Volume Two

Professional Practice Reports (PPRs)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 2

1.1 Structure and content of volume 2

This volume constitutes the second part of a two volume thesis, forming the written requirements for the doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Birmingham. It consists of four professional practice reports (PPRs) each concerning a different aspect of educational psychology (EP) practice. They reflect the experiences I have had as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) during my placement in a local authority during years two and three of my training. Whilst the aspects of EP practice discussed are different, they are all influenced by my commitment to ensuring that participants are given a voice in research and that different perspectives are taken into account.

Chapter 1: Introduction to volume two

Describes the service context and reflects on the contribution the PPRs have made to my practice.

Chapter 2: An investigation into factors influencing the successful reintegration and ongoing inclusion of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) into mainstream primary schools, from the perspective of teachers in the mainstream setting

This was a small-scale exploratory study. Four interviews were carried out in primary schools that had received a pupil from a pupil referral unit at a SEBD school between one and three years previously. The interviews were in two parts. In the first, interviewees were required to complete a ranking exercise of factors relating to the successful reintegration of pupils with SEBD, which

had been identified through a review of similar studies of teacher, pupil and parent perceptions. The second part was a semi-structured interview. A thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) was carried out with the data from this part of the interview.

Chapter 3: Using solution-focused brief therapy with a secondary school pupil displaying challenging behaviour

This report describes the case study of a fourteen-year-old boy (JB) with a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), attending a mainstream secondary school and displaying challenging behaviour. It discusses the relevance of a solution-focused approach to this case and the difficulties encountered. It reflects both on this particular case and the implications for Educational Psychologists carrying out solution-focused work in schools.

Chapter 4: Teacher perceptions of receiving feedback following observations: A pilot study comparing feedback using video interaction guidance (VIG) principles and standard verbal feedback

This was a pilot study carried out in a secondary school who had requested support from the educational psychology service with developing existing good practice around positive behaviour management. Three teachers were observed by an EP and given verbal feedback, as well as videoing a lesson and receiving feedback using positive examples from the video and the principles of video interaction guidance. They completed a questionnaire which used scaling questions to compare their experiences in terms of levels

of anxiety during the observation and feedback, how confident they felt in their teaching after feedback and how well they were able to reflect on their teaching as a result of the feedback. They were also asked to indicate which method they preferred and explain why.

Chapter 5: Responding to a critical incident: An analysis using activity theory of the support provided by an educational psychology service

The critical incident response in one local authority educational psychology Service was explored from the perspective of both an educational psychologist and a teacher using activity theory. The teacher and psychologist were interviewed using a third generation activity framework (Engeström, 1999) to structure the interview.

1.2 The Service Context

The service in which the work the reports discuss took place is a small urban local authority where I was on placement as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP). The service currently operates a time allocation model whereby schools receive an allocated number of sessions from an educational psychologist (EP) each academic year. The number of sessions is based on the size of the school and the perceived level of need in the school. In addition the service offers traded sessions to schools who wish to purchase additional EP time, chapter four describes a ‘development initiative’ which is traded project work carried out by a number of EPs working collaboratively with the school to support organisational change. Casework, projects and training are negotiated through Inclusion Partnership Meetings

(IPMs), which generally take place termly. These are multi-agency meetings attended by professionals such as advisory teachers, speech and language therapists, health visitor and education welfare officers as well as the EP. Priorities are decided through a discussion of pupils where there are currently concerns and the development priorities for the school.

1.3. Reflections on the professional practice reports

Whilst the reports have in part been influenced by contextual factors such as the service and the schools I have been working in, they also reflect my personal and professional interests and experiences. My interest in the reintegration of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) reflects my commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream settings. My commitment to solution focused approaches to working with young people influenced the second professional practice report where solution focused brief therapy (SFBT) was used with a pupil displaying challenging behaviour. The third professional practice report arose as a result of request from a school for support, but nevertheless reflects my commitment to empowering the adults I work with, in that the aim of the project was to support the development of reflective practice. The fourth professional practice report arose following a critical incident in one of the schools I was working in. Whilst I did not carry out the research in this particular school, the distress the incident caused and the impact in had on individuals and the school as a whole made me interested in how we can best support schools following these incidences.

As well as the influences described above, the purpose of the professional practice reports was to develop my knowledge and practice in specific areas. In particular, I am now able to provide evidence-informed advice around reintegrating pupils with SEBD, I am confident in using SFBT with young people in a therapeutic context and I was able to provide advice to the educational psychology service around supporting schools following a critical incident. I have also developed an interest in the use of video to support and develop good teaching practice in schools.

Finally, undertaking the reports has enabled me to develop research skills that are integral to the work of educational psychologists. I believe that the ability to carry out research that is rigorous and ethically grounded is part of the 'distinctive contribution' that EPs can make to an increasingly multi-professional environment.

CHAPTER TWO: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT 1 – AN INVESTIGATION INTO FACTORS INFLUNENCING THE SUCCESSFUL REINTEGRATION AND ONGOING INCLUSION OF PUPILS WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES (SEBD) INTO MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHERS IN THE MAINSTREAM SETTING

Abstract

This was a small-scale exploratory study. Four interviews were carried out in primary schools that had received a pupil from the pupil referral unit at the SEBD school between one and three years ago. The schools themselves were asked to identify an interviewee who had experience of working directly with the reintegrated pupil.

The interviews were in two parts. In the first, interviewees were required to complete a ranking exercise of factors relating to the successful reintegration of pupils with SEBD, which had been identified through a review of similar studies of teacher, pupil and parent perceptions. Factors were given a score out of 7 based on their position in the ranking and mean scores were calculated across the interviews. The second part was a semi-structured interview. A thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) was carried out with the data from this part of the interview.

The findings of both parts are discussed in relation to the literature. Implications for educational psychologists and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

2.1 Introduction

This report will begin with a discussion of policy and legislation relating to inclusion in terms of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and will consider why reintegration of these pupils is rare. It will then consider previous research, focusing specifically on factors that lead to the successful reintegration of pupils with SEBD. It will argue that legislation and teacher feelings towards this group are barriers to reintegration and that the majority of factors that influence reintegration lie within the receiving school. It will then describe a project in which teachers were interviewed about reintegration of SEBD pupils and relate the findings of this project to previous research. It will conclude that the teachers interviewed referred to factors within the receiving school as being supportive more often than support from outside the school, but also that teacher talk about this group is complicated. For example, whilst teachers were able to talk positively about supportive factors, they appeared to be suggesting that children with SEBD must 'integrate' successfully into schools by learning what is expected of them and preparing for the change in schools, rather than it being the schools responsibility to include them.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Context

Children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) could be said to differ from children with other special educational needs (SEN) in a number of ways. For example, prior to the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) they were generally given a medical diagnosis rather than being identified with a special educational need.

Indeed some of these children may still receive a medical diagnosis of ADHD. Jones (2003) considers the different ways in which social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) can be constructed and the consequences of these constructions. He suggests that pupils can be seen as either: difficult but not SEBD, difficult and SEBD, or SEBD but not difficult. This presents a more complex picture than other groups of children with SEN, and it can be assumed that whichever group a child is perceived to be in will influence how their needs are constructed and ultimately whether they are entitled to legal rights bestowed by legislation for children with SEN (Visser and Stokes, 2003).

Another difference between this group and other pupils with SEN is that they will have attended a mainstream school at some point and been excluded due to their behaviour. It is likely that this will influence perceptions of this group, and that they may be viewed less positively by teachers than children with other difficulties. In fact, research investigating teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in general indicates that they hold more negative attitudes in relation to this group, as they feel their needs are the most difficult to meet in a mainstream setting (Clough and Lindsay, 1991).

2.2.2 Integration/Inclusion: Policy and practice

There is some disagreement around the meaning of the terms 'integration' and 'inclusion' and how they differ from one another. It has been suggested by some that 'integration' may involve simply 'placing' pupils with SEN into a mainstream setting (Conway and Baker, 1996), whereas inclusion involves more than this. Hall (1996) suggests that there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the term 'integration' and

that issues around segregation can cause cognitive dissonance for professionals who, whilst they see segregation as being un-politically correct in principle, may not be opposed to it in practice. Hall defines inclusion as; attending an age-appropriate local school; sharing lessons; making friendships and developing understanding; and developing community competence. In addition, Lindsay (2007) suggests that when a child is 'integrated' they are expected to change to fit the environment, whereas when they are 'included' the environment is adapted to meet their needs.

The last government enthusiastically promoted the inclusion of children with SEN into mainstream schools. The Special Educational Needs and Disability act (DfEE, 2001) stated that children with a statement of special educational needs should always be educated in a mainstream school, unless this was either; against the wishes of their parents or, incompatible with the provision of an effective education for other children. However, whilst the current coalition government appears to be taking a somewhat different stance (expressing a desire to 'remove the bias towards inclusion' [DfE, 2011]) there are concerns that current legislation does not protect the rights of with SEBD (Visser and Stokes, 2003). It has also been suggested that teachers continue to be influenced by competing discourses when it comes to pupils with SEN (Burton et al, 2010). With schools simultaneously being encouraged to be inclusive, whilst also being put under immense pressure to achieve results. Consequently, schools are faced with what may seem an impossible task, including children with SEN, whilst achieving 'good' exam results for all young people using benchmarks that did not take into account the presence of pupils with SEN (Burton and Goodman, 2011).

2.2.3 Why should we reintegrate pupils with SEBD?

Before commencing a discussion about the factors which may support the reintegration of SEBD children into mainstream school, it is important to consider why reintegration may be a desirable outcome for these young people. It has proved difficult to evaluate the efficacy of inclusion for pupils with SEN in terms of the progress they make, in part because 'inclusion' is difficult to define (Goodman and Burton, 2010). Some have gone so far as to suggest that neither inclusion nor segregation is supported by a sound evidence base (Lindsay, 2007). Therefore, much of the argument for the inclusion of SEN pupils in mainstream schools has taken a human rights perspective. For example, Hall (1996) argues that by removing SEN children from mainstream community life, we are devaluing them, as special schools are not places that are valued by society. In addition, whilst there might not be sufficient evidence to suggest that pupils with SEBD achieve more highly in mainstream settings, there has been considerable concern about the low achievement of pupils educated in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), whose attainment is consistently below the national average (OfSTED, 1999). It has also been suggested that one weakness of specialist SEBD provision is that, because SEBD are a very diverse group, these schools are unable to effectively meet the needs of all of their pupils (Kershaw and Sonuga-Barke, 1998).

2.2.4 Why are pupils with SEBD rarely reintegrated into mainstream schools?

Despite the pressure on schools to implement inclusive practices, the reintegration of pupils with SEBD appears to be relatively rare. In 1999 Farrell and Tsakalidou reported that in 210 schools or units for pupils with SEBD in England, Wales and

Scotland around 5% of pupils were reintegrated each year. Whilst the authors reported a very small upward trend at this time, there is nothing to suggest that reintegration of SEBD pupils is now the norm. Consequently, much of the research investigating the reintegration of SEBD pupils focuses on individual schools or specific initiatives within local authorities (e.g. Toothill and Spalding, 2000; Gibbs et al, 2007; Lawrence, 2011).

It is likely that there are a number of different reasons why pupils with SEBD tend not to be reintegrated into mainstream. One of the most commonly cited is that teachers are less comfortable having SEBD children in their classroom. Chazan (1994), in a review of the literature into teacher attitudes towards SEBD, suggested that these children arouse strong emotions in teachers and can lead them to feel a sense of failure if they are unable to manage their behaviour. In addition, there is legislation relating to SEN and behaviour that may create opportunities for schools to avoid including children with SEBD due to the disruption they cause for other pupils (DfEE, 2001).

2.2.5 What factors seem to contribute to the successful reintegration of pupils with SEBD?

The following is taken from the literature relating to staff, pupil and parent perceptions of what contributes to the successful reintegration and inclusion of SEBD pupils.

I was most interested in research investigating the perceptions of those involved with reintegration so there is a bias towards qualitative and interpretivist approaches. The

limitations of this are that the studies were small-scale and generally focused on one school.

An overview of the research included is given below.

Overview of previous research

Study	Focus	Methods
Burton and Goodman (2011)	Perspectives of SENCos and support staff of factors which facilitate inclusive practice for SEBD pupils	Semi-structured interviews
Goodman and Burton (2010)	Secondary school teachers recommendations for creating a inclusive environment for SEBD pupils	Semi-structured interviews
Richards (1999)	A summary of a research project into the characteristics of schools that provide inclusive environments for children with SEBD	A literature search Formal interviews with pupils and staff
MacLeod (2001)	A description of a pilot	A literature review

	project in Wigan reintegrating SEBD children from a primary SEBD school to mainstream secondary	Analysis of statements of special educational needs Structured interviews with parents
Toothill and Spalding (2000)	An evaluation of a reintegration programme in one school for children with SEBD	Attendance at meetings Written responses from all involved parties
Visser, Cole and Daniels (2002)	A DfEE funded study of mainstream schools practice in relation to the inclusion of SEBD pupils	Review of relevant reports, research and reviews Interviews with key personnel in 30 schools An examination of policy, provision and practice in depth at 10 schools
DfES (2004)	Investigated the practices of 14 LEAs in relation to successful reintegration.	Postal questionnaires
Lawrence (2011)	An exploration of the views of pupil referral unit	Focus groups

	(PRU) and mainstream school staff regarding the reintegration of secondary school pupils.	
Parsons et al (2001)	Study of reintegration in 10 local authorities, including 10 cases that were considered to be relatively successful.	Case studies

Table 1

A number of themes emerged from the review of the literature, each of which is discussed below.

1) Support from other professionals

Support and information from other professionals was identified in a number of studies as being important for ensuring that the reintegration is successful. For example, in Toothill and Spalding's study pupils and staff were extremely positive about the support they received from the 'reintegration teacher'. However, this was a very small scale study so it is not clear whether these findings were due to the existence of the role of reintegration teacher, or whether it was due to the qualities of the individual working in this particular school.

In addition, in the Goodman and Burton (2010) study, SENCos and support staff raised a concern about lack of access to specialist services for SEBD children (e.g. assessment by an educational psychologist).

2) An inclusive school culture

Another factor that was identified in the reviewed research was that the receiving school needed to have an inclusive culture. For example, Richards (1999) concluded that a commitment by senior staff to inclusion and low exclusion is key to including these pupils. Lawrence (2011) also identified an inclusive school ethos as being essential for successful reintegration. However, an inclusive school culture is difficult to define, and as studies have largely focused on the views of senior staff within schools, it is not clear to what extent these views need to be shared by all school staff.

3) Planning and preparation for reintegration

Many of the participants in the studies reviewed referred to the importance of planning and preparation prior to reintegration taking place. For example, the staff in Goodman and Burton's (2010) study identified practical difficulties with implementing agreed behaviour plans as a major barrier to inclusion of SEBD pupils. Richards (1999) identified timetabling and allocation of staff as an important area for consideration prior to reintegration, and Gary and Noakes (1993) suggest that both agreeing time limits, and having a strategy if things do not develop as expected, are crucial.

4) Building positive relationships and a nurturing environment

The support staff interviewed in Goodman and Burton (2010) and Burton and Goodman (2011) identified that building respectful relationships, and ensuring a nurturing environment as being key to including SEBD pupils in mainstream.

5) Communication with and support from parents

The support staff in Goodman and Burton (2010) and Burton and Goodman (2011) talked about the importance of their relationship with parents in supporting the inclusion of the child with SEBD. MacLeod's (2001) report on a pilot reintegration project also identified parental support as a key factor contributing to its success, and Richards (1999) identified frequent, objective and two-way communication with parents as a characteristic of inclusive schools for SEBD children. In addition, Lawrence (2011) looked specifically at factors associated with parents and identified that engagement, a sense of responsibility and ownership, realistic views and hopes, and a positive and supportive attitude were important for successful reintegration.

6) Qualities relating to the individual member of staff working with the child

Quite a number of studies identified the qualities of individual teachers working with the pupil with SEBD as being an important factor for ensuring their inclusion. For example, senior staff in the Toothill and Spalding (2000) study indicated that they considered very carefully which class teachers pupils were placed with, selecting those whom they felt had effective classroom management. Richards (1999) also identified staff allocation as an important decision in relation to the inclusion of SEBD

pupils. However, neither of these studies is explicit about exactly what qualities are taken into account when these decisions were made.

7) A positive whole school behaviour policy

Staff in the Visser et al (2002) study of inclusive practices for children with SEBD identified a positive whole-school behaviour policy as a factor contributing to their inclusion, but the support staff interviewed in Goodman and Burton (2010) suggest that the behaviour policy must be flexible and that staff must have realistic expectations of SEBD pupils. Parsons et al (2001) also identified that a flexible approach is essential to ensuring successful reintegration.

8) Links with the special school

Toothill and Spalding (2000) suggest that links between special and mainstream schools are crucial during the initial stages of reintegration. However, in this study the staff worked for part of the time in both schools, which may not be a practical solution in other settings or authorities. Lawrence (2011) also identified on-going support for the mainstream school from staff at the pupil referral unit and clear communication between the two as essential for successful reintegration.

In summary, whilst previous legislation seems to have been designed to support inclusion, reintegration of pupils with SEBD is rare and the legislation may allow schools to avoid including these pupils. In addition, the majority of factors identified by previous research as contributing to the successful reintegration of pupils with SEBD relate to the receiving school rather than outside support that the school may

make use of, suggesting that a strong desire to include these pupils may be essential for successful reintegration.

The research questions for this project were as follows:

- What factors support the reintegration of pupils with SEBD according to mainstream school staff?
- What barriers are there are to reintegrating this group of pupils according to mainstream school staff?

2.3 Methodology

The aim of this study was to investigate the reintegration and on-going inclusion of pupils who have moved from a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) at a special school for SEBD pupils to a mainstream primary school. It was an exploratory study conducted with the support of specialist SEBD primary school with an on-site pupil referral unit (PRU). It has a social constructivist epistemology in that it assumes that language is a form of social action (Burr, 2003) and that talk creates different accounts of what the world is like (Edley, 2001). Therefore the focus was on teacher's talk about what factors are likely to lead to successful reintegration, rather than actual classroom practice.

The specialist EBD school provided a list of schools that had reintegrated a child from their PRU within the last three years. From this list seven schools were selected where the child would have been on roll for at least one academic year (so that on-going inclusion could be investigated) but less than three academic years (to ensure

that teachers would be able to remember their transition). A letter was sent to the head of each of these schools asking them to select a member of staff with experience of working with the reintegrated child (Appendix 1). This was followed up with a phone call. One school declined to take part in the study and two others did not respond to the letter and phone call. Therefore four schools took part in the study. A limitation of this approach is that if several staff had been involved with a pupil the school head teacher would have had their own criteria for selecting which staff they identified for the interview. This was evident when considering the final sample in which three of the members of staff interviewed were class teachers, one was a learning mentor and one was the head of the school. In the third interview two members of staff were interviewed together as they wished to share their combined experience.

The chosen members of staff took part in a semi-structured interview at the school. A semi-structured interview was used to allow any interesting lines of discussion that arose to be pursued, whilst still not allowing participants to determine the structure of the interview entirely (Pawney and Watts, 1987). A structured interview was not used as the purpose of the interview was 'ideas collection' rather than 'data collection' (Oppenheim, 1992). Prior to the interview the teachers were given a written summary that explained the purpose of the study and how the results would be used, and they were asked to give their consent (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2009 1.2) (appendix 2). Participants were also informed through this information sheet that they were free to withdraw from the interview at any time (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct 2009, 3.3).

The interview was in two parts, the first was a ranking exercise (appendix 3) where staff were given seven cards with factors on them relating to successful reintegration which were identified in the literature review and were asked to rank them in order of their importance. This exercise was designed to address the first research question. They were allowed to give the same ranking to two factors if they thought they were equally important but could not give the same ranking to more than two. Whilst a rating exercise may have provided more flexibility of response, it was felt that a ranked list of factors might be more useful to the schools in terms of deciding how to develop practice. The second part of the interview was structured around three open-ended questions. The first and third questions addressed the first research question around supportive factors:

- Are there any other factors that were not mentioned which you also think are important? Where would you put these factors on the scale?
- How do you think the process of reintegration could be improved, or in hindsight what do you think could have been done differently?

The second addressed the second research question around barriers to successful reintegration,

- What difficulties do you think arise when children with EBD are reintegrated into mainstream school?

The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone and the answers to the open questions were transcribed for analysis (appendix 4). Written notes were also

recorded as a back up to the recording and in one of the interviews the loss of some data on the recording meant that the written notes were used to supplement the recording. In the written notes, as far as possible, the words and phrases used by the participants were recorded. The name of the teacher and the school were not included in the transcript or on the tape and teachers were identified by means of a code (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct 2009, 1.2).

For the ranking exercise, each of the factors was given a score for each teacher (with .5 being used if teachers decided to give two items equal ranking). A mean score for each item was then calculated and used to give an overall ranking. A thematic analysis was carried out on the data from the open questions, using the phases of thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clark (2006) (appendix 5, 6 and 7). Thematic analysis was thought to be an appropriate method of analysis as it allows researchers to increase their accuracy and sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations about situations (Boyatzis, 1998).

A written summary was provided to all of the schools that took part, the special school and the educational psychology team.

2.4 Results

2.4.1 Results from the 'card sort' activity

Table II shows the overall ranking for each item in the card sort. It is interesting to note that the three items that scored most highly relate to practice in the mainstream

school rather than support from the special school or outside agencies. Indeed, links with the special school scored significantly less highly than any of the other factors.

Results from the card sort

Items	Mean Score (maximum possible score = 7)
Positive relationships and a nurturing environment	5.9
Communication with, and support from parents	5.6
An inclusive school culture	5.1
Support and information from other professionals	4.9
Qualities of individual staff working with the pupil	4.6
A positive and flexible whole-school behaviour policy	4.4
Planning and preparation prior to reintegration	3.6
Links with the special school setting	2.1

Table 2

However, there was considerable disagreement between the interviews about the importance of a number of factors. One factor in particular, “a positive and flexible

whole-school behaviour policy", led to polarised views. These were reflected in comments made during the semi-structured interview, with one interviewee commenting:

"..obviously once he was in our school he had to follow our sanctions" (T2, interview 2)

Whereas a teacher in another interview described the staff at her school as being very "adaptable" and identified this as being important when accommodating children with SEBD (T4, interview 3).

The highest level of agreement was for the two items which scored most highly overall ("positive relationships and a nurturing environment" and "communication with and support from parents") and the item which scored lowest ("links with the special school setting").

Interviewees were also asked what other factors they considered to be important but their responses to this question were considered as part of the thematic analysis.

2.4.2 Thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview questions

This was an exploratory study in an individual setting and so the aim of the analysis was to provide a thematic description of the whole data set (Braun and Clark, 2006). I will not be discussing the prevalence of the themes which were constructed as I am not assuming that a theme is more important simply because it was mentioned more

frequently, but considering whether it captures something important in relation to the research question (Braun and Clark, 2006). In addition, an assumption is made that talk creates different accounts of what the world is like (Edley, 2001), so I will be referring to what was 'talked about' and 'discussed' rather than what teachers think or believe.

A number of overarching themes were constructed, along with a number of subthemes. These are presented in the form of a thematic map (figure I.). The factors outlined in bold are overarching themes, those with a solid line indicate barriers and those with a dotted line indicate factors contributing to success.

Thematic map

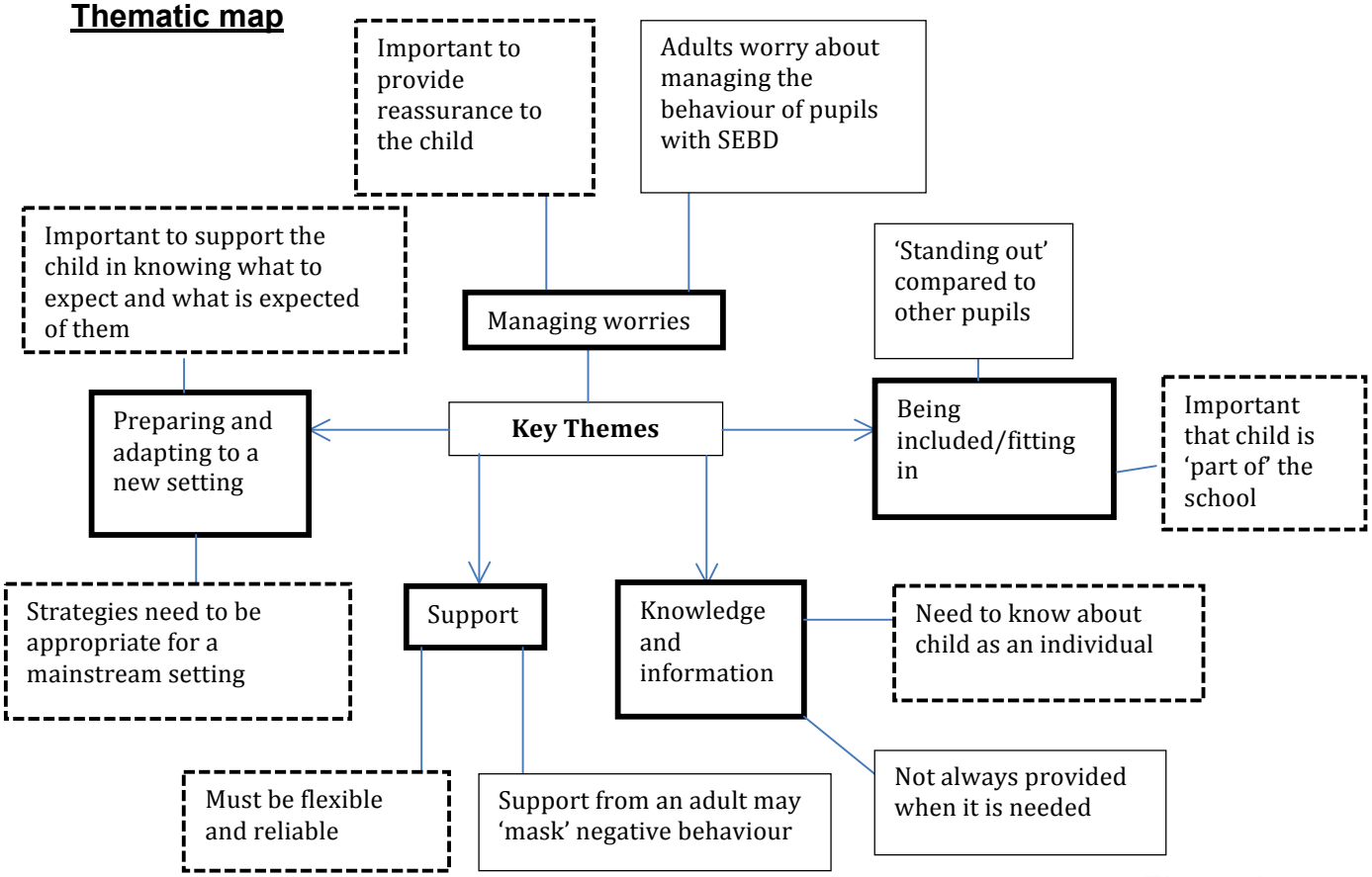


Figure 1

Each of the overarching themes is discussed below.

