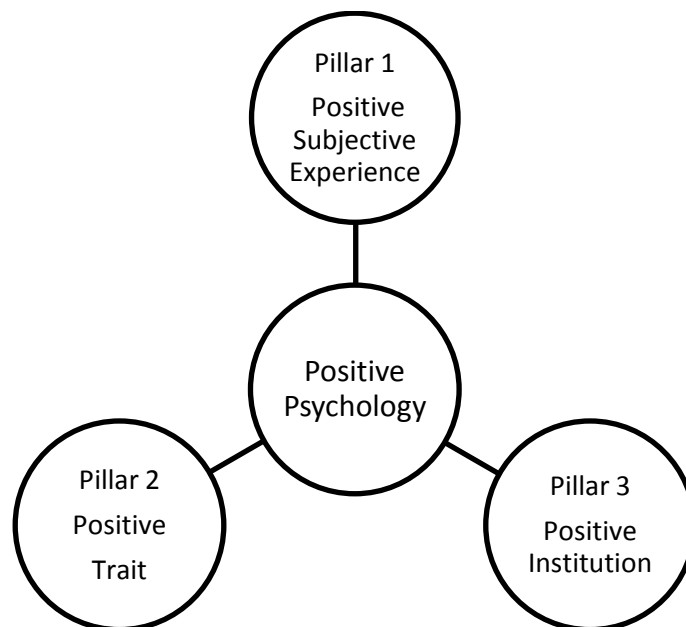


Figure 1 - Positive Psychology Framework (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)

The vision of Seligman's and Csikszentmihalyi's version of positive psychology is to spearhead an objective, scientific inquiry on positive subjective experiences, traits and institutions and this is summed up in their millennial SI which contains sixteen articles including their introductory article as:

“We predict that positive psychology in this new century will allow psychologists to understand and build those factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish. Such a science will not need to start afresh. It required for the most part just a redirecting of scientific energy. ...They (psychology and psychiatry) developed a usable taxonomy, as well as reliable and valid ways of measuring fuzzy concepts such as schizophrenia, anger and depression. They developed sophisticated methods – both experimental and longitudinal – for understanding the causal pathways that lead to such undesirable outcomes. ...These same methods, and in many cases the same laboratories and the next generation of scientists, with a slight shift of emphasis and funding, will be used to measure, understand, and build those characteristics that make life most worth living (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.13).”

Of the six articles that explore the third pillar of positive institution, there are two that are particularly relevant to young people and families. Larson's article, 'Towards a psychology of positive youth development', highlights the significance of structured voluntary activities, sports and arts in order to develop resourceful youth to address wider societal problems of boredom, alienation and disconnection; whilst Winner (2000) explores the effect of families on the development of talent. Few of the sixteen SI articles focus on developmentally-oriented variables (Larson 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000) argue Cowen and Kilmer (2002), despite Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000)

acknowledging the importance of a developmental perspective. One limitation of positive psychology is that the articles in the SI tend to have an adult cross-sectional focus. Cowen and Kilmer (2002) make the case for a more robust psychological field by being 'longitudinal in its inquiry patterns' and focusing on 'what gets children off to positive starts early on, and what keeps them going in that direction' (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002, p. 458). They argue that a robust positive psychology requires a synthesis of developmental, longitudinal, and ecological approaches (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002).

Moreover, Cowen and Kilmer (2002) note that positive psychology as operationalized in the SI appears to identify experts in several areas which might be linked to a forthcoming positive psychology rather than forming a coherent framework. They are concerned with the SI's apparent individuality of its sixteen contributions in that the articles reflect differing goals, some un-connected to each other or to the positive psychology framework put forward by its co-founders (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Cowen and Kilmer (2002) found approximately sixty proposed dependent variables, or outcome goals. Table 1 lists these positive psychology outcome variables. Similarly, Sheldon (2009) argues that the field of positive psychology lacks a unifying framework within which to conceptualise optimal functioning and is a 'grab-bag' or 'smorgasbord' of phenomena and topics (Sheldon, 2009, p. 268).

Cowen and Kilmer's argument of positive psychology lacking a coherent framework is reinforced when examining Seligman's shifting conceptualisations of positive psychology. This is summed up in Seligman's book on 'Flourish' in which he acknowledges that he has revised his conceptualisation of positive psychology.

Seligman (2011) shifts in conceptual thinking can be found in chapter one under the section 'From Authentic Happiness Theory to Well-Being Theory' in which he states:

"I used to think that the topic of positive psychology was happiness, that the gold standard for measuring happiness was life satisfaction, and that the goal of positive psychology was to increase life satisfaction. I now think that the topic of positive psychology is well-being, that the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and that the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing. This theory, which I call well-being theory, is very different from authentic happiness theory,... (Seligman, 2011, p.13)."

Table 1 - Positive Psychology Target Outcome Variables in 16 SI Articles (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002)

Achievement	Friendship	Nurturance	Realism
Altruism	Future mindedness	Optimal Experience	Resistance to temptation
Anticipation	Giftedness	Optimism	Responsibility
Autonomy	Good cheer	Originality	Satisfaction with life
Capacity for love	Good citizenship	Perception of high-challenge backed by personal skills	Self-determination
Civility	Good mood	Perseverance	Self-regulation
Contentment	Happiness	Personal control	Sense of meaning about physical health
Cooperation	High involvement	Physical optimism	Sensibility
Courage	High talent	Perseverance	Spirituality
Creativity	Hope	Personal control	Sublimation
Deep concentration	Humour	Physical optimism	Suppression
Elicitation of support	Initiative	Psychological Optimism	Subjective well-being
Engagement	Insight	Physical well-being	
Enjoy vocation	Interpersonal skills		
	Intrinsic motivation		

Flexible thinking	Kinship	Positive emotional states	Tolerance
Flow	Moderation	Rational thinking	Well-being
Freedom			Wisdom

Seligman's 'authentic happiness' theory proposes that there are three paths to happiness: through engaging in the pleasant life (experiencing high levels of positive emotion); living an engaged life (via intense absorption and flow); and living a meaningful life (through utilizing strengths in the quest of something greater than oneself) (Seligman, 2003b). Subsequently, Seligman (2011) argues that well-being has five components which are measurable; these are positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement (which use the acronym, PERMA). Seligman argues that the authentic happiness theory is one-dimensional in that all three elements of happiness are measured entirely by subjective report, whereas the five elements of well-being theory are measured both subjectively and objectively. Seligman states 'the upshot of this is that well-being cannot exist just in your own head: well-being is a combination of feeling good as well as actually having good meaning, good relationships, and accomplishment' (Seligman, 2011, p.25).

Specifically in relation to positive psychology, Henriques and Sternberg (2004) in their quest for a unified psychology make the point that 'the fragmented and separatist nature of psychology sets the stage for constant reinventing of the wheel and the proliferation of redundant notions' (Henriques & Sternberg, 2004, p.1057). This is more likely to happen when 'there is substantial disconnection between positive psychology (as operationalized in the SI), and a corpus of prior related work in primary prevention and wellness enhancement' (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002, p. 454).

Cowen, as a prominent scholar who contributed to the fields of community psychology and primary prevention for several decades (Cowen et al., 1967; Cowen, 1977; Zax and Cowen, 1976; Cowen, 1980; Cowen, 1994), is in a position to put together a list of twenty-four influential citations in the fields of primary prevention and wellness enhancement on an arbitrary nomination basis (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002). Examples of prior influential citations include Jahoda's integrated view of 'positive mental health' (1958), Hollister's notion of 'strens' (1967) and Antonovsky's conceptualisation of 'salutogenesis' (1979). Whilst concepts such as trauma and pathology and 'pathogenesis' (to describe the underlying processes of dysfunction) were widely utilised in mental health, there were no terms to describe respectively events that strengthen people psychologically as well as processes and experiences which contribute to positive physical and psychological outcomes. To counter these lacunae respectively in mental health, Hollister coined the concept 'strens' and medical sociologist, Antonovsky, developed the term 'salutogenesis'. When Cowen examined whether the identified twenty-four prior, influential citations featured in the SI, he only found three citations out of a total of 1308 citations in the sixteen articles. All three citations relate to Jahoda's (1958) original volume in Joint Commission on Mental Health series which defines mental health from a positive perspective.

Moreover, the leading proponents of positive psychology have been charged with not giving enough credit to William James, the 'American's first positive psychologist' (Taylor, 2001, p.15) and humanistic psychology for the origins of positive psychology (Rich, 2001; Taylor, 2001). James, too, in his presidential address to the APA in 1906, asked pertinent questions in relation to optimal human functioning. James posited that two more questions need to be answered in order to investigate and understand why

some individuals are able to use their resources to an optimal level and others not. These questions are 'what were the limits of human energy?' and 'how could this energy be stimulated and released so it could be put to optimal use? (Rathunde, 2001, p.136).' James' argued that there is need to create a vocabulary of positive change and understand the fundamentals of extraordinary positive experiences; that is when things are 'hot and alive within us, and where everything has to re-crystallize about it' (James, 1902, p. 162).

1.3 Positive Psychology in Relation to Humanistic Psychology

Both positive and humanistic psychologies manifested at different times but both focus on exploring and cultivating well-being, optimal functioning and healthy organisations. Given this similar focus, it is relevant to examine critically positive psychology in relation to humanistic psychology, especially in terms of their respective epistemologies and methodologies. It is necessary to draw critically from a series of articles (by Rich, Taylor and Rathunde) in the special issue of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology (2001) devoted to 're-center the discourse in positive psychology so that the movement recognizes the historical importance of humanistic psychology' (Rich, 2001, p.8) as well as from the special issue of The Humanistic Psychologist (2008) focused on finding grounds for a reconciliation between the fields, given the divisiveness at that time. The latter special issue contains a series of articles by Robbins, Friedman, Mruk, and McDonald and O'Callaghan.

The divisions and debates were triggered by Seligman's and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) unscholarly comments (Robbins, 2008). In their seminal paper on positive psychology

they asserted that humanistic psychology does not embody positive psychology because it has produced no research tradition, is narcissistic and anti-scientific (Taylor, 2001). The following quote illustrates such criticisms:

“Unfortunately, humanistic psychology did not attract much of a cumulative empirical base, and it spawned myriad therapeutic self-help movements. In some of its incarnations, it emphasized the self and encouraged a self-centredness that played down concerns for collective well-being. Further debate will determine whether this came about because Maslow and Rogers were ahead of the times, because these flaws were inherent in their original vision, or because of overly enthusiastic followers. However, one legacy of the humanism of the 1960s is prominently displayed in any large bookstore: The “psychology” section contains at least 10 shelves on crystal healing, aromatherapy, and reaching the inner child for every shelf of books that tries to uphold some scholarly standard (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.7).”

Robbins (2008) asserts that the co-founders of positive psychology were embellishing the disparities between positive and humanistic psychology for both political and rhetorical purposes. Robbins (2008) believes that the Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) dissociated their positive psychology research programme from humanistic psychology due to the latter’s marginalization within the academic community. Robbins (2008) argues that maybe to

“ gain acceptance among the status quo, they may have felt the need to take the old wine of humanistic psychology and package it in the new bottle of positive psychology - albeit, with some new innovations in methodology and a renewed interest in the virtue theory’s roots in a neo-Aristotelian ethical perspective. If

this was, indeed, their strategy, it seems to have worked famously (Robbins, 2008, p.100).”

This rhetorical move, according to Robbins (2008), is no longer necessary because positive psychology has been accepted by the academic world and subsequently both co-founders of positive psychology feel secure enough to acknowledge that positive psychology is the successor to the vision of psychology proposed by the leading humanistic psychologists, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Seligman admitted that Maslow (1971) and Allport (1961) are ‘distinguished ancestors’ of the recent positive psychology movement (Seligman, 2005, p.7). Csikszentmihalyi noted that the concept of flow ‘was originally assimilated within the humanistic tradition of Maslow and Rogers (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2005, p.90).’

McDonald and O’Callaghan (2008) reveal the power relations of social control that is taking place in the discourses of positive psychology, through the lens of Foucault’s concept of power/knowledge and discipline. Critical theorist, Foucault (1969) assert that the modern social sciences that claim to provide universal scientific truths are in fact, in real terms just manifestations of commitments (political and ethical) of a particular society rather than scientifically grounded truths. His key premise is that systems of thought and knowledge are dominated by rules and conditions that are determined between institutions. According to Foucault (1975), discourse functions through the process of disciplinary mechanisms such as hierarchical observation, the normalizing gaze, and examination. In essence these techniques of control are as follows:

“The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a

visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them (Foucault, 1975, p. 184).”

Examination, a disciplinary mechanism, is a prime example of what Foucault calls power/knowledge, since it integrates into a unified whole ‘the deployment of force and the establishment of truth’ (Foucault, 1975, p.184). According to Foucault, the aims of power and the aims of knowledge are intertwined, and therefore cannot be separated. In essence, when we know we are in a position of control, and vice-versa, that is, when in control we know.

In their original paper on positive psychology, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) deployed such mechanisms to diminish and undermine humanistic psychology whilst at the same time asserted that their theories of positive psychological functioning were distinct (McDonald & O’Callaghan, 2008). In essence they asserted that positive psychology would become the pre-eminent party to scrutinize and judge the theory and empirical research that claimed to enhance our knowledge of optimal functioning via positioning their positive psychology research programme within a positivist scientific stance: ‘At this juncture, the social and behaviour sciences can play an enormously important role. They can articulate a vision of the good life that is empirically sound while being understandable and attractive’ (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5). McDonald and O’Callaghan (2008) maintain that the key players in positive psychology asserted their influence by using an array of disciplinary mechanisms, via functioning as an observing hierarchy and using a normalizing gaze or surveillance on humanistic psychology as indicated by the following quotes:

“Unfortunately, humanistic psychology did not attract much of a cumulative empirical base, and it spawned myriad therapeutic self-help movements. In

some of its incarnations, it emphasized the self and encouraged a self-centredness that played down concerns for collective well-being. Further debate will determine whether this came about because Maslow and Rogers were ahead of the times, because these flaws were inherent in their original vision, or because of overly enthusiastic followers. However, one legacy of the humanism of the 1960s is prominently displayed in any large bookstore: The “psychology” section contains at least 10 shelves on crystal healing, aromatherapy, and reaching the inner child for every shelf of books that tries to uphold some scholarly standard (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.7).”

“What distinguishes positive psychology from humanistic psychology of the 1960s and 1970s and from the positive thinking movement is its reliance on empirical research to understand people and the lives they lead. Humanists were often sceptical about the scientific method and what it could yield yet were unable to offer an alternative other than the insight that people were good. In contrast, positive psychologists see both strength and weakness as authentic and as amenable to scientific understanding (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p.4).”

In essence the leading positive psychologists argued that humanistic psychology should be rejected for its respective vision of the optimal life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Through positive psychology's separatist position (Held, 2004), the co-founders have delineated an array of rules and conditions (Foucault, 1969) for investigating positive psychological functioning rooted in positivist thinking (McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008). According to Seligman (2004), both the publication and approval of his book, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook of Classification*, was carried out by the APA, the leading body of expertise

in psychology. In addition, Seligman and colleagues (2005) described the advancement of measurement instruments that are psychometrically sound in an article entitled 'Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions' published in the leading journal, *American Psychologist*.

Through their hierarchical observations (Foucault, 1969; McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008), the leading positive psychologists claim that the new movement is a legitimate science and promote it as rational, rigorous and empirically sound (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004), the implication being that positive psychology is a responsible scientific venture that governments, institutions and the public can rely on and have faith in. (Foucault, 1969; McDonald & O'Callaghan 2008; Seligman et al., 2005). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) side-lined humanistic psychology through normalising their conceptions of 'positive' while labelling other competing domains as radical, rooted in 'wishful thinking', 'faith', 'self-deception', 'fads' and 'hand-waving' (McDonald and O'Callaghan, 2008). This is echoed in the following quote:

“And in this quest for what is best, positive psychology does not rely on wishful thinking, faith, self-deception, fads or hand waving: It tries to adapt what is best in the scientific method to the unique problems that human behaviour presents to those who wish to understand it in all its complexity (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.7).”

This Foucauldian's critique by McDonald and O'Callaghan (2008) essentially builds on the previous critique by Taylor (2001) who argues that positivist experimental

psychology should not stipulate what is and is not first rate science. In addition, Taylor (2001) points out that positive psychology presents as controlling elite; selected and endorsed by each other, and whose benchmarks must be implemented. Seligman (2003) continues to deploy the examination disciplinary mechanism (Foucault, 1975; McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008) to argue that the limitations of humanistic psychology were essentially due to a 'sloppier, radical epistemology stressing phenomenology and individual case histories' (Seligman, 2003b, p.275) thereby failing to penetrate mainstream psychology. However, Seligman and Csikszentimihalyi (2000) made the following omission in their examination of humanistic psychology in their seminal paper, which is noted by Shapiro (2001);

“In the 16 articles, 178 pages, and over 1,300 references in this issue, I found extremely few (approximately 6, or 0.4%) references to the seminal and foundational works of Rogers, Maslow, May, Bugental, Buhler, Combs, Carkuff, and many others, some of whom have done widely respected quantitative investigations (Shapiro, 2001, p.82).”

It is evident then that the new movement has failed to recognise the pioneering quantitative empirical studies that emerged from the humanistic psychology. This niche appears to be owned entirely by some in positive psychology (Friedman, 2008). Moreover as some prominent humanistic psychologists have adopted a wider approach to science (Shapiro, 2001; Friedman, 2008, Robbins, 2008), it seems relevant here to introduce Mruk's distinction between the two respective psychologies (Mruk 2006; 2008). Mruk (2006, 2008) differentiates the epistemological differences as humanistic positive psychology and positivistic positive psychology. Although the former positive psychology is older, it adopts a wider approach to science including qualitative methods

rooted in existential and phenomenological thinking. In comparison, the latter is newer but essentially embraces a mature form of epistemology, logical positivism of traditional scientific psychology (Mruk 2006; 2008).

Mruk's (2006, 2008) argues that the most accurate label to describe the new movement is positivistic positive psychology, and this is particularly well illustrated by examining the Oxford Handbook of Methods in Positive Psychology by Ong and Dulmen (2007). This practically reads like a statistical manual as there is no mention of qualitative approaches (Friedman, 2008). Moreover, a good example of humanistic positive psychology (Mruk 2006; 2008) can be illustrated by the work of Carl Rogers who utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods to address questions concerning the critical elements of helpful psychotherapy, for which he was granted the 1956 Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology by the APA (Robbins, 2008).

Friedman (2008) asserts that the key distinction between these two respective psychologies seems to be their preference to different methodologies and epistemologies. With regards to methodology, positive psychologists have a tendency to prefer quantitative over qualitative approaches, whereas humanistic psychologists have a tendency to prefer the opposite of this. With regards to epistemology, positive psychologists orient towards logical positivism, whereas humanistic psychologists orient towards post positivism (Friedman, 2008). It is important to note that this epistemological distinction has been applied retrospectively, as the origins of humanistic psychology preceded the development of post-positivist approaches to research.

Mruk (2006) maintains that the critical concept in humanistic psychology is holism whereas positive psychology encompasses a perspective in line with reductionism. The humanists assert that the individual is more than the sum of his or her parts and can only be investigated appropriately as a whole. Thus the humanists tend to utilise more qualitative methods in an attempt to enhance their chances of investigating the whole person (Maslow, 1954; Mruk, 2006; Robbins, 2008; Friedman, 2008). Maslow (1954) argued that inquiry into human potential only through methods of a positivist orientation was akin to measuring a six foot tall person in a room which has a five foot ceiling; the conditions have already been established for that respective person not to reach their maximum height.

However Friedman (2008) recognises that there are noteworthy exceptions to this perceived divide. For example, Csikszentmihalyi developed his work on flow using a technique based on phenomenology theory called experiential sampling method (McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008). In real terms, Friedman (2008) asserts that the heart of the dispute between positive and humanistic psychology lies in the following comparative negative appraisal. Qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) research is seen as less valuable and unscientific so is rejected in line with positive psychology's alliance with positivism whereas humanistic psychology's orientation towards different versions of post positivism often rejects quantitative research as less valuable, or distorted research misapplied to studying humans (Friedman, 2008).

Robbins (2008) argues this latter point when he asserts that

“greatest danger for positive psychology lies in its potential to misappropriate Aristotelian ethics within an epistemological framework that subtly and effectively undercuts the most fundamental presuppositions and requirements for a properly Aristotelian application of virtue theory for the human sciences (Robbins, 2008, p.106).”

Robbins (2008) notes that there is a similarity between ‘eudaimonic well-being’ (a term used by the neo-Aristotelians) and ‘self-actualisation’ (Maslow, 1954); both imply a person’s ability to experience an enriching, full and meaningful life alongside the full emotional spectrum. Robbins (2008) observes that positive psychologists have shifted their original emphasis from hedonic well-being to eudaimonic well-being thereby shifting in real terms to the humanistic perspective. Moreover, Robbins (2008) argues that if positive psychology is genuine about its growing emphasis on neo-Aristotelian methods to comprehending character strengths and virtues, then they need to adopt a holistic method to the good life; as character strengths and virtues need to be understood in the holistic sense as interdependent elements of the good life. This is a pertinent issue given that Peterson and Seligman (2004) treat the virtues as if they are ‘logically independent’ (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006, p.380) whereas the activation of the virtues on a daily living basis needs the direction of practical wisdom (also known as phronesis) or the ‘master virtue’ (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006, p.385).

Moreover, Robbins (2008) argues that when researchers are asking questions on what is the good life in essence they are asking two questions, an empirical as well as an ethical question. When exploring cultivation of character strengths and virtues, there is a need to understand practical wisdom; that is to understand how to use those character

strengths and virtues in practical and concrete situations. Idiographic approaches, which humanistic psychologists tend to utilize (Friedman, 2008), are appropriately placed to impart the practical wisdom essential to exercise the virtues in such a way which can account for the context and particular, concrete situations (Robbins, 2008).

1.4 Proposed Ways Forward

Robbins (2008) states that ethical questions around the good life are in essence qualitative questions that demand qualitative solutions that can be addressed using an integrated methodology. An integration of idiographic and qualitative methods with nomothetic analysis is the proposed way forward by Robbins (2008) who argues that there is a danger of reducing the meaning and complexity of concrete human lives to overly simplified formulas as well as reducing 'multiplicity' to 'uniformity' (Bortoft, 1996, p.147) when adopting a pure nomothetic approach (May, 1996). Robbins (2008) reinforces the central humanistic concept of holism which is able to apprehend an array of characteristics and mechanisms in unity rather than an impoverished unity which is echoed in the following quote:

“...when we ground the science of psychology in a philosophy that gives ontological priority to the reality of concrete lives, and in their meanings and values within the contextual significance of those lives, we are able to preserve meaning and value from getting swallowed up in a reductive scientism (Robbins, 2008, p.106).”

With consideration to finding grounds for reconciliation between positive and humanistic psychologies, Mruk (2008) ends with a balanced perspective by Linley and Joseph (Joseph & Linley, 2004; Linley & Joseph, 2004):

“Humanistic psychology is a broad church, and there are parts of it that we would not recognize as positive psychology; but in our view, the ideas of the main humanistic psychology writers, such as Rogers and Maslow, deserve to be set center stage within positive psychology. Theirs was an empirical stance, explicitly research-based, albeit lacking in the sophistication of current psychology research methods. We ought to respect this lineage, and we encourage those who are not familiar with this earlier work to visit it (Joseph & Linley, 2004, p.365).”

“Our knowledge will advance all the more quickly if we are able to acknowledge similarities, constructively explore our differences, and work together in the joint pursuit of our common goals (Linley & Joseph, 2004, pp. xv-xvi).”

Friedman (2008) hopes that humanistic and positive psychology will forsake their respective favourites as sticking exclusively to one particular method with religious devotion, which he previously coined as ‘methodolotry’ (Friedman, 2003, p.817). Hence Friedman (2008) concludes with a way forward, that is, integrating these methodologies and their underpinning epistemologies through highlighting methodological pluralism. Such multi-method approaches are advantageous, as they would provide triangulation on research to avoid findings that are spurious (Friedman, 2008). Such an integrated methodological framework would also overcome the current difficulties encountered by positive psychology in formulating the good life as it would pay respect to the master virtue of practical wisdom through approaching the research on virtues holistically rather than in isolation (Robbins, 2008). Finally, McDonald and O’Callaghan (2008) propose that positive psychology should implement a meta-perspective of self-reflexivity: as this would avoid viewing the discipline as the pre-eminent body to judge the theory and research linked to optimal functioning; enable it

to be critical of itself; and to change often in discourse with some of the tenets of humanistic psychology. This self-reflexive stance (McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008) may result in 'adopting an experiential perspective' to 'help build a more unified psychology of optimal human functioning and avoid misunderstandings concerning the role of scientific research in human and positive psychology (Rathunde, 2001, p.135).'

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter details the outcomes of the three systematic literature reviews that cover the three pillars of the positive psychology framework (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). A total of twenty-seven empirical studies were examined. Each study was analysed in terms of its conceptual underpinning(s), methodology, research method(s), setting, participants and key findings. Prior to this, I detail the broad aims of the systematic literature reviews and search strategy.

2.1 Aims of the Systematic Reviews

In order to inform my own area and methodology of inquiry, I conducted three overarching searches to chart research studies within the broad field of positive psychology. As the field is cluttered with a diverse range of positive constructs and numerous conceptualisations of positive psychology, my strategy was to conduct searches on positive constructs that covered the preliminary umbrella positive psychology framework. I think that the three pillars of positive psychology are parsimonious and broad enough to encompass subsequent conceptualisations of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Initially 'subjective well-being' was chosen to cover the core construct of Pillar One of positive psychology, which concerns itself with positive subjective experiences. However, this was discarded once I realised that this was not a new construct, as highlighted in Diener et al.'s (1999) paper entitled 'Subjective Well-Being: Three Decades of Progress'. I also considered the construct of 'flow' and discarded it for a similar reason:

‘...Csikszentmihalyi, one of the fathers of positive psychology had already established the theory of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990, 1992) to characterise the situation when people were totally absorbed in an activity to the exclusion of everything else and hence were functioning to their fullest capacity’ (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 310).

I decided upon ‘flourishing’ on the basis that it is the fundamental goal of positive psychology and a new construct directly relevant to positive subjective experience (Seligman, 2011). To cover the second pillar of positive psychology which focuses on positive traits, ‘character strength’ was chosen as this appears to be a relatively new area of research and pertinent to the concern of positive traits. Finally, the searches ‘positive institution’, ‘enabling institution’ and ‘enabling environment’ were chosen as it relates directly to the third pillar of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The other search terms used in this systematic search were ‘children’, ‘adolescent’ and ‘youth’. Huebner and Diener (2008) argue that the scientific study of the well-being of adults has grown rapidly whilst the scientific study of well-being of children and youth has lagged behind. There is a disproportionate number of studies that involved adults to the number of studies that involved children, adolescents and youth in the large meta-analysis on positive affect (Lyubromisky, King and Diener, 2005). More specifically, Huebner and Diener (2008) point out there have been numerous studies of negative affect (such as depression) in children for many years whilst studies of positive affect and life satisfaction have only recently been undertaken. Moreover, McLellan and Steward (2015) argue ‘studies into adult wellbeing, while themselves relatively new,

cannot be applied uncritically to children and young people' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 307).

2.1.1 Search Strategy

The following searches were conducted in two major psychological databases (PsychINFO and PsychARTICLES) and one educational database (ERIC) for peer-reviewed published literature:

- 1) 'flourishing AND children'
- 2) 'flourishing AND adolescent'
- 3) 'flourishing AND youth'
- 4) 'character strength AND children'
- 5) 'character strength AND adolescent'
- 6) 'character strength AND youth'
- 7) 'positive institution'
- 8) 'enabling institution'
- 9) 'enabling environment'

Collectively, these 27 searches generated 27 studies and the number of empirical studies for each positive core construct is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 - Summary of 3 Systematic Literature Searches

Pillar of Positive Psychology	Specific Core Construct	No. of Studies
(1) Positive Subjective Experience	Flourishing	11
(2) Positive Trait	Character Strength	13
(3) Positive Institution	Positive institution, enabling institution, enabling environment	3

The aforementioned searches were undertaken in two specific timescales. The initial searches were completed in November 2011, which resulted in the submission of my application for ethical review that also included research questions and design of this inquiry. At that time, there were three empirical studies on flourishing, eleven empirical studies on character strengths and two empirical studies relating to constructs associated with positive or enabling institutions. Then, as part of the iterative research process, I updated these searches and included studies published up to March 2018.

I worked through the generated list of articles and read each of the titles, and articles were discarded if the topic was immaterial to the current inquiry. In relation to the titles that were deemed relevant, I read the abstract to examine whether their inclusion was appropriate using the inclusion and exclusion criteria (as detailed in Table 3). Duplicates or articles that were deemed irrelevant were discarded and the remainder of the articles were read completely.

Table 3 - Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria for the Systematic Literature Reviews

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
a) The paper was published up to November 2011. b) The paper was published between December 2011 and March 2018.	The paper was published after March 2018 (due to thesis write-up phase).
The paper was published in a peer-reviewed journal.	The paper was not published in a peer-reviewed journal.
The paper was written in English.	The paper was not written in English.
The paper was based on empirical research.	The paper was based on non-empirical research (i.e., conceptual papers were discarded).
In relation to the searches on flourishing and character strength, participants were children, adolescent and/or youth.	In relation to searches on flourishing and character strength, participants were not parents or educators (such as teaching and support staff).

2.2 Systematic Literature Review on Flourishing

Eleven studies were identified in this review (Keyes, 2006; Reschly et al., 2008; Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010; Kelly, 2012; Lim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Kern et al., 2016; Lubans et al., 2016; Skypriec et al., 2016; Kiang & Pi, 2018). I intend to examine each empirical study in terms of its conceptual underpinning, methodology, research method(s), setting, participants, and key findings.

2.2.1 Conceptual Underpinning(s)

These studies are underpinned by a range of conceptualisations: the dual-factor model of mental health (Kelly, 2012); psychological well-being (Kiang & Ip, 2018); the tripartite model of positive mental health (Keyes, 2006; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Schalkywk &

Wissing, 2010; Lim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; Skryzpiec et al., 2016); the theory of positive emotions (Reschly et al., 2008); the model of psychosocial functioning and self-determination theory (Lubans et al., 2016).

2.2.2.1 *Dual-Factor Model of Mental Health*

The study by Kelly (2012) is grounded in the dual-factor model of mental health. Typically, psychopathology is based on one-dimensional, uses negative psychopathology indicator, and employs the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) as standards for psychological diagnosis. Greenspoon and Saklofski (2001) argue that an approach which is too reliant on an indicator of psychopathology is unhelpful for both understanding and assessing mental health. Several decades earlier, Jahoda (1958) challenged the assumption that mental health can be achieved through the elimination of mental illness; she theorized that ‘the absence of disease may constitute a necessary, but not sufficient, criterion for mental health’ (Jahoda, 1958, p.15). Cowen (1991) assumes that “wellness is something more than/other than the absence of disease, that is, it is defined by the ‘extent of presence’ of positive marker characteristics” (Cowen, 1991, p. 154).

Cowen (1991; 1994) and others including those in the field of positive psychology make the case for the integration of the positive indicator subjective well-being and the negative psychopathology indicator in assessment in order to understand mental health in more complete terms (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 2001; Keyes & Lopez, 2002; Keyes, 2005, Keyes, 2007; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008; Doll, 2008). Instead of using the one-dimensional perspective that positions indicators of subjective well-being and psychopathology on two opposite poles, the dual-factor model of mental health refers

to the these as 'a pair of continuums as two independent but correlative structures' (Wang, 2011, p.769).

This dual-factor model generates two mental health states and two mental illness states. Individuals can be classified on the basis of such states in order 'to predict the mental health functions of those different groups and the development trend of their mental health according to the abovementioned indicators' (Wang, 2011, p. 769). Individuals can be grouped accordingly to their respective indicators of psychopathology and subjective well-being: complete mental health, incomplete mental health, incomplete mental illness, and complete mental illness (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 2001; Keyes & Lopez, 2002). Complete mental health is a state that is characterised by high subjective well-being and low psychopathology (or no recent psychopathology). Keyes describes people with complete mental health as 'flourishing' (Keyes, 2002, 2007). Those individuals with incomplete mental health states experience low psychopathology and low subjective well-being. Keyes (2002, 2007) describes people with incomplete mental health states as 'languishing' whereas Suldo and Shaffer (2008) describe them as 'vulnerable'. Typically, these individuals were over-estimated by the one-dimensional approach because their symptoms did not reach the threshold for psychopathology diagnosis. This would have resulted in them being excluded from research and gaining some form of psychological support (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008). Individuals with incomplete mental illness are characterised with high psychopathology and high subjective well-being. They have been labelled as 'symptomatic but content' (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008). This refers to individuals who experience some form of mental illness (such as depression and anxiety) and experience moderate or high levels of subjective well-being. Individuals with complete

mental illness are characterised with high psychopathology and low subjective well-being. They have been described as 'troubled' (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008).

Grounded in this quartered classification theory, Keyes adopts the sextupled classification theory (Keyes, 2002, 2005, 2007). Keyes substitutes the low/high levels of psychopathology in the quartered classification theory with yes/no. Furthermore, Keyes divides the high/low levels of mental health differently, into high, moderate and low levels of mental health. He describes individuals with high levels of subjective well-being as flourishing, moderate levels of subjective well-being as moderately mentally healthy, and low levels of subjective wellbeing as languishing. Accordingly, this generates six groupings based on the two dimensions: complete mental illness, incomplete mental illness I, incomplete mental illness II, complete mental health, incomplete mental health I, and incomplete mental health II.

Wang et al. (2011) put together a table of terms that have been used for the dual-factor model of mental health (see Table 4). This is in recognition that different scholars have used different terms with the same meaning (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 2001; Keyes & Lopez, 2002; Keyes, 2005, 2007; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008; Doll, 2008).

Table 4 - Terms used for the dual-factor model of mental health (Wang et al., 2011)

Psychopathology (PTH)/Mental Illness/ DSM-III-R 12-month mental illness diagnosis	Subjective Well-Being (SWB) Subjective well-being symptoms\Mental health diagnosis		
	Low Low SWB/Low well-being symptoms/languishing	Moderate Moderate SWB/ Moderately mentally healthy	High High SWB/High well-being symptoms/flourishing
Low Low PTH/No Low Mental Illness	Incomplete Mental Health I Low SWB-low PTH/ Incomplete mental health/Languishing/Pure Languishing/Dissatisfied/ Vulnerable	Incomplete Mental Health II Moderate mental health/Incomplete mental health	Complete Mental Health/ Flourishing: Complete mental health/ Flourishing/Well adjusted
High High PTH/Yes High Mental Illness	Complete Mental Illness Low SWB-high PTH/Mental illness and languishing/Depressed and Languishing/ Distressed/Troubled	Incomplete Mental Illness II Mental illness and moderately mentally healthy/Incomplete mental illness/Pure Depression	Incomplete Mental Illness I High SWB-high PTH/ Incomplete mental illness/Mental illness and Flourishing/Externally maladjusted/ Symptomatic but content/Pure Depression

2.2.2.2 *Psychological Well-Being*

The study by Kiang and Ip (2018) is grounded in Ryff's model of positive functioning, also known as psychological or eudaimonic well-being (Ryff, 1989). Ryff argued that well-being is multidimensional and not merely about happiness. Ryff's conceptualisation is grounded in Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics; she posits that the goal of life is about living virtuously and not about feeling good. This model is informed

by a range of disciplines within humanistic, existential, clinical, and developmental psychology. She provides a summary of preceding perspectives:

‘The extensive literature aimed at defining positive psychological functioning includes such perspectives as Maslow’s (1968) conception of self-actualization, Rogers’s (1961) view of the fully functioning person, Jung’s (1933; Von Franz, 1964) formulation of individuation, and Allport’s (1961) conception of maturity. A further domain of theory for defining psychological well-being follows from life span developmental perspectives which emphasize the differing challenges confronted at various phases of the life cycle. Included here are Erikson’s (1959) psychosocial stage model, Buhler’s basic life tendencies that work toward the fulfilment of life (Buhler, 1935; Buhler & Massarik, 1968), Neugarten’s (1968, 1973) descriptions of personality in adulthood and old age. Jahoda’s (1958) positive criteria of mental health, generated to replace definitions of well-being as the absence of illness, also offer extensive descriptions of what it means to be in good psychological health’ (Ryff, 1989, p. 1070).

Despite these loose conceptualisations, Ryff (1989) argues that these perspectives can be amalgamated to generate a more parsimonious summary. Based on these perspectives’ points of convergence, Ryff (1989) developed the six factor model of positive functioning: autonomy; personal growth; environmental mastery; positive relations with others; purpose in life; and self-acceptance.

Autonomy is described as possessing an internal, independent and self-focused individuation, and resisting enculturation and external pressures. Personal growth refers to ongoing growth of one’s potential in order to expand as a person. Environmental mastery is a sense of competence in managing one’s life and contexts.

Positive relations with others refers to the existence of and the ability to connect in close, high-quality relationships. Purpose in life is characterised by intentionality or meaning. Self-acceptance involves holding an overall positive attitude to the self as well as the acceptance of good and bad aspects of the self. Kiang and Ip (2018) did not use the self-acceptance factor: 'In the current study, the Self-Acceptance factor was not included in initial data collection because of its conceptual overlap with other measures (e.g., self-esteem)' (Kiang & Ip, 2018, p. 65).

2.2.2.3 *Tripartite Model of Positive Mental Health*

The study by Keyes (2006) draws upon Ryff's conceptualisation to develop his model of flourishing. Keyes supports the concept that mental health does not simply indicate the absence of mental illness and argues that there is evidence that mental health and disorder are not at the opposite ends of the continuum (Keyes, 2002, 2003). Mental health is characterised by the absence of mental illness and the presence of subjective well-being. Keyes argues that whilst 'it is clear that children with depression are not mentally healthy, the assumption that children without a mental illness are necessarily mentally healthy' (Keyes, 2006, p. 395)

Keyes (2006) highlights that existing subjective well-being research on youth has focused exclusively on hedonic well-being (happiness or life satisfaction). According to Keyes (2006), the study of subjective well-being generally has been divided into two lines of inquiry, one that equates well-being with happiness (hedonic well-being) and the other with the exploration of positive functioning in life (otherwise known as eudaimonic well-being). Keyes states:

‘The *hedonic stream* equates mental health with avowed happiness in life or the experience of positive emotions. The hedonic tradition embodies human concerns with maximizing the amount or duration of positive, pleasant feelings while minimizing the amount or duration of negative, unpleasant feelings. The hedonic tradition is reflected in the stream of research on emotional well-being, which consists of perceptions of avowed happiness and satisfaction with life and the balance of positive to negative affect over a period of time’ (Keyes, 2006, p. 396).

‘The *eudaimonia stream* equates mental health with human potential that, when realized, results in positive functioning in life. This tradition of viewing mental health reflects the long-standing human concerns with developing nascent abilities and capacities toward becoming a more fully functioning person and citizen. This tradition has been measured in terms of psychological (Ryff, 1989) and social (Keyes, 1998) well-being that reflect how well individuals see themselves functioning in life (Keyes, 2006, p. 396)’.

The study by McLellan and Steward (2015) also draws upon hedonic and eudaimonic conceptualisations of well-being. They reference Waterman (1993) who explores these differing conceptualisations of well-being, which are rooted in two differing schools of thought in ancient Greece of what constituted the good life. Aristippus of Cyrene postulated that pleasure is the sole good in life (i.e., hedonic well-being) whereas Aristotle postulated an ethical theory for living through ‘activity expressing virtue’ (i.e., eudaimonic well-being) (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 310). According to Waterman (1993), the theory of living well can be construed as self-realisation and personal expressiveness. McLellan and Steward (2015) state that

‘the idea of developing one’s potential is, of course, not new, as humanistic psychologists have long been interested in this (see, for instance, Maslow’s 1954 hierarchy of needs, with self-actualisation at the apex of the hierarchy), and indeed, Csikszentmihalyi, one of the fathers of positive psychology had already established the theory of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990, 1992) to characterise the situation when people were totally absorbed in an activity to the exclusion of everything else and hence were functioning to their fullest capacity’ (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 310).

Keyes’ model integrates both these theoretical lines of inquiry into well-being. Thus, Keyes’ model of flourishing has three conceptual origins: (1) Diener’s research in emotional well-being (hedonic well-being) (Diener et al., 1999); (2) Ryff’s distinction between emotional well-being and psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989); and his own sociological work on social well-being (Keyes, 1998). Keyes’ conceptualises mental health as a complete state in which a person is free of mental illness and flourishing with high levels of emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being. He conceptualises positive mental health as a syndrome of symptoms of subjective well-being. Interestingly, Keyes’ concept of positive mental health is grounded in the medical model. Keyes (2006) states:

‘The diagnosis of states of mental health was modelled after the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) approach to the diagnosis of major depressive episode. That is, a diagnosis of depression is made when an individual’s report of symptoms meet a diagnostic threshold; that is, in this case, five of nine symptoms experienced all the time or most of the time for a period of at least 2 consecutive

weeks, at least one symptoms represents depressed mood (i.e., depressed mood or anhedonia) and the remaining represent malfunctioning' (Keyes, 2006, p. 396).

Keyes' polythetic approach applies this diagnostic model of symptoms to his conceptualisation of positive mental health:

'Like the DSM-IV-TR diagnosis of an individual with major depression, a diagnosis of mental health (i.e. flourishing in life) is made when an individual exhibits a high level on least one symptom of hedonia and just over half of the symptoms of eudaimonia, that is, positive functioning in life. Individuals are diagnosed as languishing in life when they exhibit a low level on at least one symptom of hedonia and low levels on just over half of the symptoms of positive functioning. Individuals who are neither flourishing nor languishing in life are diagnosed as moderately mentally healthy' (Keyes, 2006, p. 396).

Keyes (2006) highlighted that his use of psychiatric language may be problematic to some:

'I hope the choice of psychiatric terminology to characterize items measuring facets of subjective well-being as *symptoms* does not detract from the conclusions of this paper. Scholars who wish to promote the study of positive mental health in youth may feel uncomfortable, and even rankled, with my approach, because it "medicalizes" the issue of positive mental health. Symptoms, like items of any questionnaire, are merely outward signs of an underlying condition or state. In the absence of specific diagnostic tests, underlying conditions must be inferred from symptoms (or items). Mental health and mental illnesses lack specific diagnostic tests and remain identifiable only

as collections of symptoms and outward signs (i.e., syndromes) of the underlying state or condition' (Keyes, 2006, p. 401).

Other studies in this review that are grounded in Keyes' tripartite model of positive mental health include Schalkywk and Wissing (2010), Lim (2014), Singh and Junnarker (2015), and Skrzypiec et al. (2016). Schalkywk and Wissing (2010) used Keyes' model to determine the mean levels and prevalence of the various degrees of mental health as well as to explore the participants' understanding of flourishing and the absence of well-being in South Africa. Lim (2014) used Keyes' model to examine positive mental health amongst South Korean adolescents. Singh and Junnarker (2015) used Keyes' model to examine the relationship between positive mental health and well-being amongst Indian adolescents. Skrzypiec et al. (2016) employed his approach to examine the state of subjective well-being of pupils with self-identified special educational needs and disabilities ((si)SEND) compared to pupils who did not self-identify as experiencing SEND.

2.2.2.4 *Theory of Positive Emotions*

The study by Reschly et al. (2008), which explores the contribution of positive emotions and coping to adolescents' engagement, is rooted in the broaden and build theory of positive emotions. Reschly et al. (2008) argue that there is an absence of studies researching the assumptions of broaden and build with children or younger people in the context of their schooling. The underlying theory put forward by Fredrickson is that positive emotions broaden a person's thoughts and behaviours, which in turns builds enduring personal resources (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001). Conversely, it is theorised that negative emotions narrow thoughts and behaviours through the 'fight, flight or freeze'

mechanism, which produces swift action required for survival purposes in life-threatening situations.

Empirical evidence suggests that positive emotions broaden attention, cognition and behaviour as well as build resources (such as psychological, social and intellectual) (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Fredrickson, 2009). It is theorized that these personal resources will help an individual when they are faced with future challenges (which are not life-threatening). Flourishing, according to Fredrickson and Losada (2005), is living within an optimal range of human functioning that is depicted by generativity, growth, goodness and resilience. Reschly et al. (2008) theorised on the link between positive emotions and resiliency:

‘One possible link by which positive emotions are related to resiliency and future well-being is through their effect on coping. Essentially, if the frequent experience of positive emotion broadens thinking and actions, which result in enduring personal resources, it is also likely that there is a concomitant broadening and growth in durable coping resources (Fredrickson, 2001). Coping resources, then enhance functioning during and recovery from the experience of adversity, leading to well-being and future positive emotions’ (Reschly et al., 2008, p. 420).

From a conceptual basis, Reschly et al. (2008) highlight a key limitation of their study; ‘data in this study were cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal in nature, precluding a test of the “build” component of the broaden and build theory’ (Reschly et al., 2008, p. 429).

In contrast to the broaden and build theory, Vitterso and colleagues argue that positive emotions such as interest and pleasure are separate emotions with distinct functions and phenomenology despite both characterised as positive. They argue that pleasure does not facilitate building of resources whereas the positive emotion of interest fulfils this role (Vitterso et al., 2010; Straumme & Vitterso, 2012).

2.2.2.5 Capabilities Approach

The study by McLellan and Steward (2015) is underpinned by a multifaceted model of flourishing (Huppert et al. 2009; Huppert & So, 2013; Keyes, 2002; Nussbaum, 2000). Firstly, their conceptualisation incorporates both hedonic ('feeling well') and eudaimonic ('functioning well') forms of well-being. They use Huppert and So's conceptualisation of flourishing that is the basis of their European study, which subdivides hedonic and eudaimonic well-being further by identifying personal feelings (happiness, life satisfaction and self-esteem), social feelings (sense of belonging and respect for others), personal functioning (competence, autonomy, purpose and meaning), and social functioning (altruism and care for others) (Huppert & So, 2013).

Secondly, the study by McLellan and Steward (2015) attempts to tackle some of the complexities in conceptualising well-being. With positive psychology's focus on individuals' feelings and functioning, McLellan and Steward (2015) argue that their accounts of well-being under-theorise social context. They acknowledge the sociological contribution made by Keyes (1998) in relation to the five dimensions of social well-being (social integration, social contribution, social coherence, social actualisation and social acceptance) as they sought to 'capture a more nuanced understanding of children and young people's perceptions of their well-being in the

school context' (McLellan and Steward, 2015, p. 313). Moreover, McLellan and Steward argue that the importance of exploring well-being in the school context, 'as if this is understood and more importantly, can be changed, then this will enable more young people to flourish' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 312). They designed an instrument to 'capture children and young people's perceptions of their wellbeing in the school context that is based on sound psychology (and other) theory, and reported findings from its application in a survey of primary and secondary-aged students who were participating in a study of the impact of creative initiatives' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 308). The Creative Partnerships Programme aimed to promote partnership working between schools (over 2700 schools) and creative professionals 'to inspire, open minds and harness the potential of creative learning' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 328).

Finally, McLellan and Steward (2015) also draw upon the human capabilities approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; Kristjánsson, 2016). According to Nussbaum, people who are marginalized 'do not expect and demand basic central requirements of a life with dignity' that are essential for well-being (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 40). Bodily health, affiliation, emotions, play and control over one's environment are included in the central requirements or identified human capabilities. It is assumed that in order for a person to flourish, all capabilities or entitlements need to be in place. McLellan and Steward (2015) note that there is some overlap between some of these capabilities with the entitlements classified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which shaped the Every Child Matters (ECM) reforms in England. Their conceptualisation is also rooted in the five Every Child Matters outcomes as delineated in the 2004 Children's Act.

2.2.2.6 *Model of Psychosocial Functioning & Self-Determination Theory*

The study by Lubans et al. (2016) is grounded in the model of psychosocial put forward by Diener and his colleagues and the intervention (known as ATLAS – Active Teen Leaders Avoiding Screen-Time) is informed by the self-determination theory (Diener et al., 2010; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Diener and his colleagues recognised that their research only evaluated emotional well-being (through using the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) (Diener et al., 2010). They developed the Flourishing Scale (2010) as a measure of psychosocial functioning, designed to supplement existing measures of emotional well-being. Diener et al. (2010) drew upon earlier humanistic psychology theories to include identified universal human psychological needs, integrating these with other theories of well-being (Diener et al., 2010). The Flourishing Scale fuses dimensions of well-being that Ryff (1989), and Ryan and Deci (2001) propose are important for positive functioning (relatedness, competence, self-acceptance and meaning), with engagement, giving and optimism (other evidence-based contributory factors to well-being) (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Brown et al., 2003; Seligman, 2006). Their conceptualisation of engagement is based on the framework of flow theory, which is the culmination of concentration, interest and enjoyment in an activity. Flow experiences are described as states of absolute absorption in an activity. Interest sets the basis for ongoing motivation and subsequent learning. Feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction may occur retrospectively, as all concentration is focused on the task during actual engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). They also draw on literature that have presented arguments and data supporting the concept that meaning and purpose are beneficial to positive functioning (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 1998; Seligman, 2002;

Steger et al., 2008). Based on Brown et al. (2003) research, they have also emphasized the humans need to support others (hence the dimension of 'giving'). Finally, they have drawn upon research by Peterson et al. (1988) and Scheier and Carver (2003) that found optimism is a contributory factor to successful functioning and well-being.

Furthermore, this study is underpinned by the self-determination theory (SDT). The assumptions underlying SDT, which stem from humanistic psychology, are humans are active and growth oriented towards striving to meet three inherent psychological needs (competence, relatedness, and autonomy), developing a unified sense of self, and pursuing connectedness within larger social structures. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), SDT is fundamentally involves:

'the capacity to choose and to have choices, rather than reinforcement contingencies, drives or any other forces or pressures, to be the determinants of one's actions. But self-determination is more than a capacity, it is also a need. We have posited a basic, innate propensity to be self-determining that leads organisms to engage in interesting behaviours' (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 38).

Furthermore, it is assumed that these natural developmental tendencies do not function automatically but need social support on an ongoing basis. The social context can either support or hinder these toward proactive engagement and psychological growth or it can contribute to the lack of integration, defensiveness, and fulfilment of need-substitutes. Thus, it is the interaction between the active organism and the social context which is the basis for SDT's predictions regarding an individual's development.

SDT postulates that motivation resides along a spectrum of self-determination ranging from amotivation (when an individual lacks the motivation to act) through extrinsic motivation (when an individual acts to achieve separable outcomes) to intrinsic motivation (when an individual acts for interest inherent within a particular pursuit). Moving along the continuum from the least to the most self-determined include external regulation (acting to gain rewards or avoid punishment), introjected regulation (rules are adopted but not incorporated into the sense of self – individuals go along with a task such as doing exercise because they think they should), identified regulation (action begins to be integrated within the person's sense of self – pupils who do exercise because they see it as valuable) to integrated regulation (action that contributes to defining who one is) (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

McLellan and Steward (2015) argue that Deci and Ryan have modified SDT in conceptual terms from a theory of motivation to a eudaimonic theory of well-being:

‘..Deci and Ryan recast self-determination theory (SDT), originally developed to understand motivation and well established in the motivation field (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985), explicitly as a eudaimonic conceptualisation of wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan et al., 2008). At the heart of SDT lies the ontological belief that “all individuals have natural, innate and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborated and unified sense of self” (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p. 5)’, hence the theory is centrally concerned with the development of self. Healthy development, and hence eudaimonic wellbeing, depends on the fulfilment of three core needs, namely the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness, with humans possessing the capacity

or 'will' to choose how to do this, with self-determination being the 'process of utilising' one's will' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 310).

In the context of this study, ATLAS aims to increase autonomy, relatedness and competence needs satisfaction during school sport, to enhance boys' self-determined motivation for physical activity. In addition to the basic psychological needs, various motivational regulations (intrinsic, identified, introjected, controlled and amotivation) in school sport, resistance training skill competency, muscular fitness, and recreational screen time were investigated as potential mediating mechanisms of the intervention effect. Moreover, ATLAS aims to enhance boys' competence for resistance training. According to Deci and Ryan, individuals are more likely to experience greater psychological well-being when their basic psychological needs are satisfied (Lubans et al., 2016)

2.2.2.7 *Positive Youth Development & Seligman's Model of Well-Being*

Kern et al (2016) describes flourishing 'as an outcome indicated by positive functioning across multiple biopsychosocial domains' (Kern et al., 2016, p.587). Using the metaphor of plants, Kern et al. (2016) state: 'Like plants thriving in a garden, positive domains must be cultivated over time. Positive characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours – many of which are developed in adolescence – are assets that promote flourishing, and need to be nurtured to produce flourishing throughout life' (Kern et al., 2016, p. 587). The model of flourishing put forward by Kern et al. (2016) complements the PYD model and is grounded in Seligman's (2011) theory of flourishing.

Positive youth development (PYD) focuses on the strengths of youngsters experiencing adolescence, and is rooted in developmental systems theory and ecological systems theory (Lerner et al., 2003; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The former theory posits that development is an interactive process between a person and their context, and positive development is most likely to take place when there is proper fit between individual and contextual elements. The latter theory posits that development as a process that involves interactions within and across contexts:

‘The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21).

The underlying core assumption of PYD is that ‘if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community, and civil society’ (Lerner et al., 2005, p.12). It is assumed that PYD is likely to happen when there is a union between an active, engaged and competent youngster with receptive and nurturing ecologies.

Moreover, it is rooted in community psychology with its emphasis on primary prevention (enhancing strengths and competencies) rather than secondary and tertiary prevention (treating later stages of pathology). Initially PYD was positioned as an approach for preventing high-risk behaviours, particularly amongst groups of youth predisposed to the potential harm of dysfunctional families and poverty. In line with expansive

concepts of well-being and developmental success the field of PYD recognised the value of strengthening the developmental landscape more generally. This shifts the emphasis from 'at-risk youth' to 'all youth'. Or in more poetic terms, the choice is between 'fixing' troubled youth or 'all soil can be enriched and all moisture and sunlight maximally used to nourish all flowers' (Lorion & Sokoloff, 2003, p. 137). Larson (2000) adopts a more critical stance, as he argues that PYD developed 'separately from development psychology partly because we psychologists have had little to offer' (Larson, 2000, p. 171).

King et al. (2005) found that practitioners, parents and adolescents used a range of terms to index thriving. These terms were grouped into categories that reflect the broad notions used in literature related to PYD; known as the five 'C's – competence, confidence, character, caring and connection. The sixth 'C', contribution, refers to the fundamental objective that may result when youth are able to accomplish the first five components; essential for individual well-being as well as for the development of a civil and healthy society (Lerner et al., 2005, 2009).

However, the flourishing model put forward by Kern et al. (2016) is fundamentally grounded in Seligman's theory of well-being (Seligman, 2011). Seligman conceptualizes well-being in terms of five separate domains: *positive* emotion, engagement, positive *relations*, a sense of *meaning*, and accomplishment (known as PERMA). Their model of flourishing complements the PYD model (which focuses on systems that promote the development of five core assets in youth – competence, confidence, character, caring and connection) and extends the PERMA model to adolescents by defining five positive characteristics in youth that they assume influence

the PERMA areas in adulthood. According to Kern et al. (2016), these are engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness and happiness (EPOCH).

Engagement is characterised by the 'capacity to become absorbed in and focused on what one is doing, as well as involvement and interest in life activities and tasks' (Kern et al., 2015, p. 587). Perseverance involves the ability to pursue one's goals to completion and overcome any necessary obstacles. According to Kern et al. (2016), perseverance is a 'subfacet of the Big Five personality trait of conscientious, and comprises the drive component of "grit" (that includes both perseverance and passion for long-term goals' (Kern et al., 2016, p. 587). Optimism refers to an explanatory style that appraises negative events as external, temporary and specific to the situation, an orientation that adopts a favourable stance, and confidence and hopefulness about the future. Connectedness involves satisfying relations with others and knowing that one is loved, valued and cared for as well as providing support or friendship. Happiness is theorised as 'steady states of positive mood and feeling content with one life, rather than momentary emotion' (Kern et al., 2016, p. 587).

Kern et al (2016) highlight some distinct differences between the two overlapping models (PYD and their EPOCH model). Their model derived from the positive psychology perspective focuses on a young person's strengths whereas the PYD encompasses a systems perspective. Their 'definition of positive functioning is deliberately nondevelopmental, such that normative immaturity is not spuriously associated with lower well-being' (Kern et al., 2016, p. 587). Their model focuses on characteristics that promote PERMA whereas the key emphasis of the PYD perspective

is on characteristics that enhance engagement, achievement and adjustment. In contrast to the PYD perspective, their model ignores context specificity.

2.2.2 Methodology

The researchers of these eleven studies do not explicitly state their respective epistemological and ontological positions. They have written about their research designs, which suggests their broad methodological position. For example, the study by Kelly (2012) is a longitudinal, correlational study that collected quantitative data across two time frames (five months apart between Time 1 and Time 2). Ten out of the eleven studies employed only quantitative data collection methods, which may indicate an underlying positivist epistemological and realist ontological orientation.

One study employed a mixed-method approach (Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010) and provided their rationale:

‘An exploratory sequential mixed-method design was implemented. This design draws on both qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods, each conducted rigorously and complete in itself, in one project. Mixed methods general strength is found in their possibility to complement traditional (mostly empirical) quantitative methods with deeper insight-rendering qualitative methods and interpretations (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Tuner, 2007)’ (van Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010, p. 54).

This study may be grounded in one of the common philosophical positions of mixed methods approach, such as critical realism or pragmatism (Creswell, 2014).

2.2.3 Research Methods

All eleven studies used quantitative data collection methods. I have detailed the research tools used in the seminal study of flourishing (Keyes, 2006) and the initial study that used a mixed methods approach (Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010).

2.2.3.1 *Seminal Flourishing Study (Keyes, 2006)*

Various measures of subjective well-being were administered by audio-computer-assisted self-interview. The participants listened to each question on a headphone and responded directly into a laptop, which presented the question and the response options. Keyes (2006) adapted the subjective well-being items from the Midlife in the US study of adult well-being, which is designed to assess adult well-being in terms of emotional, psychological and social well-being.

Emotional well-being in Keyes' study was measured through three questions that asked the participants how often during the past month they had felt happy, interested in life, and satisfied. The options for response for emotional as well as psychological and social well-being included: never, once or twice, about once a week, two or three times per week, almost every day, and every day (Keyes, 2006).

Keyes used four of the six theoretical dimensions of psychological well-being that were put forward by Ryff (1989): positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery and personal growth. Keyes did not include purpose in life and self-acceptance because 'self-esteem, a closely related measure of self-acceptance was already part

of the CDS' (Child Development Supplement) 'and purpose in life did not seem to be a pertinent question for pre-high school youth' (Keyes, 2006, p. 397). Questions on psychological well-being, similar to emotional well-being, began with 'How often...' In relation to positive relations with others, the question was 'How often did you feel that you have warm and trusting relationships with other kids?' in the past month. In relation to autonomy, the question was 'How often did you feel confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions?' in the past month. In relation to environmental mastery, the question was 'How often did you feel good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life?' in the past month. In relation to personal growth, the question was 'How often did you feel that you had experiences that challenged you to grow or become a better person? In the past month (Keyes, 2006, p. 397).

Keyes used all five dimensions of social well-being: social integration, social contribution, social acceptance, social coherence, and social actualization (Keyes, 1998). Similar to psychological well-being, questions were chosen that were deemed most representative of the construct. In relation to social integration, the question was 'How often did you feel that you belonged to a community like a social group, your school, or your neighbourhood?' in the past month. In relation to social contribution, the question was 'How often did you feel that you had something important to contribute to society?' in the past month. In relation to social acceptance, the question was 'How often did you feel that people are basically good?' in the past month. In relation to social coherence, the question was 'How often did you feel that the way our society works made sense to you?' in the past month. In relation to social actualization, the question was 'How often did you feel that our society is becoming a better place?' in the past month (Keyes, 2006, p. 397). It is interesting to note that Keyes excludes a measure related to the dimension of purpose in life; he assumes it is not pertinent to the youth

participants but yet includes the dimensions relating to social well-being such as social acceptance and social actualization that are arguably less relevant to youth. Gersch (2009, p.14) may disagree with Keyes' decision to exclude a question relating purpose in life, on the basis that his research suggests that most children aged from 10 to 12 are able to offer 'coherent and elaborate answers to deep metaphysical questions'.

The participants also completed the Child Depression Inventory (CDI), a self-report instrument that is designed to assess depression. Psychosocial functioning was measured through the Global Self-Concept Scale; which encompasses six items that measure the amount of time youth feel good about themselves. The participants read the six self-descriptive statements and indicated how much of the time (never, rarely, sometimes, most of the time, or always) each statement applied to them. These questions were as follows: (1) I have a lot to be proud of; (2) I can do things as well as most people; (3) I'm good as most other people; (4) Other people think I am a good person; (5) When I do something, I do it well; and (6) A lot of things about me are good (Keyes, 2006, p. 397). A similar approach was used to measure the participant's self-determination. Five self-descriptive statements were presented to the participants using the same response options (detailed as above). Self-determination was measured through the participant's responses to these statements: (1) I stay with a task until I solve it; (2) Even when a task is difficult, I want to solve it anyway; (3) I keep my things orderly; (4) I try to do my best on all my work; and (5) When I start something, I follow it through the end (Keyes, 2006, p. 397).

2.2.3.2 *Mixed Methods Study (Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010)*

Initially, this study employed questionnaires to determine the mean levels and prevalence of the various degrees of mental health. Following this, the researchers drew from this quantitative wave of data collection to select groups of participants to explore qualitatively the participant's 'understanding of the manifestations of well-being and the absence thereof' (Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010, p.54). The second part of this study employed structured interviews as the research method.

The first phase of this study employed a range of questionnaires: Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF), the Ego Resiliency Scale (ERS), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and the Affectometer 2 (AFM). The primary measure, the MHC-SF, was used to determine the prevalence of levels of psycho-social well-being. The other scales were employed to 'determine the convergent validity of the primary measure and further facilitate the description of the nature and degree of well-being of participants' (Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010, p.54). The MHC-SF consists of 14 items; 3 items measure emotional well-being, 6 items measure psychological well-being and 5 items measure social well-being (Diener et al., 1999; Ryff, 1989; Keyes, 1998). The ERS measures ego-resilience. The SWLS (a 5-item instrument) measures an individual's general satisfaction with life on a cognitive-judgmental level, and as appraised according to own criteria. The AF was employed to measure a general sense of well-being as well as positive affect, negative affect, and affect balance.

Based on the initial data set, 24 participants were selected from these three sub-groups (flourishing, moderately mentally healthy and languishing) resulting in 8 participants in each subgroup. Open-ended questions were asked during individual interviews

regarding the participant's experience and understanding of youth mental health, especially in relation to flourishing and the absence of well-being. These questions were stated in the study: 'What is your understanding of thriving youth in South Africa?'; 'Which indicators of well-being would you value of great importance?'; 'How does positive functioning occur in your own life?'; 'Provide examples regarding optimal experience in your daily activities'; 'What is your understanding of the absence of well-being/ill-being and adolescents who do not experience flourishing?'; 'In what ways does impaired functioning take place in your life?'; and 'Offer some examples how you experience poor functioning on a daily basis?' These interviews were audio-taped, and subsequently transcribed and subjected to a thematic analysis.

2.2.4 Setting

Five of the eleven studies were conducted in the USA (Keyes, 2006; Reschly et al., 2008; Kelly, 2012; Kern et al., 2016; Kiang, 2016); three were undertaken in Australia (Lubans et al., 2016; Kern et al., 2016; Skrzypiec et al., 2016); one was conducted in South Africa (Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010), South Korea (Lim, 2014), England (McLellan and Steward, 2015), and India (Singh & Junnarker, 2015). Note that Kern et al.'s study was undertaken in the USA and Australia.

2.2.5 Research Participants

All eleven studies included participants who were broadly within the adolescence phase of their development (Erikson, 1959, 1963, 1968). The study by McLellan and Steward (2015) also included younger children from primary schools. The study by Lubans et al. (2016) involved only adolescent boys.

Collectively, from a developmental perspective, most of these participants would be able to complete questionnaires that required them to report on both their positive and negative emotions. For example, the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – Children (PANAS-C) is designed to indicate how often the participants experienced certain emotions in the past few weeks. PANAS-C consists of two subscales: 12 items related to Positive Affect (PA) and 15 items related to Negative Affect (NA). The PA subscale explores the frequency of experiencing positive affect or emotions such as interested, cheerful, energetic, excited and delighted. The NA subscale explores the frequency of experiencing negative affect or emotions such as sad, nervous, ashamed, frightened, lonely and gloomy. Developmental emotion researchers, Harter and Buddin (1987), found that children accept the co-occurrence of conflicting emotions at about the age of ten.

Therefore, the younger children (those in Year 3, aged 7/8) of McLellan and Steward's study (2015) may have found it difficult to rate their responses to statements such as 'I feel happy' and 'I feel worried' on a three-point frequency scale ('not often', 'sometimes', 'often').

2.2.6 Key Findings

This section details the key findings grouped according to the tripartite model of positive mental health model, the dual-factor model of mental health, psychological well-being, the theory of positive emotions, the ATLAS intervention and new instruments.

2.2.6.1 *Tripartite Model of Positive Mental Health*

Keyes (2006) found that youth experienced more emotional well-being than psychological well-being, and more psychological well-being than social well-being. In particular, flourishing was the most prevalent diagnosis amongst 12 to 14 years of age whereas moderate mental health was the most prevalent diagnosis amongst 15 to 18 years of age. As mental health increased, Keyes found that the measures of psychosocial functioning (school integration, self-determination, global self-concept, and closeness to others) increased and frequency of conduct problems (alcohol use, skipped school, cigarette smoking, arrested and marijuana use) also decreased. Keyes' states that too much credence should not be placed on prevalence estimates his study has generated, as these are based on self-reported data. He makes the case for future research to focus on the convergence of the child's reports of subjective well-being with parent's and staff's reports of the child's well-being. This shortcoming of using self-reported data is also relevant to other studies including Singh and Junnarker (2015), Lim (2014), Schalkywk and Wissing (2010) and Skypriec et al. (2016).

Singh and Junnarker (2015) observed that positive mental health was predicted by flourishing, positive affect, social relationships, psychological well-being as well as physical and environmental health amongst Indian adolescents. They reported that:

‘Flourishing emerged as a strong predictor for all sub-constructs of positive mental health and total score of mental health in the current study. Aligning with the present study results, Keyes (2006) reported that children in USA, who were flourishing possessed better mental health. Further their conduct problems were lower and psychosocial functioning enhanced as mental health improved. These

results indicated that flourishing in a predictor of positive mental health' (Singh & Junnarker, 2015, p. 86).

Regarding South Korean adolescents, Lim (2014) found that approximately 12% were mentally healthy and approximately one in eight met the criteria for languishing. Lim (2014) suggested that 'Korean adolescents believe that there is much scope for improvement in subjective well-being' (Lim, 2014, p. 361).

The study by Schalkywk and Wissing (2010) found that 60% of the adolescents had lower psychological well-being, or in other words, not functioning optimally. Quantitative data indicated that most of the participants revealed moderate levels of emotional, psychological and social well-being, as well as satisfaction with life, degree of ego-resilience and positive affect. Qualitative data suggested that adolescents experienced psychological well-being as embodied by positive relationships, purposeful living and meaning, self-regard, being as a role model, constructive coping, positive emotions and gratitude. Furthermore, qualitative data indicated that adolescents experienced lower mental health as embodied by impaired relationships, meaninglessness, dysfunctional behaviours, identification with dysfunctional outsiders, self-incompetence, negative emotions and helplessness. Schalkywk and Wissing (2010) found that: 'Two thirds of adolescents were able to describe experiences and behaviours associated with flourishing/well-being on the one hand and languishing/absence of well-being on the other hand' and concluded that it is 'important to facilitate well-being in adolescents, sooner rather than later' (Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010, p. 59).

Skypriece et al. (2016) found that participants who self-identified with SEND (si) SEND were not faring as well as other participants without self-identified SEND. They found

that the participants with self-identified SEND were well below their peers without self-identified SEND in emotional, psychological and social well-being, resilience, global self-concept, school contentment, school satisfaction, school connectedness and support, bullying and mental ill-health. Over one third reported that they were flourishing compared with just over half of participants who did not indicate that they experienced SEND. Skypriec et al. (2016) found that they were more likely to be languishing rather than flourishing. In their discussion, Skypriec et al. (2016) highlight one of the recommendations put forward by Weare's (2015) What Works report to ensure that 'more must be done to close the wellbeing gap between students with (si) SEND and their peers' (Skypriec et al., 2016, p. 21). This recommendation involves a specific focus on school policies and practices on challenging prejudices around disability. Moreover, Skypriec et al. (2016) argue:

'In our view, this includes challenging prejudices about what extra provisions need to be made to enable students with (si)SEND to fully participate in a positive school life. Building resilience and global self-concept of students with (si)SEND, for example, by allowing them to encounter "success" and "mastery" and other eudaimonic experiences, would assist them to make them some progress along the mental health spectrum towards flourishing. Of great benefit to students with (si)SEND would be assistance to achieve a good level of positive functioning in life and developing their potential for mastery in specific learning areas. Further areas of focus for wellbeing could be programs to address social and emotional needs as well as ensuring that school experiences are satisfying and fulfilling' (Skypriec et al., 2016, p. 21).

2.2.6.2 *New Instruments: ‘How I Feel About Myself & School’ Questionnaire & The EPOCH Measure*

The focus of McLellan and Steward’s study was on the development of the ‘How I Feel About Myself and School’ questionnaire designed to assess the impact of the Creative Partnerships (CP) Programme on the well-being of children and young people. They conducted the exploratory factor analysis when discerning well-being scales and found a four-factor solution was optimal. They labelled four dimensions of well-being as: interpersonal (refers to how children related to themselves and others as part of their community); life satisfaction (refers to how children felt about their life which was largely hedonic in nature); perceived competence (refers to how children perceive their effectiveness – eudaimonic aspect of well-being); and negative emotions (refers to children’s perceptions of levels of anxiety and stress – a further hedonic aspect of well-being). McLellan and Steward (2015) acknowledge the following limitation in relation to the negative emotion factor:

‘Although the item with the highest factor loading on the final factor, item 16 (‘I feel a lot of things are a real effort’) was part of the vitality scale in the original model, items associated with the fourth factor as a group had a negative emotive flavour (worry, misery, etc.) so was termed *negative emotion*’ (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p.320).

Their study found that life satisfaction declines with age with Year 3 pupils being the most positive and pupils in Key Stage 4 the least positive. Girls are more positive as indicated by them reporting a higher frequency of life satisfaction; although this finding is reversed at secondary school. In relation to perceived competence, pupils in Year 6 are more positive than those in Year 3 but secondary school pupils report experiencing

competence on a less frequent basis than primary children, with pupils in Key Stage 4 showing the least frequent occurrences of feeling competent. Overall, boys report higher frequencies of feeling of competent compared to their female counterparts. However, at primary school female pupils reveal that they experience feelings of competence on a little less frequent basis than the boys 'but a large gap opens up and appears to grow through secondary schooling' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 325). Moreover, the girls overall state experiencing negative emotion on a more frequent basis than the boys. This indicates that the well-being of female pupils participating in this survey, especially the older ones, is a concern. Generally, it is evident that pupils in secondary school report feeling well-being on a less frequent basis than those pupils in primary schools.

McLellan and Steward (2015) highlight that research on self-concept has shown that whilst well-being is expected to decline during the phase of early adolescence, it is also expected to recover by the time pupils reach the end of compulsory education. They underscore that the low self-reported well-being across all dimensions of the survey may suggest concerns that pupils in Key Stage 4 may have about their futures at a time of high unemployment amongst youth. In relation to interpersonal aspects of well-being and competence, the pupils in Year 6 reported experiencing well-being more frequently than pupils in Year 3, whereas the latter group more often experienced life satisfaction. The finding relating to interpersonal well-being may be attributable to they have got to know significant adults in their school and peers as they have been in their school for a number of years. This is likened to being a 'big fish in a small pond' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 325). In relative terms, lower life satisfaction in Year 6 may be due to the fact that pupils were in the process of preparation for imminent public examinations. Overall, the data indicates that CP work may be impacting in positive terms on the

reported well-being of pupils in Year 3 but not in Year 6. Unexpectedly, McLellan and Steward (2015) also found that this was not the case for secondary-aged pupils; there was no evidence to indicate that CP work was having a positive impact on their well-being.

Kern et al. (2016) tested the EPOCH measure of adolescent well-being across a diverse set of participants including 4480 adolescents in US and Australia. The EPOCH measure appears to be psychometrically sound. They found that across an array of correlates, the different factors showed a similar pattern but the strength of correlations differed across the factors. Unlike engagement, happiness was strongly negatively related to depression. Grit was mostly correlated with perseverance, and it was also linked to optimism and engagement. It is interesting to note that even though all the EPOCH factors were related to greater life satisfaction and less depression, happiness, connectedness and optimism were more strongly related to these outcomes than perseverance and engagement. Physical activity was strongly related to happiness, optimism and perseverance than perseverance and engagement. Kern et al. (2016) also noticed that in several samples the factors happiness, optimism and connectedness were very strongly associated with one another, leading the researchers to suggest that 'these might better represent a single domain, such as positive sociability' (Kern et al., 2016, p. 595).

2.2.6.3 *Psychological Well-Being*

The analyses of Kiang and Ip's study (2018) revealed four profiles of well-being: 'flourishing' (refers to consistently high levels on all well-being dimensions of Ryff's conceptualization of psychological functioning); 'functioning' (consistently moderate);

‘hindered’ (consistently low); and ‘self-driven success’ (high on most dimensions but only moderate levels of positive relationships). Kiang and Pi (2018) noted that the most prevalent profile was the ‘functioning’ one, and the residual profiles were of relatively even distributions. Moreover, they found that the profiles shifted from year to year in a substantial way, with the groups of ‘functioning’ and ‘hindered’ showing the most stability.

2.2.6.4 *ATLAS*

The study by Lubans et al. (2016) found the effect of the ATLAS (Active Teen Leaders Avoiding Screen-time) intervention on psychological well-being was small but statistically significant. The findings indicated that the effect on boys’ psychological well-being was mediated by changes in screen time, autonomy support and muscular fitness that were derived via the aforementioned intervention. Moreover, Lubans et al. (2016) reported that these ‘findings are consistent with previous work that found low levels of psychological well-being amongst adolescents are associated with high levels of screen time’ (Lubans et al., 2016, p. 323-324). Lubans et al. (2016) argue that these findings should be considered in the context that the ATLAS intervention was implemented with ‘a sample of adolescent boys who, although at risk for obesity, were not yet demonstrating any pathological mental or physical health symptoms’ (Lubans et al., 2016, p. 235). Thus this study indicates that fulfilling the boys’ psychological needs for autonomy, enhancing their muscular fitness, and reducing their recreational screen time may influence well-being in the positive direction.

2.2.6.5 *Theory of Positive Emotions*

Reschly et al. (2008) concluded that student engagement was an indicator of flourishing; they found that experiencing frequent positive emotions correlated with higher levels of student engagement and negative emotions with lower levels of engagement. Frequent positive emotions related to both broadened cognitive (problem solving) and behavioural (social support seeking) coping strategies. In particular, the correlation between frequent positive emotions and variables of several student engagement was mediated partially by the broadened coping strategies. In line with the theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998; 2001), positive emotions appear to be linked to greater personal resources (i.e., greater student engagement in school activities) and environmental resources (i.e., more supportive relationships with teachers).

2.2.6.6 *Dual-Factor Model of Mental Health*

Findings from Kelly's (2012) study were reported according to their respective mental health group classification; as participants, based on their assessed levels of subjective well-being and psychopathology, were split into four empirically differentiated groups of mental health on two occasions (five months apart). Those participants in the 'flourishing' grouping who had good relations with their teachers or received family support for learning at Time 1 were more likely to continue flourishing at Time 2. Those participants in the 'vulnerable' pupils with high social support for learning from family or peers at Time 1 were more likely to flourish at Time 2 whereas 'vulnerable' pupils with good teacher-pupil relations at Time 1 were more likely to make a positive or negative group change by Time 2. Those in the 'symptomatic but content' grouping with good teacher- pupil relations at Time 1 were more likely to improve in mental health by Time 2, whereas those in the 'symptomatic but content' pupils grouping who reported often

seeking out social support at Time 1 were less likely to make a positive group change. Those in the 'troubled' grouping with high family support for learning at Time 1 were less likely to improve in mental health. Kelly (2012) suggests that 'these students do not benefit from family social support for learning, that family support for learning is insufficient as a protective factor in isolation or that a statistically anomaly has occurred' (Kelly, 2012, p. 29).

2.2.7 Conclusion

Collectively, the studies of flourishing, underpinned by a range of differing conceptualisations, indicate that this is an important area of research given the gains suggested in these eleven studies. The model of well-being put forward by McLellan and Steward (2015) is the most comprehensive, given that it is grounded in hedonic and eudaimonic conceptualisations and the capabilities approach as well as a consideration of the context. This review, in line with views expressed by McLellan and Steward (2015), found that the construct of flourishing is used interchangeably with other terms such as 'well-being', 'psychological well-being', 'positive mental health', 'happiness', and 'psychosocial well-being'. As delineated under the conceptual underpinning section, these all carry differing underlying meanings and emphases. This is an important issue as highlighted by McLellan and Steward (2015):

'Without a commonly agreed definition of wellbeing, it is therefore unsurprising that there is also a lack of agreement as to how to assess it, hence different studies have tended to measure wellbeing in different ways, encapsulating different variables' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 307-308).

Furthermore, there are no studies that explore the construct of flourishing from the perspectives of different stakeholders of one particular educational setting; which would then generate a shared understanding and more meaningful model of flourishing in one context. Thus this review indicates that the science of flourishing within the ecosystemic-developmental domain is still in its infancy. This, then, informed the formation of the initial research question of 'What are the key dimensions/characteristics of flourishing children according to parents, children and staff of one school?'

Moreover, the current review indicates there is a paucity of British research, and a clear imbalance of research methods being employed in favour of quantitative data collection. From a methodological perspective, the researchers' epistemological and ontological positions are unknown and there is an absence of studies that only employed qualitative methods. This suggests that there is an absence of studies underpinned by constructivist and/or critical theorist epistemologies in this review. This inquiry addresses this lacuna by utilising an in-depth case study design that is grounded in constructivist epistemology and adopting a range of qualitative methods.

McLellan and Steward (2015) are also interested in the context of well-being and the universal focus of well-being, whereas the model put forward by Kern et al. (2016) ignores context specificity. McLellan and Steward (2015) state that well-being is 'conceptualised in relation to learning in school, and a wellbeing-for-all perspective is adopted rather than being concerned only with the welfare of specific vulnerable groups' such as those with special educational needs (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 308;

Skypriec et al., 2016). This particularly appeals to me as ‘a wellbeing-for-all perspective’ allows me to adopt a systemic perspective and approach.

2.3 Systematic Literature Review on Character Strength

Thirteen studies were identified in this systematic review on character strengths. I intend to examine each empirical study in terms of its: conceptual underpinning; methodology; research methods; setting; participants; and key findings.

2.3.1 Conceptual Underpinning

Ten studies (Steen et al., 2003; Park & Peterson, 2006; Ma et al., 2008; Ahmed, 2009; Gillham et al., 2011; Proctor et al., 2011; Toner et al., 2012; Ruch et al., 2014; Ferragut et al., 2014; Shoshani & Stone, 2016;) are underpinned by positive psychology’s virtue theory, which has been put together by Peterson and colleagues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman, 2005). Two studies are grounded in the positive youth perspective (PYD) (Hilliard et al., 2014; Killoren et al., 2016) The remaining study explores conceptualization of two specific virtues of self-regulation, self-control and patience (Schnitker et al., 2017).

Given that most of the studies are underpinned by positive psychology’s notion of virtue and character strengths, I intend to examine critically the related theory of ‘signature’ character strengths (Biswar-Diener et al., 2011). Moreover, the conceptual shortcomings of character strengths are explored especially with the absence of a ‘master’ virtue (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Kristjánsson, 2010) and with positive psychology’s notion of descriptive science that treats individual character strengths as

logically, empirically and morally independent from another (Held, 2005). The issue of cultural bias is considered in relation to the aforementioned classification (Fowers, 2008; Held, 2005; Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008).

