



**‘By Children, With Children, for Children’: Exploring Children’s Rights-Based  
Approaches Within an Educational Psychology Service Using Appreciative  
Inquiry**

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## **Abstract**

Children's Rights-Based Approaches (CRBA) are holistically underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Research highlights the benefits of adopting CRBA within education, to raise awareness of children's rights, enhance participation, improve rights-consciousness, promote inclusion and ensure positive outcomes for children socially, emotionally and academically. Educational Psychologists (EPs) play a crucial role in upholding children's rights, which are relevant to all facets of their practice. It is therefore essential for EPs to understand how to apply CRBA in practice, yet this has not been addressed in research.

This study investigates how EPs define and implement CRBA, and identifies the factors that facilitate implementation, employing Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to support practice development. It also aims to evaluate AI as a tool for professional development within EP teams.

Using a participatory action research design, the study engaged an EP team in Northern England in six workshops over seven months, as co-researchers in an AI that sought to develop their practice in using CRBA. The 5D cycle of AI, with an added evaluation phase was utilised. Data was gathered through participatory discussion based activities, and co-analysed using a participatory adaptation of reflexive thematic analysis. Data was recorded visually by participants, using a range of tools such as rich pictures and thematic maps.

Findings indicate that EPs define CRBA contextually, and apply them broadly across all aspects of their work. Key factors that facilitate CRBA in practice include commitment, collaboration, confidence, care and creativity. The conceptual framework

based on these factors, co-developed by participants is presented. This provides a reflective tool to guide practice and embed CRBA for the EP team in this study, which, if shared, has the potential to impact rights-respecting EP practice at a broader level.

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Granny.

Granny - thank you for teaching me how to love, how to be kind, and how to always see the best in others. For teaching me what it means to give generously and to always show up. For being my biggest cheerleader.

Though I know you won't be there to see me graduate, your spirit will continue to guide me and you will always be in my heart.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This thesis was undertaken as part of doctoral research for the professional training programme in Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham. The study was conducted with twelve members of an Educational Psychology (EP) team in one Local Authority (LA) in Yorkshire.

### **1.1 Research Aims and Thesis Structure**

The aims of this research are centered around exploring the views and perspectives of an EP team in relation to how they understand and use Children's Rights-Based Approaches (CRBA) in their practice, and the factors that support them to do this effectively. A further aim of this research is to provide an evaluation of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a tool to support EP professional practice and development. Employing a participatory action research (PAR) design using AI, the study links professional practice and development with practice-based knowledge around the implementation of CRBA.

An exploration of existing research around human rights, children's rights and CRBA within education is provided in Chapter 2, along with a qualitative synthesis of research around what is known about how EPs use CRBA, and an overview of the aims and rationale for the current study.

Chapter 3 provides a description of the PAR design and AI methodology employed, as well as the theoretical assumptions that underpin the study. Details of the research participants, recruitment processes and approach to data collection and analysis is also presented, along with ethical considerations and an evaluation of research quality associated with the chosen methods.

The findings of the AI conducted are presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in relation to relevant existing literature in Chapter 5 to address the research questions posed. Chapter 5 also provides a discussion of the study's original contribution, limitations, implications and the researcher reflections on completing the research. Final conclusions are presented in Chapter 6.

## **1.2 Personal and Professional Interest**

The researcher has a passionate interest in advocating for children and young people (CYP) to ensure their needs are met and their potential as human beings is realised. As a Trainee EP and through previous roles within education, the researcher has witnessed the empowering impact of strengths-based, person-centered approaches when children's views and needs are advocated for. The researcher has also witnessed the damaging impact of restrictive practices and systems around CYP when their rights are forgotten, or not placed at the forefront of their care and support.

Throughout the training programme, the researcher has been motivated by practice that empowers CYP and seeks to place their views, strengths, needs and aspirations at the centre of practice. Believing that EPs are well-placed to serve as advocates for CYP and act as agents of change, the researcher is driven by the potential for systemic change and seeks to do this by building on the strengths within a system, and by keeping the child at the centre of everything they do. These motivations inspired the current study.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter begins by exploring human rights as psychological needs, discussing the intersection of human rights and psychology, citing pertinent literature. Children's rights will be explored within the broader context of human rights, considering the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The chapter also discusses the relevance of children's rights in education, including children's rights-based approaches (CRBA), their implementation in educational contexts, and their impact on children and young people (CYP) and wider educational systems. The relevance of children's rights and CRBA to the Educational Psychologist (EP) role will be discussed. Following this, a systematic literature review employing a qualitative research synthesis is presented to investigate what is known about EPs' use of CRBA in practice. Finally, the researcher outlines the rationale and research questions for this study.

### **2.2 Human Rights**

Human rights are defined as basic rights and freedoms that are inherent to every individual, and cannot be revoked (Equality & Human Rights Commission, 2019), although certain rights can be restricted under specific circumstances. For instance, prisoners have limited rights regarding privacy, property, education and freedom from forced labour during incarceration for breaking the law. Nevertheless, they must still receive a basic level of care in accordance with human rights principles.

In the UK, the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) was developed to protect the rights outlined within the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) in UK law. This signifies the value of human rights, setting out legal regulations for how individuals must

be treated. The HRA protects 16 fundamental human rights and freedoms, as outlined in Figure 2.1. Further guidance around realising and protecting human rights is published within the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations General Assembly, 1948), which, although not legally-binding, is signed up to by many countries worldwide.

### Figure 2.1

*An overview of the 16 rights protected by the Human Rights Act (1998), taken from 'Save the Act' campaign (Save the Act, 2018).*



#### 2.2.1 Human Rights as Psychological Needs

Psychological theorists have explicitly linked human needs with human rights (Doyal, 2001; Kinderman, 2007). Theories of motivation, such as Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (1943; 1954; 1970) help to illustrate how psychology is linked to human rights. Maslow's hierarchy begins with fulfilling basic physiological needs (e.g. food, water, shelter) and safety needs, before addressing higher-order social, emotional and psychological needs like love, belonging, esteem and personal growth. Fulfilling basic physiological and safety needs first is essential for individuals to thrive and reach their full potential, allowing for social, emotional and psychological needs to be met.

The UDHR emphasises the right to adequate food, housing, clothing and medical care (Article 25), reflecting Maslow's first stage of meeting basic physiological needs.

The HRA outlines the right to life (Article 2), liberty and security (Article 5) and protection from torture, inhumane treatment, slavery and forced labour (Articles 3 & 4), reflecting safety and security needs within the next stage of Maslow's hierarchy.

Rights to respect for private and family life (Article 8) and the right to marry and start or find a family (Article 12) in the HRA correspond with love and belonging needs discussed by Maslow. Though not explicitly stated in the HRA, higher-order needs relating to esteem and self-actualisation are implicitly covered in the right to education (Article 2), freedom of thought, belief, religion and expression (Articles 9 & 10), and the right to participate in cultural and community life (UDHR, Article 27).

Human rights provide a formalised system within society that facilitates the fulfilment of physiological and psychological needs outlined in Maslow's hierarchy (Doyal, 2001; Gallatin, 1976; Kinderman, 2007). Meeting basic human rights allows human needs (Gasper, 2005), creating opportunities to realise higher-order psychological needs. Maslow (1943) himself emphasised the necessity of certain conditions, such as freedom of expression and freedom to defend oneself, which directly align with the HRA. By appreciating the intersection of human rights and the psychology of human motivation and potential, the idea that human rights underpin psychological needs can be understood.

Recent literature (e.g., Quintavalla & Heine, 2019) attempts to integrate Maslow's hierarchy of needs into the development of a human rights hierarchy, exploring whether

there is an order to realising human rights that supports implementation, further evidencing the connection between these concepts.

### ***2.2.2 The Intersection of Psychology and Human Rights***

Psychology and human rights have always been implicitly linked (Wainwright et al., 2022). As a discipline, psychology investigates the way we relate to and treat each other as human beings (Velez, 2016b), sharing insights into human development, behaviour and cognition. Velez (2016b) suggests that the topics and theories that have developed to support this understanding of psychology include, but are not limited to, the social construction of the mind (Vygotsky, 1978), intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner, 1981), the power within interpersonal relationships (Milgram, 1974) and group norms (Festinger et al., 1950). The timing of the development of such topics and theories coincides with the emergence of an international discourse around human rights following the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. However, as disciplines, they have developed mostly in isolation within the research literature (Velez, 2016b). Recent years have seen a growing recognition for the intersection of psychology and human rights, with researchers articulating how psychology and human rights are connected, and why these disciplines matter to one another (Drazenovich & Stroink, 2023; Twose & Cohrs, 2015; Velez, 2016b; Wainwright et al., 2022).

Firstly, social psychology contributes to human rights by describing the way that an individual's social context shapes their thoughts and behaviours (e.g., Gergen, 1985; Goffman, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978) and the way that socialisation and group membership shape an individual's identity and influence their interactions and relationships with others (Velez, 2016b). This suggests that psychology can shed light on important

understandings about the way humans apply positive or negative values to their social interactions and interpersonal relationships. Some researchers have described human rights to provide collective descriptors, defined as codifications for how we navigate interpersonal relationships and social obligations (Doise, 2003; Kinderman, 2007). For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the right to education and the right to enjoy high standards of health and well-being was limited, and increased vulnerability to exploitation for some CYP, as a result of social inequality, specifically scarcity of resources, poverty and unequal opportunities. Some children were not able to access the internet to join online learning and others were subject to increased gender-based violence during this time (Gaba et al., 2022). Given that social relationships and social conditions like this are suggested to be determinants of well-being (Haslam et al., 2018a; 2018b), they also influence the human right to enjoy high standards of health (Wainwright et al., 2022).

