"Ask them what helps them and try to go ahead with the plan"*: an appreciative exploration of what works to support young people's behaviour at school

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*Quotation from one young person (see chapter three).

Overarching abstract

The permanent exclusion (PE) of young people from school is frequently linked to negative social and academic outcomes, providing the dominant rationale for reducing the numbers of young people who are permanently excluded. The aim of the systemic literature review was to explore what is known about interventions that aim to reduce the number of school exclusions. I conducted a mixed methods review asking the questions, 'which interventions are most effective in reducing numbers of school exclusions?' and, 'why are some interventions effective in reducing school exclusions?' The prevailing themes which emerged were named positivity, motivation and communication and it was felt that these were important elements of effective intervention in reducing numbers of school exclusions.

Informed by gaps highlighted in the literature review, the aim of the empirical research was to triangulate these findings with theory generated from young people's perceptions using a grounded theory approach. 18 young people were asked questions loosely based on the positive method Appreciative Inquiry in order to ascertain their perceptions of 'what works' to support their behaviour effectively using focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews. The main thematic categories created were learning, self-esteem, environment, control and change of feelings, and these were related together to form a theory. The young people's theory suggested that self-esteem was a central element and was interrelated to the categories of learning, environment and control. They suggested that in a positive system these factors would cause a positive change of feelings then a positive change in behaviour.

The high level of triangulation between the literature and young people's perceptions suggests that the type of intervention may not be as important as how intervention or prevention is implemented and then perceived by the young people. However, the findings suggest that schools and classrooms that promote positive self-esteem, young people's control, good communication and use of language based on feelings, may be effective in reducing PEs and are perceived by young people to be effective at supporting their behaviour. The high corroboration with wider research suggests that this theory may describe more than just challenging behaviour and therefore it may be applied more broadly to learning behaviour and social behaviour.

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A systematic literature review

What is known about interventions to reduce the number of school exclusions?

Abstract

The permanent exclusion (PE) of young people from school is frequently linked to negative social and academic outcomes, providing the dominant rationale for reducing the numbers of young people who are permanently excluded. The aim of the systemic literature review was to explore what is known about interventions that aim to reduce the number of school exclusions. I conducted a mixed methods review asking the questions, 'which interventions are most effective in reducing numbers of school exclusions?' and, 'why are some interventions effective in reducing school exclusions?' The prevailing themes which emerged were named positivity, motivation and communication and it was felt that these were important elements of effective intervention in reducing numbers of school exclusions. This review highlighted a need for further research into the perceptions of young people with behavioural difficulties within a mainstream setting, around why certain interventions are successful in order to triangulate the findings from this review.

Introduction

Reducing the number of school exclusions is important in order to increase the inclusion of young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) in mainstream provision and to reduce the negative outcomes for these young people (Thomas, Walker, & Webb, 1998). The aim of this review was to systematically explore literature relating to school exclusions to gain further understanding of interventions aiming to reduce their frequency. I began by exploring the definition of 'permanent exclusion' (PE) and the current and historical political context of school exclusions. I then discussed the reasons for reducing the numbers of PEs, which became the rationale for the review. The current review and the process of searching, mapping and synthesising the data were then discussed. Three main themes were created and examined alongside previous literature.

What is permanent exclusion?

Gordon (2001) defines exclusion as "the expulsion or suspension of a pupil from school" (p. 70). The 1993 Education Act states that there are two types of school exclusion, fixed term and permanent (Gordon, 2001). Imich (1994) defines fixed term exclusion as when 'the pupil is given a definite date to return to the same school' (p.4), also known as a suspension (Gordon, 2001). PE is when 'the pupil is unable to return to the original school, and the [Local Authority] is required to provide alternative provision' (Imich, 1994, p. 4). Harris and colleagues (2000) state that this is the most severe form of punishment a school can give. A number of documents share these definitions (e.g. Clegg, Stackhouse, Finch, Murphy, & Nicholls, 2009; Imich, 1994; Vulliamy & Webb, 2000) yet the terms seem so widely understood that many forego definitions (Blyth & Milner, 1994; Charlton, Panting, & Willis, 2004; Hallam & Castle, 2001; McCrystal, Higgins, & Percy, 2006; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009; Sellman, Bedward, Cole, & Daniels, 2002). Therefore these definitions were used in the current review.

Current exclusion procedures in England and Wales are based on the 1986 Education Act (sections 22-26) and more recently updated in the Education Acts of 2002 (section 52) and 2011. Pupil behaviour is considered the responsibility of the head teacher and they have the power to exclude (Gordon, 2001; Imich, 1994). However, the decision to permanently exclude must be agreed by the school's governing body. It is considered the Local Authority's (LA) responsibility to find alternative provision for the young person (Gordon, 2001).

The exclusion process varies hugely between countries. Some are arguably more inclusive (e.g. France, Germany and Scotland) where the 'managed move' process is encouraged (Vincent, Harris, Thomson, & Toalster, 2007), or where no alternative to PE exists (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007). Some areas (for example, in parts of Australia) are arguably less inclusive as they have many different ways available to suspend young people for disciplinary purposes (*ibid*). This review focused only on studies based in England and Wales in order to increase the reliability when generalising the findings to LAs in England and Wales.

This review was not simply exploring the opposite of inclusion (see Ainscow et al., 2006, pp. 14-15), but instead PE is believed to be a label given to young people who are refused attendance at a school, often for disciplinary purposes. Although relevant to this review, the area of inclusion is represented by a vast amount of complex literature (Ainscow et al., 2006) and is therefore discussed further in chapter two.

The current and historical political context to school exclusions

Procedures for excluding young people from school were first introduced in the Education Act of 1986. In the 1990s the number of young people being excluded from school increased dramatically, leading to escalated concern in this area from government (OFSTED, 1996; Pritchard & Cox, 1998; Vulliamy & Webb, 2003). Department for Education figures of PEs in 2009-2010 have approximately halved since 1997 (2011b). However, central government and arguably LAs remain challenged by the inclusion of young people with BESD (Vincent et al., 2007).

Due to this concern and challenge, the government has published a number of strategies and policies to support young people's behaviour in school. For example, in 2002 the Behaviour Improvement Programme was introduced focusing on the development of healthy schools with emotionally literate pupils (National Association Of Schoolmasters And Union Of Women Teachers, 2004) and in 2008 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) published guidance on exclusions from school which also discussed the importance of early intervention and prevention through positive approaches. In 2009, the Secretary of State announced The Behaviour Challenge (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009a) , a strategy to improve young people's school behaviour. The aim was for all schools to gain a 'good' or 'outstanding' behaviour rating from OFSTED by 2012. The

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act of 2009 outlined that all state secondary schools in England must work as part of a behaviour and attendance partnership which aims to improve overall standards of behaviour (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2010a). In 2010 the DCSF published the Inclusion Development Programme for supporting young people with BESD. Arguably, these documents all encouraged early intervention and prevention of PEs by promoting positive behaviour in school. The frequent review of behaviour strategies, policies and processes suggests that improving behaviour in schools has been a government priority.

More recent government publications including The Education Act 2011, The School Discipline Regulations (2012), Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England (Department for Education, 2012c), Ensuring Good Behaviour in Schools (Department for Education, 2012b) arguably reflect a change in focus on PE procedures and reducing negative behaviour in schools. 2011 saw the beginning of the School Exclusion Trial 2011-2014 (Department for Education, 2012e) which aims to improve the education and opportunities of young people who are permanently excluded rather than preventing exclusion.

Why is it important to reduce permanent exclusions?

The reasons for reducing PEs give a wider rationale for this review. The exclusion of young people is thought to have 'damaging effects' (Robinson, 1998, p. 75). PE has been associated with wider social exclusion from society (Hayton, 1999) and is also often associated with long periods out of education, under-achievement, reduced employment opportunities, homelessness, emotional and mental health concerns, isolation and entry into crime (e.g. Pritchard & Cox, 1998; Sellman et al., 2002; Theriot, Craun, & Dupper, 2010; Vulliamy & Webb, 2000). Schnelling and Dew-Hughes (2002) state that:

'*It would be an oversimplification, to state that exclusion from school causes crime, and unfair and unhelpful to schools to lay the blame for youth crime at their door. The link between exclusion and crime remains a correlation, rather than a simple causation.*' (p.231)

Although caution must be applied when suggesting causation, I understand that this is a vulnerable population where support and intervention may help. In support of Schnelling and Dew-Hughes' opinions, Robinson (1998) suggests that the factors

associated with the negative outcomes of exclusion may be part of the initial cause of the challenging behaviour and then the exclusion itself. Imich (1994) and Robinson (1998) also suggest that PE may reward challenging behaviour by giving young people more freedom. This therefore suggests societal as well as individual advantages to reducing PEs.

The current review

In this review I explored the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce school exclusions of young people, exploring the question, 'what is known about interventions to reduce school exclusions?' Figure 1 shows a summary of the review process, based on Harden *et al.'s* (2004) work. The subheadings in the review reflect those in Figure 1.

Review Question
What is known about interventions to reduce school exclusions?

Systematic Searches

1 - Systematic and exhaustive searches using the criteria above identified 134 citations
2 - Retrieval, screening and classification of abstracts or full reports of 100 studies that were relevant to the inclusion criteria

Search of Unpublished Literature

Search of unpublished theses produced 3 results.

Hand Searches

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties - yielded 4 new studies
Educational Psychology in Practice - yielded 3 new studies
Educational and Child Psychology - yielded 0 new studies

Inclusion Criteria

Regarding 'school exclusions' (as defined above), settings that were considered education settings, an 'intervention' study (as defined above), in England or Wales only.
Resulting in:
1 study from ERIC
2 additional studies from Scopus
1 additional study from Web of Knowledge
1 additional study from unpublished literature search (1 was unobtainable)
5 studies from hand searches
(a total of 10 studies)

Weight of Evidence

(as suggested by Gough (2007))
It became evident that there was an issue of quality in a number of the studies and therefore 3 studies were excluded. Specific reasons include the exclusion of information regarding methods of data collection and methods of data analysis.
(leaving a total of 7 studies)

Quantitative Review Question

Which interventions are most effective in reducing school exclusions?
Mapping and synthesis of data.
(3 studies)

Qualitative Review Question

Why are some interventions effective in reducing school exclusions?
Mapping and synthesis of data
(6 studies)

In Depth Review
Synthesis of the two research questions

Figure 1. Flow chart to show a summary of the review process.

As well as following this structure I adopted process methods suggested by Petticrew and Roberts (2006; See Table 1) by searching, mapping, then synthesising the data. This structure allowed me to sequence the framework suggested by Harden and colleagues (2004).

Stage of research process	Actions undertaken within each stage
Searching	Formulate research question
	Define relevance criteria and search terms
	Search for all relevant studies
	Screen studies using inclusion criteria
Mapping	Coding features of the included studies
Synthesis	Aggregate results. Can involve calculating an overall effect size (meta-analysis)
	Communicate outcomes

Table 1. The sequencing of the review method.

Research paradigm

Stating my own epistemological stance gives the reader clarity in the interpretation of this review and justification for my methodology. I describe my own epistemological stance as pragmatic critical realist. Therefore I believe that there is a fundamental truth, which is not dependent on our knowledge of it, yet its meaning is socially constructed to help solve problems, and the aim of research is to transform a situation rather than to explain an 'inaccessible reality' (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 159). The current research added knowledge in this area with the aim of working towards a solution to PEs. This knowledge will be presented through my own interpretation of this truth and this is explored further in chapter two. Shaw *et al.* (2010) suggest that pragmatism lends itself to the use of mixed methods in research, enabling me to widen the pool of data in answering this question and adding to the reliability of the findings.

Searching

All searches were conducted in November and December 2010.

Systematic searches

Several electronic databases (ERIC, Scopus and Web of Knowledge) were searched using the terms shown in Table 2 below. ERIC was chosen as an education specific database; Scopus and Web of Knowledge were both chosen for their breadth of literature. Searching the latter of these databases brought up few new studies and therefore systematic searching stopped at this point. Appropriate synonyms were selected through scoping of relevant literature. These search terms were applied to refine the relevance of the literature found whilst being kept as broad as possible. Searches did not incorporate behavioural terms (such as 'behavioural difficulties', 'emotional and behavioural difficulties', 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties', 'BESD' and so on), in order to refine the relevance of the results. The address search terms were narrowed to select articles from England and UK only because there are different reasons and processes for PEs in different countries (see Introduction section above).

Search area	Search terms
Target population terms	(school* OR student* OR pupil*) AND (expul* OR suspen* OR exclu*)
Outcome terms	"permanent* exclu*"
Intervention terms	This was not specified at this point as specific interventions were unknown and the aim of the review was to discover and explore effective interventions.
Address	(UK OR England) NOT (US or Australia)

Table 2. The search terms.

Search of unpublished literature

Studies are more likely to be published if they produce significant results, known as the 'file drawer problem' (Rosenthal, 1979). Therefore, to prevent a bias, a search of unpublished theses was carried out using the website 'www.theses.com'. A broad

search was conducted, as this website did not have a facility to apply all the search terms suggested above. Three articles were yielded, two of which met the inclusion criteria and only one could be obtained under the university library lending restrictions.

Hand searches

Hand searches were completed in the journals of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), Educational Psychology in Practice (EPIP) and Educational and Child Psychology (ECP). These journals were selected as they were known to have published relevant articles or they contained a large number of relevant articles from the results of the systematic search.

Inclusion criteria

Articles that were included in the review met three specific inclusion criteria:

- Intervention
  Cole (2008) suggests that an 'intervention study' is one that conducts 'empirical examinations of the relationship between [the outcome] and [the relevant] interventions' (p.30). Therefore, only studies that delivered an intervention aimed at reducing behaviour-related school exclusions were included. An intervention study was also considered to use original and purposeful data collection, therefore reviews and retrospective studies were not included. Action research was not considered an example of an intervention study, as there were no defined pre-intervention, intervention or post-intervention phases.

- Settings
  Studies were set in school or education settings.

- Address
  The exclusion process differs significantly between different education systems. Therefore only studies from England and Wales were included.

Weight of Evidence

It became evident that there was an issue of quality in a number of the studies. The quality of the studies was assessed by the Weight of Evidence tool suggested by the EPPI-Centre (Gough, 2007) and consequently three studies were excluded. In relation to the current question, studies with an overall weight of low or medium/low were excluded (highlighted in Table 3). Reasons for these omissions included the absence of information regarding data collection or analysis methods used. Table 3 summarises the weight of evidence for each article.

Study	*A (Trustworthy in terms of question)*	*B (Appropriate design and analysis for this review question)*	*C (Relevance of focus to review question)*	*D (Overall weight in relation to review question)*
Burton (2006)	Medium	High	High	High/medium
Hallam and Castle (2001)	**Low**	**Low**	**High**	**Low/medium**
Hardman (2001)	Medium/low	Low	High	Medium
Hartnell (2008)	High	High	High	High
Humphrey and Brooks (2006)	High	High	High	High
McKeon (2001)	Medium	Medium/low	High	Medium
Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007)	High	High	High	High
Robinson (1998)	Medium	Medium	High	Medium/high
Schnelling and Dew-Hughes (2002)	**Low**	**Low**	**Medium**	**Low**
Vulliamy and Webb (2003)	**Low**	**Low**	**High**	**Low/medium**

Table 3. The outcome of the Weight of Evidence activity.