1) Managing worries

In the interviews teachers referred to the worries of both the child and themselves. The teacher's worries seemed to relate to the child's behaviour and whether they had the necessary skills to manage it. One teacher said;

"I suppose one of the things was my apprehension, I was always waiting for him to kick off [laughs]" (T1, interview 1)

Teachers talked about not knowing a child's 'triggers' and this seemed to cause anxiety. One teacher expressed concerns about having to treat the reintegrated child differently to the rest of her class in order to keep him in the school:

"You're very mindful of the fact that if you do this to this child [give him a sanction] he is gong to blow up, and that's wrong because you should be able to do it with both [him and the other children] but you are desperately trying to be successful with him…" (T3, interview 2).

The worries of the child were also discussed. One teacher talked about the importance of ensuring that the child feels 'listened to', as they may have experienced negative interactions with adults at a previous school (T4, interview 3). Another made links between the child's ability to trust adults and his behaviour "if he didn't trust you, that's when the bad behaviour came" (T1, interview 1). The fact that the reintegrated child was 'behind' the others in the class academically and was

sensitive to being given work which he thought was ‘babyish’ was raised in another interview (T5, interview 4).

2) Preparing for and adapting to a new setting

Teachers discussed both what had been done and what could be done to prepare the child for the new setting. They referred to the usefulness of visiting the child before reintegration “on his territory” (T1, interview 1) and the importance of the child understanding what will be expected of them in the new setting. They talked about the difficulties a child may have in adapting to a new school and aspects of the mainstream school that they felt may be problematic. For example:

“They are then expected to follow a school timetable, a strict timetable, whereas at school x they would have had a more flexible timetable and smaller teaching groups” (T2, interview 2)

Teachers discussed strategies that have been used to support the reintegrated child in the previous setting and the difficulties with implementing these strategies in a mainstream setting. For example, one teacher talked about the use of a ‘time-out’ room;

“The only room we’ve got is off this corridor here but actually it leads straight out onto the entrance hall so if he wanted, he could actually open the door and he could actually get out the main door ‘cos we haven’t got anywhere like that… and we have needed it in the past.” (T3, interview 2)

3) Support

Whilst teachers said that the phased reintegration was supportive, they expressed a concern that sometimes the presence of an extra adult meant that they were not seeing the child's 'true' behaviour. For example one teacher said, "it's quite an unclear picture when they're coming in if someone is next to them all of the time" (T3, interview 2), and another said, "because he had a carer with him… he used to sort of step in and I thought that wasn't particularly helping, because if he is going to kick off we needed to see what were the triggers" (T1, interview 1).

Teachers also talked about the support that was available after the initial reintegration process. They talked about who they could contact when things were difficult and made suggestions about how this could be improved. For example, suggesting that the support should continue for a longer period of time:

"I think to be able to ring the school where they've been and say 'he's just done this. Has he ever done this before? What did you do about it?' And then they will say yes, he has done this before and this is how we dealt with it." (T2, interview 2).

Teachers referred to the differences in staffing at a mainstream school, particularly in terms of a lack of support assistants:

"I think he might have been better with a one-to-one. Erm, because they could have planned more precisely for his needs, it's very difficult, when not only had I got three

levels of children from the G and T right the way down to your general SEN, then a child who was way out of his league" (T5, interview 4).

4) Knowledge and information

Teachers discussed the information that was provided by the previous setting and the local authority. They talked about a lack of reliability, where information was not provided when it was needed, and things were not done when they should have been. For example one teacher commented that they were not aware that a child had been permanently excluded from another school when they agreed to take him (T4, interview 3) and another said:

"I think the only thing was the outside agencies, they would say that they would do certain things and then it wouldn't happen and they had to be chased up lots of times" (T1, interview 1).

Teachers also talked about the importance of knowing the child as an individual and having as much information about them as possible prior to reintegration so that they know what to expect. One teacher referred to the item in the card sort "qualities of individual staff working with the child" and said that she felt that all of the staff who came into contact with the child needed to know them well (T4, interview 3). Another teacher said:

"sometimes there are very specific things that you need to be aware of… you need to know as much about them as you can." (T5, interview 4).

Another referred to the importance of knowing “what he was like as a little boy” so that, “I knew that was the right way to go for him” (T1, interview 1)

5) Being included/fitting in

Teachers discussed the importance of a child being part of the school and feeling that they are included. Teachers referred to their schools inclusive culture (“we’ll take anyone really” [T4, interview 3]), and the importance of a positive reaction from other children: “[the children in his class were] very, very nice children, they were very tolerant and very welcoming” (T5, interview 4). They talked about the difficulty of the child appearing to be different to other children (“[he] sticks out like a sore thumb”[T3, interview 2]), particularly in terms of receiving extra support and not being subject to the same sanctions. One teacher commented, “I wanted him to be the same as the others” (T1, interview 1).

2.5 Discussion

The findings of the study will be discussed in relation to the two research questions relating to supportive factors and barriers.

2.5.1 Factors identified as supporting the reintegration of pupils with SEBD

An inclusive school culture was identified by a number of previous studies as being important in ensuring successful reintegration, and was also referred to by the teachers in this study, particularly in terms of staff being understanding and adaptable. However, the themes constructed from the data relate to concepts such

as ‘fitting in’ and ‘adapting to a new environment’ rather than schools making changes to meet the needs of the pupil. In this way teachers seemed to be drawing on a medical model of special educational needs, whereby the child is expected to adapt to their environment rather than the environment changing to support the child (Hall, 1996; Lindsay, 2007). This is not to say that teachers did not talk about how things could be done differently for the child but this was largely framed as emotional support through establishing relationships, rather than changes which could be made to school policy or classroom practice.

Teachers also talked about the importance of managing the child’s worries and referred to positive relationships as a way of achieving this. There was some talk about the child being able to trust adults and the importance of the child knowing what to expect in the new setting. This is similar to findings from the Goodman and Burton (2010) and the Burton and Goodman (2011) studies. It is interesting that in this study (where only one participant was a member of support staff) in contrast to the Burton and Goodman studies, teachers talked less about the importance of flexibility in the behaviour policy and more about the child being treated the same as everyone else. Although teachers did talk about the importance of knowing the pupil as an individual as another supportive factor, this seemed to be seen as a way of identifying and responding to a pupil’s ‘triggers’ to avoid undesirable behaviours.

Communication with and support from parents scored very highly in the card sort activity as a supportive factor but was not referred to during the interviews. It may be that, although teachers think that support from parents would be beneficial, in reality

they find parents difficult to engage. This is merely speculation at this stage and further research into parental involvement with reintegrated children may be useful to explore this particular factor. A study by researchers at the University of Warwick on behalf of the DCSF suggests that 'hard to reach' parents need 'bespoke' strategies that are tailored to their particular group (DCSF, 2007). This suggests that understanding the particular barriers to engaging this group of parents may be an important consideration.

A contrast to previous research was the focus on the provision of information prior to reintegration, and ongoing support after reintegration, rather than prior planning (Richards, 1999; Gary and Noakes, 1993). This may be because all but one of the interviewees were class-based and so may have been less aware of any prior planning. Teachers did talk about preparation, but again this was more in terms of preparing the child for the change in environment rather than for them to make adaptations.

2.5.2 Factors identified as being barriers to the reintegration of pupils with SEBD

The themes that have been constructed from the data in this study reflect previous findings about teachers' emotions in relation to this group, in that teachers talked about challenging behaviour and worries about own competence in dealing with this (Chazan, 1994). Staff also seemed to draw on a medical model of SEN in their talk about the importance of support, and in particular 'specialist support' from those with experience and knowledge in relation to this group, suggesting that they see these

children as being qualitatively different to children with more straight-forward 'behaviour problems' (Jones, 2003). This reflects the findings of Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) who found that whilst two thirds of teachers said they were in favour of inclusion in principle, over a quarter said they did not have the skills, time or training to implement inclusive practice effectively.

Teachers talked about the role of the support worker as a potential barrier to successful reintegration as they said it can make it difficult for them to see how the child may behave when he/she was not supported by an adult. They also talked about the presence of the support worker making it harder for the child to 'fit in' with the school behaviour policy and culture. Research into the role of outside support staff in the classroom suggests that they can be seen as a potential 'threat' to a teachers' autonomy and status in the classroom, and that support staff often feel they are invading a teacher's 'territory' (Thomas, 1992). Research also suggests that there is little time for communication between outside support staff and teachers, so sharing expectations is difficult (*ibid.*). There is a suggestion that in order for support staff to effectively support inclusion they need to feel fully engaged with planning and have a close partnership with teachers (Roaf, 2003). This is something that would be extremely difficult to achieve in the case of reintegration of children with SEBD. However, the teachers interviewed in this study did have some suggestions about how the support could be used differently, stating that they would prefer to be able to contact staff in the other setting fairly informally but over a longer period of time. This may help to overcome the issues discussed above, whilst still providing teachers with the support and information they say they need.

Teachers also talked about their frustration when they felt external agencies had been unreliable or had not communicated important information. This may be linked to concerns about competence and a feeling that 'specialist' knowledge is needed to adequately support these children.

2.5.3 Methodological issues

Whilst the findings of this study are interesting and should prove useful in terms of developing practice in relation to children with SEBD, it remains an exercise in collecting ideas rather than providing a definitive list of potential factors on which to focus. The themes were constructed through the process of analysis and as such are subject to researcher bias. In addition, whilst a couple of the interviewees commented on the usefulness of the card sort to help them think about the issues, it may have been that it served to 'prompt' teachers to give particular answers during the second part of the interview. However, the fact that issues unrelated to those in the card sort were raised in the second part of the interview suggests that this was not the case. Particular areas of interest for future research may be; the role of the support worker in the reintegration process; managing the worries of adults and children prior to and during reintegration; the involvement of parents in the reintegration process and how best to facilitate information sharing and communication between settings.

2.6 Conclusions and implications

This study has raised some interesting questions not only about what factors teachers say contribute to the successful reintegration of children with SEBD, but also how teachers talk about this group more generally. Whilst teachers talked about there being a need to support these young people emotionally and having concerns that they are able to integrate successfully, they did not refer to changing their classroom practices to include them. This may be because they are unsure about their skills in relation to this group. It would be interesting to investigate further how teachers say they feel in relation to this group more generally, perhaps including those teachers without direct experience of reintegration as part of the sample.

Given that this group present significant challenges in the classroom it is likely that educational psychologists (EPs) will be asked to be involved with these children. In these cases it would therefore be useful to develop an idea of how this group of young people are constructed by teachers, through studies such as this one, in order to start discussions with the new school about 'including' the child versus the child 'adapting' to the setting.

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Appendix 1: Letter to head teachers

Address

18th November 2011

Dear X,

I am a trainee educational psychologist currently working in X whilst completing a doctorate in applied child and educational psychology at the University of Birmingham. I am conducting a research project looking at the reintegration of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties into mainstream school, and specifically what factors help to make this successful. I am working with X School as part of this project and they have identified your school as having successfully reintegrated a pupil within the last three years.

I would like as part of this project to interview a class teacher with experience of working with the reintegrated pupil to gain their perspective on what is needed to ensure the reintegration is successful. The interview will be around 30 minutes long. I expect that the outcomes of the project will be useful to both X School and schools that receive reintegrated pupils in the future.

I would be grateful if you could identify a member of staff who would be suitable for this interview. If you would like to contact me to arrange a time for the interview or to ask any questions I am available via email at X by telephone on X, or by post at the X Centre. Otherwise I will be in touch by Monday 28th November to arrange a suitable date.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Hewett

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 2: Information for participants

An investigation into teacher perceptions of factors influencing the success of the reintegration and ongoing inclusion of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) into mainstream primary schools

This project will make up part of my thesis for my doctorate at the University of Birmingham. I am interested in gathering teachers' views of the reintegration of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. I am interested in this group in particular because evidence suggests that schools find their reintegration more challenging than children with other difficulties.

You have agreed to be interviewed because you have some experience of reintegration. We will not be referring to specific children in the interview, I am interested in your views more generally about what may make reintegration more successful.

I am recording the interview and will use this to write a transcript. Your name and the name of your school will not be included in the transcript, instead you will be identified using a code. If you would like to see a copy of the transcript from your interview you are welcome to do so and my contact details are given at the bottom of this sheet. The tapes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the X Centre and the transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer.

You are welcome to withdraw from the interview at any point and if you do so your data will not be included in the project.

I will be sending a summary of my findings to your school after the project has been completed.

Thank you for agreeing to take part.

Ruth Hewett
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Contact details:
****
****

Appendix 3: Card sort

Support and information from other professionals	Planning and preparation prior to reintegration	Positive relationships and a nurturing environment
Communication with, and support from, parents	Qualities of individual staff working with the pupil	Links with the special school setting
A positive and flexible whole-school behaviour policy	An inclusive school culture	

Questions:

1) Are there any other factors that we have not mentioned which you think are important?

2) What difficulties do you think arise when children with EBD are reintegrated into mainstream school?

3) How do you think the process of reintegration could be improved?

Appendix 4 – Example transcript

T1 Transcipt

Me: Firstly, are there any other factors that you would kind of add to that.. that are maybe more specific to your experience.. I know that's quite a hard question

T1: Erm, making … oh, I nearly said his name… making him feel wanted actually… and easing his worries

Me: Yeah

T1: And sometimes setting out expectations

Me: So is there anything specific you have done in the past to achieve those things?

T1: Well what I did was I met him at the school…

Me: Oh yeah..

T1: and I took him a photograph of the class and the people he would be working with so we could talk about that, and a school jumper and a few other things. As I said I met him on his territory and then he showed me around so that broke the ice. I went through the children and talked about what we were going to do so he was all prepared, and then we talked about our school… so that's how I did it.

Me: So it was important, you felt, to do that at the school he was currently at…

T1: Yeah, so it was just one-to-one rather than with all the other children…

Me: …all in one go. Ok, so if we take… shall we take these two as separate? Making him feel wanted and easing his worries.. erm… oh and then there was making expectations clear … this was part of those two wasn't it…

T1: Yeah

Me: So where would you put that on the scale of importance?

T1: Well, that all comes there really, the planning and preparation… the photographs and the jumper and by doing that you needed to speak to the parents…

Me: Yeah

T1: …to find out what he was like as a little boy, you know, and it I'm talking to them I knew that was the right way to go for him [unclear] he worried about what was going to come next all the time

Me: Ok, what about easing his worries, where would you put it? I mean, I know these things are sort of linked… would you put them in the same sort of place?
T1: Yeah, I think it was all about him worrying because [unclear] one thing that came out was that if he didn't like you, if he didn't trust you, that's when the bad behaviour came it, it was very important that I went and met him and he got to know me so it wasn't unknown…

Me: so I suppose another there is kind of understanding him.. as an individual

T1: Yeah

Me: So what difficulties do you think arise from trying to reintegrate these types of children… in particular, as opposed to children with other kinds of difficulties?

T1: Erm, well I suppose one of the things was my apprehension, I was always waiting for him to kick off basically [laughs] which didn't happen, I have to say! But that was more.. because he had a carer with him.. he used to sort of step in and I thought that wasn't particularly helping, because if he is going to kick off we needed to see what were the triggers, and so stopped coming in a lot sooner than was originally planned..

Me: Oh right, because you wanted him to be…

T1: I wanted him to be the same as the others, so…. But that was always my biggest worry.. and also whether, once he was in and knew what we expected of him, that his own behaviour issues would come back.. because he is a very cleaver child. They haven't but that was our worry..

Me: yes, that was certainly something that came out of previous studies as well.. Ok, last question, is there anyway you think the process of reintegration for these pupils could be improved?

T1: Well, it's the only one I've done so it's very hard to compare.. I've got nothing to compare it to..really… erm?

Me: Well, is there anything in this case specifically that could have been done, in hindsight, which you think 'well, actually that might have made things a bit easier?'

T1: Well, I think the only thing was the outside agencies, they would say that they would do certain things and then it wouldn't happen and they had to be chased up lots of times, that was it really..

Me: So it was communication, and then expectations being met…

T1: Yeah

Me: Anything else relating to these questions?

T1: Not really..

T2 and T3 transcript:

Me: So firstly, are there any other factors that aren't part of that that you think were important?

T2: Ongoing support and a network

T3: yes, because although we got support for the odd day, as soon as we took him on, the support disappeared

Me: So ongoing support from outside of school?

T2 and 3: Yeah

Me: From the special school?

T3: … now he is close to being excluded we are struggling to get any support at all… he's sort of been reintegrated into this school and then.. get on with it really

T2: I mean, initially we had our arm twisted, to take this child from , you know, school x and then we had the exclusions team and the head came from the special school and they said there would be lots of support etc. but then once we'd had him integrated we had support

[Unclear]

T3: … he started in December…

T2: December he did two days with support and half days and then he did three days the next week until it built up, then he did one day with support, one day without support

T3: And that transition was actually very good, but then it goes from that to being in the school, all the time, without anything…

Me: So gradual transition you think is good, it helped, but…

T3: You see we had no support from exclusions team or school x once [unclear] so at the end of January that was it..

Me: yes, so I suppose it's kind of like at what point do you say it's worked? So ongoing support, thank you. So, anything else? So ongoing support, where would you put that on the ranking?

T3: There I think, support from other professionals.

Me: So put it alongside that, but make it ongoing support from other professionals.

So what difficulties do you think there are with from reintegrating children with these needs as opposed to reintegrating children with other needs like learning difficulties?

T2: Disruption really, they usually come with behavioural problems

T3: They come from school x and obviously [unclear] but their behaviour compared to the rest of the children there might be very good, but put them into a class of 29 children, you've got more children for a start who are extremely well behaved, it's one child then, who sticks out like a sore thumb. Whereas, put them with peers similar to themselves then they may not be as severe and I think the disruption that causes them…

Me: The other children?

T3: Yeah…

T2: They are then expected to follow a school timetable, a strict timetable, whereas at school x they would have had a more flexible timetable and smaller teaching groups

T3: And more adults. There's a lot of changes going from one school to the other and nothing in between really..

Me: Hmm, there's a massive difference between the settings, so they might be doing very well in one setting… anything else?

Me: One of the reasons I am interested in this is because they are reintegrated less often than children with learning difficulties…

T2: I think really that because they do tend to come with behavioural difficulties we have to protect the children we have here. So this flexible.. we can't really have that

T3: Although, I think at times, you know, we are definitely getting a bit more flexible because we are desperate to succeed and we are desperate to keep this child. So you do find yourself becoming more flexible, and I'm his class teacher, and I know, that you try desperately .. because it gets to a point, where you follow the behaviour policy, and ours is where we give them a warning and a yellow card, then they get a red card, as soon as T gets the first warning, that's it

he'll rattle through within a matter of minutes – because as soon as you have said that he will refuse, he will be rude to you, he'll ignore you., and he'll rattle through it. Whereas the other children, they will get that and that's as much as they will need for the rest of the day. Although we have had success with that now, now if you give him a warning he will try hard to put it right, so he has got better in that way but as his class teacher, because I know as soon as I've given that first warning I'm going to lose him, then you try and hold off and hold off. Whereas the other children, if they are across the room, fiddling with a book and you say 'don't do that, else you'll get a warning' and you're very mindful of the fact that if you do this to this child he is gong to blow up, and that's wrong because you should be able to do it with both but you are desperately trying to be successful with him..

T2: You are and you do tend to try more…

T3: ..and that's not good for the other children, cos they see that … of course there are things that if you see, as you would with any other child, you do give a warnings and sanctions for straight away, like throwing something across the classroom cos, there's no way I would let that go, it's just the mindless sort of, you know, the constant distractions…

T2: the low level disruption..

T3: You know, that kids do but the other children you would say straight away to just leave it.

Me: Yes, that's definitely a difficulty isn't it.

T2: The thing is, I think when they are at school x, or an EBD-type school, they are in very small groups, possibly two or three members of staff and if they are disruptive they are taken to another area for like 'time-out' and we haven't got that facility in a mainstream school so that is then difficult to move the child, you know, we haven't got the extra staff to police that, to be able to move him from the classroom before it gets to a, you know, a major incident. We haven't got the staff to do it and we haven't got the resources or the room.

T3: I mean there's this particular boy, and his brother's just been taken to school x and he came to me about two weeks ago and he said he doesn't like it because they shut you in the cardboard boxes and I said 'the cardboard box? What's that?' and he said you can't get out, you can't do anything in there and he said that's where you go and that's very much like what we need for T but there is nowhere in this school to out him. The only room we've got is off this corridor here but actually it leads straight out onto the entrance hall so if he wanted, he could actually open the door and he could actually get out the main door cos we haven't got anywhere like that .. and we have needed it in the past

Me: Again, it's the difference in the different settings.

T2: The strategies that they use aren't going to be very successful in that we can't implement them here, they are not applicable here but sometimes we need that here. Cos, you know, one day they are at that school and the next day they're here and I mean, we've integrated them slowly and they've got support but…

Me: that leads quite nicely into my next question which is, ways you think that the process of reintegration would be improved or what could have been done differently

T2: I think longer… longer reintegration with more support..

T3: what happened in terms of lunchtimes? Was there support then?

T2: Yeah, the lady who came with him used to stay for lunchtimes. First of all – I've got it here – we did two half days with support, then two full days but with support and the support stayed and had lunch with him actually. Then we did three days with support, whole days and then three days with support, one day without support and then full time but it was still, I felt, not long enough. I think he could have done with a Monday and a Friday with support for a lot longer or possibly the middle of the week…

T3: Because, basically, this child, he will behave if you're sat next to him and if we had adults in school who could sit by him all the time, his reintegration would be a lot more successful but we haven't got that we've got two adults to a class, we haven't got a spare person to sit with him an that's where Miss X comes in and sits with him because he struggles with that and the success we've had with that class [Unclear} but the success in terms of the rest of the class being disrupted, he didn't misbehave as much.. um, it's quite an unclear picture when they're coming in if someone is next to them all of the time, then it can't be sustained..

Me: yes, so maybe the support could be used a bit differently..

T2: I think what would have been very useful when we did have him full time was if we were having problems to be able to pick the phone up and say we need one of your workers to come and support. I mean, they did say that they would do that but when we did ring…

T3: Did we ever ask about the sanctions they used?

T2: Yes, we did, we had those charts, that did happen. We followed their sanction chart, which was, I can't remember now, the support worker used those and then we used to carry that on and he used to take that back with him but obviously once he was in our school he had to follow our sanctions..

Me: maybe there was a difficulty changing from that..

T2:… he was there [school x] longer than he should have been, I think because it was before July and we had the summer holiday. [unclear] because he has four

siblings so it was finding a school in the location .. and a school that had got space.

Me: so another issue was that he had been quite a long time at school x and then..

T2: and I think coming back in, after being a long time at school x, although he followed the timetable there, it wouldn't have been as intense as it is here.

Me: ok, so is there anything you want to add to those three questions? We talked about other factors which might help to make it successful, erm, difficulties and then how the process could be improved..

T3: It would be useful to just pick up the phone and say, you know, have you got any advice, I mean our expertise really is in a mainstream school, we don't really go to that sort of extreme, do we? If there was some sort of outreach, you know, call, and say we need some help with this child, can you think of anything we could do? I mean there's exclusions but…

T2: yes, sometimes they don't always know that individual child

T3: yes, that's a bit too far up really. I mean, they are experienced and our experience doesn't really cover the sort of severe behavioural issues …

T2: I think to be able to ring the school where they've been and say 'he's just done this, has he ever done this before, what did you do about it?' and then they will say yes, he has done this before and this is how we dealt with it.

T3: I mean really, they are the professionals, they do this day in and day out, where we've got one child that we … it's very different to us but for them it's a normal, everyday thing so it would be helpful to be able to draw on that expertise

T2: I think it would be useful for the class teacher, or even myself, to go and spend a day with him there, to see how they work with him. I mean I would find that very useful.

Me: yeah, and also meet him in a familiar environment..

T3: yeah, and perhaps we might also in that instance pick up, some of the behaviours they didn't display on their days here. If we could go and watch and see, we might know what to expect.

T2: I think that might be something to think about for the future.

T4 Transcipt

Me: so firstly, are there any other factors that you think are important that weren't included in that..

T4: I suppose it's not just individuals working with that child, in a school like this everybody had something to do with him really

Me: so anyone who came into contact with him really..

T4: and everybody really comes into contact with all the children, on Friday afternoons we mix all the children into different groups so that really every teacher gets to know every child over the year so it's the whole school staff really.

Me: yeah, umm, secondly, what difficulties do you think there are with reintegrating children with these needs as opposed to reintegrating children who've been to some other form of specialist provision.

T4: well, he didn't actually make it as far as the PRU

Me: Right..

T4: so really the experience he had at his previous school was perhaps more relevant when he first came to us he showed no feelings at all. He was not rude, he was fine with other children but not with adults. He didn't understand when an adult was joking, he'd obviously never come across that before. I'd say something and the children would all know that I was joking but he wouldn't understand whereas now he joins in. Also, the thought that he was being listened to, breaking some of these beliefs

Me: So it was relationships with adults that were important?

Me: Finally, could the process of reintegration have been improved, or with hindsight was there anything which could have been done differently?

T4: well, I mean, there could have been a lot more communication, I mean the previous school were excellent in the information they provided but we didn't know anything about him … but I don't really know whose fault that was…

Talk about inclusive school culture

T4: I mean we will take anybody – teachers are adaptable

T5 Transcript:

T5: In my experience, that – flexible whole school behaviour policy – is very important, that they actually feel part of the school, and not sectioned in anyway or picked out as being different.

Me: yeah, but having that flexibility

T5: yes, yes

T5: I would say that this school is very inclusive, we have children with a huge range of different problems and their needs are identified and they are all part of the school and we make allowances for certain children but they are still expected to be part of the whole school. Do you know what I mean? Everybody in the whole school knows everybody else's sort of foibles, if you like and it's quite accepted as well.

Me: so now I've just got some kind of broader questions, the first one is, are there any other factors that you think are important based on your experience, that help reintegration to be successful?

T5: I think it depends on the class that they are reintegrated into, the children that they are going to be working with, erm, obviously if you have a difficult class then it's harder to reintegrate the child. The child that I had in particular, that I reintegrated back in from school x, was a super class, very, very nice children, they were very tolerant and very welcoming. There were no, you know, "bad apples" if you like, for want of a better phrase. There weren't any really naughty children and that really helped – that he didn't have anyone to kick off against. So that could potentially be a problem.

Me: Yes, that links quite nicely to my next question actually, which is, what particular difficulties do you think there are with reintegrating this group of children as opposed to children with learning difficulties or physical difficulties or something like that?

