FIVE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORTS FOCUSING ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF AN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST'S ROLE

(VOLUME 2)

BY

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A thesis submitted to The University of Birmingham for the Degree of Doctor of Applied Educational and Child Psychology

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The University of Birmingham

June 2010

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF VOLUME TWO

1. New Doctoral Route for Educational Psychology

In 2006, the three year Doctorate route replaced the Masters training in educational psychology and this thesis was produced as part of the requirement for the full-time Doctoral training. I was one of 12 trainees in the second cohort at the University of Birmingham. The course required trainees to attend university on a full-time basis for the first year and secure employment as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) employed by a local authority in the second and third years.

Volume Two of the thesis comprises of five professional practice reports (PPR) based on topics relevant to educational psychologists' practice. The topics selected reflect both the service context and the nature of casework undertaken in the trainee educational psychologist (TEP) role. The PPRs also reflect a value driven approach to psychology, employed by the author, particularly focusing on the empowerment of stakeholders involved in everyday practice (the child, the parents, school staff) and also a personal interest in emotional well-being.

2. Service Context

The author is part of an educational psychology service (EPS) within the Children, Young People and Families Directorate in a Local Authority which serves a large inner city with a diverse population. The city has high areas of deprivation with unemployment rates at twice the national average (Brighter Futures Strategy 2007,

City Council). 43% of school children are from ethnic minority groups (OFSTED Annual Performance Assessment 2008, OFSTED) and there has been a recent increase in asylum seekers and refugees. The number of children with Special Educational Needs is comparable to the national average. However, children enter school with lower communication, language and literacy skills than the national average (Joint Area Review, OFSTED 2007) and they demonstrate less social skills than children in other areas (Brighter Futures Strategy 2007, City Council). The author worked within a team which serves a multi-cultural area of the city, with high levels of deprivation and crime levels higher than the city average.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) comprises of Educational Psychologists (EPs), Specialist teachers and the Early Years Portage Service. The work of the service is underpinned by the Brighter Future Strategy (2007, City Council). This is a five year prioritisation plan targeting the well-being of children focusing on outcomes in physical health, behaviour, emotional health, literacy and numeracy, social literacy and job skills. Local needs assessment and national data forms the evidential basis for prevention strategies and focused intervention for those in need.

The EPS works with mainstream schools, special schools, alternative settings, school cluster areas and the Local Authority on developmental or policy work. It also focuses on pre-school work and supports children and young people from 0 to 19 at all stages of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES 2001). The Service uses a consultation approach. The consultation approach is defined by the following aspects (Wagner 2000):

- EPs are transparent in what they offer to clients.
- Schools are acknowledged as complex systems (interactionist approach).
- Clients are empowered to be agents of change.
- Problem solving is viewed as a collaborative process. The EP is not the expert. .
- It has an emphasis on preventative working; developing skills rather than crisis management.

Casework is negotiated through the consultation approach in termly planning meetings. A range of work is prioritised according to school needs at different systems levels. The following chapters are comprised of professional practice reports which reflect a diverse range of work undertaken by the author as a trainee educational psychologist within the above service context.

3. Chapter Two: How far is the Young Person's Voice Incorporated into the Reintegration Process? An Evaluation examining the extent to which pupils participate in the reintegration process at one Local Authority Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

This professional practice report developed in response to the course requirement to evaluate a specialist setting and the author's role as a visiting educational psychologist for a pupil referral unit. The evaluation was negotiated with the head teacher of the PRU during consultation regarding the organisational level needs of the PRU. Staff at the PRU identified a need for understanding the perspective of pupils in the transition process as they prepared for return to mainstream schools. This would inform improvements to the existing procedures in place for including the

'child's voice'. The study provided the basis for an evaluation of how far the young person's voice was incorporated into the reintegration process. Further rationale was provided by recent research suggesting that transition from alternative settings to mainstream provision is both a complex and difficult process (e.g. Durkin, 2000 and Gibb et al 2007) thus identifying a need to support children at this time.

The author adopted an ecological (Bronfenbrenner 1978) approach to understanding the complexities inherent in the reintegration process as this would show interacting factors impacting on the young person's experience. Triangulated data from multiple stakeholders in the process (both staff and children) was used to identify the relevant barriers and facilitators to incorporating the child's voice. Child-centred participatory techniques (O'Kane 2000) were used to gain the child's perspective and to ensure that their voices were central to the research.

The findings showed that there were differing degrees of participation at different stages of the transition process. At the PRU level, opportunities to involve children were enhanced by the PRU's flexible approaches. However, ultimately this was constrained by external forces at the Local Authority level. It is acknowledged that this research was limited by the small scale nature of the project and pragmatic factors during the research. For example, the pupil sample size was determined by the availability of pupils returning to mainstream school. Also, ethical considerations regarding pupil reintegration meetings meant that interview evidence could not be triangulated by observational evidence which may have strengthened the findings. However, the information gained from the evaluation was disseminated to the PRU in terms of positive practice and provided opportunities to build on this.

4. Chapter Three: Parent Partnership and the Role of the Educational Psychologist: Reflections on Working with Parents in the Statutory Assessment Process.

This professional practice report stemmed from casework with a pre-school child with complex needs. The educational psychology service required TEP involvement in early-years referrals as part of the local authority early intervention focus. The content of the paper centres on work undertaken with the family of the child in supporting them through the statutory assessment process. It was conceptualised from reflections on meetings with the parent during this time and the relevance of understanding parents' perspectives when considering the assessment of their children's needs and future outcomes.

Further rationale was provided by legislation (e.g. Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001) advocating parent partnership and a review of the literature on parent participation which revealed the transactional effects of parent: professional relationships in supporting children with special educational needs (SEN). For example, Roffey (2002) argues that such relationships provide opportunities for the empowerment of parents in advocating for their children at later stages. Thus, initial relationships with professionals can constrain or facilitate future partnerships and so influence outcomes for children.

Reflections reported in the PPR and the literature evidence influenced the author's practice in terms of supporting parents through the SEN process (in the case example) and understanding the ecological factors which may influence parents' perceptions of professionals and their child's needs. This knowledge also developed

the author's skills in liaising with parents and provided further understanding of the need for EPs to increase parental contributions to SEN procedures.

5. Chapter Four: Change Beyond the Individual: An Exploration of a Pragmatic Approach to a Behavioural Referral in a Secondary School using an Illustrative Case Example.

This paper gives an account of assessment and intervention work with a young person. This case work was negotiated from consultation in the author's role as an educational psychologist for a secondary school. The paper evaluates change as a result of the combination of individual therapeutic intervention and collaboration with school staff. This pragmatic approach to assessment and intervention was informed by the continuing debate regarding the nature of the EP role in terms of effective practice (see Boyle and Mackay 2007 and Boyle and Lauchlan 2009) and the author's view that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive.

The paper reflects on the success of a multiple method approach to assessment and intervention which is sensitive to the needs of the young person and the school and family context. It also explores changes beyond the individual through a combination of therapeutic and collaborative approaches with a distinctly psychological basis. This concurs with MacKay's (2005) view that psychological knowledge and skills may safeguard a role for EPs in meeting children's needs in the future. Both the casework and the reflections in the report have led the author to consider that a pragmatic approach can be instrumental in solving a variety of school based problems.

6. Chapter Five: Educational Psychologists' Contributions to Children's Emotional Well-being: An Exploratory Study of Educational Psychologists' (from One Educational Psychology Service) Contributions to the Mental Health Agenda.

This professional practice report explores educational psychologists' contributions to the mental health agenda. It also outlines EPs' perceptions of the barriers and facilitators to their work and their future role in this area. This arose from contemplation of a broader role for EPs contextualised by current legislation regarding children's outcomes (Every Child Matters DfES 2004).

With increased interest in emotional well-being and the need to make a unique contribution to children's outcomes, this practice report aimed to provide understanding of how EPs do and could contribute to the mental health agenda. This was supported by evidence of increasing mental health problems in children (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service: Children in Mind, Audit Commission 1999) and a move towards preventative interventions to alleviate crisis management (CAMHS Review (2008). The study also provided information for the educational psychology service regarding the nature of EPs contributions to outcomes in children's well-being.

The findings showed that EPs are contributing to children's emotional well being at different levels and with various stakeholders (e.g. individual therapeutic work with children, consultation with staff, service initiatives and work with parents and vulnerable groups). However, at present EPs reported that time directed towards other duties was a barrier to their work in this area. They also reported that focusing

on increasing protective factors using evidence-based practice may provide a direction for the profession. However, they envisaged increased training in the area of emotional well-being to support this.

The information in this small scale study is limited by the lack of triangulation but it does indicate that a larger scale study may provide more information to develop an understanding of how EPs contribute to the mental health agenda. This research has also highlighted the need to evaluate interventions as part of the author's practice to develop an evidence base of effective psychological interventions, again contributing to the unique role of the EP.

7. Chapter Six: Educational Psychologists and Coaching: Reflections on a School Coaching Project.

This paper outlines project work undertaken at an organisational level to develop behaviour management within one school. This was negotiated as part of a school improvement plan after a number of behaviour referrals to different agencies. This project also met Doctoral requirements in terms of evaluating an organisational level intervention. The coaching project was piloted with a small number of teachers to increase professional development. Rationale for the project was also provided by findings from a small number of studies which reported positive effects from coaching on teachers' professional development (e.g. Veenman et al 2001 and McNab 2006) and organisational change (e.g. Woodside-Jiron and Gehsmann 2009).

The paper explores the effects of solution focused coaching on the teachers' practice and evaluates the factors which influenced outcomes. Although positive changes

were noted in individual practice with regard to behaviour management and problem solving skills, the limited time scale meant that the project has yet to be evaluated in terms of wider whole school effects. Also, the success of the project may have been affected by the lack of a previous relationship between the author and the school prior to the coaching.

Planning and reporting on the coaching project has developed the author's understanding of the constraints and facilitating factors involved in organisational level work. Indeed, future interventions at this level need consideration of pragmatic issues, awareness of school culture and greater collaboration between the EP and school stakeholders to ensure a 'goodness of fit' between the intervention and the school. This would maximise the success of such projects.

8. Reflections on the professional practice reports

The research based professional practice reports have provided opportunities to develop research skills which are integral in informing an evidence-based approach to EP practice. In an increasingly multi-professional environment, EPs need to develop a distinct professional identity and MacKay (2000) and Cameron (2005) amongst others have argued that evidence-based practice may be crucial in establishing a distinct psychological contribution. The practice reports have enabled the development of such research skills as; the critical appraisal of existing literature, planning and conducting rigorous research including ethical considerations, employing and evaluating the merits of various data collection techniques and analysis methods and the reporting and interpreting of outcomes. These skills will be transferred to future work at a variety of systems levels.

The practice reports related to the empowerment of different stakeholders have developed the author's reflexive practice. In particular, skills in understanding other's perspectives and recognising power differentials between different stakeholders in educational procedures have become embedded within everyday practice. This has resulted in ethically driven collaborative interventions which recognise the needs of clients enhancing their effectiveness.

Finally, undertaking the practice reports has developed knowledge and understanding of specific topics. Developing a thorough overview of different topics has improved the author's practice in these areas. This has resulted in consideration of the need to maintain this approach to case work after qualification to ensure that current knowledge of research informs creative and innovative solutions to problems, thus contributing to positive outcomes for children.

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CHAPTER 2

HOW FAR IS THE YOUNG PERSON'S VOICE INCORPORATED INTO THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS? AN EVALUATION EXAMINING THE EXTENT TO WHICH PUPILS PARTICIPATE IN THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS AT ONE LOCAL AUTHORITY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT (PRU).

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Abstract

This evaluation seeks to describe and analyse the extent to which pupils participate in the reintegration process at one Local Authority Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). An ecosystemic approach is used to interpret and contextualise information given by pupils and staff at the PRU, alongside an examination of national and local policy. Qualitative methods, such as participatory techniques and semi-structured interviews, were employed based on the assumption that multiple perspectives illuminate the complexities inherent in social realities. The findings demonstrate positive practices at a microlevel with flexible approaches involving pupils, formal recording of pupil's views and an ethos which values children's contributions. One further strength of the PRU identified by pupils, was feeling sufficiently consulted about their reintegration. These findings are congruent with national and local policy rhetoric valuing children's views, at a macrolevel. However, pupils did highlight individual concerns where information relating to individual pragmatic issues would have improved their transition. Further to this, staff and pupil discourse revealed external forces at the mesolevel, (for example, the non-participation of pupils in the sharing panel) which prevent the active involvement of young people in educational decisions.

HOW FAR IS THE YOUNG PERSON'S VOICE INCORPORATED INTO THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS? AN EVALUATION EXAMINING THE EXTENT TO WHICH PUPILS PARTICIPATE IN THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS AT ONE LOCAL AUTHORITY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT (PRU).

1. Search Strategies

Key word searches were carried out using the following search engines; Google, Assia and Swetswise. The following key words were used in a variety of combinations using Boolean logic: child's voice, children's participation, Children's rights, Pupil Referral Units, Behaviour Support Services, Alternative Provision, transitions, research with children. Snowballing was also used as a technique for identifying further published sources and general texts were also gained from the library.

2. Definitions of the Young Person's Voice

For the purpose of this study, two definitions encompassing values inherent in children's active involvement in processes which concern them will be considered. Firstly, a definition provided by Clark (2005) is described. She advocates that 'listening to children' is part of a wider definition of participation which involves a dynamic relationship in communication between adults and children through hearing, interpreting and co-constructing understanding, not only through verbal communication but involvement in daily routines and the wider decision making process. Secondly, a definition of participation will now be considered. Hill et al (2004) define this as direct action by children in decisions which affect them both;

individually or collectively. Thus, this study utilises aspects of both definitions and assumes that ascertaining the child's voice presumes their active participation in the reintegration process.

2.1. Legislation and Policy on the child's voice

There has been increased interest in involving children as far as possible in making decisions which will affect them. This shift in practice is underpinned by an accumulation of legislation and research. Indeed, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that,

> 'Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.'
>
> United Nations Children's Emergency Fund Document p1.

This framework has been adopted by organisations working with children and is recognised by schools (Children Act 1989) through a number of policies. The UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994) urged governments to establish participatory systems for planning for children with SEN. Furthermore, the Education Act (2002) placed responsibility on Local Authorities and educational professionals to create decision-making opportunities for children to develop their responsibilities whilst balancing this with knowledge of their rights (DfES 2003). The consultation paper, Working Together: Giving Children and Young People a Say (DfES 2003), produced in consultation with a children's working group, devised principles for including children in decision making including clear commitment to and valuing the contributions of children, equality of opportunity to be involved and continual review of this process. The SEN Code of Practice (2001) and Every Child Matters (DfES

2004) also reference the need to include the views of the child on current or future opportunities. Such legislation and policies have led to the use of frameworks by educational institutions such as Hear by Right (Badham and Wade 2008). This is a tool kit of standards which structures long term involvement of young people empowering them to make decisions that affect them from the individual to the community level.

2.2. Psychological theory and the young person's voice

Justification for involving children in decision making and planning for their future is also provided by psychological theory. A constructivist perspective proposes that children actively construct their own worlds (Vygotsky 1932). Taking this perspective means that the agency of the child should be reflected in any opportunities which affect them. This can be achieved through adult collaboration which would enhance the adults' understanding of the child's situation increasing engagement. Similarly, the intrinsic values within humanistic psychology also support the need to respect children as agents in their own right. Roger's (1967) three conditions: unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence should be considered in any work with children as this would encourage adults to respond to children's needs rather than their own agendas. Finally, Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly 1955, Ravenette 1977) advocates the importance of an individual's construing of the world for understanding how they behave. This idea that everyone has a unique perspective of the world should underpin work with children as eliciting their views is central to understanding and therefore meeting their individual needs (Badham and Wade 2008). Indeed, Mayall (2000) argues that children's unique understanding of their social experiences has particular significance when considering changes which are

central to children. Educational provision based on issues which are important to children may mean that children are more likely to engage with given opportunities thus increasing the chances of success.

3. Pupil Referral Units: the national context

Pupil Referral Units were established and are maintained by Local Authorities to provide appropriate education to children who are unable to attend mainstream provision. PRUs have fulfilled a statutory function since the Education Act 1996 (Section 19) which legislated that Local Authorities have a duty to provide suitable education for children of compulsory school age. 'Suitable education' is defined as meeting age, ability and Special Educational Needs (SEN) requirements (www.everychildmatters.gov.uk). Many of the children attending PRUs have been permanently excluded but PRUs also cater for children with medical needs, school refusers, school-age mothers or pregnant school girls (www.dcfs.gov.uk/exclusions/alternativeprovision).

Exclusions have risen steadily over the 1990s (Parsons 1998) and currently, over 70,000 children who have been permanently excluded from mainstream school are attending PRUs in England and Wales, predominantly boys aged between 11 and 15 (Lipsett 2008). Also, over two thirds of these pupils have SEN (DCSF 2008 section 63). Another function of PRUs is to engage in collaborative work with mainstream schools to support earlier intervention with children at risk of exclusion. Children may also attend a PRU on a part-time basis involving 'dual registration' with their mainstream school and the PRU. This may be in response to a number of fixed term exclusions which are temporary exclusions as opposed to permanent exclusion.

Although PRUs are legally required to provide alternative education, they are not governed by all the legislation that schools are required to adhere to. PRUs are managed by Local Authorities and are not required to teach the National Curriculum but must present a broad and balanced curriculum and monitor pupil progress.

PRU placements are a short term alternative to mainstream with a key aim being successful reintegration back to mainstream education as quickly as possible (DCSF 2008 section 58). Reintegration is defined by DCSF (2008) as:

> 'longer term planning for the pupil's reintegration back into school or other suitable full time education, and is in addition to the LA's legal responsibility for making suitable full time educational provision for all permanently excluded pupils from and including the sixth school day of their exclusion.'
>
> DCSF (2008) p26.

Solomon and Rogers (2001) argue that the need for alternative provision is justified in terms of benefit for other pupils but serves other needs for education. Meo and Parker (2004) argue that alternative provision is used by the education systems as an 'escape valve' suggesting that schools use this system to dispose of pupils whose behaviour is difficult to manage. However, Solomon and Rogers (2001) also identify another justification central to government aims. They argue that the rhetoric behind alternative provision expresses concern for the pupil in providing therapeutic support to meet the needs of the individual whilst in reality, this shifts responsibility for educating pupils with behavioural needs to the local Authority. This short term aim is a simplistic notion (Gray and Panter 2000) which does not account for the complexities which are inherent in the reintegration process. However, it is not within the scope of this evaluation to discuss whether PRUs fulfil the aims of the Government policy. Also, omitted from this paper is a discussion of the nature of PRUs and how they may perpetuate exclusion for those with behavioural needs,

allowing mainstream schools to ignore the full diversity of children's needs, particularly behavioural aspects (Norwich 2002). However, it is acknowledged that PRUs may play an important role in long term inclusion if they provide opportunities for young people to develop independent skills which lead to successful integration (Farrell and Polat 2003).

4. Rationale for research: Pupil Referral Units and Reintegration

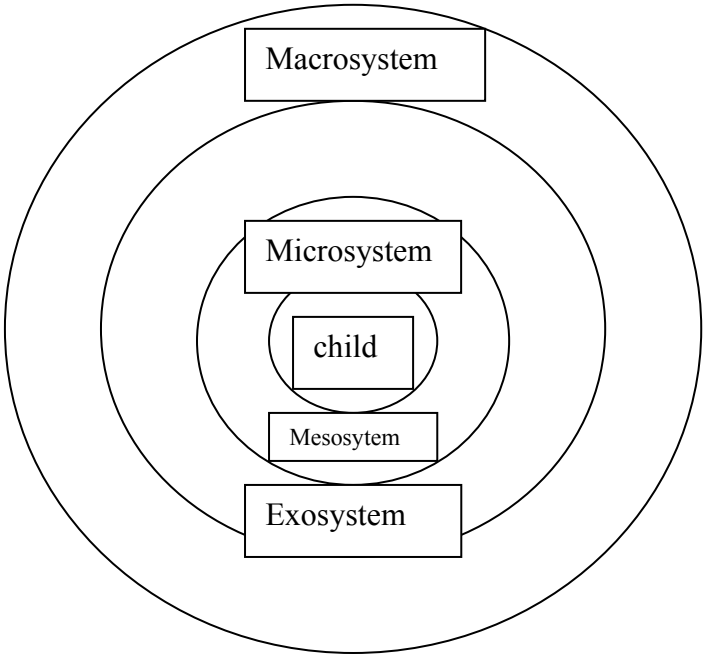
Acknowledging this complex notion of reintegration, recent research has described the transition from alternative to mainstream settings as 'difficult' (Durkin 2000, Gibb et al 2007). Indeed, in their research, Gibb et al (2007) found that pupils may fear social rejection at their new school whilst teacher attitudes and parental anxiety around change may affect the success of transitions. However, this research study was undertaken with staff involved in the transition process from both sides, thus gaining the perspectives of adults involved in transitions rather than the pupils themselves which may reflect adult concerns, perhaps omitting issues central to children . Also, generalisation of these findings should be viewed with caution as they were based on a small-scale qualitative study of one special school.

In contrast to the Gibb et al (2007) study, Durkin (2000) identified complexity in reintegration in terms of issues that affect children ecosystemically. For example, decisions which are externally directed at an exolevel may impinge on their reactions at an individual level such as imposed school choice and also memories of previous separations may underlie individual anxiety felt by children in transitions. The ecosystemic perspective highlights the importance of interactions between contexts and the impact of this on the reintegration process. This current evaluation seeks to

understand the relationship between policy, adult perceptions and children's perceptions of their involvement in the reintegration process.

It is considered that an ecosystemic approach (Bronfenbrenner 1979) provides a useful framework for aiding understanding of the complexity of contextual forces which may impact on children's experiences. This theoretical model is conceptualised by figure 1 below. In terms of the PRU context (microsystem), the child might have several influences currently including the staff and child relationships in the PRU. The mesolevel interactions may include interactions between the pupil and the PRU context, home context and their new school. This is likely to be historically influenced by interaction in their previous school. The exosystem refers to situations throughout the reintegration process where the child has indirect experience such as the sharing panel (a process by which individual allocations to school are determined by a Local Authority), whilst, macrolevel influences include societal values and policy.

Figure 1: Ecosytemic Framework



Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979) in Poole (2003) P171.

4.1 Research and the PRU setting

There has been a wealth of research on the child's voice in SEN procedures including Norwich et al (2006) and Woolfson et al (2006). The former concentrates on adult perceptions of children's experiences against policy rhetoric, thus omitting the stakeholders at the centre of the process, whilst the latter explored children's perceptions of their involvement. In their study of strategies which support children with emotional and behavioural issues, Evans et al (2004) argue that evaluations are needed to elicit children's views about transitions. They highlight the need for research which takes into account ethical considerations utilising constructivist principles of working with children. My research seeks to identify salient factors which influence the extent to which the child actively participates in the reintegration process. This will be achieved through a multiple perspective approach examining

adult and child perceptions and policy rhetoric. Analysis at different levels provides a richer picture as a starting point for change.

Research into children's involvement with groups of excluded pupils has focused on the prevention of exclusion in mainstream settings (Hallam and Castle 2001) largely ignoring the role of alternative settings in reintegrating excluded pupils (Meo and Parker 2004). This evaluation aims to provide information which can develop PRU practice in relation to the child's voice and the reintegration process which will add to a developing understanding of how non-mainstream settings contribute to the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs. The research area was formulated through discussions between the educational psychologist for the PRU, the PRU Head teacher and myself. Stakeholder collaboration was also essential in reducing power differentials between researcher and client whilst encouraging change through ownership (Robson 2002). Stakeholders decided that the evaluation could evolve as part of an action research process (Timmins et al 2003) relating to system changes around greater involvement of pupils in their reintegration. The research also seeks to illuminate good practice regarding the incorporation of the child's voice within an alternative provision which is often portrayed as inadequate in meeting children's needs (Gray 2000).

4.2 The PRU pupil's voice

Central to this research are pupil's views about their experience. Indeed, against the background of article 12 (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Hill (1997) argues that there is a need for action in relation to how children's rights can be recognised, promoted and protected in this setting. This is supported

by the Department for Children Schools and Families, Improving Behaviour and Attendance: guidance on exclusions from schools and Pupil referral Units (2008) which states that the reintegration process needs to be pupil focused. At the heart of this should be the child's voice driving the process particularly as the process of permanent exclusion can be a deeply distressing experience for young people coping with rejection (Parsons 1998). Indeed, Munn and Lloyd (2005) found that children that have been excluded highlight pragmatic factors and professional ideologies which impact on the exclusion process; whilst also highlighting possible adult reluctance to use children's voices as it might surface questions about current educational practice and societal values. Other than this, increasing the participation of children in the reintegration process may impact on reducing disaffection often experienced by excluded pupils (McNamara 1998) by increasing their internal locus of control with regard to their educational future. Indeed, research by Solomon and Rogers (2001) indicates that young people in PRUs have low self efficacy in their perceived ability to be an agent of change in their future.

Accordingly, it is acknowledged then that the current *zeitgeist* reflected in cultural policy and legislation on the inclusion of the child's voice; and the socio-historical context is inherent in my construing of this research area (Fransella and Dalton 1990). Thus, implicit is an assumption that educational contexts should reflect the way children view the world to ensure greater engagement of the child. The evaluation therefore aims to affect changes in micro-level systems with young people's voices as the driving force.

5. Evaluation Research Questions

For the purpose of this project, evaluation research is conceptualised by a definition provided by Rossi and Freeman (1993). They describe evaluation as systematic judgement activities which seek to 'better the lot of humankind' (Rossi and Freeman 1993 p3). Alternatively, Guba and Lincoln (1983) describe formal evaluations as a form of 'disciplined inquiry'. The aim of this evaluation research is to understand how staff and young people perceive the involvement of pupils in the reintegration process whilst relating this to policy rhetoric. This involves systematic exploration of different perspectives with the emancipatory intention of improving systems in one setting to enhance young people's educational experiences. In realising this, utilisation of multiple perspectives, based on a constructivist epistemology, underlies methods used assuming that an objective reality cannot be known (Robson 2002). Through this, identification of the factors supporting and constraining pupil participation will be considered. The following research questions will address this issue:

- How and when does the PRU involve the young person in the reintegration process?
- What BSS and Local Authority policies and practices are in place to support pupil participation in the reintegration process?
- Are national and local policy guidelines reflected in staff perceptions of how they involve the pupil in their reintegration back to school?
- Do pupil perceptions of their involvement match staff perceptions and policy guidelines?
- What are the facilitators and barriers to gaining the child's voice?

6. *'B' Centre PRU and the local context*

This research focuses on one secondary PRU which supports young people who have been permanently excluded. These are young people at School Action Plus on the SEN Code of Practice (2001). At present, there are twenty-three permanently excluded pupils attending the centre for half-day sessions. The PRU also provides outreach courses for pupils at risk of exclusion and there are currently six pupils accessing this support. The PRU is part of a Local Authority Behaviour Support Service (BSS) which collaborates with individual schools and extended school networks under the inclusion agenda to promote positive behaviour. The service also supports children who have been permanently excluded and vulnerable children who are at risk of exclusion through preventative intervention. The BSS also provides consultation and the delivery of INSET to teachers. The service gives reintegration high priority and comprises of a reintegration team and nine PRUs. Indeed, OFSTED (2008) stated,

> 'Its success in re-engaging pupils with learning, improving attendance and re-integrating pupils into mainstream schools demonstrates good value for money.'
>
> OFSTED (2008) p4.

7. Research methods

The evaluation takes the form of a case study defined as an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its social reality undertaken using multiple sources of evidence (Yin and Kuo-Zuis 1992). In this case, exploration of an area of the PRU's functioning has been undertaken to have later impact on changing practice.

The case study method was utilised as it would highlight particular issues concerning the inclusion of the child's voice in a single PRU context. It enables the use of qualitative methodology producing a rich picture of a particular phenomenon. This approach captures multiple interacting factors rather than producing a single truth, which cannot adequately describe such a complex reality, as results from positivist research. The case study approach also fits with the ecosystemic framework which explores various factors influencing the reintegration process from different levels. It also allows the application of a multi-method approach thus, triangulating evidence which may strengthen the validity of the findings in relation to explaining factors influencing the child's voice in the reintegration process in this particular PRU context.

A semi-structured interview (Appendix 1) was utilised to gain staff perceptions of how the young person's voice is involved in reintegration and to identify some of the barriers and facilitators to this. Kahn and Cannell (1957) define an interview as a 'conversation with a purpose' (p149). Interviews were chosen as the main source of evidence as they allow the researcher to adapt investigations and pursue relevant lines of enquiry (Robson 2002) resulting in rich data regarding phenomena. This has an underlying constructivist epistemology in seeking to view the world from the subject's lens. Indeed, Punch (2006) argues that interviews are effective methods for accessing perceptions of reality. However, it is acknowledged that the relationship between the participant and researcher results in the co-construction of knowledge thus acknowledging researcher influence on the interview context and the resultant data collected. The semi-structured interview is defined by a predetermined structure of questions with allowance for adaptation in the order of questions, wording changes and addition/deletion of questions (Robson 2002). Semi-structured interviews were

chosen as questions can be determined by the researcher but that flexibility would allow for elaboration and clarification of responses with reference to research questions through funnelling (asking a peripheral question and following with specific questions, Denscombe 1998). The interview schedule had pre-determined questions but the interview situation influenced the sequence of questions, question adaptation and use of further prompting.

7.1 Interview materials

The questions for the adult interviews were devised based on the framework for including children's voices from the National Children's Bureau (Hodgson 1990). This suggests three principles when including children in processes which concern them: the need to have information, adequate consultation and choice in decisions. These aspects were examined in relation to formal and informal procedures for gaining pupils' voices during the reintegration process which had been highlighted by the head teacher in initial discussions about the project. These aspects were framed using open questions with prompts to ensure that the data collected reflected the idiosyncratic views of each participant. This information was also supplemented by Local Authority and BSS policies to indicate current guidance on the participation of the child. Finally, two interviews (pre-reintegration and post-reintegration) with young people at the PRU undergoing the reintegration process were undertaken. It follows that the research methods should reflect the values inherent in current legislation about the child's voice and the constructivist position. Thus, my approach to this research with children is summarised by Toller (1991),

> ‘If we are going to listen to children (which is innovative in itself), then we are going to have to be innovative about doing so in a way that is appropriate and satisfactory, and, hopefully meaningful to the [children] themselves.’
>
> Toller, P (1991) p214.

The interviews with the children were based on participatory techniques (O’Kane 2000). These child-centred research techniques have been developed in response to the child as a ‘social actor’ increasing the active participation of the child. Participatory techniques reduce disparities in power between children and adults in a research situation. The agenda was partially set through defined activities and broad questions. However, I was not able to predict the content of the discussions as the young people were able to steer the conversation and identify what was important to them through visual recording, encouraging ownership and idiosyncratic response. I clarified my understandings of the pupils’ responses through oral summaries at different points of the process to enhance the reliability of the data collected. This also allowed the pupils to reflect on the process during and at the end of the session.

The two interview sessions with the young people had different aims reflected in the two activities. The pre-reintegration activity (Appendix 2) focused on what the children knew and thought about the process as they were preparing to go back. The structure of the questions was again based on the principles provided by the National Children’s Bureau (Hodgson 1990) as these provide information about the pupils’ knowledge of the process, how much they had been consulted and how much choice they felt they had at that stage. Specific questions were designed in relation to the three principles and presented in the format of a question game to elicit their perceptions of their participation in the process. The pupils recorded their answers to the questions by scribing their responses on a mind map which was later used to clarify meanings. The post-reintegration activities 1 and 2 (appendices 3 and 4) were

based on pupil responses to a scenario eliciting reflections on the process (appendix 4) and improvements for future reintegration support for other pupils thus providing feedback about how their views would be used to improve the process. Before undertaking the scenario, cards of different aspects of the process were placed in a timeline by the pupil to demonstrate aspects of the process they had participated in (Appendix 3).

Both activities had concrete materials to increase understanding and motivation. The data collected from staff and pupil interviews was coded by the researcher using thematic analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994). Fragments of data were brought together and coded using categories and themes which linked with research questions. Selection for reporting purposes was based on my judgement of the relevance of participants' quotes. Also, quotes are reported to give the data a real feel. In terms of the pupil data, summaries of responses are also provided to give context as they were in response to specific questions.

7.2 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were carried out in accordance with the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (2006). The relevant aspects are discussed below. In terms of confidentiality (BPS 2006, 1.3), all participants were informed that data would be kept in a secure location, that information would not be disclosed to other personnel, unless there was a concern about safety, and would be reported anonymously. The researcher is aware that the case study nature of this research does mean that participants may be more readily identifiable. Participants were also informed that the data collected would be kept for the duration of the

research project and until the final report had been submitted and returned. Also, participants were informed that the PRU would keep a copy of the final report. Informed consent (BPS 2006, 1.3) was gained with the researcher openly explaining the purpose, nature and consequences of participation in the research to all participants. In the case of the pupils, parental consent was obtained with assent (agreement to participate when another party has consented to participation, Lewis 2002) from the child to participate. Lastly, in reference to the protection of research participants (BPS 2006, 3.3), the participatory techniques were utilised with consideration to the maturity of the young people. Also, the researcher was mindful that discussions around a potentially anxious transition may affect well-being and so opportunities to discuss issues were provided in debriefing at the end of sessions (BPS 2006, 3.4). Participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any point during the research (BPS 2006, 3.3vi) or decline from answering questions (BPS 3.3vii).

7.3 Sampling Strategy

Consultation with the head of the PRU provided an opportunity to identify appropriate participants for the study. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the Head of the PRU and the inclusion leader for the centre as they were both ideally positioned to provide an overview of how the PRU involves the pupil in the reintegration process. Data was recorded by the researcher but was not transcribed due to time constraints. The Head also identified two pupils that would be going through the reintegration process during the school term when the research would be undertaken. Thus the sampling strategy was limited by the number of pupils going through the process. Discussions with the Head teacher as stakeholder also

narrowed the focus to Key Stage 3 pupils as the alternative provision planning process was beginning to address reintegration difficulties at Key Stage 4. Also, after pupil participants had been chosen, one of the pupils did not get a school place through the sharing panel system and so did not participate in the second interview. I was not able to identify another pupil to supplement data already collected. The pupils had been permanently excluded in line with PRU entry criteria. Pupil A was male, aged 12 and keen to return to school. He had been at the PRU for 8 months. Pupil B was male, aged 13 and keen to attend the PRU. He did not get his place at school although was still preparing to go back.

8. Findings: Policy

Local and BSS policies were examined to find evidence of guidance on including the child's voice in the reintegration process. Some National legislation identified above has been omitted from this section as it was explored above. The list of documents found is not exhaustive due to limited access to the data available. The following references to the child's involvement can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Policy Evidence supporting Children's participation in the reintegration process

Policy	Reference to the child's involvement
Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2008) Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on exclusions from schools and Pupil Referral Units Section 58	'Reintegration needs to be pupil-focused.'

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2008) Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on exclusions from schools and Pupil Referral Units Section 59	'In order to ensure the pupil, parents, LA and school staff agree to and are clear about next steps, individual reintegration plans should be drawn up within one month of a permanent exclusion being upheld by the governing body. Plans should be agreed by and issued to all relevant parties.'
Birmingham LA Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools PRUs and Alternative Provision **(**2007) Section 5:6	'Involvement of pupils in planning for their education also contributes to more successful placement outcomes. This can be supported through systematic planning on an individual basis, and the use of documentation that encourages pupils to contribute. Plans should also include objectives which cover pastoral and educational objectives.'
Birmingham LA Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools PRUs and Alternative Provision (2007) 5:11	'What ever the reasons for pupils attending alternative provision… reintegration into mainstream will almost always be in the pupil's best interests. The best outcomes will be secured through a pupil-centred approach which involves early planning and regular review of progress and which maps out options and identifies the support required for this to be successful.'
Birmingham LA Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools PRUs and Alternative Provision (2007) 4.16	'Each pupil should have Individual Learning Plan and targets for reintegration to school or employment/training.'
Birmingham LA Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools PRUs and Alternative Provision (2007) 5.18	'It is important that all young people, regardless of their placement, receive appropriate support at points of transition …'
Birmingham Grid For Learning (BGFL) (2008) Improving behaviour and attendance: guidance on exclusion from schools and Pupil Referral Units	'Ensure all pupils attending the Units have clear objectives for improving their behaviour. These could be incorporated in the action plan, which the Learning Mentor will draw up for each pupil who needs particular support. These action plans will build on other plans where they exist. It will be particularly important for parents of pupils in the unit to be involved in helping to tackle pupils' difficulties. The contribution they are to make should be incorporated in the action plan. Such

	plans might also specify the academic support to be provided where it is clear that failures at school work are a principal cause of the difficult behaviour.'
Birmingham City Council (2007) Guidance on Management Committees for Pupil Referral Units – Constitution and Roles and Responsibilities.	'To set targets for individual pupil achievement (learning plan), including exit strategy' 'To have regard to guidance in the Code of Practice on SEN'
Leading Aspect Award: Framework for Providers BSS document	'Reintegration programmes throughout the service are consistent with process and practice but are tailor made to meet the needs of individuals.'

Table 2: Themes from staff Interviews

Themes	**Examples**
Decision making	• "The decision to go back to school is made by inclusion leaders, staff and head and then this is discussed with parents and students." • "We ask [pupils] preferences about schools before the sharing panel. Some factors can be taken into account like feelings and schools." • "pupil views don't get heard at the sharing panel as they are not able to talk for themselves." • "the inclusion leader attends sharing panels as an advocate for the pupil." • " Sharing panel head teachers make decisions about schools for pupils. The Local Authority decided that there should be an advocate for the pupils." • "Pupil's attitudes can influence their success at the sharing panel."
Formal recording of pupil views	• " This is done through the Permanent Exclusion Planning Record at the initial planning meeting." • "At reviews we have pupil comments." • "We have Individual Education Plan (IEP) reviews every half-term."

	• "We use the Pupil Attitudes to School Survey." • "The close of placement report goes to their school."
Informal ways of accessing pupil's views	• " At sharing panel we give a picture of the young person, their view not the 'schools'." • At the planning meeting we ask them to tell us the positive things about themselves- their interests and strengths, feelings and wishes." • "We balance school views at sharing panel with pupil views as much as possible." • "The learning mentor gets the children's views mostly on a weekly basis." • "We are a small unit and so know kids well. We often have conversations about their behaviour and going back to school."
Meeting the needs of pupils	• "Most pupils give their views in the planning meeting but a small number don't. We work around the needs of students." • " We might get their views prior to meetings in case they don't want to speak." • "Schools can buy in a transition teaching assistant to support a pupil back in school."
Pupil involvement in reintegration process	• "Not always get their views directly but advocate for them like at the sharing panel." • "We do listen to their voice a lot. We use hear by Right." • "We have preparation lessons where the kids can discuss their views and support they need before going back to school." • "The pupils have an introduction interview at their new school." • " We are always referring to going back to school and what they need to do." • "We have certificates and celebrate before they go back into school to mark the transition."
Barriers to young person's involvement	• "whether kids want to open up." • "You need to develop their trust particularly when this has broken down in school before." • "pupil views don't get heard at the sharing panel as they are not able to talk for themselves."

8.1 Pre-reintegration pupil interview data

Appendix 5 shows examples of the pupil's completed activities in photograph form.

Table 3: Pupils' thoughts on the information they had received

	Summary of data	Pupil's voice
Positive	• Both pupils knew about the sharing panel • Both pupils said that they had understood information they were given about the reintegration process. • One pupil stated that he had been given reasons why he had not got a school place at sharing panel. Paperwork was also shared with him. • Both pupils understood targets they had and how to achieve them.	• 'Miss B explained clearly' • 'no head teachers would give me a place' • 'I have to do more, come in on time and stop arguing with teachers.'
Negative	• Both pupils were not sure what the next step was in the reintegration process. • One pupil wanted more information about possible schools. • One pupil wanted information about the distance and nature of his school. • One pupil requested information about other pupils he might know at the school. • One pupil would have liked specific dates for when going back.	• 'What other schools are there? In case there are any closer. ' • 'How far? What the school is like' • 'Is there anybody else that I know going there?' • 'When going back to school?'

Table 4: Pupils' thoughts on their involvement in consultation

	Summary of data	Pupil's voice
Positive	• Both pupils knew what their targets were before going back to school. • Both pupils felt able to ask questions in the reintegration meetings. • Both pupils felt that they could ask staff questions at any time. • One pupil stated that teachers had asked him about his feelings and going back to school. • One pupil stated that he was confident that the PRU had all the information about him and would pass that on to his new school.	• 'prove I can be good with teachers' • 'I have to do more, come in on time and stop arguing with teachers.' • 'anytime' • 'Miss B' • 'Teachers asked if had had sharing panel' • 'It will be in my folders'
Negative	• One pupil stated that his feelings about the distance of the school and knowing other pupils had not been fully considered. • One pupil had not been directly asked about how he felt about going back to school.	• 'not want to go far, affect my behaviour, the journey and how I feel.'