Mapping and synthesis

From the seven studies remaining (see Table 4), four studies were considered to analyse the data qualitatively, one quantitatively and two were considered to have mixed methods of analysis. A mixed method was applied to this review, following Harden and colleagues' (2004) approach, chosen for its clarity and transparency. Therefore, two questions were distilled from the original question, one qualitative and one quantitative. The data, in this case the written published text, was analysed and mapped according to each of these questions (Appendix 1).

Study	*Study Design*	*Participants*	*Intervention Methods*
Burton (2006)	Qualitative – evaluation	5 young people in year 8	Group work loosely based on cognitive behavioural approaches
Hardman (2001)	Qualitative – case study evaluation	1 young person in year 10	Short-term based on personal construct psychology and solution oriented approaches
Hartnell (2008)	Mixed methods – evaluation	Whole population in LA	Multi-disciplinary behaviour support team intervention across LA
Humphrey and Brooks (2006)	Mixed methods – single-group phase change evaluation	12 young people aged 13 – 14 years	Short-term cognitive behavioural and solution-focused anger management intervention
McKeon (2001)	Qualitative – longitudinal evaluation	40 young people in year 7-8	In school multi-disciplinary support centre
Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007)	Quantitative – evaluation using randomized controlled trials	124 young people aged 4 – 12 years	Multi-disciplinary early intervention
Robinson (1998)	Qualitative – evaluation	51 young people from primary schools	An LA wide multi-disciplinary support team

Table 4. The details of each study.

Qualitative review question: why are some interventions effective in reducing school exclusions?

The particular procedure for the thematic analysis was based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase process described in Table 5 below, selected for its clarity, transparency and accessibility.

Phase	Description of process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specific of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 5. Braun and Clarke's six-phase process of thematic analysis (2006).

Six articles were included in this analysis as they contained qualitative data which could assist in answering the question above. The coding table (Appendix 1) shows the coding of these particular articles (representing phase 1 and 2 of the process described above).

The term 'theme' requires definition to create a shared understanding with the reader and to allow transparency of the analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that 'a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (p.82). In the current review this was measured in terms of prevalence. The strength of a theme was determined by the number of articles it appeared in rather than the number of occurrences within a single article. This avoided complex discussions about where particular occurrences began and ended. The aim of the analysis was to create a rich and accurate description of the entire data set.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that when using thematic analysis it is important to make the theoretical position of the analysis clear. My pragmatic critical realist epistemological stance informed my analysis of the themes at a semantic level (See Braun & Clarke, 2006 for a definition). Analysis at this level means that the initial themes are created from raw data before adding my interpretation of the broader

meanings of the themes, which was appropriate given that the data were already interpretations of the author(s).

I used an inductive approach to thematic analysis, therefore the themes were constructed from the data, with the aim of limiting the impact of theoretical preconceptions. However, I also recognised that my interpretations of the data were inextricably linked to my own experiences and beliefs. The themes were named independently by myself and one of my colleagues to increase the reliability and validity of the themes created and to ensure that the themes were data-driven rather than theory-driven. The two sets of names were compared and showed a high level of corroboration.

The coded data from the six articles (Appendix 1) created nine descriptive sub-themes. Through reviewing the sub-themes along with the original articles, three main themes emerged which were named 'positivity', 'motivation' and 'communication'. See Figure 2.
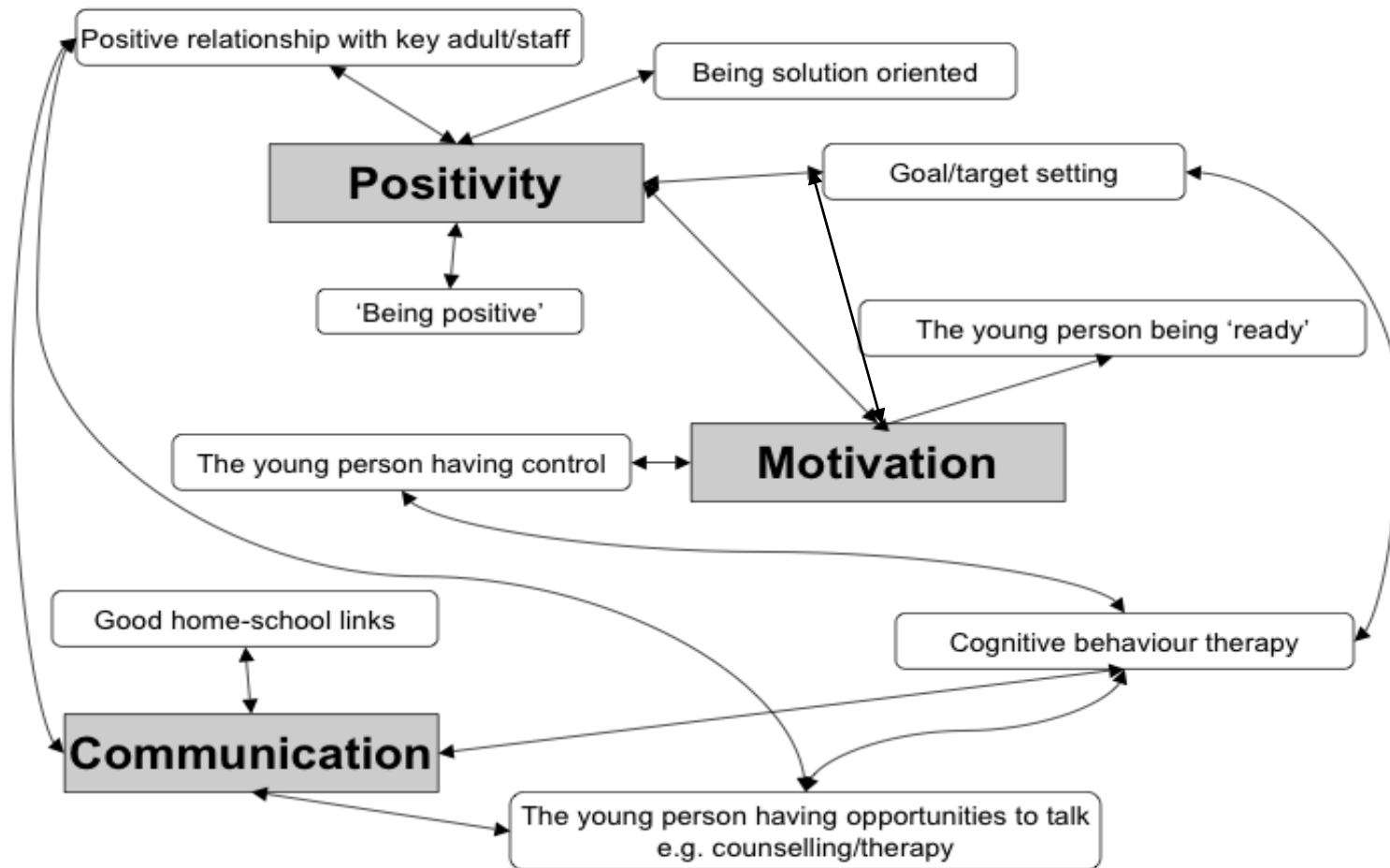
Figure 2. A map of the main and sub-themes.

Positivity

'Being positive' was considered to include ideas from positive psychology (e.g. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), including building self-esteem and focusing on strengths rather than deficits. This theme applied either to the positivity of the young people or the adults that they were working with. For example, the 'class teacher felt positively towards the child and wanted him or her to succeed' (Robinson, 1998, p. 81) suggests the importance of the positivity of staff. Whereas other articles found that the positivity of the young person also had an effect, for example, 'providing [the young person] with encouragement and praise which had the effect of raising their self-esteem' was seen by parents as one of the most helpful parts of an intervention (Hartnell, 2008, p. 154). Being solution-oriented (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davies, 1989) and creating goals, for example 'having confidence in the [individual education plan]' (Robinson, 1998, p. 81) and having 'an action plan' (Hardman, 2001, p. 47) were considered other sub-themes of this area. The final sub-theme of this main theme was the importance of positive relationships with key members of staff. An example of this was parents' views that the most helpful part of an intervention was that '[the team] provided someone to talk to their children about his/her difficulties' (Hartnell, 2008, p. 154) and young people's views that having 'somebody who I can talk to, takes me seriously, someone who can see both sides of the story' is supportive (McKeon, 2001, p. 247).

Motivation

This theme linked quite closely with the theme of positivity and can again be applied to young people or support staff. For example, in Hartnell's (2008) study, 'all seven parents commented on the problems of getting the school to sustain the strategies which had been set up' (p.154) suggesting that staff motivation is important to sustaining change. One sub-theme included the readiness of young people to change. Examples include, '[the young person] wanted to succeed' (Robinson, 1998, p. 81) and giving young people the 'means to "experiment" with another way of behaving so that he could experience the possibility of change and the effect it might have' (Hardman, 2001, p. 49). Another sub-theme included the young person having control, possibly through being given choice. Examples of this included giving 'students' opportunities to self-correct' (McKeon, 2001, p. 248) and using 'targets [the young person] set himself' (Burton, 2006, p. 222).

Communication

This theme was characterised by three additional sub-themes. The first was the young person having opportunities to talk including counselling and therapy, for example, '1:1 work with the child' (Robinson, 1998, p. 81), having time to 'reflect on their own attitudes, feelings and patterns of behaviour' (S. Burton, 2006, p. 219) and 'keeping on checking to see if I'm okay, somebody who I can talk to' (McKeon, 2001, p. 247) were all thought to be important aspects of intervention. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) was highlighted as an additional sub-theme, as although it could be considered an example of therapy, it had significant independent representation in the literature. Examples of this sub-theme include, the use of 'cognitive reframing' (Burton, 2006, p. 219), one group of young people were encouraged to 'be respectful of the thoughts and feelings they express to one another' (Humphrey & Brooks, 2006, p. 16) which suggests that thoughts and feelings were linked to behaviours, one of the principles of CBT (Stallard, 2005). Another sub-theme was having a positive relationship with a key member of staff, described in more detail above. It may be assumed that a positive relationship with a key adult may develop with a therapeutic or counselling relationship. Good home-school communication was given as a fourth sub-theme of communication. McKeon (2001) recommended that 'making time to listen, not only to the students but also to the parents and the teachers themselves' should be made a priority (p.249).

Quantitative review question: which interventions are most effective in reducing school exclusions?

Table 6 summarises the details of the quantitative studies including whether significant gains were made and the effect sizes produced from the intervention. More detailed coding for each study is available in the coding table (Appendix 1). For studies that did not produce effect sizes, Hedges' G (Hedges, 1981) was calculated using the online 'eppireviewer4' application (EPPI Centre, 2008) and converted into Cohen's D (Cohen, 1988) following Rosnow and colleagues' formula (Rosnow, Rosenthal, & Rubin, 2000). Cohen (1988) suggested that effect sizes of 0.2 are considered small, 0.5 medium and 0.8 large.

Hartnell's (2008) study did not state effect sizes and did not provide enough statistical information for them to be calculated. Effect sizes and statistical information were also not provided in the cases where significant gains were not made.

Study	Intervention for index group	Outcome Variable	Significant gains made?	Effect Size (Cohen's D)
Hartnell (2008)	Multi-disciplinary behaviour support team intervention across LA	Numbers of exclusions	No	N.A.
		Behaviour questionnaire (Total)	Yes	N.A.
Humphrey and Brooks (2006)	Short-term cognitive behavioural and solution-focused anger management intervention	Revised Rutter Scale for teachers-Behaviour scores *only during intervention period*	Yes	0.40
		Revised Rutter Scale for teachers-Prosocial Scores *only during intervention period*	Yes	0.62
		Revised Rutter Scale for teachers-Inattentive/Hyperactice Scores	No	N.A.
		Revised Rutter Scale for teachers-'Emotional Behaviour' *only during intervention period*	Yes	0.48
		Revised Rutter Scale for teachers-'Conduct' *only during intervention period*	Yes	0.52
Panayiotop-oulos and Kerfoot (2007)	Multi-disciplinary early intervention	Excluded Days	Yes	-0.46
		Health of the Nation Outcome Scale for Children and Adolescents	Yes	0.26

Table 6. A summary of the findings from the quantitative studies (based on R. L. Cole, 2008)

Comparison between the studies is challenging as they measured different outcomes using different measures. Effect sizes were only available in two studies, both of which used different interventions and outcome measures and therefore they were not pooled.

I can draw several tentative conclusions from Table 6. For example, the data suggest that none of these interventions have produced large effect sizes. This raises questions regarding whether interventions targeted at this population can produce large effect sizes or whether there are too many uncontrolled variables involved. I also question whether an intervention which produces a small/medium effect size is strong enough evidence to support applications to fund these interventions.

The highest effect size was seen on the measure of 'prosocial' scores with the cognitive-behavioural intervention (Humphrey & Brooks, 2006) which may be described as a 'medium' effect size (Cohen, 1988). Other medium effect sizes included the effect of the cognitive-behavioural intervention on 'conduct' and 'emotional behaviour' scores (Humphrey & Brooks, 2006) and the effect of the multidisciplinary early intervention on the number of excluded days (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007). The negative effect size indicated a reduction in excluded days rather than an increase.

Synthesis of the mixed methods

The rationale behind this mixed methods synthesis was to bring about further explanations of the findings. The quantitative data was used to clarify *which* interventions were the most successful and the qualitative data was used to explore *why* the interventions were successful.

Links can be drawn between the conclusions from the analyses above. For example, the cognitive-behavioural approach was arguably the most effective in terms of the quantitative analysis and this approach was also highlighted by the qualitative data as a sub-theme. It is also represented by all the main themes discovered through the qualitative analysis. The cognitive-behavioural approach may give young people the opportunity for *communication* and reflection around their behaviour; it may arguably foster a *positive relationship with a key adult*; it may involve giving the young person *control* and *positivity* by creating their own *goals*; which in turn may *motivate* them according to goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990).

The highest effect size was seen in the development of pro-social behaviour. This in itself suggests a focus on positive behaviour, strengths, and solution-oriented approaches suggesting links with the qualitative analysis, where *positivity* was highlighted as a main theme.

It appears that the two analyses describe similar themes of positivity, motivation and communication, which triangulates the results and adds to the criterion validity (Field & Hole, 2003). Below is an exploration of each of these themes within existing theory, research and government documentation.

Positivity

There seems to be evidence for the effectiveness of interventions that encourage positivity. For example, a number of American studies report the successes of positive behaviour interventions, which focus on increasing 'good' and 'acceptable' behaviours rather than decreasing negative behaviours (e.g. Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2009; Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008). Muscott and colleagues suggested that school-wide positive behaviour interventions in 28 schools led to reductions in behaviour referrals, suspensions and increases in academic achievements in maths for most schools (2008). In support of this,

Bradshaw and colleagues' (2009) study evaluated school-wide positive behaviour interventions, based on behavioural, social learning and organisational behavioural approaches, across 37 schools over five years. They described a significant decrease in suspensions and behavioural referrals, suggesting that positive behaviour interventions can be effective. However, as most of this research has been conducted in America there may be issues with generalising the results to England and Wales and further research would be necessary.

