Professional Practice Report 1

A Critical Examination of the use of the Dynamic Assessment of Learning Potential in Educational Psychology Practice

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Abstract

This review explores contemporary literature available to Educational Psychologists (EPs) concerning the value, and unique contribution, of Dynamic Assessment (DA) in EP practice.

The key features of Feuerstein's (1979-2008) model of Dynamic Assessment are presented, and the theoretical and methodological underpinnings contrasted, with those from the psychometric paradigm. Links are made to other prominent theories of development to explore the theoretical validity of DA and establish its philosophical base.

Arguments for the use of DA as a tool for helping others are explored, however this review found that the clinical value of DA comes at a cost to reliability and validity in psychometric terms. Contributions from research on this issue are considered.

This review concludes that the value of DA for EP practice lies in its power to investigate the nature of an individual's cognitive functioning within the psycho-educational domain. When used as a tool for helping, DA can inform educationalists of suitable interventions, and can account for a wide range of individual needs; but the lack of verifiability of the constructs it uses mean it has limited application for research or diagnostic purposes.

Introduction

My curiosity about DA has emerged as a Trainee Educational Psychologist through critical reflection of the implications of standardised assessments methods. Aside from the ethical concerns around the impact of labelling from using methods that assume that ability or intelligence are fixed, standardised tests are implicitly culturally biased. Furthermore, little can be done to adapt such tests for children for whom English is an additional language (EAL) or for those with sensory impairment. Although good practice requires that caveats and confidence intervals are included in standardised assessment reports, in my own practice it was clear that parents, teachers and potentially the recipients of the assessment themselves were still interpreting the results of such tests without fully recognising its limitations.

DA presents itself as an alternative approach to standardised assessment that can be tailored to the needs of the learner and is able to describe, in practical terms, what is required to move the learner on. This is particularly valuable in Local Authorities (LA) where these is a high number of EAL families, or for EPs who may be asked to provide schools with teaching advice relating to ways in which children with additional needs can develop their learning potential.

Training in the delivery of DA in the UK is restricted, expensive, and typically requires five days to achieve accreditation. Under austerity measures implemented by the UK government there are scarce resources within LA budgets to justify such training, and so I have offered my host LA to review the literature on DA relating to EP practice in order to offer direction to EPs who aspire to use it in

their practice.

Overview of Dynamic Assessment

The use of cognitive assessment to inform psychological reports remains a significant part of EP practice (Freeman and Miller, 2001; Sewell and Ducksbury, 2013) and the primary purpose of assessment is to support the teaching and learning process (Lauchlan and Carrigan, 2013). DA is both a tool and an approach for conceptualising individual cognitive functioning that uses a fluid, processes-based exploration of intellectual ability. DA represents a unique stance on intellectual measurement as it was purposefully designed to assess ability in differing cultural contexts. A definition of DA can be built from a myriad of other definitions. It emphasises the trainability of thinking and reasoning abilities that are generally not a feature of mainstream cognitive assessments (Murphy, 2011).

DA adopts a philosophically holistic perspective with a focus on the processes rather than the product of learning (Yeomans, 2008). Continual change of cognitive functioning throughout life is assumed and accounted for by DA (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002). Both contextual and biological processes are considered equally important in an individual's progress. For these reasons DA is suited to working with diverse populations and contexts. It also provides individuals who have previously been misdiagnosed a more accurate assessment method (Popoff-Walker, 1982). Significant to EPs, DA promises to inform practitioners of appropriate remedial intervention strategies that further enhance cognitive functioning regardless of ability (Campione and Brown, 1987). DA attempts to address a flaw inherent in non-dynamic assessment tests that adopt a fixed view of intellectual ability, i.e. failure of the learner to answer a question is viewed as an indicator of underlying ability.

A characteristic shared among differing forms of mediation is the examiner's intention to gain insight into the learner's responsiveness to instruction. This makes the interaction between the examiner and learner essential. When the learner encounters difficulty with a test item, the tester identifies the functional error(s) in the learner's problem solving strategies, and then uses mediated instruction to move them on. Examples of ways in which this can be done include; providing additional practice items, modelling appropriate problem solving strategies, and offering prompts (Spector, 1992). Once the targeted cognitive strategies are mastered the learner is then able to apply those skills to unique contexts and demonstrate expert problem solving skills for themselves.

Gauld (1996) suggests that assessments that adopt an *a priori* approach to intelligence risk scientifically discriminating the learner on the basis of cultural difference. They also risk introducing the limiting consequences of labelling, and obscure an individual's unique capacity to change. Feuerstein (1979); Campione and Brown (1985) argue that ability demonstrated at the time of testing is highly dependent on the amount of prior instruction the learner has received. Non-dynamic methods of assessment typically use standardised procedures that offer little constructive feedback to the learner. Consequently, it is difficult to be certain that performance reflects underlying ability; performance may equally be attributed to the learner's ability to follow instructions (Spector, 1992).

Dissatisfaction with the underlying principles of psychometric approach to intelligence testing has created a need for alternatives. Contemporary literature on

DA is now able to draw on contributions from numerous authors, and gradually a consensus has formed predominantly identifying Feuerstein's (1979) approach and theoretical principles to be the genesis for the use of DA in the UK (e.g. Spector, 1992; Elliot *et al.,* 1996; Grigorenko and Sternberg, 1998; Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002; Fuchs *et al.,* 2008; Yeomans, 2008). See Appendix A pg.26 for search criteria and research diary.

Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is frequently cited for providing a useful framework for conceptualising DA (e.g. Spector, 1992; Elliott *et al*., 1996; Day *et al*., 1997; Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000; Fuchs *et al*., 2008). The ZPD represents the difference between a learner's current ability and their potential ability with skilled mediation at any given time. Some authors have attempted to use this principle to distinguish between performance before and after mediation, and therefore provide a measure of improvability (Shamir and Tzuriel, 2002); Feuerstein (2002) called this measure of intelligence the individual's 'learning propensity'. While it may be tempting to superficially replace 'measures of intelligence' with 'learning propensity' Feuerstein warns against quantifying judgements of learning propensity. Differences in numerical measures do not necessarily reflect qualitative features of a learner's cognitive profile, or account for the skill of the mediator to provide appropriate mediation. Good practice would be to view each learner as possessing particular cognitive strengths and deficiencies, and therefore requiring bespoke instruction to demonstrate improvement.

Spector (1992) found that authors assessing improvability via DA approaches typically utilise a test-train-test method, but investigators often differed with respect

to the measures they derived with three designs dominating:

1. Measures of change between pre-test, mediation and post-test.
2. Measures of post-test performance only.
3. Measures of performance during the mediation itself.

Consequently, EPs wishing to operationalise DA approaches need to ensure they are comparing like with like when contrasting different DA informed interventions, or comparing measures within child.

Without the construct of ZPD to work from, early research on DA (e.g., Budoff, 1967; Feuerstein, 1979) focused on the development of domain-general skills associated with cognitive ability, and advocated the use of test-teach-test methodology by utilising pre-existing assessment tasks such as Raven's (1947) Coloured Progressive Matrices; Kohs's (1923) Block Design Task; and the Representational Stencil Design Task (Arthur, 1947).

Comparative analysis of dynamic and non-dynamic assessments

Inherent in the psychometric approach to testing is a positivist model of causality known as successive causation. This epistemological perspective uses reductionist principles to isolate variables and then to describe outcome patterns in detail (Pawson, 2008). While effective at being able to explore the effect size of a particular variable in the laboratory, this approach is not well suited to identifying the mechanisms and contexts that influence performance. Consequently, is unable to explain *how* or *why* such outcomes are occurring. A familiar example is the discovery that a pupil has a poor short term memory compared to their peers without consideration as to the cause of this difference. While secessionist

approaches to causality are acceptable in circumstances where singular causes and effects can be controlled and deduced, such as in laboratory studies, this method is not practical for EPs who want to understand a particular child's development. By contrast, DA offers EPs an approach for purposefully and systematically exploring how and why individuals achieve particular assessment outcomes through mediated inquiry. This allows practitioners to identify the causal conditions that bring about an improvement in educational performance.

Current socio-political context

Torrance (2003) notes that schools have increasingly used curriculum based assessments to monitor pupil progress and help teachers set clear educational objectives in the form of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) (DES 1987, p.3-4). IEPs can also be used to make predictions about future academic performance. These practices have reduced the need for EP services to classify children on the basis of educational ability, and instead have emphasised the need for psychological advice that goes "beyond describing *what* a child can or cannot do, to helping those involved understand *why* particular patterns of strength and difficulty are being expressed" (Fredrickson *et al.,* 1991, pg.20). Following the Warnock Report (1979) there has been political pressure for schools to manage the educational needs of an increasingly diverse pupil population. Consequently, teachers need realistic evidence based strategies that inform teaching to enable pupils to succeed (Haywood and Lidz, 2007). DA offers educationalists a method of assessment that offers qualitatively unique information about the kinds of cognitive functions that children and young people are able to bring to a variety of tasks. Furthermore, when DA is designed around curriculum based activities it can

improve the ecological validity of the kinds of curriculum based assessments already used in schools (Yeomans, 2008). In addition to this, by using task analysis it is possible to design the assessments around curriculum based tasks, and if this is done it could be argued to provide greater ecological validity (Lidz, 1991; Haywood and Lidz, 2007).

Applications to assessment

Feuerstein (1979, 2002) developed the first DA test: The Learning Propensity Assessment Device (LPAD), widely considered the principal form of DA to provide a valid alternative to the psychometric approach (e.g. Grigorenko and Sternberg, 1998; Spector, 1992; Elliott *et al*., 1996 and Yeomans, 2008). Subsequent developments in DA testing share four common features including; (1) a focus on the learner's ZPD rather than a measurement of current performance; (2) interaction between the assessor and the learner within the assessment; (3) an absence of predictions of future performance on the basis of current performance; (4) an absence of normative or statistical comparisons with others. Deutsch and Mohammed (2010) outline a number of additional features evident in Feuerstein's LPAD:

- Assessment is ideally completed over a number of sessions.
- There is emphasis on measuring and developing cognitive functioning, not improving item performance.
- Strengths and difficulties specific to the learner's demonstrated cognitive functioning are analysed.
- The learner's emotional and motivational responses to the mediated learning experience are considered.
- The learner's cognitive profile in relation to changes in the modalities of the

task are explored.

- The type of intervention provided is unstructured, and adaptive to the learner.
- Where the LPAD uses a test-teach-test structure using individualised mediation, other forms of DA may use a test only structure or administer semi-scripted mediation such as a graduated series of prompts (a more comprehensive overview of DA approaches is available in Grigorenko and Sternberg, 1998).

Feuerstein's LPAD (2002) also operationalises the following concepts from his earlier work:

1. Mediated Learning Experiences (Feuerstein *et al.,* 1999)
2. Structural Cognitive Modifiability (Feuerstein, 1990)
3. Tripartite Learning Model (Feuerstein, 2001).
4. Cognitive Functions (Feuerstein, 2000)

Mediated Learning Experiences (MLE)

MLE is the method by which cognitive flexibility is developed, as well as a means for improving and correcting deficient cognitive functions (Yeomans, 2008). Feuerstein *et al.,* (2006) describes three essential, and nine situational or reinforcing parameters that define MLE (shown in Table 1, p.11).

Essential Parameters
Intentionality: MLE is a deliberate and intentional act that aims to develop cognitive functioning.
Transcendence: Any developed cognitive skills must be successfully generalised and applied to other events, applications and circumstances.
Meaning: The purpose of the MLE must be clear to the learner to facilitate intrinsic motivation.
Reinforcing parameters
Sharing behaviours: Implicit thought processes should be made explicit and then shared.
Psychological differentiation: The mediator should account for the learning style of the learner.
Goal setting/monitoring: The learner should take the initiative in the setting, seeking and reaching of objectives.
Level of challenge: The mediator should be aware of the emotional effects of novel, complex, and consequently difficult tasks, and help the learner to deal with challenge.
Search for optimistic alternatives: This should be aimed at overcoming any negative associations with a given task, and support 'transcendence' (above).
Feelings of belonging: The mediator should facilitate a sense of cooperation and sharing.
Situational parameters
Awareness of learner changes: Promote recognition that change throughout life is natural, and to expect, nurture, and benefit from it.
Emotional regulation: Linked to 'feelings of belonging' (above), it may be necessary to control any pre-existing anxieties/attitudes to learning through use of metacognitive strategies.
Control of behaviour: Linked to 'emotional regulation' (above), it may be necessary to reduce impulsive behaviours, and encouraging a systematic approach to problem solving.

Table 1: Essential, and situational and reinforcing parameters defining MLE

As indicated, an essential feature of Feuerstein's DA is that new skills are

generalised to novel circumstances. The rationale for this may be to facilitate the Piaget's (1977) processes of accommodation and assimilation; if this process of generalisation is incomplete, then developmental progress cannot be ensured. Yeomans (2008) also suggests that an important aspect of mediation is to facilitate feelings of competence. In this endeavour, success can be nurtured and recognised by providing achievable tasks, feedback and praise.

Crucial to understanding the purposes of DA is recognition of intelligence as a flexible, modifiable and socially determined construct that requires mediation to bring about the sort of learning that leads to development. Not only does sufficient MLE improve cognitive functioning, but the reverse is also true. For MLE learning experiences to affect development it is necessary for the mediator, usually a parent, teacher or peer, to organise the experience in a way that enhances the learner's effective functioning. Using Bruner's (1978) terms, this is comparable to 'scaffolding the learning activity' and involves selecting appropriate stimuli, then framing, filtering, and scheduling them in a way that structures the learner's exposure according to clearly identified and explicit goals. Once these objectives have been achieved it is important for the mediator to then support the learner to generalise their learning to new and subsequent experiences in the world. It is through MLE that the leaner is able to 'think about' objects and events in the world rather than being restricted to dealing with them concretely (Feuerstein *et al.,* 2006). For these reasons MLE needs to occur through human action, rather than by books or computer programmes: Teaching is a *dynamic* process that requires a repertoire of skills on the part of the mediator, and sensitivity to the learner's changing needs.

MLE is a determinant of the quality of learning within the child-environment interaction, and provides the mechanism for the language and interaction of a skilled other to facilitate learning and development. MLE is therefore an essential prerequisite for development, although the amount required will vary from one individual to another (Haywood, 1993). Feuerstein's MLE uses philosophical principles that combine the sociocultural processes of constructing, interpreting and modifying representations about reality, with an instructional approach to development, i.e. mediation needs to be targeted *ahead* of development to be effective. The premise that deficient cognitive functions are sensitive to remedial mediation, and that a person's capacity to learn is not constrained by biological determinants, is central to the concept of MLE.

Differentiating MLE from quality teaching

DA is a model for development, rather than learning, because the development of higher cognitive functioning only occurs within the ZPD. MLEs is not intended to be a mechanism for transmitting and acquiring knowledge and skills. Greenberg (1990) helpfully identifies the features that distinguish MLE from teaching, which serve to illustrate the main points of effective MLE, and justify the use of DA based intervention with children who already have access to high quality teaching (see Table 2 below), although it is worth noting that many teachers would consider what Greenberg's description of effective MLE as also falling within the remit of quality teaching.

Quality teaching	Effective MLE
Informs learners what they need to know	Collaborates with learners, and draws connections between what is known and how this knowledge informs us of something new
Focuses the learners attention on the lesson content	Clarifies learner expectations and expands understanding beyond the immediate needs of the content and context
Often isolates specific concepts for teaching	Connect concepts to the learners' real world experiences
Provides learners with opportunities to produce right answers based on given information	Provides opportunities for learners to explore ideas, seek relevant information, and to construct meaning independently and collaboratively
Lead learners through learning experiences as part of a carefully planned curriculum	Adapts activities to ensure they remain personally relevant and challenging
Often provides a model of a given task, breaks tasks down into smaller parts and reteaches where necessary	Help learners to learn to construct their own learning strategies to solve problems
Makes certain that right answers are shared with the learners	Provide the processes and approaches that lead to an effective response
Usually provide learners with feedback related to learning products, and often reward learners based on the teacher's standards.	Encourages learners to evaluate the personal processes they used to reach a product, and provides feedback and encouragement related to the process of learning and mutually determined standards
Teachers often lead class discussions, they ask the questions and the learners respond	More frequently empower learners to ask questions and to share insights with the mediator
Establishes an atmosphere in which learners feel successful when they can learn easily and share what they know.	Establish an atmosphere in which success is measured by how much one is willing to accept challenges and learn how to learn.

Table 2: Differences between quality teaching and MLE (Greenberg, 1990).

Despite a clear description of DA informed MLEs, differences in application influence its effectiveness. Swanson and Lussier (2001) categorised differing DA procedures used in thirty studies and found significant variations in the effectiveness depending upon; (a) the ability level of the learners (underachievers yielded better effect sizes, and children with moderate learning disabilities yielded lower effect sizes than; average, hearing-impaired, or children with severe learning difficulties); (b) chronological age (younger children yielded higher effect sizes than older children); and (c) the type of assessment procedure used (scaffolding and general strategies were far more effective than coaching). Swanson and Lussier's (2001) work demonstrates how important it is for EPs to be discriminant when selecting the method, and to manage expectations for improvement on the basis of the learner's profile and approach used.

Strategies for teaching children *how* to learn, rather than *what* to learn have gained credibility following Higgins *et al.* (2012) meta-analysis of the effect sizes of various meta-cognitive training programmes. They found that programmes that encourage learners to think more explicitly about their learning consistently improved performance, particularly for 'lower achieving pupils' and 'older students'. These findings contradict the findings of Swanson and Lussier's (2001) meta-study which revealed that it was 'average ability' and 'younger children' that benefitted most from DA based intervention. Since meta-cognitive development programmes were defined by Higgins *et al.* (2012) as those which teach pupils how to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning, these differences in outcome may be attributed to the way in which these skills are taught. It is important, therefore, that practitioners are mindful

that pre-packaged approaches to promoting meta-cognitive skills may not be a substitution for DA informed MLEs. Consequently, EPs need to be selective when considering the appropriate method of intervention to meet the needs of the pupil. It is also important not to restrict assessment practices to those that fulfil Feuerstein's criteria alone. In light of the aforementioned differences in outcomes, it is recommended that; (a) consideration be given to the research base supporting specific cognitive enrichment programmes; (b) to examine the sample used to evidence claims of effectiveness; and (c) to carefully consider how these programmes can be operationalized effectively in schools.

Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM)

The essential premise of SCM is that neurocognitive structures in the brain are sensitive to remedial action in a way that qualitatively differs from unmediated experiences and typical biological maturation. SCM defines intelligence as a process, rather than a state (Feuerstein *et al*., 2006). This approach recognises that learner performance is a reflection of the quality and quantity of opportunities to acquire cultural skills and knowledge. The theory of SCM does not discount the influence of biological determinants on cognitive structures, but it does emphasise socio-cultural factors (Yeomans, 2008).

Feuerstein *et al.* (2002) explicitly state their ontological assumptions regarding human development in terms that are comparable to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of human development. Bronfenbrenner's continua from micro-systems to meso-systems to exo-systems can be likened to Feuerstein's *et al.* (2002) endogenious, endo-exogenious and exogenious factors shown in Figure 1.

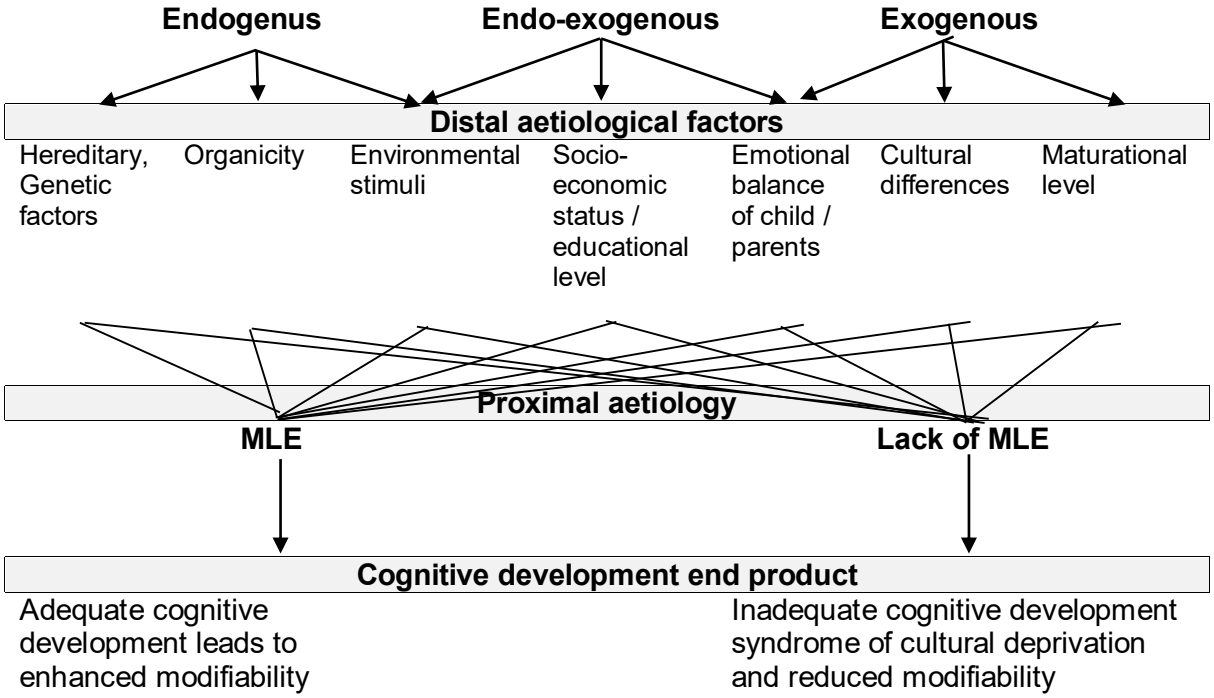


Figure 1: The LPAD model (Murphy, 2011, p.192)

Awareness of these ontological assumptions is important to practitioners as they can be used to inform our hypotheses about which interventions may be required. Such a broad view attracts criticism for embracing too vast an array of aspects, and therefore relying too much on qualitative assessment methods (Murphy, 2011).

As previously established, MLE via SCM enables individuals to approach future experiences and interactions differently. Thus "a structural change once set in motion, will determine the future course of an individual's development" (Feuerstein *et al.*, 2006:pg16). Because changes in the cognitive structure are not limited to the particular episode of learning and are instead generalised throughout cognition, and the structure of behaviour, they are considered to have a distinct contribution to the learner's neurocognitive development.

Despite theoretical plausibility, the evidence base for claims that neurological

structural changes are caused by MLE are far from established; although empirical data on the effectiveness of DA compared to non-DA interventions does demonstrate its effectiveness within the cognitive domain (E.g. Swanson and Lussier, 2001; Hessels *et al.,* 2011). Haywood and Lidz (2007) argue that a consensus is forming within neuropsychology that suggests that the brain structure of healthy individuals continues to elaborate well into adulthood, but also that there is a decline in the rate of change after the age of 12 years. This implies that neuroplasticity may be most sensitive during early years, after which MLE is likely to be less effective at bringing about SCM, but it also recognises that age does not prevent change from occurring. If true, Feuerstein's *et al.* (2006) claim that new pathways can form in the brain as a consequence of MLE has profound implications for education, therapy and rehabilitation. It suggests that mediation of deficient cognitive structures that would otherwise typically be acquired very early in the developmental sequence can be revisited in older children or even adults who might have previously been considered to have learning difficulties; while acknowledging that such process may require more intense intervention to be effective, particularly in older individuals. If established, these ideas are able to challenge assumptions that adverse early childhood experiences cause irreversible damage, and could be used to justify investment in SCM informed interventions.

Tripartite Learning Partnership (TLP)

Because MLE requires three elements to work: The learner, the mediator and the learning experience itself, Feuerstein *et al.* (2008) refer to it as a 'tripartite learning model'. Learning experiences may also occur directly without a mediator, such as when we reflect on a daily experience, but this kind of learning is unlikely to bring

about cognitive development without the aid of a mediator to facilitate deeper thinking.

As with the MLE, TLP is conceptually similar to Bruner's (1978) theory of instructional scaffolding. These process aims to promote deeper learning through an interaction between learner, mediator and task. Personalised interactions are planned and delivered by the mediator that enable the learner to achieve a particular learning objectives (Sawer, 2006). Where TLP differs from instructional scaffolding is that it emphasis developing *ability* within specific cognitive domains, rather than *attainment*.

For TLP to be effective three components require consideration:

1. The learner's current cognitive functioning.
2. The cognitive functions required of a given task (known as task analysis).
3. The mediator's response intended to develop specific cognitive functions.

These three components interact with one another bi-directionally and are interdependent.

For the mediator to understand how best to support the learner's emergent cognitive functions, their characteristics need to be known since instruction is unlikely to be effective if the mediated learning experience is outside the child's developmental capacities (Vygotsky, 1978; Feuerstein, 1979). It therefore follows that suitable tasks are required that require the learner to use those deficient cognitive functions, and that this task must first be analysed to determine its suitability. For mediation to be effective, sensitivity on the part of the mediator is essential to maintain realistic, yet

challenging expectations of the learner's potential through appropriate TLPs.

Cognitive Functions

Three overarching cognitive phases are used dynamically when problem solving:

1. Input, where a problem is defined and information gathered.
2. Elaboration, where the information is used to solve a problem.
3. Output, where the learner shares the problem solution (Yeomans, 2008).

The cognitive and non-cognitive functions that make up these three processes include; attention; perception; memory; language; logical reasoning; strategic thinking; metacognition, and behaviours affecting learning (Haywood and Lidz, 2007). Detailed descriptions of Feuerstein's cognitive functions are presented in the Cognitive Abilities Profile (CAP) by Deutsch and Mohammed (2010). The intended consequence of DA is to enhance the learner's performance in these domains.

Summary of Feuerstein's Dynamic Assessment

In summary, the purpose of Feuerstein's Dynamic Assessment is to:

1. Identify adequate and deficient cognitive functioning in order to suggest any process deficiencies that might underlie learning failure.
2. Identify what needs to be done to bring about change (that is, the amount and type of mediation, and select through task analysis an appropriate task).
3. Comment on the impact of non-intellective factors on the individual's learning (these are behaviours such as impulsivity, persistence, response to mediation, frustration tolerance).

For DA to be effective it is important for the mediator to structure an appropriate learning experience for the learner who may then model how to best solve a problem or perform a particular task. Over time the learner internalises the instruction and is then able to perform the task independently. Hence, "what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.87).

Critical review of Feuerstein's model of Dynamic Assessment

DA characterises a shift in perspective regarding the direction of causality between education and learning within the psycho-educational domain. Instead of viewing failure to learn as a characteristic of the child, it is increasingly recognised to be a consequence of the learning environment. Feuerstein *et al.* (2002) rejected Piaget's assertion that these processes are driven purely by an interaction between the need for cognitive equilibrium and biological maturation. Instead he attributed poor performance in cognitive tests to be a consequence of cultural difference or cultural deprivation (Yeomans, 2008). This said, he still recognised that both biological and social factors may influence the degree of deprivation a child may experience.

Feuerstein (1979) interprets the poor performance in non-dynamic tests as a consequence of cultural deprivation or difference, however his sociocultural ontology of development can be critiqued for being universalistic and ethnocentric. It adopts the view that an objectively ideal state of development is attainable, and that this state reflects Western academic values. It might also be considered adultocentric by interpreting the unique values and practices of children as deficits, rather than differences (Matusov and Hayes, 2000).

This literature review found the LPAD, and later Tzuriel's adaptation for younger children (e.g. Tzuriel and Klein, 1985; Tzuriel, 1989) to be often cited as the first form of DA to be operationalised in the UK. It sought to address the simple fact known by every experienced teacher: Changing the instruction given to a learner can improve their performance, whereas the restrictions imposed by standardised psychometric tests prevent these possibilities from being explored.

The LPAD is one of the most comprehensive and theoretically grounded expressions of the DA model to date and it has served as a catalyst for conceptualisation and development of further DA instruments (Lidz, 1991). Yet Murphy (2011) has criticised its construct validity and argued that the LPAD is peppered with hypothetical terms that intend to add coherence to a system for which no alternative explanations exist. Murphy (2011) adds that despite attempts to describe the constructs Feuerstein's uses in his model of DA some remain vague, particularly as they only seem to manifest during the MLE itself. In defence of Feuerstein's LPAD, many of the tasks used originate from psychometric tests and therefore can be linked to common cognitive concepts such as visuospatial ability, attention, planning, and working memory (e.g. Raven, 1947; Osterrieth, 1944). Furthermore, Lidz (1991) has identified several links between the components of the MLE and practical aspects of teaching; and between the LPAD and concepts found in DA more generally. Finally, the use of task analysis enables DA to have a greater ecological validity by adopting curriculum based tasks, something that cannot be achieved by most psychometric tests. Lidz (1991) explains that Feuerstein's adaptation of psychometric ideas does not include an explanation for how these concepts can be verified or falsified in the LPAD because they serve very different purposes and reflect very different

underpinning assumptions.

As with the LPAD, despite the seemingly orderly growth and development of DA, Lidz and Haywood (2007) acknowledge that the concepts it uses are remain infirmly anchored or buttressed empirically. DA proponents are also often critiqued for failing to demonstrate, in psychometric terms, the reliability, generalisability, and validity of their procedures (Poehner, 2008). Feuerstein's claims that he did not develop the LPAD as a research or diagnostic tool, instead DA should be considered an elaborate assessment process for gathering qualitative information about how the learner learns and therefore exempt from the metric standards of other psychological tests. Nevertheless, some practitioners *have* attempted to demonstrate the reliability or validity of DA tests materials. Spector, (1992) Day *et al.*, (1997) and Fuchs *et al.,* (2008) have all been able to showed that DA contributes predictive information about later independent post-test performance and enables viable predictions about future achievement. Swanson and Lussier (2001) used a test-retest design to examine changes between pre and post-test data by deducting a measure of the influence of random variables. This has allowed them to make comparisons with psychometric test-retest data to demonstrate the reliability of DA relative to psychometric tests.

Beckmann (2006) attempted to demonstrate predictive and incremental validity of DA and found empirical evidence to suggest that DA was able to differentiate between the intellectual constructs addressed in other psychometric tests. Studies have also demonstrated that post DA measures are able to provide comparable predictive power of subsequent school achievement as can be gained from standardised, norm referenced tests (e.g. Guthke and Wingenfeld, 1992; Tzuriel and

Samuels, 2000). Besides any quantitative gains that may be shown there are meaningful benefits to a flexible assessment method that can account for a wide range of individual needs. Lidz and Haywood (2008) describe a case where a girl formerly diagnosed as 'mentally retarded' was re-tested using DA. This found that she had a greater degree of cognitive functioning than was formerly recognised by standardised assessments alone. As a consequence, she was judged in court to be capable of making her own far reaching and life changing decisions.

Considerations for educational psychology practice

DA is able to inform educationalists of the repertoire of cognitive and non-cognitive strategies a learner possesses, and therefore what intervention is required to support further cognitive development. By removing the context of the curriculum from the assessment process it is possible to explore what a learner's capacity without interference (or 'blocking') from past associations with learning that may impede performance (Tzuriel, 2001). This decision should be carefully considered since deliberately omitting curriculum materials removes the opportunity for the assessor to comment on the significance of blocking for the learner.

EPs wishing to adopt DA need not feel restricted by the range of assessment materials used by Feuerstein and colleagues. Instead an assessor can make use of Feuerstein's list of cognitive functions described in his enrichment programme to reflect on potential activities that would allow for a suitable MLE to be planned (see Appendix B, pg.43 for the full list). Of course, when planning and selecting tasks for DA it is essential that an appropriate task analysis is completed beforehand (Feuerstein *et al.*, 2008). Additionally, borrowing tasks from psychometric test

materials is ill-advised. This is because it may be necessary to follow up a DA with a psychometric test, and familiarity with the materials is likely to affect the test outcomes in unintended ways. Similarly, using DA *during* a psychometric test could jeopardise standardisation and there is a risk that results may be misinterpreted by other professionals.

As with standardised cognitive tests, DA assesses the learner without their learning context, eliminating the possibility of observing the interaction between the learner and the learning environment. Fortunately, this can be remedied by using supplementary classroom observations and it is for this reason that the CAP (Deutsch and Mohammed, 2010) considers observations of the TLP to be a necessary part of the assessment process.

Practitioners should not expect the performance changes observed following a single mediation to be long term or durable, rather they are likely to be transient if not followed up with by a series of interventions. Making this clear from the outset helps to manage stakeholders' expectations, and may prompt discussions about planning appropriate intervention in the long term. There are useful manuals about how the principles of DA can be applied to the classroom environment for instance (e.g. Lantolf and Poehner, 2011; Lauchlan and Carrigan, 2013), however, the twin challenges of finding a suitable mediator able to commit the necessary time for successful mediation can be perceived as a barrier to its usefulness (Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000).

Despite Feuerstein's (1979) intention to develop DA as a way of counteracting the

cultural disadvantages inherent in norm referenced cognitive assessments, designing a test that does not require *any* cultural knowledge would be extremely limited in scope. Therefore, it is important for practitioners to perform preliminary investigations to identify gaps in knowledge, or to adapt the materials before administration. This flexibility makes DA well-suited to learners with sensory or physical differences. Because DA relies heavily on language to assess metacognitive strategies, when assessing with learners with limited expressive language, no intelligible speech or with children for whom English is an Additional Language, practitioners need to establish an agreed system of communication before proceeding, and to avoid language intensive materials. These latter arrangements reflect a great deal of test flexibility available in DA to accommodate learners with access needs. DA's emphasis on meta-cognitive skills development can make it particularly beneficial for supporting older learners to develop their independent study skills, or furthering development in more able and talented young people.

It is worthwhile finding out what the school or LA wants to achieve from an assessment before embarking on a DA. Occasionally the omission of norm referenced data can undermine stakeholders' efforts to demonstrate that a learner meets the entry criteria for a particular service or resource. Because of this a pragmatic stance is more likely to be sensitive to the interests of the learner. Some Additional Educational Needs Coordinators (ALNCOs) may also be wary of switching from established assessments to a more subjective method of understanding learning potential. One way of addressing this is follow the recommendations outlined in the CAP (Deutsch and Mohammed, 2010) to systematically document

examples of observed behaviour that can be used to justify judgement relating to about the learner's cognitive functioning. Such observations can then be triangulated with the class teacher to ensure agreement. Further assurance may be provided by inviting an enquiring AENCo (or teacher) to observe the assessment process since this is not prohibited. Practitioners are also encouraged to use their professional judgement about what can be considered 'defensible' practice in their LA, and to provide a clear rationale justifying the selection of DA as an assessment tool in their reports.

Given that training courses on DA are limited and expensive in the UK it is unlikely that schools will have accredited staff available to deliver the assessment themselves. DA relies heavily on the skill of the mediator to make judgements about ability and how much mediation is required for the learner to succeed. EPs are already familiar with these issues in their practice and are well placed to link outcomes with purposeful interventions, however, there are continued difficulties for EPs wishing to access professional development related to DA (Yeomans, 2008; Deutsch and Reynolds, 2010). Ideally training should provide a balance of both theoretical and practical approaches to enable practitioners to develop and select tests that are fit for purpose. As with the professional standards and competencies required for practitioners using psychometric tests, a period of supervised professional practice would also allow practitioners to demonstrate competency in DA, and receive formative feedback on their practises.

Concluding comments

This review summarises the theoretical basis for DA, and explores some of the

relevant issues for EPs who wish to use DA in their practice. The purposes of cognitive assessment are to; enable reliable and valid measures of cognitive functioning and contrast them with the norm; provide accurate predictions about future mental development; and derive suggestions for psycho-educational interventions. EPs tasked with investigating any of these aspects are required to choose an assessment that is fit for purpose. DA is particularly suitable for investigating the latter two purposes as it may be used to gain a measure of learning potential, or to explore a learner's cognitive functions. DA does not aim to be a replacement for intervention, or a substitute for other forms of assessment as each approach has its own purpose and anticipated outcome. DA works best when it is used to answer specific questions concerning a learner's cognitive functioning but "it cannot address questions that have not first been asked, and so cannot be used as part of an assessment battery" (Lidz and Haywood, 2008:pg327). To use DA as intended, assessors need to understand the theoretical basis for its use, consider the learner's cognitive requirements, and plan the content and complexity of the tasks necessary to bring about change.

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APPENDIX A: Literature on the role of Dynamic Assessment in educational psychology

Research purposefully reviewing the literature on DA in educational contexts is rare, despite there being considerable public interest in the approach. A www.google.com search for the term "Dynamic Assessment of Learning Potential" on 31st October 2013 returned 63,900 hits. Yet http://scholar.google.co.uk returned only 65 books and articles published in English using the same search term.

