Eliciting and foregrounding the voices of young people at risk of school exclusion: How does this change schools' perceptions of pupil disaffection?

Submitted by Elizabeth Anne Sartory to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology in Educational, Child and Community Psychology, May 2014.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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Overview

This thesis comprises two papers. The first paper explores the subjective school experiences of young people at risk of exclusion using participatory research methods to elicit their voices. The second reports on an intervention in which the voices of the young people elicited in the first paper were used as stimuli to engage a group of learning mentors (LMs) in implementing changes to their practice. The personal constructs of the LMs were elicited pre and post the intervention in order to explore changes in relation to their understanding and perceptions of disaffected young people.

Two relevant psychological theories underpin the thesis. Paper One considers to what extent the psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence, as defined in self determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000), are represented in the subjective school experiences of young people at risk of exclusion. It is important to note that self determination theory is not imposed as a framework on the study design, methods (young people were not asked any direct questions in relation to self determination theory) or data analysis. The aim of the paper is to map a range of disaffected young people's opinions and experiences in relation to school before considering, post data analysis, to what extent the needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence are represented in these school experiences. Personal construct psychology (Burnham, 2008; Butler

& Green, 2007; Kelly, 1955) is used in Paper Two to explore the LMs'
perceptions and views of disaffected young people.

Positioning the Research

This thesis is positioned within critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978). From
an ontological standpoint it subscribes to the notion that what can be
known about reality exists independently of people's perceptions but
can be accessed through their subjective experiences and
interpretations (Robson, 2002). An aim of the research is to capture
this reality in a way that appreciates its complexity and depth
(Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014). It therefore employs an
exploratory case study design to enable rich, meaningful and
contextualised data to be elicited. Critical realism, in contrast to
subtle realism, places greater emphasis on critiquing the social
reality and practices it studies (Robson, 2002).

This thesis takes the epistemological stance of interpretivism. The
nature of the knowledge generated is influenced by the subjective
and personal perspective of the researcher. Snape and Spencer
(2003) state that *'the researcher and social world impact on each
other'*. Obtaining genuine objective knowledge is not the aim of this
research but it is expected that I, as the researcher, will be reflexive
about my impact on the interpretation of the data. I will strive,
wherever possible, for 'empathetic neutrality' in which I remain as

neutral as possible in my position in order to limit any bias in the interpretation of data while still being able to empathise with the participants (Ormston et al., 2014).

The approach to knowledge generation is neither inductive nor deductive but aims to strike a balance between both (Ormston et al., 2014). It recognises that existing theory and research will guide the design and methods but is careful to ensure that a rigid framework based on existing knowledge in the field is not imposed. It is therefore open to new themes and theories, not predicted by existing research, emerging from the data.

Overall Context

When disaffection results in school exclusion it is associated with several negative outcomes. Excluded pupils have a significantly higher chance of becoming teenage parents, unemployed, homeless or convicted criminals (The Prince's Trust, 2007; Truancy and Social Exclusion Report, 1998). There is an association between exclusion from school and long term social exclusion. Across the last 15 years research has shown consistent links between disaffection and becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) with approximately 34% of all permanently excluded pupils falling into this category (DCSF, 2009; Thompson, 2011).

Given the significance, in terms of negative outcomes, of a disaffected pupil being excluded from school successive governments have sought solutions to the problem of non-participation in disaffected young people. Solutions have been implemented via universally imposed policies such as encouraging pupils to stay in school via the educational maintenance grant or in the most recent policy shift by making participation in education or training beyond the age of 16 compulsory (Education and Skills Act, 2008). This has been criticised for its 'disciplinary approach' to non-participation that stigmatises and potentially criminalises disaffection (Simmons, 2008). Solutions via dictated policies can struggle to be successful because, at their core, they represent imposed adult solutions to young people's problems (Gordon, 2001; Hill, Davis, Prout & Tisdall, 2004). Recent research (Fletcher, 2011; Hartas 2011) has suggested that disaffection may not stem from a reluctance to participate but in fact results from the repeated failure to have a voice heard in school. Imposing adult centred solutions potentially marginalises this voice breeding further disaffection in the future.

Rationale for the Studies

The rationale for conducting the research was as follows:

- Recent research suggests that disaffected young people's voices are marginalised in school

- There is a need for more 'pupil driven' solutions to school disaffection (Gordon, 2001)

- There is a lack of 'context specific' research in relation to disaffection

- Schools often struggle to engage with disaffected young people's voices

- There is limited research that has shown successful school engagement with the voices of disaffected young people

Relevance to the Practice of Educational Psychologists (EPs)

Research that elicits the voices of disaffected young people at risk of school exclusion is highly relevant to the practice of EPs. EPs have an important role in foregrounding young people's views to ensure their needs are taken into account during schools' decision making regarding provision. They are well placed to facilitate processes that enable schools to engage with disaffected young people's voices. Ongoing research in this area will inform EP practice in terms of their understanding of disaffected young people's school experiences, how this impacts on the young people's needs in terms of provision

and facilitative processes that enable schools to engage with disaffected young people's voices.

Summary of Findings

In Paper One, qualitative data relating to the young people's perceptions of their school experiences were subjected to thematic analysis following Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor and Bernard's (2014) 'Formal Analysis' procedure. This procedure is informed by Braun and Clarke (2006) but also integrates some aspects of Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to support the extraction of patterns from large amounts of rich, qualitative data. The 'Formal Analysis' procedure is outlined in appendix 3.16.

The study, in contrast to previous research, revealed a more holistic and nuanced perspective of disaffection in which the young people perceived their engagement to be context driven and more importantly were able to view themselves as positively engaged with some aspects of school. This highlights the need for further research into disaffected young people's voices regarding what they perceive to be positive engagement as this may differ from practitioners' perceptions. Implications for practice are that EPs are well placed to foreground the voice of disaffected young people to other professionals and in so doing will help professionals make better sense of disaffected young people's school experiences becoming ultimately better equipped to support them.

In Paper Two, written records of the LMs' discussions during the intervention process and their personal constructs were subjected to content analysis. The findings suggest that when LMs are facilitated to engage with the voice of disaffected young people, in the majority of cases it has a positive impact on their perceptions of these young people. The effectiveness of the impact depends on the context of the school, level of training received and to what extent practitioners engage with the facilitative process. It points to future research in other contexts exploring additional factors that may impact on a practitioner's ability to engage with disaffected young people's voices. As one of only a few studies that have implemented an intervention aimed at engaging schools with the voice of disaffected young people, it would be of value to explore if the intervention can be replicated with similar results in different school contexts. EPs are well placed to manage facilitative processes aimed at engaging schools with the voices of disaffected young people. In doing so they can support practitioners in broadening their understanding of these young people and, more importantly, enable them to act on their voices.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Definitions

Academy Schools - schools which are directly funded by central government and independent of direct control by the Local Authority (local government).

Comprehensive Schools - schools which do not select on the basis of academic achievement or aptitude. They are under direct control by the Local Authority (local government). The average size of a comprehensive secondary school in the UK is approximately 1000 pupils (DFE, 2014).

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) - teaching assistants trained to provide emotional and social skills support to children and young people.

Free School Meals - school meals paid for by the government and usually provided to children and young people whose parents or carers are receiving welfare benefits. As of 2013, 16.3% of the secondary school pupil population was eligible for free school meals (DFE, 2013a).

Inclusion Base – an area in school where pupils who are unable to access some of their lessons are supported.

Learning Mentors (LMs) - work with pupils who need help to overcome difficulties that are getting in the way of their learning. They are employed by schools and are part of the school community.

Permanent Exclusion - the pupil will not be accepted back into school and will have to continue his or her education elsewhere. In England and Wales the rate of permanent exclusion is 0.09% of the pupil population (DFE, 2010).

Pupil Premium – provides schools with additional money for each pupil they have from a deprived background.

Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) - an establishment which is specifically organised to provide education for children who have been permanently excluded or are unable to attend a mainstream or special school due to reasons such as high emotional vulnerability, school refusal and complicated medical issues.

School Action - is established when a child is identified as needing interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum and strategies.

School Action Plus - is established when a child's needs are such that the school needs to seek advice and support from external support services

Statement of Special Educational Needs- a legal document describing a child's special educational needs and the provision needed to meet those needs. As of 2013, 2.8% of the pupil population had a statement of special educational need (DFE, 2013b).

Paper One

Eliciting the voice of young people at risk of school exclusion: What is it like to experience school when you are at risk of exclusion?

1.1 Abstract

Previous research in relation to young people who are at risk of school exclusion can be criticised for the lack of studies that truly elicit and foreground the voices of these young people within a school context. While retrospective studies have explored their views post exclusion, few have examined their perceptions within a mainstream context prior to exclusion. This can be explained in terms of the inherent difficulties of engaging disaffected young people with research, often attributed to a combination of poor language skills and negative perceptions of adults, and schools' reluctance to foreground these voices.

This paper reports how a participatory research method, which took into account the individual needs of disaffected young people, overcame these difficulties and succeeded in eliciting the voices of ten young people at risk of school exclusion within their mainstream context. Rich, meaningful and contextualised data were generated about disaffected young people's perceptions of their mainstream school experiences.

The data were thematically analysed and then interpreted using self determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This revealed that from young people's perspectives the need for a sense of relatedness was more relevant than the need for a sense of autonomy. The need to feel competent only became relevant in certain subject contexts.

Findings showed a more holistic and nuanced perspective of disaffection. The young people perceived their engagement to be context driven and, importantly, were able to view themselves as positively engaged with some aspects of school. This highlights the need for further research into disaffected young people's voices regarding what they perceive to be positive engagement as this may differ from practitioners' perceptions.

Implications for practice are that EPs are well placed to foreground the voice of disaffected young people with practitioners. In so doing they help them make better sense of disaffected young people's school experiences and enhance practitioners' ability to support these young people.

1.2 Introduction

This is the first of two papers which explores what practitioners working within education can learn from the voices of disaffected young people at risk of school exclusion in relation to how these young people perceive their school experiences. It reports on a small scale study in which disaffected young people's voices were elicited and explored through participatory research. The voices of teachers and parents, whilst highly relevant to the subject area under study, were not elicited as the specific focus of this study was to explore young people's perceptions, views and opinions.

1.2.1 My personal perspective

My interest in disaffected young people stems from my experiences as a youth worker and a secondary school teacher and this informs my perspective. During that time I came across young people who, despite numerous interventions and strategies, appeared to have no desire to engage in education. When I took the opportunity to talk with these young people I was often surprised by the discrepancy between my perceptions of the situation surrounding their lack of engagement compared with theirs. I recall one experience as an example in which I perceived a young person's continual truancy from my lessons as a personal dislike of my lessons and teaching style. After talking with the young person I discovered that in fact she enjoyed my lessons. Instead, her truancy was being triggered by covert bullying in the class that I was not aware of. These experiences sparked an interest into how educational practitioners

can engage with the voices of disaffected young people to understand the situations around their disengagement better. This interest prompted my decision to pursue disaffection as the topic for this research.

1.2.2 Context

The current policy context concerning educational inclusion is focused on the idea of social inclusion. Social inclusion is defined as the full participation of pupils in the '*cultures, curriculum and communities of local schools'* (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughn & Shaw, 2000). This places responsibilities on schools to adapt their procedures and structures to accommodate all pupils with varied educational needs. Disaffection often significantly challenges socially inclusive practices in schools. The negative attitudes and behaviours of disaffected young people can be commonly viewed as evidence that they have 'opted' not to participate or be included in school. It is in this context, when participation is being viewed as an individual rather than a school responsibility (Bragg, 2007), that exclusion is legitimised as being what the young people want and thus in their best interests. Recent research has begun to contradict these ideas showing that disaffected young people's negative attitudes and behaviours, rather than being evidence of a desire to disengage, stem instead from a desire to express a voice that is being marginalised in school (Barrow, 1998; Fletcher & Brown, 2002; Fletcher, 2011; Hartas 2011). From this perspective disaffected

young people's increasingly disruptive behaviours could be seen as a means of trying to engage the school with their voice rather than demonstrate their desire to disengage. Fletcher (2011) has termed this 'inconvenient student voice'. Research into disaffected young people's voices is therefore an important part of the current and future debate around disaffection. There is limited robust research into disaffected young people's voices due to a number of methodological and theoretical issues. The review of selected literature in the next section will discuss these issues and provide further rationale for the current study.

1.2.3 Relevance to EP practice

Research that elicits the voices of disaffected young people at risk of school exclusion is highly relevant to the practice of EPs. EPs have an important role in foregrounding young people's views to ensure any self identified needs are taken into account during the implementation of inclusive strategies. The recent Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice (DFE, 2014) emphasises the participation of young people (and their parents or carers) in decision making regarding educational provision and how their views and perspectives should contribute towards the planning of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). EPs therefore have a role in ensuring these views are fully represented in EHCPs. Ongoing research into disaffection will inform EP practice in terms of their understanding of disaffected young people's school

experiences and how this impacts on the young people's needs in terms of provision.

1.3 A Review of Selected Literature

1.3.1 Methodological issues

Despite many large scale surveys of young people's attitudes towards school (see Gardiner, 2003; Sanders & Hendry; 1997) disaffected young people's views are often not represented in these studies. Large sample sizes tend to homogenise young people's views into an assumed 'single student voice' which marginalises the views of smaller minority groups of young people such as those who are disaffected.

Other studies have tried to elicit the voice of disaffected young people through retrospective interviews after they have been excluded from school (Cullingford & Morrison, 1996; Meeker, Edmonson & Fisher, 2008; Pemberton, 2008; Sanders & Hendry, 1997). Accessing the voice of disaffected young people retrospectively compromises the richness of the data. For example, in Cullingford and Morrison's study the participants, although able to express their negative emotions towards school, found it difficult to articulate in depth any more about their school experience – *'I hated school, I don't know why'* (Cullingford & Morrison,1996:145). Studies that explore the voice of disaffected young people while at school have yielded richer data and it is from these more 'context specific' studies that the idea that young people may be attempting to engage

schools using their 'disaffected' voice has emerged (Barrow, 1998; Fletcher & Brown, 2002; Fletcher, 2011; Hartas, 2011).

There are issues in engaging disaffected young people with research. Often they are reluctant to take part in traditional interviews or complete questionnaires. A suggested barrier to participation is poor language skills which are associated with young people who are labelled at risk of being permanently excluded from school and with disaffected young people more generally (Arnold & Baker, 2012; Clegg, Stackhouse, Finch, Murphy, & Nicholls, 2009; Hayes, 2011). Expressing themselves can be difficult especially in an adult directed activity such as an interview where power differentials exist between participant and interviewer. Studies using participatory methods have been more successful in engaging disaffected young people (Cremin, Mason & Busher, 2011; Riley & Doking, 2004) but there is a lack of research using this approach especially in school contexts. This leaves a gap in the current knowledge concerning the effectiveness of participatory research in eliciting the voices of disaffected young people and the added depth this may bring to our understanding of their school experiences.

1.3.2 Theoretical issues

Psychological perspectives on disaffection have tended to explore how young people view themselves as learners emphasising within child factors, such as self esteem, self efficacy and motivation, and

how these interact with the school curriculum. A common view is that low achievement combined with a curriculum that lacks practical assessment leads to low self esteem and self efficacy. When this becomes entrenched over an extended period of time it leads to disaffection (Collins, 2000; Humphrey, Charlton & Newton, 2004; Slater, 2005; Solomon & Rogers, 2000).

Models of disaffection that identify needs rather than 'within child deficits' are becoming a more common approach. Self determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) has been increasingly associated with disaffection and theoretically underpins the often used 'student engagement instrument' (Appleton, Christenson, Kim & Reschly, 2006) which identifies pupils at risk of disaffection. It emphasises that innate psychological needs are the basis of well being and gives scope for relating these needs to educational contexts. It identifies three innate psychological needs (competence, relatedness and autonomy) that when satisfied increase a person's sense of self-motivation and well being. Competence is the need for people to feel they have the ability to achieve goals; relatedness the need to make meaningful relationships with others and autonomy the need to feel some influence or control over external events. When these needs are not met a person is likely to experience low motivation and a poor sense of wellbeing. Self determination theory is backed by a considerable amount of empirical evidence conducted under controlled experimental conditions using self report measures

(Anderson, Manoogian & Reznick, 1976; Fink, Boggiano & Barrett, 1990; Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994; Sheldon, Reis & Ryan, 1996; Utman, 1997; see Ryan & Deci, 2000 for an overview) but few studies have directly applied it to young people's voices which have been elicited in meaningful depth. Self determination theory will be the psychological theory underpinning this study.

1.4 Research Aims

- To elicit the voices of disaffected young people at risk of school exclusion

- To improve our understanding of their educational needs by exploring their perceptions of their school experiences

- To apply self determination theory to disaffected young people's perceptions of their school experiences to facilitate an understanding of their needs. *(Please note that self determination theory is not imposed as a framework on the study design, methods or data analysis but is applied once themes have emerged from the data)*

1.4.1 Research Questions

- What do young people at risk of school exclusion perceive as positive school experiences?

- What do young people at risk of school exclusion perceive as negative school experiences?

- To what extent are the needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy represented in the perceived school experiences of young people at risk of school exclusion?

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Research Design

A researcher adopts ontological and epistemological positions that influence the subsequent research design and methods used (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Positioning my research within critical realism placed certain requirements on the research design. These were:

- disaffected young people's school experiences needed to be explored in depth.

- disaffected young people's school experiences needed to be explored within 'real life' contexts.

- disaffected young people's unique perspective needed to be valued.

It was decided that these requirements were best answered using an exploratory case study design that was flexible in its approach and generated qualitative data.

One of the defining features of a case study design is that it enables the exploration of multiple perspectives while still being rooted within a specific context. Its strength is that it allows a detailed in-depth understanding of a particular issue which is both holistic and contextualised (Lewis & McNaughton-Nicholls, 2014). For this research a collective case study design (Stake, 1994) was deemed

most appropriate in which several case studies of disaffected young people were examined across two school contexts.

1.5.2 Ethics

Full ethical considerations were given to all aspects of the study and are detailed in appendix 3.9.

1.5.3 Methods

The methods adopted were influenced by the case study design and the nature of the population under study.

Poor language skills (in terms of both receptive and expressive language) have been associated with young people at risk of exclusion from school and disaffected young people more generally (Arnold & Baker, 2012; Clegg, et al., 2009; Hayes, 2011). Table 1 illustrates the impact of this on collecting data from disaffected young people and how my methods were adapted to accommodate this:

Language Issue	Adapted method
Receptive language difficulty: May have difficulty understanding the nature of the research project and what they are consenting to	Simple and clear language was used, both verbally and in written form, to explain the purpose of the project; its procedures, potential risks and benefits (please see informed consent form for young people in appendix 3.14). The young people were given time to ask questions and encouraged to ask for clarity if they did not understand any terms or words.
May have difficulty understanding researcher's interview questions	There were no pre-determined interview questions. All discussions were led by the young people (they chose what experiences to talk about) with minimal direction from the researcher. They were encouraged to discuss their experiences using language and words they were familiar with and which formed part of their everyday communication with each other.
Language Issue	**Adapted Method**
Expressive language difficulty: May have difficulty describing or explaining their experiences	A set of enabling activities (e.g. post –it ranking of subjects, draw and talk, ideal/non ideal self drawings) were made available to the young people to use if they were struggling to expand on a topic or were unable to explain what they mean (see appendices 3.5 and 3.7).
May have difficulty identifying and expressing their emotions in relation to different experiences	The young people were given access to emoticons (stickers depicting different emotions) which they used in conjunction with their school diaries to help them identify how they felt in different lessons and at different points during the week (see appendices 3.4 and 3.6). Activities using projective techniques, which help to facilitate the expression of emotions, were made available to the young people during the discussions e.g. blob tree pictures, talking stones/stickers, personal construct psychology techniques (see appendices 3.5 and 3.7).

Table 1: Methods used to accommodate potential language difficulties

In addition to associated language difficulties disaffected young people can be a difficult group to engage due to other issues (such as their lack of trust in adults). This has further implications for the methods chosen. The table in appendix 3.1 describes these issues and explains how the methods were adapted accordingly.

In summary the chosen methods were as follows:

- Participatory and collaborative in approach - young people decided which school experiences were important to discuss and how these fitted with the research brief.

- Open ended discussions of school experiences in paired or small groups (maximum 3 young people) to reduce power-differentials between researcher and young people. Each group was considered a case study.

- Group discussions conducted over four weekly sessions to enable a positive rapport to develop with researcher (researcher prompt sheets and an overview of the sessions are included in appendices 3.2 and 3.3).

- Observational diary of school experiences, with minimal demand on language skills, kept by young people and used as stimuli for discussion (for example diary prompt sheet and participant examples see appendices 3.4 and 3.6).

- Enabling activities used to make discussion more engaging and allow exploration of issues raised in further depth (for details of activities used and participant examples see appendices 3.5 and 3.7).

- Projective techniques used to help facilitate the expression of emotions in a safe way (for details of techniques used and participant examples see appendices 3.5 and 3.7).

Participatory methods facilitate collaboration between the researcher and participants. Participants are considered experts in their own experiences and decide the relevant knowledge in terms of the study (Adiss, Horstman & O'Leary, 2008; Carney, Murphy & McClure, 2003; Grover, 2004). Participatory methods have been associated with higher rates of engagement amongst young people in comparison to traditional research approaches (Claudio & Stingone, 2008; James, 2006; Maglajlic, 2004; Rodriguez & Brown, 2009). For a full discussion of participatory research methods please refer to the appended literature review.

Zimmerman and Wieder (1977) described the observational diary-interview method as a less intrusive means of generating questions in an interview situation because it is 'owned' by the participants themselves. Participants can choose from their diary which

experiences they wish to disclose, how they do it and have a chance to reflect on the relevant importance of each experience to their overall feelings and sense of wellbeing. An example observational diary method was presented to the young people (please see appendix 3.4). This method was careful to have a minimal language load suggesting the use of emotion stickers, drawings and even 'doodles' to capture how they felt at different times during the week. The young people could choose to follow the example diary method or create their own variation (please see appendix 3.6 for photographed examples of the different observational diaries kept by the young people).

A bank of enabling activities employing projective techniques and appropriate to the age group under study (please see appendix 3.5 and 3.7) were devised and used when needed to make discussions more accessible and engaging. It is important to note that these activities were not a source of data in themselves and were not analysed individually, rather their purpose was to stimulate deeper discussion or explore emotive topics. They were used according to the individual needs of the participants who chose when and how they were used. As different enabling activities were used by each participant it was not possible to directly compare them. It was therefore only the subsequent verbal discussions that were analysed.

1.5.4 Sampling Strategy

The research was conducted in a sparsely populated area in South West England. The number of older people was above average and the working age population below average. Some areas had high numbers of people living in poverty.

The ethnicity of the area was mostly white British with only 3.2% of the population identified as being from the black and minority ethnic communities compared with 13% nationally. Within the black and minority ethnic community the largest groups were the gypsy and traveller communities and people from nations within the European Union. Together these groups formed 43.2% of the black and minority ethnic population which compares to approximately 20% nationally. People from black backgrounds formed the smallest group at 4.5% of the black and minority ethnic population compared with 18.5 % nationally (Owens, 2007).

The rate of permanent exclusion from school was lower than the national average (0.09%) at 0.03% (DFE, 2010). The rate of permanent exclusion was highest within the gypsy and traveller community at 0.5% (compared to 0.31 % nationally). The rate of permanent exclusion within the black Caribbean population was low at less than 0.07% (compared to 0.24% nationally) (DFE, 2013c).

In terms of gender differences, the ratio of females to males in the area was slightly higher than the national average (106 females to 100 males locally compared to 104 females to 100 males nationally) (Owens, 2007). Nationally, the rate of exclusion for boys is higher (0.03%) compared to girls (0.01%) – the local statistics are not available (DFE, 2013c).

As this is an exploratory case study the purpose is not to generalise to the wider population, however, there will be implications for practitioners working within similar contexts.

The study aimed to recruit approximately 2-3 secondary schools to yield a sample size of approximately ten pupils. It was decided that the sample would be small for two reasons. Firstly, as aforementioned, generalisation is not the purpose of the research so a large sample was not needed. Secondly with a large sample size it becomes impractical in terms of time and resources to elicit data in sufficient depth and over the prolonged period of contact needed to justify a case study approach.

A sample frame (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003) was put together to aid in selecting appropriate schools with sampling criteria ranked in order of preference (please see table 2).

1	School phase	Secondary level – pupils more mature and able to articulate their experiences. Higher proportion of secondary school children at risk of exclusion.
2	Informed consent	After being briefed about the study headteacher is willing to co-operate with the research.
3	Co-operation	Willingness to devote time and appropriate resources to facilitate the research (e.g. staff to co-ordinate consent forms/identify appropriate pupils/find appropriate rooms etc...)

Table 2: School Sampling Frame

Schools were selected by purposive sampling (Berg & Lune, 2012, Creswell, 2013). EPs were briefed about the criteria for schools taking part in the research and approached their link schools with an information briefing sheet about the study (see appendix 3.11). To avoid potential conflicts of interest schools where I was currently working in my role as a trainee EP were not approached. I was contacted by three schools who were interested in taking part in the study. I met with each school to discuss the project further and selected two schools to work with.

School A was a smaller than average comprehensive school for pupils aged 13−19. Most students were of White British heritage and spoke English as their first language. The percentage of students

entitled to free school meals was below the national average. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus was below that found nationally.

School B was an average sized comprehensive school which recently became an academy for pupils aged 11-18. Most pupils were of White British heritage and spoke English as their first language. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals was in line with that found nationally. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus was above the national average. The number of pupils dual registered with the local pupil referral unit (PRU) was higher than other schools in the area.

Purposive sampling was used to choose the young people for the study, this meant they were selected to meet the criteria the study required (Bryman, 2012). A sampling frame was generated which detailed this criteria and was shared with schools to aid this selection process (please see table 3).

1	Informed consent	Have consent of parents/carers and show interest in wanting to participate in the study.
2	At risk of exclusion	Receiving alternative/part time curriculum provision within school due to persistent disruption and/or multiple temporary exclusions in the last 3 months and/or frequently excluded from lessons due to persistent disruption.
3	Evidence of disaffection	Evidence of non-participatory behaviours and negative emotions/attitudes to school and /or frequently truant from school/lessons and disengagement with aspects of the curriculum.
4	Age	Where possible a spread of ages between 11-16

Table 3: Sampling frame for selecting young people

Schools identified pupils who met the sampling criteria and gained informed consent from parents or carers before passing relevant details on to myself. In School A, eight pupils were identified and six were selected (one pupil was omitted because he was transferred to a pupil referral unit prior to beginning the research, the second was omitted because I felt he did not sufficiently meet criterion three of the sampling frame). Within the six pupils selected there were five boys and one girl all aged between 14 and 15 years old. Five of the pupils were white British while one boy identified himself as being from the gypsy and traveller community. In School B, two boys and

two girls were identified and all were selected. All these pupils were white British.

Pupils of black Caribbean heritage were not represented in the sample which was majority white British with one pupil from the gypsy and traveller community. This was considered indicative of the local population in the area which was not as ethnically diverse as the rest of England and had a greater number of people from the gypsy and traveller community (Owens, 2007).

Looking at the sample of 10 pupils as a whole across the two schools, there were fewer girls than boys (7 boys to 3 girls). Nationally, the rate of permanent exclusion for boys is just over 3 times the rate for girls (DFE, 2013c). When the study sample is compared to the national statistics girls are slightly over represented (the sample should be 7 boys to 2 girls if it reflected national statistics). This may be explained by the fact locally there is a slightly higher ratio of females to males than nationally (106:100 compared to 104:100) (Owens, 2007).

The selected young people were initially sorted into four focus groups according to school and age. This was for practical reasons, as it was easier for schools (due to the way the pupils were timetabled) to

release pupils together if they were from the same year group. It was also felt that pupils within the same year group were more likely to have similar levels of emotional maturity (compared to a group of pupils from different year groups) and some shared experiences of subjects and lessons which would help to facilitate discussions. As a result, school A had two focus groups of year 10 pupils aged 14 to 15 years old (each with 3 pupils) and school B had one focus group of two year 9 pupils aged 13 to 14 years old and one focus group of two year 8 pupils aged 12 to 13 years old. The focus groups were limited to a maximum of 3 pupils so that they could be managed easily and the small number allowed the researcher more time with each individual young person so relationships and trust could be built.

The personalities of the pupils were also taken into account when sorting some of the groups. This was done in consultation with the pupils' learning mentors. To avoid personality clashes, in school A pupils who were considered to be quieter, shy and possibly more emotionally vulnerable were grouped separately from pupils who were thought to be louder and more likely to dominate discussions.

The personalities of the pupils could not be taken into account when sorting the year 8 and year 9 focus groups due to the small sample size which facilitated only one focus group for each year group. This

is a recognised constraint and the possibility of potential personality clashes is addressed in the ethical considerations of the study (see appendix 3.9).

Due to the small sample size (with an uneven distribution of males and females) and the need to group primarily by year group it was not possible to ensure an equal gender distribution amongst the focus groups. The majority of the groups were single sex (2 male groups, 1 female group) with one mixed group (2 males, 1 female).

Descriptive details of the pupils within each focus group are shown in appendix 3.15). In terms of the methodology and for the purposes of data analysis each focus group was considered an individual case study.

1.5.5 Reliability and validity (please see appendix 3.8)

1.6 Presentation of Data and Findings

1.6.1 Procedure for data analysis

In order to capture the full range of perceptions and views in relation to the young people's school experiences it was decided that thematic data analysis would be conducted. The procedure for data analysis is outlined in appendix 3.16 and follows Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor and Bernard's (2014) 'Formal Analysis' procedure which is based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) model for analysis but incorporates some of Miles and Huberman's (1994) procedures for category construction. An example of the raw data, how it was coded including a list of initial and revised codes is appended (appendices 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.20 and 3.21) Descriptive data in relation to each focus group of young people are detailed in appendix 3.15.

Self determination theory was not imposed as a framework on the analysis of the data and it was not considered at this stage. This was deliberate so that the analysis could be open to any themes that might arise from the data. Self determination theory was considered once themes and patterns in the data had been finalised with the aim of exploring its relevance as a psychological theory in relation to disaffected young people's voices. The data were analysed such that

each focus group of young people were treated as a case study meaning collective rather than individual views were analysed.

The next section gives a summary of the categories that emerged from the data. Categories that emerged from each case study are combined in figure 1 in order to map the breadth of perceptions and experiences across the entire sample. The 'bubble size' of each category represents the amount of data coded within this category in comparison to the others (this is a rough estimate- please see appendix 3.16 for more details). The arrows indicate where two categories are closely associated -where the young people linked two categories together explicitly in the data. Figures 2-5 show what categories emerged within each individual case study.

1.6.2 Summary of categories
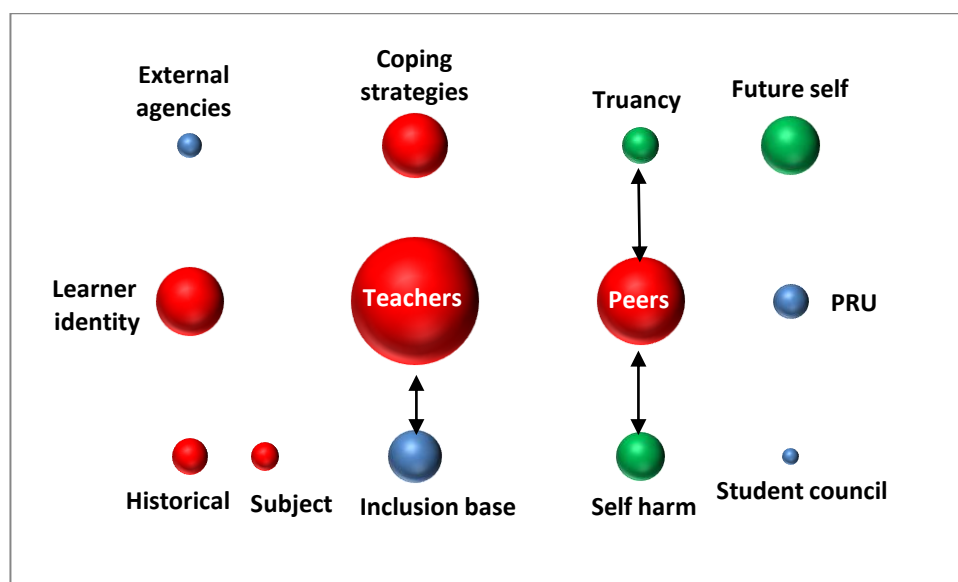
Key: Perceptions of Lessons; Perceptions of the Wider School Community; Other Themes.

