

**AN EXPLORATION OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS'  
CONSTRUING IN RELATION TO STUDENT ATTACHMENT  
STYLE**

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## ABSTRACT

This study employed a Personal Construct Theory approach (Kelly, 1955/63) to explore education professionals' construing regarding behaviours of secondary-age students representative of the four main patterns of Attachment – 'Avoidant', 'Ambivalent', 'Disorganised' and 'Secure' (Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969; Main & Solomon, 1986; cf attachment theory, Bowlby, 1969; 1973; 1980). Constructs were elicited during individual interviews and rated by participants on a 7-point scale within a repertory grid. Analysis of grids was undertaken in terms of *content* (the words generated) and *structure* (the relationships between constructs and elements shown by numerical ratings) (Jankowicz, 2004).

Participants were 10 Educational Psychologists, 10 class tutors/subject teachers ('General Teachers',) and 10 teachers/pastoral staff (Specialist ESBD/ Pastoral Teachers) working within the pastoral and behaviour management sections of mainstream High Schools (Years 6 or 7 to 9 inclusive).

A review of literature outlines current educational context regarding Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties (ESBD) in school and traditional and 'modern' aspects of attachment theory.

The language utilised within participants' construing was found to reflect aspects of attachment theory. There was a generally high level of use of constructs allied with emotional and relational aspects of behaviour across all participants, suggesting that interventions based in these areas for ESBD problems may be positively received. At the structural level, findings from repertory grids suggested that participants' preferred poles of constructs were more closely associated with students representative of a secure attachment style than those representative of an insecure style. This accords with previous findings from research into resilience (Gilligan, 2000). Individual differences were apparent with regard to participants' ratings of their constructs for students representing insecure attachment styles, although there were some trends to suggest that General Teachers may tend to associate avoidant-

insecure students with more preferred aspects of their construing than the other two participant groups.

The provision of in-service training on attachment theory to the Specialist ESBD/ Pastoral Teacher participants had little impact on either their construing or on their ratings of constructs. This was conjectured to be a participant effect related to a highly developed understanding of issues underlying ESBD. Any differences were most evident at the individual level.

The discussion considers that education professionals, particularly those with ESBD expertise, may be receptive to emotional and relationship-based interventions for students with challenging behaviour. It also contends that attachment theory could potentially be a useful theoretical framework as it fits well with participants' construing regarding student behaviours. However, individual differences suggest that adults' own internal working models and aspects of experience of working with students with significant ESBD may impact on its efficacy.

## INTRODUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT: A RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

### CONTEXT

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are often involved with school staff and families who are perplexed, puzzled and exhausted due to the presenting behaviour of children and young people. A small but challenging minority of students can present as '*unteachable*' and as '*obviously needing something more*' (Delaney, 2009, p.68). Exclusion from school, which can have negative personal and social outcomes (Parsons, 1996, 1999; Gray, 2005), can occur. (Terminology regarding emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD) changes regularly within literature and can be seen to reflect changes of cultural and political reference and bias - within this thesis, the term ESBD was deliberately selected to represent the author's preference in highlighting the impact of the development of emotional and social skills on resulting behaviours). EPs work at both an individual and a systemic level to support schools and families in these circumstances (Miller, 2003). Theoretical psychological knowledge is applied through consultative practice to support positive change in a collaborative and empowering manner (Wagner, 2000; Dowling & Osborne, 1994; West & Idol, 1987).

One such theory available to EPs is attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; 1973; 1980; Salter- Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969; Salter-Ainsworth 1991). As an holistic theory of child development, which encompasses child-adult-environment interactions, attachment theory can offer explanations of behaviours which are otherwise very difficult to understand (Cairns, 2002; Allen, 2007) and thus has potential efficacy in addressing significant ESBD presented by children and young people in secondary schools. However, until relatively recently (notably Geddes, 2006 and Bomber, 2007) attachment theory has not featured strongly within education, although it is openly referred to within other professional contexts, particularly mental health and social care (e.g. Howe, 1999; Bennett &

Nelson, 2008; Nelson & Bennett, 2008; Hughes, 1997, 2007; Levy, 2000; Levy & Orlans, 1998) and has successfully improved practice in others (e.g. hospital provision for children: Bowlby & Robertson, 1953). There is also currently an increasing focus on attachment theory within wider societal issues (see, for example, Batmanghelidj, 2009).

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#### AREA OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study sets out to explore educational professionals' personal constructs regarding the behaviours of young people representative of the four main styles of attachment, seeking to glean information in the following areas:

- How does staff construing regarding student behaviour relate to attachment theory?
- How do these echoes of attachment theory impact on education professionals' construing regarding students' behaviour?
- Does having an *explicit* knowledge of the theory (provided by In-Service Training to one participant group) affect construing in any way?

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#### METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

In order to explore these areas as openly as possible (i.e. applying no constraints or framework to participants' expressed thinking) research was undertaken within a constructivist epistemological stance, via the use of a Personal Construct Theory approach (PCT: Kelly; 1963). Whilst the pairing of PCT and attachment theory is, to the best knowledge of the author, unique, there are parallels between the two, particularly in terms of people's 'personal constructs' and 'internal working models', as will be outlined below.

Whilst families and caregivers are important within the dynamic of young people's challenging behaviour and are fully included in real-life situations, this research focuses on issues of professional practice and potential professional development and thus participant groups comprised education professionals.

The role of the researcher is a factor within this exploratory study. The investigation is therefore affected by professional understanding of the complexities of the research area in terms of school settings, adult: student dynamics, psychological theory, research paradigms and methodology. Thus this research is arguably well suited to an Educational Psychologist's perspective.

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#### STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This thesis sets out the theoretical and pedagogical-social context within which the research is sited through a review of literature in the following areas:

- Schools, relationships and behaviour: the need for an holistic framework for understanding and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable students;
- Basic tenets of and recent developments in attachment theory;
- Attachment, adolescence and the Secondary School classroom.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological stance within which this research is sited and provides an introductory overview to Personal Construct Theory followed by a detailed outline of method employed. Findings are presented in Chapter 5 and discussed in light of the literature and potential further developments in Chapter 6. Conclusions are provided in Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 1

# SCHOOLS, RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOUR: THE NEED FOR AN HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS.

*'Many of our students are disengaged from life, not just from school'*

Quote from a key worker (Ofsted, 2008)

### CONTEXT AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER

In order to consider constructs regarding in-school behaviour it is useful to consider the national context within which educational professionals operate with regard to managing student behaviour. Issues around schools and student behaviour have a long history of applied psychological interest and research (Miller, 2003; Daniels & Williams, 2000; Cooper & Upton, 1990; Wheldall, 1992). It has also been an area for government-led comment and initiatives (*The Elton Report*: DfES, 1989; *The Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*: DfE, 1994b; *Behaviour and Attendance Strategy*: DfES, 2005). Schools and other educational institutions continue to be at the forefront of supporting the holistic development of children and young people. The *Every Child Matters*' (ECM) framework (DfES, 2004) sets out five areas in which education operates to support holistic development:

- to be healthy;
- to stay safe;
- to enjoy and achieve;
- to make a positive contribution;
- to achieve economic well-being.

Yet despite a high level of focus on supporting those with challenging behaviours (*The Steer Report*, DfES 2005), including national programmes of support to schools (DfES, 2005; DCSF, 2008b), there remains a significant minority of students who find it difficult to engage with school, particularly during the secondary phase, and whose behaviours can lead them to fixed

term and even permanent exclusion from school (Ofsted 2008). This is therefore an area of on-going need for the engagement of Educational Psychologists (EPs).

This chapter outlines the current national context regarding student behaviour in secondary education in England and introduces some of the contributions from psychology in the following areas:

- 1.1 Inclusion and exclusion
- 1.2 Consideration of what data regarding exclusion tells us
- 1.3 Consideration of messages regarding the successful re-integration of disaffected students
- 1.4 Messages for schools: a focus on the emotional and social-relational aspects of education
- 1.5 Summary of chapter

#### 1.1 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION: GUIDANCE TO SCHOOLS

In line with Cooper & Upton (1990), behaviours within school are currently viewed as a 'whole school issue', and policy on behaviour is seen to '*shape the school ethos and make a statement about how the school values and includes all the people in it*' (Whole School Behaviour and Attendance Policy, DfES, 2003). Such a policy is noted to require 'collective support', recognising a need for all members of the school community to be actively involved in devising, monitoring and supporting it. Guidance also noted that a school's behaviour policy should be an integral part of its curriculum and that all schools are teachers of values in addition to knowledge and skills (op. cit.). Following workforce reforms in schools and colleges (see *Reforming and developing the school workforce*: Ofsted, 2007) school staffs now encompass a range of roles, including non-teaching support staff and pastoral staff, particularly in secondary schools. This 'wider workforce' has a particular role in extending the curriculum, providing more care, guidance and support for pupils and taking a

lead in data management to track individual students' progress (Ofsted, 2007). These changes endeavour to embed the ECM agenda.

Students' challenging behaviour in schools can take a variety of forms. 'Low-level disruption' is noted to be the most common form (*The Steer Report*, DfES, 2005) and is an area where schools generally focus their resources. Over the last few years, national strategies have been offered to support schools in this work both through evaluation to identify 'what works' (DfES, 2005) and through resources aimed at building schools' capacity (e.g. *Advice on whole school behaviour and attendance policy*, DfES, 2003; *Improving behaviour and attendance: guidance on exclusion from schools and PRUs*, DCSF, 2008).

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#### 1.1.1 TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

DfES guidance to schools (2003) noted three particular attributions for behaviour presented by students, which is likely to affect action taken by schools. Behaviours can be judged to be due to:

- Straight-forward misconduct;
- A symptom of significant underlying problems;
- The result of provocation through racial harassment or bullying

Advice to schools tends to address the first and third of these points, with little direct advice regarding the identification and manner of addressing the second point. However, DfES guidance does allude to schools' responsibility to take into account the needs of more vulnerable students, including those with special educational needs (SEN – both those with statements and those on the school's own register), those with physical or mental health needs, migrant or refugee students and children in care. Thus there is a recognition that some groups of students are more likely to present with behaviour problems, although no reasons for this assertion are provided other than statistical evidence.

More recent guidance has, however, recognised a '*complex combination of social, emotional and health problems*' that may be involved (DCSF, 2008a,

p.10). It is suggested that a focus should be placed on procedures designed to support students and to pre-empt any escalation of behavioural problems through establishing 'support programmes' to avoid 'a disproportionate number of behaviour and attendance issues arising related to more vulnerable pupils' (DfES, 2003, p.7).

### 1.1.2 MEETING BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS

In order to meet these needs, the guidance suggests that schools should identify an element of the curriculum through which the expectations of the school's behaviour policy can be explicitly translated into teaching and learning. The PHSCE (personal, health, social and community education) curriculum is often identified as the vehicle for this translation. Structured pastoral programmes and periods of support in specific skills (e.g. anger management and positive leadership skills) are also identified as being supportive, although no specific guidance as to their structure or content is provided.

It is this area of behavioural difficulties that reflect 'significant underlying problems' that this thesis is concerned with. Students whose behaviours reflect needs in this area commonly go unrecognised for long periods of time (Parsons, Benns & Howlett, 1994; Parsons 1999) allowing their behaviours to escalate. This can lead to a reduction in the child's learning opportunities and also to periods of fixed-term (or even permanent) exclusion from school.

## 1.2 WHAT EXCLUSION DATA TELLS US

The general rate of permanent exclusions has remained fairly static in recent years. A decade ago (1997/98) total permanent exclusion rates peaked at just over 12,000 per annum, falling to just over 10,000 in 1998/99 (*Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusion from schools*, DfES, 2007). Since that time, they have fluctuated between 9,000 and 10,000 annually. Research has shown variation in schools' willingness to address behavioural difficulties, with a continuum between a 'zero-tolerance' approach and a view of exclusion as 'a last and unproductive resort' (Thomson and Russell, 2007, p.3). Permanent exclusions

from the secondary sector account for the largest part of the variation, suggesting an impact of environmental factors - if within-pupil factors were the prime causal issue, it is likely that there would be more variation in rates across all school settings. However, the onset of adolescence may also be a factor, as outlined below in Chapter 3.

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#### 1.2.1 EXCLUSION RATES

During the academic year 2005/6 there were some 9,170 permanent exclusions from schools in England, representing 0.12% of the total pupil population (or 12 students in every 10,000) (DfES, 2007). Of these permanent exclusions, 87% were from Secondary schools, with peak ages for exclusion for both genders between 12 and 14 years. There is also a marked increase in fixed term exclusion between 11 and 15 years, with a peak at 14 years of age. The report notes the main reasons for exclusions to be due to persistent disruptive behaviour (i.e. an inability to modify behaviours inappropriate to the social context). Around 11% of permanent exclusions (and 23% of fixed-term exclusions) involved verbal abuse and/or threatening behaviour towards an adult.

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#### 1.2.2 GENDER AND EXCLUSION

Boys are more likely than girls to be excluded at all stages of schooling, both for fixed term and permanent exclusions (nearly 4 times and 3 times more likely respectively). However, recent research has found that girls are more likely to be absent from school than boys (Ofsted 2008), suggesting that they may be communicating their difficulties via a different presenting behaviour.

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#### 1.2.3 OVER-REPRESENTATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

The statistics demonstrate that students with certain vulnerabilities are over-represented within school exclusions. Pupils with statements of special educational need are over three times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than other students and there is a raised incidence of both permanent and fixed term exclusions for those with SEN but no statement. In

2005/6, 39 in every 10,000 pupils with statements of SEN and 43 in every 10,000 pupils with SEN without statements received a permanent exclusion in comparison to 5 in every 10,000 pupils with no SEN (DfES, 2007). Over two-thirds of permanently excluded students have a statement of SEN (DCSF, 2008). This strong connection between behaviour leading to exclusion and SEN – particularly with regard to regulation of affect and the development of executive functioning skills – is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

## Being quiet, withdrawn and uninvolved in school lessons

### 1.2.4 THE COSTS OF EXCLUSION

Previous research has outlined the high costs both to the individuals and their families and to wider society of the exclusion of young people from school (Parsons, Benns & Howlett, 1994). Children who are excluded from school are also known to be more likely to be socially excluded and to be known to the Youth Justice system (Gray, 2005; Taylor, 2006).

The need to support schools to address the fundamental underlying difficulties of these children and young people is therefore clear and education professionals have a critical role within this.

### 1.3 WHAT RESEARCH INTO RE-ENGAGING DISAFFECTED STUDENTS TELLS US

Although we can learn about the nature of the difficulties that lead vulnerable students to become excluded, arguably it is more useful to investigate factors which can help the re-engagement of such students, as this may provide information regarding prevention of their disengagement. Ofsted (2008) have recently published such research based on a survey of 29 secondary schools in England which had shown a decrease in unauthorised absence over a two year period (2004 – 2006) alongside a record of sustained good practice in re-engaging disaffected pupils in their learning. They defined the characteristics of disaffection as being one or more of the following behaviours:

- Being aggressive or threatening
- Being regularly non-compliant
- Repeatedly causing low-level disruption
- Being regularly disruptive, challenging or both, leading to repeated incident log entries
- Experiencing recurring fixed-term exclusions
- Being absent for 20% or more of available school sessions
- Being quiet, withdrawn and uninterested in most lessons

Within the sample of almost 33,000 students, 13% were found to be/have been disaffected at one time within the period of review. Of these students, schools managed to re-integrate 78% successfully. The factors the report found to be associated with this success are presented below in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1: FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUCCESSFUL RE-INTEGRATION OF DISAFFECTED STUDENTS (OFSTED 2008: SURVEY OF 29 SECONDARY SCHOOLS)**

Staff shared a commitment to helping students succeed, which was expressed clearly to students and their families. The school ethos valued and respected the needs of individuals. The students felt part of the school

Robust monitoring of academic, personal and social progress, and close collaboration with primary schools and other services for children and young people ensured that students who were likely to become disaffected were identified early. They received appropriate support before and after they entered secondary school

Teaching assistants provided vital support for individuals, helping them to maintain their interest and cope successfully with any crises. This allowed teachers to focus on teaching the whole class

Pastoral support was managed by assigned support staff. They acted as the first point of contact and they directed them to the most appropriate member of staff if they could not deal with the issue themselves

Communication with students and their families was very effective. It ensured that they were fully involved in the process and had confidence in the decisions that were made. Students knew they were listened to and felt they could contribute to decisions about their future. Home-school liaison staff played a critical role

Specific support, such as temporary withdrawal from classes and training in life skills to help students change their attitudes and improve their learning was very effective.

Particular examples discussed in the findings include using school staff to act as 'bridges' between schools on transition (e.g. secondary staff teaching a regular class in the feeder schools) and using feeder schools' information to 'match' students' needs with the skill set and personalities of the receiving school's staff. Provision of additional visits and 'taster sessions' of available support also helped vulnerable students on transition across phases of education.

These findings were echoed in a recent Ofsted study of 28 'good and outstanding' Secondary Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) across 22 Local Authorities (Ofsted 2007, *Establishing Successful Practice in Pupil Referral Units*). These PRUs were noted to '*believe strongly in holistic improvement*' and '*a journey for the individual*' (p 7). Staff were seen to work effectively to build positive relationships and '*believe strongly in pupils' potential*'. The authors provide a quotation from a PRU leader, who sums up the approach as believing that '*a safe, happy and emotionally healthy environment is the foundation stone for learning*' (p.7). The PRUs were also seen to provide focused support on the development of good social skills, resilience and self-control throughout all activities and lessons and this aspect was included in all planning. This was

most effective as it was based on a sound knowledge of the students' individual social and behavioural needs.

It is interesting to note that these areas do not feature within the 'six core beliefs' on which the influential Steer Report (DfES, 2005) was based (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: THE 'SIX CORE BELIEFS' OF THE STEER REPORT (DFES, 2005)
The quality of learning, teaching and behaviour in schools are inseparable issues, and the responsibility of all staff
Poor behaviour cannot be tolerated as it is a denial of the right of pupils to learn and teachers to teach. To enable learning to take place preventative action is the most effective, but where this fails, schools must have clear, firm and intelligent strategies in place to help pupils manage their behaviour
There is no single solution to the problem of poor behaviour, but all schools have the potential to raise standards if they are consistent in implementing good practice in learning, teaching and behaviour management
Respect has to be given in order to be received. Parents and carers, pupils and teachers all need to operate in a culture of mutual regard
The support of parents is essential for the maintenance of good behaviour. Parents and schools each need to have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities
School leaders have a critical role in establishing high standards of learning, teaching and behaviour.

Figure 3 below outlines factors which were found to mitigate against re-engagement in Ofsted's 2008 report:

<b>FIGURE 3: FACTORS FOUND TO MITIGATE AGAINST STUDENTS' RE-ENGAGEMENT INTO SCHOOL (OFSTED, 2008).</b>
Unwillingness on part of parents to work with the school and, in some cases, collusion with the students against the school
External influences and attractions that were more compelling for the students than school (e.g. gangs, criminal activity and drug-taking)
Weaknesses in provision made by the schools and other services for their students

Both positive and negative factors can be seen to hinge, at least in part, on a combination of values, beliefs and relationships. Overall, the approaches that made a difference were associated with making flexible and contingently sensitive choices about the best way to meet the young person's individual needs as communicated through their presenting behaviours (in line with Donnellan et al., 1988). Schools that were most successful '*focused on the causes of disaffection rather than on its effects. As a result, they were better able to meet the needs of individuals*' (Ofsted, 2008 p.7). Psychological perspectives regarding these reported findings are considered below in section 1.4.

#### 1.3.1 A KEY ROLE FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Consistency of approach and the involvement of all staff in developing approaches also contributed to successful re-engagement (Ofsted, 2008). It was noted that staff who were involved in developing procedures were more prepared to '*go the extra mile*' to help individual pupils who, in turn, tended to appreciate the additional support and related more positively to the staff in question. Support staff were noted to have key attributes in the areas of patience, willingness not to pre-judge children or their families, firmness, consistent approaches, high thresholds of tolerance and willingness to give students a second chance. Where specific members of the pastoral support

staff were linked to individual students, the adult was noted to be able to establish a personal link and act as *'a friend, advocate, supervisor, critic and motivator'* (op. cit., p.10). As a Year 11 student reported: *'our key workers are there for us. If you have a problem, you can talk with them'* (op. cit.). Within these positive relationships there was a noticeable reduction in the 'labelling' or the stereotyping of behaviours attributed to the young people, which prevented them from being a barrier. Again, a foster carer's quote shows the impact of this approach: *'He is tagged for burglary but this is not a barrier or an issue for the school. All his life he's never had pride but been told he's a non-achiever. Now he has people who show him they care. His attendance has improved and he's starting to achieve'* (op. cit. p.7).

The building of trust and positive relationships between school, student and family appeared to be a key factor in successful re-engagement, allowing *'difficult as well as positive messages to be communicated'* (op. cit. p.12). This impact of student-teacher relationship can also be apparent even within relatively successful relationships, where very minor relationship difficulties can impact on willingness to engage fully in learning (Page, 2006).

These factors can be considered within the framework of attachment theory, as will be explored in later chapters. It should also be noted, however, how little these factors are connected to more traditional models of behavioural management employed in schools (e.g. behaviourist approaches, focusing on rewards and sanctions) such as those outlined in Figure 4 (after Porter, 2000).

**FIGURE 4: THEORIES OF BEHAVIOUR (AFTER PORTER, 2000)**

<p><b>Limit Setting Approaches</b> (e.g. Assertive Discipline, Cantor &amp; Cantor, 1992)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers have the right to impose order on students.</li> <li>▪ Students 'need' adults to make it clear what we expect of them (Charles, 1999).</li> <li>▪ Positive and negative consequences for individuals and the group as a whole will ensure that students comply with teachers' expectation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Choice Theory</b> E.g. Glasser 1998c</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People behave as they do out of choice. They believe that their chosen behaviour will help meet their needs.</li> <li>▪ A teacher's role is to make it possible for students to make better choices for getting their needs met.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Humanism</b> (E.g. Montessori, Maslow)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students will learn when their learning meets their intellectual, social and emotional needs.</li> <li>▪ The teacher acts as a 'facilitator' to help children learn what interests them and what they need to know. If this is successful, there should be little disruption.</li> <li>▪ If a student's behaviour violates someone's right, this is resolved by listening, being assertive and working with the students to find a solution.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems Theory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focuses on students' relationships rather than on them as individuals.</li> <li>▪ Students get 'stuck' in certain ways of behaving not due to personal 'flaws' but because of how students and teachers relate to each other when disruption occurs.</li> <li>▪ It is possible to change problem behaviour by changing student-teacher interactions.</li> <li>▪ Focus on the teacher's role as it is difficult to alter the students' contribution to the relationship.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behaviourist Approaches (1)</b> Behaviour Modification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Behaviour is learned. It continues because it works – students use it to earn what they want.</li> <li>▪ If you want a behaviour to stop, then you must stop it from working. You can do this either by rewarding an alternative behaviour or by punishing the unwanted behaviour.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Behaviourist Approaches (2)</b> Cognitive Behaviourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This is the same as (1) but also takes account of people's thinking (cognitions) as well.</li> <li>▪ Behaviour is controlled by its consequences AND by emotional state, self esteem, motivation, social setting and developmental level.</li> <li>▪ Intervention is directed at both the consequences (rewards and punishments) of behaviour and at students' thinking and feeling.</li> <li>▪ Students have a more active role in deciding behaviour goals and overseeing their own programme and progress.</li> </ul>

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### 1.3.2 SCHOOLS AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

School staff do not easily recognise their own potential or efficacy for preventing the onset of mental health difficulties or for promoting students' resilience when facing personal difficulties (Oswald, Johnson & Howard, 2003; Gilligan, 2000; Rones & Hoagwood, 2000; Schoon, 2006). A lot of focus can therefore be placed on access to specialist services such as the Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to address concerns for students' mental health. The current Targeted Mental Health in Schools projects (TaMHS; DCSF 2008) will make a specific contribution in this area, but outcomes are not yet available.

### 1.4 MESSAGES FOR SCHOOLS: A FOCUS ON THE EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL-RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

The above reports are thus suggestive of a need for a focus within education on the emotional and social-relational aspects of young people's development when addressing the underlying causes of significantly challenging behaviour and/or mental health issues. The application of psychology to such an area is complex and challenging, but also necessary and potentially rewarding. A wide body of psychological research findings over a considerable period of time (for example, Rutter et al, 1979; Cooper & Upton, 1990; Gray, 2002; Hanko, 2002; Miller, 2003) has addressed this area and is considered below.

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#### 1.4.1 EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND ESD

Gray (2002) suggests that we have experienced an era where emotions tend to be debarred from concepts of professionalism whilst contending that emotions can help us to understand behaviour, even if not to accept it. Faupel (2002) notes an '*undeniable role*' for emotions within human evolution (p.114), underlining their centrality of importance in all situations – including school environments. As Gray notes, '*all difficult behaviour has an emotional component*' (p. 4) and, in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1987), the affective component needs to be addressed before cognitive learning can be engaged. This emotional component can be seen to arise from

either the child or the adult in a school situation, or to be a combination of the two (Cooper & Upton, 1990).

Hanko (2002) discusses the '*emotional experience of teaching*', recognising a need for teachers to have insight into their own emotional state and regulation capacities. Faupel (2002) suggests that if levels of anger could be reduced in both students and staff, problem behaviour would be reduced and there would be less exclusion.

Disaffection, as referred to above, can, Faupel contends, be interpreted as describing students who are '*without affection for school – either for their teachers, as they do not feel valued, or for the 'system', which adversely compares them with others or for tasks which they find either boring, irrelevant or frustrating – certainly not challenging*' (p.116). Geddes (2006) provides a visual representation of this relationship via a triangle formed by Teacher-Student-Task in a classroom situation. Such disaffection can be seen to give rise to a psychological threat (e.g. to sense of worth, value, loveableness), which can then provoke the same kind of physical response as a physical threat (op. cit. p.115; see also Breakwell, 1997; Ziegler, 2002). Emotional factors are thus key influences in teaching and learning situations (Hanko, 2002).

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#### 1.4.2 RELATIONSHIPS AND LEARNING

Wahl (2002, p.64) suggests that as children and young people with emotional, social and behavioural problems (ESBD) experience difficulties in relationship to others, the term '*relationship difficulties*' may perhaps be most apt both in terms of describing the problem and pointing towards any successful intervention. As noted above, adult:student relationships appear pivotal in successful outcomes for disaffected students. Blyth & Milner (1996), in a study of excluded pupils, found a prevalence of teacher behaviours which '*involved more subtle forms of bullying behaviour that can be embarrassing and hurtful and ultimately cause feelings of alienation and social isolation*' (p.137). Shann

(1999), whilst researching links between school culture and school effectiveness, found that the highest achieving schools combined an emphasis on academic learning with a culture of caring (measured via higher pro-social behaviour and lower anti-social behaviour).

#### 1.4.3 POTENTIAL ROLES FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER ADULTS IN SCHOOL

Tirri & Puolimatika (2000) suggest that teachers should be guided to see themselves as ethical professionals and change agents who can make a significant contribution to the lives of their students and to society (p. 158). Hanko (2002) was at the vanguard of such 'therapeutic' teaching approaches, suggesting that whilst teachers are not, nor should they need to be, psychologists or psychotherapists, they can learn to respond more appropriately to children's emotional and social realities. Figure 5 below provides an overview of Hanko's description of therapeutic teaching.

#### FIGURE 5: A SUMMARY OF THERAPEUTIC TEACHING

A pupil's current reactions and patterns of relationships may relate in part to important past experiences (such as being threatened, not feeling valued or accepted) which can be rekindled by a threat or fear perceived in the present;

It is possible for past damaging experiences to be superseded by new representative ones in an educational setting *if* a pupil is helped to perceive himself differently in relation to important others.

Teaching therapeutically thus allows learning-impaired children, together with all others who benefit from their teachers' continuing professional growth, to feel newly valued as individuals and to succeed *socially* as well as *academically*.

(Hanko, 2002, p.31)

There are some signs that moves are being made to support school staff to address the 'underlying issues' of behaviour discussed above. In primary schools, and more recently in secondary schools, resources have been made available which support schools to focus more on intra- and inter-personal issues related to learning. The SEALs materials (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, DCSF, 2008) are based in the five areas of Emotional Intelligence

outlined by Goleman (1994) (Self Awareness (of affect); Self Regulation (of affect); Empathy; Motivation and Social Skills) and build on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (see Gardner, 2006). The scope of the SEALs materials is also systemic, aiming to embed these areas of emotional development within the whole curriculum, rather than addressing them as discrete skills. Sharp (2000) provides an overview as to how such an Emotional Intelligence approach can be applied at a broader (Local Authority) systemic level. Direct teaching and opportunities for reflection are included within the structures offered, including, at primary level, whole-school assemblies and suggested structures for small group work. However, at Secondary level, the materials are less coherent and require more interpretation from school staff. In line with current government policy, the materials are only accessible via internet connection, which has also impacted on their take-up within secondary schools due to the associated access and cost constraints. However, the publication and supported use of these materials in schools is evidence of a growing move towards addressing children and young-people's developmental needs holistically, and recognising the role of their 'inner world' (their thoughts, feelings, beliefs – in terms of attachment theory, their 'inner working model') with regard to their provision and progress in school. This recognition can also be seen to support schools' role as 'first line' providers of good mental health (or 'emotional health and well-being'), an area of some concern with regard to adolescents (Wells, Barlow & Stewart-Brown, 2003; Maughan, Collishaw, Meltzer & Goodman, 2008). However, experience in professional practice suggests a great deal of variation in this type of provision and a continued need to support school development in this area.

#### 1.4.5 ATTACHMENT THEORY AS A POTENTIAL FRAMEWORK FOR HOLISTICALLY CONSIDERING BEHAVIOURS LEADING TO EXCLUSION

One paradigm that appears to encompass, explain and potentially offer proactive solutions for addressing the above issues is that of attachment theory (Bowlby 1969; 1973; 1980; Salter- Ainsworth & Wittig 1969; Salter-Ainsworth et al 1978). Whilst attachment theory is established as a framework for understanding and for the provision of therapeutic interventions within both social work and specialist CAMHS (e.g Howe et al, 1999; Bennett & Nelson, 2008; Nelson & Bennett, 2008; Hughes, 2007; Levy, 2000; Levy & Orlans, 1998), its application is far less well known within education. This study aims to explore whether (and if so, to what extent) education professionals' constructs regarding Secondary School students' behaviour relate to the tenets of attachment theory. This information is critical when considering whether attachment theory could be employed as a framework for supporting staff to work with highly disaffected or challenging young people, both in terms of the current situation and in terms of the potential for staff engaging with theory (i.e. how closely would attachment theory fit with their current construing?). Attachment theory also allows for adults' own life experiences ('*autobiography*') to influence responses to presented behaviours, an area which has been noted to be of significance in previous research (Weiss, 2002), where adults have been found to select theoretical constructs consistent with their own '*autobiographical details*' (p. 11).

In order to be able to consider the potential role for attachment theory within education, it is first necessary to outline the general precepts of the theory together with developments in and applications of the theory in the fifty years since its inception. These will be addressed in the following chapter.

## 1.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER:

- A significant minority of students do not engage successfully with schools. This impacts on their ability to learn and/or on their social inclusion
- Advice provided to schools tends to focus on behaviourist approaches. Little advice focuses on how to assess and address 'underlying needs'
- Research into successful re-engagement of disaffected students and the education of excluded students strongly suggests that interpersonal relationships based on trust and individualised responses are key
- Psychological approaches note the centrality of emotions within both learning and teaching and the student-teacher-task relationship as the space within which these emotions are expressed and contained
- Attachment theory could provide a psychological framework within which the above can be understood in schools and which could be used to inform interventions and approaches. It is therefore useful to explore education professionals' current constructs regarding behaviour to establish whether any footprint of attachment theory is evident.

**CONTEXT AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER**

As this research explores educational professionals' constructs of students' behaviour in relation to attachment theory (Bowlby 1969/1997; 1973/1998; 1980/1998; Salter-Ainsworth & Wittig 1969; Salter-Ainsworth et al 1978) it is useful to consider historical and current aspects of the theory and potential connections with education. This chapter therefore comprises of the following sections:

- 2.1 The basic tenets of classic attachment theory
- 2.2 Attachment theory and the development of capacity for representations of self and other: Internal Working Models
- 2.3 Attachment theory and the regulation of affect
- 2.4 Attachment theory and executive functioning skills
- 2.5 Attachment theory and developmental trauma
- 2.6 Summary of chapter

**2.1 THE BASIC TENETS OF ATTACHMENT THEORY****2.1.1 DEFINITIONS OF ATTACHMENT**

Attachment theory seeks to explain how a person's behaviour is shaped from (or even before) birth by the interaction of their genetically pre-programmed physiological make-up and their environment, in the form of relationships with significant others, usually the parent(s) ('primary caregivers'). Fundamentally, Bowlby defined attachment as '*the bond that ties*'; Ainsworth (Salter-Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton, 1974) expands on this to define attachment as '*an affectional tie that one person or animal forms between himself and another specific one – a tie that binds them together in space and endures over time*' (p.31). This bond

is adaptive as it promotes the survival of the infant (Bowlby, 1969/1997). It can also be seen to shape the earliest templates by which a child comes to understand and interpret the world (op. cit. 1973; 1979; 1980; Siegel, 1999, 2001; Streek-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000; Bretherton & Munholland, 2002).

The bond forms as a result of the caregiver's responses to the child's attachment behaviours (an innate survival mechanism within the human infant by which it seeks to keep its caregiver close by and informed of its needs). Over time, the repeated responses of the caregiver to the infant's signalled need helps the infant to learn to regulate its affective state and, related to the level to which responses have been contingent and sensitive, a level of trust will have developed within the infant regarding the likelihood of help being at hand when it is needed (Bowlby op. cit; Salter-Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969; Salter-Ainsworth et al 1974; Svanberg, 1998; Howe et al, 1999). This trust which an infant builds in its caregiver provides the base from which it can start to investigate its wider surroundings and begin the important process of a lifetime of learning. These main tenets of attachment theory are outlined below in Figure 6.

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#### 2.1.2 THE ROLE OF THE CAREGIVER

The role of the primary caregiver - often referred to within research as being synonymous with the role of the mother, although as the key component of being the primary caregiver is consistency of availability to the infant it could be undertaken by a caregiver of either gender - has been found to be a crucial component in the development of the attachment bond (Salter-Ainsworth et al 1974; Meins et al, 2001; Gerhardt, 2004; Fonagy, 2004; Fonagy, Gergely & Target

**FIGURE 6: BASIC TENETS OF ATTACHMENT THEORY (BOWLBY, 1969; 1973; 1980; (SALTER) AINSWORTH, 1991)**

<p><b>Attachment Behaviours</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attachment behaviours are signals from infants, which include crying and smiling, which 'promote proximity or contact' with a care-giver (Salter-Ainsworth et al. 1974, p.31) which are central to the child's survival.</li> <li>▪ Attachment behaviours tend to be directed increasingly towards those who have principal care of the child who thus become principal attachment figures.</li> <li>▪ Repeated cycles of the infant's behaviour and the caregiver's response build up the child's templates of expectation regarding needs being met.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The role of the caregiver(s)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attachment Theory recognises the reciprocal nature of interaction between caregiver and child, with each person's behaviour being seen to shape that of the other (Ainsworth 1963; Bowlby A&amp;L p.204): 'each has shaped the other' (Bowlby p.333).</li> <li>▪ However, caregivers bring far more complex influences to the relationship due to their pre-existing exposure to multiple relationships and cultural and environmental influences. So there is more variability regarding caregivers' response than infants' in early attachment relationships (Bowlby, p.348).</li> <li>▪ During their second year of life, children tend to direct their attachment behaviours towards more than one figure – 'secondary' attachment figures. Around the age of 3 years onwards children show an increasing ability to remain secure in a strange place in the presence of a secondary attachment figure, though their security is more fragile than when accompanied by their primary attachment figure.</li> <li>▪ Ainsworth (1974, p.38) noted 4 dimensions of maternal behaviour which are significantly related to the organisation of the child's attachment pattern, with the first variable found to be of key significance:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sensitivity/ Insensitivity; 2) Acceptance/ Rejection; 3) Co-operation/ Interference; 4) Accessibility/ Ignoring</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>The Secure Base</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The caregiver with whom the child has formed an attachment bond can be conceptualised as a 'Secure Base' from which the child can explore the world and to which s/he will return in times of need or distress. Ainsworth (Salter-Ainsworth &amp; Wittig, 1969) credited this concept to William Blatz's work regarding 'Security Theory', most of which was unpublished (see Bretherton, 1991, p.12).</li> <li>▪ Exploration of the world is crucial for a baby's development. A caregiver's sensitivity and contingent response to a baby's fears whilst exploring can lead to variation in an infant's willingness to explore.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Patterns of organisation of attachment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Through the repeated signalling of and responses to attachment behaviour, each partner's behaviours impacts on the reciprocal attachment relationship formed.</li> <li>▪ Ainsworth's observational studies noted differences in infants' patterns of organisation of attachment. Rather than trying to order attachment relationships by 'strength' of attachment, she preferred the dimension of 'security' of attachment.</li> <li>▪ The 'Strange Situation Procedure' an 8-stage social-experimental observational scenario was devised (see Salter-Ainsworth &amp; Wittig, 1969; Bowlby, 1969, p.374). Children were placed under the mild stressors of a strange room, the presence of a stranger and then the temporary loss of the mother. The actions of the child, particularly with regard to their reunion with their mother, fell into 3 distinct patterns.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A Secure pattern – the child was able to explore fairly freely in their mother's presence, did not show undue stress during her brief absence and greeted her happily/ was soothed by her on her return;</li> <li>2) An Avoidant pattern – the child showed an apparent disinterest in the mother, including her absence, and showed avoidance of her on her return;</li> <li>3) An Ambivalent pattern – the child vacillated between wanting contact with its mother and rejecting her.</li> </ol> </li> <li>▪ Subsequent research by Mary Main (1986) found evidence of a fourth 'Disorganised' pattern, where the child does not demonstrate any clear goal-corrected behaviours, reflecting a failure of the mother-child partnership to develop any useful everyday strategies for meaningful reciprocal interaction.</li> </ul>

2007). However, the attachment bond is a two-way process, consisting of the infant's signalling of its needs and affective state (attachment behaviours) and the caregiver's response to these signals. Different patterns of interactions between the two have been found to lead to different outcomes in terms of the organisation of attachment pattern (Salter-Ainsworth et al 1978; Howe et al, 1999; Meins et al 2001).

### 2.1.3 ORGANISATION OF ATTACHMENT PATTERN: SECURE AND INSECURE ATTACHMENT

Where the caregiver is able to recognise and meet the infant's needs in a timely manner the majority of the time, the infant begins to associate feeling a need with the need being met by a particular person, thus laying the foundation for a secure attachment bond formed on trust (Bowlby 1979; Salter-Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton, 1974; Siegel, 2001; Meins et al, 2001).

However, where this consistency of care is lacking or is not sensitively matched to the infant's needs, an insecure attachment bond may form, where the infant lacks trust that its needs will be met. The infant, who is pre-programmed for survival, develops a pattern of attachment behaviours which are most likely to help it to have its needs met. Where a child's carer tends not to meet a child's needs, either through not recognising them, through pre-occupation or through being dismissive, the child is likely to use attachment behaviours less often and to become quiet and passive – an 'Avoidant' pattern of interaction (see, for example, Geddes, 2006; Howe et al, 1999). In contrast, where a child learns that its primary caregiver may or may not respond to its signals appropriately to meet its needs, the child develops a pattern of frequent and persistent signalling of its needs and the attachment behaviours are not easily switched off by the caregiver's response, even when they are attuned to the child's needs – an 'Ambivalent' pattern of interaction (op. cit.).

These patterns (Secure, Insecure-Avoidant and Insecure-Ambivalent) were identified through a combination of intensive observation over time and an experimental approach (the 'Strange Situation' experiment, outlined in

Appendix 1) by Salter-Ainsworth and colleagues (see, for example, Salter-Ainsworth et al 1978). Main & Solomon (1986) identified a further pattern of attachment relationship organisation appertaining to infants whose early experiences had been so chaotic, neglectful or abusive that they had failed to develop any predictable pattern of attachment interaction – a ‘Disorganised’ pattern.

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#### 2.1.4 PREVALENCE OF ATTACHMENT PATTERN ORGANISATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

This pattern of interactions, resultant from early attachment experiences, can be seen to implicate on a child’s ability to engage with learning in general and a school environment. Figures vary as to the proportion of people who demonstrate security of attachment. Howe et al (1999, p.33) notes that cross cultural studies have found a secure pattern of attachment to apply to around 55 - 60% of the population with some differences at cultural levels regarding relative proportions within insecure attachment patterns. Thus, despite the Secure attachment pattern being the modal organisation of attachment relationships, there remain a significant proportion of people whose attachments are insecure, with the concomitant implications in terms of their regulation of affect and trust and security that their needs will be recognised and met in a timely manner, all of which can be seen to impact within teaching and learning relationships (Geddes, 2006; Bomber, 2007; Delaney, 2009).

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#### 2.1.5 DEVELOPMENTS IN ATTACHMENT THEORY

Developments in attachment theory have moved in a variety of directions (Bretherton, 1991; Main, 1999) since Bowlby’s initial publications. ‘Modern’ attachment theory (Schore & Schore, 2008) links classic attachment theory within developments in other disciplines, particularly in the area of neuropsychology, where innovations in in-vivo brain imaging have helped to link developmental psychology, attachment theory and brain development at the neuronal level (see Siegel, 1999; 2001; Schore 2001a,b&c; 2002; 2003a & b; Cozolino, 2006; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). The connection between

development of attachment and a child's ability to develop representational skills (crucial to the development of internal working models – the representation and understanding of self-other and the relationship between them), its ability to regulate its emotional state (a frequently cited issue relating to exclusion from school) are discussed below, followed by the role of attachment within the development of executive functioning skills which underpin so much of academic progress. Finally, an outline of Developmental Trauma, which is being suggested as a potential clinical diagnostic criteria for young people whose development is impaired as a result of trauma via attachment relationships (Streek-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000; Cairns, 2002; van der Kolk, 2005) is provided.

## **2.2 ATTACHMENT THEORY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPACITY FOR REPRESENTATIONS OF SELF AND OTHER: INTERNAL WORKING MODELS**

One of the challenges for developmental psychology (and other allied disciplines) is to understand the journey infants take from being dysregulated entities with no sense of their own mind, let alone others' minds, into beings with a developed sense of self, an ability to appreciate the mind of another and to make use of that information to plan and predict behaviour (an internal working model). In order to manage the reciprocal nature of human interactions we therefore have to be able to hold representations both of our own world and of others' worlds, and, crucially, the associated inferences we draw from our models of others' models of the world (Fonagy, Gergely & Target 2007, p289). Sigel (1999) suggests that this emergence can be seen to follow several stages, with initial direct sensory experience leading to a sense of agency in the world and thence to a subjective sense of self (as distinct from 'other').

The capacity for 'Theory of Mind' (the ability to recognise another's understanding and point of view as being different from one's own) has been postulated to develop from an initial ability to share a focus of attention leading to both social understanding and language skills on which a capacity for self-reflection and representational skills are reliant (Fonagy, Gergely & Target,

2007). A wealth of research exists which suggests that between the ages of around two and six years, children are increasingly able to develop elaborate, sophisticated and accurate 'second-order' representations or internal working models of both their own and others' behaviours and their own internal state (see, for example, Waters & Waters, 2006; Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985; Fonagy, Gergely & Target, 2007). Internal working models can be conceptualised as an *'inner map of the world... [which] ... determines what image a child has of him/herself, caregivers and the way the world works'* (Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000, p.906). These internal working models can also incorporate both explicit and implicit rules for social behaviours and interactions (Marvin & Britner, 2008, p.284).

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#### 2.2.1 NATURE OR NURTURE?

Whilst the link between attachment organisation and the development of mental representational capacity is currently correlational within research, Fonagy (2004b, p.106) postulates that it will increasingly be found to be causal, such that it is the attachment organisation which will be seen to drive the development of representational capacity. Fonagy, Gergely & Target (2007, p.299) note that brain processes involved in both attachment and mentalisation are suggestive of a functional link at a neurological level. Main (1999, p.853) supports this view, noting that the attachment behavioural system is best conceived as *'standing first in the hierarchy of infants' behavioural repertoire due to the immediacy of its tie to survival'*. Fonagy contends that the evolutionary adaptive function of attachment exceeds that of physical survival, however, and extends into the provision of an environment in which social understanding may be developed (Fonagy, 2004b; Fonagy, Gergely & Target, 2007).

However, it is not currently clear to what extent innate factors are also involved (Rutter, 2003). Gallese, Keysers & Rizzolatti (2004) noted that observation of a person performing an action automatically triggers activity of the same brain areas in the observer as those involved with actual physical performance of

that action. This innate, genetically pre-wired ability is referred to as the '*mirror neuron system*' (op. cit.). Whilst the activation of neurons is associated with the setting-up of neural pathways and networks, (Hebb, 1949; Bechtel & Abrahamsen, 1991; Siegel, 1999, 2001; Ziegler, 2002), it does not necessarily follow that such mirror activation is sufficient in itself for learning and development of the type necessary for representational skills to ensue. It is also difficult to account for the attribution of such psychological concepts as goals or intentions via a mirror-neuron system alone (Fonagy, Gergely & Target, 2007). Even if such psychological aspects could be recognised by this mechanism, there would no accounting for the ability to make a distinction between self and other in such circumstances (op. cit). It therefore seems likely that social, environmental components interact with genetically pre-programmed capacities.

Bokhorst et al (2003) note that whilst temperamental differences are largely genetic they may lead to different environmental responses, for example, in terms of caregiving, which can lead to divergence in attachment pattern developed by children within the same family, even twins.

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#### 2.2.2 THE ROLE OF THE CARE-GIVER IN DEVELOPING MENTALISATION SKILLS AND AN INTEGRATED, AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SENSE OF SELF.

Initially, the child builds up a sense of 'self-and-other' through non-verbal feedback signals from carers (Siegel, 1999; 2001). When this non-verbal feedback is emotionally attuned communication, the sharing of this communication allows the child to develop a sense of 'feeling felt' (Siegel, 2001 p.84), which itself forms the basis of the development of a secure attachment with that connecting adult. As the child develops, the role of language takes on an increasing importance via reflective dialogues (Siegel, 1999; Meins, 2001; Fonagy, Gergely & Target, 2007). Verbal feedback from caregivers, both incidental and direct, helps the child to build a vocabulary of emotional states and to identify their range of feelings. This vocabulary allows thought and conversation about these emotions and builds on the development of the

autobiographical self by providing a '*self-narrative*', which can explain and '*tell the story*' of the child's experiences before, during and after a particular event. This is the beginning of the child's capacity to live across past, present and future rather than react to immediate stimuli in the present with no wider frame of reference (Siegel, 2001; Gerhardt, 2004, p.52; Cairns 2002).

Whilst there are clear links between positive adult emotion towards a child and development of an infant's capacity for mentalisation, it should be noted that negative emotion could be an equally powerful facilitator (Newton, Reddy & Bull, 2000). It should also be noted that the impact of caregiver (and other) relationships on mentalisation development is not directly causal. Rather, it is highly complex and likely to involve numerous aspects of relational influences in everyday life including language exposure and content, access to discourse(s), quality of emotional interaction, negotiation of conflict, humour, access to discourse with peers and type and amount of pretend play amongst others (op. cit.).

As each integrated layer of the development of representational capacity is reliant upon external interactions and environment, the role of the care-giver is, once again, a central facet. Siegel (2001, p.86) notes that an integrated sense of self is reliant upon the contingent, collaborative communication involved with secure attachments. Coherent interpersonal relationships lead in turn to coherent integration of experience that is the root of adaptive self-regulation (as outlined below).

### 2.2.3 INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF PATTERN OF ATTACHMENT ORGANISATION

A caregiver's attachment pattern is known to be highly predictive of a child's later attachment pattern, although the mechanism by which this transmission occurs is not clear. However, the ability of adults to self-reflect has been found to be strongly positively correlated with attachment security. Indeed, reflective functioning capacity was more predictive of a child's attachment security than was the adult's classification of attachment (Fonagy et al 1991; Sharp, Fonagy & Goodyer 2006).

Meins et al (2001) also reported that whilst all scores of maternal sensitivity were positively correlated with security of attachment, '*appropriate mind-related comments*' was the only significant predictor of infant-mother security of attachment, including allowing all three insecure attachment patterns to be distinguished from one another (p.644). Meins and colleagues note that this finding echoes Ainsworth's original comments about caregivers' sensitivity being couched in terms of '*appropriate response*' to an infant's needs, further suggesting that '*the problem with maternal sensitivity as a predictor of attachment security lies not in its original definition but in the way it has come to be operationalised*' (op. cit. p.645).

Additionally, Fonagy (2004b, p.106) notes that:

*"Mind-mindedness" and security of attachment in the caregiver appear to go together and are associated with a coherent working model of the child that is richly imbued with representations of internal states.*

Sharp et al (2006, p.209) suggest that a caregiver's capacity to be able to reflect back accurately a child's internal psychological state may provide necessary feedback to enable the child to develop its own effective social-cognitive strategies. Parents' ability to be reflective was also held to be indicative of their own emotional availability within the relationship, as opposed to parents who have unresolved emotional needs and thus can 'enmesh' the

child in their own world (ambivalence) or be distant, cold and generally lacking in affect (avoidance) (Morley Williams, O'Callaghan & Cowie, 1995, p.50). As Bokhorst et al (2003, p.1770) note, children benefit from consistently sensitive parenting, but can be negatively affected by both inconsistently sensitive or consistently insensitive care.

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#### 2.2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF ADULT SENSITIVITY TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS IN LATER CHILDHOOD

Fonagy et al (1994) theorised that caregivers with such abilities can support a child's resilience to adversity due to their child developing improved psychological adjustment skills. Research found a link between mothers' accuracy in identifying their 7 to 11 year old child's attributions regarding mental states and their psychosocial scores (once IQ and gender were accounted for) (Sharp et al, 2006). Sharp et al suggest that this is indicative of a link between maternal reflective function and the development of social-emotional skills in middle childhood. However, it was not established whether or not this link was due to earlier exposure or to continued exposure to maternal mind-mindedness capacity. Sharp et al noted that only 'modest' maternal accuracy (around 50%) was necessary for healthy development, reminiscent of the adage that parenting has to be 'good enough' rather than perfect.

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#### 2.2.5 THE BENEFITS OF SECURE ATTACHMENT AND CAPACITY FOR MENTALISATION

Secure attachment can be seen to be a benefit for a child both in terms of earlier development of mentalisation skills and through the stronger establishment of an '*agentive sense of self*' which is associated with a ready predisposition to learn from attached adults (Fonagy, Gergely & Target, 2007, p.313). Fonagy (2004, p.106) argues that where children have a secure attachment they are more rapid in their acquisition of such skills as they are imbued with the capacity to attend selectively to critical aspects of social interactions. In terms of Pedagogic Stance theory, where it is postulated that adults provide non-verbal signals which mark communication important for the child's learning, (Gergely & Csibra, 2005; Gergely 2007b; Fonagy, Gergely &

Target, 2008) the ostensive cues that adults provide to children in school will continue to indicate the 'trustworthiness' and relative importance of the information communicated.

Schools can also potentially provide a protective environment for students with an insecure organisation of attachment. Morley Williams, O'Callaghan & Cowie (1995 p.50) note that '*because the child's internal working model of each relationship is separate, the existence of a supportive and responsive adult, i.e. a teacher or an EP, can still help to foster within the child a secure sense of self if this is unavailable at home.*' The capacity for mind-mindedness and sensitive, contingent response of adults within schools can be seen to mirror and either reinforce or challenge the existing Internal Working Models of students with regard to their earlier experiences of relationships via their primary caregivers.

It is thus the integrated sense of self, of a 'coherent life narrative' that can be seen to be at the heart of adaptive and functional development via an internal working model.

Simultaneously, and possibly via the same processes of development of an attachment bond, an infant develops an ability to regulate its own affect, as outlined below.

### 2.3 ATTACHMENT THEORY AND THE REGULATION OF AFFECT

The link between one's affective state and propensity to learn is well recognised by all learners and yet only recently, with the advent of the SEALs materials (*Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning*, DCSF 2008, based on Goleman's [1994] five areas of emotional literacy) has this link been overtly recognised nationally within educational provision. Personal experience in professional practice also suggests that whilst this link is now made explicit, practice within schools currently varies as to its influence. However, as Siegel (1999) points out, emotion is '*omnipresent*' and distinctions made between cognitive and emotional processes are artificial and can serve to impair our

efforts to understand mental processes. Mental processes involve both cognitive processes (such as the appraisal or evaluation of meaning) and physical changes (such as within endocrine, autonomic and physiological systems) of which we are far less consciously aware (op. cit.). Our cognitive capacities are thus built upon and tied to our 'emotional' brain (Siegel, 1999; Ziegler, 2002; Gerhardt, 2004). Hence our dual capacities to regulate and to be regulated by our emotional state are of critical importance, not least in the area of academic learning.

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#### 2.3.1 A NEUROLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF REGULATION

Our bodies are regulated by a variety of chemicals. Serotonin helps our bodies to be relaxed, norepinephrine enables us to be alert and cortisol, which is generally raised in the early morning, helps us to generate energy for the day, sinking to a lower level by late afternoon - hormones are thus important to the normal rhythmic flow of our daily lives (Gerhardt, 2004 p.58).

As part of its survival systems, the body is pre-programmed with a stress-response mechanism which is actioned when the normal homeostatic mechanisms within the body are overwhelmed by situations of threat which cause stress to the systems (Gerhardt, 2004; Schore 2003).

As such functions are key to our everyday experiences, it has been suggested that adults within education should have some basic understanding of the mechanisms involved and their potential impact (Fischer & Daley, 2007).

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#### 2.3.2 WHAT IS STRESS?

Firstly, however, it is useful to consider what is meant by 'stress'. We are all too familiar with the adult version of stress – the feeling of having insufficient resources or support to cope with the demands being placed on us. However, whilst infants do not have to contend with deadlines, mortgage repayments or departmental directives, infant stress can be seen as being tied to survival itself (Gerhardt, 2004). Babies are totally dependent on their caregivers for food, warmth, shelter and protection, so a high level of stress is evident if the

caregiver does not respond quickly to provide both the physical and emotional care they are in need of: *'stress for babies may even have the quality of trauma. Without the parents' help, they could in fact die'* (op. cit., p.70). Thus, for an infant, stress involves experiencing a high state of arousal that is proving difficult to manage, particularly if there is no respite from the stressor. For older children and adolescents stress can also be psychological in nature (Geddes, 2006; Bomber, 2007; Cairns, 2002).

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### 2.3.3 THE ROLE OF CORTISOL

When stress is experienced the hormone cortisol is produced (Ziegler, 2002; Gerhardt, 2004). Gerhardt (p.61) describes the role of cortisol as *'putting the brakes'* on other non-immediately essential bodily functions and processes such as the immune system or learning systems whilst allowing the body to concentrate on addressing and combating threat. It therefore generally performs an important adaptive, survival-oriented role (McEwen, 2000 p.172). However, if cortisol is generated too frequently or for long periods of time (i.e. if the perceived threat is not eliminated but is allowed to continue), cortisol remains within the body for long periods of time.

Where an infant experiences sub-optimal parenting, abuse and/or neglect, high levels of cortisol are released into its system. The effects of too much cortisol have been described as *'toxic'* (Gerhardt, 2004). Mogghadam et al (1994) have found that neuronal loss can be a result of excessive cortisol. This impacts directly on the development of the brain, including areas associated with the system involved in soothing affect (op. cit.; Ziegler, 2002; Gerhardt, 2004; Schore, 2002; 2003; van der Kolk, 2001; 2006, van der Kolk et al 2005).

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### 2.3.4 THE IMPACT OF CORTISOL IN SETTING A DEFAULT STRESS RESPONSE LEVEL

Furthermore, as Gerhardt (2004, p.84) notes, there is a weight of evidence accumulated which shows that the stress response can be set to a *'default'* setting based on early social experience, in which the capacity of primary caregivers to provide appropriate, contingent care is clearly implicated. The

default level of the stress response can reflect an optimal or a hypo- or hyper-responsive setting, and associated cortisol levels can have permanent effects on the development of the infant's central nervous system. Thus the stress response is one of the key factors affecting regulation of emotion and is already largely developed before a child reaches school-age.

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#### 2.3.5 THE ROLE OF THE PRIMARY CAREGIVER IN DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL REGULATION: EXTERNAL REGULATION PROMOTES INTERNAL REGULATION

The role of the primary caregiver in this area is crucial. Gerhardt (2004, p.23) provides a very useful outline of how primary caregivers 'teach' their babies self-regulation through the process of externally provided regulation. This external regulation is predicated on contingent, responsive caregiving, recognising and meeting the baby's needs in a timely and appropriate manner, echoing Ainsworth's notion of attuned, responsive caregiving. Sroufe et al (2005) suggest that variations in attachment pattern may be thought of as variations in dyadic regulation of emotion and behaviour (p.245; see also Sroufe, 1996).

This places a difficulty on relationships where the caregiver, for whatever reason, is unable to 'feel with' their baby due to their difficulties in recognising and regulating their own feelings. This personal difficulty with self-regulation is then perpetuated in their interaction with the baby and thus 'passes on' the regulatory difficulty to the baby itself.

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#### 2.3.6 ADULTS IN SCHOOL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGULATION OF AFFECT

There are many parallels here between the role of the primary caregiver and the teacher's secondary caregiving role in the classroom – the teacher's own ability to regulate emotional stress can be seen as a key factor in whether or not an insecurely attached child with poor self-regulation can be included within a classroom (Breakwell, 1997; Leyden, 2002; Hanco, 2002). Whilst the known

incidence of abusive caregiving remains thankfully low, schools and teachers will regularly encounter young people who have experienced such care or, more frequently, sub-optimal caregiving. This is therefore an area of considerable importance within education.

#### 2.3.7 EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND LEARNING

The ability to 'switch off' the production of the stress hormone cortisol at exactly the correct moment appears to be the key to emotional management – switching it off too soon leads to the suppression of emotions whereas allowing it to continue for too long leads to 'flooding' by unregulated emotion (Gerhardt, 2004). Within a classroom situation this ability can be seen to impact on learning, socialisation with peers and on relationships with adults (i.e. teachers and support staff). Dysregulated behaviour – seen as disruption, tantrums, outbursts of aggression or disaffection and failure to engage – is directly linked both to exclusions (as outlined above) and to reduced opportunities and skills for learning as outlined in the following section. Significant difficulties with regulation of affect are also implicated in the newly emerging area of research investigating Developmental Trauma (van der Kolk, 2001; 2006), outlined in the final section of this chapter.

#### 2.4 ATTACHMENT THEORY AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

Attachment pattern, as outlined above, can be seen as being central in an individual's approach both to the necessary social interactions in a school setting and to their interaction with teaching and learning situations (Geddes, 2006; Bomber, 2007). In this closed system, the attachment patterns of both the teachers and the students are factors within interactions, as is the cognitive development of the student (in a 'dance' of attachment: see, for example, Goldsmith, 2009). The internal working models of each, in terms of their schemas of self-other and the interaction between them, can be seen as a crucial facet in a successful experience of school at any age. This section aims to explore these issues by considering the impact of early life experiences, mediated via attachment processes, on the capacity of the brain to develop

higher order cognitive skills, particularly in the areas of executive functions and their link to learning.

#### 2.4.1 AN OUTLINE OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive function skills develop from birth through to late adolescence and their development is sited mainly within the frontal and pre-frontal cortex areas of the brain, although other cortical areas are also involved (Allen, 2007). Executive functions can be described as '*psychological attributes that are supervisory, controlling and organisational*' (Stirling, 2002, p.208). They underpin problem-solving skills necessary for every day learning and living although they are rarely taught directly in schools and do not currently form part of the national curriculum. However, the need for such skills is fundamental to many aspects of the curriculum. Meltzer (2007, p.xi) notes that whilst '*fuzzy definitions*' of executive functioning abound, most definitions include many if not all of the following elements:

- Goal setting and planning
- Organisation of behaviours over time
- Flexibility
- Attention and memory systems that guide these processes (e.g. working memory)
- Self regulatory processes such as self-monitoring

Dawson and Guare (2004) suggest a dual skill set regarding executive functioning: those necessary to achieve a goal or solve a problem (planning organisation, time management etc.) and those necessary to control behaviour in order that the skills can be applied (response inhibition, self-regulation of affect, flexibility etc.). Both of these skill sets can be seen to be affected by a young person's internal working model and, in a school setting, by that of the adult supporting their learning (Geddes, 2006; Allen, 2007).

## 2.4.2 EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

A lot of research and intervention-based practise regarding executive functioning has centred around children in care and those placed for adoption due to an increased likelihood of their having experienced neglectful or abusive early care (see, for example, Allen, 2007; Lansdown, Burnell & Allen, 2007; Dawson & Guare, 2004; Jackson, 2001). Children who have developed internal working models which were adaptive for sub-optimal caregiving circumstances can find it difficult to change their internal working model and to regulate their affect appropriately for a safer environment – for example, they can remain hyper-vigilant and find it more difficult to access higher order cognitive processes necessary for memory, language and social interaction as they are poised for ‘fight or flight’ reactions (Howe et al, 1999; Cairns, 2002; Geddes, 2006; Bomber, 2007). Indeed, such is the impact that extreme neglect or active abuse can have on children that it is seen to have the quality of trauma (Cairns, 2002; van der Kolk, 2001; 2006; van der Kolk & Courtois, 2005; Ziegler, 2002) which impacts on all aspects of a child’s development, not least in the arena of education.

## 2.5 ATTACHMENT THEORY AND DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA

### 2.5.1 ATTACHMENT EXPERIENCES AND TRAUMA

In the United States of America, increasingly in concert with practitioners in the United Kingdom, there is a movement for a new clinical diagnostic criterion of ‘Developmental Trauma Disorder’ which encompasses the holistic impact of early trauma on a child’s development (see, for example, van der Kolk, 2005; Cook et al, 2005; Allen, 2007). This is due to a combination of an inability for factors associated with the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder sufficiently to represent the presentation of those children who have suffered extreme neglect or abuse and recent developments in associated fields (e.g. neuropsychology and neuropsychobiology) which have demonstrated the interconnection of experience of early relationships and environment with development and behavioural presentation in attachment contexts (Schoré,

2003; Siegel, 1999; Perry, 2002; Streek-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000; Cairns, 2002; Gerhardt, 2004; Fonagy, 2004a).

Pearlman & Courtois (2005, p.451) provide a succinct overview of the nature of this trauma and its connection to attachment:

*Studies investigating the quality of early attachment experiences between caregivers and children on neurophysiology and later mental health and emotional disturbance have found that seriously disrupted attachment without repair or intervention for the child can, in and of itself, be traumatic, as the child is left psychologically alone to cope with his or her heightened and dysregulated emotional states, thus creating additional trauma.*

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#### 2.5.2 IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA

The impact of such developmental trauma, sited within attachment, can be seen to be pervasive. There is increasing realisation that psychological trauma and stress can affect actual brain development at a structural level (DeBellis et al, 2002; Lansdown, Burnell & Allen, 2007) which, as noted above, can impact on the development of areas such as regulation of affect, identity formation and development of executive function skills (Schore, 2003; Siegel 1999). Indeed, Cook et al (2005) found that the domains of impairment in children exposed to complex trauma included: attachment; biology; dissociation; behaviour control; cognition and self-concept. van der Kolk (2005) suggests that children with developmental trauma experience functional impairment in the areas of education, familial and peer relationships, and in legal and vocational areas – or, within the *Every Child Matters* framework (DfES, 2004), within each of the five key outcomes strived for.

Streek-Fischer & van der Kolk (2000, p.909) provide an overview of the impact of such developmental trauma and an outline of how such children and young people can be doubly disadvantaged – firstly by their earliest attachment experiences and then by responses to the impact resultant from their learned models of interacting:

*'at the core of traumatic stress is an inability to modify the impact of the overwhelming events. ... In response to reminders of the trauma (sensations, physiological states, images, sounds, situations) they behave as if they were traumatised all over again. Unless caregivers understand the nature of such re-enactments they are liable to label the child as 'oppositional', 'rebellious', 'unmotivated' and 'antisocial'. Many problems of chronically traumatised children can be understood as efforts to minimise the objective threat and to regulate their emotional distress'.*

Streek-Fischer and van der Kolk (2000, p.905) note that a *'lack of capacity for emotional self-regulation is probably the most striking feature of these chronically traumatised children'* and outlined the probable negative outcomes of untreated developmental trauma:

*If not prevented or treated early children are likely to grow up to lead traumatised and traumatising lives. Their problems with affect modulation are likely to lead to impulsive behaviour, drug abuse and interpersonal violence. Their learning problems interfere with their becoming productive members of society (p.915).*

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### 2.5.3 DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA AND SCHOOLS

For children and young people who have experienced attachment-related trauma in their early life experience, school can be a positive and therapeutic factor (Schoon, 2006; Hanco, 2002). However, as Peake (2006) notes, *'education is largely based on the assumption that most children are able, willing, and supported to take up education opportunities'* (p.98). Adults working in schools vary in their expectations regarding working with such young people and in their capacity – linked to their own internal working models of attachment – to build the necessary positive relationships. Pearlman & Courtois (2005, p. 453) note within clinical approaches a need for 'RICH' therapeutic relationships (consisting of Respect, Information, Connection and Hope). It is within the context of a relationship that intervention can take place –

neither the relationship nor the intervention is sufficient on its own to effect change (Wahl, 2002, p.64).

Pearlman & Courtois note that within a therapeutic context the therapist needs to be *'capable of secure attachment ... [and have] ... enough affective attunement and competence to engage in relational repair with the client whenever attachment disruption occurs'*. Whilst adults in schools are not trained therapists and there is no expectation or suggestion within this thesis that they should be, there are echoes of a therapeutic relationship within their own relationships with young people, particularly given their status as *'secondary caregivers'* within an attachment perspective as outlined above. van der Kolk (2006, p. 279) outlines the basic role for adults working with children with developmental trauma: *'The caregiver needs to figure out what is going on and needs to change the conditions in order to restore the homeostasis of the child'*. With regard to adults working in schools, there is no reason why their relationships should not be *'RICH'* and, as outlined above in Chapter 1, Hanko (2002) notes a possible role for adults in *'therapeutic teaching'*.

Schools and education professionals can therefore be seen to have an important role within adolescents' lives, particularly for those who do not have the protective benefit of a secure internal working model of attachment or those who have developmental trauma as a result of negative early attachment experiences. The following chapter will consider the impact of adolescence on attachment and will focus on the implications of attachment theory within secondary school environments.

## 2.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

- Attachment theory is based on extensive research initially undertaken by John Bowlby (1969/1997; 1973/1998; 1980/1998; 1988; 1979/2005) and Mary Ainsworth (see for example, Salter-Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969). Attachment promotes survival and consists of a bond forged between the infant and its primary caregiver(s) which endures over time and is often a source of great joy.
- New born babies are pre-programmed with attachment behaviours to alert caregivers to their needs. Care-givers' responses vary. The interaction between a child's needs and their needs being met in an attuned way by the caregiver forms a pattern of expectation. Such a pattern, involving self, other and the relationship between them, forms the basic template for understanding of all relationships (an Internal Working Model).
- Different patterns, varying in terms of their security of attachment, were found via the Strange Situation procedure (Salter-Ainsworth et al, 1978). Insecure patterns include 'avoidant' and 'ambivalent' patterns. Main & Solomon (1986) later described a 'disorganised' presentation, where no clear pattern had been established due to a lack of predictability within the caregiver-child relationship;
- The security of a child's attachment affects their willingness to explore their environment ('secure base' behaviour). This can impact on them within a school environment in terms of relationships, behaviour and learning.
- Attachment theory has been explored and further built on across a variety of academic and social disciplines, particularly in terms of its centrality in the development of functions such as regulation of affect, representational skills and executive functioning skills, all of which impact on a child's successful engagement in learning and school.
- Developmental trauma is a term which has recently been coined to describe the physical, psychological and social impact resultant from highly negative early attachment experiences, often as a result of severe neglect or abuse over a period of time.

## CONTEXT

The link between attachment theory and the Early Years Classroom or pre-school setting is easily drawn and is likely to fit well with education practitioners' frameworks for understanding a child's presenting strengths and areas of need. Throughout primary school education a child's relationships are generally focused on one or two key adults within school at a time, usually the class teacher and nursery nurse at foundation stage and, increasingly, a support assistant within the classroom. Thus their needs for security of attachment are both recognised and largely provided for.

The move into the secondary phase of education, the focus area for this study, is usually undertaken at the start of Year 7 (chronological age eleven years). It brings large changes in school experience for the child, not least in terms of adults' availability as a secure base or secondary attachment figure. Students are generally part of a much larger organisation and usually are required to form relationships with a wider range of adults and peers (Bomber, 2009). The curricula demands also continue combined with changes through which the curriculum is delivered. In addition to this, over their time in secondary schools children are developing into adolescence with the associated social, physical and emotional development (Erikson, 1959/1980; Strauch, 2003; Allen, 2008) and their impact on experience of school. Whilst it is outside the scope of this thesis to address these issues directly, they provide useful context when considering attachment during the adolescent period. This chapter sets out to explore the nature of attachment organisation in adolescence and its likely relevance to the school setting.

## OUTLINE OF CHAPTER

The following areas will be considered:

- 3.1 The nature of adolescents' attachment
- 3.2 The stability of organisation of attachment into adolescence
- 3.3 Factors affecting change of attachment pattern over time
- 3.4 Maintaining a secure attachment pattern
- 3.5 Moving from an insecure to a secure pattern
- 3.6 The impact of adolescence
- 3.7 The role of the caregiver in adolescence
- 3.8 Adolescent peer relationships
- 3.9 Risk and resilience
- 3.10 The role of schools
- 3.11 Summary of chapter

### 3.1 THE NATURE OF ADOLESCENTS' ATTACHMENTS

A lot of research has centred on the stability of attachment organisation across the lifespan (Grossman, Grossman & Waters, 2005; Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985; Murray-Parke, Stevenson-Hinde & Marris, 1991; Sroufe et al 2005; Waters et al, 2000b; Dozier et al, 2005; Weinfield, Sroufe & Egeland, 2000). However, it is important to note issues both regarding the nature of attachment across the lifespan and associated issues regarding both conceptualising and measuring attachment at various life stages. One key change with regard to attachment in adolescence is that of the adolescent's ability to hold both working models relating to specific attachment relationships (as outlined above) and general working models of attachment, whereas in childhood the narrower number of relationships experienced tends to focus on direct experience of individual relationships (Allen & Land, 1999; Allen, 2008). As Ross & Spinner (2001) note, these two varieties of working models can be different within the same individual. However, research does not always define the basis of the internal working model being addressed (Kerns, 2008).

Furthermore, Allen & Land (1999) suggest that, before considering security of attachment in adolescence, it is first necessary to define what is meant by the terms 'secure' and 'insecure' for adolescents, who differ from infants in that they have developed firstly a characteristic *strategy* for dealing with attachment related thoughts; secondly, *specific memories* and representations of interactions with attachment figures and thirdly, *ongoing relationships* with their attachment figures.

Buist, Reitz and Dekovic (2008) explored individual differences in attachment quality in adolescence. They noted four potential explanations for such differences – characteristics of the adolescent, characteristics of the attachment figure, the specific attachment relationship and the family as a whole. Overall they noted that whilst all four provided a significant contribution differences were best explained by the adolescent's internal working model and by unique relationship-specific characteristics (p.442).

### 3.2 THE STABILITY OF ORGANISATION OF ATTACHMENT INTO ADOLESCENCE

Lewis, Feiring & Rosenthal (2000, p.715) note that there continues to be a strong belief that attachment classification *should* be stable across the life-span (emphasis added). They suggest that this belief rests on the idea that attachment representation is outside of consciousness and is resistant to change.

However, research has reported mixed messages regarding such continuity over time. Figure 7 provides an overview of the main messages accrued from a study of literature in this area. Longitudinal studies investigating continuity of infant attachment patterns have tended to focus on comparison of Strange Situation classifications in infancy with later Adult Attachment Inventory (AAI, George, Kaplan & Main, 1984) classifications in the same individuals (see, for example,

**FIGURE 7: STUDIES OF CONTINUITY OF ATTACHMENT CLASSIFICATION ACROSS CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE / EARLY ADULTHOOD**

Author(s)	Participants and measures (where known)	Number of participants	Main Findings
Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell & Albersheim (2000)	White Middle Class Comparison of Strange Situation with AAI	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found 72% continuity re secure/insecure classifications between infancy and 21 year olds.</li> <li>44% of participants who experienced a negative life event before 18 years changed attachment classification.</li> <li>22% of those who changed attachment classification had not experienced a negative life event.</li> </ul>
Hamilton (2000)	AAI Comparison of conventional and unconventional family backgrounds		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found 77% stability in secure/insecure classification in adolescence (compared to 54% by chance).</li> <li>Differences between children from different sub-groups were more apparent as they entered school – unstable background equated to lower academic achievement and less commitment than conventional families.</li> <li>Noted infant attachment classification as a significant predictor of adolescent attachment classification.</li> <li>No significant differences in adolescent attachment in adolescents reared in conventional compared to unconventional families. However, unconventional families were more likely to experience change in family circumstances (84% of conventional families remained intact at age 4 years as opposed to 52% of co-habiting families).</li> </ul>
Weinfeld, Sroufe & Egeland (2000)	Selected due to factors of 'poverty and high risk for poor developmental outcomes' Strange Situation: AAI comparison	57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found no evidence for significant continuity of attachment</li> <li>91.2% of overall sample experienced at least one negative life event between infancy and early adulthood, of which 17 were continuously insecure, 12 were continuously secure, 6 moved from an insecure to a secure pattern and 22 moved from a secure to an insecure pattern in adulthood.</li> <li>Participants were found to transition into insecurity due to 'lawful' attachment-based reasons (child maltreatment, maternal depression, issues around family functioning in adolescence).</li> </ul>
Lewis, Feiring & Rosenthal (2000)	White middle class 18 year olds	84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found no continuity of attachment between infancy and early adulthood (18 years) – only 38% of insecurely attached infants remained insecure at 18 whereas 43% of secure one year olds were insecurely attached at 18 years.</li> <li>Attachment at one year bore no relation to recollections of life at 13 years of age, nor did such recollections relate to attachment classification at 18 years.</li> <li>70% of those who recalled negative life experiences at age 13 years were insecurely attached at 18 years compared to 37% who had positive recollections (a finding of marginal significance).</li> </ul>
Waters et al (1995)	Tracked infant participants of Strange Situation procedure at age 21 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found a 79% continuity rate at age 21 years which rose to 78% when participants who had experienced major life events known to affect security of attachment were excluded.</li> <li>Found a 44% continuity rate for participants who experienced a major life event known to affect security of attachment.</li> </ul>

Waters et al, 2000a, b & c; Weinfield et al, 2000). Fewer studies have used the relatively more recent adolescent version of the AAI (the Adolescent Attachment Interview, George, Kaplan & Main, 1984) (see, for example, Hamilton, 2000). Whilst findings regarding continuity of attachment organisation have been varied, Bowlby's contention that attachment pattern is generally stable but susceptible to environmental influences seems to be upheld (Bowlby, 1973; Bretherton & Munholland, 2002).

