

Communication Self Concept in Secondary Schools

An Exploratory Analysis

Submitted by Dr. Simon B Connor to the University of Exeter
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1. General Introduction

Recent government policy has identified Speech, Language and Communications (SLCN) as key and essential to each child's potential to achieve in school. The Bercow Report (Bercow 2008) was commissioned in order to review support for SLCN in the UK. Following a systematic review, Bercow highlighted (amongst other issues) a level of inconsistency associated with SLCN support in UK secondary schools¹. Despite general agreement that input is required in order to improve "communication" in secondary schools, a productive discussion in number of subsequent publications is limited (see Lindsay 2008 and discussion in literature review section in Appendix K), seemingly due lack of clarity regarding the precise definition of the term and the types of issues that interventions need to address. Furthermore, school based communication interventions to date have only focused on teacher-child communication, therefore, the current research aims to specify and investigate the concept of "communication" in a school setting on two different levels: within individual (self) and perceptions of others (leading to a more systemic perspective). First, on a personal level, a pupil's own self concept of communicational abilities is assessed (paper 1). Second, on an organisational level, the way in which pupils and teachers as well as senior managerial staff view the quality of communication in the school (paper 2).

This research assumes a view of communication which stretches beyond traditional models of language processing e.g. referring to syntax, phonology, morphology and pragmatics and interprets the term more widely to refer to any barrier (cognitive or otherwise) which disrupts the understanding or processing of language. The research presented in this thesis refers to one area in particular (communication self-concept) which falls inside this definition but would not be considered on most language audits and assessments (and is therefore unlikely

¹ Please see literature review in Appendix K for further discussion

to be considered in secondary schools). The term “Communication Self Concept” (CSC) refers to a person’s own views of their communicative ability and in this instance was borne initially out of more general work around “academic self-concept” by Marsh (1990) (see section 2.2 for discussion). Academic self-concept has been subdivided into a range of subject specific constructs which have been found to be highly predictive of academic attainment (Valentine et al 2004). Given the principal role of communication across a range of different disciplines it was considered that communication self-concept may have the potential to be highly predictive of academic attainment in school (see section 2.2 for discussion). Paper one therefore was split into two parts, the first part aimed to create a measure of communication self-concept and in the second to look at the extent to which it is able to uniquely predict academic attainment in English (see section 2.4.2 for discussion). Paper one concludes that the Communication Self Concept Questionnaire (CSCQ) is able to significantly predict academic attainment in English and is distinct from other predictors, such as English self-concept and Communication competence.

Paper two continues to build on the theme of communication within secondary schools by exploring the views of children in two schools about communication in order to gain a wider perspective on potential barriers to communicating, which may also impact on their levels of communication self-concept. In addition to this, the paper also explores communication from an organisational perspective via interviews with senior management and staff. The aim of conducting interviews with staff was to gain an impression of the general issues surrounding communication from an institutional and inter-staff level. A range of themes were identified on a staff and child level. Themes related centrally to poor mutual (staff to staff, child to staff) awareness of each other’s respective roles and responsibilities at school. Sources of this issue appear to partly relate to time pressure and inconsistent staffing, both of which also contributed independently to poor communication in school. More crucially however, staff

generally discussed feeling unable to communicate with their peers (i.e. other members of staff) for similar reasons to the children which was indicative of poor communication self-concept as defined in the previous study.

Whilst the work in this thesis is exploratory in nature, it establishes the potentially important role of communication self-concept alongside more traditional communication related constructs (discussed in section 2.2 and appendix K). Furthermore, the thesis highlights the need for communication intervention to encompass an entire institution and questions the value of school based communication interventions which only focus on teacher-child communication.

Questions regarding the extent to which communication self-concept on an organisational / staffing level impacts on child communication self-concept are discussed with respect to Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura 1982;1989).

2.0 Paper 1, The Relationship between Communication Self Concept and Academic Attainment

2.1 Overview of Paper One

This paper adopts a multi-faceted view of self-concept which is based around the Marsh/Shavelson model of self-concept. The Marsh / Shavelson model of Self Concept (Marsh 1990) divides self-concept into a number of sub areas, one of which is termed “academic” self-concept. Academic self-concept is then further subdivided into self-concepts relating to a large number of specific, separable academic disciplines (e.g. English self-concept, Maths self-concept Geography self-concept and so on). A large number of studies have linked academic self-concept and its subcomponents, with academic performance in school (see Marsh 1992). Despite this, no studies have explored the possibility of a more general skills based category of self-concept² which may also have the potential to predict both academic attainment and subject specific academic self-concept constructs.

The current study proposes an additional category of self-concept relating to communication, referred to in this study as “Communication Self Concept (CSC)”. As communication generally is regarded as an essential tool for academic success in a range of areas, it is considered that CSC may therefore relate more directly to academic attainment particularly in discursive subjects such as English self concept in comparison to the subject specific self-concepts proposed by Marsh (1993).

The first part of the study presents data relating to a measure of communication self-concept (CSCQ) which was constructed for the purposes of this study, initially examining the factor structure of the inventory in order to determine internal reliability and then examining

² For example this may include more specific areas such as motor skills or communicative ability (which is the focus of the current work)

relationships between CSCQ and ASDQII scores (which are standardised measures of self-concept). Results show that the CSCQ has a high degree of internal and construct validity and correlates significantly with the English Self Concept (ESC) scores which were thought to be most closely related to CSC.

The second part of the study looks at the extent to which communication self-concept is able to uniquely account for the variance in English National Curriculum scores when analysed alongside standardised measures of “actual” language competence and ESC mentioned earlier. In addition the study looks at the extent to which Communication Self-concept is able to account for the variance in English Self Concept in order to examine the potential for the skills based CSCQ tool to underlie the more general ESC category. The study concludes that the communication self-concept inventory represents the first stage of the development of a tool which is independent of other measures and is a significant and unique predictor of English attainment scores. Wider implications of this in relation to models of self-concept and application to secondary schools are discussed. References can be found in section 4.0.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 Marsh/ Shavelson Model of Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to the way in which an individual thinks or feels about him or herself. It is generally agreed that communication self-concept arises as a result of a range of experiences which are considered to be particularly influential during early development (Rochat 2001)

Self-concept is a widely used term within the literature and a wide range of tools and measurements have been developed in order to examine its impact on children's lives. Due largely to the generality of the term, measurement is often extremely problematic, with a wide array of disagreement among researchers about distinctions between related "self" areas such as self-efficacy and self-concept, and the precise nature of those relationships. Historical reviews of studies in this area highlight the level of disagreement. For example, Hansford and Hattie (1982) found 15 different "self" terms which included the use of self-concept, self-esteem, self-confidence and others, which appeared to be used interchangeably and inconsistently across the discipline. Additionally Hansford and Hattie report that studies often failed to operationalise definitions of self-concept from the outset, making cross study comparison of findings difficult. Modern conceptions of self-concept generally appear to agree on two common elements. Firstly, definitions focus on self-perceptions that incorporate both descriptive and evaluative dimensions, and second that definitions refer to perceptions of behaviour as opposed to feelings (Harter 1990) which is broadly the viewpoint adopted in this thesis.

2.2.2 Models and measures of self-concept

Traditional models of self-concept view self-concept as a singular construct which is not dividable into sub components (Marx and Winne 1973). This view is operationalised in

instruments such as the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg 1965; 1979) and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers 1984). Implicit within this model is the notion that changes in what is generally termed "global" self-concept will impact on a range of domains thought to be related to self-concept, for example child behaviour and academic performance without needing to work directly on (for example) academic success. Whilst the simplicity of this approach has practical appeal, the premise on which it is based runs contrary to most current thinking (see Hattie 1992 for a review). A large number of studies (see Delugach, Bracken et al. 1992; Marsh and Yeung 1997; Maddux and Gosselin 2003; Skaalvik and Bong 2003; Valentine, DuBois et al. 2004; Marsh and Craven 2006) have shown that drawing links with academic performance have an impact on academic performance whilst other work has shown that children often fail to generalise self-concept to academic performance without support (see Valentine et al 2004 for a review).

2.2.3 The Marsh/ Shavelson model of self concept

In their model of self-concept Shavelson et al (1976) divide self-concept into "academic" and "non-academic" components. Academic components being divided into subject areas e.g. English self-concept, Maths self-concept etc. and non-academic aspects divided into social, emotional and physical self-concepts.

This basic model was developed and refined in a series of articles by Marsh and Shavelson, (1985), Shavelson and Marsh (1986) and Marsh and Hocevar (1985), who whilst preserving the basic principles and philosophy of the model, used factor analysis to subdivide academic self-concept into verbal/academic and math/academic self-concepts, which then further subdivided into a range of different (specific) subject areas. Subsequent work by Brunner et

al (2010), however found lower than expected correlations between each of the 17 academic disciplines that were measured as part of the Marsh et al studies which suggested that the hierarchical aspect of academic self-concept was weaker than expected. Self-concept under the Marsh/Shavelson model therefore is considered to be relatively specific to a range of different areas. Whilst the data presented by Marsh et al lend strong support for this notion, and that the relationship between academic self-concept and its respective academic discipline has been found to be strongly linked in a range of studies, it is noticeable that no attempt has been made to contrast the relationships with a more general variable. In the original Marsh revision to the Shavelson et al model (see above) “verbal” self-concept was posited as a potential linking variable, however this represented a label applied to a cluster of factors following a factor analysis of a range of subject specific academic self-concept measures rather than a specific item. Potentially therefore (and in keeping with the multifaceted philosophy of the model) self-concept could be specific to an area which has wider academic implications. For example, communication is essential in a range of different academic subjects, children with poor language difficulties often struggle to access the curriculum (when not appropriately differentiated to their language level) across a range of different academic disciplines. By extension, communication self-concept, referring to a child’s view of their own abilities as a communicator may therefore have an equally profound effect on the performance in those same subject areas in the same sense that English self-concept can impact on English performance.

2.2.4 Communication Self Concept.

Communication Self Concept (CSC) will be referred to throughout this paper in line with Marsh’s subdivisions of academic self-concept. Just as English academic self-concept refers

to a child's own perception of their ability in English, CSC refers to a child's own perception of their communicative abilities or capacities.

Whilst it has been well documented that communication or language has a profound impact on academic attainment there has been considerably less research into the effects of CSC on academic attainment. This is particularly surprising given the wealth of research that has explored the links between academic self-concept generally, and subdivisions of academic self-concept.

Arguably the most relevant research comes from work by McCroskey and colleagues who termed the phrase "communication apprehension" (McCroskey 1970) to refer to "an anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with either a person or persons". Work within this construct for example by Well and Lashbrook (1970) report two general findings, firstly that individuals who were deemed to have high levels of communication apprehension were less likely to interact with others in a small group situation and secondly that interactions were generally less contextually salient than their peers. Furthermore, a number of studies have shown that individuals with low levels of communication apprehension held opinions which were generally perceived to be less credible, for example with respect to the quality of their input during discussions and debates, in comparison with other peers, and with teachers. (McCroskey and Richmond 1975)

A small line of research has examined the relationship between communication apprehension and academic performance in schools. Research in the United States in the 1970's, for example, found a strong, inverse correlation between high school students level of communication apprehension and performance across a range of curricular measurements (Bashore 1971). More recent work provides further evidence for this relationship and also indicates that children with high levels of communication apprehension also show a negative

attitude to school (Hurt and Preiss 1978; Comadena and Prusank 1988; Monroe and Borzi 1988; Bourhis and Allen 1992; Erickson and Gardner 1992; Monroe, Borzi et al. 1992; Rosenfeld, Grand et al. 1995). Unfortunately, at the time of writing there do not appear to have been any studies which have taken standardised measures of “actual” language competence in order to provide contrast. This is potentially a key issue as the notion of feeling unable to communicate is often presumed to be a lesser issue than other types of language difficulties, for example with respect to language processing difficulties, although in functional terms both issues could lead to difficulties in accessing the school curriculum.

2.2.5 Standardised measures of communication self-concept

A large number of studies that have published findings for school aged children have used the “Personal Report of Communication Apprehension” (PRCA-24) (McCroskey 1982) and the Self Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC) (McCroskey and McCroskey 1988). The former measure requires individuals to read a number of declarative statements which relate to a variety of situations in which they may feel unable to communicate, for example “I dislike participating in group discussions” and “I am afraid to express myself at meetings” and then to give a mark to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. This measure is problematic on a number of levels. Firstly whilst the measure is designed to distinguish between different situational contexts, the reliability of these extracted sub components drops substantially when interpreted separately. The measure is therefore better interpreted as a composite score (this is acknowledged by McCroskey 1982). Additionally the measures are not standardised with a school age population but with a college population, with the wording referring to contexts such as “meetings” which would not necessarily be relevant to most children. It therefore seems that the use of such a measure

is unproven and would require redesigning and revalidating in order to be used to gain a clear impression of the level of communication apprehension of children. It is therefore difficult to reliably assess the links between communication self-concept and academic achievement.

The SPCC is less well used but arguably feeds into a related concept which refers more to a person's own estimation of their levels of communication competence. In this assessment, an individual is required to rate their level of perceived competence out of 100 for each given scenario. Scenarios for example are "present a talk to strangers" and "talk to a friend" Similar to the PRCA-24, the scale is oriented around adult populations and arguably does not reflect the environment in which a child exists. Both measures also refer only to productive aspects of language. It is arguable that communication represents a two way process which also incorporates understanding of others. When McCroskey (1980) discusses the redundancy of a more general communication apprehension measure he neglects to refer for example to comprehension as a potential element and instead focuses on other forms of production such as writing and singing.

The Communicative attitude test (Brutten and Dunham 1989; Brutten 1997) represents an attempt at standardising a test of communication attitudes aimed at children. The test was adapted from one originally developed by Erikson (1969) and refined by Andrews and Cutler (1974) for use with adult populations. The assessment arose initially as a result of the need to assess communication apprehension in children who stutter but has also been standardised with a typical (non stuttering) sample. Questions cover a broader range of areas in comparison to the PRCA-24, for example incorporating aspects such as "my parents don't like the way that I talk" which provides information relating to the way in which children think that they are perceived by other people, as opposed to the McCroskey measures which focused only on an individual's feelings about him/herself. Although the breadth and child

focused aspects of this assessment is an improvement on the McCrosskey measures, it is arguable that the binary true/false choices for each question may decrease the sensitivity of the measure by making it impossible to gain an impression of the extent of feeling as it is in the PRCA-24 measure. In addition, like the PRCA-24 the measure again fails to incorporate any aspects of language comprehension³, which may represent a distinct category of information.

In conclusion, a mismatch exists between self-concept research, (which is voluminous and has been linked convincingly with academic performance in a range of studies) and communication self-concept research (which has also been linked with academic achievement but lacks a convincing, clear assessment). As mentioned earlier, studies of communication apprehension have not taken into account other aspects of self-concept and “actual” communication competence⁴ when attempting to link with academic attainment. The potential role and construct of communication self-concept is therefore relatively unexplored.

The current study will adopt the term “communication self-concept” to encompass aspects of communication apprehension as used in the prior measures discussed above, but will also refer to a broader concept which reflects a the bidirectional emphasis on communication, which covers aspects of comprehension and “pure” production (See below). The first part of this study will be devoted to developing an initial version of a communication self-concept measure and the second part will explore its links with academic attainment and English self-concept of pupils in three schools.

2.3 Part One, Constructing a Measure of Communication Self Concept

³This is likely to be due to the measures original intention to focus on children who stutter, however even in this instance broadening the measure may potentially yield clinically useful data.

⁴ Refers to communication competence in the Chomskian sense (see discussion in appendix K)

2.3.1 Aims

As mentioned earlier, this section aims to establish an initial measure of communication self-concept in order to use as a potential predictor of academic attainment in addition to other related measures in part two.

2.3.2 Methodology

2.3.2.1 Initial construction of the Communication Self Concept (CSC) questionnaire.

4 sets of questions were developed intended to account for aspects of production, comprehension and apprehension. Questions took a similar form to the ones used in the Marsh ASDQ II, however on occasion the question statements needed to be reworded slightly in order to accommodate the more general nature of the areas relating to communication⁵.

In line with work by Marsh (1990; 1992), the questions within this measure were structured to encompass a range of areas including comparative questions i.e. “compared to others my age, I am good at [area]”, performance based questions for example “I get good marks when I have to [area]”, Concept of difficulty questions for example, “Work involving [area] is easy for me” Self-esteem related questions e.g. “I’m hopeless when it comes to [area]”, and speed of learning questions e.g. “I learn thing quickly when I have to do [area].

For each of the three aspects of communication included, one question was generated from each construction and appeared in a random order on the questionnaire leading to a total of 18 questions. In addition to this, a further two questions were added per area (6 in total) in order to account for the effect of differing social contexts on the three areas of interest. This is in

⁵ The Marsh statements were designed to reflect specific subject areas whereas the communication self-concept statements were more general in nature and applied across subject areas.

line with work by McCrosskey (1980) who reports social contexts as an area which could impact on CSC (see section 2.2) and this area has also been incorporated into a number of adult measures. The initial questionnaire therefore comprised 24 questions in total.

