PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORTS

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME TWO

1.1 Introduction

Volume two comprises of four professional practice reports (PPRs) which reflect the author's development as a trainee educational psychologist over the past two years. The work reflects both the author's personal and professional aspirations towards the educational psychologists' (EP) role but also the local authority ethos in which the practice was undertaken. This introduction provides both an overview of these influences and how they supported the identification of the focus of the PPRs, and an overview of the PPRs which follow.

The local authority, in which the work was carried out, is a large metropolitan borough which has a strong focus upon inclusion; in helping all children where possible to be included in a supportive mainstream education provision. The borough includes only a small number of specialist school provisions and a SEN Service supporting schools that is not a diagnostic service, but focuses primarily on assessment and intervention.

In addition during previous experiences before becoming a trainee EP many of the author's roles were focused upon supporting young people who were experiencing disaffection/exclusion from school. Consequently, in line with the local authority aims, the author has a passion for supporting and promoting social inclusion for children and young people by attempting to support and enable their engagement in the mainstream school environment.

As a consequence many of the following PPRs focus upon enabling children/ young people to access an increasingly effective school provision; through promoting children's engagement, evaluating practice and developing wider systemic change. Additionally the final PPR focused upon building aspirations in young people who attend a specialist provision, increasing their engagement in making choices that support their life goals and promoting their inclusion and access in wider society. Below is an overview of each PPR.

The first PPR focused upon reviewing the introduction of mindfulness based approaches (MBAs) in supporting children's mental health and well-being in the education arena. MBAs are suggested in early research to have positive effects in supporting the mental health and well-being of children and consequently they have recently become more present in the education arena (Kuyken et al, 2013; Gold et al, 2010; Huppert and Johnson, 2010; Napoli et al, 2005). This PPR therefore began to explore and critique the evidence for these approaches; to review its potential application in EP practice and school practice more generally. The focus of the PPR is reviewing the evidence for these approaches before promoting systemic practice that supports the early intervention aims of the local authority. The PPR aimed to reflect the benefits of the scientist-practitioner role of EPs in reviewing and promoting evidence based practice.

In light of the local authority ambition for supporting social inclusion and mainstream school attendance where possible/appropriate, the second PPR is a case study that explored the application of an intervention underpinned by a systemic approach to

supporting a child who was experiencing disaffection from school. The PPR examined the effectiveness of solution focused brief therapy with a young person, combined with systemic consultation with school staff and the young person's parents, in supporting a positive change in the young person's behaviour to support them to re-engage successfully in the mainstream school environment. The PPR both explored the practical application of the approach and its theoretical underpinnings to further evidence its use in supporting disaffected children more generally. The PPR aimed to highlight the role of EPs in working both at an individual and systemic level to support the successful (re)engagement of young people in the mainstream school provision and to promote social inclusion for young people.

The following PPRs focused on exploring the role of EPs in developing school practice more systemically to both promote the wider local authority agenda of early intervention and secondly supporting the practical introduction of policy driven changes. The third PPR focused on supporting one mainstream school nursery to review their practice in supporting the development of early oral language skills. Early oral language skills have long been recognised as predicting poor later academic achievement (DfE, 2011; Bercow, 2008; Walker et al, 1994). Research has indicated that early intervention in nursery settings can support the development of these language skills and therefore negate the impact of poor language skills on young people's academic achievement. The PPR explored a trainee EP facilitated use of one observation tool in supporting nursery staff to review their own practice

and identify clear areas for systemic development in creating effective early intervention.

The final PPR focused upon exploring the potential role of EPs in supporting schools to integrate person centred practices into their current working practice as recommended by the new SEN code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015). The PPR centred on reviewing the potential use of collaborative action research as a way for EPs to support school practitioners to introduce person centred reviews into the current statutory processes with the aim to increase child and parental engagement. Person centred approaches aim to rebalance the power between parents and young people and the professionals who are there to support them. The approach aims to empower young people and their family and to build their aspirations and ensure those supporting them are enabling the young person to work towards achieving their goals. This PPR focuses on the potential role EPs could provide in facilitating the development and evaluation of person centred practice in the education arena.

The range of work reflected in these PPRs reflects the diversity of the role of the EP as a research-practitioner who is able to work across a range of levels from individual up to systemic, to combine the academic skills and knowledge to both review and develop school practice and also to transfer theory into practice to meet the needs of the young people and wider organisations. The PPRs also reflect both the passions of the local authority EP service and the author as a trainee EP.

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PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT ONE:

‘MINDFULNESS’- A DEEPER CONSIDERATION BEFORE APPLICATION INTO EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE. WHAT IS ‘MINDFULNESS’ AND SHOULD EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS BE INTRODUCING THE APPROACH INTO THEIR PRACTICE WITH CHILDREN?

2.1 Abstract

Mindfulness Based Approaches (MBAs) have developed significantly over the last decade and there is now a growing evidence base for its use with children. Consequently it is now an area for consideration for application into educational psychology (EP) practice. This review aims to highlight some of the controversial aspects of MBAs that need to be considered prior to acceptance into EP practice. The definition of mindfulness is considered in relation to its Buddhist origin and its westernised application. The application of MBAs in relation to supporting children is discussed providing a perspective on the evidence base following a reflection on the challenges revealed by an unclear definition. Finally the implications of the discussed areas of contention are concluded with reference to the implication for EP practice and the use of MBAs with children.

2.2 Introduction

Research and academic interest into the use of Mindfulness Based Approaches (MBAs) has expanded considerably over the last decade. Meta-analyses and qualitative reviews of the application of MBAs with adults as a psychotherapeutic approach reveal positive evaluations of its effectiveness (Hofmann et al, 2010; Chiesa and Serretti, 2011; Ledesma and Kumano, 2008). An evidence base has begun to emerge for the use of MBAs with children and adolescents (Burke, 2010; Zelazo and Lyons, 2011; Weare, 2013). As a result it is now time for educational psychologists (EPs) to consider the possible application of this practice within their role.

Weare (2013) highlights promising possibilities for MBAs in education, and evidence of this is seen in the current applications of MBAs in the school arena (Kuyken et al, 2013; Napoli et al, 2005; Gold et al, 2010; Huppert and Johnson, 2010). Although the application of MBAs in EP practice is at the moment limited (Burke, 2010), recent journal articles addressing EPs highlights the potential application of MBAs within their current service provision (Felver et al, 2013, Davis, 2012).

The following review aims to consider some of the challenges in defining mindfulness and its impact on developing an evidence base and takes a critical look at the current understanding of the application of MBAs with children.

2.3 Mindfulness and MBAs

At the heart of Buddhist meditative practice is a prominent discipline translated as mindfulness (Bodhi, 2011, Kabat-zinn, 2003). It is proposed that mindfulness was introduced to the western arena with the introduction of MBAs, which developers suggest are programs that ascribe to and encompass this Buddhist construct (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, Bodhi, 2011).

Due to a rapidly increasing interest in the efficacy of MBAs, the development of a westernised definition of mindfulness was required to facilitate the continued application of mindfulness practice in the western arena (Christopher and Gilbert, 2007) (cited in Grossman and Vandam, 2011). Attempts have been made to define mindfulness within MBAs and western psychology literature (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, Bishop et al, 2004; Shapiro et al, 2006) with the most commonly used definition being Kabat Zinn's (1994) "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the moment, and non-judgementally".

A lack of agreement between Buddhist scholars and western scientists has brought into question the quality of western definitions in regards to the extent that they truly reflect the Buddhist origin which they claim to be developed from (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, Bodhi, 2011). The first section in this review will highlight some of the elements that make defining mindfulness particularly challenging and an area that needs to be considered before implementation into EP practice. Without a clear definition of mindfulness how can we be sure what exactly we are providing to children; is what we are providing truly developed from a Buddhist origin and if it is not, does that matter?

2.4 Challenges in developing a definition of mindfulness

Challenges initially arose in defining mindfulness due to the lack of a formal definition in the original Buddhist scriptures (Bodhi, 2011). Due to the oral transmission of Buddhist teaching, scriptures were written in a formulaic style with the use of operational demonstrations used to aid memorisation (Bodhi, 2011). Developing a definition therefore relied on Buddhist scholars such as Rhys Davids (1910) (cited in Bodhi, 2011) endeavouring to capture the words' implications from the original scriptures. Rhys Davids (1910) (quoted in Bodhi, 2011, pg. 23) suggests mindfulness

> *"became the memory, recollection, calling-to-mind, being-aware-of, certain specified facts. Of these the most important was the impermanence (the coming to be as the result of a cause, and the passing away again) of all phenomena, bodily and mental. And it included the repeated application of this awareness, to each experience of life*".

However, no clear conceptual or operational definition of mindfulness was offered to the western scientists but instead just one interpretation of a complex text.

More generally Buddhist views about mindfulness practice is that it requires and is defined by the integration of both calming meditation, which enables the development of skills for attention and awareness (believed to be prerequisites of insight), and insight meditation which enables insight and understanding to be developed (Grossman and Van dam, 2011). Although there are some commonalities, there is a lack of consistency across Buddhist traditions depending on the priority given to these elements in defining and practising mindfulness

(Grossman and Van Dam, 2011; Lutz et al, 2008). There is therefore not one single view that can qualify as 'the Buddhist view' of mindfulness (Dreyfus, 2011; Fletcher, Schoendorff, and Hayes, 2010). Consequently the Buddhist literature does not provide a stable baseline from which western scientists can develop a definition of mindfulness.

A second challenge faced was due to Kabat-Zinn's (2000) (cited in Baer, 2003) suggestion for the need for the secularisation of the mindfulness approaches when introducing mindfulness into the western arena. Kabat-zinn (2000) felt that there may be many who may be unwilling to adopt Buddhist traditions or vocabulary but would benefit from MBAs. This has led to the need for the western definition of mindfulness to be independent of the religious and cultural traditions of its origin.

Many Buddhist scholars have raised concern over lifting mindfulness from its traditional setting, based on Buddhist doctrine, and transplanting it into a secular realm focused on practical results (Bodhi, 2011; Grossman and Van Dam, 2011, Rothwell, 2006; Davis, 2012; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). This is due to their view that removing it from the Buddhist arena may result in the distortions of the approach and an over focus on outcomes (Grossman and Van Dam, 2011).

These challenges could result in two types of inconsistencies in defining mindfulness. These include unintentional distortions of the Buddhist meaning of mindfulness due to incomplete translation and understanding of Buddhist practice, and intentional adaptation to increase accessibility to the western arena (Baer, 2011).

These inconsistencies can be seen in the more common definitions of mindfulness used by western scientific literature. Bishop et al (2004), who offer an operational definition of mindfulness, suggest that mindfulness has two components that of "self-regulation of attention…. and adopting a particular orientation towards ones experience in the present moment, an orientation characterised by curiosity, openness and acceptance" (pg. 232). The most commonly used definition is the previously mentioned Kabat Zinn's (1994) "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the moment, and non-judgementally".

Firstly, both definitions tend to emphasise the non-judgemental and present centred aspects of mindfulness. These characterisations are likely to have emerged from the literature of Buddhist scholars (Brown et al, 2007) who offer the definition "as a receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience" (Brown and Ryan, 2003). However Buddhist scholars have questioned the modern over-emphasis of these characteristics in MBAs and the current description of mindfulness as non-judgemental and person centred, as they are reflecting only a partial understanding of mindfulness at a theoretical level (Dreyfus, 2011). Dreyfrus (2011) suggests that although there is a need in the practical teaching of mindfulness to encourage people to develop these skills in their early practice, to propose these ideas provide adequate theoretical understanding demonstrates considerable confusion as mindfulness does not consist of these dimensions alone.

The conception of mindfulness in modern MBAs can seem to centre on a reductionist definition of mindfulness, underplaying or losing Buddhist elements such as remembering, recalling and presence of mind (Gethin, 2011) and therefore

resulting in many differences between classical mindfulness and the western version of mindfulness (Rapgay and Britisky, 2009).

Attempts to provide an operationalised definition of mindfulness (Bishop et al, 2004 and Shapiro et al, 2006) are based on a self-regulation model of cognition and mood, and contemporary cognitive models of psychopathology. Western models include two components; self-regulation of attention and open, curious orientation to experience (Bishop et al, 2004 and Shapiro et al, 2006). However evidence from validity analysis, measures of related processes e.g. sustained attention arising from self-regulation, and questionnaire data is inconsistent (Lau et al, 2006; Anderson, 2007; Brown and Ryan, 2003), and has brought these models into question.

These suggested constructs have also been questioned from a Buddhist perspective, for example Mikulas (2011) (cited in Chiesa, 2012) suggests that according to classical perspective, acceptance (open curious orientation) is an attitude that is brought to mindfulness practice but is not an inherent aspect of it. Dreyfus and Thompson (2008) (cited in Chiesa, 2012) highlight that according to Buddhist translation any discriminative mental state involves attention and awareness and cannot therefore define mindfulness. It is viewed that any attempt to delineate discrete components of mindfulness is not likely to capture the inherent interrelationships among mindfulness and related concepts that are considered as mutually reinforcing (Ivanovski and Malhi, 2007; Bodhi, 2011; Gunaratana, 2001).

As a result Grossman (2011) highlights western psychologists' definitions and operationalisations of mindfulness may, in fact, be "near-enemies" of the original Buddhist construct. They have qualities that "may outwardly or superficially appear

very similar, although these qualities actually profoundly differ from each other" (Grossman, 2011, pg. 1035).

In addition there are significant differences highlighted in the approach of MBAs in that the traditional Buddhist views holds health benefits of mindfulness as secondary to correct practice of meditation, whereas in modern MBAs health benefits are often the core aim of the approach (Gethin, 2011; Chiesa and Malinowski, 2011). This has resulted in a core difference between a more traditional Buddhist approach in the selection of a target group. Whereas traditional Buddhist mindfulness is "directed towards a type of suffering that is supposed to be common to the whole of mankind, modern MBAs are usually directed to reduction of symptoms for a specific underlying disorder" (Chiesa and Malinowski, 2011, pg. 413). This highlights a contrast between the traditional view of mindfulness as an inherent capacity essential to a cognitive change process (Dreyfus, 2011) and MBAs in western applications which are seen as a therapeutic technique.

2.4.1 Does it matter?

As can be seen through the literature one of the main areas of contention rests on the link between what is being provided by MBAs, and the extent to which it truly represents the Buddhist concept of mindfulness they report to reflect. One question to consider is the extent to which it matters whether the MBAs truly reflect the Buddhist concept of mindfulness? There is clear evidence for adults and developing evidence for children that whatever the MBAs are providing does seem to be having a positive impact on a variety of factors (Burke, 2010; Weare 2013; Harnett and Dawe, 2012). In western psychology there is a clear need to understand how these

approaches have their effect. It may be necessary to begin considering whether in fact there are factors other than mindfulness that make MBAs a homogenous group? Or whether the approaches are linked at all?

But what is the problem with stating that these MBAs originate from the Buddhist concept of mindfulness? As yet we are unable to develop a sufficient definition and the understanding of how MBAs work is unclear. In return the Buddhist concept of mindfulness appears to be equally complex. There is a need in order to continue to move forward with research to have an operational definition of mindfulness, but the contrast lies in the complexity of the construct of mindfulness and the limitations in complexity of a definition that can be produced for scientific purposes. As Buddhist scholars suggest, it is not possible to simply view mindfulness as a set of components as this misses the complex interactions involved.

However if the active ingredient in MBAs does not relate to the Buddhist concept of mindfulness, by linking MBAs with mindfulness many will make the assumption that MBAs reflect the Buddhist concept of mindfulness. Grossman and Van Dam (2011) highlight that although health benefits may be derived from a denatured approach it is not true mindfulness practice but merely an implementation of limited components of an overall more complex mindfulness approach. This could lead to the loss of a powerful approach due to an assumption made that MBAs are based on the Buddhist mindfulness approach and it is an approach already understood and used, when really it is not.

Pragmatically however, based on the evidence it is likely, although imperfect, research into the application of MBAs with children would be valuable. Awareness of

the challenge with regards to the definition must be accounted for but should be viewed as an area for development as part of the research process as opposed to a barrier to potentially worthwhile research.

2.5 Impact of definition on the developing evidence base for children

2.5.1 Curriculum

One of the emerging difficulties when reviewing the evidence base for children is the wide variation in curriculum of the MBAs. Mindfulness is suggested to be a core element of MBAs and usually there is an explicit or implicit claim that the construct closely conforms to the Buddhist construct of mindfulness (Grossman, 2011). However a review of the development of MBAs highlights there is a lack of a homogenous group in terms of MBA curriculum which makes assessing efficacy a challenge.

Burke (2010) highlights studies that have used Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) based approaches with children. However the extent to which these approaches reflect the Buddhist concept of mindfulness has been challenged. The first mindfulness based approach was developed in 1979 by Jon Kabat- Zinn at the University of Massachusetts; MBSR. It is a program that is based on intensive training in mindfulness meditation. The program involves a range of activities including eating mindfully, sitting meditation, Hatha Yoga and walking meditation with the aim to develop from an "on-going stream of constantly changing internal states and have the ability to cultivate moment to moment awareness by practicing mindfulness skills" (Baer, 2005). Already we are beginning to see the simplification of mindfulness into moment to

moment awareness, losing elements of the Buddhist construct such as remembering and recalling (Gethin, 2011).

In distinguishing MBSR from other secularised and psychological versions of mindfulness, Rapgay and Bystrisky (2009) highlight that it is based on an authentic Buddhist tradition. However Rapgay and Bytrisky (2009) suggest that the approach that MBSR is based upon appears to have been adapted from the original Indian practice of mindfulness. MBSR has also been adapted to fit within modern western mindsets and needs and as Kabat-Zinn (2011) highlights himself the intervention is only as good as the instructor, and their understanding of what is required to deliver a truly mindfulness based intervention. Minimum requirements suggested by Baer (2005) include a post-graduate qualification, regular meditation practice, attendance at meditation retreats, 3 years experiences of body centred techniques and 2 years experience teaching stress reduction group programs. A more recent guideline for good practice (UK network for Mindfulness Based Teacher Trainers, 2011) include the need for a rigorous training program, on-going supervision and self-practice, a significant reduction in qualifications required and a possible area for concern given Kabat-Zinn's emphasise on the quality of the instructor.

MBCT (Segal, Williams and Teasdale, 2002) developed following MBSR and was the first approach that makes a link between scientific and contemplative traditions. The approach represents a further adaptation/merging of mindfulness approaches with more modern approaches based on psychological understanding. This approach is mostly based on MBSR and includes many of its components: eating mindfully, sitting meditation, Hatha Yoga and walking meditation and requires a similar process of an 8 week course plus homework (Baer, 2005). The approach

includes exercises based on cognitive elements that emphasise a decentred approach to internal experiences (Baer, 2005). These involve activities such as discussing automatic thoughts and thinking and feeling exercises where time is spent considering thoughts and their impact on feelings (Baer, 2005). This appears to be a dilution of mindfulness practice in an MBA program and the possibility of confusion of mindfulness practice with cognitive behavioural therapy approaches. This may create more complexities around which elements of the program are causing its effective outcomes.

Popularised versions of MBAs include Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) which conceptually originates from MBSR/MBCT approaches but arguably continues to redefine mindfulness by importing the basic features but discarding the more comprehensive aspects (Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009). It is argued that the aim of this appears to be to make mindfulness practice simpler and consequently more accessible (Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009).

ACT encourages approaches suggested to be consistent with mindfulness approaches and involve the non-judgemental experience of thoughts and approaches that encourage the recognition that self is different from thought and feelings through activities that include labelling and recognition of thoughts (Baer, 2005). Rapgay and Bystrisky (2009) argues that these approaches are based on being mindful which is merely attention and awareness in the present moment whereas in mindfulness practice, attention and awareness skills are just the means required to enable progressive mental processes that facilitate the changing of maladaptive thoughts.