T5: erm, I think it's probably because they are very temperamental, you never know what is going to push them over the edge and it could be something very simple, erm, I mean he was quite violent at first, because he had seen a lot of violence at home and also he didn't seem to have… I didn't have a problem with him at all, but he seemed to have a problem with women. As he had a problem relating to his mum, do you know what I mean? There are, sometimes there are very specific things that you need to be aware of. Erm, and, you just don't know what's going to trigger.. you need to know as much about them as you can. Erm, I think if it's a physical disability it's more of a, you know, it's the layout of the room but when it's like an emotional trauma if you like or an emotional problem you just don't know what's going to trigger what off. Erm, this child was actually integrated into my year group, which is lower than the year group he should have been in, but because educationally he just hadn't got the skills he was the age of a year one child it was very difficult because the work he could actually achieve at was different to the work the rest of class were doing. So you had to take that very, very carefully because if the rest of them were doing fractions and he was on number bonds to ten – he didn't want to do that because that was babyish but he couldn't do it, so it was very much sort of planning so it wasn't obvious that he was doing different work … but there are all those sort of things to consider.

Me: which is more difficult to plan for because you don't know about it til he gets there.

T5: that's right, and when he was first integrated he came in every, say Wednesday morning, for so many weeks… we weren't really.. the communication wasn't brilliant so we weren't sure what he had been doing, what he could be expected to do. So it was more about keeping him in the classroom, keeping him calm really, rather than actually developing his learning. So you've got kind of a step there, do you know what I mean? You can't pick up his learning and run with it because you've got to get him into the classroom first so there's a gap if you like…

Me: that leads really nicely to my next question, which is, is there anyway which you think the reintegration process could be improved or is there anything with hindsight which you think could have been done a bit differently for him?

T5: erm, yeah, I think he might have been better with a one-to-one. Erm, because they could have planned more precisely for his needs, it's very difficult, when not only had I got three levels of children from the g and t right the way down to your general SEN, then a child who was way out of his league. It's very difficult, if he'd have had a one-to-one even for the first few months they would have been able to adapt planning and that might have helped. Also I don't think the information from the school was very good, I really didn't, he had several assigned carers, I don't know what they call them – support – and they changed constantly, I could never get to the bottom of it. So that could have been improved.

Appendix 5: Stages of thematic analysis

Phase one	**Familiarising yourself with the data** Immersion through repeated active reading Taking notes and marking ideas for coding
Phase two	**Generating initial codes** Working systematically through the data set and identifying interesting aspects of the data items that may form the basis of repeated patterns across the data set.
Phase three	**Searching for themes** Sorting different codes into potential themes. Starting to think about the relationships between codes, and between different levels of themes (e.g. main overarching themes and sub-themes within them.)
Phase four	**Reviewing themes** Reviewing at the level of the coded data extracts (do they form a coherent pattern?) Producing a 'thematic map'. Considering the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set.
Phase five	**Defining and naming themes** Identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about. Determining what aspects of the data each theme captures. Considering how the each of the themes fits into the overall 'story' you are telling about the data.
Phase six	**Producing the report** Providing sufficient evidence for the themes within the data. Embedding extracts that capture the essence of the point being demonstrated in the analytic narrative.

Braun and Clark (2006) – Phases of thematic analysis

Appendix 6 – Example of phase two of thematic analysis

Transcript 1:

T1: Erm, making … oh, I nearly said his name… making him feel wanted actually… and easing his worries T1: And sometimes setting out expectations T1: Well what I did was I met him at the school… T1: and I took him a photograph of the class and the people he would be working with so we could talk about that, and a school jumper and a few other things. As I said I met him on his territory and then he showed me around so that broke the ice. I went through the children and talked about what we were going to do so he was all prepared, and then we talked about our school… so that's how I did it. T1: Yeah, so it was just one-to-one rather than with all the other children…	**1) The importance of providing reassurance to the child** **2) Need to sure child understands school expectations** **3) Need to prepare the child for the unknown**
T1: …to find out what he was like as a little boy, you know, and it I'm talking to them I knew that was the right way to go for him [unclear] he worried about what was going to come next all the time T1: Yeah, I think it was all about him worrying because [unclear] one thing that came out was that if he didn't like	**1) Need to understand the child's unique past** **2) Child worries about the unknown** **3) Child does not trust adults**

you, if he didn't trust you, that's when the bad behaviour came it, it was very important that I went and met him and he got to know me so it wasn't unknown…	
T1: Erm, well I suppose one of the things was my apprehension, I was always waiting for him to kick off basically [laughs] which didn't happen, I have to say! But that was more.. because he had a carer with him.. he used to sort of step in and I thought that wasn't particularly helping, because if he is going to kick off we needed to see what were the triggers, and so stopped coming in a lot sooner than was originally planned.. T1: I wanted him to be the same as the others, so…. But that was always my biggest worry.. and also whether, once he was in and knew what we expected of him, that his own behaviour issues would come back.. because he is a very cleaver child. They haven't but that was our worry..	**1) Teacher's worries about behaviour** **2) Not seeing child's 'true' behaviour during transition** **3) Not knowing what child's 'triggers' are** **4) Not wanting child to be treated differently to other children**
T1: Well, it's the only one I've done so it's very hard to compare.. I've got nothing to compare it to..really… erm? T1: Well, I think the only thing was the outside agencies, they would say that they would do certain things and then it wouldn't happen and they had to be chased up lots of times, that was it really..	**1) Lack of reliability from outside agencies**

Transcript 2:

T2: Ongoing support and a network T3: yes, because although we got support for the odd day, as soon as we took him on, the support disappeared	**1) Need support in the long term when things are difficult** **2) Difficult when support disappears after initial transition**

T3: … now he is close to being excluded we are struggling to get any support at all… he's sort of been reintegrated into this school and then.. get on with it really T2: I mean, initially we had our arm twisted, to take this child from , you know, school x and then we had the exclusions team and the head came from the special school and they said there would be lots of support etc. but then once we'd had him integrated we had support [Unclear] T3: … he started in December… T2: December he did two days with support and half days and then he did three days the next week until it built up, then he did one day with support, one day without support T3: And that transition was actually very good, but then it goes from that to being in the school, all the time, without anything… T3: You see we had no support from exclusions team or school x once [unclear] so at the end of January that was it..	**3) Lack of reliability from outside agencies/other professionals** **4) Gradual increase in time spent at new school is useful**
T2: Disruption really, they usually come with behavioural problems T3: They come from school x and obviously [unclear] but their behaviour compared to the rest of the children there might be very good, but put them into a class of 29 children, you've got more children for a start who are extremely well behaved, it's one child then, who sticks out like a sore thumb. Whereas, put them with peers similar to themselves then they may not be as severe and I think the	1) **Children with SEBD 'stand out' compared to other children** **2) Effects of disruption on peers** **3) Difficulties adapting to new setting** **4) Lack of extra adult support in mainstream** **5) Inappropriateness of mainstream school behaviour policy for EBD children**

disruption that causes them… T2: They are then expected to follow a school timetable, a strict timetable, whereas at school x they would have had a more flexible timetable and smaller teaching groups T3: And more adults. There's a lot of changes going from one school to the other and nothing in between really.. T2: I think really that because they do tend to come with behavioural difficulties we have to protect the children we have here. So this flexible.. we can't really have that T3: Although, I think at times, you know, we are definitely getting a bit more flexible because we are desperate to succeed and we are desperate to keep this child. So you do find yourself becoming more flexible, and I'm his class teacher, and I know, that you try desperately .. because it gets to a point, where you follow the behaviour policy, and ours is where we give them a warning and a yellow card, then they get a red card, as soon as T gets the first warning, that's it he'll rattle through within a matter of minutes – because as soon as you have said that he will refuse, he will be rude to you, he'll ignore you., and he'll rattle through it. Whereas the other children, they will get that and that's as much as they will need for the rest of the day. Although we have had success with that now, now if you give him a warning he will try hard to put it right, so he has got better in that way but as his class teacher, because I know as soon as I've given that first warning I'm going to lose him, then you try and hold off and hold off. Whereas the other children, if they are across the room,	**6) Guilt about treating SEBD children differently to others**

fiddling with a book and you say 'don't do that, else you'll get a warning' and you're very mindful of the fact that if you do this to this child he is gong to blow up, and that's wrong because you should be able to do it with both but you are desperately trying to be successful with him.. T2: You are and you do tend to try more… T3: ..and that's not good for the other children, cos they see that … of course there are things that if you see, as you would with any other child, you do give a warnings and sanctions for straight away, like throwing something across the classroom cos, there's no way I would let that go, it's just the mindless sort of, you know, the constant distractions… T2: the low level disruption.. T3: You know, that kids do but the other children you would say straight away to just leave it.	
T2: The thing is, I think when they are at school x, or an EBD-type school, they are in very small groups, possibly two or three members of staff and if they are disruptive they are taken to another area for like 'time-out' and we haven't got that facility in a mainstream school so that is then difficult to move the child, you know, we haven't got the extra staff to police that, to be able to move him from the classroom before it gets to a, you know, a major incident. We haven't got the staff to do it and we haven't got the resources or the room. T3: I mean there's this particular	**1) Difficulties adapting to new setting** **2) Lack of extra staff in mainstream setting** 3) **Strategies used in specialist setting inappropriate for mainstream setting**

boy, and his brother's just been taken to school x and he came to me about two weeks ago and he said he doesn't like it because they shut you in the cardboard boxes and I said 'the cardboard box? What's that?' and he said you can't get out, you can't do anything in there and he said that's where you go and that's very much like what we need for T but there is nowhere in this school to out him. The only room we've got is off this corridor here but actually it leads straight out onto the entrance hall so if he wanted, he could actually open the door and he could actually get out the main door cos we haven't got anywhere like that .. and we have needed it in the past T2: The strategies that they use aren't going to be very successful in that we can't implement them here, they are not applicable here but sometimes we need that here. Cos, you know, one day they are at that school and the next day they're here and I mean, we've integrated them slowly and they've got support but…	
T2: I think longer… longer reintegration with more support.. T3: what happened in terms of lunchtimes? Was there support then? T2: Yeah, the lady who came with him used to stay for lunchtimes. First of all – I've got it here – we did two half days with support, then two full days but with support and the support stayed and had lunch with him actually. Then we did three days with support, whole days and then three days with support, one day without support and then full time but it was still, I felt, not long enough. I think he could have done with a Monday and a Friday with support	1) **Need in-school support for longer** 2) **Not seeing 'true' behaviour from child** **3) Lack of extra staff in mainstream setting** **4) Need for access to ongoing support from specialist setting**

for a lot longer or possibly the middle of the week… T3: Because, basically, this child, he will behave if you're sat next to him and if we had adults in school who could sit by him all the time, his reintegration would be a lot more successful but we haven't got that we've got two adults to a class, we haven't got a spare person to sit with him an that's where Miss X comes in and sits with him because he struggles with that and the success we've had with that class [Unclear} but the success in terms of the rest of the class being disrupted, he didn't misbehave as much.. um, it's quite an unclear picture when they're coming in if someone is next to them all of the time, then it can't be sustained.. T2: I think what would have been very useful when we did have him full time was if we were having problems to be able to pick the phone up and say we need one of your workers to come and support. I mean, they did say that they would do that but when we did ring…	
T3: Did we ever ask about the sanctions they used? T2: Yes, we did, we had those charts, that did happen. We followed their sanction chart, which was, I can't remember now, the support worker used those and then we used to carry that on and he used to take that back with him but obviously once he was in our school he had to follow our sanctions..	**1) Inappropriateness of strategies from specialist provision for a mainstream setting**
T2:… he was there [school x] longer than he should have been, I think because it was before July and we had the summer holiday. [unclear] because he has four siblings so it	**1) Difficulty adapting to a new setting**

was finding a school in the location .. and a school that had got space. T2: and I think coming back in, after being a long time at school x, although he followed the timetable there, it wouldn't have been as intense as it is here.	
T3: It would be useful to just pick up the phone and say, you know, have you got any advice, I mean our expertise really is in a mainstream school, we don't really go to that sort of extreme, do we? If there was some sort of outreach, you know, call, and say we need some help with this child, can you think of anything we could do? I mean there's exclusions but… T2: yes, sometimes they don't always know that individual child T3: yes, that's a bit too far up really. I mean, they are experienced and our experience doesn't really cover the sort of severe behavioural issues … T2: I think to be able to ring the school where they've been and say 'he's just done this, has he ever done this before, what did you do about it?' and then they will say yes, he has done this before and this is how we dealt with it. T3: I mean really, they are the professionals, they do this day in and day out, where we've got one child that we … it's very different to us but for them it's a normal, everyday thing so it would be helpful to be able to draw on that expertise	1) **Lack of expertise in mainstream school in relation to SEBD** 2) **Need for ongoing support from specialist setting**
T2: I think it would be useful for the class teacher, or even myself, to go and spend a day with him there, to see how they work with him. I mean I would find that very useful.	1) **Need to understand strategies used by staff in specialist provision** 2) **Not seeing 'true' behaviour of**

T3: yeah, and perhaps we might also in that instance pick up, some of the behaviours they didn't display on their days here. If we could go and watch and see, we might know what to expect. T2: I think that might be something to think about for the future.	**child**

Transcript 3:

T4: and everybody really comes into contact with all the children, on Friday afternoons we mix all the children into different groups so that really every teacher gets to know every child over the year so it's the whole school staff really. T4: well, he didn't actually make it as far as the PRU T4: so really the experience he had at his previous school was perhaps more relevant when he first came to us he showed no feelings at all. He was not rude, he was fine with other children but not with adults. He didn't understand when an adult was joking, he'd obviously never come across that before. I'd say something and the children would all know that I was joking but he wouldn't understand whereas now he joins in. Also, the thought that he was being listened to, breaking some of these beliefs	1) **All school staff need to know about child's needs** 2) **Previous negative experiences of school** 3) **Previous negative experiences with adults** 4) **Needs to feel listened to**
Notes taken from interview: Parents did not trust school, previous experiences had been bad. Pupil saw himself as being badly behaved. 'We didn't know he'd been permanently excluded' 'We'll take anyone really' Our staff are very adaptable	1) **Pupil's negative views of self** 2) **Lack of communication from previous setting** 3) **Inclusive school culture** 4) **Staff need to be willing to change to accommodate child**

	5) Parent's negative views of school are a barrier

Transcript 4:

T5: In my experience, that – flexible whole school behaviour policy – is very important, that they actually feel part of the school, and not sectioned in anyway or picked out as being different.	**1) Importance of child feeling included**
T5: I would say that this school is very inclusive, we have children with a huge range of different problems and their needs are identified and they are all part of the school and we make allowances for certain children but they are still expected to be part of the whole school. Do you know what I mean? Everybody in the whole school knows everybody else's sort of foibles, if you like and it's quite accepted as well.	1) **Importance of child being included** **2) All staff need to be aware of children's needs**
T5: I think it depends on the class that they are reintegrated into, the children that they are going to be working with, erm, obviously if you have a difficult class then it's harder to reintegrate the child. The child that I had in particular, that I reintegrated back in from school x, was a super class, very, very nice children, they were very tolerant and very welcoming. There were no, you know, "bad apples" if you like, for want of a better phrase. There weren't any really naughty children and that really helped – that he didn't have anyone to kick off against. So that could potentially be a problem.	1) **Other difficult children in the class can cause problems with behaviour** 2) **Positive responses from other children are supportive**
T5: erm, I think it's probably because they are very temperamental, you never know what is going to push them over the edge and it could be something very simple, erm, I mean he was quite violent at first, because he had seen a lot of violence at home	1) Not knowing child's 'triggers' is diffcult **2) Need to understand individual child's unique past**

and also he didn't seem to have… I didn't have a problem with him at all, but he seemed to have a problem with women. As he had a problem relating to his mum, do you know what I mean? There are, sometimes there are very specific things that you need to be aware of. Erm, and, you just don't know what's going to trigger.. you need to know as much about them as you can. Erm, I think if it's a physical disability it's more of a, you know, it's the layout of the room but when it's like an emotional trauma if you like or an emotional problem you just don't know what's going to trigger what off. Erm, this child was actually integrated into my year group, which is lower than the year group he should have been in, but because educationally he just hadn't got the skills he was the age of a year one child it was very difficult because the work he could actually achieve at was different to the work the rest of class were doing. So you had to take that very, very carefully because if the rest of them were doing fractions and he was on number bonds to ten – he didn't want to do that because that was babyish but he couldn't do it, so it was very much sort of planning so it wasn't obvious that he was doing different work … but there are all those sort of things to consider.	**3) Child's academic difficulties create problems fro planning**
T5: that's right, and when he was first integrated he came in every, say Wednesday morning, for so many weeks… we weren't really.. the communication wasn't brilliant so we weren't sure what he had been doing, what he could be expected to do. So it was more about keeping him in the classroom, keeping him calm really, rather than actually developing his learning. So you've got kind of a step there, do you know what I mean? You can't pick up his learning and run with it because you've got to get him	**1) Lack of communication from previous setting** **2) Importance of knowing child's individual needs**

into the classroom first so there's a gap if you like…	
T5: erm, yeah, I think he might have been better with a one-to-one. Erm, because they could have planned more precisely for his needs, it's very difficult, when not only had I got three levels of children from the g and t right the way down to your general SEN, then a child who was way out of his league. It's very difficult, if he'd have had a one-to-one even for the first few months they would have been able to adapt planning and that might have helped. Also I don't think the information from the school was very good, I really didn't, he had several assigned carers, I don't know what they call them – support – and they changed constantly, I could never get to the bottom of it. So that could have been improved.	1) **Need for more support from other adults** 2) **Lack of reliability from other agencies** 3) **Importance of knowing child's individual needs** 4) **Lack of communication from previous setting**

Appendix 7: Example of phase four - reviewing themes

Transcript 1:

T1: Erm, making … oh, I nearly said his name… making him feel wanted actually… and easing his worries

T1: And sometimes setting out expectations

T1: Well what I did was I met him at the school…

T1: and I took him a photograph of the class and the people he would be working with so we could talk about that, and a school jumper and a few other things. As I said I met him on his territory and then he showed me around so that broke the ice. I went through the children and talked about what we were going to do so he was all prepared, and then we talked about our school… so that's how I did it.

T1: Yeah, so it was just one-to-one rather than with all the other children…

T1: …to find out what he was like as a little boy, you know, and if I'm talking to them I knew that was the right way to go for him [unclear] he worried about what was going to come next all the time

T1: Yeah, I think it was all about him worrying because [unclear] one thing that came out was that if he didn't like you, if he didn't trust you, that's when the bad behaviour came it, it was very important that I went and met him and he got to know me so it wasn't unknown…

T1: Erm, well I suppose one of the things was my apprehension, I was always waiting for him to kick off basically [laughs] which didn't happen, I have to say! But that was more.. because he had a carer with him.. he used to sort of step in and I thought that wasn't particularly helping, because if he is going to kick off we needed to see what were the triggers, and so stopped coming in a lot sooner than was originally planned..

T1: I wanted him to be the same as the others, so…. But that was always my biggest worry.. and also whether, once he was in and knew what we expected of him, that his own behaviour issues would come back.. because he is a very cleaver child. They haven't but that was our worry..

T1: Well, it's the only one I've done so it's very hard to compare.. I've got nothing to compare it to..really… erm?

T1: Well, I think the only thing was the outside agencies, they would say that they would do certain things and then it wouldn't happen and they had to be chased up lots of times, that was it really..

Transcript 2:

T2: Ongoing support and a network

T3: yes, because although we got support for the odd day, as soon as we took him on, the support disappeared

T3: … now he is close to being excluded we are struggling to get any support at all… he's sort of been reintegrated into this school and then.. get on with it really

T2: I mean, initially we had our arm twisted, to take this child from , you know, school x and then we had the exclusions team and the head came from the special school and they said there would be lots of support etc. but then once we'd had him integrated we had support

[Unclear]

T3: … he started in December…

T2: December he did two days with support and half days and then he did three days the next week until it built up, then he did one day with support, one day without support

T3: And that transition was actually very good, but then it goes from that to being in the school, all the time, without anything…

T3: You see we had no support from exclusions team or school x once [unclear] so at the end of January that was it..

T2: Disruption really, they usually come with behavioural problems

T3: They come from school x and obviously [unclear] but their behaviour compared to the rest of the children there might be very good, but put them into a class of 29 children, you've got more children for a start who are extremely well behaved, it's one child then, who sticks out like a sore thumb. Whereas, put them with peers similar to themselves then they may not be as severe and I think the disruption that causes them…

T2: They are then expected to follow a school timetable, a strict timetable, whereas at school x they would have had a more flexible timetable and smaller teaching groups

T3: And more adults. There's a lot of changes going from one school to the other and nothing in between really..

T2: I think really that because they do tend to come with behavioural difficulties we have to protect the children we have here. So this flexible.. we can't really have that

T3: Although, I think at times, you know, we are definitely getting a bit more flexible because we are desperate to succeed and we are desperate to keep this child. So you do find yourself becoming more flexible, and I'm his class teacher, and I know, that you try desperately .. because it gets to a point, where you follow the behaviour policy, and ours is where we give them a warning and a yellow card, then they get a red card, as soon as T gets the first warning, that's it he'll rattle through within a matter of minutes – because as soon as you have said that he will refuse, he will be rude to you, he'll ignore you., and he'll rattle through it. Whereas the other children, they will get that and that's as much as they will need for the rest of the day. Although we

have had success with that now, now if you give him a warning he will try hard to put it right, so he has got better in that way but as his class teacher, because I know as soon as I've given that first warning I'm going to lose him, then you try and hold off and hold off. Whereas the other children, if they are across the room, fiddling with a book and you say 'don't do that, else you'll get a warning' and you're very mindful of the fact that if you do this to this child he is gong to blow up, and that's wrong because you should be able to do it with both but you are desperately trying to be successful with him..

T2: You are and you do tend to try more…

T3: ..and that's not good for the other children, cos they see that … of course there are things that if you see, as you would with any other child, you do give a warnings and sanctions for straight away, like throwing something across the classroom cos, there's no way I would let that go, it's just the mindless sort of, you know, the constant distractions…

T2: the low level disruption..

T3: You know, that kids do but the other children you would say straight away to just leave it.

T2: The thing is, I think when they are at school x, or an EBD-type school, they are in very small groups, possibly two or three members of staff and if they are disruptive they are taken to another area for like 'time-out' and we haven't got that facility in a mainstream school so that is then difficult to move the child, you know, we haven't got the extra staff to police that, to be able to move him from the classroom before it gets to a, you know, a major incident. We haven't got the staff to do it and we haven't got the resources or the room.

T3: I mean there's this particular boy, and his brother's just been taken to school x and he came to me about two weeks ago and he said he doesn't like it because they shut you in the cardboard boxes and I said 'the cardboard box? What's that?' and he said you can't get out, you can't do anything in there and he said that's where you go and that's very much like what we need for T but there is nowhere in this school to out him. The only room we've got is off this corridor here but actually it leads straight out onto the entrance hall so if he wanted, he could actually open the door and he could actually get out the main door cos we haven't got anywhere like that .. and we have needed it in the past

T2: The strategies that they use aren't going to be very successful in that we can't implement them here, they are not applicable here but sometimes we need that here. Cos, you know, one day they are at that school and the next day they're here and I mean, we've integrated them slowly and they've got support but…

T2: I think longer… longer reintegration with more support..

T3: what happened in terms of lunchtimes? Was there support then?

T2: Yeah, the lady who came with him used to stay for lunchtimes. First of all – I've got it here – we did two half days with support, then two full days but with support and the support stayed and had lunch with him actually. Then we did three days with support, whole days and then three days with support, one day without support and then full time but it was still, I felt, not long enough. I think he could have done with a Monday and a Friday with support for a lot longer or possibly the middle of the week…

T3: Because, basically, this child, he will behave if you're sat next to him and if we had adults in school who could sit by him all the time, his reintegration would be a lot more successful but we haven't got that we've got two adults to a class, we haven't got a spare person to sit with him an that's where Miss X comes in and sits with him because he struggles with that and the success we've had with that class [Unclear} but the success in terms of the rest of the class being disrupted, he didn't misbehave as much.. um, it's quite an unclear picture when they're coming in if someone is next to them all of the time, then it can't be sustained..

T2: I think what would have been very useful when we did have him full time was if we were having problems to be able to pick the phone up and say we need one of your workers to come and support. I mean, they did say that they would do that but when we did ring…

T3: Did we ever ask about the sanctions they used?

T2: Yes, we did, we had those charts, that did happen. We followed their sanction chart, which was, I can't remember now, the support worker used those and then we used to carry that on and he used to take that back with him but obviously once he was in our school he had to follow our sanctions..

T2:… he was there [school x] longer than he should have been, I think because it was before July and we had the summer holiday. [unclear] because he has four siblings so it was finding a school in the location .. and a school that had got space.

T2: and I think coming back in, after being a long time at school x, although he followed the timetable there, it wouldn't have been as intense as it is here.

T3: It would be useful to just pick up the phone and say, you know, have you got any advice, I mean our expertise really is in a mainstream school, we don't really go to that sort of extreme, do we? If there was some sort of outreach, you know, call, and say we need some help with this child, can you think of anything we could do? I mean there's exclusions but…

T2: yes, sometimes they don't always know that individual child

T3: yes, that's a bit too far up really. I mean, they are experienced and our experience doesn't really cover the sort of severe behavioural issues …

T2: I think to be able to ring the school where they've been and say 'he's just done this, has he ever done this before, what did you do about it?' and then they will say yes, he has done this before and this is how we dealt with it.

T3: I mean really, they are the professionals, they do this day in and day out, where we've got one child that we … it's very different to us but for them it's a normal, everyday thing so it would be helpful to be able to draw on that expertise

T2: I think it would be useful for the class teacher, or even myself, to go and spend a day with him there, to see how they work with him. I mean I would find that very useful.

T3: yeah, and perhaps we might also in that instance pick up, some of the behaviours they didn't display on their days here. If we could go and watch and see, we might know what to expect.

T2: I think that might be something to think about for the future.

Transcript 3:

T4: and everybody really comes into contact with all the children, on Friday afternoons we mix all the children into different groups so that really every teacher gets to know every child over the year so it's the whole school staff really.

T4: well, he didn't actually make it as far as the PRU

T4: so really the experience he had at his previous school was perhaps more relevant when he first came to us he showed no feelings at all. He was not rude, he was fine with other children but not with adults. He didn't understand when an adult was joking, he'd obviously never come across that before. I'd say something and the children would all know that I was joking but he wouldn't understand whereas now he joins in. Also, the thought that he was being listened to, breaking some of these beliefs

Notes taken from interview:
Parents did not trust school, previous experiences had been bad.
Pupil saw himself as being badly behaved.
We didn't know he'd been permanently excluded before he arrived.
'We'll take anyone really'
Our staff are very adaptable

Transcript 4:

T5: In my experience, that – flexible whole school behaviour policy – is very important, that they actually feel part of the school, and not sectioned in anyway or picked out as being different.