Figure 1: Categories that emerged across the whole sample
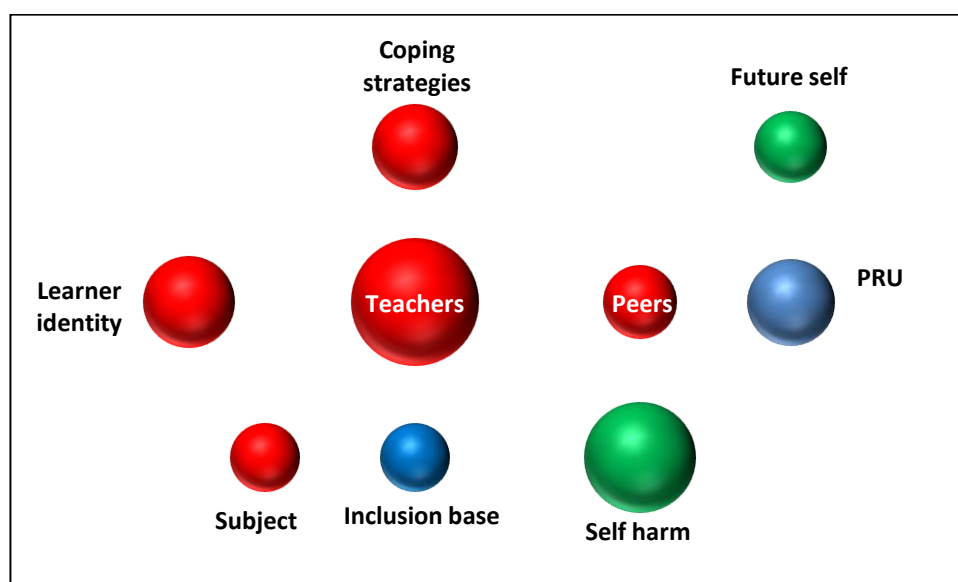
Figure 2: Categories from Case Study 1 (Focus Group 1: School A;
two boys and one girl aged 14-15).
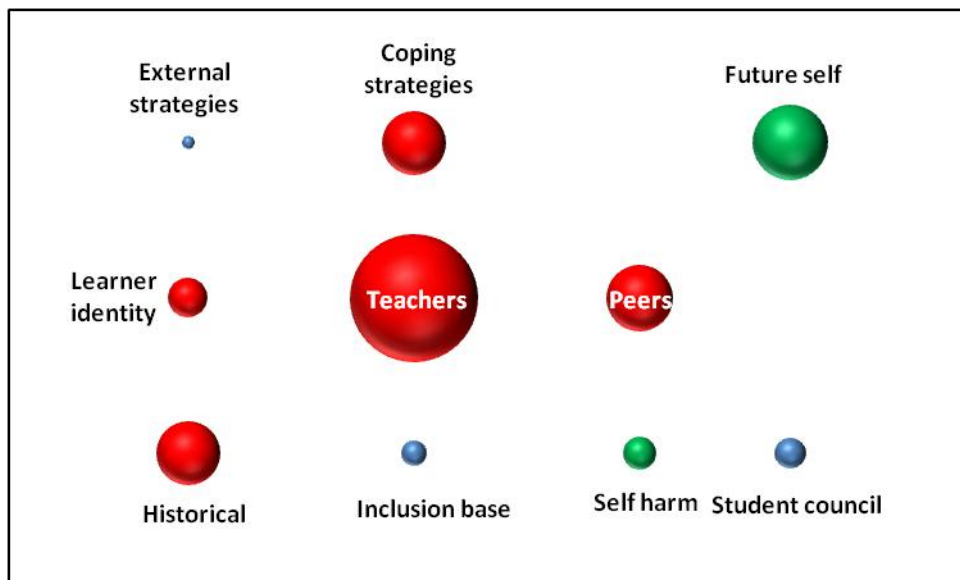
Figure 3: Categories from Case Study 2 (Focus Group 2: School A; three boys aged 14-15).
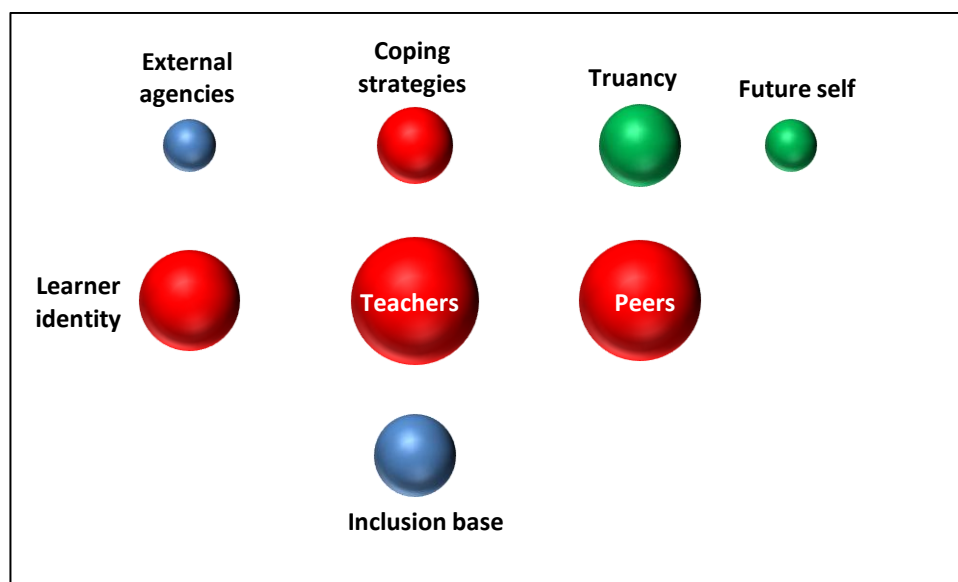
Figure 4: Categories from Case Study 3 (Focus Group 3: School B; two girls aged 13-14)
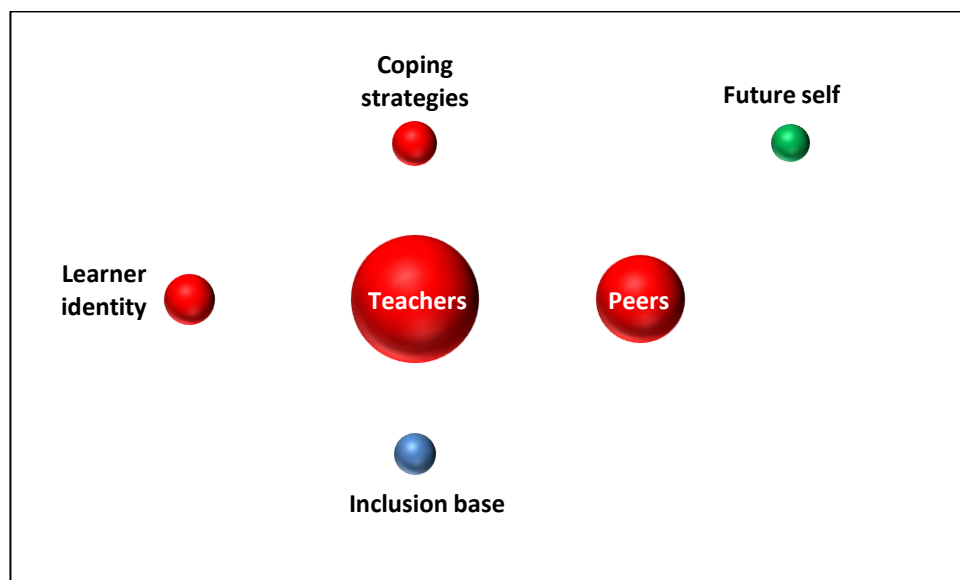
Figure 5: Categories from Case Study 4 (Focus Group 4: School B; two boys aged 12-13).

1.6.3 Construction of categories

Having summarised the data the figures in this next section show how the categories from the figures above are constructed. Each category comprises a number of components and sub components which are detailed alongside examples of typical comments from the young people. Please note that the data which relate to future self, self-harm, external agencies plus aspects of the learner identity category are presented in appendix 3.22 because they did not relate directly to the research questions.
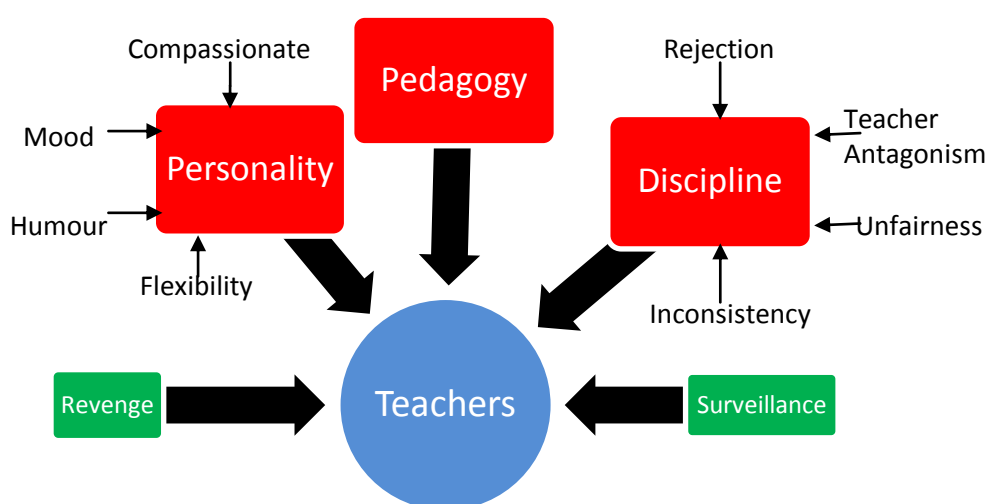
Key: Data that occurred across all case studies; Data that occurred only in some case studies.

Figure 6: Teacher category with components

These components and sub-components are now presented with illustrative quotes from the young people and my interpretive comments to demonstrate the richness and diversity of their perspectives.

sub-component	illustrative quotes from the young people	comment
unfairness	*they say detention and I say 'what for? I haven't done anything…you haven't even given me a warning yet?'*	The young people reported negative perceptions of teachers in relation to how they felt unfairly disciplined by them.
	If the teacher is giving punishments out for no reason you are not going to like them and then you will not do the work and just get more punishments… it is about student-teacher relationships	Unfair discipline was associated with a break down in the teacher – student relationship.
	they shout at you that you have not done the homework even though they didn't write it on a piece of paper that you had to do it and then you get a detention for that… and then you get angry with the teacher and you just end up having an argument…	Perceived unfair discipline was also associated with subsequent confrontation with the teacher.
teacher antagonism	*the teacher is really horrible and that's that… he had a go at me and slammed his fists on the table and shouted in my face…*	The young people reported negative perceptions of teachers in relation to the antagonistic way in which they felt they were disciplined.
	(the teacher) annoyed me when he walked out and shut the door in my face because I felt like he shut the door in my face I got even more angry and started punching the wall...	Discipline perceived as antagonistic was associated with an escalation in aggressive behaviour on the part of the young person.
rejection	*once I was out of the classroom for a whole hour… she (the teacher) forgot about me and I was sat outside the door on the floor*	The young people's perceptions of being sent out were associated with teacher rejection.
inconsistency	*one teacher will like give you a chance or something, they understand that you are just talking with friends, next lesson you will do the same thing and another teacher will give you a straight detention for it*	The young people also reported negative perceptions of the teachers in relation to the inconsistency of the discipline they received.

Table 4: Discipline Component

sub-component	illustrative quotes from the young people	comment
Teacher mood	*happier* *not grumpy, miserable* *He is mean...he has really bad mood changes….you don't know if he's joking or not* *if the teachers are happy we are happy*	The young people reported positive perceptions of teachers who were perceived to be in a more positive mood. They were negative about teachers who were inconsistent in their mood. The mood of the teacher was associated with the subsequent moods of the young people.
Humour	*able to make more of a joke* *have a sense of humour*	Teachers who showed humour were perceived more positively.
Teacher flexibility	*laid back* *lets us do our own thing*	The young people were more positive of teachers who were perceived as flexible.
Compassionate	*kindly* and *nice*	The young people were more positive of teachers who were perceived as compassionate.

Table 5: Personality Component

illustrative quotes from the young people	comment
they don't really know how to teach it... like how to get people to be interested in it… because even if they know a lot about it (the subject) if they're not teaching it right you are not learning	The young people reported negative perceptions of the teachers in relation to their ability to teach their subject.
Because she taught us the completely wrong thing so I ended up doing it wrong	The teacher's ability to teach the subject was associated with the young people's perception that they were unsuccessful.

Table 6: Pedagogy Component

illustrative quotes from the young people	comment
someone always has their eye on you constantly they're not going to leave you alone	In case study 2 and 3 (School A: Group 2; School B: Group 1) teachers were associated with the idea of surveillance.

Table 7: Surveillance Component

illustrative quotes from the young people	comment
(the) teacher confiscated my phone and said she wasn't going to give it back to me until the end of the term so what I did was me and my friends went to this make-up shop and we got them to put all the make-up on me as if I'd been beaten up.. so then I went into school and I said I got mugged but had no means of phoning anyone… .....then that rule (confiscating mobile phones) went out pretty quick (young person laughs)	In case study 2 and 4 (School A: Group 2; School B: Group 2) the young people talked positively about incidents where they sought revenge on a particular teacher for a sanction that had been perceived to be unfair.

Table 8: Revenge Component
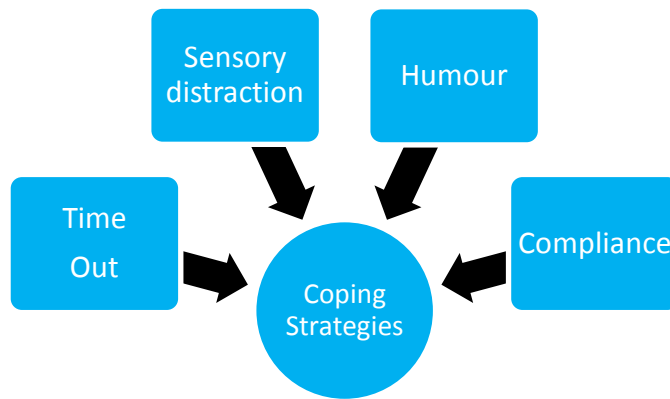
Figure 7: Coping strategies category with components

The young people talked about strategies that helped them get through lessons they did not like. They talked about sensory distractions such as '*doodling*', '*fidgeting*', '*swinging on chairs*', '*playing with a guitar pluck*', '*pinging elastic bands*' and '*pulling hairs*':

> *I have got to have an elastic band to play with or lean back in my chair. I have got to do something ......If I didn't have elastic bands I would put sellotape on my wrist or something… or pull my hairs or something.*

They talked about being able to leave a lesson (via use of a 'Time Out' card) as having a positive impact:

> *being able to leave (the lesson) helped because otherwise I would have been sent out and would have got a detention.. I was able to let out everything that I was thinking.. I was wandering around school to get it out and then went back in and then it was alright ..it's like just asking if I can get out of the classroom for a bit.*

Humour was also cited as a coping strategy:

> *that is how I coped I laughed at it that's why I have such a good sense of humour now.*

Finally they reported that complying with the teacher despite not

liking it was a way of getting through the lesson:

just get on with the work and the time goes fast…
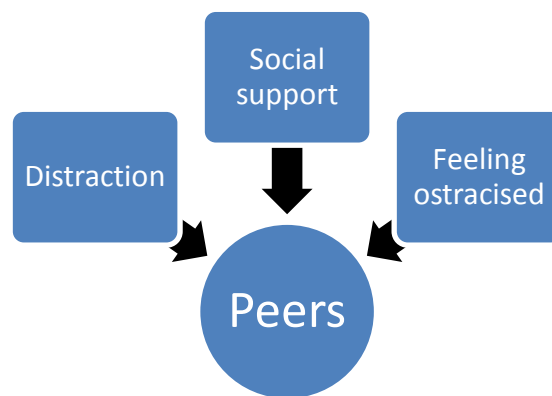
Figure 8: Peers category and components

Social Support

The young people perceived peers positively in terms of social

support if they disliked school or had a specific problem at school:

Sometimes when I go to bed and I think I don't want to go to school the next day I put on Facebook that I really don't want to go tomorrow and stuff and my friends would send really nice messages saying like I will be here for you and stuff like that…

they are my only reason for coming into school really…

<u>Feeling Ostracised</u>

They perceived peers negatively in relation to feeling ostracised by them:

> *People in lessons....that I think might be talking about me… I am a bit uncomfortable around them ....that is why I don't go to science… I am more thinking about what other people think of me in the lessons…*

<u>Distraction</u>

They also perceived peers as a distraction in lessons:

> *I didn't like it because everybody was talking so I couldn't get on with my work…*
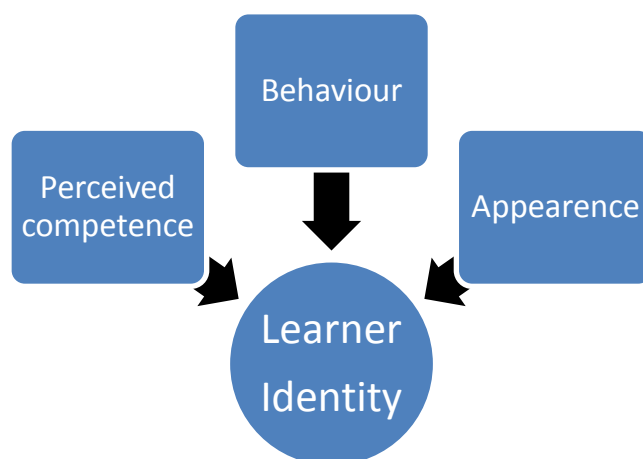
Figure 9: Learner identity category and components (data in relation to behaviour and appearance is detailed in appendix 3.22)

<u>Perceived Competence</u>

The young people reported several positive perceptions of

themselves in terms of their competence in lessons:

> *Actually I think I would be five (when asked to rate himself*

out of 10 as learner) because I am in quite good sets

I do work quite quickly when I'm by myself I am not stupid…

Only one young person reported negative perceptions of his competence and this was linked to his disengagement with the subject:

I don't like science because I am dumb…

Their perceptions of their competence depended on the subject:

I am bottom set for English so I would be right at the bottom… for maths I would be 4 or 3.... in RE I am quite high...

Interestingly competence in general was perceived to be linked to work ethic and parental influence:

I don't think you are born clever but if you study really hard… If your parents are more pushy then you are more clever.
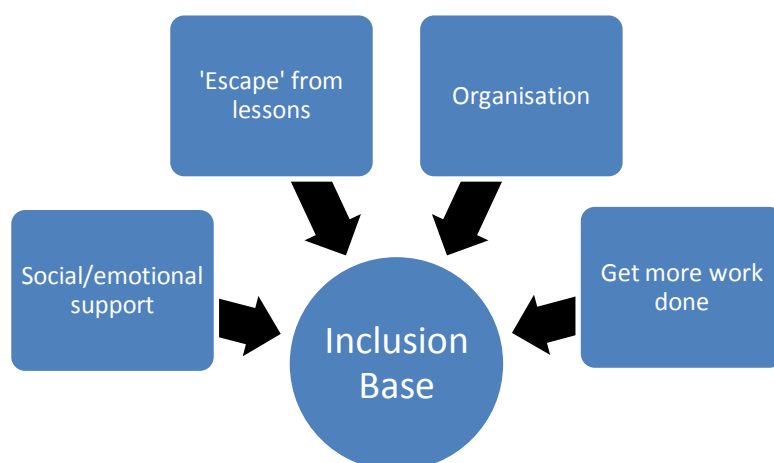
Figure 10: Inclusion base category and components

<u>'Escape' from Lessons</u>

The inclusion base was perceived positively as a place to 'escape'

teachers who they felt did not understand them or had treated them

unfairly:

> *They (teachers) don't understand me and that is the reason why I go to the inclusion base.*
>
> *Some of the people were up here in the inclusion base because they thought Sir was being outrageous and had walked out (of the lesson).*

Going to the inclusion base was also a way of avoiding lessons they
disliked:

> *I go to the inclusion base for all my lessons like science and that because I don't like it there (in science).*

<u>Get more work done</u>

The young people reported they could get more work done in the

inclusion base than in some lessons:

> *I was out of science for two weeks and the good thing is I did twice as much work in the inclusion base than I did in the lesson... I do more work up there than I do in the actual lesson because I have no one to talk to or get in trouble with.*

<u>Social /emotional support</u>

The inclusion base was also perceived as a source of social and

emotional support:

> *there are loads of other people who are going through the same thing and you're not the only one and it helps*

<u>Organisation</u>

It was also perceived to help with organising the day ahead:

> *it helps if I come here......we can then plan the day.*

1.6.4 Categories that emerged from single case studies

This section details categories that emerged from single case studies in isolation and were not seen across the rest of the data set. They only contain one component.

<u>Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)</u>

In case study 1 (School A: Group 1) the young people talked about the prospect of going to a PRU. They were positive about this prospect:

> *I might be going to the PRU… I want to… I am naughty enough… It is good there I would like it there. I want to go there.*

One young person expressed a desire to go to the PRU because he felt seeing other people behave badly would prompt him to behave better:

> *I want to go to the PRU because I will see other people being naughty and then I will see how I behave… like how other people feel when I be naughty… disrupting the learning and that...*

<u>Historical</u>

The young people in case study 2 (School A: Group 2) compared

their behaviour to that of their previous school experiences. In all

cases it had got worse:

> *if I carry on the way I'm going I am going to have doubled*
> *the number of detentions and exclusions than I had last year*
> *and I got 60 detentions last year*

<u>Subject</u>

In case study 1 (School A: Group 1) the young people spoke

positively about being able to choose what subject they studied and

how this had a positive effect on their behaviour:

> *One thing that has made me happy I actually got the lessons*
> *that I wanted so I don't actually mess around in them.*

They expressed resentment at not being able to choose their

subjects:

> *I've only chosen one lesson that's it.. they put me in all the*
> *rest because of my behaviour*

<u>Student Council</u>

In case study 2 (School A: Group 2) they spoke about the student

council as a means to air their views about school. Some were

prepared to use the school council as a means to air their grievances

about school:

> *I have just joined the school council and I'm going to air my*
> *views at the first meeting....about the sanctions and that.*

Others were more reluctant because of its association with well behaved students:

> *I could go on school council if I wanted to but it is not something I want to do… I don't like the people… If they had like a good school council and a bad school council that would be good… like a good people school council and a bad people school council….you have to be well-behaved to be on school council.*

Truancy

In case study 3 (School B: Group 1) the young people spoke about their reasons for playing truant. In both cases this was due to their peers:

> *there was a person who was in all my lessons that I really did not like and they were really horrible.*

1.6.5 Feedback from young people and staff

During the research the young people gave some feedback about how they felt about the sessions. They liked the opportunity to talk openly and learn from each other:

> *I really enjoy this and it has helped me in lessons really… I like just sitting and being able to talk about stuff.*

> *we can all learn about each other.*

> *this is the only place I can talk freely.*

The school staff reported back that, as a result of the sessions; one girl had self referred herself to the counsellor because she stated that

the experience of talking about issues in my sessions had been

helpful to her. One vulnerable boy had developed a new friendship

through the group sessions and this had been a source of support for

him during a difficult family crisis.

1.7 Discussion of the Findings

The findings are discussed in relation to the three research questions. Discussion of data relating to self harm, future self, external agencies, behaviour and appearance (learner identity category) are detailed in appendix 3.23.

1.7.1 What do young people at risk of school exclusion perceive as positive school experiences?

<u>Flexible and compassionate teachers</u>

The young people were positive about teachers who were perceived to be flexible *('laid back')*, treated them sensitively ('*kindly*') and were in a good mood (*'happier'*, *'more able to make a joke'*). This suggests that relationships with teachers are important to disaffected young people and is similar to the findings of previous research. Ryan et al., (1994) observed more positive behaviours in students who reported feeling 'cared for' by their teachers. Their conclusions, however, relied on observations of student behaviours and did not explore the students' perceptions of their behaviour. It therefore premised itself on the implicit assumption that the students behaved more positively because they felt more 'cared for' by their teachers. In the present study the young people made explicit references to feeling positive towards teachers who were not only 'kindly' to them but also 'happier' and 'flexible'. This supports Ryan et al's original findings as well as providing additional depth giving a broader understanding of the

characteristics in a teacher to which disaffected young people have positive responses. Flexibility and sensitivity could signal that teachers are willing to accommodate individual needs and disaffected young people perhaps (as they are likely to have more complex needs) need reassurance that this happens. From disaffected young people's perspectives the teachers' moods influenced their own moods, e.g. '*if the teachers are happy, we are happy*', this indicates a sense of dependence on teachers' emotional states. Disaffected young people's emotions may be more easily influenced by the emotions of other people perhaps due to a lower ability to emotionally self-regulate. It follows that adults working with these young people should be prepared to provide emotional containment where needed.

Opportunity to use coping strategies

The young people perceived lessons in which they were able to use a 'coping strategy' (e.g. sensory distraction, time out card) to help them as positive. This indicates that disaffected young people are aware that they have difficulty engaging with some lessons and have found ways (either on their own or through others) to cope with this. Lessons may become more stressful when the use of these coping strategies are restricted resulting in further disengagement or negative behaviours by the young person and links to a need for flexibility from teachers to accommodate these strategies.

<u>Peers who offer social support</u>

The young people had positive perceptions of peers in relation to the social support they offered (especially when the young people disliked school). They reported close friendships that would '*help them'* if they had a problem or encourage them to come into school: *'send me really nice messages on facebook'.* In some cases they were the '*only reason to come into school'*. This suggests that disaffected young people form meaningful friendships that are important to them. This is a different finding from previous research which has suggested that disaffected young people suffer from a lack of ability to form relationships with peers (Sanders & Hendry, 1997). Much of this previous research, however, explored young people's perceptions of their disaffection 'out of context' - often in a PRU after they have been excluded from mainstream schooling. When young people talk retrospectively about their mainstream school experiences the richness and accuracy of the data may be compromised. For example, once excluded, a young person may perceive their prior mainstream experiences more negatively. The value of the present study is that the young people talked about their experiences within the context of their mainstream schooling prior to exclusion. This gave a richer picture of their peer relationships some of which were positive and important to the young people. Even more importantly these friendships offer a vital source of social support that in many cases encourages them to attend school.

<u>The inclusion base</u>

The inclusion base was perceived positively in all four case studies. It was a source of social, emotional and practical support. Staff with experience of working with disaffected young people are perhaps better able to emotionally contain and thus socially support them. Their role may allow them to be more flexible than teachers in accommodating individual needs. The inclusion base was seen as a place of refuge where the young people felt they were able to '*get more work done'* and 'escape' from teachers and lessons they disliked; in one case a young person reported that students went to the inclusion base out of protest because of the way a teacher was disciplining the class. This implies that inclusion bases may actually facilitate further disengagement from lessons by providing young people with an option outside of the classroom where they feel better able to learn and have more successful staff-student relationships. This potentially undermines the authority and perceived competence of teachers creating barriers to future successful working relationships in the classroom.

<u>The prospect of attending a PRU</u>

 In one case study the prospect of attending a PRU was positively perceived e.g. '*It's good there...I want to go there'*. Using referral to a

PRU as a deterrent may hold little value with some disaffected young people who perceive it as a positive change. Previous research has cited similar findings. Sanders and Hendry (1997) found that some young people were more positive about learning once they have left mainstream and were attending a PRU. The data, however, was elicited retrospectively making it hard to pinpoint when these positive attitudes developed. As the present study examined young people's perceptions pre-exclusion it suggests that these positive attitudes towards PRUs may develop before the young people have left mainstream schooling.

1.7.2 What do young people at risk of school exclusion perceive as negative school experiences?

<u>Inconsistent teachers who are unwilling to help</u>

Teachers who were perceived to be *'grumpy'* or inconsistent in their mood were perceived negatively and disliking a teacher was a trigger for disengagement from lessons. This indicates that poor classroom relationships facilitate disengagement. Disaffected young people may need to feel security in where they stand in their relationships with their teachers hence why they respond negatively to inconsistent moods.

The young people reported negative experiences of teachers who were perceived to have inadequate teaching skills or were unwilling

to help them in lessons and they linked this to their subsequent lack of success. It may be that disaffected young people interpret an unwillingness to help as a personal slight and this influences their feelings of self worth as a learner. There is also a sense of dependence by the young people on the teacher's pedagogical ability and willingness to provide support to achieve success in learning. Pemberton (2008) claimed that it was the students' perception of uncaring attitudes in teachers that led to disaffection. My findings suggest a less simplistic view: that it is perhaps the perception that teachers are unwilling to help them succeed in their learning that is interpreted as uncaring by disaffected young people. Pemberton's claim was drawn from a meta-analysis of large scale survey studies within the field of disaffection, some of which retrospectively explored young people's perceptions of school. It could be argued that the case study approach of the present study enabled more contextualised data to be elicited resulting in the generation of slightly different perspectives.

Being watched

In two case studies teachers were associated with a surveillance culture which was disliked. This suggests that disaffected young people feel that teachers do not trust them. Similar findings were found by Cremlin et al., (2011). As in the present study this used a

participatory methodology to explore students' perceptions. Disaffected young people expressed negative feelings about being watched by the school surveillance cameras. It is interesting that findings relating to a dislike of surveillance have stemmed from participatory studies rather than general survey studies. This may be because participatory studies allow young people more freedom to choose what aspect of their school experiences are of relevance to the research.

<u>Unfair, inconsistent or antagonistic discipline</u>

 The young people were negative about some teachers' use of discipline which they perceived to be unfair, inconsistent or antagonistic. How the discipline administered by the teacher was perceived by the young people resulted in either their further disengagement (as with unfair discipline) or confrontation with the teacher (as with antagonistic discipline). It is possible that discipline is perceived as unfair because it does not accommodate what disaffected young people believe to be their needs at a particular time (e.g. needing to fiddle with something as a sensory distraction or talk with peers for social support) or simply that they feel unfairly singled out in comparison to their peers. It is difficult for schools to be both flexible and consistent in terms of discipline and thus makes this challenging to get right in practice. What teachers can do is be aware how they deliver a sanction and be conscious not to 'antagonise' a situation, inducing feelings of resentment or conflict in the young person. This can be achieved by explicitly reinforcing that it is the

behaviour that is being sanctioned which is separate from the person.

One case study reported a history of accumulating sanctions; *'I will have doubled the number of detentions compared to last year'*. This suggests that the value of sanctions diminishes as young people have more experience of them. Schools therefore need to work with students on the underlying issues and not rely solely on sanctions to correct negative behaviours.

In some case studies young people spoke positively about getting 'revenge' on teachers for what they perceived to be an unfair sanction. This supports previous research by Meeker et al., (2008) which suggested that disaffected young people find themselves in negative cycles of retribution against teachers for perceived unfair treatment. Meeker et al's findings were drawn from a large retrospective study of 'high school drop outs' whereas the present study examined students' perceptions within the context of their mainstream schooling. The data elicited in the present study are arguably richer. They cited specific incidents of revenge and precursor events to the act of retribution by the young person (e.g. the confiscation of a mobile phone leading to a 'prank' to embarrass the teacher).

These findings imply that when teacher –pupil relationships are damaged, this negative cycle will continue until they are repaired. Intervention in these cases should therefore focus on rebuilding relationships rather than sanctioning the behaviour.

Being sent out was perceived negatively with young people reporting that they felt rejected by teachers and led to disengagement. Teachers need to make it explicit why young people are out of the classroom, be clear that the sanction is not a personal rejection and support them in re-engaging with the learning.

Peers who bully or distract

Peers were perceived negatively in relation to the experience of being ostracised or bullied by them. Interestingly in case study 3, ostracisation by peers was a trigger for truancy. This supports Klein's ideas (1999) that many disaffected young people are 'dropped out of school' through truancy. Klein's comments were drawn from statistical analysis of truancy rates. This lacked contextual data perhaps resulting in the absence of any exploration around the possible reasons for truancy from school. The present study, although very small in scale, produced contextualised data. For example, it suggests some of the possible reasons for truancy are peer-related, although this finding needs to be treated with some caution as it only applied to two girls within the sample. Peers were

also perceived as a distraction in lessons and thus a barrier to learning. There may be a tension in disaffected young people between a need to interact with peers during a lesson for social support and a need to be free from distractions to learn. If social support is prioritised as a need, learning may be sacrificed.

1.7.3 To what extent are the needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy represented in the perceived school experiences of young people at risk of school exclusion?

Competence

The young people talked about the need to feel competent in relation to being good learners in all four case studies. The data generated in relation to perceived competence was considerably less than that for teachers and peers suggesting that needing to feel competent was of less relevance to the young people than their relationships in school.

In some lessons the young people were positive about their competence as learners and articulated this in relation to their perceived ability or attainment (*I am in quite good sets)*. In others they were less so (*I don't like science because I am dumb*). This gives a more contextualised perspective to the idea that disaffection stems from an entrenched lack of success and low ability over time (Sanders & Hendry, 1997; Slater, 2005). Slater's (2005) evidence for

the association between low ability and disaffection is drawn from large scale surveys with little exploration of specific school contexts. For example Slater draws some of his conclusions from the broadly based national report by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) into managing challenging behaviour (OFSTED, 2005). It is therefore difficult, in these studies, to consider contextual factors that may impact on the relationship between low ability and disaffection. The present study takes contextual factors into account due to use of a case study rather than general survey approach. It suggests that in some cases perceived competence is context specific rather than a general perception and implies disengagement arises in response to a perceived lack of competence in certain lessons. When identified in relation to specific subjects, this indicates that a need to feel competent is important for disaffected young people. Support in relation to improving learner competence may be less successful if it does not take into account these specific contexts suggesting a requirement to be proactive in investigating which contexts disaffected young people are achieving success in and thinking about what it is that makes these contexts different from others.

Relatedness

There were more data generated in relation to peers and particularly teachers than any of the other categories and shows that

relationships within school were highly relevant to the young people's experiences. The findings suggest that disaffected young people are able to make and sustain meaningful relationships in certain contexts (with specific peers or staff). Where they are able to sustain meaningful relationships this facilitated positive engagement (e.g. encouraged attendance). Where relationships broke down there was a considerable impact on engagement; for example truancy in relation to peers or retribution towards the teacher. This indicates that a sense of relatedness is an important need for disaffected young people and supporting successful relationships in school is a key factor in facilitating engagement.

Autonomy

Very little of the data evidenced explicitly the need for autonomy. There were only five data extracts in total referring to autonomy which came from two case studies. These data extracts referred to the young people's desire to choose the subjects they studied and their experiences of school councils. The lack of data may be explained in reference to previous research citing that children with attachment difficulties often score low on measures of autonomy (Milyavskaya, Ma, Koestner, Lydon & McClure, 2012). Difficulties with attachments and relationships have been associated with disaffected young people (Sanders & Hendry (1997). Milyavskaya et al's., (2012) research did not explore the young people's perceptions

of autonomy. They based their conclusions on observations of student behaviour in an environment where their sense of autonomy was actively encouraged by the teacher. Young people with anxious or avoidant attachment styles showed a decrease in the level of persistence with learning tasks whereas their peers showed an increase. The present study, although small in scale, does further support these findings by showing that when disaffected young people are asked about their school perceptions a sense of autonomy is not perceived to be as relevant as a sense of relatedness.

Perhaps some of these young people are still at the developmental stage where dependence on adults is important for a sense of security and well being reducing their own need for autonomy. This could further explain their sense of dependence on the teacher to help regulate their emotional state and achieve success in learning.

Being able to choose subject options was perceived as a positive experience and linked to positive behaviours. This implies that giving young people a choice facilities engagement. One young person reported that he had joined the school council and was positive about being able to voice his opinions about the school discipline procedures at the first meeting. This is hugely encouraging and shows a willingness from disaffected young people to engage with school especially when they feel able to voice their views about

issues that are important to them. Despite being only one case it does begin to contradict the research that suggests schools do not enable disaffected young people to express their voice (Hartas, 2011; Weller, 2007). Previous research, such as Hartas, 2011, has tended to report on a 'single student voice' reporting on what the majority of disaffected young people say about school. The present study enabled the exploration of individual voices, allowing opinions that may be contradictory to the majority of disaffected young people to be heard.

In contrast another young person reported a reluctance to engage with student council due to his perception that it is for 'well behaved students' only. His solution was to create an alternative 'badly behaved' school council. This suggests that there is a desire to express a voice but that there are barriers within school that prevent this. This is consistent with previous research stating schools often fail to engage with the 'heterogeneity' of student voice (Weller, 2007) and that well behaved students are the ones rewarded with a voice on school councils (Hartas, 2011).

1.7.4 Other Findings

Therapeutic effect of research discussions

There was evidence that my sessions with the young people were being perceived positively and perhaps having some therapeutic

effect. Feeling *'able to talk freely'* and '*learn from one another'* had in some cases resulted in the development of new supportive friendships or prompted them to explore further support through counselling. This implies that giving disaffected young people opportunities to speak freely about their school experiences in a group situation has a positive effect on their sense of well being and motivates them to seek solutions to problems.

1.7.5 Limitations of study

A limitation of the study was the small sample size and the limited number of contexts it explored. It is therefore not possible to make generalisations to other school populations in other contexts. This however was not an aim of the research. It is possible to draw out implications for practice for schools that have similar contexts to the case studies, although this research does highlight that there is a degree of heterogeneity within disaffected young people as a population in terms of their perceptions of school and this should be considered when relating the findings to new contexts.

It is also important to note the absence of other relevant voices in the research, such as teachers and parents, which was out of the scope of this study. However they are likely to have different perceptions of situations and this should be borne in mind when applying the findings.

Another limitation was the lack of ethnic diversity within the sample (majority White British with one pupil from the gypsy and traveller community). This was determined by the location of the study in the Southwest which is less ethnically diverse than other areas of England. The literature suggests that nationally the profile of permanently excluded young people tends to include more black Caribbean boys (DFE, 2010). The Southwest tends to have higher numbers of pupils from the gypsy and traveller community than black pupils (Owens, 2007). This should be taken into account when applying the findings to other areas outside of the Southwest.

1.8 Conclusions

The findings of this research have given a more holistic and nuanced perspective of disaffection. It suggests that many aspects of disengagement are context specific and that young people may be disengaging with one aspect of school but not all of it. Importantly it shows that these young people are able to engage in school activities, sustain meaningful relationships and be positive about school in certain situations contradicting some of the previous research in this field.

It also demonstrates the potential heterogeneity within this population of young people who can have a variety of perceptions about school that sometimes contrast with each other. It highlights the need for further research into disaffection in different mainstream contexts to enhance our understanding of young people's experiences and what it is about certain contexts that facilitates positive rather than negative perceptions. This further work could be expanded to include other relevant voices and perspectives, such as teachers and parents, and how these compare with young people's perspectives. A key question could explore how young people's perceptions of positive school engagement compare with teacher and parent perceptions.