The 24 questions appeared in a random order on the questionnaire. A 5 point response structure (completely agree, agree a little, neither agree nor disagree, disagree a little, and completely disagree) for each question was used as in the ASDQII questionnaire. Whilst the response structure to the questions was similar to the ASDQII, the design and layout of the responses was changed in order to make the questions more child friendly. The ADSQII required children to make marks in small boxes on a page which contained a large number of questions. The density of the text and the size of the questions make the ASDQII difficult to read and the volume of questions may also be intimidating to a child, particularly young children or children with literacy difficulties. The CSCQ used larger boxes and smiley faces in order to illustrate differing levels of agreement and disagreement. Further to this (again unlike the ASDQII) the questionnaires⁶ were produced in full colour as colour was used to reinforce levels of agree/disagreement so as to give children a number of different access “cues” to minimise misunderstanding.

2.3.2.2 Sample

Children from three schools were recruited, (n=101). Equal numbers of children were given the questionnaire from each year group (one form per year excluding year 11) although not all completed it. Gender split was roughly equal 46% male 54% female. As this project was linked to a number of external pressures, the sample from two of the three schools was predetermined, consisting of children who were at level 4 for English. I was unable to obtain a wider sample from these schools as a result of these pressures.

⁶ Copies of all questionnaires can be found in the appendix

2.3 2. 3 Ethics and consent

Informed consent was obtained from parents of children via letters home and by the children individually. Parents were informed that they had the right to withdraw their child at any stage before, during or after the investigation. Parents were also informed that any data would be anonymised shortly after collection and the data would be kept securely within the county council before and then destroyed shortly after data coding. Copies of the consent forms used can be found in appendix C.

Further to this, consent was also sought from head teachers of the schools involved. Two of the schools were participating in a wider project aimed at improving communication with pupils and consented to the additional collection.

School 3 was recruited in addition in order to obtain a more substantial sample and so consent was obtained separately at a later time point in comparison to the other studies. During data collection children were informed that they had the right to withdraw and were under no obligation to complete any aspect of the study.

Finally ethical approval for the study as a whole was obtained via The University of Exeter Ethics Committee (See appendix G for certificate of approval).

2.3.2.4 Procedure

The questionnaires were administered by a class teacher during PHSE lessons from years 7 – 10 in school 3. Unfortunately due to the time of year it was not possible to administer the CSCQ to year 11 as they were on exam leave at this time. Teachers were fully briefed and were also given a written guide containing information regarding the administration of the assessment (see procedure in Appendix L). As part of the instructions children were told to complete each question and that they should ask for help if needed. As there is currently no

comparable test to standardise the CSCQ on the assessment was factor analysed and was assessed for internal reliability.

2.3.3 Principal components analysis

In order to examine the underlying factor structure of the CSC, principal components analysis (PCA) was used. PCA utilised Varimax rotation across 250 iterations and established a variable extraction criteria of Eigenvalue 1.5.

Due to poor convergence scores (below 0.4) 4 variables were removed from the analysis, reducing the overall number of variables to 24. Principle components analysis was then rerun with the reduced number of variables. All remaining values had extraction coefficient scores above 0.4 and no further alterations were made at this stage.

Following the removal of the low convergence variables the CSCQ showed a high degree of factorability (KMO 0.824) which, based on Bartlett's test, was highly significant ($p > 0.0001$). In addition, all values within the anti-image correlation matrix had KMO values of above 0.5 (which was used as exclusion criteria) so no further variables were removed during this stage of analysis.

The model was able to extract 3 factors with Eigenvalues of above 1.5 (the set criteria) which cumulatively accounted for 57.270 % of the variance.

Factor one appeared to contain elements which related generally to issues regarding language confidence, containing constructions which tended to be comparative in nature with other children and relating to personal levels of satisfaction with respect to tasks requiring communication skills. Factor two was described as "Language comprehension" as its contents appeared to relate to feelings about language understanding. Factor three was named

“language production” as it comprised generally of statements which related to speaking activities.

Table 1 Variables included in each factor following principal components analysis

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Language confidence	Language Comprehension	Language Production
Question 20 - "Compared to others my age, I am good at speaking"	Question 17 - "Understanding what other people are saying in lessons is easy for me"	Question 6 - "When I'm working with people I don't know, I always understand what they are saying"
Question 19 - "I feel confident that I will do well in lessons where I have to discuss things"	Question 27 - "It is important to me that I do well in lessons where I have to understand what people are saying"	Question 23 - "I am hopeless at saying what I'm thinking in lessons"
Question 21 - "I am satisfied with how well I do when I have to understand what people are saying in lessons"	Question 10 - "Compared to others my age, I am good at understanding what I am told"	Question 4 - "I am satisfied with how well I do when I have to do a lot of speaking in lessons"
Question 24 - "I am satisfied with how well I do when I have to discuss things in lessons"	Question 15 - "I learn more quickly when people verbally explain things to me"	Question 1 - "Saying what I'm thinking in school is easy for me"
Question 25 - "I get good marks when I have to do a lot of speaking"	Question 22 - "I learn more quickly when I am allowed to tell teachers why I am confused"	
Question 26 - "Compared to others my age, I am confident in lessons where I have to discuss things"		
Question 28 - "I am confident that I will get good marks in lessons where I have to discuss things"		
Question 7 - "I have always done well in lessons where I have to do a lot of speaking"		
Question 18 - "It is important for me to do well in lessons where I have to do a lot of speaking"		
Question 5 - "I am confident that I will learn more quickly in lessons where I have to discuss things"		
Question 11 - "I am confident that I will find lessons that involve a lot of talking easy"		

Interestingly, the additional components added, which were sensitive to social context, appeared to fall into the more general categories and did not form separate factors. This

suggests that contrary to a number of claims made by McCroskey et al (McCroskey 1984a; McCroskey 1984b; McCroskey, Beatty et al. 1985) for children in this sample, the nature of the communication activity appeared to be a more crucial aspect than context.

2.3.3.1 Internal Reliability of the CSC following principal components analysis

Language confidence

Cronbachs Alpha showed a very high degree of internal consistency (0.914 from 11 items) all corrected item total correlational coefficients were above 0.5 which exceeded the criteria of 0.3 recommended by Cooper (2002) for exclusion from scaling. As a result, no further variables were removed.

Language comprehension

The comprehension scale also showed a high degree of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha 0.777) as with the confidence scale no further variables were removed and all corrected item total correlational coefficients were above 0.5.

Language Production

The language production scale showed a good degree of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha 0.682). One question was removed (question 27) which showed a weak corrected item total correlational coefficient (0.242).

Distribution

All three scales were normally distributed according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of

normality with Lilliefors Significance Correction. Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Stuart et al 1999) represents a measure which combines measures of Kurtosis and Skewness and contrasts the current distribution with a normal distribution, yielding a p value which indicates whether the current distribution is significantly different. This test is widely considered to be extremely sensitive and significant results should be treated cautiously (Lopes et al 2007). In this instance however, all 3 scales were insignificant ($p < 0.05$) which indicates that distributions were within normal parameters.

Scores were converted to percentiles and ranges were calculated in order to provide an estimated range of scores and an indication of the area that they fall into. Below tenth percentile is conventionally considered to be low 10th - 90th percentile are generally considered to be within the average range (although subdivided into high and low average also) and scores above 90th percentile are considered to be high scores⁷

Table 2 Percentile ranges for CSCQ

Range	Confidence Scale	Comprehension Scale	Production Scale
Low (below 10 th Percentile)	=>43	=>24	=>21
Low Average (10-25 th percentile)	=<44 – 58	=<24 – 27	=<22 - 26
Average 25 th - 75 th % Percentile)	=<59 – 81	=<27 – 35	=<26 - 35
High Average (75 th – 90 th Percentile)	=<82- 86	=<35 – 37	=<36- 38
High (above 90 th percentile)	<=89	=<40	<38

2.3.4 Summary

⁷ That is to say that children with high scores on the CSCQ are predicted to be children who have high levels of confidence when engaging in language based tasks.

The above analysis has shown that the CSCQ falls into three factors relating to the 3 areas that were hypothesised to be distinct areas of communication self-concept. Each factor showed a good or high level of internal reliability and the overall factorability of the dataset was strong. Interestingly, the additional questions included relating to the social context were not separate from the other variables and appear to have been grouped according to the emphasis on confidence, comprehension and production. Whilst this study has not been set up to investigate this systematically, this is an interesting suggestion and not an issue which would arise in other studies which have investigated for example communication apprehension due to the restricted number of components which make up the measures which are prevalent in the field (See section 2.2 for discussion).

The production of this measure represents the initial stages of analysis which could potentially lead to formal standardisation. The next section will look at the relationship between scores on this measure with performance on a range of variables which are relevant to a child's academic attainment and contrast with a child's academic self-concept scores.

2.4 Part 2 -Applying the CSCQ

Having established the beginnings of a measure of Communication self-concept in section one, the next section looks initially at relationships between CSC and academic English Self-concept, general self-concept and communicative competence. Following this, part two then looks at the extent to which CSC is able to predict academic self-concept scores. Finally, multiple regression analysis is used in order to examine the extent to which CSC is able to uniquely account for the variance in National Curriculum scores for English (which is a subject that was considered to be especially related to communication self-concept) next to a range of other variables which have also been linked with academic performance in English. This includes English self-concept, communicative competence, and school self-concept.

2.4.1 Aims of Part two

This section asks the following three questions.

- 1) To what extent does CSCQ relate to other measures of self-concept (such as those generated by the ASDQ II) and “actual” language competence?
- 2) To what extent is CSC able to account for the variance in English self-concept?
- 3) To what extent can CSCQ account for variance in English attainment, and is this relationship mediated by other variables, such as those generated by the ASDQII and CCC2

2.4.2 Methodology

2.4.2.1 Measures used

CSCQ subscales

All three subscales (confidence, comprehension and production) identified in part one were used in this section of the study.

Bishop Children's Communication Checklist (CCC2) (Bishop 2003)

The Bishop Communication Checklist was developed as a teacher/ parent observational checklist. In this instance teachers who were familiar with a subgroup of the children were asked to complete the checklists. The CCC2 was chosen due to the breadth of the topics that it incorporates and its ability to provide a rounded measure of language. The measure incorporates elements typically found in language assessments such as syntax, vocabulary and semantics, but also incorporates wider/ pragmatic aspects of language such as initiation, context and elements of nonverbal communication.

Marsh Academic Self-Description Questionnaire II (Marsh 1990)

Critical to the current study is that the CSCQ is distinguishable from other measures of self-concept. In order to ascertain this, the standardised Marsh ASDQII was administered alongside the CSCQ.

The Marsh ASDQ II was developed by Marsh (1990; 1992) in order to measure multiple subject measure dimensions of academic self-concept as well as a single dimension of general school self-concept. This measure is based around the Marsh/ Shavelson model of self-concept (See section 2.2). Although the entire Marsh inventory was administered, only the English Self Concept and School self-concept scales were used. Whereas English self-concept is specific to English, School self-concept is a more general measure which has a similar question structure to the other areas in the questionnaire.

Both scales have been found in a range of studies to be related to academic performance

although work by Marsh and O'Mara (2008) suggests that the generality of school self-concept may result in more indirect relationships in comparison with English self-concept, in the sense that the strongest direct correlate of English Attainment would be English self concept, which would, in turn be related to general self concept..

National Curriculum scores for English

In order to provide a realistic impression of academic attainment, National Curriculum scores for English were obtained for all young people involved in the study. English was selected due to its status as a key National Curriculum subject which has a particular reliance on communication skills and was therefore likely to be particularly strongly related to communication self-concept.

National Curriculum levels exist on a 24 point scale ranging from a score of 1A (which is low) to 8A (which is high). A range of issues surround the use of curriculum based assessment in research (see Espin and Tindal 1998 for a review), however in this instance it was considered that it would represent a clear indicator of current pupil academic level in English from a school perspective. National Curriculum levels are also key pieces of information which are used to set targets and made predictions about a pupil's future progress.

The National Curriculum scores were obtained from the school for all consenting pupils (See section 2.3.2.3 for discussion of ethical considerations).

2.4.2.2 Sample

As with the paper one, 101 children completed the CSCQ and ASDQII across three schools.

National Curriculum data was obtained from the school for all children.

For a subgroup (n29) of children from schools two and three the Bishop CCC was completed

by teachers familiar with those students (see below). As this project was linked to a number of external pressures, the sample from two of the three schools was predetermined, consisting of children who were at level 4 for English. I was unable to obtain a wider sample from these schools as a result of these pressures.

2.4.2.3 Procedure

Questionnaires (CSCQ and ASDQII) for school one were completed as part of a tutorial exercise and were administered by the children's form teachers (see section 2.3.2.4 and see Appendix L for copy of teacher guidance instructions). In schools two and three, the questionnaires were administered by the principal investigator for the current study. It is unlikely that the minor administration differences impacted on the scores from the questionnaires as classroom environments were consistent across the school and the same basic process was maintained across all contexts.

In addition, teachers who were familiar with the students were also asked to complete the Bishop CCC2 in order to gain an impression of the communicative competence of the children in the study in order to contrast with the other data. Due to the time, cost, and a number of external influences on the study design associated with completing the Bishop CCC2, it was not possible to administer this to all pupils in the sample. Communication competence data is therefore only available for children in schools two and three.

Upon collection, data was coded, and anonymised. In order to retain as much sensitivity as possible raw scores were calculated and used for all measures during analysis.

2.4.3 Results

2.4.3.1 Preparation of national curriculum data

In order to allow comparison across year groups⁸, national curriculum data was recoded into a five point scale based on the distance from the mean of each data point. For example, data points which were more than 1.5 SD below the mean were considered extremely low (relative to the rest of the sample) and recoded into one point, between 1.5SD and 1 SD were considered low and recoded into two points and so on. Data was recoded as follows.

Table 3 Recoding of National Curriculum data in order to remove age bias

>1.5 SD from mean	-1.5 -1.0 SD from mean	-1 SD to + 1SD from mean	+1 SD – 1.5SD from mean	<1.5 from mean
1	2	3	4	5

Distribution

All data were normally distributed and did not require any transformations and/or corrections.

2.4.3.2 Correlations

Pearson correlations were run in order to examine the relationships between CSCQ and other variables used in this study.

Table 4 Relationships between CSCQ and other measures

	ASDQII English Academic Self concept	BCCC2 Communicative competence	ASDQII school self-concept
--	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------

⁸ For example, children in year 9 would generally achieve higher NC levels than children in year 7. Given that the other measures are considered to be invariant across ages, this bias would act as a confound on results and subsequent conclusions if not corrected.

CSCQ Confidence	0.546** <0.0001	-0.016 0.938	0.129 0.302
CSCQ Comprehension	0.406** <0.002	0.119 0.562	0.69 0.583
CSCQ Production	0.300** <0.002	0.094 0.646	0.206 0.095

All three CSCQ measures correlated significantly with English self-concept. This was expected given the hypothesised link between communication self-concept and English self-concept. The insignificant relationship with school self-concept is also unsurprising in the light of extensive work by Marsh and colleagues (see section 2.2 for discussion) which asserts the specificity of self-concept. Interestingly, the CSCQ variables were not significantly correlated with the communicative competence measures, but both were correlated with academic attainment (see Table 5).

Table 5 Relationships between Academic Attainment, CSCQ, ASDQII, BCCC

	Academic attainment
--	---------------------

CSCQ Confidence (CSCQ-Con)	0.276** 0.004
CSCQ Comprehension (CSCQ-Com)	0.220* 0.025
CSCQ Production (CSCQ-P)	0.388** <0.0001
ASDQII English Academic Self concept (ESC)	0.240* 0.010
ASDQII School self concept	0.117 0.328
BCCC2 Communicative competence	0.463* 0.013

All measures other than school self-concept were correlated significantly with academic attainment, which was in line with expectations based on the literature. The different relationships between the ASDQ measures and academic attainment supports the notion established by Marsh (1985), which asserts that these measures should be referred to separately and reinforces claims made regarding the subject specific nature of academic self-concept.

Of particular interest is the language production measure, which shows relatively strong and highly significant relationships between both academic attainment and English Academic self-concept (see tables 4 and 5 above).

2.4.3.3 Partial correlations

In order to assess the directness of the relationships between academic self-concept, CSCQ-P and academic attainment, set of partial correlations were run.⁹

When controlling for the effect of communication self-concept (production), the relationship between English Academic Self Concept and English attainment becomes insignificant ($p=0.140, r=0.153, df 104$) which suggests that CSCA is mediating the relationship.

Additional support for the potentially mediatory relationship of Communication self-concept (production) comes when controlling for the effect of English self-concept. In this instance the relationship between CSCQ-P and academic attainment remains strong and significant ($p= 0.046 r= 0.411 df 22$). Fig 1 summarises these relationships.

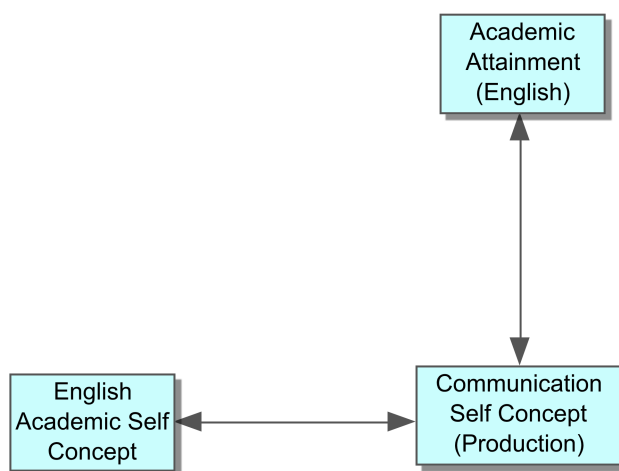


Figure 1 Mediatory relationship of CSCQ-P between English Academic Self Concept and Academic attainment

2.4.3.4 Regression analysis

⁹ For example, as all three variables are significantly correlated with each other, it is plausible that one variable could be playing a mediatory role. The use of partial correlations help to establish the relative directness of the relationships between the variables.