T5: I would say that this school is very inclusive, we have children with a huge range of different problems and their needs are identified and they are all part

of the school and we make allowances for certain children but they are still expected to be part of the whole school. Do you know what I mean? Everybody in the whole school knows everybody else's sort of foibles, if you like and it's quite accepted as well.
T5: I think it depends on the class that they are reintegrated into, the children that they are going to be working with, erm, obviously if you have a difficult class then it's harder to reintegrate the child. The child that I had in particular, that I reintegrated back in from school x, was a super class, very, very nice children, they were very tolerant and very welcoming. There were no, you know, "bad apples" if you like, for want of a better phrase. There weren't any really naughty children and that really helped – that he didn't have anyone to kick off against. So that could potentially be a problem.
T5: erm, I think it's probably because they are very temperamental, you never know what is going to push them over the edge and it could be something very simple, erm, I mean he was quite violent at first, because he had seen a lot of violence at home and also he didn't seem to have… I didn't have a problem with him at all, but he seemed to have a problem with women. As he had a problem relating to his mum, do you know what I mean? There are, sometimes there are very specific things that you need to be aware of. Erm, and, you just don't know what's going to trigger.. you need to know as much about them as you can. Erm, I think if it's a physical disability it's more of a, you know, it's the layout of the room but when it's like an emotional trauma if you like or an emotional problem you just don't know what's going to trigger what off. Erm, this child was actually integrated into my year group, which is lower than the year group he should have been in, but because educationally he just hadn't got the skills he was the age of a year one child it was very difficult because the work he could actually achieve at was different to the work the rest of class were doing. So you had to take that very, very carefully because if the rest of them were doing fractions and he was on number bonds to ten – he didn't want to do that because that was babyish but he couldn't do it, so it was very much sort of planning so it wasn't obvious that he was doing different work … but there are all those sort of things to consider.
T5: that's right, and when he was first integrated he came in every, say Wednesday morning, for so many weeks… we weren't really.. the communication wasn't brilliant so we weren't sure what he had been doing, what he could be expected to do. So it was more about keeping him in the classroom, keeping him calm really, rather than actually developing his learning. So you've got kind of a step there, do you know what I mean? You can't pick up his learning and run with it because you've got to get him into the classroom first so there's a gap if you like…
T5: erm, yeah, I think he might have been better with a one-to-one. Erm, because they could have planned more precisely for his needs, it's very difficult, when not only had I got three levels of children from the g and t right the way down to your general SEN, then a child who was way out of his league. It's very difficult, if he'd have had a one-to-one even for the first few months they would have been able to adapt planning and that might have

helped. Also I don't think the information from the school was very good, I really didn't, he had several assigned carers, I don't know what they call them – support – and they changed constantly, I could never get to the bottom of it. So that could have been improved.

Key: orange – adapting to a new setting; blue – knowledge and information; green – managing worries; red – being included; purple - support

CHAPTER THREE: PROFESIONAL PRACTICE REPORT 2 - USING SOLUTION FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY WITH A SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPIL DISPLAYING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Abstract

This report describes the case study of a fourteen-year-old boy (JB) with a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), attending a mainstream secondary school and displaying challenging behaviour. It discusses the relevance of a solution-focused approach to this case and the difficulties encountered. It reflects both on this particular case and the implications for Educational Psychologists carrying out solution-focused work in schools.

3.1 Introduction

The work took place in a metropolitan borough in the West Midlands. The educational psychology service operates a time allocation system, with the option for schools to buy additional traded sessions for casework, projects or training. I deliver all of the schools' educational psychology sessions over the course of the year and for this case it was agreed with the school that one session could be used to carry out therapeutic work (or 6 sessions of 30 minutes). After initial assessment work, the sessions were delayed for some weeks due to other priorities identified by the school as being more pressing.

The first section of this report provides the background to solution-focused behaviour therapy (SFBT), with an overview of the nature of SFBT, potential advantages of the approach and the evidence supporting its use. The relevance of this approach to young people with ADHD and young people displaying challenging behaviours, will also be discussed. The second section will discuss the case study around which the report is based. The final section will reflect on the work that was carried out, with reference to the advantages of the approach described in section one. Conclusions about the effectiveness of the work and will be drawn.

3.2 Literature review

3.2.1 What is solution-focused brief therapy?

Solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) was developed at the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee by Steve de Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg and colleagues in the early 1980s (O'Connell, 1998). It was based on their experiences of working with clients, in

particular their observations that clients were helped as much by talking about the future as the past (*ibid.*). Therefore, when a solution-focused approach is adopted, even in early sessions the focus is not on diagnosis, the client's history or exploring the problem (Gingerich and Eisengart, 2000) but instead on strengths and competences. In this way, taking a solution-focused perspective is similar to positive psychology (Bannick, 2007), with its focus on how positive individual traits can be recognised and developed (Seligman, 2002).

In addition, a solution-focused approach does not assume that cause and effect are necessarily linked and therefore does not assume that solutions always arise from an exploration of the problem (Wehr, 2010). Instead there is an assumption that every client is unique and the therapist should therefore look for an individual solution that fits what the client sees as the desired goal (Wehr, 2010). To achieve this it is necessary for the therapist to abandon the medical model (where they are the 'expert' [Bannick, 2007]) and to learn from the client who is the 'expert' in their own lives (Barret-Kruse, 1994).

A solution-focused approach also takes a systemic perspective whereby if one significant person within a system changes then the rest of the system will be forced to change (George et al, 2004). This means that only a small change may be necessary to solve even a complex and long-standing problem.

3.2.2 Epistemology

Solution-focused brief therapy takes a social constructionist perspective in that it assumes that people give meaning to things in communication with others (Burr, 2003). Given the importance attached to language in this perspective, it is important in SFBT that the therapist takes care when deciding what they encourage the client to talk about and not talk about (Gingerich and Wabeke, 2001). For example, a focus on the problem may lead to feelings of failure, whereas talking about strengths may lead to feelings of competence. A solution-focused approach also assumes that the problem does not have an objective, fixed meaning. This suggests that precedence should be given to the client's perceptions of the problem (O'Connell, 1998) and that the capacity for change depends on the client's ability to see things differently (Bannick, 2007).

3.2.3 What does solution-focused therapy involve?

George et al (2004) provide a brief overview of the stages involved in solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) , in particular the first session. Whilst they provide some guidance for subsequent sessions, they emphasise that there is no fixed number of sessions required in SFBT. The stages are summarised in table I below.

The stages of solution-focused behaviour therapy

Stage	**What does this involve?**
Problem free talk	Building rapport with the client and beginning to locate strengths
Establishing best hopes	Eliciting from the client what they

	hope to achieve from the session and the therapy as a whole
The miracle question	Eliciting a view of the world without the problem e.g. 'Imagine when you go to sleep one night a miracle happens and the problems we've been talking abut disappear. As you were asleep you did not know that a miracle had happened. What would be the first signs for you that a miracle had happened?' (O'Connell, 1998 p.50)
Finding exceptions	Identifying times when the miracle is already happening or starting to happen
Scaling	Establishing how the problem is perceived currently and what progress has been made towards achieving the miracle.
Feedback	Summarising the discussion and complimenting the client regarding their strengths using the client's own words as far as possible.

Table 3

3.2.4 Why use solution-focused brief therapy?

Below is a summary of some of the key advantages of SFBT in relation to the work of educational psychologists.

1) SFBT avoids placing blame and is empowering for clients

In his discussion about the relevance of a solution focused approach to the work of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Wheeler (2001) makes the point that the approach both avoids a negative cycle of blame and ensures that the therapist is aware of the clients strengths, as well as their difficulties. It does this by focusing on what is currently working rather than what is not working. This point could equally be applied to requests for support by teachers experiencing difficulties with a child displaying challenging behaviour, who may resort to blaming the child or others when they are unable to establish effective strategies for managing the behaviour. In addition, Wheeler suggests that the approach encourages collaboration between the therapist and client. It could be suggested that this empowers the client by avoiding a 'medical' approach where the therapist is the expert (Bannick, 2007). This may be particularly relevant to educational psychologists undertaking work with young people in school, where the child has not 'referred' themselves for therapy but rather has been 'referred' by an adult in the school. Osborn (1999) suggests that in cases such as this where the client is 'involuntary', the power differential between the client and the therapist is heightened.

2) SFBT is time-limited

One of the core principles of SFBT is that not spending time discussing and reflecting on the problem should mean that positive change can be achieved within a small number of sessions. Wehr (2010) suggests that therapists have an ethical duty to relieve a clients suffering as quickly as possible, and therefore if SFBT can lead to positive outcomes in less time than other approaches then this is the approach we should use. As well as these ethical considerations, if SFBT can achieve positive outcomes quickly, then there are practical reasons for educational psychologists to adopt a solution-focused approach. Ajmal and Rhodes (1995) suggest one of the reasons that SFBT tends to take less time is that it accepts small 'imperfect' changes as well as bigger and seemingly more significant changes. They go so far as to suggest that the focus on next steps, first signs of progress and what people would like to happen differently means that even a ten minute conversation can lead to some useful outcomes. Stobie et al (2005) surveyed practicing educational psychologists registered on the EPNET list (an online forum for discussion between educational psychologists in the UK) and found that one of the key advantages of SFBT identified was that the approach is time-limited (although there was no reference to the specific number of sessions needed to achieve treatment goals). However, it is important to note that only 31 educational psychologists responded to the survey, and it is probable that those who chose to respond are fairly committed to SFBT.

3) SFBT allows for monitoring and evaluation

An additional advantage identified in the Stobie et al (2005) study is that the scaling element of SFBT is useful in that it allows for monitoring and evaluation in relation to

the treatment goals and it takes a small steps approach to goal attainment. Turner et al (2010) suggest that, whilst ensuring a process of evaluation which takes into account the complexity of the work of educational psychologists is a challenge, it is essential both for a sense of personal satisfaction, and for public service accountability. Dunsmuir et al (2009) suggests that the Every Child Matters agenda and the transformation of Children's Services stimulated by the Children's Act (DfES, 2004b) has led to increased pressure to evaluate outcomes.

4) SFBT can be applied to a number of different areas of work

Ajmal and Rhodes (1995) suggest that the principles of SFBT are applicable when undertaking assessment and statutory work, preventative work and prolonged work on complex cases. Wheeler (2010) also suggests that SFBT is relevant to the range of work encountered by CAMHS professionals and gives some examples of cases where it has been applied successfully.

3.2.5 How effective is solution-focused brief therapy?

One of the criticisms of solution-focused brief therapy is that there is little empirical evidence supporting its use when compared to other therapies such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). Corcoran et al (2009) make some suggestions about why this is the case. Firstly, they suggest that time spent collecting information about the problem at the beginning of the therapy (so that progress towards a solution can be established after therapy) goes against strengths orientation of SFBT. They also suggest that its status as a social constructionist approach means that those who use

it do not endorse the positivist framework that gives rise to treatment outcome studies.

Nevertheless, an evidence base is developing for solution-focused approaches. Gingerich (2000) reviewed controlled studies of solution-focused behaviour therapy client outcomes appearing in English literature up to and including 1999. Studies were judged ‘well-controlled’ if they met five or six of the following criteria; they used a randomized group design or acceptable single case design; the focus was on a specific, well-defined disorder; there was a comparison group; treatment manuals and procedures were followed; outcomes measures with demonstrated validity and reliability were used; and the sample were large enough to detect group differences reliably. Only 5 of the 15 studies met these criteria. These studies found that SFBT led to improved outcomes for a range of different populations, including; college students suffering from depression, parents of teenagers displaying challenging behaviour, orthopedic patients being rehabilitated, prisoners at rick of reoffending and adolescent offenders displaying anti-social behaviours. However, none of these studies compared SFBT to other forms of therapy. In addition they all used different procedures in their delivery of SFBT.

Wehr (2010) compared the practice of finding exceptions with a problem-focused orientation. Rather than recruit participants currently receiving SFBT, this study asked student participants to generate exceptions to a standard problem. They found that those participants who were asked to do this were able to identify more successful situations during the following week, whereas students who were not

asked to generate exceptions recalled more problem situations. This suggests that generating exceptions can lead to greater confidence and a more positive mood. However, whilst the use of a standard problem increases internal validity, the sample of first year psychology students reduce the generalisability of the study to real life clients and other groups. In addition, only one very specific aspect of SFBT (that of generating exceptions) was tested.

3.2.6 Solution-focused behaviour therapy with young people with challenging behaviour or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

A small number of case studies have been carried out to investigate the effectiveness of SFBT specifically with young people with challenging behaviour. Dielman and Franklin (1998) report the case of “Nathan”, a young man described as aggressive, easily angered and frustrated, self-effacing and negative. The school social worker worked with both Nathan and his mother using a solution-focused approach. Eight weeks after the end of the intervention Nathan and his father (his mother was unable to attend the final meeting) reported that Nathan had made significant progress in terms of his behavioural control.

In addition, Franklin et al (2001) carried out 7 single case experiments with fifth and sixth grade (year 6 and 7) pupils displaying school-based behaviour problems. They received SFBT from either a clinical social worker or counseling psychologist trained at the Family Therapy Center. The ‘miracle question’, scaling questions and compliments were used. The children were purposively selected through teacher consultations and cases were only included if they were considered clinically

significant based on one or more subscales of the Conners Teacher Rating Scale (Conners, 1990). A baseline was established through two weekly observations by two teachers for four weeks, then any changes were measured through weekly observations during the intervention and one observation a month after the intervention had finished. They found at least one teacher indicated improvement on one or more subscales of the Conners Rating Scale in five of the cases, with four maintaining this change at follow-up. However, there was significant disagreement about the extent of the change between the two observing teachers.

Whilst medication is recognised as an effective short-term treatment for young people with ADHD which has resulted in severe impairment (and as a second line treatment for those with moderate impairment) (NICE, 2008), it is also recognised that it does not necessarily lead to long-term improvement (Estrada and Pinsof, 1995). Whereas it has been suggested that the use of combined treatments (for example, medication combined with family education, individual counseling or groupwork) may have more lasting effects (Dielman and Franklin, 1998). Conoley et al (2003) report case studies of three families, all with children diagnosed as having Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) (based on parental reports and DSM-IV) who received SFBT. Two of these children were taking medication for diagnoses of ADHD. Daily reports by parents, the behavior assessment system for children (BASC, Reynolds and Kamphaus, 1992) and verbal reports from the clients, teachers and therapists indicated that all of the children had made progress. At the end of four or five sessions the families believed that the concerns that had led to the therapy had been resolved. However, what was interesting is that it seemed that by meeting

a few specific goals, larger changes were evident. For example, in the case of “Tim”, the desired goal was for him to get out of the shower when asked and do homework/spelling sheets without arguing but following intervention his parents commented that he was generally more motivated.

In summary, it would appear that there is a small but developing evidence base for SFBT both in general and with young people with ADHD or challenging behaviour. Given that the current evidence base is largely in the form of case studies or empirical studies that investigate one aspect of SFBT and do not compare it to other forms of therapy, does it follow that practitioners should avoid using SFBT in favour of alternative methods? Hammersley (2003) argues that practice should be ‘evidence-informed’ rather than ‘evidence-based’, where professional practice is considered alongside research evidence. He claims that a linear, rational model of practice of goal setting and measuring outcomes is inappropriate to apply to practice where there are both multiple goals and multiple consequences. This view may be particularly appropriate to apply to SFBT, which arose from the professional practice of Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg. Indeed, Rhodes (1993) suggests that the practicality and generalisability of the approach is due to the fact that it is based on real-life interactions. In addition, Pugh (2010) criticises the use of randomized control trials as the only sources of empirical support for interventions, pointing out that they have a tendency to categorise clinical populations using only one disorder. He claims that this neglects unique personality factors affecting receptivity to psychological intervention.

3.3 Formulation, Intervention and Outcomes

3.3.1 Risk assessment/ethical considerations

A number of different risk factors were taken into account prior to carrying out the work. It has been reported by school staff that JB had at times been verbally aggressive towards staff and other pupils and physically aggressive towards other pupils. Whilst it seemed unlikely that JB would be aggressive in a one-to-one situation with an adult (as this had not occurred before), precautions were taken in terms of the room in which the sessions took place, for example, it was in a busy part of the school, staff knew where we were and it had a window. Another concern was that following initial sessions, JB seemed very aware of the importance of not seeming different to his peers. The decision was therefore made that I would not come and collect him from lessons, and where possible he would come at the start of a lesson rather than leaving halfway through. It was reported that JB's mother suffers from depression, therefore it was necessary to be sensitive when discussing his mother with JB.

Confidentiality was an important consideration prior to the sessions taking place. Whilst the room where the sessions took place was in a fairly busy part of school it was not accessible to students. It was also possible to put a sign on the door saying 'meeting in progress' to prompt staff to maintain the privacy of the session. This factors helped to ensure that we were not overheard. JB was told at the beginning of the sessions that if he told me something which led me to suspect that he may be at risk of harm it would need to be passed on to a member of staff in school. If anything

else arose which may have been useful to discuss with members of staff I reviewed what had been said with JB and asked him if he would be happy for it to be shared.

Protective factors were also taken into account, including the support that JB was likely to receive in school following the sessions. It was reported that JB independently accesses a 'withdrawal room' in school for 'time out' when he is feeling upset, this was felt to be potentially beneficial if JB did not feel that he wanted to go straight back into lessons following the sessions. Initial sessions with JB also suggested that he is comfortable talking to an adult in a one-to-one situation and was able and willing to talk about his experiences and feelings about school.

Given these factors it was decided that taking part in the solution-focused sessions was not going to cause harm.

3.3.2 Formulation

Given the epistemology associated with a solution-focused approach, a social constructionist approach will be taken to formulation, whereby different perspectives of the difficulties experienced by JB will be taken into account as a series of dialogues (Harper and Spellman, 2006). Gingerich and Wabeke (2001) emphasise that when carrying out solution-focused behaviour therapy in schools it is important to establish the goals of the teacher referring the pupil as they are the 'client' initially. Tohn and Oshlag (1996) also suggest that it is important to involve others as they will also need to notice any changes, as well as the client, and understand that any change will happen gradually.

JB was raised for my involvement at a school planning meeting. Initial consultations were carried out with the school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and assistant SENCo. Murphy (1996) suggests that adult frustration can be a considerable barrier to progress when SFBT is used as it can make their responses unpredictable so JB's teachers were given an opportunity to express their concerns through a questionnaire. A solution-focused questionnaire (appendix 1) was used to allow for exceptions to the problem to be identified as well as a description of the problem. Seven teachers completed the questionnaire. JB's behaviour record (an electronic record of incidences of challenging behaviour completed by class teachers) was also reviewed. The findings of all of these initial actions are summarised in appendix 2. Overall, the main concerns that were identified were;

- Challenging behaviour – sometimes related to interactions with peers or being 'challenged' by staff but often seeming 'unpredictable'
- Negative views of himself, school and the world

Initial individual sessions with JB focused on trying to establish his views of himself. The Self Image Profile for Adolescents (Butler, 2001) (appendix 3) and Drawing the Ideal Self (Moran, 2001) were used. Laddering (as described in Butler and Green, 1998) was also used to explore core constructs. These techniques are based around the principals of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP), which seeks to explain behaviour in terms of the way individuals construe self, significant others and their social world (Clarke, 1999). An overview of the findings of these sessions is provided in appendix 2. Conclusions from these individual sessions were;

- JB would like his behaviour to be better but does not think he has any control over his own behaviour
- JB seems to have very high expectations for himself
- Freedom to choose what he does is very important to JB
- Being ‘normal’ is important to JB

3.3.3 Intervention

A solution-focused approach was thought to be appropriate for JB for a number of reasons. Firstly, freedom to choose was identified as a core construct for JB and so using SFBT to explore his own goals seemed appropriate. Secondly, key staff identified that his negative views of himself were causing them concern, so a strengths-based approach with a focus on competence was thought to be potentially useful. Thirdly, a review of the literature suggests that initial evidence indicates that a solution-focused approach may be useful for young people displaying challenging behaviour (e.g. Dielman and Franklin, 1998; Conoley et al, 2003).

Ultimately three sessions were delivered. Each session was around 20-30 minutes long. Each session started with problem free talk, although a certain degree of rapport had been established in the sessions prior to the first session of SFBT. Each session finished with a summary and JB was asked if he would like to meet again. In the final session he admitted that he would like to meet again but only at a time when he could miss a least favourite lesson, rather than because he found the sessions useful. At this point we agreed that we would not meet again. A description of each session is provided in appendix 4.

3.3.4 Outcomes

At the beginning of the second and third session JB was unable to identify any changes that had taken place. A further meeting took place 6 weeks after the final session. The findings of this meeting are recorded in appendix 2.

The school SENCo had left her post following the initial consultation and so it was not possible to elicit her views on whether she had noticed any changes. However, it was possible to discuss any changes with the assistant SENCo who had also been consulted prior to the work taking place. The findings of this consultation are recorded in appendix 2. The views of JB's teachers were sought by email but no responses were received. It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this but it could be assumed that it teachers were still experiencing significant difficulties they would have responded to the request for information.

The key outcomes in relation to the main concerns were;

- Challenging behaviour **–** incidences of challenging behaviour recorded by teachers were reduced by 63%
- Negative views of himself, school and the world – JB rated school more positively but still saw his behaviour as being unchangeable

Additional outcomes were;

- JB reported having more friends in school
- JB did not seem to be becoming 'upset' in school as frequently
- Focus in lessons seemed to improve

3.4 Reflections

3.4.1 Reflections on the process and the outcomes

Despite the difficulties encountered during this piece of work the outcomes appear to have been positive, with changes taking place that were beyond the scope of the sessions themselves (for example, JB seemed to get less upset in school and was more focused in lessons) as in the Deilman and Franklin (1998) study. Whilst from the perspective of members of staff who originally raised concerns about JB, the change in his behaviour has been extremely positive (and will hopefully have led to improvements in his experiences of school life), in terms of maintaining the changes for the future, it is concerning that JB does not seem to be aware of any changes in his behaviour. It is likely that this is due to the fact that JB identified that neither he is school were capable of changing. If this had been apparent from the start of the solution-focused sessions, this may have been a more useful focus. Unfortunately, this also meant that goal setting did not take place.

In terms of what did make the difference to JB in the end, there are many possibilities. It may have been that the process of finding exceptions encouraged him to reflect on school and decide that things were better than he had thought. Alternatively, it may have been that the discussion of his strengths and the compliments around his strengths made him feel more positive. The solution-focused approach apart, it may simply have been that the opportunity to talk with me in individual sessions and build a therapeutic relationship (however briefly), may have made the difference. Henkelman and Paulson (2006) found that, as far as clients were concerned, the relationship with the therapist is the most important aspect of

therapy. There may also of course, been other significant changes in JB's life which made a difference to his experiences in school, for example, at the beginning of the sessions, his medication was reviewed and he starting taking slow-acting medication before school rather than taking his medication in school.

3.4.2 Reflections on using SFBT

1) SFBT avoids placing blame and is empowering for clients

Whilst the information collected from the teacher reports regarding incidences of challenging behaviour seem to suggest that their perception of JB's behaviour was more positive, the fact that individual SFBT was undertaken with JB means that teachers may still see him as being to blame for his poor behaviour.

It is difficult to establish whether JB felt empowered as a result of the session, although it is possible that the sessions were empowering for JB because they made him more aware of his strengths. For example, in his final session JB identified that he is good at design and technology (a strength discussed in previous sessions) and that this is helping him to make friends with peers in his design and technology class (by offering to help them).

It may also have been empowering for JB to be able to work towards his own goals. However, whilst 'best hopes' and exceptions were explored through the use of scaling, goal setting did not take place in any of the sessions. The main reason for this was that JB did not feel that either he, or school, were able to change. On reflection, therefore, it may have been more productive to explore this concept with

JB in order to identify times when he had experienced change and the part he had played in this change..

Nevertheless, the focus of the discussion was led by JB, and what he felt was important which was hopefully empowering for him. In addition, the findings of Wehr (2010) suggest that merely finding exceptions to a problem (which was achieved in the sessions) can be effective in creating greater confidence. This may in part explain the findings that JB felt more positive about school following the intervention. It may also be that the sessions encouraged JB to think more about the issues that were concerning him (e.g. a lack of freedom and choice in school and his behaviour) even if he did not set any specific goals relating to them. De Jong and Kim Berg (2001) suggest that sometimes this is all that can be achieved, so that if clients are still unwilling to change they are at least making a more informed decision not to change.

2) SFBT is time-limited

In practice the approach fitted relatively well with a time allocation model of service delivery. It was possible to 'over-estimate' the number of sessions which would be needed and explain to the school that they may not all be necessary, which was easier than potentially trying to arrange further sessions if the agreed time was not long enough. It was more difficult to ensure that sessions did not over-run, delaying other meetings but this may be an issue in busy schools whether or not a time allocation model is utilised. It may have been easier from a practical perspective to ensure that the sessions took place at the end of a visit so that I was able to allow extra time if needed.

3) SFBT allows for monitoring and evaluation

Scaling was very useful in the final session with JB because it enabled him to identify that he was feeling more positive about school even though he found it difficult to identify why. With hindsight it may have been useful to use scaling with class teachers to establish more clearly how they felt things had changed, particularly in relation to the concerns which were more difficult to quantify (e.g. his negative feelings towards himself and school).

4) SFBT can be applied to many different areas of work

Whilst it is not possible to comment particularly on whether SFBT can be applied to many different areas of work based on this case study it does raise an interesting question about whether the approach could have been used more broadly to include key members of staff who had raised concerns in order to avoid JB being 'blamed' exclusively for his challenging behaviour. This approach has been used successfully with families (see Dielman and Franklin, 1998 and Conoley et al, 2003) which suggested including key adults may have been a useful approach. However, all seven of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire raised concerns and it may have been difficult to include them all in any consultation or goal-setting.

3.4.3 Role of EP in this case and in delivering SFBT in schools

MacKay (2007) identifies why it may be important for EPs to carry out therapeutic work in schools. He points out that we are seeing a rise in the number of children being identified with mental health issues (now 20%) with very few of these children

accessing professional support (10-20%). He suggests that as EPs are the most plentiful child psychologists in public services they are well placed to provide this professional support. Despite this argument there is still the question of who teachers refer to EPs for support, and whether the young people experiencing mental health issues will be the ones to be referred. Whilst JB's school had concerns about his mental well-being the primary reason for his referral was his challenging behaviour and research suggests that young people are most likely to be referred to EP services if their behaviour is causing a problem (and more generally if they are male) (Vardill and Calvert, 2000). Nevertheless, the work carried out with JB seems to have had some positive outcomes and is unlikely to have taken place through any alternative routes other than a request for consultation from the EP service.

There are a number of practical reasons why a solution-focused approach may be appropriate for EP practice. Firstly, the relatively short amount of time needed for delivery; secondly, that many EPs may find the idea of working towards the young person's own goals appealing in terms of ensuring that the voice of the child is taken into account in their practice; and thirdly, (as Wheeler, 2001 identified) it encourages a more holistic approach to working with a young person where their strengths are taken into account as well as their difficulties. However, a concern that arose as a result of this case study was that carrying out this kind of work will influence how the EP is viewed by the school, with schools seeing the EP as being most effective when engaged in work with individual children who are experiencing difficulties which exist within the child themselves.