### 3.3 FACTORS AFFECTING CHANGE OF ATTACHMENT PATTERN OVER TIME

Waters et al (2000a) concluded that their findings supported Bowlby's expectation that individual differences in organisation of attachment pattern can remain stable across significant portions of the life span but that, particularly throughout childhood, they remain open to revision in the light of real-life experiences (p. 608). They noted also that no specific process or model is implicated but that these experiences can be seen to threaten the stability of attachment relationships in light of the stress placed on those within the relationship (p. 681). Other studies have also found correlational links between experiencing one or more negative life events with both the promotion of an insecure pattern and a move from secure to insecure pattern (Hamilton, 2000; Weinfield, Sroufe & Egeland, 2000). Correspondingly, very few of the already relatively low numbers of participants who moved from an infant insecure classification to an adult (adolescent) secure classification had experienced any negative life events (Waters et al, 2000b p. 687).

Hamilton (2000, p.693) noted that negative life events seemed primarily to support an early trajectory identified by insecure infant attachment as adolescents who retained an insecure attachment pattern were most likely to have experienced negative life events. Hamilton further postulates that whilst such findings do not rule out the internal working model as the process which underlies continuity of attachment, the environment could also be seen to exert a significant influence.

Hamilton also suggests that whilst changes in the internal working model are possible, over the course of early childhood the internal working model becomes less flexible and less consciously accessible and so may be less susceptible to change (p.690). She notes that environments themselves tend towards stable characteristics, such that continuity of attachment could be maintained by environmental factors rather than a within person characteristic – however, in the real world, as Hamilton acknowledges, these two facets are difficult to isolate.

### 3.4 MAINTAINING A SECURE ATTACHMENT PATTERN

Hamilton (2000) notes that her findings regarding participants whose secure attachment in infancy continued into late adolescence need to be interpreted with care. Whilst she found that around half of these children had experienced a negative life event (which did not impact on their security of attachment) she also noted that an in-depth analysis regarding the stresses associated with the events were qualitatively different for this group, being potentially less stressful than those experienced by participants whose attachment pattern moved to an insecure classification. However, it could also be postulated that security of attachment may form a protective factor which helps to guard against the stresses of negative life events, in line with theories of resilience (Gilligan, 2000).

Waters, Weinfeld & Hamilton (2000c; p.703) note that continuity of attachment representations have an adaptive, survival function in as much as they allow positive secure base experiences to guide behaviour in the absence of a caregiver. They also contend a possible '*degree of buffering against future unsupportive and disappointing relationship experiences*' alongside the unfortunate alternative stance that unsupportive care can also be seen to result in '*expectations and beliefs that guide (mis)behaviour and complicate relationships*' (in line with Bowlby, 1988).

Waters, Weinfield & Hamilton, 2000c, p. 704) suggest a variety of factors which may promote continuity of organisation of attachment pattern over time. These include:

- early experience
- consistency in caregiver behaviour
- conceptualisations of self and other being less open to revision as life progresses
- temperament
- inherited traits (personality and behavioural)

Overall, as Hamilton (2000c) notes, the apparent connectedness between early life experience and later development denotes the importance of the role of attachment in life-long development.

### 3.5 MOVING FROM AN INSECURE TO A SECURE ATTACHMENT PATTERN

Whilst studies showed few participants moved from an insecure to a secure attachment classification, there is evidence of change in this direction. Weinfield, Sroufe & Egeland (2000) noted that within their high-risk sample of participants those who had moved into a secure organisation of attachment pattern in early adulthood had experienced better family functioning at age 13 than had the insecure participants who remained insecure, suggesting an important role for the family environment, although this finding remains correlational. Waters et al (2000c; p. 705) suggested that cognitive capacity may play a role, with an adolescent's increased capacity to reflect on their life experiences and the impact they are having on their increasingly adult personality. Thus representations of attachment can be reviewed in light of new experiences, again reflecting the importance of environmental factors.

### 3.6 THE IMPACT OF ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence brings a change in many behaviours, not least within attachment behaviours (Kerns & Richardson, 2005). During adolescence young people

can often seem to be engaged in '*active, purposeful flight away from attachment relationships with parents and other parental attachment figures*' (Allen & Land, 1999, p. 319). The autonomy developed during adolescence can involve a re-evaluation of the bonds of an attachment as being restraining and constraining rather than anchoring or providing the security sought in childhood. However, the quality of their attachment with parents is a key factor within their ability to develop autonomously (op. cit.). During the adolescent phase, a transition is being made from being reliant on caregiving to becoming a potential care-giver. Whilst a child is developing to become less dependent on their caregivers, this does not mean that the attachment relationship becomes unimportant as a whole, rather that the nature of it is in transition (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; French et al, 2001).

Allen et al (2003) suggest that a successful balancing of behaviours to gain autonomy and to maintain attachment relationships within parent-related disagreements could potentially be considered stage-specific manifestations of attachment security in adolescence. Adolescents can be seen to seek distance from parents but still to turn to them in times of distress. However, possibly dependent on earlier attachment experiences, some adolescents may at times avoid a parent, *particularly* when stressed (Allen & Land, 1999, p. 321, their italics). This can also be due to other influences, such as concerns regarding peer views. Bowlby (1973) noted that attachment was one of competing behavioural systems and Allen & Land (p.321) suggest that adolescence is a time when autonomy-seeking behaviour, with its link to exploration, is of highest priority in terms of life-long outcomes (i.e. such as reproduction and independence). However, Allen & Land note that the presence of autonomy-seeking behaviours tends to be correlated with evidence of positive relationships with parents, suggesting a link between early attachment and later adaptive development (p.322).

Allen & Land (1999) suggest that there are three specific questions relating to attachment during the adolescent period:

- How is attachment organisation during adolescence related to attachment at other points in the lifespan, particularly infancy?
- What theoretical underpinning is there for understanding how or why such a longitudinal relationship should exist?
- What has the attachment system become during adolescence – if it is no longer specific to physical survival, what is its continued function?

During adolescence, the internal working models of relationships developed during childhood are increasingly generalised from individual experiences in childhood to provide prediction of expectation for new relationships, of which there are likely to be an increasing number as horizons are widened and for which the adolescent has less support and guidance as their autonomy increases (Allen & Land, 1999; Allen, 2008; Kerns, 2008). This allows relationships to be compared to one another within a framework and also allows comparison to an ideal (hypothetical) relationship pattern. Furthermore, the additional cognitive capacities of adolescence allow reflection through which any deficiencies of previous (and current) attachment relationships can be recognised and examined (Kobak et al, 1993).

Neurological research into brain development during adolescence has been prevalent over the last ten years, involving a high level of use of in-vivo neuroimaging techniques (Choudhury, Blakemore & Charman, 2006; Ziegler, 2002; Siegel, 1999; 2001; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Cozolino, 2006; Schore 2001a,b&c; Durston & Casey, 2006). Key findings indicate adolescence to be a time of considerable re-organisation of the brain at a synaptic level, with a period of synaptic growth followed by a combination of synaptic pruning and increased myelination, leading to increased speed of processing within a more efficiently organised organ (Blakemore, 2007; Choudhury, Blakemore & Charman, 2006; Gerhardt, 2004; Ziegler, 2002; Siegel, 1999). Cognitive capacities thus change, allowing for increased development of representational skills and self-reflection, both of which can impact on internal working models (Dykas & Cassidy, 2007). Adolescence thus offers a window of opportunity regarding the development of neural pathways. Whilst neurological re-programming continues into adulthood, the plasticity of

the brain is much reduced and change thus becomes more difficult (Gerhardt, 2004; Brisch, 2009).

### 3.7 THE ROLE OF THE CAREGIVER IN ADOLESCENCE

Whilst the case for the environmental impact of sensitivity of caregiving, as outlined above, has strongly been made within development of early attachment, there has been little research which has investigated the impact of this aspect into adolescence. Buist, Reitz & Dekovic (2008, p. 440) found that sensitive and responsive attachment figures continue to influence the quality of attachment relationships into adolescence, although they noted that the impact of sensitivity of the attachment figure was significantly smaller than the impact of the adolescent's general working model and also smaller than the relationship-specific attachment (see also Lewis, Feiring & Rosenthal, 2000, who note that the caregiving environment is particularly related to continuity of attachment). Allen and Land (1999, p. 329) note that the findings regarding observed continuities between infant and adolescent attachment organisation could be perceived as continuing to reflect primarily a function of '*parenting received*' rather than being resultant from any '*internal, stable model of the self in attachment relationships*'. A key question which therefore remains to be addressed (and which is outside the scope of this thesis) is '*when does attachment organisation become a property of the individual and not just a reflection of qualities of major on-going attachment relationships?*' (op. cit.).

An adolescent is increasingly able to reflect on and process their attachment experiences and, Allen & Land contend, it is the sense which a person makes of their attachment experiences which is captured by the Adult Attachment Inventory (George, Kaplan & Main, 1984) which forms the crux of the categorisation of attachment organisation rather than the 'factual' recollections per se (p. 330). The parental role during adolescence may therefore be to support this developing understanding of the attachment relationship at a deeper (and more verbally accessible) level.

Allen & Land (1999, p.330) suggest that during adolescence the central role of the caregiver may be to support the child's capacity to cope with the affect associated with the transition into independent living necessary to achieve adulthood. This is undertaken, they suggest, in terms of parental provision of a secure base to permit the exploration of the '*wide range of emotional states that arise when he or she is learning to live as relatively autonomous adult*'. They further note that teens who engage in '*productive, problem-solving discussions that balance autonomy strivings with efforts to preserve the current relationship with parents*' tend to be securely attached. In contrast, disagreements in parent-teen dyads where the teen is insecurely attached tend to lead either to withdrawal or to hostility and pressuring behaviour. These patterns can be seen to echo those developed during earlier attachment experiences (op. cit. p. 324).

Thus, adolescence is a time when true independence of affect regulation is developed with its concomitant loss of reliance on the caregiver to provide external soothing. This development could arguably increase the possibility of an affect regulation organisation which diverges from the pattern exhibited by the parents and by the adolescent him/herself in childhood.

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### 3.7.1 THE ROLE OF ADULTS IN SCHOOL

Within a school situation, adults' own Internal Working Models of attachment can be seen to be of critical importance, influencing and shaping the environment around students (Weiss, 2002; Brisch, 2009). As Cooper & Upton (1990) found, adults make a considerable contribution to a school in terms of its values and ethos, which, in turn, impact on a school's efficacy in meeting students' needs. Schools have been found to differ in their discourses regarding violence in schools and those which have a wider range of well-connected practices seem to have less difficult behaviour (Watkins et al, 2007). Shann (1999, p.409), in research focused on the importance of school culture in promoting school effectiveness, found evidence of an important synergy between an '*emphasis on academics*' and '*a culture of caring*', such that one without the other is insufficient to promote achievement.

Individual relationships between adults and students are affected by each individual's internal working model – interactions between an adult with a secure-pattern internal working model and a student with an insecure-pattern internal working model are likely to have a different quality and outcome to those for adults with an insecure-pattern internal working model. This is particularly important and influential for the student as adults in schools often come to represent key attachment figures (or secondary attachment figures) in children's lives (Delaney, 2009).

Learning itself can lead to students experiencing vulnerability as in order to learn, a pupil needs to feel safe enough to '*accept the powerlessness and frustration of not knowing something*' – '*learning takes place at that point where we struggle to match what we know with what seems new and different. Those who experience their internal and external worlds as dangerous may not be able to take this risk*' (op. cit.,p.69). In such circumstances of potentially high vulnerability, adults in school need to be able to take on a caregiver's role by regulating their own emotional state and their expressed language and behaviour in order to provide any necessary external soothing for a student (Bomber, 2009). This ability, as outlined in the previous chapter, is associated with their own internal working model of attachment and mirrors findings regarding parental roles as outlined above.

Brisch (2009) suggests strongly that all adults within an educational context should have knowledge of attachment theory to help shape their understanding and responses. He further notes that just as a disorganised pattern of attachment in a child can often be associated with unresolved trauma in the child's parent(s), so too interactions and psychodynamics can occur between teachers with unresolved trauma and their students. Taken to a logical conclusion, Brisch thus appears to suggest that adults working in school should be assessed in terms of their internal working models of attachment to ensure their ability to contain and address the attachment needs of students, a suggestion which could be seen as both pragmatic and controversial. However, whilst relationships with adults in school continue to be critical for

students, relationships with peers have increasing salience throughout their Secondary education.

### 3.8 ADOLESCENT PEER RELATIONSHIPS

In adolescence, peer relationships take on an increasingly important role, with relationships with caregivers appearing to diminish (although this may not, in fact, be the case). As Allen & Land (1999, p.322) note, by the middle of adolescence relationships with peers have taken on aspects which will continue to influence over the remaining lifespan, particularly in the areas of intimacy, feedback about social behaviour, social influence and information and ultimately attachment relationships and even lifelong partnerships. Allen & Land also note that these peer relationships continue to involve Salter-Ainsworth's (1989) four characteristics of attachment behaviour in relationships: proximity seeking; secure-base exploratory behaviour; safe-haven retreat behaviour; separation protest when separations are involuntary.

Allen & Land (1999, p. 323) note that:

*'adolescence is not a period in which attachment needs and behaviours are relinquished; rather, it is one in which they are gradually transferred to peers. This transfer also involves a **transformation** from hierarchical attachment relationships (in which one primarily receives care from a caregiver) to peer attachment relationships (in which one both receives and offers care and support).'*

This can, as they also note, lead to variation of success in relationships, with a possibility of a reflexive tendency to 'obey' within such a relationship opening the way for over-strong influence of peers ('peer pressure'). Peer relationships are also likely to be influenced by other co-developing biological systems critical to survival such as sexual reproduction (Erikson, 1959/1980; Bowlby, 1979/2005).

Security of attachment has been found to be linked to friendship quality amongst 16 year olds (Zimmermann, Scheuerer-Engelisch & Grossman, 1996;

Zimmermann, 2004) and social acceptance by peers has been found to be positively related to attachment security in adolescence in academically at risk participants (Allen et al, 1998). Peer relationships thus seem to be both an indicator of attachment organisation and a potential protective factor.

### 3.9 RISK AND RESILIENCE

As Lewis, Feiring & Rosenthal (2000, p. 716) point out, there has been an ongoing belief in linking early security of attachment to later competence, which grew from Bowlby's own belief that early insecure attachment was a risk factor for later psychopathology (Bowlby 1973; Egeland, Jacobvitz & Sroufe, 1988; Sroufe et al, 2000). However, Lewis et al's findings did not support this pattern, with attachment organisation at age one year not being predictive of maladjustment in adolescence. In fact, divorce was far more strongly correlated with later maladjustment in early adulthood, with children from divorced families being significantly more likely to be maladjusted than children from intact families, particularly for children with negative recollections of family life at 13 years of age.

Examination of the role of attachment within psychosocial functioning has found preoccupied (avoidant) attachment organisation to be positively correlated with internalised problems such as self-reported depression, whereas externalised problems, such as aggression and delinquency have been linked to a combination of insecure attachment and exposure to other environmental risk factors such as gender (being male) and low income (Allen & Land, 1999; p.325). Indeed, adolescent problem behaviours could be viewed as attachment behaviours of themselves in as much as they serve to call for attention and intervention by the parent (and others, including peers) (op. cit., p.326).

### 3.10 WHAT ROLE COULD SCHOOLS HAVE REGARDING MAINTENANCE OF ATTACHMENT SECURITY OR THE PROMOTION OF A MOVE TO SECURE ATTACHMENT ORGANISATION FROM AN INSECURE PATTERN?

Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore & Ouston (1979) and Gilligan (2000) have noted the protective function schools can have regarding outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. Oswald, Johnson and Howard's (2003) research into people who successfully overcame difficult life circumstances found that one significant person – often an education professional – was cited as having had a profound, life-changing impact (albeit, one they may have been unaware of at the time).

As outlined above, education professionals can be seen to be key players in later outcomes for vulnerable young people, particularly during adolescence where there is an arguably finite window of opportunity. Additionally, attachment theory can be seen to be potentially a useful framework for understanding (and possibly addressing) highly puzzling and challenging presented behaviours in secondary schools. The implementation of nurture groups within schools (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000; Boxall, 2002), founded on attachment theory, has been researched and evaluated as providing a significant positive impact on children and young people (Cooper & Lovey, 1999; Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005). Whilst nurture groups have tended to be provided mostly within primary school settings, they can also have an impact at the secondary school level. Sarkis, (2009, p.17) notes that '*the [Nurture Group] model transfers seamlessly to Secondary Schools and other community and residential settings*'. This provides evidence that education staff who are able to respond sensitively in an attuned manner to meet a young person's attachment needs can have a positive impact in terms of developing their internal working models, regulating their affect and thus ameliorating challenging behaviour in schools.

It is therefore useful to explore how education professionals' constructs regarding behaviour generally relate to attachment theory, particularly with regard to the following areas, which form the research questions for this study:

- How does staff construing regarding student behaviour relate to attachment theory?
- How do these echoes of attachment theory impact on education professionals' construing regarding students' behaviour?
- Does having an *explicit* knowledge of the theory (provided by In-service training to one participant group) affect construing in any way?

The following chapter will outline the methodology within which this research was sited and the specific method employed. Chapters 5 and 6 provide details of findings and discussion of the findings in light of the above literature respectively with Chapter 7 outlining conclusions drawn.

### 3.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

- Studies investigating the stability of attachment organisation over time have tended to focus on continuity between Strange Situation and AAI classifications. Findings have been mixed.
- One factor which is highly correlated with both continued insecure attachment classification and a move from a secure to an insecure classification is experiencing a significant attachment-related negative life event. However, not all those who experience such an event become insecure, and, indeed, a very small number move from an insecure to a secure classification. Security of attachment can, therefore, be 'earned' or 'learned'. Overall, this is suggestive of a continued environmental role.
- The nature of attachment can be seen to change over adolescence, moving from an individual relationship basis to a more global model of relationships within which individual relationships are sited and a move from hierarchical to peer attachment relationships
- Measures of attachment classification in adolescence are difficult due to the transitional nature of attachment within this period. However, studies continue to suggest a connection between early life experiences and organisation of attachment in adulthood.
- Peer relationships become increasingly important throughout adolescence, although relationships with primary attachments change rather than cease to matter. Early attachment experiences impact on the quality and nature of adolescent peer relationships.
- Adults continue to have a role with regard to adolescents' development or maintenance of internal working models of attachment, particularly with regard to the provision of external regulation for dysregulated young people. An adult's own internal working model of attachment is likely to influence this interaction and, in a more general manner, adults' internal working models of attachment are likely to influence whole-school ethos and approaches.
- Adults in schools, in their roles as secondary attachment figures, have an important role with regard to maintenance or development of adolescent's

**attachment organisation. Their own internal working models of attachment organisation are key factors.**

## CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

### OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER

In order to undertake any form of research, it is first necessary to decide on a useful and appropriate methodology. However, different methodologies are themselves located within a variety of epistemological stances within which different paradigms of scientific research are sited. This chapter sets out to explore different paradigms within scientific research, following which explanation is provided for the paradigm and associated methodology selected as being most appropriate for this research. A final section details the exact method utilised. The following sections are presented:

- 4.1 Epistemology: the veracity of 'truth'
- 4.2 The methodology employed in this research
- 4.3 An overview of Personal Construct Psychology
- 4.4 The use of the repertory grid within Personal Construct Psychology
- 4.5 Ethical considerations
- 4.6 Method
- 4.7 Analyses of repertory grids used in this study
- 4.8 Summary of chapter

#### 4.1 EPISTEMOLOGY: THE VERACITY OF 'TRUTH'

One of the greatest philosophical debates concerns the existence of reality: is there an objective, verifiable reality that can be captured, measured and recorded or do we construct our own personal and societal truths through the use of our perceptual and conceptual faculties? (Stroud, 1984; Sosa & Jaegwon, 2000). Within the continuum of this debate, the Realist view requires that an external reality exists that is '*logically independent of all possible experience*' (Trigg, 1989, p.xxii). The Empirical view accepts an external, knowable reality, but limits the '*criterion of what is accepted as real [to] whether*

*it can be experienced* (op. cit p.xii). Empiricism is concerned with the observable and, as Trigg points out, *'has to be deeply suspicious of appeals to what cannot be observed even as an explanation for what can be'*. In contrast, Constructivism takes as its basic tenet the notion that *'reality is socially constructed'* (Robson, 2002, p.27). The notion of an actively 'constructed' world dates back to pre-Socratic philosophers (Trigg, 1989) whose position was that truth could be seen as dependent on and created by the tradition or society of which one is part and therefore that the same *'truth'* could differ according to differing conceptual systems. Such conceptual systems could be seen themselves to be constructed from a combination of sensory information interacting with social experiences.

Sceptical arguments, as propounded by Descartes, suggested that the problem is *'to show how we can have any knowledge of the world at all'* and *'how to find out, among all the things we believe or take to be true 'what amounts to knowledge and what does not?'* (see Stroud, 1984, p.6). Whether or not an external reality exists, humans do make judgements about 'truth' and 'knowledge'. What are such judgements based on? Are some forms of belief based on stronger foundations than others and can they therefore be imbued with a stronger claim to being 'true' or as counting as part of received knowledge? Descartes' approach was to suggest *'a search for the 'principles' of human knowledge, whose 'general credentials' he could then investigate'* (Stroud, 1984, p.7). It is the *nature* of this investigation that forms the basis of differing scientific epistemological arguments, sited within the philosophical question as to whether or not an external reality exists. It is reflected within differing approaches to methodology where the debate extends to the relative abilities of methodologies to represent 'knowledge' and 'truth'.

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#### 4.1.1 PARADIGMS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Over time there have been shifts in the dominant paradigms within scientific methodology. The initial aim of early science was the finding and proving of an external reality through objective methodology (a *'positivist approach'*; Woolgar,

1996). Woolgar notes that the original defining feature of scientific activity involved '*facts rather than opinions*' which then transmuted into the notion that the outcome of scientific activity was only 'scientific' if it was provable (p. 13). This itself was overturned by Popper's famous notion that the defining characteristic of a scientific theory was its '*falsifiability*' (Popper, 1934; see op. cit.).

Furthermore, '*revolutions*' within scientific methodology can be seen to be linked to paradigm shifts within science (Kuhn, 1970, see op. cit). Paradigm shifts can be seen to occur where a crisis point is reached within a dominant paradigm such that a majority of scientists working within that paradigm lose confidence in its ability to solve the most important problems and note its incompatibility with certain unquestionable findings. This causes a 'revolution' in scientific methodology where several new competing paradigms are evaluated against one another until one paradigm is eventually adopted and subsequently becomes the new 'received view' of science. However, Delanty (1997, p.37) suggests that Kuhn's '*scientific revolution*' model applies more closely to the natural sciences as social science has tended to be characterised more by a '*multi-paradigm status*'. Kuhn's proposal does, however, draw attention to the fluidity of what is accepted as being an authoritative model for the gathering of knowledge.

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#### 4.1.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'NATURAL' AND 'SOCIAL' SCIENCES

There has long been an uneasy relationship between 'natural' sciences and 'social' sciences, due to their differing research contexts and the additional difficulties of working within the complexities of human interactions and socialisation experienced within social sciences that tended to work against the successful use of the methodology devised within natural sciences. However, in the latter part of the last century the formerly dominant positivist paradigm of natural science methodology has increasingly been called into question.

Bentz and Shapiro (1998, p.1) suggest that the new context of all scientific research is based within a post-modern zeitgeist of questioning 'rationality' and received views of scientific bases of knowledge by challenging:

- how knowledge is *produced*
- how it is *organised*
- how it is collaboratively *shared and linked*
- how it is *transmitted, accessed and integrated* between scholars
- how much knowledge is *stored and retrievable*
- which *cultural voices and social perspectives* can claim to be represented within public arenas and discourses

Within Western society, which defines itself in terms of its knowledge, this has led to 'a crisis about what knowledge is, what makes it valid and whether and how it can be objective if it is shaped by historical, social and cultural contexts' (op. cit. p.2). Delanty (1997, p.1) suggests that the crisis of the social sciences is not that of methodology but rather of 'the very social relevance of social science'. For research findings to be accepted within the valued canon of 'human knowledge' they must be accorded the status of being based on a recognisably trustworthy basis of systematic and defensible rational argument. It is the nature of what constitutes such criteria that has been called into question towards the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond.

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#### 4.1.3 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGIES

The lack of an established and widely accepted universal paradigm to cover all sciences raises arguments about relative worth of differing paradigms and approaches. Two main paradigms have been represented by quantitative and qualitative approaches which have often been viewed as a dichotomy rather than as a continuum of approaches, the centre point of which continuum could be viewed as 'critical realism' which accepts the existence of a reality which can be known '*only imperfectly*' due to the human limitations of researchers (Mertens, 2010).

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#### 4.1.4 QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGIES

Quantitative approaches have traditionally been imbued with more prestige. However, as Robson (2002, p.4 ) notes, the previous 'gold standard' of scientific enquiry, randomised controlled trial, does not relate well to exploration or explanation of the complexities of the human condition, where 'richer' and more diverse data is often sought, collected and needs to be analysed to generate theory. This does not mean that all attempts at rigour or control can or should be disregarded, a charge that has frequently been levelled at qualitative methodologies.

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#### 4.1.5 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGIES

Qualitative methodologies are usually linked to constructivist, naturalistic, interpretative world views which, at their most extreme (such as in Relativism) deny any external reality independent of human consciousness, with reality being constructed via conceptual systems. This denies the existence of any objective reality as conceptual systems will differ between and within cultures and societies as well as between individuals. However, as Trigg (1989) comments, *'the idea that there is no reality separate from the conceptual systems employed by people accords quite ludicrous powers to human thought'* and, in line with this, many relativists do not deny the possibility of some kind of underlying reality, if only in a physical sense (Robson, 2002, p.26).

Qualitative approaches reject the idea that 'truths' about the social world can be established through positivist methods applied to the natural sciences (op. cit., p.24). They take as their focus people as conscious, purposive actors who actively ascribe and construct meaning to and from events and interactions. These actions are seen to be imbued with each actor's own cultural and social experiences and, as such, their actions and their understanding of the actions of others cannot be value free.

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#### 4.1.6 CONSTRUCTIVISM

Qualitative approaches are often sited within the constructivist paradigm which holds that reality is socially constructed by people who are active in the

research process (Mertens, 2010). Coolican (2004, p.11) offers an explanation of social construction:

*'we superimpose [ ...] a 'schema' on what we actually observe. We end up with a construction of what we are seeing rather than limiting ourselves to the mere available sensory information. We do this constantly and so easily that we are not usually aware of it happening'.*

The role of research within this paradigm is to attempt to glean understanding of 'lived experience' from those who participate in the focus context. As such, all knowledge is seen to be relative and a unique construction for each participant (op. cit. p.220). Thus there is a very active and acknowledged role for the researcher (as outlined below) and there is a need for a more personal and interactive mode of data collection.

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#### 4.1.7 SELECTING APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY

As Robson suggests, pragmatically it can be best to base the decision regarding the choice of methodology for each individual study on which approach is likely to provide the best source of analysable data in terms of validity, reliability, coherence and accepted rigour to answer the research question, such that any findings are likely to be acceptable within the relevant professional community. Such choices can sometimes be based on a 'trading' of decisions regarding the types of data collected, the means of its collection, the nature of analysis and the aim of any projected outcome (for example, initial 'exploratory' research, to 'test' an existing theory or to develop theory in the light of findings). The following section outlines the choices made in selecting a methodology for this research.

## 4.2 THE METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED IN THIS RESEARCH

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### 4.2.1 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to explore with a range of education professionals their construing regarding young people's behaviour in High School (Key Stage 3) settings in terms of students' likely pattern of attachment. An exploratory

approach is pertinent as no previous research has reported directly on this area.

The purposes of exploratory research can be seen to include:

- To find out what is happening
- To seek new insights
- To ask new questions
- To assess phenomena in a new light
- To generate ideas and hypotheses for future research

(Robson, 2002, p.59).

Exploratory research is descriptive in nature, aiming to portray accurate accounts and profiles of people, events and situations. Extensive previous knowledge of the situation under review is required, to allow perspective regarding the appropriate aspects of which to gather information (op. cit). Exploratory research therefore typically builds on previous work or professional experience and can be based on theoretical frameworks which can provide pointers towards the detailed areas to be explored (op. cit. p.38).

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#### 4.2.2 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher is also recognised as forming part of this context (Robson, 2002; Coolican, 2004). This recognition of the role and influence of the researcher (both in terms of their activity and their values and belief systems) is one of the central differences between this approach and the positivistic paradigm, where the researcher is seen largely as a neutral observer. Methods such as interviews and observation, the gathering of 'richer' and 'denser' data are viewed as helping the researcher actively to construct 'multiple realities' of the participants (Coolican, 2004; Mertens, 2010). Thus the researcher has responsibility for providing participants with the '*most flexible and natural humanlike circumstances in which [they] can express themselves fully and uniquely define their world*' (Coolican, 2004, p.145).

However, questions about the analysis of such data are frequent as there can appear to remain a high level of subjectivity, even with the usage of objective

frameworks and systems for such analysis. These issues are expanded on below.

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#### 4.2.3 A CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE AND VALIDITY

This exploratory research is undertaken within a constructivist perspective (Delanty, 1997; Coolican, 2004; Mertens, 2010). As such, the approach and framework of the research and the methodology applied is designed to allow collation of participants' multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge (Robson, 2002; Mertens, 2010). As the research assumes that there will therefore be multiple realities there are no specific variables or hypotheses to test. However, general research questions can be asked which serve to shape exploration.

There are associated difficulties in conducting research within a constructivist paradigm in terms of being able to validate findings. Any effects demonstrated via research need to be genuine rather than limited to a specific context or produced by '*manipulation of spurious variables*' (Coolican, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggest that the concept of objectivity associated with the post-positivist paradigm is replaced by confirmability in the constructivist paradigm. As such, data, interpretations and outcomes are linked to people and contexts under investigation rather than '*figments of [researchers'] imagination*' (Mertens, 2010, p.19). However, it should be noted that multiple constructions of reality may often result in conflicts between participants' constructs. In this case, the researcher's role is to try to make sense of these conflicts.

The active role of the researcher can be a threat to external validity, as findings can be seen as being subject to researcher bias (Banister, Burman & Parker et al, 1994). There are also threats to internal validity, as the researcher may not fully understand the participants' context or be unable to maintain or gain a necessary distance to facilitate objectivity within interpretation of findings (op. cit.).

Overall, in order to ensure validity, the researcher's role is to provide data which is related to its source(s) and, through narrative, to make explicit the logic through which interpretations have been assembled (Mertens, 2010).

Having identified the basic aims and epistemological stance of this research there was a need to select a vehicle by which the research could be undertaken. Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly 1955/63) was identified as being the research approach most apposite in meeting these aims for a variety of reasons, as outlined below.

#### 4.3 AN OVERVIEW OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOLOGY

Personal Construct Psychology (PCP; Kelly, 1955/63) provided an open opportunity for eliciting participants' constructs of students' behaviour – for gaining insight into their individual ways of making sense of the world which have developed on the basis of experience (Banyard & Grayson, 2000). It embraces Kelly's argument that if people's actions are guided by their beliefs about the world then we have to understand these beliefs, which are best studied from 'within' - only *you* can give a satisfactory account of your particular view of the world (Banyard & Grayson, 2000, p.202). PCP allowed the type of interaction between researcher and participant which provided insight into the participant's unique world view with minimal potential for bias from the researcher. A final factor was that of pragmatism: a PCP approach allowed interviews to be undertaken within a time-period likely to be acceptable to most participants within target groups (around 30-40 minutes).

##### 4.3.1 THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL GROUNDING OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCT THEORY

Kelly's seminal text regarding Personal Construct Theory (PCT, Kelly 1955/1963), also known as Personal Construct Psychology (PCP), emphasises active construction of understanding and prediction of events within a real, inter-connected and ever-changing universe. As such it can be seen as a constructivist approach (Tindall, 1994). PCT itself is positioned between and within both Philosophy and Psychology, with Kelly noting that as a philosophy, it is rooted in the psychological observation of man, whereas as a psychology,

it is concerned with the philosophical outlooks of individuals (op. cit. p.16). Kelly suggests we make sense of our world by 'construing', which Tindall (1994, p.73) describes as '*a dynamic search for personal understanding*'. However, Kelly suggests that we construct this meaning by examining things in the light of both similarities and differences from our previous experiences – '*similarity can only be understood in the context of difference*' (op. cit.). As the process of construing is active, the constructions themselves, or '*constructs*', are open to being re-evaluated and changed over the course of time. Constructs themselves can be seen to '*subsumed*' within larger systems, which Kelly denotes '*superordinate constructs*' (op. cit.).

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#### 4.3.2 CONSTRUCTIVE ALTERNATIVISM

A central tenet of PCP is that of the creative capacity of people to '*represent the environment, not merely respond to it*' (Kelly 1955/63, p.8). This leaves open the possibility that people can place alternative constructions upon the environment, such that the condition of the environment is not seen as inexorable or fixed. An often-quoted metaphor for PCP is that of people as '*scientists*', which includes the aim of prediction and control:

*It is customary to say that the scientist's ultimate aim is to predict and control. Might not the individual man, each in his own personal way, assume more of the stature of a scientist, ever seeking to predict and control the course of events with which he is involved? Would he not have his theories, test his hypotheses, and weigh his experimental evidence? And, if so, might not the differences between the personal viewpoints of different men correspond to the differences between the theoretical points of view of different scientists? (op. cit. p5).*

Kelly places PCT within the philosophical position of '*Constructive Alternativism*', which asserts '*we assume that all of the present interpretations of the world are subject to revision or replacement*' (Kelly, 1955/63, p.15). This approach allows for one's views of the world to be alterable, and offers an opportunity to impact on life choices. As Kelly notes:

*'No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances; no one needs to be the victim of his biography'* (op. cit. p.15).

Our constructs about the world can be seen as 'patterns' which are created in an attempt to *'fit over the realities of which the world is composed'* (op. cit. p.9). It is these constructs which allow us to *'chart a course of behaviour'*, to understand and therefore to be able to predict the behaviour of others around us. They also function as a means to assess the accuracy of the prediction during and after the event and, as such, they are subject to revision.

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#### 4.3.3 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOLOGY

The following section aims to give a brief overview of the fundamentals of PCP techniques including the fundamental postulate and corollaries, elements, constructs and repertory grids. The specific use of PCP within this study is outlined within the method section below.

The basis of PCP is summed up in what Kelly terms a *'fundamental postulate'*: an assumption so basic in nature that it is antecedent to everything within the logical system that it supports (Kelly, 1955/63, p.46). This fundamental postulate states:

*'A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events'* (op. cit.).

Kelly himself provides a detailed explanation of each word within this postulate (pp 47 – 50), which deals with its placement within the realm of psychology (as in processes are conceptualised in a psychological manner, as opposed to processes being psychological rather than something else) and the use of *'channelized'* to denote processes being seen to operate within *'a network of pathways'* rather than *'fluttering about in vast emptiness'* (op. cit. p.49). The use of the pronoun 'he' is used to denote all individuals. Kelly also introduces a range of eleven corollaries, or propositions which both follow on from the

postulate and, in part, elaborate it. These corollaries are presented, in brief, below, in Figure 8. (For further in-depth explanation of each corollary see Kelly 1955/ 63, pp 50– 104).

**Figure 8: Kelly's Psychology of Personal Constructs: Corollaries of the Fundamental Postulate (Kelly 1955/ 1963 pp 46 – 97).**

<b>Construction Corollary</b>	A person anticipates events by construing their replications.
<b>Individuality corollary</b>	Persons differ from each other in their construction of events.
<b>Organization corollary</b>	Each person characteristically evolves, for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs.
<b>Dichotomy corollary</b>	A person's construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs.
<b>Choice corollary</b>	A person chooses for himself that alternative in a dichotomised construct through which he anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of his system.
<b>Range corollary</b>	A construct is convenient for the anticipation of a finite range of events only.
<b>Experience corollary</b>	A person's construction system varies as he successfully construes the replications of events.
<b>Modulation corollary</b>	The variation in a person's construction system is limited by the permeability of the constructs within whose range of convenience the variants lie.
<b>Fragmentation corollary</b>	A person may successively employ a variety of construction subsystems which are inferentially incompatible with each other.
<b>Commonality corollary</b>	To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person.
<b>Sociality corollary</b>	To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in a social process involving the other person.

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#### 4.3.4 THE NATURE OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCTS AND ELEMENTS

Personal constructions deviate somewhat from conventional logic, in that they are viewed as a system which examines how things are seen both in terms of what they have in common as well as how they differ (Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004, p.8). A construct is therefore a way in which some things (concrete or abstract) are construed as being alike and thereby different from other things. Constructs are thus bipolar in nature, with people's constructions usually placed on a continuum between two polar contrasts (which are not necessarily direct opposites: Fransella et al 2004; Jankowicz, 2004). Constructs have a personal range of convenience, which limits that construct's usefulness to a particular range of events, interactions or situations, which Kelly denotes '*elements*' (see also Fransella et al 2004; Jankowicz, 2004).

Elements determine the context of meaning for the constructs – they '*define which particular bit of a person's world is being examined*' (Banyard & Grayson, 2000, p.202). Elements are often represented by people that the participant knows well. Elements themselves are seen as being subject to some degree of abstraction, in order to facilitate their organisation within individuals, preventing a '*kaleidoscopic*' approach (Kelly, p. 110). As Tindall (1994) notes, elements need both to be personally relevant to the participant and appropriate to and representative of the topic being explored.

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#### 4.3.5 CONSTRUCTS, PREDICTION AND CHOICE

Constructs not only provide a rationale for the events of human behaviour but are predictive in nature, as they construe a movement or trend within events. Since the constructs are bi-polar, there is an element of contrast implied within prediction, encapsulating a quality of '*if – then - but not*' (Kelly, p.123). Thus reality can be seen to be built up of contrasts rather than absolutes – things are defined or described in terms of their alternatives. For example '*pleasant as opposed to rude*' carries a different meaning to '*pleasant as opposed to exciting*' (Jankowicz, 2004 p.11). Both negative and positive forecasts are involved (e.g. what is likely *not* to happen as well as what is) to allow for differential prediction. Kelly describes constructs as being the '*channels in*

*which one's mental processes run. They are the two-way streets along which one may travel to reach conclusions'* (p.126).

The construct system, then, can be seen to control the '*role*' that one plays in life. All our choices are '*channelized*' via bi-polar constructs and we can choose to '*rattle around in old slots*' or construct new pathways (op. cit.). This area is often the focus within a clinical, therapeutic application of PCP (see Fransella, 2005, Section III; Winter, 1992). Under favourable conditions, construct systems can be changed. As noted above, exploration of an individual's constructs allows a window into how that individual views the world, making PCP a useful approach for exploratory research. Constructs can be revealed through conversation, both through talking about oneself and other people.

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#### 4.3.6 ELICITING CONSTRUCTS

There are a variety of ways whereby constructs can be elicited (see Jankowicz, 2004; Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004 for overviews). Systematic triadic elicitation involves three elements in strict rotation being presented to participants with the question '*with regard to .... , in what ways are any two of these similar and thereby different from the third?*' Whilst triadic elicitation is a traditional method, dyadic elicitation can also be used and no clear differences between constructs elicited by these two approaches have been detected (Fransella et al, 2004, p.29/30). Dyadic elicitation is of particular use for children and to allow adults with learning difficulties to engage fully with the process.

Specific language is important within construct elicitation, particularly with regard to the use of '*difference from*' or '*opposite to*' for eliciting a bi-polar construct by triadic elicitation (Fransella et al, 2004, p.28). As Fransella et al note, eliciting questions using the terminology of '*opposite*' has been found to generate '*stronger*' constructs. However, in these cases, the poles of constructs used to denote the '*odd one out*' within the triadic presentation (or

the *'implicit'* pole, see Jankowicz p.48) have not always been found to be related to the elements, thus reducing the qualitative value of the bi-polar constructs (op. cit.).

Constructs elicited need to express the interviewees' views fully and precisely (Jankowicz, 2004, p.33). It is essential within the collation of constructs to ensure that the wording of the construct captures exactly the participant's own meaning. This allows the participant to speak about the topic in question strictly in their own terms, with no leads or constraints from the researcher. Jankowicz suggests that a 'good' construct is one which expresses meaning and provides:

- A clear contrast
- Appropriate detail
- A clear relationship to the topic in question

#### 4.4 THE USE OF THE REPERTORY GRID WITHIN PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOLOGY

The Repertory Grid approach provides a means whereby the content of conversations can be recorded and the relationship between constructs and elements can be subjected to forms of analysis, including empirical, statistical forms. Repertory Grids were originally developed for individual, therapeutic approaches but have increasingly been used within a variety of research, notably within consumer preference research. They provide a particularly useful tool to address participants' cognitive systems in a non-directive but empirical manner. As they have been used extensively within this study, it is useful to outline the nature of repertory grids.

A repertory grid is a *'cross-tabulation of 'elements' against 'constructs'* (Banyard & Grayson, 2000, p.202) which enables participants' ideas (their constructs) to be examined in terms of how they organize their understanding of the elements within the grid. A grid is comprised of the constructs generated by comparing and contrasting the elements (representing the 'topic' of the

conversation). Elements can be defined as '*an example of, exemplar of, instance of, sampling of, or occurrence within, a particular topic*' (Jankowicz, 2004, p.13). Elements should be selected such that the whole field of the topic is covered evenly and such that they consist of mutually exclusive factors (op. cit. p. 29/30).

#### 4.4.1 THE USE OF RATINGS SCALES IN REPERTORY GRIDS

The use of a ratings scale allows each construct to be rated numerically against each element of the conversation, thus permitting comparisons to be made between elements. This provides information on where the participant would site the specific element along the continuum of their bi-polar construct. The repertory grid can thus be seen as providing both qualitative, content-based data (the nature of the constructs) and quantitative, structural data (the relationship between the constructs and the elements as depicted by numerical ratings) (Bell, 2005, p.68; Jankowicz, 2004). In this way qualitative data can be expressed and analysed within statistically reliable parameters whilst quantitative information generated also stays true to and conveys accurately participants' intended meaning (Jankowicz, 2004, p.15). However, as noted below, this is not without some controversy. The completed grid (comprising elements, constructs and ratings of each construct for each element) provides what Jankowicz describes as '*a kind of mental map: a precise statement of the way in which an individual thinks of, gives meaning to, **construes**, the topic in question*' (emphasis in original). Constructs provide information about *how* a person thinks; the ratings of elements on constructs provide information about *what* a person thinks (op. cit., p.19).

The use of a 7-point ratings scale is now common within repertory grids (Jankowicz, 2004, p.37; Fransella et al, 2004 p.59; Bell, 2005, p.70). It provides a mid-point which can be utilised to indicate that an element is outside the range of convenience for the construct, or that the rating fell mid-way between the poles of the construct. As Fransella et al (2004) note, actual numerical ratings afforded to constructs per each element are affected by which pole of the construct is *emergent* (denoting a similarity between two

elements) and hence placed to the left of the grid and which is the *implicit* or *contrast* pole (and thus placed to the right of the grid). In order for sensible comparison to be made between elements, the ratings scale needs to be able to differentiate between participants' 'preferred' and 'least preferred' poles of each construct (e.g. 1 = 'happy' whilst 7 = 'sad' where 'happy' is the preferred construct). The solution is to ask participants to name their preferred pole and then to adjust the grid ratings accordingly (op. cit. p.91). Participants can also be given the option of noting any constructs where the mid-point between poles was preferred (which can also denote that neither pole is preferred). These adjustments allow direct comparison between all ratings and do not affect any measure of distance in ratings of constructs between elements.

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#### 4.4.2 LIMITATIONS OF REPERTORY GRIDS

There are, of course, limitations for the use of repertory grids in seeking to explore people's thinking and understanding of certain topic areas. Whilst grids can be effective in determining a person's thinking with regard to a particular topic area, they can only represent a part of that person's repertoire of thought and cannot be seen to be exhaustive (Tindall, 1994; Jankowicz, 2004). Furthermore, there are some tensions between over-reliance on positivist analysis of numerically-based repertory grid findings and the philosophical, constructivist roots of Kelly's original procedures for PCT (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al, 2007). However, the balance offered between the opportunity to explore both participants' constructs regarding the context of student behaviour and the relationship between these constructs and the specific aspects of that context (within this research, the likely presenting attachment pattern of participants' students) was sufficient to lead to the selection of PCP as a relevant vehicle for research.

#### 4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before any research is undertaken it is necessary to consider the ethics of its conduct, particularly where there is active participation and engagement of participants with the researcher. To ensure that ethical guidelines were fully met, in line with the British Psychology Society's ethical guidelines (*Guidelines for minimum standards of ethical approval in psychological research*, 2004; *Ethical principals for conducting research with human participants (revised)*, 2009), the following points were devised and carefully adhered to throughout the research process:

The following section outlines exact procedures for this study. A diagram of the

- All participants were volunteers and adults. They were advised of their right to withdraw at any point
- Assurances were given regarding confidentiality of information and anonymity within any published research
- Interviews were conducted one-to-one within a private area at a time suitable for the participant. A professional but relatively informal manner was used and every effort was made to place participants at their ease
- Participants were provided with an overview of the reasons for the research and an outline of PCP as a research approach. Fuller discussion, including discussion of attachment theory, was undertaken after grids had been completed (after the second occasion for the group interviewed twice)
- Participants were assured that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, that opinions were being sought and that each participant's opinion was equally valid and valued
- All participants were thanked for their participation. Efforts will be made to inform them in outline of the main findings of the study and to provide internet access to the research following final publication
- Students' names (used to act as elements during elicitation of repertory grids) were recorded by first name basis only and students were not known to the researcher. (A confidential record of these names was

held by the researcher only, for purposes of reminding one group of participants during their second interviews)

- At the conclusion of each interview, participants read through all constructs recorded and were able to amend them to ensure that their meaning was accurately captured
- Anonymity was ensured during inter-rater processes (e.g. inter-raters were blind to the names of participants or groups to which participants belonged). No inter-raters were also participants

The following section outlines exact procedures for this study. A diagram of the phases of the research is provided in figure 12, p.116.

## 4.6 METHOD: PILOT STUDY AND MAIN STUDY

### 4.6.1 PILOT STUDY

An initial pilot study with 3 EP colleagues was undertaken, to ensure that procedures were appropriate in terms of instructions to participants, feasibility of both materials (e.g. the use of 'cameos', as outlined below) and interview procedure, appropriateness of recording procedures and manageability within time constraints. During the EP pilot phase several small changes were made to recording materials with corresponding alterations to standardised instructions. An initial aim of using several constructs for a 'laddering' exercise was abandoned due to time constraints during data gathering. However, overall structure and procedure remained sufficiently integral to allow all data from the initial pilot phase to be included in the main study. An initial plan to pilot the study with teacher colleagues was found not to be necessary, as teacher participants were able to follow the standardised instructions as developed during the pilot phase with EP participants.

#### 4.6.2 MAIN STUDY: PARTICIPANTS

As outlined in figure 12, participants were in three categories, each consisting of 10 volunteers. A decision was made to involve smaller numbers of individuals drawn from a wider range of educational backgrounds to enhance the breadth of experience being explored. Whilst such small participant numbers per group obviously impacts on the representativeness of the sample, having ten representatives provides some breadth of experience whilst maintaining manageability of data collection and management within real-life research and is arguably sufficiently representative for the purposes of exploratory research.

Educational Psychologist (EP) participants were all colleagues within the same Local Authority Educational Psychology Service who responded to general contact via internal e-mail. The first 10 respondents were invited to individual interview over a period of 3 weeks. Participants were asked not to discuss the interview with other colleagues to avoid any contamination of responses.

Two groups of Key Stage 3 (KS 3) Teacher participants were identified for the study. The first represented teachers who had a specific role with students presenting with significant emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD) in school (ESBD/Pastoral Teachers, denoted as 'ESBD/PTs'). This was a self-selected participant group who replied to an advertisement for a free In-Service Training event (INSET) provided by the Educational Psychology Service. The INSET was entitled '*Student Behaviour and Relationships: Growing Nurturing Secondary School Classrooms*' and provided an outline of attachment theory as a framework for understanding and supporting young people demonstrating significant challenging behaviours (see Appendix 2 for outline details). Teachers were invited to attend this INSET in pairs, in order to attempt to increase the impact of the training through allowing opportunities for collaboration and for specific situation-based planning for action within each school community as part of the course. Both teachers in each school were interviewed consecutively on the same day, to avoid any contamination of constructs elicited through discussion between participants. Interviews were carried out over a four-week period in advance of the INSET course. The ten

ESBD/PTs thus represented five different schools, all within the same Local Authority. Each school was a 'High School', catering for children within National Curriculum years 6 or 7 to 9 inclusive. The participants' schools were similar in terms of numbers on roll, numbers of exclusions (low) and social-economic measures (i.e. none represented areas of high social deprivation).

The second group of teacher participants comprised teachers whose role was that of subject teacher and/or form tutor, with no specific role in the area of ESBD beyond that of everyday classroom management and pastoral support. Teachers within the 'General Teachers' (denoted as 'GTs') participant group were drawn from volunteers who responded to either a poster or request passed on via their senior staff or link EP to participate in the study. It was notably more difficult to recruit volunteer participants within this group. None of the GT participants taught at the same school as the ESBD/PT participants, thus avoiding any contamination of constructs through discussion or sharing of INSET information. GT participants were drawn from seven schools within the same county, which were comparable both within this group and to the first group of Teacher participants.

The job roles and responsibilities of both sets of Teacher participants varied, as did their levels of experience. The higher level of experience within the ESBD/PT group reflected additional seniority within this group. Regarding age, ESBD/PTs were mostly in the '45 years +' categories whereas both EPs and GTs were mostly in the 'up to 45 years' categories. Table 4.6.2 provides an outline of each participant group in terms of gender, age and length of professional experience.

**Table 4.6.2 Biographical details of participants by group**

		Educational Psychologists	KS3 Specialist ESD/ Pastoral Teachers	General Teachers
<b>Number</b>		10	10	10
<b>Gender</b>	Male	3	2	2
	Female	7	8	8
<b>Age</b>	Under 25	0	0	1
	25 – 35	3	2	4
	36 – 45	4	2	2
	46 – 55	1	5	3
	56 +	2	1	0
<b>Length of experience</b>	Up to 2 years	0	0	1
	Up to 5 years	4	1	2
	Up to 10 years	3	0	3
	Up to 15 years	0	2	1
	15 years +	3	6	3
	Not known	0	1	0

Whilst female participants appear to be over-represented, accounting for 70 – 80% of each participant category, this compares to overall gender representation within the EP population of 75% female (CWDC 2007/8: 2004 Soulbury workforce survey) and 56% full-time females within Secondary teacher population nationally (in 2004/05: Office for National Statistics, online) and can therefore be claimed as being broadly representative.

EP participants all had some knowledge of attachment theory, with three participants expressing some expertise in this area. The majority of all teacher participants expressed having no knowledge at all of attachment theory, with three of the ESD/PT group expressing a low level of knowledge (i.e. *'I've heard of it but I don't know much about it'*).

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#### 4.6.3 CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

All participants were interviewed individually over a half-term period, with each interview lasting between 35 and 55 minutes. Standard instructions and ethical considerations as outlined above were adhered to.

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#### 4.6.4 ELICITING THE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE REPERTORY GRIDS

In terms of this research, elements were required which would both be personally meaningful to participants and be representative of the four main patterns of attachment. Ideally, students whose attachment patterns were known would have been incorporated as elements within the elicitation interviews. However, as outlined above, measures of attachment pattern in adolescence are not well developed in terms of validity or reliability. Furthermore, it would have been neither ethical nor pragmatically possible to undertake such assessment with the number of young people required to facilitate each of the 30 participants. It was therefore necessary to provide participants with a vehicle by which they could identify students well known to them who could embody the main characteristics of each attachment style to act as elements within each participant's individual PCP conversation and subsequent repertory grid.

In order to facilitate this process, a brief written 'cameo' in terms of an outline of likely characteristic behaviours for each attachment pattern was provided (see figure 9). These cameos of behaviours were based on clinical descriptions of specific behaviours associated with each of the four main attachment patterns described across a range of literature as presented above, drawing particularly on Geddes (2006). Four EP colleagues independently identified the cameos as being representative of each of these attachment styles in blind presentation. To personalise the elements each participant was then asked to substitute the first name of a student familiar to them who could represent each cameo in turn: 'student-elements'. The student-elements were then employed for the elicitation of constructs with no further direct reference to the cameos.

**Figure 9: 'Cameos' of likely attachment behaviours associated with each pattern of attachment organisation used to elicit elements in participants' repertory grids**

**Cameo A (Insecure-Avoidant)**

This student is a bit of a loner and appears not to be part of things. S/he is usually very compliant and shows a high level of self-control. S/he can appear very self-reliant and can be reluctant to accept any support, even denying that s/he needs any help. S/he doesn't easily show any emotion and it can be difficult for others to tell how s/he is feeling. When s/he does occasionally become angry or hostile, it is usually directed towards objects or even other students, but is rarely directly towards the teacher. This student likes to have their own space and can be uncomfortable, even anxious, in close proximity to others. Adults working with this student can often feel anger or frustration towards them, with little sense of what is causing this feeling.

**Cameo B (Insecure-Ambivalent)**

This student appears very vulnerable and is not well integrated into school society. S/he presents as being highly anxious and finds it difficult to cope in classroom situations, finding one-to-one situations easier. S/he requires a lot of adult attention, encouragement and support. Whilst s/he is very polite in one-to-one situations, s/he can become 'commanding' and try to 'take over' the situation as the adult attempts to direct the work. S/he can find it difficult to attempt new tasks when unsupported and can appear rather helpless. Even when given support, s/he finds it difficult to concentrate and focus on the task and is easily distracted. At times when the student finds the work particularly difficult frustration can be vented in the form of hostility towards the teacher. S/he can show signs of immaturity and 'showing off' behaviour. S/he also blames others for his/her problems and is very possessive about his/her possessions. S/he can have a low tolerance for any pain or discomfort and report a high level of illness or feeling unwell in general.

**Cameo C (Secure)**

This student presents as having good self-esteem and as being well able to manage school life. S/he is resilient and is able to cope with most problems. S/he is curious about things and interested in learning – both academically and about life in general. S/he is able to work independently and has good concentration. Whilst s/he is not highly dependent on adults in school, s/he is willing to ask for and to accept support when it is needed. S/he is willing to 'have a go' at new things. S/he generally has friendly relationships with adults in school. S/he is compliant with school rules and there are few management problems with his/her behaviour. S/he shows a good ability to understand and respond to the feelings of others and is mostly able to sort out everyday conflicts with peers. S/he has good self-control.

**Cameo D (Insecure- Disorganised)**

This student's behaviour is highly unpredictable and challenging. S/he is prone to outbursts of behaviour, which can be aggressive or hostile towards others, including his/her peers and teachers. S/he does not readily accept the authority of the teacher, constantly questioning and 'pushing' the boundaries, but may submit to the higher authority of the Principal. S/he can be experienced as being highly manipulative, trying to control classroom situations and social interactions. S/he has very low self-esteem and self-confidence and is not responsive to praise or encouragement – indeed, praise can trigger outbursts of anger. This student is very sensitive about remarks or even 'looks' from others, particularly peers, and can 'over-react' to such triggers. S/he expresses little awareness of his/her own emotions or those of other people. S/he has a poor sense of humour and his/her mood often appears very low. This student finds learning very difficult, particularly areas of the curriculum requiring conceptual thinking. Free times, where the student is responsible for their own behaviour and 'filling their own time' are particularly difficult to manage.

Whilst the use of descriptive cameos to generate elements is unusual within repertory grids it is not without precedent. For example, Calisir & Lehto (2002) made use of small vignettes of 'accident scenarios' as elements within research on drivers' decision making, Jaeger & Meiselman (2004) provided 'written scenarios' of meal situations as their research stimulus (i.e. elements within a repertory grid) and Karapanos & Martens (2007) used posters with descriptions of new products to elicit responses. Furthermore, as Jaeger & Meiselman note, written scenario format is well established within marketing

literature (see Bitner, 1990). Additionally, the general use of abstract descriptions within element generation is a staple approach to repertory grid use (i.e. 'a teacher you like/dislike/get on well with/respect' etc. - see Ravenette, 1999). The validity of using such a method within an exploratory study can thus be argued to be within the capacity of PCP, through the repertory grid method, to illuminate 'types' or 'patterns' of construing.

This approach can, however, be seen to raise methodological concerns in two main areas. As noted above, the students themselves acted as elements in the grid and were later abstracted by the researcher as being representative of attachment patterns. However, it was not possible to ascertain that the selected students' were, in fact, representative of that attachment pattern (although the repetition of students to represent the same attachment pattern between participants from the same school indicates a level of reliability within this approach). Participants readily recognised the cameo descriptions and were easily able to provide examples of students based on these brief descriptions. They were able to provide student-elements likely to be representative of each attachment pattern which were grounded in their personal experience of real-life exemplars.

Secondly, the use of a cameo could be seen as prompting or directing participants' responses in terms of elicited constructs through the provision of descriptive language for each student-element. There is also a possibility that research findings could be seen as merely 'echoing back' aspects of the attachment pattern descriptions alluded to within the cameo descriptions provided. Comparison of the language within the constructs elicited and the presented cameos used to facilitate participants' selection of student to act as representative element within their repertory grids suggests that there was no discernable impact of the cameo in this manner – constructs described a broader range of behaviours and descriptive language than that within the cameos, as described within chapter 5 below.

Whilst these concerns can be seen to impact on areas of both validity and reliability, it can be argued that the cameo descriptions are an effective and

pragmatic solution to the problem of assisting participants to select students who are likely to be representing each of the four main patterns of attachment within the constraints afforded by real-life study contexts.

The following section outlines the procedure through which this process was undertaken with participants.

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#### 4.6.5 IDENTIFYING STUDENTS TO ACT AS GRID ELEMENTS ('STUDENT-ELEMENTS')

Following explanation of the overall aims of the research and the tenets of Personal Construct Psychology, participants were provided with each cameo in turn, and asked to think of a student who they either knew or had known who presented in this way. For EP participants, this was broadened to include students they had known within either their EP role or their previous role as a teacher. The first name of the student was recorded as an element ('student-element') of a repertory grid, following the same order, such that student A represented the Avoidant pattern, student B the Ambivalent pattern, student C the Secure pattern and student D the Disorganised pattern. Participants had no further access to the cameos following this identification process – all construing was based on the selected students. Each name was also written on a separate piece of card alongside the identification letter, to allow the participant the opportunity to physically move the elements around and to refer to them whilst discussing and thinking.

Whilst participants gave careful consideration to their choice of students they did not find identification itself overly difficult. In the single instance where a participant was unable to identify a student to represent one of the attachment patterns, the cameo card was retained for reference in place of a named student and the participant was asked to base their responses on their feelings regarding 'likely' behaviours expected from a student with such a presentation. In three instances, EBSD/PT participants within the same school independently selected the same child to represent the same student-element, providing some indication of reliability of the cameo descriptions as elicitors of representative elements.

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#### 4.6.6 ELICITING CONSTRUCTS

The student-elements were presented via sequential triadic elicitation (see Fransella et al, 2004, p.27) such that participants were presented with three elements in a strict rotation. The standard phrase *'In terms of their behaviours in school can you think of some important way in which any two of these are alike and thereby different from the third?'* was used to elicit constructs. Elements were presented in the order: ABC; BCD; CDA; DAB to ensure all combinations were considered. Participants were encouraged to provide at least two constructs from each triad of elements. Constructs were referred to as 'qualities' (Fransella et al, 2004) and their elicitation was as conversational as possible within a time-constrained interview. Constructs were verified verbally as part of the conversation and recorded by the researcher on a blank repertory grid, with the emergent pole to the left. Following completion of the elicitation stage, participants were asked to read through the recorded constructs and confirm that the language used captured their meaning accurately, with agreed changes being made where necessary.

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#### 4.6.7 COMPLETING THE REPERTORY GRIDS

Participants were asked to rate all constructs on all student-elements, using a seven-point scale. A visual cue of the scale was provided at the base of the blank repertory grid, to facilitate participants' understanding of how the scale worked, to prevent confusion in rating (see Appendix 3). Participants were given a free choice as to how they organised themselves to complete this task (e.g. working by element or by construct) as there is no consistent evidence that the direction of rating affects grid measures (Fransella, Bell & Bannister p.64). Participants were encouraged to verbalise their thinking to aid their use of the scale (which some participants found difficult to conceptualise, particularly where constructions involved negatives or there were reversals of preferred/ less preferred qualities between the emergent and contrast poles within their grid). Verbal feedback from the researcher was also given to check that participants had used the scale to reflect their meaning accurately (i.e. *'...so Sophie is more able to focus her attention than Joe, who is more easily distracted?'*). Once the rating scale was completed, participants were asked to

identify which was their preferred pole for each construct and this was recorded. Where participants were unable to identify a preferred pole (i.e. where neither pole was more preferred or the mid-point between poles was preferred) this was also noted. These ratings were used to organise the grids to facilitate numerical analysis, as outlined in detail below.

#### 4.6.8 PROCEDURE: REPETITION OF INTERVIEW POST IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The self-selected ESD/PT participant group received a one-day INSET (In-service training) provided by the Psychology Service. This training gave an outline of attachment theory as a framework for understanding young people's behaviour and experience of school. The researcher was involved in developing the INSET but not with its delivery, to avoid any contaminating effects. Interviews with this group were conducted pre and post INSET with the post INSET interviews conducted within a six week period of completing this training. At this post-INSET interview the same systematic triadic elicitation process was undertaken, utilising the participant's initially identified student-elements within the grids to provide new ('post-INSET') repertory grids. Additionally, following this new elicitation of constructs, participants were also asked to re-rate a copy of their original grid elicited prior to INSET to permit a direct pre-post INSET comparison.

Whilst grids can be seen to measure relationships between constructs, between elements and between constructs and elements, measurements such relationships are based on and any subsequent observations or predictions made require careful definition in terms of both reliability and validity. All repertory grids were subjected to a range of 'eyeball' and descriptive statistical analyses. Constructs were categorised via a Content Analysis process to allow for broader analysis and understanding by category areas. Within-grid statistical analyses via RepGrid IV (1.11) software were also undertaken. Findings are reported below in Chapter 5 and discussed in terms of existing literature in Chapter 6. The following section aims to explore analytical measures undertaken within this study in terms of their validity and reliability.

#### 4.7 ANALYSES OF REPERTORY GRIDS USED IN THIS STUDY

Whilst each participant's completed repertory grid carries a wealth of meaning which a researcher can tap into, this research aims at an exploration which encompasses more than one individual's perspective whilst still recognising the importance of each individual's contribution. Kelly (1955, p.39) noted that '*the psychology of individual differences turned out to be the psychology of group differences*' and advocates:

*If both John Doe and Homo sapiens are to be construed within the same system of laws, we must lift the data from John Doe at a higher level of abstraction [...] By conceiving the person as himself operating under a construct system, the psychologist can lift his data from the individual case at higher levels of abstraction.*

Robertson (2005, p.205) provides a useful overview of PCP as a vehicle for '*making sense of the group mind*'. Linking to earlier work of Kelly (1932, see op.cit.), the group mind is described as being a 'super-pattern' into which the individual sub-patterns fit. Robertson suggests that the super pattern is an operational way of '*getting a window on 'culture*' (op. cit.) as the repertory grid promotes the description of personal constructs which make up the sub-patterns. Processes are therefore necessary which allow the researcher to take a more abstract perspective – maintaining respect for individual participants' contributions whilst attempting to derive broader meaning from grouped data.

This section outlines the choices made with regard to analyses selected as being best able to explore educational professionals' constructs of their students' behaviour in the context of their likely patterns of attachment. Each type of analysis is also considered in terms of its likely reliability and validity within its context, starting with a general discussion of validity and reliability within repertory grids.

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#### 4.7.1 GENERAL VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF REPERTORY GRIDS

Fransella, Bell & Bannister (2004, p.152) note that whilst there is a tradition within psychology that the validity of a test is measured by its capacity to predict a chosen aspect of human behaviour, a construct theory approach equates validity with usefulness, with understanding of construing being seen as '*the most useful of enterprises*'. They therefore contend that the traditional notion of validity does not appertain to PCP approaches. The basic contention that constructs relate to one another is not disputable, since the act of disputing this would itself involve an organised argument which could only be conducted via related constructs. However, a repertory grid has no integral validity in its own right and thus its validity can only be discussed in terms of whether or not it effectively reveals patterns and relationships within the data it yields (op. cit. p144).

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#### 4.7.2 THE THREE SPECIFIC MEASURES INCORPORATED IN ANALYSING REPERTORY GRIDS IN THIS RESEARCH

Whilst, as noted above, each individual grid can be seen to hold its own validity in terms of the constructs elicited and the relationships between constructs in terms of each element, it is necessary to subject grids and groups of grids to further analytical interrogation to allow consideration of findings at a more abstract level.

Repertory grids can be conceived of in terms of both their content (the language of the actual constructs elicited) and their structure (the numerically-generated relationships between constructs and elements and between the constructs themselves) (Jankowicz, 2004). Three different analytical measures were employed within this research, one of which (content analysis) was concerned with grid content and two of which (statistical analysis of numerical ratings and principal components analysis) were concerned with structure. Each of these is outlined in turn below, a general description of the measure in terms of its function being followed by any specifics of its application in this study together with any individual issues regarding validity and reliability.

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#### 4.7.3 CONTENT ANALYSIS IN PCP/ REPERTORY GRID RESEARCH

Content analysis can be defined as '*a method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text*' (Weber, 1990, p.9). Although it is often used to analyse written text, it can readily be adapted for the analysis of qualitative interview data (Robson, 2002, p. 351). Whilst content analysis is itself a rigorous and systematic analysis system, Robson notes that its use is best incorporated within a multi-method study, particularly for purposes of triangulation or adding another facet to research findings (p.352). Its use is established within PCP where it is viewed as useful in terms of its ability to summarise data whilst preserving as many of the individual meanings of participants as possible (Jankowicz, 2004, p.146). In order to achieve this, the constructs of all participants are pooled and categorised according to the meaning they express (in the case of this study, categorisation is by 'subject matter').

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#### 4.7.4 RELIABILITY OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Weber, 1990 (p.17) suggests that three types of reliability particularly appertain to content analysis:

- Stability:** The extent to which the results of content analysis classification are invariant over time. It can be determined when the same content is coded more than once by the same coder (intra-rater reliability);
- Reproducibility:** The extent to which categorisation produces the same results when the same text is coded by more than one coder. High reproducibility is a minimum standard for content analysis – it measures consistency of shared understandings (meanings) held by two or more coders (inter-rater reliability);
- Accuracy:** The extent to which the classification of text corresponds to a standard or norm. It is the strongest form of reliability. (However, standard codings are established infrequently for texts so are rarely used in research).

In terms of this particular research, as outlined below, efforts were made to secure reliability in terms of both stability and reproducibility via the use of intra- and inter-rater measures. However, this study cannot claim reliability of accuracy as there is no standard classification for comparison.

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#### 4.7.5 VALIDITY OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

With regard to content analysis, validity can be seen to hold two different aspects. Firstly, its validity as a pertinent methodology to allow generalisability of results in terms of theory. Secondly, in terms of categorisation and interpretation of findings, the validity of any correspondent abstractions (Weber, 1990, p.18). Validity of content analysis also needs to be considered in the following areas:

- Face validity:** The extent to which a category appears to measure the concept/ thing that they are intended to measure
- Construct validity:** The extent to which a category can be seen to generalise across measures or methods
- Hypothesis validity:** The extent to which correspondence is found between findings and theory
- Predictive validity:** The extent to which forecasts made from findings about conditions are found to correspond to actual conditions

(after Weber, 1990, pp18 – 20)

These areas were taken into account whilst devising the method of research. The study's ability to claim validity in each of these areas is discussed in Chapter 6 following presentation of the findings.

Content analysis thus operates directly on the transcripts of research conversations (in this case, recorded in the form of a repertory grid) and aims to systematically and rigorously analyse the content into exhaustive, discrete, mutually-exclusive categories (Weber, 1990, p.23; Jankowicz, 2004, p.151).

Categories can then themselves be re-categorised into '*higher-order*' categories, thus both reducing the data and raising its level of abstraction from the raw data level (op. cit.). However, any such further categorisation does concomitantly reduce the richness of the original data and increases probability of meaning being either misrepresented or narrowed.

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#### 4.7.6 THE PROCESS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS UNDERTAKEN IN THIS STUDY

The following steps were taken with regard to maximizing the reliability and validity of content analysis procedures.

Within PCP each bi-polar construct is regarded as expressing a single unit of meaning and hence is used as the basic unit for analysis (see Jankowicz, 2004, p.149). These basic units of meaning are then grouped or 'categorised' to enable analysis to be undertaken. Categories can either be derived from the constructs themselves (via systematically identifying the various themes they express – a 'data driven' approach: Simon & Xenos, 2004) or by applying either a pre-existing categorisation system from literature or one derived from the theory being examined – a 'theory driven' approach (op. cit.; see Jankowicz, 2004, p.148 for overview). In line with the constructivist stance of this research, a data-driven approach was employed in order to maximise the participants' voice and minimise researcher bias. Hence, the researcher devised mutually-exclusive categories based on themes presented within the elicited constructs and provided definitions of them in terms of their meaning. In order to maximize stability (Weber, 1990), constructs were subjected to a blind re-allocation by the researcher one week later (intra-rater reliability). Categories with a low intra-rater reliability were re-defined where necessary.

To further address reliability issues of reproducibility (op. cit.), EP colleagues who had not been participants in the research undertook to allocate constructs to the given category headings (inter-rater procedures). In order to ensure that category headings and their associated definitions were clearly understood and to maximise their efficacy and mutual-exclusivity, EP colleagues provided feedback (usually via e-mail, although some face-to-face conversations took

place) regarding the appropriateness of categories and their definitions, with suggestions given where necessary for any changes, during the first iteration of the inter-rater process. Definitions of categories were then finalised by the researcher and remained constant across further cycles (or iterations) of inter-rater activity.

Whilst it is preferable to keep the two aspects of category definition and inter-rater activities completely separate, it was pragmatic to combine them for the first iteration for several reasons. Firstly, there was a limited number of EP colleagues available and a very limited amount of time each colleague could offer for such analysis. Secondly, in order to consider the appropriateness of each category definition, it was necessary to consider it within the context of the available constructs. It was therefore a pragmatic decision to combine comments on category definitions within the first iteration of an inter-rater reliability process, with areas of total agreement not being included in further iterations in order to reduce the amount of data to be inter-rated. Amendments were minor and generally appertained to the language involved in definitions rather than a major change regarding categorisation.

The inter-rater process was repeated across several iterations until a satisfactorily high level of agreement was reached, usually requiring 3 or 4 repetitions of reducing numbers of constructs. At least 3 EPs independently categorised each section of constructs. Although it is not possible to be certain that there was no collusion during this exercise it was made clear to inter-raters that this was an individual task rather than a group task.

The same process was followed for defining categories and inter-rater procedures for each set of participants' constructs, with the category definitions devised for the original group of participants (EPs) subsequently providing the basis for categorisation of the following groups of participants (ESBD/PTs and, finally, GTs). Additions were made to categories by the researcher to account for constructs provided by ESBD/PTs which were then commented on in terms

of their appropriateness (i.e. exclusivity, accuracy of definition) during the first iteration of inter-rater categorisation. In total, eight categories were additional to those initially used to categorise constructs from EP participants' grids. Of these eight categories only four contained more than one construct and none contained more than five constructs, suggesting that these categories were not of such significance as to necessitate a re-categorisation of previous (EP) data to take them into account. The constructs provided by the GT participant group were all accounted for within the existing categories.

Jankowicz (2004) suggests that the aim for inter-rater agreement within PCP should be 90%. In this case, levels of inter-rater agreement fell just short of this aim for two of the three groups of participants (88%, 87% and 94% for EPs, ESBD/PTs and GTs respectively). This impacts on the reliability of findings and indicates that findings from content analysis categories need to be interpreted and applied with necessary caution. However, the inter-rater scores were arguably within levels necessary to suggest general validity and as such findings are referred to within this study. Analysis of those constructs which continued to show low inter-rater agreement suggested these to be constructs which appeared to have poles which could each be categorised in a different category. In such cases the category selected by the majority of inter-raters was generally selected or, in the case of an equal distribution of raters, the researcher's categorisation was selected.

The steps taken to ensure the reliability of the content analysis undertaken in this study are summarised below in Figure 10.

## Figure 10: The steps of Content Analysis undertaken in a Personal Construct Psychology approach

<b>Step 1:</b>	<b>Identifying the basic unit for analysis</b> Within PCP, each bi-polar construct is regarded as expressing a single unit of meaning and hence is used as the basic unit (see Jankowicz, 2004, p. 149)
<b>Step 2:</b>	<b>Devising and defining categories</b> Categories can either be derived from the constructs themselves (via systematically identifying the various themes they express) or by applying either a pre-existing categorisation system from literature or one derived from the theory being examined (Jankowicz, 2004, p.148). In line with the constructivist stance of this research, categories were derived directly from constructs in order to maximise participants' voice and minimise researcher bias. Categories were defined in terms of their meaning and range to ensure their mutual-exclusivity (see Chapter 5 below).
<b>Step 3:</b>	<b>Assessing accuracy and reliability of coding via intra-rater and inter-rater measures</b> <u>3.1 Accuracy, reliability and definition of categories</u> Categories were devised and defined by the researcher following analysis of EP participants' elicited constructs. All constructs were then categorised by the researcher within these categories and then re-categorised blind after a period of one week to provide an intra-rater reliability rating. Categories were re-defined by the researcher to address areas of low intra-rater agreement where necessary. Comments on the efficacy of the re-defined categories (e.g. language, mutual exclusivity, comprehension) were provided by EP colleagues during the first iteration of content analysis, as described below. <u>3.2 Accuracy and reliability of categorisation of constructs within given categories</u> Constructs were categorised independently by six Educational Psychologists who were not participants against defined categories to provide inter-rater measures. Several iterations of analysis, usually 3 or 4, were necessary to attain sufficient levels of agreement. Following each iteration inter-raters were provided with the range of categories suggested by all inter-raters for all constructs where there was low inter-rater agreement. A declining number of constructs were being categorised in each iteration. In line with Jankowicz (2004, p.149 and p.161 respectively), the aim was for no more than 5% of constructs to be categorised as 'miscellaneous' and to achieve an overall inter-rater reliability score of 90%.

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#### 4.7.7 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF NUMERICAL RATINGS

The numerical ratings within repertory grids provide insight into the relationship between each of the elements (in this case, representative of a student's likely pattern of attachment) and the continuum between the two contrasting poles of a participant's constructs. Descriptive statistics (mean, mode, range, standard-deviation from the mean) provide an overview of each participant's ratings per student-element which can then be compared to other participants' grid data in order to explore any patterns or trends.

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#### 4.7.8 MEASURES OF VARIANCE WITHIN REPERTORY GRIDS

Principal components analysis (PCA) provides another form of structural grid analysis from numerical ratings. It analyses the variance in ratings within a grid and identifies distinct patterns of variance (Jankowicz, 2004, p.128; Fransella et al, 2004, p.157-61). RepGrid IV (version 1.11), a computer-based analysis programme for repertory grids available online, was utilised to perform principal components analyses. This analysis is undertaken by the process of:

- Looking at that extent to which ratings in each row of the grid are similar to each other (using the correlation between each row and each other row) to identify each distinct pattern
- Attributing as much as possible of the total variability to each distinct pattern, using as few different patterns as possible

Jankowicz (2004, p.128)

PCA is undertaken via an iterative process, whereby the pattern which accounts for the largest amount of variability is identified and removed from further calculations. The next major pattern is then identified. This process is repeated until all variability has been accounted for. The patterns of variability are called '*components*' (op. cit).