In addition to these modifications, additional changes have been made to support the accessibility of these approaches for children in the development of Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy – for Anxious Children (MBCT-C). Semple and Lee (2007) highlight areas such as attentional, cognitive and interpersonal functioning which differ in comparison to adult functioning. It is therefore apparent that MBAs may need to be adapted in order to be appropriate for the child's developmental stage (Ott, 2002) although practice remains at the heart, and the aims, basic content and underlying theory is consistent with MBCT. Semple and Lee (2007) identify that children's worries are often more concrete and immediate than adults, but ruminations are still past-centred and worries still future orientated and therefore believe the same approaches can apply.

Weare (2012) identified some of the general factors that are modified when using MBAs with children. Generally practice is shorter for children, and based on concrete experiences, with meta-cognition focus provided with older children and adolescents. Due to time limited sessions, aspirations are often lower and focus on awareness raising and student engagement is the objective. There is often a pacier, light hearted structure with a focus on fun with less long periods of silence. However it is necessary to consider following these modifications, how true we still remain to the idea of a truly mindfulness-based approach.

Variation in curriculum, results in unknowns in modern MBAs about how the interventions work (Brown et al, 2007). Manualised forms have been developed which have multiple components including group based elements, intervention specific activities and mindfulness based elements. Brown et al (2007) suggests it is yet unclear whether it is the mindfulness aspect that is responsible for the effects or

whether it is other aspects of the intervention. Currently though a lack of a clear definition of mindfulness makes this difficult to assess.

2.5.2 Measuring Mindfulness

Validation of MBAs in the science arena requires measurement of the construct and identification of mechanisms of change (Grossman and Van Dam, 2011). The complexity around conceptualising mindfulness is however seen within the measures used to assess it.

A range of approaches have been used to begin to assess the mechanism of change in mindfulness. These include brain scans, but these can't be used to quantify the extent to which participants are mindful in daily life (Baer, 2011). Cognitive assessments have shown improvements in sustained attention (Jha et al, 2010) but findings have been inconsistent (Anderson, 2007) and improvements in sustained attention is not synonymous with mindfulness practice.

One way to evaluate is to measure the construct of mindfulness (Baer, 2011) through the development of self-response questionnaires for adults and children. Baer (2011) suggests a review of the published literature provides encouraging evidence for mindfulness adult questionnaires. Most of the questionnaires are significantly correlated with each other suggesting the developers have included similar concepts in their measures of mindfulness. There has been evidence of correlations between most questionnaires and psychological factors that in theory appear to be associated with mindfulness (Baer et al, 2006; Brown and Ryan, 2003). Way et al (2010) provided evidence of a correlation between particular brain activity and self-reported mindfulness. Additionally participants who have engaged

in MBSR/MBCT have shown an improvement in mindfulness questionnaire scores (Baer et al, 2006). Based on this, scales have now been normed and developed for use with children and adolescents.

On closer reviewing however, the measures of mindfulness encompass a range of definitions with the level of complexity being variable (Brown and Ryan, 2003; Baer et al., 2006; Walach, et al 2006). Grossman and Van Dem (2011) highlight their view that mindfulness questionnaires often imply that they "reflect a Buddhist definition of mindfulness albeit in western terms" (p.g. 221). In reality they feel the differences between the Buddhist definition and their own characterisations of mindfulness are insufficiently noted and seen throughout the self-report measures developed. As seen in MBAs earlier (Rapgay and Bystrisky, 2009), scales used to measure mindfulness are equating mindfulness with being mindful with some scales simply measuring only attentiveness to present moment experience (Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, Brown and Ryan, 2003). By making this assumption that being mindful and mindfulness are the same, key elements associated with mindfulness are not being assessed e.g. perceptual and cognitive regulation or mental flexibility (Rapgay and Britisky, 2009). Scales have been developed to measure mindfulness in children and adolescents (Coyne, Cheron, and Ehrenreich, 2008), many encompassing different conceptualizations of mindfulness, making comparisons across studies using measurement outcomes a challenge.

2.5.3 Conceptual understanding of teaching mindfulness to children

Theoretical understanding of how mindfulness impacts upon children remains at an early stage within the literature. A study by Semple et al (2005) assessing the impact of an MBA on children's anxiety based their theory on a cognitively orientated model, which suggests that as impaired attention is a core aspect of anxiety, that by then improving self-management of attention, the level of anxiety should reduce. They view mindfulness practice as essentially attention enhancing techniques and propose this is one way that mindfulness has its effect on children. However as highlighted by Buddhist scholars (Bodhi, 2011; Dreyfus, 2011), the Buddhist concept of mindfulness is much more than facilitating skills in attention.

Zelazo and Lyons (2012) suggest that in theory, mindfulness could impact on the development of children's self-regulation based on an iterative reprocessing model. Mindfulness practice could impact on both top-down processes by allowing children to practice those skills (e.g. cognitive flexibility, inhibitory control, working memory), while at the same time supporting children to learn to mediate bottom up processes (e.g. anxiety, stress, curiosity) leading to the development of a healthy self-regulatory process. However they comment that research is still limited and mostly based on self-reported measures. Hannesdottir and Ollendick (2007) postulated that emotional regulation may be an important aspect of MBAs. They note that often Cognitive Behavioural treatments may not be as effective as MBAs for some children because of their insufficiency in addressing emotional regulation deficits, implying that emotional regulation is an important benefit of MBAs.

Semple and Lee (2007) explain that MBCT- C is based on the premise that thoughts and emotions are interpretations not facts and therefore children can be taught to identify and observe thoughts and feelings and explore how they are related to experiences. They suggest this process may lead to mindfulness interrupting habituated responses enabling children to respond with greater awareness and more adaptive responses.

Thompson and Gaunlett-Gilbert (2011) highlight it is unclear what developmental stage needs to have been reached before mindfulness practice can be accessible and effective for children. Some suggest that it may be necessary for children to have reached Piagetian 'formal operations stage' (Wagner, Rathus, and Miller, 2006; Wall, 2005), whereas those using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (which Thompson and Gaunlett-Gilbert suggest uses similar cognitive skills e.g. self-awareness as MBAs) have found that work with children at Piaget's 'Concrete operations' has been clinically useful. Research so far has indicated effectiveness in a range of age groups (Semple et al, 2005; Ott, 2002; Wall, 2005).

In considering the nature of mindfulness in relation to children's capacity it has been viewed as an inherent capacity (Goldstein, 2002) (cited in Grossman, 2011) with children born with the capacity to be mindful; an identified key element in mindfulness practice. Research has highlighted that there are natural individual differences across the general populations, most that have no formal experience of mindfulness, who reliably differ in propensity to be mindful based on assessment by the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown and Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness based approaches is then viewed as a discipline that supports the enhancement for those to be more mindful. There has also been debate about the extent mindfulness is

viewed as a state as opposed to a trait (Bishop et al, 2004) and concern relating to using self-report measures to make these inferences.

Greenberg and Harris (2011) highlight the need for more rigorous research and included within that is the need for developing logic models in order to develop more theories of change and mechanism of action. There is a need to consider mindfulness interventions from a developmental perspective when using them with children in order to gain a comprehensive view into mechanisms of change. We need to look beyond achieved end goals e.g. reducing anxiety and begin uncovering mechanisms of change. There is a requirement for further research with regards to the degree of fidelity, the dosage required and duration of effects of MBAs (Zelazo and Lyons, 2012), highlighting an assumption that positivist evaluation is the way forward.

2.6 MBAs and children

An evidence base with regards to the feasibility and efficacy of MBAs with children and adolescents is developing (Burke, 2010; Weare, 2013; Harnett and Dawe, 2012). MBAs have been used with a range of groups of children; being applied at the universal level to all children and more specifically to support target groups of children including those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, anxiety or learning needs (Burke, 2010). The literature suggests that when MBAs are used with children and adolescents that they facilitate a range of outcomes as with adults including; self-esteem, self-regulation, positive behaviour and academic learning (Burke, 2010; Weare, 2013; Harnett and Dawe, 2012). Evidence provides support for the feasibility of the approaches, and has begun to develop evidence of efficacy

for facilitating a range of outcomes but as yet no generalised empirical evidence of their efficacy (Burke, 2010; Weare, 2013, Harnett and Dawe, 2012).

Challenges emerging when reviewing the studies indicated variations across studies including sample sizes, outcome measures dependent of the purpose of the study as opposed to a more consistent measured outcome e.g. becoming more 'mindful' and variations in curriculum and format are all making it difficult to establish whether there is an efficacy evidence base for children and adolescents. This type of evidence only begins to address the efficacy of MBAs, evidence as to how and uncovering which factors make the effect is rarely investigated in these studies.

The evidence base for children as with adults as Shapiro et al (2006) highlights, requires more than just looking at the efficacy of the MBAs. If we want to assess whether children truly benefit from MBAs we need to understand how they benefit from the intervention as well as if they benefit. Shapiro et al (2006) suggests this requires dismantling studies which compare active components of the study to identify which component(s) result in the desired effect. In addition Shapiro et al (2006) highlight the need to examine the central construct to determine if developing mindfulness is what leads to the positive changes.

2.7 What does this mean for EPs?

The use of MBAs has been accepted within clinical and counselling psychology (Grégoire et al, 2012; Baer, 2003) but is not yet embedded in EP practice (Felver et al; 2013, Davis; 2012). However this review has highlighted the complexities underlying the development of these MBAs. EPs need to consider firstly the current evidence base for efficacy of the current MBAs with children. It is definitely an area that needs further development but this is hindered with some challenging base-level difficulties such as need for an accepted definition. Assessing efficacy requires some consistency in curriculum and measurement of the construct itself. The use of MBAs is very much in its early stages and therefore use of MBAs must be implemented with caution.

EPs possess many of the skills required to deliver and support MBAs. As highlighted by Baer (2005) skills required by an MBSR instructor include establishing effective relationships with a diverse range of clients and translating mindfulness into an accessible format, skills EPs are required to possess in their professional role.

There is potential for EPs to deliver MBAs both to children and teachers directly or to train teachers to deliver MBA programs in school. The UK network for Mindfulness Based Teacher Trainers (2011) has released some good practice guidance which highlights the need for those delivering MBSR or MBCT which includes the need for rigorous training and on-going supervision. EPs are in a prime position to offer training ensuring rigor to school practitioners and to offer on-going supervision and support due to their on-going links with school practitioners.

Meiklejohn et al (2012) highlight some of the practical challenges in implementing MBAs within the school environment including motivating schools to embrace the curricula, navigating changes in education policy, priorities and budgeting and considering the practical elements of implementing MBAs in a school environment. EPs are well placed with their knowledge of the education system both at a policy level and with understanding school processes to contribute and support the implementation of MBAs in schools.

EPs are as research practitioners able to continue to develop an understanding of MBAs and contribute to their development. They are currently being used in schools both at a universal and targeted level. There is a role for EPs as research practitioners in continuing to research and evaluate the impact of MBAs on universal and targeted groups of children (Felver et al, 2013). Zelazo and Lyons (2012) highlight the need for further research with regards to the degree of fidelity, the dosage required, duration of effects, and an understanding of causal mechanisms underpinning the approach which EPs could contribute to. There is potential for EPs with developmental psychology knowledge to extend the research and begin to understand when children are able to benefit from MBAs and whether developmental stage impacts on the outcome. As Felver et al (2013) highlight further research could involve evaluating and developing measures of mindfulness appropriate for children and adolescence.

There appears to be a potential range of benefits from MBAs so it is important that EPs do contribute and consider their potential application within their current role. However, due to the consideration made within the review, this should be done with

caution and with the use of continuous evaluation and review while developing an evidence base.

There are, as Felver et al (2013) highlights, some practical factors that need to be considered before integrating mindfulness into EP practice. As Kabat-Zinn (2003) suggests there is a need for the instructor to have an understanding of the Buddhist roots of mindfulness but apply this knowledge to those learning only in essence so that the teaching remains secularised. A more recent guideline for good practice (UK network for Mindfulness Based Teacher Trainers, 2011) also include the need for a rigorous training program, on-going supervision and self-practice which EPs would need to access.

2.8 Summary

A complex view of the nature of mindfulness is present in Buddhist scholarly literature; one which has yet to be clearly assimilated into western scientific research leading to variation in both the theoretical and operationalized descriptions of mindfulness (Bodhi, 2011; Bishop et al, 2004). Challenges have arisen both in accessing a clear definition of mindfulness directly from Buddhist scriptures due to the lack of a formal definition within the scriptures, leading to a divergence of Buddhists views around mindfulness. Difficulties then arose for those attempting to introduce MBAs into the western arena. The popularity of MBAs meant there was quickly a need to develop an operationalized definition of mindfulness. However due to a lack of understanding around mindfulness and the need to secularise it from its religious affiliations development of a clear definition has provided a difficult task.

Current definitions of mindfulness have been debated and considered to be insufficient and challenged not only by Buddhist scholars but by current research attempting to assess the validity of the concepts suggested in operationalising mindfulness. Buddhist scholars have highlighted the insufficiency of attempts to define mindfulness through breaking it down into identifiable concepts. The risk being that the contrasting explanations of mindfulness by Buddhists and in western literature become 'near enemies' (Grossman, 2011).

Although the extent to which MBAs truly represent mindfulness is being questioned there is however an evidence base for the efficacy of MBAs for adults and a developing evidence base for efficacy of MBAs for children. However currently there are methodological issues and limitations in research scope inhibiting the quality of the evidence.

In terms of EP practice and using MBAs with children caution must be taken. The evidence base in terms of efficacy for MBAs is developing but has its limitations. There is still a lack of a clear understanding of mindfulness and therefore a lack of understanding whether MBAs are truly based on it. This means as yet we don't really understand how MBAs are having their effect. However there may be important contributions that EPs can make to developing the use of MBAs in the school arena, evidence base and expanding an understanding of MBAs.

2.9 Conclusion

Regarding the question as to what is mindfulness, it appears a review may only contribute a view with regards to the emerging differences in the mindfulness approach that is beginning to emerge in the western arena and the Buddhist concept of mindfulness. It is apparent a need to develop the Buddhist concept of mindfulness into the western arena appears to have resulted in some possibly significant changes in its core identity. This may be due to a lack of a clear understanding of the models in the classic literature or may just have occurred unintentionally in the process of attempting to make it in to a secularised standalone approach. Either way there needs to be an awareness and further research with regards to the western interpretation of mindfulness in order for adequate implementation and useful evaluation.

In regards to whether EPs should be using MBAs with children a clear answer would be yes but with caution. Further research is required to both develop the evidence base for efficacy of MBAs with children and to uncover what are the key components of MBAs in effecting change through this therapeutic approach. If the evidence base continuous to grow and as a clearer understanding develops, EPs are in a prime position to promote the use of MBAs within the school arena. This could be by directly offering MBAs as a therapeutic approach to children, teachers and parents or through offering training/ supervision for others to be MBA practitioners. Currently however EPs have a key role in contributing to developing a high quality evidence base for the use of MBAs with children and young people.

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PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT TWO:

A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE USE OF A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO SUPPORT A CHILD DISAFFECTED FROM THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Abstract

A case study explores the use of an intervention underpinned by a systemic approach to support a child who was experiencing disaffection from school. The study explores the application of theoretical understanding to support the development of an applicable intervention. The effectiveness of the combined use of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) and consultation was explored using the Beck Youth inventory measure and qualitative information from a range of stakeholders. This case study provides initial positive qualitative evidence of the use of SFBT and consultation in supporting a reduction in the behaviour (associated with disaffection) of a young person. Although no significant differences on the Beck Youth inventory were found, this research suggests the potential effective use of SFBT and consultation to support children experiencing disaffection from school and the need for further research.

3.2 Introduction

Research reviewing the educational and social outcomes of children who experience disaffection "disengage(ment) and dislocat(ion) from …school' (Kinder, et al, 1999, p. 1) are concerning (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001; Hodgson 1999). Outcomes include further disengagement from further education (Cole et al, 2003), committing crime (Maguin and Loeber, 1996) and overall social exclusion (SEU, 1999). Fortunately research has supported the development of interventions to support children experiencing disaffection from school (Hallam, Rogers, & Rhamie, 2010, OFSTED, 2008) and has explored theories and developed models to assist understanding of the causes of disaffection (Hanrahan, 2014; Skinner et al, 2008a). This case study provides such an example where theories and models about disaffection were used to select and evaluate the use of an intervention; SFBT combined with consultation; both underpinned by a systemic approach, to support a disaffected child.

3.2.1 Literature Search strategy

Search terms were; 'school AND disaffect*', 're-engagement', 'Solution Focused Brief Therapy', 'Disaffection' used in combinations to access articles accessible from the University of Birmingham. Databases search included pro-quest-social science, google scholar, ERIC, EPIP and the University of Birmingham library search, and were used iteratively to explore the literature underpinning school disaffection.

3.2.2 Epistemology

This therapeutic work is underpinned by an interpretivist epistemological stand point. The view that is taken is that the world is socially constructed (Grix, 2010). Following this epistemological view point research is used to identify how an individual's psychological needs are met through their interpretations of social events. It takes the belief that it is our interpretation of social phenomena that creates outcomes (Grix, 2010). Interventions are explored that also assume that problems are socially constructed and require an understanding of the construction to resolve the problem.

3.2.3 Theory relating to disaffection

Disengagement is suggested to involve both behavioural disengagement (i.e. passivity, lack of initiation and giving up) and emotional disengagement (dejection, apathy and discouragement) (Skinner et al, 2008b). It is suggested that disengagement in places like school where an individual cannot voluntarily exit, can present differently; emotional and mental withdrawal can replace physical withdrawal and can be reflected in frustration, non-compliance or simply 'going through the motions'. This is termed disaffection and includes both disengaged behaviours and mental withdrawal and ritualistic participation (Skinner et al, 2008b). It is suggested that disaffected emotions can include "enervated emotion (i.e. tired, sad, bored), alienated emotion (frustration, anger), and pressured participation (anxiety)" (Skinner et al, 2008b; pg. 496). Fredrickson et al (2004) also includes cognitive disengagement which is incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness (or

not) to engage the effort needed to understand complex ideas and develop challenging skills.

Fortunately there is growing evidence that engagement is malleable and it is suggested to be influenced by the interaction between the individual and the environment (Fredrickson et al, 2004; Finn & Rock, 1997 in Frederickson; Vallerand et al, 1997; Hanrahan, 2014). Consequently in order to reduce disaffection or re-engage children identified as disaffected, a range of literature has begun to assess the individual and environmental factors that appear to contribute to children becoming disaffected from school (Hanrahan, 2014; Vallerand and colleagues, 1997).

Research has shown home factors such as parental involvement has often been positively linked with children's engagement with school (Simons-Morton and Crump, 2003; Hanrahan, 2014; Shoup et al, 2009). Hanrahan (2014) particularly found parental involvement important for children who had experienced exclusion from school. More recent research is beginning to explore the impact of school, curriculum and teacher based factors that may be contributing to children's disaffection, and consequently respective systemic changes that would support this (Rustique-Forrester, 2001, Ofsted, 2008, Solomon and Rogers, 2001, Vallerand et al, 1997, Lloyd-Nesling, 2006).

A motivational model of engagement (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Deci and Ryan, 1991) has identified individual self-system processes (i.e. "individual's appreciation

of their relationships to the context, their views of themselves and their social/physical world" Pg 471 (Brandtstadter and Lerner, 1999) that facilitate engagement, which have been shown to be affected by wider system elements e.g. teacher-pupil relationships (Connell and Wellborn, 1991, Skinner et al, 2008a). These processes have been identified as relatedness, autonomy and competency (Fredrickson et al, 2004; Skinner et al, 2008a, Hansen et al, 2014). Connell's model of self-system processes (1990 cited in Connell and Wellborn, 1991) highlight that a key element is the importance of the interaction of the environment on the resulting behaviour i.e. engagement or disengagement. System changes are required in the case of disaffected children because it is hypothesised that their psychological needs are not being met within the current environment (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Hanrahan, 2014). Research suggests that these psychological needs mediate behaviour through the child's self-construals, cognition and motivation (Hanrahan, 2014).