One concern that relates specifically to carrying out therapeutic work in a school setting is that young people do not 'refer' themselves for therapy but rather are 'referred' by the adults that work with them, the assumption being that they will therefore not be motivated or engaged with therapy (De Jong and Kim Berg; 2001). However, this concept of the 'reluctant' or 'involuntary' client is one that is rejected by SFBT. De Shazer (1985) suggests that the idea of a client 'resisting' change is a metaphor that had outlived its usefulness, and that we need to view our clients as having multiple goals. De Jong and Kim Berg (2001) suggest that it should be possible to achieve 'motivational congruence' with the client through maximising their sense of choice and control, whilst being clear about non-negotiable aspects. What is unclear is whether this may be more difficult to achieve in a school where one may be perceived by the young person as being part of an organisation that in general requires a high level of compliance. This may also be difficult when working in schools where pupils are generally expected to show a high level of compliance, as it may mean that the goals of the young person are more likely to be at odds with the goals of the school.

3.5 Conclusions and implications

This case could be seen as an example of a small change making a more significant difference to a young person's experience of, and feelings about, school with a relatively short input from a trainee educational psychologist. However, it is impossible to say for sure what small change started the process, which may not matter to the referring school but will make a significant difference to JB in the future if he remains unable to indentify how he was able to improve his situation by

changing his behaviour. JB shared that he found the sessions more enjoyable than many of his lessons in school but said he did not see them as useful. The school's goal was to improve JB's behaviour and his feelings about school, and whilst this has been achieved JB remains unaware that any such change has taken place. It may be interesting to continue to monitor his progress with school to see if the current change is maintained. It may be that it is now the responsibility of school staff to 'notice' and reward what he is doing differently to help him to become more aware of changes in his behaviour, a potential weakness of this case was that teachers were asked for information but following this were not involved in the process. Another avenue which was not pursued in this piece of work was involving JB's parents in the process. The NICE guidelines for treatment of young people with ADHD resulting in moderate impairment identify parenting classes as a first line of treatment. Whilst this may not have been possible in this case, it may have been useful to involve JB's parents in 'noticing' any changes in his behaviour. Receiving fewer sanctions and less negative feedback for challenging behavour may not be enough for him to realise that things are different. Ultimately, this is the end result of a lack of clear, well-formed and measurable goals, and time will tell whether this will affect the likelihood of long-term change.

In terms of the use of a solution-focused approach to this case, whilst there were some advantages and the outcomes were largely positive, it is not clear whether some of the advantages (e.g. empowering the client, being time-limited and allowing for monitoring and evaluation) could be achieved through an alternative approach. Whilst it was not possible to do so here, it would be interesting to compare a solution-

focused approach more directly with other approaches commonly used by educational psychologists (e.g. cognitive behavioural therapy, person-centred therapy, according to Pugh, 2010) in terms of these particular advantages.

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Appendix 1: Solution focused questionnaire for teachers

X Children's Services

Behaviour Questionnaire

Concerns have been raised about the behaviour of X in class. The following questions are designed to help me to get a picture of X across arrange of activities and situations. This will help to make sense of his behaviour overall and to work out what strategies might help.

How does X behave in your lesson? Please be as specific as you can – what do you see?
Are there situations where his behaviour tends to be worse? Give some examples of these situations.
Are there situations where his behaviour tends to be better? Give some examples of these situations.

What strategies do you find effective for engaging him more effectively in his learning?
Is there any other information which you think may be relevant?

Thank you

Appendix 2: Overview of findings				
Pre intervention			**Post intervention**	
Who?	Method	Findings	Method	Findings
Teachers	Questionnaire	- Working in groups is difficult (easily 'wound-up' by other pupils) - Behaviour is 'unpredictable' - He is better when the class is quiet and when he is doing individual work	E-mail asking for comments in relation to; - Concentration and attention -Challenging behaviour - Views of self	No response
Teachers	School behaviour record (electronic record completed by class teachers)	- 27 incidences recorded in a six week period including swearing, running off, distracting others, crawling on the floor and throwing objects	School behaviour record (electronic record completed by class teachers)	- 10 incidences of challenging behaviour recorded in the six week period following intervention - only one record of 'inadequate work' – suggests concentration has improved
SENCo	Consultation	- Sometimes behaviour is 'aggressive' – leading on from 'playful' behaviour - Concerned about lack of empathy – seems to feel 'persecuted' - Experiences strong emotions that	n/a	n/a

		are difficult to control - Behaviour is better when he is taking medication		
Assistant SENCo	Consultation	- Exhibits challenging behaviour e.g. swearing, 'insulting' pupils and staff - Poor attention and concentration in lessons - Has a negative view of himself and the world	Consultation	- fewer teachers have commented that he is not completing work in lessons or that his behaviour is a problem - he used to go to the withdrawal room in school to 'calm down' when he is upset, he hasn't done this in the six weeks following the intervention
JB	Drawing the ideal self (Moran, 2001) Self-Image Profile for Adolescents (Butler, 2001) Laddering (X)	- Identified that he is someone who 'gets bored' easily - Moderately negative views of self - Very high expectations of self (scores for where he would like to be were very extreme) - Would like to be someone who 'behaves	Interview	- JB talked about having more friends at school in the last couple of months who he is now able to contact using his mobile telephone

JB	Drawing the ideal self (Moran, 2001) Self-Image Profile for Adolescents (Butler, 2001) Laddering (X)	- Identified that he is someone who 'gets bored' easily - Moderately negative views of self - Very high expectations of self (scores for where he would like to be were very extreme) - Would like to be someone who 'behaves really good' and 'doesn't make any trouble' - Doesn't want to be someone who is disruptive and argues with teachers - Having the freedom to choose what you would like to do in life is a core construct - Being 'normal' is also important to JB - Identifies that he is sometimes good and sometimes not – seems to think he cannot	Interview	- JB talked about having more friends at school in the last couple of months who he is now able to contact using his mobile telephone

Appendix three: Completed Self-image Profile

(not available electronically)

Appendix 4: Overview of sessions

Session 1

At the beginning of the first session JB was very upset about a perceived injustice in school, just prior to the session he had been walking around school having been given a detention for bringing his P.E. kit. This made it difficult to engage him in problem-free talk as he was keen to discuss what had just happened and to defend his behaviour. Some time was therefore given to enable him to do this with little input from myself. This may have coloured the rest of the session. JB identified his best hope as being asked what he wanted to do in school. When he was asked the miracle question he elaborated on this idea, describing a school where you decided whether or not you attended and chose what subjects you anted to do. When asked for further examples of what this 'choice' would look like he said you would also get to choose where you sit and that you wouldn't get detentions. He also said that teachers would listen to him but even with prompting did not elaborate in terms of what this would look like.

Session 2

In the second session scaling was used to elicit more information about the concept of 'choice' in school and how it was perceived by JB. He identified that currently on a scale of one to ten where one is the most serious the problem could be in school and ten is the least serious, that it was around 3.5. he then identified some times when he did have choice, which were what he eats, whether or not he does work, whether he comes to school and what time he goes to bed. Following this discussion he reflected that actually he has a choice about most things but could not change what school was like. When he was asked to complete a scale about how he feels about school he rated it at 0 (where 0 is the worst he could feel about school). When he was asked how he would like school to be different he responded that school was 'unchangeable' and so he didn't want anything to change as it was impossible for this to happen. When prompted again he said that he would like the 'kids to be happier'. He also identified his own behaviour as something that could be different, saying that he is 'naughty'. When he was asked to scale how naughty he is he rated himself as a 5.5 (where 10 is the best his behaviour could be). He said that he has a choice whether he is naughty but did not want to change his behaviour.

Session three

In the final session the focus was still on finding exceptions as it was felt that goal setting was still not appropriate. JB was asked to imagine if school was currently at -1 rather than 0.

He described a school where pupils would be sent out of lessons for speaking, where the teachers would be even more strict and pupils wouldn't be allowed to get up and move around the classroom. When asked to imagine what school would be like at +2 he responded as before, saying that school would never change. He reiterated that he also was unable to change his behaviour as he had never done so before. When he was asked about exceptions to the times when he is naughty he identified English lessons as this is the only subject he felt that he was good at. In particular he identified that he 'knows words that other people don't'. He also talked more about his English teacher saying she seems happy and looks like she 'loves teaching'. This was used as an opportunity to compliment JB on his strengths.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT 3 – TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF RECEVING FEEDBACK FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS: A PILOT STUDY COMPARING FEEDBACK USING VIDEO INTERACTION GUIDANCE PRINCIPLES AND STANDARD VERBAL FEEDBACK

Abstract

This project aimed to investigate the potential utility of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) as a method for developing reflective practice for teachers through a pilot of the approach in a secondary school. Five teachers agreed to take part in the study and three ultimately did so. The teachers were firstly observed by an educational psychologist (EP) and given feedback using an observation schedule designed by the EPs. At a later date were filmed teaching a lesson and the film was edited by the EP and feedback given using VIG principles. The participants completed a questionnaire comparing the two experiences and the outcomes were compared. The feedback using VIG was rated more positively on every measure, with the most significant positive difference being around the teachers' awareness of the impact of their actions. The implications of the study are discussed in terms of the implications for the school and for EP practice.

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The local authority context

The project took place in a metropolitan borough in the West Midlands. The educational psychology service operates a time allocation model whereby schools are allocated a number of 'core' sessions to be delivered by an educational psychologist or trainee educational psychologist. In addition, the service is partly traded and there are opportunities for schools to buy additional sessions, either for individual casework, training or school-based projects. If schools are interested in a more in-depth piece of action research they are able to pay for a 'development initiative' which involves three educational psychologists (or trainees) over ten sessions (or five days). The pilot project described in this paper was a part of a development initiative.

4.1.2 The school

The school is a relatively small secondary school with 816 pupils on role. The school's OfSTED report indicates that the number of children eligible for free school meals (a measure of deprivation) is significantly higher than the national average (OfSTED, 2012). It is part of a group of three specialist business and enterprise academies. It opened in 2009 replacing a community school that was in special measures following an inspection report by OfSTED that identified that the school was failing. In the year previous to this project the school was inspected and was placed in special measures again.

Recommendations in the most recent OfSTED report included the following;

“ [the school needs to] strengthen students’ attitudes so they take responsibility for their own behaviour, and all lessons can proceed without disruption by… replicating existing good practice in positive behaviour management” (OfSTED, 2012 p.5)

This study was part of a broader project that aimed to support the school to develop existing good practice in positive behaviour management through developing reflective practice for teaching staff.

4.2 Literature review

4.2.1 Introduction

The literature review considers the nature of reflective practice, and its relevance to teachers. It then considers the process of teachers receiving feedback on their lessons and the various tensions that may exist here. Finally it introduces video interaction guidance (VIG) and discusses evidence supporting the use of VIG in schools.

4.2.2 What is reflective practice?

Cox (2005) suggests that it is necessary to consciously seek to learn from experience, and although many people will do this naturally, the use of a tool to support reflection will make this process more reliable. Kottkamp (1990) agrees that he process should be deliberate and structured, defining reflective practice as;

‘a cycle of paying deliberate analytical attention to one’s own actions in relation to intentions- as if from an external observers perspective- for the purpose of expanding one’s options and making decisions about improved ways of acting in the future or in the midst of the action itself’ (p.183)

Argyris and Schön (1974) distinguish between two types of learning from practice. They suggest that ‘single-loop learning’ is learning that seeks to satisfy existing governing variables. An example of this in the present context may be when staff are trained in behaviour management strategies which are in line with current school policies. In contrast ‘double-loop learning’ seeks to change the governing principles themselves. It could be suggested that in order to achieve this it is necessary to engage in genuine reflection that challenges the accepted view.

4.2.3 Reflective practice and teachers

Day (1993) suggests that generally in schools, staff development focuses on ‘quick fixes’ and curriculum implementation and when action research is carried out in schools, teachers spend most of their time planning and acting rather than reflecting. In order to move on from this focus on action to reflecting on the ethical justification for practice he suggests that it will be necessary for teachers to be analytical and to reflect in dialogue with others. Whilst Day was writing some time ago, the pressures on teachers remain high. Indeed, in the new teacher’s standards (DfE, 2012), as well as being required to ‘demonstrate critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum’ (p.7), teachers are also required to ‘take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to

advice and feedback from colleagues' (p.9). This suggests that teachers should be expected to take on board feedback from colleagues (possibly through lesson observations) but does not suggest that they should be reflecting on their practice themselves. Christie (2007), reporting on a study in the U.S. aimed at developing reflective practice with a group of teachers, suggests that in schools where there are significant pressures for improvement from senior staff, changes that staff make to their practice following reflection can be 'sabotaged' by other school priorities. However, this may depend how the requirement for professional development is interpreted by schools, and how they implement it. The teachers in the school in the present study will undoubtedly be subject to this kind of pressure given the recent OfSTED inspection.

Cox (2005) describes a study that aimed at developing university students' reflective practice. Whilst this study is with a different population to the present study, the findings are still relevant as the focus for the reflection was the students' work-based experience. The students were very positive about their experiences, describing the use of a reflective diary as one of the most useful aspects of their course. However, Cox found that the students tended to give descriptive accounts of their experiences and focus on their own feelings. They found answering questions like 'why did I intervene/react like that?' and 'what were the consequences of my actions?' very challenging. He also found that they tended to be very critical of themselves, leading Cox to suggest that the support of a tutor may have been useful when they were reflecting to avoid being overly negative. So, whilst the student responses were

positive, Cox's reflections on the project raise some questions about the extent to which they were able to be truly reflective.

Moran and Dallat (1995) interviewed student teachers and their mentors about the extent to which the mentoring relationship enabled the students to become reflective. They found that the term 'reflection' was used synonymously with the terms 'thinking' and 'cognition'. They also found that student teachers tended to be able to identify good teaching but not what makes it good. There seemed to be an emphasis on student teachers analysing their own lessons, and Moran and Dallat discuss the dangers of relying on self-reflection because of a lack of opportunities to question one's own beliefs and assumptions.

Overall, whilst it seems that applying the principles of reflective practice may be beneficial for teachers, it seems that it is a complex skill that can be challenging to develop without a high level of support.

4.2.4 Teachers receiving feedback

Much of the research focusing on teachers receiving feedback focuses on teachers who are in training. This is interesting in itself in that it seems to imply that this type of learning is only considered to be important for teachers before, or in the very early stages of their career. The studies presented looked particularly at the role of the language used during feedback and therefore adopted an ethnographic approach, or used aspects of conversation analysis.

Brandt (2008) used an ethnographic approach over a period of four years in a study that included 95 participants (63 trainee teachers and 32 tutors) across 9 different countries. The teachers in this study were training to teach English as a foreign language. Brandt found that trainees preferred feedback that they saw as being genuine, and sometimes felt that tutors were being either too lenient or too critical, however, overall they seemed to equate 'true feedback' with criticism. The value of the feedback seemed to be reliant on the relationship between the tutor and the trainee, which in this study was not always positive. Whilst initially Brandt's sample size seems relatively impressive, it is important to note that there were only 23 participants in the first phase of the study (the ethnographic study) and the remaining participants completed a questionnaire using the statements from this initial phase. It may have been that this created a higher degree of consensus with participants in the second part of the study merely agreeing with the outcomes of the first part of the study.

Vásquez (2004) used a discourse analytic approach to analyse post-observation meetings between teaching assistants and supervisors. She found that overall the tone of these meetings was positive and that when it was necessary for the supervisor to give advice or make suggestions (what she calls potentially 'face-threatening' situations) the supervisors used a variety of 'politeness strategies' o avoid sounding too negative. For example, they preceeded the criticism with a compliment, they used language such as 'might', may', 'kind of' and 'I wonder' and they used language which made indirect reference to a shared reality (for example, by saying 'you know'). Vásquez suggests that this avoidance if criticism may be

ineffective, pointing out that many of the teaching assistants did not seem aware that any advice had been given. However, this does not suggest that the feedback would have been more effective if it had been more critical, but rather that the supervisor needed to be clearer about what they felt needed to change (or the trainee needed to be encouraged to do this themselves).

Waite (1993) combined an ethnographic approach with conversational analysis and suggested that supervisors adopt one of three different styles when giving feedback to trainee teachers, which are: passive, adversarial and collaborative. Waite suggests that a collaborative style is most effective and involves the supervisor using acknowledgement tokens (such as ‘mm’), incorporating what the other speaker says into their own talk and active listening. However, whilst Waite suggests that supervisors will draw on different styles in different situations, he does not explore how helpful the other styles are, or what it is that makes them unhelpful.

Overall, it appears that there are a number of possible sources of tension when teachers are receiving feedback on their practice that may prevent feedback from being useful. Copland (2010) suggests that what may be at the root of these tensions is the type of framework used for feedback and the need to balance evaluation with a more developmental discourse. Nevertheless, none of the studies discussed above question the inherent value of teachers receiving feedback from someone who is more experienced than they are, but seem to make an assumption that receiving verbal feedback on performance is the way to improve teacher practice.

4.2.5 What is video interaction guidance (VIG)?

Video interaction guidance (VIG) is an intervention that seeks to enhance communication and interaction between individuals, it is most often used in interactions between children and adults (Kennedy and Sked, 2008). According to VIG interactions are considered successful when the initiatives of the child are received positively (Fukkink and Tavecchio, 2010). It encourages a respectful and collaborative approach to working with clients (Kaye, Forsyth and Simpson, 2000). The process of VIG involves taking video footage of behaviour in a normal context, this footage is then edited by the guider/facilitator to include clips that highlight positive interactions in relation to a set of specific behaviours known as 'contact principles' (Kaye et al, 2000). The outcomes are then fed back to the adult. When Kaye, Forsyth and Simposon (2000) used VIG in a school setting they also considered teachers' communication in relation to wider contextual factors such as features of daily life in the classroom, individual factors relating to the child, current pressures in school and the current development of the teacher themselves.

4.2.6 What is the theoretical basis of VIG?

It is based on the work of ethological psychologists Stern and Trevarthen (Stern, 1974; Trevarthen, 1979). Trevarthen (1979) describes research investigating the communications between two and three month old infants with their mothers. He describes how the infants demonstrated both subjectivity (i.e. by focusing attention on things, and handling and exploring things with interest in the consequences) and intersubjectivity (i.e. by mimicking the expressions of their caregiver). Trevarthen also describes how the caregiver allows the infant to take a lead in interactions by

'withdrawing' as soon as the infant appears ready to make an 'utterance'. He suggests that these processes are essential for the cognitive development of infants. VIG is also influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) ideas around mediated learning, in terms of the importance of the adult guiding the child's activities for learning, ensuring that they start from the child's interests and abilities. Finally, it is influenced by social learning theory (Bandura, 1997) whereby positively reinforcing behaviour increases the self-efficacy of learners.

4.2.7 Evidence for the use of VIG in schools

Traditionally VIG was used in family settings and there is evidence to suggest that it has been very effective in family-based work. For example, Fukkink (2008) carried out a meta-analysis of 29 studies where VIG was used in family-based work, and concluded that there were meaningful effect sizes for changes in parent behaviour, parent attitudes and child outcomes.

In terms of building an evidence base, there are inherent difficulties with the use of control groups in research investigating VIG, as this would involve depriving some participants of an intervention that should be beneficial. However, Fukkink and Tavecchio (2010) investigated the use of VIG with early education teachers working with groups of 5-7 children, and not only included a control group but also used 'blind' scoring when viewing videos i.e. those viewing the videos did not know whether they were filmed before, immediately after, or three months after the intervention. They found that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, with the adults in the experimental group being more 'stimulating'

(i.e. paying more attention to the children as individuals), responding more sensitively and offering more verbal stimulation. These differences remained at a three-month follow-up. However, some of the behaviours measured in this study seem somewhat vague and poorly defined (for example, “encourages children to talk” and “conveys warmth and openness”).

Haye et al (2011) investigated VIG in relation to developing positive behaviour management with a group of teaching assistants (TAs). They used the Target Monitoring and Evaluation system (TME) to assess the confidence of the TAs prior to and following the intervention, and a focus group to investigate the effect of VIG on their knowledge and understanding and the application of what they had learnt to their work. The TAs received two cycles of VIG feedback. The intervention seemed to have little affect on the TAs confidence (although the authors make the point that their confidence levels were high prior to the intervention taking place). However, the results were more positive in terms of what the TAs learnt from the process. The TAs showed increased understanding of communication and were able to apply this understanding to individual pupils. They were also more aware of the need for positive feedback and reported more positive relationships with pupils. Interestingly, whilst the TAs spent some time identifying things they were doing which they felt were unhelpful, this did not seem to make the experience any less positive for them.

Thomson et al (2005) used VIG to support student teachers in developing their practice. Following the VIG cycles the students reported that; they were able to see how their different responses affected the children; they felt more confident in their

practice; they found the contact principles useful for categorizing interactions; and they were able to identify more strengths than areas for development as a result of the VIG.

Overall, initial studies using VIG in schools have been relatively small scale but initial findings seem to be very positive.

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 Aims and research questions

The aim of the research was to investigate teacher perceptions of the use of VIG to give feedback compared to standard verbal feedback following an observation, through piloting both methods of feedback with a small group of teachers. The research questions were as follows:

1) How do teacher perceptions of VIG, as compared to standard verbal feedback, differ in terms of;

- Their anxiety about the observation and feedback
- Their confidence in their teaching
- Their ability to reflect on their practice

2) Which method would they prefer to be used and why?

4.3.2 Epistemological issues

This study took a constructionist approach in that it assumes that meaning is constructed between the teacher and the person giving feedback rather than discovered (Pring, 2000). However, it does not assume that there is no link between

our perceptions and reality, in that it assumes that the teacher's perceptions of their competence will have real effects on their classroom practice.

4.3.3 Initial discussions and negotiations

The additional Educational Psychology (EP) sessions were requested by the senior management team, following a project in the previous year. An initial meeting was held with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) who was also on the senior leadership team, and two members of support staff. Behaviour management was identified as an area of concern, particularly following the school's recent OfSTED report. Two sessions were set aside for whole staff training around positive behaviour management, and two for sessions for parents and pupils where the pupil had recently received a diagnosis. The remaining sessions were set aside for a project around developing practice.

EP sessions in the previous year had been used to provide training to newly qualified teachers and teachers on the Teach First programme, who were identified as needing support with developing behaviour management skills. For the present project, the idea of working with a subsection of teachers from different faculties was put forward by myself and the two other educational psychologists working on the project. The staff at the initial meeting were enthusiastic about this idea and suggested that a range of teachers could be approached to be part of the group, with different ages, different backgrounds and different levels of experience represented. One of the psychologists involved in the project introduced the idea of reflective

practice as a way of developing the good practice that was already happening within school.

At this meeting the SENCO and support workers suggested that it would be useful if observations could be part of the project, a discussion followed about the different ways that this could be achieved and video was identified as an option.

4.3.4 Seeking participants

The potential participants were chosen by the two members of support staff and the SENCO, they identified staff who were enthusiastic, had a reputation for managing behaviour effectively and had been involved in previous school initiatives. These criteria were chosen as the most important factor for participants for the project was their willingness to engage with the process of reflection, and also their confidence in having their lessons filmed. The two members of support staff then approached the identified teachers and invited them to an initial meeting to discuss the project in more detail.

At the initial meeting staff engaged in a brief discussion about their experiences of professional development, both good and bad, and reflected on what aspects had been most useful to them. They referred to being given very specific and practical advice about what strategies they could use to teach more effectively as being particularly useful. They were then provided with an information sheet (Appendix 1) which described the principles of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) and gave an outline of three different potential models for the project. Throughout this meeting it

was emphasised that everything at this point was open to discussion. There was time for questions and a number of staff asked about the use of the video clips following the project, indicating that they would only be comfortable with the clips being viewed by the psychologist and themselves. They were reassured that this would be the case. The preferred model was for an initial observation by an EP followed by a videoed observation and feedback using VIG principles.

All members of the group agreed in principle and names and e-mail addresses were shared. One member of staff remained after the meeting to discuss his deep discomfort with watching himself on film. He was very keen to take part in the project so it was agreed that he would be filmed and the film would be watched by the EP, but that his feedback would not involve watching the film himself. He later withdrew from the project altogether.

Following this meeting the teachers were contacted by e-mail and asked to complete a form indicating when the first observation could take place, and when they would be available for feedback. Whilst five teachers responded to this request, four took part in the initial observation but only three also took part in the videoing and so were able to complete the questionnaire.

4.3.5 Ethical considerations

1) Right to withdraw

Teachers were informed on the consent form (Appendix 2) that they had the right to withdraw from the project at any time without needing to give a reason for this

withdrawal (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011, 15; BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009, 1.4 [ii]). They were also informed that if they wished for their data to be removed from the final report that they could do so, as long as they informed one of the EPs involved in the project within two weeks of the final observation.

2) Confidentiality

The videos were collected from the school by hand and edited by the EPs involved in the project so that they were not seen by anyone else. They were saved onto a disk stored in a locked filing cabinet and then delivered by hand to the school in an envelope marked 'confidential' for the teachers to watch (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011, 25,28; BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009, 1.2[i]). The consent forms were also stored in a locked filing cabinet (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011, 28; BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009, 1.2[i]). The feedback took place in a quiet, empty classroom to avoid feedback being overheard by other members of staff (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011, 25).

3) Informed consent

At the initial meeting with staff it was emphasised that giving their initial agreement did not mean that they were committed to the project. Prior to the initial observation staff were presented with written information about the project (including the time commitment required, the use of the video data and the fact that the project would be written up as part of a doctoral thesis) and were asked to sign to indicate their consent (Appendix 2) (BPS Ethical Guidelines 2009, 1.3).

4) Debriefing

The teachers that took part were invited to a meeting where the findings were presented (Appendix 3) (BERA Ethical Guidelines 2011, 31; BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009, 3.4 [i]).

4.3.6 Methods

Table I shows an overview of the model that was identified as the preferred model in the initial meeting with the group of teachers.

Overview of project phases

Phase	Activity
1	• Observation of a whole lesson by an EP (see appendix 3 for the observation schedule used) • Feedback to the teacher • Lesson for next stage identified
2	• Whole lesson videoed • Video edited by EP to show examples of positive interactions (no more than 15 minutes in length) • Video returned to teacher for viewing
3	• Questionnaire completed reflecting on the experience of the first feedback session • Feedback meeting using contact principles to structure the discussion (Appendix 4) • Questionnaire completed reflecting on the second feedback session

Table 1

A repeated measures design was used in that all participants were in both conditions. A questionnaire was designed using scaling questions so that the teachers' two responses for each question (one for the verbal feedback alone and one for the feedback with video) could be compared to one another (Appendix 5). A final question asked the participants to indicate whether they would prefer to use the

observation schedule and verbal feedback in the future or the video interaction guidance, and then asked them to write a paragraph saying why. Due to the brevity of these comments they are reported in full as part of the results.

4.4 Results

The results from each participant were analysed in turn. A positive score in the right hand column of each table indicates that VIG was rated more positively than the standard observation and feedback.

