An exploration of meetings between parents and multiple professionals through bounded meta-study and collaborative action research

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I declare that this writing is my own and has not been previously submitted for any other qualification. I have acknowledged the work of others throughout.

Overarching Abstract

Parents of children who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are likely to experience relationships with numerous professionals, across disciplines and agencies. Parental participation in decision making is emphasised within UK SEND policy, as well as the importance of partnerships between parents and professionals. Meetings are a key feature in decision-making processes, where it is anticipated that all parties will collaborate to agree plans and provision for the child. This project presents a critical stance toward the discourses of collaboration and partnership between parents and multiple professionals, recognising the potential difficulties in actualising these concepts in practice. Meetings can act as a bounded context in which to explore relationships between parents and multiple professionals. Despite their prevalence in processes for children identified with SEND, meetings between parents and professionals appear to be an under-researched phenomenon in the UK. This project therefore seeks to contribute to literature regarding the practice of meetings and parent-professional collaboration.

This thesis is comprised of a systematic literature review and empirical study; a further chapter is presented to bridge these two papers and provide insight into decision making within the research process. Chapter one reports a systematic literature review that sought to address the question: what are parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals during review meetings for their children identified with SEND? A bounded meta-study methodology was employed to analyse the data, methods and theoretical assumptions of five papers to construct new understandings in relation to the review question. This synthesis suggests that the unique role of the parent and their connection to the child is a key feature that permeates parental experiences of working with multiple professionals. It is proposed that meetings can be understood as professional spaces that parents enter by the nature of their role. When entering this professional space of meetings, parents' feelings regarding how much they are valued by the team are important to their experience, in addition to their active participation being facilitated. The review offers potential implications of these findings for practice and research.

The empirical research element of this thesis aimed to be transformative in its nature and move beyond exploring experiences of meetings to actively improving practice. Chapter Three reports a collaborative action research project undertaken with a headteacher of a primary school to explore the practice of meetings between parents and multiple professionals.

The co-researcher and I chose to engage in an inquiry that we hoped would enhance our understandings and encourage reflection on our own practices. This inquiry took the form of a case study of a single meeting, where a parent, SEND co-ordinator, educational psychologist and external specialist teacher met to agree a request for the statutory assessment of a young person's SEND needs. We chose to explore the concept of role identity amongst the meeting participants by interviewing them about their perception of their own role and that of others. We also explored how roles were constructed and how participants might be positioned through interactions by video recording the meeting. The findings from the case study were used as catalysts for discussion between the co-researcher and I. From this rich discussion, several outcomes were identified for future practice. These were concerned with how meeting facilitators might create a sense of team; foster genuine connection, understand parents' perspectives and encourage the development of professional skills. The study demonstrates how collaborative action research processes can be useful in the development of professional learning and reflection. Key learnings from the research process are discussed.

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Chapter 1. A bounded meta-study exploring parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals during meetings

1.0. Abstract

This paper presents a review of qualitative research that explores parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals during review meetings for their children identified with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Meetings are a key site where professionals and parents come together to engage in discussion and decision-making for children identified with SEND. Common discourses of partnership and collaboration may mask the complex dynamics and potential challenges involved when parents are required to work with multiple professionals. Meetings offer a context where these tensions and challenges might be explored, through research that focuses on ordinary practices. This review draws on concepts of parent-partnership and inter-professional collaboration, to consider parental experience of working as team members with multiple professionals during meetings.

The review adopts a bounded meta-study methodology to identify relevant literature and analyse papers according to their data, methods and theoretical assumptions. Through a series of literature searches and refining articles, five papers were identified for analysis. The findings of parental role; feeling valued; facilitating active participation and impact on the child are suggested as key features of parents' experiences when working with multiple professionals during meetings. A model is presented that demonstrates how these features might interact and its potential applications to practice are discussed. Learnings from the analysis of the included papers' methods and theoretical assumptions are also considered.

1.1. Introduction

Parents of children who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can find themselves connected to a network of professionals. This could include various professionals from education, health or social care, at any one time, depending on the nature of need and circumstances (Rogers, 2011).

Despite helpful intentions, the process of working with multiple professionals can act as an additional stressor for parents (Rogers, 2011; P. Russell, 1997; S. Todd & Jones, 2003). In the United Kingdom (UK), the SEND Code of Practice ([CoP] Department For Education, 2015) emphasises the importance of parents being involved in decision making for their child. Meetings are a key site in which parents and professionals come together for discussion and decision making. This qualitative literature review is concerned with parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals during meetings for children identified with SEND. The following sections share my conceptual and empirical warrant for this focus, before presenting the review methodology.

1.1.1. Key concepts

The terms collaboration and partnership are frequently used interchangeably in policy guidelines and practice (Broadhurst & Holt, 2010; Carnwell & Carson, 2008; Norwich, 2014). Collaborative working can be defined as working together to achieve an outcome and can be understood as a group problem solving process (D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005; Huxham, 2003). The concept of partnership implies a relationship between parents and professionals, based on mutual respect and influence, that is focused on meeting the needs of children (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008; O'Connor, 2008; Vincent, 2000). It is hoped that through the relational mechanism of partnership, parents and professionals will collaborate to co-produce outcomes and decisions in the planning and reviewing of children's needs (Hellawell, 2017; Hopwood & Edwards, 2017). A key assumption of these concepts is that a combination of efforts from the involved parties can work toward addressing specific social issues, achieving more than can be done in isolation (Pinkus, 2003). As meetings are intended to be sites for collaboration, I use the term collaboration in reference to joint activity but use the term partnership to discuss relationships more generally.

Within the field of SEND, the concept of parent-professional partnership has been progressively strengthened through legislation over time (Department For Education, 2015; Lamb, 2009; Plowden, 1967; Warnock, 1978). Characteristics of successful partnerships, such as communication and trust, have been described by parents, professionals and researchers (Blue-Banning, Summers, Frankland, Nelson, & Beegle, 2004; Broomhead, 2013; Cameron & Tveit, 2019; Fereday, Oster, &

Darbyshire, 2010; Tucker & Schwartz, 2013; Van Houte, Bradt, Vandenbroeck, & Bouverne-De Bie, 2015). However, challenges involved in enacting these concepts in practice continue to be raised over time (see for example Broomhead, 2013; Hellawell, 2017; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008; Mittler, 1986; Pinkus, 2003; Wolfendale, 1997). The rhetoric of partnership risks presenting an illusion of coherence in parent-professional relationships (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2012). For example, an assumption of partnership is that parties are working towards mutual goals (Rommetveit, 2011); however, parents and professionals enter partnerships with differing motivations, responsibilities, expectations and relationships to the child (Gascoigne, 1995; Murray, 2000). Furthermore, parents and professionals are usually compelled to enter a relationship by circumstance, rather than by choice (Pinkus, 2003). Research that explores such tensions may help to develop enhanced understandings of how partnerships and collaboration can be better enacted in practice (Hellawell, 2017; E. Todd & Higgins, 1998).

Parents are likely to have varied relationships with the different professionals they work with. The experience of partnering with multiple professionals to support their child is a unique and potentially uncomfortable experience for parents of children identified with SEND (S. Todd & Jones, 2003; Valle, 2011). Parents may not have knowledge of the differing roles, responsibilities and working practices of the various professionals they work with (Edwards, Daniels, Gallagher, Leadbetter, & Warmington, 2009; Gascoigne, 1995; Morrow & Malin, 2004). Multi-professional collaboration is its own complex process, influenced by individual and organisational factors (Brooks & Thistlethwaite, 2012; D'Amour et al., 2005; Daniels et al., 2007; Edwards, 2017; Leadbetter, 2006). Whilst there is research exploring parents' experiences of multi-professional working as service users (Jansen, Van der Putten, & Vlaskamp, 2017; O'reilly et al., 2013; Swallow et al., 2013), there appears to be little research that explores parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals, which considers the parent as a contributing team member (Graybill et al., 2016). This review is therefore concerned with parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals as collaborative partners.

1.1.1. Parents and professionals working together in meetings

Parents seem to report increased satisfaction in SEND processes when they feel perceived by professionals as equal team members and as experts on their child

(Skipp & Hopwood, 2016). It can be argued that equality is not a fundamental aspect of partnership but a connotation of it (O'Connor, 2008). Adopting an assumption of equality amongst SEND team members may obscure existing power relations within the parent-professional relationship (E. Todd & Higgins, 1998). Power can be understood as a capability to act and is closely related to the possession and generation of knowledge (Foucault, 1980; Hearn, 2012). Professionals are expected to have specialist knowledge and expertise to fulfil their role; as such, society places trust in them to act in people's best interests (Evetts, 2006; Greenwood, 1957; Johnson, 2016). Within partnerships, parental knowledge and experience should be recognised as a legitimate source of knowledge (A. Cohen & Mosek, 2019). The differing perspectives of parents and professionals may act as a source of tension in these relationships (Tveit, 2014). Hellawell (2017) highlights a paradox whereby parent-professional discussions are likely to be moderated by professionals, thus undermining the opportunity for mutual influence. Meetings can offer a bounded space where these tensions and the actual practices of parents and multiple professionals working together can be explored (Barnes, 2008).

Meetings are a worthy phenomenon of research within themselves, as they are sites where interactional processes can be explored, that are grounded in everyday practices and embedded in their social-cultural-historical contexts (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015; Schwartzman, 1989; Smart & Auburn, 2018). Review meetings offer a formal mechanism for discussing a child's needs, strengths and progress where it is intended that parties will collaborate to plan for the child's future and identify next steps. Despite being a common feature of SEND processes, meetings themselves appear to be an under-researched element of practice (Adams et al., 2017; Boesley & Crane, 2018; Sales & Vincent, 2018; Skipp & Hopwood, 2016). On the basis of this rationale, this review seeks to explore parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals, during review meetings, for their children identified with SEND.

1.2. Review methodology

Qualitative research was deemed vital to this review of parents' experiences, as it is concerned with subjective human experience (Willig, 2013). Rather than viewing research as a tool to uncover a fixed reality, this review recognises that research is

shaped by its context and the assumptions that researchers bring to their studies (Burr, 2015).

Meta-study, as outlined by Paterson, Thorne, Canam, and Jillings (2001), is a process of synthesising literature that comprises a multi-faceted approach to qualitative research analysis. This includes an analysis of research findings, methods and theory, recognising all research to be a product of its social, historical and ideological context. The analyses of these separate facets are combined to produce a meta-synthesis which aims to provide new understandings of the phenomena of study (Paterson et al., 2001). The procedure of meta-study is outlined in Box 1.1 . The following sections will be structured using these steps as sub-headings.

Box 1.1: Procedural steps for Meta-study as outlined by Paterson et al. (2001)

1) Formulating a research question
2) Selection and appraisal of primary research
3) Meta data analysis
4) Meta method
5) Meta theory
6) Meta synthesis
7) Dissemination

1.2.1. Formulating a research question & Selection and appraisal of primary research

The review question was formed during an iterative process of scoping searches and focusing of my interests. This involved refining the inquiry from parents' experiences of meetings with professionals generally to specifically focusing on meetings for children identified with SEND. The review question was therefore:

How do parents experience working with multiple professionals during review meetings for their children who are identified with SEND?

Review meetings are defined within this paper as meetings whereby a child's needs and progress are discussed, and priority areas for future support are identified. The

discussion then informs planning for desired outcomes and next steps to achieve these. This definition encompasses both statutory (where a child has legal documentation of their identified needs) and non-statutory processes. To ensure parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals are accessed, the meetings discussed within the papers must be between at least one parent and two or more professionals.

In line with a social constructionist stance, this review makes no claim to a set truth regarding parents' experiences. Instead, realities are understood to be subjective which allows for the existence of multiple truths (Burr, 2015). As such, this review offers one interpretation of existing literature in the hope of developing understandings of how parents experience working with multiple professionals during meetings.

Numerous search terms were trialled during the scoping and searching phases, culminating in the terms outlined in Table 1.1. Boolean phrases of OR and AND were used to combine terms within and across columns respectively. The terms were used to search 7 databases: Eric, British Education Index, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, Education Abstracts (all within EBSCO), Scopus, PsychInfo (OVID) and Web of Science. Initial searches across the databases yielded 7693 results.

Table 1.1: Final search terms

Parent	Experience	Meeting	"Special Education* Need"
Mother	Perspective	Conference	"Special Ed*"
Father	Voice	Consultation	"Special Need"
Guardian	View	Review	Disab*
Carer	Opinion		"Individual* education"
	Feel*		IEP
	Perce* (perception / perceive)		"Education Health Care Plan"
	Attitude		EHCP
			SEND
			SEN

Meta-studies have tended to include a significant volume of primary research (for example Ronkainen, Kavoura, & Ryba, 2016). Paterson et al. (2001) suggest that if the number of primary studies is too few, there may not be sufficient data to draw comparisons across papers' methods, theoretical assumptions and findings. The purpose of this review was to construct new understandings from existing research of parents' experiences of review meetings, for their children identified with SEND, to learn about parental experience of working with multiple professionals within such meetings. Howell Major and Savin-Baden (2011), based on their research of qualitative literature reviews, suggest that a small number of studies (N= 2-10) are required for reviews with constructionist aims. Whilst this might contradict the guidance of meta-study, it was felt that its principles of analysing data, method and theory could still provide a level of criticality to the review. Hence, I refer to the methodology as a bounded meta-study to infer the ways in which the research question and aims of this review limited its scope (Glick, Folkestad, & Banning, 2016).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed and applied throughout the searching process to obtain papers for the review. These are summarised in Table 1.2. It was planned that this review would be specific to the English context. However, upon scoping extant literature, it became apparent that there were not enough articles to do this. A larger body of research into review meetings for children identified with SEND was set in the United States of America (USA), focusing on the Individualized Education Programme (IEP) meeting process. It was hoped that insight could still be gained into the relational dynamic between parents and multiple professionals across contexts. There was a significant legislative change in the USA regarding children identified with SEND in 2004 through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which emphasised parental rights in the IEP process. As much of the available literature was based in the USA, 2004 was selected as an appropriate date limit for the searches.

Grey literature was searched using Grey and the British Ethesis website, which highlighted some further USA based theses exploring IEP meetings. Whilst the potential value of thesis research is recognised, the decision was made to include only peer-reviewed published papers due to the difficulty in systematically searching theses and providing an audit trail of this process (Paterson et al., 2001).

Table 1.2: Inclusion criteria for papers

Criteria	**Reason**
Empirical study	To access primary data
Written in English	Accessibility to the researcher
Published within a peer reviewed journal	To allow for a systematic search trail
Published from 2004	To access recent literature, reflecting up to date policy for children identified with SEND
Parents of children identified with SEND as participants	In line with research question
Qualitative data	In line with research question
Specific focus on experiences of review meetings for children identified with SEND	In line with research question

The searches took place between September 2018 - May 2019. The databases were searched separately with the criterion applied. This process is detailed in Table 1.3.

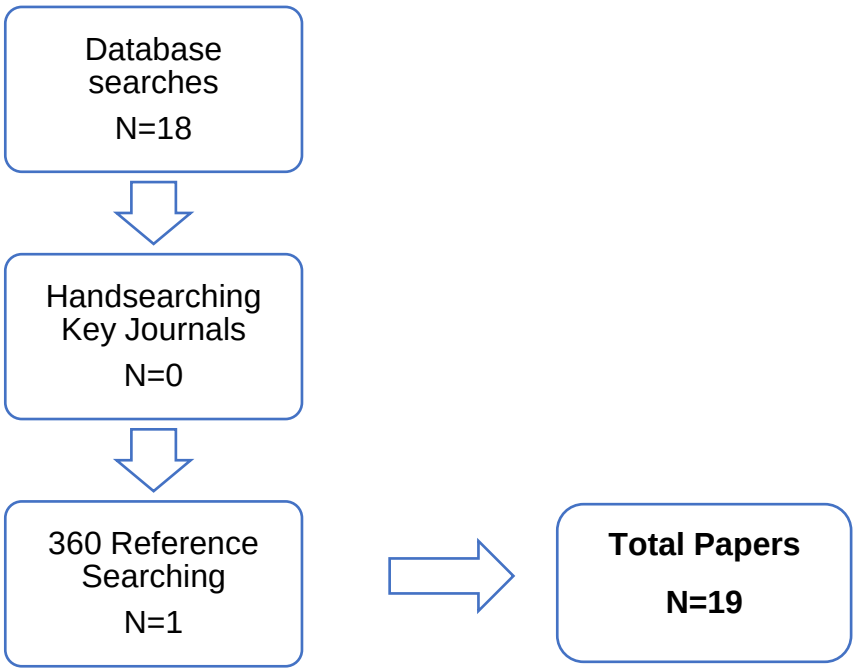
Table 1.3: Database search process

	Process									
Name of Database	*Activity* ⇨	Results	*Activity* ⇨	Results	*Activity* ⇨	Results	*Activity* ⇨	Results	*Activity* ⇨	Results
EBSCO	*Applying search terms with Boolean phrases.*	1509	*Refining results to include: >Empirical research. >Papers written in English. >Papers published after 2004.*	380	*Scanning remaining titles for relevance to review question.*	28	*Reviewing abstracts and, where needed, brief skimming of papers to check for: >qualitative data of distinct parental experience. >focus on experience of meetings specifically. >ability to access full text**	9	*Removal of duplicates across databases.*	
Scopus		936		431		51		11		
Psychinfo (Ovid)		3438		3217		138		6		
Web of Science		1810		1139		57		4		
Total results		**7693**		**5167**		**272**		**30**		**18**

**efforts were made to source full texts through my institution's library services.*

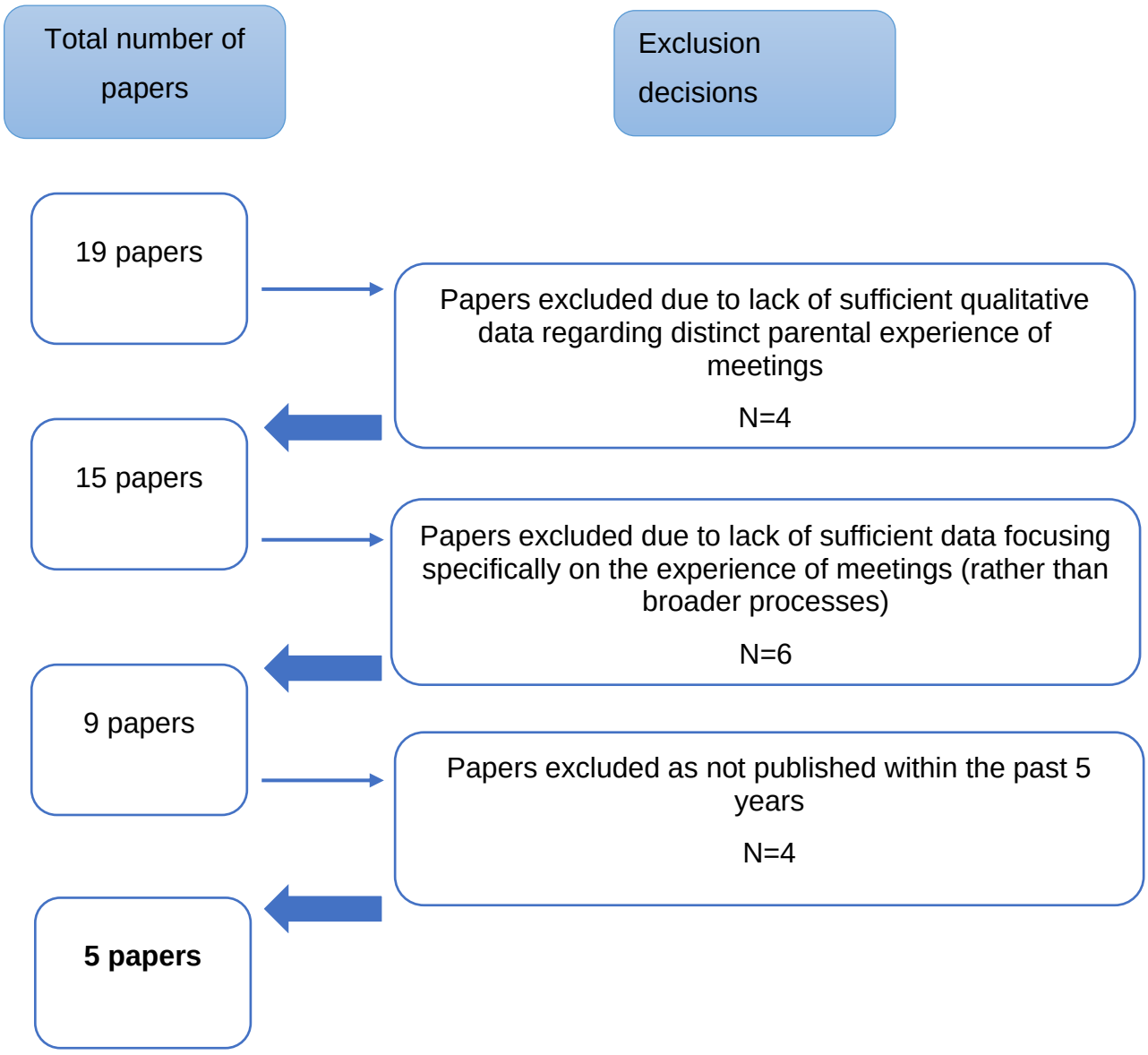
The database searches ultimately yielded 18 papers. No additional results were gained from hand searching of the British Journal of Special Educational Needs, Child and Educational Psychology and Educational Psychology in Practice. 360 reference searching took place for the 18 papers, this resulted in 1 additional paper being identified in accordance with the inclusion criteria. The process of searching and refining papers is depicted in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: A visual representation of the searching process.



The 19 papers were read in full. At this stage, I made a series of judgement calls regarding the papers' ability to address the review question. This process is depicted in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: A visual representation of the refining process



At the stage where 9 papers remained, there were two apparent groups of research: studies spanning 2004-2008 and studies from 2014-2018, with an apparent gap between 2009-2013. Given the constraints of the current review, the number of papers were still deemed too many for analysis. Adapting the inclusion criteria to papers published within the past 5 years provided opportunity for the papers to be further refined and ensure recent parental experiences of meetings were reflected in the analysis.

This process culminated in 5 papers deemed suitable for inclusion in the review. The papers' key features are presented in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Key features of papers

	Rossetti et al. (2018)	**MacLeod et al. (2017)**	**White and Rae (2016)**	**Mueller and Buckley (2014)**	**Zeitlin and Curcic (2014)**
Aims / Research Questions (RQ) relevant to the review	RQ1) How do Culturally Linguistically Diverse families perceive their participation and language access in IEP meetings? RQ2) What do Culturally Linguistically Diverse families believe will improve their IEP meetings?	Explored how parents in the United States view the experience of collaborating with educators to support their children with disabilities in general education settings.	RQ1) What are the views of young people with SEN and their parents/carers on Person Centred Reviews? RQ2) Do the young people and their parents/carers feel they are listened to in the process?	RQ1) What are fathers' experiences with navigating the special education system? RQ2) What are fathers' experiences at the IEP meetings? RQ3) What are fathers' experiences as IEP team members? RQ4) What are fathers' experiences with conflict with the IEP team?	Focused on parents' perceptions with regard to the IEP as a process and a product (the IEP document). Additional sub-questions were related to the parents' role in the IEP process and recommendations the parents would make to the IEP process or the IEP document.

Meeting Context	IEP Meeting North East USA	IEP Meeting USA	Person-centred review meeting for transition Scotland, UK	IEP Meeting Western USA	IEP Meeting USA
Theoretical Assumptions	*None explicitly stated – draws on parental participation literature and particular barriers for culturally, linguistically diverse families*	Disability studies in education as a theoretical framework Phenomenological approach	Person-centred approaches drawing on humanistic and positive psychology Critical realist ontology	*None explicitly stated – draws on literature regarding parental involvement in SEND processes and considers the unique experience of fathers within this*	*None explicitly stated – draws on literature citing barriers to parental participation in IEP decision making.* *Use of grounded comparative method could imply grounded theory approach*
Participants	38 Parents (33 mothers, 5 fathers) of Chinese, Vietnamese or Haitian nationality in the USA who self-identified as having limited English proficiency.	2 parent co-researchers. 33 parents with a child identified with SEND who attends a general education classroom. Recruited from a parent-advocacy	21 parents (of 16 CYP) of children in year 6 with a range of SEND. All participants white-British.	20 fathers of children identified with a range of SEND between the ages of 4-25. Recruitment through a conference for families of children with disabilities; chaining (fathers sharing details	20 parents with children aged 4-21 who have received SEND services for at least 2 years or more. Recruitment through flyer (unclear how distributed).

	Parents of children with a range of identified SEND. Recruitment through 'cultural brokers' from a local parent training and information centre using existing support groups.	support Facebook group.		of other fathers); convenience (fathers known to researchers through previous work. The fathers were all Caucasian and self-described as middle class, with a graduate degree as the average education level. Their average age range was 4-49.	
Data Collection Method	Focus groups through regular scheduled support groups with parents who spoke the same language. Focus groups facilitated by one author and observed by one other author.	Open ended questions on online forum. Parent co-researchers as collaborators with academic researchers.	Semi-structured interviews after person centred review meetings	Open ended telephone interviews. Interview protocol provided.	Interviews between parent and first author.

	Semi structured protocol provided.				
Data Analysis	Two stage process of open coding followed by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inductive approach. Quantification of qualitative data. Member checking.	Deductive and inductive analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Emergent themes checked back with participants for further details. Findings presented to coresearchers who produced personal vignettes of their experience in relation to the themes. Article shared on Facebook group for editing.	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	Three-step coding system by the two authors. Themes presented were from at least 15 of the fathers.	Constant-comparative method, where sampling stopped when no new information was revealed from additional participants.

Key Findings	Parents strive for meaningful engagement in meetings and need to learn how to engage meaningfully. Parents faced barriers to meeting engagement including limited access to information and limited opportunity to develop advocacy.	Parents are experts too. Professionals should acknowledge vulnerability and seek to build trust. Parents would like professionals to see the whole child, be willing to learn and demonstrate flexibility.	Transition for a child with SEND is a generally daunting and emotional process. Meetings can be daunting. Person centred reviews are containing and reassuring and are a collaborative, empowering process for parents and children.	IEP Meetings are the main way that fathers interact with the SEND system. Meetings are experienced as overwhelming and insufficient. Relationships and communication are key to positive experiences. Fathers can feel like they have to fight a battle and come together to find a resolution with professionals.	The IEP meeting is perceived as a process of depersonalization and an emotional event. It is a site of asymmetrical relationships and parents had recommendations for how the meetings could be improved.

1.2.2. Meta-data analysis

This component of meta-study refers to the analysis of qualitative data. There are multiple methods of reviewing qualitative research data, however Paterson et al. (2001) suggest the method of meta-ethnography as it is an established approach. To do this, I used key stages outlined by Noblit and Hare (1988) which are presented in Box 1.2.

Box 1.2: Key stages of Meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988)

1) Read each paper in detail
2) Determine how papers are related
3) Translate studies into one another
4) Synthesize translations

1.2.2.A. Reading each paper in detail and determining how the papers are related

Firstly, each paper was read thoroughly and annotated with my early thoughts. The studies' findings and proposed interpretations were treated as data and used to generate initial themes in answer to the review question (Noblit & Hare, 1988). An example of initial themes within one paper is presented in Appendix A.

To determine how the papers were related, commonalities between the themes were mapped within a table and developed into over-arching concepts across the 5 studies. This involved an iterative process whereby the themes of each paper were applied to the others and modified or condensed appropriately. Concepts that were present in 2 or more studies were taken forward. As the papers had slightly different focuses to my review question, I contend that the translation was interpretative rather than a re-categorization of existing data (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014). During this stage, it became apparent that some themes were meeting specific whereas others were external to the meeting. Although the review question focuses on experiences of parents during the meeting itself, it seemed that these influencing factors were a key feature of parents' overall experience of meetings. As such, I distinguished themes into categories in relation to the meeting (during; directly relating; external and over time). This process resulted in 28 initial concepts which are outlined in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Initial concepts across papers

Concepts		
During Meetings	**Directly Relating to Meetings**	**External to meetings and occurring over time**
Atmosphere of meeting	Preparation for meeting	Parents' views of professionals' actions and attitudes
Process of meeting	Meetings are daunting	Relationships and communication
Sense of team	Value of meeting	Trust / transparency between parents and professionals
Time issues	Follow through from meeting	Parents' hopes for child
Being heard and valued		Parents' role
Professional power in decision making		Battle discourse
Differing views		Being a parent
Power of multiple professionals		Developing SEND knowledge
Understanding discussion / accessibility		Wider context issues
Information processing		
Opportunity to contribute		
Skill requirement		
Painful to hear about deficits		
Emotional process		
Child-centred focus		

Initial attempts at translation with these concepts felt uncomfortable as I did not feel that I was achieving new understandings in relation to the review question. I attributed this to the large number of initial concepts which appeared to be providing

a descriptive representation of the data rather than an analytical approach (Barbour, 2001). At this stage, I decided to include broader themes which needed to be present across 3 or more studies for further translations. Examples of how themes were represented across the papers are presented in Appendix B. This process saw the original 28 concepts reflected in 13 broader themes that were taken forward for synthesis, which are presented in Box 1.3. These themes arguably represent the fluid boundary of the meeting context and parental experience, as they encompass before, during and after meeting experiences.