Relatedness is defined as "the need to feel securely connected to the social surrounding and the need to experience oneself as worthy and capable of love and respect" (Connell & Wellborn, 1991, p. 51). Relationships with teachers is often highlighted as a key area for a young person's engagement (O'Keefe, 1994 in Soloman and Rogers, 2001, Lumby, 2012). Shen et al (2012) found relatedness towards teachers had an impact on the level of engagement in lessons of 14-16 year-olds from two American high schools, as perceived by themselves and the teacher. Cooper et al (2013) found that at an American high school, young people's experience of meaningful relationships supports emotional connectedness to the

teacher and content. They suggest that this is supported by theory; as identity formation is central to how high school students experience school (Erikson, 1968 in Copper et al, 2013), so it makes sense that the relational facets of connective instruction (teaching practice that focuses on the uniqueness of individuals integrating teacher-pupil relationships with relevance and self-expressions) would be particularly salient (Cooper et al, 2013). They found connective instruction had a significant effect on student engagement. Hanrahan (2014) found that perceived supportiveness of teachers contributed to the positive prediction of mastery of goals and self-efficacy for secondary school mainstream children.

Children who have experienced break downs of school placements refer to personal relationships with staff as a significant factor in their resulting disaffection/exclusion (Atwood et al, 2004, Hilton, 2003). Research accessing disaffected students' views of alternative (college) placements suggests that relationships with staff are highlighted as a key factor in enabling them to maintain their educational placement (Atwood et al, 2004, Riley and Docking, 2004). While positive teacher interactions were not sufficient alone they were found to be necessary in supporting disaffected children who attended an alternative provision (Kennedy, 2011). Hilton (2006) highlighted that the quality of relationships teachers can foster with children is inhibited by institutional and market orientated system barriers of mainstream schools i.e. the pressures of academic demands, lack of time to spend building relationships with individual pupils.

Autonomy has been defined as “experience of choice in the initiation, maintenance and regulation of activity and the experience of connectedness between one’s actions and personal goals and values” (Connell and Wellborn, 1991). This may be indicated in the literature through discussions around how the child perceives relevance of the curriculum (O’Keefe, 1994; Kinder et al, 1995, 1996). Research exploring views of disaffected children suggest that the young people did not oppose education, participation or employment (O’Keefe, 1994, Solomon and Rogers, 2001; Atwood et al 2003) but in fact the research highlights the possibility of disaffection as a response to the discordance felt between what school offers and their own employment and aspirational goals. Studies are beginning to challenge these traditional views and see disaffection as a product of limited educational opportunities experienced by young people in contrast to as a result of young people’s opposition to mainstream values (Hartas, 2011).

Students who attended alternative provision following school breakdown refer to curriculum relevance to their chosen careers/aspirations as a positive element to their placement and one in three referred to curriculum relevance as a factor of their school breakdown (Atwood et al, 2003). Curriculum relevance seemed to be a positive influence on students deciding to remain in education post 16, although some acknowledged the potential career limitations resulting from leaving school early (Atwood et al 2003). Low self-efficacy was reflected in the interviews of young people identified as disaffected in the form of a lack of a sense of agency or choice (Rogers and Solomon, 2001). Surveys of teacher’s views support the notion that a restrictive national curriculum e.g. reliance on exam outcomes, also contributes to

the level of pupil disengagement (Brettingham 2006 in Harber, 2008; Rustique-Forrester and Riley, 2001).

Research has demonstrated that projects that enable active agency enable students to become re-engaged (Bland, 2012). Harber (2008) suggests autonomy in school is inhibited by the dominance of an authorative stance in the majority of schools. Research has highlighted that teaching styles can promote feelings of autonomy for children in the classroom (Reeve and Jang, 2006). While much of the focus in supporting children defined as disaffected remains around finding ways to coerce children back into mainstream education i.e. British legislation requiring children to remain in some form of education until 18 (Education and Skills Act, 2008), research has highlighted the importance of more imaginative routes to support these children to maintain engagement (Bland, 2012).

Competency is defined as “the need to experience oneself as capable of producing desired outcomes and avoiding negative outcomes” (Connell and Wellborn, 1991). It is proposed in the school environment that competency is achieved by two processes; knowledge about how to do well in school and beliefs one can execute those strategies (Connell and Wellborn, 1991). Miserandino (1996) found perceived competency, in a sample of 8-9 year-old high achievers, impacted their affect despite achievement which suggests its links to perceived competency rather than competency as judged by exams. Shen et al (2010) found teacher- pupil relationships for Physical Education linked to low behavioural and emotional

engagement for a sample of 14-16 year-olds through poor competency support (social feedback that supports their feelings of competency).

Research also suggests links between self-perceptions (i.e. self-efficacy, autonomy) and motivation and performance in school (Stipek, 2002 in Furrer and skinner, 2003, Hanrahan, 2014). Skinner et al (1990) explored the impact of children's capacity and strategy beliefs and found that they interact and impact on a young person's engagement and can consequently be facilitated by teacher contingency – providing structure to enable children to learn "what it takes to do well in school" (Skinner et al, 1990).

Lumby (2010) highlights that despite growing literature on how systemic change can support children who have become disaffected or can prevent disaffection, in reality the only action being taken is to help these children to fit in within the existing system as opposed to changes being made in the system which contributes to these children becoming disaffected. Research regularly reflects a deficit view of disaffected children and a pervasive discourse that the cause of disaffection remains within the child themselves (Smyth and Hattam 2001 in Bland, 2012). Consequently literature offers ways to support children's difficulties by enabling them to fit back into the existing system (Smyth and down, 2004 cited in Bland, 2012) which often results in the avoidance of dealing with pedagogical and systemic inefficiencies which arguably results in a child's disaffection in the first place (Bland, 2012).

3.3 EPs and Systemic approaches

The literature is suggestive of a child's disaffection being linked to both individual (e.g. cognitions and motivations) and environmental systems (e.g. school and home experiences) and consequently the solution needs to be developing both. Educational Psychologists (EPs) who work to support children who have become disaffected (Billington, 2012; Atkinson and Wood, 2003) need their approach to be inclusive of wider systemic factors. Therefore a useful approach may be looking at the interaction of children and their environment using a systemic approach (Hedges, 2005).

A systemic perspective of a child's behaviour moves away from locating the behaviour as within child cause, to seeing the behaviour as a necessary part of the system in which the child functions; where the system acts to maintain the focus behaviour (Beaver, 2011; Fox, 2009). It offers an alternative perspective to making sense of events and behaviour and has the potential to enable EPs to use this perspective to intervene at the system level and at the level where the individual, family and school systems interact. A central idea of a systemic approach is the premise that cause and effect have a circular relationship, where 'problems' are maintained by circular loops (Hedges, 2005).

The relevance of the systems thinking approach in EP work is not new, as Pfeiffer and Tittler (1983 cited in Wendt and Zake, 1984) highlight that approaching a child's behaviour using a systems approach provides new perspectives when designing interventions. EPs use approaches underpinned by systemic theory but often do not

acknowledge that they have done so (Pellegrini, 2009). As Fox (2009) highlights "consultation is seen as a collaborative process where the EP as a non-expert helps in a collaborative way to co-construct new ways of seeing problems – this is systemic thinking." As Wagner (1995) highlights school consultation is underpinned by systemic thinking as events and behaviour can be interpreted as responses to systems and how they interact.

3.4 Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Systemic thinking is evident in EP's work with children (Fox, 2009). The most well used approach underpinned by systems theory is Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) (Pellegrini, 2009). De Shazer (2007) suggests that SFBT is a systems therapy, as the solutions that are explored are interactional, i.e. people problems and their solutions involve other people e.g. family, peers i.e. as small (sometimes individual) changes develop, larger changes, which are often interactional and systemic, frequently follow. Pellegrini (2009) expresses the importance of when using SFBT with individuals that in order to remain systemic it needs to maintain a systems focus. This is important in the case with children who become disaffected, as it is the interaction with the systems that is problematic and individual changes alone are unlikely to solve the difficulties being experienced (Connell and Wellborn, 1991). The SFBT needs to be used to support the system changes that are the goal of the overall intervention; i.e. in the case of disaffected children the aim is to support the changes in the individual, school and home systems that result in the child's psychological needs being met.

SFBT comes from a social constructionist paradigm (Pellegrini, 2009) and is based on the idea that language is central to the construction and perception of problems. Its social constructionist approaches encourages the involvement of teachers, parents, etc. and is consistent with intervention characteristics that are suggested to be successful in school settings (Rones and Hoagwood, 2000, Franklin & Gerlach, 2007; Newsome, 2004). The practice of using SFBT in school settings has developed over the last ten years and has been used to support children with a diverse range of presenting difficulties (Newsome, 2005; Franklin et al, 2001, Rhodes, 1993, Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995; Franklin et al, 2007; Kim and Franklin, 2009). Research has also highlighted the potential for SFBT in effectively supporting children who display challenging behaviour associated with disaffection (including lateness, inattention, school phobia, difficulty in completing tasks and social difficulties) (Franklin et al, 2008).

Visser (2010) explores how solution focused approaches directly promote the psychological needs experienced by disaffected children; relatedness, competency and autonomy. Visser (2010) explores how solution focused approaches (e.g. SFBT) can support clients to promote feelings of autonomy through the general autonomous approach endorsed, by SFBT. For example the client is encouraged to choose their aims for therapy, and the enabling approach which facilitates clients in taking control in the direction of the therapeutic sessions. Competency is promoted as a client's competence is a key assumption of solution focused approach therapies (Visser, 2010). Solution focused approaches are based on finding

successful exceptions and aims to identify and compliment competent behaviours the client already demonstrates.

Finally Visser (2010) suggests that solution focused approaches supports the relatedness through the development of a connection between the practitioner and the client through taking an interest in and acknowledging the clients views and perspectives. They suggest that relatedness is supported through the practitioner normalising and consequently de-pathologising client's concerns. Solution focused therapy supports the client's relatedness by using interventions that aim to support relationships outside of the therapy. This includes interventions such as relationship questions which encourages clients to develop solutions in interactional terms (Visser, 2010).

3.5 Formulation and approach

3.5.1 Aim

The aim of this research is to explore the use of SFBT and systemic consultation to support a child experiencing disaffection in school.

3.5.2 Case study design

An individual exploratory case study was used to evaluate the impact of the use of SFBT and consultation in supporting a child experiencing disaffection from school (Robson, 2002). The approach used was an explanatory clinical case study where the aim is to use existing theories/models to understand a case and (hopefully)

solve the problem (de Vaus, 2001). The literature provided a theory/model about the difficulties experienced by children who become disaffected from school and the intervention was developed based on this theory. A case study approach was used due to the exploratory nature of the intervention. Further replicated research would be needed to generalise the findings and to assess the applicability of this approach more generally.

3.5.3 Formulation – evidence of disaffection

Jack (pseudonym used to protect identity) is a year 9 male who was initially referred to the EP by his secondary school due to on-going concerns about his persistent disaffection towards school. Exploration of Jack's needs through consultation with his parent, school and through an interview with Jack enabled the formulation.

Children who become disaffected from school often experience transition as a vulnerable time due to the risk of loss of relatedness due to the new environment (Sirsch, 2003). Jack found the transition to secondary school challenging and struggled to build positive relationships with staff, often displaying disruptive classroom behaviour and consequently receiving disciplinary action. Relationships with peers can be a protective factor but in Jack's case he experienced bullying early on in secondary school potentially reducing the positive impact.

When exploring Jack's aspirations and goals in relation to his adult life it became apparent that Jack experienced inconsistencies between his aspirations and the curriculum challenging his perceived relevance of the curriculum which may have

affected his perception of his autonomy. In addition Jack was experiencing undetected learning difficulties and consequently was unable to make progress in some curriculum activities potentially affecting his perception of his competency. These are all environmental factors that may have contributed to Jack's disaffection at school based on the motivational theory of engagement (Connell and Wellborn, 1991).

3.6 Method

3.6.1 Solution Focused Brief Therapy

SFBT (developed by Kim Berg, de Shazer and colleagues) is a pragmatically developed brief therapeutic approach which uses a future focused and goal orientated techniques to support clients (de Shazer, 2007). Jack received six individual sessions of SFBT (De Shazer, 2007). Details of key elements of the sessions are recorded in appendix A and B.

3.6.2 Systemic Consultation

SFBT was used in combination with consultation, underpinned by a systemic approach, with Jack's mother and school staff; SENCo, mentor and tutor. Sharing the theory underpinning disaffection with stakeholders enabled systemic consultation to explore how Jack's behaviour relates to the systems around him and facilitates environmental changes for Jack.

3.7 Measures

3.7.1 Solution focused scales

Due to the limited evidence base for the effectiveness of SFBT with disaffected children, this research explored Jack's views of the impact of the intervention using solution focused scaling questions which are useful for evaluating immediate outcomes of SFBT in school environments (Young and Holdorf, 2003). Jack set goals at the beginning of the therapy to make progress towards his career aspiration and to begin enjoying school again, which were reviewed in session six.

3.7.2 BECK Youth Inventories

Research has highlighted anger, anxiety and depression as emotional experiences of children experiencing disaffection (Hanrahan, 2014). Consequently in addition to the qualitative feedback from stakeholders the BECK Youth inventory was used to assess Jack's emotions pre and post the intervention. The BECK Youth Inventory, a self-report measure was chosen as it explores a young person's experiences relating to anger, anxiety, self-concept and depression on individual subscales. The tool was used to assess changes in Jack's thoughts feelings and/or behaviour following the intervention period. The tool has a high internal consistency; scoring a Cronbach's alpha co-efficient between .86 - .92. and test-re-test correlation coefficients of .84-.93. The subscales convergent validity scales ranged from .61-.77. However although Jack fell within the age range of the sample the normative data was based on, the normative data was based on a United States population rather than a United Kingdon population meaning the sample may not be

representative of the young person assessed in this case. The administration of the scales was brief and easy for the young person to complete.

3.7.3 Contemporaneous file notes

In addition to exploring the impact of the intervention using outcomes measures, an analysis, using the theory developed from the motivational model of engagement (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Deci and Ryan, 1991), of contemporaneous file notes maintained throughout the intervention, will be carried out. This analysis will aim to explore how the SFBT and consultation processes attempts to support systemic changes in order to enable an environment where Jack's psychological needs can be met (see appendix B).

3.8 Ethics

Following the BPS code of Ethics verbal consent was gained from Jack's Mother, Jack and the school to initiate the SFBT approach.

SFBT has been developed to be effective for involuntary clients, including children that may have been referred in a school setting through concerned adults (Franklin et al 2008a).As Atkinson and Woods (2003) highlight from the school's perspective expected outcomes may be focused upon achieving 'social control' rather than on addressing individual needs. This contrasts with BPS guidance where it is necessary for EPs to support and consult children as fully as possible about interventions and to ensure the child's and families' views are being heard and have

an influence the planned intervention process (British Psychological Society, 2009; Department for Education and Skills, 2001).

It was essential that by carrying out therapeutic work that the difficulties Jack was experiencing were not seen as within child but a combination of difficulties arisen due to systemic processes and environments. As Rustique-Forrester (2001) rightly points out there is a risk through using approaches that work to support change within the child that we continue to see disaffection through a 'deficit model' which is suggestive of the problems lying within the child as opposed to the system. In order to counteract this, the use of a systemic consultation approach was used.

3.9 Results

3.9.1 Solution focused scale

Jack found that he had made two steps of progress towards his career aspiration goal on a ten point solution focused scale (see appendix A) and one step of progress on his goal of enjoying school.

In order to triangulate Jack's views a meeting was held with school staff to review Jack's behaviour in school following the intervention (i.e. 6 weeks of SFBT and systemic consultation with school and parents) . The week before the intervention began, staff recorded concerns that Jack was not engaging in any curriculum activities (Jack was displaying behaviour that included refusing to write in lessons, refusing to respond to teachers questions/instructions), he was recorded late for school for 4 days of the week and was on a reduced timetable and only attending English, Maths and Science lessons due to concerns about his defiant behaviour

(refusal to contribute) raised by teaching staff. This week was identified as a typical week for Jack. The week following the intervention Jack had arrived at school on time every day of the week, engaged in and attended all curriculum lessons as reported by teaching staff. This change had been maintained at a similar level for five weeks. The change in behaviour recorded by school was felt to be positive.

A review of Jack's behaviour following the intervention revealed Jack's behaviour being more comparable to those typically associated with children who are engaged in school; demonstrating more attention and effort in curriculum activities (Skinner et al, 2008). Jack and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) reported that Jack had started to become more positive and interested in some of his school activities, particularly tutor group time, suggesting a more positive emotional experience which has been linked to school engagement (Skinner et al, 2008).

3.9.2 BECK Youth inventories

Jack's pre and post-test T-scores were within the average range across all subtests both before and after the intervention. Qualitatively, positive but not significant effects were found for the Beck Self-concept inventory, Beck Anxiety inventory and Beck disruptive behaviour inventory; no effect was found for the Beck Depression Inventory and a negative effect was found for the Beck Anger Inventory. Positive findings for the Beck Disruptive Behaviour inventory support the qualitative findings identified by Jack and school.

The positive findings for Jack's improved views in relation to the Beck Self-Concept Inventory are supportive as the aim of the intervention for disaffected children is to develop more positive self-concepts e.g. self-perceptions of competency (Visser, 2010). The improvements Jack appeared to find in relation to anxiety appeared to be linked to reduced concern regarding 'worrying about getting bad grades' and 'worrying that others might get mad at him'. This may be linked to the increased support and success Jack had reported experiencing in school.

The increased score on the Beck Anger Inventory seemed mostly linked to Jack's views about the impact other people have on him, and the fact that he does become angry and feel angry. One hypothesis-based reason that may explain this may be Jack's improved awareness of his relationships with others following the systemic focus of the SFBT where relationships outside of the therapy room were explored.

3.9.3 Analysis of contemporaneous file notes

Below is an extract of the analysis of the contemporaneous file notes from the therapy sessions using the theory developed from the motivational model of engagement (Connell and Wellborn, 1991). The notes were analysed to identify elements of the therapy that may have facilitated systemic changes that supported Jack's psychological needs being met.

Table 2.1:Excerpt of analysis of contemporaneous file notes from the SFBT sessions (remaining analysis in appendix B)

Session focus	Commentary – links to developing autonomy, relatedness and competency (*Evidence of systemic focus)*
Session one Rapport building, initial exploration of pre-session change, beginning to develop Jack's aims of the sessions, normalising and reframing of Jack's concerns	Acknowledgement of Jack's competencies, relationship building, development of Jack's autonomy through encouraging Jack to decide on his aims for the six therapeutic sessions
Session two and three Scaling questions – Scaling questions used to highlight and identify improvements since previous session and exceptions (used every session) Solution focused use of ideal self/ Miracle question used – supporting Jack to identify his own goals – relationships questions were used to support Jack to explore what impact his solutions might have Homework – during this session Jack begun to identify specific activities linked to his solutions e.g. exploring options that enabled him to follow his career aspirations	Identifying Jack's competency and skills Supporting the development of Jack's autonomy – enabling him to choose the direction of the session *Relationship questions were used to explore Jack's views of his home and school system and how they could meet his psychological needs* Supporting Jack's autonomy – Jack had clear ideas about his career but identified that the current school curriculum did not support his aspirations – Jack decided to go to see connexions to find out what he needed to do next and how much what he did now prevented to his opportunities later *Following this session Jack experienced change in the wider system as he began sharing his aims and ideas with his Mom – she was not supportive of his aspirations – as they were judged by her to be unrealistic aims for Jack (Information gathered through Jack)*

3.9.4 Analysis of solution focused consultation

Below is the analysis of the contemporaneous file notes from the consultation using the theory developed from the motivational model of engagement (Connel and Wellborn, 1991). The notes were analysed to identify how elements of the consultation aimed to facilitate systemic changes to meet Jack's psychological needs.