2.3.1.1 *Positive Psychology's Virtue Theory*

According to Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, the aim of life is about living virtuously (*eudaimonia*) (Ryff, 1989). Positive psychology's virtue theory has resulted in a handbook that included a detailed classification of six core moral virtues as well as twenty-four subordinate character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman, 2005). In their quest to focus on what makes a healthy and stable personality, they followed the example of existing diagnostic manuals – the DSM-IV (the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4th Edition) and ICD (the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases) by proposing a classification scheme of positive traits for 'nothing comparable to the DSM-IV or ICD exists for human strengths' (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005, p.203). They analysed religious and philosophical traditions in South Asia, China and the West in relation to the solutions each particular tradition - Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and Athenian philosophy - provided to questions of the good life and morality. This exercise, according to Dahlsgaard et al. (2005), revealed that there is convergence across place, time and intellectual traditions about these core virtues; courage, justice, humanity, temperance, wisdom and transcendence. Table 5 provides a description of each core virtue.

Table 5 - Core Virtues (Dahlgaard et al., 2005)

Virtue	Description
Courage	Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal; examples include bravery, perseverance and authenticity (honesty)
Justice	Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life; exemplars include fairness, leadership and citizenship or teamwork
Humanity	Interpersonal strengths that involve ‘tending and befriending’ others; examples include love and kindness
Temperance	Strengths that protect against excess; examples include forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self-control
Wisdom	Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge; examples include creativity, curiosity, judgement, and perseverance (providing counsel to others)
Transcendence	Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and thereby provide meaning; examples include gratitude, hope and spirituality

Dahlgaard et al (2005) emphasize that they have opted for ‘nonarbitrary basis for focusing on certain classes of virtues rather than others’ for the classification is ‘descriptive of what is ubiquitous rather than prescriptive or idiosyncratic’ (Dahlgaard et al., 2005, p.211). Each core virtue comprises of specific character strengths, which met criteria such as being ubiquitous, trait-like, distinct, measurable, morally valued and being embodied in certain identifiable historical moral exemplars (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Table 6 lists the six core moral virtues and the twenty-four subordinate character strengths. (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Character is assumed to be multi-dimensional, that is, it is viewed as a category of positive features shown in thoughts, actions and feelings as well as each existing along a continuum. Character strengths are deemed as the particular psychological mechanisms that describe the virtues and are the subset of personality traits that are morally valued (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Table 6 - Classification of 6 Virtues & 24 Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

Wisdom and Knowledge: Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge	
<i>Creativity</i>	Thinking of novel and productive ways to do things
<i>Curiosity</i>	Taking an interest in all of ongoing experience
<i>Open-mindedness</i>	Thinking things through and examining them from all sides
<i>Love of learning</i>	Mastering new skills, topics and bodies of knowledge
<i>Perspective</i>	Being able to provide wise counsel to others
Courage: Emotional strengths that involve exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, either external or internal	
<i>Honesty</i>	Speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way
<i>Bravery</i>	Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty or pain
<i>Persistence</i>	Finishing what one starts
<i>Zest</i>	Approaching life with excitement and energy
Humanity: Interpersonal strengths that entail 'tending and befriending' others	
<i>Kindness</i>	Doing favours and good deeds for others
<i>Love</i>	Valuing close relations with others
<i>Social Intelligence</i>	Being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others
Justice: Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life	
<i>Fairness</i>	Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness / justice
<i>Leadership</i>	Organizing group activities and seeing that they happen
<i>Teamwork</i>	Working well as member of a group or team
Temperance: Strengths that protect against excess	
<i>Forgiveness</i>	Forgiving those who have done wrong
<i>Modesty</i>	Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves
<i>Prudence</i>	Being careful about one's choices; not saying or doing things that might be regretted
<i>Self-regulation</i>	Regulating what one feels and does

Transcendence: Strengths that build connections to the larger universe and provide meaning	
<i>Appreciation of beauty/excellence</i>	Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life
<i>Gratitude</i>	Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen
<i>Hope</i>	Expecting the best and working to achieve it
<i>Humour</i>	Liking to laugh and joke; bringing smiles to other people
<i>Religiousness</i>	Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life

In order to examine each of the positive traits in this classification, the Values-in-Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) was developed. The VIA-IS is a self-report questionnaire, which asks participants to state the extent to which statements reflecting each of the strengths relate to themselves (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005). The VIA-IS has also been adapted for youngsters, known as VIA-Youth. According to Peterson and Seligman (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2002), individuals have five 'signature' or 'top five' strengths out of the twenty-four character strengths and so recommends individuals to discover their 'signature' strengths to enhance them further. The underlying hypothesis being that using signature character strengths on a frequent basis are fulfilling and related to a person's sense of being (in terms of identity and authenticity). All definitions of strengths, character or generic, are grounded in classic trait personality theory (Biswar-Diener et al., 2011; Linley & Harrington, 2006; Linley, 2008, 2010).

2.3.1.2 Conceptual Shortcomings of Character Strengths

Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) contrasts the positive psychology perspective with the Aristotelian perspective, the former proposing that the identified character strengths and virtues are logically independent of each other whilst the latter makes the case that

virtues are interdependent. They argue that virtues are interdependent and all of the virtues are needed for eudaimonia. Moreover, it will be problematic to translate such important virtues and character strengths into action, argue Schwartz and Sharpe (2006). Often concrete circumstances can put virtues in conflict with one another and do not come labelled with the required virtues and/or character strengths attached. Virtues and strengths also lack the specificity needed for translation into practice. The Aristotelian virtue of practical wisdom, also known as 'phronesis', is necessary to resolve such issues of conflict, relevance and specificity.

Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) assert that 'master' virtue of practical wisdom is essential in order to employ character strengths effectively. There needs to be an 'executive decision-maker' to deal with context and person specificity that enables individuals to do the right thing at the right time. Wisdom is one of the six virtues for positive psychologists whilst practical wisdom is the 'master' virtue for Aristotelians. This non-arbitrary objection to the positive psychology's virtue theory exists due to the theory lacking a moral integrator (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Kristjánsson, 2010). Thus, virtues and character strengths should be amalgamated and the aim of nurturing strengths should be to the mean rather than more.

Aristotle emphasized the importance of realizing the mean in any particular action and that virtues need to occur in the right proportions, that is, they need to be nurtured and utilised to the right degree. Linley (2008, 2010) also emphasizes the importance of strength regulation, and this usage of strengths in proportion to situational demands is known as the golden mean of strengths use. Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) argue that there must be balance amongst virtues as opposed to the development of signature

strengths per se. Practical wisdom is vital to realizing balance given that the right balance is contingent on the particular context (Linley, 2008, 2010; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Grant & Schwartz, 2011). Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) implicate the third pillar of positive psychology, positive social institutions, when making a special case for cultivating practical wisdom. They suggest 'you cannot have a positive psychology without paying special attention to practical wisdom, and you cannot cultivate practical wisdom without paying special attention to the shaping of positive institutions' (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006, p. 91)

Whilst Aristotle championed practical wisdom, other philosophers emphasized other virtues; for example, Confucious emphasized benevolence, Cicero highlighted gratitude and Comt-Sponville accentuated love (Dahlggaard et al., 2005). Peterson and Seligman (2004) do not identify a 'master' virtue because there is no clear consensus amongst philosophers regarding the most fulfilling of the character strengths. Even though Kristjánsson (2010) reminds critics that positive psychology's virtue theory is not meant to imitate Aristotle's theory, he admits that the distinction between virtues and character strengths is not entirely clear. Virtues could have been labelled 'cardinal virtues' and character strengths 'subvirtues' argues Kristjánsson (2010). Martin questions if the refusal to name the character strengths 'moral virtues' blurs the extent to which a value-laden inquiry is being conducted throughout (Martin, 2007, p. 97). Admittedly, due to its value-ladenness, Peterson was initially worried that the virtue project was 'doomed from the start' (Peterson, 2006, p.139).

Seligman's stance of positive psychology being descriptive is:

‘I strongly believe that science is morally neutral (but ethically relevant). The theory put forward describes what the pleasant life, the good life, and the meaningful life are. It describes how to get these lives and what consequences of living them are. It does not *prescribe* these lives for you, nor does it, as a theory, value any one of these lives above the others’ (Seligman, 2002, p.303).

Peterson and Seligman (2004) do not identify a ‘master’ virtue for this would go beyond their remit as scientific researchers – should they stipulate virtuous unity in virtuous agents (Kristjánsson, 2010). Held (2005) argues that Seligman is not being descriptive when he selects certain texts and not others on the basis of ‘*priori* moral grounds’ to produce the aforementioned classification system of positive traits. In real terms, it is impossible to carry out a value-neutral psychological inquiry on research questions relating to what makes life worthwhile (Fowers, 2008). Robbins (2008) argues positive psychologists need to simply acknowledge that they are engaged in the activity of prescriptive valuation when investigating eudaimonia.

Moreover, Fowers (2008) raises the concern of cultural bias that may be inherent in the positive psychology’s list of virtues and character strengths; given that perspectives on the human good are susceptible to both cultural and ideological bias. A virtue project that originates from the West must surely ‘distort the experiences of those from other cultures’ (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008, p. 581). Furthermore, the philosopher, Charles Scott is highly critical of positive psychology’s approach to virtue, as he deems it as equivalent to ‘ethical colonialism’. This is cited in Held’s paper:

“It’s one thing to say, ‘If you would like to be happy in this way here’s what you might consider doing.’ It’s another to say, ‘it’s best to be happy in this way.’ If ‘authentic’ is used to mean ‘distinctly one’s own,’ I find no objections. But if

‘authentic’ is universalized, I consider danger in a kind of ethical colonialism that none of us, I expect, wants’ (Held, 2005, p.25).

From a social constructionist perspective (Wilding and Griffey, 2015), it is not possible to create a ubiquitous list of character strengths or conduct research that are ‘morally neutral’ (Wong, 2006, p.135). Gable and Haidt (2005) and Christopher and Hickinbottom (2008) argue that there is complexity in establishing what is positive and/or valuable for a person. They, therefore, challenge the notion of an objective list of universal character strengths. Furthermore, the role of culture is neglected when certain strengths are endorsed; especially when cultures have different values as well as different perspectives on traits that are beneficial to both the success and well-being of individuals and/or societies (Diener & Suh, 2000; Wong, 2011). Triandis (2000) highlights the importance of context; a person’s psychological well-being is contingent on the degree of congruence between his /her strengths and those that are valued within his/her context. Correspondingly, Norem and Chang (2002) and Held (2004) argue that this is not appropriate for studies to compare strengths across individuals; this neglects both the context and function of various traits and behaviours. An emphasis on context is required to capture the Aristotelian mean, as ‘the mean or right amount of virtue varies by context, and imposing precise boundaries between vice and virtue is a relatively arbitrary choice that involves making categorical judgements along fuzzy continua’ (Grant & Schwartz, 2011, p. 71).

According to Seligman’s formulation of the good life, once one has identified one’s top five signature strengths, one should then use the signature strengths daily in the main domains of one’s life to ‘bring abundant gratification and authentic happiness’

(Seligman, 2002, p.161). Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) argue that cultivating one particular character strength may produce distortions in one's character. It is possible to augment the signature strength hypothesis by proposing that character strengths tend to grow in clusters akin to Aristotle's notion of virtues unity. So by youngsters strengthening their few signature strengths, all the other virtues and strengths would gradually emerge as well and become part of their character argues Kristjánsson (2010). Instead, Seligman's advice is limited to rewarding children systematically for exhibiting any of the strengths as 'eventually you will find your child drifting in the direction of a few of them' (Seligman, 2002, p.245). Biswar-Diener et al (2011) maintain that there is much to be gained by exploring the under-researched concept of strength constellation.

Moreover, Biswar-Diener et al (2011) argue that the 'identify and use' approach advocated by the signature strength hypothesis (Seligman 2002; Peterson and Seligman, 2004) is simplistic and is associated with classic personality psychology that considers strengths as relatively fixed traits. They propose another approach called the 'strengths development', which is underpinned by the assumption that strengths are not fixed traits amid settings and time. Biswar-Diener et al (2011) propose that people can develop their strengths through developing strength proficiency ('becoming even better'), enhanced strength usage ('using the strength more') and strength regulation ('knowing when to use a strength and in what amount'). Thus they make a case for both a more dynamic approach and a more sophisticated within-person approach.

2.3.1.3 *Positive Youth Development*

The studies by Hilliard et al. (2014) and Killoren et al. (2016) are grounded in the positive youth perspective. Hilliard et al. (2014) provides a summary of PYD:

“The positive youth development was derived in large part from relational developmental systems theory (Overton, 2013; Overton and Muller, 2012) that emphasize that the basic process of adolescent development involves mutually influential relationships between the developing individual and the multiple levels of his or her changing context. These bidirectional relationships regulate the course of development (i.e., its pace, direction and outcome). History, or temporality, is part of the ecology of human development that is integrated with the individual through these developmental regulations” (Hilliard et al., 2014, p. 992).

Hilliard et al. (2014) explored one specific aspect of the 5 C’s model of PYD, character; ‘because we think that current scholarship about character presents the opportunities to derive hypotheses pertinent to the conditions under which the link between problematic attributes’ such as bullying ‘and positive attributes will exist’ (Hilliard et al., 2014, p.993). They also make explicit their preference to use the term ‘character virtues’ rather than ‘character strengths’. Hilliard et al. (2014) argued their preference on the basis that

“in the PYD literature, strengths are defined as developmental assets (Benson et al., 2011), and we elected not to assume that the attributes of character we were assessing were strengths. We chose to test their empirical relationships with indicators of positive development” (Hilliard et al., 2014, p. 993).

Rather than construing character as a global and undifferentiated construct, Hilliard et al. (2014) draw on relevant literature to differentiate character into virtues linked to morality, performance and civic engagement. Moral character comprises of virtues pertinent to 'striving for ethical behaviour in one's relationships with other individuals and include attributes like empathy and integrity' (Hilliard et al., 2014, p. 993). Performance character comprises of virtues that 'allow individuals to regulate their thoughts and actions in ways that support their personal achievement in a particular endeavour' such as persistence, self-discipline and initiative (Hilliard et al., 2014, p. 993). Civic character comprises of 'the qualities relevant to active and engaged citizenship and can be demonstrated through local or global community perspective and involvement' such as social knowledge, social skills and social duty (Hilliard et al., 2014, p. 993). Taken together, Hilliard et al. (2014) explored the relations between bullying and character in adolescence by investigating the development of moral, performance and civic character across several years of schooling (middle to high school, grades 7 to 10) in relation to the adolescent's self-reported bullying status.

2.3.1.4 *Self-Control & Patience*

According to ethicists, self-control and patience are categorized as instrumental virtues or 'virtues that facilitate the acquisition and expression of other virtues and character strengths' (Schnitker et al., 2017, p. 165). Schnitker et al. (2017) referenced research that has shown the significance of these regulatory virtues in multiple areas of development from childhood to adulthood as well as within the adolescent phase of development. For example, self-control at the start of the eighth grade predicted better

grades and subjective life balance as well as enhanced flow at the end of that particular academic year.

Both self-control and patience fall broadly under the overarching virtue of self-regulation. Self-control is defined as the 'ability to override or alter one's predominant (pre-potent, automatic) response tendencies...aligned with (but not limited to) response inhibition' (Schnitker et al., 2017, p. 166). Patience is characterized as the predisposition of an individual to wait calmly when experiencing frustration or adversity. Schnitker (2017) found that teaching students to engage in cognitive reappraisal exercises resulted in enhanced patience and well-being. This study is rooted in the model of self-regulation that uses a muscle metaphor: 'self-regulation is a general, limited resource that can be depleted'; and as 'exercise initially fatigues a muscle, but over time makes it stronger, so too, the strength model of self-control maintains that utilizing self-control may cause immediate losses of regulatory ability but over time can increase self-regulatory capacity' (Schnitker et al., 2017, p. 166-167). This study also considers alternative accounts of understanding self-control based on motivation, attention and emotion. For example, individuals who construe tasks as enjoyable may alleviate effects of depletion assumed by the limited-strength model of self-control.

2.3.2 Methodology

The researchers of twelve out of thirteen studies do not explicitly state their respective epistemological and ontological positions (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They have written about their research designs, which suggests their broad methodological position. For example, Gillham et al. (2011) used a longitudinal design to explore whether adolescents' character strengths at the start of high school would predict their depression, happiness and life satisfaction through the end of tenth grade

(i.e., two academic years). Moreover, Proctor et al. (2011) used a quasi-experimental treatment-control design and Schniker et al. (2017) used an explicit hypothesis-testing approach. Taken together, this implies a positivistic research orientation, which is typically used to predict general patterns of human activity (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Eleven of the thirteen studies employed only quantitative data collection methods.

On the surface, the study by Killoren et al. (2016, p.92) appears to be a qualitative study on the basis that the participants are asked two open-ended questions about youth success; (i) 'How would you define success for a young person on high school?' and (ii) 'What do you think contributes to a young person's success in high school?' Killoren and colleagues (2016) are explicit about their methodological approach when they consider the limitations of their study:

"...we did not conduct face-to-face interviews with our participants, and thus we did not directly interact with them. Instead, participants completed open-ended questions about definitions of, and contributors to, youth success, and we were unable to ask for more detail about their answers. Therefore, our methodological approach was not qualitative (Creswell, 2013). Because we used participants' own words and gained meaning from their responses, however, the data we collected and coded was qualitative (Adler & Clarke, 2011; Gibson & Brown, 2009)" (Killoren et al., 2016, p. 92).

The study by Steen et al. (2003) used focus group discussions, a qualitative research method for 'it is unknown without empirical investigation whether the ways that young people display and recognize character strengths are comparable to the ways of older people' (Steen et al., 2003, p. 8).

2.3.3 Research Method

Eleven studies used questionnaires in this systematic review. Psychometric methods have predominately been used when identifying youngsters' character strengths in the form of the Values-In-Action Strengths Inventory for Youth (Park and Peterson, 2006). Eight studies used VIA-Youth, which is designed for young people aged 10 to 17 (Park and Peterson, 2006; Ma et al., 2008; Ahmed, 2009; Gillham et al., 2011; Toner et al., 2012; Ferragut et al., 2014; Ruch et al., 2014; Shoshani & Slone, 2016).

The psychometric approach assesses character strengths against a pre-determined range of character strengths, which in this case, is character strengths in the virtues and strengths classification (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). 'Signature' strengths are ascertained from scores on the VIA measure, which are ranked from 1 (top) to 24 (bottom) and youngsters rate each item on a scale that ranges from 'very much like me' to 'not like me at all'. A factor analysis using the VIA-Youth inventory showed an interpretable four-factor structure of this inventory for youth: intellectual strengths (e.g. curiosity, love of learning); other-directed strengths (e.g. modesty, kindness, teamwork); temperance strengths (e.g. prudence, self-regulation); and transcendence strengths (e.g. gratitude, hope, religiousness) (Park & Peterson, 2006).

The initial VIA questionnaire has been revised for the youth population, using simplified language and referring to settings and circumstances that are familiar to them (Park & Peterson, 2006). Nevertheless, it still exhibits each of the character strengths in the original VIA classification. The survey contains 198 multiple choice items which typically

takes approximately forty-five minutes to complete. The survey is reported to have good reliability and construct validity (Park & Peterson, 2006). It is impractical for schools to complete the VIA-Youth given that it's a lengthy questionnaire that requires adult support for those under the age of 13 argues Proctor et al (2011). This is particularly pertinent when thinking about implementing an intervention underpinned by this notion of character strengths in schools on a broad scale.

Given that work on the virtues and strengths classification focused initially on adults, Steen et al.'s (2003) study was the only study in the systematic review that conducted a number of focus groups with adolescents for they did not want to 'simply age regress our ideas and measures' (Steen et al., 2005, p.8). They adopt a developmental perspective for they maintain that character strengths show a developmental trajectory, for some adult strengths may not have an exact equivalent amongst the younger population. They cite the example of 'perspective' which 'no doubt has adolescent precursors but perhaps not an adolescent manifestation' (Steen et al, 2005, p.8). Accordingly, Steen et al. (2003) then deliberately used different labels for the six virtues and the twenty-four character strengths of the VIA classification. They changed perspective to 'wisdom', valour to 'bravery/courage' and intimacy to 'capacity to love' and be loved'. Despite such adaptations, Steen et al (2003) note that some students mistaken the VIA strength humility for humiliation.

Steen et al. (2003) put together a discussion guide underpinned by the following overarching questions:

“(a) Does the basic idea of a character strength make sense to youth; (b) How do young people define and recognize instances of the different strengths in the VIA Classification; (c) Do individual adolescents ‘own’ certain strengths, that is, can they readily claim specific strengths as their own while disavowing others; and (d) How do youth view the origins and development of these strengths across the lifespan?” (Steen et al., 2003, p.8).

The researchers randomly selected between four and six specific character strengths to discuss with twenty classes involving four hundred and fifty nine students, during a single class session lasting between forty-five to ninety minutes. Guide questions included “Would someone give an example of people they know or have heard about who are particularly _____. What are they like? How do you know that they possess _____? Give an example of a time in your life when you needed to be (or have) _____?’ and ‘Are there any particular situations in which it is particularly important to be _____?’ (Steen et al., 2003, p. 8)

2.3.4 Participants

All thirteen studies included participants who were broadly within the adolescence phase of their development (Erikson, 1959, 1963, 1968).

2.3.5 Setting

Eight of the thirteen studies were conducted in the USA (Steen et al., 2005; Park & Peterson, 2006; Ma et al., 2008; Gillum et al., 2011; Ahmed et al., 2009; Hilliard et al., 2014; Killoren et al., 2016; Schnitker et al., 2017) and one was conducted in Great

Britain (Proctor et al., 2011), Australia (Toner et al., 2012), Spain (Ferragut et al. 2014), Switzerland (Ruch et al, 2014), and Israel (Shoshani & Stone, 2016).

2.3.6 Key Findings

The key findings of each study are grouped according to its respective conceptual underpinning, and in chronological order.

2.3.6.1 *Virtues & Character Strengths*

Overall Steen et al. (2003) conclude that the adolescent participants demonstrated an understanding of the character strengths in the VIA classification and particularly valued love of learning, practical intelligence, social intelligence, leadership, spirituality and the capacity to love and be loved. Broadly speaking, Steen and colleagues (2003) found that the participants showed a promising appreciation for strengths; they considered character strengths were sought-after and worthy of recognition, and were highly energised when engaging in the discussions on character strengths. The participants believed that strengths were acquired (rather than innate) and developed via ongoing life experience (rather than formal teaching). Based on the focus group discussions, Steen et al. (2003) propose these four conclusions for teaching adolescent students about character: (a) character education programmes to be experiential, for adolescents report a preference for learning from experience; (b) character education programmes to run in line with adolescent's view that various strengths are interdependent so avoid the current character education programme tendency to illustrate character strengths in a singular format (in the form of 'flavour of the week'); (c) expose adolescents to people who demonstrate particular character strength in a distinguished way for adolescents cited the lack of contemporary role models; and (d)

character education programmes to implement group discussions as these were found to be influential in promoting character strengths.

Park and Peterson (2006) found that the most prevalent strengths amongst American adolescents were gratitude, humour and love. Character strengths of zest, leadership and hope were linked to fewer internalizing problems whereas persistence, authenticity, prudence and love were linked to fewer externalizing problems. Moreover, they found that the character strengths love, gratitude, zest and hope were linked strongly to greater life satisfaction.

The study by Ma et al. (2008) indicated that the character strengths were linked with lower levels of sexual behaviours and sex-related beliefs amongst African-American students. In particular, those students who reported higher ratings of love of learning was associated with the male students' reporting abstinence from sexual intercourse. Also, those students who reported higher ratings of curiosity was linked to both male and female students' belief in no pre-marital sex.

Ahmed et al. (2009) found that over three-quarters of the American Muslim youth sampled were classed as highly religious, which were significantly more so than their contemporaries. They found that the character strength of religiosity was significantly correlated with a higher number of character strengths, which Ahmed et al. (2011) concluded served as a protective factor.

Gillham et al. (2011) discovered character strengths that focused on others (i.e., kindness) predicted fewer symptoms of depression; character strengths labelled as transcendence (i.e., meaning) predicted greater life satisfaction; and social support, unlike the relationship between strengths and life satisfaction, partially mediated the association between strengths and depression. Overall, these findings suggest that strengths that develop relations to others and purposes larger than oneself predict future well-being. Gillham et al. (2011) make the case for building and sustaining positive relationships through cultivating character strengths on a daily basis (rather than on a reactive basis); given that the mediation analysis indicate that those character strengths that focused on others increase social support, which subsequently is a protective factor against depression during the adolescence phase of development. Thus Gillham et al. (2011) argue that relatedness is likely to be both a cause and consequence of good character and this is in line with transactional models of development.

Proctor et al. (2011) found that adolescents who participated in 'Strengths Gym' (a programme that encourages pupils to build their strengths, learn new strengths and to identify strengths in others through an array of activities called 'Strengths Builders' and 'Strengths Challenges') had greater life satisfaction than those who did not participate (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 382). Moreover, the former group reported higher scores on positive affect and self-esteem as well as lower scores on negative affect than the latter group. Proctor et al. (2011) make the case for adopting a 'shotgun' approach, that is, students engages regularly in a range of different positive activities rather than a singular positive activity (Seligman et al., 2005; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Instead of students finding out about their 'signature' strengths through the aforementioned

lengthy questionnaire, Proctor et al (2011) devised the 'Strengths Gym' so that students can participate in multiple strengths exercises and identify their own 'signature' strengths through identification, exploration and re-evaluation.

The study by Toner et al. (2012) explored the dimensions underlying the VIA character strengths and examined their links with measures of subjective well-being. They found evidence for five distinct fundamental elements, which suggested that

“...adolescents vary along five intuitively sensible strength dimensions. These dimensions involved strengths relating to temperance, vitality, curiosity and learning, interpersonal warmth and sensitivity, and transcendence” (Toner et al., 2012, p. 639-640).

Toner et al. (2012) state that these dimensions do not resemble the six virtues of the VIA classification. Moreover, Toner et al. (2012) highlight that the original classification of the virtues has never been replicated in subsequent studies involving both adults and youth. Toner et al. (2012) also found that Australian youth with higher levels of character strengths related to temperance, vitality and transcendence tended to experience higher levels of subjective well-being, whereas those with higher levels of character strengths related to curiosity tended to be slightly less satisfied with life. This supports the notion that “strengths of the heart” (i.e., Vitality and Transcendence) are more robustly associated with young people’s life satisfaction than “cerebral strengths” (i.e., Curiosity) (Toner et al., 2012, p. 640). It is also interesting to note that interpersonal strengths were not associated with subjective well-being. This indicates that whilst youth with higher levels of interpersonal strengths may have a positive impact on their social environment, there are other character strengths that may have a greater influence on their own personal well-being. The character strength of hope

was a strong and reliable predictor on measures of happiness and life satisfaction. Toner et al. (2012) state that their study may be useful in the development of effective programmes and positive institutions, given the insights they gained into the structure of character strengths and virtues and their links to well-being.

The Swiss study, by Ruch et al. (2014) which explored the character strengths of those students engaging in class clown behaviours and their tendencies to happiness and satisfaction with life, found four positively correlated dimensions of 'identified as a class clown', 'comic talent', 'disruptive rule-breaker' and 'subversive joker' (p.1). Class clowns were high in character strengths of humour and leadership, and low in character strengths of modesty, fairness, prudence, self-regulation, perseverance and love of learning. Analyses of signature strengths indicated that three-quarters of class clowns had humour as a signature strength. Also 'class clown behaviours were generally shown by students indulging in a life of pleasure, but low life of engagement' (Ruch et al., 2014, p.1). The factors 'identified as the class clown' and 'comic talent' were associated with leadership strengths whereas 'subversive joker' and 'disruptive rule-breaker' were low in other-directed strengths. The class clown characterized by disruptive rule breaking was also low in intellectual strengths. 'While humour predicted life satisfaction, class clowning tended to go along with diminished satisfaction with life' (Ruch et al., 2014, p.1). The researchers discuss the implications of their findings:

"In general humour serves a variety of functions (e.g., it manages relationships, it buffers stress, it energizes, it helps influencing) and some of these are highly relevant at school. The teacher might use humour to melt down conflicts and tension with humorous remarks, highlight a point in humour so that it is more easily remembered, or humour can make students laugh and be distracted but

then alert again after laughter etc. ...When humour interrupts the flow of teaching, or is directed at classmates or the teacher it can be seen as a misuse of a strength (Webb, 1994). When it is used constructively students might use it for building relations, leading, influencing or highlighting points, energizing, resolving conflicts, managing emotions etc.” (Ruch, 2014. P. 11).

The focus of the Spanish study by Ferragut et al. (2014) was to examine the profiles of girls and boys (in the initial phase of adolescence) in terms of their respective character strengths, and attitudes toward diversity and violence, and sexism. As expected, the girls scored higher in particular character strengths. This study found gender differences in just over half (13) of the 24 character strengths; social intelligence, perspective, love, persistence, gratitude, appreciation of beauty, self-regulation, team work, modesty, authenticity, fairness, forgiveness, and kindness. This is a consistent finding in the context of similar research on adolescents. In particular, gender differences are found consistently in relation to character strengths of kindness, fairness and perspective in Spain, US, Japan and Germany. Ferragut et al. (2014) state:

“These results clearly show that from early adolescence, women show higher levels in the strengths related to others, including those oriented toward principles of fairness, helping others and making sense of their own lives and those of others. These findings are consistent with studies in which higher levels of empathy are found in girls (Mestre, Samper & Frias, 2002), who reported greater best friend intimate support (Jenkins, Goodness & Buhrmester, 2002) as well as values linked to interpersonal relationships (Casas et al., 2005)” (Ferragut et al., 2014, p. 6).

Moreover, as expected the girls obtained lower levels attitudes toward violence than the boys. The study found that the boys were inclined to agree with justifying violence (including violence against minorities, domestic violence and peer violence), which may result in an increased risk of them being aggressors or perpetuating violence. Finally, as expected, the boys obtained significantly higher scores than girls in sexism. Ferragut et al. (2014) reference work that attribute the causes of these gender differences to human evolutionary history, particularly in the way that biological and environmental factors influence the division of labour. According to this theory, Ferragut et al. (2014) state:

“...there is a division of tasks so that men do some things in society and women do others. These specific activities in a society depend on what tasks can be performed most efficiently by each sex, given men’s greater size, physical strength and speed, and women’s bearing and nursing children. For example, given that women perform more childcare than men in most industrialized societies, women are believed to be especially nurturing and caring, and they would improve social characteristics like character strengths directed to others, according to this theory (Wood & Eagly, 2002)” (Ferragut et al., 2004, p. 7-8).

Ferragut et al. (2014) also recommend that it is essential to intervene, especially with the male adolescent group, in relation to preventing certain attitudes toward violence and sexism, and in tackling equality and preventing violence from the onset of adolescence.

The study by Shoshani and Slone (2016) found confirmatory evidence that exposure to political violence was associated positively with psychiatric symptoms. Character strengths of interpersonal, temperance and transcendence were associated negatively with psychiatric symptoms. The study, conducted in Israel, also confirmed the moderating effects of the interpersonal strengths on the link between the exposure of political violence and the psychiatric and post-traumatic stress disorder indices. Shoshani and Slone (2016) discussed this finding further:

“The finding of a relation between the interpersonal strengths and lower levels of psychological distress concur with research evidence showing the beneficial effects of engaging in interpersonal relationships and mobilizing social support in conditions of war and armed conflict (Fremont, 2004). These findings can be summarized as showing that the intrapsychic and interpersonal character strengths facilitate lower levels of distress. Emotional and behavioural regulation (Eisenberg et al., 1998), interpersonal support (Betancourt and Khan, 2008) and sense of meaning and positive appraisal (Fernando, 2007), separately and together, can provide a base for coping with stressful life circumstances” (Shoshani & Slone, 2016, p. 8).

2.3.6.2 *Positive Youth Development*

Hilliard et al. (2014) found that moral character of youth was relatively stable across middle of the adolescence, whereas civic character enhanced slightly by grade 10 (approximately 15 years of age) and some of the participating youth reported increases or decreases in performance character. Hilliard et al. (2014) stated that these results indicated the following:

“...in general youth consistently see themselves as relatively doing right or wrong actions across middle adolescence, but they report slight increases in behaviours reflective of active citizenship. In turn, some youth reported increases in their ability to maintain focus on a task, whereas others reported a loss of task orientation over middle adolescence” (Hilliard et al., 2014, p. 998).

Moreover, Hilliard et al. (2014) found that the bully-victims (those individuals who reported being bullies and being bullied by others) reported lower levels of civic and moral character. Compared with youth who reported not engaged in bullying, bullies reported ‘more positive slopes for performance character’ (Hilliard et al., 2014, p. 1000). Hilliard et al. (2014) conclude that such findings emphasize the importance of further investigating constituents of character and adolescents’ moral, civic and performance engagement, and the utility of enhancing such developmental assets to fostering positive development among youngsters who bully and who are bullied.

The study by Killoren et al. (2016) explored Mexican American college students’ perceptions of youth success and, through their inductive thematic analysis, found that the participants identified definitions of success connected to three overarching themes: academic (such as school success); individual (such as personal qualities); and social (such as positive family relationships) factors. Killoren and colleagues (2016) noticed that the participants did not reference all features of PYD:

“For instance, all of the Five Cs definitions of success were mentioned: competence (e.g., academic success), confidence (e.g., emotionally healthy), character (e.g., staying out of trouble and avoiding peer pressure), caring (e.g., helping out the community), and connection (e.g., positive relationships with family members and friends)...Although college students revealed aspects of all

of the Five Cs, dimensions of caring and character were not emphasized as frequently as dimensions of competence, confidence and connection” (Killoren et al. 2016, p. 96).

This is deemed as a surprising finding when considering the Mexican cultural values of ‘personalismo’ and ‘simpatia’; the former refers to ‘personal integrity and getting along well with others’ and the latter refers to ‘politeness and respect when interacting with others’ (Killoren et al., 2016, p.96). It is suggested that the participants may not characterize success in terms of character and caring as frequently ‘because these are cultural norms that they take for granted’ (Killoren et al., 2016, p. 96). This study revealed factors relating to the individual (such as personal qualities, goals, and school involvement), relational (such as supportive family and friends, positive role models and supportive teachers) and the setting (such as resource availability and good teachers) were deemed as significant contributors to success of the Mexican American youth.

2.3.6.3 *Self-Control & Patience*

The study by Schnitker et al. (2017) examined the efficacy of three interventions that involved traits of self-control and patience in adolescents: the interventions included participants using their non-dominant hand; taking part in cognitive reappraisal activities; and tracking their own schedule. They found that the first and third conditions only enhanced self-control, patience and well-being when the perceived difficulty was low. This indicates that the limited-strength model of self-control is inadequate and ‘underscore the explanatory power of computational and process models that account for difficulty’ (Schnitker et al., 2017, p. 165).

2.3.7 Conclusion

This systematic review into character strengths indicates that study into this topic is a worthwhile endeavour; given the positive associations between character strengths in youth and life satisfaction, emotional well-being, self-esteem and health promoting behaviours as well as the negative associations between character strengths in youth and psychiatric symptoms (Park & Peterson, 2006; Ma et al., 2008; Proctor et al., 2011; Gillum et al., 2011; Toner et al., 2012; Ruch et al., 2014; Shoshani & Slone, 2016). Participating adolescents, in the only qualitative study of this review, also expressed that character strengths were desirable and worthy of recognition, and they were observed as highly energized when engaging in the discussions on character strengths (Steen et al., 2003).

Research into character strengths appears to be limited by the methodological approach that is undertaken. Most of the studies that adopted quantitative data collection methods used the lengthy questionnaire rooted in the VIA classification system developed for adults (Steen et al., 2003). Whilst existing research has created a vocabulary for strengths, there are some fundamental conceptual flaws; the most notable being the absence of a master virtue (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Robbins, 2008; Kristjánsson, 2010). Construct development using different methodological approaches including mixed methods and qualitative methodologies are required to develop a more robust, contextual and meaningful approach to the study of character (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Friedman, 2008; Grant & Schwartz, 2011). An explicit, social constructionist approach to strengths identification is lacking in the current body of empirical work (Wong, 2006; Wilding & Griffey, 2015).

Future research consideration should include the use of a more open-ended approach to strengths identification: strengths identification would emerge from, and is categorised within, the dialogue between the researcher and the participant. This would involve a 'funnel' approach that begins with asking some broad-ranging questions; questions about the person, and their experiences, enjoyable activities and areas of excellence. Then these areas could be refined via co-construction between the researcher and the participant resulting in a core set of strengths. This dynamic approach essentially grounds the individual strength concepts in the lived experience of the participant, resulting in an in-depth within-person analyses in a particular context (Biswar-Diener et al., 2011; Killoren et al., 2016). Also, this subjective, interactionist and contextual approach may explore feasibly the notion of the golden mean of strengths use or practical wisdom, thereby fostering a holistic approach to the study of character strengths (Steen et al., 2003; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Linley, 2008; Robbins, 2008; Grant & Schwartz, 2011; Wong, 2011; Wilding & Griffey, 2015).

2.4 Systematic Literature Review on Positive Institution, Enabling Institution, and/or Enabling Environment

Only three studies were found in this systematic literature review on positive institutions, enabling institutions and enabling environments (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010; Arthur et al, 2010; Andrade, 2016). Each of these three studies are examined in terms of underpinning concepts or theoretical frameworks, methodology, research methods, participants, setting and key findings.

Outside of this systematic review, I also discuss a project that is directly relevant to the third pillar of positive psychology, known as the 'Geelong Grammar Positive Institution Project' (IPPA, 2009; Seligman et al., 2009; Seligman, 2011; Kristjánsson, 2012; Norrish et al., 2013). Given the absence of an organizational developmental framework or model in this project, I outline four major models of organizational change for consideration (Evans et al., 2012).

Moreover, in light of the lack of empirical research conducted, I also intend to supplement this review with a brief conceptual review. The foci of this conceptual review include an ecological perspective identifying key considerations for building positive institutions, the synthesis of positive and community psychologies as a way forward to building positive or enabling institutions, and some reasons for the paucity of research as well as some conceptual omissions and ways forward (Chafauleas & Bray, 2004; Clonan et al., 2004; Gable and Haidt, 2005; Schueller, 2009; Sheldon, 2009; Biswar-Diener, 2011; Kristjánsson, 2012; McNulty and Fincham, 2012).

2.4.1 Systematic Literature Review

This systematic review details three studies in chronological order. The first study explores fostering a sense of belonging in creating an enabling school environment (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010). The second study is on school culture and postgraduate professional development, with a focus on delineating the 'enabling school' (Arthur et al., 2010). The third study investigates communities' and practitioners' engagement with asset-based approaches in relation to tackling health inequalities (Andrade, 2016).

2.4.1.1 A Sense of Belonging and Enabling School Environment (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010)

The study by Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010) investigated the experience of learners (black and Indian) in a desegregated former House of Delegates School; aiming to ascertain the successes and possible challenges of safeguarding racial integration at the school level, and accordingly its role in social cohesion. It is important to underscore that this study took place in South Africa where racial tensions in schools are ongoing 'despite the constitutional and policy injunctions for equity and equality in social relations' (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010, p. 492). Furthermore, Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010) recognize that they use terms which are deemed problematic and offer the following justification:

“We are keeping the racial identifiers of the past, i.e. those of blacks, coloureds, Indians and whites, because they have historical significance and we are looking at a school that historically desegregated among black and Indian learners and is now seeking to integrate black and Indian learners” (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010, p. 504-505).

Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010, p. 492) acknowledge that there is 'no clear agreement in the literature on definitions and measurement of social cohesion'. However, they emphasize that social cohesion should not neglect individual group members' views of their sense of belonging in the group. There are two dimensions that can be explored in relation to perceived social cohesion: a sense of belonging and feelings of morale. Arguably, this requires a subjective approach to the study of cohesion that comprises of an exploration of factors related to the individual in the group (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010). Underpinned by the body of literature on racial

integration in the South African context and debates in social psychology, Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010) put forward their views on the constituents of social cohesion:

“...it can be seen as the interactions amongst different people that connect them; make them feel that they belong and are part of the group; that their shared experience and connectedness transcend the set of social boundaries, structures, cultures or traditions and as individuals, contribute to the well-being of that society, group and community” (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010, p. 494).

Their overarching research question was ‘How do Grade 11 learners negotiate a sense of belonging in a desegregated former House of Delegates school?’ The study was based on two sub-questions: ‘How do Grade 11 learners conceptualise belonging in a desegregated former HoD school?; and ‘How does Grade 11 learners’ sense of belonging contributes to social cohesion in the desegregated former HoD school? (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010, p. 494).

Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010) adopted a case study and an interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) research methodology. They provided several reasons for their chosen methodology:

“As a social constructionist approach to data generation, collection and analysis, IQA addresses power relations between the researcher and participants. Participants are encouraged through various IQA protocols to generate, collect and analyse their own data. IQA is a qualitative research methodology that attempts to provide a systematic, rigorous and accountable framework for qualitative inquiry. It is a suitable design when researchers wish to examine how phenomena are socially constructed and if they wish to develop a theory of the

research phenomenon that demonstrates a systemic understanding of the phenomenon” (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010, p. 495).

Ten participants were selected in Grade 11 from a school with only black and Indian learners, on a random basis; initially they took part in a focus group and then individual interviews. There were two phases of data collection: the focus group which included the production of a focus visual presentation; and then the individual interviews which were based on the visual presentation generated by the focus group.

The focus group generated eight categories of meaning (or affinities): school as a welcoming space; belonging; respect; security; equality in the way we socialise; tender loving care; motivation; and freedom. The participants emphasized the importance of a responsive environment (school as a welcoming space) that assists to boost a personal sense of belonging, because it influences interpersonal interactions by nurturing respect and equal treatment of one another in an attempt towards realizing a socially cohesive society. The involvement of others were indicated by nurturing safety, having positive regard towards each other and exercising one’s freedom both as an individual and group member. Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010) conclude that the combined effects of these categories of meaning affect personal motivation as one feature of academic achievement and socialisation. This study highlights

“the contribution that sense of belonging has on creating a school environment that is enabling, contributing to learner achievement and concludes that sense of belonging, integration, and social cohesion are intertwined and important in creating an environment that is welcoming and a ‘home’ to diverse learners and educators” (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010, p. 491).

2.4.1.2 *The ‘Enabling School’ (Arthur et al., 2010)*

The study by Arthur et al. (2010) is on school culture and postgraduate professional development (PPD), with a focus on delineating the ‘enabling school’. In a previous study, the authors became aware that some schools seemed to generate an enabling culture that sustained the teaching staff group to embark on research and study, whilst other schools appeared to inhibit progress and enthusiasm of the teachers. Furthermore, it remained unclear to them what constitutes or characterises the culture of an enabling school (Arthur et al., 2006).

Moreover, Arthur et al. (2010) draw upon characteristics of a learning community as defined by Aspinwall (1996) and Bolam et al. (2005). Aspinwall (1996) highlighted four features of a learning school, whereas Bolan et al. (2005) specified a list for an effective professional learning community ‘with an increased emphasis on the dynamics of the community itself’ (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 474). Table 7 details their respective lists. Furthermore, Arthur et al. (2010) argue that learning communities also ‘sustain a learning ethos for everyone at school, collaborative approaches to decision-making and a strong sense of shared vision’ (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 474). Quicke (2000) highlights that these can be problematic to achieve: collaboration may be restricted to safe areas of investigation that promote complacency rather than challenge; the notion of a single vision may be difficult given that schools are complex organisations that encompass diverse cultures; and ‘contrived collegiality’ may present as collaboration whilst the existing power of the senior leadership group remains absolute (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 474). In relation to the latter point, Quicke (2002, p. 311) argues that teachers are hardly ever encouraged to question the status quo: ‘managements aiming to establish collaborative cultures do not take individual agency seriously; they want individuals to identify voluntarily with the organisation’.

Table 7- Characteristics of a learning community (Arthur et al., 2010, p.474)

A learning school (Aspinwall, 1996)	An effective professional learning community (Bolam et al., 2005)
Commitment to lifelong learning for all those within the school	Individual and collective professional learning
Emphasis on collaborative learning and the creative and positive use of difference and conflict	Collaboration focused on learning
An holistic understanding of the school as an organisation	Reflective professional enquiry Shared values and vision Collective responsibility for pupils' learning
Strong connections and relationships with the community and the world outside the school.	Openness, networks and partnerships Inclusive memberships Mutual trust, respect and support

More fundamentally Arthur et al. (2010) recognized, in the literature, four types of culture that were pertinent to their study: the leader/led culture, the mentoring/coaching culture, the collegial culture, and the practical imperative culture (Arthur et al., 2010). In the leader/led culture, it has been argued that 'school leaders are best placed to create structural and cultural enabling conditions' and their direct involvement is regarded as vital in guaranteeing professional development impacts on school practice (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 457). Moreover, it has been suggested that school leaders should model engagement with professional learning.

Although it has been argued that mentoring and coaching are beneficial for changing practice, Arthur et al. (2010) note that 'this seems to fall short of direct consideration of how to mentor or coach in terms of engaging with research-based enquiry' leading to postgraduate professional development (Arthur et al., 2010, p 475-6). The masters

programme in teaching and learning for newly qualified teachers in England incorporates mentoring and coaching. This programme allocates a school-based professional who will work on an individual basis with the teacher/student colleague.

A collegial culture comprises self-questioning colleagues and critical friends. Peer support is essential in providing an enabling culture and teachers need to be co-operative in their respective research. Two fundamental concepts that underlie collegiality are 'learning opportunities' and 'learning space'. If a school is seeking to develop a collegial culture, the school's leadership group firstly needs to create the learning opportunities and then they need to establish a positive learning space to support outcomes; so that the teaching staff group can trial, extend and embed ideas.

A practical imperative culture centres on practical approaches that meet more immediate classroom needs. Arthur et al. (2010) state there is a lack of evidence that support the notion that accredited postgraduate courses lead directly to improved pupil outcomes. They cite observations made by Baumfield and Butterworth; there is:

“...evidence of the difficulty of transferring aspects of knowledge and experience not rooted in the immediacy of the classroom from one context to another. It is the immediacy of teaching and the potency of pupil feedback that drives inquiry and this privileges learning about students' learning above learning about teachers' teaching, which requires a switch of focus and a level of resource difficult to achieve within the daily routine of schools” (Baumfield & Butterworth, 2005, p.308)” (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 477).

The study by Arthur et al. (2010) aimed to provide an illuminative evaluation; 'shed light on how the culture of some settings works to enable PPD amongst the teaching staff'

(Arthur et al., 2010, p. 472) This study began with the researchers identifying 'one school or college that had shown commitment to engaging above-average numbers of staff' in postgraduate professional development in England. The underlying assumption was that 'such a commitment might indicate an enabling school culture where teachers were encouraged to engage in practitioner research that would have a positive impact on practice' (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 472). Case study methodology was chosen, with four different case settings selected to reflect the school cultures identified through the literature review. This qualitative research employed semi-structured interviews that allowed teachers to talk about their experiences of continuing professional development (CPD) including PPD. The small, purposive sample of schools and colleges included teachers and CPD leaders of each setting. Arthur et al. (2010) triangulated factual details through examination of Ofsted reports, CPD policies, and PPD impact reports. They stated their beliefs regarding their research position and methodology: their position was one that

“...preserves, values and privileges the voices of the participants in our research project is both ethically justifiable and evidentially robust. In this project, therefore, our intention was to move towards a less pre-determined and less structured form of talking with participants, through semi-structured interviews” (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 473).

Through discussion of whether an outcome was problematic, Arthur et al. (2010) again stated their epistemological and ontological assumptions. This was recognized when examining the differing discourses of classroom teachers and school leaders on how CPD/PPD is enacted in their particular schools. School leaders emphasized the immediate effects on standards, whereas teachers appeared to be more interested in the significance of personal experience which may catalyse change in the long-term.

Arthur et al. (2010) argue that this may be construed as a problematic outcome depending on your methodological stance:

“We argue that this is only problematic if viewed from a realist stance, as if in some way masking the ‘truth’. Countering from a constructivist stance, we argue that multiple truths exist in individual school contexts, and that these are both unique and, potentially complex (Radford, 2008) or chaotic (Ouston, 1999)” (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 486).

Arthur et al. (2010) used the words of the participating teachers to indicate how the four aforementioned cultural models were enacted in their particular schools. I am only able to briefly provide insights into the four culture types. In relation to the leader/led culture, the CPD co-ordinator of Alder School reported his role is to ‘drive CPD really’ and was positive about the outcomes that he sought to plan in from the start: ‘It’s all about practice based investigation so outcomes impact on individual practice. That way it transfers to the classroom’. The CPD co-ordinator at Dogwood School shared their philosophy towards CPD is driven by the underpinning question of ‘What will our pupils get out of this?’ However, teachers at Alder School appeared unsure about how their CPD is linked to the school’s values and ethos (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 480). In relation to the mentoring/coaching culture, one teacher at Buckthorn School commented on the long-term benefit of mentoring/coaching partnership: ‘...maintained a relationship with my critical friend who acts as an outside agent for me to voice my ideas, concerns and issues with – she offers advice in the form of questions which enable me to reach my own outcome without her persuasion or direct influence’ (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 482). In relation to the collegial culture, Buckthorn College created a ‘vibrant engaged environment where teachers learn from each other’ through regular sessions in which volunteers were invited to share initiatives including innovative practice, issues and

insights. One teacher valued such opportunities for reflecting, sharing and learning together: 'it provides reassurance, challenges your own thinking and offers alternatives which all too often don't come to yourself' (Arthur et al., 2010, p.482). The principal at Buckthorn College valued the shift towards systematic sharing of practitioner enquiry:

'I suppose that one of the things we have found is that the experience has been very motivating for staff...the remorseless unforgiving nature of the hamster wheel of college life means that often people don't have the opportunity to take time out and reflect in a supportive environment and that can be quite illuminating to people' (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 483).

In relation to practical imperative culture, there were differing views on the value of accredited professional courses:

'Universities have to change. Sometimes providers seemed to be just trying to keep themselves in a job, offering INSET that people don't want to do. Pupil progress is helped best by practical courses, rather than postgraduate development. It does not need a literature review' (Head teacher, Cedar School).
'But even in the first year we have gained more than our money's worth! The work has changed people's perceptions. Teacher's self-esteem has been raised. Initially they were worried 'Am I capable? Can I cope?' Now all have developed materials for their whole department. They have grown in confidence and self-belief. They have gained from presentation to peers (in college and beyond) and from the audience dialogue and support. These teachers are now seen as innovators. It has changed eh senior management team's perception of individuals – more are now seen as having leadership potential and have been offered opportunities for further training' (Assistant Principal, Buckthorn School)' (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 484-485).

Arthur et al. (2010) also found that

“a commonly held view by teachers was that developmental activity that is both personally relevant and professionally reflective, whether it is labelled CPD or PPD, is valued by them, and appears to be the benefit to the school as a whole” (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 486).

They recognized that each of the four types of culture had its strengths and tensions that need to be resolved.

2.4.1.3 *Use of Asset-Based Approaches in Health (Andrade, 2016)*

The study by Andrade (2016) is broadly relevant as it draws upon asset-based approaches and explores the concept of enabling environment through the theoretical framework of CHOICE (which stands for capacity building, human rights, organizational sustainability, institutional accountability, contribution and enabling environment). This study investigates how ‘communities and practitioners are engaging with co-produced, person-centred, asset-based approaches in real-life settings’ in relation to the issue of tackling health inequalities in Scotland (Andrade, 2016, p. 127). The underpinning conceptual basis is linked fundamentally to the positive frame of reference:

“Central to asset-based theory, is the belief that continued positive health and social outcomes are achievable when individuals and their communities have the chance and capacity to manage their own futures. From a policy perspective, this means focusing on their positive capacity rather than on individual or collective needs, deficits and problems (Christie, 2011). The approach emphasises the importance of assets, which can be social, environmental, financial, physical or human resources such as education, employment and social networks, local knowledge, skills or passions that inspire people to change their circumstances (Harrison et al., 2004)” (Andrade, 2016, p. 127-128).

Andrade (2016) was commissioned to gather and understand perceptions of health from Polish, Slovakian, Pakistani and Roma community members 'living in one of Scotland's most ethnically varied and economically unequal areas' (Andrade, 2016, p. 129). Andrade (2016) began this research with a six-month ethnographic study aiming to immerse herself, in an attempt to understand community members' respective beliefs and behaviours. Ethnography was characterized by contacting members of networks (both formal and informal), spending time in local neighbourhoods (such as going to shops, libraries, shops and shisha cafes), getting to know community members, as well as conducting two community events. Andrade kept a reflexive journal as she engaged with 78 community members throughout the ethnographic process.

Although the underlying ontological and epistemological presuppositions of this study are not made explicit, there are some indications given in this ethnography (Andrade, 2016). The constructive perspective is evident, as understanding is socially constructed between the participants; the study examines the 'extent to which practitioners' interpretations of asset-based theory and community empowerment are compatible with the views of minority ethnic groups living in disadvantaged communities' (Andrade, 2016, p. 128). Through the CHOICE framework, the study develops an interpretive narrative describing the interplay of individual agency and social structure. The critical theoretical perspective is also evident, as Andrade (2016) highlights some issues regarding power imbalances:

"....through the lens of human rights and social justice, asset-based approaches may be used to highlight the causes of inequalities by identifying the institutions and powers that create and maintain inequitable circumstances' (Andrade, 2016, p. 129).

An iterative research process was adopted. For example, the initial topic guide (which included a series of open-ended questions exploring asset-based approaches, co-production, engagement and empowerment) was amended when it emerged that some community members felt engagements were 'tokenistic' (Andrade, 2016, p. 131). An additional question was then put forward practitioners when investigating barriers to asset-based working; which was framed as 'How would you respond to criticisms that the application of asset-based approaches in disadvantaged communities are "tokenistic" rather than genuine' (Andrade, 2016, p. 131). Andrade (2016) reported that the research process was not a linear process given that she was still in the field as ethnographer during both data collection and analysis. Emergent themes were fed back into the various ethnographic settings to ensure that community members could respond to the views articulated by those working in the area through an iterative process. Rigour was achieved through both community members and practitioners confirming or refuting emergent findings as well as triangulation (via the fusion of various data sources). Andrade (2016) recognised this was necessary given that she was the only researcher.

Andrade (2016) analysed the interview data; she adopted an inductive approach to identify broad-based themes, which were strongly linked to the data (Patton, 1990). The main emergent themes were: 'disconnection between policy and practice; tokenism versus genuine engagement; cultural barriers to engagement; co-production and co-creation; local champions; and creative community initiatives' (Andrade, 2016, p. 131). These themes were subsequently analysed deductively through the CHOICE theoretical framework (Sen, 1999). CHOICE realizes 'choice as the enabler for people

to realise their full potential’ and it ‘proposes that people’s choice is currently limited due to inequity in distribution of resources and opportunity alongside absent or ineffective mechanisms facilitating active engagement in consensual decisions’ (Andrade, 2016, p. 132).

The findings emphasized the perceived gap between policy and ‘real practice on the ground’ in relation to the application of asset-based approaches to tackle health inequalities. There was the view that asset-based working and co-production were ‘merely fashionable policy terms driven by organisational and political self-interest, rather than genuine concern for wellbeing of the most unequal in our society’ (Andrade, 2016, p.137). Social justice issues such as non-discrimination featured implicitly suggesting that ‘human rights could be foregrounded in interactive, bottom-up, community-led programmes with a focus on arts, media, food, music, sport and the youth’ (Andrade, 2016, p. 138).

2.4.1.4 Conclusion of Systematic Review

I intend to synthesize the key concepts and findings of this review using concepts of ‘exemplary knowledge of abduction and phronesis’ (Thomas, 2011, p.15). This requires you to examine research carried out in one setting (or in this case, three settings – England, South Africa and Scotland), reflect upon findings and generating tentative hypotheses about their applicability within another context (i.e., the school participating in this research).

Taken together, I theorised that an enabling school may have these characteristics:

- a welcoming, safe and nurturing environment that boost connectedness including a sense of belonging (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010);
- a culture of CPD, in particular developing a collegial culture (Arthur et al., 2010);
- high permission for/value placed upon autonomous action by teachers and students (Arthur et al., 2010; Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010);
- a focus on capacity building (Andrade, 2016);
- an emphasis on equality (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010); and
- an authentic approach, a genuine concern for the well-being of the most unequal in our society (this is particularly relevant given that the participating school is located in a deprived area of the West Midlands region) (Andrade, 2016).

2.4.2 ‘Geelong Grammar Positive Institution Project’

Whilst at the First World Positive Psychology Congress in 2009, I heard about Seligman’s team embedding positive psychology principles in an entire school in Australia, Geelong Grammar School (GGS). On its website, GGS (the largest, co-educational boarding school) coined this initiative as the ‘GGS Positive Institution Project’. According to Michael White (Head of Positive Education at GGS) and Seligman’s team, the implemented positive psychology project appears to have been highly successful, although no convincing data are reported to support this conclusion (Seligman et al., 2009; IPPA, 2009). Data comprise only narratives of the developments and illustrative anecdotes in three sections called ‘Teaching Positive Education’, ‘Embedding Positive Education’ and ‘Living Positive Education’ (Seligman et al., 2009; IPPA, 2009). This is somewhat paradoxical considering the emphasis placed on positive psychology’s initial critique of humanism in their special issue by the co-founders (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The approach of infusing GGS with positive psychology principles began in January 2008 with fifteen trainers (from the University of Pennsylvania) teaching the skills of positive psychology (resilience, character strengths, gratitude, positive communication and optimism) to about a hundred members of the faculty. In a nine-day training programme, teaching staff were shown how they could use the skills in their own personal and professional lives and were given examples and a detailed curriculum of how to teach them to children. Seligman and some of his team were in residence for the whole year, along with scholars such as Barbara Fredrickson (each for approximately a week), to teach their respective speciality to the faculty (Seligman et al., 2009).

Little regard was paid to the ecology of the school (Clonan et al., 2004). Instead, the project put together by Seligman's team includes teaching and learning about a range of positive constructs that have been researched in a different cultural environment. Most of the experts who contributed to the project at GGS had carried out their respective research in America. Some of the leading positive psychology research, for example testing of Fredrickson's theory of the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, have involved only adults (Fredrickson, 2009). Taken together, I think school programmes developed by key stakeholders are preferable to the approach undertaken by Seligman's team (Clonan et al., 2004; Seligman et al., 2009), as this approach would be more culturally sensitive; has a developmental basis; and reduce the risk of 'ethical colonialism'. This concern of the philosopher Charles Scott, who critiques positive psychology, is cited in Held's paper:

"It's one thing to say, 'If you would like to be happy in this way here's what you might consider doing.' It's another to say, 'it's best to be happy in this way.' If 'authentic' is used to mean 'distinctly one's own,' I find no objections. But if

‘authentic’ is universalized, I consider danger in a kind of ethical colonialism that none of us, I expect, wants’ (Held, 2005, p.25).

Moreover, Seligman team’s approach to embedding positive psychology principles into GGS simply reinforces Cowen and Kilmer’s view of positive psychology being more influenced by interests and spheres of activity of ‘mostly seasoned scholars’ (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002, p. 450) rather than by a cohesive theoretical framework. Is this what Taylor (2001) meant by positive psychology promoted by a controlling elite? This expert-led approach would be too costly and inaccessible for most schools.

Implicitly, it seems that Seligman (2011) thinks that a positive institution is an objectively real entity operating in a real world and therefore emphasis should be on explanation of positive phenomena by means of empirically determined regularities and relations of cause and effect that allows for reliable predictions. This emphasis is illustrated by Seligman’s perspective of the ‘GGS Positive Institution Project’:

“Positive education at Geelong Grammar School is a work in progress and is not a controlled experiment. Melbourne Grammar School up the road did not volunteer to be a control group. So I cannot do better than relate before-and-after stories” (Seligman, 2011, p.93).

Subsequently GGS has applied a model for positive education: one that is underpinned by a conceptualisation of flourishing that focuses on both ‘feeling good’ (hedonic well-being) and ‘doing good’ (eudaimonic well-being) as well as on six domains key to well-being (positive emotions, positive engagement, positive accomplishment, positive purpose, positive relationships, and positive health) and a focus on character strengths (Huppert & So, 2013; Norrish et al., 2013; Park & Peterson, 2005). The initial five

domains of the GGS model are directly linked to Seligman's model of flourishing (Seligman, 2011). Norrish et al. (2013) describe a structured pathway for integrating these domains into three levels of GGS which have been used by Seligman's team; live it, 'teach it' and 'embed it' (Seligman et al., 2009). GGS's applied model for Positive Education is depicted in Figure 2.

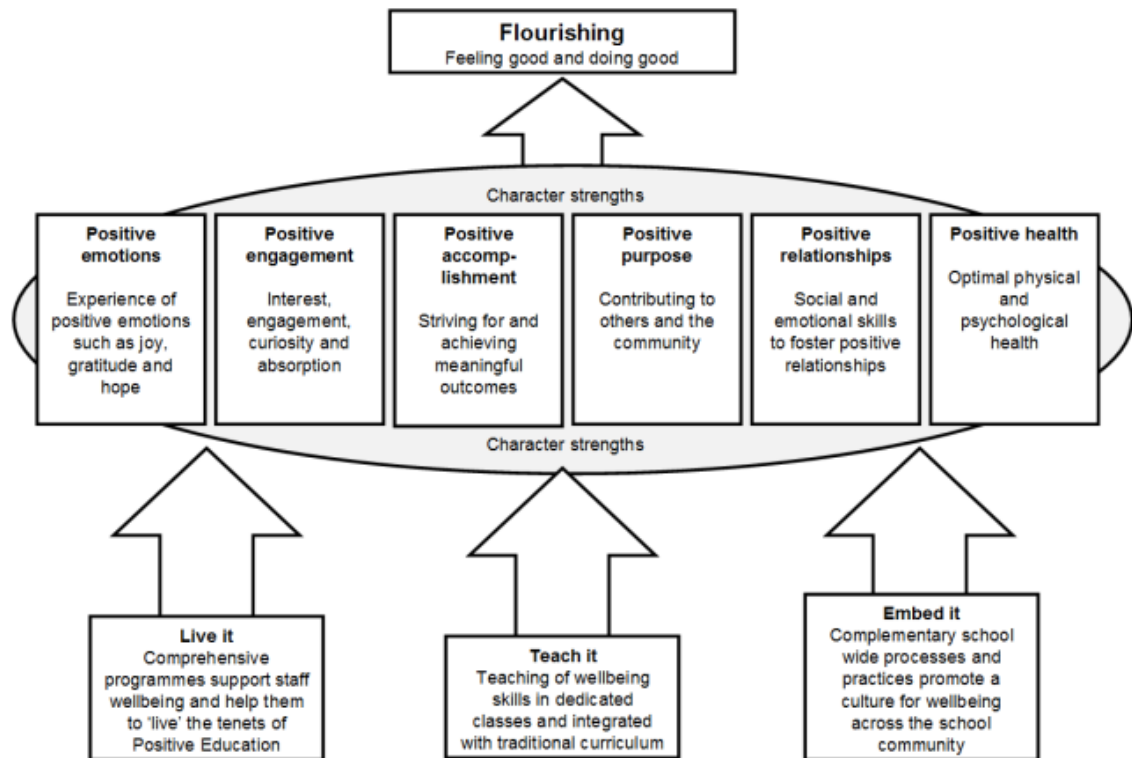


Figure 2 - Summary of the GGS Applied Model for Positive Education (Norrish et al., 2013, p. 151)

Norrish et al. (2013) raise some issues for further exploration:

"...most research to date has focused on understanding Positive Education at the level of individual students, probably because there have been so few schools implementing Positive Education as a whole-school approach, thus providing limited opportunity to explore systemic elements (Seligman et al., 2009). Research is now needed to contribute to understanding of the school as a positive institution, including what a flourishing school looks like and how positive

organisational functioning can be promoted (Kristjánsson , 2012) (Norrish et al., 2013, p. 156).

Notably, there is an absence of an applied organizational development framework to embed positive psychology principles into GGS. In light of this, I outline four major theories of organizational change put forward by Evans et al. (2012): continuous improvement (Deming, 2000); two approaches to organizational learning (Argyris & Schon, 1996; Senge, 2006); and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider et al., 2005). Evans et al. (2012) provided the following rationale for the selection of these theories:

“These four theories were selected because of their emergence within the field of education, possibly adaptability to school systems, and potential to support organizational change. Such theories can provide clear guidelines for successful organizational change. Such theories can provide clear guidelines for successful organizational transformation, promotive effective change management, and facilitate operative decision making” (Evans et al., 2012, 154).

Collectively, these models indicate active participation of staff as collaborative learners and a distributed style of leadership which empowers staff teams to implement actions based on their inquiries. Table 8 details the key assumptions and characteristics of each theory. Appreciative inquiry is the theory of organisational change that is most aligned with positive psychology principles (Evans et al., 2012; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The case study by Waters and White (2015) is an example of using AI to support positive change in a school. This generated fifteen well-being initiatives implemented over two-and-a-half years; including development of a formal well-being curriculum for students, creation of a positive psychology interest group, parent information evening sessions and parent training courses on well-being.

Table 8 - Key assumptions and characteristics of 4 theories of organizational change (Evans et al., 2012)

Theory of Organisational Change	Key Assumptions/Characteristics
Continuous Improvement (Deming, 2000)	The underlying improvement cycle that guides organizational change involves the plan-do-study-act. The key assumption being that stakeholders can expect continuous improvement through planned changes and guided by data and observations. Deming (2000) identified 14 strategies to support continuous improvement (such as adopting a new philosophy and driving out fear). He postulated that 'if applied consistently by upper management, a shared vision representing these core values would evolve within the organization and would serve as the foundation of resulting quality organization' (Evans et al., 2012, p. 156)
Organizational Learning (Argyris & Schon, 1996)	Organizational learning and individual learning are interconnected; the assumption being that an organization has the capacity to learn and grown in ways that reflect the learning of individuals. Argyris and Schon (1996) identified three forms of organizational learning: single-loop learning (i.e., errors are detected and addressed in the system which does not impact core values and beliefs of the organization); double-loop learning (i.e., a generative process that impacts an organization at its core resulting in new learning and shift in values); and deutero-learning (i.e., organizations learn how to learn and involve school leaders create actively structures for staff learning).
Learning Organization (Senge, 2006)	The first four components of a learning organization are personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning are all interdependent. Systems thinking is the fifth component that 'pervades all aspects of Senge's learning organizational model' (Evans et al., 2012, p.162). The underlying assumption being when 'organizations function as learning organizations, their members are attuned to each of the elements and can respond to an ever-changing environment' (p.162).
Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider et al., 2005)	Appreciative inquiry proposes that organizations change in the direction from which they inquire. The underlying assumption being that if organizational members inquire into problems then they will repeatedly find problems and conversely so (i.e., members will find the assets of their organization if they inquire into the strengths). According to Cooperrider et al. (2005), 'AI is based on the simple assumption that every organization has

	something that works well and these strengths can be the starting point for creating positive change' (p.3). The fundamental constructionist principle that guide appreciative inquiry assumes that social knowledge and its construction are interwoven with organizational change.
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2.4.3 Conceptual Review

Chafauleas and Bray (2004) wrote an introduction to the special issue addressing positive psychology and its 'place' in and implications for schools. They argue that there are many questions with regard to using this 'new' positive psychology in schools. The articles in this special issue begin to address such questions: how do we operationalize a concept such as positive psychology; how do we measure characteristics (i.e., positive emotion and trait); how do we use an environment to develop individual competency systematically; how do we develop environments that cultivate positive traits; and how do we sustain and generalise positive affects across settings and time?

With reference to building positive institutions, and in particular schools, Clonan et al. (2004) proposed three considerations: operationalizing main components; understanding and using the natural environment; and planning for change on a sustained basis. It would be important for school staff to determine what a positive school environment would comprise in their particular setting and how valued outcomes might be delivered or established. Moreover, it would be important to understand and use the natural environment given that the ecology or context is integral to the system (Meyes & Nastasi, 1999). Ecology encompasses the complete model of an ecosystem offered by Bronfenbrenner (1979), including the immediate context such as school and family (mesosystem), extended relationships such as friends and family (exosystem), and customs of laws and culture (macrosystem).

Meyer and Nastasi (1999) suggest that it is important to recognize systems factors that are likely to facilitate or hinder a programme through 'collaborative assessment of such areas as the needs and competencies of the system and historical and current norms potentially influencing the use of perception' of the programme (Meyer & Nastasi, 1999, p. 106). Taken together, these factors (ecological and systems) steer programme design, largely define programme acceptability, and ensure ecological validity (Meyers and Nastasi, 1999). It is possible to develop and implement a plan once the natural environment is understood; internal development of programmes is preferred rather than import of external programmes (Clonan et al., 2004).

Clonan et al. (2004) suggested ways to work within current school systems as a way to activate positive change. They recommend working within the structure of the natural school environment to lessen the natural resistance of schools to change, especially if the focus is to 'change the ecology' of 'school psychology toward implementation of a positive school psychology' (Clonan et al., 2004, p. 105). This is an important consideration when resistance is often cited as a factor contributing toward the failure of new initiatives. Clonan et al. (2004) go onto argue that the success of a new programme, in the long-term, is contingent on the values, expectations, and supports of a system, rather than the potential strength of the programme. These need to be considered when planning for sustained change.

However, by 2009, Schueller highlights that researchers working within the positive frame of reference have largely ignored the third pillar of positive psychology, positive institutions. He advocates a synthesis of positive psychology and community

psychology, which could potentially result in improved individual and community wellness. He maintains that positive psychology should focus more on the wellness of a community including paying attention to human rights, distribution of resources, democracy and equality (Schueller, 2009). Likewise, Roffey (2011) argues that fairness is an essential component for maintaining healthy relationships and there is a greater prospect of collaborative and positive relationships enhancing well-being and growth when there is more equality within an organization. A healthy school environment, according to the World Health Organization (2003), refers to a setting that underscores active learning in a climate characterized by equity, open communication, interpersonal warmth, and co-operation. Healthy school environments also bridge to pupils' home communities by involving parents and fostering authentic participation in democratic decision-making amongst all stakeholders.

Moreover, Schueller (2009) advocates expanding conceptions of well-being to include community and contextual aspects. Research in community psychology emphasizes methods to enhance wellness particularly through second-order change. Watzlawich et al (1974) distinguished between first-order and second-order change, and asserted the latter is often the focus of community psychology. First-order change is about changing the individuals in a setting in a bid to fix a problem, whilst second-order change is attending to systems and structures concerned with the problem to modify the person-environment fit.

By 2012, Schueller's suggestion of synthesizing positive and community psychologies had still not been taken up in relation to building positive institutions. Kristjánsson (2012) observed that scholars in the field of positive psychology had yet to investigate in detail

the school as a positive institution. Instead, they had focused on interventions aimed at individual change relating to the other two pillars of positive psychology (positive subjective experiences and positive traits) rather than school change. According to Kristjánsson (2012), some 'critics have considered this choice as a betrayal of an individualist bias and "morally repugnant"' (Kristjánsson, 2012, p. 92). At that time, Kristjánsson (2012) argued that the positive psychology movement was only about ten years old (on the basis that the origins of this movement dates back to their special issue in 2000), and therefore it may be 'premature to accuse it of not having yet exhausted the repertoire of all its three pillars' (Kristjánsson , 2012, p. 92). Another possibility, according to Kristjánsson, could be that 'most of the theoretical tenets about happiness-promoting schools have already been established empirically' and such 'schools offer a supportive ethos, have well-trained and motivated teachers, model the types of character skills one would like young people to embody, have high expectations of their students, and give them sufficient opportunities to actualize those expectations' (Kristjánsson, 2012, p. 92).

However, others in positive psychology recognise there are some conceptual omissions. Sheldon argues that 'some kind of broad, systems-theoretical view of the person-in-context' is missing from the current positive psychology framework (Sheldon, 2009, p. 268). Gable and Haidt (2005), in their article entitled 'What (and Why) is Positive Psychology?' argue that positive psychology must realize that 'what is positive and good is complex and multidimensional' and

"...must move beyond description of main effects (optimism, humour, forgiveness, and curiosity are good) and begin to look more closely at the complex interactions that are the hallmark of most of psychology (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p. 108)."

McNulty and Fincham (2012) make the case for positive psychology to be more contextual, and that an understanding of the complete human condition involves accepting that psychological traits and processes are not fundamentally positive or negative and whether they have positive or negative implications are contingent on the context. From an applied positive psychology perspective, Biswar-Diener (2011) argues that positive psychology needs to make shifts in order to overcome some of its current challenges. These shifts include a change of focus from individual to group well-being and a greater focus on understanding contextual factors (rather than a naïve presumption that ‘one size fits all’ approach).

2.4.4 Conclusions

This review indicates that ‘positive psychology has not gone to school’ in relation to building positive or enabling schools. Eighteen years since the introduction of the positive psychology manifesto, this systematic review found no study investigating school change that is grounded in tenets of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Other sources (Seligman et al., 2009; Seligman, 2011; Kristjánsson, 2012) reveal that there is a project at GGS with a focus on integrating research findings from the broad positive psychology field through ‘teach it’, ‘live it’ and ‘embed it’ approaches (Seligman et al., 2009; Norrish et al., 2013). Seligman (2011) suggests methodological difficulties with the GGS project that is grounded implicitly with the positivist orientation (i.e., no control school) and yet no alternative or more suitable methodologies seem to be adopted. This suggests that scholars in positive psychology might be ‘methodolotry’, which is adhering exclusively to one methodology or method with religious devotion (Friedman, 2003, p. 817). This indicates that Friedman’s recommendation of methodological pluralism has not been taken up by the leading scholars in positive psychology (Friedman, 2008).

In contrast, this systematic review found three empirical studies that investigated relevant constructs (such as 'enabling school' and 'enabling environment') using a methodology other than positivist (constructivist methodology). Accordingly, these studies employed qualitative methods of data collection. Underpinned by notions of exemplary knowledge and phronesis, it was theorised that an enabling school may have these characteristics: a welcoming, safe and nurturing environment that boost connectedness; a culture of CPD, in particular a collegial culture; high permission for/value placed upon autonomous action by teachers and students; a focus on capacity building; an emphasis on equality; and an authentic approach (Thomas, 2011; Arthur et al., 2010; Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010; Andrade, 2016).

This inquiry intends to address the paucity of research in relation to building positive or enabling schools through an appreciative inquiry, which is aligned with positive psychology principles and rooted in constructivist thinking (Evans et al., 2012; Cooperrider et al., 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The underlying assumption is that a positive or enabling institution is a socially constructed reality that is continually constructed and reconstructed through symbolically mediated interactions, therefore the emphasis would be on describing how people give meaning and order to their experiences within specific contexts, through interpretative and symbolic acts and processes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, by working collaboratively with the key stakeholders and working with the natural ecology of a school would ensure greater ecological cogency, something that is much needed in positive psychology (Clonan et al., 2004; Gable and Haidt, 2005; Sheldon, 2009; Biswar-Diener, 2011; McNulty and Fincham, 2012).

2.5 Chapter Conclusion

Taken together, these systematic literature searches on flourishing, character strengths and positive or enabling institution have identified twenty-seven empirical studies (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Of these, twenty-two studies employed quantitative data collection methods, four used qualitative data methods and one used mixed methods. Moreover, there is no study investigating school change that is grounded in tenets of positive psychology. It is difficult to ascertain whether researchers are being 'methodolotry' when they do not explicitly state their respective epistemological and ontological positions (Friedman, 2003, p. 817). At least twenty-two studies appear to be underpinned by a positivist orientation, possibly in line with the current positivistic positive psychology rather than the previous humanistic positive psychology that employed a wider approach to science (Mruk, 2006, 2008).

Most of the studies involved students who were broadly within their adolescent phase of development (Erikson, 1959). This is disappointing given Cowen's stance on early intervention, as he argued for robust psychological inquiry that focuses on 'what gets children off to positive starts early on, and what keeps them going in that direction' (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002, p. 458). This inquiry addresses the paucity of research involving younger children. The initial focus of this thesis explores the research question 'what are the dimensions/characteristics of flourishing children according to children (aged 7 to 11), parents and staff?' Following this, there is an investigation into determining universal interventions that support flourishing in a primary school.

Also, it is important to note that approximately half of the studies were carried out in America; the issue of cultural bias and a possibility of 'ethical colonialism' should be considered (Fowers, 2008; Held, 2005; Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). There are only four British studies, but exceptionally these cover all three pillars of positive psychology: study on flourishing by McLellan and Steward (2015); study on character strengths by Proctor et al. (2011); study exploring the 'enabling school' by Arthur et al. (2010); and study on asset-based approaches by Andrade (2016).

Collectively, there are two conceptual overlaps that are worthy of consideration. Firstly, positive youth perspective (PYD) features in systematic literature searches on flourishing and character strengths (Kern et al., 2016; Hilliard et al., 2014; Killoren et al., 2016). Secondly, positive or enabling institutions are implicated in the final paragraph of the study by Toner et al. (2012):

“The present study contributes to our understanding of the structure of character strengths and virtues in adolescence and their relationships with wellbeing. This understanding may assist in the development of positive institutions and effective educational programs for young people” (Toner et al., p, 641).

Moreover, Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) have already implicated the third pillar when making a case for cultivating practical wisdom, which is lacking in the current body of empirical work. Both of these conceptual overlaps have a contextual basis; PYD is rooted in ecological systems theory and there has to be an emphasis on context when exploring the Aristotelian mean or the notion of practical wisdom (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Grant & Schwartz, 2011; Robbins, 2008). It is widely acknowledged that positive psychology needs to be more contextual (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Schwartz & Sharpe,

2006; Robbins, 2008; Sheldon, 2009; Biswar-Diener et al., 2011; Grant & Schwartz, 2011; Wong, 2011).

Given the lack of research, I propose that positive or enabling institution should become the main focus of future positive psychology research (Kristjánsson, 2012). Similarly, Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) make the case for positive institutions to be the 'center-piece of a positive psychology' (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006, p. 91). I posit an integrated positive psychology framework that requires fusion of its own conceptual framework, which explores simultaneously positive institution and positive subjective experience or positive trait may result in developing a more holistic positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Schwartz and Sharpe, 2006; Grant & Schwartz, 2011). It is time to put the construct of positive or enabling institution at the heart of future positive psychology, hence why I have shaded pillar three in Figure 3 that illustrates the fusion of the original three pillars of positive psychology. This thesis intends to explore two constructs of positive or enabling institution and flourishing on a simultaneous basis.

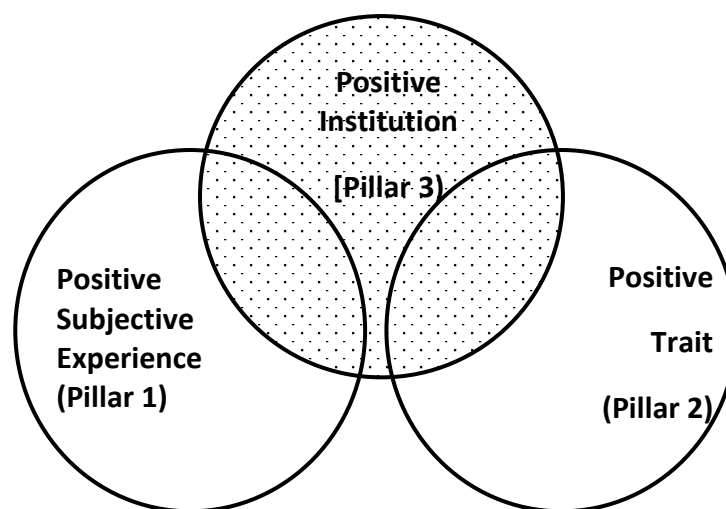


Figure 3 - Proposed Integrated Positive Psychology Framework

In relation to flourishing, there are no studies that explore the construct of flourishing from the perspectives of different stakeholders of one particular educational setting. Moreover, there is an absence of studies underpinned by constructivist thinking and critical theory, and therefore rooted in a range of qualitative methods. This thesis addresses this lacunae by utilizing an in-depth case study that is grounded in constructivist thinking (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Thomas, 2011). In addition, I intend to explore the construct of positive or enabling institution using an organizational development framework that aligns fundamentally with positive psychology principles. The philosophy and methodology of appreciative inquiry (AI) that encompasses methods for both studying and changing social systems as well as its focus on affirmative topic and processes is required to address the identified major lacuna of positive institution (Evans et al., 2012; Cooperrider et al., 2005). Whilst research question one has been informed by the systematic literature search on flourishing, the remaining research questions have been informed by the chosen AI methodology, which is explored and detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological choices that I made throughout this inquiry. I begin with making a case for using the philosophy and methodology of appreciative inquiry (AI) and case study (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987; Thomas, 2011, 2015). Other meta-theoretical perspectives are considered (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1990). I outline the key dimensions and processes in relation to the initial and refined model of AI (Cooperrider, 2012). Other considerations include a nested design frame, addressing potential limitations of both methodologies, a process evaluation, and ensuring research rigour and quality (Thomas, 2011, 2015; McNiff, 2016). This chapter closes with an overview of the three studies (including research questions, participants/participant groups and methods of data collection) positioned within this nested AI.