Box 1.3: Refined themes taken forward for synthesis

Personal Emotion
Parental Role
Trusting and Understanding Relationships
Professional Decision Making
Being Heard and Valued
Wider Process/ System Issues
Valued Outcomes
Holistic Child Focus
Parents' Hopes
Preparation
Skill Requirement
Meeting Organisation
Balancing Discussion

1.2.2.B. Translating the studies into one another and synthesising translations

Translating the studies into one another involved exploring the key themes across each paper and comparing them. Translation has been likened to the constant comparative method used in grounded theory (France et al., 2019). Noblit and Hare (1988) refer to different styles of analysis for this translation: reciprocal; refutational and line of argument. Campbell et al. (2011) suggest that a combination of translations can be used, and it has been suggested that distinguishing the type of translation may not be necessary (France et al., 2019). I aim to be transparent about the process of translation that took place over several sittinings. This involved using

a scissor and sort technique to clip data from the papers that were relevant to each theme. The data was then compared to other papers to explore congruence and contradictions. The use of mapping using the themes as headings, sorting the data clips under these and re-reading the papers was paramount in translation.

First and second order constructs available within the papers were used to develop my own interpretations of each theme. First order constructs relate to direct quotes from participants in the research and second order constructs relate to the authors' explanations of these (Schütz, 1962). I did not distinguish these in my interpretation as I view the primary authors' selection of quotes as part of their own construction (Atkins et al., 2008; Toye et al., 2014). However, I did try to use parent participants' original phrasing where possible.

My interpretations of the themes were further compared to synthesise the themes and develop my own constructs. To use Strauss and Corbin's (1994) term, a point of saturation was considered to be achieved when broader constructs emerged that offered new understandings that also remained meaningful to the original data. The synthesis is outlined in Table 1.6.

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Table 1.6: Synthesis of themes developing my own constructions

Theme	**Interpretations of 1st and 2nd order Constructs**	**My Synthesis**
Parental Role	Parents experience a unique position in meetings based on their personal relationship to the child. There may be tensions between perceived responsibilities and the goal of collaboration, for example parents saw advocacy as a key responsibility associated to their parental role. This advocacy can be linked to a battle/ fight discourse which suggests that parents need to be able to promote their child's best interests and be prepared to fight for what their child needs.	**Parental Role** The unique role of the parent during meetings influences their interactions with professionals. As the meeting is about their child, this is personal to the parent and emotion is present. Parents bring their self-perceptions and personal relationship to their child to the meeting process. Although parents may want to collaborate with professionals, ultimately, they want what is in the best interests of their individual child.
Personal Emotion	Parents have a close connection to their child; thus, emotional factors were present for parents in all elements of the meetings. These were often negative emotions, relating to the personal nature of these meetings for parents. It can be painful for parents to hear about their child's difficulties during meetings.	
Skill Requirement	Active participation during meetings requires certain skills such as understanding language, information processing, communication skills and confidence to contribute to the discussion. Whereas parents may need to develop these skills over time, professionals come to the meetings with these skills already developed. Parents can struggle in meetings and may need support to participate.	**Facilitating Active Participation** Active participation refers to parents taking part within the meeting as an active team member. There were many factors that influenced parents' participation in meetings, such as the

	Parents need to develop their skills and knowledge to engage in the meetings. In particular, parents benefit from developing their knowledge of policy, procedures and their rights. This can help them to engage more equally with professionals. Knowledge building occurs over time, with parents having less knowledge relating to SEND at earlier meetings and then developing this through experience and their support networks. Some parents found it useful to have support from either their partner or someone with more knowledge relating to policy and rights during the meeting.	meeting processes and parental skills. Parents may not have had the opportunity to develop the skills or knowledge relating to SEND to fully participate, unlike professionals. Parents seem to develop skills and knowledge over time, as they attend more meetings. Active participation for parents in meetings can be facilitated through preparation, skill development and meeting organization. Where parents' participation is not facilitated by professionals, parents may take steps to enhance their own participation, for example by seeking advocacy or arranging for their own interpreter.
Preparation	Attending meetings without prior preparation can enhance negative emotions such as apprehension. Parents valued professionals preparing them for the meetings and aiding their active participation (for example, by ensuring interpreters were in place or sharing paperwork prior to the meeting). Where this preparation was not facilitated or was insufficient, some parents took measures to prepare themselves by contacting advocacy services or support networks.	
Meeting Organisation	The process of the meeting is key to parental experience. This comprises the structure, facilitation and the general atmosphere of the meeting. Parents tended to express a preference for collaborative and more informal meetings,	

	that were purposeful for the child. The numbers of professionals at meetings could be intimidating for parents.	
Balancing Discussion	Professionals seemed to dominate the discussion at meetings and parents had limited opportunities to speak. Parents sometimes had allocated times within the meeting to share their views. The writing method within person-centred meetings (White & Rae, 2016), was a useful way for all participants to share their views and be included in the discussion.	
Parents' Hopes	Parents bring their hopes to meetings which relate to what they want for their child. Parents may want to work well with professionals but prioritise achieving what they perceive to be the best outcomes for their child. Some parents discussed wanting specific services or resources as this was understood to be in their child's best interests.	**Impact on the Child** For parents, meetings need to be purposeful and benefit their child. Parents want their child to be considered holistically, with the process supporting their strengths and difficulties. Parents want their child to be at the centre of the process. Parents' evaluations of meetings will relate to their hopes for their child and whether the meeting outcomes align with these. Meetings
Holistic Child Focus	Parents want their child to be discussed holistically during meetings, considering their strengths and recognising that they are an individual. Parents want the strengths discussed to be realistic and useful for the child, rather than 'warm and fuzzy' as one parent described. It was disheartening for parents when meeting discussion was just focused on their child's difficulties. That being said, some parents wanted the difficulties their child experiences	

	to be clearly discussed at meetings as they wanted these to be addressed for the child's future.	exist in a wider policy context, which influences processes and parental experience.
Valued Outcomes	Parents' evaluations of meetings seemed to be related to the meetings' perceived impact on their child and whether it was in line with their hopes. Parents wanted meetings to result in actions to support their children and have actual benefits, rather than just discussion. It was important for parents that actions that were agreed during meetings happened and that professionals followed through with what was agreed.	
Wider Process/ Systemic Issues	Parents indicated views toward wider systems for children identified with SEND and education, which seemed to shape the meeting experience. Within the IEP meetings, there was concern that processes lacked transparency and were confusing. It was felt by some parents that current processes were not child-centred or they promoted opposition rather than collaboration. Some parents desired wider systemic changes for children identified with SEND.	
Professional Decision Making	Professionals seemed to hold power over decision making during meetings. Differing views between parents and professionals can be a source of tension within the team. Some parents perceived there to be an attitude of professionals knowing best in meetings.	**Feeling Valued** Parents want to feel valued as part of the team and involved in decision making for their child. Professionals

Being Heard and Valued	Parents wanted to have collaborative relationships with professionals and work together in meetings to best support their child. There were varied experiences of this varying from: professionals and parents as equally valued; parents being marginalised in meetings; to adversarial relationships between parents and professionals. These feelings closely linked with whether parents felt that their views were heard by professionals. Parents did not always feel that their participation was valued by the professionals in meetings.	seem to maintain a perceived ownership of the discussion and decision making at meetings. As such, it seems that professionals need to ensure parents feel included in meeting and valued more generally. Positive wider relationships support a sense of feeling valued; these seem to be led by professionals.
Trusting and Understanding Relationships	Relationships outside of the meeting, particularly with school staff, are important to parents' overall experiences of working with multiple professionals. Relationships seemed to develop over time, where communication is a key aspect of forming and maintaining relationships with professionals. Parents want professionals to understand their position as parents and to care for their child; parents also want professionals to be open and flexible. Forming and maintaining trust is integral to parent-professional relationships; where trust had been lost, it was difficult to regain. Relationships occur between individual professionals and parents, and the collective of professionals.	

1.2.3. Meta-method analysis

The purpose of meta-method analysis is to determine how the implementation of qualitative research methods have influenced studies' findings, and what is considered legitimate knowledge within a field (Paterson et al., 2001). It involves appraising the individual papers' methodologies and comparing these. This was facilitated by mapping the key features of papers as outlined previously in Table 1.4.

Due to the small number of reviewed papers, the meta-method analysis cannot make generalised claims regarding trends within this field of research. However, key learnings in regarding different methodological considerations are presented in Table 1.7.

Table 1.7: Summary of meta-method findings

Methodological Area	**Key Points**	**Implications**
Research questions	All of the papers presented rationales that included empirical and legislative warrant for their research. 3 of the papers adopted broad, exploratory questions regarding parental experience of review meetings for children identified with SEND (MacLeod et al., 2017; Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). Rossetti et al. (2018) asked specifically about culturally linguistically diverse families' perceptions of their participation and language access in meetings. White and Rae (2016) asked specifically about person centred reviews as a particular type of meeting; indicating more of an orientation toward gathering evidence for this approach than broad parental experience.	Broader research questions seem to be less directive regarding the responses from participants. This may allow participants to express broader views, which might inform a fuller understanding of the phenomenon. For example, parents in Rosetti et al.'s (2018) study may not have attributed some of their reported experiences to language access but as this was the main research question, the researchers may have interpreted the data to further this assumption.
Researchers	The studies all shared the organisational affiliation of the lead researchers; 4 studies were led by university staff and 1 paper (White & Rae, 2016) was led by practitioners in a local authority. Mueller and Buckley's (2014) study was the only paper that included a brief biography of each researcher, at	The included papers seemed to minimise the role of the researchers themselves in the study process, possibly missing opportunities for reflexivity which can enhance the quality of qualitative research (Pillow, 2003). Macleod et

	the end of the paper. The papers did not discuss how the researcher's position and experiences might have influenced the research. Macleod et al.'s (2017) paper was composed by two academic researchers and two parent co-researchers, who also contributed their views to the research.	al.'s (2017) approach to having parents as co-researchers appeared novel amongst the research explored; this approach, and the way in which the paper was written, emphasised parental voice.
Context	All of the studies explored meetings that involved parents working with multiple professionals in review meetings. 4 out of the 5 papers focused on IEP meetings and were based in the USA. IEP meetings are a statutory process in the American system for supporting children identified with SEND. The remaining paper focused on person-centred reviews as part of transition and was based in Scotland. Meetings are influenced by their contexts and White and Rae's (2016) paper is the most distinct in terms of country and meeting type. The 4 papers which focused on IEP meetings included findings relating to parents' views of wider processes for children identified with SEND.	It was noteworthy that there was a scarcity of research into UK based review meetings for children identified with SEND. The experiences reported in White and Rae's (2016) study were largely positive in comparison to the other four papers; however, suggestions for why this might be should be tentative given the limited research explored. It would be helpful if studies provided more detail regarding the meeting processes, structure and organisation to better understand the studies' specific contexts, even for meetings of the same type.

Sampling procedures	The level of description regarding recruitment procedures was variable across the papers. 2 studies had specific sampling criteria in line with their focus on the experiences of fathers (Mueller & Buckley, 2014) and culturally, linguistically diverse families (Rossetti et al., 2018). All papers acknowledged limitations of their participant sample and the inability to generalise findings to wider populations	Parents are not a homogenous group and exploring the experiences of specific populations may help to develop a more nuanced understanding of partnership from a range of perspectives. Limitations for generalisability are commonly cited in qualitative literature (Leung, 2015). Papers might benefit from engaging more with their philosophical positionings regarding the nature of knowledge, to inform a more critical discussion around possible forms of generalisation for qualitative research findings (B. Smith, 2018).
Data collection techniques	All of the papers adopted approaches which involved asking direct questions and participants responding verbally. 3 papers conducted single interviews with participants (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; White & Rae, 2016; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014); whereas Rossetti et al. (2018) carried out focus groups with parents within existing parent support groups. MacLeod et al. (2017) asked open questions on an online forum, which may have provided space for participants to consider and	Question-answer formats appear to be an established method for collecting parents' views as there was limited discussion of the decisions regarding data-collection choices in the papers. Limited information regarding questions and data transcriptions are provided, which can make it difficult to establish how the researcher influenced

	compose their responses. All of the studies adopted a semi-structured approach to questioning, by asking follow up questions depending on participants' responses. Only 2 papers provide their interview schedule. Quotations from parents in all papers are isolated, and the questions leading to these responses are not provided. Parents in White and Rae's (2016) study were interviewed after a meeting, whereas responses in the other 4 studies were about meeting experiences more generally. Rossetti et al. (2018) note that even when parents were asked about specific meeting experiences, they tended to report broader experiences of working with professionals.	the discussion; this approach seems to minimise the role of the researcher in the process.

1.2.4. Meta-theory analysis

This component of meta-study considers how theoretical assumptions and paradigms shape the way that phenomena are studied (Paterson et al., 2001). It was facilitated by mapping the features of papers, as outlined in Table 1.4. Due to the limited number of papers included, conclusions regarding this field of research cannot be made; however, this section briefly discusses insights gained from the process.

Meta-theory analysis proved challenging as only two papers explicitly discussed their theoretical assumptions (MacLeod et al., 2017; White & Rae, 2016). Although inferences could be made regarding theoretical assumptions in the remaining three papers, there is a missed opportunity for transparency in the research process. This early finding suggests that research exploring parents' experiences of meetings may benefit from clearly sharing their theoretical frameworks to support audiences in evaluating their research.

White and Rae's (2016) study drew on the concept of person-centred approaches by exploring parents' perceptions of person-centred meetings. Their findings, in turn, were supportive of person-centred approaches. The use of thematic analysis in the study is judged by the authors to be appropriate to their underpinning critical realist ontology. Although a critical realist ontology is referred to, there is little discussion defining this or its implications for the research. It is important to remember the constraints of publishing research, with papers being subject to word limitations, meaning that much can be left out of finished copies (Bridges-Rhoads, Van Cleave, & Hughes, 2016). Therefore, there are also implications for journal editors, particularly those of qualitative research, to consider how methodological and theoretical elements of research are held in the same regard as findings in research publication.

Macleod et al (2017) drew on Disability Studies in Education as a theoretical framework, which conceptualises disability as a social construction and urges that disability should be viewed as an attribute. The researchers selected their parent co-researchers, who in turn suggested recruiting participants from an online parent forum where parents sought inclusive educational experiences for their children. This may indicate that the theoretical underpinning of the research stimulated a

recruitment process of like-minded individuals, which would ultimately influence findings.

Notably, there is congruence between disability studies in education and a person-centred approach as both place value on individuals and recognise diversity (Gabel, 2005; O'Brien & O'Brien, 1946). The remaining papers did not outline their theoretical position and instead drew on parental involvement literature, citing barriers to parent-professional working (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). White and Rae (2016) and MacLeod et al. (2017) seemingly reported more positive parental experiences and views than the remaining three papers. I cannot draw conclusions based on the limited research included, however it may be beneficial for future research to explore how theoretical positioning is related to research findings when exploring parental views.

All of the papers might have benefitted from providing more transparency around the generation of their codes, themes and findings; perhaps by offering examples of this process. This would allow the reader to understand how the researchers developed their findings from the data collected.

1.2.5. Meta-synthesis and dissemination

In line with the model offered by Paterson et al. (2001), I considered the three components of analysis to form a meta-synthesis which accounts for the data, method and theory of the reviewed studies. The hope of meta-synthesis is to develop new understandings of a phenomena, in the light of the reviewed research. In the following section, I present my synthesis and critically discuss findings with reference to wider literature.

1.3. Discussion

This review aimed to explore parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals during review meetings, for children identified with SEND, through a process of bounded meta-study. By analysing the data of five papers, the constructs of: Parental role; Facilitating active participation; Feeling valued and Impact on the child were identified as key aspects to parents' experiences. In this section, I will discuss each of these in turn whilst considering possible implications for practice and present a visual expression of my synthesis. I will also discuss implications for future research from the analysis of the papers' methods and theoretical assumptions.

1.3.1. Parental role

> *"We want this teacher and all educators to remember that the folder file in her hand concerns our child's education. It is about a person. And that person means the world to us."*
>
> *(MacLeod, Causton, Radel, & Radel, 2017, p. 391)*

Central to my synthesis is the construct of parental role, which acknowledges the unique position of the parent when working with multiple professionals during meetings. Parenthood can be understood as an intrinsically emotional experience due to parents' love for and personal investment in their children (Valle, 2018). This personal nature of the parent-child relationship arguably permeates the reported parental experience, as they are present in the meeting in their role as parent to the child.

A recognition of parental emotions during professional relationships has arguably driven partnership policy (Lamb, 2009). However, it has been suggested that processes for children identified with SEND may incur further emotional burden for parents (Rogers, 2011; S. Todd & Jones, 2003; Valle, 2011). Meetings were described by parents as emotionally challenging due to them concerning their child (MacLeod et al., 2017; Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014) and possibly taking place during already stressful times for the family (White & Rae, 2016). Parents must manage this emotion to continue to participate as team members (Mueller & Buckley, 2014). This seems comparable to the concept of emotional labour from the helping professions (P. Smith & Bryan, 2005), whereby individuals attempt to manage emotions to sustain a stable appearance and maintain relationships during difficult situations. There are significant implications for professionals to recognise the inherent emotional experience for parents during multi-professional meetings, and how this might potential collaborative processes.

Parenthood can be understood as a social institution, involving a complex interaction of roles, positions, norms and values which define elements of social life (Miller, 2010; Valle, 2018). Parental role identity can be understood as the way in which individuals understand and enact their social role as parents (Gaunt & Scott, 2014;

Mowder, 2005; Sims-Schouten & Barton, 2019; Stets & Serpe, 2013). Mowder (2005) suggests that role identity shapes how parents might relate to their child; however, my synthesis implies that parents' understanding of their role can also impact upon their interactions with professionals and systems. Parents within the papers discussed the responsibilities of their parental role. For example, one parent described how it was their job to get the best for their son, and not to be friends with the school district (Mueller & Buckley, 2014). Role identity is a complex concept which is formed from individuals' experiences and wider sociological influences (Stryker & Burke, 2000). For example, parents in Zeitlin and Curcic's (2014) study reported messages received from support networks to prepare to fight for services for their child, due to limited resources.

There is an interaction between cultural, historical and societal expectations of parental role and emotion in parenthood (Mowder, 2005; Valle, 2018; Van den Berge, 2013). Parents reported feeling negatively about themselves or like failures during meeting discussions (MacLeod et al., 2017; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). Parents may feel sensitive to scrutiny in their interactions with professionals (S. Todd & Jones, 2003). This may illuminate tensions between the family and other sociological institutions such as education and welfare services (Broadhurst & Holt, 2010). Meetings with multiple professionals are a context in which these tensions may manifest.

The construct of parental role frames the parent as an active agent within meetings whose interactions are influenced by their emotions, experiences and perceptions. Much parent partnership policy presents parents as a homogenous group and individual differences are arguably under articulated (L. Todd, 2007). This construct highlights the unique position of the parent when working with multiple professionals during meetings. An implication of this construct is for professionals to develop understandings of individual parents' perceptions and experiences when working with them.

1.3.2. Feeling valued

> *"If I am an equal contributing member of the IEP team, don't make me sit outside while everyone else is in there talking before they let the parents in, don't position my seat at the table in an 'us against them' format."*
>
> *(MacLeod et al., 2017, p. 388)*

Parents across the studies reported variable experiences of feeling valued by professionals as team members during meetings. Positive experiences seemed to be contingent on the professionals valuing parents' views and being open to their contributions (MacLeod et al., 2017; Mueller & Buckley, 2014; White & Rae, 2016). More negative experiences related to parents feeling marginalised from the professional team or in opposition to them (MacLeod et al., 2017; Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). It seemed, from the varied experiences within this construct, that parents' experience of feeling like a valued team member was conditional upon professionals' attitudes and actions towards them.

Parents' feelings of value to the team as being conditional on professionals' attitudes may imply an imbalance of power. Power can be understood as a relational concept, which is present within all elements of social life (Foucault, 1980; Hearn, 2012). Some parents reported that professionals dominated the discussion and decision making at meetings (Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). This may be indicative of an intrinsic connection between power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980). As previously discussed, professionals possess specialist knowledge by the nature of their status (Evetts, 2006; Johnson, 2016); this expertise may legitimise professionals' ability to exert influence over decision making during meetings with parents.

The concept of partnership implies each party having mutual influence (O'Connor, 2008; Pinkus, 2003). It has been critiqued for failing to grapple with the balance of power in the parent-professional partnership (Hellawell, 2017; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008). This tension is also reflected within the UK CoP (2015), which discusses parents as being able to participate in decisions for their child. Such phrasing arguably positions parents as guests who are invited into decision making

processes. A privileging of professional opinion may lead to tensions when professionals reach consensus for what is best for the child, that differs to parents' opinions, as demonstrated in the quote below.

> *"The general attitude is just very dismissive and just very impatient. They're not there to help me understand but they tell me there's only one hour and the meeting will be over and if we disagree we could move forward to mediation. So we feel that there's a lot of disrespect or just disregard of parents' perspectives and feelings, that the general attitude is that they know better, mom doesn't and that no matter how many times mom would ask for the specific service, mom would be told that no, we disagree and she doesn't need it."*
>
> *(Rossetti et al., 2018, p. 11)*

The quote illustrates how parents and professionals may have different considerations as part of their roles within meetings. Whereas parents are primarily thinking about their child, professionals may also need to consider wider factors, such as the distribution of resources for a wider population of children (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2012). Professionals' openness to creative solutions however was associated with parents feeling valued and part of the team (MacLeod et al., 2017; White & Rae, 2016).

Actions by professionals and general meeting organisation could also influence parents' perceived value as team members. This includes factors such as seating arrangements, time limitations and professional presence (MacLeod et al., 2017; Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). Relationships outside of meetings were reflective of whether parents felt valued by professionals, which seemed to be instigated and led by professionals (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018). It is important to note that professionals work within complex systems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), which may contribute to the way in which parents are valued. E. Todd and Higgins (1998) suggests that power and powerlessness can be experienced by professionals and parents in various forms within partnerships. A more nuanced understanding of parent and multi-professional working could

therefore be gained from exploring experiences of collaborative processes from the perspective of parents and professionals together.

The construct of feeling valued implies that meetings can be viewed as professional spaces which parents only enter due to their children's needs. Parental experiences of working with multiple professionals seem to be variable depending on professionals' openness to collaboration with them, inside and outside of meetings.

1.3.3. Facilitating active participation

> *"Sometimes the meetings can be very confusing, and I don't always follow exactly what is going on"*
>
> *(Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014, p. 381)*

Parents across the five studies reported a desire to collaborate with professionals and participate in meetings to support their child. However, parents' presence at a meeting did not equate to them being an active participant in discussions, which required parents to understand the content and be able to contribute (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). There were particular difficulties raised by parents for whom English was an additional language (Rossetti et al., 2018). Meetings were considered daunting events by parents across the studies. My synthesis suggests that numerous skills are needed for parents to take an active part in review meetings. These include abilities to understand the discussion, process information and have the confidence to engage in discussion with professionals. Technical language, jargon and abbreviations used by professionals at meetings may be a barrier to parents' understanding the discussion (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). Whereas parents may need to develop competencies to participate fully in meetings, professionals are likely to possess these skills due to their training and experiences.

Actions by parents themselves, as well as actions taken by professionals, may support the facilitation of parental participation in discussions. Parents reported relying on professionals, particularly school staff, to support them with preparation for meetings. When this was not organised by professionals, some parents took action to prepare themselves. For example, parents in Rossetti et al.'s (2018) study

discussed requesting a competent interpreter for the meeting and translated reports beforehand. Knowledge of their parental rights seemed to support parents in taking such action. The development of skills and knowledge to participate in meetings seemed to occur for parents over time, by attending multiple meetings. This may be problematic for parents who are new to attending review meetings for their children identified with SEND, who may be more reliant on professional support to navigate processes. Implications for professionals and organisations therefore include ensuring that parents have access to information that supports their participation.

A parent in Zeitlin and Curcic's (2014) study discussed the notion of parents becoming professional, which could be understood as parents developing capital (Coleman, 1988; Lareau, 2001). Some parents described needing skills to process information presented in the meeting and to communicate their responses in an acceptable way (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). This may be exacerbated by the personal nature of the meeting for the parents, which links with the construct of parental role. The skill of emotional regulation amongst members is understood to be a key aspect of successful collaboration (Leathard, 2004). Professionals and organisations may wish to consider how they can provide opportunities for parents to develop skills.

Facilitation and structure appear to be crucial elements in meetings that can affect parents' active participation. Parents within White and Rae's (2016) study felt that they had equal opportunities to contribute, which was attributed to the written method of information-sharing and the role of the facilitator. This implies that the organisation and process of meetings can support parents to work with multiple professionals more positively. This aspect of the synthesis has implications for professionals who organise meetings, who might consider what is needed to support parents to participate and then take proactive steps to mitigate potential barriers.

The construct of facilitating active participation may reflect meetings being within the professional domain, whereby parents must enter the meeting space without necessarily having the same skillset to support their participation as professionals. Although parents can take their own action, there is a role for professionals and organisations to consider ways in which parental participation can be facilitated.

1.3.4. Impact on the child

> *"Please remember that educator decisions are not just paper-work or check off boxes on the IEP, they shape our child's future, daily experiences and well-being in school. And although that file is about our child, it often does not represent our whole child."*
>
> *(MacLeod et al., 2017, p. 391)*

My synthesis suggests that the meeting outcomes and their perceived impact on the child are key to parental experiences of working with multiple professionals during meetings. Across the studies, parents' key concerns were for their child's education and future. Parents reported desires for meetings to be purposeful for their child by having positive outcomes, with agreed actions being implemented following the meeting (MacLeod et al., 2017; Rossetti et al., 2018; White & Rae, 2016; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014).

Parents within the studies wanted their children to be discussed holistically during meetings (MacLeod et al., 2017; White & Rae, 2016; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). It was important that the child's strengths and difficulties were discussed so that decisions were made that could build on and address these. This reflects the premise of child-centred approaches, whereby there is a focus on thinking for the child's future (Press, Wong, & Sumsion, 2012). There was tension for parents where it was felt that the meeting process was ritualistic, or administratively driven (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). This seemed to relate to parents criticising the wider existing processes for supporting children identified with SEND.

An additional frustration for parents was when collaborative processes with professionals were not realised (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). Parents reported a desire for positive relationships with professionals, in meetings and generally, across the studies to achieve shared understandings and engage in joint problem solving. Some parents suggested that existing processes for children identified with SEND were not conducive to collaboration (MacLeod et al., 2017; Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). However, these parents were speaking specifically about the

American IEP system, therefore wider suggestions regarding context cannot be made. As an implication, it would be valuable for both parents and professionals to be involved in reviewing policy and practice for children identified with SEND in their local contexts.