Table 2.2: Excerpt of analysis of solution focused consultations

Consultation session	Systemic changes
The session involved sharing Jack's ideal school and the outcomes he wanted to achieve so that solutions could be discussed to support Jack's outcomes. The consultation involved exploring school and home experiences of Jack's behaviour and links were made to the challenges with the current systems in meeting Jack's psychological needs. For example school had responded to Jack's behaviour of refusing to write in lessons by removing him to the inclusion centre where he mostly become more isolated from his peers meaning the environment did not only not address the competency difficulties he was experiencing but then failed to meet his need for relatedness with his peers, resulting in further disaffection from Jack. The solution evolved in this case; that Jack would receive additional support to enable him to experience success in lessons (i.e. develop his competency) and enabling him to return to mainstream class and to redevelop connections with his peers (i.e. develop his relatedness) on a graduated basis) The process used a solution focused approach and involved Jack's Mom, school staff (SENCo, Mentor, tutor) and EP exploring and challenging possible solutions to enable Jack's outcomes.	The purpose of working with Jack's family and teachers is based on the view that within the systemic approach paradigm that Jack's system needs to change to provide an environment that meets his psychological needs During the meeting this meant exploring stakeholders views about Jack and the difficulties he was experiencing and using theory demonstrated in the literature review to explain some of the underlying system factors maintaining his behaviour. Environmental factors needed to be changed to develop Jack's relatedness, competency and autonomy. Autonomy Jack's Mom was initially unsure about Jack's career aspirations, but through consultation and feeding back information from connexions, Jack's mom was reassured enough to support Jack's goals Jack expressed some social anxiety which hindered his access to lessons as he had become withdrawn, Jack was able to access new classes and begin with a fresh start increasing his access to a wider range of lessons

Systemic environmental changes following the consultation: Introduction of a mentor Jack to be moved to a small nurturing tutor group Access to a controlled quiet environment for break time Additional in-class support for learning needs Increased parental involvement and support from Mom for Jack's aspiration	Competency Support in class meant that Jack was able to experience more success in subjects were he had previously not been making progress and had consequently been refusing to work Relatedness Jack needed the opportunity to reconnect with his peers so opportunities were created for this, ensuring Jack had access to quieter space at tutor and break times where he could rebuild relationships with his peers Jack had a relationship with a mentor which school supported by allocating opportunities for them to meet on a regular basis

3.10 Discussion

3.10.1 Exploring the use of SFBT and consultation through a systemic approach to support a child experiencing disaffection from school

Disaffection from school could result in significant negative outcomes for children and young people and consequently there is a need to develop effective approaches to support these children to re-engage. Literature has suggested that there is a need for a systemic approach developing the systems around the child as opposed to a deficit-driven within child approach in supporting disaffected children.

This exploratory case study used theories thought to be underpinning disaffection experienced by children to guide the selection of an intervention for a disaffected child. The literature suggested that children who experience disaffection may not be having their psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness met and as a result become disaffected from school. Consequently the literature proposed support through a systemic approach could promote the development of systems to meet these needs. A combination of SFBT and consultation is thought to be able to promote changes required in the systems; individual, school and home. As a consequence a theoretical understanding of disaffection was used to explore where the current systems were ineffective in meeting the young person's needs, and a systemic approach using SFBT and consultation was used to support changes in the systems.

The outcomes reviewed suggest a positive impact of a systemic approach using SFBT and consultation over-time. Following the intervention the young person

displayed less behaviour typically associated with disaffected children than before the intervention. Triangulated information suggested improvements were seen both across the home and school environment. An increase in behaviour and positive emotions; associated in the literature to children engaged with the school environment, began to occur. However no significant changes were identified through the Beck Youth inventory.

As discussed, the intervention attempted to promote development of the systems so the young person's identified psychological needs were being met more effectively. Relatedness, by developing relationships with staff and peers, autonomy; through increasing choice – enabling increased access to lessons by supporting a reduction in anxiety, and need for competency; by addressing learning needs and enabling further success in lessons and consequently empowerment. This process involved supporting the young person directly through SFBT approach (see appendix A for details) to promote his own changes in the systems to meet his needs and supporting these changes through direct consultation with the home and school stakeholders.

It was essential that there was an understanding that the therapeutic approach was not seen as a 'within child' mechanism to 'fix' the young person and that these developments hopefully were there to facilitate improvements in the systems surrounding the young person in order to better meet his psychological needs. The intervention required recognition of the need for flexibility in the young person's, school and home systems for the intervention to be effective. Relationships with the

young person, school and home were needed in order to make these demands and ownership of the 'problem' needed to remain within the school and home system for this to be effective.

3.10.2 EPs practice and supporting children experiencing disaffection

The idea of using a systemic approach within EP practice is not a new idea (Wendt and Zake, 1984), although it remains an approach that is not currently well utilised by EPs (Pellegrini, 2009). Research has found that some practices currently used by EPs can be (Consultation) or are (SFBT) based on a systemic approach although this is not often acknowledged (Pelligrini, 2009). EPs are in a prime position to provide support for children experiencing disaffection as they are able to support the development of the systems, both through working with the child directly and with the systems around the child through consultation promoting the effectiveness of the systems in meeting the child's psychological needs. EPs area of knowledge also equips them well as a joint understanding of psychology and the capacities of the education system enables the development of effective interventions to promote necessary changes. This exploratory research study indicates that a systemic approach may be an effective way for EPs to support children identified as being disaffected from school.

This case study also highlights the continuing need for EPs to use theories and models developed in the literature and to continue to explore the application of potentially viable approaches to supporting children who experience difficulties in mainstream school. This is part of their role in developing an evidence base for

effective ways of supporting children. There is also a need following an exploratory case study to continue to evidence the generalisability and applicability of this approach in wider range of cases possibly involving the use of alternative research designs and methods. Obviously there is need for caution and continuous evaluation when developing new approaches but also the need for innovation. There is a need to use theory and models to hypothesise and develop an understanding about how an intervention supports a child so that it can be tested and developed to provide more effective and efficient ways of working.

3.10.3 Further research

Overall the study aims to explore the possible use of the combination of SFBT and consultation underpinned by a systemic approach to support a child who is experiencing disaffection from school. The study provides initial positive evidence towards the possible effective use of this approach. This intervention requires further research, possibly using an alternative research design, to counteract limitations of a case study design in order to test its efficacy and applicability with disaffected children more generally. Further research could more directly assess the impact of the systemic approach in developing young peoples' psychological needs rather than just inferring them from changes in behaviour as this study has.

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3.12 Appendices

Appendix A: Overview of Solution Focused tools used

The Solution Focused Brief Therapy sessions included a range of elements suggested by De Shazer (2007). As De Shazer (2007) highlights the therapeutic approach is overall based on several main features which include:

- “A positive, collegial, solution-focused stance.
- Looking for previous solutions.
- Looking for exceptions.
- Asking present and future focused questions
- Providing a gentle nudge to do more of what is working” pg. 4

Specific interventions used in the therapeutic sessions included:

Search for pre-session change

The initial session involved exploring any changes experienced by Jack, since I had first met with him to discuss the possibility of having some therapeutic sessions together. The approach involved asking open questions exploring Jack’s experience of change and included solution focused talk exploring Jack’s strengths and capabilities that were evident in his pre-session change.

Goal setting

Setting clear solution focused goals is key to the SFBT therapeutic sessions. At the beginning of each session time was spent supporting Jack to identify his key goals for the session. Jack was encouraged to set small specific goals identified as

solutions to be achieved rather than problems to be fixed. This approach enabled Jack to have control of the purpose of the session.

The miracle question

The miracle question was used as a tool to support Jack to identify his goals in the early sessions. The tool involves asking the client to imagine a miracle occurring that solves their problem over-night but they are unaware that this miracle has happened. The question asks the client to consider what would be different for them if their problem had been resolved. The tool is future focused and helps the client to identify what they would like/expect the future to look like without the problem. Through using this tool clients can be supported to identify their future orientated solution focused goals.

Scaling questions

Scaling questions were used through the therapeutic sessions to help identify where Jack felt he was in line with his goals. A scale of 1-10 was used where 10 represented Jack achieving his goal and 1 representing Jack not at all achieving his goal. Scaling questions were also used so that Jack could rate the effectiveness of the sessions in supporting him to work towards his goals.

A search for exceptions

During the sessions Jack was asked to reflect on his experiences of achieving his goals in the past. As the therapist my role was to identify exceptions where Jack had been successful in solving similar problems, his current problem in different

situations or being successful in overcoming part of his current problem. Once exceptions had been identified they were explored with Jack to identify the strengths and capabilities he already has that enabled him to achieve these goals.

Review, compliments and homework task

At the end of each session we reviewed what had been discussed in the session, to reflect on the strengths, capabilities identified in the session. Following on from the reflection collaboratively we set a goal for the next session to support Jack to continue to make progress. Once a specific and measurable goal had been set the plan would be to review it in the next session to see how Jack experienced working towards his goal.

Appendix B: Analysis of contemporaneous session notes

Session focus	Commentary – links to developing autonomy, relatedness and competency *Evidence of systemic focus*
Session one Rapport building, initial exploration of pre-session change, beginning to develop Jack's aims of the sessions, normalising and reframing of Jack's concerns	Acknowledgement of Jack's competencies, relationship building, development of Jack's autonomy through encouraging Jack to decide on his aims for the six therapeutic sessions
Session two and three Scaling questions – Scaling questions used to highlight and identify improvements since previous session and exceptions (used every session) Solution focused use of ideal self/ Miracle question used – supporting Jack to identify his own goals – relationships questions were used to support Jack to explore what impact his solutions might have Homework – during this session Jack begun to identify specific activities linked to his solutions e.g. exploring options that enabled him to follow his career aspirations	Identifying Jack's competency and skills Supporting the development of Jack's autonomy – enabling him to choose the direction of the session *Relationship questions were to explore Jack's views of his home and school system and how they could meet his psychological needs* Supporting Jack's autonomy – Jack had clear ideas about his career but identified that the current school curriculum did not support his aspirations – Jack decided to go to see connexions to find out what he needed to do next and how much what he did now prevented to his opportunities later *Following this session Jack experienced change in the wider system as he began sharing his aims and ideas with his Mom – she was not supportive of his*

	aspirations – as they were judged by her to be unrealistic aims for Jack (Information gathered through Jack)
Use of the ideal school- exploration of solutions Jack needed, to resolve some of his difficult experiences in school – factors identified that Jack allowed me to share with school and his Mom to promote necessary supporting environmental changes This session involved continuing to explore solutions Jack had put in place following homework he had completed – it was necessary to help Jack to explore his competencies as he felt he had not achieved his aims from the previous sessions – this enabled further exploration of solutions for the difficulties he encountered	*Following this session Jack allowed me to share his view of his world, his experiences and solutions with his family and school in order to make his environment more enabling.* (see consultation notes below for more information). Jack did not want to attend the meeting himself
Session four and five The main aim of this session was working with Jack to explore what had changed in his environment since our previous session and how he had progressed using the scaling questions	*Exploration revealed change not only in Jack's environment but changes in his relationship with school staff and his parents which appeared to be supported by their positive response to Jack's ideas.* For example school staff had changed Jack's tutor group to somewhere less anxiety provoking for Jack, this enabled Jack to begin to socialise again with some of his peers. Jack views around school began to change to be more positive. This may have begun to support Jack's connection/attachment to school Jack had begun to experience competency within the new environment alongside some additional support

Session 6 The final session involved reviewing Jack's progress with him, highlighting progress using scaling questions and future solutions he would like to continue to achieve	The session demonstrated underlying competency beliefs about Jack's ability to continue to make progress. The session highlighted Jack's skills so far and the positive outcomes he had experienced. Jack relatedness was planned to be supported through developing a relationship with a mentor in school who would continue to support him to develop his goals

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT THREE:

EXPLORING THE USE OF THE COMMUNICATION SUPPORTING OBSERVATION TOOL IN A NURSERY SETTING

4.1 Abstract

The links between early language development and academic progress are widely recognised. Associations between early language skills and early experiences and increasing numbers of children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) has ensured a focus on reviewing mainstream educational and health care provision's capacity to support the development of early language skills. This report aims to review the use of the Communication Supporting Classroom observation tool (Dockrell et al, 2012a) with a nursery setting; to review and enhance their classroom practice in promoting early oral language development. Overall it was felt that the tool provided a useful initial framework which contributed to the development of nursery practice both identifying areas of strength: the physical language learning environment, and also a key area for development: language learning interactions which are viewed as a significant contributor to enhancing children's language skills. The tool appeared to have a limitation however in that it failed to make a significant reference to the importance of practitioner behaviour (practitioner responsivity) in promoting language learning interactions.

4.2 Introduction

The aim of this review is to explore the development of pre-schoolers early oral language skills and the use of the Communication Supporting Classroom (CsC) observation tool to support it (Dockrell et al, 2012a). The literature review aims to explore the evidence justifying a focus on early oral language skills in relation to supporting children's literacy skills and how developing practice in the early years settings might support the development of these language skills. The second section explores the use of the CsC observation tool as one approach which practitioners can be encouraged to use to review and develop their practice in order to effectively support children's language development. The final sections review the findings of the observation tool and its potential contribution to development in one nursery setting.

4.2.1 Why a focus upon promoting early oral language skills? The evidence

Early oral language skills have long been recognised as predicting poor later academic achievement (Walker et al, 1994; Bercow, 2008; DfE, 2011). These early language skills have been associated in the literature more specifically with difficulties in developing literacy skills (Roth et al, 2002; Puranik and Lonigan, 2011) and its consequential impact upon children's access to the curriculum and resulting academic progress (Snowling et al, 2001; Dockrell et al., 2011). Consequently early oral language development and communication skills more generally have become a focus of government policies, research and reviews (Bercow Review, 2008; DCSF, 2008) and much literature has explored the potential to use universal health and education provision to support the development of these early skills and hence

support children's academic achievement. Consequently the following review begins by exploring the validity of the links between early oral language and literacy skills.

4.2.2 Literature Search strategy

Search terms were: 'early oral language' 'literacy' 'writing' 'reading' 'academic achievement' used in combinations to access articles accessible from the University of Birmingham. Databases search included pro-quest-social science, google scholar, ERIC, and the University of Birmingham library search, and were used iteratively to explore the literature exploring the link between early oral language skills and literacy achievement.

4.2.3 The evidence – impact of early oral skills on literacy achievement?

Oral language development at two years of age has been shown to predict achievement on assessment on entry into primary school (DfE, 2011). Research has found that children with early language impairments often do not perform as well academically later on as age-matched peers (Stothard et al, 1996; Snowling et al, 2001; Young et al, 2002; Catts et al, 2002; Conti-Ramsden et al, 2009; Dockrell et al., 2011). Research seems to suggest associations between oral language skills and difficulties with both reading and writing skills which may begin to explain the consequential impact on later academic outcomes for children and young people (Roth et al, 2002; NELP, 2008).

A review of the literature suggests that an association exists between early oral language skills and later reading skills (NELP, 2008). Phonological awareness (an

early oral language skill) in the early years (at age 5-6 years old) has been found to be predictive of word and pseudoword reading ability at assessment both at one and two years later (Roth et al 2002; Hogan et al, 2005). Research has also suggested that early phonological awareness skills can have a compensating role in supporting later reading skills for children who initially experience decoding difficulties (Spira et al, 2005). A positive impact has been demonstrated in the literature, when phonemic awareness skills are supported, on resulting reading and spellings skills (NlCHD, 2000). A meta-review of phonological training in the US evidenced that developing early phonological awareness skills improved children's reading skills (Bus and van IJzendoorn, 1999), however they also found although it was important for reading, phonological awareness on its own it was not sufficient for developing reading skills. Keiffer (2012) also found that for children learning English as a second language, both early (assessed at age 5-6years) oral language skills in their first language (Spanish) and in English were able to independently predict later at 3rd grade; (age 8years-9years) levels in English reading. More specifically it was found the English vocabulary test for EAL children was the strongest predictor for later reading skills.

A range of early oral language skills also appear to contribute to later reading comprehension skills (Catts et al, 1999; Roth et al, 2002; NELP, 2008; Kendeou et al, 2009). NELP (2008) synthesis of the literature found that early oral language proficiency measured in kindergarten (age 5-6years old) had a moderate relationship with later reading comprehension across 23 studies. Munger and Blachman (2013) found that word recognition frequency and accuracy subtest significantly correlated with later reading comprehension skills. Roth et al (2002)

found that semantic abilities (definitions and word retrieval) when children were around five years old also strongly correlated with children's reading comprehension two years later. Listening comprehension and receptive vocabulary have been shown to also contribute to later reading comprehension skills (Kendeou et al, 2009). Nation et al (2010) also found impairments in non-phonological features of language skills were a good prediction of later reading comprehension difficulties. They found that children who experienced lower reading comprehension skills performed lower in tests of comprehension, receptive and expressive vocabulary in the early years. Clarke et al (2010) developed this finding in their research and suggest that weaknesses in using and understanding spoken language contribute to the impairments experienced by poor comprehenders.

The impact of language skills on reading comprehension has also been questioned (Storch and Whitehurst, 2002). Speece et al (1999) found that the influence of oral language skills on literacy skills is not uniform. When children were found to possess higher language skills they tended to result in early reading rewards, yet no advantage was found for literacy skills for those children with average language skills compared to those with low language skills. However the study did not take into account the potential mediating effects of IQ. Speece et al (1999) suggest that oral language skills make a contribution to reading achievement at different points in development, but that their research provides evidence to suggest that beyond phonological awareness, that early oral language skills are not essential for the development of early literacy skills. They suggest that some features of oral language skills support only the development of reading skills that are developed

later (7 years onwards) on and consequently do not effect a child's early literacy skill development at around 5-7 years old (Catts et al, 2002; Speece et al, 2009). In support of this Storch and Whitehurst (2002) found that the association between oral language skills and reading comprehension disappeared during children's 2nd and 3rd year of schooling as code related skills had a larger impact on reading comprehension. They also suggest that oral language skills re-emerged in later school years to predict reading comprehension.

Although the research is more limited, links have also been made between language skill difficulties and deficits in writing skill development (Roth, 2000; Bishop and Clarkson, 2003; Puranik and Lonigan, 2011). Research has shown that pre-schoolers with weaker oral language skills are behind with their writing skills when compared to children with stronger oral skills which suggests that oral language skills may have a mediating effect (Puranik and Lonigan, 2011). Mackie et al (2013) assessed children with specific language difficulties and found that the difficulties experienced in their language skills were reflected in their written language skills suggesting language skills may impact on the writing skills developed. Cragg and Nation's (2006) study of a small sample of children with comprehension difficulties found supportive evidence and suggest weaknesses with non-phonological skills of oral language may constrain written narrative production.

Overall the research evidence begins to suggest that there is likely to be wider difficulties experienced in literacy skills; reading and writing for those children who experience early oral language difficulties. Consequently this may impact upon the

academic outcomes the children and young people are able to attain. The suggestion is then made that supporting children to develop these early oral language skills may reduce the risk of children experiencing these academic difficulties later on in their educational career (DfE, 2012).

4.3 An increasing focus on supporting language development in the early years

The combination of an increasing awareness of the persistence of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) being the most prevalent Special Educational Need (SEN) for children in primary schools, the long-term costs of SLCN and the potential influence of early experiences/intervention on early language development (ICAN, 2006; Allen, 2011; DfE, 2014b, 2014c, EYFSP, 2014) has resulted in an increased focus on language development in the early years (Bercow, 2008; Lindsay et al, 2008; Lindsay et al, 2010; DfE, 2014b, see appendix B for overview).