3.1 ‘Appreciative Inquiry’ as Action Research

I make the case for using the philosophy and methodology of AI as a mode of action research for positive psychology; as this alternative form of action research is in line with positive psychology principles, with its focus on affirmative topics and processes (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Boyd and Bright (2007), too, argue that AI should be deployed as a type of action research for community psychology (Schueller, 2009). The case study by Waters and White (2015) is an example of using AI to support positive change in a school, resulting in a well-being initiative. In relation to the appreciative component of AI, Hoy and Tarter (2011) assert that an asset or a strength-based approach can provide new ways to support schools to shape policies, practices, and processes that facilitate a positive institution. In relation to the inquiry component of AI,

Copland (2003) argues that 'an inquiry process is centrally important to building capacity for school improvement' (Copland, 2003, p. 375).

Moreover, when highlighting the potential of AI, Grandy and Holton (2010) use the conceptualisation of a learning organisation that is underpinned by quantum mechanics, which is also linked to the positive psychology's construct of enabling institutions. In particular, the key dimension of the quantum feeling that is the 'ability to feel vitally alive', is in line with the positive psychology's construct of positive subjective experience (Grandy & Holton, 2010 p. 182). Quantum mechanics is rooted in the assumption that the universe is dynamic, unpredictable and subjective (Shelton & Darling, 2003). Grandy and Holton's research is grounded in quantum skills such as quantum feeling and seeing (the ability to see intentionally), as they assume that developing and nurturing such skills will lead to learning organizations or continuous learning (Grandy & Holton, 2010, p. 182). Quantum seeing is based on the understanding that reality is fundamentally subjective, whereas quantum feeling involves cultivating positive emotions to enhance coherence and energy. Grandy and Holton (2010, p. 183) state: 'An appreciation and engagement of the lived experiences of multiple stakeholders are critical in moving organizations to new ways of being, open to movement and continuous learning.'

Moreover, AI is in line with my assumptions in relation to ontology, epistemology and human nature (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). My ontological position is that one can never know objective reality (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Watzlawick, 1984). Many, if not all, apparent positive realities are only social constructions and therefore subject to change; so I am unwilling to make fixed ontological commitments. In relation to the two positive psychological constructs under investigation, I hold a constructionist's nominalist position:

(1) the 'flourishing' construct does not have an independent existence and is created by one's own mind and by the symbolic processes of social construction; and (2) institutions such as schools are best viewed as socially constructed realities.

In relation to epistemology, I consider knowledge a product of the linguistic activity of a group. This is known as hermeneutic constructivism, of which social constructionism is an example of one. Given that communication, language and discourse are vital in comprehending how knowledge systems are acquired and sustained, I do not assume the existence of an observer-independent reality. According to Gergen (1978, 1982), knowledge is certainly not abstract, objective and absolute; rather it is always concrete, situated and knotted to human practice; thus there must be only multiple truths. Thus social constructionists view knowledge as local and fleeting given that it is constructed between individuals within a particular context and time frame. More specifically, in relation to this inquiry, the concept of 'flourishing children' is fluid and composed within the boundaries of a particular school setting (Gergen, 1991; 1994). Both context and conversation are important dimensions of 'ecological intelligence' argue Yinger and Hendricks-Lee (1993). Ecological intelligence is when working knowledge emerges through people engaging in specific activities and is constructed together by both individuals and systems in a task (Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 1993). Emphasis is therefore on describing how system members give meaning and order to their respective experiences within their particular context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In relation to my assumptions regarding human nature, the interactionist perspective has a direct link with assumptions about the relation between humans and their environment. In focusing on the interaction, a more active image of the human being

emerges rather than the image of a passive, pre-determined organism. Interaction infers individuals operating in relation to each other, taking each into account, perceiving, interpreting and then operating again (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

3.2 Other Meta-Theoretical Perspectives

However, there are three other meta-theoretical perspectives that can be adopted when shaping positive institutions; these are positivism, post-positivism, and critical theory and related paradigms (hereafter 'critical theory et al.') (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In relation to post-positivism, the underlying assumption is that a positive institution is an objectively real entity but there is less certainty about cause and effect relationships than with positivism. Dualist assumptions are largely abandoned in post-positivist epistemology, with its presumption that it is not humanly viable to preserve the independence of the researcher and what is studied. The assumption in post-positivist epistemology is that replicable findings are probably true but always subject to falsification, whilst positivist epistemology assumes that replicable findings are in fact 'true'. In relation to critical theory et al., a positive institution is a site for enacting power relations, oppression and communicative distortion. Emphasis is therefore on deconstructing organisational scripts, destabilizing managerial principles and positivist approaches of organising and theorizing, with a view to revealing marginalized and oppressed view points as well as fostering reflexive and inclusive types of theorizing and organizing. Critical theory et al.'s ontology assumes that reality can be captured within a specific time period, reflecting an array of historical factors (social, economic,

political, ethnic, cultural and gender), which give rise to structures that make up an illusory or virtual reality that restricts one's thinking and thus requires challenging.

Nevertheless, whatever meta-theoretical perspective is taken for shaping positive institution, scholars in the field of organizational development recognize that 'the use of any single research paradigm produces too narrow a view to reflect the multifaceted nature of organizational reality' (Gioia & Pitre, 1990, p. 584). Gioia and Pitre (1990) make a case for a multiparadigmatic approach to theory building as this can produce more complete knowledge of organizational reality than a single paradigm. This approach is advocated generally in psychology by Sternberg and Grigorenko (2001) as they make a case for a 'unified psychology'. This is the multiparadigmatic, multidisciplinary and integrated study of psychological phenomena and it is argued that 'knitting' all theories together would result in a more coherent, multi-layered description of psychological phenomena (Henriques and Sternberg, 2004). Specifically, in relation to AI, both Grant and Humphries (2006) and Ridley-Duff and Duncan (2015) make a case for incorporating concepts of critical theory.

3.3 Towards Methodologies

By analysing systematically assumptions in relation to ontology, epistemology and human nature, the nature of the inquiry predominately fits an idiographic methodology. The emphasis of this research, therefore, is on understanding and reconstruction, rather than what is universal and for general. Reconstruction is characterized by the numerous and developing mental constructions that form the knowledge of individuals and groups.

The inquiry adopts a case study approach. Interpretivist epistemologies are typically 'case-oriented rather than variable-oriented' (Ragin, 1987, p. xiii). This is in contrast with the positivist and postpositivist epistemologies, which explore reality in terms of variables, hypotheses-testing and measurements, resulting in loss of detail and simplification. Instead, the emphasis of the inquiry is holistically on the phenomenon of flourishing in a primary school (case) as a whole in its particularity, complexity and detail (Thomas, 2011). This in-depth approach enables revisions to scientific propositions as highlighted by Popper's example of a 'black swan'. Flyvbjerg (2004) draws on Popper's example that a single sighting of a black swan is enough to falsify the general proposition that all swans are white (Ruddin, 2006). He argues:

'Falsification is one of the most rigorous tests to which a scientific proposition can be subjected: if one observation does not fit with the proposition it is considered not valid generally and must therefore be either revised or rejected...The case study is well suited for identifying 'black swans' because of its in-depth approach: what appears to be 'white' often turns out on closer examination to be 'black' (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 424).

This is because the typical or average case is often not the richest in information. Atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied....random samples emphasizing representatives will seldom be able to produce this kind of insight (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 425).'

Furthermore, the anti-positivist approach will demand that I am involved with the participants in a collaborative way; this is known as collaborative action research. Action research is rooted in most organisational development approaches for investigating and simultaneously changing social systems (Burnes, 2009). Lewin (1946), a prominent social psychologist, described 'action research as a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of action (Lewin, 1946, p. 34-35)'. McNiff (2016, p. 116) states that most 'action research models in the literature build on the idea of action reflection cycles, following Lewin's (1946) original design' as illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4 - Lewin's Action-Reflection Model (adapted from McNiff, 2016, p.116)

Thus, I adopt the conception of knowledge as socially constructed, and recognize that all research is grounded within a system of values. This involves application of the key assumption of action research: that is, human systems can only be understood and changed if I involve the members of the system in the inquiry itself. Action research challenges the claims of a positivist perspective of knowledge which maintain that research must remain objective and value-free in order to be credible.

Despite the emphasis of action research on involving their subjects as co-researchers, most action research considers reality (social and psychological) as stable, enduring and external, so in real terms action research is fundamentally based upon the logical positivist paradigm argue Sussman and Evered (1978) and Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987). In their seminal paper, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) introduced 'appreciative inquiry'; as they re-envisioned the possibility of action research. They make a case for an alternative conceptualisation of action research, based on a socio-rationalist perspective of science. The assumption of impermanence, the fundamental instability of social order, underlies socio-rationalism (Gergen, 1982). AI assumes reality is an outcome of the moment that is open to continuous reconstruction.

Moreover, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) observed that action research had not 'achieved its potential for advancing social knowledge of consequence and [had] not, therefore, achieved its potential as a vehicle for human development and socio-organizational transformation (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, p.130).' They claim that the transformative potential of action research had been limited by the ubiquitous problem-oriented view of organising, and thus in contrast, propose an appreciative perspective of organizing. AI distinguishes itself from other modes of action research as it is grounded in collaborative affirmation and appreciation of what is well and good in social systems and institutions. In particular, generative dialogue has the potential for transformation, enabling systemic and institutional growth, whilst degenerative dialogue has the potential to accelerate institutional demise (Gergen et al., 2004). Goldberg claims that the relational narrative that progresses can 'intentionally amplify' (Goldberg, 2001, p.56) positive factors within an organisation.

According to Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987), an appreciative mode acts as a catalyst to create and discover new possibilities, which can deepen our existence and provide meaning. They make reference to the Kolb's (1984) distinction between appreciative apprehension cf. critical comprehension as essentially different ways of knowing; appreciative apprehension involves the act of attending to, valuing and affirming the immediate experience whereas critical comprehension of symbols is grounded in objectivity, dispassionate analysis and scepticism. Goldberg argues that a problem-orientated approach can 'sap energy for productive change since people can end up feeling criticised or accused of having done something wrong' (Goldberg, 2001, p.56).

AI's inception began when Cooperrider invited doctors of a medical centre and in positions of leadership, to share their stories about their successes and failures. Cooperrider 'was amazed at the levels of co-operation, innovation, egalitarian governance when they were at their most effective' (Coghlan, Preskill & Catsambas, 2003, p.7). Subsequently, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) focused on insights relating to the medical centre at its best. They assumed an investigation that asks questions about systemic strengths and successes would be transformational, based on the assumption that 'organizations move toward what they study' (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2003, p.29).

3.4 Dimensions of Appreciative Inquiry

Beyond epistemological considerations, AI hypothesizes that social existence is a miracle which cannot ever be completely understood.

In light of this assumption, explorations in appreciative mode would require me to participate directly in the school under study in an illuminative manner. Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) argue this point in the following quote:

“Serious consideration and reflection on the ultimate mystery of being engenders a reverence for life that draws the researcher to inquire beyond superficial appearances to deeper levels of the life-generating essentials and potentials of social existence. That is, the action-researcher is drawn to affirm, and therefore illuminate, the factors and forces involved in organizing that serve to nourish the human spirit” (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, p 131).

The shift from problem analysis to positive core analysis is the crux of AI; instead of pursuing a problem to be solved, organisations are a mystery to be embraced. A comparison of these two assumptions is made in terms of change management processes as illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9 - From Problem-Solving to Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005)

Problem Solving	Appreciative Inquiry
'Felt Need' Identification of Problem	Appreciating and valuing the best of 'what is'
↓	↓
Analysis of causes	Envisioning 'what might be'
↓	↓
Analysis of possible solutions	Dialoguing 'what should be'
↓	↓
Action planning (treatment)	Innovating 'what will be'
↓	↓
<i>Basic assumption: An organisation is a problem to be solved</i>	<i>Basic assumption: An organisation is a mystery to be embraced</i>

Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) argue for a multi-dimensional approach to action research, one that generates theory and develops institutions. AI aims to be scientific (in the socio-rationalist sense), meta-physical, normative and pragmatic. AI, initially, is rooted in observations and insights of the 'best of what is' (seeking interpretative knowledge), then via vision and logic, collaboratively expresses 'what might be' (seeking appreciative knowledge of miracle of organizing), ensuring participants consent to 'what should be' (seeking practical knowledge), and finally collective experimentation with 'what can be' (seeking knowledgeable action) (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Figure 5 illustrates such dimensions of AI in the form of questions resulting in a holistic form of inquiry.

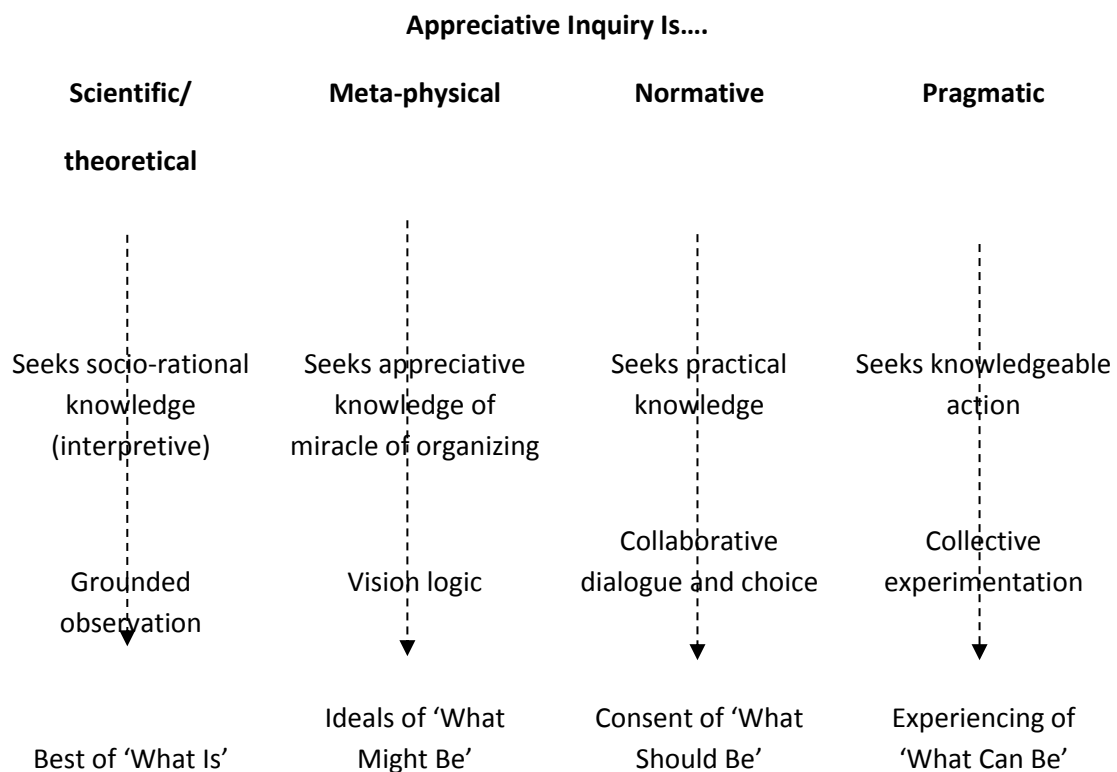


Figure 5 - Dimensions of AI: Action Research Model for a Humanly Significant Generative Science of Administration (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987)

Figure 5 illustrates key principles of AI.

- The process of discovering the best of 'what is' incorporates the principle of appreciativeness which presumes that all social systems 'works' to a certain extent.
- The second principle requires the inquiry process to be applicable, generating theoretical knowledge which can be utilized, applied and validated in action. Thus the inquiry's outcomes are concretely beneficial to the school under review.
- The third principle requires the inquiry process to be provocative. This provocative stage occurs once the school has learnt about those 'peak' social innovations, which are indicative of what might be and use this appreciative knowledge to generate images of developmental opportunities that can be tried out and tested on a wider scale. The provocative principle can only be actioned through the school's own critical deliberation and choice, which would require the inquiry to take on the normative value. This principle involves the creation of knowledge, models and images that are compelling to participants and provoking them to undertake action to shape their world in line with their own purposes (both visionary and ethical).
- The final principle, collaborative, assumes the reality of an inextricable connection between the process of inquiry and its content. In terms of AI practice, it is essential that system members are active in the process of design and implementation of the inquiry, as illustrated quote by Van der Haar and Hosking (2004):

"AI becomes a certain sort of relational process that invites a particular way of participating. The invitation is to open up possibilities and to multiple local ontologies. Relatedly, an AI process would warrant no one expertise but multiple local knowledges (as praxis). Given this way of thinking, the AI practitioner is

part of (not apart from) the appreciative process and contributes one expertise among many” (Van der Haar & Hosking, 2004, p.1027).

Bushe and Kassam (2005) note the principles of applicability and collaboration are central to most organisational development (OD) practice, whereas the principles of appreciativeness and provocativeness are distinctive to AI. Furthermore, Bushe and Kassam (2005) highlight that another set of AI principles subsequently suggested by Cooperrider and Whitney (2001), as summarised in Table 10.

Table 10 - Five Principles of AI (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001)

AI Principle	Definition
Constructionist Principle	Reality is socially constructed through language.
Simultaneity Principle	Change begins from the moment a question is asked.
Poetic Principle	Our choice of what we study determines what we discover.
Anticipatory Principle	Our image of the future shapes the present.
Positive Principle	Positive questions lead to positive change.

3.5 Processes of Appreciative Inquiry

AI is underpinned by five phases known as the 5D cycle (as illustrated in Figure 6):

- define (clarify affirmative topic choice);
- discovery (appreciating what is);
- dream (envisioning results);
- design (co-constructing); and
- destiny (sustaining or creating what will be).

Fundamentally, the AI process is a recursive process with opportunities to re-engage the 5-D cycle within each phase, resulting in the sought-after deepening process.

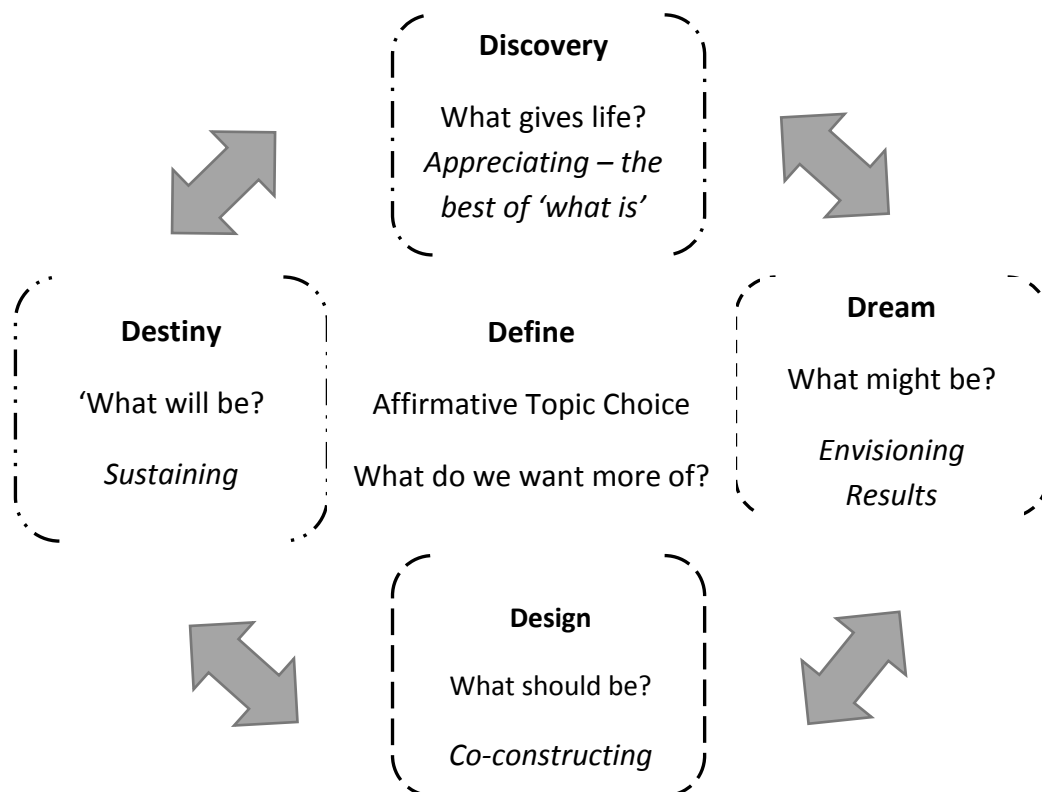


Figure 6 - Phases of AI

3.6 Refined Model of AI

Cooperrider and colleagues argue that they have been working on a vocabulary for positive change, which James argued for in 1902 (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2003; Cooperrider & Avital, 2004). This vocabulary encompasses their ‘elevate-and-extend’

framework (Cooperrider & Avital, 2004, p. xvii). The refined model of AI, also known as the theory of non-deficit transformational change, is grounded in two assumptions:

- firstly, the appreciable world greatly exceeds our typical appreciative knowing capability (resulting in the argument that ‘wider the lens, the better the view’) (Cooperrider, 2012, p. 108); and
- secondly, working on the basis that via our relationships we (theoretically-speaking) have access ‘to an almost infinite universe of emerging capacities’ (subject to the ‘right kind’ of ‘interconnectivities’) (Cooperrider & Avital, 2004, p. xv).

This generates ‘two modalities’ of discussing and igniting transformational change, as depicted in Figure 7.

The horizontal axis refers to the ‘elevation of our appreciative capacities and inquiries’; whilst the vertical axis refers to the ‘extension of our forms of relatedness, allowing for the free and super-fluid flow from the local to the universal of valued strengths, qualities, assets and all that is valued as good.’ The diagonal component of the figure refers to ‘interdependent thrusts’ which comprise of:

‘...the initiation of appreciative knowing and the extension of relatedness, together, set in motion several possible developmental phases of non-deficit, positive change including: an initial burst of elevation-and-extension of inquiry, then the fusion of strengths, and finally the activation of energy’ (Cooperrider & Avital, 2004, xvi).

Cooperrider further develops the model by integrating Fredrickson's theory of positive emotions. In summary, Cooperrider (2012) indicates that AI cultivates organizational change via elevating and extending the focus of inquiry and the formation and use of the organization's positive core (strengths) activate the broadening and building effect, which activate collective energies eclipsing the problems of the institution (Fredrickson, 1998; Waters & White, 2015).

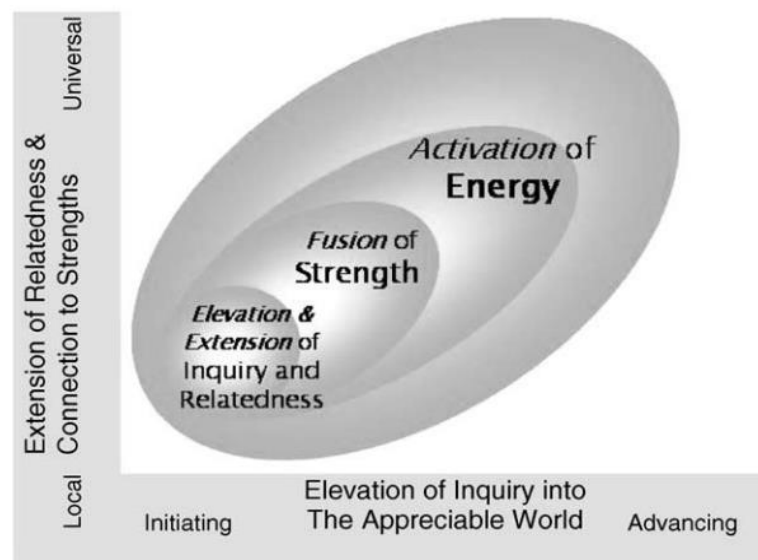


Figure 7 - Advances in AI Thematic Framework (Cooperrider & Avital, 2004, xvi)

3.7 Nested Design

Cooperrider's conception of AI is operationalised predominately through use of the AI summit, which is fundamentally the 'whole-system-in-the-room', typically over a couple of consecutive days following the 5-D cycle (Cooperrider, 2012, p. 107). Waters and White (2015) managed to run a one-day AI summit in their case study. This was not

possible with the school participating in this research (refer to section 4.1 for an overview of the school).

It became apparent quickly that it would not be possible to run an AI summit, as the in-service training days at the beginning of each term had already been planned for. In addition, during term time, there were several constraints upon implementing an AI summit; the office staff were required to operate the front desks; the dining room assistants worked for limited hours in the middle of the day; the teaching and support staff groups held separate meetings at different times; and the teaching and support staff met on a regular basis in their respective curriculum phase teams (Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2). In light of this, I proposed a nested design which would involve the implementation of two AIs in tandem and an extension of the design phase. Following the define phase, the teaching and the support staff groups would each engage with the 3-D Cycle (discovery, dream and design) followed by another design session, which included representatives from both groups (known as the integrated design group) and the planning group. In the words of Thomas (2011), 'they are nested only in the sense that they form an integral part of a broader picture - integral to something that might be happening within the school' (Thomas, 2011, p. 153). The three nested components (or subunits) of this case/AI study are depicted in Figure 8.

In this context, I coined the term nested appreciative inquiry, which reflects the amalgamation of two methodologies - case study and AI - using a nested design (Thomas, 2011). Most of this nested AI was implemented over several months (February to July 2016), so is also characterised as a diachronic study as such a study would 'show change over time' (Thomas, 2011, p.149).

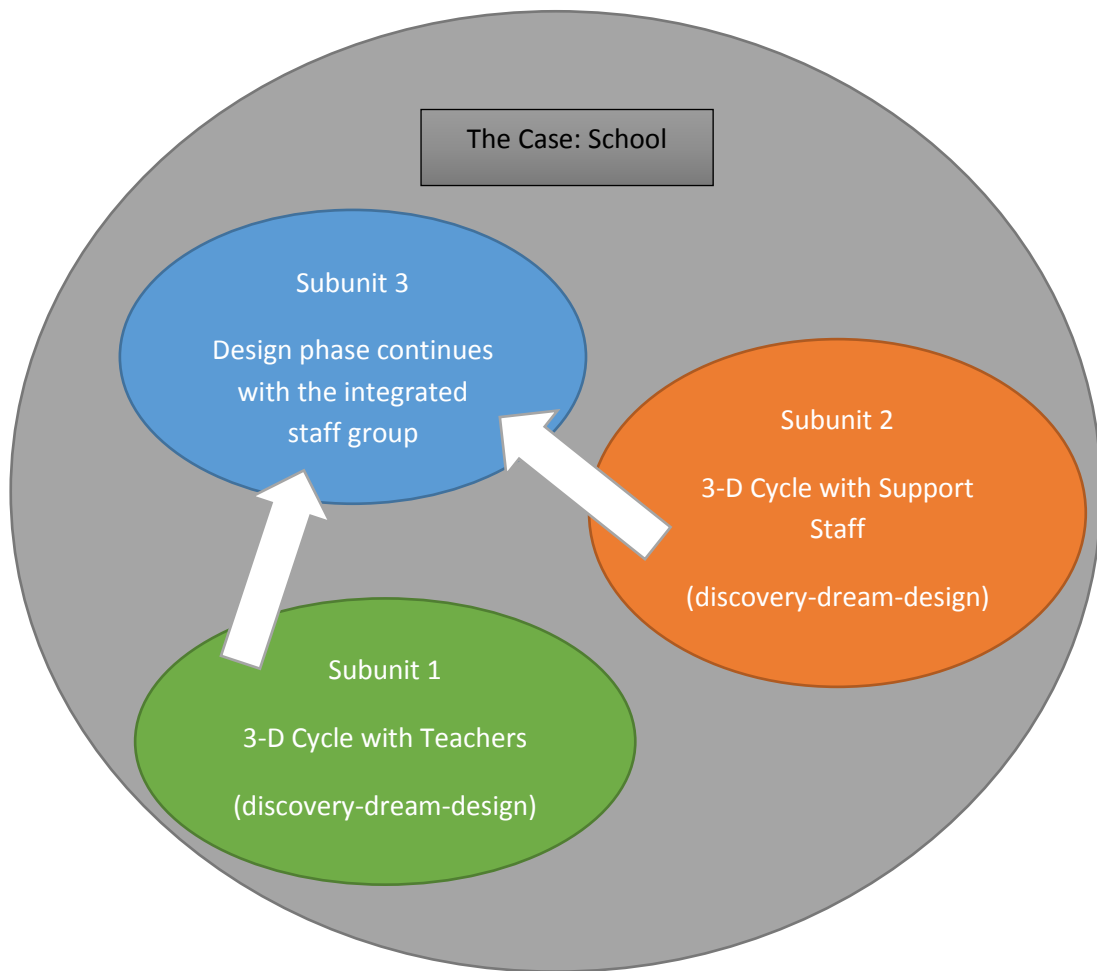


Figure 8 - Nested Components of Case/AI Study

3.8 Process Evaluation

The final phase, destiny, is preceded by a process-based evaluation grounded in social constructionism (Van de Haar & Hosking, 2004; Egan & Lancaster, 2005; Bushe & Kassam, 2005). It is important that AI and its evaluation are seen as elements of a single, integrated interwoven and on-going process, and should not be considered as two separate and independent activities. It is argued that product evaluation (that may

include 'pre' and 'post' measures) is 'inconsistent with a relational approach to AI' since it 'does not aim to be responsive to multiple local ontologies' (Van de Haar & Hosking, 2004, p.1028).

Its underlying philosophical assumptions render it problematic to evaluate an AI intervention, as multiple realities and meanings are created through social interaction. It is necessary to use a process-oriented evaluation rather than a product evaluation, given that practitioners characterise AI as a 'process focused on the creation and actualization of new beliefs, and provocative propositions' (Egan & Lancaster, 2005, p.36). Therefore I planned to use the dimensions utilised by Bushe and Kassam (2005), as these related directly to process. In their meta-case analysis that examined the presence or absence of transformational change in twenty cases, Bushe and Kassam (2005) used the dimensions detailed in Table 11, as these dimensions are grounded in the prominent prescriptions of AI theory and practice. This is the focus of Study Three.

Table 11 - Five Evaluative Process Dimensions of the Proposed AI (Adapted from Bushe & Kassam, 2005)

Dimension	Explanation
Transformational	Is there evidence of a qualitative shift in the identity of the system, also known as second-order change (Watzlawick et al., 1974)? Or did this AI develop new processes, procedures, plans or methods applied without changing the fundamental nature of the system?
New knowledge or new processes	Has this AI resulted in new knowledge, models and/or theories leading to collective formation of a new referential base? Or has it created consensus around a specific goal?
Generative Metaphor	Did this AI create a generative metaphor, that is, a persistent symbol that held meaning for participants and encompassed new lenses and possibilities for action?

Figure or Ground	<p>Using concepts from Gestalt psychology, did this AI focus on figure or ground?</p> <p>The notion of creating new ground results in an emergence of broader range of possibilities for stakeholders both in terms of thinking and doing. Are there any indications that this AI assisted to construct new ground and that central issues emerged out of interaction that had the possibility to reorient a breadth of thinking and action? It would be considered as ground should this AI be able to change or create new background assumptions.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Did this AI focus on figure, that is, it surfaced some element of the school for increased inspection so this AI remained dedicated on one or more main issues throughout the inquiry process?</p>
Improvisation or Implementation	<p>Did this AI follow an improvisation or an implementation approach to spreading change through the school system?</p> <p>Improvisation involves multiple, varied ideas for changes pursued by different stakeholders. This focuses on creating plans and processes that boost and cultivate improvised action by stakeholders. In real terms, the earlier phases of this AI would have created an array of ideas that were so compelling to stakeholders that they willingly find ways to change their processes; is there any evidence of this improvisation process?</p> <p>Implementation involves a focus on developing plans and processes for implementing agreed-upon changes.</p>

3.9 Possible Limitations

I was mindful of potential weaknesses of both case study and AI methodologies, and implications for this inquiry. In relation to the case study methodology, I would endorse key concerns identified by Aucott (2014). In relation to the AI methodology, I have paid attention to the limitations as delineated by Patton (2003), Fineman (2006), Dewar (2011), and Bellinger and Elliott (2011). Table 12 and 13 detail these potential shortcomings and my responses and strategies to mitigate these.

Table 12 - My Approach to Overcome Potential Shortcomings of Case Study Methodology

<i>Potential shortcoming</i>	<i>My approach to minimise/overcome this shortcoming</i>
Case studies are known to be time consuming and produce excessive amounts of data that are problematic to examine (Aucott, 2014).	The maximum time for collecting data (through the different methods) was forty-five minutes, and data analysis was supported via a methodical approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
A case study is susceptible to the bias of the investigator, especially in relation to data analysis (Aucott, 2014).	In light of methodological assumptions of this inquiry, it was expected that this inquiry would be affected by my influence (Gray, 2004). Therefore, it was necessary for me to be reflective and reflexive in order to recognise my role in shaping the outcomes of this inquiry; so I kept a journal (McNiff, 2016; Thomas, 2015). Also, I undertook member checking (that is clarifying the views of participants and checking my understanding or interpretation was accurate (Reason & Rowan, 1981).
A case study produces findings that cannot be generalised beyond the case study in question (Aucott, 2014).	The overarching aim of this inquiry is to seek phronesis or practical wisdom (and not generalizable findings) which may be pertinent to educational psychologists and others depending on their context (Thomas, 2015; Schram, 2012).
Case studies tend to be descriptive and have been criticised as serving no purpose (Aucott, 2014).	I intended to theorise beyond the concrete events and outcomes, providing plausible explanations (Bruner, 1991; Thomas, 2011). Also by using another methodology (AI), I intended to explore whether this inquiry had been transformational through use of a process-based evaluation (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).
Case studies lack rigour (Aucott, 2014).	I intended to achieve rigour through use of triangulation and an explicit acknowledgement of my positionality (Thomas, 2011, 2015; McNiff, 2016). As a participant observer, scientific rigour can also be achieved through observations as a way to falsify existing theoretical propositions (Flyvbjerg, 2004). Rigour was also achieved through staff participants confirming or refuting emergent findings through member checking, which was particularly necessary as I was the only researcher (Andrade, 2016).

Table 13 - My Approach to Overcome Potential Shortcomings of AI Methodology

<i>Potential shortcoming</i>	<i>My approach to minimise/overcome this shortcoming</i>
AI has been criticized for the absence of continuous reflection accompanying the generated actions (Dewar, 2011).	I realized this as I was implementing the nested AI so I developed a supplementary research question alongside the process-evaluation. This allowed participants to engage in reflective practice retrospectively but prior to the action phase of the inquiry, so potentially their reflections could shape outcomes.
Critics of AI argue that practitioners in essence are wearing rose-coloured glasses and playing 'Pollyanna' when focusing solely on positive stories and experiences during the discovery phase of AI. This approach may invalidate the negative organisational experiences of system members and inhibit potentially crucial and meaningful conversations that need to occur (Fineman, 2006).	I recognized that the dreams and wishes that were created in the dream phase of AI in real terms recognized current limitations from the perspective of the participants (Patton, 2003).
Fineman (2006) argues that AI neglects to recognize the opportunities for positive change which are feasible from negative experiences, when it exclusively favours positive narratives. Moreover, the inquiry closes access to fundamental insights necessary for double-loop learning when privileging positive experiences and times.	In my quest to develop a more meaningful positive psychology, I intended to adopt the nuanced, sensitive approach as advocated by Johnson. Bushe (2012) references Johnson's case for encompassing the schisms of human existence, for she argues that it is the tensions of those respective forces that most give life and vitality to organisations. Johnson deals with different ways of maintaining an appreciative eye on 'negative' experiences that in turn can result in 'positive', generative outcomes. The generative heart of AI is most likely to occur if practitioners embrace the polarities of human existence.
Some of the language used in AI (such as dreaming, life-giving forces, provocative propositions, miracles and destiny) may be unhelpful, not resonate with participants and reinforce cynicism (Bellinger & Elliott, 2011).	I checked out the language of AI with the school's planning team. In this particular context (the school is grounded in Catholic values), they found the language such as miracles and life-giving forces as acceptable. Nevertheless, key assumptions and phases of AI were explained in simple, jargon-free language as possible.

3.10 Rigour, Quality and Phronesis

In essence, this case study and appreciative inquiry is characterized as a qualitative research enterprise. Traditional research concepts such as generalisation, validity and replicability are not applicable to this kind of research, and would be at odds with the underpinning epistemological and methodological assumptions (Thomas, 2011). Congruent with the aforementioned dual methodologies, I sought rigour and quality through research strategies associated with triangulation and positionality (Thomas, 2015; McNiff, 2016). In addition, the concept of phronesis (or practical knowledge) was applied as this research does not seek to achieve generalisability (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Thomas, 2011; Schram, 2012).

3.10.1 Triangulation

Thomas (2015) proposes the first way to generate a rigorous piece of research is via triangulation. Thomas uses Foucault's metaphor of a 'polyhedron of intelligibility', which means to explore and apprehend the subject matter from several directions. Thomas (2011) explains this metaphor:

"...we must look at our subject from many and varied angles, to develop what the great historian-philosopher Michel Foucault (1981) called a 'polyhedron of intelligibility'. By this he meant that inquiries in the humanities and social sciences are too often one-dimensional, as if we are looking at our subject from one direction. In looking from several directions, a more rounded, more balanced picture of our subject is developed – we get a three-dimensional view" (Thomas, 2011, p. 4).

This inquiry consists of three interrelated studies, each of which uses triangulation, endeavouring to gain a 'three-dimensional view' as each study focuses on exploring many perspectives and uses different methods of data collection (as detailed in each study).

3.10.2 Positionality

The second way to achieve rigour, according to Thomas (2015), is through positionality, which involves reflexive consideration of my own views and perspectives. In section 1.1, I have provided an account to the impetus driving this research. Thomas (2015) argues the researcher's background, in an interpretative study, needs to be made explicit. I work as an Educational Psychologist for a local authority in the West Midlands region of England. I am of Indian origin, female and in the mid-phase of life.

As this inquiry unfolded, I realised that being in the mid phase of my life affected my choices, both in terms of topic and methodology. My research interest was triggered by feelings of dissatisfaction that I was not making enough of a difference in my professional life. At that time, I had not considered the personal relevance of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, where, according to Erikson, my life-stage places me in the 'generativity' phase (Erikson, 1959). Matlerud (2001) highlights a 'researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for his purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communicate of conclusions' (Matlerud, 2001, p.483-484). Upon reflection, I may have been drawn quickly to the AI methodology (known for its generative capacity), due to my preconception of making a

greater difference (Malterud, 2001; Bushe, 2013; Davies & Lewis, 2013; Doggett & Lewis, 2013). It is important to emphasise that 'preconceptions are not the same as bias, unless the researcher fails to mention them' (Malterud, 2001, p. 484).

In the context of my psychosocial development, my generative concern relates to a need to nurture and guide younger people through the application of psychological and systemic approaches. My contribution to the next generation is often made through indirect means, by supporting those who directly support and teach children (i.e. the school community) (Wagner, 2000). Moreover, I was drawn to the underlying principles of positive psychology by its universal appeal or focus; as an educational psychologist my work focuses predominately on targeted support for individual children and/or groups of children. Given that the overarching emphasis of my research has a universal focus (affecting all children in the school system), this would potentially allow me to make a greater difference.

In addition, my position as an educational psychologist meant that I was able to draw on concepts pertinent to this inquiry, which may not feature in the positive psychology and/or AI literature. In order to make sense of this inquiry, which is rooted in situated knowledge, I adopted concepts such as intersubjectivity (Kennedy et al., 2011), emotional containment and emotional defences (Bowlby, 1988; Bion, 1961; Douglas, 2007; Ruch, 2007; Eloquin, 2016), and spiritual listening (Gersch, 2009; Lipscomb & Gersch, 2012).

Finally, prior to my career in educational psychology, I developed a professional interest in computing information systems, so I also drew upon thinking in relation to sociotechnical systems (Jackson, 2014).

3.10.3 Phronesis

The concept of phronesis or practical wisdom originated with Aristotle (Thomas, 2011). In the current context, it denotes practical knowledge that can be obtained from research. Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) also refer to this in their seminal paper under the normative dimension of AI, which is concerned with seeking practical knowledge. Schram asserts:

‘...the social sciences are better equipped to produce a different kind of knowledge- phronesis, practical wisdom – that grows out of intimate familiarity with practice in contextualized settings. Local knowledges, cannot be taught a priori and are grown from the bottom up. They emerge out of practice, forgoing the hubris of seeking claims to a decontextualized universal rationality stated in abstract terms of false precision’ (Schram, 2012, p. 17).

Furthermore, Thomas uses the concept of ‘exemplary knowledge of abduction and phronesis’, which refers to examples presented within one particular context, in which they can be legitimately interpreted, which may be applied within a new situation (Thomas, 2011, p, 215). In essence, ‘exemplary knowledge of abduction and phronesis’ requires you to examine research carried out in one setting, reflect upon the findings in that particular context, and generate tentative hypotheses about their applicability within

(an)other setting(s). Instead of generalizable knowledge, Thomas (2011) makes a case for 'exemplary knowledge':

'...I am talking about an example viewed and heard in the context of another's experience – another's horizon,.....but used in the context of one's own, where the horizon changes. The example is taken to be neither representative nor typical, nor is it exemplary in the sense of being a model to follow. Rather, it is taken to be a particular representation given in context and understood in that context. It is interpretable, however, only in the context of one's own experience – in the context, in other words, of one's phronesis, rather than theory' (Thomas, 2011, p. 215).

3.11 Conclusion

I conclude by outlining my research questions that have been informed by the literature review and methodological considerations. Research Questions One to Five are linked to the phases of AI as indicated in parenthesis (detailed in Table 14). The final research question is supplementary and reflective in nature; it evolved once I realised that the participants were not able to engage in continuous reflection accompanying the generated actions (Dewar, 2011; McNiff, 2016).

Table 14 - Research Questions

Study	Research Question
One	1. What are the key dimensions/characteristics of flourishing children according to parents, children and staff of one school? (define phase)
Two	2. What existing factors underpin flourishing in children in this school? (discovery phase) 3. What does the school aim to achieve in relation to the development of flourishing in children? (dream phase) 4. What universal intervention(s) do the staff believe would best ensure many more children would cross the threshold for flourishing? (design phase)
Three	5. Has this AI been transformative in its impact? (destiny phase) 6. What were the participants' reflections, in terms of their perceptions and emotions, on the discovery-dream-design-destiny cycle?

The empirical component of this research is organised into three interrelated studies: Study One focuses on Research Question One; Study Two focuses on Research Questions Two, Three and Four; and Study Three consists of the process-evaluation which covers Research Question Five and the supplementary retrospective research question. Studies One and Two are characterised as illuminative (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Study Three is an evaluative study (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). Study Two is also a diachronic study (Thomas, 2011).

Furthermore, I provide an overview of the nested AI including positioning of the three studies (in Figure 9) as well as a list of participants/participant groups who took part in each study and methods of data collection adopted in each study (see Table 15). These will be discussed further in each respective study, beginning with Study One.

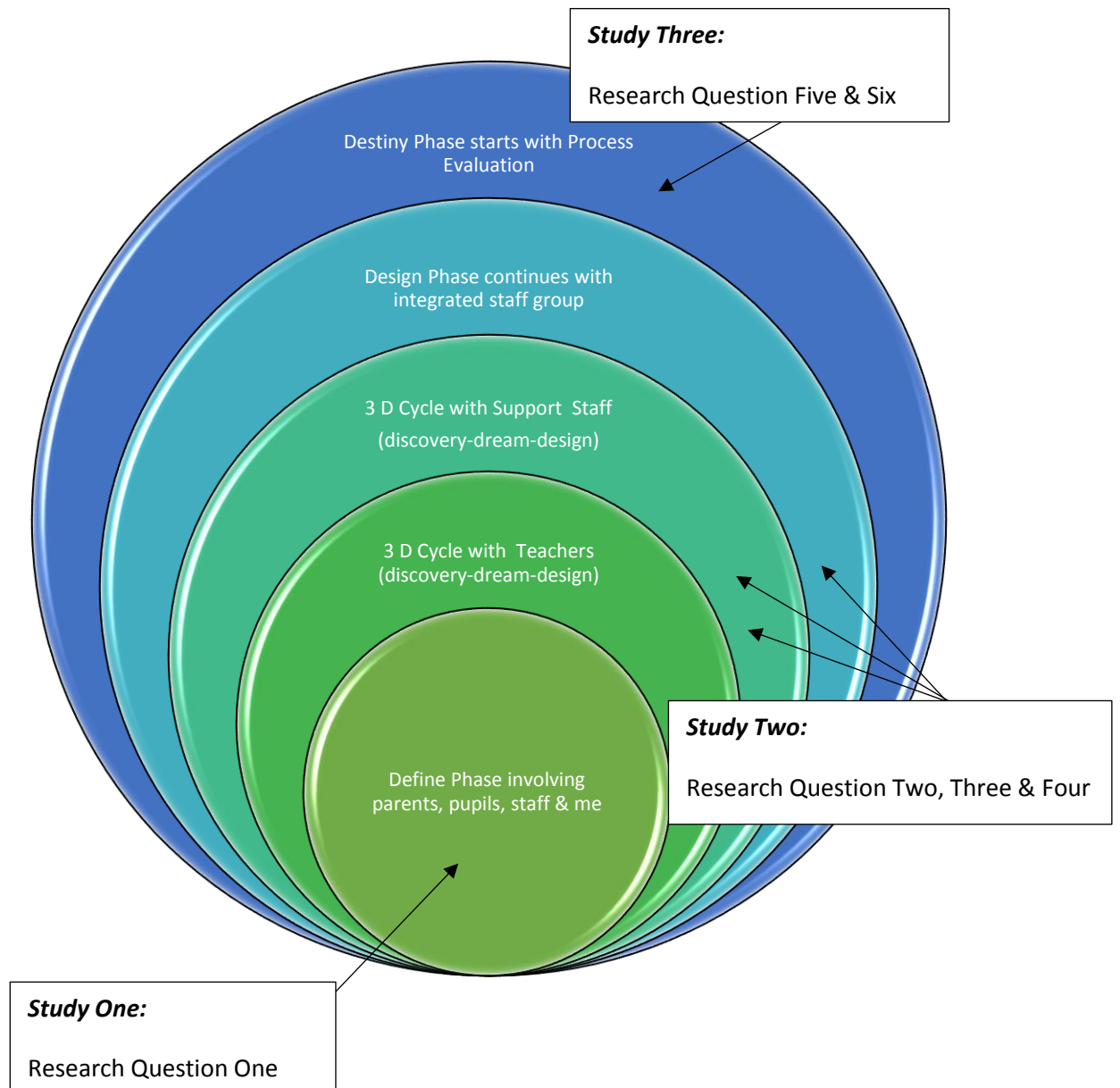


Figure 9 - Overview of Nested AI & 3 Studies

Table 15 - Overview of Participants/Participant Groups & Methods

Study One	Participant/Participant Group	Data Collection Methods
	Parent	Semi-structured Interview <i>(see section 4.3.1.1)</i>
	Children	Drawing/Talking/Colouring the 'Best Possible Child' <i>(see section 4.3.1.2)</i>
	Staff	Structured Interview using the Repertory Grid Technique <i>(see section 4.3.1.3)</i>
Study Two	Teaching Staff Group	Appreciative Interview <i>(see section 5.1.1)</i> Appreciative (Dream) Group Task <i>(see section 5.1.3)</i> Appreciative (Design) Group Task <i>(see section 5.1.6)</i>
	Support Staff Group	Appreciative Interview <i>(see section 5.1.1)</i> Appreciative (Dream) Group Task <i>(see section 5.1.3)</i> Appreciative (Design) Group Task <i>(see section 5.1.6)</i>
	Integrated Staff Group	Appreciative (Design) Group Task <i>(see section 5.1.17)</i>
Study Three	Focus Group of Teachers & Support Staff	Focus Group Discussion <i>(see section 5.1.7)</i>
	Head Teacher	Semi-structured Interview <i>(see section 6.4 and Table 35)</i>

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY ONE – BUILDING A DEFINITION AND MODEL OF FLOURISHING, BASED UPON STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

This study focuses on tackling the research question ‘what are the dimensions/characteristics of flourishing children according to parents, children and staff of a primary school?’ This is linked to the first phase of the appreciative inquiry process, which is known as the define phase or identifying an affirmative topic (Cooperrider et al., 2005). I used triangulation as a key research process to ensure that the topic of flourishing is explored through multiple lenses of staff, parents and children as well as different methods of data collection (Thomas, 2011; McNiff, 2016; Kelly, 1955; Moran, 2001). This study details the participants, ethical considerations, data collection methods, within-participant analyses and between-participant analyses. In relation to the last of these, thematic analysis was used as delineated by Braun and Clarke (2006). This study concludes with a discussion on each theme/sub-theme of the resulting developmental-ecosystemic model of flourishing.

4.1 Participants

The following participants took part in this study in a single primary school that has prioritised the development of children’s well-being as documented in their school development plan (or equivalent):

- fourteen parents;
- ten children (aged between 7 and 11); and
- ten members of staff including school leaders, teachers and support staff.

The participating school will be known as Faith School to ensure anonymity. The last Ofsted report characterised Faith School as an inclusive school community (July, 2017). Moreover, it stated that the head teacher, governors and staff team are very committed to the school's core Catholic values. Ofsted rated Faith School as good. It was also documented that pupils and their families can trace their heritage and backgrounds to nearly every continent across the world. A much higher than average proportion of pupils come from a number of minority ethnic heritages, the largest being African. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average, a few being at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of children with special educational needs is above average. A high proportion of pupils are supported through the pupil premium; additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and who are known to be eligible for free school meals.

4.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were considered and adhered to throughout all stages of this research enterprise. This involved gaining ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Birmingham, adhering to the British Educational Research Association's Revised Ethical guidelines (BERA, 2004), as well as complying with the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009) and the Data Protection Act (1998).

The university's Ethics Committee approved the following processes: recruitment; consent; participant feedback; participant withdrawal; confidentiality/privacy; storage, access and disposal of data; and protection from potential harm.

4.2.1 Recruitment

There were four key phases to recruitment.

Phase 1: I sent a letter inviting the head teacher of interested primary schools in my patch of schools to contact me (see Appendix 1). Given that AI is based on the assumption that organisations change in the direction of the things they inquire into, I needed to ensure that the participating school has an interest in developing a whole school approach into children's well-being in the first instance. Contextualization in the form of early familiarity with the culture of the participating school prior to the occurrence of the first data collection dialogues are important in ensuring credibility of the inquiry. Also I had engaged with the participating school in a prolonged way, as prior to the research I worked collaboratively with the school through consultation for two academic years (Wagner, 2000). Prior to this inquiry, I had an established relationship of trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al., 1993). If more than one suitable school respond to this letter of invitation, then the school that more / most closely matched the research criteria would be selected (as detailed in Appendix 1). Any other interested school(s) not selected would be contacted once the research had been completed to discuss outcomes in broad terms and a possibility of applying insights learnt from the inquiry in their respective school(s) will be explored with school staff.

Phase 2: Only one school was interested in taking part in this study. In the presence of the head teacher at Faith School, I held a meeting with all school staff to describe the proposed study; the decision to take part would be theirs. An information sheet was given out at this meeting (as detailed in Appendix 2). It was also explained that the remaining stages of the AI process would form part of wider school development work,

as prioritised in the school development plan. These stages would take place in planned staff meetings and project meetings.

Phase 3: A project team (consisting of the head teacher, assistant head teacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, Key Stage Two curriculum leader and me) was set up. Consent from parents/carers was sought through an information sheet (see Appendix 3). The school sent out the parent information sheet, using its routine contact mechanisms with parents.

Phase 4: Consenting staff, parents and children were selected on the basis of opportunity sampling to take part in this study. A sample consent form can be found in Appendix 4.

4.2.2 Consent

As an educational psychologist (EP), much of my professional practice encompasses a research process in which information is sought from parents, children and professionals, data are analysed and reported, strategies agreed and outcomes reviewed. I am bound by the ethical principles, codes and guidelines of my professional associations (the British Psychological Society and Health Care Professions Council). However when conducting this research I did so as a student of the University of Birmingham. Nevertheless, I cannot disregard my status as an EP, employed by the Local Authority (LA) providing many core services in the city in which the participants live, nor could I be sure that those participating perceived me as researching independently and not as a representative of the LA. Resolution of the ambivalence

surrounding my relationship with the participants was, therefore, crucial from an ethical standpoint and in the consideration of factors such as free and informed consent, free from any subtle coercion to participate.

Each person who was approached was given opportunities to decline to participate in the project so as to ensure that the data collection sessions involved only those who were genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer data freely. Participants were encouraged to be frank from the outset of each session, and I aimed to establish a rapport in the opening moments and indicated that there were no right answers to the questions that were being asked. My independent status as a researcher was emphasised so that participants could contribute ideas and talk about their experiences without risk of losing credibility in the eyes of managers of the organisation.

It was made clear to the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, and they would not be required to offer any explanation to me. Consent from the children was elicited/confirmed orally to avoid the experience being overly-formal for them. Prior to data gathering, I used a pre-prepared pupil consent form (see Appendix 5) which explained the purpose of the research activity and communicated in an age-appropriate way the key ethical principles of voluntary participation, right to refuse/withdraw, and anonymity.

4.2.3 Participant Feedback

Staff were provided with a written summary on an individual basis. Also, they were given feedback at the beginning of Study Two with the rest of their colleagues, as collectively they were part of a broader programme of collaborative action research (i.e., the remaining AI phases – discovery, dream, design and destiny) (Cooperrider et al., 2005). Staff received regular updates on the progress of the research through planned AI sessions and project meetings. Parents were provided with a written summary, alongside an opportunity to discuss any questions and/or further information about this research. The feedback summary for children was adapted in a way that was easy for them to access with support from their parents (refer to Appendix 6).

4.2.4 Participant Withdrawal

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw initially within the consent forms. Participants were asked to acknowledge their understanding of their right to withdraw using a tick box. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw before each research activity. Due to the nature of the research as well as the research being part of a written and public thesis, participants were given a 'cut-off' date by which they need to exercise their right to withdraw so that data could be analysed for inclusion in the final thesis. There were no consequences for the participants who wanted to withdraw from the study. Records of responses of participants who withdrew would have been shredded.

4.2.5 Confidentiality

As part of the ethical process, I acknowledged that I (and probably some of the staff team) would have some knowledge of which children, parents, and staff were participating in the research. However, at the point of data collection, all data remained confidential. I informed the participants that I would keep confidential the conversation and the information they provided. No names would be associated with or ascertainable from the overall summary or report. Stories and quotes from the interviews and drawings would be used, as relevant without a name associated with them. Participants' identity/data would be confidential, with each participant as it will be assigned an ID code. This ensured that the participants' identity would not be untraceable in the reporting of the research. Only I had access to confidential material.

4.2.6 Storage, Access and Disposal of Data

Audiotapes of interview and consent forms were stored in a locked cabinet at my home address for 10 years, before being destroyed. Electronic information have been stored on the University of Birmingham's network server, under my ID and in a password-protected data store for 10 years, after which data will be destroyed. Prior to storage, audiotapes and electronic information were checked to ensure the identities of participants were kept confidential.

4.2.7 Protection from Harm

Although the focus of the research was on flourishing, children participating in the research were asked explicitly to think, talk and draw about feelings of a child who is

not at their best and at their best (Moran, 2001). I acknowledged that there may be a (small) possibility of children becoming emotionally distressed, and if this occurred, I planned to support them in the same way I would whilst working in my professional capacity; as an experienced educational psychologist and also inform the child's class teacher, to ensure provision of appropriate support / after-care from familiar adults with an established working relationship with the child and her / his parents.

4.3 Data Collection

I adopted a curious and facilitative stance whilst gathering qualitative data; the chosen methods were adopted from a position of flexible and open-ended inquiry. These methods required the elicitation of personally salient accounts of some richness and depth. Two methods – repertory grid technique (RGT) and drawing/talking/colouring of the 'best possible child' – are underpinned by personal construct psychology which considers individuals acting like scientists (Kelly, 1955). These scientists (i.e., the participants) develop theories about their world to deepen their understanding as well as to enable them to make predictions.

4.3.1 Methods

This study employed three different methods: a schedule for semi-structured interview was used with the participating parents; drawing/talking/colouring of the 'best possible child' was used with the participating children; and the RGT was used with the participating staff. Given the face-to-face nature of these methods I was able to modify lines of enquiry by following up on responses I judged relevant. This is congruent with

the interpretivist underpinnings of this inquiry, which enables the co-construction of understanding between the respective participants, and researcher and participants.

Moreover, the process of member checking was adopted throughout this inquiry (Reason & Rowan, 1981). This involves returning to the participants to ask them to comment on the data and on my tentative interpretation of the data. At all points of contact with the respondents, I used active listening skills (that I typically use in my role as an EP) such as repeating, summarising and paraphrasing during the research activities to confirm with the participants that I had heard and interpreted their responses correctly. In terms of access, it was easier to check with participating staff; my emerging analysis was checked with five staff members. It has been argued that good 'research at the non-alienating end of the spectrum...goes back to the subject with the tentative results, and refines them in the light of the subjects' reactions' (Reason and Rowan, 1981, p. 248). Nevertheless, member checking can be construed as problematic as it is based on the assumption that there is a fixed truth or reality that can be accounted for by me and confirmed by a participant or a group of participants. It is also problematic to undertake member checking when an extended period of time has elapsed between the initial data collection and subsequent data analysis. In this case, this time period was approximately eighteen months (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

4.3.1.1 *Semi-Structured Interviews*

I drafted some pre-determined questions that were used to guide the interviews. Semi-structured interviews did not require literacy skills but did offer opportunities for flexibility, as I was able to respond to the information shared by the participant (such as seeking clarity). This was preferred over unstructured interviews (where participants

are free to talk about any subject they choose) as semi-structured interviews provide certainty that key areas of interest would be addressed during the interview (Robson, 2002). Furthermore, I was able to adjust the interview schedule to meet the perceived needs of the participant, by changing the wording of the questions or providing examples. This improves the quality of the data gathered through the interview process, as well as enabling a more genuine interaction between the interviewees and me. This was preferred to structured interviews, where I would have been bound by a strict set of questions (Gray, 2004).

Guiding questions and prompts for parents included:

- What are your children like when they are flourishing or at their best?;
- Let's discuss each child individually;
- What do they do and how do they feel when they are flourishing or at their best?;
- I want you to give me as much detail as you can, even small details are of interest to me;
- What do they do that captures them at their best at home, school or elsewhere? and
- What would their teachers say about them when they are flourishing?

4.3.1.2 *Drawing/Talking/Colouring the 'Best Possible Child'*

I have used the drawing of the ideal self in my professional practice as it is a developmentally-appropriate method of eliciting children's views (Moran, 2001). The philosophy of drawing the ideal self derived from personal construct psychology (PCP)

(Kelly, 1955). The ideal self technique involves an exploration of two aspects of self through drawing: the self the child would not like to be and the ideal self. Kelly (1955) proposed that a person's behaviour and approach to life makes sense to that individual. The theory is that we each have unique constructs which are based upon our own experiences, and we behave in ways which make sense according to our theories. The assumption of Individuality underpins PCP:

“...persons differ from each other in their construction of events, stresses the uniqueness of each person's construing, even where they may attach similar verbal labels to their discriminations. The contrast end of a construct helps define the meaning” (Butler & Green, 1998, p. 13).

I modified the method devised by Moran (2001) by replacing the descriptor of 'ideal', with 'best' to elicit the child's construct of flourishing. Also I extended the method by incorporating a colouring component to it. In my practice, I have noticed that children continue to talk about their drawings whilst simultaneously colouring their drawings. I believed this would allow for a richer construction of children's account of their constructs about children at their best.

The task of drawing of the 'best possible child' involved the following steps and script (Moran, 2001):

- I want you to draw the kind of child who is not at their best. This isn't a real child, but it could be made up of bits of people you have met or it could be from your imagination. Just a quick sketch in the middle of the page. There are lots more pictures to go on the page, so this sketch cannot take up the whole page. You can colour in your drawings whenever you want to.

- How could you describe this child who is not at their best? What are they doing? How do they feel? What kind of child is this?
- Everyone has a school bag. What would they have in their bag? Sketch their bag and what they have in it here.
- Think again about this child who is not at their best and sketch a birthday present they would like.
- Think again about this child who is not at their best (insert constructs from the child's description) and show how this child gets on with their family.
- Think again, how this child would get on with their friends. Sketch here.
- How would this child who is not at their best get on at school? Sketch this here.
- Everyone is afraid of something, what would this child be afraid of? Draw this and why would this child be afraid of this.
- How did this child (insert their constructs) get to be like this? Was he born like this, did something happen to make them like this? Tell me what you think? Sketch here.
- What kind of future will this child have? What will happen? How will things work out for them? Sketch here.
- Now let's have a look at the kind of child who is at their best, the best they can be?
- The above steps were repeated but with a focus on the child who is at their best. Again, children were asked to think about a child who is at their best in general terms, what would be in their school bag, their family relations, their friendships, how they are at school, their greatest fear, their history and their future.

I wrote down everything the children said during this research activity and my notes were typed up immediately after the session. Also, I am aware of the potential power imbalance in adult-child interview situations (Eder and Fingerson, 2002) and took steps

to minimize this imbalance (as I do typically in my professional practice). I had already sought to empower children by informing them of their rights. Other steps included distancing myself from their class teachers and school by inviting the children to address me by my first name, informing them that their views were highly valued and thanking them for their contribution.

4.3.1.3 *Repertory Grid Technique (RGT)*

Also originating within PCP, RGT is basically a structured interview process that results in a visual representation of the relationship between an individual's constructs and the 'elements' of his/her experience. The 'elements' are the objects of people's thinking to which they relate their concepts or values whilst the constructs are the discriminations that people make to differentiate between the elements in their personal, individual world. Despite my minimal contribution, RGT allowed me to glimpse the world from the viewpoint of the participant's construct system (Kelly, 1955; Butler & Green, 1998).

In this case, the elements were underpinned loosely by Keyes' classification model as well as the dual-factor model of mental health (Keyes, 2006; Kelly, 2012). Accordingly staff participants were asked to think of a boy and girl who is flourishing, languishing, and with moderate positive mental health as well as a child who is experiencing some mental distress and another child who is experiencing significant mental distress. This generated eight elements (or eight named children). Each name was written on a card, and these cards were shredded after each interview session.

I applied the basic procedure of RGT which includes the revised steps and scripts following the pilot study (Appendix 7 details the development of this procedure).

- 1) Determine topic (in this case, flourishing).
- 2) Determine a set of elements (in this case, the 8 named children).
- 3) I used the following script with the staff participants.

‘I am interested to hear about your views on the topic of flourishing children. I want you to think about a child who is flourishing: a child who functions in positive terms and feel positively about their world. What do they do? How do they present and feel? I want you to think about a boy who is flourishing and a girl who is flourishing. Have a think and write their names on these cards.

Now, I want you to think about a child who is languishing: a child who rarely functions in positive terms and rarely feels positively about their world. What do they do? How do they present and feel? I want you to think about a boy who is languishing and a girl who is languishing. Have a think and write their name on these cards.

Next, I want you to think about a child who is neither flourishing nor languishing; a child who functions in positive terms and feels positively about their world to a moderate level. What do they do? How do they present and feel? I want you to think about a boy and a girl who is neither flourishing nor languishing. Have a think and write their names on these cards.

To help you think about your views on flourishing, I also want you to think about a couple of children who have an identified need such as anxiety. Think of one case where mental distress is readily apparent and think of another case where impact of the mental distress is less apparent on the youngster's functioning. What do they

do? How do they present and feel? Have a think and write their names on these cards. Shortly, I will be asking you to compare these 8 children systematically.'

- 4) A blank grid, a pen and 8 cards (one for each element being used) were needed. Codes for these elements are depicted in Table 16.

Table 16 - Coding for 8 Elements

Code	Label
FB	Boy who is flourishing
FG	Girl who is flourishing
LB	Boy who is languishing
LG	Girl who is languishing
MB	Boy with moderate positive mental health (neither flourishing or languishing)
MG	Girl with moderate positive mental health (neither flourishing or languishing)
MDS	Child who is experiencing significant mental distress (significant Impact)
MDM	Child who is experiencing some mental distress (mild impact)

- 5) Elements were written across the top of the Flourishing REP Grid (see Appendix 8).
- 6) The numbers were written on one side of the card which corresponded with the elements at the top of the grid.
- 7) The cards were turned face down, shuffled and three cards were drawn at random.
- 8) I marked an X on a pre-prepared table which three cards have been drawn (see Appendix 9).
- 9) The respondent was asked to describe what aspect two of the elements share (how two are alike); so the question was *"Have a think about these 3 children, of these three, what do two have in common in terms of functioning and feeling, that differs in some way with the third?"* This was written on the left side of the grid. The respondent was then asked to say what makes the third element different. I checked

that I understood which contrast was being expressed. This was written on the right side.

- 10) I presented the bi-polar construct as a rating scale. Each element was rated to each construct on a scale of 1-5 (where 5 indicates emergent construct is typical of the element and where 1 indicates that the element does not exhibit the emergent construct) (see Appendix 10).
- 11) I asked the respondent to rate each of the three elements on this scale and to make clear which end of the scale they are nearest to.
- 12) I asked the respondent to rate each of the remaining elements on this construct (see Figure 10).
- 13) Once the first row has been rated the respondent turned the three cards over, placed them back on the pile, shuffled them and drew three cards again.
- 14) I repeated steps 8 to 12, with different triads of elements, eliciting for a fresh construct each time, until the respondent was unable to offer any new ones.

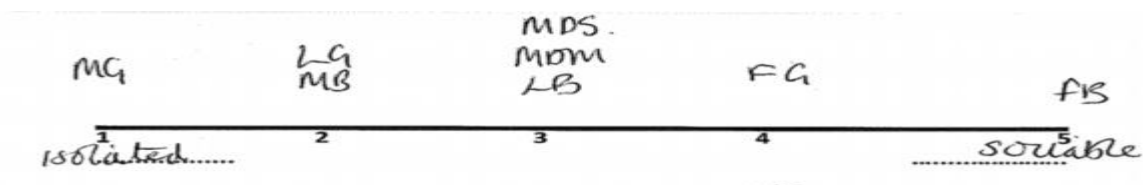


Figure 10 - Sample Completed Rating Scale

4.4 Sample Within-Participant Analyses

In line with the epistemological basis of the methods used for eliciting children's and staff's constructions of flourishing, I initially carried out a within-participant analysis of the drawing/talking/colouring of the 'best possible child' and the repertory grid responses (Kelly, 1955; Butler & Green, 1998; Moran, 2001). I analysed the REP grids through visual analysis and the verbal data accompanying the 'best possible child'

drawings through the constant comparative method (Jankowicz, 2004; Thomas, 2011). I detail a within-participant analysis of Staff 1's and Child 7's responses.

4.4.1 Initial Visual Analysis of REP Grids

Each grid was analysed for content through a visual inspection. Jankowicz (2004) asserts that RGT is fundamentally a qualitative method even though it has a quantitative structure. The visual analysis of trends within the grids addressed these questions: (a) what are the constructs; and (b) what ratings do they have? During this visual inspection, differences and similarities between the constructs were noted as well as those elements that received mostly 1s and 5s. Table 17 illustrates Staff 1's responses.

Analysis of Staff 1's Constructs

How does the staff member 1 think: what are the constructs?

Some of the constructs relate to:

- positive affect (happy, sunny disposition; zest for learning and life; enthusiasm);
- the self-system (can express own views well, independent of adult reassurance, self-motivated, self-esteem);
- social influences (following rules, being popular and highly humorous); and
- learning (zest for learning and higher achiever in core subjects).

Several constructs describe flourishing in terms of abundance (high verbal fluency, highly obedient, higher achiever, highly humorous, highly enthusiastic and high self-esteem) and the opposite of flourishing (contrasts) in terms of deficits (limited views, limited vocabulary, lacks a sunny disposition, low achiever lacking a sense of humour, lacking in enthusiasm, not popular at all, low self-esteem).

Table 17- Staff 1's Repertory Grid Responses

Emergent Construct	FB	FG	MB	MG	LB	LG	MDM	MDS	Contrast Construct
Express own views well, high verbal fluency	5	5	3.5	4	2.5	4	4.5	1.5	Limited views, limited vocabulary
Happy, sunny disposition	5	5	3.5	3.5	2	2	3.5	3.5	Lacks a sunny disposition
Independent of adult reassurance	3	4	4	4	4	3.5	1.5	1.5	Needy
Highly obedient follows rules	4	5	4	5	1	2	4	5	Lacking in obedience
High achiever in core subjects	3.5	5	4	5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1	Low achiever
Highly humorous	5	4	3	3.5	2.5	2.5	3.5	2.5	Lacking a sense of humour
Zest for learning & life, highly enthusiastic, self-motivated	4	5	5	2.5	4	2.5	3.5	3	Lacking in enthusiasm
Popular with other children	4.5	5	5	2.5	4	2.5	3.5	3	Not popular at all
Good emotional regulation	2.5	4.5	3	4.5	2	2	2.5	1.5	Excessive aggression/ anxiety
High self-esteem	4	5	3	4	1	1	2	2.5	Low self-esteem

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What does the staff member 1 think; how have the elements been rated on the constructs?

This staff member has given high ratings across all ten constructs to the 'flourishing girl', whereas in the case of the 'flourishing boy' she has given high ratings in seven constructs; 'can express their own views well', 'happy, sunny disposition', 'highly humorous', 'popular with other children', 'highly obedient', 'zest for learning and life', and 'high self-esteem'. Flourishing girl is construed somewhat similarly to the flourishing boy, the key difference being between the constructs 'good emotional regulation' and 'higher achiever' (the flourishing boy is less likely to have good emotional regulation and be a higher achiever compared to the flourishing girl).

The boy who is neither flourishing nor languishing (labelled as 'moderate boy') is construed as popular with other children, independent of adult reassurance, highly obedient, and a higher achiever, whereas the girl who is neither flourishing nor languishing (labelled as 'moderate girl') is construed more favourably: highly obedient, higher achiever, good emotional regulation, can express their own views well, independent of adult reassurance, and high self-esteem. The 'moderate girl' is less likely to be popular with other children.

The 'languishing boy' is construed as being popular with other children and highly independent of adult reassurance, whereas the 'languishing girl' is construed as highly capable of expressing her own views. Both of the children who are languishing are construed as having low self-esteem, expressing excessive aggression or anxiety, as well as lacking in enthusiasm, obedience, and a sunny disposition. Interestingly, these

children (who do not have identified mental health needs) have been rated in low terms on five constructs, whereas the 'child with significant mental distress' (who has an identified need) has low ratings on four constructs. The 'child with significant mental distress' is construed as being a low achiever, having limited views/vocabulary, being needy (of adults), and as expressing excessive aggression or anxiety.

The other child with identified mental health needs ('child with mild mental distress') is construed as functioning better than the 'languishing boy' (in 8 of the flourishing constructs) and the 'languishing girl' (in 7 of the constructs).

When examining the frequency of high ratings across the elements, this staff member construes (implicitly) the most achievable attribute as 'being obedient, following rules' (as this construct is highly rated for 6 out of the 8 children), whereas other positive descriptors ('happy, sunny disposition' and 'zest for learning and life, highly enthusiastic, self-motivated') and being 'highly humorous' appears to be distinct in only the flourishing children.

4.4.2 Constant Comparative Method

I used the constant comparative method to analyse the verbal data that accompanied the drawings of the 'best possible child'. This involves the basic 'principle of going through the data again and again (this is the constant bit), comparing each element – phrase, sentence or paragraph – with all the other elements (this is the comparative bit)' (Thomas, 2011, p. 171).

Figure 11 shows Child 7's drawing of the 'best possible child' and Table 18 contains the accompanying verbal data.



Figure 11- Child 7's Drawing of the 'Best Possible Child'

Table 18 - Verbal Data Gathered From Child 7

General	He's got a A+ in literacy. He feels excellent, very happy, he's proud of himself. He does well in his studies, he never gets into trouble and he has lots of friends. He's got a big smile on his face because he feels proud of himself.
Bag	His book, his maths test and all his homework.

Birthday Gift	He would like a science lab because he loves science.
Family	He is excellent with his family. He has good manners, he always listens to his mum and doesn't fight with his sister. He has got lots of trophies....for Maths, being brainbox of the year. He's very intelligent.
Friends	He has lots of friends. He's actually brilliant with them. He always plays with them. If someone falls down, he helps them up. If someone is stuck in Maths, he helps them out, he doesn't give them the answer. He gives them a helping hand. He has a day named for him.....called David's day. It's on the 25 th July and there are parades. He gets to do whatever he wants because he's the smartest person in the whole school.
At school	He's brilliant in everything....Science, Maths, Literacy, RE, PE, Art and even in the Year 6 SATs and he is only in Year 5. He's very clever for his age. He is only 9 years old. He's highest person in the class in lessons. He feels very proud and happy. He's like this cos of his dad because his dad was a genius.
Greatest Fear	He's actually scared of spiders. Once when he was a baby, he was sitting on the ground and he saw a spider; he turned around and he banged his head.
History	Because of his dad. When he was 4 years old, his dad taught him how to be good, he knew his times tables to 1000, he potty-trained him.
Future	He will have a great future, everybody would love him, maybe he will become the President. He's smart and he wants to create a better and happy country. He feels very proud of himself. He will feel flabagastic because he is the president of the whole city. He wants to make a big different. He does a lot for the world because he cares about the world. He's third in charge after God and Jesus. He helps dying animals, old people in hospitals, children, head teachers to help improve schools, help astronauts to find out about space and help builders.

Analysis of Child 7's Constructions of the 'Best Possible Child'

I abstracted seven themes via the constant comparative method which appear to capture the essence of this particular dataset (Thomas, 2011). According to Child 7 the best possible child appears to: experience positive emotions; be a high achiever who

is highly competent; be helpful; be influenced by his father; be interested in science; have positive relations; and is seeking to make a difference. Data supporting these themes are shown in Table 19.

Table 19 - Themes and Supporting Data for Child 7's Constructions of the 'Best Possible Child'

Themes	Supporting Data
Positive Emotions	he feels excellent, he's proud of himself; he's got a big smile on his face because he feels proud of himself; he feels very proud and happy; he feels very proud of himself; he will feel flabagastic; He will have a great future.
High Achiever/ highly competent	He's got a A+ in literacy; he gets to do whatever he want because he's the smartest person in the whole school; he's brilliant in everything....Science, Maths, Literacy, RE, PE, Art and even in the year 6 SATs and he is only in year 5. He's clever for his age. He's only 9 years old. He's highest person in the class in lessons. He has got lots of trophies....for Maths, being brainbox of the year. He's very intelligent; His book, his maths test and all his homework; He's smart.
Helpful Character	He's actually brilliant with them (his friends). If someone falls down, he helps them up. If someone is stuck in Maths, he helps them out he doesn't give them the answer. He gives them a helping hand. He has a day named for him.....called David's day. It's on the 25 th July and there are parades.
Paternal Influence	He's like this 'cos of his dad because his dad was a genius; Because of his dad. When he was 4 years old, his dad taught him how to be good, he knew his times tables to 1000, he potty-trained him.
Positive Relations	He is excellent with his family. He has good manners, he always listens to his mum and doesn't fight with his sister; he has lots of friends; he has lots of friends; everybody would love him. He always plays with them.
Interested in Science	he would like a science lab because he loves science; to find about space
Seeking to make a difference	maybe he will become the President; he wants to create a better and happy country; ... he is the president of the whole city. He wants to make a big different. . He does a lot for the world because he cares about the world. He's third in charge after God

	and Jesus. He helps dying animals, old people in hospitals, children, head teachers to help improve schools, help astronauts to find out about space and help builders.
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4.5 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen due to its congruence with my initial research goal. Given my research question, ‘what are the characteristics/dimensions of flourishing in children according to parents, children and staff of Faith School?’ I was concerned primarily with developing a set of patterns across the data derived from the three sets of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 86) define thematic analysis as ‘searching across a data set – be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts - to find repeated patterns of meaning’. Thematic analysis also allows for theoretical flexibility and a systematic and rigorous structure for data analysis, as well as being straightforward to implement. Braun and Clarke (2006) assert the importance of making explicit some initial considerations prior to the process of thematic analysis, including methodological assumptions as well as decisions about coding and analysis.

Firstly, the social constructionist epistemological basis of this research has already been made explicit section 3.1. This has implications for the way themes / construct can be discussed and to what extent conclusions can be drawn. I am seeking to consider what practical wisdom might be drawn from the analysis, rather than to abstract or claim generalizable findings (Thomas, 2011).

Secondly, an important consideration in thematic analysis is whether to code using predetermined criteria (theoretically or deductively) or to code from the data (inductively). Given that the RGT used explicitly Keyes' two-part construct of 'positive feelings' and 'positive functioning'; I initially approached the task of thematic analysis using a mixture of deductive and inductive approaches (Keyes, 2002, 2006). However, I switched to an inductive approach when negative emotions were highlighted during the early stages of thematic analysis, as the data did not fit with one of the core constructs (i.e., positive feelings). This recognises that I can never enter into such analysis as a blank slate, as I had been influenced initially by the literature review. Accordingly, Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 86) assert that 'a more inductive approach would be enhanced by not engaging with the literature in the early stages of analysis, whereas a theoretical approach requires engagement with the literature prior to analysis.' Furthermore, I recognise that my own constructs and beliefs have influenced the codes that were identified during the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Finally, I decided that themes should be identified at the semantic level of analysis as I adopted an essentialist/realist approach to reflect the participants' perspectives that I had observed during the semi-structured interviews, structured REP grid interviews, and drawing/talking/colouring of the 'best possible child'. I assumed that the meaning of the participants was represented through the language they used; as opposed to the latent level of analysis, which would involve unravelling the respective perspectives in their socio-cultural context. I focused on a semantic level of interpretation because of the intention to represent views of the participants, in line with the initial research question.

I was concerned with identifying patterns in the semantic information shared by all three sets of participants, which involved theorizing ‘motivations, experience, and meaning in a straightforward way, because a simple, largely unidirectional relationship is assumed between meaning and experience and language’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). I was not attempting to ‘unravel the surface of reality’ or examine ‘the ways events, realities, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society’; this latent level of analysis is similar to discourse analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). However, due to the iterative AI, staff participants had opportunities to revisit the define phase (so in real terms, this was the re-define phase), where they did ‘theorize the sociocultural contexts’ which subsequently led to a re-conceptualisation of flourishing (see section 5.2.4) (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85; Nussbaum, 2000, 2013; McLellan & Steward, 2015).

All data sets were analysed using the guidelines for conducting a rigorous thematic analysis, structured around a six phase process, as summarised in Table 20.

