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Volume 2

VOLUME TWO:

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OVERVIEW OF VOLUME 2

This thesis represents an assessed requirement of the Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctoral course at the University of Birmingham.

Volume 2 comprises five professional practice reports (PPRs) that each look at different aspects of the role of the educational psychologist. The production of the five PPRs was undertaken during the second and third years of supervised professional practice placement.

The first three PPRs presented in the second year of the professional practice placement address the following areas:

- an evaluation of a specialist provision for children aged 7-11 who have been identified as having a specific learning difficulty;
- work with a child with complex needs – exploring the wider affects of epilepsy;
- an evaluation of the Circle of Friends intervention for young people.

The final two PPRs were completed during the final year of the supervised professional practice placement. These two reports comprise:

- an example of how an educational psychologist can apply skills to an area of specialist working. The context of the report is within the area of mental health and well-being;
- an evaluation of the Motivation and Engagement Scale (Martin, 2009) with Year 7 pupils.

This introductory chapter aims to provide an overview of the work undertaken. The chapter will summarise the contextual and personal professional influences

upon the selection of the work and the ways in which the work was conceptualised and implemented.

Professional Practice Placement

During the second and third years of the Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctoral course at the University of Birmingham I have been employed by a Metropolitan Borough Council in the North West of England. I have been employed on a 'traded service' model. Through this model schools can opt to buy additional sessions from the educational psychology service. This has meant that I have experienced a range of primary, secondary and specialist settings located in areas with differing socio-economic needs.

The team of educational psychologists are located with professionals from; the portage team, specialist social and communication difficulties teachers, the physical and medical difficulties team, and the hearing and visual impairment teams.

My role as an educational psychologist

The PPRs presented in this volume represent a proportion of the varied experiences I have had in the two year professional practice placement. I believe that the PPRs reflect the five core functions of the educational psychologist as identified by the Scottish Executive Report (2002) and the Farrell Report (2006);

- assessment;
- intervention;
- consultation;
- training;
- research.

The PPRs also demonstrate that these five core functions can be delivered at three levels; the level of the individual child or family; at the whole school level; at the local education authority level.

An overview of the PPRs

PPR 1 focuses on the evaluation of a specific aspect of a state-run co-educational day special school for children aged 7-11 years with specific learning difficulties. The school claims to restore the child's confidence and self-esteem and it was this assertion that the PPR aimed to explore. This PPR explores the notion of self-esteem and investigates whether the self-esteem of children with specific learning difficulties who remain in mainstream is lower than their peers' who attend the specialist provision. My professional practice has developed in terms of questioning claims, such as the one made by this specialist setting, with regards to the evidence base for such assertions. Psychology is, after all, a science and is therefore based on evidence (Fredrickson, 2002).
The selection of this particular setting for evaluation was fuelled by professional and personal values regarding inclusion. Inclusion is a central issue for educational psychologists (Hick, 2005) and the existence of this specialist setting raised questions for me regarding the ethical issues surrounding the removal of a child from their mainstream school due to the evidence of specific learning difficulties. With the advances and implementation of the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning and the promotion of inclusion through the Disability Discrimination Act the results from this PPR reinforced my hopes that steps are being made to support not only the academic experiences but also the emotional wellbeing of pupils in mainstream school. This gives further credibility to the argument for inclusion.

PPR2 is concerned with the educational psychologist's involvement with a child with complex needs. The aim of the report is to highlight the potential complexities that epilepsy can cause in the daily functioning of a child both academically and socially. As epilepsy is a neurological disorder the inter-relationship between the brain and behaviour is a central focus of the paper and this is discussed within a critique of the research available. The psychosocial and environmental factors involved are explored within an ecological-transactional framework, which gives attention to the systematic, situational and interactional relationships between settings.

The involvement with individual cases was a prominent focus of my allocated work during year 2 of my professional practice placement. This has been a topic of much discussion amongst the profession when reflecting on the role of the educational psychologist (Dessant, 1992; Fredrickson, 2002; Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009). Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) warn that the move away from individual casework has 'led to an underachieving and under-confident profession in danger of becoming obsolete' (p.72).

When involved in the piece of work presented in PPR3 I met with the health practitioners who were involved with the assessment and medical intervention of the young girl. The Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) agenda highlights the importance of multi-agency working. This involvement highlighted my unique contribution as an educational psychologist. I was aware of my focus on the child and environmental interaction rather than the child deficit model, which concurs with Faupel's (1990) view that the salient point for the educational psychologist is to understand the interactions between the two parties (i.e. school and child). The use of the ecological-transactional model extended this focus to include the home/family and community environments.

Overall, I felt that my involvement with this child as a piece of individual casework was valued by the health professionals, the school and by the child's family. This concurs with the findings of Farrell et al. (2006) who reported that

agencies such as health and social work hold in high esteem the work of eps in dealing with complex individual casework.

PPR 3 was produced following the opportunity to run the peer support intervention known as the 'Circle of Friends' in two different schools. As I had located in the literature, two different methods for running the intervention the PPR focus was to evaluate and compare the success of the two approaches. The traditional approach, as described by Newton et al. (1996) and an adapted version by Shotton (1998), were implemented and evaluated using pre and post intervention measures. The small scale study presented me with another opportunity to research the existing literature regarding the reliability of an intervention and to carry out my own evaluation. I believe that if, as an ep, I am to advocate and implement a particular intervention then it is a part of my professional duty to ensure that it stems from the evidential base of the profession's foundations in mainstream psychology (McKay, 2002).

The Circle of Friends approaches both proved to be inclusive and collaborative techniques, which enhanced not only the social competence of the target pupils, but the development and humanity of many of their peers as is evidenced by the comments made. The results, as presented by PPR3, highlighted to me that the use of peer support can cause widespread benefits that go beyond the individual and positively affect a large number of pupils.

PPR4 gives an example of how an educational psychologist can apply skills to an area of specialist working. The context of the report is within the area of mental health and well-being. I have had the opportunity to work within a team of four eps to implement the nationally funded project of Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS, DCFS, 2008). McKay (2002) stated that the educational psychologist can have a pivotal role in key social issues, such as promoting

mental health. This project has given me the chance to work at an organisational and systemic level. Training and consultation with head teachers and coordinators within the health and social care sectors has resulted in the implementation of a 'framework for flourishing,' which has been developed from research based in the paradigm of positive psychology. Involvement in this project has illustrated the significance and satisfaction of working at a level that can 'impinge upon organisations and systems and which operate at the policy level' (Dessant, 1992; p.40).
Norwich (2005) points out that the Government is committed to reducing the number of Statements and providing additional resources without this 'costly and bureaucratic assessment and decision making system' (p.394). Moves in this direction would impact on the role of the ep in terms of the constraints on time and increase the opportunity to work on projects such as TaMHS.

PPR5 presents a critical evaluation of a longitudinal intervention with the Year 7 pupils of a state-run secondary school for young people aged between 11 and 16 years. The area of motivation and engagement was the focus of a large-scale questionnaire and the subsequent implementation of interventions. The PPR presents findings from a focus group which aimed to get the views of the pupils involved. The benefits of using young people in research about areas that affect their learning and well-being are highlighted as are the ethical considerations.

Ethical factors have been a prominent feature throughout the work I have been involved in throughout the two years. I have developed a more reflective and questioning attitude to practice. I feel that continuing personal and professional reflections throughout my practice has heightened my awareness of the ethical implications of my work. I endeavour to be mindful of the ethical considerations of working with young people and vulnerable families and appreciate that eps work in complex social worlds.

Moore (2005, p.104) asserted that as professionals 'we surely have a duty to be fully aware of the ontological and epistemology basis of our practice.' This is important as it inevitably has implications for the nature of our relationships with those we work with and in the ethical concerns regarding our practice methodology. I realise and respect that others may view the world very differently and as an ep I work with people of differing genders, cultures, religious and political beliefs, sexuality, and class understandings.

I believe that the presentation of these PPRs provides illustrative examples of what Gersch (2004) lists as essential aspects of psychological practice:

- helping children;
- effective interpersonal skills, listening to children and adults;
- being objective and dispassionate;
- creative problem-solving, offering practical help;
- assisting and facilitating when things get stuck;
- applying research to real life problems; being empirically grounded;
- evaluating interventions and actions (using evidence-based framework);
- working directly and through others;
- adding value to people's lives.

The PPRs give examples of these elements of psychological practice at the level of the individual (PPR 2), group (PPR 3 and 5) and organisation (PPR 1 and 4).

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An evaluation of a specialist setting which caters for complex needs of children and young people

This professional practice report (ppr) presents an evaluation of a specialist provision for children aged 7-11 who have been identified as having a specific learning difficulty (SpLD). The focus taken is on the self-esteem of the pupils and a comparison is made with another group of children to examine the extent to which the setting impacts on their self-esteem.

- Section 1 - The ppr begins with an overview of the aims of the paper; the background research relevant to the evaluation and the context of the specialist provision.
- Section 2 – This section offers an overview of self-esteem in order to identify and understand the concept that is being explored.
- Section 3 - Section 3 reviews recent research conducted on the self-esteem of pupils with a SpLD.
- Section 4 – This part of the assignment presents the study conducted in order to compare the focussed specialist setting with mainstream provision in the context of the Local Authority in which I work.
- Section 5 – The final section of the assignment explores the implications of the research findings for the staff of mainstream schools and the educational psychologist.

1.1 Aims of this Professional Practice Report

This paper attempts to evaluate a particular aspect of a specialist provision for children aged 7-11 who have Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD). The focus is on the claim to restore the self-esteem of the children who attend the school. The school's policy, as set out in the latest school prospectus, is;

'…to re-awaken an interest in learning, to restore the child's confidence and self-esteem and to help every pupil reach his or her potential.'

This statement suggests that the children who enter the school have damaged, or reduced self-esteem and a lack of confidence in themselves as learners. This paper explores the notion of self-esteem and investigates whether the self-esteem of children with specific learning difficulties who remain in mainstream is lower than their peers' who attend the specialist provision.

1.2 Background

Past research (Bender and Wall, 1994; Burden, 2005; Hughes and Dawson, 1995; Humphrey, 2002; Humphrey and Mullins, 2002; Ingesson, 2007) argues young people with dyslexia manifest lower self-esteem than others. Nugent's (2008) findings are consistent with other research (Humphrey and Mullins, 2002; Burden and Burdett, 2005) which suggests that children with dyslexia have a more positive experience in specialist settings, than do children with dyslexia in mainstream settings.

In a society where the movement towards inclusive educational provision continues (Nugent, 2008) questions are raised as to the value of a specialist provision where children with SpLD are placed away from mainstream school and their peers. It could be argued that some of the aforementioned research can not be generalised to the whole population as the samples taken have limitations; Humphrey and Mullins (2002) took a sample of 24 and 23 pupils from just two settings, Burden and Burdett (2005) interviewed 50 pupils all from the same school.

The Dyslexia Friendly Schools initiative (British Dyslexia Association) is present within this Children's Service although there was no strategy within the service to

encourage its implementation. This has resulted in only some schools taking on the advice given through the initiative. The concept of dyslexia friendly schools (DFS) was developed by the British Dyslexia Association and included a checklist of descriptors of a DFS. In a DFS 'efforts are made to raise self-esteem [and] enable learners how best to learn' (Norwich, Griffiths and Burden, 2005; p.149). With the notion of DFS and the broader concept of inclusive schools this paper aims to explore if the special provision school is needed as a resource to promote self-esteem in pupils with a SpLD, or if this is being met in the mainstream setting.

As Norwich, Griffiths and Burden (2005) point out, policies and practices at Local Authority (LA) level are of variable quality within and between Children's Services in terms of promoting dyslexia friendly schools. I therefore felt that it would be beneficial to explore the self-esteem in relation to the self as a learner in this particular Children's Service context to inform local practice and to add to the debate of inclusion for all.

1.3 Context: The Special School for Children with Specific Learning Difficulties

Due to issues regarding confidentiality throughout this paper I shall refer to the specialist provision as 'OM.'

OM is a state-run co-educational day special school for children aged 7-11 with Specific Learning Difficulties. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs attend full time and some pupils are part-time without a statement and are funded by their mainstream primary school. The current entry criteria are:

- Pupils in years 3-5 identified by psychological assessment as being of average ability (full scale IQ 90+) and who:

- Are significantly (2 Standard deviations or more) under attaining in the acquisition of literacy skills; and
- Show clear signs of significant learning difficulties notably sequencing, temporal and spatial awareness, poor memory, poor number concepts and poor fine and gross motor skills; and
- Have emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in anxiety, withdrawal or anti-social behaviour.

Below is an example, Table 1, of the population who attend OM, which was created by a Senior Educational Psychologist for strategic consideration by the LA, based on the examination of the Educational Psychologists' assessments on each pupil at the time.

Element of Criteria	Percentage on Roll
Above IQ 90	66%
Literacy difficulties 2SDs below ability Reading Spelling Both reading and spelling	 24% 18% 15%
Descriptive SpLD	56%
Emotional difficulties (Mentioned on statement)	29%

Table 1: A description of the population who attend OM

The above table highlights that not all the pupils being accepted into the special provision are meeting the entry criteria. Another fact is that 1 in 250 pupils who live in the affluent area (free school meals 13.63%) of West Wirral go to OM compared to 1 in 500 pupils in the other three areas of Wirral (average free school meals 39.98%). This suggests that the underlying and invisible criteria for entry maybe based on a socio-economic status. This may be due to many factors such as teacher and parent expectations and access to additional services.
When assessing the self-esteem of the pupils it is important to be aware that 14 feeder schools account for 50% of the places; there are 96 mainstream primary schools within this LEA. Therefore, the results of this evaluation are not representative of the self-esteem of pupils from differing socio-economic groups.

2.0 The Theoretical Background to Self-Esteem

Several eminent psychologists have put forward their theories about the concept of self-esteem (Bruner, 1996; Burns, 1982; Erikson, 1959; Rogers, 1951). As this

ppr makes substantial reference to self esteem it is appropriate to summarise the understanding behind terms such as self-esteem, self-concept, and self-image which, as Hansford and Hattie (1982) pointed out, are often used interchangeably throughout much of the literature. This paper is focussed on the self-esteem of pupils in the context of learners; Rogers (1951) would use the term self-concept to describe the image a person has of a particular characteristic of themselves, i.e. as a learner.

The development of a sense of identity is referred to by Rogers (1951) as the construction of the self-concept. He defined this as:

> 'composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities: the percept and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environments; the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and objects; and the goals and ideas which are perceived as having positive or negative valence' (Rogers, 1951, p.138).

Roger's definition brings a holistic element through the suggestion of the relationship between the self, others and the environment. It is a more interactionist perspective in its suggestions and indicates that self-concept is created through interactions, positive and negative, between the self and the surrounding world.

Erikson (1959) believed that we all have a unique sense of identity, which becomes more apparent to us with age. The older a child gets the more they become aware of differences between themselves and others. Erikson referred to 'ego-integrity' as being an important stage to reach in adolescence as it means a young person has a firm grasp of who they are and what they want to become. According to Erikson, an important aspect of the theory behind ego-integrity is that the success of a person achieving a strong sense of self is dependent on how well they passed through earlier stages. Therefore, early childhood experiences play an important role in shaping our attitudes towards ourselves.

The cultural and social aspects to this theory of development of self-esteem are neglected; I would suggest that the influences of our social world may affect the value that we subsequently place on experiences and objects. Burns (1982) made it clear that self-esteem is subjectively constructed and based on meanings for an individual that have been generally evaluated by their particular society. Burden (2005, p.7) gives the example of literacy being a highly desirable characteristic in our society and therefore those individuals who find it difficult to become literate will find it difficult to develop a positive academic self-concept in that area and so their self-esteem will be lower. This is further exacerbated by the premise that our self-evaluations are determined by our beliefs about how others see us. This is known as the 'looking glass self,' which was first postulated in 1912 by Cooley. If an individual with literacy difficulties believes that importance is placed on the ability to be literate and it is a socially desirable attribute they may start to perceive themselves as undesirable.

The exploration of self-esteem is continued by Burns (1982) when he puts forward the suggestion that self-esteem is made up of attitudes that people develop about themselves consisting of three elements:

1. The cognitive
2. The connative
3. The behavioural

The cognitive element is the beliefs we hold about ourselves or something that has developed as an interaction between our self and environment. The connative aspect refers to the strengths of these feeling or beliefs we hold towards someone or something; it is the evaluation of how much they matter to us. The third element refers to an individual's predisposition to act in a certain way. An example would be an individual who believes they are particularly gifted at mathematics, they place importance on the subject and as a result go to a

mathematics exam with confidence and a wish to do their best to succeed; this means that they are more likely to achieve a successful outcome.

More recently, Bruner (1996) put forward a succinct definition of the sense of self as being equal to the individual's 'conception of their own powers.' Reed (2001, p.121) interprets this as 'to know oneself is to appreciate one's capacities in different circumstances.' It could be argued that this then incorporates the distorted views of one's own capabilities that can come from misinterpretations of one's own strengths and weaknesses based on interactions with the environment.
Bruner goes on to describe two key properties of self-identification; agency and evaluation. Agency refers to the way in which behaviour or action is influenced by external values in society and evaluation is then performed based on how closely matched one's agency is with another's actions. I would suggest that an imbalance between one's own agency and one's own actions would potentially result in a lowering of self-esteem.

An area that warrants some discussion is the notion that our self-esteem can be made up of a number of different 'selves.' Burden (2005) suggests that throughout past research, psychologists have disagreed as to whether self-esteem across categories, such as intellectual, social, emotional, moral, academic and physical is cumulative and so produces a global sense of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1979). This *nomothetic* model, as identified by Byrne (1984), views self-esteem as undimensional and constant across settings. An alternative perspective would be that our feelings about our self are independent across the categories; therefore how an individual perceives himself or herself as a friend is not connected to how they see themselves academically. This is a *taxonomic* approach.

This difference in perspectives can be potentially confusing when focusing on what exactly is being measured; this paper is focussed mainly upon the way in which individuals perceive themselves as learners. I am therefore interested in measuring the self-esteem of pupils in relation to the views they hold of themselves as a learner.

As the above discussion demonstrates, the phenomenon of self-esteem has fascinated psychologists for at least a century. A variety of theories of self-esteem have been developed and the definitions of the concept have varied with the theory. However, as Morris (2002, p.3) points out 'all have recognised the internal nature of the phenomenon – it is how 'I' feel about my 'self.'

The following section of this paper will explore recent research findings in the more specific area of self-esteem in pupils who have a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) or a diagnosis of dyslexia.

It is appropriate at this point of the paper to give a brief description of the terms 'dyslexia' and 'specific learning difficulty.'

2.1. Defining Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulty

Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling and Scanlon (2004) describe the research into why some children can't read as 'rich and prolific.' This paper recognises the term 'dyslexic' as contentious (Elliott, 2005; Nugent, 2007) and as Humphrey and Mullins (2002, p.197) argue, 'Attempting to provide a definition of dyslexia that is accurate, reliable and agreed upon by everyone is , of course, impossible.'
The term is used interchangeably with the terms Specific Learning Difficulty or Specific Learning Disability (Vellutino et al. 2004).
The British Psychological Society (BPS) (1999) definition of dyslexia is as follows:-

> 'Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent words reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the word level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities.'

'Specific Learning Difficulties' is becoming a preferred term in the UK and Australia and refers to a range of difficulties, including dyslexia (Nugent, 2008). An important feature of the dyslexia debate is whether the factor of general intellectual ability should be considered as important in defining the difficulty. The BPS report (1999) stated that the identification of dyslexia should not be dependent on the assessment of 'average ability.' As can be seen in section 1.3 OM continues to use the discrepancy between general ability and ability in areas of literacy.

For the purposes of this paper the controversy surrounding the definition and existence of dyslexia (Elliot, 2005) will not be discussed further. The terms 'dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulty' will be used interchangeably to refer to the same difficulties as is the case in the literature (Nugent, 2008; Vellutino et al. 2004).

3.0 Self-esteem of Pupils with 'Dyslexia'

Recent research has shown that the experience of dyslexia has negative effects on the self-esteem of children (Humphrey, 2001,2002; Humphrey and Mullins, 2002). Lawrence (1996, p.xi) expresses the clear rationale for these conclusions when stating that 'people's level of achievement are influenced by how they feel about themselves and vice-versa.' Therefore, if an individual is experiencing difficulties in an area of academic achievement such as literacy then, in line with the theories as discussed above, it would appear unsurprising that their self-esteem will be negatively affected.

In terms of placement, early studies suggested that segregation enhanced self-esteem of pupils with general special needs (Gurney, 1988). This could be explained by the increased resources and attention by specialist teachers, but also by the fact that the comparisons pupils were making between their own achievement and those of others was more realistic. As this paper is focussed on exploring the effects of dyslexia on self-esteem and the differences between mainstream and special provision, I shall continue by exploring in more detail some of the more recent research and findings that have been published in this area.

3.1 Exploring Self-esteem; recent research

Humphrey and Mullins (2002) explore the relationships between dyslexia and the ways in which pupils perceive themselves as learners. The authors compared a group of pupils from a special provision with a group in mainstream. For this particular study their perception of self-esteem is embedded in the psychological perspectives of attributional style (Kurtze-Costes and Schneidner, 1994) and personal constructs (Thomson and Hartley, 1980). These perspectives and their relation to self-esteem are outlined below:-

Attributional style

Attribution theory is the 'explanation and evaluation of behaviour, both the behaviour of others and our own' (Georgiou, 1999; cited in Stapleton, 2001, p.109). Weiner (1984) suggests that attributions may be classified on three dimensions: locus, stability and controllability.
'Locus of control' (Rotter, 1966) is concerned with whether we have an internal locus of control and so believe we are in control of our destiny, or an external locus, which means we believe that fate and luck will determine what will happen to us.

Stability refers to the fluctuation over time of the factors that affect our behaviour, for example luck is unstable as it can change.
Controllability describes how much control or influence an individual perceives they have over those factors that affect their behaviour.
Attribution theory has been related to self-concept and self-esteem (Marsh, 1990) and is intrinsically linked to learned helplessness. There is evidence to suggest that children with dyslexia think they have no control over events and so develop a learned helplessness because of their exposure to failure. 'The parallels between…learned helplessness and…children with reading difficulties are striking' (Butkowsky and Willows, 1980, cited in Humphrey and Mullins, 2002, p.197).
I would argue that this is not a trait of all pupils with a specific learning difficulty and is arguably dependent on the quality of teaching, differentiation and pastoral care that they receive. The mediation involved in the classroom in order to prevent learned helplessness is an aspect that will be explored in relation to provision in a mainstream school and in the specialist setting based on the findings of this paper.

Personal Constructs

Kelly's (1995) personal construct theory views an individual as a scientist, drawing up a representational view of the world and constantly modifying and revising this model to allow better anticipation and predication of events. In line with the notion of self-concept this theory would describe the 'self' as an entity that is constantly modifying itself on the basis of experiences.
Thomson and Hartley (1980) used the 'Kelly Grid' to investigate the association of constructs. They found that children with dyslexia were significantly more likely to associate 'good at reading' with 'happiness' than children without learning difficulties.
I would argue that caution is needed when claiming such a generalised interpretation from the use of Kelly's repertory grid. The methods used to elicit

such constructs require investigation; for example were the subjects donated the comparison groups? If so the constructs elicited were based on the subjects' constructs of those people and not of their own internal self-concepts. As Burden and Burdett (2005) argue, it is indisputable that more than one approach is needed to elicit reliable data on the self-perceptions of pupils. It is my opinion that triangulation of data through, for example, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires is required to support the constructs that are elicited by the grid technique.

3.2 Findings relevant to this paper

Humphrey and Mullins (2002) investigated personal constructs and attribution for academic success and failure in children with dyslexia.

The sample of 118 pupils was drawn from two settings, a mainstream school and teaching units for children with specific learning difficulties (SpLD). Personal construct associations were measured using the 'laddering technique' (Hinkle, 1965; cited in Humphrey and Mullins, 2002) and attributions for academic success and failures were measured using an eight item Likert scale questionnaire.

The research found that children with dyslexia in both mainstream and SpLD units associated ability in reading with intelligence. The significant difference between pupils in the units and those in mainstream was that those in special provision associated 'kind' teachers with 'hardworking' more so than the dyslexic mainstream group. The authors suggest that this is due to the extra training the teachers in special provision have had and their ability to give extra time and attention to the smaller numbers of children in their class.

The authors found no significant differences between the scores of the SpLD group and the mainstream dyslexic group in the preliminary analysis of the attribution questionnaire. They did, however find that successful pupils in

mainstream with dyslexia were significantly more likely to attribute their outcome to teacher quality rather than internal factors, such as ability.

It must be noted that the authors' use of the laddering technique was not used in the traditional method. The constructs and elements were provided rather than elicited and this raises questions as to whether the unique qualities of the individuals in the sample were sufficiently explored. For example, some of the elements may have had low personal relevance. The use of such a Likert rating scale, as is used in the attribution element of the study, also brings into question the depth in which an individual's perceptions can be investigated using such a relatively simple rating scale for such a complex concept.

I would argue that a pupil may be unaware of the extent of training a teacher has had in a special or mainstream provision and that the correlation between kind and hardworking may come from perceptions of pupils rather than staff. Pupils in a SpLD unit may experience peers being more understanding and kind in comparison to their mainstream peers, as well as seemingly harder working due to the extra teacher attention and resources. This would concur with findings that children with learning difficulties are less likely to be accepted by their peers and are at an increased risk of bullying and teasing (Eaude, 1999).

As the authors did not find any differences between the attributions of mainstream and SpLD pupils in their preliminary analysis, they grouped the numbers together. I would argue that it would have been beneficial to do some qualitative research alongside the rather short (eight item) questionnaire, in order to identify any teaching methods present in special provision used to eliminate learned helplessness which could be shared with mainstream. It may be hypothesised however that when children are segregated due to a learning difficulty their feelings of learned helplessness are increased and they feel even more inadequate and out of control.

Humphrey (2002) did some further research on the effects of educational placement of children with dyslexia on their self-esteem.
Using Lawrence's (1996) self-esteem checklist which is a teachers' rating of self-esteem, 23 children with dyslexia in a mainstream school, 34 pupils attending a SpLD unit and a control group of 26 children without learning difficulties were used as the sample.
Pupils were also asked to rate their self-esteem using the 'semantic differential' method (Richmond, 1984). This is a technique which requires participants to place themselves on a seven-point scale between two opposite adjectives and then repeat it using their ideal self; where they would like to be on the scale. Discrepancy scores are then calculated by subtracting the 'I am' scores from the 'I would like to be' scores.

Humphrey found that there are differences in the self-concept and self-esteem levels between children with dyslexia and those without learning difficulties; however these differences only become significant in children with dyslexia who are placed in a specialist setting.
The author goes on to draw on data derived from interviews conducted with the same groups of children which suggest that children in mainstream were making unfair comparisons between themselves and their peers. These children also reported feeling isolated and excluded in the mainstream school context. In contrast, children in special provision reported feeling valued and cared for in the SpLD units.

It must be noted that Humphrey draws on a small sample of children from one area of the country, which limits the generalisations that can be placed on these findings. He does not mention the age of the sample which is, as previous research has shown (Gurney, 1988) important in understanding the extent to which an individual has discovered their sense of self and how much emphasis

they place on comparisons with others. If the ages of the sample differed significantly then differences in rating would be expected.

Mediational processes to influence internal change

In 2005 Burden and Burdett published research which explored the sense of personal identity in a group of 50 boys, aged 11 to 16, who attended an independent residential school for dyslexia. Burden and Burdett use their findings to challenge Humphrey and Mullins's (2002) generalised suggestion that pupils with dyslexia in a range of settings experience challenges to their self-esteem. The ethos of the school at the centre of their research is used to provide an exemplar to mainstream settings of how to foster strong feelings of self-worth and self-determination in all pupils with SpLD.

A multifaceted approach was used which incorporated the use of individual face-to-face interviews, a Likert-style questionnaire and the Myself-As-Learner-Scale (MALS) (Burden, 2000). They found that the vast majority of pupils did not have extreme feelings of learned helplessness, they were strongly disposed towards effort as an essential attribution for success, and demonstrated a very strong internal locus of control. The authors conclude that their findings contrast markedly with those of Humphrey and Mullins (2002) in that the pupils involved think positively about themselves as learners and perceive themselves as capable of achieving whatever they set themselves to do.

Both studies have limitations in the sample size and the representation of pupils across the country that have a specific learning difficulty; however important points for the purpose of this paper can be taken and explored further. Both studies are using the voice of the young people involved which is giving credibility to their findings and they are extracting examples of good practice which can and arguably should be implemented into the mainstream setting.

Burden and Burdett (2005) are proposing that it is not inevitable that dyslexia in pupils leads to 'negative consequences for their self-development' as suggested by Humphrey and Mullins (2002). However, the school that was used in the study to form the sample of the research is not a local authority run school which suggests that the sample of boys used in the study are not representative of the general population who attend state run schools. The school is an independent residential school for boys with dyslexia; although not specifically stated in the paper, it may be a fee paying school which would indicate that the sample are not representative of class and socio-economic status. The boys reside at the school and so have very limited exposure to general communities; according to Gurney (1988) making comparisons with peers develops self-referential evaluations and so being in a residential situation may reduce negative comparisons even further, increasing their self-concept and self-esteem.

4.0 Implications and relevance of the research findings

'O M changes lives forever' (OFSTED report, 2006)

With the above research as a context, an overarching aim of this paper is to explore the quotation made by OFSTED inspectors following an inspection of the specialist provision in 2006. I do not doubt that the school does 'change lives forever,' however I believe it is at the heart of the inclusion debate as to just how many ways a child's life is changed when they are removed from mainstream school. With the introduction of 'dyslexia friendly schools' the issue of whether such a provision is required is brought into question. It raises the

matter around the implications of inclusion for pupils with SpLD and for practice in mainstream schools. Teachers and school would need to be aware of the risks of a lowered self-esteem and act in a preventative and proactive way.

This paper takes the findings from the research discussed above and aims to explore the self-esteem of pupils in the segregated setting in comparison to pupils who remain in mainstream and who receive support through the outreach service for children with specific learning difficulties.

4.1 The Study

I was given the opportunity, with their own and their parents' permission, to interview a selection of 10 pupils attending OM on a full time basis and a selection of 7 pupils with a specific learning difficulty receiving additional support in two mainstream settings. The pupils in OM were selected by the teachers in year 6, the pupils in the mainstream setting were in years 5 and 6.
The sample involved in this small scale study is limited and has particular weaknesses in terms of selection. The teaching staff at the schools decided which pupils to include in the study, which meant that the sample was not randomly selected, it was a convenience sample. Secondly, the pupils are representative of only one mainstream setting, which means that generalisations can not be made in terms of the findings; they are indicative of only one primary school.

Ethical considerations

When conducting research with children and young people it must be established whether the child has given informed consent, informed assent or informed dissent. I was aware that the pupils had been asked by an adult to participate which may make them reluctant to refuse. I ensured that I informed each pupil

of my intentions, what I wanted them to do, and that they could withdraw from speaking to me at any time. It was made clear that their responses would be anonymous and that the purpose of eliciting their views would be to inform my research.

As the responses were anonymous I felt it was difficult to then use my findings to improve the emotional wellbeing of individual pupils. This raised the issue of what I would do with information which highlighted particularly negative emotional responses of a pupil.

I was also mindful of the fact that I was reading the statements to the pupils which may shape or influence the child's response more than if they were completing the questionnaire privately. As Lewis (2002) points out, we have a responsibility to ensure that the views held are fair and typical. When interpreting the results of this study the reliability of the child's response must be considered as I can not be sure that the pupil's involved gave me a view that is their own as opposed to one which might have been encouraged by my involvement in the process.

The measurement tool

Burden (1998) developed the Myself-As-Learner Scale as a measurement of self-esteem in relation to learning. It consists of a simple 20-item scale aimed at measuring children's conceptions of themselves as learners and problem-solvers. The scale appears to meet satisfactory criteria in terms of its factor structure, validity and reliability. Standardisation data are provided on a sample of 389 pupils aged between 11 and 13 years. The pupils that I carried out the questionnaire with were all year 6 pupils, aged 11 or 10 years. The mean age was 10 years 9 months.

There were 13 boys and 4 girls included in the study.

The pupils from OM had to have attended the school for a minimum of 2 terms and it was stipulated that the pupils in the mainstream setting must be receiving additional support for literacy due to an identified specific learning difficulty for at least 2 terms.

I carried out the questionnaire in a setting that was private and quiet. It was explained to the pupils that their answers would remain anonymous. Due to their literacy difficulties I read the statements to the pupils and they responded with a letter on a scale which indicated the strength of their feeling towards agreement or disagreement.

Table 2 shows the results as an average for each statement in the mainstream and in OM. Scores are given on a basis of 5 being the most positive to 1 being the most negative. Therefore, a higher score indicates a more positive response.

Table 3 reveals the average overall score from both groups. A score between 60 and 82 is considered to be within the average range. A score below 60 represents a low academic self-concept and a score above 82 represents a high academic self-concept.

Table 4 reveals the breakdown of the individual overall scores.

Statement from MALS	**Average scores on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)**	
	Specialist Provision	**Mainstream setting**
1. I'm good at doing tests.	3.9	3.4
2. I like having problems to solve.	4.3	3.6
3. When I'm given new work to do, I usually feel confident I can do it.	3.3	3.7
4. Thinking carefully about your work helps you to do it better.	4.4	4.0
5. I'm good at discussing things.	3.7	3.9
6. I need lots of help with my work.	3.2	1.8
7. I like having difficult work to do.	3.2	2.9
8. I get anxious when I have to do new work.	3.5	3.6
9. I think that problem solving is fun.	4.4	4.0
10. When I get stuck with my work I can usually work out what to do next.	3.2	3.6
11. Learning is easy.	3.3	3.3
12. I'm not very good at solving problems.	3.3	3.4
13. I know the meaning of lots of words.	4.2	4.1
14. I usually think carefully about what I've got to do.	3.8	3.7
15. I know how to solve the problems that I meet.	3.6	3.0
16. I find a lot of school work difficult.	3.6	1.8
17. I'm clever.	3.8	2.6
18. I know how to be a good learner.	4.1	4.1
19. I like using my brain.	4.0	3.9
20. Learning is difficult.	3.4	2.3

Table 2. A breakdown of individual scores from the MALS

Table 3 The average overall score from both groups

Provision	Overall average score
OM Special school provision	74.1
Mainstream setting with additional support	66

Table 4 Individual overall scores

Individual Overall Scores	
OM	**Mainstream Setting**
72	56
62	62
77	67
85	78
69	62
78	77
80	65
83	
58	
77	

4.2 Discussion

The overall averaged scores for both groups fall within the average range for academic self-esteem. The score for OM is higher at 74.1 compared with the mainstream setting score of 66. The breakdown of scores reveals that the mainstream has the lowest score of 56 in its range and OM has the highest score of 83, which will have an effect on the overall averages.
There are two pupils who fall below the mark of 60 which indicates low academic self-esteem; one is from the OM sample and the other from a mainstream context.