Table 5: Pupils' views on the amount of choice they have in the reintegration process

	Summary of data	Pupil's voice
Positive	• Both pupils indicated that they were able to contribute to choices about targets in meetings.	
Negative	• Both pupils stated that they had no choice over their school placement. • Both pupils suggested that their school placement was dependent on their current behaviour.	• 'not much, don't get to pick if naughty school won't have you' • 'You can't decide, you don't have a choice-PRU'

8.2 Post-reintegration pupil data

The post-reintegration interview information given was analysed in terms of positive aspects and suggested improvements at each reported stage of the process. Again, the completed pupil activity is shown in photograph form in appendix 5.

Table 6: Pupils' thoughts on the reintegration process

Stage	Positive attributes	Improvements
Meeting to discuss readiness for school	'on my own so could talk.'	None given
Sharing panel	None given	'let the child be there so you can see what the head teacher and school is like.'
Meeting to discuss outcome of sharing panel	'brief' 'good because I knew I would be in a mainstream school and get work.'	'wanted to know when I would be starting.'
Introduction to school meeting	'I was a bit anxious and excited but Mrs D from PRU helped as I knew her.' 'My Dad was there.' 'Looking forward to it as I	None given

	would know when I would be starting.' 'They let me ask questions' 'As good as it could be.'	

The event reported were identified by the pupil from a choice of stages which had been reported by staff at the PRU. The pupil did not select the three preparation lessons and after discussion about them did not suggest that he had participated in them. This may show variation in reintegration experiences for pupils.

9. Discussion: Are the guidelines in national and local policy reflected in staff perceptions of how they involve the pupil in their reintegration back to school?

Grundy and Blandford (1999) argue that legislation identifies priorities for young people but that this needs to be reflected in educational settings meeting their needs. Both National and Local Authority policy identify the importance of a pupil-centred approach to reintegration planning (DCSF 2008, Birmingham LA guidance for PRUs 2007). This is reflected in staff discourse around practical flexibility in gaining the pupil's voice to help to meet the pupil's needs (table 2). This supports findings from a study on young people's views about consultation by Woolfson et al (2006). They concluded that young people valued comfortable settings with people they know and trust. A pupil-centred approach was identified by staff in the utilisation of 'Hear by Right' principles and the informal acquisition of the children's views in every day conversations (table2). Factors highlighted by staff, which also support pupil participation in the reintegration process are reflected in the PRU ethos which can be summarised as:

- Actively creating trusting and caring relationships between staff and pupils

- Respect for pupil's individual needs
- Listening to the child's voice and acting on this within the PRU environment

These findings are consistent with factors enhancing children's participation by Norwich et al (2006) in their study of one Local Authority's practice, SENCO perceptions and school staff perceptions of children's participation in SEN processes. However, the findings are in contrast to research by Grundy and Blandford (1999), in their study of one Local Authority PRU, who found that staff often disregard the views of young people with behavioural difficulties suggesting that communication issues between adults and children prevent effective collaboration in decisions about education. It would therefore seem that children's participation in decisions can to some extent be influenced by the ethos of individual settings.

The pupil centred approach is also reflected in the formal acquisition of children's views in the PRU. Staff report that pupils are consulted through the IEP process (SEN COP 2001) in setting half-termly targets. Weekly meetings with form tutors result in weekly reviews of targets and views. Staff indicated that this process underlies staff decisions about pupil's readiness for school. Thus, pupils regularly participate in the process of preparing to return to school and their views are recorded for influence at later stages. However, PRU and National Policies state the importance of the child's participation in the process but they are not explicit in how this should be done which may impact on the extent to which pupil's influence the process. Such inconsistencies between policy and practice were identified by Norwich et al (2006) in the lack of clear guidance on how young people's voices should be obtained and differences in structures in place in organisations for SEN procedures.

Local Authority policy (Birmingham LA guidance for PRUs 2007) also highlights the need for systematic planning on an individual basis. Staff interviews and formal documents relating to individual children's reintegration (table 2, appendix 6) both demonstrate clear evidence of systematic procedure from the first planning meeting through to the child's entry back to school. The Local Authority policy (Birmingham LA guidance for PRUs 2007, BSS document, table 1) also states that there should be agreed targets for reintegration. OFSTED (2008) found that discussed and agreed targets were referred to in lessons and social settings in the Birmingham Local Authority PRUs suggesting that individual targets are a central part of the reintegration process at the PRU. This is supported by pupil's displaying knowledge of their targets during interviews. Research by Hallam and Castle (2001) also showed that excluded pupil's were involved in target setting which impacted on developed independence skills. Thus, this active involvement in planning for reintegration may result in self-reliant skills which could transfer to the mainstream setting.

9.1 Do pupil perceptions of their involvement match staff and policy rhetoric?

The staff and policy rhetoric emphasises the active involvement of the child in the reintegration process. Eliciting young people's views on their involvement enabled a comparison of this espoused theory and the reality of this for pupil's within the PRU. Knipe et al (2007) argue that this highlights salient issues with regard to how the systems impact on the young people. In this research, this is examined in regard to guidelines suggested by the NCB (Hodgson 1990) for increasing children's participation in education. This suggests that children should be given information,

opportunities for consultation and choice in decisions and processes which involve them.

9.2 Information

In terms of information given to the pupils, both understood all the information they had been given about the reintegration process. They also demonstrated knowledge of the sharing panel which determined their eventual school placement. However, the pupils were not able to provide details of the sequence of events between the sharing panel and their return to school. This may indicate that there are gaps in sharing information about the transition process with pupils. Further to this, pupil's concerns about information they had not received centred on pragmatic aspects such as knowing the distance of the school, dates for return, plans for getting there and if they had existing relationships with pupils at the school. This may suggest that information given to the pupils reflects the organisation's concerns rather than issues pertinent to the pupil's needs at this time of transition (Durkin 2000). Attention to individual concerns and an awareness of the process may aid successful reintegration as preparation and security in transitions reduce anxiety (Roller 1998, Durkin 2000, DfES 2003).

9.3 Consultation

Regarding the pupil's involvement in consultation, the pupils stated that they felt that they were able to ask questions, that staff listened to them and supported them throughout the reintegration process. Again one of the major factors highlighted by the pupils, in enhancing children's participation is secure relationships with staff.

This is supported by findings from Grundy and Blandford (1999) that highlight the importance of good communication between staff and pupils, as a prerequisite for participation. Indeed, one pupil highlighted staff support in meetings as reducing his anxiety in meetings. This is similar to findings from Woolfson et al (2002) in their study of what pupil's value about consultation with Educational Psychologists. Other needs in the same study were summarised as treating children's views as important and that their opinions impacted on decisions. Alternatively, in this study, pupils did not feel that their views and feelings about schools were fully taken into account before a choice of school was decided. Their perceptions of consultation may suggest that they can participate at the micro-level of the PRU environment but that they are aware that this participation may not influence the process wholly due to externally imposed decisions at the sharing panel.

9.4 Choice

Both pupils also suggested that their participation regarding choice was also constrained by external forces as they stated that they did not feel that they had a choice when it came to deciding which school they would attend. Hart (1997) advocates the importance of maximising opportunities for choice in developing responsibility. Both pupils identified their behaviour as influencing decisions in the reintegration process suggesting that they do not have overt choice but understand that they can influence decisions about them through their actions. This awareness of power differentials between stakeholders in the decision making process is also reported by Morrow (1999) in her study of children's views, with a large sample from two local authorities. She found that children wanted a relative position in the process which reflected trust in their autonomy in 'having a say' rather than total

determination of the decision. Clearly the pupils and the staff both emphasised the need for more equilibrium in power at the sharing panel. For pupils, this would be conceptualised by their presence at the meeting. In summary, pupils feel that their role in consultation at the PRU is successful but is constrained by adult-led activity at a meso-level. Indeed, Woolfson et al (2006) argue that adults may consider that children's views have been adequately sought but that it may not be experienced as such by children themselves.

9.5 Barriers and facilitators to the involvement of Young People in the reintegration process

The following SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis (attributed to Humphreys 1960) has been constructed from interpretations of policy information, explicit references to facilitators and barriers by BSS staff interviewed and information given by the Young People in the study. It aims to summarise the internal factors within the PRU contributing to pupil participation and the external factors which create opportunities or present threats to pupil participation in reintegration.

Figure 2: SWOT Analysis

Internal factors	**Strengths** • Good relationships with staff (P, S) • Flexibility in eliciting children's views (S) • Initial planning meeting (S, Po) • Information about pupils is recorded formally (P, S, PR) • Learning Mentor at PRU (S, P) • All information given is understood by pupils (P) • Pupils feel able to ask questions and say things that are relevant to them (P) • Formal pupil records are transferred (S, P, Po) • Pupils know what their reintegration targets are (S,P) • Children's views sought informally throughout process (S, P)	**Weaknesses** • Children's views about individual schools are not considered at the sharing panel (S,P, Po) • Pupils feel that they have no choice over distance and knowing pupils at school (P) • Pupils have little influence in school choice (S, P) • Transparency of information shared about each step of the reintegration process (P) • Lack of information given to pupils in response to their personal concerns (P)
External Factors	**Opportunities** • Hear by Right (S, Po) • Inclusion manager as advocate at panel (S, Po) • Transition TA to support at introduction meeting (S, P) • Ethos of PRU – child as central to the process (S) • National and Local Authority Policy- reintegration should be pupil-centred (Po)	**Threats** • Local Authority policy on who attends the sharing panel and who makes decisions about children's placement (S, P) • Information about children given to head teachers at the panel (P) • Level of trust with staff at PRU (S)

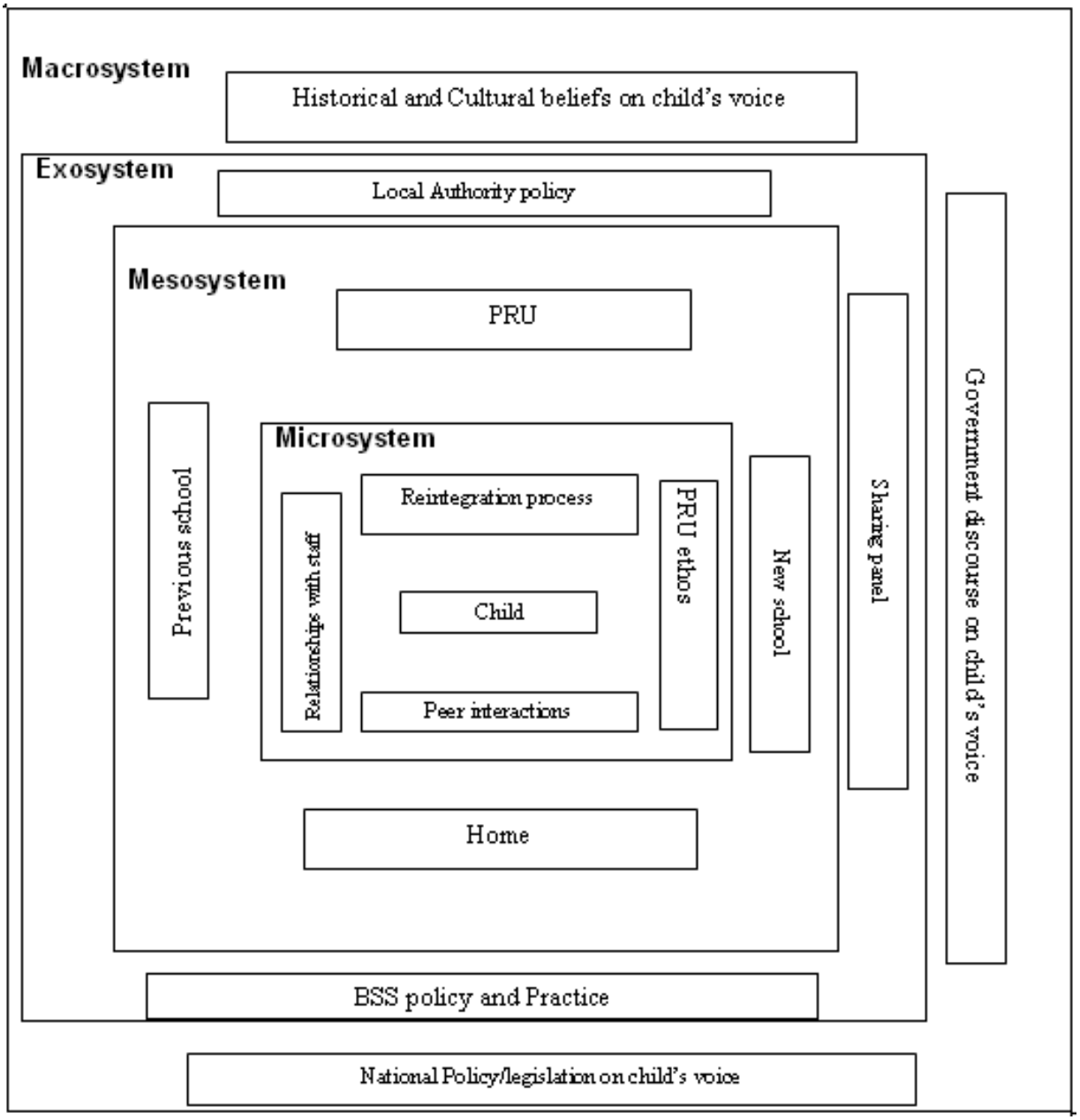
The following key shows the sources of data which relate to the factor included. Multiple sources of information may strengthen the importance of the factor.

Key

P = Pupils views
S = Staff Views
Po = Policy documents
PR = PRU records

The SWOT analysis enables differentiation between within PRU factors and external forces which impact on the extent to which the child can influence their reintegration. Certainly, the PRU ethos is a facilitating factor which could lead to systems changes in further incorporating some of the concerns of the young people in the research and increasing transparency of the process. Timmins et al (2003) advocate this as essential to organisational change. However, Local Authority practice around the sharing panel decisions is perceived by staff and pupils as a barrier to their inclusion. Although Local Authority policy rhetoric suggests a pupil-centred approach, this is not reflected in the decision making process perhaps reflecting tensions around children's abilities to negotiate and share power balanced with perspectives on their protection (Hill et al 2004). Indeed, Norwich et al (2006) identified this as a barrier to involving children in SEN procedures in mainstream schools. Although current policy rhetoric champions the involvement as of the child as integral to successful interventions, this may not be actualised if children are not able to shape processes around them (Morrow 1999). The findings suggest inconsistencies between micro-level practices, macro-level rhetoric supporting a pupil-centred approach and pragmatic constraints at the meso-level. The influences on a pupil's reintegration are expressed ecosystemically in the diagram below. It shows the complexity of dynamic interactions between the child and different systems.

Figure 3: Ecological diagram (adapted diagram based on Bronfenbrenner 1979 in Poole (2003) showing influences on the child's participation in reintegration



Poole (2003) p171.

The diagram shows that Macrolevel influences such as national policy and historical beliefs about young people's involvement in processes that involve them provide a supportive background to including the child's voice in the PRU. There are inconsistencies in exolevel influences with Local Authority and BSS policies supporting children's inclusion but the sharing panel prevents this. The other level

which has significant influence in this evaluation is at the microsystem. Here, the PRU ethos and relationships with staff support children's participation in the reintegration process.

9.6 How far are young people involved in the reintegration process?

In attempting to ascertain the extent to which the PRU involves pupils in the reintegration process, the ladder of participation (Hart 1997) will be used. The ladder of participation was developed as a metaphor for discussion around how adults may facilitate the involvement of children in collaborative projects. This can be found in appendix 7.

Evidence from staff, policy and pupils seems to suggest that there are differing degrees of participation at different stages of the process partially due to the extent to which external forces direct systems. At the microlevel and in terms of the decision to return to school, pupils are involved at level 5 (consulted and informed) as adults use their judgement to decide on their readiness for school but the child is consulted and their wishes are acted upon. Indeed, the Head of the PRU described a case whereby a pupil was incredibly anxious about returning to school and in response to this, the timescale of his reintegration process was changed again reflecting the pupil centred approach within the PRU. This level of participation meets the definition given by Clark (2005) and Hill et al (2004) as young people have an active involvement in the decision about returning to school.

With regard to the decision over choice of school placement, young people have less influence suggesting that external influences prevent active participation in wider

decision making processes thus conflicting with Clark's (2005) definition of participation. While pupil involvement is considered at the micro-level of the PRU and children's views are considered, this could be considered tokenistic at the meso-level (Norwich 2006, Hart 1997), as their views are inconsequential due to factors such as Head teacher preference and places available at the sharing panel. The use of indirect advocacy from the PRU may present an opportunity for the child's voice to be heard but is less powerful in the sharing panel context than in the PRU. Indirect advocacy is usually employed when children's feelings and wishes cannot be ascertained perhaps because of the nature of their needs (SEN Regional Partnership 2004). Lewis (2002) suggests that the use of drawings and symbol cards may to some extent access the views of children with learning difficulties although she does acknowledge that these methods would rely on adult interpretations of children's intentions.

Furthermore, research by Smart (2004) indicates that communication difficulties significantly impact on children's participation in transition planning from residential to mainstream settings. However, this is not the case at the PRU as staff did not report communication difficulties as a barrier to their involvement. Nevertheless, findings from this study suggest that pupil's have an awareness of different interacting systems on their reintegration in line with research by Knipe et al (2007) who found that the young people expressed both logical and responsible responses about decisions which involve them, in focus group settings. This provides support for Munn and Lloyd's (2005) account that children offer insight which can often transform child-focused activities. As the reintegration process is externally imposed, it would be difficult to conceive of reaching level 7 or 8 on the ladder of participation where pupils initiate and direct decisions. However, it may be possible for pupils to have

greater influence on different parts of the process particularly in identifying their needs throughout the process as this was particularly relevant to pupils both prior to their return to school and retrospectively.

10. Limitations of the research

Congruent with constructivist epistemology, it is considered that the findings gained from this research can only be understood within the social context of the research. This small-scale qualitative evaluation attempts to capture factors influencing the participation of young people in the reintegration process in one setting contemporaneously. Indeed, Parker (1994) states,' findings from the study are as fragile and mutable as real life is' (Parker 1994, p10). Multiple perspectives have been provided on pupil's involvement in the reintegration process which reflect the values of participants and represent the complex nature of reality (Robson 2002). It therefore follows that external generalisation of the findings of the study should not be reduced to positivist measures of validity. Indeed, Lincoln and Guba (1983) suggest that this congruence between the research situation and the real world increases ecological validity in valuing reality by those who reveal it.

However, it is recognised that there are several aspects of this evaluation which may have impacted on the findings. Firstly, small samples were used to gain staff perceptions and pupil perceptions. This produced in-depth material for illuminative purposes. However, this was constrained by time and meant that a range of views were not explored. On reflection, a focus group may have produced a greater range of data (Woolfson and Harker 2002) and may have stimulated richer responses (Clarke 1999), as group situations can often evoke deeper thoughts on experiences.

In contrast, it is recognised that reintegration transitions are personal journeys which may need sensitivity when exploring issues although collective aspects are acknowledged. The pupil sample consisted of pupils currently going through the process. A greater range of views may have been obtained through interviews with pupils reintegrated over a recent period of time, although, retrospective memory effects may have influenced the data collected. Time also limited exploration of staff practice in relation to the reintegration process. Again, observations staff and pupil interactions during the reintegration process may have triangulated data collected from staff interviews. For instance, I was not able to observe a planning meeting. This would have led to greater insight into how involved the pupils were in devising their targets and thus an increased understanding of pupil participation in this process.

In terms of the evaluation being systematic and exhaustive in terms of data collection (Freeman and Rossi 1993), multiple methods were used to triangulate data collected whilst also highlighting mismatches between rhetoric and reality. However, this was dominated by reliance on participant's perceptions. Further material could have been gained from direct observations of pupils in salient meetings to provide rich information to triangulate pupils' views or highlight disparities between staff and policy rhetoric. In terms of the methods used, it was intended that there would be an element of a priori control on broad topics but that the participants should control the agenda in the interview situations to increase equality in power dynamics (Orme 1997). The use of participatory techniques and semi-structured interviews created opportunities for idiosyncratic data whilst addressing the research questions. The semi-structured interview and participatory techniques enabled clarification of

meaning for the researcher and the researched. However, these may have been limited by rapport. As Tindall (1994) argues,

> 'as co-researchers our understanding is limited by our ability to relate effectively to the participants and thus facilitate the telling of their story, by our capacity for open listening to complete the message and by our own frameworks of understanding.'
>
> Tindall, C (1994) p88.

The validity of the findings may also have been affected by the lack of verbatim transcript or recording. Again, this was limited by time and may have produced an inaccurate picture of reality. Respondent bias may have also affected the data collected as participants may have withheld or produced responses in accordance with their perceptions of research aims. My own role in interpreting the data must also be acknowledged thus researcher biases and preconceptions may have influenced the interpretation of the data through direct interaction with participants but also through my selection of information reported (Lincoln and Guba 1983). Again, one of the central tenets of the qualitative approach is acknowledgement of the reflexivity of the researcher (Burman 1994). This is summarised by Sikes and Goodson (1994),

> 'as people, as social beings, located in space, time cultural milieu, researchers (like anyone else) have been influenced by the particular understandings about, and interpretations of, the world to which they have been exposed.'
>
> Sikes and Goodson (1994) p34

10.1 Future research and actions

This study focused on pupil's participation in the reintegration process at a microlevel in terms of the PRU setting prior to reintegration. This perspective on the process

was explored access resulting from my professional role in the PRU. However, the success of reintegration also depends on the receiving school. Further research could examine how far the pupil's voice is valued by staff from a post-reintegration perspective, for example, exploring what information schools value when settling children into a new environment and how utilising pupils' voices may increase participation thus increasing the success of the reintegration. Also, the inclusion of the child's voice has been explored from micro and meso levels in terms of participants but it may be beneficial to explore the Local Authority level further than just policy. Future research could focus on exploring policy rhetoric and staff rhetoric at this exolevel. This may influence future policy changes in pupil's participation in educational decisions.

The findings from this research will be reported back to staff at the PRU as part of the action research cycle with a view to changing systems within the PRU. However, findings from this research also indicate the importance of valuing pupil's contributions to processes which involve them, particularly pragmatic concerns which may not be as important to adults. This has value for all educational transitions from universal transitions such as primary to high school change or transitions affecting vulnerable children from mainstream to special settings or alternative provision.

11. Conclusion

In summary, the research has identified several positive factors which contribute to including pupils in the reintegration process at the microlevel: a flexible approach to gaining children's views, systematic formal reporting of the child's voice, pupil's feeling sufficiently consulted and an ethos which respects and values young people's

views and participation. This is supported by rhetoric in macrolevel policy, legislation and cultural views, although they lack clarity and structure in how this should be realised practically (Norwich et al 2006). However, positive practices within the PRU are set against external forces which prevent children's full participation in the process such as their contribution to the sharing panel. In addition to this, pupil views highlighted the significance of individual concerns through the process which may impact on emotional wellbeing through this period of change. Although pupil voices highlighted this, the small sample size meant that a range of views on this were not explored. This may need further exploration with a larger sample to gain a range of views. Again, the PRU ethos and positive relationships with staff provides an opportunity for collaborative planned change in this area perhaps with children's voices driving new projects. My role as an EP could be to facilitate systems changes through this evaluation and future support in the change process. Indeed, Hood et al (1996) conclude,

> 'Understanding children and childhood …. requires listening attentively to their agendas, and participating with them in the research process, the only way we can change things is to make sure that people who make decisions know what we think and what we want.'
>
> Young Person's voice from DfES (2003) piii

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Appendix 1

Semi-structured Interview schedule:
How far is young person's voice incorporated into the reintegration process?

1. **How do you currently get pupil views at the PRU?**

   Generally and for reintegration

   Who gets the views?

   Formal – meetings, paperwork

   Informal – daily interactions, 1-1, group

2. **How do you record pupil views?**

   Pupil records

   PRU records

   forms relating to process

3. **How do you use pupil's views to reintegrate the young people into schools?**

   What do you share with the schools?

   How do you share this information?

4. **Are pupils given information about the purpose of their time at the PRU and how this relates to them going into school?** How? Who?

5. **How far do the pupil's have influence over schools, targets and other decisions in the reintegration process?**

BSS policy and systems

meetings, staff

What enables this?

What constrains this?

6. **Are the pupils involved in reintegration meetings?**

When? Stages?

How involved?

How is their contribution recorded?

7. **What are the barriers to incorporating the pupil's voice into the reintegration process?**

Pupils

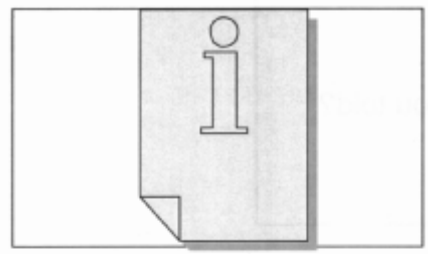
staff

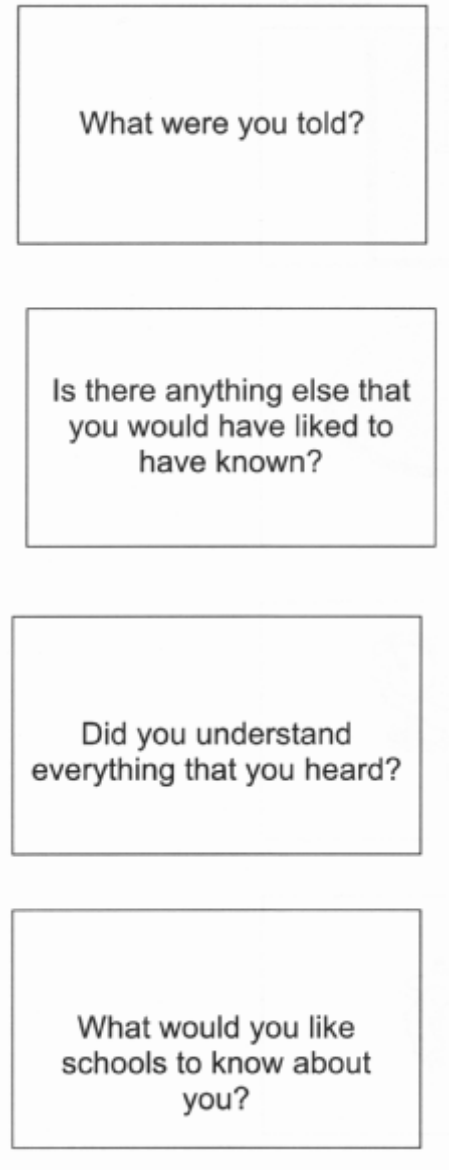
policy and systems

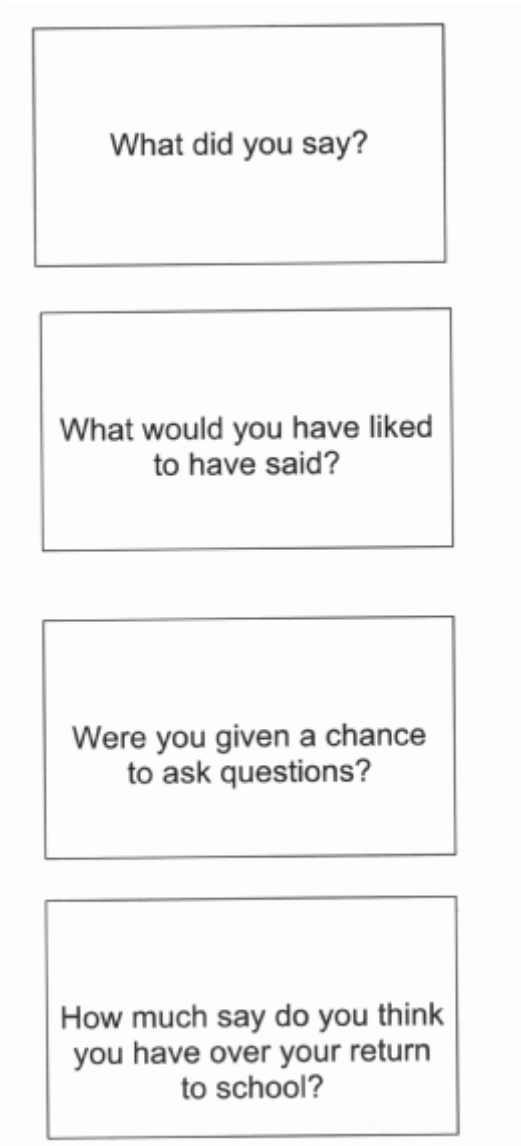
Any other factors?

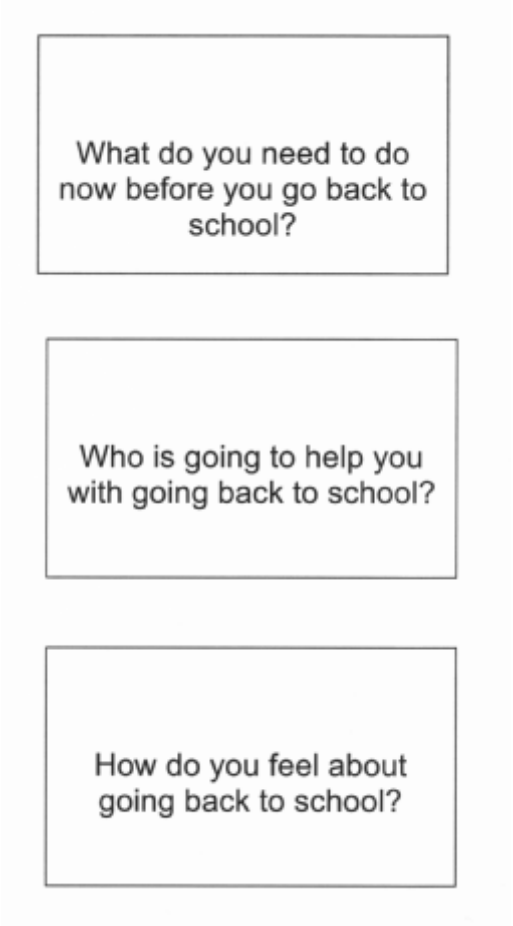
Appendix 2

Pre-reintegration activity




What were you told?
Is there anything else that you would have liked to have known?
Did you understand everything that you heard?
What would you like schools to know about you?

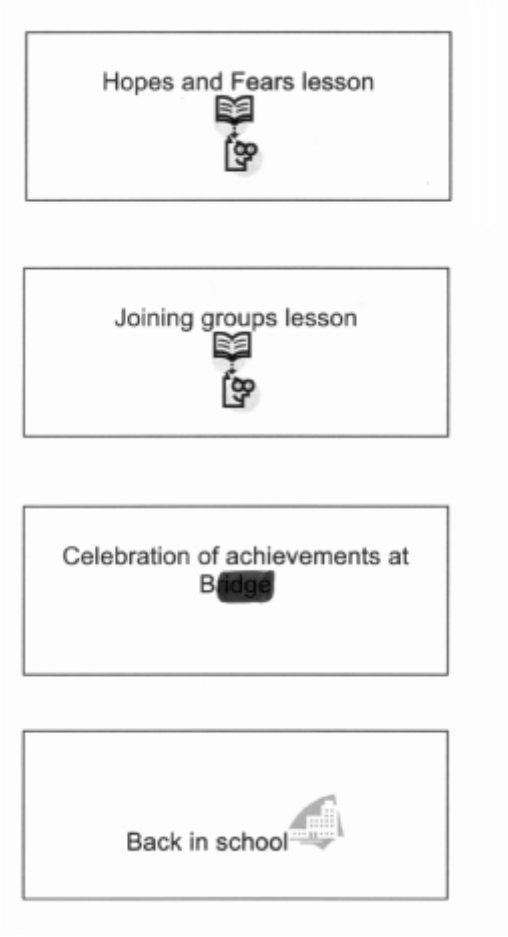

What did you say?
What would you have liked to have said?
Were you given a chance to ask questions?
How much say do you think you have over your return to school?


What do you need to do now before you go back to school?
Who is going to help you with going back to school?
How do you feel about going back to school?


Did anyone ask you about how you feel about going back to school?
Did anyone ask you about how you feel about going back to school?

Appendix 3

Post-reintegration timeline


Hopes and Fears lesson
Joining groups lesson
Celebration of achievements at B[redacted]
Back in school

Appendix 4

Back to school: post-reintegration activity

Ben has been at B PRU for 8 months. He now knows that he is going back to school soon. His sharing panel is next week. He would like to know what will happen before he goes back to school.

What can you tell him about what will happen to prepare him for his return to school?

He knows about these things. Can you tell him when these things will happen?

What happens at each stage?

What things were good about each stage?

What things could have been improved at each stage?

Overall

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

a. How much did you understand the information given?

b. How much did you feel you were able to say things that you felt?

c. How much were you able to ask questions?

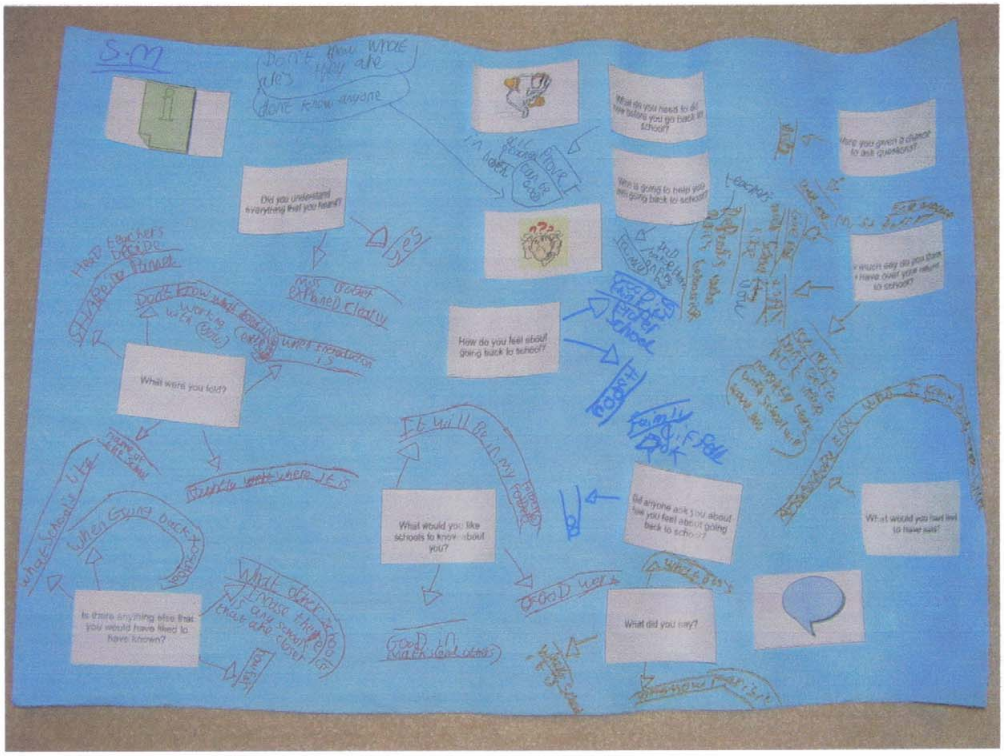
d. How much did people listen to you?

e. How much were you able to make a choice about what happened to you?

f. How much support did you get?

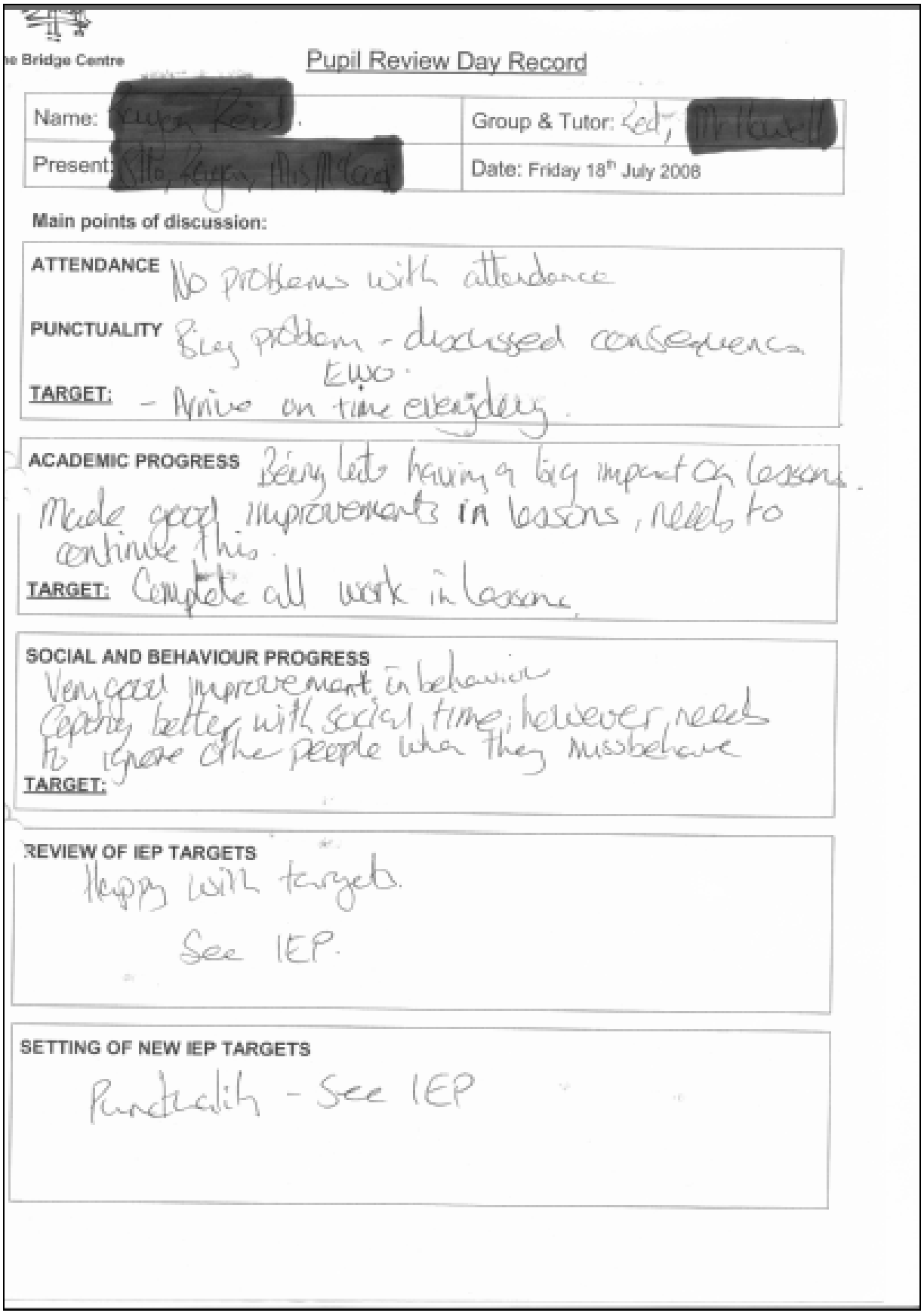
Appendix 5

Data from participatory techniques



Appendix 6

Formal documents containing pupil views



e Bridge Centre

Pupil Review Day Record

Name: [redacted]	Group & Tutor: Ked, [redacted]
Present: [redacted]	Date: Friday 18th July 2008

Main points of discussion:

ATTENDANCE No problems with attendance

PUNCTUALITY Big problem - discussed consequences Exp.

TARGET: - Arrive on time everyday.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS Being late having a big impact on lessons. Made good improvements in lessons, needs to continue this.

TARGET: Complete all work in lessons.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR PROGRESS Very good improvement in behaviour Coping better with social time; however, needs to ignore other people when they misbehave

TARGET:

REVIEW OF IEP TARGETS Happy with targets.

See IEP.

SETTING OF NEW IEP TARGETS Punctuality - See IEP

PLANS FOR EDUCATION PLACEMENT

Keep placement going in Bridge with a view to returning to School with steering panel.

PARENTS / CARERS VIEWS ABOUT CENTRE PLACEMENT

Happy with centre and how things go.