Predicting English Self concept

In order to examine the relationship between the communication self-concept variables and English Self-concept, the three self-concept variables were entered as predictor variables into a multiple regression analysis with English self-concept as Dependent variable.

The overall model was strong ($r=3,29 =9.695$, $p = >0.0001$) adjusted R square 0.501 and highly significant.

Table 6 Multiple regression analysis to examine relationship between CSC and ESC

Model	Standardised coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.	Colinearity	
				Tolerance	VIF
1 (constant)		0.391	0.699		
CSC Language confidence	0.431	-1.035	<0.0001	0.560	1.784
CSC Language Comprehension	0.390	2.337	0.027	0.619	1.615
CSC Language Production	0.508	4.270	<0.0001	0.848	1.179

As can be seen in Table 6, all three communication self-concept variables are significant predictors of English self-concept, with language confidence and language production yielding strong beta scores. Interestingly the most distinct predictor is language production with a high level of collinear tolerance (0.848), furthermore, this variable is also the most predictive of academic attainment (See next subsection). The extent to which the CSC variables are able to account for the variance in academic self-concept scores indicates that there may be some shared aspects between the variables. Potentially, English self-concept could be described as a smaller number of more precise skills. This will be discussed in more detail in section 2.4.4.5. The next section will look at the extent to which these variables are able to account for the variance in academic attainment (which is a primary focus of this

paper).

Predicting academic attainment

A strong relationship exists between communication “competence” measures and English attainment (see table 5). This is unsurprising given the discursive and language based nature of National Curriculum English. Of interest to this study, however, is the extent to which communicative competence scores differ from communication self-concept scores in their ability to account for the variance in NC scores. The extent to which the measures cross over (i.e. measure the same thing) impacts on the potential for both measures to be used together, in order to account for a greater proportion of the variance in academic attainment.

In order to ascertain the extent to which the communication self-concept variables are able to uniquely account for the variance in academic attainment a number of multiple regressions were run.

2.4.3.5 Analysis one

All self-concept variables (CSCQ-Con, CSCQ-Comp, CSCQ-P, and English academic self-concept) were entered into a multiple regression analysis using the stepwise method in order to establish the extent to which they were able to account for the variance in English academic attainment.

Although the overall model was significant ($F=1,22 =6.688$, $p = 0.017$) adjusted R square was only 0.198. The stepwise approach automatically removed all variables other than the CSC- production variable, which was singly able to account for 19.8% of the variance.

Table 7 Stepwise regression to establish significant self-concept based predictors of

academic attainment

Model	Standardised coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(constant)		1.294	0.209
CSCQ-Production	0.483	2.586	0.017

2.4.3.6 Analysis two

Having established that CSCQ-P is a significant predictor of academic attainment (See section 2.4.5 for discussion) the next analysis attempted firstly to create the strongest predictive model from the variables used in this study, and secondly to examine the extent to which communication self-concept is separate from communicative competence and is able to account for a unique proportion of the variance. In order to do both, a single hierarchical multiple regression analysis was run using the enter method, which placed Communicative competence on the first layer and CSCQ-P on the second layer.¹⁰ As shown in table 5 communicative competence variables yielded the strongest relationship with academic attainment.

Table 8 shows that communicative competence as a single predictor significantly accounts for 17.5% of the variance ($F(1,24) = 6.309$, $p = 0.019$) adjusted R square 0.175.

The inclusion of CSCQ-p contributes an additional 18.6% of the variance in CSCA scores, yielding an overall significant model ($F(2,23) = 7.493$, $p = 0.003$) adjusted R Square 0.342, accounting for 32.4 % of the variance.

Table 8 Hierarchical regression analysis to establish unique contribution of CSCQ-P

¹⁰ Due to the relatively small number of CCC data points it is not considered statistically viable to include more than two variables in a single regression analysis.

to academic attainment

Model	Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.	Colinearity	
				Tolerance	VIF
1 (constant)		1.959	0.062		
Communicative competence	0.456	2.512	0.019	1.000	1.000
2 (constant)		-			
Communicative competence	0.355	0.368	0.716	0.991	1.009
CSCQ Production	0.434	2.548	0.018		
		2.661	0.014	0.991	1.009

The independence of the two predictors is further reinforced by the colinearity statistics (0.991). This suggests that CSCQ-C and CSCQ-P are distinct predictors of academic attainment.

2.4.4 Summary of Part 2

Results reported in section 2.4.3 show that the production aspect of communication self-concept is an independent and significant predictor of academic attainment in English. Interestingly whilst other aspects of communication self-concept were found to be correlated with attainment, none of them were able to significantly account for the variance in attainment and were automatically removed during stepwise regression. In addition to accounting for academic attainment, the CSCQ subscales were also highly predictive of English Self Concept which is compatible with suggestions regarding further specification of self-concept categories i.e. that skill based self-concept skills may underlie the Academic Self Concept categories.

2.4.5 Discussion

A range of issues have arisen from both parts of paper 1. Part one took the initial steps towards developing a tool which intends to provide a quantitative impression of communication self-concept. Unlike a large number of other measures the CSCQ and its subscales is developed in order to be child friendly and covers a wider range of communicative constructs, incorporating issues relating to production, comprehension and confidence. Interestingly, the separation of these ideas appeared to have good validity, with principal components analysis separating variables into three relatively distinct groups, which reflected the above categories.

2.4.5.1 Social Context

One of the more interesting sub issues to arise from part one is that the social context questions (e.g. when I'm on lessons, when with group, when with friends) were factored according to the type of communication (e.g. production or comprehension) and did not form separate areas. This may suggest that the children were more influenced by the communication type rather than the place and/or context in which it took place. Whilst this issue certainly requires much more directed research (as the current study does not have sufficient data to fully support this claim), it does have ramifications for the development of interventional programmes in school suggesting the need in particular to focus on communicative mode and style, rather than, for example, the formality of situations and the children involved. Further exploration would be required in order to ascertain the extent to which this is the case (i.e. with a larger, more directed study) and the extent to which this reflects characteristics of the schools that the children are attending.

This study is original in that it has looked at the relationships between communication self-

concept and academic attainment after having divided communication self-concept into three distinct domains. Of interest is the particularly strong relationship between the production-oriented aspect of CSC and academic attainment which contrasts with the relatively weak relationship with English self-concept. Conversely, the CSC confidence scale has a strong relationship with English self-concept and a relatively weak relationship with academic attainment. This suggests that academic self-concept and CSC may be more similar in terms of their constructions. The key aspect of the Marsh / Shavelson model is the specific nature of self-concept, i.e. that it is possible to have a self-concept which relates directly to a particular subject, but not necessarily to other subject areas. The current study supports this notion, but suggests that perhaps the construct of “English” may still be too general. Earlier versions of the Marsh Shavelson model (Marsh 1990) presented self-concept as a tiered hierarchy (see section 2.3 for discussion), however, subsequent findings were unable to justify an intermediary category between “Academic Self Concept” and the subject specific constructs. The combination of the strong relationship between the skills based variables of the CSCQ and English Self Concept variable may suggest that, as opposed to a more general *superordinate* category, a set of *subordinate* categories may exist instead. The subordinate skills may relate to feelings about language skills as in this study, but also may refer to other related skills such as solving logical problems (which is an important skill in a range of subject areas), fine motor self-concept and so on. These skills based categories could potentially underlie the constructs proposed by Marsh and (as in this study) may provide a stronger correlate of academic performance. In order to establish this fully however, additional research would be required in order isolate the potential constructs which could underlie the self-concept categories used by Marsh.

2.4.5.2 Predicting English Attainment

Among the most central findings from this study is the relationship between the CSCQ measures and English attainment. The Production aspect of the CSCQ (CSCQ-P) was able to uniquely predict a much greater proportion of the variance in English attainment scores in comparison to the English Self Concept scale and was a unique predictor alongside communicative competence.

It is conceivable that the teacher who sets the child's national curriculum level may mediate the relationships between CSCQ-P and academic attainment. For example, children who do not communicate orally may be subjectively judged by a teacher to be poor communicators, and as a result have lowered expectations, which impacts on teacher score National Curriculum levels.

2.4.5.3 Implications of the relationship between communication self-concept and academic attainment

The strongest predictive model reported in this study combined the CSCQ-P and the measure of actual communication competence (BCCC). Given the strength and independence of both predictors, it seems likely that the combination of both these predictors have the potential to be used more thoroughly during language assessment. Currently mainstream language assessment (such as the BCC) which purport to examine the issue of language difficulties in school age children, do not recognise the importance of communication self-concept as part of an assessment battery. The current study has served to highlight (compatible with numerous claims made by MCrosskey (2009) regarding communication apprehension) the strong link between communication self-concept and academic achievement as distinct from a more generic language difficulty which would not have picked up on issues of this nature. Furthermore, whilst large number of language assessments (such as the BCC) are based on

the spontaneous production of utterances, communication self-concept highlights that there may potentially be a difference between a person's communication self-concept (which may result in a child becoming unwilling to speak) and a child's underlying communication competence. Therefore it may be unreliable to take a production based measurement of a child's language without also assessing communication self-concept.

2.4.5.4 Future directions

Further research would be helpful in continuing to explore the applications of the measure generated in the first section of this study. The predictive nature of this measure for academic attainment suggests that this measure has the potential to be used (with further refinement) alongside more traditional measures such as language and literacy screeners to gain a wider perspective of a child's needs and potential barriers to accessing the curriculum.

Although the current study has shown that communication self-concept is a significant predictor of academic attainment, it is thus far unclear as to the issues surrounding low communication self-concept scores, i.e. why children sometimes feel unwilling or unable to communicate. This information would be critical to the role of, for example, an Educational Psychologist looking to raise achievement in school. The next paper in this thesis therefore examines this issue within schools one and two in order to gain a clearer impression of the potential barriers towards developing positive communication self-concepts. More detailed conclusions and overall discussion can be found at the end of paper two in section 3.6.

3.0 Paper Two, Barriers to Communication in Two Secondary Schools

3.1 Overview of Paper Two

The previous paper discussed the notion of communication self-concept and presented a prospective tool for measuring communication self-concept in secondary age children. Findings indicate that communication self-concept appears to be separable from general self-concept and “actual” communicative competence as defined by the standardised Bishop CC instrument. Furthermore, communication self-concept appears to be an independent and significant predictor of academic attainment in English. The current paper builds on the theme of communication within secondary schools by exploring the views of children in two schools about communication in order to gain a wider perspective on potential barriers to communicating. In addition to this, the paper also explores communication from an organisational perspective via interviews with senior management and staff in order to gain an impression of the general issues surrounding communication from an institutional and inter-staff level. A range of themes were identified on a staff and child level relating centrally to poor mutual (staff to staff, child to staff) awareness of the roles and responsibilities arising as a result of time pressure and inconsistent staffing, both of which contributed to poor communication in school. More crucially however, staff generally discussed feeling unable to communicate with their peers (i.e. other members of staff) for similar reasons to the children which was indicative of poor communication self-concept as defined in the previous study. Questions regarding the extent to which communication self-concept on an organisational / staffing level impacts on child communication self-concept are discussed with respect to social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory. Potential implications of such findings for the development of interventional programmes are also discussed.

3.2 Background

The literature relating specifically to self-concept and communication self-concepts have already been discussed in paper one (Section 2.2). Whilst only a small amount of literature exists which deals with communication systems in schools, a larger array of literature links teacher self-efficacy with classroom behaviour these will be discussed in turn in the sections that follow and then discussed with respect to the current study in section 3.8.

Section K provides further, more general discussion around communication in schools.

3.2.1 Social Cognitive Theory - a causal pathway.

Whilst it is widely accepted that human behaviour is influenced by a range of different cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors, a clear consensus regarding the way in which these factors may interact is yet to be established. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1986; 1988; 1989) (SCT) provides a credible framework which can be used to analyse and interpret human behaviour in a systematic manner, without restricting the potential causal role of one or all of these factors. Central to SCT is the notion of reciprocal causation, which asserts that no one factor has prominence over another by default. SCT stipulates that psychosocial functioning can be described with reference to three influences, behaviour, person and environment. The model rests on the notion that elements within it are able to influence each other, which allows the model to be highly adaptable to different individuals across different situational contexts. SCT therefore asserts that psychosocial behaviour is a result of the interaction between each one of these elements (see fig 2).

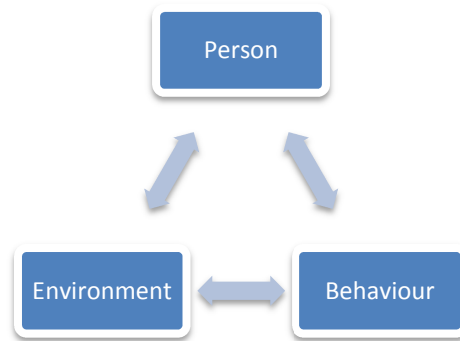


Figure 2 Schematisation of the relations among behaviour, cognitive and other personal factors and the environment (Taken from Wood & Bandura 1989)

SCT has been applied in a range of different organisational contexts (see Luthans and Kreitner 1975; Luthans and Kreitner 1985; Stajkovic and Luthans 1997) and has been used in conjunction with self-efficacy theory (Bandura 1982; 1988; 1991a; 1992; 1993) to explain teacher behaviour and teacher stress (Guskey 1988; Meijer and Foster 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff et al. 1990; Fuchs, Fuchs et al. 1992; Allinder 1994; Muijs and Reynolds 2002).

Of central importance to this study is the reciprocal relationship between the person and environment factors featured on the model above and the way in which that relationship can differ across different individuals and situational contexts. For example, members of school staff who are permanent (i.e. stay with the school for a long period of time) in school may have a larger impact on the school environment than students who exist in school for a much shorter period of time.

3.2.2 Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Self-efficacy refers to sets of beliefs held by individuals about their own capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over the events that affect

their lives. An individual's self-efficacy belief influences the way that they feel, think, motivate themselves and ultimately behave. Self-efficacy is regarded as an important linked concept to Social Cognitive theory. This construct has clear application to educational institutions. For example, a large number of studies have linked self-efficacy with teacher burnout, relationships between staff and organisational climate within schools. (Chwalisz, Altmaier et al. 1992; Freidman and Farber 1992; Evers, Brouwers et al. 2002; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2007)

3.2.3 Self-efficacy in school

As mentioned earlier, a large body of research indicates that teacher self-efficacy can impact on the general climate of the organisation. Work by Gibson & Dembo (1984) for example, shows that teachers who exhibited a high level of self-efficacy with respect to their teaching methods were more likely to create specific opportunities for students to participate and succeed in lessons. Specifically, teachers with high self-efficacy adopted a more facilitative and interactive style, which in turn contributed towards a more communicative ethos in the lesson. In contrast, teachers who exhibited low levels of self-efficacy were more likely to create a classroom atmosphere in which students were not given opportunities to participate and develop. Additional research has shown how teacher style and teacher pupil relationships can influence and /or be influenced by the school environment. Work, for example, by Woolfolk & Hoy (1990) focused more specifically on the teaching style of teachers with low levels of instructional efficacy. In this instance teachers with low instructional efficacy were more likely to favour an approach which emphasised negative sanctions and extrinsic rewards in order to encourage students to study which had a negative effect on teacher-pupil relationships, which in turn discouraged contributions from pupils in

lessons. Teacher–pupil relationships have also been found to be influenced by a range of different organisational factors such as principal style, school services and resources, work pressure, teacher relationships with other colleagues, professional prestige and level of autonomy.

A number of studies have additionally linked a range of self-efficacy related factors with teacher-student behaviour, for example, positive affection (Coudray 1995; Poenaru and Sava 1998), warm attitude (Elmore and LaPointe 1975; Van Manen 1991), teacher immediacy and teacher power (West 1994; Thweatt and McCroskey 1996) and teacher assertiveness and responsiveness (Wanzer and McCroskey 1998). Additional research has shown that teachers within a highly stressed and dis-communicative environment (on a school level) have a tendency to form more negative relationships with students, for example ones which involve rejection, excessive authority, sarcasm and disciplinary techniques which are based on fear and humiliation (Hyman and Snook 1999). Studies which have focused on students of teachers with low self-concepts have found that these students have a higher level of negative affect towards course materials (Wanzer & McCroskey 1998) and fewer learning opportunities in lessons (West 1994). Furthermore, factors such as lack of resources, low salaries, lack of principal support and negative interaction with other colleagues and pupils (Zak 1981; Kremer-Hayon and Kurtz 1985; Schwab, Jackson et al. 1986; Starnaman and Miller 1992; Byrne 1998) have also been shown to impact negatively on teacher pupil relationships.