Table 4.1 highlights the differences and similarities between the scores from both samples. There are 2 statements which, if statistical analysis were carried out, may demonstrate a significant difference between the samples. 'I need a lot of help with my work' provoked a high rate of negative responses from the mainstream sample, producing an average score of just 1.8 compared with a score of 3.2 for the OM sample. Applying social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) it needs to be considered how the effect of being in a large class impacts on a pupil's belief that they need a lot of help. From my observations at the school, the pupils at OM are typically in class sizes of 10-12 with at least 2 adults present. The pupils are therefore probably receiving a higher level of adult support with their work, whereas a pupil in a mainstream class of 30+ with one, sometimes two adults would possibly have to request adult help a lot more frequently. This may then raise the pupil's awareness of asking for help, especially when compared to their peers.
Statement 16 'I find a lot of schoolwork difficult' received a score of only 1.8 from the mainstream sample and 3.6 for the OM group. This is perhaps linked with the requests for help, the small group environment and the amount of adult support available. As Nugent (2008) points out, for children in specialist settings the class group may allow more easily for positive comparisons.

It is important to highlight the many limitations of this study before conclusions can be drawn. The sample size was small and included only two mainstream settings which, it could be argued, may not be representative of all the schools within this Local Authority. The sample of pupils from the OM setting was selected by the teachers, therefore it was not a random sample, rather the teachers may have selected based upon a criteria unbeknown to myself.
The special provision school, as demonstrated in section 1.2, stipulates that the pupil should be of average ability; the BPS report (1999) was clear that the identification of dyslexia should not depend on the assessment of 'average ability.' It is possible, therefore that the sample used was not accurate reflection of pupils with a specific learning difficulty.

Section 1.2 also highlights the fact that the pupils attending OM are more likely to have come from the more affluent areas of the LEA. The two schools that I used from the mainstream setting are based in areas of relatively high socio-economic deprivation. This then brings into question whether the study is actually comparing the self-esteem of pupils who live in contrasting areas of deprivation rather than those who attend special or mainstream provision.

It would have been useful to have a control group of pupils without specific learning difficulties to compare the overall feelings of self-concept with. This may have indicated that pupils with specific learning difficulties in both settings have a more negative attitude towards themselves as learners when compared to pupils without these difficulties.

In considering to the limitations of this study it could be argued that there is no significant difference in the self-concept of pupils with specific learning difficulties attending this particular special provision and those being educated in the two mainstream settings. This finding concurs with that of Bear, Minke and Manning

(2002) who did a meta-analysis of 61 studies and reported that educational setting did not appear to have a significant impact on student self-esteem. Before the case can be put as another argument for the pro-inclusion orthodoxy more qualitative research needs to be done with particular regard to the views of the young people involved. Nugent (2008; p.203) revealed through her research that 'despite their positive experiences, many children in specialist settings looked forward to mainstream secondary placements and the majority (63%) wanted specialist services within the mainstream.'

With the advances and implementation of the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning and the promotion of inclusion through the Disability Discrimination Act the results from this study reinforce the hope that steps are being made to support not only the academic experiences but also the emotional wellbeing of pupils in mainstream school.

5.0 Implications for Practice

The results of this limited study do not add to the aforementioned growing body of research that suggests that the problems that children with dyslexia encounter have negative consequences for their self-esteem (Humphrey and Mullins, 2002). What is highlighted by the questionnaire results in the context of this small-scale research is that the overall self-esteem of the pupils in this sample was within the average range regardless of the setting in which they are placed in.

To go back to the policy of the specialist setting;

> "…to re-awaken an interest in learning, to restore the child's confidence and self-esteem and to help every pupil reach his or her potential.'

It would appear from the results of the limited sample, that the pupils in the specialist setting do not have higher self-esteem than their mainstream peers when it comes to academic self-concept. Or, put another way, the children in mainstream with an identified SpLD do not have a lower self-esteem that needs

'restoring.' This additional claim by the specialist provision is therefore unnecessary and it could be argued that this finding further supports the rights for inclusive education.

The suggestions for change put forward by Humphrey (2001) in light of his findings may already be present in many primary mainstream settings and this could be the reason that the worrying trend as identified by Humphrey is not identifiable in this research. He made the following suggestions for changes in practice:

- Provide a more accepting and 'dyslexia-friendly' educational climate for children with dyslexia.
- Provide self-concept and self-esteem enhancement programmes to be carried out with children with dyslexia as part of Circle Time.
- Early identification of and better provision (multi-sensory teaching programmes) for dyslexia in mainstream schools.

If schools are to *include* all children, as opposed to merely integrating them, then factors such as the nurturing of self-esteem and the celebration of differences may have become more of a priority and are evidenced through programmes such as Social Emotional Aspects to Learning.

The results from this study support the findings of one study by Bear et al (2002) who reported that educational setting did not appear to have a significant impact. As Nugent (2008) points out, there is an inadequate body of knowledge about the views and experiences of children who receive special educational services for SpLD in different settings. Studies, as highlighted through this paper, tend to have small sample sizes and often focus on just one setting. There is a need to include the views of key stakeholders; the parents and young people to enhance the debate about inclusive and segregated provision.

Nugent (2008) suggests that the beneficial aspects of a segregated provision, such as the belonging and acceptance that children in her sample reported, could be delivered in an alternative way. She suggests that specialist settings

could explore the delivery of these benefits through local support groups or summer schools.

Although the findings from this research are limited, it may be a hopeful indicator that the benefits of special school placement are being delivered in mainstream settings and that children with SpLD are being supported socially and emotionally as well as academically.

Practitioners working with children with SpLD need to have an awareness of the potential damage that such a difficulty can have on the self-esteem of the pupil and also a realisation that being moved to a specialist provision is not necessarily the key to restoring that self-esteem. A lot can be achieved in the mainstream setting with the employment of existing resources such as the SEAL programme, circle times, learning mentors and peer support. In my experience as an Educational Psychologist consultation with staff can highlight that the problem holder often automatically looks outwards towards other provisions made available through a statement of Special Educational Needs, to 'solve the problem.' This paper has demonstrated that the mainstream schools included in this study are doing a successful job of promoting the self-esteem of the pupils whilst also providing them with interventions to meet their academic needs.

The EP therefore has evidence to challenge what could be viewed as the learned helplessness of mainstream staff and schools and to empower them by focussing on what they are achieving for their pupils.

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Professional Practice Report

Work with a child with complex needs – exploring the wider affects of epilepsy

Introduction

This professional practice report is based on a recent case of a primary aged pupil who has epilepsy. The aim of the report is to highlight the potential complexities that epilepsy can cause in the daily functioning of a child both academically and socially. As epilepsy is a neurological disorder the inter-relationship between the brain and behaviour is a central focus of the paper and this is discussed within a critique of the research available. The psychosocial and environmental factors involved are explored within an ecological-transactional framework, which gives attention to the systematic, situational and interactional relationships between settings. The framework highlights how the 'within' child neurological characteristics of the condition can be problematised by the environment and systems around them. This professional practice report also attempts to explore the importance of neuropsychological advances in informing the work of educational psychologists (Eps) and concludes that greater attempts should be made to develop an interactive relationship between the two professions.

Background to the case

Savi* is a Looked After Child (LAC) who has recently been returned to live with her mother. She is 7 years old and has just started a new mainstream primary school in year 3.

Savi has epilepsy and is currently taking anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) to control the condition, however the dose continues to be increased and it is believed by the consultant neuropsychologist that Savi has seizures mostly at night. This condition is a rare epilepsy syndrome called Electrical Status Epilepticus during

.

*Names have been changed

slow wave sleep (ESESS). It tends to appear in mid-childhood usually in children who already have epilepsy. The first sign is that the rate of the child's learning appears to slow significantly and they have problems with expressive and receptive aspects of speech (Afasic, 2004). The child may also have difficulty in expressing thoughts. Sleep patterns are severely disturbed and an EEG will show continuous 'spike and wave' epileptic activity during sleep.

Savi's school requested a consultation regarding concerns with Savi's attention and concentration, her attainment levels were also low – typically P6-P8 across the curriculum. She was described as being in 'her own dream world,' with a particular interest in princesses.

Within the initial assessment there appeared to be a lack of emphasis placed by the school and by the educational psychologist primarily involved in the case, upon the need to explore and understand the impact and influence of epilepsy on Savi's daily experiences. I believe that this may be due to the belief expressed by the epilepsy nurse who advised the EP that when a child is on Anti-Epileptic Drugs (AEPs) the epilepsy is under control and there are no additional difficulties to their learning and cognition. This prompted me to focus this professional practice report on the topic of epilepsy and the existing tensions between the medical model and educational psychology in general practice.

This paper aims to explore the evidence on the impact that epilepsy can have on a young person's ability to reach their academic potential and on their psychological wellbeing.

As Savi had other complex factors in her life, an ecological transactional framework is used to illustrate the interplay between risk and protective factors, as identified by research, influencing the effects of the epilepsy.

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What is epilepsy?

Epilepsy Action (2008) (www.epilepsyaction.org.uk) states that epilepsy is currently defined as a tendency to have recurrent seizures, sometimes called 'fits.' A seizure is caused by a sudden burst of electrical activity in the brain, causing a temporary disruption in the normal message passing between brain cells. This disruption results in the brain's messages becoming halted or mixed up.

What is experienced during a seizure will depend on where in the brain the epileptic activity begins and how widely and rapidly it spreads. For this reason there are many different types of seizure and each person will experience epilepsy in a way that is unique to them.

Causes and incidence

Epilepsy with a known cause, such as brain damage or a brain tumour, is called symptomatic epilepsy. For 6 in 10 people with epilepsy there is no known cause and this is called idiopathic epilepsy.

According to the latest statistics from Epilepsy Action (2008) 420,000 people in the UK have epilepsy, which equates to 1 person in 130. 75% of people with epilepsy have their first seizure before the age of 20. This has implications for schools and staff as it is likely that a teacher will have at least one pupil with epilepsy in their career.

Classification

Seizures can be split into partial (focal) or generalized. See appendix A for a pictorial representation of the 'seizure map.'

Partial seizures can be split into two types; simple partial and complex partial.

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- In a simple partial seizure the person remains fully conscious; they may experience the movement of a limb, tingling, an unusual smell or taste.
- In a complex partial seizure the person is only partially conscious; however to onlookers they may appear fully aware of what they are doing. Symptoms include 'automatisms' such as chewing or swallowing, repeatedly searching for an object, wandering off.

Partial seizures most commonly begin in the temporal lobes, which are responsible for many functions including; processing and remembering information, the emotions, receiving sound and smell and the production of speech.

Generalised seizures include several different types:

- Tonic-clonic seizures are the most common generalised seizure. The person goes stiff, falls to the ground, their limbs jerk and then they become still before regaining consciousness.
- Absence seizures used to be known as 'petit mal.' It can appear to an onlooker that the person is daydreaming or 'switching off.' However, in an absence seizure the person can not be alerted, they are momentarily unconscious and unaware of what is happening around them. In the worst cases children may be having hundreds of very brief absence seizures a day.
- Myoclonic seizures can affect the whole body and cause a sudden contraction of the muscles. As with an absence seizure, the person appears to remain fully conscious.
- Tonic seizures result in all the muscles contracting. The body stiffens and the person will fall over if unsupported.
- Atonic seizures result in the loss of all muscle tone and the person falls to the ground.

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Treatment

Epilepsy is characterised by paroxysmal events and as Guerrini and Parmeggiani (2006) explain, formulating a correct diagnosis, and so treatment, resides in history taking. After characterising the seizure type that is occurring, the physician attempts to clarify the epilepsy syndrome.

Age at seizure onset, family history, frequency and types of seizure, EEG, and neuroimaging results are all important in syndrome definition (Guerrini & Parmeggiani, 2006).

The main method of treating epilepsy is with anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs). Syndrome specificity has been highlighted in terms of drug effectiveness and seizure aggravation (Avanzini & Dulac, 1998). Doctors usually prefer monotherapy, using one drug at a time, however when monotherapy doesn't work polytherapy is usually the next step in treatment.

Guerrini et al. (2006) stress that the decision to start medical treatment on a child with epilepsy should not be rigidly made and should be tailored to the individual. With respect to Savi's epilepsy syndrome, research (Paquir, Van Dongen, & Loonen, 1992; Guerrini, Parmeggiani, Shewmon, Rubboli & Tassinaari, 2002) has demonstrated that delaying treatment may have:

'devastating effects, not necessarily from the point of view of obtaining seizure control, but because ongoing clinical or subclinical epileptic activity exerts a disruptive influence on cognitive development' (Guerini et al., 2006).

Epilepsy and Effects on Cognition

Review of literature

Much of the literature obtained from searches made using the terms 'epilepsy' and 'cognition' yielded research untaken with an emphasis on quantitative data from journals with a medical focus rather than an

educational one. This has resulted in some of the evidence identified and discussed in this section of this Professional Practice Report having a positivist epistemology, mainly based on the analysis of cognitive assessment scores. Caution must be applied to the interpretation of these findings which are heavily based on assessment tools that de-personalise the individual child and as Boyle and Lauchlan (2009; p.77) argue, psychometric tests should be 'used in conjunction with other assessment to provide a greater understanding of an individual child's strengths and areas of weakness.'

American based cross-sectional studies on small samples of Childhood Absence Epilepsy (CAE) claim to demonstrate that children have cognitive (Pavone and Niedermeyer, 2000), linguistic (Henkin, 2005), and behavioural/emotional problems (Ott, Caplan, Guthrie, Siddarth, Komo, Shields, Sankar, Kornblum, & Chayasirisobhon, 2001).

Caplan, Siddarth, Stahl, Lanphier, Vona, Gurbani, Koh, Sankar and Shields (2008) conducted research using a variety of assessment tools including semi-structured interviews with the child and the parents in order to explore these claims further. The study examines the behavioural, cognitive and linguistic co-morbidities of childhood absence epilepsy (CAE).

Caplan et al. (2008) argue that CAE has been considered in past research (Covanis et al., 1992, cited in Caplan et al. 2008) to be a benign disorder with relatively easy seizure control and minimal involvement of cognition and behaviour. However, Pavone, Bianchini, Trifiletti, Incorpora, Pavone & Pavone (2001) report associated learning and cognitive difficulties with CAE. Wirrell, Camfield, Camfield, Dooley, Gordon and Smith (1997) found poor long term vocational, educational and social outcomes in patients with and without adequate seizure control and a significantly worse behavioural outcome in patients with continued poor seizure control.

Caplan et al.'s (2008) sample size of the study is relatively large consisting of 69 children with CAE aged between 6.7 – 11.2 years with IQ scores of 70

and higher. A control group of 103 children were closely matched in age, gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity. The sample was generated in two parts, over two time periods; 66 subjects were recruited during 1994-1998 and 73 during 1999-2005.

Cognition was measured using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) (Wechsler, 1974) for the sample tested between 1994 and1998, and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children 3rd edition (WISC III) (Wechsler, 1991) was administered to children tested from 1999 to 2005.

The Test of Language Development (TOLD) (Newcomer & Hammil, 1988) was used to test spoken language. Three forms of the test were used in order to be age appropriate.

The Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia for School-aged Children (Orvaschel & Puig-Antich, 1987) was administered during 1994 and 1998 and the Present and Lifetime Version (Kaufmann, 1997) during 1998 to 2005. This was administered as an interview separately to each parent and child. Parents also completed the 118 behaviour problem items (Achenbach, 1991).

The results of the study found that:-

- The mean IQ and spoken language quotient scores of the CAE group were significantly lower than those of the control group.
- Significantly more CAE subjects had a psychiatric diagnosis with ADHD and affective/anxiety disorder diagnoses being the more frequently diagnosed in the CAE group.
- Significantly more CAE subjects had clinically relevant parent based behavioural difficulties; attention problems were the most commonly found.

The findings that there is an increased frequency of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), problem in attention and thinking, and social difficulties concurs with the findings in other children with epilepsy (Dunn & Austin, 1999). The criteria for diagnosing ADHD in children who have epilepsy is not made clear and I would suggest that signs of inattention may be a symptom of epilepsy rather than ADHD. Williams and Sharp (1999) also suggest a disruption of attention skills in children with epilepsy and found that parents consistently rated their children as demonstrating elevated levels of attention problems on parental behavioural rating scales.

Closer examination of Caplan et al.'s (2008) results found that girls with CAE were more likely to have anxiety disorder than boys. Caplan et al. (2008) postulate that the association of anxiety disorders with both increased seizure frequency and duration of illness in the CAE subjects implies that the epilepsy may be associated with feeling a lack of control and increased anxiety. This would concur with Dunn and Austin's (1999) finding that external locus of control is associated with higher scores on measures of anxiety and depression.

The Caplan et al. (2008) study is done over two time frames, with 66 subjects recruited during 1994-1998 and 73 during 1999-2005. The two populations were administered different cognitive assessments and questionnaires. Despite two different assessments and cohorts being used the results are still presented holistically without the discrepancy highlighted in the results. This could have effects on the validity and reliability of the overall results. Factors such as new medications and advances in medical research that provide better seizure control between the years of 1994 and 2005 may be outside variables that influenced the results.

The population with epilepsy all had to have had at least one seizure in the year prior to the study. This means that some of the participants were having a lot more seizures than others; this has not been accounted for in the analysis of the results.

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Academic Achievement

Dodson (1993) states that children with epilepsy have a higher risk of learning disabilities and Williams and Sharp (1999) explain that the greatest academic risk for children with epilepsy is educational underachievement.

Fastenau, Shen, Dunn and Austin (2008) assessed rates of learning disabilities by several psychometric definitions in children with epilepsy in an American based study. The authors used the definition of a learning disability as 'a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more areas of achievement' (Assistance to States for Education of Handicapped Children: Procedures for Evaluating Specific Learning Disabilities Education, 1977).

The large sample of 173 children studied in this case had a diverse range of seizure types.

Under the IQ-achievement discrepancy definition 48.2% of all children in the sample exceeded the discrepancy criterion for learning disability. Discrepancies were most common in writing (38%), followed by maths (20%) and reading (13%).

It was found that seizure type was a risk factor that was observed for computational maths skills only and Fastenau et al. (2008) concluded that even children who had seizure types that appeared to be less disabling (e.g. partial seizures or absence seizures), who had seizures that were well controlled by medications, or who required no more than one medication to control their seizures appeared to be at equal risk for learning disabilities compared to children with more severe conditions.

This study highlights that the lack of a direct relationship between learning difficulties and seizure type places more importance on the need to examine other factors, such as child and family psychosocial variables and neuropsychological functioning (Fastenau, Dunn and Austin, 2003).

Williams (2003) highlights that there are multiple factors in addition to the impact of seizures and medication that have been associated with this academic vulnerability in children with epilepsy. These include environmental variables, personality and motivation of the child, family adjustment, social factors and cognitive functions. Seidenburg (1996; cited in William, 2003, p.108) actually emphasised that 'clinical seizure variables are only modestly predictive of underachievement.'

Psychosocial Risk factors

Fastenau, Shen, Dunn, Perkins, Hermann, and Austin (2004) attempted to identify seizure and psychosocial risk factors for underachievement and tested the degree to which demographic, seizure and psychosocial variables moderate the relationship between neuropsychological functioning and academic achievement.

Psychosocial variables consisted of child attitude towards epilepsy, child self-concept, child attributional style, and family mastery. Family environment was measured by the primary caregivers' ratings on the Family Inventory of Resources for Management (McCubbin, Thompson and McCubbin, 1996). The 18 items measure family planning and problem solving, decision making, cooperation among family members, distribution of responsibilities for household tasks, organisations, ability to complete important tasks, emotional support, and stress in the family.

Demographic Characteristics were age, gender, and the primary caregiver's years of formal education.

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Seizure Variables consisted of seizure status, seizure type, duration of disorder, and age at onset.

The three latent factors found to be underlying the neuropsychological variables were:-

- Verbal/Memory/Executive (VME) consisting of measures of verbal ability, memory, and executive/attention skills.
- Rapid Naming/Working memory (RN/WM) consisting of measures of rapid naming and auditory-verbal working memory.
- Psychomotor (PM) consisting of psychomotor tasks.

It was hypothesised that all three neuropsychological factors would predict academic achievement, with each factor predicting an area of achievement to different degrees. It was further hypothesised that demographic, seizure, and psychosocial variables would moderate the prediction process.

Fastenau et al. (2004) found that from the moderating variables only family mastery was found to have significant moderating effects. It could be argued that if instruments had been used to measure learned helplessness and self-concept then other moderating variables may have been significant. The authors confirmed direct effects between all neuropsychological factors and academic achievement. Family mastery moderated the relations between neuropsychological functioning and academic achievement in writing and reading.

Fastenau et al. (2004) concluded that academic achievement was less affected by neuropsychological deficits when children's homes were more organised and supportive. In homes that were disruptive, unsupportive and disorganised, neuropsychological deficiencies were related to much lower achievement.

These findings lead this paper on to the use of the ecological transactional model as a framework to organise risk and protective factors as identified in Savi's case.

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The ecological-transactional model

Similar findings to those of Fastenau et al. (2004) have been demonstrated in traumatic brain injury (TBI). Bozic and Morris (2005) cite research that indicates that post-injury outcome is likely to be worse for children recovering in families that offer a context of 'psychosocial adversity' (Fletcher et al., 1995; Taylor et al.,1995).

A useful way of representing Savi's case, which identifies risks and protective factors in her development and education is through an ecological-transactional model (Cicchetti and Lynch, 1993). Savi had a difficult and transient early childhood, she was taken in to the care system and has frequently moved area, home and school. I believe that the framework provides a useful scaffold to demonstrate the multiple factors involved in her difficulties. This report will look in turn at the risk and protective factors under the different levels identified by the framework.

Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) formulated the ecological transactional model to explain the combined influence of child mal-treatment and community violence on children's development and adaptation, however as Bozic and Morris (2005) demonstrate and Cicchetti and Lynch (1998) advocate, this model is applicable to the study of development more broadly as well as to other psychopathological conditions.

Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) conceptualised ecological contexts as consisting of various nested levels with differing degrees of proximity to the individual. Figure 1 illustrates Cicchetti and Lynch's (1993) model of child development. The macrosystem includes cultural beliefs and values that are prevalent in the societal and familial functioning. The exosystemic factors are the community and neighbourhood settings (including school) in which the child lives. The microsystem incorporates the family environment that the children and family

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create and experience. Finally, the ontogenic factors include the individual's own developmental adaptation and characteristics.

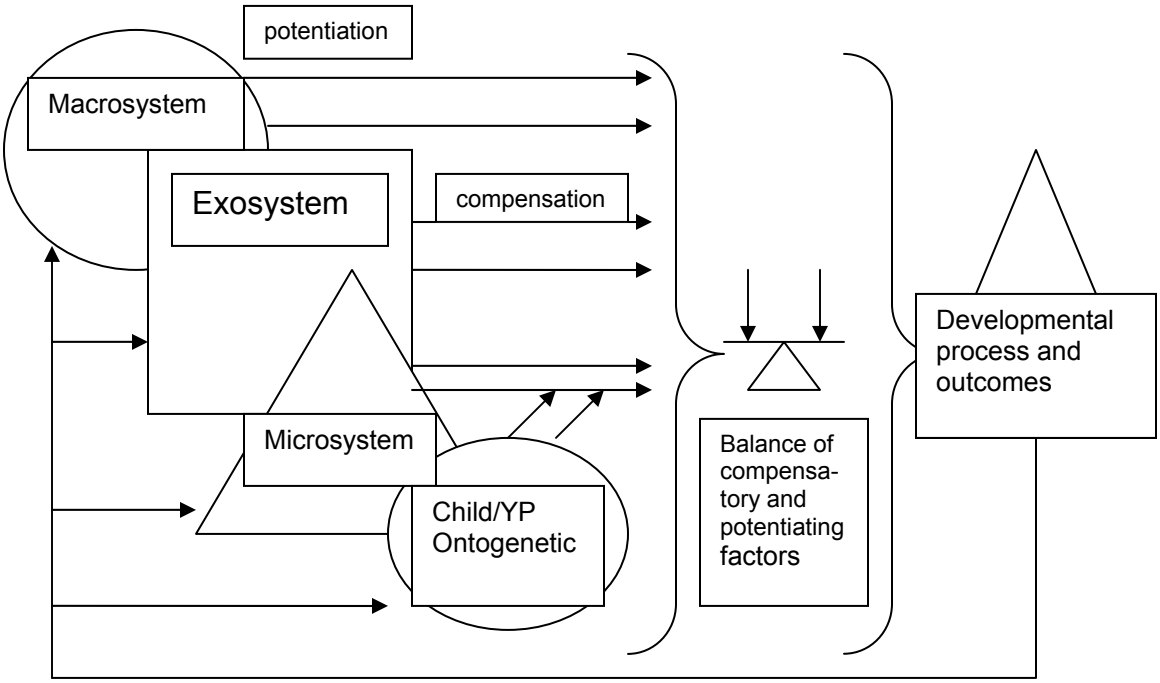

Figure 1: An ecological-transactional model from Cicchetti et al. 1993

Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) hypothesise that these levels of the environment interact and transact with one another over time and shape individual development and adaptation. The model highlights the complexities inherent in children's contexts and points out the need to explore a child's situation, needs or difficulties at various levels. Different levels of the ecology may be more or less relevant, however it is a useful way of organising the factors found from research on epilepsy and relevant aspects of Savi's experiences to demonstrate that whilst the ontological factors are not ignored it is important to take into account the other influences on her development.

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Ontogenic Factors

Seizure variables

There are many different types of seizure and each person's experience will differ. Seizures range from momentary absences to longer seizures during which people experience convulsions and lose consciousness. The type, length and severity of the seizure depend on the extent of the abnormal electrical activity and the particular part of the brain affected.

According to Fastenau et al. (2008) past studies examining the effects of various seizure variables on academic achievement have had differing results.

Inadequate *seizure control* in the form of AEDs and other medical interventions has been associated with low achievement in some studies (Aldenkamp et al. 1999; Williams et al. 1996; Zelnik et al., 2001; cited in Fastenau et al. 2008), but this has not been supported by other studies (Schouten et al., 2002).

Epilespy Action reports that children with 'severe forms' of the condition may have problems such as delayed development and learning difficulties. These more severe forms can be difficult to control with drugs and the child can continue to have seizures.

I would argue, after consulting evidence presented by Walker (2008), that prolonged and severe seizures may lead to acquired brain injury (ABI), which is a broad term that refers to structural change of brain tissue. Primary damage may occur to the brain at the time of the seizure, it may then become difficult to assess whether it is the epilepsy or the damage to the brain that causes later and prolonged difficulties. This would concur with the fact that an alteration to consciousness results in mild brain injury (Walker, 2008) which can result in long-term impairment affecting daily function and acquisition of scholastic skills,

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with pre-school children being disproportionately affected (McKinely et al., 2002; Tranel and Eslinger, 2000).

Savi's epilepsy condition has proved very difficult to control. She had been taking AEDs for two years which were continually increased in dosage without successfully controlling the seizures at night-time.

Early age of onset and duration of the condition has been associated with lower achievement (Seidenberg, Beck, Geisser, 1986; Bulteau, Jambaque and Viguier, 2000), yet others have failed to find a relation (Bailet and Turk, 2000). This inconsistency in findings raises questions as to the relevance and importance that psychosocial factors have on the affects of the epilepsy. As Fastenau (2004) argues, evaluation of seizure variables in academic functioning needs to be done with the consideration of other variables, such as psychosocial factors, and how they might interact.

Medication

Hermann, Whitman, and Dell (1989) reported that academic achievement was lower for children taking more than one medication (polytherapy) than those on monotherapy. However this is a dated study and medical advances may mean that this is no longer true. The study was also done using parent ratings rather than standardized testing and was observed only in boys.

Lewis, Parsons and Smith (2007) conducted research to find out what young people understand about epilepsy. They used an online survey and also did face-to-face interviews with 22 children with and without epilepsy.

The majority of the young people with epilepsy said that they were taking medication. Many of those participating made reference to side-effects, suggesting that there were still unpleasant or undesirable aspects to taking medication even if it was successful in controlling seizures.

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One other student said his medication had affected his memory so *'I forget things quick'.*

Lewis et al. (2007) analysed their transcribed data using a coding method and found a frequent reference across all age groups was made to tiredness, either as a side effect of their medication or arising from the epilepsy itself.

Particularly relevant to the case of Savi are comments from two primary age children interviewed which suggest that 'these children felt that their nocturnal seizures could have a significant impact on their daytime activities, due to the subsequent tiredness' (Lewis et al., 2007).

Protective factors at the ontogenic level

Savi is a little girl who responds extremely well to the one-to-one support she receives in the classroom. She has a close relationship with the teaching assistant whom she trusts and reacts well to.

Savi is liked by her peers who are reported by teachers to have a protective role in terms of 'mothering her' in the classroom and playground settings.

Although Savi is underachieving academically she enjoys and experiences success in art and craft, showing a creative flair and skill.

Interventions at the ontological level

Lewis et al. (2007) identified areas for intervention and support for pupils with epilepsy in school following their research with young people:-

- Integrate basic first aid and epilepsy awareness in the health curricula.
- Keep systematic and regularly updated records concerning pupils with epilepsy and share with relevant staff.
- Ensure that teachers are adequately trained and aware about epilepsy.
- Implement a 'Buddy system' where older children can support younger ones by being aware of environmental triggers such as flashing lights.

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There are also interventions at an academic level in terms of differentiation of work and providing memory aids. It would also be beneficial for staff to have an awareness of the affects of fatigue in children within the learning environment.

Self-perception

Self-perception factors could be influenced under the ontogenic level, mircosytemic, exosystemic and macrosystemic level.

- Ontogenic factors – personal resilience
- Microsystemic factors – supportive key people
- Exosysytemic factors – the ethos of the school and communication within services
- Macrosystemic – the affects of others' cultural beliefs on self-perception

Personal resilience

Negative child attitudes and perceptions have been associated with poorer academic performance in children with epilepsy (Austin et al., 1998). This suggests that children's feelings and perceptions about their condition play an important role in shaping their experiences and ability to cope.

This concurs with Reuber and Monzoni's (2007) argument that the degree to which epileptic seizures cause a person with epilepsy to be 'disabled' is not only explained by the severity or the frequency of the seizures but also by their ability to cope with them. Reuber and Monzoni (2007) explain that the ability to deal with adversity is determined by a number of factors including the range of coping methods which the person has at their disposal. These coping methods may rely on support from key people as well as the person's own internal resilience. 'Compared to non-resilient children, a resilient child can resist adversity, cope with uncertainty and recover more successfully from traumatic events or episodes" (Newman, 2002).

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This ability to cope with uncertainty is especially true of children who are experiencing seizures and feel that they do not have control over when this may happen. It may be suggested based on research presented by Schofield and Beck (2009) that this is also a consequence of being a Looked After Child. Caplan et al.'s research (2008) supports this view in finding a higher rate of psychiatric diagnoses in subjects with poor seizure control. In addition they found that girls were 5.8 times more likely than boys to have an anxiety disorder diagnosis. Caplan et al.(2008) conclude that anxiety disorder is associated with increased seizure frequency and duration which may be in turn associated with a feeling of a lack of control and increased anxiety.

The next section of the paper moves on to consider the factors at the microsystemic level of Savi's life.

Microsystemic Factors

As previously discussed Fastenau et al.'s (2004) findings found that family environment moderates the impact of neuropsychological deficits on writing and reading. It was also concluded that neuropsychological deficits have a smaller impact on achievement for children in supportive and organized homes compared with children in unsupportive and disorganized homes.

The scale used to measure family environment was the Family Inventory of Resources for Management (FIRM) (McCubbin et al. 1996) consisting of 18 items measuring family planning and problem solving, decision making, cooperation among family members, distribution of responsibilities for household tasks, organization, ability to complete important tasks, emotional support and stress.

With regards to the Family Inventory of Resources for Management and Savi's home environment, reports from social services would indicate that Savi is, to a certain degree, lacking this protective factor of a supportive and organized home. Savi and her 3 half siblings have spent a period of time in foster care due to

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parental drug abuse and parental depression. Savi's mother expressed concerns about her daughter's apparent regression in terms of 'withdrawing into her own world' and becoming immature in her behaviour, since returning to live with her. Savi has known two different step-fathers, one of whom is known to the authority for domestic violence, and has no contact with her own father. The family has recently moved to a different area and Savi to a new school. This would be defined as a *risk at the microsystemic level* within the ecological framework.

Epilespy Action also highlights other areas within the family system brought on by the diagnosis of a child with epilepsy that may cause additional stress. These include the reactions of the parents to the diagnosis. Through trying to seek a reason for their child's epilepsy they may believe it is their fault or has been passed down genetically.

Parents may become overprotective towards their child at the expense of attention left available for other siblings. This can cause deterioration in family harmony and resentment by siblings.

Interventions at this level may include professionals working together to actively promote a positive microsystem around the child.

The area of self-perception could be discussed as a supportive factor at the microsytemic level of Savi's life, as she had a supportive and encouraging support teacher and peers who reportedly cared about her well-being and happiness. However, the concept of self-perception can be linked to all four levels of the framework as the previously demonstrated in the ontogenic section of this paper.

The community and school factors are discussed next in an exploration of the exosytemic level of the framework.

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Exosystemic Factors

Lewis et al. (2007) found that for some of the young people interviewed, epilepsy is an 'all-encompassing experience' and that feelings of shame, secrecy and stigma were common. Half of the primary aged group already described their epilepsy as 'embarrassing.' These findings highlight the powerful influence that the culture and society we are living in has over feelings associated with stigma towards certain conditions and concurs with Houston, Cunningham, Metcalfe & Newton's (2000) (as cited by Lewis et al. 2007) findings that it was striking how even young children were already aware of the stigma associated with epilepsy. This increases the risks of isolation, damage to self-esteem and feelings of rejection (Bozic and Morris, 2005).