Government research and reports have highlighted the importance of speech, communication and language development in the early years (Bercow Review, 2008; DfE, 2011) and government funded initiatives suggest the recognition of the importance of these early language skills in supporting access to the curriculum (ICAN, 2006; DCSF, 2008; I-CAN, 2012). Research has shown that attendance at a quality pre-school provision impacts positively upon all children's development when compared to those children who did not attend a pre-school provision (DFES, 2004; Sylva et al, 2014). As part of the government social mobility strategy the government has been increasing access to funded pre-school places for two year

olds since September 2014 for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, children with SEN or Looked After Children (DfE, 2013).

In addition longitudinal research has shown a higher quality pre-school environment is associated with better outcomes for children (DFES, 2004; Sylva et al, 2014). The need to promote the language learning environment of preschool classrooms is well documented in the US literature (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; DFES, 2004; Hamre and Pianta, 2007; Justice et al 2008; Mashburn et al, 2008; Dickinson et al., 2008). However observational research suggests that many preschool classrooms do not provide an optimum environment for facilitating children's language skills, particularly those serving children from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds (e.g., Justice et al 2008; Dickinson, Darrow, & Tinubu, 2008).

A key element to this is the skill of the practitioners delivering the provision. Previous research has highlighted evidence of limited training regarding children's speech and language development/difficulties both as part of teachers' initial training or as follow –up post-graduate training (Dockrell and Lindsay, 2001; Mroz and Hall, 2003; Sadler, 2005; ICAN, 2006). In order to begin to change this, the government did start to provide funding to improve qualifications in the early years workforce (DfE, 2014a). Government funded initiatives such as the Early Language Development program (ICAN, 2012) and resources provided by organisations such as The Communication Trust aim to increase practitioners knowledge about supporting early language development. Research has shown that in-service professional development intervention for early childhood educators can change

their teaching in ways that promote students' learning (Dickinson & Caswell, 2007). Research has also highlighted the need to review in-class practice and support practitioners with training to develop their practice (Kendeou et al 2009).

Research has shown that developing practitioners' knowledge about language development and practical strategies to support the development of language has been shown to impact positively on practitioners' classroom practice (Dickinson and Caswell, 2007; Letts and Hall, 2003; Dickinson and Caswell, 2007; Pianta et al 2008; Neuman and Cunningham, 2009). More specifically as Neuman and Cunningham (2009) highlight that it seems it is not just the level of teacher education itself that explains the quality of instruction in the classroom but more importantly the difference in the way that teachers interact with their students (Early et al, 2007; Pianta et al, 2008; Price, Bradley, & Smith, 2012).

4.4 Impact of quality practitioner- child interaction on language development

4.4.1 Theory

It is generally agreed that language development involves both an innate/biological element and some level of experience of language from the environment (Hoff, 2006), although the extent each element contributes is debated.

One camp theorises that it is the innate biological/cognitive features that are essential for language development (Garton, 1992; Harley, 2008). This camp includes theorists such as Chomsky who suggests that an innate knowledge of universal grammar which can organise input is what enables language

development, or Piaget who suggests cognitive development necessarily precedes each stage of language development (Harley, 2008). Alternatively interactionists such as Bruner (1975) and Bronfenbrenner developed theories based on Vygotsky's social-cultural theory (Harley, 2008). They suggest although the biological/cognitive features play a role that they are not necessarily sufficient for language development. Bruner (1975) suggests that a child is not born with an innate universal grammar but instead is born with the innate ability to develop such as schema when provided with language input. Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) bio-ecological model also suggest that it is the interaction between the child and the environment that is the primary mechanism for development.

Vygotsky's social interaction theory and Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model consequently highlights the importance of a child's interaction with other cultural members (adults/peers) i.e. dyadic systems (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). The bio-ecological model suggests that proximal processes defined by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) "particular forms of interaction between organism and environment…. that operate over time..."pg . 795) are suggested as the primary mechanism for development. The effectiveness of these proximal processes are suggested to be dependent upon the variables of the environment: person characteristics, context and time which enable these interactions (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Research, in relation to the development of the pre-school environment, supports this theory and has identified that the quality of a child's interaction with practitioners may influence children's language development (Burchinel et al, 2000; Sylva et al, 2003; Mashburn et al, 2008) and is therefore

supportive of the need to ensure early years provision provides a high quality language learning environment.

4.4.2 Practitioner-child interaction

Research has found that the type and quality of practitioner-child interaction can have a positive association with pre-school children's language skills (Wasik and Bond, 2001; Huttenlocher et al, 2002; Connor, Morrison and Slominski, 2006; Mashburn et al, 2008; Burchinal et al, 2008; Burchinal et al, 2010; Dickenson and Porsche, 2011; Justice et al, 2013). Research appears to indicate practitioner interaction skills including providing exposure to a high level of quality language stimulation and being a responsive/sensitive practitioner in interacting and supporting the development of language both appear to be important factors in providing high quality interaction with pre-school children (NICHD ECCRN, 2000; Huttenlocher et al, 2002; Burchinel et al, 2008; Howes et al, 2008; Dickinson and Porsche, 2011; Hamre et al, 2014).

Research has found that environments that provide language stimulation (e.g. high exposure to language models, positive feedback for child's communication) are associated with higher language skills (NICHD ECCRN, 2000; Huttenlocher et al, 2002; Burchinel et al, 2008; Howes et al, 2008; Dickinson and Porsche, 2011). Dickinson and Porsche (2011) found associations between teachers' use of sophisticated vocabulary at pre-school and children's comprehension and decoding skills around six years later. Studies have found that interaction environments where there was a combination of high levels of positive language stimulation e.g.

practitioner/caregiver engages in and encourages communication, was associated with more proficient language skills in pre-schoolers (NICHD ECCRN, 2000; Huttenlocher et al, 2002; Howes et al, 2008). US research has particularly found that when teacher's provide, or are supported to provide, higher quality instructional interaction (concept development; language modelling, quality of feedback) a positive association has been found with higher level language skills in pre-schoolers (Huttenlocher et al, 2002; Mashburn et al, 2008; Pianta et al, 2008; Burchinal et al, 2008; Burchinal et al, 2010). However Hamre et al (2014) have criticised the application of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) model (LaParo, Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2002) used in these studies to identify how instructional interaction supports development and provide additional research to suggest a broader underpinning interaction factor that is important for facilitating children's language: practitioner responsivity.

Responsivity defined as "prompt, contingent, and appropriate reactions to … children" (Bornstein et al., 2008, p. 867) which according to Hamre et al (2014) includes features such as contingent responding or active engagement, is thought to be a key element in supportive interaction and is considered to be important in supporting language development (NICHD ECCRN, 2002; Burchinel et al, 2008; Burchinal et al, 2010; Hamre et al, 2014). Hamre et al (2014) found that children's exposure to responsive teaching predicted language skills in pre-schoolers; those children in classrooms with more responsive teachers made greater gains in their language skills. Burchinel et al (2008) also found that teacher sensitivity contributed

to pre-schoolers language development but also suggest it needs to be combined with high quality instructional interaction.

The research indicates a clear association between high quality practitioner- child interaction and associated increasing language skills in pre-schoolers. It has been identified as an essential environmental factor associated with increasing pre-school children's language skills (Dockrell et al, 2012b) and is a key consideration when thinking about changing the environment to support language development.

4.5 Supporting the development of early years settings – audit tools

One identified approach suggested in the literature to support Early Years classroom practice is through the use of reviewing in-class practice (Kendeou et al, 2009). A potential way to do this is to use an audit tool to allow practitioners to review and develop their practice in the early years setting.

The use of audit tools is something Local Authorities (LAs) have generally been supportive of and a range of LAs have developed their own audit tools to support schools with developing 'communication friendly' classrooms and handbooks to support developing practice (Sheffield City council, ND, Worcestershire Speech, language and communication pathway, 2011, Warwickshire city council, 2011; Plymouth City Council, 2011).

Government national initiatives have also resulted in a number of audit tools that could be used by early years practitioners (DfE, 2008; Dockrell et al, 2012a). As part

of the government's national strategy for early years the Every Child A Talker (ECAT) audit tool (DCSF, 2008) was developed. It is linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and promotes the development of practitioners' expertise and knowledge in supporting children's speaking and listening skills. The ECAT audit tool was developed as an element of a wider training process where the audit tool supports practitioners to apply their new knowledge to review their practice in their own early years settings (DCSF, 2008). The tool explored in this study is the Communication Supporting Classroom (CsC) observation tool (Dockrell et al, 2012a).

4.6 Method – Exploring the use of the Communication supporting Classroom observation tool

This section explains how the CsC observation tool was introduced and used in one nursery setting.

4.6.1 Nursery setting

The school nursery serves a large housing estate in the LA. The number of children attending the school accessing free school meals is above average and the schools latest Ofsted report (Ofsted, 2009) supports the schools view that that "a large majority of children enter the nursery with standards which are low compared with those expected nationally. The language and communication skills of many children are underdeveloped." (Ofsted, 2009, pg. 4). The school recently requested support from the LA SEN services due to identifying an increasing number of children

entering the school nursery with speech, language and communication needs over the previous years.

4.6.2 Nursery demographics

The nursery setting provides provision for two groups of children, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The demographics of the current nursery children are presented below in the table below.

Nursery Demographics	
Number of staff present	6
Average age of children	3 years 5 months
Percentage of children EAL	6%
Percentage of children with SLCN/ Low ability in language and communication skills	29% (identified by school assessment upon entry using the Sandwell WellComm toolkit)
Percentage of boys	63%
Percentage of children on free school meals	39%

Table 3.1: overview of nursery demographics – all figures are based on current nursery data (December 2014)

The demographics suggest the nursery is continuing to experience high levels of children with SLCN within the current nursery cohort and suggests the introduction of the tool remains appropriate.

4.6.3 The tool: Communication supporting Classroom observation tool

The CsC observation tool (Dockrell et al, 2012a) was created to provide a framework with which to review and develop the universal 'communication

friendliness' of school classrooms. The tool was developed by Dockrell et al (2012a) and was developed as part of the Better Communication Research Program (BCRP, 2012) which was the government's response to the Bercow Report (DCSF, 2008) and aimed to review policy and practice regarding supporting children with SLCN. The tool supports schools to review their practice in terms of promoting interactions which promote early oral language skills.

The tool takes a social-interactionist view of language development and is designed to focus upon and monitor key classroom features that support language development through interaction (Dockrell et al, 2012b). It was developed based upon a review of the literature identifying key features that are evidenced to support early oral language development (Dockrell et al, 2012b). The research reviewed included 62 papers comprised of research studies and other relevant documents including government documents/SLCN documents (Dockrell et al, 2012b). The quality of the evidence was rated depending on its sample size and research design, where randomised control studies were rated higher than single case studies without matched comparisons (Dockrell et al, 2012b).

Three key areas of practice identified to support language development

The developers' review of the literature identified three main key areas of early years practice to be important for supporting early language development. These areas of practice are:

Area of practice	Description
Language Learning Environment	The physical environment and learning context; this included both structural features of the classroom and strategies to manage the learning environment.
Language Learning Opportunities	This refers to the structured opportunities to support children's language development; this includes the opportunities for facilitated and supported conversations between adults and children or children and their peers.
Language Learning Interactions	The ways in which adults in the setting talk with children; this includes strategies such as using signs, pictures, expanding on speech, bending down to the child's eye line etc. (Taken from the CsC observation tool; Dockrell et al, 2012a)

Table 3.2: Description of areas of practice of the observation tool

Description of the tool

The tool provides an observational framework with which to profile an early years environment. It provides three separate tables of features of communication supporting classrooms split across the three areas of practice e.g. the first table includes features that would be present in language learning environment (Dockrell et al, 2012). Practitioners use the tables to record observations of good practice they see during a review of their early years practice.

The guidance for the tool is clear and specific and advises specific steps to support practitioners to complete the tool. Exemplars of potential activities that might be observed that would meet the criteria for each identified feature of the tool are provided. The tool recommends that practitioners undertake a range of one hour observations in order to profile the classroom environment.

Assessing the quality

The tool was initially evaluated by the tool developers to assess inter-rater reliability and feasibility, where an initial pilot study of the tool suggested that it has high inter-rater reliability between practitioners (Dockrell et al, 2012b). The feasibility study began to reveal a number of common patterns in the findings from the tool across mainstream settings; the study revealed that generally the classrooms scored statistically significantly higher on the language learning environment dimension than on the other two dimensions. The findings also highlight that reception classrooms were more likely to put an emphasis on positively modifying the language environment to support oral language development than year two classrooms.

The feasibility study also identified potential uses of the tool: to evaluate intervention at the classroom level, consider the opportunities afforded to children with less well developed language or to examine the impact of wider continued professional development. The tool enables staff to review not only the quality of practitioner-child interactions but also additional physical environmental factors and the existence of supportive opportunities that facilitate high quality interactions.

In comparison to other LA developed audit tools, the CsC observation tool provides a more generic review tool that could be used across LA settings but it does not link to the EYFS and in itself is not combined with advice for practitioners about how to develop their practice as others tools do (DCSF, 2008).

Forty-four of the studies used to develop the tool were based on pre-school children, yet the tool is promoted for use for pre-school, year one and year two school age children, despite the limited data for the older age ranges. One of the key limitations with this tool is that it has not yet been evaluated for its use in the Early Years settings, although it suggests that the tool could be used in this way (Dockrell et al, 2012) and only limited evaluation has been carried out for the older age ranges as well (Dockrell et al, 2012).

4.7 Introducing the tool in one nursery setting

The first stage of the process involved supporting school staff to understand and explore the CsC observation tool (Dockrell et al, 2012a). As advised by other practitioners' reflections who have used the tool previously (Dockrell et al, 2012b), time (around 30minutes) was spent with the practitioners explaining and discussing the tool to enable them to feel familiar with the tool and confident in using it.

In this school the practitioners carrying out the observation tool included the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Head of Early Years, Deputy Head of Early Years and the Nursery Class Teacher. The school decided not to involve the Learning Support Practitioners in the audit due to time constraints. As

recommended each member of staff carried out one hour observations across a range of different times in the nursery setting in order to gain a general overview of the practice in the nursery setting.

Multiple practitioners carried out the observations in order to provide multiple observations of the nursery environment; using multiple practitioners to gather general observations of the nursery environment is made plausible by the high inter-rater reliability of the tool.

4.8 Findings and Feedback

This section reports the findings from the observation tool.

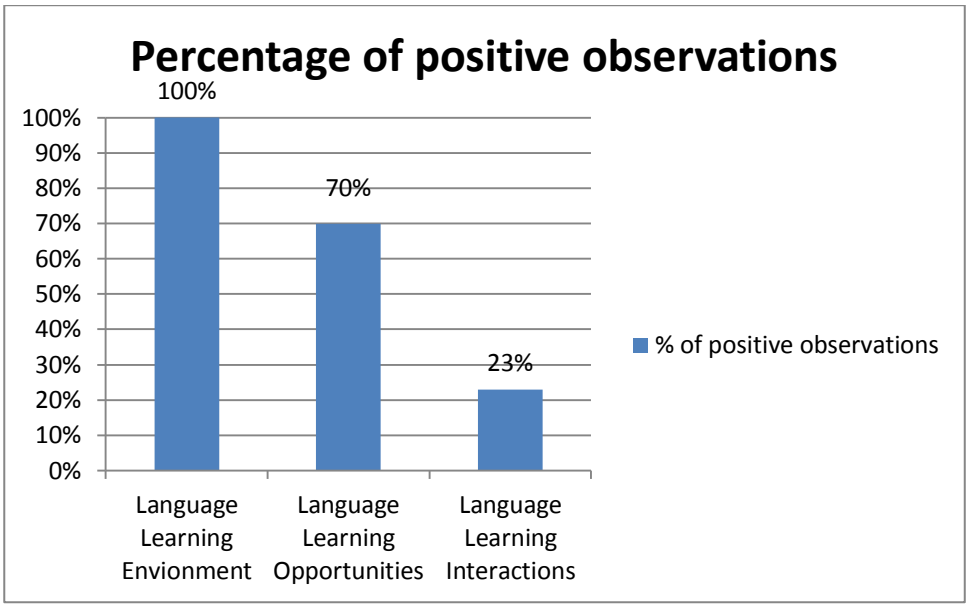
4.8.1 Request: Review of general classroom practice

Defining terms; terms used in this section are described below to aid understanding of this section

- Area of practice: this refers to the section of the tool being analysed e.g. language learning environment, language learning opportunities or language learning interaction.
- Features: this refers to the individual features identified under each area of practice in the tool e.g. for language learning interaction features include using the child's name etc. Each area of practice includes a varying number of features.
- Positive observations: this refers to observations where the feature was observed.

The data was collated and analysed from all the practitioners' completed observation tools by the trainee Educational Psychologist. The practitioners had requested a general review of practice in the nursery setting so all observation scores for each area of practice (e.g. language learning environment, language learning opportunities) were collated to identify which features of each area of practice were observed most/ least often across the observations.

4.8.2 Overview of all areas of practice



Graph 1: the graph shows the total percentage of positive observations for each area of practice across all practitioners' observations.

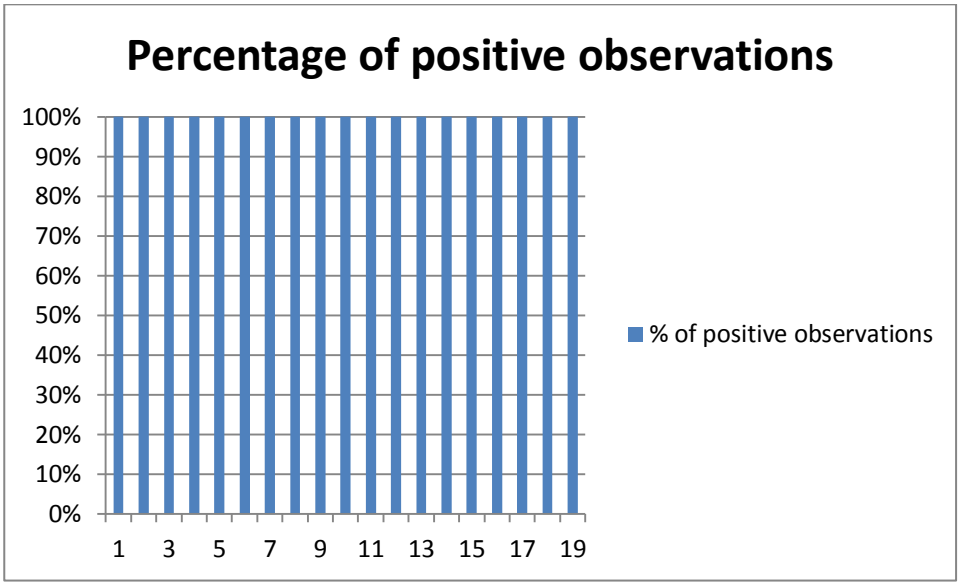
<u>Overview</u>

The chart shows the total percentage of positive observations by all observers across each area of practice. The chart demonstrates that the school nursery provides a communication friendly physical environment as all features of the

language learning environment section were observed by all practitioners. The presence of features in the classroom from the language learning opportunities section was more inconsistent with a lower percentage of positive observations being recorded. The language learning interactions section produced the lowest number of positive observations of features. Each section will be explored in more detail below.

4.8.3 Language Learning Environment

This section reviewed the physical environment and learning context e.g. quiet environment, labelled objects, book corner. It contains 19 features and the practitioner is asked to record whether the feature is 'observed' or 'not seen'. The results are represented in the chart below.