Interestingly, the notion of self-efficacy has also been applied beyond the individual level, Bandura (1982) for example introduces the term “collective efficacy” to refer to a group’s shared belief in its ability to organise and implement courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment. Seated within SCT this would refer to a point at which the

environment (within the SCT triad) plays a stronger causal role in behaviour than the person aspect of the model. Collective efficacy has been linked with a range of different outcomes in organisational, educational, sports and military settings (See Bandura 1999 for discussion) and has also been found to underlie performance in a range of different group tasks (see Gully et al 2002 for a review). In addition, collective efficacy in schools at the start of an academic year has been found to predict academic achievement at the end the year, even when controlling for the effects of student characteristics, prior academic achievement and staff experience level (Bandura 1993).

When interpreted within SCT, both self and collective efficacy can therefore have a wide reaching impact on the way in which a school operates. The notion of collective efficacy may therefore also have an impact on the way in which a school communicates with its staff and students alike (and vice versa). The literature search which was undertaken as part of the preparation of this manuscript was unable to find any studies that have examined communication systems from both a school and child level within the literature. The current study represents an exploration into the views on communication held by staff and students, which will be discussed with respect to SCT and Self efficacy theory in section 3.6.

3.3 The current study

The current research attempts to identify barriers to communication in two secondary schools in Warwickshire. Both schools also took part in the study presented in paper one. As with study one, both schools were participating in a project in Warwickshire aimed at improving

communication systems in secondary schools although the data collection took place before any interventional strategies were implemented in either school.

This study sought to explore views of students who were found in paper one as having relatively low communication self-concepts with an aim to gaining a wider impression of the perceived barriers to communication of these students. In addition, the study also aimed to explore barriers to communication amongst staff in the schools in order to establish a more general context in which communication occurs.

3.4 Methodology

3.4.1 Research questions

The research questions within this study were intended to give depth to the reported findings in paper one regarding communication self-concept in children. The central aim was to examine the communicative systems and attitudes towards communication that exist in school and examine any ways in which these may be propagated by the school staff and children.

Due to the generality of this aim, questions within this research were also kept general in order to reflect the inductive nature of the research design.

The initial question “What facilitates and prevents communication in secondary schools” was operationalised into a number of areas of sub areas:-

- What is the function of communication and to what extent is this operationalised in school?

- What systems and personal perspectives facilitate and/or prevent communication?
- What underlying drivers and motivators support communicative behaviour in school.

3.4.2 Study Design Overview

In order to explore the above questions, semi structured interview schedules were created to be used with school staff and children (see appendices I and J respectively). Staff were questioned on a one on one basis and children were questioned via focus groups. Questions were devised to encompass a range of general areas relating to communication and were designed so as to allow participants to expand and extend and pertinent issues as needed (see sections 3.4.11 and 3.4.12 for more details). Data was analysed via a grounded approach which utilised structural coding during first cycle coding and pattern coding during second cycle coding (see section 3.5 for discussion).

3.4.3 Ontology and Epistemology

The research design used in this study is seated within an interpretivist framework. Given the lack of literature on the topic of communication in schools and the difficulties in drawing generalisations across schools around this issue, it was felt that a framework which allowed a more open design would be appropriate. Exploratory Positivist approaches which often centre around a deductive approach to theory creation and testing were felt to be inadequate in this instance. Difficulties with applying a positivist approach centred mainly around difficulties in reliably generating specific constructs which would lend themselves to quantitative measurement. Due to the relatively unexplored nature of the subject matter, it was felt that adopting an Interpretivist approach would allow a wider more exploratory methodology

which would be more likely to “catch” critical issues, due to its intuitive compatibility with inductive approaches to analysis.

Interpretivism views knowledge and understanding as a socially constructed phenomena. Within an interpretive framework for example, terms such as communication may mean different things to different people, with the emphasis on why these differences exist. Of interest in this study is the extent to which socially constructed definitions are shared across all agents, and the exploration of the mechanisms by which these definitions and processes are continually updated and generated. To this end, the interpretivist approach is regarded as compatible with the current research agenda.

3.4.4 Methodological justification

Critical to this study was the need to contrast perspectives on communication from multiple sources. As one of the underlying tenants of the interpretivist perspective relates to the socially constructed nature of knowledge and understanding it was crucial to gain information regarding the level of shared understanding with regards to communication and communication systems within the schools. Due to the often political nature of discussions around the subject of communication, it was deemed necessary to meet with staff individually (as opposed to working in groups) in order to enable open discussion of the subject matter. The semi structured nature of the interviews were intended to allow the researcher to keep the discussion focused on communication but also allowing the participant to expand and extend into additional areas which may be of interest. Whilst it was felt that adults would be more likely to talk on an individual basis, it was felt that the opposite would be more likely for the children, who would be more likely to engage in discussion when in groups, as a result of this

small groups of children were randomly selected by the school to participate in a semi structured discussion around the topic of communication.

A number of criticisms have been levelled at the use of focus groups as a mechanism for attaining valid perspectives from subjects (see Campbell and Stanley 2005 for detailed discussion). A popular criticism concerns the lack of anonymity which may prevent the discussion of “genuine” perspectives. This issue however is not exclusive to focus groups, it could also be argued for example that individual interviews, particularly with vulnerable individuals would create an equivalent level of communicative apprehension. Such issues within focus groups can be partially be overcome by establishing ground rules and providing reassurances about anonymity and acceptance, and ensuring that potential group and researcher bias be taken into account during the coding process. It has also been suggested that presence of the researcher during focus groups facilitates the “cherry picking” of data, which contributes to a foregone conclusion, rather than providing new perspectives which are often the intended purpose. Opponents argue that this largely depends on the way in which the groups are constructed and the level of training received by the researcher. Such a criticism can be levelled at most research methods where appropriate steps have not been taken to ensure validity of data collection and coding. A similar discussion surrounds the use of semi structured interviews which could potentially be used in order to lead a subject towards a certain viewpoint when poorly constructed and administered. Given this issue it is therefore of critical importance that questions are designed in an open manner so as to allow subjects to discuss topics freely and that viewpoints (where possible) are triangulated with other information gained from other participants. In addition, it is standard practice to seek evidence to contrary within an interview and coding process so as to attain the relative specificity of a potential theme.

3.4.5 Procedure

In line with the interpretivist underpinnings of this study (discussed in sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.4) semi structured interviews were used as a means of collecting the views and perspectives of school staff (via individual interviews) and students (via focus groups). More detail about the structure of the focus groups can be found in section 3.4.9. The decision to use focus groups in addition to the sample selection for this study was pre-decided based on a number of local political issues.

Interviews and focus groups (see section 3.4.7 for details about the composition of the groups) took place over the course of one week in each school during the final weeks of the summer term in 2010. Interviews lasted on average one hour each and were recorded via Dictaphone. With the exception of the headmaster and SENCo's who had been requested, Staff had volunteered to take part although they were not given any prior information about the interview other than that it was to explore communication systems within school.

3.4.6 Selection of schools

As mentioned above, this study is part of a wider evaluation project run between a Midlands based Local Authority funded Integrated Disabilities Service and Educational Psychology Service. The schools had volunteered to take part in the study and were given communications training for a nominal sum of money following collection of baseline data (which is presented in this paper).

Both schools had among the highest numbers of permanent exclusions in the county (which was the target of the wider study) and had a higher than national average amount of children qualifying for free school meals.

Both schools had independently volunteered to take part in the wider project due to a perceived need (by the schools themselves) to develop communication systems. Both schools also had consented to the small amount of additional work associated with the current study (See section 3.4.10).

3.4.6.1 School one

School one in particular had (prior to the commencement of the study) identified communication as a priority following an internal audit, with pupils and with staff members. This was partially due to a large number of changes in senior management (6 changes of headmaster in 5 years) and as it had recently come out of special measures.

3.4.6.2 School two

Like school one, School two had identified communication as a priority and made some progress towards developing systems for communicating with pupils and other staff, before the commencement of the study. In addition, the school had a consistent headmaster over the previous 6 years and so had not experienced the level of systemic inconsistency as school one. Communications within this school were regarded as a priority and the school had already embraced a number of communication friendly initiatives in order to raise staff awareness of pupil needs. The school had also formed a dedicated communications “action” group, with the aim of improving communications, although the group was not yet active at the time of data collection. Ideas generated by the group however surrounded direct staff to pupil communication and did not appear to focus on communication between staff, which was of interest to the current research.

3.4.7 Within schools sample

In both schools semi structured interviews took place with key members of school management including heads, SENCo’s, heads of departments, teachers and teaching

assistants. In addition focus groups with children also took place. The children interviewed were selected by the school for the interview based on their scores in English (children who were “stuck” level 4). The formation of the discussion groups was then based on the number of signed consent forms received before the day of the focus groups. Children were in all cases given multiple opportunities to withdraw from the study should they wish (see section on ethics and consent). There is no evidence to suggest that this led to an unreliable account of the communicative issues experiences by these students. In total 12 members of staff across both schools were interviewed, in addition to 16 students as part of multiple focus groups across both schools.

Table 9 School staff taking part in study (Paper 2)

School 1	School 2
Headmaster	Headmaster
Deputy Head teacher x2	Deputy Head teacher
SENCo	Head of pastoral support
Head of department	Head of department
Teacher	Teacher
Teaching assistant	Teaching assistant
Pupil focus groups X2 (4 Children in each group)	Pupil focus group (8 children)

3.4.8 Staff interviews

During the interview, staff were informed that they were not required to answer any question that they were not comfortable with and that they should feel free to seek clarification on any question. Furthermore, staff were also informed that the aim of the interview was to elicit information about communication and that I would appreciate as much information as they could give me.

3.4.9 Student focus groups

As with staff interviews, the focus groups lasted approximately one hour each. At all times, children were encouraged to give as much information as possible. Children were aged 13 - 14 years and consisted of an equal combination of males and females. In both schools, groups took place in an unused classroom which had been allocated by the schools for the duration of the study. At the beginning of the group, a number of ground rules were established oriented towards positive turn taking behaviour so that each child had the opportunity to speak, rules included every child having the right to speak without interruption and that anything said would be treated in confidence by me (the researcher). The children were also told that in this group, everyone's viewpoint was valid, valuable and of interest to the study. After the discussion began, children's contributions were at all times encouraged and each child was given space to express any opinions or views that they held. The children in all groups engaged well and were keen to volunteer their views, appearing to enjoy the open nature of the discussion.

3.4.10 Ethics and consent

School consent for the study to take place, was obtained from the head teachers during the school recruitment process via signed consent forms. The schools also paid a small sum of money in order to contribute to the training (which was part of a larger evaluation). Head teachers additionally attended a number of meetings about the wider project and were made fully aware of the general nature of the study.

In addition to obtaining school consent, verbal and signed content was also obtained from teaching staff who took part in the interviews (which make up the results for this study). Teaching staff in both schools had in the first instance volunteered to take part in the study and had been selected by management based on a list of school positions requested by the researcher.

Consent for the children's participation was gained on two levels. Children were selected by the school and consent letters and attached information sheets were sent home for parents to sign (see appendix D and F). The information sheets contained contact numbers for the Principal Investigator so that parents could make contact if they required any further information. Forms were designed so that parents would be able to opt out of any aspect of the study that they were unhappy with, but without withdrawing completely (unless they wanted to). Parents were informed that they had the right to withdraw their child from the study at any point even if they had initially given their consent.

Further verbal consent was obtained from the children taking part in the focus groups. As with the staff interviews, the children were told that there was no obligation to speak and that the interview was to be recorded to help with analysis.

All participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point even after it had started. In this instance all data collected at that point would be destroyed if this was the wish of the participant.

All data and consent forms were kept in a secure, locked filing cabinet within Warwickshire County Council during the transcription and coding process. During the analysis and coding process all digital information was anonymised so as to protect the identity of schools and subjects. Data will be kept in paper form for 3 months after the study, at which point it will be destroyed, leaving only the anonymised digital data.

3.4.11 Construction of interview schedules

Justification for the use of individual and focus group interviews can be found in section 3.4.4. Interview schedules were created as a general guide but were intended to be flexible, if for example questions or sub questions were covered in other answers so as to minimise the time commitment needed from the schools in order to complete them.

3.4.12 Construction of questions

Questions were designed to be open and around the area of communication, crucially the schedules aimed at eliciting communicative issues within three general areas that were considered to be crucial in ascertaining the level of communicative efficacy within each institution.

Areas were, the extent of good communication, barriers and facilitators of communication, and communicative competence (based on an individual and organisational level). Each area

was subdivided once more into further sub areas which were then used in order to create the interview questions. (see fig 3)

In addition to a common core of questions which all members of staff answered, further extension questions relevant to heads of departments, teaching assistants and teachers were also developed in order to provide role specific insight. A separate set of questions was developed for use in the student focus groups which were aimed at eliciting primarily information about staff to student and student to staff communication. Interview schedules can be found in appendices I and J.

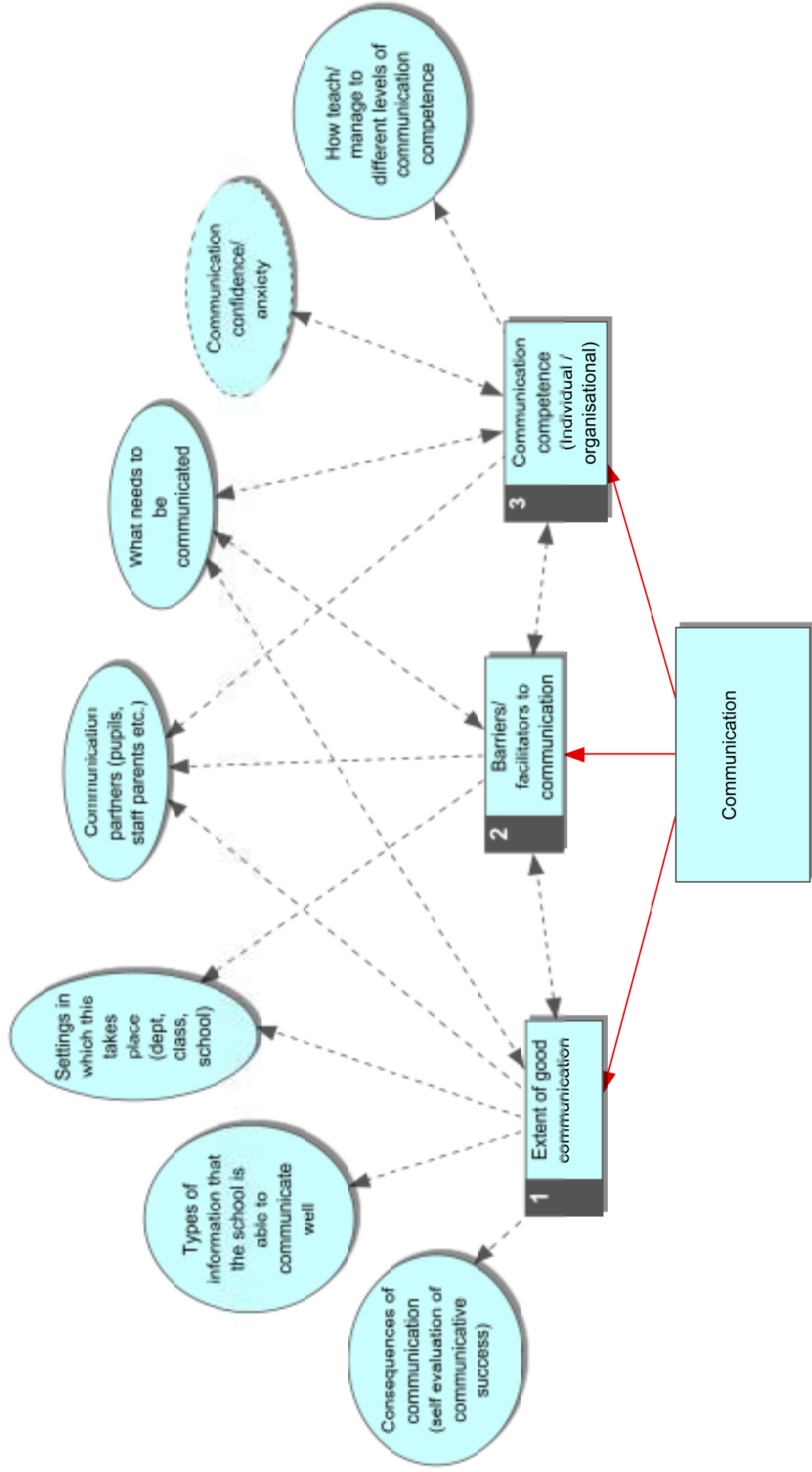


Figure 3 Underlying structure of Semi-structured interview questions

3.5 Analysis Overview

Due to the exploratory nature of the research and lack of background literature on communication in schools, it was difficult to generate a clear hypothesis or specific framework for analysis. As a result it was felt that the data would be better analysed via a grounded approach so as to allow themes to emerge from the dataset. Both schools were analysed and coded separately during first cycle coding and then brought together for comparison during second cycle coding.

Following data collection, coding took place over two cycles, the first cycle used descriptive coding (Miles and Huberman 1994; Wolcott 1994; Saldana 2003) as a way of reducing the data into categories. This was in preparation for second cycle coding which took the form of pattern coding (Miles & Huberman 1994).

It was felt that due to the size of the dataset and the limited time available that descriptive coding would help to initially organise and sort the dataset, particularly given the need to adopt a grounded approach. The categories were generated purely from the dataset and did not utilise an external framework.