Interventions at a exosystemic level

The work conducted by Lewis et al. (2007) identified further interventions for schools to support young people in dealing with their epilepsy. These included:-

- the need for schools to do more to promote understanding and awareness of epilepsy among the student population and the need for clear explanations about the condition to younger children with epilepsy to combat misconceptions.
- plan and provide opportunities to listen to the views of pupils with epilepsy (and their parents) to find out how *they* would like their epilepsy to be supported at school
- ensure pupils are told which teachers know about their epilepsy, and what they know about it - reassure pupils that they are valued members of the school and that they will be fully supported
- adopt a committed, whole school policy to supporting pupils with epilepsy and other health conditions and disabilities /impairments

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- involve the School Council in making decisions about how topics like this should /could be approached in school
- utilise a range of approaches for displaying information and raising awareness
- seek feedback from pupils about effectiveness of any information strategies and how they could be changed or improved

In Savi's case risks at the exosytemic level included the segregated manner in which services worked together. There were several professionals involved; the epilepsy nurse at the local hospital, the neuropsychologist, the educational psychologist, a social worker and the special needs coordinator at the school. At no point did any of the professionals come together to discuss their concerns and the best ways in which to support Savi. The neuropsychologist and educational psychologist worked in isolation of each other, despite the obvious benefits of joint working and sharing of knowledge. As Bozic and Morris (2005; p.112) point out, 'if information about a child is not shared between professionals there must be a higher chance that the child's needs are not met.'

This leads me on to the final part of the Ecological Transactional Model, which examines the macrosystemic factors. This report will now explore the relationship between clinical neuropsychology and educational psychology and the implications that a rejection of the medical model within the EP profession may have on the understanding of brain-behaviour relationship.

Macrosystemic Factors

I would suggest that the macrosystemic factors in this case include the culture and philosophies of the professions working towards supporting Savi. The embedded modes of working and the ethos surrounding the visions of services play a big part in influencing the assessment and interventions used by professionals.

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MacKay (2005) describes how the reconstruction movement in educational psychology highlighted a need for a wider, more systemic, consultative stance to be taken rather than a focus on individual assessment and intervention. He argues that there could be dangers that face the profession if the medical or 'deficit model' is rejected to an extent that EPs don't identify these variables and so fail to recognise their importance in the holistic assessment. Shah and Mountain (2007) agree that many people criticise the use of the medical model as it is viewed as reductionist. They point out that in the case of epilepsy biological explanation and treatment meant that it ceased to be a 'fearful phenomenon of demonic possession.'

McKay (2005, p.7) defines neuropsychology as 'the systematic study of brain-behaviour relationship' and clinical neuropsychology as 'the practical application of this discipline to the understanding and treatment of difficulties and disorders in learning, behaviour and development.' It would seem apparent, with such a definition, that educational psychology shares many of the features of clinical neuropsychology and together, as disciplines that contribute to the understanding of individual needs, they would compliment each other. Mackay (2005, p.7) believes that they have 'a close and interdependent relationship.'

MacKay (2005) goes on to identify five reasons which outline the increasing importance of neuropsychology for educational psychologists. The two of relevance to Savi's case are outlined below:-

- There have been significant advances in neuropsychology which have brought about increased awareness and knowledge about the neuropsychological correlates with areas of difficulty in reading, spelling, language disorders, memory and attention. These are areas that an EP is regularly involved in and assessments with Savi indicated difficulties in all these areas. Thus the understanding of Savi's context could have been increased and informed through neuropsychology.

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- When attempting to understand anomalous behaviour and development the discipline of neuropsycholgy has informed psychological theories. In Savi's case the type, duration and location of her seizures were important in the understanding of why she was experiencing difficulties in certain areas, such as expressive language.

MacKay (2005) draws on Bernstein's (2000) matrix of brain-context-development to highlight the strong emphasis that educational psychology places on context. This is embedded in the training of EPs and the promotion of an ecological model of assessment and intervention. This brings to light the values that are rooted in the educational psychology profession; the subsequent risks that this may have in cases such as Savi lie in a lack of knowledge on behalf of the EP of relationships between the brain and behaviour.

It also, as Fischer, Daniel, Immordino-Yang, Stern, Battro and Koizumi (2007, p.1) point out in relation to how neuroscience operates, suggests that in order to connect the mind, brain and education, research must 'move beyond the ivory tower into real-life settings.' The neuropsychologist and EP need to work together; the neuropsychologist's assessments would benefit from moving out of clinic based settings and into the environments in which children live and work and the EP's assessments would be enriched by the knowledge of the neuropsychologist. This is supported by Bruer (1997, p.15) who states, 'looking to the future, we should attempt to develop an interactive, recursive relationship among research programs in education, cognitive psychology and systems neuroscience.'

This paper would conclude that clinical neuropsychology can provide essential knowledge to cases such as Savi's and it is crucial that barriers within systems are overcome to promote and enable joint working across the two disciples.

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Conclusion

Savi's case was complex on several levels; the type of epilepsy and its control was not uncomplicated, her home situation was unsettled with a history of parental drug-taking and inability to cope, the professionals involved in Savi's case failed to come together to offer a service of joined-up working across health, education and social care.

The research on epilepsy and its effects on academic and behavioural aspects highlight an inconsistency in findings and demonstrate a need to explore the variables of each child individually. This may include seizure type, age at onset, duration, type of medication and, as Fastenau et al.'s (2004) study makes evident, the family environment.

The ecological-transactional framework illustrates some of the interplay between risk and protective factors which influence the academic and social development of pupils. In Savi's case the protective factors across the ontogenic, microsystemic, exosystemic and macrosystemic areas need to be nurtured and developed to provide more support to target her needs. Savi has many strengths which can be used by the school setting to create experiences of success and to nurture feelings of trust within key adults. Lewis (2007) suggests that children's feelings and perceptions about their condition play an important role in shaping their experiences and ability to cope with epilepsy, it is therefore important that Savi gets support in understanding her condition. This needs to be done with an awareness of the interplay between Savi's feelings regarding her time in foster care with reference to loss and attachment issues and her locus of control.

At the microsytemic level the vulnerability of Savi's family situation was not being addressed and the ongoing stresses were not being supported. As Fastenau et al.'s (2004) research demonstrates, the family environment is an important factor in the implications of epilepsy on aspects of academic progress, therefore I would propose that professionals should be aware of the need to intervene appropriately to support families. Increasing communication across services and

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with families would be an important factor in minimising stress (Bergland and Thomas, 1991; Taylor, Droctar, Wade, Yeates, Stancin, and Klein, 1995).

Exosystemically, information needs to be available for teachers to aid their understanding of epilepsy and what implications it can have on success in the classroom. Ongoing assessment by EPs would help to ensure that appropriate provision is being made. As Bozic and Morris (2005) point out, appropriate services are more likely to be provided if there is good communication between health and education professionals. This was an area of weakness in the management of Savi's needs.

This paper explored some of the beliefs and philosophies held by different professionals and the extent to which they may hinder the understanding of the individual's needs. McKay's paper (2005) highlights the need to bridge the two disciplines of neuropsychology and educational psychology. It is proposed by McKay (2005) that the philosophical shift by EP practice and training away from the 'medical model' has resulted in a neglect to appreciate the full extent of the impact and influence that neuropsychological damage can have on a child's learning and social development. This paper has hopefully highlighted that lack of communication across services can contribute significantly to risk factors associated with successfully dealing with epilepsy.

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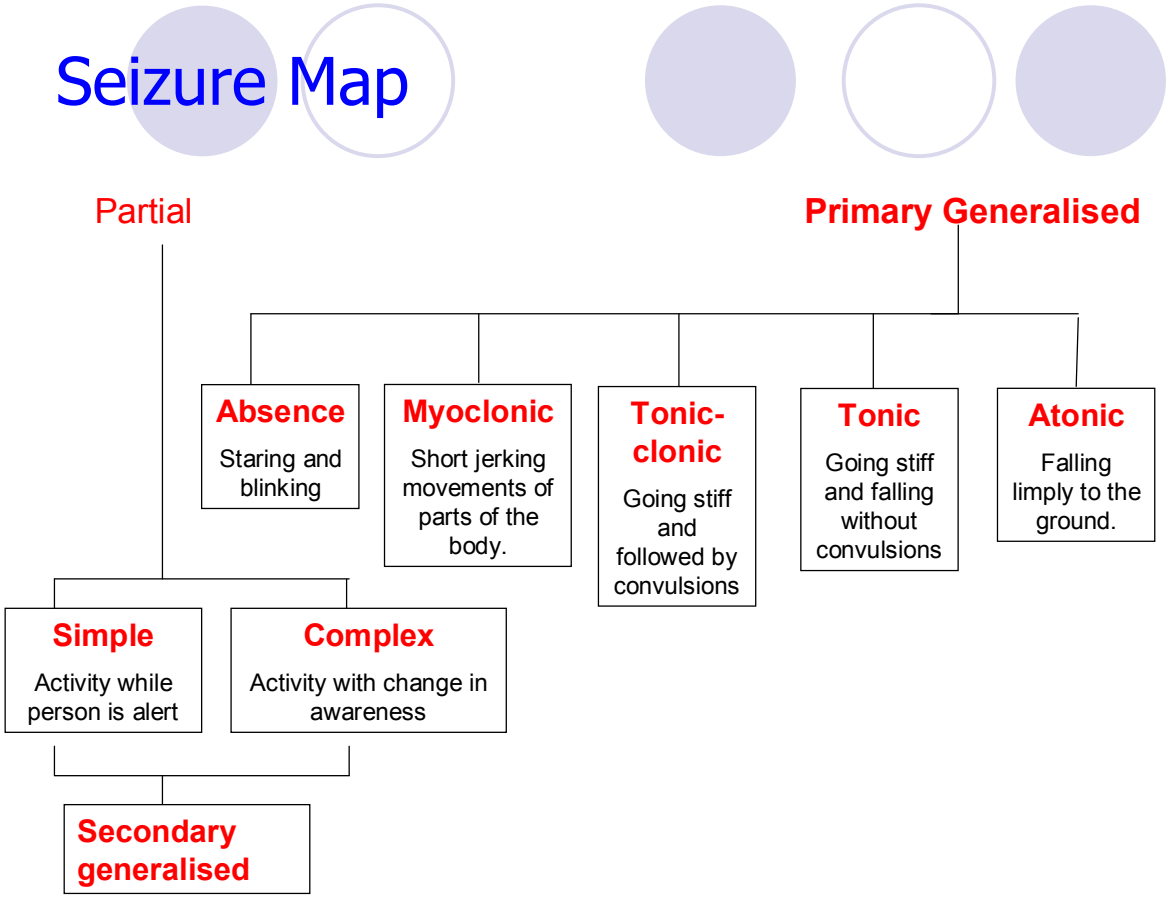
Appendix A: Seizure Map



An Evaluation of The Circle of Friends Approach – Peers as 'Instigators of Change.'

Aims of this Professional Practice Report

This Professional Practice Report (PPR) presents an evaluation of the Circle of Friends intervention. It aims to examine the theoretic foundations to the approach and look at existing literature surrounding the intervention.
Two case studies, Danny* and Zoe*, are discussed and the report presents two different approaches to the Circle of Friends; the traditional approach as offered by Newton, Taylor and Wilson (1996) and an adapted version by Shotton (1998). Comparisons are made between the two methods and conclusions drawn regarding the effectiveness of the Circle of Friends as an intervention to be advocated in educational psychology practice.
This PPR comprises:

- Section 1 – An introduction and background to the two case studies.
- Section 2 – An exploration of the background and the methodology of the Circle of Friends approach.
- Section 3 – An outline of the ethical considerations of implementing such interventions with children and young people.
- Section 4 – An exploration of the concept and theory of social competence.
- Section 5 – A critical overview of the literature and evaluation of Circle of Friends upon which the existing evidence base is formed.
- Section 6 - Details of establishing Zoe's circle are discussed and the results from the evaluation are presented.

*Names have been changed

- Section 7 – Details of establishing Danny's circle are discussed and the results from the evaluation are presented.
- Section 8 – The final part of the report draws conclusions from the evaluations of the process against the backdrop of the existing literature and evidence base.

1.1 Background to the cases

Case 1: Zoe

Zoe is a Year 4 pupil who attends the Education Inclusion Base (EIB) within her mainstream primary school. The EIB is a learning base for children who are on school action plus due to learning difficulties and are classed, under the authority's description, as having moderate learning difficulties. Zoe attends the base in the morning sessions for literacy and numeracy and returns to her mainstream class for breaks and for afternoon lessons.

Within the EIB Zoe receives small group teaching and highly differentiated activities. It was felt by teaching staff, based on academic progression, that Zoe's academic needs were being suitably met in the base; however concerns existed regarding Zoe's social experiences of school. Teaching staff felt that she did not have any consistent friendships within her class and that this isolation was perhaps being exacerbated by spending half the day in the EIB. Zoe's teacher felt that she was becoming increasingly aware of her lack of friendships and that this was affecting her emotional wellbeing.

As the educational psychologist involved, I recommended the Circle of Friends approach as an intervention to help build friendships for Zoe and improve her social skills. Through discussion with the class teacher it became apparent that there were several other children in the class who would also benefit from such

an intervention and I decided that Shotton's (1998) approach to Circle of Friends may be more suitable. This decision was based on two factors:-

- Shotton's approach does not single out the target child, which means that the facilitation of friendships can be done more broadly across a group of pupils.
- Zoe presented as being socially neglected rather than socially rejected, which is what Shotton's (1998) approach focuses upon. This was based on baseline assessments made using Friendship Circles and Sociometry (see section 6.0 for more details).

Case 2: Danny

Danny is a Year 8 pupil at an all boys selective Catholic Grammar School. Danny has lived with his maternal grandmother since the death of his mother two years ago. His mother's death was due to drug and alcohol addiction. Danny lives in an area of high socio-economic deprivation and has had EP involvement since year 4 of primary school due to behavioural difficulties.

Despite facing such adverse life events, Danny successfully passed the entrance examination to the grammar school at the end of Year 6.

The learning mentor at the school contacted me to request my involvement at the start of Year 8. Danny was becoming increasingly unpopular with his peers and with staff who were finding his behaviour highly disruptive. He was becoming socially rejected within school.

Danny has been given a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) by the community paediatrician and has been prescribed medication. The school had also referred him to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service; however Danny was reluctant to engage with this service.

After discussion with Danny, the learning mentor and Danny's Grandmother, it was agreed that a Circle of Friends approach may be beneficial in increasing the

understanding and empathy of Danny's peers and teachers, whilst also supporting Danny in self-regulating his behaviour.

2.0 Circle of Friends

The Circle of Friends approach originated in Canada and in the United States as a way to include children with disabilities in mainstream schools and to support the process of including people with disabilities in their local communities (Snow & Forest, 1987; Forest & Lusthaus, 1989). The approach has been used in the United Kingdom with children of varying ages and a range of difficulties emotional, behavioural and social difficulties and specifically with the social and communication difficulties associated with autistic spectrum disorder (Newton, Taylor, & Wilson, 1996; Shotton, 1998; Taylor, 1996, 1997; Smith & Cooke, 2000).

The approach enlists the help of peers and sets up a special group or 'circle' of friends around the 'focus' child. Initially a discussion is held with the child's class, the focus child is not present at this discussion. During this session volunteers are sought to take part in the circle. The circle of friends, including the focus child, normally meets weekly to carry out activities, to problem solve and discuss how the difficulties the focus child has with peer relationships can be overcome.

2.1 Class discussion

The whole class discussion is usually facilitated by someone from outside of the school, such as an educational psychologist (EP), with the class teacher present. As the focus child is not present at this discussion the reasons for speaking about them in their absence are talked about with the class. The class is asked to identify the focus child's strengths, before being asked to talk about their difficulties.

The facilitator then talks about friendship and this is explored with the aim of highlighting the feelings and behaviours that may be engendered by a lack of friendship. Links are then made explicitly to the focus child's behaviours and suggestions are sought for supporting the pupil. The aim of the session is to elicit empathic understanding from peers, a more positive connotation of the 'problem' behaviour and the role that social isolation may have in exacerbating the problem. Pupils may then begin to realise that social inclusion may help to solve the problems.

2.2 Shotton's (1998) adapted version

Shotton's (1998) approach is aimed at 'socially neglected' children and was adapted from the usual procedure as outlined by Newton et al. (1996). Shotton believes that there is a group of children for whom the original technique is not as appropriate. These pupils include those who have a heightened sense of awareness regarding their social isolation and who often withdraw rather than 'act out.'

Shotton (1998; p.23) argues that to hold a class discussion, which focuses solely upon the socially neglected child 'would be an insurmountable ordeal which they may not wish to face and which may in fact heighten their feelings of isolation further.' The adapted approach holds the class discussion with the target pupil present and the EP leads a general discussion about friendship and feelings of isolation and loneliness; at no point is the pupil singled out. An invitation to be a part of a group that meets weekly with the aim of getting to know one another better and become friends is put out to the class and a circle is formed which includes the target pupil.

2.3 Socially Rejected and Socially Neglected

A distinction has already been made between Danny and Zoe's cases in terms of social rejection versus social neglect. Asher and Dodge (1986) identify neglected

children as those who, although they lack friends, are not disliked by classmates. Rejected children, by contrast, are disliked by others. Asher and Dodge (1986; p.444) argue that it is important to identify and make a distinction between the two based on four factors:-

1. The two groups show distinct behavioural profiles; rejected children are more likely than neglected children to exhibit aggressive and disruptive behaviour.

2. Rejected children are more likely to remain unaccepted by their peers as they move into a new setting, whereas neglected children are more able to make a fresh start.

3. Neglected children and rejected children differ in the amount of loneliness and social dissatisfaction they experience: rejected children report more loneliness than neglected children do (Asher & Wheeler, 1985).

4. Rejected children are more likely to experience serious adjustment problems in later life.

Overall, Asher and Dodge (1986) suggest that rejected children are a group at risk, whereas the risk status of neglected children is less clear. It must be noted that these observations and conclusions were made over two decades ago, however researchers have continued to draw and build upon the concepts of social rejection and neglect (Barrett & Randall, 2004; Roffey, Tarrant & Majors, 1994; Bullock, 1992).

In the case of Zoe, teachers reported that she was having few interactions with peers and was being 'neglected,' whereas Danny was experiencing a high rate of peer interaction, but these were unsuccessful and he was being 'rejected.' I would question the reliability of these judgements as they are based on unstructured observations and without a full exploration of the dynamics of the peer groups involved.

3.0 Ethical Considerations

Shotton's argument for a more sensitive approach to intervention with a socially neglected child highlights ethical issues that the EP must ensure to be mindful of when involved in planning interventions for children and young people.

The EP must ensure that the pupil has a full understanding of what the intervention will entail before they give their consent for it to go ahead. When talking about participation in research, some writers (Lewis, 2004) have made a distinction between consent and assent to participate. Consent is defined as where gatekeepers, such as parents and school staff, agree to pupil involvement on behalf of the child. Assent is when the child agrees to participate. In addition to this it is the EP's responsibility to uphold the child's right to dissent, or withdraw their consent, to an intervention at any stage (British Psychological Society, 1993).

In the Circle of Friends approach both consent and assent are required; however, as David, Edwards and Alldred (2001) highlight, assent and the process by which it is ascertained is a complex issue. As an EP, the access to the identified pupils is through the educational settings; this brings with it educational discourse and school etiquette. For example, the pupil's involvement in the preliminary consent-seeking stage is almost assured as school etiquette dictates that when an adult comes to meet with a child it is expected that the child will not refuse to cooperate (David, et al. 2001). David et al. (2001, p.364) conclude that a straightforward notion of children and young people's right or freedom to choose to participate in social research on the basis of the provision of adequate and appropriate information in the school setting 'seems naïve.' With specific reference to the Circle of Friends approach, it needs to be recognised that the consequences of the procedure for the pupil at different stages will be unknown at the outset as they are dependent on the reactions and interactions of the peers and themselves as the focus child.

David et al. (2001, p.348) point out that consent is often viewed as a 'one-off' event at the outset, where the young person is presented with the information to 'know' and 'understand' what they are 'getting themselves into.' However, it has been argued that consent must be renegotiated over time (Morrow, 1999). This approach would ensure that any unforeseen discomfort or negative feelings experienced throughout the intervention could be dealt with through withdrawal if necessary.

When dealing with an intervention for a socially neglected child with the aim to improve opportunities for friendship development, the child's right to choose to be alone must be recognised. As EPs we need to ensure that interventions are not carried out due to society's construction of what is normal childhood behaviour and development, it has to be what the child or young person wants. As Byrnes (1985, cited in Asher & Dodge, 1986) warns 'the qualities of being a loner should come from a position of choice, not from fear or extreme discouragement.'

4.0 Social Competence

This professional practice report argues that the Circle of Friends approach is an intervention designed to increase an individual's social competence whilst at the same time influencing the peer groups' understanding and empathy of an individual's situation. The approach meets the most widely accepted view that human behaviour is influenced by interactions between the personal (cognitive and behavioural) and environmental variables (Lewin, 1936; Bandura, 1977).

The notion of social competence is described by Dam and Volman (2007, p.281) as referring to 'the totality of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable a person to perform tasks and solve problems within a specific social practice.' It is not just about learning skills in isolation, it is about successfully applying them in

social situations. Desbiens and Royer (2003, p.123) stress that peers can be used as role models to guide, promote, reinforce and initiate social interaction with children in difficulty. They go on to postulate that by adopting the appropriate and desired social behaviour peers can serve as 'instigators of change' and the involvement of peers outside of the formal sessions can assist the children in maintaining their newly acquired skills. Desbien and Royer (2003) conclude that without peer acceptance newly learned social behaviour is unlikely to be maintained or transferred to other environments.

Dam and Volman (2007) highlight the differentiation made in literature between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of social competence.

- Interpersonal aspects of social competence include contact with peers, friendships, and working and solving problems together (Beelman, Pfingsten & Losel, 1994).

- Intrapersonal elements include self-respect and self-control or self-regulation (Beelman et al. 1994).

Dam and Volman (2007) identify a third dimension as discussed in the literature; the societal dimension. This refers to the understanding and knowledge about a society and the ability to deal with cultural differences (Kaplan, 1997; Kerr, 1999; Soloman, Watson, & Battistich, 2001; Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Young people need to be able to follow social rules that apply to different situations and be able to respect and understand others' viewpoints. This is developed further by Dodge, Pettit, McClasky and Brown (1986) who developed an interactive model of social competence in children. An adapted version is shown in Figure 1:-

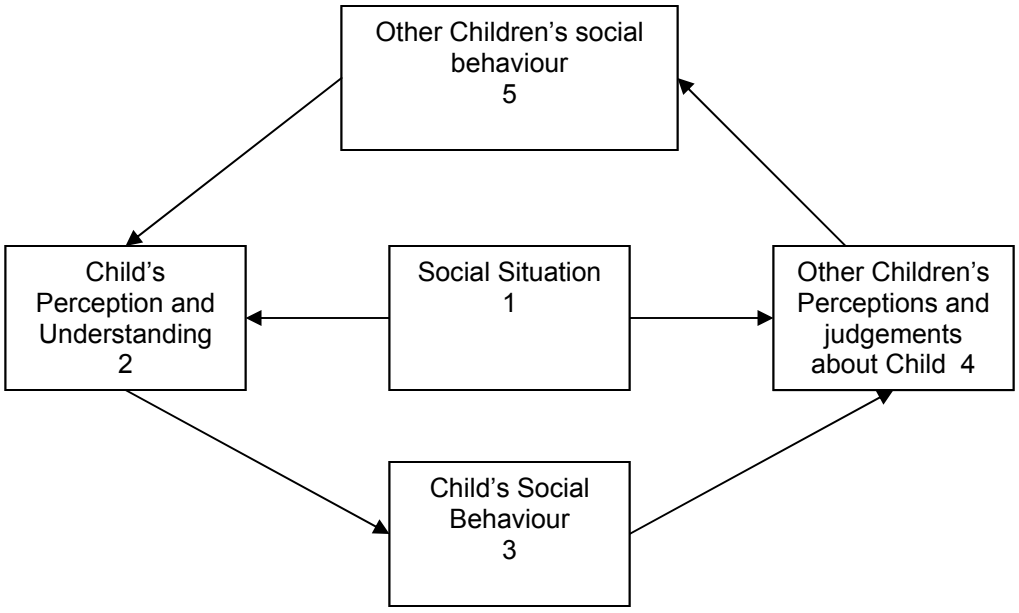


Figure 1. A Model of Social Competence in Children (Adapted from Dodge et al., 1986).

Frederickson and Turner (2001) examine each stage of the circular model and its chains of causality and interactions between individual and environmental influences.

- Stage 1: The social situation influences the child's perceptions of their own and others' behaviour.
- Stage 2: Cognitive factors are highlighted in terms of the child's perception of, understanding of and skills to deal with, the situation.
- Stage 3: The behaviour selected is executed, but the effect on the child's acceptance or rejection by their peers will depend on their interpretation of it at stage 4.

- Stage 4: How the child's peers interpret their behaviour at stage 3 depends on their attributions of the behaviour to factors either within or outside the child's control.

- Stage 5: The peer groups' behavioural response to the child will be processed within the context of the ongoing social situation.

The Circle of Friends approach has a particular impact on Stage 4 of the model. Within the class discussion factors are explored which help to shift the attitudes of the child's peers from anger and rejection to sympathy and acceptance. Frederickson and Turner (2001) explain that it is the failure to utilize the social effects of the classroom at stage 4 that 'limits the generalization and maintenance of outcomes from intervention programmes that focus on the social cognitions and behaviours of individual pupils.' Therefore it could be argued that this feature is a strength of the Circle of Friends approach.

Self-regulation is considered to be an important element of social competency (Veuglers & Vedder, 2003). This was an area that Danny struggled to control; he would react inappropriately, aggressively and disruptively in lessons. At Stage 4 of Dodge et al.'s (1986) model Danny was being rejected by his peers because of his inappropriate reactions to social situations.

With reference to Dam and Volman's (2007) discussion and identification of social competence, Zoe was finding it difficult to interact successfully due to her lack of interpersonal skills; she found it difficult to access the social norms of her peer group in terms of being included in their friendship groups. Research on social competence (Beelman et al., 1994; Hunter & Elias, 2000) pays particular attention to skills such as social communicative skills and the ability to change perspective. Zoe had become withdrawn due to her lack of social communicative skills and her difficulties with receptive and expressive language, as identified by

the speech therapist, served to exacerbate these difficulties. This perpetuated the cycle of poor social competence as she became less confident. Dam and Volman (2007, p.287) suggest that a certain level of self-confidence and a positive self-image 'are essential to be able to behave in a socially competent way.'

Both Danny's and Zoe's difficulties can be related to a third differentiation as identified by Raver and Zigler (1997), of the difference between people's capabilities and their social behaviour. A person's capabilities refers to their social skills and/or social abilities which Raver and Zigler (1997) suggest, in certain situations, may not be reflected in a person's behaviour; they may under-perform in threatening social situations. I would argue that Danny's behaviour was perhaps a reaction to feeling threatened and angry in an environment that was not addressing his sense of loss. No bereavement work had taken place with Danny. I believe that some of Zoe's social behaviour had developed from isolation from peers in the EIB, which had impacted on her feelings of belonging and so damaged her self-confidence. In both cases I believe that their true social capabilities were being masked by their poor social behaviour.

In order to realise the pupils' social capabilities Goleman's (1996) identification of developing emotional intelligence relates well to the factors involved. He has written about the need to develop emotional intelligence in response to withdrawal, anxiety, depression, attention and thinking, and aggression. Goleman (1996) suggests a 'self-science' curriculum that Sharp (2001) argues underpins all of the peer-led care approaches, including Circle of Friends. It also relates to the dimensions of social competence identified by Dam and Volman (2007); it adds a set of skills that enable more accurate interpretation of social situations and selection of behaviours, awareness of feelings, effective management of change, self-control and regulation and understanding the consequences of behaviour.

Table 1 sets out the self-science curriculum. I met with Zoe's class teacher and Danny's form tutor and learning mentor to identify areas of the self-science curriculum that could be further developed through the weekly group sessions. The areas highlighted in red indicate the skills that were identified as being underdeveloped for Zoe, the ones in green are Danny's areas of identified difficulty. The areas highlighted in blue are relevant in both cases.

The table highlights the fact that although Zoe is a socially neglected child and Danny is a socially rejected child, there are a lot of shared areas for development. The identified areas can be used as a basis for the weekly meetings and peer support can provide a collaborative basis upon which to develop these skills. Although I recognised that the profiles were based on the subjective view points of the teaching staff, I found this to be a useful framework to share with the adults at the two schools in order to keep the discourse solution focussed.

Self-awareness:	Self-monitoring and recognition of feelings; building a vocabulary of feelings; making links between thoughts, feelings and behaviour;
Personal decision making:	Self-monitoring of actions and recognition of their consequences; distinguishing between thought-led and feeling-led decisions;
Managing feelings:	Self-monitoring of 'self talk'; challenging negative self-messages; recognising triggers for strong feelings; finding ways of handling fears, anxieties, anger, sadness;
Handling stress:	Self-monitoring for signs of stress, recognition of sources of stress, learning to use relaxation methods;
Empathy:	Understanding others' feelings and concerns; recognising that different people have different perspectives and trying to work these out;
Communications:	Talking about feelings, developing listening and question asking skills, differentiating between what someone actually says and does and your interpretations or judgements of this; using 'I' messages and other assertive language; avoiding blame language;
Self-disclosure:	Building trust into a relationship, valuing and respecting openness; judging when it is appropriate to talk about personal feelings;
Insight:	Self-monitoring and recognition of patterns in emotional reactions in self and others;
Self-acceptance and positive attribution:	Identifying links between effort and achievement, acknowledging success, feeling pride and having a positive view of self, recognising strengths and weaknesses, being able to laugh at self;
Personal responsibility:	Taking responsibility for self-management, recognising consequences of actions and decisions; accepting feelings and moods, persisting to achieve goals and commitments;
Assertiveness:	Stating your concerns and feelings without anger or passivity, with mutual respect for self and others;
Group dynamics:	Understanding how groups work; self-monitoring of own contribution to group effectiveness; co-operation and collaboration, leading and following;
Conflict resolution:	Understanding the difference between need and want, using a 'win/win' model for negotiating solutions.

Table 1. The self-science curriculum (Goleman, 1996)

Red Identified undeveloped skills for Zoe Blue Relevant areas for development in both Danny and Zoe Green Identified underdeveloped skills for Danny

5.0 Existing Evaluations of Circle of Friends

The work that was originally published on the process of Circle of Friends has reported positive results using qualitative case study data (Newton et al., 1996; Shotton, 1998). In 2005, Frederickson, Warren and Turner (2005) argued that systematic information about the impact of Circle of Friends was needed and that few evaluations had been conducted.

Newton et al. (1996) claim that the outcomes for children involved in the approach, not just the target child, are positive in a number of areas:

- Development in empathy created through an increased understanding of the focus child's point of view.
- Development in problem solving skills through discussions in the weekly meetings about how best to support the focus child.
- Development in listening skills when meeting weekly in order to agree on a way forward.
- Development in the ability to express and identify feelings, which is nurtured through the safety of belonging to an accepting group.
- Development in understanding the links between feelings and behaviours.
- Increased awareness of an individual's power to change.

Through examination of the above list of claims it is observed that the benefits, which all relate to Goleman's self-science curriculum, are focussed on the peers involved in the process rather than the target child.

Newton et al.'s (1996) paper draws the above conclusions based on sections of transcripts from group meetings. It is not made clear as to how the narratives were recorded or even if the researchers were present. It could be argued that

sections have been selected and interpreted to confirm what the researchers hoped would be an outcome.

It has also been pointed out by Whitaker et al. (1998) that it is not possible from such studies to establish whether any changes reported can be reliably attributed to Circle of Friends. For example, Shotton's (1998; p.24) conclusions state that she and the form teacher noticed that the target pupil was 'beginning to become much more talkative.' This is a subjective observation with no measurements to compare a before and after effect. It could be argued that this evaluation is subject to confirmatory bias and there is no evidence that a child becoming more talkative is solely due to the Circle of Friends.

5.1 Research Findings

Barrett and Randall (2004)

Barrett and Randell (2004) investigated the effectiveness of implementing the version advocated by Shotton (1998). This was conduced as a case study on a child from a Year 3/4 class. A sociometric questionnaire (Frederickson, 1991) was given to each child in the group before and after the intervention. At the end of the intervention, pupil, staff and parent evaluation questionnaires were distributed and a whole-class discussion was held to gather the views of the class members who had not been involved in the circle.

The results indicated limited impact on the focus child's peer relationships, although general effects for the other class members were slightly more positive in terms of their perceptions of the quality of their own social skills.

There are many limitations to this study; it involves an evaluation of the approach for just one child for whom the approach may have been unsuitable and the head teacher co-led the groups rather than the class teacher or teaching

assistant, which limited the generalisation of new skills to the classroom. The child was described as socially 'rejected' by his peers, rather than socially 'neglected' indicating that the Newton et al. (1996) model may have been more appropriate.

Smith and Cooke (2000)

Another factor involved in the evaluation of the Circle of Friends approach is the issue of variations made in the delivery of the approach. Smith and Cooke (2000) discuss a preventative approach to behaviour management which is 'influenced by the Circle of Friends' work. The Circle of Friends model provided a rationale for a structured whole class friendship topic, which was delivered daily in circle-time. Particular times were set aside for the child to engage in periods of cooperative play where play skills were modelled and appropriate behaviour rewarded. I would argue that this variation is considerably removed from the traditional approach as outlined by Newton et al. (1996) and from the alternative approach advocated by Shotton (1998). I would raise the question: to what degree of variation in an approach should an educational psychologist claim to base an evidence based intervention on?

Frederickson and Turner (2001)

In 2001 Frederickson and Turner conducted research to evaluate the impact of the Circle of Friends approach on different aspects of social competence. The sample consisted of 20 primary aged pupils in one English county who were randomly assigned to one of two groups within each year group. Baseline measurements were administered to all the participants.

Group 1 received an intervention during phase 1 while group 2 were used as a comparison group before receiving an intervention during phase 2. In

intervention phase 1 the pupils in group 1 received the Circle of Friends programme over a six week period. Group 2 pupils received 20-30 minutes per week in a small group with staff reading a story with a friendship theme. Assessment measurements were repeated and phase 1 utilized a between groups pre-post design. In phase 2 of the study, group 2 children received a Circle of Friends programme and a within subjects design was implemented.

The measurements used were targeted to evaluate change at each stage of Dodge et al.'s (1986) model.

- The Sociometric Rating Scale Measure (Asher & Dodge, 1986) provides information at stage 4 of the model: other children's perceptions and judgements about the focus child.

- The Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) is designed to assess children's self-perceptions and provides information at stage 2 of the model.

- The Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behaviour (Harter, 1985), parallels the Self Perception Profile for Children and provides information at stage 3 of the model.

- The short form My Class Inventory (MCI-SF) (Fraser & Fisher, 1986) consists of 25 items which can be used to measure primary aged pupils' and teachers' perceptions of their classroom learning environment. This provides information about stage 1 of the model.

