VOLUME 2:

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORTS (PPRs)

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis comprises of five professional practice reports (PPRs), which were carried out in my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP). Each PPR is a discrete piece of work. PPR 1 and 2 consists of casework; PPR 1 being a discussion about the advantages and potential barriers of working with a group of professionals on a case, and PPR 2 an account of work carried out with a 7 year old girl with complex needs in a mainstream setting.

PPRs 3, 4 and 5 involved carrying out quantitative and/or qualitative research. PPR 3 (evaluation of a peer mediation service in a primary school) and PPR 4 (researching the impact of the secondary SEAL materials) utilised a multi method design. While findings of the peer mediation service were positive, results from the SEAL study were mixed. Although 44% of pupils had increased their emotional literacy score, a further 38% of pupils had lower scores post-SEAL. Therefore, before more time and money is invested in SEAL, long term benefits need to be investigated by independent researchers to determine the benefits of implementing the SEAL resource.

Finally, PPR 5 gives an account of work undertaken in an ASD resource base; by by combining PCP techniques with a semi structured interview, I elicited the views of 4 young people attending an ASD base. Results showed that young people valued their time in the resource base. Therefore, these findings raise important implications for the future education of pupils with ASD.

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF VOLUME 2

1. Introduction

In Year 2 and 3 of the Applied Educational and Child Psychology training course I have been employed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) at Staffordshire County Council. In Year 2 I was allocated as the named Educational Psychologist (EP) for 11 schools, which comprised of 2 high schools, 1 nursery, 1 infant, 1 junior, and 6 primary schools. Furthermore, I worked alongside an EP in a high school evaluating the impact of the secondary SEAL materials. In Year 3 I was allocated the named EP for 12 schools, which included 2 high schools, and 10 primary schools. In addition, I undertook a specialist placement in an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) unit, which was located in a mainstream high school. The work which formed the basis of five professional practice reports (PPRs) contained in this volume, were carried out in the settings noted above. In this overview I will discuss how the work was developed by reflecting on the broader contextual implications of service delivery.

2. Service delivery

2.1 Time allocation model

Currently the Staffordshire Educational Psychology Service (EPS) adopts a time allocation system, in which EP sessions are given to each school. In the service delivery policy it is noted that time is allocated by means of a formula which uses the numbers of pupils attending the schools and the neediness of the populations (Cherry, 2006), see

Appendix 1. On reflection, by working with schools there are disadvantages as well as advantages of this model of delivery.

One of the schools I have worked in is a large primary school, which had over 30 hours of EP time during September 2007 to August 2008. As a result, during an initial planning meeting held in October 2007, the SENCo was able to allocate a considerable amount of time for systemic work. Therefore, this setting formed the basis of PPR 3, an evaluation of a peer mediation system. Due to the available time I was able to carry out training with staff, pupils, engage in research, and be involved a number of consultation meetings. The peer mediation scheme was proven to be successful. As part of the evaluation process a questionnaire was distributed to all the children in the school; results showed that 89% of children, who had used the peer mediation service, felt that their problems had been resolved.

When reflecting on the success of the peer mediation scheme, the SENCo commented that they were only able set up the service because they were able to use EP time. The SENCo said that there would not have been enough money in the budget to pay for an outside provider to deliver training. Given the noted success of the scheme, it is unfortunate that many schools do not request organisational work due to time constraints. Service policy notes that work should recognise the complexity of schools as organisations, but unfortunately the way service is delivered to schools does not always allow the EP to work systemically.

While there are disadvantages of a time allocation system, there are also benefits to this approach to service delivery. Firstly, it places a responsibility on schools to prioritise their needs. It has been noted by EP colleagues in the service that if there was not an EP

time allocation system it would create a dependency culture among schools. Thus, if a school felt that time was infinite then any child they had a slight concern over they may refer to the EP instead of building capacity in schools to deal with difficulties. Therefore, the school would not be encouraged to plan time throughout the academic year. Moreover, if time is limited a referral is more likely when other strategies have been exhausted rather than at the initial stage of concern.

PPR 1, 2 and 3 were conducted in schools where I was their named EP, therefore work was shaped by time constraints. In the following section of this overview I will discuss broader contextual implications that impacted on services delivered to schools.

2.2 Work with schools

In documented service policies the ways EPs work in schools is outlined, such as contributing to a school based project, training, collaborative consultation, or individual casework (Cherry, 2006), see Appendix 2. However, work is influenced by not only time constraints, but broader contextual issues at the Local Authority (LA) level. Indeed, the County's Inclusion Strategy impacted on work undertaken in PPR 2. According to the County's Inclusion Strategy money ring fenced for Special Educational Needs (SEN) is given directly to schools in their annual budget. This is a significant shift from schools getting money for individual Statements of SEN. If has been agreed, by the LA, that a child has significant and complex needs Additional Needs Funding (AEN) is made available for them.

In PPR2, the school Deputy Head Teacher felt strongly that Ellie should be educated in a specialist setting, and not in a mainstream school. The Deputy Head Teacher applied for AEN funding, but was turned down as the LA felt that Ellie's needs were not significant enough. Nevertheless, without this funding the Deputy Head felt the child's needs could not be met at a mainstream school. By working with school staff and parents I worked hard to negotiate strategies in order to meet Ellie's needs in mainstream school.

Currently, in the County there are still specialist provisions educating children with physical, emotional, severe and moderate learning difficulties. With the new Inclusion Strategy there is a gradual change in culture in which SENCos are beginning to see special schools as Key Learning Centres helping to support children in mainstream school. Due to the historical context the Deputy Head in PPR2 did not feel that children with complex needs should be educated in mainstream schools. He also did not see special schools as Key Learning Centres. Therefore, work which formed the basis of PPR2 was influenced by the historical context of the County Council.

Work in PPR 1 and 3 was also shaped by national and local initiatives. As previously noted PPR3 was an account of how I helped to set up a peer mediation scheme in schools. The peer mediation scheme was developed in conjunction with the County's Anti Bullying Agenda. Indeed, one of the EPS priorities was to promote anti-bullying. The peer mediation service gives children an opportunity to have problems resolved before they escalate into something bigger. Another benefit of a school setting up a peer mediation service is to promote emotional well being in schools by helping children resolve conflict. Hence, the introduction of the peer mediation service was shaped by

local and national policy such as 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2003) and 'Healthy Minds' (Ofsted, 2005).

Finally, the work undertaken in PPR1 was also influenced by national and local policy initiatives. This PPR was a reflective account of work carried out with other professionals in helping to meet the needs of a 12 Year old boy with a history of emotional and behaviour difficulties. Indeed with the introduction of 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2003) there has been an increasing emphasis on multi agency working. Also as an EPS there has been a drive towards working collaboratively with other professionals. However, there are difficulties in working with other professionals, which are highlighted in this PPR. One significant issue was that each professional had a preconceived idea regarding each others role. If multi agency working is going to be successful then a greater understanding needs to occur regarding each others roles. However, a key conclusion was that if multi-agency working is going to be successful then someone needs to take on the responsibility for the coordination of services. In the final section of this overview I will discuss how local authority priorities shaped work in PPR4 and 5.

2.3 Impact of local initiatives on work

Following the introduction of the secondary Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials by the DfES (2007), the County Council piloted the materials in two schools in the district. I worked in one of the multi agency teams helping to launch and evaluate the impact of the SEAL materials. The school I worked with was a middle

school with approximately 384 children on roll. Findings of the evaluation showed that while 44% of pupils had increased their emotional literacy score, a further 38% of pupils had lower scores post-SEAL.

When reflecting on the work carried out, it highlighted strengths and weaknesses of the current evaluation design which could be rectified for the next cohort of schools where SEAL was due to be implemented. However, it is useful to note that I had the time available to carry out the research due to being a TEP. Therefore, although the LA had clear objectives for the SEAL pilot, there would not have been research conducted. This is a clear implication for a number of government initiatives being launched in school. It can be argued that without the vital evidence base it is not known to what extent government initiatives, such as SEAL is effective. This raises an important discussion for Children's Services; should it be the case that a proportion of time in schools is allocated for evidence based research? Indeed for resources such as SEAL, short and long term benefits need to be investigated by independent researchers to determine the benefits of implementing the resource.

My final PPR was an account of work undertaken in an ASD resource base, located in a High School. As part of my work in the resource base, I had an opportunity to carry out research for the county ASD steering group. The central aim of the research was to ascertain the views of the pupils in relation to how they enjoyed being at school (time in the resource base and in mainstream lessons). As part of the County Council's Inclusion Strategy, the ASD bases were set up in order for pupils to have an opportunity to attend lessons in a mainstream school. One of the key mission statements of the Base is to

‘embrace the concept of inclusion in its fullest sense, by ensuring a positive and realistic understanding of autism amongst pupils, peer groups and staff’.

Thus, a significant amount of time was spent on carrying out research for the ASD steering group. A key aim of the research was to ascertain how productive the bases have been for pupils. The research is going to be used to assess the feasibility of the bases and whether any others will be set up in the County. This was an interesting piece of work which produced positive outcomes; however, as noted in the PPR I had only had an opportunity to elicit the views of four pupils so the findings can not be generalised.

In conclusion, the PPRs included in this thesis have been shaped by service delivery, as well as local and national initiatives. Nevertheless, a broad range of work is contained in the reports which directly proceeds this overview.

1,833 words

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CHAPTER 2: PPR1

The application of the Woolfson et al. (2003) integrated framework for EP practice in a multi agency case.

1. Abstract

With the introduction of 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2003) there has been an increasing emphasis on multi agency working. Recently, I have had the opportunity to work with a group of professionals on a case of a 12 year old boy called Daniel. For the purpose of this case, I worked alongside a: Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), clinical psychologist, social worker, family support worker and the looked after children's district co-ordinator (when Daniel's new foster placement had been found). A Team around the Child (TAC) model was adopted (Limbrick, 2001, p.5).

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) I adopted the Woolfson et al. (2003) integrated framework for EP practice. The framework provided a useful guide to help me through the process of multi agency working. However, there were a number of barriers when working in the TAC; many review meetings were cancelled, and when they did procede each professional tended to report back work carried out with Daniel rather than working collaboratively towards solutions. One of the greatest diffculties encountered in the TAC was that each professional had a preconceived idea regarding what their role, and the remaining members of the team would be. In order to improve multi agency

working a greater understanding of each professional's role is needed as well as a commitment to collaborative consultation.

2. Introduction

With the introduction of 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2003) there has been an increasing emphasis on multi agency working. When reviewing the success of joint working, researchers have stated that this way of working has lead to improved educational attainment and an increase in children's overall happiness (Pettit, 2003, Sloper, 2004). The advantages of multi agency working enables the child and family to receive a range of support from a number of services, which focus on health, behaviour, and emotional well being, with a common goal to improve outcomes (Every Child Matters, 2007a). As Salmon (2004, p.156) states:

> '…collaborative practices are now seen as the most efficient way of delivering high quality services and ensuring their effectiveness in being responsive to service user needs'.

This model of service delivery is in contrast to each professional working at an individual level instead of working collaboratively with other professionals.

However, there are many challenges when a group of professionals work together with a child and their family. For instance, each professional needs to have a firm understanding of each others roles, to avoid duplication of work. In addition, there needs

to be an open communication between the professionals and the child/ family so they are aware of progress made (BPS, 2006). In a recent study, which collated parents' views about the EP contribution to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, (Squires et al., 2007, p.355), a parent spoke:

> '…about the difficulties of having so many agencies involved and that there needed to be better links with other agencies, professionals and CAMHS, learning support, ASD etc'.

Recently, I have had the opportunity to work with a group of professionals on a case of a 12 year old boy called Daniel. For confidentiality reasons his real name has been protected for the purposes of this report (BPS, 2006). Daniel has had a particularly traumatic start to his life, he was placed in care of the Local Authority (LA) after being physically abused by his father, and suffered from neglect. It has also been reported that he witnessed cases of severe domestic violence by his father to his mother. This information was obtained via the police in a child protection conference. Daniel has lived with his maternal grandmother and has gone into respite foster care on a number of occasions.

This report is an account of work undertaken with Daniel over a period of four months. When I first met Daniel he was living with his grandmother, but through the course of working with him he moved into foster care. Daniel has a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and is taking Ritalin. Ritalin is the brand name for the generic drug Methylphenidate.

> ‘Methylphenidate works by affecting some of the natural chemicals that are found in the brain. In particular, it increases the activity of chemicals called dopamine and noradrenaline in areas of the brain that play a part in controlling attention and behaviour. These areas seem to be underactive in children with ADHD. It is thought increasing the activity of these chemicals improves the function of these underactive parts of the brain’ (Netdoctor, 2007).

As a TEP I have worked alongside a number of professionals on this case: Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), a clinical psychologist, social worker, family support worker and the looked after children’s district co-ordinator (when Daniel’s new foster placement had been found).

For the purposes of this case a Team around the Child (TAC) model was adopted (Limbrick, 2001, p.5). The main function of a TAC model is to:

> ‘…plan, execute and review a co-ordinated service to the child and family, regardless of how many agencies and workers were involved’.

The minimum requirement of the TAC team is to ‘meet regularly’ to discuss progress towards outcomes (Limbrick, 2001, p.6). Each member of this team agreed to share information and keep each other informed of progress.

As a TEP working on this case I adopted the Woolfson et al. (2003) integrated framework for EP practice. This framework helped to guide me through the process of multi agency working, and moreover enabled me to reflect on the successes and

difficulties of the TAC model to this case. The Woolfson et al. (2003) model consists of five stages: 1) establishing roles and expectations, 2) guiding hypotheses and information gathering, 3) joint problem analysis, 4) joint action plan and 5) evaluate, reflect and monitor. Another reason for choosing this framework is that there are 'relatively few practical models for EPs', despite the current government emphasis on multi agency working (Woolfson et al., 2003, p.298). Thus, through the course of this report I will discuss how effective the TAC model has been to this case by applying a psychological framework.

3. Stage 1: Establishing roles and expectations

Initially each member of the TAC team had their own professional role and remit. However, the whole team had a clear goal of addressing Daniel's behaviour difficulties. School staff reported that Daniel can be disruptive in lessons by throwing things, answering teachers' back, and not following classroom rules and routines. Furthermore, staff expressed concern about Daniel's emotional well being due to the trauma he experienced as a child, and the instability of his living arrangements (he frequently goes in and out of foster care).

At this stage, each professional decided what they could do to help Daniel. The clinical psychologist adopted a medical model (Hornby, 2001) and suggested she would monitor Daniel's ADHD medication. The social worker had an aim of finding a suitable foster placement, which would be nearby so he could attend the same school. The family

support team offered to support Daniel, by accompanying him on supervised visits to meet his brother and sister (who are adopted to separate families).

However, even though all professionals agreed to work together, not everyone was present at the initial meeting. The school took on the role of the mediator communicating to those who were not present what each professional's roles would be. Moreover, I rang/ emailed each member of the TAC team separately to clarify their role and give feed back regarding my role (see appendix 1). Thus, even though all the professionals' were aware of the perceived benefits of multi agency working, getting everyone together for the initial meeting was difficult. Researchers such as Pettitt (2003) have stated the time consuming aspects of joint meetings. For instance, as a TEP there are many cases I am working on where there are a number of agencies involved. The logistics of arranging co-ordinated meetings for all these cases are indeed problematic.

A relevant point to make about multi agency working is that in Daniel's case each professional had a preconceived idea about what they were going to do before any discussion of his needs had taken place. Thus, the clinical psychologist noted she had limited time, so offered to monitor Daniel's medication. However, did his medication need to be monitored? Would Daniel have benefited from in depth cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)? Could the social worker have met up with Daniel and found out how he was feeling about things? Therefore a barrier for multi agency working is that professionals are under pressure with targets to meet, so cannot always engage in an open discussion or commit to activities they may not have the time to pursue.

However, it has been suggested that a reason why co-ordinated work is hard to achieve, is that each professional wants to project their own unique role regarding what

they can offer. For instance the social worker offered to find Daniel a suitable foster placement nearby.

> '…collaborations will be made on an unsteady foundation if professionals continue to believe that they have to demonstrate their professional identity and prove their worth, through being unique' (Hughes, 2006, p.67).

I feel that Hughes (2006) makes a relevant point about multi professional work because during each review meeting about Daniel it felt as if everybody was trying to validate their involvement by projecting their unique role in the team. However, another factor that could have influenced each professional's contribution in the TAC is organisational culture.

Thus, an important issue to consider is whether there are additional factors which could have influenced the way each professional worked in the TAC, such as the culture of their own workplace?

> 'An organization's culture focuses on the values, beliefs and meanings used by its members to grasp how its uniqueness originates, evolves and operates' (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004).

Hence, culture can have a significant impact on working practices. Thus the clinical psychologist may have offered to monitor Daniel's medication because it was the culture

of her organisation to work in that way. In the next phase of the report I will consider the range of hypotheses that were identified in the first TAC meeting.

4.1 Stage 2a: Guiding hypotheses and information gathering

After the initial consultation with school staff a range of hypotheses were proposed which may have explained Daniel's inappropriate behaviour, see Appendix 1 for a table outlining each professional's role.

4.2 Stage 2b: Information Gathering

Through the course of working with Daniel, I first considered whether Ritalin was an appropriate intervention to take. Questions came into mind such as: what evidence is there that medication is successful for children with ADHD? However, more importantly I considered whether his behaviours were related to his early traumatic childhood and not due to ADHD (Geddes, 2006). Furthermore, what evidence is there that ADHD is a 'real disorder' or is it a product of social construction (Tait, 2005, Diller, 2006).

Baldwin (2000, p.598) argues that ADHD is not a biochemical imbalance, and children should not be given medication.

> '…there is no clinical rationale for drugging children and teenagers with amphetamines. When children are given amphetamines, this is for purposes of social control'.

More controversially, Baldwin (2000, p.598) questions the means of diagnosing ADHD.

> 'The diagnosis of ADHD is based on observations about the behaviour of children and teenagers, not on scientific biochemical markers such as blood analysis, genetic screening or metabolic tests. There are no reliable scientific criteria for an ADHD diagnosis'.

In a paper written by Tait (2005) he debates whether in fact ADHD exits. He argues that there are three schools of thought: 1) that ADHD exits 2) that it may exit, but it is widely over-diagnosed and 3) that ADHD does not exit and it is an amalgam for normal childhood behaviours. Indeed he discusses the subjective nature of the disorder, as it is determined through observations and clinical interviews. He makes the point that one Doctor may diagnose the condition in a child, whereas another may not. Thus, it could be argued that Daniel may not have ADHD, but has been displaying 'normal childhood behaviours' (Tait, 2005, p19).

In the last ten years there has seen a large increase in the number of children and young people being labelled as having ADHD (Rose, 2006). Rose (2006, p.262) comments:

> '…in the 1960s, Ritalin prescriptions were running at about 2000 a year. By 1997 the prescription level had increased nearly fifty-fold, to 92,000 a year and by 2002 the figure was around 150,000. In Scotland, for instance, prescriptions increased by 68% between 1999 and 2003. There is no sign of the rise levelling off'.

Therefore, it is important to consider why this might be the case?

Diller (2006) writes about his own experiences as a psychiatrist working with parents who are convinced that their child has ADHD. He proposes that there has been a shift in focus from nurture to nature, and now the psychiatric world is embracing a 'biological view' of mental health (Diller, 2006, p.9). He discusses that in the modern world there are increasing demands on children's educational performance and behaviour in school, and that some children cannot handle these pressures. As a result, Diller (2006, p.13) states, Ritalin has become an attractive option to parents as:

> '…the fix is quick, relatively inexpensive, and safe. No one- not the student, teacher or parent- is to blame for the problem. No one needs to make changes to lifestyles, expectations, or strategies. It's just the student's brain'.

When examining Diller's perspective, whilst medication is a quick fix solution there has been evidence stating the side effects of medication, such as children not feeling in control of their lives (Travell and Visser, 2006). In addition, although he suggests that the student is not to blame for the problem, researchers such as Stein (2001) argue that when children are medicated it can have an impact on their self esteem.

> 'Diagnosing and drugging children makes them feel blamed and stigmatized, ultimately lowering their self esteem. It encourages them to believe that they cannot learn to control their own behaviour without resorting to drugs' (Stein, 2001, p.x).

However, this comment is based on Stein's (2001) opinion rather than from research. On reflection, when working individually with Daniel he believed that he "needed drugs, else I will be like my Dad." In conversations with Daniel he said that he needed to take medication to control his behaviours. Furthermore, when I first began working with him, he could not name any strategies he had for controlling his anger.

Whilst there are professionals that oppose the use of medication for ADHD, there are a similar amount of professionals who support this treatment. Cooper (2000) suggests that biological factors do play a part in ADHD, and that drugs can supplement psychosocial and educational interventions. Wolraich et al. (2006, p.1739) in a review of the treatment of ADHD, state that drugs such as Ritalin have:

> '…shown to be effective for 70% of adolescents and seem to operate in a dose-dependent manner in improving cognition and behaviour. The beneficial effects of stimulants are of similar quality and magnitude for adolescents of both genders and for younger and older children'.

However, even though stimulants have shown to be 70% effective, the 'dose-dependent' manner of the use of these drugs needs to be taken into consideration. Indeed, Travell et al., (2006, p.211) argue that the positive effects of Ritalin such as improved behaviour are balanced:

> '…by the negative experiences of side effects, and concerns about the physical and psychological effects of taking drugs'.

The side effects that were reported were suppression of appetite and sleep, stomach and head aches. In a similar review of the treatment of ADHD, Purdie et al. (2002, p.66) suggest that medication may have little, if any long term benefits.

> '…medication treatments may postpone the use of non-pharmacological intervention that may be more effective in the long term'.

Thus, in reflection the debate surrounding whether ADHD exists, and whether medication is indeed an appropriate intervention is an issue where more research is required. Indeed a useful area of research would be to what extent is medication effective in the long term? Is the drug less effective after a couple of years? These questions are unable to be addressed in the scope of the current paper, but present the reader with interesting possibilities for future research.

Consequently, when considering the research discussed in this report, the clinical psychologist's hypothesis that Daniel's inappropriate behaviour maybe a result of an incorrect dosage and side effects of Ritalin is a valid contribution in the TAC model for Daniel. However, it is useful to hypothesise what other factors may be having an impact on Daniel's behaviour. Therefore, I will continue by discussing how Daniel's early childhood experiences may have influenced his behaviour.

Daniel had a very traumatic start to his life, he was placed in care after being physically abused by his father, and suffered from neglect. It has also been reported that he witnessed cases of severe domestic violence perpetuated by his father against his mother. In the last forty years attachment theory has become an influential paradigm in

explaining human social and emotional development (Geddes, 2006). Bowlby (1988) maintained that all of us are happiest when our life is organised as a series of excursions from the secure base. Thus, by having a secure base we feel we are able to form stable fulfilling relationships and go out into the world.

Gerhardt (2004) has stressed the importance of early secure attachments on brain and central nervous system development. She stresses that early experience has an impact on the baby's physiological systems, because they are unformed and delicate.

> '…there are certain biochemical systems which can be set in an unhelpful way if early experience is problematic: both the stress response, as well as other neuropeptides of the emotional system can be adversley affected'.

Similarly, Schore (2000) suggests that when a parent smiles and interacts with their baby, it stimulates the production of bio chemicals which help the brain to grow. Geddes (2006, p.42) continues with this point by stating:

> 'The richer the experiences of interaction, the more the neural connections grow and the brain becomes richly networked'.

Other psychologists such as Golding et al. (2006) and Cairns (2006) emphasise the importance of early secure attachments. These researchers claim that insecure attachment can lead to difficulties in trusting others, and in forming fulfilling relationships later in life.

Geddes (2006) has defined one form of attachment pattern as disorganised/ disorientated. This form of attachment has sometimes been referred to as reactive attachment disorder (Millward et al., (2006). Some characteristics of this type of attachment pattern are anxiety, depression and hyperactivity (Millward et al., 2006). Interestingly, according to Geddes (2006, p.110):

> '…reactive behaviour can easily be confused with ADHD and many children may become medicated for ADHD when they may actually be demonstrating a disorganized/ disorientated attachment'.

Thus, when diagnosing ADHD for children who have been in care, difficulties in early development need to be taken into consideration. Millward et al. (2006) stated that 53% of children in care when surveyed for mental health problems displayed symptoms similar to reactive attachment, for example hyperactivity.

Thus, when reflecting on the similarities between reactive attachment and ADHD, Geddes (2006, p.110) highlights the importance of 'collaboration between agencies' when working with children displaying worrying pupil behaviour. Therefore, information about reactive attachment is vital for the school and the looked after children's district co-ordinator advisory teacher, when devising learning strategies.

As previously noted Daniel suffered from both physical abuse and neglect. Howe (2005, p.163) states that children who have experienced abuse and neglect often develop a range of problems in cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural domains. Again he emphasises that children:

> '…show poor impulse control, hyperactivity and restlessness. Destructiveness and aggression are not only directed at other people and property, but can also be turned against the self'.

There is also evidence that children with a history of abuse can steal and that their fear and insecurity can manifest itself in sleep disturbance (Howe, 2005). In Daniel's case there have been reported incidences of him stealing property and being unable to sleep. Thus, it is useful to consider whether his impulsivity and reported inappropriate behaviours at school are due to trauma in his early childhood development. Howe (2005) argues that children who have experienced abusive childhoods may develop an attachment disorder. Patterns of behaviour may be poor perceptions of self worth and a lack of trust in others. Indeed during individual work with Daniel he frequently told me he thought nobody liked him.

Furthermore, since Daniel witnessed severe cases of domestic violence, Mullender and Debbonaire (2000, p.24) maintain that the long term effects of witnessing domestic violence are 'anxiety, tension …sleeplessness and poor concentration'. In addition, Sternberg et al. (1993) suggest that children, who are subjected to abuse and domestic violence, suffer the highest levels of maladjustment and psychopathology.

Whilst there is evidence that supports an attachment related difficulty, it is not without its critics. Kagan (1998) has argued that those behaviours that are observed during attachment investigations are just as likely to be a result of biology as by parent-child interaction. Thus he possibly believes in the genetic and the biological viewpoint of

behaviour. In addition, Belsky et al. (1996) have also scrutinised attachment theory and have questioned the validity of the assessment techniques used to measure attachment.

Despite criticisms made by Kagan (1998) and Belsky (1996), I feel that in Daniel's case to explain his behaviour due to ADHD alone is a within child perspective. Moreover to provide Daniel with medication is a quick fix solution (Diller, 2006). Thus, by doing this it is not society's problem, but it is Daniel's. Daniel is a complex child that has had a difficult start to his life. As TEP involved in this case I feel that factors other than his ADHD have impacted on his behaviour and these should be investigated.

Thus, I have highlighted research that suggests children who have been identified as having ADHD may indeed have been misdiagnosed and have attachment related difficulties. Furthermore children who have been abused may display symptoms similar to ADHD, such as hyperactivity (Howe, 2005). These issues require further in depth analysis, which would be an area of discussion for a future research paper. In addition I feel a relevant area of research would be to investigate whether there are a greater number of children in care who have been diagnosed as having ADHD opposed to the general population.

Also during the information gathering stage, I observed Daniel on two occasions (Appendix 1). I was interested to see whether his inappropriate behaviour may be due to either a) learning inappropriate behaviour from his peers b) work not being differentiated to meet his needs or, c) the classroom not structured enough to meet his needs. During the classroom observations, I noticed that Daniel responded well to clear rules and structure. On the occasions I observed him, he didn't appear to be influenced by his peers, and he completed his work without adult support. Thus, I feel that school staff may benefit from

information regarding ADHD, and how a highly structured environment may help him concentrate better.

> '…classroom routines should be devised not only for practical reasons, but to enhance the structure which the classroom may provide for children who are disorganized within themselves' (Train, 2005, p.162)

However, I observed Daniel alone so my interpretations of his behaviour were highly subjective. There are advantages and disadvantages of this method of data collection. Banister et al. (2005, p.29) suggests that carrying out an observation can be a valuable research tool as:

> 'The method can tell us not only what is going on, but also who is involved, when and where things happen'.

Conversely, a key issue with observations is:

> '…concerning the extent to which an observer affects the situation under observation' (Robson, 2002, p.311).

Daniel was aware of my presence in the classroom, so I may have affected his behaviour.

When I worked initially with Daniel we talked about school, and how he was feeling about his forthcoming foster placement. He appeared to be anxious about going back into

foster care, and said that he was worried because his foster carers "may be horrible to him". He also spoke about his family and said that he missed his brother and sister, who are adopted to separate families. Furthermore he said that he felt very alone and didn't feel that he had anyone he could talk to. Interestingly, the family support worker also gave feedback about how much Daniel enjoyed seeing his siblings during a recent visit. He spoke how he supervised a visit between Daniel and his brother and sister to the park and they appeared to be very happy together.

When reflecting on the information gathering stage of the process, important information was ascertained. With the current research surrounding the use of Ritalin, it is essential that Daniel's medication continues to be monitored. Furthermore, as research suggests that some characteristics of ADHD are similar to a disorganized/ disorientated attachment disorder (Geddes, 2006), it is important to keep this information in mind when planning interventions in the classroom. In addition, when talking to Daniel he expressed his need to talk to someone and stay in touch with family members. Thus the range of information collected was vital for the next stage of the process, so that each professional in the TAC model could discuss the next step forward for Daniel. This will be the focus of discussion in the next section of this report.

5. Stage 3: Joint Action Plan

At this stage of the process it was important to reflect on which initial hypotheses in phase 2, were supported or rejected, see Appendix 2 for a table displaying this information.