An approach broadly compatible with pattern coding was used as a second cycle method as a way of developing major themes out of the data set and further refining the codes generated from first cycle coding. During this stage of analysis, codes from both schools were compared. Schools were then contrasted in what could be described as a third cycle in order to generate an overall model and to establish comparisons for later discussion.

3.5.1 Descriptive coding

Descriptive coding took place on a line by line basis by categorising the contents of meaningful text into groups. Broad categories were identified at this stage such as “success and effectiveness of communication” “Means of communication” and “what underpins successful communication”.

Multiple readings of the dataset took place in order to ensure consistency of coding across all transcripts.

Overall 27 categories were established at this stage which allowed a more detailed analysis in the next stage (see appendix A for full list and descriptions of codes found).

3.5.2 Pattern coding

Second cycle coding was broadly within the principles of pattern coding.

At this stage it was also possible to look in more detail at some of the contrasts between the interview transcripts within the categories generated from first cycle coding and to generate some overarching themes in order to capture the essence of the commentary. In order to further aid analysis emergent themes were organised hierarchically with wider themes which were more descriptive, such as “management changes causing uncertainty” at the top and sub themes such as “lack of time to communicate” which were considered to be resulting from the theme above.

Student and staff interviews were analysed separately, even though the question sets were designed to be compatible with each other. It was felt that the contrast between students and teacher views would yield interesting discussion.

3.5.3 Themes extracted from student focus groups across both schools

Three overall themes were constructed from the student dataset across both schools (and applied across both schools). Themes related to receptivity to communication, staff role and concepts of control. Each will be described below and discussed in section 3.6.

3.5.3.1 Theme 1 – teachers are unreceptive to communication

One of the main issues across both schools reflected a perception on the part of the students that teaching staff would be unreceptive to communication. Students discussed particular times of the day where teachers were likely to be stressed and less receptive to communication. This reportedly had a significant impact on whether students felt able to communicate with teachers.

“they take ages and then you don’t know what to do, you ask for help and they’re like “we’ve just been explaining it for ages”

Students were also aware of teachers who they felt were intimidated by groups of children and were able to describe the body language and behaviour in detail, discussing in particular hiding their face behind books when reading and speaking from behind a desk. They also discussed a shared awareness of a teacher’s general mood which also affected the extent to which students felt that they were able to communicate with teachers. The students appeared to hold a belief that they would be reprimanded for asking a question in class when teachers felt stressed.

“Sometimes when he’s said to get on with your work then you don’t wanna put your hand up in case he has a go at you for not doing work. but he don’t really explain it properly.”

This was not the case with all teaching staff however as students identified teaching assistants in particular as being easier to communicate with. The students felt less inhibited in communicating with them.

3.5.3.2 Theme 2 Understanding the role of different members of staff

A linked theme referred to students’ lack of certainty about who to speak to and the role of different members of staff in school but particularly in the classroom. In particular children expressed uncertainty about the role of teaching assistants vs. teachers. There was a lack of certainty about when students were supposed to speak to either teacher or teaching assistant which discouraged students from communicating in the classroom.

“I think it is better when you have a TA because they help more than teachers do but I don’t know if they are supposed to but they come first and you can talk to them, with teachers you feel like a fool when they keep coming over to you, it just feels better when they are in the class instead of teachers.”

Interestingly, this issue would seem to link well with theme 1 of the staff discussions and may reflect a more general uncertainty across schools regarding the respective roles of members of staff. At one point during the discussion, one of the students at school two briefly referred to lessons being better when staff were more communicative with each other.

“it is alright in English because one week we have one teacher where we do all the same thing in one and the next week we have another, it is easy in English because they talk to each other, but it is harder in Maths and they teach us the same things but in a different way.”

The positive reference to English is interesting as this is a department in school two which has consistent staffing and a teaching assistant who is attached to the department (See discussion in section 3.6). This suggests that the improved communication between staff as a result of the system is something which is noticed and appreciated by the students, contributing to a more positive communicative environment.

3.5.3.3 Theme 3, concept of control

A major theme, which was again consistent across both schools indicated that children feel that they are unable to influence events and processes around them by communicating. Within the classroom, students discussed feeling apprehensive when communicating, feeling that teaching staff may not be receptive to communication and that there would not necessarily be any support forthcoming as a result (see theme 1). In addition to this, students also discussed feeling unable to influence events in school in a wider sense, which is described here as a separate theme as (although linked) it refers more to a perception of school on an institutional level rather than on a classroom dialogue level which is more functional in nature.

During staff interviews in both schools a number of mechanisms by which the students could communicate with school were highlighted, these included areas such as the school council via their representatives, school pastoral system, school surveys and tutorial sessions. This

was the case in both schools, however in school one, a number of these mechanisms have only recently been introduced as part of the new school system, and is not currently operating consistently with other systems such as the tutorial system.

“I think it’s inconsistent with our tutoring system at the moment about what message get out to who and where and when but generally its good but again it’s a consistency thing. I think that students feel valued and feel that they can come and give suggestions and I give them opportunities to talk to me.”

The students discussed feeling unable to influence wider events in school, and showed a limited awareness of the function of communication. When describing the school council’s activities the students described wider issues such as the installation of speed humps and action regarding bike sheds. The poor communication with the student council and the seeming lack of activity following this dialogue seems to have reinforced the notion that the students are not listened to.

“Sometimes, they asked us about the bike sheds, and we were all for it and they asked us about other stuff and everyone’s all for it but nothing happens and they don’t always listen. So really it’s a waste of time.”

Students in both schools did not feel powerless in this sense in every area however. In one area which relates to bullying (which has been targeted on a county wide basis recently) the students indicated that both schools were extremely responsive and that they felt confident to communicate with the schools about this.

“If something happened, like if your mates getting picked on and you tell them that then that gets taken seriously, cus you have to like write a report and everything and statement and all that.”

Students appeared to have become more positive about this as they were able to view the results of their communication within a relatively short time frame which reinforced the notion that their communication has changed something. Wider events, with which the school councils were involved, are unlikely to have such a fast turnaround and a higher potential to be cancelled due to a wide range of reasons that the students may not be privy to. The longer turnaround with a smaller likelihood of change or response is likely to have contributed to a feeling of student disempowerment.

3.5.4 Staff semi structured interviews

3.5.4.1 Theme 1 – Awareness of roles and responsibilities

The theme termed “Awareness of roles and responsibilities” is arguably central to the communication related barriers in both schools in this study. Staff in both schools experienced a high level of frustration when they perceived other members of staff to not be fulfilling their responsibilities. Equally frustrating for staff was also when other staff misunderstood the role and responsibilities that they currently held and made what were perceived to be unreasonable demands. The presence of this mismatch may suggest that a more fundamental issue may exist, relating to staff’s own intrinsic sense of role and purpose within the organisation. For example, one head of department appeared to define her role in terms of prioritising deadlines. Whilst the ability to meet deadlines meant that she was able to “survive” in her role, her job roles and job identity appeared to be mainly based on the impressions of other members of staff, which seemed to lead to a perceived inability to develop or implement her own initiatives and ideas. This had an effect which was

disempowering and frustrating for her. The lack of security and role identity also meant that she found it difficult to interpret other people's roles, responsibilities and pressures.

“they turn around and say to us I want this back in 2 days. There was an issue with some of that earlier on in this academic year that caused big eruptions. And it was something imposed on the school – well turn round to whoever is imposing it and say ** ... I’m not saying that to be simplistic but there’s got to be some give sometime.”***

Poor role identity was a theme at the heart of a large number of communication difficulties in both schools. Particularly interesting were comments by teaching assistants, one of whom talked explicitly about feeling undervalued and underutilised by teaching staff, although also showing a lack of awareness of the roles of other teaching staff herself. Comments regarding the often difficult relationship between teaching assistants and teachers were also echoed in interviews with other teaching staff. By contrast, a teaching assistant at school two gave a more positive account of her relationships with teachers indicating that she felt able to easily communicate with teachers and had regular access to them which allowed her to be effective in her job. When questioned about this the teaching assistant revealed that she was different from other teaching assistants in that she was tied to one particular department which had allowed her to develop stronger relationships and subject expertise. The TA did however cite previous experience in the same school where she was deployed as a “general” TA. Her recollection of this experience appeared to be similar to the current experiences described by the TA in school one.

“My cover is generally across one class for all of their lessons (in English), so I know where they’re going, I will already know roughly how many lessons we’re going to take this work across. Other teaching assistants may only support one or two subjects once or

twice per week, and maybe someone else might do in between, that can be a problem. Because I've been up here for two years, but before that I was a general TA who moved about, that used to happen more often."

The regular contact between the teaching assistant and the other members of staff meant that the TA was able to build stronger working relationships within the department and consequently felt more confident in communicating. In addition to this the TA was also able to build stronger relationships with students due to the increased regularity of contact. This also represented a way around the "time" barrier to communication which is the subject of the next theme.

Overall, each member of staff in both schools referred to issues around understanding roles and responsibilities, and much of the poor communication or lack of confidence to communicate appears to relate at least in part to poor understanding of roles. This issue represents a chicken or egg dilemma in the sense that staff need to communicate in order to understand each other, but won't communicate because they don't understand each other. This issue will be discussed with respect to Social Cognitive Theory in section 3.6.

3.5.4.2 Theme 2 Time as a barrier to communication

One of the critical issues raised by virtually all members of staff across both schools related to the issue of time for communication. Staff on the whole expressed both dissatisfaction with the current level of communication and also did not appear to have a clear concept about how this could be improved. Discussion with the headmaster indicates that this issue is echoed by management, particularly in school one who are currently exploring ways in which they can give more time to allow communication to happen. Following the recent management

changes in school one (which is discussed in the final theme) the frequency of school leadership meetings has been increased in order to address the communicative problems within the school. Unfortunately weekly meetings are not consistent throughout the school which means that with this method it is not possible to feed information through to departments in a timely fashion. In addition it also means that information cannot always be fed “upwards” from departments in a timely fashion either.

“Time is our main issue, because although we have made that better we (leadership team) meet weekly, but it may be that the department doesn’t meet for 3 weeks in advance.”

One solution to the communication problems in school one is to change the medium of communication and rely on email in order to get around the time barrier. Unfortunately there appear to be a large amount of inherent problems with this approach. For example, some staff are more IT literate than others, not all staff have access to computers during the day and some question the value of computers in any case. This means that emails are generally checked and responded to in an inconsistent manner. In addition to the logistical issues, further tensions concern the manner and phrasing of emails, staff taking offence for example at the lack of a salutation in an email and large numbers of people being cc’d into emails by default, meaning that staff who do check their emails are frequently overwhelmed by a large volume of messages which do not necessarily concern them directly. The effect of this is that staff feel discouraged from communicating and in order to access this medium would be required to spend a large amount of time checking and responding to messages. This particular medium of communication has an effect that staff feel unwilling or unable to communicate due to negative responses or no response to messages, with a perception of communication as a redundant process.

“Yes, it tends to then turn round to getting information about the kids turns into round robin by email which is a case of hit and miss as to whether you get them back and then you chasing. TA’s don’t necessarily have the same email facilities that we have. I know my TA’s I will say I have sent an email to you and they say Ok I better check them then. They don’t have an immediate access of you know you get your registers up you get your emails open and go. They don’t have this as they are all over the place so there is an issue there of accessing the information in the first place.”

Interestingly, staff across both schools generally appeared to view the need for additional time as crucial for communication which was regarded as a central problem in school. The concept that without time, communication was impossible is indicative of a collective view that communication happens as a separate process to other activities. Naturally holding this perspective would mean that additional time would be necessary in order to communicate, however some staff in school two appeared to hold a different view of communication which saw it as part of day to day activities as opposed to a separate operation. Implicit in this view is the need for teaching staff to work alongside each other in a consistent and regular way, which is something that school two was beginning to do at the time of data collection.

Overall the issue of time for communication was viewed as a significant issue in both schools. Two main solutions were described, the increased use of email which would not require physical contact and could be used flexibly (i.e. when people do have time) and the embedding of staff in particular departments, which on the limited number of occasions that this occurred appeared to be the most successful of two approaches in encouraging staff to be more communicative with each other.

3.5.4.3 Theme three, management consistency and style

The final theme relates to consistency of management in both schools. This is particularly significant as it was an area in which the two schools showed the strongest difference. School one has shifted from a leadership style which was very autocratic and hierarchically determined to one which emphasises communication and collaborative decision making. A member of senior management sums up the change in systems –

“I think the previous head who started it, but she had a different way of working than Mike has - if you ascribed colours to people, she was a red, dominant leader – “this is what we’re gonna do and you’re gonna do it” Mike has the ideas, and he expects people to contribute ideas also, and he gets upset when people don’t understand, so he’s constantly having to explain how we do things”

The change in styles is linked with a large amount of confusion and frustration in school one and can be said to feed into the issues discussed in section 3.5.4.1 around identification of roles and responsibilities. The head expressed a degree of frustration at not receiving the level of input from staff that he needed in order to work in a consultative manner.

Whilst the identified aim of developing a consultative way of working implies joint decisions and staff collaboration, the communications infrastructure in school one remains a hierarchical, top down approach which relies on information being disseminated via senior management, through heads of department and ultimately “down” to staff. Given the discussion of theme two around the issue of time for communication, it seems unlikely that staff will feel able to participate in collaborative decision making. Discussion with the head indicates that in the absence of input from staff, he is often required to take decisions in a more autocratic manner, which undermines the philosophy that he is trying to implement. Associated difficulties which arise as result of management change in school one relate to a

lack of trust in the new style of management, and the lack of confidence that staff have that management would like the input of staff.

“The other area is around consultation and gaining the trust that consultation really does mean that under my leadership and it isn’t just something that’s done without a decision that’s already made..... I don’t think people have previously been empowered or felt empowered to have that say and have been a bit scared to voice their opinion in case of repercussions.”

School two by contrast has had a more stable management, which means that staff appear to be more secure in their ability to communicate with management via the line management system. As a result of this staff appear to hold a greater degree of trust in management’s ability to support them and respond to their concerns.

If I do have any issues, I feel confident to go and talk to my line manager, and he does always follow up the actions quite quickly so there are no problems there. With the phone call mentioned earlier, when we had the conversation that day, he rang that day. Any concerns I have, if he says he will go and speak to the head, he will do that quickly.

Overall management consistency in both schools appears to play a significant role in supporting communication. Where a consistent management infrastructure has remained in place (as in school two) staff feel able and confident to communicate with management. Although both schools use a similar system of communication via a line management system, the relative regularity and predictability of the system in school two means that a more effective and productive dialogue between staff appears to exist.

3.6 Summary and Discussion

In setting out to examine potential barriers to communication, this study has found a number of striking similarities between perspectives from both schools, between staff and students. One of the main recurrent themes associated with poor communication related to a poor awareness of respective roles and responsibilities (See sections 3.5.4.1 and 3.5.4.2). It seems plausible that poor communication is likely to be both a cause and product of this issue. The extent to which this is an issue is also related to the level of management consistency in schools and the way in which staff (in particular teaching assistants) are deployed.

Whilst the two schools do share a number of similarities in terms of communication barriers they also differed in a number of ways, with school two appearing to be more advanced towards establishing a strong communicative ethos and infrastructure. This contrast allowed the study to consider the effect of a consistent management ethos which proved to be a barrier to communication in school one, whereas it was regarded as more facilitative in school two. In addition, differences in the way that (some) staff were deployed in both schools was also significant in allowing staff to develop more positive relationships in school. The allocation of staff to particular departments (as opposed to using “floating” staff) appeared to result in positive communication and relationships, and also provided a potential route around the time issue which was regarded as a significant barrier to communication among staff. The impact of different types or staff deployment is well represented in the literature, particularly with respect to the deployment of teaching assistants. For example, in a series of studies by Blatchford et al (2008; 2009a; Webster, Blatchford et al. 2011) on the effectiveness of teaching assistants in secondary schools, a number of issues were found which reflected a level of ambiguity relating to the particular role of teaching assistants in schools nationally. Blatchford et al (2009c) found that teaching assistants typically had either no impact, or a

detrimental impact on child progress in schools. One of the major themes arising from both the current study and the Blatchford studies were comments by teaching staff regarding the lack of time and capacity with which to engage teaching assistants in planning activities. In secondary schools 95% of respondents indicated that they had not been allocated time for planning sessions, with planning (when it did happen) taking place on an ad hoc basis across lunch, break and between lessons when possible. As with findings in the current study, this left teaching assistants feeling underprepared and often unable to complete tasks that they were given. Communication following lessons was also considered to be poor with limited feedback from teachers. Furthermore the Blatchford studies highlighted that teachers often lacked the appropriate and relevant training about the effective deployment of teacher assistants in classrooms. The findings from the current study can therefore be considered compatible with nationally based findings from the Blatchford studies, however the current work takes a wider perspective by looking at communication from multiple perspectives. The current work stretches beyond teacher/ TA viewpoints and is able to consider the role and views of other members of staff. This study is also able to provide a rationale for some of the tensions in the schools studied by identifying wider management, organisational and attitudinal issues. The study found that far from issues about lack of certainty in roles and responsibilities being restricted to teaching assistants, there are wider issues within the organisations themselves across all management tiers and also with respect to the students attending the schools which emerge when examining communication.