The results from both intervention phases indicate a significant positive impact of the Circle of Friends approach on the social acceptance of the focus children in their classroom peer groups. The approach did not have a significant impact on the focus children's perceptions of their social

acceptance or behavioural conduct, teacher ratings of behavioural conduct or the general learning environment.

It must be noted that the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) has been criticised in other research in terms of the stability of the factor structure (Shevlin, Adamson & Collins, 2002). This means that the reliability estimates are lower than reported by Harter (1986). Shevlin et al. (2002) also warn researchers about the 'Socratic Effect' when using the tool. This refers to the reliability of the items increasing if the same questions are asked of the same respondents more than once. Implications of this effect are that the practice of administering the test at a single point in time and making inferences from the results may be unsuitable. Shevlin et al. (2002) explain that the first test will be contaminated with measurement error, the reliable component being small in comparison with later administrations. A way to counter this effect would be to familiarise the subjects with the items before taking a measurement.

The conclusions drawn by Frederickson and Turner (2001) are that:

- The Circle of Friends approach appears to be a useful means of changing other children's perceptions and judgements about a focus child.
- Where needs are identified in relation to other aspects of social competence, the approach needs to be supplemented by interventions effective in addressing these.

When examining these conclusions the longevity of change in other children's perceptions and judgements and how effective the approach is in maintaining this change needs to be considered. The duration of the intervention period over which change was evaluated was only six weeks; longer term follow up would be needed to explore the maintenance of the gains that were observed.

Another important observation to make is the gender bias of the sample used; only one of the participants was female. This means that the results of the study can not be generalised to apply to girls.

Frederickson, Warren and Turner (2005)

Frederickson, Warren and Turner (2005) aimed to test the following hypotheses:

1. that the largest improvements in social inclusion would result from the whole-class meeting components of Circle of Friends;

2. that further improvements in social inclusion would be apparent during the small group component of the programme but only from ratings by the pupils who are members of the small group;

3. that positive changes in social inclusion would be associated with subsequent improvements in behaviour, including peer-rated assessment of behaviour.

Using a small sample of 14 primary aged pupils, 11 boys and 3 girls, data were collected at four points in time: before and after the whole class meeting, within a week of the last weekly circle meeting and a term after the last meeting.

The study found that scores taken from the questionnaire from the Social Inclusion Survey (SIS) (Frederickson & Graham, 1999) changed significantly as a result of the whole class session, so supporting the first hypothesis. There was no support for the second hypothesis that the weekly circle meetings resulted in further enhanced or reduced rejection. Over time, for the children who had not been a part of the Circle of Friends, a return to baseline scores was apparent in their acceptance scores. There was some longer-term reduction of rejection

ratings from former circle members, however there is no evidence that this is related to their participation in the circle.

To summarise, the available research on the evaluation of Circle of Friends reports mixed conclusions. The earlier case-based research (Newton et al.,1996; Shotton, 1998) reports positive anecdotal evidence for successful outcomes of the approach, whereas the more systematically led research (Frederickson & Turner, 2001; Frederickson, Warren & Turner, 2005) reports more limited success in terms of change in the self-perception of the target child and the maintenance of change in the peer group. Explanations for these differences include the influence of variables such as; the differences in skill with which circle sessions were led and structured; the quality of support for adaptation and generalisation between sessions; and the varying and very individual nature of the needs of the target child.

6.0 Establishing Zoe's Circle

The intervention in Zoe's case began with a whole class input around the theme of friendship, which I delivered with the class teacher and teaching assistant (TA) present. This was followed with six weekly group sessions of an hour. I ran the group sessions alongside the TA, with the aim of training the TA to be able to run the groups independently in the future.

All the pupils in the class were asked to write down if they wished to be considered to take part in the weekly friendship group. In order to ensure that they were informed of what they were consenting to I gave them details of what the structure of the group sessions would be like. This was presented in a way that I felt was understandable to the children and I also ensured that, as Ward

(1997) warns against, the parents were not overlooked. Parents were sent consent forms and to sign and were invited into school, if they desired, to speak to the class teacher in more detail. There were issues to be mindful of when seeking the consent of the pupils to take part, particularly Zoe, as her literacy, expressive and receptive languages were below that of her peers. As Cocks (2006) states informed consent relies on a specific set of interactions: (1) presentation of information (2) understanding the information and (3) responding with consent being given or withheld.

This relies on the child being able to assimilate information and respond to it. I feel that Zoe was informed about the process appropriately, although I feel more effort should have been made to contact her parents to ensure that they fully understood what they had consented to. Zoe's parents were reluctant to communicate with the school about all matters; I feel that this could be related to past personal experiences of schooling.

I planned each group session around the Circle Time structure as advocated by Mosely (1998). Each hour began with a warm-up game followed by an open discussion of problems and worries with an emphasis on friendship. The group were encouraged to problem solve to overcome worries and to offer helpful solutions to other group members. Each session ended with an individual action for the week as identified through the problem solving.

The group had ground rules, which included the need for confidentiality and to respect what other group members had to say. The group session took place at the same time every week and was held in a quiet and private room with comfortable chairs and drink making facilities. I believe these elements helped to create a safe and secure environment for discussion. A child within the group made a disclosure of physical abuse during one of the sessions. This was reported to the senior member of staff with responsibility for child protection. I

ensured that this was recorded and dealt with according to the authority's safeguarding guidelines.

Following the decision to use the Shotton (1998) approach as an intervention for Zoe, I incorporated a baseline measure in the initial whole class session using concentric circles, or friendship circles (Newton, 1996) and a sociometric questionnaire (Coie & Kupermidt, 1983).

Friendship circles

The pupils are given a copy of the circles as shown below in Figure 2 and asked to fill in each circle with names. The innermost circle includes those you care about most, the second circle defines your closest friends, circle three covers acquaintances, and circle four is for those people who are paid to be in our lives.

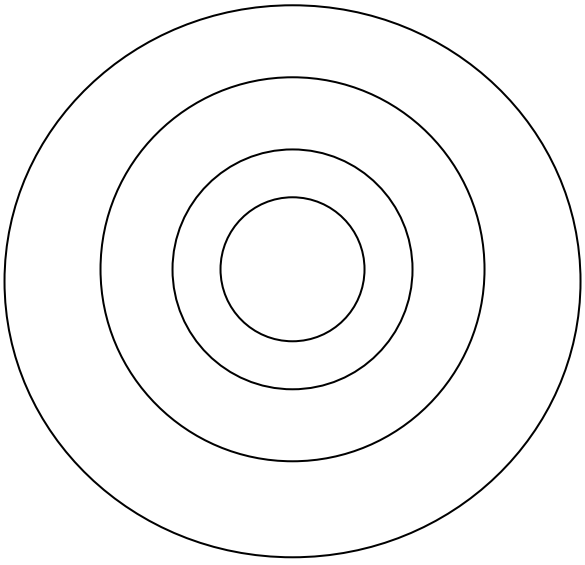


Figure 2: Friendship Circles (Newton et al. 1996)

The circles are used to elicit empathetic feeling in the group towards those who have very few people in their lives. The group is asked to say how they would feel if their second and third circles were empty. In this case, the circles also provided additional information regarding the friendships in the class and the situation for Zoe in terms of who, in her class, she thought of as being a friend.

Sociometry

Coie et al. (1982) developed a system of classification of individuals within a class in terms of their peer acceptance level. The questionnaire asks four questions for the pupils to respond to in written form;

1. Who do you meet up with/play with at break and lunch times?
2. Who do you consider to be close friends in your class?
3. Who would you like to get to know better?
4. Who do you find it difficult to work with in the class?

Shotton (1998) suggests that the results from the sociogram identify: the most popular individuals, the rejected individuals (identified as being difficult to work with), and the pupils who are neglected (receive very few nominations of friendship). I believe there to be several weaknesses in using the sociometry tool to select and baseline the pupils. Babad (2001) argues that the conventional definition as presented by Coie et al. (1982), that children receiving many liking nominations are popular, needs to be challenged. Babad (2001, p.24) states that the long term use of the term popularity to label children receiving many liking nominations in affective sociometry is 'erroneous and potentially misleading.' He explains that popularity is a social status, a position of power, dominance and influence in the classroom, which can often be characterised by higher levels of aggression. Children want to be close to popular children, but may not necessarily wish to have them as intimate friends. Babad (2001) concludes that

liking nominations cannot be labelled as popular but rather as a personal attractiveness for intimate friendship.

There were difficulties with the measurements used including: the confidentiality of the sociometry activity which was conducted in a classroom where pupils were sitting in close proximity to one-another; the literacy skills of some of the children meant that they needed support from the teacher to clarify the instruction and to write down the names resulting in outside influence on their choices.

More valid measurements of the friendship dynamics in the classroom may have been obtained through careful observation of the pupils in the classroom and on the playground. This would be an area to explore further for future baseline measurements of Circle of Friends as an intervention.

Baseline findings

Friendship Circles

The average number of names put down by the class in circles two and three was 12.88. Zoe's total was 6. Although this is below the class average, there was one other score of 6 and a score of 3. The difficulty with presenting an average is that the score can be skewed by a couple of particularly large numbers; in this case there were three scores of above 20. This could have been due to those particular children perceiving quantity as an important factor in the task. Zoe was named on two occasions in circle 3 indicating that she was viewed as an acquaintance to two pupils but not as a close friend to any of the class members.

Sociogram

Zoe was selected by two pupils as a child they would like to get to know better and by one pupil as someone they find difficult to work with. It needs to be recognised at this point that the concept of friendship has different meanings for different people and how one behaves with friends will differ from one individual to the next and from one group of friends to the next (Pratt & George, 2005). Furthermore, George and Browne (2000) describe friendship groups of girls as being focussed around a leader with a set of girls forming an 'inner circle' and an additional pool of girls who are on the periphery. This suggests that close friendship groups can be quite 'closed' and this could potentially affect the willingness of the girls to identify pupils outside of their group that they would want to become friends with. The friendship groups that existed within the girls in the class were clearly identifiable in the sociograms.

In collaboration with the class teacher, five other pupils were chosen to form a circle of friends alongside Zoe. The two pupils who had expressed a desire to get to know Zoe better were included along with the pupil Zoe had selected to get to know better, a pupil who had been identified by two children as difficult to work with, and a class member who was highlighted on the questionnaire as being particularly popular in the class. There were 4 girls and 2 boys in the group.

The validity of the responses made by the pupils is arguably weak due the friendship dynamics of the class and the lack of confidentiality when giving responses. The argument by Babad (2001) highlights the difficulty in measuring popularity through the use of 4 questions. Children may interpret these questions differently to how an adult may expect, drawing on their own intuitive conception, understanding and knowledge about the classroom processes, rather than simply nominating who they like.

6.2 Evaluation of Zoe's Circle of Friends Intervention

At the end of the intervention a whole class discussion was held in which a question was posed to the class in order to get a re-measure of sociometry within the class without replicating the initial questions used in the first session. I asked the children to name two people from their class whom they would want to be with on a desert island. Two pupils in the initial input had selected Zoe. In this follow-up question she was named on six occasions as a person to be with on a desert island. Four of these responses came from other circle members, whilst two came from class members who had not been involved in the weekly meetings.

This was particularly encouraging as it suggests that peer acceptance of Zoe increased since the approach had begun. The limitations of this evaluation are that this was a crude measure which was used to get some instant feedback at the end of the group session. The whole-class discussion took place only a week after the final meeting, so conclusions can not be made regarding the maintenance of the intervention. Also, the explanations for wanting to be on a desert island with the chosen pupils were not investigated, I am making an assumption that they were for positive reasons! Future exploration of immediate changes in friendship groups would have been better identified through the use of semi-structured interviews with the pupils around the theme of best friends and friendship. George and Browne (2000) found that this method provided them with some insights into the organisation of friendship groups and social networks.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire made up of 7 questions was devised for the purpose of evaluating the benefits of belonging to the Circle of Friends and was given to the

members of the group. I felt that it was appropriate to use a questionnaire format with 9 year old children as it has been suggested that from the age of 7 years it is feasible to collect quality data using this method (Borgers et al. 2000). See Appendix 1 for an example of the format. Morrow and Richards (1996, cited in Mishna, 2004) maintain that the biggest ethical challenge when researching an area with children involved, is created by the inequality in power and status between adults and children. Mishna (2004) suggests that the pressures of this inequality and the subsequent desire to please the adult may be experienced more if the direct interaction between the adult and child is increased. Therefore, it may be easier for a child to stop filling in a questionnaire than to stop an adult interviewer. This was another reason why I chose the questionnaire format, although Zoe's low literacy skills meant that an adult had to read her the questions and support her to record her responses thus negating these benefits.

The design of the questionnaire took into account the four key cognitive stages identified by Schwarz and Sudman (1996) that a respondent goes through when answering a well-designed question.

1. Comprehending the question
2. Retrieval of information from the memory
3. Making a judgement about the information needed to answer the question
4. Communicating the response

Bell (2007) asserts that if all stages are performed then the respondent has employed an optimising strategy to answer. If any stages are missed out then the respondent is said to have performed a 'satisficing' strategy. Satisficing means that the respondent appeals to some other principle in order to reach a response, e.g. choosing the first option on the list or always answering in the positive. Satisficing is more likely to occur if the vocabulary used is overly

complex or if the respondent is bored or disinterested in the topic. Bell (2007) claims that the quality of the question can determine the quality of the response. I ensured that the advice given through the research identified by Bell (2007) was taken into account when I was designing the questions and ensured that:

- The questions were not too long and used unambiguous and straightforward language
- The questions were direct and specific to the respondent
- Negatively phrased questions were not used

I consulted with a colleague upon the completion of the questionnaire as Bell (2007, p.467) highlights 'the application of several minds to the problem of questionnaire design can be invaluable.'

The first three questions are statements of a quantitative nature using a Likert scale of 0-5 to rate responses. It must be noted that with three of the group members the questions had to be read to them due to their level of reading ability. As a result caution must be taken when stating the responses as evidence of a positive effect; the children may have been saying what they thought was expected and desired by the teacher. Young children have a particular tendency to want to please the adults by being overly positive in their responses (Bell, 2007). They may also assume that the adult interviewer knows the 'right answers,' which can mean their responses are based on a fear of saying the wrong thing. With reflection I would have used completely labelled scales as this has been found to produce better quality responses from children than ones where only the two extremes are labelled (Borgers et al. 2003).

Question 1's statement is 'I have enjoyed taking part in the group.' All six children responded with a 5 'absolutely agree.' Question 2 asked, 'something has

changed in a good way since starting the group.' All six children responded with 5 and gave the reasons:

'We all know more about each other.'

'We have understood each other.'

'I've got to know people better.'

'I've made friends.' [Zoe's comment]

'Better at being kind to everyone.'

'Being able to talk about my dad.' [This child's father had died a year ago.]

Statement 3 is 'I have learnt something about myself or others in the group.' 5 children put a 5, one child put a 4 on the scale. Some of the things learnt cited by the group were:

'That I can make friends.' [Zoe's comment]

'It's fun to play along with each other.'

'I didn't know the people in the group and now I do.'

'The people in the group are easy to get along with.'

'It's good to make friends with more people rather than just my own friends.'

The questions 4 – 7 asked for more qualitative data and themes that emerged from the responses of the children were:

- All the group members felt closer to the other pupils in the circle.
- Knowing about others' family life has helped establish closer relationships.
- Trust was established between group members.
- All the pupils requested that the group continued to meet.

Zoe's class teacher and the teaching assistant, who was involved in the weekly running of the group, both felt that the process had been beneficial for Zoe in terms of forming friendships with those in the circle. Indicators of these positive results cited by the teacher were that Zoe was sitting next to a wider variety of pupils in carpet time and she was nominated as a potential candidate for the school council. This was viewed as great progress in the acceptance of Zoe as a member of the mainstream class.

7.0 Establishing Danny's Circle

Through collaboration with the school's learning mentor and with Danny's consent, I conducted the initial session based on Newton et al.'s (1996) Circle of Friends model with the whole of Danny's form group in his absence.

The Year 8 boys were able to talk about many of Danny's positive attributes; however when we began to discuss the areas of difficulty for Danny, a few of the pupils expressed their discomfort at talking about Danny 'behind his back.' They felt disloyal and the concept of talking negatively about a fellow pupil in his absence was contradictory of their school ethos.

This raises the ethical dilemmas as highlighted by Smith and Cooke (2000) faced by some teachers and EPs when conducting the traditional approach to Circle of Friends, namely:

- A group of pupils talking about a class mate in his or her absence

- The focus on one class member as having a deficit in social skills
- The placing of responsibility on a small circle of pupils for ameliorating the difficult behaviour of a peer.

The session concluded with the request for volunteers for the group that would meet weekly to support Danny. The boys were then selected randomly and parental consent was gained before the group sessions began. The learning mentor met with Danny to go through the class discussion and share the strengths and difficulties that the form group had identified. I felt that as the discussion had taken place it was right to share the views of the form with Danny. However, I do feel that this does raise ethical issues in terms of potentially causing emotional distress to the target pupil. This needs to be considered in terms of planning in a de-briefing session with the pupil at the end of the meeting and the following day in order to support them with any issues that this may have raised.

The weekly sessions ran for 6 weeks. I ran the first session with the learning mentor in order to model the format. The group began by setting ground rules of confidentiality and respect. Then the group problem solved together and identified ways to support Danny with different aspects of his behaviour. The following session would begin with a review of the week and a review of how successful the proposed actions had been. New targets and actions would be decided by the group each week.

7.1 Evaluation of Danny's Circle of Friends

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) was given to all of Danny's teachers and he was asked to fill in the pupil version. The SDQ is a brief behavioural questionnaire completed by parents, teachers of 4-16 year

olds and there is a questionnaire for self-completion by young people aged between 11 and 16 years old. Mathai (2008) describes the SDQ as a tool that focuses on strengths as well as difficulties. Mathai (2008) claims that the SDQ is a validated and reliable instrument which is used nationally in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

The SDQ focuses on 5 areas; emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems and prosocial behaviour. The SDQ was given to all teaching staff again post intervention and a whole class discussion was held 6 weeks after the final weekly circle meeting. All pupils in the form were given a questionnaire about the Circle of Friends process. See Appendix 2 for an example questionnaire. The questionnaire was devised with a chronology to the questions to aid memory recall as children are not likely to have the same level of recall as adults (Bell, 2007) and the questions were short with straightforward syntax as recommended by Bell (2007).

7.2 Questionnaire Results

The evaluation of Danny's Circle of Friends was carried out over an 8 month period from the point of establishing the circle to the final whole class discussion and questionnaire given to the form group at the end of the academic year. I believe the benefits to this longer-term evaluation are that some degree of maintenance can be assessed to the approach and a broader evaluation of the process can be made. It does, however mean that the quality of the data elicited from a retrospective question may be negatively affected (Bell, 2007). Scott (1997) states that the degree of adaptation to a standard questionnaire format is much reduced from the age of 11 years; this was recognised in the 'maturity' of the presentation of this questionnaire in comparison to the primary aged one. The pupils involved were all aged 13 and 14 years so the questionnaire given was of a more standard design than the one used in Zoe's case to reflect their maturity and cognitive ability. Adults were not needed to read the questions to

any of the pupils, this is due to the fact that it is a selective school and literacy attainment has to be of a certain standard in order to be offered a place at the school. However, there were confidentiality issues regarding the privacy of the environment in which the questionnaires were completed; it was in a classroom where all the pupils were together.

Danny completed a questionnaire of the same format and his responses expressed a belief that the approach had supported him well and that peer encouragement had made a positive difference to his behaviour. He felt that it may have been more successful if he had chosen the peers to form the group. Table 3 on page 36 presents a summary of the SDQ results. Danny's positive reports of the process correlate with his scores on the SDQ, which demonstrated a change of -6, which indicates that the post score of difficulties is lower. Positive changes have occurred in the areas of the 'peer problems scale' and the 'prosocial scale.'

From the questionnaire results, see Table 2 for a summary, it is apparent that the pupils who had been members of the circle felt that overall the process had been beneficial and that they had worked together to problem solve and try out hypotheses to support Danny in lessons. The learning mentor, who ran the weekly session, reported in a verbal reflection to me that two of the pupils in the circle were mostly reactive to suggestions; they would take on the role that was asked of them outside of the circle but were reluctant to offer suggestions. It was suggested by the learning mentor, that these pupil were less assertive and less comfortable with their role as a circle member. This raises issues regarding the importance of ensuring that pupils understand their right to withdraw from an intervention at anytime. Cocks (2006) highlights the fact that the researcher must constantly remain vigilant to the responses of the child or young person at all times. Assent from a child is not something that is gained at the beginning of the research and then put aside. I would argue that the same principle applies when including children and young people in interventions such as circle of

friends. The professional must be attuned to the non-verbal communications of the pupils and if they appear uncomfortable with their role they must be given an option to withdraw without any negative consequences.

The responses of Danny's peer group towards the effectiveness of the intervention were mostly positive. Table 2 presents a summary of the questionnaire findings from the quantitatively posed questions.

Question asked in the pupil questionnaire	%age of pupils in agreement	%age of pupils in disagreement	%age pupils who 'do not know.'
Do you think Circle of Friends has helped Danny?	79	17	4
Do you feel that you have had a role in the Circle of Friends?	21	79	0
Have you learnt anything from the process?	46	54	0

Table 2: A summary of the questionnaire findings from the quantitatively posed questions.

The questionnaire revealed that 79% of the 30 pupils in the form group felt that the Circle of Friends approach had 'helped Danny,' 4% weren't sure and 17% felt that it hadn't helped Danny. Perspectives on how it had helped Danny were mostly based on the decrease of disruptive behaviour in lessons. A theme that emerged from the negative responses was that the change in Danny's behaviour and attitude was lesson specific; he remained 'disruptive' in Spanish and Music.

46% of the form group felt that they had personally learnt something from the process; these responses included the following:-

'Being kind to a person can result in them being kind to you.'

'People can change with help from others.'

'To work with people is better than ignoring the problem.'

'Don't give up on a person.'

'Group sessions can help attitudes.'

'People can change.'

This demonstrates that the approach can yield positive results for many pupils, not just the target child.

7.3 The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Results

Table 3 presents the results from the pre and post scores given by teaching staff from the various subjects that Danny takes part in. Higher scores indicate a higher level of difficulty. The areas that the SDQ covers are presented separately in order to display the breakdown of the total difficulties score. Change +/- is the difference between pre and post group scores, + indicates change in a negative direction, - indicates change in a positive direction.

Table 3: Scores from the SDQ, Pre and Post measures

Area / Subject	Emotional Symptoms		Conduct Problems		Hyperactivity		Peer problems		Total Score		
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Diff
Danny – self-	5	4	4	3	7	6	4	3	20	16	-4
Art	4	0	3	3	10	9	6	4	23	16	-7
I.T.	1	1	4	3	10	6	3	2	18	12	-6
Religious Studies	3	0	3	0	7	6	3	5	16	11	-5
English	4	4	4	5	10	5	4	4	22	18	-4
Music	3	3	3	7	9	7	4	7	19	24	5
P.E.	6	3	4	3	6	5	4	2	20	13	-7
Technology	3	1	3	5	8	10	4	4	18	20	2
Spanish	1	2	2	4	10	10	2	1	15	17	2
Science	4	5	6	8	10	10	5	5	25	28	3
German	0	3	3	4	10	5	2	2	15	14	-1
History	4	3	3	3	6	5	6	5	19	16	-3

When interpreting the scores, guidance that accompanies the questionnaire provides bandings under classifications of 'normal,' 'borderline,' and 'abnormal.' Approximately 10% of a community sample scores in the abnormal band, with a further 10% scoring in the boarderline band. SDQs were used in a large national survey of child and adolescent mental health carried out by the Office for National Statistics, funded by the Department of Health. This representative British sample included 10,438 individuals aged between 5 and 15. Complete SDQ information was obtained from 10,298 parents (99% of sample), 8,208 teachers (79% of sample) and 4,228 11-15 year olds (93% of this age band).

	Normal	Borderline	Abnormal
Total	0-11	12-15	16-40
Emotional	0-4	5	6-10
Conduct	0-2	3	4-10
Hyperactivity	0-5	6	7-10
Peer Relationships	0-3	4	5-10

Table 4: Scoring categories for the SDQ teachers' responses

On teacher completed questionnaires a total difficulties score of 0-11 is 'normal,' 12-15 is 'borderline,' and 16-40 is 'abnormal.' Danny's results show him to fall in the 'abnormal' range in 10 of his 11 subjects in the pre-test scores and in 8 subjects in the post-test scores. He falls in the 'normal' range in only one subject,

Religious Studies, in the post-test scores. 8 of the overall scores indicate a positive change. Despite this positive shift in scores overall, it must be noted that Danny's scores got worse in four subjects. Closer inspection of these scores highlights that in music, where a score of +5 was reported, there had been a change of teacher and in Spanish the teacher had missed 14 questions out in the first questionnaire. Therefore, I would argue that neither of these scores is valid.

The four subject that reported a negative change in Danny's behaviour, Science, Spanish, Technology and Music, all gave worse post intervention scores in area of conduct difficulties. This indicates that Danny's behaviour had become more disruptive, however it must be recognised that reputational bias can influence the perceptions of the teachers. The Science, Technology and Spanish teachers had been teaching Danny for the majority of the year and may have tired of his disruptive behaviour, therefore reporting it to be worse than when previously asked early in the year. Variables, such as the timing of completing the questionnaire my also influence results. If Danny's behaviour had been particularly challenging that day then the frustration of the teacher may be represented in the scores given.

Conduct difficulties was the second most common area identified by teaching staff in the pre-intervention questionnaire as lying in the abnormal range. All, except the physical education and history teachers, scored hyperactivity problems as the highest area of difficulty. This included Danny himself. The fact that Danny has been given a diagnosis of ADHD this result is not surprising. It would be interesting to explore the relationship between Danny's hyperactive difficulties and perceived conduct problems. I would hypothesise that the difficulties related to ADHD as experienced by Danny may be causing frustration and anger.

8.0 Discussion

The feedback from Danny's peer group appeared to be more positive than the teacher evaluations. However, by the nature of the approach the pupils had invested more time and involvement in the process than the teaching staff.

I believe that the intervention would have been more successful from the view point of the teaching staff if they had been involved in the process. This was one of the drawbacks of implementing the approach in a secondary school; the only members of staff involved were the learning mentor and the Religious Studies teacher. As Barrett and Randall (2004) highlight from their research, if there are no links with the class teacher or opportunities to develop generalisation across subjects, then the impact of the intervention is limited. Attempt to include all of the focus pupil's teachers and how that impacts on the outcome of the intervention is an area that needs to be addressed in future research.

The results from the questionnaire and the comments made by some of the pupils highlight that the approach was more successful in supporting Danny's behaviour in certain subjects. This indicates that perhaps more focused work needs to be done in addressing the relationship between Danny and some of his teachers, namely his design and technology, science and Spanish teachers.

I believe that I missed an opportunity to involve both Zoe and Danny's parents/carers in the process, beyond the initial consent for participation. Smith and Cooke (2000) outline the collaborative role that a parent can have in the Circle of Friends process through the teaching of new skills and informal reinforcement outside of the school setting.

The measures that I used to evaluate the intervention may not have been the most appropriate tools. The SDQ covers a scale of hyperactivity, which is not an area that the intervention claims to support or improve. When the teachers

completed the questionnaire post intervention I feel that some of them used the questionnaire as an opportunity to vent their frustration about the difficulties they face when teaching Danny. I did not use a pre and post measure for the teachers involved in Zoe's case. The process may be more thoroughly evaluated using the approaches that Frederickson & Turner (2001) used which match up to the 5 stages of the Dodge et al.(1986) model.

9.0 Conclusion

Gold (1994) said that the 'circles' process helps in 'creating accepting atmospheres in the midst of a rejecting culture.' I would argue that the two approaches that I implemented for these pupils impacted upon the feelings of empathy held by their classmates and this was the first step towards supporting them. Peers can be 'instigators of change' (Desbien & Royer, 2003) and they are a naturally occurring resource in every classroom. The Circle of Friends approaches both proved to be inclusive and collaborative techniques, which enhanced not only the social competence of the target pupils, but the development and humanity of many of their peers as is evidenced by the comments made.

Reflecting on Dam and Volman's (2007) differentiation between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of social competence, I would argue that the Shotton (1998) approach as used with Zoe focussed more on improving the latter; contact with peers, friendships and working together. In Danny's case I believe that both aspects have been supported by the traditional model due to the open identification of his areas of difficulty, or his intrapersonal elements. It is this aspect of the traditional model that enables needs to be identified and targeted by interventions effective in addressing them. Frederickson and Turner (2001) argued that sometimes the Circle of Friends approach needs to be supplemented with additional interventions; in Danny's case time was spent engaged in Person Centred Planning to target continuing areas of difficulty.

The Shotton (1998) approach does not have that same transparency of identifying a pupil's difficulties which, whilst that may be more ethically comfortable, makes it more difficult to problem solve collaboratively as a support group. The foundation of understanding and empathy about the target child's situation is not formed through this more generalised approach and I would argue that the maintenance of any initial benefits may not have much longevity.

I found Circle of Friends to be a heartening experience in terms of observing children and young people supporting each other. However, the importance of ensuring that educational psychology practice is evidence based is crucial to our work and there are many variables involved in the success or otherwise of Circle of Friends including; the involvement of staff, the dimensions of the group, the individual needs of the target pupil, the responses from the rest of the class, the school environment, involvement of family, teachers' perceptions and the maintenance of the support. As Robson (2000) notes, 'when evaluating social programmes it may be useful to ask what works best for whom under what circumstances' and to add to this Frederickson et al. (2005, p.216) postulate that we should also be asking 'why' questions about the 'psychological processes underlying or undermining change.' A key issue that this professional practice report highlights is that interventions, such as Circle of Friends, and their variations need to be evaluated systemically and the longevity of any benefits need to be tested over time.

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Appendix 1

Mark your answers on the scale.
0 is totally disagree. 5 is absolutely agree.

1. I have enjoyed taking part in the group

0 ---------- 5

2. Something has changed in a good way since starting the group

0 ---------- 5

If yes, what is it?

_____

3. I have learnt something about myself or others in the group?

0 ---------- 5

If yes, what is it?

_____

4. Is there anything you will do differently since taking part in the group?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. How could the group sessions have been better?

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Have you become closer to any of the people in the group?

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. Any other comments?

_____
_____
_____
_____ _____

Appendix 2

Circle of Friends

What did you think of the process?

- Initital lesson/input

- Ongoing group process

- Do you think Circle of Friends has helped X?
  If yes, how? If not, why?

- Do you feel that you have played a role in the Circle of Friends?
  If yes, how?

- Have you learnt anything from the process?

Targeted Mental Health in Schools: creating a 'Framework for Flourishing'

1.0 Introduction

This professional practice report gives an example of how an educational psychologist (ep) can apply skills to an area of specialist working. The context of the report is within the area of mental health and well-being. I am currently working within a team of four eps to implement the nationally funded project of Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS, DCFS, 2008). The framework we have developed, Figure 1, is based on principles and approaches from positive psychology and focuses on promoting flourishing in all pupils. A concept that fits across the framework's areas for promotion in young people is creativity. This report details the implementation of creativity within schools and outlines how it can lead to improved well-being and mental health for all pupils with the opportunity for using expressive arts therapeutically with individuals.
The concepts of well-being, mental health and resilience are defined in Appendix 1 in order to provide a clear context for the report.

2.0 Targeted Mental Health in Schools

Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) is a programme funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Its aim is to transform the way that mental health support is delivered to children aged 5 to 13 years, to improve their mental health and well-being and provide early intervention in schools.
The Wirral authority's TaMHS project is being led by a senior educational psychologist and aims that are specific to Wirral are set out below.

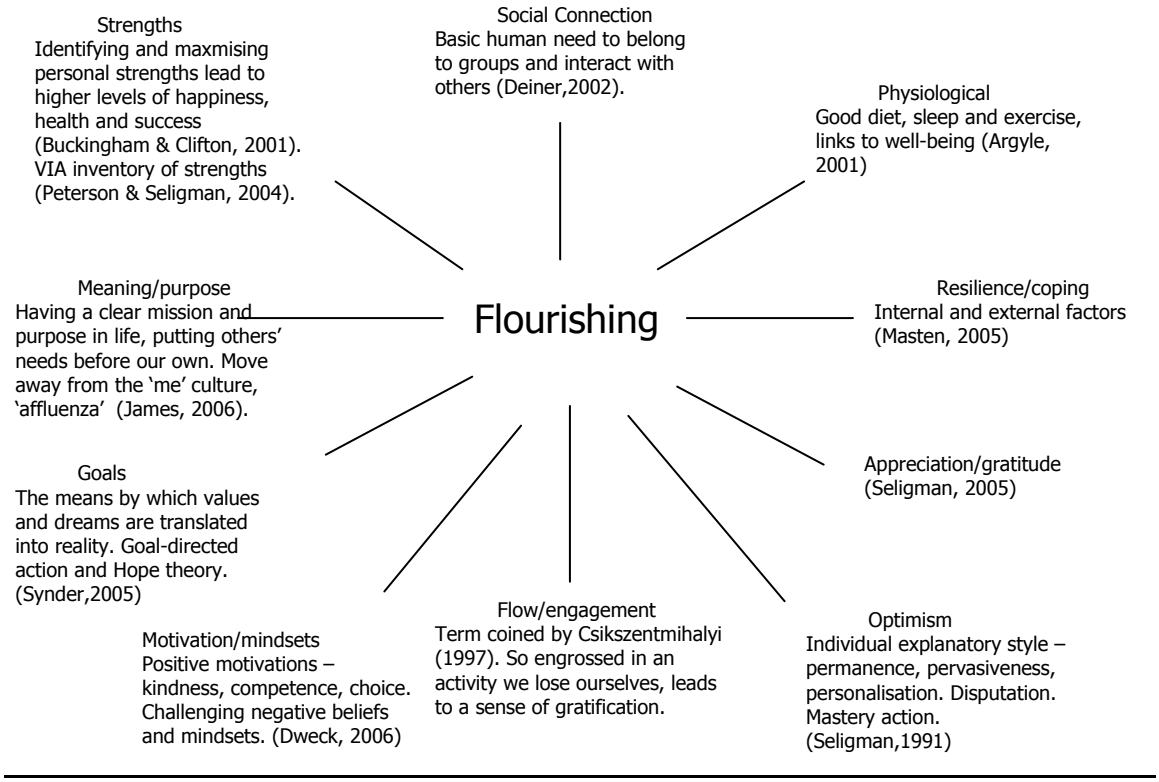

Figure 1: The Framework for Flourishing (Wirral EPS, 2009)

<u>Wirral TaMHS Project Aims:</u>

- Build the knowledge, skills and confidence base of staff in promoting the positive mental health and well-being of all young people;
- Support promotion, prevention and early intervention through additional training, supervision and access to consultation from specialist services;
- Help staff better identify those with mental health difficulties and ensure that specialist support is easy to access, readily available and based on the best evidence.