When I first met Daniel he appeared to be a vulnerable child with a number of needs. I feel that a TAC model was particularly important and useful for Daniel because there were a number of concerns that needed to be addressed by a range of professionals. When discussing the benefits of the TAC model, Limbrick (2001, p.15) emphasises:

> 'The Team around the Child offers a spectrum of integration opportunities that can match the particular child's abilities and needs and the preferred working style of the professionals'.

Indeed Woolfson et al. (2003, p. 299) writers of the integrated framework, argue that the TAC model allows stakeholders to:

> '…negotiate their roles in relation to each individual situation, this allows flexibility of response to the needs of different clients, a greater realism about what each practitioner can achieve, and a demystification of roles'.

However, although multi agency working appears to be beneficial to the client, this work is a challenge to existing services. Time is needed for meetings, planning, discussing and reflecting. In addition there needs to be awareness about group processes and dynamics. Thus each member of the TAC model needs to be committed to the process in order for it to work successfully (Limbrick, 2001).

In the next section of this report I will discuss the interventions that were agreed and implemented by professionals. This stage was when a joint action plan was devised.

6. Stage 4a: Action Plan Proforma

During this stage of the process, a joint action plan was devised and implemented. See Appendix 3 for a table outlining each professional's role in the TAC team.

6.1 Stage 4b: An evaluation of my work with Daniel

When I began working with Daniel, he was going through an unsettled period in his life. He was due to go into respite foster care and was very apprehensive about it. Through our sessions he talked to me about his concerns about going into care again, through to meeting his foster carers and living with them. Person centred counselling principles are drawn for a humanistic perspective. The basis of humanistic psychology is concerned with the way people function as whole beings, and how our thoughts and feeling can influence behaviour (Ayres et al., 2005).

Before beginning any work with Daniel I followed the BPS (2006) ethical guidelines regarding psychological practice and made sure that I had gained consent from Daniel and his grandmother. After informed consent was established I used a combination of counselling and CBT techniques throughout my individual sessions with Daniel. One of the counselling approaches I used was an active listening technique. Buse and Beaver (2000) suggests that the basic components of effective listening are Paraphrasing, Clarifying, Eliciting, Reflecting and Summarising, referred to as PACERS.

Person centred counselling, was founded by Carl Rogers (Mearns, and Thorne, 1997). Person centred therapists start from the assumption that both they and their client

are trustworthy. Three key essential principles of this therapy are: congruence, unconditional acceptance and empathic understanding. In order for the therapy to be successful the therapist must project genuineness, empathy and a non judgmental approach. Whilst each person centred therapist may differ in style, they all have a desire:

> '…to create a relationship characterised by a climate in which clients begin to get in touch with their own wisdom and their capacity for self understanding and for altering their self concept and self defeating behaviours' (Thorne, 1997, p.133).

Smith (2006) carried out a study which investigated the benefits of children being given the opportunity to talk openly to an adult; this approach was called 'Listening Partners'. These sessions consisted of 35 children being given individual, half hour listening and talking sessions with an adult over 10 weeks. Results showed that children became able to 'own and express their own emotions' (Smith, 2006, p.34). There was also a significant improvement in reading, and maths scores of children who took part in the study. Furthermore, out of the 35 children who took part, 16 showed improvements in attendance, behaviour, confidence and participation in class. Smith (2006, p.38) concluded:

> 'Indications from this study are that children who have more interactive listening experiences with adults become more confident in their own ability to talk and listen'.

Thus, in Smith's (2006) research giving children the opportunity to talk to someone helped to improve the attendance and behaviour of 16 children. However, this research was carried out on a small sample, so it is difficult to make generalisations to the rest of the population. Furthermore, information regarding the individual background of the participants is not known. Therefore the children who took part in this research may not have been presenting any behaviour difficulties at school.

When reflecting on person centred counselling as an approach, there are limitations to adopting this technique. Firstly, the success of the sessions can depend on the skill of the therapist (Thorne, 1997) being able to build up a rapport with their client. Furthermore, by implementing this approach, the client is often asked to talk about past events, which may be particularly traumatic. In Daniel's case, he relived some painful memories for him, which were about his father. He also spoke about how he felt alone and unloved. He appeared to have low self esteem, as he couldn't name anything that was positive about himself. Thus even though a person centred approach allowed Daniel to talk through his problems, I felt there were disadvantages of solely using this approach alone.

Moreover, there is little research evidence which suggests that a person centred counselling approach is useful for children with ADHD, or who have suffered abused. Alternative therapies draw on a psychodynamic paradigm such as play therapy (Cattanach, 2003). It has been argued that:

> ‘Play therapy is a way of helping troubled children cope with their distress, using play as the medium of communication between child and therapist’ (Cattanach, 2003, p.24).

Therefore an important research question would be to evaluate what types of therapy have shown to be the most successful for children with ADHD and attachment related difficulties. Furthermore are some therapies more successful in the long term?

Consequently, when reflecting on my work with Daniel I felt I could not use a person centred counselling approach alone because of the nature of his problems. During individual sessions with Daniel he said he was feeling lonely. More significantly, Daniel had negative thoughts about himself and future foster placement. Daniel said he thought that nobody liked him and before embarking on his foster placement he told me that his “foster carers will be horrible to me”. Therefore, in addition to person centred techniques I adopted a Cognitive Behavioural Approach (CBT) so I could redirect his negative thoughts about himself and future and forthcoming foster placement.

In CBT the psychologist is, amongst other things, concerned with exploring their client’s processes to help bring about a positive change. Stallard (2006, p.3) argues that:

> ‘Cognitive behaviour therapy is concerned with understanding how events and experiences are interpreted and with identifying and changing the distortions or deficits that occur in cognitive processing’.

For my work with Daniel, I was interested in trying to understand how he interpreted events to bring about a positive change. During one session Daniel and I talked about his forthcoming foster placement. He was very anxious about going, so I started to explore his views about what it would be like. Before he even had met his future carers he was convinced, “they will be horrible”, and thought, “they’ll hate me”.

It was useful to discuss with Daniel why he thought his foster carers would not like him. Interestingly, Daniel had negative thoughts about himself, which was affecting how he felt and behaved. His distortions were making him feel anxious and tense, which subsequently made him agitated. By using materials from ‘Think Good-Feel Good’ (Stallard, 2006) I tried to redirect his negative thoughts to bring about a positive change. For a couple of sessions I focused on trying to make him feel positive about his foster placement and to think good things about himself. I found the CBT paradigm useful to combine with person centred counselling as I listened to Daniel but I also helped him to redirect his negative thoughts. Evidence for this came after he met his foster carers, he said, “I think they like me”, and talked about how he would “like it there”.

Researchers such as Squires (2001), Humphrey (2006), Sukhodolsky et al. (2004), and Benazon et al. (2002) have suggested that CBT has resulted in positive outcomes with children. Siqueland et al. (2005) found that 67% of adolescents aged between 12 and 18 who were diagnosed with social phobia, generalised anxiety disorder or separation anxiety improved sufficiently to not meet the criteria for the diagnosis label after 16 sessions of CBT.

An advantage of CBT as an approach is that it has been applied to a widening field of disorders (Moorey, 1997). Thus it has been used in and out of the school context to

help clients with behavioural difficulties, anorexia, depression, anxiety, low self esteem, obsessive compulsive disorders and phobias. Barrett (1998) carried out a controlled study, which found that between 50% to 80% of adolescents who were given a three month course of CBT subsequently no longer exhibited the signs of anxiety. There is also a substantial evidence base to support the use of CBT in published articles.

> 'The established evidence base for CBT, and its particular suitability for addressing the emotional difficulties of depression and stress so frequently encountered in young people, suggests that it should have an important place in the strategies educational psychologists use' (Boyle, 2007, p.39).

However, there are limitations in using CBT; for instance clients have to be motivated to bring about change. On some occasions therapists will give clients homework to complete, so therefore the emphasis placed on homework and self help can be a limitation for some people. There are other evidence based approaches such as solution focused brief therapy (SFBT) and motivational interviewing which can bring about change. Thus,

> '…the particular methodology should be applicable to the situation of the adolescent client- that is, the client should not be made to fit the approach (Boyle, 2007, p.43).

Furthermore, while CBT helps people redirect negative thoughts, it does not address underlying conflicts as in a psychodynamic approach (Ayres et al. 2005).

6.3 Stage 4c: An evaluation of work carried out by other professionals' in the TAC

In addition to my involvement in this case, other members of the TAC team had different roles (see appendix 3). The social worker found a foster placement that was near to his school. This was very important to Daniel, as he wanted to stay close to his friends. Research by Harker et al. (2003, p.94) has found that friends played an important part in supporting looked after children whilst at school:

> 'Where friends were progressing well at school, this was seen as a source of motivation and also provided opportunities for joint studying and assistance with homework'.

Research has also suggested that continuity of school placement is also important in promoting emotional well being in looked after children (Gilligan, 2001). Furthermore, the family support worker accompanied Daniel on supervised visits to see his brother and sister. A key finding from Shaw (1997) research was that only half of children surveyed were happy with the level of contact they had with their family. Notably, children aged 13 and under expressed a wish for more contact with their family. Daniel is 12 years old and explained to me on a number of occasions that he enjoyed seeing his brother and sister. Thus these were important roles in the TAC team to support Daniel.

The school also played an important part in supporting Daniel. As evidence suggests that early attachment experiences can have an impact on emotional well being and performance in the classroom, it was important for the school to keep this in mind when devising interventions. Geddes (2006) suggests that reliable and predictable routines are important in creating a secure base for a child with an attachment disorder. Similarly, structured rules and routines are found to be beneficial for children with ADHD (Cooper and Bilton, 2002). With this in mind Daniel's school agreed to keep a copy of his timetable in the learning support office so it would be easy for him to obtain (Daniel lost his timetable on a number of occasions and walked around the school not knowing where he had to go). Furthermore, the school agreed to implement consistent rewards and sanctions that Daniel would be aware of. In the final phase of my work with Daniel I will reflect on the range of interventions adopted.

7. Stage 5: Evaluate, reflect and monitor

In reflecting on the range of interventions that were implemented for Daniel it was beneficial for a number of professionals to work together. Recently, Jarrett (2008) has reviewed research to suggest that a 'multidisciplinary assessment' is essential when working with children who have a diagnosis of ADHD. Therefore it was essential that a number of hypotheses were considered when trying to understand why Daniel was behaving inappropriately.

However, it is useful to consider how effective the TAC approach had been when working with Daniel. Although a team of professionals were working with Daniel, it was

not always possible for all members to meet together at the same time. On some occasions the social worker was unable to make scheduled meetings due to unforeseen circumstances, so therefore I fedback by using the telephone. Thus, at some stages professionals reported what work they had carried out rather than discuss solutions, or alternative interventions. Another barrier I found in the TAC process was that someone needed to be a co-ordinator for it to run more effectively. When the SENCo took this responsibility on there seemed to be better communication between professionals. Atkinson et al. (2002) argues that a key barrier for effective multi agency working is the reluctance of one agency to take the lead role. In reflection I considered whether the TAC process would have been carried out more effectively if a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) had been put in place?

The CAF is a 'standardised approach' to assessing how a child's additional needs can be met' (Every Child Matters, 2006b, p.1). A central aim of the CAF is to provide a holistic response to a child's needs. An example of how a CAF has been used successfully by a group of professionals is in Lewisham (DCSF, 2007). In this instance the head teacher took on the role of the co-ordinator, also known as the lead professional. Each professional fed back their work to the head teacher. Another responsibility of the lead professional is to organise a date to review the action plan, and to identify any outstanding needs and how these can best be met. In reflecting on this process the group of professionals:

> '…felt that the multi-agency approach of coming together with the child's mother to share information and work as a virtual team around the child demonstrated the

effectiveness of information sharing in improving the outcomes for this child' (DCSF, 2007, p.1).

Therefore, the CAF approach may have been useful to implement in Daniel's case as it would have given the process structure. Furthermore by someone taking on the role of the lead professional this would have helped with the co-ordination of meetings and in doing so there would be specific targets to review and discuss. In Daniel's case when the SENCo began to co-ordinate the various professionals the whole process ran more smoothly. Indeed in a recent review of Daniel's progress, the SENCo suggested that a CAF would be a useful step forward.

However, while a CAF approach may seem a useful strategy to implement there are limitations in adopting this process in cases when a range of professionals are involved. If a CAF approach is adopted a lead professional is identified to co-ordinate members. Tyler (2005) argues that essential characteristics of a good leader are to have a clear vision, be able to set goals, have self awareness, and be able to motivate others in the team. It is useful to consider that if these qualities are important would the lead professional necessarily possess these characteristics? If someone finds it hard to motivate other members of the TAC then individuals may contact each other via the telephone instead of meeting together at arranged times. Indeed when reflecting on my work with Daniel the process ran more smoothly when the SENCo took on the role of co-ordinating the various professionals. It is useful to note that the SENCo had a clear vision and was able to motivate each professional in the team. She was enthusiastic about the process and organised appropriate times to review progress.

In reviewing the interventions put in place for Daniel, and the approach I adopted, CBT and person centred counselling enabled him to talk about his feelings and the concerns he had over his forthcoming foster placement. I will continue to monitor his progress in school on a half term basis and a member of staff will act as a mentor for him to talk to about any difficulties he may have in school or home. On a positive note, Daniel has settled in to his new foster care placement well, and he is pleased he is still able to attend the same high school and remain in contact with friends. A family support worker is still arranging supervised visits for Daniel to meet his siblings' regularly. During my conversations with Daniel it is evident that this is very important to him and it is essential that contact is maintained for his emotional well being. The clinical psychologist monitoring Daniel's medication has explained that she feels that his dose of Ritalin is appropriate and in her opinion provides him with "symptomatic relief for his ADHD".

During the last review meeting, two areas of discussion were Daniel's Personal Education Plan (PEP), and the next steps forward. The Looked after Children's District Co-ordinator is supporting the school with meeting these targets. Another avenue that the SENCo is keen to explore is for the school to apply for a statutory assessment. The SENCo is concerned that in the future Daniel may be placed in foster care outside of the local area, and will therefore need to move schools. His present school are providing a package of support for Daniel and the SENCo feels that if he moves he may not receive this. She feels it would be beneficial to Daniel if his needs were written in a Statement for his protection. At the time of writing this report, the SENCo is collating evidence in order to apply for a statutory assessment.

8. Conclusion

This report is a critical evaluation of work carried out with Daniel over a period of 4 months. Through the course of this case I adopted the Woolfson et al. (2003) integrated framework to guide me through the stages of devising hypotheses, collating data, implementing interventions and evaluating them with a number of professionals. As Daniel appeared to be a vulnerable child a number of agencies were involved in this process: CAMHS, social services, Educational Psychology Service, Family Support Services and Looked after Children's Education team. In accordance with the Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) agenda, a TAC model was adopted to encourage collaboration between the various professionals.

Although each professional worked together, joint meetings were not always feasible and on occasions I fedback using the telephone. Thus, this seemed to create a situation where professionals were reporting back findings rather than discussing collaboratively the next step forward. There are a number of barriers which may prevent this process running smoothly such as each professional not understanding each others roles, and them wanting to keep their own professional identity (Hughes, 2006). Furthermore if multi agency working is going to work effectively then someone needs to take on the responsibility of co-ordinating the agencies. In Daniel's case, communication between professionals' became more effective when the SENCo took on this responsibility. During the last review meeting, school were very keen to implement a CAF with Daniel and for the SENCo to act as the lead professional. Whilst a CAF may provide a more structured response to multi agency working, there will be occasions

when this framework will not be appropriate. For instance when the lead professional does not have a clear vision and is unable to motivate others (Tyler, 2005).

Dearden and Miller (2006) suggest that applying a grounded theory to multi agency working can increase the effectiveness of this method of working. In this research study participants were asked what actions, events and processes they believed would result in a positive outcome for a child. Responses were coded e.g. dimensions of conflict, triggers, barriers to negotiation, aspects of successful negotiation etc. The information obtained helped to ensure a successful outcome for a young person in care. Thus, Dearden et al. (2006) presents this as an alternative approach for effective multi agency working. However, it is useful to consider that while this strategy presents a valid technique to apply it is time consuming and there needs to be a co-ordinator to ask each professional their thoughts regarding the multi agency process.

When reflecting on this case, it is useful to consider the similarities between ADHD traits and Reactive Attachment Disorder (Geddes, 2006). Thus, even in cases where there is a diagnosis of a given disorder, it useful to undertake a holistic assessment as there may be other factors that are triggering reported behaviours in a child. As an applied psychologist it is essential to draw on a number of paradigms and research in order to find solutions. In Daniel's case as well as a diagnosis of ADHD, he had a traumatic early childhood which needs to be reflected on. Thus, it was important to gather evidence in relation to a number of hypotheses.

Through the course of working with Daniel, I have found the recent debate surrounding whether ADHD exits in the first place, and the current controversy around the use of Ritalin to relieve the symptoms particularly interesting (Wolraich, 2006). As

Stein (2001) suggests there is a growing dependency on treating ADHD symptoms with medication and alternative interventions need to be explored. To treat the symptoms of ADHD with medication is a quick fix solution.

In direct work with Daniel I used a combination of personal centred counselling and CBT techniques. I feel that due to the nature of Daniel's difficulties a combination of psychological approaches was necessary as he needed to offload, but more importantly he needed to learn techniques which enabled him to redirect his negative thoughts about himself and future and forthcoming foster placement. Through a course of a few weeks Daniel is beginning to redirect his negative thoughts towards a more positive outlook. He has settled into his new foster care placement and has expressed that he is happy there and that his carers like him. The numbers of recorded incidents in school have decreased.

Finally, it is helpful to comment on the way forward for Daniel. Due to the complexities of Daniel's problems I shall continue to monitor his progress on a half term basis. I feel that this is important as Daniel frequently goes in and out of care and problems may arise. CAMHS are continuing to monitor his medication, but feel at present he is responding well to treatment. School have set up a mentor system for Daniel and have worked hard on providing a structured environment for him. School are also in the process of gathering evidence in order to provide for a statutory assessment. When reflecting on my work with Daniel, one of the most important things I have learnt is to look beyond a diagnosis of a child and consider a number of hypotheses in the problem solving process as all 'behaviour has meaning' (Geddes, 2006, p.3).

8,169 words

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Appendix 1

Clarification of roles in TAC

Psychological Paradigm	Hypotheses	Evidence	Professional
Medical/ biological	ADHD medication may not be appropriate.	• Daniel's medication is monitored. • Research the use of medication for ADHD.	Clinical psychologist. TEP
Social learning	Learning inappropriate behaviour from his peers.	• Classroom observation.	TEP
Ecological	Work may not be differentiated to meet his needs.	• Classroom observation.	TEP
Behavioural	Classroom may not be structured to meet his needs, with appropriate rewards and sanctions in place.	• Classroom observation	TEP
Developmental	Daniel may have an attachment disorder. Also other trauma due to witnessing domestic violence, and being physically abused may have had an effect on his early development.	• Direct work with Daniel. • Research on attachment, physical abuse.	TEP
Humanistic	Daniel is not having his needs met (Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, 1954).	• Direct work with Daniel. • Making sure he still has contact with siblings that are adopted. Does he value	TEP Family support worker/ social worker.

		this contact? • His new foster placement is nearby so he can keep in touch with family/ friends.	Social worker
1. Cognitive behavioural	Daniel has negative thoughts about himself/ school.	• Direct work with Daniel.	TEP

Appendix 2

Hypotheses testing

Psychological Paradigm	Hypotheses	Information Gathering	Confirmed?
1. Medical/ biological	ADHD medication may not be appropriate.	• There is a significant amount of research regarding the negative side effects of ADHD medication.	Yes- CAMHS is going to monitor his medication, as it may not be appropriate.
2. Social learning	Learning inappropriate behaviour from his peers.	• On the occasions I observed Daniel, he didn't appear to be influenced by his peers.	No- however I only carried out two observations. The lessons I observed were structured. Daniel may be influenced by his peers in a less structured environment.
3. Ecological	Work may not be differentiated to meet his needs.	• Daniel was able to complete work without adult support.	No
4. Behavioural	Classroom may not be structured to meet his needs, with appropriate rewards and sanctions in place.	• During the classroom observation, I noticed that Daniel responded well to rules and routines.	Further advice could be given to school about ADHD regarding rules and routines.
5. Developmental	Daniel may have an attachment disorder. Also other trauma	• There is a significant amount of	Yes- there is documented evidence

	due to witnessing domestic violence, and being physically abused may have had an effect on his early development.	research regarding attachment disorders, and how traits can be similar to ADHD (Geddes, 2006)	regarding the abuse he sustained as a child. Also there are accounts of him witnessing cases of domestic violence.
6. Humanistic	Daniel is not having his needs met (Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, 1954).	• The family support worker said he looked happy during a visit to see his siblings. • Daniel said he was worried about his new foster placement.	Yes
7. Cognitive behavioural	Daniel has negative thoughts about himself/ school.	• Daniel had negative thoughts about himself and future foster placement.	Yes

Appendix 3

TAC action plan

TAC Professional	Action
SENCo	Continue to provide a structured environment, with appropriate rewards/ sanctions in place.
TEP	In depth therapeutic work/ CBT
Clinical Psychologist	Monitor ADHD medication- Ritalin
Social Worker	To find a suitable foster placement and monitor how this is going.
Family Support Worker	To continue to accompany Daniel on visits to see his brother and sister.
* Looked After Children's Advisory Teacher	Give advice regarding Personal Education Plan (PEP) targets.

* The Looked after Children's Advisory Teacher joined the TAC part way through the implementation stage.

CHAPTER 3: PPR2

A discussion into the issues surrounding the inclusion of a child with complex needs in a mainstream setting.

1. Abstract

Recently, I have had the opportunity to work with a 7 year old girl called Ellie who has physical and learning difficulties. Ellie is currently being educated in a mainstream junior school, and is in receipt of 20 hours support written in her Statement of Special Educational Needs. As the school Educational Psychologist (EP), I first met Ellie when the school reported they were finding it increasingly difficult to meet her needs. As I began working with the school it became apparent that the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) felt that Ellie should be transferred to a school for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD).

Despite negotiating interventions and supporting the class teacher in writing Ellie's IEP, the SENCo still felt that no matter what support Ellie was given in school, she would still not make progress; he felt that Ellie's ability was fixed. Therefore, whether someone holds a medical or social view of disability can influence their attitudes towards inclusion. In spite of the SENCo's views, Ellie's Mother wished for her daughter to remain in a mainstream school. In the annual review meeting I mediated between school and family and made sure that Ellie's Mother felt comfortable enough to contribute to the decision making process. Therefore, I feel that EPs can make an important contribution in promoting inclusion by supporting anti-oppressive practice.

2. Introduction

The inclusion debate has often been focused on the difference between mainstream as opposed to specialist education. Researchers have questioned whether indeed a specialist pedagogy is needed when teaching children with disabilities and learning difficulties (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). However:

> 'Inclusion is about much more than the type of school that children attend: it is about the quality of their experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school' (DfES, 2004, p.25).

Thus, the issue of inclusion goes beyond whether a child should be educated in mainstream or in a specialist provision, but to what extent they participate in day to day activities. Moreover, inclusion is associated with breaking down the barriers between mainstream and special, so that they work together to meet the needs of children and young people in order for them to feel included in that community.

> 'We want to break down the divide between mainstream and special schools to create a unified system where all schools and their pupils are included within the wider community of schools' (DfES, 2004, p.35).

The issue of an inclusive education is indeed contentious, which is one to do with politics, rights and values, which will be explored through this paper. Recently, I have

had the opportunity to work with a 7 year old called Ellie who has physical and learning difficulties. For confidentiality reasons her real name has been protected for the purposes of this report (BPS, 2002). Ellie has been assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) as having low muscle tone which affects her stability and positioning. In notes written by the OT it states that Ellie has a poor sitting position for table top tasks and has to make extra effort to increase her tone to sit up.

Ellie is currently being educated in a mainstream junior school, and is in receipt of 20 hours support written in her Statement of Special Educational Needs. As the school Educational Psychologist (EP), I first met Ellie when the school reported they were finding it increasingly difficult to meet her needs. In September 2007, Ellie transferred from a mainstream infant to junior school. As I began working with the school it became apparent that the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) felt that Ellie should be transferred to a school for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). However, Ellie's mother felt she should remain in mainstream education with her sisters.

As I became involved in this case, I became a mediator between school and home. As a mediator I encouraged active participation of all parties (Gersch and Gersch, 2003). I feel that an important role as the school Educational Psychologist (EP) is to remain impartial and to equalise the power between school and home (BPS, 2002). Soloman (1987) claims that people's relations are structured by power. It could be argued that the Deputy Head/ SENCo appeared to be in a more powerful position because during meetings he would reflect on his teaching and special educational needs experience. Ellie's Mother said that she felt "powerless to do anything". As the school EP I reassured her that she knew her child better than anyone, and that if she wanted Ellie to remain in

mainstream school everything possible should be done to provide it. I will discuss the important role EP's can play promoting anti-oppressive practice later in this report.

An interesting aspect of this case, was that although Ellie was being educated in a mainstream school it was essential to consider to what extent was she included in the life of the school? Was Ellie able to access the curriculum, play with other children and become involved in extra curricular activities? As the school EP, were there any interventions that I could put in place to enable Ellie to feel more included? Consequently, inclusion:

> '…refers to the extent to which a school or community welcomes pupils as full members of the group and values them for the contribution they make. This implies that for inclusion to be seen to be effective, all pupils must actively belong to, be welcomed by and participate in a mainstream school- they should be fully included' (Farrell and Ainscow, 2002, p.3).

When working with Ellie, I negotiated interventions with the SENCo and class teacher, as well as helping to build links with the local MLD school. The Local MLD school had recently become a Key Learning Centre, and I felt outreach workers could provide valuable support. The SENCo was reluctant to contact the Learning Centre, so I enquired about the various support on offer.

This case has given me an opportunity to become a reflective practitioner when considering the issues surrounding inclusion. According to Leask and Terell (1997) a reflective practitioner is able to reflect and learn from experience. Inclusion is a complex

issue and in this report I will evaluate the differing perspectives. I will consider the role of government policy, rights, values, attitudes as well as examining the research evidence surrounding this complicated and emotive subject.

3.Policy

One of the key statements concerning the future of special educational needs was formed in 1994, the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). Between the 7th to the 10th June 2004, three hundred participants representing ninety two governments considered the changes in policy required in order for schools to meet the needs of all children. This statement stipulated that all children have the right to be educated in a 'regular school which should accommodate them' (UNESCO, 1994, p.viii).

The Salamanca Statement influenced subsequent national policy and the inclusion agenda. Government documents such as 'Education for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs' (DfES, 1997) and 'Guidance on Inclusive Schooling' (DfES, 2001) outlines strategies to make education more inclusive. The implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (OPSI, 2001) stated that if parents wanted a mainstream place for their child, everything should be done to provide it. The Act placed duties on Local Authorites (LA's) and mainstream schools to include all pupils fully, and make appropriate changes to their organisation, curriculum, accomodation and teaching methods.

In 2004 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' was published (DfES, 2004). Key issues to come out of this strategy were that too many children waited too long for their

needs to be met, and that school staff in mainstream schools did not feel equipped to meet the range of needs within the classroom. In addition that special schools were uncertain of their future role. It was suggested that special schools can fulfil an important role by educating some children directly and sharing their expertise with mainstream schools to support greater inclusion.

Whilst the goals outlined in 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' (DfES, 2004) sound vital to promote inclusive practice, in reality they may be hard to achieve. With the issue of staff feeling ill-equipped to teach children with special educational needs is part of a greater issue. Firstly, do children with special educational needs require a different pedagogy or is it good teaching? (Norwich and Lewis, 2001). As it can be argued that a personalised learning approach is good teaching for all pupils and not just for a small minority of children (this pertinant issue will be discussed in depth later).

However, I feel that a reason why inclusion can be difficult to achieve is concerned with the term "special educational needs". I feel this term is unhelpful as it suggests that a child requires a special education.

> 'These labels are very dehumanizing…I think we need to be developing teachers who like and respect children and are prepared to encourage their knowledge and creativity, not teachers who are experts on deafness or blindness or learning difficulty' (Corker, 2006, p.77).

Thus, in order to promote more inclusive practice it is useful to consider whether in fact the term 'Special Educational Needs' needs to change as it could be argued that it

suppports a medical/ deficit based view of disability (Vlachou, 1997). Therefore before inclusive practice can fully be achieved attitudes need to change regarding the perception of children with disabilities (Mittler, 2006).

> 'The biggest handicap that children with special educational needs have is our underestimation of their abilities' (Mittler, 2006, p.105).

Consequently, before inclusion is going to be achieved as outlined in government documentation, attitudes need to change.

With the current emphasis on inclusive education, special schools are changing. It has been proposed that special schools operate an outreach service and become key learning centres (DfES, 2004). Ellie's local MLD school is a key learning centre and operates a successful outreach service. Lead teachers in the school visit neighbouring mainstream schools and offer advice on differentiation, IEP targets and assessment. However, as the MLD school is the only key learning centre in the local community, the service is overstretched so often works at a reactive rather than at a preventative level. Thus, if mainstream schools are going to become increasingly inclusive, it would be benefical for more key learning centres to be available to support school staff. In addition, as the school EP I found it an excellent way to gain advice when working with Ellie. I was able to involve the MLD with assessing Ellie's progress and a teacher gave training on P scales to the SENCo at Ellie's school.