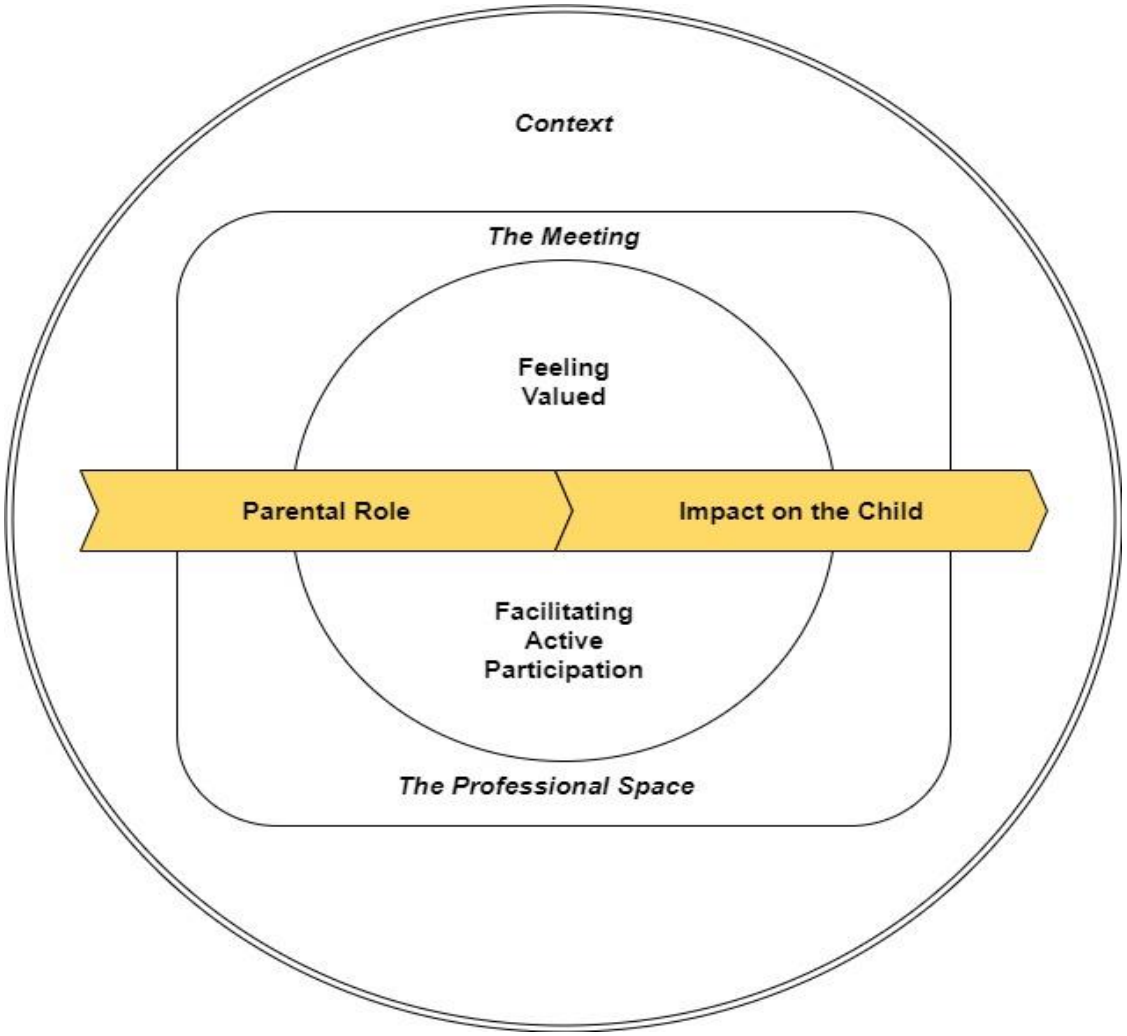
Although collaboration with professionals was important to parents, it did not seem to be the priority as parents' key concerns were the outcomes for their child (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). This is congruent with findings from Cameron and Tveit (2019) who suggest that parents evaluate collaboration in terms of whether outcomes were achieved for the child. Working in partnership suggests that parties are pursuing common goals (D'Amour et al., 2005; Rommetveit, 2011), however this may not be the case considering the different perspectives that parents and professionals may hold (Pinkus, 2003). Where professionals should take into account parents' views, parents may also need to be flexible in their goals. Processes that encourage parents and professionals to learn together, about the child's strengths and needs, whilst also considering factors within the wider systems around the child, might encourage the development of shared understandings and directions. This would require increased opportunities for parent-professional collaboration, which may be limited due to professional capacity and resources.

The construct of impact on the child emphasises the importance of keeping the child at the centre of parent-professional working. Meetings with professionals may be largely judged by parents regarding the extent to which the meeting is perceived to benefit the child. This requires recognition that meetings are part of wider systems for supporting children identified with SEND and these systems may constrain what can be achieved within a single meeting.

1.3.5. A model of parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals in meetings for children identified with SEND and potential applications

Whilst developing and expressing the synthesis, I began to develop a picture of how the constructs related to address the question of: how do parents experience working with multiple professionals during review meetings for their children identified with SEND? The visual expression of my synthesis can be viewed in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3: A model representing parental experience of working with multiple professionals during meetings



The model represents how the constructs of parental role and impact on the child permeate parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals during meetings. These constructs are depicted to be closely related and likened to a golden thread throughout the model. The constructs of feeling valued and facilitating active participation are presented as inter-related concepts. I refer to the space where these elements meet as the professional space, to represent how parents seemingly enter the world of multi-professional working during review meetings. As previously mentioned, meetings exist within a specific social-cultural-historical context (Schwartzman, 1989). It is therefore important to note that this model resides in a wider context of relationships, systems and policy, which will impact upon parental experiences within a meeting.

The model could be used as a tool to guide reflection on the practice of meetings between parents and professionals. Professionals may wish to consider how their individual or organisational practices might be adapted in light of these constructs. The model may provide a useful starting point for organisations to consider how they might seek parental feedback regarding multi-professional meetings and evaluate these practices.

Within the field of SEND in the UK, meetings are a key site where parents and multiple professionals come together to review children's needs and plan next steps accordingly. Despite this, there appears to be a lack of literature that explores the practice of these meetings specifically. Professionals may use the presented model to consider SEND review meetings in their local contexts. In the UK, Local authorities (LAs) retain responsibility for statutory processes for children identified with SEND, in line with the Children and Families Act (2014); these organisations could benefit from using the model to inform policy and procedure regarding SEND review meetings and parent-partnership more widely. As a key professional group within UK SEND assessment processes, educational psychologists (EPs) are arguably well placed to support the development of SEND processes in LAs. EPs possess psychological knowledge and research skills, which can be used to support reflection, organisational change and collaborative processes.

1.3.6. Learnings from meta-study

Due to the constraints of this bounded meta-study, it would be unreasonable to infer trends regarding the theoretical and methodological assumptions within the field of literature. However, the opportunity to explore these assumptions within the five papers provided a level of criticality to my synthesis. In Box 1.4, I summarise my key learnings as recommendations for future qualitative research literature.

Box 1.4: Recommendations for future qualitative research literature

- Provide transparency regarding the theoretical assumptions driving the study.
- Ensure the research questions leave space for alternative interpretations.
- Acknowledge the role of the researcher in all elements of the research process.
- Provide contextual information.
- Consider how participants' voices are promoted in the study and report.
- Be explicit about how decisions have been made.
- Consider quality criteria that is specific to qualitative research.

1.3.7. Limitations of review

My own subjective processes are inseparable from the review process (Etherington, 2004). To address this, I have attempted to provide transparency regarding my reasoning and actions throughout the review.

A key limitation of this review was its limited scope which required a small number of papers. This had implications for the meta-study process, which is intended for the review of a greater quantity of papers (Paterson et al., 2001). The choice of papers included in this review will have inevitably influenced the findings. Notably, the papers included a limited range of systems with most papers reporting on the IEP system in the USA. Although caution should be adopted to generalising qualitative findings to different contexts, I contend that parents working with multiple professionals is an experience that transcends a range of situations and contexts (B. Smith, 2018). As such, the synthesis may be transferable to other populations and systems. I do not propose my synthesis as a truth for all parental experiences but rather as a potential tool for stimulating reflection and enhancing practice. This can be understood as naturalistic generalisability (B. Smith, 2018; Stake, 1995), whereby

the reader judges which aspects of research reports resonate to their own experiences.

This review focused solely on parents' experiences. Acknowledging the complex nature of team working processes, I recognise that there are multiple lenses in which working practices of parents and multiple professionals can be studied. This review discusses professionals homogenously, but I recognise that there are individual differences amongst professionals within disciplines and agencies. There may also be other relational factors and working practices that impact team members' experiences of collaborative working. Future research may benefit from exploring parent-professional working from a range of perspectives within meetings.

1.4. Conclusion

Parents of children identified with SEND are expected to collaborate with multiple professionals in support of their child. Meetings are a key site for such collaboration; however, research that focuses specifically on the practice of meetings in the UK field of SEND is seemingly limited. This review drew on five studies, that explored parents' experiences of review meetings for their children identified with SEND, to construct new, tentative understandings of parental experience of working with multiple professionals during such meetings. My synthesis suggests that the unique role of the parent and their connection to the child is a key feature that permeates parental experiences of working with multiple professionals. Meetings may be understood as professional spaces that parents enter; as such, the active facilitation of parents in meeting activities should be carefully considered. Additionally, parents' experiences are likely to be impacted by how valued they feel by the professional team. The findings of this review offer useful implications for the development of research and practice in this area and may be used to support professional learning.

Chapter 2. A bridging document

2.0. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide insight into the decisions made throughout this project by offering a reflexive account of my thinking and development throughout the research process. Chapters one and two of this thesis are intended to stand alone as research papers; this chapter intends to illustrate the connections between the two papers, 'bridging' the systematic literature review and empirical research.

Reflexivity refers to an awareness of the researcher within the research, recognising that my own values and experiences have come to influence this project (Attia & Edge, 2017; G. M. Russell & Kelly, 2002). I acknowledge that I cannot separate myself from the research and instead choose to view myself as a key element within it (Gough & Madill, 2012). It is not possible to report every experience that has influenced this project, so I present key themes from my reflections which I think are of interest. I consider motivations and experiences that have fuelled my interest in parent-professional relationships and specifically their interactions within meetings. I then present my conceptual framework for the project and will go on to consider ethicality and challenges faced within the collaborative research process.

2.0.1. My motivations and connection to the research topic

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), and in previous professional roles within education, I have attended numerous meetings with parents and multiple professionals for a variety of purposes. These include consultations, review meetings for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), early help meetings and child protection meetings. I have felt a sense of discomfort in a number of these meetings regarding the dynamic of multiple professionals meeting with one or two parents. This might be understood as the "stone in my shoe" of my practice (Baumfield, Hall, & Wall, 2013, p. 38). I found this feeling difficult to articulate; sometimes it was to do with jargon being used; sometimes it was the sensitive nature of discussion and often it was concerned with how that parent might feel, sitting in a room with several near strangers, discussing their child and family life.

Despite finding this feeling difficult to articulate, anecdotal evidence from speaking to colleagues was that this is relatively common experience. I have become frustrated

with espoused person-centred practices, collaborative working and partnerships, that, at times, can arguably feel more like exercises than genuine endeavours. I think my experience as a participation youth worker, where we grew frustrated by tokenistic attempts at hearing young people's voices, has predisposed me to be critical of tokenism and buzzwords. To me, people having the right to take part in decision making that affects them and working with others rather than doing to them is integral to ethical practice and I find myself experiencing tension when working practices are not reflective of these.

Collaboration is a prevalent discourse for professional working across the public sector (Griffiths & Kippin, 2017). A discourse can be understood as discursive constructions that interact to create a meaning about a phenomenon which can influence how the world is understood (Burr, 1995). Critiquing the concept of collaboration with parents can be difficult due to its underpinning principles of respect and shared action. Norwich (2014) urges caution against concepts that exhibit ideological purity. The laudable concepts of partnership and collaboration have been problematised and challenges of realising them in practice are recognised (Ball, 2010; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2012; Liasidou, 2011; L. Todd, 2007). Recognition and examination of complexity is arguably important to the development of participative approaches (Cleaver, 2001). Highlighting such complexities in socially just ideals, such as collaboration, will hopefully encourage critical engagement with these concepts and influence how they are enacted in practice (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Hellawell, 2017).

I am not a parent. Perhaps it is the unknown of this experience to me that contributes to my interest in this group's experiences. Some of my closest family and friends are cautious of professionals, fearful of their power to act and intervene in their private worlds. Parents that I know personally and professionally have struggled to navigate the professional world for their children identified with SEND. As a TEP, I am a professional within that system. I want to encourage systemic improvements to the ways in which professionals work with parents in ways that are respectful and promote parental agency.

In previous pastoral roles in schools, at times I viewed certain families as in need of early intervention support. During my doctoral training, I was challenged to think

more critically about the idea of professionals supporting families. I realised I had taken for granted an assumption regarding the helpfulness of professional intervention in the lives of families. Despite my supportive intentions, it is important I remain reflexive of my own prejudices about parents-professional working that I bring to the project. In efforts to help, individuals may make assumptions about people's abilities to think and act (Freire, 1972; Petersen, 2011). In this case, I wanted to avoid a simple binary of powerful professionals and powerless parents (E. Todd & Higgins, 1998). One way I attempted this was by adopting an exploratory approach to the research and developing broad research questions that avoided assumptions of parent-professional relationships in practice.

The research scope needed further refinement in order to allow the topic of meetings between parents and multiple professionals to be researched in sufficient depth. SEND based meetings with parents and other professionals are a key feature of EP practice in my placement authority, which is reflective of many local authority-based EP services. Thus, these meetings reflect a working context that has direct relevance for my profession. Whilst undertaking this project, there was a desire to engage in heuristic inquiry to understand something that was personally motivating and to improve my own practice (Etherington, 2004; Moustakas, 1990). I also hoped that the learnings from exploring meetings for children identified with SEND would provide insight for the practice of collaborative meetings between parents and multiple professionals more generally.

2.0.1. From review to research: Deciding an empirical focus

This thesis focuses on the practice of collaborative meetings between parents and multiple professionals. Chapter 1 reviews existing literature and explores parents' experience of working with multiple professionals during review meetings for their children identified with SEND. The emphasis on parental voice is due to a recognition of parents' unique position when working with multi-professional teams in order to ensure their child's needs are met. The findings from the review may support reflection amongst professionals, services and organisations to improve practices with an emphasis on parents' perspectives.

The process of literature searching for the review highlighted a lack of research into SEND review meetings specifically in the UK context. Meetings can be understood

as communicative events, that are researchable phenomenon in their own right due to the complex interaction of micro and macro processes involved (Allen et al., 2015; Schwartzman, 1989). I therefore hoped my empirical study could provide insight into the practices of SEND review meetings in the UK context.

I wanted the empirical study to move beyond reporting experiences to supporting positive changes in practice. I had been inspired by reports of action orientated and participative research projects (Barrow, 2012; Hutcheson, 2018; Whitby, 2018), which led me to consider the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2010). Transformative research can contribute to positive change in the lives of the people involved through its very process (Biddle & Schafft, 2015). The focus of such research is therefore shifted from past events and experiences, to focusing more on the present and future in research (Chandler & Torbert, 2003).

2.1. Coherence in research: My conceptual framework

I strive to be coherent with my espoused values, positioning, practice and actions in order to demonstrate authenticity (Mockler, 2011). To demonstrate transparency and coherence in my research process, I now set out my conceptual framework for this project discussing how my stance toward knowledge and research shaped my inquiry (Grix, 2002; R. Parker, 2013).

2.1.1. My axiological, ontological and epistemological stance

Axiology refers to the fundamental values and ethics of the individual or approach (Killam, 2013). Values can function as guiding principles, influencing our decision-making processes and behaviours (Schwartz et al., 2012). A value that I try to embody is respect towards others, which involves recognising the worth, dignity and rights of all people (British Psychological Society, 2018). Individual agency, in terms of being able to direct one's life, is arguably a primary good for all humans (Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivary, 2001; Rawls, 2009). For me, respecting others can be considered as an ethical obligation that involves appreciating and promoting their rights to agency.

Research within the transformative paradigm holds axiological assumptions concerning the promotion of social justice and human rights through the act of research (Mertens, 2010). Social justice is a complex construct that is widely cited but ill-defined within literature (Kendall, 2017; Prilleltensky, 2014; Schulze, Winter,

Woods, & Tyldesley, 2017). A key aspect of social justice includes the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs (Schulze et al., 2017). This project's concern with parents' role in meetings that affect their child's life reflects this theme. The recognition of power differences concerning the generation of knowledge and the ethical implications that derive from these are key features of the transformative paradigm (Biddle & Schafft, 2015; Mertens, 2010). At the heart of this project, I was intrigued by the distinction between parents and the multiple professionals they work with to support their children identified with SEND. Acknowledging the unique experience of parents within multi-professional teams can be understood as recognition, which is a form of social justice that involves the wider society recognising the worth of cultural groups (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Relational social justice is concerned with the active search for better relationships at individual, group and systemic levels (Christensen & Dorn, 1997). Social justice can be enacted through interactions between people and systems. Thus, this project is concerned with broad matters of social justice at the relational level between parents and multiple professionals.

The transformative paradigm can be viewed as complementary to other paradigms (Biddle & Schafft, 2015). I. Parker (2004) states that qualitative research provides opportunity to link human experience with social action. Through focusing on experience and relational processes, I hoped to contribute to improvements in practice during parent-professional meetings. I currently conceptualise the transformativism as being the overarching axiological driver of my research, viewing it as a vehicle to address concerns with social justice, power differences and promotion of change.

Ontology refers to our assumptions held about the world and nature of reality, which inform our epistemological and methodological positions (Grix, 2002). I am sceptical toward objectivist positions which assert that a social reality exists independently of people and lean more toward constructivist positions which view social realities as a product of interaction between people and their environments (Grix, 2010). This positionality compels me to recognise the existence of multiple realities and the importance of cultural-historical contexts in meaning-making (Creswell, 2007). I adopt a relational ontology within this project, which assumes that all meaning is a result of co-action between individuals and their environment (Gergen, 2009). In line

with this view, I understand humans as inherently relational beings, rather than self-contained entities (Slife, 2004). Within this stance, I view knowledge and meaning as being created within interactions; thus, I view my role as researcher as a co-constructor of knowledge with the people I work with in our unique contexts.

Epistemology is concerned with how this reality can come to be known (Grix, 2002; Killam, 2013). There are multiple epistemological stances ranging from positivist to interpretivist positions, depending on how the nature of knowledge is understood (Grix, 2010). The same phenomenon can be studied from varied epistemological stances, producing diverse forms of knowledge. Given my relational ontological position, my epistemological position leans towards interpretivist stances, recognising the subjectivity of social action (Bryman, 2016; Grix, 2002). Epistemological stances have been likened to theories in action (Kuhn & Weinstock, 2008; R. Parker, 2013), recognising that real world research rarely fits into a neatly defined category (Grix, 2002). In Table 2.1, I present the key stances informing this project, whilst acknowledging the iterative nature of my epistemological understanding through thinking, reading and action over the course of the research (R. Parker, 2013).

Table 2.1: Stances informing the research

Stance	**Explanation**	**Influence on the research**
Social Constructionism	This stance views knowledge as a construction between people in social interactions that is culturally and historically located (Burr, 2015). Social constructionism understands the self to be multiple and varied, depending on social context (Gergen, 1991). Social constructionism does not recognise a form of inner self (Salgado & Hermans, 2009). Language is understood to have a performative function and is a constructive force in the shaping of knowledge (Burr, 2015). The constructions of knowledge are understood to be bound with power relations (Willig, 2013).	• Recognising the cultural-historical position of the project and valuing local stories. • Exploring functions of language within the case study meeting. • Considering power at parent-professional and researcher-co-researcher levels.
Dialogic	This stance views people are existing in relational and communicative processes, whereby, knowledge is shared and generated through dialogue (Linell, 2007; Marková, 2003). The Bakhtinian perspective of dialogic construction recognises that difference creates tensions, which are then held in the interaction and explored through communication (Bakhtin, 1986; Marková, 2003; Wegerif, 2008). The differences that people bring to conversation can stimulate discussion and the	• Creating space for communication in the collaborative action research (CAR) process. • Seeking to understand the experiences of others (in case study and CAR process).

	creation of new understandings (Barge, 2015). A dialogic approach is recognises the inner life of the individual, allowing for otherness in interaction (Salgado & Clegg, 2011).	• Recognising the role of otherness in conversation and how this can create new understandings. • Recognising findings as a product of conversation.
Contextualism	This stance views knowledge claims as being context-dependent, meaning that what can be said to be true in one context may not be in another (Ludlow, 2005; Pynn, 2015). The approach emphasises the significance of the attributor or claimant and the standards of knowledge applied to a knowledge claim (DeRose, 1992). In this sense, multiple claims to knowledge might be true in a given situation or utterance.	• Adopting criticality toward knowledge claims and being transparent about how claims have come to be made in the research. • Considering the concept of transferability over generalisability of findings.

2.1.2. Methodological decisions

Methodology represents my understandings of how we can come to know about the topic at hand (Grix, 2002). Through the empirical research I aimed to explore the practices of parent-professional collaboration during review meetings for children identified with SEND. In line with my philosophical positioning, it was important the research methodology could create space for dialogue and the co-construction of knowledge with those I worked with. I also wanted the project to have a positive impact on the practice of meetings through its process and implications, to avoid the risk of 'navel-gazing'. Action research methodology provides a vehicle for reflection and action, allowing for critical consideration of practices whilst also having an impact in the research context by implementing changes through its process (Mcniff, 2013).

In the early planning stages, I had hopes of a participatory action research (PAR) project, where I might work alongside parents to explore and improve the practice of collaboration during SEND meetings. PAR research seeks to reposition those who might have been participants as co-researchers, in efforts to readdress issues of power and ownership in knowledge generation about certain groups (Kemmis, 2009). However, through ongoing reading and supervision I wondered if this was at risk of being tokenistic; I did not want to do engage with parents purely for the sake of carrying out PAR research. Within my placement authority, I did not identify any local initiatives that aligned with my research aims. At this point, I considered who might have the power to affect changes regarding the practice of SEND meetings in my current context? It was this reasoning which led to my decision to undertake the project with a SENDCo as the co-researcher, as described in section 3.3.1.

My initial research aim, to explore the practice of meetings between parents and professionals, was broad. The shaping of my guiding research question, how can collaboration between parents and multiple professionals be facilitated during meetings?, and adoption of a collaborative action research (CAR) methodology occurred through an iterative process of considering my interests, exploring existing research and investigating the possibilities available to me in my current context, within the constraints of the doctorate process.

Inquiries can involve the individual (first person inquiries), a group (second person inquiries) or community (third person inquiries); one project might involve elements of each of these (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). This project aimed to explore the practice of meetings between parents and professionals in a way which served the co-researcher's interests and my own. As such, the project can be described as a form of second person inquiry. To ensure this was a meaningful process for the co-researcher and myself, we mutually decided the research focus and actions that we would take.

In line with the aims of the co-researcher and myself, we agreed that the action element of our study would involve a form of inquiry. This took the form of a case study which allowed us to explore participants' roles within a meeting. The case study provided us with opportunity to develop empathetic knowledge, considering a situation from a range of perspectives (Cain & Domaille, 2008). The role of case study within the overarching CAR methodology was an ongoing tension for me as researcher. Blichfeldt and Andersen (2006) propose that case studies begin with an interest in phenomena, whereas action research begins with issues to be addressed. I experienced a consistent pull between a more traditional academic project, where I might report my interpretations as findings, and the intended CAR process when analysing the case study data. During this stage, it was useful to revisit my conceptual framework and research aims to navigate this tension.

2.2. Quality in research

Research can be defined as a systematic process that involves gathering and synthesising information to produce new understandings (Robson, 2011; Willig, 2013). I regularly raised concerns during supervision over whether I was carrying out the research correctly and avidly searched literature to garner the right way to approach various stages of the project. I now believe that my insecurity reflected deeply held assumptions toward the purpose and process of research (Breen & Darlaston-Jones, 2010; Chamberlain, 2000; Gough & Lyons, 2016; Tanggaard, 2013); in addition to the new territory of action orientated research methodology that I was navigating as a novice doctoral researcher. Through this process, I have developed an appreciation for the importance of creativity and flexibility in what Brinkmann (2015) describes as the craft of qualitative research.

Action research can generate practical, living knowledge, that is valid for people in their context (Kemmis, 2009; Mcniff, 2013; Swantz, 2008; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Through the CAR process, the co-researcher and I were able to develop our understandings of how collaboration can be facilitated between parents and professionals which have influenced our respective practices moving forward. For me, there are clear parallels between the artistry of EP practice and the craft of research (R. Parker, 2013).

Zuber-Skerritt (2018) contends that a distinguishing feature of research is that it contributes to wider understandings in the field and is made public in some form so that it is open to scrutiny. The act of reporting research can be understood as a performance in itself (Fisher & Phelps, 2006). The inherent mess and uncertainty of action research should arguably be articulated in reports as a way of demonstrating rigour and authenticity (Cook, 1998, 2009). Although the project was collaborative, the research paper was produced by me alone as part of my qualification. During this stage, I experienced writing, thinking and sense-making as intertwined processes building my own further understandings than the outcomes generated from the research (Van Cleave and Bridges Rhodes 2013).

I sought to report the research in a way that demonstrated the close relationship between the CAR process and knowledge generation with transparency, in a bid for epistemic responsibility (Code, 2017; Doucet & Mauthner, 2002; McEwan & Reed, 2017). To do this I presented the study as narrative account of the process (Feldman, 2007). I hoped that this style of presentation would encourage the reader to engage with the report dialogically, co-constructing their own understandings and reflections with my written account (Netolicky & Barnes, 2018).

An account can be described as valid if it accurately represents the features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe or explain (Hammersley, 1992). I have found Cho and Trent's (2006) notion of transformational validity useful to the current project as it was concerned with social change. This form of validity is characterised by researcher reflexivity and engagement with partners involved in the research. The subsequent sections of this bridging document aim to illustrate these features by drawing on some of my reflections throughout the research process.

2.3. Issues of ethicality

Ethics and quality in research are arguably interrelated concepts (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2007). The research adhered to the British Psychological Society (2018) Code of Ethics and received ethical approval from Newcastle University. However, it was important to me that the research moved beyond procedural ethics to consider ethicality as an ongoing process in all elements of the project.

2.3.1. Responsibility toward others

Over the course of my training, I have grew increasingly mindful of the way individuals and groups may be constructed through research studies and their subsequent reports (Doucet & Mauthner, 2002). I considered the ways in which I worked with others throughout the project, and how my actions might position them and leave them feeling. An example of this from my research diary is presented in Box 2.1.

Box 2.1: Research diary extract - scrutiny

Date: 29/01/20

I have picked up on cautiousness in the interviews I had with the professionals who participated in the meeting. They have each shared that if they were to watch the recording back, they would probably spot themselves doing something 'wrong'. The parent, although acknowledging the recording was a little strange, did not express this same sense of uneasiness. I appreciate more fully now, that the process of being recorded might have caused the professionals to feel under scrutiny. We had tried to mitigate this in our research information by being clear about the research purposes whilst gaining their consent, but I realise now that it might have felt uncomfortable for them to be interviewed by someone who they know has watched their 'performance'. I felt myself reassuring all of the professionals at one point or another, that I had perceived the meeting to be positive and trying to put them at ease about how they came across in the recording.

On reflection, I wonder if this sensation of scrutiny might have been mitigated if the participants of the case study had been more involved in the over-arching collaborative research process. In a sense, the participants were treated like traditional research subjects where the case study was 'done to' rather than 'done with'. This makes me feel quite uneasy, given the underlying values driving the project regarding respect and participation. I think if the participants had had the chance to watch the video back themselves this may have lessened this sense of scrutiny; additionally they could have benefitted from the powerful effects of using video to support reflective practice (Kennedy, Landor, & Todd, 2015).

2.3.2. Informed consent

The concept of informed consent is integral to ethicality in research (British Psychological Society, 2018). The co-researcher and I did not explore our understandings of this concept explicitly when recruiting participants for the case study. My diary extract, in Box 2.2, illustrates how there can be consequences when assuming a shared understanding of familiar terminology in collaboration.

Box 2.2: Research diary extract - informed consent

Date: 22/11/20

Today a meeting took place in the co-researcher's setting that we had hoped to use for the case study. There has been a tight turn around between the second stage ethical approval from Newcastle University (granted on 14/11/20) and this potential meeting. As such, this meant that we have been rushed in gaining informed consent from potential participants. We agreed that the co-researcher would let meeting attendees know about our project and ask if it was ok for me to contact them to explain in greater depth and seek informed consent. As the meeting was drawing closer, I had been concerned that I haven't spoken to potential participants and felt worried about having enough time to gain informed consent. After further conversation with the co-researcher, we agreed that she would share the consent forms with the participants. Our communication over this time has been limited due to our own working schedules. The whole process has felt quite rushed, but we have been conscious that another meeting might not take

place for weeks (or potentially months). I think the pressures to complete the project within certain timescales are adding to this from my perspective.