Community, cultural, and critical psychology are also connected with human rights. Scholars highlight the influence of power (Kinderman, 2007) and 'othering', meaning the social exclusion and marginalisation of individuals from a group based on the idea that they do not fit in with the social norms of that group (Rohleder, 2014), that is experienced by minority groups on psychological well-being. This emphasises the connection to human rights principles of dignity, inclusion and freedom that are often denied when 'othering' occurs (Tripathi, 2018; Wainwright et al., 2022). For example, the marginalisation and 'othering' of CYP with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) often results in school exclusion, violating the right to education (Glazzard, 2014).

Applied psychologists play a crucial role in supporting the well-being of individuals affected by human rights violations, advocating for their rights across various fields, such as education, the prison service and mental health services (Kinderman, 2007). For example, applied educational psychologists may work with CYP who have experienced childhood trauma, to ensure their needs are met and they are supported to feel safe and build positive and trusting relationships within school. This highlights the importance integrating human rights within everyday applied psychology practice in order to support CYP safety and well-being.

Psychologists possess valuable knowledge and skills to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights, and human rights provide a framework to guide psychologists' practice, research and education (Wainwright et al., 2022). A world-wide study with different psychological associations revealed that most undertake activities related to human rights, with many incorporating human rights into their ethical codes (Wainwright et al., 2022). Integrating human rights into psychologists' ongoing education and professional development is therefore essential to maintain and strengthen the connection between psychology and human rights in contemporary work and uphold human rights in practice (Tibbitts & Hagenars, 2020). This is particularly important to address the profession's historical contributions to rights violations (Wainwright & Leone, 2020).

In summary, the relationship between psychology and human rights appears reciprocal as psychological theories and frameworks contribute to our understanding of human rights, and human rights inform psychology practice, which highlights the interconnectedness of the two disciplines.

## 2.3 Children's Rights

CYP have the same human rights as adults, along with specific rights that recognise their unique needs (Flekkøy, 1993; UNICEF, 2019a) for protection, survival, development, and participation (Theis, 2018).

UNICEF (2019b) propose several reasons for establishing a separate convention for children's rights, including:

- Recognising children as individuals with equal status
- Providing a framework for decision-making where the state acts in the child's best interests as the primary duty bearer to support a child's growth towards independence, especially in the absence of adequate family care
- Ensuring children are considered within public policy, to have a positive impact.
- Facilitating children's participation and ensuring their views are heard on matters that affect them.
- Protecting children from societal changes that may disproportionately affect them negatively.
- Addressing children's vulnerability due to their ongoing development, to support healthy growth for future well-being.
- Highlighting the significant societal cost of failing children, as early experiences significantly influence their future development.

This highlights an important distinction between human rights and children's rights, that can be understood by applying principles from developmental psychology. Children's rights are designed to address their vulnerability and specific age-related needs (Humanium, 2011), affirming their right to live and develop physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally, and intellectually within appropriate timeframes to achieve their full

potential (Wessells & Kostelny, 2020). This fits with developmental theories, including stage models of cognitive and moral development (Piaget 1932; 1971; Kohlberg, 1970), and Anna Freud's work (1951) on healthy development and potential disruptions in a child's life trajectory.

Whilst the UNCRC has faced criticism for its ambiguity regarding the right to development and the theories it draws upon (Peleg, 2013; Velez, 2016a), it is also commended for advocating for a holistic approach to child development and well-being (Wessells & Kostelny, 2020). This suggests a need for further research around the UNCRC, in collaboration with developmental psychologists to clarify the conceptualisation of the right to development, that in part justifies the importance of a separate convention for children's rights.

This shift is underway, with Velez (2016a) suggesting that bringing together positioning theory (Davies & Harre, 1990) and Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) (Spencer et al, 1997), allows for a more comprehensive and interconnected understanding of child development that asserts the importance of children's social contexts, internal characteristics, responses, interactions and individual developmental trajectories. This is because positioning theory emphasises the dynamic and relational nature of child development, with sense of self developed through a child's ongoing interactions with others and the environment, and PVEST highlights the importance of the child's intersubjective experience on their development, how they understand, interpret, and make meaning out of their experiences and interactions with others and their environment, and then respond in future. This therefore provides a critique for the UNCRC's linear view of child development. Peleg (2013) also



contributes by proposing the capability approach as a theoretical framework to analyse children's right to development, that emphasises respect for CYP agency and participation. Further research is needed to translate these ideas into practice and broaden the conceptualisation of child development within the UNCRC, drawing on emerging insights from developmental psychology.

### ***2.3.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child***

The UNCRC (United Nations, 1989) is an important international legal framework recognising children's rights (Doek, 2019) and their status as rights holders (Zermatten, 2010). Since its inception, discussions around children's rights have evolved significantly (Andreopoulos & Claude, 1997; Woodhead, 1997). Through 54 articles, the UNCRC embodies four guiding principles; non-discrimination, respect for children's views, prioritising the child's best interests, and their right to life, survival, and development (Thomas, 2011).

Ratified by the UK in 1991 (Lang, 2016), the UNCRC outlines the UK government's obligations to uphold children's rights by adhering to its articles (Jones & Walker, 2011). As the most widely adopted human rights treaty (Donnelly, 2013), the UNCRC symbolises the beginning of children's rights advancement and marks a significant historical shift in how children are perceived and valued, emphasising their status as people rather than property (Hart, 1991). This aligns with the rise of developmental psychology, which has offered insights into children's development and appropriate caregiving practices to support their development (Hart, 1991).

The UNCRC has prompted the endorsement of CRBA to development, with numerous initiatives brought into UK policy and legislation following its enactment

(Grugel, 2012; Winter, 2011). However, challenges remain as the UNCRC is criticised for its restrictive top-down approach to implementing children's rights (Robson, 2016; Lundy & Sainz, 2018), limiting its translation into practice (Kilkelly, 2006; Lundy et al., 2012; Lyle, 2014; Sargeant, 2017; Thomas, 2011). This lack of consistency around the interpretation and application of the UNCRC has resulted in significant disparities in how children's rights are realised across different contexts (Gilmore, 2017; Thomas, 2011), leaving many children's rights unrealised (Garnier, 2012).

In summary, the UNCRC addresses the historical lack of rights for children, aiming to include them, protect them from harm and promote their holistic development. The children's rights movement, which led to the creation of the UNCRC, reflects how children's rights came to be realised, influenced by the evolution of psychology and related fields in recognising children's value. Despite progress, challenges persist in implementing children's rights, highlighting the relevance of exploring how EPs can adopt CRBA in their practice over 30 years later.

### ***2.3.2 Other Legislation Relevant to Children's Rights***

The Children's Act (1989; 2004) is a legislative framework to ensure the welfare and protection of CYP in England that aligns with the UNCRC, emphasising children's rights and the importance of considering their thoughts, wishes and feelings (James, 2008). The 2004 revision introduced designated roles like the Director of Children's Services and the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England to enhance accountability for CYP's life outcomes. Subsequent statutory guidance has encouraged the incorporation of UNCRC principles into decision-making regarding CYP outcomes within these roles (Department for Education, 2013).

The UNCRC outlines children's rights to protection from discrimination, which intersects with legislation such as The Equality Act (2010) that covers discrimination law in the UK. While the Equality Act primarily safeguards children against discrimination based on protected characteristics, it lacks specific provision for age discrimination for those under 18 years, except in employment settings. The UNCRC addresses additional vulnerabilities faced by children, advocating for protection from discrimination due to their age and limited decision-making power in comparison to adults. This form of discrimination, termed 'childism' in the literature (Pierce & Allen, 1975; Young-Bruehl, 2012), is prevalent in education (Adami, 2023), particularly concerning disciplinary practices within schools (Ockwell-Smith, 2023).

### ***2.3.3 Relevance of Children's Rights in Education***

The UNCRC is highly relevant in education, affirming every child's right to access quality education that promotes their full development and potential (United Nations, 1989). Education is recognised as essential to realising all human rights and empowering individuals as rights holders (Grover, 2002; Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2014), and crucial to enhance quality of life and responsibility in adulthood (Mason, 1999).

Whilst all adults are expected to support children's rights, the government holds primary responsibility for ensuring children's rights are upheld (Atkinson, 2018; Beazley et al., 2009). In education, LA staff (e.g. specialist teachers, EPs) and teachers are recognised as duty bearers, required to protect, respect, and fulfil children's rights as outlined in the UNCRC (Jerome & Starkey, 2022).

Research into children's rights in educational contexts has grown significantly since the adoption of the UNCRC (Quennerstedt & Moody, 2020). Despite the strong

relevance of children's rights in education, research in the field is limited, with only a small proportion of educational research considering children's rights (Lansdown et al., 2014; Quennerstedt & Moody, 2020). Existing research focuses on respecting children's rights in education by considering their views (e.g. l'Anson & Allan, 2006; Theobald et al., 2011). Less attention has been given to educating children about their rights (Quennerstedt, 2015) or structuring education (e.g. teaching content and methods, relationships in school) to be rights-respecting (Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2014). Challenges around meeting UNCRC expectations persist (Lundy, 2012), which is significant given the prevalence of educational inequality, exclusion and school absence in society (e.g. UNESCO, 2016; Ige & Sebili, 2020).