Whilst I found advice from the special school useful and worthwhile, it also created new difficulties. In a consultation meeting with the SENCo after an outreach visit, he was

pleased with the support, but still felt that the school was containing the "problem". He held the view that because Ellie needed to be assessed by P scales and that he needed to borrow resources from the key learning centre to meet her needs, this meant that Ellie needed to attend a special school. The SENCo viewed special needs from a medical perspective and I worked with him, in depth, to help him see things from a different perspective. I feel external agencies can play an important role in working on a multi agency level with outreach staff to provide support for children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Hopefully, this will promote a more inclusive approach when educating children with difficulties.

In a report written by Mary Warnock, entitled 'Special Educational Needs: A' New Look' (2005) has developed a fresh debate around inclusion. In Warnock's pamphlet she argues that the idea of inclusion should be rethought. She suggests that Statements of SEN should be passports to specialist schools, and serve no other purpose. In her vision there would be no pupils with statements in mainstream schools. Warnock (2005) claims that specialist school provision is needed, and that children with special needs should only be catered for in mainstream schools when it can be supported from the school's own resources.

Consequently, Warnock's views have opened a new discussion around inclusion, and educationalists and parents may consider her arguments when considering an appropriate placment for a child. Whilst there are many arguments for an inclusive education, it is useful to emphasise that special schools do not necessarily 'imply a second system of education' (Jenkinson, 1997, p.91). Many parents do prefer to send their child to special school because of reasons such as: provision of services, cost

effectiveness, physical aspects of the environment, curriculum, student-staff ratios and social aspects (Jenkinson, 1997).

As a society are we too focused on rights- a child's right to attend a mainstream school rather than considering the benefits of specialist provision? Are parents too quick to dismiss the advantages of a special school because they feel that their child should be in a mainstream school? Ellie's Mum said that she didn't want Ellie to be seen as being different from her sisters by going to a special school, she wanted her to be like her other children. In the future sections of this report I will consider further the issues surrounding inclusion such as: pedagogy, and pupil achievement.

4. Pedagogy- special teaching for special children?

Norwich et al. (2001) considers whether pupils with SEN need a distinct pedagogy. In reviewing studies they discussed the issues surrounding pupil uniqueness and differentiation (as in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). When evaluating research, Norwich et al. (2001) concludes there is a lack of evidence to support specific SEN pedagogies. Thus they suggest that:

> '…that there are common pedagogic principles which are relevant to the unique differences between all pupils, including those considered to be designated as having SEN' (Norwich et al., 2001, p.324).

In supporting this view, McIntyre (2003) suggests that good teaching is being skilled in differentiation for all pupils, not just those with SEN. However, Norwich et al. (2001) recognises that there needs to be more focused teaching for those with SEN. Whilst this does not mean that these pupils need a specific pedagogy they do require 'more intense and specific teaching' (Norwich et al., 2001, p. 325).

The notion of more focused teaching could be interpretated as the teacher having an awareness of the child's preferred learning style e.g. visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. Educationalists such as Smith (2003) suggest that each child has a preferred learning style and it is good teaching to incorporate this factor in lesson plans. Furthermore, strategies such as a visual timetable and checking for understanding can benefit pupils who do not have SEN. However, when reviewing evidence on teaching strategies Norwich et al. (2001, p.324) concludes:

> '…the literature on teaching interventions for pupils with severe, profound or multiple learning difficulties provides some support for differences in emphases in pedagogical practice; for example towards a greater need to check that the pupil is in a ready state to learn'.

Hegarty (2001) argues that criteria for special education resembles guidance for effective general education. Thus, techniques such as the use of learning support assistants (LSA) (Norwich et al., 2001); applied behaviour analysis to reinforce desired reponses and elimination of undesired responses (Aubrey, 1995); and individual programmes based on Vvgotsky principles have been aimed at teachers in general, rather

than in special education literature (Fletcher-Campbell, 2005). When carrying out a literature review evaluating the issue of a specialist pedagogy for children with SEN; Lewis & Norwich (2007, p.57) concluded that:

> 'We recognised that the lack of evidence in our review to support SEN-specific teaching might be surprising as there is a persistent sense that special education means special teaching to many teachers and researchers'.

Another view regarding inclusive education draws on a developmental paradigm, in particular Vygotsky (Rodney, 2003). Rodney (2003) argues that all children regardless of disabilities need opportunities to explore the environment and be scaffolded in their learning. Rodney (2003, p.22) continues to state that if an:

> '…institution see it as their task to solve all problems or remove all obstacles in the child's developmental path, both physical and psychological ones, it will contribute to hampering actual personal development'.

Vygotsky (1978) viewed the process of learning as social, therefore children learn from other people in their environment e.g. teachers. Furthermore Vygotsky suggested that learning is more productive when children are stretched a little, but not too much. Therefore a child would be scaffolded by an adult to learn through the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky saw the difference between what the child can achieve and the level they can achieve with help as the zone of proximal distance.

Jenkinson (1997) reviewed research regarding educational outcomes for students in special versus mainstream. She has concluded that children placed in a special school achieved no better than those in mainstream education. She suggested that this may be due to more able students being in a mainstream class as well as there being a more competitive environment. Whereas in specialist provision there is a greater emphasis on personal development and growth (Jenkinson, 1997). Therefore, it could be argued that a child would be stretched more in a mainstream environment rather than in a specialist provision.

This is an interesting perspective. In Ellie's case a reason why her mother wants for her daughter to remain in mainstream is that she feels that she would be more stretched. She felt that Ellie did not have the same level of need as other children in a special school, so therefore thought Ellie would fall further behind. Her mother also spoke about how she felt Ellie would have a richer curriculum in a mainstream environment, which she felt would help Ellie make progress in a range of areas. Her mother also mentioned that while the local special school was a school for children moderate learning difficulties, it was admitting a high number of children with autism. Thus, as Ellie did not have a diagnosis of autism and her difficulties were in the areas of gross motor and learning she questioned whether the range of abilities in a class at the special school were any different to that in a mainstream class.

According to Vygotsky (1978), children learn from social interaction in their environment. Therefore whilst the local special school would have a higher staff ratio and more resources it may not be able to provide Ellie with opportunities to develop her social skills. In addition, if Ellie continues to be educated in mainstream education, it

provides an opportunity for children without SEN to develop their social skills through interaction. Jenkinson (1997) claims that children without SEN develop empathy and an awareness of different disabilities by being educated with children who have SEN. Rix (2003) suggests that children with SEN should be educated at their local school and accepted in the community instead of having to attend a special school in another area. A range of people make up a community and it could be argued that a school should reflect this. Hopefully, by doing this, children become more proficient at interacting socially with children who have a range of disabilities.

When considering different types of provision, it is important to analyse the research arround inclusion and pupil achievement. Therefore in the next section of this report I will discuss research that has focused on how inclusion impacts on the achievements of pupils with SEN.

5. The relationship between inclusion and pupil achievement

As discussed earlier in this report, recent government policy has placed a greater emphasis on inclusive practice. Therefore, it is useful to examine to what extent is the development of inclusive practice evidence based? Research studies around inclusive education have proven to be problematic (Lindsay, 2003, Graham, 2005). Firstly, attaining randomization and control group comparison is difficult in educational research (Lindsay, 2007). Furthermore, it has been suggested that research has focused too often on outcomes rather than the processes of success (Lindsay, 2007).

However, evidence examining the benefits of inclusion have suggested that children with learning difficulties, being educated in an inclusive classroom, achieved higher grades and had a better attendance record compared to children, with learning difficulties, being taught in a separate special educational needs class (Rea et al., 2002). Rea et al. (2002) carried out a study where they measured the educational attainment of all students with learning difficulties in the 8th grade of two middle schools. In the inclusive school, 36 children who had learning difficulties were educated in a mixed ability class with additional teaching support. Conversely, 22 children received special educational needs support in a "pullout" class in their school.

At the end of the 8th grade, Rea et al. (2002) compared the end of year attainments for all pupils in four areas: language, mathematics, science and social studies. The researchers found that students educated in the inclusive classroom achieved higher grades than children educated in a "pullout" class. For instance, 88% of pupils in the inclusive school achieved grade C or above in science compared to 59% of pupils supported in the "pullout" class.

On further examination of Rea et al. (2002) study it is useful to emphasise that while students ability was compared using IQ tests, no comparsions were made regarding the quality of educational provision between the two middle schools. It is not know to what extent the children were supported. It would have been useful to know the child to teacher ratio, quality of differentiation and educational resources to aid learning in each class. Therefore a number of variables could have influenced the outcomes of this study.

Furthermore, it is useful to note that Rea et al. (2002) compared the outcomes of children with learning difficulties in different types of provision in a mainstream school..

A criticism of Rea et al. (2002) study is that a comparison between children in mainstream as opposed to specialist provision was not investigated. Specialist provision differs greatly to a mainstream school in terms of ethos, class sizes, range of SEN, staff to child ratio, and teacher expectations (Jenkinson, 1997). The importance of these factors need to be considered when evaluating research comparing pupil outcomes in different forms of provision.

Nevertheless, Rea et al. (2002) study provides the researcher with an opportunity to carry out an interesting follow up study investigating different service delivery models in the UK. Recently, a number of mainstream schools have opened with a resource based attached providing special educational needs support in a variety of areas: Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), physical difficulties (PD) and Speech and Language Therapy (SALT). This service delivery model provides a child with a specialised curriculum and an opportunity to interact with children without SEN (Jenkinson, 1997). Therefore, it would be useful to carry out further research investigating pupil attainment and social and emotional well being for children with SEN who attend a resource base in a mainstream school.

Whilst there has been research that has suggested that there are many benefits for children with SEN being educated in a mainstream school, other studies have argued that there can be negative outcomes for children with SEN having an inclusive education. Monchy et al. (2004) found that children with SEN, who had been educated in a mainstream school, were less likely to be accepted by their peers without SEN. Children without SEN were less likely to play with children who had SEN. Furthermore, their

research suggested that teachers were judged to have too positive a view of the children's social integration, and underestimated bullying incidents.

Other researchers such as Fox et al. (2004) have also been interested in examining the outcomes of children with a disability in mainstream school. Fox et al. (2004) carried out a study of 18 mainstream primary schools where a pupil with Down's Syndrome was educated. They looked specifically at how support for Down's Syndrome was managed and the attitudes of all staff, parents and pupils. Fox et al. (2004) observed the child with Down syndrome in class, and interviewed key members of staff: Head teacher, class teacher, teaching assistant (TA), SENCo, and parents. The researchers also carried out group discussions with pupils who were in the same class as the child with Down's syndrome.

The findings of Fox et al. (2004) research indicated that the relationship between the TA and class teacher was very important. Successful relationships were when the teacher and TA's shared ideas and trusted each other's judgements. The attitudes of the teachers' were positive, but they had a tendency to be over protective of the child with Down syndrome. The teachers' also believed that the presence of the child with Down's syndrome made the other children more caring. The other children in the class had positive attitudes with no sign of rejection or hostility, but were aware of the problems faced by the pupil with Down syndrome. Finally, although the pupils' did not object to having the child with Down syndrome in the classroom, the child was not a child whom one would be likely to befriend.

These findings suggest that having children with a range of disabilities in class can be a positive experience for the other children in the classroom, as Fox et al. (2004)

research suggests that children became more caring. When reflecting on my work with Ellie, I noticed the other children helped her in the class. For instance, Ellie has difficulty with gross motor skills and I observed a child fetching equipment to her from another table so she didn't have to get up. In addition, as Ellie has learning difficulties a child read and explained a worksheet to her. Whilst she appeared to have good relationships with other pupils' I noticed she played with her two sisters' at breaktime. Her two siblings had other friends, but Ellie relied on her sisters when wanting to play a game.

In attempting to address whether schools who admit a high proportion of children with SEN performed worse in Key Stage assessments than non inclusive schools Farrell et al. (2005) carried out a large scale research study analysing data on over 500,000 pupils at each key stage. This project was commissioned by the DfES. The National Pupil Data Base (NPD) includes data for all pupils at KS1, 2, 3 and 4. The NPD contains information on many variables such as: attainments, SEN status, ethnicity and social class. By using this data, Farrell et al. (2005) carried out a series of case studies of 12 high and 4 moderately achieving inclusive schools. The researchers related school inclusivity to the number of pupils with SEN. They also investigated LA inclusivity and pupil attainment at all key stages.

The main findings of Farrell et al. (2005) study showed that there was no association between LA inclusivity and pupil attainment. However, the researchers found a small negative association between inclusivity and attainment. There may be alternative explanations to explain the small negative association; for instance, it might be the case that the schools which admitted large numbers of SEN pupils may have other characteristics which lower attainment such as socio economic factors. Indeed, Lindsay

(2007) argues that social disadvantage is a factor which has found to be associated with higher levels of SEN.

I also feel that a weakness of Farrell et al. (2005) study was that the NPD does not include data on categories of SEN and therefore it was not possible to explore the differential impact of including different groups of pupils with achievement in schools. Therefore, a school that was categorised as having a high number of SEN pupils may infact have a large number of children who are at School Action, but need limited support. Alternatively a school that was defined by the research as moderately inclusive may have a small number of children with SEN, but these children could have severe and complex needs. I feel that this is an important issue which needs to be addressed in future research. Thus a future study could examine whether there is a link between pupil attainment and schools which admit children with severe and complex needs. I also feel, that if this research study was replicated, variables such as ethnicity and social class need to be carefully considered in the design of the investigation.

Additional weaknesses in the design of Farrell et al.'s (2005) research is that they used the NPD to obtain data about the children. Florian et al. (2004) have argued that there are clear weaknessess in Farrell et al. 's (2005) research. For instance, it was suggested that in 2002 when the data was set up 10% of pupils were assigned to the wrong National Curriculum Level (Florian et al. 2004). It is useful to note that Farrell's et al. (2005) research, used data that was obtained in 2002. Moreover, in 2002 pupils that were working below level 1 of the National Curriculum levels were not included in the population (Florian et al., 2004). Thus this information does question the validity of Farrell et al. (2004) study.

In concluding their research Farrell et al. (2005) suggested that there was nothing in their findings to suggest that an organisation's commitment to including children with SEN is likely to have an impact on overall levels of attainment. However, I feel that inclusion is more complex that whether a school admits a moderate or high number of children with SEN. It is how children are included in the daily life of that school. Thus a school's commitment to inclusion goes beyond to what proportion of children with SEN are admitted, but also relates to teacher's attitudes and staff culture can determine how inclusive a school is. The attitudes of school staff can have a significant impact on the extent the pupil is included (Vlachou, 1997, Rix, 2003). Indeed in Ellie's school the Deputy Head/ SENCo felt that she would be better placed in a special school. As the school EP I have noticed that part of the school culture is that children with different forms of disabilities should be educated in a specialist provision. There is a strong sense from school that they are not sufficiently equipped to deal with the complexities of educating children with complex needs. Indeed although Ellie's school had a high proportion of children with SEN, very few have complex needs. When I spoke to school staff about Elie's needs they appeared to hold a medical model of SEN (Hornby, 2001). In the next section of this report I will discuss how values can have an impact on how inclusive a school is, and I will examine the medical and social models of disability.

6. Medical and Social Models of Disability

The medical model of disability is one that constructs disability:

> '…as a problem to be solved or contained within procedures tried and tested' (Clough, 2006, p.10).

It can be argued that some EPs follow this model of practice because many use IQ tests which focus on global scores of IQ. By using an IQ test the EP can report to the class teacher weaknesses as well as strengths. This can then make the teacher feel that the problem is "within child" (Clough, 2006, Hornby, 2001). Ability scores from the BAS II may be presented to the teacher as being fixed and therefore a representation of what they are not able to do. Farrell (2004, p.6) suggests:

> '…psychologists argue that IQ is a relatively stable entity and that as a result it will not change a great deal. Therefore the child will continue to have problems in learning throughout his or her life, no matter what we as parents or teachers try to do to help. It is easy to see, therefore, how this within person or medical model of human development can lead us to focus on the individual'.

In Ellie's case, it was evident that the SENCo held a medical model of disability. In a review meeting he concluded that it did not matter what support Ellie was given in school, she would still not make progress. He felt that Ellie's ability was fixed and he

could only "contain" her learning at a mainstream school. On a number of occasions he argued that Ellie would be better placed at a special school because they are equipped with specialised resources, and have a lower staff to child ratio. Therefore, from a medical perspective, he felt that Ellie would be better educated in a special school.

In reflection, it is useful to consider why the SENCo held a medical viewpoint of disability? It could have been the case that the SENCo's past experience with EPs was that they carried out psychometric tests so each child had a profile of their strengths and weaknesses. However, the SENCo may have wanted to transfer his own helplessness onto Ellie. At an unconscious level he may have been feeling he did not know how to meet Ellie's complex needs at school so it was safer to view her lack of progress as being due to within child factors. Weiss (2002) argues that reactions of adults to children are rarely considered among factors influencing classroom dynamics. He states that if a pupil is having difficulties with learning, the possibility that the teacher has misunderstood the situation or contributed to the youngster's problems in any way are typically ignored. Thus, as the school EP working with the SENCo to meet Ellie's needs I considered this possibility, so I suggested it would be useful for an outreach worker at the local MLD school to provide advice on programmes, assessment, P levels, and ways to support Ellie in school.

An alternative to the medical view of disability is the social model. The social model is a powerful model as it allows people with disabilities to change the way they think about themselves and their place in the world.

> '…for the disability movement the social model provides a way of thinking about disability that accords with our experience of being disabled people-that disability is caused by the attitudinal physical and communication barriers imposed on us, rather than the effects of our impairments' (Light, 2003, p.134).

The social model also gives people an opportunity to redefine their views on how they perceive disability.

When considering the social model in an educational context, it refers to the environment being a barrier to learning, not the child. Therefore a child may not be making progress for a variety of reasons such as the:

- Lesson pace being too fast;
- a lack of resources such as laptops;
- not enough lifts;
- young children being expected to sit for long periods;
- teachers not having the relevant skills and knowledge about different forms of disabilities; and
- teachers giving complicated instructions.

In constrast to a medical perspective, the social model, in an educational context, argues that disability is caused by the ecology of the school classroom. This model is an optimistic one that fits in with the governments inclusion agenda.

When reflecting on the case I have been involved with I applied a social model when thinking about about how I could promote more inclusive practice in the school. After I observed Ellie I negotiated interventions that I hoped would change the ecology of the school classroom (Ayres et al. 2005). I worked alongside the SENCo and classteacher in revising new targets on Ellie's IEP. I also suggested strategies that could be used to help Ellie access the curriculum and manage her behaviours. Amongst the techniques I suggested were a behaviour chart in which rewards and consequences were consistantly used. These techniques are not unique to Ellie because she has SEN. However, the class teacher said she didn't try a behaviour chart with Ellie "because it wouldn't work with her". This belief supports the view held by Lewis et al. (2007) that some teacher's think that special teaching is needed for children with SEN, when really it is good teaching.

By drawing on a social model of disability, an EP can apply a range of psychological paradigms when making an assessment. Although a medical model would allow an EP to test a number of hypotheses they would be within child explanations. Alternatively, a social model enables the EP to consider various possibilities that may be affecting behaviour and/or learning, such as the environment. When working with Ellie I applied a developmental paradigm; in particular I used Vygotsky's theory of child development. I became interested in how the teacher could scaffold Ellie's learning through the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). In order to do this I used Dynamic Assessment (Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000).

Dynamic Assessment analyses the strategies and cognitive skills used by the pupil in problem solving. This assessment method examines the processes (rather than the products and outcomes) of learning in order to understand how the child learns. In

contrast to standardised assessment, the assessor is able to intervene with the child in order to suggest the next steps in learning and to suggest needs related to becoming a successful and independent learner (Elliot, 2003).

After completing tasks from Dynamic Assessment I fedback to the SENCo how Ellie approached mediation and the various tasks. Useful information was ascertained through the assessments that could be used by the teacher to scaffold Ellie's learning. In the 16 word memory test, I read 16 words to Ellie and asked her to remember as many words as possible. The words were equally divided into four categories: clothing, vegetables, animals and stationery. Ellie remembered more information when she visualised the information as well as hearing the words. Also during the 16 word memory test Ellie gave up to quickly and I had to encourage her to continue. Therefore, I suggested to the SENCo that it may be useful to break up work into small parts e.g. limited maths problems on a worksheet.

When I fedback results from dynamic assessments and negotiated strategies, after observing Ellie in class, I found that the SENCo became defensive and insisted that he had "tried everything" and still felt that Ellie needed to go to a special school to make any progress. However, reluctantly he said he would implement the negotiated strategies, but wished to discuss Ellie's progress further with her family. A few weeks later a meeting was set up to review Ellie's progress. Her Mother and Grandmother were present as well as the SENCo and class teacher. I found as the school EP I had an important role during this meeting. Ellie's Mother had told me that she felt pressurised by the SENCo with his persistence about Ellie needing to continue her education in a specialist provision. Therefore, I became a mediator during this meeting, I tried to equalise the power between

the school and family. In the next section of this report I will discuss my role as the mediator in this case as well as discussing how EP's can promote inclusive practice. In particular I will be discussing how EP's can promote anti-oppressive practice.

7. Promoting Anti-Oppressive Practice.

When working with Ellie and her school and family, I found that an important part of my role was to be a mediator between the SENCo and Ellie's family. In the professional guidelines for Educational Psychologists written by the British Psychological Society (BPS) it states that EPs:

> '…have the responsibility to redress the potential power imbalance by involving clients fully in decision making' (BPS, 2002, p.5).

Thus, by drawing on the BPS (2002) guidelines I felt it was important to ensure that Ellie's family was aware that according to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (OPSI, 2001) if they wanted Ellie to remain in mainstream education everything should be done to provide it. Before I explained this to Ellie's Mother and Grandmother they both thought that Ellie's current school could decide to transfer her to a specialist provision. Therefore I feel that I had an important role in explaining the special educational needs process. This had a positive effect as Ellie's family appeared less anxious as they now were aware that they were able to make a decision about whether they wanted Ellie to remain in mainstream education.

In Ellie's case I felt that I had an important role in equalising the power between the SENCo and Ellie's famiy. According to Dalrymple and Burke (2006) anti oppressive practice requires an empowering approach which aims to overcome barriers so that people can take control of their own lives. Therefore, when working with Ellie's family I tried to empower them so that they felt confident to become involved in the decision making process. Wolfendale (1993) suggests that empowerment can come through knowledge of SEN procedures. I felt that it was important that Ellie's Mother could ask me any questions about SEN, so that she felt empowered to make a decision. Dalrymple et al. (2006) also suggest that a key issue in empowerment is awareness, as knowledge mobilises change.

Fook (2002) also claims that power operates at different levels. This was apparent in Ellie's case as the SENCo felt pressurised by the Head teacher to reduce the SEN budget. Whilst Ellie's Mother and I felt pressurised by the SENCo to agree with him regarding Ellie's future education. The class teacher also said she felt stressed about meeting Ellie needs. In order to empower the school I contacted the local MLD school to enquire about the various support on offer. Therefore power was an issue that I needed to be aware of throughout working on this case.

Dalrymple et al. (2006) argues that mediation and conflict resolution skills are an important aspect of anti oppressive practice. In the annual review meeting I mediated between school and family and made sure that Ellie's Mother felt comfortable enough to contribute to the discussion about how she was feeling. Being an effective mediator is a skill which the EP can make a positive difference in challenging meetings.

> ‘Effective mediators encourage active participation of all parties, listen carefully to the respective interests and feelings of all the parties, and generate an atmosphere of openess’ (Gersch et al., 2003, p.161).

It is important to emphasise that EPs are also skilled at recognising the role of children as active participants in their education (Beveridge, 2005). When working individually with Ellie I elicited her views about where she would like to go to school and whether she was happy. She told me that she liked being in her current school because she was near her sisters. She had a clear understanding of what happy was, and said that she liked going to school. Therefore as well as being a mediator, equalising the power and providing information EPs can obtain views from the child. I feel that it is oppressive not asking a child where they would like to be educated and to involve them in the decision making process. Children with a range of disabilites can express their views. Frederickinson and Cline (2006) argue that a variety of methods can be adopted to empower children with SEN to become involved in the decision making process. It has been suggested that drawings, role play or even the Widgit symbols programme can be used to asecertain the views of children who find it difficult to communicate verbally (Frederickinson et al., 2006).

Another important aspect of anti oppressive practice is critical reflection and reflexivity (Healy, 2005, Beckett, 2005).

> '…this involves a continual consideration of self in practice in order to understand how our values and our biographies impact on our practice relationships' (Dalrymple et al., 2005, p.20)

During each consultation I had with either the SENCo or Ellie, or her family I reflected on the process and examined how my own value system could have had an impact on my practice.

Finally, a useful point to discuss is that while anti oppressive practice involves the EP working collaboratively with all parties in the decision making process it is useful to consider whether this has has undermined the EPs contribution to the 'establishment and operation of sound inclusive practices' (Elliot, 2007, p.7). However, I feel that an effective EP is a reflective practitioner and one that considers their own practice and how they can make a positive impact on the outcomes for a child. This may involve collaborative consulation or giving advice on techniques or strategies, but all promote sound inclusive practice.

There are a number of ways EPs can promote inclusive practice. As previously discussed EPs can apply a social model instead of a medical model of disability. As Farrell (2004, p.10) suggests:

> 'Through working within the social model, drawing on theories from organisational and social psychology SPs can promote policy and practice on inclusion'.

Therefore in addition to working with individual children and suggesting strategies that scaffold the child's learning; an EP can work with the school as an organisation in promoting inclusive practice. This can be done through staff training about the benefits of inclusion as well as ways of developing inclusive practice in the classroom.

In this section of my report I have discussed the ways I contributed to promoting inclusive practice when working with Ellie and her school and family. When I spoke to Ellie's family after the meeting they told me they were grateful in having someone there who "made sure I could say how I felt." I feel that one of the unique roles EPs can have is to promote anti oppressive practice and make sure that all parties are part of the decision making process, particularly children.

8. Conclusion

Throughout the course of this report I have discussed a number of issues surrounding inclusion. I have had the opportunity to work with Ellie who has physical and learning difficulties. I became involved in working with Ellie, her school and family after the SENCo reported that the school could not meet her needs. The SENCo felt her needs would be better met in a special school, but Ellie's family disagreed. Consequently this case has helped me reflect on what inclusive education is and whether specialist pedagogy is required for children with SEN.

According to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) all children have the right to be educated in a regular school which should meet their needs. Whilst there has been an emphasis placed on the right of a child to have an inclusive education, I feel that

inclusion goes beyond whether a child is educated in a mainstream or a special school, but how they are included in the day to day activities of that school (Farrell et al., 2002). I noticed that although Ellie was attending a mainstream school it did not appear as if she was receiving an inclusive education. When I observed Ellie in class her work wasn't differentiated and she did not join in any extra curricular activities.

The SENCo at Ellie's school appeared to hold a medical view of disability, as he believed Ellie would not make any progress despite any future interventions. Whether the SENCo's value system was shaped by an unconscious desire to transfer his helplessness on to Ellie (Weiss, 2002), or that he felt that children with SEN needed to be taught by a distinct pedagogy is not know, but his value system had an impact on his attitude towards Ellie's future education.

The evidence about whether children with SEN need a distinct pedagogy has been scrutinized by Norwich et al. (2001). They felt that there was a lack of evidence to support this view. Interestingly, McIntyre (2003) suggests that good teaching is being skilled in differentiation for all pupils, not just those with SEN. Although I agree with this viewpoint, I still feel that a teacher's value system can influence how they teach children with SEN. A teacher may be skilled in differentiating work, but if they feel that disability is within child they will not be interested in the ecology of the classroom.

During my work with Ellie the issue I have reflected on the role of the EP in promoting inclusive practice. In this report I have highlighted a number of ways that EPs can support schools. As EPs are increasingly engaging in evidence based practice, research could be conducted which investigates the ways EPs can have a positive impact on inclusive practice. For instance, what do parents/ carers find most helpful in

supporting them? It would also be interesting to examine in schools where the EPs has worked at a systemic level and whether this has had an impact on attitudes, SEN attainment and the number of children being transferred to a specialist provision.

Another way forward is for EPs to encourage mainstream schools to link with special schools for outreach advice. Currently, Ellie is continuing her education in a mainstream provision and the school are being supported in meeting her needs by the local MLD school. Initially the SENCo resisted the support offered, but he has recently agreed to staff training and has adopted ideas suggested. Therefore, whilst inclusion is an emotive and contentious issue, I feel that EPs can make an important contribution in promoting inclusive practice.

8,005 words.

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CHAPTER 4: PPR3

An evaluation of a peer mediation service in a primary school

1. Abstract

Tyrell (2002, p.18) argues that peer mediation:

'…is about children helping each other to sort out their conflicts'.

Therefore, peer mediation is a process in which disputants are encouraged to listen to one another and come up with their own solutions. When peer mediation schemes have been evaluated, the results have been highly positive. Lawrence (2000) has claimed that peer mediation schemes help to increase children's self esteem. However, the long term benefits of setting up peer mediation schemes have rarely been researched.

The following report is an evaluation of a peer mediation scheme set up in a primary school. As part of the evaluation process a questionnaire was distributed to all the children in the school; results showed that 89% of children, who had used the service, felt that their problems had been resolved. Furthermore, 97% of children reported that they would use the service again. Positive comments were also voiced by school staff, in particular Key Stage 1 teachers, who reported that when children came back to class after playtime, they are now able to get on with teaching instead of spending twenty minutes dealing with minor squabbles. Mediators also remarked that they were better at listening, solving problems and were more confident.