The area of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) suggests a strong evidence-base for focusing on promoting positive aspects of one's life rather than decreasing the negative aspects (Boniwell, 2006). This area of psychology also focuses on areas such as self-esteem, strengths and being goal-oriented, which in the current study were all considered as part of the 'being positive' sub-theme.

The evidence that supports a positive approach, may also suggest that solution-oriented (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davies, 1989) or solution-focused approaches (de Shazer et al., 1986) could be effective interventions as they have similar principles to positive psychology. For example, they focus on increasing positive experiences rather than decreasing negative ones. Although none of the studies in the current review focused on these approaches purely, a number used aspects of them, for example Humphrey and Brooks (2006) explicitly mention their use of this technique. These approaches have limited support for their effectiveness (de Jong & Hopwood, 1996; Franklin, Biever, Moore, Dlemons, & Scamardo, 2001; Gingerich & Eisengart, 2000) due to a lack of published research (Stobie, Boyle, & Woolfson, 2005). Further exploration in the use of solution-oriented approaches is required with this population.

This idea of encouraging pro-social behaviour is represented in the DCSF document "Improving behaviour and attendance: guidance on exclusion from schools and Pupil Referral Units" (2008b). This document has eight parts, the first of which encourages early intervention and promoting positive behaviour. Schools, governing bodies and LAs must, by law, have regard to this guidance when considering PEs. More recently the DCSF's Guidance on School Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships documentation (2010a) suggests that 'development of more positive pupil behaviour' (p.7) is one desired outcome of the partnerships. This suggests that positive approaches to behaviour are encouraged by the government as well as by research. However, the same document defines positive behaviour as 'where disruptive behaviour, name calling, using put downs and all types of bullying is minimal, and where it does occur, it is addressed quickly and effectively by staff'

(p.7). This definition suggests a reduction in negative behaviour rather than a focus on promoting positive behaviour. Therefore I remain unsure as to whether this positive approach is actively encouraged by government.

Communication

I have used communication to describe the interactions of the young people themselves, or between home, school, researcher, facilitator or other key adults. Several reviewed studies also used a multi-agency approach to support this population of young people. This multi-agency approach has been encouraged in Children's Services by many recent government strategies and documentation, including Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills, 2003), The Children Act 2004 and Think Family (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009b).

In addition to the current review articles, the idea that having a positive relationship with a key adult aids effectiveness of interventions is partially explored by Head and colleagues (Head, Kane, & Cogan, 2003). Their research suggests that school staff believe that individual work with a pupil, which arguably gives the opportunity for a positive relationship with a key adult, was not particularly effective. Head and colleagues (*ibid*) instead argue that creating a school ethos that encourages positive relationships may be more effective. In support of the current review, Attwood and Croll (2006) suggest that having negative relationships may intensify a young person's problems at school.

Hallam and Castle (2001) suggest that in all their successful projects aimed at supporting young people at risk of PE, parental involvement was a key part, giving supporting evidence for the 'home-school links' sub-theme. Parents were invited from the outset; at the identification of their children's needs; involved in decisions regarding strategies and involved in every stage thereafter. In further support of this sub-theme, the Elton Report (Elton, 1989) suggests that, 'we draw attention to evidence indicating that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents' (p.14). However, Head and colleagues (2003) acknowledge how challenging the involvement of parents may be.

In general support of this main theme, Schnelling and Dew-Hughes (2002) and Hallam and Castle (2001) highlight that communication is an important factor in effective interventions aimed at young people at risk of PEs.

Motivation

The data suggest that young people themselves are key players in a successful intervention. It would appear that interventions which genuinely include young people are more effective than interventions that are 'done to them'. It also suggests that a young person must be 'ready' for intervention to take place for there to be success (Howells & Day, 2003).

Motivational theory such as goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) suggests that if individuals themselves have more control over their goals, they are more likely to be motivated to achieve them. A young person's motivation to achieve their goals is also influenced by their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), or their belief that they 'can do it'. Solomon and Rogers (2001) suggest that interventions to motivate disaffected pupils should aim to raise self-efficacy in specific curriculum areas. As well as being supported by theory this theme is also supported by evidence from research. For example, Halsey *et al.* (2006) literature review suggested that the behaviour of young people often improved when they actively participated in decisions made about their education.

The active participation of young people was proposed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) and is encouraged by a number of government publications including the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills, 2001b), Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) and Removing Barriers to Achievement (Department for Education and Skills, 2004). Thomas and colleagues (1998) state the importance of involving young people as partners in schools, ensuring their shared role in developments. The motivation of young people in order to improve their behaviour is also recommended by the Elton Report (1989) which suggests that, 'all initial teacher training courses should include specific practical training in ways of motivating…groups of pupils' (p.12) and that there is 'evidence indicating that pupils tend to behave more responsibly if they are given responsibilities' (p.15).

Limitations

Other factors that have been highlighted in previous research as leading to a successful intervention, which were not emphasised in this research are holistic approaches to behaviour support and the idea of early intervention and prevention (Schnelling & Dew-Hughes, 2002) which are ideas that stem from community psychology. Although not highlighted as a theme, Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) suggest successful outcomes

from using this type of approach. Although this review was not limited to interventions at a certain level, it appears as though the themes that were created are limited to interventions at the individual, group or whole school level. There appears to be limited discussions of interventions at the LA level which suggests that the responsibility for facilitating change is often with the young people, teachers or schools.

Although using an inductive (or data-driven) approach to thematic analysis, I appreciate that data is never coded in an epistemological or theoretical vacuum (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis brings with it a level of subjectivity as the researcher applies their previous experiences. Allowing another individual, with less experience of published literature in this area, to rename the themes added to the inter-rater reliability of the findings as the approach was arguably more inductive and less influenced by relevant theory.

Literature suggests that PE statistics should be analysed with care (McCluskey, 2008; Vulliamy & Webb, 2001). Internal exclusion and managed moves are often considered examples of 'unofficial' exclusions and are often unrecorded (Gordon, 2001; McCluskey, 2008). Exclusion statistics can be relatively inaccurate therefore recent decreases in PEs (Vincent et al., 2007) may reflect an avoidance of the PE system rather than inclusive practice or effective interventions. This limits the validity of the quantitative findings described above. An alternative way of considering this concept would be to explore how to include those at risk of PE. However, I was unable to find any research in this area.

A number of researchers believe that PEs are socially constructed (e.g. Vulliamy & Webb, 2001). This may be considered on a number of levels. For example, the social expectations placed on young people's behaviour in school are clearly socially constructed. The process of exclusion from school is also a social construct. Society has created a term for when a young person is barred from an educational institution, which would not exist if young people could not be stopped from attending a school.

Implications for practice

This review suggests that interventions to reduce PEs may be more effective if they have a positive focus, encourage communication, and focus on the motivation of the young people and others involved. These three areas could provide a school with a shared ethos, offering a focus on prevention rather than intervention. Interventions that may be particularly effective appear to include all of these three themes and often include ideas from CBT and solution-oriented approaches.

Implications for research

Further research would be beneficial to explore these interventions with this population or to explore the educational and social inclusion of these young people within a mainstream setting. I am interested in exploring young people's views of why certain interventions are effective in order to triangulate the findings from this review and to respond to the gap in relevant literature regarding young people's views.

Chapter Two

A bridging document

"Knowledge is socially constructed in order to help solve problems"*: my perceptions of the current study
*See p.40

Abstract

This bridging document aimed to link my systematic literature review to the empirical research in order to make my thinking and reasoning explicit to the reader. My research focus moved from discussions of permanent exclusions to explorations of behaviour support and inclusion. My story includes discussions of external and internal influences over the research and my personal reflections of what I have learnt.

Introduction

In this paper I explore the links between my systematic literature review and the empirical research in order to make my thinking explicit to the reader. I tell the story of my research beginning with the research rationale, the political and historical context to the research topic and the theoretical, psychological, epistemological, ontological and methodological underpinnings of my approach. My journey is summarised in a final section reflecting on what I have learnt.

Personal rationale

Working with young people facing difficulties managing their behaviour has been a developing interest of mine throughout my various work experiences (as a learning support assistant and a play worker for young people with additional needs). I observed how a young person's environment impacts on their behaviour. Whilst working as a graduate psychologist I received training on the Framework For Intervention approach to behaviour (Daniels & Williams, 2000). This encouraged me to reflect on my experiences using Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which explores different environmental levels that may interact with the individual. In that post I was part of a development group which created training for behaviour coordinators in schools. During my placements in the first year of the Applied Educational Psychology Doctorate I gained further experience of working with young people at risk of exclusion and in the youth justice system. At this time my reading around the area suggested a significant correlation between school exclusions and negative academic and social outcomes for young people (Daniels et al., 2003; Hayton, 1999; Pritchard & Cox, 1998; Sellman et al., 2002; Theriot et al., 2010; Vulliamy & Webb, 2000) which increased my motivation for the focus of this research.

In parallel to this, my personal beliefs and values led me to discover humanistic and positive approaches in my work. My Masters research explored young people's views of the accessibility of education and in my position as a graduate psychologist I developed my understanding of person-centred approaches. This interest may have originated from my belief in equal opportunities, respect and a desire to strive for inclusive practice.

Contextual rationale

As a trainee Educational Psychologist (EP) there was an expectation that my employers would have some input on the area of my research. At that time, changes in my Local

Authority (LA) around behaviour support services increased expectations for reduced school exclusions. Approaches to support young people at risk of permanent exclusion (PE) was raised as a potential area for research.

Developing a research focus

The systematic literature review was informed by the LA's focus on supporting young people at risk of PE as well as my own interests explored above. This review highlighted gaps in the research including a lack of preventative approaches exploring what already works well and very few studies exploring young people's views in this area. My pragmatic critical realist stance (see p.40-41) also informed my methodological choices.

What is the impact of the political landscape on school exclusions?

The legislation reviewed in chapter one (p.9-10) suggested that reducing the number of exclusions was a priority for the previous Labour government (1997–2010). For example, in 2010 the Labour government created an Inclusion Development Programme which aimed to provide quality first teaching to young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) in mainstream educational provisions. This is likely to be due to the considerable evidence that links PE to negative academic and social outcomes for young people (Pritchard & Cox, 1998; Sellman et al., 2002; Theriot et al., 2010; Vulliamy & Webb, 2000).

In contrast to Labour's preventative, more inclusive (Carlile, 2011), and arguably positive approach to behaviour, the Conservative-Liberal coalition government's approach aims to remove 'barriers which limit [Head Teachers'] authority' (Department for Education, 2011a) increasing the responsibility of families, schools and communities. The Education Act 2011 aims to help 'teachers maintain good discipline' (Department for Education, 2012a) by increasing their power to search pupils, use force when necessary and arguably encourages the exclusion of young people by reducing the power of appeal. Even more recent publications (e.g. Department for Education, 2012b; Department for Education, 2012c) maintain this focus on discipline and exclusion rather than prevention and inclusion which may be more representative of the current Conservative government leadership as it may be argued that an inclusive philosophy 'chimes with the philosophy of a liberal political system and…one that celebrates diversity' (Thomas et al., 1998, p. 5).

With little evidence against inclusion (Lindsay, 2003) and some evidence for the benefits of inclusion (Frederickson & Cline, 2002) I will assume that inclusion can lead to positive outcomes for young people including those with behavioural needs (Burton & Goodman, 2011) and therefore maintain my inclusive focus for the current study.

Exclusion versus inclusion

As suggested in chapter one (p.9), I understand that exclusion is not simply the opposite of inclusion but can also be a label given to young people who are refused attendance at a school for disciplinary purposes, unlike the definition given by Thomas and colleagues (1998). Thomas and colleagues (*ibid*) go on to suggest, however, that the term 'exclusion' regularly refers to 'children whose behaviour is found difficult' whereas the term 'segregation' is often used for those with learning difficulties or disabilities (p.12). Although the terms 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' are not always opposite, I do suggest that increasing the inclusion of young people with BESD (Department for Education and Skills, 2001b) within mainstream settings is likely to reduce the numbers of young people who are excluded and therefore inclusion becomes more pertinent to this research area. As Thomas and colleagues (1998) suggest, 'using [the term] *inclusion*…specifically shifts the focus onto the school rather than the child when thinking about excluded pupils' (p.12).

It remains a complex issue and dependent on a personal point of view whether behavioural needs are understood as Special Educational Needs (SEN), as disciplinary needs, or both (Bowers, 2001; Cole, Visser, & Upton, 1998). Differing opinions appear to be informed by perceptions of whether the environment impacts strongly on challenging behaviour or whether there is a strong within-child element. I feel that agonising over the classification of behaviour becomes irrelevant when it does not provide a way forward in meeting young people's needs. My opinion is that all behaviour can be influenced by environmental factors and yet all behaviour may be classed as SEN. This reflects my child-centred approach to practice as it suggests that there is always a role for adults in supporting young people's behaviour. It also suggests that it may be beneficial for the young person to have a behavioural need acknowledged and supported through specific targets and funding. In support of this, Williams and Daniels (2000) suggest that previous attempts to distinguish between emotional-behavioural needs and disciplinary-behavioural needs are flawed.

The 'Understanding and Developing Inclusive Practices in Schools' research network explored inclusion beyond the experiences of young people with SEN and disabilities, to consider *all learners* including those with behavioural needs (Ainscow et al., 2006). The

network therefore suggests that the aim of the inclusion process is 'to reduce exclusion and discriminatory attitudes, including those in relation to age, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and attainment' (p.2). In agreement with Ainscow and colleagues (*ibid*), I would suggest that understandings of inclusion often differ between individuals and that there is not one clear definition, due to its complexity (Hick, Kershner, & Farrell, 2008). They also describe inclusion as a *process* rather than a state and this implies the importance of a school or teacher's action and intervention, which parallels my research focus on effective behaviour support. Therefore this is the understanding that I am applying in the current study. Although this is not a definition, it is a useful understanding as it is broad enough to allow the reader to apply their own understanding (Ainscow et al., 2006, pp. 14-15). Avoiding a specific definition may allow a broader application of the findings from the following study.

The purpose of exclusion

Discussing the typical aims of school exclusions is important as it may inform the perceived level of inclusivity of a school, head teacher or LA. The purpose of PEs is informed by whether individuals involved (e.g. school teaching staff, senior management, governors and LA personnel) perceive behaviour to be an area of SEN and whether the environment can impact on this need or not. Interestingly, the definitions described in chapter one (p.8-9) do not specify that exclusions occur for disciplinary purposes, implying that they may occur in other circumstances.

The Education Act of 1993 stated that PE should only occur in cases of significant violation of a school's behaviour policy or of criminal law (Section 22). The reason given for many exclusions is the protection of the safety (Solomon & Rogers, 2001) or education (Robinson, 1998) of others in the school. Although these reasons are not the most inclusive, they are often understood as utilitarian. Exclusions may also be administered as punishments, for example Gordon (2001) suggests that 'it is a disciplinary sanction' (p.70). Some believe that PE is a form of treatment for the young person (Solomon & Rogers, 2001). However, there is limited empirical evidence to suggest that exclusions are associated with positive change (e.g. Theriot et al., 2010). In fact, Solomon and Rogers (2001) suggest that interventions and support should be given without a change in context wherever possible as self-efficacy levels are context-specific therefore increasing the inclusion of young people with behavioural needs. Therefore PEs often occur for reasons other than the wellbeing of the excluded young people, suggesting that schools that exclude young people because of their behaviour may be considered less inclusive.