The UNCRC is therefore important in education, providing many opportunities for promoting and protecting children's rights. Adults in educational roles are duty bearers, responsible for upholding children's rights, making the UNCRC crucial in underpinning all aspects of their work. However, despite this duty, children's rights are not consistently realised.

### ***2.3.4 Other Legislation Relevant to Children's Rights in Education***

The Education Act (1996; 2011) aims to guarantee access to education for all children in the UK, encompassing provisions for education, childcare, apprenticeships, and training. It outlines responsibilities for caregivers and educational settings to ensure every child receives an education suitable for their age and ability, allowing them to make progress over time.

Additional legislation concerning children's rights in education includes the Children and Families Act (2014), the SEND Code of Practice (2015), and statutory

guidance around youth participation in education, employment or training (Department for Education, 2016).

The Children and Families Act (2014) (CFA) is significant for educational professionals, including EPs, as it emphasises children's rights and the collaborative responsibility of various agencies to uphold these rights under the UNCRC, strengthening its implementation in the UK. The CFA addresses provisions for CYP with SEND up to the age of 25, outlining the rights of parents, carers, and CYP in different aspects of provision, such as sharing their views for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) (CoP) offers statutory guidance for supporting children with SEND, enacting changes from the CFA. The CoP advises on the rights of CYP with SEND, including measures to support inclusion and prevent discrimination in education. Although the UNCRC is referenced, the focus is primarily on Articles 12 and 13, emphasising children's rights to express their views and have them given due weight in accordance with their age, maturity, and capability (Department for Education & Department for Health, 2015, p.20).

The UNCRC encompasses 54 articles, yet, statutory guidance for CYP with SEND often presents a narrow and unrepresentative view of CYP rights (Lundy, 2007). Sayers (2018) criticises the CoP for missing an opportunity to adopt a rights-based approach to SEND, suggesting this to weaken educational professionals' understanding of CYP rights in education.

Other statutory guidance (Department for Education, 2016) outlines the participation rights of CYP in education, employment or training until the age of 18

years. This guidance describes the responsibilities of LAs, CYP, and education settings in ensuring participation, providing information on education provision for CYP aged 16-18 and advice for re-engaging those facing barriers to participation.

Exploring the legislative landscape in education reveals that while certain rights are acknowledged within statutory guidance and legal frameworks, other rights are ignored or only addressed implicitly. This helps to explain the challenges professionals face in realising children's rights in education, as observed in research (discussed in Section 2.4.2) as the legislative frameworks guiding practice are not explicit and do not understand the broad range of rights children have.

## **2.4 Children's Rights-Based Approaches**

### **2.4.1 Definition**

Within the literature, children's rights-based approaches (CRBA) are generally accepted as approaches that are holistically underpinned by the UNCRC (e.g., Collins & Paré, 2016; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Roscoe, 2011). The UNCRC therefore provides a framework that grounds CRBA to practice in different contexts, including schools (e.g., Covell, 2007; Covell & Howe, 2008) and educational psychology (Kosher et al., 2014; Lansdown, et al., 2014).

### **2.4.2 Implementing CRBA in Education**

Quennerstedt and Moody (2020) conducted a systematic review of educational rights research undertaken since the adoption of the UNCRC, identifying three main areas of focus. Firstly, the right to education, such as length and type of education, content and processes (e.g., Cohrssen & Page, 2016; McCowan, 2010). Secondly, rights through education, such as whether understanding rights affects CYP attitudes and behaviours (e.g., Dunhill, 2016), engagement and learning (Covell, 2010). Finally,

rights in education, the implementation of children's rights in schools, which is the main focus of research (e.g., Alderson, 2018; Burger, 2017; Cairns et al., 2018). The review highlights positive contributions in research, such as raising awareness of children's rights, enhancing participation within schools and offering a human-rights language to frame the severity of key issues. However, it also suggests challenges in translating CRBA into practice, due to a lack of agreed standards regarding UNCRC implementation (Hart & Hart, 2014). To be impactful, UNCRC goals must become the lived reality of CYP (Hart & Hart, 2014), which is difficult to achieve without practice-based research and agreed guidance around CRBA implementation in schools (Quennerstedt, 2022). This highlights the need for future research to explore the adoption and implementation of CRBA in practice, providing rationale for the proposed study.

Moreover, teachers lack the knowledge and skills to effectively implement CRBA in schools (e.g., Charmaraman et al., 2013; Perry-Hazan & Tal-Weibel, 2020; Tie, 2014), despite their role as duty bearers (Jerome & Starkey, 2022). Research indicates teachers are the most important adults to ensure children's rights are respected in schools (Quennerstedt & Moody, 2020), indicating an urgent need to upskill teachers in adopting CRBA. EPs are well-positioned to provide such support, as their role includes delivering training and interventions within schools to enhance teacher practice (Scottish Executive, 2002; Birch et al., 2015).

The other focus of research into CRBA explores CYP perspectives. Perry-Hazan (2021) conducted an international review of research exploring CYP perceptions of their rights in school, finding that perceptions are shaped by personal insights rather than

legal provisions. Factors such as the school and national context, individual characteristics, the presence of CRBA, relationships, and diversity within the school community were all found to influence CYP's perceptions, highlighting the importance of a context-based approach when designing and implementing CRBA.

Almog & Perry-Hazan (2011) introduce the concept, 'rights-consciousness', defined as individuals' awareness of their rights, particularly in relation to their ability to identify rights violations. Educating CYP about their rights is essential (Cassidy et al., 2013; Rinaldi, 2017; United Nations, 2006; 2011; Zembylas, 2017) with schools playing a pivotal role in developing rights-consciousness through education about rights, school structures and practices that enable positive experiences of rights, and teaching students how to assert their rights (Perry-Hazan, 2021).

Research emphasises the importance of a whole-school approach to rights-based education (Covell, 2010; Hantzopoulos, 2015) integrating CRBA into daily school routines, relationships, and experiences (Perry-Hazan, 2021). Similarly, it advocates for flexibility in rights discourse to accommodate children's diverse needs in evolving contexts (Perry-Hazan, 2021). CRBA therefore link to relational practices and person-centered thinking, central to the EP context, sharing values of advocacy and prioritising CYP best interests through building relationships (e.g. McMahon, 1993).

### **2.4.3 CRBA Initiatives**

The UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) is one initiative aimed at embedding CRBA in schools by promoting and respecting children's rights through practical application of the UNCRC in classrooms, schools and local communities (UNICEF, 2016). The RRSA emphasises that whilst learning about rights helps children



to understand the value of respecting others, it is the daily application within CYP's school experience that internalises the value of rights (Winch, 2020).

Quennerstedt (2022) evaluated the RRSA, finding it to be supportive of effective rights-based education, particularly around education through and for children's rights. However, also noted required improvements in educating CYP about their rights, and expanding and evaluating the impact of RRSA in schools. Quennerstedt (2022) recommends integrating CRBA into teacher training programmes to ensure broader adoption and sustained impact, embedding CRBA in teachers' standard professional competence rather than relying on outside programmes.

UNESCO's (2007) report titled, 'A Human Rights-Based Education for all', proposes a conceptual framework that aims to realise children's right to education and rights within education and is targeted at governments, LAs, parents, teachers, and communities. Figure 2.2 depicts the framework and its essential elements across three core dimensions.

## Figure 2.2

*Conceptual framework from A Human Rights-Based Education for all (UNESCO, 2007).*

The right of access to education	Education throughout all stages of childhood and beyond
	Availability and accessibility of education
	Equality of opportunity
The right to quality education	A broad, relevant and inclusive curriculum
	Rights-based learning and assessment
	Child-friendly, safe and healthy environments
The right to respect in the learning environment	Respect for identity
	Respect for participation rights
	Respect for integrity

Implementing CRBA in schools is challenging for many reasons. Insufficient resources compromise education quality, resulting in trade-offs where some children benefit at the expense of others (UNESCO, 2007). Some teachers may perceive a focus on children's rights as undermining their own rights, making it harder to maintain discipline, which highlights the power dynamics in teacher-child relationships (Howe & Covell, 2007; Jerome & Starkey, 2021; UNESCO, 2007). Whilst there is an element of balancing power within CRBA, the emphasis is on mutual respect, but teacher support and resources are crucial for success, creating tension in some schools (UNESCO, 2007). Respecting cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity is vital within CRBA, but ensuring culturally appropriate provision and curriculum design while upholding the universal right to education remains challenging (UNESCO, 2007).

## **2.5 Impact of Implementing CRBA in Education**

### **2.5.1 Benefits of Adopting CRBA**

Research identifies many positive outcomes from applying CRBA in education. These include increased knowledge and awareness of rights among CYP (Covell & Howe, 1999; Akengin 2008; Činčera, 2018), improved self-esteem (Covell & Howe, 1999), enhanced acceptance of diversity (DeCoene & De Cock, 1996), a higher degree of socially responsible behaviour (e.g. Covell, 2007; Covell et al., 2008), and support for the rights of others (Covell et al., 2008; Dunhill, 2016).