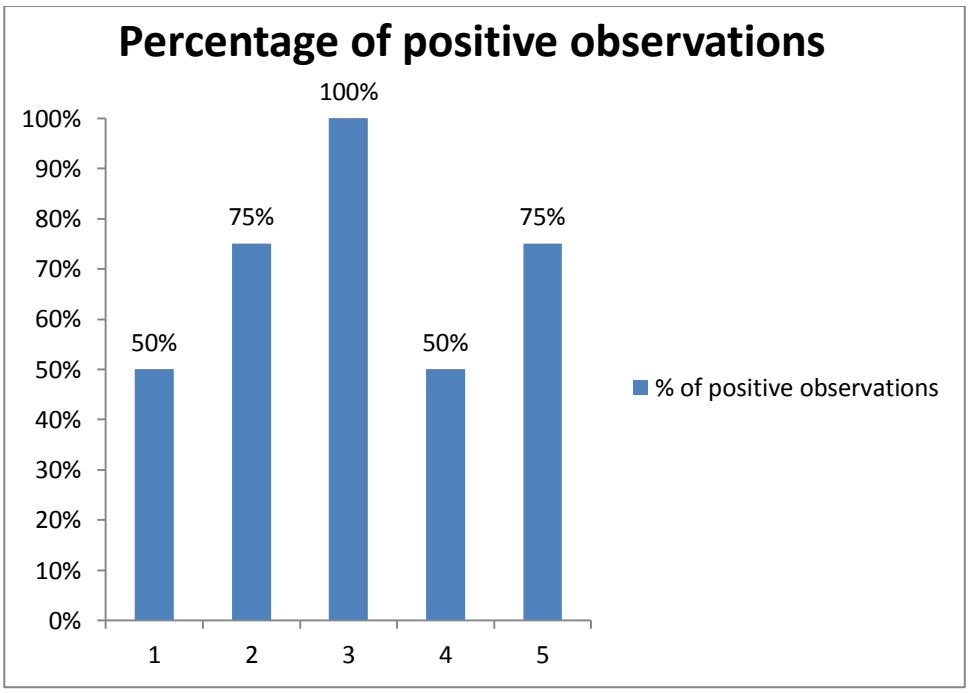


Graph 2: Percentage of positive observations across all observations of items in the language learning environment area of practive

The results suggest all features (see appendix A for list of features) identified in this area of practice were observed in the nursery environment by every observer. For some features this would be expected e.g. book specific areas available, good light etc. as the observations are being carried out in the same classroom. For other items such as noise levels during transition, organisation of space, there is the potential for more variation.

4.8.4 Language Learning Opportunities

There were five features in this section (named below) and practitioners were required to record if a feature was observed or not seen. The overall percentage of positive observations across all practitioners' observations is shown in the chart below.



Graph 3: percentage of positive observations of each element across all observations in the language learning opportunities area of practice

Features in this area:

1) Small group work facilitated by an adult takes place

2) Children have opportunities to engage in interactive book reading facilitated by an adult

3) Children have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with teachers and other adults

4) Children have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with peers

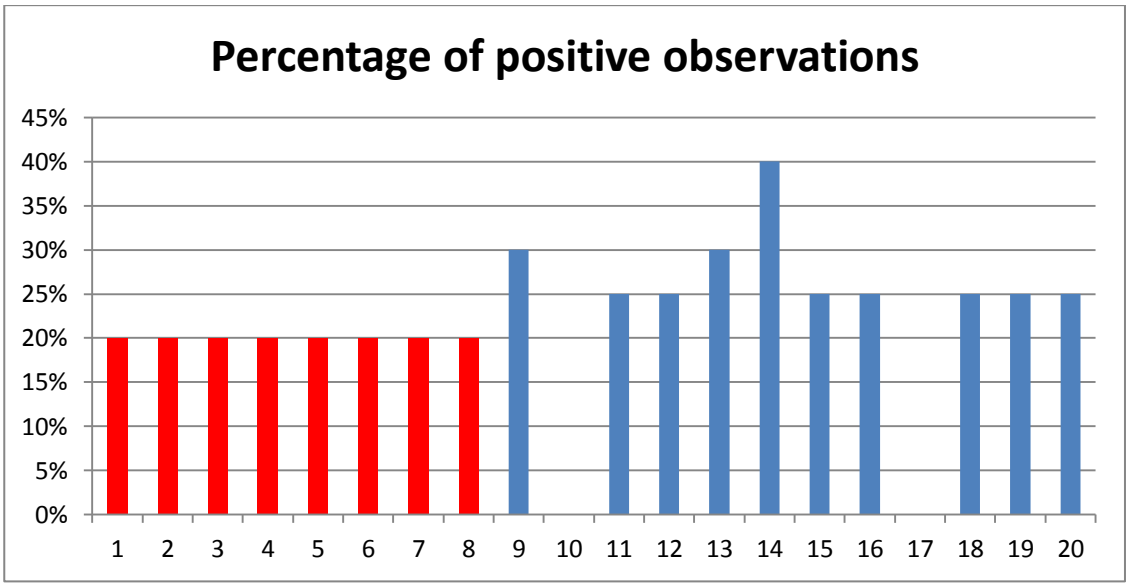
5) Attempts are made to actively include all children in small activities

*Taken from the CsC observation tool (Dockrell et al, 2012b)

In this section practitioners had to record whether the features were observed or not seen during the observation. The results suggest there is some variability in the extent to which each feature is observed in the nursery setting. While the nursery appeared to regularly provide features such as “Children have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with teachers and other adults”, unfortunately opportunities for “small group work facilitated by an adult takes place” or “Children have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with peers” (Dockrell et al, 2012a pg. 5) appeared to occur less often across the observations i.e. not all observers observed the presence of these features.

4.8.5 Language Learning Interaction

This section reviewed the ways in which adults in the setting interact with children e.g. using the child's name, getting down to the child's level. The section was presented differently; where each feature had the potential to be recorded by each practitioner as being observed on up to five separate occasions throughout the one hour observations, as it is expected that multiple separate observations of these features would be present in a communication friendly classroom (Dockrell et al, 2012a).



Graph 4: Percentage of positive observations across all practitioners' observations of elements in the language learning interaction area of practice– Red bars highlighting features where the feature was observed only once by each observer.

1	Adults use children's name, draw attention of children
2	Adults get down to the child's level when interacting with them
3	Natural gestures and some key word signing are used in interactions with children
4	Adults use symbols, pictures and props (real objects) to reinforce language
5	Pacing: Adult uses a slow pace during conversation; give children plenty of time to respond and take turns in interacting with them
6	Pausing: Adult pauses expectantly and frequently during interactions with children to encourage their turn-taking and active participation
7	Confirming: Adult responds to the majority of child utterances by confirming understanding of the child's intentions. Adult does not ignore child's communication bids
8	Imitating: Adult imitates and repeats what child says more less exactly
9	Commenting: adult comments on what is happening or what children are doing at that time
10	Extending: Adult repeats what child says and adds a small amount of syntactic or semantic information
11	Labelling: Adult provides the labels for familiar and unfamiliar actions, objects or abstractions (e.g. feelings)
12	Adult encourages children to use new words in their own talking
13	Open questioning: adult asks open-ended questions that extend children' thinking (what, where, when, how and why questions)
14	Scripting: Adult provides a routine to the child for representing an activity and engages the child in known routines
15	Adult provides children with choices (for example "would you like to read a story or play on the computer?")
16	Adult uses contrasts that highlight difference in lexical items and in syntactic structures
17	Adult models language that the children are not producing yet
18	Turn-taking is encouraged
19	Children's listening skills praised
20	Children's non-verbal communication is praised

Table 3.3: Items in the learning language interaction section of the observation tool

The chart shows that most features in this section were observed only a small percentage of times across all the observations. Further analysis revealed many features were observed only once across each observer's one hour observation (see red bars) with two features (10. Extending: Adult repeats what child says and

adds a small amount of syntactic or semantic information and 17. Adult models language that the children are not producing yet) not being observed at all (see appendix B) not being observed at all. This suggests that although most features were being observed across all observations the number of occurrences of each feature was infrequent. Please see appendix A for the list of features assessed.

4.8.6 Summary of analysis

In line with the pilot study findings (Dockrell et al, 2012b), the observations in the nursery setting revealed that it provided a highly communication friendly physical language learning environment. Similarly to the pilot findings (Dockrell et al, 2012b), language learning interactions were observed less often and consequently were identified as the main area for development in this nursery setting. The results for the language learning opportunities suggest that there is some variability in the extent to which each feature is observed in the nursery setting.

4.9 Discussion

In this study the CsC observation tool (Dockrell et al, 2012a) was used to review one nursery settings practice with regards to supporting children's early oral language development. Similar to previous pilot studies (Dockrell et al, 2012b) the tool revealed one area of strength in this setting, as all features relating to the physical language learning environment were clearly evident in practitioners' observations. However the tool also highlighted a significant area of weakness in the language learning interactions which is deemed in the literature to be significant in promoting early oral language skills. The results also highlighted variability in the number of language learning opportunities observed.

Much research has suggested that providing high quality language learning interactions involving a language stimulating environment and being a sensitive/responsive practitioner are significant factors in developing children's oral language skills (Hamre and Pianta, 2007; Mashburn et al, 2008; Howes et al, 2008). The results highlighted a number of features related to creating a language stimulating environment: where the practitioner's provide exposure to spoken language, model communication and also creates an environment that encourages children's communication (e.g. 10. Extending: Adult repeats what child says and adds a small amount of syntactic or semantic information, 11. Labelling: Adult provides the labels for familiar and unfamiliar actions, objects, or abstractions).

The tool also arguably includes some elements that may demonstrate the responsiveness/sensitivity of the practitioners (e.g. 17. Adult models language that

the children are not producing yet), however the tool primarily appears to focus on teacher talk (what the teacher is saying) more so than teacher's behaviour. This is arguably a significant limitation of this tool due to the evidence in the literature of the importance of this behaviour (responsivity of practitioner) in enabling supportive interaction.

Despite this the results do begin to suggest, particularly in the area of providing a language stimulating environment, that the setting is not providing the language learning interactions the children's language development would benefit from, and one potential contributing factor causing this may be the settings reduced language learning opportunities typically used to enable these interactions.

Although the research highlights the value in developing practitioners' knowledge in order to improve practice in the early years setting generally, (Wasik and Bond, 2001; Pianta et al, 2008) in addition to this the need for wider context factors facilitating language learning interactions also needs to be considered (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006).

The bio-ecological model of development (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) suggests that factors such as features of the program and teachers' knowledge (features of the exosystem) can indirectly impact upon children's development. It is suggested that characteristics are ecological conditions which mediate the effect of classroom interactions. Consequently factors such as classroom structure, class size, school staff skills/practice have the potential to create an environment where

quality social and instructional interactions can have a greater impact on children's development. In this case, through the language learning opportunities section some of these characteristics were considered and although many features (e.g. children have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with teachers and other adults, small group work facilitated by an adult) were observed there was also some variability in how often each feature was observed and without the presence of these opportunities language learning interactions are not facilitated.

4.10 Summary

Overall it was felt that the CsC observation tool contributed to the development of practice in the nursery setting by facilitating a review of current practice and identifying features of practice to be developed upon. On reflection the observation tool provides a framework that can be used to support the monitoring and profiling of early years practice in terms of supporting oral language development in a nursery setting. A limitation of the tool was recognised in that the language learning interaction section focused primarily on what practitioners say (teacher talk) but was more limited with regards to practitioner's behaviour which the literature suggests is equally important in promoting supportive language interaction. However the tool still provided the practitioners with evidence of an environmental feature that required further development and enabled school to request focus training/support to meet this need.

The tool makes a valid contribution to the government agenda to develop mainstream practice to support early language development but there is limited

academic literature continuing to exploring its use in the mainstream education system. It provides a useful framework to use to identify provisions training needs or to evaluate the impact of training provision. The tool begins to allow school staff to independently review their classroom practice and monitors how effectively their practice is in supporting oral language development. However the lack of significant reference to practitioner's behaviour in the language learning interaction section is potentially a major limitation which requires further exploration.

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4.12 Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of school observation tool – review of general practice

(features taken from Dockrell et al, 2012)

Language learning environment

Feature	Observed/not observed
The classroom is organised to emphasise open space	All observed
Learning areas are clearly defined throughout the classroom	All observed
Learning areas are clearly labelled with pictures/words throughout the classroom	All observed
Space for privacy/quiet areas where children can retreat to have 'down time' or engage in smaller group activities. These areas are less visually distracting	All observed
Children's own work is displayed and labelled appropriately	All observed
Some classroom displays include items that invite comments from children	All observed
Book specific areas are available	All observed
Literacy specific areas are available	All observed
Background noise levels are managed consistently throughout the observation, and children and adults are able to hear one another with ease	All observed
Transition times are managed effectively, so that noise levels are not excessive and children know what to expect next	All observed
There is good light	All observed
The majority of learning resources and materials are labelled with pictures/words	All observed
Resources that are available for free play are easily reached by the children or easily within their line of vision	All observed
An appropriate range of books are available in the book area (e.g. traditional stories, bilingual/dual language books and a variety of genres and books related to children's own experiences)	All observed
Non-fiction books, books on specific topics or interests of the other children are also available in other language learning areas	All observed
Outdoor play (if available) includes imaginative	All observed

role play	
Good quality toys, small world objects and real/natural resources are available	Used
Musical instruments and noise makers are available	Present
Role play area is available	Used

Language Learning opportunities

Feature	Number of times observed (total)
Small group work facilitated by an adult takes place	2
Children have opportunities to engage in interactive book reading facilitated by an adult	3
Children have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with teachers and other adults	All observed (4)
Children have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with peers	2
Attempts are made to actively include all children in small activities	3

Language Learning interactions

Feature	Number of time observed (total)	
Adults use children's name, draw attention of children	4	Observed by all
Adults get down to the child's level when interacting with them	4	Observed by all
Natural gestures and some key word signing are used in interactions with children	4	Observed by all
Adults use symbols, pictures and props (real objects) to reinforce language	4	Observed by all
Pacing: Adult uses a slow pace during conversation; give children plenty of time to respond and take turns in interacting with them	4	Observed by all
Pausing: Adult pauses expectantly and frequently during interactions with	4	Observed by all

children to encourage their turn-taking and active participation		
Confirming: Adult responds to the majority of child utterances by confirming understanding of the child's intentions. Adult does not ignore child's communication bids	4	Observed by all
Imitating: Adult imitates and repeats what child says more less exactly	4	Observed by all
Commenting: adult comments on what is happening or what children are doing at that time	6	Observed by all
Extending: Adult repeats what child says and adds a small amount of syntactic or semantic information	0	
Labelling: Adult provides the labels for familiar and unfamiliar actions, objects or abstractions (e.g. feelings)	5	Emotion cards displayed Observed by all Hamre and Pianta, 2007;
Adult encourages children to use new words in their own talking	5	Well-comm screening observed Observed by all
Open questioning: adult asks open-ended questions that extend children' thinking (what, where, when, how and why questions)	6	Observed by all
Scripting: Adult provides a routine to the child for representing an activity and engages the child in known routines	8	Observed by all
Adult provides children with choices (for example "would you like to read a story or play on the computer?")	5	Observed by all
Adult uses contrasts that highlight difference in lexical items and in syntactic structures	5	Observed by all
Adult models language that the children are not producing yet	0	
Turn-taking is encouraged	5	Observed by all
Children's listening skills praised	5	Observed by all
Children's non-verbal communication is praised	5	Observed by all

Appendix B: Increasing Focus on supporting language development in the Early

Years: Context

Every Child Matters (2003) Gascoigne, 2006 Speech and Language position paper	Increasing recognition in the need for integrated working for children experiencing Speech, Language and Communication Needs.
Bercow Review 2008	Review highlights the need for Early Identification and intervention for communication needs
Better Communication Action Plan (DCSF/DoH, 2008)	Joint work between the DCSF and DoH in response to the Bercow Review creating a focus on supporting those children with Speech, Language and Communication needs.
DfE (2011) Investigating the role of language in children's early educational outcomes	Research document highlighting the importance of children's early experience on children's language and communication skills.
Every Child a Talker Guidance published (DCSF, 2008)- funded ended 2011	Guidance published to support practitioners/parents to provide communication supporting environments for children in the Early Years
Lindsay et al (2012)	Research report: Recommendations from the Better Communication Research program providing evidenced based recommendations about how to prevent/support children with SLCN.
Publication of Better Communication Research program findings including What works document (2012), thematic reports	Publication of What Works document (Law et al, 2012; What works: interventions for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs) providing the summary of the best evidence of what works to support children with SLCN Reports Lindsay, G., Dockrell, J., Law, J., & Roulstone, S. (2012). Better communication research programme: Improving provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs. London: DfE. Dockrell, J., Ricketts, J. & Lindsay, G. (2012). *Understanding speech, language and communication needs: Profiles of need and provision.* London: DfE. Lindsay, G. & Dockrell, J. (2012). The relationship between speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties

	(BESD). London: DfE. Roulstone, S. & Lindsay, G. (2012). *The perspectives of children and young people who have speech, language and communication needs, and their parents.* London: DfE. Plus technical reports
New EYFS statutory framework (2012)	Communication and Language made a prime area of the EYFS with literacy becoming a separate specific area
ICAN 2012	Government funded initiative to improve qualifications in Early Years practitioners e.g Early Language Development program or resources provided by organisation such as the Communication Trust providing resources to develop practitioners knowledge.
DfE 2013	Government increases access to funded places for two year olds since September 2014 for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, children with SEN or Looked After Children.
NCTL 2014	Funding made available for graduate level training for Early Years Initial Teacher training. Student loans available for undergraduate training.
DfE 2015	Introduction of Early Years pupil premium funding to support the most disadvantaged 3-4year olds accessing government funded education provision where families are accessing free school meal benefits

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT FOUR:

USING ACTION RESEARCH TO SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF PERSON CENTRED APPROACHES INTO A SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH PROFOUND AND MULTIPLE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES – A REFLECTION

5.1 Abstract

The new Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) encourages schools to use person centred approaches to support increased child and parental engagement in statutory processes. A trainee educational psychologist explores the use of a collaborative action research (CAR) approach using the RADIO model (Knight and Timmins, 1995) to facilitate one special school's introduction of person centred reviews. The findings suggest, in supportive conditions, that the CAR approach provides a positive way to empower school practitioners to develop and implement the new style of reviews into their existing processes. Both the school senior leadership team empowering school practitioners to engage in research and the school's general person centred ethos were identified as supportive features in implementing the person centred reviews. The research supports the view that educational psychologists may have a positive role to play in supporting the introduction of the new person centred approaches into the existing school systems.

5.2 Introduction

The new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice has led to an increased focus on the use of Person Centred Approaches (PCAs) in the education arena. This PPR begins to explore what are PCAs, what is the psychology underpinning them and provides one account of how Educational Psychologists can potentially begin to support the introduction and development of PCAs in schools. The PPR reflects upon one Trainee Educational Psychologists experiences working as an external consultant in an action research process, to support one special school to introduce and develop Person Centred Reviews (PCRs) into their school practice.

5.3 Introduction to person centred approaches

Policies in Health, Social Care and Education in the UK have now made reference to Person Centred Approaches (PCAs) as a means of facilitating more control and choice for people with disabilities (DoH, 2001, SEND CoP, 2015, Robertson et al, 2007). Following the introduction of the new Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015; SEND CoP), schools are being encouraged to use PCAs including person centred reviews (PCRs) to contribute towards ensuring that children/ young people who experience disabilities and their family are involved in the planning and decision making process of creating new Education and Health Care Plans.

5.3.1 Terminology

A number of terms are used in the literature: e.g. person centred care and person centred practice, to describe approaches that are suggested to be underpinned by the person centred (PC) philosophy described below. The term person centred approaches (PCA) will be used here, both because it is the term used in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (SEND CoP, 2015) and to reflect the author's view that the PCAs are more than just the application of frameworks and tools.