2.1 Positive Psychology – 'Framework for Flourishing' and Creativity

The Wirral TaMHS project's principles, aims and vision are rooted in the paradigm of positive psychology. In 1999, the new president of the American Psychological Association, Dr Martin Seligman, declared in his inaugural presidential address (cited in Ward, 2007, p.6) that, 'Psychology is not just the study of weakness and damage; it is also the study of strengths and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is broken, it is nurturing what is best within ourselves.'

Positive psychology is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within them and to enhance the experiences of love, work and play. The focus is on the study of characteristics and processes that contribute to flourishing in people, groups and organisations. The Wirral TaMHS project has used the identification of these characteristics and the two key skills necessary for positive mental health as suggested by Bayliss (2005) to create a 'framework for flourishing' (Figure 1). The two key skills (Bayliss, 2005) are:

- to learn not only to cope but also to prosper in the face of adversity; and
- the ability to create feelings of profound pleasure and happiness through healthy positive means.

The framework for flourishing highlights ten areas that, with support from eps, schools can promote in all children. The focus is on building strength and resilience through nurturing processes such as optimism and social connections. Through this focus there is the potential for eps to contribute to the development of environments in which all young people can benefit, not just those facing specific difficulties.

The evidence and arguments for promoting positive psychology in schools are far-reaching (Mcloughlin & Kubick, 2004; Delligatti, 2004; Huebner et al., 2004)

and are based on the advantages of using a framework that promotes all children's well-being. Mcloughlin and Kubick (2004, p.139) claim that the role of the ep solely concerned with the school setting and centred on individual children with learning difficulties is 'dated, non-viable, and unlikely to be supported in the future.'

Gersch (2009) concurs with the application of positive psychology as he urges eps to 'recognise the considerable potential of positive psychology' (p.13). Gersch (2009) also highlights the links between positive psychology and the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2006). The fact that applied psychology can complement national agendas such as the ECM ensures that the profession of educational psychology remains relevant at both the local and national level; this, as Gersch (2009) points out, will secure the profession 'a vibrant long-term future' (p.13).

With the framework for flourishing as the foundation to the eps' work in schools, training, consultation and coaching will be provided to staff in practices that promote these ten areas. In addition to this, specific tools will be shared with schools including Person-Centred Planning, solution-focussed work, solutions with parents, expressive arts and creativity.

It is important to recognise that the views of those associated with the positive psychology movement have been criticised for creating a dichotomy between the study of human strengths and weaknesses (Held, 2004). Carstensen and Charles (2003) argued that scientific psychology should not have an objective to prove or disprove positive aspects of life; rather it should seek to understand psychological phenomena in their totality. It could be argued that the total focus on positive emotional experiences as the definitive of the good life has led to the view, in positive psychology, of any negative emotion as problematic. This, as argued by King (2001), has led to 'a view of the happy person as a well-defended fortress, invulnerable to the vicissitudes of life' (2001; p.53).

In the 'Handbook of Positive Psychology' (2002) the editors, Snyder and Lopez, literally declared the independence of positive psychology. They refer to what used to be the discipline of psychology as either the 'weakness model' or the 'pathology model,' in contrast to the 'strength model' of positive psychology (p.752). However, it could be argued that when so called 'negative psychologists' study what is wrong with individuals they do so in the positive hope of better living. There is, perhaps, a danger in dismissing other paradigms in favour of only one; theory, research and findings could be viewed as being less valuable and applicable.

Held (2004) also discussed the role of the media in promoting the messages and claims made by the positive psychology movement. The identity of Seligman, a leader of positive psychology, as the president of the American Psychological Association must be considered. Held (2004) highlighted that Seligman's position has brought with it media hype for positive psychology and this brings concerns that the publication of supposed new discoveries and advances by the press can damage the credibility of the field. Seligman repeatedly emphasises positive psychology's dedication to 'replicable, cumulative, and objective science' (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2001; p.90). However, there have been challenges made by Taylor (2001) to Seligman's allegedly positivistic approach to knowledge acquisition. In an ongoing debate between the humanistic and the positive psychology movements, Taylor (2001) accused Seligman of failing to contain any reflexive elements in his theories and that the relationship between the subject and object has not been confronted. There has been a call from humanistic psychologists for positive psychologists to reflect upon their epistemological and ontological assumptions. This argument is supported by Sugarman (2007), writing for the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, when he claims that ordinary capacities for practical judgement are devalued by the ideology of technical and instrumental scientific rationality. Sugarman (2007) argues that this 'will further reduce our horizons of reflection on human flourishing' (p.175).

The area that I am leading on within the project is creativity. The area has two strands: creativity as a tool to promote well-being in all pupils; and in use of expressive arts as a therapeutic intervention for individual pupils. The rationale for having a particular focus on promoting creativity in school is embedded in the belief that creativity can have a positive effect on wellbeing (Greaves & Farbus, 2006). It has been argued that children are naturally creative and that, were it not for the stultifying influences of home and school, creativity would persist into adulthood (Simonton, 2002).

Greaves and Farbus (2006) conducted a study involving 229 participants, which used creativity as an intervention tool to raise the psychological wellbeing of adults over the age of 50. Mentors worked with the participants to identify creative interests that they had an interest in, these were then provided as an intervention at a community centre. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 participants at six months and 12 months; a depression scale and a quality of life measure was offered to all participants at baseline, six months and 12 months. Data were obtained on 75%, 53% and 55% of the participants respectively. Qualitative results from interviews showed that 15 of the participants interviewed reported a positive change in their mood, including increased well being and optimism, increased sense of self-worth and willingness to engage in life, and increased enjoyment of life. At six and 12 months there were significant improvements in depression scores.

Drawbacks to this study include the lack of control group and the variability in the activities offered as interventions. The participants were all over the age of 50 years, which limits the generalisation of the findings to this age group. It could also be argued that there were other variables involved in contributing to the positive shift in wellbeing that were not controlled for. However, this study gives some evidence for the positive effects that creativity can have on psychological wellbeing. As Gersch (2009) points out, areas of positive psychology, such as creativity, can open up 'whole new ideas for further

investigative study as well as offering new ideas for casework' (p.13). I believe that through the TaMHS project and its subsequent evaluations, further evidence for the positive effects of promoting creativity in schools will become apparent.

Creativity as a tool to promote well-being in all pupils links directly to the areas on the flourishing framework, such as raising motivation (Collins & Amabile, 1999), encouraging flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), increasing coping skills (Craft, 2002), and imparting a sense of meaning (Lyubomirsky, 2007).
Intrinsic motivation is essential to creativity (Collins & Amabile, 1999). Intrinsic motivation refers to a willingness to engage in an activity for its own sake because it is challenging, interesting and enjoyable. This concept of creativity promoting motivation is further strengthened by Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory. The theory predicts that when an individual's needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy are satisfied, intrinsic motivation is likely to occur. Creative opportunities promote these three areas as students can become engaged in controllable but challenging tasks or activities that require skill and that the individual finds satisfying. This is in contrast to didactic and controlling teaching styles that rely on external rewards and extrinsic motivation. As Gersch (2009) points out, an important role for the ep is in providing a psychological perspective of how children learn; knowing how to promote creativity in the classroom concurs directly with this role.

Based on Ryan and Deci's (2000) theory, the view that the Wirral TaMHS project has is that if creativity is nurtured in the classroom then opportunities for intrinsic motivation will be increased and this in turn will allow for 'flow.' Flow experiences occur when an individual becomes engaged in controllable but challenging tasks or activities that require considerable skill and which are intrinsically motivating. Csikszentmihalyi (2002) has made direct links between the amounts of time spent in 'flow' and the happiness of the individual. The concept of 'flow' and the research behind it is discussed further in Section 4.4. The rationale for exploring

the use of flow in the TaMHS project is based in the argument made by Csikszentmihalyi (2002) that the best moments of a person's life 'occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to the limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile' (2002; p.3).

Lyubomirsky (2008) explains that creativity – in the arts, humanities, sciences and self-discovery – can impart a sense of meaning, or spirituality, to many people's lives. She highlights that a sense of meaning fuels our sense of self-worth. Lyubomirsky (2008) does not outline the evidence upon which she has drawn these conclusions, but it is supported by Geaves and Farbus's (2006) reported findings from interviews. Caution must be applied to this assertion as it is not made clear how the exact questions were phrased to participants and whether phases such as 'self-worth' were donated by the researcher.

Further research into children's spirituality has been conducted by Gersch et al. (2008). They define spirituality as referring to a sense of being connected beyond one's own self to something 'greater' (Watson, 2000), or as vitality and a creative attitude (Averill, 2005). Gersch et al. (2008) reported that most children can respond relevantly to questions about their motivations, their essential purpose in life and other metaphysical questions. This was based on a study conducted with a sample of 26 primary and secondary pupils. Arguably this small sample size does not provide a representative account of children's metaphysical and spiritual understanding that will generalise to the population. Gersch et al. (2008) refer to further research by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2006) that has suggested the relevance of spirituality to mental health, upon closer inspection however, this makes reference to religious spirituality rather than creativity.

Gersch et al. (2008) refer to the work developed by Frankl (1984), a concentration camp survivor, who argued that the human search for meaning is the primary motivation of life. According to Frankl, in a summary by Boeree (2006), one of the ways humans seek meaning is;

- Through creative values, by doing deeds, and by becoming involved in one's own projects, or life's work, which can involve creativity, art, music, writing and invention.

Evidence for Frankl's assertions come from anecdotal descriptions of individual experiences and is empirically derived as knowledge from personal accounts. This epistemology differs from the scientific and positivist realm of research that the paradigm of positive psychology places itself, yet this paper would argue, as would the paradigm of Humanistic psychology, that qualitative data is as valid in the pursuit of understanding human experiences. This ppr recognises that the exploration of creativity in pursuit of practical applications in schools, draws on two paradigms that have ongoing disputes regarding the epistemology of their research; humanistic and positive psychology. I have used the beliefs from both paradigms to ensure a balanced approach to the portrayal of the subject.

With regard to creativity as a tool to encourage the creation of an environment as outlined in the Framework for Flourishing (Wirral Educational Psychology Service, 2009) it is recognised that as Aspinwall (2002; cited in Held, 2004; p.19) said 'it would be premature – and likely to be incorrect – to say that all positive beliefs and states are salutary.' Aspinwall (2003; cited in Held, 2004; p.19) also pointed out another caution that involves the possibility that there are situations and contexts where attributes or processes that work as strengths in one setting may be liabilities in another. Indeed some of the actions of creativity include levels of risk and non-conformity that would endanger the predictable outcome necessary in situations, such as medical operations.

The conceptualization in the TaMHS project of a positive institution as focussing only on the school is arguably an over-simplification. Consideration of other layers within the ecological system (e.g. family, community) is essential for the successful incorporation and maintenance of positive psychology in schools (Clonan et al. 2004). However, with regards to raising the awareness of the benefits of promoting creativity, this ppr argues that the school represents a

valid starting point wherein to begin work towards the promotion of the positive development of all students.

The remainder of this report focuses on how promoting and nurturing creativity in the classroom can positively affect the areas identified for flourishing and how I, as the ep, have implemented this in the TaMHS schools.

3.0 Creativity

The past decade in England has witnessed a focus on creativity in educational policy making. In 1999 the National Advisory Committee for Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999, p.13) advocated that young people needed to leave formal education with the ability to 'adapt, see connections, innovate, communicate and work with others.' Concrete proposals in the NACCCE report led to various educational policy moves in England, including Creative Development in the Early Years curriculum for three to five year olds in 2000 and the publishing of 'Excellence and Enjoyment' (DfES, 2003) for primary schools, which emphasised the need for schools to take a creative approach to the curriculum and to place creativity high on their agendas. In 2005 and 2006 a further government review of creativity and the economy was undertaken (Roberts, 2006). Common to all the initiatives and reports is the commitment to the idea of fostering everyday, life-wide creativity. It could be argued that such a commitment does not complement the target setting and league table ethos of the current education system.

3.1 Exploring the concept of creativity

Creativity is a word often used in education today and in British society generally, but in a variety of ways.

The Government's Creativity web site (DfES,2004) claims that, 'We are all, or can be, creative to some degree. Creative pupils lead richer lives and, in the longer term, make a valuable contribution to society.'
Hayes (2004) argued that such powerful claims made on behalf of creativity highlight the importance of acquiring a good understanding of its form. McWilliam and Haukka (2008, p.652) state that if the concept continues to be viewed as 'mysterious' and 'serendipitous' then attempts to foster it systematically within education will be 'doomed to failure.'

Hayes (2004) states that creativity is a difficult term to define and he explores the origin of the word. The root of the word means to 'bring into being,' which encompasses agronomic terms such as nurture, produce and grow; dynamic terms such as construct and devise; and spiritual terms such as inspiration and spontaneity. Many of the definitions of creativity trace the concept back to its roots; for example Bockling (2006, p.513) describes creativity as, 'tied to the human potential to bring into being something new. Its basis is, first, the power of imagination as the capacity to make the absent present; and second, building upon this, fantasy as the capacity to realise the (as yet) inexistent.'

Craft (1997, p.29) proposes that a full understanding of the concept involves people, processes and domains and suggests that creative processes 'may interrelate together to produce a creative approach to life.' This understanding that creativity is influenced by the interactions with the context around a person echoes the definition proposed by Rogers in 1961 and Csikszentmihalyi (1996). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) proposed a systems model of creativity, which views creativity not so much as an individual trait but rather a systemic process involving individuals, gate-keepers (representing the field or society) and the culture. This model can be useful when exploring how creativity can be encouraged in the school setting. Individual teaching styles would represent the

gate keeping element, whilst the culture of the school and the education system as a whole impacts on the validation of promoting creativity in the classroom. Cropley (2001) stated that teaching styles and school environments/ethos need to ensure that they are not inhibiting creativity. Intolerance of differentness, rejection of novelty, imposing sanctions against even inspired failures will all, Cropley (2001) argues, dampen pupils' willingness to depart from the safe and conventional. This results in the social environment needing to:

- accept differentness;
- have an openness and tolerance of variability;
- have an absence of rigid sanctions against (harmless) mistakes;

The arguments against the promotion of this style of environment may include the suggestion that some students need rigidity and clear boundaries in order to feel secure in their learning setting and to gain the best possible academic grades. There is also the possibility that some subject areas may lend themselves more readily to promoting divergent thinking.

There is an argument that individual teachers need to feel safe to promote creative thinking and employ creative teaching styles. This would need to come from the wider ethos of the school and the beliefs of the leadership. Schools are driven to perform on maintaining and achieving certain academic standards, if the incorporation of creative teaching styles was proven to raise academic standards at the point of external evaluation then schools may be more comfortable to embrace such pedagogy. It may be that the values of nurturing creativity and producing creative young people would not be recognised by the current external examination system. It could be argued that this element is the strongest gate-keeper to creativity in schools. There could be a role for the ep in highlighting the evidence based findings regarding intrinsic motivation and how the elements of creative teaching and learning can increase a student's desire to learn.

The report 'All our futures; Creativity, Culture and Education' (1999) by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE), states that everyone can be creative and creativity lies across all domains. This is important when introducing the concept of creativity to teaching and non-teaching staff; some people's construct of creativity lies solely within the arts. Craft (2003) has developed the application of creativity by individuals in everyday settings and uses the phrase 'life-wide' creativity. She makes a conceptual distinction between 'everyday' creativity and 'extraordinary' creativity, the latter involving the production of new knowledge, which has a major impact on an existing area of knowledge.

The description of creativity given by the NACCCE report (1999, p.13), which has subsequently been used as the accepted definition in Government policy is, 'Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are original and of value.' The NACCCE report (1999), along with current discourse about creativity (Craft, 2001, 2002) makes the assumption that the ordinary person can be creative and the focus is upon ordinary rather than extraordinary creativity. An argument to be made with regards to this discourse is that it suggests that creativity is either extraordinary or ordinary without recognising the relationship they bear to one another. Everyday creativity is what could lead to extraordinary creativity. I would suggest that the more opportunities that are provided within the education system for everyday creative thinking and problem solving the more likely it is that extraordinary creativity may occur.

Although there are various definitions of creativity, there appears to be an agreement about the positive nature of the concept and the need to encourage and promote creativity. Simonton (2005, p.189) states that people are 'almost universal in their appreciation of creativity.' Evidence for this comes from the special means by which societies encourage its citizens to exhibit creative behaviour, such as the Nobel Prizes awarded to the best creators in literature

and science. Craft (2003) questions creativity as a universally applicable concept; she suggests that it is quite culturally specific in the value it places on being able to think independently of social norms. Creativity may be viewed as less desirable and relevant in a more repressive or conformist culture.

As the exploration of the definitions suggests such positive beliefs around creativity and highlights the benefits to the individual and to society, it would seem acceptable to promote and encourage creativity within young people. The educational drive for targets and the public use of league tables appear to be contradictory to the identified benefits of creativity. As Csikszentmihalyi (1996, p.12) states, 'when test scores wobble, more and more schools opt for dispensing with frills – usually with the arts and extra-curricular activities – so as to focus on the so-called basics.' This paper argues that due to the prescriptive nature of the curriculum these subjects are not being taught in such a way as to promote curiosity, risk and exploration, which all fuel creative and flourishing behaviour. The ep is well placed to provide teaching staff with knowledge about what motivates pupils to learn and how creative teaching strategies can be employed in the classroom to promote intrinsic motivation and problem solving skills across the curriculum.

The next section will explore why creativity has psychological benefits and how it can be nurtured within schools despite the pressure that is experienced by teaching staff to continually raise academic standards.

4.0 Creativity and mental well-being

There is research available which states the benefits of creativity, not just for the individual, but for society. Barron (1995) believes that creativity could help us in many ways: towards our health and well-being, our sources of growth and

change in life, our appreciation of complexity, difference, beauty, and multiple truths.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) believes that we are 'programmed for creativity.' He based this belief on the fact that when people are presented with a list and asked to choose the best description of what they enjoy most – reading, climbing mountains, dancing – the answer most frequently chosen is 'designing or discovering something new.'

Limitations to this research exist in the fact that a list of options was donated to the participants, which may have resulted in a choice being made for reasons other than a genuine belief in the chosen answer. Csikszentimhalyi (1997) claims that if happiness comes from creating new things and making new discoveries, then enhancing one's creativity may therefore also enhance well-being. He proposed that this is a logical element of evolution in that people who enjoy exploring and inventing are better prepared to face unpredictable conditions that threaten their survival.

This leads to the concept that is at the centre of the TaMHS project; promoting positive mental health.

The next section of the report will attempt to demonstrate how creativity and the nurturing of this attribute in children and young people can promote and develop some of the areas identified by the Framework for Flourishing (2009).

4.1 Resilience and Coping

The National Curriculum Handbook (1999, p.11-12) outlines the importance of creativity; 'it should enable pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity.'

This concept resonates with the notion of resilience defined by Masten (2001) as 'The human capacity to face, overcome and ultimately be strengthened and even transformed by life's adversities and challenges…a complex relationship of

psychological inner strengths and environmental social supports throughout a person's life.'

Masten and Reid (2005, p.85) conclude from their research that 'resilience does not come from rare and special qualities but from the operations of ordinary human systems, arising from brains, minds, and bodies of children, from their relationships in the family and community, and from schools, religions, and other cultural traditions.' Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have, it involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed. It also suggests that the child's environment can be adapted to promote the factors identified as important in the development of resilience.

Ward (2007) gives a succinct summary of findings taken from various models of resilience (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Egeland, et al. 1993; Masten, 1994, 1999) which outlined the external and internal factors that seem to be important in the development of resilience. These are displayed in Table 1, which provides succinct links to demonstrate how creativity can promote some of these factors of resilience.

Table 1: Internal and external factors and processes important in the development of resilience (Ward, 2007) and how these factors relate to creativity.

Internal factors	Relation to creativity	External factors
• Social competence (including empathy and impulse) • Problem solving skills (including self-efficacy and optimism) • Autonomy (a sense of mastery, a belief that one's own efforts can make a difference) • A sense of purpose and future (ambitions, goals, optimism and hope) • An awareness of strengths and talents • A sense of humour	• Expressive arts, such as music and dance have been used throughout history and around the world as a common tool for celebration, communication and worship within communities. It can be a focus around which people come together and feel a sense of belonging. • Creative problem solving and thinking skills can lead to overcoming an obstacle or achieving a goal. This can lead to a sense of mastery. Expressive arts can be used as a tool to explore and communicate emotions. • Promoting creativity allows more opportunity for young people to discover strengths and interests. It allows risks to be taken that can open up new experiences. • Creating something new and of value can give a sense of purpose and promote optimism. • Creativity needs to be encouraged in order for young people to leave education with the ability to adapt, see connections, innovate, communicate and work with others. These are essential life skills for the future. • The enabling of creativity will lead to a meaningful life and so a positive school experience.	• Strong social support networks • Exposure to challenging situations that provide opportunities to develop both problem solving and emotional coping skills • The provision of opportunities for meaningful participation and the ability to make a difference • Opportunities for participation in a range of activities that highlight strengths and interests • The explicit teaching of life skills (communication and assertiveness) • A positive school experience • A committed mentor or other person from outside the family • The setting and communication of high expectations • The presence of at least one unconditionally supportive parent or parent substitute • Clear and consistent boundaries

This report proposes that promoting children's development of creativity in schools will have a positive impact on many of the factors of resilience identified in Table 1. This report will go on to explore the research evidence available to support this assertion.

Promotion of Life Skills and Resilience

The political call for creativity suggests a need for greater creativity in order to both thrive and survive in the twenty-first century (Seltzer & Bentley, 1999; Craft, 2002). In 1999 the National Advisory Committee for Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999) produced a report, which highlighted the need to provide young people with skills and approaches required by employers. The report stated that employers now require, alongside high academic achievement, 'people who can adapt, see connections, innovate, communicate and work with others' (NACCCE, 1999, p.13). McWilliam and Haukka (2008, p.654) support this view with the claim that it is becoming more recognised that 'creative capability is the key to economic growth and human capital development.' Florida's (2002) research supports this assertion and his findings suggest that creative capabilities are regarded as important vocational capacities in all globally competitive enterprises.

These findings all suggest that schools need to be teaching for creativity; teaching young people to be original as well as competent in order to nurture and equip young people with the skills that they will need when they enter employment. Csikszentmihalyi (1996, p.11) argued that an individual's instinct for exploring and enjoying novelty and risk can 'wilt if it is not cultivated,' which is why it is argued throughout this paper that the environments that young people are in need to make available opportunities for curiosity and ensure that obstacles are not put in the way of risk and exploration.

Problem Solving and Resilience

Cropley (2001) suggested that one way of showing the relationship of creativity to problem solving is to focus on the problems themselves, dividing them according to:

- their degree of definition;
- the degree of specification of the way they are to be solved; and
- the clarity of the criteria for recognising a solution.

Clearly defined problems that are solvable by means of standard techniques, for which there are obvious and well-known criteria identifying the solution, constitute 'routine' problems. Routine problems do not require creativity to solve them. However, complex or intractable problems that are ill defined require a higher level of creativity. Cropley (2001) points out that this raises the possibility that certain kinds of routine problems may inhibit creativity. This argument could also suggest that increased opportunities for creativity may aid problem-solving skills and, as Brophy (1998) concluded, finding, identifying and clarifying problems are the aspects of problem solving that lead to creativity.

Craft (2002) concurs with Brophy's (1998) assertion that creativity is also about identifying problems and she proposes that 'possibility thinking' is at the heart of all creativity in young children. 'Possibility thinking' is when children move beyond the given, to the possible, or to 'what could be.' Possibility thinking includes problem solving as in a puzzle, finding alternative routes around a barrier, the posing of questions and the identification of problems and issues. It requires children to find and refine problems as well as solve them. Craft argues that this combination of relevance, ownership and control then leads to innovation. Jeffrey and Craft (2004) assert that when control over the investigation of knowledge is handed back to the child s/he have the authority and opportunity to be creative. Craft (2002, p.1) believes that fostering children's 'possibility thinking' can be seen as 'building their resilience and confidence and reinforcing their capabilities as confident explorers, meaning-makers and

decision-makers.' This concept links clearly with the framework for flourishing element of resilience and coping.

4.2 Motivation and Mindsets

A widely accepted position is that creativity requires intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1996), the wish to carry out an activity for the sake of the activity itself. This can be contrasted with working for external rewards, such as prizes and praise, which is classed as extrinsic motivation.

Dweck's (1999; cited in McWilliam & Haukka, 2008, p.660) research highlighted that current thinking in the education system is based on raising self-esteem and helping young people reach their full potential, which has a created a climate in which it is possible to achieve 'easy success' rather than struggle with the 'constructive complications of error.' For Dweck (1999), an individual's performance goals are focussed on 'winning positive judgement of your competence and avoiding negative ones,' but when too much emphasis is put on performance goals, people are less likely to move out of their zones of competence and more likely to blame their ability if things go wrong. 'When the pressure is on, if they can't look smart, nothing matters more than avoiding looking dumb…creating a downward spiral of self-recrimination, vulnerability and victimhood' (Dweck, 1999; cited in McWilliam & Haukka, 2008, p.660). Dweck (2007) introduced the concept of fixed and growth mindsets. Dweck (2007) states that the individual with the fixed mindset believes that their qualities will not change and that they have a 'certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality and a certain moral character' (p.6). Dweck (2007) argues that individuals with fixed mindsets will have an urgency to prove that they have these qualities in abundance, which results in a lack of risk taking and creativity in the earning environment. The growth mindset is 'based on the belief that your basic qualities are things that you can cultivate through your efforts' (Dweck,

2007; p.7). The individual with the growth mindset believes that everyone can change and grow with experience and practice and this creates a motivation for learning. The lack of internal motivation to persevere in the face of complexity could be overcome if more emphasis were put on the strategy, and error and the uncertainties experienced through being creative were welcomed and embraced.

4.3 Strengths

This report argues that promoting creativity in schools would increase the chances of teachers recognising individual strengths, as children would be encouraged to take greater risks and be creative in their approaches to tasks. An example to illustrate this would be providing opportunities for creative problem solving, which would lead to mastery thinking. Mastery thinking is the realisation that an obstacle has been overcome, or a goal has been achieved, which can lead to a change in belief about oneself. Seligman (1995; cited in Ward, 2007) suggests; 'In order for your child to experience mastery, it is necessary for him to fail, to feel bad and to try again repeatedly until success occurs.' This supports the positive aspects of creativity as a tool to experiment and explore new and novel possibilities.

Further opportunities for discovering strengths come from providing situations that create flow for children. The next section will focus on this concept.

4.4 Flow/Engagement

As can be noted in Figure 1, the Framework for Flourishing (Wirral EPS, 2009), the concept of flow and engagement makes up one of the ten elements for flourishing. This next section aims to outline what flow is, why it is beneficial to experience flow and how teachers can help promote opportunities for flow.

Flow was defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1996) as 'the balance of challenges and skills when both are above average levels for the individual.'
Csikszentmihalyi (1996) characterized flow as an 'optimal experience…an effortless yet highly focused state of consciousness.' Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) states that the original account of the flow state has been confirmed through studies of arts and science (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), aesthetic experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990), sport (Jackson, 1995, 1996), literacy writing (Perry, 1999).
The components of a task to produce flow as identified by Csikszentmihalyi (1996) are:-

- The task is challenging and requires skill;
- The individual concentrates;
- There are clear goals;
- The individual gets immediate feedback;
- The individual has deep, effortless involvement;
- There is a sense of control;
- The sense of self vanishes;
- Time stops.

Csikszentmihalyi's research used a very large sample group across many cultures and ages. An issue to consider however, when drawing conclusions from Csikszentmihalyi's research on the concept of flow is that interview approaches are limited by their reliance on retrospective reconstructions of past experiences. One study in particular is relevant to the relationship between flow and happiness. Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter (2003) conducted research used the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) to measure the frequency of flow. In ESM participants were asked to carry around a pager that beeped at random times during the day. The participants consisted of 342 male and 486 female primary school pupils. They were asked to record what they were doing at the moment the pager beeped, what they were feeling, and how engaged they were. The benefits of using ESM include the fact that the data consists of more than a one-

time measure, a drawback includes the reliance on the participant to be honest in their responses. To measure whether a participant was in a flow condition the model as shown in Figure 2 was used. The study concluded that the frequency of time spent in the flow condition is a very strong predictor of happiness ($t= 6.05$, $p< 0.0001$).

Figure 2 shows the current model of flow, which has eight experiential channels. The quality of experience intensifies within a channel as challenges and skills move away from a person's average levels. It divides the challenge/skill space into a series of concentric circles, associated with increasing intensity of experience. The model was created from the longitudinal ESM studies of adolescent and adult samples.

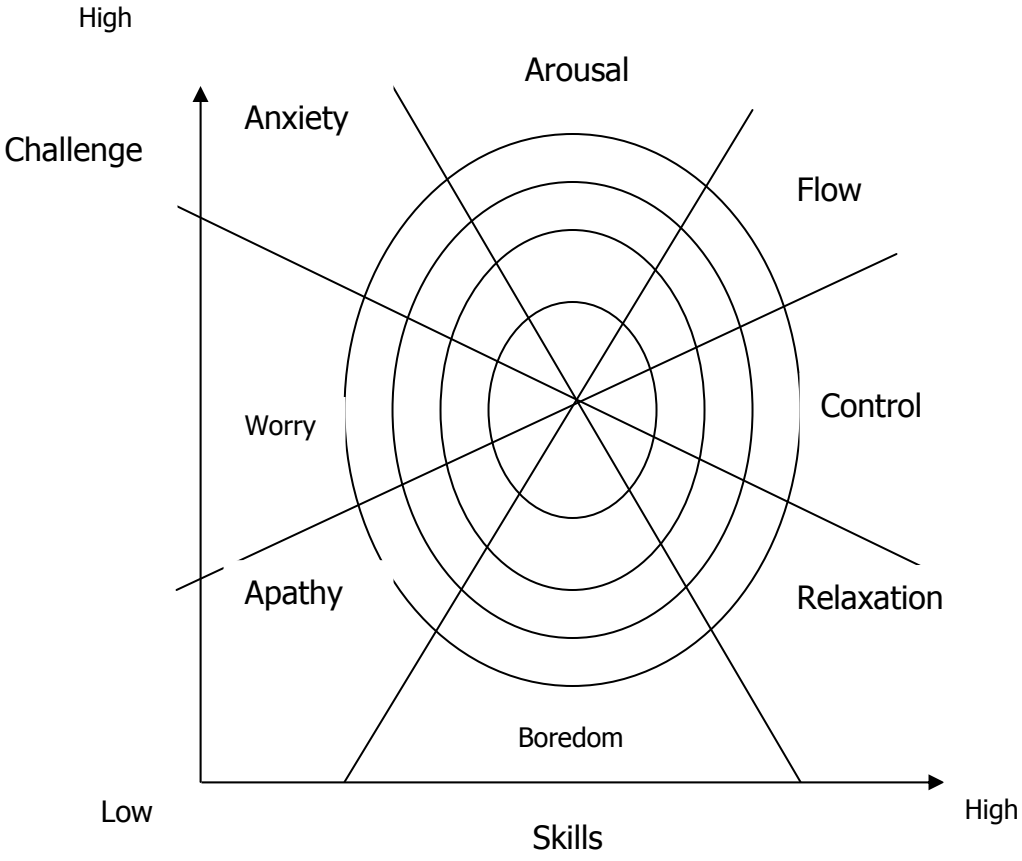

Figure 2. The current model of the flow state (Csikszentmihalyi 1997).

The model highlighted that flow can only be experienced when we encounter challenges that test our skills, yet our capacities are such that it is just about possible for us to meet our challenge. If the challenge is high, but the individual's skills are low then anxiety can be caused. This report proposes that this model based on findings from such a large sample group would be a useful framework to share with schools to highlight the importance of tailoring activities to meet the individual pupil's needs. This is where allowing and enhancing creativity can enable pupils to experience flow as they take part in challenging and interesting activities that highlight and amplify their strengths.

MacDonald et al. (2006) conducted research to explore the relationship between flow and creativity. The study involved 45 participants (25 males and 20 females) who were all undergraduate music students at a university in central Scotland. Measurement materials included ESM, the consensual assessment technique (Amabile, 1996; Hickey, 2000), and a staff criteria scoring form. MacDonald et al. (2006) concluded that increased levels of flow are related to increased levels of creativity. The higher levels of flow reported by individuals within a group corresponded to that group's composition being rated as having higher levels of creativity. This is arguably including a great deal of subjectivity in the results and it does not allow for bias or personal opinion. However, the results of this study have specific relevance for music educators interested in developing creativity and creative thinking. It highlights that the methods advised by Csikszentmihalyi (1992) such as ensuring the risk of failure is reduced, that the task is achievable and be at or near to the current level of skill and experience, are necessary in order to give opportunity for flow.

5.0 Therapeutic uses of the Expressive Arts

The second strand of creativity within the TaMHS project focuses on the use of expressive arts in a therapeutic manner.

Natalie Rogers (1993, p.xiv) presents a philosophy of psychotherapy and creativity and the aim of her work is to inspire an individual to 'rediscover [their] innate creative ability and to learn ways to explore that creativity with a freedom of self-expression that is healing and transformative.'
Rogers' (1993) approach is based on expressive art as therapy and this links with the belief that creativity can enable the expression, communication and development of feelings and emotions is an area that is important in the promotion of mental well-being (Pennebaker, 1997; cited in Salovey, Mayer & Caruso, 2005, Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2005). One of the aims of the TaMHS project is to equip schools with the knowledge of how to enable their pupils to flourish and remediating negative mood in order to achieve greater subjective well-being is one of the goals of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2005) present the act of writing as a process towards achieving mental health. Their research demonstrated that putting upsetting experiences into words allows people to stop inhibiting their thoughts and feelings, to begin to organise their thoughts and to find meaning in their traumas. This resonates with Rogers' (1993) belief that the expressive arts (movement, art, writing, sound, music and imagery) can allow an individual to express previously unknown facets of themselves and bring to light new information and awareness.
Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2005, p.582) concluded that a 'focus on negative emotions may be necessary in order to genuinely overcome trauma and grow as

a mentally healthy human being.' These conclusions were drawn from a study (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; cited in Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2005) using students who were instructed to write about an assigned topic for 15 minutes daily, over four consecutive days. The only rule was that once they had begun to write they were to continue to do so without stopping. Participants were then randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group; one group were asked to write about one or more traumatic experience in their lives, the others had to describe objects and events dispassionately.
It was reported that the individuals in the experimental group had a seemingly intuitive drive to disclose. The immediate outcome for the group was increased distress and negative mood, however long term effects were more positive as they had a significantly reduced number of visits to the doctors in the next year and reported feeling happier than the control group. Further studies by Pennebaker (1998; cited in Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2005) found positive influences on behaviour in the experimental group participants in terms of increased job offers and higher college grades. It must be noted that these studies by Pennebaker (1986, 1998) did not compare the relative effects of focusing on negative expression versus writing about something positive.