2. Introduction

During a planning meeting in October 2007 the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and Head teacher of a primary school enquired whether they could use part of their allocated Educational Psychologist (EP) time to help the school set up a peer mediation service. The primary school has a total of 462 children on roll and pupils are from a wide variety of socio economic backgrounds. Stacey and Robinson (2006, p.7) state that:

> 'Mediation is a structured process in which a neutral third party assists voluntary participants in resolving their dispute'.

Therefore, in school based peer mediation, the mediators trying to help resolve the conflict are peers, other students (Tyrrell, 2002).

The idea of setting up a peer mediation service was part of the Head teacher's initiative of promoting emotional literacy in school. As part of the school's development plan the Head teacher was committed to improve the personal well being of pupils. According to Goleman (2005) there are five components to emotional literacy: self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The head teacher felt that a peer mediation service would help to promote the five areas in school.

The Head teacher had recently been appointed and was committed in changing the culture and ethos of the school. Consequently, the primary social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) package was implemented as well as an introduction of a school

council, quiet corners on the playground and talk time sessions. Talk time sessions consisted of twice weekly drop in sessions with a teacher where children could talk about their problems. Antitode (2005, p.2) argues that in order to develop an emotionally literate school it needs to:

> '…permeate what goes on in the staffroom, the classroom, the school's corridors and its playgrounds, as well as affecting how the school interacts with the wider community'.

Thus, an introduction of a peer mediation service was part of the school's overall development plan to become an emotionally literate school.

In guiding my thinking whilst working on this project I used a framework referred to as the RADIO model (Research and Development in Organisations) (Timmins et al., 2003). I found the framework a useful resource when negotiating roles, agreeing the focus of the project, and action planning in a research context. There were twelve phases of the RADIO model (see Appendix 1). The RADIO model has been used successfully as a framework to help guide thinking when negotiating work in schools (Timmins et al. 2006).

I felt that the RADIO model was a particularly useful framework to adopt in this project as I was undertaking a piece of action research jointly with the school. The RADIO model takes the researcher through stages of negotiating, carrying out the action and evaluating the process. Tyrell (2002) argues that action research is an appropriate method of research design for a peer mediation project. Cohen et al. (2006) discusses the

principles behind action research: planning, action, observation and reflection. In the peer mediation project the school identified the problem, which was that there were an increasing number of reported incidents of conflict between pupils. The Head teacher also wanted to promote an emotionally literate school. After the peer mediation scheme was implemented the school evaluated and reflected on the process. Later in this report, I will reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of using action research for this piece of development work, as well as considering the benefits of adopting the RADIO model to guide my thinking during this process.

Throughout this practice report I will evaluate research that has been carried out analysing the success of peer mediation schemes before discussing the current project. When evaluating this peer mediation project I will reflect on the practical and ethical issues of implementing a peer mediation project as well as considering the future of the scheme in school. Finally, when concluding this report I will consider how the school can improve the peer mediation service in the future.

3. Research

Peer mediation schemes initially started in the United States of America (Murad, 2006, Cremin 2007). Cohen (2005) argues that peer mediation is used across America as a way to resolve pupil conflict. Through his extensive experience Cohen (2005) suggests that there are numerous benefits of implementing this approach as it is a preventative intervention that empowers students to resolve conflict. From the late 1980s, peer mediation schemes began to spread to Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Cremin,

2007). Tyrell (2002) claims that in the 1990s the number of peer mediation projects being introduced in schools in the United Kingdom has significantly increased. However, currently there is no available evidence which states how many schools started then abandoned peer mediation projects and how many schools have found it successful (Murad, 2006).

Before evaluating research that has been carried out investigating the outcomes of setting up a peer mediation project, it is useful to consider why peer mediation projects are useful? Cowie and Wallace (2006) argue that small disagreements which may seem insignificant to a teacher, are often perceived differently by a child. Tyrell (2002) suggests that common disputes are associated with falling out with friends and being excluded from friendship groups. Tyrell (2002, p.28) notes that:

> 'Mediation can help stop an ordinary situation before it builds up into bullying'.

Therefore, Tyrell (2002) suggests that mediation provides children with an opportunity to have problems resolved before they escalate into something bigger. However, Murad (2006) and Cremin (2002) argue that girls are more likely to access the service than boys, so maybe other forms of anti-bullying measures are more appropriate for boys.

Nevertheless, studies investigating the overall impact of peer mediation services have been encouraging. Cremin (2000) evaluated the benefits of implementing peer mediation in three primary schools. All three schools had received training, but only one school decided to set up a peer mediation service. Results showed that the school who had set up the service reported a reduction in bullying incidents as well as developing

more negative attitudes towards bullying. After an initial dip, pupil self esteem was reported to have improved. In addition children with emotional and behavioural problems also benefited, with teachers stating that there was a general reduction in disaffection and aggressive behaviour. Finally, Cremin (2000) argued that schools who had not implemented the peer mediation service did not report any changes in the number of reported bullying incidents.

However, whilst Cremin (2000) suggests that there are indeed benefits of implementing a peer mediation service, the researcher should be cautiously optimistic when considering these findings. It is not known what the long term benefits of using a peer mediation service was over time, and whether the service was sustained. It is also useful to note that the teachers worked hard in setting up the service so may not have been objective when filling in the questionnaire. For instance the peer mediation co-ordinator may have been focusing on the positive aspects of the service because she wanted it to work. It is also not know if any other anti-bullying projects had been introduced in school which may have influenced the number of reported bullying incidents. Finally, in Cremin's (2000) research only Year 5 pupils were originally trained and I feel in future research it would be advantageous to train pupils of various ages to investigate the wider benefits and/ or limitations of this approach.

Nevertheless, further studies have suggested that peer mediation schemes can improve children's self esteem (Lawrence, 2000) and relationships (Tyrell, 2002) as well as giving them a greater sense of responsibility (Bitel and Rolls, 2000). Lawrence (2000) evaluated a peer mediation service in an inner city school in the UK. The peer mediators had a series of training sessions before they tried to help other children solve problems.

After a year had passed a questionnaire was given to children, as well as to teachers. Sixty eight percent of pupils thought that mediation was useful to help them solve their problems. Furthermore, teachers also noted that pupils had become more confident, could empathise with their peers more and spent less time dealing with conflicts. Lawrence (2000) also asserted that whilst peer mediation does not cure bullying it increases children's self esteem in order to deal with bullying. As in the case of Cremin's (2000) research the long term outcomes of peer mediation was not evaluated.

In a follow up study carried out by Cremin (2007) findings also showed that the peer mediation service was valued by children in school. When asking mediators, Cremin (2007) found that the majority of children thought that their school had become a friendlier and happier place. In concluding Cremin (2007, p.41) states that:

> '…mediators have a clear understanding of mediation as part of a whole-school approach towards social and emotional well being. These successful schools have thus been able to transmit their core values to the mediators.

Although there is research which states the numerous advantages of implementing a peer mediation service, it is useful to note that this evidence is often written by people involved in supporting schools to introduce peer mediation schemes. Therefore, it could be argued that it is unsurprising that there is little attention given to disadvantages. In addition, when positive outcomes have been obtained they are often related to self esteem or in a reduction of bullying incidents. Peer mediation has not been linked to fewer exclusions, higher academic achievement and increased attendance. Furthermore, there is

rarely a control group used in peer mediation programmes to verify whether changes have come about because of peer mediation (Tyrell, 2002).

A major criticism of peer mediation services is that this method does not provide equal benefits to all pupils (Clements and Clements, 2000). The children who benefit the most are children who are trained as mediators. Clements and Clements (2000) suggest that all pupils should benefit from problem solving as this skill would be useful to all the children.

A further criticism of peer mediation systems are that they place too much responsibility on children to solve disputes when it should be the teacher who resolves conflicts between pupils (Baginsky, 2004). However, in responding to this argument Tyrell (2002) claims that when a teacher attempts to solve a dispute between pupils, they have the control to apportion blame and issue sanctions. However during peer mediation the mediator does not attribute blame, but helps their peers to come to a resolution.

Another difficulty when evaluating peer mediation schemes is that schools are reluctant to record the number of mediations and monitor the mediation process (Bitel and Roberts, 2003). Setting up, monitoring and supporting the mediator's takes up a significant amount of time. Often the peer mediator co-ordinator is a class teacher so will need to manage a full time class as well as taking on this additional responsibility. Therefore, the sustainability of peer mediation projects can become difficult because an adult needs to take the continued overall responsibility of the project. In addition new children need to be trained every year when the older children move to secondary school. Therefore, a teacher needs the time to train the children and organise this on a yearly basis.

Another barrier to the sustainability of a peer mediation project is that children who are the mediators need to be committed. The majority of research has not stated how many children drop out of the scheme and whether the success is sustained over time. Therefore, whilst research carried out on peer mediation has been positive (Tyrell, 2002) there is a lack of evidence evaluating the long term impact after a period of time. In order to promote the use of this technique in helping to improve the social and emotional well being of children, I feel that it is important longitudinal research is carried out in this area.

Cremin (2007) and Sellman (2002) both suggest that a key factor in establishing whether a peer mediation project is sustained over time is the school culture. Murad (2006) suggests that peer mediation thrives in an atmosphere of positive relationships. Stacey et al. (2006) argue that if respect, open communication and readiness to work through problems are not embedded in the school culture, then a peer mediation scheme will not be successful. If school culture does have an impact on the success of a peer mediation service, then it is important that work is undertaken at a systemic level before an introduction of a peer mediation scheme is discussed.

Organisational culture has been described as:

> '…the collection of relatively uniform and enduring values, beliefs, customs traditions and practices that are shared by an organization's members, learned by new recruits, and transmitted from one generation of employees to the next' (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004, p.643).

Therefore, cultural norms and expectations about what is expected can have a significant impact on a school's ethos. Bell (1997) suggests that a collective set of values can help to secure a successful organisation. Therefore if teachers in a school work collectively on tasks instead of individually then it helps to create a co-operative school ethos. These values will be transferred to children so that they are encouraged to share and problem solve with their peers.

The Head teacher can play an important role in developing a positive and caring school ethos. This can be done by making the staff feel rewarded and appreciated and involved in decision making. According to Cremin (2007), Sellman (2002) and Stacey et al. (2006) the school needs to be a place where there is mutual respect, co-operation, trust, support and positive relationships in order for a peer mediation service to be successful. Therefore, if the school culture is not supportive then it is advisable that an EP works at a systemic level to try and change the school culture. One way may be to develop peer support systems amongst teachers (Steel, 2001) before trying to introduce a peer mediation service for children.

Consequently, when reflecting on research carried out analysing the successful of peer mediation schemes in school, findings have shown to be positive. Studies have suggested that children become more confident and learn vital problem solving skills (Stacey et al. 2006). In addition, Cremin (2007, p.115) has suggested that peer mediation schemes help:

> '…pupils to develop an appreciation of their role and responsibilities within their family and wider community'.

Citizenship education has now become a part of the National Curriculum (Teachernet, 2008). In Key Stage 1 and 2, guidelines suggest children should have the appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to become responsible citizens. These skills are built on in Key Stage 3 and 4 when citizenship education becomes statutory. At this stage children are encouraged to develop skills of enquiry, communication and responsible action (Teachernet, 2008). Cremin (2007) suggests that peer mediation has much to offer in promoting the key skills in citizenship education. It could be argued that children build on a range of skills such as: listening, problem solving, communication and conflict resolution. These skills help children become responsible citizens in their community as well as in their school. However, whilst peer mediation promotes citizenship, children who benefit the most are the mediators. Therefore, in order for all children to benefit the whole of the school population would need to have the opportunity to access peer mediation training.

In concluding this section I have reviewed and evaluated research that suggests peer mediation systems provide positive outcomes for children. Cremin (2007) argues that peer mediation helps to reduce bullying and create a happier and friendly school for children. When reflecting on previous research I felt that it was important that the current project was part of a wider school initiative to promote positive relationships amongst children. Furthermore, I feel that it is important to train children from a range of year groups to ascertain the wider advantages and limitations of peer mediation. In the following section I will discuss the initial planning stage of this current project by examining the selection process and training of peer mediators. I will also consider the ethical and practical issues when setting up a peer mediation service.

4.1 Planning stage

After the initial planning meeting, a follow up meeting was arranged to identify roles and to discuss a number of issues such as: how the children were going to be nominated, how many pupils were going to be involved, the selection process, obtaining parental permission, and how the scheme was going to be introduced to the school (see Appendix 2 for the agenda of meeting). A key role that was negotiated was who was going to be the peer mediator co-ordinator in school (see Appendix 3 for details of role). A class teacher in the school offered to become the peer mediator coordinator. Gilhooley and Scheuch (2000) argue that in order for a peer mediation scheme to run smoothly it is essential for a coordinator to be identified in the early stages of the process.

4.2 Selection process

Tyrell (2002) describes that choosing which children will become peer mediators is one of the most difficult parts of the process. Ferrera (1996) suggests that in any selection process some people are rejected. Therefore, it could be argued that rejecting pupils who have volunteered is potentially demotivating and disaffecting (Baginsky, 2004). However, whilst an aim of peer mediation is inclusion (Cremin, 2007) not exclusion, it could be argued that in order to make the peer mediation process successful the children involved need to have certain skills (Murad, 2006). For instance, mediators need to exhibit high levels of trustworthiness, helpfulness, and a respect for individual differences (Murad, 2006).

Murad (2006) argues that one way to select peer mediators is for children to choose after engaging in a discussion about what personal qualities make a good peer mediator. When reflecting on this suggestion I feel that children may select their friends, or those children who are seen as being popular. An advantage of peer mediation is that is promotes a number of skills such as listening, empathy and problem solving (Stacey et al., 2006). Therefore, becoming a peer mediator may benefit children who are withdrawn, and those who are on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register for behaviour. Imman and Turner (2001) in an evaluation of a peer mediation scheme in a London borough concluded that children whose behaviour had been challenging prior to the scheme had been 'transformed' after being chosen as a mediator.

Bitel et al. (2000) suggest that it is important for peer mediators to be representative of the school population. They argue that often girls are chosen as peer mediators by teachers and that it is important to have an equal number of boys involved as it improves the credibility of the scheme. Furthermore in order to introduce the peer mediation as a whole school resource it was important to select children of all ages to take part in this project. An alternative way of selecting peer mediators has been proposed by Bitel et al. (2000) and Gilhooley et al. (2000) in the form of self nomination.

Cowie et al. (2006) argue that a combination of self, peer and adult evaluation of a child's suitability to become involved in a peer support role is the most suitable method of selection. They suggest that children who are considered unsuitable by their peers often come to the conclusion themselves after the training stage. Cowie et al. (2006, p.67) conclude by stating:

'…this method has the supreme advantage of increasing individuals' self awareness whilst doing no harm to pride or status within the group'.

When reflecting on previous research the peer mediation project group decided to select individuals by combining self and adult evaluation methods. Cowie et al. (2006) suggest that self nomination empowers young people to make their own choices and take responsibility for their service. Consequently, the project group produced a self nomination form that all pupils in school could fill in (see Appendix 4). Cremin (2007, p.36) argues:

'…that peer mediation needs the support of the whole school community in order to achieve success'.

Therefore, the key stakeholders in the peer mediation project carried out staff training, with teachers and teaching assistants, as well as a whole school assembly to inform pupils about the forthcoming peer mediation service. However, although all children were aware of the forthcoming peer mediation scheme, the stakeholders decided that only Year 4 and 5 children would be allowed to be mediators. Therefore the Year 4 and 5 teachers introduced and discussed the self nomination form before distributing it to their class. After children filled in the peer nomination form they were invited to attend a peer mediation training day. The training of peer mediators will be discussed in the following section.

4.3 Training of Peer Mediators

Tyrell (2002) argues that the training of peer mediators needs to be seen as part of a process rather than a programme. Thus the introduction of peer mediation schemes are only effective when the approach is part of the school culture. As mentioned previously, the introduction of a peer mediation service was part of the Head teacher's initiative of promoting emotional literacy in school.

Stacey et al. (2006) identify six core skills that need to be developed in prospective peer mediators. These skills are: speaking and listening, affirmation, co-operation, emotional literacy, conflict resolution and mediation. Lampen (1994) also emphasises the importance of training by doing. Thus, during the training process peer mediators should have the opportunity to practice their skills. Stacey et al. (2006) also cite role playing techniques as an effective way for peer mediators to develop skills such as listening and problem solving.

When reflecting on research I planned a morning of training with all the children who volunteered to become peer mediators (see Appendix 5). I introduced a number of activities which promoted key skills outlined by Stacey et al. (2006). The training process is seen as valuable irrespective of whether a peer mediation service is established (Tyrell, 2002). The peer mediator co-ordinator helped to deliver the training.

During the training sessions the peer mediator co-ordinator and I assessed key skills in all the prospective peer mediators (see Appendix 6). Children were then selected to become mediators. At this stage a permission letter was sent home for parents to sign for each mediator (see Appendix 7). In addition all parents received a leaflet explaining

the purpose of the peer mediation scheme. Children were paired and asked to mediate on either the reception, infant or junior playgrounds. Each child was asked to mediate once a week to ensure they could join in other playground activities and school based clubs (Cremin, 2002). The children who were not selected to be mediators still remained part of the peer mediation team. They were on the reserve rota to cover peer mediator sickness and carried out other work such as making posters and monitoring the peer mediation comment box. The peer mediation training was carried out in December 2007. The school was planning to implement the service in January 2008. In the following section I will discuss how the peer mediators were introduced to the school.

4.4 Introduction of the peer mediation service to the school

Cremin (2002, p.141) suggests that successful peer mediation services:

> '…have a high profile with displays, assemblies and clearly visible ways of identifying mediators in the playground'.

With these suggestions in mind the Head teacher introduced the peer mediators to the school and reinforced what the mediation service was for during an assembly in January 2008. The peer mediators also visited classrooms so that children could ask any further questions. To ensure the high profile of peer mediators in school the children wore tabards so they could be recognised easily. Furthermore, the school bought peer

mediation stops which were put in each playground. Any child who wanted to access the service was asked to stand at the stop so the peer mediators knew they wanted help.

An important feature of the school peer mediation service was that the co-ordinator informed the mediators that if they were asked to help solve a problem that they felt was too difficult they should tell her. Furthermore, the co-ordinator ran weekly drop in supervision sessions so that all the mediators had an opportunity to talk over any issues. Stacey et al. stress (2006, p.168):

> 'Although peer mediators need to have ownership of their service and make the decisions and choices about the way the service runs, they need regular adult support and supervision'.

Cowie et al. (2006) also stress the need for regular supervision meetings. However, there were difficulties in arranging a time which would be convenient to all mediators. Some mediators were involved in clubs and playground activities and were even being a mediator during the weekly supervision slot (times were changed weekly). It was also difficult to arrange a supervision time during lesson time as the co-ordinator was also a full time class teacher and other members of staff did not want pupils to regularly miss lessons. Other practical and ethical difficulties will be discussed in the following section.

5. Ethical and practical difficulties

An ethical issue which was addressed during the training stage was confidentiality. It is important that peer mediators were aware when it was acceptable to break confidentiality. Murad (2006, P.21) stresses the issue of disclosure needs to be addressed prior to the service being implemented.

> 'Children using the mediation service need to be aware that they cannot speak to the mediators in complete confidence, as there may be instances where adult involvement is necessary'.

Thus peer mediators need to understand when it is appropriate to tell an adult what an individual has told them during a mediation meeting. This issue was discussed during a peer mediation project meeting. As a way of supporting peer mediators with issues of disclosure it was decided children would be paired together. Furthermore, in the training session children were encouraged to use a script when individuals initially approached them for peer mediation. The script stated the occasions when the mediators would tell a teacher.

Another ethical issue regarding peer mediation is that children who are mediators may feel burdened with other children's issues (Tyrell, 2002). Some children may worry over other children's problems and this may create stress for the mediator. Although all the mediators were told to inform the co-ordinator if they were worried about anything, some may not do which could be very destructive. When discussing this issue the peer

mediator co-ordinator said she would regularly meet each child separately in order to counteract this.

On occasions, the practicalities of setting up and running a peer mediator service in school became difficult for the peer mediator co-ordinator. The peer mediation process is a time consuming task for the co-ordinator (Murad, 2006). During follow up meetings with the co-ordinator, she often spoke of the difficulties of carrying out debriefing sessions, organising the rota and monitoring the service in school alone. On reflection I feel that it would be appropriate for two members of staff to run a service as this would cover staff absences. Indeed in January the peer mediator co-ordinator was unwell and was absent from work for a week. As a result the children used the previous week's rota and there was not a point of contact for the children. Consequently, if I helped a school to set up a peer mediation service in future I would stress the importance of involving other members of staff in the process.

Another practical issue of running a peer mediation service is that it was unable to run during wet playtimes. Therefore, during wet playtimes the consistency of the service was lost. Problems were just as likely to occur in the classrooms as they would on the playground (Murad, 2006). Stacey et al. (2006) suggest that would be advisable to have an area in school for peer mediation. However, this was problematic as there was not any available space in school where peer mediation could take place. Therefore, during wet playtimes the peer mediation service was postponed.

Finally, when setting up a peer mediation service it is important to consider funding aspects (Gilhooley et al., 2000). During this project the Head teacher used money from the Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) budget to fund tabards and the peer

mediation stops. The school also used their allocated EP time to help them set up this process. Due to the school being a large primary, they had a high number of EP sessions. Therefore, in a smaller school a Head teacher may find it difficult to use their allocated EP time in this way. Consequently, if the school needed to fund help from an external source this may prove costly.

After the peer mediation service had been running for just over a term: January to May 2008, the school was interested in evaluating the impact of the scheme. During a consultation meeting with the peer mediation co-ordinator questionnaires were designed for children, mediators and members of staff. In the following section I will discuss the findings of the information obtained.

6.1 Evaluation

After the peer mediation service had been running for over a term, the key stakeholders said that they would like to evaluate the scheme so far. During a consultation they were interested in obtaining feedback about what worked and ways they could improve the service for the following academic year. Cohen (2005) argues that it is important to evaluate peer mediation schemes because the findings help to improve the service for the future by giving vital feedback about strengths and weakness of the approach.

Through negotiation, it was decided that the peer mediation scheme would be evaluated in four ways. Firstly, a questionnaire would be devised for all children in the school (Appendix 8). The stakeholders explained that they would ask class teachers to

introduce the questionnaire in class and explain to the children that they can post it in the peer mediation comment box. To ascertain the views of staff, the peer mediator co-ordinator and Head teacher said they would ask for feedback during a staff meeting. To elicit the views of the mediators the peer mediation co-ordinator said she would hold a meeting in order to ask them about their experiences. Finally, I planned to carry out a lunchtime observation to see the mediators in action (Appendix 9).

6.2 Questionnaire for children

Ninety eight questionnaires were filled in by the children in the school. The questionnaire was distributed to all children on roll: 462. However, after the questionnaires were collated the stakeholders were made aware that two members of staff forgot to distribute the questionnaires to the children. Therefore the questionnaires obtained did not represent the views of the whole school population. Nevertheless out of the questionnaires collated the scheme was rated positively; table A represents responses from the children.

Table 1: Pupil Questionnaire

Question	**Yes**	**No**
Have you used the peer mediation service in school?	93	5
Did the mediators help to sort out the problem?	89	9
Would you use the peer mediation service again?	97	1
Would you prefer a teacher to help sort out your problems?	26	72

When examining the results they do show that many of the children felt that their problem had been "sorted out" by talking to a mediator and that they would use the service again. This suggests that the scheme was valued by the children and that it was helpful to have a peer to talk to rather than a teacher. However, when reflecting on the findings it could be argued that the children who valued the service were more likely to fill in the questionnaire and post it. Out of the whole school population only a small minority of children filled in the questionnaire: 21%. Therefore the findings did not represent the views of the whole school.

When reflecting on the evaluation process I feel that there are limitations in using a questionnaire to elicit the views of children. The questionnaire consisted of a mixture of closed and open ended questions. Although the closed questions provided the stakeholder with a 'yes' or 'no' response as to whether the peer mediators helped to sort out the problem (question 3, appendix 8), the questions did not prompt the child to write in what way the mediator had been helpful. Furthermore, it may have been beneficial to have used a rating scale and asked the children on a scale of one to ten to rate how useful the peer mediator service had been. Cohen et al. (2006, p.250) argues that:

> 'There are comparatively few complex or subtle questions which can be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. A 'yes' or a 'no' may be inappropriate for a situation whose complexity is better served by a series of questions which catch that complexity'.

In order to counterbalance the difficulty of using closed questions, the questionnaire contained a number of open ended questions. However, open ended questions also carry problems regarding data handling. Whilst open questions invite an open and honest comment from the respondent (Robson, 2002), they also are subject to problems regarding the interpretation of answers by the researcher. Furthermore, these types of questions make it difficult for the researcher to compare answers between respondents as there may be little in common to compare (Cohen et al. 2006). Another criticism of the questionnaire was that a child could only fill it in if that they used the service; it did not ask children why they hadn't used the service. Therefore, when evaluating the peer mediation service in future this issue needs considering when designing a questionnaire.

Another important issue to discuss regarding the validity of the questionnaire is that the questionnaire was designed for children and some of them may have been unable to read or feel confident enough to record their views. When discussing this concern with stakeholders it was agreed that each class teacher would read out the questions to the children. However, not all members of staff did this and after the evaluation process the Head teacher became aware that a number of children in upper Key Stage 2 (Year 6) had been given the questionnaire at home time. Not all the children in Year 6 would have been able to read the questionnaire so they did not have the same opportunity as children in the lower key stages to record their responses.

Cohen et al. (2006) suggest that if a questionnaire is going to be administered by someone rather than the researcher, then it would be useful to have a clear set of instructions for administration. When discussing this issue during a meeting with key

stakeholders it was agreed that when evaluating the peer mediation service in future, questionnaires would be given to all children in separate Key Stage assemblies': Foundation, Key Stage 1 and 2 to ensure that all children would receive the same set of instructions and have an opportunity to fill it in during school time.

6.3 Focus interview with teaching staff

To elicit the views of staff the Head teacher asked the rest of the teaching staff for feedback about the peer mediation service during a staff meeting. Only teaching staff were present, so data collection was in the form of a focus group interview. When discussing the scheme the staff gave positive feedback about how they were dealing with less minor incidents after break and lunchtimes. However, the school had not recorded the number of incidents in order to make an objective comparison. The most encouraging finding was that Key Stage 1 staff felt that the scheme had the most impact with young children. A member of staff reported that when the children come back to class after playtime, she is now able to get on with teaching instead of spending twenty minutes dealing with minor squabbles and comforting children who said they had nobody to play with. The mediators encouraged the children to sort out minor fallouts and play with each other. One teacher remarked that she had seen mediators playing with other children when they looked lonely.

The negative comments about the peer mediation process were that the mediators were reporting problems with lunchtime supervisors. Initially it was reported that lunchtime staff were leaving the mediator to sort out problems instead of becoming

involved. As a consequence the Head teacher needed to set up a meeting to discuss these issues with staff. On reflection if I was helping a school set up a peer mediation service again I would encourage the whole of the staff to take part in awareness training.

Although focus group interviews produce a great deal of information in a short period of time (Cohen et al., 2006) I feel that it may have more appropriate to have developed a questionnaire for the whole of the school staff so the feedback would have been more representative. However, the focus group was carried out alongside other forms of data collection so they can be useful to triangulate information (Cohen et al., 2006).

6.4 Group interview with children

Group interviews are seen as less intimidating than individual interviews when working with children (Cohen et al., 2006). Group interviews allow a discussion to develop between participants (Robson, 2002). Therefore, other members are aware of each others views about the topic in question. During a supervision meeting the co-ordinator asked the mediators for feedback. The comments were very positive and the majority of children said that they enjoyed being mediators. Some children remarked that they noticed they were better at listening, solving problems and became more confident. The co-ordinator recorded the children's comments in note form.

When reflecting on the mediators comments it is useful to keep in mind that this interview was conducted by the peer mediator co-ordinator so it could be argued that she wanted to present the service in a positive light because she had put a lot of time and

effort into the process. However, the co-ordinator did report that some mediators had remarked that they had experienced negative comments from Year 6 children. When discussing this issue some of the Year 6 children felt excluded from the project as the stakeholders decided to use only Year 4 and 5 children for the project. The main reason for this was that Year 6 children were the school prefects. However, during the course of the project some of the children said that they would rather have been mediators than school prefects. To rectify this matter it was decided that the scheme would be open to Year 6 children the following year and that the current Year 6 children would have an opportunity to be mediators after SATs.

6.5 Playground observation of peer mediators

Finally, when evaluating this project I observed peer mediators on the playground. I used a semi-structured non-participant observation (see Appendix 9). I stood at the corner of the playground and wrote down my observations under a list of key headings, which included prompts. Scott and Usher (1999, p.101) argue that there are three key advantages of not participating:

> '…the detached stance allows observers to gain a more comprehensive view of what is being observed- they are less likely to be influenced by the agendas of the participants. Second, this stance allows observers to become more detached from their own specific agendas and…it allows them to gain a more objective view of the reality being investigated'.

However, it is useful to emphasise by taking a non-participant role, it may have affected the results. The peer mediators would have been aware that I was observing them, as they would have seen me writing notes and this may have inhibited them. During my observation I did notice one mediator keep looking at me and it appeared she was uncomfortable by my presence.