Output from PCA analysis (via RepGrid IV) is provided in the form of graphs (known as '*Prin-Grids*') which plot the manner in which elements and constructs are arranged with respect to the principal components (the horizontal line representing the first component and the vertical the second). Distances,

which denote grid structure, are thus an important factor within PrinGrids and PCA in general. Jankowicz (2004) notes that the general guideline is that components should be examined which account for at least 80% of the variance.

#### 4.7.9 INTERPRETATION OF PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSES

The role of the researcher is evident within the interpretation process of findings from PCA. The general interpretation process is outlined below in figure 11 (c.f. Jankowicz, 2004, pp 134 – 6), followed by the specific manner in which findings were interpreted within this study.

**Figure 11: The process of interpreting Principal Components Analysis in Repertory grids (after Jankowicz, 2004, pp 134 – 6)**

1. Look at where elements lie with respect to the principal components
2. Look at how constructs are grouped and which components seem to underlie them. (Fransella, Bell & Bannister note that it is usual to focus on constructs and elements that are clearly at one extreme or the other on the components, and to pay less attention to those constructs which are close to the point where the two component lines cross, as they can be seen as 'too vague' (p. 159)
3. Identify any similarities of meaning of constructs. (n.b. there are evident similarities to content analysis here, although the process of 'naming' of categories, as outlined below, is more descriptive and interpretative and less rigorous – for example, categories are not mutually exclusive and exhaustive)
4. Look at any individual constructs or groupings of constructs which lie close to the axes – these are likely to be the most different from those clustered at the other axis and can help to provide a clearer distinction between the two components
5. Check interpretations (the naming and composition of principal components from each grid) with each participant

Whilst this process can be seen to be applicable within individually-administered grids for clinically-based approaches, within this particular research it was not feasible to re-visit each participant to discuss findings. Additionally, within this study early analysis did not identify any distinctive components within grids and did not serve to provide data to illustrate how constructs were related to elements within the grids. Therefore, the distances

within the PCA were utilised to denote the relative associations between poles of constructs and specific student-elements (which, in this case, denoted organisation of attachment pattern). This data was drawn from Prin-Grids where the two components accounted for more than 80% of the variance.

As noted above, the interpretative role of the researcher is strong within this approach, and thus the reliability and validity of findings is lower than that of the other measures outlined above. However, the face validity of the findings was such that it merited inclusion within the analysis procedures. Furthermore, the findings from this analysis can be triangulated with the other measures to check for general coherence across findings. If a similar picture emerges, it is more likely to reflect actual facets of grid structure rather than being an artefact of the method per se (Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004, p.110/111).

#### 4.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER:

This chapter has covered the following areas:

- An outline of the constructivist epistemological stance of this research which takes the view that people actively construct their own world.
- An overview of Personal Construct Psychology as being an acceptable vehicle through which to explore participants' world views within the given context of student behaviours.
- An outline of repertory grid techniques.
- Ethical considerations
- A detailed account of the specific method used for gathering, analysing and interpreting data including considerations regarding maximizing the validity and reliability of findings.

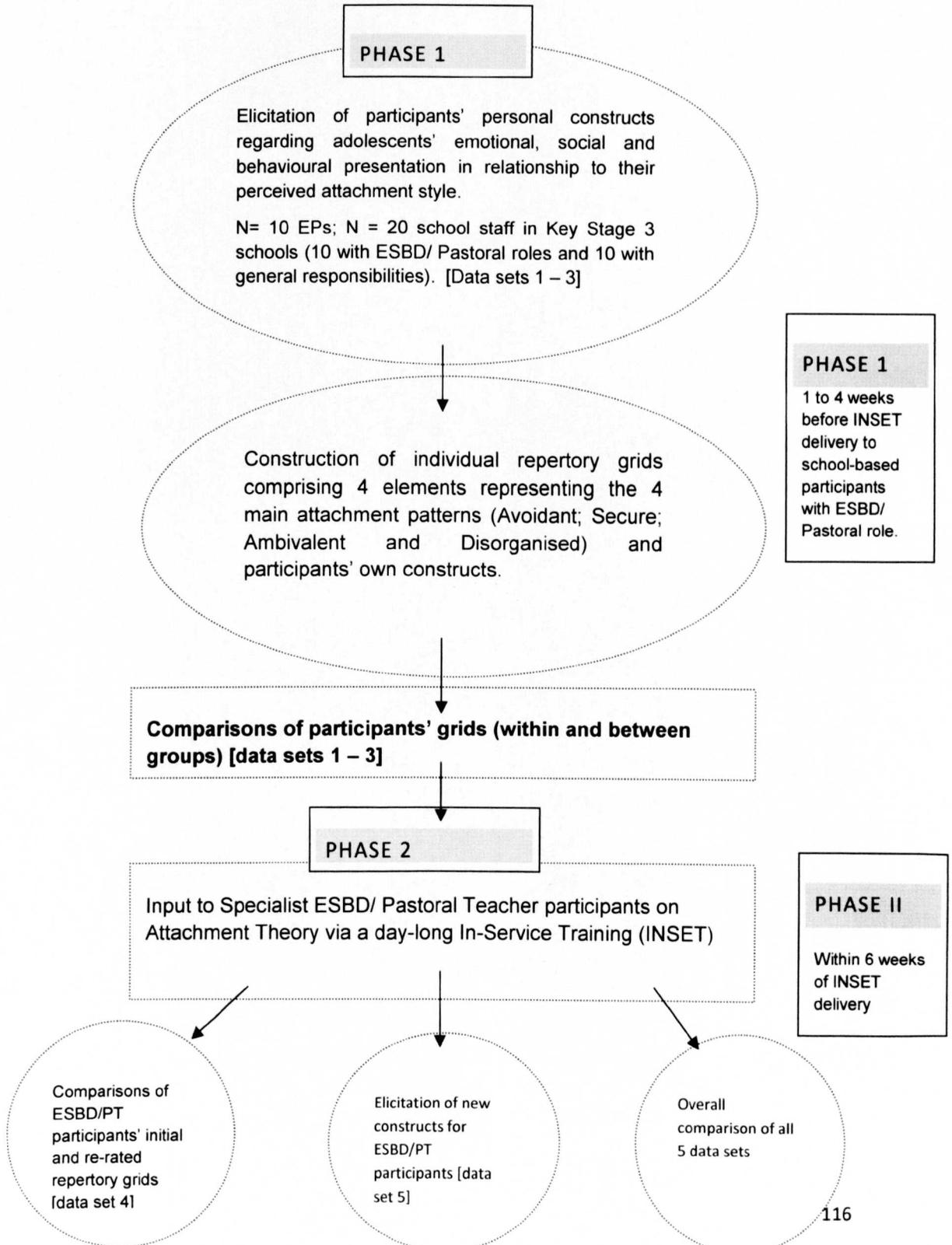
This study aimed to explore educational professionals' construing regarding secondary school students' behaviour, where the behaviours are those of students judged to reflect categories of attachment. In its use of Personal Construct Psychology this study adopts an exploratory approach, one which can illuminate group construing (Robson, 2005), enabling informal comparison between professional groups. Data provided by repertory grids (RGs) are both rich and complex. RGs offer the opportunity to explore two facets. On the one hand, the language through which participants express their constructs (the *content*) as they relate to the presented 'elements' (students indicative of attachment-category, referred to as 'student-elements'). On the other hand, a structural analysis yields *organisational* information regarding construing patterns, for example, indicating the relative position between the preferred and non-preferred poles of these constructs for each element (the *structure*). The exploration of content in RGs is delineated by the researcher in ways consonant with exploratory case study research (Willig, 2001). Thus RGs offer an opportunity to explore participants' social-constructions of young people's behaviours

The purpose of this study was to investigate the exploration of education professionals' constructs in relation to attachment. The design selected allowed for some comparison of the three selected groups, specialist ESBD/Pastoral teachers (ESBD/PTs), Educational Psychologists (EPs) and general key stage 3 teachers (GTs). Data are therefore explored at a group level wherever possible whilst still being grounded within individual responses.

The order of presentation follows the two phases of the research (see Figure 12). An outline of this chapter is provided in Figure 13.

**FIGURE 12: OUTLINE OF PHASES OF RESEARCH**

**AN EXPLORATION OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS' CONSTRUING  
IN RELATION TO STUDENT ATTACHMENT STYLE**



## FIGURE 13: THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### AN EXPLORATION OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS' CONSTRUCTING IN RELATION TO STUDENT ATTACHMENT STYLE

#### PHASE 1

##### Process:

- Individual interviews of 10 participants in each of 3 groups: EPs, ESB/PTs and GTs.
- Repertory grids produced – each construct rated on each student-element (students known to participants who are likely to be representative of the 4 main patterns of attachment) on a 7-point scale.
- Findings analysed by grid *content* and *structure* to answer component research questions:

##### CONTENT (SECTION 5.1)

- *What constructs did participants hold with regard to students' presented behaviours in school?*
- *How do the categories of constructs regarding students' behaviours compare between participant groups?*
- *How do the constructs elicited relate to attachment theory?*

##### STRUCTURE (SECTION 5.2 & 5.3)

- *Did participants differentiate their ratings of constructs according to students' likely pattern of attachment?*
- *If so, were there any differences or similarities between participant groups in this differentiation?*
- *What poles of constructs were most associated with which likely patterns of attachment? ('portraits').*

### THE IMPACT OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING REGARDING ATTACHMENT THEORY IMPACT ON ESB/PT PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUCTS OF STUDENTS' PRESENTED BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS

#### PHASE 2

##### Process:

- Re-ratings of existing repertory grids
- Newly elicited grids based on the same 4 students representing the same likely attachment patterns as student-elements.
- Findings analysed by grid *content* and *structure* to answer component research questions:

##### 5.4 STRUCTURE: RE-RATED PRE-INSET REPERTORY GRIDS

- *What are the similarities and differences in re-ratings of the pre-INSET constructs on each student-element post-INSET?*

##### 5.5 CONTENT: NEWLY ELICITED GRIDS

- *What constructs did participants hold with regard to students' presented behaviours in school post-INSET?*
- *How did these (newly elicited) constructs compare with constructs in the pre-INSET repertory grids (and other participant groups' constructs)*

##### 5.6 & 5.7 STRUCTURE: NEWLY ELICITED GRIDS

- *What are the relationships between the constructs and each likely pattern of attachment (student-elements within the grids)?*

#### 5.8 OVERALL SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 5

## 5.1 FINDINGS REGARDING THE CONTENTS OF THE REPERTORY GRIDS

The data presented within this section concerns the *content* of the RGs.

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### 5.1.1 CONSTRUCTS ELICITED

Numbers of constructs were elicited as follows:

- ESBD/PTs: 86
- EPs: 116
- GTs: 97
- Total of constructs overall: 299

At least two constructs were elicited per participant per triad of elements compared. The variance in number of constructs elicited was attributable, at least in part, to time constraint issues with some participants, particularly the ESBD/PTs. Some individuals were more fluent in responding to the triadic elicitation process, that is, some participants were more fluent when verbalizing their construing. A complete record of all constructs elicited is presented by participant group in Appendices 4 to 6.

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### 5.1.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CONSTRUCTS

In order to facilitate analysis at a further level of abstraction, Content Analysis was undertaken as outlined above (see section 4.7.6 for detailed outline). Mutually-exclusive categories were devised by the researcher (see Figure 14 below). Inter-rating procedures achieved the following reliability scores which broadly meet the target of around 90% agreement (Jankowicz, 2004):

Percentage of overall inter-rater agreement for content analysis

- 87% for ESBD/PTs
- 88% for EPs
- 94% for GTs

**FIGURE 14: DEFINITIONS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)**

<p><b>Ability and Attainment</b> The academic ability of the student and/or their level of attainment</p>	<p><b>Consideration of a Longer-Term View</b> Level of ability to defer reward for work and see the 'bigger picture' re work/career (rather than needing 'immediate' targets and rewards)</p>	<p><b>Optimism and Pessimism</b> Student's level of optimism or pessimism</p>	<p><b>Response to Praise</b> Behaviours shown by student when given praise</p>
<p><b>Aggression</b> The level to which a student is felt to show aggression in their behaviour or approach</p>	<p><b>Coping with Conflict</b> A student's response to situations that they find difficult – 'containing' their emotions</p>	<p><b>Organisation</b> A student's personal organisational skills</p>	<p><b>School Management Issues</b> Presentation which causes the application of existing school systems/approaches</p>
<p><b>Approach to Learning</b> The skills and attitudes that a pupil brings towards learning opportunities</p>	<p><b>Developing Identity</b> Referring to a student's development of their core identity</p>	<p><b>Peer Relationships</b> Nature and quality of relationships with peers</p>	<p><b>Seeking Support</b> Behaviours and attitudes of a student regarding seeking help and support</p>
<p><b>Arrogance</b> Level of arrogant presentation in student</p>	<p><b>Emotional State</b> Involving a student's underlying emotional presentation</p>	<p><b>Personal Attributes</b> The attributes ascribed to a student</p>	<p><b>Self-Awareness and Reflection</b> The student's ability to be self-aware and to reflect on their own attributes and skills/difficulties</p>
<p><b>Attachment Issues</b> Reference to attachment style of student</p>	<p><b>Family Issues</b> Any family issues appertaining to the student's behaviour or presentation in school</p>	<p><b>Personal Responsibility</b> How much responsibility the student is willing to take with regard to their own progress and presentation in school</p>	<p><b>Self-Belief</b> A student's set of core beliefs about themselves</p>
<p><b>Attention Seeking</b> Level to which the student seeks to be noticed by others and not 'forgotten'</p>	<p><b>Humour</b> Student's own use of humour and responsiveness to others' use of humour</p>	<p><b>Predictability</b> How predictable a student's behaviours are</p>	<p><b>Self-control</b> The student's ability to take ownership of their own emotions and to make purposeful decisions for their expression</p>
<p><b>Communication</b> Verbal and non-verbal communication skills of student</p>	<p><b>Impact on Teacher</b> The impact (positive or negative) that a student has on a teacher</p>	<p><b>Relationship with Adults in School</b> The nature and quality of student-adult relationships</p>	<p><b>Social Skills</b> The student's own understanding and use of social skills</p>
<p><b>Conformity and Compliance</b> A student's ability to conform and comply to 'rules' (written and unwritten)</p>	<p><b>Liking for School</b> Level of liking for school and reasons which may affect that liking</p>	<p><b>Respect</b> Level of respect shown by student to self and others</p>	

Constructs with persistently lower inter-rated agreement were analysed. Analysis suggested that the bi-polar nature of constructs, particularly where the poles did not appear each to fall within the same category, was a critical factor in lack of concordance. This feature of the analysis will be returned to in the Discussion.

Figure 15 shows the relative frequency of constructs within each category for each group of participants alongside the number of participants who provided a construct within that category. A percentage of each category's constructs of the total number of constructs per group is also provided to allow for a differential analysis of frequency of constructs between participant groups.

Of the 31 categories devised, 14 were common to all participant groups, suggesting some overall commonality in construing, consonant with the predictions of Kellyian psychology and its use in groups (Kelly, 1955; Robertson, 2005). Overall, 75% of all constructs were described within these 14 categories, including:

- 84% of the ESBD/ PTs' constructs
- 75% of EPs' constructs
- 69% of GTs' constructs

This suggests that these categories were the most salient for all participants regarding their constructs of behaviour: they hold a good range of convenience (Kelly, 1955) in explaining a significant amount of the data available to individuals.

Few constructs were attributed to a category which was not repeated either within or between participant group(s): (3 For ESBD/ PTs; 3 for EPs and none for GTs). Such individual categories accounted for less than 5% of categorised constructs overall, thus falling within acceptable parameters for representativeness of content analysis categories (Jankowicz, 2004, p.149). Tables presenting all participants' constructs by content analysis category are provided in appendices 7 to 9.

**FIGURE 15: OVERVIEW OF THE FREQUENCY OF CONSTRUCTS WITHIN CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES FOR ALL PARTICIPANT GROUPS**

Content Analysis Category	EP Participants 114 constructs 88% Inter-rater reliability			ESBD / PT Participants 86 constructs 87% Inter-rater reliability			GT Participants 96 Constructs 94% Inter-rater reliability		
	Freq.	% of all constructs	Number of participants represented (n = 10)	Freq.	% of all constructs	Number of participants represented (n = 10)	Freq.	% of all constructs	No. of participants represented (n = 10)
	Emotional State	20	18%	9	8	9%	7	8	8%
Ability/Attainment	12	11%	7	4	5%	4	8	8%	7
Peer Relationships	11	10%	7	7	8%	5	9	9%	6
Approach to Learning	10	9%	7	6	7%	6	8	8%	5
Relationships with adults in school	6	5%	6	6	7%	6	2	2%	2
Family Issues	6	5%	4	6	7%	4	2	2%	2
Communication	4	4%	2	5	6%	5	3	3%	3
Seeking Support	3	3%	2	5	6%	4	5	5%	4
Self Belief	2	2%	2	5	6%	5	5	5%	4
Predictability	2	2%	2	2	2%	2	1	1%	1
School Management Issues	2	2%	1	2	2%	2	1	1%	1
Conformity / Compliance	2	2%	2	8	9%	5	6	6%	6
Coping with conflict	2	2%	2	6	7%	3	8	8%	5
Aggression	3	3%	3	2	2%	2	1	1%	1
Consideration of a longer-term view	1	1%	1	2	2%	2			
Personal attributes	7	6%	2				3	3%	2
Social skills	6	5%	5				4	4%	4
Self-control	5	4%	4				3	3%	3
Impact on Teacher	1	1%	1				2	2%	1
Attention seeking	1	1%	1				5	5%	4
Developing Identity				4	5%	2	3	3%	2
Response to Praise				2	2%	2	1	1%	1
Organisation				1	1%	1	5	5%	3
Liking for school				1	1%	1	2	2%	2
Personal responsibility				1	1%	1	1	1%	1
Self-awareness / Reflection	6		5						
Attachment Issues	1	1%	1						
Humour	1	1%	1						
Arrogance				1	1%	1			
Optimism/ Pessimism				1	1%	1			
Respect				1	1%	1			

Areas of commonality, similarity and difference in construing are presented below in order to illuminate both individuals' construing and the varying construing between professional groups.

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### 5.1.3 COMMONALITIES IN CONSTRUING: CATEGORIES OF FREQUENTLY USED CONSTRUCTS

In order to examine commonalities in all thirty participants' construing, it is useful to focus on the categories which described the majority of constructs across the three professional groups. Of the 14 categories common to all participants, 6 categories accounted for the highest number of constructs in participant groups (identified as 8% of total constructs and above in at least one group, see figure 15). These categories are outlined below in detail and comprise:

- i. Emotional State
- ii. Peer Relationships
- iii. Ability and Attainment
- iv. Approach to Learning
- v. Conformity and Compliance
- vi. Coping with Conflict

### 5.1.3.i EMOTIONAL STATE

**Table 5.1.3i EMOTIONAL STATE CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS**

EPs		ESBD/PTs	GTs
Self-assured and comfortable / Frightened'	Have no problems expressing self (emotionally)/ Has problems expressing self (emotionally)	Even keel/ mood swings	Is calm/ has tantrums
Doesn't self-harm/ Self harms	Has low self-esteem / Finds it hard to read situations	Will show extreme emotions/ Will not show emotions (but have deep emotions)	Doesn't have outbursts/ Has outbursts
Finds it hard to talk about negative emotions/ Can't address negative emotions	Has difficulties in being aware of own emotions/ Very aware of own emotions – but gets overwhelmed	talks to adults and peers / Builds up emotions	Takes changes of staff in his/her stride/ Has an inability to cope with changes in school staff (supply)
Has more observable anxiety/ Has ambiguous behaviour signs	Fairly good understanding and maturity / Emotionally immature	more easy going when stretched /Reacts negatively when feels may fail	Quiet and calm/ Challenging, 'in your face'
Can present a vulnerable side/ Doesn't present a vulnerable side	Emotionally robust/ Severe mental health issues	Can empathise / Inward looking, selfish	Happy/ Unhappy
Resilient, independent/ Vulnerable, needs support	Has a healthy body image/ Has a distorted body image	Confident/ Quieter, nervous	Is in control of feelings/ Cries 'at the drop of a hat'
Happy / Depressed	Has a less emotional presentation/ Has high emotional expression and symptomology	Feels safe in regular classroom/ needs small group and/or known adult to feel safe	Wants peer approval/ Wants adult approval
Peaceful / Strong temper	Is emotionally contained, controls own feelings/ Manipulates social relationships	Truthful/ twists things (to suit self)	Is self assured and relaxed/ Has low self-esteem

Table 5.1.3.i provides an overview of each participant group's constructs within the 'Emotional State' category. In conjunction with figure 15 data suggest that:

- Constructs within this category were the most frequent type of constructs for both EP and ESBD/PTs.
- Constructs in this category were the second most frequent (after 'Peer Relationships') for GTs.
- Only four GTs provided a construct placed within this category, as opposed to nine EPs and seven ESBD/PTs.
- Both teacher groups provided a lower percentage of overall constructs for this category than EPs (8% and 9% as opposed to 18%).
- **Participants construe the emotional presentation of students as being salient to their presenting behaviours. This appears to be a less prevalent factor for teacher participants.**

Several constructs within the 'Emotional State' category appear to be linked to aspects of emotional regulation, including awareness of own emotional state:

Figure 3.5 reports findings regarding Peer Relationships, highlighting

- EP: *'Has no problems expressing self emotionally / Has problems expressing self emotionally'*
- ESBD/PT: *'Will show extreme emotions / will not show emotions (but has deep emotions)'*
- GT: *'Is in control of feelings / Cries 'at the drop of a hat' '*

This suggests that constructs could be reflecting a linkage between a student's construed behaviour and their emotional state. The relative frequencies of constructs in this area in this study delineates a central importance of this aspect in constructs regarding student behaviour. This data resonates with notions reviewed in the above literature (see Grey, 2002; Hanko, 2002; Schore, 2003) and will be returned to in the Discussion.

5.1.3.ii PEER RELATIONSHIPS

TABLE 5.1.3.ii 'PEER RELATIONSHIP' CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS			
	EPs	ESBD/PTs	GTs
Very dominant over peers (effectively) / Sets self up to be physically dominated	Popular with peers / Not popular with peers	Small, close, tight-knit group of peers who respect each other/ Isolated from peers	Tries to get on with anyone / Can become involved with conflict with other students
More inquisitive of adults / Interested in peers	Is less dependent on peer group / Is more likely to want close proximity of friends	Good social skills with peers/ Not good social skills with peers	Is centre of attention / Can withdraw from peers
Secure friendships / Need support re peer relationships	Is less manipulative / Is more controlling of peer group	Centre of a large group of friends/ Struggles with friendships	Has large friendship groups / Is a loner
Not bullied / Bullied	Has higher levels of skills initiating and maintaining positive relationships / Has problems initiating and sustaining relationships	Loud, commands an audience/ Doesn't hold/command a group	Is admired by others in school / Is seen as a child no-one wants to be
Popular / Unpopular	Has competent social interactions with peers / Interacting socially with peers is a big challenge	Has stable, long-term relationships/ Fall out with peers a lot	Has an open, supportive friendship group / Is arrogant – others are frightened [of him/her]
Respectful to peers / Difficulties with social relationships with peers		Is not friendless/ Struggles to keep a friend	Can construct friendships / Cannot always maintain friendships
		Appear to have friendships/ Bit of a loner	Has a large friendship group / Is a loner
			Has a friendship group / Doesn't have friends
			Has a small friendship group / Not readily accepted by others

Figure 15 reports findings regarding Peer Relationships, highlighting:

- Peer Relationships constructs were the most frequent category for GTs (9% of their total constructs)
- 6 GTs provided a construct within the category (compared to 5 ESBD/PTs and 7 EPs)

This finding is suggestive of participants' perceptions of the importance of peer relationships at Secondary level. This both resonates with and challenges the literature regarding staff perceptions of development, socialisation and identity.

Constructs elicited appeared to focus on external behaviours rather than on underlying skills within peer relationship (which may reflect a range of convenience limitation within construct elicitation):

EP: *Popular with peers / Not popular with peers*

ESBD/PT: *Has stable, long-term relationships/ Fall out with peers a lot*

GT: *Has large friendship groups / Is a loner*

However, constructs did represent the complexity of peer-group interpersonal relationships, covering a breadth of issues including:

- Popularity
- Withdrawal/ Isolation/ Being a 'loner'
- Initiating/ Maintaining/ Sustaining/ Stability of relationship
- Acceptance by or of others
- Manipulation/ control/ Use of fear or dominance (in both directions)
- General social skills
- Conflict
- Dependency
- Respect
- Degree of proximity
- Size of group

- 'Appearance' of having friends (recognising the difficulty inherent in external knowledge of people's relationships)

### 5.1.3.iii ABILITY AND ATTAINMENT

TABLE 5.1.3.iii 'ABILITY AND ATTAINMENT' CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS

EPs		ESBD/PTs	GTs
Higher achiever / Has lots of difficulties	Gifted / Struggling	Less extreme gap / Big discrepancy between ability and attainment	Capable with learning / Struggles with learning
High achieving in literacy / Has difficulties with literacy	Reasonably high achieving / Low achieving	Highly intelligent / thinks is highly intelligent	Happy to get on, confident in own ability / Is demanding of teacher's time due to lack of confidence
Able / Has learning difficulties	Bright / Not bright	High ability/ Less able	Has a strength in art / Struggles with most subjects
Not on SEN record / On SEN record	Successful at school [academically] / Not successful at school [academically]	High flying/ Difficulties in accessing curriculum	Literacy is ok / Struggles with literacy which affects behaviour
Developmentally, at an exploratory play stage / At an acquiring information stage	Academically achieving / Has reduced skills in approaching learning tasks		Higher ability / Middle ability
Can engage in the classroom / Needs support to access curriculum	Makes better academic progress / Academic progress is inhibited [by emotions and behaviour]		Has potential to achieve / Elements of personality hold back achievement
			Has higher intelligence / Is lower ability
			Achieves academically / Doesn't achieve academically

Regarding constructs within the 'Ability and Attainment' category:

- EPs and GTs provided a greater frequency of constructs allied to issues of ability and attainment than did the ESBD/PTs (see figure 15, p.124).
- 7 EPs and 7 GTs provided constructs in this area (as opposed to 4 of the ESBD/PT group).
- This type of construct accounted for 11% of the EP total constructs as opposed to 8% of the GT group and 5% of the ESBD/PT group.
- This may suggest that ESBD/PTs' constructs regarding behaviour may not focus on ability and attainment as a central factor to the extent of the

other participant groups. The ESBD/PT participants appeared rather to focus on aspects of emotionality, relationships and conformity.

GTs' and EPs' constructs appeared to reflect their perceptions of the impact of ability and attainment on students:

EP: *'Needs support to access curriculum / Can engage in the classroom'*

GT: *'Literacy is ok / Struggles with literacy, which affects behaviour'*

Interestingly, the term 'struggle', with its overtones of effort and persistence, features in three of the eight constructs provided by GTs in this category and in one EP construct, suggesting some degree of commonality in construing in this area. Factors regarding ability and attainment link strongly to a student's approach to learning.

#### 5.1.3.iv APPROACH TO LEARNING

TABLE 5.1.3.iv 'APPROACH TO LEARNING' CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS

EPs		ESBD/PTs	GTs
Completely confident will make progress / Doesn't believe can learn	Visual learner / Kinaesthetic learner	Able to get on in a lesson/ Doesn't get on (predictably)	Will attempt anything set / Can be reluctant to try
Gets on with things / Frustrated	Hardworking / Disinterested	Motivated by school work/ Not well motivated by school work	Works to best of ability / Could achieve more
Self-sufficient, independent learner / Needs high level of adult intervention	Is more able to problem-solve / Is more likely to need reassurance	Willing to take risks with learning / Expecting to fail	Independently tries to best of ability / Needs attention checking (to try to best of ability)
More self-sufficient / Requires more teacher time and attention	Has high levels of concentration / Has attention difficulties	Approaches tasks in a linear, methodical manner / Chaotic approach	Hardworking / Underachieving
Can use initiative / Dependent	Is able to access learning effectively / Finds it difficult to access learning	Likes to work independently / Likes adult support for working	Is concerned about doing well at school / Is concerned about social and emotional life at school
		Can sustain concentration/ Easily distracted	Tries hard, makes an effort / Doesn't try hard – only makes effort under duress
			Has high concentration level / Has poor concentration level
			Is an independent learner / Needs a lot of one-to-one attention

- Constructs in this category were provided by at least half of all participants (including 7 of the 10 EP participants) suggesting a good degree of salience and commonality.

Constructs in this area appear to have strong connections to relational issues:

EP:	<i>'Self-sufficient, independent learner'/ Needs high level of adult intervention'</i>
EP:	<i>'Is likely to need reassurance/ More able to problem solve'</i>
ESBD/PT:	<i>'Likes to work independently / Likes adult support for working'</i>
GT:	<i>'Is an independent learner / Needs a lot of one-to-one attention'</i>

Far fewer constructs appeared to refer to the executive functions necessary for learning to take place:

EP:	<i>'Has high levels of concentration / Has attention difficulties'</i>
ESBD/PT:	<i>'Approaches tasks in a linear, methodical manner/ Chaotic approach'</i>
GT:	<i>'Has high concentration level /Has poor concentration'</i>

Difficulties experienced in learning situations can impact on a student's behaviours and can lead to situations both of conflict (with adults and/or peers) or to issues around conformity and compliance to adults' requests or to school rules and codes of conduct. Both of these areas featured strongly within participants' constructs and findings are outlined below.

TABLE 5.1.3v 'CONFORMITY AND COMPLIANCE' CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS

EPs	ESBD/PTs	GTs
Keen to please / Not keen to please	Conformist / Erratic behaviour	Tries to follow instructions in school / Is difficult to get them to do work
Realises there are boundaries / Boundaries are irrelevant	Not an obvious problem in a learning situation/ Difficult to manage	Sits quietly in class / Doesn't sit quietly in class
	Compliant to authority/ Questions authority	Compliant / Volatile
	More compliant with teachers / Severe difficulties re compliance with teachers	Compliant / Non-compliant
	Amenable/ Sets out to undermine	Better behaved / Disruptive
	Compliant and considerate/ Confrontational	Has good behaviours / Is demanding
	Amenable/ Can be awkward	
	Accepts being reprimanded / Can get stropky	

- Five Teacher participants in each group provided constructs ascribed to the 'Conformity and Compliance' category, as opposed to two EP participants.
- Frequency of constructs within this category was high for both Teacher groups (accounting for 9% of ESBD/PTs' constructs and 8% of GTs' as opposed to 2% for EPs').
- This suggests that issues around conformity and compliance may hold more salience for Teacher participants than for EP participants.

The language of Teacher participants' constructs tended more towards descriptive labelling of behaviour, whereas EP constructs here appeared to reflect construing regarding underlying causes for lack of conformity and compliance:

ESBD/PT:	<i>'Compliant, considerate / Confrontational'</i>
GT:	<i>'Compliant / Non-compliant'</i>
EP:	<i>'Realises there are boundaries / Boundaries are irrelevant'</i>
EP:	<i>'Keen to please/ Not keen to please'</i>

It could also be argued that an implicit link might be traced in Teacher construing, a link between a student's conformity and compliance and impact on adults in school:

- GT: ... [It] is difficult to get them to do work;
- GT: ... Is demanding;
- ESBD/PT: .. Is difficult to manage;
- ESBD/PT: ... Sets out to undermine.

Participants also provided constructs which give an insight into the various ways in which students cope with conflict.

5.1.3.vi COPING WITH CONFLICT

TABLE 5.1.3.vi 'COPING WITH CONFLICT' CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS		
EPs	ESBD/PTs	GTs
Doesn't show anger / Anger flares up quickly (and is obvious)	Will face fears and challenges / Want to walk away from difficult situations	Problems can be sorted out by talking and listening / Doesn't want to listen to what teacher has to say
Has calm and controlled behaviour / Has more overt expression of needs [acting-out behaviour].	Knows when to move self from situation / Let things spiral out of control	Shows emotion through tears / Shows emotion through anger
	Leaves difficult situations / Argue with teachers if they think they're right	Will talk to adults when things go wrong / Gets verbally aggressive when things go wrong
	Seeks adult to calm down (uses time out systems)/ Enjoy the attention involved in conflict	Is peaceable – tries to keep the peace / Has huge problems with anger management
	Can recover from an outburst/ Can't recover from an outburst (during that school day)	Wants to 'keep head down'/ Seems to enjoy confrontation
	Tries to diffuse confrontation / Extends confrontation	Is physically violent / Is passive-aggressive
		Anger builds up / Instantly gets angry
		More accepting of wider picture [re authority] / Can be hostile to authority figures

- EPs provided very few constructs within this area (only two participants provided constructs which accounted for only 2% of all EP constructs). However, it should be noted that the EP role could tend to lead to these participants having less direct behavioural evidence on which to reflect when construing.

- Half of the Teacher participants in each group mentioned constructs regarding students' approaches to coping with conflict.

Participants' constructs in this area are suggestive of reflection and analytical thought having taken place:

- EPs: *'Has calm and controlled behaviour / Has more overt expression of needs [acting-out behaviour]'*
- ESBD/PT: *'Argues with Teachers if they think they're right / Leaves difficult situations'*
- GT: *'Will talk to adults when things go wrong / Gets verbally aggressive when things go wrong'*

Links to both 'Emotional State' and 'Relationships with Adults in School' categories are apparent within these constructs. The use of an adult as both a 'Secure Base' and as providing external soothing are referred to by Teacher participants:

- ESBD/PT: *'Seeks adult to calm down (uses 'Time Out' system)/ Enjoys the attention involved in conflict'*
- GT: *'Will talk to adults when things go wrong / Gets verbally aggressive when things go wrong'*

Whilst many of the constructs refer to external expression of anger via 'acting-out' or 'outburst' type behaviours, some also note alternative and less obvious expressions of high emotional states experienced in times of conflict:

- GT: *'Is physically violent / Is passive aggressive'*
- ESBD/PT: *'Will face fears and challenges/ Wants to walk away from difficult situations'*
- EP: *'Doesn't show anger / Anger flares up quickly (and is obvious)'*

Overall, **constructs elicited within this category highlight Teacher participants' recognition of both the existence of emotional issues for students within conflict situations and a role for adults in helping students to cope. They can also be seen to reflect an awareness of students' varying capacity to access adult-offered support or to self-regulate within conflict situations.**

#### 5.1.4 AREAS OF DIFFERENCE IN CONSTRUING

The above content analysis categories focused on areas of agreement between all participant groups. However, both ESD/PT and EP participants provided categories of constructs unique to their own group. The most salient findings from two of these categories, in terms of both frequency count of constructs and number of participants providing a construct within the category, are outlined below.

#### 5.1.4i SELF-AWARENESS AND REFLECTION: A UNIQUE CATEGORY FOR EP PARTICIPANTS

TABLE 5.1.4.i SELF AWARENESS AND REFLECTION
More thoughtful / Uninhibited
Can talk about feelings / Finds it hard to articulate feelings
understands when needs help / Doesn't have understanding of own needs
Measured reactions / Disproportionate reactions
Is more emotionally literate / Has reduced emotional literacy skills
Is able to talk about problems / Is less able to discuss weaknesses

- 5 of the 10 EP participants provided a construct within this category, suggesting this to be an area of some salience for EP participants.

- As the heading suggests, constructs placed in this category are those related to participants' perceptions of students' internalised state of being – their sense of self.
- **This recognition of the existence and importance of an inner sense of self, a personal 'dialogue', is less evident from Teacher participants' constructs within this sample.**
- **A cautious interpretation suggests that EP participants within this sample may be more aware of and sensitive to the existence and importance of a developing sense of self, thus arguably showing a tendency to being more 'mind-minded' than Teacher participants.**

5.1.4.ii DEVELOPING IDENTITY: A UNIQUE CATEGORY FOR SPECIALIST EBSD/PTS

TABLE 5.1.4.ii DEVELOPING IDENTITY
Presents as a strong character / Presents as a needy character
Make a name for self by achieving and being popular/ Makes a name for self by being 'different' (i.e. getting into trouble)
Definite, specific interests / General interests ('having fun')
Likes to be special / Wants to be the same as everyone else

- This category is impacted on by strong representation of two participants, one of whom provided three of the four constructs included in this category, which accounted for 5% of the group's overall constructs.
- It is interesting to note the relative paucity of constructs relating to an area which has been clearly associated developmentally with adolescence. This may be connected with the stage of development of students being considered as eliciting elements within this study.

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### 5.1.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING **CONTENTS** OF REPERTORY GRIDS IN PHASE 1

- Content analysis of constructs found a high degree of commonality and fewer specific differences in construing between participant groups.
- Commonalities reflected important areas regarding behaviour and self-regulation of young people in school, psychologically speaking.
- Constructs showed some nuanced differences between participant groups, as drawn out above.

Having given consideration to the content of the elicited grids, the following section presents data with regard to grid **structure**.

### 5.2 THE **STRUCTURE** OF THE REPERTORY GRIDS: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUCTS AND INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS (REPRESENTING ATTACHMENT PATTERNS) WITHIN THE GRIDS.

The analyses here approach the question of how participants within each group rated their individual constructs (in terms of their preferred/non-preferred pole) for students representing each likely pattern of attachment. This section therefore examines findings from the numerical structure offered by the ratings scale employed within RGs. Descriptive statistics allow participants' RG findings to be compared both individually and at a group level.

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#### 5.2.1 PREFERRED POLES OF CONSTRUCTS

As noted, participants were asked to indicate their 'preferred' pole within each construct (*'which of these statements is preferable to you?'*). In order to facilitate meaningful comparisons, grid ratings were reversed where necessary to allow for all 'preferred poles' to be presented to the left-hand side of the grid (denoted, in *decreasing* order of relevance by ratings of 1, 2 or 3) and all 'non-preferred poles' to be presented on the right-hand side of the grids (denoted, in order of *increasing* relevance by ratings of 5, 6 or 7). Hence, lower cumulative scores for an element indicated a participant viewing them as being more associated with preferred aspects of their construing whilst higher scores represented association with non-preferred aspects of their constructs (Jankowicz, 2004; Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004).

However, for some constructs participants noted that their preference lay at the 'midpoint' of the continuum (e.g. '*Has difficulties being aware of own emotions / very aware of own emotions but gets overwhelmed*'). These constructs, marked as 'M' within repertory grids, were not included in statistical analysis in order to facilitate interpretation of scores.

Ratings within each individual's grid were explored in terms of descriptive statistics: mean and modal ratings, range of ratings given and the standard deviation from the mean scores (Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004). Tables presenting findings from each of these four statistical analyses are outlined in turn below. Findings for all individual participants are presented within participant groups to allow for exploration of trends both within and between groups. (Tables outlining these analyses for each individual by participant group are available in appendices 10, 11 and 12).

**5.2.2 EXPLORATION OF GENERAL TRENDS OF CONSTRUCT PREFERENCE BY ATTACHMENT STYLE: MEAN RATINGS**

Mean scores were calculated for each participant's ratings of their constructs for each student-element. This allowed exploration of any patterns connected to participants' preferred poles of constructs and their students' likely pattern of attachment. Table 5.2.2 below indicates the frequency of the mean ratings given by each participant group to allow for comparisons both within and

**TABLE 5.2.2: FREQUENCY OF MEAN SCORES OF RATINGS FOR CONSTRUCTS RECORDED BY PARTICIPANTS BY GROUP AND STUDENT-ELEMENT ATTACHMENT STYLE**

Mean ratings	SECURE			AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			DISORGANISED		
	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT
1.0 - 1.4	5	4	5									
1.5 - 1.9	4	5	3					1				
2.0 - 2.4	1	1	1		1	3						
2.5 - 2.9					2							
3.0 - 3.4			1	1		1		1		2		
3.5 - 3.9				1		1	2					1
4.0 - 4.4				2	5	2	2	1	2		1	1
4.5 - 4.9				1	1	1	3	1	3	2	1	1
5.0 - 5.4				2		1	2	2	2	3	1	2
5.5 - 5.9				2			1	2	2	2	1	3
6.0 - 6.4				1	1	1		2		1	2	1
6.5 - 7.0									1		4	1

between groups.

- **There was a strong trend across all participants in all groups for low mean ratings for the 'Secure' student-elements, reflecting the preferred poles of participants' constructs.** Mean ratings were more broadly distributed for all other student-elements. This echoes previous findings of associations between students with a secure attachment style and success, or more effective teacher attention, in school situations (Bomber, 2007, 2009; Geddes, 2006).
- Five GTs recorded means below 4 regarding the 'Avoidant' student-elements, suggesting a trend amongst this group to associate the 'Avoidant' pattern more closely with preferred aspects of their constructs than participants in the other two groups. EPs' means for 'Avoidant' were higher than for other two groups – six EPs recorded means of 4.5 or above as opposed to two ESBD/PTs and three GTs.
- Very few participants recorded overall mean ratings relating to more preferred poles of constructs for student elements regarding the 'Ambivalent' style. Two EPs, two ESBD/PTs and no GTs recorded ratings at below 4.0 whereas three EPs, six ESBD/PTs and five GTs recorded ratings at 5 or above. This suggests a strong trend for all three participant groups to generally associate students with a likely ambivalent pattern with more negative aspects of their construing.
- Overall, data suggests the 'Disorganised' student-elements to be most associated with participants' least preferred poles of their constructs. However, this was not as strong as the association between positive aspects of participants' construing and the 'Secure' pattern. There were some signs of different trends between participant groups with only three EP participants recording mean scores of 5.5 or above as opposed to seven ESBD/PTs and five GTs. **This suggests that EP participants were more likely to associate students with a likely 'Disorganised' pattern with more positive aspects of their construing than the other two participant groups.**

5.2.3 EXPLORATION OF GENERAL TRENDS OF CONSTRUCT PREFERENCE BY ATTACHMENT STYLE: STANDARD DEVIATION OF RATINGS FROM MEAN RATINGS  
 Standard deviations from mean ratings were calculated for each individual participant's ratings within their own repertory grids in order to explore how representative the above mean ratings were of each participant's range of ratings. Table 5.2.3 below shows the frequency of standard deviations by group and by students' likely attachment style.

**TABLE 5.2.3 FREQUENCY OF STANDARD DEVIATIONS BY PARTICIPANT GROUP AND STUDENT-ELEMENT ATTACHMENT STYLE**

Standard Deviation	SECURE			AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			DISORGANISED		
	EP n = 10	ESBD/PT n = 10	GT n = 10	EP n = 10	ESBD/PT n = 10	GT n = 10	EP n = 10	ESBD/PT n = 10	GT n = 10	EP n = 10	ESBD/PT n = 10	GT n = 10
0 – 0.4		2	3					1			2	1
0.5 – 0.9	5	5	5					3	1	1	2	1
1.0 – 1.4	5	1		3	4	3	4	4	5	3	2	2
1.5 – 1.9		2	1	1	5	6	2	1	1	2	1	3
2.0 – 2.4			1	5	1	1	3	1	1	3	2	2
2.5 – 2.9				1			1		2	1	1	1

- For the 'Secure' student-elements, standard deviation was generally low (only two ESBD/PTs and two GTs recorded standard deviations of 1.5 or above).
- There was more variation in standard deviations from the mean for the 'Avoidant' student-elements than for other likely attachment styles – seven EPs recorded standard deviations of 1.5 or above, and six participants in each of the other groups. This suggests that there was less overall agreement in attributing ratings of constructs on this particular element.
- For the 'Ambivalent' and 'Disorganised' student-elements standard deviations were generally low, with most falling at or below 1.5 for all three participant groups suggesting a relatively high level of agreement within each group.

5.2.4 EXPLORATION OF GENERAL TRENDS OF CONSTRUCT PREFERENCE BY ATTACHMENT STYLE: RANGE OF RATINGS

Exploration of the range of participants' ratings by likely attachment pattern provides information as to whether or not their ratings are closely associated with either the preferred or non-preferred poles of their constructs, or a mixture of both. With a seven-point ratings scale the maximum range of ratings possible is 6. Table 5.2.4 below records the frequency of participants' range of ratings by each likely attachment pattern.

TABLE 5.2.4: FREQUENCY OF RANGE OF RATINGS BY PARTICIPANT GROUP AND STUDENT-ELEMENT ATTACHMENT STYLE												
Range	SECURE			AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			DISORGANISED		
	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT
0		2	1								1	
1	2	1	5			1		1			2	2
2	1	5	1					1	1		1	
3	5		1	1	2	2		4	4	2	2	1
4				1	4	3	4	2	1	3		2
5	1	2	2	2	4	3	2	1	1	3	1	4
6	1			6			4	1	3	2	3	1

Findings included:

- At least one participant within each group recorded a maximum range of scores for student-elements representing 'Disorganised' and 'Ambivalent' patterns, indicating that at least some of their positive poles of their constructs were associated with students with these likely patterns.
- The range of scores recorded for the 'Secure' pattern was lower than for the other three patterns, suggesting a stronger association with positive aspects of constructs for this group of students, particularly for the GTs (six of whom recorded a range of 1 or below).
- For the 'Avoidant' pattern EPs recorded a broader range of scores (eight EP participants had a range of scores of 5 or above as opposed to four ESBD/PTs and three GTs) suggesting a trend for EPs to associate

students with a likely avoidant pattern with a broader range of preferred and less preferred aspects of their constructs.

- EPs' ratings also had greater range than the other two participant groups for the 'Ambivalent' student-elements (six EPs recorded a range of scores of 5 or above as opposed to two ESBD/PTs and four GTs). No EPs recorded a range of 3 or below, whereas six ESBD/PTs and five GTs did.
- There was a slight trend towards EP participants overall recording a broader range of scores across all likely attachment styles. This reflects EP participants being more likely to associate students across all styles with both preferred and less preferred aspects of their construing than the other participant groups.

**5.2.5 EXPLORATION OF GENERAL TRENDS OF CONSTRUCT PREFERENCE BY ATTACHMENT STYLE: MODAL SCORES**

Modal scores were also calculated to enable further exploration of any patterns of association between preferred/ non-preferred poles of constructs and student-elements. Bi-modal scores were also noted where appropriate. Table 5.2.5 below indicates the frequency of the modal/ bi-modal ratings given by each participant group to allow for comparisons both within and between groups.

**TABLE 5.2.5 FREQUENCY OF MODAL AND BI-MODAL RATINGS OF CONSTRUCTS RECORDED BY PARTICIPANTS BY GROUP AND STUDENT-ELEMENT ATTACHMENT STYLE**

Modal and bi-modal ratings	SECURE			AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			DISORGANISED		
	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT	EP	ESBD/PT	GT
1	10	8	6	1	2	2		1		1		
2	1	1	4	3	1	3		2				
3	1			1	2	3	1			1		
4		1			4	1		1				
5				3	4			1	3	3		2
6				5	2	2	6	2	5	3	4	5
7				4		1	2	3	5	5	6	5

**For the 'Secure' pattern all three participant groups most commonly recorded a modal score of '1' overall, strongly associating student-elements representing a secure pattern with the most positive aspects of participants' construing.**

- **Three GTs had modal scores of 5 or above for the 'Avoidant' student-elements as opposed to twelve modal/bi-modal scores of 5 or above for EPs and six for ESBD/PTs). This suggests that EPs and ESBD/PTs were more likely than GTs to find aspects of the behaviours of students representing a likely avoidant attachment style to be connected to the least preferred aspects of their construing.**
- **Examination of the modal ratings for the 'Ambivalent' student-elements shows that all GTs and eight EPs' modal ratings were at 5 or above, whereas there were four modal scores recorded for ESBD/PTs which were at 4 or below. This suggests that ESBD/PTs showed more variation in their construing of students with a likely ambivalent pattern than the other two participant groups, with a broader spread of more positive aspects of their constructs being associated with these students.**
- **For the 'Disorganised' student-elements modal scores of 6 and 7 were most common for all participants although there was a tendency towards more deviation in modal scores for EP participants (including participant 8 who recorded a bi-modal score of 1 and 7). This suggests that EPs were more flexible in their ratings of constructs for students with a likely disorganised attachment pattern, associating at least some of their ratings with more preferred poles of their constructs.**

#### 5.2.6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

- Findings from all three participant groups strongly indicate that those students representing a likely secure attachment are highly associated with positive aspects of their construing regarding students' in-school behaviours.
- Ratings for the student-elements representing the likely 'Disorganised' pattern of attachment provided by all 3 groups reflected the least positive poles of their construing.
- Ratings of constructs regarding student-elements representative of an 'Avoidant' attachment pattern showed a trend towards more variation both within and between groups. Whilst there was an overall trend towards higher modal scores for all three participant groups for the likely 'Avoidant' pattern in comparison to the likely 'Secure' pattern students, there was some evidence of differences in strength of trend between groups. EP participants gave twelve bi/modal ratings of 5 or above in comparison to six from EBSD/PTs and three from GTs. This suggests a stronger association with least preferred constructs for students with a likely Avoidant pattern for EP participants than for either of the other two participant groups. GTs in particular tended to associate students with a likely 'Avoidant' pattern with preferred poles of their constructs.
- Whilst similar mean ratings were recorded by all three groups for both the 'Ambivalent' and 'Disorganised' student-elements, there was a trend in all three groups for slightly higher mean ratings for the 'Disorganised' pattern.

These findings from the structural data, afforded by the cross-tabulation of constructs and elements, have aided an understanding of how the content of participants' construing, outlined above, relates to each likely attachment pattern. The following section uses an additional examination of numerical ratings to explore this relationship further.

### 5.3 WHICH POLES OF CONSTRUCTS ARE MOST CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH EACH ATTACHMENT PATTERN?

Having established that participants, to varying degrees, do appear to differentiate their constructs of behaviour in a way which may be related to students' likely style of attachment, it is interesting to investigate the exact nature of this construing: to draw up a '*portrait*' to describe students' behaviours according to their likely attachment style from each participant group's perspective.

In order to address this issue the completed repertory grids for each set of participants were also examined by Principal Components Analysis (PCA) via Rep Grid IV software as outlined above. Analysis along the lines of component analysis was not undertaken in this case, due to content analysis having already been undertaken (as outlined above) and many of the prin-grids providing a main component which accounted for 80% or more of the variance itself (i.e. the majority of the entire grid being seen as one component, which could only be categorised in the broadest of terms as representing views on students' presented behaviours). This is likely to be a facet of the relatively small size (in terms of both the number of constructs and elements) of the grids produced.

However, the prin-grids provided useful structural information with regard to the individual poles of constructs most closely associated with each student-element (likely attachment pattern) within each grid, in terms of relative distance within the cross-tabulated matrix. It should be noted that this data is affected by a degree of subjectivity as distances cannot be measured with exact accuracy and some interpretation of findings by the researcher is involved. For the infrequent occurrence where poles were positioned equidistant between two elements, they are included in both tables of data to minimise researcher bias. These findings can be seen to complement other data and to provide interesting context to the above findings in terms of both additional breadth and complexity.

Tables 5.3.1 to 5.3.4 provide an overview ‘portrait’ for each attachment pattern, comprising the poles of constructs regarding behaviours most associated with each pattern respectively for all three participant groups. For ease of reference, the descriptive poles of constructs have been organised under broad headings devised by the researcher. The portraits provide an insight into the manner in which students’ behaviour is construed in line with their likely pattern of attachment by different education professionals. Findings from each table are briefly highlighted below.

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#### 5.3.1 POLES OF PARTICIPANTS’ CONSTRUCTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ‘SECURE’ ELEMENT

- For all participants, *preferred* poles of constructs constitute the majority of construct poles associated with students with a likely ‘Secure’ pattern of attachment (see Table 5.3.3).
- Few GTs’ and EBSD/PTs’ construct poles associated with student-element representative of a likely ‘Secure’ pattern make reference to the area of ‘emotional regulation’.

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#### 5.3.2 POLES OF PARTICIPANTS’ CONSTRUCTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ‘AVOIDANT’ ELEMENT

- Overall, there is a high degree of commonality in the portrait of behaviours associated with an ‘Avoidant’ pattern both within and between participant groups.
- However, EP and EBSD/PT participants appear to reflect a more negative aspect to their construing than GT participants for the ‘Avoidant’ pattern, possibly reflecting a different understanding of the associated difficulties:  
EP:            *‘excessively controlled’*  
ESBD:        *‘bottles up emotions’*  
GT:            *‘Is in control of feelings’*
- Individual differences within participants’ own construing may also be evident, in terms of the manner in which a student’s behaviour resonates with them:

EP: *'Engenders feelings of anger from adults'*  
ESBD/PT: *'Can't access adult support or build relationships easily'*  
GT: *'Arouses an empathic response'*

## EPS

### EMOTIONAL STATE

- Can present a vulnerable side
- Can talk about feelings
- Is more emotionally literate
- Is emotionally robust

### Self Regulation

- Doesn't show anger
- Has a high level of self-control
- Acts unconsciously (reactive)
- Is better equipped to 'block out' emotional responses
- Has calm and controlled behaviour

### OTHER

- Has reduced levels of aggression
- Is able to manage expectations
- Has measured reaction
- Calm

### FAMILY

- Is not controlling of mother
- Home context factors not contributory to any difficulties
- Father has a positive impact on life
- Lives at home

### DISCIPLINE

- Less obvious in classroom
- More compliant
- Teacher has strategies to try to address behaviour issues

### LEARNING

- Is completely confident will make progress
- Has age appropriate language
- Is high achieving in literacy
- Is academically achieving
- Is able
- Is able to access learning effectively
- Developmentally, at an acquiring/information stage
- Is a self-sufficient, independent learner
- Has a high level of independence
- Is easily provided for by teacher
- Not on the SEN record
- Is more self-sufficient
- Has high levels of concentration
- Is more able to problem-solve
- Can engage in the classroom
- Hard-working
- Makes better academic progress
- Confident
- Creative
- Gifted
- Can use initiative
- Fairly good understanding

### PEER RELATIONSHIPS

- Has more positive social skills
- Has competent social interactions with peers
- Wouldn't say hurtful things; sensitive
- Has higher levels of skills initiating and maintaining positive relationships
- Not bullied
- Doesn't try to take control of social situations
- Respectful to peers
- Unpopular
- Is popular with peers
- Has secure friendships
- Can interact socially on other's terms

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS

- Can elicit a nurturing response
- Is more inquisitive of adults
- Is able to interact appropriately with adults
- Has good relationships with teachers

### OTHER

- Self assured and comfortable
- Has a clear vision of the future
- Is resilient, independent
- More thoughtful
- Is the same in different situations
- Lucky
- Can express needs verbally
- Understands when needs help
- Not hostile
- Has a healthy body image
- Well-presented
- Peaceful
- Happy
- Kind

### EMOTIONAL STATE

- Self Regulation
- Even keel
- Predictable
- Never shows aggression
- More easy going when stretched
- Amenable

### FAMILY

- Settled home background
- Has two supportive parents
- Experiences routine/structure in home life
- Family better off financially and more emotionally secure

### OTHER

- Can think in the longer term
- Will face fears and challenges
- Approaches adults and peers for help in difficult situations
- Talks to adults and peers
- Can talk on an adult level
- Truthful
- Articulate

### PEER RELATIONSHIPS

- Has a small, close knit group of peers
- Good social skills with peers
- Has stable, long-term relationships
- Centre of a large group of friends
- Appears to have friendships

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS

- Co-operative with teachers
- Easier to work with
- More compliant with teachers
- Able to get help
- Makes a name for self by achieving and being popular
- Public praise motivates
- Can talk through difficulties
- Greater regard and respect

### DISCIPLINE

- Conformist
- Holds hands up to behaviour

### LEARNING

- Able to get on in a lesson
- Motivated by school work
- Good self-confidence and self-esteem
- High ability
- Willing to take risks with learning
- Better organised
- Highly intelligent
- Can be successful in mainstream school
- Has aspirations
- High flying
- Likes to work independently
- Feels safe in regular classroom
- Can sustain concentration
- Confident
- Positive outlook
- More positive view of self

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS

- Will talk to adults when things go wrong
- Take changes of staff in their stride
- Wants 'mothering' type of reassurance
- Is a 'pleaser' - likes to have teacher approval
- Wants adult approval
- Tries to follow instructions in school
- Compliant
- More accepting of wider picture [re authority]
- Behaviour and attitude can be improved by support building in general school environment
- Better behaved
- Understands the importance of authority
- Is punctual
- Can leave unattended
- Behaviour fits better with school behaviour policies

### FAMILY

- Has a happy, stable home background
- Has a settled home background
- Integrates with others
- Tries to get on with anyone
- Can withdraw from peers
- Has an open, supportive friendship group
- Socially aware
- Has a large friendship group
- Has a friendship group

### PEER RELATIONSHIPS

- Shows emotion through tears
- Self Regulation
- Is sensitive - is attuned to people
- Anger builds up

### EMOTIONAL STATE

- Shows emotion through tears

### DISCIPLINE

- Shows emotion through tears

### LEARNING

- Confident
- Capable with learning
- Capable of working independently
- Happy to get on, confident in own ability
- Has a strength in a particular subject
- Seeks support
- Literacy is ok
- Looks after equipment, is organised
- Is concerned about doing well at school
- Is imaginative and shares ideas
- Hardworking
- Tries hard, makes effort
- Has potential to achieve
- Takes part in extra-curricular activities
- Has a high concentration level
- Is very organised
- Is an independent learner
- Doesn't need extra attention
- Has higher intelligence

### OTHER

- Doesn't comfort eat
- Happy
- Is on top of things
- Enjoys some aspects of school
- Has a centred, balanced viewpoint
- Has good co-ordination

## ESBD/PTS

Table 5.3.1

Principal Components Analysis: Poles of constructs most associated with the 'Secure' pattern of attachment.

## GTs

## EPS

- EMOTIONAL STATE**
  - Has difficulties in being aware of own emotions
  - Has low self-esteem
  - Has severe mental health issues
  - Depressed
  - Vulnerable, needs adult support
- Self Regulation**
  - Excessively controlled
  - Self-harms
  - Is emotionally contained, controls own feelings
  - Can mask fears and anxieties
  - Has a less emotional presentation
  - Has calm and controlled behaviour
  - Has problems expressing self (emotionally)
  - Aggression can be inflicted on self
  - Doesn't present a vulnerable side
  - reach/unresponsive

- Reciprocity**
  - Controlling
  - Has a greater degree of mind-mindedness
  - Difficult to reach/unresponsive
  - Not keen to please
- PEER RELATIONSHIPS**
  - Wouldn't say hurtful things; sensitive
  - Reluctant to show social skills
  - is less dependent on peer group
  - is not popular with peers
  - Doesn't feel that social niceties are important
- RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS**
  - Elicits frustration
  - Has less satisfactory relationships with teachers
  - Engenders feelings of anger from adults
- FAMILY**
  - is interested in peers
  - is controlling of mother
  - Needs would be greater without the consistency of a parent
  - Father has a negative influence on life
  - is accommodated away from home

- LEARNING**
  - Difficulties with literacy
  - Difficulties in understanding spoken language
  - Is on SEN record
  - Needs a high level of intervention
  - Requires teacher resilience
  - Requires more teacher time and attention
  - is less reliant on the teacher
  - is more secure in functioning independently
- DISCIPLINE**
  - is difficult to manage
  - Boundaries are irrelevant
  - Less obvious in classroom, more compliant
  - Behaviour is completely predictable
- OTHER**
  - Has no vision of the future
  - Has a distorted body image
  - is less manipulative
  - Manipulative

- EMOTIONAL STATE**
  - Bottles up emotions
  - Wants to walk away from difficult situations
  - In denial about own behaviour
  - Lets things get out of control
  - Seeks adult to calm down
  - Leaves difficult situations
  - Can recover from an outburst
  - Tries to diffuse confrontation
  - Can empathise
  - Non-aggressive, calm
  - Knows when to move self from situation
  - Can be persuaded
  - Aggressive
- RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS**
  - isolated from peers
  - Bit of a loner
  - Doesn't command/hold a group
  - is not friendless

- RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS**
  - Adults have to try to engage them in adult conversation
  - Has positive relationships with adults
  - Can't access adult support or build relationships easily
- LEARNING**
  - Big discrepancy between ability and attainment
  - Doesn't like being in school
  - Good self-esteem
  - Will accept help for needs
  - Approaches tasks in a linear, methodical manner
  - Seeks help
  - Few aspirations
- DISCIPLINE**
  - Not an obvious problem in a learning situation
  - Doesn't come up against behaviour management systems
  - Compliant to authority
  - Easier to work with
  - Amenable
  - Behaviour is more consistent
  - Compliant and considerate
  - Quiet

## ESBD/PTS

- FAMILY**
  - Little routine/structure in home life
  - Lack of adult attention in home background
- OTHER**
  - Focused on the here and now – little regard for circumstances
  - Able to hold a discussion
  - Less likely to appear arrogant
  - Can be awkward
  - Has definite, specific interests

**Table 5.3.2**  
Principal Components Analysis: Poles of constructs most associated with the 'Avoidant' pattern of attachment.

- LEARNING**
  - is lower ability
  - Will attempt anything set
  - Works to best of ability
  - Independently tries to best of ability
  - Doesn't seek attention as often s/he should
  - is more self-motivated
  - Achieves academically
  - Higher ability
  - Blends in, doesn't stand out
  - Has poor coordination
  - Panics about punishment and doesn't explain difficulties with work
  - Needs a lot of one-to-one support
  - Has a poor concentration level
  - is, risk-managed
- Reciprocity**
  - Willing to interact but can wait (for attention)
  - Responds to praise in a good way
  - Responds to calmness
  - Problems can be sorted out by talking and listening
- EMOTIONAL STATE**
  - Tends to distance self
  - is self assured and relaxed
- Self Regulation**
  - More able to regulate own behaviour
  - Calm
  - Quiet and calm
  - Doesn't have outbursts
  - Likely to stay calm if challenged
  - is in control of feelings
- PEER RELATIONSHIPS**
  - is a loner
  - Can construct friendships
  - Likes to blend in with the crowd
  - Seen as the child no-one wants to be

- RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS**
  - Wants to try to please teacher
  - Has to be brought into conversation
  - Arouses an empathic response
- DISCIPLINE**
  - Sits quietly in class
  - Accepts responsibility for own actions
  - Has good behaviours
  - Punctual
- OTHER**
  - Has manners
  - is peaceable – tries to keep peace
  - Wants to 'keep head down'
  - More mature
  - is quieter

## GTS

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### 5.3.3 POLES OF PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUCTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE 'AMBIVALENT' ELEMENT

- All participants gave a high number of poles of constructs related to 'Learning' issues associated with the 'Ambivalent' student-element.
- There is a strong consistency of 'non-preferred' poles of constructs being represented for all participant groups.
- Various factors, including academic ability; language development; reliance on adults; self-esteem; confidence; distractibility; expectation of failure/ reluctance to try; organisation; personality and emotions and associated behaviour are all associated with this portrait, reflecting the complexity of the situation.
- Some reference is made within the portrait to interactions with adults, reflecting all participants' recognition of the importance of an interactional stance.
- These poles of constructs are representative of the ambivalent nature of students with a likely insecure-ambivalent attachment pattern. As one ESBD/PT articulated, the key question with such students is:

*'How do you get a way in?'*

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### 5.3.4 POLES OF PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUCTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE 'DISORGANISED' ELEMENT

- Poles of constructs most closely associated with student-elements representative of a 'Disorganised' pattern reflected construing around emotional regulation and learning for EP and GT participants, whilst there was a stronger focus on issues around discipline for GTs and ESBD/PT participants (see Table 5.3.4 below).
- A negative impact on learning is suggested by all three participant groups' portraits for students with a likely disorganised pattern of attachment. Key features mentioned in this area include underachievement; struggle; problems with executive functions and interplay between both relationships and behaviour.

## EPS

### EMOTIONAL STATE

- Can't address negative emotions
- Finds it hard to articulate feelings
- Doesn't have an understanding of own needs
- Is emotionally immature
- Severe mental health issues
- Expresses needs non-verbally
- Has reduced emotional literacy skills
- **Self Regulation**
- Uninhibited
- Doesn't self-harm
- Anger flares up quickly (and is obvious)
- Frightened
- Is physically aggressive
- Anxious
- Has disproportionate reactions
- Responds to provocation
- Can be outwardly aggressive

### PEER RELATIONSHIPS

- Says things to hurt relationships
- Needs support re peer relationships
- Has difficulties with social relationships with peers
- Wants to take control of social situations
- Social skills fluctuate
- Has problems sustaining relationships

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS

- Likes adult company
- Is more vulnerable and susceptible to adult criticism and expectations
- Has a more complex presentation, is more challenging to teacher
- Teacher has a more negative relationship with him/her

### DISCIPLINE

- Has ambiguous behaviour signs
- Sets self up to be physically dominated
- Behaviour is less predictable
- Has more overt expression of needs (acting out behaviour)

### OTHER

- Can show hostility
- Likes a laugh
- Born in the UK

### LEARNING

- Doesn't believe can learn
- Is a higher achiever
- Gets on with things
- Has learning difficulties
- Very articulate
- Developmentally, at an exploratory play stage
- Needs support to access the curriculum
- Fairly confident
- Dependent
- Not creative
- Is less likely to accept adult support
- Is successful at school (academically)

### PEER RELATIONSHIPS

- Doesn't require a statement
- Is reasonably high achieving
- Is more likely to need reassurance
- Has attention difficulties
- Has a high reliance on adults (re school work)
- Has reduced skills in approaching learning tasks

### FAMILY

- Difficulties have been influenced by the absence of one parent
- Home context factors contributory in difficulties

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS

- Not bothered how teachers see them
- Doesn't want to listen to what teacher has to say
- Is not interested in adult approval
- Doesn't want to communicate
- Demands attention
- Is demanding
- Is demanding of teacher time
- Needs one-to-one rapport building but not in general school environment

### DISCIPLINE

- Challenging 'in your face' changes in school staff
- Comfort eats
- Has huge problems with anger management
- Likely to have an outburst if challenged
- Volatile
- Instantly gets angry
- **Reciprocity**
- Is arrogant
- Has problems with time keeping

### EMOTIONAL STATE

- Unhappy
- Is concerned about social and emotional life at school
- Is emotionally illiterate – doesn't pick up signals
- Vulnerable and insecure

### Self Regulation

- Not good at controlling temper
- Has an inability to cope with changes in school staff

## ESBD/PTS

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS

- Won't accept help
- Doesn't easily see the need for help

### DISCIPLINE

- Comes up against behaviour management systems
- Difficult to manage
- Enjoys the attention involved in conflict
- Argues with teachers if thinks is right
- Will say 'no' and not move
- Severe difficulties re compliance with teachers
- Behaviour is more erratic
- Needs a lot more support to avoid exclusion
- Needs a lot more support to avoid exclusion

### FAMILY

- Breakdown of family marriage
- Refers a lot to absent father
- Lack of adult attention in home background

### LEARNING

- Less extreme gap between ability and attainment
- Thinks is highly intelligent
- Confident
- Open praise can cause an outburst
- Doesn't seek help/support
- Doesn't like help at all
- Doesn't like to be singled out
- Likes adult support for working

### OTHER

- Approaches adults and peers for help in difficult situations
- Has general interests (having fun)
- Presents as a strong character
- Chaotic approach
- Likes being in school
- Needs a small group/known adult to feel safe

### FAMILY

- Has problems at home

### OTHER

- Wants to be as far away as possible when things go wrong
- Has no manners
- Immature
- Doesn't take part in extra-curricular activities

Table 5.3.4

Principal Components Analysis: Poles of constructs most associated with the 'Disorganised' pattern of attachment.

## GTs

## EPS

- Reciprocity
- Keen to please
- Finds it hard to read situations
- PEER RELATIONSHIPS**
- Is very dominant over peers (effectively)
- Popular
- Bullied
- Needs support with developing social skills
- Is more controlling of peer group
- Is more likely to want close proximity of friends
- Manipulates social relationships
- Is shy
- Interacting socially with peers is a big challenge
- Social interaction is only on own terms
- RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS**
- Staff feel positive towards him/her
- Finds it difficult to interact appropriately with adults
- Accepts adult support
- Is able to talk about problems
- OTHER**
- Likeable
- Has no sense of humour
- Unfortunate
- Spoiled
- Unkempt
- Is polite
- Anger flares up quickly (and is obvious)
- Responds to provocation

### EMOTIONAL STATE

- Is frustrated
- Has more observable anxiety
- Finds it hard to talk about negative emotions
- Has a high emotional expression and symptomology
- Makes needs overly known

### Self Regulation

- Has reactive responses
- Volatile
- Lacks self-control
- Aggressive
- Unpredictable
- Strong temper
- Has no problem expressing self (emotionally)
- Very aware of own emotions – but gets overwhelmed
- Is driven by emotional experiences
- Is attention seeking
- Anger flares up quickly (and is obvious)
- Responds to provocation

### LEARNING

- Has difficulties in understanding and use of language
- Has speech and language difficulties
- Is less able to discuss weaknesses
- Finds it difficult to access learning
- Has bits of difficulties
- Struggling
- Disinterested
- Not confident
- Is low achieving
- Requires a statement
- Is not bright
- Is not successful at school (academically)
- Is more reliant on the teacher
- Academic progress is inhibited [by emotions and behaviour]

### DISCIPLINE

- Is more obvious, disruptive
- Realises there are boundaries
- Has more overt expression of needs (acting-out behaviour)

### FAMILY

- Is heavily influenced by siblings
- Difficulties exacerbated by lack of siblings

## ESBD/PTS

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS

- How do you get a way in?
- Accepts help
- Wants to please trusted adults
- Lots of adult attention and stimulation

### LEARNING

- Less extreme gap between ability and attainment
- Doesn't get on (predictably)
- Low self-esteem
- Not well motivated by school work

### PEER RELATIONSHIPS

- Has social communication difficulties
- Not good social skills with peers
- Falls out with peers a bit
- Struggles with friendships
- Wants to be the same as everyone else

### DISCIPLINE

- Difficult to manage
- Erratic behaviour
- Very unpredictable
- Questions authority
- Severe difficulties re compliance with teachers
- Accepts being reprimanded
- Makes a name for self by being 'different' (i.e. getting into trouble)

### OTHER

- Not very articulate
- Monosyllabic
- Quieter, nervous
- Says out to undermine
- Can look arrogant
- Inward looking, selfish
- 'closed door' – doesn't buy in to positives about school
- Needy child
- Presents as a needy character
- Likes praise
- Lacks respect (of adults, peers and school)

### DISCIPLINE

- Challenging 'in your face'
- Aggressively challenging
- Has no manners
- Is late
- Behaviour leads into disciplinary issues
- Responds to firmness

### FAMILY

- Personal background leads to being more needy

### OTHER

- Is arrogant
- On the surface, shings off praise
- Is an individual – stands out
- Is more vocal
- Can't leave unattended
- Has a reputation
- Gets singled out

### EMOTIONAL STATE

- Is less confident
- Has low self-esteem

### Self Regulation

- Attention seeking
- Has outbursts
- Has tantrums
- Shows emotions through anger
- Gets verbally aggressive when things go wrong
- Demands attention
- Has huge problems with anger
- management
- Seems to enjoy confrontation
- Attention seeking
- 'Cries' at the drop of a hat'

### PEER RELATIONSHIPS

- Can become involved with conflict with other pupils
- Centre of attention with peers
- Finds it hard to mix
- Cannot always maintain friendships

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS

- Has an inability to cope with changes in school staff
- Not good at asking for help and support
- Will strike up a conversation

## Table 5.3.3

Principal Components Analysis: Poles of constructs most associated with the 'Ambivalent' pattern of attachment.

## GTS

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#### 5.3.5 SUMMARY COMMENTS ON 'PORTRAITS' OF STUDENTS' BEHAVIOURS ACCORDING TO LIKELY PATTERN OF ATTACHMENT ORGANISATION

- Data in this section have illustrated key aspects of construing for individuals and professional groups in terms of their connection to the four main presenting patterns of attachment.

The following section explores findings regarding the impact of the provision of In-Service Training regarding attachment theory on EBSD/PT participants' construing.

#### 5.4 THE IMPACT OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING REGARDING ATTACHMENT THEORY ON SPECIALIST KS3 EBSD/PASTORAL TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTS REGARDING BEHAVIOUR

Personal Construct Theory allows for changes to our construing of the world to occur as a result of our experiences. The provision of In-Service training (INSET) is a frequently used method of expanding education professionals' understanding and developing their practice. If this is effective, there may be evident change either within the content or the structural matrix of participants' RGs as a result of the experience of INSET. This section sets out to present and explore the findings of post-INSET analysis of EBSD/PT participants' re-rating of their existing RGs. The content and structure of RGs newly elicited post-INSET are then presented in sections 5.5 and 5.6 below. Comparisons with previous data sets are presented where appropriate.

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##### 5.4.1 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: **STRUCTURE** WITHIN EBSD/PT PARTICIPANTS' RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS.

As above, descriptive statistics were employed to explore EBSD/PTs' re-rated RGs and to compare them to their pre-INSET counterparts. Each area of descriptive statistic is presented below in turn followed by an investigation of change. (Appendix 13 provides the re-rated repertory grids and Appendix 14 an overview of these statistics per individual).

5.4.2 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: MEAN RATINGS OF RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS

Table 5.4.2 compares ESB/PTs' frequency of mean ratings of their constructs pre and post INSET for each attachment style:

TABLE 5.4.2 A COMPARISON OF PARTICIPANTS' MEAN RATINGS OF CONSTRUCTS FOR EACH STUDENT-ELEMENT ATTACHMENT STYLE PRE- AND POST-INSET ON ATTACHMENT.								
Mean Ratings	SECURE		AVOIDANT		AMBIVALENT		DISORGANISED	
	ESBD/PT Pre	ESBD/PT Post	ESBD/PT Pre	ESBD/PT Post	ESBD/PT Pre	ESBD/PT Post	ESBD/PT Pre	ESBD/PT Post
1.0 - 1.4	4	6						
1.5 - 1.9	5	1			1			
2.0 - 2.4	1	1	1					
2.5 - 2.9		2	2	1				
3.0 - 3.4				1	1			
3.5 - 3.9				1				
4.0 - 4.4			5	2	1	2	1	1
4.5 - 4.9			1	2	1	2	1	2
5.0 - 5.4				3	2	2	1	
5.5 - 5.9					2	2	1	3
6.0 - 6.4			1		2		2	1
6.5 - 7.0						2	4	3

- Overall, participants' mean ratings increased slightly for all student-elements (representing a move towards the least preferred pole of constructs) with the exception of student-elements representative of a 'Disorganised' pattern where there was a decrease. However, there were no strong trends evident suggesting that there was no strong impact of INSET on mean ratings of constructs for any student-element.

5.4.3 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: MODAL RATINGS OF RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS

Table 5.4.3 below outlines the frequency of modal ratings of constructs for ESB/PTS' RGs pre- and post-INSET.