In relation to self determination theory, this research suggests that young people perceive relatedness to be a more relevant need than autonomy while competence is only relevant in certain school contexts specific to the individual. Eliciting the voice of disaffected young people gives us a richer picture of their needs and the contexts in which disengagement is occurring.

1.8.1 Implications for EP practice

The research findings suggest that eliciting the voices of disaffected young people gives educational practitioners valuable insights into the meanings behind disaffected behaviours and specific contextual factors that facilitate engagement. This has implications for EP practice. EPs are well placed to elicit disaffected young people's voices due to their psychological knowledge and skills. They are able to draw on their knowledge of psychological techniques (such as narrative therapy, PCP and projective techniques) to facilitate the elicitation of young people's narratives and subsequent views. They can also use their knowledge of young people and high level of interpersonal skill to interact with young people in a way that assists them to express their views and opinions.

There are also implications for EP practice at group and organisational levels. EPs can use their unique knowledge of local school contexts to deliver tailored training in how to elicit disaffected

young people's views to school staff. At an organisational level EPs are able to influence local authority policy to ensure it incorporates and reflects disaffected young people's views.

Lastly the findings have implications for the recent SEND code of practice (DFE, 2014). The new SEND code of practice places a greater emphasis on the participation of young people (and their parents or carers) in decision making regarding support and provision. This research suggests that when seeking disaffected young people's views it is important to explore their perceptions of positive engagement and not assume that disaffected young people's views will solely centre on perceptions of disengagement. As the new SEND code of practice extends EHCPs to the age of 25, with a larger focus on transition to adulthood and independent living, eliciting disaffected young people's views on their current and future provision is going to become increasingly more important (DFE 2014).

1.8.2 Reflection

Working collaboratively with disaffected young people has impacted on me personally and professionally. Some of my personal beliefs and values regarding disaffected young people have shifted as a result of the research. Prior to conducting the research I held the belief that disaffected young people had difficulty forming relationships with adults. I perceived them as being quite dismissive of adults and displaying hostile and sometimes aggressive

behaviours towards them. During the research I was able to establish a rapport with the young people based on trust and mutual respect. I was surprised how accepting the young people were of me and how open they were to hearing my views on disaffection. I now believe that, given the right nurturing environment, disaffected young people are more capable of forming positive relationships with adults than I had previously anticipated.

In my previous role as a secondary school teacher I valued the use of sanctions and a separate 'inclusion base' within the school as a means to improve behaviour and facilitate engagement. I now perceive that sanctions for disaffected young people may hold less value compared to approaches aimed at repairing student-teacher relationships. The research has also led me to question the value of a separate 'inclusion room' outside of the classroom. As it suggests educating disaffected young people in an inclusion room may further their disengagement from the classroom.

The research has also led me to develop and change my practice as an EP. I have learnt skills in how to engage disaffected young people through establishing a safe and nurturing environment and elicit their narratives through the application of personal construct psychology. It has also led me to consider the potential mismatch in perceptions between adults and young people regarding disaffection. Hence in

my future practice, I will be careful to ensure I explore both the

adults' and young person's perceptions of the situation and make

sure these are equally represented when planning interventions.

Paper Two

An intervention for engaging schools with the voice of young people at risk of exclusion: How does this change their perceptions of pupil disaffection?

2.1 Abstract

Interventions in relation to young people at risk of exclusion tend to be drawn from education practitioner views which focus on a particular perspective of disaffection such as within child or curricular factors. Consequently interventions are 'done to' rather than 'with' young people and lack an integrated, holistic approach.

In this small case study the researcher facilitated an intervention with seven Learning Mentors (LMs) set within two different school contexts. The aim of the intervention was to engage LMs with the voice of disaffected young people. The LMs met in two groups over two months during which vignettes of disaffected young people's voices were used as stimuli for prioritising, implementing and evaluating changes to current LM practice. LMs' personal constructs of disaffected young people were elicited pre and post intervention.

The findings reveal that when LMs are facilitated to engage with the voice of disaffected young people it can have a positive impact on their perceptions of those young people. The effectiveness of the impact was dependent on the context of the school, level of training received and the extent to which LMs engaged with the facilitative process.

As this is one of few studies which have implemented an intervention to engage schools with the voice of disaffected young people, further research exploring whether the intervention could be replicated in

other school contexts would be of value. This study adds to the body of knowledge on school disaffection in young people and indicates that EPs are well placed to manage facilitative processes aimed at engaging schools with the voices of disaffected young people. In doing so they support practitioners to broaden their understanding of these young people and, importantly, enable them to act on their voices.

2.2 Introduction

This is the second of two papers which explores how schools can engage with the voices of young people at risk of exclusion. The paper reports on two case studies of an intervention aimed at engaging a group of LMs with the voices of disaffected young people. The specific focus of the paper is exploring what impact the intervention had on the LMs' personal constructs of disaffected young people. It foregrounds the voices of disaffected young people elicited in Paper One and uses these voices as stimuli for action within the intervention.

2.3 A Review of Selected Literature

2.3.1 Interventions in relation to disaffection

Interventions in relation to disaffected young people tend to be drawn from practitioner views and focus on a particular perspective of disaffection. Therapeutic type interventions, for example motivational interviewing sessions and LM support, focus on within child factors such as motivation and self esteem (Atkinson & Woods, 2003). Another approach is alternative curricula for disaffected pupils. These consider school factors that disengage pupils such as the delivery and nature of the curriculum and rigid assessment regimes (Solomon & Rogers, 2001). Alternative curricula are designed to be more relevant, engaging and practical. Lastly, there are interventions

aimed at building better school–parent partnerships via support workers. These emphasise the impact of family factors, such as parental role models, on disaffection (Vulliamy & Webb, 2003).

There is a lack of interventions that use an integrated model of disaffection which acknowledge different perspectives and take into consideration the voice of disaffected young people. Gersch (1992) emphasises a fundamental 'mismatch of perception' between adults and children with much intervention based on the incorrect assumption that young people's views of the world 'tally exactly with that of adults'. In fact, if we assume that no one else can have the same shared experience, it follows that adults and children will make sense of the same events in different ways and therefore have unique perceptions of these events (Ravenette, 1977). There is, therefore, a significant argument for implementing interventions that respond and engage with the voice of disaffected young people.

2.3.2 Schools' engagement with disaffected young people's voice

Schools engage with student voice through the school council forum. However, Weller (2007) points out that schools are often reluctant to engage with the 'heterogeneity of pupil voice' especially from those who are disaffected. Disaffected pupils have stated they feel 'invisible' within school councils which are often reserved for the well behaved students (Hartas, 2011). Schools often feel they need to

maintain their authority and position in relation to disaffected pupils. They can feel threatened if pupils are given too much voice, fearing they may exercise these rights irresponsibly (Borland, Laybourn, Hill & Brown, 1998). When schools do try to engage with the voice of disaffected pupils they can push them into adult ways of participating, treating them like consumers giving feedback on 'products' the school offers, for example subject choice and dress code (Haynes, 2009; Prout, 2003). The purpose of engaging with pupils' voices may also be flawed in that it is often achievement and performance orientated with less emphasis on pupils' emotional experiences of learning (Watkins, 2001).

Even when schools successfully elicit and listen to disaffected young people's voices they may still choose not to act on them. This can be due to a conflict of positions between schools and disaffected young people. For example, where acting on their views requires too much effort and resources on the part of schools or it undermines the authority and control of teachers. Other barriers to schools acting on disaffected young people's voice relate to adult scepticism about young people's capacity and capability to express a valid view and feeling threatened about the potential challenge to adult authority (Kellett, 2008). In view of this, further disaffection may occur as a result of the young person's voice not being acted upon even if they have been allowed to express it.

There are few studies in the literature which report on schools successfully engaging with the voice of disaffected pupils. In many cases engagement has come via a third party such as a support worker or EP without the school being directly involved (Barrow, 1998; Hartas, 2011). In studies where schools have been successful at engaging with the voice of disaffected pupils it has been done through individual teachers who have taken it upon themselves to research young people's voices (Bragg, 2001). In one example a media teacher reflected on her pupils' responses to the films she had chosen to discuss and analyse as part of the course. The pupils were reluctant to take part in any adult discussions regarding the films choosing to make derogatory comments about them instead. By listening to their voice she came to realise that her 'adult' view of the films differed from her pupils and this was, perhaps, what the pupils had been trying to tell her through their antagonistic reactions to the films. Consequently she was able to change how she approached class discussions with the pupils taking into account their differing views (Bragg, 2001).

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Training

ELSAs are trained to help young people identify their emotions and teach them practical skills which aid them in managing these emotions. There is evidence (e.g. Grahamslaw, 2010) to suggest

that ELSA training can improve the practice of staff who support the learning of pupils because it enables them to have a greater understanding of young people's emotional needs in relation to their learning. This applies to young people who are at increased risk of being excluded. Grahamslaw (2010) evaluated the impact of emotional literacy support training on the practice of support assistants and the emotional wellbeing of the children they supported. The study was conducted across one local authority with a large sample size which compared the practice of ELSA and non ELSA trained staff using self report questionnaires and focus groups. Support assistants who had undergone ELSA training had higher self-efficacy beliefs about their practice which suggests they feel more confident and competent in supporting emotionally vulnerable learners. It also found that children supported by ELSA trained practitioners had higher emotional self-efficacy beliefs than those supported by non ELSA trained practitioners. This suggests that ELSA trained staff have a positive impact on children's perceptions of their ability to understand and cope with their emotions. The study also found that the greatest positive impact on children's emotional self-efficacy beliefs were when they were supported by ELSA trained staff who were given protected time to prepare for working with young people and opportunities to attend refresher training.

2.3.3 Application of psychology

The psychological framework underpinning this work is that of personal construct psychology (PCP) (Kelly, 1955).

PCP as a theoretical position can be best understood as a form of social constructivism. It subscribes to the notion that people seek to 'construct' a version of reality based on their experience. An underlying assumption is that of "constructive alternativism" meaning people continually recreate their experiences such that reality is uniquely represented in each person depending on how they have made sense of their experiences at any one particular moment in time. Butler and Green (2007) describe this as being like 'architects' of our own 'unique realities'.

Kelly, 1955, describes people as being like 'scientists' in how they 'construct' their version of reality (Butler and Green, 2007). They are motivated to make accurate predictions about the world and do this by formulating theories - detecting repeated themes and patterns in events to help make sense of them. This enables people to anticipate and predict future events (Burnham, 2008). PCP, therefore, can be considered a theory about the 'theories' people have about the world (Butler and Green, 2007).

Within PCP are a set of techniques for exploring people's theories about the world and these have been used successfully with disaffected young people (see Hardman, 2001; Ravenette, 1999). Exploring people's theories about the world relies on analysing their 'personal constructs'. Personal constructs are a means by which people assess the world (Burnham, 2008). They are meaningful discriminations between aspects of the world that are similar or contrasting and help people make better sense of their worlds. Each construct has an emergent and contrast pole (e.g. Happy - emergent pole and sad - contrast pole). Constructs are contrasting rather than opposite poles – for example it is equally possible to have 'grumpy' as the contrast pole instead of sad when happy is the emergent pole (Beaver, 2003; Hardman, 2001).

Using PCP techniques to analyse people's personal constructs gives researchers insight into the possible reasons why people have developed certain theories or conclusions about their world. It helps researchers to explore people's belief systems, values and perceptions in a way that 'opens out' discussions and facilitates exploration. PCP can also be used as an intervention technique. It can be used as a reflective exercise giving people space to consider and explore alternative beliefs and theories about a particular aspect of their experience. This can help them to look at issues and problems in a different way helping them to find solutions (Burnham, 2008; Hardman, 2001).

2.3.4 Relevance to the practice of EPs

EPs are well placed to manage facilitative processes aimed at engaging schools with the voices of disaffected young people. EPs have skills in consultation (e.g. active listening skills, ability to reframe perceptions, use of explorative questioning and the ability to sensitively challenge beliefs) that enable them to work with practitioners who may be sceptical of the merits of engaging with disaffected young people's voices. EPs can use these skills to shift practitioners' perceptions towards a more positive view of disaffected young people. In doing so they support practitioners to broaden their understanding of these young people and, importantly, enable them to engage with their voices.

2.4 Research Aims

- To engage LMs with the voice of disaffected young people at risk of school exclusion

- To use the voices of disaffected young people as stimuli for actions aimed at improving their social inclusion.

- To explore the impact this has on the LMs' personal constructs of disaffected young people.

2.4.1 The research question

The research question relating to this aim is:

- To what extent does engaging with the voice of disaffected young people influence LMs' personal constructs in relation to their mentees?

2.5 Methodology

2.5.1 Positioning the research

As in Paper One, my approach for this paper is that of critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978; Robson, 2002). I am seeking knowledge about practice and how changes in practice influence practitioners' perceptions of situations. In terms of ontology, from a critical realism standpoint, what we can know about the reality of practice exists independently of practitioners' perceptions. In order to access this reality we must explore practitioners' subjective experiences and interpretations of their practice. Critical realism places emphasis on critiquing the social reality and practices it studies (Robson, 2002) and this will also form part of my approach.

The nature of the practice knowledge generated will be influenced by my subjective and personal perspective. My epistemological stance, therefore, is that of interpretivism and subscribes to the idea that '*the researcher and social world impact on each other*' (Snape & Spencer, 2003). As a researcher I am a facilitator of the intervention but I am not a participant and therefore, as in Paper One, have aimed for 'empathetic neutrality'. Obtaining genuine objective knowledge, therefore, cannot be the aim of this research but I will be reflexive about my contribution to the findings and the impact this had on my interpretation of the data.

2.5.2 Research Design

Similar to Paper One, the study uses an exploratory case study design situated in two school contexts. These were the same contexts as Paper One. The aims of the study also placed other requirements on the research design which are detailed below.

The research design needed to enable:

- the use of disaffected young people's voices to stimulate a change to LM practice

- a mechanism which facilitates and evaluates the change

- opportunity to reflect on the impact of the change

- measurement of the impact this has on LMs' personal constructs of disaffected young people.

It was decided that these requirements would be best answered by an intervention design that drew on aspects of the action research approach and PCP.

Action research is a form of 'self reflective inquiry' that aims to transform or change practice (Kemmis, 2007). It begins with a practical problem - in this study the problem being how best to socially include disaffected pupils in school - and leads to action aimed at trying to solve the problem (Punch, 2009). It is cyclical in nature using reflection as a means to continually improve the action being taken to solve the practical problem. Kemmis & McTaggart,

(2000) refer to action research as a series of 'self-reflective cycles' (see figure 15 below).

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Plan a change to practice │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Implement change     │◄───────────────── │      Re-plan change      │
└─────────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────────┘
            │                                              ▲
            ▼                                              │
┌─────────────────────────┐                                │
│  Observe consequences of │                                │
│          change          │                                │
└─────────────────────────┘                                │
            │                                              │
            ▼                                              │
┌─────────────────────────┐                                │
│ Reflect on consequences of ├────────────────────────────┘
│    change and the overall  │
│          process          │
└─────────────────────────┘
```
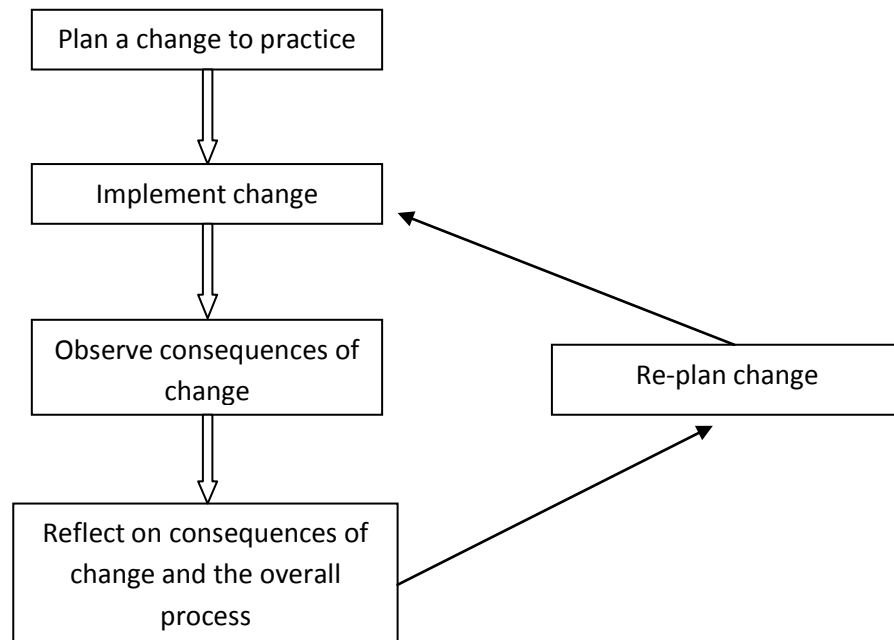
Figure 15: Self-reflective Cycle (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000)

PCP enables a person to examine how their current beliefs and behaviours fit into their view of the world (through the elicitation of their personal constructs) while prompting them to consider alternative interpretations of the events that led to those beliefs and behaviours. This can facilitate changes in their future behaviour which may provide potential solutions to current problems they are encountering (Hardman, 2001). Specific techniques (e.g. triadic elicitation) are used to elicit these personal constructs.

A Salmon line (Salmon, 2003), or equivalent, is used to give a scale to any changes in perceptions or behaviours. Participants can rate where they are on each scale at any particular point in time and experiment in changing their perceptions and behaviours to move further up or down the scale (Butler and Hardy, 1992). Using a scale in this way is a useful visual record of the changes that have occurred over a set period of time (please see figure 16 -17).

The strength of this intervention approach is that changes are not imposed on participants but instead are devised by the participants themselves based on their own unique understanding of the world and the problems presented within that world. Using PCP would enable the LMs to consider alternative ways of constructing their beliefs in relation to disaffected young people which may lead to positive changes to the LMs subsequent behaviours and practice.

Happy ←――――――――――――――――――→ Sad

Figure 16: Example of a personal construct