In order to review the literature on DA, a database search using the terms "Dynamic Assessment" AND "Literature" within the Web of Science (ISI), Australian Education Index, ERIC, British Education Index and Swetswise was conducted on 27th September 2013, using the University of Birmingham eLibrary service. The purpose of this search was to identify whether a literature review had been attempted previously. This process returned two examples completed by Swanson and Lussier in 2001, and by Boers, Janssen, Minnaert and Ruijssenaars in 2013; the latter focused on the value of DA in assessing individuals at a pre-linguistic level. It was hoped that reading these papers would help to clarify the relevant and wider issues relating to the use of DA by EPs. A follow up literature search was then conducted the same day using the University of Birmingham eLibrary service, to access all "peer reviewed journals" on the topic of "Dynamic Assessment". This yielded 34 papers mainly related to the use of DA as an evaluation method and teaching technique. As the purpose of this review is to consider its distinct epistemological and theoretical features with that support the teaching and learning process, these search terms were narrowed to 'whole articles' relating to "Dynamic Assessment" AND "Educational Psychology" from the Journal of the Association for Educational Psychologists, Educational and Child Psychology, and from the [American] Journal of Educational Psychology (between 1992 and 2013) returning 13 articles on 12th November 2013.

From reading these articles it became apparent that there was no dominant methodology used to evaluate the effectiveness of DA. Both positivist enquiry (n=6) and qualitative reviews (n=7) were used. No clear dominant forms of DA conceptualised in this literature, a mixture of test-teach-retest methods, standardised teaching models, and individualised teaching methods were represented. However, the majority conceptualise DA within Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1935/1978), whilst the remaining refer to Feuerstein (1979), or both. Finally, a selection of prominent works identified from the above articles were added to the sample for review. E.g. Vygotsky (1978); Feuerstein (1979); Tzuriel (2000); Haywood and Lidz (2007); Lidz and Haywood (2008). In total more than 60 books, government documents and articles from a range of different journals were identified and examined to determine their relevance to the issues surrounding the application of DA in EP practice.

The following research diary completed on 30th November 2013 summarises the research on application of DA by EPs, and identifies further avenues of investigation.

Literature Review	**Background / Motive**	**Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions**	**Theoretical Base**	**Method**	**Strengths/ Findings**	**Questions / future directions**
Swanson, H.L. and Lussier, C.M. (2001) A Selective Synthesis of the Experimental Literature on Dynamic Assessment, *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 71 (2), p.321-363.	A meta-analysis of published studies on dynamic assessment that aims to critically assess its effect size. This study aims to add a quantitative validity to Grigorenko and Sternberg's (1998) qualitative review, and Laughon (1990) The study looks to determine the most effective way of using DA.	Positivist outlook that focuses on the effect sizes that DA produces and compares it with test-retest controls.	Is based in psychometrics and draws on a range of intelligence testing theory.	A meta-analysis of published studies on dynamic assessment. (N=30), and 170 effect sizes (ES). Uses Cohens threshold of .80 for a large effect size and demonstrates that a non-DA single pretest-teach-posttest design yields a mean ES of 0.76. The ES of DA are compared.	DA procedures improve testing performance over static conditions, and these effect sizes (ESs) varied significantly as a function of: *Ability group* (underachievers yielded highest ESs, children with learning disabilities yielded lower ESs than average, hearing impaired, and SLD). However, the influence of ability group classification was mitigated when contextual variables were considered. *Chronological age* (younger students yield higher ESs than older students do), *Sample size* (studies with moderate sample sizes yielded larger ESs than did studies with small or large sample sizes). *Type of assessment procedure* (scaffolding and general strategies yielded larger ESs than did coaching). Assessment domain (ESs are higher on visual-spatial than on verbal measures).	Are there times when static testing is a better predictor of ability? Why are medium sized groups more effective than small or large groups? What distinguishes coaching, general strategies or scaffolding strategies? How are underachievers defined? Vague.

Grigorenko and Sternberg (1998) was added to the research diary after identifying it as the motive of Swanson and Lussier's (2001) literature review. It is presented in addition to those articles found in the aforementioned database search.

Literature Review	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions / future directions
Grigorenko, E.L. and Sternberg, R.J. (1998) Dynamic Testing. Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 124 (1), p.75-111.	To apply a description of different uses of DA and outline the strengths and weaknesses of each method in order to demonstrate its potential. To advocate DA as an alternative psychometric testing procedure as an alternative to static testing.	Social constructionist argument. DA is a more culture-fair test that could be used with immigrants and culturally diverse populations. Appropriate for testing of individuals with deprived educational experiences. The measurement of learning potential as distinct from what has been learned regardless of the culture, population, or social group.	Analyses formulated on a conceptual rather than historical basis. DA provides a basis for teaching and developing cognitive skills. DA is a methodology for the testing of learning potential.	Provides a comprehensive description of leading approaches to DA including: Feuerstein's Approach Budoff's Approach The Graduated-Prompts Approach The European Contribution: The Lemtest. Swanson's Cognitive Processing Test.	A wide range of possible applications for DA are discussed, beyond the typical educational contexts. Describes underlying theories of DA as a test of learning potential. Each form of DA has its own stance in (a) aims, methodologies, analysis, (b) how to measure change and (c) ecological validity. Suggests that the weaknesses of static tests can be compensated for by dynamic assessment. That post-test (only) scores reliably measure ability (but no better than a static test). DA provides an opportunity to measure specific cognitive skills, but is a labour intensive intervention in itself.	There is no analysis of the quantities differences between one approach and another. Identifies that some groups will benefit, but again, little evidence to quantify who or by how much. Still emphasis is on the child and their abilities, rather than the ecology and teacher's skill. Will the outcomes reflect real world practice (1:1 verses 30:1)? Are the goals of DA measurable without laboratory conditions?

Literature Review	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions / future directions
Boers, E., Janssen, M.J., A.E.M.G. Minnaert and Ruijssenaars, W.A.J.J.M. (2013) The Application of Dynamic Assessment in People Communicating at a Prelinguistic Level: A descriptive review of the literature, International *Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, Vol.60 (2), p.119-145.	Aims to explore the application of DA to the assessment of individuals operating at a pre-linguistic level (e.g. deaf-blind children). The purpose is to provide a description of current practice and to determine a future course of good practice.	Social constructionist argument. The nature of assessment for children working at a pre-linguistic level is qualitatively different for that of children with spoken language. Therefore, although DA can be utilised, it will be to achieve different aims. This study looks to previous studies to explore commonalities between methodologies already in circulation.	Not made explicit, the epistemology and methodology of earlier work is the primary focus of this literature review. Considers that the development of communicative skills to be of prime importance.	Literature presented in relation to the participants, abilities being targeted and method of assessment.	Identifies a process for using DA with non-linguistic children: Identify contextual variables that support the person's communicative competence rather than to assess their learning potential (in children with speech). Both the learner and their communication partner need to learn new skills during the assessment. There is a difference in the level of individualisation of the procedure. The majority of procedures developed for people who communicate at the prelinguistic level included target abilities, target items, activities, interactions and mediation, which were all adapted to each participant's communicative level, needs and interests. The principles of mediated learning experience are unnecessary for people who communicate at a prelinguistic level (too language intensive).	The effectiveness of DA with children who operate at a pre-linguistic level has not been evaluated. The nature and method of teaching skills is not standardised across studies thus limited by its heavy reliance on the knowledge and mediational skills of the examiners, so the data gathered by examiner is subjective. This could be done by providing a list of behaviours that could inform judgements about communicative skills. Some way of matching the communicative competence (lo-hi) of their key communicator (adult) could be devised to match adult competence to the child's needs.

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Spector, J.E. (1992) Predicting Progress in Beginning Reading: Dynamic Assessment of Phonemic Awareness. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 84 (3), p.353-363.	Investigate the predictive ability of DA to measure 5-6 year olds phonemic awareness and to predict progress in early reading. Secondary purpose to compare DA with static assessment.	Uses a positivist methodology to demonstrate accuracy of prediction through statistical analysis. This study uses the language of psychometric testing to endorse DA as a valid and reliable psychometric test of reading ability.	Draws on Feuerstein, (1979), and Vygotsky (1935/1978), but acknowledges a variety of DA approaches including learning potential assessment; testing-the-limits procedures; mediated assessment; and assisted learning and transfer (pg.354). Wider reading on the relationship between *phonemic awareness* and reading acquisition. Spector (1992) identifies a range of factors that impact on performance in standardised tests.	N=38 non-reading 5-6-year-old aged children (non EAL) went through a series of static tests in November and again in May. *In one test the floor of 0 points was awarded in n=25 and feedback was withheld. This led the researcher to award marks for partial success. **<u>Campione's taxonomy</u>** **Focus**: Success was determined by performance *during the DA itself*. **Interaction**: This study used standardised methods to explore specific responses given by the participants. **Target***:* refers to the number of skills tested.	DA improved performance in phonemic awareness. The DA measures correlated with each of the three static measures of phonemic awareness, more than the three static measures correlated with each other. Students who showed the most growth in word recognition were helped most by the prompts and cues provided during dynamic assessment. Dynamic phoneme segmentation was a better predictor of reading progress than the standardised test. The dynamic measure was also a better predictor of word recognition than the PPVT-R, a measure that is often used to estimate verbal ability.	Those tested in November are less likely to provide a reliable score because they are being tested on a topic for which they have no knowledge at all. There will be a more significant effect of *prior* exposure in the November group than the May group. There is also the test-retest effect; enhanced familiarity with testing processes and other ancillary variables at work. *Learned helplessness in some tests may be responsible for low scores in the static condition.

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Elliott, J., Lauchlan, F. and Stringer, P. (1996) Dynamic Assessment and its Potential for Educational Psychologists. *Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology*, Vol. 12 (3), p.152-160.	Introduces DA to EPs, (esp. Feuerstein and Tzuriel). The motive of the authors is to promote DA as an alternative to static testing. To provide a set of psychological theories, vocabulary and tools to answer *why* a child not learning effectively?' There is a motivation to define the role of EPs as *explainers* of SEN, not just *measurers*.	A balanced review of Feuerstein and Tzuriel's work. Defines the learning experience socio-cognitive. Behavioural learning approaches are considered inadequate. New focus is on teaching cognitive *strategies* for learning, rather than learning by rote. Standardised testing does nothing to diagnose the nature of difficulties a child has, and disadvantages those who are culturally disadvantaged. Argues that a paradigm shift is required.	*Vygotsky* - learning is a process rather than a state; the mediator cannot be divorced from the learning experience. *Feuerstein* - Input (x8), elaboration (x11) and output (x8) phases of mental manipulation. 'Culturally deprived' (CD) children need to be taught skills before they can be tested on them. CD is a child who acquires most of their thinking from the environment, not via skilled adult mediation. DA is and approach, not a diagnostic test. Also affect can influence performance and this requires mediation.	Case Study and description of Feuerstein *et al*. approach is intended to demonstrate the benefits of DA: 1. Collaboration between assessor and child. 2. A supportive environment to mediate affect. 3. Tasks that allow the assessor to identify cognitive strategies underlying performance. 4. Opportunity to demonstrate performance *after* mediated learning (post-test). 5. Opportunity to explore affective or cognitive factors that may hinder performance.	Feuerstein and Tzuriel's DA is better equipped to investigate the specific cognitive limitations than that static tests because the non-standardised elements allow hypotheses to be explored. Static tests do not teach cognitive skills and offer limited feedback for early items only. Emphasis upon cognitive processes in learning should be a central aspect of EP practice. Offers a theory, language and tools for attending to affective, 'non-intellective' factors of learning.	Feuerstein is anti-standardised testing; there are no guidelines on how EPs report a DA; Feuerstein insists that test-retest and inter-rater reliability are inappropriate to measuring learning. There is also a lack of clarity about his cognitive structures. How can the philosophic and scientific dimensions of DA be harmonised? Is the test a measure of assessor ability? What does this tell us even when we know? – Does it inform teaching of specific cognitive skills for which the child had experienced CD?

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Stringer, P. Elliott, J. and Lauchlan, F. (1997) Dynamic Assessment and its Potential for Educational Psychologists, *Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology,* Vol. 12 (4), p.234-239.	Explores the reasons why DA has not become a significant part of the practice of EPs. To contribute to professional debate about the need to broaden EPs repertoire of assessment approaches. Defines the unique contribution of EPs. To promote the use of DA rather than challenge psychometrics in EP practice. DA is the next step in the development of EPS.	Social constructivist argument that intend to shape future discourse on psychometric testing in EP practice. It assumes that DA has value (social and cognitive basis for assessment) to EP practice where behavioural and curriculum based assessments are limited. Standardised assessments cannot accommodate cognitive and social aspects of learning. Human rights – psychometrics disempower and are non-collaborative.	Reference to Dessent (1992) "EPs who abandon psychometrics have ill-defined roles." Elliot (1993) drawn upon to identify 4 reasons DA has not taken off: Lack of familiarity with DA tests; DA takes longer to assess the child; access to training is limited; DA does not fit into western models of professional thinking and acting (empiricist, quantitative) see Fig 1 pg. 236.	Description of the barriers to DA being adopted by EPs including. *Measurement* - Product verses process of learning. *Classifying SEN* - As above. EPs as gatekeepers. *Resources* - IQ scores are quick to administer. Is DA recognised by the LA? *Defensible practice* – Statutory Assessment processes mean EPs are pushed towards static testing as they are considered defensible in court. Risk aversion. *Training* – difficulties accessing training, even in cases where it is better than standardised testing (multi-cultural/EAL). Only been one UK-based course, on the Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD).	DA has greater application for bilingual children. There are clearly defined barriers to the use of DA that can be acted upon to promote DA in the community of EP practice.	If someone is interested enough to read this article, they will already be convinced that DA may offer something standardised testing cannot. More critical approach needed. This does not seek to provide any solution to the identified barriers. Arguments sorely needed when faced with prevailing attitudes and expectations against DA. Is the story that was presented in 1997 the same today in 2013? How much progress has been made? What was the impact of this article?

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Day, J.D., Engelhardt, J.L., Maxwell, S.E. and Bolig, E.E. (1997) Comparison of Static and Dynamic Assessment Procedures and Their Relation to Independent Performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology,* Vol. 89 (2), p.358-368.	To demonstrate that DA can be used to more reliably predict mild LD than static tests: (a) to evaluate whether dynamic measures provide information *additional* to that provided by static pretest measures in predicting posttest performance. (b) to investigate whether dynamic measures of learning and transfer are relatively consistent across different task domains (crystal and fluid intelligence).	Positivist stance. If DA is more effective than static testing, then it will demonstrate measurable outcomes beyond test-retest.	Draws on Vygotsky: Asserts that pre-test performance, and ability during a test is a better indicator of ability (ZAD + mediated ZPD = tomorrows ZAD). Use of statistics to demonstrate effectiveness.	Tested N=84, 4-5 year olds in verbal and spatial tests. Effect size of pretest – teach – posttest was measured. Tests determine (a) if pretest, learning and posttest performances were domain specific. (b) If paths from both pretests and learning assessments were needed to predict posttest performance. Children tested in 2 domains, then trained to mastery in two versions, and then retested.	Evidence supports the idea that spatial and verbal domains are separate (crystallised and fluid intelligences). The best predictor of posttest performance used data from pretest and the learning assessment compared to either test alone. Suggests that static testing alone is less effective for predicting performance. Demonstrates that *both* Pre-test and assessment during teaching contribute towards predicting future independent performance. Advocates both static *and* DA. Found that performance is enhanced and predicted within domain specific aspects of testing, not of global performance. DA was less effective at developing the child's crystallised intelligence.	In the posttest, feedback is still given thus posttest is still training, but the responses given by the experimenter are standardised. The outcomes of this study are unlikely to be transferrable to EP practice unless this specific model is adopted. How are practice effects controlled for in this experimental design? Will a child who learn maths slowly at 7 continue to learn slowly at 14? How does performance in DA relate to school learning? DA may actually predict how responsive a child is to instruction, rather than how well they can learn.

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Finlay, J. (2000). In Reviews of Assessment and Intervention Tools, *Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology*, Vol.16 (2), p.261-271.	To support professionals working with children with SEN by providing an informed perspective of the value of different assessment tools.	A balanced, non-statistical appraisal based on Finlay's professional experience.	Practical aspects of testing from an EP position are considered.	Narrative descriptions provided by drawing reference to the test-kit manuals. Some opinions for their use and limitations are provided by Finlay, J. (2000).	Describes "Let's Play" as a form of DA and recommends its use for children who have low-cooperation (SpLD, ASD, motor delay), or are very young. Attempts to understand learning styles to inform planning of learning experiences, but also compares the child to the norm is required. DA can be used to establish trust before using static assessment. Monitors `affective factors'; `interaction during assessment' and `approaches to task'. The test administrator can intervene dynamically following set procedures.	By relaxing the standardised elements of the test then affective aspects of test performance can be better mediated.

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Deutsch, R. and Reynolds, Y. (2000) The Use of Dynamic Assessment by Educational Psychologists in the UK, *Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology*, 16 (3), p.311-331.	This study explores the views of EPs in the barriers to implementing DA in practice. The authors take the position that the EP's repertoire would be enriched by improved knowledge of and training in DA. Proposes changing current educational and psychometric practices to achieve a more inclusive system.	Uses a social constructivist approach to understand the perceived barriers to using DA. Improving training and confidence of practitioners will create a paradigm shift from the 'bottom up'.	Contrasts psychometric and DA. Draws on Vygotsky's *cultural mediation / tools* to develop intelligence. ZPD is used to conceptualise DA. Intelligence is seen as an open, dynamic system – not close and fixed. Identified the child, task and mediator as inseparable to the learning process and aims to optimise these.	88 EPs who have been trained in DA between 1994 and 1999 were surveyed to ask them about their *attitudes* to DA and the effectiveness of the training in a UK context. Questionnaire sent to those registered on a DA forum	Describes two DA models: (a) Standardised: Pretest-teach-posttest and use of graduated prompts. (b) Clinical: Mediated Learning group use non-standardised interventions. The latter is most widely known by UK EPs. EPs are interested in DA, but insufficient training. EPs want report writing formats, and methods of matching DA outcomes to school curriculums. *Perceived advantages:* Flexibility; testing is a positive process; interactive; practical advice for teachers; viable alternative to psychometrics; rich in information; and more culture-fair. *Perceived disadvantages*: Time; Jargon; Poor links to classroom practice; Subjective; Insufficient evaluation; poor DA materials; LA demands. DA is useful in assessing bilingual children, as well as those from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds; disability and disadvantage. Proposes a national standard of training for EPs in DA.	How were the government plans (DEE, 1999) to develop 'thinking skills' operationalised? Has this changed since 2008 elections? Evaluations remain to be carried out. The field of DA as a whole still lacks a substantial body of empirical studies. Once training is established, will the attitudes held by EPs change? Some thought that its radical departure from psychometrics was a disadvantage, others an advantage.

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Freeman, L. and Miller, A. (2001) Norm-referenced, Criterion-referenced, and Dynamic Assessment: What exactly is the point? *Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology*, 17 (1), p.3-16.	To present a taxonomy of purposes and procedures deriving from these major assessment paradigms in an attempt to add clarity to when and why some tests should be used.	Frames this social constructionist study within a political context of the SEN code of practice (1993). The authors propose that different kinds of tests have relative merits and weaknesses.	Explore the merits of the particular debate within individual assessment has centred on the relative merits of norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, curriculum-based and dynamic methods of assessment.	Examining questionnaire responses from 59 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCos) in one Local Education Authority (LEA) – gaining their thoughts on three forms of assessments: (a) Normative (b) Dynamic assessment and (c) curriculum-related SENCos are selected because they are the receivers of EP reports and thus best suited to judging their usefulness.	Argues from a historical perspective how EPs can make use of DA. Curriculum-related (CR) assessments were most commonly used and most valuable for IEP planning. The SENCOs wanted external professionals to confirm the in school CR data. DA was mostly incidental, and used more in consultation-based approaches used by EPs. SENCOs rated this as second most useful. Normative (NR) were used to assess SpLD, LD and for 'cognitive profiling' and considered least useful for planning, although age equivalents were thought of as useful. Conclusion: NR rated as not useful for planning, DA rates as more useful for planning and understanding than is familiar.	Again, this study is so old that the political climate has changed. Where are we on the pendulum of psychometrics now? The methods of assessments and reports used by EPs in an LEA are likely to differ across the country, as is the perceived value of each type by SENCOs. Is there a significant difference between the usefulness of DA for understanding and planning? Is there a difference for NR? If CR is considered so useful, then why are EPs asked to do assessments that typically involve NR? What if this study was replicated with the LEA officers as recipients rather than SECNOs?

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Bosma, T, and Resing, W.C.M. (2006) Dynamic assessment and a reversal task: A contribution to needs-based assessment, Educational and Child Psychology, Vol.23 (3), p.81-98.	Explorative study to examine whether a DA test and an additional reversal task can inform EPs about general cognitive performances. Seek to demonstrate that DA offers qualitatively rich data that is helpful for differentiating teaching to suit the child's learning differences. Argues static tests only provide information about learning indirectly. Secondary purpose to explore the value of this information in the final phase of the psycho-diagnostic process using qualitative methods.	Critical Realist – teachers have difficulty differentiating for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). EPs use problem solving framework to diagnose problems before providing consultation to the teacher. Mixed methods design with quantitative and qualitative feedback is useful for making sense of uncertainty.	Diagnostic process similar to problem solving frameworks (Resing *et al.,* 2002, Monson *et al.,* 2006) Distinguishes between assessments to *categorise* with assessment to *inform* planning. Works within a cognitive paradigm.	Analogical Reasoning Learning Test (ARLT) given to N=26 7-8-year-old children with Mild Learning Difficulties (MLD), who then completed a DA task. Qualitative analyses of the DA findings. Uses role reversal of the child-teacher after teacher does the static tests. The teacher playing the child tests the child's declarative knowledge.	Also compared DA and 'static' ARLT tests alone and gathered additional information about individual strategies and verbalisation. DA can gain *additional* information about children's ability, and that ARLT + DA is better at informing planning than IQ alone. Strong correlation found between ARLT and DA tests outcomes ($r_s = .70$, $p < .001$). Levels of learning potential ('high', 'moderate' and 'low' (i.e. responsiveness to intervention) did not correspond with IQ. Some children have higher learning potential than their IQ score predicted, but ability to explain problems was correlated with IQ. DA can provide additional and valuable information about children's learning potential, compared to IQ alone. E.g. children with MLD could solve abstract problems with feedback and direction.	Does DA interfere with the standardisation of the static tests? How were children categorised as low, medium and hi responders? How does this differ from categorising on the basis of standardised score? Can DA replace intelligence testing, or is it necessary to use both forms of assessment?

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Fuchs, L.S., Compton, D.L., Fuchs, D., Hollenbeck, K.N., Craddock, C.F. and Hamlett, C.L. (2008) Dynamic Assessment of Algebraic Learning in Predicting Third Graders' Development of Mathematical Problem Solving, Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 100 (4), p.829–850.	Explores the utility of a DA of algebraic learning in predicting third graders' development of mathematics problem solving. The authors attempt to predict academic ability. They argue that static tests are imperfect forecasters of achievement (too much variance), and that DA may be of value in *forecasting* (not identifying current ability).	Positivist assumptions that ability can be objectively measured quantitatively via accepted psychometric means. Uses statistical modelling. Strips out contextual variables to demonstrate the greater effectiveness of DA in predicting future laboratory performance.	Vygotskian framework (1962): Capacity to learn verses attainment. Campione's taxonomy (1989) *Index*: Pre/teach/post testing comparative measures verses Measure the amount of scaffolding required against the norm. *Interaction*: Standardised (e.g., Ferrara et al., 1986) *verses* Individualised (e.g., Tzuriel and Feuerstein, 1992). *Nature of skills assessed*: Domain-general skills (e.g., Feuerstein, 1979) *verses* Academically grounded (Campione, 1989).	122 third-grade students were assessed using DA. Group 1 = 16 weeks of either validated (schema teaching) Group 2 = conventional teaching. Children having had DA were able to transfer these skills to other contexts. Introduction draws on other similar studies to add weight to their claims.	Some evidence of domain specific cognitive functions. Ability to learn (measured through DA) also predicts the child's ability to *transfer* learning to new, similar tasks. DA is a better predictor of *future* achievement than static testing. Results show that language, pre-treatment word-problem skill, and DA were needed to predict future word-problem performance. Modelling indicates that DA may represent an aspect of students' learning potential that is *distinct* from conventional static measures.	Did the authors demonstrate that they predicted the outcome? (By chance a statistically significant result is likely to show up regardless of hypothesis.) In laboratory conditions such as 'standardised teaching on novel problems', DA was more effective than static tests. This may be because static tests are more influenced by socioeconomic circumstances. DA is likely to be less reliable in the classroom in contexts where those who are 'culturally advantaged' will continue to perform better.

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Yeomans, J. (2008) Dynamic Assessment practice: some suggestions for ensuring follow up, Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology, Vol.24 (2), p.105-114.	Seeks to examine the tensions for EPs and school staff in interpreting DA outcomes through curriculum-referenced objectives. Suggests ways that DA can fit into the UK education initiatives. Proposes three conditions in which DA can be implemented: (1) sharing common assessment and intervention goals; (2) sharing a common curriculum context; and (3) sharing a common language.	Social constructionist methodology. Uses a review of the literature to describe the main ideas and issues in DA and is meant to be persuasive rather than critical. It demonstrates how DA can be operationalized by UK EPs within schools.	Adopts Feuerstein's theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM) (Feuerstein, 2003), an interactive model of assessment to measure *cognitive functions* (CF) rather than the outcomes of learning. Low functioning caused by *cultural differences* and *cultural deprivation.* These are explained via bio-ecological perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Use of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) to develop skills (Deutsch, 2003). 3 essential elements of MLE: *Intentionality and reciprocity; Meaning; Transcendence,* (Also mediation of feelings of competence).	Uses discourse analysis to identify the limitations of DA considered by other qualitative studies and then seeks to address them. This is done by: (1) Looking for links within the National Curriculum in order to establish meaningful links to school practices. (2) Examining common features of studies that bridging the gap between assessment and intervention.	Summarises the theoretical underpinnings of Feuerstein's DA. Identifies links between the DfES (2005) 'thinking skills', and 'employability skills' (QCA, 2001). Advocates the use of National Curriculum language instead of Feuerstein's list of CF. 3 recommendations: (1) Sharing common assessment and intervention goals in pre-assessment phase. (2) Sharing a common curriculum context – 3 ways of teaching thinking skills (DfES) suggested. (3) Sharing a common language – follow up negotiation is essential to mediate the implementation of any intervention. See Deutsch and Keane (2005) Cognitive Abilities Profile.	Have Feuerstein's CFs been translated using National Curriculum objectives? Does the new SEN code of practice (2013) justify the use of DA? Can DA contribute to IPP/IDPs/EHC plans? Does the National Curriculum actually differentiate process and product? How is this assessed?

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Ferrão, E.S. and Enumo, S.R.F. (2008) To what extent are non-intellectual factors included in current approaches to dynamic assessment: A review, Educational and Child Psychology Vol. 25 (1), p.59-65.	To reviews evidence of inclusion of non-intellectual variables in current dynamic assessment procedures. To promote the inclusion of non-intellective, or motivational variables in future DA test design.	An objective literature review of the different ways in which non-intellectual factors are considered by DA tests. Difficult to determine epistemology.	Takes a broad stance of DA. Utilises concepts such as low frustration tolerance, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and locus of control. Tzuriel (1991, 2001, and 2003) specified seven such factors. The Behaviour Rating Observation Scale (Lidz and Jepsen in Haywood and Lidz, 2007) is incorporated into the Application of Cognitive Functions Scale, a DA for preschool children.	Presentation of a series of examples of DA tests that include non-intellective or motivational measures.	Suggests that non-intellectual factors are included in some types of DAs, and omitted in others. Presents a range of DA researchers who sought to measure non-intellectual factors.	Which method was of most successful? Do they measure the same thing? Are they a valid measure of learning ability?

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Hessels, M.G.P, Vanderlinden, K. and Rojas, H. (2011) Training effects in dynamic assessment: A pilot study of eye movement as indicator of problem solving behaviour before and after training, *Educational and Child Psychology* Vol. 28 (2), p.101-113.	To demonstrate differences in learning potential both with and without moderate learning difficulty (MLD) on a test of analogical reasoning. Attempts to demonstrate the construct validity of DA by analysing changes in their visual behaviour when confronted with test. Argues DA measures of Learning Potential are more appropriate than traditional intelligence tests when assessing persons with MLD. Advocates use of eye movement tracking to understand a learner's problem solving strategies, and to measure changes in response to DA.	Positivist enquiry to measure changes in behaviour as a result of DA. Eye movements indicate cognitive strategies being used, the first study of its kind.	Draws upon the literature measuring saccades and fixations in problem solving. Vakil *et al.* (2010) found that typical verses MLD children showed different eye-movements when confronted with a matrix reasoning test (MLD switching between options more) = different strategy use, or have impaired Working Memory and so need to refresh their memory more often. MLD spend more time and draw many more comparisons.	Used Hessel's Analogical Reasoning Test (HART) to evaluate the changes in problem solving behaviour of children with MLD following DA. Eye movements were recorded in the pre-test and post-test. By measuring eye-movements, then problem solving behaviour can be directly measured – adding construct validity to the idea that DA is effective for demonstrating potential to learn cognitive skills.	Following DA children show more structured inspection patterns, more 'intelligent' comparisons and spend more time on encoding the information, confirming HART's construct validity. Show that the percentage of the time spent on Encoding rises from pre to post test, but time spent was reduced in total and more time was spent looking at details to infer relationships. In the pre-test participants in both groups made more comparisons between items behaviour characteristic of Response Elimination strategy characteristic of low ability participants. Suggests that EPs using eye measurement to understand the child's problem solving strategies.	Although the method is empirical, there is a lot of speculation as to the meaning of the behaviours being measured. Tiny sample size of test groups (N=4 and N=7). Doesn't DA simply replace a static test of attained ability with a static assessment of ability to learn skills? We are replacing one measure of cultural capital (individual attainment) with another (responsiveness to teaching). How does ASD influence the outcomes?

Article	Background / Motive	Epistemological/ Methodological Assumptions	Theoretical Base	Method	Strengths/ Findings	Questions
Pearson, F. (2011) Dynamic assessment, intelligence and measurement, Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology, Vol.27 (4), p.439-440.	A book review of Raegan Murphy (2011) *Dynamic Assessment, Intelligence and Measurement*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. This table presents the authors views of the above work.	Murphy adopts a positivist stance, and seeks to promote psychology as a science.	Murphy (2011) explains Dynamic Assessment and how its assessment methodology can address the concept and measurement of intelligence, taking into account the notion of adaptability and modifiability in a learning context, and cognitive potential. Murphy suggests, explains and demonstrates the use of Meta-theory, citing the work of K.B. Madsen, as a possible answer to the problem of cognitive assessment.	Murphy (2011) This is achieved by revisiting and questioning the scientific basis of psychology and the mathematics of measurement, reminding practitioners, for example, psychologists, statisticians and educators, of the less than perfect state of assessment methodology, and the models of assessment it has spawned to date. Meta-theory is applied to a range of DA tools to demonstrate how it can provide additional information.	A major strength of the book is its comprehensive approach to assessment methodology and DA and Intelligence by reviewing at a fundamental level philosophical, scientific, mathematical and psychological issues, their strengths and weaknesses, which constitute the models of cognitive assessment psychologists have at their disposal presently.	Pearson strongly recommend this book to educational psychologists, concerned with the cognitive assessment of individual children on a daily basis. The book will enable all psychologists to review their practice of assessment both in terms of static and dynamic considerations and the relationships between the two, for the benefit of those whom they assess.

APPENDIX B: Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment Cognitive Functions

Summary of cognitive functions from Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment programme (adapted from Adey and Shayer, 1994).

Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment Cognitive Functions	**Required to achieve task?**
Gathering all the information we need (Input)	
Clear perception: Using our senses (listening, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, feeling) to gather clear and complete information.	
Using a system or plan so that we do not skip or miss something important or repeat ourselves.	
Labelling: Giving the thing we gather through our senses and our experience a name so that we can remember it more clearly and talk about it.	
Temporal and spatial referents: Describing things and events in terms of where and when they occur.	
Conservation, constancy, and object permanence: Deciding on the characteristics of a thing or event that always stay the same, even when changes take place.	
Using multiple sources of information: Organising the information we gather by considering more than one thing at a time.	
Need for precision: Being precise and accurate when it matters.	
Using the information we have gathered (Elaboration)	
Analysing disequilibrium: Defining what the problem is, what we are being asked to do, and what we must figure out.	
Relevance: Using only that part of the information we have gathered that is relevant, that is, that applies to the problem, and ignoring the rest.	
Interiorisation: Having a good picture in our mind of what we are looking for, or what we must do.	
Planning behaviour: Making a plan that will include the steps we need to take to reach our goal.	
Broadening our mental field: Remembering and keeping in mind various pieces of information we need.	
Projecting relationships: Looking for the relationship by which separate objects, events, and experiences can be used together.	
Comparative behaviour: Comparing objects and experiences to others to see what is similar and what is different?	
Categorisation: Finding the class or set to which the new object or experience belongs.	
Hypothetical thinking: Thinking about different possibilities and figuring out what would happen if you were to choose one or another.	
Logical evidence: Using logic to prove things and to defend your opinion.	
Expressing the solution to a problem (Output)	
Overcoming egocentric communication: Be clear in your language and put yourself into the 'shoes' of the listener to be sure that your answer will be understood.	
Overcoming trial-and-error: Think things through before you answer instead of immediately trying to answer and making a mistake, and then trying again.	
Restraining impulsive behaviour: Count to 10 (at least) so that you do not say or do something you will be sorry for later.	
Overcoming blocking: If you cannot answer a question for some then leave the question for a little while and return to it later.	
Visual transport: Carrying an exact picture of an object in your mind to another place for comparison without losing or changing some details.	

Professional Practice Report 2

Measuring the Impact of School Based Solution Focused Brief Therapy for a Young Person with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Case Study

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[redacted]

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Abstract

Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is routinely practiced in schools throughout the UK by Educational Psychologists (EPs) and school based counsellors with children and adolescents. Reasons for this include: (1) brief commitment requirements necessary to affect change; (2) an emerging evidence base endorsing its effectiveness, and (3) congruence between SFBT and social constructionist approaches that challenge limiting beliefs about the agency and potential of young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD).

This case study reflects on the effectiveness of a three session SFBT episode with a young person with BESD in one secondary school using the Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS) and Goal Progress Chart (GPC). Small gains were found in CORS measures and sustained improvements in measures of GPC were recorded from baseline to endpoint three months later. Although these results do not provide unequivocally support for SFBT, the benefits may have been offset by the young person's experience of a bereavement during the therapeutic period.

The study endorses the utility of SFBT when working with adolescents with BESD in schools, but also highlight limitations in the use of the CORS instrument to evaluate progress. Suggestions are made as to how these limitations may be overcome.

Introduction

Whilst the majority of research into the effectiveness of therapeutic approaches focus on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), there is also a growing evidence base for the effectiveness of SFBT as a valid alternative underpinned by similar learning principles, whilst operationalising a different set of assumptions (Cepeda & Davenport, 2006; Bannink, 2007).

SFBT is a person-centred approach that actively challenges and engages young people to explore avenues of change (Cepeda & Davenport, 2006). It provides structured, solution-focused discussions that allow individuals to explore affirmative solutions to real-life difficulties through language (Gingerich & Peterson, 2013). One of SFBTs strengths is applicability across settings, including schools, and its congruence with the values and beliefs held by many EPs, particularly those who adopt strengths based and/or social constructionist principles e.g. the demystification of the expert role; collaboration with children and families; and rejection of the deficit model (King & Kellock, 2010). Whilst some principles are shared with CBT (Bannink, 2007), SFBT remains distinct from psychodynamic approaches that emphasise the influence of traumatic past experiences and instead offers a practical, change orientated way of engaging with young people (Ciuffardi *et al.,* 2013). A defining characteristic of SFBT is its use of focused questioning around four main areas:

- Exploration of past successes and exceptions to the problem.
- Identification of a preferred future.
- Identification of existing skills and positive personal qualities.
- Reflection on progress made.

The model of solution-focused therapy proposed by George *et al.,* (2003) covers two sessions, with the flexibility to repeat the topics outlined for the second session should the client feel the need to continue the work (for reference, an outline of the model is presented on p.64-67).