TABLE 5.4.3 MODAL RATINGS OF CONSTRUCTS FOR ESB/PTS RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS POST-INSET								
Modal and bi-modal ratings	SECURE		AVOIDANT		AMBIVALENT		DISORGANISED	
	ESBD/PT Pre	ESBD/PT Post	ESBD/PT Pre	ESBD/PT Post	ESBD/PT Pre	ESBD/PT Post	ESBD/PT Pre	ESBD/PT Post
1	8	8	2	2	1			
2	1	2	1	1	2			
3			2	2		1		
4	1		4	3	1			
5			4	3	1	1		1
6			2	4	2	5	4	1
7				1	3	5	6	8

Whilst post-INSET modal scores were similar to pre-INSET modal scores for the 'Secure' and 'Disorganised' student-elements, there was a trend towards higher modal ratings for student-elements representative of 'Avoidant' and 'Ambivalent' patterns. This reflects a tendency towards an association with least preferred aspects of construing for these student-elements post-INSET.

5.4.4 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: RANGE AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS POST-INSET FOR RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS

There were no substantive differences between pre-and-post-INSET findings regarding range or standard deviations (see Appendix 14).

5.4.5 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: ANALYSIS OF CHANGE IN INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUING PRE- AND POST-INSET

Further analysis of change in individual participants' construct ratings pre-and-post INSET was undertaken via a Simple Change Grid mechanism (Jankowicz, 2004). This allows calculation of the absolute change (a cumulative addition of

all rating changes, disregarding direction e.g. +1 and -2 = 3) and the arithmetical change of ratings (indicating the direction of change in terms of increase or decrease in rating, e.g. +1 and -2 = -1) for each individual cell involved in the comparison of identical grids (see Table 5.4.5).

**TABLE 5.4.5 SUMMARY AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ESD/PASTORAL TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' CHANGE GRIDS (FOLLOWING RE-RATING OF ORIGINAL REPERTORY GRIDS POST INSET)**

Participant	SECURE		AVOIDANT		AMBIVALENT		DISORGANISED	
	Absolute change	Arithmetic change	Absolute change	Arithmetic change	Absolute change	Arithmetic change	Absolute change	Arithmetic change
Teacher 1	6	+6	7	-3	12	+12	12	+12
Teacher 2	6	0	13	-5	7	-5	19	-1
Teacher 3	11	+12	7	-1	9	-5	8	-4
Teacher 4	1	-1	11	+1	14	0	8	-4
Teacher 5	7	-5	5	-1	4	+4	4	-2
Teacher 6	3	-1	22	+21	2	-2	3	+3
Teacher 7	3	-3	11	-1	3	+1	5	-1
Teacher 8	9	+3	12	+6	16	+12	5	-7
Teacher 9	1	+1	9	+3	15	-7	11	-3
Teacher 10	0	0	6	+2	18	+16	2	-2
<b>Total Change</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>+12</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>+22</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>+26</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>-9</b>
<b>Variance</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Number of Increased/Decreased ratings:</b>	<b>Number of Increased/ decreased ratings (n = 10)</b> 4 / 4		<b>Number of Increased / decreased ratings (n = 10)</b> 5 / 5		<b>Number of Increased / decreased ratings (n = 10)</b> 5 / 4		<b>Number of Increased / decreased ratings (n = 10)</b> 2 / 8	

- Ratings for the student-element representing the 'Secure' pattern showed the least change, with only 47 absolute changes recorded and

- the 'Disorganised' student-element recorded the next lowest level of change (77 absolute changes).
- The highest changes occurred in the ratings of constructs for student-elements representing the 'Avoidant' (103 absolute changes) and the 'Ambivalent' (100 absolute changes) patterns.
  - Variance of absolute change was very similar, suggesting no effect of INSET regarding ratings of constructs on one particular student-element.
  - Arithmetic changes indicate that the direction of change was towards *higher* ratings (reflecting a move towards least-preferred poles of constructs) for each student-element except those representative of a 'Disorganised' pattern (where a change of -9 was recorded).
  - In each case, the majority of the direction of change is attributable to large changes being recorded by individual participants (+21 for Teacher 6 for the 'Avoidant' student-element; +16 and +12 for Teachers 10 and 8 respectively for the 'Ambivalent' student-element; +12 for Teacher 3 for the 'Secure' student-element and +12 for Teacher 1 for the 'Disorganised' student-element).
  - This last finding had the effect of reversing the overall direction of change for the 'Disorganised' student-elements at a group level, as eight out of a possible ten changes recorded were towards the preferred poles of constructs.

#### 5.4.6 OVERALL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM SPECIALIST ESD/ PASTORAL TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS POST INSET ON ATTACHMENT THEORY

- At an individual level, where large changes were recorded they tended to be in relation to only one student-element within each teacher's grid – no teacher recorded large changes across all the student-elements.
- Large changes were all in the direction of a move towards the *least preferred* poles of constructs, suggesting a possible effect of a move towards non-preferred poles of constructs following INSET on attachment theory. (Possible reasons for this finding are discussed in Chapter 6).

- Where there was an increase in ratings, particularly for ‘Ambivalent’ student-elements, this reflected a minority of participants increasing their ratings rather than a general trend for all participants.
- **The Change Grid findings suggest that there were large individual changes in ratings of constructs on individual elements following INSET alongside a general trend towards an increase in ratings for all constructs on all student-elements, with the exception of for the ‘Disorganised’ student-elements, where the trend was generally reversed (8 of the 10 participants).**

Further investigation into impact of In-Service Training on ESBD/PT participants was also sought via newly elicited repertory grids, making use of the same student-elements to represent each pattern of attachment. Findings from this aspect of the research are presented in the following section.

## 5.5 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: THE CONTENTS OF NEWLY ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS

In order to explore further any impact of INSET on the content of participants’ construing, new grids were also elicited from the ESBD/PTs. The same student-elements represented likely patterns of attachment. As participants were familiar with the procedures more constructs were elicited and rated within the time constraints, resulting in larger grids (see Appendix 15). This section presents findings regarding the contents of the newly-elicited RGs. Section 5.6 below presents findings regarding their structure.

### 5.5.1 CONTENTS OF THE NEWLY ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST-INSET

- 146 constructs were obtained (see Appendix 15).
- Content analysis found that constructs fitted within the same categories previously employed across all participant groups with an inter-rater reliability score of 94% (see table 5.5.1i which also includes findings from other participant groups for comparison).

- The percentage frequency of constructs within categories was subject to some change, but five of the same categories remained amongst the categories with the highest frequency (8% of total constructs or above).
- Two new categories of constructs fell within this parameter for newly elicited grids ('Family Issues' and 'Self Belief').
- A final category included here is that of 'Ability and Attainment' as it was reported on above (due to its being included in the six most frequent categories across all participant groups) and is provided for comparison.
- Constructs contained within these eight categories accounted for 61% of the total constructs newly-elicited, reflecting a broader range of categories of constructs overall within the newly elicited grids.

**Table 5.5.1i Overview of the frequency of constructs within content analysis categories for all participant groups including newly elicited repertory grids**

Content Analysis Category	EP Participants 114 constructs 88% Inter-rater reliability			EBS/PT Participants 86 constructs 87% Inter-rater reliability			GT Participants 96 Constructs 94% Inter-rater reliability			ESBD/PT Participants – Newly elicited grids post INSET 146 constructs 94% inter-rater reliability		
	Freq	% of all constructs	Number of participants represented (n = 10)	Freq	% of all constructs	Number of participants represented (n = 10)	Freq	% of all constructs	Number of participants represented (n = 10)	Freq	% of all constructs	Number of participants represented (n = 10)
	Emotional State	20	18%	9	8	9%	7	8	8%	4	12	8%
Ability/Attainment	12	11%	7	4	5%	4	8	8%	7	4	3%	4
Peer Relationships	11	10%	7	7	8%	5	9	9%	6	17	12%	8
Approach to Learning	10	9%	7	6	7%	6	8	8%	5	10	7%	9
Relationships with adults in school	6	5%	6	6	7%	4	2	2%	2	4	3%	3
Family Issues	6	5%	4	6	7%	4	2	2%	2	12	8%	3
Communication	4	4%	2	5	6%	5	3	3%	3	3	2%	3
Seeking Support	3	3%	2	5	6%	4	5	5%	4	2	1%	1
Self Belief	2	2%	2	5	6%	5	5	5%	4	12	8%	6
Predictability	2	2%	2	2	2%	2	1	1%	1	2	1%	2
School Management Issues	2	2%	1	2	2%	2	1	1%	1	5	3%	3
Conformity / Compliance	2	2%	2	8	9%	5	6	6%	6	12	8%	7
Coping with conflict	2	2%	2	6	7%	3	8	8%	5	10	7%	6
Aggression	3	3%	3	2	2%	2	1	1%	1	1		1
Consideration of a longer-term view	1	1%	1	2	2%	2				6	4%	4
Personal attributes	7	6%	2				3	3%	2	4	3%	3
Social skills	6	5%	5				4	4%	4	5	3%	4
Self-control	5	4%	4				3	3%	3	2	1%	2
Impact on Teacher	1	1%	1				2	2%	1	2	1%	2
Attention seeking	1	1%	1				5	5%	4			
Developing Identity				4	5%	2	3	3%	2	2	1%	2
Response to Praise				2	2%	2	1	1%	1			
Organisation				1	1%	1	5	5%	3	1		1
Liking for school				1	1%	1	2	2%	2	2	1%	2
Personal responsibility				1	1%	1	1	1%	1	4	3%	4
Self-awareness / Reflection	6	5%	5									
Attachment Issues	1	1%	1							1		1
Humour	1	1%	1							2	1%	2
Arrogance				1	1%	1						
Optimism/ Pessimism				1	1%	1						
pect				1	1%	1						

- Participants provided constructs within seven categories where previously they had not and, conversely, no constructs were provided within four where previously there had been representation see Table 5.5.1i).

Each of the eight most frequent categories of constructs is outlined briefly below.

#### 5.5.1ii PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Very caring to other, younger, needier children / More involved with own friends	Consciously worries about what peers think to some extent / Unconsciously wants to impress peers	Overtly aggressive towards peers / Often withdraws with peers
Able to make relationships with other students / Not able to make relationships with other students	Seeks approval of peers as he wants to be liked and accepted / Seeks approval of peers as enjoys control	Has lots of friends / Struggles to make friends
Good friendship group / Socially isolated	Doesn't bully / Can bully	Popular, at centre of things / Difficult to sustain a friendship with
Uses care-giving and nurturing approach to develop peer relationships / Uses dominating behaviour over peers to control peer responses over them	Spends a lot of time with family / Older friends have detrimental influence on behaviour out of school	Popular / Tends to be socially isolated
Deals with friendship issues alone / Has friendship issues can't sort out themselves	Popular / Finds it very hard to get on with children of own age	Has close friends, is centre of attention / Doesn't have a lot of close friends – feels alienated
Always shows sensitivity to peer comments and remarks and responds emotionally / Response to peer remarks is very unpredictable	Well established, positive peer relationships / Dysfunctional peer relationships	

- Constructs relating to the 'Peer Relationships' category were most frequent within newly elicited RGs (increased from 8% to 12% of overall total) and more participants provided constructs within this category (increased from 5 participants to 8 of the 10 participants).
- These findings suggest a continued perception of the importance of peer relationships in participants' construing.
- In contrast to pre-INSET constructs there appear to be a few constructs which appertain to skills underlying peer relationship:

*'Uses care-giving and nurturing approach to develop peer relationships/ Uses dominating behaviour over peers to control peer responses over them'*

*'Always shows sensitivity to peer comments and remarks and responds emotionally/ Response to peers is very unpredictable'*

*'Seeks approval of peers as he wants to be liked and accepted/ Seeks approval of peers as enjoys control'*

5.5.1iii EMOTIONAL STATE

**TABLE 5.5.1iii EMOTIONAL STATE CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS FOR NEWLY ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST-INSET**

Calm, stable and predictable presentation in a lesson / Feelings significantly affect how they present in a lesson	Will show emotions in private, one-to-one / Bottles up emotions or diverts emotions into anger	Thrives in normal mainstream situation / Vulnerable
No mental health issues / Has mental health issues	Recognises own and others' emotions / Doesn't always recognise own and others' emotions	Survives happily in a large class group / Thrives in a small group situation
Comes across as outgoing / Can appear withdrawn	Can show emotion in a one-to-one situation / Doesn't understand own emotions and doesn't show any	Has a normal range of moods / Has extreme mood swings
Gets emotional and shows tears / Very rarely shows emotions – is blank	Doesn't need any specialised support / Needs a nurturing environment	Does not show extreme expression of temper / Shows extreme temper (kicks, throws)

- Participants' 'emotional state' constructs accounted for a similar percentage of constructs overall as prior to INSET (8% as opposed to 9%), albeit with slightly fewer participants providing a construct within the category (5 as opposed to 7 of the 10 participants).
- Post-INSET constructs within this category were the second most frequent (alongside 'Family Issues'; 'Self-Belief' and 'Conformity & Compliance').
- This finding replicates ESBD/PTs participants' tendency noted above to construe behaviour as being connected to a student's emotional state.
- Constructs within this category can be seen to reflect an impact of emotional state on learning:

*'Calm, stable and predictable presentation in a lesson/Feelings significantly affect how they present in a lesson'*

- They can also be seen to reflect various aspects of emotional literacy, such as self-awareness of emotions and ability to regulate emotions:

*‘Will show emotions in private, one-to-one / Bottles up emotions or diverts emotions into anger’*

5.5.1iv CONFORMITY & COMPLIANCE

Behaviour doesn't disrupt others' learning / Behaviour disrupts learning of other pupils	Accepts authority / Find it difficult to accept authority	Totally compliant but not in a submissive way – understands restrictions / Challenges boundaries vociferously
Appropriate behaviour – knows boundaries / Extreme, acting-out behaviour	Complies / Extremely disruptive	Copes well with less structured times / Difficulties in less structured times
Steered by class and teacher / Driven by own needs	More accepting of things happening to them / Wants to control situations all the time	Never truants / Will truant
Conforms / Uses controlling behaviour	More willing to be compliant / Regularly overtly challenges staff	Willingness to comply with instructions / Deliberately obstructive – sets out to create confrontation

- Whereas more participants provided constructs in this area for newly elicited grids (7 as opposed to 5 of the 10 participants), the percentage of constructs in this area remained virtually unchanged (8% as opposed to 9%).
- In keeping with previous constructs, only one construct can be seen as being non-descriptive and as possibly considering underlying issues around conformity and compliance:

*‘Steered by class and teacher / Driven by own needs’*

5.5.1v ABILITY AND ATTAINMENT

**TABLE 5.5.1v ABILITY & ATTAINMENT CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS FOR NEWLY ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST-INSET**

Above average in attainment / Below average in attainment	Achieving well academically / Underachieving academically	Is academically fine / Has special needs in some areas
	High attainer / Less well achieving	

- The overall percentage of constructs within the 'Ability and Attainment' category was slightly lower than participants' pre-INSET repertory grids (reduced from 5% to 3%).
- Constructs elicited do not appear to be suggestive of a post-INSET change to reflect any emotional aspects in this area but appear rather to be based on participants' objective reporting of perceived levels of academic success.

5.5.1vi APPROACH TO LEARNING

**TABLE 5.5.1vi APPROACH TO LEARNING CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS FOR NEWLY-ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST INSET**

Can be a perfectionist / Doesn't care about work	Willingness to commit over a period of time to a piece of work / Need tasks breaking up into shorter term pieces	Able to sustain periods of concentrated effort / Not able
Wants to do well and makes effort / Not motivated	Looks to develop and extend a task / Doesn't fulfil tasks in depth – does bare minimum	Tries hard re schoolwork / Schoolwork is not a priority
Happy to work independently / Likes to be part of the pack (when working)	Takes on board useful advice / Finds it hard to implement change	
Seeks and absorbs knowledge / Has learned ways of avoiding work	More willing to give things a go / Uses feeling unwell as an excuse for not doing things	

- Both the number of participants providing constructs within this category and the frequency of constructs as a percentage of the overall constructs remained the same as for pre-INSET repertory grids.
- There appear to be no apparent links to any emotional aspects of attainment, nor any mention of executive functioning, but rather there appears to be a focus on within-student features.

The following two content analysis categories showed increased frequency of constructs as a percentage of the overall number of constructs following INSET.

5.5.1vii SELF-BELIEF

TABLE 5.5.1vii SELF BELIEF CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS FOR NEWLY-ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST INSET		
Enough self esteem to tackle a new task / Has very low self-esteem/ self image restricts what will attempt	Self-confident – doesn't feel threatened by things / Confidence fragile – lack of self-assurance can be marked	Only defiant when feels threatened / Regularly defiant
Set sights high / Low expectations	Self esteem is fine – is confident / Lower self-esteem	Very confident / Lacks confidence in self
Doesn't lack self-esteem / Lacks self-esteem	Competent and confident / Less able to cope in all aspects of school	Can expect to fail (and see it as a problem) / Doesn't see failure as a problem
More willing to attempt new tasks and novel situations / Has difficulties in coping with novel or challenging situations	Has independent desire to achieve / Needs external support and encouragement to try to achieve	Has high self-esteem / Has low self-esteem

- Constructs within this category showed a small increase post-INSET, with the percentage of overall constructs rising from 6% to 8% (thus meeting the arbitrary cut-off point for the categories with the highest frequencies).
- Constructs elicited suggest that participants may regard confidence and self-esteem as being key factors affecting what students are willing to attempt:

*'Enough self-esteem to tackle a new task/ Has very low self-esteem – self image restricts what will attempt'*

- Reference is also made to *'external support and encouragement to try to achieve'*, thus suggesting a perception regarding an adult's role to foster a student's self-belief.

**TABLE 5.5.1viii FAMILY ISSUES CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS FOR NEWLY-ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST-INSET**

Things at home don't affect behaviour negatively / Things at home affect behaviour negatively	Positively influenced by Grandfather / Never mentioned Grandfather	Smart, well-presented / Can be smelly and dirty
No family issues known about / Family issues known and talked about	Has at least one strong parent / Lives with caring (but struggling) Grandparent	Hasn't been abused as a younger child / Has been abused as a younger child
Good support from both parents / Good support from one parent	Has two strong parents / Has a strong, supportive mum	Discloses personal and family issues / Doesn't talk about relationships at home
Both parents offered praise and encouragement / Mother has had a big negative impact on life	Background hasn't impacted in the same way on difficulties / Background has had a greater impact re difficulties	Better adjusted relationships with siblings / Over-protective relationship with siblings

- Whilst there was a slight increase in 'Family Issues' constructs as a percentage of all constructs (7% to 8%), one less teacher provided a construct in this area within their newly-elicited grids post-INSET, further reducing participants represented within this area to 3 of the 10.
- Whilst participants' constructs can be seen to acknowledge that family issues impact on young people in school, their constructs do not apparently present a negative stance towards family influences.
- The amount to which young people discuss family issues is raised as a factor by some participants:

*'No family issues known about/ Family issues known and talked about';*

*'Discloses personal and family issues / Doesn't talk about relationships at home'*

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#### 5.5.2 SUMMARY OF CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ESB/PTS' NEWLY ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST-INSET

- **Comparison of contents of pre- and newly-elicited-post-INSET repertory grids found few areas of difference and a great deal of similarity, suggesting little or no impact of INSET regarding attachment theory at a contents level. However, some individual differences in construing may be evident.**
- Five of the six most frequently used categories remained constant between both pre- and post-INSET repertory grids ('Peer Relationships', 'Emotional State', 'Conformity and Compliance', 'Coping with Conflict' and 'Approach to Learning') suggesting continued high salience of constructs in these areas for participants.
- Constructs were spread over a wider range of categories. However, the eight categories with the highest frequency of constructs (each accounting for at least 8% of the total constructs) still accounted for 61% of all constructs.

Having considered the content of Specialist ESB/PTS' newly elicited repertory grids, the following section outlines findings with regard to their structure.

## 5.6 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: THE **STRUCTURE** OF NEWLY ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS

Descriptive statistics were employed to explore the structure of RGs newly-elicited following INSET and to allow comparison with both pre-INSET grids and the re-ratings of initial grids post-INSET. As above, each of these areas of descriptive statistics will be examined in turn (see also Appendix 16 for descriptive statistics per individual participant).

### 5.6.1 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: ESBD/PTs' MEAN RATINGS OF CONSTRUCTS ON ATTACHMENT PATTERNS – NEWLY ELICITED GRIDS

As presented in Table 5.6.1, post-INSET changes in ESBD/PTs' mean ratings of constructs on elements in their newly elicited grids followed a similar pattern to that exhibited in their re-rated RGs:

**TABLE 5.6.1 FREQUENCY OF MEAN RATINGS OF CONSTRUCTS PER ATTACHMENT STYLE FOR PRE- AND POST INSET RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS AND NEWLY ELICITED GRIDS POST INSET (ESBD/PTs)**

Mean ratings of constructs for each attachment style	AVOIDANT			SECURE			AMBIVALENT			DISORGANISED		
	Pre	Post	New Elicit	Pre	Post	New Elicit	Pre	Post	New Elicit	Pre	Post	New Elicit
1.0 – 1.4				4	6	7						
1.5 – 1.9				5	1	2	1					
2.0 – 2.4	1			1	1							
2.5 – 2.9	2	1	1		2	1						
3.0 – 3.4		1	1				1					
3.5 – 3.9		1										
4.0 – 4.4	5	2	1				1	2		1	1	1
4.5 – 4.9	1	2	3				1	2	1	1	2	1
5.0 – 5.4		3					2	2	1	1		1
5.5 – 5.9			2				2	2	3	1	3	3
6.0 – 6.4	1		2				2		2	2	1	2
6.5 – 7.0								2	3	4	3	2

- Mean scores for the newly-elicited ratings increased (representing a move towards the non-preferred pole of constructs) for student-elements representing 'Avoidant' and 'Ambivalent' attachment patterns and

decreased (towards the preferred poles) for the 'Disorganised' and 'Secure' student-elements.

- These changes thus broadly replicate changes made in participants' blind re-rated grids post-INSET.

5.6.2 EXPLORATION OF IMPACT OF INSET: RANGE AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FROM GRIDS NEWLY-ELICITED POST-INSET

There were no apparent substantive differences in either the range of scores participants recorded nor in standard deviations from their means for the newly elicited grids (see Appendix 16).

5.6.3 EXPLORATION OF IMPACT OF INSET: MODAL RATINGS OF CONSTRUCTS ON ATTACHMENT PATTERNS FOR GRIDS NEWLY-ELICITED POST-INSET

**TABLE 5.6.3 FREQUENCY OF MODAL RATINGS OF CONSTRUCTS PER ATTACHMENT STYLE FOR PRE- AND POST INSET RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS AND NEWLY ELICITED GRIDS POST INSET (ESBD/PASTORAL TEACHERS)**

Modal and bi-modal ratings of constructs for each attachment style	SECURE			AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			DISORGANISED		
	Pre	Post	New Elicit	Pre	Post	New Elicit	Pre	Post	New Elicit	Pre	Post	New Elicit
1	8	8	10	2	2	1	1					
2	1	2		1	1		2					
3				2	2	1		1				
4	1			4	3	1	1					
5				4	3	2	1	1	1		1	
6				2	4	3	2	5	4	4	1	3
7					1	3	3	5	5	6	8	8

- Modal ratings of constructs on the likely 'Ambivalent' and 'Disorganised' student-elements increased in grids newly-elicited post INSET. Modal ratings for the 'Avoidant' student-element increased with six participants recording ratings of 6 or above in grids newly-elicited post-INSET as opposed to two pre-INSET. This echoes the increase recorded in the post-INSET re-rated grids (five participants).

- Similar increases were recorded for the 'Ambivalent' student-elements (nine participants and ten participants recorded modal ratings of 6 or above for newly-elicited and post-INSET re-rated grids respectively compared to five pre-INSET).
- Again, comparisons of newly-elicited grid modal ratings to pre-INSET modal ratings broadly replicate changes in participants' re-rated grids post INSET.

### 5.7 EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF INSET: FINDINGS REGARDING WHICH POLES OF PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUCTS WERE MOST ASSOCIATED WITH EACH ATTACHMENT PATTERN – NEWLY ELICITED GRIDS

As above, Principal Components Analysis was undertaken to ascertain which poles of the newly-elicited grids were most closely associated with each attachment pattern to develop 'portraits'.

Overall, whilst the additional constructs provided more breadth and hence richer portraits, subjective analysis suggests there were no fundamental differences which is supported by similarities of findings with regard to content analysis. Findings are presented in Appendices 17 & 18 for additional information.

#### 5.7.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING THE STRUCTURE OF SPECIALIST ESD/ PASTORAL TEACHERS' NEWLY-ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS

- Findings from descriptive statistic exploration of grids newly-elicited following INSET suggest a very limited impact of INSET at the group level. Any impact, where evident, appeared to be limited to individual participants and individual patterns of attachment for that individual, echoing findings from the grids re-rated following INSET.
- Again in line with findings for re-rated grids there was a slight trend towards an increase in mean ratings for all student-elements except 'Disorganised' post-INSET, both for re-rated and newly-elicited grids.

- Ratings of constructs in newly-elicited grids appertaining to 'Secure' pattern student-elements remained closely associated with participants' preferred poles of constructs.
- Portraits of poles of constructs associated with each likely pattern of attachment derived from newly-elicited repertory grids provided evidence of replication of previous findings reported above.

## 5.8 OVERALL SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 5

This chapter has presented a range of complex findings based on examination of both the content and structure of participants' repertory grids, drawing on individuals' grids and comparisons both within each group's grids and between each group of participants. This was undertaken to explore the relationship between participants' construing regarding behaviour and students likely to be representative of differing attachment patterns. The main findings are summarised below:

- Content analysis of elicited constructs found that categories associated with 'Emotional State', 'Peer Relationships', 'Approach to Learning', 'Conformity and Compliance' and 'Coping with Conflict' accounted for the majority of all participants' constructs. 'Ability and Attainment' was apparently considered an important factor by both EP and GT participants but appeared less so by ESBD/PTs.
- There is some evidence to suggest that education professionals may rate their constructs differentially in line with students' likely attachment style. This is particularly apparent for the 'Secure' student-elements. Whilst there are individual differences within groups, there is also some indication that differences in ratings showed some tendency towards difference at a group level, with EP participants tending towards recording broader ranges of ratings across all attachment patterns and GTs tending towards viewing students representing a likely 'Avoidant' pattern as being more connected with the preferred poles of their constructs than the other two groups of participants.
- In-Service training with regard to introducing the main tenets of attachment theory showed little apparent impact on participants' construing, as evidenced by both the content of their constructs and the relationship between each student-element's (representing likely attachment pattern) position on the continuum between the poles of participants' constructs. Any changes were small and were more evident at an individual level. However, the overall trend was towards rating constructs closer to non-preferred poles for all student-elements with the exception of student-

elements representative of a 'Disorganised' pattern, where the ratings tended to move towards the preferred poles of constructs.

The following chapter expands on and critiques some of these findings and considers potential implications for education professionals.

This chapter aims to consider the above findings in light of the existing literature presented above. The following areas will be considered:

- 6.1 Theoretical Context: where this research is sited contemporaneously
- 6.2 How does participants' construing regarding student behaviour relate to attachment theory?
- 6.3 What does the structural analysis of participants' construing tell us? How do echoes of attachment theory impact on education professionals' construing regarding students' behaviour?
- 6.4 What impact does In-Service training (INSET) regarding attachment theory have on participants' constructs regarding student behaviours?
- 6.5 Methodological considerations: reliability and validity issues within this research
- 6.6 Implications for education professionals and potential future research
- 6.7 Summary

### 6.1 THEORETICAL CONTEXT

This exploratory research was undertaken in a context of a growing interest in attachment theory within education (Geddes, 2006; Bomber, 2007; Perry, 2009) and an on-going concern regarding both the impact of and approaches to address successfully the challenging behaviours of students arising from '*significant underlying problems*' (DfES, 2003). A constructivist stance was employed, utilising a Personal Construct Psychology approach (PCP: Kelly, 1955) in order to attempt to provide a 'window' into participants' own internal-working models with regard to students' behaviours in secondary schools. However, a PCP approach in research can be described as having limitations

as not *all* pertinent constructs held by participants are likely to be elicited (Tindall, 1994; Jankowicz, 2004). Furthermore, all interpretation of repertory grids – both in terms of content and statistical findings regarding structure – is undertaken via the filter of constructs held by researchers/interpreters. As Fransella et al (2004, p.55) note: *'whenever we look at a grid in its naked form or at the statistical outputs, we look through our own system of constructs. We select what we shall look at and determine what we shall consider to be important'*. This study employed a PCP approach to exploration of professional standpoints, founded upon other uses of PCP to explore group identities and commonalities in construing (Kelly, 1955; Robertson, 2005).

This research also offered the opportunity to investigate attachment theory via a PCP approach. Both can be described as paradigms offering a theoretical framework to explain our understanding of the world which directly impacts on our actions – the internal working models of attachment theory and the bi-polar construing of PCP. Both paradigms also place 'experience' as a central facet, which allows for experience to lead to change in our internal world. As such, there are arguable synergies between the two approaches. However, exploration of each of these paradigms is problematic as 'inner worlds' are not easily accessible in a manner which meets the requirements of rigorous investigation, particularly when research addresses adult participants' engagement in a complex social-relational environment (Mertens, 2010; Robson, 2002). These issues are explored below in terms of their potential impact on the validity and reliability of findings.

Given this context and these caveats, this chapter seeks to discuss how findings relate to existing literature outlined above and what they have to tell us in response to the questions being explored:

- How does staff construing regarding student behaviour relate to attachment theory?
- How do echoes of attachment theory impact on education professionals' construing regarding students' behaviour?
- Does having an *explicit* knowledge of the theory (provided by In-Service Training to one participant group) affect construing in any way?

## 6.2 HOW DOES PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUING REGARDING STUDENTS' BEHAVIOUR RELATE TO ATTACHMENT THEORY?

The relationship between participants' constructs regarding student behaviour and attachment theory is discussed within this section.

### 6.2.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS AND A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

In order to explore the research questions, content analysis of repertory grids could have been undertaken within categories directly representing aspects of attachment theory (a '*theory-driven*' approach: Simon & Xenos, 2004). However, in line with the constructivist nature of PCP and the overall stance of this research, content analysis categories were derived from the elicited constructs (a '*data-driven*' approach: op. cit.), such that participants' voices were as unfettered as possible (Green, B; 2004). As detailed in Chapter 4, the use of inter-rater reliability procedures sought to minimise any potential bias in the assigning of constructs to categories. Within exploratory, qualitative research, the position of the researcher is one which requires reflexivity and interpretation based upon a secure view of epistemological and theoretical underpinnings (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). The discussion below aims to explore and describe features of participants' constructs in relation to tenets of attachment theory. In doing so, the intention is that connections drawn between participants' construing and attachment theory are made clear, and open to scrutiny.

Each of the basic tenets and aspects of attachment theory outlined above in Chapter 2 (comprising: attachment behaviours, caregiving, the secure base,

regulation of affect, executive functioning/ approach to learning and relationships) is discussed below in terms of how participant construing regarding student behaviours may relate to attachment theory - and, of equal interest, where they may not.

#### 6.2.2 ELICITED CONSTRUCTS AND ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOURS

Attachment behaviours are designed to bring caregiver and infant closer together and to focus the caregiver on the needs of the child (Bowlby, 1969/97). Whilst attachment behaviours continue to exist into adulthood (albeit generally to a much lower level and with less frequency) they are likely to be more difficult to recognise within the age group of secondary school students due to both individual behaviours and the environmental context being far more complex than that of an infant's. Many constructs within several categories, including 'emotional state', 'approach to learning', 'conformity and compliance' and 'coping with conflict' could broadly be interpreted as potentially signalling what some theorists would describe as 'attachment-based needs' for some students (see Appendices 7 to 9), especially those which result in reassurance or other regulation of affective state:

- ESBD/PT: *'More easy going when stretched/ Reacts negatively when feels may fail'*
- EP: *'Volatile/ Excessively controlled'*
- GT: *'Is willing to interact but can wait/ Is attention-seeking'*
- GT: *'Has good behaviours/ Is demanding'*

Relatively few constructs were placed within the 'attention seeking', 'self-control' or 'seeking support' categories (again, see Appendices 7, 8 & 9) which could arguably be seen as mapping directly on to attachment behaviour:

- ESBD/ PT: *'Approaches adults and peers for help in difficult situations/ Lets things get out of control'*
- EP: *'Less obvious in classroom, more compliant / More obvious, disruptive'*

EP: *'Is attention-seeking/ Is more secure in functioning independently'*

Overall, there is a suggestion from this data that whilst the outcome for many behaviours may indeed be to increase the proximity of the adult to the young person and to meet the student's need, the signal of the student's behaviour is not often recognised overtly as attachment behaviour per se. Rather, it is interpreted within a more complex social and learning relationship. This can include possible negative connotations being drawn from such behaviours or behaviours being seen as indicative of students 'lacking' expected levels of emotional regulation:

EP: *'Can mask anxieties and fears/ Makes needs overtly known (inappropriately)'*

GT: *'Is in control of feelings/ Cries 'at the drop of a hat''*

Whilst individual participants differ in their responses and construing, there is a question here as to whether students' construed behaviours are recognised as communicating needs associated with attachment behaviours – that is, to promote the proximity of the caregiver and to seek external emotional regulation. However, as will be discussed below, there may be a suggestion of some differences between participant groups in how they interpret the *meaning* behind students' behaviour. Reference to 'caregiving' within the elicited constructs is discussed in more detail in the following section.

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### 6.2.3 ELICITED CONSTRUCTS AND CAREGIVING

The role of a sensitive caregiver who provides a reliable, contingent, attuned response to an infant's signalled need is crucial within the development of attachment (Salter-Ainsworth et al, 1974; Fonagy et al, 1994; Siegel, 2001). The role of the adult in school, as outlined in the literature above, is noted as being of continuing key importance, particularly for more vulnerable students (Ofsted, 2008; van der Kolk, 2006; Bokhorst et al, 2003; Tirri & Puolimatka,

2000) although the role of caregivers with regard to attachment is recognised as changing and, to some extent, diminishing as adolescence proceeds into adult-hood (Buist, Reitz & Dekovic, 2008).

Overall, this aspect of the adult's role is not overtly evident from within the elicited constructs in this study. This may be an outcome of a range of convenience limitation, as the question used to elicit constructs focused on the behaviour of students themselves and did not specifically encompass the adult's role within that behaviour. However, a relatively higher frequency of elicited constructs focused on students' relationships with peers (accounting for between 8% and 12% of all constructs) whilst less constructs focused on adult: student relationships across any of the participant groups (accounting for between 2% and 5% of all constructs) suggesting relative differences in salience for these two areas. This was particularly evident for the GTs, only two of whom provided constructs relating to 'relationships with adults in school' (as opposed to six of both EP and ESBD/PTs – see Table 5.5.1i).

- EP:            *'Teacher has a more positive, interactive relationship/  
Teacher has a more negative relationship'*
- ESBD/PT    *'Positive relationships with adults/ Relationships are a  
minefield'*
- GT:            *'Wants to try to please teachers/ Not bothered how  
teachers see them'*

There may be implications here regarding the role of adults within school. Is it possible that adults 'step out' of a caregiving role - which can arguably be more expected within pre-school and early stages of schooling - too soon within secondary schooling? (See also Bomber, 2009). Or that adults can find the attunement (Salter-Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton 1974; Salter-Ainsworth 1991), reflective functioning (Sharp et al, 2006) or intersubjectivity (joint affect, attention and intention: Hughes, 2009) aspects difficult? If so, this would be likely to have a disproportional impact for insecurely-attached students. This would accord with the findings of other researchers in this area such as Bomber, (2007; 2009); Delaney, (2009); Golding et al, (2006) alongside

researchers within education, where secondary teaching has been seen to be '*characterised by greater distance than elementary*' (Hargreaves, 2000). Attachment behaviours would be likely to become more pronounced and more frequent or, in the case of an avoidant-insecure pattern, students would become more withdrawn and more at risk of emotional and mental health difficulties (op. cit.). Both of these situations can be seen to arise during Key Stage 3 (DfES, 2007).

This potentially calls into question not only the role of staff working in this key stage but the fundamental organisation of adult: student relationships at this juncture. It is arguable that all students could benefit from the continuation of provision of at least one 'secure base' relationship and, indeed, the form tutor role aims at providing this. However, there may be a need to increase the focus of this role which is currently highly time-pressured and thus diluted (Rosenblatt, 2002). This finding also relates to research in the area of student engagement with school, which suggests that '*a student's psychological connection to school plays an important role in affecting student motivation and participatory behaviours*' (Appleton, Christenson & Furlong, 2008, p.377). One important aspect reflected within Engagement Theory is that relatedness (of a student to school) appears to drop over time whilst the effects of relatedness appear to become stronger (Furrer & Skinner, 2003), although caution needs to be exercised in applying this finding to the current study due to the students being younger in Furrer & Skinner's study (US school grades 3 to 6).

For more vulnerable students, there may be a need to identify a 'key adult' to provide such support (Bomber, 2007). Certainly it is arguable that far greater use needs to be made of the provision of adults as mentors and independent supporters in school for students with lower-level difficulties rather than school systems being predicated on a need for behaviours to escalate to trigger such support mechanisms.

'Mind-mindedness', reflecting recognition of the child's own sense of self and concomitant support of reflective function, is an area of caregiving which has been outlined as crucial in the development of emotionally-healthy securely-attached children with an integrated sense of self (Siegal, 2001; Fonagy et al, 2007). Very few of the constructs which did make reference to adult: student relationships made mention of this. Whilst five EPs provided constructs which could be described as linked to this area, (accounting for 5% of their group's total constructs) no such constructs were provided by either of the two teacher groups (see Table 5.5.1i):

EP: *'Doesn't have understanding of own needs/ Understands when needs help'*

EP: *'Uninhibited/ More thoughtful'*

Individual differences in sensitivity of response, or ability to 'read' the communication underlying some behaviours, however, are likely to be inevitable and to be connected to adults' own internal working models of attachment and wider relationships (Weiss, 2002; Brisch, 2009).

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#### 6.2.4 ELICITED CONSTRUCTS AND THE PROVISION OF A SECURE BASE

Contingent care-giving provides the basis of a secure relationship from which a child can seek to explore its world, both physically and psychologically. This 'secure-base' to which a child can return whenever a need arises is seen as being central to the promotion of exploration, learning and development (Salter-Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969; Geddes, 2006; Ofsted, 2008). Whilst no constructs made direct reference to the notion of a 'secure base' being necessary to enable students to engage in learning, several constructs may be viewed as making implicit or oblique reference to this concept. Within the 'emotional state' constructs, one ESD/PT participant makes reference specifically to a feeling of safety (*'feels safe in regular classroom/ needs small group and-or known adult to feel safe'*), embodying the psychological security of secure base exploration within a learning situation.

The link to a '*known adult*' (and, implicitly, 'trusted' adult) is also referred to more obliquely within a construct provided by one GT participant, who differentiates between students who '*take changes of school staff in their stride*' and those who '*have an inability to cope with [supply] staff*'. Within the 'approach to learning' category some reference is also made to adults' provision of '*reassurance*' and '*support*' which links to the provision of a psychological secure base.

Whilst there were individual differences in construing across and between all participant groups, there were some signs that GTs as a group may view high compliance amongst students with a likely 'avoidant' pattern as being indicative of ability to regulate their own emotional state or to be '*in control*' of their feelings. This is in contrast to EP participants who construed avoidantly-attached students to '*have difficulties in being aware of their emotions*' and ESBD/PTs who viewed students '*bottling-up*' their emotions or '*letting things get out of control*' (see Table 5.3.2). This suggests differences in the 'reading' of students' emotional life underpinning their behaviours. Attachment theorists propound the need to support a child or young person in experiencing distress or difficult emotion, through the adult being emotionally present, rather than requiring a child to only suppress emotion (Hughes, 2009; Cairns, 2002). This is described as the sensitivity and contingency necessary in attuned caregiving. It is this level of contingent sensitivity which could make a difference in terms of promoting a secure pattern of attachment organisation (Morley Williams, O'Callaghan & Cowie, 1995; Sharp et al, 2006).

There was also some recognition of a secure base role regarding the external regulation of affect, which is discussed in the following section.

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#### 6.2.5 ELICITED CONSTRUCTS AND REGULATION OF AFFECT

Interestingly, the most frequent category of construct for both EP and ESBD/PT participants when asked about students' behaviours was that of 'emotional state' (see Figure 15). Nine EPs and seven ESBD/PTs provided constructs

within this category, making it possible to assert a strong role for affect in the interpretations of behaviour for these participants:

- EP: *'Has difficulties in being aware of own emotions/ Very aware of own emotions but gets overwhelmed'*
- EP: *'Is driven by emotional experiences/ Is better equipped to 'block out' emotional responses'*
- ESBD/PT: *'Even keel/ Mood swings'*  
*'Aggressive/ Non-aggressive, calm'*

However, this was less evident for the GT participants, only four of whom provided an 'emotional state' construct, although it was their joint second most frequent category of constructs. This may again indicate differences in construing at a group level, with GT participants arguably being less likely to draw a link between behaviours and students' emotional state.

This notion of a relatively high level of connection between emotional state and behaviour may reflect the 'zeitgeist' in pupil wellbeing. There may be an impact of several national initiatives which have sought to build recognition of the significance of emotional approaches to both learning and social behaviours such as the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, DCSF, 2008) and TAMHS (Targeted Mental Health in Schools, DCSF, November 2008) projects. Additionally, it can be argued that there is a general move towards being more emotionally-literate within education and, indeed, wider society (Weare, 2000; Hargreaves, 2003; Ecclestone, 2007). Participant effects also cannot be ruled out and are discussed in more detail below.

Contradicting this trend was the evidence that whilst Teachers did link affect with behaviour within the 'emotional state' category, there was little direct link within their construing between acting-out type behaviour (that is, 'coping with conflict' and 'conformity and compliance' categories) and affect. This is again likely to be connected with a limitation of the range of convenience for the

eliciting question, and/or could be a factor of the content analysis categories utilised. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that teacher constructions tended to focus mostly on overt behaviours, with little reference made to any possible underlying causes:

GT:                            *'Is physically violent/ Is passive-aggressive'*  
                                  *'Has good behaviours/ Is demanding'*

ESBD/PT:                *'Compliant and considerate/ Confrontational'*

Constructs within these two categories held more apparent salience for teacher participants and few EP constructs were categorised within these areas, again a noteworthy distinction. One possible interpretation of this finding is that teachers' constructs in this area may reflect a more managerial stance towards behaviour which can be associated with the need for order in secondary school settings (Stott, 2006) or, indeed, many settings requiring large numbers of people to be organised. Another possibility is that EPs, due to the 'emotional distance' of their professional role, would be less likely to have regular and protracted interactions with students (Beaver, 1996). Overall, EPs do not tend to have responsibilities in this area to the same degree as teachers and this is likely to impact on their construing.

Such an emotionally-literate stance can be seen to be more in keeping with the types of approaches discussed within Ofsted (2008) guidance regarding re-engaging disaffected students rather than the more traditional 'six core beliefs' associated with the Steer Report (2005). However, it remains largely out of kilter with the range of 'tools' provided for teachers in terms of addressing underlying behavioural issues such as those provided within the 'Behaviour and Attendance' materials (DfES, 2005) which tended to reflect a more behaviourist approach (see Porter, 2000). Construing involving such a link between behaviour and affect is suggestive of potential fertile ground for discussion of Hanko's (2002) 'therapeutic approach' to teaching and Pearlman and Courtois' (2005) RICH therapeutic relationships as outlined in Chapter 1 above, at least for school staff already focusing on working with the most challenging students.



experience of students who demonstrate dysregulated emotional states across a significant and complex range of emotions is likely to have a considerable impact upon adults, and this is an enduring theme in the literature (Hanko, 2002; Weare, 2000). Gray (2005) and Faupel (2002) note that adults' own emotional literacy is a key factor, especially their ability to self-regulate. Breakwell (1997) outlines the likely cycle of emotional response (in terms of physiological, psychological and behavioural outcomes) which both student and adult are likely to follow in such circumstances. As Hanko (2002, p.27) notes *'once overwhelmed by the complexity of uncontained emotions, it becomes more and more difficult to think professionally'*. Furthermore, Weare (2000, p.7) suggests that an adult's ability to successfully regulate emotional state impacts on outcomes for the child: *'a teacher who has his/her own anger triggered by witnessing a child's violent explosions may only be able to think of punitive solutions; recognising and accepting his/her own anger may help the teacher and thus the pupil to think of other solutions'* (see also Faupel, 2002).

Participants' constructs did not highlight any impact of students' presenting behaviour on adults' own affect (and its regulation). However, there was some indication of the pressure challenging behaviours place upon adults in terms of students being construed as *'difficult to manage'*; *'in your face'*; *'arguing'* and generally *'needing more support'*. EPs, from their more detached stance, note this impact, particularly with regard to students with a likely *'disorganised'* pattern, suggesting such students have *'a more complex presentation and [are] more challenging to the teacher'* and that *'teachers have a more negative relationship with her/him'* (see Table 5.3.4).

Adults' own abilities for emotional regulation – and their own access to a secure base and external soothing where necessary – are a key component in the provision of support to students using acting-out type behaviours. In a school where challenging behaviour is seen as the collective task of all members of the community teachers are less likely to be over-stressed and can regulate their emotional state such that they can both maintain positive working relationships and use cognitively-led approaches alongside appropriate

emotionally-led responses and approaches to support students (see Cooper, 1990; Weare, 2000).

Further investigation is required into whether the provision of an explanatory framework for understanding such emotional expression within students helps adults to contain their own emotional state successfully in such circumstances (an area of research which this study obliquely touches on).

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#### 6.2.6 ELICITED CONSTRUCTS AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTION – APPROACH TO LEARNING

There was some evidence of a relationship between secure-base thinking and constructs in the 'approach to learning' content analysis category. Language expressed within these constructs depicted a role for adults in terms of reassurance, attention and support. This suggests that the participant groups construe students' approach to learning as both influencing and being influenced by their relationship(s) with adults supporting the learning.

Whilst a large number of executive functioning skills were made reference to, in the areas of problem solving, concentration, motivation, effective learning, difficulties accessing learning, ability to 'get on', motivation, expectation (regarding failure), willingness to try or to take a risk, chaotic versus methodical approaches and distractibility, this was seemingly from a 'within child' perspective, with children largely construed as either 'having' or 'not having' a particular skill.

Whilst the range of convenience for the eliciting of constructs may have impacted on this finding, in terms of participants not being required to expand their constructs beyond the observational, this could be indicative of a lack of knowledge regarding the necessity (and the possibility) of teaching these skills directly (Dawson and Guare, 2004; Allen, 2007). This would be likely to have a particular impact for students whose early life experiences have not led to their having developed the necessary executive functioning skills to negotiate the

Key Stage 3 curriculum with the general amount of support and guidance provided (Allen, 2007; Bomber, 2009).

ESBD/PTs provided the fewest constructs categorised within 'approach to learning' (six ESBD/PTs as opposed to eight GTs and all ten EPs). This may suggest that in their job-roles ESBD/PTs may tend to focus on aspects of emotionality and relationships, possibly as being precursors necessary to access cognitive capacity (Breakwell, 1997; Ziegler, 2002; Maslow, 1987; Gerhardt, 2004; Schore, 2003) and a strong recognition of the vulnerabilities of learners in everyday situations (Delaney, 2009). However, as Shann (1999) notes, there is an important synergy in linking both high academic focus and a culture of caring to obtain optimum outcomes for students (see also Hargreaves, 2003; Rosenblatt, 2002).

#### 6.2.7 ELICITED CONSTRUCTS AND RELATIONSHIPS – THE 'BONDS' WITHIN WHICH WE OPERATE

Attachment is fundamentally about relationships – Bowlby's 'bond that ties'. Whilst it cannot be expected that relationships in school are of the same importance as primary attachment relationships, the connection between attachment security and other relationships is based on both the repetition of basic templates of experience (formed from the earliest experiences generating the most important initial template) and on adolescents' broadening out of their earliest attachment templates into more generalised models (Allen & Land, 1999; Allen, 2008; Kerns, 2008, as outlined in chapter 2). As Wahl (2002) notes, the efficacy of interventions within schools are reliant upon the relationship(s) within which they are based. Thus relationships form an important part of school context and this is strongly reflected within elicited constructs in this study. As relationships with adults have already been discussed above in terms of caregiving and provision of a secure base, this section highlights constructs regarding peer relationships.

The focus on 'peer relationship' constructs suggested that education professionals recognised a considerable role for a student's peers within the

adolescent phase. However, together with a relative lack of constructs within the 'relationships with adults in school' category, there is a possibility that this could reflect an underestimation of the importance of the adults' role of continued caregiving, as outlined above. Whilst adolescents can be seen increasingly to develop attachment relationships with their peers (Allen & Land, 1999), this is likely to develop later into adolescence than the chronological age of students considered within this research (op. cit.).

#### 6.2.8 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION REGARDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUING AND ATTACHMENT THEORY

The footprints of attachment theory, although faint at times, can be seen to varying degrees within participants' personal constructs regarding student behaviour. In the case of both teacher participant groups, who did not have an explicit knowledge of attachment theory (as opposed to EPs, whose professional training would have provided at least basic knowledge), this could be viewed as being indicative of an implicit understanding.

The following section discusses the relationship between student-elements' likely attachment styles and the continuum between participants' constructs being 'preferred' and 'least preferred' as represented by their numerical ratings within the repertory grid.

#### 6.3 WHAT DOES THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUING TELL US?

The opportunity afforded by structural analysis of repertory grids allows exploration of whether the poles of participants' constructs are – or are not – associated with particular likely attachment patterns, as represented by the student-elements. This section discusses the implications of findings from both the statistical analysis of the relationships between the numerical ratings ascribed to constructs and student-elements ('structural findings') including both descriptive statistics and the 'portraits' of poles of constructs most associated with each likely pattern. Findings associated with each student-element are discussed in turn below, followed by an overall summary.

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### 6.3.1 STRUCTURAL FINDINGS, INCLUDING 'PORTRAITS', RELATING TO A LIKELY 'SECURE' ATTACHMENT PATTERN

All participants' ratings for students with a likely 'secure' attachment pattern were most closely associated with their preferred poles of constructs. This was the strongest finding from the structural analysis across all student-elements, with mean ratings between 1.0 and 2.4 (see table 5.2.2), modal scores of '1' for each group and generally low standard deviations from the mean (only four teacher participants recorded standard deviations of 1.5 or above – see table 5.2.3).

This finding indicates a strong connection between participants' preferred poles of constructs and students with a likely secure pattern of attachment (Table 5.3.1 illustrates these for each participant group.) It suggests that securely-attached students, whose internal-working-models are shaped to regard adults around them as providers of care and security, are likely to have this world-view reinforced.

The impact of a secure attachment can be seen to be positive across all areas of school, not least in terms of students' learning. This accords with previous research which identifies a secure attachment to be associated with the stronger establishment of an *'agentive sense of self'* and a *'ready disposition to learn from attached adults'* associated with Pedagogic Stance Theory, as outlined above (Fonagy, Gergely & Target, 2007). This finding also echoes the so-called 'Matthew effect' (Merton, 1968), where those who are predisposed by appropriate early experiences tend to gain more from interventions whereas outcomes are less optimal for those who are already disadvantaged. It also accords with the literature in noting the benefits of a secure attachment within a school situation in terms of resilience (Gilligan, 2000) and receipt of greater positive attention from staff (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Within the portrait of construing associated with 'secure' student-elements, particularly by GTs (see Table 5.3.1) poles of constructs addressing 'discipline' include '*conformist*', '*compliant*' and '*easy to manage*'. Additionally, 'secure' students are noted to be responsive to the usual range of teacher disciplinary approaches where needed:

- EP:            '*teacher has strategies to try to address behaviour issues*'
- GT:            '*behaviour and attitude can be improved by rapport-building in general school environment*'
- GT:            '*more accepting of wider picture [re authority]*'

Construing regarding family life as reflected in this portrait generally reflects poles of constructs associated with being '*stable*', '*settled*' and '*secure*', all aspects of caregiving associated with the development of a secure attachment. This links to the poles of constructs regarding 'relationships with adults', where 'secure' student-elements are noted to be '*co-operative*', '*able to get help*', to '*want adult approval*' and to '*talk to adults when things go wrong*'.

There is, however, a little more variation expressed with regard to 'peer relationships'. Although 'secure' student-elements are noted to have '*more positive social skills*' and to '*integrate with others*', the size and nature of students' friendship groups appears to show variation... :

- 'has a small, close-knit group of peers'*
- 'centre of a large group of friends'*
- 'appears to have friendships'*
- 'unpopular'*
- 'can withdraw from peers'*

... suggesting a role for wider environmental and developmental influences in this area.

One area of contrast within the 'secure' student-elements portrait is that few GTs' and ESBD/PTs' constructs appear to reflect the area of 'emotional regulation'. This could suggest emotional regulation being construed as innate within securely-attached students – it is not remarkable and thus it is not commented on by participants. This could also be contended to reflect a 'deficit' approach, whereby emotional regulation is of more importance where it is notable by its absence or difficulties with its functioning (as within insecure patterns of attachment organisation). Indeed, contrasts in this area with the portraits drawn for both the 'Ambivalent' and 'Disorganised' patterns are marked, as will be discussed below.

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#### 6.3.2 STRUCTURAL FINDINGS, INCLUDING 'PORTRAITS', RELATING TO A LIKELY 'AVOIDANT' ATTACHMENT PATTERN

Constructs associated with 'avoidant' student-elements make reference to students being emotionally contained and experiencing difficulties with relationships with both peers and adults, reflecting the above literature (Howe et al, 1999; Geddes, 2006; Gerhardt, 2004). However, EP and ESBD/PT participants showed closer association with preferred poles of their constructs (see Table 5.2.2) than GT participants for the 'avoidant' student-elements, seven of whom recorded mean ratings of 4.4 or below. Overall, EPs recorded higher mean ratings for these student-elements than the other two participant groups.

This may possibly reflect a different understanding of potential difficulties associated with the same behaviours. Examination of the 'portrait' of poles of constructs associated with the 'avoidant' pattern student-elements (table 5.3.2) suggests that qualitative differences may be apparent when comparing some aspects of EP and ESBD/PT portraits with those of GT participants (particularly for the 'self-regulation' section of 'emotional state'). Whilst all three participant groups have similar constructs regarding students' behaviours, there may be differences in their interpretation of the communication implicit within the behaviour (Donnellan et al, 1988) and thus their numerical ratings:

EP: *Excessively controlled*  
ESBD: *Bottles up emotions*  
GT: *Is in control of feelings*

It is interesting here to contrast participants' portraits of the likely 'avoidant' student-elements with those for the 'secure' pattern, as several of the presenting behaviours can be seen to be similar (for example, in terms of compliance and self-containment).

Poles of constructs associated with 'learning' again feature strongly within this portrait for EPs and GTs, but markedly less so for ESDB/PTs. Overall, the portraits suggest an impact on attainment for the 'avoidant' student-elements and provide some poles of constructs regarding what may be causal to this impact:

ESBD/PT: *Few aspirations*  
EP: *Requires more teacher time and attention*  
GT: *Doesn't seek attention as often as s/he should*

With regard to constructs appertaining to 'discipline', GTs and ESBD/PTs tended to provide preferred construct poles, whereas EPs' were more mixed. Constructs in this area can be seen to reflect 'acting-out' behaviours:

GT: *Sits quietly in class*  
ESBD/PT: *Not an obvious problem in a learning situation*  
EP: *Boundaries are irrelevant*  
EP: *Behaviour is completely predictable*

Interestingly, little mention is made of 'family' issues within this portrait, with such links as are made tending to reflect less-preferred aspects of construing:

ESBD/PT: *Little routine and structure in home life*  
EP: *Is controlling of mother*  
EP: *Father has a negative influence in life*

With regard to their relationships with adults in school, it appears to be noted that adults need to take a pro-active stance towards engagement. Constructs also appear to reflect both adults' recognition of this and a willingness to attempt to do so:

- ESBD/PT: *Adults have to try to engage them in adult  
Conversation*
- ESBD/PT: *Can't access adult support or build relationships  
easily*
- GT: *Has to be brought into conversation*

However, there appears to be variation of impact on the associated emotional state of the adult:

- EP: *Elicits frustration*
- EP: *Engenders feelings of anger from adults*
- GT: *Arouses an empathic response*

Peer relationships also appear to be impacted on, with student-elements noted to be apparently '*less dependent*' on peer group. Student-elements in the 'avoidant' category are seen as '*loners*' who '*like to blend in with the crowd*' and may be '*isolated from peers*'. However, as one EP notes, there may be disengagement with social situations to the point where the student '*doesn't feel that social niceties are important*'. Due to the increasing importance of peer relationships in terms of attachment across later adolescence (Allen & Land, 1999; Zimmerman et al, 1996; Zimmerman, 2004), this is an area which could benefit from further research to address possible mental-health implications for this finding.

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### 6.3.3 STRUCTURAL FINDINGS, INCLUDING 'PORTRAITS', RELATING TO A LIKELY 'AMBIVALENT' ATTACHMENT PATTERN

Overall, very few participants in any group recorded a mean rating of constructs which showed an association of 'ambivalent' student-elements with more preferred poles of their constructs (see Table 5.2.2). Modal scores found that GTs' and EPs' ratings tended to be at 5 or above for the 'ambivalent' student-elements, whereas ESBD/PTs showed more variation (four participants with modal scores at 4 or below – see Table 5.2.5).

Descriptions of students with a likely ambivalent pattern can be seen to be similar in many ways to the portrait of students with a likely 'disorganised' attachment style, discussed below (see Tables 5.3.3 and 5.3.4). Indeed, these areas were most difficult to distinguish between in terms of allocating poles of constructs to elements by distance, with several poles being equi-distant between the two (and thus included in each portrait).

The portrait findings for 'ambivalent' student-elements reflect a high focus on acting-out behaviours and difficulties with self-regulation from EPs' and GTs' constructs. However, this aspect is less represented in ESBD/PTs' portrait (see Table 5.3.3). Descriptive poles of constructs include:

EP: *'Volatile', 'lacks self-control', 'responds to provocation'*

GT: *'Has outbursts', 'gets verbally aggressive when things go wrong', 'shows emotions through anger'*

ESBD/PT: *'Lets things get out of control', 'Extends confrontation'*

Executive functioning problems with associated emotional regulation difficulties appear to be particularly associated with learning difficulties for students with a likely ambivalent or disorganised attachment organisation. As one GT participant construes: *'elements of personality hold back achievement'*. The constructions around this difficulty can be seen to include all five elements of emotional literacy (Goleman, 1994).

This type of behavioural presentation is likely to affect relationships, both with adults and peers, and this is also reflected within the portrait. However, it is noticeable that not all poles of constructs reflected in this portrait are necessarily towards the least preferred end of the continuum:

EP: *Finds it difficult to interact appropriately with adults*

EP: *Staff feel positive towards him/her*

ESBD/PT: *How do you get a way in?*

ESBD/PT *Wants to please trusted adults*  
GT: *Not good at asking for help and support*  
GT: *Will strike up a conversation*

These reflected poles of constructs could be argued as being illustrative of the relational ambivalence alluded to within the nature of student-elements representing this 'ambivalent' attachment pattern. This ambivalence is also seen with regard to the poles of constructs associated with 'peer relationships':

EP: *Manipulates social relationships*  
EP: *Bullied*  
GT: *Centre of attention with peers*  
GT: *Finds it hard to mix*  
ESBD/PT *Not good social skills with peers*  
ESBD/PT *Wants to be the same as everyone else*

The portraits also suggested associations regarding 'discipline' and 'family life' with least preferred aspects of constructs for 'ambivalent' student-elements.

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#### 6.3.4 STRUCTURAL FINDINGS, INCLUDING 'PORTRAITS', RELATING TO A LIKELY 'DISORGANISED' ATTACHMENT PATTERN

Participants' ratings for student-elements representing the 'disorganised' pattern were most associated with the least-preferred poles of their constructs. However, this finding was less strong for EP participants, who recorded more mid-range ratings and were more likely to associate at least some of their preferred poles of constructs with these student-elements. Additionally, this connection with least-preferred poles of constructs was not as strong as the connection between preferred poles of constructs and the 'secure' student-elements.

Again the portraits suggest a strong link between student-elements representative of a 'disorganised' attachment pattern and poles of constructs associated with learning. As noted above, the tendency is towards least-preferred aspects of construing ('*has reduced skills in approaching learning tasks*'; '*could achieve more*'; '*can be reluctant to try*') but construct poles also

reflect other issues which impact on learning, including *'high reliance on adults'*, being *'more likely to need reassurance'* but *'doesn't like help at all'*, *'doesn't like to be singled out'*. Constructs also recognised that, at times, learning difficulties can underpin subsequent behavioural difficulties: *'struggles with literacy which affects behaviour'*.

Variability is expressed regarding 'disorganised' student-elements' relationships with adults. This ranges from *'likes adult company'* to *'doesn't want to communicate'*. Construct poles did not readily appear to reflect aspects associated with caregiving within this portrait; rather, the impact of student-elements on the emotional resources of the adults is referred to:

EP:	<i>Has a more complex presentation, is more challenging to teacher</i>
ESBD/PT	<i>Won't accept help</i>
GT:	<i>Is demanding</i> <i>Not bothered how teachers see them</i>

Difficulties are also referred to in relation to peer relationships, particularly in terms of maintenance.

Perhaps unsurprisingly there is a strong focus across this portrait on 'self-regulation' and 'discipline' issues across all participant groups (Schoore, 2008; Perry, 2002; van der Kolk, 2005). Similar poles of constructs to those associated with 'ambivalent' student-elements are associated with this portrait, all of which are highly likely to lead to such students being subject to disciplinary approaches within an educational setting (DfES, 2007; Thomson & Russell, 2007). More than the other student-elements, these students can be seen as representative of those students whose behaviours are *'a symptom of significant underlying problems'* rather than showing *'straight-forward misconduct'* or behaviours through *'the result of provocation through racial harassment or bullying'* (DfES, 2003).

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#### 6.3.5 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION REGARDING STRUCTURAL FINDINGS, INCLUDING 'PORTRAITS' OF PARTICIPANTS' RATINGS PER STUDENT-ELEMENT

- Structural findings from repertory grids are suggestive that at least some education professionals within this study may have differentiated their constructs regarding students' behaviours according to students' likely attachment organisation. This finding was particularly evident with regard to the likely 'secure' presentation for all participants.
- EPs' ratings tended overall to be less polarised, recording more mid-point ratings than other participants (see Tables 5.2.2 to 5.2.5), possibly reflecting a professional stance towards the avoidance of 'labelling' or 'awfulising' behaviours. It is suggested that a relative lack of in-depth knowledge of the students concerned could be a key factor in this area, although there is insufficient evidence within this study to substantiate this assertion.
- Portraits are in line overall with published accounts of attachment presentation (Geddes, 2006), although they provide a more complex, richer picture, especially in terms of classroom associations. They also provide a unique opportunity to obtain views from different groups of educational professionals.
- There was a lower level of focus on 'Family' issues than may be suggested from previous research into student behaviour (Miller, 2003)
- There was a tendency to focus on emotional regulation issues and emotional state only when it was an area of difficulty
- There were some signs that students' potential problems associated with a likely insecure-avoidant pattern of attachment organisation may be either missed or misinterpreted by GT participants.

The following section will discuss whether or not making knowledge of attachment theory explicit to one group of participants (ESBD/PTs) impacted on their construing.

#### 6.4 DOES IN-SERVICE TRAINING (INSET) REGARDING ATTACHMENT THEORY HAVE ANY IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUCTS REGARDING STUDENT BEHAVIOURS?

A PCP approach recognises that people's constructs are not fixed – they can be re-evaluated and changed over the course of time in response to a body of evidence or experiences (Kelly, 1955/63). INSET (or any form of teaching or experience) can thus be viewed in terms of its ability to change participants' constructs regarding the focus area – in this case, offering attachment theory as a framework for understanding students' behaviours, particularly their more challenging ones. The elicitation and measuring of EBSD/PT participants' constructs pre- and post-INSET was undertaken as part of a Psychology Service evaluation of the impact of a new training programme. With regard to exploring potential impact on participants' constructs of behaviour, measures were taken through a combination of re-rating previously elicited grids and the elicitation of wholly new repertory grids, offering the opportunity for new constructs to be employed (see Jankowicz, 2004; Winter et al, 2007).

##### 6.4.1 POST INSET STRUCTURAL FINDINGS FROM REPERTORY GRIDS RE-RATED AND NEWLY-ELICITED

Replication of the pre-INSET structural findings was partially provided by both repeated rating of the same repertory grid and the rating of grids newly-elicited following INSET, providing support for the internal reliability of this study. Similar findings regarding change were observed for both re-rated and newly-elicited repertory grids, with changes being generally most evident at an individual level (see Tables 5.4.5, 5.6.1 and 5.6.2).

For both re-rated and newly-elicited repertory grids there was an overall trend towards an increased association with *least* preferred poles of constructs for all student-elements with the exception of the 'disorganised' pattern. Whilst this finding was repeated across all the patterns of attachment, any substantial changes were only evident within one or two participants, indicative of any changes resultant from INSET being apparent only at the individual level, rather than a whole-group effect. Additionally, where such large changes were recorded they tended to be in relation to only one student-element within each

teacher's grid – no teacher recorded large changes across all the elements, suggesting that any impact of training was limited at best to a specific attachment pattern for individuals.

However, eight of the ten participants *decreased* their re-rated grid ratings for the 'disorganised' student-elements, which, alongside a slight decrease in mean construct ratings in newly-elicited grids (compared to pre-INSET measures) is suggestive of a trend towards an association with more-preferred poles of constructs for this student-element post-INSET. This suggests that there may have been a general impact of INSET in terms of teacher understanding of underlying reasons for behaviours for 'disorganised' student-elements, which may have affected their rating of their continuum of constructs in terms of a more favourable viewpoint. The impact of INSET appears to have had a more varied effect for the other attachment patterns, possibly as a factor of participants' own IWMs which is likely to have affected the manner in which they assimilated the information offered to them.

One reason for the overall lack of impact of INSET on this particular participant group may have been this self-selected group's level of implicit understanding of attachment theory prior to the INSET course. This likely participant effect is discussed below, alongside other methodological issues likely to have affected this study.

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6.4.2 FINDINGS REGARDING CONTENT FROM GRIDS NEWLY ELICITED POST-INSET  
Constructs elicited post-INSET were all categorised within existing categories, suggesting both salience for original categories and no impact of INSET at a fundamental level in terms of the content of participants' constructs.

As above, constructs appear to be suggestive of some specific links to the main tenets of attachment theory, particularly with regard to the notion of a 'secure base' and regulation of affect, but few clear links were evident.

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#### 6.4.3 SUMMARY OF IMPACT OF INSET

- Any claim for an impact from In-Service training on ESBD/PTs' internal working models appears to be limited. Whilst it may have had an impact on some teachers, impact appears to be limited to construing regarding a particular pattern of attachment. This may be connected with individual participant's own existing internal working model, representing their own organisation of attachment pattern.
- Anecdotal evidence, based on participants' evaluation, feedback and conversation following INSET, suggests that ESBD/PTs found attachment theory to have high salience for them. In common with other groups of education professionals that similar INSET has been provided for, frequent comments included '*now I feel I understand*' and '*why did no-one ever tell me this before?*' This suggests that attachment theory may have efficacy as a framework for supporting understanding of and developing supportive approaches to more challenging students' behaviours.

#### 6.5 CONSIDERATION OF METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES WHICH MAY HAVE IMPACTED ON FINDINGS.

Whilst every piece of research undoubtedly sets out with careful forethought regarding methodology and procedures, unforeseen issues or the necessity to compromise for pragmatic reasons can have an impact. This can be particularly evident for research into 'real life' situations associated with complex social and interpersonal factors, where variables are potentially harder to identify and more difficult to control for (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Mertens, 2010). This section sets out to highlight issues or concerns which may have impacted on the research.

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#### 6.5.1 PARTICIPANTS

It was intended to explore the construing regarding students' behaviour through the eyes of different groups of education professionals. EPs were selected due to their role in promoting understanding of highly challenging behaviours in schools alongside strategies to address them. It was also the professional

stance of the researcher. The contrast was planned to be provided by teaching staff in KS3 schools. A group of ten self-selected staff were identified via their application to attend a one-day INSET session entitled '*Student Behaviour and Relationships: Growing Nurturing Secondary School Classrooms*' and agreement to take part in research consisting of two interview sessions. However, once analysis of the biographies of this group was undertaken in terms of job roles and responsibilities, it was apparent that the level of knowledge and skill with regard to ESD was higher than that held within the general population of teachers, and therefore could not be broadly representative of general classroom teachers. As a group, they also demonstrated a high level of professional commitment and personal interest in developing skills regarding the area the emotional, social and behavioural development.

It was therefore decided to recruit another participant group who would be representative of 'general' teachers within Key Stage 3 – i.e. subject teachers and form tutors. This proved to be an extremely difficult group to recruit. Recruitment was undertaken by personal request from either the researcher or colleague EPs to senior staff within schools and by notices in staff rooms. Eventual participants appear to have been biased towards being sensitive and supportive as they were recruited more by a process of 'plea for help' rather than a more democratic offer to volunteer. Several expressed an interest in the role of EP or in working with students with additional needs and suggested these as reasons for their volunteering. Therefore, the GT participant group could be seen to be representative of general teachers at the 'top end' of sensitivity.

In terms of pre-post measures relating to the efficacy of INSET outlining attachment theory, the inherent level of knowledge of the ESD/PTs is likely to have impacted as prior training undertaken and experience within this group would affect any impact from the training course.

Due to the self-selecting and/or volunteer nature of the participants, the sample cannot be claimed to be representative or generalisable in terms of age, gender or experience of all such groups of education professionals. Whilst the gender of participants generally reflected the spread across the professions, there was some bias towards over-representation of females. Between the groups, ESBD/PTs tended to be older and, consequently, to have had more experience within education (see Table 4.6.2).

Whilst the participants overall remain sufficiently representative to provide relevant representation for this exploratory research, findings can only be generalised to similar groups of participants with a great deal of caution.

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#### 6.5.2 TIME CONSTRAINTS

Interviews needed to be limited to around 40 minutes to tie-in with teacher participants' availability for a maximum of one teaching time-period. In reality, this was often reduced to around 30 minutes. Given the need to cover ethical considerations, explain the nature of a PCP approach and check the researcher's understanding of and accurate recording of the constructs elicited, the actual time for discussion during the interview was limited and thus reduced the number of constructs which could be elicited for each triadic presentation. EP grids, where participants were aware of the basic tenets of PCP and tended to be less constrained by time factors, thus yielded more constructs, as did ESBD/PT's grids which were newly-elicited post INSET. The number of constructs as a factor affecting this research is considered below.

Time constraints also impacted on an initial research aim to undertake laddering (a technique by which participants' core constructs can be elicited; Kelly, 1955/63; Jankowicz, 2004) and discussion of emerging themes with participants, which reduced the exploratory potential of the research.

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#### 6.5.3 NUMBER OF CONSTRUCTS WITHIN REPERTORY GRIDS

A higher number of elicited constructs may have been preferable. However, during the interviews constructs were often repeated for several elicitation permutations, suggesting that the constructs captured were strong (if not, indeed, core concepts) for the participants. Similar number of constructs were yielded for each comparison of elements, which, given the number of participants, was sufficient both to provide a range of views and to show some similarities and differences in construing, thus rendering the approach useful in terms of exploration (Jankowicz, 2004; Fransella 2005).

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#### 6.5.4 NUMBER OF ELEMENTS WITHIN REPERTORY GRIDS

Grids were also restricted to four elements to ensure that the field of the topic (the four main patterns of attachment) was covered evenly (Jankowicz, 2004; issues regarding the use of 'student-elements' are discussed below). Whilst there is no ideal number of elements for a repertory grid (Jankowicz, 2004; Fransella, Bell and Bannister, 2004), the convention is to have a minimum of six to eight elements to allow a range of comparisons when construing. This limited access to the use of statistical packages specific to PCP, many of which are designed to operate with grids with a minimum of six elements.

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#### 6.5.5 RANGE OF CONVENIENCE ISSUES

Findings suggest that the range of convenience of the eliciting question (*'In terms of their behaviours in school can you think of some important way in which any two of these [students] are alike and thereby different from the third?'*) may have been too narrow in that it did not explore any construing regarding underlying reasons for behaviours, tending to elicit instead more concrete descriptions of behaviours. Whilst this tended to limit findings, it was important to avoid any confusion between participants' construing regarding students' behaviours with their attributions for these behaviours during elicitation. However, it would be interesting and potentially useful to have knowledge of *why* participants felt that students were making use of such a behaviour (i.e. what was their view of the *communication* of that behaviour; Donnellan et al, 1988). This could be addressed through further research.

#### 6.5.6 VALIDITY

Validity within repertory grids themselves can only be discussed in terms of whether or not they effectively reveal patterns and relationships within the data they yield (Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004). This section therefore focuses on aspects of validity appertaining to the approaches used in the exploration of the content and structural aspects of the grids.

#### VALIDITY AND THE USE OF CAMEOS TO ENABLE PARTICIPANTS TO SELECT STUDENT-ELEMENTS

This area was a key methodological concern. Whilst it was necessary for participants to consider students who were representative of each attachment style in order to explore the research question, there was no ethical or practical approach available which allowed the identification of students' attachment style. Furthermore, as noted above, measures of attachment style during adolescence are open to some debate in terms of their accuracy and efficacy as the nature of attachment itself is in the process of developmental change (Allen & Land, 1999; Buist, Reitz and Dekovic, 2008).

In line with Coolican (2004), there was a need to provide participants with '*flexible and natural*' ways in which they could '*express themselves fully and uniquely define their world*' in terms of their '*lived experience*'. The role of the researcher is to actively construct these multiple realities (op. cit.; Mertens, 2010). Cameos were thus selected as being able to provide an outline of known associated behaviours regarding attachment from existing literature from which participants would be able to identify representative students on whom they could base their construing ('student-elements'). The use of cameos to prompt the naming of known students grounded elements in reality for participants and thus made attachment patterns accessible and meaningful. All participants were able to do this with relative ease. Provision of outline descriptions could have affected constructs elicited to some extent although the additional complexity and breadth of construing across all attachment patterns suggests that this effect was not critical.

In terms of validity and reliability, the cameos were each independently verified as being representative of their designated attachment pattern. However, it is not possible to state that each student who was selected as an element within each grid was necessarily representative of that particular attachment pattern. Reported findings note this difficulty regarding validity in terms of the student's 'likely' attachment pattern. The fact that some students were independently chosen to represent the same attachment category by participants within the same school indicates a level of reliability within this method.

Elements within repertory grids are seen as being subject to some degree of abstraction (Kelly, 1955; Ravenette, 1999). The use of cameos within this study can be seen to be similar to the traditional use of a person to act as a role element (e.g. 'A teacher you get on well with'; 'A person you admire'). The use of descriptive text and posters to act as or to elicit elements in a repertory grid is established within marketing approaches using PCP (Jaeger & Meiselman, 2004; Karapanos & Marten, 2007; Bitner, 1990) and there were no difficulties with any of the participants' capacity to follow the reasoning when identifying their personal student-representations for each element, supporting the integrity of the approach.

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#### VALIDITY AND CONTENT ANALYSIS

A content analysis approach was utilised with regard to categorisation of constructs elicited. Categories of constructs were robust both within and across participant groups and thus had stability (Jankowicz, 2004). Categories are judged to hold face validity to the extent that they appear to measure the concept or thing that they are intended to measure (Weber, 1990). Agreement amongst a variety of independent raters thus strengthens face validity (see section 4.7.6 above for a detailed outline). Construct validity is evident when a category can be seen to generalise across measures or methods. In the case of this study, several categories may be seen to reflect attributional research regarding parents', students' and teachers' views of behaviour, such as issues

regarding teachers' actions, pupil vulnerabilities and family-based issues (Miller, 2003).