CRBA initiatives demonstrate benefits by promoting inclusion and social justice in schools (Covell & Howe, 2011; Covell et al., 2016). Research shows that RRSA implementation improves student engagement and well-being (Anderson & Graham, 2016; Lloyd & Emerson, 2016), attendance (Covell et al., 2016), academic attainment (Mannion et al., 2015), respect for peers' rights (Covell et al., 2016; Dunhill, 2016;

Covell et al., 2010), and sense of belonging (Sebba & Robinson, 2010; Markham et al., 2012; Patton et al., 2016). Additionally, RRSA implementation positively impacts teacher well-being by reducing burnout (Covell et al., 2009). However, it is important to acknowledge the limited generalisability and potential biases in these findings due to small samples, self-report measures and conflict of interest due to commissioning from UNICEF.

CRBA are also shown to improve rights-consciousness in schools, empowering students to recognise their rights as important (Hart et al., 2001; Banerjee et al., 2018; Birnhack & Perry-Hazan, 2020) and avoid violating the rights of others (Covell, 2010; Militello et al., 2009). Young & Billings (2020) suggest that rights-consciousness promotes cultural capital, highlighting the interconnectedness with knowledge and skills that translate to social advantage. Fostering rights-consciousness is also important to safeguard CYP in schools (Perry-Hazan, 2021).

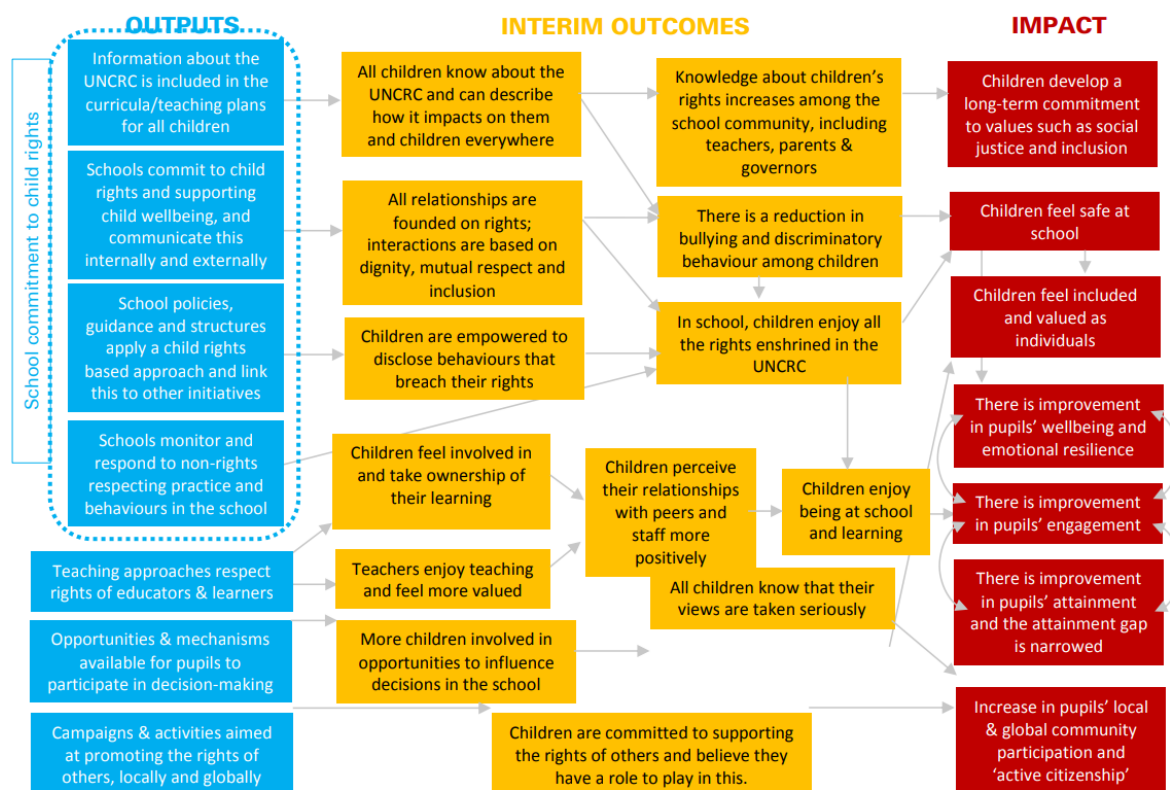
Beyond individual benefits, CRBA promote social cohesion in a cost-effective and sustainable way (UNESCO, 2007) by encouraging a greater understanding of others, and diverse cultures and backgrounds, as children learn about their own and others' human rights within CRBA, which includes teaching about rights and learning through their experiences and interactions with others. This exposes and socialises CYP to their own rights, and rights from others' perspectives, building their understanding and awareness of their own and others' rights and diverse cultures and backgrounds. This is because CYP can explore what their rights mean for them and what it might mean to stand in another person's shoes. This prompts a shift towards societies that are rights-respecting, as children are better equipped to listen, negotiate,

and have the confidence to participate in wider community issues (UNESCO, 2007; Davies, 2009; Maitles & Deuchar, 2006).

Figure 2.3, taken from UNICEF's evaluation of RRSA (UNICEF, 2017) provides a visual summary of the impact of RRSA as a CRBA in education, as described above.

### Figure 2.3

*A visual summary of the outcomes and impact of Rights-Respecting Schools Award (UNICEF, 2017).*



### 2.5.2 Negative Impact of the Absence of CRBA

Attempts to realise children's rights in schools often fall short of the standards outlined in the UNCRC (Struthers, 2015; United Nations, 2011), with many children unaware of their own rights (Hareket & Yel, 2017). This emphasises the importance of

implementing CRBA to raise awareness and ensure respect for children's rights. Without CRBA, children may experience reduced participation, diminished rights-consciousness and increased risk of rights violations for both themselves and others, increasing the likelihood of teacher burnout. This is supported by research that compares fully and partially embedded CRBA in schools (Covell et al., 2008; Covell et al., 2009).

Non-CRBA environments increase the potential for safeguarding risks, particularly for CYP who are victims of abuse, neglect or discrimination, as they may normalise these experiences without awareness of their rights (Perry-Hazan, 2021).

CYP without full access to CRBA in school face increased risks of poor well-being, social problems, and low self-esteem (Covell et al., 2011), which makes sense given these factors that are positively correlated with rights-respecting practices (Anderson & Graham, 2016; Lloyd & Emerson, 2016). This highlights the emotional impact of the absence of CRBA for children's social and emotional well-being. Given the links between attainment, engagement and emotional development (Greene & Miller, 1996; Pietarinen et al., 2014; Wara et al., 2018), this highlights the potential for non-CRBA to negatively impact attainment as a result of its negative impact on children's emotional well-being.

Tokenistic rights-based practices can normalise rights infringements in contexts where rights violations have become embedded in school cultures due to not adopting CRBA, exacerbating negative outcomes for CYP (Birnhack et al., 2018; Byrd, 2019; Leung et al., 2016; Perry-Hazan & Lambrozo, 2018). Prioritising CRBA in school culture is therefore essential to ensure children are aware of their rights, to promote their

safety, well-being and social advantage, and to mitigate the risks of normalising rights infringements (Nielsen et al., 2015; Perry-Hazan, 2021).

### **2.5.3 Summary**

Implementing CRBA in education has shown numerous benefits, including increased rights-consciousness, enhanced participation, better relationships, reduced rights violations, and improved social, emotional, and educational outcomes. However, challenges in adopting CRBA persist, due to a lack of implementation guidance and insufficient teacher knowledge. While initiatives like RRSA show promise, they require refinement to ensure a comprehensive rights-based curriculum, increased teacher competence and whole-school implementation. Addressing broader issues such as resource constraints, teacher training and promoting diversity is required at an LA and government level. Despite these challenges, the benefits of CRBA implementation in education far outweigh the drawbacks, as neglecting CRBA results in adverse outcomes across all aspects of CYP education and development.

### **2.6 Relevance of Children's Rights and CRBA to Educational Psychology**

Research emphasises the EP role in using and promoting CRBA in practice to meet UNCRC goals (Hart & Prasse, 1991; Hart & Hart, 2014; McMachon, 1993; Koshier et al., 2014; Landsdown et al., 2014). Well placed to operationalise the UNCRC in all aspects of their work (Jaffé, 2020; NASP, 2012), EPs are urged to assume a leadership role in ensuring UNCRC goals are met (Hart & Hart, 2014), particularly given their obligations as duty bearers to uphold children's rights (Goodfellow, 2021).