Special issues in working with young people

SFBT is especially suited to work with young people due to its relatively brief delivery model, and adoption of strengths based principles that focus on identifying positive behaviours (Bannink, 2007). It can also provide additional benefits by fostering young people's self-efficacy and self-esteem (Pantaleao & Rambo, 2014). As well as helping clients to achieve personal goals SFBT has also been argued to offer substantial behavioural and psychological benefits (de Shazer *et al*., 2007; Gingerich & Peterson, 2013). However, the evidence base examining the effectiveness of SFBT with children often varies in both quality and outcome. Kim & Franklin (2009) review of the evidence from 1988 to 2007 found only 7 studies of sufficient quality that allowed effect sizes to be derived, and of these the results showed mixed outcomes. They concluded that SFBT *can* reduce children and young people's feelings of negativity, help with conduct problems and improve academic outcomes, but that it was not effective in reducing truancy or in improving students' self-esteem (note that this latter point contrasts with the findings of Pantaleao & Rambo, 2014). Interestingly, Corcoran (2006) found that SFBT produced equivalent outcomes for behaviour change as CBT, and that clients were more likely to complete the therapeutic episode.

The most rigorous, comprehensive, contemporary, and independent review of literature on the effectiveness of SFBT with children (0-18 years) was produced by Bond et al. (2013). This work commissioned by the Department for Education (2011) and was able to include an additional 12 recently published studies not otherwise included in Kim & Franklin's (2009) analysis; it also broadened the range of studies to include non-school based settings. As well as forming judgements about the effectiveness of the SFBT as a therapeutic approach, Bond et al. (2013) focused on the types of issues for which SFBT was most effective. In a total of 38 studies analysed, 32 of the studies presented positive outcomes, the remainder showing either neutral (4) or negative (2) outcomes. SFBT was most effective in helping children with mild, externalising behaviours (e.g. aggression, oppositional or anti-social behaviour) and for girls, and to a lesser extent to boys, with problematic internalising behaviours (e.g. anxiety, low self-esteem and depression). The evidence was less conclusive for children with both types of problem behaviour, and the authors of such studies (i.e. Seagram, 1997; Wilmshurst, 2002; Franklin et al., 2008) note that in some cases SFBT provided no better outcomes than control groups. Overall Bond et al. (2013) were able to conclude that SFBT was most effective as an early intervention for children with mild-to-moderate problems. Currently there is little evidence to demonstrate consistent effect for children with complex needs, although studies outside Bond et al. (2013) selection criteria have recently demonstrated the efficacy of SFBT with children and adolescents from foster-care placements (e.g. Koob & Love, 2010; Cepukiene & Pakrosnis, 2011).

The lack of clarity around the efficacy of SFBT highlights the methodological challenges that therapeutic practitioners face. Often research is based upon case studies written by practitioners, thereby constraining the type of research available,

e.g. participant samples constrained by service requirements, compromised objectivity on the part of the author, the omission of control groups, and the ethical feasibility of using prescribed outcome measures. Arguably, what is needed is greater collaboration between researchers and practitioners is needed, to develop reliable research designs. There also needs to be greater fidelity to a recognisable SFBT approach adopted by practitioners claiming to use it. This might include training requirements, supervision requirements, and an agreed number or range of sessions necessary to affect change, before any firm conclusions can be reached. In response to this, this study includes a comprehensive description of the core elements of the model adopted and attempts have been made to adopt agreed outcome measures proposed by the Child Outcome Research Consortium (CORC, 2014).

The application of SFBT to young people with BESD addresses an imbalance of discourse regarding the development of children and young people. Traditionally professionals working with children are influenced by psychiatric and statistical models of development that render young people who deviate from the norm as inherently problematic (Hill, 2013). Young people identified as deviant are often assessed, diagnosed and receive treatment from professionals. Rarely in this process is the voice of the child represented, and the underlying assumptions ultimately pathologise those they are meant to help (Milner & Bateman, 2011). Whilst acknowledging that in some instances the use of diagnostic processes may be appropriate to ensure that young people have equal access to effective treatment, SFBT offers a systematic way of working with children and young people that recognises them as active contributors to their families, communities and schools, thereby respecting them in their own right (Milner & Bateman, 2011). For

adolescents it is especially important to deliver therapy in a way that considers their views, and essentially regards them in the same way we do adults. This means delivering therapeutic interventions that are comprehensible to young people: SFBT's *Scaling Questions* and *The Miracle Question* are examples of ways in which SFBT is well suited to this purpose (Pantaleao & Rambo, 2014). An overview of the basic features of SFBT are presented in Appendix A.

Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to explore the effectiveness of three sessions of SFBT delivered in school with a young person with BESD as outlined by George et al. (2003). Although this case study reports on a young person with BESD, the relevance of this diagnosis is suspended as there was no intention to correct or 'treat' this condition.

Participant

This case study involved an individual given the pseudonym 'Dean'. At the time of therapy Dean was a 12-year-old, White British, male presenting with impulsivity and anger management problems present for at least five years. Dean received school based SFBT as part of an ongoing package of care negotiated between his family, school and Educational Psychology Service (EPS). The EPS held file records that showed a history of "intimidating and obstinate behaviour with his teachers". Hypotheses regarding Dean's needs related to self-esteem, social anxiety, and elevated need for positive regard. His associated behaviours put him at risk of

permanent school exclusion. Dean requested that I meet with him regularly to help him to “get on better with others.”

Case formulation

Consultation enabled key people in Dean’s life to come together and discuss his situation using the Constructionist Model of Informed and Reasoned Action (COMOIRA) (Gameson *et al.,* 2003; 2005) framework. The people involved included Dean’s mother, aunt, the school AENCo, myself as Trainee EP, his form tutor, and Dean’s Head of Year. Dean’s own views were represented predominantly by his mother, but also informed from discussions that professionals had held with him. From our COMOIRA discussions it was agreed that Dean was academically able, articulate, conscientious, and reflective; most importantly he was motivated to change and had asked for help to do so.

Previous attempts to understand Dean’s problems had perhaps pathologised his problems: He described himself as having difficulties with: (1) anger management; (2) attention deficit; (3) sleeping; (4) bed wetting; (5) dyslexia; (6) claustrophobia; (7) poor social interaction skills; and (8) social anxiety. Despite these perceived difficulties he remained sanguine, hopeful that therapeutic intervention would be an effective way to manage change. It was thought that further investigative testing and formulation risked further negatively reinforcing Dean’s identity.

SFBT eschews the use of formulation and instead supports the client at a superficial level. Rather than attempting to identify the definitive cause(s) of Dean’s SEBD, SFBT was adopted as part of a more hopeful discourse proposing that “people change when they shift their ways of describing their worlds and their experiences”

(Ratner *et al.,* 2012: p.233). While a search for 'intrinsic causes' to social problems is deeply rooted in Western thinking, such approaches can mystify the role of the therapist, and disempower young people by reinforcing the assumption that expert help is a necessary prerequisite for change. SFBT was also selected because it can be delivered over a relatively brief time-period, operationalises experiential and narrative models of change, and avoids adding credence to the notion that his presenting problems were intrinsic to Dean. SFBTs short-term commitment requirements also allowed Dean's needs to be balanced against the time constraints of the EPS (King & Kellock, 2010).

It was hoped that SFBT would provide Dean with a positive space to reflect upon his goals, circumstances, and reinforce in him a sense of personal agency over his actions and life choices. It presented Dean with an opportunity to explore his own voice and work on goals that he felt to be most pressing and achievable. The purpose of using SFBT over other types of therapy was decided on the basis of the Educational Psychology Service culture to focus primarily on social-constructionist and person centred approaches. Dean had already demonstrated his self-reflective skills during the case formulation, and so the reliance of the approach on language was not considered problematic.

There is tentative evidence to support the effectiveness of SFBT for children and young people with mild externalised problem behaviours (Kim & Franklin, 2009; Bond et al., 2013). Concoran (2006); Kim & Franklin (2009) found the outcomes of SFBT to be comparable to other popular therapeutic approaches such as CBT and psychotherapy. At the same time SFBT offers superior engagement and retention, perhaps due to its relatively brief episode of intervention (Bannink, 2007). This said, systematic reviews of SFBT literature commonly cite small sample sizes, variability

of procedure, and lack of control group to harm the validity of such claims to SFBTs efficacy. This means that the weight of evidence allows for only tentative claims to effectiveness be made at best (Kim & Franklin, 2009; Bond et al., 2013).

As with many case studies, this episode of SFBT was planned alongside a broader package of support organised in school to accommodate Dean's needs. Although SFBT is rarely integrated into other interventions due to its formulaic approach, Ratner *et al.* (2012) argues that the theoretical underpinnings of SFBT are just as useful as the specific techniques. This means that SFBT is likely to work well as part of a package of support that adopts social constructionist foundations.

Ethics

Dean gave informed consent to participate in this study. The extent and limits of confidentiality were discussed with reference to the British Educational Research Association Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA: 10, 2011) and British Psychological Society Code of Ethics (BPS: 1.3, 2009). Parental consent was obtained and Dean's mother and I discussed the potential conflict of interests created, should Dean share sensitive concerns that he wished to remain confidential. Any part of our discussion that Dean was uncomfortable with sharing with potential audiences of this study were omitted from the study.

A 'Pupil Consent Form' presented in Appendix B was used to provide an opportunity to clarify the extent of Dean's agreement to participate in this case study. It is written in a child centred way as recommended by BERA (Paragraph 11, 2011). This form also provided an opportunity to discuss a range of participant rights including: Openness to disclosure (BERA: 14); right to withdraw (BERA: 15; BPS: 1.4); and

reassurances to act in Dean's best interests with regard to the research aims and safeguarding procedures (BERA: 16; 29). Aside from confidentially issues there were no identified risks to Dean for agreeing to allow his story to be shard as a case study (BPS: 3.3, 2009). A debriefing was given to Dean and his mother once the therapy had concluded (BPS: 3.4, 2009). Privacy was protected through the use of a pseudo-name as was data stored safely and securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998); BERA (Paragraphs 25-28, 2011); BPS (section 1.2, 2009).

Procedure and intervention

This episode of SFBT consisted of three therapeutic sessions delivered once a fortnight over a six-week period following the guidance from the *Solution Focused Brief Therapy: Course Notes* by George *et al.* (2003).

Session one featured the following:

- Establishing rapport and exploring Dean's goals.
- Connecting with the young person:
    - Problem free-talk.
    - Discovering areas of competence.
    - Exploring life before the problem.
    - Listening with a constructive ear.
- Identifying personal resources, assets, strengths.
- Preferred future questions that focus on solutions rather than causes.
- The miracle question, asking the young person to imagine life without the problem.
- Exploring exceptions to the problem.

- Value scaling to evaluate progress.
- Offering constructive feedback and complements.

Dean responded well to this session and was able to identify a number of useful changes that he had already made before our first session. During session one he set himself three interrelated personal goals. These were: ‘To behave’, ‘to talk’ and ‘to respond’ to others in ways that help him to get on with them. We agreed that these could be summarised as ‘to get on better with others’.

Session two focused on Dean’s progress, in particular:

(a) What had been better since the first session?

(b) What Dean had done?

(c) How he did it?

(d) What others saw him do?

(e) What he had learnt?

(f) What else could be done?

Session three usually reiterates session two unless the young person is not able to identify progression. In this instance Dean reported that things had not improved. His feelings regarding his progress were acknowledged before exploring:

- His best hopes for the session.
- What things were still okay despite such a difficult period?
- What he has been doing to prevent things from getting worse?
- How he had managed to cope with difficulties during this time?
- Whether he had dealt with these difficulties before?
- What might be the first signs that he was back on track?
- How confident he felt about getting back on track?

- What prevented him from giving up even though things were so bad?

Measures

Measures were taken before the episode of therapy commenced (baseline), at the end of each session, and three months after the final session (endpoint). The measurement instruments used were recommended by the Child Outcome Research Consortium (CORC, 2014), in particular the *Children and Young People's IAPT Tracking Outcomes: Resource Pack 1.3.1* (NHS, 2012).

The CORC aim to develop routine evaluations of therapeutic outcomes that can then be compared across a range of services to promote good practice, and allow the effectiveness of different therapeutic services to be compared (CORC, 2014). The CORS (Appendix C) was chosen because of its child friendly presentation style and its neutrality to intrinsic problem formulation. It was therefore considered compatible with the constructionist philosophical underpinnings of SFBT (Ratner *et al.,* 2012). A second instrument: The Goal Progress Chart (GPC, see Appendix D) was selected because of its similarities with SFBTs scaling questions that enable the young person to measure progress towards their preferred future. Finally, the *Child Session Rating Scale (CSRS)* (Appendix E) was used to evaluate the quality of each therapeutic session and identify issues that may have arisen as a consequence of my delivery.

Outcomes

Table 1: Baseline to endpoint ratings for the CORS and GPC

CORS Measures[1]	Baseline	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Endpoint
Me	9	9	10	9	9
Family	10	10	6	8	10
School	8	8	10	8	8
Everything	6	6	8	10	8
GPC Measure	1	3	5	5[2]	8

[1]All measures are scored from 0 to 10 with higher scores being rated better.

Chart 1: Ratings taken from baseline to endpoint for the CORS and GPC

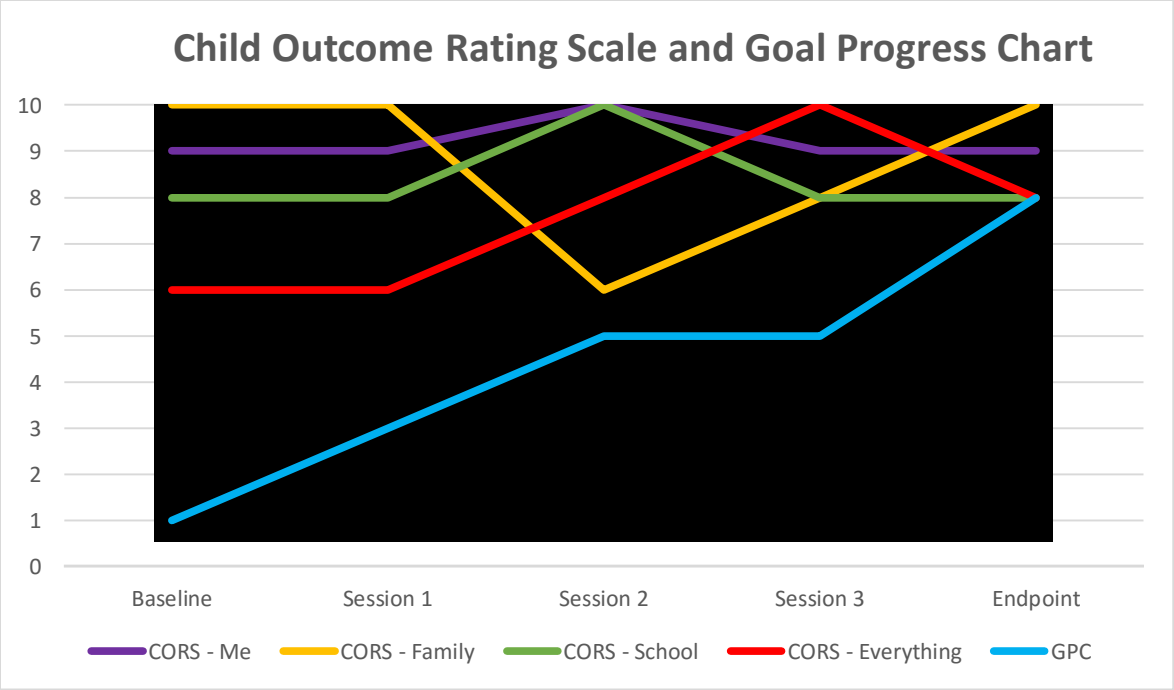


Table 1 and Chart 1 show the CORS and GPC ratings taken at baseline, after each session of SFBT, and at the endpoint. Overall there was no change in CORS sub-measures of 'Me', 'School' or 'Family'. There was a temporary drop in Dean's ratings for how things were in his 'Family' in session 2. Dean's rating of 'Everything' initially increased from 6 to 10, before settling at 8 by the endpoint three months later.

Dean's GPC showed gradual improvements in GPC ratings from a baseline of 1 to 8 at endpoint. Dean chose to change the focus of his overall goal from 'getting on better with others' to 'winning back lost friendships' during the third session, accounting for the lack of progress felt at this point.

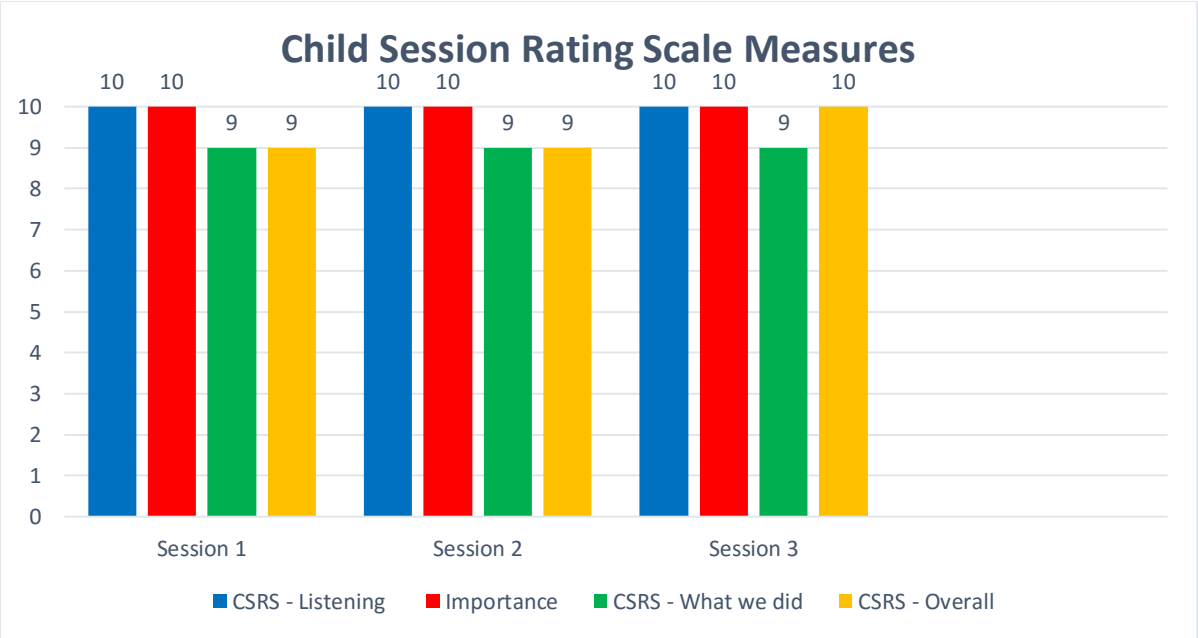
Overall these scores show small, positive results in terms of impact on Dean's quality of life represented by his CORS score for 'everything'. There were also clear, sustained improvements in his evaluation of goal progress represented by his GPC scores.

Table 2: Child Session Rating Scale (CSRS) ratings

CSRS Measures[1]	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Listening	10	10	10
Importance	10	10	10
What we did	9	9	9
Overall	9	9	10

[1]All measures were sourced and adapted from CORC (2014) and are scored from 0 to 10 with higher scores being rated as better.

Chart 2: CSRS ratings of the quality of each therapeutic session. Measures taken at the end of each SFBT session



The Chart 2 shows consistently high ratings in 'feeling listened to', and 'importance of the therapeutic sessions', with slightly lower scores in evaluations of 'what was done', and 'the value of the therapeutic session overall'. These scores suggest that Dean valued our meetings, and that they were important to him.

Observations

In each SFBT session Dean willingly engaged with the questions used and was able to elicit a number of useful personal strengths.

Dean told me that prior to beginning the first SFBT session he had thought about the changes he wanted to make in his life. He said that he was already feeling the benefits of change, and looking forward to working with me. After the first session he said he had thought about what he wanted to achieve from this episode of therapy,

and set himself a goal “to get on [better] with others.” Appendices F outlines the therapeutic discussion.

Between the first and second sessions Dean had experienced a close family bereavement. Despite these events Dean was very enthusiastic about attending therapy, and was eager to tell me about his reflections of our first session. He was determined to change his behaviour to help those he loved (see Appendix G). He could see how his decision to change would affect his peer relationships in school, although some bridging was necessary to help Dean to transcend these changes to his interactions with his teachers.

The third and subsequent sessions typically reflect the structure of the second, however, Dean was not able to report any further improvements as a result of his change efforts (see Appendix H). George *et al.* (2003: pg. 16) provide guidance on supporting young people who report that things were the same, or worse than before, but it transpired that Dean wanted to shift the emphasis of his goal to “get on better with others”. Instead of “being less aggressive with others” he wanted to “win back lost friends.” Because of this change of emphasis, it was appropriate to revisit some of the questions asked in the first session (George *et al.,* 2003).

Discussion

Evaluating the impact of SFBT

The instruments used in this case study show a small long-term improvement in CORS ratings of ‘Everything’ from baseline to endpoint. The GPC measures also improved significantly from baseline and endpoint. Although the improvement in CORS ratings showed small improvements in quality of life overall, these ratings

may have been offset by a close family bereavement in Dean's family before the second session of SFBT. Under the circumstances it is perhaps surprising that his CORS ratings generally remained stable, and even improved in non-family sub-measures over the short-term. During his bereavement Dean reported an improvement in his evaluations of how he was feeling about himself, and how things were going in school. These returned to their baseline levels by the endpoint. These changes could be interpreted as a short term improvement in Dean's quality of life as defined by Næss (2001, p.1994) i.e. "the extent the person's conscious cognitive and affective experiences are positive…", if we consider that Dean's endpoint data represents an improvement in GPC, and consider that adverse external events had negatively affected his ratings of family life.

My observations and the CSRS data suggest that the therapeutic sessions were well received by Dean, who attended each session as planned and worked cooperatively throughout. He consistently rated the SFBT sessions as important to him, and when I spoke to him about the impact of the therapy at the endpoint, he was positive, happier, was making more of an effort in his social life, and life was generally better (See Appendix I).

Dean consistently rated the quality of the session delivery very highly. Dean clearly felt listened to, and that our meetings were important to him, but his lower ratings for session content suggests that they were not as useful as he had hoped. This could be because the goals he had set for himself did not address the difficulties he was experiencing with his teachers. He seemed to accept this part of his life was an inevitability and consequently his response to the Miracle Question richly described his home life and peer relationships, but was less detailed when applied to his relationships with his teachers. This could have been explored further to refocus

Dean's change efforts from home to school. Dean's acceptance of his difficulties in school were, perhaps, a reflection of having received targeted EPS and school support in school for BESD over the previous five years.

Limitations relating to outcome instruments

Both the CORS and CSRS are reported to have strong concurrent validity with lengthier, more established measures of treatment outcomes (Low & Miller, 2012). A significant evidence base shows that they are reliable and valid measures, with the advantage of being quick and easily administrable (Low & Miller, 2012). When applied to SFBT these instruments can be restricted by the brevity of the therapeutic episode. This means that the data is likely to be sensitive major life events in the young person's life, which may be outside the initial focus of the therapeutic work. In Dean's case bereavement profoundly affected him and others in his immediate family. It is entirely understandable that this would in turn affect Dean's CORS rating "How are things in your family?", and yet Dean's CORS rating for this session could be contrasted with the positive enthusiasm he shared with me verbally. Despite his tragic circumstances he had made some positive changes at home, and these had been recognised by others. In conjunction with SFBT the tragedy added gravity to his circumstances and reinforced the need for Dean to change. The combination of events seemed to create a moment, in which Dean developed a newfound determination to reflect on, and modify his interactions with family members. The positive outcomes that Dean had verbally reported to me were unrepresented by the low CORS rating during this period.

Another way the CORS measure did not seem to capture the impact that the episode of SFBT seemed to have on Dean is where he had been working on goals relating to his peer relationships. His response to the question “How are you doing in school?” was not necessarily likely to invoke his peer relationships to and from school.

In defence of the CORS instrument, it was designed to be quick and simple to administer, whilst being general enough to capture the important aspects of quality of life for the majority of young people. CORS succeeded in this aim, taking very little time to complete.

The possibility of misinterpretation of the sub-measures alongside the influence of un-represented external factors therefore raises doubt over the validity of CORS alone as an evaluative tool for measuring the effectiveness of SFBT with young people.

It is possible that these issues could be partially explained by the CORS sub-measures for 6-12 year olds being presented differently than for people aged 13 years and over. This difference may make evaluative comparisons across age groups less reliable. The Outcome Rating Scales designed for ages 13 years and over are more explicit about what these scales are measuring (See Appendix J), whereas the CORS for 6-12 year olds sacrifice clarity for reading ease (See Appendix C). While Dean was 12 years old, he may have benefitted from this additional clarification, and this could have been simply addressed by discussing his ratings with him after he had evaluated his progress, and re-scoring if necessary to reflect the intended sub-measure; although this may bias the outcomes towards the therapist’s own observations.

The GPC addresses some of the above issues by assessing progress against the young person's own hopes of what can be achieved from therapy. Goals are personalised and explicit from the outset enabling a more precise and valid measure of progress. Because of this, the instrument could be considered to measure the effectiveness of SFBT to acknowledge and respond to the young person's voice. In practical terms it demonstrates the effectiveness of SFBT to empower and support the young person to achieve personally meaningful goals. The GPC can also offer clarity of exit criteria, and match the aims of SFBT to be a pragmatic and goal or solution orientated method of helping.

A limitation of relying exclusively on the young person's feedback as a measure of success are that other stakeholders may have different interpretations of progress, and may disagree with the young person's judgement regarding the most pressing issues. There is little doubt about the reliability and feasibility of these measures (Low & Miller, 2012), but therapists should consider *where* the primary source of distress is, and request rating of CORS from the persons most affected by the problem issues. Low & Miller (2012) also recommends that a parent / carer also rate the young person's progress. Follow up discussions with home and school three months post-therapy suggested that although home life had improved since attending the SFBT sessions, yet the more significant problems Dean was having in school remained. This potential problem is more likely to be an issue for SFBT practitioners who eschew more formal formulation processes in favour of person-centred goal setting. By adding weight to the voice of the child, it diminishes the voice of the school, family and therapist who may wish to define the desired change. This problem may be addressed by first agreeing what the objective of therapy ought to be, with the young person (if of sufficient age), from the outset.

EPs are often tasked with gathering a clear and complete understanding of a young person's problem situation in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Initial discussions clarify avenues of investigation, the outcomes of which reflexively lead to agreed actions. Such methods may be applicable to SFBT goal setting in a way that acknowledges its social constructionist principles.

Collaborative approaches to SFBT

In schools, stakeholders may be called to develop an agreed consensus regarding the overall objective of SFBT *with* the young person. This may be especially important for occasions when the young person is referred to therapy by others. Ratner *et al.* (2012, p.45) endorses these principles, suggesting that stakeholders may be actively involved in the therapeutic process at the young person's discretion, and may even stand in as substitutes for the young person. Whilst the overall aims of therapy can be negotiated with others, the specific goals set could remain between the young person and therapist, thus ensuring they remain confidential, relevant and personally meaningful.

For school based SFBT to be reliably evaluated in line with CORC (2014) guidelines it will also be important to be consistent about the way in which wider stakeholders engage with objective setting whilst also being flexible enough to account for a variety of different contexts. Low & Miller (2012) recommends using CORS measures with the young person in conjunction with ratings provided by other identified stakeholders such as an identified teacher and parent. If used consistently in this way, Low & Miller (2012) argues that the CORS assessments can be triangulated, and therefore provide more robust measures of impact. CORS used in

this way can perhaps provide a SFBT friendly alternative to the SDQ currently used by a majority of school based counsellors (Cooper, 2013).

The efforts of stakeholders to reach a consensus of suitable objective of SFBT presents an opportunity for them to become actively involved in the process of noticing change, and open up the possibilities for the young person to receive a greater range of feedback than can be achieved between client and therapist alone. The provision of qualitative feedback for young people receiving SFBT is particularly helpful in making them aware of the impact of their efforts to change, and allow them to modify their future behaviours accordingly (Kvarme *et al.,* 2013). Increasing the number of key people who are recognising a young person's change efforts is likely to encourage them to do more. It may also have beneficial effects for the observers by encouraging them to be more open minded to change, and recognise the young person's change efforts. Importantly, it protects against the risk that the therapist and young person may develop a self-deluding feedback loop of positivity (Wheeler, 2014).

The development of more collaborative approaches to therapeutic change can help to bridge learning from within the therapeutic relationship to external contexts. By contracting an agreement for stakeholders to provide positive feedback to the young person, there is a greater emphasis on the transference of SFBT outcomes to wider contexts and relationships. These principles are consistent with Feuerstein *et al.* (2006) assertion that for changes in approaches to problems to be internalised, they must be intentional, intrinsically meaningful, and generalised to other events, applications and circumstances.

Should it become standard practice to utilise the CORS in this way it may be possible to meet the CORC aims to draw comparisons with other SFBT approaches used with young people, providing practitioners maintain fidelity to their espoused therapeutic method. This is important because the sporadic nature of EP work make it unlikely that conditions suitable for a true experimental design are achievable, or even whether it would be ethically sound to do so. Through collation of a range of similar case studies such as this, contextual depth and practical reflection about the effectiveness of SFBT with young people, and the usefulness of evaluative instruments. Such proposals conform to Cooper's (2013) recommendation that school based counsellors focus their attention on increasing the extent to which practice is evidence-informed, and developing fidelity to method, including the standard use of outcome monitoring.

In comparison with other forms of therapeutic intervention SFBT is practical, respectful and an ethically agreeable. This is perhaps because SFBT focuses on the simplest methods that work and does not rely upon potentially misleading formulations, pathology, or developmental theories in order to be effective in supporting young people.

As a single case this study is unable to provide conclusive evidence regarding the effectiveness of SFBT. Instead interested readers are directed to wider comparative research that suggest that there comparable equal efficacy between therapies once individual circumstances are taken into account (de Shazer, 1985; Rhodes, 1993); to the literature reviews carried out by Kim & Franklin (2009) and Bond et al. (2013); and evidence indicating that solution-focused conversations have improved effectiveness in helping students to self-regulate than confrontational approaches, (Schlundt-Bodien & Visser, 2013), although it should be noted that this latter study is

only loosely based on SFBT principles, and like many of its kind, uses a small sample sizes and adult population.

Probably the most uncontended rationale for using SFBT over therapeutic methods, when working with school aged pupils, is its brevity. This is of vital importance to EPs and psychotherapists interested in maximising the number of pupils who can be supported. It *can* stimulate clients to positive action (Bannink, 2007), and unlike problem focused alternatives to therapy SFBT does not require an extensive diagnosis before treatment can begin. This means treatment can be low risk, positive, shorter, sufficiently effective, and therefore cost-effective (Bannink, 2007).

EPs who wish to use approaches that operates harmoniously with social constructionist principles e.g. Wagner's (2008) consultation framework and COMOIRA (Gameson *et al.,* 2003, 2005), may regard SFBT a valid and desirable approach to therapeutic support. There remains a need to agree with stakeholders the underlying purpose of the therapeutic work, and to develop a consensus among regarding its intended outcomes.

A further exploration of ways in which SFBT can be combined with collaborative goal setting processes may offer a route to providing children and young people with a viable therapeutic alternative to systematic hypothesis testing and extended assessment that children too often experience (Rhodes, 1993).

Conclusion

First and foremost, the purpose of this project was to provide Dean with a non-harmful form of therapeutic support, to help him to find practical solutions for difficulties he experienced at home and in school. These opportunities also gave him

an opportunity to explore ways of coping and helped him to plan future changes. In this regard SFBT could be considered to have been a success, as it supported him to achieve his goals.

SFBT may well be a robust method of supporting young people with BESD despite events that may be happening externally, depending on how success is measured. In this instance the GPC provided a meaningful and sensitive measure of change for Dean, despite being used over relatively short-lived episode of SFBT.

The two session model of SFBT seemed to be an effective way of supporting Dean to make progress against his goals, but the endpoint data success that these goals need to be triangulated with other key stakeholders. This means that there needs to be a greater focus on mutually agreed areas of difficulty, if SFBT is to have an impact on the issues that are likely to affect quality of life in the long term.

Although the outcomes were mixed in the long term, they are consistent with Milner & Bateman's (2011) findings that SFBT *can* be an effective therapeutic approach for young people with BESD in schools in the short term. The outcomes also suggest that future research should consider ways in which SFBT can provide more prevalent and enduring change for young people with BESD. This is especially true for children with severe or complex needs where there remains uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of SFBT (Bond et al., 2013).

Once evaluations of SFBT can be standardised such that researchers are making use of valid and reliable measures, it would theoretically be possible to make comparisons between these populations. Such approaches are likely to require the collaboration of practitioners and researchers, if they are to provide more conclusive

evidence regarding the efficacy of this two session model, or that of any other (Milner & Bateman, 2011; Ratner *et al*., 2012; Bond et al., 2013).

Recommendations

- School-based counsellors may gain more purposeful progress for young people with SEBD when the objectives are negotiated in collaboration key stakeholders in their life. It is important to ensure the young person's views are represented fairly in these negotiations.
- CORS outcomes may be more effective when combined with feedback regarding mutually agreed objectives from involved stakeholders.
- Emphasis should be made on the importance actively supporting young people with SEBD to transcend any intentional and personally meaningful progress to wider applications and circumstances, in accordance with stakeholders' expectations.

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Glossary, abbreviations and acronyms

Glossary entries are adapted from the Welsh Government Social Research (Number 23, 2011).

Baseline data: Data from a first meeting between counsellor and client taken either at a separate assessment session or in the first session of therapy. In this case baseline data was taken at the beginning of the first session.

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD): A learning difficulty where children and young people are described as withdrawn, isolated, disruptive, disturbed, hyperactive, lack concentration, have immature social skills and/or present as having challenging behaviours.

Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC): A body that aims to evaluate the impact of therapeutic activities through the routine use of outcome measures in work with children and young people with mental health and emotional well-being difficulties.

Child Outcomes Rating Scale (CORS): A clinical scale that attempts to offer young people a means to give feedback on their therapeutic sessions, and evaluate the effectiveness of their therapy.

Child Session Rating Scale (CSRS): A post-session evaluation questionnaire recommended by the Child Outcome Research Consortium.

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT): A range of techniques and therapies that try to produce change by directly influencing thinking, behaviour or both.

Constructionist Model of Informed and Reasoned Action (COMOIRA): A problem solving framework that employs a series of reflective and reflexive questions to help practitioners to think about complex process issues.

Counselling: See Therapy.

Effectiveness: The extent to which an intervention, when used under ordinary circumstances, brings about a desired effect.

Endpoint data: Data from a last recorded session of therapy, in this case taken three months after the last therapeutic session.

Episode (of therapy): A complete series of sessions of therapy undertaken by a client.

Educational Psychology Service (EPS): A psychological service for children and young people that often is typically coordinated with parents and teachers within schools.

Goal Progress Chart (GPC): A 0-10 scale that attempts to measure the amount of progress a client feels they have made towards a pre-defined objective.

Humanistic: A family of psychological therapies that place particular emphasis on establishing a warm, understanding relationship with clients such that clients can come to uncover, and express, their true thoughts and feelings.

Mean: The mathematic average of a set of scores, calculated by summing the scores and dividing by the number of scores.

Outcome Rating Scale (ONS): A clinical scale that attempts to offer people over the age of 13 years a means to give feedback on their therapeutic sessions, and evaluate the effectiveness of their therapy.

Person-centred: A form of humanistic therapies that puts particular emphasis on allowing the client to take the lead (‘non-directive’), in a relationship that is accepting, empathic and genuine.

Psychodynamic: A family of psychological therapies which aim to help clients develop a greater awareness and understanding of the unconscious forces determining their thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

School Based Counselling (SBC): A form of counselling that is delivered in a school environment.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ): a measure of psychological distress in young people with self-, parent- and teacher-completed versions.

Session (of therapy): A specific meeting with a counsellor, normally of around one hour’s duration. Generally held on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT): Often referred to as simply 'solution focused therapy' or 'brief therapy', is a type of talking therapy based upon social constructionist philosophy.

Therapy: An umbrella term like counselling, that covers a range of talking therapies. It is delivered by a trained practitioner who works with people over a short or long term to help them bring about effective change or enhance their wellbeing.

United Kingdom (UK): The nations of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Appendix A: Overview of Solution Focused Brief Therapy Approach

According to Stobie et al. (2005), in order of popularity, the main features of SFBT are:

1. Goal identification
2. Talk about 'exceptions'
3. Scaling questions
4. Complements
5. Problem-free talk
6. The miracle question
7. Task setting.

The two session framework for SFBT retains the features familiar to SFBT practitioners (George et al., 2003). In this study all the above features were present. An outline of some of the purpose of some of the features is presented:

Scaling Questions

SFBT uses scaling to identify and explore past successes, present skills and preferred futures. They can also be used to meaningfully gauge progress with the young person (Young & Holdorf, 2003). Typically scaling involves asking the client:

"*Rate where you are now from 0-10, where 0 is the worst it could possibly be, and 10 the best you could hope for.*"

Once the situation is ranked the therapist then explores the client's reasoning for their ratings. For example:

"*So what is it that indicates to you that you're at 5 and not at 3?*"

When such questions are worded meaningfully the young person typically places themselves somewhere in the middle of the scale. Discussions then focus on the strategies the young person has employed to manage the problem, without focusing on the problem itself. Once all present strategies have been explored the therapist moves the conversation towards envisioning a preferred future.