In terms of hypothesis validity, which looks for a correspondence between findings and theory (Weber, 1990), categories arguably reflected areas within the main parameters of attachment theory (e.g. relationships, self-regulation, secure-base behaviours) although the terminology used by participants differed to that employed within theoretical language. Links were also evident with Engagement Theory as outlined above (see Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Appleton, Christenson & Furlong, 2008)

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#### VALIDITY AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

The combination of a low number of elements, large single factors within Principal Components Analysis and highly-correlating constructs precluded access to many statistical avenues of analysis available for repertory grids. Descriptive statistics for individuals' grids were therefore employed and compared at both individual and group levels to allow for some exploration of trends within and between groups.

The presentation of 'portraits' of attachment pattern (poles of constructs most associated with each element), derived from Principal Components Analysis, is not a conventional use of such analysis and, as such, has no externally-referenced validity as an analytical technique. However, PCA is based upon relative distance (Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004) so the approach was arguably within acceptable constraints. Furthermore, findings from this particular analysis were descriptive and complementary in nature only and served to provide greater depth to previously recorded findings.

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#### 6.5.7 RELIABILITY

Within constructivist, exploratory research, reliability can be seen to serve a different role to that within empirical research. With regard to measures, *'validity is a necessary but not sufficient condition; validity provides that sufficiency'* (Scheurich, 1997, p.81). Lincoln & Guba (1985, p.189) suggest that in terms of naturalistic inquiry, trustworthiness is tested by four naturalistic

analogues to the conventional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity which they term '*credibility*', '*transferability*', '*dependability*' and '*confirmability*'. Whilst there are therefore few opportunities to measure reliability within this exploratory, naturalistic study, internal reliability within this exploratory study is indicated by comparison of pre- and post-INSET data. This showed there to be some replication of findings, and similarity of construing both within and between the participant groups (Jankowicz, 2004). Overall, this suggests that findings were reliable for these groups. However, no external measures of reliability were available. Replication of findings within other sample groups of similar participants would give a stronger indication of reliability.

The bi-polar nature of personal constructs can be seen to affect the reliability of a content analysis approach to some extent, as different poles of the construct may each accord more readily to different categories. However, inter-rater reliability procedures undertaken during content analysis ensured that findings were as reliable as possible, with inter-rater agreement scores close to or exceeding the benchmark of 90% agreement (Jankowicz, 2004).

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#### 6.5.8 LANGUAGE ISSUES

There were differences with regard to terminology and language which served to make connections more difficult to see directly and to leave them open to some interpretation. Whilst the temptation to 'crowbar' the constructs to fit an attachment theory paradigm had to be avoided there also did appear to be implicit connections within a broad range of constructs to the basic tenets. Language does play an important part in communicating psychological theory to education professionals and it should be noted that teachers and EPs can discuss the same issues – and, arguably, make use of the same theories – via the use of different language.

## 6.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS AND POTENTIAL FUTURE RESEARCH

Implications for education professionals from this research are discussed below alongside suggestions for potential future research which arise from them.

### 6.6.1 THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOLS: THE CAPACITY FOR A POTENTIAL INCREASE IN ADOPTING A 'THERAPEUTIC' APPROACH TO TEACHING

Sadly, experience in professional practice and evidence from research into resilience (Oswald, Johnson & Howard, 2003) suggests that teachers can often underestimate both their own personal impact in terms of being able to support a student experiencing difficulties and the ability of a school setting in general to be effective in addressing emotionally-based behavioural problems. This can often lead to a belief that students would benefit from a 'therapeutic' placement - usually sited 'elsewhere', within specialist provision - whilst underestimating the school's own capacity to provide therapeutic support. Research indicates that teacher attitude is a key factor in successful inclusion, but that this is less likely to be favourable for students with learning difficulties or EBD than for those with physical and sensory impairment (Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Lindsay, 2007).

Such external placements can often remove students from their own social context and lead to further alienation and social exclusion. They also have financial implications for the education system (Parsons, 1999; Parsons, Bennis & Howlett, 1994). DFE guidance currently provides little support for schools in how to address students' *'underlying needs'*. However, findings from this research are suggestive of education professionals' fundamental capacity to embrace approaches such as Hanks' (2002) therapeutic teaching within mainstream settings or relationship-led approaches such as those involved in successful re-engagement of disaffected students outlined above (Ofsted, 2008).

## 6.6.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF IN SCHOOLS AND SUPPORT WORKERS

This section discusses several of the issues raised within this thesis in terms of implications for education professionals and support for vulnerable students.

### THE IMPACT OF INSET ON ATTACHMENT THEORY: ACCESS TO ATTACHMENT THEORY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING STUDENTS' NEEDS

Overall, it could be contended that INSET is likely to have an effect on participants' construing, but the direction of that effect is impacted on by participants' own experiences and internal working models, with each person interpreting things in light of their own experiences and existing templates (Weiss, 2002; Brisch, 2009).

The centrality of attachment theory in everyone's lived experiences, providing education professionals with an innate sense of its theoretical underpinnings, questions whether it should be included in initial teacher training and other para-professional training. It could provide education professionals with an important theoretical framework for understanding the importance of relationships and underlying emotional difficulties which can lead to behavioural issues (Geddes, 2006; Bomber, 2007; 2009). Furthermore, consideration of one's own internal working model, having knowledge of one's role regarding emotional regulation and acknowledging one's own triggers and limitations, is an important step in being able to provide contingent and sensitive support for students with insecure patterns of attachment (Brisch, 2009; Gray, 2005; Faupel, 2002). Such initial training, alongside provision for existing professionals, could be supported by on-going access to systemic and individualised support via professional supervision, mentoring or coaching. It could be argued that the EP role is uniquely situated to fulfil this task, given knowledge of both the theoretical underpinnings and the workings and challenges of a secondary school environment. However, others, such as Educational Therapists or Primary Mental Health Workers, can be seen increasingly to be involved in this field.

The above findings regarding commonality of construing but differences in language regarding theoretical framework is an important consideration in any such undertaking. Within educational settings, often by the very people who formed participant groups within this study, EPs can be regarded as the 'experts' in this area. This study suggests that there is a lot to be learned from one another by all education professionals and that collaborative work, sharing and challenging one another's constructs, is likely to be most beneficial. The EP role could incorporate the facilitation and encouragement of this collaboration, and ensure the provision of a mutually-accessible framework for understanding to support the development of how strategies based in attachment theory could be employed to aid both students and teachers.

INSET could potentially have more impact if it were undertaken with a group of staff within the same school, thus opening up wider opportunities for constructs to be shared and debated within the same environment. The Commonality Corollary, which notes that *'to the extent to which a person employs a construction of experiences similar to those employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person'* (Kelly, 1955) suggests a mechanism by which educational ethos can be built. Thus, in some schools, the ethos is highly nurturing and supportive of all students and staff, with a focus on the inclusion of all students whatever their presenting needs. The construing of staff across a group is thus an important factor and can be highly impactful both on student behaviour and on staff approach (in both positive and negative directions) (Cooper & Upton, 1990; Williams & Daniels, 2002).

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#### LIMITATIONS OF ATTACHMENT THEORY

Whilst noting the capacity of attachment theory as a potential framework for both understanding and addressing student vulnerability and challenging behaviour it is important to recognise that it is not the *only* psychological framework or process involved in development. It is thus important that balance is maintained and there is not a drive for any 'labelling' (e.g. of 'attachment style' of students or adults) or 'blaming' (e.g. of families in terms of

a history of care-giving) when working to support highly vulnerable children and young people.

## 6.7 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

- Much of participants' construing appears to reflect aspects of attachment theory, although connections can at times be more implicit than explicit and may be affected by potential differences in language and terminology employed between attachment research and professional practice.
- Participants' constructs appeared to connect more to the affective and relationship-based approaches outlined in Ofsted's (2008) paper regarding successful re-integration of disaffected pupils (addressing their '*significant underlying problems*') than to more traditional behaviourist approaches favoured in support materials for schools (the 'six core beliefs' of the Steer Report, DfES, 2005; Behaviour and Attendance Secondary Strategy, DfES 2005).
- Findings suggest that education participants may be open to providing student support based on and requiring the type of sensitive, attuned, contingent reciprocal interactions associated with secondary caregiving.
- However, education professionals, particularly General Teachers, may lack sensitivity of response to some students' presenting needs, and may even 'step out' of a caregiving role too soon.
- There is some evidence of trends at a group level with regard to connection between preferred/ non-preferred aspects of constructs and student-element attachment pattern.
- Students with a likely 'secure' attachment pattern are strongly associated with preferred poles of constructs, reflecting their positive experiences of school.
- Students with a likely insecure attachment pattern may be particularly affected regarding their academic attainments.
- The provision of INSET did not have any discernable impact at a group level. Those differences which were recorded tended to be limited to individuals in relation to one student-element. The overall lack of impact of

INSET on attachment theory is likely to be attributable to a participant effect, as the self-selected participants involved in this aspect of the study were more highly-skilled and knowledgeable in the area being addressed than is usual for general teaching staff within High Schools (Key Stage 3).

- Overall, personal constructs elicited from education professionals may be indicative of some implicit understanding of attachment theory and, subject to the caveats at both group and individual levels, this research suggests that attachment theory could potentially be a useful theoretical framework for use in school settings with regard to supporting vulnerable students with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties in High Schools.

Education policy and centrally-provided programmes to support teaching staff in addressing challenging behaviours have tended to focus on 'low-level, disruptive behaviours'. This has contributed to a tendency for schools and teaching staff to undervalue the efficacy of their role in providing a 'therapeutic' approach for supporting the development of students with highly-challenging behaviours, of both the 'acting-in' and 'acting-out' varieties (Oswald, Johnson & Howard, 2003; Bomber, 2007, 2009; Hanko, 2002). This area of research was selected due to the researcher's interest in the mainstream provision afforded to students with significant ESD who are considered to experience '*significant underlying difficulties*' (DfES, 2003), particularly in terms of whether there was any relationship between education professionals' construing in this area and the basic tenets and features of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969,1973,1980; Salter-Ainsworth & Wittig 1969; Main, 1999; Schore & Schore, 2008).

As there was no previous literature addressing this specific area, exploratory research was undertaken within a constructivist paradigm. A Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955) approach was employed to explore education professionals' construing regarding the behaviours of students selected by participants as being representative of the four main attachment styles (Salter-Ainsworth & Wittig 1969; Salter-Ainsworth et al, 1978; Main & Solomon, 1986). Whilst a PCP approach permitted close investigation of each individual's constructs and their own internal working models in terms of the relationship between the preferred and non-preferred poles of their constructs and students selected by each participant as representative of each attachment pattern, analysis of both content and structure of repertory grids allowed exploration of trends within and between participant-groups (Jankowicz, 2004; Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004; Robertson, 2003).

Participants' construing regarding behaviour was generally more in line with recent national guidance on addressing disaffection (Ofsted, 2008) than more traditional behavioural approaches ('Steer report', DfES, 2005; DfES, 2003).

Findings from this study suggest that approaches for supporting challenging student behaviour as outlined by Hanko's (2002) '*therapeutic teaching*' may have fertile ground within schools, particularly with regard to those professionals who specialise in supporting students in this area. There were some findings suggesting that general teachers may possibly tend to view behaviours of students presenting with an avoidant-insecure attachment style more positively than either EPs or specialist ESD/Pastoral teachers, indicating that there may be a differences at a group level in interpretation of the communication implicit within behaviour (cf Donnellan et al, 1988).

Exploration of education professionals' constructs regarding behaviour found some evidence of footprints of the basic tenets of attachment theory within participants' construing. This included relational issues which reflected internal working models of 'self, other and the relationship between them', secure base behaviours (in terms of adults providing a psychological secure base via reassurance), executive function and emotional regulation.

However, findings revealed a relatively lower focus on 'caregiving' aspects of constructs, particularly for general teacher participants, and little reference to 'mind-minded' reflective function within construing (Sharp et al, 2006; Siegel, 2001). This was in contrast to a slightly higher focus on students' peer relationships. This is contended to be an issue as the age of students within high-schools is likely to be too young for peers to successfully take on aspects of attachment relationships as associated with peers in later adolescent development (Allen et al, 1998; Allen & Land, 1999). Restrictions on access to a 'secure-base', mind-minded relationship with an adult in a school setting could be seen to impact disproportionately on students with insecure attachments in comparison to those with secure attachment styles (Geddes, 2006; Delaney, 2009). It is suggested that this exploratory finding requires further research.

Evidence from the structural analysis of repertory grids, afforded by the differential ratings of constructs along the continuum of preferred/non-preferred poles per student attachment-style, was strongly suggestive of differential

views of students at the secure-insecure level. Thus students representative of a 'secure' attachment style were closely allied with the preferred poles of participants' constructs across all participant groups. Findings were less clear with regard to the insecure patterns (student-elements representing the 'avoidant', 'ambivalent' and 'disorganised' attachment styles) but trends were discernable: student-elements representing the 'disorganised' pattern were most closely associated with least preferred poles of constructs with 'ambivalent' student-elements sharing many of the same qualities.

Additionally as noted above, there was some evidence that general teachers as a group may find it more difficult to interpret the communication underlying behaviours and may misinterpret some behavioural signals. This was particularly evident with regard to 'avoidant' student-elements, where there were some indications that behaviours could be interpreted as indicating self-reliance, resilience and confidence rather than possible withdrawal or defensive approaches (Geddes, 2006; Bomber, 2007, 2009).

Further research into the impact of student attachment style on a variety of school factors including relationships, approach to learning and ability and attainment is recommended.

In-service training to provide explicit knowledge of attachment theory was found to have little impact on participants' construing (neither in terms of re-rating of previous repertory grids nor in newly-elicited constructs). This is contended to be likely due to the high level of prior expertise of the participant group; further research regarding the impact of such training on 'General Teacher' participants would be beneficial.

Overall, exploration of education professionals' construing regarding student behaviour has highlighted some areas of relationship with aspects associated with attachment theory. This study has indicated that there may be a relationship between education professionals' continuum of preferred/non-preferred constructs and the likely attachment-style of a student, particularly at the secure-insecure level. Whilst in-service training regarding attachment theory may impact on both staff knowledge and confidence, evidence from this

study was likely to have been compromised due to the high pre-training level of knowledge in the self-selected participant group. Findings indicate attachment theory may have potential salience for education professionals as a theoretical framework for understanding and addressing the 'significant underlying difficulties' associated with challenging ESD which can lead to school exclusions. Individual differences, probably attributable to differences in adults' own internal working models, would need to be taken into account when researching or employing such an approach. Educational Psychologists, given their understanding of theory and school contexts, are uniquely placed to take forward such initiatives.

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**APPENDIX 1: AN OUTLINE OF THE STRANGE SITUATION PROCEDURE (SALTER-AINSWORTH & WITTIG, 1969)**

Episode	Time	Entrances and Exits
<p><b>1. Mother, Baby, Observer</b> The mother introduces the mother and baby to the experimental room. The mother has been instructed to carry the baby in, and is shown where to put him down – at the mid-point of the base of the triangle formed by the chairs, away from but facing the apex where the toys are. The observer leaves the room.</p>	30 seconds approximately	Observer leaves the room
<p><b>2. Mother, Baby</b> The mother puts the baby down, then sits in her chair and pretends to read a magazine. She has been told that she is to respond to him quietly if he seeks a response from her, and to reassure him if he needs it, but she is not to try to attract his attention.</p>	3 minutes	
<p><b>3. Stranger, Mother, Baby</b> The stranger enters, greets the mother briefly, then sits quietly in her chair. After a minute has elapsed she is signalled to engage the mother in conversation. After another minute she is signalled to invite the baby's attention, gradually approaching him and attempting to engage him in interaction. Meanwhile the mother is to sit quietly and to talk only the stranger talks to her.</p>	3 minutes	Stranger enters room
<p><b>4. Stranger, Baby</b> Another signal is given for the mother to leave the room as unobtrusively as possible, leaving her purse behind, on her chair, while the stranger distracts the baby's attention. The stranger then withdraws from active interaction with the baby, sits quietly in her chair, but responds to any advances the baby makes. If, however, the baby is distressed at his mother's departure, the stranger tries to distract him or comfort him, and, if this is successful, then she tries to re-engage his interest in the toys. If she is unsuccessful in comforting a highly distressed baby, the episode is curtailed.</p>	3 minutes *	Mother leaves room
<p><b>5. Mother, Baby</b> The mother speaks outside the closed door of the experimental room, loudly enough for the baby to hear her. She pauses, then opens the door and stands in the doorway, hesitating for a moment, so that the baby has time to make a spontaneous response. Then she greets him and makes him comfortable for the next episode. She was not given more specific instructions, except that before she leaves she is to settle the baby on the floor again, interested in the toys.</p>	variable	Mother enters room, Stranger leaves
<p><b>6. Baby Alone</b> The mother leaves the room, after saying 'bye-bye' to the baby, and again leaves her purse behind her on her chair. In the case of extreme and prolonged distress this episode was also curtailed.</p>	3 minutes*	Mother leaves room
<p><b>7. Stranger, Baby</b> In this episode the stranger's behaviour varies in accordance with the baby's behaviour both in this episode and in the previous stranger-baby episode. If he explored when alone with her previously, she is to approach him gradually to see how much close attention from a stranger he can tolerate, and to continue to interact with him for two minutes. If he did not explore previously, she is to allow three minutes for exploration, and then proceed to the two minutes of increasingly close interaction. But if he is distressed from having been alone, or becomes distressed, she is to attempt to comfort him. If she is unsuccessful in comforting him, the episode is curtailed.</p>	2 or 5 min*	Stranger enters room
<p><b>8. Mother, Baby</b> The mother returns to the experimental room, pauses in the doorway for a moment, speaks to the baby, and finally picks him up to terminate the episode.</p>	variable	Mother enters room, Stranger leaves

## APPENDIX 2: AN OUTLINE OF THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROVIDED TO KS3 SPECIALIST EBSD/ PASTORAL TEACHERS

### *Student Behaviour and Relationships: Growing Nurturing Secondary School Classrooms*

#### THEMES:

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Supporting extreme emotions
Attachment	Emotional Literacy
Identity and brain development	Assessment Tools
The importance of relationships	Planning

#### CONTENT:

##### DEVELOPING SECURE ATTACHMENTS AND IDENTITY

Neo-natal development; the role of the primary care-giver; things that can go wrong; impact on readiness for learning; other influences on attachment; definitions, Internal working models; four basic patterns of attachment (IWMs); adolescence and attachment; peers and attachment in adolescence; factors to consider in school (to promote security of attachment); Identity and brain development; Sensory experiences, neural pathways, environmental cues.

##### RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERVENTIONS

The importance of relationships; Personal experience; attributions; the environmental situation; reciprocal response; the role of emotions within communications; the 'balance of power'; barriers to relationships; therapeutic teaching; links to school effectiveness; verbal and non-verbal communication; asserting authority without disempowering young people; active listening; assertive, positive language; instructional language; corrective language – avoiding and defusing confrontation; Positive choices.

##### SUPPORTING EXTREME EMOTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

Promoting positive behaviour within a nurturing environment: CBT frameworks; Breakwell's cycle; underlying emotional causes of behaviours; adults' professional role; eco-systemic approaches to behaviour.

##### RESILIENCE

Resilience definitions; individual risk factors; family risk factors; environmental/community risk factors; Marine navigation metaphor; the role of schools in promoting resilience; research evidence; Competencies.

##### ASSESSMENT TOOLS

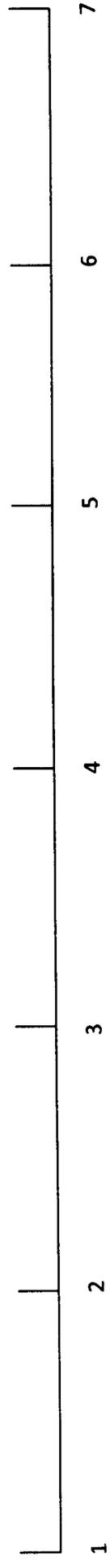
For Resilience; Emotional Literacy and Adult EQ)

**Appendix 3: Blank repertory grid used to elicit constructs and record ratings**

Participant Ref:

Date:

	A	B	C	D



## APPENDIX 4: EP REPERTORY GRIDS (SHOWING 'PREFERRED' POLES OF CONSTRUCTS TO THE LEFT)

N.b. In order to make comparison feasible, constructs are all represented with the 'preferred' pole of the construct on the left. Some constructs (and their ratings) have therefore been reversed to reflect this and are denoted by (R). Where participants were unable to identify a 'preferred' pole of a construct, (M) has been used to denote this ('mid-point preferred'). Ratings reflect a 1 to 7 scale, with the lower score representing the preferred (left-hand) pole of the construct.

<b>EP 1</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Keen to please	5	1	1	3	Not keen to please
(R) Self-assured and comfortable	7	6	3	5	Frightened
(R) More thoughtful	2	7	1	7	Uninhibited
(R) Wouldn't say hurtful things; sensitive	1	5	1	6	Says things to hurt
Likeable	4	2	2	2	Difficult to reach/unresponsive
(R) Completely confident will make progress	6	6	2	7	Doesn't believe can learn
Volatile (Mid point preferred)	7	1	4	1	Excessively controlled
Controlling (of others) (Mid point preferred)	2	6	4	6	Reactive responses
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>5.0</b>	

<b>EP 2</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Get on with things	2	6	2	5	Frustrated
Higher achievers	3	6	2	3	Has lots of difficulties
(R) Very articulate	2	6	2	3	Have speech and language difficulties
High achieving in literacy	6	7	1	3	Difficulties with literacy
(R) Age appropriate language	6	6	1	3	Difficulties in understanding spoken language
(R) Doesn't self-harm	7	3	1	2	Self harms
Difficulties in understanding and use of language (Mid point preferred)	6	2	4	6	Difficulties with abstract concepts
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>	

EP 3	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Find it hard to talk about negative emotions (Mid point preferred)	2	1	6	7	Can't address negative emotions
(R) Not controlling of mother	5	6	1	7	Controlling of mother
Can elicit nurturing response	6	3	2	6	Elicits frustration
More observable anxiety	5	1	3	7	Ambiguous behaviour signs
(R) Clear vision of future	7	4	1	7	No vision of future
Can present a vulnerable side	6	2	3	2	Doesn't present a vulnerable side
Very dominant over peers (effectively) (Mid point preferred)	1	2	4	6	Sets himself up to be physically dominated
(R) Interested in peers	1	7	4	5	More inquisitive of adults
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>	

EP 4	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Less obvious in classroom, more compliant	1	7	1	7	More obvious, disruptive
(R) Resilient, independent	7	1	1	7	Vulnerable, needs support
(R) Self-sufficient, independent learner	7	1	1	7	Needs high level of adult intervention
(R) Can talk about feelings	6	7	1	6	Finds it hard to articulate feelings
Able	1	4	1	6	Has learning difficulties
Likes adult company	2	3	4	3	Shy with adults
Needs support with developing social skills (Mid point preferred)	5	1	4	2	Reluctant to show social skills
(R) Doesn't show anger	2	7	1	7	Anger flares up quickly (and is obvious)
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	

EP 5	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
(R) More self-sufficient	7	3	1	5	Require more teacher time and attention
(R) Easily provided for by teacher	7	4	1	5	Require teacher resilience
(R) Fairly confident	4	6	2	2	Shy
(R) Not on SEN record	6	5	1	5	On SEN record
(R) Secure friendships	7	2	1	6	Need support re peer relationships
(R) At an acquiring information stage	7	3	2	5	Developmentally, at an exploratory play stage
(R) Can engage in classroom	7	3	1	5	Need support to access curriculum
(R) Home context factors not contributory to any difficulties	6	3	1	6	Home context factors contributory to difficulties
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>	

EP 6	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
(R) Not bullied	7	6	2	6	Bullied
Creative	2	6	1	7	Not creative
Confident	6	6	1	7	Not confident
(R) Calm	6	7	1	6	Aggressive
(R) Happy	7	6	1	6	Depressed
(R) Lucky	7	6	1	4	Unfortunate
Popular	1	3	6	5	Unpopular
(R) Gifted	5	6	1	7	Struggling
(R) Is the same in different situations	6	6	2	5	Unpredictable
Well-presented	7	5	1	6	Unkempt
Can use initiative	2	4	1	7	Dependent
(R) Peaceful	7	4	2	5	Strong temper
Visual learners (Mid point preferred)	1	4	3	6	Kinaesthetic learners
Manipulative (Mid point preferred)	3	1	6	7	Acts unconsciously [reactive]
Kind	3	6	1	2	Spiteful
Hardworking	3	6	1	5	Disinterested
Like having fun	6	3	2	1	Serious
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>5.3</b>	

EP 7	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
(R) Doesn't try to take control of social situations	4	7	4	6	Wants to take control of social situations
(R) Staff feel positive towards them	7	2	1	3	Engender feelings of anger from adults
(R) Not hostile	6	4	1	5	Can show hostility
Polite	7	3	1	4	Doesn't feel that social niceties are important
(R) Understands when needs help	6	6	1	5	Doesn't have understanding of own needs
(R) Confident	7	7	1	5	Anxious
(R) Measured reactions	6	6	1	6	Disproportionate reactions
Respectful to peers	6	6	1	6	Difficulties with social relationships with peers
Have no problems expressing selves [emotionally]	7	2	1	3	Have problems expressing selves [emotionally]
Realises there are boundaries	6	3	1	3	Boundaries are irrelevant
Has low self-esteem (Mid point preferred)	1	5	4	6	Finds it hard to read situations
Have difficulties in being aware of own emotions (Mid point preferred)	2	7	4	4	Very aware of own emotions - but gets overwhelmed
(R) Fairly good understanding and maturity	3	5	1	7	Emotionally immature
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4.8</b>	

EP 8	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
(R) Easy to manage	6	3	1	2	Difficult to manage
Reasonably high achieving	5	7	1	1	Low achieving
(R) Fathers have a positive impact on life	7	2	2	7	Fathers have a negative influence on life
(R) Doesn't require a statement	5	7	1	1	Requires a statement
(R) Emotionally robust	6	1	1	7	Severe mental health issues
Bright	5	7	1	1	Not bright
Likes a laugh	2	5	2	2	No sense of humour
Successful at school [academically]	5	7	1	1	Not successful at school [academically]
Popular with peers	6	3	1	2	Not popular with peers
Good relationship with teachers	7	3	2	5	Less satisfactory relationship with teachers
(R) Living at home	7	1	1	7	Accommodated away from home
Healthy body image	6	2	1	7	Distorted body image
Not born in UK (Mid point preferred)	7	1	7	7	Born in the UK
<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	

EP 9	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
High level of independence [re school work]	2	6	1	4	High reliance on adults [re school work]
More able to problem-solve	2	6	1	6	More likely to need reassurance
Less dependent on peer group (Mid Point Preferred)	1	7	6	6	More likely to want close proximity of friends
Less manipulative	3	6	4	6	More controlling of peer group
Less emotional presentation	2	6	4	5	High emotional expression and symptomology
Calm and controlled behaviour	1	7	1	6	More overt expressions of needs [acting-out behaviour]
Less reliant on teacher (Mid point preferred)	1	7	4	5	More reliant on teacher
High levels of concentration	2	6	1	6	Has attention difficulties
More positive social skills	2	4	1	7	Social skills fluctuate
More emotionally literate	5	5	1	6	Reduced emotional literacy skills
Academically achieving	4	6	1	6	Reduced skills in approaching learning tasks
(R) More secure in functioning independently	1	7	1	4	Attention seeking
(R) Emotionally contained, controls own feelings	2	6	2	4	Manipulates social relationships
(R) Have higher levels of skills initiating and maintaining positive relationships	5	2	1	7	Have problems initiating and sustaining relationships
(R) Able to manage expectations	6	6	3	7	More vulnerable and susceptible to adult criticism and expectations
(R) Greater degree of mind-mindedness	2	5	1	6	Respond to provocation
Can mask anxieties and fears (Mid point preferred)	2	7	4	7	Make needs overtly known [inappropriately]

Can express needs verbally	4	3	1	7	Express needs non-verbally
(R) Reduced levels of physical aggression	2	3	1	7	Physically aggressive
Teacher has a more positive interactive relationship	7	4	1	7	Teacher has a more negative relationship
(R) Teacher has strategies to try address behaviour issues	7	6	4	6	More complex presentation, more challenging to the teacher
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>5.9</b>	

<b>EP 10</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Able to interact appropriately with adults	3	2	1	4	Finds it difficult to interact appropriately with adults
(R) High level of self-control	5	6	1	7	Lacks self-control
Able to access learning effectively	5	5	1	7	Finds it difficult to access learning
Competent social interactions with peers	7	6	1	6	Interacting socially with peers is a big challenge
Accepts adult support	1	2	1	5	Less likely to accept adult support
(M) Behaviour is less predictable	6	4	7	2	Behaviour is completely predictable
(R) Can interact socially on others' terms	7	6	1	6	Social interaction is only on own terms
(M) Driven by emotional experiences	2	1	7	1	Better equipped to 'block out' emotional responses
Make better academic progress	7	6	1	6	Academic progress inhibited [by emotions and Behaviour]
(M) Can be outwardly aggressive	7	2	4	1	Aggression can be inflicted on self
Able to talk about problems	3	5	4	2	Less able to discuss weaknesses
(M) Heavily influenced by siblings	2	6	4	2	Difficulties exacerbated by lack of siblings
(M) Difficulties have been influenced by the absence of one parent	7	2	4	1	Needs would be greater without the consistency of a parent
<b>Mean ratings</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>	

**APPENDIX 5: SPECIALIST KS3 ESD/PTS' REPERTORY GRIDS, (PRE INSET, SHOWING PREFERRED POLES OF CONSTRUCTS TO THE LEFT)**

N.b. In order to make comparison feasible, constructs are all represented with the 'positive' (or 'preferred') side of the construct on the left. Some constructs (and their ratings) have therefore been reversed to reflect this and are denoted by (R). Where participants were unable to identify a 'positive' pole of a construct, (M) has been used to denote this ('mid-point preferred'). Ratings reflect a 1 to 7 scale, with the lower score representing the positive (left-hand) pole of the construct. Hence, lower scores denote a more 'positive' view, with a closer association to the left-hand poles of the constructs.

<b>ESBD/PT 1</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Able to get on in a lesson	2	7	2	7	Doesn't get on (predictably)
(R) Able to get help	2	5	1	4	Negative self-image
(R) Predictable	2	7	1	6	Very unpredictable
(R) Less extreme gap	6	2	3	1	Big discrepancy between ability and attainment
Even keel	4	7	2	6	Mood swings
(R) Don't come up against behaviour management systems	1	1	1	7	Come up against behaviour management systems
(R) Conformist	2	6	1	6	Erratic behaviour
(R) Not an obvious problem in a learning situation	1	6	2	7	Difficult to manage
<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>5.5</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 2</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
(R) Approaches adults and peers for help in difficult situations	7	6	2	3	Let things get out of control
Can talk on an adult level	7	4	1	7	Adults have to try to engage them in adult conversation
Will show extreme emotions	5	7	3	1	Will not show emotions (but have deep emotions)
(R) Will face fears and challenges	7	6	1	7	Want to walk away from difficult situations
Can think in longer term	3	7	1	6	Focused on the here and now – little regard for circumstances
(R) Holds hands up to behaviour	6	7	1	5	In denial about own behaviour
(R) Talks to adults and peers	7	7	2	6	Bottles up emotions
(R) Small, close, tight-knit group of peers who respect each other	7	6	2	6	Isolated from peers
(R) Easy to talk to, able to make friends	7	7	1	1	Social communication difficulties
<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 3</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
(R) Confident	6	6	3	7	Low self-esteem
Good social skills with peers	6	5	2	5	Not good social skills with peers
(R) Knows when to move self from situation	2	5	1	6	Let things spiral out of control
Motivated by school work	5	6	2	7	Not well motivated by school work
Like being in school	6	4	2	2	Doesn't like being in school
Co-operative with teachers	4	6	1	7	Co-operation depends on mood
(R) Leaves difficult situations	2	6	1	7	Argue with teachers if they think they're right
(R) Seeks adult to calm down (uses time out systems)	1	7	1	7	Enjoy the attention involved in conflict
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 4</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
(R) Compliant to authority	4	6	1	6	Question authority
Highly intelligent	5	5	1	6	Thinks is highly intelligent
(R) Can be persuaded	4	4	1	7	Will say 'no' and not move
Able to hold a discussion	1	3	1	6	Monosyllabic
(R) Settled home background	6	5	1	7	Breakdown of family marriage
(R) Loving and strong parent/child relationship	6	3	1	7	Refer a lot to absent father
(R) Good self-esteem	3	4	3	7	Incredibly low self-esteem
Can recover from an outburst	3	4	1	7	Can't recover from an outburst (during that school day)
(R) Tries to diffuse confrontation	4	7	1	7	Extends confrontation
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>6.7</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 5</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
(R) More positive view of self	6	6	2	7	Problems regarding self-worth
(R) Willing to take risks with learning	5	5	2	6	Expecting to fail
(R) More easy going when stretched	5	6	2	7	React negatively when feel may fail
(R) More compliant with teachers	4	5	2	7	Severe difficulties re compliance with teachers
(R) Can talk through difficulties	5	5	2	7	'closed door', doesn't buy in to positives about school
Positive outlook	6	5	1	7	Negative outlook
Amenable	4	5	2	7	Sets out to undermine
Easier to work with	4	5	2	7	How do you get a way in?
(R) Less likely to appear arrogant	3	5	3	7	Can look arrogant
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>6.9</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 6</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
High ability	5	6	2	4	Less able
Good self-confidence and self-esteem	6	5	1	5	Lacking in confidence/self-esteem
(R) Compliant and considerate	1	6	1	6	Confrontational
(R) Can empathise	2	6	1	5	Inward looking, selfish
Quiet	1	6	2	6	Outspoken/rude
Behaviour more consistent	2	7	2	6	Behaviour more erratic
(R) Greater regard and respect	3	7	1	6	Lack respect (of adults, peers and school)
(R) Better organised	3	6	1	5	Disorganised
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 7</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Will accept help for needs	3	2	6	6	Doesn't easily see the need for help
(R) Has two supportive parents	4	6	1	7	Have strong supportive mums, but lack supportive fathers
Centre of a large group of friends	6	5	1	3	Struggles with friendships
Confident	5	6	1	1	Quieter, nervous
Presents as a strong character	5	6	1	1	Presents as a needy character
Make a name for self by achieving and being popular	5	4	1	6	Makes a name for self by being 'different' (i.e. getting into trouble)
Loud, commands an audience	6	6	2	1	Doesn't hold/command a group
Definite, specific interests	3	3	1	7	General interests ('having fun')
(R) Approaches tasks in a linear, methodical manner	3	2	2	6	Chaotic approach
<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 8</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
(R) Likes to work independently	1	5	2	7	Likes adult support for working
Likes to be special	2	2	6	4	Wants to be same as everyone else
Public praise motivates	4	2	1	7	Open praise can cause an outburst
Feels safe in regular classroom	4	2	1	7	Needs small group/known adult to feel safe
(R) Lots of adult attention and stimulation	5	3	1	7	Lack of adult attention in home background
Has aspirations	5	3	1	7	Few aspirations
Experiences routine/structure in home life	6	4	1	7	Little routine/structure in home life
Can be successful in mainstream school	4	4	1	7	Need a lot more support to avoid exclusion
Wants to please trusted adults	5	2	1	6	Can't access adult support or build relationships easily
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>6.6</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 9</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Family better off financially and more emotionally secure	5	5	1	4	Families have difficulties
Positive relationships with adults	1	4	1	6	Relationships are a minefield
Seek help	1	6	1	7	Don't seek help/support
Has stable, long-term relationships	2	7	1	7	Fall out with peers a lot
High flying	4	7	1	7	Difficulties in accessing curriculum
(R) Non-aggressive, calm	1	4	1	7	Aggressive
Articulate	4	7	1	7	Not very articulate
Is not friendless	1	7	1	7	Struggles to keep a friend
Can sustain concentration	1	6	1	4	Easily distracted
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 10</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Amenable	5	2	1	7	Can be awkward
Appear to have friendships	6	2	1	7	Bit of a loner
Never shows aggression	5	1	1	7	Aggressive
Accepts help	4	1	1	7	Won't accept help
Accepts being reprimanded	4	2	1	7	Can get stroppy
Truthful	5	3	1	7	Twists things (to suit self)
Doesn't like help at all	5	6	4	1	Needy child
Likes praise	2	1	1	7	Doesn't like to be singled out
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	

**APPENDIX 6: GENERAL TEACHERS' REPERTORY GRIDS (PREFERRED POLES SHOWN ON LEFT HAND SIDE)**

N.b. In order to make comparison feasible, constructs are all represented with the 'preferred' pole of the construct on the left. Some constructs (and their ratings) have therefore been reversed to reflect this and are denoted by (R). Where participants were unable to identify a 'preferred' pole of a construct, (M) has been used to denote this ('mid-point preferred'). Ratings reflect a 1 to 7 scale, with the lower score representing the preferred (left-hand) pole of the construct.

<b>GT 1</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Integrates with others (R)	6	6	2	3	Tends to distance self (from others)
Will attempt anything set	2	5	1	6	Can be reluctant to try
Confident (R)	5	5	2	6	Has low self esteem
Wants to try to please teachers	2	3	2	6	Not bothered how teachers see them
Tries to get on with anyone (R)	5	5	1	7	Can become involved with conflict with other students
More able to regulate own behaviour (R)	3	3	1	7	Not good at controlling temper
Problems can be sorted out by talking and listening	2	3	1	6	Doesn't want to listen to what teacher has to say
Works to best of ability	1	5	1	6	Could achieve more
<b>Mean of ratings</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>5.9</b>	

<b>GT 2</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Capable with learning (R)	5	7	2	6	Struggles with learning
Confident (R)	4	5	1	6	Has lack of confidence
Is willing to interact but can wait (R)	1	7	2	6	Is attention-seeking
Is calm (R)	1	7	2	5	Has tantrums
Doesn't have outbursts	1	7	2	4	Has outbursts
Independently tries to best of ability	1	7	1	6	Needs attention checking (to try to best of ability)
Capable of working independently (R)	4	7	1	6	Needs one-to-one attention
Responds to calmness	1	7	1	3	Responds to firmness
<b>Mean ratings</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	

<b>GT 3</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Happy to get on, confident in own ability (R)	7	7	2	5	Is demanding of teacher's time due to lack of confidence
Can withdraw from peers	1	7	2	5	Is centre of attention
Has a strength in art	6	6	1	1	Struggles with most subjects
Shows emotion through tears	6	6	2	7	Shows emotion through anger
Wants 'mothering' type reassurance	4	1	1	7	Wants to be as far away as possible
Will talk to adults when things go wrong (R)	5	6	1	5	Gets verbally aggressive when things go wrong
Will try to explain his/her differences with work (eg homework)	7	4	1	2	Panics about punishment and doesn't explain difficulties with work
Takes changes of staff in his/her stride (R)	2	7	2	7	Has an inability to cope with changes in school staff (supply)
Has large friendship groups	7	1	2	1	Is a loner
Is admired by others in school	7	2	4	2	Is seen as a child no-one wants to be
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	

<b>GT 4</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Quiet and calm	1	5	1	7	Challenging, 'in your face'
Seeks support (R)	4	6	1	7	Not good at asking for help and support
Calm (R)	1	6	1	7	Aggressively challenging
Has manners (R)	1	7	1	7	Has no manners
Looks after equipment, is organised (R)	4	7	1	7	Is not organised
Tries to follow instructions in school	3	6	1	7	Is difficult to get them to do work
Responds to praise in a good way	2	4	1	7	On the surface, shrugs off praise
Demands attention (M)	5	2	4	1	Doesn't seek attention (as often as s/he should)
Has an open, supportive friendship group	3	4	1	6	Is arrogant – others are frightened [of him/her]
Literacy is ok (R)	3	6	1	7	Struggles with literacy which affects behaviour
<b>Mean Scores</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>6.9</b>	

<b>GT 5</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Hardworking (R)	5	5	2	7	Underachieving
Happy	4	7	2	5	Unhappy
Is an individual – stands out (M)	6	1	2	1	Likes to blend in with the crowd
Is a 'pleaser' – likes to have teacher approval	6	2	2	6	Is not interested in adult approval
Is peaceable – tries to keep the peace (R)	2	7	1	7	Has huge problems with anger management
Can construct friendships	2	7	2	4	Cannot always maintain friendships
Is sensitive – is attuned to people	6	7	2	2	Is emotionally illiterate – doesn't pick up signals
Is in control of feelings (R)	3	7	4	6	Cries 'at the drop of a hat'
Wants peer approval	2	1	6	2	Wants adult approval
Has a happy, stable home background	4	5	2	5	Has problems at home
Doesn't comfort eat (R)	5	3	1	7	Comfort eats
Is imaginative and shares ideas	7	4	1	2	Doesn't want to communicate
Is self-assured and relaxed	3	7	2	6	Has low self-esteem
Seems to enjoy confrontation (M)	5	2	4	1	Wants to 'keep head down'
Is concerned about doing well at school	4	3	1	6	Is concerned about social and emotional life at school
Is physically violent (M)	4	1	6	1	Is passive-aggressive
Is street-wise and grown-up (M)	2	6	3	2	Is childish
Attention seeks (M)	6	1	4	1	Avoids attention
<b>Mean score</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>5.0</b>	

<b>GT 6</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Socially aware (R)	5	6	2	6	Finds it hard to mix
Has a settled home background	3	7	1	7	Personal background leads to being more needy
Likely to stay calm if challenged (R)	1	6	3	7	Likely to have an outburst if challenged
Accepts responsibility for own actions (R)	2	5	2	6	Likely to deny responsibility for own actions
More mature	2	5	2	6	Immature
Doesn't need extra attention	2	7	2	7	Attention seeking
Sits quietly in class	1	3	1	6	Doesn't sit quietly in class
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>6.4</b>	

<b>GT 7</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Is on top of things	6	5	2	3	Vulnerable and insecure
Middle Ability (M)	6	4	5	3	Higher ability
Compliant (R)	3	5	1	6	Volatile
Tries hard, makes effort	4	5	2	6	Doesn't try hard – only makes effort under duress
Will strike up a conversation	5	2	6	2	Has to be brought into conversation
Punctual	2	5	2	4	Is late
Has a 'reputation', gets singled out (M)	6	1	6	2	Blends in, doesn't stand out
Instantly gets angry	3	4	6	1	Anger builds up
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>	

<b>GT 8</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
More accepting of wider picture [re authority] (R)	4	5	1	7	Can be hostile to authority figures
Non-compliant (M)	3	2	7	1	Compliant
Has potential to achieve	3	5	1	4	Elements of personality hold back achievement
Has centred, balanced viewpoint (R)	6	6	1	7	Has low self-esteem
Confident	6	6	1	6	Is less confident
Behaviour fits better with school behaviour policies (R)	6	6	1	7	Behaviour leads into disciplinary issues
Can leave unattended (R)	6	6	2	7	Can't leave unattended
Behaviour and attitude can be improved by rapport building in general school environment	1	1	1	6	Needs one-to-one rapport building but not in general school environment
Enjoys some aspects of school	5	6	1	3	Enjoys no aspects of school
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	

<b>GT 9</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Better behaved	6	1	1	6	Disruptive
Has higher intelligence	4	7	1	2	Is lower ability
Has high concentration level (R)	6	5	1	5	Has poor concentration level
Takes part in extra-curricular activities	7	3	1	7	Doesn't take part in extra-curricular activities
Can be manipulative (R)	6	1	1	7	Is not manipulative
Has good co-ordination	4	7	1	2	Has poor co-ordination
Is very organised (R)	6	7	1	5	Is disorganized
Has a large friendship group	6	7	1	2	Is a loner
Understands the importance of authority (R)	6	2	1	7	Finds it difficult to accept authority
Is an independent learner (R)	6	7	1	3	Needs a lot of one-to-one support
Is punctual	5	2	1	6	Has problems with time-keeping
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>4.7</b>	

<b>GT 10</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Has good behaviours	3	6	2	7	Is demanding
Is quieter (M)	2	6	4	7	Is more vocal
Is more self-motivated (R)	3	6	2	6	Is demanding of teacher time
Is confident	5	5	2	2	Unsure, lacking in confidence
Achieves academically	2	5	1	7	Doesn't achieve academically
Has a friendship group (R)	6	3	1	6	Doesn't have friends
Has a small friendship group (R)	6	3	1	6	Not readily accepted by others
Arouses an empathic response (R)	3	6	1	7	Is frustrating to teach
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>5.9</b>	

**APPENDIX 7: EPs' CONSTRUCTS PRESENTED WITHIN CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES (BY ORDER OF FREQUENCY).**

Participant reference	<b>Emotional State</b> (20 constructs; 9 participants represented)
1.2	Frightened / Self assured and comfortable
2.6	Self-harms / Doesn't self-harm
3.1	Finds it hard to talk about negative emotions / Can't address negative emotions
3.4	Has more observable anxiety / Has ambiguous behaviour signs
3.6	Can present a vulnerable side / Doesn't present a vulnerable side
4.2	Vulnerable, needs support / Resilient, independent
6.5	Depressed / Happy
6.12	Strong temper / Peaceful
7.3	Can show hostility / Not hostile
7.6	Anxious / Confident
7.9	Have no problems expressing self (emotionally) / Has problems expressing self (emotionally)
7.11	Has low self-esteem / Finds it hard to read situations
7.12	Has difficulties in being aware of own emotions / Very aware of own emotions – but gets overwhelmed
7.13	Emotionally immature / Fairly good understanding and maturity
8.5	Severe mental health issues / Emotionally robust
8.12	Has a healthy body image / Has a distorted body image
9.5	Has a less emotional presentation / Has high emotional expression and symptomology
9.13	Manipulates social relationships / Is emotionally contained, controls own feelings
9.17	Can mask anxieties and fears / Makes needs overtly known [inappropriately]
10.8	Is driven by emotional experiences / Is better equipped to 'block out' emotional responses

Participant reference	<b>Ability / Attainment</b> (12 constructs; 7 participants represented)
2.2	Higher achiever / Has lots of difficulties
2.4	High achieving in literacy / Has difficulties with literacy
4.5	Able / Has learning difficulties
5.4	On SEN record / Not on SEN record
5.6	Developmentally, at an exploratory play stage / At an acquiring information stage
5.7	Needs support to access curriculum / Can engage in the classroom
6.8	Struggling / Gifted
8.2	Reasonably high achieving / Low achieving
8.6	Bright / Not bright
8.8	Successful at school [academically] / Not successful at school [academically]
9.11	Academically achieving / Has reduced skills in approaching learning tasks
10.9	Makes better academic progress / Academic progress is inhibited [by emotions and behaviour]

Participant reference	<b>Peer relationships</b> (11 constructs; 7 participants represented)
3.7	Very dominant over peers (effectively) / Sets self up to be physically dominated
3.8	More inquisitive of adults / Interested in peers
5.5	Need support re peer relationships / Secure friendships
6.1	Bullied / Not bullied
6.7	Popular / Unpopular
7.8	Respectful to peers / Difficulties with social relationships with peers
8.9	Popular with peers / Not popular with peers
9.3	Is less dependent on peer group / Is more likely to want close proximity of friends
9.4	Is less manipulative / Is more controlling of peer group
9.14	Has problems initiating and sustaining relationships / Has higher levels of skills initiating and maintaining positive relationships
10.4	Has competent social interactions with peers / Interacting socially with peers is a big challenge

Participant reference	<b>Approach to Learning</b> (10 constructs; 7 participants represented)
1.6	Doesn't believe can learn / Completely confident will make progress
2.1	Gets on with things / Frustrated
4.3	Needs high level of adult intervention / Self-sufficient, independent learner
5.1	Requires more teacher time and attention / More self-sufficient
6.11	Can use initiative / Dependent
6.13	Visual learner / Kinaesthetic learner
6.16	Hardworking / Disinterested
9.2	Is more able to problem-solve / Is more likely to need reassurance
9.8	Has high levels of concentration / Has attention difficulties
10.3	Is able to access learning effectively / Finds it difficult to access learning

Participant reference	<b>Personal Attributes</b> (7 constructs; 2 participants represented)
1.5	Likeable / Difficult to reach , unresponsive
6.2	Creative / Not creative
6.3	Confident / Not confident
6.6	Unfortunate / Lucky
6.14	Manipulative / Acts unconsciously (reactive)
6.15	Kind / spiteful
6.17	Likes having fun / Serious

Participant reference	<b>Self Awareness / Reflection</b> (6 constructs; 5 participants represented)
1.3	Uninhibited / More thoughtful
4.4	Finds it hard to articulate feelings / Can talk about feelings
7.5	Doesn't have understanding of own needs / understands when needs help
7.7	Disproportionate reactions / Measured reactions
9.10	Is more emotionally literate / Has reduced emotional literacy skills
10.11	Is able to talk about problems / Is less able to discuss weaknesses

Participant reference	<b>Social Skills</b> (6 constructs; 5 participants represented)
1.4	Says things to hurt / Wouldn't say hurtful things, sensitive
4.7	Needs support with developing social skills / Reluctant to show social skills
7.1	Wants to take control of social situations / Doesn't try to take control of social situations
7.4	Polite / Doesn't feel that social niceties are important
9.9	Has more positive social skills / Social skills fluctuate
10.7	Social interaction is only on own terms / Can interact socially on others' terms

Participant reference	<b>Relationships with adults in school</b> (6 constructs; 6 participants represented)
3.3	Can elicit a nurturing response / Elicits frustration
4.6	Likes adult company / Shy with adults
7.2	Engenders feelings of anger from adults / Staff feel positive towards them
8.10	Has good relationships with teachers / Has less satisfactory relationships with teachers
9.20	Teacher has a more positive, interactive relationship / Teacher has a more negative relationship
10.1	Is able to interact appropriately with adults / Finds it difficult to interact appropriately with adults

Participant reference	<b>Family Issues</b> (6 constructs; 4 participants represented)
5.8	Home context factors contributory to difficulties / home context factors not contributory to any difficulties
6.10	Well presented / unkempt
8.3	Fathers have a negative influence on life / Fathers have a positive influence on life
8.11	Accommodated away from home / Living at home
10.12	Is heavily influenced by siblings / Difficulties are exacerbated by lack of siblings
10.13	Difficulties have been influenced by the absence of one parent / Needs would be greater without the consistency of a parent

Participant reference	<b>Self-control</b> (5 constructs; 4 participants represented)
1.7	Volatile / Excessively controlled
1.8	Controlling (of others) / Reactive responses
4.1	Less obvious in classroom, more compliant / More obvious, disruptive
9.16	Responds to provocation / Has a greater degree of mind-mindedness
10.2	Lacks self-control / Has a high level of self-control
Participant reference	<b>Communication</b> (4 constructs; 2 participants represented)
2.3	Has speech and language difficulties / Very articulate
2.5	Has difficulties in understanding spoken language / Has age-appropriate language
2.7	Difficulties in understanding and use of language / Difficulties with abstract concepts
9.18	Can express needs verbally / Expresses needs non-verbally
Participant reference	<b>Seeking Support</b> (3 constructs; 2 participants represented)
9.1	Has high levels of independence [re school work] / Has high reliance on adults [re school work]
9.7	Is less reliant on teacher / Is more reliant on teacher
10.5	Accepts adult support / Is less likely to accept adult support
Participant reference	<b>Aggression</b> (3 constructs; 3 participants represented)
6.4	Aggressive / Calm
9.19	Physically aggressive / Reduced levels of physical aggression
10.10	Can be outwardly aggressive / Aggression can be inflicted on self
Participant reference	<b>Conformity / Compliance</b> (2 constructs; 2 participants represented)
1.1	Keen to please / Not keen to please
7.10	Realises there are boundaries / Boundaries are irrelevant
Participant reference	<b>Coping with Conflict</b> (2 constructs; 2 participants represented)
4.8	Anger flares up quickly (and is obvious) / Doesn't show anger
9.6	Has calm and controlled behaviour / Has more overt expression of needs [acting-out behaviour].
Participant reference	<b>Self Belief</b> (2 constructs; 2 participants represented)
5.3	Shy / Fairly confident
9.15	Is more vulnerable and susceptible to adult criticism and expectations / Is able to manage expectations
Participant reference	<b>Predictability</b> (2 constructs; 2 participants represented)
6.9	Unpredictable / Is the same in different situations
10.6	Behaviour is less predictable / Behaviour is completely predictable
Participant reference	<b>School Management Issues</b> (2 constructs; 1 participant represented)
8.1	Difficult to manage / Easy to manage
8.4	Requires a statement / Doesn't require a statement

<b>Single Category Constructs</b>	
Participant reference	<b>Attachment Issues</b>
3.2	Controlling of mother / Not controlling of mother
Participant reference	<b>Consideration of a Longer Term View</b>
3.5	No vision of the future / Has clear vision of the future
Participant reference	<b>Impact on Teacher</b>
5.2	Requires teacher resilience / Easily provided for by teacher
Participant reference	<b>Attention Seeking</b>
9.12	Is attention-seeking / Is more secure in functioning independently
Participant reference	<b>Humour</b>
8.7	Likes a laugh / no sense of humour

**APPENDIX 8: ESD/PTS' CONSTRUCTS PRESENTED WITHIN CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES BY ORDER OF FREQUENCY.**

Participant reference	Emotional state (10 constructs; 8 participants represented)
T1.5	Even keel / Mood swings
T2.3	Will show extreme emotions/ Will not show emotions (but have deep emotions)
T2.7	Bottles up emotions/ talks to adults and peers
T5.3	Reacts negatively when feels may fail/ more easy going when stretched
T6.4	Inward looking, selfish/ Can empathise
T7.4	Confident/ Quieter, nervous
T8.4	Feels safe in regular classroom/ needs small group and/or known adult to feel safe
T9.6	Aggressive/ Non-aggressive, calm
T10.3	Never shows aggression/ Aggressive
T10.6	Truthful / Twists things (to suit self)

Participant reference	Conformity and compliance (8 constructs; 5 participants represented)
T1.7	Erratic behaviour/ Conformist
T1.8	Difficult to manage / Not an obvious problem in a learning situation
T4.1	Question authority/ Compliant to authority
T5.4	Severe difficulties re compliance with teachers/ More compliant with teachers
T5.7	Amenable/ Sets out to undermine
T6.3	Confrontational / Compliant and considerate
T10.1	Amenable/ Can be awkward
T10.5	Accepts being reprimanded / Can get stropky

Participant Reference	Peer relationships (7 constructs; 5 participants represented)
T2.8	Isolated from peers/ Small, close, tight-knit group of peers who respect each other
T3.2	Good social skills with peers/ Not good social skills with peers
T7.3	Centre of a large group of friends/ Struggles with friendships
T7.7	Loud, commands an audience/ Doesn't hold/command a group
T9.4	Has stable, long-term relationships/ Fall out with peers a lot
T9.8	Is not friendless/ Struggles to keep a friend
T10.2	Appear to have friendships/ Bit of a loner

Participant Reference	Coping with conflict (6 constructs; 3 participants represented)
T2.4	Want to walk away from difficult situations/ Will face fears and challenges
T3.3	Let things spiral out of control/ Knows when to move self from situation
T3.7	Argue with teachers if they think they're right/ Leaves difficult situations
T3.8	Enjoy the attention involved in conflict/ Seeks adult to calm down (uses time out systems)
T4.8	Can recover from an outburst/ Can't recover from an outburst (during that school day)
T4.9	Extends confrontation/ Tries to diffuse confrontation

Participant Reference	Relationship with adults in school (6 constructs; 6 participants)
T2.2	Can talk on an adult level / Adults have to try to engage them in adult conversation
T3.6	Co-operative with teachers/ Co-operation depends on mood
T4.3	Will say 'no' and not move / Can be persuaded
T5.8	Easier to work with/ How do you get a way in?
T8.9	Wants to please trusted adults / Can't access adult support or build relationships easily
T9.2	Positive relationships with adults/ Relationships are a minefield

Participant Reference	Approach to learning (6 constructs; 6 participants represented)
T1.1	Able to get on in a lesson/ Doesn't get on (predictably)
T3.4	Motivated by school work/ Not well motivated by school work
T5.2	Expecting to fail/ Willing to take risks with learning
T7.9	Chaotic approach/ approaches tasks in a linear, methodical manner
T8.1	Likes adult support for working/ likes to work independently
T9.9	Can sustain concentration/ Easily distracted

Participant Reference	Family issues (6 constructs; 4 participants represented)
T4.5	Breakdown of family marriage/ Settled home background
T4.6	Refer a lot to absent father/ Loving and strong parent/child relationship
T7.2	Have strong supportive mums, but lack supportive fathers/ Has two supportive parents
T8.5	Lack of adult attention in home background/ Lots of adult attention and stimulation
T8.7	Experiences routine/structure in home life/ Little routine/structure in home life
T9.1	Family better off financially and more emotionally secure/ Families have difficulties

Participant Reference	Communication (5 constructs; 5 participants represented)
T2.9	Social communication difficulties/ Easy to talk to, able to make friends
T4.4	Able to hold a discussion/ Monosyllabic
T5.5	'closed door', doesn't buy into positives about school / Can talk through difficulties
T6.5	Quiet/ Outspoken and rude
T9.7	Articulate/ Not very articulate

Participant Reference	Seeking support (5 constructs; 4 participants represented)
T2.1	Lets things get out of control / Approaches adults and peers for help in difficult situations
T7.1	Will accept help for needs/ Doesn't easily see the need for help
T9.3	Seeks help / Doesn't seek help or support
T10.4	Accepts help/ Won't accept help
T10.7	Doesn't like help at all/ Needy child

Participant Reference	Self Belief (5 constructs; 5 participants represented)
T1.2	Negative self-image/ Able to get help
T3.1	Low self-esteem/ Confident
T4.7	Incredibly low self-esteem/ Good self-esteem
T5.1	Problems regarding self-worth/ More positive view of self
T6.2	Good self-confidence and self-esteem/ Lacking in confidence/self-esteem

Participant Reference	Ability (4 constructs; 4 participants represented)
T1.4	Big discrepancy between ability and attainment/ Less extreme gap
T4.2	Highly intelligent / thinks is highly intelligent
T6.1	High ability/ Less able
T9.5	High flying/ Difficulties in accessing curriculum

Participant Reference	Developing Identity (4 constructs; 2 participants represented)
T7.5	Presents as a strong character / Presents as a needy character
T7.6	Make a name for self by achieving and being popular/ Makes a name for self by being 'different' (i.e. getting into trouble)
T7.8	Definite, specific interests / General interests ('having fun')
T8.2	Likes to be special / Wants to be the same as everyone else

Participant Reference	<b>Response to Praise</b> (2 constructs; 2 participants represented)
T8.3	Public praise motivates/ Open praise can cause an outburst
T10.8	Likes praise/ Doesn't like to be singled out

Participant Reference	<b>Predictability</b> (2 constructs; 2 participants represented)
T1.3	Very unpredictable/ Predictable
T6.6	Behaviour more consistent/ Behaviour more erratic

Participant Reference	<b>School Management Issues</b> (2 constructs; 2 participants represented)
T1.6	Come up against behaviour management systems/ Don't come up against behaviour management systems
T8.8	Can be successful in mainstream school/ Need a lot more support to avoid exclusion

Participant Reference	<b>Consideration of a longer term view</b> (2 constructs; 2 participants represented)
T2.5	Can think in the longer term / Focused on the here and now – little regard for circumstances
T8.6	Has aspirations / Few aspirations

<b>Categories with single content</b>	
Participant Reference	<b>Organisation</b>
T6.8	Disorganised/ Better organised
	Liking for school
T3.5	Like being in school/ Doesn't like being in school
	<b>Personal responsibility</b>
T2.6	In denial about own behaviour/ Holds hands up to behaviour
	Arrogance
T5.9	Can look arrogant/ Less likely to appear arrogant
	<b>Optimism/Pessimism</b>
T5.6	Positive outlook/ Negative outlook
	Respect
T6.7	Lack respect (of adults, peers and school)/ Greater regard and respect

## APPENDIX 9: GENERAL TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTS BY CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORY IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY

<b>PEER RELATIONSHIPS</b>	
1.5	Tries to get on with anyone/ Can become involved with conflict with other students
3.2	Can withdraw from peers/ Is centre of attention
3.9	Has large friendship groups/ Is a loner
3.10	Is admired by others in school/ Is seen as a child no-one wants to be
4.9	Has an open, supportive friendship group/ Is arrogant – others are frightened [of him/her]
5.6	Can construct friendships/ Cannot always maintain friendships
9.8	Has a large friendship group/ Is a loner
10.6	Has a friendship group/ Doesn't have friends
10.7	Has a small friendship group/ Not readily accepted by others

<b>EMOTIONAL STATE</b>	
2.4	Is calm/ Has tantrums
2.5	Doesn't have outbursts/ Has outbursts
3.8	Takes changes of staff in his/her stride/ Has an inability to cope with changes in school staff (supply)
4.1	Quiet and calm/ Challenging, 'in your face'
5.2	Happy/ Unhappy
5.8	Is in control of feelings/ Cries 'at the drop of a hat'
5.9	Wants peer approval/ Wants adult approval
5.13	Is self-assured and relaxed/ Has low self-esteem

<b>APPROACH TO LEARNING</b>	
1.2	Will attempt anything set/ Can be reluctant to try
1.8	Works to best of ability/ Could achieve more
2.6	Independently tries to best of ability/ Needs attention checking (to try to best of ability)
5.1	Hardworking/ Underachieving
5.15	Is concerned about doing well at school/ Is concerned about social and emotional life at school
7.4	Tries hard, makes an effort/ Doesn't try hard – only makes effort under duress
9.3	Has high concentration level/ Has poor concentration level
9.10	Is an independent learner/ Needs a lot of one-to-one attention

<b>ABILITY AND ATTAINMENT</b>	
2.1	Capable with learning/ Struggles with learning
3.1	Happy to get on, confident in own ability/ Is demanding of teacher's time due to lack of confidence
3.3	Has a strength in art/ Struggles with most subjects
4.10	Literacy is ok/ Struggles with literacy which affects behaviour
7.2	Middle ability/ Higher ability
8.3	Has potential to achieve/ Elements of personality hold back achievement
9.2	Has higher intelligence/ Is lower ability
10.5	Achieves academically/ Doesn't achieve academically

<b>COPING WITH CONFLICT</b>	
1.7	Problems can be sorted out by talking and listening/ Doesn't want to listen to what teacher has to say
3.4	Shows emotion through tears/ Shows emotion through anger
3.6	Will talk to adults when things go wrong/ Gets verbally aggressive when things go wrong
5.5	Is peaceable – tries to keep the peace/ Has huge problems with anger management
5.14	Seems to enjoy confrontation/ Wants to 'keep head down'
5.16	Is physically violent/ Is passive-aggressive
7.8	Instantly gets angry/ Anger builds up
8.1	More accepting of wider picture [re authority]/ Can be hostile to authority figures

<b>CONFORMITY AND COMPLIANCE</b>	
4.6	Tries to follow instructions in school/ Is difficult to get them to do work
6.7	Sits quietly in class/ Doesn't sit quietly in class
7.3	Compliant/ Volatile
8.2	Non-compliant/ Compliant
9.1	Better behaved/ Disruptive
10.1	Has good behaviours/ Is demanding

<b>SELF BELIEF</b>	
1.3	Confident/ Has low self esteem
2.2	Confident/ Has lack of confidence
8.4	Has centred, balanced viewpoint/ Has low self-esteem
8.5	Confident/ Is less confident
10.4	Is confident/ Unsure, lacking in confidence

<b>ATTENTION SEEKING</b>	
2.3	Is willing to interact but can wait/ Is attention-seeking
2.7	Capable of working independently/ Needs one-to-one attention
4.8	Demands attention/ Doesn't seek attention (as often as s/he should)
5.18	Attention seeks/ Avoids attention
6.6	Doesn't need extra attention/ Attention seeking

<b>SEEKING SUPPORT</b>	
2.8	Responds to calmness/ Responds to firmness
3.5	Wants 'mothering' type reassurance/ Wants to be as far away as possible
3.7	Will try to explain his/her differences with work (eg homework)/ Panics about punishment and doesn't explain difficulties with work
4.2	Seeks support/ Not good at asking for help and support
8.8	Behaviour and attitude can be improved by rapport building in general school environment/ Needs one-to-one rapport building but not in general school environment

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	
4.5	Looks after equipment, is organized/ Is not organised
7.1	Is on top of things/ Vulnerable and insecure
7.6	Punctual/ Is late
9.7	Is very organized/ Is disorganised
9.11	Is punctual/ Has problems with time-keeping

<b>SOCIAL SKILLS</b>	
1.1	Integrates with others/ Tends to distance self (from others)
4.4	Has manners/ Has no manners
5.7	Is sensitive – is attuned to people/ Is emotionally illiterate – doesn't pick up signals
6.1	Socially aware/ Finds it hard to mix

<b>SELF CONTROL</b>	
1.6	More able to regulate own behaviour/ Not good at controlling temper
5.11	Doesn't comfort eat/ Comfort eats
6.3	Likely to stay calm if challenged/ Likely to have an outburst if challenged

<b>DEVELOPING IDENTITY</b>	
5.3	Is an individual – stands out/ Likes to blend in with the crowd
5.17	Is street-wise and grown-up/ Is childish
7.7	Has a 'reputation', gets singled out/ Blends in, doesn't stand out

<b>Communication</b>	
5.12	Is imaginative and shares ideas/ Doesn't want to communicate
7.5	Will strike up a conversation/ Has to be brought into conversation
10.2	Is quieter/ Is more vocal

<b>PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES</b>	
6.5	More mature/ Immature
9.5	Can be manipulative/ Is not manipulative
9.6	Has good co-ordination/ Has poor co-ordination

<b>RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS IN SCHOOL</b>	
1.4	Wants to try to please teachers/ Not bothered how teachers see them
5.4	Is a 'pleaser' – likes to have teacher approval/ Is not interested in adult approval

<b>FAMILY ISSUES</b>	
5.10	Has a happy, stable home background/ Has problems at home
6.2	Has a settled home background/ Personal background leads to being more needy

<b>IMPACT ON TEACHER</b>	
10.3	Is more self-motivated/ Is demanding of teacher time
10.8	Arouses an empathic response/ Is frustrating to teach

<b>LIKING FOR SCHOOL</b>	
8.9	Enjoys some aspects of school/ Enjoys no aspects of school
9.4	Takes part in extra-curricular activities/ Doesn't take part in extra-curricular activities

<b>SINGLE CATEGORY CONSTRUCTS</b>	
<b>PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY</b>	
6.4	Accepts responsibility for own actions/ Likely to deny responsibility for own actions
<b>RESPONSE TO PRAISE</b>	
4.7	Responds to praise in a good way/ On the surface, shrugs off praise
<b>SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ISSUES</b>	
8.6	Behaviour fits better with school behaviour policies/ Behaviour leads into disciplinary issues
<b>PREDICTABILITY</b>	
8.7	Can leave unattended/ Can't leave unattended
<b>AGGRESSION</b>	
4.3	Calm/ Aggressively challenging

**APPENDIX 10 INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EP REPERTORY GRIDS (MID-POINT PREFERRED SCORES NOT INCLUDED)**

	AVOIDANT		AMBIVALENT		SECURE		DISORGANISED	
	Mean	Mode S.Dev	Mean Range	Mode S.Dev	Mean Range	Mode S.Dev	Mean Range	Mode S.Dev
1	4.2 6	2.3 2, 6	4.5 6.0	6 2.4	1.7 2	1 0.8	5.0 5	7 2.1
2	4.3 5	2.3 5, 6	5.7 4	6 1.4	1.5 1	1, 2 0.5	3.2 3	3 0.8
3	5.0 6	2.3 5, 6	3.8 6	Mode 2.3	2.3 3	1, 3 1.2	5.7 5	7 2.0
4	3.7 6	1.2, 7 2.8	4.3 6	7 2.8	1.4 3	1 1.1	6.1 4	7 1.4
5	6.4 3	7 1.1	3.6 4	3 1.4	1.3 1	1 0.5	4.9 4	5 1.2
6	5.0 6	6, 7 2.2	5.3 4	6 1.2	1.6 5	1 1.3	5.3 6	5, 6, 7 1.8
7	5.9 4	6 1.3	4.6 5	6 1.9	1.3 3	1 .9	4.8 4	5, 6 1.4
8	5.6 5	5, 6 1.0	4.0 6	7 2.4	1.3 6	1 .5	3.0 6	1, 7 2.8
9	3.3 6	2 1.7	5.2 5	6 1.4	1.7 3	1 1.2	5.9 3	6 1.1
10	4.8 6	3, 5, 7 2.3	4.8 4	6 1.8	1.4 3	1 1.1	5.4 5	6 1.7

**APPENDIX 11 INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ESB/PTS' REPERTORY GRIDS (MID-POINT PREFERRED SCORES NOT INCLUDED)**

	AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			SECURE			DISORGANISED						
1	Mean Range Mean	2.5 5 6.2	Mode S.Dev Mode	4 1.7 6	Mean Range Mean	5.1 6.0 6.3	Mode S.Dev Mode	7.0 2.4 7	Mean Range Mean	1.6 2 1.6	Mode S.Dev Mode	4 .5 1	Mean Range Mean	5.5 6 4.7	Mode S.Dev Mode	6,7 2.1 6
2	Range Mean	4 4.0	S.Dev Mode	1.4 6	Range Mean	3 5.6	S.Dev Mode	1.0 6	Range Mean	2 1.6	S.Dev Mode	1.2 1	Range Mean	6 6.0	S.Dev Mode	2.4 7
3	Range Mean	5 4.0	S.Dev Mode	2.0 4	Range Mean	3 4.6	S.Dev Mode	.9 4	Range Mean	2 1.2	S.Dev Mode	.7 1	Range Mean	5 6.7	S.Dev Mode	1.8 7
4	Range Mean	5 4.7	S.Dev Mode	1.6 4,5	Range Mean	4 5.2	S.Dev Mode	1.3 5	Range Mean	2 2.0	S.Dev Mode	.7 2	Range Mean	1 6.9	S.Dev Mode	.5 7
5	Range Mean	3 2.9	S.Dev Mode	1.0 1,2,3	Range Mean	1 6.1	S.Dev Mode	.4 Mode	Range Mean	2 1.4	S.Dev Mode	.5 1	Range Mean	1 5.4	S.Dev Mode	.3 6
6	Range Mean	5 4.4	S.Dev Mode	1.8 3,5	Range Mean	2 4.4	S.Dev Mode	.6 6	Range Mean	1 1.8	S.Dev Mode	.5 1	Range Mean	2 4.2	S.Dev Mode	.7 6
7	Range Mean	3 4.0	S.Dev Mode	1.2 4,5	Range Mean	4 3.0	S.Dev Mode	1.7 2	Range Mean	5 1.7	S.Dev Mode	1.6 1	Range Mean	6 6.6	S.Dev Mode	2.7 7
8	Range Mean	4 2.2	S.Dev Mode	1.6 1	Range Mean	3 5.9	S.Dev Mode	1.1 7	Range Mean	5 1.0	S.Dev Mode	1.7 1	Range Mean	3 6.2	S.Dev Mode	1.0 7
9	Range Mean	4 4.4	S.Dev Mode	1.7 5	Range Mean	3 1.7	S.Dev Mode	1.3 1,2	Range Mean	0 1.0	S.Dev Mode	0 1	Range Mean	3 7.0	S.Dev Mode	1.3 7
10	Range	4	S.Dev	1.3	Range	5	S.Dev	.9	Range	0	S.Dev	0	Range	0	S.Dev	0

**APPENDIX 12 INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR GT REPERTORY GRIDS (MID-POINT PREFERRED SCORES NOT INCLUDED)**

	AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			SECURE			DISORGANISED		
	Mean	S.Dev	Mode	Mean	S.Dev	Mode	Mean	S.Dev	Mode	Mean	S.Dev	Mode
1	3.3	1.8	2	4.4	5.0	1.4	1	1.4	1	5.9	6	6
	Range 5	1.8		Range 3.0	1.2	Range 1	.5	Range 1	.5	Range 4	1.2	S.Dev 1.2
2	2.3	1	7	6.8	7	1.5	1,2	Mean 1.5	1,2	Mean 5.3	6	Mode 6
	Range 1	1.8		Range 2	.7	Range 1	.5	Range 1	.5	Range 3	1.2	S.Dev 1.2
3	5.2	7	7	4.7	6,7	1.8	2	Mean 1.8	2	Mean 4.2	5,7	Mode 5,7
	Range 5.2	7		Range 6	2.5	Range 3	.9	Range 3	.9	Range 6	2.5	S.Dev 2.5
4	2.4	1.3	6	5.7	6	1.0	1	Mean 1.0	1	Mean 6.9	7	Mode 7
	Range 3	1.2		Range 3	1.1	Range 0	0	Range 0	0	Range 1	.3	S.Dev .3
5	4.1	2,4	7	5.0	7	2.2	2	Mean 2.2	2	Mean 5.0	6	Mode 6
	Range 5	1.7		Range 6	2.2	Range 5	1.5	Range 5	1.5	Range 5	1.9	S.Dev 1.9
6	2.3	2	2	5.6	5,6,7	1.9	2	Mean 1.9	2	Mean 6.4	6	Mode 6
	Range 4	1.4		Range 4	1.4	Range 2	.7	Range 2	.7	Range 1	.5	S.Dev .5
7	3.8	3	3	4.3	5	3.2	2	Mean 3.2	2	Mean 3.7	5	Mode 5
	Range 4	1.5		Range 3	1.2	Range 5	2.2	Range 5	2.2	Range 5	2.1	S.Dev 2.1
8	4.6	6	6	5.1	6	1.1	1	Mean 1.1	1	Mean 5.9	7	Mode 7
	Range 5	1.8		Range 5	1.7	Range 1	.4	Range 1	.4	Range 4	1.6	S.Dev 1.6
9	6.2	6	6	4.5	7	1	1	Mean 1	1	Mean 4.7	7	Mode 7
	Range 3	1.1		Range 6	2.7	Range 1	0	Range 1	0	Range 5	2.1	S.Dev 2.1
10	4.0	3	3	4.9	6	1.4	1	Mean 1.4	1	Mean 5.9	6,7	Mode 6,7
	Range 4	1.6		Range 3	1.3	Range 1	.5	Range 1	.5	Range 5	1.8	S.Dev 1.8

## APPENDIX 13: TEACHERS' RE-RATED REPERTORY GRIDS, POST IN-SERVICE TRAINING (PREFERRED POLES PRESENTED TO THE LEFT)

N.b. In order to make comparison feasible, constructs are all represented with the 'positive' (or 'preferred') side of the construct on the left. Some constructs (and their ratings) have therefore been reversed to reflect this and are denoted by (R). Where participants were unable to identify a 'positive' pole of a construct, (M) has been used to denote this ('mid-point preferred'). Ratings reflect a 1 to 7 scale, with the lower score representing the positive (left-hand) pole of the construct. Hence, lower scores denote a more 'positive' view, with a closer association to the left-hand poles of the constructs.