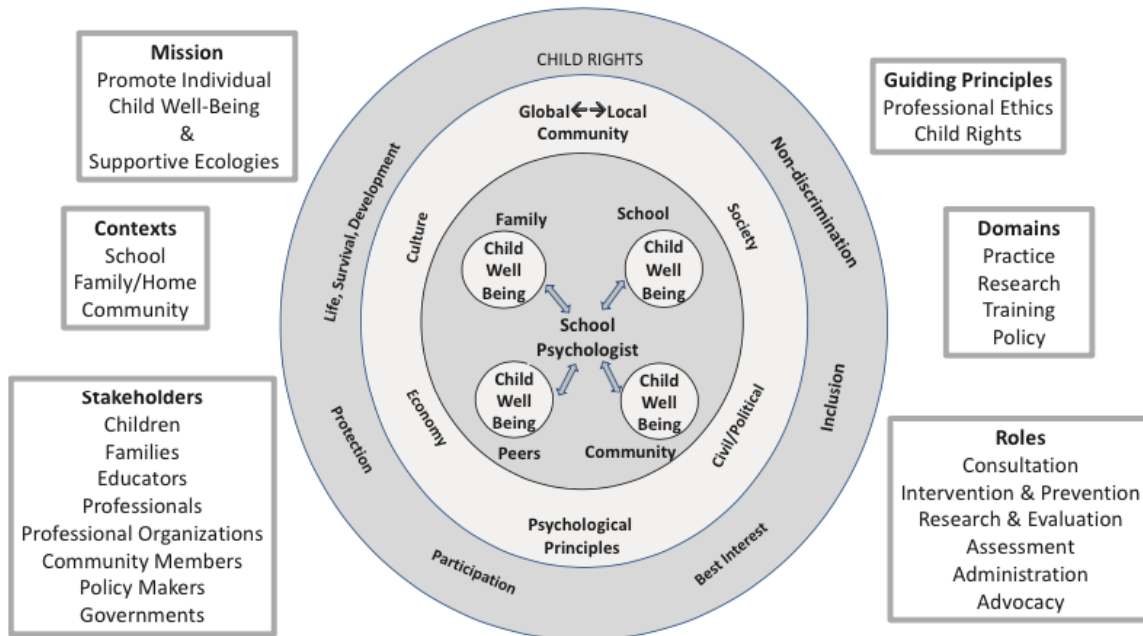
The UNCRC calls for systems level advocacy of CYP rights (Koshier et al., 2014), which is fitting with the EP role working across different systems, providing direct and indirect services to CYP, families and schools (Birch et al., 2015; Boyle & Lauchlan,

2009; Kosher et al., 2014). By applying systems psychology, such as ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), EPs become part of the child's ecosystem to advocate for their needs and facilitate positive change (Hendricker et al., 2023; NASP, 2020).

Nastasi and Naser (2020) propose a child rights ecology model, that they suggest builds on Bronfenbrenner's ecological-developmental theory (1989; 1999) and integrates child rights and school psychology to illustrate the school psychologist or EP role in promoting and protecting children's rights, shown in Figure 2.4. It should be noted that the term 'school psychologist' is used within Figure 2.4 as the model was developed in the US context, and that 'educational psychologist' is an equivalent term for comparison within the UK context. EPs are positioned within the 'meso-system', mediating interactions and influences within the child's eco-system to facilitate and protect their rights. Within this model, children's rights, as outlined in the UNCRC, serve as the 'meta-system', the over-arching influence on every child's ecology. Whilst this model was developed in the US, the relevance of systems psychology for EPs in the UK suggests potential for broader exploration of this model within the profession, particularly given the limited research in this area.

#### **Figure 2.4**

*Child Rights Ecology Model (Nastasi & Naser, 2020, p.29)*



*Note.* Educational Psychologists (EPs) are equivalent to ‘School Psychologist’ within Figure 2.4.

Hart & Hart (2014) advocate for a new social contract in educational psychology that promotes CRBA universally, not just for those with additional needs. They suggest a human development model (Hart & Glaser, 2011), where EPs actively partner with CYP, teachers, families, and communities to prioritise children’s best interests, build capacity, and implement interventions fostering holistic child development. This aligns with the EP role as advocates for the whole child and agents of positive change, as well as the child rights ecology model above. It suggests EPs pivotal role in promoting CRBA in practice and their capacity to advocate for broader shifts in rights-based practice for all children, moving away from deficit models of practice (Fox, 2015).

Considering relevant ethical and practice standards for EPs (e.g., HCPC Standards of Proficiency, 2015; BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2018) and legislative



changes (e.g., Children and Families Act, 2014; SEND CoP, 2015) it is evident that embracing CRBA is important for EPs to uphold ethical practice (Nastasi & Naser, 2014; Woods & Bond, 2014) and ensure CYP participation to fulfil UNCRC duties.

Research highlights the vital role of EPs in eliciting CYP views (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Ingram, 2013; Fox, 2015) and promoting their participation (e.g., Lansdown et al., 2014). Collaborative consultation approaches (Crothers, 2020; Ingraham, 2017) used by EPs facilitate joint problem solving, build empathy for CYP needs and experiences (Parker et al., 2020; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; Bouvier, 2019; Gray & Woods, 2022), and balance power dynamics between children and adults (Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Pickup, 2021; Wagner, 2017). EPs also possess unique skills to advocate for CYP at different levels (Briggs, 2013; Cascardi et al., 2015; Speight & Vera, 2009). All of these factors align with CRBA, illustrating the significance and influence of the EP role in adopting and promoting CRBA to uphold children's rights.

Existing literature establishes the links between principles and approaches relevant to EPs and the UNCRC, and indicates the essential role of EPs in supporting CRBA, however, there remains a gap in understanding how EPs can achieve CRBA in practice. This provides the rationale for a systematic literature review to better understand what is known about how EPs adopt CRBA in their practice.

## **2.7 Systematic Literature Review**

### **2.7.1 Introduction**

Systematic literature reviews are methods of critically appraising, evaluating, summarising and integrating evidence, to understand what is known about a particular topic of interest (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

The researcher performed a systematic review to explore the existing literature, to understand how EPs use CRBA in practice, as the literature review highlighted this as a gap within the current evidence base.

## **2.7.2 Qualitative Research Synthesis**

### **2.7.2.1 Overview**

Qualitative Research Synthesis (QRS), as a process of scientific inquiry, involves systematically reviewing and integrating findings from qualitative studies (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007) that are selected based on their relevance to a specific research review question (Zimmer, 2006). QRS therefore aims to understand recurring concepts and themes across selected studies, to gain a comprehensive overview of the overall findings (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010), enhancing the accessibility and applicability of qualitative findings to practice (Zimmer, 2006).

### **2.7.2.2 Rationale**

The systematic search yielded five papers, all containing qualitative data as the primary component. Given this, and the focus of the review question, a QRS of findings was adopted to interpret the qualitative findings across all papers, in the hope of advancing theory and practice, and identifying areas for further investigation to enhance knowledge and understanding around CRBA in EP practice.

### **2.7.2.3 Review Question and Aims**

This review aims to consolidate existing research on what is known about EP's use of CRBA in practice, aiming to gain an insight into their views and perspectives about using CRBA. The review question posed was:

What is known about how Educational Psychologists use CRBA in their practice?

### **2.7.2.4 Method and Design**

#### **2.7.2.4.1 Search Strategy**

Conducting a systematic search is integral to QRS (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). To identify suitable studies, a comprehensive literature search was conducted between 22/06/2023 and 06/07/2023 to locate relevant research studies for consideration.

#### **2.7.2.4.2 Exploratory Searches**

Manual searches of Google, Google Scholar and NuSearch (University of Nottingham library database) were completed using the terms 'child\* rights' and 'educational psycholog\*' to explore relevant concepts for the review. This informed the development of search terms for the systematic search.

#### **2.7.2.4.3 Systematic Database Searches**

Three databases were selected for their access to a range of relevant research journals relating to the review topic: ERIC, PsycINFO and Web of Science. The systematic search was conducted from 06/07/2023 to 09/07/2023. A search of 'grey' literature within EThOs database was also completed to include recent doctoral theses that were relevant to the review topic.

A range of search terms were employed within the systematic search, relating to EP's use of CRBA in practice, as detailed in Table 2.1. Synonyms were used to broaden the search scope (e.g. 'practice' OR 'development', 'educational psycholog\*' OR 'EP'). Some synonyms were excluded from the search due to generating no additional results (e.g. 'enactment') or for their irrelevance within the UK education context and the inclusion criteria applied (e.g. 'school psycholog\*'). Multiple terms were used with truncation to ensure a thorough search and allow for alternate endings and spellings (e.g. 'children's rights' OR 'child\* rights' OR 'children's rights based approaches' OR 'rights based' OR 'rights of the child').

Simplified search terms ('educational psycholog\*' AND 'child\* rights') were used for the EThOs database as the initial complex search yielded no results. Searches were filtered to include search terms within paper abstracts. For the Web of Science database, filters related to the topic area were applied (e.g. education, special education, educational psychology) to narrow the search.

Microsoft Excel was used to organise and manage papers obtained from these search results.

**Table 2.1**

*Search terms for review*

	<b>Summary of concept being searched</b>	<b>Search terms</b>
	Educational Psychology – the study of helping CYP who are experiencing problems that can hinder their chance of learning (British Psychological Society, n.d.)	('educational psycholog*' OR 'EP')
AND	Children's Rights – the specific rights afforded to children as outlined within the UNCRC to protect their vulnerability and specific age-related needs (Humanium, 2011).	('children's rights' OR 'child* rights' OR 'children's rights based approaches' OR 'rights based' OR 'rights of the child')
AND	Practice Development – a continuous process of improving and shifting applied practice to increase effectiveness in person centred care that is enabled and supported by facilitation (McCormack et al, 1999).	('practice' OR 'development')

#### **2.7.2.4.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Table 2.2 details the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied within the review, as well as associated rationale.