I dropped the camera to the co-researcher yesterday, as I had placement demands that meant I could not be there in person today. At this point, the co-researcher was still waiting for consent from one participant, a speech and language therapist; the other two participants, the parent and an external specialist teacher had provided verbal consent and planned to sign the form in the morning.

This afternoon, I went to collect the camera at the end of the school day and the co-researcher explained that the recording had not gone ahead as one meeting attendee did not consent to taking part. As we were discussing this, it became apparent that the co-researcher had not shared the information sheets. She explained that she had not felt that people would mind so much about the recording and had thought the consent forms were more of a formality. She was extremely apologetic but I did not see this as her fault.

I felt a sense of responsibility for not explicitly discussing the importance of the informed consent and supporting her to gather this. This was a realisation for me that I had perhaps not privileged the importance of informed consent myself, due to the sense of desperation I felt to 'get the data' – because of this I had possibly placed too much responsibility on the co-researcher. We had an interesting discussion about informed consent and the assumptions we had towards it. The co-researcher reflected that she had put a lot of effort into explaining the study to the parent and had perhaps made an assumption that the professionals would be fine with taking part. We have now agreed our procedure for providing study information and collecting informed consent for when our next research opportunity arises.

Despite this event being a challenge within the research process, it offered an opportunity for the co-researcher and I to learn together. Since this experience, I have been considering the informed consent procedures I follow in my role as a TEP

more carefully. I now have a greater appreciation for the need to be explicit about definitions and procedures regarding informed consent, as it is often SENDCos who collect parental consent for me to become involved with their children.

A few months after that event, I was in the position of gaining consent from the parent to participate in the case-study. Our first conversation took place by phone; my reflections on this conversation are shared in Box 2.3.

Box 2.3: Research diary extract - explaining the research

Date: 17/1/20

Today I spoke on the phone with the parent attending the meeting to provide information about the study and ask if he would be happy to take part. He told me that he had been told I would call and listened whilst I explained who I was and why I was doing the research. Early in our conversation, it became apparent to me that his understanding and use of English was functional but limited. I was trying to use simple, clear language whilst being conscious that some of the terms I was using may have had limited relevance to him (i.e. explaining my course and reasons for doing the research).

After this explanation, I asked if he had any questions but some of his responding comments made me feel uncertain as to whether my explanation had been understood. For example, he explained that he had been to an appointment for his daughter's hearing and told me a bit of information about her needs. It seemed as if he thought my role was to gather information about his daughter.

Over the course of our conversation, through me re-explaining my role and the research purposes, it seemed that he developed more of an understanding of the study. For example, he began to ask me questions about what I would be doing with his information and how the video of the meeting would be stored. This made me feel more confident that any consent he provided would be 'informed'. We arranged to speak again before the meeting, where we could go through the information sheet and consent form.

After our conversation, I had a wave of realisation that this research and my presence as an additional person in the life of this parent was part of the very phenomenon that we were aiming to explore. Despite me not being part of the multi-professional team supporting his daughter, I was going to be yet another 'professional' face for this parent.

Informed consent can be understood as a shared decision making process that is ongoing (Whitney, McGuire, & McCullough, 2004). This processual definition supported me in thinking about the challenges described in Box 2.3. In my following interactions with the parent, I strived to offer opportunities for him to ask more questions and offer clear explanations for what I was doing. I also made it clear that his participation was optional. This instance has influenced my practice, as I have since been considering how much I create space to be questioned and have attempted to create conditions that invite others to feel comfortable to challenge me.

2.4. Collaborative processes

Collaboration is a complex construct and process, that can be described as a form of artistry (Carnwell & Carson, 2008; Huxham, 2003; Shepherd, Kervick, & Morris, 2017). The theme of collaboration has ran through multiple elements of this project: from the parent-professional meeting, to the action research, to my research supervision. The process of studying collaboration, whilst also trying to enact it has led me to develop an appreciation for the values and challenges of collaborative processes. These collaborative processes have been marked with points of tension, which cannot be easily resolved. Instead, these tensions have acted as key moments for learning as I have had to embrace them and find ways of navigating them to move forward (Flyvbjerg, Landman, & Schram, 2016).

2.4.1. Roles, negotiation and ownership

Researchers and practitioners can bring complementary forms of knowledge to collaborative inquiries (Wahlgren & Aarkrog, 2020). The differences that people bring to conversation can stimulate discussion and the creation of new understandings (Barge, 2015). In Table 2.2, I consider the similarities and differences between the co-researcher and myself and the implications for the research.

Table 2.2: Similarities and differences between the co-researcher and myself

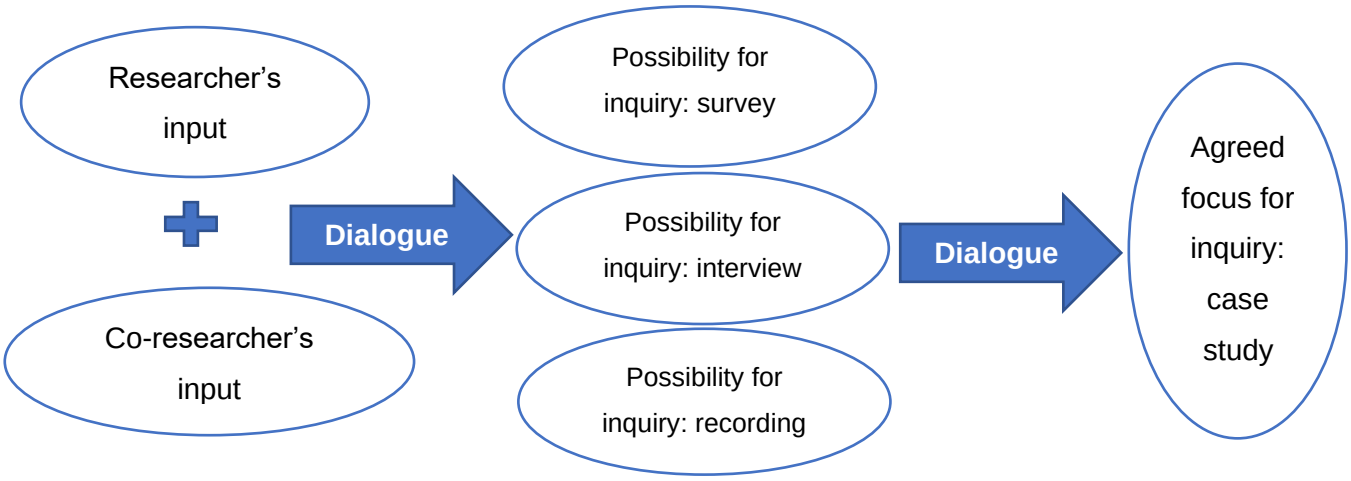
Similarities	Differences	Implications
Both working in the field of education. Working in the same local authority (wider system).	Co-researcher is a headteacher with SENDCo responsibilities and was previously a classroom teacher. I am a TEP who has never been a teacher. Co-researcher has worked in education and the LA for significantly longer than me.	• A shared sense of understanding regarding our wider system and LA processes. • Different perspectives, knowledge and skills due to our different disciplines, roles and responsibilities. • Co-researcher having more professional experience.
Shared professional interest in relationships with parents and parent participation	Co-researcher works with parents of her school more frequently and has closer relationships with parents. I work with parents generally as part of casework.	• Our mutual interest acting as a driving force for the CAR process • Different types of relationships with the parents we work with, bringing with them differing dynamics and demands.
Both white-British women	Co-researcher is a parent; I am not.	• Possibly bringing similar cultural experiences to the relationship. • Co-researcher having shared experience with parents.

Collaboration involves an expansive learning process where which new directions can be formed (Davis, 2013; Engeström, 2001; E. Rouse & O'Brien, 2017). The flexibility and openness of the research design that I bought to the co-researcher, in combination with our rich discussions and optimism for the research, resulted in multiple possible areas for our inquiry (as discussed in section 3.4.2). At this stage, pragmatic considerations needed to be taken into account, particularly the time constraints surrounding the project due to my university requirements. I needed to limit the scope of the project we had planned in some form but I worried that the co-researcher might lose interest or motivation, particularly if it did not contribute to her priorities as a headteacher.

At times, my cautiousness to be too directive in the CAR process may have been a hindering factor to the collaboration. Through supervision, I was reminded that I offered equally important contributions to the process. This conversation encouraged me to challenge an underlying assumption that I had been holding onto: that the co-researcher should have the most say in the research design. I was potentially jeopardising opportunities for otherness in the collaboration by attempting to minimise my presence within the research. This action contradicted my espoused stance to acknowledge and own my influence in all elements of this project (McNiff, 2008). Directiveness can be a useful feature, even in collaborative endeavour, to provide boundaries and structure (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2013). From this point, I felt more confident to say to the co-researcher what I needed or wanted from the research.

I shared the concerns about the brevity of the project with the co-researcher and through dialogue we reached a shared decision for how we could move forward. A visual representation of this focusing is presented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: A visual representation of the collaborative planning process



The co-researcher shared that she was happy to go with my preference for the inquiry. I was worried that this might create a shift in the sense of ownership over the research. I have found it helpful to consider the issue of ownership as a fluid concept that exists in any shared activity, similarly to the nature of power. This conceptualisation encourages me to consider how I might monitor the balance of power and ownership in my interactions with others. For example, I regularly reviewed the CAR process with the co-researcher by checking in and asking how she was finding the process. This can also be applicable to parent-professional collaborative processes.

2.4.2. Reciprocity

Reciprocity in collaboration is concerned with how individuals are influenced and changed by the process of working with others (E. Rouse & O'Brien, 2017). Petersen (2011) describes reciprocity as a willingness to expose one's vulnerability and engage in a mutual exchange of personal information. This challenges practices whereby researchers or professionals may engage in one-directional questioning of the personal life of the participant or parent (Harvey, 2015; Valle, 2018). In our review, the co-researcher emphasised the importance of connecting with parents on a human level, outside of the societal roles we hold. Despite sharing this view, Box 2.4 and Box 2.5 outline two examples from the study where I was surprised to be asked questions by the person I was talking to.

Box 2.4: Research diary extract - parenthood

Date: 23/01/20

During our interview today, the parent asked me if I had children. I was a little taken aback by his question and I feel a little embarrassed to write that I found it quite personal. Later in our conversation, he also asked me what area I lived in and I found my head immediately thinking how much detail should I share? This was not because of any ill-feelings toward the parent, but I was thinking about the idea of professionalism: would it be 'appropriate' to tell this parent where I lived? I think at this point I was thinking of myself in terms of my LA trainee role, rather than my researcher role. I answered the parent's questions openly and honestly, and do not think that I let my initial reaction hinder these opportunities for genuine connection. I think this reflection highlights a tension between connection and the boundaries of the parent-professional relationship; where I had to make a judgement call regarding what would be appropriate for me to share of myself.

Box 2.5: Research diary extract - learnings

Date: 02/04/20

During our review, I had asked the co-researcher how she had found the CAR process and if she had learnt anything from the research. After sharing her thoughts, she asked me the same question. I had a blank moment and had not been expecting to be asked my thoughts. I have been wondering if this reflects an assumption that I was the 'researcher' and the co-researcher was the 'participant' in the review; with me sharing the video clips and leading the conversation by asking questions. Whilst transcribing the review conversation, there seems to be a constant interaction, where at some points I am leading the conversation and at other points it seems to be more reciprocal. I feel pleased that I managed to create this dynamic with the co-researcher and on reflection, take it as a sign of successful collaboration that she could ask questions of me and my practice as well.

When considering these extracts, I find it interesting that my initial reaction to these questions was that of surprise and uncomfortableness. I espouse the importance of connection in all of my work with others and would say that I am usually comfortable in sharing elements of myself with others as part of this. It seems that even for me, someone who has been engaging reflexively in research concerned with working with others, these questions challenged my ideas of what was appropriate or expected in those situations. As a TEP, I am bound to a code of professional practice (British Psychological Society, 2017) and must demonstrate professional competencies (Health and Care Professions Council, 2015). My initial reactions may have been reflective of assumptions I hold about what it means to be a researcher and professional. The research process has encouraged me to challenge these assumptions, expanding my understandings of what these roles can mean and look like.

2.5. Summary: A journey of becoming

This chapter has aimed to provide a reflexive account of my research journey. We often draw on narratives that will portray ourselves to others in our preferred ways (Goffman, 1959). I have been conscious whilst writing this that I am trying to represent my ideas of 'goodness': a good researcher; a good educational psychologist and, overall, a good person. The mess and uncertainty inherent to the CAR methodology led to uncomfortable feelings for me at various points in the research, which I think challenged my values and ideas of goodness. Similarly, I have been navigating complexity in my own development as a researcher and practitioner. It is well established that learning can be an uncomfortable process, as it is concerned with change and uncertainty (Robson, 2011). Throughout this project, and my training more generally, it could be said that I have been experiencing a journey marked with becomings and unbecomings (Fox & Allan, 2014). I am now entering the next stage of my professional journey feeling better equipped to navigate the uncertainty, tensions and complexity of practice and research by engaging with my values and developing relationships with others.

Chapter 3. Meetings as mirrors: exploring the practice of parent-professional meetings through collaborative action research

3.0. Abstract

Collaboration is a concept and practice that is marked with complexity. This project sought to explore the practice of collaboration between parents and professionals during meetings for children identified with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Meetings are sites in which parents and professionals come together to share information and engage in decision making. Despite being a key feature of SEND processes, there is seemingly little research that explores the practice of review meetings in the UK context. This project aimed to contribute to this literature gap, whilst also being transformative in its nature. As such, a collaborative action research (CAR) methodology was adopted which set out to explore the facilitation of collaboration between parents and professionals during SEND review meetings with an educator co-researcher.

This paper presents an authentic account of the CAR process to provide transparency regarding the intertwined nature of action and knowledge in this project. This account discusses the preparing and planning stages of the research to provide transparency into how decisions were made. The co-researcher and I chose to engage in an inquiry for the 'action' aspect of the CAR process. This inquiry took the form of a case study of a single meeting. In order to inform practice, we wanted to develop our understanding of how parents' might view their role and the roles of professionals they work with; as well as explore how language used in meetings might position parents. The case study meeting involved a parent, SEND co-ordinator, educational psychologist and external specialist teacher, whereby a decision was made to request a statutory assessment of a young person's SEND needs. Participants were interviewed to explore the perceptions of their role in the meeting and the young person's education, as well as their perceptions of the roles of others in the meeting. The meeting was also video recorded to explore how roles were constructed during the meeting, and how participants were positioned. The findings from the case study were used as catalysts for discussion between the co-researcher and I, from which a number of specific outcomes for practice were

developed. The outcomes were concerned with: creating a sense of team; fostering genuine connection; understanding parents' perspectives and developing professional skills. The project can be described as being at a provisional resting place. Key learnings from the project are discussed with implications for professional learning, research and practice.

"… [as an effective practitioner] you should be reflecting all the time and questioning could that be done any better?" (Co-researcher, 2020)

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3.1. Introduction

This paper reports a collaborative action research (CAR) project which explored the practice of meetings, between parents and multiple professionals, for children identified with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). I present an authentic account of the project as it developed to provide methodological transparency, whilst also contributing new understandings regarding the topic (Cook, 2009; McAteer, 2013). I hope that this paper encourages reflection amongst practitioners and academics regarding the theory and practice of collaboration in meetings and research (Mcniff, 2013), which in turn promotes ways of working that are respectful of all people and their rights to participation.

3.1.1. Conceptualising Collaboration

Within the field of SEND, parents have the right to participate in decision making for their child (Department For Education, 2015). This requires parents and various SEND professionals, across the agencies of education, health and social care, to work together (Hellawell, 2018a). Collaborative working can encourage a holistic approach to understanding and meeting children's needs, that is reportedly valued by parents and professionals (Abbott, Townsley, & Watson, 2005; Abbott, Watson, & Townsley, 2005; Barnes, 2008; Boesley & Crane, 2018; Hellawell, 2018b; Holland & Pell, 2017; Skipp & Hopwood, 2016). Criticisms tend to relate to the practical challenges of realising collaboration in practice, due to individual, group or organisational factors (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Spivack, Craston, Thom, & Carr, 2014).

The terms collaboration, partnership and participation, and variants thereof, are often used interchangeably in SEND policy and practice guidelines without clear conceptualisation (Broadhurst & Holt, 2010; Carnwell & Carson, 2008; Norwich, 2014; Van Houte et al., 2015) [see for example, the SEND Code of Practice CoP (CoP; 2015)]. Consequently, these terms remain open to interpretation by professionals and organisations, potentially masking a variety of working practices (Horwath & Morrison, 2007; Press et al., 2012). This risks such terms becoming virtuous buzzwords, which fail to grapple with the complexities of enacting these principles in practice (Broadhurst & Holt, 2010; Cleaver, 2001; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008).

Collaboration can be understood as a process of individuals or parties working together toward an outcome (Brooks & Thistlethwaite, 2012; Carnwell & Carson, 2008; Henneman, Lee, & Cohen, 1995; Huxham, 2003). Based on their conceptual review, D'Amour et al. (2005) define professional collaboration with five key concepts, outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Key concepts to collaboration (D'Amour et al., 2005)

Concept	Explanation
Sharing	Collaborative processes involve different features of sharing. This might involve team members sharing responsibilities, decision making, information or philosophies. The concept of sharing implies that input and tasks are divided amongst team members in some form, as well as eluding to a common purpose or beliefs.
Partnership	Collaborative processes involve two or more individuals. Partnership relationships imply trust, respect, openness and communication, in addition to the pursuit of common goals. Partnerships can be understood as the relational mechanism to collaboration.
Interdependency	This concept implies that individuals are mutually dependent on each other to work toward their goal. Individuals contribute their expertise to the process and, in turn, the output of the

	group becomes larger than what may be achieved by the individual alone.
Power	Power should be shared between group members in collaborative processes. The power of all individuals to act in the collaboration is recognised and is based on knowledge and experience, rather than titles and roles. Power is understood as a relational construct that is present in all interactions.
Process	Collaboration is a dynamic and evolving process, which involves transcending individual professional boundaries.

Parents and professionals who work together to support children identified with SEND can be described as a team (Bacon & Causton-Theoharis, 2013; Edwards et al., 2009; Kendall, 2017). Discourses of inter-professional collaboration and parent-partnership may fail to account for the inherent complexity in team dynamics between parents and multiple professionals (Cottrell & Bollom, 2007; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Walter, Arnold, Curley, & Feudtner, 2019). Parents and professionals enter into working relationships from distinct positions within a child's life, bringing differing views, skills and hopes to the interaction (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2012; Gascoigne, 1995; Rommetveit, 2011). Additionally, neither parents nor professionals are homogenous groups, meaning that individuals will bring their own perspectives and contexts to the collaboration. Highlighting differences and potential tensions within parent-professional teams, through research that draws on a variety of methods and perspectives, may help to develop understandings of issues and possible solutions (Gelech, Desjardins, Matthews, & Graumans, 2017; E. Todd & Higgins, 1998). These understandings could elicit more effective relationships and collaborative processes as professionals may be better equipped to navigate them (Hellawell, 2017).

3.1.2. Study Rationale

Meetings are the proposed site for collaboration between key stakeholders for children identified with SEND (Department For Education, 2015). Review meetings provide space for children's needs to be monitored and for parties to plan supportive action accordingly. Although parent-professional collaboration occurs through

multiple interactions over time, meetings can provide a bounded site for researching these relationships at the micro-level within a particular social-cultural-historical frame (Allen et al., 2015; Schwartzman, 1989; Smart & Auburn, 2018). The analysis of ordinary events can develop rich understandings of interactions between individuals and wider contexts (McDermott & Roth, 1978). SEND review meetings can be understood as sites where multiple contexts interact (Gastaldi, Longobardi, Quaglia, & Settanni, 2015); this could include the home, school, Local Authority (LA) and potentially other agencies depending on circumstances. SEND review meetings therefore provide a site to research the complexities of collaboration between parents and multiple professionals, by focusing on interactions and team dynamics.

Meetings are a common feature of practice for professionals in the field of SEND. Despite this, research into the practice of SEND review meetings in the UK appears to be limited. There is little guidance available within the CoP (2015) regarding the expectations of such meetings. This intended space for local interpretation may contribute to a variation of practices amongst LAs. Extant literature tends to focus on broader parent-professional relationships (Cameron & Tveit, 2019; Jansen et al., 2017; O'Connor, 2008; O'reilly et al., 2013; Stoner et al., 2005; Swallow et al., 2013) or evaluations of SEND processes (Adams et al., 2017; Boesley & Crane, 2018; Sales & Vincent, 2018; Skipp & Hopwood, 2016; Spivack et al., 2014). This seems to imply that meetings are a given feature of practice, rather than a phenomenon of interest within themselves. There is a larger body of literature from the United States that is concerned with Individual Educational Planning (IEP) meetings. This seems to focus on either participants' reported experiences of meetings (Childre & Chambers, 2005; Esquivel, Ryan, & Bonner, 2008; Fish, 2006; MacLeod et al., 2017; Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014) or the discursive practices within them (Compton, 2020; Lo, 2008; Martin et al., 2006; C. Y. Mason, McGahee-Kovac, Johnson, & Stillerman, 2002). As such, the existing research provides a critical commentary on events that have already occurred.

Transformative research is concerned with action and change, with the intent of furthering social justice (Mertens, 2010). Kozik's (2018) study can be described as transformative, as he explored the development of positive interactions within meetings through appreciative inquiry. This approach contributed to understandings of practice during meetings, whilst also acting as an intervention to promote positive

change. Exploring phenomena through a range of research methods can provide new insights that can develop our understandings (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Willig, 2013). Action oriented methodologies can allow researchers to generate knowledge on topics of interest, whilst influencing changes in practice (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). The present study aimed to contribute to the understanding and practice of parent-professional collaboration during SEND review meetings, within the UK context, through an action-oriented methodology.

3.2. Overview of the research process

This section outlines the study methodology and research context, before providing an overview of the stages involved in the research process. This section is intended to orientate the reader to the project's developing nature before the study phases are discussed in greater detail.

3.2.1. Collaborative action research

Action research (AR) refers to a broad family of research approaches, originating across various disciplines (Blichfeldt & Andersen, 2006; Zuber-Skerritt, 2015). AR seeks to stimulate change through research processes in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of concern, in participation with others (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). It can function as a research methodology and process for adult learning by combining action and reflection (Kasl & Yorks, 2002; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Through its process, AR aims to generate contextual knowledge via the integration of theory and practical experience (Baumfield et al., 2013; Herr & Anderson, 2014; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

As the present study was concerned with collaboration, I chose to work with a co-researcher to deepen my understanding of collaborative processes. Collaborative action research (CAR) particularly references people with differing roles working together toward a shared purpose (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014; Heron & Reason, 2006). I therefore adopt this term for this project's methodological approach. When referring to broader action research literature in this paper, I will use the term AR. The purposeful parallels in the CAR approach and the overarching focus of this project served as ongoing sources of reflection.

3.2.2. Research context

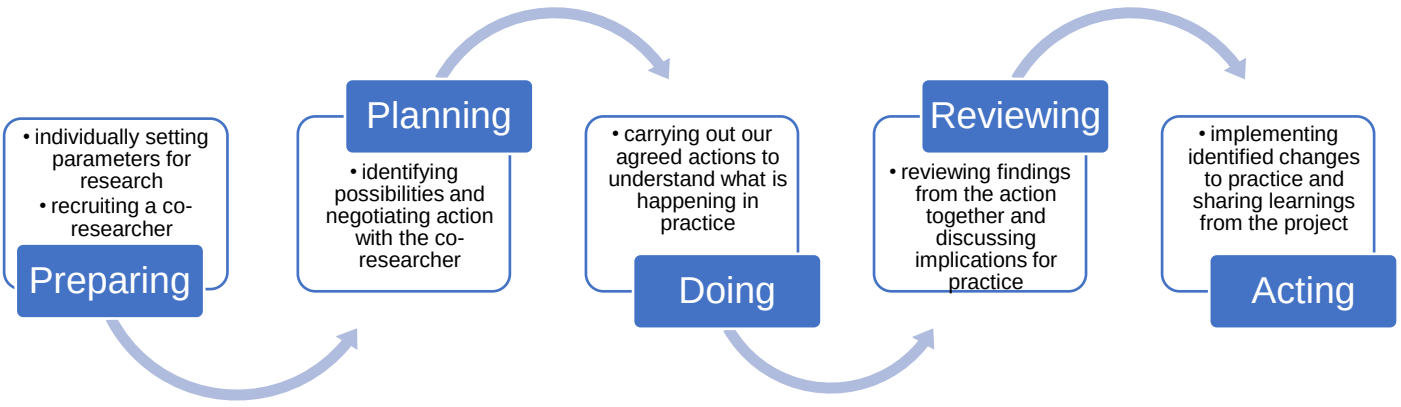
The project was conducted with a co-researcher in a City within the Midlands of England. The co-researcher holds the role of Headteacher within a primary school and the role of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo). The primary school opened in September 2017 and is connected to a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The school serves an ethnically diverse community and is based in an area that is considered to be disadvantaged, due to significant levels of deprivation.

The project was initiated by myself as an outsider researcher to the school. The project formed part of my university requirements. In addition to my role as primary researcher, I was on placement as a Trainee Educational Psychologist in the same LA as the school. I did not have an existing relationship with the school or MAT, but they did subscribe to the Educational Psychology Service (EPS).

3.2.3. The research process

AR offers a flexible approach to inquiry by allowing emerging developments in the process to influence the direction of research (Herr & Anderson, 2014; Mcniff, 2013). As such, Cook (2009) contends that messiness is an inherent feature of AR that should be articulated. AR is often discussed in terms of cycles or loops, encompassing planning, action and reflection (Bargal, 2008; Kemmis et al., 2013; O'Leary, 2004). Koshy (2005) urges against an over-reliance on models, to allow for creativity and fluidity in AR processes. Figure 3.1 depicts the project as one CAR cycle that demonstrates the key research phases, although I acknowledge the simplicity of this representation.

Figure 3.1: Visual representation of the CAR cycle



AR methodology is expected to evolve with the project, allowing for different approaches to be used pragmatically to address research questions (Christ, 2010). It is therefore important that researchers are explicit about how choices are made and the conditions in the field of practice to ensure transparency (Herr & Anderson, 2014; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Table 3.2 provides an overview of the research stages, which are later discussed in greater detail.

Table 3.2: Description of the research process

Phase of CAR Cycle	Stages within project	Key Activities
Preparing	**Stage 1: Preparation** *October 2018 – April 2019*	• Deciding an over-arching focus for the project and suitable methodology. • Gaining first stage ethical approval from Newcastle University.
	Stage 2: Recruitment *April 2019 – June 2019*	• Approaching settings and sharing expression of interest form Appendix C • Contact with Chief Executive of the MAT. • Presenting to SENDCos regarding project at MAT meeting. • Contact from interested SENDCo and arrangement of an initial meeting.
Planning	**Stage 3: Introductions and Contracting** *June 2019*	• Initial meeting with potential co-researcher: getting to know each other and discussing the parameters and possibilities of the project. • Co-researcher agreeing to join the study and both parties agreeing roles and responsibilities, as well as expectations for meetings.
	Stage 4: Negotiating Action *June 2019 – November 2020*	• Discussing our practice relating to meetings between parents and professionals and hopes for the research: Identifying issues in practice and areas for further exploration. Supported by researcher sharing emerging findings from literature to support discussion (Appendix B).

		• Developing shared aims and focus for action. Agreed to conduct an inquiry into current practices by carrying out a case study of one meeting - planning to explore role identity within meetings; how individuals understand their role identity and how this is constructed during the meeting. Findings from case study to be used as a tool to support reflection and inform practice. • Gaining second stage ethical approval from Newcastle University.
Doing	**Stage 5: Organising the case study** *November 2019- January 2020*	• Identifying naturally occurring meetings suitable for the inquiry between at least one parent and two professionals. • Recruiting participants by sharing project information and gaining informed consent (Appendix D) for participants to be interviewed and the meeting to be recorded.
	Stage 6: Collecting data *January 2020*	• Video recording the meeting • Following interview schedule (Appendix E), individual interviews carried out by researcher with the four meeting participants (parent; SENDCo; Educational Psychologist; External Specialist Teacher).
	Stage 7: Analysis *January 2020 – March 2020*	• Researcher transcribing recordings. • Researcher analysing case study data using an analytical framework to interpret key findings from interviews and meeting.