Psychological perspective

As I am writing this as a trainee EP, it is important for me to consider the psychological perspectives of both inclusive practices and behavioural needs. This exploration gives further evidence for my rationale for the research focus and aids the transparency of my thought-process. Another purpose for this discussion is to inform the implications for EP practice when this research is drawn to its conclusions.

The psychologies of inclusion

In the study of psychology, there has been a considerable overrepresentation of research around the negative concept of mental illness rather than mental health (Rozin & Royzman, 2001) with a focus on deficits, disabilities and pathology (Carr, 2011). This is very different from questions about what may be wrong with the environment or even what is going well, both of which may be more congruent with the social model of disability and the idea of inclusion. It is my view that this negative medical focus leads to challenges in drawing links between psychology and inclusion on a wide scale. Although for many years mainstream psychologists did not appear to represent the principles of inclusion (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009) other subgroups of psychologists may have done, for example, 'educational psychology is inclusive by nature' (Association of Educational Psychologists, 2008, p. ii). Even today EPs follow different practices and apply different theories to their practice (*ibid*). Therefore, I would suggest that the following areas of psychology are congruent with the principles of inclusion.

Arguably, community psychology (Bender, 1976) subscribes to the idea of inclusion (Hick et al., 2008). Hick and colleagues (*ibid*) suggest that a number of community psychology's principles including, 'sensitivity to people's contexts, respect for diversity among people and settings, addressing competencies (as well as problems), promoting empowerment, giving voice to traditionally under-represented populations, and promoting social justice' are congruent with the principles of inclusion (p.4).

Hick and colleagues (2008) also suggest a link between critical psychology and inclusion, which is not surprising given the link to community psychology suggested above. Fox and colleagues (2009) suggest that the core values of critical psychology are participation, social justice, human welfare and equality.

The psychologies of behaviour

'Psychology' is often defined as the science of behaviour (Carlson, Buskist, & Martin, 2000) therefore suggesting the psychologies of behaviour may seem futile. I would argue that each psychological paradigm uses a different interpretation of behaviour (Hart, 2010) and therefore different individuals would have approached the current study according to the psychological domain, or domains, to which they subscribe. Examples of these different paradigms include neuropsychology (e.g. Hale et al., 2009), behavioural psychology (e.g. Kurtz, Chin, Rush, & Dixon, 2008), cognitive behavioural approaches (e.g. Cole, 2008; Humphrey & Brooks, 2006; Stallard, 2005), ecological approaches (Daniels & Williams, 2000), psychodynamic approaches (e.g. Garner and Thomas, 2011), psycho-social approaches (Miller, 2003) and systemic approaches (Daniels & Williams, 2000; Miller, 2003) to name but a few. In my opinion, there is considerable overlap between many of the processes and methods involved in these approaches; the significant difference between them is their epistemological grounding and therefore the interpretations and implications that may arise from their use.

Psychological paradigms applied in the current research

The current research will reflect my focus on community psychology (Bender, 1976) and positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), informed by the discussion above and my personal beliefs and interests.

Research paradigm

The following section explores my epistemological stance through discussing the kind of knowledge I aim to produce in the current research, the assumptions my methodology will make about the world (also known as 'ontology') and my role as a researcher within this (or 'reflexivity'; Willig, 2008).

Ontology and epistemology

I believe that the young people participating in the current study experience their own realities and although these may be affected by my enquiry about them, my research will not affect the existence of their own realities. Although the findings are grounded in the data, my beliefs and experiences influence my own understanding of these perspectives, leading to the development of my own reality. I believe that there is an objective, fundamental truth which may go beyond an individual's perspectives. I also believe that this discovery of a fundamental truth may be challenging and almost irrelevant when it is so heavily influenced by many social, cultural, political, ethnic, economic and cultural factors (Deforge & Shaw, 2012). Therefore it is the perspectives and realities of individuals that I am interested in exploring in the current investigation. This understanding describes the epistemological dualism of critical realism.

DeForge and Shaw (2012) and Clark *et al.* (2008) suggest that the critical realist worldview offers a middle ground between the complete order of positivism and the unknown chaos of postmodernism. Critical realism recognises the significance of human perspectives yet does not give them the authority of fundamental truths (*ibid*). DeForge and Shaw (2012) argue that it is the critical realist's acceptance of context-specific conditions that distinguish this worldview from positivism. It is my belief that there is a fundamental truth, which is not dependent on our knowledge of it, yet the meaning of it is socially constructed (Easton, 2010; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006).

I propose that my worldview is more specifically described by Johnson and Duberley (2000) as *pragmatic* critical realism which suggests that knowledge is socially constructed to help solve problems and the aim of research is to transform a situation rather than to reach an 'inaccessible reality' (p.159). I also agree with Johnson and Duberley's statement that 'we can develop, and indeed identify, in a fallible manner, more adequate social constructions of reality by demonstrating their variable ability to realize our goals…since our practical activities allow transactions between subject and object' (*ibid*; p.163).

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In the current research I aim to produce an interpretation of the participating young people's voices, or their reality, in order to explain why they consider certain interventions effective. This represents a subjectivist ontology. The idea of 'what works' is often considered a pragmatist view of truth (Bridges, 1999) and is a particular area of focus for the current research.

Reflexivity

In this section I take my discussions of ontology further to explain my role as researcher within the current investigation. My epistemological stance as a pragmatic critical realist supports my interpretation of young people's realities, through gaining their perspectives. In agreement with Guba and Lincoln (1994) I believe that 'the investigator and the investigated object are assumed to be interactively linked, with the values of the investigator...inevitably influencing the inquiry' (p.26). The beliefs and experiences that I bring are considered another source of data rather than being privileged (Adolph, Hall, & Kruchten, 2011), they influence my own interpretation (and therefore reality) of the research findings and therefore I become a contributing factor to the findings.

Methodology

In this section I make my rationale for my methodological choices explicit to the reader. The qualitative realist grounded theory (GT) exploration of young people's perspectives reflects my pragmatic critical realist stance. The methodology also has a positive, humanistic and pragmatic focus, considering why certain interventions are effective through a participant-centred method (Clark, 2011; Punch, 2002).

My preference was to use focus groups to allow the young people to socially construct a joint understanding, to generate wider discussion and create a breadth of themes (Armstrong, Hill, & Secker, 2000; Nyström, 2007; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). However, the pilot study (see below) and research literature (e.g. Stewart et al., 2007) suggest that young people who have received targeted behaviour support may become disengaged or distracted by the social element of a focus group, therefore individual interviews were used with this selected sample and focus groups were used with the random sample of young people.

Findings from the pilot study

A small-scale pilot focus group was carried out at one secondary school to explore the appropriateness and accessibility of the methods with this population. Three young people were selected as being 'at risk' of PE by the school and had parental consent to participate.

I drew the following conclusions:

- This population of young people may engage more readily and enthusiastically individually rather than as part of a group. This was observed when the young people arrived for the group one-by-one and I observed the change in dynamics and engagement as the session continued.
- I believe that one young person did not understand the tasks despite receiving several explanations and examples.
- Targeting those 'at risk' of PE would only give me a certain amount of information and therefore gaining information from a random sample of young people may provide different information.

Following this pilot I considered using individual interviews as well as focus groups and I simplified the main questions and explanations, providing concrete examples.

Recruitment of participants

Although the involvement of all stakeholders is recommended in the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008) this was not practical in the time available and therefore gaining the views of young people was prioritised as the first stage of this research.

The head teachers of all the mixed secondary schools (excluding academies, due to differences in funding and approaches to behaviour support) in the LA were contacted by email and telephone and invited to take part in the research. The selection of participants who were 'at risk' of PE or who received targeted behaviour support was based on the perceptions of key members of school staff. The lack of objectivity in this procedure was out-weighed by the lack of consistency between the schools' behaviour policies leading to criteria that would differ between schools. It was also assumed that these young people were likely to have experienced some form of behaviour intervention. Therefore, five young people from two different secondary schools (aged 11 – 14 years) were selected to take part in individual interviews.

It came to my attention during this time that the schools that I worked with as a Trainee Educational Psychologist had low numbers of exclusions according to LA data. Therefore for pragmatic reasons, three primary schools were also selected through a convenience sample and 18 young people from Year Six (aged 10 – 11 years) were randomly sampled from this population to participate in focus groups. According to LA data, the Year 6 population had the highest levels of exclusion rates for primary aged young people and therefore they were considered more familiar with the concept of behaviour support. They were also considered to be more experienced in answering the abstract questions around *why* some support is helpful (Piaget, 1962). A random sample was used to ensure that a cross-section of young people with different experiences was represented in these groups, building on the pilot study findings. This also allowed a more positive and preventative focus of the research questions and acknowledgment of the low exclusions rates in these schools.

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Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was used to inform the construction of the interview and focus group procedures (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Appendix 2). As in San Martin and Calabrese (2010) the first two stages of AI, discovery and dream, informed the activities and positively phrased questions which enabled the inquiry of 'what works'.

Grounded theory

Troxel, (Unknown) suggested that both AI and GT approaches encourage the emergence of findings from the organisation, system or data itself rather than being theory-driven. The theory created is therefore grounded in the context of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 1998), emphasizing the importance of the young people being experts in their own lives. Strauss and Corbin's (2008; 1998) method was selected for the reasons discussed in chapter three (p. 54) connected to my pragmatic critical realist epistemology and due to the transparency of the method. Arguably, using Glasser and Strauss' method (1967) would be more suited to a positivist epistemology due to the emphasis on the *discovery* rather than the *construction* of theory grounded in the data (Piggott, 2010). Adolph and colleagues (2011) also suggest that the Glaserian approach to GT provides 'less likelihood of imposing pre-existing categories on the data' (p.493) which arguably supports a positivist approach to reflexivity. Charmaz's constructivist GT would be more suited to a social constructivist approach (2006).

The text from the visual artefacts (including mind-maps, post-it notes and posters) were analysed rather than transcriptions of the interviews and focus groups. The text was either written by the participants or scribed by myself, taken directly from the words the young people said, then checked with them. Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (1990, 2008) suggest that GT can be applied to many different forms of data. This choice was made for two main reasons. The first was the acknowledgment that transcripts are themselves interpretations of the data, rather than raw data (Kvale, 1996; Lapadat, 2000) and therefore for the theory generated to be grounded in the data I thought it was important that the analysis took place using the data that was put forward by the participants. The second associated reason is that analysis of the visual artefacts enabled the young people to have additional power over the data that they volunteered, highlighting my use of critical psychology and community psychology. Both myself and the young people had the opportunity to reflect on their ideas to ensure they were representative of their thoughts, therefore less interpretation was involved in the preparation of the data for analysis. This

reason is also responsive to Hart's Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992) as the young people became more active in the research process.

Ethics

Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) suggest that qualitative psychological research is filled with ethical issues. The ethical considerations in this research are summarised in chapter three (p.54-55), but here I take the opportunity to briefly explore a number of ethical considerations more critically.

Time restrictions as well as the LA being the 'problem-holder' led to the decision that young people would be consulted rather than leading the research themselves. Therefore, throughout the research process care was taken to be as transparent as possible with the young people, their parents, schools and LA personnel in order to ensure they that they had the opportunity to give meaningful consent and that they had appropriate expectations of my role and the research outcomes.

I was also aware of the importance of power throughout my research, particularly because the young people were not given as much opportunity to take the lead as I would have originally liked. Young people are typically assumed to lack power and Todd (2012) suggests that without a critical approach, they are at risk of being disempowered further. With this in mind I was aware that the young people are expected to follow the rules in school and follow the direction of their teachers, which may have led to feeling a pressure to participate despite efforts to reassure them that their participation was optional. Therefore care was taken to ensure the young people understood that I was not a member of school staff, yet was considered an adult whom they could trust for the purposes of this research. I also considered there to be a fine line between building a good rapport with the young people and allowing them to assume an alliance between us, which may affect the quantity and type of information they chose to share with me (Fox et al., 2009).

I was also aware of my role as trainee EP within a number of the participating schools. I decided that it would be ethically inappropriate to conduct interviews or focus groups with young people who I had worked with in a professional context. This was to ensure that there was no bias in their perceptions towards my work with them, to avoid obscuring the boundaries of psychologist/therapist and researcher (Fox et al., 2009) and also to minimise any preconceived power imbalances or knowledge.

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Despite the aim of the conversations being positive, I was aware that some young people chose to discuss their own behaviour which may have led to some discomfort on the part of the young person, however, this was not assumed. Inquiry into their behaviour and the support they may have received using a positive framework, may have led to a form of intervention in itself (Cooperrider et al., 2008), a further ethical consideration.

Reflections

This bridging document has amalgamated my thoughts, interests and beliefs which led to the development of the current research. What is also worth consideration is how this research has affected my thoughts, interests and beliefs. In addition to this, I aim to summarise my reflections on the practical knowledge and skills which I have gained throughout this process.

- I have gained knowledge and skills including the use of AI, GT and skills in conducting focus groups.
- My attention was drawn to school teachers' motivation to resist positive approaches including solution-focused approaches. Although not asking the teachers to use this approach directly, this perception may have affected the gatekeepers' decision to allow the research to progress, a difficulty acknowledged by O'Riordan (2011).
- I have increased my interest in a pragmatist approach in my practice and have developed my understanding of my epistemological beliefs in discovering that I subscribe more to a pragmatic critical realist belief, than to a critical realist approach as I initially thought.
- As I have become more familiar with the work of Todd (2012) my thoughts have developed from feeling a pressure to include young people as much as possible in the process of research in order to empower them, to reflecting on whose agenda this fulfils and realising that enforced participation is somewhat less empowering.
- I have become more aware of the link between young people's self-esteem and control (and their perceptions of these factors in my practice). I am also aware of how these findings feedback into my interests and beliefs in discussions of pupil participation.

Chapter Three

An empirical research study

"Ask them what helps them and try to go ahead with the plan": young people's perceptions of why behaviour support is effective

Abstract

The aim of this empirical research was to triangulate theory generated from young people's perceptions of why behaviour support is effective at school, with findings from the literature review explored in chapter one. 23 young people were asked questions based on the positive method Appreciative Inquiry in order to ascertain their perceptions of 'what works' to support their behaviour effectively using focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed using a grounded theory approach which created five main thematic categories of learning, self-esteem, environment, control and change of feelings, forming a theory. The young people's theory suggested that self-esteem was a central element and interrelated to the categories of learning, environment and control. They suggested that in a positive system these factors would cause a positive change of feelings then a positive change in behaviour. The high level of triangulation between the literature and young people's perceptions suggested that the type of intervention may not be as important as how the intervention is implemented and perceived by the young people. The findings suggest that schools and classrooms promoting positive self-esteem, young people's control, good communication and using language based on feelings may be effective in reducing permanent exclusions and are perceived by young people to be effective at supporting their behaviour. The high corroboration with wider research suggests that changes in behaviour may describe more than just challenging behaviour and therefore this theory may be applied more broadly to learning behaviour and social behaviour.