<b>EBSD TEACHER 1 (POST)</b>	Avoidant	Ambiv.	Secure	Disorg.	
Able to get on in a lesson	2	7	2	7	Doesn't get on (predictably)
(R)Able to get help	6	5	4	7	Negative self-image
(R) Predictable	2	7	1	7	Very unpredictable
(R) Less extreme gap	6	6	6	7	Big discrepancy between ability and attainment
Even keel	5	7	2	7	Mood swings
(R) Doesn't come up against behaviour management systems	1	7	1	7	Comes up against behaviour management systems
(R) Conformist	1	7	1	7	Erratic behaviour
(R) Not an obvious problem in a learning situation	2	7	2	7	Difficult to manage
<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>7.0</b>	

<b>EBSD TEACHER 2 (Post)</b>	Avoidant	Ambiv.	Secure	Disorg.	
(R) Approaches adults and peers for help in difficult situations	5	7	1	7	Let things get out of control
Can talk on an adult level	6	7	1	2	Adults have to try to engage them in adult conversation
Will show extreme emotions	4	6	4	1	Will not show emotions (but have deep emotions)
(R) Will face fears and challenges	5	7	3	7	Want to walk away from difficult situations
Can think in longer term	5	7	1	4	Focused on the here and now – little regard for circumstances
(R) Holds hands up to behaviour	3	7	1	5	In denial about own behaviour
(R) Talks to adults and peers	5	7	1	3	Bottles up emotions
(R) Small, close, tight-knit group of peers who respect each other	7	7	1	7	Isolated from peers
(R) Easy to talk to, able to make friends	7	7	1	5	Social communication difficulties
<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.6</b>	

<b>EBS D TEACHER 3 (POST)</b>	<b>Avoidant</b>	<b>Ambiv.</b>	<b>Secure</b>	<b>Disorg.</b>	
(R) Confident	6	2	5	2	Low self-esteem
Good social skills with peers	3	5	4	5	Not good social skills with peers
(R) Knows when to move self from situation	4	7	3	7	Let things spiral out of control
Motivated by school work	4	6	2	6	Not well motivated by school work
Like being in school	6	2	2	3	Doesn't like being in school
Co-operative with teachers	3	6	2	7	Co-operation depends on mood
(R) Leaves difficult situations	2	7	3	7	Argue with teachers if they think they're right
(R) Seeks adult to calm down (uses time out systems)	1	7	4	7	Enjoy the attention involved in conflict
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>	

<b>EBS D TEACHER 4 (POST)</b>	<b>Avoidant</b>	<b>Ambiv.</b>	<b>Secure</b>	<b>Disorg.</b>	
(R) Compliant to authority	5	7	1	7	Questions authority
Is highly intelligent	1	5	1	4	Thinks is highly intelligent
(R) Can be persuaded	4	7	1	7	Will say 'no' and not move
Able to hold a discussion	1	1	1	7	Monosyllabic
(R) Settled home background	7	7	1	7	Breakdown of parental marriage/family
(R) Loving and strong parent-child relationship	7	4	1	4	Refer a lot to an absent father
(R) Good self esteem	6	2	2	6	Incredibly low self esteem
Can recover from an outburst	2	7	1	7	Can't recover from an outburst (during that school day)
(R) Tries to diffuse confrontation	4	7	1	7	Extends confrontation
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>6.2</b>	

<b>EBS D TEACHER 5 (POST)</b>	<b>Avoidant</b>	<b>Ambiv.</b>	<b>Secure</b>	<b>Disorg.</b>	
(R) More positive view of self	6	6	1	6	Problems regarding self-worth
(R) Willing to take risks with learning	6	6	1	7	Expecting to fail
(R) More easy going when stretched	6	7	1	7	React negatively when feel may fail
(R) More compliant with teachers	4	6	2	7	Severe difficulties re compliance with teachers
(R) Can talk through difficulties	4	5	1	7	'closed door', doesn't buy in to positives about school
Positive outlook	6	6	1	7	Negative outlook
Amenable	3	5	1	6	Sets out to undermine
Easier to work with	4	5	1	7	How do you get a way in?
(R) Less likely to appear arrogant	2	5	4	6	Can look arrogant
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>6.7</b>	

<b>EBS D TEACHER 6 (Post)</b>	Avoidant	Ambiv.	Secure	Disorg	
High ability	5	6	1	4	Less able
Good self-confidence and self-esteem	5	5	1	6	Lacking in confidence/self-esteem
(R) Compliant and considerate	5	6	1	6	Confrontational
(R) Can empathise	6	6	2	6	Inward looking, selfish
Quiet	5	6	2	6	Outspoken/rude
Behaviour more consistent	6	7	1	6	Behaviour more erratic
(R) Greater regard and respect	7	7	1	7	Lack respect (of adults, peers and school)
(R) Better organised	4	4	1	5	Disorganised
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5.8</b>	

<b>EBS D TEACHER 7 (Post)</b>	Avoidant	Ambiv.	Secure	Disorg.	
Will accept help for needs	5	2	4	7	Doesn't easily see the need for help
(R) Has two supportive parents	7	6	1	7	Has strong supportive mum but lack of supportive dad
Centre of a large group of friends	6	4	1	1	Struggles with friendships
Confident	6	6	1	1	Quieter, nervous
Presents as a strong character	6	6	1	1	Presents as a needy character
Makes a name for self by achieving and being popular	6	4	1	7	Makes a name for self by being 'different' (ie. getting into trouble)
Loud, command audience	4	6	1	1	Doesn't hold, command audience
Has definite, specific interests	2	4	1	7	Has general interest in 'having fun'.
(R) Approaches tasks in a methodical manner	3	3	2	7	Chaotic approach
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>4.3</b>	

<b>EBS D TEACHER 8 (Post)</b>	Avoidant	Ambiv.	Secure	Disorg.	
(R) Likes to work independently	2	6	1	5	Likes adult support for working
Likes to be special	6	2	4	4	Wants to be same as everyone else
Public praise motivates	3	6	1	4	Open praise can cause an outburst
Feels safe in regular classroom	3	6	1	7	Needs small group/known adult to feel safe
(R) Lots of adult attention and stimulation	7	6	1	7	Lack of adult attention in home background
Has aspirations	6	4	1	7	Few aspirations
Experiences routine/structure in home life	6	5	1	7	Little routine/structure in home life
Can be successful in mainstream school	3	3	1	7	Need a lot more support to avoid exclusion
Wants to please trusted adults	6	1	1	4	Can't access adult support or build relationships easily
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	

<b>EBS D TEACHER 9 (Post)</b>	<b>Avoidant</b>	<b>Ambiv.</b>	<b>Secure</b>	<b>Disorg.</b>	
Family better off financially and more emotionally secure	5	6	2	3	Families have difficulties
Positive relationships with adults	1	7	1	7	Relationships are a minefield
Seek help	1	1	1	1	Don't seek help/support
Has stable, long-term relationships	5	7	1	7	Falls out with peers a lot
High flying	5	6	1	7	Difficulties in accessing curriculum
(R) Non aggressive, calm	1	3	1	7	Aggressive
Articulate	1	3	1	7	Not very articulate
Is not friendless	3	7	1	7	Struggles to keep a friend
Can sustain concentration	1	6	1	7	Easily distracted
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	

<b>EBS D TEACHER 10 (Post)</b>	<b>Avoidant</b>	<b>Ambiv.</b>	<b>Secure</b>	<b>Disorg.</b>	
Amenable	5	5	1	7	Can be awkward
Appears to have friendships	7	3	1	6	Bit of a loner
Never shows aggression	5	5	1	7	Aggressive
Accepts help	4	4	1	7	Won't accept help
Accepts being reprimanded	3	3	1	7	Can get stroppy [when reprimanded]
Truthful	4	6	1	6	Twists things (to suit themselves)
Doesn't like help at all (M)	7	5	4	1	Needy child
Likes praise	3	3	1	7	Doesn't like to be singled out
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>6.7</b>	

**APPENDIX 14 INDIVIDUAL PRE-POST DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ESD/PT PARTICIPANTS**

PARTICIPANT	AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			SECURE			DISORGANISED		
	PRE	POST		PRE	POST		PRE	POST		PRE	POST	
1	Mean	2.5	3.1	Mean	5.1	6.6	Mean	1.6	2.4	Mean	5.5	7.0
	Range	4	4	Range	6.0	2	Range	2	5	Range	6	0
	Mode	2	2	Mode	7.0	7	Mode	4	1,2	Mode	6,7	7
2	S.Dev	1.7	2.2	S.Dev	2.4	.7	S.Dev	.5	1.8	S.Dev	2.1	0
	Mean	6.2	5.2	Mean	6.3	6.9	Mean	1.6	1.6	Mean	4.7	4.6
	Range	4	4	Range	3	1	Range	2	3	Range	6	6
3	Mode	6	5	Mode	7	7	Mode	1	1	Mode	6	7
	S.Dev	1.4	1.3	S.Dev	1.0	.3	S.Dev	1.2	1.1	S.Dev	2.4	2.2
	Mean	4.0	3.6	Mean	5.6	4.7	Mean	1.6	2.8	Mean	6.0	4.9
4	Range	5	5	Range	3	5	Range	2	3	Range	5	5
	Mode	6	3,4,6	Mode	6	7	Mode	1	2	Mode	7	7
	S.Dev	2.0	1.8	S.Dev	.9	2.2	S.Dev	.7	1.2	S.Dev	1.8	2.1
5	Mean	4.0	4.1	Mean	4.6	5.2	Mean	1.2	1.1	Mean	6.7	6.2
	Range	5	6	Range	4	6	Range	2	1	Range	1	3
	Mode	4	1,4,7	Mode	4	7	Mode	1	1	Mode	7	7
6	S.Dev	1.6	2.4	S.Dev	1.3	2.4	S.Dev	.7	.3	S.Dev	.5	1.3
	Mean	4.7	4.6	Mean	5.2	5.7	Mean	2.0	1.4	Mean	6.9	6.7
	Range	3	4	Range	1	2	Range	2	1	Range	1	1
7	Mode	4.5	6	Mode	5	5,6	Mode	2	1	Mode	7	7
	S.Dev	1.0	1.5	S.Dev	.4	.7	S.Dev	.5	1.0	S.Dev	.3	.5
	Mean	2.9	5.4	Mean	6.1	5.9	Mean	1.4	1.3	Mean	5.4	5.8
8	Range	5	3	Range	2	3	Range	1	1	Range	2	3
	Mode	1,2,3	5	Mode	6	6	Mode	1	1	Mode	6	6
	S.Dev	1.8	.9	S.Dev	.6	1.0	S.Dev	.5	.5	S.Dev	.7	.8
9	Mean	4.4	5.0	Mean	4.4	4.5	Mean	1.8	1.4	Mean	4.2	4.3
	Range	3	5	Range	4	4	Range	5	3	Range	6	6
	Mode	3,5	6	Mode	6	6	Mode	1	1	Mode	6	5
10	S.Dev	1.2	1.7	S.Dev	1.7	1.5	S.Dev	1.6	1.0	S.Dev	2.7	3.2
	Mean	4.0	4.7	Mean	3.0	4.3	Mean	1.7	2.0	Mean	6.6	5.8
	Range	4	5	Range	3	5	Range	5	3	Range	3	3
11	Mode	4.5	6	Mode	2	6	Mode	1	1	Mode	7	7
	S.Dev	1.6	1.9	S.Dev	1.1	1.9	S.Dev	1.7	1.2	S.Dev	1.0	1.5
	Mean	2.2	2.6	Mean	5.9	5.1	Mean	1.0	1.1	Mean	6.2	5.9
12	Range	4	4	Range	3	6	Range	0	1	Range	3	6
	Mode	1	1	Mode	7	6,7	Mode	1	1	Mode	7	7
	S.Dev	1.7	1.9	S.Dev	1.3	2.2	S.Dev	105.Dev	.3	S.Dev	1.3	2.3
13	Mean	4.4	4.4	Mean	1.7	4.1	Mean	1.0	1.0	Mean	7.0	6.7
	Range	4	4	Range	5	3	Range	0	0	Range	0	1
	Mode	5	3,4,5	Mode	1,2	3	Mode	1	1.0	Mode	7	7
14	S.Dev	1.3	1.4	S.Dev	.9	1.2	S.Dev	0	0	S.Dev	0	.5

**APPENDIX 15: NEWLY ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST INSET (SHOWING 'PREFERRED' POLES OF CONSTRUCTS TO THE LEFT)**

N.b. In order to make comparison feasible, constructs are all represented with the 'preferred' pole of the construct on the left. Some constructs (and their ratings) have therefore been reversed to reflect this and are denoted by (R). Where participants were unable to identify a 'preferred' pole of a construct, (M) has been used to denote this ('mid-point preferred'). Ratings reflect a 1 to 7 scale, with the lower score representing the preferred (left-hand) pole of the construct.

<b>ESBD/ PT 1: NEW ELICIT</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Calm and stable, predictable presentation in a lesson (R)	7	7	2	5	Feelings significantly affect their presentation in a lesson
No attachment disorder (R)	7	7	1	1	Has an attachment disorder
Enough self-esteem to tackle a new task (R)	7	5	4	5	Has very low self esteem which restricts what they will attempt
Doesn't get things out of proportion (R)	7	7	2	5	Small things have a huge impact – can't move on
No mental health issues (R)	7	7	1	1	Has mental health issues
Behaviour doesn't disrupt others' learning (R)	3	7	1	7	Behaviour disrupts the learning of other pupils
Can talk things through and get back on task (R)	7	7	1	6	Difficult to 'bring round' (from a strop)
Very caring to other, younger, needier children	7	1	6	1	More involved with own friends
Things at home don't affect behaviour negatively (R)	6	7	1	6	Things at home seriously affect behaviour (negatively)
Not as dependent on one or two people (R)	7	5	1	6	Relationship with significant, specific adult(s) is very important
Doesn't take up a lot of teacher time (R)	7	7	4	7	Takes up a lot of teacher time
Has higher self-esteem re academic ability (R)	6	4	4	7	Very low self-esteem re academic ability
Not outwardly aggressive other pupils	1	1	1	7	Is outwardly aggressive to other pupils
Not aggressive to staff (R)	5	7	1	6	Can be aggressive to staff
Able to make relationships with other students	7	2	1	1	Not able to make relationships with other students
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>4.6</b>	

<b>ESBD/ PT 2: NEW ELICIT</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Good friendship group (R)	6	7	1	6	Socially isolated
Deals with things earlier (R)	6	7	2	7	Lets things go too far
Can appear withdrawn (M)	1	1	7	3	Comes across as outgoing
Doesn't lack self-esteem (R)	7	7	2	7	Lacks self-esteem
Deals with things verbally (R)	6	7	2	6	Deals with things physically
Gets emotional and shows tears	2	7	4	1	Very rarely shows emotions – is blank
Has appropriate behaviours – knows boundaries (R)	4	7	3	7	Has extreme, acting-out behaviour
Uses care-giving and nurturing approach to develop peer relationships (R)	1	7	1	7	Uses dominating behaviour over peers to control peer relationships
Able to listen and give own point of view (R)	5	7	2	7	Argumentative and confrontational
Takes responsibility (R)	5	7	1	6	Finds it hard to take responsibility for own behaviour
Values education and sees its importance	4	7	1	1	Doesn't see the bigger picture re education
Can see a longer term view	4	7	1	1	Sees shorter-term view
Can be a perfectionist (M)	4	7	1	1	Doesn't care about work
Wants to do well and makes effort (R)	2	7	1	1	Not motivated
Anonymous until something happens (M)	1	7	1	7	Goes out of their way to avoid being anonymous – makes sure is noticed
Has friendship issues they can't sort out theirself (M)	1	3	7	3	Deals with friendship issues alone
Will show emotions privately or one-to-one (R)	6	7	2	7	Bottles up emotions or diverts them into anger
No family issues known about (R)	1	7	1	7	Family issues known and talked about
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>5.1</b>	
<b>ESBD/PT 3: NEW ELICIT</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Doesn't like to be centre of attention (M)	1	7	1	7	Enjoys being centre of attention
Always shows sensitivity to peer comments and remarks (M)	2	7	3	6	Response to peer remarks very unpredictable
Steered by class and teacher (R)	3	7	1	7	Driven by own needs
Would not lie (R)	3	7	2	7	Can lie to get out of a situation
Happy to work independently	2	6	1	6	Likes to be part of the pack
Consciously worries about what peers think	2	6	2	7	Unconsciously wants to impress peers
Uses controlling behaviour	3	7	1	7	Conforms
Recognises own and others' emotions	3	6	2	5	Doesn't always recognise own and others' emotions
Not noticeable in a classroom (M)	3	7	2	7	Has a lot of presence
Doesn't enjoy confrontation (R)	1	6	1	7	Enjoys confrontation
Can show emotions in a one-to-one situation	1	6	1	2	Doesn't understand own emotions and doesn't show any
Seeks approval of peers as wants to be liked and accepted (R)	4	7	3	2	Seeks approval of peers as enjoys control
Forms good relationships with all teachers	2	7	1	7	Doesn't form good relationships with teachers
Gets a lot of attention in class (M)	6	1	7	1	Doesn't get a lot of attention in class
Likes positive attention	3	6	4	5	Doesn't mind if attention is positive or negative
Good sense of humour	2	3	4	5	Finds humour difficult
Doesn't bully (R)	1	5	1	6	Can bully
Likes sport (M)	1	1	6	1	Doesn't like sport
Takes responsibility for own actions (R)	3	7	2	7	Takes no responsibility for own actions – blames others
Sits quietly in class (R)	2	7	1	7	Competes for attention in class
Never truants	6	2	1	1	Will truant
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 4: NEW ELICIT</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Accepts authority (R)	5	7	1	6	Finds it difficult to accept authority
Barely misses a day of school (R)	6	3	1	6	Misses a good deal of school
Good support from both parents (R)	7	7	1	7	Broken families
Seeks and absorbs knowledge (R)	5	7	1	7	Has learned ways of avoiding work
Knows (and achieves) what wants for the future (R)	5	7	1	7	Has no clear aspirations re the future
Both parents offer praise and encouragement (R)	6	6	1	6	Mother has a big (negative) impact on life
Complies (R)	4	7	1	7	Extremely disruptive
Positively influenced by Grandfather (makes frequent reference to him) (M)	6	1	6	4	Never mentions Grandfather
Above average in attainment	3	6	1	7	Below average in attainment
Sticks to topic of conversation and contributes well (R)	5	7	1	7	Can change a conversation to their benefit – manipulates to own ends
Doesn't require intervention work (R)	5	7	1	7	Poor response to intervention work from school
Spends a lot of time with family (R)	4	7	1	7	Older friends have detrimental influence on behaviour out of school
Good sense of humour – doesn't laugh at others' misfortunes (R)	3	7	1	7	'Wacky' sense of humour – has few boundaries
Has not experienced permanent exclusion (R)	7	7	1	1	Has experienced permanent exclusion
More accepting of things happening to them (R)	4	7	2	7	Wants to control situations all the time
Some ability to plan for the future (R)	4	7	1	7	Has short-sighted aspirations
Accepting of consequences for actions (R)	3	7	1	7	Has never accepted there are consequences to their actions
Popular (R)	2	7	2	7	Finds it very hard to get on with children of own age
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>6.5</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 5: NEW ELICIT</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
More willing to attempt new tasks and novel situations (R)	6	7	1	6	Has difficulties in coping with novel or challenging situations
Self-confident – doesn't feel threatened by things	6	5	1	5	Confidence is fragile – lack of self-assurance can be marked
Doesn't need constant supervision	5	7	1	7	Wouldn't survive in an unstructured situation – can't handle freedom
More willing to be compliant (R)	3	6	1	7	Regularly overtly challenges staff
Willingness to commit over a period of time to a piece of work	4	6	1	6	Needs tasks breaking up into shorter term pieces
Willing to work for something (reward) in the longer term	4	6	2	7	Needs reward / target achievable in the short term
Able to maintain a high level of self control	5	7	1	7	Rapidly spirals out of control once situation gets difficult
Willing to comply with instructions	4	6	1	7	Deliberately obstructive – sets out to create confrontation
Can be relied on to arrive on time	2	5	1	7	Frequently goes AWOL or is late
Has well established, positive peer relationships (R)	6	6	1	7	Has dysfunctional peer relationships
Is overtly aggressive towards peers (M)	7	1	4	1	Is often withdrawn with peers
Is loud, in your face, attention seeking (M)	7	1	5	2	Is quiet and easily overlooked
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>6.6</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 6: NEW ELICIT</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Is astute and aware of social situations (R)	5	6	1	6	Misreads dynamics of social situations
Is a high attainer (R)	6	6	1	6	Is less well achieving
Self esteem is fine (R)	7	6	1	6	Has lower self-esteem
Is competent and confident (R)	6	6	1	6	Is less able to cope in all aspects of school
Has fluent vocabulary and expression	7	7	1	7	Is less able to communicate – shows in behaviour/ frustration
Is totally compliant (but not in a submissive way) (R)	5	6	1	6	Challenges boundaries vociferously
School environment suits	6	6	1	6	Doesn't see relevance of school environment
Sets sights high (R)	7	7	1	7	Has low expectations
Looks to develop and extend a task (R)	7	7	1	6	Doesn't fulfil tasks in depth – does bare minimum
More vocal [in terms of aggression] (M)	6	2	7	1	More withdrawn in difficult situations
Issues are intermittent and less frequent (R)	3	7	1	7	Issues are frequent (daily)
Only defiant when feels threatened (R)	4	7	4	7	Regularly defiant
Makes big gestures and noisy remonstrations – is in your face (M)	2	1	4	1	Runs and hides
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>6.4</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 7: NEW ELICIT</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
Has lots of friends (R)	5	7	1	4	Struggles to make friends
Has a least one strong parent (M)	1	7	1	1	Lives with caring (but struggling) grandparents
Very confident (R)	5	6	1	1	Lacks confidence in self
Wants to succeed at school	1	1	1	7	Doesn't prioritise success at school
Popular, at the centre of things	5	6	1	3	Difficult to sustain a friendship with
Takes on board useful advice (R)	5	6	2	7	Finds it hard to implement change
Has two strong parents (R)	7	4	1	7	Has a strong supportive mother
Seems mature for age	7	4	1	1	Slightly immature for age
Doesn't attract trouble	2	3	1	6	Likes the recognition of being in trouble
Can expect to fail (and sees it as a problem) (M)	2	1	4	6	Doesn't see failure as a problem
Is a fun seeker	6	7	2	1	Is trying to survive and be happy
<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>4.1</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 8: NEW ELICIT</b>	<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>AMBIV.</b>	<b>SECURE</b>	<b>DISORG.</b>	
More willing to give things a go (R)	5	7	1	5	Uses feeling unwell as an excuse for not doing things
Has high self-esteem (R)	5	6	1	6	Has low self-esteem
Has an independent desire to achieve	6	6	1	7	Needs external support and encouragement to try to achieve
Doesn't need any specialised support (R)	6	6	1	7	Needs a nurturing environment
Thrives in normal mainstream situations (R)	6	6	1	7	Is vulnerable [in a normal mainstream situation]
Survives happily in a large class group (R)	2	7	1	7	Thrives in small group situations
Doesn't need any additional support (R)	6	6	1	7	Needs a lot of additional adult support
Can organise own independent time	5	5	1	7	Needs support to organise independent time
Is better working as part of a group [due to social skills]	7	2	1	4	Needs more support re social skills in a group situation
Doesn't require additional PHSE (R)	7	7	1	5	Benefits from additional PHSE
Kicks off- shows external signs of frustration (M)	2	6	4	1	Internalises frustration
Can go back to situation later and offer one-to-one (R)	6	2	4	7	Needs support immediately in class situation (to stop escalation)

Craves adult support (and needs it) (M)	7	1	4	3	Doesn't appear to want adult support although needs it
<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>6.3</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 9: NEW ELICIT</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Not overdemanding of adult attention	1	7	1	7	Overdemanding of adult attention
Able to sustain periods of concentrated effort	1	6	1	7	Not able to sustain periods of concentrated effort
Popular (R)	5	7	1	7	Tends to be socially isolated
Background hasn't impacted on difficulties (R)	4	7	1	6	Background has had an impact on difficulties
Smart, well presented	4	7	1	5	Can be smelly and dirty
Achieving well academically (R)	4	4	1	3	Underachieving academically
Displays appropriate verbal behaviour (R)	1	6	1	7	Inappropriate verbal behaviour [shouting out, abusive]
Sporty, achieves well	3	7	1	2	Avoidant of sports
Hasn't been abused (R)	1	7	1	5	Has been abused as a younger child
Has a sexual awareness	7	1	1	7	Doesn't have a sexual awareness
Doesn't actively seek to establish close, personal relationships with staff (R)	7	7	4	7	Seeks to establish close, personal relationships with staff
Discloses personal family issues	1	2	4	1	Doesn't talk about relationships at home
Doesn't come into school moody (R)	1	6	1	7	Can come into school moody
Copes well with less structured times (R)	4	7	1	7	Has difficulties in less structured times
Articulate (R)	4	6	1	7	Has poor expressive language skills
Better adjusted relationships with siblings (R)	1	1	1	7	Over-protective relationship with siblings
<b>Mean Ratings</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>5.8</b>	

<b>ESBD/PT 10: NEW ELICIT</b>	AVOIDANT	AMBIV.	SECURE	DISORG.	
Never appears to lose temper (R)	5	5	2	7	Can lose temper (even if being helped)
Has lots of friends, is outgoing (R)	7	5	1	6	Has problems with social skills
Can be outgoing (R)	7	4	1	4	Is quiet
Tries hard re school work (R)	5	7	2	6	Schoolwork is not a priority
Has normal range of moods (R)	6	5	2	7	Has extreme mood swings
Just a normal classroom situation is fine (R)	7	5	1	4	Warrants a lot of one-to-one attention
Has close friends, is centre of attention (R)	7	5	1	6	Doesn't have a lot of close friends – feels alienated
No extreme expression of temper (R)	5	5	1	7	Has extreme expression of temper (kicks, throws)
Academically fine	6	6	1	6	Has special needs in some areas
<b>Mean ratings</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5.9</b>	

**APPENDIX 16 INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ESD/PT PARTICIPANTS' NEWLY-ELICITED REPERTORY GRIDS POST-INSET**

	AVOIDANT			AMBIVALENT			SECURE			DISORGANISED		
	Mean	Mode	7	Mean	Mode	7	Mean	Mode	1	Mean	Mode	6,7
1	Range 6	S.Dev 1.6	2.4	Range 6	S.Dev 2.4	5	Range 5	S.Dev 1.8	1.8	Range 6	S.Dev 2.4	2.4
2	Mean 4.2	Mode 6	7	Mean 7.0	Mode 7	7	Mean 1.7	Mode 1	1	Mean 5.1	Mode 7	7
3	Range 5	S.Dev 2	0	Range 0	S.Dev 0	3	Range 3	S.Dev .9	.9	Range 6	S.Dev 2.7	2.7
	Mean 2.6	Mode 3	7	Mean 5.9	Mode 7	7	Mean 1.8	Mode 1	1	Mean 5.5	Mode 7	7
4	Range 5	S.Dev 1.3	1.5	Range 5	S.Dev 1.5	7	Range 3	S.Dev 1.1	1.1	Range 6	S.Dev 2.1	2.1
	Mean 4.6	Mode 5	7	Mean 6.6	Mode 7	7	Mean 1.1	Mode 1	1	Mean 6.5	Mode 7	7
5	Range 5	S.Dev 1.4	1.0	Range 4	S.Dev 1.0	6	Range 1	S.Dev .3	.3	Range 6	S.Dev 1.5	1.5
	Mean 4.5	Mode 4,6	6	Mean 6.1	Mode 6	6	Mean 1.1	Mode 1	1	Mean 6.6	Mode 7	7
6	Range 4	S.Dev 1.4	.7	Range 2	S.Dev .7	6	Range 1	S.Dev .3	.3	Range 2	S.Dev .7	.7
	Mean 5.7	Mode 7	6	Mean 6.5	Mode 6	6	Mean 1.3	Mode 1	1	Mean 6.4	Mode 6	6
7	Range 4	S.Dev 1.3	.5	Range 1	S.Dev .5	6	Range 3	S.Dev .9	.9	Range 1	S.Dev .5	.5
	Mean 4.8	Mode 5	6	Mean 4.9	Mode 6	6	Mean 1.2	Mode 1	1	Mean 4.1	Mode 7	7
8	Range 5	S.Dev 2.0	2.0	Range 6	S.Dev 2.0	6	Range 1	S.Dev .4	.4	Range 6	S.Dev 2.7	2.7
	Mean 5.5	Mode 6	6	Mean 5.5	Mode 6	6	Mean 1.3	Mode 1	1	Mean 6.3	Mode 7	7
9	Range 5	S.Dev 1.4	1.8	Range 5	S.Dev 1.8	7	Range 3	S.Dev .9	.9	Range 3	S.Dev 1.1	1.1
	Mean 3.1	Mode 1	7	Mean 5.5	Mode 7	7	Mean 1.4	Mode 1	1	Mean 5.8	Mode 7	7
10	Range 6	S.Dev 2.1	2.2	Range 6	S.Dev 2.2	5	Range 3	S.Dev 1.0	1.0	Range 6	S.Dev 2.0	2.0
	Mean 6.1	Mode 7	5	Mean 5.2	Mode 5	5	Mean 1.3	Mode 1	1	Mean 5.9	Mode 6	6
	Range 2	S.Dev .8	.8	Range 3	S.Dev .8	8	Range 1	S.Dev .5	.5	Range 3	S.Dev 1.2	1.2

**APPENDIX 17: PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS ANALYSIS: POLES OF NEWLY-ELICITED REPERTORY GRID CONSTRUCTS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH THE 'AVOIDANT' AND 'AMBIVALENT' PATTERNS OF ATTACHMENT.**

**AVOIDANT**

**EMOTIONAL STATE**  
Has mental health issues  
Can appear withdrawn  
Can show emotions in a one-to-one situation  
Self Regulation  
Doesn't enjoy confrontation  
Is more accepting of things happening to them  
Willing to work for something (reward) in the longer term  
More withdrawn in difficult situations

Reciprocity  
Recognises own and others' emotions  
Is quiet and easily overlooked

**FAMILY**  
No family issues known about  
Never mentions Grandfather  
Has a strong supportive mother  
Lives with caring (but struggling) grandparents  
Better adjusted relationships with siblings

**PEER RELATIONSHIPS**  
Not outwardly aggressive to other pupils  
Not able to make relationships with other students  
Socially isolated  
Always shows sensitivity to peer comments and remarks  
Consciously worries about what peers think  
Doesn't bully  
Popular  
Is often withdrawn with peers  
Struggles to make friends  
Difficult to sustain a friendship with

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS**  
Not over-demanding of adult attention

**OTHER**  
Has an attachment disorder  
Would not lie  
Doesn't like to be centre of attention  
Good sense of humour  
Finds it hard to implement change  
Slightly immature for age  
Lacks confidence in self  
Hasn't been abused  
Sporty, achieves well  
Is quiet

**LEARNING**  
Wants to do well and makes effort  
Can be a perfectionist  
Can see a longer term view  
Values education and sees its importance  
Happy to work independently  
Will truant  
Above average in attainment  
Warrants a lot of one-to-one attention  
**DISCIPLINE**  
Finds it hard to take responsibility for own behaviour  
Anonymous until something happens  
Steered by class and teacher  
Uses controlling behaviour  
Not noticeable in a classroom  
Likes positive attention  
Complies  
Has experienced permanent exclusion  
More willing to be compliant  
Can be relied on to arrive on time  
Only defiant when feels threatened  
Issues are intermittent and less frequent

**EMOTIONAL STATE**  
Doesn't understand own emotions and doesn't show any  
Self Regulation  
Behaviour disrupts the learning of other pupils  
Difficult to 'bring round' (from a stroop)  
Small things have a huge impact - can't move on  
Feelings significantly affect their presentation in a lesson  
Bottles up emotions or diverts them into anger  
Wouldn't survive in an unstructured situation - can't handle freedom  
Rapidly spirals out of control once situation gets difficult  
Deliberately obstructive - sets out to create confrontation  
Is loud, in your face, attention seeking  
Has difficulties in coping with novel or challenging situations  
Has difficulties in less structured times  
Needs reward/ target achievable in the short term  
Is less able to cope in all aspects of school  
Is less able to communicate - shows in behaviour/ frustration  
Can lose temper (even if being helped)  
Has extreme mood swings  
Has extreme expression of temper (kicks, throws)  
Reciprocity  
Doesn't always recognise own and others' emotions  
Wants to control situations all the time  
Misreads dynamics of social situations

**PEER RELATIONSHIPS**  
Very caring to other, younger, needier children  
Has friendship issues they can't sort out themselves  
Response to peer remarks very unpredictable  
Seeks approval of peers as enjoys control  
Finds it very hard to get on with children of own age  
Older friends have detrimental influence on behaviour out of school  
Is overly aggressive towards peers  
Has dysfunctional peer relationships  
Doesn't have a lot of close friends - feels alienated  
Has problems with social skills

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS**  
Takes up a lot of teacher time  
Relationship with significant, specific adult(s) is very important  
Can be aggressive to staff  
Doesn't form good relationships with teachers  
Regularly overtly challenges staff  
Overdemanding of adult attention  
Seeks to establish close, personal relationships with staff

**FAMILY**  
Things at home seriously affect behaviour (negatively)  
Family issues known and talked about  
Positively influenced by Grandfather (and makes frequent reference to him)  
Broken family  
Mother has a big (negative) impact on life  
Discusses personal family issues  
**OTHER**  
Likes sport  
Can change a conversation to their benefit - manipulates to own ends  
Wacky sense of humour - has few boundaries  
Confidence is fragile - lack of self-assurance can be marked  
Doesn't see relevance of school environment is trying to survive and be happy  
Avoidant of sports  
Has been abused as a younger child  
Has poor expressive language skills

**LEARNING**  
Very low self-esteem re academic ability  
Has a very low self-esteem which restricts what they will attempt  
Is not motivated  
Doesn't see the bigger picture re education  
Sees a shorter-term view  
Doesn't care about work  
Below average in attainment  
Has learned ways of avoiding work  
Has no clear aspirations re the future  
Has short-sighted aspirations  
Needs tasks breaking up into shorter term pieces  
Has low expectations  
Doesn't fulfil tasks in depth - does bare minimum  
Is less well achieving  
Has lower self-esteem  
Can expect to fail (and sees it as a problem)  
Wants to succeed at school  
Has special needs in some areas  
Schoolwork is not a priority

**DISCIPLINE**  
Goes out of their way to avoid being anonymous - makes sure is noticed  
Competes for attention in class  
Takes no responsibility for own actions - blames others  
Finds it difficult to accept authority  
Poor response to intervention work from school  
Has never accepted there are consequences to their actions  
Frequently goes AWOL or is late  
Regularly defiant  
Makes big gestures and noisy remonstrations - is in your face  
Doesn't attract trouble

**AMBIVALENT**

**APPENDIX 18: PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS ANALYSIS: POLES OF NEWLY-ELICITED REPERTORY GRID CONSTRUCTS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH THE 'SECURE AND 'DISORGANISED' PATTERNS OF ATTACHMENT.**

**SECURE**

<b>DISORGANISED</b>	
<p><b>EMOTIONAL STATE</b> Has no mental health issues Will show emotions privately or one-to-one Self Regulation Doesn't get things out of proportion Calm and stable, predictable presentation in a lesson Can talk things through and get back on task Behaviour doesn't disrupt others' learning Deals with things earlier Is able to maintain a high level of self control No extreme expressions of temper Has normal range of moods Doesn't come into school moody Never appears to lose temper Copes well with less structured times Reciprocity Able to listen and give own point of view</p>	<p><b>LEARNING</b> Has enough self esteem to tackle a new task Has higher self-esteem re academic ability Doesn't lack self-esteem Happy to work independently Knows (and achieves) what wants for the future Seeks and absorbs knowledge Barely misses a day of school Willing to commit over a period of time to a piece of work More willing to attempt new tasks and novel situations Sets sights high Looks to develop and extend a task Self esteem is fine Is a high attainer Is competent and confident Achieving well academically Able to sustain periods of concentrated effort Academically fine Just a normal classroom situation is fine Tries hard re school work</p>
<p><b>PEER RELATIONSHIPS</b> Able to make relationships with other students More involved with own friends Comes across as outgoing Has a good friendship group Uses care-giving and nurturing approaches to develop peer relationships Deals with friendship issues alone Consciously worries about what peers think Seeks approval of peers as wants to be liked and accepted Has well established, positive peer relationships Is astute and aware of social situations Popular, at the centre of things Has lots of friends Popular Has lots of friends, is outgoing Can be outgoing</p>	<p><b>EMOTIONAL STATE</b> Self Regulation Bottles up emotions or diverts them into anger Driven by own needs Enjoys confrontation Wouldn't survive in an unstructured situation - can't handle freedom Rapidly spirals out of control once situation gets difficult Deliberately obstructive - sets out to create confrontation Is loud, in your face, attention seeking Has difficulties in coping with novel or challenging situations Needs reward/ target achievable in the short term More vocal (in terms of aggression) Can come into school moody Has extreme expression of temper (kicks, throws) Reciprocity Wants to control situations all the time</p>
<p><b>PEER RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS</b> Not aggressive to staff Doesn't take up a lot of teacher time Forms good relationships with all teachers Takes on board useful advice Doesn't actively seek to establish close, personal relationships with staff</p>	<p><b>PEER RELATIONSHIPS</b> Is outwardly aggressive to other pupils Uses dominating behaviour over peers to control peer relationships Has friendship issues they can't sort out themselves Likes to be part of the pack Unconsciously wants to impress peers Can bully Finds it very hard to get on with children of own age Older friends have detrimental influence on behaviour out of school Is overtly aggressive towards peers Has dysfunctional peer relationships Tends to be socially isolated Doesn't have a lot of close friends - feels alienated Has problems with social skills RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS Regularly overtly challenges staff</p>
<p><b>OTHER</b> No attachment disorder Would not lie Doesn't like to be centre of attention Doesn't like sport Sticks to topic of conversation and contributes well Some ability to plan for the future Good sense of humour - doesn't laugh at others' misfortunes Self-confident - doesn't feel threatened by things Has fluent vocabulary and expression School environment suits Very confident Seems mature for age Smart, well presented Articulate</p>	<p><b>LEARNING</b> Lacks self-esteem Below average in attainment Has learned ways of avoiding work Has no clear aspirations re the future Has short-sighted aspirations Needs tasks breaking up into shorter term pieces Doesn't prioritise success at school Doesn't see failure as a problem Not able to sustain periods of concentrated effort Underachieving academically Has special needs in some areas</p>
<p><b>FAMILY</b> Things at home don't affect behaviour negatively Good support from both parents Both parents offer praise and encouragement Spends a lot of time with family Has two strong parents Has at least one strong parent Background hasn't impacted on difficulties Doesn't talk about relationships at home</p>	<p><b>OTHER</b> Has a lot of presence Enjoys being centre of attention Finds humour difficult Never truant Can change a conversation to their benefit Wacky sense of humour - has few boundaries Confidence is fragile - lack of self-assurance can be marked Is a fun seeker Can be smelly and dirty Doesn't have a sexual awareness</p>
<p><b>DISCIPLINE</b> Lets things go too far Argumentative and confrontational Deals with things physically Has extreme, acting-out behaviour Goes out of their way to avoid being anonymous - makes sure is noticed Can lie to get out of a situation Conforms Gets a lot of attention in class Doesn't mind if attention is positive or negative Finds it difficult to accept authority Poor response to intervention work from school Has never accepted there are consequences to their actions Frequently goes AWOL or is late Issues are frequent (daily) Likes the recognition of being in trouble Inappropriate verbal behaviour (shouting out, abusive)</p>	<p><b>DISCIPLINE</b> Lets things go too far Argumentative and confrontational Deals with things physically Has extreme, acting-out behaviour Goes out of their way to avoid being anonymous - makes sure is noticed Can lie to get out of a situation Conforms Gets a lot of attention in class Doesn't mind if attention is positive or negative Finds it difficult to accept authority Poor response to intervention work from school Has never accepted there are consequences to their actions Frequently goes AWOL or is late Issues are frequent (daily) Likes the recognition of being in trouble Inappropriate verbal behaviour (shouting out, abusive)</p>

A Grounded-Theory study of Year 9 pupils' views of their secondary school experience: friends, teachers, learning, behaviour 'n' stuff.

February 2006

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### THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

Full time, universal education for all children in the United Kingdom is a relatively modern concept. Continuing on from debates which brought about a universal right to schooling is the debate as to the *purpose* of such education in terms of both the children themselves and the benefits for wider society. Westbury (1978), in a critique of classroom research, notes that four assumptions appear to have underpinned the development of the classroom system:

Firstly – to engender a basic literacy and numeracy and a respect for order in the mass of the population whilst facilitating social mobility within a hierarchical social order for the successful.

Secondly – a model of the learning process which draws on the view of the mind being akin to an organ, which develops through both maturation and exercise.

Thirdly – goals reflecting a view that knowledge is conscious and can be translated into words. Correspondingly, words can be translated into knowledge, permitting learning through being 'told'.

Finally – the teacher's task was to communicate pre-ordained knowledge to pupils.

Westbury (1978; p.297)

This description as to the development of the view regarding the purpose, process and structure of classroom-based learning can be seen to resonate particularly within current models of Secondary Schools, although arguably less so within Primary School classrooms. It is a description which takes little (if any) account of psychological models of behaviour, learning and social interaction, all of which offer a framework of thinking upon the efficacy of classroom-based learning experiences (and, indeed, on all learning

experiences). It is also a description which fails to recognise the complexity of the interactions of these various factors within schools, classrooms and teachers and learners themselves. As Cohen and Manion (1996) suggest, school classrooms can be viewed as being 'very much prisoners of their own history'. Within the current paradigm of Secondary School classroom practice, the adult is seen as being responsible for the teaching and learning experience and for setting the context for optimal conditions. To this end, much research and advice is aimed at identifying 'good teaching practice' in the form of lists of attributes and approaches that teachers should use to maximise their efficacy in 'communicating ordained knowledge to pupils', with rather less emphasis on either focusing on what makes for a good *learning* opportunity or on what learners themselves find most useful in supporting their learning.

#### PUPIL PERSPECTIVES

The focus on school improvement and pupil attainment has been largely centred on the views of interested adults – policy makers, educationalists, employers and parents. Very little focus (outside of specific interest areas of some educational researchers) has been placed on the pupils' views as to the efficacy and appropriateness of the educational systems which set out to educate them. Calvert (1975) suggests that this situation may be due to the 'disvalued' low status of the pupil role, which is seen as being largely defined by the adult carrying a position of greater status, similar to the way in which the role of the patient is defined by the doctor or the nurse. Calvert notes that whilst much has been written about the role of the teacher, the role of the pupil has been largely ignored. This situation is, she suggests, all the more insupportable as each role depends for '*its satisfactory performance on the interlocking performance of the other role*' (op. cit., p.2). However, by virtue of the imbalance of the element of choice with teacher and pupil roles, successful role performance can be seen to have more personal importance for teachers than it necessarily does for pupils, for whom there is little immediate reward and arguable and tenuous future reward. This could lead to their being

'uncommitted' to the role (of pupil) or to their becoming disaffected. Calvert further notes that adults within education can be in the position of believing that theirs is the more 'decisive' participatory role within the process and that the system(s) should therefore be arranged from their perspective and maximise their involvement. However, if the nature of any social interaction is reciprocal, such that one participant's behaviour affects the behaviour of another participant, pupils' perspectives of the educational process are of equal value to those of the adults engaged in the daily teaching and learning interactions which take place in classrooms across the country.

Duffield et al (2000) suggest that within the discourse of 'raising achievement' *'pupils are constructed as the beneficiaries of improved school ethos, better class organisation (including setting and streaming), greater use of direct teaching and more effective teaching generally. These assumptions are made with little regard to how pupils themselves construe their school experiences and how they see themselves as learners.'* They also note that whilst pupil performance is seen as an indicator of school success, the pupils' perceptions of school life find little place in the standards discourse (p. 263). Furthermore, pressure placed on schools and teachers to raise attainment is likely to be transferred onto pupils, placing strain on relationships. This pressure can be seen as particularly intense with regard to summative assessments and examinations, where debate is often at its most strenuous and negative following the publishing of results. Duffield et al conducted research based on group interviews with early secondary-age pupils in Scotland, and found that school emerged as a 'social rather than a pedagogic experience' for the pupils. This is in contrast to the 'instrumental goals and arbitrary criteria' they associated with the current climate of a schools standards agenda. Furthermore, pupils spoke volubly regarding their place within the social context, noting various ways in which behaviour can either enhance 'belonging' (e.g. achieving at a 'medium' level: 'want to be just in between – about what everybody else gets, not do too well' [pupil voice]) or the social isolation which can be seen to result from 'inability or unwillingness to fit in with the norms of

peer group leaders'. One notable absence within the pupils' discourse was that of a discourse about learning itself, with participants being seen as identifying themselves with the role of 'pupil' rather than that of 'learner'. However, this was not due to a lack of sophistication of commentary by the participants, but was rather attributed to a 'dominant sense of disengagement of pupils from the learning process.' Overall, Duffield et al noted the existence of a complex 'constructed social world' which they contrasted to what they termed the 'simplistic approach of government documents'.

This research endeavours to find the pupils' voice with regard to what participants see as being the important features of secondary school classroom-based experiences.

## METHODOLOGY

A recurring difficulty in research within social sciences is that of obtaining reliable and valid findings. Indeed, the epistemological debate regarding the very existence of an objective, measurable and verifiable truth continues. Do such truths exist or is 'reality' personally constructed through individuals' perceptual and conceptual faculties, thus being different for everyone. Or is there a combination of a general, 'over-arching' truth, that the majority of people exposed to a situation would agree to and recognise yet still interpret nuances of difference based on their own experiences and views? Research which involves the interactions of many individuals within complex social situations is particularly challenged by such arguments. How can there be any one truth within such circumstances? How can quantifiable observations be made? How can validity be attained? This paper adopts the stance of the existence of an over-arching truth or 'external reality', which, although interpreted and experienced on an individual basis, is recognisable to all participants within a situation. The methodology adopted is that of Grounded Theory, an approach developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967), which seeks to offer a methodology that can 'bridge traditional positivistic methods with interpretative methods' (Charmaz, 1995, p.30) by making use of positivistic processes 'grounded' in the voices of those involved within a situation. The aim of the method is to 'discover' the underlying/underpinning framework (or 'theory') behind interactions, assumptions, attributions within complex social settings – in this case, Secondary School classrooms and interactions between pupils and teachers. A brief outline of Grounded Theory (methodological stance and process of application) is presented below. (For more detailed outlines see, for example, Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 1995; Pidgeon, 1996; Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996).

### GROUNDING THEORY: METHODOLOGICAL STANCE

Grounded Theory is a systematic approach to investigating and reporting significant aspects of human experience that are not accessible to traditional, qualitative, methods of research. The methods it employs are designed to study processes and participants' meanings within a situation, enabling an

investigation of the development, maintenance and change of individual and interpersonal processes (Charmaz, 1995, cf. Rennie et al, 1988). Grounded Theory combines internal and external perspectives of a situation, with the professional experiences of the researcher having an active and acknowledged role within the research. However, the findings are based on and linked back to ('grounded in') the participants' (or 'actors') own lived experiences. The researcher's role is to seek to *'learn how they construct their experience through their actions, intention, beliefs and feelings'* (Charmaz, 1995, p.30) whilst adopting a more positivistic, external view focusing on describing, interpreting and predicting. These two roles for the researcher are combined by the 'flip-flop' approach of re-visiting the voices of the actors in light of the researcher's interpretations and vice versa. The role of theory, as an underpinning framework or structure which can be used to understand and to predict within same or similar situations, is also a central issues within Grounded Theory. Pidgeon (1996) notes that research generally differs as to whether existing theory is being verified by research or whether the research itself is aimed at discovering or developing theory. He suggests that Glaser and Strauss's work *'required a radical change of philosophy, aimed at generating more local, contextual theory that would as a consequence 'work' and also be of relevance to those being studied'*. Furthermore, as Lincoln & Guba, (1985, p.41) note, no a priori theory could account for the full complexity of the accounts and situations uncovered through the Grounded Theory approach. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that Grounded Theory provides *'a nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organising these into a theoretical explanatory scheme'* (p.11). However, the researcher does not approach such processes devoid of any theoretical constructs or of previous personal experiences within the field being studied and therefore requires sensitivity to the various theoretical constructs already surrounding the area of interest. Within the school classroom setting this would, for example, include broad theoretical areas such as Social Learning Theory, Interactionist Psychology, Behaviourist and Cognitive Behavioural Theory and Developmental Psychology. It is therefore important for the researcher to

remain self-aware within the research process and to note both internal and external influence on the developing theory which is driven initially from the 'rich' and complex data obtained through the actors' voices and is then checked and counterchecked back to those voices to establish its validity and 'groundedness' within the data. Thus, whilst critics of Grounded Theory methods suggest that it has not yet resolved the challenge of accommodating both the 'objective' and the 'subjective' in human sciences research (see Hammersley, 1996) it currently provides arguably the most appropriate methodology for attempting to address the above research question.

#### GROUNDING THEORY: AN OUTLINE OF PROCESS

Whilst Grounded Theory is presented as being a research method, it is apparent that different researchers interpret and adopt the methodology in different ways. A brief outline of the specific process undertaken within this study is therefore necessary. Participants' voices, obtained through interview, were transcribed verbatim and were then 'coded' (see Method section below for specific participant and interviewing details). Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.3) define coding as *'the analytic processes through which data are fractured, conceptualised, and integrated to form theory'*. The first level of coding, on initial reading of the transcript, involves what Miller (1996, p. 94) describes as *'a line by line or even word by word analysis of the data'* where the researcher's role is to label or 'code' each discrete incident, idea or event, aiming for the code to be at a higher conceptual level than the text. Charmaz (1995, p.37) notes that initial coding on a line-by-line basis allows analysis to begin to be built from the 'ground up' *'without taking off on theoretical flights of fancy'*. She further notes that it also aids the researcher to refrain from imputing motives, fears or unresolved personal issues onto the respondents and the collected data. Pidgeon and Henwood (1996, p. 92, cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967) suggest that it is crucial that names of codes 'fit' the data well, providing a recognisable description of the activity, action or discourse that they contain and represent within the analysis.

The Grounded Theory approach makes use of a 'constant comparative method', such that following the coding of the first interview, changes may be made to the direction or focus of the questioning in the subsequent interview(s). Subsequent interviews themselves will also impact on the coding, in that new codes may be generated or further information added to existing codes. In the second stage of coding, the coded concepts are refined, extended and related to each other, taking into account the additional material obtained from further interviews (Pidgeon and Henwood 1996, p. 95). The level of abstraction is increased whilst the grounded link to the data is maintained. Level II codes, also known as 'categories', are derived from condensing level I ('open') codes (Miller, 1996, p.94). Charmaz (p.40 - 41) notes that a category may subsume common themes and patterns in several codes. Categories need to be mutually exclusive and also provide for all the data. As codes are raised to categories the researcher needs to begin to:

1. explicate its properties
2. specify conditions under which it arises, is maintained and changes
3. describe its consequences
4. show how the category relates to other categories

This work is recorded through written memos, which have a further role of allowing the active thinking of the external researcher to be evident. It is important to note, however, that the memos are written as a way of engaging with the data and are not directed at an external audience. Charmaz notes that memo-writing itself forms an intermediate link between coding and first-draft analysis. As Grounded Theory has as its aim the development of an understanding of underlying principles and processes underpinning social situations, memo-writing is an important component of the process as it '*spurs [the researcher] to start digging into implicit, unstated and condensed meanings*' (Charmaz, p.43). Comparisons can be drawn between and within participants and categories within memos. This in turn leads to conceptual developments, which themselves are also recorded by memo and, as noted above, this leads the emergent analysis throughout the research. However, at

all times the memos are linked back to specific data and codes from participants' dialogue, with memos often being illustrated by lines or partial lines of text. In turn, the memos help to focus the data collection to permit sampling that will allow testing and further clarification of emerging ideas from the data.

Definitions of the category are written when categories become 'saturated': that is, when the collection and coding of additional data no longer contribute further insights (Pidgeon & Henwood, p.97, cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Such a definition will outline both the content of the category and the implicit assumptions made when linking the contents of the category within it. Such category definitions then scaffold the lead to the next level of coding: Axial coding, or theory generation. As Pidgeon and Henwood note, '*the aim is not mere representation but to recount the interrelationships between categories in the light of their wider theoretical relevance*' (p.99). Memos thus provide the initial framework of the developing theory. Verbatim material is used to demonstrate connections between data and analytic interpretation and to add weight to the concepts derived from the findings. At this stage, findings are compared to specific literature review of the pertinent areas that have emerged from the data. (In this paper, a second literature review section, addressing specific areas that emerge from the research is therefore presented below, following the initial analysis section). Axial coding and theoretical concepts can then be presented in light of both the research findings and the existing literature.

## DESIGN

A Grounded Theory approach was used to address qualitative information obtained from secondary school pupils. Data was gathered and analysed according to this methodology, as presented in detail above.

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## PARTICIPANTS

Within the Leicestershire High School system, which caters for pupils in Years 6 to 9 inclusive, Year 9 pupils were selected as being most able in terms of

language and social development to provide the depth and amount of discourse necessary for a Grounded Theory approach. Four Year 9 pupils from different tutor groups were selected at random, by drawing number lots that corresponded to class registers. The two female and two male participants were given a prescribed outline briefing as to the nature of the research (see appendices) by the Headteacher and their informed consent was obtained. As the participants were under the age of 18, parental consent was also obtained through a letter requiring signature (see appendices). The ages of the participants ranged from 14 years, 3 months to 15 years 2 months with a mean age of 14 years 8 months. All participants were of white British extraction and spoke English as their first language. None of the participants had any special educational needs.

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#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Informed parental and individual consent was obtained prior to interviews. All participants were informed of their anonymity within the research and of their right to withdraw at any point. They were informed that the audience for the research could be wide-ranging and may include their school staff, Psychology service personnel and University tutors. They were assured of the confidentiality of their conversations, such that specific names or persons referred to would not be recounted and that comments made would not be attributed in such a way as to be traceable to the individual concerned. Participants and parents were aware that tape-recordings of interviews would be made to allow for later transcription, but that the tape recordings would only be available to the researcher.

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#### PROCEDURE

Participants were individually interviewed. The interviews took place over the period of one term. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as informally as possible in quiet, private surroundings (see appendices for outline of interview schedule). Following introductions a reminder was given of the right to withdraw together with confidentiality and anonymity agreements, including

agreement to the use of the tape recorder. Participants' willingness to continue was obtained verbally. Interviews were conducted in conversational style, with the interviewer making brief notes of areas to probe further with supplementary questions or to check out meanings. Interviews lasted between 25 and 35 minutes. Care was taken not to ask the participants leading questions and to encourage them speak candidly and fully about their thoughts. Participants were reminded that their genuine views were being sought and that no 'right' answers existed. Verbatim transcripts were made of interviews and were open coded according to Grounded Theory approaches outlined above. Changes to the focus of questions in subsequent interviews were made as a result of findings from the coding of previous interviews (cf. Glaser and Strauss's 'constant comparative' methodology) although the overall schedule of questions remained the same throughout. Following the process of Grounded Theory outlined above, data was reduced into codes which were reassembled into (Level II) codes or 'categories'. These, in turn, were further reduced into axial codes, which allow for the generation and description of a theoretical relationship between the derived concepts. Memos were written throughout the process and definitions of categories were developed as a precursor to the move to axial coding. Coding information and organisation was undertaken by computer, making use of multiple cross-referenced files. Printed versions of the files were used when physical manipulation of categories was necessary to aid conceptualisation.

## FINDINGS

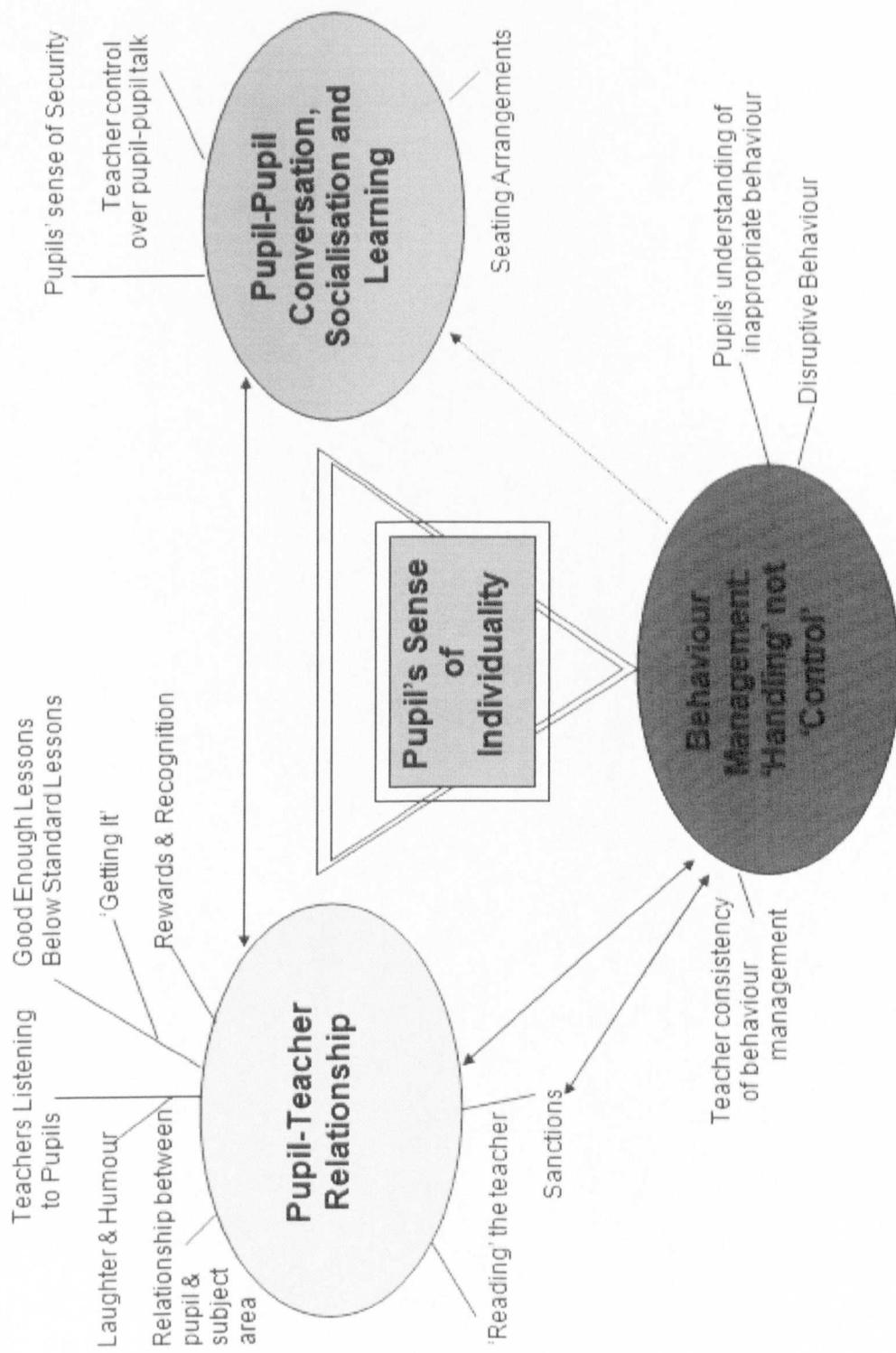
From close examination of the data, three axial codes were found to describe pupils' perceptions of the social processes of behaviour management within the classroom at a conceptual level:

- Pupil-Pupil Conversation, Socialisation and Learning
- Teacher Behaviour Management – 'Handling', not 'Control'
- Pupil-Teacher Relationships

A chart outlining the relationship of second level codes to each axial code is presented in figure 1 below. A further underlying psychological principle was found to connect each of these axial codes – Individuality and Identity Development. This concept resonated within each of the axial codings, reflecting pupils' views on their sense of individuality as to how this was or was not accommodated in a school setting within a variety of contexts and interactions. The relationships between the axial codings and the over-arching theoretical principle of identity development are represented diagrammatically in figure 4 below. Each axial coding is outlined in detail below, following the subsections of the level two codings, and is presented together with quotes from participants to illustrate the points made and to 'ground' the findings in their evidence base.

**TABLE 1: LEVEL II CODES COMPRISING AXIAL CODES**

<b>AXIAL CODE 1</b>	<b>LEVEL II CODES</b>
Pupil-Pupil Conversation, Socialisation and Learning	Teacher Management of Pupil Talk Seating Arrangements Pupils' Sense of Security Pupil-Pupil Conversation, Socialisation and Learning
<b>AXIAL CODE 2</b>	<b>LEVEL II CODES</b>
Behaviour Management: 'Handling', not 'Control'	Pupil Disruption Pupils' understanding of Inappropriate Behaviour Behaviour Management: 'Handling' not 'Control'. Consistency of Behaviour Management
<b>AXIAL CODE 3</b>	<b>LEVEL II CODES</b>
Pupil-Teacher Relationships	Lessons Learning – 'Getting It' Teachers, Pupils and listening: Joint understanding and avoiding conflict Pupil-teacher relationships Impact of Rewards/Sanctions on Pupil-Teacher Relationships



**Figure 2: The inter-relationship between the 3 Axial Codes, the Level II Codes and the interconnecting link of individual sense of identity.**

*'I work better if I can like talk to people'.*

This axial code was compiled from four second level codes, which also included Teacher Management of Pupil Talk; Seating Arrangements and Pupils' Sense of Security.

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PUPIL-PUPIL CONVERSATION, SOCIALISATION AND LEARNING:

Access to peers, in terms of conversation and socialisation, was an important area for all participants. Pupil perspective suggests that such access is seen as being largely within teacher control, with opportunities to talk referred to as being 'permitted' by teachers, rather than being a default position. It varies for pupils as to whether they have access to their particular friends for talking to in lessons, and this can impact on the effectiveness of talking and their general feelings towards the lesson itself. There is an innate understanding shown by pupils that talking together helps them to learn:

*'They [younger teachers] let you sit next to your friends, and they let you, y'know, talk between you in the lesson and help each other to learn'.*

*'some of them [friends] like have a different point of view from you and then you can write it down cos you've got like different ways of seeing things cos you know you're not always right but your friend might be'*

*'you can ask for help and ... give help to other people really'*

Working with friends is seen as mostly being better due to the higher level of trust and security and familiarity with them. Pupils refer to a teamwork approach through the sharing of relative strengths. There is also a notion of using friends as a 'sounding board' for work in progress. Pupils also note a preference for asking fellow pupils than for seeking help from the teacher :

*'when you are with friends it's good. Cos you can like, you know what each other's like, you know how to talk to 'em and ... say, one's good at drawing but not writing you give them drawing but you write summat'.*

*'well, to say like, help each other and, read it out to 'em to see if it sounds right, stuff that gets you talking'.*

*'erm, if I'm stuck on something and I'm sitting next to someone who knows what to do, it sometimes helps to ask them than to ask the teacher'.*

Pupils noted that the conversation did not need to be linked specifically to the lesson to be helpful – it may have the function of reducing anxiety, normalising the classroom and allowing cognitive functioning to be accessible to the pupil (Maslow, 1987). The teacher has a strong role in providing pupils with access to communication within lessons – who they sit next to, whether or not communication with them is permitted (how much, how long for, in what ways etc.) and thus the teacher has power over pupils' access to shared resources/thinking with others for learning.

Working with people not known to students can be more problematic. Students show a clear preference for working with friends (although they do acknowledge that some difficulties can be caused if friends start to 'mess about' instead of getting on with the work. However, this is also seen as a possible way of making new friends, and of speaking with people you might not otherwise speak to, but there is an element of 'risk' involved, which could impact on the social learning context. Pupils noted that it could make them quieter (thus reducing noise levels), it could make them feel embarrassed and less likely to share their thinking, especially when not sure about something. Pupils reflected that it is not enough for teachers to merely place children next to one another and ask them to work together – the relationship between the pupils is the key as to the quality/usefulness of the dialogue/thinking/work. Overall, pupils report preferring the security of working with those that they know well and get on with.

*'I've made some friends doing that but ... I like, prefer it with my other friends, my normal friends, cos I can get on with them well'.*

*'Yeah, well not shy I just, I just stick to my friends like, I don't really mix with other people. I don't know why, I just do'.*

*'erm, if it's someone I didn't like then I'd still talk to them, talk to them as much, cos I'd just like, feel like stepping back'.*

Teachers do allow and even encourage opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, but they do not always have a good enough understanding of the social dynamics of the pupils' social structure to get the best from the circumstances. Whilst teachers are noted to instigate language-based learning opportunities (e.g. group or paired discussion) pupils note that such opportunities are limited and that little apparent concern is given to the social groupings involved:

*'mostly we're on our own doing work, erm, sometimes like we're in pairs and have to work out some questions and stuff. We only do group work if we're doing a project or er, er ... a speech in English, or something, that's like a project or something'.*

*'we weren't supposed to know each other we just work'*

Pupils noted that their level of involvement within a group could vary both as a factor of the size of the group and their level of friendship with other group members.

Lessons where talking is allowed are seen as more 'fun' and teachers are preferred where there is a clear and explicit need for silence on the occasions it is instigated and where these occasions are infrequent. In lessons where talking is regularly proscribed the role of the teacher is subtly changed from being a pro-active facilitator to that of being an 'overseer', upholding a rule:

*'when there's silence you, erm, the teachers are just sitting there watching for if you're talking – it's, it's not fun and ... .. it's just really like boring and the lesson seems to go on for hours'.*

Also teachers can use access to talking as a behaviour management tool, moving pupils away from the pupils they are most likely to be able to talk to freely:

*'cos everyone's sitting next to their friends and you talk more to your friends so they put you like with other people you don't know – well you do know 'em but you don't talk to them cos you're not friends'.*

Structured opportunities to get to know other students are provided very early on in the first term, but do not continue for longer than a day or so. Students do gradually mix into new friendship groups but after this point there is little further mixing.

*'Yeah, well we had Open Day early on (...) everyone was talking though and first days, just, everyone's with friends like in groups but now everyone's just mixed together'.*

There are further opportunities outside lessons for socialisation – there is a 15 minute morning break and an hour lunch-break, but opportunities for socialisation can be disrupted by lunchtime detentions. Casual contact in lessons is preferred, even though this may be with different people in different lessons – just being near them is enough.

*'most of my friends are always in my lessons so I can erm and I'm sitting round them so I can just like talk to them – I'm usually like with them, whether it's different people in every lesson. But it's good'.*

Where sufficient time is not available for legitimate socialisation, pupils will need to find opportunities to meet this need (i.e. when in class).

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#### TEACHER MANAGEMENT OF PUPIL TALK:

There is variation between teachers as to how they manage/respond to this area. Pupils variously attribute the variation to either teacher's age or teacher's style. Pupils see being made to be quiet for no specific reason as being

detrimental to both their socialisation and their learning. Teachers who try to impose 'silence' regularly find that pupils actively try to disrupt such lessons:

*'some [teachers] respond better than others, 'cos' you know, the younger ones do, the younger teachers, but the older ones sort of make you sit down and be quiet I think that's what sets people off being naughty because you know, they can't sit, and some put you in seating plans and then on-one's sitting next to their friends so they're shouting across the classroom, which will make the teacher more angry.'*

However, pupils note that where 'normal' talking is allowed, pupils can take advantage of this:

*'erm, he doesn't expect us to work in silence but he just expects us to get on with our work and talk quietly but it doesn't usually happen.'*

Pupils note that there has to be a balance, led by both teacher permission/expectation and pupil self-control so that this state can be achieved:

*'so, it's alright having quiet lessons cos you like can get on with your work and just learn more but, sometimes, you just need to ask someone.'*

Sometimes the need to 'just ask someone' can outweigh any possible retribution for talking, despite the fact that it can carry an arbitrary sanction without any discussion as to the cause/purpose of the talking with the teacher.

E.P.: *They ever ask you what you're talking about?*

Pupil: *Sometimes they do, but not very often.'*

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#### SEATING ARRANGEMENTS:

Teachers use seating arrangements as a way of imposing a social order on the classroom. It is an overt display of their 'power' and it impacts on pupil opportunity to socialise, particularly their access to 'talking'. Seating arrangements give pupils messages about expectations regarding behaviour,

but they can also be seen as 'labelling' regarding behaviour, teacher decisions being seen as reflecting judgement and expectations regarding pupil behaviour. Pupils see this as a way of reducing the amount of non-work-based social interaction and of making pupils 'focus' on learning in a teacher-directed manner. However, as noted above, access to preferred peers impacts on a pupil's sense of security and their ability and willingness to interact with the lesson and thus, at least indirectly (and sometimes, directly) on their ability to learn. Seating plans can be used to impose order at the start, with 'relaxation' allowed after pupils have 'proved themselves', or they can be 'imposed' as a result of pupils not being sufficiently ordered when given free choice of seating partners:

*'only for a term and then they'll see how it's going that term and then they'll move us back'.*

Pupils also note that it can feel good to know that the teacher is 'in control':

*'it sometimes like makes you feel like you – like the teacher knows what he's doing so, like ...'*

This can increase a pupil's sense of security, knowing that a teacher will not let things get 'out of control'. However, pupils note it can also feel like an unjustified 'punishment':

*'other times it just feels like you've been separated from your friends and you haven't done anything wrong'.*

Pupils note that being with friends can sometimes increase off-task behaviour

*'if you're like with your actual friends you hang around with sometimes you just like mess around and when you try to get on with your work they try and talk to you and ... stuff like that'*

Pupils 'read' teacher behaviour on this and interpret it with regard to developing their view of the teacher – e.g. strict teachers place pupils; strict teachers will move pupils who talk when they're sitting together. It is one of the more overt ways in which teachers communicate their expectations to pupils. Pupils can

be made to sit next to someone they do not like. This can be particularly difficult if that pupil is known for 'messaging around'. This can have the impact of both annoying and disturbing the pupil, but it can also encourage them to focus on their work:

*'it's just really annoying cos they annoy you and stuff so you just like try to get on with your work'*

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#### PUPILS' SENSE OF SECURITY:

The classroom is noted by pupils to have the potential to be a scary, public place where your behaviour, your social connections, your 'standing in the community' and your ability to learn are all exposed to a large group of people from whom it is difficult to escape. Teachers also have a lot of power over pupils to 'force' them to do things they would rather not have to do. Being 'exposed' in front of the whole class is particularly difficult:

*'I don't mind doing that as long as you don't have to like stand up in front of everyone'*

Learning in the classroom is seen as being easier to do in smaller groups, if you are with people that you know and trust (even working in a pair with someone you don't get on with is noted to be difficult). Increased willingness to interact with a subject can affect pupil confidence in offering answers and risking failure. This is affected both by pupil liking for the subject (a genuine willingness to want to extend their knowledge/understanding) and their confidence in the teacher or their liking for the teacher), possibly because they feel 'safer' and know that they won't be allowed to 'fail'.

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#### BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT: 'HANDLING', NOT 'CONTROL'

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#### PUPIL DISRUPTION:

Pupil views varied as to the extent to which pupil disruption was attributed to internal ('within pupil') or external ('within environment/context') factors or to an

interaction of the two. There are some pupils who are seen as always being 'good' and others whose behaviour can fluctuate according to the teacher:

*'well, the good people are always good but I think there are lessons where kids think they can get away with more so they just mess around more and there are some lessons that they're just, like, perfect, cos, then, y'know, that the teacher's going to do something'.*

Behaviour problems of a few students can persist despite interesting and fun lessons and some pupils can be silly, regardless of the teacher. Where pupils who often misbehave in lessons are well behaved, pupils ascribe this to teacher impact:

*'they're quite good in some lessons ... (E.P.: what do you think has made them better in some lessons?) I think the way the teacher talks to them and teaches, and lets them have a natter and then get on with their work.*

However, where there is a difference in pupils' behaviour across different classes, pupils ascribe this to a teacher effect. As to what the nature of this effect is – i.e. fear of the sanction-wielding 'strict' teacher or the pro-active, interesting and liberal teaching approach used to prevent pupil disaffection – pupils are divided. Pupils note that teachers can 'set off' pupil disruptive behaviour:

*'the older ones [teachers] sort of make you sit down and be quiet I think that's what sets people off being naughty because you know, they can't sit ...'*

Another theory is that some pupils find the work hard to cope with, but don't like to admit to this or accept support:

*'I think sometimes when they're struggling with their work but they don't want people to know, so, they stop doing it and they misbehave'.*

*'some of them can get on with their work and, but when they don't get it they sit, they're confused, they just sit back and they have a laugh with their friends'.*

This adds to previous areas which have discussed how difficult it can be for children to seek help from a teacher or admit they don't 'get it'. Other students are seen as perpetuating a constructed personality or image:

*'just like to show off cos, y'know, they think they're hard and that ...'*

Pupils note that they can sometimes look as though they are on task but actually subvert the task to their own interest, to manage their 'boredom'.

*'me and X just like – still on that subject but did like a little bit of something different and then just got back to it and so ... she [the teacher] didn't know but ...'*

This raises the issue that some pupils are able to look engaged when they're not, whilst others are more open in their lack of engagement and lack either the social awareness or social skills to hide this feeling.

Both pupil and teacher behaviour is likely to be affected by this sense of 'audience' around them. The class itself is a social entity – pupils talk about the classes they work with in terms of 'we': *we've got some people*. In the case of sanctions, the pupil receiving the sanction is at the centre of class attention, particularly when the sanction is imposed in a very public manner. Both pupil and teacher behaviour can influence the social context in reaction to the incident. As with all social contexts, this is an interaction, with one person's (or group's) actions influencing the other's. This can lead to 'secondary behaviours' (Rogers, ??) which are 'self-protecting' behaviours such as bravado and nonchalance, designed to protect a pupil's social standing within their peer group.

*'people started cheering when they come back, so he was like showing off a bit'*

*'everyone just shows off and, I think everyone, they think everyone will laugh at them more and like them more if they show off and stand up to everyone'.*

Types of behaviour used to demonstrate this approach can, in themselves, be deemed disruptive by teachers (e.g. 'back chat', sighing, negative body-language). Teacher reaction to secondary behaviours can either resolve or inflame the disruption. A pupil being known to make frequent use of secondary behaviour can also affect a teacher's willingness to make use of reprimands in an effort to avoid further disruption from secondary behaviours.

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**PUPILS' UNDERSTANDING OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR:**

Pupils find it somewhat difficult to explain why they sometimes behave in ways which they know are 'inappropriate' and break school rules:

*'Yeah – it was my own fault really, cos ... I knew I was doing stuff wrong but just did it ...'*

Pupils note that other pupils' inappropriate behaviour can *'ruin it sometimes for others ...'* It is not readily apparent if pupils attribute intentionality to this or not. However, pupils do think that sometimes the apparent pupil response to being 'told off' for inappropriate behaviour does not reflect their true feelings:

*'y'know, I bet they feel, they know what they've done and they feel ashamed about it. Cos it's stopping the whole class from learning'*

This reflects pupil culture that everyone has a right to learn and a responsibility to allow others access to learning. It also recognises that, as outlined above, embarrassment can lead to secondary behaviours to protect self-image/peer credibility.