PUPILS VIEWS ABOUT CENTRE PLACEMENT

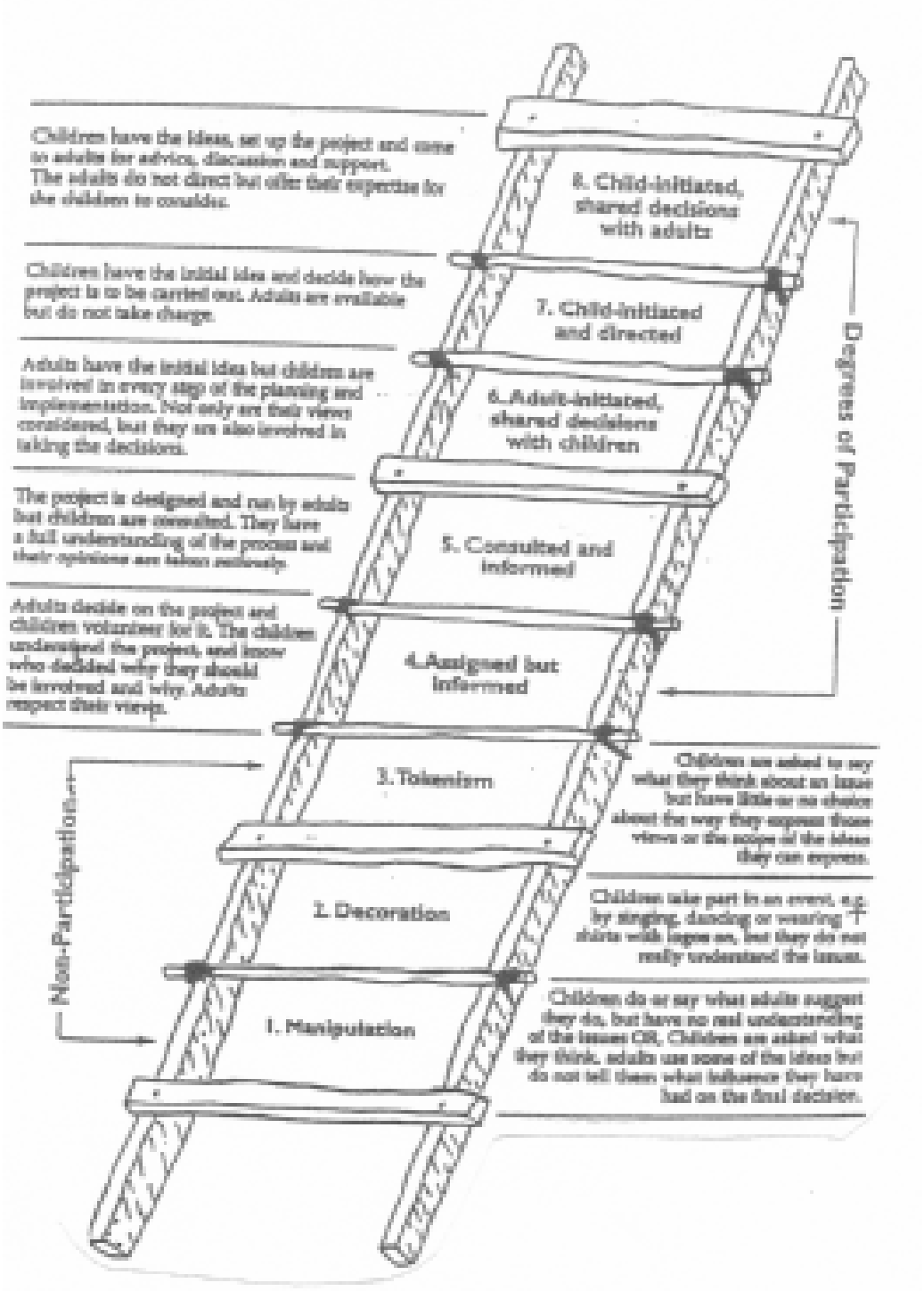
Is "OK" with how things are going.

Agreed actions following this review:

- Copy of new IEP and this review sheet given to family
- Monitor punctuality
-
-
-

Appendix 7

Ladder of participation



CHAPTER THREE

PARENT PARTNERSHIP AND THE ROLE OF THE EP: REFLECTIONS ON WORKING WITH PARENTS IN THE STATUTORY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

CHAPTER THREE

PARENT PARTNERSHIP AND THE ROLE OF THE EP: REFLECTIONS ON WORKING WITH PARENTS IN THE STATUTORY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Abstract

There has been a wealth of literature on increasing parent partnership to meet the needs of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) (e.g. Wolfendale 1992, Hornby 1995, Gascoigne 1995, and the SEN Code of Practice DfES 2001). This paper explores the extent to which parent partnership was achieved between parents of a child with SEN and the author from reflections on collaborations towards the statutory assessment process. Further than this, it explores how educational psychologists may contribute to parent partnership more generally. This is achieved through the examination of definitions of parent partnership, exploration of studies which highlight parental perceptions of their involvement in relationships with professionals and the identification of psychological theories, models and skills which develop awareness of the factors which may influence parent partnership. Conclusions acknowledge the complexity of parent partnership and discuss the need to apply the eclectic use of psychological frameworks and interpersonal skills to understand, guide and develop successful interactions with parents.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP AND THE ROLE OF THE EP: REFLECTIONS ON WORKING WITH PARENTS IN THE STATUTORY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. Introduction: Aims

Several questions regarding parental involvement will be addressed in this paper. They are outlined below.

- What is parent partnership?
- How does legislation define parent partnership today and what is the historical tradition leading up to this?
- What does research evidence on parental views of partnership suggest?
- What models of partnership have been developed?
- What issues affect parent partnership?
- What psychological theories can inform parent partnership?
- What aspects of parent partnership were apparent in my involvement with one family throughout the statutory assessment process?
- How can I improve my future practice in terms of parent partnership?
- What skills can EPs offer parent partnership?
- Do EPs have a distinct role in developing parental partnership?

In response to these questions, a number of psychological theories and models will be applied at a number of levels to examine influences on the EP-parent relationship during the statutory assessment process. These influences will also be considered in terms of future early years statutory assessment work and generally in EP work with parents. It is acknowledged that much of the literature on parent involvement is related to parent-teacher relationships but that the principles which emerge from the evidence and theory have a wider application.

1.1 Case study

The basis of this paper derives from my involvement with a child with complex medical and physical needs and his parents in the statutory assessment process. His name has been anonymised and he will be referred to as Isaac for the purposes of this paper. Details regarding the nature of his needs and family situation are

outlined below in order to give an overview of issues facing his parents for the duration of my involvement with the family. An understanding of these factors is considered as integral to successful parent partnership (O'Connor 2008), a theme which is explored in this paper.

Isaac is one year and ten months. He has Congenital Hypotonia. Hypotonia is not specifically a medical disorder but a manifestation of a variety of conditions affecting motor nerve control by the brain or muscle strength. It is often termed 'floppy baby syndrome' and is a condition of abnormally low muscle tone. As a result, Isaac experiences the following manifestations of hypotonia:

Table 7: Symptoms of Hypotonia

- Hyperflexible joints (inability to maintain flexed muscles and extend them)
- Hypermobility of joints (His range of movement is excessive at the knees, hips and elbows)
- Gross and fine motor skills delay
- Ataxia (poor co-ordination of arms and legs)
- Speech restricted to short sounds
- Difficulties in feeding as mouth muscles are unable to maintain a suck-swallow pattern
- Drooling
- Poor reflexes
- Decreased strength
- Decreased activity tolerance in terms of attention and motivation
- Poor head control (head lag)

(Adapted from Medline plus 2009).

Hypotonia results in delayed developmental milestones (Bodensteiner et al 2003) and the extent to which these are delayed varies according to severity. At present,

Isaac is not able to sit up without adult support, he lies on his back and kicks and waves his arms. He is able to hold an object for a short time when placed in his hands. Hypotonia does not directly affect cognition but may impact on acquisition of language, social and cognitive skills. At present his physical abilities and lack of speech are restricting his development in other areas. Isaac also has a history of dietary problems including weight loss which may be related to feeding difficulties. Isaac and his family have regular appointments at the hospital with many different specialists.

Diagnosis is essential, as determining an underlying cause will impact on interventions. If cause is attributed to the brain, then it may be labelled as Cerebral Palsy or if causation is ascribed to the muscles then it may be termed as Muscular Dystrophy. Hypotonia is often associated with Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome or Prader-Willi Syndrome (Leitner et al 2007, Couper 1999). As yet, there has been no diagnosis given for Isaac and so his parents do not know how progressive his condition will be. Sometimes muscle tone improves over time. Bodensteiner et al (2003) found that Hypotonia symptoms had largely diminished by the third year of life although their results are dependent on a small sample size of three children with co-morbidity of other conditions, thus questioning the validity of the data gathered. If caused by cerebellar dysfunction or motor neuron diseases then Hypotonia can be progressive and life threatening (NINDS 2009).

My involvement in this case was to support Isaac's parents through the statutory assessment process and the eventual educational placement of their son. His parents want him to attend a special school from the age of two. His mother has reported that her decision for early placement reflects his need for physiotherapy,

which he is receiving on a fortnightly basis at present. Also, she would like him to have access to a sensory curriculum. Isaac's mother also described concerns over his safety within a mainstream environment due to his physical vulnerability and wanting him to experience children with similar needs to him. Due to the nature of Isaac's needs, there was agreement on the type of provision needed between his parents and myself.

2. Methodology: Case evidence

The evidence reported in this paper is based on a case study approach which is defined as an investigation into an aspect of a social reality undertaken using multiple sources of evidence (Yin and Kuo-Zuis 1992). The case is used as a basis from which research and theory are interrogated. The evidence regarding Isaac's needs, his family situation and parental views have been obtained from consultations whilst on home visits, observational evidence of Isaac at home and in the Child Development Centre, assessment records and consultations with his portage worker and medical records.

2.1 Search strategies

An outline of the methods used to locate relevant sources of information is presented below. Firstly, a 'snowballing' approach was utilised to identify published documents relating to parent partnership, parent's views on working with professionals, physical disabilities and Hypotonia. Secondly, internet search engines were also utilised to access relevant government documents and recent developments in this area. Also, a literature search was undertaken by the researcher using a computer data base

search. The databases included Assia and Swetswise as well as a retrospective examination of psychological, educational and Special Educational Needs (SEN) journals. The search strategy used (Boolean logic) key concepts relating to parent partnership including working with parents, parents' views/perceptions, parents in education and parents of children with physical disabilities. Other related key terms used were special school and mainstream settings and statutory assessment. Papers were selected, summarised and evaluated to meet the criteria of the research questions stated below.

3. Rationale

After my initial home-visit, which involved explanations regarding my role, the statutory assessment process and the parent's role in this, I began to reflect on how Isaac's parents may have felt about our discussions. In particular, how much of the information they had been able to process and whether I had responded to their needs and met their expectations in my role (this was my first early years statutory assessment case); as well as how they may have perceived their involvement. Indeed, Connor (1997) suggests that often, professionals may concentrate on meeting the needs of the child rather than considering the anxieties and issues that parents may face in terms of their child's needs. Further to this, paragraph 2.12 from the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001) states that, 'the statutory assessment process can be difficult and challenging for parents'. Thus, EPs need to consider many influences when gathering information about children as responding to parent's needs and building effective relationships with them may affect the quality of information received. Consequently, this may also affect the eventual support for the child and family (McConkey 2005). In addition, it is assumed that parents of

children with complex SEN would have long term close involvement with education professionals and that early relationships influence future relationships, which are integral to meeting children's needs (Beveridge 2005). It is therefore presumed that my interactions with Isaac's parents would have transactional effects. In support of this, Roffey (2002) argues that successful contact with educational professionals at start of SEN process provides opportunities for parents to learn the language of SEN and advocate for the needs of their child which may lead to empowerment and so increased participation at later stages.

Thus, my initial rationale for focusing on parent partnership stems from a reflective position. Indeed, Schon (1987) discusses the importance of reflection on past experiences for its indirect influence in shaping future action. Although in this case, I perceived a successful relationship with Isaac's parents, there may have been parts of our interaction which may have been either difficult or confusing for them due to the unfamiliarity of the statutory assessment process, which I was unable to notice due to pragmatic concerns at the time. In future work with parents, this may result in unpredictable situations whereby my knowledge-in-action (dealing with surprising events using tacit knowledge, Schon 1987) may not be sufficient enough to effectively manage difficult situations. It is therefore important to consider how I could improve my practice in this area. Reflections on this case will impact on future work with parents at this interpersonal level. Further evidence for focusing on parent partnership based on research in this area will be explored after definitions of partnership have been defined.

4. Definitions of parental involvement in education

Parental involvement is a broad concept which is related to other key terms concerning parent's inclusion in the education of their children (Wolfendale 1989). Other associated terms are; parent partnership, the empowerment of parents, and parental rights. All suggest active influence by parents in the education of their children although this may be manifested at different levels (individual child, school collaboration, community involvement and political involvement such as policy creation). However, the most commonly used term is partnership and usually describes the dynamic between individual professionals and individual parents. Although this paper examines partnership at many levels, the term will primarily be examined in relation to this dynamic. The term partnership has many meanings in education. Pugh (1989) argues that partnership implies:

- Shared purposes
- Mutual respect
- Willingness to negotiate
- Sharing of information
- Shared responsibility and accountability
- Shared decision making

These notions are also shared by Bastiani (1993) who defines partnership in terms of shared power, dialogue, responsibility, ownership and commitment to joint action. Furthermore, Wolfendale (1992) suggests four principles underlying parental partnership in education.

Table 8: Wolfendale's Four Principles for Parent Partnership

Principles	Application to working together
Rights	Decision making in SEN at individual and macro level
Equality	Status between parents and professionals
Reciprocity	Collaboration, contribution and involvement of parents when working with others
Empowerment	Opportunities for parental development in their enablement and confidence as part of the education system

These principles will be explored throughout this paper with regard to the extent to which these principles were prevalent in my relationship with Isaac's parents, how far these principles have been reflected in research on parent partnership and also how these principles can be enhanced by EPs applying psychological theory, frameworks and interpersonal skills.

4.1 Partnership: a problematic concept?

Several theorists have argued that the concept of 'partnership with parents is problematic (Beveridge 2005, Wolfendale 1989, Vincent 1996). Wolfendale (1989) suggests that partnership 'is a slippery concept, probably because it is rarely manifest' (Wolfendale 1989 p107). Further than this, she argues that although parent partnership is espoused in educational discourse, the reality exists in legislation and policy but is not embedded within practice. Indeed, there has been conflicting evidence from research which explores parent partnership to meet the needs of SEN children. For example, from a professional stance, Bastiani (1993) argues that the areas of SEN and pre-school have embedded more of the principles of 'true' partnership than other areas in education. This may be attributed to explicit guidelines in SEN legislation (explored in the next section) impacting on increased

contact to meet the needs of this group of children. Research by Elkins et al (2003) on parents' attitudes to inclusion found that parents described collaboration with professionals as integral to effective inclusion. There have been several studies investigating parents' views on partnership (e.g. Russell 2007, O'Connor et al 2005, and Webb et al 2008). As part of the SEN Policy Options Group, Russell (2007) reviewed a number of studies accessing the views of parents of children with disabilities and found that they did not feel valued or have the respect of professionals. Thus, suggesting that Wolfendale's (1992) principles are indeed espoused rather than reflected in reality.

A study by O'Connor et al (2005) explored parental views on the statutory assessment process and educational provision planning for children with SEN with regard to whether their needs were met and how procedures could be improved. They found that parents suggested that professionals applied sensitivity in their approach which made parent's feel less stigmatised and more able to discuss stressful parts of the process but that improved communication was still needed. Although this study was undertaken in Northern Ireland, the formal procedures involved in statutory assessment are equivalent to English processes. The study sample had 1000 participants and utilised postal questionnaires and was triangulated with in-depth telephone interviews (with 10% of the sample) suggesting high validity and so findings could be generalised to a wider population of parents of children with SEN.

Research by Webb et al (2008) involving interviews with parents of children with disabilities found that parents termed the language used by professionals as often confusing and lacking in clarity. They also found that parents described the statutory

assessment process as complex. Connor (1997) also found that parents would like improved answers to their questions. Indeed, Frederickson et al (2004) acknowledge the importance of effective and responsive communication networks between both parties to ensure information is understood and acted upon. The study by O'Connor et al (2005) and further research by McConkey et al (2003) also found that parents prefer jargon free language and individual opportunities to receive information, in a safe environment, so as to develop relationships with professionals. In summary, these studies provide evidence to suggest that at present, parents report inconsistencies in parent partnerships despite legislation intended to increase their participation. This legislation will now be explored.

4.2 Rights: *A history of legislation on parental involvement*

The 1967 Plowden Report (HMSO 1967) stimulated interest in parental influence on children's educational achievements sowing the seeds of joint responsibility (Vincent 1996) and reciprocal accountability (Beveridge 2005) seen in Educational Policy today (Every Child matters: Change for Children 2004). Following this, the Warnock report (HMSO 1978) was a catalyst for future legislation concerning parental involvement in the education of their children with SEN. It suggested equality in partnership, through dialogue, between professionals and parents. Interest in parent partnership continued into the 1980s with the evolution of general schemes linking home and school as part of agenda to raise standards and address disadvantage by sharing power with parents (These are explored by the National Literacy Trust 2001 in their evaluation of home-school schemes). This was government policy imbued with parental rights set against a backdrop of what constituted good parental

involvement, thus suggesting a controlled role for parents in education and constrained choice in educational decisions for parents.

In terms of SEN, the1981 Education Act (HMSO 1981) introduced the right to refer for formal assessment, entitlement to contribute to SEN process and the right to appeal placement decisions. However, a Review by House of Lords (1987) '*House of Commons Special Educational Needs: Implementation of the Education Act 1981'* stated that a number of factors impacted on parents' abilities to exercise these rights. These were: inadequate information on assessment and resources provisions in Local Authorities (LA), insufficient support in completing parental assessments, a lack of weight given to parental views, and in reality, limited choice in provision dependent on LA resources. Thus, it may be inferred that espoused theory about parental involvement was not underpinned by mechanisms which would enable this. The 1981 Education Act was one of a number of government policies during the 1980s and 1990s which reflect New Right discourse advocating this consumer role for parents. Indeed, Kelley-Laine (1998) suggests that principles of democracy, accountability, consumer choice were linked to raising standards and addressing disadvantage agendas reflecting strategies employed by the Government to relocate blame for failure.

During the 1990s other acts extended rights for parents further. In particular, the 1994 Education Act which introduced the SEN Code of Practice (HMSO 1994) continued to emphasise the need for partnership in SEN and encouraged professionals to act upon parent's concerns and views during the assessment process but also introduced voluntary and LEA support for parents. It also added the inclusion of parents in early years SEN provision which could be accessed before the

age of two. The 1996 Education Act was introduced to support parental involvement in formal assessment parents through a secured named person and the Right to appeal decisions through SEN tribunals. This act further moved parents from a historically given 'client' role (Wolfendale 1983) to that of the consumer. However, these rights may be more beneficial to those who can better express themselves as other more vulnerable groups may be led by professionals in decision making. Indeed, Wolfendale (1997) asserts that parental representation does not secure empowerment in SEN processes due to such factors as individual professional views of parents and LA level decisions about provision.

The DfES 2001 Revised Code of Practice continued with the theme of partnership stating, 'All parents of children with SEN should be treated as partners' (paragraph 2.1). It stressed the need for professionals to value parental views, and utilise their understanding of their child's needs during the assessment process but also added the need for parental support and a rhetoric of empowerment (Beveridge 2005). The SEN Disability act 2001 (HMSO 2001) introduced compulsory provision of parent partnership services from Local Authorities and access for parents to information regarding SEN to support informed decisions. This was further updated in the 2004 DfES *Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for SEN* stating that clearer information is given to parents about resource allocation but also reinforcing the accountability of parents in the SEN process as a consequence of these rights. It may be inferred that this would strengthen parental involvement but again as Wolfendale (1997) suggests, representation may not increase empowerment, as it would be dependent on the type of support received from professionals.

4.3 Critique of legislation

Government rhetoric during the 1980s and 1990s suggests a strengthening of parental power through the right to exercise individual choice, although the legislation is not explicit in how parent's rights are enabled. Many (Bibby and Lunt 1996, Phillips 2005, Wolfendale 1989 and Bastiani 1993) argue that in reality parental choice is constrained through government regulation. For example, Isaac's parents have choice over the school they choose but not how he learns, what he learns or how he is assessed due to universal systems and organisational processes. For true involvement, structural amendments are needed sourced by collective parental involvement (Wolfendale 1992) which then impact at an individual level.

Building on this, Vincent (1996) argues that power operates at various levels and identifies macro level inequalities which structure the relationship between parents and professionals creating disequilibrium in power. She argues that organisational knowledge can desensitise professionals to structural inequalities which maintain the status quo; for example, empowering parents in decision making through an individual relationship but ignoring societal embedded constraints on choice. In their study of parent's views on SEN settings, Flewitt and Nind (2007) sent questionnaires to 19 parents of children with SEN triangulating this with 5 in-depth interviews and found that parents reported reduced choices in schools and conflicting advice from professionals terming this as 'informed confusion'. This suggests that choice is indeed constrained by Local Authority provision and educational knowledge. However, it is acknowledged that the sample group of parents was small and so would not necessarily be representative of the wider population of parents of SEN children

Furthermore and in relation to Wolfendale's (1992) concept of equality, Beveridge (2005) questions whether this underlying notion can be realised in partnership. He argues that although legislation (Warnock Report 1978, The Education Act 1981, The Parent's Charter 1994, The SEN Code of Practice 2001) underpins this philosophy, many professionals lack the skills needed to value insightful contributions from parents. Thus, rhetoric is mismatched with reality. Although a discussion of macrolevel power issues has been explored, for the purposes of this paper, partnership will now be explored in relation to the parent-professional relationship at a microlevel.

4.4 Equality

Although professionals may adhere to principles of equality in their work with parents, this may not be reflected in reality. The following section explores factors affecting equality including studies indicating parental perceptions which may indicate that equality is not realised. The Warnock report (1978) defined the relationship between parents and professionals as 'a partnership and ideally an equal one' (HMSO 1978 p151). However, Gascoigne (1995) presents a series of dichotomies affecting the parent-professional power dynamic in relation to their involvement with children with SEN which suggests that 'true' partnership may not be an achievable aim. These are presented below.

Table 9: Gascoigne's models of parent: professional relationships

Parent	Professional
Unpaid	paid
Compulsory involvement	Voluntary involvement
Permanent role	Episodic involvement
Continuous responsibility	Sporadic responsibility
Untrained	Trained
Inexperienced	Experienced
Isolated	Networked
Subjective view	Objective view
Holistic appraisal	Judgement based on 'snapshot' assessment opportunity

Adapted from Gascoigne (1995)

These differences in role could influence the equilibrium of power in parent professional relationships through the assumptions of the other party. For example, concerning the compulsory/voluntary descriptor, a parent may perceive their wishes for their child to be more genuine as they have emotional investment and continued responsibility. Parents may compare this against a professional fulfilling duties and making decisions on behalf of their organisation which may impact on the relationship in terms of parents' assumptions of the powerful role of a professional (Hegarty 1993). In my case, as an EP, I could be perceived as the gatekeeper to provision with supporting knowledge of the education system and assessment procedures. A study by Fylling and Sandvin (1999) with parents and teachers of children with SEN in Norway found that parents feel that their views are not taken into account or valued by teachers, thus suggesting that parents perceive a power imbalance. This is further acknowledged, when considering that a networked

professional may have the support of other professionals through access to knowledge, supervision and services whereas a parent may lack support from professionals, family or other parents with children with SEN. This may indicate vulnerability on the parents part (Gascoigne 1995).

Also, of particular relevance is the experience/inexperience descriptor (Gascoigne 1995) as it may be construed in different ways. Gascoigne (1995) intends it to mean experienced in knowledge of child development and education. However, Wolfendale (1992) argues that parents have valuable experience and knowledge about their own child providing holistic views and realistic appraisals, perhaps resulting in them as experts. Each partner needs to acknowledge the skills, experience and knowledge of the other thus validating their contribution. Beveridge (2005) argues that equality is an unachievable aim and suggests that equity may be a more appropriate term. He suggests that both parental knowledge, based on emotional investment and in-depth knowledge of individual children, and professional knowledge, of child development and education, are different but equivalent. In agreement with this, Wolfendale (1983) terms this 'equivalent expertise'. However, this may not be realised in reality. For example, psychological advice is not equally weighted in terms of professional and parental contribution and also studies have indicated parental dissatisfaction with their involvement in the statutory assessment process (O'Connor et al 2005).

In a study exploring parents' perceptions of partnerships with teachers in Bangalore, Hornby (1995) found that parents wanted an increase in the acceptance of their viewpoints, more influence on decision making in their child's education and professional admittance when they have gaps in their knowledge indicating that there

are imbalances in contributions to decisions. However, the study was reliant on information from focus groups drawn from a sample group containing thirty teachers and twenty parents of children with special educational needs in Bangalore. Caution should therefore be used in generalising these findings to all professional-parent relationships particularly comparing with British counterparts. Also, data collected from the focus groups may have eliminated extreme views in drawing consensus but alternatively conflicts may have skewed the views of the group towards a particular direction (Robson 2002). Individual interviews may have produced more reliable and representative responses from participants. Despite these limitations, the study does highlight some parental views of involvement in SEN issues.

4.5 Models of parent-professional partnerships

Building on acknowledged differences in parent-professional relationships, Cunningham and Davis (1985) offer three models for distinguishing between different parent-professional relationships which may influence power differentials; the expert model, transplant model and the consumer model. The expert model refers to professionals who consider their knowledge as superior to that of the parent's tacit knowledge thus little value is given to parent's views. The professional delivers advice and dominate decisions which results in a passive role reliant on professional decisions and advice thus reducing their influence on processes. The adoption of this model would have several implications for an EP's role in the statutory assessment process. Firstly, important information regarding children's needs may be disregarded or overlooked which may result in provision which does not match the child's needs. Secondly, it does not account for issues which may be affecting the parents and thus linking with ecological theory on wider influences directly affecting

the child (Dale 1995 and Hornby 1995, explored in more detail at a later point). Also, this style of partnership would have long term effects as it may not be perceived as meaningful. A parent of a child with SEN will need continued long term involvement with education professionals and so early relationships will provide a template for later relationships with professionals, if dissatisfied this could be problematic to collaborative support for a child with SEN. Therefore, the expert model does not employ Wolfendale's (1992) principles of partnership due to a weakened parental role.

The transplant model is utilised by professionals who give primary consideration to their expert knowledge but acknowledge that parental knowledge has some value. Professionals would expect that their knowledge would be adopted by parents when making decisions about their children. This model may increase the likelihood of parental wishes being met but is far from meeting Wolfendale's (1992) equality principle of partnership and rather than creating empowerment, similar to the expert model, it may cause dependency (Hornby 1995). Alternatively, parents may be more satisfied with a balance of advice and consideration of their views by professionals. Although, Hornby (1995) does suggest that the transplant model may overburden parents taking on professional advice.

The third model of parent-professional relationships proposed by Cunningham and Davis (1985) is the consumer model. This is characterised by the recognition of parents as consumers (underpinned by legislation from the new Right era). Professionals provide information for parents through consultation, whilst parents maintain responsibility for decision making. This reverses the dominant role of the professional, as epitomized by the expert and transplant models, resulting in an

'expert' parent role. However, Hornby (1995) identifies mixed effects from this type of partnership; firstly, parental satisfaction with the realisation of increased power but also the possibility of uninformed decisions about school placement with professionals reduced responsibility. Indeed, in terms of Wolfendale's principles (1992), it may be suggested that parental rights have been exercised, parents have increased power and are enabled but perhaps this model does not reflect true collaboration between partners as the relationship may not be reciprocal if professionals do not utilise their knowledge effectively.

In response to the three models, Hornby (1995) adds a fourth dimension, the partnership model. In this model, the different types of knowledge held by parents and professionals are equally weighted. The parent is regarded as an 'expert' on their child using experiential knowledge to evidence their views whereas the professional is regarded as an educational 'expert'. This type of partnership based on mutual respect (Hornby 1995, Hanko 1999) facilitates Wolfendale's (1992) principles of partnership with parent's exercising their right to make decisions about their child, achieving equality and reciprocity in the partnership which in turn may maximise the chances of empowerment.

On reflection, my partnership with Isaac's parents was founded on this model of partnership, indeed there were times when I utilised my knowledge of the statutory assessment process but balanced with this was parental knowledge of Isaac, resulting in a sharing of power holistically although it fluctuated during interactions. Although this model may realise these principles, Hornby (1995) does conclude that these models should not be applied rigidly when working with parents recommending flexibility in approach as there may be situations whereby parental needs may require

a particular style of response by professionals and so practice should be informed by this rather than by extreme ethical positions.

4.6 Critique of partnership models

Utilising models to describe forms of parental partnership can generalise and simplify the complex nature of parent-professional relationships. Indeed, McConkey (1985) argues that parents are a heterogeneous group with unique experiences, beliefs and knowledge which affect the parent-professional dynamic. Thus, partnership can be undermined by assumptions of the 'other' by either party. Relationships should be developed with reference to understanding of individual needs and family structures. In the case of parents of children with complex needs such as physical or medical conditions, it may be inferred that complexity will increase. Psychological theories which highlight the complexities involved in such relationships will now be explored with reference to my knowledge of Isaac's family situation.

5. A complex picture: issues facing parents of children with SEN

Gascoigne (1995) discusses the significance of possible mismatches between externalised behaviours and internalised states of parents when interacting with professionals. She uses a psychodynamic framework to identify emotional reactions associated with parenting a child with SEN. Indeed, a considerable amount of theory exists regarding the acceptance process of parents with children with SEN particularly a serious medical condition or physical disability (Hornby 1995, Dale 1996, Gascoigne 1995, Connor 1997, Heiman 2002, Perryman 2005). A study from Heiman (2002) reports that 28% of the 32 parents still felt anger when experiencing

situations where their child would be compared to children without disabilities (e.g. transitions to school). He also reports that most of the parents reacted negatively to their child's diagnosis. Again within the psychodynamic stance, Hornby (1995) provides a continuum model which describes the process of coming to terms with the reality of having a child with SEN, based on the Kubler-Ross (1969) model of mourning. It tracks emotional reactions from the problem identification stage to assimilation of the information. This is shown below.

Table 10: Hornby's model of parental acceptance of Special Educational Needs

Stage	Description
Shock	Experienced emotions such as confusion, numbness and helplessness in response to diagnosis. May result in parents avoiding support from professionals.
Denial	Disbelief in news acts as a coping strategy resulting in needs for second opinions on their child's needs
Anger	Anger may manifest in searches for causes (family or professionals). Guilt may accompany individual blame.
Sadness	Grieving starts for the loss of a healthy child.
Detachment	Characterized by feelings of emptiness and life seems meaningless
Re-organization	Parents focus on the situation and begin to look to future hopes
Acceptance	Parents are aware of the child's needs and work towards meeting these

(Adapted from Hornby 1995).

Hornby (1995) acknowledges the simplicity of this model particularly as a linear sequence and suggests that it should be interpreted in terms of the phenomological experiences of individuals rather than as a prescriptive process in a consistent and

continuous order. Indeed, Perryman (2005) argues that the grieving process for parents of children with disabilities is a fluid process. Therefore, such models of parental loss for a 'healthy' child should be used to provide understanding of parental reactions. Thus, professionals should be aware of the possibility of these emotional reactions, which may not have disappeared before the transition to school (Gascoigne 1995) and apply sensitivity in their practice. Awareness of the model may also be useful when reflecting on dialogue during parental interactions. In the case of Isaac, he is still young and without a formal diagnosis, from this it may be inferred that his parents may be going through this process especially as medical professionals are still trying to decide between cerebral or muscular causes of the Hypotonia. This information is crucial for long term prognosis and so it would be hard to reach the reorganization and acceptance phase without this. Although diagnosis is not needed for school provision, this may cause added pressure when making decisions about placement. In terms of general contact with parents of children with SEN, it is worth noting Hornby's (1995) point that parents may re-experience these emotions at later stages particularly at transitional times in the child's life.

Connor (1997) argues that the choice of a special school placement may represent a sense of bereavement for the child's parents and the need to protect them through access to staff with better knowledge and extra facilities. This connects with the views of Isaac's mother. Indeed, Curtin and Clarke (2005) found that protective themes were implicated in school choice decisions, by parents of children with physical disabilities in special schools. Also, Heiman (2002) reported that 55% of the parents in his study were concerned about their child's inclusion in society thus special provision provided a protective function against social attitudes. In addition, Lightfoot et al (2001) argue that the protective theme would be particularly relevant

for parents of children with medical conditions as the amount of care needed would be more significant. Thus, acknowledgement of this protective desire needs to be taken into account by EPs if there are discrepancies between parental and professional views on school placement.

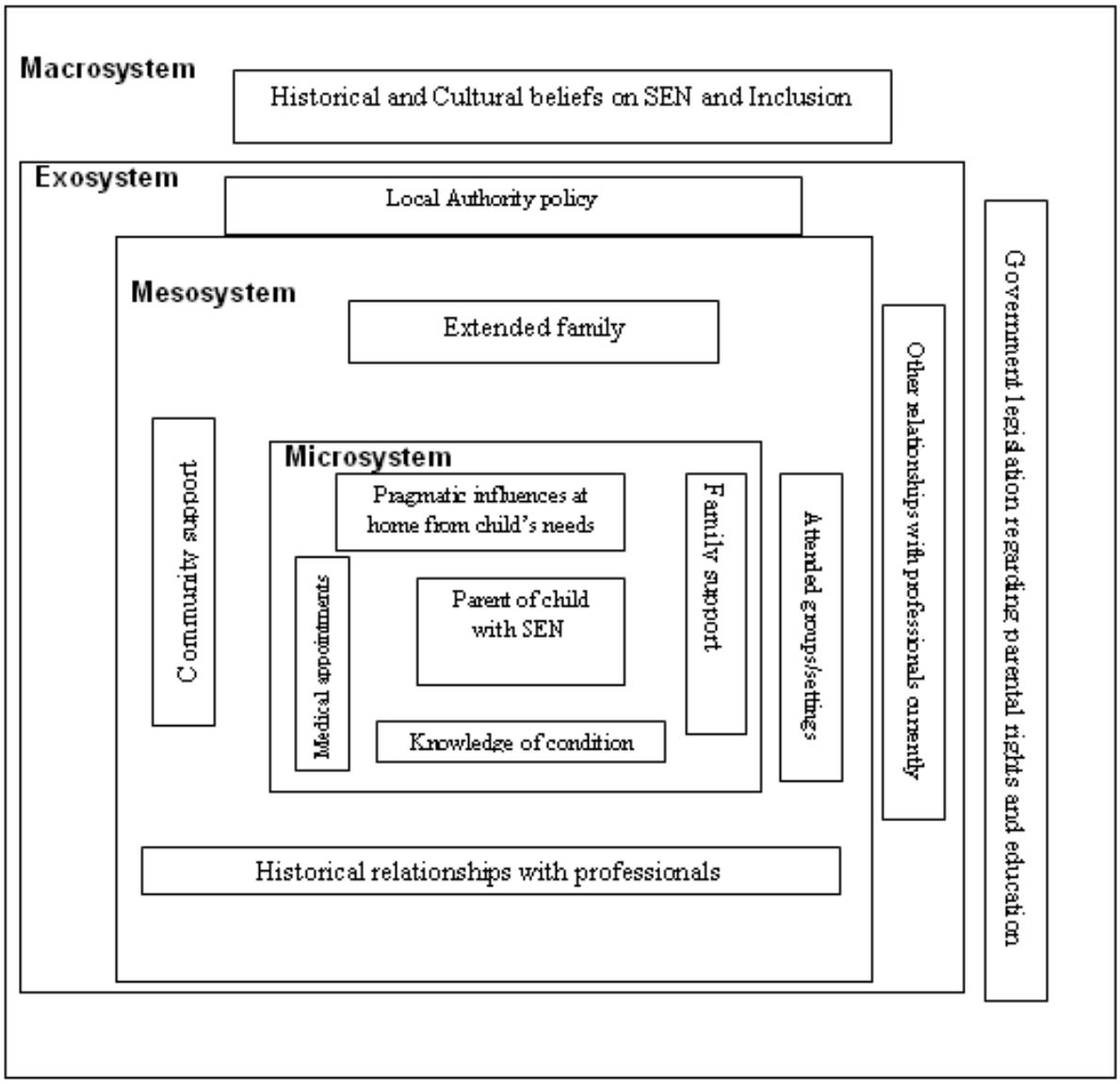
Other considerations when considering the parent's experience in participating in the statutory assessment process have been described by Roos (1978) who argues that parent's may experience conflict in terms of past orientation. This is defined as difficulty anticipating a child's future in adverse circumstances. Parents of children with complex SEN may not be able to plan the educational future of their child as present pragmatic and life threatening circumstances may mean that they live in the present. In such circumstances, this may make the statutory assessment process a lesser priority. From my interactions with Isaac's parents, I would suggest that their hopes for their son are connected to his future educational placement in a special school and so they are able to think about education at this point. For example, his mother stated, 'when he goes to school in September, he will be able to have more physiotherapy which should improve his head control'.

5.1 Eco-systemic theory and the parent's perspective : Microlevel influences

Another theory which provides an understanding of factors which may influence parent's experiences and directly affect relationships with professionals is the ecosystemic model (Bronfenbrenner 1979). This can be used to explore the interaction of different levels of the social environment on the behaviour of parents with children with SEN. In terms of interactions between the EP and the parent

during the Statutory Assessment process, the following factors may need to be considered and are represented in the following diagram.

Figure 4: Ecological diagram showing influences on parent partnership from the parent's perspective



Adapted from Poole (2003) p171.

Firstly, at the micro-level, Russell (2005) argues that professionals need to acknowledge the parent's role in caring for the child, which is reflected in terms of

emotional investment and also variations in their knowledge of their child's disability. She argues that understanding that parent's expectations are closely linked to their needs at different stages of the child's life is integral to successful partnerships. Also, specific types of need will affect family functioning (Hornby 1995). The SEN Code of Practice acknowledges this stating, 'All staff should bear in mind the pressures a parent may be under because of the child's needs' (Paragraph 2.6 SEN Code of Practice 2001).

The family systems perspective provides insight into parental experiences during the statutory assessment process. This interactive model explains the dynamic processes which occur between a parent and their child with SEN resulting in holistic family needs and is essential for understanding family structures which may influence parent-professional interactions (Beveridge 2005). For example, due to Isaac's age and his medical condition, Isaac is completely dependent on his parents for all his basic needs. This will mean pragmatic issues for his parents (Gascoigne 1995) such as feeding, changing, monitoring his physical health, attending appointments and taking time off work which may result in additional stress in the family environment. Therefore, professionals need to be aware of this extra strain which is reliant on coping, adaptation and caring skills (Perryman 2005). Indeed, O' Connor et al (2005) found that parents preferred a sensitive and supportive approach by professionals in meeting their needs when involved in planning processes on behalf of their children.

The application of an ecosystemic approach to meeting parent's needs in SEN processes is also suggested by Carpenter (1998) who argues that a family centred approach is essential as it; reflects respect for diversity, is flexible to both pragmatic and emotional needs, and has parental choice at the centre of decision making. He

particularly highlights the need for professionals to evaluate their practice in considering how they can meet individual needs and enable families in the process. When giving assessment information about Isaac, his parents reported many pragmatic constraints on their family and I responded empathetically to acknowledge these issues as well as giving information about their contributions to the assessment process in order to reduce further anxiety.

5.2 Wider Influences

Also, families may be affected by the meso-level systems in which they participate. For example, reactions from neighbours, extended family and the extent to which they are supported may influence the way parents interact with professionals and on their decisions about educational placement (Russell 2005). Thus, those without support systems may need more sensitivity and information from professionals. Next, influences on parental responses are considered in terms of the exosystem. The quality of relationships with other professionals both currently and previously may also affect the present relationship (Gascoigne 1995) suggesting that a transactional understanding of parent-professional relationships needs to be considered. For example, Isaac's parents have had extensive experience with medical professionals due to the nature of his condition which may impact on their knowledge of the condition and thus their confidence in giving knowledge in the assessment process. Their experience of professionals would also influence their perceptions of the quality of the service and so influence the present relationship. In this case, parents have reported a good relationship with their portage worker but have highlighted the lack of communication with other agencies. This influences the

need to establish good communication routes and for clarity when giving information about the timescale in the statutory assessment process.

Using personal construct theory (Kelly 1955), Roffey (2002) argues that parents hold constructs of themselves, professionals and the education system. In support of this, Russell (2005) suggests that parents' own experiences of education, authority roles and previous social interactions all influence the professional-parent relationship. A study by Burstein et al (2005) demonstrates this point. They undertook a 4 year study with parents of children with medical disabilities and those with general developmental delay and examined their interactions with medical professionals, through analysis of taped conversations. They found that the parents of children with medical disabilities were more confident with the professionals than those who had little experience of discussions with professionals which may indicate that they had a higher level of participation. They also found that parent participation was linked positively to gathering information for assessment purposes thus suggesting that establishing good relationships with parents enables a richer picture of the child which is integral for assessment purposes.

Thus, this study shows how partnership is affected by previous professional relationships and so needs to be taken into account by professionals when developing partnerships with parents. It may also suggest that parents of children with medical conditions may have increased knowledge of their condition which could result in increased confidence in dealing with professionals which may reduce power differentials in the parent-professional relationship. However, it is acknowledged that this study was undertaken in America and involved a small sample of 100 parents and so generalisation of the findings may not be representative of a wider population

of parents with children with complex SEN. Further to this, the study explored relationships with medical professionals rather than educational professionals which may have different power dynamics underlying the relationships.

Lastly, macrosystem influences would also underlie interactions between parents and professionals in terms of cultural beliefs and values (Beveridge 2005) such as parental understandings of inclusion and how these underlie decisions about school choices. Media portrayals of children with SEN may also influence parents' behaviour. Carpenter (2000) also acknowledges that parent's own religious or cultural beliefs may influence their relationships with professionals in terms of discrepancies between an expected role by professionals and cultural expectations of their parenting role.