Table 20 - The thematic analysis process taken in this research (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Phase of TA	Description
Familiarising yourself with the data	I had already familiarised myself with two of the data-sets (staff and children) given that I began data analysis with the within-participant analyses as discussed in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2. Familiarisation took place during transcription of the parental interviews and by reading repeatedly the data in active manner (i.e., noting down initial ideas).
Generating initial codes	I used the NVivo 11 software to support with identification of codes as I selected interesting features within the data item. I coded systematically, taking each data-item individually (see Appendix 11 for an example of coding). This was not necessary with the staff data-set as their emergent constructs were treated as codes. Braun and Clarke

	(2006, p. 86) cite Boyatzis when delineating codes: 'the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998, p.63). Segments of text may be labelled with multiple codes to ensure that all aspects are included within the analysis.
Searching for themes	I adopted a manual approach to identifying themes. Refined codes were transferred onto post-it notes. Then these codes were collated and I searched for patterns amongst the refined codes. Similar codes were organised into themes and sub-themes. Refer to Tables 21 to 32 for findings table for each theme/sub-theme.
Reviewing themes	Themes were refined to ensure they represented interesting patterns within the data corpus. These themes were checked to ensure the consistency of individual codes within the theme (known as internal homogeneity). Also themes were checked to ensure they were distinct from one another (known as external heterogeneity). Several draft thematic maps of the analysis were generated before the final map. Refer to Appendix 12 for the initial thematic map and Figure 12 for the final thematic map of the analysis. I constructed two overarching interconnected themes; developmental emotional well-being and developmental eudaimonic well-being. The former comprises dimensions relating to children's emotional states and the latter includes dimensions relating to children's optimal functioning. For ease of reference, I have colour coded the final thematic map of analysis: the overarching themes are in black; themes connected to developmental emotional well-being are in grey; and themes connected to the developmental eudaimonic well-being are in blue with their respective sub-themes in green.
Defining and naming themes	Themes were named and the essence of the themes were identified. I sought support from a colleague to aid with wording of the themes. This involved revisiting the contents of the themes with a random selection of quotes and checking again for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. Refer to Table 33 for a complete list of the final themes and a short descriptor of each theme.
Producing the report	This phase is the final opportunity for analysis which includes selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, linking the analysis to the research question and literature. This results in the production of a scholarly report of the analysis (as detailed in section 4.6).

Table 21 - Findings Table for Theme of Emotional Spectrum

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children Staff Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Emotion Happy Excited Proud Contented Grateful Joyful Zest Negative Emotion Scared Sad Lonely Disappointed Frustrated Angry Worried Nervous Frightened Stressed 	<p>(C1) nice cheesy grin...smiling; feels good; very grateful; happy; proud; excited; shivery...good bumps; she worries about being bored; very nervous.</p> <p>(C2) jolly; happy, gets a tingle in his stomach he is happy that he is working; excited.</p> <p>(C3) Really happy; proud; hates being bored.</p> <p>(C4) Feels proud about himself; feels strong; feels good; feels kind of lonely; feels scared.</p> <p>(C5) feels really good inside; really grateful.</p> <p>(C6) feels little bit happy; feels happy; thankful about her life; little bit sad.</p> <p>(C7) he feels excellent, he's proud of himself; he's got a big smile on his face because he feels proud of himself; he feels very proud and happy; he feels very proud of himself; he will feel flabagastic; He will have a great future.</p> <p>(C8) he's feeling proud; feels really excited; feels amazed; little bit annoyed.</p> <p>(C9) he is happy; quite joyful.</p> <p>(C10) he is very happy; he's very happy with himself; he feels worried; feels a bit nervous; he will feel proud.</p> <p>(S1) Happy</p> <p>(S1) Zest for learning and life, highly enthusiastic</p> <p>(S2) Happy to be in school, big smiles</p> <p>(S4) Frequently happy</p> <p>(S5) Happy</p> <p>(S6) Happy</p>

		<p>(S7) Frequently happy</p> <p>(S8) Contented</p> <p>(S8) Has a happy look</p> <p>(S9) Frequently contented</p> <p>(S10) Happy</p> <p>(P1) He normally gets excited; he's proud of himself; he gets really, really proud of himself; bit of self-pride; excited; sometimes gets a bit down; very disappointed when he got a bronze; he was like a sad face; he gets disappointed, like, it's a normal, like how I'd feel....feel a bit down; worry; I don't see the pride but he gets excited on</p> <p>(P2) He's happy; happy; at his best, he's happy; he's smiling; happy; oh mummy I'm happy.</p> <p>(P3) He's quite happy; yeah he seems to be more happier and relaxed; he's happy; happy; just happy; I think he's just happy; he gets a bit scared I think; he can get a bit frustrated; quite happy.</p> <p>(P4) She's always happy; happy; happy; happy; so happy; happy; happy all the time; she worries about getting X, you know getting it wrong.</p> <p>(P5) Very happy; a very happy child; at home she's always happy, always smiling, happy; she only gets sad when she falls out with her friends; she's a very happy child.</p> <p>(P6) He's feeling happy; felt happy; feeling happy; very happy; he was very happy, he was proud of himself; very happy; she's very happy; it makes her happy; she feels happy; he's very happy; he gives a smile, so much happy face; she feels nervous.</p> <p>(P7) Happy; happy; excited; happy; very excited; she's very, very happy; it makes her happy; it makes him happy; happy; you can just tell in them when they're happy; they are happy; she's very down on herself; very down on herself; she get very angry with them; she's getting frustrated with herself.</p> <p>(P8) He's always happy; he always like smiling; he's actually excited; relaxed and chilled out; seems really chilled out; happy; he's happy; really happy; always got this big massive smile on her face; they're smiling; he's really happy; he gets very stressed out.</p>
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		<p>(P9) She's excited; excited; he is feeling well good.</p> <p>(P10) Happy; he's a happy child; is happy; she must be feeling happy; she's happy child; I can't say my children are miserable....my children are quite happy; he gets frustrated sometimes.</p> <p>(P11) Excited; yeah really happy; she's smiling; being happy; I think she's feeling proud of herself; happy; genuinely happy to give; feeling loved; very excited; feeling really secure; he's feeling happy; being secure in your love; love; feeling secure; feeling sad.</p> <p>(P12) I think it makes her happy; very happy yeah; proud of herself; so she's happy; oh he's happy; proud; happy.</p> <p>(P13) He's quite happy; excited I think most of the time I'd say excited and very happy with himself; very proud; I think he's quite happy in his setting; is happy; happy.</p> <p>(P14) He's happy; bit of pride; good pride; pride; pride; good pride; pride; proud; proud; he beams; scared, alone and frightened.</p>
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Table 22 - Findings Table for Sub-theme of Emotional Regulation

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code(s)	Supporting Extract
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional regulation • Self-regulation • Emotional maturity • Emotionally literate 	<p>(S1) Good emotional regulation; independent of adult reassurance</p> <p>(S4) Good emotional regulation, reasons even if cross, can express themselves</p> <p>(S6) Emotionally mature, express feelings, why they are upset</p> <p>(S8) Demonstrates sound understanding of emotional literacy</p> <p>(S10) Emotional maturity and stability</p>

Table 23 - Findings Table for Theme of Self-Esteem

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code(s)	Supporting Extract
Children Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Positive sense of self 	<p>(C10) very happy with himself; he's very happy with himself</p> <p>(S1) high self-esteem</p> <p>(S3) high self-esteem, self-worth</p> <p>(S4) feels good about themselves</p> <p>(S5) high self-esteem</p> <p>(S7) high self-esteem</p>

Table 24 - Findings Table for Theme of Engagement in Energizing Task

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children Staff Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoyable activity Interesting activity Energizing activity Absorption Deep concentration Highly energized/energized 	<p>(C1) She plays the cornet at school...she likes going to cornet lessons</p> <p>(C2) When he get home, he does a lot of research on the things he's learnt about that day.</p> <p>(C3) She wants to learn everything now. She wants a big learning book.</p> <p>(C3) She loves to learn. She likes it when she has lots of learning to do, she hates being bored. She enjoys thinking and doing work. She loves all the lessons.</p> <p>(C5) Lots of books because she likes to study... lots of pencils and crayons and paper for extra homework</p> <p>(C7) he would like a science lab because he loves science</p> <p>(C8) secret agent book... he likes to work out secrets</p> <p>(C8) After his reading and maths, he loves to draw, he is a really good drawer.</p> <p>(C10) He would like a poetry set because he likes poetry and writing poems.</p> <p>(S3) really engaged</p> <p>(S4) enjoys challenges</p> <p>(S5) flourish in a subject they like</p> <p>(S6) focused, absorbed concentration on their special interest</p> <p>(P1) He does a lot of karate.</p> <p>(P1) Yeah, he has to be the loudest. Yeah because they "kiai", they say "oil" like, a, when they are doing certain end set of moves, at the end they have to "kiai" and he has to be the loudest out of the whole class. He has to be, so it's like ... arggh. He loves doing his karate moves.</p> <p>(P1) Once he's there, he's full of beans, running round like a lunatic. (Laughter)</p>

		<p>(P1)...when he plays games like his Wii game, he'll get all excited on that.</p> <p>(P2) He likes football.</p> <p>(P2) He likes reading.</p> <p>(P2)...he likes football and at school he likes Maths, English, Science.</p> <p>(P3)...and he's just started going MMA, mixed martial arts. I think probably because he's running around and he enjoys it.</p> <p>(P3)...he's just always had a passion for football. He likes watching it as well. He'll watch it, he likes going to the matches, and he likes playing it. Yeah, he'll go on about his matches as well.</p> <p>(P3)...he loves to be outdoors, exploring nature.</p> <p>(P3) He gets more engrossed into a computer...don't want to come away from it.</p> <p>(P3) He likes his animals.</p> <p>(P3) He's really interested in any animals, that he comes. Like, we've got a parrot and he'll go on and on about his parrot. Or fish. Or going fishing.</p> <p>(P3) Yeah, trout fishing, yeah, he loves the fishing. I don't know why. He really loves it, he loves to going and the building up to the going. He'll just go on about it, I'm going fishing, I'm going fishing, I'm going fishing, is it time to go fishing now?</p> <p>(P3) ...it's a long day. Do you know he's jumping around what he's caught, "we caught this" and he'll tell me how they've caught it and what they've done and if they've lost any fish.</p> <p>(P3) He likes researching into different animals, can spend his spare time looking into the different creatures. He wants animals all the time. Like now he wants fish. We can't have dogs because my younger son's got allergies but he'd have a dog, he'd have a cat, he'd have a farm, he'd be quite happy with a farm.</p> <p>(P3)...likes his own time. He'd quite happily sit there with pens, paper, making things like designs.</p> <p>(P3) He just, he loves if he's got something in his head, like this week he's had in his head he wants to make a guitar, he wants to make that guitar, he's got to do, he sets it</p>
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		<p>(P3) Any crafty arty, give him a box and a pen and sometimes paper and off he goes, even paper, building houses out of paper.</p> <p>(P3) He'd sit there for hours doing that.</p> <p>(P4) And she likes learning more and more and more. She loves Maths and she loves reading. She loves writing.</p> <p>(P4)...she likes doing her homework...</p> <p>(P4) She loves dancing and she loves singing.</p> <p>(P4) She loves all the subjects.</p> <p>(P4) She loves music. She loves dancing, singing and playing violin.</p> <p>(P4) She likes writing stories.</p> <p>(P5) She enjoys reading and she enjoys, she's one of them children, she likes to before she turns the page she likes to think of what's going to happen next and imagine what she would, how she would do it.</p> <p>(P5) She loves art.</p> <p>(P5) She loves art at school. ...it's the only homework I've seen her do properly at home is her art homework and she'll sit at the table and she'll sit there for hours just ... it's like she loses herself in it.</p> <p>(P5) It's like she'll, she sits there and she imagines what...she thinks so hard and imagines about what the pictures meant to be and do you know what I mean?</p> <p>(P6) He likes doing English work.</p> <p>(P6) English he likes doing, spelling or writing sentences or stories something.</p> <p>(P6) He really enjoyed the school trip, he loved the boat ride and climbing, new things for him. He wants to go again because he found it fun.</p> <p>(P6) ...he learn a lot of things like school things and Mosque things, everything, he enjoys it. He brought his holy Quran into school and showed his teachers how to read Arabic.</p>
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		<p>(P6) He likes doing Maths work.</p> <p>(P6) He likes watching TV. (Laughter) Power rangers. Enjoy watching Power Rangers and Digi Man.....and cartoons.</p> <p>(P6) He like going out, playing football.</p> <p>(P6) ...he's keen on the Maths questions</p> <p>(P6) he enjoys playing football and rugby.</p> <p>(P6) She likes drawing and writing and reading.</p> <p>(P6) She likes creating. I'd say she's best at creative, all area. She like doing that, all that activity, as long as sticking, cutting, colouring, she loves that.</p> <p>(P6) ...she likes doing different work, like Maths, English or Science, different projects.</p> <p>(P6) She like listening to stories like prophets and all that what happened in the past. She loves that, listening to stories and learning.</p> <p>(P7) She is very keen on sports. She loves doing netball, any opportunity she wants to play.</p> <p>(P7) She loves telling me about her games. She tells me that she's doing really well, that she's scored goals at netball. She always come straight to me and says I scored 3 this match, and I scored this this match and I passed to my friend. Same with running and her other sports that she does.</p> <p>(P7) She loves her school work. She loves Maths, she loves Reading, she loves the computers, everything about school.</p> <p>(P7) Every day he's played in the sand, he loves the sand.</p> <p>(P7) He asks to play in the sand and he asks to make cakes and things yeah. He asks to play on his tractor and football.</p> <p>(P7) They're just really full of energy, like they're floating on clouds almost. They're really like untouchable, really confident, it's hard to put into words...you can just feel the energy coming from them.</p>
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		<p>(P8) He really really loves football so everything's about football. All he ever talks about when he comes home from school is football. That's all he said he does at school, he learns and then at break time he does football.</p> <p>(P8) He likes to be on the internet looking up things that his teachers asked him about, you know researching a lot of things that he does, we went to Kenilworth Castle last week so he went home and looked up more about Kenilworth Castle on the internet. He likes things like that as well, he loves anything he can sit you know and like concentrate and loves his reading. Really loves his reading. He likes to have a book and sit and have some time out on his own, sit and read the book.</p> <p>(P8) ...he actually tells ya, look Mum look what I found on this one now. I'll say, go on then tell me and he'll read it out to me, he just conveniently said to me I really enjoyed this Mum, it's really interesting isn't it mum, you get to find out about the old days Mum. You know things like that that does interest him things...</p> <p>(P9) She like to sing in the choir and she likes to do Track B class on Tuesdays.</p> <p>(P9) ...activities you know, the good energy she is getting.</p> <p>(P9) Every Wednesday she goes to swimming, she really enjoys the swimming class.</p> <p>(P9) She likes to do maths, maths lesson.</p> <p>(P9) Every time she's drawing. Art. She likes Art.</p> <p>(P9) He likes sports, football and basketball.</p> <p>(P10) He loves to draw.</p> <p>(P10) ...she loves to read. Yeah she loves to read.</p> <p>(P11) She enjoys playing guitar.</p> <p>(P11) I suppose she likes to play what she already knows, although she does like learning new things, she gets a buzz from showing everyone what she can already do. When she's performing. She enjoys that.</p>
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		<p>(P11) She likes dressing up, she likes building dens but she'll also just sit in the corner with a book and she loves getting into a story and they're both quite into books so they'll be happy to sit in a corner and get absorbed by a story and get taken away by their imaginations.</p> <p>(P11) Yeah, he's got an encyclopaedia of dogs that tells you all the different dogs breeds and he goes around with a tape measure, he's got his own tape measure now just because he's gone on about it so much and he'll come up and say, Mummy did you know a King Charles Spaniel can be up to 43cm tall and stuff like that. And can we look at YouTube and see which is the tallest dog in the world or the fattest dog in the world or did you know that a blue whale ... what was it the other day ... did you know that a blue whale can eat 4 tonnes of krill in a day. Right ok well that's good to know. So he's into it. He's stimulated, motivated and so interested.</p> <p>(P12) She likes dancing. That's what she likes.... she attended classes. I think more than 4 years at another college. Yeah so she loves it.</p> <p>(P12) She's a kind of like sports person. Oh she loves it...</p> <p>(P12) He loves football... He's just like joining in. Engaging with whoever. So he's totally involved with it all, playing football with his team.</p> <p>(P12)...he loves Mathematics the best.</p> <p>(P13) ...he would say he's at his best when he's doing his gymnastics. He absolutely loves it and he's working his way through and I would say that would be one of things that he's best at.</p> <p>(P13) Cos he's very energetic when doing his gymnastics.</p> <p>(P13) He absolutely loves it and he's working his way through... There's the sort of levels they go up. He started as a beginner and now he's a Novice so he's gone through 2 stages very quickly. And they do their exams, they have competitions only in at the moment only in the gymnastics, when he goes to the next level he'll go out to do competitions but he really I don't know what the word I'm looking for is that's his, that's him at his best, doing something energetic and bouncing around basically.</p> <p>(P13) ...loves Maths</p> <p>(P14) He investigates everything...he feels great and he loves coming up with the answer.</p>
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Table 25 - Findings Table for Theme of Competence

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children Staff Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capable/Clever High achiever Skilled/competent Achievement/ Accomplishment Higher standard Exceptional Knowledgeable Awards/prizes Making progress 	<p>(C1) She's done her GCSEs and got 120 out 120 right; She is very clever, knows her 40 times tables.</p> <p>(C2) He's smart. He knows all of his work, in literacy he gets level 5 and in all other subjects he gets the highest level.</p> <p>(C2) ...he gets the highest levels in all of his subjects.</p> <p>(C2) After half an hour of his teacher speaking to him, he knows, he's got it all stored in his brain. He doesn't like Geography but still gets the highest mark.</p> <p>(C3) She did her test, her teacher marked it, got it back and checked her work, she got it all right.</p> <p>(C4) ...he knows his subjects</p> <p>(C5) She's very good at school work</p> <p>(C5) She's top student in the class.</p> <p>(C5) She's like a tutor. She's good in all subjects.</p> <p>(C7) He's got a A+ in literacy;</p> <p>(C7)he gets to do whatever he want because he's the smartest person in the whole school; he's brilliant in everything....Science, Maths, Literacy, RE, PE, Art and even in the year 6 SATs and he is only in year 5. He's clever for his age. He's only 9 years old. He's highest person in the class in lessons.</p> <p>(C7) He has got lots of trophies....for Maths, being brainbox of the year. He's very intelligent; his book, his maths test and all his homework; He's smart.</p> <p>(C8) He's very good at his times tables.</p> <p>(C8) He has got good hand writing</p> <p>(C8) he's clever and everyone keeps asking him what the answers are</p>

		<p>(C9) very exceptionally good (at learning)</p> <p>(C9) He's good and great at school work.</p> <p>(C10) He is very clever, he knows everything.</p> <p>(C10) ...he's the cleverest in the class</p> <p>(C10) His teacher picks him for Maths because he's clever.</p> <p>(C10) He thinks of lots of good rhyming words and sentences all by himself.</p> <p>(C10) The teacher picks him because she knows he will get correct answer so other children could learn more like him.</p> <p>(C10) ...he knows the questions</p> <p>(S1) Higher achiever in core subjects</p> <p>(S2) Very able academically</p> <p>(S3) Higher achiever</p> <p>(S4) Outstanding academic progress</p> <p>(S5) Exceptional academic ability, go from 'strength to strength'</p> <p>(S6) Easily applies and generalises new skills and knowledge</p> <p>(S7) Academically able</p> <p>(S9) High academic abilities</p> <p>(P1) ...because he's good at</p> <p>(P1) Well he's very good at it and he's been going Karate since he was a small child, since he's 5, now he's worked his way up he's a red belt so he's very confident in himself almost to the point where he can teach the younger children</p>
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		<p>(P1) he's won two tournaments, he's won gold and silver in tournaments..... He's won gold, silver, he got a bronze,</p> <p>(P1) He won two golds. And then he won a gold and silver, and then he won bronze.</p> <p>(P1) So obviously he won his tournaments when he was on a green belt,</p> <p>(P1) he wins the star worker award.....for doing so well in his work</p> <p>(P1) ...he's come up to the same standard</p> <p>(P1) He's got very good skills</p> <p>(P1) ...it is a good quality 'cause it's the winning and the achieving</p> <p>(P3) Do you know he's jumping around what he's caught, "we caught this" and he'll tell me how they've caught it</p> <p>(P3) Remember when we went to that dancing place, done lots of dancing done I, I was good...</p> <p>(P5) she's a very, very good reader....because she's good at it</p> <p>(P5) She's excellent, she's a really good drawer.</p> <p>(P6) Like he had a test and he achieved 100%.</p> <p>(P6) Yeah he's good at...he came first in his class last year.</p> <p>(P7) ...she's doing well in the sports</p> <p>(P7) ...she's doing really well, that she's scored goals at netball. She always come straight to me and says I scored 3 this match, and I scored this this match and I passed to my friend. Same with running and her other sports that she does. She achieves high standards.</p> <p>(P7) If she's done a test for example and she's done well,....., she'll come home and say I scored 4 points on this test, one of the highest in the class.</p> <p>(P7)the teacher gives her 10 out of 10, that's it. She's brilliant.</p> <p>(P7) She does high standard of work</p>
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		<p>(P7) quite good at school, quite good at reading</p> <p>(P7) They achieve more. When they're at their best they achieve higher standards, a lot higher standards....</p> <p>(P8) He's reaching all his targets that they're meant to reach. She would say that he's above some of his targets in some of the lessons.</p> <p>(P9)very good at Maths.</p> <p>(P9)....good grade.</p> <p>(P9) He's good at art and numbers and Science.</p> <p>(P10) She does her phonics beautiful.</p> <p>(P10) ...they're doing well in their Arabic lessons.</p> <p>(P11) ...she can do something and she's achieving something that she maybe thought she couldn't do.</p> <p>(P12) ...really good at netball</p> <p>(P12) He's doing well in his school work</p> <p>(P12)...he will just get them spot on.</p> <p>(P13) ...he's good at it</p> <p>(P13) There's the sort of levels they go up. He started as a beginner and now he's a Novice so he's gone through 2 stages very quickly.</p> <p>(P13) And most of the time very proud as well if he's achieved something.</p> <p>(P13)...he sort of picks it up very quickly and with most things</p> <p>(P13) ...they excel and bloom if you like</p> <p>(P14) ...he's really good at.....and he will do it, he will achieve it and do it well; ...that I've achieved</p>
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Table 26 - Findings Table for Sub-theme of Competence Development

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children Staff Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort/Perseverance • Practising skills • Regular practise • Working hard 	<p>(C1) ...and she wants to learn tunes at home, goes to cornet lessons, so she can practise at home.</p> <p>(C1) She goes to gymnastics, goes even when hard. She learnt to do a routine on rings that are hanging.</p> <p>(C2)... he reads 20 pages every day, ,,he tries really hard</p> <p>(C3)...she's tried her best</p> <p>(C4) ...he tries to answer hard questions</p> <p>(C5) She tries very hard</p> <p>(C6) She keeps going with her learning even when it's hard. She keeps on learning about music. She watches good singers, enters competitions, keeps practising her singing at home.</p> <p>(C8) He tries very hard at his work....He sometimes studies his times tables. He writes them in his notebook in his bedroom.</p> <p>(C9) He knows he doesn't have to get it right first time, so he keeps going until he get it</p> <p>(S2) Perseveres, tries hard, keeps going</p> <p>(S6) Perseveres consistently, tries hard, practising new learning</p> <p>(P1) they have to do a certain set of moves, they have to learn a new kata for each belt</p> <p>(P1) the higher belt they are the higher the standard. So obviously he won his tournaments when he was on a green belt, very in the middle, but now he's a red belt, he's only got two more belts and he's a black. Yeah, so the standard is, I mean, even though they're small boys, a small boy, they still expect him to be on that level. Yes and it's very, very hard. He puts the effort in though</p> <p>(P2)he puts the effort in to learn</p>

		<p>(P3) ...he keeps trying and trying, if he can't get something right he'll keep going at it, until he's got it right. I think he knows in his head what he wants to do but he doesn't like help and keeps going until he's got it.</p> <p>(P4) ... she tries her best.</p> <p>(P4) She tries really hard and is practising every day.</p> <p>(P7) ...she worked hard at it...</p> <p>(P10) She tries hard.</p> <p>(P13) You know he puts in that extra bit of effort.....he practises his gymnastics every other day or nearly every day</p>
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Table 27 - Findings Table for Sub-theme of Environmental Competence

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children Staff Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness for school/learning • Independently completes homework • Organised/prepared • Follows rules/instructions in school 	<p>(C1) Reading book, pencil case, reading diary, allowed to bring one fruit and it will be fruit. She's ready for school and she has her homework.</p> <p>(C1) She be good, do as she is told, listen to teacher very carefully, that's why she knows all her stuff. She doesn't go out 'tiddling toddling'... wandering around the classroom...</p> <p>(C2) Very clean (school bag), plastic folder with all his things in, finished homework, pencil case, reading book and diary filled out every day.</p> <p>(C3) Rubber, pencil and homework that she's finished. Because when she's in year 5, teacher said, you to bring homework next day. She did it straightaway and taking it to the teacher next day.</p> <p>(C3) Her desk, she likes her classroom to be neat.</p> <p>(C4) ...listens in class; head phones to block out noise when working</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-sufficient/independent in classroom • Good at managing responsibilities at school/home 	<p>(C4) Homework, books, phone, money to get food... he has this (in his school bag) because he needs it for school. He brings books to school. Homework is done. He knows what to do, he's organised.</p> <p>(C5) ...she obeys the teacher when her teacher gives her instructions.</p> <p>(C5) She pays attention in class.</p> <p>(C5) Her teacher tells her to do extra work at home. She does extra work at home and extra work in school.</p> <p>(C8) tidy bag</p> <p>(C8) He is patient in lessons, he's listening</p> <p>(C9) He always studies first then plays...</p> <p>(C10) ...he listens well</p> <p>(C10) ...he listens to everything what she (his teacher) says</p> <p>(C10) When it's time to go to the classroom, he walks to the classroom, not runs.</p> <p>(S1) Highly obedient, follows rules</p> <p>(S2) Compliant, follows rules and instructions</p> <p>(S3) Independent learner</p> <p>(S4) Able to do anything independently, can trust them</p> <p>(S5) Independent, getting ready for work, working, answering questions</p> <p>(S6) Independently functions in the classroom</p> <p>(S7) independent in the classroom</p> <p>(S8) Independent worker, functions well in the classroom</p> <p>(S9) Independent in class</p>
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		<p>(S10) Self-sufficient in the classroom</p> <p>(P2) If he has homework to do, he does it as soon as he comes home, he finishes his homework and then he watches TV.</p> <p>(P4) ...she likes doing her homework, she never comes to school without doing her homework; Her homework she's doing by herself....she doesn't like leaving her homework without finishing it.</p> <p>(P5) ...she does do homework but she does a lot of it in school on the computers because we don't have a computer at home</p> <p>(P6) He also does his homework for Mosque lessons, he prepares for tests he has there too.</p> <p>(P7) If someone starts talking she'll get very angry with them. She'll be like, be quiet, I'm trying to do my homework here.</p> <p>(P8) When he is at his best he always makes sure that he does his homework as soon as he comes home from school his homework comes out.</p> <p>(P9) His friend asked him to draw a picture for him. It took him two weeks to draw it because he made sure he did his core homework first and then he spent 15 or 20 minutes every day drawing this picture. He finished it two weeks later and gave it to his friend.</p> <p>(P10) Like every Fridays they always come home with homework. He doesn't delay with it. Like sometimes you don't even know when did he do it.he just go and grab his homework, sit down, do it and finish.</p>
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Table 28 - Findings Table for Theme of Connectedness

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children Staff Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents Siblings Friends Loved Ones Teachers Supportive relations Caring towards others Sharing/playing with others Respectful relations Maintains relations/works through conflicts Sense of belonging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karate club School Church Family Friendship group 	<p>(C1) She is very good with her family. Very caring towards her mum as she is poorly. She lets her mum go to sleep and rest, she helps out.</p> <p>(C1) She has got lots of friends.</p> <p>(C1) ...loads of friends</p> <p>(C2) His family is really proud of him...</p> <p>(C2) When his brother and sister want to play with him he says yes...</p> <p>(C2) He's got about 30 friends.</p> <p>(C3) She respects her family.</p> <p>(C4) ...he feels close to God.</p> <p>(C4) ...has lots of friends. They come to his house to play, shares and respects, helps with homework, cares about them. They live close to him.</p> <p>(C5) She gets on really well. She does extra chores for her mum. She obeys her family, her big brother is very loving and her little sister is very gentle. She gets on well with them. She cleans the house when her parents are away. She likes to help her family.</p> <p>(C5) She's really loving (to her friends).</p> <p>(C5) She will have a happy future with her family and loved ones.</p> <p>(C6) She has a little sister, she always insists that she looks after her when her dad is at work and mum is tired.</p> <p>(C6) When friends are lonely, she's the first person to ask 'what's wrong?' If they don't tell her, she says 'come on play with me.'</p> <p>(C6) she's been doing good things like looking after her family, sister, friends and church</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving/good friend • Relationship with God 	<p>(C7) He's actually brilliant with them (his friends). He always plays with them.</p> <p>(C7) He is excellent with his family. He has good manners, he always listens to his mum and doesn't fight with his sister; he has lots of friends; he has lots of friends; everybody would love him.</p> <p>(C7) He's like this 'cos of his dad because his dad was a genius; Because of his dad. When he was 4 years old, his dad taught him how to be good, he knew his times tables to 1000, he potty-trained him.</p> <p>(C8) He's good because he's got lots of friends.</p> <p>(C8) He gets on very well (with his friends).</p> <p>(C8) He can tell them (his friends) the secret of why he is a really good footballer.</p> <p>(C8) He doesn't share the secret because somebody shared the secret with him and he promised (his friend) he wouldn't tell anyone.</p> <p>(C8) He only got in to trouble once with his family.</p> <p>(C9) Flowers for the teacher because he looks after him.</p> <p>(C9) Toys to share with people</p> <p>(C9) He gets on very well with his family. He respects his family, helping people up and down stairs especially his mum who is poorly. He shares his toys.</p> <p>(C9) He gives his friends a helping hand</p> <p>(C10) He gets on very good with his family. He helps his mother make cake, he helps his father on the computer. He plays with his sister.</p> <p>(C10) ...very good (with his friends). They always play at lunch time. They play hide and seek and attack.</p> <p>(C10)...when his friends are hurt he helps them</p> <p>(C10) He helps his friend in Maths</p> <p>(S2) maintains relationships, works through conflicts</p>
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		<p>(S3) makes friends easily, has a range of friends</p> <p>(S4) giving friend, maintains relationships, good established friendships, deals with conflicts well</p> <p>(S5) makes a good friend</p> <p>(S6) makes a good and caring friend</p> <p>(S7) strong sense of belonging, known in school</p> <p>(S8) high social awareness, belongingness</p> <p>(S9) socially integrated, part of a solid friendship group</p> <p>(S10) Strong sense of belonging</p> <p>(P1) He's loves to be part of the karate club</p> <p>(P1) his instructor supports him. He's got a lady instructor and she's really, really nice but he tends to, there's a male instructor that comes every now and again but he'll get more boisterous with a male, than he will, he'll respect more Karen who's his main instructor. He has a relationship with her but not with the male instructor. Like she says something, he will stop and listen.</p> <p>(P1) ...some friends</p> <p>(P1) ...do an activity at night with other children</p> <p>(P1) ...he'll respect more Karen who's his main instructor. Like she says something, he will stop and listen.</p> <p>(P2) He plays with his brother and he likes sharing</p> <p>(P3) plays in the football team and he's just started going MMA, mixed martial arts.</p> <p>(P3) Just the way he is, he'll go all day if he could. If he could sit there playing football all day...and interacting with others...some of his friends.</p> <p>(P3) He's quite happy in playing with them.</p> <p>(P3) A story teller, he likes to tell stories to his group of friends.</p>
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		<p>(P3) Teachers love him.....just because he's polite, and he'll do anything if they ask him to do anything. He just does everything for 'em.</p> <p>(P3) He goes with his Dad. He loves it. He loves catching the fish and killing them and eating them together (Laughter).</p> <p>(P3)...and boys club.</p> <p>(P3) He's just started going to boys club, so it's only been this year that he's getting out of his shell a little bit.</p> <p>(P3) He's quite happy to be playing with his brothers, following his brother's lead.</p> <p>(P4) She's asking her Dad and she's asking her sister. She is really close to them.</p> <p>(P4) She likes to be friends with everybody.</p> <p>(P4) She and her sister, singing and dancing all the time.</p> <p>(P4) She's going to miss all the teachers. She loves all her teachers</p> <p>(P4)...they have a good communication with their Dad....</p> <p>Even if she's struggle if he's not here, he lives in Holland most of the time, she call him and "Dad I'm struggling, this, this, this..."</p> <p>(P4) My oldest one says, "That school is like my house, my home", she say, "I miss the school".</p> <p>(P5) She's got lots of friends.</p> <p>(P5) She only gets sad when she falls out with her friends at school which happens occasionally but apart from that no, she's a very happy child.</p> <p>Occasionally when she falls out with her friends then she'll come home and she'll say, "NAME's not my friend." And we'll sit and talk about it and I'll ask her why and I'll say, "Go back to school tomorrow and say to NAME you want to be friends" and sort it out that way.</p> <p>(P5) ...sometimes when we have cuddle time</p> <p>(P5) ...she's got lots of friends.</p>
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		<p>(P5)...cuddle time.</p> <p>(P6) He play with the footballs with his brothers and his father sometimes in the park. But he enjoy playing mostly with his brothers</p> <p>(P6) ...she likes to draw something for her younger baby brother...</p> <p>(P6) She made a Mother's Day card...</p> <p>(P6) She likes playing with her friend and doing things with the teachers or with a group.</p> <p>(P6) Mostly she likes playing with them or chatting...</p> <p>(P7) Like with her brother, when he's upset you know she's straight to him, what's wrong, can I help you?</p> <p>(P7) With the teachers, she'll go in and she wants to hug the teachers, say hello if she's been of or they've been of sick.</p> <p>(P7) And saying how much she misses them and (inaudible) she'll go in and want to hug them and say you know welcome back.</p> <p>(P8) She's very loving. She fusses so much, especially with her brother.</p> <p>(P8) ...she tends to mother him very much.</p> <p>(P9) ...she loves her two friends.</p> <p>(P9) She's in the church choir.</p> <p>(P11) ...when the teacher's mum was poorly or whatever, he came home and told me and said I'd like to make her a card.</p> <p>(P11) ... we're Christians and it is important that our children have a relationship with God... knowing that my children are secure in God's love as well that's important.</p> <p>(P12) She's in the Netball team, she loves to be part of the team.</p> <p>(P12) He's just like joining in. Engaging with whoever. So he's totally involved with it all, playing football with his team.</p>
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		<p>(P13) His best friends he's been with since Baby Room at Baby Nursery and they're still together now and they're a very close knit group and they're very careful about who they let in and they're very protective of each other.</p> <p>(P13) ...but he loves his friends, if you know what I mean, he'd do anything and if they're upset, he'll come home some nights and be upset because so and so was hurt today, you know he's got great empathy with his friends. And quite tight with them if that makes sense.</p> <p>(P14)are at their best, it's when we're together and we're doing things together as a family.</p> <p>(P14) ...yes he's in a good place there but not his best, because his best is when he's with his sister and brother and also with Mum and Dad too. We're a real family, family. We do everything together. Everything.</p> <p>(P14)...he likes being amongst a group of children, where he likes working with them. He gets on with his class mates.</p> <p>(P14)...we flourish as a family as I've already said and we are happiest and at our best when we are together, when we are one. And there is nothing stronger or greater than that.</p> <p>(P14)... we do as a family.</p>
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Table 29 - Findings Table for Theme of Autonomy

Data-Set	Refined Codes	Supporting Extract
Staff Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership • Intrinsic Motivation • Goal-Oriented • Making Choices 	<p>(S1) Can express their own views well</p> <p>(S3) Self-motivated; has own ideas; awareness of own goals</p> <p>(S4) Self-motivated, has own goals/interests</p> <p>(S4) Aspirational; keen to learn and talk about their learning; takes ownership</p> <p>(S5) Self-motivated</p> <p>(S6) Asks questions, extends their own learning, has goals</p> <p>(S8) Tends to use own initiative and ideas</p> <p>(S9) Self-motivated</p> <p>(S10) Goal-focused, intrinsically motivated</p> <p>(P1)...when he's got a goal....it motivates him a lot more than if there's no goal.</p> <p>(P3) ...but he doesn't like the attention. If he's put in assembly for a main part, he doesn't want to do it. He gets a bit scared I think, he likes bringing the attention on himself. But not being given the attention, do you know what I mean? If he's put on the spot he doesn't like it but if he's putting himself on it, he's fine.</p> <p>(P3) ...he done it off his own back.</p> <p>(P4) ...she wants to be the best student.</p> <p>(P11)kind of having a framework of love with freedom to explore things and explore their gifts and abilities...</p> <p>(P14)...he seems to be wanting to prove that he can do things.</p> <p>(P14) ... however, whatever it is she believes in....but she sticks to it, she remains true to it. (P14) She says what she wants to say or needs to say.</p>

Table 30 - Findings Table for Unique Trait

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children Staff Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personality Personal trait/disposition Individuality 	<p>(C1) Very friendly in all places she goes</p> <p>(C3) kind</p> <p>(C4) Good personality, sensible, polite</p> <p>(C4) He's friendly</p> <p>(C5) generous</p> <p>(C5) She's kind</p> <p>(C9) helpful, helps people at school</p> <p>(C10) He's very kind</p> <p>(C10) he's chatty</p> <p>(S1) ...sunny disposition; highly humorous; popular with other children</p> <p>(S2)...outspoken, confident; sociable; inquisitive</p> <p>(S3)...happy disposition; empathic; respectful, respect for others and other people's things</p> <p>(S4)...empathic, easily able to see others' points of view</p> <p>(S5)...kind, friendly, thoughtful towards others; optimistic, forward thinking; caring</p> <p>(S6)...happy disposition; caring</p> <p>(S7)...highly resilient; optimistic outlook</p> <p>(S8) ...very helpful and thoughtful</p> <p>(S9)...upbeat, optimistic disposition; popular; high degree of self-awareness</p>

		<p>(S10)...very caring and kind; socially skilled; self-aware</p> <p>(P1) he's quite quiet</p> <p>(P2) ...honest; caring.</p> <p>(P3) ...comical; funny; polite; well mannered.</p> <p>(P4) ...kind; helpful; appreciative; determined.</p> <p>(P5) ...kind; caring; very helpful; imaginative; happy-go-lucky child; well mannered; hyperactive.</p> <p>(P6) ...respectful</p> <p>(P7) ...competitive; very hyperactive...bouncing around; very bubbly; chatty; a live wire; confident; persistent; helpful; caring.</p> <p>(P8) They're all got their own little personalities, so it's erm, it's just really nice to see them all different...</p> <p>(P8) ...boisterous; inquisitive; helpful; caring; pleasing; motherly; loving.</p> <p>(P10) ...everyone's got their own personality.</p> <p>(P10) ...pleasant; bubbly; humorous; quiet.</p> <p>(P11) ...headstrong; leader-y-type; confident; resilient; inquisitive; humorous; kind of a sticker...determined; diplomatic; sensitive; generous-hearted person; very accepting of people; welcoming; warm; thoughtfulness; religious; spiritual.</p> <p>(P12) ...bubbly; friendly; quiet; drive; sporty.</p> <p>(P13) ...very, very boisterous; happy go-lucky type of person; daring; active; people-type; pleasing; very bouncy...like a leaping lion; a sociable little fella; open person; has great empathy.</p> <p>(P14) ...team player; shy; sociable young man; leady; cheeky little chappy; inquisitive; humble; courage; brave.</p>
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Table 31 - Findings Table for Theme of Emergent Character

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good character • Doing the right thing • Good/strong morals/ moral identity • Specific character trait <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassionate • Kindness • Resilience • Philosophical • Helpful • Service • Steadfast/Brave • Reasoning for virtuous actions • Growing/ developing character 	<p>(C1) If person feels sad, she will at least go up to them and do her best, very caring and helpful;</p> <p>(C1) ...if someone is crying upset she will go and see if they need any help and try her best to put her smile on their face. She will have a go even when it is hard.</p> <p>(C3) If she sees someone lonely, no-one to play with, she makes a game up to play with them.</p> <p>(C3) She shares. She takes a packed lunch and if her friend doesn't have much lunch she gives bit of her lunch.</p> <p>(C5) ...helps them when they need help. She always stands up for them, when they are hurt. Sometimes her friends get bullied, she comes along and puts a stop to it.</p> <p>(C6) She's kind she's going to check her piggy bank and give some money to the parish church for charity. She had a note from the church that any money would be appreciated. She decided to give all her money.</p> <p>(C6) She's on a higher level. She does the right thing.</p> <p>(C7) If someone falls down, he helps them up. If someone is stuck in Maths, he helps them out he doesn't give them the answer. He gives them a helping hand. He has a day named for him.....called David's day. It's on the 25th July and there are parades.</p> <p>(P11) She's pretty good at being philosophical about them really, which I think is something that she's learnt that people are not always nice and that is just the way they are sometimes and it's not right to hit out and do what they've done to you back to them she's quite good at just saying well it didn't make me feel nice but I feel sorry for them because maybe they're doing it because whatever.</p> <p>(P11) ...she's not kind of smiling and emitting happiness but at the same time as far as developing character I think that is a good thing if you know what I mean. I don't mean for her to be feeling sad or whatever but I think as far as flourishing goes I don't think it's all about happiness, it's about learning character traits and learning who you are and learning how to cope when things don't always go right. And showing that actually there's reasons behind things and why people do things and its right to be able to respond even to bad things in the right way.</p>

		<p>(P11) ...showing kindness and stuff like that I think it gives him confidence and affirms him that that's the right way to be as well.</p> <p>(P11) It's not about you're flourishing because you can play the piano, play the guitar and you've got a swimming badge or whatever. It's about flourishing in your character, growing in your character and feeling secure and confident to be able to do that.</p> <p>(P14) ... he's really forming as a person.</p> <p>(P14) So the pride comes in him serving, you know. He's offered his service to help.....he involves himself, he volunteers for all sorts of things. He doesn't worry about what anybody says or thinks about him in terms of not being a teacher's pet but in the fact that he involves himself. And because he involves himself the teachers are happy to include him and to ask him and so on. So he's a librarian you know he took that on himself and all kinds of other little services in the school, goodies and things he's just straight in, he volunteers, he does it. So he is, has that quality of service, that's his characteristic.</p> <p>(P14) ... has strong morals. She will always choose to do the right thing even if all around her are pushing for her to do something different. And she'll stand up and say no that's wrong. And even though the pressure might be extremely strong.</p> <p>(P14) She is very strong in doing the right thing. So she has a very, absolutely powerfully strong character our Name.</p> <p>(P14), however, whatever it is she believes in, and I know it's based on her faith and our faith as a family, but she sticks to it, she remains true to it. She truly believes in it, it's not wishy-washy, it's not bit part or only fair weather times and so on. She remains true to it. So she's so strong, incredibly strong and the ironic thing with that is that she has a language problem. She's had speech and language therapy here. She's not...there's nothing wrong with her mentally, all she does is some of her words get mixed up and yet despite all of that, she shows great strength you know when she could just fade into the background and keep her head down and think to herself, if I say this or I say that they'll just... she doesn't.</p>
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Table 32 - Findings Table for Theme of Aspiring to Make a Difference

Data-Set (s)	Refined Code (s)	Supporting Extract
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a difference in future lives • Connected to something bigger than self • Public service roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher • Priest • Police • Government • Supporting people in need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor • Elderly • Homeless • Concern for environment • Making progress in society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving schools/hospitals • Learning about space 	<p>(C1) She wants to be a police lady...to see and work out mysteries and making sure people are alright, feel safe from robbers.</p> <p>(C2) ...because he donates to charities.....children in need and hospitals.</p> <p>(C2) ...trying to make more people happy, wants everything around him to be the best it can be</p> <p>(C3) She will become a teacher. She will help people who are poor, will give money to charity. Will help the silly children to be good so they can have a good life. She's teaching her class. She is using stuff to teach the class. She also likes to give money to charity to help out.</p> <p>(C4) ...he is a priest.....He will baptise people, pray for them in church, sit along with them and for them, pray for them when they are poorly. He will bless them....lots of people go to his church. He is cleaning his church after someone has been sick. He is sitting there having a break, thinking about God...</p> <p>(C5) Sometimes donates her clothes and her food to the poor.</p> <p>(C5) Sometimes she spends her free time picking up litter in the street</p> <p>(C5) She will be a charity person who gives out flyers, telling people to donate so it go to good cause. For people who don't have any clothes, or roof over their heads....</p> <p>(C6) She is going to build a church. She is going to have a church programme for poor people who want to learn more about Jesus. Because all the people who are poor, she says don't worry there will be a service for you. I will take away my life for you. I will help you out. She feels the poor should be treated nicely like they deserve this.</p> <p>(C7) maybe he will become the President; he wants to create a better and happy country; ... he is the president of the whole city. He wants to make a big different. . He does a lot for the world because he cares about the world. He's third in charge after God and Jesus. He helps dying animals, old people in hospitals, children, head teachers to help improve schools, help astronauts to find out about space and help builders.</p> <p>(C8) When he grows up, he might be in government helping people.</p>

		<p>(C8) He is picking up berries so make it into jam, he is going to wrap it up and give it to children in need.</p> <p>(C9) He's building a house for homeless people. He's doing it by himself because he really wants to help out. He's bending down to fix it. These are homeless people, he's still trying to get inside. He's trying to help him. He's got money for homeless people, he's collected money for homeless people.</p> <p>(C10) He wants to be King of England. He wants to run the country better.... He wants to look after the environment. He helps people to keep the city clean and tidy. He's helping all the people in the city.</p>
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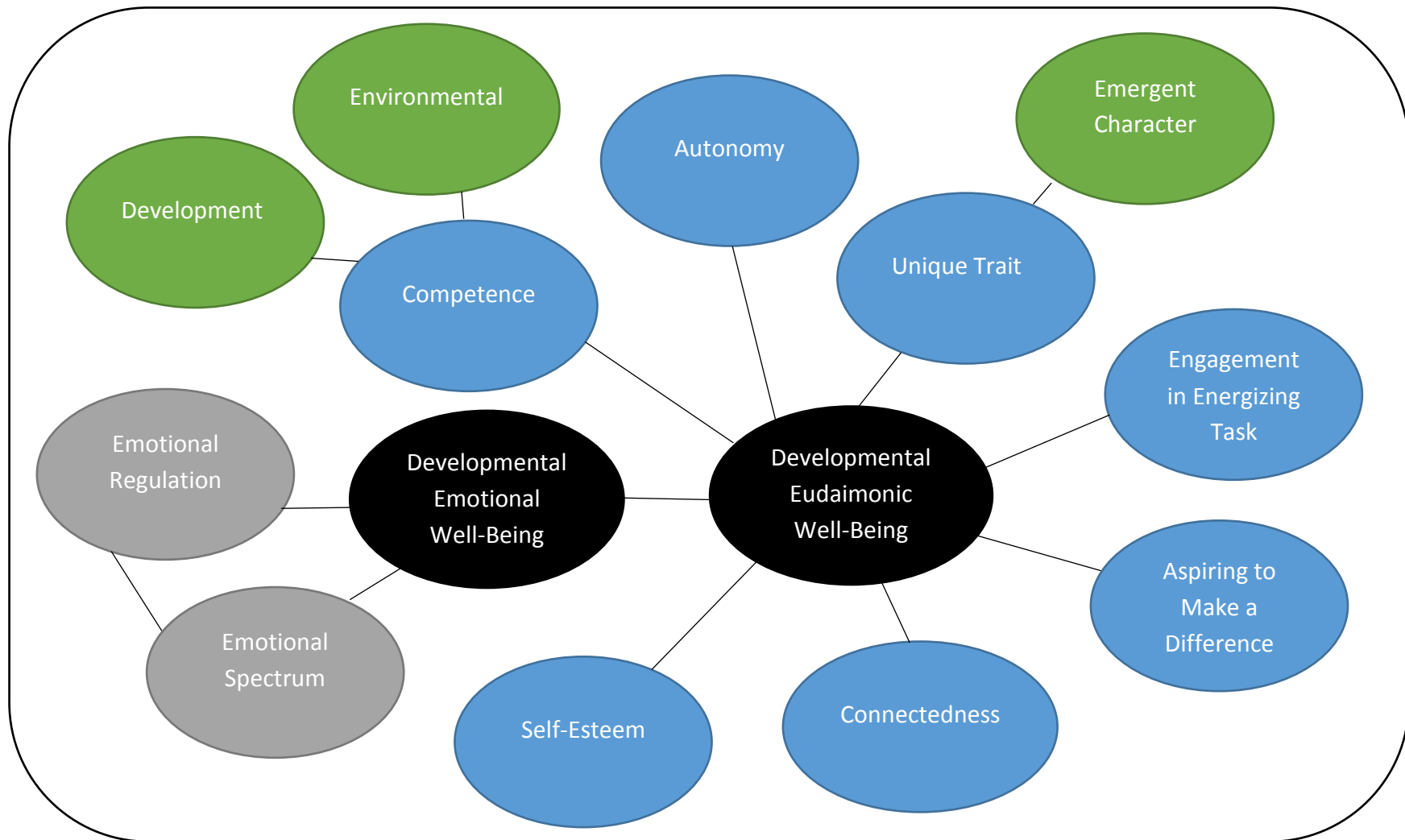


Figure 12 – Final Thematic Map

Table 33 - List of Themes/Sub-themes and Definitions

Theme/Sub-Theme	Definition
Emotional Spectrum	Experiences a range of positive and negative emotions.
Emotional Regulation	Manages own emotions well.
Engagement in Energizing Task	Involvement in activities that are motivating to the child.
Connectedness	Has close attachments to others including a divine being (i.e., God) and a sense of belonging.
Competence	Ability to do something successfully.
Development of Competence	Puts the effort into developing skills.
Environmental Competence	Good at managing home/school responsibilities/expectations.
Autonomy	Self-motivated action underpinned by own goals and/or views.
Unique Trait	Personal characteristic(s) of a child.
Emergent Character	Development of good character/character trait including emergent reasoning underpinning virtuous action.
Self-esteem	Has a positive attitude towards self.
Aspiring to Make a Difference	Aspiring to make a difference in relation to something larger than self.

4.6 Discussion

This illuminative study provides an insight into the perceptions of parents, children and staff regarding the key dimensions/characteristics of 'flourishing' in children. This section explores and interprets the findings of the 'define' phase of the inquiry. Findings for each theme and sub-theme are discussed in relation to the existing literature. Similarities and differences are explored between the socially constructed realities of the participants (which is referred as the developmental-ecosystemic model of flourishing) and the existing models of flourishing (which appear to be underpinned predominately by a positivist epistemology). Also parental models of flourishing are discussed, as Parents 11 and 14 expressed their respective conceptualisation of flourishing in explicit terms.

These findings are discussed in relation to the broader positive psychology literature including pertinent theories proposed by leading humanistic psychologists (such as Maslow and Rogers), given the insufficient regard to and review of previous relevant literature by the co-founders of the current positive psychology movement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Joseph & Linley, 2004). [For a recap, refer back to the section 1.3 entitled 'Positive Psychology in Relation to Humanistic Psychology'].

The findings are discussed in two interconnected sections. First, the overarching theme of developmental emotional well-being is discussed, which comprises the theme of emotional spectrum and sub-theme of emotional regulation. Second, the overarching cluster of themes (and sub-themes) of developmental eudaimonic well-being is examined: theme of engagement in an energizing task; theme of connectedness; theme of autonomy; theme of competence, including sub-themes of development of competence and

environmental competence; theme of unique trait and sub-theme of emergent character; theme of self-esteem; and theme of aspiring to make a difference (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Findings are presented in a way which seeks to provide ‘a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell – within and across themes’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93).

4.6.1 Developmental Emotional Well-Being

4.6.1.1 Theme of emotional spectrum and sub-theme of emotional regulation

This theme captures the full range of emotions that participants highlighted when they were thinking about a child who is flourishing or at their best. This question was framed loosely on the two-part construct of ‘positive feelings’ and ‘positive functioning’; for example, parents were asked to think about when their child is at their best, how are they feeling and what are they doing? (Keyes, 2002, 2006). The range of positive emotions included happy, excited, proud, contented, grateful, joyful, and zest (Fredrickson, 1998; 2009). The range of negative emotions included scared, sad, lonely, disappointed, frustrated, angry, worried, nervous, frightened and stressed (McLellan & Steward, 2015).

The theme of emotional spectrum does not feature in the current positive psychology literature. Instead nine of the eleven studies on flourishing focus on the dimension of subjective well-being including positive emotion (Reschly et al., 2008; Kelly, 2012; Keyes, 2006; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Kim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Kern et al., 2016). However, this theme does feature implicitly within the broader positive psychology literature when Rogers describes a person who is self-actualizing as a ‘fully functioning person’ as having qualities such as

being non-defensive and open to experience where both positive and negative emotions are accepted (Rogers, 1961, p.122).

Although Norrish et al. (2013) applied the PERMA model put forward by Seligman (2011), they acknowledge the dangers of focusing exclusively on positive emotions. Norrish et al. (2013) appear to adopt a broader perspective as they state 'the positive emotion domain encourages individuals to anticipate, initiate, prolong and build positive emotional experiences and accept and develop healthy responses to negative emotions' (Norrish et al., 2013, p. 152). They acknowledge the concerns of an exclusive focus on positive emotions:

'Appreciating the danger of promoting the idea that positive emotions and thoughts must be experienced continuously (Held, 2004), the students are encouraged to cultivate and enhance positive emotions without avoiding, suppressing, or denying negative reactions or emotions. An overarching objective is to help students understand that all emotions are normal, valid, and important parts of life'. (Norrish et al., 2013, p152-153).

In essence, the sub-theme of emotional regulation is captured in these quotes of 'accept and develop healthy responses to negative emotions' and 'enhance positive emotions without avoiding, suppressing or denying negative reactions or emotions' (Norrish et al., 2013, p. 152). This sub-theme is not evident in the literature review of this thesis.

Some of the staff participants may have highlighted the sub-theme of emotional regulation due to their previous experience of the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme (DfES, 2007). Proctor et al. (2011) refer to the SEAL programme when they

suggest that educators are 'beginning to recognize the benefits of looking at well-being from a positive perspective' (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 378). The SEAL initiative is grounded in Goleman's model of emotional intelligence which includes five domains: self-awareness, self-regulation (managing feelings), motivation, empathy and social skills. Self-regulation is defined as:

'Managing how we express emotions, coping with and changing difficult and uncomfortable feelings, and increasing and enhancing positive and pleasant feelings. When we have strategies for expressing our feelings in a positive way and for helping us to cope with difficult feelings and feel more positive and comfortable, we can concentrate better, behave more appropriately, make better relationships, and work more cooperatively and productively with those around us' (DfES, 2007, p. 5-6).

The purpose of the SEAL initiative was to provide an entitlement curriculum to develop social and emotional skills within a structured and progressive framework through a universal approach (via class-based, 'quality first-teaching' to all children from the ages of 3 to 16 years). Staff's responses with regard to emotional regulation suggests they may have been influenced by the SEAL initiative (DfES, 2007).

Upon further examination, I found negative emotions were linked to a range of eudaimonic activities including competence, connectedness and character development. This indicates positive emotions were not experienced during eudaimonic endeavours even though these activities are considered important for good functioning. Child's 10 construction of a child at their best 'feels worried he might get it wrong.' Child 8 stated that a child at their best feels a 'little bit annoyed' when there is a test because 'he's clever and everyone keeps asking him what the answers are.' Parent 5 references their child feeling

‘sad’ when she falls out with her close friend. According to Parent 14, their child feels ‘scared, alone and frightened’ when doing the ‘right thing’.

When discerning scales of well-being, McLellan and Steward (2015) made a case for the fourth and final factor to be labelled as ‘negative emotion’, given that ‘items associated with the fourth factor as a group had a negative emotive flavour (worry, misery, etc.), so was termed *negative emotion*’ (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 320). It may be argued that further exploration may be required to ascertain, when children are at their best, whether they may experience greater positive emotions than negative emotions. This is problematic from a developmental perspective, given that most primary school children would lack understanding of the underlying emotional processes within themselves. Developmental emotion researchers, Harter and Buddin (1987), found that children accept the co-occurrence of conflicting emotions at about the age of ten.

4.6.2 Developmental Eudaimonic Well-Being

4.6.2.1 Theme of engagement in an energizing task

This theme is described as involvement in an activity that is motivating to the child. A range of energizing activities were reported by the participants including karate, football, reading, researching, dancing, learning, writing stories, fishing, gymnastics, playing musical instruments, and singing. Engagement is grounded in explicit terms in four studies (Reschly et al., 2008; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Lubans et al., 2016; Kern et al., 2016) and in implicit terms within the emotional well-being cluster of dimensions (i.e., positive affect, interest) of Keyes’ model of flourishing (Keyes, 2006; Schalkywk & Wissing, 2010; Kim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016). This theme is linked to the

following theories that are found in positive psychology literature: the flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997); the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001; Reschly et al., 2008); and the strengths theory (Linley, 2010).

Parent 5 implicates the flow theory when discussing their child engaged in Art homework:

‘She loves Art at school....it’s the only homework I’ve seen her do properly at home is Art homework, and she’ll sit at the table and she’ll sit there for hours just...it’s like she loses herself in it’.

Seligman (2011) draws upon the flow theory when he discusses the engagement element of the PERMA model with terms such as ‘completely absorbed by the task’ and loss of ‘self-consciousness’ (Kern et al., 2016). Seligman (2011) describes the engagement element as:

“Engagement remains an element. Like positive emotion, it is assessed only subjectively (‘Did time stop for you?’ ‘Were you completely absorbed by the task?’ ‘Did you lose self-consciousness?’). Positive emotion and engagement are the two categories in well-being where all the factors are measured only subjectively. As the hedonic, or pleasurable, element, positive emotion encompasses all the usual subjective well-being variables: pleasure, ecstasy, comfort, warmth, and the like. Keep in mind, however, that thought and feeling are usually absent during the flow state, and only in retrospect do you say, ‘That was fun’ or ‘That was wonderful.’ While the subjective state for the pleasures in in the present, the subjective state for engagement is only retrospective” (Seligman, 2011, p.16-17).

Moreover, the argument that different positive emotions have different functions and phenomenology (Straumme & Vitterso, 2012) may be applicable when comparing a child

engaging in a pleasurable activity such as ‘watching TV....cartoons’ (Parent 6) with a child who is ‘focused’ and demonstrates ‘absorbed concentration on their special interest’ (Staff 6). Whilst Fredrickson (1998, 2009) argues that all positive emotions activate the ‘broaden-and-build’ mechanism, others argue that interest and pleasure are separable emotions with distinct functions and phenomenology even when both are characterised as positive. Straumme and Vitterso (2012) make this case when they examine pleasant feeling states and interest feeling states. Drawing from a functional perspective of well-being, Vitterso and his colleagues (Vitterso et al, 2010; Straumme and Vitterso, 2012) maintain that pleasure is an affective response to a stimulus that is not too complex and to a situation in which needs are satisfied and goals are realized. The role played by pleasure in the regulation of behaviour is to reward successful behaviour, and to broaden spheres of attention to provide mental flexibility. In contrast to the broaden-and-build theory, the functional model of well-being does not suggest that pleasure facilitates the building of resources, but rather that the positive emotion associated with interest fulfils this role.

Furthermore Straumme and Vitterso (2012) argue that attentional resources are managed differently during pleasant states and those states that feel interesting. Attention is broadened during pleasant feeling states, preparing individuals for rapid changes in goals and activities. In contrast, when absorbed in something of interest, attention is focused and changes to goal commitment do not take place easily. In real terms, interest provides sustained attention to an object that is hard to reach or to a goal that is difficult to attain.

In addition, Parent 7’s and 9’s responses appear to link with Linley’s conceptualisation of strengths (Linley, 2008, 2010; Biswar-Diener et al., 2010):

“When you are using a strength, you feel energised. You get a buzz. You feel like it’s the ‘real me’ coming through.Strengths are deeply fulfilling to us – and they should be. They are about our unique selves, who we are at our best” (Linley, 2010, p.66).

Parent 7 suggested that the outcomes of engagement were noticeable and enduring beyond the involvement of the energizing task itself:

“You can tell. You can just tell in them when they’re happy, when they’ve had a good day and they come home. They’re just really full of energy, like they’re floating on clouds almost. They’re really like untouchable, really confident, it’s hard to put into words...you can just feel the energy coming from them.”

Similarly, Parent 9 said ‘activities you know, the good energy she is getting.’

4.6.2.2 Theme of connectedness

This theme refers to close attachments to others (including a divine being) and a sense of belongingness. There were references to connectedness with family members, friends, class mates, school, clubs and God. Parent 4 referenced that when their child is functioning well is ‘really close to’ their father and brother, whereas Parent 1 mentioned their child ‘loves to be part of the karate club. Staff member 7’s construction of a flourishing child refers to a ‘strong sense of belonging’. Parent 13 also mentioned the value of being part of a ‘close knit group’:

‘His best friends he’s been with since Baby Room at Baby Nursery and they’re still together now and they’re very close knit group and they’re very careful about who they let in and they’re very protective of each other’.

Child 4’s construction of a child at their best ‘feels close to God’. Similarly, Parent 11 referred to their child at their best having ‘a relationship with God’.

Similarly, South African adolescents (in the qualitative part of the mixed-methods study) included relationships with parents or primary carers, friends and others, and God (Schwallyk & Wissing, 2010).

The theme of connectedness is evident explicitly in seven of the eleven studies that explored the construct of flourishing (Keyes, 2006; Kim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016; Lubans et al., 2016; Kern et al., 2016). The other remaining studies that focused on relatedness include Schwallyk and Wissing (2010) and Kiang and Pi (2018). These studies used the label of positive relationships derived from Ryff's conceptualisation of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989). Underpinned by a developmental perspective, I have labelled this theme as connectedness rather than positive relationships.

Developmentally, I think it is unrealistic for young children to initiate and sustain positive relationships. Disagreements or quarrels amongst friends, peers and/or siblings are 'part and parcel' of children learning about relationships. The following quote from Parent 5 illustrates this when she talks about her child functioning at her best:

"She only gets sad when she falls out with her friends at school which happens occasionally but apart from that no, she's a very happy child.

Occasionally when she falls out with her friends then she'll come home and she'll say, "Molly's not my friend." And we'll sit and talk about it and I'll ask her why and I'll say, "Go back to school tomorrow and say to Molly you want to be friends" and sort it out that way."

In addition, Staff 2's emergent construct of a flourishing child 'maintains relationships, works through conflicts'. These references meant that I re-named the initial theme of positive relationships to final theme of connectedness (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Those studies that are underpinned by the tripartite model of positive mental health feature both connectedness and positive relationships; connectedness is akin to the dimension of social integration as part of the social well-being cluster and positive relationships is part of the psychological well-being cluster (Keyes, 2006; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Kim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016). This overlap may be explained by the fact that Keyes developed his model of social well-being in 1998 on a separate basis and Ryff developed her model of psychological well-being in 1989. Keyes then integrated these two models to form the tripartite model of positive mental health (Keyes, 2006).

Based on the assumption that connectedness is a basic psychological need that is considered innate and nine of the eleven studies on flourishing are underpinned by this assumption, suggests that connectedness is a core part of flourishing which remains the case from both a developmental and life-span perspective (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Keyes, 2006; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Kim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016; Lubans et al., 2016; Kern et al., 2016; Kiang & Pi, 2018).

4.6.2.3 *Theme of autonomy*

This theme refers to self-motivated action underpinned by own goals and/or views. Parent 3 talked about their child's self-determining behaviour in this way:

“...but he doesn't like the attention. If he's put in assembly for a main part, he doesn't want to do it. He gets a bit scared I think, he likes bringing the attention on himself. But not being given the attention, do you know what I mean? If he's put on the spot he doesn't like it but if he's putting himself on it, he's fine.”

Similarly, Staff member 3's constructions of a flourishing child included someone who is 'self-motivated', 'has own ideas' and has an 'awareness of own goals.' Staff member 10's emergent construct of 'intrinsically motivated' also fits into this theme. According to self-determination theory, the most self-determined state comprises intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 1985, 2000).

The flourishing dimension of autonomy is also evident in two other conceptualisations: psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989); and tripartite model of positive mental health (Keyes, 2006). The theme of autonomy features in eight of the eleven studies on flourishing (Keyes, 2006; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Kim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016; Lubans et al., 2016; Kiang & Pi, 2018).

I wondered about the ways pupil autonomy can be supported in the classroom. Stefanou et al. (2004) propose that autonomy support can be demonstrated in the classroom in three ways: organizational autonomy support (such as allowing pupils to take part in some decision making in relation to classroom management issues); procedural autonomy support (such as offering pupils choices about the use of different methods to present their

ideas); and cognitive autonomy support (such as providing opportunities for pupil to appraise their work from a self-referent standard). Stefanou et al. (2004) argued that these distinct types of autonomy support may produce differential outcomes: organizational autonomy support may reassure a sense of comfort and well-being with the way a classroom operates; procedural autonomy may nurture initial engagement with tasks; and cognitive autonomy support may promote deep-level thinking via a more enduring psychological investment. When considering the underpinning assumption of the interplay between the context and the pupil, staff of a school need to review authority structures in instruction and readjust those authority structures to support pupil autonomy. For example, autonomy can be supported through the provision of choice alongside the minimal use of external controls (Ryan & Deci, 1985, 2000; Stefanou et al., 2004).

Moreover, based on the assumption that autonomy is a basic psychological need that is considered innate and eight of the eleven studies on flourishing are underpinned by this assumption, suggests that autonomy is a core part of flourishing which remains the case from both a developmental and life-span perspective (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Keyes, 2006; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Kim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016; Lubans et al., 2016; Kiang & Pi, 2018).

4.6.2.4 *Theme of competence and sub-themes of development of competence and environmental competence*

The theme of competence refers to the ability to do something successfully. Child 2's construction of a child at their best includes achieving 'the highest levels in all of his subjects'. Similarly, Parent 7 said their child when at their best 'achieve higher standards,

a lot higher standards'. Staff 9's emergent construct of flourishing included 'high academic abilities'.

This theme is sub-divided into two related elements, development of competence and environmental competence. The former refers to putting the effort into developing new skills or learning whereas the latter refers to being good at managing responsibilities at home and/or school. Two of the eleven studies on flourishing are rooted in the dimension of competence (McLellan & Steward, 2015; Lubans et al., 2016), five studies are grounded in the dimension of environmental mastery (similar to environmental competence) (Keyes, 2006; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Lim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016), and one study is underpinned by the dimension of perseverance (akin to the sub-theme of development of competence) (Kern et al., 2016).

Participants discussed children at their best or flourishing putting the effort into developing new skills or learning: Parent 2 said 'he puts the effort into learning'; Parent 7 said 'she worked hard at it', Staff 2 said 'perseveres, tries hard, keeps going'; Staff 6 said 'perseveres consistently, tries hard, practising new learning'; Child 9 said 'he know he doesn't have to get it right first time, so he keeps going until he get it'; and Child 6 said 'she keeps going with her learning even when it's hard'. Perseverance is one element of the EPOCH model (others being engagement, optimism, connectedness and happiness). According to Kern et al., (2016), perseverance is a 'subfacet of the Big Five personality trait of conscientious, and comprises the drive component of "grit" (that includes both perseverance and passion for long-term goals' (Kern et al., 2016, p. 587).

Moreover, I examined data extracts of the sub-theme of environmental competence through the lens of self-determination theory. This involved unravelling whether the

participants were referring to children at the introjected regulation (i.e., rules are adopted but not incorporated into their sense of self – children go along with a task such as doing homework because they think they should) or at the identified regulation stage (i.e., action begins to be integrated within the child's sense of self – children do their homework because they see it valuable) (Ryan & Deci, 1985, 2000). Data extracts below suggests children may be at the identified regulation stage of self-determination; Parents 4, 7 and 10 imply their children perceive homework as motivating or valuable (Ryan & Deci, 1985, 2000).

‘...she likes doing her homework, she never comes to school without doing her homework; Her homework she's doing by herself....she doesn't like leaving her homework without finishing it.’ (Parent 4).

‘If someone starts talking she'll get very angry with them. She'll be like, be quiet, I'm trying to do my homework here’ (Parent 7).

‘Like every Fridays they always come home with homework. He doesn't delay with it. Like sometimes you don't even know when did he do it.he just go and grab his homework, sit down, do it and finish’ (Parent 10).

Child 3's construction of a child at their best includes finishing her homework because ‘when she's in year 5, teacher said you to bring homework next day’ which she ‘did straightway and taking it to the teacher next day’. This response indicates that this child is at the introjected regulation stage of self-determination.

Based on the staff's responses, it is difficult to ascertain whether flourishing children are at the introjected or identified regulation stage of self-determination. Staff 1 and 2's constructs of ‘highly obedient, follows rules’ and ‘compliant, follows rules and instructions’

seem to suggest the former (given emphasises on obedience/compliance) whereas Staff 10's construct of 'self-sufficient in the classroom' appear to suggest the latter (given the emphasis on the self-system).

Nevertheless, based on the assumption that competence is a basic psychological need that is considered innate and eight of the eleven studies on flourishing are underpinned by this assumption, suggests that competence is a core part of flourishing which remains the case from both a developmental and life-span perspective (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Keyes, 2006; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Kim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016; Lubans et al., 2016; Kiang & Pi, 2018).

4.6.2.5 *Theme of unique trait and sub-theme of emergent character*

I start the discussion of this theme with a quote from Parent 8 who said 'they're all got their own little personalities....it's just really nice to see them all different.' Unique trait is a personal characteristic which is distinctive to an individual and is amoral in nature whereas character refers to a personality trait that is morally evaluable and considered to provide an individual with moral worth within a particular context (Allport, 1937; Triandis, 2000; Kristjansson, 2013; Wilding & Griffey, 2015). A range of unique traits were reported by the participants including funny, polite, caring, helpful, shy, competitive, quiet, optimistic, bubbly, sociable, empathic, chatty, diplomatic and generous.

Only one study mentions briefly the notion that a personality trait may impact upon optimal functioning. Kern et al. (2016) delineates perseverance as a 'subfacet of the Big Five

personality trait of conscientious' (Kern et al., 2016, p. 587). Philosophically, unique trait and virtue appear to be central to the notion of eudaimonic well-being; which is fundamentally about fulfilling or realizing one's daimon or true nature. Aristotle considered hedonia to be a vulgar ideal and theorised that true happiness or flourishing is located in the expression of virtue (i.e., in doing what is worth doing) (Waterman, 1993). Moreover, the theme of unique trait can be located within the origins of modern personality psychology (Allport, 1937). Linley and Harrington (2006) assert that the lack of an integrative theoretical framework can be traced back to Allport's seminal definition of personality that excluded specifically the topic of character. Allport's definition of personality includes his thinking that character is a term that is more relevant for ethics and philosophy than for psychology: 'Character is personality evaluated, and personality is character devaluated' (Allport, 1937, p.52).

There were instances of children's personality being evaluated in this study, by Parent 11 and 14. Deliberately, I used the label of 'emergent' as some of the responses indicated embryonic development of character: Parent 11 reported 'learning character traits' and 'growing in your character'; and Parent 14 used the language of 'forming' as in 'he is really forming as a person'. Hilliard et al. (2014) prefers the term character virtues rather than character strengths on the basis that these are developmental assets.

In particular, Parent 11 underscored the process of learning including moral reasoning and identity:

"She's pretty good at being philosophical about them really, which I think is something that she's learnt that people are not always nice and that is just the way

they are sometimes and it's not right to hit out and do what they've done to you back to them she's quite good at just saying well it didn't make me feel nice but I feel sorry for them because maybe they're doing it because whatever"

"...she's not kind of smiling and emitting happiness but at the same time as far as developing character I think that is a good thing if you know what I mean. I don't mean for her to be feeling sad or whatever but I think as far as flourishing goes I don't think it's all about happiness, it's about learning character traits and learning who you are and learning how to cope when things don't always go right."

"It's not about you're flourishing because you can play the piano, play the guitar and you've got a swimming badge or whatever. It's about flourishing in your character, growing in your character and feeling secure and confident to be able to do that."

Explicit reasoning and motives are deemed as necessary in character formation as well as the importance of guidance from significant adults. Habituation refers to an 'intentional process of inculcation of character by means of repeated action under outside guidance' (Kristjánsson, 2013, p.9). According to Aristotle, shifting from habituated to full virtue requires learners to choose the right actions for the right reasons and from the right motives. Kristjánsson (2013) elaborates this key Aristotelian notion:

"...we must learn to choose the right actions and emotions from a 'firm and unchanging state' of character (1985, p. 40 [1105a30-1105a34]): that is, after having submitted them to the arbitration of our own *phronesis*. On this view, truly virtuous persons not only perform the right actions, but they perform them for the right reasons and from the right motives: knowing them, taking intrinsic pleasure in

them and deciding that they are worthwhile. This process takes time, as those who have just learnt a virtue through habituation 'do not yet know it, though they string the [correct] words together; for it must grow into them (Aristotle, 1985, p. 180 [1147a20-1147a22])' (Kristjánsson, 2013, p. 9-10).

Moreover, Parent 14 indicates their child has a strong moral identity; who appears to be intrinsically motivated to do the 'right thing' even though this results in her feeling 'scared, alone and frightened':

".....has strong morals. She will always choose to do the right thing even if all around her are pushing for her to do something different. And she'll stand up and say no that's wrong. And even though the pressure might be extremely strong."

"She is very strong in doing the right thing. So she has a very, absolutely powerfully strong character our NAME."

"...however, whatever it is she believes in, and I know it's based on her faith and our faith as a family, but she sticks to it, she remains true to it. She truly believes in it, it's not wishy-washy, it's not bit part or only fair weather times and so on. She remains true to it. So she's so strong, incredibly strong and the ironic thing with that is that NAME has a language problem. She's had speech and language therapy here. She's not...there's nothing wrong with her mentally, all she does is some of her words get mixed up and yet despite all of that, she shows great strength you know when she could just fade into the background and keep her head down and think to herself, if I say this or I say that they'll just... she doesn't. She says what she wants to say or needs to say."

It is pertinent to highlight that there were no references of emergent character from staff participants, in light of Kristjánsson (2013) argument that character education will always take place in schools. Using Wiley's quote, Kristjánsson (2013) argues that the real choice is between whether character education is 'intentional, conscious, planned, pro-active, organized and reflective' or 'assumed, unconscious, reactive, subliminal or random (Wiley, 1998, p. 18)' (Kristjánsson, 2013, p. 8).

Moreover, Wilding and Griffey (2015) make the case for my professional colleagues to listen actively to students to acknowledge their world view and promote the use of 'creative labelling' as described by Wong (Wong, 2006, p.136). This strategy may aid educators and professionals working with students in understanding different constructions of character strengths; as 'creative labelling' involves educators and professionals to be involved in the process of co-creation of strengths with an individual student. Fundamentally, 'creative labelling' involves a dialogue where the student discusses which strengths are important to them, and labels and defines them as they wish. Meanings of emergent character or virtues are, in essence, negotiated through explicit dialogue (Wong, 2006; Wilding and Griffey, 2015). This may enable educators and professionals to 'deliver a personalised strength-based approach' (Wilding and Griffey, 2015, p.52). Therefore, a student's perspective regarding their beneficial emergent character or virtue must take precedence over Peterson and Seligman's (2004) 'one size fits all' recommendation of character strengths.

4.6.2.6 *Theme of Self-Esteem*

Child 10's construction of a child at their best feels 'very happy with himself'. Similarly Staff 3's emergent construct of a flourishing child refers to 'high levels of self-esteem, self-worth'. Closely related to the theme of self-esteem, the theme of self-confidence and self-regard ('self-liking') was identified as a key theme amongst South African adolescents' understanding and experience of flourishing (Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010). Self-esteem features in McLellan and Steward's conceptualisation of flourishing within the scale of perceived competence; the item relating to positive functioning (eudaimonic well-being) is 'feeling good about yourself and that you are doing well' (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 320). Proctor et al. (2011) implicates self-esteem in their quasi-experimental study; they found that those adolescents who accessed a developmental character strengths programme were more likely to report higher levels of self-esteem than those who did not.

Nevertheless, self-esteem appears to be a fuzzy construct. This is apparent when Keyes (2006) reported that he did not include self-acceptance in the cluster of dimensions linked to psychological well-being. Keyes justified this by stating that 'self-esteem, a closely related measure of self-acceptance was already by of the CDS' (Child Development Supplement) (Keyes, 2006, p. 397). Similarly, Kiang and Pi (2018) did not use the self-acceptance factor (Ryff, 1989): 'In the current study, the Self-Acceptance factor was not included in initial data collection because of its conceptual overlap with other measures (e.g., self-esteem)' (Kiang & Ip, 2018, p. 65).

Moreover, Seligman (2002) expressed concerns about accepting self-esteem as part of positive psychology, as he states:

'I am not against self-esteem, but I believe that self-esteem is just a meter that reads out of the state of the system. It is not an end in itself. When you are doing well in school or work, when you are doing well with the people you love, when you are doing well in play, the meter will register high. When you are doing badly, it will register low' (Seligman, 2002, p.v).

In contrast, Maslow (1943; 1954) included self-esteem in his hierarchy of human needs. He outlined two different forms of esteem: the need for self-respect in the form of self-love, self-confidence, aptitude or skills; and the need for respect from others in the form of recognition, success and admiration. Rogers (1959, 1961) assumed that the source of many people's problems to be that they despise themselves and consider themselves worthless and incapable of being loved. Hence, Rogers advocated the importance of giving unconditional acceptance to a client which in turn could improve their self-esteem.

Furthermore, it is important to understand self-esteem from a developmental perspective (Erikson, 1959, 1963, 1968). The embryonic nature of self-esteem was conceptualised by Erikson in his model on the phases of psychosocial development in children and adolescents (as well as adults). Erikson argued that an individual is engaged with their self-esteem and self-concept as long as the process of manifestation of identity continues. Erikson (1968) assumes that an individual remains confused if this process is not negotiated successfully.

In line with developing self-esteem as part of a broad-spectrum approach for mental health promotion, Weare (2000) highlighted that schools need to focus on supporting children develop a healthy sense of self-esteem as part of the development of their intra-personal

intelligence; the ability to form an accurate model of oneself and the ability to use it to function well in life. In her quest for defining positive mental health, Jahoda (1958) included the adequate perception of reality as a basic element of mental health (Ryff, 1989). It is difficult to ascertain from the existing responses whether the participants were referring to self-esteem as the ability to form an accurate model of oneself.

4.6.2.7 *Theme of Aspiring to Make a Difference*

The theme of aspiring to make a difference refers to seeking to make a difference, in an area connected to something bigger than the pupils themselves. Children's constructions referred to roles involving a public service (such as teacher, priest and police woman), supporting people in need (such as the poor, elderly, and homeless), a concern for the environment (including animals), and making progress (such as improving schools and hospitals, and learning about space). Child 6's pursuit of worthwhile endeavours in the future life of a child at their best included:

'She is going to build a church. She is going to have a church programme for poor people who want to learn more about Jesus. Because all the people who are poor, she says don't worry there will be a service for you. I will take away my life for you. I will help you out. She feels the poor should be treated nicely like they deserve this' (Child 6).

This theme is linked loosely with the social well-being model put forward by Keyes (1998, 2006). Collectively, measures of social well-being operationalize how much people perceive themselves thriving in their social life. Specifically, this theme is related to the social contribution dimension of the social well-being cluster (Keyes, 1998, 2006). Also, this theme is akin to the psychological well-being dimension of purpose in life, which was

excluded in Keyes' study on the assumption that it's not applicable to the lives of the participating youth (Keyes, 2006). This assumption is not supported by the responses from this study.

This theme was constructed from children's responses only. Also, South African adolescent participants in Schwalkyk and Wissing's study (in the qualitative part of the mixed-methods study) reported purposeful living and meaning (Schwalkyk & Wissing, 2010). Lipscomb and Gersch (2012) argue that spiritual listening can be used to support to explore how children construct meaning in their lives and to investigate associations between their aspects of experience and their underpinning belief structures. Based on these responses, it can be argued that children from ages of 7 to 11 (who are part of a school that is located in a deprived area of a city, ethnically diverse and grounded in Roman Catholic values) are already thinking about ways that they can make a difference in their future lives. Similarly, Gersch (2009) argued that children aged from 10 to 12 are able to offer 'coherent and elaborate answers to deep metaphysical questions' (Gersch, 2009, p. 14).