Several studies have found the expression of emotion as a coping mechanism to be beneficial for the physical and mental health of the individual (Berghuis & Stanton, 1994; Terry & Hynes, 1998; Stanton, 2000). Caution must be applied to this belief, as research has not been sufficient to generalise this finding across all individuals. Variables such as the nature of the stressor, its severity, the specific emotions processed and expressed and aspects of the environmental context need further examination (Dalebroux & Goldstein, 2008).

A taxonomy of mood regulation strategies was proposed by Larsen (2000), which was directly derived from a content analysis of people's statements about what they did to remediate unpleasant moods. Among the strategies reported were

venting – the expression of negative feelings and fantasy; and daydreaming or positive distraction in order to forget one's negative feelings. These two strategies contrast in their nature; when venting negative emotions are expressed, when fantasizing the individual is attempting to prompt positive emotions.

Dalebroux and Goldstein (2008) investigated these two strategies in the context of art making. Dalebroux et al. (2008) claimed that although the act of art making is a universal behaviour, which is considered to have a positive effect on mood, there are no studies that have examined the function of art making on mood regulation, and evidence from art therapy has generally been linked to clinical cases correlating improved mood with art-making (Kramer,2000). Dalebroux and Goldstein (2008) propose that the 'venting hypothesis' has become 'untested conventional wisdom.' It is often assumed within the practice of art therapy that the expression of negative affect through the production of negatively themed creations that show an individual's feelings is considered to be therapeutic because it allows the discharge of negative feelings through self-expression (Kramer, 2000).

Dalebroux and Goldstein (2008) asked the question: is venting an effective method of mood repair? When an individual is venting they are attending to their feelings. Lishetze and Eid (2003) reported that under some circumstances attention to negative feelings can be beneficial as it can lead to attempts to repair the mood. However, attention to a negative mood can also have detrimental effects by intensifying and prolonging the mood (Duval & Wickland, 1972). Kross and Ayduk (2008) found that distanced analysis of one's negative feelings reduced depressed affect, but that immersing one's self in negative feelings proved less effective. This would suggest that creating images that immerse the artist back into a traumatic experience is likely to amplify negative affect; however a factor to reduce this may lie in the quality of the de-briefing the individual receives or the context that the experience takes place.

Dalebroux and Goldstein (2008) took a sample of 75 participants between 18 and 22 years of age. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: venting, positive emotion, and control. A short video clip that had been determined through the use of pilot participants to be 'extremely tragic' and 'sad' based on the completion of Russell's (1989) Affect Grid was shown to the groups. Following the clip, in the venting condition participants were instructed to 'draw a picture that expresses your feeling in reaction to this movie.' The positive emotion condition group were asked to 'draw a picture that depicts happiness.' The control group were given a sheet of symbols and were given instructions to find and cross out certain symbols on the sheet.

Dalebroux and Goldstein (2008) reported that art-making is most effective as a means of repairing negative mood when the individual creates content associated with positive emotion. Dalebroux and Goldstein (2008, p.239) proposed that 'creating positively valenced images in the context of a present, unpleasant reality may allow the artist to escape from the here and now into a more pleasant imagined situation.' The fact that the negative mood improvement of the participants in the control group was no greater than in the venting condition suggests that the effectiveness of the positive emotion group was not only due to distraction.

There are several critical observations to be made of Dalebroux and Goldstein's (2008) study. The pilot group only consisted of 12 participants, which brings into question the reliability of the film clip chosen to induce negative emotion. Generalisations cannot be made from this study, as the sample is not representative of the general population; 70% of the sample consisted of women and all the participants were recruited from an undergraduate psychology department. There was no long term follow up so the benefits identified can only claim to exist in the short term and can only claim to have a positive effect on negative feelings created by images in a film-clip and cannot be generalised to real-life enduring situations. However, the belief in the effectiveness of creating positive images rather than venting is consistent with the findings of Gross and

Thompson (2006) who demonstrated that cognitive strategies, such as reinterpreting or reappraising a situation in a positive light, lead to positive mood outcomes.

For those pupils who are displaying emotional difficulties, the expressive arts may be an area that could have therapeutic beneficial effects as advocated by Rogers (1993). As Gersch (2009) points out, practising eps should not underestimate the importance of therapeutic interventions as a part of the professional role.
A clear benefit of expressive art is that it can be used as a communicative tool to offer to children who find verbal expression difficult or threatening and can enable the expression of thoughts and feelings that are difficult to articulate in words (Coates, 2002; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008). This could be helpful in the process of overcoming trauma and remediating negative mood as suggested by Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2005). It should also be recognised that using expressive arts to create positive images and to communicate positive and optimistic feelings may also be beneficial to the mental well-being of all pupils (Dalebroux & Goldstein, 2008).

6.0 Nurturing creativity

It is argued that the current education system in England is inhibiting creativity (Robinson, 2001; Hayes, 2004). Robinson (2001) argues that where creative teaching and learning are occurring is mostly despite the dominant policies of a prescriptive curriculum and achievements measured by Statutory Achievement Tests (SATS) rather than because schools and teachers are being encouraged to embrace creativity. The open mindedness, exploration, and celebration of difference that the concept of creativity brings with it can be viewed as being in

opposition to the language of targets and accountability that is so prevalent in schools.

The NACCCE report (1999) set out the conditions under which creativity can flourish and points out that it is as relevant to science, technology and humanities as it is to the arts. The report argues that everyone has creative potential but that developing it requires a balance between skill and control and the freedom to experiment and take risks. This next section of the report will review research that identifies barriers and opportunities to developing creativity in the classroom.

Rogers' Theory of Creativity (1961)

Carl Rogers' Theory of Creativity (1961) identified 2 external conditions for fostering constructive creativity:-

- psychological safety; and
- psychological freedom.

Psychological safety refers to the need for an individual to be accepted unconditionally. Within a classroom a learner needs to feel safe in order to discover his/her own ideas and approaches and external evaluation needs to be limited to reactions rather than judgements.

Psychological freedom permits the individual complete freedom of symbolic expression; they may not be able to do what they like, but they can think or express what they like.

Rogers (1961) also identified three inner conditions of creativity:

- Openness to experience
- Internal locus of evaluation
- The ability to toy with elements and concepts

Openness to experience includes the ability to be flexible and to perceive the world honestly and directly rather than accepting of convention or the conceptions of others.

Internal locus of evaluation refers to the need to be able to trust one's own judgement and taste and to evaluate things from your own values. The culture within the education system can work against this concept as teachers and external examiners are perceived as experts who tell us what is good or bad. A key and critical element in this paper is captured in Petrowski's (2000) argument that from a creativity standpoint, the educational system is inherently flawed because evaluation and assessment are proven inhibitors of creativity.

The ability to toy with elements and concepts relates to the opportunities to play spontaneously with, for example, ideas, colours, shapes, and relationships. Rogers believed that these inner conditions could grow in a supportive environment that includes the identified external conditions.

This resonates with Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) concept of a 'congenial' environment.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) encapsulated the necessary environment to foster creativity by referring to what he called a 'congenial' environment. Among the properties of such an environment are openness, positive attitude to novelty, acceptance of personal different-ness and willingness to reward divergence. These factors define a society that assists and recognises novelty production.

Within the classroom environment recent research (Burnard, Craft & Grainger, 2006) has documented the interplay between children aged 3-7 years and adults in relation to fostering creativity. This research identified a number of core features of learners' and teachers' engagement, which foster creativity and is displayed in Table 2. The main emphasis in on encouraging children's ideas and possibilities, Craft and Jeffrey (2004) described this as practice that is 'learner inclusive.' Learner inclusive practices involve the children and teachers co-participating in the learning context.

Table 2. Core features of learners' and teachers' engagement in fostering creativity in children aged 3-7 years (Burnard, Craft & Grainger, 2006).

Core Feature	**Qualities of the core feature**
Posing questions	Children's questions; both those posed aloud and other implied through actions, were closely documented by practitioners with a concerned, deep knowledge of each individual. Questions were treated with respect and interest, nurtured and celebrated. Question posing often occurred in imaginative play.
Play	Children in these settings were offered opportunities to play over extended periods of time. Children were highly motivated and engaged, deeply interested and very serious in their playfulness, engaging closely with one another's ideas and experience, imagining all kinds of scenes, encountering and solving problems.
Immersion	The children were deeply immersed in a caring, positive, loving environment in each setting. In each case this was combined with overt cognitive challenge involved.
Innovation	Children made strong connections between ideas and practitioners sought to further the children's growing understandings, offering provocations to stimulate connection-making.
Being imaginative	Through imagining, children were able to be decision-makers about the quality of ideas, content of their learning tasks, and ways of conducting them.
Self-determination and risk-taking	Children were enabled in taking risks, working in safe, secure and supportive environments in which they were expected to exercise independence in making decisions and where their contributions were valued. Adults encouraged learning from experience as both empowering and generative. Each adult worked hard not to rush children.

An important point to make in this section of the report is based on an argument made by Turner-Bisset (2007, p.200). If information for promoting creativity is presented, as it is on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) website, as checklists for teachers and managers then the audience is moved 'into the performativity discourse by providing yet another list of things to remember when planning for teaching.' Care must be taken when promoting creativity in schools to avoid the essence of the concept being lost within another external political pressure on the practice of teaching.

7.0 Summary

The philosophy underpinning the work to be disseminated to schools as presented in this report is embedded in the principles of positive psychology. This report advocates that in order to effect change it is crucial to identify and promote strengths that support positive adaptive functioning as well as prevent or improve identified mental health difficulties.

This report has identified how the promotion and use of creativity with children and young people is one of the methods in which positive psychology can be used constructively in schools.

There has been a focus on creativity in educational policy making (NACCCE, 1999; Excellence and Enjoyment, 2003; Roberts, 2006) with a realisation that a creative workforce is the key to economic growth and human capital development. Although the driving force for the Government in promoting creativity can be viewed as leading to increased wealth for a society as a whole, this report has outlined that the benefits to the individuals at a personal level are positive.

One of the main messages throughout this report is that everyone can be creative; all individuals have creative potential. This potential can be nurtured

and this results in the promotion of well-being and fulfilment (Maslow, 1970; Barron, 1995; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Simonton, 2005).

With creativity having such prominence in twenty-first century education and policy making, a role for the ep is not to provide another checklist of creative tools for teachers, but rather to emphasise the impact of fostering creativity on the well-being of young people. This will hopefully inform teaching staff of what is really meant by creativity in practice and that it is not merely a 'bolt-on' to the existing curriculum, but an ethos that can fostered throughout the school environment. The Wirral TaMHS project has provided the opportunity for the educational psychology service to provide this underpinning context and rationale for promoting creativity in schools. This is being done through whole school training and ongoing support to implement creative practice and the nurturing of creativity in pupils across the curriculum (see Appendix 2 for examples of presentations).

This ppr proposes that there is a need for more empirical evidence to highlight the benefits that creativity can have on the mental health and wellbeing of young people. Through this project there is the opportunity to measure the impact of promoting creativity on mental health and wellbeing in terms of the framework. This has been built into the evaluation of the Wirral TaMHS project and will contribute to the existing research base.

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Appendix 1

Terminology

Well-being

The term 'well-being' used throughout this report refers to the notion of subjective well-being (SWB) and it is used in research literature as a substitute for the term 'happiness' (Boniwell, 2006). Boniwell (2006, p.33) explains that SWB encompasses how people evaluate their own lives 'in terms of *cognitive* and *affective* explanations.' Life satisfaction represents an individual's own assessment of their life and, it is argued that dissatisfaction is reduced when there is little or no discrepancy between the present and what is thought to be the ideal situation. Affect represents the emotional side of SWB and comprises both negative and positive moods and emotions that are associated with everyday experiences. Research (Fredrickson, 2004) suggests that in order to thrive and flourish, an individual needs to experience a ratio of 3:1 or above of positivity to negativity and anything below this ratio results in languishing. It could be argued that this assertion does not consider the variables of the individual's personality and character traits and is perhaps claiming a generalisation that is oversimplified.

Mental Health

Keyes and Lopez (2005, p.48) state that mental health is 'not merely the absence of mental illness, nor is it merely the presence of high well-being.' Keyes et al. (2005) define mental health as a state consisting of both the absence of mental illness and the presence of high-level well-being (mental health). Figure 2 sets out this definition in a model, which depicts well-being and mental health as being on a continuum which together produce four quadrants. This model demonstrates that mental health and mental illness can both consist of complete and incomplete states. An example of this suggestion would be an individual with

a diagnosis of a mental illness who can regulate their illness sufficiently in order to be mentally healthy; they would not be in a state of complete mental illness.

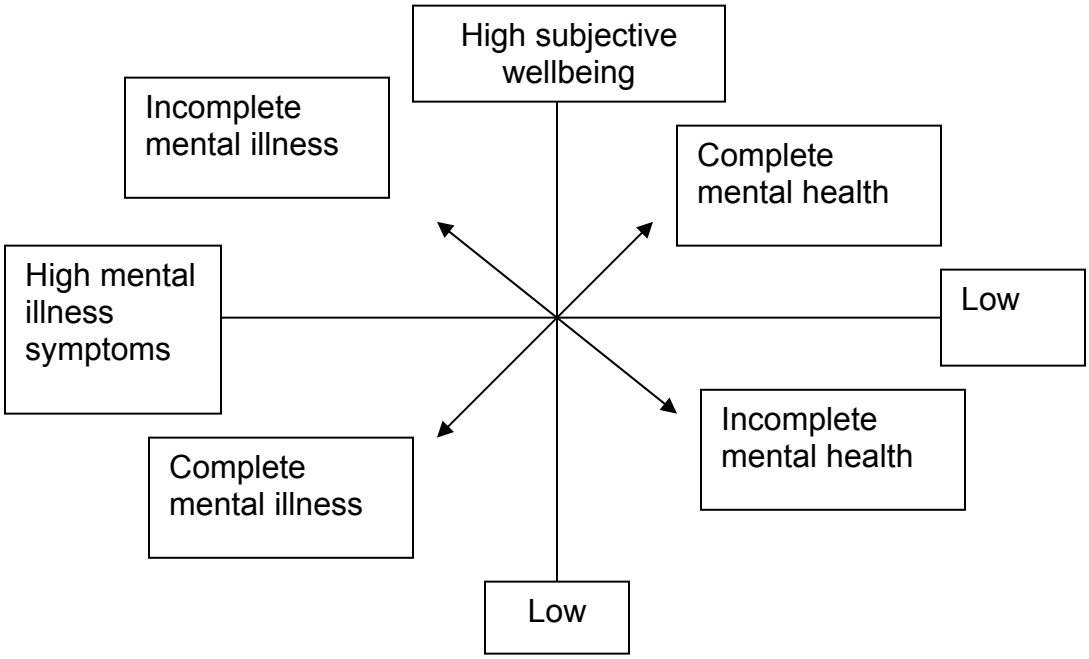


Figure 2. Mental health and mental illness: The complete state model (Keyes & Lopez, 2005)

Resilience

The meaning of resilience and its operational definition has been a subject of debate and controversy (Masten, 1999; Wang & Gorden, 1994; Masten & Reed, 2005). Masten and Reed (2005, p.75) conclude that the research conducted generally refers to resilience as 'a class of phenomena characterised by patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity or risk.' Positive adaptation may include positive behaviour such as academic and social achievements, and other behaviours that are socially desirable for individuals, or

the absence of undesirable behaviours, including behaviour symptomatic of mental illness and criminal behaviour.

Appendix 2 – example of a presentation given to TaMHS schools

What is creativity?

- 'To bring into being'
- 'the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people or circumstances of life on the other' (Rogers, 1961)
- 'Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are original and of value' (NACCCE Report, 1999).

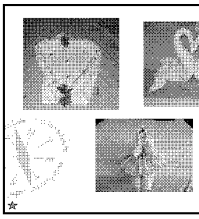
Why focus on creativity?

Why is it good to promote creativity in school?

Alfie, age 6

'Big C' and 'little C'

- Creativity is not just for the few, but is an everyday phenomenon of everyday people (Maslow, 1970).
- Creativity lies across all domains
- Everyone can be creative (NACCCE, 1999).



Expressive Arts

Drama, dance, art, music, writing

Therapeutic Approaches:-

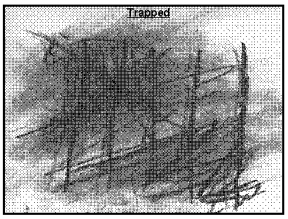
- Exploring trauma in order to grow as a mentally healthy human being.
- Self-expression and communication

Resilience and coping

Safe

A warm sun, some clouds, calm waves and pink colours for love and for warmth. It's a little bit about faith.

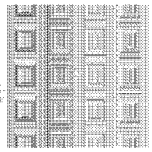
Trapped



Appendix 2 – example of a presentation given to TaMHS schools

Alter your focus to change your perception

Change the way you look at things and thing you look at changes…

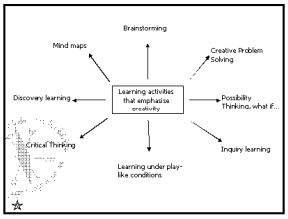


Less is more…

'The creative individual is a fulfilled one' (Maslow)

What properties do we need to be encouraging and nurturing in school?

Motivation	Personality
Goal directedness	Active imagination
Fascination for a task or area	Flexibility
Risk taking	Curiosity
Willingness to ask many (unusual) questions	Independence
Willingness to consult others (but not simply carry out orders)	Tolerance for ambiguity
Desire to go beyond the conventional	Ability to restructure problems
	Ability to abstract from the concrete
	Seek alternatives



Can you daydream at night?
Matilda, 4 years

Who made God?
Alfie, 5 years

Is tomorrow today?
Holly, 4 years

What came first, the rain or the sea?
Finbar, age 6

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Creativity is part of the essence of being a child

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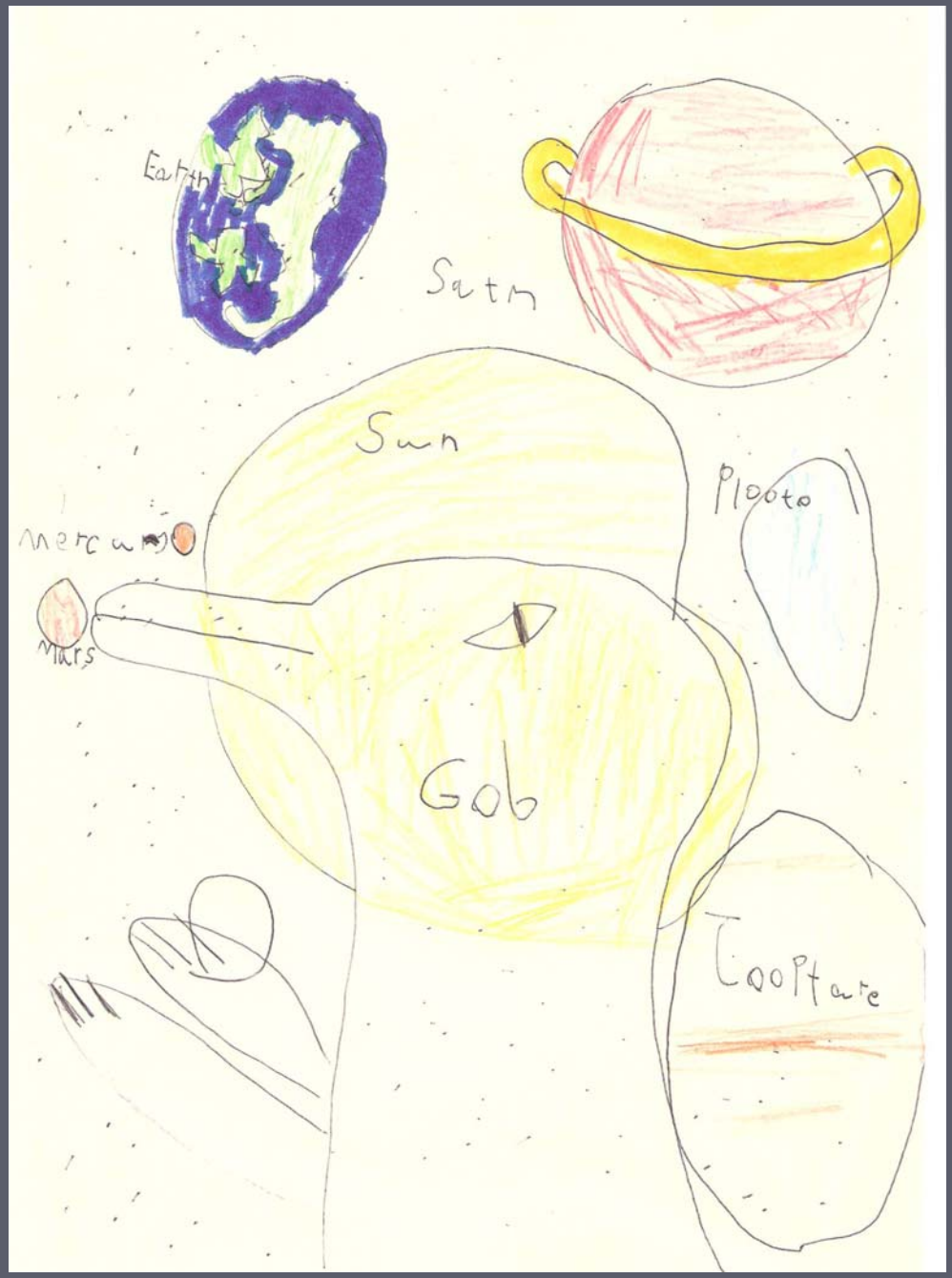

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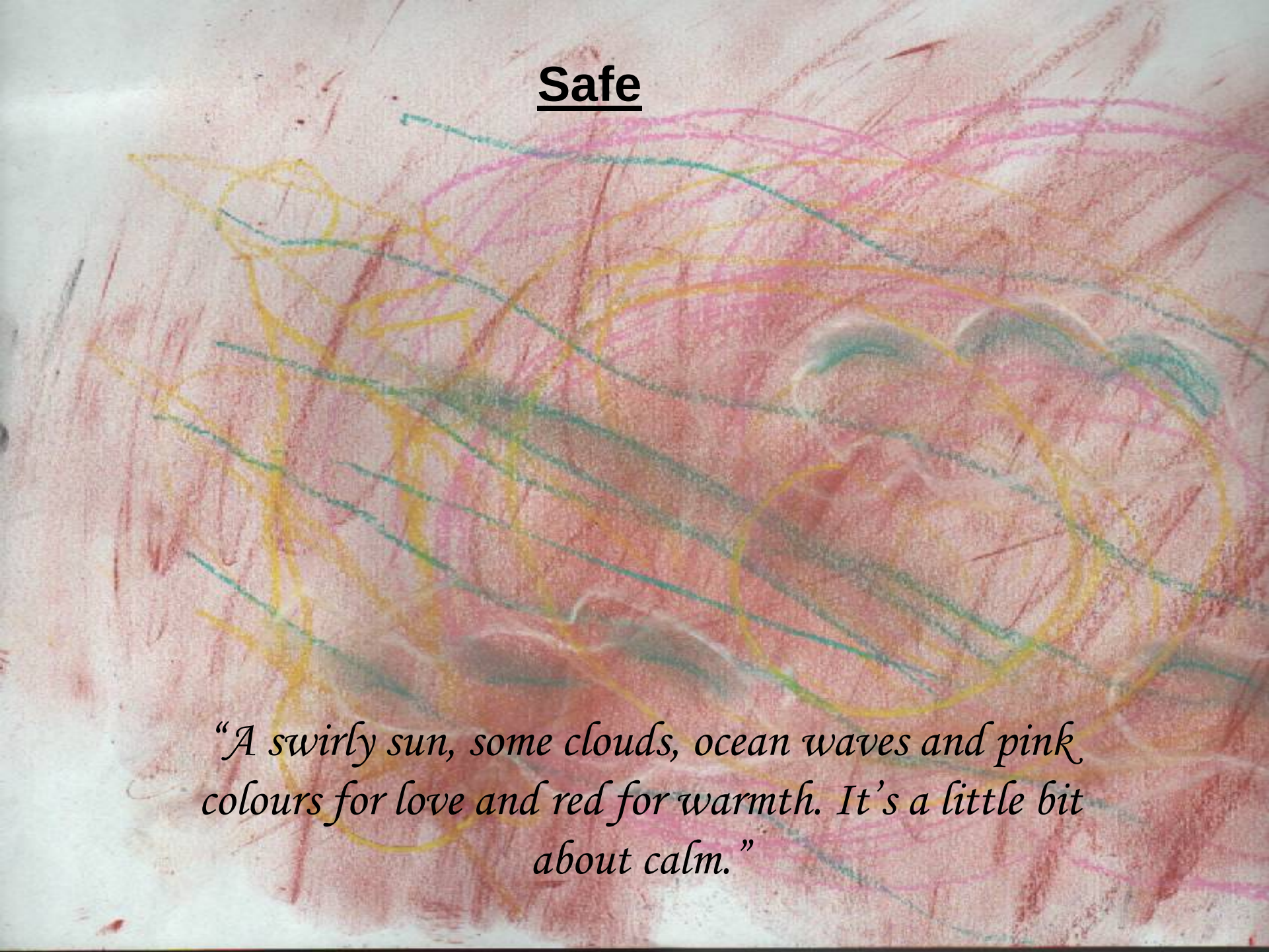

"A swirly sun, some clouds, ocean waves and pink colours for love and red for warmth. It's a little bit about calm."

Trapped

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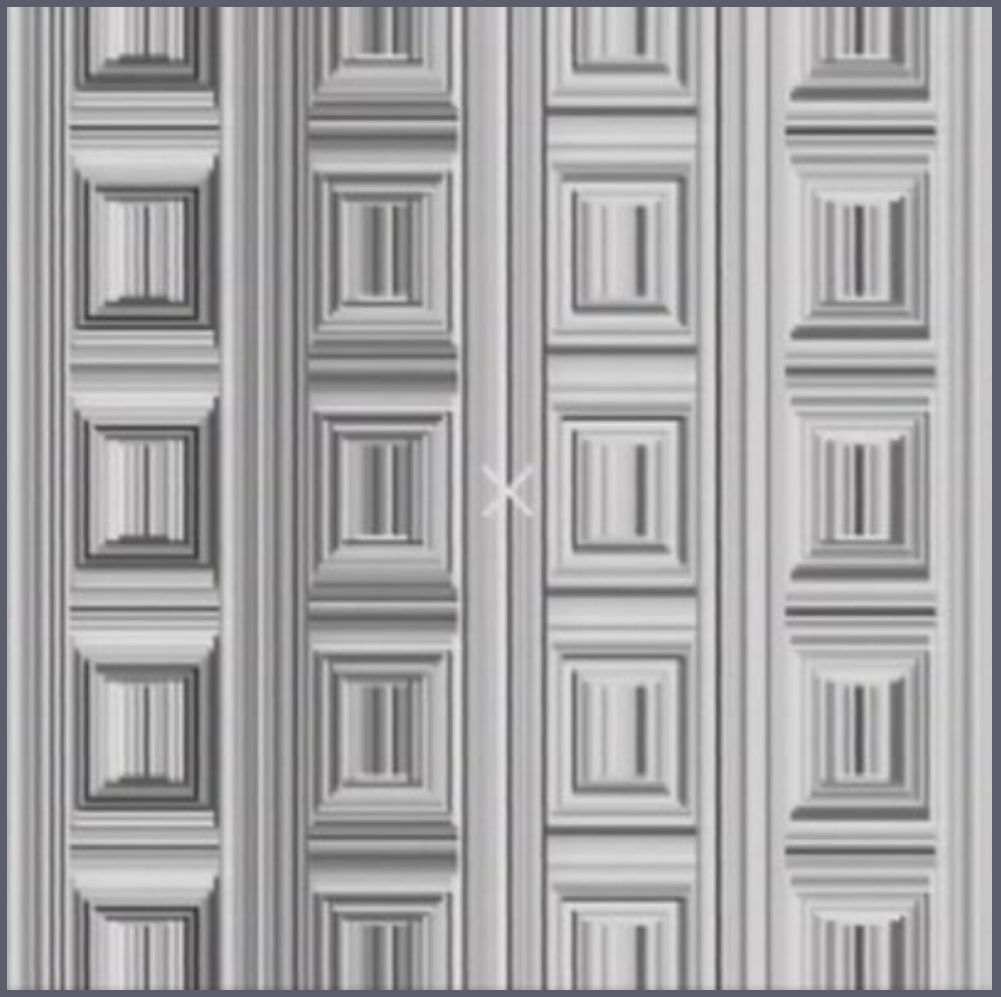

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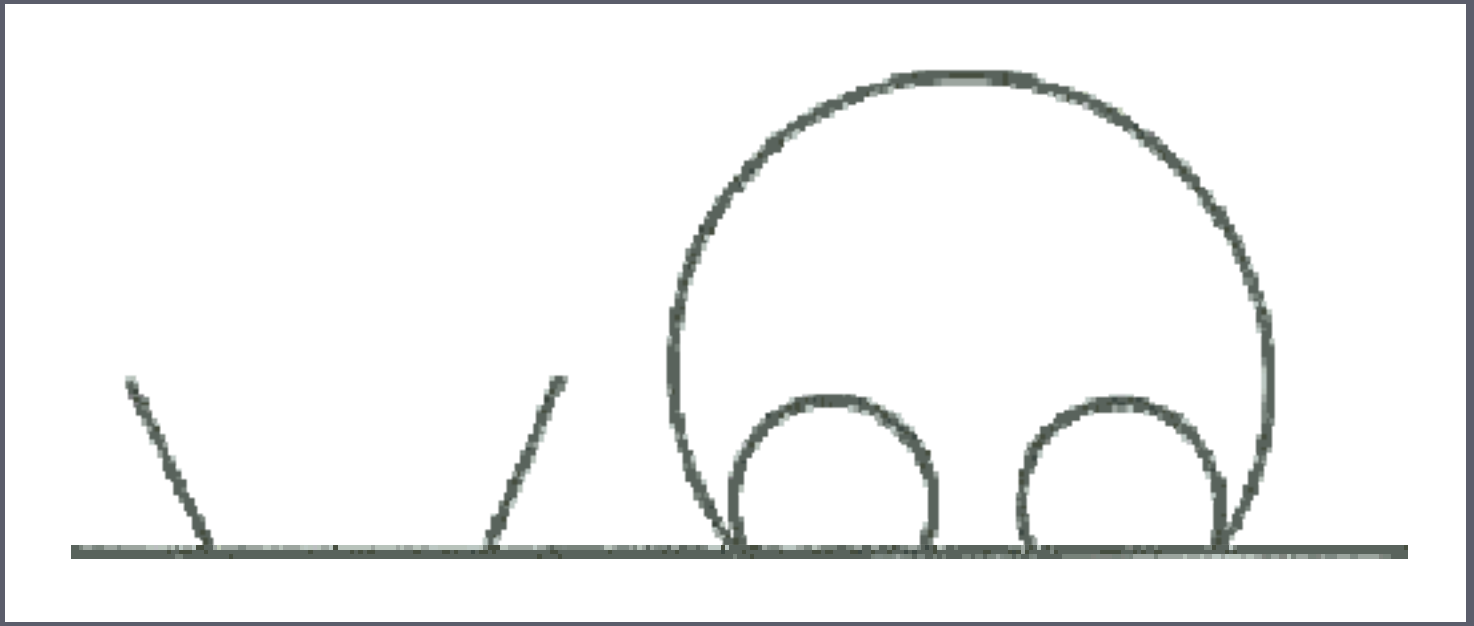

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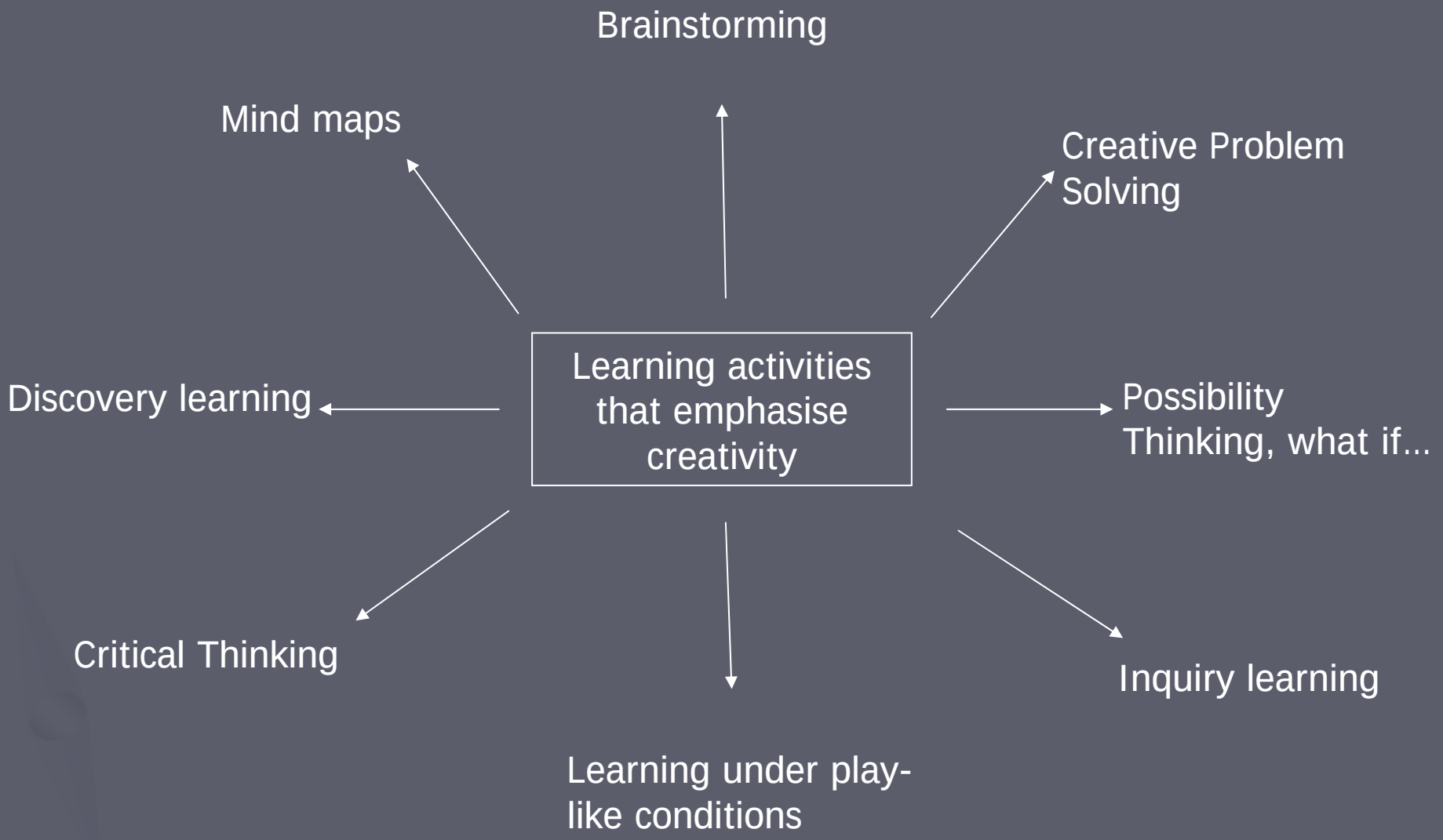
Brainstorming
Mind maps
Creative Problem Solving
Learning activities that emphasise creativity
Discovery learning
Possibility Thinking, what if...
Critical Thinking
Inquiry learning
Learning under play-like conditions

Can you daydream at night?