Pupils can be unwilling to enter into any discourse regarding their behaviour:

*'they just, erm, don't wanna hear what they, what they've done. I think, at the end of the day, when all their mates have gone, they feel a little embarrassed about it and then they don't want to hear what they've been doing'.*

However, teachers are noted to not always want to discuss behaviour problems, but to apply a sanction and leave it at that. There is no mention by the pupils of any interactions aimed at examining cause and effect scenarios with regard to behaviour. Where reference is made to discussion, it is often 'one-way' with little eliciting of the pupil's own view as to the causes of the behaviour. Pupils can even find it difficult to be assertive when they 'know it's not their fault', as they feel that the teacher reaction to this will be more negative than their just 'taking it':

*'there's no point arguing really'*

*'they refuse to listen sometimes'*

*'erm, I will say something because I know it's not my fault and I shouldn't be punished for something I haven't done, so, I don't see why I shouldn't (sic) keep quiet about it. The teacher will probably have a go at me, erm, just sort of shout at me maybe. But, yeah, cos they think that it's me but it's not and ...'*

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#### BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT – HANDLING, NOT CONTROL:

Pupils tend to attribute appropriate behaviour being demonstrated by pupils as being largely within the teacher's control. Even where some pupils tend to demonstrate inappropriate behaviour, they note that teachers differ as to their ability to deal with it. This is teacher ability to 'handle' things – not 'control' them.

*'sometimes they're [classrooms are] OK - the, erm, the teachers handle it well but, erm, there are some lessons where er all the children just mess around all the time and the teachers don't really handle it at all'*

*'There is one lesson, in X where the teacher can't handle us at all. Everyone, I think in every lesson something bad has happened just, everyone is either chucking stuff or and everyone is mostly shouting'*

Pupils differ as to what they attribute this success to – some feel it is due to the teacher's age, others attribute it to teacher style/approach. It does appear that some teachers display more confidence in their ability to 'handle' things than

others – this could be connected to experience, which allows access to a wider range of learned strategies and also, providing previous experience has been successful, to a greater sense of confidence. Pupils note that changing the social situation for pupils can have an impact on their behaviour:

*'the people were split up into different classrooms and behaviour started to change a lot then'.*

Generally, pupils do not note many pro-active management devices. Seat plans, voicing expectations (regarding on-task behaviour) and 'start of term' rules are the main pro-active devices that pupils are aware of. This can be further complicated by a lack of consistent rules across all departments, although there is naturally a need for additional rules in some subject areas, where equipment is involved. Teachers are not noted to regularly voice expectations with regard to require behaviour:

*'erm, ... I don't .... Really think they do a lot to show you how you should behave ... '*

Pupils are left to 'guess' that their behaviour is becoming inappropriate through the teachers' use of such devices as seating re-arrangement or telling the class to work in silence:

*'you'll know if you're behaving bad when they do certain things'.*

Pupils also react or behave differently according to their view of the teacher, especially in terms of their perceived 'strictness'.

*'they know that they'll get a detention or an after-school detention or something bad or, erm, so, they've just sort of learnt really not to'.*

In this way, a teacher's reputation regarding use of sanctions or reactive management technique in effect becomes a pro-active management device. There is an expectation towards older pupils (Year 9) that they already know the expectations with regard to behaviour and that they should not need reminders. Where targets are set they are often teacher led and teacher reviewed:

*'we're just like given target sheets and then they write down what targets you've ... they think you've achieved and that'.*

Teachers can be explicit regarding some wanted behaviours, especially more concrete ones, such as raising a hand to speak. Some teachers, especially less experienced or younger teachers, are felt to react to behaviour and apply sanctions with little or no discussion or consideration *'they just put you in detention'*. Where teachers do manage or 'handle' things well, pupils have very little awareness of what skills, approaches or strategies that teacher is using, seeming to be more aware only when things are less successful. They do, however, note that having structure to the start of the lesson can help things to remain calm, and that some teachers calm difficult children by giving them attention and talking to them privately.

Pupils noted a well-known and well-used process of reactive strategies and sanctions which are applied to misbehaviour. These include methods by which teachers 'nip misbehaviour in the bud' by 'stopping' the whole class to ensure that people catch up/know what to do/re-exert their leadership over the group and 'adding time on' to the lesson (which can also be gained back through appropriate behaviour). Teachers can also use verbal interactions as behaviour management tools. This includes their volume and tone as well as content. Teachers can shout for misdemeanours such as talking. Teachers who are seen as being 'stricter' are seen as shouting a lot and this is how you can tell that they are strict. They can also 'talk down' to pupils:

*'the naughty ones get talked down to a lot.'*

*'the way that they like, erm, shout and all like, just ... just, like (laughs) just, like, that's what you do'.*

Pupils can lack knowledge as to what exactly is entailed in a sanction (especially where they lack personal experience of it). Teachers don't want to 'intrude' on the lesson with overt behaviour management techniques which interrupt the 'flow' and can sometimes deal with issues at the end of the lesson. Pupils being sent out of the room can result in different outcomes, depending

on teacher actions – for example, a quiet word and a chance to ‘calm down’; being given a further sanction; being sent to another class; being sent to senior staff with further consequences. This gives rise to a pupil question as to whether being sent out of class is a behaviour management technique or a sanction.

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CONSISTENCY OF BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT:

The consistency of behaviour management can vary both between and within teachers. *Between teachers*, different teachers respond to very similar incidents in different ways. This can vary in how public/private they make their response, how immediate, how proportionate it is to the level of the disruption/level of apparent deliberateness. In some lessons, the teacher ‘tries’ *‘to be strict and stuff and they just don’t listen’*. Sometimes some teachers don’t respond to poor behaviour, but this doesn’t mean that they haven’t noticed and will talk to the pupil later. Pupils are usually made to ‘make amends’ for their behaviour (or sanctions are applied). *Within teachers*, response can vary according to a pupils’ perceived standing on the ‘behaviour’ continuum:

*‘some teachers like change it for different pupils, like, nicer to some’.*

with teachers being seen as *‘nicer to the well-behaved kids ... which is right’*. Also, teachers are seen as differentiating their response according to how hard a pupil is trying to behave appropriately:

*‘if some kid’s been behaving for the whole year then like go out of control once then, they just take it as a one-off’.*

Children who have been naughty tend to get more praise. However, teachers are also noted to be ‘more down’ on pupils who are seen to have difficult behaviour, presenting a disproportionate response to the misdemeanour:

*‘well there’d always like, even the smallest things that they do they’d turn into the biggest things and the teacher would just take it and write on the incident sheet or something’.*

Also, difficult behaviour in one lesson can impact on how the child is treated in the next lesson of that same subject, preventing a 'fresh start':

*'if they've misbehaved before the, erm, like in the lessons before that then it would be picked up more'.*

Teachers can also be seen as 'softer' on some children than others for the same behaviour, especially when taking a more flexible approach to behaviour management: '

*'there's this really naughty girl and if – she just like shouts out and stuff - if someone else did it they would – the teacher would go bonkers. Or just send them out – but he doesn't with her'.*

Pupils feel that they should all be treated equally and that protocols and sanctions should be applied evenly. Teachers being 'nice' to the well-behaved children is seen as a justifiable reward for their good behaviour rather than a default relationship stance.

Generally, teachers differentiate their response for different pupils in similar situations depending on their previous behaviour. Teachers can react more strongly to small misdemeanours from known miscreants and their memory of previous misdoings can colour their management decisions in lessons. Where teachers do make an effort to be positive towards those experiencing behavioural difficulties, 'ignoring' some behaviours to concentrate on shaping others, pupils see this as being 'unfair', preferring equality of treatment.

## PUPIL-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

### LESSONS:

It is seen as the teacher's responsibility to make the lesson interesting/fun and teachers are seen to vary (between and within) in their ability (and willingness) to do this. Teaching style is an important factor in this. Interesting lessons carry a notion of inclusiveness and engagement – everyone is actively involved

and feels able to contribute. Learning is however still seen as the function of the lesson by pupils – fun is not seen as the main end in itself. Concentration is increased by fun starters, helping everyone to focus their attention right from the start, especially when it involves active participation. Pupils appreciate and benefit from prompt starts, clear structure and active participation. Pupils noted that most lessons are 'OK' or 'alright'. There appeared to be a note of defensiveness or even surprise at this opinion, as though pupils felt there may be an expectation that they should note a dislike for school.

In 'OK' lessons teachers have good relationships with pupils and have good classroom management strategies, although pupils can find it difficult to articulate exactly what this consists of:

They can *'have a laugh with you'* and they're *'not always in a mood'*.

They *'just sort of get on with you well'*

They allow a low level of talking with no telling off:

*'If there's no telling off then I think it goes a bit smoother'*.

In 'OK' lessons teachers give achievement marks for effort as well as attainment and make use of small sanctions (such as adding time on proportionately) rather than whole-class detentions. They *'only keep the naughty ones behind'*, showing that they try to treat pupils as individuals rather than as a collective 'herd'. They make time for children with SEN and behaviour problems and try to calm them down. They do not allow previous negative experiences (e.g. previous bad lesson) to affect their treatment of pupils at a personal level. Teacher personality is important in this area. Lessons go well when teachers are 'fun' people who 'get on well' with pupils and who are liked. They do not make use of draconian sanctions and show little tendency towards micromanagement, being more liberal with what's allowed. They only ask for silence when there is a good cause to do so. They make good use of structure and active teaching/learning methods and appear well organised.

Where lessons are less than 'OK', pupils noted such as issues as teachers not being interactive (sitting down, marking work), and *'just sitting there watching you'*. Pupils are *'just doing their work'* and getting told off when deemed necessary. There is a lack of interactive work *'all we do is write out books'* and there is rarely, if ever, anything more imaginative or exciting such as projects. There are few opportunities for joint or collaborative work and the teacher appears distanced from the teaching/learning relationship. There is little, if any, dialogue between pupils and teacher and little dialogue is allowed (let alone encouraged) between pupils themselves. There is a feeling engendered of 'them and us' (teacher 'watching out' for misbehaviour) rather than a sense of community and of all moving on together. There is also a feeling that the teacher may have 'opted out' and is making little effort regarding the teaching. Such curriculum presentation/delivery can impact on pupil willingness to participate. Participants noted that there may be some age (and/or style) differences between teachers regarding length of oral introduction/explanation and amount of activity focused experience offered to pupils.

The use of laughter and humour within lessons was also mentioned as an important factor. Teachers make use of several different sorts of humour – 'general' (ie funnies, jokes), self-directed (ie to cover up their own inadequacies or to 'buy' good regard from pupils), or directed towards pupils (can be either genial, taken in good part, or sarcastic/derogatory comments, masquerading as humour). Self-deprecating humour can be dangerous for classroom management, particularly when used to disguise any incompetence, as this can seem to lower respect that pupils have for teachers. Participants note that most pupils cope with being the 'butt' of a teacher's joke. Teachers differ as to how much they make use of humour, with older teachers seen as using less humour. Preferred teachers have a sense of humour that the pupils can share and don't feel excluded by:

*'I think it's cos he was like nice and treats everyone like nice and he just has jokes all the time, like, to do with Science sometimes, he just has jokes'.*

Pupils are more accepting of humour if it is at a 'shared' level. Ultimately, humour can depend upon the relationship the pupils have with the teacher – it is successful where they feel at ease and secure and have mutual respect – the teacher needs to be 'laughing with them, not at them'. In this way, teachers can use humour as part of the relaxed and 'safe' environment that they create and foster in the classroom.

An interest in the subject area can impact on the way in which a pupil interacts with the lesson. For some pupils, even at High School level, future career aspirations can colour their perspectives on subjects, as they know they will need to 'do well' in them. Liking for a particular teacher can enhance a pupil's liking for a subject area. Conversely, participants note that a negative relationship with a subject teacher can adversely affect a child's engagement with the subject area:

*'Erm, it does kind of, cos if you've got a nice teacher then you'll be sort of, like the subject better, but I don't really like X [subject area] anyway but I just I think it made me not like it even worse'.*

It was less evident whether a liking for a subject area could over-ride a relationship difficulty with the subject area teacher. However, it is evident that moving on to a new teacher with whom the pupil develops a 'better' relationship can improve their engagement with and liking for the subject area:

*'... when I was in Year 6,7,8 I had the same teacher in X – I wasn't very keen on that – I've got, erm, a new teacher this year - I'm more interested in X now'.*

Generally, pupils are less keen on a lesson when they have little or no interest in the subject area. One negative interaction with a teacher can colour the pupil's response to that teacher, and, by association with their subject area, for a considerable length of time. This can have a particularly large impact where the child keeps the same subject teacher over a long period of time. The level of pupil interaction is also affected by their liking for the teacher (although this may also be connected to 'trust'). Pupils are less likely to 'have a go' in a

lesson with a disliked teacher. So, their negative response and the negative impact on their learning can be very subtle and difficult to spot (not outright disruption, but a subtle lowering of effort and interaction and/or taking less care). From a teacher's perspective, this amounts to very little and may not even be noticed, but it can have a large impact on the pupil's progress in the subject area. Difficult experiences here can also impact on a pupil's future generalised behaviour – for example, reduced overall trust in teachers.

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#### LEARNING – 'GETTING IT':

Whilst different teachers may use different teaching methods, pupils seem to note quite a narrow range of ways in which teachers can help pupils to 'get it'. These methods include:

- Copying off the board (information given to be learned)
- Learning it (by heart)
- Talking about 'it' in a group
- Stopping the whole class and going through (re-capping) work in progress
- Ensuring everyone has 'caught up' (keeping the class in the 'same place' with their learning)
- Showing you another method of 'doing it'
- Not 'giving you' the answer
- Preferred teachers circulate room and offer help automatically – they check on everyone: *'he'll just go round and help you and stuff. He'll come up to you when you need help and then explain it, then he might tell the whole class what to do.'*

These approaches can be seen to be teacher directed and controlled. The main way in which participants noted that pupils can actively seek to develop or check their learning is through verbal interaction with other pupils. In cases where talking is not permitted, whispering to neighbour for support can even outweigh the potential penalty for talking or being accused of 'copying'.

Generally, teachers try to make sure that everyone 'gets it', although pupils feel it can take them a long time. Some teachers seem to address a wider range of understanding levels and this seems to be recognised and appreciated by pupils as 'somewhat exceptional' and out of the ordinary:

*'the way he explains it to everyone it sort of gets through to you, and even the people who don't get it very well'.*

Re-capping can also be used as a behaviour management technique, to pull the whole class together for a short while and thus re-gain control. Pupils appreciate it when teachers check that they have understood. However, teachers can show, both through their articulations and through their body language, their adverse response to pupils who do not understand. Their response seems to suggest a feeling of pupils 'deliberately' not 'getting it' to annoy the teacher – or, it could be that it shows their own frustration at not being able to find a way of getting it across so that it is understood. All pupils seem sensitive to this and some pupils may be hyper-sensitive to this (possibly reflecting low self-esteem and/or previous bad experiences in this area). Teacher's response to help seeking behaviour, however, is generally viewed very negatively and requesting help directly is generally seen in a very negative light and only to be used as a 'last resort'. However, where teachers pro-actively expect pupils not to understand necessarily, pupils are more open about their learning. Teachers who make reference to their own ways of learning (especially 'when I was young' comments) are particularly well received. It takes courage on the part of pupils to seek help and it exposes their 'weakness/vulnerability' in front of their peers and the teachers themselves. Pupils feel that teachers should have a good knowledge of their pupils and deal with them sensitively. Kind teachers scaffold learning opportunities and to 'give time' to their pupils. Preferred teachers create a relaxed and 'safe' environment in the classroom:

*'Erm, he'll like congratulate you if you do something well, erm, if you're doing something on the computer he'll just like go round and help you and stuff. He'll come up to you when you need help and then explain it,*

*then he might tell the whole class what to do. Erm, he's just, generally jokey.*

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WHEN PUPILS 'DON'T GET IT':

Pupils find it difficult to articulate why they can find it hard to 'get it':

*'if you don't get it then you don't get it'*

One possible reason may be not being keen on asking for additional explanation or for help:

*'I like doing without asking if I'm getting something wrong ... I mean, if I, there's homework I don't understand it I just try instead of asking – I dunno why I just ...'*

*'sometimes you just have no choice you have to stick your hand up'*

Pupils' reluctance to ask for help could stem from previous negative experiences. These can include examples of both content and tone of response as well as body language, as described below:

*'pull a face at you when you ask a question and he won't tell you like, help you with it. And, it just, no one really gets on with him'*

*'she pulls a face at me cos I'm taking ages to explain it and she expects me to know everything but I don't and, yeah, it just annoys me cos and mmm ... not very nice'*

Participants noted that some teachers can even shout at you when you need help and this can really affect shy and quiet pupils, especially when they have finally found the courage to admit their lack of knowledge or confidence and seek support. Other pupils can also be sensitive to this and it can impact on their own view of the teacher in question and could affect their future help-seeking behaviour.

TEACHERS, PUPILS AND LISTENING: JOINT UNDERSTANDING AND AVOIDING CONFLICT:

There is no particular difference between teachers ability to 'understand' or 'get' what pupils are trying to say, although younger teachers are felt to be more able to connect here and that younger teachers are seen to be more willing and likely to listen to pupils than are older teachers:

*'she like, you know, she's a bit younger as well, so, she gets everything that we're trying to say'.*

*'some teachers are a bit ... cos, y'know, the older teacher I don't think get it'.*

There is also some feeling that even when teachers do listen they do so with no willingness to find out the 'truth' of what went on and have already pre-judged the outcomes:

*'Erm, some teachers give their, like, give the pupils a chance and in telling them what happened if someone like got hurt or something and then like they'll, I think they kind of like tell that you're lying or something then they (laughs) and then they like just put you on dinner report or something ...'*

During such conversations, teachers can 'direct blame' towards the pupil or towards other pupils involved in an incident. Teachers can also use 'dismissive' language, possibly in an effort to 'move on' (especially if this is in a lesson). However, this can be 'hurtful' to pupils who feel undermined and undervalued.

Just as pupils can vary in their ability to 'read' the (non-verbal) communication of teachers, teachers can vary in their understanding of the importance of their non-verbal signalling. Pupils set a lot of store on non-verbal communication, particularly on first meeting a teacher, and this can set up future relationships and expectations. 'Strictness' is a particular attribute that is subject to a somewhat stereotypical set of non-verbal behaviours:

*'first you just like look at them and then you like ... then they're just in the class they're just like shout a lot and stuff'.*

*'they just like stand up straight and look like, smart and stuff, and they're just like – look like they mean business'.*

However, this approach in itself is not sufficient – it takes more than just 'looking the part'. However, participants seem somewhat at a loss to understand why teachers who present themselves on the surface as being this way are unable to maintain 'discipline' as other 'strict' teachers do:

*'she tries to be strict and stuff and they just don't listen'.*

Pupils often 'guess' they have done something wrong via the teachers' actions. Thus walking around the class and looking at work is seen as a communication that teachers are not happy with behaviour. Also, 'generally naughty' pupils are seen to attract more attention and visits from teachers, thus providing subtle reinforcement of any constructed perception of the child. Other teachers can be more overt and verbally communicate what is wrong/what they want to change for things to be right. As some pupils are more adept than others at reading this information and also in their willingness to accept it and act on it, this can lead to differences in outcomes with regard to pupils' behaviour.

Altercations with teachers can have a longer-lasting impact for the pupil than for the teacher. When there is a difference of opinion, many pupils feel it is not worth the bother of trying to put their own side, even if they feel they are 'in the right' as there would be no point and it could even make matters worse. However, this does not mean that the incident is forgotten about by the pupil nor that it has no impact on their relationship with the teacher in question for a considerable length of time. As noted above, trust in the teacher can be lost quickly and can be slow to be regained. Pupils are also wary that if they are assertive about their difference of opinion the teacher will 'hold it against them'. Therefore, the silence of the pupil does not necessarily signal their agreement with the teacher. However, the pupil can be willing to keep quiet and put up with a 'personal slight' by the teacher in order to make the relationship 'work':

*' I don't like it to affect the way that ...'*

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PUPIL – TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS:

This is a big area with several component parts, including *teachers' approach to pupils* (personality, style, content of interchanges, amount of apparently available time for interactions, level of interest shown, willingness to 'get to know' and treat pupil as an individual), the issue of (mutual) respect and what different parties mean by this; and issues of 'power (ie do adults treat pupils as 'equals' or as being subject to the authority of their position, invested in them by right in their position of adult and, particularly, as teacher).

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POWER

*'teachers can do what they want really can't they ... if, like, tell you off ...  
There's no point arguing really'.*

Teachers can use access to discourse as a reward/sanction as well as a learning tool. This is one of their most powerful 'weapons'/tools and it is also closely linked to pupil responses regarding their view of the teacher (relationship).

RESPECT/PARITY – from the pupils' standpoint there is a certain meaning (or level) of respect that all teachers are entitled to as a matter of course due to their social standing in the school context. This is at a more superficial level than genuine person-to-person respect, which is based on trust and relationship rather than on authoritarian standpoint. Teachers are respected at this more genuine level if they treat pupils 'as a person' and do not generalise sanctions to the whole class. Participants gave a sense of the importance of respect being mutual. There is also a link here to 'fun lessons', where lessons are fun where there is a feeling of parity to the teacher and respect and mutual liking seem implicit. As noted previously, the way in which teachers speak to pupils is seen as a critical indicator of the level of mutuality of respect within the relationship:

*'Erm, if they're like, just like kind to you as a person then like say if someone's naughty they tell them not to do it and not and like and not keep the whole class in all the time'.*

*'He just sort of, y'know, treats us like, erm, another member of staff, so he talks to us all the same. He treats us all the same'*

*'they just talk to me like a adult instead of a child really'.*

TEACHERS' APPROACH TO PUPILS – preferred teachers engage in a series of behaviours which include allowing and even encouraging social interaction between themselves and pupils and also pupil to pupil within lessons. However, this in itself is not enough for there to be a good relationship between pupils and teacher, as some 'easy-going' teachers are not respected due to a perceived weakness in their behaviour management style:

*'they [younger teachers] just let you talk really. But some people use it to their advantage and like mess them around'.*

Preferred teachers appear 'calmer' and give positive instructions such as 'quiet down a bit' 'instead of yelling'. Non-verbal messages are also taken on board, such as facial expressions and tone of voice and this can affect the interaction between pupils and teachers. There is some disagreement between participants as to whether the age of the teacher is important within this aspect, but they are in agreement as to what the attributes are, even though they disagree as to what to attribute differences between preferred/non-preferred teachers to. Teachers can be strict and still kind, but it seems as though it is difficult to be both at the same time, with teachers seen as switching between the two states:

*'like sometimes he's like really jokey and stuff (yeah) and other times, he like controls the class and everything ...'*

However, other participants see being 'nice' as a key to controlling the class:

*'I think it's [the ability to control the class] 'cos' he was like nice and treats everyone like nice'.*

Kind teachers have a sensitive response, taking on board the feelings of the pupil. This can calm difficult situations (rather than exacerbate them).

THE USE OF HUMOUR – younger (or less experienced) teachers can struggle with their use of humour as it can escalate out of control and then they take refuge in 'shouting' or handing out sanctions which pupils see as unfair as they were invited to laugh but then punished for not stopping when the teacher wanted to stop.

CONVERSATIONS WITH TEACHERS – these tend mostly to be work-based and can be avoided as much as possible by some students:

*'erm, I don't really talk to them in class (small laugh) I just like to get on with my work – I don't really like doing the oral work'.*

*'it'll probably be about your work – how you're working – and something like that ...'*

Participants noted little non-work-related discussion/conversation – it is the exception rather than the norm. This results in teachers and pupils keeping each other at a personal distance, often referred to within the teaching profession as the development of a 'professional' relationship with pupils. There are also concomitant undertones of pupils developing a similar sense of 'professional' distance and relationship. However, this can also allow a sense of 'otherness' to build up, or a disassociation.

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#### IMPACT OF REWARDS AND SANCTIONS ON PUPIL-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP:

The majority of rewards known and talked about by pupils focus on academic achievement. However, pupils feel that working for a reward is more motivating than working in fear of a sanction. Some teachers give feedback for effort, even when an answer is incorrect: *'they'll say like well done for trying and stuff'.* However, participants noted that little overt feedback is given regarding general ways of behaving. Pupils report that they think those who do not receive public rewards may feel 'left out' or excluded when they see others attain them. However, none of the interviewees expressed having felt this themselves. Also, they felt that they would not want other pupils to see that they had not

achieved the status offered by the reward. Rewards which are small and cumulative are liked, particularly when they are quite private (eg stickers in books accruing to build bigger reward or building slowly on a large-scale reward scheme). Stamps/stickers in books are also popular as they '*brighten up*' the books and can have a positive effect on pupil-teacher relationship (the teacher has made some effort to 'meet' the pupil by providing a funny stamp and this is appreciated by the pupil):

*'so it makes you actually want to work so you can get a different stamp as well'.*

This type of system provides a concrete reward, but is often focused on academic behaviour. Also, if a pupil is at odds with a teacher about something (misunderstanding, being incorrectly accused or generally feeling 'hard done by') this can prevent the pupil from being responsive to reward-based approaches:

*E.P.: What do you think works best y'know, being told off or working for a reward?*

*Pupil: Working for a reward. Unless, I'm arguing with a teacher cos or summat like that ...*

There is a sense of process and inevitability about the application of sanctions – pupils talk about '*normally it's ...*' in response to sanctions being imposed for certain types of behaviour. Children who misbehave are said to '*know that they'll get a detention or an after school detention or something bad*'. There is a mixture in pupil perception as to how effective the imposition of sanctions is on shaping pupil behaviour, varying from:

*'so, they've just sort of learnt really not to [misbehave]'*

to: *'if people just get detentions I don't think it really works because they just still keep messing around. I mean, it's only one detention and it can't, I don't think it does anything'.*

There is some perception that teachers can focus on negative behaviours when children are on report, as well as on positive ones, and that they are generally looking far more closely at that pupil's behaviour. The report can be used as a non-verbal reminder regarding behaviour, as when the teacher picks it up, or looks around the room before adding something to it. There is a sense that some sanctions, such as being on report, bring along other 'baggage' with them:

*'they're just like on yellow report and everything'.*

which participants give a sense of affecting the on-going relationship between pupils and teachers. The threat of sanctions can be used as a behaviour management technique. This is thought to be particularly effective by pupils when they have seen the sanction applied previously. However, there is a feeling that if sanctions are applied too frequently or as a snap reaction, the teacher has little respect from pupils and is seen as being unable to manage the class properly. The Head of Year role is viewed as some sort of mysterious interaction – pupils know that 'something' goes on, but do not know what it is, without personal experience of this. Pupils noted a sense of community ownership regarding the Head of Year, referring to *'your head of year'*. However, there is a difficult balance for teachers in involving 'outside' support – involvement at too soon a stage can undermine the teacher's authority, as can allowing a situation to escalate to a higher level.

Pupils response to the application of a sanction can also vary. Some pupils are thought to like to 'show off' and to 'think it's good' when they get into trouble, demonstrating an inappropriate method of gaining peer attention and possibly approval. Some pupils are thought to feel *'ashamed'* or *'embarrassed'*:

*'I think they go off and sulk – sometimes they storm out, erm, or they won't like, do any work, they won't contribute in class discussion and stuff – they just like sit there and do nothing'.*

So, they storm or sulk or simmer. This response can continue with that teacher for a while or can even escalate a poor relationship. There is also an air of stoicism regarding putting up with the (inevitable) sanction:

*'I just think everyone takes it and y'know'.*

Participants noted a general air of inevitability regarding sanctions, especially with regard to the teacher. It is felt that putting across one's own side of the argument (where it is felt that the sanction is unfair) is not worthwhile:

*'There's no point arguing really'.*

Teacher consistency with regard to 'automatic' sanctions can vary. Pupil response to this varies, as it can be seen as unfair that some pupils 'get away with it' when they have put themselves out to get work done; other times, teacher understanding and flexibility can be appreciated. There seems to be an underlying feeling that teachers should know their pupils well enough to know who 'deserves' flexibility and who should rightly be punished.

Peer pressure regarding poor behaviour can be engineered by teacher's use of whole-class detentions. Sometimes people do speak to the main culprits but often nothing is said as it can be the less out-going pupils who would rather endure the unwarranted punishment than raise an issue with more outspoken peers:

*'... some people do say stuff to the people that get erm, that get the whole class into uh, ..., gets them into trouble'.*

Whole class detentions can adversely affect the class relationship with the teacher, mostly because there is a feeling that the teacher did not 'bother' to find out who was causing the disruption and is dismissive of any counter arguments regarding innocence. Respected teachers do find the culprit(s):

*'if someone's naughty they tell them not to do it and not and like and not keep the whole class in all the time'.*

This involves treating pupils as 'a person' and individualising sanctions. Respected teachers use mid-point sanctions – keeping the whole class in for two minutes rather than whole-class detentions where it has not been possible to identify core culprits. In this way, whole class detentions have a different impact on pupil-teacher relationships.

Teachers also vary as to how public or private their sanction-giving is. Pupils generally feel that it being given confidentially is preferred, but that generally other pupils do notice or teachers are very public and verbal about it:

*'they usually tell them off so everyone can hear and most of the class just goes quiet. Sometimes if they get sent out, erm, then the teacher will shut the door and then talk to them, erm, but, everyone tries to listen is as well'.*

*'they shout it across the room'.*

As noted above, the method of the giving of a sanction can also impact on secondary behaviours:

*'cos sometimes if they shout at ya, then like other kids will start laughing and I feel a bit embarrassed ...'*

*'when you've got other people round you you feel that you've got – they feel that they've got, like, stand up to the teacher and, and, like, show off all the time. But if they do it in private then ... they don't have that and then they're just like normal and I think it's better cos then – they're making it worse when they're in the classroom with everyone – just showing off'.*

Overall, whilst the method of applying the sanction and pupil response to it can vary a lot, it is still not always apparent as to the impact on the pupil's internal emotions or self-view, or the impact of the sanction in affecting both the pupil's future behaviour and their relationship with the teacher(s) involved.

## INDIVIDUALITY AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: AN UNDERLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT

The thread of discussion and importance of identity development and the desire of pupils to be seen and treated as an individual ran through each of the three axial codes presented above, without emerging as an axial code in itself. Thus, within the axial code of pupil-pupil conversation, socialisation and learning, there is an expectation that teachers should know enough about the pupils as individuals to understand and acknowledge the complexity of their social interactions when grouping students. There is also an expectation that teachers should differentiate their management of classroom issues such as pupil to pupil talk according to their knowledge of the pupils' personalities and trustworthiness or to 'protect' other pupils from being placed within situations that will impact on their learning. Teacher sensitivity to pupils' willingness to be 'exposed' in front of the class or group is also required by pupils, through a knowledge of who is willing and able to do so and those for whom such a request is too challenging. Within behaviour management itself, pupils reflected a strong sense that teachers should take individual pupil factors into account before applying management techniques and that response should therefore be applied on an individual basis. This can be seen particularly strongly in discussion around pupils who demonstrate secondary behaviours in response to reprimand. There is also a sense of disappointment and distance expressed by pupils with regard to the lack of depth of interaction between pupils and teachers with regard to conversations around behaviour, with sanctions being seen as just being 'given' rather than explained and discussed. This is particularly an issue where pupils feel unfairly blamed where participants demonstrated a perception of there being little or no opportunity to voice their own perspective or version of events. Within a developing sense of individual identity, this teacher behaviour appears to reflect a culture of viewing pupils as part of a collective, rather than accepting a need to deal with each pupil and each circumstance as an individual personal event. However, pupils do note that teacher-pupil relationships appear to be stronger where pupil behaviour is seen as being 'good', a state of affairs they note to be 'right', possibly reflecting a view that positive relationships are a reward for

appropriate social interaction. Within the axial code of Pupil-Teacher Relationships, there is appreciation for teachers who manage to find the appropriate level for classroom teaching, alongside some feeling that teachers should know their pupils well enough to understand what style and level of teaching will best help them to learn. The sharing of humour is seen as reflecting equality, along with teachers who speak to pupils 'as equals' or '*like a adult instead of a child*'. The use of language, in terms of tone, content and amount is seen as one of the key areas in which teachers demonstrate their understanding and response to pupils as individuals. Teachers who speak to pupils about non-school related topics are seen as being more willing to recognise and accept the individuality of pupils. Depersonalised sanctions, especially as evidenced in whole-class detentions, are strongly disliked by pupils, reflecting their dislike of 'blanket' application of any management techniques which apply to pupils as a 'herd' rather than being made up of disparate individuals.

Thus, throughout each of the three axial codes, there runs a thread of pupil viewpoint of each of the areas in terms of the level of individuality each aspects affords to them and recognises within them. This suggests that this developing sense of self is an important construct for young people, a viewpoint through which each aspect within the axial codes is sifted when commenting.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The above findings can be seen to be sited within an existing literature of psychological theory. Each section of the findings will be related in turn to relevant areas of literature, with associations and implications being further examined within the ensuing discussion section.

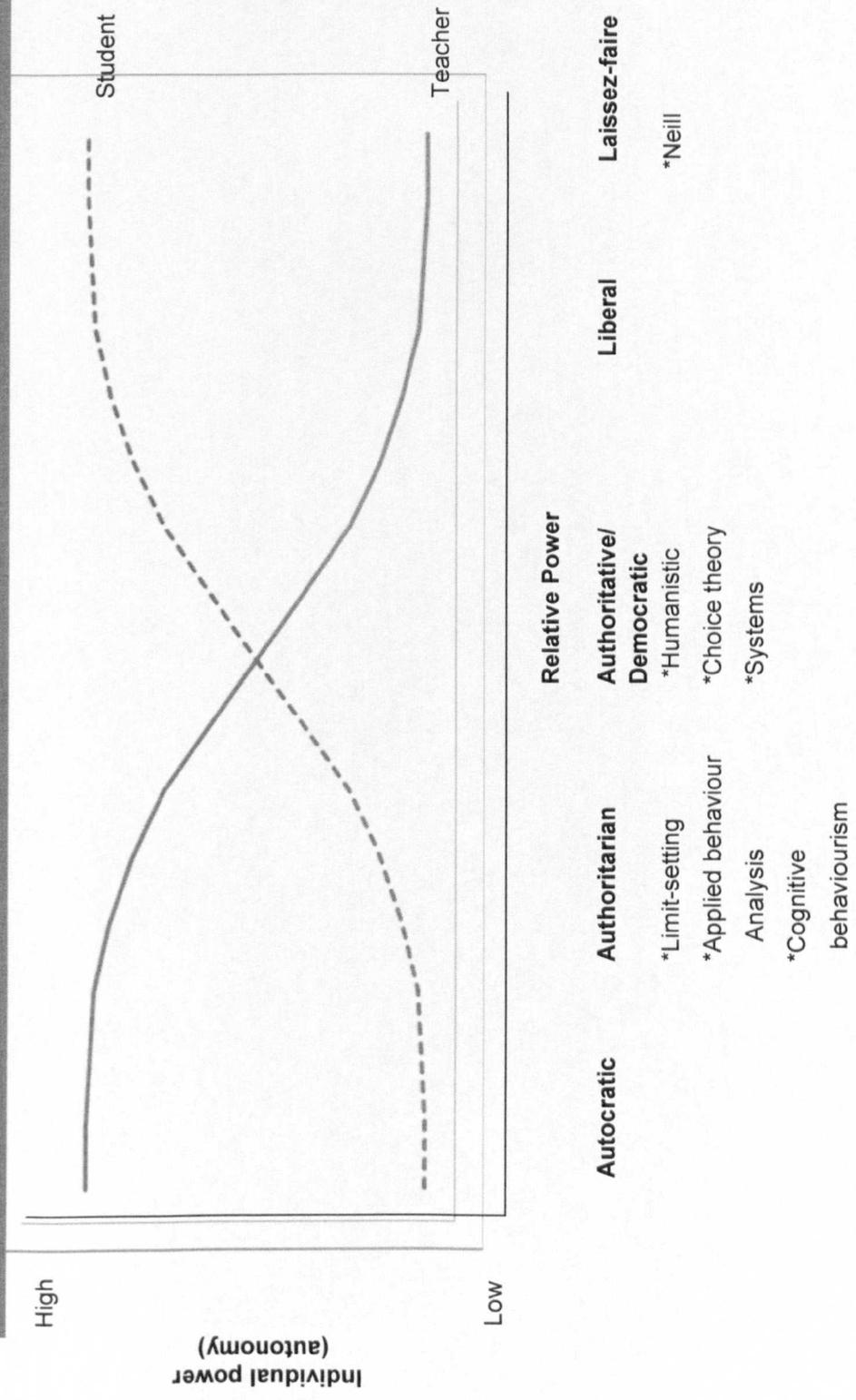
## BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT – ‘HANDLING’, NOT ‘CONTROL’.

There is a vast and varied existing literature with regard to the management of behaviour in schools, and argument which predates Psychology as a discipline. Porter (2000) provides a useful and accessible overview of different psychological theories of behaviour and presents them in terms of their relative positions on dimensions of autonomy (high or low individual power) and relative power (in terms of being autocratic, authoritarian, authoritative/democratic, liberal or laissez-faire) (see figure 3). Teacher training courses currently provide little (if any) outline of psychological theories of behaviour. A recent event organised by the Teacher Training Association (TTA, 2003) regarding behaviour management (‘what do trainee teachers need to know and what do training providers need to do?’) noted, amongst other things, a need for ‘a greater knowledge of child development’ and for ‘theory and practice (regarding a ‘body of knowledge about behaviour management, rooted in research’) to be interwoven’. It was also noted that there is a need for reflective practice to be encouraged and that this required specific time discussing behaviour management with mentors. However, no clear consensus was reached on whether behaviour management should constitute a separate component of courses, or should be a continuous thread, permeating all modules of teacher training. Current DfES guidance to schools, such as the Secondary Strategy Behaviour and Attendance materials (DfES 2003; 2005) provides advice and strategies based on a mixture of Behavioural, Cognitive Behavioural and Humanistic theory, although these are not generally referenced or referred to directly. Whilst the lack of adherence to one particular method of behaviour management (linked to adherence to one theoretical stance) is not of itself a

bad thing, it could be argued that a lack of any framework for understanding of the complexity of situations with regard to classroom behaviour damages practitioners' efficacy to manage such situations within appropriate boundaries. However, even when practitioners do have an awareness of at least some range of psychological theory, research has shown that there appears to be a tendency for practitioners to select theoretical constructs which are consistent with their personal attitudes (Weiss, 2002). Furthermore, these attitudes and their concomitant impact on their response to children presenting with a range of behaviours, can be seen to be directly connected with teachers' own personal experiences, or 'autobiographical' details. Weiss notes:

*All pupils and teachers project their personal life stories, filled with memories, beliefs and associated thoughts and feelings, into every classroom situation.*

**FIGURE 3: THE BALANCE OF POWER PROPOSED BY THEORIES OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE. PORTER (2000, P. 11).**



*These autobiographical mental images form a template that shapes the way pupils and teachers view each other. When expressed through the language of words, emotions, gestures and other actions, the images influence the ways teachers and pupils interact.*

(p. 11).

Such personal experiences thus form part of the cultural and social background of each school. Certain attitudes and beliefs based on these experiences can become predominant and can shape what is commonly referred to as the 'school ethos', which is seen to be a strong factor in affecting both pupil and staff behaviour. Blyth and Milner (1996), in a study of excluded pupils, note that when pupils are excluded from school, there is therefore '*an element of both personal and cultural rejection*' (p.40).

Blyth and Milner also note that the abolition of corporal punishment was an opportunity for schools to encourage staff to develop alternative skills and approaches within counselling and community liaison and make reference to the high level of creativity of solutions to complex difficulties that teaching professionals can display when encouraged to do so. This development requires investment in terms of both time available to teachers and training provided. However, Blyth and Milner suggest a prevalence of teacher behaviours which '*involved more subtle forms of bullying behaviour that can be embarrassing and hurtful and ultimately cause feelings of alienation and social isolation*' (p. 137). Such teachers were found to be perceived by their pupils as 'unapproachable and irrational' and as expecting respect that they did not demonstrate towards others. The voices of participants, reflecting on their relatively recent experiences in school, are remarkably congruent with those of the participants of this study, outlined above: '*they should like talk to you as if you're a normal person, instead of treating you like a big kid*' (20 year old male participant in Blyth & Milner, p. 137).

The importance of the interpersonal domain was stressed with regard to the experiences of excluded pupils, where interviews showed that about half of the

excluded pupils appeared 'overpersonal', suggesting a fear of rejection and a strong need for affected (p. 154). However, it should also be noted that most of the pupils in the study showed a lower 'wanted' score, which was interpreted as indicating that the pupils were very selective about which people they form deep relationships with. Blyth and Milner note that most of the pupils in the study had been 'let down emotionally' and consequently found it very difficult to trust others. This links to Bowlby's theory of Attachment, (Bowlby, 1973) where early relationship patterns with primary caregivers (such as parents) form 'patterns' on which future relationships are understood and based, particularly in terms of trust and of predictability. Difficulties with social interactions are often at the heart of behaviour difficulties within schools, as will be discussed at more length below.

Teachers can thus be seen as having a great deal of influence and responsibility with regard to pupil behaviour, but as having had little direct training with regard to either theoretical frameworks and evidence-based approaches or to adequate time to reflect on their values, beliefs and behaviour. Tirri and Puolimatka (2000) conducted a study of Finnish teachers' understanding and use of their authority in schools. They found that the most problematic conflicts in schools were related to teacher-given punishment and that teachers' behaviour included 'manipulative means' to control classroom life. They suggest that with growing autonomy and increasing cultural diversity – a situation resembling the current professional challenges within teaching in the United Kingdom – 'moral dilemmas' in school will increase. The most common moral dilemmas they identified, for both pupils and teachers, concerned matters related to teacher behaviour, particularly with regard to teachers' practice of using authority. Therefore they suggest that teacher training needs to include a theoretical understanding of the nature of legitimate authority, since a lack of understanding can lead to frustration in teachers and sometimes to 'mis-use' of authority, including manipulative tactics (p.164). They purport that teachers should be 'guided to see themselves as ethical professionals and change agents who can make a significant contribution to the lives of their students and to society' (p.158). This holistic and far-reaching

view is a long distance from a view of 'behaviour management' consisting of a variety of methods for 'getting and maintaining silence in a classroom', which is the main thrust of a lot of in-service training on offer to teachers. It also presupposes a culture of mutual support within educational establishments, with self-reflection and high-level professional development at the heart of such approaches, rather than a predominant culture where teachers can be afraid to seek support for behaviour management issues, due to the impact such admission can have on views of their professional competence. As Grey (2002) notes, *'the world of behaviour problems is characterised by blame'* (p.4).

#### PUPIL-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

In a rapidly changing society, it is not surprising that the culture of schools is an area which is central to debate. Parents particularly are seen as being increasingly central to important decisions with regard to education, and as being more prepared to assert their rights and entitlements (Gray, 2002). However, whatever the policy changes and procedural amendments bring about in terms of systemic impact, schools continue to be places made up of myriad social interactions on a daily basis, many of them between adults and young people. Within and underpinning these interactions are the complex emotions which each person brings with them, which are shaped by a combination of personal experience and attributions, the environmental situation and reciprocal interactions. An understanding of these emotions is part of everyday communication, and, as Gray notes, such communication is ineffective if people's emotions are neglected or not properly understood. However, when understood and used positively, communication, in the form of a relationship, can be instrumental in effecting change in difficult or 'stuck' situations:

*It's the relationship that heals,  
the relationship that heals,  
the relationship that heals –  
my professional rosary.*

Irvin Yalom (1989) (cited in Wahl, 2002)

Wahl (2002) separates professional relationship from 'technique', noting that 'technique is what we do to intervene', whilst the context of a relationship is the space within which intervention can take place. He provides a metaphorical explanation where technique is analogous to a planted seed whilst a relationship is the earth, sunshine and water necessary to initiate and facilitate successful growth. Research in clinical settings has also found that the *quality* of the relationship between client and practitioner can be more important for successful outcomes than the specific intervention or technique utilised (Lambert, Shapiro and Bergin, 1986). Indeed, Wahl asserts that no technique can be effective in the absence of a 'relatively strong' relationship or bond. This does not, of course, preclude the need for practitioners to understand and implement appropriate and effective techniques and approaches – the bond in itself is not necessarily sufficient to effect change. Furthermore, the choice of appropriate support interventions can itself impact on the strength of the relationship.

This type of relationship has been referred to in different ways. Orlinsky, Grawe and Parks (1994) described it as a 'therapeutic bond' whilst Clarkson (1995) made reference to 'the working alliance'. Experience of professional practice indicates that teachers are more comfortable with the 'working alliance' terminology and tend to assume that a 'therapeutic bond' is only undertaken by 'expert others', such as mental health professionals, a view which Hanko (2002) also notes. However, this does not preclude the therapeutic impact of such relationships on those who are in need of emotional support, especially those within school who are seen as experiencing emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSD). It should also be noted that such relationships can

have a positive impact on all interactions, not just on those with specific needs but on the full range of interpersonal exchanges at all levels (e.g. with colleagues, parents and managers as well as students). Jones, Charlton and Whittern (1996) suggest that teacher pupil 'partnerships' can be categorised according to the balance of power existing within them (p. 223). At 'Level 1', the relationship is seen as being Teacher-dominated, where the relationship is found 'create more barriers to learning for those who are already encountering difficulties', whereas at 'Level 2' pupils are more empowered and are aided to take more responsibility both for learning and overcoming difficulties they face. Jones et al note a potential evolution of a 'Level 2' relationship into a 'Level 3' relationship, where there is a genuine sense of equal partnership, with teachers and pupils working closely together to improve conditions in all areas and aspects (p. 237).

Instigating and developing such relationships (or 'reasonably healthy working alliances') is not always easy, particularly with those who have not previously encountered such relationships. However, as Wahl notes, whilst it is '*often the hardest*' it is also the '*most essential task*' practitioners face (p.64). Indeed, whilst noting that those students who do present with EBSD experience problems in relationship to others, Wahl contends that perhaps the EBSD term could be better replaced with a '*relationship difficulties*' term, as being more descriptive and also as being more likely to point in the correct direction for amelioration and the necessary 'therapeutic' support to effect change. Wahl's extensive research into classroom practice across both the UK and the USA has led him to formulate both an outline of the characteristics that seem to coincide with or support effective and productive relationships (or 'working alliances') and those characteristics or approaches which he refers to as 'the ten traps'. These are presented below in figures 4 and 5. Wahl notes that whilst teachers (and other adults within school) can often '*get away with*' using such approaches with the majority of pupils, those

**FIGURE 4: CHARACTERISTICS OF FERTILE WORKING ALLIANCES. WAHL (2002, P. 66)**

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
Trust, safety	The child believes that they will not be hurt or let down by the adult and the adult feels reasonably psychologically/physically safe.
Openness, expressiveness	There is an ongoing and productive exchange (verbal, non-verbal or physical) between the adult and child.
Bond*	The relationship matters or is meaningful to both adult and child.
Reciprocal attunement*	The adult and child are on the same 'wavelength' and are not at cross-purposes. Similar to Rogers' (1951) idea of empathy.
Reciprocal affirmation*	Verbally, non-verbally or physically the child and adult are able to express liking or affection for one another. Similar to Rogers' idea of unconditional positive regard.
Motivation for and commitment to change	Child and adults experience a desire for things to be better/different and a willingness to continue the relationship despite difficulties or ruptures.
Collaboration, cooperation, engagement	Child and adult are working as a team.
Consistency of arrangements*	The child believes that the adult will 'follow through' and believes in what the adult says. Similar to Rogers' idea of congruence.
Expectation of change	The adult and child believe that change is possible. Similar to Yalom's (1985) idea of 'instillation of hope'.
Clarity of roles and procedures*	The child and adult are clear about expectations, responsibilities and processes.
Maintenance of boundaries	There exists a clear and achievable means of containing the child, where necessary.

\*Adapted by Wahl from the meta-analytic review of Orlinsky *et al* (1994).

**FIGURE 5: PROBLEMS IN ADULT-CHILD ALLIANCES: THE TEN TRAPS. WAHL (2002, P.67).**

TRAP	DESCRIPTION	PREDICTABLE CHILD RESPONSE
1. Nagging	Adults repetitively express their needs in a manner which has little or no meaning to the child.	Child 'tunes out' adult.
2. Shouting	Loud nagging. The dynamics are similar – only the volume has changed.	The child eventually 'tunes out' the adult.
3. Public verbal reprimand	A form of punishment that relies on social shaming.	Child may appear repentant during and just following reprimand, but the behaviour is likely to recur due to resentment, lowered self-esteem, negative labelling and possibly a desire to 'get even'.
4. Groundless threatening	Usually an 'off the cuff' threat, which the adult cannot follow through on.	Child's behaviour usually recurs as the child senses the adult cannot or will not follow through.
5. Vague promises	A promise of a reward that is unclear.	Child's poor behaviour often recurs because they are unclear of what is expected of them or believe they will be rewarded despite their behaviour.
6. Character attacks	A form of punishment that is focused on the child's <i>person</i> , rather than his/her behaviour.	Poor behaviour often recurs due to labelling, lowered self-esteem and possibly a desire to 'get even'.
7. Pointless ignoring	Ignoring poor behaviour when there exist sources of reinforcement other than the adult.	Poor behaviour recurs or even escalates.
8. Blaming or accusing	The strong insistence that the child has behaved poorly.	Child projects blame either privately or socially.
9. Inconsistent responding	Responding to a child's behaviour in unpredictable ways.	Poor behaviour continues as the child develops a 'gambling mentality'.
10. Physical	Spanking, hitting, grabbing, etc.	Child engages in poor behaviour in instances where they believe they will not get caught. No internalisation or learning of appropriate behaviour.

who have relationship difficulties '*seem particularly immune to such unsophisticated approaches*' (p.68). This provides at least a partial explanation as to why school staff note that some pupils are not responsive to the 'usual' range of behaviour management strategies that they employ and attribute such lack of response to some deliberate behaviour of the pupil whilst being generally unwilling to reflect on their own stance. The traps are deceptive and can be attractive to teachers, as, at least in the short term, they can aid teachers in getting the necessary behavioural responses to move a situation on. They can also allow adults to 'vent' some of the uncomfortable emotions that the situation has caused them to experience (e.g. irritation). However, the 'ten traps' do not promote the 'working alliance' which is outlined above, being focused rather on the role of the adult as an authority figure with a lack of mutuality in terms of either respect or problem-solving approaches for relationship difficulties. As such they rely on the adult exercising authority over the child, with an element of 'coercion' involved. As Wahl notes, at a fundamentally human level, children reject attempts to coerce them against their will. Threat of sanction can effect response in the adults' preferred direction at least in the short term, but is likely to foster resentment and refusal in the longer term. Furthermore, such approaches do not elicit or encourage the child's sense of empathy and therefore do not promote social conscience. They also do not provide any means for the child to discover alternative, more appropriate means of getting their needs met. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they provide a potentially dangerous and powerful adult model that suggests coercion to be the most effective way of gaining a wanted outcome.

Hanko (2002) notes that it is essential that teachers' needs are met with regard to the personal and interpersonal emotional factors outlined above. Whilst '*any school's learning environment will be affected by what teachers feel about their pupils*', training emphasis tends to be placed on developing knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes. However, as Hanko contends: '*emotional factors are key influences in both teaching and learning*' and, this being the case, teaching requires an understanding of the nature and complexity of '*interactive emotional experience*' from both the pupil and teacher perspective. Hanko also

notes that a current climate of narrow focus on academic attainment can impact at an emotional level for both pupils and teachers and can also affect the teaching and learning relationship. Where teachers 'miss' the emotional message behind inappropriate or problem behaviour, there is a danger that they can fall into the traps outlined above, and attempt to address the difficulties in terms of control rather than as part of a wider professional relationship, which is a longer term proposition and requires a higher level of commitment and time – a commodity which is always in short supply in schools. Hanko contends that teachers can be trained in 'therapeutic' teaching skills and can learn to respond more appropriately to children's needs as they enhance their own '*emotional competence*' (p.29). She provides the following summary of therapeutic teaching:

Therapeutic Teaching may thus be summarised as understanding that:

- A pupil's current reactions and patterns of relationships may relate in part to important past experiences (such as being threatened, not feeling valued or accepted) which can be rekindled by a threat or fear perceived in the present;
- It is possible for past damaging experiences to be superseded by new representative ones in an educational setting *if* a pupil is helped to perceived himself differently in relation to important others.

Teaching therapeutically thus allows learning-impaired children, together with all others who benefit from their teachers' continuing professional growth, to feel newly valued as individuals and to succeed *socially* as well as *academically*.

Hanko (2002, p.31)

This approach can also be seen to link to Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1973), which postulates that children's early experiences of attachment with their primary caregiver(s) is transferred into new settings, such as school, and becomes the basis for further relationship patterns. As outlined above, Weiss (2002) further notes how teachers' own experiences, their '*personal autobiographies*' impact in terms of their own understanding of relationship

patterns, developed through their own attachment style, on their relationship with pupils. As Bowlby notes, *'human beings of all ages are found to be at their happiest and to be able to deploy their talents to best advantage when they are confident that, standing behind them, there are one or more trusted persons who will come to their aid should difficulties arise'* (p. 407).

Hanko also notes affective dimensions of cognitive development, at all levels and ages. This is line with Maslow's theory of a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1987), which contends that affective needs have to be met as a prerequisite to cognitive engagement with the environment. Shann (1999), in research focused on the importance of school culture in promoting school effectiveness, reports findings which suggest that the highest achieving school combined an emphasis on academics with a culture of caring, which was reflected in higher rates of pro-social behaviour and lower rates of antisocial behaviour amongst students. It is also interesting to note that Shann suggests an important synergy between an *'emphasis on academics'* and *'a culture of caring'*, such that one without the other is insufficient to promote achievement (p. 409). This challenges the current situation where there appears to be two often opposed, or at least divergent, academic (and sometimes policy-driven) discourses with regard to *'standards and achievement'* and *'caring and nurturing'* (Shann, p. 411, cf. Prillaman et al, 1994).

The methods by which teachers communicate with children are therefore of great importance. This includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. Cohen and Manion (1996) note that there are at least four reasons for the importance of non-verbal messages:

1. *non-verbal messages are seen as more honest reflections of what we are really thinking or feeling at a particular time;*
2. *a child's ability to learn from a teacher depends on their sharing of the nonverbal system of communication, which can often be subtle (i.e. tone of voice);*

3. *human communication is a complex process involving all modalities and not merely verbal communication – nonverbal communication thus draws attention to the non-language facets of communication that are often overlooked within the total process;*
4. *nonverbal communication acknowledges communication as a process taking place within a framework of human relationships, rather than as a simplistic end-product of reception of content from a source.*

Cohen and Manion (1996, p.181)

Cohen and Manion note that facial expression may be of most importance within nonverbal communication and that teachers '*probably communicate more accidentally by his or her facial expression than by any other means*' (p.193). Such facial expressions can act as reinforcers for presented patterns of behaviour, and whilst teachers do have control over what Cohen and Manion term '*more enduring expressions like smiles and frowns*' they contend that, in practice, few teachers actually do control these signals. Teachers instead appear to respond intuitively, with little conscious awareness of the impact of their nonverbal communication (p.196). Similarly, certain aspects of verbal communication, such as speed, loudness, pitch, breathing and resonance have also been found to express emotion (p.198) which can affect students' interpretation of the content of a verbal communication. Overall, teachers require a strong awareness of the importance of their nonverbal communication when interacting with their students.

#### PUPIL-PUPIL CONVERSATION, SOCIALISATION AND LEARNING.

Socialisation, language and learning are part of the everyday experience of every member of a school community, as is apparent within the voices of the participants represented above. A Vygotskian perspective, based on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1896 – 1934; see revised work, 1986, for overview), is centred on examination of these areas and consideration to existing literature will therefore be considered from this stance, with a particular focus on the role of language within learning.

Heated debate as to 'how' learning takes place has been part of educational discourse for a considerable time. Different viewpoints on this question lead to different approaches to teaching and educational provision in general. Wells (1992) suggests that the pervasive conception of learning, for both pupils and teachers, is that of a body of 'knowledge' that is '*contained in minds and books and that can be transmitted from one container to another*'. Wells also notes that there is a general '*distrust*' in the value of students being encouraged to use open dialogue in learning situations to express their beliefs and opinions, possibly because outcome from such dialogue is unknown and hence more difficult to manage. However, this process of verbal expression and commenting and questioning of others' viewpoints can be seen as a critical process in terms of progress in both individual and collective understanding (p.112). This view is very much in line with a Vygotskian approach, which emphasises thinking as being influenced by cultural exposure, particularly through interaction with other members of a culture (Meadows, 1998). As Meadows notes, cognitive abilities within a Vygotskian perspective are seen as being formed through interaction within the wider cultural environment and are thus based on inter-psychological development before they become internalised and intra-psychological (p.6). Language is the mode by which this transfer most commonly takes place: '*collaborative language becomes an enabling tool for thought so that interpersonal experience is transformed into intrapersonal competence*' (Vygotsky, 1978).

The process by which this cognitive development occurs is often described using the metaphor of scaffolding, but may be better described by Feuerstein's model of a 'mediated learning experience' (Feuerstein et al, 1980), of which 'scaffolding' can be seen as one example of a mediational strategy (Stringer, 1998). Mediated learning experiences allow for collaboration between an 'expert' and a 'novice', where the novice's understanding is extended through the provision of the interaction. The 'expert' role can be undertaken by any other whose level of understanding is at a higher level than that of the novice, such that other students can fulfil the role. Meadows (1998) notes that children

who receive good scaffolding not only acquire culturally-valued skills and ways of organising their knowledge but also learn the process of scaffolding. This will, initially be reflected in an ability to scaffold themselves in solving their own problems leading to an ability to be able to scaffold others, who are less skilled in the relevant area (p.8).

However, is access to opportunity for social and language-based interaction within the classroom (i.e. opportunities for pupils to talk to one another) sufficient in itself to provide the necessary socially-based arena for culturally-based mediated learning to take place? Wells (1999) contends that for discourse to be worthwhile, it should be 'progressive', in the sense that it must result in progress, involving *'the sharing, questioning and revising of opinions [that] leads to a new understanding that everyone involved agrees is superior to their own previous understanding'* (p. 112). This differs slightly from the above description of mediated learning experiences, as it does not recognise the need for scaffolding by an 'expert' and provides a version whereby students of equal level can facilitate each other's increase in level of understanding. This type of knowledge building exchange can be seen within a community basis, through the exchanges of professionals working within the same or similar circumstances, via publication, conference and, more recently, internet dialogue. Bereiter, 1994a notes six commitments that all participants make with regard to progressive discourse:

- *There is a focus on conceptual artefacts.*
- *Improvability as a positive attribute of conceptual artefacts.*
- *Common understanding is given priority over agreement.*
- *There is a commitment to expand the factual base.*
- *Selective criticism is based on knowledge-advancement goals.*
- *Nonsectarianism.*

(Bereiter, 1994a, pps 87-8)

These commitments and this mode of discourse is familiar to those who have studied as adults, and may form the basis of an adult model of learning. However, it is less often apparent within classrooms or even at undergraduate student level, where a 'transmission' model of teaching and learning remain prevalent. Bereiter notes that the fact that classroom discussion in itself is unlikely to generate ideas which advance the discourse in the manner set out above should not prevent it from occurring, as the most important aspect of such interactions is that the understanding which is generated is new to the students and is recognised as being superior to their previous level of comprehension.

Hanko (2002) notes a need for teacher training and support with regard to the importance of language within teaching and learning. She advocates *'asking answerable questions that are geared to widening insights about a pupil's needs and responding to them in the course of an ordinary working day – asked in a genuinely exploring, non-provocative and supportive way'* (p.32). This allows for Vygotskian aspects such as scaffolding (or Feuerstein's 'mediation') within the social and cultural context, working within or just beyond a student's current level of understanding or competence (their 'zone of proximal development' – the area within which there is sufficient existence of knowledge to be able to comprehend the next level of understanding).

Cohen and Manion (1996) in discussing the role of the teacher with regard to classroom language opportunities, note that there are three different styles of learning commonly offered to students. They can be passive listeners, they can be 'allowed' to verbalise at some point or they could engage in 'active dialogue' with the teacher. All of these approaches, it should be noted, remain under the control of the teacher. Cohen & Manion also suggest that a characteristic of much classroom talk is the extent of the teacher's *'conversational control'* over a topic, that is, *'the relevance or correctness of what pupils say, and over when and how much pupils may speak'* (p.168). This could be seen as having a constraining influence on pupil dialogue, which is possibly less apparent within free pupil-to-pupil dialogue which is not directly

influenced by the teacher. Wells (1999) recognises that there is an air of discomfort in allowing free discourse amongst students and that there needs to be more trust in students' ability to take an active role in their own learning. It could also be argued that teachers need to feel more confident in the value of pupil discourse that is not directly controlled and also in their own confidence to teach pupils necessary skills to enable dialogue to be 'progressive'.

Classroom conversation has also been recognised as being qualitatively very different from 'everyday' conversation, standing in marked contrast due to the level of inequality between teacher and student (Edwards and Furlong, 1978). Thus, in everyday conversation, no one person has the overriding claim to dominate the conversation in terms of when or how much to speak, or on having the 'power' to make a unilateral decision on a subject and when to end discussion. In classroom situations, this can be very much the case and can make inequality between teacher and pupil very apparent. However, Edwards and Furlong also recognise that as far as pupils are willing to be taught, they are able to recognise the need for the teacher to thus '*dominate*' the proceedings and to take control of the social situation in terms of conversation. However, where teachers do not allow for sufficient time for language and socially-based learning opportunities, as noted above, this could have a serious impact on the learning of pupils. The research of Edwards and Furlong provides an outline of the relative frequency of such opportunities:

### Participant-Structures in Traditional Classrooms

In traditional classrooms, the participant-structures in order of general decreasing frequency:

1. The teacher talking to a silent audience, and requiring everyone's attention.
2. The teacher talking to one pupil (asking a question, evaluating an answer, issuing reproof), but assuming that everyone else is taking notice.
3. A pupil talking to the teacher, with the rest of the class as audience.
4. The teacher talking to one or more pupils when the others are *not* expected to listen and may be allowed to talk themselves.
5. Pupils discussing among themselves with the teacher as chairman (neutral or otherwise).
6. Pupils discussing among themselves with the teacher absent.

*Edwards and Furlong (1978, p.15)*

Whilst Edwards and Furlong's research was undertaken some considerable time ago, the frequency chart they produced remains recognisable as a description of practice within today's secondary school classrooms. Furthermore, the research showed that the majority of the content of the teachers' talk, which few teachers were able to limit to less than two thirds of the time available for talking, consisted of 'telling' (i.e. giving information and instructions, censuring pupils and evaluating them). This observed use of language is at considerable odds to the role assigned to language from a Vygotskian perspective, as outlined above.

## IDENTITY – THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SENSE OF AN INDIVIDUAL SELF.

Identity is a way of thinking about oneself which involves a sense of self-unity and a sense of continuity of an individual persona which persists over time and across contexts. Whilst this sense of self is perceived by the individual, it also needs to be both recognised and confirmed by others (Erikson, 1959; 1963 and 1968). However, it should be noted that individual identity is regarded as a dynamic rather than static entity, its formation within adolescence being seen as the basis for continual change in the content of identity throughout adult years, within a life-span developmental process. The development of a personal identity can therefore be seen as an important psychological development within a lifespan perspective. Within Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (op. cit.) eight stages of development are outlined, each stage involving both physical and psychological changes within a social context. Between approximately the ages of twelve and eighteen, the 'psychosocial crisis' being undertaken is that of 'Identity' versus 'Role Confusion'. This involves a process of young people developing their own sense of self, of individuality. As with all changes, this involves discomfort at times, and with every choice made (whether consciously or unconsciously) other options become closed or less likely to be available in the future. Changes are seen to take place across three 'planes' or levels simultaneously: biological (especially with regard to puberty); social and psychological. At the social level, adolescence can be seen as a time of confusion and conflict, with young people vacillating between being expected to make important life decisions and to take more responsibility for their conduct at the same time as their being maintained as generally dependent upon adults around them and being expected to recognise the 'authority' of adult supervision through parents and teachers. Meyerhoff (2004) suggests that for adolescents there is a sense that *'you are stuck in this not-a-child-and-not-an-adult limbo of increasing responsibilities without commensurate privileges'* and that this state causes a great deal of stress. Meyerhoff also comments that adolescence is, in many ways, an *'artificial construction of our modern world'*, engendered to respond to the needs of an industrialised society's new requirements for expanded

education and increased maturity to fulfil the roles required for both work and citizenship at a higher level of sophistication.

The sense of self develops within a social environment over a period of time. Erikson's approach views identity as being built upon childhood experiences such as the incorporation of significant others in terms of their roles, values, beliefs but as being *more* than the sum of these experiences (Bergh and Erling, 2005). Identity was thus seen as being the outcome of conscious choice between known alternatives. Marcia (1993a; 1994) identified a process of development of identity which involves a sense of initial 'crisis' when choosing among the various alternatives for life ('exploration'), followed by 'commitment' to one of the possible choices, in order to achieve what Marcia designated a 'mature identity'. Within this process, adolescents can be operating within any one of four states of identity formation. Gross (1992), in a general explanation of the psychology of adolescence, outlines these four states of identity status as follows:

#### **Marcia's Identity Statuses**

- (a) *Identity Diffusion* – the person is in crisis and is unable to formulate clear self-definition, goals and commitments; it represents an inability to 'take hold' of some kind of adult identity.
- (b) *Identity Foreclosure* – the person has avoided the uncertainties and anxieties of crisis by rapidly committing him/herself to safe and conventional goals without exploring the many options open to the self.
- (c) *Identity Moratorium* – decisions about identity are postponed while the person tries out alternative identities without being committed to any particular one.
- (d) *Identity Achievement* – the person has experienced a crisis but has emerged successfully with firm commitments, goals and ideology.

Excerpted from Gross (1992, p. 630).

Bergh and Erling (2005) note that the identity statuses are generally regarded as being representative of different levels of sophistication, with diffusion being considered the least mature state, followed by foreclosure, moratorium and identity achievement. Bergh and Erling suggest that the relationship between identity status and the type of education adolescents receive has not been well researched, despite the focus on the role of social context within the theory.

Elkind (1988) makes reference to the changes in adolescent's cognitive capacities. In Piagetian terms, adolescents are increasingly able to achieve formal operational thinking such that they are able to make use of symbols and develop an ability for meta-cognition. This enables them to start to discuss such conceptual entities as their beliefs, faiths and values. Elkind also propounds the theory of an 'imaginary audience', which is seen as having a '*powerful motivational force*' (p. 113). Elkind describes the imaginary audience as being the product of adolescent's misguided and ego-centric beliefs and confusion between their own thinking and that of other people: '*the belief that others are as concerned with us as we are*' (op. cit.).

However, Bell and Bromnick (2003) contend that whilst '*the audience is perceived by [...] young people as being real, with real personal and social consequences, [it] should be conceptualised as such by researchers and theorists*'. Furthermore, their Grounded Theory investigation notes that at least in terms of the 'imaginary audience' consisting of other adolescents, the audience is more real than imaginary. Citing other research (Vartanian, 2000) they suggest that if young people believe that others are watching and judging everyone, rather than just themselves personally, then the possibility exists that their belief is not only shared but could also be accurate. They also note (cf. Baumeister, 1982) that literature regarding adults' '*self-presentation and impression management*' accepts a view of the importance and reality of other people's opinions. Adults' motives within this area are presented as being a wish to '*please the audience*' and to '*construct one's self congruent to one's ideal*'. Bell and Bromnick suggest that '*the fact that these concerns are conceptualised as real for adults, yet imaginary for adolescents, attests to the*

*argument that traditional research tends to patronise and undermine the views and feelings of young people while taking the views of adults seriously.'*

## DISCUSSION

Interpretation of these findings has to be made with caution, due to the small size of the participant group. In terms of the Grounded Theory methodology, whilst it could be argued that there were sufficient participants to allow for a level of comparative interrogation of the data, and that there was evidence of a relatively high level of homogeneity across the participants within the areas presented above, it could also be argued that no saturation point had been reached, such that some new first levels codes were still being presented by the final interviewee. There does, therefore, exist the possibility that further participants could have added further dimensions or have changed the researcher's views of the interconnectivity between the presented dimensions. Nonetheless, the research has arguably fulfilled the role of providing at least an outline 'pilot' investigation of the views of young people with regard to what they find important within school, and could provide an interesting basis for further research in this area, particularly with regard to the finding concerning the interconnected relationship of identity formation and sense of individuality. As Bergh and Erling (2005) noted, little investigation has been undertaken on the role that schools play within this process. Further research in this area would arguably need to address this issue from two perspectives: firstly, the impact of school contexts on the identity formation process (how do schools 'help or hinder'?) and secondly, the impact of the identity formation process on young people's engagement with schools and their education experience (could their choices lead them to either embrace or reject school-based values?). The relationship between these two perspectives would also require further investigation.

Within a Grounded Theory approach, the dynamic role of the researcher, together with acknowledgment of the potential and likely impact of their professional stance and experience on the interpretation of data, is recognised and embraced. Thus, in terms of sensitivity to potential theoretical frameworks which could be implicated within the findings, the researcher was aware of the potential for certain areas to arise, such as relationships, the role of language within learning and the impact of emotions on potential to learn effectively.

However, the researcher did not anticipate the emergence of an apparently interconnecting framework based around young people's search for individual identity and the impact of such a need for individual recognition within the school environment on young people's interaction with both relationships and the taught curriculum. Within a Grounded Theory perspective, this demonstrates the need for researchers to be able to consider their findings within the light of the wider theoretical canon, which requires a broad knowledge base of potential (but initially unexpected) theoretical directions.

The findings of this research, whilst tentative, as outlined above, do however suggest some serious implications in terms of both emotional aspects of the educative process and its impact on the quality and nature of relationships between adults and young people within school contexts. Findings with regard to the role of socialisation and the importance of the role of language within learning echo previous findings and provide further support for a Vygotskian theoretical stance, in line with previous research, as outlined above (Meadows, 1998; Stringer, 1998). The finding with regard to the interconnected psychological principle of identity formation could be seen to be either incidental (reflecting a psychological process that is taking place at this point within a chronological and maturational development process) or as being instrumental (affecting the interactions within and between young people in their school context and being affected by it). It is beyond the scope of this research to address this question. However, it can be noted that, based on the participants in this study, the sense of individuality and a need for this individuality to be recognised impacts on both pupil-teacher relationships and even on pupils' engagement with the taught curriculum. Where relationships are damaged by a pupil's perception of teachers' lack of recognition of individual needs or preferences, pupil response can range from being overtly antagonistic to a subtle lowering of willingness or effort in participation. What is also evident is that this effect can be relatively long-lasting from the pupil's perspective and can also be generalised across adults or subject areas, thus impacting at a wider and deeper level across the curriculum and general educational context.

Pupils were not always able to articulate potential reasons behind relationship difficulties and, indeed, often found open questions difficult to respond to, showing a preference for short and general responses, even when encouraged to elaborate. This relative paucity of response could be attributed to several reasons, including pupils' familiarity with a convention within school to provide succinct answers; a difficulty with expressive vocabulary around the areas discussed and the novelty of being asked to reflect on areas which they generally 'took for granted' as being their school experience. Related to this latter point, pupils found it very difficult to elaborate on concepts or schema of complex social interactions which they encountered on a regular basis. There was a tendency to use encompassing descriptive terminology such as 'things' and 'stuff' to describe such interactions. When encouraged to elaborate further, pupils showed difficulty both with finding language for explanations and with the concept that the researcher did not apparently immediately understand what it was they were describing. There may also have been an element of participants feeling that adults would not be *able* to understand the specific nuances of the situations they were outlining, due to their disconnectedness from the social situation. With regard to these considerations, it should be noted that Grounded Theory approaches were developed for use with adult participants and that little research has been undertaken as to the efficacy of the approach with younger participants. However, if qualitative research is genuinely to attempt to address school-based issues, ways in which to investigate the views of young people need to be further developed and honed, and Grounded Theory can be seen to have a potentially major role within this, particularly with older pupils. There may, however, be a level of language maturity within participants that is necessary for Grounded Theory approaches to be considered.

With regard to the inter-relationship of the three axial codings and the underlying psychological principle of individual identity (represented in figure 2) which emerged from the research, each of the three axial code areas can be seen to interact with each other in a reciprocal manner. Thus, for example, pupil-teacher relationships were found to impact on teacher decisions with

regard to behaviour management issues and, reciprocally, behaviour management decisions to impact on the nature and quality of pupil-teacher relationships. What is not, perhaps, entirely evident from this representation, is the subtlety of the interaction, in terms of the apparently disproportionate impact seemingly innocuous (from the adults' perspectives) interactions can have on pupil perception of their relationship with the teacher. This suggests that whilst the pupils may largely view their teacher as being an individual, teachers may, to a large extent, view their pupils as being members of a 'collective' - the 'class' - rather than a collection of highly individual young people. Whilst pupils reflected an understanding of this viewpoint, together with some understanding as to the reasons why this stance may be prevalent or indeed, at least to some extent, necessary, they also showed an incongruent feeling that teachers should have more understanding of and take more heed of the individual needs and feelings of their pupils on a one-to-one basis. This is also compatible with the view that ego-centricity is increased during adolescence. One particular area which could be seen to highlight this finding is that of 'Sanctions' (a second-level code) being aligned with 'Pupil-Teacher Relationship' rather than with the arguably more obvious connection to the axial code of Behaviour Management. This was due to pupil perception of the impact of teachers' use of sanction directly affecting the relationship between themselves, the pupil(s) immediately involved and the remainder of the class, in their role of 'audience' or social context. In such a way, teachers' decision to make use of a sanction; the type of sanction applied; the manner of its implementation and consequences following on from the use of the sanction all impacted directly on the nature and quality of the teacher's interaction with both target pupils and other, apparently 'non-involved' pupils. This was also seen to have further implications in terms of both behaviour and curriculum engagement which, whilst potentially very subtle, could be seen to have far-reaching consequences in terms of pupil progress and attainment.

Questions regarding the relative level of 'power' within pupil-teacher relationships are raised by this research, particularly within the context of current cultural debate as to the level of 'rights' afforded to individuals (as

opposed to the 'good of the greater number'). The publication of 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2004) increases debate as to the centrality of the voice of children and young people within this arena. Whilst it can be seen as laudable and necessary that children and young people are consulted as to what they see as being helpful, alternative argument suggests that adults have a broader perspective and more experience and can thus make more informed judgements. Adults can therefore be seen as legitimate decision makers for children and young people in some areas (such as ensuring a healthy diet and sufficient sleep), at least until they achieve the necessary level of maturity to make their own decisions. Young people themselves recognised and accepted this role of adults, also ascribing a sense of 'security' to the fact that adults could be seen to be 'in control'. Part of the necessary development of young people into adulthood is the slow assumption of this care-taking role such that young people begin to make their own informed judgement decisions across a range of issues over a period of time. This development is scaffolded by adults and is based on young people's previous experiences of decisions made on their behalf, together with the reasons ascribed to them. This research raises questions as to the level of negotiation between teachers and pupils concerning 'automatic' authority ascribed to adults in terms of their leadership role as opposed to an automatic assumption of the power of the adult to make (well-meaning) decisions for less-experienced young people. This links to the young-people's developing sense of autonomy which is concomitant with their developing sense of identity. There is also cultural debate as to whether this aspect of development is being accelerated in terms of young people's 'demands' to be respected and as to whether or not young people demonstrate the necessary level of acceptance of 'responsibility' which is seen as the reverse side of being ascribed rights. Whatever the rights and wrongs of such debates, schools are central to young people's experience of life and therefore need to be aware of the impact of such debate and possible wider cultural change on the ways in which they interact with young people. This may require adults within school communities to review the nature of their relationship with young people in terms of their expectations of their natural 'authority'.