An unexpected finding from this study concerned the similarities between barriers and views towards communication of students and staff. Both groups in both schools discussed a lack of clarity regarding communication, in terms of who they should communicate with, when and how. When this was unclear both staff and students indicated that they felt unable or otherwise inhibited in communicating. It is difficult to establish a clear causal direction in

this instance. Certainly it would appear that improving and/or increasing communication or quality of communication between groups would add clarity, but conversely, communication seems unlikely to improve unless the respective roles and responsibilities of people are also clarified. An overarching theme across the entire dataset therefore appears to relate to the level of personal identity held by staff and students. When individuals are secure in both their own identities (for example when TA's are attached to respective departments) and in other peoples identities then communication appears to be more positive and more productive.

3.6.1 Communication Self-concept, Self-efficacy, and Social Cognitive Theory

Paper one discussed the notion of communication self-concept, which, as stated in section 2.2 does not refer to communication competence (indeed these scores were found to be significantly different in paper one) but refers more to an individual's self-perceived ability to communicate. Whilst a discussion based on evidence of the causes of poor communication self-concept is beyond the scope of this thesis, there are some parallels with Bandura's concept of self-efficacy (see section 2.2 for discussion). A number of sub themes extracted from the data for example suggest that staff often do not communicate because they anticipate that their communication will be unsuccessful, misunderstood or ignored. Whilst the organisational rationale for this position may be due to a lack of awareness of roles and responsibilities, time, and insufficient means of communication, the individuals perception is likely to be linked to an number of socio-cognitive causes (according to self-efficacy theory). This is also in addition to an interaction between person, environment, and behaviour when interpreted with the broader Social Cognitive Theory model. Particularly salient and evidenced from the dataset are experiences which Bandura refers to as mastery experiences and vicarious experiences. These are considered critical mechanisms for learning within

Bandura's definition of five basic human capabilities¹¹ (See Wood and Bandura 1989 for discussion) (which underlie SCT) and make up two out of the four causal factors for self-efficacy theory. The latter (vicarious experiences) refers to the observation of success and failures in other peoples attempts to communicate and the former (mastery experiences) refers to an individual's own successes or failures to communicate¹². Both of these factors are considered to be significant predictors of self-efficacy in the workplace. Additionally Bandura's conception of self-efficacy is specific as is Marsh's notion of academic self-concept (from which the construct of communication self-concept in paper one is drawn from) in that it is possible to have high self-efficacy / concept in one particular area and low in another. This makes it possible to assume that self-efficacy about communicating can underlie aspects of communication self-concept. If so, then this would imply that low communication self-concept may potentially arise partially as a product of low self-efficacy. When viewed through the broad lens of social cognitive theory, poor communication self-concept may therefore arise indirectly as a result of an interaction between a range of individual and organisational factors with the schools.

In contrast to communication between staff, it seems plausible based on previous literature that student-staff communication may have a different dynamic; with students being more affected by the communicative environment than they influence it. Section 3.2 outlines a number of studies which show that teachers with low self-efficacy exhibit different teaching styles. For example, within these studies teachers with low self-efficacy are less likely to provide mastery and positive vicarious experiences for pupils and tend to adopt more confrontational styles of teaching which are communicatively discouraging to students. It is therefore theoretically possible and even plausible that poor communication self-concept

¹¹ Refers to "symbolising", "Vicarious", "Forethought", "Self-Regulatory" and "Self Reflective" capabilities,

¹² Bandura also stipulates that physiological states and social persuasion also play a causal role in self-efficacy, although as the study was not set up to examine self-efficacy it is not possible to identify these factors in the data collected.

(when interpreted within self-efficacy theory) among staff could have an impact on the communication self-concept of students also.

It is concluded from this study that students' school based communication self-concept are likely to be "set" following initial experiences in school which then become mutually reinforcing as their school careers continue. Social Cognitive Theory therefore provides a useful framework for examining communication issues within schools. Whilst a seemingly abstract discussion, the conclusions drawn regarding the direction of causality and their relative elasticity are critical when attempting to develop interventions in order to raise communication self-concept.

3.6.2 Implications of the current work and future directions

Paper one has already indicated that communication self-concept may play an important role in academic achievement and is predictive of NC scores in school. Establishing the causal direction of poor communication self-concept would determine the best way to address this issue: whether child centred sessions which encouraged children to be more confident communicators (which is the current norm in the area in which the research took place) or whether improved communication within staff from an organisational / environmental level would provide the optimal approach. Certainly, educational psychology training following the publication of *Reconstructing Educational Psychology* (Gillham 1978) has placed an increasing emphasis on the need for Educational Psychologists to work at a systemic level with schools, with the broad aim of changing the environment to change a child. In this regard the systemic approach which is taken in this research is compatible with this viewpoint. However within the area of communication there are currently no systematic approaches in the UK (that the current author is aware of) which are oriented towards

developing communication skills in children which emphasise a systemic approach, it is thus difficult to assess the relative impact of this approach.

Additionally, as this study is exploratory and non-interventionist in nature, further work would be required in order to gain a clearer impression of the type of impact that might be required in order to raise staff communication self-efficacy. Furthermore, new measures of staff communication self-efficacy would need to be designed in order to synchronise with the child measures presented in paper one. It is likely that an intervention programme would be best oriented as a combination of within child and systemic approaches, although it would be crucial that a child's perception of their communicative ability be reinforced by the systemic changes. It would therefore be important to design any within child intervention (e.g. via groups work etc.) to mirror changes being made at a systemic level in that same school. It would be essential that an intervention of this nature be tailored to individual schools, following a communications audit. Whilst projects of this nature would be time consuming and potentially costly, the impact has the potential to extend beyond communication to other valued outcomes and the intervention could be designed to be self-perpetuating once initially implemented.

Questions remain however about whether Educational Psychologists (and allied educational professionals e.g. specialist teachers) are sufficiently skilled to tackle the range of broad, complex issues particularly with respect to the more logistical/ management issues which would be required to support a school in implementing the type of intervention described above. Intuitively activities of this nature would lend themselves more obviously to the work of an occupational psychologist who has training in working on a management level. In this regard however Occupational psychologists may lack knowledge of education systems which is also crucial for work of this nature.

Currently, suggestions around the merging of professional training into singular courses with a common core of training may provide a new generation of psychologists who would be in a position to specialise in this type of working by applying a multi-disciplinary knowledge base to issues of this nature.

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4.0 Appendix

Title	Appendix Reference
Table of codes used in the thesis	A
Tree Structures following thematic analysis (Staff and Student)	B
Sample of an interview Transcript with NVIVO coding stripes	C
Copy of parent consent form	D
ADSDQII Questionnaire	E
Copy of Information sheets sent to parents	F
Copy of Ethical Approval Certificate	G
Copy of Communication Self Concept Questionnaire (CSCQ)	H
Interview Schedules for staff	I
Interview Schedule for Students	J
Literature Review	K
Directions for administering questionnaires for teaching staff	L

Appendix A
Table of codes used in thesis

Categorical coding	Code description	Themes emerging from pattern coding (Staff)	Theme description	Themes emerging from pattern coding (students)	Theme description
Where information comes from	Discussion about the sources of information	Management style	How management style across both schools and overtime has impacted on communication	Understanding the role of different members of staff	Similar to staff awareness of roles and responsibilities theme, lack of certainty about who to speak to and when
Why communication with other staff breaks down	Discussion about what makes it difficult to communicate with other staff	Means of communicating with staff is ineffective	Refers to the way in which information is transferred around school	Don't communicate because teachers misunderstand	Sub theme, student discussion about poor communication from teachers
Success and effectiveness of communication	Discussion of particular examples of when communication was either successful or unsuccessful	Staff don't think anything will happen as a result of communication	Feelings of powerlessness on the part of the staff	Unable to influence events around us by communicating (Concept of control)	Students feelings of their ability to effect change via communication.
Means of communication	How information is physically relayed from one place to the next	Time as a barrier to communication	Lack of time and capacity on the part of the staff to communicate	When teachers are stressed they don't communicate clearly	Reflects difficulties in understanding teachers and an awareness of staff mood state
Attitude towards communicating with other members of staff	Staff views on the likely outcomes of communicating with other staff	Staff are entrenched and reluctant to change	Tensions among some staff regarding willingness to adopt new initiatives	Lack of opportunity to communicate	Discussion around perceived in ability to communicate due to expectation that they should be given opportunity to communicate

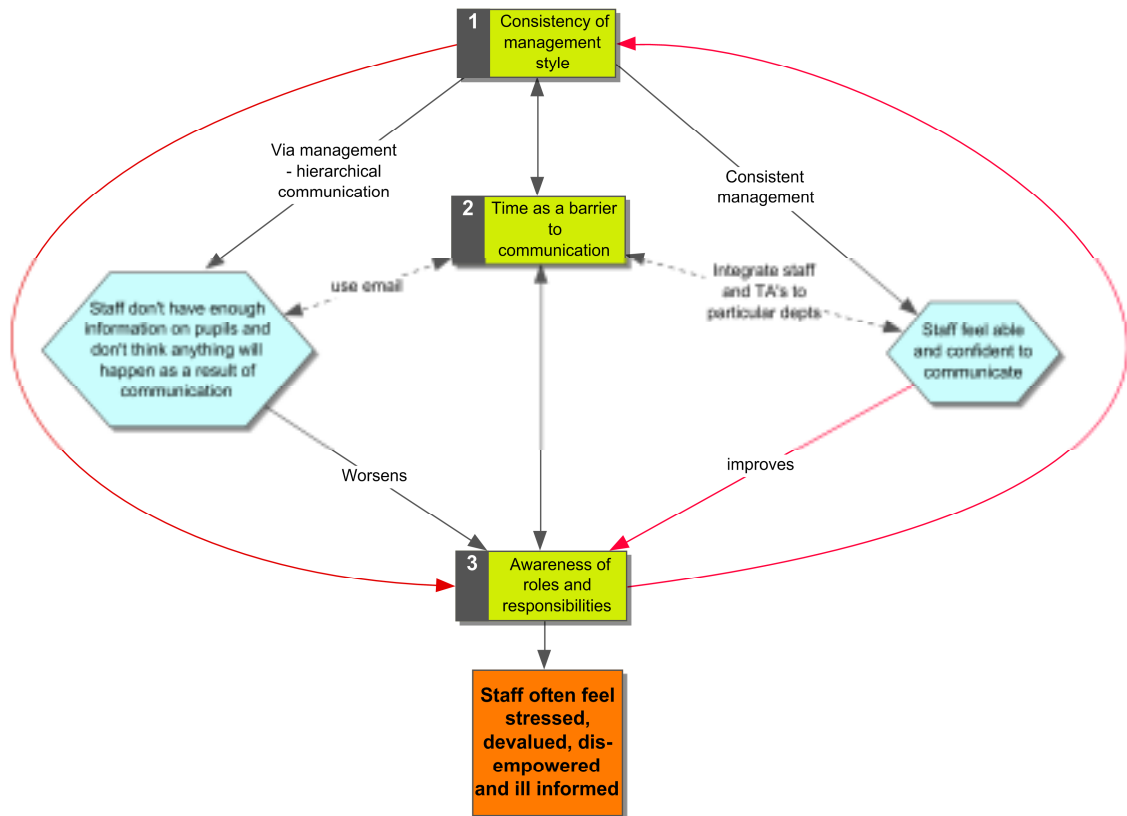
Use of information following communication	What happens after communication i.e. what is done with the information	Poor awareness of the roles and responsibilities of other staff	Issues arising as a result of poor understanding of staff roles	Teachers are unreceptive to communication	Students feelings that they will not be listened to by staff and therefore do not attempt to communicate
Communication between senior management and staff	Discussion around the way in which management communicates with staff	Staff don't feel valued or appreciated by other staff	Sub theme, relates to poor awareness of roles and responsibilities		
Definition of communication	What do staff and students think communication is	When communication happens between staff, it works well	Sub theme, relates to awareness of roles and responsibilities Discussion of positive impact of staff communication		
Information needed	What information is needed (regardless of whether it is provided)	Information that staff think they need vs. what management think they need	Discussion regarding the type of information needed vs. what management believe they need, relates to awareness of roles and responsibilities		
Making information available to other staff members	How is information e.g. about pupils made available for other staff to access it	Needing information in a timely fashion	Sub theme, relates to all three principal themes		
Communication FROM other staff members	How do other members of staff communicate with you				
What underpins successful communication	What is needed "theoretically" to be a good communicator				
How communication should work	How ideally should we communicate with each other				
School communication with children	How does the school communicate with children				
Communication between school and children	How do children communicate with the school				
Barriers between children and school	What prevents communication between school and children				

People involved with communication	Who do staff usually communicate with			
Barriers resulting from external pressures	Factors which impact on communication which are perceived to be beyond the schools control			
Management style	How the style of management has impacted on communication			
Staff tensions regarding communication	Discussion of how communication can generate anxiety among staff			
Barriers between children and teachers	What prevents effective communication between children and teachers			
Communication between teachers and TA	Discussion of the way in which teachers and TA's communicate			
Communication in school about children	What is said in school which is about children but not necessarily to them			
Support for students to communicate	The strategies that the school uses to encourage students to be more communicative			
School based barriers to communication with children	What prevents the school from communicating effectively with children			
Communication between school and children	How school and children communicate			

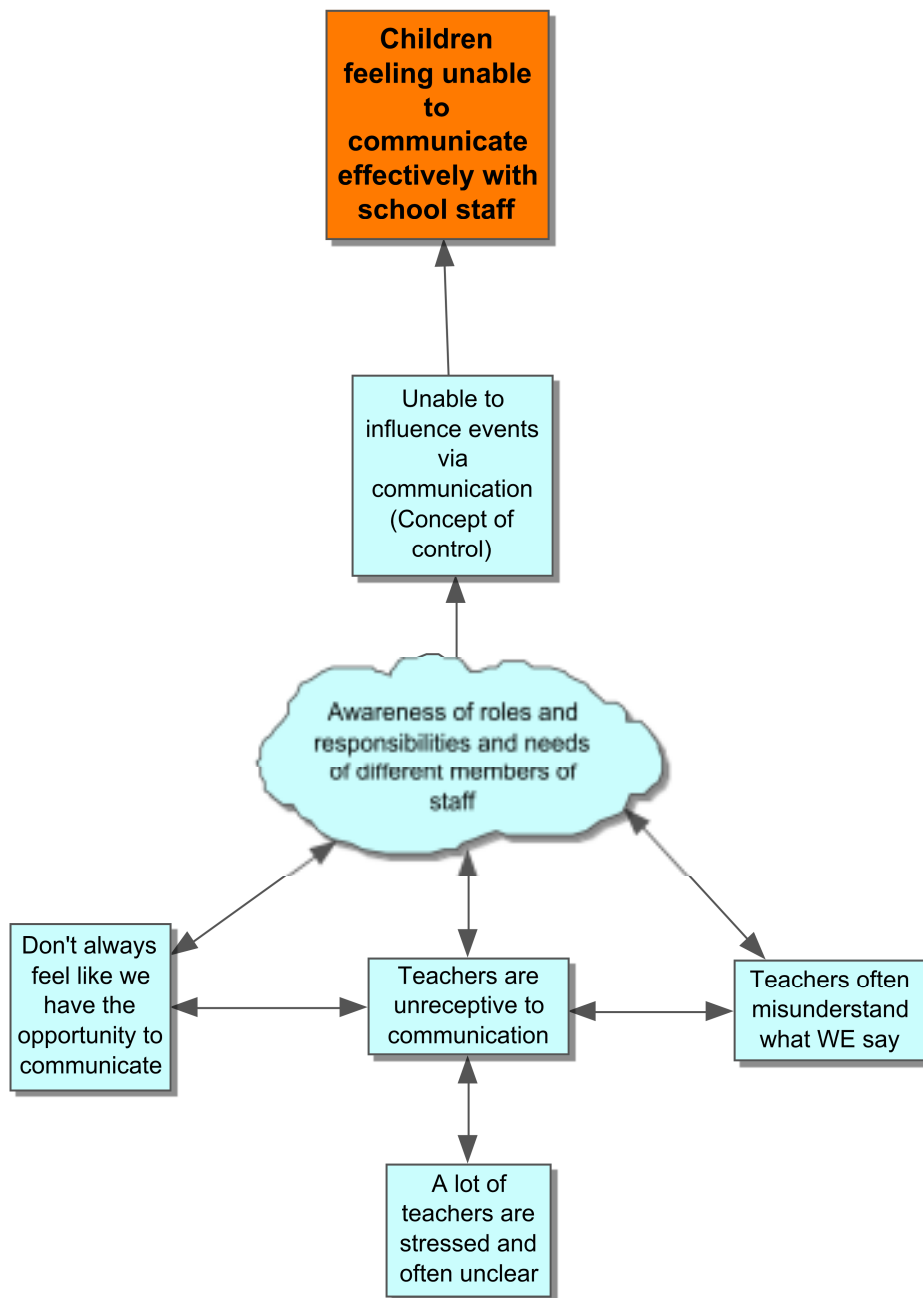
Appendix B

Tree structures following thematic analysis

Diagrammatic representation of Staff themes discussed in paper 2



Diagrammatic representation of student themes discussed in paper 2



Appendix C

Sample of an interview Transcript with NVIVO coding stripes

22 July 2010

Interview at Hartshill Secondary School with Headmaster.

What would you say communication means to you?