**Table 2.2**

*Inclusion and Exclusion criteria applied*

<b>Feature of study</b>	<b>Inclusion Criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion Criteria</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	Abstract contains search terms	Abstract does not contain relevant search terms	Abstract searched to narrow the search results generated and ensure included studies were relevant to review topic.
<b>Publication Type</b>	Study published in a peer-reviewed journal or doctoral thesis	Study not published in a peer-reviewed journal or doctoral thesis	Peer-reviewed journals are recognised as trustworthy, subject to expert scrutiny within a particular field (Kelly et al., 2014). Grey literature (research theses) included to capture recent unpublished research that supports in answering the review question, particularly given the limited search results within the topic area. This also addresses the publication bias for studies with significant results that is noted as a limitation of published research (e.g. Rosenthal, 1979).
<b>Empirical, primary research</b>	Study included empirical	Study based on secondary research or	Purpose of systematic literature review is to provide a high-level overview of empirical primary research in a focused area and

	primary research relevant to the topic, i.e. not a review or discussion paper	opinion, i.e. a review, discussion or opinion paper	identify, select, synthesise and appraise the research evidence that is relevant to a particular question (Kysh, 2013).
<b>Country</b>	Study completed in England	Study completed outside of England	There are numerous studies within international literature that examine EPs use of children's rights (e.g. school psychologists in US context). There is a large variation in the education systems and EP practices between countries, thus studies conducted outside of England may not be comparable to the English context.
<b>Sample</b>	Study involved qualified EPs and/or TEPs	Study did not involve qualified EPs and/or TEPs. E.g. sample restricted to teachers, parents, other	Review question focuses on what is known about how EPs use CRBA in practice, therefore included studies must involve EPs/TEPs.

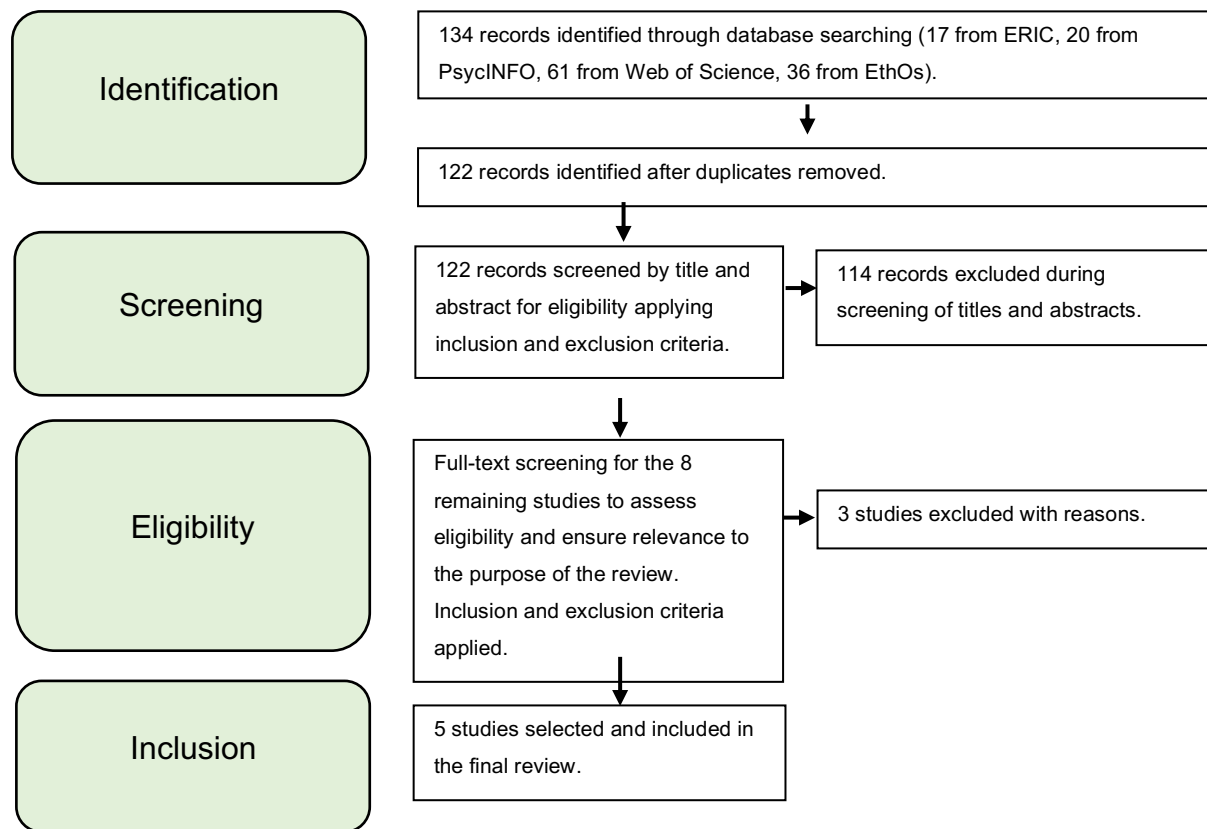
		professionals, young people.	
<b>Date of publication</b>	Study published between 1989 and 2023	Study published before 1989.	UNCRC was published in 1989.
<b>Study focus</b>	Study has a children's rights focus	Study not specifically focused on children's rights, e.g. bullying, speech and language	Review question focuses on what is known about how EPs use CRBA in practice. Included studies must, therefore, focus on at least one aspect of children's rights.
<b>Research design / data</b>	Study included qualitative data	Study only included quantitative data	Given the review focus on EPs views and perceptions of their use of CRBA, only studies that contained some element of qualitative design were included.

### 2.7.2.5 Selection of Studies

The titles and abstracts of each paper were read to determine their relevance to the topic. Irrelevant and duplicate papers were omitted. For papers that were deemed appropriate for inclusion, the full text was assessed, and inclusion/exclusion criteria applied to arrive at the final list of papers to be included. This process is outlined in Figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.5**

*Flow chart detailing study selection*



### **2.7.2.6 Summary of Included Studies**

Five studies met the inclusion criteria to be included in this review. An overview of the characteristics of included studies is provided below, and further detailed in Appendix 1.

#### **2.7.2.6.1 Context and Sample**

For all included studies, the participant sample included EPs and/or TEPs working in England. Some studies also included other groups within the sample, such as young people (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021) and parents and school staff (Atkinson et al., 2017). EPs and TEPs primarily worked within LA contexts (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020) but some studies



included a mix of EPs working in LA contexts and EPs working independently or for private companies (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021) or lecturing at university (Goodfellow, 2021). EPs had varying levels of experience, with some studies providing specific years of experience while others presented a range (e.g. 'less than 5 years experience' or '0-3 years qualified') or role titles to indicate this (Senior EP, Principal EP). Gender was explicitly reported in two studies, with all participants identified as female (Atkinson et al., 2017; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020).

#### ***2.7.2.6.2 Relevance of Topic to Current Review***

All included studies have a children's rights focus. All but one of the studies focus on one specific article of the UNCRC, with Goodfellow (2021) taking a more general approach, focusing on the enactment of children's rights as a whole. Topics captured by papers that focus on a specific article include: right to play (Article 31) (Atkinson et al., 2017); right to participation (Article 12) (Boswell et al., 2021; Marshall, 2021); right to education that promotes community cohesion (Article 29 and associated General Comment No.1) (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020).

#### ***2.7.2.6.3 Methodology***

A range of qualitative methodologies were employed in the selected studies. Participatory action research was used in two studies (Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020) each employing different frameworks: appreciative inquiry (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020) and the RADIO model (Boswell et al., 2021). One study used a Foucauldian approach (Goodfellow, 2021). The remaining two studies used qualitative designs, one adopting an exploratory design (Atkinson et al., 2017) and the other utilising multiple qualitative methods (Marshall, 2021). Atkinson et al. (2017) included

two exploratory studies within one paper, but only the first is discussed in this review, in line with the review question and inclusion/exclusion criteria, as the second employed a single case experimental design.

#### ***2.7.2.6.4 Data Collection and Analysis***

Selected studies employed various qualitative methods to gather data. Focus groups were used in three studies (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020), as were semi-structured interviews (Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). Qualitative questionnaires were used in one study, alongside individual appreciative interviews (Marshall, 2021). Additionally, mapping and drawing activities and collaborative review meetings were used alongside other methods in one study (Boswell et al., 2021).

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was the primary approach to data analysis (Atkinson et al., 2017; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021). Content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) was used in two studies (Boswell et al., 2021; Marshall, 2021) and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) in one study (Goodfellow, 2021). Descriptive frequency analysis was used alongside content analysis for questionnaire data in Marshall's (2021) study.

#### ***2.7.2.6.5 Publication Type***

Three of the included studies are journal articles published in two different peer-reviewed journals: *Educational and Child Psychology* (Atkinson et al., 2017) and *Educational Psychology in Practice* (Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020). The other two studies are doctoral theses retrieved from EThOs database (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021).

## 2.7.2.7 Analysis and Synthesis:

### 2.7.2.7.1 Quality Appraisal

Gough's (2007) weight of evidence (WoE) framework was used to assess the quality of studies included within the review to assure credibility, rigor and trustworthiness. WoE also ensures a degree of transparency when making judgements about how evidence within included studies is used to answer the review question (Paterson, 2011; Porritt et al., 2014; Soilemezi & Skaiste 2018). WoE incorporates three key judgements to assess the overall quality of evidence, as shown in Figure 2.6.