4.6.2.8 *Parental Models of Flourishing*

I consider it pertinent to report on two models of flourishing that were presented explicitly by two parent participants (Parent 11 and 14). Parent 11 stated a triangular framework of flourishing:

'I think it's very much to do with them being secure in your love and acceptance but kind of having a framework of love with freedom to explore things and explore their gifts and abilities but also a framework of kind of discipline if that doesn't sound

too harsh but boundaries and so they know what's allowed and what's not allowed as far as behaviour goes and that helps them, I think that really helps them as well.'

'Love, freedom and discipline or boundaries, almost like a triangle I suppose in my head.'

Parent 11 defined love to include parents' love as well as spiritual love,

'knowing that my children are secure in God's love as well that's important.'

Parent 14's model of flourishing included the metaphor of a flower;

'Flourishing. Well, you know, we're talking the word comes from like a flower, how it grows and starts as a seed and grows and you have the petal at the end and it's a beautiful flower. You know that I'm a Christian and so on, and I think certainly and I believe strongly and we do as a family that the human person is made up of not just the body and not just the mind but we have a spirit. And when all three are fed, this isn't a Christian party line I'm telling you here, this is a true belief, when all three are fed then that person flourishes. When just one of those things is looked after or two of those things is looked after there is a deficiency and that person doesn't flourish as well as when all three are fed.'

'That is, the body, the mind and the spirit. So it's important as human beings that we feed all three and not just one or two out of three. Because that makes a complete person.'

Both of these parental models seem to incorporate key notions from prominent and contemporary humanistic psychologists. Parent 14 appears to use concepts of growth and

deficiency that are associated typically with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's (1943, 1954) five stage model can be split into deficiency (or basic) needs (such as physiological, safety, love and esteem) and growth needs (self-actualisation). Love and acceptance of the Parent 11's view is linked to a key Rogerian principle; in that, a person may develop optimally if they experience only unconditional positive regard. This and positive self-regard would match organismic evaluation, resulting in congruence between self and experience (i.e., full psychological adjustment) (Rogers, 1959, 1961). 'Freedom to explore' of Parent 11's conceptualisation relates to the autonomy component of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000).

4.7 Conclusion

This is the first known study to explore the construct of flourishing as it is grounded and expressed in multiple subjective perspectives (children, parents, and school staff), tied to a particular primary school setting that is grounded in Roman Catholic values and is ethnically diverse. This developmental-ecosystemic model of flourishing, derived from qualitative methodology, is a more nuanced model of flourishing than existing models (as detailed in sections 2.2.2.1 to 2.2.2.7). This is particularly evident with the theme of emotional spectrum, which refers to both positive and negative emotions being experienced when engaging in eudaimonic activities (Rogers, 1961; McLellan & Steward, 2015).

Competence, autonomy and connectedness may be considered as dominant dimensions of flourishing; these are grounded in at least eight of the eleven studies (Keyes, 2006; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; Lim, 2014; Singh & Junnarker, 2015; McLellan & Steward,

2015; Skrzypiec et al., 2016; Lubans et al., 2016; Kern et al., 2016; Kiang & Pi, 2018). Also, these dimensions are wholly congruent with self-determination theory, focusing on human needs which are argued to be universal and innate (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). McLellan and Steward (2015, p. 310) argue that Deci and Ryan have modified SDT in conceptual terms from a theory of motivation to a eudaimonic theory of well-being: 'At the heart of SDT lies the ontological belief that "all individuals have natural, innate and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborated and unified sense of self" (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p. 5)', hence the theory is centrally concerned with the development of self.' Moreover, the dimensions of unique trait, emergent character, self-esteem and engagement in energizing task appear to be related to the formation of identity (Allport, 1937; Kristjánsson, 2013; Wilding and Griffey, 2015; Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Proctor et al., 2011; Erikson, 1968; Linley, 2010).

The theme of engagement in energizing task is also linked to theories in the current positive psychology literature; the established flow theory, the theory of positive emotion, and the strengths theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997; Fredrickson, 1998, 2009; Linley, 2010). The theme of unique trait is largely missing in the current body of literature, although seminal references can be found in the broader positive psychology literature (Allport, 1937). Also themes of emotional spectrum and self-esteem as well as the aforementioned parental models of flourishing are grounded broadly in the key tenets of humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1943, 1954; Rogers, 1959, 1961; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). Emotional regulation, connectedness, and competence development are rooted in the developmental perspective (DfES, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000).

Use of triangulation has been important in generating such a rich, complex model of flourishing (Thomas, 2011; McNiff, 2016). The theme of aspiring to make a difference was constructed from the children data-set (Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2010). The sub-theme of emotional regulation was built up from staff responses only; they may have been influenced by the implementation of the SEAL programme (DfES, 2007; Proctor et al., 2011).

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY TWO – DISCOVERING THE ENABLING FEATURES OF FAITH SCHOOL

Respectively, Research Questions Two, Three and Four were rooted in Faith School and linked to a particular phase of the AI process: what existing factors underpin flourishing in children?; what does the school aim to achieve in relation to development of flourishing in children?; and what universal intervention(s) do the staff believe would best ensure that many more children would cross the threshold for flourishing (design phase)? I have included Research Question one again ('what are the key dimensions/characteristics of flourishing children?') as this second study built upon the initial model of flourishing; so in real terms, this is linked to the re-define phase.

This chapter is divided into two key sections, the empirical and analysis components of Study Two. The empirical component details the appreciative task(s), outcomes and reflections (which includes my observations); for the 3-D (discovery, dream and design) teacher cycle, 3-D teaching assistant cycle, and the integrated design session. I, then, intend to examine and discuss these findings through application of a framework that supports theory-building (Thomas, 2011).

As an active participant and through the recursive inquiry process, I noticed particular patterns evolving during this diachronic study (Thomas, 2011). In order to make sense of these emergent findings as well as capturing complexity, I developed the three-world model of analysis – conceptual, emotional and latent. The conceptual layer comprises of the school's theoretical hypothesis of an envisioned future and model of flourishing (Cooperrider, 1986). Answers to Research Questions One, Two, Three and Four can be found within the conceptual layer of analysis (as highlighted chronologically throughout

this chapter in the headings/sub-headings, in parentheses as RQ2, RQ3, RQ4 and RQ1). The emotional layer considers the emotional impact of the inquiry (Kennedy et al, 2011). The latent layer includes my assumptions and ‘as if’ reflections on the possible impact of the role of underlying defense mechanisms (of the participants) and group dynamics in relation to the inquiry on a wider basis (Bion, 1961; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Collectively, these layers support the development of the enabling school theory (Senge, 2006; Arthur et al., 2010; Thomas, 2011; Evans et al., 2012).

5.1 Empirical Component – AI Tasks, Outcomes & Reflections

5.1.1 3-D Cycle with Teachers begins with Discovery Session

I explained the overall purpose of appreciative interview; to inquire into ‘what existing factors underpin flourishing in children?’ This question was then reframed using parent 14’s metaphor; ‘Flourishing. Well, you know, we’re talking the word comes from like a flower, how it grows and starts as a seed and grows and you have the petal at the end and it’s a beautiful flower.’ The reframed question put to the participants was ‘what kind of organizational soil, water and sunlight conditions really nourish their pupils?’

The teachers were asked to pair up and conduct an appreciative interview with each other. I introduced the appreciative interview guide and took the participants through the various stages of this appreciative task. This guide consisted of: general tips, 3 sections of appreciative questions, notes page, summary page and analysing stories page (see Appendix 13). They were asked to interview each other, analyse each story and then produce a poster for presentation at the next session. They were given a flip chart paper and pack of shapes (which included at least 10 brown rectangles, 10 green squares and

10 yellow circles). I stated that the brown squares are to be used for writing the underpinning values of the stories, the green squares are for the underpinning strengths, and the yellow circles are for their wishes arising out of their stories.

This session lasted one hour and the participants were informed that they would have protected time to finish this task (prior to the next session).

5.1.2 Reflections on Teachers' Appreciative Interview Session

This session went according to my expectations but with one exception. I assumed that the head teacher would be comfortable undertaking an appreciative interview with a member of her teaching team. I did not require her to be a facilitator at this stage and had communicated this early on in the planning stage. She opted not to take part in this task and gave this reason; 'I don't think it would be appropriate for me to take part'. I assumed that sharing one's 'peak experiences' would be a safe activity to engage with. I deliberated whether the head teacher's response was linked to her leadership style; to maintain a distance between her and her team. I looked back at the AI literature to find out what others have said about AI in relation to leadership. Bushe (2010) maintains that AI 'to be transformational, the AI process required passionate, committed leadership from people with credibility in the schools' and it involves 'critical acts of leadership' occurring 'in the right place at the right time (Bushe, 2010, p.22).' It's difficult to ascertain whether this act can be framed as a critical act of leadership.

5.1.3 Discovery to Dream Session

There were 5 sections to this one-hour session.

- (a) This session started with each pairing sharing their respective poster. I (facilitator 1) wrote down the most compelling quotes on flip chart paper 1. (30 minutes were allocated to this task).
- (b) Participants were given these instructions alongside a hand out on 'Valuing the Best of What Is' (see Appendix 14): 'After listening to your colleagues' best stories or 'peak experiences', in small groups of 4, what patterns did you notice? Refer back to the posters to help you with this task.' The head teacher and I (co-facilitators) looked at all the posters together, and with the stories in our minds, tried to identify patterns in relation to the wishes. (10 minutes)
- (c) The second facilitator (the head teacher) wrote the teachers' feedback on flip chart paper 2. The head teacher shared our interpretations of their collective wishes and I wrote down these wishes on flip chart paper 3. I checked with the teachers whether they recognised our interpretations. Following confirmation, the teachers were asked to choose one wish. They organised themselves into 4 groups. (5 minutes)
- (d) I introduced the next appreciative task, the visioning task. Participants were given these instructions alongside a hand out on 'What Might Be?' (see Appendix 15): 'As a group, think big about this wish and imagine bold possibilities for your school. Where do we want to go ideally with this wish? As a group, visualise the ideal future or preferred future for this wish. Create a collective image and write a headline, and create priority elements of a cover story for the press. Or present your dreaming or 'visioning' in another creative way.' (5 minutes)
- (e) Participants made a start on this task (10 minutes)

5.1.4 Findings: Teachers' Positive Core (RQ2)

A total of sixteen participants took part in the poster presentation. I have taken a photograph of a sample poster so you can see some sample strengths (on green rectangles), values (on brown rectangles) and wishes (on yellow circles) (see Figure 13).

Photographs of three flip charts have been included:

- flip chart 1 (as shown in Figure 14) details the collection of most compelling quotes that the participants identified during their appreciative interviews;
- flip chart 2 (as shown in Figure 15) details the patterns of success factors construed by the teachers; and
- flip chart 3 (as shown in Figure 16) details the patterns of wishes construed by the facilitators and subsequently confirmed by the teachers.

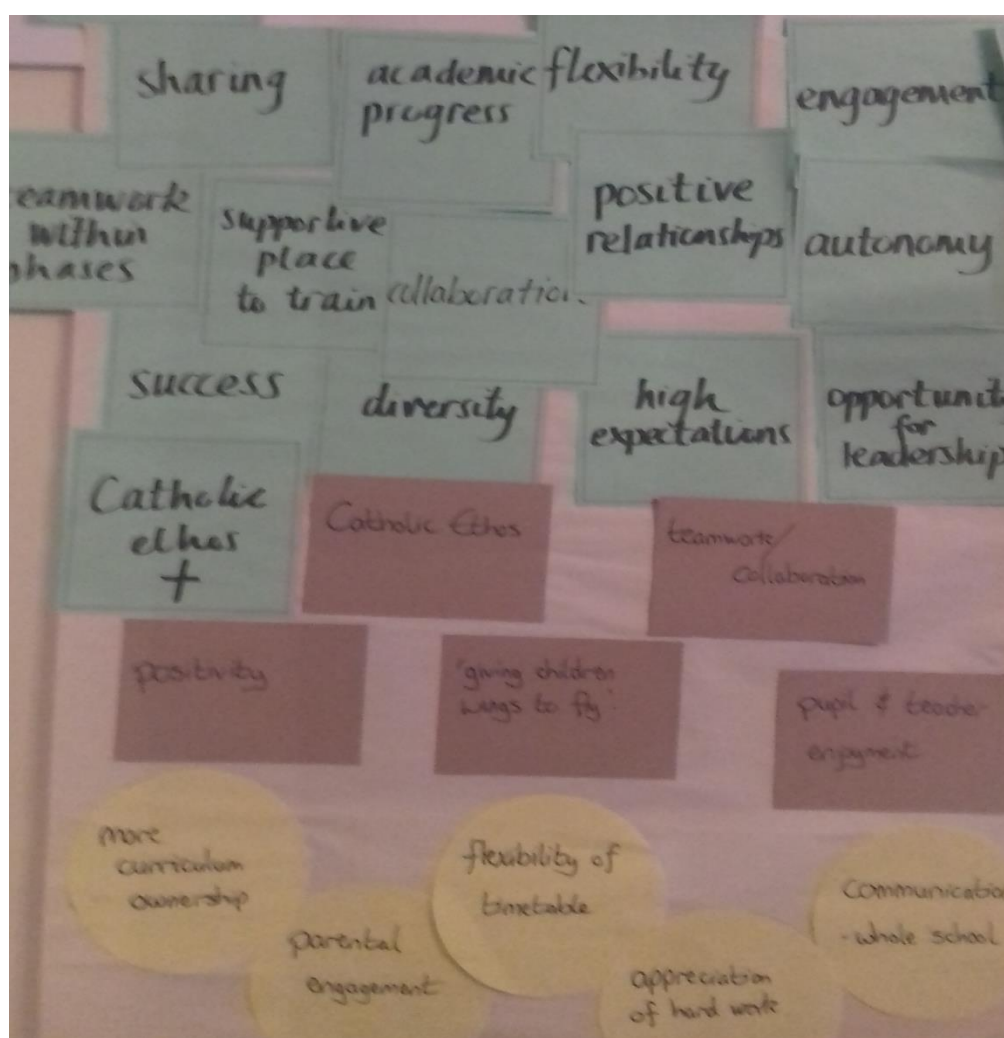


Figure 13 - Sample Poster

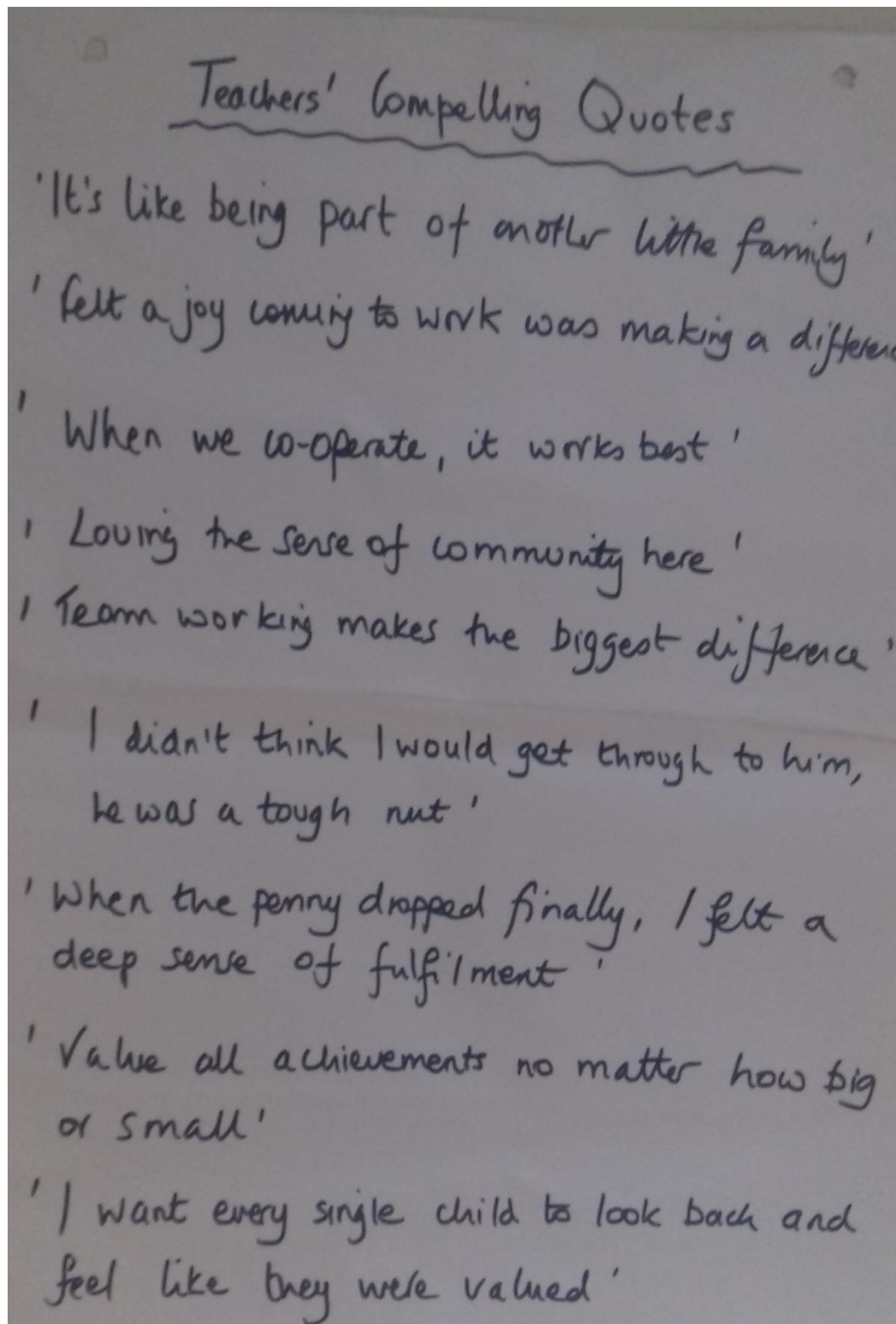


Figure 14 - Flip Chart 1: Collection of Teachers' Most Compelling Quotes

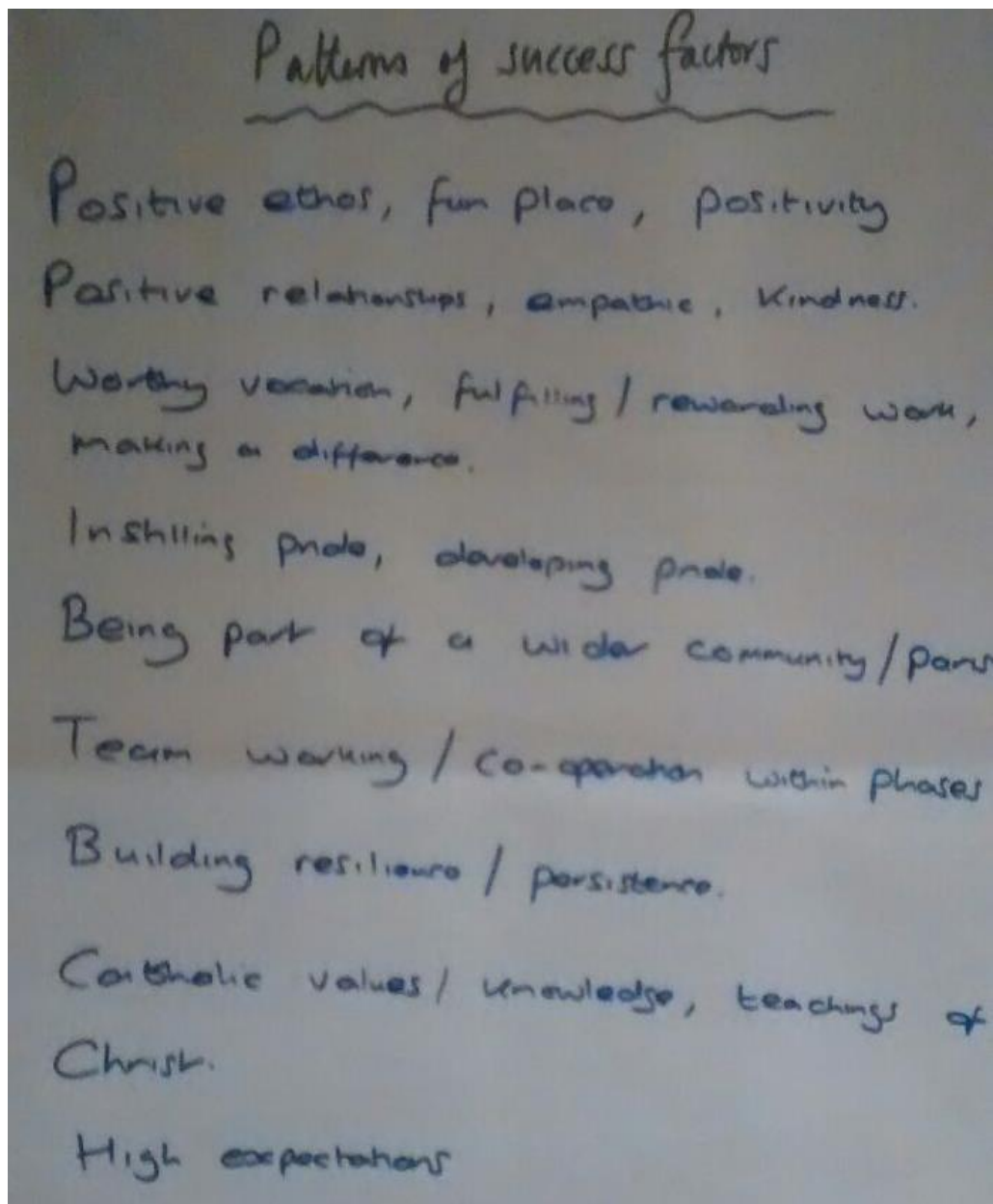


Figure 15 - Flip Chart 2: Patterns of Success Factors Construed by the Teachers

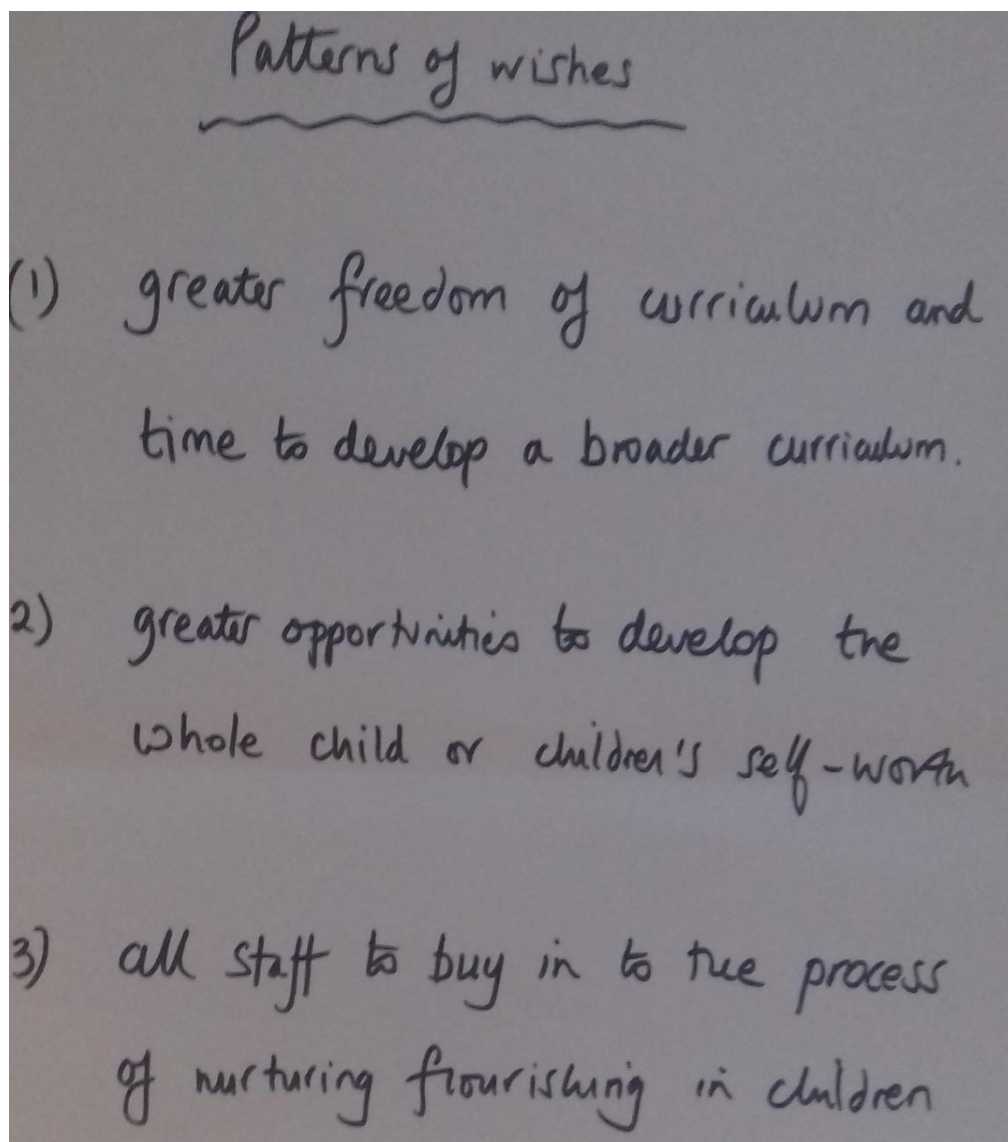


Figure 16 - Flip Chart 3: Patterns of Wishes Construed by the Co-Facilitators

5.1.5 Reflections on Teachers' Discovery/Dream Session

This session worked particularly well. After each poster presentation, the teachers clapped. I could see smiles and people nodding their heads as well as hear laughter. Congruent with the positive principle, this session was characterised by high energy and positivity (as I felt a palpable 'buzz'). So much so, that some of the participants stayed on for another 10 minutes discussing the session. I cannot recall experiencing such a positive

session during my professional practice. I found it uplifting to hear so many stories of success and good practice (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Fredrickson, 2009).

Nevertheless, one participant, when talking about positive relations with children acknowledged that this may not be case with the non-teaching staff; she said (along these lines): 'We all know that lunchtime supervisors don't always treat children with the respect they experience from us.' It was interesting to note that this issue was not explored further in this inquiry (as it did not feature in the collective wishes). Is this what Fineman (2006) means when he criticises AI for privileging positive accounts of reality?

Moreover, it was a fast-paced and highly engaged session: it seemed that everyone was involved in listening to the stories which underpinned the posters; the teachers construing the patterns amongst the stories in terms of success factors; and the head teacher and I construing the patterns amongst the stories in terms of wishes. I wondered if the wish 'greater opportunities to develop the whole-child or children's self-worth' consisted of two wishes; one linked to whole-child development and one linked to children's self-worth. I think this potential omission appeared to be linked to the fast pace of this session. It is possible that the head teacher and I may have missed on different ways of viewing future reality. It is pertinent to think about the simultaneity principle of AI, which states that 'inquiry and change are not separate moments, but are simultaneous' and 'inquiry is intervention'; because it can be difficult to manage these simultaneous processes that 'inquiry is intervention' (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p.50).

At the end of this session, one teacher was keen to talk to me and said: 'I'm struggling with this task, this curriculum wish is too hard' and 'the curriculum is the curriculum'. The others in this group nodded in agreement. I acknowledged her apparent frustration and guided them back to the posters: on one poster, it stated 'exploring pupils' lines of enquiry'. Through discussion, this wish was reframed to 'greater opportunities for pupils to explore their lines of enquiry'. They appeared more willing to have a go at this visioning task. In this case, I questioned the positive principle of AI (Bushe, 2012; Flyvbjerg, 2004; Popper, 1959); as I sensed some frustration rather than 'sheer joy in creating something meaningful together' (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 53).

5.1.6 Dream to Design Session

There were 5 sections to this one-hour session.

- (a) This session involved each group sharing their vision in turn. (20 minutes were allocated to this)
- (b) The participants were asked to choose a vision they were most interested in. (5 minutes)
- (c) I explained the next appreciative task of designing provocative propositions. I emphasized that the provocative propositions (which are essentially their dreams already happening and working successfully) needed to be affirmative, stretching, stated in the present tense and grounded in real-life examples of best of current practice. Refer to Appendix 16 which details the hand out supporting the design phase. Prior to starting this task, I provided a sample provocative proposition to the group: 'At the phase meeting, we design a curriculum module where pupils are able to explore a topic of interest to a deeper level.' (20 minutes)
- (d) Each group read out and discussed their provocative propositions. (10 minutes)

(e) Participants were asked who would be interested in representing their vision in the integrated design session. (5 minutes)

5.1.7 Findings in Relation to Visions of Teaching Group (RQ3)

5.1.7.1 *Wish 1*

This group presented a PowerPoint presentation on the wish of 'greater freedom of curriculum and time to develop a broader curriculum'. They started their presentation with the visionary headline of 'School Timetable Kicked Out!' (Refer to Figures 17-22 which shows the presentation slides). The teacher leading this presentation shared the group's key thinking underpinning this headline: build upon children's interests by allowing time for individual lines of enquiry; spark children's interest and maintain their motivation through longer blocked periods; staff to find opportunities for cross curricular links and the real reasons for learning; set up cross phase curricular teams to map out curriculum to ensure correct coverage; and extend the school day to set up clubs for pupils who need additional support.



Figure 17 - Front Presentation Slide of Wish 1

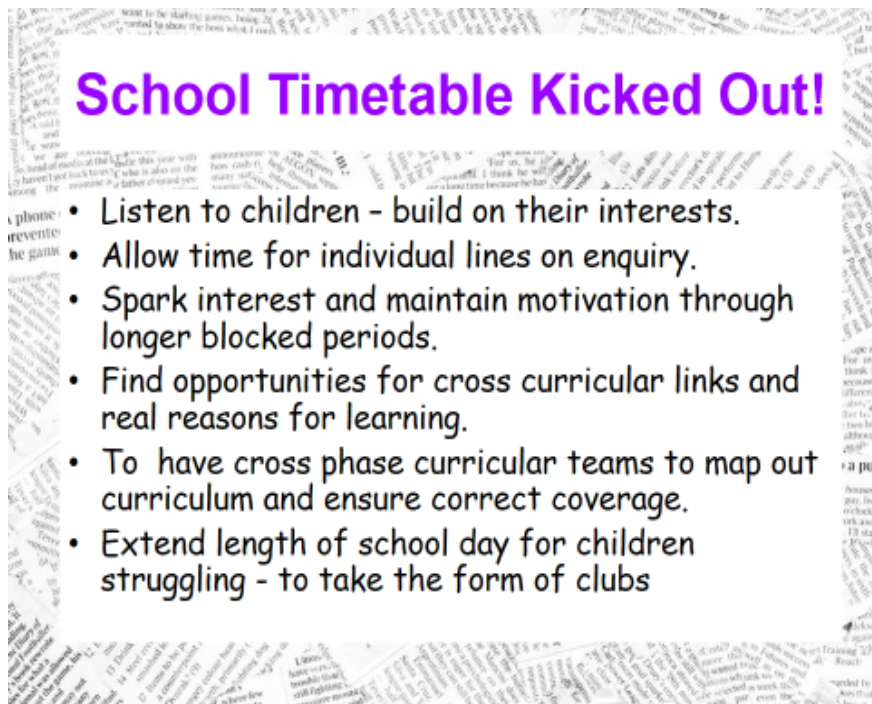


Figure 18 - Second Presentation Slide of Wish 1

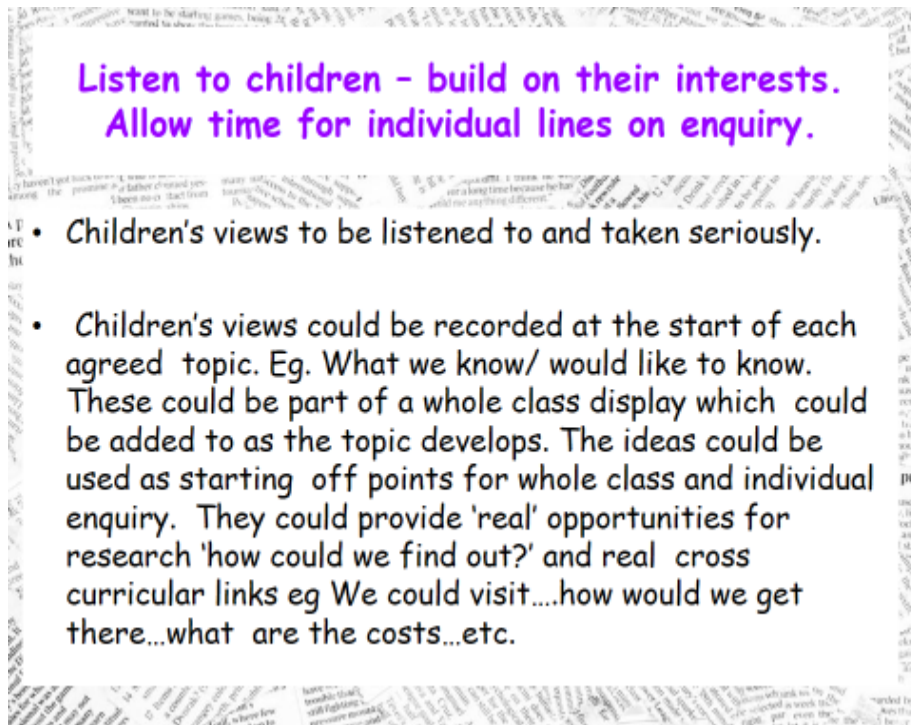


Figure 19 - Third Presentation Slide of Wish 1

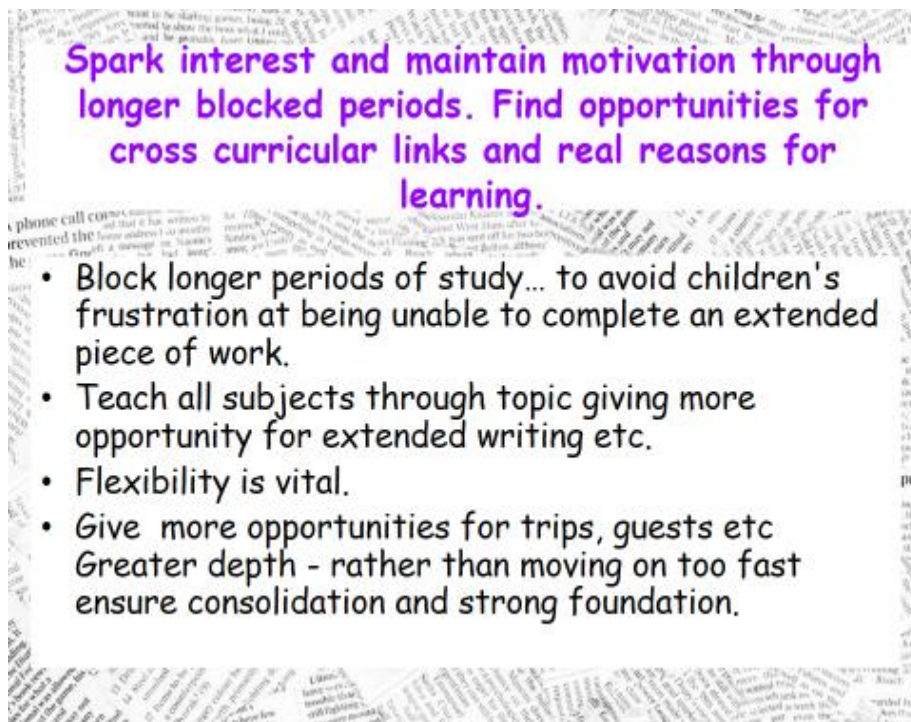


Figure 20 - Fourth Presentation Slide of Wish 1

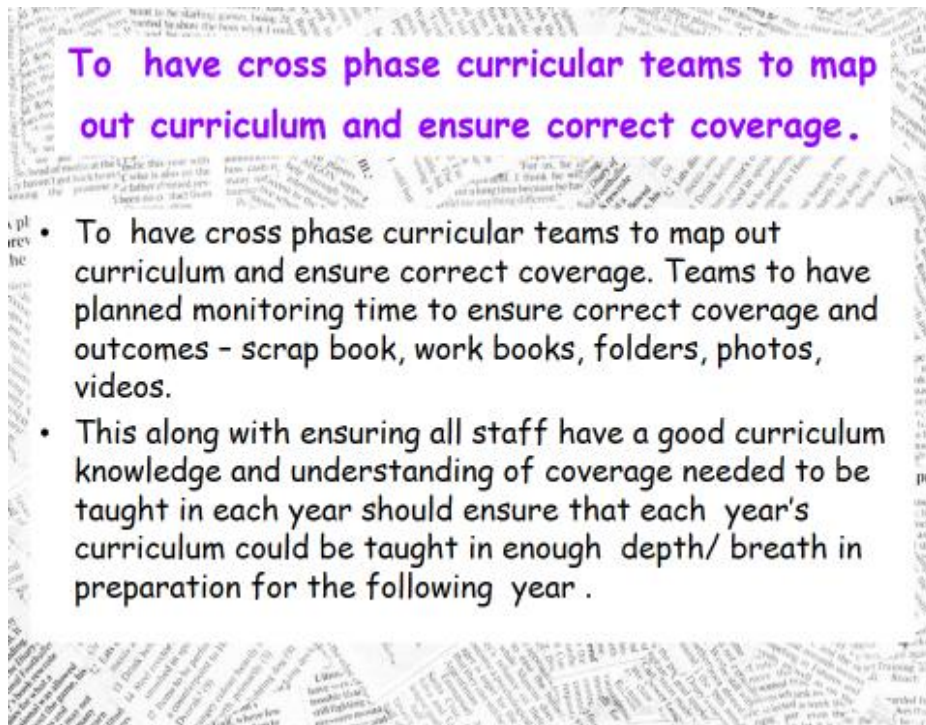


Figure 21 - Fifth Presentation Slide of Wish 3

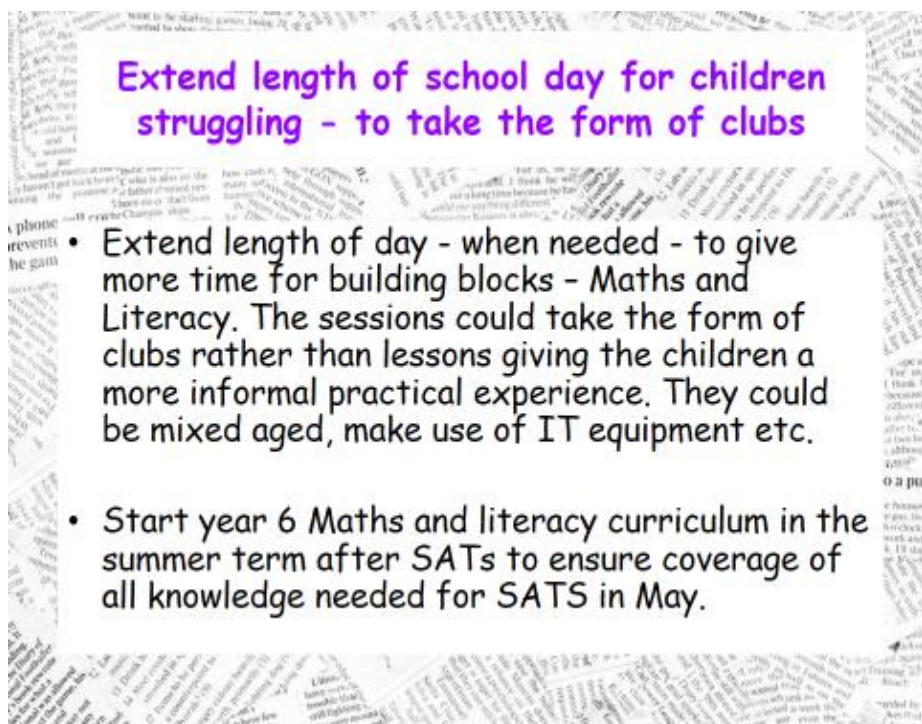


Figure 22 - Sixth Presentation Slide of Wish 3

5.1.7.2 *Wish 2*

The group that explored the wish of 'greater opportunities to develop the whole child or children's self-worth' presented a 'whole child' called Molly. Their visionary headline was 'Breaking news: Whole child found in school!'

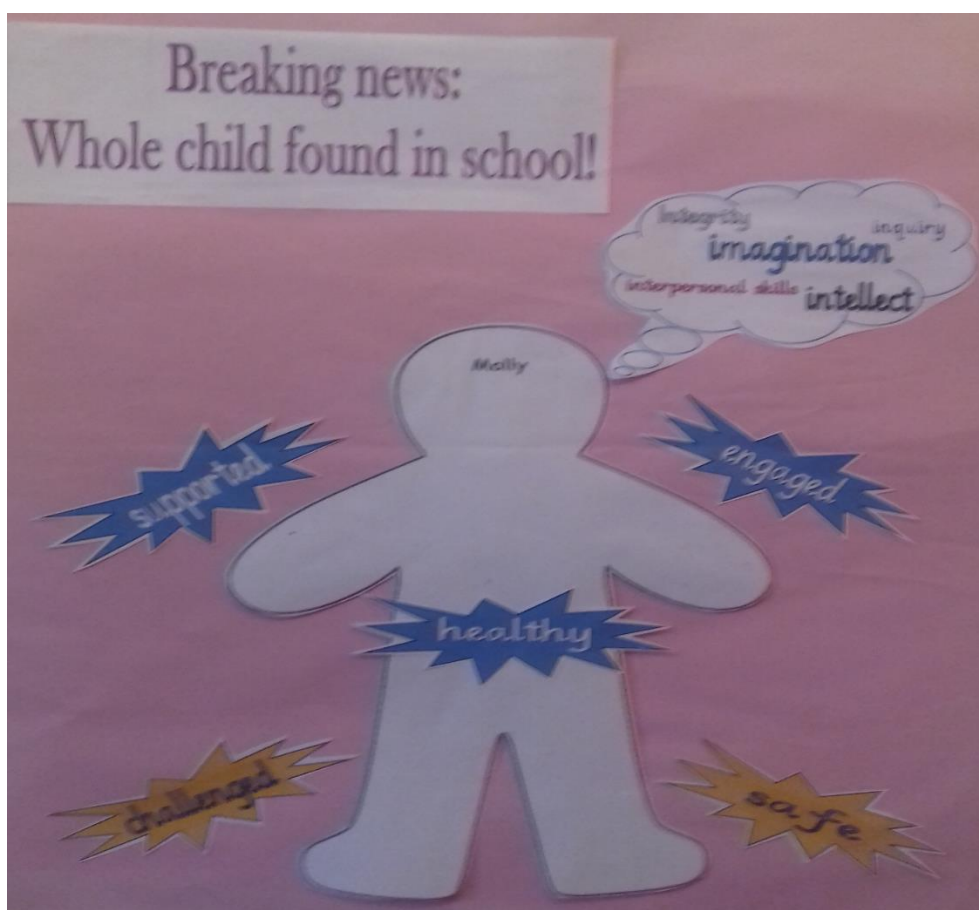


Figure 23 - Poster of Molly's Flourishing Rights

The teacher leading this presentation shared the group's thinking underpinning this vision. She reported that Molly is flourishing as she has great attributes: imagination, intellect, interpersonal skills, integrity and a keen sense of inquiry. She further stated that Molly was only flourishing because she had access to her flourishing rights. These are to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged and challenged (as illustrated in Figure 23).

5.1.7.3 *Wish 3*

There were two groups that inquired into the wish of 'all staff to buy in to the process of nurturing flourishing in children'.

5.1.7.4 *Wish 3 (a)*

This group's visionary headline was 'Break From the Norm!' (as indicated in Figure 24). It related to all staff learning from each other's practices including learning from peers in the different curriculum phases. The teacher leading on this vision talked about the need for developing consistency through the processes of induction, mentoring and peer coaching.

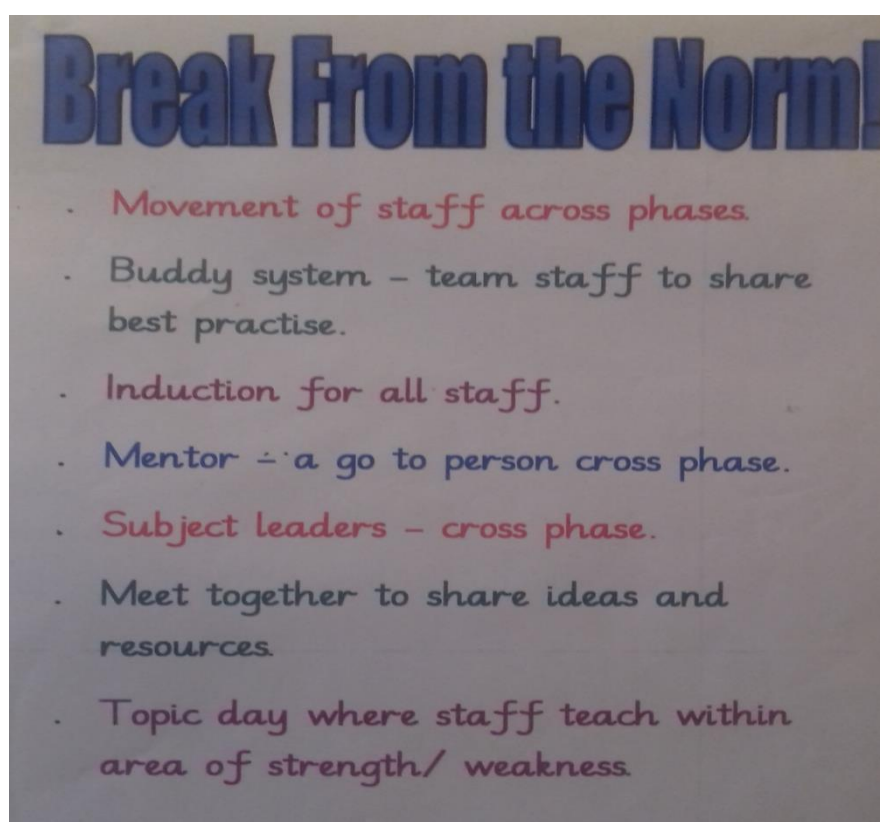


Figure 24 - Visionary Headline for Wish 3 & Key Points

5.1.7.5 *Wish 3 (b)*

This group used parent 14's metaphor in their introduction of a coaching system to fulfil the wish of 'all staff to buy-in to the process of nurturing flourishing in children.' Their visionary headline was 'Staff Flourish as Seeds of Success are Sown'. This group envisaged that staff would develop or further develop their skills in nurturing flourishing children through a peer coaching system. This group referenced the guidance report entitled 'Coaching for teaching and learning: a practical guide for schools' (Lofthouse et al., 2010) (as shown in Figure 25). They quoted that:

'Collaborative (Co-) coaching is a structured, sustained process between two or more professional learners to enable them to embed new knowledge and skills' from this inquiry in 'day-to-day practice' (Lofthouse et al., 2010, p.7).

They emphasised that a whole-school coaching system would be useful for embedding new knowledge about flourishing in their teaching practices.

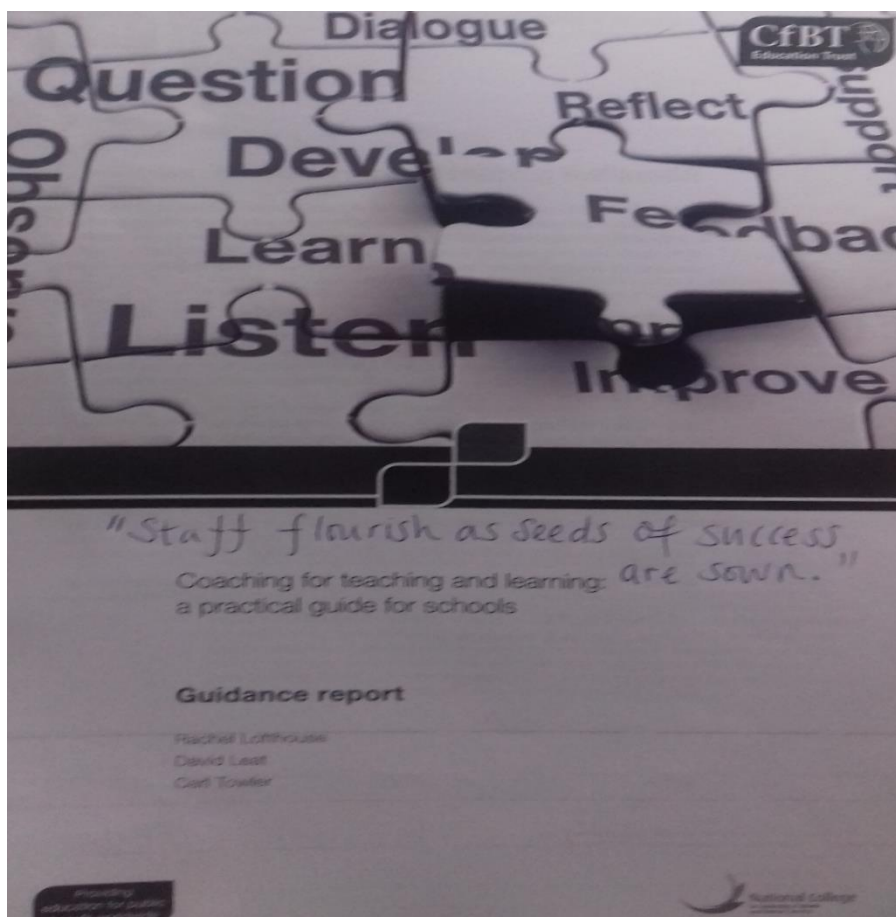


Figure 25 - Visionary Headline for Wish 3 & Front Cover of the Guidance Report on Coaching (Lofthouse et al., 2010)

Also, they stated that: ‘And just as every child matters, every teacher matters too’. They made links back to the school’s positive core (such as staff’s sense of vocational well-being and positive relations) when they quoted:

‘Teachers’ well-being is another complex dynamic, but largely influenced by their sense of worth and opportunity to make a significant contribution to the school community. In turn these are partly influenced by the nature of relationships between teachers, their colleagues and their students. Coaching creates opportunities for trusting, open professional relationships to develop and these help to develop the school’s social capital’ (Lofthouse et al., 2010, p.10).

5.1.8 Findings in Relation to Draft Design Propositions (RQ4)

Design Propositions for the Vision of 'School Timetable Kicked Out!'

- Cross phase curriculum teams have responsibility and authority to ensure that an outstanding curriculum is planned.
- At team meetings, staff present their own timetables promoting greater flexibility.
- Staff ask children what topics they would be interested in finding out about.
- Use the children's ideas to create a curriculum map and share across curriculum phases to eliminate repetition of topics.
- Plan a vocations day so that children learn about the different vocations.

Design Propositions for the Vision of 'Whole Child Found!'

- Communicate with staff, parents and visitors about the school's vision of ensuring the rights of the child - to be safe, healthy, supported, and engaged.
- All staff, pupils and parents know the core areas that help develop a whole child:
 - Staff - All adults within the school setting facilitate flourishing by ensuring there are regular opportunities for the child to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, and challenged. Staff harness positive development (such as clear thinking and problem-solving) and provide regular opportunities for them to become active citizens in their surroundings.

- Parents - There are regular shared nurturing experiences between school staff and parents. There are regular coffee mornings/afternoons sessions with parents.
- Pupils – Pupils are aware of their entitlements. Pupils reflect on a half-termly basis charting progress against the core areas of the whole child.

Design Propositions for the Visions of 'Break From the Norm!' and 'Staff Flourish as Seeds of Success are Sown'

- Explore the development of a whole school coaching system.
- Agree and pilot a form of a whole school coaching system.
- Introduction of a voluntary, peer coaching system to build flourishing practice.
- All staff have a 'changing places' day to experience working in a different curriculum phase.
- Develop a draft staff flourishing guide/ a good practice guide to support the promotion of children's rights.
- The school provide a personalised induction programme for all staff.

5.1.9 Reflections on Teachers' Dream/Design Session

Once again, another teacher session was characterised by high energy and positivity (in terms of amusement and excitement). Similar, to the previous session, there was high engagement levels amongst the participants. In particular, I was not expecting such a detailed vision for the curriculum wish; as the staff involved in this vision initially presented

as frustrated. The teacher sessions seemed to be congruent with the positive principle of AI:

‘Building and sustaining momentum for change requires large amounts of positive affect and social bonding – things like hope, excitement, inspiration, caring, camaraderie, sense of urgent purpose, and sheer joy in creating something meaningful together’ (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p.53).

Immediately after the session, an interesting interaction took place between two participants (a teacher and an assistant head teacher) in front of me. The teacher made this comment (whilst looking at the assistant head teacher); ‘this is great, being involved in building visions, no offence but you’re in SLT (senior leadership team) and know the school’s vision but I have no idea.’ The assistant head teacher (AHT) nodded in agreement (Senge, 1990). The AHT continued interacting with me in an open way by herself. She expressed her surprise by the three volunteers who had opted to contribute to the integrated design session; as according to the AHT, two of the three volunteers rarely ‘volunteered for anything’.

Moreover, she was questioning why the teacher sessions have been so successful, and offered three possible explanations. She attributed the success to the ‘positive methodology’, the ‘staff’s ownership of the tasks’, and the ‘staff respecting me’. Given that I have worked with her in a consultative way for several years, I felt safe enough with her to share a recent conversation that I had with Sue, my research supervisor; who asked me to consider the role of my personal qualities in this inquiry, in particular, my charisma. I think it is important to view both questions as useful on the basis of my blind spots; which

according to Johari Window model, is the area that others may know about me but is unknown to myself (Luft & Ingham, 1955). I was initially resistant when Sue asked me to consider my charisma; as I thought I was not particularly charismatic. Then I asked a couple of peers about their thoughts on this matter. I was still resistant when my peers fed back that they viewed me as charismatic. This feedback made me feel uncomfortable and I started to think why this may be the case. Carl Jung adopted the term 'Shadow' to define the repressed parts, negative and/or positive, of our being which are unconscious to us (Fawkes, 2015). Maybe, I construed charisma in a negative way; as I think charisma can be used in a covert way to influence people and draw power. So I looked up what is meant by charisma in general terms: the Cambridge English dictionary defines charisma as 'a special power that some people have naturally that makes them able to influence other people and attract their attention and admiration'.

Still feeling uneasy about this, I then started to reflect on my contributions to the appreciative tasks completed so far. I think I have been in responsive mode; because I have been responding to the participants' constructions of their peak experiences, and my only active contribution has been in co-constructing the collective wishes of the teachers with the head teacher (which was subsequently confirmed with the participants) (Reason & Rowan, 1981). In real terms, I have had minimal influence in this study so far. However, I now need to be mindful of this perceived aspect of my personality, especially when considering McNiff's understanding on the origins of power:

'Power is not a 'thing'; it is within the relationships among people. Foucault (1980) speaks about 'capillary action', as power is drawn along the threads of relationships and comes to rest in some people but not in others. Those people regard themselves as in power and try to persuade others that this is how it should be.

They often succeed; others agree to speak the script without asking whether it can or should be changed or how it come into being. It is generally assumed that this is the way things are because this is the way things are' (McNiff, 2016, p. 244).

Nevertheless, I was pleased to hear the AHT thinking of plausible explanations to her question, especially as I found it difficult to answer such a question. It was interesting to acquire such formative feedback that she perceived the teacher 3-D cycle to be successful. Furthermore, it was noteworthy to observe similar outcomes following an appreciative task/conversation and a consultation process; enhanced professional skills of the consultees (such as critical thinking) also feature typically in the consultations I facilitate in educational settings (Gutkin & Curtis, 1990; Wagner, 2000; McNiff, 2016).

5.1.10 3-D Cycle with Teaching Assistants

The same appreciative tasks (appreciative interviews, poster presentations, envisioning task, and designing draft provocative propositions) that were undertaken by teachers were also completed by the teaching assistants. In line with this, the same appreciative interview guide and hand outs were used for the 3-D cycle with the teaching assistants. Figure 26 details a sample poster.

5.1.11 Discovery Session: Reflections on TAs' Appreciative Interview Session

Generally, the session went according to my expectations. The session was characterised by high engagement by all participants. I noted down one key comment from one teaching assistant who made this comment repeatedly 'we never do anything like this'. I sensed

that she was surprised by the request to undertake an activity about sharing and analysing stories of her and her colleagues' 'peak experiences'.

5.1.12 Discovery to Dream Session: Findings of TA's Positive Core (RQ2)

A total of twelve participants took part in the poster presentations. I have taken a photograph of a sample poster so you can see some sample strengths (on green rectangles), values (on brown rectangles) and wishes (on yellow circles). Photographs of three flip charts have been included:

- flip chart 4 (as shown in Figures 27 and 28) details the collection of compelling quotes that the participants identified during their appreciative interviews;
- flip chart 5 (as shown in Figure 29) details the patterns of success factors construed by the teaching assistants; and
- flip chart 6 (as shown in Figure 20) details the patterns of wishes construed by the facilitators and subsequently confirmed by the teaching assistants.

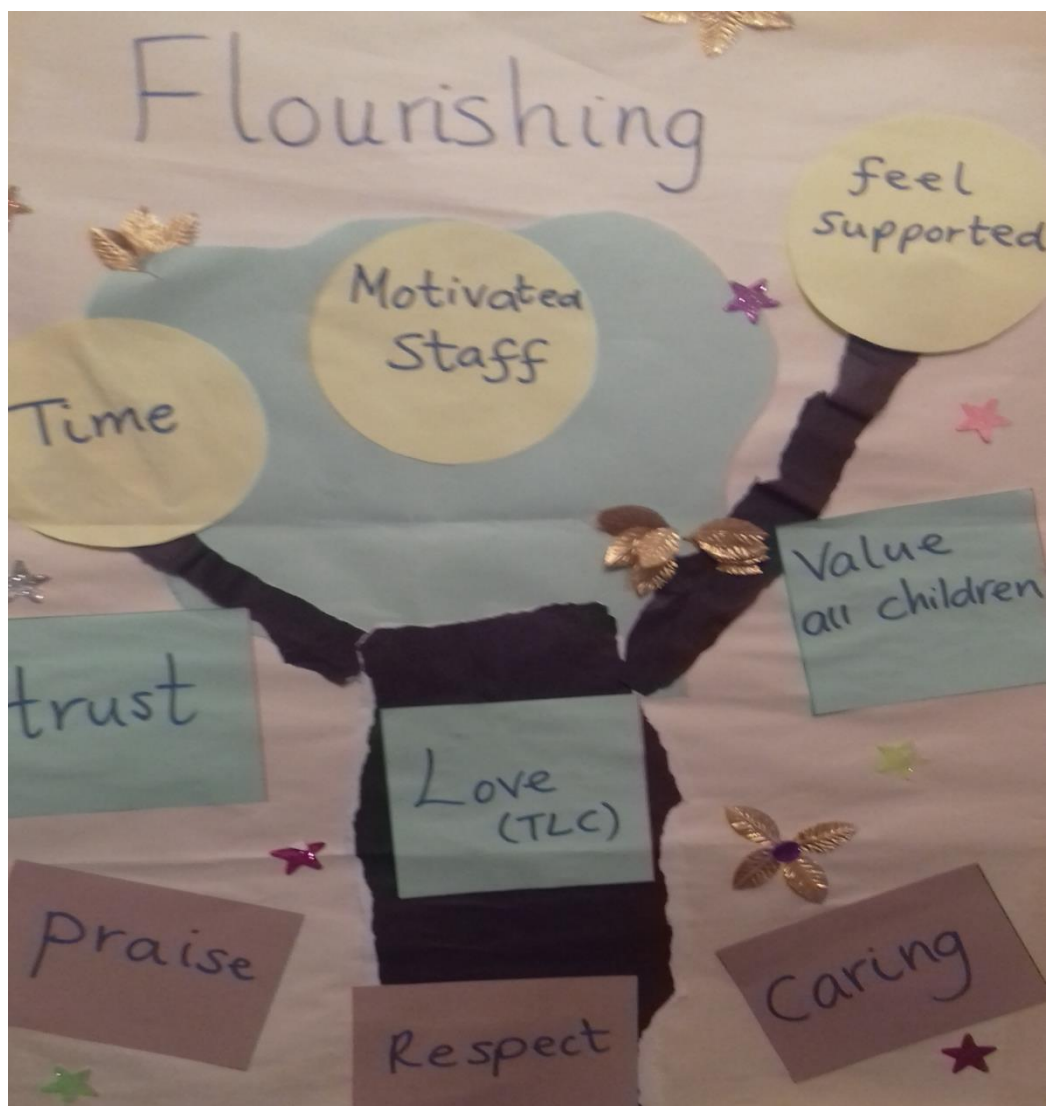


Figure 26 - Sample Poster

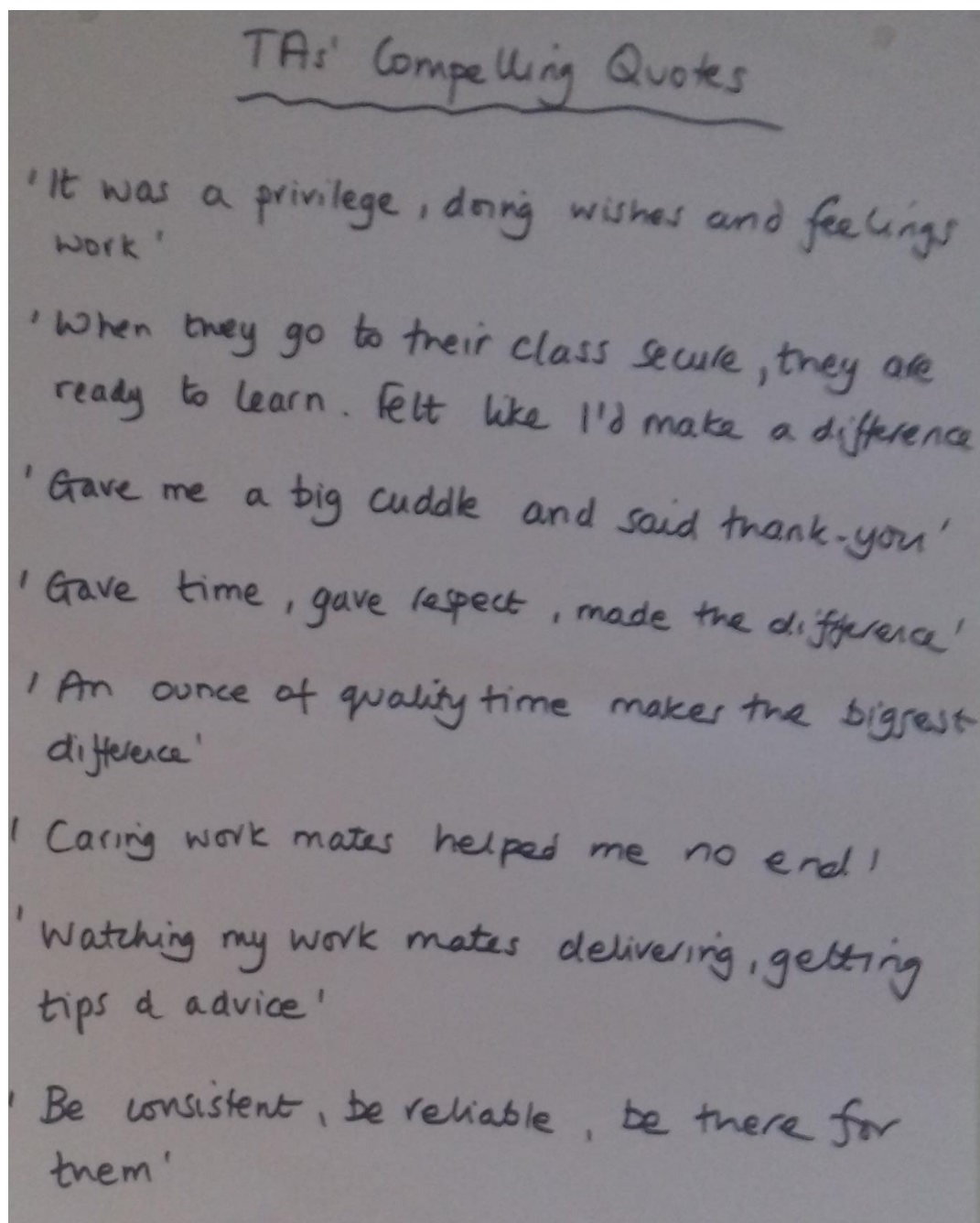


Figure 27 - Flip Chart 4: Collection of TA's Most Compelling Quotes

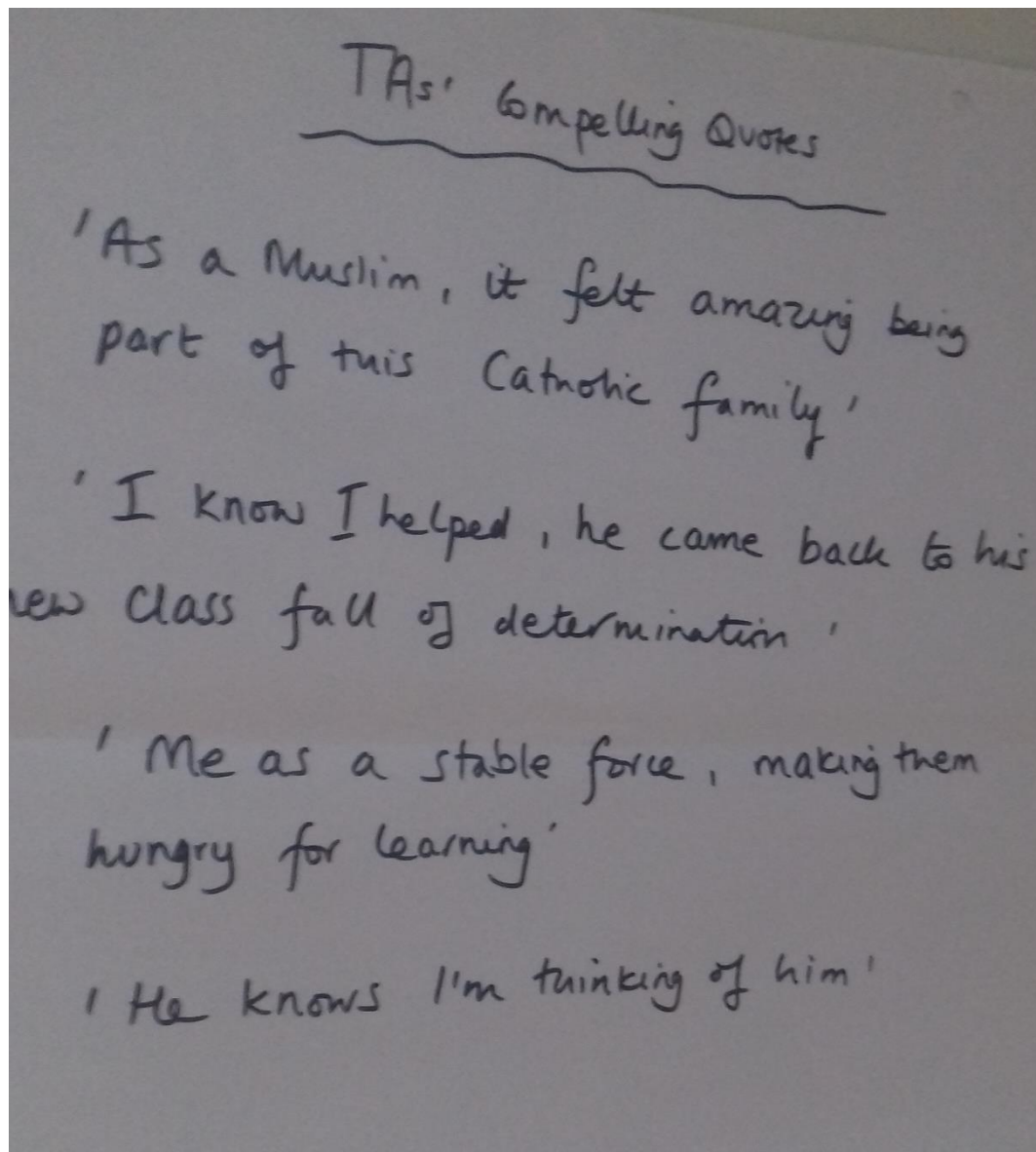


Figure 28 - Flip Chart 4: Collection of TA's Most Compelling Quotes

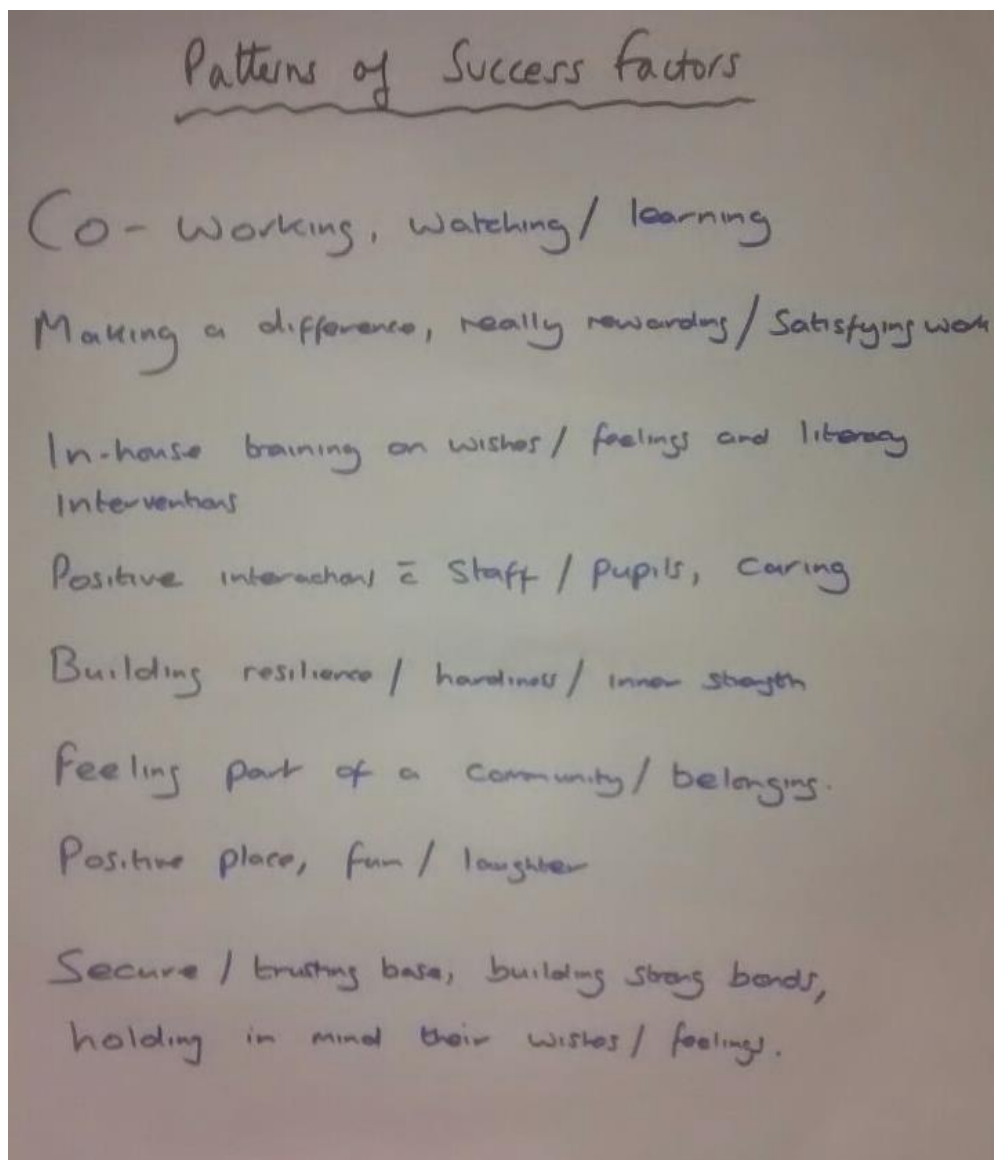


Figure 29 - Flip Chart 5: Patterns of Success Factors Construed by the TAs

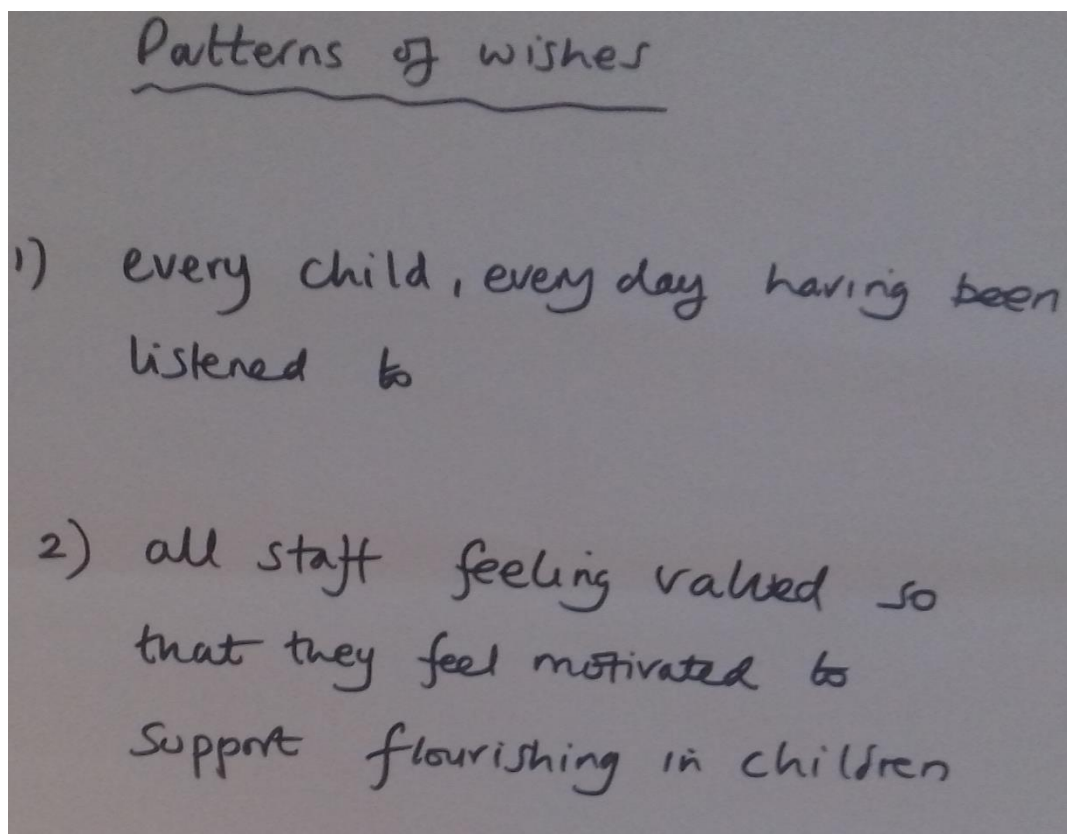


Figure 30 - Flip Chart 6: Patterns of Wishes Construed by the Facilitators

5.1.13 Reflections on the TAs' Discovery/Dream Session

This session challenged the positive principle of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). I did not expect one participant to express such a range of emotions during this session. One teaching assistant, whilst sharing her story of peak experience in an excitable manner, started to cry as she compared it to a low point in her life. She talked about the support she gained from her colleagues and expressed her gratitude. The rest of the participants including the headteacher responded in a warm, empathic way. I noticed a colleague sitting next to her touching her arm and comforting her. She continued to take part in the session without any signs of apparent distress. In light of her emotional responses, I carried out a post-session conversation with the participant as a follow-up. She reported that she was fine, and was keen to take part in the next session.

Given that this participant was the first participant to present, I think subsequent presentations may have been affected by this presentation. The overall ambiance of this session was subdued and quiet.

In addition, the tone of the session may have also been affected by the contents of the subsequent presentations. I became acutely aware of an unfolding, uncomfortable story line as I listened to all the stories underlying the poster presentations. One by one, I kept hearing of the staff's wish to feel valued. It must have been uncomfortable for the head teacher listening to these wishes being expressed by the teaching assistants. It was like she was being exposed to a hidden story line; as dozens of micro-narratives were told, this dominant story line emerged (Bushe and Kassam, 2005). The co-construction of collective wishes felt awkward; because in real terms, this phase highlighted what was missing in the system (i.e., the staff not being valued). In this case, this supports (partially) the assumption that 'a positive focus does not exclude the discussion of problems and that the dreams presented are often an reflection of the frustrations that come from unrealized potential and from barriers in the organization and negative aspects of an organization often arise during AI discussions' (Waters & White, 2015, p.21). I say partially because there was not a discussion of the problems as such, but rather repeated suggestions that the staff need to be valued more.

5.1.14 Dream to Design Session: Findings in Relation to Visions of TA Group (RQ3)

There were two groups that inquired into the wish of 'every child, every day having been listened to'.

5.1.14.1 **Wish 4 (a)**

This group's visionary headline was 'Every Child has a Voice' (as shown in Figure 31). They focused on valuing the voice of every child through building a safe and trusted base so that children are able to explore their feelings, interests and wishes. These comments were made during the presentation of their vision; 'just listen', 'to believe them' and 'today is a new day so it's a fresh start.'

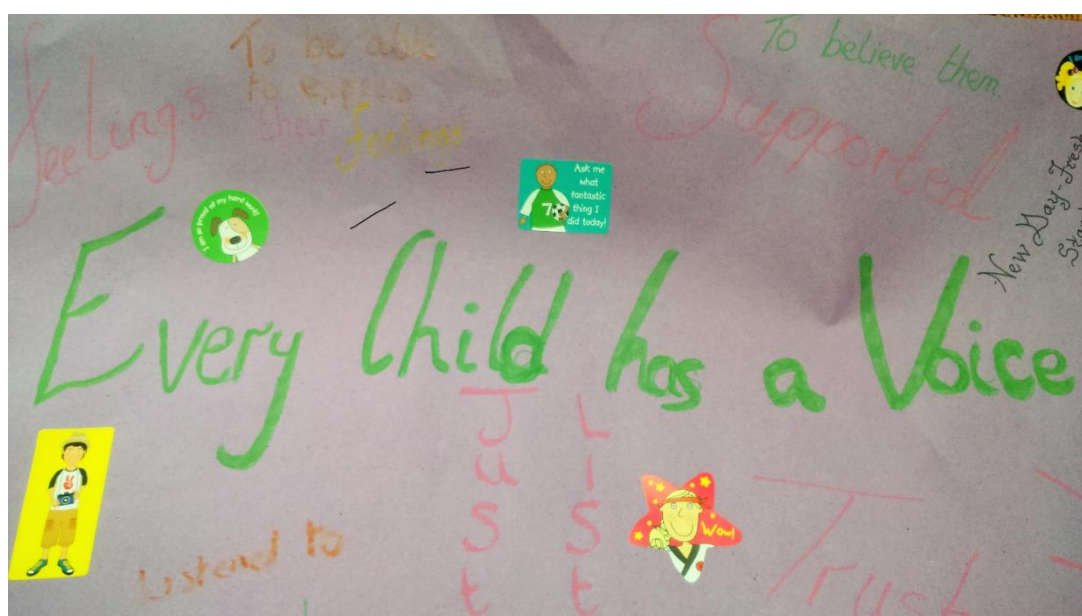


Figure 31 - Visionary Headline for Wish 4

5.1.14.2 **Wish 4 (b)**

This group's visionary headline was 'Listening Bus Pulls into School' and they also emphasised that every child matters and every voice is heard when children on the bus 'get to spend quality time' with a staff member. After discussing the benefits of listening to children, the teaching assistant reported that 'listening is the smallest thing that makes the biggest difference.' This is illustrated in Figure 32.