Introduction

This study begins by exploring the rationale for reducing permanent exclusions (PEs). I then consider the use of a preventative approach to PEs by supporting young people's behaviour in school which is discussed in the context of the current research with a focus on my rationale for exploring young people's perceptions. I then draw this information together by stating my research questions. The methodology is described, findings discussed and theory created. To conclude, I explore the quality and limitations of this research and the implications for Educational Psychology (EP) practice.

Reducing permanent exclusions

The PE of young people from educational provison is often explained by the behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) they face (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007; Wright, 2009) and linked to negative academic and social outcomes both anecdotally and in published literature (Daniels et al., 2003; Hayton, 1999; Pritchard & Cox, 1998; Sellman et al., 2002; Theriot et al., 2010; Vulliamy & Webb, 2000). Recent governments have aimed to reduce the number of exclusions by promoting the inclusion of young people with BESD in mainstream settings, to improve social and academic outcomes.

Government statistics suggest that the number of PEs from schools in England has approximately halved from 12,300 in 1997 to 5,740 in 2010 (Department for Education, 2011a). However, care needs to be taken in the interpretation of exclusion data (McCluskey, 2008; Vulliamy & Webb, 2001) due to the high number of illegal or 'grey' exclusions (Sellman et al., 2002; The Centre for Social Justice, 2011). These seem to be exacerbated by the pressure for schools and Local Authorities (LAs) to reduce exclusion numbers because of the research linking PEs with negative outcomes. The inclusion of young people with behavioural needs and the subsequent reduction of PEs remains a challenge for LAs (Vincent et al., 2007) and has been supported through various government documents (e.g. Department for Children Schools and Families, 2008b; Department for Education and Skills, 2003).

Using a preventative approach to support young people's behaviour

The LA where the current study is based has tried to reduce PE numbers by using preventative, early intervention and holistic approaches to include young people displaying challenging behaviour in mainstream settings. This is also encouraged by the Centre for Social Justice (2011) and supported by research carried out by the House of Commons (UK Parliament Education Committee, 2011). The focus of this research therefore progressed from the reduction of PEs, as research suggests that working in a preventative manner can lead to positive behaviour outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 2009; Muscott et al., 2008).

Challenging behaviour in schools can be described using the terms 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties' (Cole, 2008) or conduct disorder (Bennett, 2006), but it is commonly acknowledged to be difficult to define (Visser & Stokes, 2003). Emerson (1995, 2001) defined 'challenging behaviour' as culturally abnormal behaviour that often risks the safety of the individual or others, or is likely to limit access to community facilities. Describing any behaviour as 'abnormal' adds an element of blame which does not support the positive focus of my research or the cultural influence of behaviour and so this definition is not used. The term 'behaviour' has a broad meaning and can be used interchangeably with 'action', 'manner' or 'response' but for the purposes of this study it is used to describe challenging or negative conduct.

Rationale for current research

The behaviour support services in the LA where I work have undergone a series of changes and the Behaviour and Attendance Team were interested in exploring what is successful at reducing PEs, or improving young people's behaviour, and why. The systematic literature review suggested that interventions focusing on cognitive-behavioural and pro-social approaches may be effective and that good communication, motivation and positivity of all involved were also key components of effective approaches to reduce exclusions (see chapter one). This review, along with other literature, highlights a need for the representation of young people's views in this area (e.g. de Pear & Garner, 1996; Tam, 2011).

Exploring young people's perceptions

Due to a recent increase in published research involving young people (Einarsdottir, Dockett, & Perry, 2009; Flutter & Ruddock., 2004; Reid et al., 2010), researchers are beginning to

learn more about young people's perceptions (Christensen & James, 2000). Despite this, Tam (2011) stresses the lack of young people's voices in the wider social construction of their experiences.

Beyond a gap in the current research, it is a young person's right to access information, be consulted and participate in decisions made about their lives according to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989; Articles 12 and 13). Hence, many UK government documents (e.g. Department for Children Schools and Families, 2008b; Department for Education and Skills, 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Department for Education and Skills, 2004) and acts of parliament (e.g. The Children Act 1989; The Children Act 2004) recommend involving young people actively in matters that affect them.

I view young people as experts in their own lives who can provide valuable information and use this themselves to make decisions (Christensen & James, 2000; Clark, 2011; Todd, 2012) This understanding enables a meaningful and genuine collaboration with the young people within the current research to construct a shared understanding. *Genuine* participation of young people (Aston & Lambert, 2010) is demonstrated by fully and realistically informing them of the research intentions, aims, outcomes and actions proposed by the research. The use of grounded theory also supports their genuine collaboration in this research .

In this case the ultimate decision-making will take place without the young people and therefore their active participation is limited to being 'consulted and informed' according to Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation, or 'consultation-focused' according to Kirby *et al.* (2003). However, Todd suggests that being further up this ladder is not as important as a critical approach to evaluation (Todd, 2012).

Research questions

The initial research questions were:

- What are young people's perceptions of what works well to support their behaviour at school? And;
- Why do young people perceive these interventions to be successful?

As the research developed, the second question became more dominant as I was most interested in discovering *why* these young people believe interventions work. Munn *et al.*

(2000) ask questions regarding what counts as effective, successful or working well and in the current study this was determined by the individual young people's perceptions.

Methodology

Research paradigm

I addressed the current study using a pragmatic critical realist epistemology, a subjectivist ontology, and a participant-centred (Clark, 2011; Punch, 2002) and positive focus (see chapter two).

Participants

LA secondary schools were invited to participate by allowing interviews to take place with young people at risk of PE or with those receiving targeted behaviour support, based on the perceptions of key members of staff within the school. Five young people from two different secondary schools took part in individual interviews. The schools that I work with have low numbers of exclusions, when compared to others in the LA. 18 young people from three primary schools were randomly selected to participate in focus groups. Therefore, the views of young people who had not necessarily received targeted behaviour support were also represented. Table 7 shows the demographics of the participants.

Method (N = 23)	Gender	Year Group
Focus Group (18)	Male (9)	Year 6 (18)
	Female (9)	
Interview (5)	Male (4)	Year 9 (2)
	Female (1)	Year 8 (1)
		Year 7 (2)

Table 7. The demographics of participants (N = 23).

Procedure

The decision to carry out interviews with those who had received targeted support with their behaviour and focus groups with randomly selected young people was informed by a pilot study (see p.42). Semi-structured interviews were timetabled with the participant-focused activities shown in Table 8 as a starting point, drawing on the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) discovery and dream stages (see p.44 and Appendix 2). Participants were offered flexibility

in the type and order of activities carried out. All interviews took place in a quiet space within the young people's schools and were carried out by myself. Data was gathered through the visual artefacts created by/with the young people. The sessions were video-recorded (except one, where the young person preferred not to be on film) to allow for secondary viewing of the sessions. The focus groups followed the same starting agenda and process but were able to provide less flexibility due to time restrictions.

Time in minutes	Activity	Description/aim
0 - 10	Introduction	Explaining: • The purpose of the interview • What is likely to happen during and after the interview • That their involvement will be anonymous and confidential • That they can stop at any time • The ground rules Asking: • Whether they give verbal and/or written consent to participate • Whether they consent for the interview to be video-recorded
10 - 15	Ice-breaker activity	To increase the confidence of the young people and ensure they were relaxed.
15 - 30	Mind maps	Discovery stage: introducing the key questions and giving ideas for the other activities. Questions included: 1. Tell me about a time that you were happy at school and why? 2. Tell me about someone or something that has helped with your behaviour (or someone else's) and why? 3. If you were in charge of your school, how would you help children with their behaviour and why?
30 - 50	Poster-making	Dream stage: dreaming of the best school for helping children with their behaviour.
50 - 60	Summary and debrief	To ensure that the young person understands the research and the ethical protection they have. To ask whether they would like to ask/add anything to what they have said already. To give the opportunity to retract anything they have said. To signpost them on to a member of staff who they can discuss any concerns with.

Table 8. The starting agenda used during interviews.

Analysis

Methods of analysis were informed by Strauss and Corbin's qualitative Grounded Theory (GT; Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) which aims to generate theoretical explanations of social phenomena (Blase, 1982; Kennedy & Lingard, 2006) by exploring the social reality from the actors' perspective (Frykedal & Chiriac, 2011), in this case young people's perceptions of what helps with their behaviour and why. GT is described as 'particularly appropriate for an area which is under-researched' (Jackson, Hayward, & Cooke, 2011, p. 488) Strauss and Corbin's GT was used as it complimented my pragmatic critical realist epistemological stance (see chapter two) and was more structured and explicit than other GT approaches (Adolph et al., 2011), making it ideal for a novice.

Data coding was carried out in parallel to data collection so codes, concepts and categories emerged as the research developed. Coding was carried out in three forms - line-by-line (open) coding, focused (selective) coding and axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Constant comparisons facilitated exploration of similarities and differences in the data, enabling the construction of concepts and categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The latter was carried out through visual mapping, memo writing and field notes to explore the dimensions and properties of the categories and the relations between them (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The codes, concepts and categories were then used to inform lines of questioning in future interviews and focus groups. Therefore, GT was also used as a method of research (Kennedy & Lingard, 2006). Once a theory was created I watched the video recordings of the interviews and focus groups to confirm my understandings.

Ethics

Ethical approval and consent was gained at several levels; the Newcastle University's Ethics Committee; the head teacher of each participating school; participant's parents or carers; and young people themselves. Care was taken to fully inform and ensure understanding of:

- all research aims, methods and procedures
- what would happen with the data after analysis
- the secure and confidential holding of data
- all information being anonymised
- their ability to stop the project at any point

This information was presented in a meaningful and accessible manner (Appendices 3 and 4). In addition, consent from the young people was viewed as on-going rather than a singular agreement (Todd, 2012). Care was taken to work in accordance with the ethical recommendations outlined by the British Psychological Society (2009) and the Health Professions Council (Health Professions Council, 2008). In agreement with Kvale and Brinkman (2008) and Fox and colleagues (2009) I suggest that ethics requires more than achieving a set of guidelines (see p.45).

Findings and discussion

This section begins by briefly describing the five thematic categories that the young people perceived to influence the effectiveness of behaviour support, giving examples from the original data. Categories are related together in the early stages of the theoretical construction. I then assess the quality of the current research and discuss limitations. Finally, I explore the implications of the research findings with particular attention to the implications for EPs.

The core categories

Table 9 shows how the codes were amalgamated to form higher order concepts and categories (learning, self-esteem, environment, control and change of feelings). Table 10 gives example quotations for each of the categories.

Codes	Concepts	Categories
Teaching to behave, teaching to be friends, making me kind, reminding to behave, understanding own behaviour, getting advice, positive feedback, learning to behave	Learning and teaching	**Learning** (to behave)
Consistency Vs given chances, being strict, punishment, positive feedback, reward	Rewards and punishments	
Belonging, getting positive feedback, stop being sad, cheering up, being proud of self, being good at something, work being easy, being comforted, feeling welcomed, feeling respected, being yourself, being confident, getting a boost	Feeling good about self	**Self-esteem**
Having fun, being yourself, being excited, enjoyments, being interested, makes me feel better, makes me laugh, good sense of humour	Being happy	
(Feeling scared, feeling embarrassed, feeling blamed	Feeling bad about self)	
Fresh air, getting space, quiet, being alone	Environmental factors	**Environment** (formed originally from the two categories of 'ability to control environment' and 'others' response to behaviour')
Feeling comfort, belonging, food	Having needs met	
Others helping, help with work	Others' help	
Others being kind, others being calm, peers managing own behaviour, adults in control of their feelings	Others in control of their behaviour	
Not letting the school down, behaving for someone else, others sticking up for me	Others supporting positive behaviour	
Others being kind, others being calm, peers managing own behaviour, adults in control of their feelings, others helping	Positive People	
Talking about behaviour, others listening, others understanding, feeling respected	Feeling listened to	Feeling listened to (sub category of others' response to behaviour)
Being yourself, angry outside-calm inside, having choice, having control, lacking control	Feeling in control	**Control**
Being yourself, being an individual, feeling independent	Independence	
Chilling out, being relaxed, cooling down, calming down	Calming down	**Change of feelings**
Expressing feelings, distract from anger, behaviour becomes acceptable, reducing anger	Reducing anger	

Table 9. The codes, concepts and categories that were created following analysis.

Category	Example Quotations
Learning (to behave)	"my mam *teaching* me new things to grow up" [*sic*]
	"they are helpful by *teaching* to me!" [*sic*]
	"golden rules remind people how to behave"
	"it helps people because they get told off and they learn off [*sic*] it"
	"people don't like the punishments and they learn there [*sic*] lesson"
	"learn you how to behaviour " [*sic*]
	"parents [*sic*] evening helps me because I am hearing that I am getting better"
Self-esteem	"friends….make you feel good about yourself"
	"some teachers…they help you….feel good"
	"because she cheers me up when I was alone"
	"coz [*sic*] I am good at them"
	"I got chose [*sic*] for head boy"
	"something I like to do"
	"[I felt] happy for myself"
	"because I was bursting with exitment [*sic*]"
Environment	"it helps you more if by yourself"
	"time alone [because] there's no-one to shout at"
	"because it wasn't so noisy"
	"it all being noisy…I start telling them off…trying to be quiet"
	"pupils comfort people wen there down" [*sic*]
	"because everyone was warm and welcoming"
	"food calms you down"
	"teachers help me being friends with the people that I fall out with"
	"Bullies No More!!!"
	"kick kids out if they break any rules"
	"she is kind and calm…she doesn't shout at you…anger goes down"
	"better teachers…not strict…they make me feel better"
	"when teacher [*sic*] are not stressed"
	"get nice teacher – people what deal with their anger"
	"my friends stop you getting into trouble [by] telling teachers"
	"[my Keyworker] says to stop during lessons…I stop for her"
	"she sends us out the classroom when she knows I'm going to get angry"
	"because [my friends] stick up for me when I'm being bullied"
	"because [my sister]'s a good role model"
Control	"kind staff who listen"
	"talking about things"
	"[because] she's dead calm with us and she talks with us about what's bothering you"
	"being alone helps cos you get control…and calm down"
	"time out…'cos you can clam down and that….'cos you're not getting angry any more and you're controlling it"
	"I went upstairs and stroked my cat…my idea…I calmed down…[I] tried again a couple of times and it's helped"
	"ask them what helps them and try to go ahead with the plan"
	"because I come [*sic*] more independent"
	"'cos I can do what I want"

	"more freedom can help"
Change of feelings	"…because you can chill out"
	"time alone to calm down and express feelings"
	"'cos they need to get rid of their aggression"
	"anger goes down"
	"stop you from frustrating [*sic*]"

Table 10. Example quotations from the young people from the five categories.

Learning (to Behave)

Learning to behave was discussed frequently, possibly due to its observable nature, and concrete examples were often given as reasons for the efficacy of certain approaches. For example, the idea that being 'grounded' helped them because it was a punishment. Some elaborated further and discussed how this teaches them to behave. Often just awareness of a punishment or reward was thought to be enough to change their behaviour. Concepts of both learning and teaching to behave, differing only in terms of the young people's role in the process, were reasons given for effective intervention. The relevant codes and concepts forming this category were linked to parents, teachers, other adults and less frequently to peers.

Analysis suggested that learning correlated with control and the motivation theme from chapter one, for example, young people suggested having active control over some of their learning. Alternatively they may gain control through learning more about their behaviour. They also perceived learning to be strongly influenced by the environment, for example, an inconsistent learning environment could lead to a perceived lack of control.