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Is tomorrow today?

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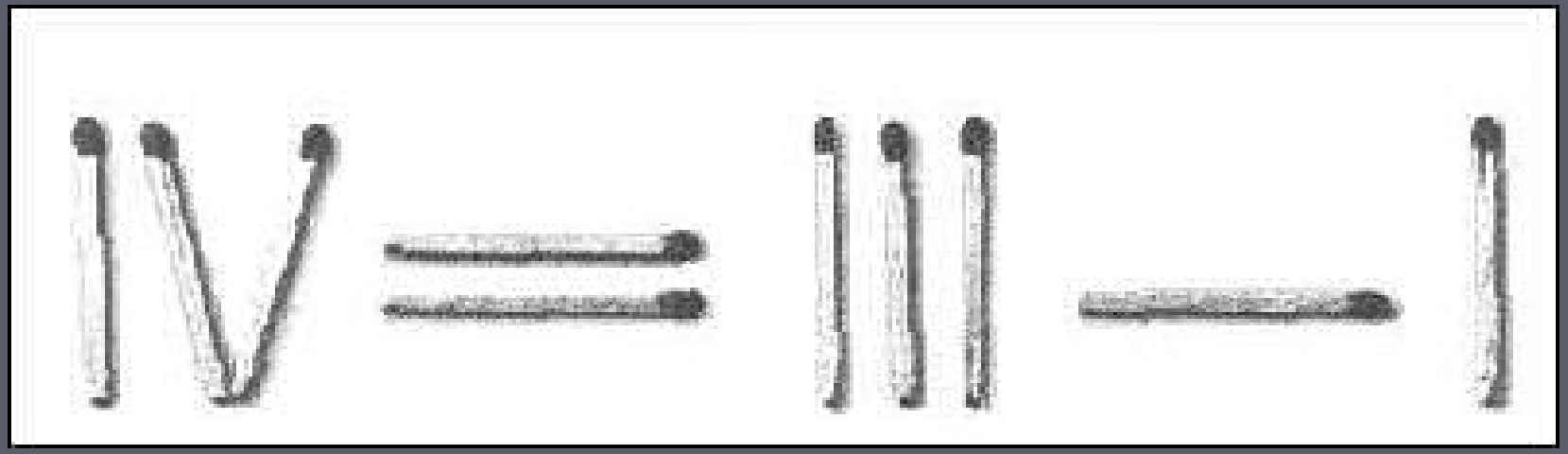

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The Evaluation of the Motivation and Engagement Scale with Year 7 Pupils in a Mainstream Secondary School

Introduction

Context

The author, in her role as educational psychologist (EP), has had a 10 month involvement with an intervention in a large secondary school. A meeting with the Head of Year 7 highlighted an area of concern that was common across the year group; motivation and engagement in learning.

It was decided that the Motivation and Engagement Scale (MES) (Martin, 2009) would be used as a tool to explore the motivation and engagement of each Year 7 pupil in order to group them for appropriate intervention.

The aims of this professional practice report

This professional practice report (PPR) aims to evaluate the Motivation and Engagement Scale (Martin, 2009) in terms of answering the following two questions:

- Did the identification of specific areas of motivational difficulties using the MES lead to successful interventions for pupils in this school?
- Is the MES a reliable tool for the identification of individual difficulties in motivation and engagement?

The PPR will give a concise background to the theories of motivation before presenting the central theoretical perspectives behind the construction of the MES. Ethical considerations of implementing a questionnaire in a school setting will be explored.

This report will follow the outline as presented below:-

- Section 1 – provides an overview of the theories of motivation and engagement in the realm of education and learning;
- Section 2 – provides an overview of the content of the MES;
- Section 3 – provides the conceptual background to the MES;

- Section 4 – presents the results from a focus group held with a selection of year 7 pupils;
- Section 5 – presents a description and critique of the intervention and measures the impact of the intervention;
- Section 6 – presents an overall evaluation of the MES with reference to the two questions posed above.

Table 1 provides an overview of the EP's involvement in the administration, analysis and implementation of the intervention.

Time scale	**The role of the educational psychologist**
September 2008	Planning meeting with the SENCo leading to a separate meeting with the Head of Year 7. Identification of the MES as a tool to use in this instance.
November 2008	Training provided to the Inclusion Team (consisting of seven learning mentors) in the background, underpinning theory and administration of the Motivation and Engagement Scale.
January – February 2009	Collection of the data and input into excel spreadsheet.
March 2009	Presentation of the data to the Inclusion Team and collaborative identification of pupils for the first intervention.
March-April 2009	Planning of the intervention (study skills) with the Inclusion Team.
July 2009	Arrangements made for post-intervention evaluation. Focus group held with selection of Year 7 pupils and questionnaire re-administered to pupils who had received the intervention. Analysis of the evaluation.
July 2009	Feedback to Inclusion Team regarding the findings of the evaluation. Action planning with the Inclusion Team to improve the future administration of the questionnaire and the resulting interventions.

Table 1: An overview of the educational psychologist's role

Section 1 - An overview of the main theories of motivation for learning

Motivation for learning is a complex concept, which, Harlen and Crick (2003) argued, 'is influenced by a range of psychosocial factors both internal to the learner and present in the learner's social and natural environment' (p.173). Harlen and Crick (2003) present three broad principles incorporating a range of factors that have to be taken into account when considering motivation for learning:

1. the learner's sense of self, expressed through values and attitudes;
2. the learner's engagement with learning, including their locus of control, and efficacy; and
3. the learner's willingness to exert effort to achieve a learning goal.

The following section will explore these three broad principles with reference to other existing theories, such as attribution theory (Heider, 1960; Kelly, 1967; Weiner, 1986), self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1982; Schunk, 1991), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The learners' sense of self

The notion of 'learner identity' relates to the beliefs, values and attitudes that the learner holds about and towards him or her self. These beliefs then have an influence on their goal orientation, or what they chose to strive for, and to their sense of efficacy as a learner.

Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1982) states that a learner will initiate, work hard during, and persist longer at tasks they judge they are good at. Self-efficacy is an appraisal or evaluation that a person makes about their competence to succeed at a task. Self-efficacy, therefore, is situation-specific rather than a personality trait or disposition (Borich & Tombari, 1997).

A person's perceptions of the causes of success or failure are of paramount importance to the understanding of that individual's motivation for learning (Harlen and Crick, 2003). Attribution theory states that accomplishments or failures are attributed to three antecedents:-

I. Locus of causality – whether causes are perceived to originate from within the person or externally
II. Stability – whether causes are viewed to be consistent or to vary over time
III. Controllability – whether the individual perceives that they can influence the causes of success or failure

Effort and ability are often cited as causes of success or failure at a task. Both are internal to the learner, but the views of stability and control vary among learners and teachers. Learners who perceive success or failure as due to ability will also see it as uncontrollable and stable. Effort however, is perceived as controllable and unstable and Schunk (1991) argued that learners who attribute success to effort are more likely to persevere with a learning task and to accEPt failure as something they can change next time.

Dweck (2007) introduced the concepts of fixed and growth mindsets. Dweck (2007) stated that the individual with the fixed mindset believes that their qualities will not change and that they have a 'certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality and a certain moral character' (p.6). Dweck (2007) argued that individuals with fixed mindsets will have an urgency to prove that they have these qualities in abundance, which results in a lack of risk taking and creativity in the learning environment. The growth mindset is 'based on the belief that your basic qualities are things that you can cultivate through your efforts' (Dweck, 2007; p.7). The individual with the growth mindset believes that everyone can change and grow with experience and practice and this creates a motivation for learning.

<u>Engagement with learning</u>

Dweck's (1992) research has also highlighted that students with learning goals, or mastery goals, have more positive attitudes to school, have a higher sense of competence as learners and show greater interest in school than do those students with performance goals. Performance goals are linked to extrinsic factors such as how others perceive the pupil and the grade or outcome awarded to the pupil. The student with the growth mindset studies to learn, not just to get a good grade. This results in better learning strategies and a deeper level of understanding.

The belief in the growth mindset can lead to the love of challenge, belief in effort, resilience in the face of setbacks, and greater (more creative) success (Dweck, 2007).

Harlen and Crick (2007) stated that there are many reasons why a goal may or may not be embraced. Kellaghan et al. (1996) proposed that there are four reasons:-

I. The individual needs to comprehend the goal;
II. The goal needs to be reachable yet challenging;
III. Individuals should believe that their efforts to reach the goal will be successful;
IV. The attainment of the goal will lead to benefit for the individual.

These four reasons are closely aligned with Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2000) self-determination theory. This theory was developed to explain conditions that foster intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to learners finding interest and satisfaction in what they learn and the learning process itself; this leads to self-motivated and continued learning. The theory predicts that when our needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy are satisfied, intrinsic motivation is likely to occur.

Extrinsic motivation is where the incentive for learning is found in rewards such as certificates, prizes or in avoiding the consequences of failure. The meta-analysis by Deci et al. (1999) of 128 studies of the effects on extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation showed that rewards undermined intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is also weakened by punishment, threats of punishment, pressured evaluation and by imposing goals, deadlines and directives. Both punitive and positive incentives reduce intrinsic motivation because they reduce an individual's perception of autonomy and increase their perception that their performance was caused by external factors.

Willingness to exert effort to achieve

Johnston (1996) argued that the will to learn is derived from a person's sense of deEP meaning and purpose and can be described as the energy to act on what is meaningful. This links to Kellaghan et al.'s (1996) finding that a goal is more likely to be embraced if the attainment of a goal leads to actual benefits for the individual.

'The low-effort syndrome' is a phrase used to describe the students with the fixed mindsets who have a goal to look smart and to exert as little effort as possible. This low-effort syndrome is explained by Dweck (2007) as a means that students with the fixed mindset protect themselves and prevent the risk of 'being found out,' therefore they are much more likely to turn down more challenging activities. For students with a growth mindset it does not make sense to stop trying. Dweck does not explain if there is a 'continuum of mindset' and her research (2007) suggests that a person either has a fixed or a growth mindset. This is best illustrated by Dweck's (2007; p.730) study which involved hundreds of students, mostly early adolescents. Students were given a set of ten problems from a nonverbal IQ test. The first group of students were praised for their ability and told they were clever; the second group were praised for their effort. The second group were not made to feel that they had some special gift and as a result 90 per cent of them wanted to try the next more challenging task, compared to none of the first group. Dweck (2007) asserted that the first group of students did not want to do anything that could expose their flaws and call into question their talent. She concluded that 'in the fixed mindset, imperfections are shameful' (Dweck, 2007; p.73). It needs to be considered that this is

Dweck's interpretation of the phenomenon; there are no accounts from the young people to add to triangulate evidence that may confirm or dispute this assertion.

The research on motivation and the theories that have been presented all appear to claim generalisation of their findings. Differences in cultures, ethnic origin and socio-economic groups have not been considered. This is an area that warrants further investigation before the claims made by proponents of these theories can be applied without caution to all young people in education.

Section 2 – An overview of the Motivation and Engagement Scale (MES) (Martin, 2006)

Martin (2006) described motivation as 'the students' energy and drive to learn and to work hard at school' (p.5). He defined engagement as 'the behaviour that reflects this energy and drive' (p.5). This suggests that motivation is observable as a behaviour, however it could be argued that an internal motivation may not always be visible in external behaviour.

The Motivation and Engagement Scale (MES) – High School is an instrument (Appendix 1) that claims to measure the motivation and engagement of pupils aged between 12 and 18 years. The manual (Martin, 2009) goes on to describe only how it measures motivation, confirming the unnecessary inclusion of the term 'engagement.'

The scale is developed on three principles:

1. That a number of thoughts and behaviours reflect enhanced motivation and engagement. These are termed 'motivation and engagement boosters.'
2. A number of thoughts and behaviours reflect impeded motivation and engagement. These are termed 'motivation and engagement mufflers.'

3. A number of thoughts and behaviours reflect reduced motivation and engagement. These are termed 'motivation and engagement guzzlers.'

The MES claims to assess motivation through three adaptive cognitive dimensions (booster thoughts), three adaptive behavioural dimensions (booster behaviours), three impeding/maladaptive cognitive dimensions (mufflers) and two maladaptive behavioural dimensions (guzzlers) of motivation and engagement. Each of the eleven factors comprises four items – hence a 44-item instrument. To each item, students rate themselves on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Students then get an overall score for each of the eleven areas within booster thoughts, booster behaviours, guzzlers and mufflers. These scores are then aggregated and converted to a raw score out of 100 and then to a normative score. It must be acknowledged that the MES was devised in Australia and the sample of young people used to create the normative scores are from Australia. This results in the need to apply caution when comparing the scores of British young people with those of an Australian population.
(See Appendix 1 for an example questionnaire.)

Boosters

Each booster falls into one of two groups: thoughts and behaviours. Booster thoughts include self-belief, learning focus and valuing of school. Booster behaviours include persistence, planning and study management.

Mufflers

Motivation and engagement mufflers are anxiety, failure avoidance and uncertain control.

Guzzlers

Guzzlers reflect reduced motivation and engagement. They are self-sabotage and disengagement.

Taken together, these boosters, mufflers, and guzzlers comprise the Student Motivation and Engagement Wheel (Martin, 2003, 2005). This is displayed in Figure 1.

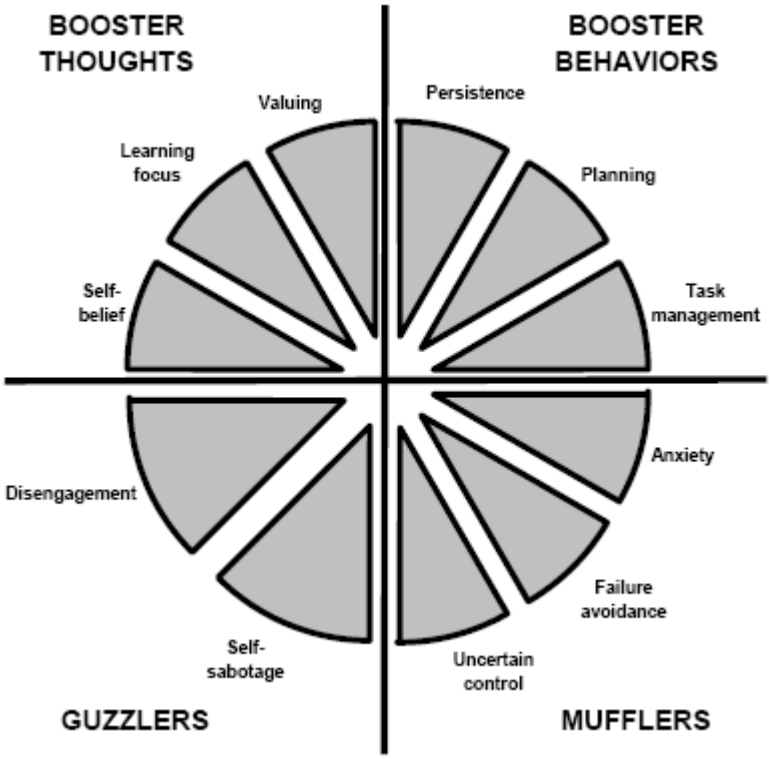

Figure 1: Student Motivation and Engagement Wheel (Martin, 2003, 2005).

The MES manual also provides 'strategies for enhancing boosters, reducing mufflers, and eliminating guzzlers' (Martin, 2006; p.66). For example, 'challenge thoughts like 'I'm hopeless' by thinking things like 'I didn't do as well as I could have.' Further examples of these strategies can be found in Appendix 2. There is also a student workbook which claims to provide exercises to 'learn how to maintain and build on your motivation and engagement strengths' (Martin, 2006; p.iv).

This PPR argues that the checklists given, as presented in Appendix 2, under each of the eleven areas, are minimal and simplistic. They have also been devised with the Australian education system in mind; this means that the

language chosen and techniques suggested may be unfamiliar and incompatible with MES users in the UK. The areas highlighted, such as anxiety, are arguably complex issues that need a detailed and individualised plan to address them thoroughly. The workbook goes into more detail, but there is debatably a danger that teaching and support staff would merely use the workbook as an intervention without viewing the child's needs in an individual manner. This paper argues that interventions need to be personalised and relevant to the individual in order to be successful.

Section 3: Conceptual background and related research to the MES

Martin (2006) stated that the purpose of developing the MES model is to integrate a number of theoretical perspectives on motivation and articulate a framework that is accessible to students and from which action can be drawn. The theoretical perspectives that the MES is developed from are discussed in this section of the report.

Need achievement and self-worth motivation theory

The MES concepts of self-belief, control, anxiety, failure avoidance, self-sabotage and disengagement all evolved from the need achievement and self-worth theory of motivation. Martin (2006) stated that, based on the need achievement model of motivation, students can be characterised in terms of three typologies: the success-orientated student, the failure avoidant student, and the failure accepting student. This is closely linked to the research highlighted in Section 1 'The learner's sense of self.'

Crocker and Knight (2005) highlighted that contingency of self-worth shape long-term and short term goals. Individuals want to prove that they are a success not a failure in domains of contingent self-worth. Crocker and Knight (2005) argued that students who base their self-esteem on their academic accomplishments

typically have self-validating goals in this domain, viewing their school work as an opportunity to demonstrate their intelligence. Because failure in domains of contingency threatens self-esteem, some students may try to avoid failure by increasing effort, whereas others may abandon their self-validation goal and become unmotivated (disengagement) or prepare excuses that will act as a defence mechanism (self-sabotage).

Failure avoidant students are motivated by a fear of failure; they tend to be anxious and are uncertain about their ability to achieve success. This is due, as Crocker and Knight (2005) highlighted, to the fact that the focus on performance increases stress and anxiety which can then undermine learning.
With reference to Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2000) theory of self-determination, the belief that one's self-esteem and self-worth are reliant on an outcome reduces the sense of autonomy. This is due to the individual engaging in a task because they feel they have to, not because they want to.
Crocker and Knight (2005) also pointed out the costs to relationships and self-regulation when one is driven by self-worth motivation. They stated that relationships become a means of validating the self rather than an opportunity to support and give to others. The pursuit of self-esteem interferes with achieving important goals because the intense emotions associated with failure in contingent domains can disrupt efforts to attempt and achieve goals.

The issue of cultural dimensions recurs; this paper highlights the need for cultural psychologists to examine whether there are cultural differences in contingencies of self-worth and whether the consequences of contingent self-worth might be a very Western phenomenon. This is a recommendation for future research.

Attribution theory and control

The MES concept of control is included from attribution and control theory perspectives. Attribution theory states that the causes an individual attributes to an event can determine how they behave on future occasions (Weiner, 1985). In Section 1 'The learner's sense of self' the three dimensions of locus, stability and controllability are described.

Nicholls and Miller (1984) found that children's understanding of effort and ability changes dramatically with age. For younger children (up to 9 years) ability and effort are positively related concepts; clever pupils are hard workers and not-so clever pupils do poorly because they do not work hard enough. For older children (9 years and above) ability and effort are reciprocally related concepts; clever students do not need to work hard and conversely, students who do need to work hard must not be so clever.

Folmer et al. (2008) found that this has implications in that higher effort, coupled with a negative outcome, represents a greater personal threat for older children and have stronger affective and motivational consequences due to the tendency to attribute failure to internal, stable and global causes.

Students who feel they have no control over outcomes become increasingly uncertain as to whether they can avoid failure and in response to this engage in counterproductive behaviour. Eccles and Wigfield (2000) described some students taking on a low-effort strategy in challenging achievement orientated situations in order to protect themselves in the event of failure. This concurs with Dweck's research (2007) as outlined in Section 1 'Willingness to exert effort to achieve.'

Mezulis et al. (2004) suggest that causal attributions and self-serving bias do vary from culture to culture. These findings are important to consider when using the MES with young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and cultures. In addition, Hufton et al.'s (2002) work suggests that the relative importance of effort and ability differs across culture and geographical regions. Further

investigation of these cultural differences may illuminate key aspects of the sociocultural milieu in which children's understanding of ability emerges. This investigation would need to encompass the consideration of the influence of unique personal circumstances, such as special educational needs and disability, upon causal attributions.

Self-efficacy and expectancy-value theory

The MES constructs of self-belief, valuing of school and persistence are derived from self-efficacy theory and expectancy-value theory.

Self-efficacy was discussed in Section 1 'the learner's sense of self.' There is evidence (Bandura, 1997) that self-efficacious students participate more readily, work harder, persist longer, and have fewer adverse emotional reactions when they encounter difficulties than do those who doubt their capabilities.

Zimmerman (2000) pointed out that self-efficacy beliefs are not a single disposition but rather are multidimensional in form and differ on the basis of the domain of functioning, for example; efficacy beliefs about performing on a history test may differ from beliefs about a biology test. This is an important point to consider when using the MES, which gives a general impression of self-belief across all aspects of learning.

Zimmerman (2000) also highlighted the fact that the self-efficacy measures are also designed to be sensitive to variations in performance context, such as learning in a noisy environment as opposed to a quiet one. For example, a student may not demonstrate as much persistence if the level of noise was causing a distraction. The MES does not take these variables into account when measuring 'self-belief,' the concept that was included as a direct result of self-efficacy theory. Self-belief may differ across settings, environments and contexts; the MES does not explore the personal significance of these variables through the questions it asks.

Theorists (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) in the tradition of expectancy-value theory argue that individuals' choice, performance and persistence can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will do on an activity and the extent to which they value an activity.

Eccles et al. (1983) defined different components of achievement values: attainment value or importance, intrinsic value – enjoyment one gains, utility value – how well it fits into future plans, and cost – how the decision to engage in one activity limits access to other activities.

Bandura (1997) distinguished between efficacy expectations, or the individual's belief that he can accomplish a task, and outcome expectancies. Bandura argued that expectancy-value theorists historically have focussed on outcome expectations in their models, and stated that efficacy expectations are more predictive of performance and choice than outcome expectations.

Motivation orientation and self-determination theory

The MES concepts of learning focus, planning and study management are linked to motivation orientation and self-determination theory.

Motivation orientation refers to the student's focus on the task at hand (learning focus) or on how he or she is performing (performance focus). This is directly linked to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) in that learning-focussed students are motivated to attain mastery rather than to outperform others. This links clearly with Dweck's (2007) research on learning and performance goals as discussed in Section 1 'engagement with learning.' Learning focus is closely aligned with intrinsic motivation, which requires a high degree of self-regulation. Self-regulation is conceptualised as a continuum within self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1996), individuals can be more or less self-regulated with respect to a particular behaviour. The highest level of self-regulation involves actions being undertaken because the individual finds them interesting or important, the

lowest level involves doing an activity because the person feels forced by an external agent.
Learning focus can therefore be evident because of an external drive e.g. to enter a particular profession. Learning focus and performance focus are not as dichotomous as Martin (2006) presented them to be, rather learning focus is on a continuum as highlighted by Deci and Ryan. (1996).
Martin (2006) stated that planning and study management are ways in which an individual's learning focus is manifested in their behaviour. The author of this paper would argue that this is not the case for all students; it may be hypothesised that it is possible to have a student who has complete learning focus yet is not efficient at planning or managing their study due to external factors or pressures that are out of their control, such as having the role of a young carer or being in the care system.

To conclude this section of the report, Martin (2006) has taken components of eight major theories of motivation to develop the eleven constructs of the MES. It could be argued that these theories did not develop individually with an intention to interweave them to create one measure of motivation. It could be argued that the theoretical background of the MES is too eclectic, resulting in key concepts being diluted, which in turn may affect the content validity of the tool. The issue of cultural differences has also been highlighted throughout this section in terms of the theoretical concepts being restricted to research in Western cultures.
The following section will draw on results from a focus group held with a sample of Year 7 pupils to examine what the students thought of the questionnaire.

Section 4: Focus Group

Section 4 will be divided into parts to present;

a) The rationale for using a focus group;
b) The methodology of the focus group;
c) The results of the focus group;
d) A discussion of the findings.

The rationale for a focus group

Krueger (1994; p.6) defined a focus group as 'a carefully planned discussion, designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.' The aim of the focus group was to produce qualitative data that provided an insight into the perceptions and opinions held by the students about the MES questionnaire that they had completed.
Focus groups are effective forams for generating children and young people's views and insights (Horowitz et al. 2003). It has been found that rather than being reticent to share perspectives in a focus group format, children can be more relaxed discussing issues among peers than they might be if interviewed alone by an adult (Horner, 2000).
Epistemologically the use of a focus group provides qualitative data from the young person's perspective. As a methodology, it is giving a forum for the young person to voice their experiences and what it meant for them to be asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding their engagement and motivation. This can provide valuable descriptive data and insights as the adults suspend their assumptions and instead question the young people directly.
Other advantages of using a focus group to generate data is that they are relatively inexpensive, efficient and data rich (Kennedy et al. 2001).
It is also important to acknowledge potential disadvantages of focus groups. These include potential informants choosing not to participate or offer their views as they may feel uncomfortable in a group setting. A moderator's failure to manage group dynamics effectively can reduce the quality of the data obtained (Horowitz et al. 2003). Another important consideration is that attitudinal

consensus cannot be inferred and strength of opinion cannot be judged accurately from the data. Lastly, empiric generalisation from the data is not valid as the data collected represents the views of that particular group (Beyea & Nicoll, 2000; Sim, 1998).

Methods

Focus groups employ an interviewing technique with discussion taking place under the guidance of a moderator. The moderator facilitates discussion in a non-directive and unbiased way, using pre-determined questions (Kingrey et al. 1990).
As advised in the literature (Greenbaum, 1998; Kennedy et al. 2001) the group consisted of eight participants. The sampling procedure was decided by the learning mentor at the school who approached the students and obtained their initial consent and parental consent. This was an obvious flaw in that the sample selection was biased, as it was based on the mentor's beliefs of who would be a good contributor to the group rather than a random selection of Year 7 pupils. In future focus group design the random selection of participants would be encouraged.

The location of the group was in a classroom. This was appropriate in terms of the participants feeling like the 'insiders,' which can reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and the participant. However, it is not ideal in terms of context issues for the pupils. The context may influence behaviour normally associated with that setting, such as waiting for permission to speak by raising the hand (Green & Hart, 1999). A more neutral setting outside of the school premises may have been a more suitable environment. It was, however an accessible and quiet location.

A small Dictaphone was used to record the session as there was no assistant available to record the interview in a written, and arguably less intrusive, method. The use of the audio-recorder was highlighted and discussed when informed consent was obtained from both the pupils and their parents. It was agreed that the recording would be destroyed once the material had been transcribed. The transcript was produced without the use of names and remained in the possession of the researcher rather than the school. This was agreed as part of the informed consent process, which involves consensual understanding of the research and its potential risks and benefits (Jensen et al. 1996). Informed consent was obtained by inviting the participants to discuss with the researcher the nature of the focus group, the procedures, and confidentiality of information, the voluntary nature of participation, and risks and benefits.
It has been found that confidentiality of data means different things in research than it does in teaching. Teachers, school nurses, learning mentors, and administrators regularly share information about students (Horowitz et al. 2003). School staff often expect to be informed about what individual students have said in the focus group, it is the researcher's responsibility to explain the parameters for sharing information. Horowitz et al. (2003) stated that generally 'overall themes may be shared without divulging the content of specific students' statements' (p.324).
It is suggested (Gibson, 2007) that the nature of the research should influence the decision about gender and group composition. As the focus of this research was a questionnaire that all Year 7 pupils had completed, it was decided that a mixed gender group would be appropriate and representative of the mixed sex year group.

It is important to recognise that the moderator is not neutral to the students; gender, role, profession, age category and appearance can all inhibit or promote openness within the group (Krueger, 1994). Attempts to counter these included

employing suggestions made by Gibbs (1997), such as demonstrating patience, warmth, humour, respect, active listening, flexibility, and being non-judgemental. Hennessy and Heary (2005) outlined three important functions of the role of moderator: to make the group feel comfortable and at ease, to keep the group discussion focussed on the topic and ensure that all the young people have had an opportunity to contribute, as well as seeking clarification to ensure an accurate account of their view is captured.

There was a pre-determined structure to the sequence of questions posed to the group. Krueger (2000) provides a useful guide on different categories of questions, and on how they ought to be used throughout the interview. Krueger's question types appear in Table 2, with example questions from the interview schedule.

Krueger's category	Question formulated
Opening question	What experience have you had of filling in questionnaires?
Introductory questions	What's your opinion of questionnaires?
Transition questions	Has anyone ever spoken to you about motivation? What does motivation mean to you? Has anyone spoken to you about your learning?
Key questions	What are the positives about the MES questionnaire? What are the negatives about the MES questionnaire?
Ending question	Overall, has the MES questionnaire been a useful tool?

Table 2: Progressive questions based on Krueger (2000)

Before the questioning began the students agreed to ground rules regarding:

- the nature and format of the group discussion;
- confidentiality rules;
- the method of recording;
- not talking at the same time and how to attract attention when wanting to contribute;
- the expected length of the discussion;
- there are no right and wrong answers.

Although an interview structure was pre-prepared it was realised that the moderator needed to be spontaneous and adaptable in order to respond to emerging issues and diversity of views. The focus group discussion took 45 minutes in total.

Results of the focus group

Breen (2006) stated that any formal analysis of focus group data should include a summary of:

- the most important themes;
- the most noteworthy quotes;
- any unexpected findings.

The audio recording of the group was transcribed verbatim and then analysed for the above points. The transcript was read several times and comments and reflections were added before identifying themes. See Appendix 3 for a copy of the transcript. Breen (2006) also highlighted that when extracting themes from the interviews it is important to take account of the intensity, extensiveness and specificity of comments made. It is imperative to acknowledge the limitations of the researcher when making interpretations of qualitative data. Robson (2002;

p.460) highlighted some of these deficiencies of the human as an analyst, which included;

- positive instances: a tendency to ignore information conflicting with hypotheses already held, and to emphasise information that confirms them;
- inconsistency: repeated evaluations of the same data tend to differ; and
- internal consistency: there is a tendency to discount the novel and unusual.

The identified themes are presented below with quotes to illustrate the flavour of each theme. It is acknowledged that the researcher is presenting quotes chosen to illustrate an identified theme; this is open to criticism in terms of the risk of the researcher ignoring some quotes in favour of others to suit the argument.

Four themes were identified from the data; the following part of the PPR will describe the theme and then present a quote from the transcript to illustrate the theme.

1. Feeling that the questionnaire was a test.

The students all, with the exception of one, described the process of completing the questionnaire as being like a test. They felt that even though it was explained to them that it was a questionnaire, their answers would be used against them and comparisons made.

P3: 'You think it's a test really.'

P2: 'Yeah, they trick you, don't they, and give you your test results and you get a flashback going I don't remember it being a test, uh no.'

2. Physiological affects.

Three of the students described physiological affects that they experienced when asked to complete the questionnaire.

P4: 'Gives me a headache…but it does! [Urghhhhh!]

P3: 'but if I get it is a test and it gets me all frustrated.'

P1: 'Same here.'

P3: 'I get belly ache sometimes but sometimes you fill them out and it ends up being a test.'

3. The presentation of the questionnaire to the pupils.

All the students complained about the manner in which the questionnaire had been given to them to complete. It varied across the classes; some were given a time limit and asked to sit in isolation.

P3: 'like they said just go, you've got 45 minutes starting now and then like you get really all stressed cos you ask if you can finish in 45 and read in 15.'

Several of the pupils said that they would have preferred to have been given the questionnaire to take home to complete.

P2: 'Or do it at home and then you're in an environment that you know you're safe.'

4. The lack of feedback.

The MES provides an overall profile of scores for the student once they have completed it. This highlights areas of strength and areas that need supporting. The pupils in the focus group reported that they had not seen their profile or had any feedback from teachers about their results.

Interviewer: 'did you get any feedback from anybody after you had done it?'

P4: 'No.'

P2: 'Not really.'

P3: 'They just said, did you like that little test thing and we were like no!'

Discussion

Some of the discussion in the group about the MES was negative. They had not understood its meaning or purpose and there was a feeling of mistrust about its use. This suggests that the students did not feel that their answers to questions would be dealt with in a confidential way; rather they would be used to rank them and compare them against other pupils. This is perhaps a reflection of the culture of external evaluation that is present in the UK school system.
The implications of this mistrust is that the students would not answer the questions honestly, therefore affecting the reliability of the MES. Some students may have given answers that they thought teachers would want to see, other students may have given false answers as a way to vent their frustrations about school, and others may have given answers that matched their reputation. As Bell (2007) highlighted; children are subject to the influences of context and setting, and may edit their answers in an attempt to please, impress or acquiesce.

Students had a time limit imposed by school staff in which to complete the questionnaire resulting in undue pressure and stress. The use of a time limit is not a feature of the MES administration as outlined in the manual. This may have affected the reliability of the results as students felt rushed to complete and may not have read and understood the questions properly.

An unexpected finding from the focus group was the way in which the questionnaire had been presented to the students. A more careful and sensitive presentation of the questionnaire by teaching staff may have reduced the concerns regarding confidentiality and the purpose of the MES. The manual

(2006; p.11) gives a little guidance about the administration of the MES, which includes the following relevant information;

- Students must be informed that this is not a test and that there are no right or wrong answers.