5.3.2 Brief history and philosophy of PCA

A shift in society's views in the 1970s away from a medical model view of disability to a social view of disability prompted the development of PCAs (Dowling et al, 2006; O'Brien and O'Brien, 2000). Historically those experiencing disability were often treated as a homogenous group and placed in institutions rather than supported or empowered (O' Brien and O'Brien, 2000). The social model of disability offered an alternative view of those experiencing disability where the cause for social exclusion is not viewed as due to the disability itself but the way in which society responds to it (Oliver, 2009). This shift in perspective created a change in the way those experiencing a disability were seen and treated: as individuals first (O'Brien and O'Brien, 2000; Kanter, 2006; Oliver, 2009). A shift in thinking away from assuming that the needs of those with a disability can be universally defined and therefore can be met using universal approaches, is suggested to be key in person centred thinking (Dowling et al, 2006).

This philosophy is underpinned by social role valorisation theory (Wolfensberger, 1998 cited in Ramsey, 2007; Sherwin, 2009) which suggests that people largely define themselves and others based on what roles they occupy (Flynn and Lemay, 1999; Osburn, 2006). The PCA's aim is to shift people's thinking about how those with disabilities are seen and what the role of service providers are to service users. In PCA the role of services is seen to provide individuals who experience a disability with the personalised support needed for them to have equal access in their community.

Brost and Johnson (1982 cited in O'Brien and O'Brien, 2000) provide a clear summary of the assumptions made underpinning PCAs that highlight this philosophy:

- "that all people, those with and without disability, all share the same basic human needs,
- a description of disability is relevant only to the extent that the disabling condition complicates the fulfilment of these needs,
- because these disabilities can make it more challenging to get these needs met, some form of help is needed to support them to achieve this and
- the aim of services and natural supports around the person is to create conditions and support to enable the person to live in their local community" (O'Brien and O'Brien, 2000, pg.17).

5.3.3 Legislation

The social model of disability is a view that has been arguably enshrined in legislation; in particular in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).The convention promotes the human rights of people with disabilities and includes legislation in regards to equal rights, inclusion, dignity and highlights it is not about treating people in the same way but supporting all to enable an equal level of access (UNC on the Right of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). The personalisation agenda follows on from this, viewing those with disability as people first and promoting these same human rights (DoH, 2001).

This agenda is now seen throughout both health and social care policies as well as more recently, following critical reviews of the current education statements (Audit Commission, 2002; Ofsted, 2010 in Corrigan, 2014) in education (SEND CoP, 2015; Cutler, Waine and Brehoney, 2007). Personalisation has been defined broadly by central government as “the way in which services are tailored to the needs and preferences of citizens. The overall vision is that the state should empower citizens to shape their own lives and the services they receive” (HM Government Policy Review, 2007: p.7). It has been identified as the “cornerstone of the modernisation of public services” (Department of Health, 2008: p. 4) and as Dickinson and Glasbury (2010) highlight, it has potential to radically change the way that public services are delivered.

5.3.4 PCAs: Frameworks and tools

PCAs originated in the USA and Canada with the aim to promote social inclusion for adults who experienced disability (Corrigan, 2014). The earliest application of person centred thinking/approaches was through a community of practice with their aim of discovering how the application of normalisation could be realised to improve the quality of services for those with disabilities (O'Brien and O'Brien, 2000). As a result of the underlying PC philosophy it is suggested that true PCAs are underpinned by common themes, summarised by O'Brien and O'Brien, (2000);

- "Increasing choice…
- Using ordinary language and images rather than professional jargon
- Actively searching for a person's gifts and capacities in the context of community life
- Building relationships
- Individualising support based on high expectations for the person's development
- Honouring the voice of the person and those who know the person best in accounting for their history, evaluating their present conditions in terms of valued experience
- Defining desirable changes in their lives and
- Demanding that agencies adopt new forms of service and organisation to provide newly conceived supports" (O'brien and O'Brien, 2000, pg. 5)

Early approaches developed in the 1980-1990s included frameworks such as Person Future Planning and Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope which are

still suggested as useful tools today (see Sanderson, 2000 for further detail) and others such as Individual Design sessions and Getting to Know You, which are less frequently utilised (O'Brien and O'Brien, 2000). As O'Brien and O'Brien (2000) suggest these approaches/ styles of planning although having similar underlying aims are differentiated by their purpose leading to reformed processes/styles over time. These early frameworks are often labelled under the umbrella term Person Centred Planning approaches (Sanderson, 2000).

More recent developments in PCAs has led to the production of a range of tools and techniques underpinned by this person centred thinking (Sanderson, Goodwin and Kinsella, nd.). Person centred thinking skills are skills that support people e.g. practitioners, to work with people who have a disability to get a clearer understanding of what quality of life means for the focus person and to identify ways to improve their quality of life (Sanderson, Smull & Harvey, 2007). More recent tools have been created to support the use of person centred thinking within the education/school arena (Murray and Sanderson, 2007). These tools include activities such as identifying what's working/ not working to support a young person's aspirations, sorting what is important to a focus person and important for a focus person: to support the identification of balance between being happy and content and healthy and safe and the relationship circle activity: to help identify who is important to a young person and how they can support them to work towards being an active part of the community (see Helen Sanderson Associates website – Person Centred Thinking tools).

5.3.5 Psychology

The PCAs have been linked to a number of psychological paradigms and theories: positive psychology, resiliency theory, person centred theory, community psychology and humanistic psychology, that seem to underpin the way in which the frameworks and tools promote its philosophy in practice (Warner, 2012).

Dowling et al (2006) highlights that PCAs focus upon a person's strengths and appears to take a strengths based approach to supporting the focus person. A strength based approach "aims to enhance the positive developmental pathways of pupils through augmenting their strengths, as opposed to focusing solely on reducing or eliminating the stated issue of concern" (Gable and Haidt, 2005 pg. 46). Strength based approaches stems from a combination of positive psychology, resiliency theory and community psychology (Wilding and Griffey, 2015; Zimmerman, 2013; Jimerson et al., 2004; Gable and Haidt, 2005; Levine and Perkins, 2005). Part of the PCA is identifying with the young person and their family the young person's personal strengths and the wider strengths of the system/community (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) supporting the young person.

The strength based approach evident in PCA supports the move away from a medical model of disability and supports those working with the focus young person to identify a more balanced view of their assets that promote optimal functioning rather than just deficits that they experience. One of the goals of the strength based approach that aligns clearly with PCAs is to rebalance the power between the focus

child/young person and practitioners that are working to support them (Rashid & Ostermann, 2009).

Other psychological theories that support PCA include person centred theory (Rogers, 1959 cited in Patterson and Joseph, 2007) which is based on the central idea that humans have "an inherent tendency towards growth, development, and optimal functioning" (pg. 118 in Paterson and Joseph, 2007) i.e. actualising tendency. Rogers (1959) suggests that fully-functioning human beings are those where their behaviours and attitudes are in-line with internally generated value directions. It is suggested that socially-favourable environments can promote behaviours and attitudes that are in-line with these value directions. PCAs attempt to gain a shared understanding of these internal drives and aim to use the approach to support the child/young person to work towards them and create favourable environments that support them. PCAs have been linked with humanistic psychology: which has a central focus upon the subjective conscious experience of the individual (Jarvis, 2000); as PCAs focus upon supporting practitioners to discover what quality of life means for each individual person and how to create a supportive environment to enable this.

These psychological theories appear to be linked with and have possibly influenced the development of the PCA tools. Many of the PCA tools generated appear to use psychological principles and focus upon achieving outcomes such as identifying strengths and attempting to generate a shared understanding of a young person's drives/aspirations. Application of psychological theory in the creation of new PCAs

has the potential to ensure that PCAs continue to enable the principles of the PC philosophy to be realised.

5.4 Person Centred Reviews

Due to the recent change in legislation (SEND CoP, 2015) person centred reviews (PCR) have only recently become more apparent and more generally used by schools for the purposes of statutory assessment, annual reviews and transition reviews. Again the reviews aim to be underpinned by the PC philosophy and often use the person centred tools e.g. 'what's working/ not working' but vary slightly in practice depending on their purpose and across locations (Sanderson and Mathieson, 2004; Waltham Forest; Connexions Staffordshire, 2007; Wokingham Borough Council, 2014).

Sanderson and Mathiesen (2004) suggest that there are three types of PCRs: what's working/ not working reviews, important to/for reviews and the citizen review, all which have a slightly different purpose and use a range of person centred tools to facilitate person centred thinking in the review. PCRs developed for use in schools are different to the original Person Centred Planning approaches due to their change in purpose. Sanderson and Mathiesen (2004) highlight these differences in the table below.

Table 4.1: Difference between person centred planning and person centred reviews in school taken from Sanderson and Mathiesen (2004)

	Person Centred Planning	Person Centred Review in schools
What?	A way of working out what is important to and for the person, now and in the future. Developed in partnership with family and friends, and leading to change. There are different styles of person centred planning, for example Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), Making Action Plans (MAP) and Essential Lifestyle Planning. The plan belongs to the person. Information can be used by care managers and providers, if the person agrees.	A different way to do reviews. Using person centred thinking tools and the principles of person centred planning to ensure that everyone is heard, and that there are shared actions with a bias towards inclusion. Fulfils statutory requirements. Information collected at a person centred review could be developed further into a person centred plan.
Who?	Whoever the person wants to invite.	The people who 'have' to be there and other people the person wants to invite.
Where?	Where the person wants it.	Where the person wants it within the limitations required by the service.
When?	Major decision points in a person's life - whenever they want to plan.	At the Year 9 review, the Year 10 review and at annual reviews.
Why?	Create a shared understanding and make changes.	Create a shared understanding, meet service requirements and lead to change

It is clear to see from the summary in table 1 that PC principles have been applied to begin to adapt the more traditional review process used in educational settings. It appears to be the case that requirements of the review process in schools constraints the extent to which the Person Centred Planning processes can be directly applied. Flannery et al (2000) and Miner and Bates (1997) identified that

there is the potential for misapplication of the PC philosophy if PCAs are not adapted to meet the new educational/school purposes. They suggest the need for the development of new/adapted PCAs to be created based on the principles of the PC philosophy and the new purposes rather than practitioners just automatically utilising existing tools that were created for other arenas or that were developed for different purposes to meet the new needs.

5.4 Review of PCRs in education

Search strategy

– Search terms were a combination of the following terms "education" "Person centred" "children" to access articles available from the University of Birmingham. Databases searched included Google scholar, EPIP, Proquest social science and the University of Birmingham library search.

PCRs have already been introduced in health and social care services through the Valuing People Now white paper (2001) but reviews of their introduction have been mixed (Robertson et al, 2005; Robertson et al, 2007). A key factor that appears to impact upon the effectiveness of the PCRs was the quality of its implementation. Important features that are associated with success included having trained facilitators, which seem to lead to increased chances of people getting a plan. The role and identity of facilitators also seemed to impact on the number of benefits from the plan; it was more likely to be successful if the facilitators had this activity in their job role and were in a role of power e.g. managerial (Robertson et al, 2007).

The use of PCRs in education has been more limited, although is beginning to gain more coverage in recent years and this is likely to increase over the next decade. PCRs have mainly been used to support a child's transition to their next educational provision and been used to support children with a range of special educational needs including social, emotional and behavioural needs and multisensory impairments (Keyes & Owens-Johnson, 2003; Hayes, 2004; Childre and Chambers, 2005; Taylor, 2011; Corrigan, 2014). Research so far highlights a positive potential in the use of PCRs for supporting children, young people and their families to be increasingly actively engaged in statutory processes but also identifies challenges too (Hayes, 2004; Corrigan, 2014; Taylor 2011).

Overall PCAs have been viewed positively when compared to more traditional institute-driven reviews and advantages have included the empowerment of children and their family to be increasingly actively involved in the review meeting (Keyes & Owens-Johnson, 2003; Hayes, 2004; Children and Chambers, 2005; Kaehne and Beyer, 2014). Taylor (2011) identified that the approach provided a re-balancing of power and a more holistic approach to reviewing the child's whole life not just school life. Warner (2012) found reflections from parents and young people were generally positive highlighting elements such as finding the process open, constructive and reassuring. Childre and Chambers (2005) found that families who attended a PCR experienced increased satisfaction and all PCR stakeholders experienced increased collaboration.

The literature has also identified features that may impact on the effectiveness of PCRs in promoting the engagement of children and their parents. One key feature appears to be the need for increased preparation time and support to enable the young person to fully engage in the review process (Hayes, 2004; Taylor, 2007; Warner, 2012; Corrigan, 2014). Research indicates the need for a personalised, differentiated and supported approach in enabling the young person to contribute to the PCR depending on the young person's communication needs (Hayes, 2004; Taylor, 2007). Corrigan (2014) identified the benefits of a champion to support the young person to contribute meaningfully to the process.

There has also been a focus on the quality of the approach and the skills of the facilitators enabling the PCR. Research that has explored the introduction of PCRs, particularly highlight the importance of creating PCR approaches that are not only underpinned by a PC philosophy but that are also adapted to be fit for purpose (Keyes & Owens-Johnson, 2003; Childre and Chambers, 2005). Flannery et al (2000) and Miner and Bates (1997) identified the potential for misapplication of the philosophy if these approaches are not adapted for the new educational purpose. Corrigan (2014) highlights the importance of the skills of the facilitator in the success of the PCR, particularly their ability to create a shared understanding of the focus person's aspirations.

At a system level, research has identified the need for a supportive school environment that embraces not only the PCRs but also the PC philosophy (Taylor, 2011; Corrigan, 2014). Kaehne and Beyer (2014) identified the need for committed involvement from all stakeholders in supporting the achievement of the outcomes

identified in the PCR. Claes et al (2010) identified the need for wider system change from service providers and highlighted the limited progress made so far in enabling outcomes to be achieved due to the lack of person centred services available to support young people. Kaehne and Beyer (2014) suggest until PCRs are used to guide service delivery we are at risk of PCRs remaining a paper-based activity.

It is clear to see that in social care, health and education arenas, that how the PCRs are implemented is key, as features such as the wider organisational system, time to prepare for reviews, ensuring the child's voice is heard, all contribute to the quality of engagement and outcomes.

The following section reviews the use of an action research model to begin to explore how Educational Psychologists (EPs) could contribute to the development and implementation of PCRs in a school environment.

5.5 Educational Psychologists and systemic development

Traditionally the role of EPs has been closely linked with providing assessment and intervention at an individual level for those children experiencing Special Educational Needs (Fallon, Woods and Rooney, 2010; Squires and Farrell, 2007). More recent reviews of the role of EPs highlight an expansion and diversification of the activities EPs may be engaged with (Fallon, Woods and Rooney, 2010).

Of particular interest in regards to this study is the increasing occurrence of involvement of EPs in organisational level work (Gersch and Nobel, 1991; Stoker, 1992; Ashton, 2009; Evans and Cowell, 2013). The change in thinking evident here appears to be a shift from a within-child deficit model and more towards a bio-ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) which is more aligned with the social model of disability (Oliver, 2009). Research has begun to evidence the positive outcomes associated with organisational level interventions supported by EPs (Simm and Ingram, 2008; Evans and Cowell, 2013; Woods et al, 2013). EPs have been shown to be well placed and able to offer a valuable role in supporting organisational development particularly in school provisions where they are more traditionally based (Wagner, 2000; Evans and Cowell, 2013; Ashton, 2009; Simm and Ingram, 2008; Timmins et al, 2006).

5.6 Action Research and PCAs

Action research aims to enable practitioners to develop their own individual or organisational practice (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000), it is carried out by themselves or collaboratively with other external practitioners as opposed to being done to them (Herr and Anderson, 2005). Action research for school organisational development is often supported by EPs due to their research background, knowledge of organisational psychology and understanding of the education system (Simms and Ingram, 2008, Binnie et al, 2008; Ashton, 2009; Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). It is an approach that empowers teachers/school practitioners to be the drivers of change in their own schools (Horn, 2002; Pine, 2009). As Horn (2002) points out, however, opponents to this approach raise concerns regarding not only

the quality of this research but the threat this empowerment provides to the established hierarchical order of power in education reform (Carr and Kemmis, 2003; Horn, 2002; Hinchey, 2008).

Lewin is credited with developing the process of action research and his view of action research's purpose was a "cyclical process of fact finding, planning, action and evaluation" to create improvements in practice (Lewin 1948, 202–6 cited in Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). It is an approach suggested to be developed out of critical theory which interprets activities through a social constructionist view point and suggests the importance of understanding a situation in order to change it (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011) making those practitioners involved in the process key to promoting and enabling effective change.

Action research is viewed as a process that is particularly useful when a new approach such as PCRs are to be embedded into an existing system (Koshy, 2010). It was considered as a valuable approach for the introduction of PCRs as its implementation requires the development of a new review process that is both underpinned by a PC philosophy but is effective for the purpose of reviewing children's statements of SEN/Education and Health care plans in this school (Childre and Chamber, 2005). The action research approach needed to support school to introduce the new PCRs in to their existing school system.

Balchin et al (2006) highlights systemic changes within school are often passively promoted through projects or through staff training but growing evidence is

suggesting the importance of schools taking ownerships of projects (Balchin et al, 2006) and EPs acting as informed consultants (Senior, and Swailes, 2010). This was a particularly crucial factor when supporting a school to undertake PCRs in their provision as previous research has highlighted the significance of the commitment from practitioners in the success of the PCA, including allocated preparation time for facilitators, a prior person centred ethos in the school and active involvement of management (Robertson et al, 2005, Sanderson et al, 2006). Pine (2009) highlights how action research assumes that teachers are the agents of change rather than the object of reform and action research model was chosen as a way to empower staff to influence and create change despite its legislative origin (Horn, 2002).

5.7 RADIO Model

The Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) model (Knight and Timmins, 1995) is well used by EPs and TEPs (Timmins et al, 2003; Timmins et al, 2006; Ashton, 2009; Blacklidge, 2010) in supporting organisational development and was used to support the action research carried out with school practitioners to introduce PCA. The model is a collaborative action research (CAR) framework which can be used to guide and negotiate the action research process and roles between practitioners (research sponsors) and facilitators (TEP) through a research process (Timmins et al. 2003). It is an approach that focuses on both systems work and systemic thinking in its social constructionist approach to organisational development (Fox, 2009).

The RADIO model was used in this research as it provides a systematic process to guide the development of the research which is both useful to a TEP who is relatively new to organisational research processes (Timmins et al, 2003) and to provide a clear shared research approach which both school practitioners and the TEP could follow collaboratively.

Despite limited evaluation in the literature, previous reviews from TEPs who have used the approach (Ashton, 2009; Blacklidge 2010) emphasised the collaboration the approach promotes. Ashton (2009) particularly notes the importance of this collaboration in promoting practitioner engagement and accessing practitioner motivation and the resources needed in order for the process to be effective in creating change. Introducing PCA required a significant commitment and active engagement from practitioners due to the systemic changes/development required to introduce PCA. Consequently the RADIO model was used to negotiate and facilitate this high level of collaboration with practitioners from the start.

5.8 School context

The school involved in this project is an outstanding (Ofsted, 2015) primary specialist provision developed for children with complex and profound learning difficulties. The project was discussed with the school in a Service Planning meeting. The school was initially identified for the project by its EP, due to its high number of children with statements of SEN; following further discussion with the school they agreed the project would be useful for school development and a collaborative approach to the project was decided.