Young people's tendency to suggest behavioural approaches as being effective in supporting behaviour is evident in previous research (e.g. Munn et al., 2000; Reid et al., 2010; Vulliamy & Webb, 2000) noted by teachers (Bennett, 2006), parents (Miller, Ferguson, & Simpson, 1998) and government documents (Miller, 2003; Taylor, 2012). Arguably, there was a cognitive element within young people's responses around learning to behave, seen in discussions around changes in feelings and behaviours. The young people rarely discussed social learning or learning from peers. Their level of cognitive and language skills may have affected their ability to access this more abstract concept (Piaget, 1962).

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is defined by Covington (2001) as an individual's personal evaluation of 'whether he or she is good or bad, valued or not, loveable or reprehensible' (p.354). High self-esteem was perceived as important to effective behaviour support and may be linked to the positivity theme from chapter one. Perceived self-esteem was affected by perceived increase in control, learning and environmental factors, and a change in self-esteem may cause a change in feelings and behaviour. Links between positive internal factors such as self-esteem (Daniels et al., 2003; Harris, Vincent, Thomson, & Toalster, 2006) or self-identity (Armitage & Conner, 1999) and positive behaviour outcomes is evident in previous research. Additionally, negative behaviour outcomes have been linked to feelings of rejection and injustice (Miller, 2003; Munn et al., 2000) and more specifically to low self-esteem (Leary, Schreindorfer, & Haupt, 1995). Caution is needed in understanding whether these links are causal or correlational (Emler, 2001).

Happiness was also an element of self-esteem, as most young people described schools that are good at helping young people with their behaviour as happy places and effective behaviour support made them feel happy, excited and interested. Vulliamy and Webb (2003) and Reid and colleagues' (2010) studies agree that young people suggest the behavioural benefits of 'interesting' rather than 'boring' lessons. Encouraging happiness is arguably encouraged by the government's new 'expert advisor on behaviour' (Department for Education, 2012d) who suggests that, 'often it is doing the simple things that can make a difference with behaviour…the teacher who takes the time to meet and greet pupils at the door will find they come in happier and ready to learn' (Taylor, 2012, p. 2).

Occasionally, young people perceived feeling bad about themselves as a reason for a positive change in behaviour. Although this was an anomaly in the current research, Emler's (2001) review suggested that there was little evidence that building self-esteem increases positive behaviour outcomes. It also suggested that the link between self-esteem and behaviour may be more complex than the theory created from the young people's perceptions (see below), as high self-esteem can also be linked to anti-social behaviour.

Environment

This theme was developed from the original categories of *ability to control the environment* and *others' response to behaviour.* Young people's perceptions often described the benefit of a positive environment for successful behaviour support, linking to the theme of positivity from chapter one.

According to the young people, physical environmental factors led to successful behaviour support. Examples included low levels of sensory stimulation, allowing increased control of their environment leading to positive changes in feelings and behaviour. Clarke (2003) agrees that in loud or crowded environments, people are less likely to exhibit pro-social behaviours.

The young people discussed having their fundamental needs met. A caring and nurturing environment arguably reduces motivation for safety and security (Burton & Goodman, 2011; Maslow, 1943) increasing their ability to conform socially and behaviourally. Research also suggests the effective application of Nurture Groups (Garner & Thomas, 2011; Sanders, 2007; Seth-Smith, Levi, Pratt, Fonagy, & Jaffey, 2010) and nurture principles (Doyle, 2003, 2004; Lucas, 1999) in supporting behaviour and in support of this the Centre for Social Justice recommends that all schools have a 'nurture policy' (2011).

Receiving offers of help with learning and behaviour were additional factors thought to influence positive behavioural changes, highlighted by previous research (e.g. Bennett, 2006; Burton & Goodman, 2011; Daniels et al., 2003). The *perceived* accessibility and availability of support may be important to effective behaviour support (Vulliamy & Webb, 2003). It also allows a young person to choose whether they access it or not, increasing environmental control.

The young people believed that removal of their peers who could not control their behaviour and adults being in control of their feelings and behaviour were beneficial to their behaviour, a concern raised in previous research (Reid et al., 2010). Many discussed the behavioural and emotional benefits of significant others' responses to their behaviour and positive people. The benefits of positive relationships between staff and pupils is seen in previous research (Bennett, 2006; Burton & Goodman, 2011; Groom & Rose, 2005; Munn et al., 2000; Vulliamy & Webb, 2003) and by

pupils themselves (Garner & Thomas, 2011; Kidger, Donovan, Biddle, Campbell, & Gunnell, 2009; O'Riordan, 2011; Reid et al., 2010).

The subcategory of feeling listened to and the concept of others' responses to behaviour links to the theme of communication from chapter one. Previous research highlights the importance of talk and active listening to young people for effective emotional and behavioural support (Armstrong et al., 2000; Kidger et al., 2009; McLaughlin, 1999; Vulliamy & Webb, 2003).

Control

Feeling in control was another reason given for successful behaviour interventions. Young people believed they benefited from time alone to calm down, giving more control. Teachers also see the importance of giving young people opportunities to 'cool off' (Bennett, 2006; Carlile, 2011). A strong link between staff and young people's views could be due to a common, reinforced language and therefore I may question the origin of these views. Research suggests that positive behavioural, social, emotional and academic outcomes are often found following active pupil participation in decision-making (Halsey et al., 2006; Lawrence, 2011; Lee & Gavine, 2003). The importance of control, independence and responsibility was outlined by The Elton Report (1989) which suggested that "…schools which gave pupils positive responsibilities tended to achieve better standards of behaviour" (p.142). De Pear and Garner (1996) also suggested that excluded pupils have a need to feel competent and responsible which has implications of being in control. The behavioural benefit of increased control has been suggested by young people in previous research alongside opinions that behaviour could also be a barrier to decision-making participation (Aston & Lambert, 2010), suggesting a reciprocal relationship between behaviour and control. Control can be linked to the theme of motivation in chapter one where both linked to psychological theory such as goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) attribution theory (Heider, 1958) and human agency (Bandura, 2006).

As the current study focuses on young people's perceptions, their *perceived* control may also be important. The idea of perceived control of a particular behaviour may be linked to self-efficacy which is defined as 'beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required' (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). As Ludwig and Pittman (1999) suggest, 'self-efficacy is directly linked to decision making and

perceived self-control' (p.462). Therefore if these young people feel that they are capable of successful changes in their behaviour (in their words they are in 'control' of their behaviour), they may be described as self-efficacious in this domain according to Bandura. Bandura (1997) also states that, 'unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act' (p.2-3), suggesting the importance of self-efficacy in facilitating a change in behaviour. In support of this, research suggests that high levels of self-efficacy may have a positive effect on behaviour outcomes following intervention (Daniels et al., 2003; Hallam & Castle, 2001). Bandura (2006) also suggests that a school provides a young person with many opportunities to develop their self-efficacy in different domains, for example, through continuous tests, comparisons and evaluations of their social and cognitive skills; peer modelling; and teachers' interpretations of their success and failures. This also suggests a link between the broad categories of control and learning.

As suggested above, self-efficacy is defined distinctively from self-esteem. Self-efficacy describes the judgements of personal capability, yet self-esteem describes a judgement of self-worth (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (*ibid)* goes on to explain how there seems to be no relationship between these two concepts. For example, one could feel incapable of a given activity yet unless one invests their self-worth in this activity, it is unlikely to affect their self-esteem. This suggests that these two concepts can be linked but this is dependent on the positioning of self-worth. For example, if a young person invests their self-worth in 'behaving well' then their perceptions of their capability in 'behaving well' is likely to influence their self-esteem and vice versa. This is in agreement with Owens, Stryker, and Goodman (2001) who suggest that self-esteem can be broken down into two dimensions of self-efficacy and self-worth. The young people in the current study also identified links between control and self-esteem.

Change of Feelings

Young people discussed effective behaviour support in terms of a positive change in feelings. This category links strongly to self-esteem, which was defined partly in terms of happiness. Calming down and reducing anger were given frequently as a reason for successful behaviour support. I believe that all the young people explained successful changes in their behaviour as being due to a positive change in feelings. There appears to be a common language of feelings for most young people

when discussing their behaviour and this is often perceived as a precursor to a behaviour change, also seen by Byrne and Hennessy (2009).

Chapter one (p. 25) discussed the value of a Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approach for successful exclusion reduction. CBT approaches focus on the interaction between thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Stallard, 2005) which links to perceptions of a change in feelings leading to a change in behaviour. The language used by young people may be a reason why CBT approaches are often effective (e.g. Humphrey & Brooks, 2006), however it may stem from the previous application of CBT or other therapeutic methods such as narrative therapy in behaviour interventions and interactions with school staff. I would argue that the cause of this language is less relevant than the implications, discussed below.

Moving towards a theory

The young people perceived that control, the environment and learning had a considerable effect on their self-esteem and may elicit a change of feelings, often used in conjunction with a positive change in behaviour. They also perceived that self-esteem, control, environment and learning all interact and are important for the effective prevention and intervention of challenging behaviour (Appendix 5). Hence the following theory was created:
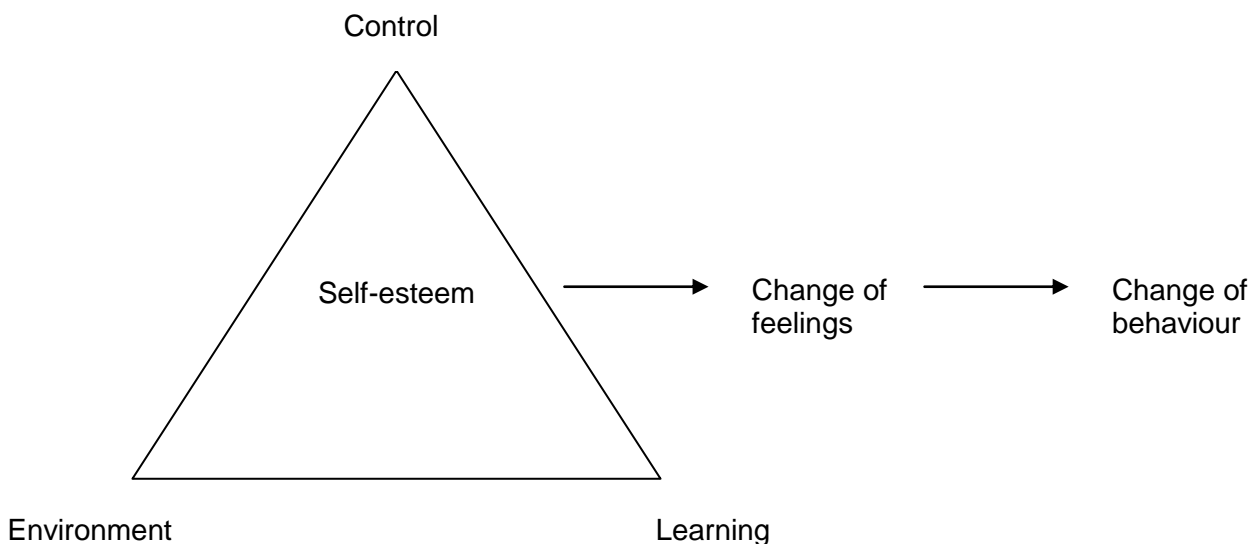
Control

Self-esteem ⟶ Change of feelings ⟶ Change of behaviour

Environment   Learning

Figure 3. A theory of young people's perceived reasons for successful behaviour interventions.

Figure 3 suggests young people's perceived control over behaviour, learning to behave or positive environmental factors can increase self-esteem, leading to a positive change in feelings and behaviour. Occasionally, they discussed how lowered self-esteem could lead to a positive change in feelings and behaviour. This appeared to be when a drop in self-esteem was used as a punishment and I would argue that this was an example of learning, aiding the young person's control of a situation which then led to calming down.

Relating the theory to others

A limited number of studies have explored young people's perceptions of behaviour and behaviour interventions. This, along with wider literature and theory regarding young people's behaviour or their perceptions will be compared with the findings outlined above.

Tam's (2011) theory of the discourses of young people's problematic behaviour suggests links with the theory described above. The initiating influence of peers on girls' problematic behaviour links to others' control of behaviour and others' responses to behaviour (and therefore the environment) highlighted above. Arguably, Tam's facilitating factors for delinquent behaviour in girls link to self-esteem, environmental factors and learning. The noticeable difference between the theory for boys' behaviour seems to be that school performance, possibly linked to self-esteem, is often an initiating factor whereas peer aggression, which could be linked to environmental factors, is often a facilitating factor.

The theory suggested above also shows links to wider psychological theory including human agency (Bandura, 2006), motivation (e.g. goal-setting theory; Locke & Latham, 1990) and planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The latter suggests the importance of perceived behavioural control and self-efficacy on behavioural intention, which arguably links to control and self-esteem in the current study. Armitage and Connor (1999) suggest that with this theory in mind, perceived control reflects actual control, suggesting a stronger justification for the link with the current study. Armitage and Conner (*ibid*) also suggest that perceived control works alongside positive attitudes, which may be described as an example of self-esteem. Whereas the theory of planned behaviour uses the theme of 'control' centrally, the young people suggested self-esteem as a central theme in the current research, perhaps predictable given that the theory was grounded in the data gained from

individuals. Ajzen's work has been criticized for over-simplifying the concept of perceived behavioural control (Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999) and that different factors within the theory of planned behaviour may be predictive rather than causal (Armitage & Conner, 1999). As my focus is on young people's perceptions, rather than a fundamental truth, these cannot be argued to be over-simplified. Whether these relationships are predictive or causal, it is the implications that are important to me.

Carlile's (2011) theory of an 'Extended Body' suggests that behaviour, attitude, mental state and intention are all reciprocal influences on the external world. Along with the theory above, this theory suggests that behaviour can be affected by a young person's feelings (attitude), self-esteem (mental state) and learning or control (intention). While Carlile (*ibid*) suggests that this Extended Body becomes contested space that can lead to pathologising, I would suggest that these are elements of a young person which can be more readily influenced through the environment and they themselves could gain greater control.