**Figure 2.6**

*Gough (2007) Weight of Evidence framework*

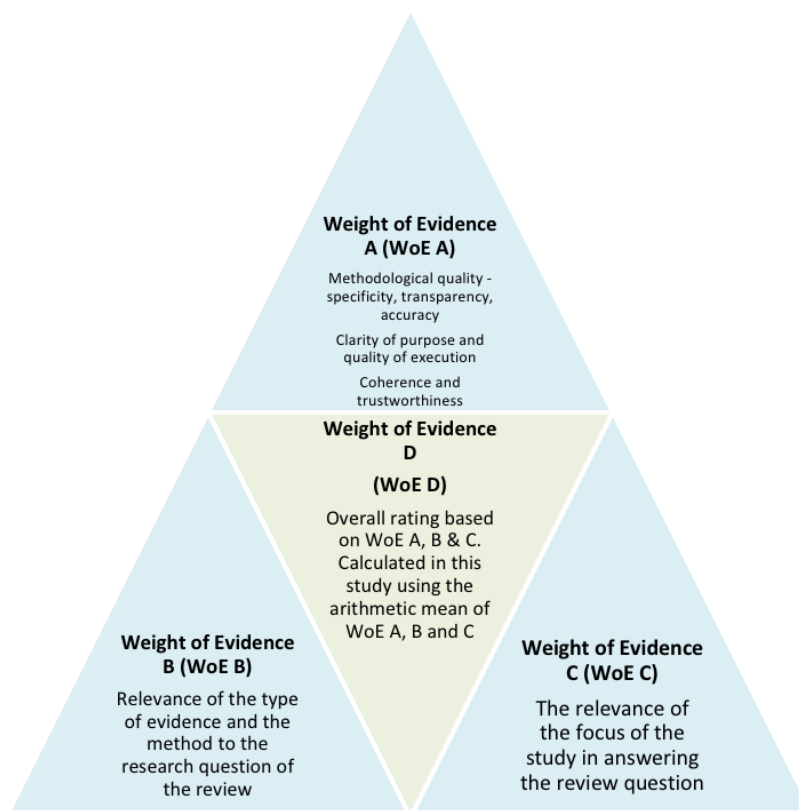


Table 2.3 shows the quality ratings applied to the five included studies, according to Gough's (2007) WoE framework. Appendix 2 outlines the criteria set for each area of the WoE framework to establish a rating of 'high', 'medium', or 'low' when applied to included studies.

To ensure a reliable WoE A score, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist (Long et al, 2020) was used to assess included papers (see Appendix 3). Widely cited in literature (e.g., Dalton et al., 2017; Gough, 2021; Long et al., 2020), CASP outlines quality criteria for the conduct and reporting of qualitative research. CASP is endorsed by the Cochrane Qualitative Research Methods Group and the World Health Organisation for qualitative evidence synthesis (Hannes & Macaitis, 2012; Hannes & Bennett, 2017; Long et al, 2020; Noyes et al., 2018) and recommended for novice qualitative researchers (Hannes & Bennett, 2017), justifying its use in this review. While some research suggests CASP may be less sensitive to interpretative and theoretical validity compared to other qualitative appraisal tools (Hannes et al., 2010), Long et al. (2020) refined the CASP checklist to address these limitations, incorporating an additional question on the clarity, consistency, and coherence of theoretical underpinnings and guiding frameworks. This review adopts the modified CASP proposed by Long et al. (2020) to increase appraisal rigor and maximise valid judgements of methodological quality. Each study was scored between 1 and 11 based on how many aspects of the CASP checklist had been satisfied (see Appendix 4), with higher scores indicating higher methodological quality. These scores were used to inform the assignment of WoE A ratings (see Appendix 2).

For WoE B, the researcher assessed the relevance of evidence to the review question, focusing on research design and methods of data collection and analysis. Qualitative designs eliciting rich data from EPs through discussion received higher WoE B ratings, as they allowed for greater exploration of experiences and perspectives regarding the use of CRBA in practice. Inductive analysis methods were awarded higher ratings given that themes and concepts are derived from the data, authentically representing participants' views, rather than imposing pre-determined criteria. Further details are provided in Appendix 2.

For WoE C, the researcher examined the focus of individual studies considering the review question, affording higher ratings to studies primarily focused on children's rights and EPs use of CRBA in practice. Studies focusing on EP participants sharing their views received higher ratings, compared to studies centred on other participant groups (e.g. CYP). Further details are provided in Appendix 2.

WoE D provides an overall judgement of the quality of studies and was calculated by establishing the arithmetic mean of WoE A, B and C scores.

**Table 2.3**

*Weight of Evidence (Gough, 2007) ratings for each included study*

Study	WoE A – <i>Methodological Quality</i>	WoE B – <i>Relevance of the evidence</i>	WoE C – <i>Relevance of the focus to the review question</i>	WoE D – <i>Overall judgement, arithmetic mean of WoE A, B &amp; C</i>
<b>Atkinson et al, 2017</b>	Medium	High	Medium	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Boswell et al, 2021</b>	High	High	Medium	<b>High</b>
<b>Goodfellow, 2021</b>	High	Medium	High	<b>High</b>
<b>Jackson-Taft et al, 2020</b>	Medium	High	Medium	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Marshall, 2021</b>	High	Medium	Medium	<b>Medium</b>

### 2.7.2.8 Thematic Synthesis

Thematic synthesis, as outlined by Thomas and Harden (2008), was employed to synthesise and analyse findings across included studies, aligning with the primary aim to consolidate existing literature around how EPs use CRBA in practice. This involved repeated readings of the findings section of each study to achieve familiarisation, followed by line-by-line coding to generate inductive codes across the dataset. Codes were grouped into descriptive themes to highlight patterns across the dataset, which were further reviewed in light of the review question to develop analytic themes. Nvivo software (Lumivero, 2023) was used to support coding and analysis.

Descriptive and analytical themes and subthemes, and supporting quotations, are detailed in Appendix 5. Thirteen descriptive themes were identified, which when reviewed resulted in six analytical themes. Each analytic theme will be described to highlight the outcomes of the thematic synthesis.

#### 2.7.2.8.1 Applying Psychology Supports the use of CRBA in Practice

All papers described how applying psychology supports EPs to use CRBA in their practice. Child-centered practices, particularly collaboration and co-construction, were identified as facilitative to implementing CRBA in EP practice. Establishing positive relationships, building rapport, and using various tools to ensure accessibility to EP support for CYP were cited as crucial for involving CYP and realising their rights across studies (Boswell et al., 2021; Marshall, 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Atkinson et al., 2017).

In papers by Boswell et al. (2021), Marshall (2021), Goodfellow (2021) and Atkinson et al. (2017), the need for EPs to create space for CYP participation is described, with strategies suggested for achieving this (e.g. EP introductions, preparation for meetings, visuals, child-friendly materials, online resources to share information and publicise the EP role, transparent expectations around involvement, feedback, an understandable speaking style).

Psychological processes supporting EPs' use of CRBA were discussed, such as consultation skills (Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021, Jackson-Taft et al., 2020, Marshall, 2021), facilitation (Marshall, 2021), and person-centered approaches (Marshall, 2021; Goodfellow, 2021, Jackson-Taft et al., 2020). Specific psychological paradigms and theories that EPs use to support them to implement CRBA were referenced, including group processes (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020), attachment theory to support the right to play (Atkinson et al., 2017) and theoretical positioning to guide rights-based practice (Goodfellow, 2021).

#### ***2.7.2.8.2 Understanding of CRBA Impacts on EP use in Practice***

This theme synthesises the data regarding EPs understanding of CRBA. Goodfellow (2021) and Atkinson et al. (2017) described EPs to lack understanding

around children's rights, hindering CRBA implementation in practice. Rights not being attributed to all children in the same way, as dependent on individual factors, (e.g. age, developmental stage) (Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020) or contextual factors (e.g. parent views, school views) (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall 2021), prevent EPs from realising and respecting children's rights.

Goodfellow (2021) described EP's perceptions of children's rights to be aspirational, with the UNCRC considered a document EPs aspire to implement, rather than part of current practice. Other papers suggest EPs to have a good understanding of rights prevalent in their everyday practice, notably the right to education and the right to express their views (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021).

EPs understanding of their responsibility as duty bearers was noted, particularly concerning the right to education, to build an understanding of CYP needs and ensure appropriate education provision (Goodfellow, 2021). Marshall (2021) found more experienced EPs to have more confidence in challenging rights-infringements when seen in schools.

Establishing a shared understanding of children's rights among EPs and within their wider working systems was acknowledged as crucial for facilitating CRBA in all papers, requiring alignment of EPs personal position and values with CRBA (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021) and the creation of a rights-respecting culture that prioritises children's views (Marshall, 2021; Boswell et al., 2021). The attitudes of others within systems relevant to EPs (e.g., schools) were also noted as important, with the views, attitudes and confidence of



supporting adults cited as particular mechanisms for promoting CRBA in EP work (Marshall, 2021; Boswell et al., 2021).

Challenges in building a shared understanding included lack of specificity and responsibility (Goodfellow, 2021), with the need for collaboration (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021), a nominated person to lead CRBA (Boswell et al., 2021) and leadership buy-in (Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020) central to successfully developing a shared understanding.

#### ***2.7.2.8.3 Wider Systems Relevant to EP practice Influence the use of CRBA***

Across all included studies, systemic factors were noted as barriers to CRBA implementation in practice, for several reasons. Time constraints imposed by LA expectations for EP work (Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021) and school expectations for the use of EP time (Marshall, 2021) presented significant barriers to adopting CRBA. Other challenges included financial limitations (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021); managing expectations due to relying on other systems (Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020); the school environment being inappropriate to meet CYP rights and needs (Atkinson et al., 2017; Marshall, 2021); school practices not fostering CRBA through curriculum content, curriculum demands and limited differentiation in lessons (Atkinson et al., 2017; Marshall, 2021) and a lack of inclusion and cohesion (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020).