```
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
```

Happy   Lucy   Bob   Adam   Sad
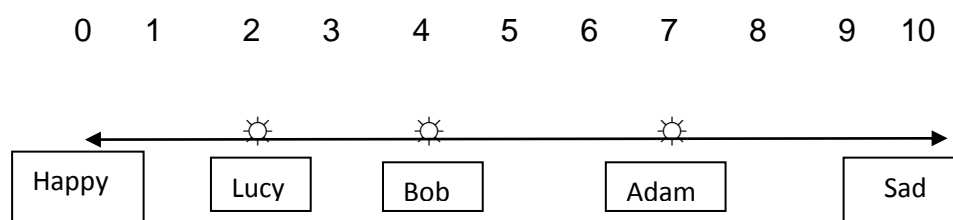
Figure 17: Example of a rated personal construct

2.5.3 Methods

The methods used were twofold. The first set of methods relates to the intervention and the second relates to the pre and post personal construct elicitation.

Intervention methods evolved via an initial discussion with the LMs as to what would be most helpful for their practice. The outcome of the discussion is detailed below.

The LMs felt they wanted:

- a collaborative approach: a chance to jointly problem solve with each other
- to focus on one disaffected pupil they were having particular difficulty with
- to be able to look at the problem situation in a holistic manner - they particularly did not want to focus simply on the academic achievement of these pupils
- a chance to work with the pupil over time.

The methods also had to address my own aims. To recap these were:

- disaffected young people's voices needed to be the stimuli for actions

- the change to practice had to focus on the improvement of social inclusion for disaffected young people.

In response to this an intervention framework was devised which drew on the LM's preferences, the principles of an action research approach and the aims of the research. The framework is outlined in figure 18. It was administered across four sessions at fortnightly intervals. The vignettes which were used of disaffected young people's voices are included in appendix 3.24.

Session 1
LMs discuss as a group vignettes of disaffected young people's voices (collated from Paper One) and what issues this raises for the social inclusion of these young people

Follow up work
LMs select a young person at risk of exclusion they are currently working with. They find out more about the young person's perception of their school experiences by listening and paying attention to their voice.

Session 2
LMs feed back to the group what they have learnt from listening to young person's voice. LMs decide on a change aimed at making that young person feel more socially included.

Follow up work
LMs implement change. LMs measure impact by exploring the young person's perception of the change and the impact this has had.

Session 3
LMs feed back the impact of the change to the group. LMs modify the change to improve its effectiveness.

Follow up work
LMs implement modified change. LMs measure impact by exploring the young person's perception of the modified change and the impact this has had.

Session 4
LMs feed back the impact of the modified change to the group. Group reflects on the impact of the change and the intervention as a whole.
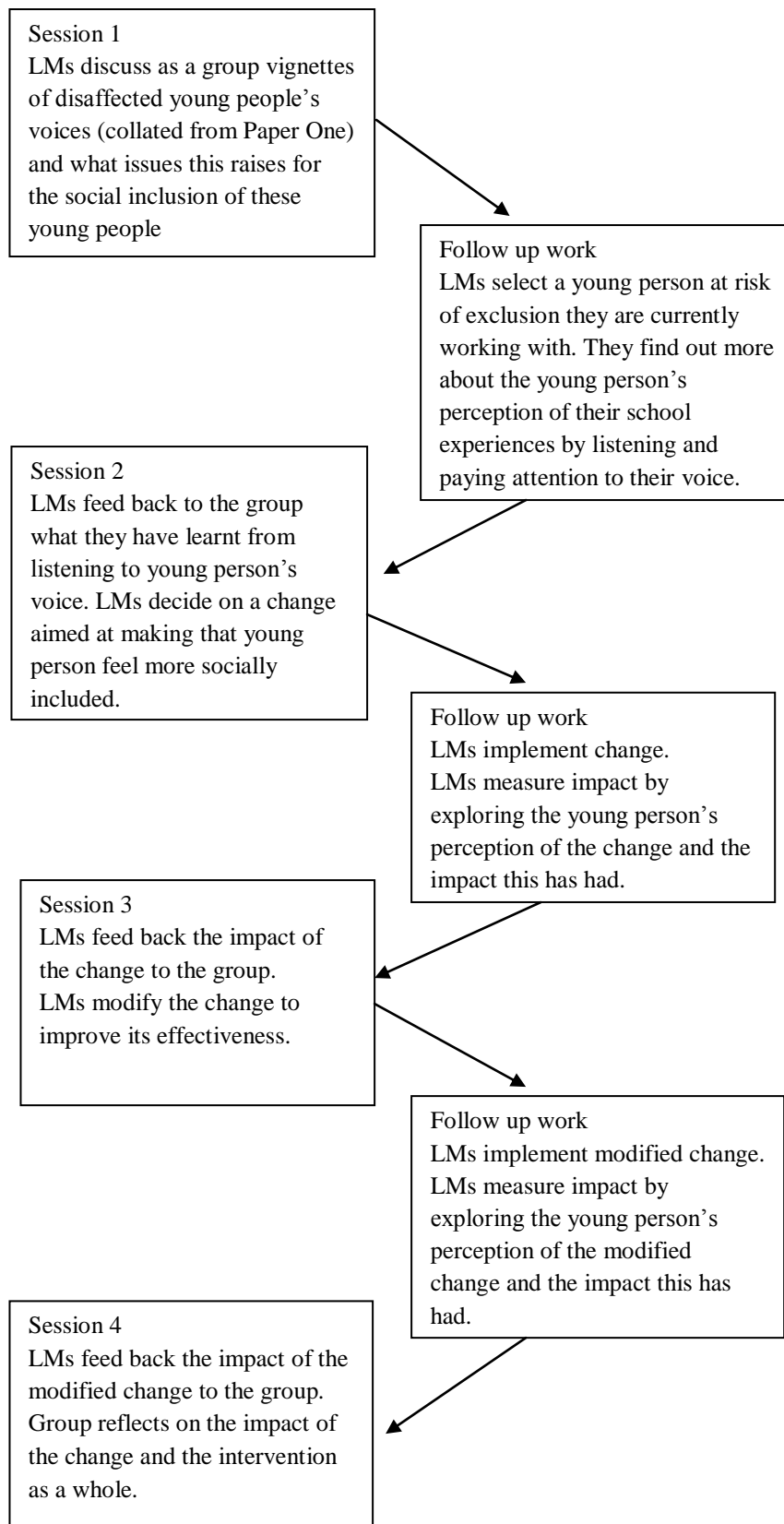
Figure 18: Intervention Framework

My prompt sheets, as a facilitator of intervention, were created for each session (please see appendix 3.25). As the sessions were taking place I recorded the themes and ideas that the LMs discussed on flipchart paper (please appendix 3.30 for photographed examples). This helped facilitate the discussion as well as providing a record of the sessions. I also kept a research journal of the process in which my reflections of each session were recorded including any particular comments that the LMs made which were significant (please see appendix 3.31 for a photographed example extract).

To explore the impact of the intervention on the LMs' perceptions of disaffected young people, their personal constructs were elicited via triadic elicitation. Participants compared three items and decided how two of the items were similar in comparison to the third. This method has been used frequently to elicit personal constructs about people (Pope & Keen, 1988; Ravenette, 1999). Since the procedure is administered in a standardised manner and the personal constructs elicited can be used to rate different items (e.g. people) it allows for direct comparison and therefore can be used as a pre and post intervention measure. As it tightly focuses the participants on a particular situation, it is a good alternative to pre and post interviews that can be difficult to directly compare. The triadic elicitation procedure used in the present study is detailed in appendix 3.26. The LMs rated the young person they had selected as a mentee on each of their personal constructs pre and post the intervention. A

document was prepared that enabled a written record to be kept of their elicited personal constructs (please see appendix 3.27).

2.5.4 Validity and reliability

As a result of my research design there were some threats to the validity and reliability of the study that needed to be addressed.

Participant bias: peer pressures and culture clashes (in terms of styles of practice) between members of the group may influence what the LMs said. The sessions were all managed in a way that minimised the potential impact of this. I ensured all participants were able to give their opinion and this was respected. If culture clashes or disagreements did arise this was addressed in a sensitive way by myself with the participants' wellbeing prioritised over any data collection. In my diary reflections, I took account of the group dynamics within each recorded session because of the importance of the context in which the data had been generated and factored this into my data analysis. Participants were reassured that they could withdraw at any stage of the research process and for any reason.

Respondent bias: the presence of a researcher could influence the behaviour of the LMs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). LMs may be unwilling to divulge information about their true practice for fear of being judged or tell me what they think I want to hear. To mitigate against

this, the LMs were encouraged to be the 'experts' in their own practice rather than the researcher and their anonymity was assured in any publication of the findings. They were also assured that I would only report back the anonymised findings to the school leadership teams.

Researcher bias: the researcher's own preconceptions or inaccurate collection of data can influence its interpretation. Therefore, discussion notes relating to all the sessions were recorded on flip chart paper. In addition to this any relevant comments made by the LMs during the sessions were recorded in my research journal. After a session and on the same day I reflected on the session and recorded this in my research journal. I shared my reflections with the LMs as the session progressed to check that I was making accurate interpretations of the intervention. Prolonged involvement tends to reduce respondent bias but increase researcher bias; respondents become less inhibited with the researcher but the researcher becomes more enmeshed within the practice context increasing the potential for bias (Robson, 2002). The project was confined to four sessions to limit this.

Affective physical bias: the time of day, setting and mood of the participants could affect their responses. To alleviate this, sessions were scheduled for the same time at equal intervals (afterschool,

fortnightly). To limit the possibility of the LMs getting tired or distracted refreshments were provided. The general mood of the LMs was recorded in the research journal.

2.5.5 Sampling strategy

The area and schools used in the study were the same as in Paper One. Purposive sampling was allowed for the research design, where participants are chosen to meet the criteria of the study (Bryman, 2012). In the event, all LMs from both schools wanted to participate so selection was not required. LMs were considered the most relevant educational practitioners to participate because the core of their work is around re-engaging and supporting disaffected young people with the curriculum. The inclusion mangers in each school set up a meeting between the LMs and myself. In this meeting I explained the study and gained the LMs' informed consent.

Seven LMs chose to take part which formed two groups: three from school A and four from school B. In terms of ethnicity the majority were White British (one was Black Caribbean) and this mirrored the ethnicity within both school populations which was majority White British. In terms of gender there were four females and three males. Age was not collected as it was not deemed a relevant factor for the study.

School A had three LMs who were newly recruited and all trained as Emotional Literacy Assistants (ELSA's). This was the first year the school had employed and used LMs. They were all on one year contracts with the prospect of their job being renewed dependent on the academic outcomes of the young people they supported. They were being funded by pupil premium money and this influenced which young people they supported. They were based within an inclusion base which traditionally had been associated with special educational needs (SEN) interventions (e.g. literacy and numeracy).

School B had four LMs who were well established, been in role for a reasonable amount of time, but were not trained as ELSAs. They were based in a newly created inclusion base which separated young people with behaviour issues from those with learning difficulties. They were funded from within the school's core budget and were all employed on a permanent basis. They supported any young people who were not engaging with lessons.

2.5.6 Ethical Considerations

<u>Legal requirements and informed consent</u>

The research project received ethical approval from the University of Exeter ethics committee (see appendix 3.10) and complied with the British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines for practicing psychologists as well as the Data Protection Act (1998).

The LMs who were selected to take part in the study signed an informed consent form (see appendix 3.28). The purpose of the research, its procedures, potential risks and benefits were explained verbally in a way that the LMs could understand and therefore make an informed, voluntary decision about whether to take part (Emanunel, Wendler & Grady, 2000). No deception was used in the study and all participants were fully briefed about the purpose of the research and the aims and objectives were made transparent. Further ethical issues and how they were resolved are detailed in table 14.

Issue	Resolution
May fear information they disclose about their practice gets back to their employers incurring potential negative consequences	Empathise voluntary nature, have a right to withdraw at any time for any reason and take their data with them. Emphasise anonymity of their data in any publication. Data will be kept secure (in a locked cabinet or on a password protected computer).
May have difficulties understanding what they are consenting to	Explain purpose of project verbally, its procedures, potential risks and benefits, in simple and clear language. Give time for participants to ask questions.
Confidentiality issues versus child protection duty	Participants may raise practice issues that trigger a child protection concern. Researcher to take issues confidentially to supervision for further advice. Forewarn participants that any child protection concerns will have to be passed on. Pupils to be discussed anonymously at all times.
Inadvertently disclose illegal activities in relation to pupils, themselves or colleagues.	Forewarn if they disclosed anything that causes the researcher concern for their safety or of any pupils this would have to be passed on. Encourage participants to draw their own boundaries around what they feel they should or should not share in relation to their practice. Avoid undue intrusion into private lives of participants. Researcher to take issues confidentially to supervision if further advice needed.
Protection from harm and risk	Forewarn that research may bring up some sensitive issues or culture/personality clashes regarding practice. If conflict in the group arises researcher to try to manage this but if it is felt that the conflict is causing distress to end the session prioritising participants' emotional wellbeing over data collection. Signpost to support services. Researcher to ensure participants are in an emotionally 'safe' place before ending a session. Researcher to take issues confidentially to supervision if further advice needed.

Table 14: Ethical issues and their resolution

<u>Ethical issues that arose during data collection</u>

During the course of the research an ethical issue arose that required negotiating. As the research was taking place in the same schools as Paper One the LMs were able to identify some of the young people from the vignettes as they were often already working with these young people. Since I had promised the young people anonymity I sought their views in terms of how to proceed. The young people were pleased that the LMs wanted to take their views into consideration but wanted them to promise not to reveal their identities to anybody else (they were particularly worried about teachers finding out). The LMs made a declaration to say they would not disclose their identities and this was shared with the young people. This declaration is included in appendix 3.29.

2.6 Presentation of the Findings

Findings are presented and analysed in this section and then discussed in more depth in section 2.7.

2.6.1 Procedure for analysis of the data

All personal constructs elicited and records of the LM discussions notes were subjected to content analysis (Berelson, 1952; Robson, 2002). Content analysis is concerned with the content and context of written records. Assessing the frequency with which certain terms, subjects or categories appear on these documents is the intention of this type of analysis. In addition to this, reflections on the sessions recorded in my research journal were examined to gain an overview of each LM's level of engagement with the intervention. Examples of the raw data and content analysis can be found in appendices 3.30, 3.31 and 3.32.

The ratings that the LMs gave their selected mentees pre and post intervention are represented numerically on graphs and can be found in figures 22 to 28.

2.6.2 Collective personal construct data

The personal constructs were classified into the following categories:

- Attendance (e.g. '*low/high attendance*')

- Behaviour descriptors (e.g. '*shouts out/does nott shout out*')

- Literacy (e.g. '*poor/good literacy*')

- Self Esteem (e.g. '*low/high self esteem*')

- Social factors (e.g. *'has no friends/has lots of friends*')

- Motivation (e.g. *'no/lots of motivation*')

- Home life (e.g. *'insecure/secure home life*')

- Personality descriptors (e.g. '*sulky/not sulky*')

The personal constructs generated by the LMs were firstly examined collectively across the entire sample and then by school. Figure 19 shows the number of personal constructs that were collectively generated by all the LMs across both schools in each category pre and post intervention. Figures 20 and 21 show the number of personal constructs that were collectively generated in each category pre and post intervention by each group of LMs within each school.
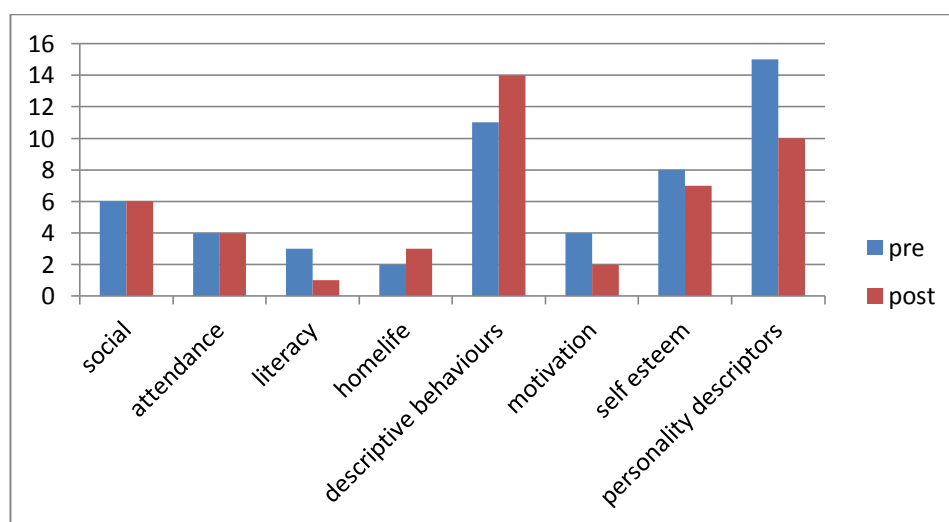
Figure 19: Comparing the number of constructs in each category pre and post intervention for all LMs across both schools:

Post intervention, the LMs collectively generated less personal constructs in relation to the personality, motivation, self esteem and literacy levels of the young people but more in relation to the young people's behaviour and home life. This suggests that there has been a shift in their understanding of young people's disaffection. Firstly their understanding of these young people has been broadened, evidenced by the shift towards more external (home life) factors and away from academic issues (literacy). There has also been a shift away from within child factors (motivation, personality) towards behavioural factors. This suggests they are beginning to reconceptualise the young people's personality traits as behavioural

and perhaps perceiving the young person as being separate from their behaviour.
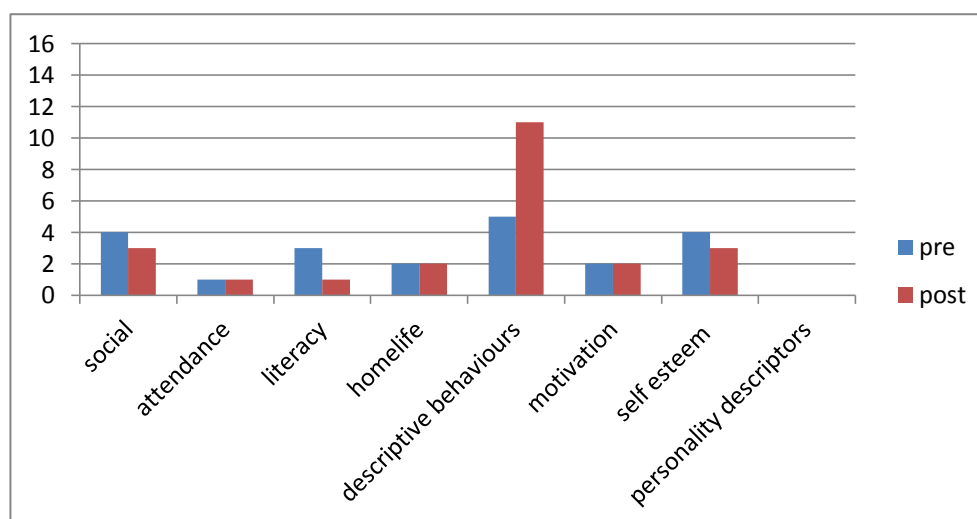

Figure 20: Comparing number of constructs in each category pre and post intervention for ELSA-trained learning mentors (School A).

The ELSA-trained LMs in school A did not generate any personal constructs in relation to the personality of the young people and suggests that they already conceptualise disaffected young's people's behaviour as separate from their personalities. Post intervention they generated more personal constructs in relation to the behaviours of the young people and less in relation to the young people's literacy levels, social skills and self esteem. This suggests that the intervention has had an impact on their understanding of disaffected young people which has become more focused on behavioural factors. Perhaps being conscious to attend and listen to a young person's voice has made the LMs more aware of what the

young people may be communicating about their wants and wishes through their behaviour.
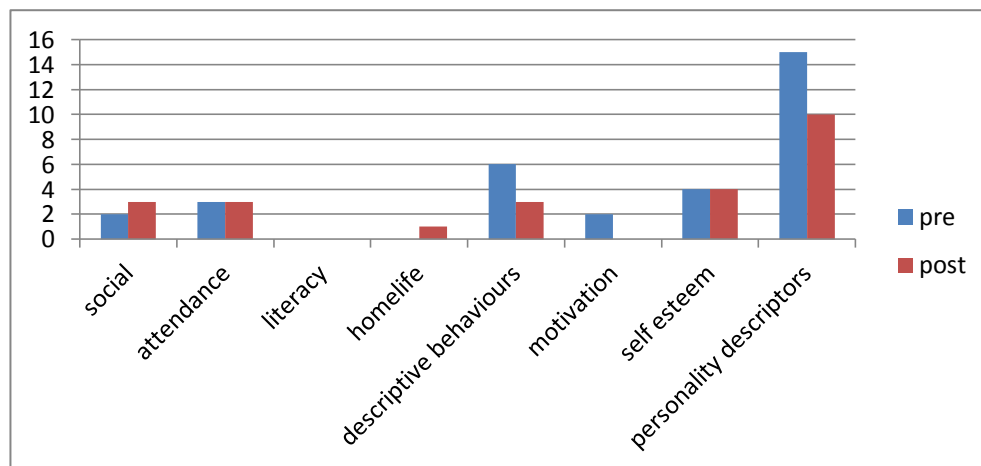

Figure 21: Comparing number of constructs in each category pre and post intervention for non ELSA-trained learning mentors (School B).

In contrast the non ELSA-trained LMs of school B generated the most personal constructs in relation to the personality of the young people. This suggests that they view disaffection as part of these young people's identities and personalities. Post intervention there is a considerable reduction in the number of personal constructs generated in relation to the personality of the young people which suggests the intervention had an impact on changing these perceptions. Perhaps attending and listening to the young people's voices encouraged them to view the young people's disaffected behaviour as separate from their personalities and identities.

Post intervention the non ELSA-trained LMs generated more personal constructs in relation to young people's social skills and home life and less in relation to the motivation of the young people. This suggests that intervention had an impact on the LMs' understanding of disaffected young people which has been broadened, moving towards more social factors and external factors (home life) and away from within child factors (motivation). It could be that attending to the young person's voice resulted in a more holistic view of the young person. Interestingly the LMs produced no personal constructs relating to literacy pre or post intervention suggesting that this was not viewed as an issue impacting on the young people's disaffection.

A notable finding is that there is a qualitative difference between the personal constructs of ELSA-trained LMs (no personality descriptors) and non ELSA-trained LMs (mostly personality descriptors) in relation to disaffected young people. Although a small study, in which contextual factors specific to the individual schools will also have an impact on LMs personal constructs, this does suggest that being an ELSA-trained LM makes you more likely to view disaffected behaviours as separate from the personality and identities of young people.

2.6.3 Pre and post personal construct rating for mentees according to their LMs

These graphs show how the LMs rated their mentees according to their personal constructs pre and post intervention. The young people were rated on a scale of one to 10 with 10 being high (e.g. 10 on '*secure in family life'* would mean the young person was highly secure in their family life). These personal constructs have not been categorised and exist in their original form so subtle variations between different personal constructs within the same category can be seen. A notable result is that all the LMs produced more personal constructs post intervention which suggests that in all cases their understanding of disaffected young people had been broadened.
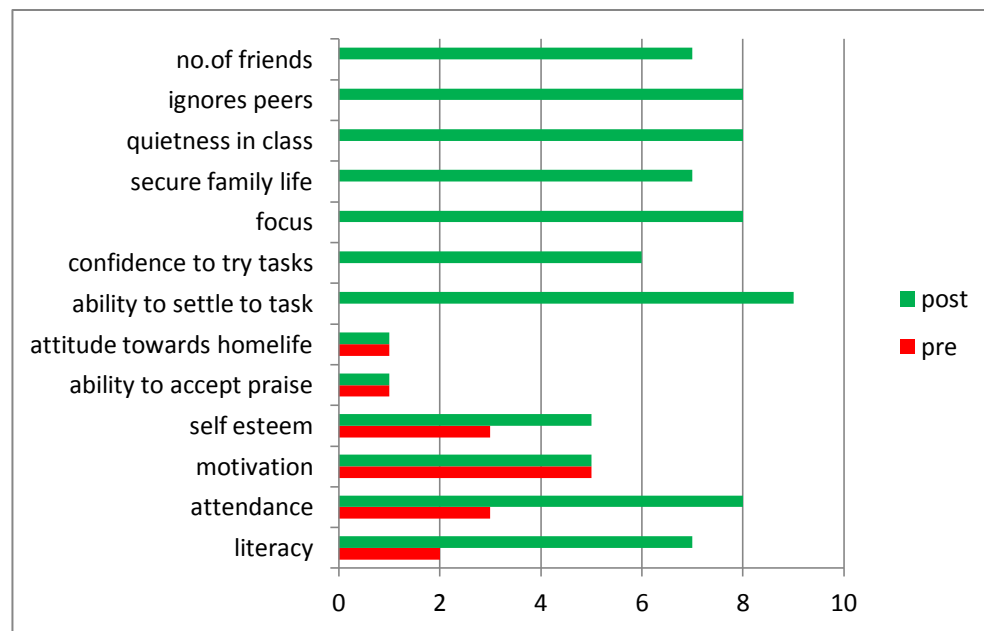
Figure 22: LM1 ratings

The graph in figure 22 shows that LM1 was able to generate seven more personal constructs post intervention suggesting her understanding of disaffected young people had been broadened considerably. She rated her mentee post intervention highly on three of the original personal constructs. This shows that she viewed her mentee more positively in terms of literacy skills, attendance and self esteem. Three original personal constructs showed no shift indicating that her view of her mentee's motivation, ability to accept praise and attitude to home life had not changed.

Figure 23: LM2 ratings

LM2 was able to generate two additional personal constructs post intervention which shows his understanding of disaffected young people had been broadened slightly. One of the original personal constructs showed a positive shift meaning that he viewed his mentee's ability to comply with authority more positively. There was no shift in the ratings for self esteem and literacy meaning his view of the mentee in relation to these had not changed. Three personal constructs showed a negative shift meaning the LM viewed the young person's concentration, stability of home life and popularity more negatively. Reflections in my research journal noted LM2 disengaged with the intervention towards the end. This may explain why he elicited much fewer personal constructs post intervention than LM1and viewed his mentee more negatively.

115
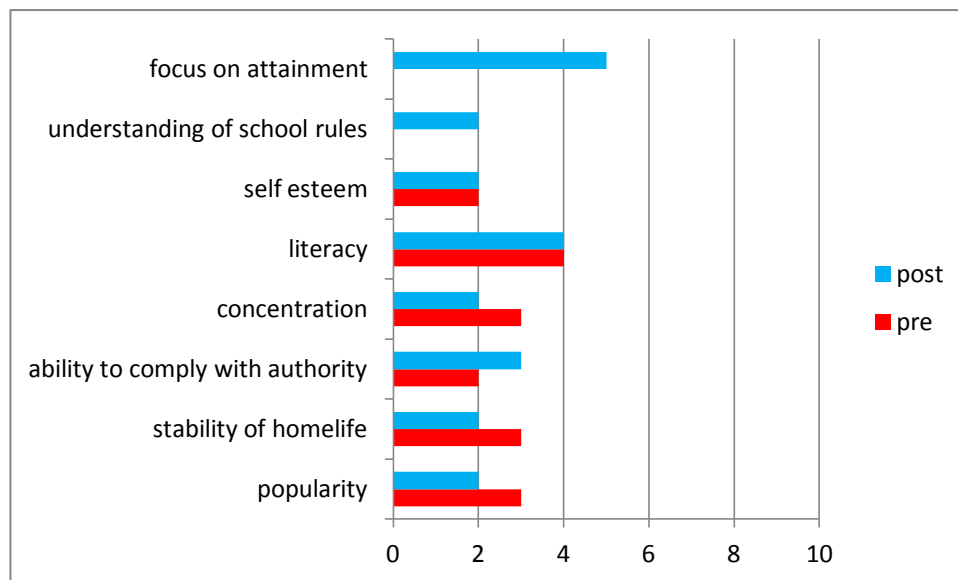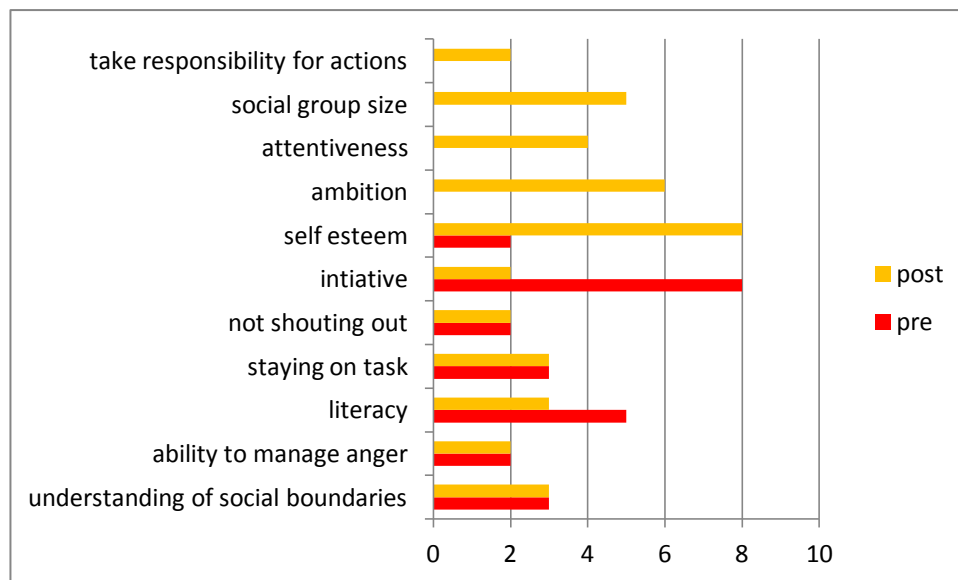
Figure 24: LM3 ratings

LM3 was able to generate four more personal constructs post
intervention suggesting that his understanding of disaffected young
people had been broadened somewhat. There was one positive shift
meaning he viewed his mentee's self esteem to be higher. Four
personal constructs showed no shift suggesting that he did not
change his view regarding the mentee's ability to stay on task, not
shout out, manage anger or understand social boundaries. Two
original personal constructs showed a negative shift indicating that
he viewed the mentee's literacy and initiative more negatively.
Reflections in my research journal noted LM3 was the most sceptical
about the intervention and this may explain why he viewed his
mentee more negatively post intervention. He did generate several
more personal constructs post intervention than LM 2; perhaps his
views were being challenged by the intervention causing him to
broaden his understanding of disaffection.

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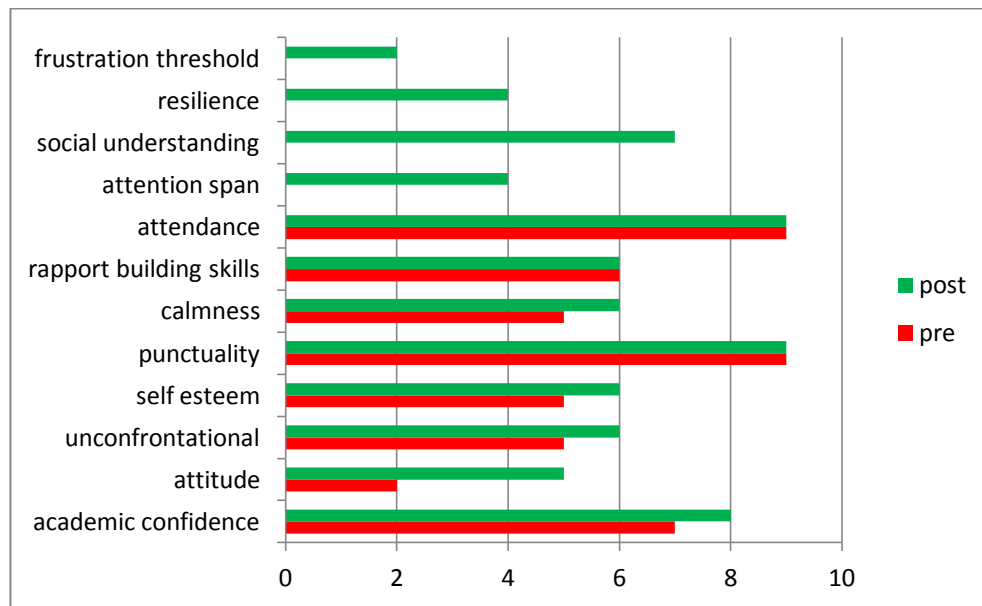
Figure 25: LM4 ratings

LM4 was able to generate four more personal constructs post intervention indicating that his understanding of disaffected young people had broadened somewhat. Three of the original personal constructs showed no shift meaning that his views of his mentee's attendance, rapport building skills and punctuality had not changed. Five constructs showed a positive shift suggesting he perceived his mentee's attitude, academic confidence and self esteem to have improved as well as perceiving his mentee to be calmer and less confrontational.
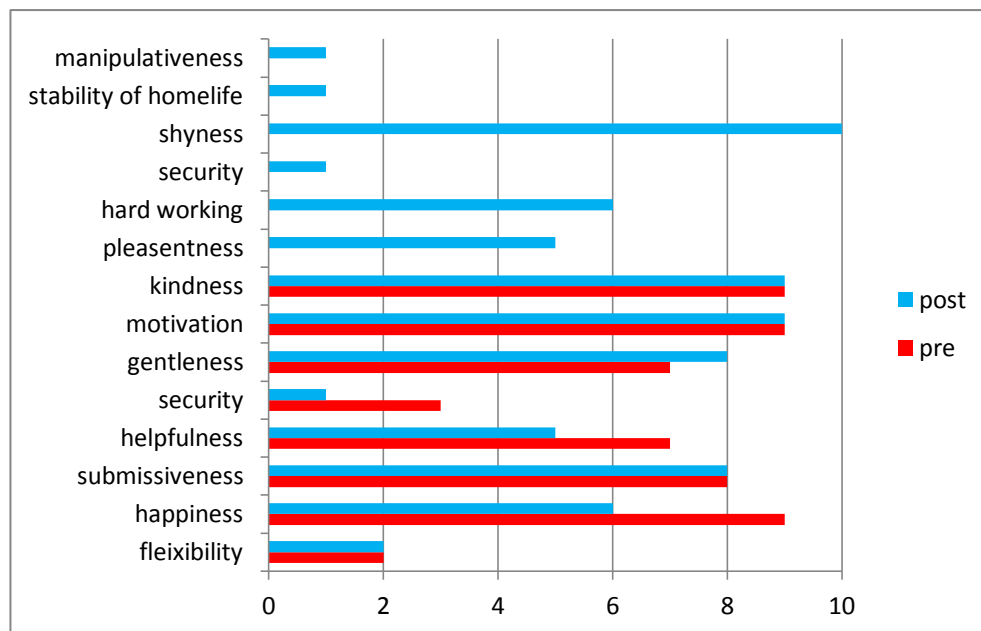
Figure 26: LM5 ratings

LM5 generated six more personal constructs post intervention indicating her understanding of disaffected young people had broadened considerably. Four original personal constructs stayed the same meaning her view of the mentee's flexibility, motivation, submissiveness and kindness had not changed. One construct showed a positive shift suggesting she viewed the mentee's gentleness more positively. Three constructs showed a negative shift meaning she viewed the mentee's sense of security, helpfulness and happiness more negatively. Reflections in my research journal noted LM5 was sceptical about the intervention and may explain why she viewed her mentee more negatively on some personal constructs post intervention. She did generate more personal constructs post intervention than LM4. Perhaps her views were being challenged by

the intervention causing her to broaden her understanding of disaffection.


Figure 27: LM6 ratings

LM6 generated one more personal construct post intervention which meant her understanding of disaffected young people was only broadened slightly. Five original personal constructs showed no shift meaning her view of her mentee's compliance, ability to relax, enthusiasm, understanding of boundaries, and level of engagement had not changed. Two personal constructs showed a positive shift suggesting her view of the mentee's conscientiousness, and calmness was more positive. There was one negative shift showing that her view of the mentee's punctuality had gone down. Reflections in my research journal noted LM6 had been used to mentoring in a certain way and was reluctant to shift from this. Perhaps this is why

her understanding was only broadened slightly and she had a more negative view of the young person in relation to some personal constructs.

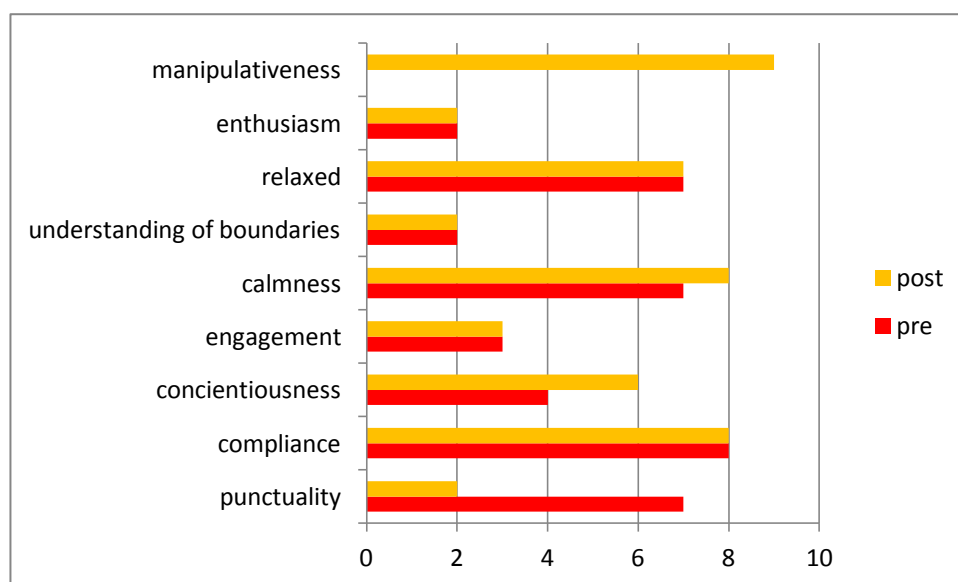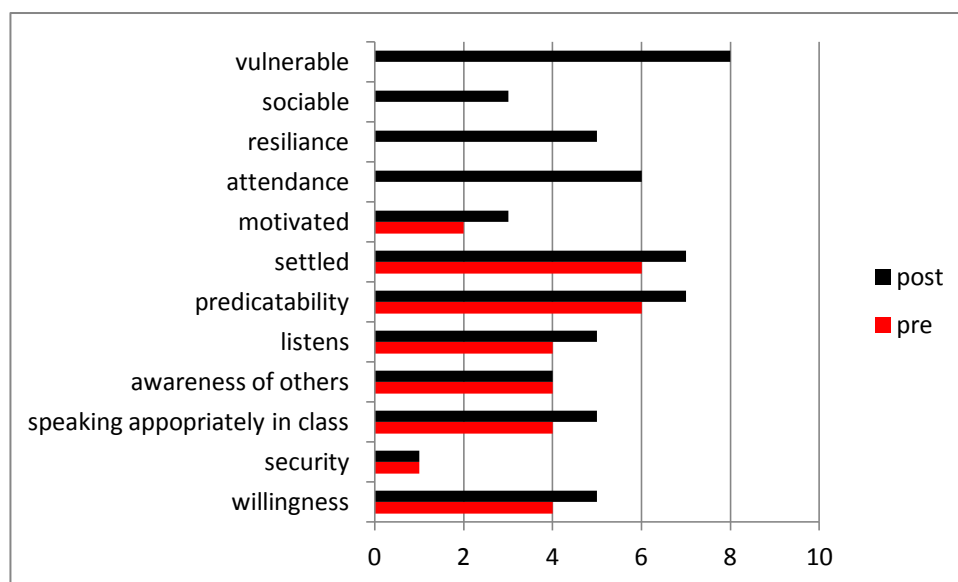

Figure 28: LM7 ratings

LM7 generated four more personal constructs post intervention suggesting her understanding of disaffected young people had broadened somewhat. Two original personal constructs showed no shift meaning her view of her mentee's sense of security and awareness of others had not changed. Six constructs showed positive shifts meaning she viewed her young person as better at listening, more predictable, more settled and motivated, more willing and speaking more appropriately in class.

2.6.4 LM engagement and personal construct generation and shift

Drawing on my research journal in order to contextualise these data, I was able to analyse themes emerging from the individual LM findings across the two schools. This revealed that the level of engagement, scepticism, enthusiasm and rigidness (in terms of LM practice) influenced the amount of personal constructs generated post intervention and the direction of the shifts (positive or negative) on the original personal constructs. This is summarised in table 15 below:

School A	Level of Engagement	Personal constructs (pc)
LM1 (female: ELSA trained)	Very eager and committed, self-deprecating about her own abilities/knowledge. Tended to defer to more knowledgeable members in the group.	7 extra pc 3 positive shift 3 no shift
LM 2 (male: ELSA trained)	Just joined at the last minute to replace someone who had left. Quiet, needed to be drawn out. Became disengaged.	2 extra pc 1 positive shift 2 no shift 3 negative shift
LM3 (male: ELSA trained)	Very experienced and knowledgeable, sceptical at times.	4 extra pc 1 positive shift 4 no shift 2 negative shift
School B	**Level of Engagement**	**Personal constructs (pc)**
LM 4 (male: non Elsa trained)	Eager and knowledgeable – tended to speak for others in the group	4 extra pc 5 positive shift 3 no shift
LM5 (female: non ELSA trained)	Sceptical at times – but engaged with the process, liked to challenge.	6 extra pc 1positive shift 4 no shift 3 negative shift
LM6 (female: non ESLA trained)	Very eager and positive but had been used to mentoring in a certain way and was reluctant to shift from this.	1 extra pc 2 positive shift 5 no shift 1 negative shift
LM7 (female: non ELSA trained)	Very quiet – needed to draw her out a lot to contribute.	4 extra pc 6 positive shift 2 no shift

Table 15: Comparing LMs' level of engagement with personal construct generation and shifts.

The LMs who generated the lowest number of personal constructs post intervention (LM6 and LM2) and hence whose understanding in relation to disaffected young people was broadened the least, had either been used to mentoring in a certain way and were reluctant to shift from this or became actively disengaged with the intervention. LM6, despite being eager and positive, was not open to changing the way she worked and hence it can be argued she was not open to adapting her views regarding disaffected young people. This suggests the impact of the intervention is reduced when LMs are disengaged or reluctant to shift their views. The LMs who showed more negative shifts in their view of their mentees (LM3 and LM5) were also the most sceptical about the intervention. Interestingly, even though they were the most sceptical they generated high numbers of personal constructs post the intervention suggesting that their understanding had still been broadened considerably. This indicates that the intervention is having some impact in challenging their preconceptions while perhaps not shifting them as yet. It is at this point that an EP could work with LMs, while they are open to their views being challenged, to shift their views towards a more positive perception of disaffected young people.

An EP could also work with LMs who are not open to their views being challenged or changing their practice. This could perhaps be

due to their disengagement with the intervention or lack of confidence. EPs have skills in consultation which enable them to do this. For example the use of active listening techniques and positive reframing may help to strengthen confidence, competence and emotional resilience. Consequently LMs are more likely to allow their views to be sensitively challenged by EPs leading to changes in practice. Other examples include the use of exploratory questioning techniques to determine the reasons behind a LM's disengagement and rapport building skills to re-engage LMs. Once re-engaged the LMs may be more open to their views regarding disaffected young people being challenged and changing their practice.

2.6.5 Content analysis of the intervention process (based on flip chart records of the sessions):

Each session of the intervention contained an open ended discussion amongst the LMs. Notes of these discussions were recorded on flip chart paper during the session. Content analysis was conducted on these notes and results are shown in figures 29–32 by school (apart from session four in which both school's results have been combined as there was no notable difference in the responses from each school and combining data enabled themes to be highlighted). Raw data can be found in appendix 3.30.

I will present the data in this section. Interpretation of the findings and further discussion can be found in section 2.7.

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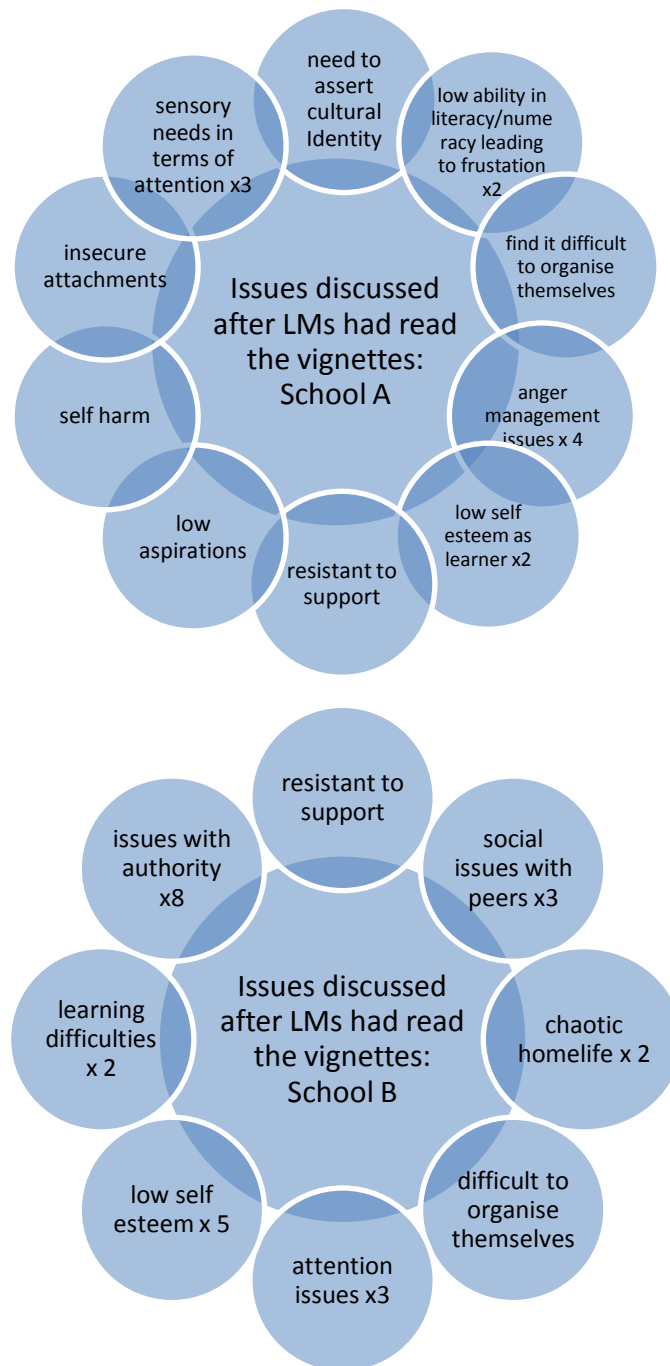
Figure 29: Content analysis of session 1 - Issues discussed by LMs in relation to disaffected young people after they had read the vignettes.

This shows that the ELSA-trained LMs in School A, on presentation

of the vignettes, were able to generate a broader range of issues in

relation to disaffected young people than the non ELSA-trained LMs
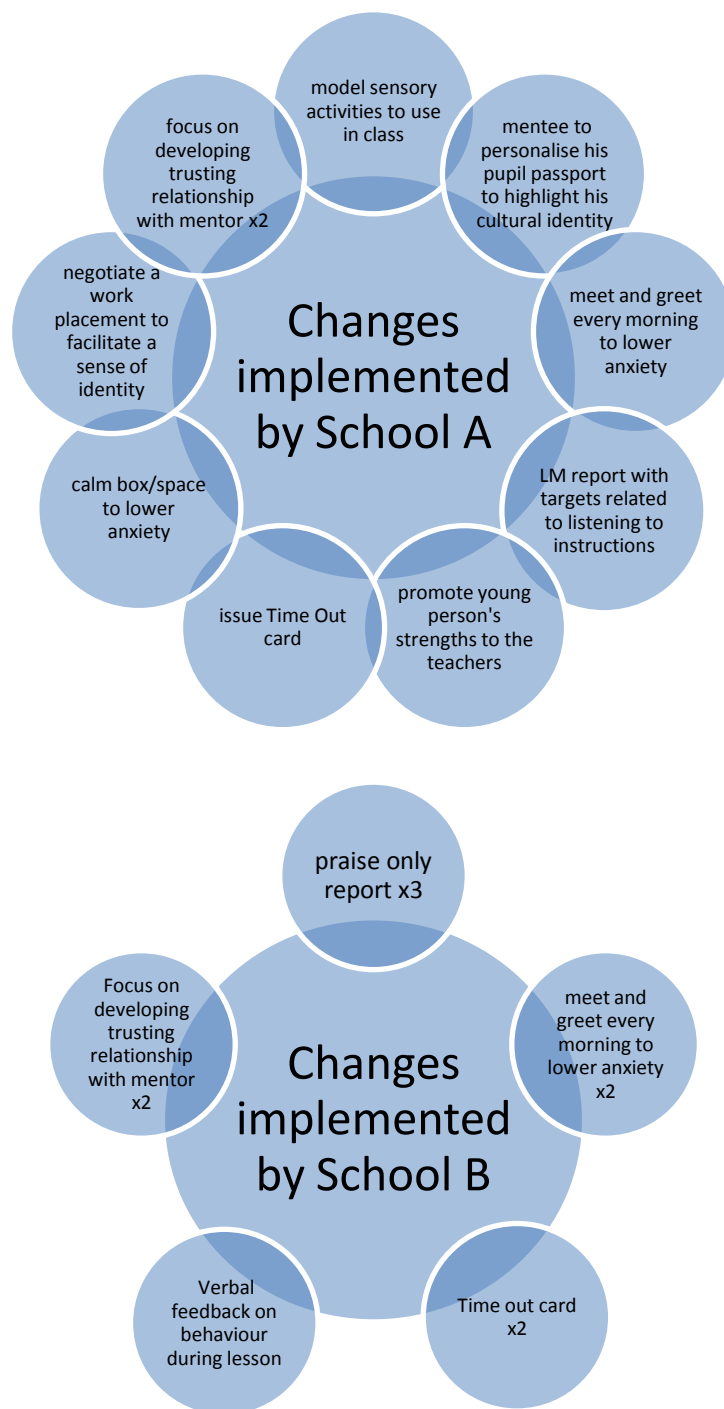
in School B.

Figure 30: Content analysis of session 2 - LMs' discussion of what changes to implement to improve the social inclusion of their mentee.

This shows that the ELSA-trained LMs in School A were able to

suggest a broader range of strategies aimed at improving the social

inclusion of their selected young person than the non ELSA-trained
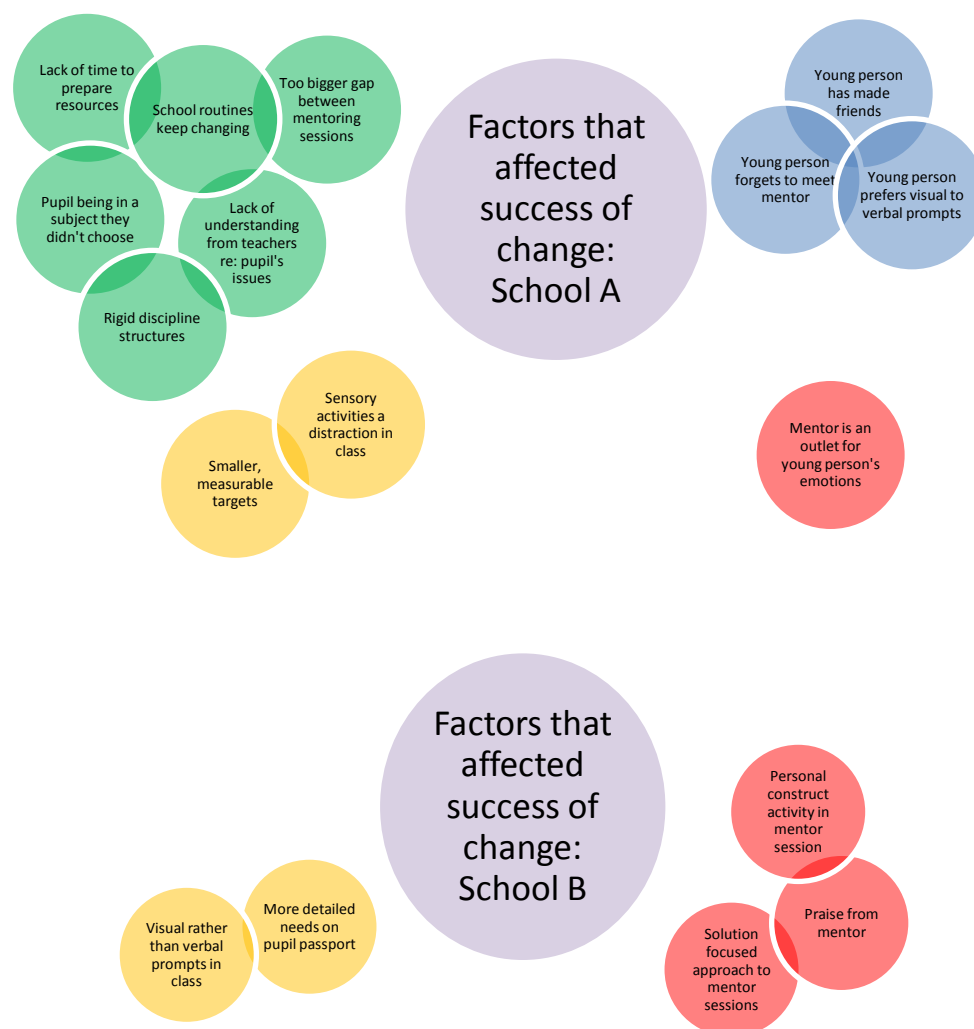
LMs in School B.

Key: Factors relating to **School Structures**, **Young Person**, **Mentor**, **Strategy**

Figure 31: Content analysis of session 3 - LMs feedback on the
success of the changes

The ELSA-trained LMs in School A attributed a lack of success in

improving the social inclusion of their mentees to rigid school

structures, the specific strategy being ineffective and the mentee not engaging. Success was attributed to the mentee engaging, LMs' individual skills and having an effective strategy.

The non ELSA-trained LMs in School B attributed success to the skills of the LM and the specific strategies used being effective.
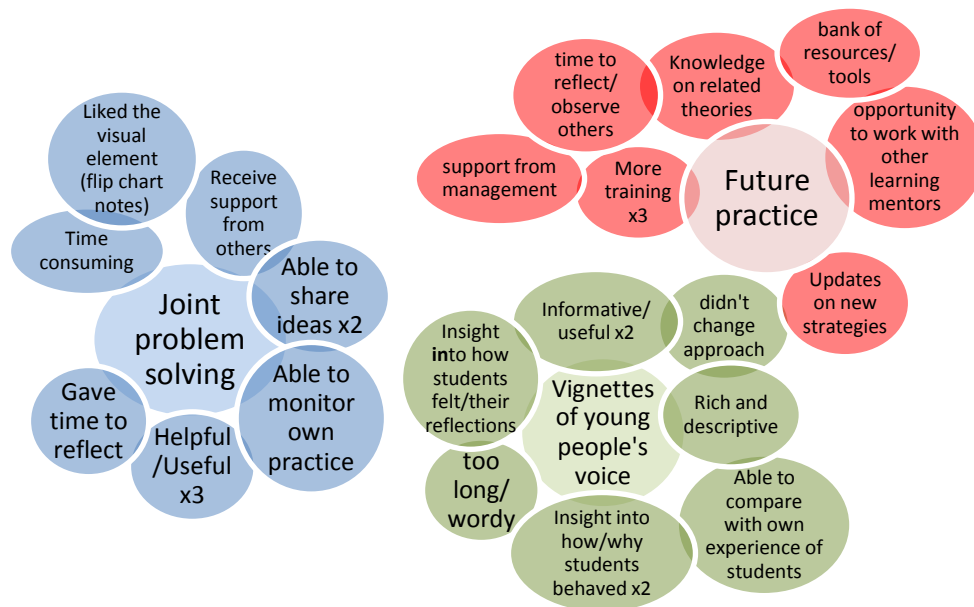
Key: Feedback related to Joint **Problem Solving**, **Vignettes**, **Future Practice**

Figure 32: Content analysis of session 4 - LMs give feedback on the intervention process (data from both schools combined).

Three themes emerged in the LMs' feedback on the intervention process. The joint problem solving aspect of the intervention (being able to discuss and come up with strategies as a group of LMs) was perceived as '*useful*' and '*supportive*' although one LM did not like the '*time consuming*' element of it. The vignettes of disaffected young people's voices was also perceived as '*useful*', informative*' and gave insight into how the disaffected young people behaved and felt. Lastly, reflecting on the intervention prompted a discussion regarding future practice as LMs. The intervention raised the idea of wanting '*more training*', '*more opportunities to work with other learning mentors*' and having time to update knowledge regarding strategies for helping disaffected young people feel more included.

2.7 Discussion of Findings

2.7.1 To what extent does engaging with the voice of disaffected young people influence LMs' personal constructs of their mentees?

<u>The school context</u>

Although I did not set out to do a comparative study, the chance sampling resulted in one school with ELSA-trained LMs and the other without. This gave rise to opportunistic comparisons in the data which proved to be particularly noteworthy. There was a qualitative difference in the personal constructs the ELSA-trained LMs generated in comparison to the non ELSA-trained LMs. Non ELSA-trained LMs produced personal constructs in relation to the personality characteristics of the young people (e.g. sulks/doesn't sulk) whereas the ELSA-trained LMs did not. Being ELSA trained may facilitate a better understanding of the underlying issues impacting on the personality traits of disaffected young people (e.g. unstable home life causing them to be confrontational). Therefore they are more inclined to view the young people in terms of these underlying issues rather than their presenting personality traits.

ELSA trained LMs were also able to discuss more issues impacting on the exclusion of pupils and generate more strategies to socially include disaffected young people. This suggests that the impact of the intervention on disaffected young people was greater when it was implemented by ELSA-trained LMs. It implies that ELSA training is

highly valuable to LM practice, facilitating a better understanding of disaffected young people and enables LMs to generate and implement a broader range of strategies. My findings support and build on Grahamslaw (2010), which found that ELSA trained staff had higher self-efficacy beliefs regarding their practice .Grahamslaw's findings were largely based on self report questionnaires regarding staff's general practice. However, my study went further because it analysed LMs' responses to a specific intervention. Whereas Grahamslaw's study could only show a link to a perceived sense of general competence in ELSA trained staff, my study went further. It demonstrated that ELSA trained staff respond better than their non-trained counterparts to interventions aimed at engaging with disaffected young people's voices.

Grahamslaw also found that children supported by ELSA trained practitioners had higher emotional self-efficacy beliefs than those supported by non ELSA trained practitioners. This links to the findings of Paper One in which young people spoke positively about the emotional support they received from staff in the inclusion base showing they valued this type of support. This suggests that ELSA trained staff could have a key role in supporting the emotional needs of disaffected young people in school.

An important observation is that not all of the differences between the two groups of LMs could be attributed to being ELSA-trained.

Structures within the school context also had an impact. LMs in school A produced personal constructs in relation to the literacy levels of the young people whereas school B did not. This could be explained by the LMs in school A being located in an inclusion base that was traditionally associated with SEN. In comparison, school B's inclusion base was associated with behaviour and was separate from SEN. Being linked to SEN interventions may have made the LMs in school A more aware of literacy issues and this had an influence on their perceptions of disaffected young people.