Another criticism of using an observation as a method of data collection was that I only watched six mediators during one break time. There are three playgrounds (Reception, Key Stage 1 and 2) with two children on each. Each child is required to do one duty a week; therefore there are a total of thirty mediators and four reserves (covering sickness, holidays etc). Thus I only watched a small number of mediators, nevertheless I obtained useful information such as how many children accessed the service, and how the children interacted with one another.

During the observation I noticed that all the mediators were easily recognisable to their peers. Although the mediators, on the Key Stage 2 playground, were playing games separately I noticed that two girls were only waiting a minute at the peer mediation stop before they were approached by the mediators. After the mediation the two girls began to play with each other. It has been argued that one of the key advantages of adopting an observational technique is its directness (Robson, 2002). I was not asking the peer mediators their thoughts or feelings about the process, I was watching them interacting with each other in a natural environment.

7. My reflections of the peer mediation project

When reflecting on the peer mediation project I shall first consider how useful the RADIO model (Timmins et al., 2003) was in helping me to negotiate roles and work with the key stakeholders. The model provided me with a valuable framework to guide me through the process of working with a school to set up a peer mediation service. Out of the twelve phases (Appendix 1) I feel that phase four was particularly helpful for me because I made sure I identified the key stakeholders in this project. During this stage the peer mediation co-ordinator was identified who took on a key role of distributing self nomination forms, permission slips and designing a rota on a weekly basis. This gave the organisation ownership of this project and I became a facilitator offering support and advice.

Equally I found phase six of the RADIO model (Appendix 1) important when working on this project. This phase is concerned with negotiating the framework for data gathering. When reflecting on this phase I negotiated deadlines for the selection of mediators, arranged the training date and discussed when the service would begin. Therefore key targets and goals were identified which gave everyone involved something to work towards. A key feature of the RADIO model is:

> '…characterised by intense collaborative interaction between researcher and research sponsor in order to elicit, clarify and agree the direction that work with the organisation will take' (Timmins et al., 2006, p.307).

By using the RADIO model as a framework in this project it enabled me to carry out a piece of action research (Cohen et al., 2006). Action research is a piece of collaborative work with participants. It is participatory, through which people work towards improving their practice. One of the most important ways that action research and the RADIO compliment each other is that:

> 'Action research develops through the self reflective spiral: a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, (implementing plans), observing (systematically) reflecting…and then planning, further implementation, observing and reflecting' (Cohen et al., 2006, p.229).

The RADIO model is a recursive rather than a sequential model (Timmins et al., 2006).

While there are many advantages to undertaking a piece of action research to bring about change, the approach is not without its critics. Banister et al. (2005) argues that nobody can be sure exactly what action produced what results. Cohen et al. (2006) states that action research evaluates change in one organisation and comments on the difficulty of generalising this to the wider population. Lastly, as action research is often carried out in schools and involves change, some members of staff may react negatively to this process. Indeed in the peer mediation project some lunch time supervisors and teachers showed resistance to change. For instance, one teacher commented that she felt it was her role to solve conflicts between the children in her class and not other children in the school. Nevertheless by supporting the school to set up a peer mediation service, on the whole it was received very positively by children, mediators and staff. During the

evaluation process the Head teacher reported that there had been a reduction in reported bullying incidences and that she was pleased how the peer mediation service was working in school.

When all the data was collected I had a meeting with the key stakeholders to discuss the results and how to take the peer mediation service forward. The issue of selection was discussed and it was decided that next year all children in Key Stage 2 would have the opportunity of becoming peer mediators. Of all the children who had been mediators only two out of thirty four children said that they did not want to do it again. Rewards and incentives were also discussed, as well as the sustainability of the service. At the end of the academic year each mediator would have a shield and be presented with it during assembly. In addition the mediators were going to have an after school BBQ as a reward for their hard work. Regarding the issue of sustainability, the peer mediator co-ordinator said she would like to continue in the role next year and carry out a further evaluation in the summer of 2009. I agreed to help with the design of the questionnaires and evaluating the impact of the service over time. Since this service has been positive I feel that it is important to investigate to what extent these views are sustained after a period of time.

8. Conclusion

When considering research investigating the outcomes for peer mediation schemes in school, on the whole the findings have been positive. Lawrence (2000) has argued that peer mediation schemes can enhance children's self esteem as well as improve relationships (Tyrell, 2002). Cremin (2000) has set up and monitored a number of peer

mediation services in the West Midlands and found that there was a reduction in reported bullying incidents in school. However, whilst the evidence has been encouraging there has been little research investigating the long term impact of peer mediation.

In a planning meeting in October 2007 a primary school asked if they could use part of their allocated EP time to help set up a peer mediation scheme. By using the RADIO model (Timmins et al., 2003) as a framework I undertook a piece of action research in school. By drawing on previous research in collaboration with key stakeholders, peer mediators were selected and trained before a service was launched in January 2008.

After the service had been running for over a term the stakeholders were interested in carrying out research evaluating the effectiveness of the scheme. Data collection was carried out by administering: a pupil questionnaire, focus group interview with teaching staff, group interview with mediators and a playground observation of mediators. Feedback obtained was positive suggesting that teachers were spending less time dealing with minor squabbles and it had improved pupils skills such as listening, problem solving and empathy in the mediators. However a number of ethical and practical difficulties were found; for instance there had been resistance by some teachers who felt that it was their role to intervene during conflict situations. Another problem which needed to be addressed concerned lunchtime supervisors, who stood back and let the mediators deal with a range of conflicts on the playground.

When reflecting on the process I felt that a number of lessons were learnt for future projects. I feel that all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, would have benefited from awareness training. Although Cremin (2007) stressed the importance of a whole school

approach when setting up a peer mediation scheme, in the current project stakeholders concentrated on raising awareness with teaching staff, instead of all school staff. I also feel that a key factor which helped the scheme to be successful was that there was a peer mediator co-ordinator. She arranged the rota and was someone who the mediators could turn to for advice. During the group interview the mediators valued the supervision sessions. Stacey et al. (2006) stress the importance of regular supervision meetings. One mediator remarked that it was nice to know there was someone who she could go to for help. Therefore when reflecting on this point I stressed the importance of having a second co-ordinator to stakeholders to cover for sickness and to provide support for one another.

When discussing the future of the peer mediator project with stakeholders a number of issues were discussed. One issue was how to make the service a part of school culture, like the school football team. The Head teacher suggested the mediators would be presented with a shield and each year there would be an event such as a BBQ, or a trip to celebrate their hard work. The issue of sustainability was also mentioned as to whether the results would be maintained. Therefore the Head teacher agreed to a number of action points for phase two of the peer mediation scheme:

- staff awareness training for all school staff;
- all Key Stage 2 will have the opportunity to be mediators;
- raise the profile of the peer mediation service by having regular assemblies, a display board in the hall, and an annual event for the mediators; and
- record and monitor the number of minor incidents at playtime.

It is hoped that the peer mediation service will be evaluated again during the summer of 2009. As the long term impact of peer mediation schemes has rarely been investigated, this information would be valuable when suggesting the implementation of a peer mediation service to reduce pupil conflict in other schools.

8,284 words

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Appendix 1

Stages of RADIO model

RADIO phases	RADIO stages	Typical activities
Clarifying concerns	1. Awareness of need.	School/ EPS/LA request or EPS suggestion.
	2. Invitation to act.	Contracting EP role in organisational development.
	3. Clarifying organizational and cultural issues.	Exploring opportunities and threats relating to initiative.
	4. Identifying stakeholders.	Agreeing processes for collaborating with stakeholders for feedback and discussion e.g. coordinating group and initiative co-ordinator.
	5. Agreeing the focus of concern.	Identifying research aims and purposes
Research methods mode.	6. Negotiating the framework for data gathering.	Issues and decisions regarding methodology, methods, resources and timescales.
	7. Gathering information.	Using agreed methods.
Organisational change mode.	8. Processing information.	Sharing findings with stakeholders.
	9. Agreeing areas for future action.	Discussing findings in relation to organisation's needs and identifying areas action for.
	10. Action planning.	Stakeholder- led planning process.
	11. Implementation/ action.	Stakeholders facilitating change within organisation.
	12. Evaluating action.	Stakeholders reviewing effectiveness of action and possibly requesting further EP involvement.

Timmins, P., Bham, M., McFadyen, J. and Ward, J. (2006) Teachers and Consultation: Applying research and development in organisations (RADIO). *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 22 (4): 305-321.

Appendix 2

Planning session

2 types of peer support:

- Emotional support- mediation, befriending and counselling.
- Information based support- peer mentoring and peer tutoring.

Issues to discuss:

- What type of peer support is required? Will it be only peer mediation or will a few be trained in befriending/ counselling too?
- Introduction of peer support scheme/ peer mediation- through assembly?
- Will teachers discuss this as a follow up session in classrooms?
- Pupil nomination- will children nominate themselves and put it in a box outside HT office?
- Nomination form- will there be questions on form? For example: asking the children how they deal with any conflict? Why they think they would be a good peer supporter? Peer support will use up some of their free times, what other things are they involved in at school? What do they think makes a good peer supporter?
- Is there a specific year group that is targeted for support or to develop listening/ problem solving schools?
- How many pupils? Different pupils for different lunchtimes- rota basis.
- Will support scheme be accessed during lunchtimes/ break times or both?
- Parental permission maybe a tear off slip could be put at the bottom of the pupil nomination form.
- Selection process of pupils- session two November 27th. Peer supporters can be selected by selecting a number of pupils and then talk to them further on the day, or look through all forms and select on that basis.
- How many children- representative school sample so all children feel comfortable to access the service.

- Parents notified when children are selected- letter sent home.
- When pupils are selected how will the other children be able to recognise them? Will they be wearing badges etc? Will HT introduce them in an assembly? Will the children introduce themselves and tell the rest of school how they can help them?

- Resource room/ area for peer mediation/ support. This needs to be clear so that children know where to go.

- Support session for pupil volunteers so they can discuss issues with one another and be supervised by member of staff. How regular will these take place?

- Have a named staff that pupil volunteers can go and talk to if necessary.

- Will pupils feedback to HT or school council how the service is going?

- How will the service be monitored regarding how many children use service- age groups?

- Workshop/ training session for pupils arranged for 4th December.

- When is the planned start date for scheme?

- EP can come to school a few weeks after scheme has started to see how it is going and talk to pupils about any problems?

Appendix 3

The role of the peer mediator co-ordinator

- Make decisions prior to peer mediation being set up:
  - What problems are appropriate for pupil mediators?
  - How will pupils access the service?
  - Introducing whole school circle time

- Identify the client group:
  - Age?
  - How many?
  - Balance of abilities

- Recruitment:
  - Nominations?
  - Applications?
  - Selection criteria

- Training:
  - Venue
  - Funding
  - Follow up?

- Resources:
  - When will the service take place?
  - Where will it take place – room/quiet area
  - Incentives for peer mediators e.g. caps/badges/refreshments

- Week to week running:
  - Weekly team meeting
  - Teacher has to be in easy reach of peer mediators
  - Finer details of rota and responsibilities

- Sustaining
  - Maintaining high profile for service
  - Referral channels
  - On-going support
  - Continuation – future years
  - How to measure success

- Safety
  - Support of supporters

Supplied by Staffordshire County Council, Educational Psychology Service

Appendix 4

Nomination form for Peer Mediator

Name……. **Class**……

Question 1: What skills does a Peer Mediator need?

Answer……
……
……

Question 2: How do you deal with conflict?

Answer……
……
……...

Question 3: Why do you think that you would be a good Peer Mediator?

Answer……
……
……

Appendix 5

Peer Mediation Training 4th December 2007

Session 1

Handouts taken from: Stacey, H. and Robinson, P. (2006) *Let's Mediate.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Objective/ Key Skills	**Activity**	**Resources**	**Timing**
General introduction	**Whole Group** • Inform the children what they will be doing over the course of the morning. For the majority of the activities they will be split into 2 smaller groups. • Dispel any myths regarding peer mediation (they won't be expected to break up fights) and give lots of encouragement about what they will be doing.		5 Mins
Team building and communication skills.	**Small groups** • Circle time activity (go over rules). Each child introduces themselves by giving their name, something they like/ enjoy doing and why they want to be a peer mediator.	Object to be used in circle time activity.	10 mins
Understanding conflict and strengthening empathy skills.	**Small groups** • Ask the pupils to put their hand up if: They know some people who have fallen out this week. If they have ever fallen out with a friend. • Give each child a post it note	Flip chart Post it notes	15 mins

	and ask them to write down how they feel when they have argued/ fallen out with a friend. • Each child puts their post it note on a flip chart. • Each group discusses how people feel when they have fallen out/ argued with their friends.		
Ground rules for peer mediation.	**Small groups** • Ask a child for an example of a dispute and what may happen when people disagree. • On a flipchart draw two people on either side of the paper and arrows going from one to another. Make a scribble in the middle between them and identify this as the problem. • Make the point that in this way of doing things people expect there to be a winner and loser. • Cross out the arrows and draw new ones directed at the problem. • Discuss peer mediation is about helping people to find solutions to the problem. • Give each child a handout entitled 'Mediation', which outlines the five steps to successful mediation. Discuss in groups.	Flip chart Flip chart marker 'Mediation' handout.	15 mins
Listening and communication skills (Activity 1)	**Small groups** • Time the pupils (30 seconds) to	Body language handout.	15 mins

	work in 2s listening to each other in specific ways: A) Both pupils are asked to keep talking simultaneously for 30 seconds without taking any notice of what the other is saying. B) One of the pupils is told to speak while the other uses body language to suggest that they are bored or not interested in listening. C) The same pupil speaks again, but this time the other pupil uses body language that shows they are listening. • Discuss what each situation felt like. What were the signals we use to let people know that we are listening/ not listening? • Give children copy of handout entitled 'Body Language' and discuss.		
Listening and communication skills (Activity 2)	• Discuss the difference between open and closed questions. Closed questions can be answered by 'yes' or 'no'. Open questions encourage people to talk more freely. • Give children handout 'Open Questions' • In pairs children ask each other about their favourite TV programme by using open questions. • Feedback to group.	Open questions handout.	15 mins

Session 2

Objective/ key skill	**Main Activity**	**Resources**	**Timing**
Mediation role play (Activity 1)	Small groups • Give each child handout 'Mediators Prompt Sheet'. • Brainstorm as a group answers to the questions.	Mediator prompt sheet handout	15 mins
Mediation role play (Activity 2)	Small groups • Children split into small groups of either 3 or 4. In each group there are 2 disputants, and either 1 or 2 mediators. Use peer mediation role play cards for disputes. Children swap roles. Give children a copy of 'The Mediators' handout, which summarizes main steps in process. • Children come back into groups and share with each other what they found difficult and what they enjoyed. **NB**: trainers can assess children informally using assessment sheet.	Role play cards Mediator handout	30 mins
Whole group mediation	• Whole group comes back. Discuss when service will start, that there will be a rota etc. • Do children have any questions? • Ask a few children one thing that they have learnt today which is important in peer mediation.		15 mins

Appendix 6

Peer mediator assessment sheet

Name:	Does this well	Does this ok	Needs some practice
Is warm and welcoming to disputants			
Can remember both sets of ground rules			
Can remind people firmly but kindly to keep the ground rules			
Can remember the steps of the mediation process			
Can treat both people the same			
Can help disputants understand each others feelings			
Can encourage the disputants to brainstorm a fair list of suggestions for solving the problem			
Can repeat back all the suggestions that have been made			
Does not give advice or tell people what they should do			
Make sure both people are happy with suggestions			
Remembers to let them know they can come back to check if agreement is working or to make changes to it			

Supplied by Staffordshire County Council, Educational Psychology Service

Appendix 7

Permission letter

6th November 2007

Dear Parent

We are planning to run a Peer Mediation Programme in school for children starting in January next year and feel that ……. would be a good candidate to be a peer mediator.

If you have no objections to your child being chosen, please could you return the slip below to your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Peer Mediator Co-ordinator

……
.

Peer Mediation Programme

I give permission for my child to take part in training and to become a Peer Mediator.

Signed……

Parent of……

Class……

Appendix 8

Questionnaire

1) Have you used the peer mediation service in school?

2) If yes, what was the problem discussed?

3) Did the mediators help to sort out the problem?

4) Would you use the peer mediation service again?

5) Would you prefer a teacher to help sort out your problems?

Appendix 9

Playground Observation

Before mediation

Prompts

Were the mediators easily recognisable? Were the children waiting long at the peer mediation stop?

During mediation

Prompts

Did the mediators explain the steps of mediation? Did the mediator encourage the children to understand each others feelings? Were both children allowed to have their say?

After mediation

Prompts

Did the children leave happy? Did it appear that the conflict had been resolved?

CHAPTER 5: PPR4

An exploratory study of the impact of SEAL on Year 7 pupils and review of associated research.

1. Abstract

Secondary SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) is a:

> '…comprehensive approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance' (DfES, 2007).

With the current interest in SEAL, this paper is an account of the implementation and evaluation of the secondary SEAL materials in a middle school. This exploratory evaluation consisted of two phases; all Year 7 pupils completed an emotional literacy checklist (Faupel, 2003), and a group of 12 young people formed a focus group. In both procedures the evaluation was carried out before, and two terms after, the introduction of the SEAL materials.

Findings of the evaluation showed that while 44% of pupils had increased their emotional literacy score, a further 38% of pupils had lower scores post-SEAL. An interesting finding was that the mean emotional literacy score for boys went from 74.0 to 73.7 post SEAL. Therefore, it may be the case that the SEAL materials need to be adapted to target skills which are deemed as being fundamental to boys' social and

emotional development. Results from the focus group were more positive; since it appeared that boys and girls had a greater understanding of different types of emotions post-SEAL. Another positive finding was that children were beginning to recognise their own achievements in and out of school.

Despite SEAL being introduced to an increasing number of schools, there has been little research carried out which measures the impact of the materials. I feel before more time and money is invested in SEAL, short and long term benefits need to be investigated by independent researchers to determine the benefits of implementing the SEAL resource. Therefore, this exploratory study provides the researcher with areas to investigate further, as well as identifying flaws to be aware of in future research design.

2. Introduction

In September 2007, I formed part of a multi-agency team to help implement the Secondary SEAL materials. Two schools in the district were chosen to be pilot schools for the County, a secondary and middle school. Each school was supported by a multi agency team, which consisted of Local Authority (LA) advisors (inclusion and behaviour) and an Educational Psychologist (EP). As a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) I worked in one of the multi agency teams helping to launch and evaluate the impact of the SEAL materials. The school I worked with was a middle school with approximately 384 children on roll.

The secondary SEAL package follows on from the primary SEAL initiative (DfES, 2005). Gross (2006) argues that the Primary SEAL materials have shown to have had a

positive impact on children's learning as well as helping young people to understand their emotions more effectively. Therefore, the secondary SEAL materials have been developed to build on previous work children have experienced in their primary education.

The SEAL programme is a whole school approach which aims to develop 5 key areas, first developed by Goleman (2005):

- Self awareness (identifying and describing our beliefs and emotions);
- managing feelings (managing how we express our emotions);
- motivation (working towards goals);
- empathy (understanding others thoughts and feelings); and
- social skills (forming and maintaining relationships).

Goleman (2005) claims that these 5 key areas are associated with positive outcomes in life; for instance, if a child is unable to manage their emotions effectively it will impair their ability to concentrate and learn in class.

The secondary SEAL materials consist of 4 themes which target one or more of the 5 keys areas identified by Goleman (2005).

- Theme1: 'A place to learn'- self awareness;
- theme 2: 'Learning to be together' – social skills and empathy;
- theme 3: 'Keep on learning' – motivation; and
- theme 4: 'Learning about me' – managing emotions.

Further details regarding the SEAL themes can be found on the Bandapilot website (2007).

My initial role in the multi-agency team was to support the school in implementing the SEAL materials (consultation meetings, training). As part of the pilot, only Year 7 pupils had access to the resource. During the initial planning meeting, key stakeholders enquired whether they could use part of their SEAL allocation time for additional support in evaluating the impact of the SEAL materials. Subsequently, I carried out a pre and post focus group interview with 12 pupils. School staff selected the 12 pupils who took part in the focus group interview. In addition all Year 7 pupils filled in an emotional literacy checklist (aged 11-16) (Faupel, 2003), see Appendix 3, before the initial launch of the SEAL materials in November 2007, and again in the last week of the summer term, July 2008. The findings of the focus group and emotional literacy checklist will be discussed later in this paper.

In guiding my thinking whilst working with the school I used a framework referred to as the RADIO model (Research and Development in Organisations) (Timmins et al., 2003). There were 12 phases of the RADIO model, see Appendix 4. The RADIO model has been used successfully as a framework to help guide thinking when negotiating work in schools and Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) (Timmins et al., 2006). Through the course of this paper I will reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of applying the RADIO model when working with the school on this task.

Before discussing the current exploratory study of the secondary SEAL materials I will consider previous research investigating the benefits of programmes designed to increase emotional understanding, including findings from the initial pilot of the

secondary SEAL materials (Ofsted, 2007). I will reflect on the practical and ethical issues of implementing the SEAL materials as well as considering the future of the programme in school. Finally, when concluding this paper I will consider the future direction of SEAL in school.

3. Research

3.1 Link between emotional understanding and improvements in behaviour and learning

Currently, there is an interest regarding the link between emotional understanding and improvements in behaviour and learning. There are many programmes which go under names such as, 'emotional literacy', 'emotional intelligence', 'social and emotional learning' (SEL) and 'life skills'. When reviewing research, Weare (2004, p.12) suggests that emotional literacy programmes have been associated with:

> '…higher school attainments, greater emotional awareness, improved conduct, less aggression and conflict, better relations with others, improved problem-solving and less risky behaviours'.

Sharp (2000) supports this view when evaluating an emotional literacy project in Southampton. The project involved a range of programmes designed to increase emotional literacy in pupils. Sharp (2000) noted that since the introduction of the 'Promoting Pupil Inclusion Project', exclusions had reduced by 50% from 1997 to 2000.

However, it is difficult to attribute this finding to the introduction of emotional literacy programmes alone. Indeed, Weare (2004) states that Southampton City LA set a target of no exclusions for its schools. Therefore, it could be argued that there was a decrease in exclusions because head teachers were under pressure to meet the LA target. Furthermore, those pupils who were at risk of exclusions may have benefited from a range of measures in school. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude that the introduction of the 'Promoting Pupil Inclusion Project' was the sole reason that there was a reduction in exclusions in the authority.

Weare (2007a) argues that Social and Emotional Learning programmes (SEL) are central to the key objectives outlined in the 'Every Child Matters' agenda (ECM) (DfES, 2003). For instance, Weare (2007a) suggests that SEL programmes have been shown to contribute to children's physical health, by helping them to understand the health choices they make. In addition SEL helps children to stay safe as it helps them to understand:

> '…difficult emotions and know how to act in challenging situations without putting themselves or others in danger or at risk' (Weare, 2007a).

Academic improvements have also been linked to SEL programmes. A project carried out by Izard et al. (2001), at the University of Delaware, set out to evaluate emotional knowledge as a long term predictor of both social behaviour and academic competence. Seventy two children took part in the project at the age of 5 and then again at the age of 9. The children's verbal ability, temperament (according to the parents) and emotional knowledge were assessed. The researcher's assessed emotional knowledge by

asking the children to match verbal descriptions with different facial expressions. At 9 years old, the teachers rated the children on social skills and academic competence.

The researchers argued that emotional knowledge of the children at 5 contributed significantly to their academic competence, behaviour, and social skills 4 years later. The research team found that there was a positive correlation between those pupils who were rated as having a high level of emotional understanding at 5 years old and their subsequent academic performance and behaviour. Furthermore, they concluded that a lack of emotional knowledge at 5 years old correlated with hyperactivity and internalizing behaviour when the children were assessed at nine.

When interpretating their findings, Izard et al. (2001) suggested that lack of emotional knowledge may affect teacher-child rapport, thereby influencing subsequent quantity and quality of educational exchanges and teacher expectations. However, while this study does suggest that there is a link between emotional understanding and later behaviour and academic performance; criticisms can be made regarding the research design. Firstly, children were assessed for their emotional understanding by matching verbal descriptions with facial expressions. However, was this test a valid measure of emotional awareness? A child may not have understood what the verbal description of the emotion meant, but had an awareness of how someone felt by looking at the facial expression. Another flaw of this test is that sometimes facial expression can be ambiguous, for example sad and disappointed.

It is also useful to note that while children in the project were from similar socio-economic backgrounds, it is not known what other risk factors the children were exposed to between the ages of 5 and 9. Some of the children may have experienced separation

from parents, death, and or violence which may have affected their subsequent behaviour (some of the children were described as being hyperactive or withdrawn). Other variables such as the quality of the children's education, and additional teaching support were also not considered when measuring the children's academic performance at 9. Therefore, I feel that there are many factors which may have contributed to later behaviour difficulties and academic performance rather than attributing it to emotional understanding at age 5.

Wilson et al. (2001) carried out a meta-analysis of 165 published studies measuring school based intervention programmes such as SEL, behaviour modification and school counselling in USA. They found that those schools which focused on SEL resulted in improved school attendance. SEL has also been linked to academic performance by Zins et al. (2004). When reviewing 80 SEL programmes in the USA, Zins et al. (2004, p.14) stated that:

> 'All of these approaches can have positive effects on academic performance, especially those that had teachers acquire and use more effective teaching techniques; 83% of such programs that did not specifically target academic performance documented an impact on academic achievement'.

An interesting finding showed those children who had access to the Promoting Alternative Thinking strategies curriculum (PATHS) developed better problem solving and planning skills after the intervention had been introduced.

With the current interest in SEL programmes it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives designed to promote emotional awareness in the U.K. As

earlier noted, the primary SEAL materials were published in 2005 by the DfES. The primary SEAL materials formed a strand of the DfES Behaviour and Attendance Strategy. In 2006, Hallam et al. published an evaluation of the pilot Behaviour and Attendance, which focused on the impact of SEAL. Therefore I shall discuss these findings in the next section of this paper.

3.2 Evaluation of the primary Behaviour and Attendance pilot

Hallam et al. (2006) researched the effectiveness of the SEAL materials; based on evidence from interviews with LA co-ordinators, head teachers, teachers, teaching assistants, children and parents in 16 good practice schools. In addition questionnaire data was collated from head teachers, teachers, non teaching staff, parents and key stage (KS) 1 and 2 pupils in the 16 good practice schools. Questionnaire data was also available for 4237 KS1 pupils prior to the implementation of the SEAL resource and 2163 children afterwards. In addition 5707 KS2 pupils completed the questionnaire before the introduction of SEAL and 3311 young people afterwards.

The findings showed that teachers were more able to recognise and understand their pupil's emotions after the implementation of SEAL. Other findings showed that staff:

> '…perceived a positive impact on the children's behaviour and well-being. Classrooms and playgrounds were calmer. Children's confidence, social, communication, negotiating skills, and attitudes were perceived to have improved'
>
> (Hallam et al., 2006, p.7).

Furthermore, over 90% of the teachers believed that the SEAL resource had been relatively successful in improving children's confidence and behaviour.

Teachers noted that there had been a reduction in the number of exclusions, but the numbers of children being excluded prior to the introduction of SEAL had been small. Indeed, there are generally fewer exclusions in the primary as opposed to the secondary sector. It is also not known what policies the individual schools had in place prior to the introduction of SEAL which may have had an impact on the number of exclusions. Thus, it may have been the case that behaviour policies and strong leadership contributed to the reduction of exclusions. In order to conclude whether SEAL has made an impact in decreasing the number of recorded exclusions it would be beneficial to monitor the most vulnerable pupils before and after the implementation of SEAL. In addition, the introduction of a control group would also help to establish the impact of SEAL.

While the SEAL resource was interpreted as being worthwhile by teachers, it is important to emphasise that children in KS2 were less positive in statements related to attitudes towards schools, relationships with teachers and their perception of academic work after the pilot. However it is useful to note that responses were found to be age related; as the children became older the responses were less favourable. Therefore, it may have been the case that the SEAL resource was less effective as the children became

older, or simply that it was not able to counteract natural tendency for pupils to fail to like school as they get older, again adequate controls are needed to investigate the impact of the SEAL resource.

Conversely, it could be argued that children's responses were less positive after the SEAL pilot because they had become more self aware, thus making the SEAL materials an effective intervention to enhance emotional literacy in that area. For instance some children may have had a higher than average response to many of the statements on the questionnaire before the pilot. After having access to the themes, which aim to promote self awareness in pupils, they may have developed a more realistic view of their relationships with other pupils, teachers and their perception to school work. For example, one question asks each child to rate how well they are able to take turns. Before the introduction of SEAL a child may have felt that they are good at turn taking. However by taking part in the SEAL activities, they may have realised the appropriate rules of turn taking, listening, and compromise and felt that they did not act like that.

When interpretating this data it is useful to note that it is hard to establish whether any benefits to the children's emotional well being were directly linked to the SEAL materials as a control group was not set up and monitored in each school. Researchers suggested that a contributory factor to the success of the programme was the school's ethos to children's personal and social development. Therefore, if this is the case it is difficult to conclude that the SEAL resource alone is linked to improvements in behaviour, attendance and academic competence.