6. A complex picture: The EP's perspective

Just as parents are influenced by different influences at different levels, professionals and so EPs are influenced by similar interacting factors. For example, Roffey (2002) using a socio-cultural framework highlights how internalised models influenced by cultural beliefs and values regarding parental roles may affect the parent-professional relationship. Indeed, the SEN Code of practice (paragraph 2.6, 2001) states that, 'stereotypic views of parents are unhelpful and should be challenged'. Munn (2005) argues that there is a historical tradition which has developed in education which presents parents as 'problems'. Although, Munn (1993) does suggest that there has been a shift in professional attitudes towards parents from 'the problem parent' to a recognised role in education enabled by legal rights. Vincent (1996) argues that this has its roots in the Plowden report (1969) which established dichotomous views of

parents (good/bad) based on their involvement in their children's education. Research by Connor (1997) exploring parental views on SEN involvement suggests that parents perceive that professionals attribute partial blame for their child's difficulties to them. Furthermore, Hanko (1999) suggests that parents may take on a sense of blame for their child's difficulty and this may result in parent's feeling judged by professionals. This is exemplified in a study by Bowers (1995) of relationships between parents and LEA professionals. They found that parents believed that professionals partially blamed parents for difficulties associated with their child. Hanko (1999) also describes how parents may feel threatened by a perceived omnipotent and omniscient professional in contrast with their traditional role as a receiver of information. Such misapprehensions may prevent effective communication or result in disagreements.

In addition, Vincent (1996) identifies particular roles performed by parents in parent-professional relationships which may affect professional views of parents. These are outlined below.

Table 11: Vincent's roles adopted by parents and professionals

Parent type	Description
Supporter	Preferable to professionals as support educational issues through the absorption of professional views
Consumer	Parents exercise their rights to choice but are accountable and responsible for their child's educational trajectory.
Independent	Disaffected by own educational experiences, these parents demonstrate a passive role and decreased involvement in education. However, they may be prevented from active participation from such issues as emotional strain, child care, language, monetary restrictions.
Participant	Active in education system at one or more of a number of levels (individual child, school, local or national)

Adapted from Vincent (1996) p44.

Gascoigne (1995) also provides other performed parental roles similar to those of Vincent (1996) which may influence professional responses. Again, she utilises psychodynamic theory and explores the implications of past experiences on current professional relationships. Psychodynamic theory argues that we adopt ego defence mechanisms as protection from anxiety. For example, the projection of internal anxiety directed at others and displacement where angry feelings are directed at another person causing conflict. These are unconscious processes which may manifest in parent-professional relationships.

Table 12: Gascoigne's parental roles

Parent role	Description	Parental reality	Professional implications
Articulate, assertive, educated	The parent knows their rights and understands the education system.	Defence mechanism where external behaviour is not congruent with internal feelings.	Professional may perceive a distant relationship between the parent and their own child or they may be threatened by the perceived confidence of the parent.
Angry, Knowledgeable	Well informed and contradict knowledge of professional	Angry about previous involvement of professionals	Professional may have to deal with conflicts in decision making and criticism of their views.
Submissive	Agree with professionals, lacking in confidence	May disagree but not able to express this and so dissatisfaction could grow.	Professional may presume that decisions are jointly agreed.
Uncaring	Appears unconcerned about child	Own difficult school experience affects relationship with educational professionals	Professionals may assume that the parent is not committed to actions and this may underlie discussions.
Angry – ill informed	Appear confrontational	Distressed about child and have difficulty accepting difficulties	Professional need to give clear information to avoid confusion.
Fighting parent	Interested in fighting the system rather than their	Professional's perceived as	Professionals need to be transparent in their role

	child's needs	gatekeeper to resources	and in explaining the system.
Special needs parent	Emotional or learning difficulties (possibly similar to the child's needs)	Frustration or confusion if not able to explain their views	Avoid unequal relationship

(Adapted from Gascoigne, 1995).

Professionals may tend to value the supporter parent if they take a defensive position from underlying feelings of anxiousness about their lack of knowledge of a condition (Gascoigne 1995) and impose their knowledge about education issues to the parent rather than ask their view. Alternatively they may prefer the consumer or the participant role in line with current legislation. However, the independent parent may reflect the historical view of the parent as described by Munn (2005) and may influence professional views of parents. Wolfendale (1989) argues that professionals should recognise parents as individuals rather than assume that a lack of participation reflects 'bad' parenting skills. Again, considering Roffey's (2002) micro level pragmatic influences should act against this.

The above models of parental roles appear rigid and simplistic. Indeed, Fylling and Sandvin (1999) argue that typologies of parents are more complex as parents may take different roles at different times in process and with different professionals particularly as dialogue progresses. However, these models may highlight particular styles adopted by parents and provide professionals with opportunities to reflect on the reasons for adopting these roles. Indeed, in discussing partnerships with parents, the SEN Code of Practice (DfES 2001) states,

> 'These partnerships can be challenging, requiring positive attitudes by all, and in some circumstances additional support and encouragement for parents. '
>
> SEN Code of Practice (DfES 2001, paragraph 2.2).

6.1 How can EPs increase parent partnership?

The following points regarding parent partnership have been generated from the above research and theory and are summarised below:

- Consideration by professionals of pragmatic and emotional issues faced by parents of children with SEN (Connor 1997 and O'Connor 2005).

- Acknowledgement by professionals that parents may find the statutory assessment process challenging (SEN Code of Practice 2001, McConkey 2005).

- The need for mutual respect including professionals valuing parents' 'equivalent expertise' with regard to their child (Wolfendale 1983 and Hanko (1999).

- Professional reflection on power issues affecting equality (Gascoigne 1995).

- The need for parents views to be taken into account in decisions about their child (Hornby 1995, Fylling and Sandvin 1999).

- Improved communication to facilitate differences in world views which are influenced by ecosytemic factors (Hegarty 1993).

Next, a selection of psychological theories, approaches and skills will be explored and related to the above findings. Two questions will be answered in relation to this: What aspects of parent partnership were evident between Isaac's parents and myself and how can EPs increase parent partnership?

6.2 Developing communication

There is a need for EPs to examine their communication skills when working with parents. Indeed, the SEN code of practice (paragraph 2.7, 2001) states:

Table 13: SEN Code of Practice (2001) on effective communication

'To make communications effective professionals should:

- acknowledge and draw on parental knowledge and expertise in relation to their child
- focus on the children's strengths as well as areas of additional need
- recognise the personal and emotional investment of parents and be aware of their feelings
- ensure that parents understand procedures, are aware of how to access support in preparing their contributions, and are given documents to be discussed well before meetings
- respect the validity of differing perspectives and seek constructive ways of reconciling different viewpoints
- respect the differing needs parents themselves may have, such as a disability, or communication and linguistic barriers
- recognise the need for flexibility in the timing and structure of meetings.'

(The SEN Code of Practice 2001, paragraph 2.7).

Many of these statements have been referred to in previous sections. In my case, I felt that I did value Isaac's parent's knowledge on him and give information on procedures within their home setting. However, I perhaps did not consider the personal and emotional investments of the parents during the interaction and did not

perceive any difference in viewpoints as there was a shared view on special school as an appropriate placement. In consideration of meeting the SEN Code of practice (DfES 2001) objectives, the EP can rely on both psychological theory and interpersonal skills. For example, Hornby (1995) recommends the use of four effective listening skills: attentiveness, paraphrasing, passive listening and active listening. Attentiveness involves eye contact, an open and relaxed posture and awareness of the distance between the speakers and a non-distracting environment. This is important as it will reflect interest in parents thus contributing to their perception of how much their opinion is valued and could be considered a prerequisite to the reciprocal principle outlined by Wolfendale (1992).

Secondly, paraphrasing is defined as summarising and feeding back a factual version of what has been said to clarify meaning. This is useful in checking that another person's viewpoint has been understood. Passive listening is defined by the use of open questions, non-verbal invitations to speak, pausing to allow further elaboration by a speaker. Active listening is characterised by the active engagement with the thoughts and feelings of the speaker. This is useful in understanding the parent's position as suggested by Roffey (2002) and supports suggestions from Paige-Smith and Rix (2006) that professionals need to be aware of parental experiences and views. Applying these four listening skills may impact on parental perceptions of mutual respect and reduce power imbalances, although time may constrain this. Indeed, the Farrell report (Farrell et al 2006) stated that EPs have developed good working relationships and are using effective communication skills with parents. However, in reality, in may be difficult for EPs to apply these skills consistently as difficult conversations may not allow for planned responses (Schon

1987). However, careful application of these skills may contribute to the de-escalation of incidents.

6.3 Increasing mutual respect

Hanko (1999) and Pugh (1983) argue that SEN partnership should be based on mutual respect. The application of humanistic theory provides a basis for achieving this through its underlying principle that individuals construe the world in different ways of which all are equally valid (Hough 2006). Thus, interactions with parents should be person centred in nature. This would respond to parent's views, wanting individual responses, in the research from Flewitt and Nind (2007). This idea builds on Rogers (1961) core conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence or genuineness. Applying empathy and understanding parents' views of the world (Hegarty 1993) and expectations (Russell 2005) would mean that their contributions would be valued and understanding of how parents feel about the statutory assessment process would be gained. Also, unconditional positive regard exemplified by an acceptance and non-judgemental attitude towards parents and their views, would increase respect for individual circumstances and affect power dynamics. Lastly, a sense of genuineness (congruence) would convey an openness, sincerity and honesty to parents which would contribute towards mutual respect and trust. Wolfendale (1989) argues that such specialist skills which reflect sensitivity are integral to building mutual respect between parents and professionals and this may respond to findings from research by Connor (1997) that indicated that parents would like professionals to demonstrate that they have taken their concerns seriously and their opinions acted upon in decision making. Practice based upon Roger's (1961)

conditions should be particularly useful in statutory assessment work with parents in understanding different views on provision.

6.4 Professional approaches: Consultation

The consultation approach used by my service has its roots in the consultation model developed by Wagner (1995) and is based on systemic, personal construct and symbolic interactionist perspectives recognising that problems are individualistic, complex and multi-layered. The approach explores the client's views and is used as a problem solving tool. It would seem an effective approach for working with parents. Indeed, this approach underpinned my work with Isaac's parents although there were no difficult conversations which involved complex problem solving. It is based on the following principles:

- a transparency of the professional role
- reflexivity
- a solution focused style
- equality of roles
- the empowerment of clients
- problem solving should be collaborative

It would seem that this approach may facilitate conversations with parents which explore situations at many levels in line with the ecosystemic approach (Dale 1996). Its solution focused stance would be useful in dealing with conflicting views through reframing (Wagner 1995) and the collaborative approach would increase parental participation in procedures and decision making which impacts on the reciprocity

principle highlighted by Wolfendale (1992). Lastly, in principle, the empowerment theme should also increase partnership. Indeed, Norwich (2000), on behalf of the Special Educational Needs Policy Options Steering Group, recommended consultation mechanisms which are flexible in meeting individual parent's needs towards empowering parents of young children with SEN. However, in reality, this may be difficult as the approach does not give specific directions on how to increase empowerment and so would be dependent on individual professional application of the approach.

6.5 Increasing empowerment

Increasing empowerment may be partially addressed by Gascoigne's recommendations (1995) which identify several ways to increase parental contributions in SEN processes. These have been related to my involvement with Isaac's parents in the statutory assessment process.

Table 14: Gascoigne's recommendations for increasing parental contribution

Gascoigne's recommendations for increased parental contribution	My actions
Information given about educational processes	Discussion giving an overview of the Statutory assessment process
Professional role is explained	EP role was explained with reference to Statutory Assessment and provision
Assessments and those involved in assessing are described	My role, other professionals and the purpose of assessment was explained
Parents are notified of the decisions that they will have to make and the rights they have in making the decisions	Discussion of school choice, agreement with the Statutory Assessment process beginning and agreement with the proposed statement.
Parents know what their contribution is and how it will be used	The importance of parental knowledge about I was discussed and the purpose of the PIPP

	chart was discussed before use.
Parents are informed about where they can access support	An overview of the roles of Parent Partnership and SENAS and relevant phone numbers were given
Parents have a knowledge of appropriate schools for their child	Explanations of various types of provision were given and the advantages and disadvantages were discussed

An example of the script used on the initial home visit which details these aspects is provided in appendix 1.

By providing parents with clear information, this should have impacted on their understanding of the statutory assessment process and enable informed choices. However, I am aware that jargon was used which may have been unfamiliar and is highlighted by McConkey (2003) and O'Connor (2005) as a parental concern. I tried to ensure explanations were given to supplement this but on reflection, written information, which the parents could peruse afterwards, may have increased their knowledge further. Utilising Gascoigne's (1995) recommendations regarding information may contribute to increased confidence in expressing views by parents as increased understanding of the system may begin to empower parents in advocating for their child at a later stage (Wolfendale 1983).

7. Conclusion

Wolfendale (1989) argues that 'Partnership is an ambitious goal and should perhaps be only an aspiration' (Wolfendale 1989, p108). My reflections on the case reveal that many of Pugh's (1989) principles regarding partnership were achieved, for example, shared purposes in planning for provision, an underlying principle of respect and the sharing of relevant information. With regard to shared decision

making, the nature of Isaac's needs meant that there was shared agreement on the type of provision needed. However, other cases may not be so clearly delineated resulting in unequal influence on educational placement decisions for parents. Thus, future casework may fall short of Pugh's (1989) principle regarding shared decision making.

Wolfendale (1985) argues that 'authentic partnership' is based on interactions whereby parents actively participate in decisions and are perceived as having equivalent expertise. Current legislation (e.g. SEN Code of Practice, 2001) supports this view. However, evidence from research (e.g. Russell, 2007, O'Connor, 2005, Webb et al, 2008, McConkey et al 2003 and Fylling and Sandvin 1999) suggests that parents of children with SEN are not fully satisfied that their views are taken into account in educational processes. They imply that although professionals are often sensitive, they do not value parental views and suggest that current systems of communication do not fully meet their needs. Therefore, professionals working with parents need to consider how they can improve communication and the extent to which parents are included in educational decisions.

Many of the skills and principles highlighted above have been successfully used by other professionals in direct work with parents (e.g. listening skills, mutual respect and collaborative effort). However, reflections on my interactions with Isaac's parents and examination of psychological theory have revealed a complex set of dynamic influences on parent partnership which may not be immediately evident. In contrast to other professionals, educational psychologists can rely on the eclectic application of psychological frameworks and skills which create awareness of professional and parental assumptions, power differentials, individual needs, expectations and beliefs.

Cameron (2006) argues that it is the recognition of different perspectives and understanding that different belief systems that provides a qualitatively different role for EPs. Indeed, utilising an eco-systemic framework and considering parent partnership as a complex process with multi-level influences may provide a richer picture of relationships and thus improve their quality in collaborative planning situations. Thus, understanding the dynamic nature of the process means that EPs could influence and extend parental agency leading to long term empowerment. This suggests that EPs can contribute to more effective collaboration between parents and professionals at this interpersonal level.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CHANGE BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL: AN EXPLORATION OF A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO A BEHAVIOURAL REFERRAL IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL USING AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE EXAMPLE.

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Abstract

Educational psychologists (EPs) have been influenced in their practice by historically developed notions of the EP role. Polarised positions have been constructed; from an initial role as individual caseworker to the reconstructed systemic practitioner. As a result, there are discrepancies between perceptions of the EP role by stakeholders and the EP profession itself. Current educational legislation and policy presents both universal preventative strategies and directed interventions around individual children suggesting tensions in roles to meet outcomes for children. Against this background, this paper argues that the application of psychological theory and models should be the driving force of any EP intervention in line with the new training route for educational psychologists. This is illustrated through a case example showing how a pragmatic approach to a behavioural referral in a secondary school; both bridged this historical divide and led to positive outcomes for the individual and beyond. This was achieved through the implementation of a multi-modal therapeutic/collaborative intervention. The paper concludes by recommending that the future of the EP role may be pursued in this direction but that this would be strengthened by a developed evidence base in this area.

CHANGE BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL: AN EXPLORATION OF A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO A BEHAVIOURAL REFERRAL IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL USING AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE EXAMPLE.

1. Introduction: Aims

The purpose of this paper is to explore the nature of the EP role through the evaluation of a case study based on an individual case behavioural referral. This will be undertaken with reference to reviews of the literature in this area with particular reference to systemic, individual and therapeutic work as these aspects relate to specific features of the case study. The following questions will be examined:

- What is the history of the EP role in terms of ways of working?
- What are the advantages and limitations of particular ways of working?
- What is the current context surrounding the EP role?
- How do EPs envisage the future of the EP role?
- What is the rationale for and value of therapeutic work in EP work?
- What are the barriers and facilitators utilising therapy in the EP role?
- What was the rationale for utilising therapeutic and systemic working in the case study?
- How was the problem formulated and what approaches were used in the case study?
- What outcomes resulted from the case study?
- What were the strengths and limitations of the pragmatic approach used in the case study?

- What implications for EP practice have resulted from reflections on the case study?

1.1 Methodology

This paper is informed by a case study example originating from the author's practice as a trainee educational psychologist. This presumes a multiple method approach capturing various interrelating factors, rather than producing a single truth which ignores the complexity of schools as social settings which may be the case if inferred from a positivist paradigm. Information from the case study is explored in relation to published research regarding the EP role and aspects of working.

1.2 Search Strategies

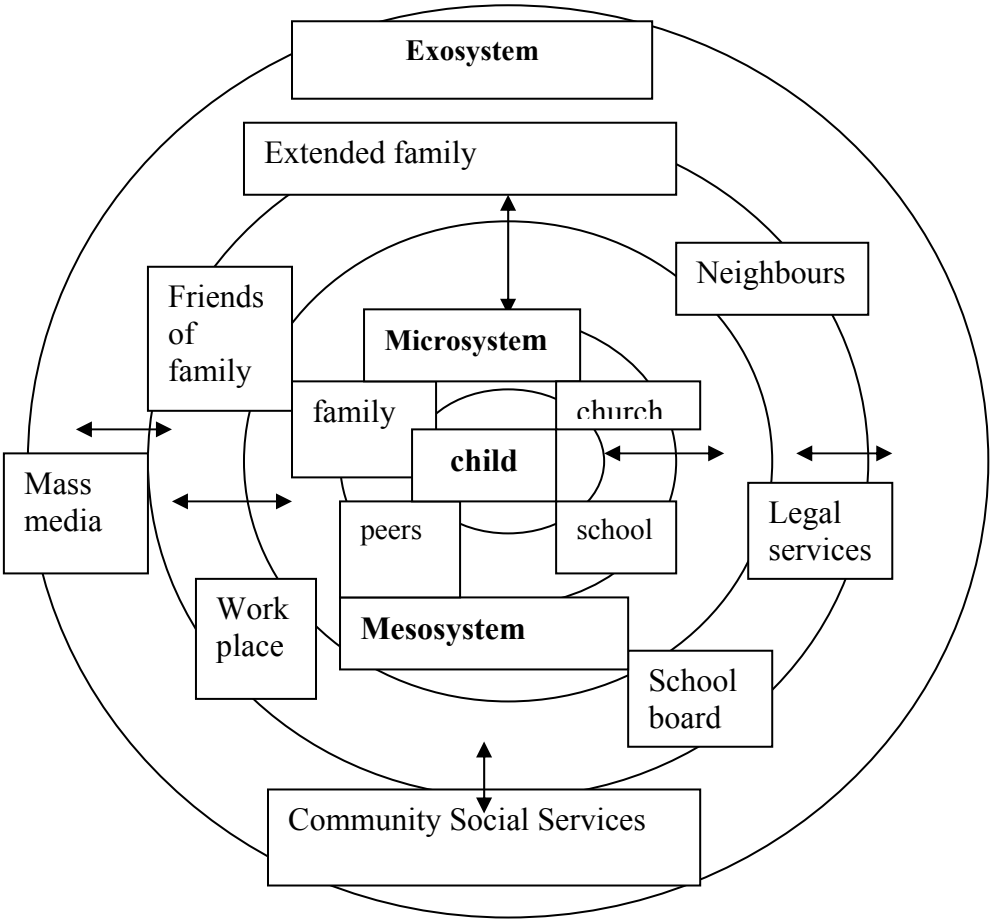
An outline of the methods used to locate relevant sources of information is presented below. Firstly, a 'snowballing' approach was used to identify published documents relating to the educational psychologists' role and research relating to therapeutic and systemic working. Secondly, internet search engines were employed to access recent relevant legislation in this area. Also, a literature search was undertaken by the author using a computer data base search including Assia and Swetswise. The search strategy used key concepts relating to the EP role and other key terms such as therapy, systemic working, consultation, personal construct psychology and solution focused approaches. The sources obtained were summarised and critiqued with regard to methodological aspects and epistemological assumptions in relation to resultant conclusions.

2. History of the EP role: Construction and reconstruction movement

Burt, in1913, is widely known as the first educational psychologist securing a role for EPs in assessing children's educational needs based on an individual differences approach (MacKay 2007). From 1913 onwards, educational psychologists were constructed as individual caseworkers through the application of psychometric and psychodynamic traditions (Burden 1999). This approach to assessment and intervention was characterised by a within-child/medical model whereby the problem is located within the individual resulting in a deficit based approach. Frederickson and Cline (2002) argue that such an approach relies on linear causation which provides a limited view of a reality which is inherently complex.

The reconstruction movement was characterised by a movement away from Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests to applying psychology to embedded systemic organisational problems (Gillham 1978). Systemic working became an aspiration of EP work from the 1970s onwards. This was a dramatic paradigm shift towards an interactionist model. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development is part of this interactionist tradition and shows multiple and mutual influences between individuals and the systems which surround them. This is shown below.

Figure 5: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model



Adapted from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of the child (Poole, J. 2003 p171)

Bronfenbrenner's model acknowledges continual transactional influences between an individual and their multiple environments. From this perspective, linear causations of problems become extinct. Instead, changes are linked to a variety of factors within an individual's life context resulting in circular causality. The reconstruction movement led to changes in approach by EPs with the employment of such methods as consultation (Wagner 1995) which involves indirect intervention to meet a child's needs through work with a significant person in a child's life (Bozic 2004). More than this though, systemic approaches infer change beyond the problem situation towards

capacity building when skills used in the current problem can be utilised to solve future problems. However, Stobie (2002b) identified school, service and Local Authority (LA) factors which influenced this pattern of service delivery. These include: school expectations, stakeholder understanding of the role of educational psychology, the competency and commitment of EPs to this new role and LA directives. Stobie (2002b) describes the reconstruction movement as an evolutionary process hindered by the above constraints on autonomy.

2.1 Individual work versus systemic working: advantages and disadvantages

Criticisms of the individual approach have been aimed at limitations in effecting change beyond the client. However, Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) argue that 'Individual casework should be an integral and essential part of the work of most applied psychologists and in educational psychology more so.' (Boyle and Lauchlan 2009, P81) as they suggest that it can successfully inform policy and organisational change inferring change beyond an individual level. This would indicate that change in one or multiple parts of a system may cause ripple effects. However, Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) do acknowledge that individual work with children has ceiling effects as it largely ignores interactions between the school environment and the child. This is considered as crucial to conceptualising problems from a systemic perspective. Another advantage of systemic practice is provided by Grieg (2007) who argues that systemic working is efficacious as a larger population of children can be supported at less cost.

However, EPs have also identified limitations to working systemically. A study by Farouk (1999) explored the effects of consultation on children with emotional and

behavioural difficulties through EPs' views. Farouk (1999) reports time constraints on information gathering in secondary settings. Also, EPs advocated the use of this collaborative problem solving approach but acknowledged the importance of developing constructive relationships and an established reputation for success. However, the views of the EPs in the sample may largely be influenced by the historical tradition of the reconstruction movement as they are likely to have been trained after this thus this systemic aspiration may be a professional norm.

Another advantage of systemic working was identified by Stobie (2002a) who argues that in terms of the school context, collaborative work on a case may lead to double-loop learning which is defined as 'conceptualisation change' in the way future problems are solved. However, Leyden (1999) reports constraints on fulfilling a systemic role with statutory obligations lessening opportunities to pursue developmental work to build capacity within educational organisations.

2.2 Current context for the EP role

Recent legislation (e.g. Every Child Matters, ECM DfEE 2003) has significantly shifted the way children's needs are met in education. Government concentration has been redirected towards emotional well-being with increasing recognition that a holistic strategy supports educational achievement. However, Finney (2006) argues that to date, school responses to mental health have been largely driven by crisis management due to the Government's main focus on raising standards. However, the introduction of the 2004 Children Act (DfES 2004) directed educational settings to contribute to emotional well being in response to a rise in the number of children experiencing mental health problems. Conversely, the introduction of ECM (DfEE

2004) and its focus on Multi-agency working including the Common Assessment Framework (CAF DfEE 2004) may suggest renewed interest in meeting individual children's needs again. Against this background, Baxter and Frederickson (2006) argue that educational psychology needs to employ effective strategies to add value and in doing this, discard limited ways of working whilst developing new areas. In considering this, they acknowledge the importance of meeting the needs of the client (child, school, LA) to clarify the type of work offered. They also highlight the current crisis between a value driven child-centred approach against a preventative systemic role which builds resilience. Boyle and McKay (2007) argue that the current context has impacted on educational psychology resulting in tensions between applications of psychology and existing practice. However, whilst there may be tensions between ways of working, there need not be an ethical dilemma as both would be ethically driven by inclusive principles and so affect change for children.

2.3 Current working practices undertaken by EPs

Recent studies have highlighted disparate views on service delivery patterns as conceptualised by EPs and stakeholders. The Farrell report (Farrell et al 2006) explored the views of EPs, PEPs, LA officers, other professionals and young people on EP contributions to ECM and reported that colleagues working within Children's Services (health and social care) appreciated the EP contribution to complex individual casework particularly therapy, with all stakeholders agreeing that this would be a valuable role. However, Batten (2008) argues that the report is limited in terms of its validity due to unrepresentative samples. She also suggests bias in its contents due to funding responsibilities.

A study by Ashton and Roberts (2006) found discrepancies between EP and SENCO perceptions of the type of work they value. EPs rate systemic work whilst SENCOs highlighted support for individual children. The difference may reflect the historical background of the reconstruction movement and training influencing EPs' preference; whilst service delivery and how this is communicated may have affected SENCOs understanding of the EP role. This study was carried out in one Local Authority (LA) with 9 EPs and 58 SENCOs. Questionnaires were utilised to obtain views with a response rate of 38% for the SENCO participants and 8 of the 9 EPs. Thus, the sample size is not significant enough to be representative of the wider population of EPs and SENCOs. Also, the survey was undertaken in one LA which would have particular service delivery patterns again, which may not be representative of EP work generally.

A study of Scottish educational psychologists' work practices by Thomson in 1998 suggested that EPs were delivering a range of different services including individual casework and in-service training. EPs acknowledged that school-based stakeholders accepted this range of services but that individual assessment and intervention was still a priority. In agreement with the recommendations of Ashton and Roberts' (2006) study, they highlighted clearer communication about EP services as integral to shifting school priorities. However, this research may not be representative of the wider population of British EPs due to the sampling strategy focusing on Scotland and also with regards to data collection, only 53% of EPs responded from 189 questionnaires distributed.

Historically then, the EP role has been characterised by a polarisation of the two positions with stakeholders and EPs holding different views on the importance of the two approaches. Thomson (1998) takes a different position stating,

> 'I would integrate casework/development work rather than postulate them as alternatives … [I prefer] casework which impinges on context development (and vice versa).'
>
> Thomson (1998) p162

Indeed, many (Leadbetter 2000, Boyle and Lauchlan 2009, Gersch 2009) have argued that the current context requires a different approach to the role. For instance, Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) suggest that the current situation may require further adaptation to the EP role with applied psychology as the driving force providing both theoretical and evidence based solutions to educationally based problems. Indeed, Leadbetter (2000) envisaged such a change to service delivery in 2000. This direction is reflected in the current educational psychology doctorate training scheme with its focus on applied psychology. Gersch (2009) suggests that this may progress further with possible changes to the structure of psychological training routes exemplified by three year courses comprised of a two year generic focus and a third year specialism.

3. A rationale for EPs using therapy: Why should EPs undertake therapeutic work?

The reconstruction movement warned of the dangers of overemphasis on individual casework (McKay 2005) but polarising systemic and individual working may ignore many justified within-child factors. The increase in children with mental health problems (10% of children between 5-16 had a clinically diagnosed disorder, Mental

Health of children and young people in Great Britain, Green et al, 2004) would suggest that there is a need for individual intervention in this area. However, the current Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS 2008) strategy is progressing towards reducing intensive interventions in line with the CAMHS four-tier model as shown below. TaMHS is a Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) project aimed at improving mental health support and outcomes for children between 5 and 13.

Table 15: CAMHS Four Tier Model

The four-tiered CAMHS framework

Tier 1: Services provided by practitioners working in universal services (such as GPs, health visitors, teachers and youth workers), who are not necessarily mental health specialists. They offer general advice and treatment for less severe problems, promote mental health, aid early identification of problems and refer to more specialist services.

Tier 2: Services provided by specialists working in community and primary care settings in a uni-disciplinary way (such as primary mental health workers, psychologists and paediatric clinics). They offer consultation to families and other practitioners, outreach to identify severe/complex needs, and assessments and training to practitioners at Tier 1 to support service delivery.

Tier 3: Services usually provided by a multi-disciplinary team or service working in a community mental health clinic, child psychiatry outpatient service or community settings. They offer a specialised service for those with more severe, complex and persistent disorders.

Tier 4: Services for children and young people with the most serious problems. These include day units, highly specialised outpatient teams and inpatient units, which usually serve more than one area.

The CAMHS Review (2008) p22

This model shows how the children's workforce has a role in delivering universal and targeted services in mental health. Thus, the therapeutic work that EPs could offer as tier 2 professionals may bridge a much needed gap. However, whilst systemic and statutory work has progressed, McKay (2002) argues that therapeutic skills have

lain dormant within EP's repertoires. The current context for meeting children's mental health needs warrants a resurgence of therapeutic skills, of which EPs have a wealth of tools and evidence based frameworks, to apply. To support this, the British Psychological Society (BPS 1998) cites many therapeutic interventions for use including Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Motivational Interviewing and Personal Construct Psychology. Farrell et al (2006) also report schools' enthusiasm for such interventions and recommend development in this area. Furthermore, Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) argue that individual casework is a distinct aspect of the EP role and has improved the emotional well being of pupils. A number of examples of the application of therapeutic interventions can be found in *Educational Psychology in Practice* and *Educational and Child Psychology* since the reconstruction movement with reported successful outcomes. Selections of these are reported below.

A study by Atkinson and Woods (2003) outlines a case study approach using Motivational Interviewing with a disaffected secondary student and reports positive changes in attitude and increased motivation. Another study by Squires (2001) shows the value of CBT as a group intervention for individual behaviour difficulties. This study shows how staff attitudes changed in response to the effectiveness of the project thus suggesting that such interventions can affect change beyond the individual level. Greig and McKay (2005) also suggest a role for therapy in meeting the needs of young people with Asperger's syndrome advocating advantages such as flexibility of approach to meet individual needs and empowerment. A study by Rees et al (2003) also found that in sixteen local authorities in the UK, that 56% of EPs favoured therapeutic interventions such as PCP or solution focused approaches with children referred for behaviour difficulties.

The CAMHS review (2008) argues for the need to access best evidence on improving outcomes for young people and a rationale for measuring outcomes for therapeutic work. However, the above studies can be criticised for a reliance on qualitative methods, mainly case studies which according to the Standard Research rating system (Wolpert et al 2002) are positioned as a less valuable source of evidence as they lack a systematic approach. Indeed, using solution focused therapy as an example, Stobie et al (2005) underline this point reporting that from a literature review, little evidence exists which has evaluated the application of solution focused methods and resultant changes within EP practice. This would point to the need for EPs to establish an evidence base which supports advancements in therapy work for the EP role. Indeed, McKay (2007) states,

> 'educational psychology in seeking to be an evidence-based profession can therefore appropriately embrace therapeutic interventions and apply them where they have known effectiveness'
>
> McKay (2007), P15.

This would provide a distinct role for EPs in applying and measuring therapy to impact on outcomes for children's well being in the future.

Although interest in therapeutic work has remained, its prominence in EP practice has lessened. In 2007, McKay (2007) explored the use of therapy in EP practice citing four explanations for the decrease in its use. These points are outlined below.

- The reconstruction movement meant that the EP's role as an agent of change moved from intervening at the individual level to organisational level. This was due to time, cost and efficacy issues.

- Professional boundaries became delineated as psychologists specialised. This left clinical psychologists with accredited therapeutic skills, unlike educational psychologists.
- Educational psychologists adopted educational rather than child focused practice in line with the government's raising standard agenda.
- Legislation regarding statutory assessments meant that time was reduced for other work.

The combination of these macro and meso level influences has meant that the EP role has gradually narrowed to meet educational requirements.

3.1 Barriers and facilitators to utilising therapy

Although the incidence of therapy has decreased in EP work, Squires (2009 in a recent lecture on cognitive behavioural therapy, at the University of Birmingham) highlighted a well developed skill and theoretical base as rationale for its use. He argues that expertise in child development, working with special populations and information gathering tools are crucial to applying client appropriate therapies to alleviate mental health difficulties. Although there is a clear rationale for re-prioritising therapy as an effective strategy for meeting children's mental health needs, this direction is not without issue. For instance, service delivery patterns, particularly time allocation (Leadbetter 2000), may constrain the amount of time available if EPs are to deliver these types of interventions. The CAMHS review 2008 also suggested that time available can affect rapport with children which is a prerequisite for establishing a successful intervention.

A study by Thomson (1998) found that EPs viewed statutory paperwork as restricting their therapeutic role. McKay (2000a) goes further than this suggesting that legislation constrains the range, client group and priorities for EPs. Additionally, undertaking therapeutic work may mean adopting a within- child view, which may counter aspirations to the systemic role (McKay 2005). In particular, Prilleltensky and Nelson (2000) criticise individual therapy for implicating pathological change and ignoring interactions between individuals and social systems. However, adopting a within child framework is not necessarily a prerequisite for therapeutic work; as it may still be accepted that interactions between systems may be at the basis of the problems. Change may be effected by altering one part of the system causing ripple effects. This is one of the assumptions of Solution Focused Therapy (De Shazer 1985) which originated from systems therapy acknowledging the interaction of different systems particularly the family on individuals.

Other criticisms of individual reactive therapy have been posed by Prilleltensky and Nelson (2000) who argue that they are not effective in alleviating mental health difficulties. More specifically, McKay (2000b) suggests that individual therapy does not affect macro level change. Thus, the reconstruction movement seems more aligned with mental health development as it explores social structures. Indeed, there has been a rise in the implementation of ecologically focused government schemes into schools over the last few years (e.g. Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, SEAL DCSF, 2006, Healthy schools, Barnard et al 2009 and Targeted Mental Health in Schools, TaMHS, DCFS 2008). In particular, the TaMHS project (DFCS 2008) aims to improve mental health of children between 5-13 years at a preventative level. Indeed, the CAMHS review (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service, 2008) examined how health, education and social care professions

are contributing to children's mental health. They recommended that, 'Everybody needs to recognise and act upon the contribution they make to supporting children's mental health and well-being' P10. This demonstrates a need for EPs to be involved in mental health but again, the question remains as to the appropriate level at which EPs should intervene.

4. Case Study

The following case study explores how therapeutic interventions may form part of a wider systemic approach to meeting children's needs thus suggesting the usefulness of multi-modal and pragmatic approaches to school based individual referrals.

4.1 Background Information

Daniel was referred for educational psychology involvement for 'challenging behaviour' in year 11. He attended an all male Grammar school. School staff highlighted issues such as truancy from lessons, a lack of organisational skills and confrontations with teachers, which may have led to underachievement but also possible exclusion from school before he would have chance to sit his G.C.S.E examinations. An initial consultation meeting was arranged with the SENCO, student support assistant and a senior member of the school staff. At this point, I was keen to negotiate my role against an established context (a high achieving school resulting in mostly social and emotional referrals) which framed the EP role as largely therapeutic. A solution focused framework (De Shazer 1985) was used to structure conversations and four outcomes were agreed with the school: for Daniel to develop an awareness of his behaviour, staff to develop their awareness of Daniel's needs,

improved organisational skills and consistency between home and school approaches. The school felt that parental pressure regarding work may also be affecting Daniel. From discussions at this point, I agreed to an assessment of Daniel's needs, which comprised of an individual assessment session, a meeting with Daniel's father and information gathering from school staff. An overview of the assessment and Intervention process is provided in appendix 1. This timeline shows the contributions of key stakeholders and the combination of different methods used.

4.2 Assessment

Implying that assessment is a complex process, Frederickson et al (1991) state,

> 'We believe that psychological assessments should involve a creative investigation of a broad range of hypotheses that builds on research from all areas of psychology.'
>
> Frederickson et al (1991, P6.

The assessment phase was structured using this approach and an adapted problem solving framework (Monsen et al 1998) which can be informed by a number of psychological theories and accordingly generate hypotheses. This can be found in appendix 2. The assessment tools utilised were selected with reference to the problem presented and the purposes of my involvement as reported by the school stakeholders. My rationale for this approach stemmed from the British Psychological Society framework for psychological assessment and intervention (BPS 1999). It states that the following principles should be inherent in educational psychologists' practice:

- assessment should take place over time

- it should be formative in nature and inform resultant interventions
- carers should be part of the process
- it should consider the young person's strengths and difficulties generating numerous hypotheses which account for a range of issues
- the young person's understanding of the situation should be incorporated
- professional views should be sought and inform the process
- a solution centred approach should drive the assessment

The assessment was also informed by my previous tacit knowledge from working as an assistant psychologist in a high school with a high referral rate for behavioural difficulties (Schon 1987) and an underlying epistemology based on personal construct psychology (Kelly 1955) which assumes that a person's construing of behaviour is rooted with the social context (Butt 2001). Time and the high school setting constrained the methods which I could use to gain staff views and so this led to an indirect approach utilising a solution focused questionnaire (Lander and Marks 2009 unpublished document composed as part of doctorate training). The questionnaire (found in appendix 3) is based on solution focused principles which; acknowledge concerns whilst positively framing times when there is no or less of a problem, strategies which are already working and preferred solutions. This is aligned with a systemic approach.

I structured my individual assessment session with Daniel using the Ideal Self (Moran 1997) to establish whether Daniel recognised a problem and to provide information regarding his construing of the problem. The ideal self enables access to a child's view of the world whilst also providing opportunities to consider polarised contrasts in behaviour by a comparison of the child's ideal and non-ideal self. Daniel highlighted

several core constructs underlying acknowledged difficulties at school. These were; doing well at school, needing to belong and being good enough. The elaborated discussions around the ideal self can be found in appendix 4.

At this point, I recognised tensions in Daniel's current behaviour. His need to 'belong' and his need to do 'well' meant that he was 'slot rattling' (experimenting with extremes of behaviour in different situations, Kelly 1955) by manifesting different contrasting poles in different contexts which were not conducive to his long term goals. By choosing to flout school based norms, Daniel was validating his social self. At the end of the session, I asked Daniel whether further sessions would be beneficial thus providing Daniel with the opportunity to make different choices and gaining informed consent. Unlike, many other teenage males which had been referred to me previously, Daniel was not at the pre-contemplative stage (McNamara 1997) but was contemplating change showing his investment in the intervention process.

The meeting with Daniel's father revealed similar narratives to staff with Daniel's behaviour construed as reflecting 'an attitude' and 'laziness' but also questioning a possible learning difficulty as causation. This was against a context of considerable pressure to do well. Daniel was currently invalidating his father's construing of an 'ideal son'. His father was keen to support the school in the subsequent intervention. I did not have any direct contact with Daniel's mother throughout the intervention.

4.3 Problem formulation

The information gathered led to several hypotheses about the current situation at school. Stage 5: exploring problem dimensions (Monsen et al 1998) shows how the assessment information was combined, analysed and led to the following intervention (appendix 2)

4.4 Intervention

A multi-modal approach was chosen as this would explore and perhaps bridge what may be perceived as a historically polarised approach to EP working. Rationale for including therapy within the intervention was based on an evidence base which recommends the use of therapy in behaviour referrals (e.g. Hardman et al, 2001 and Squires, 2001) The therapeutic intervention comprised of four further sessions which took place over a term. The sessions had an underlying humanistic philosophy but utilised a range of different therapeutic tools dependent on Daniel's identification of the next step in the process thus underpinned by the 'client as the expert' philosophy. These are outlined below.

4.5 Humanistic Approach

A humanistic approach was chosen as it is congruent with my own values when working with young people. The main principles relevant to the case are outlined below.

- It acknowledges human agency and its reciprocal influence with social interaction.
- It encourages reflection and develops self-awareness. In Daniel's case, reflections based around conversations using different tools, developed his self-awareness and which meant he was the agent of change.
- Rogers (1961) core conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence or genuineness are integral to a positive therapeutic relationship.
- The client rather than the therapist is the expert.

4.6 Personal Construct Psychology (PCP, Kelly 1955)

Personal Construct Psychology is a specific branch of humanistic theory which assumes that humans have a unique experience of reality. Kelly (1955) argued that an individual defines themselves through 'core constructs' which stem from their active engagement with the world. These constructs are bipolar in nature and represent contrasting aspects of behaviour. These aspects of PCP were of particular relevance to the case.