Bailey and Thompson (2008) used an Activity Theory framework (See Figure 4; Engestrom, 2000) to consider young people's views on how and why learning support impacts positively on self-esteem and achievement showing considerable overlap with their views of why behaviour support is effective. Seven key themes emerged, including enjoyment, confidence and sense of achievement (which could all be linked to self-esteem), learning independence (which draws links between learning and control), relationships with peers and adults, and the physical environment (grouped into the environment category above). This study also highlights that Activity Theory could have been used to analyse data in the current study and that Figure 3 seems similar to Figure 4 in that 'tools' could describe 'environment', 'rules' could describe 'learning' and 'division of labour' could describe 'control'. The 'community' would be the school and the 'subject' and 'object' would depend on the level of control the young person felt in a given situation.
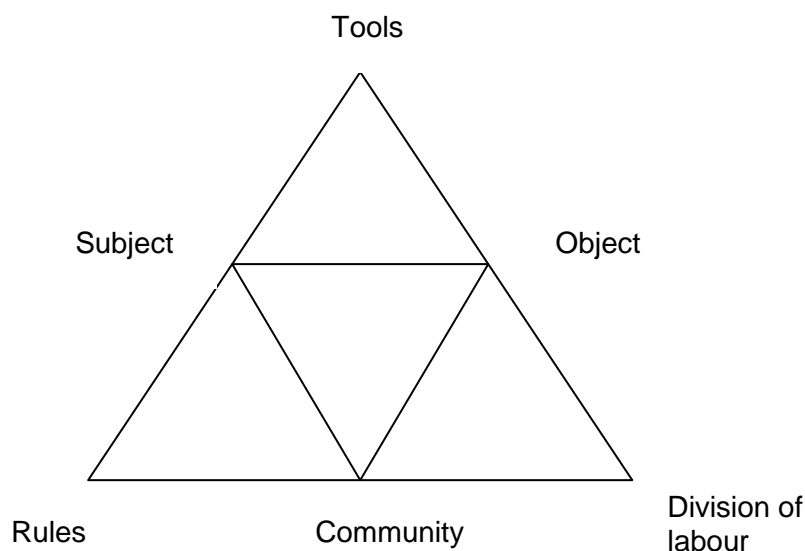
Tools

Subject   Object

Rules   Community   Division of
                                  labour

Figure 4. Figure showing Engestrom's Activity Theory framework (2000).

Gillen *et al.*'s (2011) research suggested similar themes to those described by Bailey and Thompson (2008), suggesting that young people consider similar factors to influence effective support across different domains. This is supported by comparing the theory above to Dweck's research exploring young people's theories about intelligence and how this impacts on their motivation to learn (e.g. Mueller & Dweck, 1998) and Gorard and See's (2011) exploration of young people's perceptions of how school enjoyment could be enhanced; implying that this theory may be applied more broadly than simply in reference to challenging behaviour.

Summary

Chapter one discussed the findings from a systematic literature review, which concluded that factors such as positivity, motivation and communication appeared to be significant in the effectiveness of interventions to reduce school exclusions (p. 26-29) which broadly represented the categories suggested by young people's perceptions of why behaviour support is effective. Their perceptions had more of an individual focus, regarding self-esteem, perceived control and own feelings, as I would expect from data grounded in individuals' perceptions.

The high level of triangulation between the literature and young people's perceptions suggests that it is not necessarily what is involved in an intervention that is important but how intervention or prevention is implemented and perceived by the young

people. Supporting this Daniels and colleagues (2003) and Munn and colleagues (2000) suggest that no specific type of intervention is associated with a more positive behaviour outcome for young people experiencing challenging behaviour. This corroboration with wider research suggests that 'change in behaviour' may describe more than just challenging behaviour and that this theory may be applied to learning behaviour and social behaviour.

Research quality

I have evaluated the current qualitative research using a framework suggested by Mays and Pope (2000). Table 11 provides evidence that I considered all of these criteria.

Area for evaluation	Definition of area for evaluation (from Mays and Pope, 2000)	Summary of evaluation of current study
Triangulation	"Triangulation compares the results from either two or more different methods of data collection (for example, interviews and observation) or, more simply, two or more data sources" (p.51)	• Data collected using two methods and constant comparison used to triangulate findings • Findings from empirical data triangulated with findings from systematic review
Respondent validation	"Respondent validation…includes techniques in which the investigator's account is compared with those of the research subjects to establish the level of correspondence between the two sets" (p.51)	• This approach was used constantly in GT by analysing each set of data before collecting the next • In interviews and focus groups I continuously checked correspondence of understanding
Clear exposition of methods of data collection and analysis	"Since the methods used in research unavoidably influence the objects of inquiry…a clear account of the process of data collection and analysis is important" (p.51)	• The methods of data collection and analysis are described clearly within the methodology section, with additional information given in chapter two and in appendices
Reflexivity	"Reflexivity means sensitivity to the ways in which the researcher and the research process have shaped the collected data, including the role of prior assumptions and experience, which can influence even the most avowedly inductive inquiries" (p.51)	• Explored in chapter two
Attention to negative cases	"As well as exploration of alternative explanations for the data collected, a long established tactic for improving the quality of explanations in qualitative research is to search for, and discuss, elements in the data that contradict, or seem to contradict, the emerging explanation of the phenomena under study" (p.51)	• One such example is given in the 'Moving towards a theory' section
Fair dealing	"…to ensure that the research design explicitly incorporates a wide range of different perspectives so that the viewpoint of one group is never presented as if it represents the sole truth about any situation" (p.51)	• Perspectives were gained from young people of different ages, from different settings and having received different levels of behavioural support • Young people were considered as experts in their own lives and therefore their views were perceived as equal to others' • My pragmatic critical realist perspective lends itself to considering theory beyond the perspectives of individuals, so that these viewpoints are not presented as a fundamental truth

Table 11. The qualitative evaluation of the current study.

The current study also arguably meets ten of eleven evaluative criteria suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990) for the use of GT. In particular, the GT method employs the constant comparative process which 'checks on credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness' (Kvale, 2007, p. 123) with the participants, adding to the 'natural rigor' of the findings (Piggott, 2010, p. 420). They suggest that GT 'has specific procedures for data collection and analysis, although there is flexibility and latitude within limits' but that with too much deviation, rigor cannot be maintained (*ibid;* p.6). One criterion was not met as sampling did not always proceed on theoretical grounds due to the availability and accessibility of participants.

Limitations

This section explores three of the limitations of the current research and the impact on current findings.

Miller (2003) suggests that young people's behaviour is not easily explained due to numerous individual, social and environmental influences that produce a complex interaction rather than clear linear relationships of cause and effect. Therefore, care needs to be taken with interpretation of these findings and particular attention needs to be paid to the context of each young person's situation.

The selection of participants was conducted by school staff and was therefore dependent on their interpretation of the terms 'behaviour' and 'support', the standards and procedures in each school and their knowledge of particular young people. I did not consider this to significantly affect the findings as the important element was that they had some experience of behavioural support, the type or intensity of which was not particularly relevant.

Axial coding was challenging due to the simplicity of the data produced. My decision to analyse the young people's visual artefacts (see p.44) meant that I lost some of the richness of the content, a challenge identified by Piggott (2010). I gained some of this richness back by watching the video recordings of the interviews and focus groups to check through the theory created. At this abstract level my own interpretations become more evident.

Implications for practice

This section will focus on the implications for EP practice and how I can learn from this research in my future EP practice. Caution should be applied when generalising these findings as Corbin and Strauss (1990) state, '[GT] may…implicitly give some degree of predictability, but only with regard to specific conditions' (p.5). Munn and colleagues (2000) also suggest that 'schools have individual histories, traditions and contexts which make it impractical to import "what works" in one context unproblematically to another' (p.xii). Consequently, I suggest the prudent application of these implications within different contexts. The findings above suggest that:

- *How* an intervention or preventative theory is applied may require more consideration than simply *which* intervention to use. Therefore, when considering behavioural support in school, an EP could consider the wider context and ethos (for a definition see Munn et al., 2000, p. 49) of the school rather than purely intervening at an individual level.
- Self-esteem is a central factor in my theory. Consideration of a young person's self-concept or self-esteem may be helpful during EP's assessment/ therapeutic work or may inform environmental strategies at the class or school level. According to Emler (2001) parents play an important role in a young person's self-esteem and an EP's role may be to work through parent consultation.
- Young people's *perceptions* of different factors are important so it may be helpful for EPs to consider young people's interpretations of different events. If perceived control can be increased, for example by ensuring that they are part of any decision-making processes, this may be beneficial. EPs could invite young people to consultation meetings and reviews where possible and ensure their views are used appropriately.
- These young people tended to use a vocabulary of feelings to discuss their behaviour and EPs could use similar language to aid their understanding. Cognitive-behavioural (Stallard, 2005) or narrative (White, 2000) approaches embrace discussions around feelings so may be particularly effective for supporting young people's behaviour.
- Many young people aged ten years and over have a good understanding of behaviour, what may support it and why. This could be appreciated by encouraging their active involvement in decisions made about their behaviour

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support at an individual or systemic level (Reid et al., 2010). This strengthens the EP's role as an advocate for young people (Farrell et al., 2006).

- There are also implications of the method used. I suggest that the findings support the use of AI in research and practice in order to gather positive information. The young people found these positive discussions accessible.

Implications for research

The AI process could be continued by exploring perceptions of teachers, parents and relevant professionals and triangulating these with the young people's views. This may increase the perceived value of the findings and aid the motivation of adults involved to apply the findings in practice. Literature suggests that parents play a significant role in behaviour support (Miller, 2003; Munn et al., 2000) and self-esteem (Emler, 2001). An alternative method of data collection, such as young people recording their own voices, may increase the richness of their responses whilst maintaining the accessibility of the research methods and control over what they present.

The perceptions of different cohorts of young people could be explored to enhance the theoretical sampling of the GT process. For example, young people who may be considered to have low or high self-esteem or those excluded from school. The focus of research could also be narrowed to the exploration of young people's perceptions of self-esteem or control in relation to behaviour more widely.

General conclusions

The high level of triangulation between the literature and young people's perceptions suggests that the type of intervention may not be as important as how intervention or prevention is implemented and then perceived by the young people. However, the findings suggest that schools and classrooms that promote positive self-esteem, young people's control, good communication and use of language based on feelings may be effective in reducing PEs and are perceived by young people to be effective at supporting their behaviour. The high corroboration with wider research suggests changes in behaviour may describe more than just challenging behaviour and that this theory may be applied to learning behaviour and social behaviour.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Coding tables

Appendix 2 – Appreciative inquiry

Appendix 3 – Sample information and consent form for young people

Appendix 4 – Sample information and consent form for parents/carers

Appendix 5 – Example of visual map of categories

Appendix 1 - Coding tables

Study and Aims	Age Group	N	Treatment Group(s)	Comparison Group(s)	Dependent Measure(s)	Intervention details	Findings relating to the question: why are some interventions effective in reducing school exclusions?	Effect size
McKeon (2001) Aims: To explore students perceptions of their knowledge of the support centre and its aims, elements of the support centre that they felt made a difference to their own development, and their views about their future in school	Ages 11 – 13 years (longitudinal)	Unknown (whole population of year 7s and 8s). Consultation of 40 students in year 7 and 8. Secondary part of project, involved group discussions with 16 students from core group.	The 'core group' were considered at high risk of exclusion.	Selected as medium-risk. All had at least one internal exclusion. Not offered a timetable in the Support Centre but were monitored. After one academic year this group then were able to access a drama group that focused on making choices.	Number of exclusions. Student consultations, all asked the same questions. Teacher questionnaires (no further details).	Provisionally offered one term in the support centre, reviewed after one term. Each student was given a package of academic and PSHE work, which they followed at their own pace. Each student identified at least one behaviour target which was monitored. Focus on reflection on the circumstances or their exclusion and planned strategies to avoid it reoccurring. Some were offered a counselling timetable. A focus on positive relationships and confidence building, through group and individual work. Assessed by EP and recommendations for literacy and numeracy support made (linked to IEPs). Exit procedure.	Students' perceptions of the support centre: -it was important for teachers not to shout at them -confidentiality -needing a female to talk to -having a quieter working environment with smaller classes -someone who promotes students to be organised -a place for students to calm down away from others -teachers that don't mind repeating instructions -teachers that don't make them feel embarrassed for not understanding -giving students opportunities to self-correct -help sort out strategies to sort out problems -happier atmosphere which makes you laugh -somewhere to go when you have done something wrong -being able to talk things through (counselling) -individual targets. Teacher questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive (only 30% were returned). They believed that the school had benefitted from the centre in the following ways: -it provides a 'safety-valve' for pupils who can't cope with classroom demands -it takes the pressure off the teacher and pupil	N.A.

								-it contributed to a cooperative approach of dealing with events -it provided a supervised time-out place.	
Burton (2006) Aims: Not explicit but seemed to evaluate the 'Over To You' group work which aimed to: - reflect on personal strengths and difficulties - set and work towards their own personal targets - increase awareness of how their thinking may affect their feelings and behaviour (Link with CBT?) - recognise the impact of their communicatio n style on others	12 – 13 years	5 (2 girls and 3 boys)	Selected by staff for being frequently in trouble with teachers as a result of their behaviour in school.	N.A.		Self-rating social skills assessment form (post-intervention this original form was returned so that pupils could judge whether their skills had improved). Staff-rating social skills assessment form (post-intervention staff were given a new form and not shown their original ratings). Pupils also carried out post-intervention interviews to feed back on the process.	'Over To You' group work led by an EP and a school-based co-worker. Practical elements: -encouraged motivation for change -participants were invited to keep a feelings diary -ideas of CBT (including homework and connecting thoughts, feelings and behaviour, cognitive reframing, the use of role-play to work through real-life situations) -reflecting on their successes	-pupil A suggested that she had improved in all target areas (controlling anger, fewer arguments, concentration in class), also felt that she was getting into less trouble and understood lessons better. Her mother had noticed that she was less argumentative at home. She thought she was learning to change her reactions -pupil B thought the group had made them work as a team, develop better friendships, thought she had improved in two target areas (cooperate better and to speak better to teachers). -pupil C felt he had made progress on his targets (to not talk in lessons and not to argue with teachers and not to call out), he felt he wasn't being told off as much. -pupil D felt his behaviour had improved in some lessons and he wasn't getting into as much trouble and that he's listened better. He also thought he was teasing people less but still found it hard to ignore provocation. The school-based co-worker wrote a report describing the progress of the pupils half a term after the end of the input. Some of the themes of this report are: -felt the group had been very successful. -thinks that knowing the pupils well is essential	N.A.

- practice using assertive strategies for resolving conflicts.								
Robinson (1998) Aims: Not explicit but seemed to evaluate the multiagency team work which aimed to: - provide intensive short-term support - to offer those who had been permanently excluded a new school - to offer support to schools to develop new strategies or systems.	4 – 11 years	51 children from those referred to the team were accepted	Unclear – whole population referred to the team?	N.A.	Numbers of permanent exclusions. Evaluation forms sent to schools when a pupil graduated from the project. Members of the team were asked to rate their satisfaction about individual interventions on a 5 point scale.	The team aimed to provide a trained multiagency team which could respond rapidly to support schools where a child was seen as being in danger of permanent exclusion. The team included: - 5 support assistants specialising in emotional and behavioural difficulties - 2 EBD support teachers - 1 project social worker for 3 half days a week - 1 EP for 3 half days a week. All children accessed: - a 'keyworker' - a new IEP - work focusing on the development of self-esteem and achieving success in school -direct teaching of social skills -support with academic tasks -withdrawal from stressful activities -help to calm down -opportunities for counselling -work in a small group -teaching of playground skills The team also provided: - liaison with parents - liaison with class teacher - a focus of building relationships	Team members suggested that the following factors aided interventions: -roles and responsibilities clearly defined -good home school links -working in a supportive team with good management and communication -good liaison with a supportive and friendly school -effective and consistent action planning -class teacher positivity -good timing of intervention -schools valued support -children placed appropriately -child wanted to succeed -wide range of skills represented in the team	N.A.