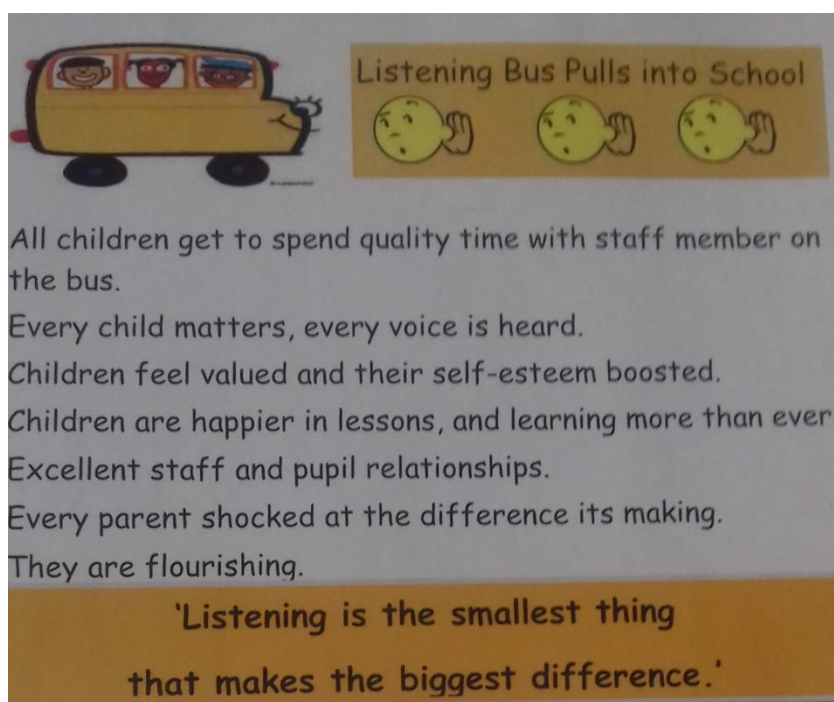


Figure 32 - Visionary Headline for Wish 4

5.1.14.3 Wish 5

Initially there was no vision presented for the wish of 'all staff feeling valued so that they feel motivated to support flourishing in children'. With my support (as detailed in my reflections below), the elicited visionary headline was 'Tell Me That I Matter!'

5.1.15 Findings in Relation to Draft Design Propositions (RQ4)

Design Propositions for the Vision of 'Every Child has a Voice' and 'Listening Bus Pulls into School'

- Set up the 'listening bus' initiative.
- Children spend quality time with a staff member. Children write on the 'bus sign' of the listening bus to see a member of staff.

- A room is set aside for the listening bus. There are different types of 'talking and making' activities in the listening bus/room.
- Staff to take part in the 'Walk and Talk' the daily mile.
- Active listening training for all staff.

Design Propositions for the Vision of 'Tell Me That I Matter!'

- All staff to have access to professional development.
- Appraisals for all staff.
- Set up a staff 'MAD' (Making a Difference) or 'WOW' board in the staff room.
- Staff's contributions to making a difference for a child/groups of children are noticed and posted on this board.
- This board is split into 2 sections, 'Curriculum Strengths' and 'Pastoral Strengths'
- This board is seen by the senior leadership team on a weekly basis, and is viewed by all staff.

5.1.16 Reflections on TAs' Dream/Design Session

This session did not fulfil my expectations. I had assumed some difficulties given that: I (with the head teacher) had co-constructed a somewhat fraught wish of 'all staff feeling valued'; and I grappled with some uncomfortable and uneasy feelings in the lead up to this session. This was not helped by the fact that I found it problematic to generate a sample provocative proposition to share in the session (as I had done for the teaching session). This 'block' was probably reinforced by me thinking about how the teaching

assistants were getting on with their visioning task. In hindsight, I deliberated whether this visioning task should have been undertaken by the school's senior leadership team; as it implied a systemic failure to appreciate (ironically) the work undertaken by teaching assistants.

I had expected the head teacher to co-facilitate this session (as planned); she did not turn up. I deliberated about my interaction with her prior to this session; as I had shared with her that I had not been able to think of a sample provocative proposition. Did this impact adversely on her? Did I project (unintentionally) my anxiety onto her (who I assumed was probably feeling anxious about the wish that implied the teaching assistants are not feeling valued)?

I had expected three visions; two visions relating to the wish of 'all children being listened to' and one vision relating to the wish of 'all staff feeling valued.' The teaching assistants revealed that they had all undertaken the visioning task for the wish of 'all children being listened to'. In other words, there was no vision for the wish of 'all staff feeling valued' and the group who opted for this task were adamant that they were undertaking the other visioning task. I found it difficult to accept this omission on face value; given that I was active in the co-construction of this fraught wish (after listening to their stories of 'peak experiences'), which they subsequently confirmed (in the previous session) (Reason & Rowan, 1981; McNiff, 2016). I construed that the group assigned to undertake the visioning task for the 'all staff feeling valued' wish felt threatened, so avoided it.

On this basis, I set about to negotiate the format and content of this session with them. I started by recapping on my understanding of their collective wish. I shared that: I had been thinking about them undertaking this visioning task; I felt it would be a difficult task to do; and I found it difficult to devise a sample provocative proposition for this session. This may have prompted the group to see me as a co-learner. I proposed these possible options; (1) do nothing in relation to this collective wish; or (2) a small group attempt to create a vision together; or (3) the whole group engages in the visioning task. Half of the group shared they were still interested in addressing the issue of staff feeling valued (McNiff, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2011).

Few participants of this self-selected group made these comments with intensity and with raised voices; 'we don't get to go on training courses' and 'we don't have appraisals'. The participants tended to speak loud, fast, and sometimes over each other. I noticed that they used the word 'we' and accompanied with what they were saying suggested they were being treated differently to their teaching colleagues. They presented as angry.

I used principles of attuned interactions and guidance, and processes of emotional containment to manage this session (Kennedy et al., 2011). Fortunately, I (alongside the rest of my colleagues) had accessed training by Hilary Kennedy in 2015, which meant I have been recently introduced to the intersubjectivity theory underpinning the specific processes of attunement (such as being attentive, encouraging initiatives, receiving initiatives, developing attuned interactions, guiding and deepening discussion). It is interesting to note that the process of attunement is acknowledged by Fitzgerald et al. (2001; 2010) when they critiqued AI as a noun or a 'thing'. They state:

‘The conversation around AI as a “thing” evokes questions as to how it “should” be categorized – as an intervention, as method or technique, as spirit, as philosophy, as worldview and so on. It also creates the possibility of our conceiving and promoting of AI as a “disembodied miracle worker,” thereby de-emphasizing the importance of “the practitioner’s experience with the approach, attunement with self and others, and his or her overall physical, spiritual, mental and emotional well-being’ (Fitzgerald et al., 2001, p.19).

Outcomes for this group included the visionary headline ‘Tell Me That I Matter!’ and six draft provocative propositions. The other group managed to write some draft provocative propositions for the visions, ‘Every Child has a Voice’ and ‘Listening Buss Pulls into School’, by themselves. Regarding the former group, the outcomes were contingent on active and attuned facilitation rather than the positive principle of AI. The liberation of collective energy was possibly due to ‘reclaiming long neglected and/or silenced aspects of individual and organizational life (i.e., Shadow)’ (Fitzgerald et al., 2010, p.226). It is possible that I may have used my apparent charisma to make a positive difference in this session. However, I can say with certainty that I used democratic means to reconfigure this session (McNiff, 2016).

5.1.17 Integrated Design Session

The participants (included 3 teacher representatives and 2 teaching assistant representatives, the head teacher and the assistant head teacher) were presented with the ‘Story So Far’ sheet (see Figure 33); which summarised the outcomes of each phase

of AI. This summary sheet was created by joining two pieces of A4 landscape paper, to provide the 'gestalt' so far (including outcomes of the define phase - Study One).

I recapped on the key outcomes of define, discovery, dream and design phases. Each representative was expected to feedback on their vision and accompanying draft design statements. The task of this session was to generate some new design statements, and/or refine existing design statements.

5.1.18 Outcomes of Integrated Design (RQ4)

New Statements:

- Curriculum freedom is encouraged.
- Teaching assistants contribute to the curriculum planning afternoon.
- Teaching assistants share their ideas for next term's topics. They participate in the curriculum planning meetings that occur on a termly basis.
- Staff ask children a choice of topics to choose from; for example in Geography, 'which country in the world do you want to find out about next term?'
- Each class plan their own set of activities in the form of 'mini topics'.
- Set and agree a protocol for access to staff training/development.

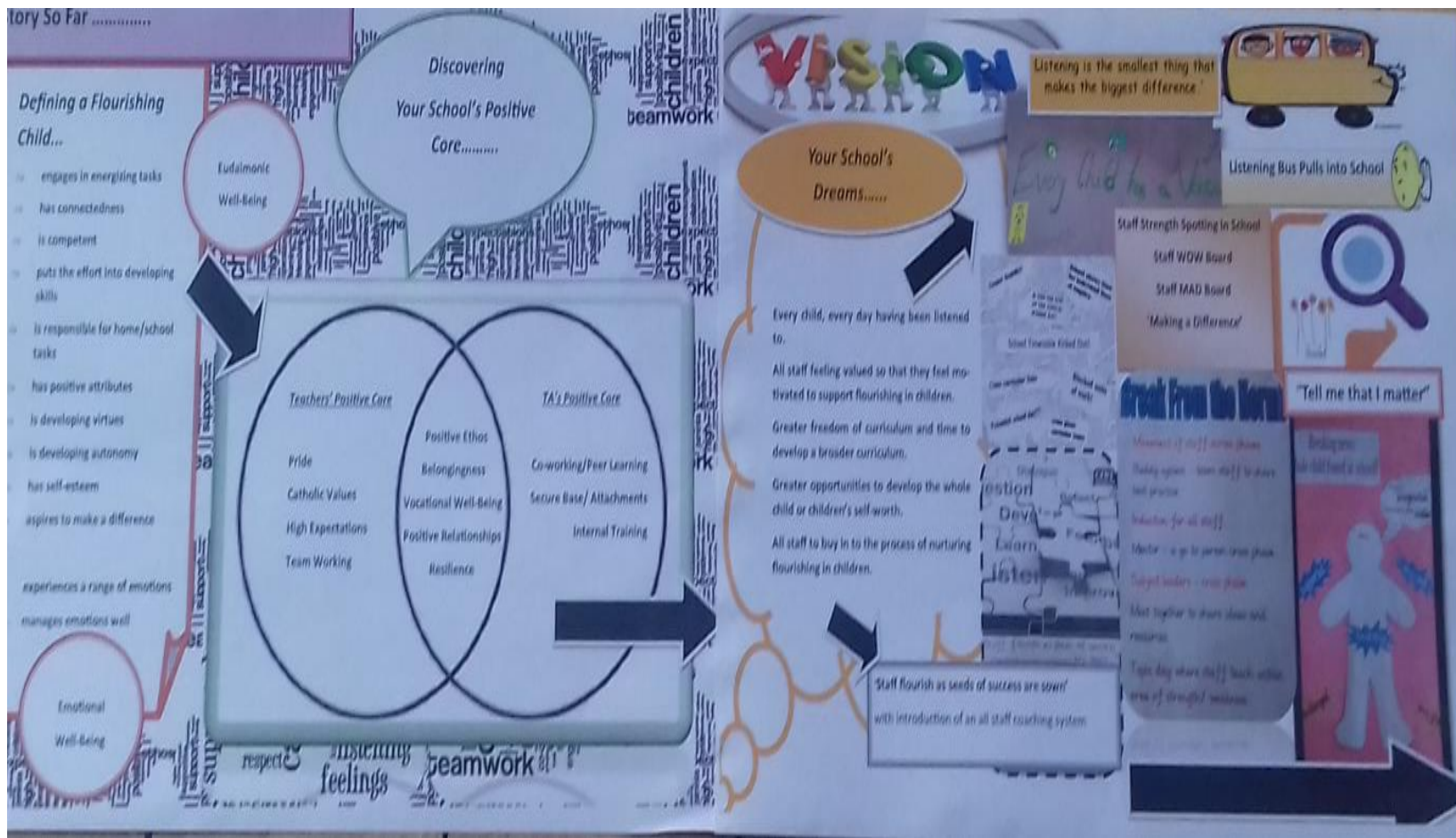


Figure 33 - The 'Story So Far' Sheet

Revised Statements (underlined words represents the change to the existing statement):

- Communicate with staff, parents and visitors about the school's vision of ensuring the rights of the child - to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to.
- Staff - All adults within the school setting facilitate flourishing by ensuring there are regular opportunities for the child to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to.
- Staff to take part in the 'Walk and Talk' the daily/golden mile. (It was changed to the golden mile because it may be difficult to do the 'Walk and Talk' mile every day).

5.1.19 Reflections on Integrated Design Session

Through attentive listening, I attributed that the participants were experiencing some excitement and anxiety (Kennedy et al., 2011). The participants linked 'Molly's 5 Flourishing Rights' with 'Every Child has a Voice' to create a set of entitlements for their pupils. The participants presented as excited as they tried to create a visual framework. I noted down comments such as 'how about we represent this model in form of a hand?', 'there are only five fingers and six rights' and 'how about using the palm of the hand for the listening ear?'

I had expected to support the teaching assistant representing the vision 'all staff to be valued', as she had the difficult task of sharing the visionary headline of 'Tell Me That I

Matter!' in front of the head teacher. She did not require any support; she appeared empowered by the AI process, as she discussed in some detail what her colleagues discussed in their previous session. Unexpectedly, it was one of the teacher representatives who appeared to express some anxiety over the change process. Whilst checking whether the draft design statements were provocative in content, she said 'can I be provocative, what if I don't want to implement any of this.' It was interesting to observe how the rest of the group rallied quickly around this participant to recap on some of the processes of AI and to offer some reassurance in terms of next steps. For example, one teacher participant said 'remember these are our ideas'. Moreover, the head teacher said 'there will be time to implement this programme over a two year period' and 'staff will be able to opt into activities that they are interested in.'

I deliberated whether this intervention by the head teacher would constitute as a critical act of leadership that Bushe (2010) referred to. This intervention by the head teacher was concerned about managing the change process. She seemed to be suggesting an improvisation approach rather than an implementation approach. Bushe and Kassam (2005) in their meta-case analysis of whether AI was transformational coded 'implementation' and 'improvisation' approach as:

'A case was deemed to have pursued an implementation when the goal pursued was a specific tangible change that had been agreed upon by key decision makers or a consensus of those involved. The destiny phase was characterized as an attempt to implement, in a top-down fashion, ideas that had emerged out of the inquiry. A case that was coded as improvisation as one where there were numerous, diverse ideas for changes pursued by various actors' (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 171).

I thought another critical act of leadership took place when the head teacher generated a new provocative proposition of 'curriculum freedom is encouraged'. This was in response to the discussion that occurred amongst participants in this session that covered the challenges of implementing design statements in relation to the curriculum vision. One teacher participant said 'it's a pity we are so accountable with the National Curriculum'. The head teacher responded by saying 'teachers can implement the National Curriculum in a more flexible way, and I am surprised this is not already happening.' Another teacher participant said 'this has made me think that we do not really consult with our pupils about their topic interests.' The experienced teaching assistant said 'years ago we used to contribute to curriculum planning and it used to help us no end.' The head teacher's contribution seemed to generate some shared understandings on this curriculum matter, something that was evidently missing in the system (Senge, 1990; 2006; Evans et al., 2012). It also highlighted previous best practice of teaching assistants contributing to curriculum planning.

Through careful observations, I noticed one exception to high engagement levels. One participant, the teaching assistant who represented the vision of every child being listened to, appeared withdrawn (she said little in the session). This observation ran counter to the assumption that participants are engaged in AI sessions. I deliberated whether she was not used to working collaboratively with such a cross-section of colleagues and/or felt anxious about it (rather than energised as assumed in the positive principle of AI).

Moreover, I deliberated whether this session could have benefitted from being longer and collective reflection; as very little attention was given to the 'Venn Diagram' of the positive core of the 'Story So Far' sheet (see Figure 34), which highlights the similarities and differences in the school's positive core.

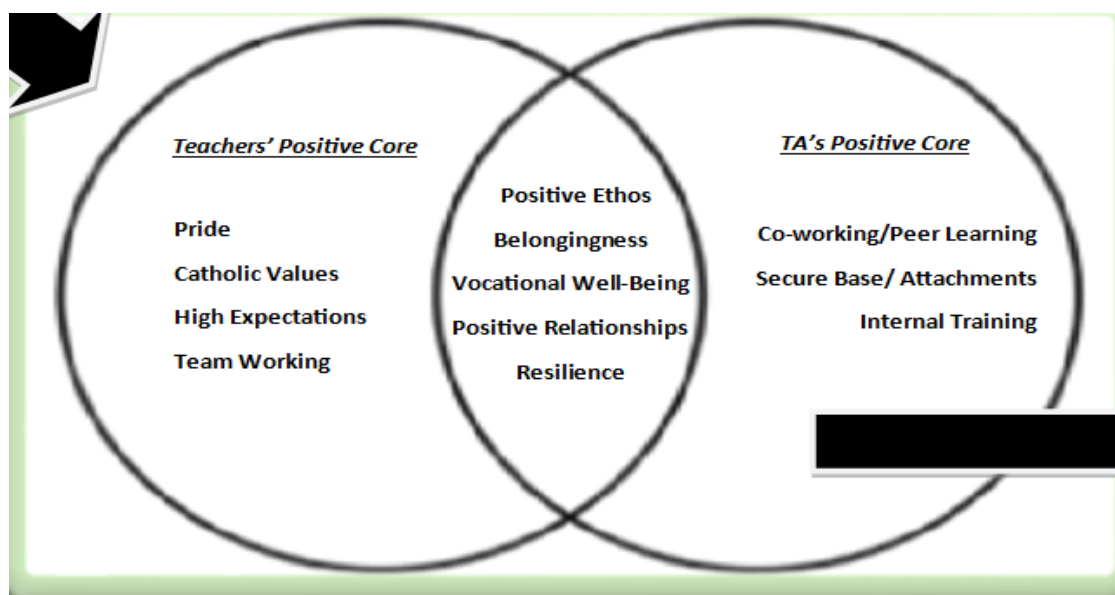


Figure 34 - Venn Diagram of Faith School's Positive Core

This would have further facilitated the discipline of systems thinking (Senge, 1990; 2006; Evans et al, 2012). Moreover, without further dialogue and reflection, the outcomes of this session challenges the assumption that AI is solution-focused as it 'considers 'what works' in order to encourage and motivate people to do more of it' (Doggett & Lewis, 2013, p. 125). If this was the case, then this inquiry would involve the teachers doing more of 'what works' such as building secure bases with the children (which was part of the teaching assistants' positive core). Similarly, it would involve the teaching assistants doing more of 'what works' such as having and maintaining high expectations of their pupils (which was part of the teachers' positive core) (Kristjánsson, 2012). There was no such emphases in

this session, possibly due to the lack of time to explore and reflect upon these systemic differences (Senge, 1990; 2006; Evans et al., 2012).

Moreover, this led me to question why there is no in-built space for collective reflection within AI, given that AI is viewed as a form of action research (Dewar, 2011). Reflecting amongst the participants is a key phase of a spiral of action research cycle (Lewin, 1946). Surely, the participants would benefit from reflecting together after each phase of AI or session?

5.2 Overview of Analysis

I have synthesized the findings (from the nested appreciative inquiry, my observations as an active participant, and my reflections) to form a three-world model of analysis – conceptual, emotional and latent. The conceptual world comprises the school's theoretical hypothesis of an envisioned future and model of flourishing (Cooperrider, 1986). The emotional world consists of the emotional impact (as ascertained by my observations and attributions) and the processes of attunement and emotional containment (Kennedy et al., 2011; Ruch, 2007). The latent world includes my assumptions and 'as if' reflections on the possible impact of the role of underlying defense mechanisms (of the participants) and group dynamics in relation to the inquiry/research questions (Bion, 1961; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

I have built upon Thomas' metaphor of a case being a 'suitcase'; I have 'a state of affairs bounded by the case' and you can 'study the complexity of what is in there' by examining the three layers of the school's 'suitcase' in relation to flourishing (Thomas, 2011, p.13).

This is a way to capture the complexity and depth of this case study, including its nested components. I intend to discuss each layer in turn – the conceptual, emotional and latent worlds of the participants – which is summarised in Figure 35. Collectively, these layers support the development of the enabling school theory (Senge, 2006; Arthur et al., 2010; Thomas, 2011; Evans et al., 2012).

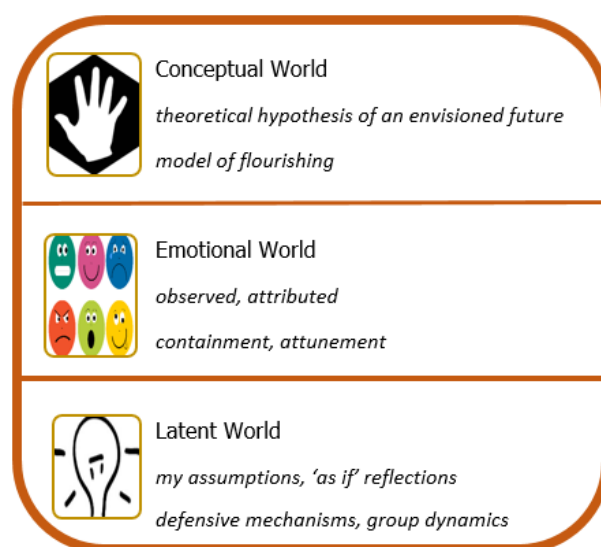


Figure 35 - 3 Layers of Faith School's 'Suitcase' (Thomas, 2011)

5.2.1 Conceptual World – Discovery Phase (RQ2)

Initially, both the teachers and teaching assistants were engaged in theory building on a separate basis. When exploring their 'peak experiences' or thinking about the existing factors that underpin flourishing in children, there was some overlap and distinctiveness in their conceptualisations. This is

'based on the assumption that every living system has a hidden and under-utilised core of strengths – its positive core – which, when revealed and tapped, provides a sustainable source of positive energy for both personal and organisational transformation' (Ludema & Fry, 2008, p.282).

The common 'positive core' amongst both the teachers and teaching assistants included: a sense of belonging; positive relationships; a positive ethos; vocational well-being; and fostering a sense of resilience in children. Success factors identified by the teachers only included cultivating a sense of pride in children, an ethos underpinned by Catholic values, a culture of high expectations and engaging in team working within a curriculum phase (Fredrickon, 2009; Kristjánsson, 2012; Senge, 2006). The teaching assistants identified a different set of success factors too, which included building a secure attachments with children, developing skills through co-working, and internal training in specific interventions. The school's common positive core and distinctive positive cores are illustrated in Figure 36.

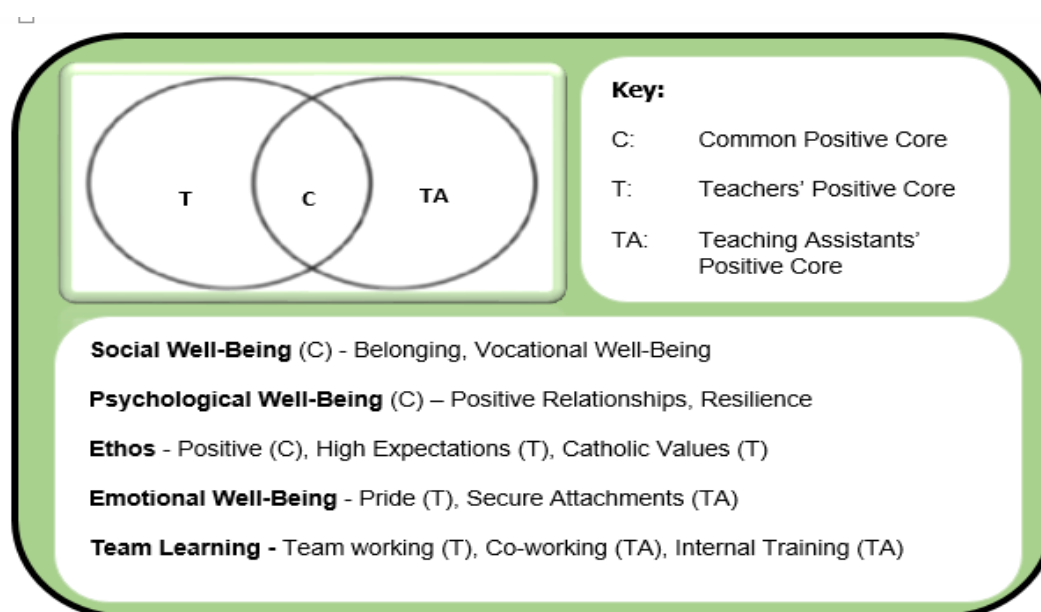


Figure 36 - Summary of Faith School's Positive Core

The school's positive core has been grouped into five themes: success factors relating to school ethos, supporting children's emotional well-being, supporting children's psychological well-being, supporting children's/staff's social well-being and team learning.

I intend to begin this discussion with social well-being and psychological well-being which are the only common themes.

5.2.1.1 *Supporting Staff's /Children's Social Well-being (RQ2)*

Keyes (1998) makes the case for the conceptualization of social well-being; he states,

‘Although the existing models emphasize private features of well-being, individuals remain embedded in social structures and communities, and face countless social tasks and challenges. To understand optimal functioning and mental health, social scientists also should investigate adults’ social well-being’ (Keyes, 1998, p.122).

A sense of belonging was part of the school’s common positive core. Maslow (1968) positioned ‘love and belongingness needs’ in the centre of his motivational hierarchy. He postulates that belongingness needs do not emerge until basic needs are met, but they take precedence over esteem and self-actualisation. Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that this influential assertion was not supplemented by original data or a review of previous findings. They do, however, state that existing evidence ‘supports the hypothesis that the need to belong is a powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation’ (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, p.497). This notion of belongingness to a community features in Keyes’ five-dimensional model of social well-being; under the dimension of ‘social integration’. Keyes (1998) states:

‘Integration is therefore the extent to which people feel they have something in common with others who constitute their social reality (e.g., their neighbourhood), as well as the degree to which they feel that they belong to their communities and society’ (Keyes, 1998, p.122).

The other common positive core of the school, staff experiencing a high sense of vocational well-being, is akin to another dimension of Keyes' model of social well-being, social contribution (Keyes, 1998). He asserts that item and confirmatory factor analyses corroborate his model of social well-being. Keyes defines social contribution in the following way;

'Social contribution is the evaluation of one's social value. It includes the belief that one is a vital member of society, with something of value to give to the world. Social contribution resembles the concepts of efficacy and responsibility' (Keyes, 1998, p.122).

Keyes' conceptualisation of self-efficacy includes Bandura's and Gecas's notions; that self-efficacy is the belief that one can carry out certain behaviours (Bandura, 1977) and can achieve specific objectives (Gecas, 1989). Social responsibility, according to Keyes, is the 'designation of personal obligation that ostensibly contribute to society' (Keyes, 1998, p.122). From a lifespan developmental perspective, Keyes states that midlife is a phase when adults can act on their desire to contribute to society by shaping the future generation into productive members of society through mentoring (Erikson, 1950; Keyes, 1998). As Keyes has roots in social psychology, it is unsurprising that he draws upon Marxist thinking and argues that;

'Social contribution reflects whether, and to what degree, people feel that whatever they do in the world is valued by society and contributes to the commonweal. This construct is consistent with Marx's thesis that people are naturally productive (Israel, 1971)' (Keyes, 1998, p.122-123).

5.2.1.2 *Supporting Children's /Staff's Psychological Well-Being (RQ2)*

Alongside 'making a difference', staff mentioned that they experienced positive relationships with their colleagues as well as with the children they support and/or teach. Positive relations with others or 'the possession of quality relations with others' (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) is included in Ryff's multi-dimensional conceptualisation of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This includes the ability to generate warm and satisfying bonds with others as well as the feeling of empathy and affection in order to identify, understand and maintain deep relationships with one another. Ryff's model of psychological well-being is underpinned by a convergence of theoretical frameworks of positive functioning; these include Jung's (1933) account of individuation, Buhler's (1935) basic life tendencies, Erikson's (1959) psychosocial stages, Allport's (1961) formulation of maturity, Rogers' (1961) conceptualisation of the fully functioning person, and Maslow's (1968) conception of self-actualisation (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

The development of children's resilience was another part of the school's common positive core. Seligman and others have positioned resilience as a within-child attribute that can be developed (Seligman et al., 2009). Gillham, Reivich and Seligman are the key investigators of the Penn Resiliency Programme (PRP), which is a school-based cognitive-behavioural intervention designed to prevent depression and anxiety among middle school children. A recent evaluation of the PRP, which included 2,844 pupils in UK schools, found the intervention group had small reductions in self-reported depressive symptoms. This effect was found to be small and no longer present in the subsequent follow-ups (1-year or 2-year) (Challen et al., 2014).

In contrast, the staff in this inquiry were talking about nurturing resilience in a more general way; fundamentally by appreciating a range of achievements in children. There are links between resilience and health inequalities (Marmot, 2010). Resilient people may show better outcomes than those who are more vulnerable in the face of adversity: these include higher mental well-being and flourishing; higher attainment at school, qualifications and skill levels; lower incidence of unhealthy behaviours; better employment prospects; and improved recovery from illness (Allen, 2014). The Marmot Review (2010) acknowledges the important role of schools in cultivating resilience, and advises a policy objective that schools work in partnership with their respective families and communities to diminish the gradient in health, well-being and resilience of children. What works to improve resilience includes schools recognising a range of achievement and promoting engagement and confidence in children, promoting healthy behaviours, ensuring smooth transitions, supporting parents and carers, promoting good relationships with peers, adopting a 'whole-school' approach, being a community hub, as well as supporting pupils through positive relationships with teachers and support staff who can offer support and guidance (Allen, 2014). When combining these two common positive cores together (resilience building and positive relationships), it indicated that some elements of 'what works' were evident in this school (Allen, 2014).

5.2.1.3 *School Ethos (RQ2)*

Both teachers and teaching assistants mentioned a positive ethos characterised by fun and laughter. A consistent, positive ethos (put another way, is positivity over time) has the potential to build a range of resources for individuals in this school setting (Fredrickson, 2001). There is experimental evidence to support this claim, through testing of the broaden-and-build hypotheses proposed by Fredrickson (2001; 2009). She theorizes that

experiencing positive emotions (such as amusement and joy) can broaden a person's thoughts and actions in a positive way. These fleeting positive emotions are theorised to accumulate and compound over time in ways that build incrementally an individual's resources (such as psychological, social, intellectual and physical) (Fredrickson, 2009).

With the exception of a positive ethos, the school's ethos is not uniform with the teachers only espousing high expectations and Catholic values. The latter is evident in the school's mission statement, as stated in the paragraph below:

'The vision of Faith School is to develop the children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural growth within a caring Catholic environment where life is centred around Christ's teachings. We endeavour to do this with the support of parents, staff, governors and the whole parish community. We will provide a caring, supportive environment where each child's contribution is encouraged and accepted without judgement. We will provide a broad, rich and stimulating curriculum which will encourage children to reach their full potential. Together, with Christ, everyone achieves more.'

The Venn diagram of this school's positive core, in this case, highlights a fragmented school ethos. This is analogous to Senge's 'systems maps'; he advocates the use of diagrams that show the main elements of systems and how they connect. Systems thinking (is known as a discipline, which is a series of principles and practices that employees study, master and integrate into their working lives) is the conceptual foundation of Senge's approach (Senge, 1990; 2006; Evans et al., 2012). It is the discipline that assimilates the other four disciplines (team learning, shared vision, personal mastery, and mental models), merging them into a coherent body of theory and practice. The emergent nested design of this inquiry seemed to promote systems thinking for the

facilitators, which is at the heart of Senge's learning organization model. The head teacher and I heard first-hand the similarities and differences between the teachers' and teaching assistants' 'peak experiences'. This phase of the inquiry seemed to unravel the hidden subtleties, influences and leverage points which lead to a deeper, more complete awareness of the interconnectedness behind any changing system (Senge, 1990). Senge argues that systemic thinking (as well as the other disciplines) may never be fully mastered, but learning organizations practice them continuously (Senge, 1990).

5.2.1.4 *Supporting Children's Emotional Well-Being (RQ2)*

I continue with the practice of identifying systemic differences in the school's positive core by highlighting the differing ways the staff support children's emotional well-being; as emphasized in the Venn diagram. The teachers' peak experiences involved cultivation of pride in children whereas the support staff's positive core comprised of them building secure attachments with the children they support.

Fredrickson (2009) makes the case that when 'pride is specific and tempered with appropriate humility, pride is clearly a positive emotion' (Fredrickson, 2009, p.45). Pride is a good feeling that is experienced when one achieves in socially valued domains. Fredrickson highlights that pride has a mixed reputation; that unchecked pride becomes hubris, and reminds us of some well-known sayings such as 'pride makes people's heads swell' or 'pride comes before a fall'.

Teaching assistants in their accounts of 'peak experiences' highlighted the need for a secure base for the children they support as well as holding in mind their aspirations and feelings. It is unsurprising that the teaching assistants have only mentioned this success factor, labelled as 'building secure attachments' with children, as they are more likely to support children on a more intimate basis either on an individual basis or in small groups. Bowlby (1988) recognized a key feature of parenting as providing a child with a 'secure base' to which a child can return 'knowing for sure s/he will be welcomed, nourished physically and emotionally, comforted if distressed, reassured if frightened' (Bowlby, 1988, p.11). A secure base is understood to be provided through a relationship with sensitive and responsive attachment figures (key staff who support children are sometimes known as secondary attachment figures) who meet the child's needs and to whom the child can turn as a safe haven, when upset or anxious.

When children acquire trust in the availability and reliability of this relationship, it is hypothesized their anxiety is reduced which allows them to explore and enjoy their world, safe in the knowledge that they can go back to their secure base for help if needed. The concept of a secure base is important in this case because it links attachment and exploration, and provides the basis of a secure attachment. A securely attached pupil does not only seek comfort from their (secondary) attachment figure, but through feeling safe to explore develops positive attributes. Seligman in his 'Authentic Happiness' book references Bowlby's work and states that strong or secure bonds are at the heart of most relations (Seligman, 2002).

5.2.1.5 *Team Learning (RQ2)*

Whilst in the realm of thinking about systemic differences, it is also pertinent to highlight the subtle ways in which the staff differed in their team learning. Team working was one aspect of the teachers' positive core. Senge (1990) commented on the lived experiences of working in a 'great team':

'When you ask people about what it is like being part of a great team, what is most striking is the meaningfulness of the experience. People talk about being part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative. It becomes quite clear that, for many, their experiences as part of truly great teams stand out as singular periods of life lived to the fullest. Some spend the rest of their lives looking for ways to recapture that spirit' (Senge, 1990, p.13).

Co-working (or peer learning) and training in a specific intervention featured in the teacher assistants' positive core. In particular, they valued the internal training on eliciting pupil's voice (in terms of their wishes and feelings) they had received from a senior colleague. Specifically, Senge (1990) found that team learning is another discipline of a learning organization; team learning 'is a process of aligning and developing the capacities of a team to create the results its members truly desire' (Senge, 1990, p.236). Team learning is the discipline of group interaction (such as skillful dialogue and discussion) to create new forms of shared learning and knowledge.

5.2.1.6 *Next Conceptual Steps (RQ3)*

The next phase of this inquiry focused on developing shared visions, which interestingly, is another discipline of a learning organization (Senge, 1994, 2006; Evans et al., 2012).

The next section continues to examine the conceptual world of the participants, in particular, an analysis of the visions that were generated from their respective wishes. Teachers' wishes included 'greater freedom of the curriculum and time to develop a broader curriculum', 'greater opportunities to develop the whole child or children's self-worth' and 'all staff to buy in to the process of nurturing flourishing in children'. The teaching assistants' wishes included 'every child, every day having been listened to' and 'all staff feeling valued so that they feel motivated to support flourishing in children'. Although the head teacher was not directly involved in generating the wishes and accompanying visions, these visions were construed as authentic. According to Senge, building shared visions is part of a learning organisation. He states:

'A genuine vision breeds excellence and learning because people in the organization want to pursue these goals....Shared vision is vital for learning organizations that want to provide focus and energy for its employees. In fact, you can't have a learning organisation without shared vision. The overarching goal that the vision establishes brings about not just commitment but new ways of thinking and acting. It fosters risk-taking and experimenting. It also encourages a commitment to the long-term' (Senge, 1994, p.17).

5.2.2 Conceptual World - Dream Phase (RQ3)

I have represented all the visions generated in the 'field' (i.e. teaching and support staff and their environment) as either environmental-based, child-based or both. According to Lewin, 'to understand or to predict behavior, the person and his environment have to be considered as one of constellation of interdependent factors' (Lewin, 1946, p.338). Lewin (1946) postulated that 'field' refers to all aspects of individuals in relationships with their

surroundings (including conditions) that seemingly influence the particular behaviours and developments of concern at a specific point in time.

In the summer term of 2016, seven visions were generated from the five wishes; four by the teaching group and three by the support staff group. Figure C shows the visionary headlines and each visionary headline has been labelled as either environmental-based, child-based or both. When you glance at Figure 37, it reveals that staff chose to address this question ('what does the school aim to achieve in relation to development of flourishing in children?') by focusing predominately on the environmental features of the system, followed by solutions that encompass an interplay between child-based and environmental-based factors; rather than adopting solely a within-child approach.

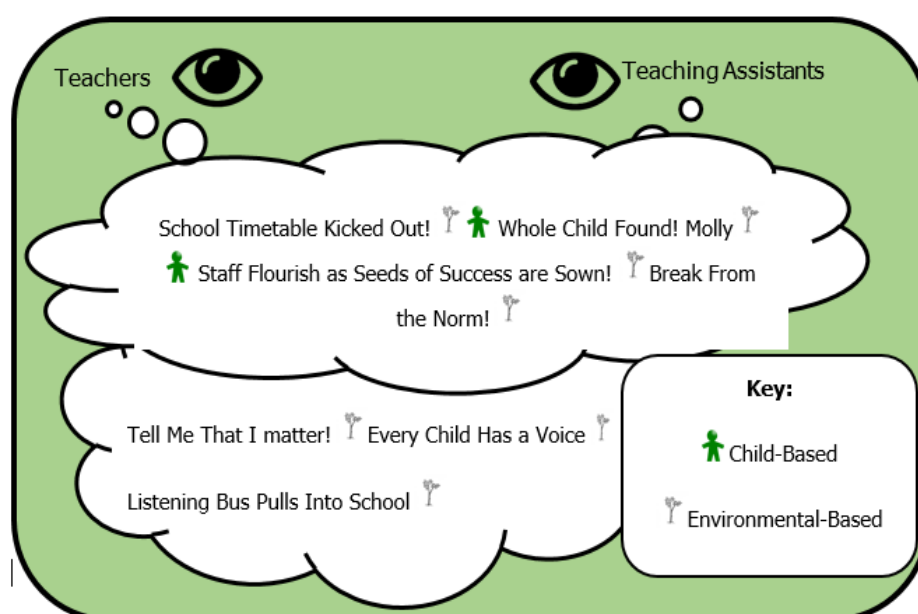


Figure 37 - Faith School's Visions

5.2.2.1 Environmental-Based Visions (RQ3)

It is widely acknowledged that positive psychology needs to be more contextual (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Robbins, 2008; Sheldon, 2009; Biswar-Diener et

al., 2011; Grant & Schwartz, 2011). Given this, it is pleasing to note that there were four environment-based visions in this school's ecology.

Firstly, the headline vision of 'Staff Flourish as the Seeds of Success are Sown!' is related to the introduction of a staff coaching system. The wish of 'all staff to buy-in to the process of nurturing flourishing' underpins this vision. Staff who presented this vision also mentioned parent 14's metaphor (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).

They acknowledged the need for staff to be nourished by peer support and development in order for them to nurture flourishing in children. It is assumed that the changes in the staff development system would have a positive impact upon children's development and functioning. The thinking underpinning this vision appeared to be linked to the ecological systems theory; the microsystem layer is the closest to the child and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). At this level, relationships can have an impact in two directions; both 'away from the child' and 'toward the child'. Bronfenbrenner calls this 'bi-directional influences'; it has been argued that bi-directional influences are strongest and have the greatest impact on the child at the microsystem level. This vision is concerned about the quality and context of the child's environment (i.e., 'away from the child'), and how staff support and development can aid a child's functioning (i.e., 'toward the child').

Secondly, the visionary headline 'Break from the Norm!' can be framed along the same lines as the above vision (which is also linked to the wish of 'all staff to buy-in to the process of nurturing flourishing'). Staff leading on this vision talked about the need to

develop their own practice by learning from each other by 'changing places'. This vision is also positioned within the microsystem layer and is bi-directional in influence.

Thirdly, the vision of 'Listening Bus Pulls into School!' is concerned about staff making appropriate arrangements in the microsystem to ensure that there are opportunities for staff to actively listen to children. The wish of 'all children to be listened to' underpins this vision.

The final environmental-based vision of 'Tell Me that I Matter!' is grounded in the support staff's wish of 'all staff being valued'. In addition, I have labelled this vision as an 'elicited' and a 'scaffolded' vision; as I was involved actively in bringing this seemingly fraught wish to fruition. My approach regarding this vision is detailed in sections 5.2.5.2 and 5.2.6.1.

5.2.2.2 *Child-&-Environmental-Based Visions (RQ3)*

Teaching staff explored the wish of 'greater opportunities to develop the whole-child or children's self-worth' and generated the headline vision of 'Whole Child Found! Molly'. Teaching staff make the case for Molly to have her core rights fulfilled in order for her to flourish. These entitlements included the right to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged and challenged. They argued that Molly could only flourish if her environment supported it. This vision seemed to be concerned about an optimal interplay between the environment and the child, for Molly to flourish.

The other vision entitled 'School timetable kicked out!' also explores the possibility of ensuring a better interaction between the pupil and the school environment (Lewin, 1946). The focus of this vision, which underpins the teachers' wish of 'greater opportunities of curriculum flexibility', was on broadening the curriculum offer in line with the pupils' interests and choices.

5.2.2.3 *Child-Based Vision (RQ3)*

Support staff who explored the wish of 'all children being listened to' generated the vision of 'Every Child has a Voice'. This child-based vision is fundamentally about children's entitlement. This vision is concerned about actively listening to children's aspirations, views and feelings. Davies and Lewis (2013) (who used AI as a framework for children to investigate how 'talking and listening' in a primary school year 2 and 3 class could be improved) assert:

'Fundamentally, children have the right to be heard. Furthermore, it is important to listen to pupils' views so that educational professionals can meet their needs effectively, keep them safe and improve their school experience' (Davies & Lewis, 2013, p. 62).

Moreover, Gersch (2009) mentioned a research programme that focused on listening to children at a deep level; which is called 'spiritual listening'. Gersch (2009) states:

'In the context of these studies, "spiritual" refers to an individual's animating or vital drive, the meaning they attach to their lives, their longings, purposes and in essence, what they are doing on this earth. It is not intended to carry any religious significance' (Gersch, 2009, p. 13).

Insights from Study One suggest that children participants aged from 7 to 11 were able to indicate meanings, longings and purposes of children who are functioning that their best in their future lives.

5.2.2.4 *Next Conceptual Steps (RQ4)*

The focus of the next phase of AI as designing interventions in line with their shared visions. Senge asserts that the development of shared vision links to 'the capacity to hold shared picture of the future [organisational members] seek to create' (Senge, 1990, p. 9). I noticed that these multiple visions have different emphases to Faith School's mission statement. Senge argues:

'When there is a genuine vision (as opposed to the all-too-familiar vision statement), people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to. But many leaders have personal visions that never get translated into shared visions that galvanise an organisation ...What has been lacking is a discipline for translating vision into shared vision – not a cookbook but a set of principles and guiding practices. The practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared pictures of the future that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance' (Senge, 1990, p.9).

5.2.3 Conceptual World - Design Phase (RQ4)

The teachers and teaching assistants continued to theory build on a separate basis before the representatives for each vision formed an integrated design group. This new group continued to generate provocative propositions that would underpin new interventions. Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987), in their seminal paper, decried the lack of ideas that

were generated through use of the conventional action research methodology (Lewin, 1946) and postulated that AI is more likely to generate new notions, images and theories that would result in social innovations. A detailed definition of social innovation can be found in Cooperrider's (1986) unpublished doctoral thesis:

'(1) a new element in organizational structure or interorganizational relations; (2) innovative set of procedures, reward systems, or technologies for shaping new technologies for shaping new forms of human interaction and activity and the relations of human beings to the natural and social environment; (3) a new administrative policy in actual use; (4) new role or sets of roles; and (5) new belief systems or ideologies transforming basic modes of relating' (Cooperrider, 1986, p.81).

This inquiry generated a range of provocative propositions that I have grouped into five themes – curriculum development, pupil's flourishing entitlement, continuous professional development, staff equality and staff appreciation; refer to Table 34 for the grouped propositions. While the former three themes appeared to contain social innovations (or systemic innovations), the remaining themes did not seem to comprise of social innovations as such. In real terms, provocative propositions that address staff inequalities and feelings of professional unworthiness have been labelled more accurately as 'systemic repair'. The key basis of the school's draft flourishing programme is illustrated in Figure 38, and the 'black swan' represents falsification of the implicit claim that AI generates social innovations only. I have already stated in the methodology chapter that the 'case study is well suited for identifying 'black swans' because of its in-depth approach' (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p.424).

Table 34- 5 Design Themes & Accompanying Design Propositions

<p>Curriculum Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross phase curriculum teams have responsibility and authority to ensure that an outstanding curriculum is planned. • At team meetings, staff present their own timetables promoting greater flexibility. • Staff ask children what topics they would be interested in finding out about. • Use the children's ideas to create a curriculum map and share across curriculum phases to eliminate repetition of topics. • Plan a vocations day so that children learn about the different vocations. • Curriculum freedom is encouraged. • Teaching assistants contribute to the curriculum planning afternoon. • Teaching assistants share their ideas for next term's topics. They participate in the curriculum planning meetings that occur on a termly basis. • Staff ask children a choice of topics to choose from; for example in Geography, 'which country in the world do you want to find out about next term?' • Each class plan their own set of activities in the form of 'mini topics'.
<p>Pupil's Flourishing Entitlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with staff, parents and visitors about the school's vision of ensuring the rights of the child - to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to. • Staff - All adults within the school setting facilitate flourishing by ensuring there are regular opportunities for the child to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to. • Staff to take part in the 'Walk and Talk' the daily/golden mile. • Parents - There are regular shared nurturing experiences between school staff and parents. There are regular coffee mornings/afternoons sessions - with parents. • Pupils – Pupils are aware of their entitlements. Pupils reflect on a termly basis charting progress against the core areas of the whole child. • Set up the 'listening bus' initiative. • Children spend quality time with a staff member. Children write on the 'bus sign' of the listening bus to see a member of staff. • A room is set aside for the listening bus. There are different types of 'talking and making' activities on the listening bus/room.
<p>Continuous Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the development of a whole school coaching system. • Agree and pilot a form of a whole school coaching system. • Introduction of a voluntary, peer coaching system to build flourishing practice. • All staff have a 'changing places' day to experience working in a different curriculum phase. • Develop a draft staff flourishing guide/ a good practice guide to support the promotion of children's rights. • The school provide a personalised induction programme for all staff. • Active listening training for all staff.

Staff Equality

- All staff to have access to professional development.
- Appraisals for all staff.
- Set and agree a protocol for access to staff training/development.

Staff Appreciation

- Set up a staff 'MAD' (Making a Difference) or 'WOW' board in the staff room.
- Staff's contributions to making a difference for a child/groups of children are noticed and posted on this board.
- This board is split into 2 sections, 'Curriculum Strengths' and 'Pastoral Strengths'
- This board is seen by the senior leadership team on a weekly basis, and is viewed by all staff.

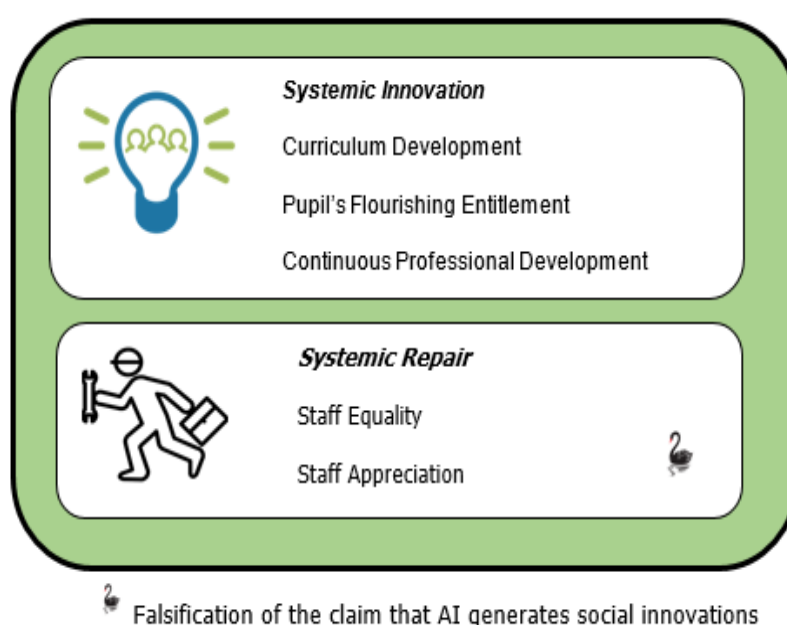


Figure 38 - Key Basis of Faith School's Draft Flourishing Programme

5.2.3.1 *Systemic Innovation: CPD (RQ4)*

Staff generated several provocative propositions that belong to the overarching theme of CPD. The key initiatives within this theme included 'a changing places day' for staff, an introduction of a peer coaching system and training in active listening skills. Using Arthur et al.'s (2010) types of learning cultures, the staff seem to advocating a mentoring/coaching culture rather than leader-led culture, collegial culture or practical

imperative culture. These key initiatives are considered new given that these have not been tried before by the school staff (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). Moreover, during my fifteen years working as an educational psychologist, this is the first time a school has requested training in active listening skills. Taken together, this suggested that the staff were keen to develop their practice, skills and knowledge-base in order to facilitate flourishing in children.

When connecting this theme of CPD with the school's positive core of staff experiencing vocational well-being, it seemed to fit tentatively with Senge's discipline of personal mastery. Senge found that this discipline is more than just building staff's competence and skills, as it involves a special kind of proficiency which is linked to one's 'calling'. According to Senge (1990), individuals with a high level of mastery are in a continuous learning mode; as it is a process and a lifelong discipline. Senge found that 'personal mastery is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening one's personal vision, of focusing one's energies, of developing patience and of seeing reality objectively' (Senge, 1990, p. 7). The process of peer coaching has the potential to facilitate further the discipline of personal mastery, as there will be opportunities for reflection within this process. From a methodological perspective, I think the process of reflection was truncated in this inquiry given that there is no public reflective space within the AI methodology (unlike Lewin's action research methodology), thereby limiting potentially the participants' process of furthering their personal mastery (Lewin, 1946; Senge, 1990; Evans et al., 2012).

5.2.3.2 *Systemic Innovation: Curriculum Development (RQ4)*

The staff were also keen to design curriculum module(s) based around the pupils' interests and strengths, and to offer, wherever possible, curricular choices to the pupils. This appeared to link with parent 11's conceptualisation of flourishing; 'having a framework of love with freedom to explore things and explore their gifts and abilities'. According to 'The Good Childhood Report' (Children's Society, 2012), which is based on a series of surveys involving 30, 000 children aged between 8 and 16, the proportion of children who felt that they had relatively little autonomy increased with age. Gersch (2009) argues that 'choice of the child' is becoming increasingly important (Gersch, 2009, p.15). The Good Childhood Report (2012) calls for a reconsideration of the pupils' relationship with their teachers; it asserts that there needs to be a better balance between the 'nurturing' aspects of the relationship (such as care, support and safety) and the aspects linking to autonomy, respect and choice (Children's Society, 2012, p.61).

According to the theory of self-determination, notions of pupil autonomy and choice are central for the enhancement of well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Accordingly, a curriculum that affords choice, in essence, provide opportunities for self-direction and may provide feedback that is informing rather than corrective (which in turn, may aid pupils to self-regulate), would enhance intrinsic motivation and enhance feelings of autonomy and self-efficacy. In other words, promote flourishing, as this would provide opportunities for children to engage in an energizing task and exercise some autonomy (i.e., opportunities to fulfil two dimensions of the flourishing model that was constructed in Study One). McLellan et al. (2012) found that pupils tended to display aspects of eudaimonia and hedonia in schools where the emphasis was on greater pupil autonomy, a less controlling environment and where more opportunities for risk taking were provided

during lessons than in schools that made pupils feel safe and cared for by strictly imposing rules for behaviour and offering extrinsic rewards.

5.2.3.3 *Systemic Innovation: Pupil's Flourishing Entitlement (RQ4)*

Alongside 'choice of the child', Gersch argues that 'children's rights are seen as becoming increasingly important' (Gersch, 2009, p.15). Participants of the integrated design session put together draft provocative propositions from the teachers' vision of 'Molly's flourishing rights' and the teaching assistants' vision of 'Every child has a voice' to create six core children's flourishing entitlements. These include: every child to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to. This thinking is similar to the assumption underpinning the capabilities approach; capability refers to being able to do something through having the right opportunities or conditions (McLellan & Steward, 2015; Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; 2011). Nussbaum (2011) clarifies that she

'...typically uses the plural, "Capabilities", in order to emphasize that the most important elements of people's quality of life are plural and qualitatively distinct: health, bodily integrity, education, and other aspects of individual lives cannot be reduced to a single metric without distortion' (Nussbaum, 2011, p.18).

Capabilities approach is underpinned by the central question, when comparing societies and assessing them for their basic decency is, 'what is each person able to do and to be?' (Nussbaum, 2011, p.18). Fundamentally, this approach is concerned about the opportunities available to each person and is focused on choice or freedom;

‘the crucial good societies should be promoting for their people is a set of opportunities, or substantial freedoms, which people then may or may not exercise in action: the choice is theirs’ (Nussbaum, 2011, p.18).

This approach, developed within human developmental studies, is concerned with ‘entrenched social injustice and inequality, especially capability failures that are the result of discrimination or marginalization’ (Nussbaum, 2011, p.19). Staff were particularly clear in their thinking that children would only be able to demonstrate the dimensions of flourishing with the availability of these six opportunities (McLellan & Steward, 2015).

Interestingly, two of these entitlements or opportunities, were once part of the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda; every child to be safe and healthy. Gersch (2009, p.13) recognized the ‘total harmony between positive psychology and the ECM agenda and outcomes that include being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being’. McLellan and Steward (2015) reverted back to the ECM agenda when incorporating an entitlement focus in the questionnaire they developed. They argued,

‘Although the present government has recently removed all mention of wellbeing from the current inspection framework (Office for Standards in Education, 2012), the ECM Agenda and the accompanying SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) Programme (Department for Education and Skills, 2005) continues to be seen as an important aspects of schooling, not least as the main aims, values and purposes of education articulated in the current National Curriculum talk about enabling all young people to become successful, confident and responsible, recognising that personal development is essential to wellbeing and success

(Department for Education, 2011). Hence we took into consideration the dimensions outlined in ECM' (McLellan and Steward, 2015, p.314).

McLellan and Steward (2015) considered both the individual and social aspects of well-being when developing their instrument to capture children and young people's perceptions of their well-being in school. They recognised that accounts of well-being from the positive psychology perspective tend to under-theorise the social context. Their questionnaire, 'How I Feel About Myself and School', is rooted in the capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 2000).

Moreover, Kristjánsson (2016) (in his critical review of flourishing as the aim of education) refers to Aristotle's notion of 'external necessities' as a precondition of flourishing. Kristjánsson (2016) states that:

"...the word 'external' must be understood quite broadly here to cover various psychological, physical, societal/political and economic aspects of what philosophers call 'moral luck': favourable enabling circumstances that are largely beyond the agent's own direct control. Some of those necessities may, however, be 'internal' to the agent (e.g. a healthy constitution), and some of them may be amenable to some personal control (e.g. exercising to improve stamina; attending a workshop on cognitive behavioural therapy to enhance resilience) (Kristjánsson, 2016, p.5).'

Kristjánsson (2016) briefly discusses only six categories of external necessities or goods of fortunes listed by Aristotle. These include: 'Close parental attachments and good upbringing/education'; 'Good government, ruling in the interests of the people, and a just

constitution'; 'Enough wealth to make sure we do not come a cropper'; 'A complete life: namely a life in which we do not die prematurely'; 'Health, strength and even minimal physical beauty'; and 'Friends and family' (Kristjánsson, 2016, p.6). Kristjánsson asserts that Aristotle emphasizes these background conditions that enable or disable flourishing.

While Kristjánsson (2016) discusses the notion of these external necessities being beyond the school's control, these six entitlements specified by the school staff are more within their control. In particular, it is within the staff's control to enable pupils to be safe (in school), supported, engaged, challenged and listened to.

5.2.3.4 *Systemic Repair: Staff Appreciation & Equality (RQ4)*

Although the explicit focus of this inquiry is about supporting flourishing in children, this inquiry has revealed some inequalities in relation to staff development. Systemic repair, in this particular case, is concerned primarily about repairing the reported inequalities and implicit feelings of professional unworthiness experienced by teaching assistants. In their dream/design session, some teaching assistants made comments along the lines of 'we don't get to go on training courses like the teachers do' and 'we don't have appraisals' which resulted in their visionary headline of 'Tell Me That I Matter!'. Under the dimension of social contribution, Keyes' in his paper on 'Social Well-Being', draws upon Marxist thinking and argues that 'alienation is the economic counterpart to the diminution of the perceived value of one's life and everyday activities' (Keyes, 1998, p.123).

Evidence of staff inequality also existed within the AI schedule (as shown in Appendix 17); to date, the teaching group accessed four sessions whereas the teaching assistant group

accessed only three sessions. Taken together, this suggest a form of discrimination may exist, that is, the denial of opportunities to the teaching assistants that the teachers may enjoy within the school system. There seems to be a failure in the system to treat all staff as of equal worth. Systemic differences were realized in the teaching assistants' dream/design session (Senge, 1990, 2006; Evans et al., 2012).

In their book, Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (which includes a foreword written by Cooperrider) reference the work of Paulo Freire who suggests that the 'oppressed' are plunged in their reality of believing their world is the way it is and there is nothing they can do about it. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) state the voices of the 'organizationally oppressed' include: 'This is how it has always been around here. It has been this way for the twenty years I have worked here. It is never going to change' (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p.269). They postulate 'when one group in an organization feels undervalued and unable to influence so do others' (p.269). Moreover, Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) state:

'In our experience, organizationally oppressed people live and work in all functions, at all levels, and in all sectors of organizations. No organizational group, level, or function is more receptive to organizational oppression than another. In some organizations, the marketing group doesn't feel heard or able to influence decisions. In others, it is manufacturing. Elsewhere, those at the top express frustration at being unable to influence the market or shareholders or to motivate employees. In still others, front-line employees experience themselves invisible and unable to influence the way work – even their own work – gets done' (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 269).

Furthermore they claim, that through the act of mutual hearing, 'employees who are traditionally disenfranchised – the organizationally oppressed – begin to show up, think, and imagine in bold and provocative new ways' (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 274). This may be the case when teaching assistants were thinking of supporting children (as evidenced by their visionary headline of the 'Listening Bus Pulls into School') but it was not the case in relation to themselves (as indicated by the lack of a vision for their wish of 'all staff feeling valued'). It was only through active and attuned facilitation that the teaching assistants were able to voice ways in which they perceived the system to be unjust. Whilst the teaching assistants needed to be supported to potentially influence the system they worked in, Freire (1970) (in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) argues that those who are oppressed can change their circumstances through 'praxis'; he defines praxis as 'reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed' (Freire, 1970, p.126).

The teaching assistants were able to draw on the school's common core of vocational well-being to devise the staff 'making a difference' (MAD) board. The staff 'MAD' board that would highlight strengths of the staff (in curriculum and pastoral domains) may be considered as an innovative way to address staff feeling undervalued; but there is no innovative element to the provocative propositions of 'all staff to have appraisals' and 'all staff to access external training courses' (Cooperrider, 1986; Flyvbjerg, 2004; Popper, 1959).

Without appraisals and access to the full range of professional training, it raises the question of whether the system is unwittingly setting up the teaching assistants to fail in their role of supporting children. This took me back to the unfortunate media headlines about the impact of teaching assistants in the national context: 'Teaching assistants

blamed for poor results' (The Daily Telegraph) and 'Teaching assistants impair pupil performance' (The Times Educational Supplement). Blatchford et al.'s (2012) large-scale research on the deployment and impact of support staff project found that the least trained educators were supporting children with the most complex needs or special educational needs with minimal impact. Training for teaching assistants features in the guidance report on 'Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants' (Sharples et al., 2015). Sharples et al. (2015) recommends that schools, in relation to use of teaching assistants in the classroom, must ensure teaching assistants are trained robustly and supported in understanding the methods and pedagogies, and how to apply them.

5.2.3.5 *AI Relative to Systemic Innovation & Repair (RQ4)*

Although the proponents of AI have little to say about systemic repair, Bushe (2012) and others have made a case for generativity in the widest possible sense. Bushe (2012) points out that Barge and Oliver (2003) argue

'for a different image of appreciation in which managers make judgments about what will be life generating and position themselves in the conversation in ways that respect the complexity of the situations and keep conversations generative. That, for them, means exploring vulnerabilities, fears, distress and criticism, as well as moments of excellence' (Bushe, 2012, p.15).

While the focus of Jackson's (2014) essay, 'Rethinking Repair', is about the repair of sociotechnical systems, he raises some interesting questions which seemed to have some relevance in this case; as he contrasts innovation and repair. He argues that the repair of sociotechnical systems takes places in the space between 'an almost-always-falling apart world' and 'a world in constant process of fixing and reinvention' (Jackson, 2014, p.222).

Jackson argues that 'broken world thinking' can be both 'generative and productive' and states:

'The fulcrum of these two worlds is repair: the subtle acts of care by which order and meaning in complex sociotechnical systems are maintained and transformed, human value is preserved and extended, and the complicated work of fitting the varied circumstances of organizations, systems, and lives is accomplished. Repair in this connotation has a literal and material dimension, filled with immediate questions: Who fixes the devices and systems we "seamlessly" use? Who maintains the infrastructures within and against which our lives unfold? But it also speaks directly to "the social", if we still choose to cut the world in this way: how are human orders broken and restored (and again, who does this work) (Jackson, 2014, p.222)?'

This case has generated systemic repairs, partly, due to its nested design; it occurred within the process of group or peer-based collaboration (which may have been a safer option than system-wide collaboration). I think a typical AI (i.e., system-wide collaboration) may have masked these key systemic issues that were highlighted by the group of teaching assistants. As it was, initially, this group found it difficult to talk about their dissatisfactions of the system amongst themselves and a known facilitator.

5.2.4 Conceptual World: Re-define Phase (RQ1)

Nevertheless, the integrated design session allowed both teaching and support staff to share and integrate their mental models of flourishing for the first time. Senge (1994)

makes the case that mental models are an important component of a learning organisation;

‘....Because mental models are usually tacit, existing the below the level of awareness, they are often untested and unexamined. They are generally invisible to use – until we look for them. The core task of this Discipline is bringing mental models to the surface, to explore and talk about them with minimal defensiveness – to help us see...the impact on our lives and find ways to re-form (...them...) by creating new mental models that serve us better in the world’ (Senge, 1994, p. 236).

Mental models increase personal awareness, influence what we see and how we act (Senge, 1994; 2006; Evans et al., 2012). The participants assimilated the explicit assumptions of teaching staff (i.e., that children have the right to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged and challenged) and support staff (i.e., that children have the right to be listened to) to form an additional but essential and critical component of the emergent model of flourishing. Staff assumed that the cultivation of emotional well-being and eudaimonic well-being is only possible when children’s core flourishing entitlements are readily disposed and available to them. This led to the re-conceptualisation of flourishing, which is illustrated in Figure 39. In real terms, the end product of the discipline of mental models in the integrated design session was to challenge previous thinking, the initial model of flourishing as detailed in Study One (Senge, 1994; 2006; Evans et al., 2012).

Staff wanted to represent these entitlements in form of a hand, which signifies helping hand of significant adults in the system (with the palm of the hand representing the listening element). The participants in this session seemed to set free their mental models which consists ‘deeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations, or even pictures or images

that influence how they understand the world and how they take action (Senge, 1990, p.8).'

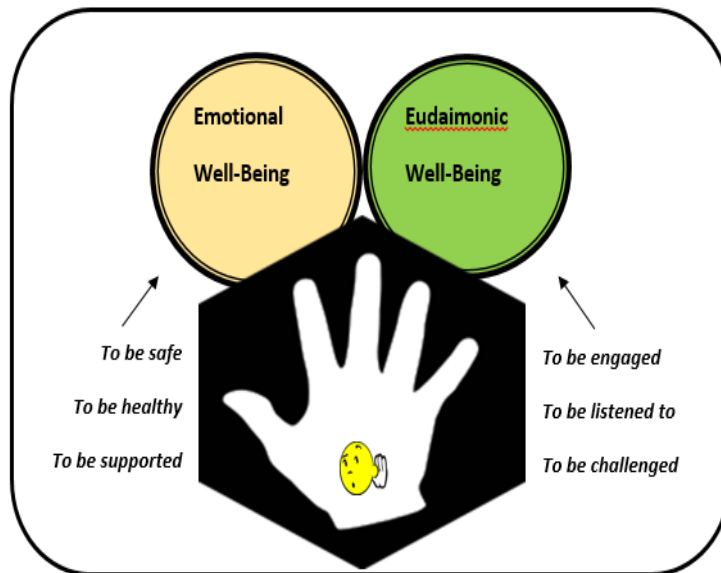


Figure 39 - Faith School's Reconceptualised Model of Flourishing

There are no hierarchical models of flourishing in the literature review of this thesis. This model of flourishing which prioritises the role of the significant adults in the system can be likened in general terms to Maslow's conceptualisation of self-actualisation in that both are hierarchical (albeit in a different sense).

5.2.5 Conclusions on the Conceptual World (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 & RQ4)

The staff in this illuminative inquiry, in relation to flourishing, have identified systemic success factors (the school's positive core), systemic solutions and systemic repairs (Cooperrider, 1986; Jackson, 2014, Bushe, 2012).

The school's common positive core comprises social well-being (staff and children's sense of belongingness and staff's sense of vocational well-being), psychological well-being (positive relationships with children and staff, and cultivating resilience in children) and a positive ethos (Keyes, 1998; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Marmot, 2010; Allen, 2014; Fredrickson, 2009). Staff also recognized that their team learning as a key success factor that contributed to flourishing in children (Senge, 1990; 1994; Evans et al., 2012). Other success factors recognized by teachers included cultivating a sense of pride in children as well as an ethos underpinned by Catholic values and high expectations (Kristjánsson, 2012). Possibly, due to the close nature of the work undertaken by teaching assistants, they identified building secure attachments with the children they support as a success factor (Bowlby, 1988; Seligman, 2002). The proposed systemic solutions centered on promoting children's core entitlements (to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged, and listened to), new forms of continuous professional development (such as 'changing places', the introduction of a peer coaching system and training in active listening skills), and developing a strengths-based curriculum (McLellan & Steward, 2015; Senge, 1990, 1994; 2006). The teaching assistant group, with my support, revealed the need for systemic repairs; the need to address staff inequality and, linked to this, address feelings of professional unworthiness (Bushe, 2012; Jackson, 2014).

Alongside this, both the teaching and support staff have constructed a hierarchical, tripartite model of flourishing; which comprises of an entitlement focus, eudaimonic well-being and emotional well-being (McLellan & Steward, 2015; Nussbaum, 2000).

So far, I have discussed the participants' intentional states; primarily their theories, desires and beliefs in relation to flourishing. In the subsequent sections, I endeavour to interpret

why some participants may have acted in the way they did; in doing so, I am attempting to build a richer understanding through an exploration of the participants' emotional and latent worlds. In the words of Bruner (1991),

'If people can predict anything from a character's intentional states, it is only how he will feel and he will have perceived the situation. The loose link between intentional states and subsequent action is the reason why narrative accounts cannot provide causal explanations. What they supply instead is the basis for *interpreting* why a character acted as he or she did' (Bruner, 1991, p.7).

'Unlike the constructions generated by logical and scientific procedures that can be weeded out by falsification, narrative constructions can only achieve "verisimilitude" (Bruner, 1991, p.4)

5.2.5 Emotional World

This section examines the emotional impact of this inquiry upon the participants. On face value, the teacher 3-D cycle appeared to be characterised predominately by positive emotions whereas the teaching assistant 3-D cycle seemed to be characterised predominately by negative emotions. Congruent with the underlying social constructionist perspective of this thesis, a sociodynamic model of emotions is applied, rather than focusing on positivity ratios of a group of individuals. This is different from the positivist positive psychology perspective espoused by Fredrickson, who makes a case for positivity ratios (Fredrickson, 2009). It is important to note that the concept of critical positivity ratio has been discredited by Brown et al. (2014). In this case, emotions are seen as dynamic systems that are located within a context, relationships and interactions.

5.2.5.1 Emotional States of the Teachers

Figure 40 provides samples of the (most plausible) emotion experienced by the teachers as they progressed through the initial 3-D appreciative inquiry process. I have categorised the emotion as observed or attributed. I have also added the 'black swan' image to highlight where the positive principle of appreciative inquiry may have been falsified (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Popper, 1959).

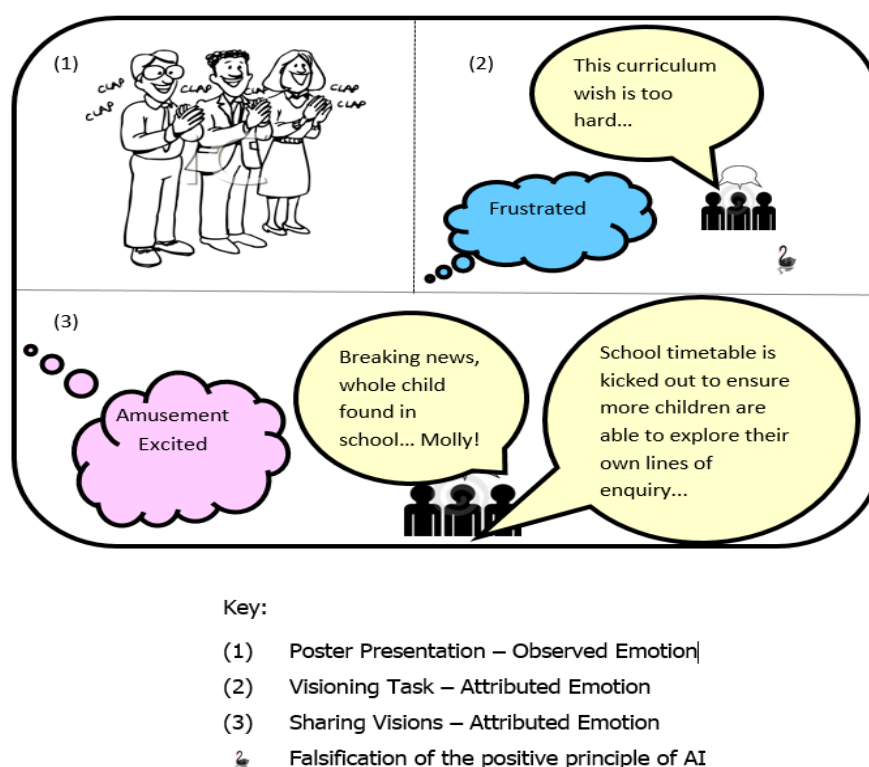


Figure 40 - Samples of Emotion Experienced by Teachers

Poster Presentation

The poster presentation session with the teachers was characterised by a good dose of positivity. After each presentation, the rest of the group (including myself) clapped. When I glanced at the group, I noticed they were smiling and, at times, laughing. Emotional states can be observed through noticeable expressions, and in case, positive emotions were

evident with participants' smiles, claps and laughter. This session seemed to be congruent with the positive principle of AI (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Fredrickson's theory and research suggests that positive emotions broadens thinking, expands awareness, builds resiliency and generates an upward spiral of learning and growth (Fredrickson, 2009).

Visioning Task

When supporting a group of teachers attempting to undertake the visioning task for the wish of 'greater freedom of the curriculum and time to develop a broader curriculum', one participant commented that 'this curriculum wish is too hard' and 'the curriculum is the curriculum'. From this context, I attributed that she was experiencing a sense of frustration. When attributing emotions, I worked backwards in trying to understand why a participant or participants is/are producing a combination of features; including body language, facial expression, vocal expression and verbal statements (Heider, 1958). In this case, I heard the participant's sense of frustration alongside her aforementioned comments.

Sharing Visions

Although excitement does not feature in Fredrickson's list of positive emotions, Ekman (2004) includes excitement in his chapter on enjoyable emotions. He argues that excitement occurs in response to novelty or challenge. His mentor, Tomkins, perceives excitement as the most intense form of the emotion interest. Ekman (2004) states that interest is a thinking state rather than an emotion, whereas Fredrickson too identifies interest as a positive emotion. However, Ekman (2004) argues that

“....it is true that matters that start out as simply interesting can become exciting, especially when changes happen quickly or are challenging, unexpected, or novel. It

is not easy to specify a universal excitement trigger or theme. All those that I think of – downhill skiing, shooting stars – are probably, for some people, terrifying. I think there is often a close relationship between excitement and fear, even if the fear is only vicarious and not brought about by actual danger” (Ekman, 2004, 0.194).

Fredrickson includes amusement in her list of positive emotions and states that amusement occurs when something unexpected happens that results in laughter. Fredrickson mentions that social scientists refer to the circumstances that surround amusement as ‘nonserious social incongruity’ (Fredrickson, 2009, p.45). This label highlights two important features about the incongruities (or surprises) that results in amusement; amusement is social and surprises are only amusing if they are embedded within safe contexts.

5.2.5.2 *Emotional States of Teaching Assistants*

Figure 41 provides samples of the (most plausible) emotion experienced by the teaching assistants as they progressed through the initial 3-D appreciative inquiry process.

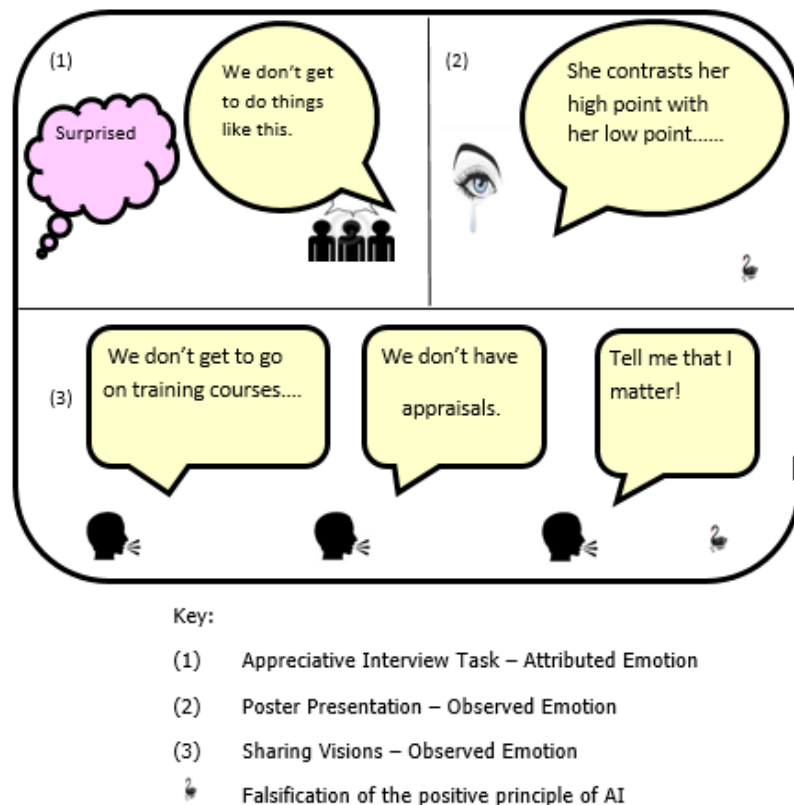


Figure 41 - Samples of Emotion Experienced by TAs

Appreciative Interview Task

While surprise does not feature in Fredrickson’s arbitrary list of positive emotions, Ekman’s research found surprise to be one of the six universal emotions (Fredrickson, 2009; Ekman, 2004). His research suggests that six basic emotions – surprise, happiness, anger, disgust, sadness and fear – are expressed by certain facial expressions that are shared by people in all cultures. Ekman’s research indicates that surprise and fear were not distinguished from each other, and shared,

“To this day I do not know why fear and surprise were not distinguished from each other. It could have been a problem with the stories, or it could have been that

these two emotions are often so intermingled in these people's lives that they aren't distinguished" (Ekman, 2004, p.10).

Poster Presentation

One member of the teaching assistant group seemed to present as excited as she talked about her 'peak experience' as she sounded quite lively in her presentation, but then, when she contrasted this with her low point in her life, her tone became slow and subdued, before becoming visibly upset (in the form of tears). The group acted in an empathic way towards the upset teaching assistant and seemed to act as an emotional container (Bion, 1962). Collectively they appeared to support her well, so much so, she continued to participate in the session (and in the subsequent design session). Other than a brief follow-up conversation, there was very little facilitation and support required on my behalf. I observed first-hand some of the school's positive core in action.

She also expressed her gratitude to colleagues who supported her through this difficult time. Gratitude features in Fredrickson's list of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2009). Seligman et al. (2005) found (through experimental testing of various positive psychology interventions on 411 people) the impact of writing and personally delivering a letter of gratitude to someone who had never been properly thanked for their kindness was greater than that from any other intervention. They found that the participants immediately showed a huge increase in happiness scores, with benefits lasting for a month (Seligman et al., 2005).

It could be argued that the staff (including the head teacher) seemed to embrace the polarities of human existence including the tensions that may give life and vitality to their school (Johnson, 2011). Bushe (2012) argues:

‘In practice, however, the invitation to focus on the positive and the act of remembering high points in life can evoke sadness, anger and despair – perhaps that the current situation is not like that, perhaps that the high point story happened so long ago, or seems so infrequent, perhaps a deep yearning for something different from current experience is touched’ (Bushe, 2012, p.12).

Sharing Visions

Once it was established that there was no vision for the wish ‘all staff feeling valued so that staff can support flourishing in children’, I tried to be as transparent as possible with the teaching assistants. I proceeded to negotiate with them both the content and format of this dream/design session. I attempted to provide meaning to our current context by recapping on my understanding of their collective wish (especially since I was actively involved in co-constructing it). I shared that I had been thinking about them undertaking this task and felt it would be a difficult task to do. After explaining the purpose of the current session, I also shared that I found it difficult to devise a sample provocative proposition for this session. I proposed these possible options; (1) do nothing in relation to this collective wish; or (2) a small group attempt to create a vision together; or (3) the whole group engages in the envisioning task.

Half of the group shared they were still interested in addressing the issue of staff feeling valued. It was agreed that two out of three visions relating to the ‘all children being listened

to' would be shared with the whole group, and then half of the group would explore the outstanding wish with support from myself (whilst the other group drafted provocative propositions for their chosen vision for 'all children being listened to' by themselves). Final part of the session involved both groups sharing key discussion points and outcomes during the plenary phase of the session.

Soon after the self-selected group started to engage with the visioning task, few of them began to voice their discontentment and anger. They were making these statements with intensity and with raised voices; 'we don't get to go on training courses' and 'we don't have appraisals'. Other views shared included the lack of curriculum planning with the teachers and network opportunities with their contemporaries from schools in their cluster. They seemed to be 'venting' their dissatisfactions of the current system, and appeared to be safe to do so (especially since the head teacher was not present). Their anger was palpable; the participants spoke loud, fast, and sometimes over each other. They tended to use the word 'we' and accompanied with what they were saying suggested they were being treated differently to their teaching colleagues.

In general terms, I used two theoretical approaches to manage and make sense of this session: principles of attuned interactions and guidance (as advocated by Kennedy et al., 2011) and processes of emotional containment (Bion, 1962; Douglas, 2007; Ruch 2007). The following two quotes provides a broad theoretical insight on each approach:

'Attunement, from intersubjectivity literature, refers to a harmonious and responsive relationship where both partners....play an active role' (Kennedy et al., 2011, p.23).

‘Containment is thought to occur when one person receives and understands the emotional communication of another without being overwhelmed by it, processes it and then communicates understanding and recognition back to the other person. This process can restore capacity to think in other person’ (Douglas, 2007, p.33).

More specifically, I utilised these guiding principles of attuned interactions in this session: receiving an initiative (showing that I had heard their wishes by re-capping of their collective wish of ‘all staff feeling valued’); developing attuned interactions (contributing to the interaction/activity equally); guiding (scaffolding); and deepening discussion (through collaborative discussion and reaching new shared understandings) (Kennedy et al., 2011). Furthermore, in specific terms, this session was characterised by emotional containment and epistemological containment; it began with emotional containment (making unmanageable feelings manageable) and ended with epistemological containment (enabling the self-selecting group of teaching assistants to think about, discuss and make sense of the underlying issues of the collective wish of ‘all staff feeling valued’) (Bion, 1962; Ruch, 2007). After the process of emotional containment, the group’s capacity to think through this fraught collective wish, with my support, was evident with outcomes including a visionary headline (‘Tell Me That I Matter!’) and six draft provocative propositions. These specific processes are summarised in Figure 42.