Table 4.2: overview of project using the RADIO model

Clarifying concerns	Following the introduction of the new draft SEN Code of Practice with its focus on introducing PCAs- a project was negotiated between the TEP and senior staff at the school exploring/supporting the introduction of PCRs in to the current statutory process. An action research process was agreed with school staff – as a high level of commitment was required by school staff; the TEP agreed to work as an informed consultant and agreed to be part of the working group led by a school project leader to support the research.
Research methods mode	Information gathering initially involved gaining parents' views about the current statutory processes – a focus group was held with sample of parents (6 parents) who had been through the previous statutory process. Strengths and weaknesses of the current approach were identified. (See appendix A). A SWOT analysis was carried out on data from parents and fed back to the working group.
Organisational change mode	A new review process (see appendix B) was developed/adapted using information/guidance from parents and person centred literature to ensure it was underpinned by the PC philosophy. The approach was adapted/developed to be appropriate for the parents and children attending this school. Whole school training and workshops were carried out to introduce and further develop the PCRs with whole school staff. Two pilot PCRs were carried out by school staff and TEP.

	Feedback about the new PCR process was gathered during two separate group discussions that followed the two pilot PCRs from two groups that included parents, the young person and professionals (including a SEN advisory teacher for children with a visual impairment, a social worker, primary and secondary school SENCos and learning support practitioners). Parents and practitioners were asked to reflect through focus group discussion on the new process and identify both areas of strength and areas for development (see appendix C for summary). The following section (5.9) summaries stakeholders' views of the new PCR process and reflects on its ability to engage parents and the young people in the process.

See appendix D for complete RADIO model process.

5.9 Findings

5.9.1 Reflections from parents/ practitioners (ie. school staff, SEN advisory staff)

Initial reflections provided by parents and professionals, following the PCRs (RADIO section 12), suggested that they viewed these PCRs more positively than the previous annual review processes. Feedback suggested parents felt more able to contribute to the meeting and more able to ask questions about what they wanted to learn about. Parents felt that the meeting was more meaningful to them and that they could contribute ideas about what they felt was best for their child and that this was listened to and discussed. They identified that information about their child was more clearly presented so they could understand what it meant and how they could support their child at home. They particularly enjoyed the fact that their child could be part of the meeting and come and share their progress.

Parents/professionals felt areas for improvement might be in making the meetings a bit shorter as they felt some information could have been shared before the meeting. They identified that they would like more professionals at the meeting so they could directly ask them questions about their child.

5.9.2 Reflections from TEP and school project lead following pilot PCRs

Initial reflections from the project lead and TEP revealed how the introduction of the PCA appeared to develop/change the process of the statutory review. The PCR increased the focus on the young person's strengths and aspirations and how

school practitioners, parents, other professionals, family and friends could support the young person to achieve their ambitions. The PCR became future orientated and focused on identifying achievable outcomes with the young person and their family that could then be used in the young person's plan. Actions for each stakeholder to support the achievement of these outcomes were agreed in the meeting.

One of the main developments/adaptations in the review process was the way in which children contributed to the review. This process was made individual for each child depending on their current communication skills. A range of tools e.g. cameras, power point, signing systems, were used to support children to communicate their views in the meeting. Time to prepare children and parents were introduced to the existing parents evening processes and PSHE classroom activities.

Overall it was felt by the project lead and TEP that the process had supported increased engagement of parents and children in the process.

Reflections on the use of TEP as an external consultant to support organisational development

In this research the RADIO model was used to facilitate organisational development through an action research process where the aim was to develop and begin to embed change in practitioner's practice in relation to the PCRs. One of the key aspects of organisational development initiatives is suggested to be the use of an

external consultant who facilitates the work of the participants from the organisation concerned (Cummings and Worley, 2014).

As Horn (2002) points out opponents to the action research approach raise concerns regarding the quality of this research and consequently in this case one role of the TEP as the external consultant was to facilitate/support the research design aspect of the process. In terms of influencing the research design the TEP was able to guide the discussion with school practitioners' about the type of data that could be used to evaluate the quality of the new person centred reviews. This meant the research design was informed by the TEP's knowledge of possible research approaches but the ultimate research processes was selected by the school practitioners (see research process in RADIO table – appendix C). By sharing knowledge about research design/methods with practitioners means school practitioners' were able to make an informed decision about their research design choice while maintaining ownership of the research process.

5.10 Discussion - Reflections on supporting the introduction of PCRs

The initial findings agree with the literature and suggest the introduction of the PCRs may have had a positive impact on increasing the engagement of children and their families in the statutory process. This section highlights the TEPs reflections on features of the CAR approach that impacted on the effectiveness of the PCRs in creating this outcome.

5.10.1 Engaging practitioners in the research process

One of the key elements of CAR is engaging school practitioners, as the process is inherently participatory and should always involve the participants from the context in the process of change (Townsend, 2013). Previous literature exploring the implementation of PCRs in education settings highlights the importance of the wider systemic environment, the development of individual approaches to enable engagement of parents and children and the need for time and resources to be allocated by schools to the PCR process. All these features require a high level of engagement from school practitioners as they may impact significantly on current processes and resources. It requires practitioner knowledge of their parents and children and current systems and processes in order to create and develop a new format that can be introduced to their existing way of working.

The early stages of the RADIO model were used to negotiate this involvement. The role of the TEP was positioned as a role of informed consultant to the process and it was agreed that school would take the lead in the research process. In this school this process was possible because the school is a research school in the local authority and consequently staff were encouraged and allocated time and resources to organise research projects that relates to the development of their practice. The RADIO model provided the format to negotiate a shared research project that was planned and negotiated collaboratively.

School practitioners brought many of their own skills and experiences into the process which was invaluable in creating a PCR that aimed to effectively engage

the children and parents that they worked with. Practitioners' knowledge of how to best support each child to communicate their views for the PCR was key in making the process effective. Practitioners' understanding and empathy with parents led to developments in the approach that aimed to support parents to feel confident and comfortable in engaging e.g. planning how to prepare parents for the meeting.

School practitioners in the researcher group genuinely seemed to recognise the value in introducing the PCAs beyond the policy requirements and were provided with time to consider how to implement these changes. As the approach fitted with their current school practice (see below) and they felt dissatisfied with the current statutory process, it was an area the working group were keen to develop. This change was more than just an enforced change for this school so it became a change that they wanted to implement.

During the process it became clear that the policy drive underpinning the change disempowered some practitioners. Some school practitioners saw the project as only driven by policy change and the practical application of the policy vision where the action research is used to maintain the more traditional hierarchical power process in educational reform (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). A concern arose that the research was seen as a disingenuous attempt to empower staff to embed politically motivated practice which had a negative effect on some practitioner's initial motivation to introduce the PCR. This was particularly found during the implementation stage when the new approach was introduced to all practitioners (stage 11), practitioners not involved in the early stages of the action research

expressed some negativity towards the process initially. Experiences of those staff that attended a PCR suggest these views changed once they had engaged in the PCR personally, many identifying positive views about the new processes for the children and families they worked with.

5.10.2 Supportive wider school context

Previous research has made reference to context factors needed to embrace the PCAs (Taylor, 2011; Corrigan, 2014). As Townsend (2013) highlights action research is always based in professional, social and cultural contexts and consequentially the action research approach is affected/influenced by this wider environment. Townsend highlights that action research is inherently reflexive and this suggests researchers concerned with change in practical settings need to be aware of the diversity of their settings and influence they have on it and it has upon them.

In considering these factors one area of interest when exploring the introduction of PCA with school practitioners was the culture “the way we do things and relate to each other around here” (Thacker, 1994, pg.11) of the wider school environment. Previous research has made reference to the importance of the system change needed to embrace the PC philosophy for PCA to be effective (Taylor, 2011; Corrigan, 2014). Fortunately, in this case, PC philosophy was present throughout the practice of the school, in that the school is already somewhat person centred in their approach (Kendrick, 2007).

As Sanderson (2002) highlights, one of the key factors that facilitates practitioners working in person centred ways is the organisation being person centred with staff. Sanderson (2002) suggests this involves sharing decision making with staff, empowering staff to follow through areas of interest and skill and working with staff to identify what they need and how to best provide it. As a research school, staff are encouraged to explore and develop practice based on knowledge and interest, staff are empowered to be involved in whole school decision making where possible, and professional development is negotiated with staff as needed. In line with this, one member of staff was identified to take the lead in rolling out the PCRs in the school, they were allocated some time in which to do this. Three other members of staff volunteered to be involved in the project. The TEP provided advice and knowledge about PCAs whereas school staff took the lead in negotiating how the processes could be adapted to fit their purpose.

The PC philosophy was also evident in the way practitioners worked with children and their families. All children, when they start at the school, develop an individual profile that begins to explain who that young person is as a person and how practitioners can best support them to achieve their goals. Each child's needs are met individually through an individual education programme in order to promote equal access to the school community environment. Parents are invited into school regularly and are involved in all decisions regarding their child and wider school development where possible. This wider school ethos was found to be supportive of the PCR process introduced, as parents already had existing relationships with school practitioners needed for the PCR and practitioners had good knowledge and

positive views of their roles as supporting children to achieve their aspirations, key views of the PC philosophy.

5.10.3 Applying philosophy and psychology

As identified earlier in the report the approach is thought to be underpinned by a number of principles and a number of psychological theories and approaches. One particular role of the TEP as the external consultant was to share the PC philosophy with practitioners and use psychology to support the development of the PCRs introduced in to the school.

Consequently a solution focused approach discussion with school practitioners was used to support a review of their current school practice and to develop it to be more in line with the PC philosophy principles. Person centred tools (discussed earlier) that are underpinned by the psychological theories and approaches and parental views were then used to develop and create the new adapted PCR process (see appendix B). The TEP was able to use their knowledge of psychology and PC philosophy to support practitioner's design of the PCRs.

5.10.4 Time constraints

One of the main constraints for this action research was the time constraint. The process needed to be implemented early into autumn term in 2014 due to the policy constraints. This time pressure caused anxiety for practitioners as they wanted to develop a good quality process that was effective and involved parents and children in the development which was a time consuming approach.

The action research process is typically cyclical but due to the limited nature of this change it was only possible to go through one cycle of review before implementation across the board. Staff did continue to develop the process after it was implemented to make it more effective where possible. As the school had taken the lead in the research project it was possible for practitioners to continue to develop and review the PCR following the TEP involvement. The TEP was able to provide guidance in setting up the research process and to provide knowledge regarding the PC philosophy, but school owned the research and felt empowered to continue this process even when the TEP involvement was reduced.

5.11 Conclusion

The research reviews a TEP supported application of a CAR approach using the RADIO model to support one special school to develop and introduce PCRs into their statutory processes. The reflections revealed that in this setting an action research approach was a positive way to support school development. Factors such as the school being a research school where research led by practitioners is encouraged and the existing PC philosophy underpinning the wider school system promoted the introduction of the PCR. The research begins to suggest under the right contextual conditions that action research has the potential to provide a positive way in which to begin to develop PCAs which can be used effectively in a mainstream school.

5.12 Implications for Educational Psychologists

A review of the literature suggests the developing role of EPs includes an increasing presence of systemic work including supporting organisational development/change in schools. This research project suggests that EPs could have a key role in facilitating action research in order to support the introduction and development of PCAs/PCRs into the school system. PCA/PCRs are frameworks, tools and reviews that will need to be continually developed to ensure they both are underpinned by the PC philosophy but also meet the purpose of PCRs in the school system. One way to do this is through an action research process.

EPs can provide a knowledge base regarding PC philosophy and the application of psychology to support the development of effective PCAs. Action research approaches enable EPs to offer support and facilitate this process with school practitioners who will have a clear understanding of the purpose of the reviews. School practitioners will be able to contribute their knowledge and experience in relation to the children and parents who they work closely with and children/parents themselves could all be active researchers in developing this approach effectively. The action research approach provides a way to integrate this knowledge and experience in order to promote the effective implementations of PCAs in schools.

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5.14 Appendices

Appendix A: Findings from parent focus group

Strengths (of the traditional annual review process) • If the information was current (focused on the now rather than the past) it could be useful • Useful for sharing information on academic progress	**Weaknesses** (of the traditional annual review process) • Too formal – can feel like parents vs the professionals • Feeling as if you are being dictated to – limited opportunity to contribute • Process is too generic – standard procedure which can seem like a waste of time because it's not relevant to the child – a case of just going to the motion • Can be quite intimidating for parents to contribute • Not current enough – often talking about last years events – where things can change quite quickly • Can be quite a negative experience – focusing on the child's difficulties – not on the positive plan to support them (parents felt that they were aware of their child's needs and did not wish to re-discuss them at every annual review • Relevant professionals don't attend
Opportunities (for a Person Centred review) • Needs to be current • Use of pictures of the children doing activities in school – with notes to explain what they are doing	**Threats** • Possibility of the meeting being too formal if all professionals come along • Difficulties getting all professionals involved • Communication – parents

• Needs to be earlier in the year to make a plan for the current year • Could be more than once a year – as things change more regularly than once a year • Focus on now and the future not the past • Positive information to be shared – what is going well • Focus on sharing relevant information from both home and school • Relevant professionals at the review so they can speak directly to parents rather than for school to indirectly pass information on • Child could be invited to the review • Share information about what is important – e.g. how parents would like school to communicate with them e.g. home diary, food diary • It would be useful to have one short document that could be shared with professionals that would mean that parents didn't have to keep repeating information about their child to the different professionals involved • Shorter document that is easier to read	need to feel comfortable and able to contribute to the meeting • Time constraints

Appendix B: Format of the new Person Centred Review

- Who is here?

This section involved everyone introducing themselves including the child/young person. Professionals were encouraged not to use jargon and explain their roles clearly

- Ground rules

The rules were created in the session and encouraged by the facilitator. Thai m of the rules was to ensure everyone felt involved in the review and was able to contribute when they wanted to.

- Strengths – what we like and admire about the child/young person

All participants in the group were asked to identify what they admired about the young person. Prior to the review the class teacher had created a record of what the child's peers had identified they liked by the child. The focus on the section was about the child's existing strengths from a range of perspectives

- Important to/Important for?

In this section we aimed to work as a group to gain balance between what is important to the child and important for the child. Children had completed (prior to the review) with the support of school staff and parents a one page profile which contained a list of important to/important for that were further discussed in this section

- What's working/ not working well at the moment
- How can we make it work better next time?

This section provided an opportunity for a group discussion about what had been working well or not so well – this gave an opportunity for an open solution focused discussion about how we could improve this for next time or why things needed to remain the same. This section (at the parent's request) also included a review of the progress the child/young person had been making during the year. The child was also invited to use this time to showcase some of the work they had been doing.

- Agreed outcomes for the next phase of education

Based on the information gathered throughout this review the group then agreed on outcomes for this child that could be achieved both at the next key stage phase and then also more specifically in the next academic year. The outcomes were discussed alongside action points to achieve these and the provision needed to meet these outcomes. These outcomes were to be reviewed/ amended at the next annual review.

Everyone attending the review had a copy of the agenda prior to attending the review to enable them to begin to think about their contributions. The children were supported through their PSHE sessions to prepare answers/ contributions to the discussion through a range of mediums e.g. visual/verbal.

Appendix C: Findings from pilot PCR

Strengths

- I felt I was really able to share my views honestly and that they were listened to (Parent)
- I was pleased I was able support my son to share his views (Parent
- felt it empowered child/parent (T of VI)
- felt it was positive to see the child holistically and to look at his future aspirations (to be a tooth fairy) (Social worker)
- Relaxed style (all)
- Positive solution focused approach (School/ secondary school staff)
- I was able to find out how to support my child at home and able to ask any questions I had (parent)
- Possible to highlight discuss any issues (secondary school staff)
- Enabling secondary school to find out about who my child really is (Parent)
- Visual display meant everyone could see/contribute to what was being said (parent)
- "I liked showing everyone my work" - child

Areas of development

- Time – meeting took around 2hours which may be a challenge where school has a high volume of review meetings to complete
- Further consideration needed with regards had to engage children with a variety of complex communication needs/needs
- Need for all stakeholders to be prepared before meetings – need for questions to be disseminated to stakeholders before meetings to enable everyone to be able to contribute
- Need for more professionals to be at meetings so questions can be asked directly (parent)
- How to transmit this information?

Appendix D: Overview of RADIO stages in project

Table2: Overview of Radio stages in project (Adapted from Timmins et al, 2003)

RADIO element	Typical actions	Project actions	Reflections
1. Awareness of a need	EPs contact with school/LA/Teacher/Pupil may result in the identification of potential need for research or 'systemic' work	New draft SEN Code of Practice released – identifying increased need for Person Centred approaches in relation to the new EHC plans – special school identified through discussion with EP as wanting support with introducing PCR into the school annual review process	Request arising from school through discussion with EP – increases the chances that school will engage in the research
2. Invitation to act	EP contacts research sponsors/stakeholders in a position to approve and resource the project and negotiate roles.	Meeting held with school Deputy head/SENCo to discuss aims of the project. In-school project co-ordinator identified. Project being run within LA allocated school hours	
3. Clarifying organisational and cultural issues	Initial exploration of factors likely to support or impede the initiative	Barriers explored with in-school project lead focused around staff capacity/ time to facilitate PC reviews Current PC school ethos to use as a starting point	It was decided Project manager and TEP would pilot PC reviews before rolling them out more generally across the school
4. Identifying stakeholders in area of need	In this phase, it is useful to establish a research co-ordinating group, representative of major stakeholder	Transition lead – in-school project manager, children and their parents identified and invited to pilot the	The research purpose was agreed to be the development and implementation of a PCR process. It was agreed that the research process

	groups, in order to give them a strong role in research-related decision-making (to help focus and clarify research questions, secure resources, co-ordinate research activities, maintain communication with other stakeholders and to ensure take-up of research)	PC reviews and to provide feedback to help develop the reviews before they are rolled out across the school.	required two steps, firstly developing a review process that was underpinned by the PC philosophy but which achieved the aims of engaging parents and children in the review process and secondly implementing this process in to the current school systems. Consequently it was agreed that the role of the TEP was to provide advice, knowledge and guidance related to the PC philosophy and the research process. The role of the school was to lead the research and provide knowledge and guidance about how the process could be developed and adapted to enable engagement from parents and children from this school in the review system. This negotiation lead the development of a research group in the school which the TEP was a member. Involvement of school staff ideally would have been involved at this stage – an Ofsted inspection and staffing issues at school meant this was not possible at this stage
5. Agreeing focus of concern	Research facilitator and major stakeholders agree research (main research questions). This phase often results in a plan to carry out some form of needs assessment that leads to organisational	The aim was to develop annual review of statements/EHC plans process to enable it to become more person centred in its approach in preparation for the introduction of the code of	

	development in phases 9–12. The insight gains at this phase may suggest a need for further appraisal of organisational culture in order to ensure a successful outcome	practice in September	
6. Negotiating the framework for data gathering	Issues and decisions regarding methodology, methods, resources and timescales	The approach taken to develop practice was a solution focused approach so data collection involved reviewing current practice with parents Data collection involved reviewing the literature around PCA LA/policy literature related to the approach	
7. Gathering information	Using agreed methods	Focus group with parents - swot analysis of data Review of the literature	
8. Processing information with stakeholders	Sharing findings with Stakeholders	Sharing findings with working group; transition leads for phase 1, 2 and 3	
9. Agreeing areas for future action	Discussing findings in relation to organisation's needs and identifying areas for action	Used solution focused consultation to review current practice and create plan of action	
10. Action planning	Stakeholder-led planning Process	Creating a plan of action with working group– development of	

		artefacts to facilitate approach	
11. Implementation /action	Stakeholders facilitating change within organisation	Person centred Training delivered to whole school staff – EP and TEP Transition lead and TEP modelling new review format Phase one leader and TEP – modelling first two pilot PC reviews - Feedback gained from review	
12. Evaluating action	Stakeholders reviewing effectiveness of action and possibly requesting further EP involvement	Informal Feedback provided after PCR. Parents/professionals were invited after their pilot PCRs to provide their thoughts on the strengths and areas for development of the new approach – both groups gave their feedback after the PCR in a discussion group	