Hardman (2001) Aims: Not explicit but seemed to reflect on the application of the use of PCP with a young person.	Aged14/15 years (Year 10)	1	Case study	N.A.	Teachers were given a solution focused questionnaire. Young person's experiences as a narrative.	8 week PCP and solution focused intervention, one session per week, each lasting 40mins. Sessions provided the opportunity for the pupil to consider an alternative self-image and to experiment with new behaviours. Intervention also included work with the parents and staff. Feedback was given through weekly meetings with the SENCO, a written report for parents and school staff, and a letter to the young person.	The teacher questionnaire suggested a number of themes. The young person felt listened to. Increasing the young person's awareness of the situation. Raised young person's self-esteem and social relationships. Using small steps to changing behaviour. Young person understanding his own motivations. Allowed the young person to 'experiment' with another way of behaving to experience change.	N.A.
Humphrey and Brooks (2006) Aim: To evaluate the effectiveness of a short cognitive-behavioural anger management intervention in reducing problem behaviour in school and to identify factors that may facilitate	Mean age 14 years 2 months	12	Teachers nominated students who were 'at most risk of permanent exclusion as a direct consequence of anger management problems'	Participants were their own controls using a baseline period with no intervention.	Revised Rutter Scale for Teachers. Post intervention semi-structured interviews with students. Non-participant observations. Baseline period, intervention period and follow-up period.	Six one-hour sessions over four weeks. Focus on teaching strategies and problem-solving skills to control t anger. Main elements underpinning the programme were the cognitive and behavioural components of anger, cognitive and behavioural techniques to manage anger, and using solution-focused techniques in facilitating the application of newly acquired skills. Sessions included whole-group, small-group and individual discussions, games and exercises. A whole group	The students valued discussions where thoughts, feelings and experiences could be shared. Success of the intervention may have been effected by; power in the classroom; treatment readiness, the importance of sharing thoughts, feelings and experiences with others. Qualitative analysis of interview transcriptions and observation field notes suggested that the theme of 'power' is central and overarching to the effectiveness of the intervention. A second theme of 'trust' between members of the group was also located. 'Treatment readiness' was also raised as a third theme.	Revised Rutter Scale for teachers- Behaviour scores (only during intervention period) showed: 'Behaviour' scores - significant 0.40 (Cohen's D) 'Emotional Behaviour' scores - significant 0.48 (Cohen's D)

or impede participant progress during this type of intervention.						review was conducted at the end of each session. Participants were encouraged to: - explore what anger is - why we need it - when it becomes a problem - how we can take control by recognising the signs that we are getting angry - the things that make us angry - develop self-instruction (self-talk) - use relaxation techniques. - create an individual portfolio.		'Prosocial' scores - significant 0.62 (Cohen's D) 'Conduct' scores - significant 0.52 (Cohen's D) No significant main effect for 'inattentive/hyperactive' scores. No time x domain interaction was found.
Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) Aim: To measure the impact of this intervention on the number of excluded days and the reoccurrence of emotional and behavioural difficulties.	4 – 12 years	124 registered cases of children excluded from school	54 received the new intervention, randomly chosen (the 'index group')	8 did not receive new intervention, randomly chosen 43 received standard intervention, randomly chosen 19 received no standard intervention (most were considered not in need of intervention)	The number of excluded days. The re-occurrence of emotional and behavioural difficulties. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Health of the Nation Outcome Scale for Children and Adolescents.	An intensive multidisciplinary intervention for pupils excluded from primary school because of disruptive/antisocial behaviour.	Reasons for effectiveness included: - Bringing school and home closer together - More positive - Behavioural intervention - One-to-one counselling [The intervention group showed a reduction in the number of excluded days (mean 4.62) between the two phases, while the control had a slight increase on the same variable. (not statistically significant) 90% of schools who received the new intervention agreed that the input was very helpful 90% agreed that the content of the intervention was relevant and the	Excluded Days – significant 0.46 (Cohen's D) Health of the Nation Outcome Scale for Children and Adolescents – significant 0.26 (Cohen's D)

					General Health Questionnaire. Excluded and Suspended Children Interview Schedule (a semi-structured interview schedule).		liaison between the school and the team had been effective. 62.5% found that the intervention produced a positive change in pupils' emotional states The cases that complied with this new multidisciplinary intervention had significantly (p<0.014) better results than the control group.]	
Hartnell (2008) Aims: Not explicit but seemed to be to explore the effectiveness of a new multi-disciplinary Behaviour Support Team within a local authority, using both quantitative and qualitative methods	4 – 18 years (all schools)	All those referred between February and May 2004 (some excluded for ethical reasons) N = 38 All parents of children sampled. 6 cases sampled for interview, purposive sampling (3 with positive impact of intervention and 3 with negative	Over 500 schools across LA	N.A.	Questionnaire to schools to evaluate BST services. Teacher behaviour questionnaire for individual pupils who were referred (15 descriptors with a 6-point frequency scale) these scores were compared to those 6 months after referral. Parent telephone interviews. In depth interviews with a sample of pupils, their	4 multidisciplinary behaviour support teams created consisting of: -BST Manager (Senior EP 0.6) -Specialist Senior EP (0.6) -Primary Mental Health Worker (1.0) -Advisory Teacher S.E.B.D. (1.0) -Behaviour Teacher (1.0) -Family Workers (1.5) Work included activities with individual young people, work in groups or whole classes and whole school work. Examples of interventions in school included consultation with pupils, consultation with staff, advice to parents, assessment of pupil, whole class interventions such as circle of friends, anger management interventions, training for staff, support with behaviour policies etc.	[A significant decrease in overall numbers of PEs is not observed. Significant decrease seen in primary exclusions.] **Interventions rated:** -whole school work rated least effective and the most effective -individual assessment of a pupil, therapy/support to parents about their child, help writing a behaviour plan for a pupil, individual therapy for the pupil, individual counselling or art therapy for a child, support from the outreach service from the EBD base were all seen as equally most effective interventions (rated by HTs). -Interventions at whole class and whole school levels were all/mostly seen as equally effective, except for in-service training which was seen as very effective. **Parental Questionnaire/interview:** -parents commented that the most helpful part of the support was that the BST provided someone to talk to their child about his/her difficulties. This offered them strategies as well as	Not enough statistical information provided to calculate effect sizes.

| | | impact/no impact of intervention), their parents and teachers. | | | parents and their teachers. Six open questions used and a practical checklist of demographic information (etc). | | encouragement and praise to raise their self-esteem. (mentioned by 8 out of 15 parents)
-parents also mentioned difficulties of getting the school to sustain the strategies and obtaining feedback from the school about behaviour.
-there was no significant relationship between parents' opinions and teachers' opinions.
-concern raised about validity of parental questionnaire.

In depth interviews:
-Themes included the role of the BST in developing strategies, the responsiveness of the BST, fostering joint working between home and school, and the effects of BST interventions (mostly positive) | |

Appendix 2 - Appreciative inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was used to inform the structure, methods and specific questions during the interviews and focus groups. AI is a concept and method devised by David Cooperrider and colleagues in the United States of America in the mid-1980s (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). According to Cooperrider, AI allows organisations to be viewed as affirmative systems and aims to facilitate change, therefore it stands as a philosophy and a methodology (Hall & Hammond, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011). AI focuses on solution-finding rather than problem-solving, by finding current successes and positive attributes, imagining an ideal future and realising this in terms of possibilities. This is a philosophy which is shared with positive psychology (Appreciative Inquiry, 2010).

The AI method is based on five main principles shown in the table below which allowed me to apply the pragmatic stance of 'what works' (Cormier, 2001) using positive and community psychology approaches.

1	*The constructionist principle - all organisations are realities that are constructed socially and that there are no empirical truths to locate (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001).*
2	*The principle of simultaneity - 'inquiry is intervention, that as we inquire into human systems, we change them' (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p. 166).*
3	*The poetic principle - organisations exist through the stories, words and phrases that describe them (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).*
4	*The anticipatory principle - our actions are informed by our images and dreams of the future (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).*
5	*The positive principle - positive affect (emotions such as hope, excitement, and inspiration) lead to change (Ludema, Wilmot, & Srivastva, 1997).*

Table to show the five main principles of AI.

The AI process is described in the figure overleaf using the 4D cycle of discovery, dream, design and delivery (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001).
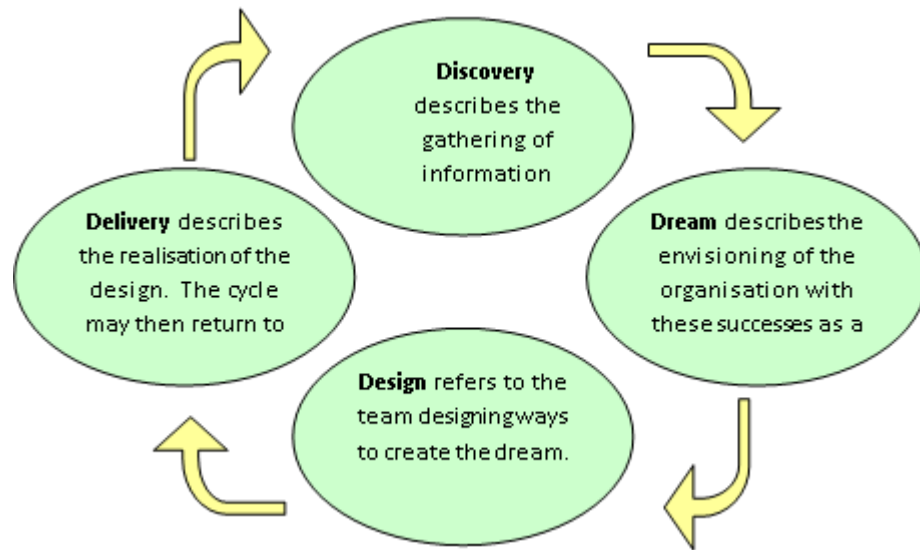
Figure showing the AI 4D cycle (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001).

As with other solution-oriented approaches (de Shazer, 1985; O'Hanlon, 2006), a common criticism of AI is that it ignores or denies the existence of problems (Coghlan, Preskill, & Catsambas, 2003). Arguably, the subject chosen for exploration (in this case the aim for a reduction of PEs through the support of young people's behaviour in school) is considered the problem and is therefore not ignored. This area of choice is then reframed to focus on the strengths and values of the current system (*ibid).*

Baker and Wright (2006) effectively used an AI approach with young patients and other stakeholders. They noted that, 'most striking was the input of young people themselves…their presence changed the dynamic of the gathering and provided very different and valuable views' (p.568). San Martin and Calabrese (2010) used the discovery and dream phases (See the figure above) in their research and concluded that AI lends itself to the inclusion of young people in a 'cooperative and collaborative decision making process' (p.119), another reason for its use in the current study.

Appendix 3 – Sample information and consent form for young people.

The following consent form was read and discussed with the young people in person. The young people were encouraged to take the letters home with them.

Dear Pupils,

My name is Fiona Boyd and I am doing some research for ███████████████ about behaviour. I want to find out the best way to help young people with their behaviour in school, so I have come to █████████████ School to interview you to find out what helps you.

I have asked you if you would like to do this interview as you are in year 7 or year 8 and you have had some help with your behaviour since you've been at this school. I think that this means you will have some good ideas about what schools and ███████████████ can do to help pupils with their behaviour. Your parents have agreed to you coming along today, but I would like your permission as well.

If you agree, the interview will last between half an hour and one hour and we will do some activities like making posters and playing games. If you agree, the interview will be video-recorded so that I can remember the things you say.

Important things:

- I am really interested in what you have to say...there are no right and wrong answers
- You will be able to stop at any time
- I will be the only person who will see my notes and the
- video tape
- The notes and the video-tape will be destroyed at the end of the project
- My report will not have any names of pupils or schools in it,

so no one will be able to see what you have said or even that you were in the workshop
- o I will write to you and your parents at the end of the project to tell you what I found out
- o I will also tell your school and ███████████ what I have found out, and hopefully it will mean that schools will have some more ideas about how to help young people with their behaviour
- o The interview should be fun and might help you to learn some new skills

If you have any questions about this research please ask me or tell ███████████ and they can pass on a message to me.

If you would like to take part please fill in this form and hand it in to ███████████

Consent Form

Name:...

Class:...

Please tick Yes or No:

	Please tick if you agree.	
	Yes 🙂	No ☹
I would like to do the interview		
I'm ok with being videoed		
I know that Fiona will keep my identity secret		
I know that I can stop the project at any time		
I know I can contact Fiona with any questions		

Signature...

Full name...

Date ....

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Boyd
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Newcastle City Council

Appendix 4 – Sample information and consent form for parents/carers of interviewees

Fiona Boyd
Trainee Educational Psychologist
██████████████████
████████████████████
Tel: ████████████
Email: fiona.boyd@ ████████████████

September 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your son/daughter's school is taking part in a research project about behaviour. I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist working for the Educational Psychology Service in ████████. I am interviewing young people to get their views about what helps their behaviour in school.

Who is taking part?

You have been sent this letter because your son/daughter has received some targeted support with their behaviour. If you give your consent for them to take part in this research, your son/daughter will then be asked if they would like to take part. Your son/daughter will only be interviewed if I have your consent and their consent.

What will happen?

If I interview your son/daughter, it will take about one hour during one school day. In this session they will be asked to complete practical activities such as making posters. My questions will focus on what is already working well to support their behaviour.

The task will be explained to your son/daughter in a way they understand. They will be told that they can leave the research and return to their lesson at any time.

What will happen after the group sessions?

I aim to find out how ████████████████████ (and your son/daughter's school) can support young people's behaviour effectively. I will write to you and your son/daughter in the summer of 2012 with the research findings. The findings will be fed back to the schools that took part and will be reported to ████████ University in a written report. The findings will also be shared with the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership as a way of increasing the inclusion of young people throughout ████████.

Things to consider…

I will be video-recording the interview in order to allow me to analyse it at a later date. The video will only be seen by myself and will be destroyed at the end of the project. Your son/daughter's identity (including their name, personal identifying circumstances, school etc.) will not be recognisable from the written report and the data will be anonymised.

Why should my child take part?

This will be a simple and fun activity for your son/daughter to take part in. It may also encourage them to see their school in a more positive light and may encourage their awareness of their own behaviour. The session may also help your son/daughter to develop their discussion, presentation and research skills. I hope you agree that it is a very worthwhile piece of research.

Parental/guardian consent

I will only include your son/daughter in this research if you provide your consent. If you are happy for your son/daughter to be considered for this research then please fill in the form below and return it to school by _____.

Further information

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email on fiona.boyd@ ███████████ or ring me on ███████████ .

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Boyd

Trainee Educational Psychologist

✂---

<u>**Parental/Guardian Consent Form**</u>

Anything written on this form will be held in confidence

Your son/daughter's name:………………………………………..…………………...

Your son/daughter's year group:……………………………………………………….

By signing and returning this slip you are agreeing with the statements below:

- *I give consent for my child (named above) to take part in the research project.*

- *I understand that my child will be video-taped in the group sessions and this will only be seen by Fiona Boyd, and then destroyed.*

- *I understand that my child's identity will not be recognisable (all data will be anonymised)*

- *I am aware that the process will be explained to my child in a way they understand.*

- *I understand that my child may stop the research at any point.*

- *I understand that if I have any further questions I can contact Fiona Boyd on the details above.*

Parent/guardian's signature ………………………………………………………………

Please print name……………………………………………Date ……………………

Please return this form to your child's class teacher by _____

Appendix 5 – Example of visual map of categories