Lastly, when considering Hallam's et al. (2006) investigation, the researchers were commissioned by the DfES to undertake the evaluation. Therefore, it could be argued that

it would be in their interest to produce a favourable finding because a considerable amount of time and money had been put in to SEAL. Another point is that it is not clear how certain schools were selected to take part in the evaluation; Hallam et al. (2006) describes them as 16 'good practice schools'. It may have been possible that many of the schools were considered outstanding, by the LA, in promoting emotional well being before SEAL, so how can researchers be sure that the materials were indeed effective? Furthermore, the LA may have put forward 'good practice' schools because they would like to be considered as an emotionally literate authority. In addition, some schools who took part in the pilot prior to the implementation of the SEAL did not take part in all aspects of the data collection after the pilot. Therefore, was it the case, that schools who felt that SEAL had made an impact only completed the evaluation? Head teachers who felt that the children had not made gains may have been reluctant to take part in the final phase of the investigation.

Consequently, when analysing the findings of the primary SEAL materials it is necessary to be cautiously optimistic. The results have shown that SEAL was perceived positively by teachers, but older pupil's responses to statements concerning teachers, and attitudes towards work were less favourable (Hallam et al., 2006). Therefore, in the next section of this paper I will discuss the findings from the longitudinal evaluation of the secondary National Strategy pilot (Ofsted, 2007). The secondary National Strategy's main objective was to develop social, emotional and behavioural skills in young people.

3.3 Evaluation of the secondary National Strategy pilot

The secondary National Strategy's pilot programme was introduced to 54 schools in 5 LAs in the summer term of 2005. A year later the pilot programme was implemented to a sixth LA. Ofsted (2007) evaluated the effectiveness of the secondary pilot over 5 terms in 11 schools. During the period of the pilot, the DfES decided to expand the materials further and rename the resource the secondary SEAL programme. In order to gather the data for the purpose of this evaluation, the inspectors visited the schools 4 or 5 times. Each school selected a group of pupils in Year 7 and 8 to form a focus group. The researchers observed the young people in and outside of the classroom during each visit and discussions took place with the children on the first and last visit. In addition the researchers spoke with senior leaders and teachers during each school visit.

The key findings of the evaluation were that the SEAL resource had the greatest impact in developing teachers understanding of pupil's emotional and social development. It was perceived that relationships had improved between teachers and pupils. In addition it was found that:

> 'Where the pilot was most effective, pupils social and behavioural skills improved in the way they worked with each other and with staff. Their resilience increased, as did teamwork skills and their willingness to take risks in their learning' (Ofsted, 2007).

Consequently, the findings from the pilot suggest that the secondary SEAL had a positive impact on the young people's social and emotional development. Teachers remarked that after the pilot the pupil's confidence had increased and participated better in learning. These findings support the conclusions made by Hallam et al. (2006) in the primary SEAL evaluation. As in the primary evaluation, teachers' perceived there to be a positive impact in the implementation of the SEAL materials.

However, it is not known how particular schools were selected to take part in the Ofsted (2007) evaluation; therefore the results may not representative. Furthermore, in the secondary SEAL pilot the school picked a focus group of pupils for the researchers to observe and talk to. Therefore, the school could have picked pupils in the focus group who they believed the resource would make the most impact with. It is not know what other support these pupils were receiving in addition to the SEAL materials, which may have affected the results. Ofsted (2007, p.6) comments:

> 'All the schools found it difficult to evaluate the impact of the work. Even where the work was successful, schools often found it difficult to disengage what had been achieved through the programme from other initiatives'.

A comparison of the primary and secondary SEAL pilot studies will be discussed in the following section of this paper.

3.4 Comparison of the primary and secondary SEAL pilot

When analysing the findings of the secondary SEAL pilot compared to the primary SEAL pilot, the researchers in both studies collected their data through different research designs. In the primary SEAL a number of pupils were given a questionnaire to fill in, 4237 in KS1 and 5707 in KS2. In the Ofsted (2007) study, researchers observed children in SEAL lesson as well as interviewing a group of young people and talking to members of staff. Therefore, in the secondary SEAL pilot, researchers used a qualitative research design, whereas in the primary SEAL pilot both quantitative and qualitative research methods were adopted.

When considering the reliability and validity of the pilot studies it is advantageous to consider the epistemological assumptions central to the research. Epistemological assumptions concern the origins of knowledge. Maykut and Morehouse (1995) claim that epistemology is interested in the origins and nature of knowing and the construction of knowledge. For example, what roles do values play in understanding? Moore (2005, p.110) claims that in qualitative studies the researcher values the exchange of knowledge between themselves and the participant. Thus the:

> 'researcher or practitioner would assume that both they and their colleagues or clients have much to learn together and that it is an inescapable mutual interchange of understanding that actually opens further avenues for change'.

In contrast to positivist research, social constructivists argue that they gain a greater insight into how the participant is feeling. Thus in the Ofsted (2007) investigation researchers observed the children, held a discussion with a group of young people, and spoke to senior members of staff.

However, while there are strengths in adopting a qualitative research design, positivists would argue that this method lacks objectivity. Scott and Usher (1999, p.25) point out that:

> '…any acknowledgement of the location of reason and hence of science in [tradition] immediately introduces an unacceptable subjectivity, thus destroying the 'objectivity' of science'.

Therefore, the reliability of the findings reported by Ofsted (2007) is questionable, since the interpretation of the pupil's views was subjective. In contrast Hallam's et al. (2006) research the pupils completed a questionnaire which may be considered more objective. A further strength of the Hallam et al. (2006) research is that it consisted of both qualitative and quantitative data. Hallam et al. (2006) study utilised a multi-method design, through which Hallam et al. (2006) achieve a greater depth of understanding in ascertaining the views of pupils who accessed SEAL. They adopted a quantitative design through the questionnaire in their study, which was supplemented by richer qualitative research by carrying out in depth interviews.

Despite the weaknesses in the research design of the Hallam et al. (2006) and Ofsted (2007) study, SEAL has been viewed as a valuable resource to improve the

emotional well being of pupils (Weare, 2007b). However, there are opposing arguments that question the credibility of SEAL. These viewpoints will be discussed during the next section of this paper.

3.5 A critique of the SEAL materials

Craig (2007) has been very critical of the systematic and explicit approach to teaching social and emotional skills through SEAL. She begins her critique with her concerns regarding the lack of research supporting this approach. When discussing the secondary SEAL materials, Craig (2007) points out that the resource is based on Goleman's (2005) five areas of emotional literacy. Goleman's (2005) work is based on theory rather than on scientific research. While the supporters of SEAL argue that the materials have had a positive impact on learning (Gross, 2006), there has yet to be evidence to show this is sustained over a number of years. Indeed, Craig (2007) suggests this is only possible if a longitudinal study, incorporating a control group is set up to measure the impact of SEAL.

When considering the SEAL pilot studies, Craig (2007) argues that neither Hallam et al. (2006) nor Ofsted's (2007) research had a control group. Therefore, it is not clear whether improvements in children's emotional well being was due to SEAL or programmes already going on in school. Craig (2007) also claims that the pre-intervention results for children's self esteem and social skills, in Hallam's (2006) research, did not suggest there was a problem that needed to be addressed. This suggests that the children's emotional literacy scores were unlikely to be low regardless of SEAL.

Another important issue is that self awareness and emotional awareness are at the heart of both the primary and secondary SEAL materials. However, is it necessary to encourage children to be overly concerned with their feelings? Craig (2007, p.9) argued that preoccupation with feelings can be destructive as people can become 'depressed if they become too introspective'. Furthermore, some children may feel uncomfortable with expressing how they feel to the rest of the class, particularly if they have or are experiencing trauma. Therefore, a teacher may need to carefully consider the appropriateness of the unit of work before teaching it to his or her class.

Finally, Craig (2007) suggests that SEAL sends out a message that schools are responsible for promoting social and emotional development. Whereas, Craig (2007) claims parents should be developing their child's emotional and social skills. In response, SEAL does provide the parent with a set of family activities and proposes a joined up approach between the school and family. Therefore, SEAL does not place the sole emphasis on the school to promote mental health.

I have reviewed theory and research that have suggested that there is a link between emotional understanding and improvements in attainment, behaviour and attendance (Zins et al., 2004). In addition while there has been positive findings related to the implementation of SEAL (Ofsted, 2007), criticisms have been raised regarding the research design of the pilot studies and about the SEAL materials. Despite these arguments secondary SEAL has been introduced to schools across the country. As noted earlier, I have worked with a school in implementing and evaluating SEAL; the next part of this paper will give an account of this process.

4. Implementing SEAL in school

4.1 Aims of exploratory study

The aims of the exploratory study were outlined during the initial SEAL meeting in September 2007. There were three clear aims, which are noted below.

School and LA aim

- For the school and LA to have an understanding of the impact of the SEAL resource over two terms with a group of Year 7 pupils.

School aim

- For the school to have an understanding of which areas of emotional literacy (self awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills) they need to target in future PSHE lessons. Through the exploratory study the stakeholders hoped that it would identify areas the children needed extra support.

LA aim

- For the LA to have an awareness of any practical difficulties and limitations with the research design used in the pilot. As a consequence of the pilot the LA was

hoping to use this information to carry out further research evaluating the impact of the SEAL resource.

4.2 Planning

In September 2007 a meeting was held between key stakeholders and the members of the multi agency team set up to help the school implement and evaluate SEAL. During this initial meeting a timeline of future meetings and work that would be carried out was negotiated. When I discussed my role in the planning process I applied the RADIO model (Appendix 4). I will reflect on the advantages of using this model at a later stage of this paper.

The SEAL materials are designed to be a whole school approach. Antidote (2003) and Weare (2004) argue that a whole school approach has been shown to be more effective in improving every aspect of school life. However, the SEAL co-ordinators, in the target school, faced resistance from other members of staff when introducing the SEAL materials as a whole school resource during a staff meeting. Many members of staff saw the SEAL theme as 'nothing to do with them', particularly teachers in the Maths and Science departments. This sentiment has been noted in other schools, Perry et al. (2008) found that teachers often viewed emotional literacy as an 'add on' and not as part of the school curriculum.

In response to the resistance felt by the SEAL coordinators, the secondary SEAL programme was initially introduced in Personal Health and Social Education (PSHE) lessons. As the school was a middle school, the primary SEAL was also being taught in

PSHE. The SEAL coordinators also explained that they were introducing SEAL assemblies. However, this was more easily achieved than in other secondary schools. The target school was a middle school, and the school ethos regarding assemblies was like a primary school, there was an assembly each day.

During the initial SEAL meeting, the issue of how the SEAL resource was going to be evaluated was discussed. After negotiation, it was agreed that Year 7 pupils would be asked to fill in an 'Emotional Literacy Checklist' (Faupel, 2003) prior to the implementation of SEAL, and again two terms later. This particular checklist was chosen because it claims to assess the five key areas of emotional literacy identified by Goleman (2005). As previously stipulated the SEAL resource consists of themes which focus on the five aspects of emotional literacy identified by Goleman (2005). After negotiation it was also agreed that twelve Year 7 children would be asked to form a focus group, in order to ascertain their understanding and views about the SEAL materials. In the next section I will consider how the children were selected to take part in this exploratory study.

4.3 Sample

All Year 7 pupils who accessed the SEAL materials were asked to take part in phase 1 of the evaluation, which consisted of young people completing an emotional literacy checklist prior and after the implementation of SEAL (Faupel, 2003). Therefore, the sample was representative of the school population who accessed the SEAL resource. However, the sample of pupils who took part in phase 2 of the evaluation, pre and post

SEAL interviews, were selected by the school. I did not have any prior knowledge of the young people, unlike the SEAL coordinators. A weakness of the research design was that background information was not sought for each pupil in the focus group, so the sample may not be representative of the Year 7 population. The SEAL coordinators may have chosen particular pupils because they perceived them to be receptive to the SEAL resource. It is also not known whether any additional support was targeted to the specific pupils who were selected to form a focus group. Further practical difficulties and ethical considerations will be discussed in the following sections.

4.4 Practical difficulties

Practical difficulties regarding the implementation of SEAL were concerned with resources found on the Bandapilot website (2007). The SEAL coordinators explained that many of the worksheets were not perceived as age appropriate by staff or 'interesting, or enough for a lesson'. Therefore, the coordinators explained that they needed to adapt the materials and design new worksheets. During a follow up meeting they reported that this was very time consuming. Furthermore, because the secondary materials were downloaded from a website, they emphasised that this took further time printing the resource for members of staff. These feelings were shared by members of staff in the other SEAL pilot school. In a district network meeting, the coordinator explained they also faced similar difficulties.

4.5 Ethical considerations

During the initial SEAL meeting, in September 2007, ethical considerations were discussed. In accordance with the British Psychological Practice Guidelines (BPS, 2002) I considered a range of ethical issues. Firstly I discussed consent with key stakeholders. The evaluation was in 2 phases, all Year 7 children completed an emotional literacy checklist (Faupel, 2003) and a group of children were selected for an interview. Both phases were carried out in November and again at the end of the summer term 2008. The SEAL coordinator wrote a letter home to parents and explained the purpose of the evaluation, see Appendix 1. The parents of the children in the focus group were contacted via a letter and follow up telephone call in order to seek consent, see Appendix 2.

In addition to ascertaining parental consent, the young people themselves were asked if they would take part in the research. This is accordance with the BPS (2002, p.6) guideline:

> 'Educational psychologists should gain the informed agreement of the young person, wherever possible'.

Thus, the co-ordinators spoke to all children about the purpose of research, in order for them to make an informed choice whether to take part. Furthermore, when the co-ordinators administered the checklist, they checked whether all the young people were still happy to continue. Similarly, before I began the focus group interview I asked all the pupils whether they would still like to join in.

Another equally important ethical consideration was concerned with withdrawal. I informed the young people that they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the process. The children who filled in the checklist and the focus group were ensured that their responses would remain confidential. In addition, each child's name was anoymised for the purposes of this exploratory investigation. In the next part of this paper I will discuss the findings of this exploratory study.

5. Results

5.1 Findings from the Emotional Literacy checklist (Faupel, 2003)

A total of fifty Year 7 pupils completed the Emotional Literacy Checklist (Faupel, 2003). After analysing the results, each pupil was given an emotional literacy score. This procedure was carried out for both pre and post SEAL checklists (see Appendix 5 for pupil scores). The next stage of the analysis consisted of comparing pre and post SEAL scores.

Table 1: Comparison of pre and post emotional literacy scores

Outcome	Number of pupils	Percentage
Emotional literacy score decreased	19	38%
Emotional literacy score increased	22	44%
Emotional literacy score stayed the same.	3	6%
Did not take part in post SEAL evaluation.	6	12%

A visual representation of these scores can be found in Appendix 6.

When interpreting the scores it can be seen that while a greater number of pupils had increased their emotional literacy score, a high percentage of pupils had lower scores after the SEAL. Factors such as how people were feeling on the day will also influence the pupils score. Some young people may have had a higher post SEAL score due to a range of factors. For instance, pupils may have completed the questionnaire in a way they think other people wanted them to. It is useful to note that pupils were administered the checklist during a SEAL lesson by a member of staff. Therefore the pupils may have been influenced by their peers when completing the checklist. For instance, some children may not have wanted their peers to know how they felt to questions such as, 'I spend too much time alone' so gave an inaccurate answer.

During further analysis mean scores were obtained for both pre and post SEAL scores.

Table 2: Pre and post mean SEAL scores

Gender	Pre SEAL Emotional Literacy Mean Score (to 1 decimal place)	Pre SEAL Emotional Literacy Mean Band	Post SEAL Emotional Literacy Mean Score (to 1 decimal place)	Post SEAL Emotional Literacy Mean Band
All Pupils	72.2	Average	73.1	Average
Males	74.0	Average	73.7	Average
Females	70.3	Average	72.4	Average

When interpretating the above results it can seen that the mean score, for all pupils, slightly increased; however, the increase was not as large as would have been predicted based on previous research (Hallam et al., 2006 & Ofsted, 2007). Research by Ofsted (2007) concluded that SEAL had a positive effect of children's social and emotional

development and children were better at teamwork, more confident, and resilient after accessing the resource. The current research suggests that improvements were minor.

Another interesting finding was that the boys' scores slightly decreased through using SEAL. The boys may have been influenced by their peers when completing the checklist, so did not record their responses accurately. It has been argued that boys need to be encouraged to develop more caring traits and taught skills to avoid conflict (DoH, 2003). In addition, it has been recommended that work needs to be carried out in school aimed at exploring peer pressure and abuse that may be directed at boys who work hard in school (DoH, 2003). Therefore, it may be the case that the SEAL materials need to be adapted to target skills which are deemed as being fundamental to boys' social and emotional development. This would be an interesting area for further research.

When reflecting on using an emotional literacy checklist for the purposes of this evaluation, there are limitations in using a questionnaire in eliciting the views of children. The emotional literacy checklist consisted of 25 questions, in which children answered either, 'very like me', quite like me', 'only a bit like me' and 'not like me at all'. Cohen et al. (2006) argues that when participants pick from a number of discrete choices the findings are seldom more than a crude statistic since words may often be ambiguous and misleading. When the checklists were administered a number of young people said they were confused regarding the difference between 'quite like me' and 'only a bit like me'. Therefore, the reliability of the results is questionable as the pupils may have randomly chosen either 'quite like me' or 'only a bit like me' without understanding the difference. Consequently, it may have been beneficial to have included a number of open ended questions so that an individual, in depth response could have been obtained.

However, open ended questions also carry problems regarding data handling. Whilst open questions invite an open and honest comment from the respondent (Robson, 2002), they also are subject to problems regarding the interpretation of answers by the researcher. Furthermore, these types of questions make it difficult for the researcher to compare answers between respondents as there may be little in common to compare (Cohen et al., 2006). Hence, an advantage of using the emotional literacy checklist was that it was easier to compare the pupils' answers.

Another important issue to discuss regarding the validity of using the emotional literacy checklist was that some of the pupils may have been unable to read the questions. Therefore, it may have been the case that some respondents randomly ticked boxes because they could not read or understand the questions. On reflection if the emotional literacy checklist was used in future research; I feel it would be important for the administrator to read out the questions in order to increase the reliability of the results.

Cohen et al. (2006) suggest that if a questionnaire is going to be administered by someone rather than the researcher, then it would be useful to have a clear set of instructions for administration. In the current study, two different teachers administered the emotional literacy checklist. It is not known how the checklist was introduced to students. Therefore, if the emotional literacy checklist was used in future; it is essential a script is devised so that all respondents have access to the same information prior to filling it in.

In addition to filling in the checklist a focus group of 12 pupils were asked to take part in an interview prior to and after the implementation of SEAL. I shall now discuss the findings from both interviews.

5.2 Focus group interviews

An interview was carried out with a group of 12 young people in November 2007 and again in July 2008. I carried out the pre and post focus group interviews alone. The questions administered, and the SEAL resource sheets referred to through the pre and post focus group interviews can be found in Appendix 6, 8 and 9. Initial findings can be found in Appendix 10 and 11.

Findings showed that during the post SEAL interview, pupils could name what SEAL stood for. The young people had a greater understanding of emotions, and were able to name alternative words for emotions such as happy; for example, ecstatic and delighted. Pupils were also able to offer solutions to a range of problems, and were beginning to recognise their own achievements. However, pupils varied in their responses to a negative incident. Some pupils were able to reframe an event; whereas other pupils internalised the situation. For example, when presented with a situation where pupils needed to imagine they missed a goal at netball or football, five children said they would have missed the shot because they are always unlucky. This is an area identified for future work in subsequent SEAL lessons.

There are a number of advantages in carrying out an interview with a group of children. Firstly, focus group interviews produce a great deal of information in a short period of time (Cohen et al., 2006), and they are often seen as being less intimidating than individual interviews when working with children (Cohen et al., 2006). Furthermore, group interviews allow a discussion to develop between participants (Robson, 2002).

However, there are weaknesses in carrying out an interview to a group of young people together instead of individually. Firstly, some pupils may have been influenced by their peers in how they answered questions. Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) suggest that members of a group can exhibit different types of behaviour, and take on diverse roles. For instance some individuals may try and be the centre of attention; conversely, other members may resist taking part in group discussion. On reflection, when conducting the interviews, it appeared that different children took on different roles. One girl dominated group discussion, and another girl did not contribute at all. Therefore, the validity and reliability of the results are questionable. The girl who did not contribute may have held very contrasting opinions, but felt uncomfortable in a group situation to voice them. If this is the case then the findings are unreliable and not representative of the whole group.

Another important issue regarding the group structure was that some children were with friends, and others seem to be on their own. Cohen et al. (2006) suggests that focus groups are more successful if they are composed of relative strangers rather than friends. This may explain why some children were more open than others, and took on different roles. It was also agreed that I would facilitate the focus groups alone. As I was not a teacher at the school, or the school EP, I was a stranger to the children who formed the focus group. Therefore, it was hoped that the children would be able to be more honest and open in their responses as I was unknown to them. I will discuss the findings of this current exploratory study in the following section.

6. Reflections on SEAL study

6.1 Discussion of results

When reflecting on this current SEAL evaluation, it is useful to consider whether the present findings support previous research. Studies by Izard et al. (2001), Zins et al. (2004) argued that schools which had implemented social and emotional approaches noted improvements in children's subsequent academic performance. The present study did not track pupils' academic performance, which is a flaw of this study. Since theory suggests that emotional understanding can lead to improvements in learning (Weare, 2004) then it is essential that data is collated to measure children's academic attainment.

Another weakness of this study was that data was not collated in relation to the number of exclusions prior to and after SEAL had been implemented. Research has demonstrated that social and emotional understanding has led to reductions in number of exclusions reported (Sharp, 2000). The SEAL coordinators noted that there had been a reduction in exclusions, but this was on 'hear say' rather than supporting their claims with evidence. When considering the impact of SEAL in relation to pupil behaviour, the SEAL coordinators also reported that children were 'better behaved in lessons'. However, teaching staff were not interviewed to ascertain their opinions about pupil behaviour in lessons.

When considering the impact of the SEAL resource, the mean score for all pupils went from 72.2 to 73.1 after the introduction of SEAL. Therefore, this data suggests that the SEAL resource had only a limited impact on the children's emotional understanding, indeed only 1 point.

When interpreting the findings from the current evaluation, it is useful to consider what impact the primary SEAL had on the current research study. All the Year 7 pupils involved in the evaluation had already being taught from the primary SEAL for two years. Therefore, were the pupils emotional literacy scores initially high because they already had access to the primary SEAL materials? The primary SEAL resource is established in the target school so it not known what affect this may have had on the current findings. An interesting area of future research would be to establish a control group, which consisted of children who had not had access to the primary SEAL resource, and compare their scores on a tool such as the Emotional Literacy Checklist (Faupel, 2003) with children who had.

While there are a number of inherent flaws in the current investigation, it is useful to note that this was an exploratory study. A key aim of the research was to inform future work. While improvements in children's social and emotional well being were considered minor, the present study was conducted over a short period of time. In addition only the pupil's viewpoints were ascertained. In order to have a greater understanding of the impact of SEAL then more data needs to be considered which supplements pupil responses.

Therefore, in a meeting with key stakeholders during July 08, it was decided that during phase 2 of SEAL (September 2008 to July 2009) evidence will be collated which relates to children's levels of attainment, attendance and number of school exclusions. In addition all teachers will be surveyed via a questionnaire in order to ascertain their perceptions of pupil behaviour. It is envisaged that during the summer of 2009, a further analysis of these results will be carried out. However, in order to assess the long term

impact of the SEAL resource, it would be necessary to gather data after a longer period of time, such as three years. In the final part of the discussion I will consider the benefits of applying the RADIO (Timmins et al., 2003) when carrying out this evaluation.

6.2 My reflections on applying the RADIO model

The RADIO (Timmins et al., 2003) model provided me with a valuable framework to guide me through the process of working with a school to implement and evaluate the impact of secondary SEAL. Out of the 12 phases (Appendix 4) I feel that phase 5 was particularly useful because I agreed the focus of concern and identified the research aims and purposes with stakeholders. The concerns which the coordinators had in implementing the SEAL materials were discussed and resolved.

Equally I found phase 6 of the RADIO model (Appendix 4) important when working with the school. This phase is concerned with negotiating the framework for data gathering. When reflecting on this phase I negotiated deadlines for each stage of the research process. Therefore key targets and goals were identified which gave everyone involved something to work towards. A key feature of the RADIO model is:

> '…characterised by intense collaborative interaction between researcher and research sponsor in order to elicit, clarify and agree the direction that work with the organisation will take' (Timmins et al., 2006, p.307).

7. Conclusion

Through the course of this paper I have discussed previous theory and research associated with the link between emotional well being and improvements in behaviour and attitude to learning. In the current study I worked as part of a multi agency team to help support a school implement and evaluate the impact of the secondary SEAL materials. The evaluation consisted of 2 phases. All Year 7 pupils completed an emotional literacy checklist and a group of 12 young people formed a focus group. In both procedures the evaluation was carried out prior to, and two terms after, the introduction of the SEAL materials.

This exploratory study consisted of three central aims. Firstly, both the school and the LA were interested in assessing the impact of the SEAL resource over a period of two terms. Findings of the evaluation showed that while 44% of pupils had increased their emotional literacy score, a further 38% of pupils had lower scores post SEAL. Furthermore, the mean score for all pupils went from 72.2 to 73.1 after the introduction of SEAL. An interesting finding was that the mean score for boys went from 74.0 to 73.7 post SEAL. However, these results may be due to chance since there was no control group used to compare scores.

Results from the focus group were more positive since it appeared that pupils had a greater understanding of different types of emotions post SEAL. Another positive finding was that children were beginning to recognise their own achievements. From these results the school were able to fulfil their aims of establishing areas of future curriculum

development. Two areas which were identified for future work were shaping pupil's goals for the future and their ability to reframe negative incidents.

After feeding back the results with school staff, a further discussion developed regarding future work. The coordinators requested support in helping SEAL to become a whole school resource; further meetings have been scheduled during the autumn term of 2008. As part of this objective, the coordinators are planning to implement SEAL to Year 8 pupils; this will mean that all pupils in the school will have access to SEAL. I feel that this will help to make SEAL a part of the whole school curriculum.

An additional target for the school next year is to carry out a further evaluation in summer term of 2009. In July 2008, an Inspector from the Department Schools, Children and Families (DSCF) visited school, spoke to the SEAL coordinators, and observed a SEAL lesson. The Inspector was interested in the results of the exploratory study, and the coordinators are due to feedback findings in the autumn term of 2008. In addition, as a consequence of this meeting, the school have been invited to form part of a national advisory group to support other schools in implementing SEAL. Furthermore, in response to feedback from the DSCF Inspector, the coordinators are seeking ways to engage parents in SEAL, and to ask for their opinions regarding the impact of the resource.

Finally, it is useful to note that despite SEAL being introduced to an increasing number of schools, there is little research carried out which measures the impact of the materials. So far only a few studies have been conducted which were carried out by government agencies. I feel that before more time and money is invested in SEAL, short and long term benefits need to be investigated by independent researchers to determine the benefits of implementing the SEAL resource.

When reflecting on the findings of the study, the LA were able to consider various ways the research design of the current pilot study could be developed. For instance, in order to measure the impact of SEAL, it would be beneficial if a control group was set up in order to compare the results of children who had, versus children who had not had access to the SEAL materials. It is also important to establish the long term impact of SEAL by tracking pupil's attainment, attendance and behaviour throughout their secondary education. If schools are able to carry out in house evaluations then it is hoped that the findings can be fed back to regional and national advisory groups in order to influence future practice.

8, 620 words

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Appendix 1

Permission letter 1 (all Year 7)

October 15th 2007

Dear Parent

As part of Year 7's PSHE lessons, the school will be introducing the Secondary SEAL materials. In order to monitor the effectiveness of SEAL, we would like to give all Year 7 pupils an opportunity to complete a questionnaire during the next few weeks, and again at the end of the summer term.

If you have no objections for your child to complete the questionnaires, please could you return the slip below to your child's form teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Head Teacher

Year 7 SEAL

I give permission for my child to complete the SEAL questionnaires.

Signed _____

Parent of _____

Appendix 2

Permission letter 2 (focus group)

October 15th 2007

Dear Parent

As part of Year 7's PSHE lessons, the school will be introducing the Secondary SEAL materials. In order to monitor the effectiveness of SEAL, we would like _____ to be included in a group of pupils who are asked specific questions related to SEAL. With your permission this would take place during the next few weeks, and again at the end of the summer term.

If you have no objections to your child being chosen, please could you return the slip below to your child's form teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Head Teacher

Year 7 SEAL

I give permission for my child to be part of a focus group.

Signed _____

Parent of _____

Appendix 3: Emotional Literacy Checklist

Appendix 4

Stages of RADIO model

RADIO phases	RADIO stages	Typical activities
Clarifying concerns	1. Awareness of need.	School/ EPS/LA request or EPS suggestion.
	2. Invitation to act.	Contracting EP role in organisational development.
	3. Clarifying organizational and cultural issues.	Exploring opportunities and threats relating to initiative.
	4. Identifying stakeholders.	Agreeing processes for collaborating with stakeholders for feedback and discussion e.g. coordinating group and initiative co-ordinator.
	5. Agreeing the focus of concern.	Identifying research aims and purposes
Research methods mode.	6. Negotiating the framework for data gathering.	Issues and decisions regarding methodology, methods, resources and timescales.
	7. Gathering information.	Using agreed methods.
Organisational change mode.	8. Processing information.	Sharing findings with stakeholders.
	9. Agreeing areas for future action.	Discussing findings in relation to organisation's needs and identifying areas action for.
	10. Action planning.	Stakeholder- led planning process.
	11. Implementation/ action.	Stakeholders facilitating change within organisation.
	12. Evaluating action.	Stakeholders reviewing effectiveness of action and possibly requesting further EP involvement.