Teacher 1: Results

Question	Standard observation and feedback	VIG	Difference
Feelings during observation	4	8	+4
Feelings during feedback	8	10	+2
Confidence	7	9	+2
Ability to identify positive aspects of teaching	7	10	+3
Ability to identify areas for development	6	9	+2
Awareness of impact of actions	7	9	+2
Ability to identify what needs to change	9	9	0

Table 2

Overall teacher one rated VIG more positively than a standard observation for all aspects, with the exception of 'ability to identify what needs to change'. The most significant difference was in terms of feelings during the observation, with this teacher indicating that s/he felt much less anxious when being filmed compared to having someone else in the room. S/he also identified that it was easier to identify positive aspects of teaching, although considering the positive focus of VIG this is not surprising.

In addition teacher one made the following comments in relation to video interaction guidance:

"Video allowed specific clips of good/bad practice to be highlighted"

"[Video} allows discussion from an observers point of view for both people"

Teacher 2: Results

Question	Standard observation and feedback	VIG	Difference
Feelings during observation	7	8	+1
Feelings during feedback	3	6	+3
Confidence	7	8	+1
Ability to identify positive aspects of teaching	8	9	+1
Ability to identify areas for development	9	9	0
Awareness of impact of actions	4	10	+6
Ability to identify what needs to change	7	10	+3

Table 3

Again, this teacher rated VIG more positively in terms of all but one of the aspects on the questionnaire. In this case the most significant difference was in terms of her/his awareness of the impact of her/his actions.

In addition, teacher two made the following comments in relation to VIG;

“good to look back and evidence what happens – sometimes memories fade or become skewed”

“can be used to look at body language more and see the specific behaviours and reactions of students that are not obvious through normal teaching/verbal feedback”

“can be used to share with other colleagues to drive teaching and learning”

Teacher 3: Results

Question	Standard observation and feedback	VIG	Difference
Feelings during observation	3	6	+3
Feelings during feedback	2	3	+1
Confidence	8	7	-1
Ability to identify positive aspects of teaching	8	9	+1
Ability to identify areas for development	8	9	+1
Awareness of impact of actions	8	9	+1
Ability to identify what needs to change	8	9	+1

Table 4

In addition, teacher three made the following comments in relation to VIG:

“clearly self-critical”

“great opportunities for self-reflection”

“very easy to identify good and bad practice”

“very powerful viewing yourself on screen”

Overall results

Aspect	**Mean difference between standard verbal feedback and feedback using VIG**
Feelings during observation	+2.6
Feelings during feedback	+2
Confidence	+0.6
Ability to identify positive aspects of teaching	+1.6
Ability to identify areas for development	+1
Awareness of impact of actions	+3
Ability to identify what needs to change	+1.3

Table 5

Again a positive figure in the right hand column indicates that VIG was rated more positively in this area than the standard verbal feedback.

Overall, all three participants identified that if only one method of feedback was to be used in school in the future, they would prefer VIG to be the method used.

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 Discussion of the results

The teachers were positive about the use of video to give feedback and indicated that they felt less anxious receiving feedback in this way. However, it is important to note that the teachers all received the VIG feedback after the standard verbal feedback and so the reduced anxiety may have been due to feeling more comfortable with the EP giving the feedback rather than the use of video. This may also be significant in terms of how much the feedback that was received was valued

by the participants, Brandt (2008) found that the value of the feedback was determined by the relationship with the person providing the feedback.

More significant perhaps in terms of developing reflective practice is the fact that all teachers identified that video enabled them to be more aware of the impact of their behaviour on their students. This is similar to the findings of Thomson et al (2005) where student teachers reported that VIG, "allowed them to see how different responses affected children's behaviour" (p.8). This is important if we define reflective practice as: 'a cycle of paying deliberate analytical attention to one's own actions in relation to intentions' (Kottkamp, 1990, p.183). The teachers also indicated that VIG helped them to identify what they needed to change, although the present study did not allow for an exploration of whether these changes were put into place.

The comments which were made by the teachers about the video helping them to identify poor practice and well as good practice are interesting, given that it is not the purpose of VIG. This suggests either that the clips were not selected carefully enough and included some examples of poor practice, or that the teachers found it difficult to shift from focusing on what they do wrong to what they do right. Brandt (2008) found that the teachers in her study tended to equate "true feedback" with criticism, it may have been that the participants in the present study thought that unless they were able to identify weaknesses in their practice they had not truly received feedback. Vásquez (2004) suggests that sometimes it is necessary to be critical to ensure that people know what they need to do to improve. However, it

could be argued that doing more of what is going well can be what needs to take place in order to improve, and this can be done without criticism.

4.5.2 Strengths and limitations of the study

The strength of the present study is that the use of a repeated measures design allowed the responses of the participants to be directly compared for each condition. This was intended to overcome some of the difficulties associated with the use of scaling as a measure i.e. that the scale will be interpreted differently by different people. This means that considering the results as a whole is less meaningful as we cannot assume, for example, that a difference of three points between the scale for the standard verbal feedback and the VIG feedback, would mean the same for each participant. In addition, because of the small number of participants one extreme score would have had a significant affect on the mean score overall.

Attrition was a significant difficulty in the early stages of the study with only three of the original five teachers taking part, there are a number of possible reasons for this. Firstly, whilst the teachers were only required to set up the video and then contact the EP to collect it when it was done, in the course of a busy school day it would have been easy to forget to identify a class or to set up the camera. Secondly, although concerns about being videoed were only raised by one participant, other participants may have become more reluctant as time went on.

Another potential difficulty was the fact that all participants were observed by the EP first and videoed second. This may have led to order effects whereby the participants

were more positive about the second feedback session due to feeling more comfortable with the EP. This issue could have been overcome by counterbalancing so that participants received the two types of feedback in a different order to one another. However, the finding that the teachers felt more aware of the impact of their behaviour on students following feedback using VIG is harder to explain in terms of order effects.

4.5.3 Conclusions and implications for the school

This study was an example of VIG being applied in a new context, that of a secondary school wishing to develop existing good practice. The findings of this initial pilot study suggest that teachers felt less anxious being filmed than observed in real life; they felt less anxious receiving positive feedback using video than receiving standard verbal feedback; they felt more confident following VIG feedback (although this was not true for all three participants and confidence was relatively high in both conditions); and they felt more able to reflect on their practice (particularly in terms of their awareness of the impact of their behaviour on the behaviour of the students). Therefore despite some significant limitations to the study, these initial findings suggest that it may be useful for the school taking part to investigate the use of video as a way of giving feedback to staff to encourage a more reflective and collaborative approach to developing practice. The teachers in the study seemed keen to experiment further with video in the future, but it is important to note that these teachers were identified as already demonstrating good practice and rated their confidence highly in each condition, therefore at present it is difficult to predict whether the approach would be as successful with teachers who are less confident.

Further research with a different group would help to address this concern. The fact that one participant did not feel comfortable being filmed was not an issue for the study but may be an issue if video became part of a whole school policy in the future. Another practical issue is that VIG has a significant 'cost' in terms of the time needed for feedback and for editing the video. It took around and hour and a half for each video to be edited and this would be difficult to achieve for busy teachers. The feedback also took marginally longer for the VIG given the level of detail given in the discussion of each clip. It might be useful therefore to compare using VIG specifically, with using video as a more general tool, as it was not clear from the present study whether it was the positive focus of the VIG or simply the use of video that teachers found helpful. Finally, in order for the school to adopt this new approach to giving feedback it would be necessary to determine whether the teachers were able to implement the changes they identified to lead to improvements in practice.

4.5.4 Implications for educational psychology practice

This study provides an example of EPs not only carrying out research in schools to support the development of teacher practice but also modeling an approach that could be used by the school in the future. Consequently, whilst this initial project required a reasonable commitment of time by the teachers who took part and the EPs who carried out the project, in the long term this approach should be relatively time efficient, with the teachers who took part able to share their learning with other members of staff. This could reduce the need for further EP support around issues such as challenging behaviour and freeing up EP time to be used in other ways. However, the concepts relating to both Video Interaction Guidance and reflective

practice are complex and previous research suggests they can be difficult to grasp (Cox, 2005; Moran and Dallat, 1995) and so there is a danger that the approach would become diluted or distorted without ongoing support from the EPs. Nevertheless, the positive responses from the teachers who took part, particularly in terms of their ability to reflect on the impact of their actions on the young people they teach, suggests that the use of video is a potentially powerful tool for use by EPs working with teachers.

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Appendix 1: Information sheet for teachers

What is Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)?

Aims:

- to enhance communication, most typically used to look at interactions between children and adults (professionals or parents)
- to help to reflect on interactions, drawing attention to what is successful and supporting them to make changes
- to develop greater awareness of how young people are trying to communicate and how to respond

Key principles

- utilising a collaborative 'coaching' relationship
- focus on strengths and potential rather than problems
- looking at when things are going well as a way of making informed decisions about what to do when things are going less well

Process:

- goals are negotiated (i.e. what will be focused on/what could be improved)
- interactions are then filmed
- the 'facilitator' then watches the film looking for examples of positive communication
- the 'facilitator' and the teacher then review these successful moments focusing on both verbal and non-verbal communication, they reflect on what the teacher is already doing to achieve their goals
- further goals are negotiated

How has VIG been used?

1) Early years teachers' interaction skills

- teachers were more sensitive to the verbal and non-verbal communications of the children
- teachers felt more confident in their role

Fukkink and Tavecchio (2010)

2) Teaching assistants and positive behaviour management

- being videoed was identified as being the most effective part of the process
- TAs said they were able to use their increased knowledge of the principles of communication to reflect on pupils difficulties
- improved relationships with pupils were reported

Hayes et al (2011)

3) Improving interactions with children with autistic spectrum conditions

- staff in this study also received training in a specific imitation technique
- adult verbal contributions decreased and child verbal contributions increased
- adults felt they would continue to use the imitation technique and could identify times when it might be useful

Kennedy and Sked (2008)

4) With primary school teachers to reduce challenging behaviour

- all teachers reported finding it useful in terms of giving them time to reflect and 'making them think' about their practice
- led to teachers feeling more positive about their class, feeling more assertive and less stressed
- feelings of self-efficacy (how effective they felt as teachers) increased

Kaye, Forsyth and Simpson (2000)

Proposed Models for Project

Model 1

Phase	Action	Outcomes
1	Teachers identify a lesson they would like to be observed EPs observe the lesson	Meeting to give general feedback Discussion around identifying goals
2	Teachers identify another lesson to be videoed The lesson is filmed EPs watch the video and edit to show examples of effective communication	Meeting to view video and discuss examples of positive communication Goals are set
3	Teachers identify another lesson to be videoed The review the	

Model 2

Phase	Action	Outcomes
1	Teachers identify a goal	Meeting to share the goal with the EP
2	Teacher's identify a lesson to be videoed The lesson is filmed EPs watch the video and edit to show examples of effective communication	Meeting to view video and discuss examples of positive communication Goals are set

Appendix 2: Project information and consent

Consent form

- The aim of this study is to compare teacher experiences of receiving verbal feedback following a lesson observation with receiving feedback using the principles of Video Interaction Guidance.
- You will be asked to complete a questionnaire. You are allowed to withdraw from the study at any time and may request for your data not to be included, as long as you do so within 2 days of completing the questionnaire.
- The questionnaires will be anonymous and once completed will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.
- The findings of the study will be shared with participants in the study and the senior leadership team in school. Contributions from individual participants will not be identifiable.
- The findings will also be shared with Educational Psychologists at Walsall Educational Psychology Service – whilst the will be aware which school the study took part in, they will not be aware of which teachers took part.
- A report on the project will be written up as part of a doctoral thesis. The name of the school, local authority and individuals taking part will not be used. The write-up will be available to University of Birmingham staff and students in via the university library.

I have read and understood the information above and agree to take part in the study.

Signed …….

Date …….

Appendix 3: Feedback to teachers

Thank you for agreeing to complete the questionnaire about your experience of receiving standard verbal feedback following an observation and feedback using video interaction guidance (VIG).

Results:

The results are given for each teacher who took part below. The numbers were assigned randomly and do not indicate the order in which the questionnaires were completed. A positive score in the right hand column indicates that VIG was rated more positively than the standard verbal feedback.

Teacher one

Question	Standard observation and feedback	VIG	Difference
Feelings during observation	7	8	+1
Feelings during feedback	3	6	+3
Confidence	7	8	+1
Ability to identify positive aspects of teaching	8	9	+1
Ability to identify areas for development	9	9	0
Awareness of impact of actions	4	10	+6
Ability to identify what needs to change	7	10	+3

Teacher two

Question	Standard observation and feedback	VIG	Difference
Feelings during observation	4	8	+4
Feelings during feedback	8	10	+2
Confidence	7	9	+2
Ability to identify	7	10	+3

positive aspects of teaching			
Ability to identify areas for development	6	9	+2
Awareness of impact of actions	7	9	+2
Ability to identify what needs to change	9	9	0

Teacher three

Question	**Standard observation and feedback**	**VIG**	**Difference**
Feelings during observation	3	6	+3
Feelings during feedback	2	3	+1
Confidence	8	7	-1
Ability to identify positive aspects of teaching	8	9	+1
Ability to identify areas for development	8	9	+1
Awareness of impact of actions	8	9	+1
Ability to identify what needs to change	8	9	+1

The overall results are presented below. These results should be interpreted with caution as we cannot assume that each teacher will have interpreted the scale in the same way. Also, the small number of participants means that an extreme score will have had a significant effect on the overall mean scores.

Overall results

Aspect	**Mean difference between standard verbal feedback and feedback using VIG**

Feelings during observation	+2.6
Feelings during feedback	+2
Confidence	+0.6
Ability to identify positive aspects of teaching	+1.6
Ability to identify areas for development	+1
Awareness of impact of actions	+3
Ability to identify what needs to change	+1.3

In addition all three participants indicated that (if one method was adopted in the future) that they were prefer VIG to be used to give feedback. The following comments were made about the use of VIG:

“Video allowed specific clips of good/bad practice to be highlighted”

“very powerful viewing yourself on screen”

“[Video] allows discussion from an observers point of view for both people”

“good to look back and evidence what happens – sometimes memories fade or

become skewed”

“very easy to identify good and bad practice”

“can be used to look at body language more and see the specific behaviours and

reactions of students that are not obvious through normal teaching/verbal feedback”

“clearly self-critical”

“great opportunities for self-reflection”

“can be used to share with other colleagues to drive teaching and learning”

Conclusions

As you can see VIG was rated positively compared to standard verbal feedback by all participants. Particularly in terms of, feeling less anxious during observations and when receiving feedback, and in terms of being aware of the impact of teacher behaviour on students. This suggests that it may be useful for x school to consider investigating the use of video in giving feedback further.

However, it is also important to consider the following points;

- The cost of using video in terms of time (around and hour and a half of editing per lesson)

- We don’t know how effective using video may be with teachers who are less confident in their practice
- It may be that participants felt more confident following feedback using VIG because they already knew the educational psychologist at this point
- It is interesting that it was identified that VIG helps to identify poor practice as this is not the purpose of the approach
- At this point it is not clear whether it was using VIG that made the difference or just using video

Appendix 4: Contact principles used to give feedback

Type of communication	**What is it?**	**What does it look like?**
Initiative and reception (e.g. being open to communication)	Being attentive Tuning in	Open body language Eye contact Nodding Agreeing Turning towards someone Friendly facial expressions
Interaction	Forming a group Making turns Co-operation	Giving and taking turns Joint transactions Looking at each person in the group Acknowledging contributions
Giving guidance: discussion	Supporting to form opinions Giving information Helping decision making Developing effective learners	Accepting/investigating/exchanging opinions Offering additional knowledge Describing the task Judging the time needed Encouraging review Goal setting Attributing achievement
Giving guidance: Conflict management	Restoring contact Making transactions	(using principles above) Establishing viewpoints Complying with ‘rules’

Appendix 5: Questionnaire

Consider the following questions in relation to the first feedback session.

How did you feel during the observation?
1 indicating that you felt extremely anxious and 10 that you felt completely relaxed

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How did you feel during the feedback?
1 indicating that you felt extremely anxious and 10 that you felt completely relaxed

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How confident did you feel about your teaching following the session?
1 indicating that you had no confidence and 10 that you felt extremely confident

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you feel, following the feedback, that you were able to identify positive aspects of your practice from that lesson?
1 indicating that you felt unable to identify any positive aspects of your practice and 10 that you were able to identify a number of different positive aspects

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you feel, following the feedback, that you were able to identify areas for development?
1 indicating that you felt unable to identify any areas for development and 10 that you were able to identify a number of different areas for development

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you feel, following the feedback, that you were aware of the impact of your actions on the pupils in your class?
1 indicating that you had no idea about how your actions had influenced the pupils in your class and 10 that you felt extremely aware of the impact of your actions on the pupils in your class

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you feel, following the feedback, that you knew what you needed to change to improve your practice?
1 indicating that you felt unable to identify any changes and 10 that you were able to identify a number of different changes to make

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Consider the following questions in relation to the second feedback session.

How did you feel during the filming?
1 indicating that you felt extremely anxious and 10 that you felt completely relaxed

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How did you feel during the feedback?
1 indicating that you felt extremely anxious and 10 that you felt completely relaxed

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How confident did you feel about your teaching following the session?
1 indicating that you had no confidence and 10 that you felt extremely confident

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you feel, following the feedback, that you were able to identify positive aspects of your practice from that lesson?
1 indicating that you felt unable to identify any positive aspects of your practice and 10 that you were able to identify a number of different positive aspects

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you feel, following the feedback, that you were able to identify areas for development?
1 indicating that you felt unable to identify any areas for development and 10 that you were able to identify a number of different areas for development

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you feel, following the feedback, that you were aware of the impact of your actions on the pupils in your class?
1 indicating that you had no idea about how your actions had influenced the pupils in your class and 10 that you felt extremely aware of the impact of your actions on the pupils in your class

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Did you feel, following the feedback, that you knew what you needed to change to improve your practice?
1 indicating that you felt unable to identify any changes and 10 that you were able to identify a number of different changes to make

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

If the school were to adopt one method to support professional development in the future, which method would you prefer? (*please circle one)*

The observation schedule with verbal feedback

Video Interaction Guidance

Neither

If neither please indicate what method you would prefer to be used in the space below

……
…….

……
…….

If you chose either the observation schedule with verbal feedback or video interaction guidance, please use the space below to indicate why you made this choice. Please give as many reasons as you can.

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CHAPTER FIVE: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT 4 – RESPONDING TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT: AN ANALYSIS USING ACTIVITY THEORY OF THE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY AN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

Abstract

The critical incident response in one Local Authority Educational Psychology Service was explored from the perspective of both an Educational Psychologist and a teacher using activity theory. The teacher and psychologist were interviewed using a third generation activity framework (Engeström, 1999) structure the interview The results indicated that whilst there was general agreement across the two activity systems, there were also key differences around the difficulties encountered, the broader purpose of the work, the key individuals involved and the division of labour, although it was acknowledged that it was not possible to fully explore the division of labour though separate interviews. These differences are discussed and possible implications for the Educational Psychology Service are presented.

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Background

The aim of the research was to analyse the critical incident support provided by an Educational Psychology Service in a metropolitan borough in the West Midlands, from the perspective of both an educational psychologist and a member of school staff involved. To achieve this aim it focuses on the support provided following one particular critical incident that took place in March 2011, when a male pupil at a school was struck by a car, leading to a severe head trauma. Support was provided to the school by the school's link Educational Psychologist (EP) (who was a trainee at the time) and the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP).

5.1.2 Overview of professional practice report

Firstly an overview of the current critical incident response provided by the Educational Psychology service is given, along with a brief summary of the incidents where support has been provided by the service over the last four years. A review of the literature relating to providing psychological support following a critical incident follows, with a particular focus on the role of the EP. Activity theory is then described and critiqued, again with particular consideration given to its relevance to the role of the EP in schools. The methodology is discussed. The findings are presented and then discussed in terms of the implications for EP practice and conclusions are drawn.

5.1.3 Overview of the current critical incident response in the local authority

In the local authority in which the study took place all EPs may potentially be involved in a critical incident response (unless they request not to be). Usually the school's named EP and a senior or the PEP will be involved in supporting the school. When a school requests support following an incident the EPs initially meet with the head teacher and other senior staff to support with planning the school's response. This may involve discussing how staff, pupils and parents will be supported and how information will be shared with them. Usually a staff meeting will be offered, where staff can raise concerns and guidance can be given on talking to parents and pupils. During the initial visit EPs will often make themselves available to talk to any staff who feel that they would like to have an informal discussion. The EPs will also offer information about other services such as bereavement services and advise when schools may wish to consider contacting these services. The school's link EP may provide consultation relating to individual pupils if concerns are raised, and will continue to signpost to other services if necessary. Other support may include meetings with particular staff members, pupils and parents.

Whilst this provides a general overview of what generally takes place following a request from a school for support following a critical incident, it is important to note that there is no written policy within the service describing the procedure to be followed.

5.1.4 Overview of from the last four years of critical incidents within the local authority

An overview of the critical incidents the service has been involved with over the past four years was completed (see Appendix 1) Much of this information was gathered some time after the fact and so is dependent on the memories of the EPs. At present the service does not have a formalised system for recording critical incidents within the authority. Overall, it would seem that the most common role for the EP's in the service providing support following critical incidents is providing guidance to staff about how to talk about the incident, particularly to pupils. When individual sessions with staff members or pupils are offered these seem less likely to be taken up, EPs commented when they were asked to provide information for the current project that staff often seemed to feel that they had sufficient support from one another.

The incident that provides the focus for this report was a road traffic accident and took place on a Sunday, so was not directly witnessed by many pupils (although siblings of the child involved were present). The boy involved in the accident went into hospital and remained in a coma for several days. Following an extended hospital stay, he transferred to a rehabilitation centre for children with acquired brain injury for six weeks, before moving to a school with facilities for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

2. Literature review

2.1.1 Psychological responses to trauma

A person's response to trauma depends on many different factors, most particularly their previous experiences of trauma and the levels of social support available to them (McCaffrey, 2004). However, there is general agreement that initially most people will experience a sense of shock that leads to feelings of being 'dazed' (Parkinson, 1993). It has been suggested that this feeling serves a psychological function in that it temporarily prevents processing of other stimuli so that the event can be processed bit by bit (Parkinson, 1993). This may explain why, even in extreme circumstances people rarely panic (Raphael, 1986). Another common initial reaction is to seek to establish some meaning in relation to the event, where those involved try to find out what has happened and why (Hodgkinson and Stewert, 1991).

Some individuals who have experienced witnessed or been confronted with an event which involved actual or threatened death or serious injury may develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV, APA, 2004) as including the following elements over a period of at least one month;

- the event is persistently re-experienced (e.g. through dreams, feeling as though the event is happening again, being very distressed by stimuli that represent the event etc.)
- avoidance of stimuli associated with the event and general feelings of numbness
- persistent symptoms of increased arousal

It has been found that PTSD can increase negative beliefs about self, others and the world in the long term (Brewin and Holmes, 2003). This type of response would require specialist support.

Whilst in the present study, for the most part, those who received support had not directly witnessed the event, there is evidence to suggest that negative psychological effects are still possible. In a large-scale survey, Cohen-Silver et al (2002) found that 17% of Americans living outside New York following the 9/11 terrorist attacks reported post-traumatic stress symptoms two months after the event. They found that pre-mental and physical health status prior to the event played a significant role in predicting how well people were able to cope. The use of a self-report questionnaire in this study means that there is some question about the validity of the results, as participants may have been primed by the questions to identify symptoms. Zinnur Kiliç et al (2008) found that children and adolescents who had experienced an earthquake were more likely to develop symptoms of PTSD if they had high 'anxiety sensitivity' (fear of the physical symptoms of anxiety). This study had a small sample and used a cross-sectional research design, so was not able to establish that anxiety sensitivity is a causal factor in the development of PTSD symptoms rather than PTSD causing anxiety sensitivity. Nevertheless, these studies suggest the need for a degree of caution in terms of identifying who is in most need of support following a critical incident, as it may not necessarily be those in closest proximity to the incident.

5.2.2 Principles of responding to critical incidents

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2005) recommends that the support provided to those who have experienced trauma should depend on the severity and length of the response. Table one gives an overview of the guidelines.

NICE Guidelines for the treatment of PTSD

Who?	Response
Those with mild symptoms lasting less than four weeks	• "Debriefing" should not be routine practice • "Watchful waiting" • A follow-up after 1 month
Those with severe PTSD symptoms	• Trauma focused CBT should be offered within one month • A course of trauma focused CBT should be offered

Table 1

Most interesting and relevant to the present discussion is the recommendation that "debriefing" should not take place routinely. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) is a structured intervention designed to help people to cope with the emotional impact of being exposed to trauma with the aim of reducing the likelihood of developing PTSD (Stallard and Salter, 2003). However, research suggests that not only may interventions of this type fail to reduce this likelihood but that they may increase the likelihood of developing PTSD in some individuals. For example, Hobbs et al (1996) conducted a randomised control trial of victims of road traffic accidents admitted to hospital. They found no evidence that debriefing for the treatment group helped to alleviate post traumatic symptoms, indeed, outcomes were worse for some in the

treatment group. Hobbs et al suggest a number of reasons for these outcomes, firstly, some participants may have been too numb or distressed immediately after the accident to be receptive, secondly, that a single session may not have been sufficient to support those experiencing a major emotional response and thirdly, that early intervention may disturb natural 'psychological defences'. Bisson et al (1997) also found that for some burns victims psychological debriefing led to more severe dimensions of trauma.

5.2.3 Critical incidents in schools

Research into critical incidents in schools is limited, and where it does exist tends to either be a presentation of a particular approach taken by a local authority (with little explanation of how it was developed) or a reflection on an individual case from the perspective of the EPs rather than those in the school who were affected. This is why the literature around disaster management was also included as part of the literature review to provide some idea about the impact on 'victims' of these kinds of incidents rather than just the different approaches which can be used to support them. Nevertheless, the available research focusing on the role of the EP in supporting schools following a critical incident is presented below.

Greenway (2005) describes her personal experiences of supporting a school through a critical incident, using psychoanalytic concepts to focus particularly on the effect on school staff and the school as an organisation. In addition she makes some suggestions about the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) in supporting schools in these circumstances. She suggests that, following the incident, staff were

unable to think rationally in order to distinguish between perceived and actual threat, and that they became hypervigilent. She suggests that when this occurs the EP can help by supporting the school to avoid rumour and with the use of cognitive behavioural interventions with individuals or groups. She suggests that staff either need a good 'internal mother' to contain their emotions or they need leadership in the school to take on this role. If this does not happen Greenway suggests that staff can become overly dependent on others. She found in her own experiences that staff blamed leadership for the event, and in turn the pupils blamed the staff.

In terms of the effect on a school, Greenway describes how it became difficult to retain staff and the staff who remained lost faith in the behaviour management system and the ability of senior staff to manage behaviour in school. Here, she suggests that the EP may have a role in supporting the school to maintain stability, routine and consistency. Overall, she suggests that EPs can be process facilitators for both groups and individuals; can help to investigate the health of the school as an organisation and also refer to other outside agencies who may offer support. Whilst Greenway's reflections make some suggestions to EPs about supporting schools who have experienced a critical incident, they are based on her experiences with one school and with one particular type of critical incident (the murder of a member of staff at the school gate), which may explain the particular affects here and may not relate to other kinds of incidents.