The LMs in school A reported barriers to the success of the strategies implemented that school B did not. In particular they cited school factors such as *'rigid discipline structures'*, *'lack of time'* and *'too large a gap between mentoring sessions'*. The LMs of school A who, under more pressure to deliver results because continuation of their funding depended on it, were perhaps more aware of the constraints school structures and routines had on their role and ability to facilitate change. This links to Haber's (2008) argument that *'school creates disaffection with itself'* via its rigid working practices and structures that prioritise control and compliance over welfare (Oldman, 1994). Haber and Oldman's evidence for this position is drawn largely from young people's views about school and does not refer to the views of school staff. The present study suggests that rigid working practices not only impact on students but also staff. Haber and Oldman's argument could therefore be broadened to

include the idea that as well as creating disaffection in its students, schools' rigid structures also create disaffection in its staff.

Themes of 'inflexibility' and 'rigidity' within the school system are mirrored in some of the findings of Paper One. The young people spoke negatively about the inflexibility of teachers and the rigid application of sanctions. The ELSA trained LMs spoke negatively about the inflexibility of their success criteria (young people had to show an improvement in academic grades) and the impact of rigid discipline structures (in relation to the young people) on their ability to facilitate change. This implies that disaffection may occur at staff level as well as student. As a further study it would be interesting to explore whether the extent of disaffection in staff mirrors the level of disaffection among students.

LMs can become forced into a position where they are unable to act on young people's voices due to a lack of resources or flexibility within the school system. This implies that schools need to be aware that suitable support structures and a degree of flexibility in the system are needed to ensure that LM practice is effective.

All the LMs were able to generate new and different personal constructs about disaffected young people post intervention which suggests the intervention impacted on their understanding of disaffected young people, in all cases broadening this somewhat.

The number of new constructs elicited post intervention varied between individuals. LM6 for example generated the smallest number (only one) of post intervention constructs and this related to her reluctance to change the way she worked with her mentees leaving her less open to new ways of thinking about them. A notable finding is that LMs who were sceptical about the intervention (LM3 and LM5) still generated a high number of new personal constructs post intervention. It implies that the intervention, despite their cynicism, was still able to broaden and challenge their perceptions of disaffected young people. EPs are well placed to intervene and work with LMs at the point at which personal constructs are being challenged regarding disaffected young people. Using their psychological knowledge and techniques they can guide sceptical LMs towards a more positive view of these young people.

There are other factors that had the potential to influence the LMs' engagement with the intervention (Grahamslaw, 2010; Osborne & Burton, 2014). The ELSA trained LMs may have been more inclined

to engage with the intervention because of their training. Part of the ELSA training involves therapeutic interventions including how to listen and respond to distressed young people. It also gives staff an understanding of the social and emotional factors that underlie behaviour. As a result ELSA trained LMs would have a better understanding of the benefits of listening to young people as well as being more confident in their ability to understand pupil behaviour. Therefore, they may have been more able to see the benefits of the intervention and feel more confident in being able to deliver it.

Another factor which could have influenced the LMs' engagement with the intervention concerns the ethos of the school in relation to supporting its staff. Lack of time, resources and support from senior management may have undermined the LMs' ability to successfully implement the intervention. Over time this may have caused the LMs to disengage from the research.

Additionally, the LMs' years of experience may have been a factor. Inexperienced LMs could have lacked confidence in their ability to engage with the young people and were therefore less inclined to engage with the intervention. In contrast LMs with lots of experience may have been used to a certain style of working and became disengaged because they were reluctant to shift their practice away from their preferred style. All LMs were able to show some positive

shift in their personal constructs in relation to their mentees. This suggests the intervention had a positive impact on the LMs' perceptions of disaffected young people. It supports the notion that actively listening to the voices of disaffected young people facilitates a more positive view of them. The extent of this positive shift was influenced by the LMs' level of engagement with the intervention. LMs who were observed as more sceptical or disengaged showed the least number of positive shifts in their personal constructs relating to their mentees and the most negative shifts. This indicates that the LMs' level of engagement with the intervention influenced its impact and the extent to which their personal constructs changed. Those who were sceptical may have been less inclined to engage with disaffected young people's voices due to a conflict of positions. As previous research speculates, some possibilities may have been feeling threatened by the potential challenge to their authority or scepticism in relation to the young people's capacity and capability to express a valid view (Kellett, 2008).

My findings link to emerging literature (see Bucknall, 2012; Kellett 2008; 2011; Lodge, 2005) which argues that one of the key barriers to authentic student voice is the need for adults to retain authority and power over young people. For example Kellett (2008) argues that the common phrase 'giving young people a voice' conceptualises 'voice' as a gift to be bestowed on young people at the discretion of adults. Within this power dynamic the elicitation of

135

voice is constrained. There is very little research which has explored this aspect of student voice specifically in relation to young people at risk of exclusion. Findings from my study have contributed to this debate by highlighting that specific structures within school systems (e.g. rigid discipline regimes) reinforce unequal power dynamics and become a barrier to LMs engaging with young people's voices.

Lundy (2007) argued that it is not just about listening to a voice but about whether that voice is acted upon. This links with some of the findings of Paper One in relation to how the young people perceived teachers' pedagogy in the classroom. Some young people reported that they failed to receive help from teachers despite having the opportunity to explain what they did not understand in the work. From young people's perspectives they have been allowed to use their voice and teachers have appeared to listen, but their voice has not been acted on. This creates further disengagement and disaffection in the young people.

If voice is not acted upon it becomes merely a 'decorative account' (Alderson, 2000) of young person participation with no real meaning. In the case of the sceptical LMs they may be listening to their mentees' voices but due to a conflict of positions not acting upon them. Hence this might be why their personal constructs shifted less. The implication of this is that the facilitation of positive engagement

136

with interventions is a key factor in their impact and success. EPs are ideally placed to build relationships with LMs that encourage and facilitate positive engagement with interventions regarding disaffected young people.

2.7.2 Limitations of the study

Using a case study design with pre and post intervention measures facilitated a more contextualised understanding of how schools were able to engage with the voices of disaffected young people. A limitation, however, was its small sample size whereby a limited number of contexts were explored. It is therefore not possible to make generalisations to other school populations in other contexts. This however was not an aim of the research.

It is possible to draw out implications for practice for schools that have similar contexts to the case studies, although this research does highlight that any positive effects of the intervention were highly context specific and should be considered when applying the findings. Although steps were taken to reduce participant researcher bias, it is always possible that some subconscious bias could have influenced the study and needs to be acknowledged as a limitation.

2.8 Conclusions

This is one of few studies that have implemented an intervention aimed at directly engaging schools with the voice of disaffected young people and represents an original contribution to knowledge. The findings suggest that when LMs are facilitated to engage with the voice of disaffected young people it has some positive impact on their perceptions of these young people; all LMs showed at least one positive shift on one of their personal constructs. This implies that listening and acting on disaffected young people's voice is key in shifting practitioner perceptions towards a more authentic and positive view of pupil disaffection. When practitioners have an authentic perception of pupils' disaffection which more closely aligns with how these young people perceive themselves and their environment, interventions are likely to be more 'pupil driven', better suited to their needs and therefore ultimately more effective.

The quality of training LMs undergo influences the extent to which they are able to facilitate change for disaffected young people. Being ELSA trained meant LMs were able to see disaffection as being separate from the identity and personality of the young person and consequently were able to generate a broader range of more effective strategies to include them. This has implications for practice. There are compelling reasons for ensuring that LMs are

properly trained in the social and emotional issues impacting on vulnerable young people and prompts schools to consider the quality of the LMs they employ rather than the quantity.

School structures (e.g. inclusion base being associated with either SEN or behaviour), resources (e.g. time) and ethos (e.g. continued employment based on academic targets) impacted on LMs' perceptions of disaffected young people and ability to engage with their voice. Perceptions of pupil disaffection are therefore highly contextualised. Schools need to be aware that constraints of inflexibility and rigid system structures hinder LMs' practice and ability to facilitate change. There is a need for future research to explore other contextual factors, not highlighted by this study, that impact on LMs' ability to engage with disaffected young people's voices. These need to be brought to the attention of schools who are considering using LMs.

It would also be of value to explore if this intervention can be replicated with similar results in different school contexts. EPs are well placed to manage facilitative processes aimed at engaging schools with the voices of disaffected young people. In doing so they can support practitioners in broadening their understanding of these young people and more importantly enable them to act on their voices.

Since September 2013 the government's raising participation agenda (Education and Skills Act, 2008), in a bid to curb the numbers of young people who become NEET, has made it compulsory for young people to stay in education or training to the age of 18. I would argue that this is an adult solution to pupil disaffection that makes no attempt to engage with the voices of disaffected young people. In fact, this punitive approach which potentially 'criminalises' their disaffection (Simmons, 2008) ignores and marginalises them.

Compelling disaffected young people to socially participate in school is ultimately not effective. They are only more likely to participate if and when they feel more socially included. Listening, engaging with, and acting upon disaffected young people's voices will facilitate their social inclusion. As the findings of this research show, when strategies which privilege young people's voices are employed and practitioners are facilitated to engage with this approach, perceptions of disaffection alter and practitioners are able to implement positive changes towards social inclusion. I hope that this small study will go some way to influencing policy and practice with regard to young people's disaffection and risk of exclusion.

2.8.1 Reflection

Working with LMs during this research project has impacted on my beliefs and values as an EP practitioner as well as influencing my practice. I now place greater value on interventions that are co-created through collaboration with practitioners rather than interventions that are imposed. Using PCP allowed the LMs to shape their interventions with young people based on examining their beliefs and constructions regarding disaffection. I feel this had a more positive impact on the outcomes for both young people and LMs than interventions in my previous practice that I tended to impose. I am more inclined to use this collaborative approach in my future practice.

The research has also prompted me to think about the value of training for practitioners working with vulnerable young people. I am now of the belief that it is the quality not the quantity of training that can make a difference – not only to practice but to the LMs' level of engagement with interventions and feelings of confidence and competence. In my future practice I am more likely to consider the quality of training before making any recommendations to schools.

Lastly, as a result of this research I am more appreciative of the impact of the school context on the success of interventions. Time, resources, availability of support and inflexible school structures all

had an impact on the effectiveness of the research intervention. My practice in the future will place greater emphasis on the context of individual schools when devising and implementing interventions that will successfully fit within those contexts.

Appendices

Paper One

3.1 Table 9: how the methods were chosen to engage the population under study

Potential Issue	Implication	Chosen Methods
Reluctance to engage with adults due to lack of trust.	Trusting relationship needs to be established with the researcher.	Prolonged contact (over 4 weeks) to establish a rapport and relationship with the researcher.
Often negative response to perceived authority.	Need to lower perceived power differentials	Participatory method that allows for collaboration. Groups or paired rather than individual data collection sessions to lower power differential between researcher and participants.
Poor language skills may lead to difficulties expressing themselves.	Enabling techniques to make research more accessible.	A set of enabling techniques (card ranking, draw and talk, projective techniques) to use if participants are struggling to expand on a topic or are unable to explain what they mean.
Often feel 'done to' in life and school.	Collaborative approach so participants feel some ownership over the research.	Collaboration through participatory methods. Open ended exploration of school experiences.
May have difficulty identifying and expressing emotions	Projective techniques available to facilitate expression of emotions.	Projective techniques (where individuals attribute some unacceptable feelings to an external object) available e.g. blob trees, talking stones/stickers, personal construct psychology techniques.
May have diverse and individual needs in terms of accessing the research.	Methods need to be flexible.	Flexible and evolving methods that can take into account individual needs.
Robustness of their memory recall for events.	Without a tangible marker may find it difficult to pair perceptions/feelings with specific events/experiences, or recall specific experiences when put on the spot.	Observational diary - interview approach with a very low language load (e.g. emoticon stickers to mark in their planner how they felt about each lesson/section of the day or equivalent).

3.2 Overview of the sessions

Session 1 (1 hour)	Introduction to the researcher/ research and its purpose Gain written informed consent Pupils get to choose their own Pseudonym Show concrete examples of diary method – pupils chose/create a method to use Ask pupils what topics they want to talk about in the sessions (put it together in a list of ordered importance) Show enabling techniques 'menu of activities' pupils indicate which ones they may like to use in later sessions. Small scrap books given (to record any drawing or activities they do in the sessions). Pupils get to decorate scrap books with their pseudonym (if time).
Session 2 (1 hour)	Discussion of ground rules for group discussion Pupils share their diaries for the week Pupils choose a topic off the list to talk about in more depth (referring back to specific experiences in their diaries where relevant) Pupils choose enabling techniques to help stimulate the discussion if needed (may be different for each pupil).
Session 3 (1 hour)	Same structure as session 2
Session 4 (1 hour)	Same structure as session 3 Endings – what have they got out of the sessions? What will happen to the research? People they can talk to if issues have been raised (follow up support).
Follow up session	Show students transcripts of the sessions and initial thematic analysis – Do they agree with the themes? Do they want to take anything out of their transcripts?

3.3 Researcher prompt sheets for each session

Prompt Sheet: Session 1

0-5 mins: Developing a positive rapport

- Introduce myself, show Exeter ID badge and explain that I am a researcher and what this means
- Ask for their names, what lesson they have come out of and whether this is a lesson they like/ wish to miss

5-15 mins: Ensuring informed, voluntary consent

Hand out student info. sheet on the project. Read and talk it through.

- Do you think it is a good project?
- Would people be interested in reading it when it is finished?
- Who would they be?
- Is they were to take part any topic they would particular like to talk about?
- How do they feel about keeping a diary?

Verbally explain the ethics particularly emphasise that it is <u>voluntary</u>, <u>they can withdraw at any time</u>, the recordings are <u>anonymised</u>, <u>child protection</u> (if they say something that leads me to believe that they or anyone else is unsafe this will need to be passed on)

15-20 mins: Give time to sign consent and choose a fake name (pseudonym)

20-30 mins: Show example of observational diary method

- Do you think this is a good way of keeping a record of your school experiences?
- Can you think of other ways you could do it?

30-35 mins: Give time for them to decide on an observational diary method to use

35-40 mins: Introduce the menu of activities

Explain that sometimes it may be difficult to explain why or how you felt on a particular day and these activities can help. Also remember to say that if they don't feel safe enough to tell others they can use one of these activities instead to indicate how they feel

40-50 mins: Give out the menu of activities sheet and show how each activity works.

- What do they think of the activities?
- Are they any other ways they can show how they feel about something without talking?

50-60 mins: Give out scrapbooks which they will use to keep any drawings etc... that they do in the sessions. Allow time for them to decorate them with their fake names (pseudonyms).

Prompt Sheet: Session 2-4 (each session follows the same pattern)

0-15 mins: Establish ground rules democratically (write them up on flip chart)

- How are we going to ensure everybody's opinion is heard/respect each other's opinion?
- How are we going to ensure that we all get along?

Try to draw out these rules (get them to come up with them themselves)

- only one person talking at once (perhaps use talking cushion)
- no comments that would make another person upset
- mobiles off and away
- respect the anonymity of others

15-20 mins: Share diaries

5 mins for each pupil to look at diaries and choose something to talk about

20-50 mins: Go round each pupil in turn (give them the talking cushion) - 5 mins to talk about how their week has been followed up by 5 mins open discussion amongst the group. If pupil is stuck – use an activity from the menu which all the others in the group can do as well.

- Anyone else had a similar experience?
- What do you think about what X said?
- Do you feel the same as X does?
- Is this something that happens a lot to children in general?

55-60 mins: Debrief

Make sure they are in a safe place emotionally – end on a happy note – tell me something you're looking forward to?

Signpost to further support in school if needed (counsellor, tutor, learning mentor, ELSA)

Make sure they have enough stickers/materials for diaries etc... for next week

Prompt Sheet: Follow up session

0-5 mins: Re-establish rapport

- How has it been since I was last here?
- Anything changed? Got better? Worse?
- Anything significant happened?

5-15 mins: Give out transcripts (colour coded by participant)

Can you spot yourselves?

Give chance to read or read parts out as a group/ or I read it for them

Remind them that it is anonymised using their fake names (pseudonyms)

While reading it through aloud they can raise their hand if there is something that they don't agree with – give choice it can be taken out completely or still analysed but not quoted as a comment in the full thesis

15-25 mins: Show the initial thematic framework

- What do they think?
- Do they agree with it?
- Is that how they would have analysed it?

25-30 mins: Explain next steps

 I will write a report on this which will be examined and possibly published. Remind them that they will be completely anonymised. Tell them about what I am going to be doing in part 2 (working with the learning mentors).

Example Diary

Mon	Thurs
maths	fun lesson
friends	friends
P.E	
Tues	**Fri**
new teacher	felt ill
spilt acid in science	got a good mark in class
got a detention	
Wed	
didn't understand work	
h/w	
drama	

- The idea is to choose a sticker or draw a face which best represent how you felt at different times during the day. You can do this in your school planners / rough books or another note book - just remember to bring it with you to each session.

- You need to write something (it can just be one word) to remind you why you chose or drew a particular face.

- Don't worry if you lose the stickers I give you – you can just draw the faces.

- Try to do it each day – use your timetables in you planners to help you remember what lessons you had.

3.5 Enabling activities prompt sheet

Menu of Activities

If you can't think of the words to describe how you felt at a particular time or can't think what to say these activities may help.

1. Drawing

Drawing can often help you to organise your thoughts and feelings. You may want to draw a picture of a person, yourself or an event to help explain what happened and how you felt at the time.

2. Post it note ranking

If you are struggling to explain why you particularly like or dislike something you can rank it against other things. This means you put a group of things (e.g. subject lessons) in order of preference (e.g. which subjects you like the best at the top and which ones you like least at the bottom). This may help you to explain why you feel a particular way about one thing but not others.
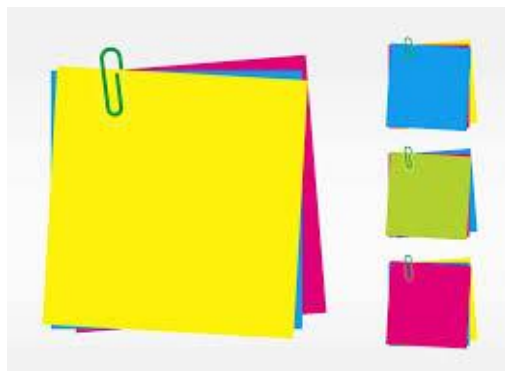
3. Blob pictures (Wilson & Long, 2008)

Sometimes explaining how you feel can be hard. The blobs all represent different feelings by choosing one it may help you to explain how you feel.

4. Talking stones/objects (Wearmouth, 2004)

You can choose an object in the room or the stones that I have brought with me to represent a person, subject or even yourself. This may help you to explain how you feel about that particular person, subject or yourself.

3.6 Young people examples of observational diaries

In these examples the young people chose to follow the example diary method using their planners or rough books to record their observations.

W2

Monday : 🔵 had my haircut 👍 intown

Tuesday : 🟢🟡 it was a fun day. 👍

Wednesday: 🟡 it was quit a boring day

Thursday : 👍🟢 it was alright but abit
boring

Friday : its alright so far. 🟡

11/10/13

Wk 4

SP 🙂

Hi 🙂

PE 🙂

Ge 🙂

MA 🙁

overall↑ SC 🙂

Tuesday

In these examples the young people chose to use the 'feelings blob tree' to record how they felt on different days during the week.
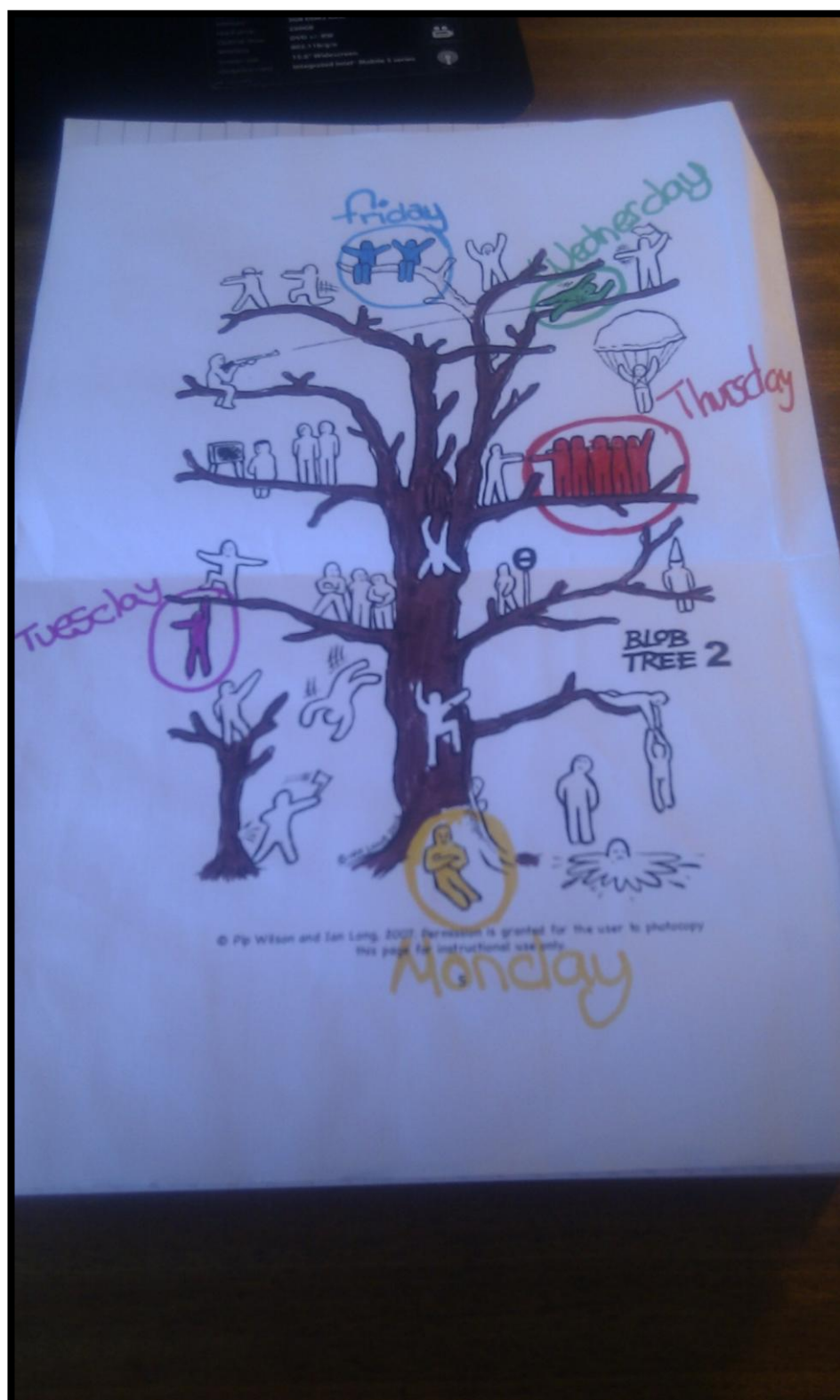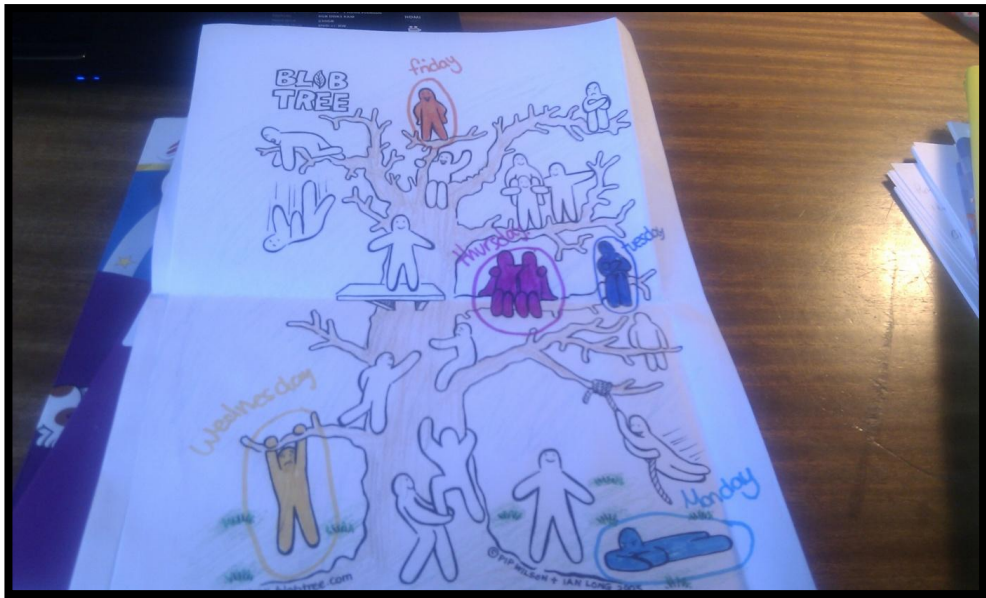
3.7 Young people examples of enabling activities

In these examples the young people chose stickers to represent different people who they came into contact with during the school day. The stickers in the inner circle are people they felt closest to/liked the most (friends), the stickers in the outer circle are people they feel least close to/liked the least (teachers represented by skull and cross bones) and the middle circle represented people who they had mixed feelings about - who they felt close and detached from/liked and disliked (mixture of teachers, other school staff and peers).
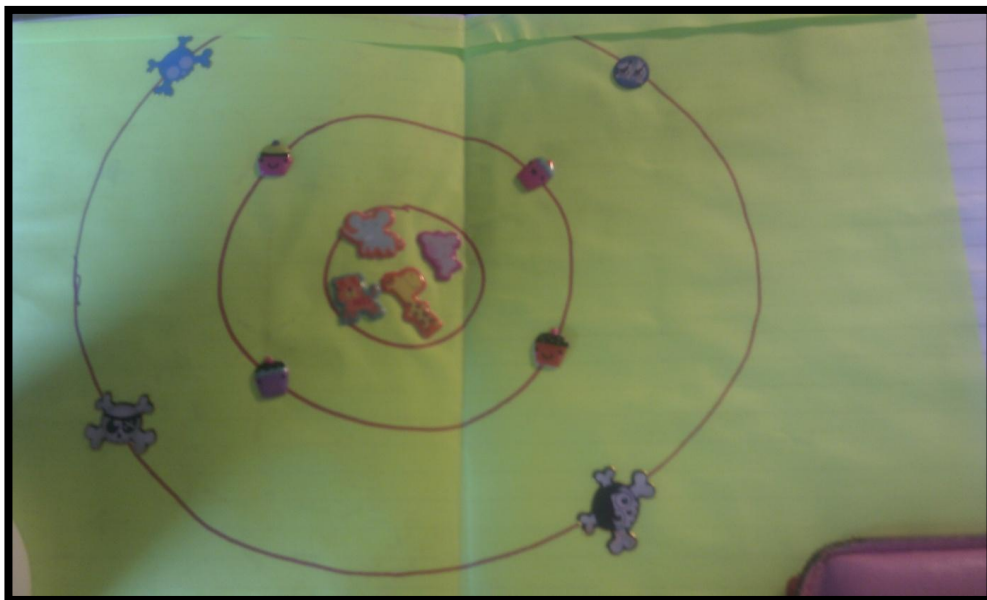
In this example the young people generated a list of changes they would like to see in lessons. They then ranked them in order of preference.
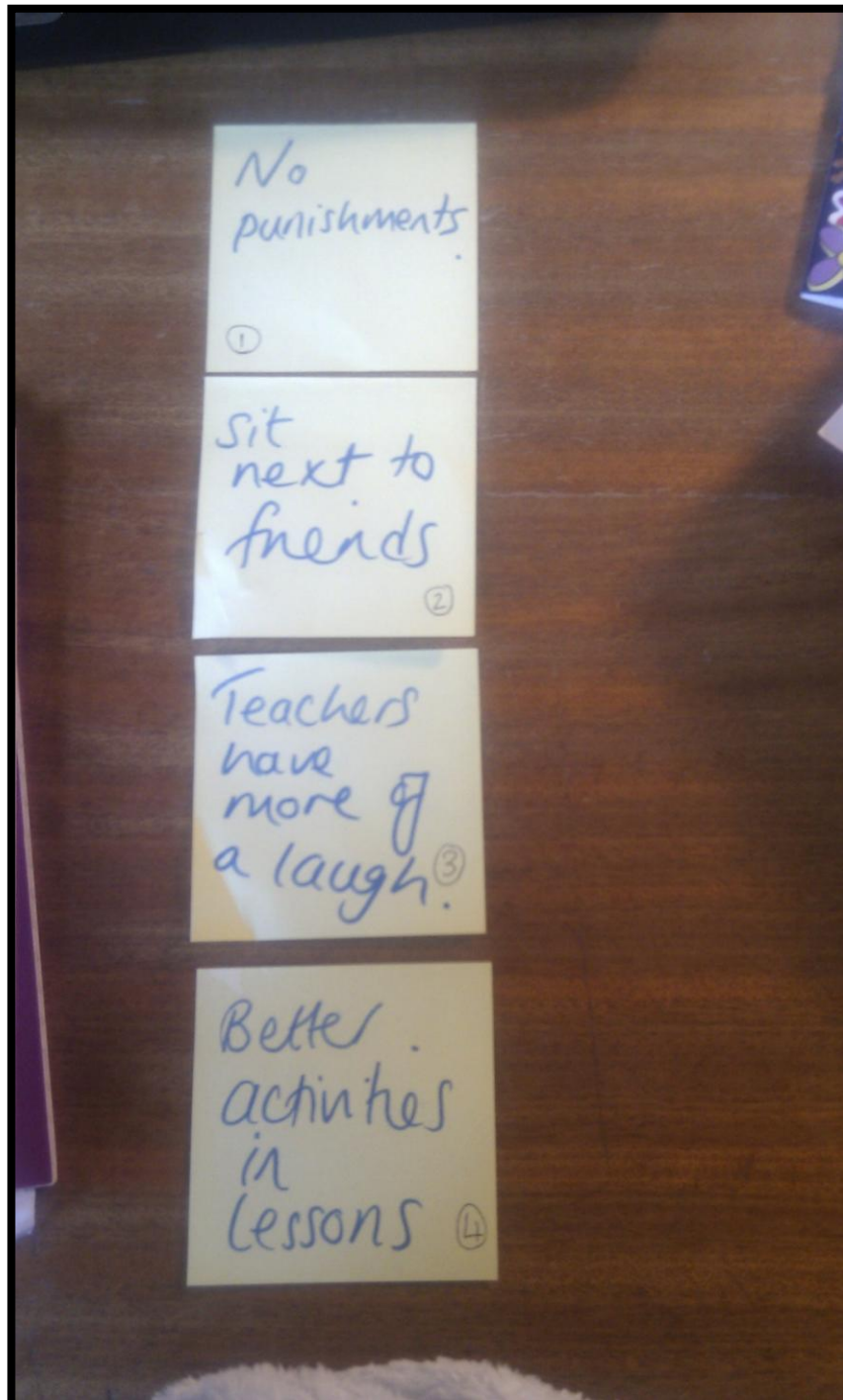
In these examples the young people drew pictures of nice/good teachers and mean/rubbish teachers to illustrate what they thought about them.
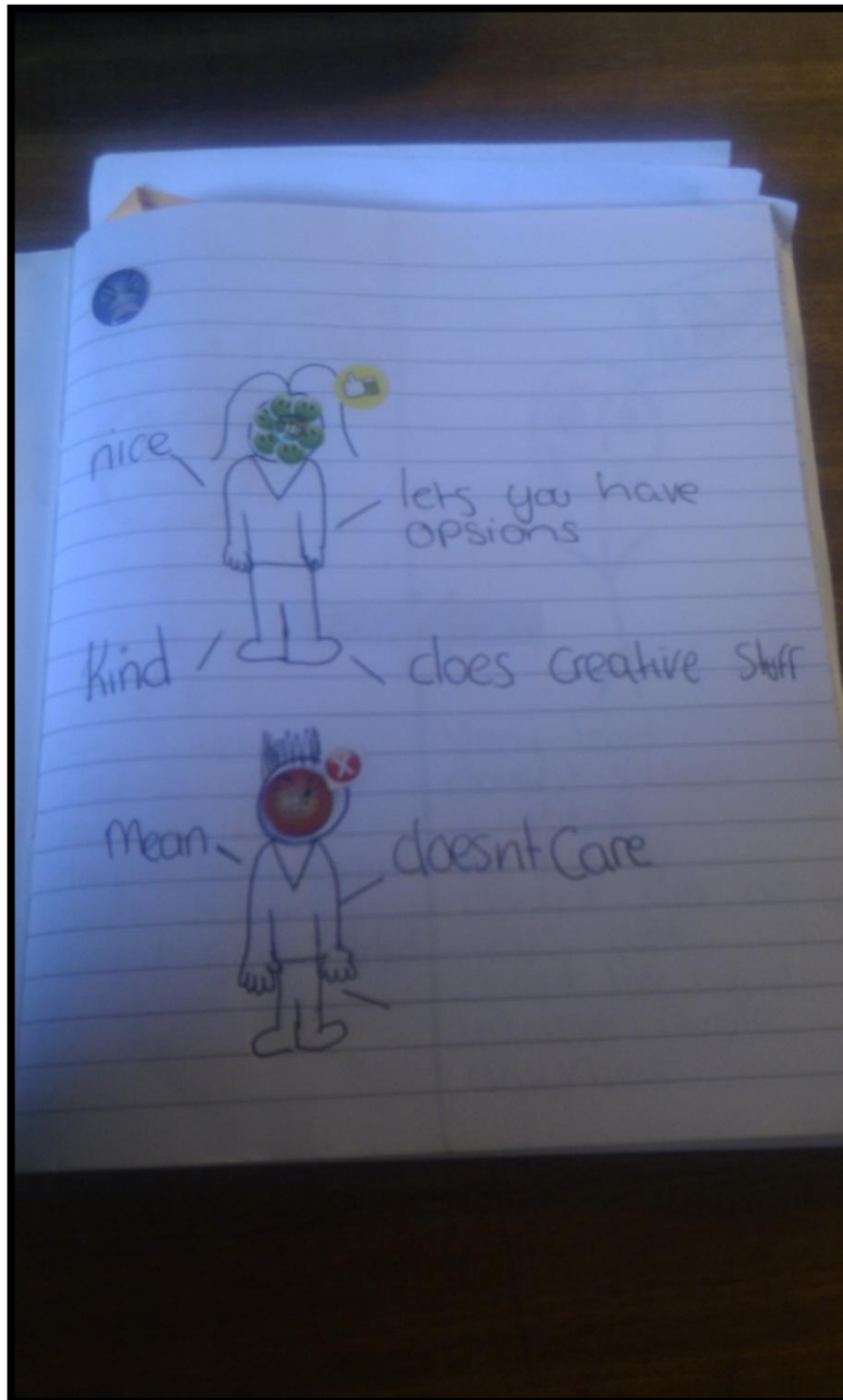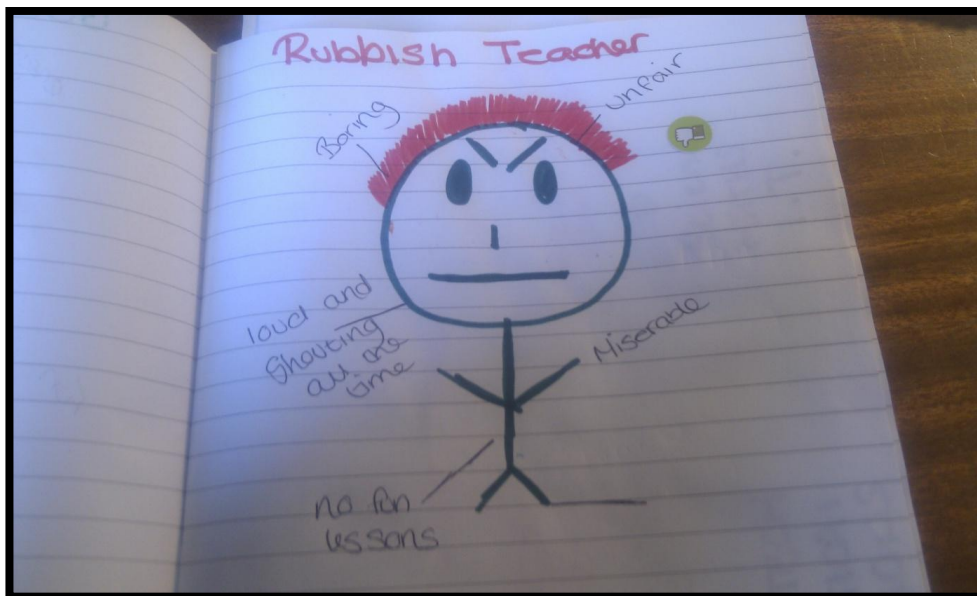
In these examples a young person drew examples of 'smart' and 'dumb' people in her lessons to illustrate what she thought about them.
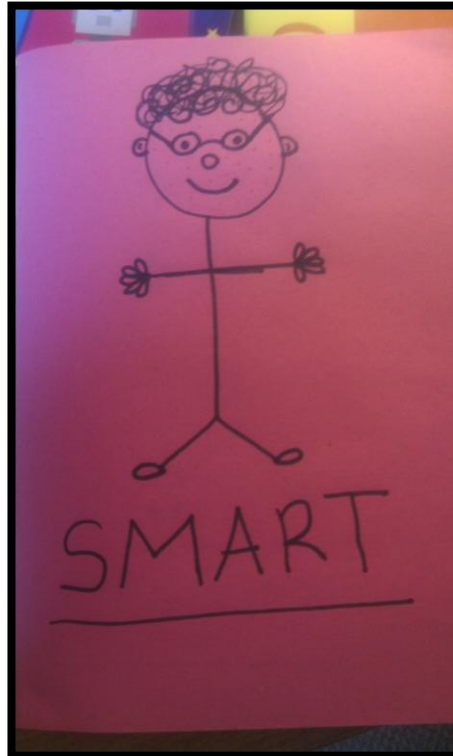
3.8 Details of measures taken to ensure reliability and validity

There are some issues related to the research design chosen that could threaten the reliability and validity of the study.

Group interview approach - there are benefits and drawbacks to using a group interview approach (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). The table below details these issues and how any adverse effects were limited in the study.

Benefits	Drawbacks	How effects of drawbacks were mitigated against
Facilitates a more natural style of interaction, participants empowered by others of a similar social culture to make comments in their own cultural language and stimulated by comments of others in the group. Gives some social support to shy people who may be reluctant to be interviewed alone. Can create a safe space for interaction and self disclosure. Can be more enjoyable Allows participants to take over the interview space, levelling of power differentials	Some participants may dominate discussion or restrict certain topics. Extreme views may dominate, some participants may feel inhibited. Conflicts may arise among participants.	Discussion was well managed by: - addressing dominant participants using non verbal body language, (breaking eye contact/leaning away), or verbally (e.g. valuing their contribution before stating the importance of hearing what others say). - drawing out reluctant participants (non verbal gestures, indirect questions). - avoiding simultaneous dialogue between participants.
Facilitates the discussion of taboo subjects as less inhibited members may break the ice	Confidentiality issues may arise due to presence of other participants.	Within the ground rules established it was decided that what is discussed stays within the sessions/room.
Can probe to what extent there are consistent or shared views	Can be difficult to do individual analysis of the data. (at participant level) Can promote 'group think' among participants (Brown, 1999).	Analysis of each group's collective rather individual views conducted. To avoid 'group think' researcher asked if anyone had a different view, stressing that disagreement is acceptable, used exception finding questions and played 'devil's advocate' at times to encourage alternative views.

Table 10: Benefits and drawbacks of the group interview approach and how this was limited

Participant bias: peer pressures from other members of the group may influence what the young people said (see table 9 for how this was addressed). Young people may have different understandings of certain terms than adults (Lewis 1995). The young people were asked wherever possible to clarify what they understood by different terms and any specific terms I used were explained. There may have been issues with accurate memory recall of feelings and perceptions. Ericsson and Simon (1980) argue that when participants are asked to recount social situations verbal reports of specific events are a more accurate indicator of participants' feelings and perceptions than general accounts. This bias was therefore limited by the use of the observational diary-interview method which focused the young people to recall specific events in the week.

Respondent bias: the presence of the researcher can influence the behaviour of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants may withhold information or try and tell the researcher what they think they want to hear. To reduce this, the group interview approach was used to lower power differentials between myself and the young people. The use of pseudonyms meant anonymity was assured. To avoid the young people trying to 'please me' with their answers they were encouraged to be the 'experts' rather than the researcher.

Researcher bias: the researcher's own preconceptions or inaccurate collection of data can influence its interpretation. All group sessions were audio taped to ensure accurate data capture. Transcripts and the initial codes and themes were checked by the participants for accuracy. Prolonged involvement tends to reduce respondent bias but increase researcher bias (Robson, 2002). The project was limited to four sessions (plus a follow up session) to limit this bias.

Affective physical bias: time of day, setting and mood of the participants could affect responses. Focus groups were scheduled for the same time each week. To limit the possibility of the young people getting tired or distracted refreshments were provided. The mood of the young people during the sessions was recorded by myself and taken into account when analysing the data.

3.9 Ethical considerations of the study

Legal requirements and informed consent

The research project received ethical approval from the University of Exeter ethics committee (see appendix 3.10) and complied with the British Psychological Society's guidelines for practicing psychologists as well as the Data Protection Act (1998).

At the time of the research I held a current Criminal Records Bureau enhanced disclosure certificate checked in accordance with local authority regulations. I decided to use 'opt in' consent for parents and carers so they could participate and engage more fully with the research. Opt in parental consent forms (see appendix 3.13) with information about the project were sent home to the parents and carers. Due to difficulties engaging some parents, despite young people being eager to take part, a professional at the school known and trusted by the parent gained verbal informed consent prior to the first session. This was officially recorded and signed by the professional that gained the verbal consent. Written informed consent was then followed up later.

The pupils who were selected to take part in the study then signed a further informed consent form (see appendix 3.14). The purpose of the research, its procedures, potential risks and benefits were explained in a way that the young people could understand and therefore make a voluntary decision about whether to take part (Emmanunal, 2000). A participant information sheet for students (appendix 3.14) was used to aid this explanation and details the information explained to the young people. No deception was used in the study all participants were fully briefed about the purpose of the research and the aims and objectives were made transparent.

Obtaining informed consent from vulnerable participants can pose additional ethical issues (Melrose, 2002). Table 10 details some of the ethical issues in gaining informed consent from vulnerable groups and how these were resolved in the present study.

Issue	Resolution
May fear negative consequence for not signing consent form	Empathise voluntary nature, have a right to withdraw at any time for any reason and take their data with them. Level power differentials through group interview approach and emphasise that I am not part of the 'school system' and do not have authority within the school.
May have difficulty understanding what they are consenting to	Explain purpose of project verbally, its procedures, potential risks and benefits, in simple and clear language. Give time for the young people to ask questions.
Confidentiality issues versus child protection duty	It was explained that the young people would choose a pseudonyms so their comments would remain anonymous. Forewarned if they disclosed anything that caused me concern for their safety this would have to be passed on. Explained that audio tapes of sessions would be kept in a locked cupboard or a password protected computer. I took issues confidentially to supervision if further advice needed.
Inadvertently disclose illegal activities about themselves or family members/friends	Forewarned if they disclosed anything that caused me concern for their safety this would have to be passed on. Encouraged to draw their own boundaries around what they felt they should or shouldn't share in relation to close friends and families. Avoided undue intrusion into private lives of pupils. I took issues confidentially to supervision if further advice needed.
Protection from harm and risk	Forewarned that research may bring up some sensitive issues. Sign posted to support services. I ensured pupils in an emotionally 'safe' place before ending a session. If conflict in the group arises I tried to manage this but if it was felt that the conflict was causing distress I ended the session prioritizing young people's emotional wellbeing over data collection. Avoided undue intrusion into private lives of young people. I took issues confidentially to supervision if further advice needed.

Table 11: Ethical issues and their resolution

Ethical issues that arose during data collection

Cutcliffe and Ramcharan (2002) described research as '*a process with ongoing and negotiated ethical dimensions'.* During the course of the research an ethical issue arose that required negotiating. Within two of the group sessions (two different case studies but within the same school) there were disclosures of self harm. In one case this referred to another young person in the school, the second was a self disclosure about past self harming behaviour. The researcher sought advice through supervision and passed on the issues of concern to the relevant child protection officer in the school. The young people involved were forewarned of the possibility of this before disclosure and were signposted to the school counsellor (under advice of the school) for support.