The Miracle Question

The Miracle Question enables the young person to identify and articulate their preferred future (Young & Holdorf, 2003). It asks the young person to imagine and describe a future where the problem is absent. Redpath & Harkes (1999) provide a classic example of the miracle question adapted for children and young people:

"*Imagine that tonight, while you are asleep, a miracle happens and all the difficulties in school are solved. Since you are asleep you do not know that this miracle has happened. What will be the first sign, at the start of school tomorrow, that things are different?*" (p.3).

The therapist encourages the young person to enrich these imaginings, and to a focus on how they are behaving differently.

Psychological terminology is notably absent in these techniques, instead is an emphasis on practical, descriptive dialogue, and goal setting.

Identification of existing skills and positive personal qualities

Because the dialogue between the young person and therapist focuses upon past successes, coping, and exceptions to the problem, the conversation tends to be

positive, hopeful and optimistic. Such discussions are likely to help the young person to feel more confident and elicit implied personal strengths and qualities (Young & Holdorf, 2003). These qualities are listened for and fed back to the young person as a complement. Because these complements are grounded in the young person's actions, they are recognisable by them.

Complements are best given after acknowledging the difficulties the young person is facing. This is important to reassure the young person that the therapist has heard their problem (Ratner *et al.* (2012). Without this acknowledgement there is a risk that the complements may be seen as underestimating the gravity of the situation. For example:

"It would be clear for anyone to see that you have a lot of challenges to deal with. Yet you are determined to improve your life for the better. You haven't given up on your goals and you have taken a big step to sort things out at home. Well done!"

Complements validate, appreciate and recognise the young person's past efforts, reinforcing their sense of control over their circumstances (Young & Holdorf, 2003).

Review of progress made

In follow-up sessions, de Shazer (1985) advocates the use of direct questioning to focus the conversation on positive change. This means asking:

"So what has been better since we last met?"

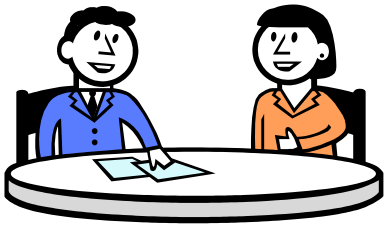
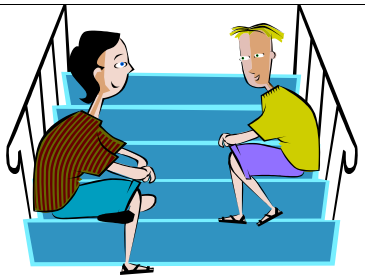
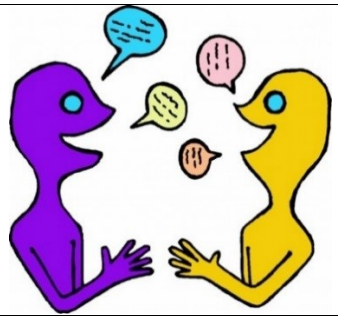
Rather than the more benign:

"So how have things been since we last met?"

This is to engage the young person in a progressive narrative and encourage the young person to be vigilant for signs of progress. The therapist then explores and amplifies the young person's positive actions in a way that is curious, respectful and empowering. This embeds the young person's own strategies and ideas into the change process, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will persist in the long term (Young & Holdorf, 2003).

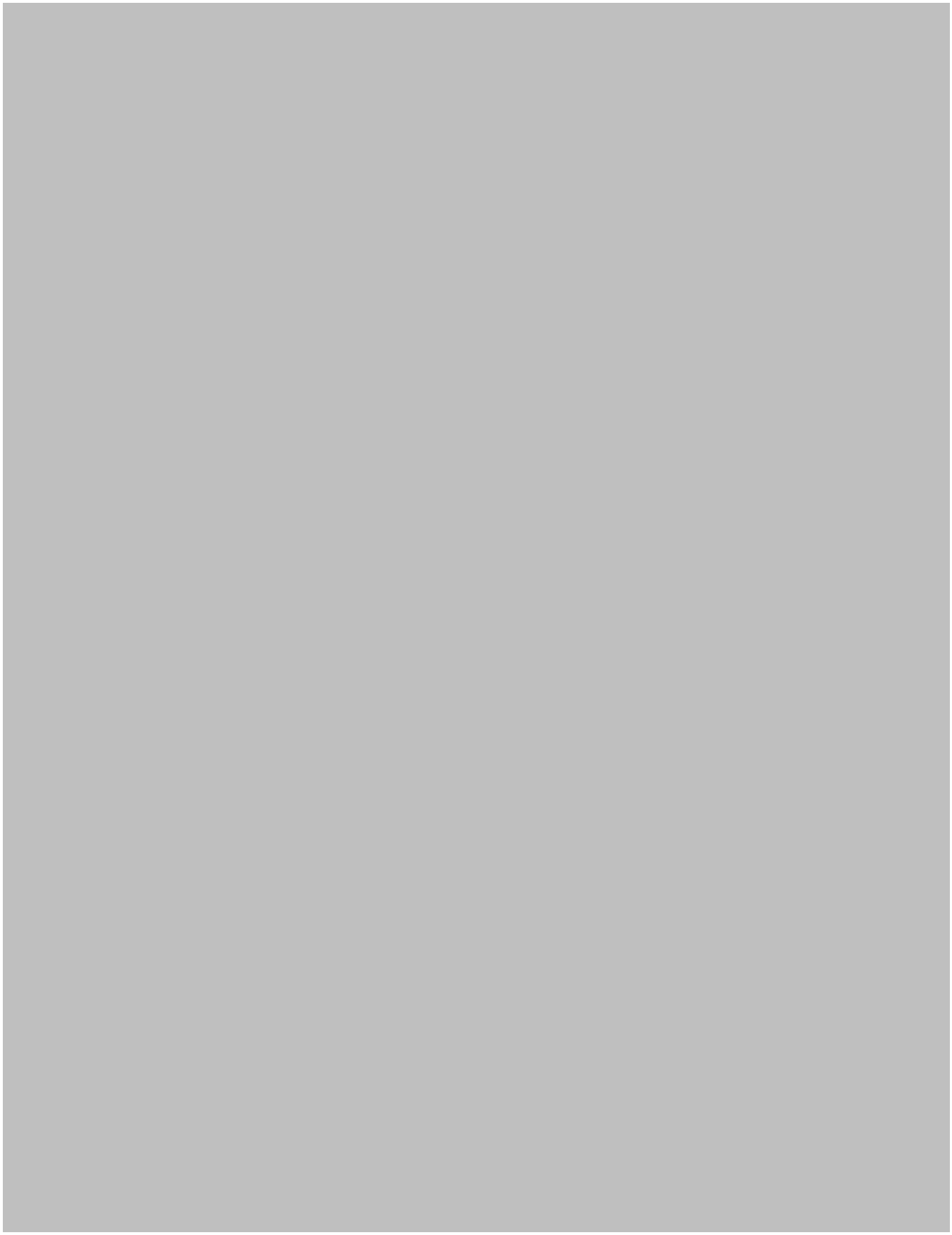
Appendix B: Pupil Consent Form

Please tick if these things are OK ✓

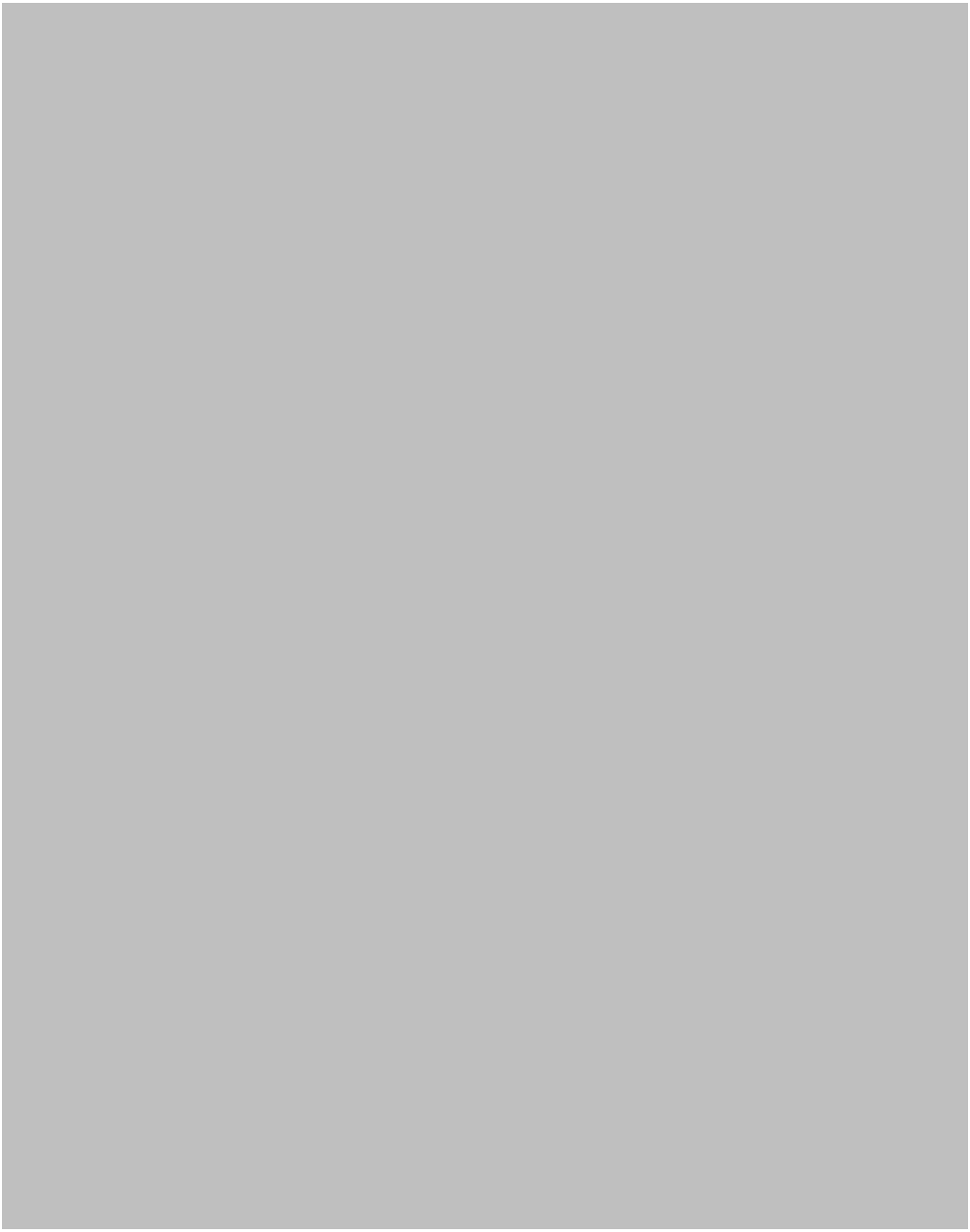
	I know that I am meeting an educational psychologist because my teachers and/or parents/carers want to try and help me in school.	
	I know that we will talk about lots of things - school, home, friends, what I like doing, what I find difficult and what helps me.	
NO	I know I can say “no” to any questions that I don’t want to answer. I know I can say “no” at any time.	
	I know that if I say something that may harm me or others, the educational psychologist will have to tell someone else. This is to make sure nobody gets hurt.	
	I am happy for what I say to be shared with teachers and my parents/carers.	

	I know that what I share might be written into a report which will be shared with teachers and my parents/carers.	
	I know that sometimes there may be things that I can do which may help.	
	I know who I can talk to in school if I want more information.	
	It is OK for my information to be used in a university case study.	
	I understand all of these things and have no more questions.	
Name: Signature: Date:		

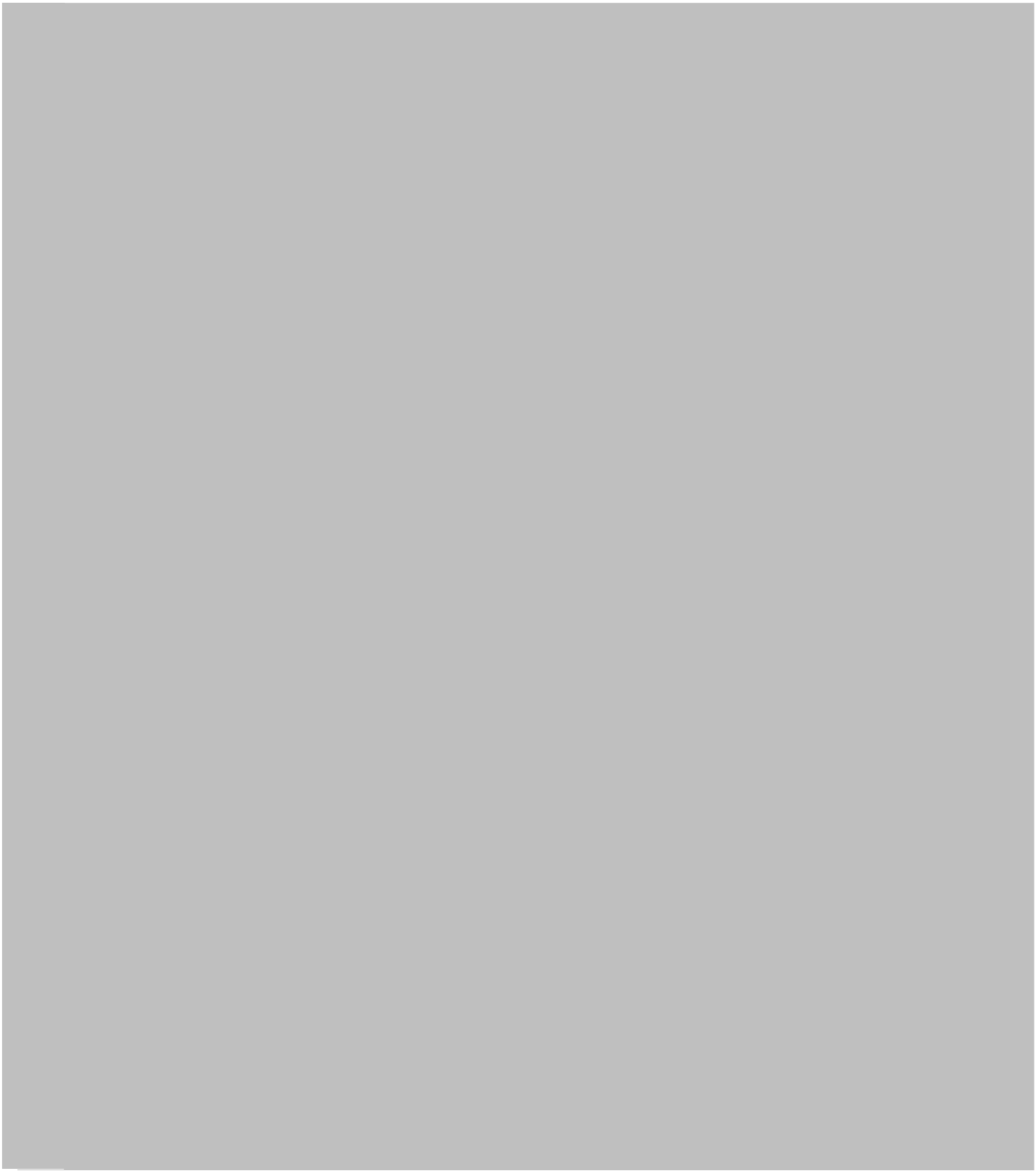
Appendix C: Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS)



Appendix D: Goal Progress Chart



Appendix E: Child Session Rating Scale (CSRS)



Appendix F: Session 1 Script Guide & Responses

These notes are the outcome of my reflections on the therapy session together with any had written notes taken during the session. They are not intended to reflect a verbatim record of our discussion.

Notes: The following script includes the main subject headings used to structure the therapeutic session with Dean in **bold**.

Following this are example questions that can be drawn upon to structure the discussion if needed in *italics*.

Finally, in red ink are my reflections on Dean's responses to some of these questions. These were recorded during and immediately after the session to remind me of the session content throughout therapeutic episode. They were also useful as a method of making qualitative clinical observations regarding the effectiveness of each therapeutic session.

Session 1

1. **Meeting the Person**

Connect with the person about anything other than the problem

"I've got a little about of information about what brings you here today, but I know almost nothing about you. I'd find it useful to hear a little bit about you before going back to what brings you here today. Would that be OK?"

Discovering areas of competence

Talk about areas where the person feels confident to look for transferrable skills.

Dean described himself as very active and enjoys team sports, in particular he enjoys participating in the school rugby team. Dean has shown perseverance in sports, enjoys technology, and uses his laptop regularly.

Pre-treatment change

Dean had noticed that spending long periods of time playing on his X-box was affecting his relationships. He reported becoming moody, cheeky and rude with his mother. Dean had asked his mother to put his X-box into storage. Since making this decision the confrontations Dean used to have about coming to mealtimes and bedtimes have stopped. Dean is pleased with this outcome.

In comparison with the way things had been historically, staff in school have noticed that Dean's behaviour had improved generally for the better. Dean noted that his teachers have all noticed this improvement, and aside from Religious Education lessons, this has been sustained. Dean said he is more likely to "just sit and get on with his work" than when he was first referred to the educational psychology service for support.

Dean said he had made positive changes by moving his seat in class for problematic lessons to avoid contact with 'trouble makers'. He also practiced counting to five before responding to teachers and listening to them when difficulties arise.

2. **Identifying resources**

Listen with a constructive ear

Look for exceptions, but hear their problem.

Listen for Internal resources (skills, strengths, abilities, useful qualities, useful beliefs, capacities, qualities).

Listen for External resources (supportive relationships, personal or professional).

"So what did it take to do that?" "What helped you to achieve that?" "How did you do that?" "How did you get through that time/experience/trauma?" "What did you learn about yourself managing to do that?" "What do you think that might have taught others about you?"

3. **Define a preferred future**

Should be something the client wants, small, concrete observable, significant to the client, realistic, recognised as hard work, beginnings rather than endings.

"What are your best hopes from us working together today?"

Things will be much better for Dean when he is less reactive, has a 'longer fuse' and he is generally calmer and more patient. There have been occasions when this happens in everyday life, particularly when he is not tired.

4. **The miracle question**

A miracle happens / the miracle resolves the problem(s) or realises the goal(s) / the client is asleep so doesn't know / the discovery, step-by-step.

"How will you know that things are improving? How will you know the problem is solved? Let's imagine that tomorrow is a good day for you. How will you know it is going well? What will you / others be doing differently that will tell you?"

Dean responded to this questions by describing events from the moment he woke up. There would be no arguments, I'd feel better in myself, less tight chested and more energetic.

I'd tell my mum about feeling better today. Dean then explained that "sometimes I feel tense, but I still stay positive, but if a miracle had happened then there would be no tightness."

"On the way to school I usually stop and throw stones through a fence with my friends, but I wouldn't this time and my friends would know something was different".

Dean explained how sometimes he can come in to school in a bad mood, and this can last throughout the day. At other times an event, such as doing well in rugby, can change his mood for the better.

When asked how he copes on the bad days Dean responded by saying that he makes an effort to earn the trust of others, to be responsible and respected.

Dean has tried to change his morning routines so that he wakes up well, even though he often has a poor night's sleep. He listens to calming music to bring himself out of sleep.

To prevent things from getting worse he often tries to stay away from arguments, and make an effort to be particularly nice when others say things provoke him into conflict. Sometimes conflict does lead to a fight, so he says with his friends how are calming and will stick up for him. Dean listens to Child M advice, and this has been particularly helpful in de-escalating conflict.

Shift from negative to positive

"When you are not X, what will you be doing instead?" "When you resist the urge to X, what will you be doing then?"

Move from the general to the specific

Move on from descriptions of feelings to describing the change in terms of what they will be doing to make the change more practical and visible.

"How will you know you are happier?" "What will you be doing that will tell others that your confidence is returning?" "Who will be the first person to realise that you are beginning to move forward in your life?"

Describe the preferred future in detail

"What will be the first thing you notice when you wake up?" "Who, other than you will be the first person to notice?" "What will s/he see that is different?" "Who else will notice? What will s/he see?" "What else? What difference will that make?"

Distinguish means from ends

Agree a goal, then negotiate of the means to achieve it.

Dean wanted to behave, talk and respond in ways that help him to 'get on' with others. Dean recognised that this was a skill like karate. He added that "you need to practice it, and it isn't something that just happens overnight after a session like today."

5. **What is already working?**

Pre-meeting change

"So what changes have you noticed since you agreed to meet with me?"

Exceptions

"Tell me about times when you are not X / less X?" "Tell be about how you cope despite X?" "I guess there are times when you resist the urge to X – how do you do that?"

Explore:

- Getting by/coping
- Stopping things getting worse
- Signs of the preferred future beginning to happen.

6. **Using Scales to Evaluate Progress**



"Imagine a scale from 0 to 10 with 10 representing the way that you want things to be when the problem is resolved and 0 being the absolute opposite."

Movement and Change

"Where do you see things right now on the scale?"

Dean rated his current position with regard to the issue as a 7 out of 10, particularly in light of the progress he has made over the last few weeks. If he were to score an 8 out of 10, then he would be "less chopsy" and would respond to requests to do things by simply saying "yes", rather than "Ugh, yes". Dean was certain that if he were to make this small change that "others would 100% definitely notice." Another difference he thought might represent an 8 would be for him to be more trustworthy and reliable during rugby sessions. He explained that had only been a rugby captain once in 5 years of training and that his coach made this decision on the basis of behaviour and attitude to training in the previous session. Dean did not think this would be something that could be achieved in the next week and asked to discuss it next week. I asked what other differences might he notices if things were moved on from a 7 to an 8 and Dean thought that this might represent changes in his class work. He suggested that he might shout out less often, and he would follow the instructions from his teacher more often. Again, Dean did not want to discuss these change in more detail until next week.

Resources

"What has helped you to get from 0 to where you are now? What is stopping things from getting any worse?"

Dean identified me as his first resource to support him in moving on from a 7 to an 8. Dean said he hoped that our meetings would provide an opportunity to introduce and reflect on his change efforts.

Dean recognises that his mum has been very helpful in modelling how he should respond to in particular social dilemmas.

Dean said his rugby coaches, particularly 'P', may be able to support him to focus on being trustworthy and responsible. I suggested we begin by about asking P what he thought would be a good way to earn his trust, perhaps so that Dean could understand what the expectations were. In the past P has offered to work with Dean 1:1 coaching and Dean felt able to discuss this kind of personal change with him.

What's right?

"What is it that tells you that things are at the point on the scale and not at 0?" "What will tell you that you have moved one point up on the scale?" "Who will you know when you are at 10?" "What point will be 'good enough' for you and how will you know that you're there?"

I asked Dean what was going well over the last few weeks. He responded by saying that he has learnt that sometimes he feels down, particularly about exams, but if he revises he can do it. Consequently, Dean now rushes less through the tests and no longer tries to be the first person to leave the hall. As a consequence, he is proud of his efforts and has achieved a high score in his SATS. Dean summed up the following strategy as contributing to his success: "Practice, revise and take time during the test."

Other scales

There can be multiple scales, an overall scale or specific scales relating to dimensions of one goal. Consider using alternate scales as appropriate:

- confidence about reaching goals
- desire to change (motivation)
- commitment
- coping
- safety.

7. Constructive Feedback

Validate and acknowledge the client's difficulties without being trivial.

Feedback the skills, strengths, abilities and useful qualities and capabilities that have emerged during the session.

Pay attention to pre-treatment change towards the preferred future, to exceptions and to coping. What is the client doing that is useful to him/her?

- Offer as little new material as possible

- Ensure the predicament has been acknowledged
- Less is more
- Check the client is in agreement with the feedback being offered

Consider a co-constructed suggestion. Ask the client to notice, watch for signs that they may be moving towards their goal, look for exceptions.

Reflecting on our conversation I framed some positive feedback for Dean relating to his perseverance with sports and study; his ability to reflect on his relationships with others, and make small real, sustained changes in his lifestyle for the better.

Appendix G: Session 2 Script Guide & Responses

These notes are the outcome of my reflections on the therapy session together with any had written notes taken during the session. They are not intended to reflect a verbatim record of our discussion.

Notes: The following script includes the main subject headings used to structure the therapeutic session with Dean in **bold**.

Following this are example questions that can be drawn upon to structure the discussion if needed in *italics*.

Finally, in red ink are my reflections on Dean's responses to some of these questions. These were recorded during and immediately after the session to remind me of the session content throughout therapeutic episode. They were also useful as a method of making qualitative clinical observations regarding the effectiveness of each therapeutic session.

Session 2

At the beginning of the session Dean shared that there has been a death of a close family member. He apologised for arriving late and thought we were meeting on Tuesday (it *was* Tuesday).

I was anxious that my plans for today would be derailed and that I was unprepared to offer support for this unexpected and tragic news. I asked if he still wanted to talk about the goals we discussed last week, or whether he would prefer us to spend our time talking more generally about how he was hoping and how things were at home. He emphatically said he wanted to talk about his goals.

"So how are things?" I tentatively began with a neutral opener, instead of my planned "*What's been better?"*

Dean replied "things are much better, I thought about it the day after [our session]. We had heard the bad news and everyone was sad. Then I said to myself, this has to stop now, I need to change. I want everyone to be happy, not telling me off or putting me in detention.

Since then I have made a real effort to improve my attitude, not to be chopsy or talk back, and I haven't."

So how did you do that?

"I have already learnt before to count to 5 before answering people, and this means I have time to think about what I want to say, rather than just saying something and then regretting it."

"My actions have also improved. Yesterday my friend broke both his knees and was really hurt, someone came over and was laughing at him. I calmly controlled my feelings rather than letting my feeling control me. Before it was like something would take over me, but now I wait and then respond."

Complementing

I gave a positive and complementary messages *"I'm really impressed that you have been able to make these changes in such a short time."*

Constructive History

What made you want to make this change?

"Everyone was devastated after the death in the family. I reflected and looked at them. I did not want to see my family so upset. So I decided to change."

Dean said, "My mum noticed straight away, she took me aside and said 'Who are you and where is Dean? Your behaviour is much, much better.'"

What was it that first made her notice the change you have made?

"I didn't respond to a fight with my sister, she took my stuff and usually we fight about it. My mum came over and demanded that she gave me my things back. I said, 'its OK mum, she can have it.' My mum looked at me, puzzled, I never say that."

What else happened?

"Normally I'm lazy, when I have been asked to help or to come for tea I talk back and wait. Now I just do it."

I shared an example from my own life to normalise those feelings, and offered that sometimes these small differences mean a lot to others.

I then asked, *"Who would not be surprised that he had changed?"* This questions were aimed at exploring his relationships with a wider group of people, and at the same time I wanted to help Dean to consider that it was his skills and qualities that led to change. It was hoped that this might lead to a generalisation of the positive changes Dean had experienced.

"My classmates probably wouldn't notice, they used to try to wind me up, and make me do things to get me in trouble. Now I don't respond to them, they aren't surprised [that I have changed], they just don't get to wind me up anymore."

I asked "*Who else?*" Dean shrugged. Sensing that this was a dead end I asked *"Have you made a change like this before."*

"I ditched my X-box a couple of months ago, I had it since I was 7. I grew up with it. When I had it I wouldn't do my homework, I used to play it in the morning, and I would be late for tea, I was always saying 'In a minute' to my mum. My mum came upstairs and we had an argument and I realised things had gone too far. She took it off me, but after a while I said 'You know, throw it out'. My mum said 'Good, I will'".

And you noticed you were a better person without it?

"Yeah, my friends noticed too. They used to get annoyed with me because I wouldn't go out with them. Now I do. I still have a PlayStation at my dad's house that I like, but now I improvise [he meant compromise]. I play on it for a half hour, then go out to play with my mates, then come in and play for an hour. My friends are happier. I fell asleep in three lessons at school because I was up so late playing games. I noticed I was becoming very aggressive. Now I limit myself to playing for an hour when I get in and that's it."

Complementing

I complemented Dean for being so reflective, and how he has used this skill to help him to make changes in his life. Remembering that his mum said that Dean often ruminates I commented that it can be a real strength if used to make positive choices, but if it focused on bad things it could turn to worry. I added that Dean seemed like he had been using his reflective skills well to help him to make positive changes.

Scaling

I recapped the 0-10 scale we had used in the previous week and reminded Dean that last time he had scored himself 7 out of 10. He had set himself a goal to achieve 7.5 and overall he was aiming to get to an 8 out of 10. Dean said he was at 7.5 now. I asked what made him think he was at a 7.5.

"Sometimes I slip back to a 7, other times I am towards an 8. 7.5 means only having an off day maybe once a week."

I shared that I thought it was normal to have occasional bad days, but was important was being able to bounce back and return to your goals.

I reminded Dean that we he had identified three things he could do last week to help move towards his goals, and asked if he had tried any of the others he had suggested.

Did you ask you coach about what he expects from you?

Dean said he had asked for 1:1 coaching where he would not be distracted by other he was training with, but there wasn't much time just before the match and so it was only a brief chat. His coach said that he liked Dean's idea and would go to talk to the other coaches and get back to him.

Exploring others perspectives

To bring us on to the topic of other's perspectives and to explore unchartered territory for the future, I asked if there was anyone who had not yet noticed the changes he had made.

Dean said his English teacher and his Chemistry teacher would not have noticed, for differing reasons.

How will you convince them that you mean business, what would it take for them to notice?

"In English I am usually good anyway, but I would need to avoid being distracted by my peers behind me, answer more questions instead of not being bothered, and to look as though I was listening rather than putting my head down in my arms." Dean explained that he didn't mean to be rude, he was sometimes just tired, and it was just the message that was being communicated that offended her.

In Chemistry Dean explained that it would be harder to convince his teacher because he is strict. "I can't do anything right. He probably wouldn't notice if I was good because that's what he expects from everyone. I would need to ignore the distraction of others, not go in with my shirt untucked and wearing the correct uniform, and answer questions. Usually he tells me to tuck my uniform in and I ignore him. This makes us both irritated from the beginning of the lesson. I would need to get some new shirts and trousers and a clip on tie so I can look smart for his lessons. I could easily take my tie off outside of class, and put it on again before lessons. Then we're both OK."

Summary

We summarised what it was he would need to get closer to an 8.

"I need more school tops and trousers that fit and are tidy."

"Ask teachers permission to remove my blazer."

"Buy a clip on tie so I can put in on and off in the school day."

Appendix H: Session 3 Script Guide & Responses

These notes are the outcome of my reflections on the therapy session together with any had written notes taken during the session. They are not intended to reflect a verbatim record of our discussion.

Notes: The following script includes the main subject headings used to structure the therapeutic session with Dean in **bold**.

Following this are example questions that can be drawn upon to structure the discussion if needed in *italics*.

Finally, in red ink are my reflections on Dean's responses to some of these questions. These were recorded during and immediately after the session to remind me of the session content throughout therapeutic episode. They were also useful as a method of making qualitative clinical observations regarding the effectiveness of each therapeutic session.

Session 3

I planned to follow the template used in the previous session, with the addition of the alternative scaling of D's confidence in achieving his goals, and / or exploration of his commitment to doing so. The purpose of this was to check there were no barriers to progress, and to find ways of further motivating Dean to continue his progress. I also checked what might be useful in the situation where things had not changed, or had gotten worse (see George *et al.,* 2003: p.16). I wondered whether following Dean initial enthusiasm, the emotional upheaval caused by a death in the family may have distracted him from his goals or presented him with new problems.

Complement

As with the previous two sessions, upon meeting Dean I greeted him with a warm smile and commented on how good it was to see him. He responded accordingly by offering me his hand to shake (the first time we met he seemed less sure about shaking my hand – something I introduced to convey a sense of equality and personal warmth).

If things are "the same" or "worse"

I asked Dean *"what was better than last time we met two weeks ago."*

Dean's immediate response was "Things are the same, not better, not worse. The same."

To clarify; *"Have you been able to maintain the progress made since the first couple of sessions?"*

"Yes." Things at home had been difficult following the family death, and her funeral was tomorrow.

As with the previous session I thought it best to check what it was that D helped to gain from this session following the prompts from Briefer: A Solution Focused Manual. Dean said "I want to talk about how I can improve and what could be done differently."

To show sympathy, and reframe his seeming lack of progress more positively I offered an analogy, *'progress can sometimes feel like sailing a boat, you can be moving forwards, but the flow of the water can push you back, and so it can seem like we are not making progress, even though we are working hard to do so*.

Dean nodded.

"What have you been doing that has helped you to get through such a bad period?" Dean told me about a friend in his class who he had spoken to who had lost her father. That life was sometimes tragic, and that he would need to remember her. He said that he could close his eyes and remember her in his visions, and if he did this she would be there with him, in here (pointing to his chest). Dean told me how supportive his friend was in this situation, and that it was not something he has had to deal with before.

Reflecting on this exchange surprised me in was way that it didn't at the time. In my role, with a pre-planned agenda, it seemed as though I was present for the therapeutic exchange, and felt able to listen to Dean, but did not joining him in his pain. It was not until after the event that the emotional gravity of his circumstances became apparent.

We moved on to talking about the goal he had set himself in our first meetings, to improve how he got on with others.

Dean said that he thought his previous goal was to be less aggressive with others – this is an interpretation of the agreed outcomes of the previous session that I did not share.

Alternative scales

How committed are you to achieving your goal?

He said he was 9 out of 10, not 10 out of 10 because he had other things he wanted to achieve at the same time.

How confident are you that you will be able get back on track to achieve your goals when things are down?

He responded 9 out of 10, and added that "there are moments that will happen when I make mistakes."

Resources

What would help you to achieve your goal, and keep you on track, to reduce the number of times when you make mistakes?

Dean explained that he has a TA in class who gives him a timeout card which reminds him to wait 5 seconds before responding. This stops him from saying anything bad and gives him time to think about things.

What else?

"Other things that make a difference is waking up on a good day, I'm not tired or irritable, and on these days I am able to have more self-control. I am focused and I have more ability to stop any bad behaviour."

What else?

"Mr F and Mrs F are TA's that help me in class to stay focused. Mr F is particularly helpful."

Tell me more

"Mr F is strict but he has good manners and is caring. He is firm but fair. I have a better relationship with him. He is trustworthy. Mrs F is jokier, but she is also stressier."

Dean was distracted by the noises heard through the wall next door. This seemed genuine as on two other occasions he had stopped mid-conversation to attend to various background noises.

Dean explained that he finds he is distracted easily. "I have… [I offered attention deficit?], yes that's it. I find it hard to concentrate in a busy classroom. I'm also claustrophobic and sometimes blackout. Everything goes blurry, I block others out"

Coping

How have you coped with this feeling before?

Dean told me about a time in rugby "when they grouped together to chant I blacked out. My friend had to bring me too. But I have learnt to live with it. I actually quite like the sensation." This caused me some concern – I passed on this story to the school AENCo who said she would liaise with the school nurse.

Dean said he wanted to set aside his previous goals and to create new goals related to getting on better with others.

Preferred future

"What would the first signs of new progress be like?"

He said "I'd be making new friends rather than losing them."

"How would you do this?"

He explained that when he is not in 1:1 situation he is a 'class clown', "I'm funny, I'm a drama queen, I'm a good pianist, comedian, I can do tricks, illusions etc." He demonstrated a simple magic trick and showed me how it worked. I offered a positive reframe about him being an entertainer, and offered that it was probably tricky to know when to 'turn on' his entertainer side, and when to 'turn it off'.

Dean nodded and said it was.

Dean then explained that he had already made a new friend in Yr7 and had been working towards his goal before we had met. An example of pre session change.

I checked, did he want to make new friends, or to avoid losing friends? Perhaps to repair a friendship?

Drawing on past experience of coping

I asked "had he had been able to repair friendships before?"

Dean nodded and talked about two friends he had lost recently through misunderstandings.

Dean explained how he had knocked G's ice-cream out of his hand when acting silly with another friend. G was upset and angry at Dean. Dean explained how he had to calm down for a few days. He then decided to give G £5 to buy another ice-cream. G said he would buy 2 and give one to Dean.

Dean explained that the other friend was a girlfriend and that I probably already knew how that went. Since I did not Dean explained that he had posted a video on social media of him roughhousing with his cousin. Dean girlfriend had understood it to be a flirtatious exchange.

What made a difference in repairing that relationship?

"It took time before she was willing to talk about it."

Dean offered another example of an Iranian boy who joined his school. Dean got on well with this boy, and helped him to learn English. At one point some other pupils asked Dean to say something Iranian into a microphone and this was played to the boy, resulting in

great insult. Dean said he did not know what it meant, but that it took a long time to repair the harm done.