McCaffrey (2004) describes a consultancy approach to supporting schools following a critical incident. She suggests that the EP service is well placed to provide support

at these times due to having an existing relationship with the school. The objectives of the approach she describes are as follows;

- normalisation of the response to the incident
- reducing tension through the airing of feelings
- helping with cognitive organisation
- working to validate and enhance existing methods of coping

McCaffrey describes the overall objective as being to promote psychological processing of the event at both an individual and systems level. The service described in this paper has found that the predominant initial need for schools is for advice on the planning and management for distressed pupils and staff, along with how to communicate to pupils, staff and parents. This paper is a detailed description of a particular approach but it is not clear how the approach was developed and whether there is a clear theoretical background to the approach that was taken.

Carroll et al (1997) identify a number of principles for EPs providing support following a critical incident that are similar to the ones identified above, these are; that the EP should make immediate contact with the school and that any work should be by invitation only, that the support to schools should be short term, and there should be signposting to other services if longer term support is required. They also describe how the local authority in which they are based also provides training to schools in preparation for a traumatic event that has been well received. In addition, they make suggestions about the support that should be provided to the EPs themselves, suggesting that co-working between EPs should take place and that supervision specific to the critical incident response should be available.

In contrast the to previously described studies O'Hara, Taylor and Simpson (1994) discuss the use of critical incident stress debriefing in direct work with a group of pupils in year six at a primary school following the death of a pupil. The pupils were either bystanders or close friends of the pupil. The need for group counselling was proposed following concerns expressed by parents, as with the previous study the adults were concerned that they were not offering the 'right' support to their children. The EPs running the group found that the members of the group were very supportive of one another but some difficulties arose with respecting the confidentiality of the group as some parents were keen to know what had been discussed. However, although initial reactions to the intervention seem positive there is no evaluation of the long term effects for the children, or whether any required further support later on.

In summary, research suggests the following possible roles for EPs following a critical incident in a school;

- supporting the school as an organisation
- work with individuals or groups, which, whilst not full-blown therapy, has a distinct therapeutic focus
- helping schools to plan

However, what is missing from the literature from Educational Psychology journals is a sound theoretical justification for the approaches suggested.

5.2.4 Activity theory

Daniels (2008) describes activity theory as follows;

'activity theorists seek to analyse the development of consciousness within practical social activity. Their concern is with the psychological impacts of any activity and the social conditions and systems produced in and through such activity' (p.115)

Edwards (2000) compares it with action research. She suggests that if action research is concerned with facilitating systemic change then activity theory is an analytical tool that can be used to promote informed action. This indicates that activity theory provides a theoretical basis upon which action research can be based.

Engeström (1999) suggests that this is how activity theory differs from traditional frameworks, which consider socioeconomic structures and individual behaviour separately, where activity theory seeks to bring them together. He describes three generations of activity theory (Engeström, 1999a/b). The first is influenced by Vygotsky's concept of mediation, whereby the relationship between the subject and the object is mediated by tools/artefacts (see figure 1).

First generation activity theory

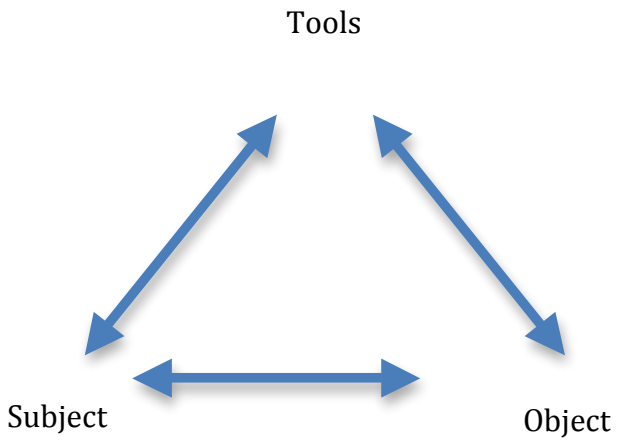


Figure 1

Engeström (1999a/b) suggests that the problem with this system is that it doesn't fully explain the collaborative nature of peoples' actions, and the influence of social factors. He suggests that this system implies that the influence of peoples' actions is very limited and bound to their current situation. He therefore expanded the activity system to include the social basis of activity in terms of the rules influencing the activity (which can either help or hinder), the community (who is involved?) and the division of labour (who does what?). In addition he suggested that the subject should be broadened to include more than just one individual and introduced 'outcome' to the system, suggesting that considering the motive for activity gives it a broader meaning (see figure 2).

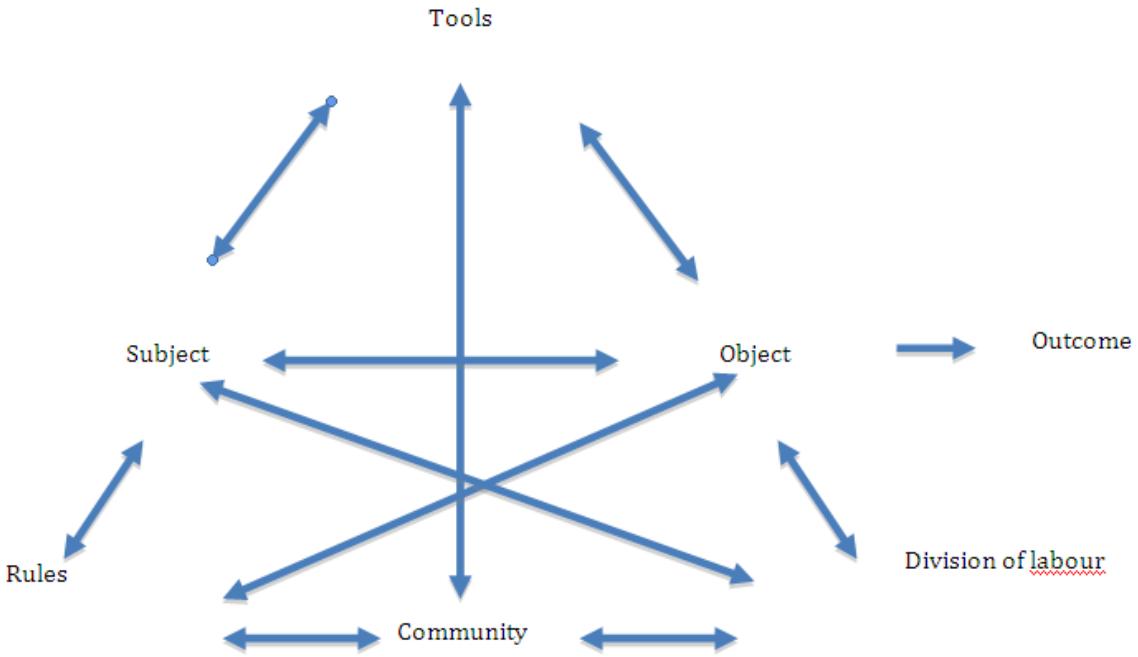


Figure 2: Second generation activity theory

Engeström also introduced the idea of the importance of contradictions within the activity system that may cause the system to fail, but also drive attempts to make changes to the system (Daniels, 2008).

Engeström identified a number of different types of contradictions, as described by Durbin (2009). They are as follows;

- Primary contradictions – these are within internal aspects (e.g. contradictions between different tools)

- Secondary contradictions – these are between different aspects of the activity system (e.g. between the tools and the community)
- Tertiary contradictions – these may occur when a new object is introduced and it is in conflict with the previous object
- Quaternary contradictions – these are between one activity system and other related activity systems

Engeström's third generation of activity theory acknowledges that all activity systems are part of networks of interacting activity systems, and that these interacting systems may lead to the development of new objects entirely.

Third generation activity theory (adapted from Daniels, 2008)

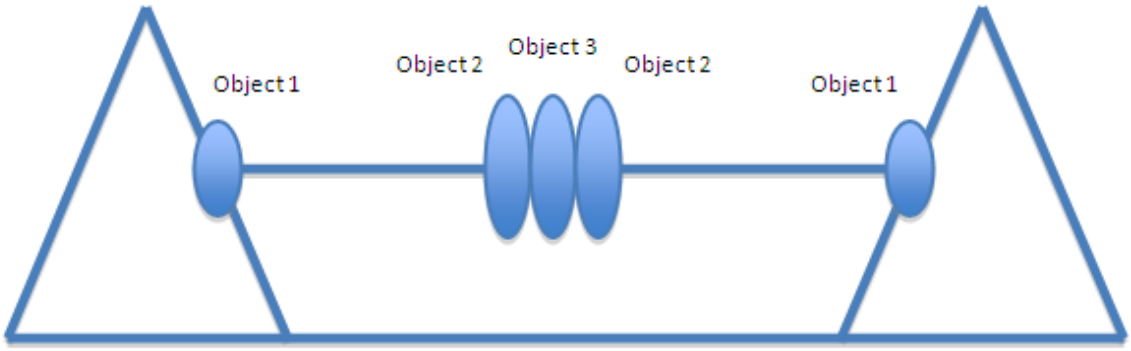


Figure 3

2.2ii Relevance to role of EP

Leadbetter (2005) in a special edition of Educational and Child Psychology (Journal of the Division of Educational and Child Psychology of the British Psychological Society), suggests that activity theory is a valuable tool for analysis and

understanding and suggests a number of different ways in which it may be utilised by practising EPs. Firstly, she suggests it may be used during consultation around individual pupils, secondly, for problem-solving in a teaching and learning situation and thirdly for analysing complex systems within schools. She identifies its particular strengths as being; that it is based on sound psychological principles and theory; that it takes into account the individual in any system; and that it emphasises the importance of historicity. This could be seen as an advance on what is offered by other problem-solving models that may be used by EPs (e.g. Woolfson et al, 2003), which do not explicitly consider these factors.

2.2iii Critique of activity theory

Criticisms of activity theory focus on whether or not it provides anything new and useful to cultural psychology. For example, Josephs (1996) does not consider activity to be of key importance for the study of psychology. She considers the concept of activity to be too broad and questions whether a clear distinction has been made between what is psychological and what is activity (i.e. is remembering an activity or is it a psychological process?). She is particularly concerned about how activity theorists decide what is relevant to an activity system, for example, when looking into the history of activity it may be difficult to know how far back to explore. In addition, she suggests that the task of linking social processes to psychological functions is too complex to undertake without greater understanding of these concepts. Toomela (2000) also questions whether activity theory is able to lead us to an understanding or explanation of the mind. He suggests that analysis of activity is necessary but makes the point that the same external activity can have different underlying mental

operations, so the study of activity cannot tell us how and why people do things. I would argue that these writers are taking a different ontological and epistemological position when presenting these arguments, to the position taken in this paper. Discussions around mental operations, psychological functions and the difference between what is psychological and what is activity are essentialist, in that they assume that there is an essence to these things that makes them what they are (Burr, 2003). This is not the position taken here, instead a social contructionist position is taken which denies that our knowledge is a direct perception of reality, making an understanding of the 'mind' not something that we can have as psychologists, but something that we create through our interactions with others (*ibid*). Joseph's most significant criticism in relation to the current project is that activity theory does not pay sufficient attention to subjective experience. However, I would argue that it is not possible by interviewing people to access their experiences, but through a discussion using activity theory it is possible to gain one of many possible perspectives on an activity.

5.3 Methodology

5.3.1 Research aims and research questions

The aim of the research is to analyse a local authority Educational Psychology Service Critical Incident response from the perspective of both a psychologist and a teacher. The purpose is to explore the similarities and differences in the object, outcome, identified tools, division of labour, community and rules from each perspective, to establish whether there is agreement around what the psychologists were working on and how they were doing it. The aim is also to identify contradictions

within each activity system to help to identify where the process may be changed to facilitate more effective working in the future.

The research questions were therefore as follows;

- Where do the teacher and the EP agree about what support is being provided and the purpose of that support?
- Where do the teacher and the EP disagree about what support is being provided and the purpose of that support?
- Where do potential contradictions exist within the activity systems?
- What suggestions does this analysis make about how the support provided by the EP service to schools could be improved?

5.3.2. Selecting the school

The criteria for selecting the school was that the critical incident needed to have taken place no more than two years ago but less than six months ago. This relatively narrow criteria was adopted because it was thought that for more recent critical incidents ongoing support from the service may still be requested, and for incidents more than two years ago school staff and EPs may find it difficult to recall what had taken place or may have moved to a different post. Information about involvement in critical incidents was provided by a senior EP who had responsibility for recording critical incidents at the end of each academic year. Further information was requested from local authority EPs at a team meeting, with responses given by email. There were two critical incidents that met the criteria. The first was rejected given that the support provided had been focused mainly on one particular pupil and his

mother. The second which took place just under two years prior to the study was thought to be more suitable as the support provided had a much broader focus.

Initially the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) at the school, who had been very much involved in the incident, was contacted by telephone and asked whether she would be willing to be interviewed. Following her initial agreement, a later face-to-face meeting was arranged where the study was explained verbally in more detail and a time for the interview to take place was arranged. The SENCO approached the other members of staff who had had contact with the EPs at this time initially to ask if they would be willing to take part. Unfortunately the class teacher of the pupil involved in the critical incident had left the school in the interim.

The school's link EP was on maternity leave during the study and so was not available to be interviewed. The PEP was approached informally initially to ask if she would be willing to be interviewed. At a later meeting the study was explained in more detail and a date for the interview was arranged.

5.3.3 Methods

The teacher and the principal psychologist were interviewed separately using an activity theory system to structure the interview (see figure 1 and 2). The questions were taken from Soan (2012) who had used activity theory with parents to investigate their experiences of EPs work. Given that the focus was similar here, these questions were thought to be appropriate. and discussed in the order marked. Brief notes were made at the time to help the interviewees to identify what had been said but the

interviews were recorded and transcribed in order that the activity system could be completed in more detail.

Structure for EP interview

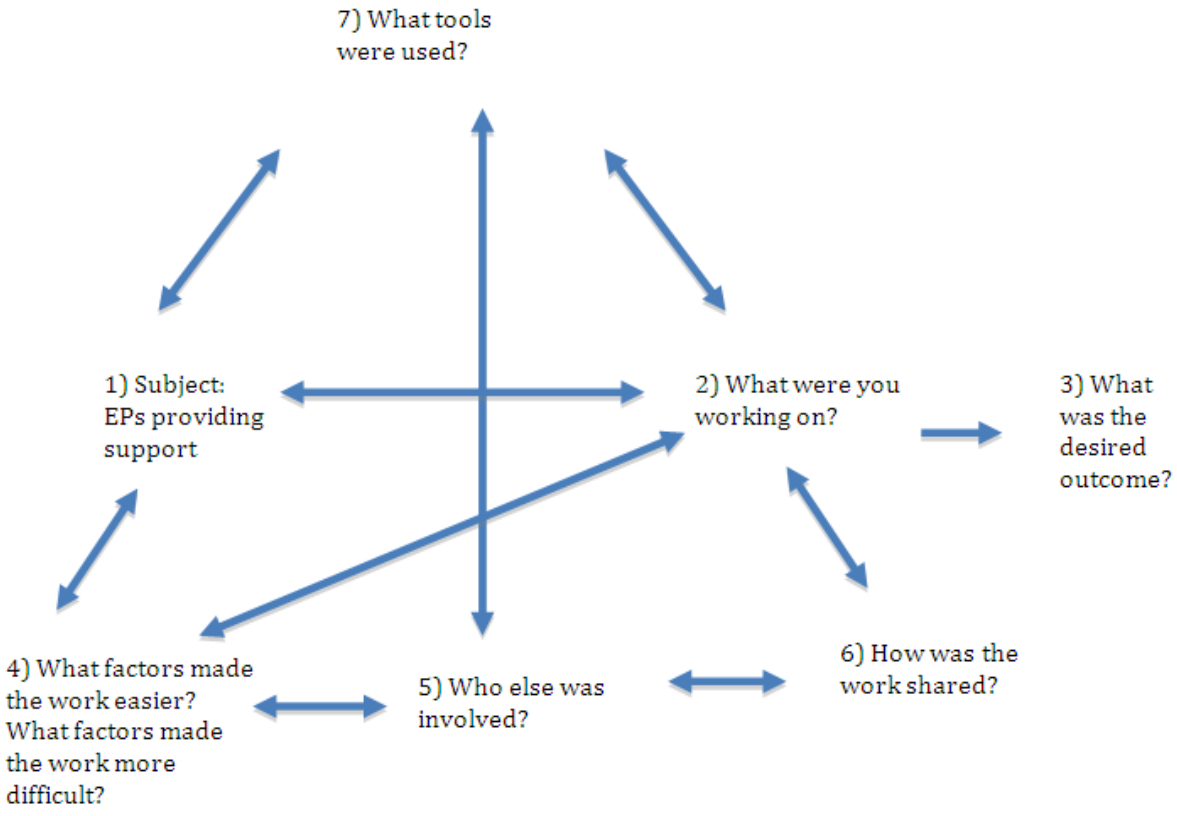


Figure 4

Structure for the school staff interview

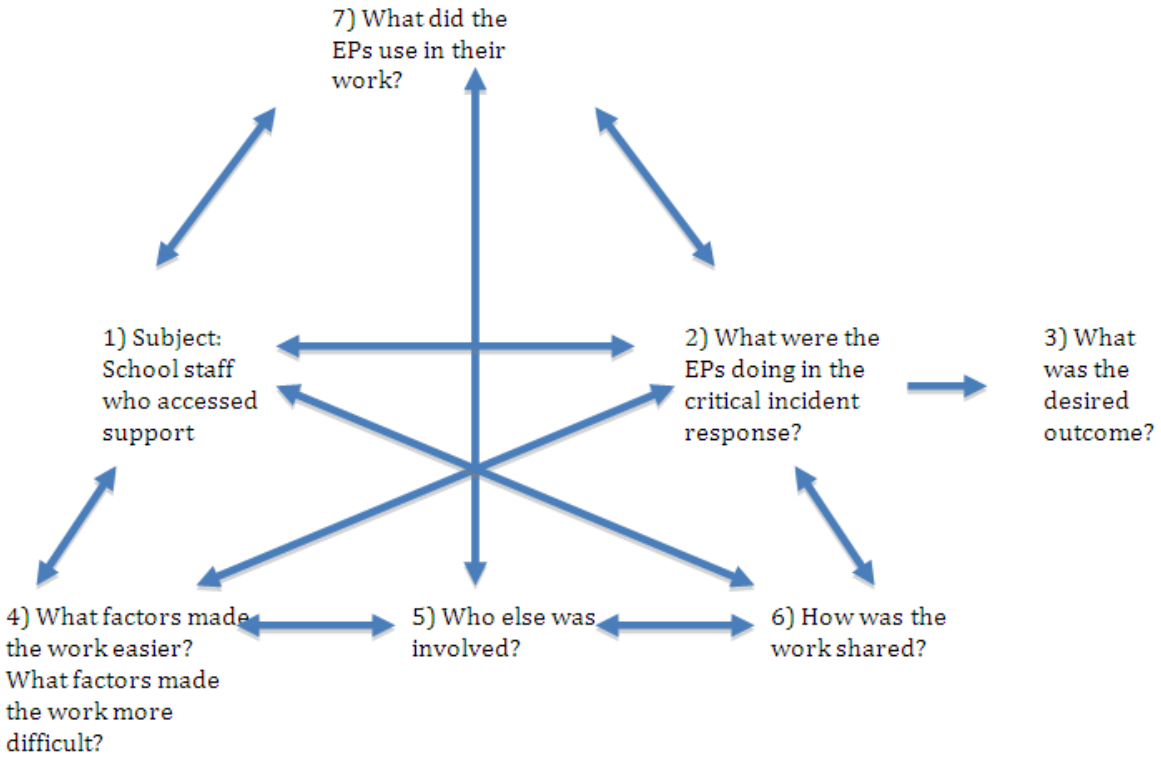


Figure 5

5.3.4 Ethical considerations

1) Informed consent

The interviewees were given a written information sheet about the study immediately prior to the interview (appendix 2), they were then asked to sign and date a consent form (appendix 3) to indicate that they had understood the information that was presented and were happy to take part. (BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009 1.3).

2) Right to withdraw

The information sheet informed the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason (BPS Ethical Guidelines 2009, 1.4). They were also told that they could request to have their contribution removed from the transcription as long as they did so within two weeks of the interview taking place (the final date was given on the information sheet).

3) Confidentiality

The transcripts did not include the names of the teachers or any pupils who were mentioned by name (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011, 25; BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009, 1.2[i]). The transcripts and recordings were stored on a password-protected computer and the consent forms in a locked filing cabinet (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011, 28; BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009, 1.2[i]). The interviews took place in an office in the school to reduce the likelihood of the interviews being overheard (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011, 25). It was explained to the teacher and the EP that the recording would only be listened to by myself and the findings would be reported to the teacher who took part and the educational psychology service but that individuals would not be identifiable in the final report (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011, 11, 25 and 26).

4) Debriefing

A written report was sent to the school for the member of staff who took part. A written report was given to the principal psychologist prior to the results being presented to the rest of the service (BERA Ethical Guidelines 2011, 31; BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2009, 3.4 [i]). There were some tensions identified in the EP interview around relationships within the school that I did not report to the teacher who was interviewed, I thought that there was little benefit in raising these concerns with her and that doing so may cause tension between the EPS and school.

5.3.4 Epistemological stance

A social constructivist epistemological stance was taken whereby it was assumed that each person sees the world differently and creates their own meanings from events (Burr, 2003). Therefore, it was not assumed that the interviews were allowing access to the stable 'opinions' or 'attitudes' of the participants but rather that the findings were constructed during the interview in collaboration with the interviewer.

5.4 Results

Table one gives an overview of the findings from the two interviews (Appendices 3 and 4). The comments made by the teacher and the EP have been summarised in the table in relation to the appropriate node on the activity system.

Node	**Educational Psychologist**	**Teacher**
Object	• To help to advise the school on managing the response	• Specialist support • To ask questions • To tell the school 'what to

		do next’
Outcome	• To reassure the school about their response • To build confidence in the school • To support the school to clarify what had happened and what could be done	• To alleviate stress • To learn for the future • To support the people most affected
Tools	• Sample letters for parents • Meetings • Listening/therapeutic skills	• Understanding of the bereavement process • Meetings • Printed materials
Rules	Supportive factors • Good working relationships with the school • EPs being familiar with the school Barriers • People ‘knew different	Supportive factors: • Good relationships with EPs • All ‘wanting the same thing’ • Mutual trust and respect between EPs and school • Understanding of EP role

	things' • Rumours • Relationships between staff in school • Establishing who was making decisions • Staff being unhappy with the initial response	by senior member of staff Barriers • Not having 'the facts' • Different perceptions within school of what the service could offer
Community	• Whole staff • Class teachers of child • Children within the child's year group • Relatives of the child	• Teachers • Children • Relatives of child • Friends in the community
Division of labour	• EPs met with groups of children • EP met with the class teacher • SENCO (?) did an assembly	• EPs met with groups of children • EP met with class teacher • SENCO did a whole school assembly • SENCO liaised with health professionals about future school placement for the child

Table 1

5.5 Discussion

5.5.1 Where do the EP and the teacher agree about what support is being provided and the purpose of that support?

The table shows that the school and the EP agreed that the EP is there to provide advice with some disagreement around whether this support can be seen as 'specialist'. The EP also identified that providing reassurance is important, and whilst this was not referred to explicitly by the teacher the references to 'specialist support' could be interpreted as the teacher expressing a need for reassurance from someone who knows more than she does. The table also shows that the teacher and EP agree that the EP can provide direct support to individuals and groups but that the teacher identified that they can also help senior staff themselves to provide support to those who are distressed. Another interesting difference was that the teacher saw the EPs involvement as contributing to capacity building within the school, perhaps anticipating that the level of support needed should future incidences arise, would be reduced.

5.5.2 Where do potential contradictions exist within the activity systems?

5.5.2(i) Primary contradictions

Primary contradictions are contradictions that exist within each internal aspect of the activity system. For the teacher interview the following primary contradictions was identified;

- Within the division of labour – a potential contradiction within this aspect is that the senior leadership team in the school were overseeing the work but the

EPs were doing work with individuals and groups. It is not clear who was taking on the role of identifying which groups were more vulnerable in order for the EPs to work with them.

For the EP interview the following primary contradictions were identified;

- Within the rules – good relationships with the school were identified as a supporting factor for the work but a potential contradiction is that the relationships between the senior leadership team and the rest of the staff became strained as a result of the response to the incident. This means that the good relationship may not have benefitted the rest of the staff in the school due to difficult relationships within the school. This is similar to the findings of Greenway (2005) who identified that staff can turn against the senior leadership team following a critical incident. In Greenway's case study the incident took place in school and so the staff seemed to blame the senior leadership team for the incident. In this case the incident did not take place in school but the staff seemed to blame the senior leadership team for not responding as staff felt they should.
- Within the tools – potentially there is a contradiction between the EPs use of listening and problem-solving skills. Use of listening skills implies a relatively passive approach to providing support where individuals or groups are provided with opportunities to talk and express how they are feeling without necessarily being given advice by the EP, whereas use of problem-solving skills implies a more active role for the EP where the EP is working through the key issues with the school and helping to decide next steps. Greenway

(2005) suggests that following critical incidents staff can became dependent on others, this suggests that perhaps more use of group problem-solving skills may help to prevent staff becoming too passive.

- Within the outcome – it may not always be possible to both provide reassurance that the school is doing the 'right' thing and clarity. Providing clarity may demonstrate that the approach currently being used by the school is inappropriate and needs to be altered which would make it impossible for the EP to continue to support the schools approach.

5.5.2 (ii) Secondary contradictions

Secondary contradictions exist between the internal aspects of the activity system. The following secondary contradictions were identified in the teacher interview:

- Between the community and the division of labour - there is a possible contradiction here given that the community implications of the incident were significant but there did not seem to be anyone who was responsible for assessing the impact of this and information about the community impact seemed to be discovered by chance. Therefore the work was not necessarily reaching all of those who may have needed support.
- Between the object and the rules – the school identified that the EP would be able to provide guidance to the school to ensure what they were doing was 'right'. There is a potential contradiction here, in that the school also identified that they were not always aware of the 'facts' around the incident, which would make it difficult for the EP to identify one way or the other the 'right' way

for the school to be providing support – beyond suggesting they wait until they have more information.

The following secondary contradictions were identified in the EP interview;

- Between the object and the division of labour – there is a potential conflict with the EPs taking an advisory role but the senior leadership team ultimately agreeing the work of the EP, this means that the advice provided by the EPs may be restricted by the expectations of the leadership team.
- Between the outcomes and the rules – as with the teacher interview, there is a potential contradiction in that it is difficult for the EP to provide clarity when there is uncertainty about the nature of the incident.

5.5.2 (iii) Quaternary contradictions

Quaternary contradictions exist between two related activity systems. Quaternary contradictions identified between the teacher and EP systems were as follows;

- Between the communities – interestingly the EP focused more exclusively on the involvement of members of the school but the teacher thought the involvement was broader and emphasised the impact of the incident on the wider community.
- Between the communities/rules – the EP suggested that staff were unhappy because the senior leadership team had not responded as they felt they should, whereas the teacher felt that they were unhappy because they had unrealistic expectations of the EPs.