As a result of the disclosures the young people are receiving support in school from the counsellor. The disclosures sparked discussion about self harm as a topic in both groups and it was felt by the young people that their discussion should form part of the research as it was a relevant part of their school experiences that few school staff may know about. The results of the self harm discussions are presented and analysed in appendices 3.22 and 3.23. It touches on some potential culture issues in schools regarding self harming. My analysis was presented to the Educational Psychologist (EP) and the inclusion team for the school. It is my understanding that the EP is providing ongoing support in the school for tackling some of the self harm issues raised by my research.

3.10 University ethical approval certificate

UNIVERSITY OF
E X ETER

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

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/publications/guidelines/ and view the School's statement on the GSE student access on-line documents.

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: Elizabeth Sartory

Your student no: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Return address for this certificate ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Degree/Programme of Study: Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology

Project Supervisor(s): Margie Tunbridge, Andrew Richards

Your email address: eas216@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: ▮▮▮▮▮▮

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my 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: Elizabeth Sartory   date: 21st June 2013

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
updated: April 2011

Certificate of ethical research approval
DISSERTATION/THESIS

Your student no: 560021607

___

Title of your project: Psychology for engaging with the voice of disaffected pupils at risk of exclusion: What can they tell us about their educational needs and how these can be better met in schools?

Brief description of your research project:

The research project explores the school experiences of secondary pupils at risk of exclusion (fixed term, permanent and internal*) and the school's capacity to implement positive inclusive practices for these pupils.

The proposed research will consist of two connected studies. The first study will survey the perceptions of secondary pupils at risk of exclusion in relation to their school experiences. The second study will explore the school's capacity to implement positive inclusive practices for pupils at risk of exclusion via action research. It aims to engage a school in an action research project, the purpose of which is to implement a change to current inclusive practice concerning disaffected pupils and monitor how successful the change is in terms of reducing the risk of exclusion.

(*internal exclusion meaning when pupils are excluded from the normal timetable but kept within school as a sanction for behaviour).

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

Study one will involve working with appropriately 8 – 10 secondary school age pupils (aged 11-16) at risk of either permanent, fixed term or internal* exclusion. I will work with them for approximately 4-6 weeks. This will involve weekly meetings either individually or in very small focus groups (maximum 3). The sample of pupils will be selected by the school (ensuring parental consent is gained before the project begins). Informed consent will be gained from both parents/carers and pupils and their permission will be asked as to whether anonymised feedback from these sessions can be shared with school staff and the educational psychology service.

Study two will involve working with a group of 5-10 school staff in an action research project spanning up to 3 months. They will be sampled opportunistically. The action research project will involve meetings with the group at regular intervals and individual interviews/focus groups with school staff/pupils to elicit their views on the action research. Members of the group may work directly with groups of secondary school age (11-16) pupils as part of the action research. It will be expected that they focus on pupils whose informed consent (as well as their parents'/carers') will have already been sought as part of study 1. If different pupils are used informed consent will be sought from both the pupils themselves and their parents/carers making it clear that the data from the action research project will be used for research purposes (there is more on the informed consent procedure in the next section).

(*internal exclusion meaning when pupils are excluded from the normal timetable but kept within school as a sanction for behaviour).

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

a) <u>informed consent:</u> **Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents/carers. Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document**

Copies of the project information sheet, parent, participant and head teacher informed consent forms are included in appendix 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively.

The headteacher of the school and all participants (in the case of pupils their parents/carers also) will be fully informed of the purpose of the study and the information that is to be gathered. They will be informed of the conditions under which the data will be used. This will be for research purposes (anonymised data and findings will be published) and with their permission to feedback to the school and educational psychology service to improve practice. It will be emphasised that they can withdraw at any time, and have their data removed if they wish, and contact details (plus a contact within the school) will be provided so they are able to do this. They will be informed how long the data will be stored for and the security measures taken to ensure it remains confidential and secure.

The issues mentioned above will be carefully explained to pupils in an initial meeting before any research commences to ensure they fully understand and can ask any questions. Some of the pupils may have literacy or comprehension or other learning difficulties in which case the information sheet will be read to them with all the words carefully explained so they are able to give their fully informed consent. It is also possible that some of the parents/carers may also have literacy or other learning difficulties in which case a contact in school will be provided who can read through the information sheet with them and answer any questions. I will identify as early as possible (through school) parents/carers who may need this extra support so an appropriate contact within school can be put into place (such as a form tutor or parent support advisor).

b) <u>anonymity and confidentiality</u>

All interviews/focus groups (and some meetings) with participants will be audio-taped (then converted to a digital computer file and stored on a password protected computer). This is so they can be transcribed (digital files will be deleted after transcription). In the transcripts (and for any reporting purposes) the identity of any individuals will anonymised by the use of pseudonyms (or self-chosen pseudonym). The identity of the school and surrounding neighbourhood will also be anonymised.

Participants will be given a chance to review the transcripts allowing them to take out anything they feel uncomfortable sharing.

Any written transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet, or on a password protected computer. They will be destroyed after analysis has been completed.

All information shared will be treated as confidential (in terms of participants being anonymised) unless a participant shares something that raises a child protection risk. In the event of this happening I will follow the school's child protection policy as to how the information disclosed should be treated. All participants will be informed of this prior to any research commencing.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

In study 1 participatory methods will be used to explore pupils' perceptions of their school experiences. The philosophy behind participatory research is for participants to work in collaboration with researchers as much as possible. The researcher will collaborate with pupils in developing methods to express their voice and 'tell their story' about 'what it is like for me at school'. The researcher will give some examples of methods the pupils could use to 'help tell their story' (these will be using drawings/art work (rich picture), a written, photo or video diary and using objects such as 'talking stones' (Wearmouth 2004) to signify different aspects of their school experiences) but will also actively encourage them to develop their own methods. This will help reduce power differentials between the researcher and the participants reducing potential feelings of stress.

The researcher will collaborate with the pupils across 4-6 weeks in developing the methods to 'tell their story'. Data will be collected via unstructured 'conversational style' individual interviews which will be led by the pupils themselves (these will be audiotaped). Using their chosen method, they will be encouraged to 'tell their story' about their school experiences with minimal direction by the researcher (e.g. they may talk through their rich picture, show me their video diary etc...). Instead of one long interview per pupil it is anticipated that there will be several shorter informal interviews across 4 - 6 weeks as they develop their method for expressing their voice and put it together. At the end of the 4-6 weeks there will be a 'reflection' session with each young person. This gives the young people a chance to reflect on the research process, review the transcripts and feedback to the researcher. With the pupils' permission some photos of the methods the pupils decided to use to express their voice may be collected for illustrative purposes in the research report – these will be anonymised.

The research may touch upon sensitive issues for pupils causing them to become upset. If this does happen the wellbeing of pupils will always be prioritised over the data collection even at the expense of continuing with the interview. If the researcher cannot resolve these issues they may signpost the pupil to other relevant sources of support such as a carer or another significant adult within their school support network.

The second study is an action research project with a group of professionals within a particular school. This will involve regular meetings with the group. These will be audiotaped/logged so that group processes as well as the facilitative impact of the psychologist/researcher can be analysed. This will be fed back to the group to improve practice. Further interventions will be reactive to school need (identified by the group) following an action research model. They could involve systemic changes to school policies and structures, group work or direct work with individual young people. They may also involve changes to teaching practice. These interventions will be carried out by the school staff themselves and will be in keeping with activities/interventions that would be normally expected by parents/carers to be delivered by school staff.

To measure change, in keeping with the action research model there will be a feedback mechanism in which interviews and focus groups (with staff and pupils) will follow each round of interventions (intervention then interview...improved intervention then interview etc...). The interviews/focus groups will be audiotaped. Feedback from these interviews (in an anonymised form) will be disseminated to the group to help improve the interventions and guide practice. This will mean the interventions will be informed by the participants themselves. Feedback will be positively framed rather than critical and negative. This will avoid participants in the action research group feeling distressed by the research process.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

If pupils choose to use photo or video equipment to express their voice about their experiences permission will first be sought from the school. Recording equipment owned by the school will be used and kept on school premises (i.e. not taken home in between school days and locked in a safe place on school premises – this can be monitored by a member of staff). Pupils will be requested not to take pictures which will identify other pupils or teachers. If pupils wish to make a video diary this will involve just themselves speaking about their experiences and access to the video camera will be monitored by school staff. All pictures/video images will be analysed in school with the pupil present and then deleted from the recording equipment.

All transcripts/photos illustrating methods pupils developed will be kept in a locked cabinet or on a password protected computer and destroyed after analysis.

During the research process I may come across unethical professional practice. I am supervised by ███████ County Psychological Service and will adhere to all their policies regarding professional conduct and child protection. If I have concerns these will be discussed in supervision and informed action taken.

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):

There may be professional culture or individual clashes between members of the action research group or focus groups. I will discuss these concerns at supervision and take informed action to prevent unreasonable distress to other members of the group.

---

*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: 01-05-2013 until: 01-05-2014

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): *Mortimbridge* date: 23-04-2013

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

GSE unique approval reference:.............. D|12|13|32 ....

Signed:......*Ngurns*..date:......28/6/13........
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2011

3.11 Information sheet for schools including guidance for pupil selection

Research Project: Exploring the views of pupils at risk of exclusion and how schools can better engage with them

Who am I?

My name is Elizabeth Sartory. I am a final year trainee educational psychologist at the University of Exeter and I am currently on placement at the ▮▮▮▮ educational psychology service. As part of my training I complete a research thesis in my final year.

What is the project about?

I am interested in finding out about:

- What pupils at risk of exclusion think about their school experiences
- How schools can engage better with pupils who are at risk of exclusion

What will the project involve?

The project is in 2 phases.

The first phase will take place in the first half of the autumn term and I am looking to recruit approximately 10 pupils at risk of exclusion (the criteria for selecting pupils that would meet the purpose of the study is given overleaf) across 2-3 schools. The plan would be to meet with them weekly in small groups (no more than 3) over 4 weeks to discuss their school experiences. They will be asked to keep a diary of how they have felt over the course of the previous week and this will form part of the discussion. At the beginning of the spring term there will be one follow up session with the pupils where I will discuss some of the outcomes of my research with them.

The second phase will take place in the second half of the autumn term. I am looking to work with a group of learning mentors (or equivalent) over approximately 7-8 weeks. The idea is to meet 4 times during which I hope to facilitate an intervention aimed at supporting the learning mentors to better engage with pupils who are at risk of exclusion.

Next steps

If you think your school would be interested in the taking part in the project please contact me on the details below and I can arrange meeting to discuss the project further.

Contact details

Elizabeth Sartory: eas216@exeter.ac.uk or ███████████████████

██████████████████████████████████████

Tel: ███████████

Criteria for selecting pupils who would fit the purpose of the project (in order of preference).

1	Informed Consent	Able to gain consent of parents/carers and pupils show an interest in wanting to participate in the study.
2	At risk of exclusion	Receiving alternative/part time curriculum provision within school and/or had multiple temporary exclusions in the last 3 months and/or frequently excluded from lessons.
3	Evidence of disaffection	Negative emotions/attitudes to school and disengagement with some aspect of the curriculum and /or plays truant from lessons.
4	Age	Where possible a spread of ages between 11-16

3.12 School informed consent form

Research Project

Elizabeth Sartory, Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology, University of Exeter.

Informed consent form

I have had the project explained to me understand what it is about.

All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

- The school's participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
- The school is free to withdraw at any time without disadvantage.
- The data will be securely stored and destroyed when it is no longer needed.
- The results of the project may be published but the anonymity of the school will be preserved.

I agree to take part in the project.

Headteacher Name:

Phone/Email:

Headteacher signature: Date:

If you have any further questions, queries or feedback please contact:

eas216@exeter.ac.uk or █████████████████

3.13 Informed consent form for parents/carers

Research **St**udy: Exploring students' perceptions of their school experiences: What can they tell us about their educational needs and how we can better meet them in schools?

Dear Parent/Carer

My name is Elizabeth Sartory, I am a trainee educational psychologist with University of Exeter and currently on placement with ███████ County Psychological Service. As part of my training I am conducting a research project with the school into students' perceptions of their school experiences. This letter is going out to the parent/carers of selected students who may benefit from being part of the project.

The project involves individual weekly sessions (of approximately 45 mins) for the duration of 4 weeks. This will be organised so it does not interfere with your son/daughter's academic studies. No individual student will be named in any report of what has been learned.

Please read the enclosed information sheet and if you are willing for your child to participate in the project please complete and return the slip below.

For more information about the project you can contact me directly. My contact details are on the enclosed information sheet.

Yours faithfully

Elizabeth Sartory

<u>Informed Consent Form:</u>

I have read the information sheet concerning the project and understand what it is about.

All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

- My son/daughter's participation in the project is entirely voluntary
- I am free to withdraw my son/daughter at any time without disadvantage
- The data will be securely stored and destroyed when it is no longer needed
- The results of the project may be published but the anonymity of my son/daughter will be preserved

I agree for my son/daughter to take part in the project.

Son/Daughter's Name:

Parent/Carer Name:

Parent/Carer signature: Date:

Phone/Email:

Information sheet for **parents/carers**

What is the project about?

I am interested in exploring students' perceptions of their school experiences, both social and academic. I would like to learn about what they perceive as positive experiences and how these influence their level of engagement with school. I am also interested in what the students' perceptions are of their educational needs and what school experiences help meet them effectively. The information gained from this study will used to support the improvement of school practices.

Who will be part of the project?

Elizabeth Sartory (Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Exeter)

What will my son/daughter do?

If they decide to take part in the project they will be invited to work with me for approximately an hour on a weekly basis (for duration of 4 weeks). This will be arranged in discussion with their teachers to ensure it does not interfere with their academic studies. During this time the students will complete a 'journal' of their school experiences. The students will be able to choose how they construct their journal (they may want to do a video or photo* journal rather than a written journal or use drawings and collages to illustrate their perceptions of school). I will discuss their journals with them as they complete them and when they have finished they will be invited to talk through their journals with me.

*Any video/photo images will not leave the school premises and will be deleted from the recording equipment at the end of the sessions.

How will the data be recorded?

So that I can accurately record what they say I will ask the students if it is alright to audiotape the sessions. Their views will be recorded in an anonymous form (they will choose a pseudonym (fake name) to use during the discussions). This means that they

will not be named and will not be able to be identified. A transcript (written record) of the recordings will be made. I will ensure that all the information they give is kept securely. Any paper/audio/video information will be kept in a locked cabinet and electronic data will be password protected. I will comply with the Data Protection Act as well as the University of Exeter code of conduct for data protection.

What happens if they change their mind?

They are free to withdraw from the project at any time and, if they wish, have any data collected about them destroyed. All they need to do is to let myself know either directly or using the contact details on the informed consent form.

How long will I use the research?

A report of the research will be made in the form of a doctoral thesis. It will be made available to future University of Exeter students and may also be accessible via a published research journal. Your son/daughter will not be named anywhere in any report of what has been learned.

Who can I contact?

Please feel free to contact myself at any time at:

eas216@exeter.ac.uk or ████████████████

Research Project: Student Information Sheet
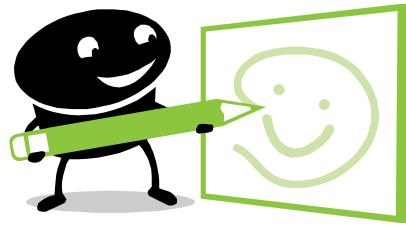
Who am I?

My name is Lizzie Sartory and I am a researcher at the University of Exeter.

My research project

I am interested in finding out what students really think about school.

I am interested in finding out:

- What you like/dislike about school
- What you think about lessons
- What you think is important to you at school
- Who you get on/don't get on with in school
- What you want to do when you leave

What does the project involve?

I am hoping to work with a small group to create scrap books/diaries called 'what school is really like for me!'.

Don't worry!

You can be as honest as you like...each student will create a 'fake name' so teachers will not know whose scrapbook/diary is whose.

Everything you say will be anonymous (no one will know you said it)*.

You can stop being involved whenever you like.

You will only miss lessons you don't like being in.

Recording our meetings

It will be impossible for me to remember everything you tell me so for some meetings I will ask if it is ok to 'audio record' you. Don't worry – if I am audio recording we will make sure that we only use our 'fake names' so nobody knows it is you. I will type up the audio recordings using your 'fake names' and then delete the recording from my Dictaphone.

*Unless you tell me something that makes me seriously concerned about your safety.

Informed consent

I have had the project explained to me and understand what it is about.

All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

- My participation in the project is entirely voluntary
- I am free to withdraw at any time without disadvantage
- The data will be securely stored and destroyed when it is no longer needed
- The results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved

I agree to take part in the project:

Participant Name:

███████

Participant signature: Date:

If you have any further questions, queries or feedback please contact: eas216@exeter.ac.uk or ████████████████

3.15 Table 12: Descriptive data on participants

School/Focus Group	Pupil	Year Group	Gender	Ethnicity/Exclusion Information
A:Focus Group 1	Pupil C	Year 10	Male	Multiple fixed term exclusions On part time curriculum Identifies himself with the traveller community
A:Focus Group 1	Pupil Z	Year 10	Male	Frequently excluded from lessons White British
A:Focus Group 1	Pupil J	Year 10	Female	Multiple fixed term exclusions On part time curriculum White British
A:Focus Group 2	Pupil D	Year 10	Male	High level of unauthorised absence Frequently excluded from lessons White British
A:Focus Group 2	Pupil P	Year 10	Male	Frequently excluded from lessons White British
A:Focus Group 2	Pupil T	Year 10	Male	Multiple fixed term exclusions On part time curriculum White British
B:Focus Group 3	Pupil J	Year 8	Male	Frequently excluded from lessons On part time curriculum White British
B:Focus Group 3	Pupil X	Year 8	Male	Frequently excluded from lessons White British
B:Focus Group 4	Pupil D	Year 9	Female	High level of unauthorised absence On part time curriculum White British
B:Focus Group 4	Pupil B	Year 9	Female	High level of unauthorised absence On part time curriculum White British

3.16 Procedure for data analysis

The framework for thematic analysis followed the 'Formal Analysis' procedure described by Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor and Barnard (2014). This procedure was chosen because while being informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach it also incorporated Miles and Huberman's (1994) data summary and display stage which is effective for extracting the dimensions of categories from large amounts of data. The framework has two main phases: data management; abstraction and interpretation. Figure 11 illustrates the framework:
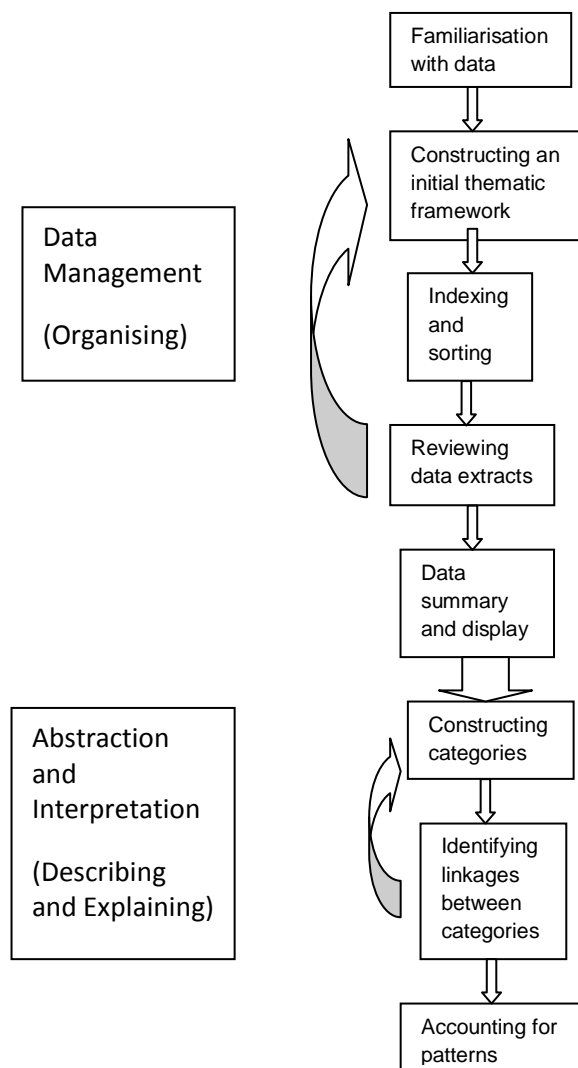
Figure 11: The 'Formal Analysis' framework (Spencer et al, 2014).

This next section describes the specific analysis conducted at each stage of the process.

<u>Data Management</u>

Familiarisation with the data

Each group session was audiotaped and then transcribed. Post transcription I read through the transcripts multiple times to gain an overview of the content and scope of the topics discussed. This helped ensure that the initial codes developed were grounded in and supported by the data.

Constructing an initial thematic framework

Initial codes were developed based on familiarisation with the data (please see appendix 3.18). These were sorted into themes.

Indexing and sorting

The initial thematic framework was used to annotate and label all the data using the computer data base program NVivo (please see appendix 3.19).

Reviewing data extracts

The NVivo program allowed all the data extracts within a theme to be easily reviewed. A new thematic framework was produced on the basis of this revision (please see appendix 3.20). NVivo generated an approximate percentage for the data that had been coded under each theme in relation to the overall data and individual case studies.

These were used to generate the approximate 'bubble sizes' of the categories in figures 1 to 5.   .

Data summary and display

The data extracts relating to each participant within the various themes were summarised in a matrix based format (please see appendix 3.21) in which each participant was given a row and each theme a column (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This enabled the elements and dimensions of each theme to be easily identified across the large data set.

Constructing Categories

The purpose of the categories is to discriminate between different manifestations of the data (Spencer et al, 2014). I looked for 'detected elements' and dimensions in each theme to try and understand what was happening. The aim was to try and describe the range of perceptions, views, experiences and behaviours which had been labelled as part of theme. I listed the elements present in the responses and any dimensions that differentiate them. In doing this I was able to distil the basic concept or category that encapsulates what the responses within a particular theme were about.

Identifying linkages between categories

I looked to see if there are any possible links between categories; data from different categories occurring consistently together. These were noted and are indicated by an arrow on the final presentation of the data.

Accounting for patterns

In this final stage I searched for possible explanations for patterns in the data. These were either explicit, participants' own accounts of the patterns in the data, or implicit explanations; ones that I had inferred myself. It was important to stay true to the voices of the young people and therefore I sought mainly explicit explanations for attitudes, behaviours and perceptions that clustered around specific school experiences. I did infer and seek implicit explanations, however, for patterns across the different groups, ages and schools. My implicit explanations were drawn within the context of existing knowledge in the field and these can be found in the presentation of the findings and discussion sections.

3.17 Example transcript

Focus group 1:

Session 1:

I: how has your week been (to C)? (The students have used colours and stickers to indicate how their weeks had been on their timetables)

C: my week has been good because I have been doing PE most of the time… I do boxing and love being really sporty so I colour-coded my timetable with greens and I haven't had any C3's or that and normally I am the most brazen person in the school

J: me neither

C: no you just got excluded! No C3 just excluded... that's just....

J: no it ain't… that's good

Z: that's amazing

I: how has your week been? (to Z)

Z: well enough to tick all of them (subjects on timetable)… One thing that has made me happy.. I actually got the lessons that I wanted so I don't actually mess around in them

C: but he used to mess around in all of them

Z: did I?

C: yes

Z: I remember walking into maths once and saying "ain't nobody got time for that" and Sir put on my report a 1 – "he needs a detention" and he also said that I was a racist

C: and he used to be naughty and got sent out of every lesson… For being cocky in lessons

I: what does a 1 mean?

C: 1 in a report means really bad

Z: there is 1 to 5… well… I got two 6's in a row

J: you can't get a six

Z: officially on the report you can get 1 to 5 but if the teacher thinks you are really good you can get a 6

C: some teachers do

Z: they do… Because a mate of mine got an 8

J: they would get into trouble (teachers) if they did that

(The student start to argue and talk over each other)

C: shut up we should listen to the teacher

I: how has your week been? (to J)

J: I actually don't know… I haven't had any trouble… (prompted by C) I didn't see my friends and I missed my lessons

(The students get distracted by the stickers at this stage)

I: what makes a good week? (To everybody)

C: now we are in year 10 and get to pick our lessons… we don't get in trouble

I: what makes you get in trouble?

C: well… People who like your friends with… You talk with them or just be silly

Z: basically you just be a C

J: are you going to let him get away with that?

Z: C always lets me get away with things

C: drop dead! (to Z)

I: what's the opposite then… What makes a bad week?

C: C makes a good week… Z makes a bad week

Z: don't mess with Z…

I: what makes a bad week?

Z: bullying… Sometimes my friends just p*** me off so much

J: swearing!

Z: says you!

C: Mr ***'s office is just around the corner

 (At this point we take a break as the group is starting to become distracted.... To focus them I ask them to choose an activity to do – they decide to draw what a perfect pupil would look like)

C: (to Z and J) you are both goody two shoes

(At this point that recorder is switched off because the students cannot remember their pseudonyms)

Z: I am going to draw a lemon head

C: what I draw depends what's in the lesson… Like PE for example… Try and be on your best behaviour ....don't get told off do the right thing… do what teacher says… And don't speak to no one just do what teacher says

Z: the best learner is probably a little kid… because when you get older you are sort of like "I don't give a c*** about lessons… And when you're young you are like… "I don't know this... I want to learn"… Because when I was young I would always pay attention because I was like "what the hell is he going on about" I didn't know it ...so I would listen to it and learn ...whereas when we are here... sometimes we mess around ..sometimes we want to get straight into a practical… and sometimes we wanna do that… but sometimes we don't… which annoys people who say "I don't wanna be in this class ….I'm going to drop science"

J: yeah I agree

I: can you tell me about your picture (to J)

J: people like that (points to picture) sit down and listen... (Points to specs) smart people have them

Z: so you're basically saying if one person came in with glasses on they would be smart but then another day if I didn't come in with my glasses on I would not be smart is that what you're pretty much saying ?

J: no

C: so one day if you come in with glasses and then the next day you come in with contact lenses it wouldn't make you smart… It's about what you do and how you act in lessons

(They now draw the opposite of a perfect pupil)

I: so what does your opposite pictures look like?

J: a Barbie… Because all they care about is their hair and makeup and they don't listen

C: that's basically you! (to J)

J: how's that?

Z: is that what you're like? (to J)

(I have to quietly remind the group about the rules)

Z: my picture is basically more retarded than the other

C: you shouldn't say that word people get offended by it

Z: his mouth is all weird… Because you know when people say… When I used to chat a lot… My mum used to say if you keep on chatting your mouth will stay like that… Don't keep chatting… Because your mouth will go wonky… That's what she used to always say… You know people say… Don't pull your teeth out because the tooth fairy won't come or don't be naughty because you won't get any presents… My mum used to say to me to shut me up because I used to chat all the time… Don't keep talking because your mouth will go wonky… To like scare me… To make me think my mouth was going to go wonky basically... I've drawn a person like who always chats and I've also drawn him with big eyes because he is always watching TV and not doing any work and I've also drawn him with big hands and big feet because say like… Big hands means he doesn't write and big feet means he doesn't do any sport or anything… I know that sounds really weird but…

(We discuss as a group how to not talk over each other)

The group select a topic to talk about: Lessons

I: What would make lessons better?

C: A least be able to do our own thing… For at least 10 minutes… Read our own thing or go on our phones… Go on our tablets and read a book … But listen make sure you're listening and make sure the teacher asks you questions to check you have been listening if you haven't that should be a C3… Let us swing on our chairs but make sure we have something behind us… That makes the lesson a bit more fun and helps us get on with the work quicker… If we can do our own thing we will enjoy it more… If we don't behave for the first 10 minutes of the lesson we won't do it… But if we do (behave) then we should be able to go on our tablets