Continuing with the theme of exploring past experiences of coping I asked "*What can be learnt from these stories?*"

They seem to involve an apology, reparations, talking it through and empathy. Dean added that he loved helping others and gaining their approval, despite being so much more physically bigger than them. He wanted to be trusted and that gave him a lot of pleasure.

Moving from the general to the specific

Feeling as though he had progressed through this problem Dean then set himself a new goal relating to adults. For the next two weeks he was going to focus on following instructions.

I asked for how he was going to do this?

Dean explained that he was going to do things when he was told to do them by listening for whether something an adult says is a question or an instruction. He had noticed that adults change the way they end sentences to indicate whether he was being asked or told to do something [D demonstrated the difference between the same sentence presented as a question or as an instruction]. He then explained that teachers get irritated when they give you an instruction and he interprets it as a question. His goal therefore is to listen out for these differences and respond appropriately.

What will you do if you are not sure whether something is a question or an instruction?

"I will ask pardon then they will ask again. But you have to mean it, or it could be seen as being rude"

I reiterated his goal to reinforce it.

Complement

I offered feedback about how thoughtful he was, and commented that he has a lot of ideas about how he can change for the better.

We agreed to meet in two weeks one final time, just for me to check in on how he was doing and to complete some forms.

This was followed up by a letter sent to Dean and family, including affirmative statements about his capacity to change, evaluation forms and the next planned meeting.

Appendix I: Feedback and ratings taken at the endpoint three months after the episode of therapy

Dean's responses to questions about these scales are presented in *italics*.

Goal Progress Chart (GPC)

Overall goal: To get on better with others.

Aspect 1: To listen to adults carefully and work out whether they are asking me a question, or telling me to do something.

GPC rating out of 10 = *"5, I sometimes listen to adults and sometimes don't."*

Aspect 2: To win back lost friendships.

GPC rating out of 10 = *"8, I get on much better with others and the techniques we discussed really helped me to make friends with all of year 8."*

CORS Measures

Measure 1: How are you doing?

CORS rating = *"9, life is a good but I haven't quite sussed school yet."*

Measure 2: How are things in your family?

CORS rating = *"10, life with family is 10 because my behaviour has changed and my mum agrees."*

Measure 3: How are you doing in school?

CORS rating = *"8, life in school is 8 because I still haven't been great with some of my teachers but I'm getting better."*

Measure 4: How is everything going?

Give a rating from 0 - 10 = *"Everything is going good so I rate it an 8 because of everything in school, that's why it's not a 9 I didn't say ten because it's impossible to act perfectly!"*

Endpoint feedback from Dean's mother

"Dean was really positive and he understands that school life still has room for improvement but I think he thinks he had made better progress than his teachers think.

I only hope that is because he feels he is making more of an effort and his social life in school is great so in his mind things have improved.

He is having an hour out a day in the Learning Support Base now and his reports are better already.

As I said at home things are so much better and he seems back to his happy self, so I am very pleased with his progress... Just his relationship with teachers to conquer and the future will be very bright for him!

Thank you for all your help, and I hope it can continue as it seems to have helped him greatly."

Appendix J: Outcome Rating Scale (ORS)

(Ages 13 to Adult)

Name_____Age (Yrs):____Session #___Date_____

Who is filling out this form? Please check one: Self_____Other_____
If other, what is your relationship to this person? _____

Looking back over the last week, including today, help us understand how you have been feeling by rating how well you have been doing in the following areas of your life, where marks to the left represent low levels and marks to the right indicate high levels. If you are filling out this form for another person, please fill out according to how you think he or she is doing.

Individually

(Personal well-being)

Interpersonally

(Family, close relationships)

Socially

(Work, school, friendships)

Overall

(General sense of well-being)

Professional Practice Report 3

Reflective Teams: A Supervision Model for Developing Professional Competence within Educational Psychology Services

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Abstract

Background: As helping professionals, educational psychologists (EPs) often engage in complex and demanding work in support of service users who face adversity. To perform at their best, EPs are required to regularly access quality supervision and continuously develop their skills and knowledge. Reflective Team Supervision (RTS) is presented as an efficient, empowering and respectful approach that enables team of EPs to actively examine their experiences, rather than just live them.

Aim: To evaluate the experiences of members from one educational psychology service in the use of RTS, and to explore its impact on their personal and professional development.

Method: This is a qualitative study that draws on the inductive thematic analysis of focus group interview data.

Conclusion: RTS is a discrete but effective approach, capable of providing various benefits to participants' personal and professional development. It provides participants with access to a range of perspectives, broadens professional knowledge, and facilitates personal insights, whilst respecting the supervisee's autonomy. This study is recommended to managers of EPS, who are encouraged to reflect on the merits of RTS as an efficient way of improving service quality, and improving EPs professional skills and practices.

Introduction

In recent years, many Educational Psychology Services (EPS) have faced financial constraints that have reshaped service delivery, demanding creative responses regarding the application of psychology to better the outcomes for children and young people (Callicott and Leadbetter, 2013). Among the responsibilities of EPS is the need to meet the requirements of the Health Care Professions Council "to regularly audit, reflect on and review practice, and to critically evaluate the impact of their actions" in all aspects of their work (Dunsmuir and Leadbetter, 2010, p.3). Professional supervision is a central means for EPSs to assure quality standards of service delivery and service development. It should therefore aim to "…address the well-being and professional development of the supervisee, but also attend to the outcomes of children, young people and their families" (Dunsmuir and Leadbetter, 2010 p.3). Supervision should therefore serve three overarching functions;

(i) to develop the supervisee's skills and competence;

(ii) to safeguard service users through improvements in the quality of the supervisee's work;

(iii) to emotionally sustain and support supervisees (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012).

The British Psychological Society Guidelines for Practice for Educational Psychologists (p.12) stipulate that supervision should be an emotionally safe experience free from pejorative judgement. It requires careful planning and clearly identified roles for the supervisee and supervisor(s), including ways in which the session should be structured and reviewed.

Supervision models can be broadly classified as either 'one-to-one' or 'group', with the distribution of EPs receiving support from each type being roughly evenly split (Dunsmuir, Lange and Leadbetter, 2015). Although variations exist regarding the status and professional identities within the supervisor – supervisee relationship, EPs most often receive supervision from a Senior or Principal EP (38%) closely followed by peer/colleague support (32%); the remaining EPs are supported by a

combination of specialists (9%), or non-EP line managers (21%) (Dunsmuir, Lang and Leadbetter, 2015). Group supervision can involve a group of homogenous professionals or trainees (e.g. Corlett, 2015; Mills and Swift, 2015; Rawlings and Cowell, 2015) or engage an arrangement of professionals from different disciplines (e.g. Dunsmuir, Lang and Leadbetter, 2015; Hulusi and Maggs, 2015; Soni, 2015). The advantages of group supervision models are numerous, but they tend to share the common benefit of enabling participants to access a wide range of alternative perspectives from others. This potentially offers supervisees opportunities for a greater assimilation of knowledge as well as the experience of being a member of an emotionally supportive group (Mills and Swift, 2015; Rawlings and Cowell, 2015).

Where supervision is provided by Senior or Principal EPs, the supervisor is often required to carry out several different and sometimes conflicting roles (Kadushin and Harkness, 2002; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012). These roles are complex due to the obligations of Senior and Principal EPs to ensure that work is carried out effectively, on time, and that it is of high quality; and so these responsibilities can conflict with important supportive and educative functions of supervision (Nolan, 1999). This dilemma has led to some teams to think creatively about ways in which such incompatibilities may be resolved, with many finding that group supervision models offer a practical solution that can be used alongside, yet distinct from, managerial processes (Dunsmuir and Leadbetter, 2010).

Group Supervision

Lindgren et al. (2005); Scott and Smith (2008) add that group supervision works best when it is conducted in a positive climate; develops the interests of the group; allows the supervisee to express their own vulnerabilities and concerns; and promotes open and honest talk about work. Kangasniemi et al. (2011) suggest that it is best if participants have clarity of purpose and commitment to a particular model and set of principles. They recommend that a good starting point

is a respectful, egalitarian stance, and an atmosphere of confidentiality, openness, and active participation. Such arrangements require social and management skills as tensions between members may create functional problems within a group (Kangasniemi et al., 2011).

Despite agreement regarding the importance of quality supervision arrangements in EP practice, Nolan (1999) and Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) point out that research investigating the effectiveness of differing models of supervision has been neglected in recent decades, with the majority focusing on the supervision of trainee EPs, newly qualified EPs, or of supervision across disciplines (e.g. Carrington, 2004; Atkinson and Woods, 2007; Brown and Henderson, 2012; Osbourne and Barton, 2014).

The benefits of supervision for supervisees within EP practice are well documented (e.g. Pomerantz et al., 1987; Schön 1987, 1991; Webster et al., 2000), but Carrington (2004) argues that not enough research has been on the bilateral benefits for supervisors or of supervision groups. Carrington (2004, p.32) considers such thinking to be "inaccurate and unhelpful" since all work situations contain the potential for learning; to ignore the mutual benefits for supervisors risks stifling learning for both parties by inhibiting the free expression of ideas. The possibility that supervision processes have the potential to benefit all participants begs the question as to how, or in what contexts, can this process be effectively and efficiently utilised? Until very recently there has been an absence of literature dedicated to the use of group supervision models in EP practice over the last fifteen years, with the vast majority being published by health, care, and therapeutic professionals (e.g. Hyrkas et al., 2001; Kangasniemi et al., 2011; O'Connell et al., 2011; Brink et al., 2012; Parker and O'Reilly, 2013; Reichelt and Skierve, 2013; Taylor, 2013).

Group supervision processes take a variety of forms (Kangasniemi et al., 2011; Reichelt and Skjerve, 2012). Often, experienced colleagues explicitly share their ideas about their own practice, providing less experienced members an opportunity to reflect on their own practice and develop a more realistic professional approach (e.g. Jones, 2006; Brink et al., 2011). Other services have found

Solution Circles (e.g. Brown and Henderson, 2012) or Reflective Teams (e.g. Pare, 1999; Reichelt and Skjerve, 2013) to be helpful.

Group supervision models provide a forum where participants are free to discuss their own limitations and problems without criticism (Jones, 2006). As well as serving an educative function it improves team communication; enhances working relationships; increases peer support; empowers members to challenge existing practices; increases shared problem solving; increases job satisfaction; improves work-related attitudes; decreases stress; and supports the development of supervision skills (Hyrkas, 2001; Cross et al., 2010; Kangasniemi et al., 2011; O'Connell et al., 2011). Despite these widely recognised features of group supervision, existing systematic reviews within psychotherapeutic professions often omit any examination of the potential effects on client outcomes (e.g. Freitas, 2002; Lambert and Ogles, 1997; Milne and James, 2000; Wheeler and Richards, 2007). This is likely to be because of the nature of complex systems and that nature of social relationships across different service delivery contexts (Milne and James, 2000; Dunsmuir, Lang and Leadbetter, 2015).

The potential benefits to professionals and clients do not come without financial and time costs to service, as well as any personal risks for supervisees who are expected to make their personal values and vulnerabilities explicit to others. Although personal costs are difficulty to quantify, Hyrkas (2001) argues that the financial cost of supervision are offset by improvements in the quality of care. Despite the measures that Hyrkas (2011) employs being simplistic, i.e. quality of care and improvements in staff coping was measured by a reduction in indemnities and a decrease in staff sickness rates in just one hospital, the outcomes are encouraging because there may also be subtle qualitative benefits that accompany any financial incentives. Hyrkas's (2001) cost-benefit model of analysis is founded on Chang and Henry's (1999) six principles: (i) identify who pays and who benefits; (ii) describe the anticipated benefits; (iii) specify the costs; (iv) discount for differential timing; (v) conduct a sensitivity analysis; and (vi) calculate the efficiently measurement. Such

methods may be of value to EPSs that operate within a traded model as a means of demonstrating how the monetary cost of supervision may be justified. It should be noted that the reductionist assumptions that underpin a purely financial cost-benefit analysis also risk overlooking a potential range of qualitative benefits that are intrinsic to the process. Brink et al. (2012) focused on identifying these qualitative and subjective aspects of change brought about through group supervision in an effort to justify the costs involved. They found that participants developed (i) a sense of security and participation; (ii) an increased self-awareness and positive professional development; (iii) participants' values and attitudes; and (iv) professional skills. Since the acquisition of tacit knowledge in the caring professions is often implicit and can take a long time to acquire, it stands to reasons that when teams meet together regularly to make implicit thinking explicit, then all members are able to avoid the mistakes of their experienced colleagues. Brink et al. (2012) argues that this approach makes financial sense as participants are better able to develop their competency, compassion, confidence, conscience, and commitment to their work. These qualities are likely to translate into greater staff attendance, improved quality of care and lower numbers of patient complaints. Such findings are easily translatable into the work of EPs, where mistakes can easily lead to poor pupil progress and / or parent tribunals. There is ample evidence to suggest that the qualitative benefits of group supervision can be found across disciplines (e.g. Watkins, 1997; Kadushin and Harkness, 2002; Brink et al., 2012; Hulusi and Maggs, 2015; Rawlings and Cowell, 2015; Soni, 2015). What remains to be seen whether individual services are able to consistently demonstrate these benefits across services. Once was this could be done would be to develop an agreed set of measures in a similar way to the way therapeutic progresses is measured by the Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC, 2015). The use of cost benefit analyses as demonstrated by Hyrkas (2001) is one such tool, but a broader perspective is needed that considers incorporates the emotional and educative functions of supervision. Despite widespread recognition of the value of group supervision over the last 40 years (Dunsmuir, Lang and Leadbetter, 2015) there continues to be subtle differences in the ways in which group supervision models are appraised and appreciated.

It is probable that the value and effectiveness of different models of supervision are mediated by the professional context of those involved. The corollary of such thinking suggests that it would be improper to attempt to generalise the outcomes of group supervision, since efforts to evaluation a particular model is likely to produce contextually unique outcomes worthy of investigation in their own right.

The Reflective Team Model

The Reflective Team (RT) is one model of supervision that originates from the work of Norwegian Family Therapist Andersen (Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013; Pander and Stinchfield, 2014; Andersen 1987, 1991). It is heavily influenced by constructivism and social constructionist principles and acknowledges that participants are observers, each capable of interpreting reality from a multitude of possible construings depending upon their environmental interactions (Brownlee et al., 2009; Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013). Fundamentally, Andersen recognised the importance of providing clients with the freedom to be in charge of their own destiny, and to construct their own meaning when presented with differing perspectives regarding an issue. In practice this involved adopting a non-expert stance, focusing on the client's resources, and treating psychological theory with scepticism (Andersen, 1987).

RT developed from Andersen's personal experiences as a family therapist. During therapy he would regularly leave the session to seek advice from his colleagues. It occurred to him that the families he was working with might benefit from hearing his colleagues' reflections regarding the family's circumstances. This developed into a regular feature of the therapeutic sessions: The family would observe the therapists' discuss their reactions to the family's circumstances, and from this the family members were able to formulate their own change experiences (Andersen, 1991). This approach overcame a philosophical problem felt by the therapeutic team: they were never able to fully understand their clients' circumstances in a way that made them amenable to intervention. With

this approach, clients were able to indirectly receive multi-faceted input, and this provided them with the opportunity to select that which they found useful (Andersen, 1987; 1991; Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013). The team found that the collaborative nature of these exchanges encouraged clients to view themselves as equal participants. They also removed any defensive barriers to change associated with more expert driven therapeutic approaches, and provided a supportive and open environment where clients could experience empathic interactions (Nichols and Schwartz, 2004). The drawbacks of collaborative models such as this are that clients often expect therapists to take a more directive role in the therapeutic process. This can result in some clients choosing to disengage from the process before any real change has occurred on the grounds that their expectations differed from their experiences.

Reflective Teams Supervision (RTS)

In keeping with good practice related to any form of group supervision, RTS requires a contract of accountability, confidentiality, code of ethics, rights, responsibilities and managerial communication to be established before the process can begin (Proctor and Inskipp, 2001; Soni, 2015). This should state the conditions relating to the agreed size, attendance, and membership of the group, but also clarify the details of the working arrangements, rules, and identify participants (Soni, 2015). Before beginning each session of RTS a facilitator (hereafter supervisor) should outline the session agenda and ask the RT for any topics they wish to bring to the discussion. A topic should be agreed on the basis of the needs of the group and the time available. Topics often involve individual casework, but may also relate to systemic or interpersonal issues that can affect the whole team. Before beginning RTS there should be an opportunity for the supervisee / supervisor to stipulate the conditions of a mini-contract that relates to that particular piece of supervision (Proctor and Inskipp, 2001).

The RTS model presented in this study was directly adapted from Andersen's RT model for family therapy, as described by Andersen (1987; 1991), and more recently Recihelt and Skjerve (2013). An overview of RTS is presented in Figure 1 with typical timeframes for practice.

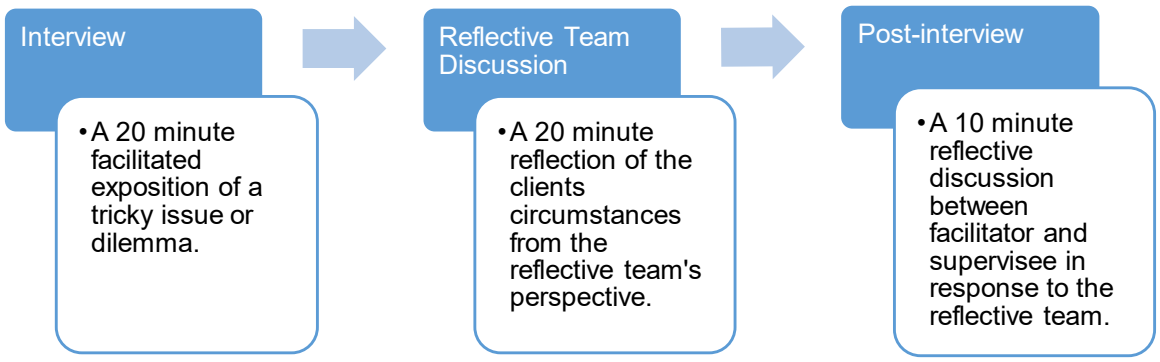


Figure 1: Overview of the Reflective Team Supervision process

During the interview phase the supervisee and a supervisor engage in dialogue where the supervisee is encouraged to comprehensively describe a situation, event or experience in which they feel 'stuck'. In this discussion the supervisor adopts the role of naïve listener, seeking clarification of the situation through open-ended questioning. The rest of the RT sit separate from the discussion, actively listening to what is said without interfering (Andersen, 1991). The RT do not ask questions or interrupt the speaker, instead they use this time to learn about the situation, to empathise with the supervisee's circumstances, and to develop their own thoughts in response to what they have heard. Members of the RT are then encouraged to express their impressions and ideas among themselves in a mutually respectful manner (Haley, 2002). This is done with sensitivity and appreciation for the supervisee's circumstances for the purpose of expressing a range of possible ideas for consideration (Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013). The supervisee and supervisor listen silently, but remain separate from the RT. Up to this point the process has much in common with Solution Circles (Forest and Pearpoint, 1996), which similarly aims to facilitate problem solving with the support of a group of peer colleagues. Unlike Solution Circles, once the RT have discussed their reactions to the

supervisee's circumstances, there is a final phase where the supervisee and supervisor discuss any thoughts the supervisee may have had as a consequence of listening to the RT's discussion. This allows the supervisee space to consider any new insights regarding their situation. There is no expectation that the supervisee will then commit to a particular course of action as discussed, rather this phase does provide a reflective space to support the supervisee in planning their future direction in a constructivist way (Andersen, 1991; Brownlee et al., 2009). The principles of this final phase are unique to RTS: Instead of the supervisee engaging in dialogue with members of the RT, the supervisee talks exclusively to the supervisor and reflects openly upon what they have heard. To symbolise this separateness from the RT, eye contact between the two groups is avoided. This is to maintain the idea that the discussions were observed as though through a one-way mirror, a feature evocative of the conditions in which Andersen and colleagues first developed the RT approach. This separateness affords the supervisee the privilege of being able to access the thoughts, observations, and expertise of the RT, whilst also retaining their autonomy through the power to *not* listen (Andersen, 1992). The purpose of this process is to grant the supervisee the option to adopt any combination of solutions and to reject those parts of little value, without feeling pressured to comply or conform to a course of action as dictated by existing power differences within the RT (Andersen, 1987, 1991; Brownlee et al., 2009; Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013). It is only once the RTS process is complete that Recihelt and Skjerve (2013) advise that managers take the opportunity to adopt a more authoritarian stance by ensuring that any necessary safeguarding or quality assurance procedures are concluded.

Exploratory Research

Pander and Stinchfield (2014) note that a scarcity of outcome based research is a major weakness of the RT approach, particularly when applied to professional supervision purposes. Brownlee et al.

(2009) produced the last comprehensive review on the value of RT, and outlined its strengths and challenges:

Collaborative Approach

RTS is intended to be a collaborative approach that gives participants a chance to hear their colleagues' ideas in a way that transcends hierarchal barriers and opens up new meanings and possibilities for action. Young et al. (1997) for instance, found that participants preferred to have the RT sit in the same room as them rather than behind a one-way mirror as described in Andersen's original model (Andersen, 1987; 1991). This was argued to be because it better fostered a sense of collaboration between members of the group. In one small ethnographic study involving eight families, O'Connor et al. (1997) found that participants who engaged in RT for therapeutic purposes experienced feelings of 'mutual cooperation' and considered RT to promote an 'egalitarian atmosphere' between participants. It should be noted that there are notable differences between the use of RT for family therapy and RTS, such as the composition of family members present in any given session, and the tendency for the RT in this study to make conscious efforts to reframe participants' narratives for the better.

Strength-Based Orientation

RT is a positive, strengths based approach that enables and empowers participants to manage their own change processes (Smith et al., 1995). Young et al. (1997) found that possibility-framed language used by the RT allowed participants to hear what was working well, but it also allowed them to be amenable to ideas about areas of concern. Haley (2002) and Brownlee et al. (2009) suggest that the more positive and favourable RT reflections are, the more likely it is that participants continue to engage in the process and reflect on their experiences positively. That said, Gray (2011) has questioned such assumptions, and called for empirical evidence that demonstrates

the effectiveness of strengths based interventions, especially comparative studies that compare the outcomes with non-strengths approaches to change. Despite the growth of strengths based approaches in the helping professions over the last 30 years (e.g. solution focused brief therapy, positive psychology, narrative psychology, to name a few) Smail (2005) and Gray (2011) caution against the use of strengths based approaches on the grounds that they potentially overlook systemic or structural inequalities that underlie any presenting difficulties. Related to the difficulties inherent in evaluating the effectiveness supervision already discussed on p.129-130, Gray (2011) calls for a pragmatic approach which evaluates not through some idealistic or independent measure of truth, but through the impact it has on intended beneficiaries whether they be clients, a group of peers, or supervisees.

Multiple Perspectives

Not only do RTs provide a multitude of perspectives regarding a particular problem, but it also allows participants to access a range of expertise without feeling demoralised (Brownlee et al., 2009). When listening to the RT, participants are free to select and adapt the ideas that they like best and seem most helpful to them (Haley, 2002; Brownlee et al., 2009).

The aim of the RT is to find "useful, rather than true definitions of problems and solutions" (Carr, 2000, p.119). Accordingly, RTs strive to remain speculative and respectful of the client's circumstances throughout their engagement. Such discussions should not aim to reach a conclusion, nor is it necessary for the members of the team to agree with one another, on the contrary, Haley (2002) found that incongruity among members of the RT demonstrated to clients that there were often several ways of approaching a problem, and these encouraged clients to view their circumstances from a fresh perspective (Haley, 2002; Brownlee et al., 2009).

Open Questioning

The dedicated use of open questioning provides the supervisee with an opportunity to explore their concerns without feeling restrained by the case complexities or their preferred course of action. The client's exposition of their issues is focused squarely on their systemic context, thereby creating a distance from any immediate thoughts about a solution. This reduces the risk that the RT become enmeshed the case complexities and their own personal associations (Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013). The purpose is to keep all possible perspectives open and to avoid the co-construction of solutions. Any unanswered questions are saved for the RT to discuss once the situation has been thoroughly explored. Thus, there is no 'objective' to gaining an understanding of the situation, rather, the process more closely resembles an exploration of how the client has struggled with their concerns (Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013).

Challenges

Various disciplines have attempted to apply the principles of RT for peer supervision purposes with the intention of providing personal and professional support within teams (e.g. Hyrkas et al., 2001; Pertoft and Larsen, 2003; Kangasniemi, et al., 2011; Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013). Pertoft and Larsen (2003) for instance examined changes over time in supervisors' and supervisees' ratings of group interaction, group climate, improvements in attained skill. Through hierarchical regression analysis they found that participants generally experienced a positive change over time in their attainment of knowledge and skills, group interaction and group climate. However, they also found that supervisors were more likely to rate positive changes over time than supervisees. The use of hierarchical regression analysis is often used in counselling research to test specific, theory-based hypotheses. Petrocelli (2003) argues that such analyses introduce bias because it focuses on maximising theoretical predictions, rather than properly theory-testing or exploring differences

between results. As a result, there is a risk that the outcomes primarily focus on confirming what is already suspected.

In a qualitative study conducted by Recihelt and Skjerve (2013), ten RTS groups undertaking further training in clinical psychology were interviewed. Participants responses were considered and deductively appraised in light of Andersen's (1987, 1991, 1992) approach. Recihelt and Skjerve (2013) assumed was that variations and modifications to the approach were common, but not necessarily be beneficial. Although the research epistemology risks confirming what is already suspected, the study outcomes do demonstrate how the interpersonal dynamics of any particular configuration of RT, supervisor, and supervisee, affected participants' judgements regarding the quality of supervision experience. The possibility that variations are likely to exist from group to group, and from session to session, confirm the need for RTs to establish and maintain clear ground rules that are faithful to the approach. Several interrelated threats to the use of RTS were identified: During the interview stage many supervisors focused the discussion on the case history, rather than on the supervisee's dilemmas and concerns. Although some supervisees felt that this was necessary in order to prevent misunderstandings, Recihelt and Skjerve (2013) argue that this had consequences for the rest of the process because the emphasis on case information encouraged some members of the RT to enthusiastically adopt an 'expert role' during the reflective team discussion, rather than making efforts to consider "the therapist's dilemmas and concerns in an exploring, tentative, and lingering style" (Recihelt and Skjerve, 2013, p.251; see also Brownlee et al., 2009). The resultant discussions then focused largely on the supervisee's case and lost sight of their situation. The RT would also sometimes go off on tangents in pursuit of feedback for their own ideas and this was noticed by some supervisee's who viewed the RT as making a contribution from a position of power and expertise. When this happened, supervisees felt obliged to accept the RTs ideas even when they felt that the RT has misunderstood the context or significantly deviated from their main concerns. When the RT's comments did not resonate with the supervisee, it left them with little to reflect upon during the post interview phase. They also found that supervisors

sometimes felt compelled to fill silences with their own ideas, rather than giving the supervisee the freedom to respond and expand on those parts of interest to them. Recihelt and Skjerve (2013) caution against any tendency on the supervisees part to seek closure, or to pursue their own hidden agenda, including moving the supervisee towards the construction of a solution, the adaptation of a particular theoretical lens, or adoption of a particular intervention. This can overstep the supervisor's role and undermine the constructivist and social constructionist principles of RT, i.e. the supervisee should feel unrestrained from the notion that the RT or supervisor 'knows the answer'. Despite this, some supervisees claim to appreciate having access to the knowledge and experience of their supervisors (Carr, 2000). To avoid these pitfalls to the approach, Smith et al. (1995) and Young et al. (1997) recommend ensuring that a good rapport exists between the supervisee and the RT, and that the RT is taught and reminded that their role should be to empathise with the supervisee's circumstances, rather than their issues. As with the objectives of this research study, insights from Recihelt and Skjerve (2013) work are intended to aid others with a potential interest in adopting RTS within their own teams, albeit experiences pooled from a highly contextual and limited pool of participants. In criticism, no insights are provided as to whether participant satisfaction with the process translates into an improvement in the personal and professional skills, or whether RTS is simply appreciated on the basis of its general format and underlying principles.

Methods

Aims

This study aims to contribute to the discussion regarding the value of RTS by exploring its impact on the personal and professional development of EPs in one EPS. Framed as a research questions, this study asks, 'What are participants' views regarding the value of RTS as a tool for personal and professional development in EP practice?'

Participants

Seven participants (5 women, 2 men) from on Local Authority EPS were asked to evaluate their experiences of RTS. The group consisted of five main grade Educational Psychologists, one Senior Educational Psychologist in a management role within the EPS, and one Trainee Educational Psychologist. Participants had worked in the EPS for between five months to twenty years (Mean = 7 years). At the point of data collection all participants had participated in RTS at least once, with the majority having attended between fifteen and twenty sessions (Mean = 12). The EPS met once fortnightly. Members would then have an opportunity to raise a topic for discussion through RTS. The sampling strategy used was 'total population purposive sampling'. It therefore involved all available candidates within the EPS who had experienced RTS as a single unit of analysis (Bryman et al., 2012). This sampling approach has the advantage of facilitating extracting rich, in-depth reflections from participants who have experienced RTS within a particular EPS, however it is difficult to defend the representativeness of the sample of other EPS and therefore the findings may lack generalisability.

Data Collection

A semi-structured qualitative focus group interview was used to enable all group members to share their own experiences and reactions to RTS, unconfined by pre-existing theory. This was intended to be uninfluenced by prior research otherwise introduced through deductive interview processes (See Appendix A for a copy of the interview script). The focus group interview was held in the same place that the participants regularly met to engage in RTS. The use of a focus group method allowed participant's interpersonal insights, as well as their intrapersonal insights, to be investigated (Larsson et al., 2005). This enhances the credibility of the data as focus group processes encourage members to check the validity of their ideas with one another in order to justify their claims. Because all members of the EPS attended the focus group, all possible voices were heard regardless of status.

This happened without interruption or fear of reprisal in accordance with the established ground rules used to structure the RTS sessions themselves (see p.131).

The focus group interview lasted 45 minutes. Participants discussed the structure of the RTS model, and reflected on its value for themselves and the wider team. Everything shared in the meeting was regarded by the group as relevant to the issue and nothing needed omitting. Once the interview was over an abridged transcription was produced from a digital recording of the discussion as advocated by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009).

Using a focus group method within an existing RTS allowed participants to discuss their experiences openly, to share their views, and explore each other's thoughts and feelings (Kruger and Casey, 2000). In this instance pre-existing group dynamics positively affected participant interaction, facilitated trust and openness, and enabled effective data collection (Powell and Single, 1996). That said, it is possible that some participants may have felt unable to express any ideas likely to be considered divergent from the group consensus in an effort to maintain group harmony. One way this could have been overcome would have been to request private, anonymised data from participants through individual interviews or questionnaires.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the research was provided by the Senior EP within the EPS and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were forewarned that confidentiality could not be guaranteed by other members of the research group. They had a right to withdraw in accordance with the guidelines set out by the British Ethical Research Association (BERA) (10-15; 2011); British Psychological Society Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS) (2.1, 2009); (Polit and Hungler, 1999; see Appendices B and C).

Privacy during data collection was maintained by placing a private sign on the door of a dedicated room to inform other staff that a private meeting was taking place. Participants' names were anonymised during transcription in accordance with the BPS (2.1, 2009) and BERA (25; 2011) guidelines. The digital recording of the focus group and transcribed text were stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998, modified 2003). Participants were made aware that their responses would be shared anonymously in a research paper.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using data driven thematic analysis. Both latent and manifest meanings were analysed from participants' shared experiences of RTS similar to the method employed by Graneheim and Lundman (2004) and Boyatzis (1998). The process began by listening to an audio recording of the focus group discussion and transcribing the data. The transcription was then divided into contextually referenced meaning units. Each meaning units was allocated one of thirty codes that emerged inductivity from the data. Similar or related codes were grouped together and arranged into one of nine sub-themes. These were later grouped into six themes, and one super-ordinate theme that were considered to have manifest from the transcription (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). The themes were formed in accordance with the studies research question:

'What are participants' views regarding the value of RTS as a tool for personal and professional development in EP practice?'

The themes where then presented alongside their related sub-themes and the entire data analysis process was then presented to the participants to ensure that each step fairly represented the participant's intentions. Once this was complete the themes were reviewed and refined with regard to the literature review and to ensure that they formed a coherent narrative. Any extracts, codes or subthemes that remained uncategorised were then assigned into an existing theme, or discarded from the analysis. A final thematic analysis review was conducted with all participants in order to

check that the resultant thematic map accurately represented the data set as a whole, as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006). Examples for each meaning unit, code, sub-theme and theme are presented in Table 1. Three exemplar quotations are presented to demonstrate the process.

Table 1: Examples of meaning units condensed meaning units, codes, sub-themes and themes

Meaning units	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
"You didn't come away with a list of things to do, but that is a strength because… it only increases [your options] by hearing others' perspectives."	Broaden perspectives. Different perspectives. Different to other models of supervision.	Presents options and possibilities rather than confines thinking.	Fresh Perspective
"Effectively it isn't only one case [being explored], because there will be common elements to other cases that we can take away consider and apply if we feel it is appropriate."	Mutually beneficial.	It is a mutually beneficial experience for both reflective team and supervisee.	Mutually beneficial
"There wasn't a pressure to have to choose one solution. It was about how you thought about things, and it made me think about the issue in a different way. That is what was helpful."	Freedom from compliance. Interrupts habitual thought processes.	It presents options and opportunities that broaden rather than confine thinking.	Respect for Supervisee Autonomy. Fresh Perspective.

Results

Six themes were identified, the last focusing on ideas for future development of RTS. These themes have been presented using thematic maps comprised of one super-ordinate theme, and two themes (see Figures 2, 3, and 4). An explanation of each theme is presented beneath each figure, and exemplified using quotations from the focus group data to demonstrate authenticity.

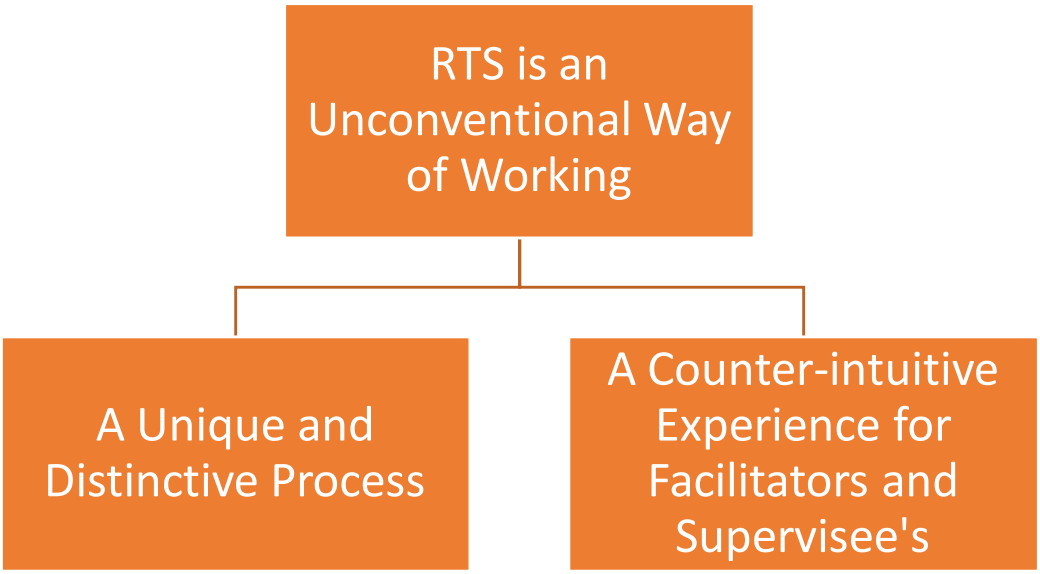


Figure 2: Thematic map relating to RTS as an unconventional way of working.

Theme (i): An unconventional way of working

The structure of RTS was thought to be qualitatively different from any other form of supervision that the group had experienced before. The absence of a direct discussion between supervisor and supervisee, solution finding, and target setting process took participants time to get used to. This was perceived to be strange and counter-intuitive at first. RTS conflicted with participants' daily practice and EPS culture, as they were used to directing conversations towards agreed actions. The advantage of this process was that it allowed the supervisee time to talk uninterrupted about things that were important to them, and allowed them to remain in control of the issue presentation.

> *"…in this case the team just reflect [by] themselves. That makes it different from anything else that I have come across. There is no direct discussion, but there are questions."* - Jenny

> *"…it is different from other types of group consultations in that you are not necessarily offering solutions to the issue the person brings."* - Kelly

The idea of being observed by the RT, and the lack of feedback between the RT and the supervisee/supervisor pair felt "unnatural" for supervisees. One supervisor said that he sometimes needed to intervene to prevent dialogue spontaneously developing between groups during supervision.