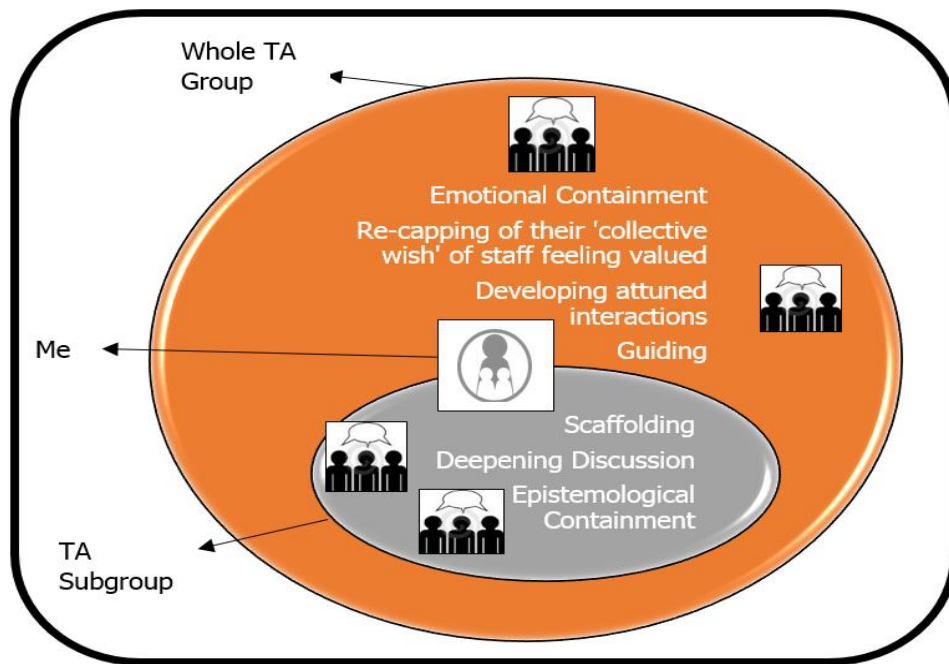


Figure 42 - Key Processes involved in TA Dream/Design Session (Ruch, 2007; Kennedy et al., 2011)

5.2.5.3 *Integrated Design Session*

This session appeared to be characterised by both positive and negative emotion; as highlighted in Figure 43.

There seemed to be a surge of excitement amongst the participants when they were attempting to develop a model of flourishing that incorporated the six children's entitlements. Comments along these lines were noted: 'how about we represent this model in form of a hand?', 'there are only five fingers and six rights' and 'how about using the palm of the hand for the listening ear? The participant who made the latter comment drew out their idea on a piece of paper, which was agreed by the group.

When the participants were in the process of examining all of the draft provocative propositions, one teacher participant said: 'Can I be provocative, what if I don't want to implement any of this? I attributed that she may be experiencing some anxiety or feeling overwhelmed by the pending changes (Bion, 1961). Interestingly, the group appeared to contain their colleague's response through the process of epistemological containment: as a short discussion took place amongst the participants about the fact that these proposed solutions have been generated by themselves (and not imposed upon them); and the head teacher tried to offer some reassurance by sharing with her that the proposed flourishing programme is likely to be implemented over two years with colleagues opting into activities that interest them (Ruch, 2007; Bushe and Kassam, 2005).

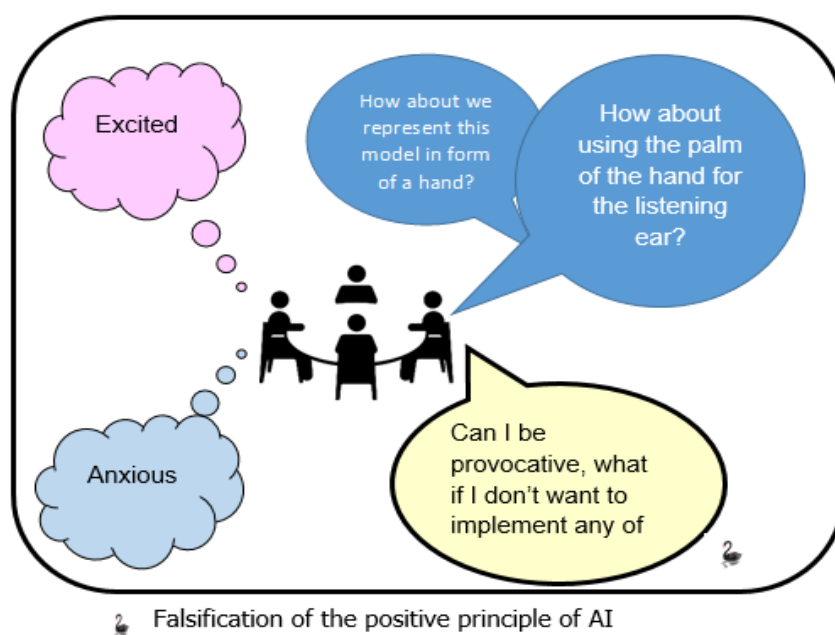


Figure 43 - Sample of Emotions Experienced by Participants in the Integrated Design Session

5.2.5.4 *Appreciative Inquiry and the Positive Principle*

Fitzgerald et al (2010) mention the discord between 'uplifting stories, images, and experiences of AI and some disturbing cognitive and emotional experiences with that did

not fit the lofty aspirations and claims espoused for it' (Fitzgerald et al., 2010, p.221). While AI has been evaluated for its bias towards the positive, radical discourse is developing on how to support the 'Shadow' as part of the AI process including the negative emotions that vent during the change process (Bushe, 2012; Johnson, 2011; Fitzgerald et al., 2010). Carl Jung used the term Shadow to label the repressed parts, both negative and positive, of our self which are unconscious to use (Fawkes, 2015). When we discuss things we typically do not feel comfortable talking about, we enter the area of the Shadow (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). This discourse is deemed to be radical in that it shifts away from AI's exclusive focus on positivity to embrace the negative. Johnson (2011) argues that 'embracing the Shadow must be done with a radically appreciative gaze' and 'what we typically construe as negative may actually be a potent source of insight that serves robust "vocabularies of hope" than might otherwise be available' (Johnson, 2011, p.204).

Fitzgerald et al. (2010) are leading on the radical discourse on AI being a Shadow process. They recognized three AI-Shadow relationships: AI (1) generates knowledge of Shadow; (2) as an intervention into Shadow; and (3) can itself be a Shadow process. Masserlink (2012) suggested another AI-Shadow relationship; 'AI may perpetuate an existing organisational shadow' (Masserlink, 2012, p.42). Fitzgerald et al. (2010) note a paradox within AI when there is an exclusive focus on the positive principle of AI:

'Although equalizing power in organizational life and promoting egalitarian values (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987) are central to our AI conversation, when we harness it to an exclusive, non-reflexive focus on the positive, it can unwittingly become a shadow process, obscuring the promotion of the positive as being in service of sustaining organizational power structures' (Fitzgerald et al., 2010, p.228).

Bushe (2012, 2013) suggested that embracing both the positive focus and the Shadow can enhance generativity of AI, which he considered to be more valuable than the obsessive focus on positivity. Bushe (2012) reports the following personal correspondence from Cooperrider that took place on 30th March, 2010:

'I think we are still on this quest for a full blown non-deficit theory of change. I'm not saying that the other isn't a way of change but I am saying that we are still in our infancy in understanding non-deficit, strength-based or life-centric approaches to change. William James called for it back in 1902, in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, when he said we know a lot about the kind of change that happens when people feel threatened, feel fear and violence is coming at them, but we don't know much about the change that happens when in his words, "everything is hot and alive within us and everything reconfigures itself around it." Whether someone would call the initiating experience "positive" or "negative", the transformational moment is a pro-fusion moment when something so deeply good and loving is touched in us that everything is changed – that's the kind of change I'm talking about...I don't think we really understand the possibilities in that kind of change yet and we aren't going to understand them until we take this to the extremes' (Bushe, 2012, p. 16-17).

On the basis of this inquiry, I do not consider it radical to embrace negative emotions (such as upset, frustration, and anger) that erupted during this change process. Rather, I consider it essential to respond to the participants' emotional reactions in a contained, attuned and sensitive way (Bion, 1962; Ruch, 2007; Douglas, 2007). I agree with Fitzgerald et al. (2010) who wrote:

‘Remember people are always more important than the process, no matter how brilliant the design might be – listen intently and reflexively. Understand that empathy for the whole person – not only that which we construe as positive – is an important element of relationship. Do not abandon the ideal of the positive but expand our conception of it to include and value participants’ lived experience, including what we learn from our painful or difficult experiences’ (Fitzgerald et al., 2010, p.231).

Otherwise, there is a danger that the participants become a lost voice in the appreciative process or that they become the ‘docile bodies’ being changed in the Foucauldian sense. Foucault’s notion of ‘docile bodies’ explicates the sense that bodies must be placed receptively in order for logics of arrangement to act upon them; this ‘mechanics of power’ is defined as ‘how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines’ (Foucault, 1975, p.138).

It is pertinent to highlight that the AI literature says little on the facilitation of the participants’ emotional responses (possibly due the assumptions encapsulated in the positive principle). For example, in their book, Cooperrider and Whitney (2005), state that the AI consultant can support the process in these ways: train participants as interviewers and as internal agents of inquiry; design the overall project flow through the AI cycle; facilitate AI tasks; and support participants in making it their own. Bushe (2011) argues that very little has been written about the competencies required of the AI facilitator. He asks, can any intelligent person with a ‘positive attitude’ learn to facilitate the AI process? Or does it require a “healthy and spiritually grounded” individual?’ (Murrell, 2005, p.111)

Cooperrider (1986) asserts that a facilitator must be able to build an empathic understanding when engaging in this mode of inquiry. To build high levels of empathic understanding, I suggest it requires understanding the participants' entire presented internal frame of reference (in the form of their perceptions, ideas and meanings) and emotional-affective components connected with the affirmative topic (flourishing) as well as any apparent dissonance or incongruity (as this could provide insight into censored emotional and/or cognitive content) (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). Fortunately, my professional practice draws upon theoretical principles derived from the consultation and intersubjectivity literature, and to a lesser extent, the domain of systemic psychoanalysis (Wagner, 2000; Kennedy et al, 2011; Eloquin, 2016). An article, 'Systems-psychodynamics in schools: a framework for EPs undertaking organisational consultancy', by Eloquin (2016) suggests that he is able to (or, in this case, more able than me) to 'sensitise participants to the below-the-surface dynamics of groups and organisations' given his further training in the field of systems psychodynamics and organisational consultancy (Eloquin, 2016, p. 164). Nevertheless, I felt reassured when Eloquin (2016) states he was 'continually struck by the overlap between many of these new skills and ones already established with an EP's consultative repertoire, chiefly, for example, the act of consultation' (Eloquin, 2016, p. 164). The next section examines my practice, assumptions and 'as if' reflections in relation to some of the participants' underlying responses to this inquiry.

5.2.6 Latent World

Although I feel uneasy exploring the 'latent world' of the participants, which is concerned about their possible underlying defensive mechanisms and group dynamics, the starting point is me - as a co-researcher and participant observer. It is necessary to examine this

world, in the spirit of academic rigour (as reflexivity is an essential process in action research) and in advancing knowledge (McNiff, 2016). As part of the reflexive process, I continued to reflect on the nature of my involvement in the inquiry process and the way this has shaped its outcomes. Reflexivity is the process of examining myself as a co-researcher and the research relationship. I have already examined my own assumptions and preconceptions, and how these impact upon the research decisions. Now, I examine my relationship with the groups of participants, and how the relationship dynamics may have affected the construction of knowledge. McNiff (2016) acknowledges that interrogating one's thinking (also known as 'deconstruction') is 'difficult because it involves deconstructing a form of thinking while using that form of thinking to do so, which can be destabilising' (McNiff, 2016, p.25).

I begin this section by examining what I considered to be the most defensive session of the appreciative inquiry, the teaching assistant design session. Then, I progress onto examining the session of the newly formed design group which also consisted of subtle clues regarding group dynamics at play. I have tried to make sense of these sessions by engaging in the same 'as if' hypothesis testing that Cooperrider (1986) referred to. In an attempt to build empathic understanding, Cooperrider (1986) 'engaged in a mode of inquiry akin to Bion's (1961) "as if" hypothesis testing, i.e., "This system is behaving as if it were important to live up to a norm of..."' (1986, p.127).

5.2.6.1 *Teaching Assistants' Dream/Design Session*

Prior to the teaching assistants' design session, I experienced some uncomfortable feelings every time I thought about the group of teaching assistants attempting to generate

a vision for the 'all staff feeling valued' wish. Moreover, I started this design session with a continuation of these uneasy feelings. I agree with Eloquin (2016) that the 'use of feelings as data is a difficult concept to grapple with and, initially, to use' (Eloquin, 2016, p.168). Nevertheless, within the domain of systems psychodynamics, feelings are utilised as a portion of the data set allowing for working hypotheses to be developed and tested. I attributed three reasons for these uneasy feelings: (a) I had not managed to think of a sample provocative proposition (just as I had for the teachers' design session); (b) I had been thinking about the teaching assistants and questioning how could they address the issue of feeling unvalued, surely this visioning task should be for the school's leadership team?; and (c) the destabilising effect of engaging in the process of reflexivity (McNiff, 2016).

A few minutes before the design session, I spoke with the head teacher and shared that I could not think of a sample provocative proposition. The session did not start on time as I and teaching assistants were waiting for the head teacher, who then did not turn up. I deliberated whether I had projected my anxiety onto the head teacher, who was probably already anxious about the session (regarding the vision to address the 'all staff feeling valued' wish) (Eloquin, 2016). In hindsight, I questioned whether I had entered the realm of my Shadow (Fitzgerald et al., 2010); and was this a critical process as a facilitator, to be aware of one's Shadow to avoid exacerbating the school's Shadow that may exist (Masserlink, 2012)? Fitzgerald et al. (2010) offers this guidance:

'Often the Shadow first expresses itself through uncomfortable feelings and awareness. As facilitators, we are learning to first recognize and include our own discomfort, rather than ignore or discount it, as integral to authentic appreciation. In doing so, we value it and the information and contributions that it may offer to

us. We then find a way to express it, sometimes in confidence to a “shadow” consultant [sic] we have engaged, to a co-facilitator, to our client, or to everyone present. We engage this choice reflexively to the extent we are able’ (Fitzgerald et al., 2010, p.229).

When the session started, it became apparent that all the teaching assistants had worked on the ‘all children being listened to’ wish; the group assigned for the ‘all staff feeling valued’ wish was adamant that they had opted to do the visioning task for the ‘all children being listening to’ wish. I hypothesized whether this task was too anxiety-provoking for this latter group of support staff, and so they avoided it. Threatening situations may trigger defensive routines and face saving (Bion, 1961; Argyris & Schon, 1974). ‘In systems psychodynamics the task, or aspects of it, is postulated to be a cause of anxiety which leads to group or organizational defenses, known as social defenses, which serve to lessen the anxiety of the task’ (Eloquin, 2016, p. 165). Group relations theory is grounded in Bion’s (1961) psychoanalytic theory and Lewin’s (1947) work in group dynamics. Bion (1961) postulates that groups operate on two levels; at one level, a group that assembles together to undertake or complete an activity is known as the work group, whilst at the same time, this same group demonstrates in behaviours that are intended to alleviate group anxiety is known as the basic assumption group. The basic assumption group may run counter to the aims of the work group (Bion, 1961). In this case, it appeared that the group’s flight mechanism (using Bion’s terminology of the basic assumption flight) has been activated; resulting in displacing their possible anxiety by completing the other, safer vision relating to the ‘all children being listened to’ wish.

I used some of the key principles of attuned interaction to resolve this situation (Kennedy et al., 2011). Given that the principles of attuned interaction and guidance are informed by Argyris and Schon's (1974) theory of action and double loop learning for reflection, it is also necessary to explain this situation through their concepts of single loop and double loop learning (Evans et al., 2012). Instead of accepting single loop learning where I assumed the guiding values of the teaching assistant participants seemed to be 'win, don't lose' and 'avoid unpleasantness', while 'keeping unilateral control', I facilitated a situation where double-loop learning may have occurred where the underlying assumptions have been shared and explored, thereby increasing valid information for all those concerned, enhancing freedom via informed choice and developing commitment and responsibility through bilateral control (Kennedy et al., 2011, p.75). In summary, I supported the self-selecting group of teaching assistants to potentially actualise their espoused theory instead of responding with their theory-in-use (their automatic response of avoiding unpleasantness).

Figure 44 summarises my 'as if' reflections (Cooperrider, 1986). In summary, initially there were three things were missing in this session: a sample provocative proposition, the head teacher/co-facilitator, and a vision for the 'all staff feeling valued' wish (Bion, 1961). I suggest that attunement and harmony was achieved with the participants by aligning their espoused wish ('all staff to feel valued') with their vision in action ('Tell Me That I Matter!') (Kennedy et al., 2011; Argyris & Schon, 1974).

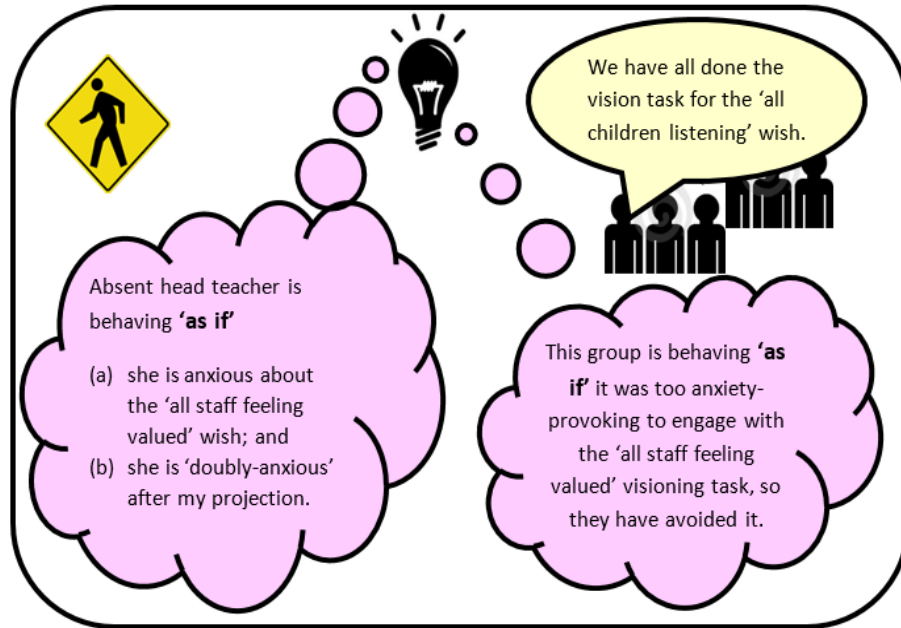


Figure 44 - My 'as if' reflections on TA's Dream/Design Session

5.2.6.2 Group Dynamics in the New Group

Also, I noticed that everyone was engaged in this session with the exception of one of the two teaching assistants; she (the representative for the 'all children being listened to' wish) presented as withdrawn and said very little. I may have understood it if it was the other representative teaching assistant, because she was required to feedback on the draft provocative propositions of the vision of 'Tell Me That I Matter!' in front of the head teacher. She appeared empowered as she spoke at length about the issues that fed into their vision and the draft provocative propositions; self-advocacy is a superior outcome, it's better than me advocating on behalf of the self-selecting group of participants who generated the vision 'Tell Me that I Matter!' I think the former teaching assistant presented as withdrawn 'as if' she was; (1) attempting to figure out the workings of this new group (in line with Tuckman's group formation theory); and/or (2) reflecting as discussion and critical thinking takes time (McNiff, 2016); and/or (3) feeling anxious about being in a new group (Bion,

1961; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). My 'as if' reflections on both of these scenarios are depicted in Figure 45.

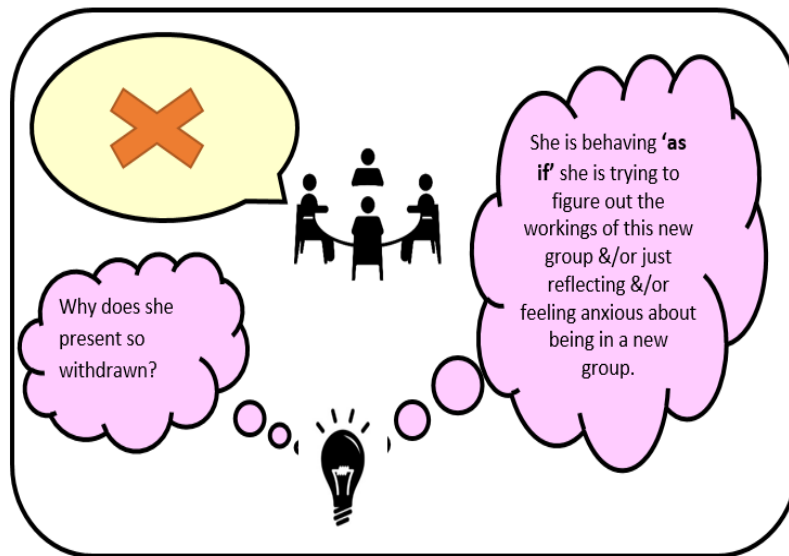


Figure 45 - My 'as if' reflections on the Newly-Formed Design Group

In both these situations, the aforementioned participant(s) in this system were behaving 'as if' they were: (a) feeling threatened, anxious and/or overwhelmed that their defensive mechanisms may have been activated; and/or (b) reflecting in the newly formed group (Bion, 1961; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

5.2.6.3 *Positive Psychology/Al & Social Defenses/Group Dynamics*

The only article I have read that focuses on the role of defenses in positive psychology is by Vaillant (2000); in the millennial special issue edition of the American Scientist devoted to positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The focus of Vaillant's article is on mature defenses (also known as adaptive defensive mechanisms) such as altruism and humour. He raises the question, how do mature defenses work to promote an enhanced ability to work, play and love whilst lessen cognitive dissonance and conflict? Vaillant (2000) ends his article by briefly making a case to also understand how 'best to

facilitate the transmutation of less adaptive defenses into more adaptive defenses' (Vaillant, 2000, p. 98). This facilitation, suggests Vaillant (2000), would require an increase in social supports and interpersonal safety. While Bushe and Kassam (2005) argue that Argyris and Schon's 'focus on changing defensive routines is clearly about changing how people think, but although well respected in the OD field, it has not had much impact on actual OD practice, probably because the processes offered for eliciting and changing defensive routines are not practical' (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 164), I would make a case for using the principles of attuned interactions to minimise defensiveness and maximising alignment between espoused theories and theories-in-use of the participants (Kennedy et al., 2011; Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Retrospective to this empirical study, I discovered Elliott's (1999) work on the role of unconscious processes in appreciative inquiry. Elliott (1999) offers some guidance and considerations:

'Those who imagine that appreciative inquiry is by definition a pain-free, contended chewing of the organizational cud of recalled best practice need to bear in mind that any attempt at depth learning within an organizational setting is likely to exact its own psychic price. There is no such thing as a free crunch. For that reason, embarking on appreciative inquiry is a risk....That risk is raised to a higher power if the group as a whole is dealing with emotions and unconscious material that may be deeply unsettling, even when raised within an appreciative mode of operation...The real risk ...is that the participants in the process play safe and do not touch the kind of emotional material that is actually playing havoc with the organization's health and effectiveness....Which is greatest risk: (1) going on as we are?; (2) initiating a problem-focused process?; (3) initiating an appreciative

inquiry, knowing that it obliges us to face stuff we would rather avoid?’ (Elliott, 1999, p. 85-86).

AI theory has little to say about group dynamics (other than strengthening relationships). In relation to group dynamics, I reverted to Lewin’s thinking who is considered to be ‘the intellectual father of contemporary theories of applied behavioural science, action research and planned change’ who’s ‘seminal work on leadership style and the experiments on planned change launched a whole generation of research in group dynamics and the implementation of change programs’ (Schein, 1988, p. 239).

For successful change, Lewin identified three requisites and the last two are linked to the matter of group dynamics. These are: (1) participants to be free to make their own decisions; (2) participants to be helped, through a neutral facilitator, to understand how their behaviour is formed, motivated and maintained (group dynamics and field theory are the key tools to facilitate this requirement); and (3) by learning about their own behaviour, participants could change it by utilising action research and the 3-step model of change (unfreezing-moving-refreezing). I was interested to learn that Lewin postulates that the second condition must be fulfilled before engaging in action research. Burnes (2009) asserts that there are four elements (group dynamics, field theory, action research and the 3-step model of change) to Lewin’s formulation of Planned approach, and these elements are often treated separately whereas Lewin viewed them ‘as a unified whole with each element supporting and reinforcing the others and all of them necessary to understand and bring about Planned change’ (Burnes, 2009, p.368). I think it makes sense for the participants to be supported to understand their underlying group dynamics and group relations prior to engaging in appreciative inquiry (may be in the form of training).

This way they can be empowered to make sense of their own group behaviours and relations.

After all, what can I do with this unexpected layer of analysis? I must have started this inquiry with a limited set of assumptions which did not include any assumptions about group development and dynamics. Upon reflection, this seemed to be a somewhat naïve approach to undertaking any research that involves groups of participants. Nevertheless, the initial intended methodology involved a system-wide collaboration rather than the emergent group-based collaboration that occurred. I wondered if this nested appreciative inquiry resembles more closely the democratic group-based participation, which Lewin (1946) advocated in action research. In particular, Lewin (1946) was motivated by the need to raise the self-esteem of minority groups; to help them seek equality, independence and co-operation. System-wide collaboration may be different from the group-based collaboration that occurred; as a cross-section of stakeholders of an organization is involved in the former and a collaboration amongst peers is involved in the latter. Both ways, there are groups involved and this does not explain why group dynamics is not underscored in the key tenets of appreciative inquiry.

5.2.7 Concluding Comments

I have engaged in the process of incremental chunking; the tacit process of 'organizing the stimulus input spontaneously into several dimensions and successfully into a sequence of chunks' (Miller, 1956, p.96). As illustrated in Figure 46, so far, I have analysed each 'chunk' in the sequential order 1 to 8 by working through the respective dimensions (the conceptual, emotional and latent worlds of the participants).

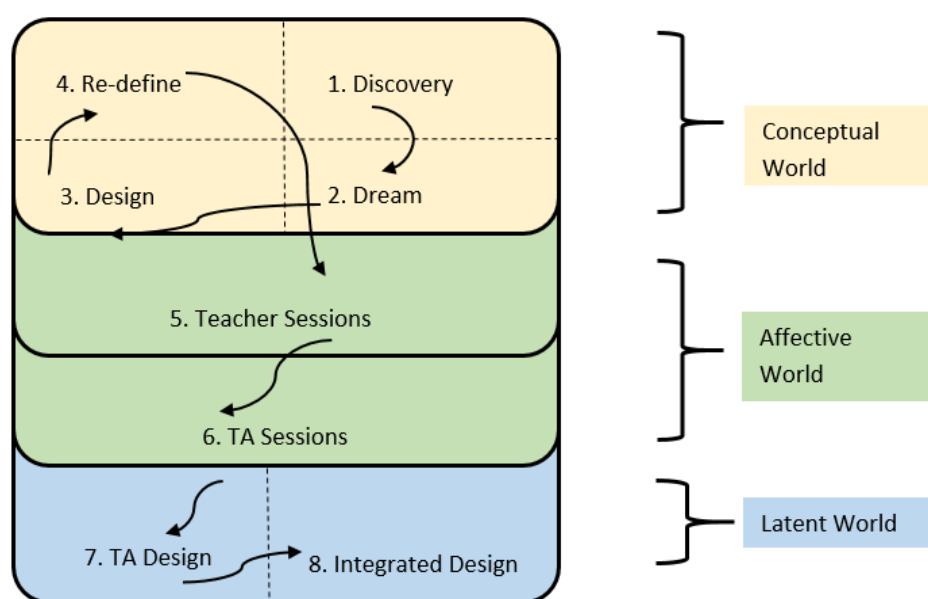


Figure 46 - Analysis of the 'Chunks' in Sequential Order

Moreover, during the process of incremental chunking as well as formulating links with the existing literature and my practice, I noticed three particular strands unfolding in this inquiry (Miller, 1956; Thomas, 2011). This school: (1) seemed to be moving in the direction of a learning organisation (Senge, 1990; 1994; 2006; Evans et al., 2012); (2) emerged to be an emotional containing environment (Bion, 1962; Kennedy et al., 2011; Ruch, 2007); and (3) appeared to be characterised by a good degree of social well-being (Keyes, 1998). Collectively, these three strands could constitute the 'whole', in Bruner's terms, 'the mentally represented putative story' (Bruner, 1991, p.8). This is important as the 'parts

and wholes in a narrative rely on each other for their viability' and 'a story can only be "realized" when its parts and whole can, as it were, made to live together' (Bruner, 1991, p.8).

Firstly, this inquiry through holistic lens, appeared to precipitate the move to a learning organisation, given that all five disciplines that typify a learning organisation were evident (Evans et al., 2012). The discipline of systems thinking was apparent in the Venn diagram of the school's positive core; which highlighted a fragmented school ethos as well as the differing ways that staff supported the children's emotional well-being and engaged in team learning. Further systemic differences were realised during the teaching assistants' dream/design session. The discipline of team learning was part of the school's positive core, and double-loop learning seemed to occur in the teaching assistants' dream/design session (Senge, 1990; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Evans et al., 2012). The discipline of shared visions arose out of the dream phase. The discipline of personal mastery featured in a connected way; in the proposed systemic innovation of CPD and in the school's common positive core of staff's sense of vocational well-being. The final discipline of mental models was evident in the school's re-conceptualised model of flourishing; the hierarchical, tripartite model of flourishing that includes an entitlement focus, eudaimonic well-being and emotional well-being (McLellan & Steward, 2015). Whilst Senge (1990) asserts that these five disciplines should be cultivated methodically, these disciplines have evolved organically in this inquiry. For example, the emergent nested design of this inquiry allowed the head teacher and me (in the first instance) to identify systemic differences quickly in the school's positive core. Moreover, there seemed to be a natural fit between one phase of AI and one discipline; which is the dream phase and the discipline of shared visions (Senge, 1990; Evans et al., 2012). When these five disciplines are actioned, according

to Senge (1990), they can release the full potential of an organization (including non-business organizations such as schools); enabling it to learn effectively and grow continuously.

Secondly, this school has shown to be a safe, containing environment (in the emotional and/or epistemological sense): the teaching assistants provided a safe and secure place for the children they support (which was part of the school's positive core); the staff (including the head teacher) contained the upset teaching assistant during the poster presentation session; I provided a safe place for the self-selected group of teaching assistants in their dream/design session and subsequently contained some of their emotional responses; and the participants (including the head teacher) seemed to contain their seemingly overwhelmed colleague in the integrated design session (Bion, 1962; Kennedy et al., 2011; Ruch, 2007; Vaillant, 2000). Evans et al. (2012, p.164) argues that 'creating a safe environment to air deeply held beliefs and expose possible flaws requires' school leaders to 'attune to the structural and procedural aspects of' schools 'but also to the relational aspects of the players in their school community'. As the study unfolded, I realized that I have been able to explore both my presumed Shadow and the school's presumed Shadow in a safe, containing way; by endeavouring to make sense of those aforementioned uncomfortable moments experienced by some of the participants (including me) (Fitzgerald et al, 2010; McNiff, 2016).

Thirdly, the staff appeared to experience a good dose of social well-being. A sense of belongingness (i.e., social integration) and vocational well-being (i.e., social contribution) featured in the school's common positive core (Keyes, 1998). The staff have generated systemic innovations and (with my support) systemic repairs, so could they have

experienced a sense or an enhanced sense of social actualisation? Keyes (1998) defines social actualisation as

‘..the evaluation of the potential and the trajectory of society. This is the belief in the evolution of society and the sense that society has the potential which is realised through its institutions and citizens’ (Keyes, 1998, p.123).

I think this could be a real possibility given that the staff have contributed actively in proposing a better, innovative and/or fairer system. Being a facilitator of such an empowering and generative inquiry, I certainly felt a sense of social actualisation, something that I have not experienced before.

Taken together, provisionally, these strands may be construed as the core enabling features of this school (as summarised in Figure 47). Contingent on active and attuned facilitation, this nested appreciative inquiry (akin to group-based collaboration) seemed to have engendered optimal solutions for this school; as it has generated both systemic innovations and repairs (Kennedy et al., 2011; Lewin, 1946; Bushe, 2012; Cooperrider, 1986; Jackson, 2014). While some of the systemic innovations may be underpinned by the broadening and building effect of positive emotions experienced by some of the participants, systemic repairs have been elicited from the group of teaching assistants by the key process of attunement (and subsequent processes of emotional containment and alignment) (Fredrickson, 2009; Kennedy et al., 2011; Ruch, 2007; Argyris & Schon, 1974). I propose the principle of attunement to be augmented into the theory of AI; alongside the much contested positive principle of AI (Bushe, 2012; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Kennedy et al., 2011). This would highlight to the facilitators that there may be a need to process sensitively participants’ negative emotions and/or social defense mechanisms (Bushe, 2011; Eloquin, 2016). While this suggestion is grounded in this nested appreciative

inquiry, it may also offset AI's excessive focus on positivity (Bushe, 2012). Finally, I suggest it would be helpful for an in-built public reflective process to be incorporated within the AI process; as it felt like a fast-paced inquiry at times (Lewin, 1946; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). This public reflective space would have provided the participants with the opportunities to develop or further develop their sense of personal mastery and/or 'praxis' as well as systems thinking (Senge, 1990; Freire, 1970).

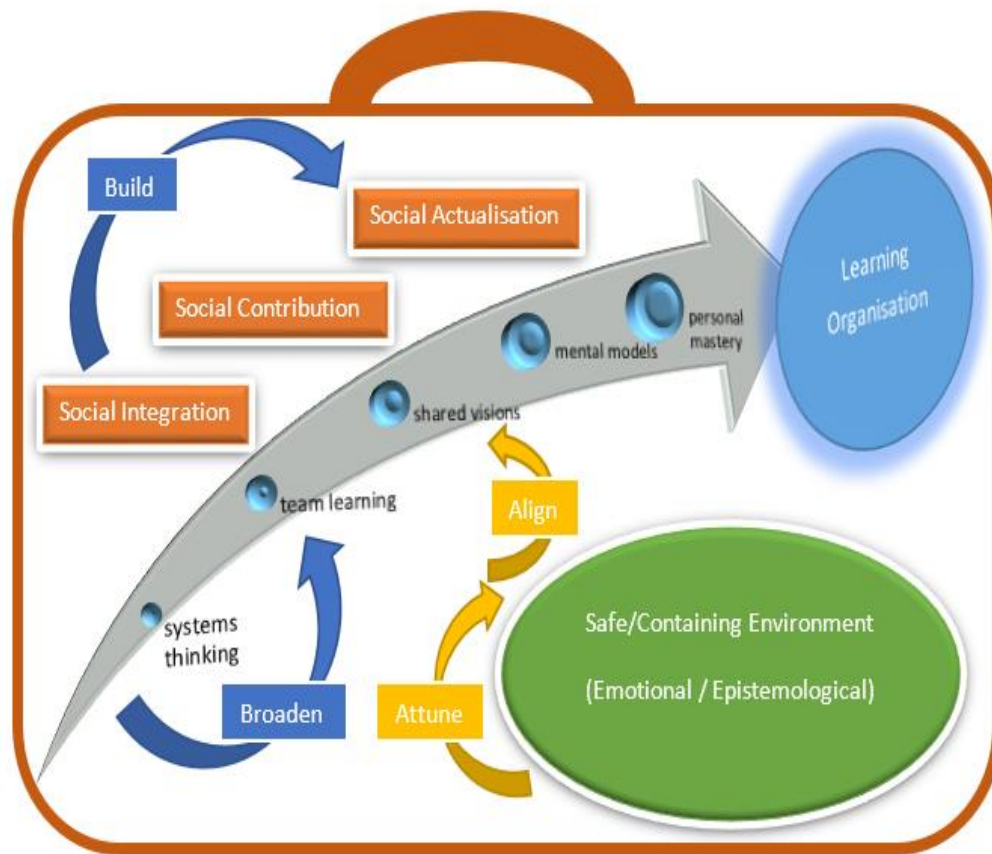


Figure 47 - Faith School's 'Suitcase' contains 3 putative core enabling features including underlying mechanisms (assumed/known)

CHAPTER SIX: STUDY THREE – REFLECTING UPON AND EVALUATING THE AI PROCESS

6.1 Introduction

Thomas (2011) recognises that research questions can be changed and refined during the case study process. He affirms research questions that have been developed in the early stages of a research enterprise have their worth in that they allow investigators to 'be unafraid, on the understanding that it will change' for the 'better' (Thomas, 2011, p.30). The initial research question attached to Study Three was 'has this AI been successful?' but upon further reading, I realised the critical question was whether the AI has been transformative in its impact? In their meta-analysis that examined the presence or absence of transformational change in twenty cases, Bushe and Kassam (2005) define transformation as

'...referring to changes in the identity of a system and qualitative changes in the state of being of that system. Such changes have been variously defined as second-order change (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974), radical change (Nord & Tucker, 1987), and revolutionary change (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994) and contrasted with changes to a system that keep the basic nature of the system intact' (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p.162-163).

Also I acknowledged the lack of an in-built public reflective space for participants during the course of the inquiry process (Dewar, 2011). Retrospectively, I developed a supplementary research question to address this shortcoming; 'What were the participants' reflections (in terms of their perceptions and emotions) on the 4 D-Cycle?' Moreover, there is limited research on 'what change looks like and feels like' from the

perspective of the participants (Oreg et al., 2014, p. 14). I judged this particularly pertinent given that this inquiry, in real terms, sought to produce practical reasoning or phronesis that helps inform the human condition as it is experienced and changed by the very people being studied (Thomas, 2011; Schram, 2012; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987).

This study is a process-oriented evaluation that is positioned in the early stages of the destiny (action) phase of the inquiry. Due to its underlying philosophical assumptions, it is problematic to evaluate an AI intervention as multiple realities and meanings are created through social interaction. It is necessary to use a process oriented evaluation rather than a product or outcome evaluation, given that AI is characterised as a ‘process focused on the creation and actualization of new beliefs, and provocative propositions’ (Egan & Lancaster, 2005, p.36). I, as outlined in the following section, planned to use the process-oriented dimensions utilised by Bushe and Kassam (2005). Waters and White (2015) opted to evaluate their AI study in three key phases; development, implementation, and monitoring: a decision influenced by their hybrid change approach, as they state:

“It is important to note that although AI provided the underpinning philosophy for the school to enact its new wellbeing goal it was not the only approach used and the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) also engaged in more traditional change approaches such as top-down planning, trouble-shooting, and problem-solving” (Waters & White, 2015, p. 22).

6.2 Bushe & Kassam’s (2005) Key Evaluative Dimensions

In their meta-analysis, Bushe and Kassam (2005) used dimensions grounded in the leading prescriptions of AI theory and practice to reveal that only seven of the twenty cases

showed transformational change. These twenty cases used AI for changing social systems to explore the effect of adopting AI principles on transformational change. By comparing transformational and non-transformational cases, Bushe and Kassam (2005) identified two key differences between conventional organizational development techniques:

- AI supports self-organizing change processes that rise from new knowledge, models and/or theories; and
- AI places a focus on changing how people think instead of what they do/their behaviours.

Those cases that did not indicate transformational outcomes in real terms 'look more like successful, conventional action research efforts guided by inquiry into the positive – that is, the best of system members' experiences and aspirations – resulting in useful first-order changes' (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 163). Watzlawich et al (1974) distinguished between first-order and second-order change, and asserted the latter is often the focus of community psychology (Schueller, 2009). First-order change is about changing the individuals in a setting in a bid to fix a problem, whilst second-order change is attending to systems and structures concerned with the problem to modify the person-environment fit.

For each case, Bushe and Kassam (2005) examined the following processual dimensions to ascertain whether there was evidence of transformational change:

- the outcome was new knowledge, or was it simply new processes;
- the AI intervention created a generative metaphor;
- the AI intervention followed the 4-D cycle;
- the AI intervention started with collecting stories of the affirmative topic;
- the AI intervention focused on figure or on ground; and

- the AI intervention concluded with implementation or improvisation.

The supplementary research question implicates the 4-D cycle. There was no need to evaluate whether this inquiry collected stories of the affirmative topic because this is detailed in sections 5.1.4 and 5.1.12.

6.2.1 Coding used by Bushe & Kassam (2005)

It is pertinent to detail the coding that Bushe and Kassam (2005) used to examine the processual elements of AI.

6.2.1.1 *Transformational or Not*

Cases were coded as transformational when there were evidence of ‘a qualitative shift in the state of being or identity of the system, usually reflected in patterns of organization emerging after the appreciative inquiry that were clearly different from previous patterns’ (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 170). Conversely, cases were coded as not transformational ‘when the changes described new processes, procedures, resources, plans, or methods that were employed without changing the basic nature of the system’ (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p.170).

6.2.1.2 *New Knowledge or New Processes*

Cases were coded as new knowledge when there was evidence that ‘a new way of looking at the world was accepted and employed some kind of realization that something not previously considered important was now important’ (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p.170).

Bushe and Kassam (2005) coded this as new knowledge, as the AI intervention 'lead to the collective creation of new knowledge that served as a new referential base' and 'a shift to a new lens became apparent by the realms of possibilities that were now open for consideration, the ideas put forth, the new avenues for action that could not previously be considered' (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p.170). Conversely, cases were coded as new processes 'when an intervention was geared toward a specific goal that required buy-in, when all ideas focused on reaching a particular end'. In other words, in such cases, the participant stakeholders kept focused on the same realm of possibilities and were constrained by the same established beliefs.

6.2.1.3 *Generative Metaphor versus No Generative Metaphor*

Cases were coded as having generative metaphors when there was a description of 'some kind of artefact or common reference point that either guided the participants or served as memory of a key event' (Bushe and Kassam, 2005, p.170). They state that this symbol (material, linguistic or other) has to be a persistent symbol that engendered 'a unique shared meaning held by the system members and that contained within it new lenses and/or new possibilities for action' (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p.171). Presumably, the converse of this would be no evidence of a persistent generative metaphor.

It is worth reiterating here that the concept of generativity is central to the underlying AI theory of practice (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The originators of AI drew upon Gergen's seminal paper, 'Toward Generative Theory', which suggested that social science should focus on its generative capacity (given that it is not possible for the successful application of normal scientific assumptions when researching human relationships, so in other words, the accomplishment of scientific values of prediction and

control are not possible in social psychology) (Gergen, 1978; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Bushe, 2013). Gergen defined generative capacity as the

“....capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, to raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster reconsideration of that which is ‘taken for granted’ and thereby furnish new alternatives for social actions” (Gergen, 1978, p.1346).

The methodology of AI was developed in line with this key principle of generative capacity; AI is generative through the creation of new ideas, metaphors, perceptions and images, which in turn yielded better alternatives for actions in an organization (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990; Bushe, 1998; Bushe, 2013). Bushe and Kassam (2005) found evidence of generative metaphors in all the cases of transformational change; in contrast to only 8% of the non-transformational cases.

A generative image or metaphor (which is new to the group) allows the stakeholders to see their world anew, identify new choices, formulate new strategies, and change their identity. Bushe (2013) details how the generative process changes organizations. A generative image or metaphor influences how stakeholders think and the decisions and actions they undertake. A new normative order evolves or surfaces out of these shared assumptions, resulting in culture change which in turn influences what stakeholders think. Bushe’s thinking on the transformational potential of generative metaphors or images is encapsulated in the Figure 48 below.

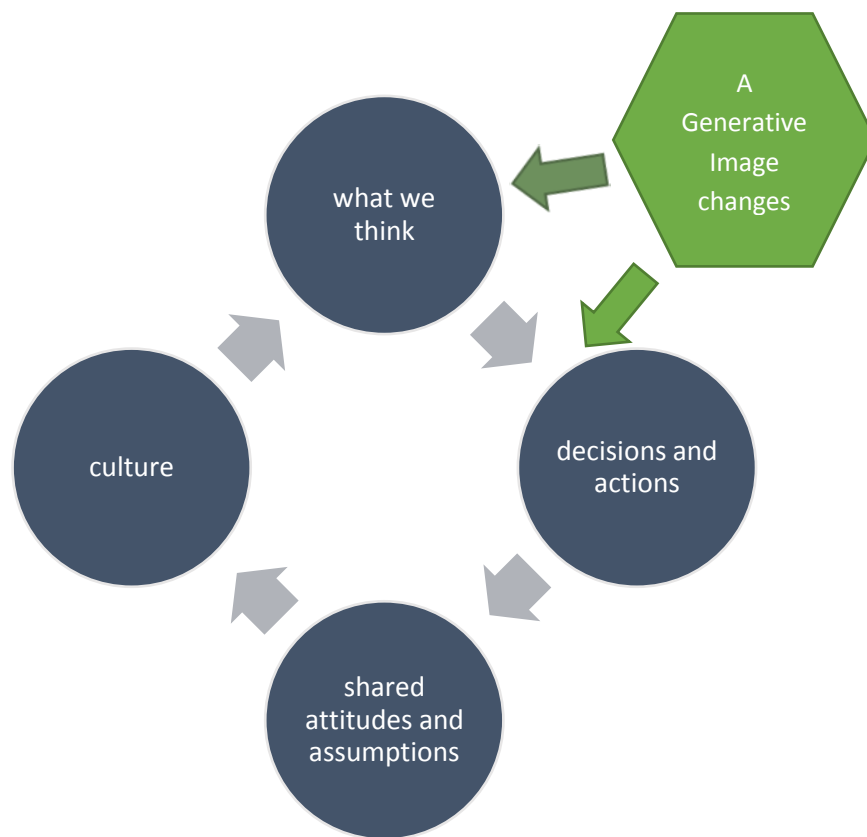


Figure 48 - How Generativity Changes Organizations (adapted from Bushe, 2013)

6.2.1.4 *Figure or Ground*

This evaluative dimension uses a key principle of Gestalt perception, the figure-ground relationship; elements are perceived as either figures (distinct elements of focus) or ground (the background on which the figures rest). Cases were coded as ground when the AI intervention created new ground; so that, ‘a much wider range of new possibilities emerges for the way system members think about things and do things’ (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p.168). They examined each case to ascertain whether there were any indications that the AI under scrutiny helped to construct new ground: that is, important issues transpired which had the possibility to reorient a range of thinking and acting (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). Cases were coded as ground – the substructure that influences what

people think and do – when there was evidence of the AI intervention changing or creating new background assumptions. Conversely, cases were coded as figure when the AI intervention ‘surfaced some element of the organization for increased inspection’ (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 171); in real terms, they examined whether cases remained focused on one or more key issues from start to finish.

6.2.1.5 *Implementation or Improvisation*

Cases were coded as implementation when the ‘goal pursued was a specific tangible change that had been agreed upon by key decision makers or a consensus of those involved’ in a top-down way (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 171). Conversely, cases were coded as improvisation ‘where there were numerous, diverse ideas of changes pursued by various actors’ (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p.171).

A further two distinctions were made:

(a) whilst an implementation approach was focused on an end result (which indicated an end to the AI process), an improvised approach had numerous continuous, (and on occasion, disparate changes) that were all connected to a deeper fundamental change in how the organization was perceived; and

(b) whilst an implemented approach with its emphasis on a particular tangible result put a cap or limit on the impact of the intervention, an improvised approach led to tangible results that could be construed as by-products of some bigger, less tangible change (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).

Bushe (2007) summarises that 'AI generates spontaneous, unsupervised, individual, group and organizational action toward a better future' (Bushe, 2007, p.30).

6.3 Ethical Considerations

As discussed in 4.2, appropriate ethical protocols were considered and adhered to (BERA, 2004; BPS, 2009; Data Protection Act, 1998). Participant information sheets and consent forms were used. Appendix 18 details a sample participant information sheet including a pre-prepared consent form. Participants were also given written feedback (see Appendix 19).

6.4 Data Collection

Qualitative data were gathered through use of a focus group with both teaching and support staff participants and a semi-structured interview with the head teacher, the schedules for both of which consisted of the following types of questions:

- warm up (a general question on the affirmative topic of flourishing);
- reflective questions on the 4-D cycle including questions that elicit participants' thinking and emotions on each phase;
- evaluative questions based on the aforementioned dimensions (Bushe & Kassam, 2005);
- general reflective (a question on general improvements); and
- closure (a question about the next, possible affirmative topic).

In addition, two rating scales were used to plot and discuss the participants' views on whether major change took place or was expected to take place, and on the scope of the change that took place or would take place (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).

The question grid below details specific questions that were devised according to this organising framework for the focus group schedule (see Table 35). An adapted version of this was devised for the semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix 20 which includes the two aforementioned rating scales). Both schedules were similar and designed to elicit the full range of participant views on the process of AI, as delineated by Bushe and Kassam (2005).

I carried out the semi-structured interview and the focus group discussion with the respective participants. I used the question grid flexibly; I was able to amend the schedules to meet the perceived needs of the participant, by changing the wording of the questions or providing examples, to improve the quality of the data gathered through the interview and discussion process, as well as enabling a more genuine interaction between the interviewees and me. This was preferred to structured interviews, within which I would be bound by a strict set of questions (Gray, 2004).

Interview and focus group discussions were audio-recorded, prior to transcriptions for analysis.

Table 35 - Question Grid Guiding Focus Group Discussion & Semi-Structured Interview

Type of Question	Questions	Prompts/ Information Provided
Warm Up	What did you think and feel about the topic choice of flourishing?	The 'Story So Far' Sheet (Appendix 21)
Retrospective Reflective: Discovery	What did you think and feel about the topic choice of flourishing?	
Retrospective Reflective: Dream	What did you think about the discovery phase (doing the appreciative interviews, analysing the interviews, making the poster, listening to the stories of 'peak experiences' and identifying the key success factors)? What emotions were evoked?	
Retrospective Reflective: Design	What did you think about the dream phase (imagining the best possible dream)? What emotions were evoked?	
Current Reflective: Destiny	What do you think about the current phase, known as destiny, which involves you embedding the learning and making the agreed changes? How would you describe your emotions currently when thinking about making the agreed changes?	
Evaluative: Transformation	Let's examine the draft flourishing programme; have any of these components been tried before the start of this research? What's never been tried before? What had been tried?	Draft Flourishing Programme (Appendix 22) Rating 1 included definitions of transformative change and

	<p>How transformative is this programme likely to be?</p> <p>What is your rating?</p> <p>Why have you given this rating?</p>	<p>incremental change (Bushe, 2010)</p> <p>(Refer to Appendix 20)</p>
Evaluative: Metaphor	Did the appreciative inquiry generate a metaphor for you? If so, what is it? What does this metaphor mean for you?	
Evaluative: Knowledge	What, if any, knowledge have you acquired through the appreciative inquiry?	
Evaluative: Figure-Background	<p>Looking back at the draft flourishing programme, what do you think about the actions that have been generated?</p> <p>What do you think about the scope of the programme?</p> <p>What is your rating?</p> <p>Why have you given this rating?</p>	<p>Draft Flourishing Programme (Appendix 21)</p> <p>Rating 2</p> <p>(Refer to Appendix 21)</p>
Evaluative: Improvisation-Implementation	<p>How do you think this programme is going to be actioned?</p> <p>Do you think you will be able to action components of the programme that you feel most passionate about independently?</p> <p>If not, why?</p>	<p>Draft Flourishing Programme (Appendix 22)</p>
Reflective: General	In what way(s), do you think the AI process could have been improved?	
Closure	If the school were to undertake a second AI cycle, what would you like to see as the central topic for change?	

6.5 Data Analysis

Interview recordings were transcribed. Appendix 23 details transcription of the focus group discussions. A deductive or theoretical approach was undertaken so responses were grouped accordingly to the aforementioned process dimensions (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). This last research question and supplementary research question were addressed by reporting the triangulated views of all the participants (which included five participants of the focus group, the head teacher and me) (Thomas, 2011; McNiff, 2016).

Rigour was achieved through triangulation of different methods (including my reflections, insights and observations) and perspectives. Furthermore, triangulation was also realized by me pausing to consider whether the participants' responses could be perceived another way (Thomas, 2011; McNiff, 2016). Moreover, as a reflexive researcher, I have already acknowledged that my prior values and knowledge are likely to have some influence over the interpretations and choices within this research enterprise (Schram, 2012; Thomas, 2015). Schram states that:

‘.....social scientists are inevitably people who offer interpretations of other people's interpretations. And the people being studied always have the potential to include the social scientists' interpretations in theirs, creating an ever-changing subject matter and requiring a dialogic relationship.....’ (Schram, 2012, p. 17).

The use of focus group discussion and semi-structured interview afforded opportunities to mediate the impact of my subjective interpretation; as I was able to reflect back the participants' views and check/confirm that I had understood accurately their meaning/s (Reason and Rowan, 1981). As stated in sections 3.3 and 3.10.2, objectivity is not expected when operating within an interpretivist framework and my subjectivity (as long as it is acknowledged) does not present as a flaw (Thomas, 2015).

6.6 Evidence of Transformative Change

Overall, I sought to understand whether this inquiry had been transformative in its impact (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). This section examines each of Bushe and Kassam's (2005) evaluative process-oriented dimensions by synthesizing multiple perspectives: the views of the participating staff members (head teacher, teachers and teaching assistants), and my perspective which is grounded in my observations, insights and reflections. This way this process-oriented evaluation is underpinned by a 'polyhedron of intelligibility' (Thomas, 2011, p. 4).

6.6.1 Transformational Dimension

All of the participants' responses suggested that there had been a perceived change in the qualitative nature of the system. Participant C said:

"I've got nothing below 5, so it's all changes."

There was agreement amongst all the participants that major change took place as a result of the inquiry process; the participants' ratings were towards the 'major change' end of the rating scale, with ratings of 7 to 10. For example, participant D said:

"The first one I have done is a 7 and I've said that because it is in between a major change because I think no matter what we call it, we do communicate with our parents at this school we do focus on making sure our children are safe we support, challenged, engaged and listened to, so I think that's what we do already; we may not do it with those words attached to it, but that is what we do. I think a listening bus is an initiative and we've had other initiatives and it's one that's going to focus on listening is new. Give it a 7 and I think that we do look at supporting and

promoting our children's wellbeing so I think there's a lot of other things in there that we are already doing so I'm just a little over some change."

In real terms, participant A appeared to indicate incremental changes (Bushe, 2010) and differed from participant D her assessment of the degree of elicited change:

"I'd say that's a 9, I think these are huge changes for our school. A culture shift for us, and really enormous changes for us. I think it's going to impact on so many different levels in terms of our curriculum offer, nurturing both our children and us. Staff coaching has not been tried before."

Participant E was in agreement with participant D:

"My rating is 8. Again we do have a form of performance management, but they don't exist in reality, they're not very well done; we do have access to professional development, but again you could look at it across the board of the school and it's not everybody. How many people feel they can actually access professional development, rather than having it done to them? I think that's a huge thing as well. I don't think that's going to be a problem, the peer coaching, but it is new thing, we've not tried that before. We've have not really looked at the curriculum from our children's perspective before, starting with their interests. That is completely new for us. For professional development, again it's not offered to everyone: we are part of a cluster of schools; some kind of formal training takes place with the cluster. The teaching staff have their training and cluster meetings, but there's never any TA involvement where they meet with other TAs from other schools to exchange ideas, so there's an imbalance there to be felt."

Participant B summarised the changes succinctly by referring back to the visionary headlines; she said

“I have given it a 8 too. Really the clues are in those headlines, look ‘Break From the Norm!’ and ‘School Timetable Kicked Out!’ These suggestions are all new, aren’t they? We have not talked about these things before.”

The head teacher’s response provided these reasons for her rating of 10:

“If we implement everything successfully then it is going to be a 10, I would have thought: major changes.”

“We are hitting so many different areas. When we first started this programme I thought we would be coming out the end with one or two people really excited about something and really see it through because there are many times you start something in school and it grinds to a halt and you think you’ve put in something that is really going to change thing and it is going to be entirely different, and if the staff are not on board or not involved or don’t believe in it, it is never going to be successful, whereas I think everything we have come up with, they have come from what the staff spoke about, people have talked it through and they have had quality time as well to discuss it; it wasn’t 2 minutes, they had time to go away think about it, come up with and they had to communicate. And they communicated major changes, from children’s rights to CPD to curriculum development.”

Other comments that indicated wide-ranging changes were identified when the head teacher was reflecting on the discovery phase; she said:

“I like the way everyone got involved and identified and it was never saying ‘oh my goodness everything has to change’; what it was saying was, ‘right something really good is going on, let try and find out what it is and see if we can build upon that and take it a bit further.’

When asked about their views on the topic of flourishing (the opening question), participant B suggested culture change, and a high degree of change is implicated in her response:

“I think you were right to focus on positive things; it was good to look at the positive side. And whether we have any flourishing children; we’re looking at trying to establish a culture for flourishing children; I wonder if our children are at that stage, and are we as a school? There’s a lot of work to do, with all the changes we want to make. It’s good to have that direction.”

6.6.2 Knowledge-Process Dimension

This case created a new lens regarding the construct of positive mental health; the head teacher reported that she and her staff had ‘an epiphany moment’. Also, she indicated gains in knowledge of the school’s positive core.

“Well I think the matter of involving all staff and going back as far as the rationale not just kind of go ‘right were going to do it like this now’ but actually getting people to unpick what are the things we think are successful about, and that this was always a positive model in that we were looking at the children who were succeeding and what was it about those children who were succeeding. And then always thinking positively about how we can help more children.

Me: And what did you think about this element then, the positive core of the school?

I like the way everyone got involved and identified and it was never saying "oh my goodness everything has to change", what it was saying was, ‘right something really good is going on let’s try and find out what it is and see if we can build upon that and take it a bit further.’

I think it's made us stop, every other bit of CPD that we've thought about, how we are working as a team of professionals, and to meet the needs of the children in the school. It's not just about subject knowledge or are we covering everything what are our standards. It has actually been about the children here and how do they learn, and talking about the most successful children, because the other thing we do is talk about the children that aren't successful, so it was great to have those conversations with everybody. And everyone sort of had an epiphany moment.

Me: What was that epiphany moment?

That there's this whole new vocabulary related to positive mental health. We have been thinking about it in the deficit sense. I get that now."

Participants A and D also mentioned the school's positive core as the 'DNA of our school' and 'our collective strengths'.

Participant A: "For me, I learnt about the DNA of our school.Our collective strengths. It's good to know this, as we can build from this positive base."

Participant D: "It was interesting to find out about our different strengths too."

6.6.3 Generative Metaphor Dimension

Some of the participants reported that they were guided by the metaphor identified by Parent 14 (who took part in the define phase of AI). This metaphor appeared to generate differing meanings for the participants. It appears that the metaphor developed in meaning from an initial focus on the children to both the children and staff within the system. The responses from participants E, B, C and D indicate this:

Participant E:

“It’s the flourishing metaphor, the metaphor is a flower.”

Participant B:

“For me, I imagined they're blossoming, really the metaphor would be watering plants.”

Participant C:

“Yes, like watering and feeding children every day to enable them to blossom and grow into a beautiful flower. But we can’t have beautiful flowers if the gardeners are not trained properly. The initial metaphor grew for me. Initially I thought about the nurturing children but by the end I was thinking about nurturing the gardeners too. Really that’s to do with the staff, coaching, training, and professional development.”

Participant D:

“It needs to be on-going staff development.”

The head teacher combined this metaphor with the image generated by the participants of the integrated design session. She suggested that the ‘helping hand’ framework would guide their practices and policies in relation the school’s ‘long-term endeavour’ of cultivating flourishing in their pupils. She said:

‘I, we all latched onto the flower metaphor which came from the parent. It’s a strong metaphor from seed to a beautiful flower. For me, it was about a long-term endeavour. We start off small and bit-by-bit our children grow and stand strong and healthy. Their roots are strong through our collective helping hands and know-how. I felt that the final design session was really significant because the staff created a powerful image of the helping hand and the six things they have to do to support

flourishing. We will need to ensure our practices and policies reflect the helping hand framework.'

Two similar metaphors featured in the systematic literature review on flourishing. Kern et al. (2016, p. 587) used the metaphor of plants: 'Like plants thriving in a garden, positive domains must be cultivated over time. Positive characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours – many of which are developed in adolescence – are assets that promote flourishing, and need to be nurtured to produce flourishing throughout life'. Kern et al. (2016) also references Lorion and Sokoloff's metaphor when highlighting expansive concepts of well-being and developmental success in the field of PYD that recognises the value of strengthening the developmental landscape more generally. They argue the choice is between 'fixing' troubled youth or 'all soil can be enriched and all moisture and sunlight maximally used to nourish all flowers' (Lorion & Sokoloff, 2003, p. 137). It is evident that Faith School chose the latter.

I, however, was guided by a different metaphor, as stated in section 5.2 and shown in Figure 35. At this phase, the metaphor of the 'suitcase' was refined to a 'stretchy suitcase': it expanded when the participants were in a learning phase; and it contracted when the participants were presenting as defensive and in need of emotional containment (Thomas, 2011; Bion, 1961; Ruch, 2007). For example, the 'suitcase' was expanded when the participants acquired new knowledge, it contracted temporarily when some of the teaching assistant participants found it difficult to express their vision in line with the 'all staff to feel valued wish', and then once again it expanded when 'double-loop' learning took place (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Evans et al., 2012).

Some of the responses indicated that the participants continued to be in generative mode (Bushe, 2013). For example, the participants of the focus group dissected the model of flourishing from a developmental perspective. The interactions between participants D, E and A illustrate this:

Participant D:

“It’s useful to have these flourishing indicators. It may be better to split these dimensions from a developmental perspective.”

Participant E:

“Looking at these, for the little ones, we can focus on them getting to grips with the school environment and expectations, connectivity, engagement, skills-development, emotional vocabulary and making good choices.”

Participant A:

“Yes, that makes sense, because character development would develop later as their reasoning develops.”

Moreover, the head teacher generated further actions when she reflected upon the differences between the positive core of the teachers and support staff.

“I would like to ensure that all staff have high expectations of our children: not just the teachers. And I’d like to revisit our Catholic values with all staff as this is at the heart of our school.”

6.6.4 Figure-Ground Dimension

As indicated in Study Two, this nested AI appeared to create new ground as a much wider range of new possibilities emerged. Participants created new background assumptions in the form of the 'helping hand' framework; staff assumed that the cultivation of emotional well-being and eudaimonic well-being is only possible when children's core flourishing entitlements were readily disposed and available to them (Senge, 2006; Evans et al., 2012). Participant E's comments suggested that the ground has only shifted partially because this inquiry did not adopt a whole-school approach.

Participant E was the only participant of the focus group who articulated a view on this dimension, which was subsequently agreed by Participant A. Participant E gave a rating of 7 as non-teaching-and-support staff (such as the cleaners, caretaker and dining room assistants) were not involved in this inquiry. According to the World Health Organization (2003), a healthy school environment comprises authentic participation in democratic decision-making amongst all stakeholders. Participant E said:

"We've got to think we're here in a building with children and staff from 7:45-5:30; it's great for us as teachers and TAs, head teachers, but most of the children have an 1 hour and 15 minutes where they are dealt with by dinner ladies and other members of dining room staff. What involvement are they going to have in it? If it's going to be a whole picture, they have to be in the picture as well and the cleaners, because when the children are here after school, it's the cleaners they see; they probably won't see me, as their teachers we're probably involved in meetings, getting prepared for tomorrow, so I think if we were doing a vision and to go forward with it, it would have to be everybody, from the caretaker, to the dinner staff, the cleaners, everyone."

The head teacher had already suggested that the outcomes of this inquiry were wide-ranging which included use of the 'helping hand' framework; she said: "And they communicated major changes, from children's rights to CPD to curriculum development"; and "We will need to ensure our practices and policies reflect the 'helping hand' framework."

6.6.5 Improvisation-Implementation Dimension

As indicated in section 5.1.19, the head teacher implied an improvisation approach in the integrated design session. She appeared to shift from this position; as at the beginning of the destiny phase, she seemed to be promoting an implementation to the action phase of the inquiry. She said:

"No, because that first planning meeting we will decide as a group; we will sit and talk and plan."

Participants of the focus group expressed their concerns about using an improvisation approach and indicated that it would be difficult to nurture an improvisational approach to the action phase,; as this may result in staff feeling insecure, chaos, 'Chinese whispers' and confusion. Interactions between participants D, B, E and A illustrate this:

Participant D:

"There will be barriers; they're not necessarily negative, but just think about exams and stuff like that. If we're all going to have this approach, then it's a case of letting go of the reins and trusting that people will , know some staff that I've worked with like structure and like to be told this, this and this; you can be more flexible, you can decide and some people find that very hard. When I do make that decision and it doesn't work, who's going to be there to bail me out? That I've made this decision

and it's all gone wrong. It's all about having a structured timetable; I did that because I've been told to do that, and if you take that away from people I think they're going to find it very difficult not having that. It can be frightening. Some people will revel in the opportunity of having some of the structure out, and other people will feel 'Well what do you mean?', 'Well where's the book?', 'What do you mean I don't have a scheme of work?'"

Participant B:

"I think it's going to be difficult to follow our programme passions individually. It might end up being quite chaotic. I think it is best if we plan this programme carefully, and work out who will do what when. And review it on a termly basis."

Participant E:

"Yes, it's going to require some careful co-ordination. I think we need to know who is leading on what and when things are going to be reviewed. It's best if our senior leadership puts the plan together, as long as they know who is most interested in doing what."

Participant A:

"We can't just swap places and I can't just say 'I want to teach a class lower down the school today'. This has to be planned carefully, otherwise it will cause chaos and confusion. Everybody needs to know about the plan in advance and that way we can avoid Chinese whispers and confusion."

The head teacher reported that it would be 'challenging' to action the 'Changing Places' day as she would want to ensure that the quality of teaching would not be affected. She seemed to imply careful planning and rigour would be required to ensure that the quality of teaching will not be compromised during the implementation of this action. She said:

“The changing places day I could imagine would be very successful with: some staff, it's going to be. Here's my control coming out again. If you take somebody from Year 1 to teach my Year 6 maths lesson for a day, I know I would be thinking will they deliver it to the same standard, and I know that my Year 1 staff would get a lot out of it and a lot of respect, but there is that, what would the children have got out of it? So that is just an example it doesn't mean the year 6 teacher is better than a Year 1 teacher: it's just that all over it might be a nice thing for the staff, is it going to be a good thing for the children in the short term, so I know it's about being brave isn't it, thinking we want to have the sense of everybody understanding each other's roles, we've got to give people those experiences. But I want every single lesson to be the absolutely best that it can be. And it would take a lot of work to ensure that the quality of teaching, did not have any kind of a negative effect. Every second of every lesson counts.”

6.7 Concluding Comments

Taken together, the responses to this process evaluation indicated that this AI was mostly transformative in its impact (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Bushe, 2010).

There appears to be consensus amongst the participants that transformative change had taken place. Different patterns of organizing emerged; participants were thinking for the first time about developing a strengths-based curriculum, setting up a peer coaching system, and the need for an equitable CPD system amongst staff (Waters & White, 2015; Arthur et al., 2010; Schueller, 2009; Roffey, 2011; WHO, 2003). The transformative element was also evident in the creation of new lens and knowledge as the participants

appeared not to be constrained by their existing thinking. They realised there was ‘this whole new vocabulary related to positive mental health’ (as they had been thinking about it in deficit terms) and developed understandings about their ‘school’s DNA’ (i.e., the school’s positive core) (Cooperrider et al., 2005; Cooperrider, 2012; Bushe & Kassam, 2005).

Other indicators of transformative change were evident through two persistent metaphors - children blossoming from ‘seed to flower’ and school being a ‘case’- but the accompanying meanings evolved over time (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Thomas, 2011; Kern et al., 2016). In particular, the ‘helping hand’ symbol had the potential to be an enduring metaphor to guide future policies and practices. Participants continued to be generative, by splitting the model of flourishing on a developmental basis, and generating further actions in relation to harmonizing some of the differences in the positive core (Bushe, 2013; Senge, 2006). Although new ground was created, not everyone was involved in creating this new ground, thus limiting the transformative potential of this inquiry. Participants oriented towards an implementation approach, as they expressed concerns about pursuing changes in an individualised way. Both the head teacher and focus group participants indicated that they believed it would be difficult to nurture an improvisational approach to the action phase (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).

Whilst Bushe and Kassam (2005) make the case that transformative change co-occurs alongside an improvisation approach, the participants’ responses seemed to challenge this assertion. Does this mean that this case was less transformative, as the participants orient towards an implementation approach for some of their agreed actions? The participants’ concerns about the improvisation approach were grounded in their particular

practices. It is both prudent and congruent with the underpinning epistemology to draw upon the practical reasoning or practical wisdom of the participants, after all,

‘...the social sciences are better equipped to produce a different kind of knowledge – phronesis, practical wisdom – that grows out of intimate familiarity with practice in contextualized settings. Local knowledges, even tacit knowledges, cannot be taught a priori and are grown from the bottom up. They emerge out of practice, forgoing the hubris of seeking claims to a decontextualized universal rationality stated in abstract terms of false precision’ (Schram, 2012, p.17).

Or put another way, the participants’ insights are considered more valuable than adhering to the improvisation dimension put forward by Bushe and Kassam (2005). Given this conclusion, the next step was to organise a planning meeting with the project team to discuss which actions required a more careful, top-down, co-ordinated response which would include any further actions that had been generated by this process evaluation. This resulted in a hybrid change approach (i.e., bottom up inquiry and top-down planning) as adopted by Waters & White (2015).

6.8 Participants’ Reflections

6.8.1 Discovery Phase

Both the head teacher and I co-facilitated the discovery sessions. As stated in section 5.2.5.1, the teacher session was characterised by positivity as indicated by smiling, clapping and laughing, whilst the observed and attributed emotions in the teaching assistants’ session included surprised, upset and gratitude (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Fredrickson, 2009; Ekman, 2004; Bushe, 2012). The head teacher construed these differences as teachers being more ‘analytical’, including ‘bigger picture’ thinking and

teaching assistants being 'emotional', including their desire for professional fulfilment and development.

"I think I was surprised how different and how teachers were more analytical in their approach and the teaching assistants were very emotional in their response. It was a real privilege to actually share that with them, because you don't realise, and I think it is about the journey they have been on as well. And I think we all bring all of ourselves to work every day and you just realise how satisfaction is so important at the minute, and the teaching assistants were talking very much about how they love to be a part of the whole journey with the child and feel part of the success and enjoy sharing in that and I think the teachers were thinking inevitably in a different way: they were thinking more like a bigger picture approach to it. The teaching assistants very much had individuals in mind and about their own growth."

Participant C stated that the discovery session was a 'highly personal' matter because she related it to her sense of vocational well-being. She experienced a sense of professional pride and said:

'Firstly emotions, you're looking very specifically at your impact on that child, and we don't often, as teacher, have that chance to do that. I wanted to know what difference we all make: that's why we are in this profession; for me it was a highly personal. I felt proud. We are always looking at classes or year groups/cohorts/are they falling behind. They struggle just as much the ones that are high achievers. They need targets as well as the under-achievers, and sometimes it's not always academic-wise, it's about developing their personalities, characters and their sense of self.'

Participant B seemed to value the discovery phase because rarely do the staff engage in reflective practice with each other and celebrate their peak experiences/successes. Again professional pride featured.

“It was a positive experience to sit with a colleague and to have that conversation which very often we don’t even talk to each other.

We don’t celebrate our success enough. Very often we are only talking to each other to discuss interventions or year group transitions to another year group and things on the radar that need looking at. We don’t often sit down and think that was great: I’ve done a really good job with that child, I’m really proud of that child now and that they come back to see us or we see them in a higher year group. It was just nice to just spend a moment.”

6.8.2 Dream Phase

As stated in 5.2.5.1, I attributed a sense of frustration amongst a group of teachers when attempting to flesh out a vision for the wish for greater opportunities for pupils to explore their lines of enquiry (Heider, 1958). The teaching assistant session appeared to be characterised by defensiveness and anxiety (Bion, 1961). Participant D indicated a sense of frustration when attempting to build a vision for the wish of all staff to buy in to the process of nurturing flourishing in children.

“I found that tricky because my wish was hard. I can’t remember which one it was, getting all staff on board, whereas the curriculum one, I had more ideas for that, but I found that quite hard. I suppose it was a bit of an issue but we got there in the end.”

The head teacher appeared to express annoyance at her prior approach to introducing curriculum flexibility. She attributed the lack of shared understanding on curriculum implementation to her leadership approach and then within the mind-sets of some staff members. She said:

‘I loved hearing everything but part of me wanted to kick myself because what I felt was some of the things they were saying were some of the things that were already true. So obviously the message I have given out to people has not come through loud and clear enough. So when people are talking about visions and curriculum freedom, I thought I had already given that. I think were 2 years into a new curriculum, people probably have got a bit of insecurity again, so it probably is a bit of that, but I think I need to make sure and reflect upon how I give out those visions. I think as a school we have focused a lot about what we are teaching and not enough on how we are teaching. About curriculum organisation and shared because it made me realise there was such a difference across the school, in people’s view of how you could deliver; some people have a much more fixed mind-set.’

6.8.3 Design Phase

Amusement featured in the teacher design session; defensiveness/anxiety and anger were evident in the support staff design session, and anxiety and excitement were highlighted in the integrated design session (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Fredrickson, 2009; Bion, 1961).

The head teacher expressed that a range of emotions were evoked during the design phase. It is important to recall that the only session the head teacher did not co-facilitate with me was the support staff design session. She reflected (again) upon her leadership approach and compared it with the bottom-up, empowering approach of AI (Evans et al., 2012).

“A mixture of emotions I think; surprise, anxiety, and excitement.

Love the way the staff, the different groups they were in that at times. Groups kind of evolved just with people following things and I thought that worked really well in terms of having a bit of freedom to run with an idea; it was a little bit out of control for me because normally I would have, at the start of any session with the staff, I would have very clear aims and objectives and I would probably be quite fixed. I would be in terms of imparting my knowledge; I would want them to go away at the end of the sessions and fulfil my visions. This approach was definitely more empowering than my usual approach.”

Whilst the head teacher remarked on the benefits of this empowering inquiry process, Participant D expressed concerns about it in relation to curriculum flexibility.

“But that’s communication, and I don’t think anybody feel they have the ability to empower themselves. You’re still expected to provide, you’ve still got to do a percentage of this subject and that subject.”

Similarly to the head teacher, Participant B expressed a similar range of emotions: ‘Surprise and apprehension I suppose a bit. Excitement as well to start afresh’

6.8.3 Destiny Phase

As indicated in section 5.2.5.3, some participants appeared to be anxious in the integrated design session, which may have led to the head teacher suggesting an improvisation approach over a 2-year period. At the beginning of the destiny phase, the head teacher expressed her anxiety and again reflected upon her leadership style (being 'imposing' and 'a bit of a dictatorship'). Her comments suggested being out of her "comfort zone"; she appeared to recognise she needed to step back, so that staff could action their own ideas.

"A little bit scary... and I had to stop myself and make myself listen and be a part of the conversation and not be again imposing ideas because I have got a fantastic team here, I have got some talented people with lots of great ideas and I know and have seen that sum of it is always greater than the individuals. Recently we've been in such a period of change that it has been a bit of a dictatorship. And I think it was a really interesting process for me in terms of actually the outcomes that can be achieved when you put a team of people together and they're not directed but they are given the freedom to go away and come up with ideas and constructing things."

Participant D recognised that the action phase could potentially be a threatening process and suggested that effective and transparent communication could mitigate this. This participant also acknowledged that a range of emotions was evident in the process of change.

"I think you have to go with an open mind if they are going to change it: let everybody know it at the same time; have a day where it's communicated and spread out for everyone to see exactly what is happening. Some people are visual and need to see it, so all aspects need to be taken into consideration.

I think they will go with it. As long as it is communicated clearly and everybody hears the same message at the same time without Chinese whispers and anyone

feeling left out or threatened; change no matter what it is, does evoke different emotions in people. If it is communicated clearly and then everybody has a chance to get on board and we can consolidate then I think it will work. Even if we do it in two different groups. The second group will not hear it like the first group; it's a bit like a lesson, if you're doing maths the first time round and think that didn't work, you change it for the next lesson. And if it's going like that then it will be changes instead of it being laid out over a whole morning or whatever. A bit like when we had the values explained to us, we all took it away and we had a look at it. It will take time and we all have different times in the morning during breaks."

6.9 Concluding Comments

In essence, this inquiry was concerned with producing relevant forms of 'local knowledges' or phronesis which helps inform the human condition as it is experienced and changed by the very same people being studied (Schram, 2012; Thomas, 2011). Collectively, the participants indicated that they experienced a roller coaster of emotions; for example, excitement about changing the status quo, and confusion and anxiety about the specifics of the intended changes. Some of the responses indicated strongly that the positive principle of AI was problematic, given that the participants expressed emotions such as frustration, upset, and anxiety. Alongside this, the participants' responses indicated that they found the AI process to be personal (as it linked to their professional pride and sense of vocational well-being), empowering, hard, reflective (of their successes and approaches to leadership) and threatening.

It is important to understand participants' emotional reactions even when using an appreciative approach and not assume that only positive emotions are only experienced by the participants. The principle of attunement, as proposed in Study Two, allows facilitators to attune to the participants' spectrum of emotions, both positive and negative (Kennedy et al., 2011). Furthermore, it may be important to encourage thoughtful reflection on, and discussion of, the emotional dimension of this process throughout the action/destiny phase; as when emotions are expressed and acknowledged in a safe forum, and the participants are treated with respect, they are more likely to engage with the intended changes (McNiff, 2016). Otherwise, as discussed in Study Two, there is a danger that the participants become a lost voice in the appreciative process or that they become the 'docile bodies' being changed in the Foucauldian sense (Foucault, 1975). Given this, I intend to discuss with the project team ways in which reflective sessions can be built into the destiny phase (Dewar, 2011).

CHAPTER SEVEN: FINAL DISCUSSION ON THESIS' DUAL CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BASES

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has simultaneously explored two positive psychology constructs - flourishing (Pillar One of the positive psychology framework) and positive institution (Pillar Three) - on a simultaneous basis (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Overall, the outcomes – the tripartite developmental eco-systemic model of flourishing, draft flourishing programme consisting of systemic innovations and repairs, and second-order change - have been more complex than reported in the broader literature review (including literature on the AI methodology) (Cooperrider, 1986; Bushe & Kassam, 2005). The ways in which change occurred in Faith School are compared with the refined model of AI (Cooperrider, 2012). I also revisit my theory on the characteristics of an enabling school that was grounded in the review of the sparse literature on positive or enabling institution (Thomas, 2011; Arthur et al., 2010; Taban & Human-Vogel, 2010; Andrade, 2016).

Another dual aspect of this thesis, which requires further discussion, is the use of two methodologies – case study and AI (Thomas, 2011, 2015; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider, 2012). Multiple and complex truths informed by the research findings have been made possible through use of triangulation, a nested design, attuned facilitation and practical wisdom (Thomas, 2011, 2015; Kennedy et al., 2011).

7.2 Thesis' Conceptual Bases

7.2.1 Flourishing Construct

This inquiry produced a model of flourishing that is grounded in the perspectives of multiple participants (parents, children, teaching staff, support staff, head teacher and me). This may account for the complex model of flourishing that was constructed: the tripartite, hierarchical, developmental-ecosystemic model of flourishing. It is also distinct in that environmental factors have been highlighted and given priority over the dimensions of flourishing directly linked to children's individual characteristics and biographies; the entitlement focus of the model includes children's rights to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to (Nussbaum, 2000; McLellan & Steward, 2015). This addresses the identified lacuna in the field of positive psychology: that it needs to consider and recognise contextual factors contributing to optimal functioning (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Robbins, 2008; Sheldon, 2009; Biswar-Diener et al., 2011; Grant & Schwartz, 2011; Wong, 2011; McNulty and Fincham, 2012).