J: fashion is my favourite lesson… Because you get to do your own thing by yourself you don't have teachers in your ear all the time… Geography is my worst lesson… Because it is rubbish you just sit there and learn about the sea… I've got to do it for GCSE and I don't even know what it's about… (I: did you choose it the GCSE?) I've only chosen one lesson that's it they put me in all the rest because of my behaviour

Z: my favourite lesson is geography mainly because at the start you the first 5 -10 minutes ...you can have a chat, you can speak to anyone around the room except you can't say "oi you alright mate" across the room… Basically you get to do whatever you want at the start and then we go on to the actual thing that you've got to do... what the teacher says… The opposite to that would have to be PSE… I hate it… That's when I found out about the **** thing… All you have to do is look for jobs… It's like (makes a groaning noise) ... It's the subject that we are doing right now it's about work experience we've got to find a job and it's so boring… It was asking me for my addresses and that... I was like ***** much… It's just annoying and miss was like that you had to put them in… why would I put my email address and phone number into a machine?

C: it is if you got a job so that they can contact you… It's the only way they can get hold of you

(The bell goes and the students rush out to lunch)

3.18 Initial thematic framework

1. In Lessons

1.1 subject

1.2 behaviour

1.3 peers

1.4 sanctions

1.5 coping strategies

1.7 voice

1.8 activities

1.9 teachers

1.10 ability

1.11 environment

1.12 historical

1.13 appearance

2. Outside of Lessons

2.1 inclusion base

2.2 pupil referral unit

2.3 exclusion (external)

2.4 unauthorised absence

2.5 lunchtime/break

2.6 external agencies

2.7 friends

2.8 my sessions

2.9 family

3. Emotional wellbeing

3.1 bullying

3.2 self-harm

4. Comments

4.1 disagree

4.2 agree

4.3 put down

4.4 supportive

4.5 to me

4.6 speaking for others

4.7 distraction

4.8 question to another student

4.9 'don't know'

4.10 misc

5. Future Self

5.1 job aspirations

5.2 pathway to job aspiration

5.3 parental influence

5.4 imaginary school

5.5 future school self

5.6 place

3.19 Example of coded data

C: what I draw depends what's in the lesson… Like PE for example (1.1) … Try and be on your best behaviour don't get told off ....do the right thing (1.2) … do what teacher says… And don't speak to no one just do what teacher says (1.9)

Z: the best learner is probably a little kid… because when you get older you are sort of like "I don't give a c*** about lessons… And when you're young you are like… "I don't know this... I want to learn"… Because when I was young I would always pay attention because I was like "what the hell is he going on about" I didn't know it ...so I would listen to it and learn (1.12) where as when we are here sometimes we mess around ..sometimes we want to get straight into a practical (1.8) … and sometimes we wanna do that… but sometimes we don't… which annoys people who say "I don't wanna be in this class … (1.3) .I'm going to drop science"

J: yeah I agree (4.2)

I: can you tell me about your picture (to J)

J: people like that (points to picture) sit down and listen (1.2)... (Points to specs) smart people have them (1.13)

Z: so you're basically saying if one person came in with glasses on they would be smart but then another day if I didn't come in with my glasses on I would not be smart is that what you're pretty much saying ? (1.13, 4.8)

J: no (4.1)

C: so one day if you come in with glasses and then the next day you come in with contact lenses it wouldn't make you less smart… It's about what you do and how you act in lessons (1.13, 1.2)

3.20 Revised thematic framework

1. Perceptions of lessons

1.1 Teachers

1.2 Peers

1.3 Coping Strategies

1.4 Learner Identity

1.5 Historical

1.6 Subject

2. Perceptions of wider school community

2.1 Inclusion base

2.2 Pupil referral unit

2.3 External agencies

2.4 Student Council

3. Other Themes

3.1 Truancy

3.2 Self-harm

3.3 Future self

3.21 Table 13: Example of data summary and display to show construction of categories

Pupil D: Data summary	Detected elements	Detected dimensions
1.9 Teachers Annoying – they get you into trouble for no reason. They use sanctions unfairly which makes me angry e.g. I was using my mobile phone to check the time and I got sent out and they didn't accept my excuse for being late (phoning home to sort bus journey) so I got sent out then because I was sent out I didn't get my work done so I got a detention for that. They never give us a chance. If the teachers are nice and get on with you then the lesson is fun, if they are strict and make you do loads of work then it's annoying. They are inconsistent – sometimes one teacher will give you a chance other times another won't. It was cool when Pupil P 'pranked ' the teacher They are like the 'uniform police' One time the teacher gave the whole class a detention which was unfair.	Perceived trigger for getting into trouble Unfair use of sanctions Teachers inconsistent/inflexible in their approach Getting back at teachers Association with the police Unfair use of sanctions	Discipline – Unfairness Discipline - Inconsistency Revenge Surveillance Discipline - Unfairness
Pupil P: Data summary	Detected elements	Detected dimensions

1.9 Teachers		
They just make us sit and work with no talking.	Teacher's style of teaching	Pedagogy
They need to have more of a joke/laugh.	Teacher personality (lack of humour)	Personality – Humour
When the teacher sends me out I can't learn. I get told off for talking but they did not say exam conditions and they gave me a detention before any verbal warnings.	Sanction barrier to learning Unfair use of sanctions	Discipline – Unfairness
They say silence for no reason and don't give you a chance. I don't do the work because teachers don't explain it.	Sanctions not perceived as fair Teacher pedagogical style (unclear instruction)	Discipline – Unfairness Pedagogy
I was late for the lesson because the corridors were blocked and the teacher still gave me a detention.	Unfair use of sanctions	Discipline – Unfairness
I got back at a teacher once when they confiscated my phone – I pretended I had been beaten up because I couldn't phone my mum to come and collect me so she gave me back my phone.	Getting back at teachers	Revenge

3.22 Presentation of additional data

Self Harm
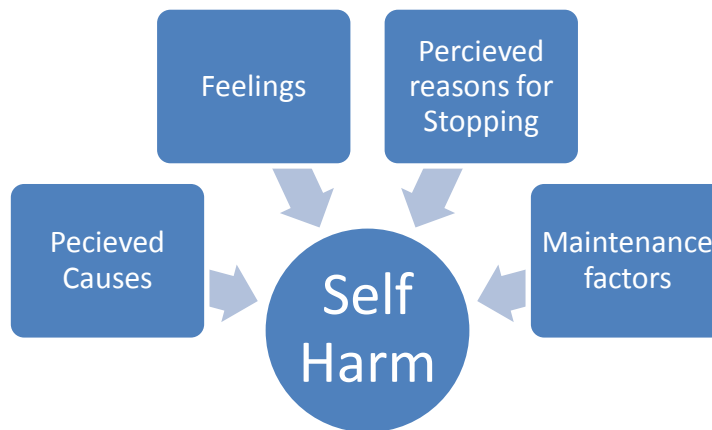
Figure 12: Self Harm Category

In the two Year 10 groups self harm was a topic of discussion. Being aware of peers who self harmed was upsetting for the young people:

'I hate it when people say they self harm themselves...why I get angry'

'I didn't want anybody to see me (when heard a rumour a friend was self harming)'

They perceived the causes of self harming to be; '*family issues'*, '*because they get bullied', 'just attention seeking', 'just need to grow up'* or *'something everybody does as they go through school'*.

They reported one of the reasons they thought people stop self harming was due to threat of permanent physical marks

'it leaves marks on your body that you're going to regret one day '

They reported that people often did not report self harming because of the threat of being further bullied:

'if they tell somebody about it (self harming) then they feel like they will get bullied even more...'

Future Self
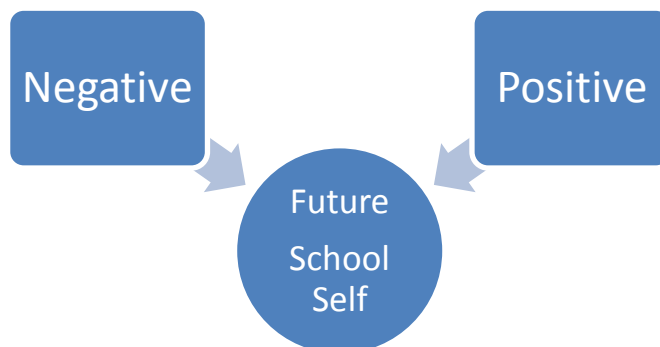
Figure 13: Future Self Category

Some young people were positive about their future in school:

'Hopefully it works out here and I can stay here… and hope I am doing well in lessons and that'

Others were pessimistic about their future in school:

'Still here… still getting into trouble every day..'

'if you keep on doing the same thing they will realise that you don't want be in school'

External Agencies
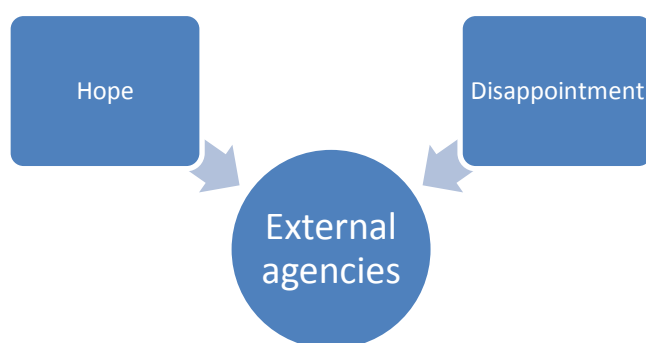
Figure 14: External Agencies Category

In some of the groups the young people spoke with hope and disappointment about external agencies.

One boy in the Year 10 group (School A: Group 2) spoke about how he had been disappointed by the support he had received from an external agency:

'they said it would be inconspicuous and 'it won't get you bullied' they said (said with a sad sarcastic tone – talking about a special cushion given to him by OT)

One girl in the Year 9 group (School B: Group 1) was hopeful about the support she might receive from an external agency:

'everything should be alright because I've got this meeting thing with something called (CAMHS: SUPPORT GROUP NAME)… It sounds really weird but it is a meeting thing that you go to which helps you with your self-esteem…'

Learner Identity (behaviour and appearance)

The young people's perceptions of what it means to be a learner were also influenced by behaviour and appearance.

The young people perceived good learners to be *'clever', 'have books' and 'have OCD'* (obsessive compulsive disorder). In terms of behaviour they described good learners as those that *'completes all the work', 'listens well', tells other students to shush'* and are *'more quiet', and 'really organised'.*

Bad learners were perceived as *'doesn't think they're clever'* and *'doesn't like school'* In terms of appearance they had a '*a flat cap'* (a sign of being cool – as clarified by one young person) and their behaviour was described as *'crazy', 'going a bit mental', 'going mad', 'a bit over the top of messing around' , 'acting cool', 'chucking pencils across the classroom', 'being naughty'* and *'gets disturbed easily'*.

3.23 Discussion of additional findings

Awareness of self harm

The Year 10 groups both reported negative experiences associated with finding out someone at school had self harmed. Interestingly some normalised the notion of self harm '*something everybody does at school'* and attached it to behaviours such as attention seeking and immaturity. Others in the group associated it with bullying and family issues. Worryingly the threat of further bullying was cited as a reason for not seeking help. This suggests there are a variety of perceptions around the normality of self harm and its underlying causes. The implications for practice are that young people who come into contact with self harmers may need to be supported and access to support with self harm needs to be discrete and take into account the potential stigma it carries amongst peers.

Hopeful versus pessimistic futures

All the young people spoke about their perceived futures in school. Some were pessimistic reporting that their circumstances would remain unchanged; '*still here...still getting into trouble everyday'*. Others were more positive suggesting that things could change; *hopefully it works out and I can stay here.* This suggests that disaffected young people can still be hopeful about their school future and have a desire to engage with school despite being at risk of

exclusion. It implies that practitioners need to be careful not to assume that negative non-participatory behaviours are always indicative of a desire to leave school. In fact, as shown here, some disaffected young people still show a desire to stay in school.

Experience of external agencies

One girl reported that she felt hopeful about having involvement from external agencies (CAMHs). In contrast anther boy reported a feeling let down by an external agency when he was promised the extra support provided would not get him bullied.

This suggests that disaffected young people do not always experience external support positively. It implies that practitioners need to be careful not to make promises to young people about the impact support will have. What practitioners may perceive to be a positive benefit to the young person may be different from the young people's own perceptions and experiences.

Learner Identity (behaviour and appearance)

The young people's perceptions of learners were based on salient features such as their behaviour or appearance. Wearing a '*flat cap*' (a sign of being cool – as clarified by one young person) and '*acting cool*' were perceived to be incompatible with being a good learner, as was '*being naughty*'. This implies that schools need to be aware that

when they identify disaffected young people as 'naughty' this may be interpreted by the young people as being a bad learner. A second implication stems from the incompatibility of '*being cool'* with being a good learner. Disaffected young people may prioritise status and peer approval over learning because, as shown in my previous findings, maintaining peer relationships is an important source of social support for them. Practitioners need to be aware of this conflict when planning strategies to support them.

Paper Two

3.24 Vignettes of disaffected young people's voices

Vignette: Pupil C

I was naughty in catering… and she wanted me to clean up but I am a boy and no traveller boy cleans up that is why I was refusing to clean up so miss tried give me a C4 for that… and apparently I was having a go at the teacher and apparently running up the corridors swearing and that so I got a C5 for that so I got excluded for a whole day and on that day I went to work and I earned 50 quid.

as soon as I get below 4 I give up (talking about his report card)

I was out of science for two weeks and the good thing is I did twice as much work in the LRC than I did in the lesson I do more work up there than I do in the actual lesson because I have no one to talk to or get in trouble with

*she says 'C3' and you say.. "what for I haven't done anything you haven't even given me a C1 yet?" and she says "I have but you have been ignoring me"… and then she shouts something and gets all angry and all that.... I asked M **** if I could have one of those squishy things and then with lessons you could be playing with it and you could be listening to the teacher and then you can do your work but on the table and then carry on playing with it*

*when I was having a go at Miss **** I hit the table as hard I can.. I took most of my anger out and was calmer a bit but I carried on swearing I couldn't stop… until she walked out and shut the door… it annoyed me when she walked out and shut the door in my face because I felt like she shut the door in my face so I got even angrier and started punching the wall... that took all of my anger so I was okay then*

Vignette Pupil D

the annoying thing is I don't get it ...because you are still working, concentrating but you still like to have a chat with your friends and socialise with them but no you still can't do that… you have to just be working

we just watched a little clip of YouTube and had to write a little bit about it... and we were just talking with our mates... just really quietly.. and we were still writing.. still doing our work.. and we would still have got our work finished.. but no we got in trouble for it!

That's the thing I reckon if the teachers didn't punish us at all that would encourage us to behave better… that just makes us angry to get a punishment so it makes us misbehave more

I reckon if they want us to change our behaviour they shouldn't punish us because that just wants us to misbehave more

Like my maths teacher some people didn't have their homework… and then the whole class got a C3 so I really don't like him… and it was really unfair

it is boring.. I'm always getting sent out in the lesson... always getting up and walking around talking to my mates and stuff and then I will get sent out for that.. I really hate staying still… I have a guitar pluck because I play guitar which I have in my pocket and I play with… it is the one thing teachers don't tell me to put away

in one of my lessons the teacher does not have a clock so I got my phone out to check the time and I was going to put it back in my pocket but she said "bring that that phone here" and I basically said "no" because I hate people taking my personal stuff and I basically said "no you don't have any right to do that" and then she just stands there in front of everybody yelling at me ..."give me the phone" and then she goes and gets on call to take me to sixth form lesson

Vignette Pupil P

it actually gets very boring… I don't like science because I am dumb… It's boring it's really boring they barely let us do any experiments

I get really stressed when it is really silent... I can work when people are talking but I can't when people are not

give us more freedom of speech… because they say they treat us like adults but they don't treat us like adults

All of my detentions have been through homework I am the most disorganised person in the world

If the teacher is giving punishments out for no reason you are not going to like them and then you will not do the work and just get more punishments… It is about student relationships

as well... a lot of kids don't do their homework, are disruptive in their behaviour and all that to get attention.. to get the punishment... so if there weren't any punishments the kids would not be disrupting the class

they never let you explain they just have a go at you

Prompt questions

What are your first reactions/feelings after reading the vignette?

What do you think motivates him?

How do you think he sees himself as a learner?

What do you think are the barriers to learning?

3.25 Researcher prompt sheets for the intervention sessions

Prompt Sheet: Session 1

0-15 mins: Establish a rapport: Introduce myself, explain the project (what I did in phase 1), time commitment and what it will involve.

Ask for their names, prior experience and why they are interested in taking part.

Gain informed voluntary consent and remind them that they will remain anonymous, they do not have to take part and can withdraw at any time.

15-30mins: Complete pre intervention triadic elicitation exercise.

30-40mins: Give each learning mentor one of the three vignettes and allow 5 mins for the learning mentors to read and 5 mins to answer prompt questions.

40-55mins: Facilitate group discussion – each learning mentor feedback their reactions to the vignettes, facilitate a discussion on the social inclusion of disaffected young people, write up themes on flipchart paper.

- What issues does this raise for including young people at risk of exclusion?
- What do other people think? Agree? Disagree?

55-60mins: Explain follow work for next week:

- Select a young person to focus on
- Find out more about their perception of school

Prompt Sheet: Session 2

0-20 mins: Discuss follow up work and give each learning mentor 5 mins to feedback what they have learnt from their young person about their views re: school. Facilitate the discussion and write up notes on flip chart.

- Is it what they thought?
- Anything surprise them?
- Does it reflect any of the issues raised in the vignettes?
- What are the barriers to their inclusion?

20-40 mins: facilitate a discussion on possible changes/strategies that could be implemented to facilitate inclusion - allocate 5 mins to each learning mentor to discuss their young person. Other learning mentors can offer suggestions/contribute. Write up strategies on flipchart.

40-45 mins: Each learning mentor selects changes/strategies to implement before next session.

45-55 mins: Discuss how to measure the impact of the change/strategy from point of view of young person as well as learning mentor.

55-60 mins: Give out follow up work.

- Implement change
- Observe impact from child's perspective

Prompt Sheet: Session 3

0-20 mins: Facilitate discussion - each learning mentor given 5 mins to feedback the impact of their change/strategy

Write feedback up on flipchart paper

- What has been successful? Why?
- What has not worked so well? Why?

20-40 mins: What modifications could they make to make the strategy/change more effective?

- Is it worth continuing with the strategy?
- Do we need to modify it?

40-45 mins: Learning mentors decide on a modification to their change.

45-50 mins: Give follow up work.

- Implement modified change
- Measure impact

Prompt Sheet: Session 4

0-20 mins: Give each learning mentor 5 mins to feedback impact of modified change and facilitate discussion.

20-40 mins: Facilitate a discussion which helps the learning mentors to reflect on the intervention/research process

- What has been the benefit?
- What have been the drawbacks?
- Implications for future practice

40-60 mins: Complete post intervention triadic elicitation exercise

3.26 Method for triadic elicitation

1. The participants choose 4 pupils who they have worked which they believe are disaffected that - this must include the pupil they have chosen to focus on as part of the research- and write their names on 4 white cards. They place these cards face down on the table.

2. The participants now choose 2 pupils that they feel are not disaffected that they have worked or know of within the school and write their names on 2 white cards. They also place these cards face down.

3. The participant then turns over 3 cards at random. Looking at the names on the cards they must decide on one feature that is similar between two of the pupils on the cards but is different from the third card (e.g. two pupils have low attendance while the other has high attendance). In doing this they have elicited a personal construct about those particular pupils. They record this on a scale as shown:

| Low attendance | High attendance |
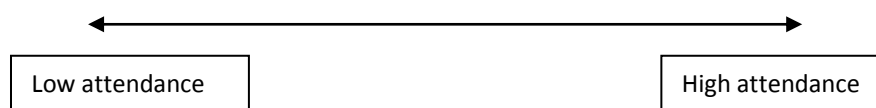
4. They repeat step 3 until they cannot elicit anymore personal constructs. *Please note there is deliberately an uneven distribution of non disaffected (2) and disaffected (4) names because this allows for personal constructs of disaffected pupils in comparison to non disaffected peers to be elicited (a mix of non disaffected and disaffected cards picked) and personal constructs of disaffected pupils in comparison to other disaffected peers to be elicited (all disaffected cards picked).*

5. The personal construct is converted into a 10 point scale. They rate each pupil on their cards on each 10 point scale. This gives an insight into how the learning mentors view each pupil within their personal construct system.

| 1 | | 10 |

Low attendance   Bob   High attendance
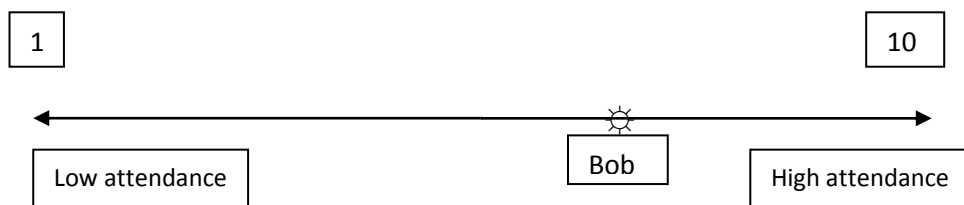
3.27 Record sheet for personal constructs elicited

1   **10**
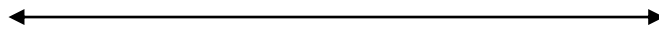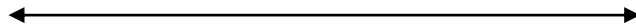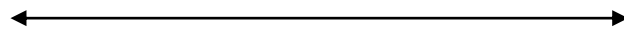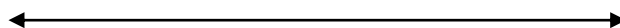
3.28 Informed consent form for participants

Research Project

Elizabeth Sartory, Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology, University of Exeter.

<u>**Informed consent form**</u>

I have had the project explained to me and understand what it is about.

All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

- My participation in the project is entirely voluntary
- I am free to withdraw at any time without disadvantage
- The data will be securely stored and destroyed when it is no longer needed
- The results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved

I agree to take part in the project:

Participant Name:

Phone/Email:

Participant signature: Date:

If you have any further questions, queries or feedback please contact: eas216@exeter.ac.uk or ████████████████

3.29 Declaration of promised young person anonymity

We the learning mentors promise not to disclose the identities of any of the pupils associated with the vignettes we read.

Signed :   Date:

3.30 Example of flip chart notes

Example notes relating to session 1:
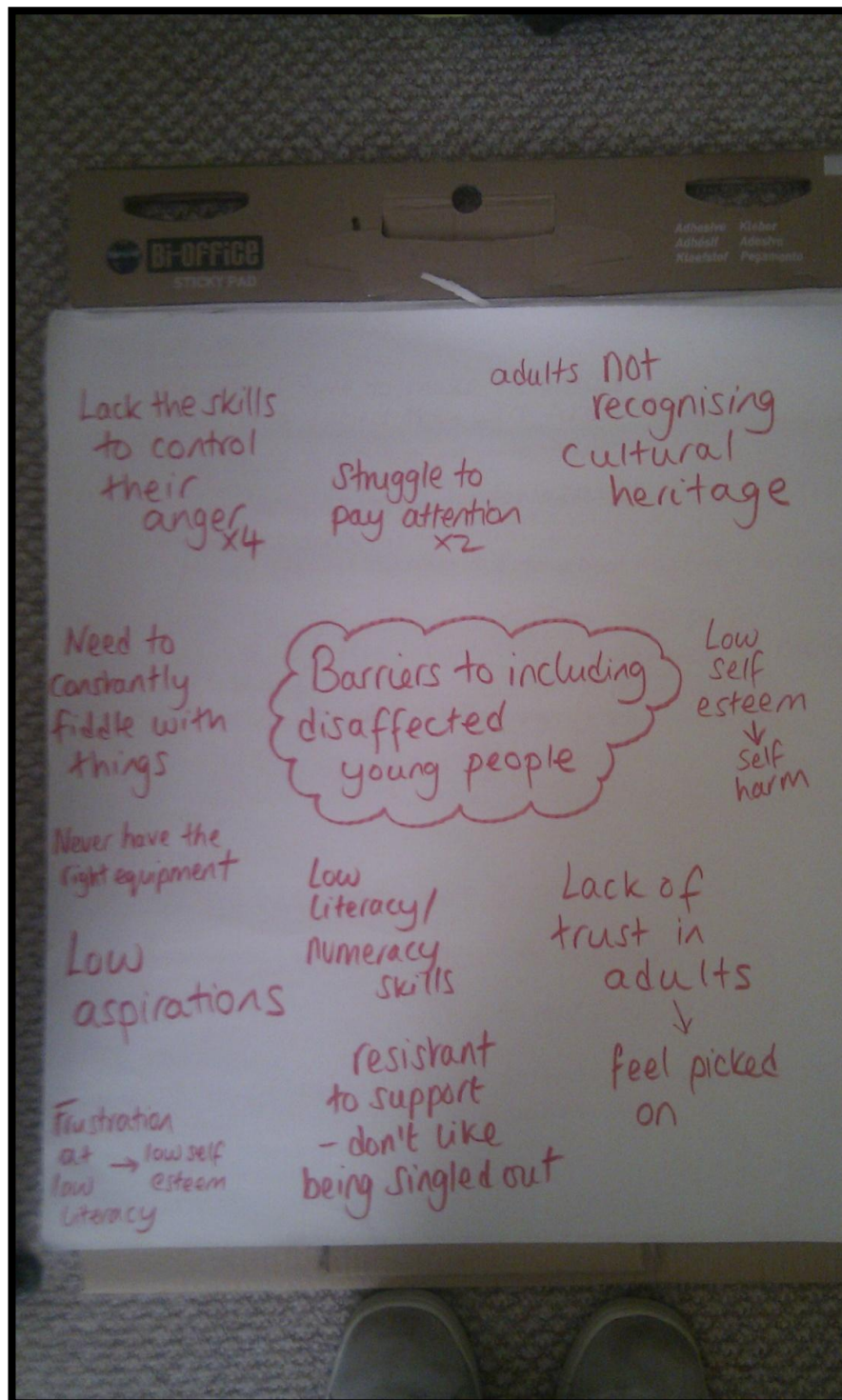
Example notes relating to session 2:

Example notes relating to session 3:

Negative
- lack of time to make resources
- yp in a subject they were forced to do
- yp stuck in a 'cycle of detentions'
- Fortnightly mentoring too far apart
- Teachers don't understand yp's needs
- Missed mentor sessions due to school routine changing

- Blu tak a distraction to others in class

How successful was the strategy?

- yp person forgets to meet mentor

Positive
- yp has made more friends
- yp able to 'offload' to mentor
- smaller, measurable targets are better
- yp prefers visual to verbal prompts about his behaviour

Example notes relating to session 4:

3.31 Example extract from research journal

Notes   Date   No.

Reflections on session 3:   School A:

area [feedback on strategies]

There was a lot of negative feedback about how school structures (like the detention system) was making it difficult ~~for the learning~~ to implement the strategies or see an impact. It seemed that the young people were initially positive about the strategy (eg the learning mentor report) but as soon as they get a detention they become very negative and it is back to square one – they blame the strategy eg 'I did everything it said on my learning mentor report' but I still get a detention!'. Detentions are not something the learning mentors can control so they are frustrated. Learning mentor 1 seems more willing to keep persevering (talk to teachers etc...), learning mentor 3 is sceptical ('I predicted this would happen'), learning mentor 2 seems to be disengaging with the process.

3.32 Table 16: Classification of the personal constructs data pre and post intervention

Category	School A: Pre	School A: Post		School B: Pre		School B: Post
Social	Understand/does not understand social boundaries Narrow/wide friendship circle Isolated/popular(x2)	Difficult /solid friendships Lots of friends/constant friendship issues Few friends/large social group		Poor / good rapport building skills Unable to settle/settled in tutor group		Top dog/shy Low/high social understanding No social skills/sociable
Attendance	Poor/high attendance	Never/always in registration		Late/on time Poor/good punctuality Poor/good attendance		Poor/good attendance Low/high attendance (x2)
Literacy	Poor/good literacy (x3)	Poor literacy/articulate				
Home life	Positive/negative attitude towards home support Unstable/secure home life	Low expectation of family/stable, positive home life Feels rejected/confident in family				Terrible background/stable
Behaviour Descriptors	Difficulty with concentration/high attention span Don't like authority/ok following instructions Poor/excellent anger management Goes off task easily/highly focused Shouts out in class/communicates appropriately	Answer back at teachers/never answers back Need prompting to stay on task/able to focus Does not/does understand rules Difficulty settling to task/on task immediately	Struggle to keep focus/fully focussed Shouts out/quiet in class Seeks attention from peers/quiet and on task Blames others/takes responsibility Inattentive/attentive(x2) Seeks peer attention /focussed on attainment	No boundaries/know what boundaries are Disengaged/engaged Poor/positive attitude Over vocal/speak at right times Inability to listen/listens well Prone to outbursts/predictable		Poor/high attention span Low/high frustration threshold Low/high resilience in terms of behaviour
Motivation	Not reaching potential/confident in reaching potential Able/unable to work to long term goal	No clear direction in life/ ambitious and focused Low/high initiative		No motivation/motivated Lack of motivation/motivated		
Self Esteem	Low/high self esteem (x2) Able/unable to accept praise (x2)	Low/high self esteem Fearful of new situations/confident to try things Unsure of themselves/confident		Insecure/secure (x2) Low/high self esteem Low/good academic confidence		Insecure/secure (x2) Low/high self esteem (x2)
Personality Descriptors				Stubborn/flexible Angry/happy Alpha-male/submissive Naughty/helpful Aggressive/gentle Spiteful/kind Bored/enthusiastic Excitable/relaxed	Aggressive/calm x2 Stubborn/easy going Lazy/conscientious Confrontational/ Un-confrontational Egotistical/driven by others Stubborn/willingness	Angry/pleasant/calm x2 Lazy/works hard Manipulative/un-manipulative (x2) Stubborn/compliant Defiant/compliant Lazy/studious Negative/positive Sulks/doesn't sulk

4. Literature Review

This literature review has been marked and is not to form part of the thesis examination. It is included here for completeness.

Literature Review

Study 1: Eliciting the voice of disaffected secondary school pupils at risk of exclusion.

Study 2: Engaging educational practitioners with the voice of disaffected secondary school pupils at risk of exclusion.

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to inform the aims of the proposed studies. These aims are: 1) to improve our understanding of the school experiences of disaffected pupils at risk of exclusion by eliciting their voice; 2) to engage educational practitioners with the voice of disaffected pupils at risk of exclusion through participatory action research. It therefore reviews and critiques current literature concerning disaffection in relation to school exclusion, participation and young people's voice. The review intends to identify gaps and weaknesses in the findings of current research which will form the basis of the rationale for the studies. It also considers literature in relation to participatory action research (as this theory underpins the approach of the second study) as well as exploring the relevance of the proposed studies to the role of educational psychologists (EPs).

A systematic search of the literature was conducted using the University of Exeter library, EBSCOE, Web of Knowledge and PsychInfo databases. The following terms were used:

Disaffection, voice, participation, at risk of exclusion, engagement, disengagement, disaffected students'/pupils'/young peoples' views, participatory action research.

In addition to the database search, recently published highly cited seminal articles were backwards referenced manually until no new references could be found. The systematic literature search resulted in the following themes and subthemes (see figure 1) which form the basis of the sections in this literature review.
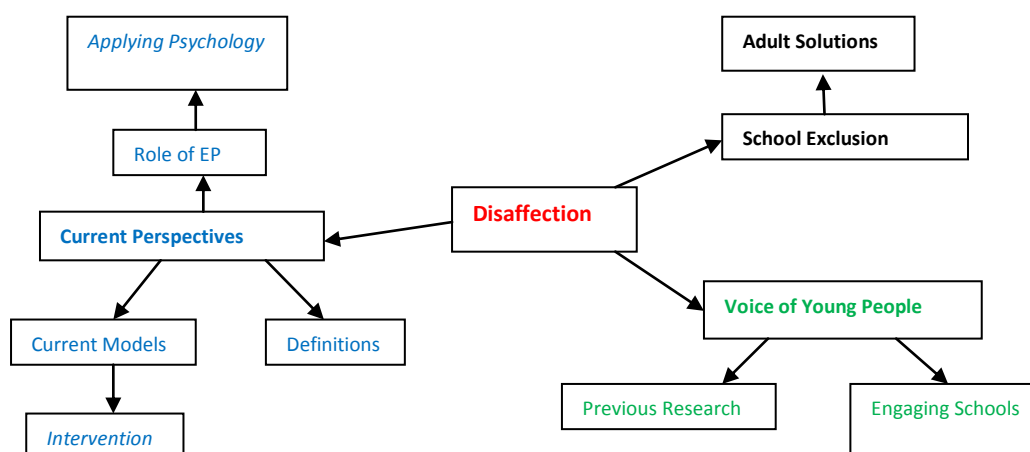
Figure 1: Themes and subthemes resulting from the systematic literature search.

1. Current Perspectives on Disaffection

1.1. Definitions

Throughout the literature disaffection is an elusive concept often associated with different perspectives. In its broadest sense and from a policy perspective 'disaffected students' are defined as those who are 'detached from' and 'unable to maintain themselves in education' (Room, 1995). More recently these types of students have been termed potential NEETs (not in education, employment or training). From an educational perspective disaffection is characterised in terms of non-participation and disengagement. Disaffected students do not or are reluctant to participate in the endeavour of schooling; they do not involve themselves in lessons, may play truant, do not complete homework and may actively resist (sometimes aggressively) school work (Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Gordon, 2001; Gutteridge, 2002). This, mainly behavioural description of disaffection, ignores its emotional dimension. Psychological perspectives emphasise emotions such as dejection, apathy and boredom which result in non-participatory beliefs, attitudes and behaviours such as passivity, lack of effort and mental withdrawal (Skinner, Kinderman & Furrer, 2009). From this perspective disaffection can be described as *an integrated set of negative attitudes, beliefs and behaviours with respect to the demands of*

school life generally and academic domains in particular'

(McNamara, 1998).

Research within the literature tends to focus on one aspect of disaffection with definitions driven by particular perspectives. There is a lack of research that uses a holistic approach in which the different perspectives can be integrated into a more coherent definition of disaffection. Figure 2 illustrates the definition of disaffection the proposed studies will be based on and shows how it integrates the different perspectives within the literature.

Educational Perspective

Non participatory behaviours / disengagement (persistent lateness, off task behaviours, active resistance to school work)

Negative attitudes and beliefs towards schooling (resulting from emotions such as apathy, dejection and boredom)

Detachment from school (through truancy, permanent exclusion or mental withdrawal)

Psychological Perspective

Policy/Social Perspective

Figure 2: Illustration of the how different perspectives can be integrated to form a definition of disaffection.

A second issue is the interchangeable use of the term disaffection and social, behavioural and emotional difficulties (SEBD). Much research into disaffection has been done using students in pupil referral units (PRU's) where it is assumed these students are disaffected because they have been unable to maintain themselves in mainstream education. In fact many of these students have been unsuccessful in mainstream due to SEBD which should not necessarily be synonymised with disaffection. Although SEBD can lead to disaffection it is also possible to experience SEBD and not have negative beliefs and attitudes towards school (Klein, 1999). In fact many students in PRU's report more positive attitudes towards school work and lessons once they leave mainstream (Sanders & Hendry, 1997). This also suggests disaffection may be context specific and by using students in PRU's their disaffection with mainstream education is explored 'out of context'. By applying such a broad definition of disaffection the result is a lack of research into its context specific nature particularly in relation to mainstream schooling. It also ignores more nuanced manifestations of disaffection (e.g. students who are able to maintain themselves in school but are still mentally withdrawn).

Some also critique the validity of the term disaffection as a label or category (Adams, Robertson, Gray-Ray & Ray, 2003). Categorising pupils as disaffected assumes they are a homogenous group with a shared set of common needs. Research into NEETs (a key indicator of educational disaffection) has shown that there is in fact a diversity

of influences on an individual's NEET status reflecting a range of needs (Pemberton, 2008). Categorising pupils under the label of 'disaffected' may result in some of these varied needs being overlooked.

1.2. Current Models

Kinder (1995) identified 3 models of disaffection within the literature and summarised them as; the individual pathologies; family background and school factors models. The family background model largely stems from social policy perspectives and associates disaffection with disadvantage (Slater, 2005). It argues that there is a causal link between disadvantaged dysfunctional families and disaffection (measured through the NEET status of young people in the family). Unstable family circumstances (such as divorced families and children in care) and what has been termed 'fractured childhoods' has been identified as a risk factor for young people becoming NEET (Arnold & Baker, 2012; Rees, Williamson & Istance, 1996). Lack of family role models that are positive towards education and employment especially in families that experience intergenerational unemployment (in which several generations within one family remain unemployed) are also associated with NEET status (Mckendrick, Scott & Sinclair, 2007). A limitation of this model is the heavy emphasis it puts on the influence of the family on young

people's disaffection. Its main concern is disaffection with education and employment post compulsory schooling and therefore ignores the role of school practices and within child factors.