The RT also said that it felt uncomfortable to leave the supervisee with their concerns unresolved, or at least without hearing what direction the supervisee intended to take. Some supervisees felt anxious about presenting issues in front of an audience, and supervisors felt that their questioning and listening skills were open to scrutiny. These feelings emerged despite participants being well established, respectful, and supportive in their daily interactions. Participants questioned whether RTS would work in less secure working environments, or across disciplines where there may not be a rapport between participants. Such reflections are consistent with observations made by Griffith et al. (1992) and Sells et al. (1994), who found that RTs are seen as less effective in situations where trust was not well established. This may be especially true if recipients suspect that the comments are in any way disingenuous and overly positive (Lax, 1995).

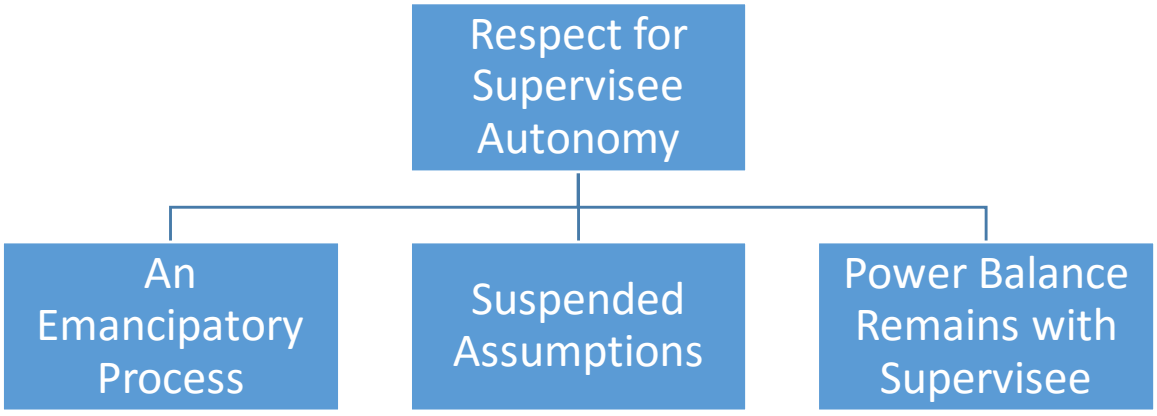


Figure 3: Thematic map relating to ways in which RTS respects supervisee autonomy

Theme (ii): Respect for supervisee autonomy

As unsettling as the process felt at first, the deliberate separation of the supervisee from the RT was considered important because it prevented the RT from interrupting the supervisee's presentation,

and allowed the focus to remain firmly on their concerns. During supervision sessions the RT purposefully attempt to protect the supervisee from pressure to justify their beliefs or actions. Similarly, there is no expectation that the supervisee accepts or publically discloses any ideas they intend to carry out. This was thought to benefit the supervisee because it removed any defensive barriers they might have regarding their personal or professional practice; avoids pressure to conform to dominant group members; actively demonstrates respect for the supervisee professional judgement; and affords the supervisee ultimate control over their circumstances.

The absence of dialogue between the RT and the supervisee forces the RT to listen to the 'whole story', and suspend any assumptions they might have until it is fully explained. Not only does this prevent interruption, but it also prevents the RT from hijacking the exposition by asking questions that relate to their ideas, experiences and interests.

Thinking about the presenting issue continued long after the supervision session had ended. The supervisee was free to accept only those comments that appealed to them, and this process allowed them to choose what kind of EP that *they* wanted to be.

> *"You can just listen and reflect, and certain things do strike a chord with you, and those are the things you take away. That for me is a big part of it. It is a personal decision, no-body else needs to know what you've actually done."* - Allan

One supervisor said that he found this part of the process difficult, because he often developed an interest in the presenting issue, and he then became self-conscious of the need to avoid leading questions, and to preserve the supervisee's space to direct their own exposition.

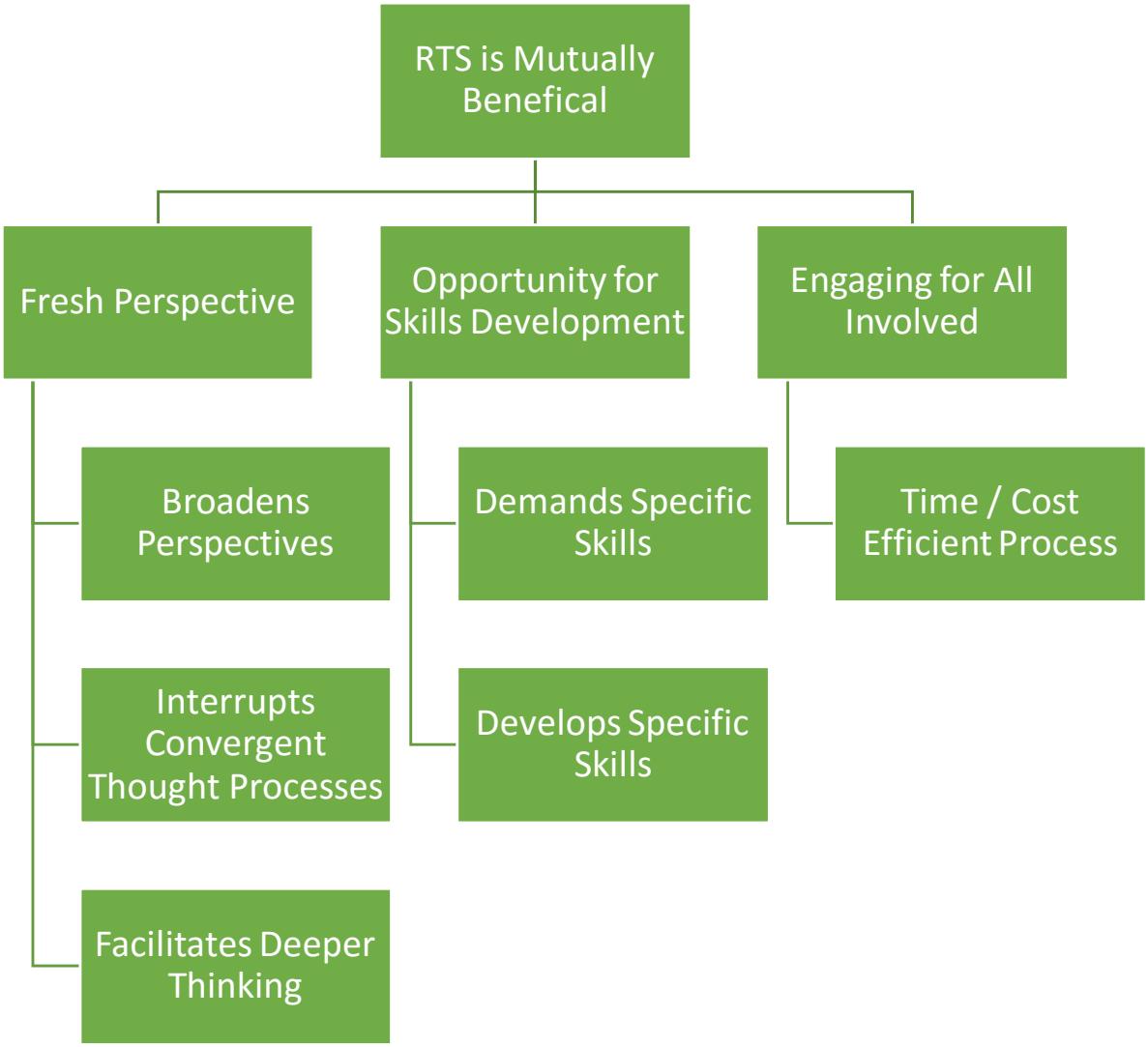


Figure 4: Thematic map relating to the mutual benefits of RTS

Theme (iii): It provides participants with a fresh perspective

A clear and recurring strength of RTS is that it enabled supervisees to explore their concerns in depth, and provided a great deal of material for reflection. The RTS process interrupted participants' habitual thought processes by creating a reflective space, where they were exposed to a wealth of alternative perspectives and constructs in a non-threatening way. This was considered a useful way to improve self-awareness and the professional development of all members.

"If you are given an answer or several different answers you have the focus on those, whether they are good or bad, and not think of wider alternatives. With this... It's like your options are opened up. No-one is trying to pin you down. It is broadening [your] perspectives. That is useful." - Jenny

Theme (iv): Mutual benefits for everyone involved

Participants agreed that being a member of the RT was just as engaging and valuable as being the supervisee. The issues being discussed contained themes that were transferrable to other areas of work, and the emerging ideas and thought provoking questions stimulated self-reflection. RTS was therefore considered efficient because it allowed all participants an opportunity to hear the thoughts of others about a particular issue or concern.

"Whichever role I am in; it gives me the opportunity to listen to the thoughts of seven or eight other EPs on any topic. I think that is quite a luxury." - Allan

Theme (v): It is a skilled approach with opportunities for skills development

While RTS mainly draws on generic consultation skills, supervisors noted that preserving the supervisee's autonomy required determination and specific questioning skills that focused primarily on the supervisee's interpretation of events in an open and non-directive way. There was a perception that an understanding of the theoretical basis of RTS was necessary to best facilitate the process. Facilitating RTS made participants self-aware of the kinds of questions they ask in their daily practice.

"These are different listening skills. Rather than the active listening that we usually do, it is almost like 'pure listening'… They were [also] different sort of questions to those that I might ordinarily ask in consultation." - Kelly

Some members thought that by allowing members of the RT to rotate the role of supervisor, an opportunity was presented for team members to develop their own skills in the role of supervisor.

> *"We need to develop ourselves to being able to facilitate more instead of just relying on one person, so that we are able to develop those skills, as opposed to just the listening skills."* - Kelly

There was one dissenting voice who thought that the skills required to facilitate RTS were the same consultation skills EPs use in daily practice.

Theme (vi): Opportunities for development

A perceived limitation of RTS was that the supervisee's exposition of the issue was often lengthy and demanded a great deal of attentional resources from both the RT and the supervisor. As a consequence, some listeners found it difficult to remember their initial thoughts about the issue, and missed opportunities to discuss them with the RT. To address this, some possible variations to the approach were discussed by the group, including:

- The value of members of the RT taking notes during the interview phase while the supervisee is describing their situation.
- The option to introduce dialogue by switching from supervisee to the RT at a midway point. This exchange would provide an opportunity for the supervisee to clarify any early misunderstandings, and for the RT to recalibrate to the supervisee's main concerns.
- The option to run two short RTS sessions in place of one longer session, in order to cover a wider range of issues.
- The option to facilitate RTS within multi-agency / multi-disciplinary teams.

Discussion

This study aims to explore participants' views about the value of RTS for personal and professional development in EP practice. It demonstrates that RTS is an efficient and cost effective way for all EPs to develop their skills as problem-solvers and supervisors, regardless of experience or role. The outcomes of this small scale research confirm Nolan's (1999) claim that supervision is important to EPs and contributes to their professional development. This study provides further evidence specific to the effectiveness of RTS group supervision as a cost-effective means of ensuring that all members regularly receive support (Hyrkas, 2001); and important finding for EPSs during a time of financial austerity.

The most prominent feature of RTS was is that it broadened participants' perspectives about issues relevant to their practice. This finding matches that reported by Haley, (2002) and Brownlee et al. (2009), who found that RTS participants viewed their circumstances with a 'fresh perspective', and provided participants with opportunities to share and reflect on their experiences. This process was found to develop skills and understanding that complements the EP role. Supervisees reported that the approach is respectful, non-judgemental, and preserved their professional autonomy.

Because RTS is a model that benefits to *all* participants, it surpasses Hawkins and Shohet's (2007) three primary functions; to develop the supervisee's skills and competencies; to maintain standards in the quality of their work; and to provide emotional support. RTS is not therapy, but like therapy, quality relationships are essential to the process. RTS shares underlying principles with all effective forms of supervision, including; a safe, positive climate where supervisees feel secure enough to express their vulnerabilities and concerns; an egalitarian stance; topics of interest to the whole group; and clarity regarding the model's principles (Lindgren et al., 2005; Scott and Smith, 2008; Kangasniemi et al. 2011). Furthermore, Johansson et al., (2006), and Brink et al. (2011) highlight that where such values are modelled in teams, it can lead to a positive attitude change in their wider professional relationships.

An identified weaknesses of the approach is that it requires a skilled supervisor, fluent in the models principles, with a high level of self-awareness. This is important in order to manage participants who may feel that the process is unnatural, or feel personally exposed during their exposition. Improvements and variations to the process were identified, mainly focusing on improving the quality of the RTs reflections. The impact of such changes have not been explored, and may be worth investigating in future research.

Quality of Research – A Critique

The research limitations are discussed with reference to credibility, dependability and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Polit and Hungler, 1999; Tracey, 2010). To ensure a credible sample it was necessary to use purposive sampling involving all members of an established RTS group. Although this method allowed a variety of perspectives to be debated, it is possible that some members may have felt marginalised due to their relative inexperience with RTS, or pre-existing power differentials within the team.

The amount of data collected was sufficient for analysis with many themes recurring. All data was collected simultaneously, then transcribed, coded and thematically analysed by the author to maximise dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In the absence of a co-author to verify the themes identified by the author, it was important to elicit and reflect upon the feedback provided by participants during the data analysis to establish the accuracy of interpretation. Exemplar quotations presented for each theme add to demonstrate authenticity of the data handling process, and are intended to resonate with readers (Tracey, 2010).

The entire data set has been made available in Appendix D to add transparency and coherence to the data analysis process (Yardley, 2000). Transferability of the outcomes is limited, as the study represents the views of just one group of participants in a Local Authority EPS (Polit and Hungler,

1999); yet, small samples are generally considered an acceptable trade-off in qualitative research (Polit and Beck, 2006).

Implications for Educational Psychology Practice

RTS is an efficient, effective, and capable group supervision model, able to broaden perspectives and facilitate the thinking of all participants. These qualities may be of interest to EPSs as a valuable quality assurance tool for safeguarding EPs' personal and professional development and is well suited to their skillset.

EPs are able to bring their concerns to the fore, and discuss them in depth, in a forum that respectfully maintains their professional autonomy. This process is mutually beneficial as it provides a forum where colleagues are able to share their experience, knowledge, and insights in a non-directive way. EPs are free to accept whichever ideas they feel best complements their professional identity, and are liberated from the expectation to accept a particular course of action. In this study, RTS benefitted all participants regardless of status or experience and it has contributed to their expertise. These enduring benefits mean that RTS should be considered a cost effective addition to any existing individual supervision arrangements that ensure EPs are able to meet their supervision and continued professional development requirements, as outlined by Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010). Some services may benefit from the opportunities that RTS creates for members to further develop their supervision skills, and may consider exporting the model to multi-disciplinary teams, potentially increasing participants' opportunity for diverse perspectives and insights to be considered in their professional practice.

RTS is not free from limitations. Participants in this study found that it took take time to get used to, and that it taxed their listening, attention and questioning skills. Furthermore, its rich, in-depth examination of issues can sometimes be inappropriate for discussing less significant topics that may instead benefit from a 'lighter touch'. Furthermore, when selecting from the various supervision

models available, it is important not to overlook the opportunity cost of adopting RTS over other available models. Presently there is an absence of comparative research in this area.

For success, the approach requires participants to have a clear understanding of the purpose and potential of RTS, and to adhere to clear boundaries and ground rules. This includes a safe environment and a mutually respectful team who are willing to set aside their own interests and judgements.

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Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Focus Group Schedule

This focus group will involve discussion based around three research questions relating to the use of Reflective Teams as a model for collegial supervision as used within [redacted] Educational Psychology Service (EPS). The interview schedule is outlined below:

Informed consent check

- The focus group participants are meeting [redacted]
- A notice is posted on the door requesting privacy while the focus group interview is being conducted.
- No one else but those taking part in the discussion are present.
- Check that informed consent has been granted including demographic data.
- Any questions participants have about the research are answered.
- Digital recording device is set up and turned on.
- Use a code to refer to individual participants.

Review of the aims of the research

The aims of this study are to:

- Describe your views about the basic structure and function of the RT model of collegial supervision;
- Explore your views about the value of RT supervision in developing personal and professional skills in EP practice.

Ground rules will be established at the beginning of the session

- Only one person talks at a time, listen to others when they are talking.
- Confidentiality is encouraged. “What is shared in the room stays in the room.”
- It is important for us to hear everyone’s ideas and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers to questions – just ideas, experiences and opinions, which are all valuable.
- It is important for us to hear all sides of the experience – both the positive and the negative.
- It is important for everyone’s ideas to be equally represented and respected.

Topic one (max 15 minutes)

Would anyone like to start by sharing that they understand to be the structure and function of RT as a model of collegial supervision?

Extension questions:

- How is RT collegial supervision carried out in this EPS?
- How does that exercise contribute to the overall process?
- What kind of ideas does this stage generate?
- How is RT collegial supervision different from other supervision models you have used?

Topic two (max 30 minutes)

What in your opinion is the value of RT collegial supervision for developing personal and professional skills in EP practice?

Extension questions:

- What do you think of the value of RT supervision as a method of developing your personal skills?
- What do you think of the value of RT supervision as a method of developing your professional skills?
- What do you think of the value of RT supervision as a method of developing the capacity of the EPS?
- How does RT collegial supervision make a contribution to skills development?
- What kinds of thoughts or feelings does RT collegial supervision generate?

At the end of the session

Remind participants will contact them during the data analysis to check that my interpretation of the discussion matches the intended meaning. They do not need to do anything at this stage, but are encouraged to reflect on the analysis and identify any perceived errors in interpretation.

Once the paper has been written up they will receive a copy of the research so they are able to read the findings.

Thank participants for their time and contributions

Appendix B

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Information Sheet

This informed consent form is for members of [redacted] Educational Psychology Service who are invited to participate in an evaluation of the use of Reflective Teams as a model for collegial supervision.

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

• Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)

• Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

Introduction

My name is Robert Brooks and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my third year of training at The University of Birmingham. I am conducting some research that aims to evaluate participants' experiences of the use of Reflective Teams (RT) as a model of supervision within Educational Psychology Services (EPS), and to explore the impact of RT on participants' personal and professional development.

You are invited to take part in this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate, and are free to discuss it with anyone you wish beforehand. If you have any questions before you give your consent may speak to me in person, contact me by email at rxb296@bham.ac.uk, or by telephone on 07584 864009.

Title: Reflective Teams: A model of collegial supervision for developing professional competence within Educational Psychology Services.

Purpose: RT was originally developed for use in family therapy by Andesen (1987; 1991). While its use is in decline in family therapy, it has been adapted as a tool for use in clinical casework, supervision and didactic learning experiences (Pander and Stinchfield, 2014).

The purpose of this research is to begin the discussion of the value of RT as a supervision model for EPSs by presenting the views of members from [redacted] EPS who have used it in this way.

Participant Selection: You are being invited to take part in this research because you have experience as an EP (or Trainee EP) at [redacted] EPS where RT supervision is practiced.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and your decision will have no bearing on any work-related evaluations or reports. You may withdraw from the research at any time for up to two weeks after the focus group session.

Procedures: To qualify as a participant for this study you will need to be an EP or Trainee EP and have attended at least one RT supervision session delivered in [redacted] Council Educational Psychology Service. If you agree to participate you will be asked to attend a focus group interview that will take no more than one hour on a Wednesday afternoon.

This interview will be facilitated by me, and will include other members from the [redacted] Council Educational Psychology Service. No one else but those taking part in the discussion will be present. The focus group interview will take place in the Mon Law library, with a notice posted on the door requesting privacy while the focus group interview takes place. I will answer any questions you have about the research before we proceed.

The focus group interview will ask the group to describe their experiences of RT supervision openly. You will then be asked to share your thoughts about its impact on your personal and professional development and wider impact on the team.

You do not have to share anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

An audio of the entire discussion will be digitally recorded. The recording will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998; 2003). This means the information recorded is confidential, and no one else except me will have access to the recording. This information will then be transcribed and anonymised. The original recording will then be stored on an encrypted memory stick and kept in a locked filing cabinet within the University of Birmingham for 10 years, after which it will be destroyed.

Risks: There are no planned activities that risk of causing social embarrassment (such as a requirement to role play), nor will you be coerced to participate in any way. All data will be collected privately, and stored confidentially. You do not have to answer any questions or take part in the discussion if you feel the questions are too personal or if talking about them makes you feel uncomfortable.

Benefits: There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help others to understand the value of RT supervision. To my knowledge, this is the first time research has been conducted that explores RT supervision in an Educational Psychology Service.

Reimbursements: There is no material or financial incentive provided to encourage you to take part in this research.

Confidentiality: I will not be sharing information linked to your name with anyone, nor will any personal information linked to your name be disclosed in any publication of this study. I will ask you to provide some demographic data which will be presented anonymously, including the number of participants, the gender split, the group's age range and mean age, the range of participant job titles, range and mean number of years' experience as an EP, and an estimation of the number of times you have participated in RT supervision session. In the transcription, any information you share will be linked to a coded identifier rather than your name. Only I will have the key to this code and this information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

During the focus group discussion, you will hear each other's views. I cannot guarantee that other members of the group will maintain your confidentiality, but I ask you not to share with people outside the group what is said during the focus group.

If anything is raised that relates to harm / potential harm to any person, then [redacted] Council policy on confidentiality and safeguarding will be followed. I will remain on site for 20 minutes after the focus group is complete to discuss anything raised by the discussion that you would like to discuss with me in private.

Sharing the Results: Once the research is complete you will receive an email thanking you for your participation and summarising the key findings. The Principle EP of [redacted] Council will also receive a written summary of the findings. The research findings will be available to other researchers at the University of Birmingham via the eThesis repository. These findings may be published or presented at future conferences so that others may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: Once again, you do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and choosing to participate will not affect your job or job-related evaluations in any way.

After the focus group discussion you will have up to 2 weeks to reflect on your contribution and retract any remarks you wish from the transcription by contacting me in person, by email at [redacted]. During this period, you have the right to withdraw from the study entirely. In this event your contribution will be omitted entirely. You may contact me during any part of the research process if you have any further questions relating to the research process.

This proposal has been written in accordance with the British Psychological Society Code of Human Research Ethics (2010) and the British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011). Please keep this Information Sheet in a safe place in case you want to read it again in the future.

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Certificate of Consent

Title: Reflective Teams: A model of collegial supervision for developing professional competence within Educational Psychology Services

I have read the participant information sheet and I wish to participate in the above project.

To give consent please acknowledge the following by ticking each box (✓).

I have read the information sheet and understand what this study is about.	
I have been able to think about the information and have been able to ask any questions about the study. I am happy with the answers given.	
I understand that answering the questions is completely up to me and I can stop at any time without having to give a reason.	
I understand that I have the right to change my mind about participating in the study after the focus group has taken place.	
I understand that what I say may be quoted in the research under a pseudonym.	
I agree to a digital recorder being used during the focus group interview and understand how this will be stored.	
I understand that I will be offered a summary of the research findings once the study is completed.	

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

A copy of this research can be forwarded to you when it is finalised in June 2015. If you would like to receive a copy, please include your email address below.

Email _____

Appendix C

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Demographic Data

The following information is required to produce a demographic overview of the participants in this research project.

This information will be kept confidentially, and stored in a locked filing cabinet and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998; 2003). No-one other than me will be able to link your name to your responses.

Gender

Date of Birth

Current job role

Approximately how many years and months have you worked in [redacted] Educational Psychology Service?

Approximately how many times have you participated in a Reflective Teams collegial supervision?

Appendix D1: Transcription and Initial Coding

	Transcription Meaning units	Codes	Codes	Codes	Codes	Codes
Rob	Would anyone like to start by sharing what they understand the function of Reflective Teams as a model of peer supervision that we have used here in Newport? So just tell me a little bit about it. To introduce it... How do you imagine it?					
Rob	I'm trying to say, what is it that we have been doing? If I'm, going to describe this in a paper, in your words what would you say it is that we do?					
Allan	It's a discussion with one facilitator, and usually one individual, but it could be more than one individual. About an issues of particular interest or concern to the individual or pair. Which is observed at a small distance by the rest of the team.	Clear Structure				
Allan	At a point when it is felt pertinent and appropriate the team reflect on what they have heard. Talk about what they have heard, give their own thoughts and ideas.	Clear Structure				
Allan	Without there being any direct contact between people who are facilitating the problem presenting doing the problem presenting and the reflective team.	Clear Structure				
Jenny	It is a structure, you've got the facilitator and the person whose issue is being discussed sit together. The rest of the team sit away and listen.	Clear Structure	Different to other models	Reflective Process		

Jenny	They discuss the issue and then the team reflect together, but again they sit separately to the facilitator. Then they go back to the pair, and sometimes back again to the team.	Clear Structure	Different to other models	Reflective Process		
Jenny	So it's that discussion, but there is never discussion between the team and the pair.	Clear Structure	Different to other models	Reflective Process		
Jenny	The discussion is within each group, which is quite different to other types of supervision where the general rule is, if it is a group supervision the group will talk directly to the person with the issue.	Clear Structure	Different to other models	Reflective Process		
Jenny	But in this case the team just reflect themselves. That makes it different from anything else that I have come across. There is no direct discussion, but there are questions.	Clear Structure	Different to other models	Reflective Process		
Kelly	One of the key things that stands out for me is that it is different from other types of group consultations in that you are not necessarily offering solutions to the issue the person brings.	Freedom from compliance	Different to other models	Non-goal orientation	Reflective process	Different perspectives
Kelly	It is to open up different perspectives on a problem and different ways of thinking of a problem.	Freedom from compliance	Different to other models	Non-goal orientation	Reflective process	Different perspectives
Kelly	Different people's perspectives who might be thinking about it and constructing it in a slightly different way.	Freedom from compliance	Different to other models	Non-goal orientation	Reflective process	Different perspectives

Kelly	And just to open up that difference between different people's perspectives as opposed to offering a range of solutions which the person chooses from.	Freedom from compliance	Different to other models	Non-goal orientation	Reflective process	Different perspectives
Kelly	There is no expectation on the person bringing the issue to choose a way forward or commit to what they are going to do next. It is just to hear those different perspectives and think those and consider those and maybe result in a change in their thinking,	Freedom from compliance	Different to other models	Non-goal orientation	Reflective process	Different perspectives
Kelly	But I don't think that is the essence of it.	Freedom from compliance	Different to other models	Non-goal orientation	Reflective process	Different perspectives
Rob	What is the purpose of that change in perspective? And separateness. How do those contribute to the process? What is the value of that?					
Allan	Having been in the position of someone who has brought an issue I didn't feel under any pressure whatsoever to take away anything that was said.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Reflective Process	Problem remains within holder control	Different perspectives
Allan	I didn't have to enter into a dialogue where I might have felt the need to justify my position and to say, I'm going to go with what Kelly or Rob said, because that is not a part of it.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Reflective Process	Problem remains within holder control	Different perspectives
Allan	There is no pressure at all, you can just listen and reflect, and certain things do strike a chord with you. And They are the things you take away. That for me is a big part of it. It is a personal decision, no-body else needs to know what you've actually done.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Reflective Process	Problem remains within holder control	Different perspectives

Allan	You could go away an ignore everything that was said (I haven't!) or which bits really strike a chord and probably led to you doing something differently. That is how that contributes to that part of the process.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Reflective Process	Problem remains within holder control	Different perspectives
Kelly	Which felt a bit strange to me at first, because other forms of group consultations or supervision as a facilitator, have always come to a problem solving type conclusion or actions.	Non-goal orientated	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Freedom from compliance	Different Perspectives	Reflective Process
Kelly	At the beginning it felt uncomfortable at first to just leave it there.	Non-goal orientated	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Freedom from compliance	Different Perspectives	Reflective Process
Kelly	Because of that difference it felt like things weren't tied together as neatly as with other approaches, you don’t come away with that immediate feeling that the problem has been solved.	Non-goal orientated	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Freedom from compliance	Different Perspectives	Reflective Process
Kelly	But actually it is the thinking that you do. There is a bit of thinking you do after that driving home, you think "that was interesting".	Non-goal orientated	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Freedom from compliance	Different Perspectives	Reflective Process
Kelly	Or "I didn’t really think of it that way". I wonder whether that has a difference. You don’t feel like you need to justify or be defensive about the course of action you have taken, because you just think about it afterwards.	Non-goal orientated	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Freedom from compliance	Different Perspectives	Reflective Process
Jenny	That was, strange at first. You didn’t come away with a list of things to do. But that is a strength in that that it in a way only narrows your options. In only increases them by hearing other people’s perspectives.	Broadens perspectives	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Different perspectives	Different to other models	

Jenny	Usually you have some potential options in your heard and you can develop them.	Broadens perspectives	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Different perspectives	Different to other models	
Jenny	If you are given an answer or several different answers you have the focus on those, whether they are good or bad, and not think of wider alternatives.	Broadens perspectives	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Different perspectives	Different to other models	
Jenny	With this, the options are only increased rather than narrowed down rather than one or two options to go with.	Broadens perspectives	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Different perspectives	Different to other models	
Rob	It's like your options are opened up, no one is trying to pin you down and its broadening perspectives that is useful.					
Brad	I was listening to what people was saying and thinking the same thing, but my understanding of it as well and that of other traditional models of supervision.	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Different to other models	Different perspectives		
Brad	We were talking about systems this morning and this idea that systems self-regulate as well, so that if you are receiving supervision, and you have a supervision relationship,	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Different to other models	Different perspectives		
Brad	Then over time you begin to understand that relationship, and the potential is that the ideas that generates fit a pattern of your understanding of the interactions you have.	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Different to other models	Different perspectives		

Brad	The idea of Reflective Teams is to recognise that, so you still have that process happening, but the team look in on that and they can introduce an idea of difference.	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Different to other models	Different perspectives		
Brad	If we had one week, two people who delivered supervision to each other, come in and take part of the Reflective Team, then you might walk away with a difference in that supervision relationship as a result as well.	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Different to other models	Different perspectives		
Rob	Yeah, it sort of challenges, changes through different perspectives, those habitual relationships that we have.					
Rob	Sara, you have only been to one of the sessions haven't you, and I don't know if you wanted to contribute because it has only been that one occasion, but I am interest in what your thoughts were of that experience?					
Sara	Similar to what others were saying, there wasn't a pressure to have to choose one solution. And it was about how you thought about things and it made me think about the issue in a different way. That is what was helpful.	Freedom from compliance	Interrupts habitual thought processes			
Sara	I think that as Kelly. Said, you create agreed actions at the end, we are usually tied to 'what we are going to do?', but I was freed up from that.	Freedom from compliance	Interrupts habitual thought processes			
Rob	I was hearing earlier that it felt strange at first, not to be doing that, because it was a different process. And I thought that would be a fresher experience for you both, you as well Michelle.					

Michelle	I like the way that it has a very clear structure. You sit and observe two people talking about a case and then we observe, and then we turn around and discuss what we have just heard.	Clear Structure	Explore the issue in depth	Different perspectives		
Michelle	You don’t get that interruption then, and I think it is good in a way for both sides to have that clear boundary that you don't cross over into each other’s conversations.	Clear Structure	Explore the issue in depth	Different perspectives		
Michelle	I think it is good for the person bringing the case to be able to just sit and listen and not to be questions by all these other people. That want to find out answers to all these little bits of information that they might have questions to.	Clear Structure	Explore the issue in depth	Different perspectives		
Michelle	I felt as an observer I was sat there thinking, "I wonder if this" and "I wonder if that", but I don't know if that then sparked off interest in the case for the case holder that left them to carry on wondering what was picked up on.	Clear Structure	Explore the issue in depth	Different perspectives		
Michelle	I felt that discussing that in a small group, light bulbs were going off when thinking about what we had just heard.	Clear Structure	Explore the issue in depth	Different perspectives		
Rob	I wanted to make a contribution as well because I have seen a few Reflective Teams.	Explore the issue in depth				
Rob	Sometimes I have questions that come up in that discussion, and thinking about 'not interrupting', I think "I'd love to know the answer to that", but then 10 minutes go by, but lots of other questions come by.	Explore the issue in depth				

Rob	Part of me thinks, "wouldn't it be great to find out the answers to those?" But the other part thinks, "Well maybe that is a good thing, because it allows the situation to be explored fully?"	Explore the issue in depth				
Brad	I think that is really interesting because in me it inspires the question of ownership and power and things, because we all become really fascinated.	Problem remains within holder control	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Supervisee's perspective retained	Freedom from compliance	
Brad	I've facilitated a few of them, and I find it really difficult, when I am listening to the team, to not respond to some of the things that really interests me.	Problem remains within holder control	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Supervisee's perspective retained	Freedom from compliance	
Brad	What I am really aware of is that, when I become interested, then I potentially lead the person in a way that might not be the way they want to go. And that, is the value.	Problem remains within holder control	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Supervisee's perspective retained	Freedom from compliance	
Brad	The other thing is that having facilitated a few, I am really conscious about now 'unnatural' the process is. When I am sitting with somebody, I can see some people fighting that natural process to just turn and go, Oh yeah! I *did* think that!	Problem remains within holder control	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Supervisee's perspective retained	Freedom from compliance	
Brad	And you can see people hold it in. Sometimes I need to pull people back to just two of us, and help them to resist the temptation of engaging.	Problem remains within holder control	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Supervisee's perspective retained	Freedom from compliance	
Brad	Because as soon as they engage, they get drawn into something.	Problem remains within holder control	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Supervisee's perspective retained	Freedom from compliance	

Kelly	It is hard for the team as well. To not, as you're saying, to not ask those questions and get drawn into that dialogue.	Opportunity for development	Strange / counter-intuitive			
Kelly	We did briefly mention at the last meeting, would it be OK to being paper and pen to note those things. Sometimes when people are talking for 20 minutes you forget.	Opportunity for development	Strange / counter-intuitive			
Kelly	But, is that part of it? It that part of not jumping in too quickly with questions, but the more the person talks, that questions might be answered, or it might not be relevant anymore, because you have found out more information.	Opportunity for development	Strange / counter-intuitive			
Kelly	I don't know whether it is worth sometimes jotting questions down, or would that change it in some way? We haven't tried doing that? I remember last time, I said, would it be OK to do that? Or to go back?	Opportunity for development	Strange / counter-intuitive			
Kelly	We have previously listened to the case in its entirety. Then talked to the team. We have discussed having a shorter presentation of the issue, and back to the team and back to the person again, and then maybe back to the team again.	Opportunity for development	Strange / counter-intuitive			
Kelly	I suppose you could try it the other way by jotting things down to see if it helps or hinders the process.	Opportunity for development	Strange / counter-intuitive			
Alan	I know when I have had a couple of turns in the hot seat. However unnatural the process, it actually feels very supportive. Either to just hear the conversations between the team afterwards.	Supportive Process	Different perspectives			

Alan	Some of the things you might have considered yourself, it is reassuring. But also to gain the perspective you haven't thought of.	Supportive Process	Different perspectives			
Alan	It is a reassuring as well as helpful process.	Supportive Process	Different perspectives			
Rob	That reassuring feeling that you're not going to be judged, or to justify the things you've said. It suggests a safeness, or containment thing? I don't know.					
Rob	We have gone on 15 minutes or so of introduction.					
Rob	What I am really interested in is how it affects our personal and professional development, because I feel that is almost the purpose really.					
Rob	It is a nice thing to do, and perhaps an interesting process, but how does it have an impact on personal and professional development? Does it?					
Brad	I think personally thinking, one of the things I am aware of, is that having qualified a while ago, you develop interests. Particular ways of looking at something. For me attachment is something I am interested in.	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Broadens perspectives			

Brad	I am also really aware that when I hear people talking about concerns, I will frequently go into that as a first explanation.	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Broadens perspectives			
Brad	So what I am saying is that this process is really useful because it makes me climb out of my little box of interests, and hypotheses to go "Oh yeah, but it could be that?"	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Broadens perspectives			
Brad	Which I might not necessarily think about within a consultation myself, because I am too focused on that which habitually floats about my head.	Interrupts habitual thought processes	Broadens perspectives			
Jenny	I find hearing people's case is as useful as talking about my own. So I think you get a lot out of it, whether or not it is your case. Perhaps in more traditional types of supervision, unless it is your turn you don't.	Mutually beneficial	Broadens perspectives			
Jenny	You can get a lot out of it as well. You learn a lot by listening to what people are doing, and what they are finding difficult.	Mutually beneficial	Broadens perspectives			
Jenny	It is valuable being part of the reflective team, as valuable as when you are bringing an issue.	Mutually beneficial	Broadens perspectives			
Kelly	Maybe that is linked to it being more about issues that are common across cases, as opposed to finding a solution to your particular case?	Mutually beneficial	Broadens perspectives	Non-goal orientation		

Kelly	Because at the end of it if you would like the crew to come up with a way to help with your particular case, then that is perhaps more specific than wondering a bit more about the more general issues.	Mutually beneficial	Broadens perspectives	Non-goal orientation		
Allan	One of the things for me in terms of development is that whichever role am in, it gives me the opportunity to listen to the thoughts of seven or eight other EPs on any topic. I think that is quite a luxury.	Broadens perspectives	Freedom from compliance	Efficient Process		
Allan	And again, whatever position you are in you can listen to those thoughts without necessarily thinking you have to do anything about them or respond to them. It is just handy to have other people's constructions and perspectives.	Broadens perspectives	Freedom from compliance	Efficient Process		
Allan	As much as anything, it is a really efficient way of enabling that.	Broadens perspectives	Freedom from compliance	Efficient Process		
Rob	That is interesting that you say that, because I was thinking that looking from the outside and not understanding the process, one criticism might be, "well that is an awful lot of supervisors, for one case, for one issue. It is looking at something in depth.					
Rob	It sounds quite expensive. And yet you are saying that is not the case, it is mutually beneficial.					
Brad	But then if it was the other way around, the reason we brought this in in the first place was because we couldn't afford the time to give individual supervision to everybody.	Efficient Process				

Brad	So it is kind of cheaper in that sense, to do it like this. It is just one hour a fortnight, rather than 4 or 5 hours.	Efficient Process				
Alan	Effectively it isn't only one case, because there will be common elements to other cases that we can take away, consider and apply if we feel it appropriate.	Mutually beneficial				
Rob	Yeah it was you Kelly that said, those links between cases, expose you to different ways of thinking.					
Kelly	That is a criticism of some of the other services that apply other forms of supervision and consultation, that it is just picking up on children, unless it is just your issue or case,	Mutually beneficial	Engaging	Opportunity for development		
Kelly	Then people perhaps can zone out, or switch off. You have more of a vested interest if the case is yours.	Mutually beneficial	Engaging	Opportunity for development		
Kelly	I was thinking about whether this type of process, would work with other people? Like us facilitating it with teachers? Or would they find that quite unsatisfying, or difficult in that it is usually to come up with some way forward or solution?	Mutually beneficial	Engaging	Opportunity for development		
Kelly	I was just wondering about its use outside us as a team of EPs.	Mutually beneficial	Engaging	Opportunity for development		

Brad	It is culturally different isn't it? But when I was on the course at the Family Institute. That is what they did. They did this, Reflective Teams stuff, but with other people on the course. Social workers, Nurses etc.	Different perspectives	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Opportunity for development	Mutually beneficial	
Brad	We were encouraged to take a case to supervision and I found that really interesting, because if we were talking about difference earlier on, and the idea that it brings in difference.	Different perspectives	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Opportunity for development	Mutually beneficial	
Brad	You don't get much more difference that when you're sat with people who do different jobs, and you are presenting a case and they are going "Why would you do that?"	Different perspectives	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Opportunity for development	Mutually beneficial	
Brad	Or "What's that about?" "Or maybe it's this?" from a medical or social work viewpoint. I found that really rich. It was a weird experience for all of us but once you got into the process it was fascinating.	Different perspectives	Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	Opportunity for development	Mutually beneficial	
Kelly	Yeah, there is still a difference within the generic role, within the EPS saying different things. But if you ride that out to people from different disciplines as well, that difference might be much greater.	Opportunity for development	Different perspectives			
Jenny	I've never thought of that, but I wonder if you did it with schools, because it is so different; it is a very respectful approach.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Respectful Approach		
Jenny	I'm thinking if it came from family therapy where families might not be respectful to each other, you almost have to be more so in that process.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Respectful Approach		

Jenny	I wonder if it was a school that didn't work well, or where there were cliques of groups that didn't get on, it might be a really useful way of getting them to share their ideas and perspectives, but in a very non-judgemental way.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Respectful Approach		
Jenny	And again, because of that separateness, if the person with the issues thought someone's perspective wasn't very good or useful.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Respectful Approach		
Jenny	Because they keep that to themselves, and thought, "well that shows your lack of understanding", it could perhaps be really valuable for groups that don't really work together well.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification	Respectful Approach		
Michelle	Like at the PPP meetings we used to have. Something like that could be helpful, to discuss cases.	Opportunity for development				
Brad	It would be interesting wouldn't it?	Opportunity for development				
Jenny	If you could get everyone to agree to the rules, it would be fascinating.	Opportunity for development				
Kelly	So it could impact on your professional practice in a wider way, in a variety of ways that we have not yet explored or looked at because we are still getting used to the process ourselves within our own team.					