		• Preparation for sharing findings with co-researcher to discuss together - researcher making decisions regarding key findings to feedback to co-researcher and identifying clips from video recording to act as catalyst for conversation (Appendix L)
Reviewing	**Stage 8: Shared Review** *March 2020*	• Meeting between researcher and co-researcher via video-conferencing. • Sharing findings using video clips to support dialogue. Attempting to present findings as possibilities rather than fixed truths. Drawing on interview data to provide contextual information and aid our understandings. • Identifying implications for practice. • Reflecting on the research process.
Acting	**Stage 9: Next Steps** *March 2020 - Ongoing*	• Writing up the project. To be done: • Feeding back project to case study participants. • Implementing changes to practice. • Sharing learnings from the project with MAT (and wider education community).

3.2.4. Reporting the study

The knowledge produced through AR is embedded in the process and vice versa (Herr & Anderson, 2014; McEwan & Reed, 2017); as such, creativity is encouraged in AR report writing (Fisher & Phelps, 2006). This report discusses the research in its chronological phases, rather than traditional report sections. Action, literature, findings and reflections are embedded throughout the discussion, to illustrate how action and knowledge developed through the process (Wolcott, 2002). This reflects the process of abduction, whereby knowledge is generated through inference using multiple sources (Brinkmann, 2014). The discussions are not final statements regarding this study or the individuals involved, but one report which aims to promote dialogue around the topic of parent-professional relationships and collaborative processes (Frank, 2005).

3.3. Phase 1: Preparing

This section discusses my actions, as primary researcher, that shaped the study to offer transparency into the research process.

3.3.1. Deciding an overarching focus

It was necessary to determine an over-arching focus for the CAR project and seek approval prior to any fieldwork in line with my university requirements. I needed to design a project to explore collaboration in parent-professional meetings that could be meaningful and interesting to potential co-researchers (Kemmis et al., 2013). Meeting facilitation had been interpreted as a key influence on parents' experiences of meetings with multiple professionals in an earlier systematic literature review [SLR] (MacLeod et al., 2017; Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Rossetti et al., 2018; White & Rae, 2016; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). Facilitators can encourage more equal contributions between parents and professionals during meetings and ensure that individuals' voices are heard (Beck & DeSutter, 2019; Doronkin, Martin, Greene, Choiseul-Praslin, & Autry-Schreffler, 2019; Jensen-McNiff, 2012; C. Q. Mason & Goldman, 2017; Mueller & Vick, 2018, 2019; Pomerantz & Denvir, 2007). Beck and DeSutter (2019) suggest that training in meeting facilitation should be a feature of professional learning. Within my placement LA, SENDCos are the primary organisers of SEND review meetings. I decided to seek a SENDCo as co-researcher, with the hope that this project would offer a professional learning

opportunity that could influence practice for a wider population of parents. At this stage, the working research question was:

How can collaboration be facilitated between parents and professionals during meetings?

I submitted a project proposal and request for ethical approval to Newcastle University to initiate a CAR project to address this question. The proposal expressed that the details of the study would be defined with the SENDCo co-researcher. Consequently, I was asked to resubmit for second stage ethical approval when these details were known.

3.3.2. Recruiting a co-researcher

Voluntary participation is a key feature of ethical research practice (British Psychological Society, 2018). The MAT had expressed interest in developing research projects with the EPS. A colleague, with an existing relationship, enquired if the MAT chief executive would be interested in this project and project information was subsequently shared (Appendix C). I was invited to present the project and seek expressions of interest for co-researchers at the next MAT SENDCo meeting. Following this, one SENDCo made contact and we arranged to meet to discuss further.

3.4. Phase 2: Planning

This phase of the research was concerned with developing a relationship with the co-researcher and mutually planning the project.

3.4.1. Forming a relationship

Relationships are key to collaborative processes (C. Day & Townsend, 2009; Heron, 1996; Hovey & Craig, 2011; Reason, 1994). Trust, respect and communication are key features of partnerships, which function as mechanisms for collaboration (Carnwell & Carson, 2008; D'Amour et al., 2005). I sought to build trust by being transparent about my hopes and intentions, as well as taking genuine interest in the views and experiences of the co-researcher, which felt reciprocated. Our relationship formed rapidly in our first meeting and strengthened over time, as we learnt more about each other. I believe this relationship helped us to feel comfortable venturing into uncertain territories together and being open to having our ideas challenged (Roffey, 2012).

The balance of power and mutual influence are further key features of collaborative research processes (C. Day & Townsend, 2009). Power can be understood as the propensity to act (Hearn, 2012). It is enacted through interaction and therefore is in constant flux, meaning that power is not a static possession of an individual or group (Foucault, 1980). Power can therefore be understood as a relational construct (D'Amour et al., 2005). There is a close relationship between power and knowledge, where power may be based on and also produce knowledge (J. Rouse, 2007). Traditional research approaches may privilege researchers' claims to knowledge (Grant, Nelson, & Mitchell, 2008). The CAR approach aims to enhance a more balanced enaction of power as all parties are understood to have ownership over the research process and knowledge claims (Kemmis et al., 2013).

Reflexivity is a crucial aspect of CAR as researchers wrestle with issues of relationships and power (Grant et al., 2008). Reflexivity refers to an awareness of the researcher within the research, and the recognition that my own values and experiences have come to influence this project (Etherington, 2004). Reflection in action, through wondering aloud during conversations, and reflection on action, through my research journal and supervision were vehicles to engaging in reflexivity (Schön, 1987, 1995).

Contracting between the co-researcher and myself allowed us to set the study's parameters and our expectations of each other (Kemmis et al., 2013). Informed consent in this instance was conceptualised as an ongoing shared decision-making process (Whitney et al., 2004).

3.4.2. Developing a shared focus

Dialogue was fundamental to the co-construction of knowledge in this project (Feldman, 1999). Collaborative processes recognise the catalytic value of difference that parties bring to a conversation to expand and create knowledge (Van de Ven, 2007). Through an ongoing series of conversations, the co-researcher and I shared our perspectives to develop mutual understandings and possibilities for action (G. M. Russell & Kelly, 2002).

During our initial conversation, I learnt that relationships with parents was an area of significance within the co-researcher's practice. Being the headteacher of a new school, she reported trying to build connections with parents, through various

initiatives. Additionally, a recent dispute concerning a local school, had re-emphasised for her the importance of developing trusting relationships with parents in the community. Despite the co-researcher's intentions, she reported that she was struggling to connect with some parents. She expressed criticality toward the term 'hard to reach parents' and felt she needed to adapt her own practices to better suit their needs.

We shared our respective aims for the project, which are outlined in Table 3.3. It seemed that the co-researcher desired a better understanding of the views of her schools' community of parents regarding professionals and general school practices. She felt that this knowledge could support her in facilitating collaboration between parents and professionals.

Table 3.3: Respective aims for the research

My aims	**Co-researcher's aims**
• To explore practice within SEND review meetings between parents and professionals in the UK. • To promote changes in practice that promote parental agency and team involvement in meetings. • To critically reflect on espoused collaborative processes.	• To better understand parents' feelings and perceptions toward school, professionals and education. • To be able to identify best practice in meetings between parents and professionals.

These aims emphasise the development of understandings with hopes of influencing future practice, which can be described as a form of inquiry (Reason, 1994). The approach of inquiry as action contrasts with AR approaches that might involve the implementation of an intervention (Chandler & Torbert, 2003). The distinction between intervention and inquiry is arguably blurred, as all actions have the potential to influence change (Hosking, 2008). We hoped that an inquiry could provide us with

insights that would stimulate changes in our practices. The rationale for this was to understand what is currently occurring between parents and professionals in this context, before identifying any planned actions.

At our next meeting, I shared emerging themes from my ongoing SLR that explored the experiences of parents of working with multiple professionals during SEND meetings (Appendix B). I discussed my current understanding of the themes, and the co-researcher shared what resonated for her in her practice. Thus, the themes acted as a tool within the study to stimulate dialogue. This discussion was fruitful, and as a result three aims for further inquiry were identified as presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Areas for inquiry

Aim	**Rationale**
To explore parents' perceptions of their own role and the role of professionals.	The theme of parental role identity within the SLR was concerned with how parents understand their parental role and its associated responsibilities. This, in addition to how they understand the roles of professionals, can influence parental behaviour in interactions. The co-researcher felt that she could benefit from knowing more about how parents in her school community viewed education and the role of professionals in their child's life.
To explore how professionals use language to deliver difficult messages when talking with parents.	Within the SLR, professionals' use of language within meetings was found to be a key influence on parental experiences, particularly the way in which children's difficulties were discussed. We reflected on the way language might be used in professional practice to translate messages in attempts to be sensitive to parents. For example, by referring to a child as a 'character' when eluding to challenging behaviours in the classroom during a meeting. The co-researcher felt this could be an interesting tension to explore further.
To gather parental views regarding school's	The SLR findings indicated communication practices in the school could impact on parent-school relationships, which in turn could influence the experience of parents within

communication practices.	meetings. The co-researcher wondered how parents viewed the school's current communication practices.

We initially envisaged a project that allowed these three areas to be explored. However, when reflecting afterwards, I grew concerned about the brevity of the inquiry, particularly when considering the time constraints of the project. I explored these concerns through supervision and returned to the co-researcher to discuss further. We revisited our mutual aims and overarching focus for the project, that centred on the facilitation of collaboration during meetings. We agreed that the third area of inquiry shifted away from the practice of meetings towards wider school practices and eliminated this option.

I suggested that an in depth exploration of one meeting between parents and multiple professionals could allow us to explore the parents' perspective of their own role and professionals, whilst also providing opportunity to explore language use within the meeting. This suggestion was largely driven by my desire to ground the inquiry in ordinary practices and explore the everydayness of parent-professional working (Gelech et al., 2017). The co-researcher had expressed preference for surveying parents for the inquiry, with possibilities for follow up focus groups, which would allow us to gather data from more parents. This exemplifies how our own roles shaped our hopes for the research design, as we each bought differing motivations to the research process. I had motivations as a doctoral student to explore practices in depth, whereas it would be useful for the co-researcher, as headteacher, to gather wider parental views in her setting. After discussion of the possibilities of each approach, the co-researcher expressed that she was happy to use the inquiry as opportunity to try something different to what she might have tried on her own. This process of negotiation stimulated my own reflection regarding shared ownership of the CAR process, which is discussed further in section 2.4.1.

3.4.3. Outlining our case study

It was agreed that an in-depth exploration of one meeting would form our inquiry. The inquiry method can be described as a case study, whereby the meeting acts as the case under investigation. Case study research can provide rich understandings of phenomena in real-world contexts (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). Case

study research has been critiqued for a lack of methodological transparency, which may have contributed to case study becoming an ill-defined term in research (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014; Tight, 2010). In this project, the case study of one meeting sat within the wider CAR methodology, where its findings were expected to act as a catalyst for reflection, which could in turn inform changes to practice.

The co-researcher wanted to better understand how parents in her school community understood their role and the role of professionals in their child's education. Role identities are the meanings that individuals apply to the self within a social role (Serpe, Stryker, & Powell, 2020; Stryker & Burke, 2000). The way in which individuals perceive their role identity may influence how they interpret themselves and behave in group situations (Chreim, Williams, & Hinings, 2007; Touati, Rodríguez, Paquette, Maillet, & Denis, 2019). Role identity can be understood as a socially constructed and processual concept, meaning it is likely that an individual will have multiple role identities, given the multi-faceted nature of ourselves in the social world (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Pratt, 2012). Thus, role identity is not fixed and should be considered within context. The case study would allow us to explore this concept in one parent-professional meeting. Generalisability from single case studies is limited (Willig, 2013); however, the aim of our case study was to provide a rich description to encourage reflection, rather than uncover a fixed truth (Stake, 1995).

At this stage I needed to submit a further ethical approval request, which required me to consult role identity literature to inform the proposal. There is a wealth of existing literature surrounding professional role identity, particularly when working in multi-professional contexts (Brooks & Thistlethwaite, 2012; Daniels et al., 2007; Edwards et al., 2009; Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Hellawell, 2018b). Edwards (2005) suggests that professionals need to be able to understand their own role and the role of others in collaborative contexts, referring to this concept as relational agency. This is congruent with Morrow and Malin's (2004) term, relational power, which describes the relational skills and knowledge needed by parents to be able to exert influence in collaborative processes with professionals. Based on my developing understandings of role identity and collaboration, I suggested that it could be useful for us to explore all participants' perceptions of their own role and the roles of others within the meeting.

The co-researcher was also interested in reflecting on ways in which professionals might use language in their interactions with parents and the implications for transparency in parent-professional relationships. We wondered how professionals' use of terminology, abbreviations and commonly understood phrases might position parents within the interaction if they do not know the intended meaning. Positioning theory is concerned with how discourse might locate individuals within conversation (Harré & Moghaddam, 2014; Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009). Role identities are arguably formed through interactions and gain significance in context from the way in which speakers use discourse to define and enact them (Bozatzis & Dragonas, 2014; Kelly, 1963; McInnes & Corlett, 2012). We therefore chose to adopt a discursive lens to the case study, by exploring how meeting participants' roles were constructed and enacted through language and how this might position individuals.

We developed research questions to provide us with a clear focus and purpose for the case-study (Yin, 2014). Table 3.5 presents the research questions and data collection methods.

Table 3.5: Case study research questions

Research question	**Data collection**
How are roles enacted and constructed within a parent-professional meeting? What is the impact of this?	Video recording of meeting
How do participants of a parent-professional meeting understand their role and the roles of others?	Interviews with participants

The criteria for the case study was a naturally occurring review meeting between parents and two or more professionals. This can be understood as an instrumental case study, as it hoped to capture a general occurrence of parent-professional meetings (Stake, 1995). Rather than test or develop theory (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014), the rich description generated from one meeting was intended to encourage reflection and influence future practice, within the CAR methodology.

3.5. Phase 3: Doing

This section describes the inquiry through case study process.

3.5.1. Identifying a meeting and collecting data

We expected a meeting taking place in the co-researcher's setting to form the basis of the case study. However, due to timescale demands and limited opportunities in her setting, we were compelled to approach SENDCos within the MAT community for access to additional meetings. The SENDCo of the partner secondary school identified an appropriate potential meeting in her setting in January 2020. Consequently, the case study was no longer based in the co-researcher's school; however, we hoped that the process would still provide fruitful insight for discussion.

The secondary SENDCo shared the study details with the meeting attendees and asked if they were happy for the researcher to contact them. When they provided consent for their details to be shared, I made contact to share information about the study and, if they were still interested, to arrange the collection of informed consent. The information and consent forms (Appendix D) were shared with participants and completed prior to the meeting.

The case was a pre-statutory SEND review meeting. The purpose of the meeting was for key parties to determine whether to request a statutory assessment of need for a young person in year eight. The participants of the meeting were: a father; a SENDCo; an educational psychologist (EP) and an external advisory specialist teacher (ST). The young person did not attend the meeting. The meeting lasted for approximately 45 minutes and culminated in the parent signing an agreement for the SENDCo to submit paperwork to the LA requesting an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) assessment.

The meeting was video recorded to capture the verbal and visual content of the meeting. I interviewed the participants in the two weeks following. The co-researcher and I developed a semi-structured interview schedule which was used for all participants (Appendix E). Questions were asked explicitly about participants' roles within the meeting and the young person's education, and their understanding of other participants' roles. Broader questions around the meeting experience and views of collaboration were also asked to prompt discussion and provide contextual information. The semi-structured interview approach was intended to create space

for dialogue and exploration of the participants' perspectives (G. M. Russell & Kelly, 2002). No additional information about the meeting participants was requested prior to meeting them; I hoped that this would allow participants to only share information about themselves that they felt was relevant to their experience.

3.5.2. Interpreting the data

The decision was made in the planning phase that I, as outsider researcher, would carry out the data analysis of the meeting recording and participants' interviews. This was in recognition of the co-researcher's workload, and it was intended that I would bring back my findings for further discussion.

The project's purpose and research questions should inform data analysis (Willig, 2012). Although the case study had the potential to offer rich data, which could form the basis of an empirical report alone, it was important that the findings fed into practice as part of the CAR process. It was also important that the data analysis did not attempt to offer a picture of truth in terms of people's views and the interactional mechanisms in a meeting, but rather it was understood as one way of interpreting the data (Bryman, 2016). These interpretations would function as catalysts for discussion in the review phase.

The data analysis approach used an analytical framework, rather than following a prescriptive analytical procedure (Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In hopes for transparency, Table 3.6 documents the key theoretical approaches that informed the analysis. Based on my understanding of these approaches, I judged them to be complimentary and in line with the research questions (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Table 3.6: Approaches informing the analytical framework

Theoretical approach to data-analysis	**Description**	**Relevance to the research**
Role identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000)	The concept of role identity defines the self in action and includes the goals, values, beliefs and norms of interaction that tend to be associated with a role (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001).	To explore participants' views of their own role, and how they viewed the roles of others in the interaction.
Positioning theory (Harré & Moghaddam, 2014)	Positioning is concerned with situation specific interactions and how individuals may use discourse to locate themselves and others within their speech (Harré et al., 2009).	To explore how discourses adopted by individuals positioned themselves and others in an interaction.
Discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987)	Discourse analysis is interested in the constructive effects of language (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).	To explore the effects of language and actions within the meeting.

I transcribed the video data to capture the discussion content. The transcription and recording were reviewed simultaneously to revisit how utterances were delivered and their impact. I segmented the video into sections that were manageable for analysis, shown in Appendix F. For each episode, I examined the speech acts of participants and drew on the analytical framework to interpret the impact of these. An annotated example is presented in Appendix G.

I transcribed the individual interview data, which was read and re-read with references to explicit and implicit role identities being highlighted. An example of this is presented in Appendix H. These initial codes were revisited and themes that combined codes were generated and reviewed. This approach is similar to Cohen's

(2008) analysis of teacher's talking about their professional identities. A visual representation of key themes from the individual interviews is available in Appendix I. The rich contextual information provided by participants was considered important to developing my understandings. The analytical framework risked privileging theory over the emergent points of interest within the data. I captured these points by recording them on a mind-map as shown in Appendix J.

Throughout the analysis, I was continually seeking ways to make sense of the complex patterns and interactions within the video and interview data. There were elements of the data which were consistent with third generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001). This theory provides a model for a collective work activity that is undertaken by people (subjects) who are motivated by a purpose (object) to achieve an outcome. The meeting could be understood as a collective work activity which brings together the activity systems of the participants. Activity theory provides a conceptual framework to understand the inter-relationships between subjects, activities and actions as well as socio-cultural contexts (Engeström, 2001). It has been applied to explore complexity within multi-professional working (Daniels, 2016; Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Greenhouse, 2013). As part of my analysis, I attempted to map data onto an activity theory framework, shown in Appendix K, recognising there were gaps as the theory had not been used to guide data collection.

3.5.3. Preparing for review

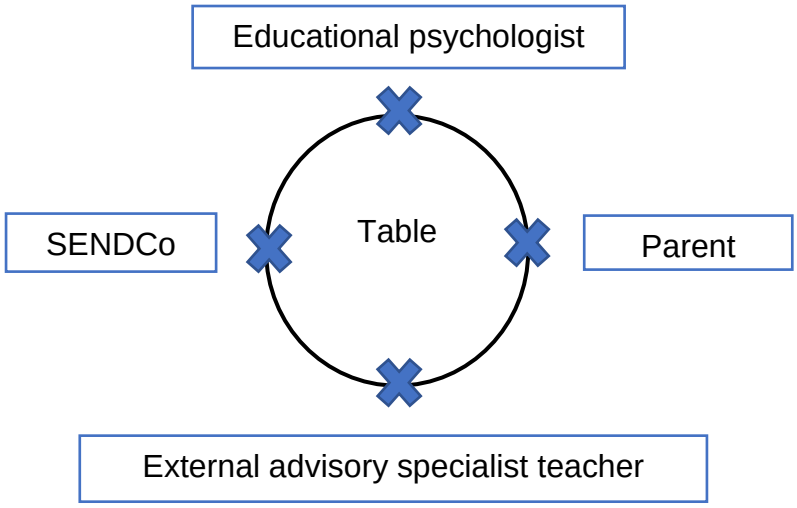
The case study was intended to facilitate an inquiry that would support reflection to inform future practice. Through supervision, I explored ways in which I could share my interpretations of the data that would encourage conversation rather than promote my claims to knowledge as researcher. I chose to share the 3rd generation activity theory model (Engeström, 2001), prior to sharing findings, to illustrate the complexity of interaction within the meeting. I decided to share video-clips to present the co-researcher with examples of practice that could act as a tool to facilitate dialogic processes (Barrow & Todd, 2011). I selected key video-clips that I considered pertinent to the agreed focus for inquiry that I felt would elicit conversation. I also made notes of points of interest from the interview data analysis that could provide context to the video clips. Drawing on suggestions by Kemmis et al. (2013), I planned to ask questions that would elicit implications for practice. These aspects formed the basis of a schedule for the review (Appendix L)

3.6. Phase 4: Reviewing

The review meeting, between the co-researcher and I, took place via video conferencing due to national social distancing guidelines. I attempted to balance following the schedule with letting the conversation develop organically. Due to time constraints and the richness of our discussion, only three out of the five selected video clips were shared. The discussion allowed for the co-researcher's and my own respective knowledges to be explored, challenged and developed (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009).

The meeting video clips were an engaging way to stimulate dialogue, that avoided me relaying my understandings in a presentational format. The use of video can support professionals to reflect on practice as it occurred in the moment (Kennedy et al., 2015). Van der Riet (2008) proposes that visualisation and dialogic interaction can act as a catalyst for distanciation, which supports critical reflection. Distanciation involves the observer stepping back from an object of scrutiny, allowing space for reasoning. An example of this occurring in the review is presented in Box 3.1, where we are discussing the meeting seating arrangements which are depicted in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Seating arrangements in the meeting



We discussed the sense that there were three professionals together and the parent seemed separate. The professionals appeared more settled, for example they had removed their coats and had paperwork in front of them, whereas the parent had his coat on and hands in his pockets. In the extract, the co-researcher highlights that

she is just thinking of an idea for practice now, based off what she is seeing. This suggests that the still visual of the meeting was a powerful tool for reflection.

Box 3.1: Review extract - example of distanciation

Co-researcher: I just think again, its almost just a barrier isn't it. He won't realise that, he's just gone in and sat down, but I suppose its just the social, if you keep it [the coat] its almost like right, this is me, I'm keeping to myself, this is my barrier, when really I mean it would be a bit strange cos you wouldn't say to him, take your coat off, but uh, I mean, you may ask the question but yeah that was the first thing that struck me. Its almost like I'm not stopping, I'll hear what you've got to say and then I'll go.

Researcher: I'm-I'm, yeah I'm a visitor here I'm popping in and, yeah

Co-researcher: yeah

Researcher: definitely gives you that sense doesn't it

Co-researcher: yeah, just when just when you look at it like that, yeah

Researcher: you could probably tell immediately who the parent was, even if you didn't know.

Co-researcher: yeah and the other thing is well, one thing possible one of the other ways you can break down the barriers is that (SENDCo's name) whose the SENCo of the school, probably what you could do, and this is something for me as well, she could be seated with the father because she's-she's actually working with him so she knows him, she knows the child, maybe she should be with him,

Researcher: ok

Co-researcher: to make him feel comfortable. Yet the other two ladies who are the externals, you could seat them so its almost like-

Reseacher: right

Co-researcher: -an us and them, in a nice way. So that the school is actually working with dad that you know they're together as opposed to all the professionals are together and poor dads on his own.

Exploring the participants' multiple perspectives encouraged us to consider how individuals might view events differently, recognising that each participant would have their own thoughts and feelings. The following extract, in Box 3.2, shows us

discussing a clip where the father has asked if the professionals think his daughter can continue in her current secondary school, or if she should attend a specialist learning provision. The SENDCo takes in a deep breath, pausing before answering the question and the EP is the professional who responds.

Box 3.2: Review extract - multiple perspectives

Co-researcher: um I completely get it because, you see if from both sides, its really interesting watching this, um I think what you see is 'ooh yeah she's [the young person] you know she's got some real learning issues' and you know and they're stru- not their struggling with it but what are we gonna do.. not what are we gonna do with the girl but-

Researcher: yeah

Co-researcher: they're really thinking you know, the deep breath you know, I would read that in a really negative way

Researcher: if you were the parent?

Co-researcher: yeah if that was my child, I'd think ooh is it that bad

Researcher: yeah, I wondered I was trying to think about the position (SENDCO) found herself in when she did that breath and I wondered if-

Co-researcher: like she didn't know the answer

Researcher: yeah or she or she doesn't know how to say what her answer is

Co-researcher: which is where (EP's name) jumps in for her then doesn't she

Researcher: yeah

Co-researcher: which I think (SENDCO's name) is extremely grateful of (laughter)

Researcher: (laughter) (EP's name) almost jumps in to uh a rescuer role

Co-researcher: yeah-yeah totally

Researcher: which perhaps might show us some of their relationship I mean I think I asked (SENDCO's name) how many of those meetings she had in her role as SENDCo as she said maybe about 7 or so and I wonder this professional group if they have a bit of a rhythm every time to kind of how they do things in these meetings

Co-researcher: mm

Researcher: they the dad in his interview he spoke about, I asked him did you feel like you were part of the team and he quite explicitly said, no they're a team not me.

Co-researcher: oh really, that's interesting

Researcher: yeah it was it was interesting that he said he said um he spoke that he felt able to talk at the meeting, he felt listened to but he very much saw his role as hearing what they had to say

Co-researcher: yeah

Researcher: and that they were the team and he got to come and sit in the meeting, but that he was a visitor to it. He didn't feel that he was part of the team. But he wasn't unhappy with it.

Co-researcher: yeah you can see that though can't you?

This extract demonstrates how exploring the same event from different perspectives served as a tool for reflection. The interview data allowed us to involve the perspectives of the participants in our conversations. There were instances where the reported perspectives of the participants were different to how we as observers viewed the situation. Notably, the parent did not express dissatisfaction with the dynamics of the group. The parent had worked with these professionals before, as he had an older daughter who had been through the SEND statutory assessment process a year earlier. He did not view himself as part of a team with the professionals, who worked together, but trusted that they were doing the best for his child. The parent stated that they listened to him and was happy with the relationship. This led me to question the assumptions I bought to the research; in that I had assumed that the parent feeling like an active team member was the ideal.

My use of action-oriented questions throughout the dialogue seemed to help ground the reflective discussion into actions for practice (Kemmis et al., 2013). Box 3.3 shows an example of this.

Box 3.3: Review extract - developing plans for action

Researcher: just in terms of well from what we've looked at, what do you think might be useful for you to take forward?

Co-researcher: so I think obviously environment is key

Researcher: yeah

Co-researcher: and I think obviously knowledge of the parents, because I think its important that they are totally in control and its not just that done to process, so I think I would definitely think about how I would be setting up that meeting, and it may even be that you have a chat with the parent before the actual formal meeting well 'formal', to say ok you know what, what is it that you-you're almost giving them a mini parents evening aren't you, let's talk about what you want, what are your hopes and dreams, what do you want? So you've almost got that background information on them, if you haven't already before, so when you go into the meeting-so that when you're talking you can almost do a bit of a tag team can't you? So you can support them in the saying I know that you want x y z for your child and then you kind of get the professionals can jump in which makes them feel more comfortable and confident I think, so they're not going on the, you know, on the back foot because you've almost like pre-tutoring isn't it

Researcher: yeah ok yeah like you're also priming for-

Co-researcher: yeah so that they feel confident that they're not just walking in right 'this is what we're doing', it allows them to perhaps almost reflect and therefore think about what they do want. Sometimes you put people on the spot in the meetings

Researcher: yeah

Co-researcher: and they don't really know so you end up trying to tell them what they should be knowing when actually you might be given you know if you just had a much more of an informal meeting you can give them some guidance through that as well

Researcher: yeah and I like actually because and rather than it being almost like we are producing a letter or something, you're just saying it can actually be a conversation. How would you see that happening in your practice? How would you fit that into what is already a very busy practice?

Co-researcher: yeah you mean the pre-tutoring almost

Researcher: yeah like the priming to that? What, how realistically if we're saying that could happen?