Table 16: Personal Construct Psychology and the case study

Aspect of PCP	Relation to case
Fundamental Postulate: 'A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events.'	Daniel's behaviour in class was influenced by his anticipations of teacher responses.
Individuality corollary: Humans have unique experiences	Both Daniel and I would need to understand why his construing of his school life was functional in order to affect change in this area.
Constructive alternativism: There is always an alternative view of a situation.	This positions PCP as a theory of change thus situations can be changed by reconstruing them. Reconstruing was significant in Daniel changing his behaviour. Acknowledging the reciprocal relationship between human agency and social

	interaction meant that this corollary was relevant to staff also. For example, Conversations with staff suggested that they held within-child constructions of behaviour such as Autism rather than circular causality acknowledging a number of factors at different levels.
Choice corollary: a person chooses a pole which most represents their actions.	Daniel was choosing behaviour which was at odds with his 'doing well' construct but fulfilled his construct 'needing to belong'. Salmon lines helped to structure different choices.
The metaphor of humans as scientists constantly experimenting with hypotheses.	This enabled Daniel to carry out behaviour experiments which tightened and loosened constructs through exploration of contrast poles thus validating a new aspect of his self (For example, what would happen if he was a pupil that had completed his homework?).
Construction corollary: A person anticipates events by construing their replications.	In Daniel's case, he was construing encounters with teachers based upon anticipation of their reactions to his lack of homework.
Sociality construction: perceptions of how others construe us play a part in our social relationships with them.	Daniel's constructions of his teachers' perceptions of him affected his behaviour with them.

4.7 Evaluations of PCP

Criticisms of PCP centre on a number of aspects relating to the structure and application of the theory. Firstly, Kelly's use of scientific language may reflect his background in science and it may be argued that this explains human behaviour in a mechanistic way. Secondly, Butt (2001) argues that identifying core constructs is easier than affecting change particularly in this case as difficulties in school had become entrenched over the years. Thus, the theory may explain rather than actively change behaviour. Nevertheless, identification of bipolar constructs and identifying the degree to which behaviour relates to these can lead to higher levels of cognitive awareness which may facilitate change. Further than this, a psychoanalytic approach may consider that PCP ignores past influences on current behaviour (Weiss 2002). For example, in Daniel's case it may be inferred that his construing of his relationships with teachers may be transference of his relationship with his father.

However, PCP assumes and enables choice in the process unlike behavioural interpretations which imply a stimulus response approach which removes individual agency from the equation. Also, when contrasted with other therapeutic approaches such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) it may appear more ethically sound. For instance, some critics of CBT suggest an increasingly passive role for the client in therapy as the therapist identifies cognitive errors and corrects faulty cognitions through psycho education (Winter and Watson 1999) whereas PCP adopts a credulous attitude in unconditionally accepting the client's view of reality which to others, may reflect a better ethical base in the dynamic between professional and client.

4.8 Stress Bucket Metaphor (Traxson 1999) (Appendix 5)

The stress bucket metaphor was developed through work with teachers, children and parents and explores individual interpretations of stress. Individuals imagine that they have an imaginary stress bucket in their head which is never empty but at times can overflow. This is a useful tool when working with children as it does not rely entirely on verbal ability. Cards to stimulate stressors can be used as prompts with the eventual emphasis on the client's donations. Ethically, this positions the child as the lead on disclosing aspects of their life which may be affecting them. The stress bucket metaphor showed how Daniel was anticipating each day when he hadn't completed his homework. This connected with Daniel's construing of his relationships with teachers based on his anticipation of how they will react to him in response to his lack of homework. He identified high levels of stress prior to starting the school day resulting in acknowledged fight/flight reactions. This information led to

experimentation with constructs, where Daniel had completed his homework and noticed changes in his relationships with teachers.

4.9 Solution Focused Brief Therapy (De Shazer 1985)

Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) evolved from DeShazer's family therapy work and was originally used to affect change on family systems. This approach was utilised in individual sessions and in the collaborative work with staff. Stobie et al (2005) suggest obvious connections to humanistic theory, as it assumes that the client has strengths from which they can act as their own agent of change, again the client is the expert. However, SFBT also presumes that search for an underlying cause is not necessary to solve problems. This approach was chosen as it would provide Daniel with tools from which he could steer the path of change. The specific techniques used are outlined in appendices 6 and 7. The miracle question was posed to elicit a preferred future, whilst scaling served the purpose of identifying small steps and evaluating progress each session. The use of solution focused approaches in EP practice has been criticised by Stobie et al (2005) for lacking a sufficient evidence base. They reviewed a number of studies which reported change but lacked clarity in the measurement of this and were also lacking in underlying rationale for their chosen methods.

4.10 Self-Organised Learning (SOL Harri-Augstein and Thomas 1991)

SOL is rooted within the personal construct psychology paradigm and presumes individual agency in reconstructing current experiences. The emphasis for the 'coach' is again on providing tools for individuals to exercise this change (Timmins,

1999, 2003). Counselling skills such as active listening, reflecting back and challenging are utilised to extend the client's awareness whilst solving problems. This again develops ownership of the problem whilst providing support to identify barriers and facilitators to current learning behaviour. SOL (appendix 8) was used to structure conversations around Daniel's organisation of his study time which he had highlighted as contributing to high levels of stress and his current relationships with teachers. Homework tasks were posed as behaviour experiments which involved him trying out organisational strategies which evolved from the sessions.

5. A flexible approach

Prilleltensky and Nelson (2000) criticise individual therapy as they assume that it follows the therapist's agenda rather than enabling collaboration and agency on the part of the client. The number of therapies utilised, in this case, reveals a complex process from which my role was to decide on the best tool after each session which would build on Daniel's own identified goals and needs. Indeed, this was a highly flexible approach with an emergent trajectory throughout the process. Thus, my role was to facilitate the change process with Daniel as the driving force (client as expert, Kelly 1955).

5.1 A collaborative approach

One limitation of individual PCP or solution focused methods is that they ignore other interacting systems in the young person's life (Dummett 2006). Thus, my knowledge of the value of systemic working was prevalent in my decision to supplement individual therapy and build on the initial solution focused work with the staff. Also,

the study from Hardman (2001) shows the use of PCP supplemented with teacher consultation which led to positive outcomes on a behaviour case. Solution Focused work (DeShazer 1985) stems from systems theory and so is aligned with this type of working. I decided to compile a profile of Daniel based on our therapy sessions and the information received from the staff (appendix 9) resulting in jointly constructed strategies.

The rationale behind this collaborative approach originated from trials in previous casework with some success and the quality of responses from Daniel's teachers. The aim was to change adults' construing of Daniel's behaviour by providing alternative constructions from Daniel's point of view. This was against entrenched views exemplified by a conversation with a teacher in the school who said 'he's been like this since he came … you won't change his behaviour now.' This type of working has been shown to be successful in a study by Dowey et al (2006). They undertook training with 51 staff working with children with learning difficulties which focused on changing attributions of self-injurious behaviour and found that staff attributions had changed post-training. The study had an ABA design which shows pre and post measurement, although it was limited in its measurement of the training by using quantitative measures which reduced attributions to predetermined categories supplied by the researchers. Also, research by Axup and Gersch (2008) recommends staff reflection based on shared information about pupils as this promoted understanding and impacts positively on relationships between pupils and teachers. However, there was no comparison between this way of working and individual interventions. Another study by Franklin et al (2001) demonstrates the use of individual solution focused therapy with solution focused consultations with teachers. The study was based on a single case design with a sample of 19 children

over 5-10 sessions. Observable changes in the behaviour of the children and the teacher's perceptions of the behaviour were evident during the intervention. However, an ABA design may have established whether there were long term effects.

The individual therapy was utilised as part of the collaborative work by feeding back understanding into Daniel's construing of the situation. This was done through the person-centred profile. Indeed, Ravenette (1977) recommends the importance of providing feedback to change teachers' constructions of situations and Lethem (2002) argues that it enables teachers to take a fresh perspective on a situation. A study by Redpath and Harker (1999) shows the efficacy of a solution focused approach with staff. Using a three-way interview, they developed a collaborative approach which resulted in joint constructions of strategies to support individuals referred for behavioural difficulties. This demonstrates a bridge between polarised systemic/individual case based roles for EPs. It also indicates how tools originally used with individuals can be adapted beyond this and used as a practical solution to a problem originally conceptualised as within-child.

6. Ethical Considerations

The Frederickson et al (1991) framework for assessment highlights the need for assessment and intervention to be highly sensitive to ethical practice. Leyden (1999) argues that informed consent is a considerable ethical dilemma when undertaking therapeutic work. EPs often receive referrals for children which are based upon adults' construing of problems which require change. Indeed, Ravenette (1999) suggests that such referrals reflect a threat to teachers' sense of 'knowingness'

reflected in intolerant responses. I gained consent from Daniel prior to assessment and consequent intervention. Again, adopting humanistic principles strengthened the consent received. For example, part of the process involved transparency in my purpose; the aims of the intervention and his role within this so that Daniel's awareness of the process was increased and also his understanding of possible changes which could affect him. Time was set aside at the beginning of every session to clarify informed consent. Informed consent was also needed to share information with staff and was integral to the collaborative approach. Thus tensions were present between confidentiality agreements and the need to share important information to influence other systems around Daniel. In this case, discussions with Daniel about how understanding gained from the sessions may influence his relationships with staff and the changes he would like to make meant that he gave clear consent for certain information to be shared.

7. Measurement of Outcomes

Individual scaling used in PCP and solution focused therapy gave a baseline, during intervention and also post-intervention measures of success in this case. This provided a meaningful measure from which Daniel could observe and reflect on progress (Young and Holdorff 2003). Thus, through this process, Daniel was able to identify the next steps towards his preferred future demonstrating increased independence skills. Although useful throughout the process and in measuring short term success, it would need revisiting to measure long term effects. This is particularly difficult now as Daniel has left school following his exams.

Staff were also involved in evaluating change as a result of the intervention but also the usefulness of the collaborative approach in relation to the case and any secondary benefits. A staff evaluation questionnaire was distributed to all of Daniel's teachers post-intervention. This can be found in appendix 9. On reflection, a baseline scaling measure may have been more reliable than a retrospective response to change as the intervention process may have resulted in memory effects. Teacher perceptions of Daniel's initial behaviour may have changed throughout the process. Goal Attainment Scaling (Kiresuk and Sherman 1968 in Stobie et al 2005) may provide a more valid measure of pre and post intervention effects as it is a transparent form of evaluation providing qualitative and quantitative information for clients with regard to outcomes and progress.

7.1 Summary of short term outcomes

Table 17: Outcomes reported by Daniel

Outcomes reported by Daniel
Daniel had noticed that 'things were better at home'. He elaborated that this meant that he was able to discuss school with his father. Prior to the intervention, he reported difficulties in communicating with his father.
Daniel stated that teachers were 'nicer'.
Daniel described how adhering to his new study plan had reduced his stress before school which had been related to anticipations of teacher's reactions to his lack of work.
Daniel reported that he was completing more homework and that this had led to more control over his learning.

Table 18: Outcomes reported by staff

Outcomes reported by staff
'Daniel is more focused' (2/10)
'His attitude towards his work has changed' (2/10)
'Daniel is asking for help' (3/10)
'He is more co-operative and polite' (5/10)

‘Daniel is less confrontational, shouts out less and is less disruptive’ (3/10)
‘He seeks less attention’ (1/10)
‘Daniel has a better attitude’ (5/10)
‘His organisational skills have not improved (3/10)
‘I am calmer when working with Daniel.’ (1/10)
‘Knowing everyone is working together to support Daniel has changed my practice.’ (1/10)

Table 19: Noticed outcomes in sessions

Noticed outcomes in sessions
Daniel’s awareness of how his current behaviour was affecting his school situation and life increased over sessions.
Daniel became more confident in decisions regarding next steps towards his miracle showing increased independence.
Daniel reflected on behavioural experiments and utilised knowledge gained to inform decisions about his life.

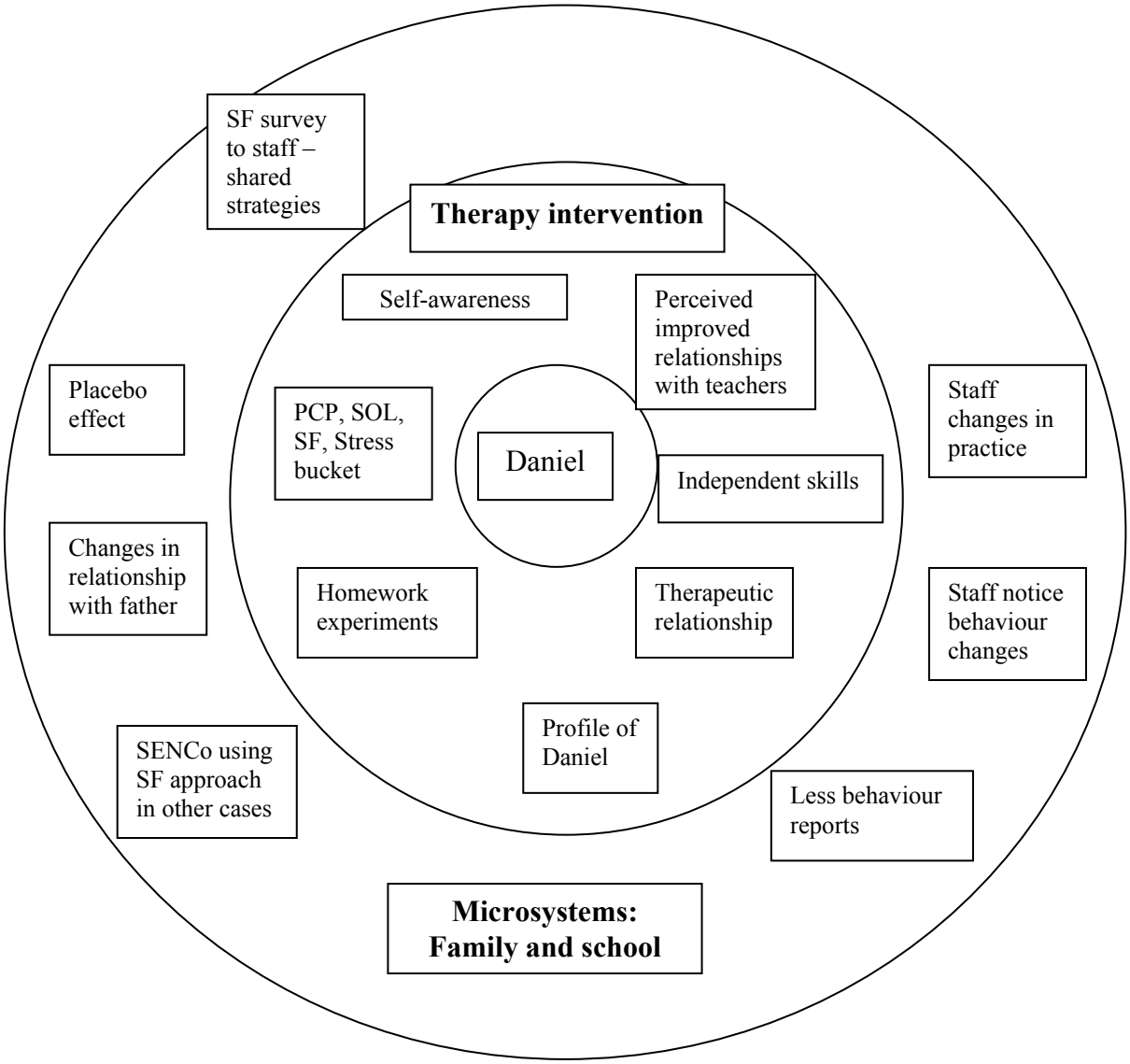
Table 20: Secondary level changes

Secondary level changes
The SENCo and SEN support assistant had been using the solution-focused questionnaire to gather information and form hypotheses prior to EP involvement in cases after observing the benefits of this way of working.

Currently, it has not been possible to ascertain the views of Daniel’s father (who was also a key stakeholder in the process) as I have been unable to make direct contact since the intervention finished.

7.2 Positive change at many levels

Figure 6: Dynamic factors interacting in the microsystems around Daniel as part of the intervention



The above diagram shows interacting dynamic factors in the different Microsystems in Daniel's life. It attempts to explain how transactional effects between the therapy and the collaborative approach may have led to the reported positive outcomes. The outcomes demonstrate that there have been many observed changes in Daniel's behaviour by all stakeholders. The triangulation of evaluations from different stakeholders suggests reliable evidence of some change particularly in perceptions of the relationships between Daniel and his teachers from both parties. Daniel noted changes in his home and school situations. One criticism of the approach may have focused on ignoring the family system in terms of direct work but the intervention may have caused a ripple effect on the family system anyway. Teachers mainly reported positive changes in Daniel's attitude and behaviour. This supports findings by Atkinson and Woods (2003) regarding individual attitude change due to therapeutic intervention and Squires (2001) who reported staff attitude change after interventions with children referred for behaviour difficulties. However, staff did report that organisational skills had not improved. This is in contrast to Daniel's reported positive changes in this area. This could be due to a difference in expectations by both parties.

A small number of teachers also reported changes in their practice as a result of the collaborative approach with five teachers also suggesting that the collaborative approach had helped. However, five teachers were not aware of the nature of the collaborative approach with one stating that 'direct collaboration may have maximised the effect of the intervention.' This has implications for future use of the collaborative approach in increasing the transparency of the process. Alternatively, future casework may present an opportunity for a face-to–face meeting to facilitate strategies in the profile as it can be questioned whether this indirect collaboration on

strategies in this case can be considered as shared constructions. One positive outcome from this case is the double loop learning which occurred due to the reported changes from staff. Stobie (2002a) argues that this second order change is a clear advantage of systemic working. Certainly the teacher evaluations show an immediate change in attitude towards the problem situation but longer term practice changes would be difficult to measure. However, Gersch (2009) argues,

> 'In order to be effective, at all times EPs should ask themselves both about outcomes, in essence whether they are making a positive difference to children, families, schools and other organisations, however these differences are measured, remembering that it is often easy to over-value things that can be directly measured but under-estimate the value of things harder to quantify.'
>
> Gersch (2009) p17

Certainly, this case shows common themes among stakeholders in identified positive outcomes. However, it would be difficult to measure what affected these successes due to the complexity of the process. Future research could include comparison studies between such pragmatic approaches and individual therapeutic interventions to develop evidence which highlights interacting factors implicated in successful interventions.

7.3 What effected change?

The pragmatic approach to the case conceptualises an EP role which involves a flexible approach whereby underlying principles and the eclectic application of methods were utilised in response to a dynamic problem situation. This reflects the nature of the social world as complex (Robson 2003) and an underlying epistemology which recognises circular causality as a more appropriate understanding of change.

This suggests an autonomous role for EPs as researchers who should apply psychology which fits the situation resulting in a goodness of fit. However, the complexity of this multi-modal approach prevents identification of underlying causes.

Nevertheless, several factors may be identified but not necessarily implicated in the reported successes. In relation to examining outcomes from therapeutic interventions, the TaMHS project report (DCSF2008) highlights the complexity of identifying causal mechanisms within stating that they can be affected by:

- family and systemic factors
- the attitude of the client
- the skills of the therapist
- expectations of those connected with the intervention (This may take the form of a placebo effect whereby the clients knowledge that they are undergoing intervention may have affected their associated expectations).

Indeed, Stobie et al (2005) highlight difficulties in revealing systematic evidence for change in therapy work. The CAMHS review (2008) also argues that the success of therapy is reliant on interpersonal factors such as the rapport between therapist and client. Indeed, Atkinson and Woods (2003) argue that any change resulting from therapy is likely to have derived from the relationship between the client and the therapist rather than the approach used thus postulating that this role may not be uniquely filled by the EP. However, they suggest a distinct role for the EP in contributing to success through the construction of interventions based on problem solving skills (Cameron 2006). Thus, the positive responses from both staff and Daniel may have been from the conjunction of the two approaches towards a holistic

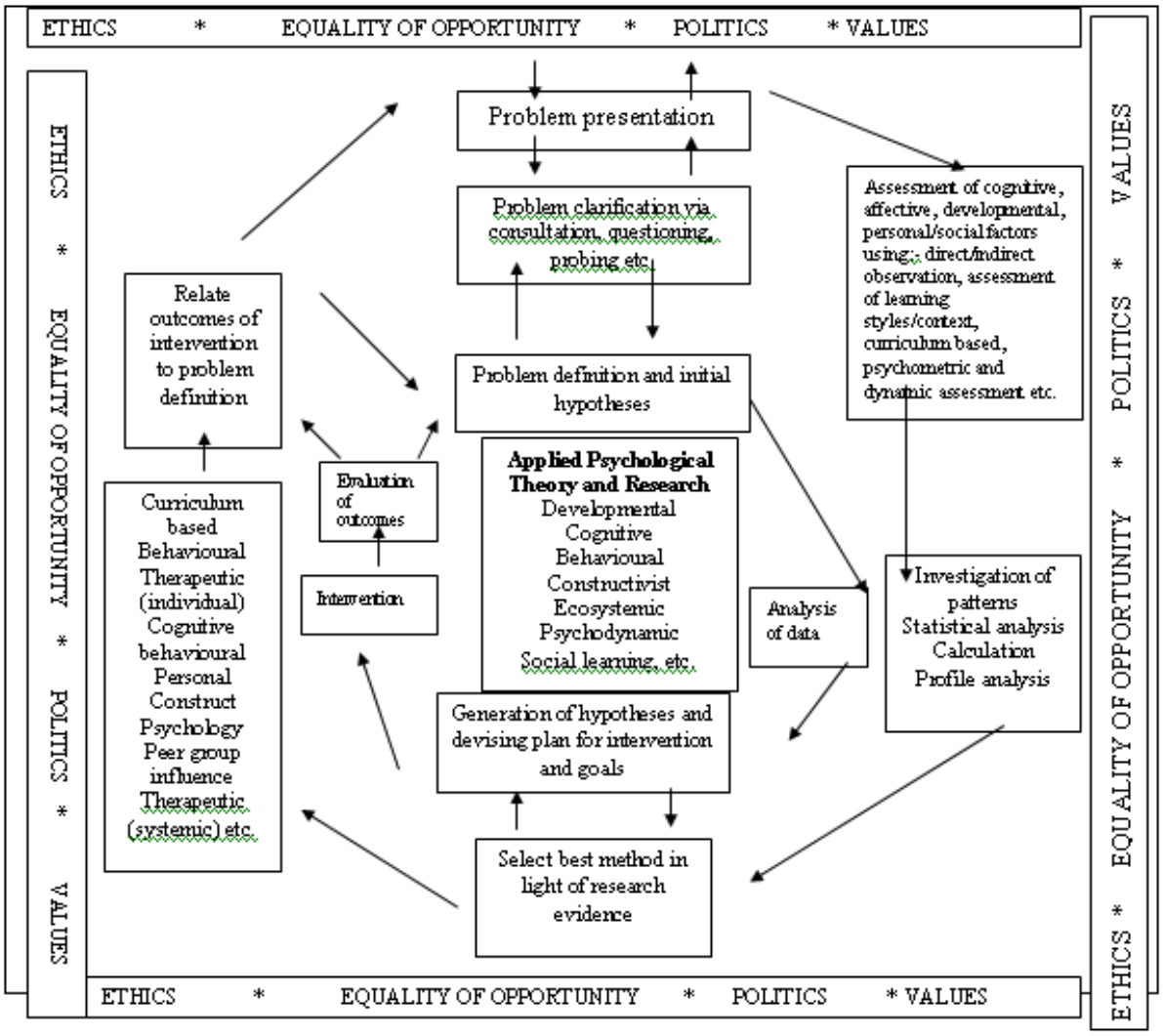
process. Both the individual work and the systemic work may have contributed to perceptual changes which may have improved the school situation. However, it is difficult to isolate when the changes in the dynamics occurred as the profile and therapy were delivered simultaneously.

Another factor which may have led to success may have been the role that Daniel adopted in the process. Again, the role had an underlying humanistic and human rights ethical position reflecting the current context of the child's voice as the driving force (Baxter and Frederickson 2006) but also an aim towards increased self-awareness and empowerment. Kreber et al (2003) argue that the type of therapy chosen is an important variable as underlying principles affect the solutions to the problem. For example, if humanistic principles had not been inherent, would Daniel's self awareness have increased and thus affected behaviour change? A within construction of the problem would not have presumed constructive alternativism and may have hindered the solution. Also, if Daniel had not demonstrated a mature and reflective stance, this may have changed the type of intervention used and consequent outcomes.

Many therapeutic packages prescribe fidelity to a chosen framework. However, Grieg and McKay (2005) argue that a flexible approach which meets individual needs may lead to success. Indeed, utilising an ecological approach meant that this flexible approach was possible. It allowed the application of eclectic approaches based on multiple epistemologies to meet individual needs connecting disparate strands of information together. This may suggest that the type of problem formulation as exemplified by the Frederickson et al (1991) model (see figure 7 below) utilising different psychological approaches may contribute to a thorough assessment of

needs and so appropriate intervention which leads to successful outcomes. However, it is impossible to differentiate whether underlying values behind both approaches rather than specific methods effected change.

Figure 7: Framework for psychological assessment and intervention



Frederickson et al (1991), p9.

7.4 Evaluation of the process and implications for future working

There are several limitations to this type of working. Firstly, the EP role would not necessarily lend itself to such a labour intensive intervention. Indeed, McKay (2007) highlights the time-efficacy difficulties attached to therapy and my own experience suggests that the information gathering involved in systemic practice is also limited by time. This implicates time as a factor in adopting this type of pragmatic approach. However, I was not constrained by service delivery patterns which may restrict fully qualified EPs (Leadbetter 2000). The CAMHS review (2008) favours such a psychosocial approach as it considers all aspects of need thus outweighing the time involved. Also, the intervention was reliant on my own beliefs and values which would have influenced decisions about interventions.

Prilleltensky and Nelson (2000) argue that reliance on individual level interventions maintains a pathological view of difficulties rather than acknowledging the interactions between individuals and systems. The conjunction of the two overarching approaches used in this case study counters this as it is child focused but not within-child. It explores and impacts on the dynamic relationship between individuals and surrounding Microsystems. However, it is still at the individual case level although the second order change (Stobie 2002) may suggest some evidence of capacity building thus indicating the value of this work at different systems levels. It may be argued that this case study is not truly 'systemic' but a forerunner towards systemic work as it involves others in change but does not wholly indicate wider system changes.

McKay 2007 concludes that therapy is integral to outcomes for children concerning their well being both at the preventative, systemic and crisis management at an individual level. In terms of contributing to the national mental health agenda, this case example would be termed as a preventative approach to mental health as it intervenes prior to mental health difficulties but in terms of the EP role, it may be termed as a crisis level behavioural intervention. In this case example, therapy was used in a traditional sense (working with a referred client) which may be considered as a narrow conceptualisation of a therapeutic role for an EP. For example, Squires (2009) suggests therapy with school staff in response to a child's referral. Staff perceptions were an interacting factor in Daniel's case and so the therapy may have easily have applied to direct work in reframing staff views in this case. A more systemic therapeutic role may also be realised in EPs supporting staff well-being which may impact on perceptions of behaviour and decrease referrals.

8. Conclusions: Rationale for a pragmatic approach?

The studies by Ashton and Roberts (2006), Farrell et al (2006) and Thomson (1998) all suggest discrepancies between stakeholders in children's services and within differences in perceptions of the EP role which continue a historical tradition of polarised preferences. However, this case example shows that individual therapy and extensions towards systemic modes of working can be complimentary, leading to positive outcomes. Indeed, Bozic (2004), Leadbetter (2000) and McKay (2000a) argue that EPs should strive for a balance between systemic and individual approaches. For McKay (2000a), this is conceptualised by his comment that, 'A broad and effective role based on psychological knowledge and skills is the only safeguard for the future' (McKay 2000a, p30) whilst Leadbetter (2000) adds that this

pragmatic approach to psychological problem solving should be directed at multiple levels. This case exemplifies such a pragmatic approach which is both sensitive to the social context and the needs of the individual. It demonstrates positive outcomes through the application of multiple frameworks leading to deeper understanding of problems and positive change, an approach considered to be the distinct role of the EP (Cameron 2006). This meta-competence (Squires 2009) enables decisions regarding the practical application of three years of training in applied psychology giving EPs deserved autonomy in return. Indeed, Gillham (1999) suggested that,

> 'understanding change, and how – and where – it can be achieved is an essential skill of our profession. Our professional tools are not ready-made packages or notions but conceptual and methodological approaches: we have to construct our understanding and practice 'on site' without bringing in a lot of our own baggage. You don't give psychological knowledge away: you make it fit the special character of the setting you find yourself in.'
>
> Gillham (1999) p221

This type of practice is valued by Leyden (1999) who argues that combining subjective views of pupils and working with systems in school may redefine the EP role. Furthermore, it demonstrates ethical and psychological principles which should be central to EP practice (McKay 2005) whilst exacting a role that should not be constrained by paradigms. In support of this, Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) argue,

> 'There is no doubt that there is more to the role of the EP than individual casework and, moreover, that a good psychologist should examine a person's interaction with the environment. However, to totally remove oneself from the "bedrock" of the role of the EP may be tantamount to folly.'
>
> Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) p81

Future practice and research could focus on providing an evidence base (Stobie 2000a) to support such a role which could facilitate greater communication regarding EP practice and the value of such approaches for stakeholders.

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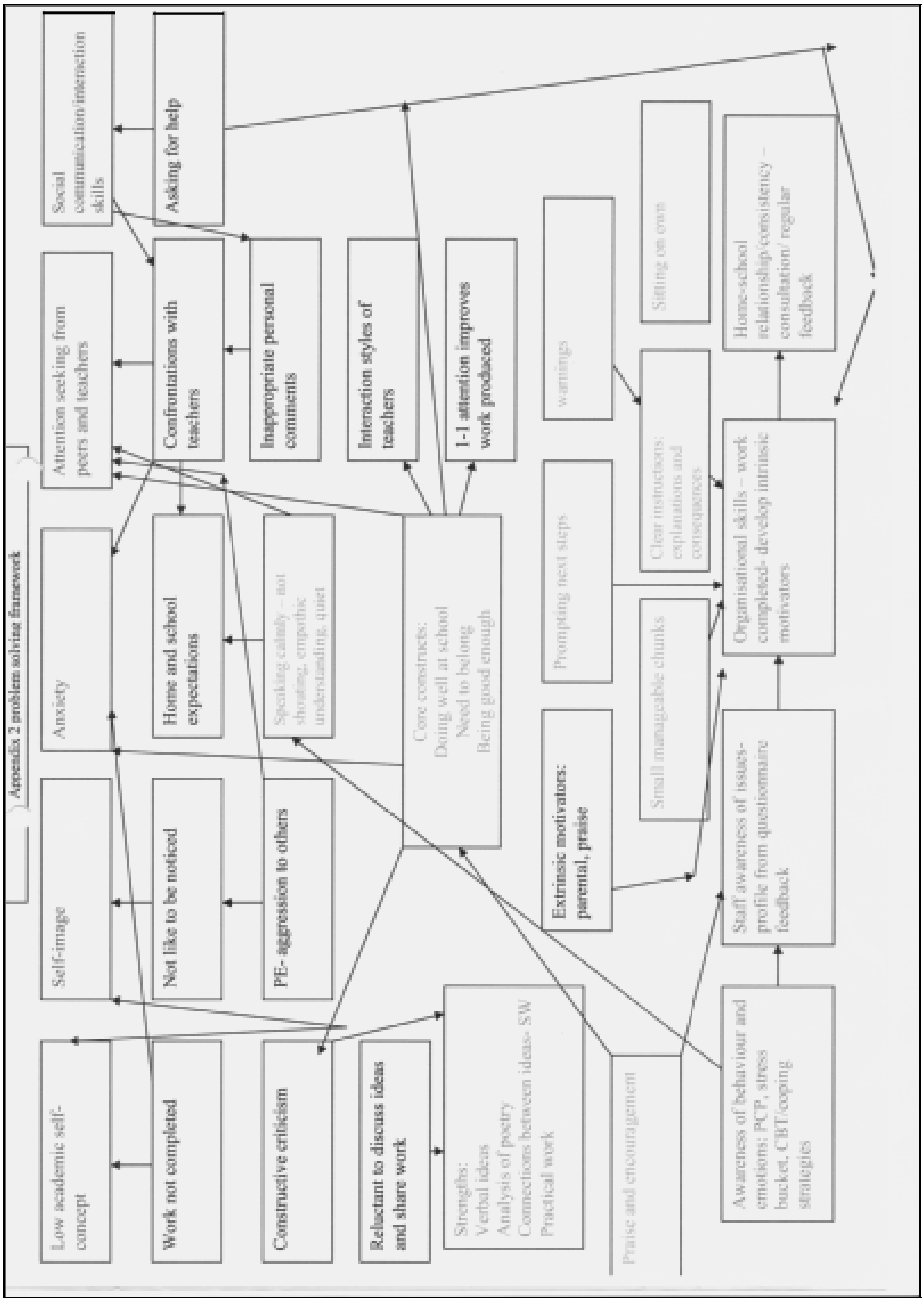
Appendix 1

Timeline of aspects of casework

Individual therapeutic work	Collaborative work
	Planning and consultation meeting with Assistant Head, SENCO, Teaching Support Assistant
Session 1 (assessment): The ideal self and informal discussions about school. Informed consent gained for therapeutic intervention.	Solution Focused Questionnaires distributed to staff who taught Daniel
Session 2: Stress Bucket Metaphor	Meeting with Daniel's father and Teaching Support Assistant. Parental views, support and communication routes established.
Session 3: Miracle question and Scaling Self-Organised Learning homework task	Solution Focused Questionnaires returned from staff. Views and strategies gained.
Session 4: Reflections on Self-Organised Learning task and noticed changes	Feedback provided for Daniel's family via Teaching Support Assistant.
	Person-Centred Profile constructed from therapeutic sessions and Solution-Focused staff questionnaire. Profile sent to all staff.
Daniel has study leave for G.C.S.E examinations	Evaluation questionnaire sent to all staff and anecdotal feedback obtained via SENCO and Teaching Support Assistant. Unable to contact Daniel's father at this time.

Appendix 2

Problem solving framework



Appendix 3

Appendix 3
Solution Focused Survey

Child / Young Person: _____ Year: _____

Teacher: _____ Subject: _____

This pupil has been highlighted by the school for Educational Psychology involvement. I would like to collect some information about factors that may be contributing to current concerns. Your responses to the following questions will create greater understanding about times and situations when the pupil does well in your class. This might help us improve things by building on any current successes.

1. What are your concerns?

2. What are X's strengths? (academic & social)

3. What motivates X? (interests, activities, feedback, praise, rewards, etc)

4. When do you notice that X has done a little or a lot better than usual?
(type of activity, time of day, seating arrangements, peer interaction, etc)

5. What strategies are you already using that work? (whole class and/or individual)

6. How will you know when things have improved? What will be different?

☺ Thank you for your help. Any information highlighting 'what works' will be shared amongst all staff to support X.

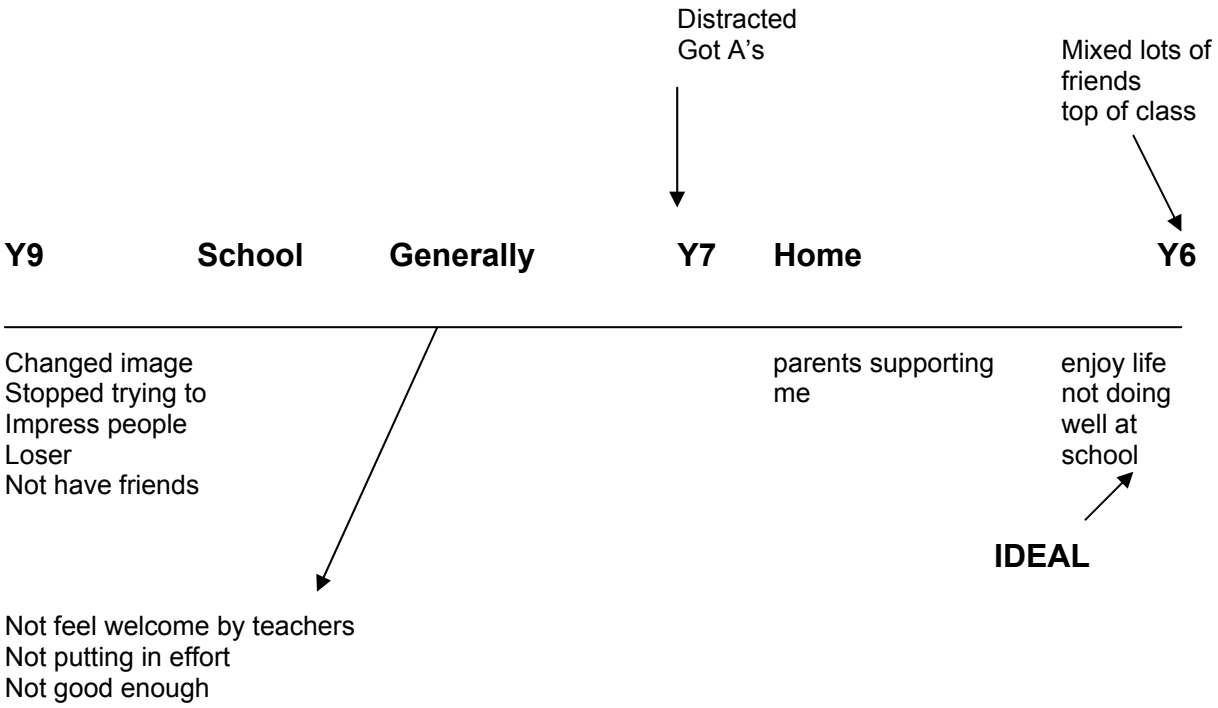
Educational Psychology Service

Date completed:

Appendix 4

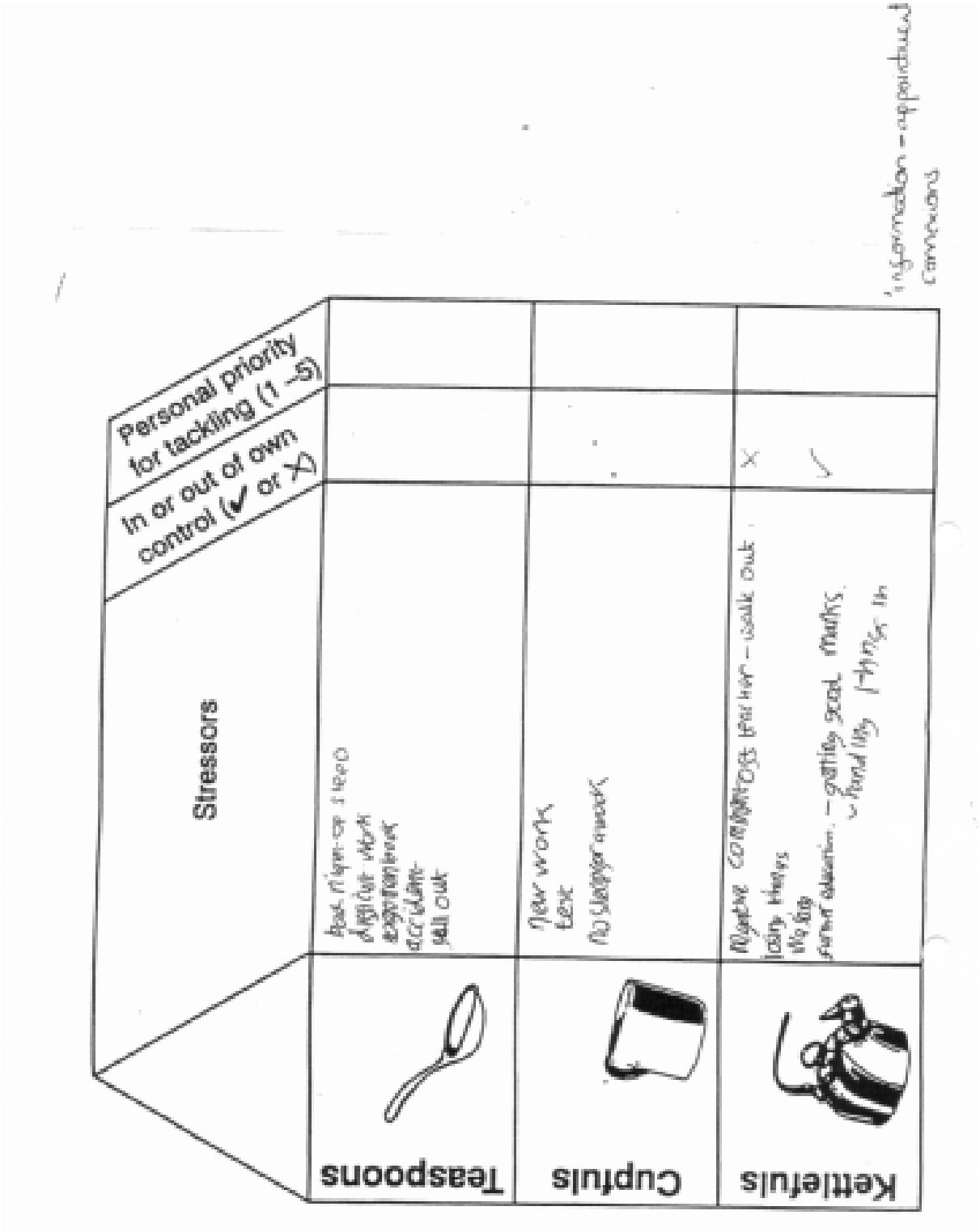
Ideal self

Aspect	Ideal self	Non-ideal self
Description	Doing well at school Managing money	Failure Recluse Not achieved anything Alone
School	Makes sure that he has everything that he needs – equipment	Not bring anything to school Not make effort Not doing well in school
Birthday	Money – saves up and doesn't waste anything	Not sure
Family	Not too much time but got on with them Felt like he had made them proud	Blamed for stuff and for not doing well at school Confrontational and arguments
Fear	Normal stuff like getting killed	Killing themselves and haven't anything to look forward to
History	Did well at school	Had friends with same interests
Future	A good job – doing something over and over again Not too many risks and reliant on something	No job or anywhere to live On own



Appendix 5

Stress Bucket Metaphor



Appendix 6

Session 3 with Daniel

Summary of last session	• Explained and agreed conditions of involvement – client led agenda, self-awareness and self-regulation • Stress bucket metaphor – identified larger stressors affecting life at the moment: negative comments from teachers, further education, handing in work, good marks • School would arrange meeting with connexions re: further education • Use sessions to plan how to get to next stage of education
Solution focused questions	• Positives since last met • Miracle question • Describing preferred future • What is working already? Exceptions, noticing when miracle happens already • Scale – where are things right now? When has it been worse? What will tell you that you have moved 1 point up on the scale? Who will notice?
Homework task	• Experiment: set study session with conditions to achieve target concerning work for school

Solution focused notes

Miracle question - Get up and go to school
In form wouldn't be worried that the teacher would notice me
Teachers not telling me off for not doing stuff

Feeling fine – accomplished
I would know that the work would be done
Getting on with work
Wouldn't be talking with my mates
Teacher teaching class rather than talking to me 1-1
Breezing through it

Not trying to do work in lunch and break
Wouldn't be thinking about it
Looking forward to going home

Home – in my room and then going out
Not at home trying to get my work done
Dad wouldn't notice me – I don't really like to let him know when I am in trouble
Better reactions to make things easier at home

Having fun – going out, less anxieties
Positive feedback from teachers

Exceptions – art work and when finished essays
Reward myself
Friday – lots of time to do work

Experiment – English coursework – set timetable for week

[redacted]

Miracle

Who would notice?