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Appendix 5

SEAL pre and post pupil scores

Pupil	Gender	Pre SEAL Emotional Literacy Score	Pre SEAL Emotional Literacy Band	Post SEAL Emotional Literacy Score	Post SEAL Emotional Literacy Band
1.	M	84	Well above average	82	Above average
2.	M	74	Average	*	
3.	F	59	Well below average	54	Well below average
4.	M	70	Average	77	Average
5.	F	76	Average	83	Above average
6.	M	66	Below average	*	
7.	M	86	Well above average	80	Above average
8.	M	78	Average	76	Average
9.	F	74	Average	69	Average
10.	F	81	Above average	89	Well above average
11.	F	72	Average	74	Average
12.	F	71	Average	*	
13.	M	59	Well below average	69	Average
14.	M	71	Average	67	Average
15.	F	61	Well below average	61	Well below average
16.	F	71	Average	78	Average
17.	M	62	Below average	71	Average
18.	F	80	Above average	83	Above average
19.	F	63	Below average	62	Below average
20.	M	86	Well above average	77	Average
21.	M	59	Well below average	*	
22.	M	72	Average	*	
23.	F	59	Well below	65	Below

			average		average
24.	M	84	Well above average	*	
25.	M	76	Average	66	Below average
26.	F	86	Well above average	65	Below average
27.	M	63	Below average	70	Average
28.	M	80	Above average	77	Average
29.	M	74	Average	74	Average
30.	M	72	Average	71	Average
31.	F	80	Above average	77	Average
32.	F	70	Average	82	Above average
33.	M	72	Average	73	Average
34.	M	73	Average	80	Above average
35.	M	81	Above average	77	Average
36.	M	72	Average	73	Average
37.	F	56	Well below average	61	Well below average
38.	**F**	**67**	**Average**	**62**	**Below average**
39.	**M**	**82**	**Above Average**	**75**	**Average**
40.	**F**	**63**	**Below average**	**74**	**Average**
41.	**F**	**75**	**Average**	**78**	**Average**
42.	**F**	**65**	**Below average**	**78**	**Average**
43.	**F**	**74**	**Average**	**78**	**Average**
44.	**F**	**76**	**Average**	**84**	**Well above average**
45.	**F**	**68**	**Average**	**63**	**Below average**
46.	**M**	**68**	**Average**	**81**	**Above average**
47.	**M**	**86**	**Well above average**	**72**	**Average**
48.	**M**	**63**	**Below**	**66**	**Below**

			average		**average**
49.	**M**	**71**	**Average**	**69**	**Average**
50.	**M**	**72**	**Average**	**72**	**Average**

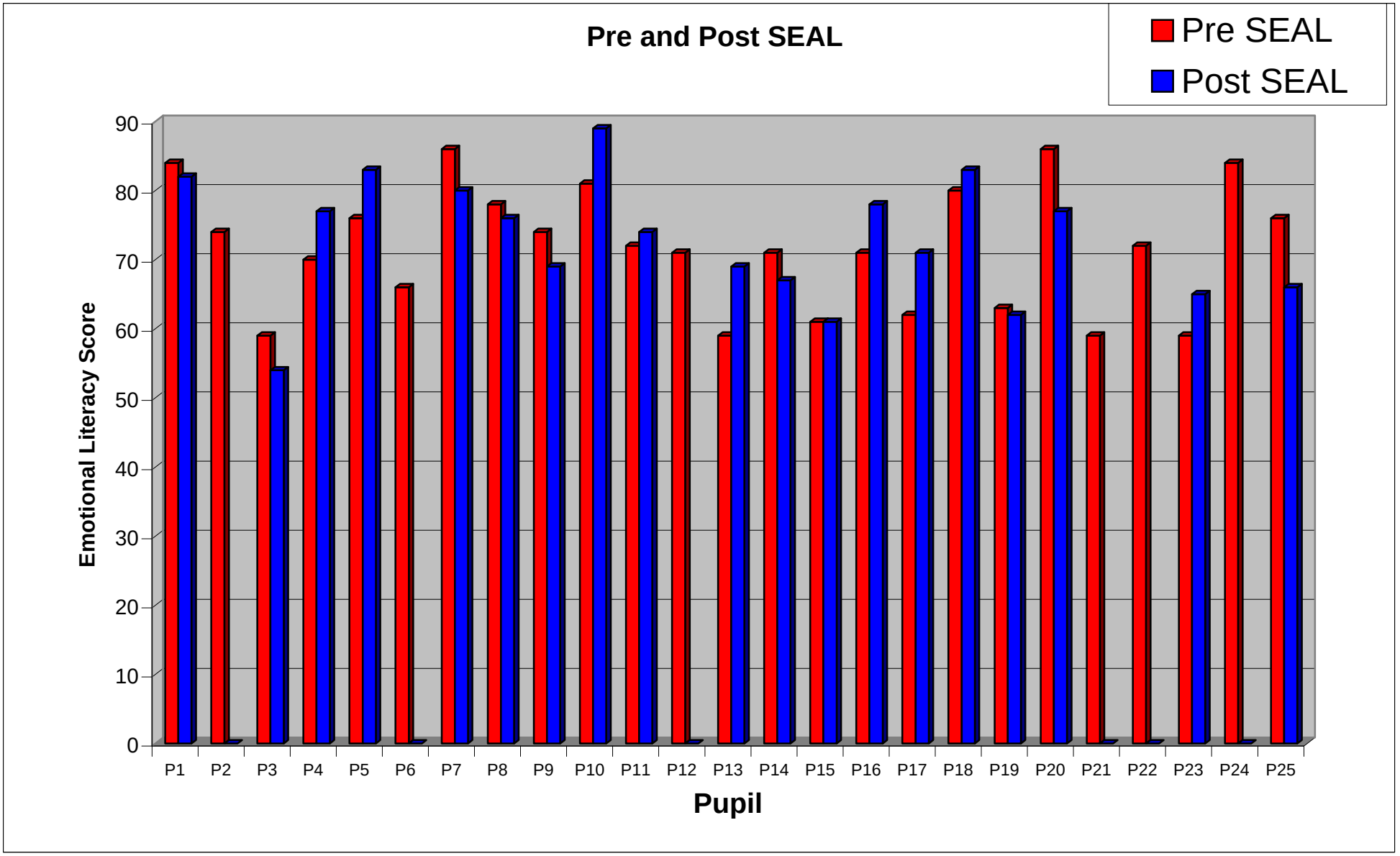
Key

- * = post SEAL emotional literacy checklist was not filled in.

- Pupils 38 to 50 formed part of a focus group. In addition to filling in the emotional literacy checklist, pupils were interviewed pre and post the introduction of SEAL.

Appendix 6

Graph to represent percentage scores


Pre and Post SEAL
Pre SEAL
Post SEAL
Emotional Literacy Score
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
P1
P2
P3
P4
P5
P6
P7
P8
P9
P10
P11
P12
P13
P14
P15
P16
P17
P18
P19
P20
P21
P22
P23
P24
P25
Pupil

Appendix 7
Questions asked during pre focus group interview

Introduction

1.1 Have you heard of SEAL?
1.2 Have you had SEAL lessons before, in Year 5 and 6?
1.3 If so, what can you remember about SEAL?

2. Self awareness

SEAL theme: place to learn

2.1 (Show photo card) how do you think the children on the photo cards are feeling?
2.2 (Show photo card) can you think of any other words to describe how the girl/ boy are feeling?
2.3 (Show photo card) can you think of what may have happened to the girl/ boy to make them feel like this?

3. Social skills & Empathy

SEAL theme: Learning to be together

3.1 When you work together in a group, how can you tell when you are working together well?
3.2 (Read a problem from resource sheet 2.13).
3.3 (Read a problem from resource sheet 2.16).

4. Motivation

SEAL theme: keep on learning

4.1 Are any of you involved in extra- curricular activities?
4.2 What would you like to do when you are older?

5. Understanding emotions

SEAL theme: learning about me

5.1 (Read a question from resource sheet 4.11)

N.B Information in brackets is an instruction to the researcher.

Appendix 8
Questions asked during post focus group interview

Introduction

1.1 Do you know what SEAL stands for?
1.2 Can you tell me a bit about what you have been learning in SEAL?

2. Self awareness

SEAL theme: place to learn

2.1 (Show photo card) how do you think the children on the photo cards are feeling?
2.2 (Show photo card) can you think of any other words to describe how the girl/ boy are feeling?
2.3 (Show photo card) can you think of what may have happened to the girl/ boy to make them feel like this?

3. Social skills & Empathy

SEAL theme: Learning to be together

3.1 When you work together in a group, how can you tell when you are working together well?
3.2 (Read a problem from resource sheet 2.13).
3.3 (Read a problem from resource sheet 2.16).

4. Motivation

SEAL theme: keep on learning

4.1 Are any of you involved in extra- curricular activities?
4.2 What would you like to do when you are older?

5. Understanding emotions

SEAL theme: learning about me

5.1 (Read a question from resource sheet 4.11)

N.B Information in brackets is an instruction to the researcher.

Appendix 9
Resource sheets referred to during pre and focus group interviews

Appendix 10

Raw data from pre focus group

Introduction

1.1 All 12 pupils had heard of SEAL.
1.2 All 12 pupils had been taught SEAL in Year 5 and 6.
1.3 Three pupils said that SEAL had something to do with "ways of working together".

2. Self awareness

SEAL theme: place to learn

2.1 All 12 pupils recognised the emotions on the photo cards.
2.2 Only one pupil said excited for happy.
2.3 Two pupils said that the girl, who looked sad, in the photo card might have "just fallen out with her mate".

3. Social skills & Empathy

SEAL theme: Learning to be together

3.1 Pupils described that you know when a team is working well when:

- "people take it in turns";
- "everyone has a job, like one writing notes"; and
- "people don't shout out".

3.2 From resource sheet 2.13, problem 1 was discussed; three pupils said they would go swimming.
3.3 From resource sheet 2.16, problem 1 was discussed; no pupils were able to come up with a solution to the situation.

4. Motivation

SEAL theme: keep on learning

4.1 Four pupils said they liked swimming, netball and football. One pupil said they played football in the school and in a local team.

4.2 One pupil said they would like to be a vet.

5. Understanding emotions

SEAL theme: learning about me

5.1 From resource sheet 4.11, problem 3 was discussed; 3 pupils answered ‘c’ and 5 pupils said ‘d’.

Appendix 11

Raw data from post SEAL focus group

Introduction

1.1 Two pupils said Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning.
1.2 One pupil talked about the work she had completed on what makes an effective group, two other pupils talked about their posters displayed in the foyer. These posters were related to the motivation theme and were drawings of their achievements.

2. Self awareness

SEAL theme: place to learn

2.1 All pupils were able to recognise different emotions in the photo cards. One girl also developed her answer from sad to, "it looks as though she's very disappointed about something".
2.2 Pupils named alternative words for emotions such as:

- "ecstatic";
- "delighted";
- "disappointed"; and
- "frustrated".

2.3 Two pupils offered alternatives for why the children in the photo cards might have been feeling sad, happy. One pupil said, "maybe she hasn't done very well in her SATs".

3. Social skills & Empathy

SEAL theme: Learning to be together

3.1 Pupils named a number of ways to work in a group:

- "compromise";
- "listening to each other";
- "taking turns"; and
- "not shouting out".

3.2 From resource sheet 2.13, problem 1 was discussed; four pupils said they would, "go swimming one day and cinema the following day".
3.3 From resource sheet 2.16, problem 1 was discussed; one pupil offered advice such as, "maybe you could invite your best friend along to football and then both of you could start to talk to other people".

4. Motivation

SEAL theme: keep on learning

4.1 Two girls said that they had started to go swimming after school and was proud about how well they were doing. Another boy was very excited when talking about how he is going to try out for Manchester United boy's team.
4.2 Pupils said they would like to be a vet, hairdresser, midwife and footballer when they leave school.

5. Understanding emotions

SEAL theme: learning about me

5.1 When referring to resource sheet 4.13, problem 4, five pupils answered 'a' and six pupils said 'd'.

CHAPTER 6: PPR5

An account of work undertaken in an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) resource base

1. Abstract

Recent government documentation, such as 'Education for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs' (DfES, 1997) and 'Guidance on Inclusive Schooling' (DfES, 2001) has outlined strategies to make education more inclusive. However, despite this guidance some researchers have questioned whether a totally inclusive approach is appropriate for all pupils on the SEN register, in particular pupils diagnosed with Austism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (Jordan, 2008). Indeed Jordan (2008) suggests that resource bases are the best model of provision for children with ASD.

This report gives an account of work undertaken in an ASD resource base. Drawing on the work of Williams and Hanke (2007) and Humphrey and Lewis (2008b), I elicited the views of 4 young people attending an ASD base by combining PCP techniques with a semi structured interview. Results showed that the young people valued their time in the resource base, and liked being able to go there at lunchtimes and breaktimes. Interestingly, one pupil reported that the resource base had "changed his outlook on education". These findings raise important implications for the future education of pupils with ASD.

A further finding was associated with work undertaken in collaboration with school staff, primarily the implementation of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) techniques. Staff found ABA a valuable tool when analysing challenging behaviours of pupils. By

using the approach, staff found significant improvements in pupil behaviour. Thus, if ABA is an effective tool, more schools should have access to training on how to implement this approach.

2. Introduction

When considering the issue of inclusion, the debate has often focused on the difference between mainstream as opposed to specialist education. Some researchers have questioned whether specialist pedagogy is needed when teaching children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) (Norwich and Lewis, 2001). Indeed, when evaluating research, Norwich et al. (2001) concludes there is a lack of evidence to support specific SEN pedagogies. Thus they suggest:

> '…that there are common pedagogic principles which are relevant to the unique differences between all pupils, including those considered to be designated as having SEN' (Norwich et al., 2001, p.324).

Therefore, it would be argued that good teaching is being skilled in differentiation for all pupils, not just those with SEN (McIntyre, 2003). However, Norwich et al. (2001) does emphasise that children with SEN need more focused teaching. The notion of focused teaching could be interpretated as the teacher having an awareness of the child's preferred learning style e.g. visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. Nevertheless, when carrying

out a literature review evaluating the issue of a specialist pedagogy for children with SEN; Lewis & Norwich (2007, p.57) concluded that:

> 'We recognised that the lack of evidence in our review to support SEN-specific teaching might be surprising as there is a persistent sense that special education means special teaching to many teachers and researchers'.

Recent government documentation, such as 'Education for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs' (DfES, 1997) and 'Guidance on Inclusive Schooling' (DfES, 2001) has outlined strategies to make education more inclusive. Indeed, it has been proposed that special schools operate an outreach service and become key learning centres, and that staff in mainstream schools become equipped to teach children with SEN (DfES, 2004). However, despite this guidance some researchers have questioned whether a totally inclusive approach is appropriate for all pupils on the SEN register (Jordan, 2008). Jordan (2008) suggests that children and young people with ASD will need specialist support, but this does not necessarily mean a segregated setting. Jordan (2008, p.13) suggests that:

> 'Resource bases are the best model, where the child with ASD belongs to his peer group teacher but has the support of staff with expertise and a 'haven' in which to recover when needed'.

Jordan (2008) makes an interesting point regarding the benefits of resource bases for children and young people with ASD. The child or young person with ASD has access to specialist support (resources and teaching), but is also able to interact with children who do not have SEN in mainstream lessons. Indeed, since children with ASD often have difficulty in communicating, (Plimey and Bowen, 2007), joining mainstream lessons would help to improve their social skills. This argument is also shared by Hesmondhalgh and Breakey (2001) .

As part of my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), I have had an opportunity to undertake specialised work experience in an ASD resource base (September 2008-July 2009), which is located in a mainstream secondary school. There are two ASD resource bases in the Local Authority (LA) and I have had an opportunity to carry out research and advise on strategies in one of the bases. The resource base was initially opened in the summer term of 2008. During this term, one pupil was on role at the resource base and the mainstream school. From September 2008, four pupils had access to the resource base and lessons in the mainstream school. There are three boys and one girl on roll, three pupils are Year 7 and one pupil Year 9. In addition, three of the pupils transferred from a mainstream primary school to the resource base, two of the pupils attended their previous school full time, whereas one pupil attended part time (due to fixed term exclusions). Lastly, one of the pupils transferred from a special school to the resource base.

This professional practice report is an account of the work I have undertaken in the resource base. Initially I will evaluate research that considers autism and the effectiveness of different forms of educational provision (mainstream, resource base support, specialist

provision). As part of my work in the resource base, I had an opportunity to carry out research for the county ASD steering group. The central aim of the research was to ascertain the views of pupils in relation to how they liked being at school (time in the resource base and in mainstream lessons).

In the latter sections of this paper, I will discuss my work in the resource base, which primarily involved the implementation of ABA. I have included this area of work in the report because it raises interesting implications for future EP practice in my service. In addition, this report is an account of work carried out in a specialist placement and introducing ABA to staff in the resource base formed a substantial amount of time during the placement. I found that staff in the resource base were positive about ABA as a technique to manage challenging behaviours. Therefore, it may be the case that staff in mainstream schools may also benefit from ABA awareness training.

3. Educational provision for children with autism

Humphrey and Lewis (2008a) argue that the issue of inclusion for children with ASD is more complex than other types of SEN. Autism has been described as a lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and interacts with other people (Batten, 2005). Therefore, a mainstream school environment brings an array of challenges for the ASD individual. Indeed the preference for routine, low sensory stimulation is in contrast to the noisy, busy environment of secondary schools. It may be assumed that if an ASD child is academically able then he or she will be able to cope with a mainstream environment. However, diffculties in social interaction may result in

ASD pupils being more likely to be bullied and experience social isolation over and above those with either no or alternative forms of SEN (NAS, 2006).

Indeed Batten (2005) suggests that impairments associated with autism may lead to high levels of anxiety in a mainstream secondary school environment. The high levels of anxiety experienced may have a significant impact on a child's behaviour. Therefore, it is necessary to consider whether a mainstream education is the most effective provision for children with ASD. Jordan (2008, p.12) asks the question whether children, who have been identified with ASD, are being educated in a mainstream setting because of the 'social and political movement towards inclusion'? Jordan (2008) suggests that there is too much emphasis placed on a child's entitlement to a mainstream education rather the appropriateness of the provision. Indeed as a society are we too focused on rights- a child's right to attend a mainstream school rather than considering the benefits of specialist provision? Are parents too quick to dismiss the advantages of a specialist provision because they feel that their child should be in a mainstream school? These issues are important to discuss when considering autism and inclusion.

Jones (2002) argues that there is relatively little evidence which examines the benefits of different forms of provision for children with ASD, but suggests that assumptions are often made regarding their effectiveness. Indeed, Jones (2002, p.32) claims:

> 'There is little evidence on which pupils benefit most from mainstream or specialist provision or how best to support inclusion; at the moment this must be assessed on

an individual basis on what is known of the pupil's needs and the resources potentially avaliable'.

Jones (2002) argues that in order for local authorities (LAs) to ascertain the outcomes for pupils with ASD attending different provisions, it would be useful to adopt a tracking document for each pupil. The document would be completed on the pupil's admission and transfer to different provisions. She suggests that the forms would be held centrally and analysed on a termly basis to yield information on the progress of pupils with ASDs for evaluation and planning purposes within an authority and at a national level.

At the surface level Jones' (2002) idea of pupil tracking appears a useful way to collate data since information will be gathered which gives an indication of each pupil's progress between different schools or provisions. However, due to the complexity of ASD (Jordan, 1999) it will be difficult to compare outcomes between different children, so while one child may make good progress in a resource base, another child may not adapt well to this form of provision. Therefore, if any generalisations are made it may be advantageous to scrutinise the outcomes of children with high functioning ASD, low functioning ASD, Aspergers Syndrome and examine how they adapt to different forms of educational provision. By categorising ASD pupils into sub groups, a crude comparison will be able to be made. Jones (2002, p.33) advocates for pupil data to be collated as she argues that:

> ‘Having good and comparable, retrospective data throughout the UK, would add substantially to our knowledge on the educational routes which pupils follow and on the outcomes at different phases of education and, ultimately, in adult life’.

Hesmondhalgh and Breakey (2001) carried out pioneering work at a mainstream secondary school in Sheffield, in which they helped set up a ASD resource base. In the beginning two children attended the resource base, but more recently the number has grown to twenty four pupils. The children attend lessons in the mainstream school, but also participate in lessons/ activities in the resource base. Initially, some staff in the school were anxious about the resource being established, feeling ill-equipped to teach the children in mainstream lessons. However, with support and advice, the resource base flourished over time.

Hesmondhalgh et al. (2001, p.63) noted the advantages of having a resource base in school:

- the base provides information for all teachers in the school;
- resource pupils receive intensive support;
- it is useful for other pupils in the school to have an understanding of autism;
- it provides a ‘haven’ for the pupils at lunchtimes; and
- an another adult is present in the base.

An objective of the base was to help pupils to become independent, and to prepare them for life after school. Indeed, the base has enabled pupils to undertake work based

experience and attend college based courses. Some of the pupils have been able to experience a variety of work based placements, such as in a law court and in the retail industry.

However, while the resource base has proven to be an asset to the school, Hesmondhalgh et al. (2001) discusses the difficulties the resource base created during the first year of opening. Some of the teachers felt that the base resulted in extra work for them, primarily because lesson plans needed to be adapted to incorporate largely visual strategies. More importantly, some of the teachers did not have adequate training before the introduction of the resource base, so they would have needed to research autism in their own time.

A significant concern was associated with the pupils behaviours. Some of the pupils in the resource base proved to be disruptive in lessons, and needed intensive support to access the curriculum. When an adult from the resource base was not avaliable the teacher felt that they needed to spend the majority of the lesson supporting them. However, adult support was removed gradually so pupils were not isolated from his or her peers in the classroom. Furthermore, it may have been the case that some teachers felt that because a pupil was from the resource base they automatically needed additional support. Hesmondhalgh et al. (2001) notes that by Easter of the initial year the majority of Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils would be expected to be independent for approximately one-third of all lessons.

Despite concerns raised about resource base provision, Jordan (2008) argues that for some individuals with ASD they will need specialist support, but this does not need to be in a separate school. Therefore, Jordan (2008) claims that resource bases are the best

model for children and young people with ASD. In addition, Jordan (2008, p.13) suggests that:

> '…there is a role for specialist schools, but they must have a better reason for their existence than that they pick up those who 'fail' in mainstream schooling, or they fit the Government's entrepreneurial vision of education'.

Jordan's (2008) vision is for specialist provision to be centres of excellence, pioneering new ways of working with children and young people with ASD. She proposes that specialist settings work with the most severe cases of ASD. Another interesting suggestion is that specialist provisions become centres of research (linked with universities) as well as with teaching.

By reviewing work by Hesmondhalgh et al. (2001) and Jordan (2008), it appears that there are many advantages of a resource base model of provision. However, as Jones (2002) argues there has been little research which attempts to investigate the benefits of different forms of provision for children and young people with ASD. Indeed the majority of research has attempted to investigate the academic achievement of children with SEN being educated in a mainstream school, (Fox et al., 2004, Farrell et al., 2005), rather than comparisons between different forms of provision for children with differing forms of SEN. Furthermore, studies have researched SEN as one group instead of examining discrete categories of SEN, such as ASD, children with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). Finally, while Hesmondhalgh et al. (2001) provides an account of benefits and challenges of setting up

a resource base, quantitative and/ or qualitative research was not carried which investigated the success of the resource base.

In 2000, Barnard et al. carried out research on behalf of the the National Autism Society (NAS) in which they ascertained the views of parents who had a child or young person under the age 20 with ASD. The main aim of the research was to investigate how satisfied parents or carers were with their child's educational provision. They sent out 2049 questionnaires and 1,110 (46%) were returned. The first 1000 surveys received were analysed. The findings showed that 73% of parents or carers were satisfied with their child's education. When children were being educated in autism specific schools (ASD resource base in a mainstream setting, or in an ASD specific school) satisfaction levels were at their highest. In addition parents with their child in an ASD specific provision were twice as likely to be 'very satisfied' (54%) than parents of children attending a resource base (23%). However, only 12% of parents with children in an unsupported mainstream primary school were 'very satisfied'. Therefore, Barnard et al.'s (2000) survey indicates that a higher number of parents or carers feel that a form of specialist provision is more beneficial for children or young people with ASD according to the sample of parents surveyed.

However, while the Barnard et al. survey (2000) provides useful information regarding provision for children and young people with ASD, it is necessary to question the reliability and validity of the results. Firstly, only 46% of the questionnaires were returned, and the first 1000 were analysed. Furthermore, the questionnaires were sent to members of the NAS only. Therefore, it is important to consider whether the results were representative of the ASD population? The results may have been more reliable if they

had been sent to parents/ carers in all mainstream, special and resource base provisions in discrete demographic areas. Following the above issue, it is not clear whether an equal number of questionnaires were sent to members with their children in either mainstream, special or resource base provision. Thus, it may be the case that only 12% of parents whose children were being educated in a mainstream setting were 'very satisfied' because only a small number of parents were contacted for their views. It is not known whether there is larger number of parents, who are members of the NAS, whose children are educated in a specialist provision. If this is the situation then this variable will have affected the reliability of the results.

A futher weakness of the Barnard et al. survey (2000), was that children and young people were not contacted themselves for their views about how they enjoyed school, and what experiences they were having such as, levels of support, friendships, and the environment they were working in. In addition to contacting parents of children and young people under the age of 20, the researchers obtained 29 completed questionnaires, and interviewed 8 adults with ASD. While this provides interesting information, the research would have been strengthened if a sample of children and young people were contacted too.

On reflection, since resource bases are being introduced in some LA's, I feel that it is important to examine Jordan's (2008) argument, that resource bases are the best model of provision for children and young people with ASD. In order to do this I feel that it is important to consider the views of the child or young person with ASD. This report is a discussion of work undertaken in a resource base, so the next section of this paper will

be an account of research undertaken to elicit the views of children and young people with ASD in the resource base.

4. Eliciting views of children and young people with ASD

4.1 Research base

Before embarking on my own research, I reviewed literature which was designed to elicit the views of children with ASD. By carrying out the literature review it provided me with areas to explore in my own research. Williams et al. (2007) carried out a study to ascertain the views of 15 mainstream pupils with ASD on what they felt were the most important features of school provision. In order to elicit the views of pupils the researchers used techniques adapted from Personal Construct Psychology (PCP), based on the work by Kelly (1955), in particular Drawing the Ideal Self (Moran, 2001). The children and young people were aged from 6 to 14 years old.

Williams et al. (2007) were interested in gathering the pupils views around two main themes; environmental features (appropriate size of building, furniture in classroom), and the qualities and characteristics of school staff (knowing each pupil, happy, friendly). Williams et al. (2007) results showed that there were two elements of provision highlighted by pupils; first being school ethos (how fun, friendly, supportive the school is). Some children expressed this view by drawing or describing the observable features that to them indicated a certain ethos. For example, one pupil said the school's moto should be "No one's perfect". The second element of provision which was shown to be important was how helpful and friendly the adults who supported them were.

When discussing their research Williams et al. (2007, p.58) commented that using PCP techniques:

> '…proved to be an accessible and valuable tool. Staff working with the individual pupils gave very positive feedback about the work'.

It was also suggested that the drawings were easily recognisable and accessible, therefore Williams et al. (2007) research appears to provide a useful approach to eliciting the views of children and young people with ASD. However, Williams et al. (2007) study is a small scale study, and therefore the findings can not be generalised to the whole ASD population. It is also not known how severe each child's ASD was; therefore PCP may be an appropriate tool only for children with high functioning autism. It would be have been interesting to have had detailed background information about each child, in particular whether they had always been educated in a mainstream setting. Furthermore, to have information about the schools such as how many pupils with ASD are on roll, would have given a broader contextual picture of how inclusive each school was.

Humphrey et al. (2008b) researched the views of 20 mainstream pupils with ASD. The pupils were aged between 11-17 years, and attended one of four mainstream secondary schools in the north-west of England. Methods identified to elicit the views of children were a combination of semi-structured interviews, drawings and pupils diaries. Pupil drawings was not a method of data collection originally planned for this study. However, one pupil drew pictures about his life in school so this information was included.

Humphrey et al. (2008b) used thematic analysis to discover key findings from their research. Themes identified were children's anxiety and stress in school, and the children's relationship with peers and teaching staff. The researchers found that pupils relationships with peers proved to be a barrier and en enabler to their successful inclusion in school. Bullying and teasing were experienced at different levels of severity. All the pupils differed in levels of additional adult support offered to them. This issue is a dliemma in many schools, as many pupils with ASD do need support, but schools do not want to mark pupils out as 'different'.

Although, the Humphrey et al. (2001) research does highlight the complexity of successfully integrating children with ASD in mainstream schools, there are limitations with this research study. The study was small scale, only four pupils took part. Furthermore, the researchers picked four mainstream schools to carry out the research in it. It is not known why these particular schools were chosen, but it does raise questions about the reliability of the research.

Nevertheless, Humphrey et al.'s (2001) study does suggest there are indeed benefits of using drawings when eliciting the views of pupils with ASD. In the Humphrey et al.'s (2001) study one pupil drew about his life in school in addition to being interviewed and filling in a pupil diary. Humphrey et al. (2008b, p.27) commented that the pictures provided a 'powerful insight' into the child's feelings about being in school. Therefore, Humphrey et al. (2008b, p.28) concluded:

> 'In the context of our study, we felt that this method might represent an innovative way of exploring the perspective of individuals who, by their nature, struggle more

than most in expressing themselves by other, more traditional means (eg. interviews)'.