The school factors model highlights educational practices and structures that are said to foster disaffection in pupils. Haber (2008) claims that 'school creates disaffection with its self' through its authoritarian rather than democratic practices that focus on fostering compliance in pupils through disciplinary practices and structures. Oldman (1994) states that alienation in school children arises from systems in schools (such as codes for pupil behaviour) designed to create manageable working conditions for teachers which are not necessarily the optimal conditions for pupils to enjoy learning. The government's standards agenda, realised through rigorous assessment regimes, is another identified school structure said to foster disaffection. The intensive and relentless regime of assessment becomes a constant reminder to low achieving pupils of their lack of success and leads to their inevitable disaffection (Armstrong, 2005). Finally, the school curriculum is highlighted as another source of disaffection. Much research claims it to be too prescriptive, failing to stimulant the interest of many learners due to its irrelevance to the everyday experiences of pupils (Brettingham, 2006; O'Keefe, 1994).

A limitation of the school factors model is that its evidence base is largely drawn from research using practitioner views. Studies using pupil views have contradicted some of its claims. For example, Solomon and Rogers (2001), who explored the experiences of 6 young people in pupil referral units, found there was little evidence from the views of the pupils that suggested disaffection was the result of an inappropriate curriculum.

The 'individual pathologies' model (historically associated with psychological perspectives) points to within child factors as the source of disaffection. A common view held by practitioners is that individual factors such as low self esteem, motivation and self efficacy are at the root of disaffection. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN), poor language skills and low achievement have been linked to disaffection and this is said to influence their feelings of self esteem, sense of motivation and self efficacy (Slater, 2005). Non-participation in these pupils has been linked to their inability to perceive themselves as part of a learning community due to rigid and unchanging negative views of themselves as learners (Collins, 2000). Low achieving pupils who do not receive much recognition in school have been shown to seek alternative recognition by becoming part of a 'schoolastic counter culture' (manifested through negative behaviours and attitudes towards school) (Humphrey, Charlton & Newton, 2004). Pupils with a poor sense of perceived competence (in their ability to achieve school related goals) have been associated

with low levels of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A study exploring the views of 16 practitioners in pupil referral units claimed that disaffection stemmed from a poor sense of agency and self efficacy in the pupils themselves (Solomon & Rogers, 2001). Again this model is limited by the evidence base which is largely based on practitioner views. It also focuses on disaffection among low achievers ignoring disaffection that might arise from 'bright pupils' being 'turned off' by schooling.

1.2.3. Interventions

The literature lacks research that integrates the different models of disaffection (due in part to the different research disciplines the models are drawn from). As a result the evidence base for interventions tends to be drawn from a particular model of disaffection with little acknowledgement of other perspectives. The individual pathologies model has led to therapeutic type interventions designed to tackle within child 'deficits'. Examples are the use of motivational interviewing sessions and the employment of specific learning mentors to encourage, motivate and raise the self esteem of disaffected learners (Atkinson & Woods, 2003). Interventions drawn from the school factors model have focused on providing alternative curriculums for disaffected pupils with emphasis on more relevant, practical skills and competencies rather such as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) (Solomon & Rogers, 2001).Lastly,

interventions that focus on the family background model of disaffection attempt to reduce disaffection in children by facilitating better school – parent partnerships via support workers (Vulliamy & Webb, 2003).

There is a clear gap in the literature for interventions that use a more integrated model of disaffection which acknowledges different perspectives within the literature. Figure 3 (adapted from Klein, 1999) illustrates the model of disaffection that will be used in the proposed studies and shows how the different perspectives within the literature can be integrated.
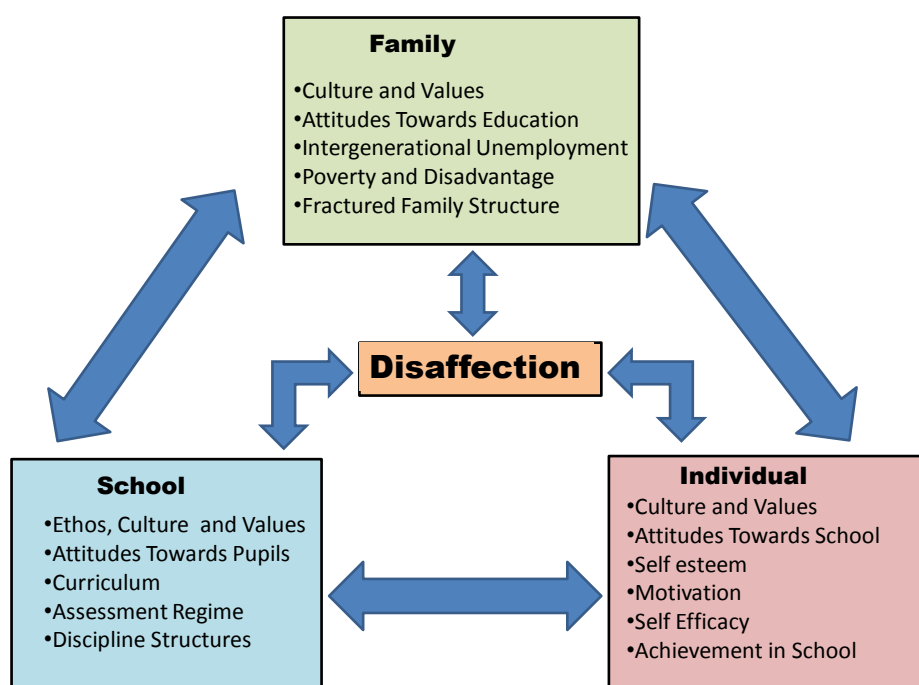
Figure 3: Integrated model of disaffection that acknowledges different perspectives within the literature.

1.3. Role of the EP

Research that elicits the voices of disaffected pupils at risk of exclusion is highly relevant to the practice of EPs. The British Psychological Society (BPS) states that EPs should be involved in 'maximising the participation of all learners' particularly those that are 'vulnerable to exclusionary practices' (BPS, 2002). EPs have an important role in eliciting disaffected pupils voices to ensure that pupils' self identified needs are taken into account during the implementation of inclusive strategies (Hartas, 2011).The introduction of the Raising Participation Agenda from 2015 (in which pupils will be required to stay in some form of education and training until they are 18), will mean EPs may be increasingly required to advise on appropriate post 16 provision for disaffected pupils. Ongoing research in this area will inform their practice in terms of appropriate interventions and strategies for disaffected pupils at risk of exclusion and the capacity of schools to implement these strategies.

1.3.1 Applying Psychology

Psychological perspectives on disaffection have tended to explore how pupils view themselves as learners emphasising within child factors (such as self esteem and self efficacy) and their interaction with the school environment (for example poor achievement resulting

in low self esteem which entrenched over an extended period of time leads to disaffection). A more holistic model of disaffection in terms of needs rather than 'within child deficits' may be more appropriate when attempting to engage with the voice of disaffected pupils. Recently self determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) has been increasingly associated with disaffection and theoretically underpins the widely used 'student engagement instrument' (Appleton, Christenson, Kim & Reschly, 2006) which has been used to identify pupils at risk of disaffection.

Self determination theory emphasises that innate psychological needs are the basis of well being and gives scope for relating these needs to educational contexts. It identifies three innate psychological needs (competence, relatedness and autonomy) that when satisfied increases a person's sense of self-motivation and well being. Competence is the need for a person to feel they have the ability to achieve goals; relatedness the need to make meaningful relationships with others and autonomy the need to feel some influence or control over events that happen. When these needs are not met a person is likely to experience low motivation and a poor sense of wellbeing. Self determination theory is backed by considerable amount of empirical evidence (see Ryan & Deci, 2000 for an overview). Sheldon, Reis and Ryan (1996) found that a person's fluctuations in mood were directly related to fluctuations in their reported sense of autonomy and competence. Relatedness,

competence and autonomy have all been associated with levels of motivation in pupils. Students who were asked to complete a task in the presence of a stranger (who ignored them and failed to respond to them) reported a poor sense of relatedness and this lowered their motivation to complete the task (Anderson, Manoogian & Reznick, 1976). Consistent with this, Ryan, Stiller and Lynch (1994) observed more positive school related behaviours when students claimed to feel cared for and secure at school (a high sense of relatedness) and if their perceived sense of competence was higher they were more motivated in school generally. Teachers who are supportive of their pupils' senses of autonomy have been shown to increase their pupils' intrinsic motivation for school tasks. While those teachers who are more controlling in their teaching style show no change in their pupils' levels of motivation (Fink, Boggiano & Barrett, 1990; Utman, 1997).

A limitation of these studies is, ironically, their empirical nature. Many were conducted under highly controlled conditions using quantitative data from self report questionnaires in which the voice of disaffected pupils were not engaged in any adequate depth. It could, therefore, be argued that self determination theory has been constructed through research which has used an 'adult lens'. There are no studies, as yet, in which self determination theory has been used

when eliciting the voice of disaffected pupils. There is, therefore, a gap in the current body knowledge as to its effectiveness as a framework for understanding the self identified needs of disaffected pupils.

It is important to note that the literature references some weaknesses in self determination theory. Firstly, some of the evidence associating autonomy with motivation is not supported when children with attachment difficulties are considered. Milyavskaya, Ma, Koestner, Lydon and McClure (2012) found that children who had avoidant and anxious attachment styles were not more intrinsically motivated by autonomy supportive figures (teachers who helped them to make autonomous decisions regarding a learning problem) but rather it was in response to authority controlling figures (teachers who told them what to do in the task) that their persistence with the task was increased. Secondly, in collectivist cultures pursuit of autonomy (individualism) is seen as hampering the development of satisfying relationships. There is evidence that Chinese students do not rate autonomy as a significant need if their sense of relatedness is already positive (Vansteenkiste, Lens, Soenens & Luyckx, 2006). Lastly there is evidence to show what appear to be consciously self-determined behaviours may actually be non-consciously primed (Levesque, Copeland & Sutcliffe, 2008). Bargh and Ferguson (2000) showed subconsciously priming participants with words such as 'win' and 'succeed' led to better performance on a task than those primed

with neutral words. They argue that self-determined behaviours are not necessarily under conscious control but can in fact be unconscious behaviours that are 'endorsed by the self' as being self determined (the individual decides in hindsight that the behaviours are self-determined).

2. Disaffection and School Exclusion

The current policy context concerning educational inclusion is influenced by the much broader aim of social inclusion. This is a move away from previous notions of 'integration' where the emphasis was on individuals to fit in with the practices and structures of schools (Ainscow, 1995). In contrast social inclusion places responsibilities on schools to adapt their procedures and structures to accommodate all pupils with varied educational needs. In this context educational inclusion can be defined as the full participation of pupils in the '*cultures, curriculum and communities of local schools'* (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughn & Shaw, 2000). A common challenge identified by schools is the effective social inclusion of disaffected pupils (Atkinson & Woods, 2003). Disaffection can manifest itself in disruptive behaviours (active and aggressive resistance), truancy (including school phobia), mental withdrawal and disengagement with the curriculum. All of which places disaffected pupils at risk of exclusion from school (Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Gordon, 2001).

There is considerable discourse in the literature regarding a close association between disaffection and school exclusion. Klein (1999) states that disaffected students are either 'pushed out' (due to disruptive behaviour) or 'dropped out' (due to truancy) by schools. Cullingford and Morrison (1996) argue that disaffection inevitably results in deliberate disruptive behaviours that end with exclusion from school. Goodman (2001) goes as far to say that all permanent exclusions from school are due to pupils' disaffection with education generally and schools' failures to socially include these pupils.

The high number of disaffected pupils at risk of exclusion suggests that current inclusive practice is significantly challenged by disaffection (Harris, Vincent, Thomson & Toalster, 2006). Disaffection challenges inclusion for two main reasons. Firstly schools only have a duty to ensure pupils are included if they do not disrupt the 'efficient education of other children' (SEN and Disability Act, 2001). Schools are therefore under no obligation to include disaffected pupils who express their disaffection through negative behaviours which disrupt other pupils' learning. These pupils are therefore more likely to face exclusion. Secondly, participation can be viewed as an individual rather than school responsibility (Bragg, 2007). It is often assumed by educational practitioners that the negative attitudes and behaviours of disaffected pupils are evidence that they have no

desire to participate or be included in school. Exclusion is therefore deemed the best option for them.

Recent research, however, contradicts these ideas. Hartas (2011) showed that disaffected pupils' negative attitudes and behaviours, rather than being evidence of a desire to disengage, stemmed instead from the desire to express a voice which was being marginalised in school. Pupils stated that teachers tended to listen to the academically able and therefore disruptive behaviours and negative attitudes were a means of engaging with teachers to express their dissatisfaction with how they were being treated. A study which encouraged 8 boys at risk of exclusion to voice their feelings in an open forum within the school found they felt marginalised because of their lack of progress and the only way of expressing their subsequent alienation and estrangement was through negative behaviours in school (Barrow, 1998). Fletcher and Brown (2002) also observed that pupils identified as disaffected in modern languages lessons used disruptive behaviours to attempt to engage with teachers. In response to this research, Fletcher (2011) alluded to a new concept of 'inconvenient student voice'. In this, pupils whose voices are marginalised in schools express their views and opinions through behaviours considered 'inconvenient' by schools such as adding graffiti messages to school property. These

behaviours are then perceived as disaffection with the assumption that the pupils do not wish to participate in school resulting in their voices being ignored.

2.1 Adult Solutions

When disaffection results in school exclusion it is associated with several negative outcomes. Excluded pupils have a significantly higher chance of becoming teenage parents, unemployed, homeless or convicted criminals (Truancy and Social Exclusion Report, 1998). There is an association between exclusion from school and long term social exclusion. Across the last 15 years research has shown consistent links between disaffection and becoming NEET with approximately 34% of all permanently excluded pupils falling into this category (DCSF, 2009; Thompson, 2011).

Given the significance, in terms of negative outcomes, of a disaffected pupil being excluded from school successive governments have sought solutions to the problem of non-participation in young people. Solutions have been implemented via universal imposed policies such as encouraging pupils to stay in school via the educational maintenance grant or in the most recent policy shift making participation in education or training beyond the age of 16 compulsory. The government has been criticised for taking what has been termed a 'disciplinary approach' to non-participation

that stigmatises and potentially criminalises disaffection (Simmons, 2008). Other critics claim that solutions via dictated policies will struggle to be successful as a solution to disaffection and school exclusion because at its core it represents imposed adult solutions to young people's problems (Gordon, 2001; Hill, Davis, Prout & Tisdall, 2004). If, as suggested earlier, disaffection is not a failure to participate but a failure to have a voice heard then imposing adult centred solutions will only marginalise this voice further potentially breeding more disaffection.

3. Disaffection and the Voice of Young People

In 1989 the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child stated that all children had a right to express their views freely on all matters that affect them. Despite this, little research has explored children's own accounts of their everyday lives and experiences (Kirby, 2001). Critics argue that much of the research in top adolescent journals is constructed using an 'adult lens' with the perspectives and real life experiences of young people set aside (Bennett, Coggan & Adams, 2003; Daiute & Fine, 2003). This is because traditionally children have been observed, measured and tested on rather than being considered 'expert enough in their own experiences' to have their views sought (Fielding, 2001).

Gersch (1992) emphasises the importance of seeking the views of children by claiming that in much research there is a fundamental

'mismatch of perception' between adults and children. Research is based on the incorrect assumption that children's views of the world 'tally exactly with that of adults'. In fact if we assume that no one else can have the same shared experience (even adults and children) it follows that adults and children will make sense of the same events in different ways and therefore have unique perceptions of the same events (Ravenette, 1977). There is, therefore, a significant argument for eliciting and listening to children's views and voices in research.

Eliciting and listening to children's voices, however, does not necessarily give them power and agency. Adults can listen to pupils' voices but chose not to act on them. Alderson (2000) points to 'decorative' accounts of pupil voice (where pupils give their views but have no understanding what for) and the negative impact of this. An example is in the use of some student councils where pupils' views are elicited to meet accountability criteria (such as OfSTED) and then subsequently are not acted upon (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). Pupil voice that is controlled and directed by adults (in terms of what aspects of school pupils can express their views about) is another way power and agency is taken away from pupils. One common example is student councils set up to discuss 'comfort issues' (e.g. improving the quality of school dinners) but which do not allow pupils to discuss their views on teaching and learning (Lodge, 2005).

Schools may chose to not act on pupil voice because of a conflict of positions. For example if acting on views requires too much effort and resources on the part of the school or undermines the authority

237

and control of teachers. Other barriers to schools acting on pupil voice relate to adult scepticism about pupils' capacity and capability to express a valid view and feeling threatened about the potential challenge to adult authority (Kellett, 2008). In view of this disaffection may occur as a result of their voice not being acted upon (even if they have been allowed to express it).

3.1. Previous Research on the Views of Disaffected Pupils

There have been many large scale surveys of pupils' attitudes towards school (see Gardiner, 2003; Sanders & Hendry, 1997). Large sample sizes (up to 15,000 pupils in some cases) are used to increase the ability to generalise the findings and provide 'robust', quantitative data but results in disaffected pupils' voices becoming lost and homogenised into an assumed 'single student voice'. Large scale surveys are therefore more often than not unrepresentative of disaffected pupils' views. The bias towards large scale questionnaire studies means there are few studies that have authentically explored in depth the voice of disaffected pupils. This is also in part due to issues in engaging disaffected pupils who are often reluctant to take part in traditional interviews or complete questionnaires. A suggested barrier to participation may be poor language skills which are often associated with disaffected pupils (Arnold & Baker, 2012). Pupils may find expressing themselves difficult especially in an adult

directed activity such as an interview where power differentials can exist between participant and interviewer.

Studies have largely tried to elicit the voice of disaffected pupils through retrospective interviews after pupils have been excluded from school. In one study exploring the link between school disaffection and young people's NEET status 'peer researchers' were used to engage participants who were NEET in semi-structured interviews. Participants cited boredom and the uncaring attitudes of teachers as some of the reasons for their disaffection with school and education in general (Pemberton, 2008). Another study which interviewed 10 excluded pupils in a pupil referral unit found similar themes with pupils citing the lack of ability to form relationships with their peers and teachers, lack of success due to their below average ability and difficult home circumstances as reasons for their exclusion and negative attitudes towards school. One pupil stated; *' I hated my time at school...teachers and classmates had it in for me. The lessons were always boring...and the teacher would get angry at me for no reason'* (Sanders & Hendry, 1997).

Conflict with teachers is another cited reason for disaffection. Meeker, Edmonson and Fisher (2008), in a large study of 158 'high school drop outs', commented on responses from interviewees that characterised disaffection as retribution for perceived unfair treatment by teachers (e.g. *'All the teachers wanted me to fail so I acted out in class and stuff like that')*. Some responses went on to reflect on negative cycles of retribution between teachers and pupils

('*My teacher and I had a conflict and she didn't want me to come back to class. When I would come back she would kick me out. And the same thing would happen with another teacher. So they kicked me out.'*). There are other studies that highlight disaffection as a response to perceived 'threat' or unfair treatment by teachers (Mcdonald & Marsh, 2004; Thompson & Bell, 2005). Some examples of responses from these studies include: '(they) *would target me out for being a troublemaker and I was expected to get into trouble'*; '*the teachers don't treat you the same as everyone else';* '*they judged me on preconceived impressions...I just got singled out'* (Thompson & Bell, 2005). In this context, therefore, disaffection may not be about the need to express a voice but retribution for perceived unfair treatment by adults.

Accessing the voice of disaffected pupils retrospectively can compromise the richness of the data. For example in one study using retrospective interviews it was found that participants, although able to express their negative emotions towards school, found it difficult to articulate in depth any more about their school experience. An example of one such response was, '*I hated school, I don't know why...it's school you've gotta go'* (Cullingford & Morrison, 1996). Studies that explore the voice of disaffected pupils while at school have yielded richer data. Hartas (2011) set up a forum for disaffected young people within a school. In this forum young people were able to articulate the perceived mismatch between their needs and what the school could offer them (e.g. less academic subjects that were

more tailored to their interests). They were able to conclude that their transition to employment was being hindered by these issues in school and felt strongly that this needed to change.

In many studies, it has been argued that participatory research approaches elicit better responses from young people (in terms of the quality of the data generated and level of engagement with the research) than other research approaches (Cahill, 2004; Claudio & Singone, 2008). In a participatory research approach the production of knowledge is democratised (Cronholm & Goldhukl, 2004) via research that is done 'with' rather than 'on' people. It takes the epistemological stance that participants co-construct knowledge (with the researcher) about themselves, their realities and the problem under study through participation in the research process (Reason, 1998). This epistemological stance is not merely a value position regarding participant 'rights' (the 'right' to be able to take part collaboratively and democratically in research) and emancipation (research that leads to social action). It also concerns the type of knowledge generated which is deemed to be more 'authentic 'because it draws on the unique insight participants have into their own experiences. Grover (2004) argues that by drawing on participants 'self knowledge' researchers gain more authentic knowledge about the participants' subjective realities and more nuanced understandings of complex social problems and phenomena.

A central tenant to participatory research is collaboration and the sharing of power between the researcher and participant. Rodriguez and Brown (2009) cite the diffusion of power differentials as a factor in participants engaging to a greater degree with participatory research approaches in comparison to other research approaches. Other studies also associate participatory approaches with high levels of engagement. Claudio and Stingone (2008) found that the use of participatory research methods (in which they worked in collaboration with children in classrooms) compared to questionnaires given out through teachers yielded 80.5% compared to a 45.5% response rate in a study about children's experiences of asthma. James (2006) found the use of participatory approaches improved teacher's engagement with students in care and Maglajlic (2004) claimed a participatory approach was instrumental in engaging a community in open discussion of the transmission and prevention of HIV.

In participatory research participants are encouraged to tell their story without guidance in whatever medium they are best able to express themselves in (e.g. using photos, drawings or video diaries). This helps to overcome language barriers and literacy difficulties. It encourages methods of communication which are familiar to young people and are often creative and visual. Participants decide what is important and the researcher does not limit their response or impose constraints (Adiss, Horstman & O'Leary, 2008; Carney, Murphy, &

McClure, 2003). Despite its frequent use in health studies to explore the views of young people (Mathers, Anderson, McDonald & Chesson, 2009) there are few, if any studies employing participatory research methods with disaffected pupils (only two studies were found in my literature search). Riley and Doking (2004) worked with pupils who chose to create pictures about what school meant to them. The majority created what was claimed as 'sad and depressing places'. A flaw in this design lay in the large sample size (45 pupils) which meant that follow up informal interviews (in which the pupils would then talk through what they had created) were not practically possible. Interpretation was therefore left in the hands of the adults meaning, although a noble attempt to engage pupils through participatory methods, it ultimately remained an adult centric study with the views of the pupils not fully realised.

The second study found, used photo elicitation as a method to elicit pupils' voices. Pupils drawn from top and bottom subject sets created photo scrap books of their school experiences. Care was taken to avoid what was termed the 'photographers gaze' (in which people place their own interpretation on what others have photographed) by informally meeting each pupil so they could explain the reasons behind including the various photos in their scrapbook. Disaffected pupils were contrasted with those identified by the school as having high levels of engagement. Themes throughout were discipline and surveillance, peer and staff – pupil relationships. It was found that

disaffected pupils took considerably more photos (but less of teachers) than the engaged pupils and were able to use their photos to articulate their reasons for feeling negative about school. For example pupils explained that they had taken lots of pictures of fences and security cameras because they felt they were 'being watched all the time' and kept in a 'prison' which is why they felt unhappy at school (Cremin, Mason & Busher, 2011). Given the lack of studies using a participatory approach there is a gap in current knowledge concerning its effectiveness with disaffected pupils and the added depth it may bring to our understanding of their school experiences.

3.2. Schools and the Voice of Disaffected Pupils

Weller (2007) observed that schools in general are reluctant to engage with the 'heterogeneity of pupil voice' especially from those who are disaffected. When asked about their ability to express their voice in school disaffected pupils have stated they feel 'invisible' with school councils being reserved for the 'clever students' (Hartas, 2011). There are several barriers to schools engaging with disaffected pupils mentioned throughout the literature. Firstly school councils tend to be accessed by the academically able and well behaved leaving disaffected pupils' views marginalised. This had led to claims of a new 'elite' being created in secondary schools where some are privileged in being able to express their views via school councils in return for their good behaviour and high achievement

(Bragg, 2007). Another issue with using school councils to elicit pupils' voices is that it pushes pupils into adult ways of participating (Prout, 2003). Pupils are treated like consumers being asked for feedback about 'products' that schools offer (e.g. subject choice, dress code). It assumes children have developed adult like consumer behaviours which disaffected pupils may be less concerned with (Haynes, 2009). The purpose of eliciting pupils' views is often achievement and performance orientated (so the school can perform better in league tables) with less emphasis on pupils' experiences of learning (Watkins, 2001). This purpose sits better with the more academically able 'elite' pupils but may marginalise disaffected students who may be more concerned with their day to day experiences of learning. Lastly, some educational practitioners feel a need to maintain their authority and position in relation to pupils (especially those that challenge this through disaffection) and can feel threatened that pupils given too much voice may exercise these rights irresponsibly (Borland, Laybourn, Hill & Brown, 1998).

There are few, if any, studies in the literature (I found one) which report on schools successfully engaging with the voice of disaffected pupils. In most cases engagement has come via a third party such as a connexions worker or educational psychologist without the school being directly involved. In studies where schools have been successful at engaging with the voice of disaffected pupils it has been done at the individual teacher level who have taken it upon

245

themselves to conduct participatory action research in their own classrooms. Participatory action research as a method is well suited to engaging schools with the voice of disaffected pupils. It is aimed at identifying 'transformative goals' that favour the least powerful in society (in this case disaffected pupils) and emphasises collaboration with the population under study making sure power differentials are balanced between researchers and participants (Minkler, 2000). It can also empower educational practitioners to identify and take ownership over their problems giving them greater confidence in their ability to promote change and a stronger commitment to achieving the goals they have set themselves (Pine, 2009).

In one example of participatory action research with disaffected pupils (the only one I found), a media teacher used the approach to reflect on her pupils' responses to the films she had chosen to discuss and analyse as part of the course. The pupils were reluctant to take part in any adult discussions regarding the films choosing to make derogatory comments about them instead. By listening to their voice she came to realise that her 'adult' view of the films differed from her pupils and this was, perhaps, what the pupils had been trying to tell her through their antagonistic reactions to the films. Consequently she was able to change how she approached class discussions with the pupils in the future taking into account their differing views (Bragg, 2001).

There is a lack of studies using participatory action research methods as a means of engaging educational practitioners with the voice of disaffected pupils particularly at a systems or school level (all studies found were at an individual teacher level). There is a gap, therefore, in the current body knowledge regarding its effectiveness in engaging schools with the voice of disaffected pupils.

Conclusions

The purpose of this literature review was to inform the aims of the proposed studies. In reviewing the literature, gaps and weaknesses have become apparent in the research which can be used to justify the rationale for the proposed studies. Table 1 (overleaf) summarises the gaps and weaknesses identified and details how these will be addressed in the proposed studies.

A recurring theme throughout the literature has been that research into disaffection is 'adult centric'. It is designed, led and evaluated by adults. Findings are largely drawn from adult views. Solutions are subsequently imposed on pupils by adults. The main rationale, therefore, for the proposed research is to address the 'adult centric' themes within the current debates. It aims to elicit what pupils think

are the solutions to disaffection and engage adults in listening to

what they have to say. I end with a quote by Gordon (2001) who

eloquently summarises the key rationale for my research;

'nobody seems to be asking them, the most important participants in the school exclusions policy debate. Perhaps we should ask the right questions and listen to the children's voices before imposing adult solutions'.

	Application of Theory	Research Methods
Gaps/ Weaknesses in Literature	- Lack of interventions based on an integrated model of disaffection that incorporates different perspectives. - Interventions/solutions largely drawn from practitioner views. - Self determination theory has not been explored as a framework for understanding pupils own self-identified needs in relation to disaffection.	- Retrospective studies have not produced very rich data. - Lack of studies using participatory methods. - Participatory action research not explored as method for engaging practitioners with the voices of disaffected pupils at a whole school level.
The Proposed Studies	- Use holistic model of disaffection that integrates various perspectives (see figure 2). - Emphasis on 'pupil driven' solutions to disaffection. - Self determination theory as the underpinning framework for understanding disaffected pupils' views.	- Views of disaffected pupils elicited within the context of mainstream schooling. - Participatory methods to elicit rich data in terms of disaffected pupils' voices. - Participatory action research methods, ideally, at a school level, to engage practitioners with disaffected pupils' voice.

Table 1: Gaps and weaknesses in the current literature and how the

proposed studies address them.

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