The other two components of the flourishing model – developmental emotional well-being and developmental eudaimonic well-being - have a focus on children's attributes. Distinctive features evident in these components include emotional spectrum and emotional regulation as well as unique trait and emergent character (Rogers, 1961; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Norrish et al., 2013; DfES, 2007; Proctor et al., 2011; Allport, 1937; Kristjánsson, 2013; Wilding and Griffey, 2015).

7.2.2 Positive or Enabling Institution Construct

From my reading about enabling institutions and environments (Thomas, 2011; Arthur et al., 2010; Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010; Andrade, 2016), I theorised that an enabling school may have these characteristics:

- a welcoming, safe and nurturing environment that boosts connectedness;
- a culture of CPD, in particular a collegial culture;
- high permission for/value placed upon autonomous action by teachers and students;
- a focus on capacity building;
- an emphasis on equality; and
- an authentic approach.

In relation to this case study, some of these characteristics were evident and some of these appeared to show a different emphasis, as indicated in Table 36.

Table 36 – Evidence of Enabling School Theory in this Case/AI Study

Enabling School Theory	Evidence of theory's characteristics in this Case/AI Study	Study/Section/ Figure/Table
Connectedness	Belonging featured in the school's common positive core (under the theme of social well-being) (Keyes, 1998).	5.2.1.1 Figure 36
Culture of CPD, in particular a collegial culture	The school appears to have adopted the conception of a learning organization, with a particular focus on developing a peer coaching culture (Senge, 2006; Arthur et al., 2010; Lofthouse et al., 2010).	Figure 25 5.1.7.5 5.2.3.1
Autonomous Action	The participating teaching group had chosen to set up a peer coaching system (Arthur et al., 2010). Another teaching group were keen to design curriculum module(s) based on the pupils' interests/strengths, and to offer, wherever possible, curriculum choices to the pupils (Children's Society, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000).	5.2.3.1 5.2.3.2

Capacity Building	Team learning featured in the school's positive core, with teachers focusing on team-working and the support staff valuing co-working and 'in-house' training. These (and other) differences contributed to the concept of systemic differential in the positive core as illustrated in Figure 36 (Senge, 2006; Evans et al., 2012).	5.2.1 5.2.1.5 Figure 36
Equality	I assumed an emphasis on pupil equality, and had given inadequate attention to the staff <i>inequality</i> that was highlighted in the dream/design phase of the inquiry with support staff. Addressing staff inequalities featured in the systemic repair section of the draft flourishing programme (Jackson, 2014).	5.2.3.4 Figure 41 Table 34
Authentic Approach	<p>The school has shown a real commitment to pursuing the 'wellbeing-for-all' perspective by exploring the topic of flourishing and engaging in all aspects of the planned project, including addressing the supplementary reflective research question in the process-based evaluation (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 308; Bushe & Kassam, 2005).</p> <p>Also, there appeared to be a genuine concern for children's rights. The initial developmental-ecosystemic model of flourishing was further developed by staff participants to focus on children's core flourishing entitlements (i.e., that children have the right to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to).</p>	<p>Study Two</p> <p>6.8</p> <p>5.2.4 Figure 39</p>

Moreover, the process evaluation indicated this AI had been largely transformative in its impact (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). It was evident that the participants widened their focus and understanding of their work setting to see what was possible in terms of flourishing. They reported, in Study Three, that the scope of inquiry was far-ranging. In this sense, AI

fostered organisational change by elevating and extending the topic inquiry as suggested by Cooperrider (2012).

Cooperrider and Avital (2004) assume a non-deficit model of transformational change whereas this case is rooted in both non-deficit and deficit models of transformational change (Cooperrider, 2012; Johnson, 2011; Bushe, 2012). Potentially, this resulted in both systemic innovations and repairs; the school adopted the conception of a learning organization and community psychology's core concept of equality (Cooperrider, 1986; Jackson, 2014; Senge, 1990; Grandy & Holton, 2010; Roffey, 2011; Schueller, 2009; WHO, 2003). Whilst Cooperrider is unable to delineate his assumption of non-deficit transformational change which is dependent partly on limitless emerging relational capacities (Cooperrider & Avital, 2004), this case appears to make explicit the centrality of extending the concept of relatedness to include three dimensions of social well-being: social integration; social contribution; and social actualization (Keyes, 1998). Although Cooperrider and Avital (2004, p. xv) do not describe what they mean by the caveat 'subject to the right kind' of 'interconnectivities', this case suggests that this may be based on an array of relational processes such as emotional containment, attuned interactions, active listening including reflecting back, member-checking, and democratic communication (Bion, 1961; Kennedy et al., 2011; Reason & Rowan, 1981; McNiff, 2016).

Interestingly, there is limited reference to the role and skills of the facilitator in the initial and refined models of AI (Bushe, 2011; Cooperrider, 2012).

7.3 Thesis' Methodological Bases

7.3.1 Dual-Methodologies

I recognised, as both a case inquirer and an appreciative inquirer, I needed to adhere to the tenets of both methodologies. In relation to AI, I undertook a within-phase analysis, resulting in examining outcomes of each AI phase. In relation to case study, I paid specific attention to the concept of holism and particularity, I examined the relationship between the 'parts' and the 'whole' of the narrative in Study Two, whereas Waters and White (2015) seemed to overlook this critical component of the case study methodology in their case/AI study (Miller, 1956; Bruner, 1991; Thomas, 2011).

This then generated rich, in-depth explanatory analyses as I was able to identify three particular strands that unfolded during the course of this diachronic inquiry (Thomas, 2011; Bruner, 1991):

- the school's orientation as a learning organisation;
- the emergence of a containing environment; and
- staff experiencing a good degree of social well-being.

Although Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) acknowledge that only a partial understanding can be acquired through an appreciative inquiry (due to the underlying basic assumption that an organisation is a mystery to be embraced), a more complete narrative can be realized 'when its parts and whole can, as it were, be made to live together' as these 'rely on each other for their viability' (Bruner, 1991, p.8). In contrast, the case/AI study by Waters and White (2015) appears to have adopted a relatively reductionist approach by limiting discussion to the outcomes of each phase of AI or strategic phases (such as

development, implementation and monitoring) (Bruner, 1991; Thomas, 2011). This suggests the key tenets of case study methodology risk being overlooked when using it alongside an AI methodology.

7.3.2 Triangulation

As a case inquirer, I utilised triangulation on a consistent basis to strengthen rigour. I drilled deep in each of the three studies, using different methods and drilling from different perspectives (Thomas, 2011). Using Foucault's terminology, Thomas (2011, p.4) advocates developing 'a polyhedron of intelligibility'; which provided me with the best opportunity to know much about this case by examining it as a many-sided object (i.e., a polyhedron). Collectively, I have illustrated the use of triangulation by use of a polyhedron (see Figure 49). There are 19 angles to this polyhedron, which consists essentially of a hexagon (Study 1), an octagon (Study 2) and a pentagon (Study 3). Each angle either represents a data collection method or a perspective.

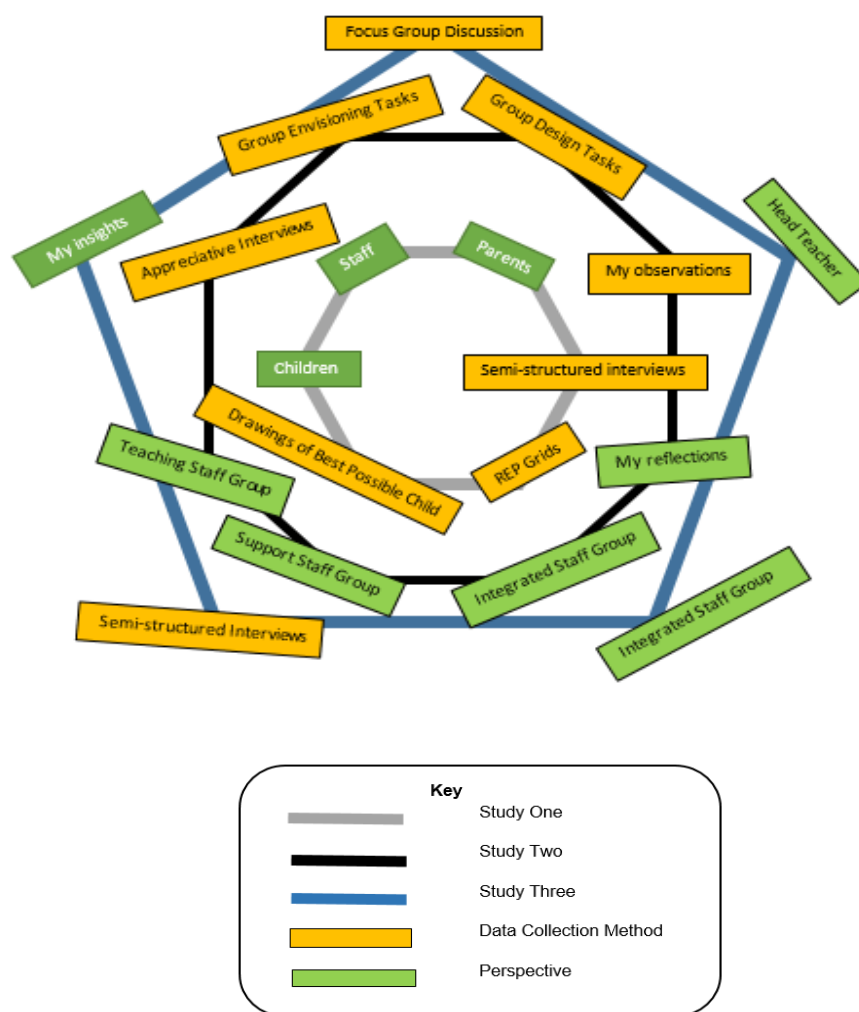


Figure 49 - 'A Meta Polyhedron' Summary of Triangulation (Thomas, 2011)

7.3.3 Nested Design & Attuned Facilitation

Another substantive theoretical contribution is the articulation of the concept of systemic repair and the principle of attunement in the theory of AI (Jackson, 2014; Kennedy et al., 2011).

The nested design and responsive facilitation, which were organic in nature, appeared to be critical in revealing the marginalised position of the support staff group (Freire, 1970).

Knowledges gained through interactions with the support staff group indicated that their position in this school setting was excluded in the professional sense. This understanding was realized through use of a nested design and attuned facilitation in the absence of the head teacher. Attuned facilitation appeared to be a critical factor in shaping outcomes of this inquiry, as it empowered half of the teaching assistant participant group to identify systemic repairs (Kennedy et al., 2011). In other words, attuned facilitation enabled this apparent marginalized group of participants to design a social system that potentially eradicated their disadvantage. Unintentionally, this resulted in this participant group deconstructing part of their experience that was meaningful to them in order to move forward with the co-constructed vision (which was based on the repeated stories of their 'peak experiences').

This prompted me to think about the role of critical theory concepts in an AI, where critical theory is defined broadly as drawing insights into the everyday, practical way in which power is utilized and potential conflicts are suppressed (Grant & Humphries, 2006). Grant and Humphries (2006) illustrate the importance of engaging with critical theory in AI:

'...critical theory may help draw attention to important but unnoticed dimensions, such as, for example 'hidden' sources of power, and thus gain a deeper appreciation of the situation and processes under investigation' (Grant & Humphries, 2006, p. 408).

'...we may begin to better understand not just how an appreciative inquiry develops, but to consider also the knowledge and power influences which might be negotiated as the process unfolds and on what basis such negotiation might be used to contribute to the emancipation and flourishing of humanity' (Grant & Humphries, 2006, p. 410).

Grant and Humphries (2006) argue that AI disregards the influence of social systems that breed dominant systems of power over group members' consciousness and is over-optimistic about the role of human agency. The suggestion that power dynamics may have impacted adversely affected participant participation prompted me to reconsider/review my ontological position, given that both critical theory and social constructionism have a shared epistemology (i.e., knowledge is socially constructed through the interactions of individuals with their context and each other). I prioritised constructing relationships for co-operative organizing (given that social reality is unstable and a product of impermanent processes of exchange) over discourse to deconstruct the processes that sustain prevailing forms of organization and contingent distortion of power (Gergen, 2014; Cooperrider, 2012).

This prioritisation would not have been necessary had I adopted a critical appreciation inquiry (Grant and Humphries, 2006; Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015). Taking a dual ontological approach would involve examining 'what is?' and 'what might have been?' (i.e. deconstructing experience or narratives that are meaningful to participants) prior to considering 'what is yet to come?' (i.e. constructing narratives that reshape school life). Collectively, this would represent a fuller discovery process and lead to a deeper appreciation of the situation and process (Ridley-Duff and Duncan, 2015; Grant, 2006). In addition to asking the overarching question of 'what gives life?' in an AI project, inquirers adopting such a dual ontological approach would be able to ask 'what depletes life?' (i.e., what to avoid) (Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015). This would, therefore, require a process based on 'relational and trustful communications that are highly personal and self-disclosing' (Taylor, 2009, p.11), which would support access to the 'Shadow side' and disclose hidden stories of experience (Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015). Moreover, this would require a brave senior leadership team to explore the initial question of 'what depletes

life?’ in their school setting. Ridley-Duff and Duncan (2015) make the case for using generative research strategies to illuminate and change the Shadow (Fitzgerald et al., 2010).

Such an approach would risk being unrealistic, problematic and alienating key staff (e.g. school leaders) early on in a project, compromising their consent/engagement in an authentic collaborative inquiry. To focus on ‘what depletes life?’ may prove more practicable, once trusting relationships have been strengthened in the wholly appreciative, strength-based phase(s) of joint inquiry (Ridley-Duff and Duncan, 2015).

7.4 Conclusion

Overall, this research suggests positivity is a weak concept in positive psychology and AI: as the concept of emotional spectrum was evident in both of the core positive psychology constructs (Held, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Cooperrider, 2012). A range of emotions featured in the developmental-ecosystemic model of flourishing and were experienced by the staff participants during the process of transformative change (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).

A more complete understanding could have been gained by intentionally adopting a deconstructive mode of inquiry. I recognise that I end this final discussion with a suggestion of using yet another dual approach; an inquiry drawing firstly upon the ontological assumptions of social constructionism followed by ontological assumptions of critical theory (Grant & Humphries, 2006; Ridley-Duff and Duncan, 2015). This is in line

with the suggestion of a multiparadigmatic approach to theory-building, which is considered to produce more complete knowledge of organizational reality than a single paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Rathunde, 2001; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001; Henriques & Sternberg, 2004; Friedman, 2003, 2008). It is apt to highlight the common research objective shared by researchers using appreciative inquiry and concepts from critical theory:

‘An emancipatory intent is common to both critical theory and appreciative inquiry. Both approaches encourage researchers and participants to look beyond and to challenge accepted ‘norms’ to encourage and facilitate human flourishing (Reason & Bradbury, 2001)’ (Grant & Humphries, 2006, p.410).

A dual-ontological approach that explores ‘what gives life?’ and ‘what depletes life?’ would give rise to more nuanced approach. This is suggested and described as the second wave of positive psychology resulting in a more balanced perspective (Held, 2004; Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015; Wong, 2011). Alternatively, positive psychology should implement a meta-perspective stance of self-reflexivity (McDonald & O’Callaghan, 2008):

‘By eliminating their a priori dichotomy of positivity and negativity, positive psychologists might well find themselves in a better position to put back together the psychological reality that they have fractured in their ontologically dubious move of carving up psychological reality a priori into positive and negative phenomena. They then might find themselves better placed to “broaden and build” their own science of flourishing’ (Held, 2018, p. 313).

CHAPTER EIGHT: FINAL REFLECTIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR EP PRACTICE

8.1 Reflections on my professional preoccupations

Fundamentally, this inquiry reflects the values of subjectivism, holism, relativism, interpretation and generativity (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gergen, 1978; 1982; 1991; 1994; Thomas, 2011; Bushe, 2013). As discussed in section 1.1 and 3.10.2, I was preoccupied with making a greater difference through adopting a 'wellbeing-for-all' perspective and an asset-based approach (Malterud, 2001; Erikson, 1959; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 308; Cooperrider, 2012; Andrade, 2016). Broadly speaking, I felt satisfied with this research enterprise that generated a meaningful model of flourishing for Faith School, insights into the enabling features of Faith School, and significant second-order change (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Watzlawich et al. 1974; Schueller, 2009; Senge, 2006; Evans et al., 2012). In particular, I was surprised to be thinking about enhancing teaching and support staff's social well-being when my norm is supporting staff's emotional well-being largely in order to better to address children's needs (Keyes, 1998; Wagner, 2000). Taken together, I think EPs seeking to resolve their dissatisfactions of working in a system that predominately adopts the deficit model for all children and lack of systemic work should consider using the 'wellbeing-for-all' perspective and philosophy of appreciative inquiry (including the principle of attunement and core concepts from critical theory) in their practice (McLellan & Steward, 2015, p. 308; Boyd & Bright, 2007; Kennedy et al., 2011; Grant & Humphries, 2006; Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015).

Roffey (2015) argues that, in addition to the traditional work of EPs in special educational needs, 'there are also often untapped opportunities for school psychologists to be pro-

active for well-being in their other legitimate functions – as advocate for the whole child and as a change agent in schools’ (Roffey, 2015, p. 25). She argues that even with limited resources such as time, EPs can enhance universal well-being through consultations and conversations. More specifically, I would argue for the value of appreciative conversations and attuned interactions within the structured 4-D methodology (Kennedy et al., 2011; Cooperrider et al., 2005). This case is an example of facilitating generativity in a school using relatively limited EP time; I facilitated seven sessions (six of these were also facilitated by the head teacher) across two school terms. These generated significant second-order change, and contributed toward the school adopting the conception of a learning organization (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Roffey, 2015; Senge, 1990, 1994, 2006; Evans et al., 2012; Arthur et al., 2010).

8.2 Further Implications for EP Practice

Moreover, this case study cultivated a number of key insights that may benefit other EPs (Thomas, 2011, 2015). These insights include addressing some limitations that were encountered during the course of inquiry. First, it was evident that this inquiry became increasingly collaborative as it progressed. Study One was predominantly an individual and protracted endeavour with me collecting data from different participants and making sense of data, with a long gap between data collection and data analyses making it problematic to engage in meaningful member checking (Reason & Rowan, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). In contrast, Study Two was predominantly a collective and fast-paced endeavour which allowed for co-construction of themes in relation to the positive core, wishes and design statements as well as member checking in situ (Reason & Rowan, 1981). In hindsight, it would have been better to have adopted more collaborative

methods in Study One that involved participants actively engaging in the co-construction of the flourishing dimensions.

Second, this inquiry could have been strengthened by use of multiple researchers. This could have fostered further dialogue, led to the development of both complementary and divergent understandings of the studied situation, further revealed and contested my latent or hidden assumptions, and minimised the destabilizing effects of engaging in reflexivity (McNiff, 2016).

Third, participation in training in appreciative inquiry during planned project meetings and the beginning of each AI session seemed to be essential to staff participants' understanding of the underpinning philosophy of AI. Further training may be required to sustain the cultural change that has occurred to date in Faith School; this is in line with the learning provided by Waters and White (2015, p.29): '...the training of the SLT in AI was an important factor in enabling leadership to continue to communicate the themes of collaboration, inquiry and strengths.'

Fourth, given the outcomes of this nested AI, I suggest that EPs apply principles and processes of AI when it is not possible to implement an AI summit. Instead of the 'whole-system-in-the room' approach, generative outcomes can be realised through use of a nested design frame (Cooperrider, 2012, p. 107; Bushe, 2013; Thomas, 2011). This inquiry fell short of a 'whole school approach', as office staff, dining room assistants, and after-school club staff did not participate in this inquiry, which then limited the transformative potential of the process and its outcomes (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). This shortcoming could have been addressed by supplementing another nested unit (i.e., the

remaining staff of the school) and then the representative of this group could have contributed to the integrated design session (Thomas, 2011). This way the 'whole system appreciative thinking' on flourishing could have been realized when it was not possible to adopt 'whole-system-in-the room' approach.

Fifth, the process of reflection was truncated in this inquiry given that there is no public reflective space within the AI methodology (unlike Lewin's action research methodology), thereby limiting potentially the participants' process of furthering their personal mastery (Lewin, 1946; Senge, 2006; Evans et al., 2012). Future AI research should include opportunities for group reflections following each phase of AI, with regular reflective sessions built into the current action/destiny phase (Lewin, 1946; Dewar, 2011).

Sixth, it makes sense for the participants to be supported to understand their underlying group dynamics and group relations prior to engaging in appreciative inquiry; in this way they can be empowered to make better sense of their own group behaviours and relations (Burnes, 2009). This may lead to an expansive conceptualisation of a learning organization, to include deutero-learning (i.e. schools learn how to learn) (Senge, 2006; Argyris & Schon, 1996; Evans et al., 2012). I suggest such training should incorporate key principles of attunement and systemic psychoanalysis as well as stages of group development (Kennedy et al., 2011; Eloquin, 2016; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

Seventh, EPs should consider using core concepts from critical theory which may result in a deeper appreciation of a situation and process. This may support EPs to consider the influence of social systems and not to be over-optimistic about the role of human agency

(Grant & Humphries, 2006; Ridley-Duff & Duncan, 2015). This may, also, minimise the possibility of ‘contrived collegiality’ (Arthur et al., 2010, p. 474).

Eighth, participants who took part in the process evaluation indicated that a hybrid approach is required during the action phase; a combination of implementation and improvisation approaches (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). Waters and White reached a similar conclusion:

‘...the vital role of the SLT, such as strategic planning, goal setting, making the decision to adopt an AI approach, resourcing the ideas put forward by staff and giving authority to staff to lead these ideas’ (Waters & White, 2015, p. 30).

Ninth, change takes time, and whilst there is evidence of transformative change in the early action phase of the inquiry, more evidence is required in the longer term (i.e., a need to focus on distal outcomes) (Waters & White, 2015). Finally, this evaluation evidence should be gathered from multiple perspectives including staff, parents and children.

Throughout this research enterprise, I tried to keep in mind the collaborative spirit put forward by Burroughs and Gysin (1978, p. 77). Future research should continue along this vein, that is, the fusion of two subjectivities to generate enhanced thinking on an important subject matter.

“Gysin: ‘...when you put two minds together...’

Burroughs: ‘...there is always a third mind...’

Gysin: ‘...a third and superior mind...’

Burroughs: ‘...as an unseen collaborator.’”

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter to Head Teachers of Primary Schools

I am writing to invite you to consider taking part in a piece of research with a proposed starting date of September 2012. You have been selected on the basis that I am currently the link educational psychologist to your school.

Currently I am studying for a research doctorate at the University of Birmingham where positive psychology is my chosen research area. Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal functioning. This field is founded on the humanistic assumption that individuals want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of work and play. Positive Psychology has three central concerns: positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits and positive institutions. Through my systematic literature review so far, I have found that both positive psychology constructs, flourishing and positive or enabling institutions, are under-researched domains. Currently there is no known study investigating the phenomenon of flourishing in children, teenagers and/or youth in the UK.

The focus of this proposed inquiry will therefore be to develop a whole school approach aimed at the promotion of flourishing in children. Initial focus will be to develop a shared view of flourishing gained through multiple perspectives. Once flourishing has been defined by children, parents and school staff, this will then inform next steps of the inquiry process through collaboration. These steps will include development of a programme that ensures many more children are experiencing flourishing in your school. It is expected that the subsequent research process will be spread out over two to three consecutive academic terms using a methodology called appreciative inquiry (AI).

AI will be used as it is a form of collaborative inquiry in which lots of people can become involved that builds on what is positive in organisational life as it seeks out stories of success. So instead of focusing on the negatives in your school and trying to change them, AI looks at what works well and uses that as a foundation for future development.

To help you think about whether this proposed research is suitable for your school, please find enclosed a checklist for your consideration. It is important to point out that you do not have to tick all of the questions in order to be eligible to take part. Following consideration of the checklist, if you are still interested in the proposed research, please contact me to arrange a meeting to discuss any further questions or information. There is no need to return the checklist information; discussion of your own appraisal of the school's current work will form part of any subsequent meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding this research and/or if you are interested in taking part in this research.

Yours sincerely,

Raj Pahil
Educational Psychologist
Enc

Research Criteria Checklist

Have you got?

- (1) Evidence that developing children's well-being using a whole school approach is part of your school's development plan. ☐
- (2) Evidence of using a whole school approach. ☐
- (3) Evidence of using a positive approach (solution focused or strengths-based). ☐
- OR A willingness to try a positive approach ☐
- (4) Evidence of collecting and responding to parents' views. ☐
- OR A willingness to collect and respond to parents' views. ☐
- (5) Evidence of collecting and responding to children's views. ☐
- OR A willingness to collect and respond to children's views. ☐
- (6) Evidence of collecting and responding to support staff's views. ☐
- OR A willingness to collect and respond to support staff's views. ☐
- (7) Evidence of collecting and responding to teachers' views. ☐
- OR A willingness to collect and respond to teachers' views. ☐
- (8) Evidence of evaluating a universal programme (such as SEAL*) ☐

*SEAL – Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme

Appendix 2: Information Sheet for School Staff: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the research about?

Since 2000, there has been increasing interest in the field of positive psychology. Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal functioning. This field is founded on the humanistic assumption that individuals want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of work and play. Positive Psychology has three central concerns: positive subjective experiences; positive individual traits; and positive institutions. Although there is a diverse body of published research, the concepts of flourishing and positive institution, remain under-researched areas. Currently there is no known study investigating the phenomenon of flourishing in children, teenagers and/or youth in the UK.

The initial research purpose will be to develop a shared view of flourishing within your school, gained through multiple perspectives. Once flourishing has been defined by children, parents and school staff, this will then inform next steps of the inquiry process. These steps will include development of a programme that ensures many more children are experiencing flourishing in your school. It is expected that the subsequent research process will be spread out over two to three consecutive academic terms using a methodology called appreciative inquiry (AI).

Who is conducting the Research?

The research is being conducted by me, Raj Pahil, Educational Psychologist, as part of a doctoral thesis. My research supervisors at the University of Birmingham are Mrs Sue Morris and Professor Gary Thomas. Although I am the link EP to _____ School and I work for _____ LA Educational Psychology Service, I am carrying out this research on a more independent basis, under the supervision of Mrs Morris and Professor Thomas.

How long will the research last?

This research is planned to run from September 2012. Data collection will begin in September 2012 until April 2013. Data analysis will continue until December 2014. I plan to provide feedback in January 2015.

What methodology will be used?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) will be used, as it is a form of collaborative inquiry in which lots of people can become involved; AI builds on what is positive in organizational life, as it seeks out stories of success. So instead of focusing on any negatives in your school and trying to change them, AI looks at what works well and uses this as a foundation for future development.

What will I be asked to do?

In this study, you will be asked to take part in an activity that elicits your view of flourishing. This should last no longer than 30 minutes. You will be asked to reflect on children on two distinct dimensions – the positive mental health continuum and the mental illness continuum. This reflection will generate eight children with varying degrees of positive mental health and mental illness. Using a structured process, you will be asked to compare the children you have identified in order to elicit your construction of flourishing.

The remaining research will be part of wider school development work as prioritised in the school's development plan. This will take place in planned staff meetings and project meetings.

Am I obliged to take part in this study if I do not want to do so?

No. The decision whether or not to take part is yours. Also, once the research activity begins, you are free to leave at any point and need not give a reason for doing so.

How will my comments be recorded?

During our discussion, I will note down your responses on paper. After our discussion, your responses will be inputted into a computer programme.

How will these records be stored?

Notes will be stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home address for 10 years, before being destroyed. Electronic information will be stored on the University of Birmingham's network server, under the researcher's ID and in the researcher's store data that is password protected for 10 years, before being destroyed. Prior to storage, electronic information will be checked to ensure the identities of participants are kept confidential. Participants will be identified using a coding system. There will be no means of linking participant code names to their identities as listed on the consent forms.

What about confidentiality?

Information gathered through research activities (with staff, parents and children) will be used to evaluate the ways in which staff, parents and students define the term flourishing.

This research will be written up as part of a university thesis and will be made available to academic staff for assessment purposes. It will also be shared with school staff and other members of the local authority.

At a later date, the information gathered through interviews may be used to write a paper for publication.

Some direct quotes may be used when writing up.

Your name and the name of the school **will not** be used in any write-up and it will not be possible for naïve readers to trace any direct comments or data back to you.

Who will have access to the research data?

Only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the individual data. All data will be coded so that no connection can be made back to the original source of data.

Will I be made aware of the findings of the research?

You will be given feedback on the findings with your colleagues who will be active contributors to subsequent inquiry process. As part of a broader programme of this collaborative action research, regular updates on the progress of the research will be given through planned staff meetings and project meetings.

..and if I would like to know more before completing the research?

Raj Pahil, Sue Morris and/or Gary Thomas will be happy to answer any questions you still have.

raj.pahil@xxxx.xxx.xx

Miss Raj Pahil
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Appendix 3: Information Sheet for parents: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the research about?

Since 2000, there has been increasing interest in the field of positive psychology. Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal functioning. This field is founded on the humanistic assumption that individuals want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of work and play. Positive Psychology has three central concerns: positive subjective experiences; positive individual traits; and positive institutions. Although there is a diverse body of published research, the concepts of flourishing and positive institution, remain under-researched areas. Currently there is no known study investigating the phenomenon of flourishing in children, teenagers and/or youth in the UK.

Initial research focus will be to develop a shared view of flourishing gained through multiple perspectives. Once flourishing has been defined by children, parents and school staff, this will then inform next steps of the inquiry process including development of a programme that ensures many more children are experiencing flourishing.

Who is conducting the Research?

The research is being conducted by Raj Pahil, Educational Psychologist, as part of a doctoral thesis and her research supervisors at the University of Birmingham are Mrs Sue Morris and Professor Gary Thomas. Although I am the link EP to _____ School and I work for _____ LA Educational Psychology Service, I am carrying out this research on an independent basis.

How long will the research last?

This research is planned to run from September 2012. Data collection will begin in September 2012 until April 2013. Data analysis will continue until December 2014. I plan to provide feedback in January 2015.

What methodology will be used?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) will be used as it is a form of collaborative inquiry in which lots of people can become involved that builds on what is positive in organisational life as it seeks out stories of success. So instead of focusing on the negatives in your school and trying to change them, AI looks at what works well and uses that as a foundation for future development.

What will I and/or child be asked to do?

In this study, you and/ or your child will be asked to take part in an activity that elicits your and /or your child's view of flourishing. This should last no longer than 45 minutes for you and no longer than 30 minutes for your child. This will be done through asking you questions in the form of a semi-structured interview and asking your child to draw/talk about a child who is not at their best and is at their best.

Am I or my child obliged to take part in this study if I/he/she does not want to do so?

No. The decision whether or not to take part is yours. Also, once the research activity begins, you and your child are free to leave at any point and need not give a reason for doing so.

How will my comments and/or my child's comments be recorded?

Our discussions will be recorded on tape, and later transcribed to paper. Your child's comments will be noted down on paper and then transferred onto a computer program.

How will these records be stored?

Drawings (and accompanying notes) and audiotapes of interviews will be stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home address for 10 years, before being destroyed. Electronic information will be stored on the University of Birmingham's network server, under the researcher's ID and in the researcher's store data that is password protected for 10 years, before being destroyed. Prior to storage, audiotapes and electronic information will be checked to ensure the identities of participants are kept confidential. Participants will be identified using a coding system. There will be no means of linking participant code names to their identities as listed on the consent forms.

What about confidentiality?

Information gathered through interviews (with staff, parents and children) will be used to evaluate the ways in which staff, parents and students define the term flourishing..

This research will be written up as part of a university thesis and will be made available to academic staff for assessment purposes. It will also be shared with school staff and other members of the local authority.

At a later date, the information gathered through interviews may be used to write a paper for publication.

Some direct quotes may be used when writing up.

Your name, your child's name and the name of the school **will not** be used in any write-up and it will not be possible for naïve readers to trace any direct comments or data back to you or your child.

Who will have access to the research data?

Only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the individual data. All data will be coded so that no connection can be made back to the original source of data.

Will I be made aware of the findings of the research?

Yes, if you would like to learn more about the findings of this research or about positive psychology in general, I will be visiting the school numerous times until the completion of the research project (July 2016) and will be happy to meet with all participants. A written summary of the research will also be circulated to the parents of all participants. The one for children will be adapted in a way that is easy for them to access.

... and if I would like to know more?

Raj Pahil, Sue Morris and/or Gary Thomas will be happy to answer any questions you still have.

raj.pahil@xxxx.xx.xx

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*to be attached to a letter sent by the school

**parents will be asked to sign against the following statements:

I have read and understand the 'information for parents' sheet and would like my child to take part in the research study.

I have read and understand the 'information for parents' sheet and would like to take part in the research study.

Appendix 4: Research Consent Form

Research title: Collaborative Pursuit of Flourishing

Researcher name: Raj Pahil

This study will make use of interviews to explore the characteristics of a flourishing child. During the interview, you will be asked questions about the kind of things your child does when they are at their best as well as their feelings when engaging in these activities. The interview is expected to take up to 45 minutes. The interview will be recorded to allow for transcription and analysis by myself at a later time. The recordings and transcriptions will be stored securely for up to 10 years after the study. These will be destroyed after 10 years.

Please tick the following statements:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw up to a week after the interview, without giving any reason.
3. I agree to take part in this study.
4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.
5. I understand that the information I provide will be included within a thesis write-up, and that I will receive a summary report once the research has been completed.

Name of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 5: Child Consent Form

Hi _____



Who am I and what do I want?

My name is Raj Pahil. I am carrying out some University research and would like you to take part.



What am I doing?

I am interested in understanding more about children being at their best. So I am interested in finding out all the things children like to do when they are at their best. I will be also asking school staff and your parents the same questions. With this information, I hope to find out what works and find ways to do more of it at school. At the end this will help me and most of the adults in your school to understand what is needed so that more children can be at their best. This will be done through drawings and talking about your drawings of a child who is not at their best and a child who is at their best.



What's this got to do with you?

If you think that you would like to be part of my research, I want to take a small amount of time (about 30 minutes) to talk to you individually about your views. Your parents have already said that it is okay for you to take part but I wanted to check with you. Everything we talk about will be confidential. That means that although people will hear about the important things you say, no names will be used so nobody will know who said what in the research. This means we can talk honestly. If you feel that you don't want to take part, don't worry that's okay too. It's also okay if you agree to take part but then change your mind, either before or during our discussions.

If you want to know more about my research, you can ask_____.
You hopefully think this would be a good idea. Sign your name at the bottom of the next page if you like to be involved.

Thanks, Raj Pahil - Researcher

Your consent:

Please read below and tick (✓) the boxes if you agree with them.

1. I have read the information about the research.	
2. I agree to take part in the research.	
3. I understand that my views will be shared with others but nobody will know who has said what.	
4. I understand that I can leave the research at any time.	

My Name: (Full name)

My Signature:

Date:

Appendix 6: Feedback to Children Participants

Address

Telephone Number

Email address

Dear

As you may remember, your child participated in a research project that explored characteristics of a flourishing child.

The purpose of this letter is to provide your child with the feedback about the results of this research. These findings are based on the information shared by children, parents and staff.

This information revealed that children who are at their best or flourishing:

- experience different feelings such as happy, excited, pride, anger, worry and frustration;
- are good at managing their feelings;
- have close relationships with their family, friends and classmates;
- like to take part in an enjoyable activity;
- have good skills;
- put the effort into learning skills;
- are good at managing their responsibilities at school and/or home;
- have their own goals and views;
- have unique personality;
- are learning about their good character (i.e., they are beginning to understand why they are helpful or kind to others);
- have a positive attitude to themselves; and
- are thinking about making a difference in their future.

I would appreciate if you can share these findings with your child. If you and your child would like any further information about this research or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Please can you pass my thanks to your child for their participation in this research and thanks for your support in sharing this feedback with them.

Yours sincerely,

Raj Pahil

Researcher

Appendix 7: Outcomes from the Pilot Study regarding development of the RGT

This Appendix details the key outcomes from the pilot study that developed the RGT with 3 EPs over the course of 3 sessions.

Session 1:

I introduced my EP colleagues to the two conceptualisations and classifications of mental health that forms the basis of the RGT; Keyes' sextupled classification theory and Kelly's dual-factor model (Keyes, 2006; Kelly, 2012). Following questioning and discussion, they expressed their concerns about the psychiatric language that was evident in both mental health models and classifications. In particular, the cluster of symptoms that is evident in Keyes' diagnostic model of symptoms (i.e., a diagnosis of flourishing is given when a person presents with a high level on least one symptom of hedonia and just over half of the symptoms of eudaimonia).

It was agreed that a script would be developed that only describes flourishing, moderate positive mental health, languishing and mental distress in broad terms and without explicit references to the language associated with the medical and diagnostic models. For example, 'Think about a pupil who is flourishing, who functions in positive terms and feels positively about their world. What do they do? How do they present and feel? This is congruent with the two overarching constructs of positive mental health - 'positive functioning' and 'positive feelings' (Keyes & Annas, 2009).

Following this, the following 5 elements were generated for the initial trial run.

<i>Code</i>	<i>Label</i>
FP	Pupil who is flourishing
LP	Pupil who is languishing
MP	Pupil with moderate positive mental health
MDS	Pupil who is experiencing significant mental distress (significant impact)
MDM	Pupil who is experiencing some mental distress (mild impact)

Session 2:

- We paired up and tried the steps of the RGT using 5 cards (depicting the 5 elements).
- The following changes to the initial script were made to ensure there was clarity in what was being asked.

Initial Script: 'Have a think about these 3 children, of these three, what do 2 have in common in terms of functioning and feeling, as opposed to the third?'

Revised Script: 'Have a think about these 3 children, of these 3, what do 2 have in common in terms of functioning and feeling, which differs in some way with the third?'

- After the initial run, there were concerns that 5 elements will not produce a sufficient number of triads. Therefore, 3 additional elements were generated. Instead of asking participants to think of a pupil who is flourishing and languishing as well as experiencing moderate positive mental health, they will be asked to think of a boy and a girl for each one. The table below details the updated list of elements (8 in total).

<i>Code</i>	<i>Label</i>
FB	Boy who is flourishing
FG	Girl who is flourishing
LB	Boy who is languishing
LG	Girl who is languishing
MB	Boy with moderate positive mental health (neither flourishing or languishing)
MG	Girl with moderate positive mental health (neither flourishing or languishing)
MDS	Child who is experiencing significant mental distress (significant Impact)
MDM	Child who is experiencing some mental distress (mild impact)

Session 3:

- We paired up differently and tried the revised procedure using 8 cards (depicting the 8 elements).
- An additional step was added to include member checking (i.e., respondents will be asked to say what makes the third element different to ensure that I understand which contrast is being expressed).
- The following paperwork was finalised:
 - Flourishing REP Grid (Appendix 8);
 - Pre-prepared table to identify which elements were selected by the participant (Appendix 9); and
 - A series of blank rating scales (Appendix 10).

Appendix 8: Flourishing REP Grid

Element No	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Elements	FB	FG	MB	MG	L B	L G	MDM	MDS	
Bi-Polar Constructs									
Emergent Construct	Rating Scale 1 (low) to 5 (high)								Contrast Construct
	FB	FG	MB	MG	LB	LG	MD M	MDS	

5 indicates that this emergent construct is typical of the element.

1 indicates that the element does not exhibit the emergent construct.

Appendix 9: Table that was used to identify which elements were selected by the participant

Round	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FB										
FG										
MB										
MG										
LB										
LG										
MDM										
MDS										

Appendix 10: Rating Scales

1	2	3	4	5
.....			

1	2	3	4	5
.....			

1	2	3	4	5
.....			

1	2	3	4	5
.....			

1	2	3	4	5
.....			

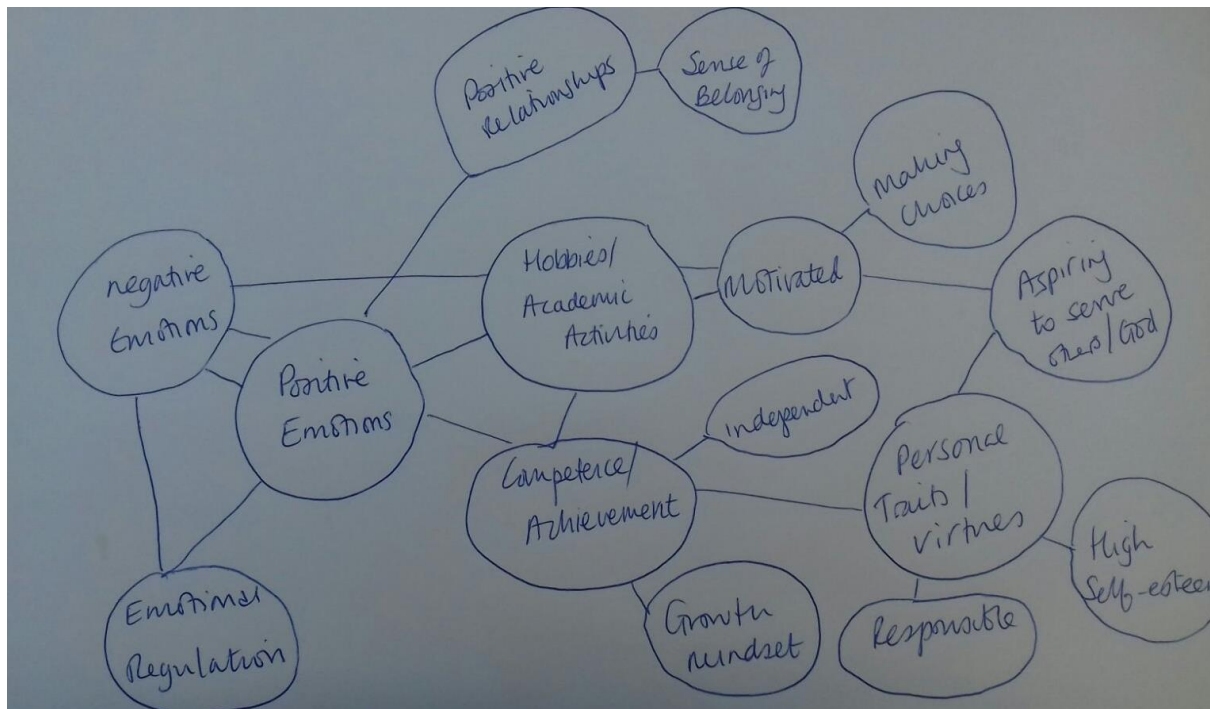
Appendix 11: Sample Coding

Interview Transcript	Codes
<p>Raj: Firstly thank you for participating in this research.</p> <p>Can you describe your child, who is 9, at his best? What does he do and how does he feel? I want you to give me as much details as you can, even small details are of interest to me.</p>	
<p>Parent 1: He normally gets excited. He's proud of himself. He does a lot of karate.</p> <p>Raj: So he feels excited and proud of doing Karate?</p> <p>Parent 1: He gets really, really proud of himself obviously because he's good at it and obviously he always wants a certificate which will motivate him so he'll try even harder and if he doesn't get one he sometimes gets a bit down but you know, he's ok.</p>	<p>Positive emotions; hobby</p> <p>Deep satisfaction; competence; working towards an award; putting the effort in; disappointment</p>
<p>Raj: So he gets a bit down when he doesn't get a certificate.</p> <p>Parent 1: Also, if the teacher hasn't picked him out to say he's good then I always say, yeah you've done really well (laughter). He's a bit...well, she didn't notice me, I says well she's not noticing everybody 'cause she's got a big class today and I always say it like that.</p>	<p>Disappointment about not being noticed for doing good; parent offering perspective</p>
<p>Raj: So why Karate, what is it about Karate?</p> <p>Parent 1: Well he's very good at it and he's been going Karate since he was a small child. He's loves to be part of the karate club since he's 5. Now he's worked his way up he's a red belt so he's very confident in himself almost to the point where he can teach the younger children. So that gives him a bit of self pride, look at me sort of thing.</p>	<p>Competence; long-term hobby; connectedness; working towards a higher standard; grown in confidence; skilled to point he can teach others; deep</p>

	satisfaction; enjoying the spotlight
<p>Raj: So it's doing the Karate, getting to a higher level but also teaching others.</p> <p>Parent 1: Yeah, he gets really...he buzzes like, look at me, look at me, I can tell 'em what to do and all this lot. And I'm like, don't get too bossy!</p>	Energised; enjoying bossing others around.
<p>Raj: So, how often does he do Karate?</p> <p>Parent 1: Twice per week</p> <p>Raj: So, twice a week is he at his best then? What do you notice when he's doing Karate? What do you notice it before he goes?</p> <p>Parent 1: Sometimes he gets a bit, he's hard to get motivated. Sometimes he's a bit...oooh...and I'm like come on pick your top, get your gear on. Once he's there, he's full of beans, running round like a lunatic. (Laughter)</p> <p>Raj: So, he gets excited, he's proud and he likes the teaching side of it as well. Ok. Have you noticed anything else about him when he's doing Karate?</p> <p>Parent 1: Yeah, he has to be the loudest. Yeah because they "kiai", they say "oi!" like, a, when they are doing certain end set of moves, at the end they have to "kiai" and he has to be the loudest out of the whole class. He has to be, so it's like ... arggh.</p>	<p>Regular commitment</p> <p>Parental encouragement; highly energised.</p> <p>highly energised</p>
<p>Raj: Do you see that level of excitement and pride during the other days of the week, when he's not doing karate, do you see that level of excitement and pride?</p> <p>Parent 1: I don't see the pride but he gets excited on, when he plays games like his Wii game, he'll get all excited on that. That's normally... he's quite quiet</p> <p>Raj: He's quite quiet, but he comes out of his shell during Karate?</p> <p>Parent 1: Yeah, very much so. Almost to the point where I've got to tell him to calm down.</p> <p>Raj: Anything else about Karate?</p>	<p>No pride evident when playing computer games only excitement; personal trait</p> <p>Highly energised when doing karate</p>

<p>Parent 1: Well basically he's...they have to do a certain set of moves, they have to learn a new kata for each belt but he's won two tournaments, he's won gold and silver in tournaments so I took him to all the tournaments before and that's throughout the whole Midland region. He's won gold, silver, he got a bronze, very disappointed when he got a bronze.</p> <p>Raj: So, he was disappointed about getting a bronze medal.</p> <p>Parent 1: Yep, he was like sad face and I was like you can't always win every time.</p>	<p>Learning karate sequences; winning awards in regional tournaments; disappointment about getting bronze award</p> <p>Negative emotion</p>
<p>Raj: So he won the gold first</p> <p>Parent 1: He won two golds. And then he won a gold and silver, and then he won bronze. Now he doesn't want to go to a tournament</p> <p>Raj: After the bronze he's not wanted to go to a tournament?</p> <p>Parent 1: Nah, 'cause it put him off. Yeah, but the higher belt they are the higher the standard. So obviously he won his tournaments when he was on a green belt, very in the middle, but now he's a red belt, he's only got two more belts and he's a black. Yeah, so the standard is, I mean, even though they're small boys, a small boy, they still expect him to be on that level. Yes and it's very, very hard. He puts the effort in though. But his instructor supports him. He's got a lady instructor and she's really, really nice but he tends to, there's a male instructor that comes every now and again but he'll get more boisterous with a male, than he will, he'll respect more Karen who's his main instructor. He has a relationship with her but not with the male instructor. Like she says something, he will stop and listen.</p> <p>Raj: So he's doing Karate at a higher standard and he has a supportive relationship with Karen. Can you give me an example of him being at his best in school?</p>	<p>Winning top awards; disheartened about getting a bronze</p> <p>Finding it difficult with higher standards and expectations; challenges; effort; supportive instructor; good and respectful relationship with regular instructor</p>

Appendix 12: Initial Thematic Map of Analysis



Appendix 13: Appreciative Interview Guide

General Tips

- ❖ Be like an 'interested friend' hanging onto every detail; try to find out who did what when....and what were they thinking so then what did they do?
- ❖ Capture key words and phrases.
- ❖ Ask questions as they are written.
- ❖ Let the interviewee tell his or her story. Try to refrain from giving yours. You will be next.
- ❖ Take good notes and be listening for great quotes and stories.
- ❖ Listen attentively. Be curious about the experience, the feelings and the thoughts. Allow for silence. If your partner does not want to or cannot answer a question, it is OK.
- ❖ Try to relax and have fun, after all, you're being an 'interested friend'.

Appreciative Questions

Section 1:

What attracted you to want to be associated with XXXX School?

Now, think of all of your experience, from the time you joined to now. Tell me about a time that was a real high point, a time when you felt most alive, most successful, most engaged. How did it feel?

What was it about you and about others that made it so exciting for you?

When work is at its best for you, what do you value most?

What is it about your school that you value the most?

Section 2:

Tell me about your 'peak experience' (a real high point) you have had with a child who was flourishing or with a group of children who were flourishing?

Describe the event in detail. What were you doing? How were you feeling? Why do you feel that way?

Why was that important to you? What made it remarkable? What was your contribution?

What was the school doing that helped you do this?

What do think was really making it work?

How has it changed you?

What helped you? What contributed to your success?

What did you value deeply at that time?

Section 3:

If you had 3 wishes for XXXX School, what would they be, in relation to flourishing?

Describe a time when XXX School was the most effective in developing children and enriching their lives. Tell me a story that stands out for you that best embodies this ideal? What was most noteworthy?

Looking to the future, what will inspire us to greater levels of children flourishing?

What values would you say have distinguished XXXX School?

How has XXXX kept those values alive?

Appendix 13 (continued)

Interview Notes

Section 1:

Section 2:

Section 3:

Appendix 13 (continued)

Interview Summary Page

Your Name: _____

Interviewee's Name: _____

What was the most quotable quote that came out of this interview?

What was the most compelling story that came out of this interview?

What were the 1-3 themes that stood out the most for you during the interview?

Appendix 13 (continued)

Analysing Stories

- ❖ Identify strengths and enabling conditions for each person's story.

ASK: What strengths, assets or resources made the achievements/best moments possible?

- ❖ Deepen the analysis by asking probing questions to reveal underlying values, strengths, factors and elements that led to the success. Typically stories, if probed, reveal individual and group resources, values, strengths, and aspirations.

ASK: What values to the stories reflect?

ASK: What external conditions existed that contributed to the peak experiences?

- ❖ Explore what is behind individual wishes?

ASK: What will change if the wish comes true?

ASK: What is behind the wish?

- ❖ Write strengths from the stories on the squares (one strength per square), values on rectangles (one value per rectangle) and wishes on circles (one wish per circle).
- ❖ Make one large poster for your pair combining the strengths, values and wishes for both persons.
- ❖ Make sure the strengths, values and wishes links back to your stories.

Appendix 14: Hand out supporting the discovery phase

Discovery Phase – Appreciating

‘Valuing the Best of What is’

Appreciate and value the best of what is; what is positive about being here in order to act as a resource to enable strategies later.

After listening to your colleagues’ best stories or ‘peak experiences’, in small groups of 4, what patterns did you notice?

Summarise the key success factors/themes on this sheet.

(Refer back to the posters)

Appendix 15: Hand out supporting the dream phase

Dream Phase – Envisioning

‘What Might Be’

Imagine and envision what might be; what are we aiming to achieve?
--

As a group, think big about this wish and imagine bold possibilities for your school.

Where do we want to go ideally with this wish?

As a group, visualise the ideal future or preferred future for this wish. Create a collective image and write a headline, and create priority elements of a cover story for the press.

Or present your dreaming or visioning in another creative way.

Appendix 16: Hand out supporting the design phase

Design Phase – Dialoguing

‘What Should Be’

Co-construct how it will be in the future?
--

In your group, create statements that describe the dreams as if they are already happening and working successfully. These are known as ‘Provocative Propositions’.

Checklist for your propositions: Is your proposition:

- affirmative (is it positively framed, about what you want rather than what you don’t want);
- stretching (challenge the status quo by expanding the realm of the possible);
- stated in the present tense (as if the proposition was already true and happening at the current time); and
- grounded in real-life examples of best of current practice (remember the school’s positive core).

Be prepared to feedback to the rest of the group.

Appendix 17: AI Schedule

Date:	With Whom:	Key Phase of AI:
8 th February 2016	Feedback to whole of teaching staff	Define
29 th February 2016	Teaching staff session	Discover
10 th March 2016	Support staff session	Define and Discover
18 th April 2016	Teaching staff session	Dream
23 rd May 2016	Support staff session	Dream
23 rd May 2016	Teaching staff session	Design
16 th June 2016	Support staff session	Design
7 th July 2016	Representative teaching and support staff as well as planning group	Integrated Design

Appendix 18: Participant Information Sheet for Staff Participating in the Process Evaluation - Frequently Asked Questions

What is this research about?

As you are aware, you have been taking part in an appreciative inquiry on the topic of flourishing as part of wider school development work as prioritised in the school's development plan. I, Raj Pahil, am interested in exploring the process part of the appreciative inquiry as well as examining whether the inquiry so far led to some fundamental changes.

Who is conducting this research?

Again this research will be carried out by me (Educational Psychologist) as part of a doctoral thesis and my research supervisors at the University of Birmingham are Mrs Sue Morris and Professor Gary Thomas. Although I am the link EP to _____ School and I work for _____ LA Educational Psychology Service, I am carrying out this research on an independent basis.

How long will the research last?

This research will take place after your last design session and will last no longer than 1 hour (during the week beginning.....)

What will I be asked to do?

You will be part of a focus group discussion that elicits your views on the phases and processes of the appreciative inquiry. The discussion will focus on exploring your perspective on the 4 D cycle – discovery, dream, design and destiny. The focus group will explore each phase of the appreciative inquiry, in terms of your views and emotions. Also you will be asked questions to gain your views on the changes and intended changes. You will be given:

- the 'Story So Far' Sheet which summarises outcomes of each phase of the 4 D cycle;
- a rating scale to plot and discuss your views on whether major change took place or will take place; and
- rating scale to plot and discuss your views on the scope of the change that took place or will take place.

Am I obliged to take part in this study if I do not want to do so?

No. The decision whether or not to take part is yours. Also, once the research activity begins, you and are free to leave at any point and need not give a reason for doing so.

How will my comments be recorded?

Our discussions will be recorded on tape, and later transcribed to paper.

How will these records be stored?

Audio tapes and transcripts will be kept in a secure file at the researcher's home address. If data from interviews is used in the write-up of a published paper, then records will be destroyed ten years after the paper's publication date.

What about confidentiality?

This research will be written up as part of a university thesis and will be made available to academic staff for assessment purposes. It will also be shared with school staff and other members of the local authority.

At a later date, the information gathered through interviews may be used to write a paper for publication.

Some direct quotes may be used when writing up.

Your name and the name of the school **will not** be used in any write-up and it will not be possible for naïve readers to trace any direct comments or data back to you.

Will I be made aware of the findings of the research?

Yes, if you would like to learn more about the findings of this research, I will be visiting the school numerous times until the completion of the research project (July 2016) and will be happy to meet with all participants. I will provide a written summary of the findings.

..and if I would like to know more?

I, Sue Morris and/or Gary Thomas will be happy to answer any questions you still have.

raj.pahil@xxxx.xx.xx

Raj Pahil

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Professor Gary Thomas
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B15 2TT

Research Consent Form

Please tick the following statements:

6. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
7. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw up to a week after the interview, without giving any reason.
8. I agree to take part in this study.
9. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.
10. I understand that the information I provide will be included within a thesis write-up, and that I will receive a summary report once the research has been completed.

Name of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 19: Feedback to Participants of Focus Group

Address

Telephone Number

Email address

Dear

As you may remember, you participated in a study that explored the process part of the appreciative inquiry including whether the inquiry had led to some fundamental changes.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the feedback about the results of this research (as detailed in the list below).

- There was consensus that transformative change is taking place in your school such as planning a strengths-based curriculum and setting up a peer coaching system for teaching and support staff.
- There was talk of new knowledge in the form of learning about a whole new vocabulary relating to positive mental health. You and your colleagues reported learning about your school's assets, which was referenced as your 'school's DNA'.
- There was evidence of generative metaphors that appear to support the change process. There was talk of children blossoming from 'seed to flower'. It appears that the 'helping hand' framework that was created during the appreciative inquiry has the potential to be an enduring metaphor to guide future policies and practices that affect all children.
- There was recognition that the developed flourishing model needs to be broken down on a developmental basis. This suggestion has been discussed further in project planning meetings and incorporated in the developing programme of activities to support flourishing.
- It was highlighted that this inquiry fell short of a 'whole school approach' as staff such as office staff and dining room assistants did not participate in this inquiry. This limited the transformative potential of this inquiry.
- There were concerns about pursuing intended changes in an individualised way. The project team have put together a plan which will be shared with you and your colleagues shortly.
- Reflections indicated that you and your colleagues found the process empowering, hard, and reflective and experienced a range of emotions including excitement and frustration. Further reflective sessions will be planned as the intended changes are implemented.

If you would like any further information about this research or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Thanks again for your participation in this study.

Yours sincerely,

Raj Pahil

Researcher

Appendix 20: Questions Guiding the Semi-Structured Interview

1. What did you think and feel about the topic choice of flourishing?
2. What did you think about the discovery phase (listening to the stories of 'peak experiences' and identifying the key wishes)? What emotions were evoked in the teacher session? What emotions were evoked in the teaching assistant session?
3. What did you think about the dream phase (listening to the visions)? What emotions were evoked in the teacher session?
4. What did you think about the design phase (co-constructing how it will be in the future)? What emotions were evoked?
5. What do you think about the current phase, known as destiny, which involves you embedding the learning and making the agreed changes? How would you describe your emotions currently when thinking about making the agreed changes?
6. What emotions were evoked within the teaching staff?
7. What emotions were evoked within the support staff?
8. Let's examine the draft flourishing programme, have any of these components been tried before the start of this research? What's never been tried before? What has been tried?

How transformative is this programme likely to be?

What is your rating?

Why have you given this rating?

No Change	Some Change	Major Change
0	5	10

9. Did the appreciative inquiry generate a metaphor for you? If so, what is it? What does this metaphor mean for you?
10. What, if any, knowledge have you acquired through the appreciative inquiry?
11. Looking back at the draft flourishing programme, what do you think about the actions that have been generated? What do you think about the scope of the programme?
What is your rating?
Why have you given this rating?

No scope	Some Scope	Major
Scope 0	5	10

12. How do you think this programme is going to be actioned? Do you think you will be able to action components of the programme that you feel most passionate about independently? If not, why?
13. Do you think the AI has had any impact in school? Have you noticed any changes at all during the inquiry (If so, what? Why do you think these changes occurred?). Do you think it (the AI) has contributed at all toward positive change? What other factors may have contributed toward these changes? Overall, how effective do you think the inquiry has been in facilitating positive change?
14. In what way(s), do you think the AI process could have been improved?
15. If the school was to undertake a second AI cycle, what would you like to see as the central topic for change?

Appendix 20 (cont. /d): Rating 1

8) Let's examine the basis of the flourishing programme, have any of these components been tried before the start of this research?

What's never been tried before?

What has been tried?

How transformative* is this programme likely to be?

What is your rating?

Why have you given this rating?

No Change	Some Change	Major Change
0	5	10

*Transformational change is when there is 'a clear, compelling change in the normative routines of staff and the changes are seen as discontinuous – that is, they were not changes that had been simmering before the AI process began' (Bushe, 2010, p.13).

Whereas incremental change is when 'any observed changes are consistent with change processes already in action'. There are no changes to normative routines or no discontinuous change. (Bushe, 2010, p.13)

Appendix 20 (cont. /d): Rating 2

11) Looking back at the draft flourishing programme, what do you think about the actions that have been generated?

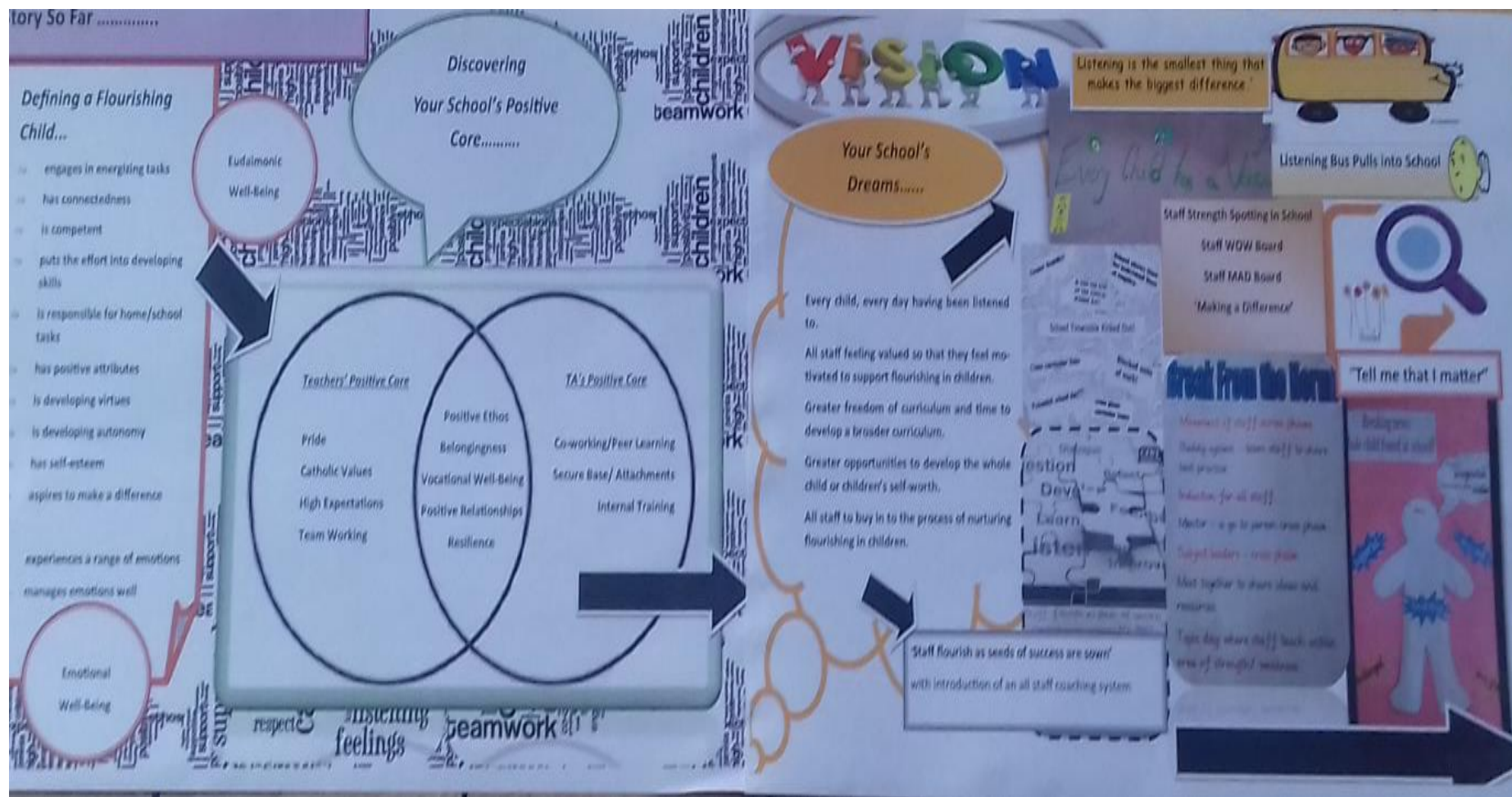
What do you think about the scope of the programme?

What is your rating?

Why have you given this rating?

No scope	Some Scope	Major Scope
0	5	10

Appendix 21: The 'Story So Far' Sheet



Appendix 22: Draft Flourishing Programme (5 Design Themes & Accompanying Design Propositions)

<p>Curriculum Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross phase curriculum teams have responsibility and authority to ensure that an outstanding curriculum is planned. • At team meetings, staff present their own timetables promoting greater flexibility. • Staff ask children what topics they would be interested in finding out about. • Use the children's ideas to create a curriculum map and share across curriculum phases to eliminate repetition of topics. • Plan a vocations day so that children learn about the different vocations. • Curriculum freedom is encouraged. • Teaching assistants contribute to the curriculum planning afternoon. • Teaching assistants share their ideas for next term's topics. They participate in the curriculum planning meetings that occur on a termly basis. • Staff ask children a choice of topics to choose from; for example in Geography, 'which country in the world do you want to find out about next term?' • Each class plan their own set of activities in the form of 'mini topics'.
<p>Pupil's Flourishing Entitlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with staff, parents and visitors about the school's vision of ensuring the rights of the child - to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to. • Staff - All adults within the school setting facilitate flourishing by ensuring there are regular opportunities for the child to be safe, healthy, supported, engaged, challenged and listened to. • Staff to take part in the 'Walk and Talk' the daily/golden mile. • Parents - There are regular shared nurturing experiences between school staff and parents. There are regular coffee mornings/afternoons – 'Biscuits Break Barriers' sessions - with parents. • Pupils – Pupils are aware of their entitlements. Pupils reflect on a half-termly basis charting progress against the core areas of the whole child. • Set up the 'listening bus' initiative. • Children spend quality time with a staff member. Children write on the 'bus sign' of the listening bus to see a member of staff. • A room is set aside for the listening bus. There are different types of 'talking and making' activities on the listening bus/room.
<p>Continuous Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the development of a whole school coaching system. • Agree and pilot a form of a whole school coaching system. • Introduction of a voluntary, peer coaching system to build flourishing practice. • All staff have a 'changing places' day to experience working in a different curriculum phase. • Develop a draft staff flourishing guide/ a good practice guide to support the promotion of children's rights. • The school provide a personalised induction programme for all staff. • Active listening training for all staff.
<p>Staff Equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff to have access to professional development. • Appraisals for all staff. • Set and agree a protocol for access to staff training/development.

Staff Appreciation

- Set up a staff 'MAD' (Making a Difference) or 'WOW' board in the staff room.
- Staff's contributions to making a difference for a child/groups of children are noticed and posted on this board.
- This board is split into 2 sections, 'Curriculum Strengths' and 'Pastoral Strengths'
- This board is seen by the senior leadership team on a weekly basis, and is viewed by all staff.

Appendix 23: Transcription of the Focus Group Discussion

Raj:

What did you think and feel about the topic choice of flourishing?

Participant A:

You don't think flourishing is what you expect. And what you expect and what we expect are two different things.

Raj:

And what are these differences?

Participant A:

I was expecting academic engagement but not character development, autonomy and strengths. It was better, you've got a more defined area to look at rather than in general terms. It narrowed it down and you could answer the questions on it.

Raj:

Any other comments or views?

Participant B:

I think you were right to focus on positive things; it was good to look at the positive side. And whether we have any flourishing children, were looking at trying to establish a culture for flourishing children, I wonder if our children are at that stage, and are we at a school? There's a lot of work to do, with all the changes we want to make. It's good to have that direction.

Participant C:

From our aspect were looking at children in year 6 and before they leave for secondary school, you probably can look and think wow some of those children have been on such a journey and many of them you have seen right from reception. If you have seen them from reception right the way through to when they leave now you can begin to think they weren't like that before they have acquired skills and attributes and the journey out of primary school makes you think have they got that in their bag to take to secondary school. If you look at children in reception, early years and year 1 and think are they flourishing? Maybe you look at aspects of it. It would be more of a home task for me for the little ones, but within school I would say we've got some children that could cover some of these. We call it blossoming we say "oh that child is really blossoming" because you see the journey from Yr1, Yr2 right thought to year 6 obviously there is children that are flourishing at year 1 and year 2 but don't come into their own until they are that bit older.

And it's a big step from key stage 1 to key stage 2 and when you get them come in at year 5 they're very immature but by the end of year 5 they have turned a corner the you see them grow in year 6.

Participant D:

It's useful to have these flourishing indicators. It may be better to split these dimensions from a developmental perspective.

Participant E:

Looking at these, for the little ones, we can focus on them getting to grips with the school environment and expectations, connectivity, engagement, skills-development, emotional vocabulary and making good choices.

Participant A:

Yes, that makes sense, because character development would develop later as their reasoning develops.

Participant C:

I have found it enlightening thinking about flourishing.

Raj:

What did you think about the discovery phase? Doing the appreciative interviews, analysing the interviews, making the poster, listening to stories of peak experiences and identifying key success factors? What emotions were evoked during that process?

Participant C:

Firstly emotions, you're looking very specifically at your impact on that child and we don't often as teacher have that chance to do that. I wanted to know what difference we all make, that's why we are in this profession, for me it was a highly personal. I felt proud. We are always looking at classes or year groups/cohorts/are they falling behind. They struggle just as much the ones that are high achievers. They need targets as well as the under achievers, and sometimes it's not always academic wise, it's about developing their personalities, characters and their sense of self.

Raj:

How did you feel doing the appreciative interview and sharing the poster?

Participant B:

I can't remember which one we had but I would have rather been in another one.

Raj:

I think you're thinking about the envisioning task. You know when you and staff name were sharing your peak experiences.

Participant B:

It was a positive experience to sit with a colleague and to have that conversation which very often we don't even talk to each other.

We don't celebrate our success enough. Very often we are only talking to each other to discuss interventions or year group transitions to another year group and things on the radar that need looking at. We don't often sit down and think that was great I've done a really good job with that child, I'm really proud of that child now and that they come back to see us or we see them in a higher year group. It was just nice to just spend a moment

Raj:

So for you reflecting on your peak experience at school was positive.

Participant A:

Yeah well we've just had a previous school child come back to do work experience and when you think of him you still think of him as a young boy in year 5 or year 6 but he talks about how impressed he is with the children, and it's made an impact on him, some people don't even hear the children's voice they think of themselves. It's just nice when they come back and say "well I remember when we did this, it stayed with me". Makes you think there is an impact.

Raj:

What did you think of the dream phase? Imagining the best possible dream!

Participant D:

I found that tricky because my wish was hard.

Raj:

What was it?

Participant D:

I can't remember which one it was, getting all staff on board whereas the curriculum one I had more ideas for that but I found that quite hard.

Raj:

How did it make you feel? What emotions were evoked?

Participant D:

I suppose it was a bit of an issue but we got there in the end.

We all had similar aspirations of what we would like. It was very much that we wanted to work closer together across phases but that was the same for the TA's we don't get to talk to TA's other than in the staff room and if there is a child whether it be a high achiever or a low achiever there is just a knack of dealing with this child but you don't get to know that until you mention an episode that has happened and they say well no you don't do that with them you do x, y and z. I think there needs to be more communication and sitting down and talking for an hour especially when they are changing year 5 & 6 or 1 & 2, reception

Participant E:

We were the same weren't we; we were breaking from the norm. We were the ones who said about perhaps having to exchange places for the day, changing places day for all staff.

Participant D:

I wish we'd have them all to buy in, with the actual dream thing.

Raj:

In terms of when you were completing that envisioning task how did you find it?

Annmarie:

It was good, because it was that opportunity to talk to each other we don't do enough of that, we never have enough time to have reflection or a directed programme in terms of this is what you are meeting for it was good to say well actually how could that work.

Raj:

On your sheet, there is a list of all the wishes....

Participant E:

The thing about every child being listened to, some children get up in the morning don't see a parent, they get themselves up get dressed and come out and they haven't spoken to anybody. And someone mentioned about a walking mile and we didn't know anything about a walking mile so we asked what it was all about and someone said its someone who walks around with them whether it be the class room or the hall .

Raj:

What did you think about the design phase? You had to construct provocative propositions as if the dream was actually happening now and it's in the present tense but it's grounded in the positive core?

Participant D:

What was nice about that was the head teacher joined our conversation and at that time was very open to tell us what you want and she will try to facilitate it. We were reflecting on the timetable and we are very regimented in our timetable and perhaps we could have a more flexible approach, where the afternoons could be more topic like maybe. You could have a heavier focus one week on one subject.

But that's communication and I don't think anybody feel they have the ability to empower themselves.

You're still expected to provide, you've still got to do a percentage of this subject and that subject.

Raj:

Yes, in the last design session there was some discussion about the curriculum and accountability.

Participant B:

There aren't any percentages any more.

Raj:

Ok so what's this percentage?

Participant A:

It used to be the old national curriculum you had to do so many percent of maths and so many hours of geography and that's gone now so you are flexible with that.

People find it hard don't they because you are so used to what you do and you've got used to that way of working but then again that's the whole school approach. You can't have one person saying I want to be regimented so I'm still going to be doing this, this and this and the colleagues in the classroom next door saying oh not this is great were just going to go with it. Sometimes there are constraints that you have to stick to but as a school we have to look at how we are going to manage that freedom because it can't be total freedom.

Raj:

When you were discussing this flexibility and accountability, what emotions were evoked?

Participant B:

Surprise and apprehension I suppose a bit. Excitement as well to start a fresh.

Raj:

So what do you think about the current phase? Known as destiny which involves embedding the learning and making the agreed upon changes. How would you describe your emotions currently no thinking about the programs ahead and the changes we will be making in the next academic year.

Participant D:

I think you have to go with an open mind. If they are going to change it let everybody know it at the same time, have a day where it's communicated and spread out for everyone to see exactly what is happening. Some people are visual and need to see it so all aspects need to be taken into consideration.

Raj:

They are giving feedback next term but you know what is coming so you've got an idea of the programme.

Participant A:

What I will say about the staff here they take it on board, anything you say they will take it all on board.

Raj:

OK, how will they cope with change?

Participant D:

I think they will go with it. As long as it is communicated clearly and everybody hears the same message at the same time without Chinese whispers and anyone feeling left out or threatened, change no matter what it is does evoke different emotions in people if it is communicated clearly and then everybody has a chance to get on board and we can consolidate then I think it will work. Even if we do it in two different groups. The second group will not hear it like the first group, it's a bit like a lesson, if you're doing maths the first time round and think that didn't work you change it for the next lesson. And if its going like that then it will be changes instead of it being laid out over a whole morning or whatever. A bit like when we had the values explained to us, we all took it away and we had a look at it. It will take time and we all have different times in the morning during breaks.

Raj:

Let's examine the draft flourishing programme. As you can see, I have grouped the programme into five key themes – flourishing pupil's entitlement, curriculum development, cpd, staff appreciation and equality. So, have any of these components been tried before the start of this research? What's never been tried before, what has been tried? Rating 1 sheet has two definitions – transformational change and incremental change. Have a read and think about your rating and why? Then we'll have a discussion about it.

Participant C:

I've got nothing below 5, so it's all changes.

Participant D:

The first one I have done is a 7 and I've said that because it is in between a major change because I think no matter what we call it we do communicate with our parents at this school we do focus on making sure our children are safe we support, challenged, engaged and listened to so I think that's what we do

already we may not do it with those words attached to it but that is what we do. I think a listening bus is an initiative and we've had other initiatives and it's one that's going to focus on listening is new. Give it a 7 and I think that we do look at supporting and promoting our children's wellbeing so I think there's a lot of other things in there that we are already doing so I'm just a little over some change.

Participant A:

I'd say that's a 9, I think these are huge changes for our school. A culture shift for us, and really enormous changes for us. I think it's going to impact on so many different levels in terms of our curriculum offer, nurturing both our children and us. Staff coaching has not been tried before.

Participant E:

My rating is 8. Again we do have a form of performance management, but they don't exist in reality, they're not very well done, we do have access to professional development but again you could look at it across the board of the school and it's not everybody. How many people feel they can actually access professional development rather than having it done to them? I think that's a huge thing as well. I don't think that's going to be a problem the peer coaching, but it is new thing, we've not tried that before. We've have not really looked at the curriculum from our children's perspective before, starting with their interests. That is completely new for us. For professional development, again it's not offered to everyone we are part of a cluster of schools, some kind of formal training takes place with the cluster. The teaching staff have their training and cluster meetings, but there's never any TA involvement where they meet with other TAs from other schools to exchange ideas so there's an imbalance there to be felt.

Participant B:

I have given it a 8 too. Really the clues are in those headlines, look 'Break From the Norm!' and 'School Timetable Kicked Out!' These suggestions are all new, aren't they? We have not talked about these things before.

Participant A:

Yes, you're right.

Raj:

Sounds like major changes for the school then.

Raj:

Did the appreciative inquiry generate a metaphor for you? If so what is it, and what is the metaphor mean for you?

Participant E:

It's the flourishing metaphor, the metaphor is a flower.

Participant B:

For me, I imagined they're blossoming, really the metaphor would be watering plants

Participant C:

Yes, like watering and feeding children every day to enable them to blossom and grow into a beautiful flower. But we can't have beautiful flowers if the gardeners are not trained properly. The initial metaphor

grew for me. Initially I thought about the nurturing children but by the end I was thinking about nurturing the gardeners too. Really that's to do with the staff, coaching, training, and professional development.

Participant D:

It needs to be on-going staff development.

Raj:

What if any knowledge, have you acquired through the research.

Participant A:

For me, I learnt about the DNA of our school.

Raj:

What is the DNA of your school?

Participant A:

Our collective strengths. It's good to know this as we can build from this positive base.

Participant D:

It was interesting to find out about our different strengths too.

Raj:

So its knowledge of the school's positive core. When were you presented with the positive core what were the emotions that were evoked in you?

Participant D:

Really good, I was really happy. It doesn't look how I thought it might, not that I know what I thought it might look like. I think that was part of that process. I never in a millions years thought that this would have been what it looks like. Everyone has come together and were all giving similar ideas and similar feelings but you don't realise that and you come in on a weekly basis and you don't know that kind of thing.

Raj:

So through that reflective process, and everyone sharing their stories, you got the bigger narrative. Now if you go back to your ratings, if you turn your page over there should be another rating scale. Looking at the programme, what do you think about it, try to think about the scope of the programme, what is your rating and why have you given it? The scope is really looking at the range of possibilities.

Participant E:

We've got to think we're here in a building with children and staff from 7:45-5:30 it's great for us as teachers and TA's, head teachers, but most of the children have an 1 hour and 15 minutes where they are dealt with by dinner ladies and other members of dining room staff. What involvement are they going to have in it? If it's going to be a whole picture, they have to be in the picture as well and the cleaners, because when the children are here afterschool, it's the cleaners they see, they probably won't see me, as their teachers we're probably involved in meetings, getting prepared for tomorrow, so I think if were doing a vision and to go forward with it, it would have to be everybody, from the caretaker, to the dinner staff, the cleaners, everyone.

Raj: Yes, the ideal would have been for all staff to be part of the inquiry. In light of your view, what's your rating then?

Participant E - Probably about a 7.

Participant A: I agree.

Raj: Any other views.

Raj: Ok, let's think about how these changes are going to be actioned. Do you think you will be able to action components of the programme that you feel most passionate about independently? If not, why?

Participant D:

There will be barriers, they're not necessarily negative, but just think about exams and stuff like that. If we're all going to have this approach, then it's a case of letting go of the reins and trusting that people will, know some staff that I've worked with like structure and like to be told this, this and this, you can be more flexible, you can decide and some people find that very hard. When I do make that decision and it doesn't work, who's going to be there to bail me out? That I've made this decision and it's all gone wrong. It's all about having a structured timetable, I did that because I've been told to do that, and if you take that away from people I think they're going to find it very difficult not having that. It can be frightening. Some people will revel in the opportunity of having some of the structure out, and other people will feel 'Well what do you mean?', 'Well where's the book?', 'What do you mean I don't have a scheme of work?'

Participant B:

I think it's going to be difficult to follow our programme passions individually. It might end up being quite chaotic. I think it is best if we plan this programme carefully, and work out who will do what when. And review it on a termly basis.

Participant E:

Yes, it's going to require some careful co-ordination. I think we need to know who is leading on what and when things are going to be reviewed. It's best if our senior leadership puts the plan together, as long as they know who is most interested in doing what.

Participant A:

We can't just swap places and I can't just say 'I want to teach a class lower down the school today'. This has to be planned carefully, otherwise it will cause chaos and confusion. Everybody needs to know about the plan in advance and that way we can avoid Chinese whispers and confusion.

Raj: in what ways do you think the appreciative inquiry process could have been improved. You've completed a research cycle and in what ways do you think it could have been improved?

Participant D:

Not everyone has been part of the process.

Participant A:

More time for reflection. So much came out of the sessions. We did talk a lot after the sessions but not in a structured way, just snatched conversations. It would have been good to reflect together.

Raj:

That's right, there were no time for reflection after each session. I intend to share key reflections and findings with the project team.

If the school were to undertake a second AI cycle, what would you like to see as the central topic for change?

Participant B:

Staff appreciation

Participant D:

Staff morale.

Raj:

Any other comments before we finish?

Participant C:

I thought it was great, I don't think any of us knew where we were going, it was great to work with other people here as a starting point.