Brad	I think that also, within the EP world we are all really different as well, so we all practice in a different way. But I wonder from this whether that is quite useful, within our culture, to do it this way .	Different perspectives	Broadens perspectives	Freedom from compliance		
Brad	Because what this doesn't do is go "there is one way of doing things and this is it."	Different perspectives	Broadens perspectives	Freedom from compliance		
Brad	In terms of personal a professional development this is perhaps the thing that comes out, you can sit and watch the team, and then personal and professionally you can choose how you want to develop.	Different perspectives	Broadens perspectives	Freedom from compliance		
Brad	You can choose what kind of EP you want to be. Based on hearing eight EPs sharing their views.	Different perspectives	Broadens perspectives	Freedom from compliance		
Rob	It is difficult to separate the personal and professional bit. The approach changes the way you think about things and that is personal and professional. Thinking about skills. Are there any practical skills that we gain from it?					
Kelly	Yes, it is learning not to jump in with a question. Just after someone has finished a sentence. I know it's hard to believe. I found it hard initially, but that separation forces you to do that.	Learning to Listen	Suspending Assumptions			
Kelly	And actually you have this inner monologue going on, but it is really helpful to put the brakes on with that.	Learning to Listen	Suspending Assumptions			

Sara	It makes you realise how much control you do have in a consultation. You direct where the lines of thinking are.	Learning to Listen				
Allan	That is very true, you can end up getting the sort of consultation that you want can't you, by asking the right questions.	Learning to Listen	Suspending Assumptions			
Sara	Yes by focusing on some areas, and ignoring others.	Learning to Listen	Suspending Own Agenda			
Allan	That then paths…					
Kelly	But sometimes we do that purposefully. If we want to try a solution focused slant in consultation, we would do that. It would be justified. It would be interesting not to do that sometimes.	Suspending Own Agenda				
Brad	In relation to that, is the sense that although we sit in consultations as EPs, or sit here as EPs, we are also lots of other things as well. Allan. is a mum, I'm a son, a brother and all kinds of things.	Suspending Assumptions	Broadens perspectives			
Brad	Do I always listen to the conversation as an EP, or do I listen as an EP that is a son, and I'm thinking from the situation from that perspective? How does that affect what I do or ask?	Suspending Assumptions	Broadens perspectives			

Brad	Actually, there are loads of facets to that that, it is not just 8 EPs, it is the difference from the fact that the 8 EPs who have very different lives, very different experiences, very different roles that feed into that.	Suspending Assumptions	Broadens perspectives			
Jenny	I very often find myself thinking from the child's perspective when I am listening. Like what I said, when you can't ask questions you have got to just listen. You start going off on these thoughts. Like what you said, you think from your experience,	Learning to Listen	Suspending Assumptions			
Jenny	'If I was at school if that had happened I would feel like this..." And, yes you do start going down that route, even though the relevance of what happened when I was at school is to the present? I don't know. But you do think that way?	Learning to Listen	Suspending Assumptions			
Rob	So it is the listening skills, and the skills we are picking up. And deliberately not directing the conversation in the way that we often do. I'm aware that I do that too.					
Jenny	But these are different listening skills. Rather than the active listening that we usually do, it is almost 'pure listening', you are just listening, you don't have to show that you are listening, because the facilitator does that.	Learning to Listen	Suspending Own Agenda	Suspending Assumptions		
Jenny	You can have your eyes shut, or facing the other way, it is 'pure listening' that you are doing really.	Learning to Listen	Suspending Own Agenda	Suspending Assumptions		
Michelle	I think that listening to the person who brings the case, but also wondering why it is that the facilitator is asking those questions. I might think "I wonder what is going on in their mind" to ask that question.	Broadens perspectives	Learning to Listen			

Michelle	It is watching the two people, not just the one person that brings the case. It is more the interaction of the case, and what other people are thinking and questioning how they might think differently.	Broadens perspectives	Learning to Listen			
Brad	I'm really aware that sometimes I have a hypothesis in my mind, and that is why that for the two people, if you were in that supervision relationship is useful.	Suspending Own Agenda	Suspending Assumptions	Learning to Listen		
Brad	If my hypothesis is that it might be attachment theory, hearing others might affect the kinds of questions I ask next time.	Suspending Own Agenda	Suspending Assumptions	Learning to Listen		
Alan	So that goes back to Kelly's point that it might be useful to not have that one set of questions and response to that, but to have that toing and froing, because your questions might be influenced by what you've heard?	Opportunity for development				
Michelle	I think what would be interesting as well would be to have a bit more structure within the group. So perhaps when we have heard what we have heard, to maybe review that.	Opportunity for development				
Michelle	To find out if we are all hearing the same thing, or is there something that one of us has missed? And then thinking more about what is going on in the case itself.	Opportunity for development				
Rob	Why do you think that might be useful?					

Michelle	I think that when we turned around to discuss it, we did not review what we have just heard. And it allows us to think, "Oh yes, I did think about that question",	Requires Attention / Listing Skills	Opportunity for Development			
Michelle	it might trigger that question you thought about really early on, it might be useful to review what we have heard and then to think about the case itself.	Requires Attention / Listing Skills	Opportunity for development			
Rob	I didn't mean to put you on the spot there, what I was thinking, and this is my own little agenda here, I am wondering "what are the weaknesses, and limitations to it?"					
Rob	Because I have heard almost all positive things about RT. I am wondering if there are any, we talked about scope for future development, but underlying those, is there any weaknesses, or areas for improvement?					
Brad	I've got one, defiantly, I think that one of the limitations is coming back to what Kelly said earlier on. It is about doing it in a team where everyone is doing the same job.	Limitation: Assumptions still exist				
Brad	My reason for saying that is that there is a huge potential to make assumptions about experience.	Limitation: Assumptions still exist				
Brad	I think, because you are in the same job that my experiences are the same as yours, but that sometimes stops us asking the simplest questions.	Limitation: Assumptions still exist				

Kelly	You don’t want to be patronising.	Limitation: Assumptions still exist				
Brad	Yes, or just thinking, "I've been in that situation, but what was it like for you?" Because actually, that is probably not the same. And that is a different level of conversation which I think sometimes we can make assumptions about.	Limitation: Assumptions still exist				
Allan	I think you do ask that question quite a lot? "How did that feel for you?", or "How did that make you feel?" So I think you must be aware of those questions and deliberately ask them.	Suspending Assumptions				
Brad	Perhaps unconsciously?	Suspending Assumptions				
Allan	You do ask those questions a lot.	Suspending Assumptions				
Alan	Yes you do.	Suspending Assumptions				
Allan	I think that's making it very explicit that you are not making assumptions, and are making it explicit that just because you said this, you are not going to make assumptions about how you feel. I think you do that, and I think that is a really helpful question.	Suspending Assumptions	Limitation: Assumptions still exist	Requires specific questioning skills	Broadens Perspectives	

Allan	It is always helpful to me listening, because I might have exactly the same sorts of assumptions in my head, or it might remind me of a case I have worked on, where I thought I knew exactly how they were feeling.	Suspending Assumptions	Limitation: Assumptions still exist	Requires specific questioning skills	Broadens Perspectives	
Allan	And to hear them say how they are feeling, it sort of dispels my pre-conceptions about it.	Suspending Assumptions	Limitation: Assumptions still exist	Requires specific questioning skills	Broadens Perspectives	
Rob	You have pretty much exclusively taken the role of facilitator or questioner. And we are talking a little bit about skills as well, about skills are needed of that role.					
Rob	Do you think there are any particular skills that are necessary to facilitate the process, to make it work, that other might not necessarily be aware of?					
Brad	I think I have quite a different view on that than everybody else, because I think that actually it is the skills that everybody here has got. It is consultation skills essentially. But in terms of limitations, and following on from that.	Requires consultation skills	Threatening Experience			
Brad	I think another limitation is that the process is, even in a close team that get on well, it can still feel threatening to sit up there. Whether you are the person bringing the problem, or the person facilitating.	Requires consultation skills	Threatening Experience			
Brad	And to be observed by your colleagues, even though everybody gets on really well. I think that's really tricky.	Requires consultation skills	Threatening Experience			

Kelly	I remember once when I had to do the questioning. I did feel quite anxious about doing it because all of a sudden I had to listen, I was trying to listen *and* to ask questions.	Threatening Experience	Requires consultation skills	Requires specific questioning skills	Requires underpinning knowledge of theory	
Kelly	But there were different sort of questions to those that I might ordinarily ask in consultation.	Threatening Experience	Requires consultation skills	Requires specific questioning skills	Requires underpinning knowledge of theory	
Kelly	Even though they are those kinds of skills. In a consultation you are trying to sort of, understand the problem a bit more. I don't know, they seem like different types of questions to me, then the questions I would typically ask in consultation.	Threatening Experience	Requires consultation skills	Requires specific questioning skills	Requires underpinning knowledge of theory	
Kelly	Then again, I probably ask more of those types of questions in consultation now than I did before, as a result of the process. So maybe they are just different types of questions that I am not as familiar with.	Threatening Experience	Requires consultation skills	Requires specific questioning skills	Requires underpinning knowledge of theory	
Kelly	And I think it might be that because you [Brad] might understand much more of the background of this approach, you have done more reading around it. Maybe there is a perception that you understand that better in order to facilitate.	Threatening Experience	Requires consultation skills	Requires specific questioning skills	Requires underpinning knowledge of theory	
Kelly	But I think that maybe a limitation is that we need to develop ourselves being able to facilitate more, instead of just relying on one person so that we are able to develop those skills, as opposed to just the listening skills.	Threatening Experience	Requires consultation skills	Requires specific questioning skills	Requires underpinning knowledge of theory	

Jenny	So it’s a different approach. I suppose that when you are doing your consultation you are writing a report, and think that "I've got to be able to write this up with things under each heading" and I think, "right strategies need to go into this box".	Requires specific questioning skills	Non-goal orientated			
Kelly	Right the structure. You're leading it more aren’t you?	Suspending Own Agenda				
Jenny	Whereas I think that with this it is more about getting the person to talk, and say it from their perspective and feelings. I found that when I brought a case it was much more intimidating than I thought.	Threatening Experience	Supervisee's perspective retained	Personally Challenging Experience		
Jenny	I thought it would be easy, because we talk to each other all the time so why would I be worried? But when I actually tied to do it I found it very hard, because I was thinking, "this is wasting everybody's time" "it this interesting?" "Is this worthwhile?"	Threatening Experience	Supervisee's perspective retained	Personally Challenging Experience		
Jenny	Which is not necessarily a bad thing, in a supportive environment, to be intimidated, because it is good to push yourself out of your comfort zone a bit.	Threatening Experience	Supervisee's perspective retained	Personally Challenging Experience		
Alan	But I wonder how well it would work in less compatible teams then? So not how well it works for us, but if we were to generalise this to other teams, or even other teams of EPs?	Requires safe, respect team				
Alan	Depending on how comfortable they are amongst themselves, it might work differently.					

Jenny	Perhaps if the person prepared, because I thought it would be easy and I wouldn't need to prepare, and it wasn't. If I were to do it again I might need to think about what I was going to say beforehand.	Challenging Experience				
Kelly	Do you think that is linked to that 'separation' the fact that the team are quiet? If you were presenting in a more informal way, the team would be chipping in? Because you almost think, "Oh God no one has said anything."	Lack of feedback is threatening				
Sara	You can't gauge how they are feeling can you? You think, "Are they bored?" "Am I wasting their time?" I had all those feeling, and because there is no feedback, you don't know. You worry.	Lack of feedback is threatening				
Kelly	You're sort of seeking that feedback aren't you?	Lack of feedback is threatening				
Brad	And you're also deliberately turned away aren't you, which makes it even harder doesn't it?	Lack of feedback is threatening				
Alan	But then, if you think about our normal consultations you would gauge that, and if you got a sense that you were in an area that was difficult or boring you'd adjust it.	Lack of feedback is threatening				
Alan	But because you don't have that control you can't, which is probably why you have those feelings of insecurity.	Lack of feedback is threatening				

Brad	And for me what is why it is really important, because you are not having to respond to that stuff. Who cares if people are bored? Because actually it is not about them, it is about you.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification?			
Kelly	So it is just to be mindful of those feeling isn't it? Well I'm feeling this.	Requires safe, respect team				
Alan	I don’t care if people are bored, because it’s all about me!	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification?			
Allan	Quite right too.	Freedom from compliance	Freedom from self-justification?			
Rob	There have been time in my experiences that we have struggled to find cases.					
Brad	Yes					
Rob	And just thinking personally, I've thought "I could talk about something if I'd prepared maybe" but I didn't want to waste people's time. I wonder if there is a barrier there.					

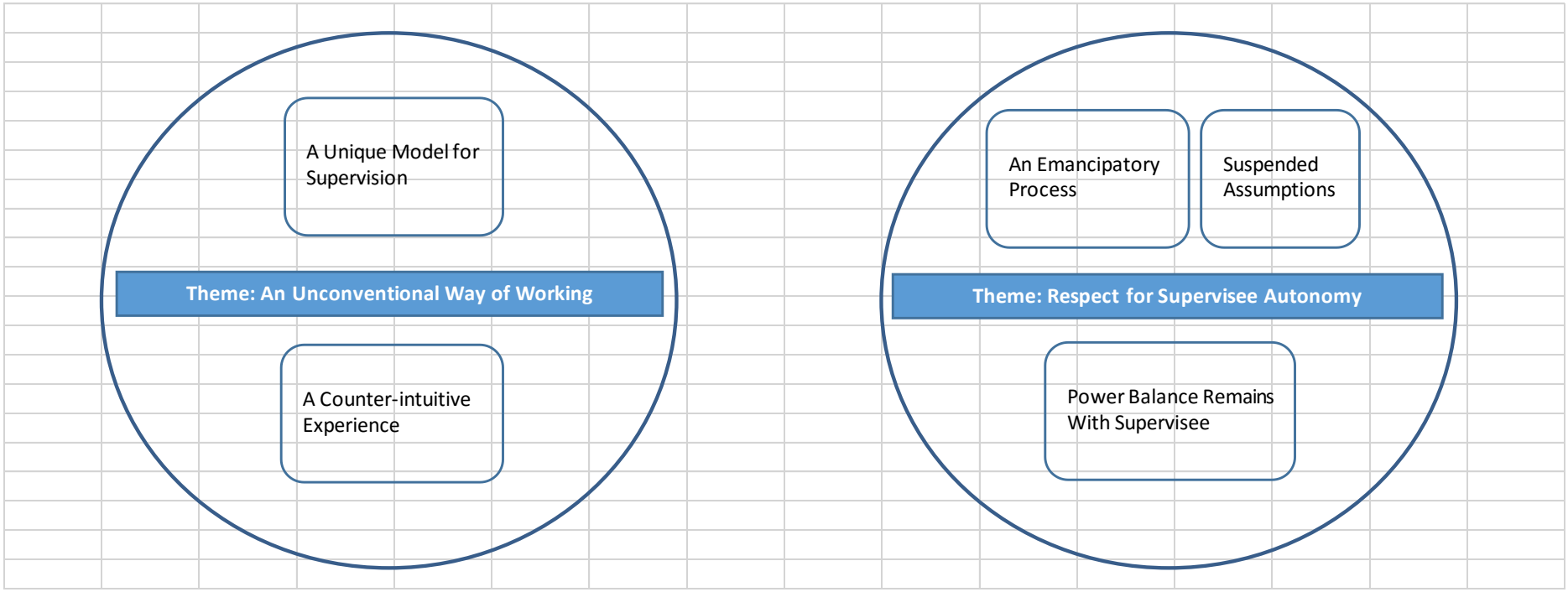
Rob	On the one hand that you need to prepare, the other that you feel you might be wasting people's time, is this something that other people have experienced?					
Jenny	This is not necessarily a limitation of the approach, but I sometimes feel I have got two or three cases, that I'd like to hear peoples perspective on, but there is really not too much on each of them,	Exploration is too long for some issues	Opportunity for Development	Inefficient for some issues		
Jenny	But there is such a long time when you are describing the case, and your feelings.	Exploration is too long for some issues	Opportunity for Development	Inefficient for some issues		
Jenny	Sometimes I have relatively straightforward ones that I'd like to bring up say, Alan. And that may be a potentially different direction to go in where you could bring one, or more than one.	Exploration is too long for some issues	Opportunity for Development	Inefficient for some issues		
Jenny	Sometimes I'd really like to hear people's perspectives, but I wouldn't have enough to say over 45 minutes.	Exploration is too long for some issues	Opportunity for Development	Inefficient for some issues		
Kelly	Perhaps you could shorten it? Sometimes have two shorter sessions.	Opportunity for development				
Brad	We could yes.	Opportunity for development				

Jenny	I think that I personally would find it easier to bring cases. You don't want to ask people over lunch because it is too in depth, but to ask for help.	Exploration is too long for some issues	Different perspectives			
Jenny	But it is not long enough to take up a whole sessions, it is not about wasting peoples time, but in a way it is because you don't want to go into every minor detail of what you have done to get one other perspective.	Exploration is too long for some issues	Different perspectives			

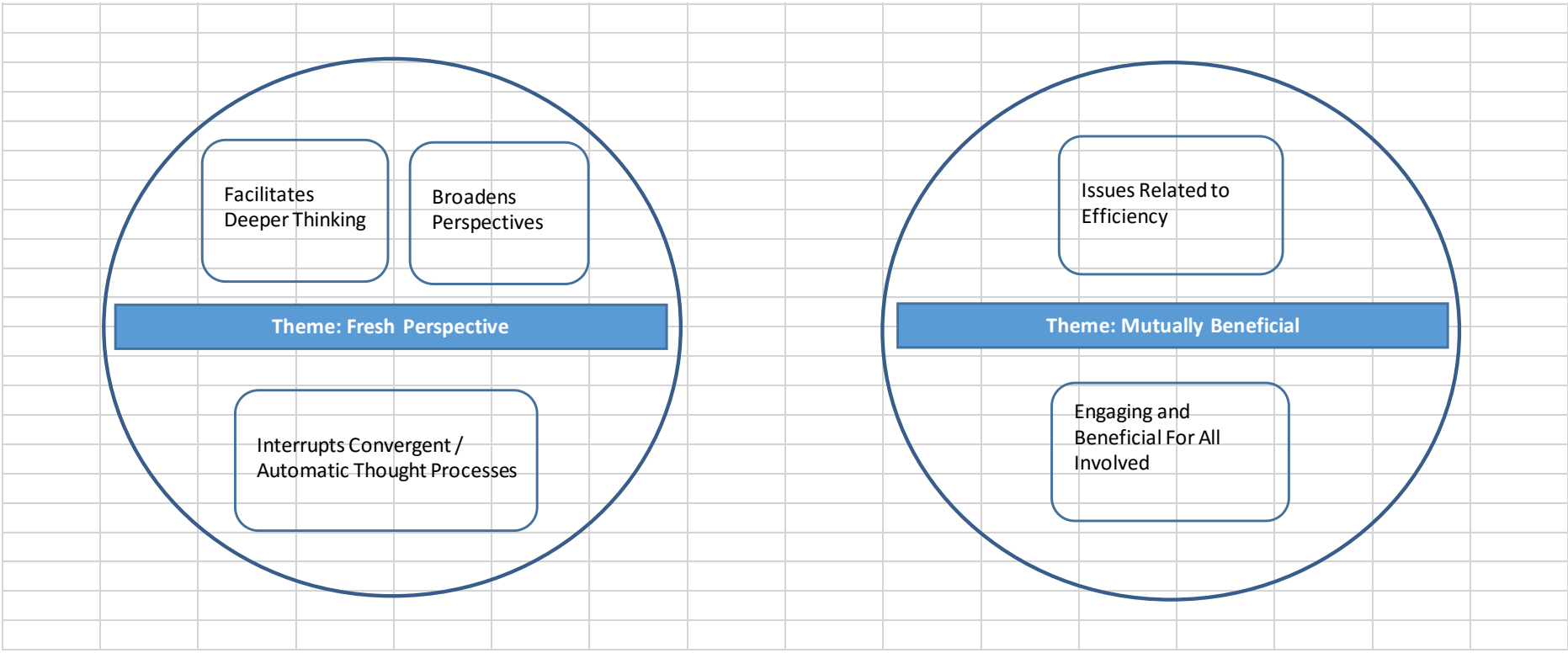
Appendix D2: Analysis from Codes to Themes

Codes	Occurrences	Sub-themes	Themes
Clear Structure	3	A clear and unique structure and process / A distinct process / Unique process	It felt unnatural at first
Different to other models	4		
Strange / uncomfortable / counter-intuitive	5	Threats: Personally risky for supervisor / supervisee. A counter-intuitive / strange experience.	
A threatening / challenging experience for supervisee / facilitator	5		
Lack of feedback from the Reflective Team is unsettling	5		
Requires a safe, respectful team to work	2		
Supervisee freedom from compliance	11	The supervisee is liberated from the typical social constraints and supported to freely explore the topic. Emancipatory Process	It respects the supervisee's autonomy
A supportive Process	1		
A respectful Approach	1		
Supervisee is free from self-justification	5		
The supervisee's perspective retained	1	The emphasis on the supervisee's understanding of the issue.	
The team suspend their assumptions	11		
The team suspending their agenda	5		
It is a non-goal orientated process	4		
The problem remains within the supervisee's control	3		
Limitation: Assumptions are still made	4		
It is a reflective process	4	It presents options and opportunities that broaden rather than confine thinking.	It provides participants with a fresh perspective
It broadens perspectives	9		
It interrupts habitual thought processes	3		
It offers different perspectives	10		
Explore the issue in depth	2	Issue is explored in great depth.	
Limitation: Problem exploration is *too* lengthy for some issues	2		
Mutually beneficial	5	It is a mutually beneficial experience for both reflective team and supervisee.	It is beneficial for everybody involved
Efficient (or inefficient?) Process	3		
Engaging Process	1		
Develops listening / attention skills	9	It requires / develops a specific skill set.	It is a skilled approach with opportunities for skills development
Requires specific questioning skills	3		
Requires consultation skills	2		
Requires underpinning knowledge of theory	1		
Opportunities for development	13	Opportunities: Various suggestions made (see Coding).	Opportunities for development

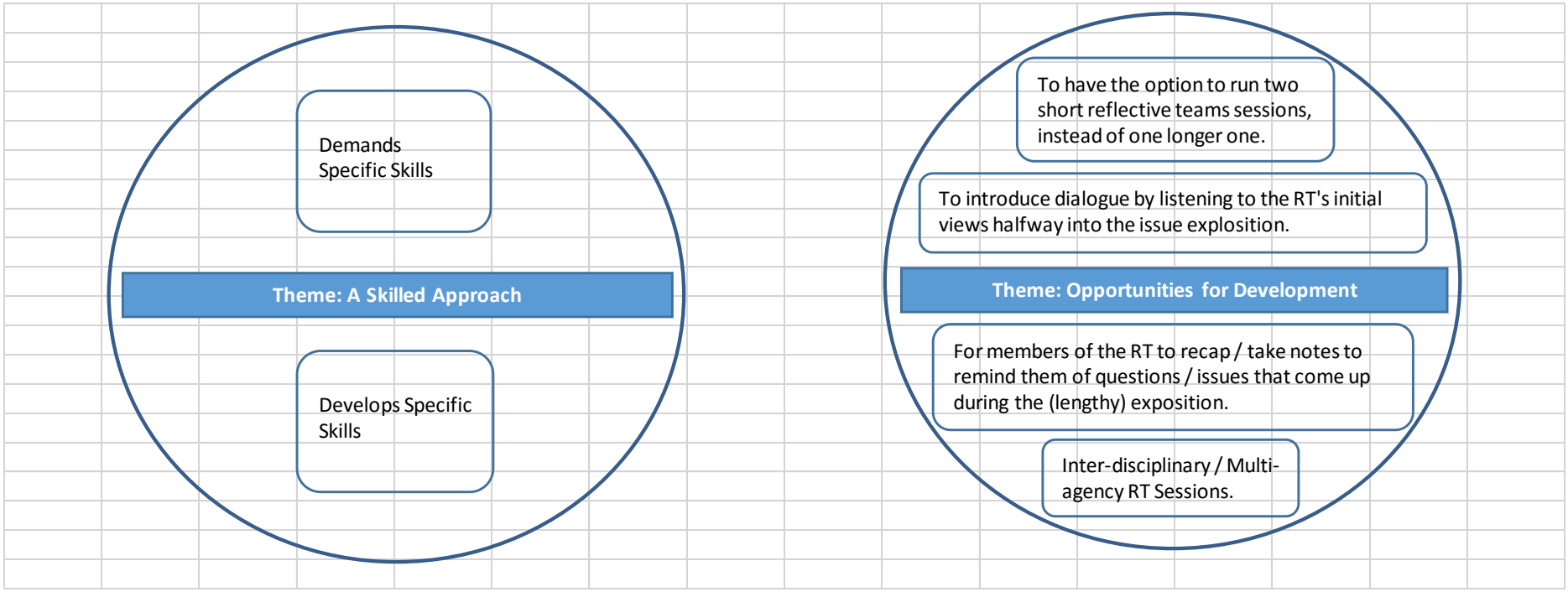
Appendix D3: Presentation of Themes



Presentation of Themes



Presentation of Themes



Professional Practice Report 4

The State of Special Educational Needs in England and Wales: A Comparison of the English and Welsh Systems and Reflections on the Proposed Changes for Wales

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[redacted]

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Abstract

This report compiles contemporaneous government reports and their responses to provide a timely overview of the proposed reforms for meeting the Special Educational Needs (SEN) of Children and Young People (CYP) in Wales.

Current provisions and processes are explained through a comparative examination of the differences between the English and Welsh SEN systems in the post-devolved era. The proposed changes to SEN in Wales are presented and critically appraised, with implications for Local Authorities (LA) and Educational Psychology Services (EPS) considered.

The report concludes that reform in Wales is now inevitable. Welsh Government intends to embrace Person Centred principles through the creation of a single, universal, seamless SEN pathway that spans the early identification of needs from infancy through to the age of 25 years. These ambitious proposals will require clear, specific, mandatory guidance for relevant services if they are to effectively navigate the legal and financial landmines they create. EPSs face different challenges: Uncertainty over their place in a new SEN framework, the risk of overwhelming demand verses underutilisation and redundancy, and freshly emerging proposals for EPs to become responsible for facilitating planning of SEN provision as well as contributing to it.

Introduction

Aims

A review of SEN proposals for Wales is particularly relevant to Welsh LAs who need to anticipate and plan the future development of their EPSs to maximise the benefits for schools, services, CYP, and their families.

This investigation has helped to shape planning in the EPS in which I am based by providing a comprehensive basis for understanding the direction of change in England and Wales, and for anticipating potential gaps in provision. It also provides an excellent starting point for an informed appreciation of an anticipated new legislative framework for SEN in Wales due summer 2015.

The information in this report is primarily written from a Welsh perspective based upon a review of contemporaneous government documents related to SEN released since 2014. The report is divided into three topics:

(1) An examination of the differences between the English and Welsh SEN systems;
(2) A presentation of the proposed changes for Wales outlined in the White Paper: Legislative Proposals for Additional Learning Needs (Welsh Government, 2014; hereafter '2014 White Paper'); and
(3) A critical appraisal of the potential implications of the 2014 White Paper proposals for EPSs in Wales.

A note on the terminology used in this report

Although not yet enshrined in legislation, the term 'Additional Learning Needs' (ALN) is increasingly used to describe SEN or Learning Difficulty or Disability (LDD) needs in Wales. References to ALN are comparable with the term 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities' (SEND) in England.

In Wales the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) 2011 highlight differences in the definitions of 'children', 'young people' and 'young adults' across education, health, and social care services. Although these differences are recognised, the simplified term 'Children or Young Person' (CYP) is used to encompass all persons up to the age of 25 years. Occasionally the term 'Young People' (YP) is used to refer to people in tertiary education or training. When discussing rights of children up to 16 years, the rights of their parents to act in their interests are assumed.

Finally, once a Code of Practice has been introduced fully, further references to it have been simplified using the format '[Year] [Code] [Country]'.

Context

The number of children in school on the SEN register in Wales has steadily grown since 2010 from 21.2% to 22.6% in 2014 (StatsWales, 2014) and while the trend in England has reversed over the same period from 21.1% to 17.9%, roughly 1 in 5 pupils continue to require on-going SEN support (Department for Education, 2014). Such figures represent the scale of responsibility that governments, LAs, and schools have to ensure that the SEN of CYP are recognised, assessed, well-planned, and adequately resourced.

Because educational provision is a devolved issue the responsibility for educational law in Wales lies with the Welsh Government, whilst similar legislative responsibilities for England lie with the British Parliament at Westminster. Both governments are responsible for producing guidance outlining how the needs of CYP with SEN should be met. Following devolution of LA and educational to Wales in 1999, the way in which the SEN of CYP in Wales are met have diverged from practices in England. In England a revised SEN and Disability Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years came into force from January 2015 (Department for Education, 2015a). This new code includes guidance that integrates SEN support with disabilities and extends its reach to include YP up to the age of 25 years. Meanwhile, the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales 2002 applies to the needs of CYP with SEN up to age 19 years.

Those involved in the provision of ALN in Wales argue that the current arrangements are "no longer fit for purpose" (Welsh Government, 2014 p.2; Department for Education, 2015b). Accordingly, the Welsh Government intends to consult on a new Bill and Code of Practice from July to December 2015. These changes are partially driven by a need to address considerable inconsistencies in the achievement of CYP with ALN throughout Wales (Welsh Government, 2014b). Whilst reforms in Wales are inevitable, ministers remain cautious in their desire to retain what works from the previous system and advocate "evolutionary rather than revolutionary change" (Welsh Government, 2012; p.4).

Part 1: A comparative overview of the English and Welsh SEN systems at present

Prior to the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEN systems of England and Wales were broadly similar. The changes introduced in England therefore not only represent a revision of the way SEN are planned for in England, but they also demonstrate how the English and Welsh systems have becoming disentangled.

Definitions of SEN

According to the Education Act 1996 (s.312.1) CYP have SEN if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A learning difficulty is defined by s.312.2 of the same act as:

(1) A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children the same age; or

(2) A disability that prevents or hinders their access to educational facilities of the kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools maintained by the LA.

(3) A child under compulsory school age, but over two years, who would fall within the definition of either (1) or (2) where special educational provision is not provided for them.

The 2015 Code (England; p.14-15) extends the above criteria to include mainstream post-16 institutions and relevant Early Years providers, and children under compulsory school age likely to meet these criteria once they reach compulsory school age. It also now includes YP with LDD within the SEND framework.

Codes of practice

The Education Act 1993 (amended 1996) requires that a Code of Practice should be produced to provide practical guidance on how schools and LA should meet the SEN of CYP. The first UK Code printed in 1994 was revised in England in 2001. Wales similarly updated the 1994 Code (UK) following devolution. Presently, the 2002 Code (Wales) is in effect whilst in England the 2015 Code now replaces the 2001 Code (England). Both the 2002 Code (Wales) and the 2015 Code (England) provide guidance intended to help schools and LAs to obtain the best value from the considerable resources and expertise they invest in helping children with SEN. A comparative overview of the main features of SEN/SEND provision in England and Wales is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: A comparison of Welsh and English SEN systems outlined in the Codes of Practice

Feature	2002 Code (Wales)	2015 Code (England)
Core Principles	Both the 2002 (Wales) and 2015 (England) Codes share the following core principles: Children with SEN should have their needs met; the SEN of children should normally be met within mainstream settings; the views of the child should be taken into account; parents have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education; and children with SEN should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to their needs.	As a consequence of the Children and Families Act 2014, the 2015 Code (England) introduces Person Centred Planning (PCP) principles to include: The views, wishes and feelings of parents; greater and informed participation of CYP and their parents in decision making; and a long term perspective of plans aiming to prepare CYP effectively for adulthood.
Eliciting the views of CYP and their parents during the planning process	The 2002 Code (Wales) regards the views of parents and CYP as essential to the decision making processes as required by the Education Act 1996. Decisions such as the parent's preferred choice of school inform LA decisions should be accommodated for in a CYP's statement of SEN.	EHC plans have replaced statements of SEN and LDAs. This change is intended to simplify the assessment process for CYP up to age 25 years and encourage greater collaboration across the disciplines of education, health, and social care. The 2015 Code (England, p.19) also requires LAs to consult with CYP with SEN and their families, not only to regard their views, wishes and feelings, but to also enable them to engage as fully as possible in decisions and prepare them effectively for adulthood. This approach utilises PCP principles as recommended by the 2001 White Paper 'Valuing People'.