For me as a personal view and a view for the school is about how information is passed between various people within the school. That is one area about information, the second area is about how we share successes and how we ensure people feel valued within the organisation and the methods of how I get to know of the things going on across the school and also how I share my vision and the schools vision of where we are going.

What would you say it means to be a good communicator, what would you say it looks like?

In my position in the school it's challenging because for me its ensuring that all people in the school get to know about things that are appropriate for them to know about, is the best way. But (MAKING SURE THAT EVERYONE HAS THE INFORMATION APPROPRIATE FOR THEM) that's a real challenge because in an organisation as big as this, some people want more information than is perhaps is appropriate for them to know and some people feel quite overwhelmed with the information that they receive.

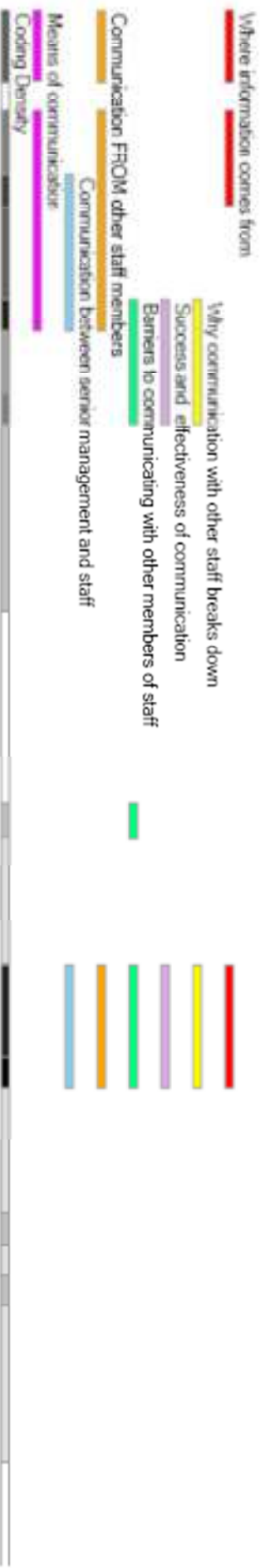
For me, my role as far as communication is concerned is quite strategic in terms of information sharing and as far as vision is concerned. Its about making sure people understand where the school is now where we want the school to go, Because its where we want the school to go and reminding people about actual priorities then and where we want to go. Because otherwise people can forget about it in the day to day running of things and lose the bigger picture. My role as a good communicator is also to ensure that the right information gets to the right people at the right time. And I have had to develop that (COMMUNICATION) this year significantly through the line management because that hasn't happened before. Communication from my predecessor was done pretty much through her and only her and so I inherited a position for example where it wasn't unusual for me to receive about 150 emails a day requesting information, requesting decisions from the sublime to the ridiculous because that's what had happened before and actually that meant I couldn't be a good communicator. And so what I have tried to do this year is to put in a fairly traditional line management structure for that so that I share appropriate information with my senior team who then would share appropriate bits of information with middle leaders and so it goes. And its important that it feeds back up. Is it there yet? No!¹ Communication I think, works well between myself and the senior leadership group and pretty well between senior leadership group and middle leaders. Does it get to everywhere that its needed all of the time, I'm not so sure. I think that's what I get back. I have mechanisms in place to help me to understand that more COMMUNICATION AND WHETHER IT GETS WHERE ITS SUPPOSED TO GO) so I meet with staff representatives on a fortnightly basis which are actually 2 middle leaders and a member of the support staff.



I communicate through them (MEMBERS OF STAFF AS PART OF THE COMMUNICATION GROUP) as well and they tell me about whether communication is coming through. I have also set up a communications focus group which is represented by a range of staff and we have met to discuss how communication happens, how we can try and improve that so that we can work as team to try and improve communication because I might think it's the best things since slice bread, so its important to try and monitor that as well. The major challenges are, for example I have a member of my support staff that feels that they should know about everything, absolutely everything that's going on in the school and is consistently quite unhappy that they don't. But realistically a lot of people in the school, when we went for Investors in People for example, because they were asking about communication then and from that I understood that generally speaking most people understood how they fit into the bigger picture and increasingly have done that over the year which is good news for me because that's what I wanted to make sure of and appreciated that they knew enough for what they needed to do to get their job done within the section they were in.

That has incorporated a lot of the other questions I was going to ask.

I can go into more detail. When I started here I did a SWAT analysis very first thing, I said come on I want warts and all. Because coming in as a new head in September it's a really challenging thing to do. I'm a fairly young guy, in this school I'm the 5th head in four years had a lot of change. I'm chalk to cheese to my predecessor, who, don't get me wrong she was very effective here, but had a very different leadership style to me. There wasn't the consultation and actually the school was in special measures when she arrived here and it needed that, you are going to have to do it this way even if you don't like it. Whereas the schools not there now and what I am passionate about is in a true term distributed leadership is giving people rope and letting people come up with ideas and see that through and that's taken time over the year and the trust to build up and we're not there, its going to take a bit longer. And so the staff found it (DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP) quite difficult to start with. They found it bizarre and actually saw this as a weakness in me that I explained, I gave rationale why I was doing things. I actually went to then and said 'what do you think?' and that to start with was seen as a weakness and therefore although that's what they requested, staff really wanted that old style of 'just do it, tell us what to do and we'll get on with it'. As far as staff morale around that point and communication, it dipped, because I think staff felt a little unnerved around accountabilities as well. I really tried to drive up accountability because there wasn't much accountability outside of the senior leadership team and so trying to communicate and value what was happening and to get the message across that, yes you can take some risks here, and I'll support those risks, and I'm going to be the yes man a lot of the time, it has been quite hard and that's taken some careful and consistent communication.



Would you say initially there would have been almost like a cultural barrier to effective communication ?

Yes and the fact that when I came here, if it wasn't the head teacher saying 'well done', if it wasn't the head teacher saying 'I'd like you to do this' then it was seen as poor communication and there is still a little feeling of that. The importance of me saying well done to people, as opposed to their line manager is enormous. And I do that, in fact I only had a conversation yesterday around valuing and rewarding people and the fact that I don't do it publicly that often, because actually a lot of people don't like that. I don't like things to be divisive, and again my predecessor, for example used to have the wine of the week, a bottle of wine went to one person. And I said 'I'm sorry that's so divisive in communicating my thanks because there is so many people who have done an amazing job this week and I can't afford that many bottles of wine a week'. But that one to one conversation, the emails that we do, for example something that I brought in fairly quickly, as I recognised that people wanted this, was a regular, standard SLT agenda item weekly about good news stories. We went round the table and people told me about others who have gone that extra mile and then I email those staff and say well done. But people don't go out and communicate the fact that I've said that (WANTS GOOD NEWS STORIES). There is some staff in the school, and I'm being quite honest with you on this, who are perhaps looking for fault, would say that I don't say thanks enough. And that's really difficult and I was discussing that with the group that I was with and said 'if I did it publically all the time, what I want to be careful of is, I will always thank people at the end of the term for doing their job, but if they are doing their job, then they're doing their job, I want my thanks to be when they've gone that extra mile. Otherwise thanks means nothing. And then people feel less valued. It's been fascinating actually and what I have recognised about communication is it's all about relationships and different people want to be communicated to in very different ways about how they are doing. Some people like it to be really formal, other people just like a quick pat on the back, some people are very embarrassed and will make excuses. And if I say 'thank you so much for doing that, it was really exceptional'. And they will say 'no, its just my job'. So people respond in very different ways.

Thinking about teachers, how well do you think you communicate with teachers in your capacity as head?

Me personally, I think that I communicate with them (TEACHERS) fairly well, I communicate with them (TEACHERS) through line management structures mainly. However we have a weekly briefing where I address the whole of the staff where I inform them of the things that are going on. We look at what's called the 'week ahead', which communicates the things that are happening in the next week ahead. We have the calendar which communicates what's going on when and how. I'm pretty visible around the school, perhaps not as much as I would like to be but that goes with the job and so at various times teachers get communications from me thanking them for what they are doing. They also get communications from me when they are not doing what they should be doing. And so it goes hand in hand there. I think that teachers know better now than they have done before about the direction of the school and that's (HIGHLIGHTING OF SCHOOL DIRECTION) done every time we have a full staff meeting or training day, the first 20 minutes is me recapping,



don't forget these are our values, don't forget these are our priorities. Because that for me is the most important thing for me to communicate as a head teacher (SCHOOL VALUES AND PRIORITIES). I have always said this to staff, 'I'm not available, but I'm accessible'. And I think that staff know that they can come and knock on this door and make an appointment to see me and I will never turn anyone away. I will listen to that, and then right down to first thing in the morning, I go into staff room at the start of the day if there are any staff there I will have a meeting with them and I also every Thursday afternoon have what I call Head teachers surgery, where I go into the staff room and sit there, anybody can talk to me about anything and I think its really important.

And do they?

Yes, not many (PEOPLE TALK TO ME), but sometimes people sound off, and that's fine, that's part of the job. Frequently its just a bit of banter, which is nice. They are the only times I go into the staff room because I believe, and I know there is differences of opinions there, but if I went into the staff room most breaks and lunchtimes then teachers wouldn't have an area where they can be open without feeling they could be at risk of some sort of repercussion for something that they say. As head, I'm aware that I have to push things through that aren't welcoming at times, and so some people will need an avenue to sound off, to have other conversations that are probably not for my ears. But I do offer that opportunity and it is taken up. I get emails as well and that is great because that is what I've tried to do and of course you have to try to whether the storm because people then feel that they can write to you about anything, so I have had to manipulate that through the year and sometimes say really you need to go and speak to that person about it first. And that's been quite difficult because people have been offended by that (BEING SPOKEN TO DIRECTLY). I have always said to people, we have a hard working staff who are hard work. That's what I would say about my staff here, hugely committed but quite hard to manage, quite vocal in there opinions about things and sometimes unprofessionally so, and that's hard then, because what you're trying to do is keep a happy ship but make sure the standards are there.

Do you have much contact with Teaching Assistants?

Not as much as I will do next year. I do that (COMMUNICATE WITH TA'S) through line management but I feel that our non teaching staff would probably not feel as valued as the teaching staff. But that's probably not unusual in the school setting. I think they feel valued but in the areas that they work in, but as far as my direct contact they have the opportunity, they are in briefings on a Monday morning, if they(TA'S) are expected to come in for training days or full staff meetings then they come to those, they can come to the head teachers surgery on a Thursday afternoon, that's open to all of them. Some come and see me, but within in year of being here, I'll be honest, there are some here that I wouldn't know their name, I know there face and that's probably not good enough. What I'm setting up for next year is, once every half term, I pull support staff and just have half an hour with them, however if they ask for a meeting with me, and they have done at times, the administration staff, then I'll meet with them. And they have been for specific issues,



but as far as a general – how are things going – but then I suppose I don't do with that with teaching staff, its done at a full staff meeting. I think there are mechanisms to make them feel valued, I think the support staff have a better idea of the school vision than they have done previously and again I know from the amount of people who just come and have a chat with me that they will do that, and a lot of those conversations will happen when I'm standing on duty. And they feel that they can just come and talk to me about these things and that's great because that's such an important part with those sort of informal conversations and I can test how things are. Again its (COMMUNICATION) about relationships.

What do you think might get in the way of communicating with teachers and teaching assistants?

Systems. Consistency, on trusting that when I inform senior team and when making decisions about things, that they will go and talk to the people they line manage and those will go to talk to them and those will go and talk to them, that's one. Time, because although we have made that better we meet weekly, but it may be that the department doesn't meet for 3 weeks in advance. And there hasn't necessarily been a mechanism other than email to make sure that information is passed on more quickly. That we've addressed by making more meetings basically.² And then is the perception that you are hiding things from people, when its probably not appropriate, when they probably don't need to know. I try to make sure that people know what they need to know for the position they're in. For example, somebody working in my admin office doesn't necessarily need to know about every single thing I am trying to do to try to improve the quality of learning and teaching, but then they want to know and so like I said at the start of this interview. Different people want different things and so no matter what I communicate there will be some people who don't feel that's its enough. And that's a barrier, I think the final barrier is that people don't always understand that communication is a two way process. If you want to know something, ask. Some people think that its just a right to be told and its so easy to just ask me, I've got nothing to hide. The only thing that I couldn't tell people about is about child protection issues. But outside of that, if people want to know what's happening with the local authority, just come and ask me the question, and I will tell you but I don't think a number of staff consider that to be communication.

Is that a throw back from the old system

Although they weren't always happy then, from what I understand. And that's a challenge and about how each person wants to be valued, because different people want to be valued in different ways and some people get very upset of the fact that they're at the top of their scale and regardless of how well they're doing they can't be remunerated for that, so what's the point of things. I suppose the other area is around consultation and gaining the trust that consultation really does mean that under my leadership and it isn't just something that's done without a decision that's already made. There is an intended outcome, but I do believe in a democracy. I think increasingly staff know across the board that there are some things where I have to and there are other things that I will go out to staff and say 'what do you think?' and that's been a bit of a barrier because I don't think people have previously



been empowered or felt empowered to have that say and have been a bit scared to voice their opinion in case of repercussions. Whereas I have had to take the risk of encouraging people to make opinions, even though I have had to say, I appreciate your opinion but the way that you made it wasn't right. For example a blast in a public setting isn't appropriate but I appreciate what you're saying.

How about parents of the children?

Absolutely not good enough at the moment, and there is cost attached to that. I have written formerly 11 letters over the year, so that's at least one every half term if not more. They go on our website, they are given to students to take home, but a lot of the time they don't even get in the bag, never mind parents looking in the bag for the letters. When we ask parents though on communication, they say it's ok. And actually we have just sent out 200 questionnaires to a sample of parents asking them for a lot more information of how we communicate with them. And how would they like to be communicated with. We also have a parent council as well as a PTA, which is a group of parents that come in and represent the parents. Now that could be better because I don't think they do, but they tell us about how they feel, how the schools going, they help increasingly with improvement planning and we talk a lot of about what they hear and how they hear about things, but its not good enough. Online reporting next year is going to make a huge difference to that, every parent that is able to access the internet, and we think there is over 80% of parents that is able to do that, and we're looking at ways to make sure the other 20% can as well. They will be able to access, very easily through our website link a secure portal which will bring up information about their children, it will give them things like their levels and things like that. And when we meet with them all I'm hoping that they will all give me their email addresses so we can have a big distribution list so we can email all these letters because that seems to be the way. The issue I have is when I post things it costs me £370 a time. And with budget situations as they are it's a waste of money. One of the issues we have is that students being students in the secondary school don't communicate what is happening in school to their parents but I've consulted with parents over a number of things for that. So when I say that its not good enough, I want it to be outstanding, that's what I'm about in this school. I want everything to be outstanding and that's what needs to happen. We have non teaching pastoral leaders attached to each year group, so communication between them and parents, most parents would say is exceptional. If they phone into the school they can normally get to speak to somebody straight away. And that's not usual, sometimes it slips through the net but generally speaking they get to them fairly quickly or within half an hour, so that's great. The reporting to parents, we are adapting because I don't think its good enough quality about student progress, looking to improve that for next year. And also through consultation with parents we're changing the opportunities to report. So what I inherited this year was, they get their report and then meet the parents and that meeting parents are told what's in the report, well I think that's a waste of time and so do a lot of parents. So next year they will have a written report at one time and a parents evening at another time of the year so they get two bites of that plus next year they will have 4 progress reports in addition which are more about grades and data and attitude to learning and that will be done through the online system instead of paper. So that's the sort of formal student progress what we don't do enough of is inform parents of students success.

- Where information comes from
 - Why communication with other staff breaks down
 - Successes and effectiveness of communication
 - Barriers to communicating with other members of staff
 - Communication FROM other staff members
 - Communication between senior management and staff
 - Means of communication
 - Coding Density
-

And I spoke to the student council yesterday about that and they want more post cards to go home, but again I have said when we have got this online thing – could I do an electronic post card. Because the thing is postcards cost, stampage and other things like that. And the students would agree they would rather have the money put into their resources. So we are looking at all of that at the moment. On a personal level with parents, parents from the website have my personal email address and they do write to me, and when they do I try to get back to them in 24 hours. So I think parents do feel like they have access. And we have changed the school day this year, and that was a massive consultation exercise with parents, with public meetings and things like that. And although some parents may not be happy with the outcome they are at least been consulted.³

So you have actually been under pressure given that you have to make sure there is that is that communication infrastructure in order to get that across?

Yes and with the changes to the school day, that was when I realised that the pupil post just didn't work. Because word of mouth we had parents saying I didn't know anything about this. So I did a second part of a consultation and posted it all. Part of it is making sure the parents need to appreciate that they need to ask the students – have you got a letter today. And we're changing that because if there are important letters that need to go out in the future, we've gone back to primary school a bit and in a student planner there will be a page where it will say Letter – received and the parent will have to sign it. That's the other way, parents through the planner. Again whether its enough I'm not sure.⁴

In terms of pupils how well would you say the school communicates with pupils and are aware of their needs?