5.5.3 Strengths and limitations

The sensitivity of the subject matter meant that care was needed when selecting the school to approach. It was thought that if the incident had taken place too recently it would be insensitive to approach the school and that the support from the EP service may be required even if it seemed that the need for support had ceased. Conversely, if the incident took place too long ago there was a concern that the EP and school staff may find it difficult to remember what took place. This was an issue during the interview with both the EP and the teacher commenting that they felt they had forgotten some details.

The structure of the activity system was useful in helping the EP and the teacher to reflect on aspects of the work that they may not have done otherwise. This was particularly true of aspects which may seem straight-forward initially such as the division of labour and the community, but which in reality, were complex. It was also useful to have a visual representation of the discussion to refer to during the interview as a reminder of what had been discussed. In addition, the use of activity theory gave the interview findings a practical focus, which helped to make clear suggestions about implications for future work.

The EP and teacher had some difficulty understanding the nature of some of the aspects of the activity system, for example, the tools, and this may have affected the answers they gave for some questions. Future projects could look at rewording the question around tools to help interviewees understand what is being asked. In addition, difficulties around understanding some aspects of the system meant that

different prompts were used with each participant, which will have affected the content validity of the study and the appropriateness of directly comparing the outcomes from the two interviews. Piloting of the interview would have allowed possible prompts to be trialled to assess their usefulness.

The difficulty of using activity theory to investigate the critical incident response was that the interviews had to take place some time after the event, and the EP and teacher found recalling enough detail to answer the questions challenging. However, there seemed to be enough information overall to complete the activity systems for both interviews and make some tentative suggestions about implications.

One aspect of the activity systems that was not fully explored was the division of labour, this was largely due to the fact that the interviews took place separately. A joint interview with both the EP and the teacher would have allowed this aspect to be explored more fully and may have aided recall overall. In addition, the validity of the findings may have been improved had I consulted with the participants about the findings and allowed them to comment on which aspects they agreed/disagreed with (Parker, 2005).

5.6 Conclusions and implications

Overall, in this study, there was a significant amount of agreement between the EP and the teacher, the following positive aspects were identified by both participants;

- That the EPs could provide practical advice about next steps

- That the EPs could provide support for vulnerable groups which makes use of therapeutic skills
- That the EPs knew the school well and had a good relationship with the school which helped the work to be successful

Analysis of the contradictions both within and between the activity systems suggests that the following may be useful to consider;

- That the service may offer centralised training to interested schools around bereavement and managing critical incidents
- That it may be useful to agree a named contact early on, and then agree who will take responsibility for agreed actions at the end of any meetings
- That it may be useful to discuss the impact on the wider community with schools, along with what support may be available for these groups.

Overall, the teacher herself was very positive about the support offered, during what was clearly a distressing time for the school and for her personally. I would argue that even taking into account the specific skills of the EP, the value of receiving support at times such as this from someone outside the school, who nevertheless knows the setting well, cannot be underestimated.

More general concerns around the critical incident response within the authority arose from the literature review. For example, that there is not a written policy around responding to critical incidents and follow-up visits are not included automatically as part of the support provided. This is concerning given the NICE guidelines around

"watchful waiting" and the research evidence suggesting that some individuals may be susceptible to symptoms of PTSD some time after experiencing an event, even if the event was not directly witnessed by them. The following suggestions are made on the basis of these concerns;

- that schools are advised by the service of the importance of "watchful waiting" for those children or adults identified as experiencing mild trauma symptoms
- that a visit is offered one month after the incident to discuss outcomes for these individuals

The limitations of this study mean that it has not been possible to describe more fully what would constitute good practice for Educational Psychology Services supporting schools following a critical incident. Further research is needed to establish what this may involve, ensuring that any recommendations are informed by an understanding of psychological responses to trauma so that those who are more vulnerable can be identified and supported.

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Appendix 1
Overview of critical incident support provided by the Educational Psychology Service in the last four years

Nature of incident	Support provided
Secondary age pupil died suddenly of natural causes	Materials provided to head teacher (e.g. letters, guidance etc.) EP went into school and was available to talk to staff (although none took the offer) Meeting with the parent of a close friend of the pupil who was distressed Discussion with this pupil Support for staff working closely with this pupil
Death of a 9 year old pupil from natural causes	EP attended funeral with staff (she had known the pupil for some time) Meeting with head teacher Materials shared with head teacher Staff meeting with teaching staff around talking to pupils about the death Materials shared with staff Meeting for teaching assistants offered but not taken up
Sudden and violent death of a teaching assistant and her partner. Her son attended the school. Her other son's girlfriend was a dinner-time supervisor and both of them were arrested (but released) following the deaths.	Two EPs met with the senior management team at the school and provided materials and advice. During the initial visit the EPs were available for an informal meeting with staff who felt they needed to talk, two members of staff did so. A staff meeting (also attended by the school's link EP) was provided for

	staff, mainly around talking to pupils Further guidance was given through follow-up e-mails and phone calls. Consultation was provided by the school's link EP around one pupil where a parent had expressed concern.
Child at a special school died unexpectedly	Phone call to school but the school felt they did not need further support
Secondary school girl seriously burned in toilets and air-lifted to hospital	Telephone discussion with deputy head around supporting pupils Individual sessions with staff present at the event
A male pupil who had previously attended a secondary school killed himself	Phone call to head teacher Materials faxed to head teacher

Appendix 2: Information sheet

- The aim of the project is to investigate the Critical Incident support provided by the Educational Psychology Service at X, specifically the similarities and differences between the perspectives of the psychologists providing the support and the school receiving the support. It is hoped that by identifying where contradictions exist it will be possible to make suggestions about how the support provided could be improved in the future.
- The interview will be structured using something called an activity system. This is a way of looking at and analysing the things we do from different perspectives to help us to describe and make sense of different situations and systems.
- The interview will last for approximately one hour. It will be recorded so that a transcript can be written up afterwards. This transcript will be used to identify the themes that come out of the interview. Some notes will also be made during the course of the interview to help identify what sorts of things have been discussed.
- The notes, the tape from the interview and the consent forms for the project will be stored in a locked filing cabinet which only Ruth has access to. Names will not be used in the transcript and the transcript will be stored on a password-protected computer.
- You may withdraw from the interview at any time without giving a reason.
- If you wish for your contributions to be removed from the transcript you may request this as long as you do so within two weeks of the interview taking place (Tuesday 5th February)
- The findings of the project will be shared with the Educational Psychology Service at X. Whilst the psychologist will be aware which school the project took place in no names of individuals will be used.
- A written report of the findings will be provided to your school following the write-up.
- A report on the project will be written up as part of a doctoral thesis. The name of the school, local authority and individuals taking part will not be used. The write-up will be available to University of Birmingham staff and students in via the university library.

Appendix 3: Consent form

- I would like to take part in the interview about Critical Incident support provided by the Educational Psychology Service at X
- I understand that the interview will be recorded and transcribed but that individual contributions will not be identified
- I understand that the raw data will only be accessed by Ruth Hewett
- I understand that the findings will be shared with the Educational Psychology Service at X and potentially staff and students at the University of Birmingham

Name ……..

Signed ……

Date …….

Appendix 4: EP Interview Transcript

R – Ok, so this is the activity system and we are going to work through it how it's numbered basically in terms of what we are going to discuss. The first bit is straight-forward, it's the subject – an EP providing support whereas before it was the teacher involved in the support. So the first from your perspective what were you working on or kind of what was the purpose of what you were doing?

EP – right, well, it's quite a long time ago but I believe we were contacted by the school to say that there had been this road traffic accident and that school were uncertain as to erm, how badly injured the boy was erm, I can't remember whether they were asking for advice at that point, well they must have been seeking something because they got in touch with us about it

R – yeah

EP – anyway we offered erm, to go into school, erm, and it's coming back to me slowly- yes, I didn't take the original call, it was another EP who took the call but it came through to me as part of the critical incident team and then I was the second person to speak to erm, the SENCO, it was the SENCO we dealt with and we arranged to go into school so x and myself went in because x was the EP for the school

R – yep

EP – erm, and me because I'd taken the call and also because I was familiar with the school as well

R - yeah

EP – but really I think initially it was to help advise the school erm, the staff

R – yep

EP – on how they might er, just manage the situation, because information was- some- you know, people knew different things

R – yeah

EP – and rumours were about

R – yeah

EP – and erm, you know it was the talk of the playground

R – yeah, yeah. Ok, so what do you think was the desired outcome for the school? what do you think they were hoping for?

EP – erm. I think they wanted to know the right way, you know it's just- the right way to deal with the situation, whether or not there is a right way of course is questionable. But they wanted to know, to be reassured that what they were doing was right, that they were going to be supporting the children emotionally erm, you know- well enough. Because I think it was a situation obviously that they don't go through very often

R – mm

EP- so- so it's about er, reassurance and confidence-

R – yeah

EP – building, I think

R – what was the desired outcome do you think from your perspective? Or from the link EP's perspective?

EP – erm. It was to find out in terms of our outcome, at the first meeting was to erm, find out more about the situation because it was very sketchy what we heard first of all erm, so it was just- to get some clarity. So that we could erm, suggest- see what they put in place as well-

R – yeah

EP – because you know schools often do put things in place so- to find out about the situation, see what they had done, what they'd put in place, find out what they wanted- more. Erm, and then be able to advise them

R – yeah

EP – on what might be good –

R - to get a picture of what was actually going on, yeah. Okey-dokey, erm, well my next question is about what factors made it easier and what factors made it more difficult, so I'd just jotted down difficulties about rumours and communication and people not necessarily-

EP – mm

R – was that a barrier do you think or-?

EP – a barrier to?

R – the success of the support really

EP – so the support there was- there was lots of little things that happened as part of the support so are you talking about overall

R – yes, was there anything that made it more difficult or-

EP – erm, well there- I suppose there were a couple of things and they were to do with relationships in the school- on the staff team

R – yeah

EP – that made it a bit more difficult in terms of who was making decisions

R – yeah

EP – and who was going to do what. There seemed to be a sense, but only once we got to the first meeting that some members of staff felt that what had been done so far wasn't right- wasn't enough or was too much or whatever. And also it wasn't whether- which bit of the leadership team was taking- was going to stick

R – yeah

EP – so that was definitely a barrier. Erm.

R – so was that also sort of expectations about what could be done and what was right from other members of staff, were they a bit- if it wasn't what they- if they didn't think it was right do you think they had different expectations about what-?

EP – yes, I think so, yeah, yeah

R – was there anything that made easier, anything about that particular school or the way it was organised that you think made it easier?

EP – erm, I think the fact that we had good working relationships with them anyway, well established working relationships made it easier

R – yeah

EP – erm, you know, with a number of staff, both- you know, both of us who went in knew he school quite well

R – yeah

EP – erm

R- ok, erm, what's next? Who else was involved- so I've put the link EP was someone else who was involved. Erm, who else was involved from the school's side, directly in the work?

EP – well, we had a meeting with pretty much- I don't know if it was just one key stage or whether it was the whole staff

R – mm

EP – with quite a few members of staff so if not the whole school then the majority of the school were there. Um, but not the head teacher at that first meeting which goes back to one of the barriers

R – yeah

EP – that I was talking about. Erm, or she came in right at the end and I think staff were a bit crit- you know they weren't too happy – it wasn't helpful

R – yeah

EP – erm

R – so was that teaching and non- teaching staff

EP- yes, yeah. And then with other aspects of the work, it was the class teachers of the year group which the- you know, the boy was a member of that year group, I think it was two forms

R – yeah, ok. Erm so, after he initial meeting you made decisions about what might happen next – how was the work shared out do you know who took on what responsibility or –

EP – in the school?

R – yeah

EP – not really no, erm, they'd had, before we'd gone in I think maybe that same day they'd had an assembly where certain things were said in the assembly and that's what staff were pretty critical about that approach, I think it was because er, you know sort of almost business as usual sort of thing and erm, so we gave some suggestions as to what the children needed to be told

R – um

EP – I don't know who would have done that you know, any follow-up on the assembly

R – yeah

EP – letters that might go out to parents we talked about

R – yeah

EP – and gave them a sample. Again, I'm assuming it was members of the leadership

R – yeah

EP – they were the one's who seemed to be taking- you know saying it might be a good idea. It might have been the head or the deputy or-

R – yeah. Did the link EP do any follow-up work?

EP – yes, she did- she did, well we both did. Erm, we also saw groups of children

R – yeah

EP – that was another thing that was agreed was that we would see- I think it was- certainly the children within the year group-

R – yeah

EP – because for t-this boy would have been part of different teaching groups so we felt the whole year group

R – yeah

EP – so we had small groups of children

R – yeah

EP – and you know talked to them erm, and heard what they had to say and that sort of thing-

R – yeah

EP – and also I think there may have been people who were di- you know, people like relatives- cousins or whatever as well were included in that work

R – yeah

EP – so, two EPs did that and then x worked with the class teacher

R – yeah

EP – who was- quite emotionally upset as you can imagine, erm so she did- it was like two mini-counselling sort of therapeutic- listening really- sessions she did with her

R – ok, erm, ok, finally is a question about tools – what things do you think you used?

EP – what things?

R – yeah so-

EP – well, we certainly used counseling skills erm, listening was a big part of it, erm with the ch- with everybody at every level. And also normalising er, reactions and erm- We gave out copies of sample letters as well erm and I mean the idea of that is to I suppose get a common view, you know, to give information. You know, promoting an idea that you give information as you know it

R – yeah

EP – and erm, everybody hears that information or has access to that information as a way of stopping the rumour mill from getting out of control

R – yeah

EP – I mean it wasn't a bereavement situation at that point- well it didn't become that erm, there was just so much uncertainty about how this boy would be so the children were talking- we gave them the opportunity to talk about him

R – yeah

EP – you know, and they were saying all the things he was really good at and how they got on with him and what they thought of him erm, so just an opportunity to talk really

R – yeah

EP – and share their stories about him and what they'd heard, you know

R – yeah, and I suppose clarifying then what we know and what we don't know and that sort of thing

EP – yeah

Appendix 5: Teacher Interview Transcript

R – so we are going to do them in the number they are ordered. So the first bit is not a question to you really, erm, the subject is who is doing the interview so at this point it's- it's you who accessed the support. So the first question is, from your perspective what were the EPs doing in the critical response, what was the purpose of them being involved?

T – erm, it was – it was so we could ask questions of them really

R – yep

T – erm, so we'd know where to go

R – yep

T – if we came up against a dead end

R – yep

T – if it was something that was just too big for us to cope with,

R – yep

T – we got back up support, and specialists, specialised support as well

R – yeah

T – erm

R – what kind of thing do you think might have been 'too big for you to cope with'?

T – well, the bereavement process

R – yeah

T – the parents of the children, er, psychologically, that sort of thing

R – yeah

T – erm, what was they're- really they were there to direct us as well what to do next

R – so, kind of like in terms of the process

T – mm

R – I wonder if you mean signposting as well, to other-

T – yes, I didn't use that word but yes, I did mean signposting er, and that- and that no question was too silly really, anything that you thought- you knew you could ask and you'd get an answer really

R – yeah

T – so it was to alleviate stress I think, for everybody involved

R – yeah

T – I think that was it basically

R – okey-doke, erm, and what was the kind of desired outcome, what were you hoping would happen after they'd been in?

T – that, as a school we could- we could support the children- well, the people that were most affected by it, I think

R – yeah, so-

T – and we could learn from it for the future, so we'd know if, god forbid- if anything did happen, we'd know what to do next time

R – yeah- so support the children, and other people as well?

T – yeah, staff, parents, anyone really that it impacted on really. And ourselves, if you were, you know-

R – yeah, yeah. Ok

T – within teams I think

R – yeah. Erm, ok, so- Next, do you think there were any factors to do with erm- this particular incident or to do with you as a school or to do with the way the EP service worked that made the work easier?

T – well, we've got very good relationships with the senior person and the other person, our assigned [cough] psychologist. So-

R – yeah

T – that definitely made it easier, because I know that there would be other people that wouldn't have made it very easy. Definitely, because I've worked with them so- because of that, it made it- it was very good. Erm, I think we all wanted the same thing

R – yep

T – so there was a common- erm- I don't know really, I think that was enough to make it-

R – yeah- what was it about having good relationships that you think made it easier specifically?

T – well, we trust- there was trust

R – yeah

T – there was a large amount of trust and credibility on their side and respect for their-

R – yeah

T – erm

R – and like you said no question was too silly-

T – no. There was a warmth in the relationship as well, er, they respecting what we were trying to do

R – yeah

T – and it wasn't just they were paying lip service to it, you really felt they- and I think because our respect for them you felt that they wanted to do it for the right reasons, it wasn't because they'd got to tick a box, they'd got to offer us support- so-

R – yeah. Ok, were there any factors again, to do with the way the work was done or to do with you as a school or the situation at the time that made that piece of work more difficult do you think?

T – erm, the communication I think, from outside

R – yeah

T – we were getting different stories, so it was hard to give them the facts-

R – yeah

T – I felt that we were giving them conflicting information all the time and I felt that let us down

R – yeah

T – but you can only say what you know really so

R – yeah

T – and different perceptions from people, I think-

R – how do you mean?

T – what- what the service could offer

R – right, yeah

T - what we could reasonably expect erm-

R – who do you think had the diff- had the different perspectives?

T – sometimes we all did, sometimes it was just key people who just though they could come in and wave a magic wand and meet with the children- and it just- and- some of us knew that wasn't feasible

R – yeah

T – people who didn't work with the service I think perhaps

R – yeah, so-

T – who had unrealistic expectations about what they could do

R – yeah, they hadn't had that experience before

T – well, we hadn't but we knew certain things they could do cos at the end of the day

R – yeah

T – they're there as school support and they are not there to do counselling for the whole school-

R - yeah, I see what you mean- okey-dokey, right, so when I ask who else was involved I'm thinking quite broadly- who else was involved in school, who might have had direct contact or who might have been kind of indirectly involved?

T – well there were the class teachers- there was the parallel class teacher to the class teacher concerned. Er, there were their line managers and then there were the LSAs that were involved and their line managers. Erm, the children obviously-

R – of course

T – and relations.

R – yeah

T – and that's- because of the nature of our community, it's quite an extended-

R – so there were a lot of-

T – people saying ‘oh my so-and-so, my cousin was-‘ and you suddenly thought, ‘oh, we didn’t know you were related and-‘

R – yeah

T - -oh, my friend’s dad’s so- and you began to realise it spread further than perhaps you would have expected

R – yeah. Erm, were there any other outside services that were involved early on- provding support?

T – er, no. No, we were on our own really, apart from- er, the police weren’t involved, we didn’t hear anything from them. Erm, I think one of the governers, the chair of governers he knew about things-

R – yeah

T – and there were some of the LSAs from erm- other year groups who knew about it because they’d been around-

R – yeah

T – and they lived in that general direction so,

R – so there was a lot of community kind of-

T – yes, there was erm, of course then there was the SLT and people who were taking phone calls and people in the office, they were involved

R – yeah. Erm,

T - it spread- it really spread

R – yeah, yeah. Ok, so it terms of how the work was shared out- it’s sort of who did what really in terms of what happened in the immediate kind of aftermath?

T – do you mean in the service or from us?

R – both, so what did the service do and then what did you do?

T – erm, well- it was the other way round really cos I’d been on this RADIO project, I knew that they could do something for us

R – yeah, yeah

T - so I mentioned that I think, and then the headteacher contacted them I think or some- I can't remember who contected them. And they came straight- they came in straight away

R – yeah

T – and they met with people that were- the adults that were involved

R – yeah

T – leadership, and I'm not sure if class teachers at that stage- but they told us what they could and couldn't do

R – yeah

T – you know and what they would want to do and what they felt might be needed. Cos we didn't know what we didn't know at that stage

R – no, so it was just some suggestions. Yeah.

T – erm, then after that they said that they would meet with the class teacher and they would meet- the senior person withdrew somewhat but was available and then the person that was assigned to us she met with class – with the classes

R – yep, yep

T – the class teacher, quite regularly

R – yeah. How long for, do you know?

T – oo, I'd say possibly a month- I'm not sure it was that long, it might have been even longer than that

R - but on a number of occasions she came in-

T – you thought there was a real need for that class teacher, cos she was really affected

R – yeah, so was it just the class teacher or was it the children as well-

T – yeah, she did meet with the children um, she met with the children who were directly, you know, there at the time, there was a cousin and a brother-

R – yeah

T –s he did meet with them I think. But I can't remember how much- we tried to find out cos I can't remember-

R – well, you're not thinking about recording what's happening at that point, you're just-

T – no, I think she- I think she offered to do some work with the next door class as well cos I know she talked to- she told the class teacher what to do with the class-

R – yeah

T – that concerned, I think

R – yeah

T – erm, so we had that and then we did an assembly

R – yeah

T – I did an assembly

R – yeah

T – erm, that was recorded for him

R – right

T – so we were talking about him, and the children- the class teacher got the children to do like memories of him, you know- what he was like- when he was in the class, what he was doing- and what he was good at and they came up and they read out things he was good at like telling jokes and playing football and they missed him and that sort of thing. And the auntie and the mom came in and they listened to it-

R – yeah. That sounds like a lovely idea.

T – and they played it to him because he wasn't- you know- [pause] right, moving on..

R – ok. Erm, this might seem like quite an odd question but what were you aware that the psychologists were using-?

T – I can't remember- I've wracked my brains and- I don't remember them- they might have said we're going to be doing a such-and-such or a so-and-so at the time- because I'd done this- but they did give out- they did give some things out- I'd had on the RADIO project- as a school-

R – so one thing they did was give materials and kind of advice- printed materials and things like that-

T – yes, which we did find really useful you know, to read through and we got some thing for parents and carers

R – yeah, and that was part of your desired outcome

T – we've got that now, I know now- I go to that and I think I'll get that out if I need it again

R – yeah, and like you said, part of your desired outcome was to learn for the future so you've got-

T – yes

R – some resources now

T – you're not scratching around- on a Monday morning, which is what it was- thinking 'what do we do?'

R – yeah, and I suppose it might not seem like something they were using but it sounds like they did consultation

T – yeah

R – they came in, they kind of- for meetings, yeah- cos, I don't know what they did, they may say the same thing actually you know- there weren't any particular thing that we used

T – you know, I'm not sure- I wouldn't- I don't think they said 'oh, we're going to use this model or that- you know, it's just-

R – yeah

T – they just said that they could do certain things, and there were certain things they could not do, like they couldn't counsel children

R – yeah

T – which we were aware of straight away

R – yeah, and like you said there was- that in a way- might have been what other people might have expected- when you hear psychology-

T – yeah, you don't realise it's not-

R – erm, did you go on to access any services that they signposted- do you know of anybody-

T – no because, what they were doing within school, we felt- well- I felt er, we were doing as much as we could in school- I don't know whether the class teacher did and I can't ask her because she's moved on-

R – yes, of course

T – erm, I couldn't anyway really so I'm pretty certain- well, we were told to keep an eye on her you know- and to support her more than perhaps we would have done

R – yeah

T – I'm not sure whether she did access anything. We didn't access anything

R – no, no

T – cos what we got served the purpose- it did help us

R – yeah, oh, that's good. Okey-dokey, right, shall we just have a look at the kind of whole thing, I'll remind you of what we've talked about. So first it was erm, what was the purpose of them being involved from your perspective so we talked about erm, being able to ask questions in terms of the process but also signposting to other services you could contact. Erm, having an understanding I suppose of bereavement and things like that-

T – yes, yeah

R – and what you were looking for was erm- so that you would then be able to support children, parents, staff and yourselves as well and so that you could learn for the future, cos you know these things do happen. Erm, and then factors that made the work easier was good relationship with the service the fact you thought that you were working towards the same thing. Things that made it difficult was that the lack of communication for you from outside serives meant that you felt you couldn't always give the facts-

T – yeah, yeah

R – erm, and the fact that people in school sometimes had different perceptions of what the service could offer. Different people involved were class teachers and their line managers, LSAs and their line managers, the children and also it sounds like quite- like a network of friends and relations-

T – mm,mm

R – as well-

T – yeah

R –erm, so in terms of what the EPs did, they met with key adults, they met- they worked with particular classes erm, and class teachers. Erm, in terms of what you did- erm- you did an assembly, was that the whole school?

T – yeah, it was the whole school

R – yeah

T – because, that was part of it- I think- letting- perhaps suggested by the er, EPs that as a whole school we needed to do something to allay fears perhaps erm-

R – yeah

T – possibly erm, and there was the brother- was it the brother or the cousin? Was having real difficulty with blaming himself-

R – yeah

T – um, so it was partially for him, although we didn't want him to come if he couldn't cope with it, and he was getting upset at the thought of it, and he did get upset but the parent made him stay Which was – er

R –mm

T – so I think maybe they'd suggested that but – I can't remember now if it was the mom wanted something to take back to the ward. It was a mixture, I think perhaps we thought well that will serve that purpose-

R – yeah

T – you know we need to let the school community know what's going on

R – it's a way to kind of do that that's-

T – the two together you know-

R – erm, and of course were you also taking a kind of liaison role between hospital and things like that and going to meetings

T – yeah, later on erm, I went to a couple of meetings over at Birmingham

R – mm

T – C, came with me for the first one, and then I went to the next one, I think, did I go on my own? Erm, yeah, to find out- because they thought that we could instantly go for a statement erm, and it was up to me to sort of- they didn't realise the process and they thought because I was there oh yeah, we'd get the statement erm, we had to explain that it doesn't work like that

R – yeah

T – and I was liaising with erm, somebody from the office

R – about the process-

T – what the process was and she explained the bit you know- about when they've had critical injury and whatever it-

R – yeah

T – and er, so I filled in the paperwork for that and sent that to them so they'd got it wherever he went, it was filled in so-

R – yeah, yeah

T – a lot of talking to her, yeah

R – erm, yeah. So clarifying-

T – the process really

R – the statementing process to medical professionals

T – you know, we didn't have the graduated response. It was just er- and then he moved down South to some place- for a while

R – yeah

T- and that's where we seemed to lose- we didn't even know he'd come back- he was where he'd gone to or anything-

R – so, it was the kind of difficulties around communication

T – yeah, yeah

R – and then when it came to the process, working out what needed to happen when yeah. Okey-dokey, anything else? I'll let you have a quick look.

T – erm, erm, I meant to ask..

R – [laughs] it's not a test so if you've forgotten anything

T - I meant to go and ask if there was anything- I was trying to- no, I don't think there is, I think that's all I- that's all I could remember and I did go and ask the parallel class teacher if she could remember anything else that had happened

R – yeah

T – as I say, we didn't take note, you know-

R – no

T – it's just you know, for next time almost

R – and you'll just remember the bits that really stuck out for you

T – yes. Yeah the- yeah

R – yeah

Additional comment made after the tape was turned off – EPs recognised that the incident was 'a big deal' for school