Consequently, on reflection I decided to use drawings alongside a semi-structured interview as a way of gathering the views of pupils who attended the resource base. By examining previous research, I felt that a qualitiative design, utilising PCP techniques with a semi-structured interview was a more reliable tool than giving each pupil a questionnaire to fill in, for example. In the next section of this paper I will give a detailed account of how I elicited the views of the young people attending the resource base.

4.2 Methodology

There are currently four pupils working in the ASD resource base. Before carrying out any research, it was important to ascertain permission from the parents and young people (BPS, 2002). Firstly, I sent a letter to each pupils parents; this letter was agreed with stakeholders to this project, the county ASD steering group, see Appendix 1. It was also agreed with parents, stakeholders and staff in the resource base, that I would speak to the young people when visiting the resource base. Therefore, I discussed with each pupil the purpose of the research and gained their informed consent before undertaking any work. Furthermore, I explained to each pupil that they had a right to withdraw at any stage of the process (BPS, 2002).

By drawing on the work of Williams et al. (2007) and Humphreys et al. (2008b) I developed a prompt sheet to be used when interviewing each pupil, see Appendix 2. I

was interested in gaining the pupils views on transport (to and from school), the environment in the base, staff, environment outside the base, relationships with peers, and lunchtimes and breaktimes.

When reflecting on research by Williams et al. (2007) and Humphrey et al. (2008b) I also also decided to use drawings alongside a semi-structured interview. I decided to use drawings a way of providing a context to the activity so that it may help pupils to feel relaxed to speak. Indeed, Humphrey et al. (2008) commented that drawings may be a useful strategy to adopt alongside other means of data collection.

During data analysis the drawings were not interpreted per se, the results of this research were based on children's verbal answers to questions asked (See Appendix 2 for prompt sheet). However, it is helpful to refer to the children's drawings when considering the findings of this research (See Appendix 3). I shall now discuss the results of this research.

4.3 Results

All four pupils consented to the research, and information was gathered about the 6 central themes, which were drawn from Williams et al. (2007) research and aims noted in the resource bases 'mission statement'. For confidentially reasons pseudoynms have been used.

Transport

The young people travelled by taxi to school from twenty minutes up to one hour away. Each child reported that they preferred it when the same taxi took them to school each day. One pupil spoke how they got upset if a different person came to pick them up.

Environment in the base

While pupils were drawing their picture of the resource base, they spoke about how they liked being in there. All pupils said that they thought the resource base was very comfortable and quiet, and they knew the rules. They also said that they did fun activities in the resource base, and work was explained. One pupil, Joe, was very candid about his feelings towards the resource base, and remarked that the resource base had, “changed his outlook on school”. Joe said that he had been excluded from his previous school because the teachers did not understand him, and he said that the teachers understood him better in the base. Furthermore, Joe said that, “if I wasn’t here, I’d be tutored at home”.

Staff

All pupils said that they can get help when they need to in the resource base, and staff were friendly and helpful (pupil’s drew staff in their drawing of the base).

Friendships

All pupils said they had friends in and out of the base. They said they talk to their friends and play games in the resource base (pupils drew friends in their drawings).

Environment outside the base

While pupils were drawing a classroom outside the base, they also spoke about the differences between different classrooms. All pupils liked experiencing the other lessons, but said they liked to go back to the base. Emma said that the tables were in rows and it was more noisey, and less comfortable in the other classrooms.

Lunchtimes and breaktimes

All pupils said they liked being able to go to the resource base at lunchtimes and breaktimes. Joe had started to go the school canteen during lunchtime and meet up with friends, but he said that he “liked knowing I could go there if I need to”. Emma said that she liked staying in the resource base over breaktimes and lunchtimes because “it is more happy”.

In the next section of this report I will discuss how the findings of the current study relate to previous research.

4.4 Discussion

This small scale study supports previous work by Williams et al. (2007) and Humphrey et al. (2008b) regarding the use of drawings to elicit the views of children and young people with ASD. I found drawing a useful way of focusing the children to the task. As they started to draw all pupils involved started to talk about the resource base. The drawings made the process less formal. However, it was useful to note that the pupils involved in the current research enjoyed drawing and another cohort of pupils may not like this process. Therefore, alternative ways of exploring the views of ASD pupils needs to be considered for future research.

When reflecting on Hesmondhalgh et al.'s (2001) findings, that the resource base had become an asset to the school. It has been noted by staff in the current study, that the resource base had become a "haven" to the pupils and gave them somewhere to go anytime during the school day. An encouraging finding was that Joe was beginning to have the confidence to explore other parts of the school during lunchtime (canteen, football area) because he felt that he could always go to the resource base, if needed. Joe explained that:

> I know I can come here anytime, even during a lesson. I have a card I can show the teacher and I can just go and come here.

As previously noted Jordan (2008) argues that resource bases are the best model of provision for children and young people with ASD. She claims that resource bases

provide specialist support, but also allow children to have access to mainstream classes. When asking the children about whether they liked going to school, they all replied "Yes". As Joe reflected, "the teachers' understand me here" (referring to staff in the resource base). Therefore, it could be argued that children and young people with ASD do need to have access to specialist support (staff specialised in teaching pupils with ASD, resources)

Batten (2005) argues that mainstream environments can be noisy and busy, which may result in high levels of anxiety in children or young people with ASD. When discussing the differences between the resource base and classrooms outside of the base with pupils, all the children said the resource base was quieter and calmer. Furthermore, the pupils explained that although they liked experiencing some lessons outside of the base, they looked forward to going back to the resource base because it was quieter. Therefore, the current findings do suggest that the pupils benefited from having access to the resource base as well as participating in lessons outside the base.

The current research also supports and contrasts findings from the Barnard et al. (2000) survey. The Barnard et al. (2000) research showed that parents satisfaction levels were at their highest when pupils had access to autism specific support (resource base, or specialist provision). However, findings from the Barnard et al. (2000) study showed that 54% of parents were very satisfied when their children attended a ASD specific provision, compared to 23% of parents whose children attended a resource base.

On reflection, as previously noted a flaw with the Barnard et al. (2000) survey was that results were not triangulated with pupil views. Since findings in the current study indicate that pupils were happy in the resource base, it is important that research is

triangulated in order to draw any conclusions. An interesting finding in the present study was that a pupil said that he preferred being in the resource base, than to the special school he had attended at primary level. Therefore, while it is important to consult the views of parents, it is equally important to consider the voice of the child when considering their future educational provision.

On reflection, if LA's are committed to become more inclusive, then this may be an alternative to a special school context. Indeed, when talking to staff in the resource base, I had been made aware that two of the pupils were going to be educated at a local specialist provision if the resource base had not been made available to them. Since Jordan (2008) argues that resource bases are the best model of provision for children and young people with ASD, I feel that it is important that more LA's should investigate the feasibility of setting up resource bases for children with ASD. In the following section I discuss the limitations of my research.

4.5 Limitations of research

While the current findings do suggest that resource bases are an effective means of provision for children and young people with ASD (pupil satisfaction, access to specialist support, working with peers who are of similar age outside the resource base), the sample was very small so conclusions cannot be made.

The findings were also not triangulated with staff interviews (in and outside the resource base). It is not known whether there is a difference in children's behaviour in and out of the resource base. Another limitation of this study was that the children's

drawings were not analysed per se. The findings of this research were based on pupil's verbal responses. Therefore, a richer picture of children's views may have been obtained by carrying out a detailed analysis of the drawings.

Finally, on reflection it would have been beneficial to have triangulated the pupil responses with views from each set of parents. Joe reported that he had been excluded from his previous school. Therefore, Joe's parents would have been able to give a broader explanation of Joe's difficulties in his previous school, and the benefits of him attending the resource base.

As previously noted, eliciting the views of pupils was one area of work I carried out in the ASD base. In the following sections of the report I will discuss work that I did in collaboration with school staff, which primarily involved the implementation of Applied Behaviour Analysis techniques (ABA). As previously noted I have included this area of work in the report because it raises interesting implications for future EP practice in my service. I shall begin the following section of this professional report with a brief summary as to why ABA was implemented.

5. ABA

5.1 Decision to use ABA

During an initial consultation meeting with staff, the teacher in charge of the ASD resource base expressed her concerns regarding some of the pupils challenging behaviours. Some of the behaviours that were discussed ranged from screaming, eating crayons, self stimulatory behaviour, and hitting/ pushing other children. All four children

in the resource base exhibited behaviour that appeared puzzling and challenging for staff. After the teacher in charge expressed her concerns, I introduced ABA. I explained the principles and research behind ABA, and how it may be used in the resource base. During the consultation meeting I hypothesised that all the children's behaviour was fulfilling a communicative function (Yeomans, 2008). Therefore, a decision was made to implement ABA since it is an evidence based approach which aims to analyse the functional purpose of challenging behaviours. Before examining practical examples of how ABA was implemented in the resource base, I will discuss the key principles and research associated with ABA.

5.2 What is ABA?

Kearney (2008) suggests that ABA is an:

> '…approach to changing socially useful behaviors that employs scientifically established principles of learning to bring about these changes'.

In order to bring about a change in behaviour it is necessary to examine the Antecedents (what precedes the behaviour), Behaviours and Consequences (what happens as a result of the behaviour). Yeomans (2008) argues that all behaviour serves a purpose for the individual, even in cases of self harming. She claims that behaviour can be learned and changed if necessary. When examining challenging behaviour, Yeomans (2008, p.2) considers the:

- frequency (for example every one or two minutes);
- persistence (to the exclusion of eveything else);
- intensity (how hard); and
- duration (how long it lasts).

Therefore, when presented with a challenging behaviour, it is necessary to engage in different forms of data collection such as direct observation, checklists, meetings with staff, ABC and/ or ABCC (Antecedents, Behaviour, Consequences and Communicative function) charts. When the data is collated it is analysed in order to determine what the purpose is of the child's or young person's behaviour; what the child trying to communicate? In other words what are the triggers (antecedents) that lead to the child's behaviour. The next task is to change the antecedents and to teach new and acceptable behaviours (Yeomans, 2008). An example of a challenging behaviour may be when a child spits out food when he or she has had enough. In this case it would be important for the child to be taught alternative ways of communicating they have had enough food. Furthermore, it would be important to find out what food the child likes and does not like; the child may have been spitting out food that they simply do not like.

However, while ABA is an evidence based approach (Kearney, 2008), the technique is not without difficulties. As an approach ABA is very time consuming, to somebody needs to be available to carry out an objective analysis and be trained in observational techniques. Thus, a teaching assistant would need to be available to observe a child's behaviour. Indeed ABC charts need to be filled in over time, and if triggers (antecedents) are not identified immediately it may put a teacher off completing them.

It is also worth noting that an additional problem may arise when using ABA, as other children may feel envious about all the attention a particular child is receiving. Another issue is that when rewards are used to promote appropriate behaviour, the child may lose interest with a certain stimuli and the undesired behaviour may re-occur.

In addition, when ABA is used effectively and appropriate behaviour is taught, it may result in a child exhibiting a different equally challenging behaviour as they may like the attention their inappropriate behaviour causes. Finally, on reflection while ABA approaches may indeed help to promote appropriate behaviour, it does not address the underlying cause of the behaviours (Ayres et al., 2005). Indeed there may be alternative hypotheses to explain challenging behaviour drawing on psychodynamic, humantisic, biological, cognitive and ecological approaches.

Nevertheless, I had an opportunity to effectively use ABA in an ASD resource base. Before I consider practical examples of using this approach, I will examine associated research which has studied the effectiveness of ABA.

5.3 ABA research

Through his work with the 'Young Autism Project', Lovaas et al. (1973) proposed the use of behaviour therapy techniques to promote positive behaviours in autistic children. Keenan et al. (2006) suggests that before Lovass et al. (1973, p.53) autism presented:

> '…one face, that of being institutionalised, and the emphasis on the teaching of toileting, handling sleep issues…and generally keeping such persons as safe as possible so they did not harm themselves or others'.

By carrying out research, Lovaas et al. (1973) suggested that behaviour change was possible by using ABA techniques.

Lovaas et al. (1973) researched the use of behaviour therapy with twenty autistic children. The main aim of Lovaas et al.'s (1973) intervention was to reinforce appropriate behaviour (increasing social behaviours and promoting play). Lovaas et al. (1973) intervention also focused on the development of language, and the researchers attempted to decrease inappropriate behaviours (rituals and aggressive behaviour). For instance, for a child who was echolaic, Lovaas et al. (1973) introduced a programme which was designed to make speech meaningful and functional. As soon as a child was taught a name for a particular food, they would only be allowed to eat it if they asked for the food by name. At the end of treatment Lovaas et al. (1973) research found that inappropriate behaviour decreased and appropriate behaviour had increased during treatment.

Lovaas (1987) carried out a follow up study in which he compared the outcomes of a group of autistic children who had access to behaviour therapy and a control group in which behaviour modification treatment was not used. Lovaas (1987) argued that his results showed that 47% of the behaviour modification group had achieved normal educational and intellectual functioning, with normal range IQ scores. In contrast only 2% of the control group children achieved normal educational and intellectual functioning.

However, despite the positive outcomes of using the Lovaas et al. (1973) and Lovaas (1987) ABA technique, it has been highly criticised. Many flaws of the Lovaas' (1987) study are directed towards methodological weaknesses. Indeed in the Lovaas (1987) study, the children were separated into either an experimental or a control group. Toews (2007) argues that initially the children were selected into groups based upon staff availability and parental influence. Therefore, this flaw may have affected the reliability of results, since the sample may not have been representative of the autism population. Researchers such as Gresham and Macmillan (1998) have also questioned whether the sample used in Lovaas (1987) work is representative of the autism population; there was a greater number of males to females utilised in the study.

An additional weakness of Lovaas' (1987) work has been how he has reported his findings. The use of the term "normal functioning" is over stated and misleading (Toews, 2007). Toews (2007) argues that by using this term it implies that a child's autism is cured, and parents felt deeply mislead by Lovaas' (1987) comments. In addition, at intake the children in the study completed different intelligence tests, which again weakens the comparisons made between the groups in terms of intellectual functioning.

On reflection, Lovaas (1987) has been further criticised about his choice of outcome measures. Indeed Toews (2007, p.157) questions his criterion of school placement to define "normal functioning", and suggests:

> '…placement depends signifcantly on location, school district policies, and available assistance to schools. In light of this, children of equal levels of

intelligence may have achieved different placement outcomes, making it difficult to compare the effectiveness of the program with a basis on placement data'.

Finally, a key feature of the Lovaas (1987) study is that he argues that behaviour change is possible if 40 hours of intervention per week is implemented. When analysing Lovaas (1987) work it is unclear whether each autistic child in the behaviour modification group did indeed receive 40 hours of intervention per week. Nevertheless, Lovaas (1987) research allowed subsequent researchers to build on his work and recommend the use of ABA strategies to bring about a positive change for autistic children (Keenan et al., 2006).

Simpson (2001, p.69) argues that ABA is an established effective intervention for children and young people with ASD. He suggests that a strength of ABA is that it is an evidence based approach, and as such claims that:

'…there is overwhelming evidence that methods on the behaviourally based principles of ABA form the foundation of many effective individualised programs and generally bode well for achievement of desired outcomes among individuals with autism spectrum disorder'.

Nevertheless, there is indeed controversy surrounding ABA. Simpson (2001) suggests that many parents believe that ABA is the only strategy to be used with their child to the exclusion of others. Therefore, if ABA is being used for extended periods of time, it not known whether a combination of other approaches would be more successful.

The benefits of using a combination of different techniques is an interesting area which cannot be explored fully due to the constraints of a 8,000 word research paper.

When evaluating the use of ABA, researchers have also commented on the practical difficulties of implementing ABA with children who have ASD. Again, a considerable amount of time is needed to plan, and evaluate programs. Moreover, someone who is trained in the use of ABA programs needs to be available to introduce these programs.

In the next section of this paper I will discuss practical examples of how ABA was implemented in the resource base. I will also consider the strengths and weaknesses of using this approach in helping staff to change challenging behaviour in their pupils.

5.4 The use of ABA in the resource base

After explaining the central principles and research behind ABA, the teacher in charge wanted to devise a program for Emma; it was reported that Emma was pushing and/ or hitting other children, and on occasions screaming while at school. I gave staff copies of an ABC, ABCC chart and a behaviour management plan, see Appendix 4-6. During the consultation meeting I agreed to observe Emma utilising an ABCC chart. Initially, the teacher in charge felt that staff, in the resource base, did not have enough time to fill in the ABCC chart, but after negotiation she agreed for a member of staff to fill in the chart. After two weeks, a follow up meeting was arranged to collate data and fill in a behaviour management plan. The behaviour management plan outlined a plan of

action to teach Emma new behaviours. An example of how I filled in a ABCC chart, and the agreed behaviour management plan can be found in Appendix 5-6.

By analysing the data, it can be seen that Emma screamed and became distressed when hearing the school bell. Moreover, all the occasions when Emma had either pushed or hit another child was when she was walking down the corridor to go to a lesson or back to the resource base. It became apparent that Emma was hypersensitive to noise, in particular the sound of the school bell to signal the end or beginning of a lesson. It was hypothesised that Emma was communicating her sensitivity to the sound of the bell by screaming or hitting. By working with Emma, she learnt to put on a pair of ear plugs as soon as she heard the sound of the bell. When the bell finished Emma was shown a picture of a bell by an adult, and after a short period of time Emma learnt that the picture meant the bell had stopped and she removed her ear plugs. When reviewing Emma's progress six weeks after the behaviour management plan was devised, Emma had learnt an alternative response when feeling distressed by the noise. Emma had stopped pushing or hitting other children in school. In addition, Emma appeared to be much happier in school.

On reflection, the ABA approach has been found to be an effective method for understanding and changing challenging behaviours. Staff in the resource base gave very positive feedback about the effectiveness of the approach with Emma, and have began to use the technique to analyse another pupil's behaviours. Currently the staff are filling in ABCC charts in order to observe a child who is eating pencil crayons. Further reviews of pupils attending the base have been scheduled throughout the academic year 2008-2009. However, the teacher in charge expressed her concerns that staff in the other resource

base in the county had not been fortunate enough to access ABA training. This is because each resource base has a limited allocation of Educational Psychologist (EP) sessions.

Since I was a trainee undertaking specialised work experience I was able to offer additional time for consultation meetings and lesson observations. She reported that EP time had been used for routine annual review meetings. Therefore, this raises an important implication for the use of EP time. Currently, the resource base does not receive any hours from the Learning Support Team, only from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). Therefore, it may be advisable for each resource base to have time from a member of the learning or behaviour support team for review meetings, and from an EP to introduce and evaluate strategies such as ABA.

In addition, if ABA techniques are successful in helping to manage challenging behaviour, it is important that training is extended to mainstream and specialist provision. By doing this staff will be equipped with the skills to implement ABA programs. However, it is useful to note that staff in the resource found the process of filling in the ABCC charts time consuming. Hence, even if training is made available, if relevant staff do not have the time available to monitor and review progress, then strategies aimed at adapting challenging behaviour are likely to be reactive rather than proactive.

6.Conclusion

Through the course of this report I have given an account of work undertaken in an ASD resource base. On reflection, my work raises important implications for the education of children with ASD. Firstly, when eliciting the pupils views it was apparent that they enjoyed being in the resource base, and it became a 'haven' for them, somewhere they would always be welcomed. These findings support pioneering work by Hesmondhalgh et al. (2001) who set up a resource base in a mainstream secondary school in Sheffield.

However, it is useful to note that the current research was carried out on only four pupils, but nevertheless it raises important issues surrounding the education of children with ASD. It may be the case that resource bases are indeed the best model for children and young people with ASD, as they provide the child with specialist support, but also the opportunity to develop relationships with children who do not have SEN (Jordan, 2008). However, there is relatively little research which identifies the benefits of different forms of provision for children with ASD (Jones, 2002). Therefore, I feel that more research needs to be undertaken regarding the advantages and disadvantages of resource bases, specialist and mainstream environments for children with ASD, so that it may inform future policy and practice in LAs.

An equally interesting finding was associated with work undertaken in collaboration with school staff, primarily the implementation of ABA techniques. I introduced the principles behind ABA, and worked with school staff to analyse the behaviours of Emma. After a series of ABCC charts were filled in, a behaviour management plan was drawn up. After a period of six weeks, Emma's behaviour had

improved. The staff in the base found the approach very useful and effective. Therefore, this finding raises important implications for EP practice. If ABA approaches are valued by staff, it may be appropriate to consider changes to EP service delivery. Thus, it could be argued that in order to support the inclusion of children with challenging behaviours it may be beneficial for EPs to deliver training, introducing ABA approaches in the school community.

8,469 words

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Appendix 1: Permission Letter

Dear

Reflections

The County Educational Psychology Service has been asked to become involved with gathering information to support the development of the High School ASD Resources in ----------. This will inform future planning as well as helping to ensure the best possible learning opportunities for those already there.

I would like to meet with the young people within the ---------- resource to ask them about their experiences since starting at their school. This will probably take around 45 minutes.

I will be visiting school on ---------- at ----------and would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation. If you do not wish your child to be involved with this work, please contact ---------- on ----------

Thank you again for your help,

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Richards

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 2: Prompt Sheet

1. Introduction

Introduce myself and explain that the purpose of my visit is to ask them about school and their classroom (resource base). Gain informed consent before proceeding.

2. Transport

- How do you get to school?
- How long does it take you to get to school?

3. Environment in the base (drawing 1)

Ask pupils to draw their classroom and use prompts to guide the drawing:

- What furniture is in the room, what is it like?
- What is on the walls?
- What equipment/ resources are there?
- What are the noise levels like/ what can you hear?
- What are the rules/ reward systems?
- What activities are there in the resource base/ classroom?
- Do you enjoy coming to the base?

4. Staff in the resource base (in drawing 1)

Ask pupils to draw adults supporting in their classroom and use prompts to guide the drawing:

- What does the person look like?
- What do they have with them? (e.g. equipment, planner)
- What do they say/ do which helps/ does not help?
- Do they work with anyone else in the classroom?

5. Environment outside the base

- Do you go in other classrooms in the school?

Ask pupils to draw other classrooms and use prompts to guide the drawing (as above) (drawing 2).

- What do other classrooms look like? What is your favourite/ least favourite?
- Can you find your way around school to other classrooms?

6. Relationships with peers (can draw peers in drawings 1 and/ or 2).

Ask pupils to draw themselves with other pupils in the base and use prompts to guide the drawing:

- Do you have friends in the base?
- Do you have friends in school?
- Is there anyone who you don't get on with in the base?
- Do you do any extra-curricular activities?

7. Lunchtimes/ Breaktimes

- Where do you go at breaktime/ lunchtime?
- Who are you with at breaktime/ lunchtime?

Appendix 3: Pupil Drawings

Appendix 4: ABC chart

Date/ Time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequences

Appendix 5: ABCC chart

N.B Below is an example of how I filled in the ABCC chart when I visited school and observed Emma on Monday 13th October AM.

Date/ Time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequences	Communicative Function
13th October 08 9:55am	End of first lesson (Bell)	Emma puts her hands on ears- slight tapping on ear.	Emma is told to put her hands down/ stop tapping.	Emma is uncomfortable with the sound of the bell – hands on ears.
13th October 08 10:00am	Walking through corridor (Bell sounds to signal new lesson)	Emma pushing another child in corridor, screaming, appears distressed.	Emma is sent back to the resource base for pushing a pupil (put on report)	Emma appears to be anxious, distressed and protesting about the sound of the bell.
11am 13th October 08	Break time begins (Bell)	Emma looks anxious, hands clasped.	N/A	Anxious about bell – hypothesis hypersensitive to bell.

Appendix 6: Behaviour management plan

Basic information

Name of child/young person: **Emma** Date of birth: ---------

Current age: 12

Setting: **Resource Base**

Name of person(s) completing this plan: ----------

Data summary

Target behaviour described in precise observable terms	• Hitting and/ or pushing children; • Screaming.
Frequency of behaviour if appropriate/applicable	• During completion of ABCC Charts Emma pushed or hit a pupil 4 times.
Situations where behaviour is evident or where it is more likely to occur	• Walking to lessons, and going back to resource base; • distressed beginning and the end of lessons.
Situations where behaviour is not evident or where it is less likely to occur	• During the main part of the lesson.
What do you think the individual is trying to communicate?	• Distressed by noise of bell
Consequences noted when target behaviour occurs	• Put on report; • sent back to resource base; and • told off by an adult.
How effective are the current consequences? 1=very, 2=a little 3=not at all	• 3
What motivates the individual? What does s/he like doing or receiving? What preferred rewards have you identified?	• She responds well to praise; • Likes being in resource base; and • likes to draw/ colour.

Action plan

Details of positive programming to be put into place (note: you do not have to record action against all four types of positive programming)	Teaching new behaviour • Put ear plugs in when is distressed by sound of the bell.
	Substituting means of communication • Adult to use a visual symbol to signal end of bell
	Substituting more appropriate behaviour
	Assigning meaning
Changes to antecedents (if required)	
Rewards to be used	• Emma is on report, if she receives a good report, has free time to draw and colour in resource base.
How the programme will be monitored	• Record of number of incidents by staff
Reactive strategy (if required)	
How long the programme will last before it is reviewed (date for review)	• 6 weeks (half a term)
Date shared with parents/carers and their views	• October 08
Views of the child/young person	• Will enjoy having time to colour; • likes the resource base.

Signed…….(practitioner)……..date

…….….(parent/carer)……..date

Behaviour management plan taken from:

Yeomans, J. (2008) *Applied Behaviour Analysis: A Non Aversive Approach to Challenging Behaviour*. Birmingham: Birmingham University.

CHAPTER 7: REFLECTIONS

When reflecting on work included in the five PPRs it is useful to examine to what extent they contribute to future Educational Psychology (EP) practice, research, or personal development. When evaluating the outcomes of each PPR it can argued that two of the PPRs, in particular, may have contributed to the development of EP practice. Work related to the implementation of the peer mediation scheme, and the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) has made an impact on EP practice in my service. For instance, I have discussed the benefits, difficulties, and outcomes of the peer mediation service with colleagues during a team meeting. After reflecting on the planning stages, practical difficulties, and areas that the implementation process could have been improved, an EP colleague has considered these issues when helping a school to set up a service. During a recent meeting with this colleague she informed me that the peer mediation training she had delivered to all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, had been very beneficial; this had been a direct recommendation from my work.

Similarly the work I carried out evaluating the impact of ABA with children who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was also valued by EP colleagues. Although colleagues had been aware of ABA and had used the principles in their work, they found the behaviour management plan useful when negotiating targets with staff. Furthermore, the use of ABA when working with children and young people exhibiting challenging behaviour helped to prompt further discussions about delivering training to staff in mainstream as well as specialist provisions.

On further reflection it is useful to note that PPR 1 and 2 also contributed to my own professional development. Since my Educational Psychology Service (EPS) are beginning to encourage multi agency practice, I found it useful to carefully reflect on the barriers of working with other professionals when problem solving. Similarly, work carried out in PPR 2 helped to develop my role as an EP. When carrying out this work I reflected on the important role EP's can play in promoting anti-oppressive practice when working with schools and families. However, when examining PPR 1 and 2 critically they are unable to provide the reader with ways the piece of work can contribute to existing EP practice, knowledge development or research. Unlike PPR 3, 4 and 5 I did not carry out research which was comissioned by the LA, or school. Nevertheless, it is my view that PPR 1 and 2 were pertinent pieces of work as they helped me to consider my future role of an EP.

PPR 4 and 5 consisted of carrying out research for the LA. In both PPR 4 and 5 there were clear aims to my research. In both cases the outcomes of the research has made contributions to policy development, but on a wider level conclusions are made regarding future research. Indeed, in PPR 4 important issues are raised about the implementation of SEAL initatives in school. After a literature review it was found there is currently a lack of evidence investigating the short and long term benefits of implementing SEAL.

Research carried out in PPR 5 built on current research by Williams and Hanke (2007), by eliciting the views of young people with ASD by combining PCP techniques with a semi structured interview.. Like Williams et al. (2007) I found that drawings made the process less formal, and it helped to provide a structure because the pupils knew they

were going to draw two pictures. Staffordshire ASD steering group found the pupils views useful when considering the success of the base, and the possible introduction of new ASD bases in the County. Recently, a senior EP has noted that she is going to discuss the approach used in this study to other EP's in the West Midlands who specialise in working with children and young people with complex needs as way of eliciting views.

While the approach used in PPR 5 was successful, it is useful to note that the pupils enjoyed drawing and were happy to engage in this method. Another cohort of pupils may not like drawing and withdraw from research. Therefore, alternative ways of engaging children in research needs to be considered. However, the views of the pupils and the tool used to elicit them has proven valuable in helping to contribute to work of the profession. In addition since PPR 5 was based on work carried out in a specialist placement it helped to build on my own professional development. As identified through my personal development plan a key target was to work with children and young people with complex needs. Thus I have developed my own knowledge in this area through reading, practical work and critical reflection.

On reflection each PPR included in this thesis are discrete pieces of work that have made a significant contribution to the development of my role as an EP. While not all pieces may contribute to wider LA policy development, or to future research, they have made a significant contribution to my personal development as an applied educational and child psychologist.

852 words

References

Williams, J. and Hanke, D. (2007) ‘Do you know what sort of school I want?: optimum features of school provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. *Good Autism Practice*, 8 (2): 51-61.