Co-researcher: well I mean it could take the form of a telephone call couldn't it, or generally-I mean I do think face to face is always better, so you know I think if you can actually see the parents as when they come to collect or pick up you can just have that conversation with them and say look have a little think about it, this is what this is, what we're going to be talking about, you know if there are any questions or anything that you want to think about you could phone me up and talk about it prior to that too, I mean I know that's not so structured but um or whether it is that just take much more of an informal meeting and you know your sitting in comfy chairs and you're just talking about the child and what they want, something much more relaxed

Researcher: yeah

Co-researcher: in that kind of like well what we said earlier just having a bit of a chat, actually and maybe just yeah cause there's a lot to be said for that, but if you think about parents' evening you know? You'd really ideally give each parent half an hour but you know they get in five minutes, some of the things you learn in that 5 minutes are key aren't they. But equally there's lots that you're missing

Researcher: why does it happen in that way? Why is there only 5 minutes?

Co-researcher: yeah well to be fair people do do it in a number of different ways so people do spread it over the course of different nights and really I suppose its always been for teacher wellbeing because teachers do have to stay for meetings and then its always a very long one for parents so, but I think actually for myself going forward, I will think about how we do that a bit differently so that actually all parents get a different, get time, you know even if that's staggered over the course of a term, you know you're going to come in on this night, you're going to come in on this night, so you've almost got that chance to really get to know to them

Seven actionable outcomes were developed through the conversation, as shown in Table 3.7. Whitehead and McNiff (2006) suggests that action research can highlight aspects of practice that work and why; this was reflected in numerous existing practices that emerged during our conversation. At the end of the review, I sought

the co-researcher's views on the CAR process and we reflected together on the project.

Table 3.7: Outcomes from review

Outcome	**Rationale**	**Related theme in conversation**
Organising seating within meeting so that the professionals with the closest relationship to the parent is seated by them	It is likely that the SENDCo knows the parent best and could be sat by the parent to encourage a sense of togetherness and to be available to support him to feel comfortable. Acknowledged the meeting environment was not the most comfortable.	Developing a sense of team
Utilise the person-centred meeting structure within more meetings in the setting	When the co-researcher told the specialist teacher about the research, the specialist teacher facilitated a person-centred meeting in the setting. The co-researcher had seen value in this structure as a way of actively involving parents in the meeting and wanted to embed it in her practice.	
Having a pre-meeting with parents to explore their views as well as explaining the upcoming multi-professional meeting's purpose and structure.	This provides the parent with space to consider what is important to them and prepare their thoughts prior to the meeting. The parent can be prepared for the meeting purpose and expectations so that they can more fully take part.	
Consider starting meetings with general	As a way of humanising the individuals outside of their roles to support connection.	Fostering genuine connection

check ins and problem free talk.		(outside of roles)
Ask parents prior to the meeting what they would like to discuss and explore their views, hopes and worries.	As a way of understanding what is important to the parent so that the facilitator is aware of this.	Understanding parents' perspective
Changing the format of parents' evening to longer slots spread over a period of time.	Creating space for more parent-teacher conversations to develop a greater understanding of the parents' perspectives and values.	
Factor in time at the end of a meeting to reflect on the meeting itself (maybe separately with parents and professionals?).	Building in reflection as part of practice and evaluating practices in the moment.	Developing professional skills
Possibly ask someone to be a critical friend / use video for reflection.	To continue professional development through more structured reflection.	

3.7. Phase 5: Acting

It is hoped that the outcomes identified will be implemented; additionally, I hope that the essence of this inquiry will be sustained in both of our practices through ongoing critical reflection (Duenkel & Pratt, 2013). However, schools are currently facing unprecedented challenges that may make it difficult for the co-researcher to dedicate time to embedding these. Although my involvement as researcher has ended, we have plans for a conversation in the new school year regarding further dissemination. I am also in the process of planning how to share the research with the participants of the case study. Zuber-Skerritt (2015) suggests the term provisional resting place is appropriate for AR, as it is hoped that reflection and planned action continues in practice. As such, the process is at its provisional resting place for the purpose of this paper submission.

3.8. Learnings and Insights

Action research aims to produce change and generate knowledge through its process (Reason & Bradbury, 2008); this project has resulted in changes in the co-researcher's and my own practice, whilst developing our understandings of parent-professional collaboration. In this section, I summarise key learnings from the CAR project and discuss their implications for research and practice.

3.8.1. Facilitating parent-professional collaboration during meetings

This study had a transformative aim to promote changes in practice that encourage parent-professional collaboration during meetings. Through inquiry, using a case-study approach, we were able to explore a meeting in depth to gain insights into participants' roles and perspectives, as well as how individuals' roles are constructed within meetings. In this sense, the case study method can be understood as a metaphorical magnifying glass, that allowed us to develop a rich picture of the complex interacting factors within one meeting. Hood (2014) suggests that mapping the complexity of joint working is more useful in hindsight to support reflection, than in foresight to plan practice. This may be disconcerting for practitioners (and parents) who navigate these complex situations regularly. The current study has attempted to grapple with the complexity of dynamics within parent-professional meetings in a way that directly informs practice through CAR methodology. This is a shift from research that reports actions and experiences, to using research within a process of professional learning.

CAR encompasses elements similar to that of effective adult learning (Knowles, 1984; Trivette, Dunst, Hamby, & O'Herin, 2009), such as active participation and reflection. The inquiry within the CAR approach offered opportunity for reflection through shared dialogue. In the reviewing phase, context specific outcomes that could support the facilitation of collaboration between parents and professionals were developed through such dialogue. These outcomes were concerned with creating a sense of team; fostering genuine connection; understanding parents' perspectives and developing professional skills. Given the multitude of factors that interact to make each meeting unique, it is arguable that generalised advice for facilitating collaboration between parents and professionals would be limited in its usefulness to practitioners. By actively engaging in a collaborative learning process, the co-researcher and I have been able to reflect on our practice and assumptions

regarding parent-professional collaboration which will help us to navigate future meetings and collaborations (Argyris, 1994).

Although SEND review meetings are just one element of parent-professional working, they can offer a useful site for researching interactions between parents and multiple professionals. Herr and Anderson (2014) suggest that through AR approaches, one might come to have a deeper understanding of the questions they ask. Throughout the course of the project, I have developed a greater appreciation for the fluid boundaries of meetings and their context. I now contend that the interactions within meetings are reflective of the wider relationships between the parent and the professionals involved. This is demonstrated in the discussions and outcomes from the review phase, which related to the practice of meetings specifically and parent-professional relationships in the setting more generally. In this sense, meetings can be described as metaphorical mirrors for reflecting on parent-professional collaboration.

The metaphor of meetings as mirrors to explore parent-professional collaboration has useful implications for professional learning and research. Meetings can provide a starting point for professionals to examine their practice to develop their relational skills for working with parents. The use of video can support professionals to reflect and consider their skills within the micro-moments of interaction (Kennedy et al., 2015). Future research in this area might benefit from adopting a CAR process with a mixed group of professionals to explore their practices in relation to parent-professional collaboration, whilst benefitting from group learning opportunities. This would require mechanisms being in place to support such forms of collaborative learning at an organisational level.

3.8.2. One meeting: many perspectives

At the project's onset, there was recognition that parents and professionals enter partnerships from different positions within a child's life (Gascoigne, 1995; Landeros, 2011; Rogers, 2011). Our case study highlighted the different perspectives that individuals bring to collaborative processes by focusing on the concept of role identity amongst participants within a SEND review meeting. The review format provided space to consider these varied perspectives. Our discussion emphasised the importance of avoiding assumptions about others and of seeking people's views

to better understand their perspective. This led to planned actions that would create space for more communication, such as discussing hopes with parents before meetings and adaptions to parents' evenings.

The CAR process created space for dialogue and reflection between the co-researcher and me. It would be beneficial to consider how shared dialogue can be embedded into parent-professional teams, as this encourages individuals to share their perspectives and supports the co-construction of knowledge (Linell, 2007; Marková, 2003) . Meetings which draw on a variety of ways to share views could be useful, such as person-centred planning meetings (Alexander & Sked, 2010; Tabassum, 2013). Additionally, professionals may benefit from examining discursive strategies that can elicit the perspectives of others in conversation (Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

It is important for professionals to recognise the importance of trust when seeking parents' thoughts, experiences and hopes (Crozier & Davies, 2007; Dunsmuir, Cole, & Wolfe, 2014; Valle, 2018; Woods, Morrison, & Palincsar, 2018). Trust is arguably developed in relationships over time (Angell, Stoner, & Shelden, 2009), which may pose challenges to professionals who have infrequent contact with parents, such as EPs. Thus, increased opportunities for communication and relationship building could be useful to parent-professional teams. Due to time limitations, professionals may need to consider creative ways to build trust with parents, individually and more widely; for example, by publicly sharing information about their roles, ways of working and how they might support children.

The parent in our case study trusted that the professionals were acting in the best interests of his child. He did not perceive himself to be part of a team with them and viewed them as having more expertise regarding his daughter's education. This parent was happy with the relationship and did not desire a more active role in the team. This highlights an interesting dilemma between promoting collaboration and parent participation as socially just processes, whilst also respecting the parents' wishes and their preferred ways of working with professionals. There is a risk of narratives forming around parents who do not engage in processes in the ways deemed acceptable by professionals (for example 'passive', 'hard to reach' or 'pushy' parents) (S. Day, 2013; Gelech et al., 2017; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray,

2000; L. Todd, 2007). The development of localised knowledge that recognises the unique contexts, strengths and wishes of parents, could support professionals in adapting practices to be responsive to the communities they seek to serve (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Furthermore, individual professionals, services and organisations can centre ethicality in their work by regularly engaging critically with assumptions that inform their practices and explore how their activities align with their espoused values (British Psychological Society, 2018; Schein, 2017). This study has highlighted how the exploration of everyday practices through CAR methodology could support these reflective endeavours.

3.8.3. Dis/agreement in collaboration

All participants within the case study described the meeting positively and cited being listened to as a key reason for this. The participants also expressed that there was agreement regarding what was best for the young person, which created a positive atmosphere as there was little need for challenge within the group. Meetings for children identified with SEND where there are differences of opinion and a lack of shared decision making may be more challenging to facilitate (Mueller & Vick, 2018).

The participants seemed to define the extent to which the meeting was collaborative with regard to there being consensus within the group. I would suggest that difference should be recognised as a valuable asset to collaboration as it can act as a catalyst to expanding understandings and developing creative directions (Van de Ven, 2007). Within SEND processes, decisions need to be made that impact on children's education and future. Professional knowledge may be held in higher esteem than the knowledge of parents in such decision making (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000). It could be that the parent's views within the case study meeting were deemed compatible with the professionals' opinions regarding what was best for the young person.

Collaboration should be a reciprocal process, meaning that professionals should be open to learning and adapting their opinions (E. Rouse & O'Brien, 2017). This might pose a challenge to professional expertise (Hellawell, 2018a). Additionally, professionals may need to consider additional factors such as capacity and fair distribution of public resources as part of their role (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2012). This leads me to question whether the UK SEND system is truly conducive to

collaborative working. If it is not, the discourses of collaboration and participation within current policy may be misleading for parents who may expect to have more influence in decision making than is feasible for LAs to accommodate. Future research may benefit from exploring practices where there are both agreements and disagreements between parents and professionals during meetings and wider SEND processes; such research could inform a review of policy from a range of perspectives.

3.8.4. Reflections on the project

The current project existed within constraints that limited its scope and possibilities for action. It would have been insightful to engage in further CAR cycles with the co-researcher to implement the outcomes identified in our review and explore their effects. Future cycles could have explored case studies that focused on meeting examples from within the co-researcher's setting or from my own practice, which would have bought a more personal element to our reflections and professional learning.

Herr and Anderson (2014) suggest that it is common for researchers to express doubt over the participative purity of their collaborative research. There were inevitably opportunities within the project where further attempts could have been made to share tasks with the co-researcher or to facilitate a more active role in the research process for the case study participants. However, pragmatic decisions had to be made to ensure the process was manageable for the co-researcher and myself. Collaboration can be understood as a developmental process, that can always be worked towards, rather than an entity to be achieved through specific procedures (Shepherd et al., 2017). This report has attempted to provide transparency into the decision-making processes, to portray the messiness of such collaboration in action.

3.9. Conclusions

This paper has presented an authentic account of a CAR project that explored collaboration between parents and multiple professionals during meetings for children identified with SEND. The project aimed to contribute to research regarding the practice of parent-professional collaboration during SEND review meetings in the UK context, whilst also supporting positive changes in practice. The case study

allowed us to explore one meeting in depth, with a particular focus on the concept of role identities amongst participants, whilst the over-arching CAR methodology supported the development of several outcomes for the future practices of the co-researcher and myself.

The CAR methodology has served as a useful tool for reflection for the co-researcher and I. It has supported us to critically engage with practices and assumptions that can be taken for-granted in everyday working by providing space for dialogue and shared learning. The study has highlighted how research into meetings might act as a mirror to reflect parent-professional relationships more widely. It has also emphasised the importance of recognising individuals' perspectives in collaboration. The dual perspective of the co-researcher's local knowledge and expertise as headteacher, in combination with my psychological and research knowledge as a trainee EP, seemed to support the development of new, shared understandings (Van der Riet, 2008).

EPs seek to make positive differences to children's lives through the application of psychology. This project demonstrates an example of applied psychological practice in collaboration with an educator practitioner. Action research offers a model to work with others to encourage reflection and professional development (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Similar processes could be achieved through supervision with other professional groups or services, whereby EPs can offer their psychological skills and knowledge to the process.

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Appendices

Appendix A Initial concepts within one paper

Table A.1: Example of initial concepts within Zeitlin and Curcic's (2014) paper

What are parents' experiences of working with multiple professionals during meetings?	
Initial Theme	**Examples**
Feeling attacked/ judged by professionals	One mother stated feeling *'like a little gazelle that was being shot at one-by-one by each of the twelve staff members at the meeting'.* Her hunting analogy reveals Nora feeling small and powerless. Anna saw IEP meeting as an event that left her feeling 'beat up' and incompetent as a parent: "*I just sat at these meetings until my dreaded hour was up. There were times when I felt like I was being beat up at these meetings. I made sure my husband came so that I didn't have to be the only one beat up, the only one to made to feel as if I were not doing my part as a parent…"*
Number of professionals	He was overwhelmed by the power dominance of "*… ten to twelve professionals sitting on the opposite side of the table who would go on to tell us a host of negative things about our young son*."
Distance between professionals and parents	Parents frequently shared feelings of being kept at a distance with constructed and reinforced boundaries between themselves and the school
Professional power to make decisions	*"IEP meetings remind me of a doctor's appointment where you are waiting alone in the doctor's office for the doctor to give you a terminal diagnosis and as much as I told myself, 'It really doesn't matter what you say about my son', I knew they could inflict a life sentence on my son and our family."*
Hearing and taking on board parents views	They do not want to feel like they are '*sitting in the backseat as a passenger; not a part of the team – interfering with someone's agenda'*, *"I was really disappointed at the last meeting I attended. I felt talked over and not talked to. I was not included in on any of the assessment decisions"*

Process issues	'*mechanical*', and even '*meaningless*'. [process]
Emotion	There was a sense of complexity, uncertainty, anxiety, and vulnerability that came with the IEP meetings. The comments, gestures, and inflections of school personnel at these meetings often left parents worried, frustrated, and angry.
Struggle to hear about child's difficulties	*"The hardest thing about the meeting is getting your nose rubbed in your child's shortcomings …* (*choking to hold back tears at this point)"*
Developing skills	*"My earliest memory of my role in the IEP process was just relying on the special education team to be the experts. Now I know that sometimes I have to become the professional, talking the talk, with all that jargon … Often times I advise other parents to be more assertive. I tell them to download the 'iadvocate', so that the school cannot lie to them about their rights."*
Role of parent	*"I think my role is to be my daughters' advocate, first and foremost, but also a collaborator with the team, if they allow it."*
Atmosphere of meeting	*"Most IEP meetings are not collaborative. If you have a problem solving collaboration meeting in advance, you really are planning together"* *"These meetings need to be simpler and lots more collaborative."*
Professionals attending the meeting	*"More often than not, teachers are coming in and out of the meeting …".* Juanita expressed feeling bad that she was taking teachers' time away from the students.
Feelings of mistrust toward professionals / system	*"Parents hate IEP meetings because they believe the system is meant to keep their children down, rather than to be a benefit. There is so much mistrust and feelings that school will do things to their children without any collaboration."* "*I really had no idea that the IEP meeting I attended several years ago was designed to put my daughter in a cross-categorical classroom. It wasn't until I went to the Open House in October looking for her 1st grade*

	classes only to hear from a teacher, 'Oh sorry, I don't see your daughter too much, she seems so sweet, she spends most of her day in room 101'. I felt so bamboozled, filled with regret and confusion. I begged the special education director to allow her to be in regular education, but they just told us 'No'."
Outcomes	Some parents reported feeling chronically disappointed, perceiving the meeting as a waste of time without learning what the other team members had to offer in support of their child.
Hopes	Parents desired the IEP process to be open and trusting with exploratory dialogue rather than the current process that has been frequently described as a '*ritualistic*'.
Relationships and communication	*"I don't even know all the names of the people that work with our daughter."* "*We just really want to know what's going on, but communication is poor at best."*
Parent support networks	*"It's only worse now because of all the things people write on Facebook. People are on the web spouting off about how they went into their meetings and managed to get their kids bussed to a school 100 miles away and the school district has to pay – 'Wow, look at me, I won!' There is no one getting on the websites and saying, 'I had a really great IEP meeting and these people really love my kids and are doing a great job with them and really understand their needs'."*
Fighting discourse	*"I feel like I have to be my child's advocate and fight for the services she needs. If we are not prepared for a fight and ready to get a lawyer, we know they will try to take services away from her."* *"Autism conferences that we have attended keep saying over and over again: "You have to be the advocate for your child …'. It's so ironic that we attend these conferences looking for support … and the number one message we get is 'Set it up and get ready for a fight …' We were told we needed to be super-combative since our schools have limited resources and lots of students."*

Appendix B Examples of final themes across the five papers

Table A.2: Examples of final themes across the five papers

	Rossetti et al. (2018)	Macleod, Causton, Radel and Radel (2017)	White and Rae (2016)	Mueller and Buckley (2014)	Zeitlin and Curcic (2014)
Personal Emotion		*"We want this teacher and all educators to remember that the folder file in her hand concerns our child's education. It is about a person. And that person means the world to us."*	The PCR was an emotional process.	*"I find myself so emotionally invested in this process that it is very difficult not to take things personally".*	*"The team needs to remember that these meeting are about someone's child – there is a lot of emotion on my part as a mother. Think about how we feel when you are talking about our child."*
Parental Role	*"As a parent you should be brave and tell the school what you think and what you want"*	*"…we are experts too. Not unbiased experts, admittedly but we have spent more time than anyone living with our child. typical family…"*		*"Your child doesn't have to be friends with the school district. Your job is to get the best… I'm sure that we probably ruffled*	*"I think my role is to be my daughters' advocate, first and foremost, but also a collaborator with the team, if they allow it."*

				some major feathers when we did that but we got what we needed for our son."	
Trusting and Understanding Relationships	In particular parents thought school personnel were doing only the minimum, felt they could not be trusted, and lack confidence in their professional skills.	Regular check ins, both before and after the IEP meeting would help build trust…[parents] who wrote about strong and trusting relationships with teachers explained they communicated (however briefly) daily or weekly throughout the year via text message email or written notes.	*"Its given me a HELL of a lot more confidence in the fact that they really do understand how important it is… yeah, no its given me a lot of confidence"*	*"we've been able to build some long-term relationships with the school. And I think the more of that you have, probably the better off you're going to be"*	*"I want a team that relates well with one another and plans well for my son."*

Professional Decision Making	*"For a good half an hour I was able to just have um a soliloquy just expressing my perspective on why my son should stay in [his current placement] and then there were supports from his teacher and feedbacks for me. Even though the meeting lasted for an hour and 45 minutes the last 5 minutes of the meeting the coordinator on his own made the final and sole decision saying that he represents the team and that my son must*	*"Often when we suggest they try something different or disagree with an IEP goal, service recommendation or placement for our son, the teacher's first reaction can be to take offense. […] they wonder who are we to question their judgement or compassion? Worse, they wonder if we do not trust them. But we do not want educators to think like this."*		One father, who felt that the district did listen to him, talked about the importance of including the parent voice so that *"they don't just try to ram their agenda down"*	*"I begged the special education director to allow her to be in regular education, but they just told us 'No'."*

	leave and go to another environment"				
Being Heard and Valued	*"Some of the team members say because I'm in a rush, so let me speak first,. When he or she finish, they will just leave the meeting. So when it was my turn to speak, some team members had left. How can we work as a team if some of the members are not present?"*	*"If I am an equal contributing member of the IEP team, don't make me sit outside while everyone else is in there talking before they let the parents in, don't position my seat at the table in an 'us against them' format"* (everyone facing toward the parent instead of sitting right by them in more of a circular format)	Parents felt involved and equal to professionals in the meeting.	[giving advice to educators] *"….really understanding that the parent has a voice, wants to have a voice at the table as an equal partner, not somebody to be told what to do. And, I know there are some time constraints and take takes some energy to make sure that parents come along when they haven't been privvy to all those detailed*	*"the school did not recognise me at all and I was seen as more of an obstacle in the process"*

				conversations along the way..."	
Wider Process/ System Issues	*"The general attitude is just very dismissive and just very impatient. They're not there to help me understand, but they tell me there's only one hour and the meeting will be over, and if we disagree, we could move forward to mediation. So we feel that there's a lot of disrespect or just disregard of parents' perspective and feelings, that the general attitude is that*	*"It is about building a culture of acceptance and understanding. We are looking for ways to help every student and family feel a sense of belonging, regardless of learning needs, race, religion, socioeconomic status or any other perceived difference"*		*"The system and process itself is confusing."*	*"Parents hate IEP meetings because they believe the system is meant to keep their children down, rather than to be a benefit. There is so much mistrust and feelings that school will do things to their children without any collaboration."*

	they know better, mom doesn't, and that no matter how many times mom would ask for the specific service, mom would be told that no, we disagree and she doesn't need it. There's just no moving forward. There's no meaningful projective resolution."				
Valued Outcomes	*"I would like what has been requested during the IEP meeting. They agreed to it, such as I need OT, I need physical therapy. Its not happening."*	*"We have unorthodox arrangement now… "*	*"…and made an action plan at the same time so I think that's – a massive action plan it was the whole sheet… yeah she was squeezing things in at the end."*		Some parents reported feeling chronically disappointed, perceiving the meeting as a waste of time without learning what other team members had to offer in support of their child.

Holistic Child Focus	*"They always talk about our children like positive, but they not focus on negative about our children, parent concerns about our children, what we see that our children should have and deserve and need the support service at school"*	*"Teachers sometimes have trouble looking beyond the issues. So I need to be sure that we talk about his strengths and weaknesses, his interests and extra curricular activities and my goals for the future as well as his goals for the future"*	*"We weren't just talking about his disabilities and problems he's got, his mind. We were talking about S as a person as well which sometimes can get a bit overlooked".*		
Parents' Hopes	*"My desire is a family friendly meeting. You just don't have to feel that pressure, emotional. Hope that the meeting will go as friendly as possible"*	"*if we can work back and forth in a professional manner I would love that. The IEP is not a one-time meeting, it is a year long plan it needs to be adjusted sometimes. I*	Shared understanding and agreement	When confronted with a battle, these fathers wanted a resolution and working together as a team. They also spoke about understanding the	Parents desired the IEP process to be open and trusting with exploratory dialogue rather than the current process that has been frequently described as a 'ritualistic'

		like communication throughout the year, not only when something is wrong {…] regular team meetings would make this a great plan."		district perspective and keeping that in mind during conflict over services.	
Preparation	*"I actually requested the services reports beforehand because I learned that by law by two days before the meeting they're supposed to provide that to the parents. I think two days before is still too short, but its better than nothing. Just learning about your rights I think is helpful so that you're*	Arriving at the IEP meeting without any prior discussion about what was going to occur was scary and inefficient.	Parent's and children's anxieties appeared to be exacerbated by the lack of preparation for the meeting.	*"its daunting, its overwhelming. It definitely gives me butterflies in my stomach. It is not something I look forward to."*	"*I really had no idea that the IEP meeting I attended several years ago was designed to put my daughter in a cross-categorical classroom…"*

	more prepared at the meeting"				
Skill Requirement	*"Translations are important because we need to be able to understand these evaluation and progress reports in order to actively participate in the meeting."*	*"what is common sense or standard knowledge to a teacher (especially normal procedures at a school) are not necessarily that of the family…"*	*"obviously, the teachers it comes across easier to them doesn't it writing on – writing them down and. They write neater and better than you and you think "oh""*	*"it's intimidating when you don't know the system and you don't know the vocabulary"*	*My earliest memory of my role in the IEP process was just relying on the special education team to be the experts. Now I know that sometimes I have to become the professional, talking the talk, with all that jargon … Often times I advise other parents to be more assertive. I tell them to download the 'iadvocate', so that the school cannot lie to them about their rights.*

Meeting Organisation			*"the lady who was sort of sort of taking the meeting really that she had done this before and she perhaps from experience knew what needed to be addressed first"*	Fathers also talked about the lack of structure with IEP meetings by describing a *"free flowing"* process without any *"concrete agenda".* One father also shared, *"There's really no left brain flow".*	*"I would like the meetings to be more comfortable and prefer them to be more like parent teacher conferences, more collaborative and less judgemental."*
Balancing discussion	*"usually during the meeting the teachers say many things and then we don't have a chance to talk and then the time is out"*		*"you could see what other people had put and sometimes it would jog things that you perhaps wanted to say and put down"*	*"They throw so much testing information at you, just boom boom boom and then they say here is the next set of goals"* Another father shared that parents *"just get railroaded"*	*"I was really disappointed at the last meeting I attended. I felt talked over and not talked to. I was not included in on any of the assessment decisions"*

Appendix C Coresearcher information sheet

Newcastle University

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Research Opportunity

Action Research: An exploration of meetings between parents and multiple professionals for children identified with SEND

Researcher:	Jade Russell (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
University Contact Details	School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU Telephone: 01429 402711
Email	j.russell6@newcastle.ac.uk

I am seeking expressions of interest to take part in a study which aims to explore collaboration between parents and professionals in review meetings for children with SEND. This project forms part of my programme requirements for my Educational Psychology training course at Newcastle University.

This is an action research study, which aims to develop professional practice in this area. SENDCos are often tasked with the responsibility of facilitating meetings between parents of children with SEN and multiple professionals. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of collaboration with parents. Achieving this can be difficult when we consider the complex dynamics within these groups and the pressures faced by those involved.

I am hoping to recruit SENDCos to become involved in this study as co-researchers. As a co-researcher you will have opportunity to shape the research question and design to suit the needs and interests of you and your setting, in line with the broad theme of parent-professional collaboration for parents of children with SEND. The action research format will allow changes to be implemented in practice as part of the study. Therefore, if you are a SENDCo and have an interest in parent-professional collaboration in meetings, this project offers opportunity for you to explore this in your setting and to develop practice in this area.

Why is this project important?

- Parent-professional collaboration benefits children with SEND.
- Participation has benefits for parent wellbeing and, in turn, family wellbeing.
- It can be difficult for parents to take part equally with professionals in collaborative meetings for their children due to power imbalances, role clarification and processes.
- Parent participation is a key element of the SEND Code of Practice and there is increasing emphasis on co-production.
- Recent Ofsted findings for our LA suggested that co-production with parents was an area that needed development.

What will my participation as a co-researcher involve?

At the beginning of the project, we will meet to jointly agree the nature of the project. I anticipate a minimum time commitment of:

1. An individual meeting with myself to go through the research aims and requirements, to receive all information for you to provide informed consent.
2. An initial meeting. This will provide us opportunity to plan the research.
3. A period of action.
4. A review meeting to reflect on what has been learnt and decide next steps to inform practice.
5. Implementation of practice changes that have been agreed.
6. A review meeting to reflect on changes and evaluate findings.

It is anticipated that the study will run throughout the summer and autumn term of 2019.

What are the benefits for me and my setting?

- Involvement in research which will benefit children with SEND and their parents, as well as parent-school relationships.
- Evidence of co-production and collaboration with parents – criteria valued by Ofsted.
- An opportunity to reflect on practice with an outsider researcher and be supported to implement positive changes in practice.

- Opportunity to develop a model of good practice for other settings within the authority.

Your participation in the study is optional. You can express interest to find out further information, with no obligation to participate.