Miss Wood

Positive feedback from teachers

Dad – not let him know when in trouble – his son doing well - cocky

Resources

Phone friends – check situation

What would be happening and what I would be doing

Happening:

At school, teachers would not be noticing me. They would talk to the class and not me on 1-1 basis.

Would be getting better reactions from people – make things easier

I would be:

Get up without thinking about teachers and work

Getting on with my work and not talking to my mates

Not trying to do or thinking about work at lunch or break

Breezing through my work

Looking forward to going home

Having fun: going out

Feelings

I would be:

Feeling fine

Accomplished – knowing work would be done

When this happens already:

Art work and essay – finished and crossed off list

Friday – when thinking lots of time to do work

Holidays – relaxed, in bed

Appendix 7

Session 4 with Daniel

Summary of last session	• What has been better since we last met? What have you been pleased with? (Positives) elicit signs of improvement, times when have coped in difficult situation • Recap summary of miracle: preferred future, exceptions, scaling • Discuss homework experiment: identify skills, strengths, resources used in experiment • Prompts: What did you do that worked? What did others see you doing? What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned from this that may be useful in future? What do you know about yourself that you didn't know last week?
Solution focused target setting	• How are you going to move up the scale 1 point further: barriers, enablers • Prioritise next steps: Timetable as external memory – best times for concentration, realistic targets, reward, distractions and ideal environment, multi-task or one thing at time.
Homework task	• Experiment: trial timetable

Appendix 8

Personal Learning Contract

Name:	[redacted]
What am I learning about in my plan?	What conditions are needed for me to work.
My Coach for this plan is:	Chloé Hawkes
My task is to:	Complete my English Coursework

My Plan	**What I did, What happened and what I achieved.**	**Reasons for differences between my plan and what actually happened**
My purposes for this task are: make an effort with my work	**What were my purposes?** made progress with work I needed to do	+tired +not in mood for thinking
To achieve my purposes I will carry out these actions: 2 sessions - 1 hour internet - Mum English coursework	**What actions did I actually carry out?** D.T coursework half of one of essays	
I will know I have completed the task successfully when: English coursework done	**How successful was I?** 12%	
I will begin this task at .... and will have completed it by	**I began this task at ... and completed it at ....**	
My coach will review my work at...	**My coach reviewed my work at ....**	

My strengths: after school DT resisted temptation- do nothing	**Where I need to improve:** environment more sleep
I have learned that: Can do work if I make effort	
Because of this in my next task I will: more effort - stick to plan Complete some work at school.	

Self Organised Learning (Timmins 1998)

Appendix 9

Personal profile

Personal Profile: [redacted]

Thank you for returning the Solution Focused Surveys. The following profile has been constructed from the returned responses and my initial 1-1 sessions with [redacted]. It is intended that this interim feedback will provide further understanding and contribute to a supportive background while [redacted] continues with Educational Psychology intervention.

Chloe Marks (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Strengths and aspirations

- From 1-1 discussions, [redacted] displays a mature, considered and concerned attitude towards his education.
- He is aware of issues which affect him in school but he does not always know how to tackle them successfully.
- He can verbalise ideas, make connections between ideas and evaluate.
- He enjoys practical work.
- [redacted] is good at analysing poetry.
- He is able to make connections between his own experience and new ideas.

What is important to [redacted]

- Doing well at school is very important to him, although this may not be reflected in his current behaviour. A particular positive is that this has been the primary motivator for his commitment to change rather than adult direction.
- His attitude to work and his behaviour seem to be related to his sense of belonging in school. Relationships with his friends and adults affect his actions in school.
- He would like to improve his relationships with staff in school.
- [redacted] would like to work in advertising. He is interested in planning and designing advertisements.

Strategies working in school already

- Speaking calmly to [redacted] rather than shouting.
- Showing empathy and an understanding of his situation.
- Giving clear instructions and explanations.
- Using warnings and referring to consequences of actions.
- Praise and encouragement improves [redacted] levels of effort and so work produced.
- Prompting for next steps in work.

Other suggested strategies for lessons and school

- As a sense of belonging is important to [redacted] taking an interest in him, praise for appropriate behaviour and making him feel noticed and liked may impact on his perceptions of relationships with some staff and contribute to more trusting relationships as well as having a motivational effect.

- In terms of dealing with inappropriate behaviour, use explicit positively framed directions focussing on what you want [redacted] to do, accompanied with reasons for this. Also, give [redacted] an opportunity to express his opinion and interact with him in a calm but assertive way. These strategies may encourage a calmer response from him and may de-escalate confrontations.

- [redacted] often ruminates on difficult situations experienced in school resulting in a delayed flight response. He needs a calm space where he can reflect on what has happened before he will feel able to rejoin a group.

- [redacted] is reluctant to ask for help if he finds tasks difficult and so if he is not on task, it may be worth quietly discussing the task and prompting ways to approach it such as:

    - breaking it down into manageable chunks
    - reference to knowledge already gained which relates to the task
    - prompting metacognitive skills. Eg. What do you need to know, what do you need to do first/next, how will you know when you have been successful
    - encouraging thinking time
    - rereading instructions.

Other strategies or interventions in process

[redacted] is attending 1-1 sessions to develop his awareness and management of issues which are affecting his achievement in school. At present, he has identified things that he would like to change, including his organisational and metacognitive skills. He will be constructing a plan to initiate changes which will contribute to his outcomes for this year. Further feedback will be given as this progresses.

CHAPTER FIVE

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract

There are increased expectations for educational professionals with regard to meeting children's emotional well-being needs. Recent legislation and guidance suggests a broader role for educational psychologists in this area. This study seeks to provide an overview of EPs' contributions to the mental health agenda, identified barriers and facilitators to their work and their perceptions of a future role in this area. Questionnaires were disseminated to members of one educational psychology service and analysed thematically. The findings show that EPs are contributing to children's emotional well-being at a variety of levels, with various stakeholders. At present this is mainly in educational settings. EPs are applying various psychological frameworks, therapeutic and consultation skills. Time spent on other work was identified as a barrier to mental health contribution, whilst collaborative working and supportive school environments were highlighted as facilitating factors. Conclusions centre on a future role in children's mental health with evidence- based practice providing a distinctive contribution.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

1. Introduction: context and rationale for EP involvement in children's emotional well-being

Historically, children's mental health has been a neglected area (Davren 2007). However, interest has increased as a number of recent reports suggest that mental health difficulties are experienced by children and young people in the UK. For example, one in five children and adolescents experience mental health problems (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service: Children in Mind, Audit Commission 1999). Also, the Department of Health (2003) reported that studies have indicated that around 2 million children and young people under the age of 16 may need mental health support at various times. Another report by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE 2001) showed that 10% of children between 5 and 15 years in the UK had mental health problems. These statistics show considerable variability which Maddern et al (2004) attribute to the employment of differing methods and the sample population studied. Nevertheless, they conclude that they present a general consensus showing a necessity to intervene in children's mental health.

1.1 Meeting Children's mental health needs

Interest in meeting children's mental health needs has been growing steadily over the last decade underpinned by the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) strategy (Together We Stand, Health Authority Service, HAS 1995); which

aims to provide a universal structure which promotes well-being, identifies needs early and intervenes at a crisis level (Davren 2007). Historically though, clinical approaches to mental health have been reactive and also competitive in relation to available resources. This contrasts with educational philosophy which has aligned itself with universal provision (Salmon 2004). However, Birleson, et al (2001) argue that a new paradigm has become embedded within mental health service delivery which focuses on early intervention and prevention with regard to reducing later adult mental health problems. This underpins the government strategy outlined in the 2003 guidance, Getting the Right Start: National Service Framework for Children (Department of Health 2003) which aims to provide such a comprehensive service by 2006; with emotional well-being presented as central to its effectiveness (paragraph 2.5, p16 and 2.7, p17, Department of Health 2003). The Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TAMHS 2008) Strategy is also aimed at reducing reactive responses in mental health. Currently, this strategy is being piloted in many regions across the UK targeting 5-13 year olds.

Previously, mental health services had not met the demand in terms of children's mental health needs. This is exemplified by the Children in Mind report (Audit Commission 1999) which reviewed 59 authorities in the UK between 1997 and 1999, with regard to children at tier's 2-4 (see figure 8 below for explanation of the four-tiered CAMHS framework (Department of Health 1995). They found variations in response rates to children referred. Indeed, in 2000 a study by Meltzer et al found that only 1 in 5 of children with mental health disorders received intervention.

Another study by Ford et al (2005) found that 77% of children with mental health difficulties had not had seen specialist CAMHS and that 42% did not receive post-

intervention support. The evidence for this study was based on triangulated evidence from interviews and questionnaires with parents supported by a good response rate. The reliability was also increased through inter-rater reliability and clarification of responses through the interview process. They concluded that education has a crucial role in bridging this gap in access to services with particular reference to the importance of increasing parental knowledge of access to services and supporting their children's needs. The study by Ford et al (2005) suggests that mental health services are still not meeting the emotional well-being needs of children in line with the aims of 2003 guidance, Getting the Right Start: National Service Framework for Children (Department of Health 2003).

1.2 Mental health and education

In response to this context, recent legislation and guidance has increased expectations for educational professionals with regard to children's well being (E.g. National Healthy School Standard, DfEE 1999, Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings, DfEE, Every Child Matters, DfES 2003). This meets recommendations in government guidance which states that mental health is 'everyone's business' (TAMHS 2008, Getting it Right, Department of Health 2003, CAMHS Review 2008). These recent changes have meant that the EP role has broadened beyond the traditional Special Educational Needs (SEN) client group to promoting positive outcomes for children (Baxter and Frederickson 2005). This combines with a national focus on vulnerable groups based on evidence which highlights a complex interaction between aspects of a child's life resulting in risk factors for mental health. The Audit Commission and Mental Health Foundation (1999) identify the following risk factors at different levels for children's mental health.

Table 21: Risk factors for children's mental health

Individual risk factors	Family risk factors	Community and environmental risk factors
• Learning difficulty • Academic failure • Low self-esteem • Specific developmental delay • Communication problems • Genetic influences • Low IQ • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Substance misuse	• Parental conflict • Family breakdown • Inconsistent discipline • Rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's needs • Physical, sexual or emotional abuse • Severe parental mental health problems • Parental criminality or substance addiction • Death or loss	• Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster • Discrimination • Unemployment

Adapted from the CAMHS review (2008) p 22

The DfES (2001) states the increased chances of mental health difficulties in children where there are interactions between multiple risk factors. For example, one associated risk factor may increase the likelihood of mental health difficulties by 1 or 2% whereas four or more risk factors may increase this to about 8% (DfES 2001).

In terms of positive outcomes for children with regard to mental health, the Department of Health (1995) four-tier model provides a framework aimed at reducing mental health problems by promoting greater accessibility, flexibility and preventative intervention.

Figure 8: The four-tiered CAMHS framework

Tier 1: Non-mental health - Services provided by practitioners working in universal services (such as GPs, health visitors, teachers and youth workers), who are not necessarily mental health specialists. They offer general advice and treatment for less severe problems, promote mental health, aid early identification of problems and refer to more specialist services.
Tier 2: Uni-displinary work - Services provided by specialists working in community and primary care settings in a uni-disciplinary way (such as primary mental health workers, psychologists, educational psychologists and paediatric clinics). They offer consultation to families and other practitioners, outreach to identify severe/complex needs, and assessments and training to practitioners at Tier 1 to support service delivery. They work through a network rather than as a team.
Tier 3: CAMHS teams - Services usually provided by a multi-disciplinary team or service working in a community mental health clinic, child psychiatry outpatient service or community settings. They offer a specialised service for those with more severe, complex and persistent disorders.
Tier 4: Inpatient CAMHS - Services for children and young people with the most serious problems. These include day units, highly specialised outpatient teams and inpatient units, which usually serve more than one area.

Educational Psychologists are placed at tier 2 with associated expectations regarding training and consultation for tier 1 professionals (including teachers), consultation for families and assessment to identify the mental health needs of children or signposting for intervention at a higher level (Appleton 2000). Both school staff and educational psychologists are classified as primary care professionals where as CAMHS are defined as specialist services. Tier 2 provides an interface between specialist and primary care services. Thus, EPs have a gate-keeping role regarding referral to specialist services at tier 3 and 4.

2. Multi-agency approaches and discourses of mental health

As educational professionals have increased responsibility in meeting children's emotional health needs, this infers a link between health and the education sector. Indeed, recent moves towards integrated services (e.g. Every Child Matters DfES 2003, Children Act 2004) provide a context for this multi-agency approach to mental health. Indeed, Salmon (2004) argues that this is integral to effective mental health delivery. However, there are historically associated differences in the way educational professionals construct mental health in comparison to the health sector. As referred to above, clinical conceptions of mental health are viewed through a medical paradigm resulting in a deficit based discourse which identifies problems and relevant solutions, traditionally at crisis level. Although, it is acknowledged that the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) strategy (Together We Stand, Health Authority Service, HAS 1995) has somewhat reduced reliance upon this approach.

In contrast, education professionals may define their contribution to emotional well-being through a historical association with Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties (ESBD) linking with the guidance in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001). This was found in a review of the literature on EP's contributions to children's well-being (explored in a later section) and supports Maddern et al (2004) who argue that EPs have a traditional role linking mental health and SEN. However, there is also much in the educational psychology literature about well-being which suggests recent broader conceptualisations. Indeed, emotional–well-being, emotional literacy, empowerment, community psychology, positive psychology and resilience are recognisable and familiar terms in educational psychology literature.

Although traditionally relating mental health and behaviour, the education sector now applies a broader definition. This is exemplified by the description given by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES 2001) guidance, *Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings.*

> 'Mental health is about maintaining a good level of personal and social functioning. For children and young people, this means getting on with others, both peers and adults, participating in educative and other social activities, and having a positive self-esteem. Mental health is about coping and adjusting to the demands of growing up. It does not all happen at one point in time, and appears to result from an interactive process to which we can all contribute, based on the child's environmental, social and cultural context.'
>
> Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings (DfES 2001 pi).

This definition has an underlying ecosystemic (Bronfenbrenner 1979) discourse which constructs children's emotional well-being in terms of a psychosocial model. This approach shows multiple and mutual influences between individuals and the systems, which surround them, and has influenced EP work since the reconstruction movement in the 1970s. This is the antithesis of the medical model which constructs within problems, traditionally underlying the clinical tradition (Birleston et al 2001). This importance of adopting such as approach to mental health work is conceptualised by Galloway (2001) who states,

> 'We thus have the paradox that the best way to offer individual help may be by focusing more sharply on the school's principal function, namely promoting children's learning within a group. It follows that the school's contribution to children's mental health does not come principally from its specialist pastoral care staff, nor from a time-tabled slot for personal, social and health education (PSHE), but from the quality of its curriculum and social ethos as an educational community.'
>
> Galloway (2001) p156

This approach to children's well-being is reflected in the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL, DCSF 2006) initiative which has been adopted by many schools in the UK. This is a curriculum focusing on social, emotional and behavioural skills. Thus, this proactive approach to children's mental health shows how EPs are perfectly positioned to impact on the mental health agenda through their relationships with schools and the application of the ecosystemic approach.

The current context relies on this ecosystemic and broader conceptualisation of mental health (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) strategy (Together We Stand, Health Authority Service, HAS 1995) and rationale for this preventative and joined up strategy is reflected in 'A review of 24 CAMHS innovation projects What's new: Learning from the CAMHS Innovation Projects', (Department for Health, 2002). The review found that mental health needs were present in children at lower tier levels. The CAMHS innovation projects had an underlying holistic approach with education and health combining to on a range of projects from early intervention and consultation with parents, work with children and families, whole school interventions, consultation and training with professionals, work with vulnerable groups of children (E.g. Looked After Children, young offenders and children with complex needs) to:

- Promote and improve children's mental health
- Increase children's engagement with school and learning
- Reduce exclusions
- Provide support for parents and carers
- Develop the confidence and skills of school professionals in identification and support for mental health problems

Adapted from What's new: Learning from the CAMHS Innovation Projects, (Department for Health, 2002 p?)

The review concluded that children appreciated the projects, parental confidence increased in meeting children's emotional needs, waiting time for specialist services reduced but acknowledged difficulties in engaging school systems. This may present an opportunity for EPs to create a unique role, as engaging schools is an integral part of their current role. Evidence presented in the review is based on both quantitative and qualitative measures of progress. However, it is acknowledged that evaluative information from stakeholders relies on a low response rate. The importance of engaging schools in mental health work is also stressed by Ford et al (2007) who argue that children spend the majority of their time within schools and is safe environment without the stigma of the mental health label. This is supported by Salmon and Clarke, Coombs and Watson (2003) who found that young people would prefer to seek support from teachers rather than other services. Again this provides rationale for EPs in engaging and supporting schools in this area.

The findings from the CAMHS innovation projects review suggest that a multi-agency approach may be integral to increasing the success of mental health interventions. However, differences in discourses of mental health may impact on a unified mental health strategy. This difficulty is acknowledged by Hannigan (1997) who argues that differences in values and languages influence effectiveness of community health teams. Indeed, Rothi et al (2008) argue that addressing how different professionals construct and identify need is integral to improving children's mental health outcomes. One solution to this concern has been provided by Gersch (2009) who

reports Kinderman's (2005) recommendations for a unified training route (for educational and clinical psychologists) which is underpinned by a generic thread eventually resulting in specification. This may improve communication between the two disciplines in determining shared terms of reference and reducing misunderstandings (Leadbetter 2007) thus, positively influencing joined up approaches to mental health.

3. Aims of paper

The context provided above demonstrates a need for EP involvement in the current mental health agenda. However, an examination of how EPs have been involved previously and how they contribute currently needs to be examined prior to discussing the future role of EPs in this area. In accordance with this need, this paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. How are EPs currently contributing to children's emotional well-being in educational psychology literature and in the service included within the study?
2. What affects their contribution to children's emotional well-being?
3. How do EPs perceive their future role in meeting outcomes for children's emotional well-being?

Thus, this paper seeks to explore EPs current practices in the area of children's emotional well-being in terms of clients, work with other professionals, settings and levels of working. It also seeks to identify aspects of the role, theories and skills which contribute to outcomes for children in terms of their emotional health and the barriers and facilitators influencing EPs' contributions. Lastly, it aims to explore EPs'

perceptions of their future role in mental health with a particular focus on a distinct contribution.

3.1 Search strategies

A number of methods were used to locate relevant sources of information. Firstly, a 'snowballing' approach was used to identify published documents relating to children's emotional well-being, mental health, the educational psychologists' (EPs') role, educational psychology training routes and multi-agency working. Secondly, internet search engines were employed to access recent relevant legislation in children's mental health and emotional well-being. Also, a literature search was undertaken by the author using a computer data base search including Assia and Swetswise to identify studies exploring and evaluating EP projects undertaken between 2000 and 2009 in the area of children's emotional well-being. The search strategy used key terms relating to emotional well-being such as social skills, behaviour, emotions and various therapies to identify EP work in this area. The sources obtained were summarised and critiqued with regard to methodological aspects and epistemological assumptions in relation to resultant conclusions.

4. Review of the literature: types of mental health work undertaken by EPs

In terms of this paper, the author acknowledges that the time constraints and the scale of the study have determined a limited review of the educational psychology literature with regard to children's emotional well-being. However, certain trends emerge. In comparison to children's learning, there is a reduced focus on mental health in the literature. Historically, this may reflect the profession's narrower role

with an SEN client group. Many of the articles which reflect children's mental health needs tend to be defined in terms of emotional, behavioural difficulties (e.g. Kelly et al 2002, Poulou, 2005, Curtis and Norgate, 2007). Again, this may reflect the influence of the SEN Code of Practice (DfEE 2001) with increased focus on intervention for children with EBD and historical constraints on the EP role. There is also a prevalence of evaluations of social skills and emotional literacy interventions (E.g. Circle of friends, Barrett and Randall 2004, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, Kelly et al 2004, social skills interventions in primary schools, Denham et al 2006) perhaps representing the educational discourse of mental health (DfES 2001) and global interest in emotional literacy (Goleman 1995).

Other articles specifically focus on therapeutic approaches to children's emotional health (E.g. Solution-focused counselling, King and Kellock, 2002, Cognitive Behavioural therapy, Squires et al 2001). These include both group and individual level interventions. One more recent article focuses on family work with a vulnerable group in line with the national focus highlighted above. This study by Dodd (2009) explores the effects of preventative working by EPs with mothers of children who have experienced domestic abuse highlighting the need to develop protective factors which impact on children's well being long term. This article may reflect recent focus on a wider role for EPs suggested by Baxter and Frederickson (2005).

Another theme represented in the literature was an EP role in developing whole school preventative approaches to children's emotional well-being. The study by Kelly et al (2004) advocates an integral role for the EP in supporting schools to develop a positive school ethos whilst Sanders (2007) evaluates the effectiveness of a whole school nurture group approach.

Other less significant themes found were the application of research skills by EPs in evaluating the success of interventions (E.g. Frydenberg et al 2004 and Denham et al 2006). The article by Frydenberg et al (2004) also advocated a training role for EPs in schools with regard to school staff development in the area of children's emotional well-being thus meeting the guidance for EPs at tier 2 of the HAS (1995) framework. Lastly, reflecting guidance from both the health and education sectors on multi-agency working, an article by King and Kellock (2002) explores the effects of EP contribution to a multi-agency counselling team with clinical psychologists.

The above studies show that EPs have historically been involved in meeting children's mental health needs. However, the changing societal climate and the current zeitgeist in how children's needs are met present opportunities to broaden the EP role in this area. Although placed at tier 2, with associated guidelines, it is perhaps still not clear how EPs are intervening at present and how their skills can be used effectively at a time when the EP role is under debate.

4.1 Review of future perceptions of the EP role in contributing to outcomes for children's emotional well-being

Rothi et al (2008) view the rapidly changing current context not only as an opening from which to review the EP role but also re-examine the relationships between professionals collaborating on meeting children's well-being needs. Indeed, Rothi et al (2008) state,

> '… the current re-thinking of policy in these systems provides us with a unique opportunity to not only re-examine the role and function of educational

psychology, CAMH and school services independently, but to truly work on those difficult areas of overlap.'

Rothi et al (2008) p140

Gersch (2009) further argues that EPs need to promote a role which is forged through action and evidence to be perceived as valued particularly citing the importance of published research which may create greater parity with the clinical profession in this area. Rothi et al (2008) however, argue that there is a current lack of guidance on intervening in mental health for EPs. However, the guidance from the DfES (2001) *Promoting Children's Mental Health in Early Years and School Settings* suggests a universal approach which targets school systems with regard to policy, practice and work with families.

- Group and whole class interventions
- Use of psychological knowledge to support systems in behaviour and emotional support
- Engaging agencies in collaborative interventions
- Developing links with CAMHS

Adapted from DfES 2001 Promoting Children's Mental Health in Early Years and School Settings

This links closely with the report of the working group Educational Psychology Services: Current role, good practice and future directions (DfES 2000) which states that EPs should:

- Apply psychology to promote the attainment and healthy emotional development of children and young people from 0-19 years
- Focus on assessment, intervention and consultation
- Develop multi-agency approaches to support schools and parents

DfES 2000 p5

The guidance the DfES (2001) and DfES (2000) both link with the tier 2 role in providing consultation and training and joined up approaches to meet children's mental health needs based on psychological evidence. Indeed, Hunter et al (2008) report that CAMHS workers identified needs for education staff in terms of skills relating to supporting and referring young people to appropriate services. This suggests that EPs may have a role at the interface between specialist and primary services. Although, a study by Lacey (1999) shows that the role of the CAMHS Primary Mental Health Worker (CPMHW) may fulfil this gap between tier1 and tiers 2 and 3 through consultation, as referrals to higher tiers in services with CPMHWs were reduced. However, this was a small scale study with a reduced sample. Further longitudinal studies may provide evidence to support these claims.

However, Norwich (2005) argues that psychological knowledge is not unique to EPs, as many caring professionals utilise such skills, and furthermore that using a systemic approach could further diminish their distinctiveness. Alternatively, the systemic approach with its inherent sensitivity to real world contexts may be what distinguishes educational psychologists from the clinical tradition (Power et al 2003). Indeed, the psychosocial model could create opportunities for a researcher: practitioner role in understanding, intervening and evaluating mental health work in educational settings (Webster and Beveridge 1997). Indeed, DeSocio and Hootman

(2004) argue that this monitoring and evaluation of interventions is well established within the health sector but not in education. Would evidence based practice (Baxter 2002) develop a distinct role in children's mental health at early intervention levels? Could this be linked to researching the impact of interventions on those at risk of mental health difficulties? The doctoral qualification suggests a shift in the profession to such a position (Cameron et al 2008).

However, a study by Rothi et al (2008) found that 23% of primary and secondary teachers from a sample of 100 valued individual casework with regard to EP intervention in mental health. This finding is parallel to reports from school staff regarding the EP role generally, in a study by Ashton and Roberts (2006); suggesting that EPs may not be transparent about what do offer. This again creates a need for greater promotion of the systemic work undertaken with regard to children's emotional well-being underpinned by evidence based practice (Gersch 2009). However, the research undertaken by Rothi et al (2008) is dependent on a small sample and may not be considered representative of teachers' views in the wider population.

With increasing debate over the future of the EP role, the rapidly changing national agenda (Every Child Matters DfES 2003, changes to EP's training, the mental health agenda HAS 1995) brings new challenges for the EP to provide a distinct contribution (Gersch 2009) to outcomes for children. EPs may yet demonstrate a unique contribution by addressing gaps in current mental health provision (Norwich 2005).

5. Method and methodology: *Selection of method and instrument design*

This small-scale study employs a flexible design and a mixed method approach in terms of data analysis. Congruent with the interpretivist tradition, it is an exploratory study which intends to provide insight, in a qualitative form, regarding the EP role in children's emotional well-being. Although, the author considered that some of the data was better expressed in numerical form (Robson 2003), thus suggesting the complimentary nature of the different types of methods and; bridging the false dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative methods (Miles and Huberman 1994) often presented in psychological studies.

Furthermore, the study aims to provide a snapshot of reality through the eyes of the respondents. Thus, implied is an underlying constructivist epistemology in seeking to view the world from the subject's lens. Thus, it is not intended that findings from this study should be generalised as would be assumed in positivist research which ignores implicit bias inherent in empirical research (Robson 2003).

A questionnaire was chosen as an appropriate method to gain such subjective data for the following reasons:

- the lack of researcher presence would reduce social desirability effects and researcher bias
- views could be sought from a larger sample
- anonymity of views could be sought via this method

- questionnaires are used to obtain factual information about phenomena thus fitting with the purpose of this study in ascertaining the nature of EP work in the area of children's mental health

Adapted from Munn and Drever (1990)

In designing the questionnaire, a review of the literature on the EP role more generally and EP contributions to children's emotional well-being was undertaken. This provided a framework from which to structure key questions which correlated to the research aims. An example of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 1. Questions focused on EP contributions to children's emotional well-being in terms of settings, types of work, levels of intervention and multi-agency work consistent with current themes in the literature. Further questions honed in on barriers, facilitators and unique contributions to children's well-being and lastly future perceptions of the EP role.

The questionnaire was structured using multiple types of questions. Standardised questions were utilised to construct a framework for data analysis purposes. Open questions were utilised to capture the participant's own themes thus reducing the influence of the researcher on the resultant data. Closed questions were utilised to ascertain the settings, types of work and levels of intervention to aid in the analysis of the data. Ranking questions regarding time spent on different types of work were avoided as the research purpose did not extend to exploring time spent on each aspect of working, although it is acknowledged that this information may increase understanding of the EP role in this area.

In constructing the questionnaire, consideration of the layout was paramount as this can affect response rate (Thomas 1999). An open question was posed first as to ascertain the respondent's views in this area without researcher influence and then closed questions followed to increase motivation and engagement (Robson 2003) containing multiple responses to reduce bias (Clarke 1999) and increase valid comparison of themes. The last half of the questionnaire returned to open questions again to gain rich data from the respondents in line with the interpretivist paradigm. However, a trade off was acknowledged as the comprehensive nature of the responses may have caused difficulty in comparing themes at the data analysis stage. The questionnaire was peer reviewed and piloted on one colleague before use to ascertain any ambiguities in language (Clarke 1999) and the completion time which may affect the resultant response rate (Munn and Drever 1990).

5.1 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994). Firstly, the raw data from the questionnaires was collected, simplified and expressed in qualitative themes according to the research questions. It was considered that some of the information regarding levels of working, types of working, skills and frameworks was better expressed in tabular form. Thus, categorical measurement which measures the frequency within groups (Lewis et al 2008) was used to indicate the strength and nature of the responses to the reader thus increasing the transparency of the data analysis process.

The codes were finalised using the following strategies:

- counting responses to strengthen the weight of the identified pattern

- clustering the themes by re-ordering and re-grouping
- Making contrasts and comparisons between responses
- Differentiating and dividing themes throughout the iterative process
- Clustering themes into higher order dimensions
- Highlighting relationships between themes and across questions
- Identifying outliers (themes with little weight of response) which may counter hypotheses

Adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994)

Resultant interpretations were then considered through the identification of patterns and through checking hypotheses consistent and contrasting with the evidence in the literature on children's emotional well-being. Additionally, the data regarding barriers and facilitators to EP contribution to children's emotional well-being was analysed using Lewin's force field analysis (1951) as this framework allows the analysis of forces which influence situations.

5.2 Sample selection

Due to availability of respondents and the increased usefulness of the research, questionnaires were disseminated to EPs in the author's service via the internal email system. The scale of the research meant that respondents were given a short time scale of one week to return the questionnaires which may have affected the response rate. A second request for responses was made allowing a second week to return the questionnaires. The response rate was 10 EPs from a sample population of 60 thus indicating a low response rate.

The sample selection was purposive and contained EPs from the service which, include a range of experience from trainee to management levels. Thus, the specificity (Bannister et al 1994) of the research is acknowledged as the sample population is embedded within its social context (Miles and Huberman 1994) and determined from one educational psychology service with associated patterns of working. In this case, the service utilises a consultation approach, has involvement in community work and has members which have specialist roles, which may not be paralleled in other services in the UK. Further than this, the service is influenced at the exolevel (Bronfenbrenner 1979) by authority influences which may differ from other UK services.

5.3 Ethics

The use of questionnaires meant that ethical considerations were significantly reduced in comparison with direct relationships involved in other research situations such as interviews. However, remaining ethical issues were countered using the British Psychological Society (2006) Code of Ethics and Conduct. Initial consent was gained from the acting principle educational psychologist and consideration of the reciprocal effects (Miles and Huberman, 1994) of the study were undertaken at this stage as the research may highlight information which may benefit the service demonstrating a sound ethical purpose. Deception to respondents was avoided through information accompanying the questionnaire explaining the purpose and associated ethical issues. This information can be found in appendix 2. One significant ethical factor was ensuring anonymity of responses and was finally ensured through internal post systems.

6. Findings: How are EPs currently contributing to children's emotional well-being?

The findings from the questionnaire data will be reported under the research questions stated above and correspond to the sections in the questionnaire.

6.1 Levels of intervention

Table 22: Levels of intervention that EPs are contributing to the emotional well-being of children

Level of intervention	Number of EPs
Individual work with children	8
Group work with children	5
Consultation with school staff	10
Whole school training/organisational change projects	8
Work with families	6
Service development work	6
Community projects	3
Policy development	1

The table above indicates that EPs are contributing to children's emotional well-being at many different levels. All participants are using consultation with school staff. 80% of participants are contributing to children's emotional well-being at the individual level with only half of participants contributing to group work with children. Also, 80% of participant's referenced contributing at the whole school or organisational level in this area. Six of the ten participants also referred to work with families and service development work which impacts on children's emotional well-being. Community and policy work featured less in EP work in this area.

6.2 Settings in which EPs are contributing to children's emotional well-being

Table 23: Settings in which EPs contribute to emotional well-being

Setting	Types of work undertaken	Number of EPs
school	Individual work Consultation Training school staff Solution focused therapy Evaluation of training Behaviour training CBT awareness Work with parents Group work with children	8
Children's centres	Parenting consultation clinic project	3
Special/residential school	Young people's views Training/consultation for staff	3
Nurseries	Parenting programme	1
Cluster work with schools	TAMHS	1
Local Authority	Dissemination of research findings	1
Home visit	Parental holistic views of child	1
Looked After Children	Consultation	1
service	Supervising graduates self-esteem	1

The table above demonstrates that EPs are contributing to children's mental health in a variety of settings undertaking different types of work. Of particular significance, 80% of respondents are working in schools using therapeutic approaches, research skills and training at a number of levels. Three of the ten EPs also referenced work in children's centres and three respondents also noted their work in non-mainstream settings.

6.3 Multi-agency Work

In terms of contributing to children's emotional well-being through multi-agency collaboration, 60% of the sample referenced this type of working. The types of work undertaken in this way are reported in the table below.

Table 24: Types of multi-agency work undertaken by EPs to meet children's emotional well-being

Type of work	Number of participants
Person centred reviews	2
Newly arrived work	1
Behaviour projects	1
Working with clinical to support schools and families	1
TAMHS	1
Multiagency meetings in residential homes for children in care	1
Multi-agency meetings in school	1

The findings show that EPs are undertaking multi-agency work with vulnerable groups such as newly arrived and Looked After Children. They also contribute to meetings around the child in schools and projects in behaviour and mental health at the community level. Two respondents referenced collaborative working with clinical colleagues to meet children's mental health needs.

6.4 Theoretical frameworks, approaches and skills EPs use in the area of children's emotional well-being

Table 25: Theoretical frameworks, approaches and skills EPs use in the area of children's emotional well-being

Theoretical framework/approach/skill	Number of EPs
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	6
Solution Focused Therapy	5

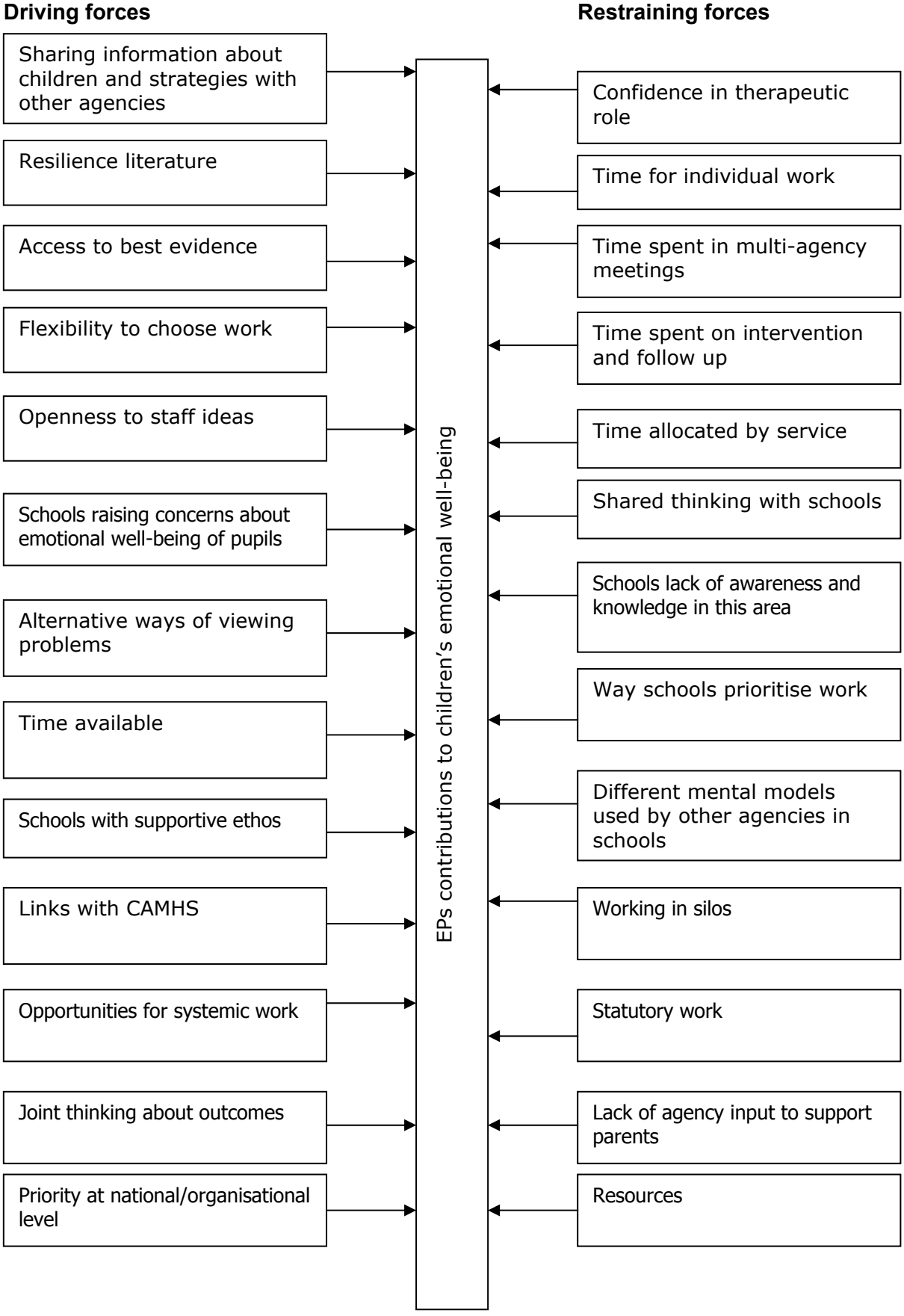
Motivational Interviewing	2
Personal Construct Psychology	2
Views of young people literature	2
Attachment theory	3
Psychoanalytic approaches	1
Ecological/systemic models	2
Behavioural psychology	2
Neuroscience knowledge	1
Models of self-esteem	1
Joint problem solving/consultation	2
Active listening/counselling skills	2

The findings indicate that EPs are applying a variety of theoretical models and approaches to meeting children's emotional well-being needs. EPs are utilising many therapeutic techniques and counselling skills in this area of practice.

6.5 What affects EPs' contribution to children's emotional well-being?

The barriers and facilitators impacting on EP contributions in the area of children's emotional well-being is reported using Lewin's (1951) Force field analysis.

Figure 9: Force field analysis adapted from Lewin (1951)



The force field analysis identifies a variety of driving forces which impact on EPs contributions to the mental health agenda. These include collaborative working, problem solving and consultation skills, evidence based practice and school factors. A significant theme identified by the restraining forces is the time needed to contribute to children's emotional well-being which is affected by a number of factors at many working levels. Also, the impact of working with other agencies and school factors are also highlighted as affecting contributions to the mental health agenda by the EPs in the sample. The implications of these drivers and restraining factors will be addressed in the discussion section.