I think that's pretty good. Again I'm the eternal optimist and think that things could be better. Because of that word relationships, our students with our staff have great relationships in this school. Surprisingly so as far as I'm concerned. They come up and talk to you about things they give the idea of significant adults, our students have more than one. The pastor I will go out to staff and say 'what do you think?' and that's been a bit of a barrier because I don't think people have previously been empowered or felt empowered to have that say and have been a bit scared to voice their opinion in case of repercussions.

al leaders are a significant part of that because they are non teachers. I think its inconsistent with our tutoring system at the moment about what message get out to who and where and when but generally its good but again it's a consistency thing. I think that students feel valued and feel that they can come and give suggestions and I give them opportunities to talk to me. One of the areas personally that I do that is almost every break and lunch time I'm in the canteen or walking around the school and going to students and talking to students about things and they will tell me about things. The students council is more formal but we have form voice so we consider things we want to talk about, they take it back to their forms then it comes back to me. Communication is done through assemblies as well and the senior team and the pastoral leaders are people that normally take those assemblies, but not exclusively and then other programmes that would seem slightly less obvious. We've just had

Communication FROM other staff members
Communication between senior management and staff
Means of communication
Coding Density

Where information comes from
Why communication with other staff is
Success and effectiveness of communication
Barriers to communicating with other n

an enrichment week where we have had students working vertically with different staff that they wouldn't normally know and its what we communicate to students. I think that we still need to work on the more formal side of students knowing what level they are working at and how to improve, and we can still work at getting better at that, its not bad but it could be better. I think students feel that they know the direction of the school and when I test that out I think students are clear about that . We did the curriculum rail survey with students and got some good information back from that. A clear one from me was they recognise that bullying happens in school but they think we deal with that outstandingly well. Now that's a clear message to me that students feel that they can communicate with the staff in school and trust that something will happen.

That came across very strongly from the focus groups that I did this morning.

Good and in want that to continue. I think that we could do more but again it's what do the students need to know. They are very proud of this school and they want it to be outstanding and they know the things that have to happen to be outstanding, and I think they value the good teaching that happens in this school and that communication in the lessons, the area that we've got to improve on is how they are rewarded, the merit system in the school has no currency to it so when students are given merits it doesn't lead to anything. We will do something about that next year. And heads commendations certificates, we have awards assemblies and they're great, loads of kids get rewarded in those assemblies but day to day how do we communicate with them, and I have a real passion about how we try and make sure that we know all of the children. Not me personally, you cant do that in a 1000 strong school, I know all of the faces but I don't know all of their names. But somebody knows every single child in the school and that's important. And actually every children, I reckon is known by at least 10 significant adults in the school who can communicate at various levels with them.

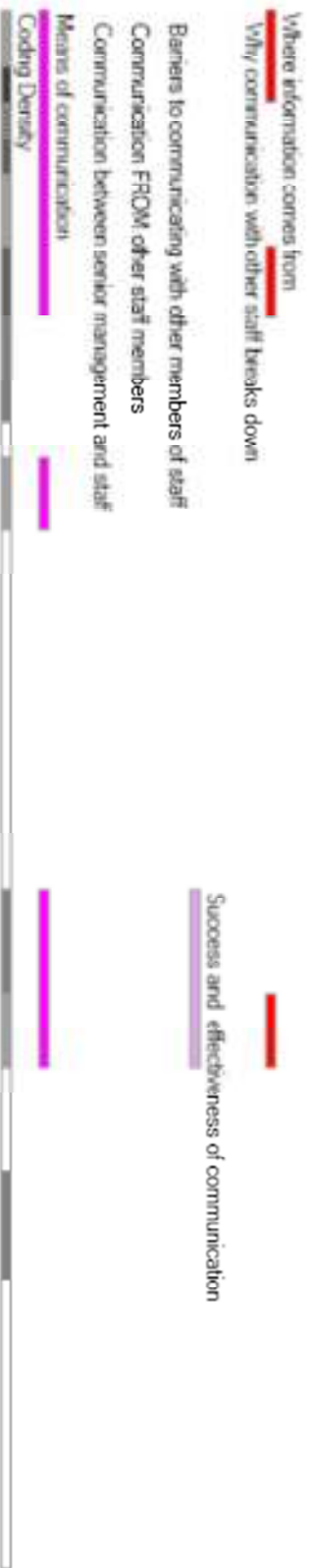
Annotations

¹ This is referring to a new system, moving from an old head-centric system

² there hasn't necessarily been a mechanism other than email to make sure that information is passed on more quickly.

³ NOT CURRENTLY CODED AS IS RELATING TO PARENTS

⁴ NOR CURRENTLY CODED AS RELATES TO PARENTS



Appendix D

Copy of Parental Consent forms

Parental consent form Secondary Communication Friendly Environments Project

Please see attached information sheet for details.

As part of the project I understand that I will be asked to complete questionnaires relating to:-

The way in which I communicate with my child, school and other professionals.

The way that my school communicates with me, and my child.

My child's communication and communication needs.

In addition to this, I am also happy to:-

Participate in structured interviews relating to different types of communication and communication events with school.

I also understand that:-

All information collected during this project is confidential and my name not be used in connection with the dissemination of results without my prior consent.

will

All data collected will be being used for research and evaluation purposes.

Upon collection, data will be transcribed, coded, anonymised and analysed members of the Pathfinder team.

by

I have the right to withdraw from the project at anytime and (if required) all relating to myself or my child will be destroyed.

data

Physical data will be kept securely in locked filing cabinets, and digital data kept securely on WCC central servers

will be

I consent to my child:-

Taking part in a group (verbal) exploration of barriers and facilitators of communication in school. This will be recorded via dictaphone and transcribed and anonymised by the project team.

Undergoing questionnaire based language assessments, aimed at :-

Eliciting my child's own perceptions of his/her communication.

Gaining a general perspective on my child's current strengths and difficulties relating to communication.

Gaining an impression of how my child feels about school in general.

I am also happy to:-

Allow the project team to access normal school assessment data relating to child and to use this data as part of the research project.

my

Allow the project team to approach me again with regards to monitoring my progress after he/she completes compulsory education (e.g. into college/ job etc.)

child's
first

In addition:-

I understand that the project team has a clear commitment to ensuring that child does not miss normal lesson time, focus groups or questionnaire work take place during appropriate lesson times.

your
will

I have read the above and agree to participate in the above study

Name of young person.....

Name of school.....

Name of parent.....

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix E

ASDQII Instrument

Due to copyright, it is not possible to include a copy of the instrument within these pages. A copy of the instrument can however be found at the following web address:-

http://www.self.ox.ac.uk/Instruments/ASDQII_PACKAGE/ASDQII_Inst.pdf

Appendix F

Copy of information sheet sent to parents

Communication Friendly Environments Evaluation Project

Information Sheet

Background

Thank you for your interest in this project. The school that your child goes to is taking part in a scheme which aims to improve communication in schools, and we have had the support of the Government in carrying out this work which will be shared with schools across the country when it is finished.. Your child has been identified by the school as someone who might be willing to help us find out whether the project is successful or not. Along with this information sheet there is also a form for you to see the different things that we will be doing. If you would like to be part of the project we need to ask you to sign it, please.

What is a Communication Friendly Environment?

Communication Friendly Environments are part of some developments which are already being used in a number of Primary schools in Warwickshire. These developments are aimed at improving the way pupils can communicate with each other, with staff, and with their families.

This project will look at how well Communication Friendly Environments work in two secondary schools in Warwickshire. It will involve a number of different people working with the school to help develop:-

- 1) The use of visual supports (these are things like clearer signs, pictures, or short notes)

in school to make it easier for pupils and staff in school to get information

- 2) The way the teachers teach the pupils and how that helps the pupils to get the best from the lessons
- 3) All the things in the classroom and school which make a difference for the children – these are things like having carpet, using different seating plans and so on.

When will this project happen?

It is expected that this project will begin at the start of the Autumn term – that is around September 2010, but we need information both before and after the project, to tell us whether it has worked or not. That means that we would really like to collect information from you, as parents, and from the children this term (i.e. from May 2010), and then again after the project has finished in April 2011. ,

Why am I being asked to help, and what do I/ my child have to do?

You are being asked to help because your school has identified your child as someone who might be willing to take part in this project. We would like to ask your child to answer several questionnaires and have a short interview with one of the project team to find out their views on communication and communicating in school.

As we are also interested in gathering parent views, we would ask whether you would also be willing to complete a few short questionnaires and / or take part in a short interview with us about the types of communication you have with your school. Interviews will take no longer than 30 – 40 minutes. These interviews can be arranged at a time convenient for you, over telephone or face to face, we will contact you to arrange this if you are happy for us to do so.

It may be that you do not wish to take part in the research yourself but are happy for your child to be involved. If so, you will see that there are boxes you can tick on the consent form to show this.

If you have any questions at all about the project then do please contact a member of the project team at the address above.

Appendix G

Copy of Ethical Approval Certificate

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH



UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS
You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the 'Student Documents' web site.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Simon Connor
Your student no: 580030285
Return address for this certificate:
Degree/Programme of Study: DEdPsych in Educational, Child and Community Psychology
Project Supervisor(s): Prof. Brahm Norwich and Dr Shirley Larkin
Your email address: sbc205@exeter.ac.uk
Tel: 07783108622

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:  date: 03/03/10

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must not be included in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Potentially conflicts in views during the interviews if made known could cause tensions within the school staff. Care must therefore be taken to anonymise data and report results in a way that does not allow staff to identify each other.

Children/ parents may no longer wish to take part in the study following collection, in this event all existing data will be destroyed and the relevant child will be removed from all records.

*This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.*

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: April 10 until: April 11.

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): *B Nowicki* date: 13/1/11

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.









SELL unique approval reference: *D/10/11/22*









Signed: *Sarah Trough* date: 26/01/2011
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee









This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/>

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Appendix H

	Completely Disagree <i>(not at all like me)</i>	Mostly disagree	Partly Disagree	Disagree a bit	Agree a bit	Partly Agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree <i>(exactly like me)</i>
								
I have always done well in lessons where I have to do a lot of speaking								
I am hopeless at understanding what people are saying in lessons.								
I get good marks when I have to understand what other people are telling me								
Compared to others my age, I am good at understanding what I am told.								
I am confident that I will find lessons that involve a lot of talking easy								
In school I understand more when I'm working with friends.								
I worry about lessons involving lots of discussion								
I am better at speaking when I am working with friends in school								

	Completely Disagree <i>(not at all like me)</i>	Mostly disagree	Partly Disagree	Disagree a bit	Agree a bit	Partly Agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree <i>(exactly like me)</i>
								
I learn more quickly when people verbally explain things to me.								
I am better at speaking when I am working with people I don't know in school.								
Understanding what other people are saying in lessons is easy for me								
It is important for me to do well in lessons where I have to do a lot of speaking.								
I feel confident that I will do well in lessons where I have to discuss things.								
Compared to others my age, I am good at speaking								
I am satisfied with how well I do when I have to understand what people are saying in lessons.								
I learn more quickly when I am allowed to tell teachers why I am confused.								

	Completely Disagree <i>(not at all like me)</i>	Mostly disagree	Partly Disagree	Disagree a bit	Agree a bit	Partly Agree	Mostly agree	Completely agree <i>(exactly like me)</i>
								
I am hopeless at saying what I'm thinking in lessons								
I am satisfied with how well I do when I have to discuss things in lessons								
I get good marks when I have to do a lot of speaking								
Compared to others my age, I am confident in lessons where I have to discuss things.								
It is important to me that I do well in lessons where I have to understand what other people are saying.								
I am confident that I will get good marks in lessons where I have to discuss things								

For each question, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by ticking one of the boxes next to each statement. There are no right or wrong answers.

Appendix I

Communication staff interview schedule

(To be divided into sections for specific staff)

Attempt to elicit as much information as possible, prompting to “tell me a bit more” where information is sparse.

Personal views (to link with school ethos/ culture)

Position specific/ individual (ALL STAFF)

What do you understand by the term “Communication”?

- What do you think it means to be a good communicator?
- What skills do you think are necessary to improve your ability as a communicator?

What types of information are most important in order for you to successfully do your job?

How well do you (personally) feel you communicate in school with:-

- **How well does each communicate with you?**
- **How would you describe the consequences of communication, in general (with the above)? (e.g. positive / negative etc)**

- Teachers
(What prevents/ enables?)

- Teaching assistants
(What prevents/ enables?)

- Parents of children
(What prevents/ enables?)

- Pupils
(What prevents/ enables?)

School based (SENIOR TEACHERS)

What types of information do you think it is important for the school as a whole to communicate about/ concerning...

- Children
- Curriculum
- Staff
- Parents of children

Do you feel that the school is generally successful in communicating this information?

How would you describe the consequences of communication, in general (with the above) in school? (e.g. positive / negative etc)?

What barriers exist which prevent the above information being communicated successfully? (Explore issues)

- Can you identify maximum 3 barriers which prevent you communicating effectively?

OR (if adamant that there are no barriers) what barriers could potentially exist and what steps do you take to avoid these issues.

What would make things better?

- How could you avoid the barriers that you have identified (in a perfect world). (Is fine to be unsure but detail needed about the nature of uncertainty)

Do you think that pupils communicate effectively with the school?

- Why do you think this is?
- What do you think could be done in order to improve this?

Department based (HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

What types of information do you think it is important to communicate within your department about/concerning:-

- Children
- Curriculum
- Staff
- Parents of children

Do you feel that this information is successfully communicated:-

- To you?
- To other staff in the department?
- Between other staff in the department?

FOR EACH OF THE ABOVE - What barriers exist which prevent the above information being communicated successfully? (Explore issues)

How would you describe the consequences of communication, in general (with the above) in the department? (e.g. positive / negative etc)

Can you identify maximum 3 barriers which prevent effective communication in your department?

OR (if adamant that there are no barriers) what barriers could potentially exist and what steps do you take to avoid these issues.

What would make things better?

- How could you avoid the barriers that you have identified (in a perfect world)

Classroom based (TEACHER / TEACHING ASSISTANT)

What types of information would you consider important in order to do your job effectively in the classroom?

- Do you always feel that you have access to this information?
- Where/ who should/ does this information come from?
- What prevents/ helps the retrieval of this information?

What types of information or topics do you think it is important to communicate within the classroom?

- To/from teaching assistants/ teachers
- To/from children

Do you feel that this information is successfully communicated?

- To you?
- To other staff members?
- To children?

(For each of the above discuss what facilitates/ prevents successful communication)

How would you describe the consequences of communication, in general (with the above) in the department? (e.g. positive / negative etc)

How confident do you feel in your ability to differentiate the curriculum in order to accommodate the varying communicative needs of the children in your class(s). (Specifically KS3 class)

- What types of strategies do you use in order to do this?
- How would you know that information is being successfully communicated?

Parents (ALL STAFF)

What systems are in place to allow parents to communicate with school?

Are parents given enough opportunity to communicate with school?

How does the school typically communicate with parents?

- How often?
- By what medium(s)?
- Over / about what issues (typically)?

Do you think that parents communicate effectively with the school?

- Why do you think this is?
- What do you think could be done in order to improve this?

**How would you describe the consequences of communication, in general with parents?
(e.g. positive / negative etc)**

Appendix J

Child interview Schedule (group focused)

What do we understand by the term “communication” ? (Brainstorm on flip chart)

(explore issues)

- How do we know when we are “communicating” effectively with each other?

Can you me give examples of when adults have communicated effectively with you?

(explore issues) What did the adults do that made things clear?

Do you understand what is expected of you in school?

- Do you know what to do in lessons?

Are there opportunities for you to talk to the school/ teacher etc about how things are going?

- How do you do this, e.g. student council (how many people actually participate in this?)
- Do you feel that the things you say to the school get taken seriously?

Can you give me some examples of when things are unclear to you in school?

- What was it that made things so unclear?
- What could have been done differently (to make it clearer)?

Can you give me some examples of when things are really clear?

- Why was it that these things were so clear?
- What was the difference between these situations and the ones previously discussed?

Do Adults understand you in school?

- How might we know if an adult has understood something you have said?
- Do we know?

How do you know that adults are listening to you?

How do adults know that you are listening to them?

What types of things could adults do in order to communicate more effectively with you:-

In school (generally)

In class

During breaktimes/ lunchtimes

During after school activities

What types of things do you think that the school staff talk about in relation to you?

What do you think might stop adults from communicating with you?

How do you think that the adults could change this?

Appendix K

Please see literature review in separate document

Appendix L

Directions for administering questionnaires

Thank you for agreeing to administer these questionnaires to the pupils in your class, please see the following administration points.

- 1) Please open by telling to students that these questionnaires are part of a piece of research being conducted by Warwickshire County Council in order see how pupils feel about communicating in school. The research team would be really grateful if you could complete these questionnaires in order to help us although if you really don't want to then you don't have to.
- 2) Please administer the Communication Self Concept Questionnaire first. Do not give out the second questionnaire until the first has been completed.
- 3) Please do not allow students to discuss their answers until questionnaires have been collected.
- 4) Ideally, questionnaires should be completed in silence with pupils on separate desks.
- 5) Please tell the students that all responses will be anonymous and that their names are provided initially, only for matching the questionnaires and will not be used in connection with any other work.
- 6) Students have right to withdraw at any point or to choose not to complete the questions if they do not wish to.
- 7) Please feel free to read out any questions to students who are struggling but do not provide any additional input regarding the answers to the questions. If students are unable to complete the questionnaires due lack of clarity of the questions then please mark this on the questionnaire.
- 8) If students are unable to answer a question then please tell them to leave it blank and move onto the next.