If you are interested in finding out more about this research please contact me on: j.russell6@newcastle.ac.uk/

Appendix D Case study participant information sheet and consent form

Newcastle University

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Information Sheet

Contact details	
Researcher:	Jade Russell (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
University Contact Details	School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU Telephone: 01429 402711
Email	j.russell6@newcastle.ac.uk

Research Details

1. You are invited to take part in an ongoing research study entitled: **An exploration of collaboration between parents and professionals during meetings for children with SEND**.
2. Please read the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.
3. The study is conducted by Jade Russell as part of her DAppEdPsy studies at Newcastle University and (coresearcher's name), Headteacher at (Name of School).
4. This research project is supervised by Dr. Wilma Barrow from the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences at Newcastle University. Her email address is: w.barrow@newcastle.ac.uk
5. For this phase of the research, we are exploring collaboration between parents and professionals during SEND review meetings for their children. This will focus on how parents and professionals understand their own role and the role of others during these meetings, and how these understandings influence the interactions during the meeting.
6. You have been approached to take part in this research as you have an upcoming SEND review meeting. All participation is conditional on the parent providing consent for the research to take place.

7. The findings from this research will be used by the co-researcher and researcher to reflect on practice with hopes to improve future meetings between parents and professionals.

Details of participation

8. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
    a. provide permission for the meeting to be video recorded. This will only occur if everyone present provides their consent.
    b. participate in an interview with the researcher after the meeting (for up to an hour) that is audio recorded. The location and time of interview will be agreed between yourself and the researcher. This will focus on your experience of the meeting, your role within the meeting and your perception of other's role within the meeting. A copy of the questions for discussion will be provided to you prior to the interview.
    c. to sign a consent form to demonstrate your consent to participate.
9. We do not anticipate that the interview will cause any distress to participants. However, the topics explored may be sensitive to some. You have the right to decline to answer any question or to cease the interview at any stage. If anything explored does impact you, the researcher will signpost you to a relevant support agency.
10. The aim of this research is to learn more about the interaction between parents and professionals during meetings. This research does not aim to scrutinize individual professionals or agencies.
11. You are free to decide whether or not to participate, with no obligation to explain your decision. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time during the data collection period. The data collected as part of the meeting will be retained due to the group nature, but any individual interview data will be destroyed.

Use of data

12. The data collected will only be used to explore the stated research aims.
13. The video and audio data will be transcribed by the researcher to allow for qualitative data analysis, in line with the research questions.
14. The video of the meeting will only be viewed by the researcher and (name of

co-researcher).

15. The audio recordings of the interviews will only be heard by the researcher.

Anonymity

16. Due to the case study nature of the research anonymity amongst participants cannot be guaranteed by the researcher. However, the data will be anonymised during transcription and for any publication so that you are not identifiable to anyone outside of the meeting group.
17. When any other person is discussed during your individual interview, they shall be anonymised. This data will be treated with upmost sensitivity when considering how findings are reported.
18. In any research report that may be published, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify you individually, any other participant or the child.
19. Your individual interview will only be available to the researcher. The researcher will carry out data analysis and themes that answer the research question will be shared with the co-researcher to support our wider project and during future publication. Anonymised quotations may be used to illustrate themes within the findings.
20. You will receive a summary report of key findings from the research upon completion of the study as part of the debriefing process.

Data protection and storage

21. The meeting will be video recorded using the researcher's video camera. This will be kept on the researcher's person until the file has been transferred to an encrypted drive.
22. The interview will be audio recorded using the researcher's Dictaphone. This will be kept on the researcher's person until the file has been transferred to an encrypted drive.
23. Raw data files will be stored securely on an encrypted drive in possession of the researcher.
24. Your individual interview recording will not be shared with any other person. Data will be transcribed anonymously by the researcher.
25. The video of meetings will only be viewed by myself and (co-researcher). The

recording will be anonymously transcribed by the researcher.

26. All data collected will be kept confidential.
27. Raw data files of interviews will be destroyed once transcriptions are completed.
28. The video file of the meeting will be kept for the duration of the study. This will be deleted no longer than 1 year after being recorded.
29. The records of this study will be kept secure and private. All files containing any information you give are password protected.
30. Your personal data (e.g. name & contact details) will be collected for the purposes of contacting you during the study. These will be stored separately to the data collected for the research, in a secure encrypted drive. and will be destroyed 1 year after their collection.
31.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the HaSS Faulty Ethics Committee at Newcastle University (date of updated approval: 14/11/2019)

If you have any questions, requests or concerns regarding this research, please contact me via email at j.russell6@newcastle.ac.uk

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Newcastle University, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Consent Form

Title of study: An exploration into collaboration between parents and professionals during meetings for children identified with SEND

Researcher: Jade Russell (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Contact details: School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne , NE1 7RU

Email: j.russell6@newcastle.ac.uk/

Telephone: 01429 402711

Please initial by each comment to indicate if you accept the following statements.

Statement	Initial
I have met with Jade Russell, read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided regarding the research.	
I agree that the meeting that I am scheduled to take part in can be video recorded for these research purposes only Date of meeting:	
I agree to take part in an interview between myself and the researcher. This interview will be audio recorded. Date agreed:	
I have been informed that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.	
I have been informed that all of my responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that I will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.	

I have been informed that the researcher will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures and know how to contact them.	
(Professionals only) I have shared information about this study with my manager and have approval to take part in the research.	
I agree to participate in this study	

You will be provided with a copy of this form for your records.

The researcher's email address is j.russell6@newcastle.ac.uk/

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee, Newcastle University via email to ecls.researchteam@newcastle.ac.uk

_____

Date _____

Participant Name (please print) _____

Participant Signature _____

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

_____

Date _____

Signature of Investigator _____

Appendix E Interview Schedule

Introductions

- Reminder of purpose:
    - Looking at meetings and how parents and professionals work together
    - We are interested in your experience of the meeting that you had; your role in the meeting and what you understood the role of others to be.
    - Planning to use the information you share to explore the practice of meetings and hopefully develop improvements for practice
- Reminder re: data
    - Data protection
    - Confidentiality and limits

Questions

Key Questions	**Possible Additional Prompts**
General experience	
What was the purpose of the meeting?	• Why did you have the meeting? • How was it organised? Why?
How did you find the meeting?	• What happened? • Would you call it collaborative? • How did people work together? • Had you met everyone in the meeting before? • Did you understand what was discussed? Were there any bits you didn't? • Content/ discussion / language / physical positioning • Did you learn anything in the meeting? • Did you feel listened to? Did you feel understood? • How did it feel to be in that meeting? • How did you feel before the meeting?

	• How did you feel afterwards?
Were there any positives?	• Why was this a positive? • What helped that to happen?
Were there any negatives?	• Was there anything difficult about the meeting? • Why was this a negative? • What could be done to improve this?
What were the outcomes?	• Do you think it achieved its purpose? • Was there anything else you hoped that would be talked about? • Is there anything you need to do now as a result of the meeting?
Your role identity	
What is your role in relation to (child)?	• In relation to education specifically • Other words for role: job; position; purpose • How would you explain that role to someone?
What responsibilities are involved in your role?	• Other words: duties; obligations; things you should do
How would you describe your role in that meeting?	• How did you contribute? What did you say / do? What made you do this? How did it impact the meeting? How did others respond? • Do you think others share this view of you in the meeting? • Do you think others understood your role?
Did you have any aims for the meeting?	• Were these achieved? What helped? What hindered? • Did your role change within the meeting?
Is there anything else you feel you could have offered to the	• What prevented this? • What would have helped? • Any other factors that influenced?

meeting? Any other roles you could have taken on?	• How had these come to be?
Perceptions of others	
Who else is involved with the child?	• Do you know their job title? What does a (job title) do?
What is their role? What does that involve?	• What kinds of things do they do to support (child)
How would you describe your relationship with (person)?	• In what ways do you work together / communicate?
What was X's role in the meeting?	• What do you think they were trying to achieve? • How did you work with X in the meeting? • What did you each do? How had that came to be?
Working together	
Do you feel you worked together?	• Did you feel like a valuable member of the team? • Did you feel like you had power to make decisions? • Did you share any common ground? Similarities? Differences?
Future	
How do you think meetings could be improved in the future?	

Is there anything else you feel I should know or that I might have missed?

Reminder of next steps and debriefing

Appendix F Meeting episodes

Table A.3 Meeting episodes

Episode	Timings	Description
Introductions	*0.00 – 1.16*	Parent is welcomed and thanked for joining the professionals. Professionals take turns to introduce themselves.
Framing the discussion	*1.16 – 6.12*	The SENDCo recaps previous meeting and presents updates from school since the last meeting. She details interventions and supports in place for the young person.
Establishing purpose of the meeting	*6.12 – 7.20*	SENDCo finished recap and updates, and then shifts to the purpose of this meeting. Parent interrupts to ask whether his child will be changing school. Educational Psychologist explains statutory procedure and asks the Parent for his perspective on the current situation.
Discussing young person's emotional wellbeing	*7.20 – 13.07*	Parent shares recent experiences of his child being unhappy coming into school and the shame she feels during lessons. SENDCo shares the attendance record which supports this and what school have put in place. Conversation shifts toward the young person being more settled now and Specialist Teacher suggests the strategy of a card the young person can present in lessons if she is finding something hard, which is well received.
Parent's wishes	*13.07 – 15.05*	After short group pause, parent redirects back to possibility of a change of school, which is his hope. SENDCo explains process and purpose of this meeting. Educational Psychologist asks about young person's views about changing school. Parent explains he has not spoken to his child about changing schools but is thinking it would be best as her sister also goes to that specialist school; he explains it would be easier for him if the two girls went to the same school.

Parent's views	*15.06 – 15.37*	He goes on to share strengths about his child (the young person) in comparison to her older sister. He feels she will make progress and talks about her skills at home. Professionals listening and making notes. Educational psychologist summarises and repeats back.
Information gathering – language	*15.37 – 17.36*	Parent describes how his daughter started speaking English later and did not come to this country until she was nine. SENDCo seeks clarification about languages spoken at home and young person's skills in the home language. Parent describes the skills of his older daughter and it is not always clear when he is talking about the chid who this meeting is for. Specialist Teacher asks clarifying closed question specifically about young person's language skills.
Explaining statutory process and developing shared agreement	*17.36 – 20.47*	Educational Psychologist asks the parent about his view and revisits the purpose of the present meeting and the statutory process, including when he will be able to formally request a change of school for his child. Revisits reasons for parents' view and establishes that the professionals support that view. Group discusses the positives of the potential specialist setting (a learning resource base within a local mainstream school).
Seeking young person's view	*20.47 – 22.45*	Specialist Teacher asks parent about the young person's feelings toward changing school. Parent expresses that his child has not expressed anything but that he thinks she can make friends, drawing on his older daughter's experience of moving to that school. Parent talks about the experiences of his other children; SENDCo provides information about how they find school. Parent discusses how his older children will leave this school soon and it will be easier for him to go to one school to pick up his two daughters. Parent emphasises that professionals know better than him, regarding education but he

		just wants something good for his children when they grow up. Educational Psychologist emphasises importance of his views.
Information gathering – home perspective	*22.45 – 27.05*	Educational Psychologist seeks information about the young person's interests at home. Parent discusses problems with technology for all young people. Specialist Teacher advises being careful with use of phones at bedtime, to which parent explains that the young person does not have a phone. Professionals redirect to young person and try to understand functional skills. Parent speaks about current day challenges and wider issues of children having a lot of freedom and not having much respect. Tells professionals that he used to be slapped; professionals laugh and emphasise that cannot happen now.
Information gathering – strengths at home	*27.05 – 30.27*	Specialist Teacher asks about young person's skills in the home/ independence skills. Parent shares his child's strengths in terms of skills in the home. He shares news from recent hearing check, which raised no concerns. Parent emphasises that learning is the problem for his child and thinks that when she grows older she will be a talented girl because of her common sense.
Revisit challenges in school	*30.27*	Parent describes how he wants her to develop her skills and the only thing stopping her is the learning. SENDCo explains the increased challenge of approaching GCSEs and high expectations for all children.
Thinking about the future	*31.24 – 32.43*	Specialist Teacher asks about the Parent's hopes for the future. Parent discusses wanting his child to get a job and run a house. Parent mentions differences in cultural expectations and how traditionally women would stay in the home but that this does not happen now. Professionals acknowledge view.

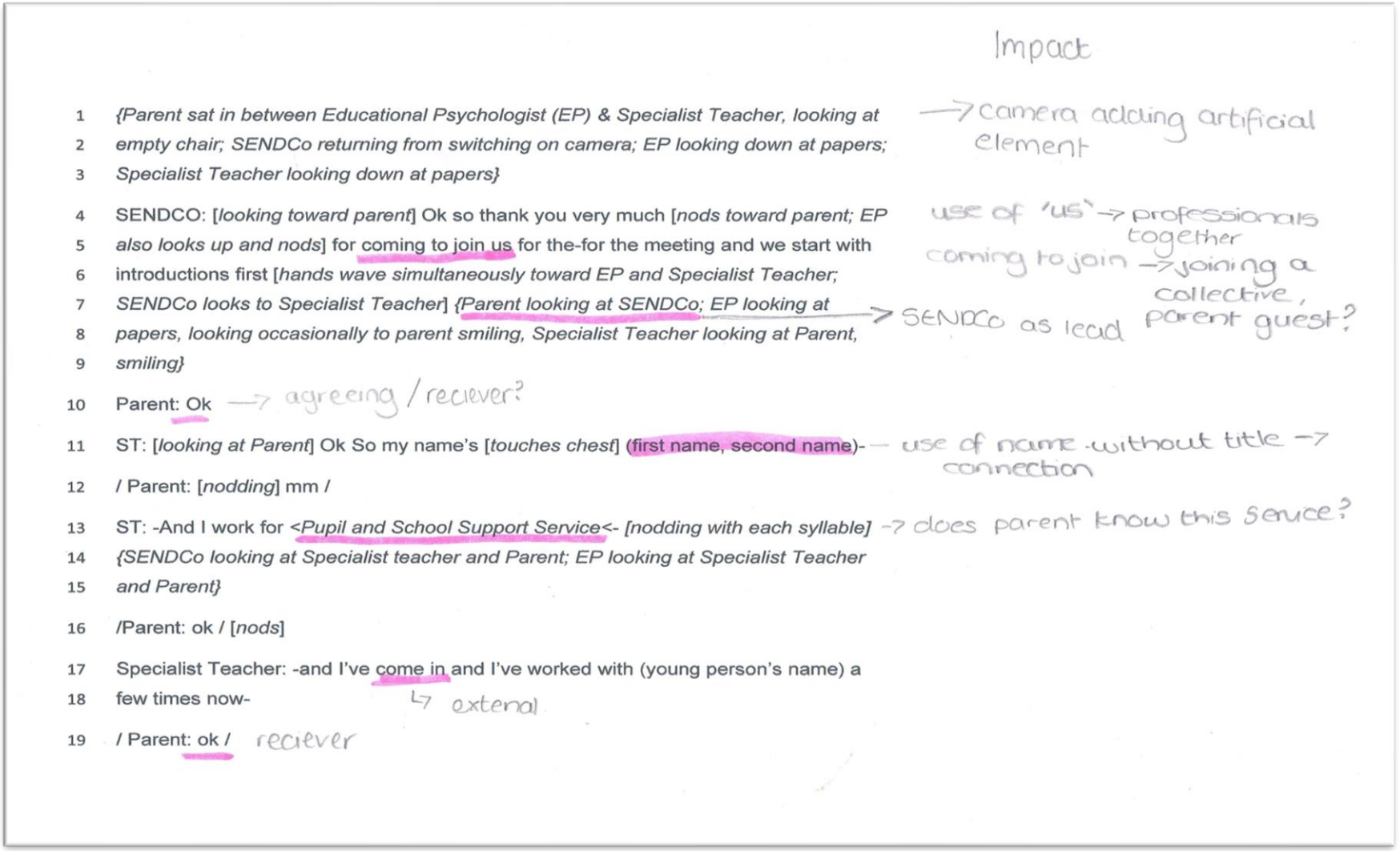
Information gathering - money skills	*32.43 – 34.38*	Educational Psychologist asks what young person is like with using and managing money. Parent shares examples and highlights this as a difficulty for her, with professionals asking clarifying questions. Specialist Teacher praises Parent for supporting the development of functional skills. He speaks about the worries he has for his older daughter; not so much for this child. Educational Psychologist talks about curriculum to teach these skills.
Discussion around strengths and difficulties	*34.38 – 37.53*	SENDCo confirms from school point of view difficulties with maths. Specialist Teacher discusses her findings, highlighting young person's ability to read some words and write. Parent shares his view that her reading is getting better. Educational Psychologist shares piece of work done with the young person with parent to show what she saw of her maths' skills. SENDCo emphasises the importance of developing functional skills and parent agrees. Parent shares experiences from his perspective.
Signing paperwork	*37.53 – 42.00*	Conversation comes to end. SENDCo turns discussion to paperwork, describing what is included. Parent does not look through paperwork but agrees. SENDCo indicates where signature is needed.
Closing of meeting	*42.00 – 43.00*	Parent hands signed document to SENDCo. Educational Psychologist reminds that it is best not to say anything definite about changing schools at this time. SENDCo asks if there is anything else, parent says no. Professionals thank parent and say goodbyes.

Appendix G Meeting transcription example

Table A.4: Transcription key

Convention	Meaning
{text}	Description of situation/ actions
Number	Line number for readability and reference
[*text*]	Actions by speaker
(word)	Author's attempt to decipher unclear wording
(?)	Talk too unclear to transcribe
/ at start of line	Overlapping talk begins
/ at end of speech	Overlapping talk ends
- At end of word	Speech interrupted
~text~	Noticeably quiet speech
,	Brief pauses
<	Slowed speech
>	Quickened speech

The images below present an extract from the meeting transcription. This interaction is taken from introductions segment.



Impact

{Parent sat in between Educational Psychologist (EP) & Specialist Teacher, looking at empty chair; SENDCo returning from switching on camera; EP looking down at papers; Specialist Teacher looking down at papers}

→ camera adding artificial element

SENDCO: [looking toward parent] Ok so thank you very much [nods toward parent; EP also looks up and nods] for coming to join us for the-for the meeting and we start with introductions first [hands wave simultaneously toward EP and Specialist Teacher; SENDCo looks to Specialist Teacher] {Parent looking at SENDCo; EP looking at papers, looking occasionally to parent smiling, Specialist Teacher looking at Parent, smiling}

use of 'us' → professionals together

coming to join → joining a collective, parent guest?

→ SENDCo as lead

Parent: Ok → agreeing / reciever?

ST: [looking at Parent] Ok So my name's [touches chest] (first name, second name)-

/ Parent: [nodding] mm /

— use of name without title → connection

ST: -And I work for <Pupil and School Support Service<- [nodding with each syllable]

{SENDCo looking at Specialist teacher and Parent; EP looking at Specialist Teacher and Parent}

→ does parent know this Seruce?

/Parent: ok / [nods]

Specialist Teacher: -and I've come in and I've worked with (young person's name) a few times now-

↳ extenal

/ Parent: ok / reciever

Specialist Teacher: um and I've assessed her 1:1, so we've sat together [*hand gestures between her and parent*] like this

/ Parent: mm /

Specialist Teacher: - and I've done some activities to find out about her learning,

/ Parent: mm /

Specialist Teacher: um and I've also watched her in class as well

/ Parent: [*nodding*] ok /

Specialist Teacher: and from that I've written my report [*touches report; nodding*] to um go to- [*gestures toward SENDCo*]

/ Parent: ok /

Specialist Teacher : -Miss. [*nods; looks away from parent to professionals*]

SENDCo: [*looking toward Parent*] My name's Mrs (last name) and I'm the SENCo here {*Specialist Teacher & EP looking toward Parent}*

/ Parent: mm /

SENDCo: -and I coordinate the provision for, for (young person's name) and I also teach her [*SENDCo smiles; Specialist Teacher smiles toward parent; EP smiles*]

Parent: OK

→ assessor → implications for knowledge (is this a 'truth?'

legitimising role/contribution to meeting

→ exploring role through activities

→ reciever

→ knows information about child

SENDCo as organiser/'holder'

→ have likely met before

→ use of formal name

→ more personal - knows the child

37 , [*SENDCo looks to Specialist Teacher and to EP*] ? reassurance, cueing in?

38 EP: [*looking toward Parent*] And I'm (first name, last name) so we've met before, >call me
39 first (name)>-

40 Parent: (unclear sound)

41 EP: -and um again like (name of Specialist Teacher) [*gestures toward Specialist Teacher*
42 *with hand*] I've seen (child's name) on a couple of occasions, um, and talked to her about
43 how she's feeling about things with work and school um and I've carried out some
44 assessments [*hand gestures*] to look at her levels and how she's coping-

45 / Parent: ok /

46 EP: -and what she's good at? and what things she's having some problems with,

47 Parent: ok [*nodding*]

48 EP: ok, → checking back → space for parent to ask

49 Parent: (unclear) yeah

50 EP: so that's all the things [*circular hand gesture*] we'll discuss in the meeting [*looks*
51 *toward SENDCo*] → SENDCo as facilitator

52 Parent: [*nods*] ok

use of name → connection outside of role
→ establish shared past experience

→ EP/ST similarity
→ over time
→ gathering young person's views

subjective/objective

→ balance

* no mention of professional title → choice?

preparing for discussion/signpost

53 SENDCo: yeah, so as you know like (child's name) has been here for, like almost like a
54 year and a half now?, *[nods toward Parent] {EP & Specialist Teacher looking down at*
55 *paper throughout}*

56 Parent: [*nods*] <yes

57 SENDCo: a:nd, since actually [*hand gesture*] her transition meetings [*looks up as if*
58 *thinking*] and since she started here a year and a half ago {EP making note} we noticed
59 that she finds it really difficult, not just the language barrier [*hand gestures*] but also,
60 <struggles with learning [*looking at Parent*]

☆ parent does not introduce self

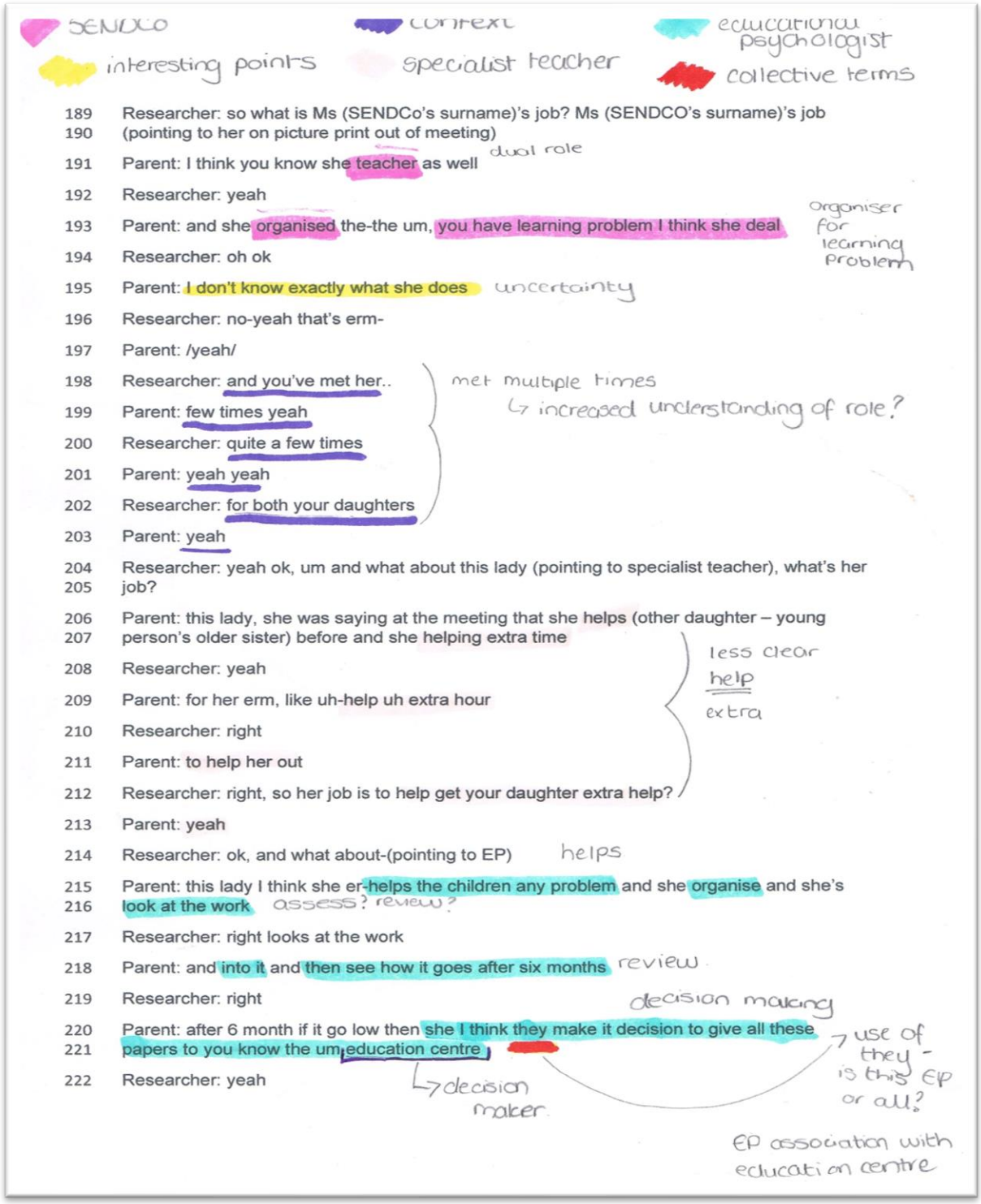
SENDCo leading establishing shared understanding

introducing difficult message

clarifying

Appendix H Interview transcription example

The images below present a scanned excerpt from the parent's interview transcription and initial coding process.