6.6 How do EPs perceive their future role in meeting outcomes for children's emotional well-being?

Table 26: EP perceptions of their future role in the area of children's emotional well-being

Theme	Number of EPs
Increased supervision in this area	1
Competence in therapeutic work	1
INSET specific applications	1
Increased focus on children's emotional well-being	2
Designated role in this area	1
Awareness raising in schools regarding the relationship between poor well-being and educational outcomes	1
Capacity building of teachers in area rather than 1-1	2
Systemic training	1
Parent groups	1
Supporting staff in schools to promote well being	2
Supporting NQTs	1
Person centred planning	1
Evidence based practice/research projects/literature reviews	2
TAMHS	1
Service development aligning with local authority strategies	1
SEAL with families	1
Earlier intervention	1
Children's homes and social services	1
Work with other educational agencies on well-being	2
Community work	1
Direct work with children and young people on social skills and self-esteem	1
Evaluating impact of EP work in this area	1

Table 26 shows a number of different themes highlighted by EPs in terms of their perceptions of the future of the EP role in this area. These themes can now be clustered to show different areas of practice where EPs perceive the need for development or increased focus.

Table 27: Clustered themes showing EPs' perceptions of the future of the EP role in the area of children's emotional well-being

Clustered theme	Original themes
Work in schools	• INSET • Awareness raising in schools regarding the relationship between poor well-being and educational outcomes • Capacity building of teachers in area rather than 1-1 • Supporting staff in schools to promote well being • Supporting NQTs • Systemic training
Continued Professional Development	• Supervision • Increased competence in therapeutic work
Service level development	• Increased focus on children's emotional well-being • Designated role in this area • Service development aligning with local authority strategies
Meeting the needs of vulnerable children	• Children's homes and social services
Early intervention	• Parent groups • TAMHS • SEAL with families
Multi-agency work	• TAMHS • Work with other educational agencies on well-being
Child-centred approaches	• Person centred planning
Evidence based practice	• research projects • literature reviews • Evaluating impact of EP work in this area
Community level intervention	• No specific themes given

The findings presented in table 27 show multiple areas for developments in how EPs perceive increased contributions to the mental health agenda. These will be discussed in the next section.

7. Discussion: Levels of intervention in the area of children's emotional well-being

The findings from this study suggest that EPs are contributing to children's emotional well-being in a variety of different ways. Firstly, EPs are involved at a number of different levels in school settings. Consultation was highlighted as an integral part of the EPs contributions to children's emotional well-being. This meets the recommendations from the DfES Current role and good practice (2000) for working in schools and also the Department of Health (1995) guidance for tier 2 professionals engaging in consultation with tier 1 professionals. The EPs also identified individual working as common practice in the area of children's mental health. This took many forms including the application of various therapies. This is consistent with the literature as there have been a number of published studies which show therapeutic interventions with individual children, for example, Motivational Interviewing (Atkinson and Woods 2003), Personal Construct Psychology (Hardman 2001). Evidence from Rothi et al (2008) suggests that a number of schools value individual work with children in the area of mental health. However, Love (2009) argues that EPs can intervene more effectively at other levels.

Indeed, the EPs in this study referenced group work, work with families and whole school level work as features of their work. Group interventions can be found in the literature, with group work such as circle of friends (e.g. Barrett and Randall 2004) as used by two of the EPs in this study (see appendix 3: analysis of data). Group interventions are also recommended by the DfES (2001) guidance. This suggests that EPs are currently following guidance with regard to their role in children's mental health. Work with families featured highly in EPs work in this study. According to

Farmer and Farmer (1999) and Ford et al (2005), this is an area which could bridge gaps in services aimed at promoting children's emotional well-being. Indeed, evidence from the review of the CAMHS innovation projects (Department of Health, DOH 2002) found that work with parents increased the confidence of parents thus positively affecting children's emotional well-being.

In terms of whole school work, 60% of the EPs stated that this was a part of their contribution to children's emotional well-being. The review of the CAMHS innovation projects (DOH 2002) concluded that engaging schools was a barrier to effective mental health work. The evidence in this study may suggest that EPs are able to engage schools at the whole school level and so may be promoting a proactive approach to mental health in accordance with the Department of Health strategy (1995) and the DfES guidance (2001) which recommends the use of psychological knowledge to support behaviour support systems. Indeed, this finding is consistent with the literature as the study by Kelly et al (2004) describes the positive effects of EPs collaborating with schools to develop a positive whole school ethos. Further than this, this systemic approach demonstrates efficacy in delivering support to a wider population and provides longer term benefits, at less cost (Greig 2007).

In terms of other levels of working, community level and policy level interventions seem to be an area which is largely omitted from EPs practice in this study, in the area of mental health. Again this is consistent with the literature as the review in this study identified this as a current gap. It may be that such practices are undertaken but have not yet been reported.

7.1 Settings in which EPs contribute to children's emotional well-being

The findings in this study show that EPs mainly contribute to school settings in this area. This is not surprising as traditionally, this has been the main focus for educational psychologists. Again, a variety of types of working are undertaken in schools. One type of intervention, not mentioned in the last section, is training of school staff. This is a core function of a tier 2 professional (HAS 1995) and is recommended by Frydenberg et al (2004) as they found that staff knowledge of interventions targeting mental health affects their success. This was an evaluation study of a coping strategies programme based on a comparative study of two school settings. They concluded that successful partnerships between EPs and schools are integral to effective mental health strategy.

A number of EPs (30%) in this study also stated that supporting children's emotional well-being through their work in children's centres was a part of their role in the mental health agenda. This may suggest that EPs may be moving towards earlier interventions in this area again supporting the HAS (1995) strategy. This extension of the EP role is highlighted in the Farrell report (DfES 2006) which recommends that EPs should be extending their work beyond school settings to community working.

7.2 Multi-agency work

Multi-agency work was acknowledged as a part of current practice by 60% of the sample in this study. Thus, just over half of the EPs were undertaking some type of multi-agency work including; person centred reviews with individual children in mainstream and non-mainstream settings, interventions to support newly arrived

children and links with clinical psychologists. With the exception of involvement in the local TAMHS project, the multi-agency collaborations were reactive interventions. Indeed, the study by King and Kellock (2002) shows the effectiveness of EP collaborations with clinical colleagues to meet crisis level need. Also, the DfES (2001) guidance recommends such links with agencies and in particular CAMHS and this type of practice meeting the requirements of the Children Act 2004 in terms of collaborative working to meet outcomes for children.

7.3 Skills and frameworks

The findings of the study demonstrate that EPs are applying the eclectic use of theoretical models in meeting the emotional well-being needs of children. Norwich (2005) argues that this presents itself as one solution to a distinct role in meeting children's needs in the current climate. It is unsurprising that the ecosystemic model was highlighted by EPs in the study as this has been an integral part of the EP role since the reconstruction movement (Power et al 2003). Indeed, EPs in this study noted that the ecosystemic model would facilitate their work in this area. However, Norwich (2005) argues that aligning fully with this approach may reduce the distinctiveness of the EP role.

The findings of this study suggest that EPs are applying various theoretical models pragmatically showing sensitivity to real contexts. Further than this, opportunities for systemic work was considered a facilitating factor for contributing in this area. Cameron (2006) argues that these multiple perspectives on situations are invaluable in meeting the needs of children today. Rather than losing the distinct role, problem

solving at many levels as implied in the ecosystemic model may enhance the EP role in mental health.

The other notable finding in terms of theoretical models and skills was the eclectic use of therapeutic techniques and counselling skills to meet children's emotional well-being needs. The EPs identified a number of therapeutic approaches which were useful in their practice particularly solution focused approaches and cognitive behavioural therapy. This is consistent with findings in the literature which report studies showing the effectiveness of these approaches on children's mental health and the skills of those supporting them (e.g. King and kellock, 2002, Squires 2001, Boyle and Lauchlan 2009) and also recommendations by the Farrell report (DfES 2006) which was based on stakeholder views supporting the need for EP intervention in the area of individual therapy. This demonstrates that clients value an individual therapeutic role although the HAS (1995) strategy position at tier 2 with a linked consultation role, conflicts with this identified need. This may imply a need to demonstrate more explicitly the value of EP intervention at particular levels through evaluation. Indeed, Rothi et al (2008) advocate the need to evaluate the EP role in mental health and also the CAMHS review (2008) recommends the need for best evidence in measuring outcomes for children.

7.4 The future of the EP role and research skills

Although the application of research skills was not a significant finding in this study in the area of children's mental health, it was referred to by two respondents in relation to contributions to settings and the future of educational psychology in meeting children's emotional well-being needs. This outlier (Miles and Huberman 1994) is

consistent with future predictions for a distinct role in recent educational psychology literature. For example, Gersch (2009) and DeSocio and Hootman (2004) suggests that EPs may forge a role in this area through the application of evidence-based practice. Indeed, the EPs in this study show the use of evidence-based approaches and also suggested that this was a facilitating factor in their role in this area. Furthermore, Baxter (2002) argues that EPs have existing skills in this area which could measure interventions at all levels. Could this be a future role for EPs in children's mental health? Eodanable and Lauchlan (2009) also conceptualise a practitioner-researcher role but foresee difficulties with clinical colleagues accepting the qualitative evidence which may be more appropriate when evaluating interventions in real world educational settings (Robson 2003).

7.5 Driving forces and restraining forces on EPs' contributions to children's emotional well-being

The major restraining factor highlighted by EPs in this study was time to undertake work relating to children's emotional well-being. Factors identified included time spent on meetings, investment involved in individual therapeutic work and post-intervention support, statutory requirements and service allocation time. These are barriers which can be found in the literature. For example, Leadbetter (2000) refers to the impact of time allocation on therapeutic work whilst Thomson (1998) reports EPs descriptions of the constraints of the statutory role on the range of work undertaken by EPs. However, conversely in this study, one respondent considered flexibility in role division was sufficient in allowing opportunities in this area.

7.6 Continued professional development

The findings in the study show that 70% of EPs considered that they had received training on children's mental health. The types of training ranged from specific theoretical and therapeutic approaches in this area and doctoral training. It is interesting to note that one of restraining factors relates to continued professional development with regard to developing confidence in a therapeutic role and that two of the themes identified with regard to the future of the profession in children's mental health refer to increased supervision and competence. These findings may indicate a need for more training and support to meet the demands of a role in children's mental health and link with a driving force identified by one respondent with regard to prioritisation at an organisational level or designated roles in the future.

7.7 Factors affecting multi-agency work

As referred to above, EPs in the study are engaging in multi-agency work. However, they also identified a number of barriers to this including; role delineation difficulties and different constructions of mental health. These findings are consistent with a wealth of literature on multi-agency working. For example, Rothi et al (2008) and Hannigan (1997) suggest that different constructions of children's mental health needs present as a barrier to multi-agency working and Leadbetter et al (2007) report professional identity issues as restraining factors in multi-agency work. Indeed, Leadbetter (2006) argues the need for shared terms of reference to develop effective practice in this area. This may imply the need for joint training if the current strategy for integrated working continues (Children Act 2004). In contrast to this, one theme from the study describes the value of joint working through established

communication systems between multi-agency professionals. Again the need for effective communication is a common theme in multi-agency studies (Hymans 2006).

7.8 School factors which affect EP contributions to mental health

Many themes identified in the force field analysis suggest that school environments can either facilitate or prevent effective mental health work for EPs which supports the findings in the CAMHS innovation projects review (2002) regarding the engagement of schools. For example, one theme highlights a lack of awareness by school staff in this area. The tier 2 role (HAS 1995) clearly implicates a role for EPs in addressing such issues and the CAMHS review of the innovation projects (2002) also suggested a need to develop the confidence and skills of school professionals in identification and supporting children's mental health. This suggests a clear role for EPs in developing training and consultation approaches to meet this current gap in service provision.

Indeed, EPs in this study identified driving forces which supported their mental health work as; schools raising concerns and supportive schools environments, which are reliant on awareness of how to promote children's emotional well-being and how to identify early signs of difficulties. One EP also highlighted the need to develop staff understanding of the link between emotional well-being and educational outcomes and another reported a future role which builds capacity in school staff rather than centring on individual casework. The findings of this study may point to further focus on how to increase our effectiveness in this area to fulfil the designated tier 2 role. Indeed, the development of INSET applications for this purpose was identified by one respondent for this purpose. Of course this type of role relies on the consultation and

ecosystemic approach highlighted as a key feature of EP work in this study and also advocated as an effective way forward both in this study and the wider academic literature (e.g. Power et al 2003).

7.9 Future areas of development for EPs in supporting children's emotional well-being

In terms of other needs which EPs could address in the future, several areas were evident from this study. Firstly, several EPs reported the need to intervene with vulnerable groups such as looked after children. EPs also indicated that they were currently supporting newly arrived children and other vulnerable groups of children (not specified in the data). Increased focus for looked after children can be seen at a national level (DfEE 2000) and is identified as a risk factor for poor life outcomes by Dent and Cameron (2003). EPs may add value to the mental health strategy through facilitating and measuring the impact of projects which develop protective factors for such vulnerable groups, utilising their unique research skills. Another theme from a respondent was a role in promoting children's views in the area of children's emotional well-being. This future role for EP practice is advocated by Baxter and Frederickson (2003) as EPs have traditionally highlighted children's rights to make decisions about their experiences.

Earlier intervention was also a theme identified by respondents in the study. Two responses centred on the need for effective interventions with parents. Several EPs stated that they were already involved in this kind of work. Again this need is highlighted by the tier 2 guidance and also recommendations from the CAMHS innovation projects review (2002). The study by Ford et al (2005) suggests a role for

EPs in increasing parental understanding of how to access services and meet their children's needs. This creates a role for educational psychologists in promoting psychosocial structures which increase resilience in children (CAMHS Review 2008) and aligns with Baxter's (2002) suggestion that EPs could carve a role for themselves in meeting children's emotional well-being needs at this preventative level.

8. Limitations and future research

It is acknowledged that the findings in this study reflect a small scale and time constrained project. Thus, the findings are limited by several factors. Firstly, multiple data sources were not utilised. Triangulation using other methods may have increased the richness of the data collected and increased the reliability of the responses given. Also, questionnaires miss contextual information and clarification of responses which may have been highlighted through an interview situation (Munn and Drever 1990). However, time in terms of data collection and analysis (Clarke 1999); and social desirability factors were prevalent in this decision. Thus, the findings reflect a trade off between time and quality of data (Cohen et al 2000). However, the anonymity of the questionnaire may be more representative of EP views.

The validity of the findings is also affected by the low response rate. An attempt at increasing the sample was made by extending the response time with a second copy disseminated. This method is advocated by Edwards et al (2002) as an effective form of increasing response rates. This did increase the sample size but not

substantially. A shorter questionnaire with closed questions may have increased the response rate but would have reduced the richness of the data.

Future research could extend this study through exploration of the EPs' contributions to children's emotional well-being using a larger sample thus strengthening the findings. Also, the use of interviews would produce a richer picture. Furthermore, the evaluation of research projects targeting children's mental health with EP involvement (e.g. vulnerable groups, school, community and parent projects) may indicate the effectiveness of EP research skills in the area of children's mental health and measure the impact of early intervention. Also, gaining the views of multi-agency professionals regarding collaborative mental health projects may also provide insight into how EPs may fulfil a role in this area.

9. Conclusions

This study shows that EPs are currently contributing to children's emotional well-being in a variety of ways: the eclectic application of psychological frameworks and skills, participation in multi-agency collaborations, therapeutic work and consultation. They are contributing at a variety of levels with various stakeholders in different settings. In particular, EPs seem to be fulfilling part of their tier 2 role in consulting with education professionals and parents thus applying an ecosystemic approach. EPs in this study identified a number of barriers to their work in children's mental health such as time constraints and factors influencing multi-agency working. These constraints need to be considered at a service level to support the national agenda. EPs also identified collaborative working, consultation, evidence based practice and relationships with schools as facilitating factors to their work in this area. These

driving forces support the early identification and intervention strategy from the mental health agenda (HAS 1995) and are reliant upon EPs skills and daily practice.

In terms of the future of the EP role in meeting children's emotional well-being needs, EPs in this study identified several areas of significance. Firstly, the need for continued professional development in children's mental health. This would seem to be both integral to the effectiveness of EPs as tier 2 professionals in training and meeting the needs of tier 1 professionals and parents and so impact early intervention. Training and supporting clients cannot be undertaken until EPs have confidence in their knowledge and skills in this area.

It also emerged that EPs perceived a role in multi-agency collaborations in their future working. Whilst this aligns with the mental health agenda and the current children's services context, it brings tensions in how EPs offer a distinct contribution to this type of work. However, EPs valued evidence based practice and this researcher: practitioner role may provide a solution to this difficulty; applying psychological research skills to assess, intervene and evaluate mental health projects (Cameron et al 2008). Indeed, Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) state,

> 'The profession of educational psychology cannot be an esoteric backwater but should be advancing psychological knowledge in as many areas as possible. EPs are foremost psychologists and have as much right to apply their psychological knowledge to situations as any other sphere of psychology. '
>
> Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) p80

Adding value to children's emotional well-being through evidence based practice at a variety of levels may forge a broader and distinct role for EPs in the future.

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Appendix 1

Educational Psychologists' contributions to children's well being Questionnaire

1. In what ways do you consider that you are contributing to children's emotional well-being?

2. What levels of intervention have you been involved with in terms of children's emotional well-being? *Please tick relevant boxes.*

Individual work with children	
Group work with children	
Consultation with school staff	
Whole school training/organisational change projects	
Work with families	
Service development work	
Community projects	
Policy development	

Any other work? *Please specify* …

3. In what settings are you contributing to children's emotional well-being? (E.g. school, children's centre etc…)

Setting	**Types of work undertaken**

4. Have you contributed to any multi-agency work in relation to children's emotional well-being? *If yes, please state work undertaken.*

5. What facilitates your contribution to outcomes for children in the area of children's emotional well-being?

6. What are the barriers to EPs working to meet outcomes for children in the area of emotional well-being?

7. What psychological approaches/ theoretical frameworks or skills do EPs have that would impact on children's emotional well-being?

8. Have you experienced training in relation to the mental health agenda/ children's emotional well-being? *If yes, please state the title or the focus of the training.*

9. How do you think EPs can contribute to children's emotional well being in the future?

Appendix 2

Rationale and context for research into children's emotional well-being

I am a year 3 trainee educational psychologist on the University of Birmingham training course. I am also employed by Birmingham EPS and am based at the MEC.

As part of my course, I am required to undertake several professional practice reports. My current report focuses on educational psychologists' contributions to children's emotional well-being. I am seeking to provide evidence of current practice in this area within Birmingham Educational Psychology Service.

I acknowledge that everyone is very busy at this point in the term but would be grateful if you would consider completing a short questionnaire on this topic. This should not last more than ten minutes. Further details are given below.

Rationale and context

Recent reports suggest that mental health difficulties are increasing in children and young people in the UK. For example, one in five children and adolescents experience mental health problems (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service: Children in Mind, Audit Commission 1999). In response to this, recent legislation and guidance has increased expectations for educational professionals with regard to children's well being (E.g. National Healthy School Standard, DfEE 1999, Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings, DfEE, Every Child Matters, DfES 2003). These changes have meant that the EP role has broadened beyond the traditional Special Educational Needs client group to promoting positive outcomes for children (Baxter and Frederickson 2006).

The Department of Health (1995) four-tier model provides a framework aimed at reducing mental health problems by promoting greater accessibility, flexibility and preventative intervention. Educational Psychologists are placed at tier 2 with associated expectations regarding training and consultation for tier 1 professionals (including teachers), consultation for families and assessment to identify the mental health needs of children or signposting for intervention at a higher level. With increasing debate over the future of the EP role, the mental health agenda brings new challenges for the EP to provide a distinct contribution.

This questionnaire seeks to ascertain current practice by EPs (within Birmingham Educational Psychology Service) and their perceptions of the future of the profession in the in the area of children's emotional well-being.

Returning the questionnaire

To ensure anonymity, the questionnaires should be returned to me at the MEC via the internal post by Thursday 15th October 2009.

The results will be reported in the practice report which will be made available to the service. You can also request a copy of the report. Your responses will provide a valuable contribution to the growing literature in this area.

If you have any queries regarding the questionnaire then I will be happy to answer them. Thank you for considering this request.

Chloe Marks (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

CHAPTER SIX

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COACHING: REFLECTIONS ON A SCHOOL COACHING PROJECT

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EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COACHING:REFLECTIONS ON A SCHOOL COACHING PROJECT

Abstract

There has been increased focus on developing teachers' practice to influence school improvement and consequently children's outcomes. This paper explores the negotiation and facilitation of the initial stages of a coaching project in one primary school. The project aimed to address whole school behaviour management concerns. The coaching programme was carried out with three newly qualified teachers and employed a solution focused approach. The paper reports on the effects of the project on specific problems and individual teacher practice. Evaluation of the project is also considered in relation to the barriers and facilitators affecting the success of the coaching in this case study. Conclusions consider how educational psychologists may incorporate coaching into their role and suggestions for further research to develop an evidence base for the use of coaching in educational settings.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COACHING: REFLECTIONS ON A SCHOOL COACHING PROJECT

1. Introduction: Context for a coaching project

The current educational climate focuses on raising educational standards and in relation to this, there has been increased interest in continuing professional development (Simkins et al 2006). Indeed, the National Strategy for Continuing Professional Development (DfEE 2001a) identifies the need to develop and maintain teachers' practice in order to impact on pupils' learning. Monsen and Cameron (2002) have also suggested that teachers benefit from opportunities to reflect on and develop their practice, with educational psychologists uniquely positioned to facilitate this (Cameron 2006). More specifically, Farrell et al (1996) suggest a role for educational psychologists in supporting teachers to manage behaviour in the classroom.

There has been a growing interest in coaching as an effective process for developing capacity in teachers (McGatha 2009 and Veenman et al 2001). Coaching relies on a collaborative relationship between the coach and the coachee. Since the reconstruction movement, collaborative work with teachers has been a feature of educational psychologists' practice. Indeed, Wagner (2000) argues that 'EPs are most effective when they work with teachers collaboratively and with a sense of the school as a whole organisation' (Wagner 2000, p12/13). Stoker (2000) also adds that educational psychology as a profession has increasingly recognised the need to impact on children's outcomes at an organisational level and this has been reflected in increased application of the consultation approach in EP work (Wagner 2000,

Farouk 1999). However, Baxter (2000) argues that despite a shift in interest to organisational level work, schools rarely request EP support beyond the individual level.

1.1 Background to the case study

This school project was initiated by local authority concerns regarding the number of pupil referrals to school support services for behaviour. It was considered by the lead educational psychologist (EP) for the school that extra support from a trainee educational psychologist (TEP and author), at the organisational level could be offered to meet the school's needs in the area of behaviour management. This was discussed with the senior management in the school and school support services who agreed the need for focus on behaviour management with the support of a TEP.

The school is a large two form entry primary which is situated in an area of social disadvantage. The school population is mainly comprised of ethnic minority pupils and has a high number of transient pupils who are refugees. The school has a higher than average number of children with learning difficulties. In recent years, the school has had a high staff turnover. The school OFSTED report (2006) rated the school as satisfactory in its performance in most areas including behaviour. However, the recent government guidance, Delivering the Behaviour Challenge: our commitment to good behaviour strategy (Department for Children, Schools and Families DCSF 2009) sets a new standard for behaviour in achieving a 'good' rating. If this level is not reached then interventions will be offered and a re-inspection from OFSTED within a year will follow. Also, schools will not be able to gain a 'good' rating overall if they do not demonstrate this rating with regard to behaviour. This

provided further rationale for involvement in a project aimed at developing behaviour management skills in teachers.

1.2 Aims

This paper discusses a trainee educational psychologist's contribution to behaviour management in one school and explores the effectiveness of a coaching project on school improvement in this area. It explores how coaching was negotiated as a means of making impact on three designated teachers' professional development. More specifically, it sets out to identify changes as a result of the coaching programme in terms of individual practice and the specific problems which the coaching aimed to enable the coachees to address more confidently and effectively.

The following questions are addressed:

1. What is coaching and how can it impact on teachers' professional development?
2. How does coaching fit within an educational psychologist's role?
3. How was a coaching project negotiated as a form of intervention for school improvement in behaviour management?
4. How was an appropriate coaching method selected to fit the specific school context?
5. How successful was the coaching in terms of solving specific problems and impacting on teachers' practice?
6. What are the future implications for educational psychologists using coaching in their practice?

1.3 *Search Strategies*

An outline of the methods used to locate relevant sources of information for this paper is presented below. Firstly, internet search engines were employed to access recent relevant legislation in the area of professional development and school improvement. Also, a literature search was undertaken by the author using a computer data base search including Assia and Swetswise. The search strategy used key concepts relating to coaching, organisational level work, schools as 'learning organisations', professional development and teachers and solution focused approaches. A 'snowballing' approach was then used to identify other documents relating to coaching by professionals and systems level work undertaken by educational psychologists.

1.4 Negotiating the coaching programme

The organisational level work described in this paper was structured by the Research and Development in Organisations Approach (RADIO Knight and Timmins 1995). The RADIO model was developed as a tool for trainee educational psychologists in formulating and managing organisational level work in schools. This is shown in Table 28 below. Although presented in linear form it was intended that the model should be used in a cyclic manner with evaluation informing returns to different stages. The RADIO model was used to structure conversations around the author's involvement in school improvement and resultant actions towards change. This is outlined below and also conveys a timeline of the process.

Table 28: RADIO model (Knight and Timmins 1995)

Stage of RADIO model	Application to organisational project
1 Awareness of a need	• July 2009: Supervisor describes need for systems level work for behaviour management in school • July 2009: multi- agency planning meeting for school work for the next academic year. Role agreed in contributing at systems level.
2. Invitation to act	• September 2009: Meeting between author and Deputy (responsible for development work) to negotiate role. • Agreed need for exploration of behaviour management systems in school • Discussed possible approaches to exploring this need.
3. Clarifying organisational and cultural issues	• September 2009: meeting between deputy and author • Identified staff turnover as barrier to consistency • Discussed school culture and possible resistance to change by established teachers
4. Identifying Stakeholders in area of need	• September 2009: meeting between deputy and author • Discussed NQTs as starting point for exploring behaviour management (part of induction). • Highlighted the needs of all school staff but acknowledged the current established culture as a barrier to such work. • Negotiated NQTs as participants in initial phase of a coaching project which would develop behaviour management skills. • The feedback from the initial coaching would inform a plan for wider application of coaching as a professional development tool in the school.
5. Agreeing the focus of concern	• To explore NQTs' behaviour management through coaching project. • To develop problem solving skills in the area of behaviour management.
6. Negotiating framework for Information gathering	• September – October 2009: Researched coaching methodologies and selected approach as solution-focused. • Information provided for participants (NQTs) to ensure transparency of approach and consent gained (see Appendix 1) This was discussed in a short meeting and coaching times arranged.
7. Gathering Information	• November 2009: first phase of

	coaching sessions begin • Written feedback provided to coachees. Coaching sessions were structured from data gathered through observation and discussion. • January/February 2010: second phase of coaching and feedback.
8. Processing information with project stakeholders	• January/February 2010: Second coaching session: evaluation of action plans and reflections of NQTs are discussed.
9. Agreeing areas for future action	• Positive feedback from teachers. • Introduce coaching to other staff in Spring term on voluntary basis • Discussions regarding whole school plans for coaching with the deputy.
10. Action Planning	These stages will be undertaken at a later point in the project.
11. Acting	
12. Evaluating action	

Adapted from Timmins et al (2003)

Stages 10 -12 have been omitted as the project had not progressed to these stages at the time of writing.

Several factors influenced the negotiation of the project. The original intention was to negotiate a collaborative whole school project engaging all school stakeholders. However, discussions about the current school culture in the meeting with the deputy suggested that it was not an appropriate time for such a project. A coaching programme would support the current needs of the school in starting to look at behaviour management of new staff with a view to eventually widening to more established staff.

The author had reservations about the client group selected for the coaching as the school had a history of new staff leaving within their first year. However, I considered that the coaching may provide much needed support for new staff to continue at the school. Also, D'Abate et al (2003) raise choice as a factor in decisions about

coaching. The top-down decision for the NQTs' participation in coaching did not enable their choice and so may have affected their motivation and thus the success of the project. Furthermore, perceptions by the senior management team about established staff meant that the staff did not make a decision about their participation, when they may have appreciated the opportunity for support in behaviour management. Although school culture was given as a reason for a smaller scale project, again external agency reports suggested that it may have been resistance to change which had influenced the type of project negotiated.

Bedeian (1980) in Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) suggests explanations of resistance to organisational change. Firstly, parochial self-interest (an interest in protecting the status quo) may have affected the school staff's commitment to a specific type of project. Conversations with many support service professionals had suggested that the leadership team may be hesitant to engage in a process which examines current systems as it may threaten current security. Also, contradictory assessments of the situation in the school may mean that the senior management team and school support service staff have conflicting views of proposed change. Thus, external agencies may perceive an organisational project as a medium for improvement whereas school staff may regard the process as threatening. A combination of these factors may have resulted in an initial small scale project. Furthermore, the current status of the author as a trainee and the lack of an established relationship with the school also may have contributed to an imbalance in power which may have affected the type of project negotiated.

1.5 Definitions of coaching

Coaching is a dynamic process which aims to change individuals' construing of problems enabling different thinking about work related situations (Monsen and Cameron 2002). Through the coaching dynamic, individuals develop reflective skills from constructive feedback on specific work-related problems. Downey (1999) defines coaching as 'the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another' (Downey 1999, p15). Coaching can be located within the umbrella of developmental interactions such as mentoring and supervision which are utilised as professional development opportunities. Coaching and mentoring are often used interchangeably as both involve a dynamic relationship from which intrapersonal development occurs. However, coaching and mentoring may be differentiated. Coaching relationships are defined by a shorter term, practical and narrower focus on a specific problem whereas mentoring may broaden interest to professional development in a long term supportive relationship (D'Abate et al 2003). Indeed, Rhodes and Benicke (2002) identify a personal counselling element to mentoring.

2. Rationale for coaching : Coaching in non-educational contexts

Traditionally, coaching has been used in sports contexts to develop and improve skills for performance. However, Cushion et al (2006) have suggested that sport's coaching has been heavily influenced by the positivist paradigm with an emphasis on causal relationships between variables and progress. Sports coaching has traditionally utilised an instructional model, employed by experts, rather than acknowledging a dynamic process between coach and coachee. Coaching has also been utilised by the business sector since the 1980s to improve employee

performance, manage executive stress and meet job requirements (Natale and Diamante 2005). This type of executive coaching relies on a dynamic relationship between the coach and coachee.

2.1 Professional development in education: schools as learning organisations

There has been increased interest in continued professional development and since the 80s, coaching has steadily been developing as an initiative which develops specific aspects of practice (Simkins et al 2006). The Department for Education and Employment (DFEE 2001b) Learning and Teaching: A strategy for professional development guidance states that teachers' professional development should be enhanced by:

- a focus upon specific teaching and learning problems;
- opportunities for teachers to reflect on what they know and do already;
- opportunities for teachers to understand the rationale behind new ideas and approaches; to see theory demonstrated in practice; to be exposed to new expertise;
- sustained opportunities to experiment with new ideas and approaches, so that teachers can work out their implications for their own subject, pupils, school and community;
- opportunities for teachers to put their own interpretation of new strategies and ideas to work, building on their existing knowledge and skills;
- coaching and feedback on their professional practice over a period of weeks and months. This is a particularly important element, and can be decisive in determining whether changes in practice survive.

DfEE (2001b) p11.

This guidance provides support for coaching as a professional development method as it is a medium for exploring specific problems, reflecting on action and providing opportunities to explore and implement new ideas over time.

2.2 The effectiveness of coaching in educational settings

Traditionally, teachers have experienced In-Service Education and Skills Training (INSET) as the main context for developing and generating new knowledge. Alternatively, Li and Chan (2007) argue that coaching with its reliance on context specific focus develops and embeds new skills changing practice more effectively. Indeed, Monsen and Cameron (1998) argue that the psychological underpinnings of coaching have more impact on professional development as coaching relies on learning in action (Schön 1983). The importance of experiential learning for meta-cognitive development from coaching has also been identified by Cote (2006) in the field of sport science. Also, consultation evidence from the DFEE (2001) with 1100 teachers also found that 90% of respondents valued professional development opportunities which involve 'on the job' learning including coaching or mentoring. Further than this, coaching is based upon the social constructionist principle that new knowledge is generated by interactions with others, in particular, the Vygotskyan theory that the interpersonal context creates intrapersonal change (Leat et al 2006). Thus coaching, with its combination of experiential learning within the context of a reflective partnership provides a basis for professional learning.

Although there are studies on coaching in education, generally, there is a dearth of empirical data to support the effectiveness of coaching (Neenan 2008). For example, a study by McGatha (2008) looked at the impact of coaching programmes on teachers' practice. Rather than evaluating the effects of the coaching though, McGatha concluded that the interaction between the coach and coachee affects the outcomes of the coaching. However, in their review of the coaching literature, Veenman et al (2001) report that coaching increases problem solving skills, self-awareness and confidence in work situations. In their study, Veenman et al (2001) evaluated the effectiveness of coaching programmes for beginner teachers. Although mainly focusing on the coaches' skills, the beginner teachers did report the coaching experience as positive and highlighted the impact of the coaching on improved teaching skills. However, the study concluded that further research is needed to evaluate the impact of coaching on the practice of beginner teachers.

One study which evaluates the effectiveness of coaching programmes was undertaken by Staffordshire educational psychology service (McNab 2006) in a number of schools across the authority. The project was initiated in response to the behaviour and attendance national strategy and was based on a solution focused model of coaching (detailed in a later section). Part of the project measured teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the coaching through pre and post rating scales. The findings showed that teachers found the coaching useful in addressing the specific issue they had raised (mean rating of 9 out of scale of 1-10). Also, effects on behaviour management were rated 7 out of 10 (mean rating). Further than this, the teachers also identified effects on other aspects of school life. The evidence from this research is based on scaling which provides well-defined dimensions to measure attitudes (Robson 2002) but conversely the pre-specified criteria may have reduced

the scope of the participants' responses and so it may be argued that it provided a limited view of the effectiveness of the coaching.

A study by Shidler (2009) examines the effects of coaching on teacher self efficacy and children's outcomes. The research explores the correlation between allocated coaching time and children's outcomes in literacy. The study was undertaken in America over a period of 3 years. In year one, the coaching focused specifically on literacy instruction, whereas year two and three had general support and less observational time in class. The children's outcomes were measured using standardised literacy tests. The study found that better outcomes are achieved when there is a specific focus to the coaching as outcomes for the children were better in year one. Shidler (2009) also concludes that effective coaching contains the following elements: a specific focus, observation, consultation to facilitate reflection and modelling of skills. This study clearly shows a causal relationship between coaching and literacy outcomes for children. However, the study omitted a control group to provide a comparison. Also, the study does not indicate possible effects of other variables such as other interventions taking place within the classrooms over the three year period.

A study by Swafford (1997) also highlights the impact of peer coaching on teacher's procedural knowledge, affect and reflective thinking skills. The study was conducted with 18 teachers in coaching dynamics with their peers. Using qualitative data evidence, Swafford (1997) found that the coaching process positively developed teachers' skills in the above three areas and additionally that over the year, their discourses reflected more reflective thinking than procedural knowledge.

Another study by Ling (2004) examines the value of a peer collaborative school-based project which included a coaching element. The project was undertaken with 60 teachers who attended workshops, engaged in reflective discussions and participant observations. The findings of the study were based on the observational evidence, semi-structured interviews and coaching discussions with staff. Ling (2004) found that there were positive changes in the teachers' perceptions of their practice but little change in actual practice. However, he concluded that collaborative projects foster a reflective school culture which contributes to schools as learning organisations and thus pupil outcomes. Also, he regards the role of an external facilitator as integral to such projects to ask questions which stimulate reflective thinking. Although this research provides triangulated evidence to support the value of collaborative projects for professional development, it does not highlight coaching as the specific locus of the change. It does however indicate that whole school commitment is needed to impact on organisational development.

A case study by Woodside-Jiron and Gehsmann (2009) shows wider effects of coaching. This study shows how coaching as part of a whole school approach to school improvement (in a school in a socially disadvantaged area of America) initiated and achieved policy change whilst, impacting on outcomes for the children. The authors acknowledge that such change occurs over a longitudinal process which is influenced by complex social factors.

Although the coaching evidence base is limited, the above studies indicate that coaching can impact on teachers' professional development (e.g. building confidence, developing problem solving skills, enhancing reflective thinking) as well as influencing outcomes for children. Furthermore, the selected studies also suggest

broader effects in informing whole school approaches to organisational change. However, this interpretation is applied with caution as there are many other variables which could have contributed to the positive changes in school development.

2.3 Educational psychologists' practice and coaching

As Ling (2004) suggests, external facilitators provide a crucial role in improving schools, thus impacting on outcomes for children, as they provide insight from this outsider viewpoint. On a daily basis, many educational psychologists work indirectly with adults to achieve outcomes for children traditionally using a consultation approach (Dickinson 2000). Wagner (2000 p11) defines consultation as 'a voluntary, collaborative, non-supervisory approach, established to aid the functioning of a system and its related systems'. The consultation approach utilises psychological evidence and frameworks to empower adults to improve situations for children at individual and whole school levels. Effective practice is reliant on understanding schools as complex contexts which influence teacher behaviour (Watkins and Hill 2000). Similarly, coaching relies on the use of psychological approaches to extend professional development, contributing to organisational development, if part of a whole school approach. Both consultation and coaching rely on a constructivist approach with the underlying principle that knowledge is co-constructed in interactions thus; talk is the medium for change. Both approaches are also applied to clients offering a specific problem to which joint solutions are generated based on the premise that the client has the resources to effect change. One difference between coaching and consultation can be considered in terms of the problem referred. Consultation with individual teachers tends to centre on case referrals which may be structured by pathological conceptions of a child's difficulties. In contrast, the

coaching context focuses on improving teacher level factors on specific problems. However, coaching and consultation both offer the opportunity for a 'consultee' or 'coachee' to understand complex classroom based situations whilst developing new skills (Kraayenoord 2003). In summary, both consultation and coaching are similar in approach and method, therefore equipping EPs as appropriate external facilitators to undertake coaching work in schools.

3. Selection of coaching method: Problem based coaching models

There are various psychological frameworks for coaching (e.g. Cognitive Behaviour Coaching, Neenan 2008, Peer coaching, Swafford 1998, Cognitive coaching, Costa and Garmston 2002). Cognitive coaching (Costa and Garmston 2002) is a problem-based approach which develops reflective thinking and self-directed behaviour utilising the coach's expertise and questioning skills to develop practice. Basile et al (2003) argue that a problem based approach which is inherently constructivist has more effect in developing capacity building skills in individuals. This is in contrast to the predominant deductive approach (defined by instructional methods) in the field of sports coaching. Indeed, Cameron and Monsen (2002) suggest a 10 step coaching problem solving framework for use in the education. This is reported below in table 29.

Table 29: Monsen and Cameron 10 step Coaching problem solving framework

Stage of process	What happens in the coaching session
1. Understanding the problem situation	Exploring problem situation through questions and active listening skills
2. Summarising the problem situation	The problem is summarised

3. Examining systemic aspects	Look at organisational factors which influence the problem
4. Developing cultural understanding	Checking the coherence of the clients' thoughts on the problem
5. Considering underlying personal dimensions	Suggest themes and identify gaps in professional expertise
6. Exploring selected dimensions	Select a dimension for discussion
7. Creating an action menu	Explore alternative actions
8. Planning action	Discuss action plan and discuss outcomes
9. Evaluating outcomes/ processes	Consider changes and reflect on further needs
10. Carrying out meta-evaluation	Review coaching sessions and reflect on needs from sessions

Adapted Cameron and Monsen (2002) p116

This model allows a thorough analysis of problem situations which can be resolved through action in the form of strategies. These are evaluated through reflection, at a meta-level, and improve professional development. Although a rigorous and systematic model, the author considered that step 5 which focuses on identifying client weaknesses would not represent the principles inherent in her practice and would not be beneficial to the current culture of the school (in this project); so solution focused coaching was considered an appropriate alternative for the school in this study.

3.1 Solution Focused Coaching

The Devon model recommended by the DfES (2001) utilises a solution focused approach to coaching and has been used successfully by the Staffordshire educational psychology service (McNab 2006). Solution focused approaches to problems originated from DeShazer's (1985) family therapy work. He found that focusing on the future with clients enabled positive change. Solution focused approaches have the following principles:

- There is collaboration between coach and client
- The client is the expert and has the resources to change situations
- Sessions are future oriented and positively framed
- Conversations are goal driven rather than problem based
- There are always exceptions to problems
- If something works, do more of it
- Small changes have ripple effects

Adapted from O'Connell and Palmer (2006)

A solution focused approach was chosen as it incorporates a non-judgemental attitude towards clients. This was considered as important to the success of consultation with teachers by EPs in a study by Farouk (1999). It is conceived that the dearth of literature on coaching and the similarities between coaching and consultation mean that parallels are suggested and therefore accepted as appropriate evidence by the author throughout this paper. In addition though, a study by Li and Chan (2007) found that a non-judgemental attitude from coaches was

perceived as beneficial by teachers. Further than this, solutions focused coaching centres on developing existing strengths rather than relying on the coach's expertise as advocated in cognitive coaching (Costa and Garmston 2002). From previous experience of using solution focused consultation, the author considered that this provides a safer emotional context for teachers to develop professionally.