This PPR argues that the MES should have had a thorough introduction to students about its purpose, how the results were going to be used and how it could help to support individuals. The students felt that the MES was not optional and this raises important ethical issues regarding the use of questionnaires in a school setting. The power imbalance that is created in a school environment can result in pupils feeling that they have to obey the adult's requests. The author feels that the MES should have been introduced by the EP, rather than school staff, to small groups of students at a time with clear guidelines on informed consent and confidentiality.

The reliability and validity of the MES in this case must be questioned as the conditions under which it was conducted means that students' answers may not accurately reflect what the question intended to elicit and may not be the same if the questionnaire was administered again.

Section 5: Measuring the impact of the intervention

When the results had been collated the first step towards planning for an intervention was to select an area that the learning mentors were going to begin to support pupils in. The area of 'study skills' in the booster grouping was chosen as the initial focus for intervention. This was due partly to the level of confidence that the mentors felt in supporting within this area without additional weekly support from the educational psychologist.

Within the MES study skills are measured using the following questions:

- When I study, I usually study in places where I can concentrate;
- When I study, I usually organise my study area to help me study best;

- When I study, I usually try to find a place where I can study well;
- When I study, I usually study at times when I can concentrate best.

Pupils who had scored ten or lower out of a possible 28, in the area of study skills were selected to take part in the intervention. This was a drawback to the intervention in that the number of pupils receiving the intervention had to be limited due to time and staffing resources. The decision that it was a score of ten or less was a choice made on the advice of the EP after taking time and resource constraints into account. This raises concerns regarding equal opportunities and ethical decisions about the use of questionnaires with pupils if they can not all benefit from the outcome. Pupils are being asked to confide and share information about themselves without a guarantee that their difficulties will be acted upon.

25 students scored ten or less in the area of study skills. The EP advised that the intervention begin with 12 students in order to have a control group. A control group was perceived as useful in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. The control group could then receive the intervention following the evaluation. This suggestion was positively received as it meant that the mentors could begin the intervention with a smaller group of pupils and work towards implementing it on a greater scale. Initially two groups of six pupils were created to attend a weekly intervention course on study skills over six weeks. The learning mentors within the school selected the pupils and grouped them.

The mentors used the Student Motivation and Engagement Workbook that comes with the MES. This workbook was explored in a session with the EP and the specific structure of the intervention was introduced. Martin (2006) has structured the interventions around a systematic 'prepare, generate, reflect and closure' procedure that Martin (2008, p.253) states, is aimed at;

a) providing an advance organiser for the module and its key activities;

b) enabling the participant to generate and construct key learning relevant to their motivation;
c) providing an opportunity for the participants to reflect on key messages developed through these learnings; and
d) then attaining closure on the target module through having mentors sign off the module.

In the 'prepare' session, the construct under focus is defined, general rules for addressing the target are presented, and key strategies for achieving the targets are identified.

The 'generate' session presents self-complete activities designed to specifically target the relevant construct under focus.

In the 'reflect' session the student is encouraged to process and further personalise the key messages from the exercises.

'Closure' includes a final session with the mentor to revisit the general rules identified in the first session and to rate the confidence to apply what has been learnt in the module.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the intervention the 13 pupils who had not been selected for the initial intervention input were used as a control group. The MES was given to the 25 pupils after the intervention had taken place; 12 pupils had taken part in the intervention and 13 had not, but had been highlighted as students with a score of ten or less.

The raw data is presented in Table 3. Total scores for the booster behaviour of 'Study Skill' are displayed for both the intervention group and the control group pre- and post- intervention. The mean scores are shown for both groups.

	Control Group		Intervention Group	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
	10 4 10 10 9 8 5 8 9 10 4 8 5	18 12 22 15 10 12 8 17 5 11 8 19 7	10 10 6 7 8 10 8 5 10 10 7 9	24 28 14 20 13 19 11 9 7 4 13 22
Mean	7.7	12.6	8.3	15.3

Table 3: Raw data from the MES study skills questions for both groups pre- and post-intervention

The mean scores show that both groups improved in their overall scores after the intervention had taken place regardless of whether the student had been a part of the intervention or not. As mean scores can be misleading due to extreme scores in the low or high end skewing the average, it was decided that an un-related t-test would highlight any significant difference between the two groups. The aim was to calculate if there was any significant difference between the post intervention scores for both groups.

Using the methods for choosing a statistical test outlined by Squires and Lewis (2008) an un-related, or independent groups t-test was carried out using SPSS. The independent groups design is used for comparing two (or more) groups which are independent of one another – meaning there are different people in each group. The independent t-test examines the differences between the mean scores for each condition; it describes whether the difference is large enough to be statistically significant.
The statistical procedure carried out on the data can be found in Appendix 4. The t-test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the results for the two groups. This means that the intervention did not have a significantly positive impact on the students in terms of their scores in the booster behaviour of study skills as measured by the MES questionnaire.

The disadvantages of using a repeated measures design need to be considered when drawing conclusions from the data. The students had a time lapse of ten months between doing the MES the first and second time. Miles and Banyard (2007) highlighted the problem of sensitisation. Sensitisation is when the participant perceives that a dependency exists between the two measurements and deliberately keep their answers similar when the researcher may be looking for a change. Alternatively, because the participant perceives that the researcher is looking for a change, they might change their answer.

Whilst taking the issue of sensitisation in to account, it can be concluded that the intervention did not have a significant impact on factors that are measured by the MES. All the students, except one, who completed the questionnaire the second time had improved in their scores regarding study skills. Possible hypotheses to explain this occurrence are:

- The reliability and validity of the MES questions were negatively effected by the weak administration procedures;

- The MES made pupils focus on an area of personal weakness which led to independent changes to the way they study;
- Sensitisation or satisficing meant that students answered falsely;
- The intervention did not meet the needs of the students sufficiently to make a significant impact.

The intervention was run by the school staff who followed the MES workbook. The author feels that a more solution-focussed and collaborative methodology which empowers the students to make changes may be a more effective approach. The MES workbook suggests that the pupil has a problem that needs to be fixed; it may be helpful if this was redefined as a skill that needs to be learnt and would be beneficial to the student (Furman, 2007). There would be a clear role for the EP in the design of the intervention for the different areas of motivation and engagement.

The design of the MES must also be considered when judging its reliability and validity as a tool. Bell (2007) shared insights into the use of questionnaires with children and highlighted that 'satisficing' can occur. Satisficing means that instead of going through the four key cognitive stages of answering a question, a respondent appeals to some other principle in order to reach a response, e.g. simply choosing the first option on the list, or answering every question in the positive. Satisficing can occur as a result of a number of different factors, reflecting on the characteristics of both the respondent and the question, and the interaction between these (Bell, 2007). If the respondent is bored or disinterested in the topic satisficing can occur, which illustrates the importance of asking questions that are salient and meaningful to the respondent. As the students reported that they were unaware of the purpose of the MES, it is unlikely that the questions were meaningful to them.

The issues that were raised in the focus group were fed back verbally by the EP to the Inclusion Team, with the students' permission. It is hoped that this

feedback will be considered and acted on by the Inclusion Team in the future administration of questionnaires and interventions.

The questions in the MES use a scaled response, where the participant is asked to say how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement. Each number between one and seven is labelled, which has been shown to produce better quality responses from children than partially-labelled ones (Borgers et al., 2003).
Bell (2007) discussed the number and ordering of response options and stresses that it is important not to expect too much of children, either in terms of requiring them to remember a large number of options, or by presenting options which might be confusing, e.g. because they are only subtly distinct from others on the list. Borgers and Hox (2000) detected a negative relationship between multiple response options and the quality of the data collected from children. Bell (2007) concluded that it seems that children from age 11 up are usually able to handle four or five options. The MES gives seven options, which may affect the reliability of the answers given.

Taurangeau et al. (2000) highlighted the fact that when designing questions aimed at measuring children's behaviour it must be considered that children will provide less valid data about mundane or everyday occurrences. The content of the MES is focussed on everyday occurrences such as homework and attitudes towards school. This links directly with a comment made in the focus group by one student, 'I got really bored.' This can result in respondents giving satisficing answers.

Section 6: Summary

Returning to the aims of the paper as set out in the introduction, this PPR has shown that the identification of specific areas of motivational difficulties using the

MES did not lead to a significantly successful intervention. In this school the way that the MES was presented to the pupils and their distrust of the questionnaire meant that it can not be asserted that the data collected was reliable.

Section 1 of this PPR, 'An overview of the main theories of motivation for learning' gives a succinct account of some of the leading theories of motivation. The theories and the research used in this section were selected by the author as they fit into the conceptual background used by Martin (2006). There are many more pieces of research regarding motivation that have been omitted. This highlights the fact that the topic of motivation and engagement is a complex one and this brings into debate whether a questionnaire can fully encapsulate such a broad area. Martin (2006) has taken several of the 'big' theories and interwoven them to create one measure. There are two reasons why this may be problematic:

I. The fact that the theories used to give the questionnaire a theoretical background are significant and well known theories does not mean that they are true to all of the population;
II. The theories may become diluted when woven together and this may affect the validity of the questionnaire.

It is recognised that this evaluation only applies to the secondary school that it was performed in and so the findings can not be generalised. This is due to the variability in the presentation of the questionnaire to pupils, the feedback given and the subsequent delivery of the intervention. It does, however provide valuable information for future implementation. It has highlighted that the EP needs to be particularly mindful of the ethical issues surrounding the consent acquired from pupils to complete questionnaires and what happens to the information collected.

In this case, the author believes the biggest factor affecting the reliability of the tool was in the pupils' mistrust of the questionnaire; this will have impacted on the responses they gave. The factors leading to mistrust were connected to the

administration of the questionnaire and may also have been influenced by previous experiences of the students that are unknown to the EP.
As the MES is unreliable in this case, if the pupils were given the questionnaire to complete a second time the scores may be very different. This may explain the insignificant score difference pre- and post-intervention. The initial answers given by students may not have provided a reliable account of how they manage their studying.

When offering tools such as questionnaires to schools to assess an area within a young person's life, the EP needs to be aware of how the school intends to present the tool to the pupils and what resources they have in place to meet the needs that may be highlighted as a result of collecting such data.
The teaching assistants and Special Educational Needs Coordinator valued the tool in highlighting anxious pupils who would not have otherwise been identified for support. This is a strength of the questionnaire, but the resources then need to be available to ensure such pupils get the support they need.
In this case, overall the pupils in the focus group were quite negative about their experiences of the questionnaire. Some of the negative experiences could be eliminated easily and are not necessarily due to the design of the MES. Careful explanation and support when administering the MES would have been beneficial and overall may have made the results more reliable as the students may have had more confidence and less distrust in the tool.
When examining the design of the MES, consideration of research (Borgers & Hox, 2000; Bell, 2007) indicates that thought needs to be given to the wording used and the number of options given. The MES is an Australian tool and so some of the language used or sentence structure may differ from that used in the UK.
The wheel, as depicted in Figure 1, presents the areas involved in motivation in a clear and visual way, which would appeal to the young people if it had been presented to them.

As an EP implementing a questionnaire in the future, I will ensure that I am involved in all the stages; presentation of the tool to the students; feedback to the students on their responses and intervention design. A future consideration, as suggested by the students, may be the creation of an online version of the questionnaire. This could be done in private, at the student's own pace and provide immediate feedback.

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Appendix 3

Motivation Questionnaire – Focus Group Transcript

Ok, so we're here to talk about the questionnaire that you did before the summer, that you all filled that in - do you remember filling it in? Do you remember what it was about?
P1: it was about erm…studying, tests
P2: see what your scared off,
P3: how you feel about tests, what subjects are you studying
P4: future of jobs

It was quite a long questionnaire wasn't it? It had quite a lot of questions, how did you fill it in, were you given it and asked to fill it in on your own?
All: yes

What experience have you had of filling questionnaires in?
P1: Quite a lot

[1:07] Tell me about that

P1: Well in our Primary School we had to fill them in for things like, if we didn't know what we were doing and things about the classroom

So you're quite used to filling questionnaires out then. What about the rest of you?
P2: I went to the same Primary School as her so I did the same

So what kind of questionnaires did you fill out at Primary School?
P3: Science ones….P4: yeh like science ones…

Can you remember what else you did?
P4: we were given ones about what we like and what we did…

When you started Primary School?
P4: no when we were in Year 6

[2:16] Ahh so before you came to secondary school – can you remember what kind of questions were in that?
P4: no
P3: there was a booklet about shapes, patterns, triangles, how many sides……

So is that test questions rather than questions all about you?
P1: Yes…
P2: They were very very easy

So what's your opinion on questionnaires, what do you think about them? If someone says here's a questionnaire for you to fill in, what do you think?
P3: you think its a test really

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You feel like it's a test
P4: Gives me a headache…but it does! [sounds URGHHHH!]

That's interesting that it gives you a headache and it feels like a test, do you agree with that P2? What do you think?
P2: it doesn't bother me, cos I know that it isn't a test
P3: but if I get it I feel it is a test and it gets me all frustrated
P1: same here

What about you P1? Do you like filling questionnaires in?
P1: don't mind really, yeh?

Your not bothered either way?
P3: yeh I get belly ache sometimes but sometimes you fill them out and it ends up being a test

[3:52] Oh so you feel like you get tricked sometimes?
P3: yeh

Does anyone else feel like that?
P2: yeh they trick you don't you, and give you your test results and you get a flashback going I don't remember it being a test, uh no

Do you feel like that P4?
P4: nah I don't see the point of questionnaires really, urm…they might as well just ask you

So you feel it would be easier if someone was just to ask you, face to face?
P3: I don't cos it might be like secretive and the teacher might not wanna have it across the classroom

Ok, so it feels more private if you write it down?
P3: yeh…but your only gonna show it to the teacher, or like the person…

[4:55] Alright so there's quite some different thoughts on questionnaires aren't there? What about the questionnaires you had that I'm talking was questionnaires on motivation. So your right in saying that it asked questions about tests and things and things you might be scared of, but actually it was to give an idea of motivation. Has anyone ever spoken to you about motivation before?
P1: yeh, we have this sort of group that tries to help us with urm maths

OK, do you know what motivation means?
P4: nope
P2: it helps you to guide through urm problems
P3: it's how you feel

In what way P3?
P3: About stuff that's gone on or going on, like bullying, cyber bullying…
P1: urm like tests, GCSEs, tests and that.
[5:53] OK…
P2: Stuff that's going on in your life

If someone said to you, you're really motivated to play footie, what would they be saying?
P4: erm your really into football
Right, so your into something and you really want to do it more, so your motivated to do it, whereas say your struggling in a subject, say music, you found that really difficult, some people if they find it difficult it makes them more motivated because they want to try and do it, and do it well, whereas other people will make them less motivated because they feel like they might fail. Now some people get really unmotivated with school, totally not interested, so that's what the concept of motivation is about. And that's what the questionnaire was asking you about. Does that make sense when you think of some of the questions it was asking you?
All: yes

[7:08] Now would it have been helpful for you to have known about what the questionnaire was about before you filled it in?
All: yes

Can you tell me a bit about that then and how it was given to you?
P1: like it was just like splat bang on the table…do it
P2: it wasn't just properly put down on the table, they just like threw it down and urm
P3: urm they wouldn't like urm [unclear] and couldn't explain it urm and like the other two urm and said turn over now and urm….it urm I got really bored and erm you cant help it and urm….like they said they just go you've got 45 minutes starting now and then like you get really all stressed cos you ask if you can finish in 45 minutes and read in 15 minutes

Ok so you were given a time limit
P2: Yeh
P1: Yeh that's horrible..i cant even write at the top…[mutters]

[8:09] So how do you think questionnaires should be given to you?
P4: like you can take the amount of time you need to do it
P2: or do it at home [ahh yeh] and then urm you're in an environment that you know your safe

Umm, that's interesting that one isnt it so something you can do it in your own time, do you think that as well P3?
P3: cos when I wasn't coming into school they gave me homework and I was like I hate that bit urm and I had papers to do like and my geography teacher when I was in year 7

said you've gotta do loadsa tests things urm….so like people came back to me and gave me homework to do there. [*right, yeh*] it was better there than being in school

Yeh, like safer? What do you think P4 cos you don't think they should give you questionnaire at all, so if you are given questionnaires how should we give them to you?
P4: urm they should give them to the rest of the class as well to make it fair as well because if its just you you're put on the spot and its not fair on you
P2: or they could give them to straight to your parents and they'll read it out to you in your own home so you'll feel much safer and you'll know urm that you can talk to your mum so like how to explain a question like that urm
P3: if your doin it in school they should give you more time like more time on the bus…say like ten to, five to and urm 45 they should say urm you can do your best..

[9:51] We're coming back to that test thing again aren't we?
P1: urm and…like in year 7 they kept saying like you've gotta finish at this time when they say its first and you feel like you haven't done that much and you haven't checked over it that many times [*umm]*

So has anyone ever spoke to you about your learning and difficulties you might face in your learning. Has anyone ever spoken to you about that before?
P2: My mum has [*your mum has]* yeh
What about you P3 has anyone ever spoken to you about your learning [cannot hear a response – presume a shake of the head]

So is this the first time your learning has been talked about and what difficulties you might have
P3: urm not really cos in primary school I've always been in really difficult like groups [*ok]*

[10:42] So what do you think are the positive things about people taking time to talk to you about your learning and explore what you might find difficult? What are the good things about doing that?
P4: cos they can help you

In what way could it help you
P4: do betta

Ok are they any bad sides to it?
[pause]
P2: yeh cos it might make your life feel stupid or summat like that
P3: people comparing you
P4: bullying you like what did you get
P1: do it at urm home because then urm…and instead of the hall urm and lots of people around you and feeling uncomfortable like

[11:52] But there're tests aren't they, exams, whereas this was a questionnaire so wasn't a test. But you all seem to be describing it as if it felt like it was a test
P2: there is a system where you all line up by the hall and put your phones in a box and then urm you go in the hall, sit down [*right]* and it makes you feel like you're doing a test

Ok, when you were actually filling in the questionnaire, what did you think were the good things about it- think about the questions they asked, the way it was asked, what were the good things about them
P1: they asked them like urm would you rather do it like…I remember one question saying 'where do you like to study' like where would you study and not others

[12:44] Right so it was made specific to you and that was a good thing. What else was good about it?
P4: Like it made sense cos all the other tests…in year 7 like didn't make sense and get frustrated and these were like plain sense

Ok, so does everyone feel the same?

P3: yeh
P2: I didn't get most of it [*youdidnt get most of it, so it didn't make sense to you]* yeh so I had to ask my teacher [*ok so we'll talk about the bad side of it in a minute but keep thinking about the good side]*
P1: it gave you loadsa answers like options to choose from [*right, yeh*]
[pause]

[13:32]What else was good about it?
[pause]
P4: you get to ask questions about what does it mean, instead'a like the teacher saying 'oh sorry I cant tell you the answers' they don't tell you enough about it like
P2: I know
P4: urm they come around and your writing like and they're like giving you like information but then they say 'I can't give you that otherwise that's be cheating and then they walk off but all I said was can you give me more information urm…urm…
P1: like can you explain the question to me in a certain type of way in that I can understand it

[14:23] Yes, ok, what about the questions that it was asking you, do you think they were helpful questions
P3: yeh, yeh
P1: they were like if you were doing your homework, would you rather do it at home or school
P2: someone give you new options, like, say if you you like you haven't done something before, like say, work at your nans and you've never worked at your nans, you go, I might try that one day cos it gives you more options to choose from..

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What about you P4, can you remember doing it? [laugh] No, you can't remember doing it?! That's not a good sign it is!
P4: I can remember what it looked like but I cant remember who or what it said. I can't….

[15:31] Ok lets think about the bad side to it, what were the negative side to the questions?
P2: urm well, some questions were stupid, like saying like have you ever got like..it tells you about you about your private stuff, like how often..do..do your father or your like dad gives you money and I don't like answering them cos I don't like giving personal details out which is why I leave them questions out [*ok]*
P4: it tries to give you a private life for tests that like urm…[unclear] dignity or life and stuff, questions about erm tests and things and they don't need like test results and things and how much time you do on homework
P2: yeh cos sometimes its different cos you do it at different times like sometimes one will take you 2 minutes writing a sentence like others can take 2 hours like so those questions don't make sense cos like you could spend how much time you do your homework, like 10 minutes or an hour on in……
P3: so they could say how much time do you normally put in it
P2: yeh I was gonna put n/a cos I can do it anytime

[16:58] So the questions were too rigid, it didn't give you enough options to put the alternatives down. What else was bad about it?
P3: Sittin in different corners of the classroom, I have quite a small class, like in English we have to spread ourselves out but it wasn't even a test, it was like a questionnaire.

So it felt like a test yeh...P1 what did you think, any bad things? Or did you think it was alright?
P1: well we did it in erm…we didn't separate our class we just sat like we usually did [*ahh right ok*]

[17:49] So do you think that was a bad thing that different classes did it in different ways?
P2: yeh that's weird
P1: I think if we're doing a test urm….if people don't feel like they need to do it…..different times like before or in the classroom…..so whatever you feel comfortable in

[18:17] So you should be given a choice and not just treated all the same
[Inaudible sound from someone]
P4: it's like all the top set always get the most homework, [*ah right]* but all the lower sets don't get anything
P2: yeh it's not fair
P4: I'm so glad I'm in the middle set

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Ok so when you finished the questionnaire it gave you a profile which identified your strengths and areas you were weaker in, do you think that profile was accurate, do you think that it was good at finding out what your weaknesses and strengths were?
P3: some of the answers were like do you feel strengths in your work and that didn't make sense to me..urm….
P2: I thought it means that…what are your….urm….like say…what are you better at and then it'd have like English or science but then you wouldn't know what to choose cos you might like English and science and you've gotta tick one, so then you're stuck…

[19:31] Ok so at the end when you got it there was a wheel, a round circle, and it showed the things you were struggling with and the things you were better at, but it might have shown where you weren't as [P1: I didn't get one] *Oh right so you didn't get the overall profile as you, showing your strengths and weaknesses?*
P1: No – what they should do after your test is just log on to the website and pretend your doing some DLE urm and type your password in and it'd probably come up with your urm thing…and your test results and you can choose a weakness and you can look online from the pie chart or something like that

[20:23] So did you get any feedback from anybody after you'd done it?
P4: no
P2: not really
P3: they just said did you like that little test thing and we were like no!
P1: Cos why would you say that we hate tests

So am I right in saying the next thing you knew was that you were being offered some group sessions up here?
P2: yeh
P4: yeh like how are you studying with your homework, where would you do it, how would you do it, would you do it slowly or fast, would you do it on different days…[*ok]*I would do it fast and then go downstairs and watch tele.

So, some of you were chosen for the study skills group and some of you were chosen for the other group
P3: I'm not worried about tests, I know I'm going to fail

[21:32] But was that anything about the questionnaire and how good it was?
P2: may be they could make the questions easier.
P3: they give you like…urm….i always know I'm gonna fail on tests. Some questions are like…I definitely know but on some you just guess, and hope its right. But if it's for 5 marks you just want to do well, like when I was in year
6……
……..

So P1, do you think the questionnaire picked up the wrong thing in you then?
P1: yeh [*yeh*]

[22:40] So you don't think it was very accurate?
P1: no

Right, so lets think about the group sessions you've been doing, what have they been like, can you describe those to me?
P4: they've tried to trick us to do these tests but we forgot to read through it…
P2: we got to the last question miss said you do 1 and 2 questions, so it shows that you should read it first and then you can get good marks.

[23:20] So think about the group sessions you've been going to then
P3: we've had a table…a homework table and what we have to do is urm write what homework and what times we do our homework and we had a thing on what you did on Saturday and Sunday. given a timetable and that's helped me…

How helpful have you found the groups then?
P2: I used to go to like…loads of the groups last year, they tried to make me to go to [inaudiable] but I liked it…

So which bits of the groups have you found helpful?
P2: urm like the tests and like….urm….and we've got them again this year, and like which marks are the hardest

Right and have you found that useful?
P2: yeh

And what about you P1, have you found the groups useful?
P1: yeh, like preparing for tests

And were the groups enjoyable?
P1: yeh, they don't make you feel that stressed…..

[25:09] Well I bet that some of you have never been taken out of lessons like this before, so how did this feel like if you've never done it before?
P4: you could spend more time before the test….and you'd be missing out on something but at least you felt like you could do the test

Do you feel like it was time well spent then?
P2: I wasn't worried about tests in the first place, [*so it wasn't appropriate for you then]* yeh I don't like tests…

[26:04] So was there anything that wasn't helpful, or that they didn't enjoy about going to the group?
P1: well some people didn't even care about the group and urm they didn't care, and they were like why were they here, they laugh at you for going…some people skipped it…it would have been nice to have taken a friend. Then if the teacher goes out the room at least I could have talked to your friend.

P3: I don't like it when they take you out of your best lesson ever

Ok so tell me about that then…
P3: like when your in your lesson and then you have to go out and go to these meeting..if they could do it like those in modern language, like they shouldn't do it in English, maths or science cos like they're your main GCSEs and I'm in set 3 for Spanish and French and I'm getting the same marks as those in the top set, but I don't understand why
P2: I'm missing a lot of lessons, like when I was given French I didn't get it, cos I was given like a 3c but that wasn't the ……

[28:30] *Ok so can you say one thing that you found helpful and unhelpful about the groups?*
P2: one thing that helped me is I wanted to do urm…do less stress, and after being there I feel like can do it
P1: and with my French homework I feel less stressed because of the environment in school
P3: the science teacher made me revise in the classroom which I didn't feel comfortable so the group sessions have made me realise I can have more choice and feel less stressed.
P4: asked to re-read the question a lot, but nothing really changed for me
P1: another thing was they helped me prepare for tests.

What about the unhelpful sides to the group?
P4: there were like too many people there
P2: someone might laugh at you and it makes you feel less comfortable saying the next bit
P1: I don't like taking part
P3: a boy asked the teacher why he had to do it and he asked it twice and didn't answer them……
……
P4: sharing personal information in front of everyone

So it didn't feel like it was a safe environment to share – that's important though isn't it when you come together to form a group that you can be honest and feel that safety?
P3: yeh they didn't tell us that we were like going to go over the questions

[33.55] Ok, so last question, overall has the motivation questionnaire you did been a useful tool? Has it been helpful/relevant to you overall?
P2: Yes, kinda in sections, like urm for doing homework in different places like in school or at home, and same with erm tests, doin them at home or in school…….[*ok, so some aspects of it you did find helpful*]
P1: well I don't really feel like I've found it helpful or unhelpful…I don't think like I should have been there anyway cos I've been really happy [*ok that's fine, so you don't really feel like anything's changed, so how could it have been done differently, as it's quite a detailed questionnaire about you, so what could have been different*]
P3: you could do it again at the beginning of year 8, as things have changed a lot

P2: yeh like we could have gone on the computers, saying like do this and do that, and questions like..what job would you do in the future, and you'd be like, I don't know yet cos I dunno what subjects I like [*that'd be interesting to do it again and see if you'd changed, a good point and what about the issue of feedback? For example if you'd had been given the feedback, the circle, your profile, would that have been helpful where we could have seen your strengths and weaknesses?*]
P4: yeh
P2: yeh it would have helped
P3: yes

So overall helpful, unhelpful?
P1: the unhelpful bit was doing like, missing one lesson and like shorter groups…urm longer better

And what about 1:1 in the groups? like you and a teacher?
P4: I would want my friends about, they can explain it betta than your teacher can't they
P3: yeh and if the teacher went out the room then you got your friend there with you and urm you can then urm talk about what you have too

[37:11] So maybe peer support instead of the teacher telling you how to do tests, and be less stressed you think it'd be better coming from your friends and peers?
P4: yeh yeh and then you can give them help and advice if you get urm stuck or something
P3: cos the teachers just say do that, you know that you know that
P2: yeh the teachers say just do that

[37:40] Ok, well can I just sum up then all the important points we've talked about

1. *the way the questionnaire was given to you was an important point, and would like tobe changed in the future, such as everyone needs to be given it in the same way, and so it doesn't feel like a test, yeh so does everyone agree with that? Am I ok to feed that back to the teachers?* All: yes, yes.
2. *Ok, the whole concept about why you were doing it, so if someone had explained to you what motivation was…*P4: then you could have actually like done it better *So maybe it would have made more sense?* P4: yeh *Can I feed that back as well?* All: yes
3. *Feedback after you'd finished the questionnaire would have been useful, to have some feedback and to have seen your profile that the questionnaire produces at the end would have been helpful, yeh?*
4. *The group sessions, some of you found them useful but maybe the group sizes were too big, some of you felt that it wasn't a safe environment to be in, and some people you couldn't speak directly in front of, yeh?*
5. *They need to be careful about what lessons they're taking you out of* P2: yeh cos if it's lessons you like to do for your GCSEs urm…. *So it could be counterproductive and you could end up feeling more stressed!* P3: yeh say like art, you only have that say once a week, but English, maths and science you have

like two or three times P4: and like for ICT you only urm have that like once or twice a week P1: I don't even do ICT *Ok so let me just finish my notes…*

6. *So overall some suggestions to change it might be to: take it again and see if there's, to be given the profile and some feedback, to have the group sessions running for longer and maybe looking at how peers can support you rather than it just coming from your teachers. And am I alright in feeding those points back?* All: yeh
7. *Is there anything else you want to say about taking part in the motivation questionnaire?* All: no

Total time: 40:32

Appendix 4 Independent t-test

Group Statistics

	condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pre.test	control	13	7.69	2.359	.654
	intervention	12	8.33	1.775	.512
post.test	control	13	12.62	5.205	1.444
	intervention	12	15.33	7.291	2.105

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
pre.test	Equal variances assumed	1.276	.270	-.762	23	.454	-.641	.841	-2.380	1.098
	Equal variances not assumed			-.771	22.148	.449	-.641	.831	-2.364	1.082
post.test	Equal variances assumed	1.934	.178	-1.080	23	.292	-2.718	2.518	-7.926	2.490
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.065	19.773	.300	-2.718	2.552	-8.045	2.610

CONCLUDING CHAPTER

This chapter aims to draw some final conclusions regarding my personal and professional development throughout my practice placement and the completion of the professional practice reports.

Throughout the second and third year of my professional practice placement I have been acutely aware of the scrutiny and ongoing reflections amongst the profession regarding the unique contribution of the educational psychologist (ep). Ashton and Roberts (2006) highlighted that this is a result of the increased accountability of public services due to the actions identified by the Children Act 2004. This awareness has brought with it ongoing personal professional reflections that I believe are mirrored throughout the professional practice reports (PPRs) presented in this thesis.

Throughout my work with a large range of primary, secondary and special school (21 in total) over the two years, I have encountered conflicting perspectives of the role of the ep. My initial contact with the educational setting has mostly been with the special needs coordinator (SENCo) and it has been through this interaction that I have come across varying perspectives of what I can offer to the school. Some SENCos have valued the more 'traditional' ep role of individual pupil assessment whilst other have acknowledged the wider range of services that make up my professional competencies. This concurs with the research findings of Ashton and Roberts (2006) who interviewed a sample of SENCos and eps.

These differing viewpoints of the professional role have allowed me the opportunity to negotiate and experience a wide range of opportunities to apply psychology across the three potential levels as outlined by Curran, Gersch and Wolfendale (2003):

- The individual (for example, assessment and intervention with an individual child);
- The organisation (for example, in a school providing in-service training of teachers);
- The system (for example, in a local education authority which is developing innovatory, special or additional educational provision).

The selection of PPRs presented in this thesis provides an insight into the range of psychological paradigms and frameworks that I have applied throughout my professional practice.

The completion of the PPRs has enabled me to devote time to the exploration of the origins of practical principles and techniques, such as 'Circle of Friends,' that are applied by eps. This aspect has been a significant element of my professional development. I believe that as the role of ep is being conceptualised as that of 'scientist practitioner' (Fallon et al. 2010) then our professional duty needs to encompass the relevant use of scientific principles and methods to check the validity of what we are doing. The PPRs aim to present a critical review of the literature and research associated with the concept being explored and to draw conclusions based on personal evaluations of interventions where relevant.

PPR4 presents an account of my contribution to applied psychology practice within a defined professional specialism. My involvement with the Targetted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) project has provided me with the opportunity to widen my practice to promote positive developmental outcomes for all children; an aspect of the profession that Baxter and Frederickson (2005) argue all eps should be doing. My involvement in the project has enriched my psychological knowledge and application through providing me with the opportunity to explore the paradigm of positive psychology. My particular investment of research into the area of creativity and well-being has led to the introduction of the concept of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) in the classrooms of

the schools involved. As Cameron (2006) points out, creating conditions in the classroom whereby disaffected pupils can obtain flow experience gives the opportunity for these young people to experience the joy, as opposed to frustration, of learning.

PPR4 also provides examples of how I have taken existing research on the use of expressive arts as a therapeutic tool and disseminated this in the form of practical tools for teaching staff to use with pupils in school. My work with the expressive arts and psychology is continuing and developing. It is an area that I hope will contribute further to the theory development and knowledge.

Cameron (2006) cited a quote made by Hughesman (2004) that resonates strongly with the development of my personal and professional practice. Cameron (2006, p.298) stated that Hughesman (2004) has envisioned 'real applied psychology' as opening people's minds to what they can do, rather than creating the illusion of helping by offering complex explanations for why they cannot do it. Cameron (2006) suggested that positive psychology is one of the contenders which meet the 'Hughesman criteria,' along with the concept of empowerment. My professional involvement in the TaMHS project has impacted on all areas of my practice in terms of my application of positive psychology in individual casework and work with organisations and systems. I have experienced the benefits of focusing on positives rather than weaknesses and deficits and the promotion of optimism and hope has encouraged empowerment.

The PPRs also address the other prominent features of an ep's profession; namely ethical considerations and the supporting of equal opportunities relating to the removal of barriers in gender, culture, race, disability and social disadvantage.

Consultation has been a core feature of my work, which is not fully represented in the PPRs, yet I feel deserves to be appreciated in terms of the reflections on my professional practice development. My skills in consultation are continually

developing and I have experienced the satisfaction of working collaboratively to re-frame, reconstruct problems and employ techniques as defined by Wagner (1995). I believe the constant reflections on consultation, both personally and through supervision, have resulted in the significant development of these skills. These PPRs provide a representation of some of the work that I have been involved with over the past two years. They do not represent the full extent of the role that I have and will continue to develop, yet the process of producing the reports has provided the opportunity for deeper personal reflection on my professional development and the directions of the profession as a whole. To summarise, I believe that these PPRs demonstrate that 'applied psychologists are required to use psychology in a creative and innovative way' (Cameron, 2006; p.292).

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