These findings suggest a need for teachers and school administrators in general to have a far clearer idea of the role of emotions within learning situations. These findings can be seen to echo Hanks (2002) and Gray (2002). The findings also reflect Attachment Theory in respect of pupils' discussion of learning and relationships within which learning can take place in terms of 'security'. There is some development in this regard with the release of recent DfES materials focusing on the role of Emotional Health and Well-Being within the Secondary School phase (DfES 2004), although this is aimed at existing school staff. As noted above, the Teacher Training Association has identified a need for teacher training to encompass this area to raise awareness amongst teacher trainers as well as trainee teachers of the importance of this aspect. As Shann (1999) noted, the highest achieving schools are noted to have attained a synergy between high academic expectations and what she denotes 'a caring culture', which carries with it a notion of good understanding of and reference to the emotional health and well-being of all members of the school community, concomitant with which are good relationships between all members of that community.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS (EPs):

This research provides further evidence to support development work with teaching colleagues working within the Secondary School sector. The aims of such development work should include increasing teachers' understanding of psychological development within adolescence and gaining and applying an understanding of psychological frameworks of relationships, attachment patterns and the emotional context of schools. This, in turn, should impact on school approaches to behaviour management, particularly with those 'high-profile' pupils at risk of exclusion, staff confidence and emotional well-being and, ultimately, on school attainment in terms of both academic and socially-based aspects. There are also more general implications with regard to further support for Vygotskian perspectives on teaching and learning experiences and their promotion by EPs within systemic consultations. These aspects could

also be addressed through Psychology Service links with local teacher training institutions and through whole-school development initiatives, such as peer-coaching approaches or mentoring of newly qualified staff.

With regard to a view advocating that research should form part of regular EP activity, Grounded Theory could be seen as a methodology that could be applied to a variety of information gathered as part of the regular role of EP work, such as interviews with a variety of participants within education, alongside its potential application to documentary evidence accrued. The analysis of such information is time consuming, but where there are no specific time constraints, it affords a rigorous approach to qualitative data which reflects the complex situations and contexts within which EPs operate.

## CONCLUSION

A Grounded Theory approach allowed pupil perspectives on their secondary school experiences to be examined and presented within existing theoretical and practice-based evidence.

Three axial codes emerged to describe the main areas of importance for pupils, in terms of pupil-teacher relationships, learning through socialisation and teacher 'handling' of behaviour. A further, unexpected, underlying psychological principle, that of individuality and the development of self-identity, was found to connect with all three areas.

Further research is required to understand the place of identity development within school experience for young people, in terms of the direction of any influence(s) or there being any causal role.

The findings are suggestive of there being a need to review teacher training opportunities with regard to behaviour management approaches, particularly with regard to the development of pupil-teacher relationships and the role of emotions within the teaching and learning context.

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**Learning Support Assistants'  
attributions for the causes of children's  
challenging behaviour in schools**

**August 2005**

## ABSTRACT

**BACKGROUND:** Understanding of causal attributions can support an eco-systemic approach to addressing challenging behaviour in the classroom. Previous studies of causal attribution for pupils' challenging behaviour in schools have addressed teachers', parents' and pupils' perspectives. Differences in causal attributions have been found between those held by teachers and those held by parents and pupils. Learning Support Assistants increasingly form part of the school community and hold important roles in supporting teachers and working with children with emotional, behavioural and social skills difficulties.

**AIMS:** The present study aims to examine the structure of causal attributions of Learning Support Assistants for Key Stage 3 children's difficult and challenging behaviour within school. It also aims to compare these findings to those already reported for teachers, parents and pupils (Croll & Moses, 1985; Miller, 1996; Miller et al, 2000; Miller et al 2002) and to consider the impact of attributions on the role of the Educational Psychologist in addressing issues around pupils' challenging behaviour.

**SAMPLE:** The participants were 100 Learning Support Assistants in 14 Leicestershire High Schools (Years 6 or 7 to 9 inclusive).

**METHOD:** A questionnaire drawn from previous research (Miller, Ferguson & Byrne, 2000) was used to survey participants' responses to 27 possible reasons for challenging behaviour on a 4-point Likert Scale.

**RESULTS:** Factor analysis indicated that LSAs' attributions for pupils' challenging behaviour in school was best represented by three factors: (1) 'Fairness of Teachers' Actions', (2) 'Adverse Family Circumstances' and (3) 'Pupil Vulnerability' (to peer relationships and to lack of adult guidance).

**CONCLUSION:** The structure of Learning Support Assistants' attributions for pupils' challenging behaviour shows marked similarity to that of parents and pupils and differs from that of teachers. The nature of the role of the LSA within the classroom, in terms of relationship with pupil and level of responsibility, may impact on their attributions.

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## STATEMENT OF PERSONAL CONTEXT FOR THIS RESEARCH

This research arose out of a combination of several areas of personal and professional interest. Firstly, an interest in the general issue of behaviour within schools, especially within an eco-systemic approach (Cooper & Upton, 1991). Linked to this general interest is the body of research undertaken at the University of Nottingham regarding attributions of key people (teachers, parents and pupils) with regard to causes of challenging behaviour in schools (Miller, 1996; Miller, Ferguson & Byrne, 2000; Miller, Ferguson & Moore, 2002). The interest in researching the attributions of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) with regard to pupils' challenging behaviour arose out of personal experience of professional Educational Psychologist (EP) practice.

LSAs increasingly form a large part of the adult community of schools and their job role often takes them into direct contact with children deemed to be presenting with challenging and difficult behaviour. Professional EP practice often involves gaining their perspectives and/or their active support in implementing interventions. Personal professional experience of working with LSAs, including a recent involvement in providing several extended in-service-training opportunities, has further extended professional insight into their unique perspective on classroom practice. Whilst LSAs are adults within the classroom, they do not hold the same status as class-teachers. Anecdotally, this impacts both on how the LSAs view themselves and their role and also on how the pupils view the LSAs. Naturally, the impact of this differs from school to school.

Given the nature of their role, LSAs are also in a position to be able to develop close relationships with pupils, particularly those who are specifically targeted for their support. This relationship offers opportunity to gain understanding of the child's own perspectives and attributions as to the causes of the child's presenting behaviour. LSAs can also be seen to have more opportunity than class-teachers to act as 'observers' within the classroom, as they are not necessarily as closely involved with, or as responsible for, leading lessons. This

gives them an opportunity to develop an appreciation of the complexity of interactions and environmental contexts which are causally linked to a variety of behaviours within the wide range of pupils' personalities in classrooms. This, in turn, can lead them to be less linear in cause-effect attributions for behaviour and to have a propensity for broader understanding, taking into account more complexity, in an intuitively eco-systemic manner. This understanding thus often includes an appreciation of the importance of the role of adults within the classroom, including their own, in shaping and reinforcing appropriate behaviour. Anecdotally, many LSAs express opinion that this understanding is more highly developed in and more taken account of by LSAs than teachers.

This research, therefore, is interested in the attributions of towards the causes of children's difficult and challenging behaviour in schools, given their unique perspective and role. It is also hoped that the research will complement the existing research into causal attributions outlined above.

Behaviour in schools remains an on-going area of discussion and debate, retaining a high profile both within professional educational circles and within the wider media. A focus on raising attainment and standards within schools has also led to increased focus on addressing challenging behaviour, due to its impact on successful teaching and learning. This has been addressed mostly through supporting staff confidence and capacity to 'manage' behaviour within classrooms and the wider school environment.

Recent Department for Education and Skills (DfES) initiatives to support this development indicate a high level of commitment to promoting positive behaviour in classrooms and include the provision of both training materials and consultants to promote positive approaches to behaviour (and attendance) (*The Behaviour Improvement Programme*, DfES, 2002; *The Key Stage 3 Behaviour & Attendance strand of the KS3 strategy*, DfES, 2003). More recently this has been extended to include Key Stages 1 and 2, within the Primary Strategy (DfES, 2003). A DfES appointed Leadership Group on Behaviour and Discipline has been created and is due to publish a report later this year.

Challenging behaviour remains one of the frequent components of individual, group and whole-school casework undertaken by Educational Psychologists on a daily basis. Poor behaviour in school has also been noted to be linked to wider societal malaise, such as crime and vandalism (see Blyth & Milner, 1996 for an overview). As the Elton Report (DES, 1989) notes, '*teachers have always had to battle against inattention, idleness, irresponsibility, vandalism, bullying, fighting, defiance, impertinence and personal assault*' (p.54). This is not to suggest that such behaviour is acceptable or desirable, or to ignore the impact of such behaviours on both teachers' physical and psychological well-being and on the efficacy of teaching under such conditions, but rather to place the existence of such difficulties within a daily school context. As such, responsibility for and ownership of approaches to support those exhibiting

emotional and behavioural difficulties is part of the everyday responsibility for every teacher and, by extension, all adults working within the school community.

The amount of time and effort that teachers expend in addressing behaviour issues is also of importance. Merrett and Wheldall (1987) note that '*at least half of British teachers are prepared to admit that they spend more time on problems of order and control than they ought*'.

Such difficulties can also impact on both teachers' confidence and professional competence. In a climate where teacher (and overall school) performance is examined and recorded in terms of measurable educational outcomes, such as examination results or SATs scores, successful behaviour management can thus be seen to be an important and pervading factor.

Previous research and current media reports highlight 'disruptive' and 'disrespectful' behaviour as being of on-going concern to teachers and one of the reasons given for teachers leaving the profession, often after a relatively short time in the classroom (*The Elton Report*, 1989; Blyth & Milner, 1996). Many challenging behaviours exhibited in the classroom are of a low-level, disruptive nature rather than being overtly physically confrontational. It is their persistence and their disruptive nature, together with the amount of teacher time and energy necessary to address them, that can be the cause of disaffection amongst teachers (Merrett & Weldall, 1987). The effect of such persisting behaviours on the development of staff confidence and motivation is also an important factor. Such behaviour can lead to fixed-term or even, in terms of its persistence, to permanent exclusion of students from school. This is particularly the case for any behaviour which exhibits elements of verbal or physical aggression towards staff, other students or property (OFSTED, 1996).

#### EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL

Exclusion from school has been found to have a highly detrimental impact both on the child or young person involved and on society as a whole. Hayden et al (1996) found that the permanent exclusion from school of young (Primary

school age) children was particularly linked with increased likelihood of delinquency and mental health problems. An audit commission report (1996) noted that in a survey of young offenders, some 42% had been excluded from school. Personal experience within the role of an Educational Psychologist (EP) working in a multi-agency capacity with Youth Offending Teams continues to provide anecdotal evidence of the educational difficulties experienced by the young people who form their client base, both in terms of exclusion and their presentation of challenging behaviour within school environments.

However, it should also be noted that rates of exclusion differ widely by social group, with male students, students with special educational needs (SEN), looked-after children and students from particular cultural backgrounds (e.g. Afro-Caribbean) having been found to be at a disproportionately high risk of exclusion (Parsons, 1996; Blyth & Milner, 1996; Malcolm & Haddock, 1992; Hayden et al, 1996). This could either be indicative of some social construction of the behaviour that leads to exclusion or that some types of presented challenging behaviour are more difficult than others to address within the school; for example, those students with attachment difficulties (Bowlby, 1973; Howe et al, 1999).

Pressure to avoid exclusion without concomitant support in addressing the underlying EBSD presentation is not sufficient in itself and can lead to situations where a child is merely 'contained' within a school, often to the detriment of both that child and others (Hayden et al, 1996).

#### CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR AS A SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED

The Warnock Report (DES, 1978) initiated a move away from a 'within-child' view of behavioural difficulties by introducing the term 'Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties' (EBD) and placed behaviour within its wider environmental context. Within the Primary Strategy (DfES, 2003) recently introduced into Primary Schools, the term 'Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills' (SEBS) is utilised, together with a concomitant expectation that such skills

need to be taught and that school is an appropriate place to do so. The application of the concept of special educational needs to this area of the curriculum recognises that some students will require additional or different learning experiences to learn and appropriately apply such skills.

Whilst EBD is recognised in the Code of Practice for special educational needs (DfE, 1993), Parsons (1996) notes that such recognition does not necessarily support adequate provision nor does it prevent exclusion. This can be seen to be a marked difference to other learning difficulties recognised by the Code of Practice, such as literacy acquisition difficulties or general learning difficulties. It should also be recognised that some students present with needs within several areas of the Code of Practice and that learning difficulties can have, but do not necessarily have, a causal relationship with presented behaviour.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Personal experience in practice as an Educational Psychologist (EP) also reflects research findings regarding a wide range of often conflicting beliefs about the causes of children's challenging behaviour amongst the adults who have most contact with the child(ren) concerned (Miller, 1996; 1999; Miller et al 2002). Teachers have been found to propose home background as being a major cause of difficult behaviour in school (Croll & Moses, 2000; Miller, 1996) whereas parents and pupils tend towards seeing 'teacher unfairness' as a major influence (Miller et al, 2000; Miller et al, 2002). These clashes of belief can lead to blame apportioning and thus are seldom productive in changing already difficult situations or effecting positive change. Furthermore, the adults within the situation can make assumptions that other adults share their own ways of explaining why certain behaviours occur, further increasing misunderstanding.

However, an understanding of the possible pre-existing climate of belief is useful when working within such situations. Hence the professional role of an EP in such circumstances can include facilitating a shared understanding of

the interaction between the environmental context around the child, including the views of the adults, and the child's understanding. This often leads to overt discussion between the adults around the child as to their understanding of the contextual factors which influence the child's behavioural responses, such as, for example, the language the adults use, their tone of voice, the consistency of response to the same exhibited behaviour.

Dowling & Osborne (1994) discuss the concept of 'circular causality' as an explanatory model rather than a commonly accepted linear view of cause/effect. This view places EBSD within a wide and complex setting, where the individual factors of a child interact within environmental contexts and interpersonal relationships and the physical and psychological factors of both the immediate and wider surroundings. Several environmental audits have been developed within Psychology Services for use within schools (*Birmingham Framework for Intervention*, Daniels & Williams, 2000; *Promoting Positive Learning Environments*, Leicestershire EPS 2002). More recently, the DfES (2003) has made environmental behaviour audits available to schools through the Behaviour and Attendance strand of the Key Stage 3 strategy.

Cooper & Upton (1991) note '*a growing sense of the way in which emotional and behavioural problems in schools can be seen as the product of environmental influences*' (p.22). Such environmental influences naturally include the interactions between pupils and both the adults who work with them within the school environment and those within their family environment. Cooper & Upton further note that an important factor in developing responses to EBSD is how to facilitate the '*development of autonomy and self direction in students in ways that do not appear to shift the blame for EBSD from pupils to their teachers or parents*'. They suggest an ecosystemic approach, which has several underlying key concepts:

- Interactions - problem behaviour originates from the interaction between the individual exhibiting EBSD and other individuals (see also Wahl, 2002).
- Circular causation - rather than a linear cause/effect relationship (see also Dowling & Osborne, 1994).
- Systemic change – change in any part of a system will change the whole system and affect related systems.
- Holistic participation and approaches - intervention based on a recognition that all parties in the interactions surrounding the problem need to be involved; no neutral position exists.

Abridged from Cooper & Upton (1991), p.23

Cooper & Upton suggest that an eco-systemic approach can be used to enhance teachers' understanding of routine, daily interactional processes and their power in effecting positive change. It necessitates those who wish to change behaviour to understand the meanings that both they themselves and others involved in the situation ascribe to the behaviour in question (p.26). As such, it can be seen to be far more than a strategy for 'controlling' difficult and challenging behaviour, being rather an agent for individual and systemic change.

#### THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

The professional role of the EP can be to try to elucidate and 'make sense' of this causal web, to share their view of the interactions and relationships and to facilitate those concerned in developing their own shared understanding as the first step in developing a joint, agreed approach. The student's own participation within this process can further strengthen the likelihood of a positive outcome, particularly with older or more able students. Working in such a way, with the willing participation of those involved, it has been noted that EPs can have a considerable positive impact, even when working in

situations where teachers have noted pupil behaviour to be '*the most extreme*' they have encountered in their teaching experience (Miller, 2003). Such impact can be linked to EP involvement at a variety of levels - policy level, system level and individual level, or a combination of these, all of which can impact on the behaviour of individual students (Leicestershire EPS, 2005).

To address such issues, EPs can be seen to make use of a variety of psychological approaches. Examples from professional practice include Social Constructionist frameworks (see Burr, 2003 for overview), Cognitive-Behavioural approaches (for overview see Porter, 2000), applied behavioural analysis (see Donnellan & LaVigna, 1986) and Solution Focused approaches (see Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995). These psychological approaches are set within the ecological framework outlined above (cf Cooper & Upton, 1991) and the 'overlapping' dimensions of home, school and child described by Miller (1999).

Within an eco-systemic approach, access to and involvement of key adults in the situation is a vital factor. Once this has been established, a key function of the EP role is to facilitate adults' clearly defined perception(s) of the situation. In practice, this can include perceptions as to what the behaviour consists of (type, frequency), what may be 'causing' the behaviour and the impact of the behaviour (on the child's own learning, on the learning of others, on their relationships with others within the school community). Brophy & Rohrkemper (1985) note that '*teachers' beliefs and expectations motivate and control their behaviour and the nature of their interactions with students in general and problem students in particular*'. As many of these perceptions, beliefs and motivations can consist of causal attributions it is useful to consider attribution theory in some detail.

#### AN OVERVIEW OF ATTRIBUTION THEORY

As human beings, being aware and interactive with our environment, we are not passive, but actively seek to make sense of the world around us. As such, we

seek out the causes of events and ask 'why?' questions, formulating and testing predictions and theories about the world in a quasi-scientific manner. Such attributions are part of the processes that enable us to make our everyday world make sense in terms of predictability and, hence, provides us with some notion of control.

Attribution theory (see Försterling, 2001 for an overview) is a theory (or group of theories) about how common sense operates, how we explain events and the psychological consequences of such explanations. As such, attribution theories are scientific theories about naïve theories, or 'metatheories'. It is important to note that attribution theories are not directly concerned with the actual causes of behaviour but rather with people's *perceptions* as to the causes of behaviour (Fösterling, pp 3 -5). A central factor of attribution theory is its position as a cognitive approach, where situations/stimuli are seen as not triggering behaviour or emotions directly but are rather mediated through cognitions, the relationship thus being: Incident - thinking - affect and behaviour.

Fösterling notes that research regarding causal attributions has typically fallen into two subgroups: Attribution Theory and Attributional Theories (p,9). Attribution Theories are concerned with the antecedent conditions that lead to different causal explanations whereas Attributional Theories (cf Kelley & Michela, 1980) are concerned with the psychological consequences of such causal attributions in terms of behaviour, affect and expectancy.

As noted above, one of the main functions of naïve attributions is to make the world and events feel more understandable and predictable. When people feel able to predict and understand events they have a sense of 'control' over situations, an ability to be able to 'understand' what will happen if certain behaviours occur in certain patterns. Such patterns can be seen to form the basis of schema (Piaget, 1970) where exposure to congruent examples and

understanding links to form a 'world view' or template which guides our behaviour without our necessarily having conscious awareness of it. Therefore, events which adhere to this pre-existing schema are unlikely to trigger attributions. However, when behaviour outside of the expected pattern occurs, this leads to a sense of disorientation and discomfort, a sense of vulnerability and of events being outside of our control (Fösterling p.11). This, in turn, triggers a 'search' for explanations, for more information on which to build (or revise) our schema. Therefore, unexpected or unique situations can be seen to trigger more causal search than everyday, regular experiences, particularly where such situations differ from our existing schema (Meyer et al, 1994 in Fösterling). This can lead to our being more likely to 'question' events for which we do not have well-developed schema.

One area of discussion within attribution/al research has been the extent to which there is evidence that individuals 'always' search for the causes of events (see Fösterling, p.13 for an outline). Research could be criticised for 'forcing' participants to make attributions where they would not necessarily make them. However, Weiner's (1985b) review of 17 studies, which made use of non- reactive measures to investigate attributional activity, concluded that all the investigators report a great amount of causal search undertaken by participants. Other criticism has centred around the extent to which asking participants to respond to hypothetical situations through the use of vignettes or survey questionnaires relates to their 'real life' experience.

Within the context of school staff and their approach to students with challenging behaviour, attribution/al theory has implications for the application of staff training and professional development in its impact on existing schema and attributions. 'Self-serving bias' in attributions (Deschamps, Guimond & Hilton, 1996 in Hilton, 1998) has been noted, where attributional responses follow a pattern of taking personal credit for success whilst apportioning blame for failure and shortcoming elsewhere. Furthermore, it has been noted that

people can experience difficulties in changing their attributions, preferring to add additional rationalisations to existing attributions rather than shifting a previously held view (Miller, 1996). It should also be noted that individual differences have been found with regard to ability to form attributions and to level of certainty personally ascribed to them (Weary & Edwards, 1994).

Jenson et al (1998, cf Weiner' 1986), note four central concepts of causal Attributions. Firstly, that people judge the perceived locus of the causal event (internal or external); the stability of the cause (stable or unstable) and its controllability (controllable or uncontrollable). People then tend to attribute their own success or failure to one or more of four causes: Ability; Effort; Ease/Difficulty of Task and Luck. Thirdly, the way people explain things that happen to them often results in emotions, such as pride, gratitude, anger, shame or helplessness. Fourthly, these emotions are important mediators of our behaviour.

Another important factor in considering attributions is that of intentionality - how intentional we believe the outcome of an observed behaviour is. Grey et al (2002) note that this can influence emotional and behavioural responses to challenging behaviour. For example, that individuals receive more praise and more blame for actions that are considered to be intentional rather than unintentional. Grey et al 2002 (cf. Malle, 1999) identified four variables that affect judgements of intentionality:

- A perceived desire for an outcome of the action
- Beliefs about an action that leads to that outcome
- Skill to perform that action
- An awareness of fulfilling the intention whilst performing the action

Grey et al, 2002, p.309

## IMPACT OF CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS ON BEHAVIOUR AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

The beliefs that we hold are particularly important as to the extent to which they lead our behaviour. For example, if an adult attributes a child's challenging behaviour to their home background, the adult may feel that as those factors are outside their direct control (external locus) they are less likely to be effective with attempts to address the behaviour. This could lead them to not bothering to try at all, to try but on a reduced scale, to give up more easily or to look for (negative) indicators to support their perception of lack of efficacy. Maxwell (1987) noted that staff beliefs regarding their efficacy in addressing poor behaviour is an important factor.

Locus of control theory (Rotter, 1966) suggests that when teachers believe that the causative factors for difficult behaviour are within the control of either themselves or the school, they should be more effective at impacting on that behaviour (internal locus of control). Conversely, those who feel that such challenging behaviour is directly attributable to external factors outside of their control, such as family circumstances, can feel helpless and lacking in efficacy at addressing the issues (external focus of control).

In an attributional study, Poulou & Norwich (2002), found that *'people attempt to perform a behaviour to the extent that they have confidence in their ability to do so'*. Thus teachers who attributed students' problems to factors which originated within the child themselves or within the school were less likely to perceive the EBD as being 'remediable'. Poulou and Norwich suggest that this may be due to teachers' perception of 'control' over the situation, particularly as those teachers who attributed EBD as being causally affected by factors within teachers (e.g. 'personality', 'teaching style', 'manner towards child') were more likely to perceive both a potential remediation of the EBD and their own efficacy within this remediation. Stress and feelings of helplessness were linked to those teachers who saw EBD linked to factors which were 'outside' of their control.

Further support for these findings arises from Scottish research (Maxwell,

1987) where management and pastoral care staff in six Scottish Secondary schools were found to be significantly more likely to believe that school-based solutions for addressing EBSD were more effective than external referral where respondents noted an internal locus of control with regard to causes.

Attributional research notes the importance of attributions in decision making regarding choices for actions and behaviour. Thus, in the classroom context, teachers' perceptions about learners and learning leads to design, selection and use of certain strategies and approaches (Ainscow, 1998). Maxwell (1987) found that when staff attributions in terms of locus of control for causes of EBSD presentation were compared on a school-by-school basis, there was a strong suggestion of a trend towards higher exclusion rates (fixed term and permanent) in schools with an external attribution for locus of control (e.g. to family circumstances).

This suggests that it is important to know what people (teachers and other adults in classrooms) are thinking such that, if necessary, further training and professional development opportunities can be offered to challenge existing thinking (and, therefore, attributions) where necessary with regard to addressing challenging behaviour within an eco-systemic approach.

Staff perceptions and beliefs regarding the 'intentionality' of student behaviour are also important factors in their approach to the student. However, it should be noted that, from the student's perspective (whether consciously or unconsciously) their behaviour is an attempt to *solve* a problem, albeit an inappropriate or ineffective attempt (Wahl, 2002).

#### PREVIOUS RESEARCH REGARDING STAFF ATTRIBUTIONS FOR STUDENTS CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

The notion of eco-systemic approaches and circular causality within which professional EP practice is sited leads to a need for attributions of the adults most closely involved with situations to be elicited and explored, such that they can be appreciated and taken into account as factors within the complexity of

the situation. Previous research has investigated the attributions of three significant groups within school-based behaviour issues, namely Parents, Teachers and Pupils.

Croll & Moses (1985) found that teachers attributed EBD to 'home factors' in around 66% of cases. This finding was supported by the Elton Report (DfE 1989) where it was noted *'our evidence suggests that teachers' picture of parents is generally very negative. Many teachers feel that parents are to blame for much misbehaviour in schools. We consider that, while this picture contains an element of truth, it is distorted'* (p.193). Similar findings have also been reported by other researchers (Maxwell, 1987; Miller, 1996).

Miller (1999) notes that the study of attributions is important as it is within the area of our attributions that we are working, rather than with any 'objective truth', when addressing challenging behaviour through the eco-systemic model outlined above (or any other model or approach). However, for each individual attributions do present a 'psychological reality' which may strongly affect behaviour. Miller also notes that policy decisions and formation can also be guided, implicitly if not always explicitly, by such attributions. Therefore, knowledge about such attributions, particularly of any underlying pattern(s), is of great importance for professional EP practice regarding issues around behaviour.

#### THE UNIQUE ROLE OF LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) form an increasing percentage of the adult population of school communities. The DfES ('Skills for work' website, 2005) puts their numbers at over 90,000 across Primary and Secondary school settings. A general description of the role of an LSA (DfES, 2005) includes supervision of children in the classroom, working closely with teachers, responding to their instructions and carrying out pre-determined tasks. These tasks can include basic literacy and numeracy skills, support for children with

English as an additional language or for those with learning difficulties. Other aspects of the role can include '*encouraging difficult pupils to interact with others in a more socially acceptable manner*'. Personal attributes necessary for the role include good communication skills with children, an ability to work as a team member and to show flexibility, patience and a willingness to learn within the role. Professional qualifications and training can vary significantly, with an increasing move towards providing at least basic training, although this is not yet a formal requirement.

LSAs, then, can be seen to hold an unusual place as a non-teaching adult within the classroom environment. Their direct contact with a range of children, whilst liaising with class teachers, puts them in a position of being required to view the classroom from both perspectives. In addition, the responsibility for direct contact with students whose behaviour is challenging, often for prolonged periods of time, is, in practice, often delegated to LSAs, albeit under the purported supervision of the teacher. The role of the LSA also contains ambiguities in terms of their perceived and actual power within the classroom. Whilst they are adults, and are thus in a position of authority over the children, they are also themselves under the authority of the class teacher. Anecdotally, many LSAs talk about this situation as occasionally being the cause of some conflict, both within their own interpretation of their role and within their professional relationships with both teachers and pupils. This can particularly be an issue where LSAs hold another role within the school, such as that of lunchtime supervisor or provider of after-school care or activities (possibly due to the nature of their relationship with children at such times being qualitatively different to that which is held in the more formal classroom situation).

Given the impact of attributions on school ethos and beliefs in efficacy in effecting change outlined above, and the unique and increasingly important role of LSAs within school communities, the present study sought to determine LSA's causal attributions for pupils' challenging and difficult behaviour.

## METHODOLOGY

### RATIONALE

This study was aimed at eliciting participants' attributions as to the causes of pupil misbehaviour, a sensitive area of investigation. Qualitative methodologies are of particular use in collecting such data, through interview and focus group approaches. Qualitative analysis methods such as Content Analysis, Discourse Analysis and Grounded Theory (see Smith et al, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998 and Richardson, 1996, for overviews) have increasingly added rigour to analysis of such methodological approaches. However, the time-scale for carrying out such interviews made this approach inappropriate in this instance, both due to the amount of researcher time available and the limiting of the number of participants involved.

A questionnaire survey of a wider number of participants, making use of a quantitative approach, was therefore selected, such that a larger number of participants' views could be gathered and the time commitment of both participants and researcher was minimised. The use of a questionnaire survey thus allowed a large sample of participants to be involved whilst remaining manageable in terms of researcher capacity.

The use of a Likert scale allowed for Component Analysis, which facilitates research into possible psychological constructs which may underlie correlations of any pattern(s) of response found within the data. A further consideration was that data collected in this manner could also be compared to existing data in previous studies (see below) which investigated parents', teachers' and pupils' attributions of causes for misbehaviour in schools.

### THE INSTRUMENT

Previous studies (Miller, Ferguson & Byrne, 2000; Miller, 1995) have made use of a quantitative questionnaire survey developed from interviews. In Miller et al (2000) this involved twenty Year 7 pupils (modal age 12 years), representing a

range of different feeder Primary Schools. Pupils were asked to discuss the classroom behaviour they had witnessed in their previous schools and to consider the causes of it. This approach was developed such that no one individual school would feel exposed by the research. The questionnaire items reflected the balance between the Pupil, Parent, Teacher and Other categories of attributions raised during the discussion.

The questionnaire was then piloted with a group of eight pupils selected by their Head of Year as representative of varying ability and typical classroom behaviour. A final questionnaire of 30 items was developed, with each item rated on a 4-point Likert Scale: *Very Important*; *Quite Important*; *Not Very Important*; *Not Important At All*.

The questionnaire has been used, in slightly altered formats, in three studies, and has good face validity. As the questionnaire was designed to ascertain participants' attributions of behaviour, reliability cannot be measured by similarity of pattern of response across different participant groups.

The questionnaire developed for use in this present study made use of the 27 items presented in the final analysis of Miller et al (2000, p.91), administered in random order as determined by a lottery. Outline permission from the line manager of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) in each school was sought, by telephone and letter, to request LSAs' participation. Of 15 schools approached, 14 schools agreed to participate. 100 questionnaires were returned, representing a very high response rate of 70%. A copy of the questionnaire used in this study is included in the appendices, together with letters sent to line managers and individual participants outlining the research.

## PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 100 Learning Support Assistants drawn from 14 of Leicestershire's High Schools. Whilst participants held a variety of job titles, including Teaching Assistant and Ancillary Support Worker, all participants

undertook very similar job roles which included direct work with individuals and groups of children within the classroom and outside the classroom, and working with a range of teachers either across a department or across the whole school. Due to the nature of High Schools in Leicestershire, the LSAs were working with children from either Year 6 or Year 7 to Year 9 inclusive (maximum age range 10 years to 14 years). The high proportion of female participants (97%) reflects the high number of females working within the job role. Due to this skew in the gender of participants, no gender differences could be explored from the collected data. Biographical information regarding age and length of experience were collected and are presented below in Table 1.

**TABLE 1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS (100 LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS IN LEICESTERSHIRE HIGH SCHOOLS)**

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>LENGTH OF EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>%</b>
		25 or below	6%	1 year or below	14%
<b>MALE</b>	3%	26 – 35	9%	2 – 3 years	22%
		36 – 45	41%	4 – 6 years	36%
<b>FEMALE</b>	96%	46 – 55	33%	7 – 8 years	8%
		56 or above	7%	9 – 10 years	4%
				10 years or over	15%
<b>Missing data</b>	1%	<b>Missing data</b>	4%	<b>Missing data</b>	1%

Participants were all volunteers. In addition to the request made for their participation through their line manager, each participant also received a letter attached to the questionnaire outlining the area of the research and assuring their confidentiality (see appendices).

## METHOD

15 High Schools were approached on the basis of their either being schools for which the researcher held link Psychologist responsibility or their being schools where the link Psychologist was well known to the researcher (such that their support could be elicited in increasing the response rate if necessary). Following initial letter contact with line managers, a telephone call was made by Psychology Service support staff to ascertain agreement to approach LSAs for their involvement and to agree the numbers of potential participants at each school.

Questionnaires were returned anonymously, either through participants' line manager or directly to the researcher in envelopes provided. Follow-up telephone calls were made to line managers by Psychology Service support staff 2 weeks after the initial issue of the questionnaires to increase response rate. Response rate was high at 70%.

Responses to the 4 point Likert scale were analysed using version 11.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## RESULTS

The data were analysed by means of a Principal Components Analysis, with varimax rotation (Brace, Kemp & Snelgar, 2003). Missing values were excluded pairwise. The data had a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of .74, indicating an acceptable level of factorability. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also favourable (865.39;  $p < 0.0001$ ).

## EXTRACTING THE FACTORS

Initial analysis found eight components (factors) with an eigenvalue greater than one. A variety of criteria can be considered when determining the number of components to be extracted. These include the Kaiser-Guttman rule (or Kaiser Criterion), where components with an eigen value greater than 1.0 are extracted, and the Cattell Scree Test which plots components on the X axis against corresponding eigenvalues on the Y axis. Cattell's scree test involves dropping all further components after the one starting the 'elbow'. Statsoft (2005, on-line) note that the Kaiser criterion can sometimes retain too many factors, whilst Cattell's scree test sometimes retains too few. However, both are seen to be useful under conditions with relatively few components and many cases.

Other tests include a consideration of the amount of variance explained by the solution, with balance required between solutions which account for a high amount of variance and a parsimonious solution. It could be argued that solutions which make use of a high number of components to explain around 60% - 70% of variance could be of little explanatory consequence (in this case, eight components to explain twenty-seven variables). However, Fabrigar et al (1999) note that underfactoring is likely to *'lead to a correspondence between the structure of the true factors and that of the estimated factors'* which is a more serious problem than overfactoring, where components can be poorly defined, being made up of relatively few variables (see also McCallum, 2001).

Whilst several authors (Fabrigar et al, 1999; Utexas, 2005 online; Darlington, 2005, online) note concerns regarding the use of both the Kaiser-Guttman

rule and Catell's scree plot, they remain amongst the most common criteria for determining the number of components within social science (Dunteman, 1989). Interpretability of components, whilst a subjective measure, is also an important criteria.

The analysis of data was reviewed in light of the above. Two variables were removed before the final analysis, due to very low communality. A three factor solution was extracted from consideration of a combination of evidence including eigenvalues, the scree plot and the interpretability of the solution.

The first factor was termed 'Fairness of Teachers' Actions'; the second, 'Adverse Family Circumstances' and the third, 'Pupil vulnerability to peer influence and lack of adult guidance'. The factors and the variables that load on them are shown in Table 2.

The rotated solution accounted for 45.43% of the variance, with the factors accounting for 21.12 % (eigenvalue 5.38); 13.27% (eigenvalue 3.32) and 11.03% (eigenvalue 2.76) of the variance respectively. Table 3 provides a comparison of the results of this study to the factors extracted in previous studies of pupil and parent causal attributions (Miller et al, 2000 & 2002).

## RELIABILITY

Chronbach's alpha, a measure of consistency and internal reliability through examination of how well a set of items (or variables) measure a single construct, was applied to the data. Results found that alpha was acceptable in the case of the first two factors ( $\alpha = .8811$ ,  $\alpha = .8223$  respectively) as it exceeded 0.80, the acceptable measure for social science applications (UCLA 2005, online). The alpha coefficient for the third factor, 'Pupil Vulnerability to Peer Influences and Lack of Adult Guidance' was lower ( $\alpha = .6979$ ), suggesting lower internal reliability of this factor.

## CROSS-LOADINGS

Three variables most strongly associated with Factor 1 (Teacher Fairness) also cross-loaded onto Factor 2 (Adverse Family Circumstances) with eigenvalues exceeding 0.3 recorded ('Teachers had favourites', .32; 'Pupils were picked on by teachers', .34 and 'Teachers had bad moods' .41) One Factor 2 variable cross loaded onto Factor 1 ('Pupils were worried about other things' .30). Factor 3 showed no cross-loadings.

These cross-loadings show the 3 factor solution to be less clear-cut than would be liked; however, as discussed above, both Factors 1 and 2 do demonstrate a reasonably good level of internal reliability. The 3 factors also replicate with considerable similarity the findings of the two previous studies carried out with the same questionnaire (Miller et al, 2000 and 2002).

**TABLE 2: ANALYSIS OF STRENGTH AND PATTERN OF LOADINGS DETERMINING FACTORS AFTER VARIMAX ROTATION**

Variable	Teacher Fairness	Adverse Family Circumstances	Pupil vulnerability to peer influences and lack of adult guidance
Too much homework is given	<b>.41</b>		
Pupils were unfairly blamed	<b>.55</b>		
Teachers were rude to pupils	<b>.07</b>		
Classwork was too difficult	<b>.32</b>		.13
Teachers were too strict	<b>.51</b>	.23	-.11
Teachers had favourites	<b>.50</b>	<b>.32</b>	
Teachers shouted all the time	<b>.75</b>	.21	
Pupils were picked on by teachers	<b>.70</b>	<b>.34</b>	
Good work wasn't noticed	<b>.70</b>		.18
Teachers gave too many detentions	<b>.77</b>	.12	.18
Teachers had bad moods	<b>.67</b>	<b>.41</b>	.12
Teachers did not listen to pupils	<b>.73</b>	.23	.16
Too much classwork was given	<b>.55</b>		
Alcohol/drug abuse by family members		<b>.78</b>	
Pupils were worried about other things	<b>.30</b>	<b>.50</b>	.14
Pupils was unable to see mum/dad	.16	<b>.76</b>	.23
Families did not have enough money to eat or buy clothes	.15	<b>.72</b>	
There were fights and arguments at home	.13	<b>.78</b>	.12
Pupils liked misbehaving		-.15	<b>.75</b>
Other pupils told pupil to misbehave	.12		<b>.75</b>
Teachers were too soft	.21		<b>.32</b>
Other pupils wanted to copy work		.24	<b>.57</b>
Other pupils stirred up trouble		.20	<b>.59</b>
Parents let pupils get away with too much	-.16	.13	<b>.49</b>
Other pupils wanted pupil to be in gang	.13	.19	<b>.60</b>

All loadings over 0.3 are shown in bold. All loadings below 0.1 have been removed for ease of reference.

Mean	37.96	16.74	22.29
Standard Deviation	10.3	3.5	5.1
Alpha	.881	.8224	.698
Eigen-value	5.38	3.32	2.76
Percentage of Variance	21.12	13.27	11.03

**TABLE 3 A COMPARISON OF THE STRUCTURE OF PUPIL, PARENT AND LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHALLENGING AND DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS, DERIVED FROM FACTOR ANALYTIC STUDIES.**

<p><b>PUPIL FACTORS</b> (from Miller, Ferguson &amp; Byrne, 2000)</p> <p><i>'Fairness of teachers' actions'</i> Teachers shouted all the time Pupils were picked on by teachers Teachers did not listen to pupils Teachers had favourites Pupils were unfairly blamed Good work wasn't noticed Teachers were rude to pupils Teachers had bad moods Teachers gave to many detentions Teachers were too soft Pupils didn't like teacher</p> <p><i>'Pupil vulnerability'</i> Other pupils wanted pupil to be in gang Other pupils told pupil to misbehave Pupil was unable to see mum/dad Pupils were worried about other things Pupils liked misbehaving Other pupils wanted to copy work Pupils needed more help in class Class work was too difficult Other pupils stirred up trouble</p> <p><i>'Strictness of classroom regime'</i> Too much class work was given Too much homework was given Teachers were too strict</p> <p><i>'Adverse family circumstances'</i> There were fights and arguments at home Alcohol/drug abuse by family members Parents let pupils get away with too much Families did not have enough money to eat or to buy clothes</p>	<p><b>PARENT FACTORS</b> (From Miller, Ferguson &amp; Moore, 2002)</p> <p><i>'Fairness of teachers' actions'</i> Teachers have favourites Pupils are picked on by teachers Teachers shout all the time Teachers do not listen to pupils Teachers are too soft Good work isn't noticed Pupils are unfairly blamed Teachers have bad moods</p> <p><i>'Pupil vulnerability to peer influences and adverse family circumstances'</i> Other pupils tell pupil to misbehave Other pupils want pupil to be in gang Families do not have enough money to eat or to buy clothes Other pupils want to copy work Other pupils stir up trouble Pupil is unable to see mum/dad Parents let pupils get away with too much Pupil likes misbehaving There are fights and arguments at home</p> <p><i>'Differentiation of classroom demands and expectations'</i> Too much homework was given Teachers are too strict Too much class work was given Class work is too difficult Pupil needs more help in class Pupil doesn't like teacher Pupil is worried about other things</p>	<p><b>LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT FACTORS</b> (Present study)</p> <p><i>'Fairness of teachers' actions'</i> Too much homework was given Pupils were unfairly blamed Teachers were rude to pupils Class work was too difficult Teachers were too strict Teachers had favourites Teachers shouted all the time Pupils were picked on by teachers Good work wasn't noticed Teachers gave too many detentions Teachers had bad moods Teachers did not listen to pupils Too much class work was given</p> <p><i>'Adverse family circumstances'</i> Alcohol/drug abuse by family members Pupils were worried about other things Pupil was unable to see mum/dad Families did not have enough money to eat or to buy clothes There were fights and arguments at home</p> <p><i>'Pupil vulnerability to peer influence and lack of adult guidance'</i> Pupils liked misbehaving Other pupils told pupil to misbehave Teachers were too soft Other pupils wanted to copy work Other pupils stirred up trouble Parents let pupils get away with too much</p>

## DISCUSSION

### CAVEATS

The findings of this study, which will be discussed in more detail below, should be viewed with caution for several reasons. The LSA participant group was drawn from within one County Council's schools and as such the sample does not reflect the broad variety of makeup of school communities in terms of cultural and economic aspects. Findings can only, therefore, be held for this particular participant group and are not generalisable to LSAs nationally.

The size of the participants group (N=100) could also be viewed as problematic within this study, as some statisticians have been noted to recommend a minimum sample size of 200 for factor analytical approaches (Brace, Kemp & Snelgar, 2003).

Participant gender balance prevented statistical comparison of attributions between male and female participants, due to the heavy skew towards female respondents. Therefore, as it was not possible to ensure that there were no significant differences between male and female attributions, it is not possible to discuss these results in terms of gender. However, the results could be seen to reflect female LSA attributions within this sample group, composed as it was of 97% female participants. Whilst actual statistical information of the representation of females within the LSA job role across the United Kingdom is not available professional experience suggests that there does indeed exist a very high proportion of females within the role. The participant group could therefore be claimed to be broadly representative in terms of gender.

As noted above, questionnaires regarding attributions cannot necessarily be held to have any predictive value with regard to either the attributions held by the LSAs towards the particular pupils they work with directly, nor their specific behavioural actions (Kelley & Michele, 1980). However, the data gathered allows a view of the structure of reported attributions held by LSAs towards possible causal reasons for pupils' difficult and challenging behaviour.

Consideration of the variables available for rating within the original questionnaire suggests that there is, arguably, a bias towards an external locus of control with regard to causes for pupil behaviour, with no representative variables presenting internal locus of control, 'within child' causal attribution options. (This may be an attribute of the questionnaire having been compiled from focus group discussion with pupils, who may have reported 'self-serving' attributions). Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that, if given the option, respondents to the questionnaire may attribute difficult behaviour to within child factors, exhibiting internal locus of control.

As noted above, 'intentionality' is also an important factor and has a particular bearing on attributional studies, with regard to impact on consequent behaviour. However, the questionnaire does not currently have any facility for measuring perceptions of intentionality.

Whilst comparison between these findings for LSAs' attributions with those of parents, pupils and teachers will be made below, direct comparison is limited by several constraints. The questionnaire used in this study was drawn from a 30-item questionnaire devised from pupil interviews (Miller et al, 2000). However, this questionnaire was based on the 27 reported variables discussed in their findings, after 3 variables had been eliminated due to statistical information during analysis. Two further variables were eliminated in this study, reducing the variables discussed below to 25 of the original 30 questionnaire items. Whilst direct comparison is therefore not exact, it could be argued that as the main body of variables reflected remains intact, it is possible to draw broad comparisons between the findings of each of the studies.

A further difficulty with direct comparison is that the pupil and parent studies (Miller et al, 2000; Miller et al, 2002 respectively) dealt with the parents of Primary- age pupils and the reflections of first year secondary pupils on Primary school children's behaviour, whereas the present study centred around LSAs working within High Schools (Key Stage 3). Additionally, due to the system of schooling in place in Leicestershire, the participants' schools varied as to whether or not their High schools had Year 6 pupils on roll and thus

participants' own experiences varied as to the age-range of the children they work with. It was also beyond the scope of this study to interrogate the data in terms of either the length of experience of the LSA participants, or their level of training and professional qualifications, both of which could impact on their attributions.

One aspect which may affect the attributions recorded by LSAs is that of a 'self-serving bias', as discussed above. The extent to which LSAs see themselves as having an active role with regard to managing behaviour within the classroom, or their having responsibility or accountability for it, was beyond the scope of this research. It is thus not known how 'responsible' the LSAs personally felt for the outcomes of a child's difficult behaviour (in terms of its impact on learning and on relationships with others).

It could be argued that LSA attributions may be affected by the level to which they view themselves as having either a 'parental' type role or being more closely allied with a teaching role. Within the parental role approach, this could lead to a working relationship with children that is characterised by caring, protecting, offering stability and security and ensuring challenges are within the child's scope. A role more closely allied with a teaching approach could lead to focus on differentiation of materials, ensuring work is completed on time and scaffolding children's learning. These two approaches, whilst many overlaps between them would exist, could be argued to impact on the type of relationship built between LSAs and the children they work with. The nature of these interactions could also impact on the attributions LSAs make with regard to the pupils' behaviour, and on understanding of the relationships between teachers and pupils. It could also offer at least a partial hypothesis as to the closer link between LSA and parental attributions than that between LSA and teacher attributions found in this study, which will be discussed in more detail below.

## THE STRUCTURE OF LSAs' ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR FOUND WITHIN THIS STUDY

The position of the LSA within the classroom requires consideration when discussing the findings of this study. According to their job description, it could be anticipated that their view may accord most closely with that of teachers, the professionals they are in place to support and work alongside. Indeed, criticism of the rise of LSA positions within schools has often noted their role as 'quasi teachers', according them the role and responsibility of teaching with little (if any) training and a correspondingly considerably lower salary scale. The findings of this study arguably raise some interesting questions as to how LSAs themselves view their role within school, in terms of both their relationships with pupils and teachers and their own view of the job role, status and responsibilities of their position.

In order to examine these issues, each of the three factors extracted from the data will be considered individually and then an overall picture will be compiled. This view will then be compared to previous findings in respect of teachers', parents' and pupils' attributions from previous studies, to consider similarities and differences and their possible impact on both school communities and outside agencies.

## OUTLINE OF THE EACH INDIVIDUAL FACTOR AND THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF LSAs ATTRIBUTIONS FOR DIFFICULT AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM WITHIN THIS STUDY

The findings suggest that LSAs mainly attribute difficult and challenging pupil behaviour to a factor which, in line with Miller et al (2000; 2002), could be described as 'Fairness of Teachers' Actions'. This factor, with a strong eigenvalue rating (5.38) accounted for 21.12% of the variance, around half of the total variance. As outlined in Table 2, this factor includes areas such as the teachers' approach towards children, which could be constructed in terms of 'respect', (ways of communicating, ability to listen, consistency and impartiality); management of classroom regime and learning opportunities (homework, detentions, strictness, level of classwork) alongside personal

attributes (mood). This could be seen as indicative of LSAs' causal attributions as to the main causes of children's difficult and challenging behaviour in the classroom being outside pupils' direct control, placing it rather within the control of the teacher.

The second factor consisted of the variables which were connected with pupils' home circumstances and, as such, could be seen to be outside of the direct control of both the LSA and the pupil. This factor was named 'Adverse Family Circumstances' (again, in line with Miller et al, 2000 and 2002) and was compiled from items which reflected both difficult physical circumstance (poverty) and difficult psychological circumstances (the impact of the availability of family contact, stress through living with difficult and unpredictable family situations, coping with substance abuse or relationship discord within the home environment) and their impact on the child in school. This factor accounted for 13.27% of the variance and with an eigenvalue of 3.32 it can be seen to be a less strong factor than the first factor.

The final factor appears to be compiled of two separate but connected strands, which could be constructed in terms of 'Pupil Vulnerability' in terms of relationships to both peers and adults holding significant roles within their lives (parent and teacher). Again, this factor allies closely with the findings of Miller et al studies. The two strands consist of pupils' vulnerability to adverse peer influence (being drawn into existing cultural expectations amongst peers with regard to conforming behaviour to a particular type or expectation) and to lacking an opportunity for adult-led structure, which can provide security and psychological containment (teachers being 'too soft' and parents 'letting the pupil get away with too much'). It should be noted that this factor has the lowest internal reliability score of the three ( $\alpha = .6979$ ) and the lowest eigenvalue (2.76). It also accounts for the least amount of the variance of the three factors.

Viewed overall, the structure of the LSAs' attributions for difficult and challenging pupil behaviour appear to suggest a strong view of the importance of the role of the teacher in setting the behavioural tone of the classroom, with

an interaction of family circumstance and pupil vulnerabilities to both their peers and experience of guidance from key adults around them being lesser but still important factors.

As discussed above, an eco-systemic approach (Cooper & Upton, 1991) suggests that behaviour in the classroom is affected by the complex interaction of a variety of factors and is thus supported by these findings. The importance of teachers' actions can be seen in terms of teachers' modelling appropriate behaviour, by their impact on both the ethos and cultural values of the school through their own example and by their scaffolding and reinforcing behaviour seen as appropriate to the context. An ecosystemic view therefore supports the role of the teacher as being of vital importance, whilst placing it in conjunction with other factors such as policy and procedural contexts and the physical environment. The role of the teacher, and, by extension, the role of other adults in schools such as LSAs, can also be seen to remain a key factor in promoting positive behaviour in schools, even where the pupils are particularly affected by issues around their family circumstances and have increased vulnerability (Johnson et al, 1999). Thus, teacher belief in the importance of their role and of their potential efficacy in being able to change difficult behaviour in a positive manner, remain key areas for schools and outside agencies alike to focus on, in terms of both training and continuous support.

#### A COMPARISON OF THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY WITH PREVIOUS ATTRIBUTIONS STUDIES FOR DIFFICULT PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

As outlined above, the use of (broadly) the same questionnaire allows opportunity for some direct comparison to the findings of pupil attributions (Miller et al, 2000) and parent attributions (Miller et al, 2002). Table 3 presents a visual comparison of the factors found in both of these studies to the present study.

In all three studies, 'Fairness of Teachers' Actions' was deemed to be a clear construct and was also rated the most important factor. Eight variables

consistently appeared in all three of the studies within this factor. This finding may be somewhat surprising with regard to LSAs, in light of their role of 'quasi-teacher' within the classroom. This may have led to a prediction of their attributions being more closely allied to those of teachers and hence, attributions which centre on 'adverse family circumstances' as causal factors of difficult pupil behaviour (Miller, 1996; Croll & Moses, 2000). Findings suggest that LSAs and pupils both regard 'adverse family circumstance' as a discreet factor, whereas parents' attributions incorporated aspects of pupils' perceived vulnerabilities into this area. LSAs considered pupil vulnerability to be allied also to the pupils' access to 'boundaries' in shaping their behaviour from both teachers and parents. Such boundaries could also be seen as providing a sense of security and of psychological containment for children, which can be seen as necessary prerequisites of their emotional and behavioural development and well-being (Bion, 1962a in Ingram, 2005).

Findings appear to suggest that LSAs' attributions are therefore more closely allied to those of parents and pupils than to those of teachers. As discussed above, LSAs hold unique positions within schools, where they are part of the daily context but hold little responsibility for either the daily outcomes or the development and implementation/monitoring of policy and practice. In terms of perceived 'power' within the classroom situation, LSAs could be argued to be more closely allied to the position of parents and pupils rather than that of teachers, with little overt control over situations and decisions (although this does, of course, vary from school to school and person to person). As such, they are arguably more able to 'step back' and reflect and review the impact of such aspects as personal relationships, as they are less affected both personally and professionally. It would therefore be interesting to explore whether their attributions would change as a factor of either increased professional training or increased expectation with regard to their responsibilities (in terms of achieving measurable outcomes for whole cohorts of pupils).

## IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY FOR THE ROLE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND OTHER OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Educational Psychologists and other outside agencies working with schools benefit from an awareness of the causal attributions of those connected to classrooms when making use of an eco-systemic perspective for addressing challenging and difficult pupil behaviour. Outside agencies, particularly EPs, are often best placed to be able to perform this role. This is due to a combination of their understanding of the complexities of the situation, the nature of their role as being 'external' (and hence non-personal) to the school and the ability to apply psychological frameworks and approaches to the situation. Appreciation and careful exploration of these aspects could, in particular, reduce or even remove some of the conflict between adults involved in what is often a tense and highly emotionally charged situation. This could be achieved by promoting shared understanding or by actively re-framing situations to promote a broader understanding of the complexity of the situation rather than promoting a more simplistic cause-effect (or 'blame') scenario. An understanding of when, where and how differences in causal attribution between those most closely involved (parents, pupils, school staff in a variety of roles) may occur can aid understanding and hypothesis building and could potentially lead to increased understanding and hence better outcomes. Within the classroom, understanding and joint approach within the teacher/LSA working partnership is necessary in terms of developing shared understanding and equality of commitment to the chosen approach or interventions being applied for addressing challenging behaviour.

EPs also have a role within the wider school to promote the provision of a psychological framework for understanding and working with children presenting with difficult and challenging behaviour. Having an understanding of the potential causal attributions held by different people within the school community can help to structure conversations and training opportunities, with a view to promoting a closer shared view and approach, particularly towards the understanding of the potential efficacy of adults' roles in promoting positive behaviour within school and the wider community, despite the perceived level

of vulnerability of the pupil. Within the EP role, this can also include work at policy level both within individual schools and at a wider level, within families of schools or Education Authorities.

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH WITHIN CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS FOR DIFFICULT AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

As outlined above, the limitations of this study provide several openings for research, both to further explain the findings and to provide increased rigour to the research base. This includes a need to repeat the study, possibly using a questionnaire that includes variables reflecting within-child factors and intentionality scales, across single whole-school communities, thus allowing for comparison of causal attributions within the same educational context. If this design were also to be replicated across different Key Stages, comparison could be made according to the age of the children alongside other factors which may change with setting (such as class size, amount of time each teacher interacts with individual pupils and the parent-school relationship). Comparisons in causal attributions between similar catchment schools which record high and low exclusion rates could also increase understanding of the role of causal attributions in decision making and behaviour management.

Future research should also seek to reflect on the amount and type of training and professional qualifications held by school staff participants to allow analysis of the impact of training on causal attribution for challenging behaviour. Pre/post reported attribution measures could be analysed with regard to the provision of eco-systemic-based classroom management training, alongside other psychological behavioural approaches. These responses could also be mapped onto observational recordings of participants pre/post training in order to both consider the link between recorded attributions and actual behaviour and to consider the impact of such training on classroom management style.

An area of interest raised by this study is that of the difference of causal attribution between teachers and LSAs and the closer alliance of LSAs'

attributions to those of parents and children. It would be interesting and potentially useful to further examine the reasons behind this pattern of attribution, possibly in terms of considering similarities and differences between teachers and LSAs within the areas of professional development, personality and personal constructs. One area of particular interest would be those LSAs who train to become teachers, in terms of the impact of this change of job role on their attributions. It would be interesting to investigate whether any change did occur, and, if so, the direction of it, and to establish possible causal influences (such as the change in job role, change and direction of responsibility or the impact of training, as outlined above). If changes were to be recorded, the impact of self-serving attributions would need to be examined.

As outlined above, reported causal attributions do not necessarily reflect behaviour towards children presenting with challenging and difficult behaviour. Further attributional studies within participating school communities could potentially examine the link between reported attributions and behaviour. This would be of particular benefit with regard to the willingness and commitment of staff employing specific behavioural management approaches aimed at addressing difficult behaviour of pupils.

The impact of gaining the causal attributions of all those involved within the complexity of EP casework with regard to challenging behaviour in the classroom could be investigated through individual case studies. (In many ways, this could be closely linked to an Applied Behavioural Analysis approach (LaVigna & Donnellan, 1986), where those involved are asked to hypothesise possible causal reasons 'behind' the behaviour). It would be interesting to note the impact of gathering such knowledge on the role of the EP, in terms of both process and eventual outcome of subsequent intervention.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study suggests that Learning Support Assistants' reported causal attributions for children's difficult and challenging behaviour in school classrooms are more closely allied with those of parents and pupils than they are with those of teachers.

Limitations of the study with regard to the size and make-up of the participant group limit the application of findings to female LSAs and the schools within which the participants were based.

The three-factor solution suggested by the data reflects findings from previous studies of parent and pupil attributions in this area (Miller et al, 2000 & 2002).

It is beyond the scope of this study to be able to offer insight into the reasons behind this pattern of attribution styles, although several hypotheses have been presented which include personality; facets of professional training; specific responsibilities of job role; opportunity to take on an 'observational' and hence more reflective stance and the type of professional relationship developed between LSAs and pupils as opposed to that between teachers and pupils.

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## APPENDIX 2

Here is a list of things which some people say cause misbehaviour in the classroom. How important are these in causing misbehaviour?

	Not Important At All	Not Very Important	Quite Important	Very Important
1. Too much homework was given				
2. Pupils needed more help in class				
3. Alcohol/ drug abuse by family members				
4. Pupils were unfairly blamed				
5. Teachers were rude to pupils				
6. Pupils liked misbehaving				
7. Other pupils told the pupil to misbehave				
8. Classwork was too difficult				
9. Teachers were too soft				
10. Other pupils wanted to copy work				
11. Teachers were too strict				
12. Pupils didn't like teacher				
13. Pupils were worried about other things				

	Not Important At All	Not Very Important	Quite Important	Very Important
14. Other pupils stirred up trouble				
15. Pupil was unable to see mum/dad				
16. Teachers had favourites				
17. Teachers shouted all the time				
18. Pupils were picked on by teachers				
19. Families did not have enough money to eat or buy clothes				
20. Parents let pupils get away with too much				
21. Good work wasn't noticed				
22. Teachers gave too many detentions				
23. Teachers had bad moods				
24. There were fights and arguments at home				
25. Other pupils wanted pupil to be in gang				
26. Teachers did not listen to pupils				
27. Too much class work was given				

Dear .....

As part of my doctoral studies I am currently conducting some research regarding Learning Support Assistants' views on various aspects of classroom behaviour across a range of High Schools in Leicestershire.

I would very much appreciate it if you could ask your team of LSAs (including Teaching Assistants and Cover Supervisors where appropriate) if they would be willing to complete a short questionnaire. The questionnaires are completed anonymously and I enclose a sample of the questionnaire for your information and consideration. If you are not line manager for the LSAs I would be grateful if you could pass this on to the relevant colleague.

I will contact you by telephone early this half term to ascertain if your team are willing to participate and, if so, to arrange delivery of the necessary questionnaires. If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Very many thanks in anticipation of your support.

Yours gratefully

Dear Colleague

I am currently conducting some research regarding various aspects of classroom behaviour in Secondary Schools. I would very much appreciate it if you could take some of your valuable time to complete the attached questionnaire concerning your views of the importance of a variety of possible reasons for misbehavior in class.

I would also be grateful if you could complete the short section concerning basic information regarding your range of experience and personal characteristics. Please be assured that all responses are completely anonymous.

Please either return the questionnaire via the envelope provided to your line manager or directly to the above address through the internal mail system, marked for my attention.

Very many thanks in advance for your support.

Yours gratefully

# DISSEMINATION AND IMPACT EVALUATION

September 2011

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The papers presented within this thesis were developed over a period of time, during which the researcher was employed as an Educational Psychologist within a Local Authority Psychology Service in a variety of job roles. The manner in which learning accrued from the research process was disseminated, and the impact of this on both professional practice and efficacy of professional involvement, were therefore affected by this changing context and the researcher's own professional development. This paper sets out to outline the various ways in which learning from research was disseminated and how it impacted on professional practice.

A brief exposition of how each paper contributes to the central theme within the overall thesis and the key points which were identified for dissemination is followed by more detailed outline of how these messages were disseminated through the Educational Psychologist role at various levels: systemic, group-based and individual. An evaluation of the impact of gaining of familiarity in the use of the various research approaches and methods is then provided. The conclusion aims to incorporate potential future direction and next steps, at a personal, professional and corporate level.

### RELATIONSHIPS, HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT BEHAVIOUR: A CENTRAL THEME

Each of the papers contained within this thesis address the general area of how psychological models of behaviour, learning and social interaction are, or are not, evident within education today. This thesis took as its specific area of study Local Authority maintained High Schools (school years 6 or 7 to 9 inclusive, depending on the setting) and the impact of the school environment, particularly in terms of staff involvement, on developing behaviour appropriate for learning situations (see pages 282 to 284 above for further detail on this context). Each paper will be discussed briefly in turn below.

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#### LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS' ATTRIBUTIONS FOR THE CAUSES OF CHILDREN'S CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS

The first paper made use of a factor analysis approach to examine Learning Support Assistants' views of factors which impact on student behaviour within school. It was set within the context that an understanding of causal attributions can support an eco-systemic approach to addressing challenging behaviour in the classroom. The research area and methodology employed built on existing research (Croll & Moses, 1985; Miller, 1996; Miller et al, 2000, Miller et al, 2002) and extended it to research causal attributions of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who increasingly form part of the school community and hold important roles in supporting teachers and working with children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD). Findings indicated that LSAs' attributions for pupils' challenging behaviour were best represented by three factors: 'Fairness of Teachers' Actions', 'Adverse Family Circumstances' and 'Pupil Vulnerability' (to peer relationships and to lack of adult guidance). These findings showed marked similarity to parent and pupil attributions in this area, but differed to the attributions of teachers, who had been found to attribute such difficulties to 'home factors' in around 66% of cases (Croll & Moses, 1985). This initial paper postulated that the nature of the role of the LSA within the classroom, in terms of the relationship with the pupil and level of responsibility, may have impacted on their attributions. The discussion argued that LSA attributions may be affected by the level to which they view themselves as having either a 'parental' type role or a role more closely allied with a teaching role. Each of these roles is discussed in terms of relationship aspects with the child, an area which, in terms of dissemination of these findings, has impacted at all levels of professional work, as outlined in detail below.

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#### A GROUNDED-THEORY STUDY OF YEAR 9 PUPILS' VIEWS OF THEIR SECONDARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE: FRIENDS, TEACHERS, LEARNING, BEHAVIOUR 'N' STUFF.

The second paper aimed to explore children's general experience of school, including things which impact on their behaviour, through an examination of the voice of students themselves via a grounded theory approach. It has been noted that pupil status is lower than that of teacher, although researchers such

as Calvert (1975) have pointed out that each role depends for '*its satisfactory performance on the interlocking performance of the other role*' (p.2). This research identified three key factors for students in terms of their experiences of school: Pupil-Teacher Relationship; Pupil-to-pupil conversation, socialisation and learning and teachers' 'behaviour management', which student participants conceptualised as 'handling' rather than 'control'. A key, linking factor was identified which over-arched these three areas – the pupils' sense of individuality, of being seen as, respected as and treated as an individual by individuals (see p.294 above for an overview). Thus, again the importance of relationship was raised: an area which was a key factor in all dissemination.

#### AN EXPLORATION OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS' CONSTRUING IN RELATION TO STUDENT ATTACHMENT STYLE

The area of research for the final paper, which involved an exploration of education professionals' constructs of student behaviour, built on these earlier explorations and reflected the researcher's increasing professional role with regard to children and young people with a variety of vulnerabilities (e.g. children in care, post-adopted, known to the Youth Justice system and/or those whose behaviours were placing them at risk of exclusion from school). Reading for research and professional development purposes had led to attachment theory being identified as a possible vehicle by which relationships could be examined within a school context and as a possibly useful conceptual framework for understanding behaviours within schools, including behaviours identified as being challenging. Whilst publications had already been produced which made the assumption that attachment theory would be a useful framework for these purposes, no research had addressed whether education professionals' constructs around students' behaviours reflected aspects of attachment.

Findings from this exploratory research identified that students likely to have a secure pattern of attachment were more closely associated with participants' preferred poles of constructs than those students representative of an insecure

attachment pattern. There was, however, also some suggestion that General Teachers, who have less experience with working with students expressing ESBD, may tend to associate avoidant-insecure students with more preferred aspects of their construing than Educational Psychologists or Specialist ESBD/Pastoral Teachers. Overall, findings from this research were suggestive that education professionals may be receptive to emotional and relationship-based interventions with students with challenging behaviour and that attachment theory could potentially be a useful theoretical psychological framework for understanding all aspects of student behaviours, including ESBD. However, individual differences within findings were suggestive that this cannot easily be undertaken via a 'blanket' in-service training approach, which is potentially impacted on by adults' own internal working models and life experiences.

The manner in which these key findings from the research undertaken have been disseminated is outlined below.

#### DISSEMINATION AT DIFFERENT 'LEVELS' OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY WORK

Dissemination of learning from a review of the literature associated with the research and the research findings themselves was undertaken over a period of time and took a variety of forms. Each of these is outlined in turn below, detailing dissemination opportunities at each of the various levels at which Educational Psychology involvement is generally undertaken.

#### DISSEMINATION VIA SYSTEMIC WORK

The opportunity to undertake work at a systemic level, often across the Local Authority, was linked to the researcher's job role growing to encompass first a Senior Practitioner and then a Senior Educational Psychologist role with regard to vulnerable students (e.g. students excluded or at risk of exclusion; children in care or post-adopted; children using offending behaviour or at risk of developing offending behaviour and children with high levels of anxiety, often

leading to school refusal). Dissemination has been undertaken via discussions and joint work with a variety of people including senior school staff, Local Authority officers in a variety of roles (Special Educational Needs Assessment Services, Attendance Improvement, Behaviour Support, Education of Children in Care, Post-Adoption team, Social Care teams, Youth Offending Service team, Common Assessment Framework team) and other agencies outside of Children and Young Peoples Services such as multi-agency-based contacts in health and CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services).

This dissemination has included incorporating in discussion and debate an understanding of ESD within the context of attachment and developmental trauma. The context for these discussions has particularly been with regard to systemic considerations incorporating provision for children and young people excluded and at risk of exclusion, provision for those children and young people with ESD whom mainstream schools struggle to provide for successfully and the range and siting of access to supportive measures within a progressive matrix of support mechanisms for children and young people with significant ESD.

One key consideration currently being highlighted is the importance of executive function (Stirling, 2002; Meltzer, 2007) for the educational progress for children and young people with ESD, due to the likely impact of any developmental trauma on the development of these skills. Assessment materials are now used regularly to add to other contextual information regarding a young person's profile and to aid the development of personalised learning programmes. Another key area currently in development is the increasing role of Psychology Service support to newly formed 'Behaviour Partnerships' (previously known as 'hard to place' panels or 'Placement and Support panels') which are established by families of schools to support the prevention of exclusions. Contributions at a systemic level have included framing of discussions by the educational psychologist-researcher in terms of relationships and attachment-based paradigms, such that security of

attachment is understood, recognised and promoted, and the provision of training to groups of school staff (as outlined in more detail below).

Contributions involving the dissemination of key points outlined above have also been made via the complex casework panel to support the education of children in care and the Education of Children in Care strategic group and similar panels for adopted children via multi-agency support afforded to post-adoption social workers.

Currently, this research and associated study has provided the basis for recommendations to the Local Authority regarding local criteria for statutory assessment regarding ESBD and access to levels and types of support including specialist provision and therapeutic-type interventions. Contributions were also made via involvement with the selection process for prospective Local Authority foster carers and the provision of training for foster carers and social workers, as outlined below.

Dissemination of much of the information gleaned from the close review of literature is also currently underway via a booklet for school staff, written by the author and specialist teaching colleagues, which aims to provide an outline of the impact of insecure attachment and/or developmental trauma in terms of a child's holistic development and, in particular, their emotional regulation capacity and their executive functioning skill development. This booklet, which will incorporate explanation alongside practical approaches to support positive development for the child and advice to promote containment for school staff, aims to support staff in understanding a child's challenging behaviours and need for secure relationships – a re-framing of the 'naughty child' into a 'child needing security'. Whilst it is initially being targeted towards teachers who hold the designated role in relation to children in care, it will also be supportive of those students who, for whatever reason, have developed insecure attachments which continue to impact on their development.

#### DISSEMINATION VIA GROUP-BASED WORK

The job-role of an Educational Psychologist affords the opportunity to work at a group-based level with a variety of people including school staff within a variety of contexts (senior leadership teams and other leadership teams, such as Heads of Year and Department, SEN and behaviour support/pastoral teams, teaching staff, support staff including support assistants and lunchtime supervisors), teachers holding specific job roles such as SENCOs, area SENCOs, designated teachers for Children in Care and other people outside of a direct educational context who have association with education via individual children and young people such as parents, foster carers and social workers. Group-based workshops and In-Service training sessions are often commissioned by such groups of people. They can also be offered as a way of addressing a particular issue or to support Psychology Service casework on behalf of individuals or groups of children/young people.

The key themes as outlined above have formed the basis or key aspects of a great deal of group-based support over the last few years and have covered all of the above groups of people outlined. Presentations and work shops have been tailored to individual needs and have included 'Growing a Nurturing Classroom' training to school staff at Key Stages One, Two and, as a pilot, Three, and the publication of 'Training for Trainer' materials which have had a national take-up. This approach incorporates attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/97; Salter-Ainsworth, 1989) with resilience theory (Gilligan, 2000) and general child development and embeds it within the context of an eco-systemic framework and Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs. It has been positively evaluated in terms of both staff's perceptions of the usefulness of the training and in terms of positive impact in classrooms, particularly regarding staff-pupil relationships and the capacity of staff to understand and thus cater for a child's presented behaviours which are challenging in the school context.

Another area which has incorporated dissemination from the study and research process is the delivery of workshops focusing on 'Attachment and the Classroom'. These workshops have been provided for a variety of schools at

all key stages and have also incorporated aspects regarding the management of challenging behaviour within a nurturing framework, based on attachment principles. Where the courses have been undertaken with foster carers and/or social workers, the focus has been on the role these adults can take to promote schools' understanding of possible underlying difficulties that the child may be experiencing and empowering the adults around the child to engage the support of the necessary people (e.g. designated teacher, senior staff, link Psychologist to the school) to ensure that the child's needs are understood and addressed holistically and according to individual requirements.

The roll-out of the recent Inclusion Development Plan materials (DCSF 2010) for BESD was undertaken by a multi-agency team within the Local Authority, including the researcher. These materials, which take an attachment theory perspective as the basis for understanding children's acting-in and acting-out behaviours, were introduced across the whole Local Authority via five half-day sessions. The key points outlined above were drawn on to expand upon points illustrated by the materials. Hand-outs including key points and signposting to references and resources were also provided, which drew heavily on research findings.

Prior to the development of Behaviour Partnerships, as discussed above in terms of systemic approaches, the key aspects of these studies were incorporated into a family of Secondary Schools working group of senior staff, whose half-termly meetings were facilitated and led by the researcher. The aims of the meetings were to consider some of the key themes outlined above and to discuss how these impacted on current practice within each school (3 feeder High Schools and the KS4 Upper School). Senior staff including the Deputy Heads with responsibility for pastoral care/behaviour management and the Inclusion Head/SENCO formed the working group. As a result of this approach, there was improvement in relationships between the key staff and improved consistency of approach in the management of challenging behaviour within and between the schools. This had a particular impact in terms of transition between the High Schools and the Upper School, as improved consistency in management led to fewer disruptions on transition. Whilst this

approach is, to some extent, incorporated within the Behaviour Partnership approach, the strength of discussion can be seen to have dissipated as the partnerships focus more on process and finance and less on the psychological approaches to addressing children's needs. There is therefore a continued need to address this area to promote consistency and improve staff confidence. This challenge is increased in a climate of considerable change within educational provision, particularly regarding the current move away from centralised resources to school-led commissioning based on a school's own views of its individual needs.

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#### DISSEMINATION VIA INDIVIDUAL CASEWORK

Individual educational psychology casework adopts an holistic approach involving observation of a child or young person across a variety of settings and environments and psychological consultation with those who know the child best. The aims of such involvement are to gain understanding of and to interpret a child's needs in the context of both their present and past experiences. This is of particular importance where a child may have experienced trauma in their early development. Thus a picture of the child's areas of strength and their areas of difficulty is built-up and hypotheses are formed of their presenting behaviours and the needs that these behaviours are likely to be indicating. These hypotheses can then be shared with others who have close association with the child such that they can be translated into practical strategies and approaches that can be applied within predominantly the educational setting but also within the home setting. Reading undertaken for these research papers has formed the basis of many of the frameworks for understanding a range of behavioural presentations and has aided the researcher's ability to help others to develop their own understanding of how a child's early experiences (the inner working models of an attachment theory perspective) and the need to support a child's continued development in the areas of emotional regulation and executive functioning can lead to a differentiated response by significant adults and increase their ability to

manage challenging situations with more confidence and less impact on their own emotional well-being.

Such work is undertaken within a multi-agency perspective and involves the child/young person closely. Whilst the focus is to build-up an holistic picture of the child, as outlined above, the purpose is often driven by the need for the Local Authority to make decisions regarding the nature of a child's educational placement and the type and level of support necessary to meet the child's educational needs via such mechanisms as Personal Educational Plan Meetings, Annual Reviews of Special Educational Needs. However, when it is most effective, it can also be used to plan a network of support for a child and his/her family or carers, such that the child's psychological development is nurtured alongside other aspects being catered for.

#### THE USE OF RESEARCH METHODS AND APPROACHES EMPLOYED IN RESEARCH

Three major research methods were employed within this research: Grounded Theory, Factor Analysis and Personal Construct Psychology. Each of these methods were new to the researcher both in terms of their remit, their practical use and the interpretation of resultant findings. Whilst the role of Educational Psychologist nominally includes the use of research within and across educational settings, it is increasingly rare to have the time or opportunity to build this into everyday practice. Each of the above papers arose out of an area of the researcher's personal interest, and, whilst each of them was allied to the everyday job role, none of them were specifically linked to a job-related need. However, the skills learned, honed and utilised by the researcher remain available for use within professional practice should the opportunity arise. It is likely that a factor analysis approach may be used with regard to the evaluation of a training programme about to be trialled across an area of the county by the researcher. Additional rigour with regard to evaluation approaches (and, indeed, to the reading of others' evaluations and research) is also an outcome of the research undertaken.

Personal construct psychology, however, with its basis in individual, therapeutic casework, has afforded more opportunities for continued use. Indeed, it has provided a useful addition to casework techniques when working with adolescents to help them to explore their own worlds and potential actions that would support their continued development.

## CONCLUSION

The process of evaluating the impact of undertaking the above research, and how it has been disseminated, has been inseparably interwoven with growth in professional practice – from an EP with just one year's professional experience to a Senior EP role with responsibility for management of a team of psychologists who work to support children with high level of vulnerabilities, their families and schools, and responsibilities at a corporate level within the current Local Authority system. Reading and research undertaken have been the warp to the weft of everyday experience – theoretical learning has been applied to individual circumstances which have, in turn, iteratively directed the nature of further reading and research. Dissemination of the impact of this journey is therefore arguably most evident in lived professional practice – and it will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

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