Considering emotional safety in coaching approaches is also identified by Basile et al (2003) as a condition for effective learning. A further study by Eisenbach and Curry (1999) revealed the affective aspects involved in the coaching relationship. Through examination of a peer coaching dynamic they found that the coaching process may surface vulnerability. This may also be relevant to an 'outsider: insider' coaching relationship as the teacher may perceive the external consultant as an expert, thus influencing the resultant relationship. It was considered that the transparent nature of the solution focused approach and explicit sharing of the rationale and coaching process should increase the empowerment of the participants.

Also, solution focused approaches empower teachers to solve their own problems and facilitate paradigm changes in the way problems are conceptualised (Redpath and Harker 1999). Redpath and Harker (1999) measured paradigm shifts in the language used in solution focused consultation and found that teachers conceptualised problems differently after experience of the solution focused approach. However, measurement of the impact of this on children's outcomes was omitted. The use of pre and post measures of targeted outcomes may have produced data to support the effectiveness of the approach.

The solution focused coaching model used in this project was adapted from the Devon model (DfES 2001) which includes pre-coaching observation. The observation provides contextual information from which the coach can facilitate conversations about the coachee's practice. The session structure is shown below in table 30.

Table 30: Coaching session structure

1. Observation	- Coach identifies positive practice - Coach develops understanding of classroom context
2. Coaching discussion	- Introduction recapitulating the aims of the coaching and the solution focused approach - Positive feedback from coach - Coachee identifies positive aspects of the lesson - Coachee identifies the focus of the session - exploration of the problem - scaling and goal setting - action plan - feedback in the form of a summary of the session linked to the goals and actions set

The script for the coaching session can be found in Appendix 1 and was adapted from the Cauffman and Berg (2002) model of solution focused corporate coaching. The script was selected for its detailed structure which enabled exploration and expansion of the problem dimensions. It also allowed flexibility in question order and

the creativity of the solution focused approach in situ. The questions focused attention on the aspects of practice which inform solutions (Rhodes 1993).

The solution focused approach utilises several learning experiences, which according to D'Abate et al (2003), facilitate learning for clients in developmental interactions.

Table 31: Learning experiences which facilitate professional development

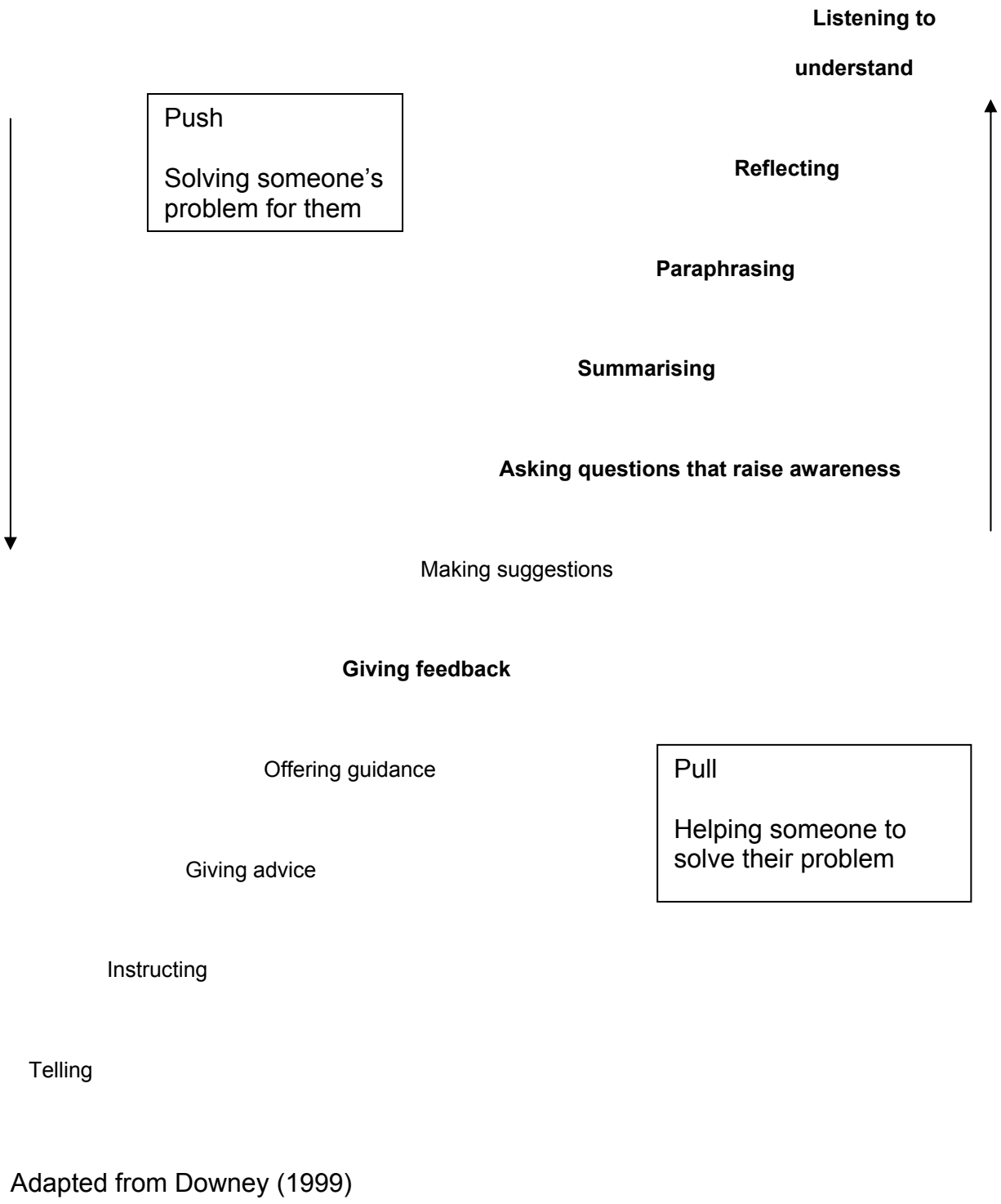
Learning experience	Solution focused coaching
Collaborating: the coach and learner work together in collaborative way.	Solution focused questioning enables the exploration of problems from the client's perspective and joint solutions are reached.
Goal setting: the coach and learner establish, monitor and seek support for goals.	Solution focused approaches are goal driven rather than problem focused.
Observing: The learner is observed in the work context for development purposes.	The coach observes the client in the work context noticing positives.
Problem solving: Through the coaching dynamic problems are explored and resolved.	Problems are positively framed. Strategies which work and exceptions are highlighted and solutions build on these positive points.
Providing practical application: The learner acts to solve problem in work context.	An action plan which builds on the client's strengths and strategies which work are applied in the work context.
Providing feedback: Constructive feedback is provided for the learner.	Feedback based on client's strengths and noticed positive practice is given to the client.
Sharing information: Information is shared for professional development purposes.	Information about the solution focused approach is shared to enhance the effectiveness of the coaching process.

Adapted from D'Abate et al (2003) p367.

The rationale for using a solution focused coaching approach also stems from research by Simkin et al (2006) who found that active participation in learning interactions, and a facilitating coach with a less directive approach produced positive outcomes for participants, although it is acknowledged that the research was specifically focused on leadership development. Like consultation, the solution focused approach relies on a principle of transparency of purpose (Wagner 2000) and method to increase the commitment of individuals and develop skills through awareness. Indeed, the way which coaching is presented can affect the motivation and commitment of clients (Beneike and Rhodes 2002).

The solution focused approach utilised in this project reflects the coaching skills at the higher end of the coaching skills spectrum (Downey 1999) shown below in Figure 10. The diagram highlights a range of skills which encourage learning. Downey (1999) considers that the non-directive skills facilitate self-learning. The skills used in the coaching sessions are highlighted in bold. These are predominantly non-directive skills which aimed to help the teachers to solve their problems rather than donating solutions. The coaching can therefore be viewed as a capacity building approach which seeks to avoid co-dependency.

Figure 10: The spectrum of coaching skills



Adapted from Downey (1999)

3.2 Method

The coaching project was undertaken with three newly qualified teachers (NQTs) who had joined the school at the beginning of the year. Participation in the coaching programme would contribute to their induction support entitlement. To date, the NQT's participated in two coaching sessions which involved an observation followed by solution focused coaching and feedback. An example of a session is shown below in Table 32.

Table 32: Participant C – coaching session one

Observations	• Good use of praise (including proximity praise) • Explicit expectations for behaviour • Rules clearly referenced and children given as examples • Class reward system consistently used and most of the children in the class responded positively
Concerns raised by client	• Some of the children do not like it when praise is given to others. They feel hard done by on a daily basis. • How can I get these few children to respond in the same way as the rest of the class?
Discussion	• The problem happens first thing in the morning and after lunch. • The problem does not happen when I work with their group as they get positive praise. • Stickers, well done cards and praise sessions work with the children already. • The problem will be solved when there is a calmer atmosphere in class and there will be less need to give negative attention. • Have already thought about a job system linked to rewards.
Action Plan	1. Give the few children attention when lining up in the morning by engaging them in conversations (show an interest). 2. Give the few children jobs to do in the morning creating chances for them to earn a well done card. 3. TA to support in speaking to children. Negotiate which children to target.

Evaluation	Scaling 1 2 3 4 5 **6** **7** 8 9 **10** Now Actions Ideal

The observational method employed took the form of an informal observation which was characterised by an unstructured narrative with a specific focus on the teachers' behaviour management skills, classroom behaviour management systems and the children's behaviour; to meet the aims of the coaching project. Also, the solution focused approach was used to frame the observations to ensure congruence with the type of coaching selected (the narrative style of the observation allowed for possible concerns to be noted but none was recorded during the observations). Thus, the initial part of each coaching session was positively focused to highlight teacher strengths and positive resources to build on when problem solving.

The unstructured observation was chosen as it would allow freedom in selecting appropriate information for problem solving (Robson 2002), which matched teacher concerns, rather than imposing a focus of the session which would counter the teacher's expert role in the solution focused approach. The coachees presented different behaviour management concerns which ranged from children's engagement in class behaviour systems to promoting specific skills for the children. The specific problems explored can be found in the feedback forms (Appendix 2) and are summarised later in the paper.

The last part of the coaching session involved a baseline evaluation of the teacher's perception of the problem using a self-report scale. This scale was also used as a post-intervention measure and was evaluated at the beginning of the next session. The scale is similar to the Target Monitoring and Evaluation (TME, Dunsmuir et al

2009) scale which was developed to indicate the efficacy of interventions and demonstrate post-intervention progress. TME requires the allocation of a baseline descriptor, an expected level (post-intervention) and a more than expected level of progress in relation to a target. This information is represented on a ten point scale. An adapted version of the TME scale was chosen as it is client-focused, thus enabling the client to be positioned as the expert. An example of the coaching scale is shown below in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Coachee A's rating of children's playing skills in her class

E.g.	Free play skills	1	2	3	**4**	5	**6**	7	**8**	9	10
					Now		After actions		Ideal		

The coachees were asked to rate the extent of the concern on a ten point rating scale in terms of the current situation, projections after the action plan had been implemented and an ideal position. Although subject to participant bias, the use of the scale may have increased the commitment of the participant to implement the negotiated interventions.

3.3 Ethical considerations when facilitating the coaching project

The information from the coaching sessions was not only going to inform individual teachers' practice but also inform school management about how behaviour policies are operationalized in the classroom. These multiple relationships with staff in the school, led to several ethical considerations with the participants. Confidentiality of information received in coaching sessions was discussed with each participant in terms of restricting the scope of disclosure of information (British Psychological

Society Code of Ethics 2006). All participants were given alternative confidentiality options but all agreed to information sharing with senior management which identified them. Informed consent was gained from each participant prior to the coaching with the nature, purpose, rationale and consequences of the coaching project provided in written form prior to consent (Appendix 3). Consent was gained again in the first coaching session in the event that withdrawal may occur after face to face discussions about the project.

Other ethical considerations took the form of negotiating procedures with the deputy head teacher for reporting any events which may compromise the safety or welfare of adults or children in the school and opportunities for debriefing for the teachers to support their psychological well-being in relation to factors which arose during the coaching process (British Psychological Society Code of Ethics 2006). There were no incidents which needed reporting, nor in my judgement, did a need for a debriefing session arise in the course of this work for any of the participants.

4. Findings and Discussion

The efficacy of the coaching was measured using pre and post coaching observational data, discussion information and scaling of the problem from both coaching sessions. This information was shared with the participants in each coaching session and in written form. The evaluation feedback was also shared with the deputy to inform senior management and future school development plans. One limitation of the coaching project is that it was not possible to evaluate the long term effects of the coaching in this paper due to time constraints, although the project is

continuing. However, the following effects have been observed on specific problems and the teachers' skills.

4.1 Effects of the coaching on individuals' practice: Scaling Evidence

Participant A identified gaining the attention of the children on the carpet as a concern. She set an action plan to implement more kinaesthetic and visual activities to engage the children more fully in the introductions as this was a strategy that was already working in some lessons. The evaluation scale showed that after the intervention, she rated the problem as one point higher on the scale. She also identified that children were not purposefully playing in activities and implemented a strategy to improve this which involved adult modelling of skills for the children. After the intervention, she rated the problem as two points higher on the scale. This information can be found in Appendix 2, Participant A: sessions 1 and 2.

Participant B was concerned that not all the children in her class were on task. She implemented a class reward system and created opportunities for the children to gain rewards in relation to on-task behaviour. She rated the children's behaviour as two/three points higher on the scale after the intervention. This information can be found in Appendix 2, participant B: sessions 1 and 2.

Participant C identified that some children in the class did not respond positively when other children were praised. As a strategy, he used the time of other adults in the classroom to develop stronger relationships with the few children by giving them quality time and responsibility. After the intervention, he rated the children's

behaviour as two points higher on the scale. This information can be found in Appendix 2, Participant C: sessions 1 and 2.

The scaling of the coachees' problems showed that all participants' perceptions of the problem had moved up one or two points closer to the ideal position on the scale (See table below). The individual participants' scales and the specific problems that formed the targets for the intervention can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 33: Ratings of progress on problems

Participant	**A**	**A**	**B**	**C**
Rating of problem in Coaching session 1	4	6	6	5
Rating of problem in Coaching session 2	6	6-7	8	7
Difference in ratings	+ 2	+ 0.5/1	+ 2	+ 2

* Coachee A had identified two problems in the first session

This shows that after one coaching session, subjective effects were observed on the specific problem highlighted. This supports Shidler's (2009) argument that coaching impacts positively on practice as it has a specific and context dependent focus.

4.2 Observational evidence

The evidence from observations of each teacher indicated that the coachees had applied actions which they had set as part of their first action plan. For example, Coachee A was using visual materials in the introduction of her lesson to gain the attention of the children and support children with additional needs. The second observation showed that more children were engaged for a longer period of time on the carpet. Secondly, the children in Coachee A's classroom were also playing co-operatively with the play equipment in the home corner showing that adult modelling of play skills may have impacted on the children's behaviour. This is shown in the table below and is taken from Appendix 2, participant A: session 2.

Table 34: Participant A - Observational evidence

Summary of observation
• Again excellent use of praise and linked to class rules. • Objects (fruit) used to support the whole class literacy activity engaged most of the class. • Good use of TA to support EAL and SEN children (used visual prompts and interaction). This engaged them with the activity. • Children were on task on all table activities. • Children in the home corner were sharing equipment and engaging in co-operative pretend play.

Also, Coachee B had displayed and was using the collaborative target and reward system (see Appendix 2, Participant B, session 2 - observations). This had impacted on the problem as the children were following instructions and on task. This evidence is presented below in Table 34 and is taken from Appendix 2, participant B – session 2).

Table 35: Participant B – observational evidence

Summary of observations
• Class settled very quickly after assembly. • Clear references to class point system. • Established routines for work with reminders and linked praise. • Children very engaged in literacy task. • Use of TA to settle one child. • Several activities simultaneously and all groups engaged with tasks.

The second observation in Coachee C's classroom showed that children were more settled in the morning and that generally, children were responding positively to praise given to individual children This evidence is presented below in Table 35, taken from Appendix 2, participant C – session 2).

Table 36: Participant C – observational evidence

Summary of Observation
• Class reward system used consistently and as a result children listening to instructions. • Clear expectations given and linked to the class reward system. • Rules were reinforced during the lesson. • All children engaged in the set activity and as a result time could be spent with a group.

The observational evidence gained from the coaching project shows that the coaching was having an effect on both the issue and the teacher's behaviour management skills which supports findings from the study by McNab (2006). The combination of the scaling evidence and observational data reveals that there had been both perceptual and practice change by the teachers as a result of the coaching. This contrasts with findings from a study by Ling (2004), who found perceptual changes regarding the problem but little evidence of effects on practice.

4.3 Coaching discussion evidence

Discussions with the teachers in the second coaching sessions were qualitatively different from the first. The discourses used by the participants in their problem solving were framed by the solution focused approach. The coachees were more readily exploring solutions rather than focusing on the problem. This supports findings by Redpath and Harker (2009) who infer a paradigm change as a result of the solution focused approach to problem solving. Indeed, the coachees were demonstrating new skills in the coaching context (Kraayenoord 2003) and had developed capacity in problem solving (Basile et al 2003). For example, the teachers also needed less prompting to identify the next steps in solving their problem. For example, Coachee A stated, 'I think that the use of talking partners would engage more children with topics in introductions of lessons.' This was then incorporated into the action plan. Also, Coachee C explored a range of solutions to the problem without any prompting. This supports findings from Veenman et al (2001) who suggest that beginner teachers develop confidence in problem solving and self-awareness with regard to their practice from the coaching process. Reflective thinking as an outcome of coaching is also identified by Ling (2004) who argues that the external facilitator is essential in stimulating this kind of thinking.

4.4 Evaluation of the coaching project

The triangulated evidence above shows that there have been changes to individual practice and the identified problems. Indeed, teachers perceive positive effects on identified problems, observational evidence shows how actions have been implemented and discussions show increases in problem solving skills. Therefore,

the above findings suggest that there are short term effects of coaching on teachers' practice. However, the factors which impacted on the success of the coaching are hard to differentiate. Shidler (2009) argues that an observation of context, consultation for reflective thinking, modelling and a specific focus contribute to the effectiveness of coaching. In this project however, modelling was not part of the process as it was considered that the solution focused approach would empower individuals to solve their own problems rather than rely on the coach's expertise. This links with Cameron and Monsen's (2002) view that there needs to be a balance between offering a new perspective on problem and not donating one. In using solution focused approaches, paradoxically, EPs are experts in the process of problem solving rather than experts on school problems (Wagner 2000). However, O'Connell and Palmer (2005) argue that coachees may prefer directive instruction rather than collaborative approach to problem solving.

The study by Li and Chan (2007) found that the effectiveness of coaching depends on the skill levels of the coach, consistency of approach and the commitment of the coachees to the approach rather than preferring a problem focused method. Having the rationale and purpose in a written document may have encouraged commitment from the coachees (in this project) meaning that this was a transparent process which may have increased the effects. Indeed, Benicke and Rhodes (2002) argue that the way coaching is presented affects the commitment of the coachees, whilst Simkin et al (2006) argue that less directive approaches such as solution focused models have positive outcomes on the professional development of teachers.

Often in coaching relationships there will be a power differential which can affect the effectiveness of the programme. Benicke and Rhodes (2002) argue that the EP is

positioned as an independent observer and is perceived as having a neutral role. This point is supported by evidence from the Staffordshire coaching project (McNab 2006), as the participants valued the outsider coach, stating that the relationship with an external professional provided a space for trust and freedom to talk. Also, a study by Miller (1994) examining teacher views of consultation found that teachers valued aspects of the EP role such as the external view of the situation. In this coaching project, the value placed on coaching using an external consultant was reinforced by confidentiality agreements and the solution focused approach. However, the power differential may have been positively affected by the observation directly before the coaching session (McGartha 2003). Swafford (1997) suggests that peer coaching develops practice and may be an alternative professional development approach by schools which would avoid outside observation. An EP may be ideally positioned to provide training and facilitate such projects for schools rather than adopting a coaching role.

One of the factors which may have influenced the success of the coaching programme was the commitment of the school in terms of planning and allocating the appropriate time for the project. Firstly, the initial meeting with the NQTs was inserted within a small time frame which meant limited discussions about the project. As the coaching proposal was communicated prior to the meeting, the author provided a written proposal indicating the purpose and rationale of the coaching programme (Appendix 3). Also, the time allocated in the non-contact time with the NQTs did not match the original agreement of a 45 minute observation and 45 minutes coaching session and so the sessions were amended to fit with the cover time allocated. Leat et al (2006) identify pragmatic issues such as arranging cover

for classes, as problematic when organising coaching programmes, thus, affecting the outcomes.

Low stakeholder commitment to coaching projects is identified in the literature as a threat to the outcomes of coaching programmes. Indeed, in setting up coaching programmes in schools, Leat et al (2006) found that a barrier to successful coaching programmes was lack of planning regarding links between professional development and school improvement. Therefore, there is a need to embed and monitor coaching programmes in school settings otherwise this could result in limited effects. So far in this project, the coaching has not become a whole school approach thus limiting the effects. The DFEE (2001) state that the vision and commitment of the head teacher, supported by the senior management is integral to the success of coaching programmes. At present, representation of the senior management team has come from the deputy rather than team investment demonstrating low prioritisation of the intervention. Benicke and Rhodes (2002) argue that schools should locate professional development at the centre of the approach to school improvement and embed this within school practices to gain most value.

The outcomes of the coaching programme may have been influenced by the nature of the coaching relationship. There was little time to establish rapport with the coachees. This was coupled with the author's new relationship with the school. An organisational project fostered after an established relationship between the EP and a school may have produced different coaching outcomes based on trusting relationships. Indeed, Leat et al (2006) found that teachers participating in coaching programmes identified trust as integral to successful coaching experience. A study by Farouk (1999) of EP views on factors influencing the success of consultation

found that EPs advocated the need to develop rapport and engage in previous work with teachers to enhance the success of the consultation approach. Cote (2006), meanwhile, argues that a facilitating factor is the coach's skills and the philosophy underpinning coaching. Indeed, O'Connell and Palmer (2005) advocate that the quality of a coaching relationship is enhanced by the solution focused principles. The success of the coaching may have also been influenced by the author's coaching skills. This is a significant factor highlighted by Harrison (2002) who argues that the coach's ability to reflect is as important as the coachee's meta-cognitive skills.

4.5 The impact of the coaching project at the organisational level

The findings above show that there were changes to problems and individual teacher practice. At this stage, the coaching project has increased senior management's awareness of behaviour management issues in the school. At this stage, only agreement for further coaching for other teaching staff has been achieved. The complexities of impacting on whole school systems are identified by both Woodside-Jiron and Gehsmann (2009) and Watkins and Hill (2000). They conclude that organisational change is a longitudinal process. To date, (due to the deadline for the submission of this paper) it is not yet possible to highlight any long term effects at a whole school level. However, if the plans for coaching to be embedded as a whole school professional development opportunity are realised then long term changes may be noted.

The author's future involvement in organisational projects will be based on the acknowledgement of the importance of whole school collaboration; involving all stakeholders in the school community. Such a project was undertaken by Lloyd

Bennett and Gamman (2000). In this project, the views of all members of the school community were ascertained and a collaborative approach to information gathering before planning actions was negotiated and this meant that potential gaps between policy and practice were reduced. Schlesinger (1979) also suggests that securing the commitment of all stakeholders in organisational change and enabling their participation through planning and implementing the project reduces resistance to change which may have been a barrier in negotiating this project.

4.6 EPs as coaches: Implications for practice

Monsen and Cameron (1998) argue that EPs are uniquely positioned to undertake coaching roles in schools as they offer an outsider perspective on systemic school problems. Indeed, consultation has become embedded within many educational psychology services to ensure that applied psychology is at the heart of outcomes for children (Dickinson 2000).

As well as consultation as a tool for systemic change, EPs also regularly use counselling skills which are integral to a coaching role (Downey 2003). D'Abate et al (2003) argue that coaching requires such counselling skills as active listening, encouraging, calming, reframing and confidence building which emotionally support the client, although this is related to work related situations. Qualitative evidence from the Staffordshire coaching project highlights EPs' skills in this area. One participant stated, 'The psychologist allowed me the time to reflect on my role and the solutions implemented' (McNab 2006 p3).

Besides consultation and counselling skills, Cameron and Monsen (1998) also highlight the importance of evaluating the coaching programme particularly in the current context where schools need to demonstrate added value. Indeed, the researcher: practitioner skills that EPs possess would mean that they are able to fulfil a coaching and evaluative role. This is supported by recommendations from the DFEE (2001) for teaching and learning strategies which rely on good quality research and evaluation in the area of professional development. EPs can offer a role in building sound evidence-based practice in the area of coaching through planning, facilitating and measuring coaching projects.

5. Conclusions

The case study has provided evidence to indicate that coaching for teachers contributes to individual capacity building in terms of problem solving skills and impact on behaviour management in the classroom. In this specific context, the coaching role fitted with the consultation approach of EP service delivery and the solution focused approach had a 'goodness of fit' with both the school culture and the author's principles. The coaching was well received by both the coachees and the school's senior management. It is acknowledged that such a project was perhaps welcomed because it meant little threat to existing systems and practices.

At a time when the distinctiveness of the EP role is under scrutiny (Boyle and Lauchlan 2009), school level projects such as coaching clients or facilitating coaching projects may provide a role for EPs in contributing to staff capacity building and school improvement. This is further supported by the psychological underpinnings of coaching approaches (Monsen and Cameron 1998) suggesting a potential niche role

for the EP. However, the lack of literature on the effectiveness of coaching and recommendations from the DfEE (2001) about establishing an evidence base suggest that coaching as a form of school improvement has not yet been established as an effective intervention. Further research needs to be undertaken to provide evidence for the effectiveness of coaching in schools and how EPs may influence such projects.

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Appendix 1

Solution Focused Coaching Script

Name:
Year group:

1. Rationale and aims of coaching

Coaching is developing as an integral part of continued professional development within education. It develops professional skills in relation to specific aspects of practice (Simkins et al 2006).

2. Solution focused principles

The solution focused approach developed from the therapeutic work of DeShazer (1985) in America during the 1980s. In his work with clients, he found that focusing on the future enabled positive change. Solution focused approaches have the following underlying principles:

- There is collaboration between coach and client
- The client is the expert
- It is future-oriented and positively framed
- It is goal driven
- There are always exceptions to a problem
- If something works, do more of it
- Small changes can have ripple effects

Solution focused coaching is a positive framework and aims to develop teachers existing skills (Howe 2008). All questions asked shape solutions to professional problems. Through ownership of the process, it develops self-awareness through reflective thinking which impacts on practice in the organisational context.

3. Confidentiality

As part of the coaching process, we will be having conversations regarding your professional development. As the coaching has been arranged by the senior management team, they are keen to have feedback on those participating and on the process which would lead to school improvement in behaviour management. At this stage, I would like to agree whether you would prefer that all information is reported anonymously to senior managers or whether you would give your permission for information which identifies you to be reported to senior management as part of the school improvement process.

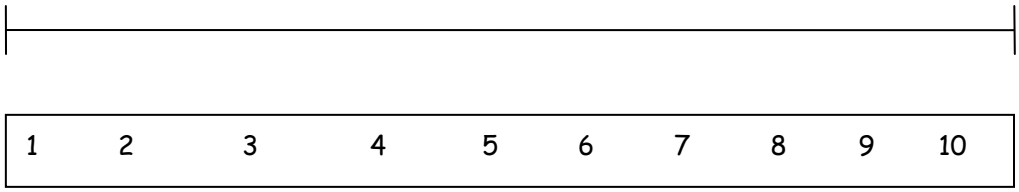
Agreement given for anonymous feedback	Agreement given for identifiable feedback

4. Solution focused questions
(adapted from Cauffman and Berg 2002)

1. Complimenting	These were the things which I noticed in your lesson:
2. Noticing	What did you notice?
3. Goal setting	What should we discuss in this session so that the conversation will be useful?
4. Breaking down big goals into small goals	What would be the smallest step you could take to solve this problem?
5. Eliciting co-operation from the client	What else can you tell me so I can see the situation even more clearly?
6.Future orientation and expanding the problem	How will you know when the problem is solved? How will you notice this? What would you do differently then? What would your colleagues notice?

7. Exceptions	Are there times when this does not happen or when it is less of a problem? What is different when this is happening?
8. Resources	What strategies are you using that already work? Has anyone else helped you with this? If so, how?
9. Pre-session changes	Has something changed since we arranged this coaching?
10. Building on success	Now that we have seen some times when the situation is better/that some strategies are working/that changes have already happened, what is the next small step that you could take?

5. Scaling



Where are you on the scale now?
Where would you like to be?
What would have to happen for you to move up 1 point on the scale?
How can others help?

Appendix 2

Feedback to coachees

Solution-focused coaching feedback: Session 1

Name: Participant A Coach: Chloe Marks

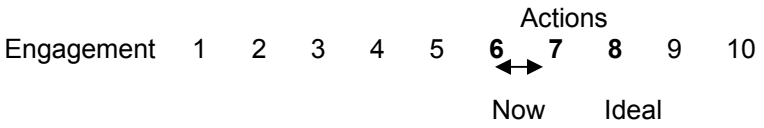
Observations	• Excellent use of praise and linked to class rules. • Frequent reminders of class rules. • Children settled well after kinaesthetic activity on carpet. • Pictures used to support the whole class literacy activity sustained the attention of the children.
Concerns raised by client	• The children are not engaging in purposeful free play including sharing equipment. • The children constantly come up to me and complain about others. • Gaining the attention of all children on the carpet.
Discussion	• Visual prompts gain the attention of the children and so the TA could use these with the EAL children /children not engaged. • The class is split into two at the moment. • The problem does not happen when doing fun activities, visual things, story time and involving them at the front. • The strategies that work already are white boards and lego. Both of these activities have been modelled so the children know what is expected of them and what to do. • The children respond positively to the sticker system and the kinaesthetic activities. • The problem will be solved when the children are less fidgety and the children will play independently.
Action Plan	4. All adults will model how to use and play with the free play equipment and revisit this to reinforce the desired behaviours. Adults will highlight children playing appropriately with equipment and praise them throughout lessons. 5. All adults will model how to share equipment and highlight examples of children sharing and praise this throughout lessons. 6. More kinaesthetic and visual activities on the carpet.
Evaluation	Scaling Free play 1 2 3 **4** 5 **6** 7 **8** 9 10 Now actions ideal Attention 1 2 3 4 5 **6** **7** **8** 9 10 N A I

Solution-focused coaching feedback: Session 2

Name: Participant A Coach: Chloe Marks

Date: 3.2.10

Observations	• Again excellent use of praise and linked to class rules. • Objects (fruit) used to support the whole class literacy activity engaged most of the class. • Good use of TA to support EAL and SEN children (used visual prompts and interaction). This engaged them with the activity. • Children were on task on all table activities. • Children in the home corner were sharing equipment and engaging in co-operative pretend play.
Evaluation of previous action plan and targets	Scaling Free play 1 2 3 **4** 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Date: 12.11 3.2 Attention 1 2 3 4 5 **6** **7** 8 9 10 Date: 12.11 3.2 Evaluation of Action Plan 1. In afternoons, adults demonstrate playing together and this is related to a learning objective. 2. Sharing equipment is regularly reinforced and opportunities given to share equipment. 3. More visual support is used but sometimes hard to find appropriate materials. Smart board may help. TA support for EAL/SEN children used and this has increased focus of other children in class and the engagement of EAL/SEN children.
Goal set	• Everyone in class will be engaged in activities and introductions of lessons.
Discussion	• Noise from other reception class impacts on engagement of children on carpet. • Use of talking partners to increase engagement. • Continue the visual and kinaesthetic support in introductions. • B not engaging in class routines or most activities. • When B likes an activity, he will join in.

	• B is ambivalent to praise. • Not noticed any patterns to B's engagement in class. • Will know when B is engaged as he will join in for one session a day. • Attention give to B diverts attention from the rest of the class impacting on their engagement.
Action Plan	7. Observe B. Look for 2 desirable behaviours. Identify antecedents and consequences and record on ABC chart. TA to undertake or VB in NQT time. Gather this information for next coaching session to establish any patterns to increase desirable behaviours. 8. Talking partners – more opportunities in introductions. Designate partners and pair higher and lower ability. EAL/SEN to use visual support with partner. 9. Noise from other reception class. Query use of sliding door. Discuss use of noise barometer to lower levels of noise at certain times (used by both classes).
Evaluation	Scaling 

Solution-focused coaching feedback: Session 1

Name: Participant B Coach: Chloe Marks

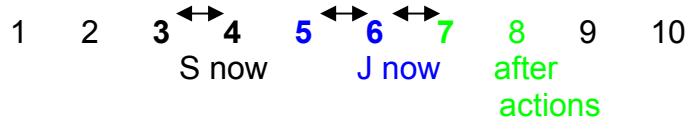
Observations	• Good use of descriptive praise using children as examples. • Clear expectations for behaviour and class rules clearly referenced. • Use of rhythms gained attention of children very quickly. • Rewards were given for on-task behaviour. • Clear expectations for work expected were given. • Teaching Assistant was using rules and rewards consistently.
Concerns raised by client	• The majority of the children are on-task and motivated but three children are not following instructions. • I would like everybody on task and following instructions.
Discussion	• The children like writing on the whiteboards. • The children are engaged in subjects that interest them and practical subjects (science for one, science and maths for another and literacy and emotive subjects for other). • Mornings are better. • The strategies that work already are using their interests, strikes with consequences and stickers for good work. • The TA has a good relationship with the children and other staff support them. • The deputy team teaches and supports me with behaviour management at the moment. • The problem will be solved when the children are on-task and following instructions. • I will give attention for positive behaviour and ignore the negatives. • I will give more praise for their work showing them that I value this.
Action Plan	10. Show that I value whole class collaboration through a class points system where all children are working together to achieve points. 11. Visual display of class points system with clear linked and displayed targets: e.g. on-task, noise level, being kind. 12. The class points system will have whole class reward at the end of each day. 13. Create opportunities to gain points and more of these when begin the system to reinforce how much these behaviours are valued. 14. Use of proximity praise (identifying child next to child not following rule by referencing the appropriate behaviour and praising it) to encourage children to follow rule or expectation. 15. Use circle time to introduce the class system to encourage ownership by the class. 16. Make all staff involved with the class aware of the system so that it can be used consistently.
Evaluation	Scaling 1 2 3 4 **5** **6** 7 **8** **9** 10 Now actions ideal Would like observation to evaluate before next coaching session.

Solution-focused coaching feedback: Session 2

Name: Participant B Coach: Chloe Marks

Date: 22.2.10

Observations	• Class settled very quickly after assembly. • Clear references to class point system. • Established routines for work with reminders and linked praise. • Children very engaged in literacy task. • Use of TA to settle one child. • Several activities simultaneously and all groups engaged with tasks.
Evaluation of previous action plan and targets	Scaling Goal: All children On task and following instructions 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 **7 ⟷ 8** 9 10 Date: 20.11 22.2 Evaluation of Action Plan 4. Class reward system is in place and class have settled down. 5. Class reward system is displayed. 6. Class have earned reward each week and enjoy this. 7. references are made to the reward system and praise is used to reinforce expected behaviours. 8. Using proximity praise. 9. Staff using the system.
Goal set	• To engage two children with ADHD in class activities.
Discussion	• To find out and utilise interests of children and base work around this – snakes, buildings • Shorter activities engage the children more. • Exceptions: mornings are better, physical activities, practical activities • Settling down after playtimes and lunchtimes. • Using examples which interests the children engages them. • Problem will be solved when use less reminders and they look engaged • Also when they are more independent and can spend more time with other children
Action Plan	17. Kinaesthetic activities at the beginning of lessons – e.g. brain gym types

	18. Talk time with TA for S after break and dinner whilst doing jobs 19. Using more examples which interest the children in the introductions to lessons. 20. Stimuli box for writing sessions so the children can have hands on experience and use to engage them 21. Interest books for children – possibly whole class?
Evaluation	Scaling 

Solution-focused coaching feedback: Session 1

Name: Participant C Coach: Chloe Marks

Observations	• Good use of praise (including proximity praise) • Explicit expectations for behaviour • Rules clearly referenced and children given as examples • Class reward system consistently used and most of the children in the class responded positively
Concerns raised by client	• Some of the children do not like it when praise is given to others. They feel hard done by on a daily basis. • How can I get these few children to respond in the same way as the rest of the class?
Discussion	• The problem happens first thing in the morning and after lunch. • The problem does not happen when I work with their group as they get positive praise. • Stickers, well done cards and praise sessions work with the children already. • The problem will be solved when there is a calmer atmosphere in class and there will be less need to give negative attention. • Have already thought about a job system linked to rewards.
Action Plan	22. Give the few children attention when lining up in the morning by engaging them in conversations (show an interest). 23. Give the few children jobs to do in the morning creating chances for them to earn a well done card. 24. TA to support in speaking to children. Negotiate which children to target.
Evaluation	Scaling 1 2 3 4 5 **6** **7** 8 9 **10** Now Actions Ideal

Solution-focused coaching feedback: session 2

Name: Participant C Coach: Chloe Marks

Date: 4.2.10

Observations	• Class reward system used consistently and as a result children listening to instructions. • Clear expectations given and linked to the class reward system. • Rules were reinforced during the lesson. • All children engaged in the set activity and as a result time could be spent with a group. • O is following different activities to rest of the class.
Evaluation of previous action plan and targets	Scaling Goal: All children responding to class rules and reward system 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 **8** 9 10 Date: 12.11 4.2 Evaluation of Action Plan 10. Attention has been given to few children and they have settled as a result. 11. Class job system is running well. 12. TA support is no longer needed to speak to children in the morning.
Goal set	• O to be integrated into the rules of the classroom • This will be demonstrated by O putting up his hand when he wants to speak • O showing increased awareness of himself and others (empathy)- safety
Discussion	• Understanding of children is better • Have own work and reduced timetable for O. • Following his own timetable is working as he produces more work but want to integrate him into class routines. • PSHE – he can work in a group which is TA led • Discussion with O's mother – there are signs that you can see before his emotions change • Discussed autism training and use of emotional cards to develop self awareness
Action Plan	25. Emotional time out corner in classroom 26. Emotional cards with strategies to prompt appropriate management of emotions – need to scaffold learning of physiological associations, facial expression, and body language with emotion. Independent use of cards

	should follow this. 27. Preparation with TA scaffolding use of cards each morning 28. Prompt card with a strategy for putting hand up before speaking in class. Use 3 part praise to reinforce when using strategy.
Evaluation	Scaling 1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7 **8** 9 **10** Now after actions Ideal

Appendix 3

Written Rationale for Solution Focused Coaching

Introduction

My name is Chloe Marks and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist with Birmingham Educational Psychology Service. I will be working in Manor Park over the next year looking at whole school approaches to behaviour. As part of this process, I will be offering solution focused coaching to staff beginning with Newly Qualified Teachers as part of their induction support, as discussed with OK (Deputy Head). Coaching is developing as an integral part of continued professional development within education. It develops professional skills in relation to specific aspects of practice (Simkins et al 2006).

What is solution focused coaching?

The solution focused approach developed from the therapeutic work of DeShazer (1985) in America during the 1980s. In his work with clients, he found that focusing on the future enabled positive change. Solution focused approaches have the following underlying principles:

- There is collaboration between consultant and consultee
- The consultee is the expert
- It is future-oriented and positively framed
- It is goal driven
- There are always exceptions to a problem
- If something works, do more of it
- Small changes can have ripple effects

Solution focused coaching is a positive framework and aims to develop teachers existing skills (Howe 2008). Through ownership of the process, it develops self-awareness through reflective thinking which impacts on practice in the organisational context.

What does the coaching process involve?

1. classroom observation which identifies positive practice
2. coaching session

The coaching session format is as follows:

- introduction including recap of aims of coaching
- teacher identifies positive points from lesson (pre-session change)
- Discussion of lesson
- Ideas for development
- Target setting

The targets will be evaluated at a later stage through the same process. Also, the success of the coaching will be evaluated through a pre and post coaching questionnaire gaining teacher perceptions.

Evidence regarding the benefits of coaching for teachers

Williams (2008)

This was a pilot coaching project undertaken by the educational psychology service with teachers, in Staffordshire, as part of the behaviour and attendance national Strategy in 2005. From teacher evaluations, Williams (2008) found that coaching impacted positively on many aspects of school life and that they would recommend solution focused coaching.

Simkins et al (2006)

An evaluation of 500 coach-client (middle managers and teachers) relationships in 500 schools in the UK revealed that where good quality relationships had been established between coach and client, coaching was seen as both a positive and beneficial experience for both parties.

Veenman et al (2001)

This Dutch coaching project utilised teacher coaches for teachers in training. The teachers in training reported that the coaching was a positive experience and influenced their teaching skills.

Ethical considerations

Confidentiality regarding information gained as part of the solution focused coaching process will be negotiated between the consultee, deputy head and the coach prior to the commencement of the coaching.

Research

As part of doctoral training, the coaching project will form the basis of a professional practice report. All information relating to participants in the project will be anonymous and those involved in the project can request a copy of the completed report. A copy of the report will also be made available to the school.

References

DeShazer, S. (1985) Keys to Solution in Brief Therapy. London: W. W. Norton and Company.

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