189 Researcher: so what is Ms (SENDCo's surname)'s job? Ms (SENDCO's surname)'s job
190 (pointing to her on picture print out of meeting)
191 Parent: I think you know she teacher as well
192 Researcher: yeah
193 Parent: and she organised the-the um, you have learning problem I think she deal
194 Researcher: oh ok
195 Parent: I don't know exactly what she does
196 Researcher: no-yeah that's erm-
197 Parent: /yeah/
198 Researcher: and you've met her..
199 Parent: few times yeah
200 Researcher: quite a few times
201 Parent: yeah yeah
202 Researcher: for both your daughters
203 Parent: yeah
204 Researcher: yeah ok, um and what about this lady (pointing to specialist teacher), what's her
205 job?
206 Parent: this lady, she was saying at the meeting that she helps (other daughter – young
207 person's older sister) before and she helping extra time
208 Researcher: yeah
209 Parent: for her erm, like uh-help uh extra hour
210 Researcher: right
211 Parent: to help her out
212 Researcher: right, so her job is to help get your daughter extra help?
213 Parent: yeah
214 Researcher: ok, and what about-(pointing to EP)
215 Parent: this lady I think she er-helps the children any problem and she organise and she's
216 look at the work
217 Researcher: right looks at the work
218 Parent: and into it and then see how it goes after six months
219 Researcher: right
220 Parent: after 6 month if it go low then she I think they make it decision to give all these
221 papers to you know the um education centre
222 Researcher: yeah

education centre as decision maker

223 Parent: and they change school I think

224 Researcher: right

225 Parent: I'm not sure but uncertain

226 Researcher: right she's involved in that bit

227 Parent: yeah

228 Researcher: so together they kind of make that decision

229 Parent: yeah

230 Researcher: yeah, and do you make that decision with them like.. are you involved in that
231 decision?,

232 Parent: uh what do you mean?

233 Researcher: so if they make the decision, what do you do?

234 Parent: my part-my part they showing me how's it going on being shown

235 Researcher: yeah they show you

236 Parent: yeah yeah, how is she going to improve or under or is she going up, where is she
237 you know like um, that's why they call me professionals involve him

238 Researcher: yeah ?

239 Parent: so I, I think you make a decision because er see how it goes, maybe june we got
240 another meeting

241 Researcher: mm

242 Parent: and if she don't, they can send the papers there

243 Researcher: yeah

244 Parent: and change the school

some understanding of process

Appendix I Key themes relating to role from interviews

Figure A.1: A visual overview of the Parent's perceptions of meeting participants' roles

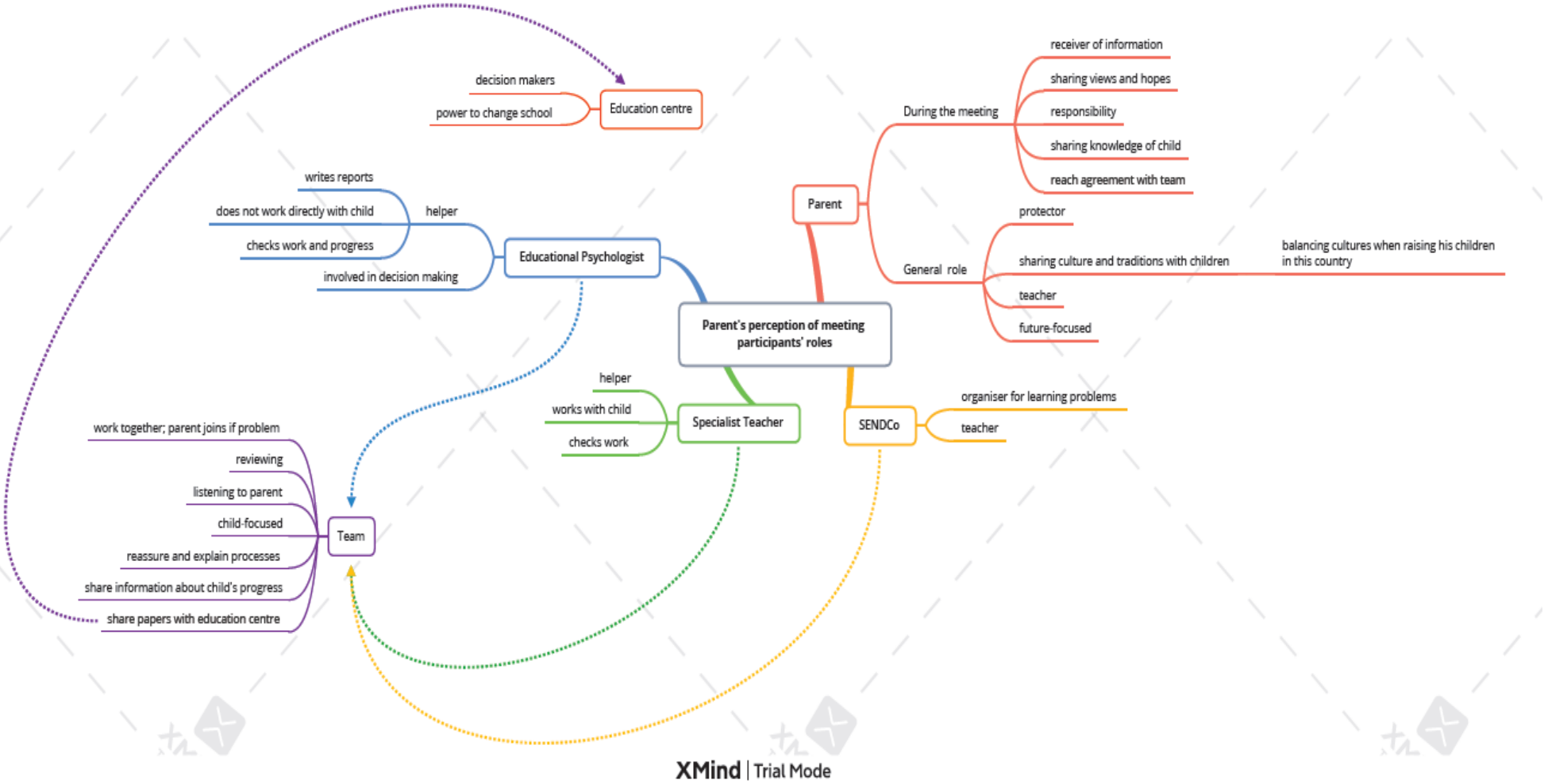


Figure A.2: A visual overview of the SENDCo's perceptions of meeting participants' roles

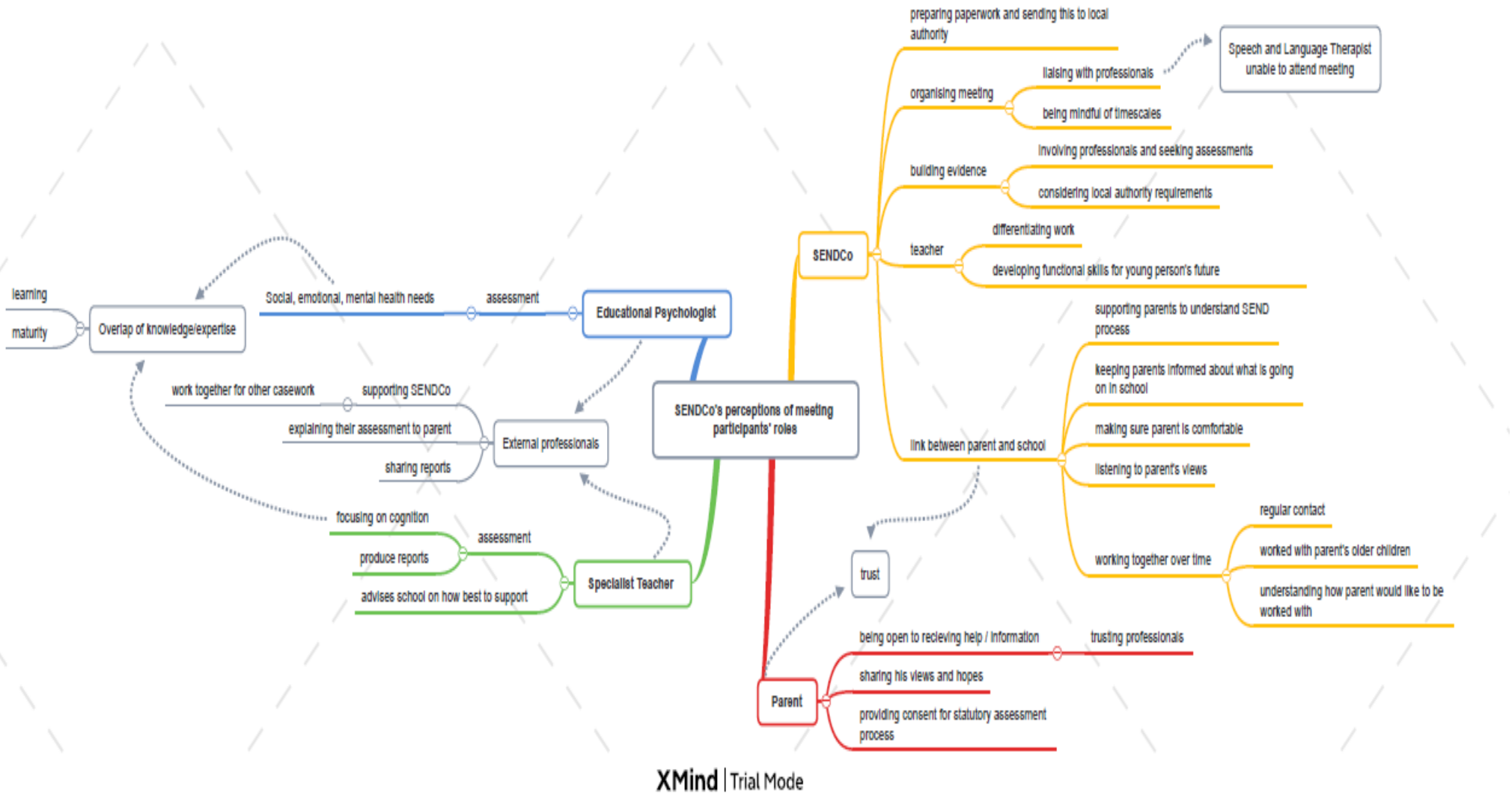


Figure A.3: A visual overview of the Specialist Teacher's perceptions of meeting participants' roles

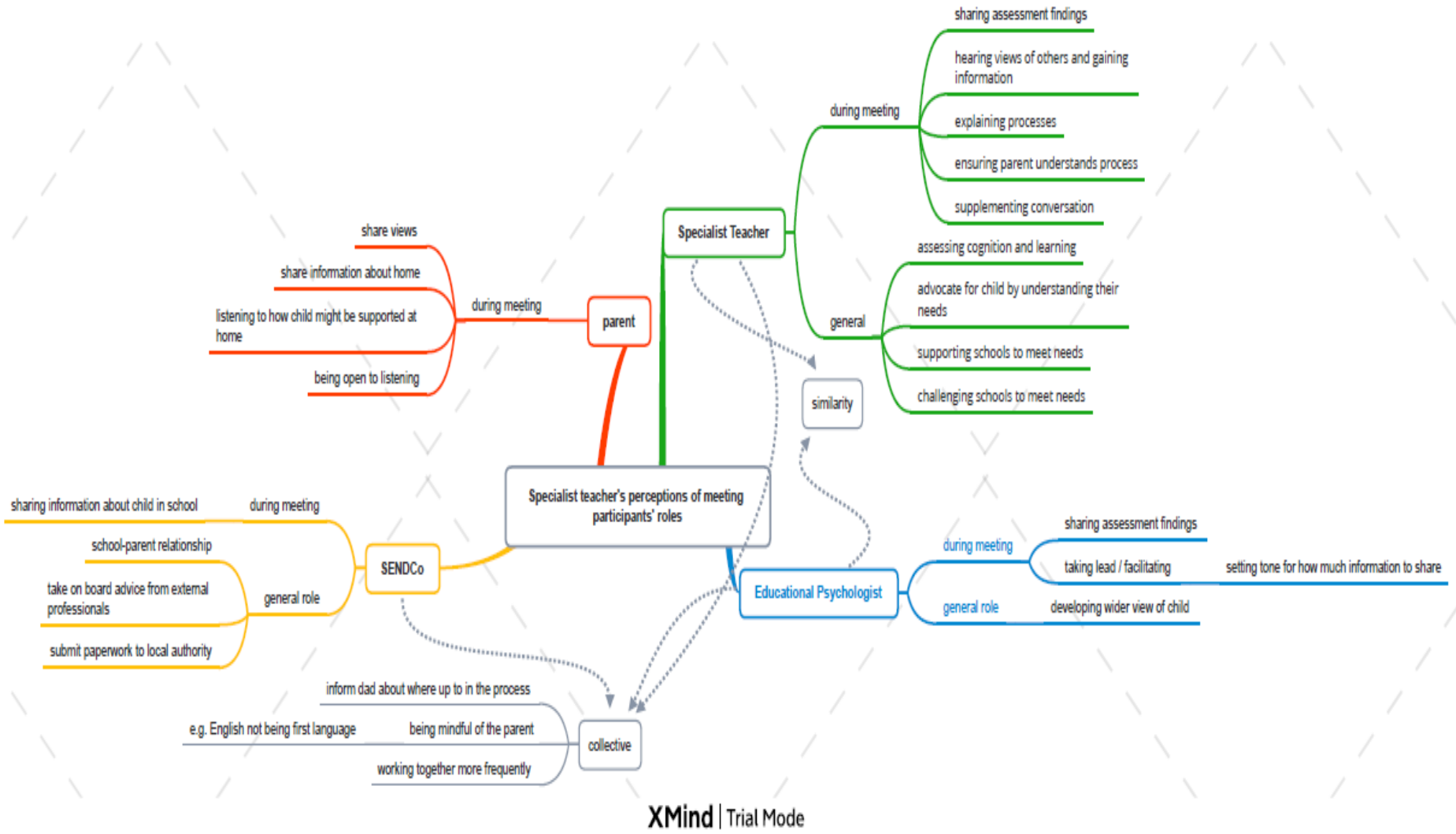
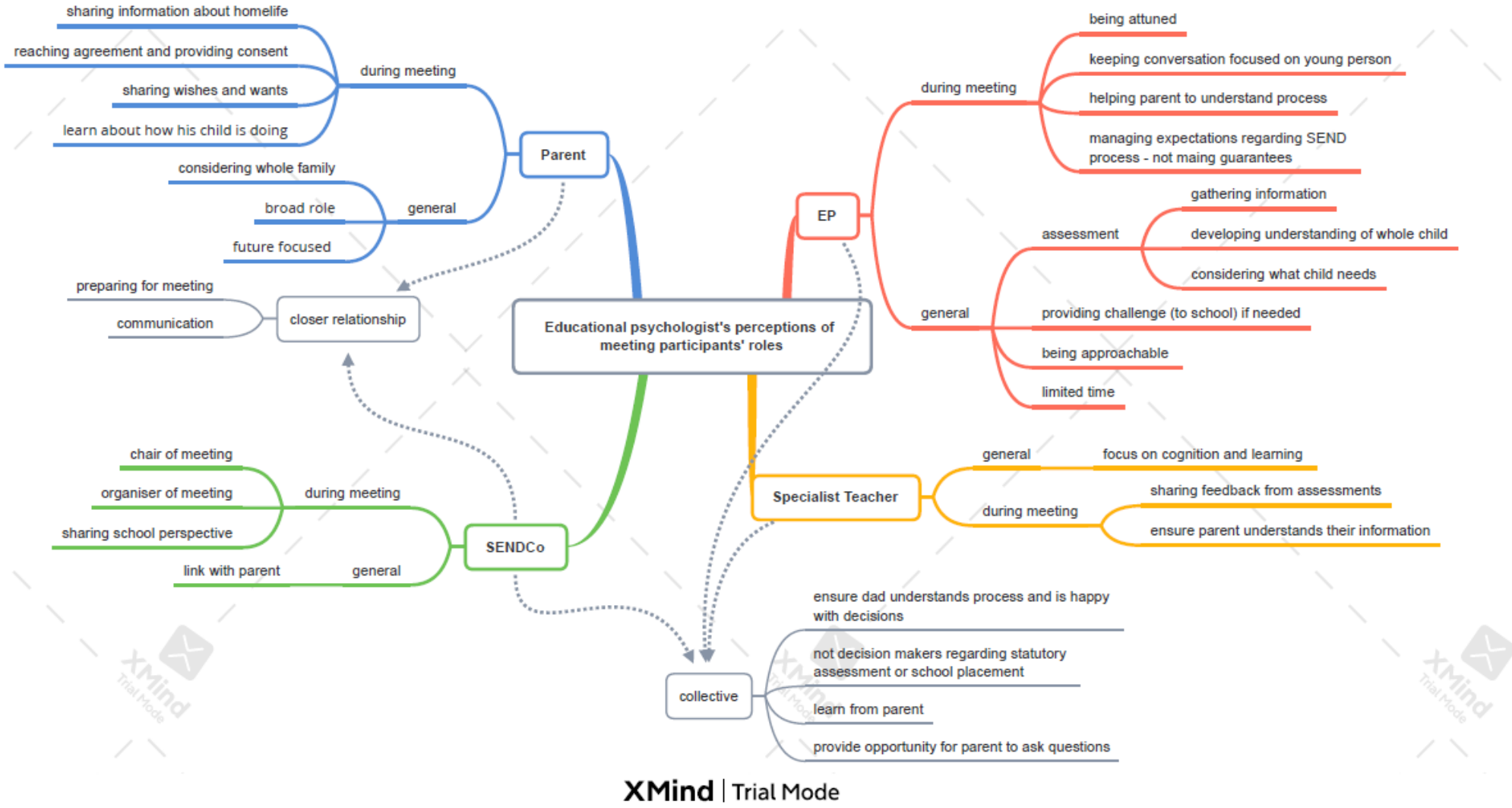
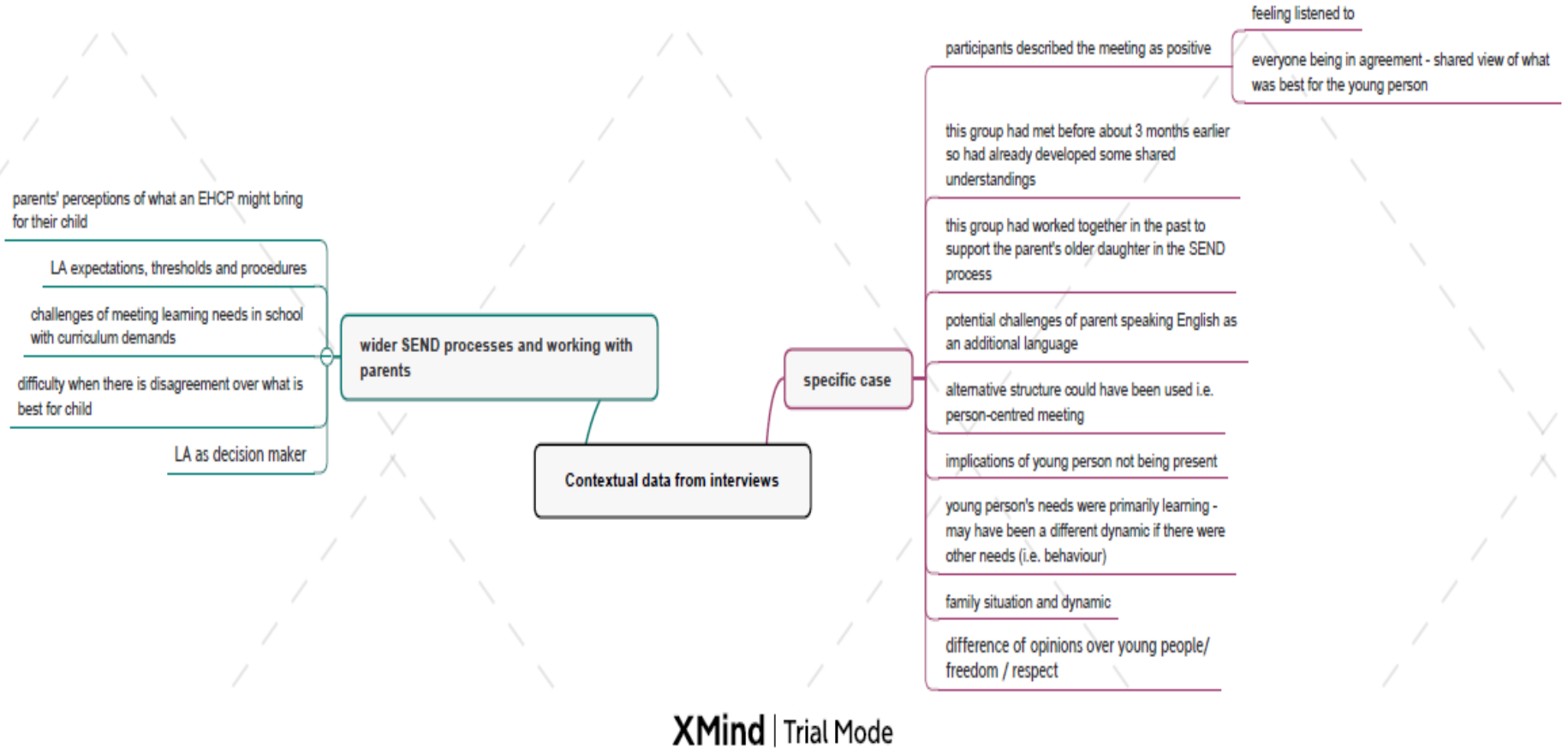


Figure A.4: A visual overview of the Educational Psychologist's perceptions of meeting participants' roles



Appendix J Contextual data from interviews

Figure A.5: Contextual data from interviews



Appendix K Example of mapping data to activity theory

Figure A.6: Mapping data to third generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001)

Participant: Parent

Tools/Artefacts

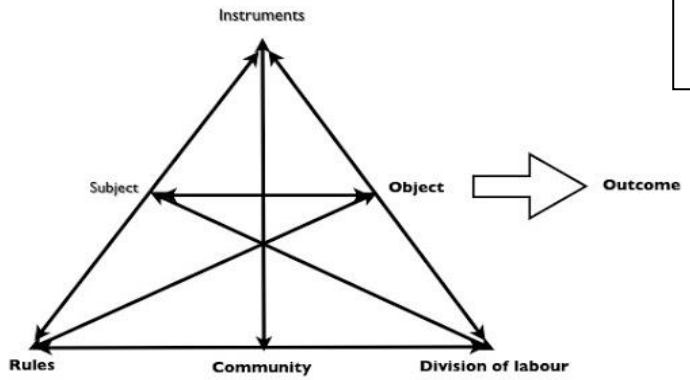
- language
- paperwork?

Object – The Meeting

- About his child
- *"Slow"* (gives reasons for this being moving from Pakistan, shy)
- Wants a change of school
- Hear about how she is doing and how school are helping

Subject

- Relationship with child
- Understandings of his role – teacher; protector
- Past experiences of working with professionals and SEND system



Outcome

- Waiting to hear outcome
- *"Fill in form, wait for decision on whether we can change school"*

Rules

- "*You have to go*" (to meetings) for child's future
- Embed children with values (culture) – respect
- Show respect

Community (in meeting)

SENDCo – knew her name*; she's a teacher as well; organises if you have learning problems; don't know exactly; met a few times*

EP – *met before; helps with any problem; looks at the work, checks it; makes decision if papers go to education centre*

PSS – *met before; helped older daughter; gives extra help*

"They thinking about my child so I be respectful to them"

Community wider

School/ teachers – helpful; "*good school*"

"*Some people say school is rough*", bad reputation

Education centre – change school

Balancing cultures

Division of labour

- School organised the meeting and asked him to go
- "*They show me what's going on*" and "*My job to listen*"
- Tell them what I think

Appendix L Review schedule

Plan for review

Overview

- Recap research process so far
- Learning from the case-study – reflecting and thinking about implications for practice
- Thinking about implications for practice and potential next steps
- Reflecting on the CAR process

Recap

- Revisit intentions for the case study and agreed areas of focus
- Intention that after this stage there will be actions for practice

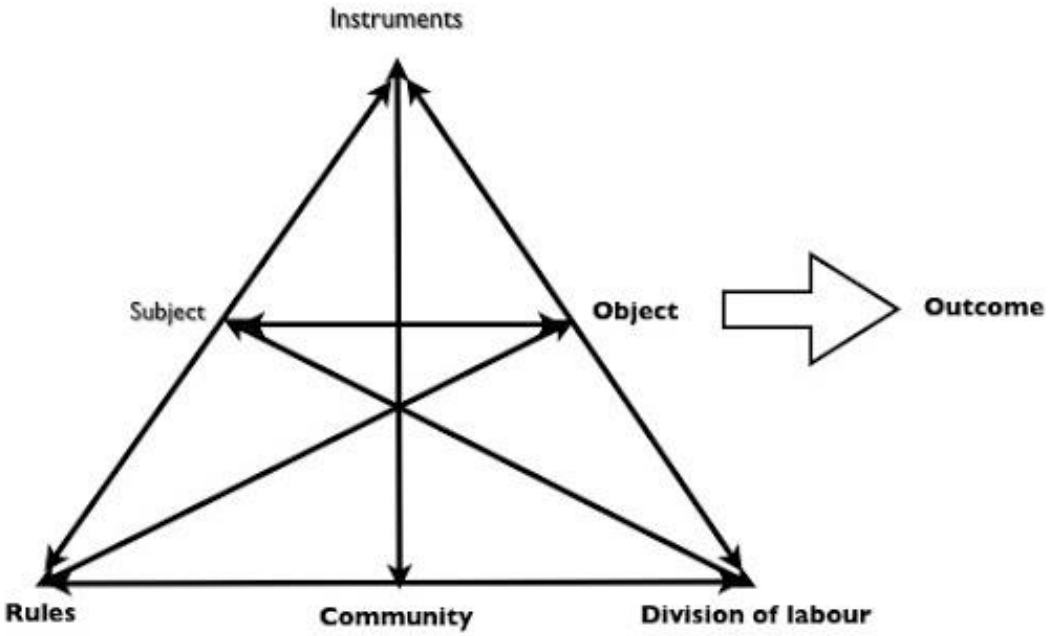
Reviewing the case study

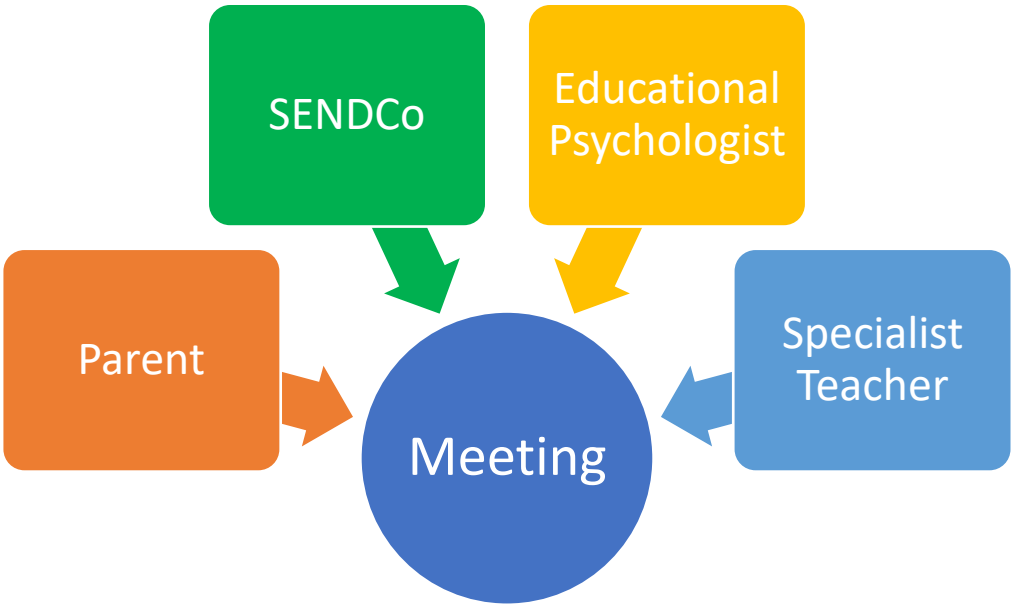
Key contextual information

- A Team around the Child meeting for a young person in year 8
- SENDCo, PSS, EP and parent
- Parent has been through this process already with YP's older sister

A model for collective activity – third generation activity theory *(Engeström, 2001)*

- Captures the complexity within a single meeting, where multiple activity systems are in play.


Instruments
Subject
Object
Outcome
Rules
Community
Division of labour


SENDCo
Educational Psychologist
Parent
Specialist Teacher
Meeting

Video clips

Key things to look out for

- What is happening?
- What sense did you get from the clip? What caused you to feel that way?
- How are people's roles constructed?
- How are people being positioned?
- What is the impact of that clip? How is that done?
- Does anything resonate with your practice?

Clips

Clip	Segment	Key content	My thoughts
1: Introductions	0-1.16	Beginning of meeting; attendees introducing themselves to part	• Use of 'us' • Presentation to parent • Parent does not introduce themselves • SENDCo as facilitator
2. Shifting to focus	5.45-7.20	Parent asking whether child can change school	• SENDCo presenting • Impact of the parent question – professionals in expert role, pause • Teamwork amongst professionals to answer • Use of questions to change focus?
3. Group agreement*****	17.35-20.45	EP seeking parent view re: hopes for future education. Group justifying view about change of school	• EP focusing – drawing back to process • EP explaining process statutory process • EP stating benefits – drawing in other group members (yes; nods) • Group building on each other's responses -Inter-thinking?
4. Learning about life at home*****	22.45-25.42	Parent asked about home – what young person likes to do. Parent talks about negatives of mobile phones.	• EP information gathering – EP/ST make notes • Group laugh • Parent thinking about family – unclear which child he is talking about

			• ST advice about screen time – impact for parent?
5.Freedoms	25.42-27.05	Parent discussing problem of too much freedom and children's behaviour. Tells professionals how children used to get a slap.	• Parent sharing views – telling professionals about community • ST/EP trying to reframe • Techniques professional use to disagree but maintain the relationship

did not share these as ran out of time

Implications for practice

- What next?
- What might you take from this into your practice in meetings (continuations/ different things)?
- What might others see you doing differently?
- What might help or hinder?

Creating an action plan - *Questions adapted from Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2013)*

- What changes have we planned?
- What is the rationale for these changes?
- What needs to happen?
- Who will do this?
- When will this be done?
- Who do we need to get on board?
- How will we know if the changes are effective?

Reflecting on the research process

Questions adapted from Baumfield, Hall and Wall (2013; p138)

- What went according to plan? (how might another way have been different?)
- What was easier?
- What was more difficult?
- What was predictable?
- What was surprising?
- What did you enjoy? What did you not enjoy?
- What could you tell someone else about this?
- Who needs to know about what we have done? How?