Funding	In Wales (and England prior to 2014) the funding arrangements for SEN are jointly controlled by schools (at School Action and School Action Plus) and LAs (for pupils of compulsory school age with a statement of SEN). FE institutions are also able to apply for financial support to meet the needs of YP directly from the Welsh Government through a Learning Disability Assessment (LDA).	One of the most significant changes brought about by the Children and Families Act 2014 relates to the option for greater control of finances relating to SEND provision to be given to parents. CYP now have the right to request a Personal Budget which may contain funding elements from health and / or social care. The Personal Budget is an amount of money set aside to pay for the CYP's SEN outlined in an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan. Parents may spend this budget on any provision available in a LA supplied Local Offer. These can take the form of direct payments that allow parents to contract and manage services themselves; or arrangements whereby the LA, school or college is given control over the funding; or third party arrangements where direct payments are given to an organisation or individual acting in the interests of the CYP.
Provision of SEN for children and YP under the age of 16 years	Both the Code 2002 (Wales) and the 2015 Code (England) state that schools should make full use of available school resources before calling on external expertise and / or the resources. The early identification, assessment, and provision for CYP with	The 2015 Code (England) combines School Action, School Action Plus, and their Early Years counterparts into a single category of 'SEN Support'. Any further support requiring provision from the LA, Local Health Board or Social Services is then outlined in an EHC plan. For children not yet of compulsory school age SEN Support includes: A written progress check at age 2; a health care check for

	SEN are encouraged. SEN in Wales are planned for and met through three graduated stages of intervention: 1. Additional support provided by the schools themselves (School Action). 2. Additional support provided by schools with the support of outside agencies (School Action Plus); and 3. Additional support provided by the LA in the form of a statement of SEN which affords legal protection for the CYP to receive a package of support. Applications for a statement SEN require approval from a multi-agency panel.	children aged 2-3 years; a written assessment provided in the summer term of a child's first year at school; and reasonable adjustments for disabled children (Long, 2014). The SEND planning for CYP differs from the Welsh system in the following ways: 1. SEN plans are unified into an EHC plan single document replacing statements of SEN and LDD Plans, and extending the range to include YP up to the age of 25 years. 2. LAs are obligated to inform CYP with SEND and their families of the Local Offer made available to everyone with an EHC plan or in receipt of SEN Support. 3. Where an EHC plan is provided, parents and YP will have the option to receive a Personal Budget. 4. Increased partnership between the LA and health bodies in planning the assessment of needs and the delivery of support for CYP. 5. A clearer focus on the participation of CYP and their parents in decision-making, including their engagement in preparing and EHC plan through use of PCP tools intended to aid their accessibility to those they are intended to help.

Provision of SEN for YP adults over the age of 16 16 years	Welsh Ministers have a duty under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 to secure proper provision for YP aged 16 – 19 years and in full time education. Reasonable allowances are also made for learners aged 19 – 25 years to enable them to access FE and training. This Act also requires LA to complete an assessment for CYP before the end of their final year in compulsory education where they have a statement of SEN; where they may have developed learning difficulties (such as through acquired brain injury or illness); or where learning difficulties were not properly identified. These assessments enable Careers Wales, an organisation funded by the Welsh Government, to complete a LDA to set out a YP's post-16 educational and training needs. Where necessary Careers Wales also negotiate funding from the Welsh Government, LA, and the Local Health Board to meet the YP needs.	Whereas LDAs in Wales are often criticised for being fragmented and somewhat confusing for YP and support services to navigate, in England, the replacement of SEN statements and LDD plans with EHC plans enables a unified and a person centred approach to care planning that covers a wide spectrum of education, health and social care needs. These plans for support recognise that some people need longer to access education or training to make an effective transition to adulthood. LAs are obligated to cease an EHC plan for 19 – 25 year olds where the CYP has met the outcomes specified in the plan (see s.9.151; and s.9.64 to s.9.69).

The purpose of the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 as presented in Table 1 are to encourage the participation of CYP and their parents in decisions that affect their lives. CYP with the highest level of need are entitled to a Personal Budget to spend on the LA's Local Offer, a list of specialist services available to CYP with SEND. This measure is intended to improve the range and quality of provision for CYP with SEND. It also requires LA to adopt a simplified and streamlined SEN assessment process to encourage the early identification of needs; to enhance collaboration between Education, Health and Social Care services; and increase preparation of CYP for adulthood and independent living by extending the scope of SEND to 25 years (Department of Education, 2014, p.16). These reforms are intended to improve the life outcomes for CYP by giving children's parents and YP power over the way their SEND are met.

Part 2: Proposed changes for Wales following the 2014 White Paper:

Legislative Proposals for ALN

Problems with the current Welsh SEN system

The Welsh Government 2014 White Paper describes three main issues that justify why the current legislative framework for SEN requires reform:

Firstly, there has long been a drive in Wales to abolish the term 'SEN' and replace it with the more encompassing term 'ALN'. This is argued to be less stigmatising for CYP and makes a clear distinction from the SEN systems used in England.

Secondly, Welsh Government (2014) argue that the divide between CYP who require a statement of SEN, and those who do not, is unclear. A lack of clear guidance for LAs has led

to inconsistencies in criteria and approach across Wales. These inconsistencies have created a perception among families that the existing 2002 Code (Wales) is not applied rigorously enough and has eroded trust between parents and LAs. Parents have also long felt it unjust that the current system provides legal status to CYP with a statement of SEN, while it does not for other children on the SEN register. This has led to a desire by Welsh Government to provide statutory protection to all CYP with SEN.

Finally, the present system is far too complex. This makes it difficult to adopt a flexible approach to special educational provision and the arrangements for CYP with LDD risks disrupting the transition of CYP from school to post-16 provision. Currently legislation regarding independent schools registered to admit pupils with SEN, is also unclear regarding who is responsible for ensuring that the CYP SEN are met.

Proposals for a unified legislative framework to support CYP aged 0 – 25 years with ALN in Wales

The 2014 White Paper introduces a range of proposals under the aim to create a unified legislative framework for CYP with ALN aged 0 – 25 years:

- To introduce the terms ALN and 'additional learning provision' to replace the terms SEN, LDD, and 'special educational provision'.
- To introduce a single statutory plan called an Individual Development Plan (IDP). This will replace the variety of statutory and non-statutory plans for learners in schools and FE institutions including statements of SEN, LDAs, and Individual Education Plans. These IDPs will have minimum requirements of information that must be included and detailed mandatory requirements that underpin them.

- Welsh Ministers will produce a new Code of Practice that LAs, grant maintained schools, FE institutions, Pupil Referral Units, Local Health Boards and SEN Tribunal for Wales must enact.
- All grant maintained schools, FE institutions, and Pupil Referral Units will be required to make their best endeavours to secure the additional learning provision set out in a CYP's IDP. LAs will need to secure specialist education provision for post-16 learners where the IDP indicates this is necessary to fulfil a YP's IDP.
- Finally, the 2014 White Paper proposes to prohibit the placement of any CYP into an independent school that is not registered to provide the type of provision required in their IDP.

Proposals for an integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring that facilitates early, timely and effective interventions

The 2014 White paper places greater emphasis on multi-agency collaboration in meeting ALN, with guidance provided to professionals through the new Code of Practice regarding the early identification of ALN (including those below school age). This will require schools, LAs, Local Health Boards, and FE institutions to co-operate and share information when assessing, planning and delivering provision to meet the needs of CYP aged 0 – 25.

As in England where mainstream schools are required to designate an SEN Co-ordinator, Welsh schools will be required to have an ALN Co-ordinator who will facilitate the development of IDPs. There will be a greater emphasis on planning and delivering tangible outcomes that contribute to the achievement of the CYP's. In England, the 2015 Code has

enforced this by making schools accountable for ensuring that CYP make progress, even for interventions provided by external agencies.

An examination of IDPs

In Wales all CYP with ALN from 0 – 25 years will be entitled to an IDP, developed alongside all relevant professions relevant to meeting their needs. Figure 1 outlines the current proposals for the development of an IDP.

A CYP with less severe or complex needs will have a simpler and therefore shorter IDP than a CYP with more severe or complex needs, which may contain contributions from a wide range of agencies to inform the action plan.

The use of PCP tools are intended to ensure that the presentational style of the IDP reflects that it belongs to the CYP, rather than reflecting an administrative process. This means the style, and where possible the language, should reflect the age of the CYP. IDPs will therefore be written in plain Welsh or English, avoid the use of jargon, and explain any technical terminology that need to be included. They will also include basic biographical information about the CYP.

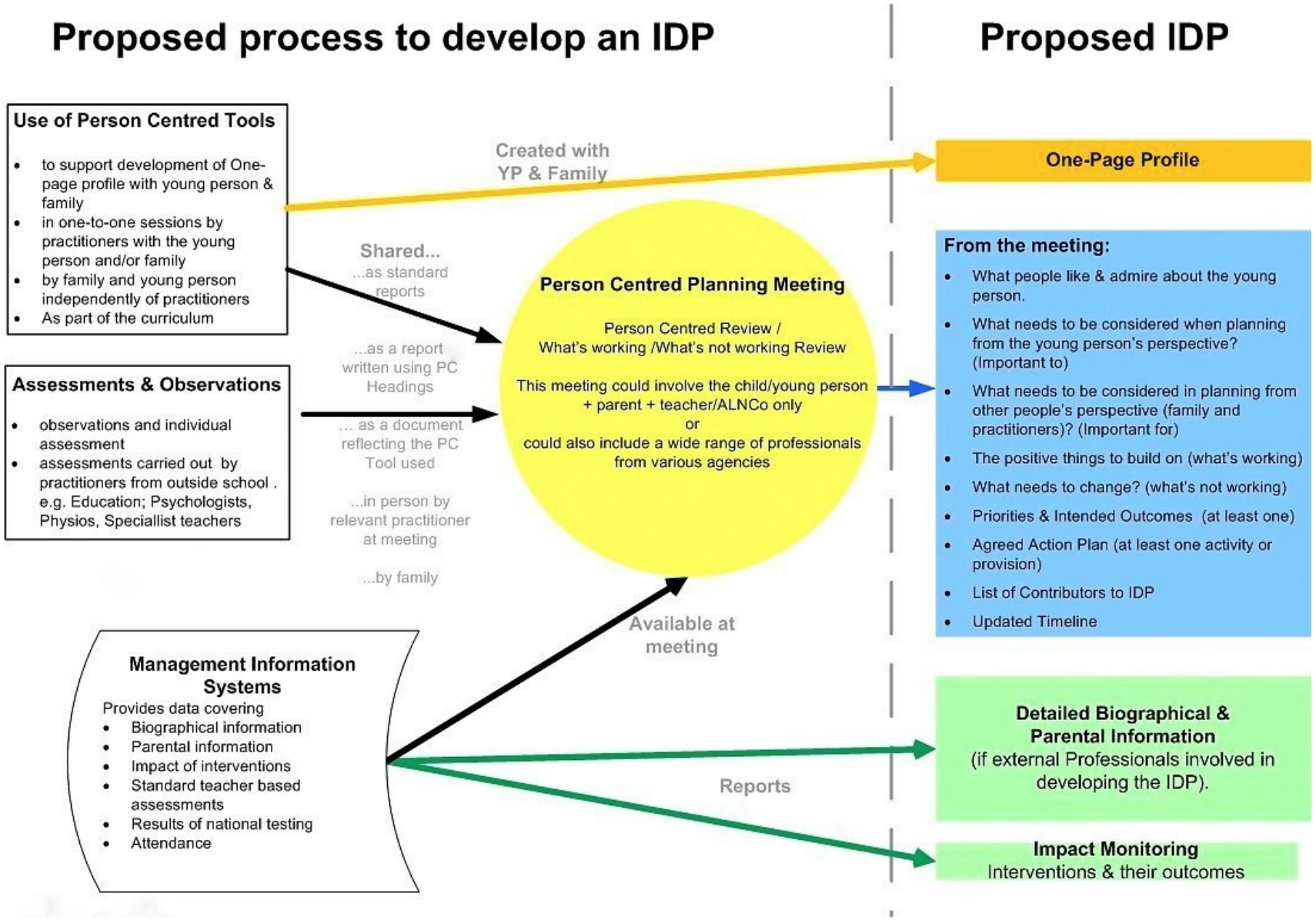


Figure 1: The proposed process to develop and IDP (Thomas, 2015)

The PCP principles underpinning IDPs and EHC plans

According to the Children and Families Act 2014 (s.19) EHCs place the focus of support on to the CYP and family in order to facilitate the CYP's development and help them to achieve the best possible educational outcomes in keeping with their expressed wishes. These goals and outcomes are identified by; (1) seeking the views, wishes and feelings of the CYP (and their parents if under age 16); (2) encouraging the CYP and parent to participate as fully as possible in decisions; and (3) providing the information and support necessary to enable participation. These reforms embrace PCP principles and extend the social model of disability by promoting the self-determination of CYP. Legislative momentum in the UK is indicative of the groundswell of support for PCP following the publication of the 2001 White Paper 'Valuing People' and its update 'Valuing People Now' (2010). These papers set out to improve the quality of life for people with learning disabilities through a commitment to strong principles, a firm value base, and clear objectives for individuals to be supported to achieve their life goals. This drive has stimulated the development of person-centred planning tools that aim to facilitate such processes for people with learning disabilities. The Lamb Inquiry 'SEN and parental confidence' (2009) extended this vision to include CYP with SEN and has similarly highlighted the need for the use of person-centred approaches for the planning of SEN provision in the 2015 Code (England) and the 2014 White Paper (Wales). The Lamb Inquiry (2009) identifies that the existing culture within SEN often problematises CYP and so they often become sidelined from the planning process. SEN planning often develops *around* CYP, rather than *with* them, and there is a risk that important contextual information that is essential to the implementation of such plans is overlooked. Lamb (2009) recommended that a new framework should be developed that puts the relationship between CYP and school at the heart of the process. The proposed adoption of PCP

principles is also intended to strengthen compliance with CYP and their families by engaging them in meaningful decision making processes. PCP aims to benefit the recipients of services by encouraging CYP and their families to adopt a proactive and engaging role in achieving life goals. By emphasising personal strengths, it is hoped that CYP will become motivated to action and helped to participate in mainstream society.

PCP has been notably developed by Sanderson and associates who have influenced policy development in England since the late 1990s into the collection of practical thinking tools available today (see Helen Sanderson Associates, 2015). Examples of the contribution of Sanderson and associates to the development of PCP in education includes the inclusion of One Page Profiles and Person-centred Reviews that have been adapted within many LAs in the UK for the purposes of planning the SEN of CYP. One Page Profiles are strengths based child centred documents that form the foundation of PCP planning documents for CYP with ALN in Wales and many schools have been encouraged to adopt such plans at a universal level. In essence a One Page Profile emphasises the following information written from the CYP's perspective: 'What people appreciate about me', 'What's important to me' and 'How best to support me' (Helen Sanderson Associates, 2015).

More generally, PCP is premised upon humanistic principles first posited by Bugental (1964). It can therefore be considered to have roots in existential and phenomenological philosophy, which has been shaped by political action, rather than having been developed from research. The humanistic basis of PCP is outlined by Bugental (1964, p.19) as follows:

1. Human beings, as human, supersede the sum of their parts. They cannot be reduced to components.

2. Human beings have their existence in a uniquely human context, as well as in a cosmic ecology.
3. Human beings are aware and are aware of being aware - i.e., they are conscious. Human consciousness always includes an awareness of oneself in the context of other people.
4. Human beings have the ability to make choices and therefore have responsibility.
5. Human beings are intentional, aim at goals, are aware that they cause future events, and seek meaning, value, and creativity.

Bugental's (1964) principles emerged in response to the dominance of psychoanalysis and behaviorism which held a pessimistic view of human behavior, often highlighting the tragic events, deficits discourses and the depressing emotions of humans, and sometimes discounting the impact of personal choice (Bugental, 1964). These values are congruent with PCP and strengths based approaches that aim to develop resiliency by establishing and developing protective factors within an individual's environment, and emphasise the growth and potential of individuals (France and Houlson, 2015).

Politically, the handing over of choice and control to CYP and their families introduces competition among service providers by encouraging services to tailor their provision to meet the individual needs of a wider range of CYP with SEN. The principles of informed choice are reflected in the 2015 Code (England): the introduction of the Local Offer and provision of Personal Budgets that grant YP and children's parents' greater control over how their SEN needs are met.

PCP is a well-known and often used approach to planning care to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities throughout the world (Claes et al., 2010). The UK Government

adopted PCP principles as government policy following the Department of Health's publication of the 2001 White Paper: Valuing People. While the majority of this paper was well endorsed at the time, Mansell and Beadle-Brown (2004) expressed concerns about the use of PCP approaches for a number of reasons that remain relevant today. They found that PCP had: (1) a lackluster evidence base demonstrating its effectiveness over other individual planning processes; (2) a national strategy that was perhaps over-ambitious in proposing the delivery of PCP processes to *all* CYP with SEN/ALN; (3) difficulties in engaging CYP with the most severe and complex needs in genuine PCP processes; and (4) potential funding and skills shortages among SEN/ALN specialists that may constrain and undermine the effectiveness of action, based on these plans. Towell and Sanderson (2004, p.18) also point out that "positive change could just as well be achieved by investing in existing services and enhancing the skills of direct delivery staff to make a tangible difference in everyday life and staff supervision to match."

Since these critiques were published, both the variety of PCP tools and evidence base for their effectiveness as grown, albeit modestly. In 2005 Robertson et al. concluded a two-year longitudinal study with 93 people with learning difficulties in four English localities. Robertson's team compared levels of change in people's lives before and after a PCP plan with the previous year considered to form a baseline measure. Following PCP, participants increased the size of their social networks by 52%. There was also a 140% increase in contact with family members, a 40% increase in the level of contact with friends, a 30% increase in the number of community activities, a 33% increase in the hours per week of scheduled day activities and 180% more choice for those taking part compared with their lives before the plan was introduced. Arguably the degree of change may reflect a simple deviation towards the norm, i.e. the impoverished state of those participating prior to

receiving a PCP, rather than demonstrating the effectiveness of the process itself. A cross group comparison with those receiving alternative forms of planning processes may therefore be helpful for determining whether PCP provides additional value beyond that provided by equally resourced non-PCP planning processes. The authors did find that there were no significant additional costs associated with PCP and the average weekly cost to the service had only increased by 2.2% (an amount not considered to be statistically significant). Interestingly Robertson et al. (2005) were unable to find any benefits of PCP for establishing inclusive social networks, access to employment, increased physical activity or use of medication. Furthermore, PCP was more effective for some people than for others. Sanderson, Thompson and Kilbane (2006) note that those with mental health, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, autism, health problems, or restricted mobility were less likely to get a plan than those with learning disabilities. It may be that PCP is helpful, but that further measures are required to ensure that sufficient support is available to promote social inclusion across the range of needs.

The first systematic review of the effectiveness of PCP was conducted by Claes et al. (2010) and explored the outcomes of 15 studies published between 1996 and 2006. These authors also found that PCP improved social networks, facilitated closer contact with family and friends, and encouraged greater involvement in group activities. They concluded that such changes were likely to be a consequence of people with learning disabilities being able to exercise their preferences to remain within their communities, a right that CYP in education already possess. Although the outcomes of this review showed positive, moderate benefits for those who engaged in PCP processes, the studies that Claes et al. (2010) reviewed focused on a wide range of independent and dependent variables to draw their conclusions. Claes et al. (2010) compiled data from adults as well as CYP and many of the studies claimed

to generate statistically significant data from very small samples: For example, Artesani and Mallar (1998) looked at the effects of PCP on the frequency of incidents of challenging behaviour of just one student; Reid et al. (1999) explored the impact of PCP on the leisure preferences of just four adults with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and Buschbacher (2004) examined the effects of PCP on the parent-child interactions of just one boy with autism spectrum disorder. Arguably there remains an absence of research that attempts to critically evaluate the impact and effectiveness of PCP on the outcomes of CYP beyond that demonstrated in small scale qualitative case studies. This is despite widespread acceptance of its principles throughout the UK, suggesting that the impetus behind the adoption of PCP may be primarily ideological.

Although PCP is an important feature of both EHC plans and IDPs, Thomas (2015) believes that welsh proposals make put PCP at the heart of the development of IDPs, with a far greater emphasis on the CYP strengths and preferences than is evident in English ECH plans. They also require the Welsh Government and LA to consider how to; (1) meet the ambitious proposal to deliver PCP informed IDPs to *all* CYP with ALN including those currently on School Action and School Action Plus if required; (2) engage those with the most severe and complex needs; and (3) address the potential funding and skills gap among ALN specialists to ensure they can be effective in reaching their aims.

One Page Profiles to Individual Development Plans

A universal requirement for educational establishments in Wales will be to create a 'One Page Profile' that outlines a CYP's basic biographical information, preferences, and dislikes. This is completed in partnership with the CYP (and their family where the person is under 16

years). A One Page Profile becomes an IDP when the CYP is thought to have ALN. Unlike Wales, England has no legislative requirement for LAs to provide a One Page Plan prior to a CYP receiving an EHC plan, although educational settings are likely to possess their own documentation that identifies a CYP's SEN Support needs. A distinctive feature of an IDP is that it begins from a strengths based position by identifying what people like and admire about the CYP. The IDP is then build up through PCP inspired discussions (see Figure 1, p.214). Both EHC plans and IDPs acknowledge the intended outcomes for CYP as central to the planning process.

Determining the CYPs SEN/AEN and suitable provision

Person centred discussions inform the CYP's priorities for development. These outcomes are agreed and added to an action plan including any additional learning provision required to meet those needs. There are potential risks inherent in such processes: The expectation that education, health, and social care services will be able to agree funding within a single IDP meeting is perhaps optimistic. Furthermore, processes that require professionals from Health and Social Care to attend *every* IDP meeting would be tremendously wasteful and ultimately unnecessary. This means that judgements have to be made ahead of an IDP meeting to determine the nature of the need so that relevant parties could attend and authorise provision of resources. In practical terms, invitation protocols would likely reflect current arrangements for statements of SEN and annual reviews. It is also likely that the responsibilities of local health and social care providers will need to be more clearly set out when agreeing the nature of activities or provision required in Wales, if contention is to be avoided between funding services e.g. to hold the LA solely accountable for the ALN of CYP

allows Local Health Boards and Social Services to safely disregard their part in the IDP process. Such issues complicate and / or undermine the collaborative principles that PCP meetings are intended to facilitate.

Personal Budgets and the Local Offer

The 2014 White Paper make no reference to the rights of YP or (children's parents) to a Personal Budget to spend on the services identified within their locality to meet their needs. Instead it emphasises the need for LAs to secure provision for the ALN of CYP themselves. The lack of an explicit requirement for LA to provide details of the Local Offer in Wales also would make it difficult for CYP and their families to make informed choices about the nature or type of provision they would prefer and may perpetuate their dependency on the advice of professionals.

Evaluation of the impact of previous SEN/ALN provision

There are new requirements for there to be an evaluation and examination of evidence regarding the impact of activities or provision planned since the previous IDP (or EHC plan). This reflects a greater emphasis on educational outcomes than is present in statements of SEN. This enhanced focus on outcomes rather than inputs is a feature that is not present in the current statement of SEN process and so requires contributors to an IDP to identify and outline realistic targets for completion from one review to the next.

Timelines

Timelines are intended to be a useful feature of IDPs not present in EHC plans that will allow the history of CYP to be tracked easily. They provide a record of the dates of each IDP meeting and proposed review dates; a record of education settings attended since their first IDP; and where necessary a summary of key events related to the CYPs ALN. The timeline also includes any relevant information for planning any additional learning provision required by the CYP. Where a running record of key events are recorded on the timeline, the impact of the event will be recorded in the body of the IDP. Where necessary the details of any assessments may be attached as an appendix similar to the way EHC plans are presented in England.

Summary of proposed changes for Wales

Table 2 summarises the current planning processes for SEND in England, with the proposed changes for Wales outlined in the 2014 White Paper.

Education Health and Care Plans	**Individual Development Plans**
An EHC plan begins from scratch and includes the views, interests and aspirations of the CYP.	An IDP builds on a CYP's universal 'One Page Profile' that every child in education will receive regardless of their needs. This includes the CYPs preferences, dislikes and basic biographical information.
	IDPs begin with an examination of the CYP's strengths, including the things that people like and admire about the CYP.
Outcomes are sought and added to the CYP's EHC plan, including their outcomes for life.	A greater emphasis on the CYP's contribution to determine what needs to be considered when

	planning from their perspective i.e. *What is important to the CYP?* Also the identification of what needs to be considered in planning from the perspective of family and practitioners i.e. *What is important for the CYP?*
A record of the CYP's SEN, health care needs and social care needs which relate to their SEND.	A focus on what is working to establish a positive foundation from which to work from. Then the identification of what needs to change to meet the CYP's needs i.e. *What is not working?* Priorities and intended outcomes are identified as a consequence of the above information.
ECH plans identify any special educational provision, any SEN related health provision as a result of any LDD, and any social care provision required by the CYP as a consequence of s.2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled persons Act 1970.	An agreed action plan is created that contains at least one activity or provision based on the CYPs ALN needs (including education, health and social care needs).
In the final version of the EHC plan the CYP and parents' identify their preferred educational placement / provision.	
Details of the Personal Budget (including arrangements for direct payments) to be spent on services identified in the Local Offer.	No proposals have been put forward for families to receive a Personal Budget, or for the creation of Local Offers in Wales.
Any other advice and information.	A list of contributors to the IDP including their contact details.
	Creation of / or updates to the CYPs Timeline.

Table 2: A comparison of features required by the EHC plan and proposals for IDPs (adapted from the Independent Parental Special Education Advice, 2015; Thomas, 2015)

Part 3: A critical appraisal of the 2014 White Paper proposals and implications for EPs

Formal consultation on the 2014 White Paper closed in July 2014 having received 215 responses. The Welsh Government (2015b) claimed that the proposals had general support from practitioners as well as CYP and their families, with strong support for a mandatory Code of Practice. The decision to make a mandatory Code highlights the importance of clearly distinguishing which elements *must* be done, from those that *should* be done. Failure to get this right has wide-ranging implications for all involved. Whilst the general direction of change was welcomed by respondents, there was concern that the proposed legislative changes will require further planning and investment if they are to operate effectively.

The value of revising the terminology from SEN to ALN

There is agreement among those consulted that the term 'ALN' should be used for CYP who need additional and / or different support with learning, to enable them to benefit as fully as possible from the education or training available to them. The purpose of replacing the term 'SEN' with 'ALN' aims to minimise stigmatisation and the pejorative labelling of CYP with additional needs. Despite half of CYP consulted in Wales supporting such a change, many YP have argued that the change would be ineffective in removing labelling and that the substance of the changes were more important than the terminology.

In England, the term SEN and Disabilities (SEND) represents a distinct category of need that distinguishes those CYP entitled to an EHC plan from those in receipt of SEN Support. If proposals in Wales go ahead for School Action, School Action Plus, and statements of SEN to be combined into a single tier of support i.e. provision of an IDP, then legislators need to

provide clarity about how this translates into the different *levels* of need, currently described by the 'graduated response' (2002 Code Wales, p.47).

Risks related to extending the system to include CYP up to the age of 25 years

There is general agreement among respondents to the 2014 White Paper that the transition of CYP into adulthood should be supported for those who need it, as the present system results in a significant reduction in support for some YP. Unifying the assessment and planning of ALN to include FE would also allow for more consistency of approach and support. An implication of extending the SEN / ALN plans to cover the age 19-25 range is that it will be essential for FE institutions to be required to evidence their 'best endeavours' to secure provision for ALN set out in a YP's IDP, as it currently is for schools. If so, then it should be anticipated that FE institutions will need training in universal and early intervention strategies and require access to specialist services to meet the needs of YP with ALN. The Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP, 2015) has advised the Welsh Government to make it clear in their guidance that EPs are well-placed to support FE institutions in this way. To identify any potential skills gaps from legislative reform, the Welsh Government (2015a) conducted a review of workforce development needs related to the assessment of SEN/ALN. It provided no specific reference to the challenges that the proposed reforms have for FE institutions, but it does allude to the potential role of EPs in teacher and AENCo training (which may include FE teachers).

Almost a third of respondent to the 2014 White Paper questioned whether the LA's responsibilities should include special FE provision where a YP's needs cannot be met by mainstream providers. Many also maintain that the requirement for mainstream FE

institutions to make their 'best endeavours' to meet ALN is insufficiently robust. Estyn (2014) have pointed out that the costs of extending ALN to FE are likely to create extra pressure for LAs, health agencies and social care providers. The current proposals also risk leaving LA solely responsible for meeting any funding gaps as they are solely liable for ensuring that the ALN of CYP are met. The AEP (2015) have also expressed concern that EPs may be expected to play a mandatory role in creating IDPs for CYP, which encompass a far greater range of needs and ages than the current system does. If so, then it is necessary to recognise that EPSs will require additional staffing and resources if they are to work effectively.

The Welsh Minster for Education and Skills (National Assembly for Wales, 2014) has admitted that the education budget may require re-prioritisation once costs are quantified. He has subsequently commissioned a review 'to assess the quantum of funding for SEN currently in the system' which will be used to inform the costs of a new SEN/ALN Bill due July 2015.

Risks related to extending the system to provide all CYP with ALN with an IDP

The principle that there should be a single plan that covers CYP from early years through to FE is hoped to ensure continuity of care, to be more child centric, and create less confusion for CYP and their families; yet some parents have expressed concern that extending the benefits of a statement to the full spectrum of ALN learners risks diluting the specialist support for those with the greatest levels of need (AEP, 2015). As with the extension of the SEN system to include CYP up to the age of 25, the proposed extension of the security and entitlements of statements to all ALN learners through a single IDP framework has raised

resource and capacity issues for services who will play a central role in creating IDPs. It is unclear whether EPs will be required to contribute to this in the same way they did with statements of SEN, or whether there will be a specific trigger point in which they will become involved. Currently EPs are not written into the proposals at all and so there is a risk that the robust research and specialist knowledge that EPs are able to bring will be excluded from the process. This contrasts with current guidance in England that writes EPs into the 2015 Code (England, p.27). Many LAs already consider EPS to be an expensive necessity and if the Welsh Government does not prescribe the role of specialists in AEN planning then there is a risk that LAs will utilise cheaper, inappropriately qualified, alternatives in an effort to reduce their fiscal commitments (AEP, 2015). Whilst this may save money in the short term, the long term implications of less rigorous assessments are likely to lead to poorer outcomes and greater financial costs in the future.

The above risks also extend to the problem created by ambiguities regarding who is ultimately responsible for organising and preparing an IDP: Under current arrangements the responsibility for planning to meet the needs of children at School Action and School Action Plus lies with schools, whilst the LA takes responsibility for preparing statements of SEN. It seems likely that the decision regarding who should be involved in the assessment of needs will be left to ALNCos, CYP and their families. There is also a concern that in the future LAs may be required to prepare IDPs for non-grant maintained schools, a setting in which a LA has no control. As the proposals stand, without mandatory requirements expected of LA, schools, FE institutions, Local Health Boards and Tribunals, there is a fundamental risk that EPs will be bypassed in planning provision for all but the most extreme circumstances.

Critique of the adoption of a multi-agency approach to planning and delivery

During the creation of a multiagency support plan it is likely that each agency will have their own criteria for success and will continue to self-manage the quality of the services they provide. This could potentially create competing concerns or interests between agencies involved in an IDP and undermine the principles that place the CYP at the heart of the process. Furthermore, to be effective IDPs cannot and should not be regarded as a one off event. Because a range of education, health, and social care services will be sharing outcomes, these services will need to share information, not only in the early stages of the assessment process, but also through formative assessments that result in continuous subtle revisions of the specific needs of CYP. This means that if IDPs are to operate as intended then CYP, their families, and multi-agency specialists will need to engage in a *process* of information sharing for which no current mechanisms exist. Finally, as previously mentioned, the current responsibilities for the assessment and delivery of mandates with regard to ALN presently falls to the LA alone. In a future where there is greater partnership between LA and Local Health Boards the requirements of multi-agency partnership will have to be legally and practicably outlined in a new ALN Code of Practice. This is particularly relevant in a context where CYP and their families have a right to appeal against decisions through Tribunal. If LAs become solely responsible for the provision of IDPs then other agencies could shirk their responsibilities without repercussion. It is also difficult to see how responsibility for funding the provision of ALN generated by an IDP can be successfully delegated among the various multi-agency services and this needs to be spelt out clearly.

Resolving disputes in the early stages

To reduce the number of disputes going to Tribunal, and to give CYP and their families' additional rights to appeal against decisions related to an IDP, the 2014 White Paper proposes that LAs utilise their complaints procedures and attempt to resolve issues at a local level with an independent arbitrator. This is intended to allow disagreements or concerns to be resolved quickly and easily before recourse to Tribunal. Inger (2014) Chief Executive of SNAP Cymru has argued that these proposals risk disadvantaging CYP and their parents, as it could create delays in lodging appeals by introducing a further loophole for parents to negotiate. It would also require LAs to create a distinct complaints pathway for such disputes, as they would serve a very different function to other LA complaints. The AEP (2015) has argued that LAs and agencies involved in IDP planning should engage in third party mediation with CYP and their families when resolving such disagreements. It is hoped that such changes would reduce the financial burden of existing Tribunals on LAs, since recourse to the Tribunal would only be permitted where mediation fails. It would also help to protect LAs who may be taken to Tribunal over elements of the IDP or provision for which they have no control.

The quality, status and rigour of IDPs

Inger (2014) argues that the vast majority of parent and LA disputes are not related to whether or not a CYP is able to receive SEN support, but they relate to the difficulties parents face in obtaining a detailed assessment and the provision that it provides.

Some parents have expressed concern that the 2014 White Paper proposes IDPs that represent watered down versions of the statements of SEN they are intended to replace. By

extending the legal status to *all* IDPs then those CYP with the greatest level of need may receive a relatively reduced proportion of specialist resources; and apparently less rigorous assessment; and reduced status within the SEN/ALN system. Families who have trialled the IDP have found the new format to contain insufficient detail and emphasis. Converse to the aims of the 2001 White Paper: Valuing People, CYP and their parents have argued that the insights provided by a diagnosis and in-depth assessment of needs risk being side-lined by the shift in emphasis on the CYPs views and the adoption of PCP principles (Inger, 2014). It is possible that these responses reflect concerns among CYP and their parents that IDPs appear to be less rigorous than the statements of SEN and IEPs that they replace, precisely because they *appear* to be less rigorous due to their transparency and plain use of language. Despite the current weaknesses in the existing statutory assessment process, such as the time, cost, and its inflexibility, it is still felt by many families and professionals to provide a rigorous assessment of need.

In defence of the 2014 White Paper proposals, IDPs have the potential to be more responsive to a CYP's emerging or changing needs and appear to be far less bureaucratic to achieve. They could also be seen as removing the absolute need to obtain a statutory statement before CYP are able to access additional support, whereas for those CYP with more complex needs, a rigorous assessment could still be provided by the new process if needed.

Concluding Comments: The Potential future of ALN in Wales and implications for EPSs

According to the National Assembly for Wales Research Paper: SEN / ALN in Wales (2015b), the Welsh Government is expected to introduce a Bill for the provision of SEN / ALN in July

2015. This could lead to legislation being published later in 2015 and implemented the following academic year (2016/17). Before this point can be reached there are a number of things that require consideration with regard to the role of EPs in a new ALN system.

At present there are concerns regarding the lack of detail in the 2014 White Paper about the role of EPs. It is therefore difficult to foresee at what point EPs will engage in the process of creating an IDP and what contribution they will make to the process. One possibility is that EPs become 'gate keepers' to CYP accessing an IDP or ALN support; another is the risk that financially constrained LA may not be *required* to involve EPs in the decision-making processes at all, and there may be a temptation to delegate IDP planning to cheaper and perhaps inappropriately or under-qualified practitioners. Both possibilities have significant ramifications for EPSs in Wales.

There are also concerns that if EPs were written into the IDP process as they are in the 2015 Code (England), then the increased breadth of IDPs would create a major skills shortage for many EPSs in Wales. The Welsh Government (2015a) has already indicated that EPs are well placed to tackle major skills gaps in "advanced and specialist SEN skills" (p.33) related to the way in which expertise is distributed across settings and specialist SEN services. Early indications from the AEP (2015) and Welsh Government (2015a) suggest that EPs may therefore become involved in the delivery initial teacher training; the training of ALNCos who are new to their role; and provision of activities intended to support educational institutions to self-reflect and self-evaluate how they can best fill their own ALN skills and knowledge gaps. Although these proposals do outline a clear role for EPs within the new ALN system that is distinct from their English counterparts, these plans will require adequate investment or significant changes to the way EPs are funded and operate.

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