Some papers highlighted failure of LAs to embed CRBA (Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020), restricting the EP role and preventing rights-based working (Atkinson et al., 2017). Insufficient multi-agency working between systems was shown

to further hinder use of CRBA in EP practice (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021). Government-level systemic changes were deemed necessary to foster a child-rights focus within the curriculum and the education system by some papers (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). Goodfellow (2021) added to this, describing the way that the government discourse shapes EP practice, through its constructions of children's needs and the juxtaposition of this with children's rights. Despite the noted barriers, collaboration between EPs and school systems was shown to facilitate CRBA (Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021), as was maintaining strong links with school communities (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020). Support for parents to support children at home was also seen as a facilitator to developing independence (Goodfellow, 2021) and play skills (Atkinson et al., 2017) in line with CRBA. Goodfellow (2021) finds that EPs describe the UNCRC to be embedded in their thinking and practice, highlighting the policies and guidance that impact on EP work within wider societal and government systems.

#### ***2.7.2.8.4 Commitment to Long-Term Development Supports the use of CRBA in Practice***

This theme explores EP's commitment to their personal and professional development in facilitating CRBA in practice. Most studies emphasised the supportive role of continued personal and professional development in utilising CRBA (Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021). Marshall (2021) suggests that EPs describe broadening their thinking and increasing CYP participation as crucial aspects to improve their personal development in relation to using CRBA.

Boswell et al. (2021) found implementing CRBA to be a long-term process that requires ongoing commitment and practice to embed.

In several papers, EPs describe future practice developments to enhance their use of CRBA, including creating child-friendly materials and providing clearer information about meetings in advance to facilitate CYP participation (Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). Marshall (2021) highlights the value of person-centered approaches (e.g., PATH and MAP frameworks) to foster safety and encourage CYP participation, aligning with EPs adopting child-centred practices and creating space for participation as described above. Giving children a choice, and a sense of autonomy was viewed as crucial for the future development of EP practice by Marshall (2021).

#### ***2.7.2.8.5 Espoused Theory vs Reality in Practice***

Jackson-Taft et al. (2020) note a silence culture surrounding children's rights in EP practice suggesting avoidance of the topic to prevent causing offence, especially regarding cultural sensitivity rights and community cohesion. Disparities between EP beliefs and practice are also cited in papers by Marshall (2021), Jackson-Taft et al. (2020) and Goodfellow (2021), highlighting the idea of espoused theory around CRBA, and the reality of their use in EP practice, which has important implications for EP accountability and presents a barrier to the adoption of CRBA.

Making assumptions about what CYP want presents a further barrier to effective CRBA implementation, as it leads EPs to make decisions for CYP (Marshall, 2021). This emphasises the need to ensure genuine participation for CYP to implement CRBA in practice. EP use of tokenistic and restrictive practices is noted in three studies

(Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). EPs restrict children's autonomy by giving too much direction (Atkinson et al., 2017) and pay lip service to children's voice, failing to act on and give due weight to their views (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). This is an important part of espoused theory versus reality that presents as a barrier to implementing CRBA for EPs.

Ethical dilemmas, referenced in most papers (Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021), further impede the use of CRBA. EPs grapple with ethical judgements around balancing competing rights, such as the right to appropriate education versus the right to consent, and the right to consent versus acting within a child's best interests (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). These ethical judgements can restrict EPs abilities to mobilise children's rights within CRBA. Balancing rights to participation with the risk of harm is also challenging for EPs, who want to ensure they practice ethically and provide the opportunity for the child to participate (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021).

Consent issues, particularly distinguishing between consent and assent, and ensuring access to appropriate information to make informed decisions presents another ethical dilemma for EPs (Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). Sometimes, parental consent prioritises the parent's position, with assent minimising children's rights (Goodfellow, 2021). Balancing children's rights and needs is a further challenge to adopting CRBA in EP practice, as there can be competing agendas about the core aspects of the EP role (Goodfellow, 2021). Identifying children's needs as a core part of the EP role can affect the conceptualisations of children's right

to education, and the EP has a key role in supporting these discussions, adopting CRBA to support schools (Goodfellow, 2021).

#### ***2.7.2.8.6 Conceptualisations of the EP Role Influence the use of CRBA in Practice***

The final theme addresses how conceptualisations of the EP role influence the adoption of CRBA at different levels. All five papers discussed the variety of EP work as a facilitator of using CRBA in practice. Casework with individual children was seen as crucial to promote children's rights, such as the right to play (Atkinson et al., 2017), while also supporting systemic work (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020). Training within systemic work was viewed as important to shift attitudes to support CYP participation (Marshall, 2021). Boswell et al. (2021) elaborate on co-constructing an EP service with CYP, working systemically to promote the adoption of CRBA in practice. Community work, highlighted by Jackson-Taft et al. (2020) emphasises the EP role in promoting community cohesion by adopting CRBA. This highlights the relevance of CRBA to all levels of EP work.

#### **2.7.2.9 Weight of Evidence Across Studies**

Three of the five studies reviewed received a medium WoE rating (Atkinson et al., 2017; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021), while two received a high rating (Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021). Across all studies, WoE was strongest for methodological quality and relevance of the evidence but weaker for the focus of studies to the review question, likely due to variation in specific aspects of children's rights that were covered. This may indicate included studies were less relevant to the review question than is ideal, however, given the limited research on EP perspectives and CRBA, it was relevant to include all studies with a children's rights focus.

Limitations around methodological quality were identified, including lack of transparency in theoretical underpinnings (Atkinson et al., 2017), researcher-participant relationships (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021) and ethical considerations, such as consent and confidentiality (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021). Some papers lacked detail in recruitment and sampling strategies (Jackson-Taft et al., 2020), and justifications for chosen methods (Atkinson et al., 2017). Relevance of evidence was rated medium for two studies (Marshall, 2021; Goodfellow, 2021), due to data gathering or analysis methods. For instance, Marshall (2021) used surveys limiting opportunities for participants to describe their experiences in comparison to discussion-based methods like interviews or focus groups. Goodfellow (2021) employed Foucauldian discourse analysis, combining inductive and deductive coding, potentially biasing some of the findings with pre-determined criteria.

#### **2.7.2.10 What is Known about how EPs use CRBA in Practice in the Existing Literature?**

The findings of this review highlight several barriers and facilitators that influence how EPs use CRBA in practice.

The application of psychological approaches, particularly those centred on the child, and fostering collaboration, share similarities with CRBA and support the adoption of CRBA in EP practice. This review demonstrates how various psychological methods are utilised in EP work to uphold children's rights, with consultation and person-centred approaches emphasised as valuable, and EP skills in facilitation seen as pivotal to embracing CRBA. The review also explores how different psychological domains contribute to CRBA adoption in EP practice, illustrating the breadth of the EP role in supporting CRBA by applying psychology, linking theory and practice. CRBA appear to

underpin various aspects of EP work, through the application of psychology, which in turn also supports CRBA to be embedded.

EPs' understanding of CRBA acts as both a barrier and an enabler to their implementation in practice. While this review suggests that EPs have some understanding of children's rights, particularly regarding access to appropriate education to meet CYP needs, this understanding is limited to rights prevalent in EP practice, indicating a lack of understanding for children's rights in general. Findings suggest that use of the UNCRC is aspirational and not common practice among EPs. This indicates a barrier to EPs using CRBA that relates to limited understanding, particularly around rights being afforded dependent on individual or contextual factors (e.g., age, skill level, development, parent/school views). Establishing a shared understanding of CRBA within EP services, LAs, and wider systems is essential for facilitating CRBA, with the absence of this shared understanding identified as a key barrier in this review. These findings emphasise the need for further research exploring how EPs can build a collective understanding of CRBA to inform current working practices.

Review findings highlight a silence culture within the EP profession, where talking about children's rights and how they can be upheld is avoided. Findings also show EPs to make assumptions about what CYP want and engage in tokenistic practices that fall short of truly respecting children's rights. There is a need for action to better understand how EPs use CRBA and ensure espoused views around meeting children's rights translate into practice to avoid tokenism. Further research is necessary to understand where CRBA fit within EP practice alongside ethical and safeguarding standards, to

establish a best practice framework that enhances EPs implementation of CRBA, increasing their responsibility and accountability as duty-bearers.

This review indicates that wider systems can either support or prevent EPs from using CRBA. When CRBA principles are integrated across systems, EPs find it easier to adopt these principles, but if systems do not align with CRBA, EPs face challenges in practicing in a rights-respecting manner. This links with perceptions of the EP role within government systems and how practices are shaped by constructions of children's needs, which can make it difficult to apply a CRBA. Further research is needed to explore how the EP role can be shaped to implement CRBA to then develop a framework that promotes this to be embedded across systems.

This review highlights the diversity of the EP role in implementing CRBA. EP engagement with individual children, parents, schools, and communities provides opportunities to apply CRBA principles and promote rights-respecting practice among others to positively impact children. The review highlights the importance of ongoing personal and professional development for EPs to sustain a rights-respecting approach. Many EPs express a desire for personal development, suggesting a need for research that supports their growth and implementation of CRBA in practice over time. Action research designs, using processes such as AI, may support this.

#### **2.7.2.11 Limitations**

The subjective nature of interpretations is acknowledged due to the involvement of only one reviewer and the absence of member checking due to time constraints (Bearman & Dawson, 2013). This subjectivity is influenced by the researcher's biases, experiences and views, somewhat limiting the objectivity and trustworthiness of



findings. Additionally, the small number of papers included raises concerns about publication bias, potentially limiting the credibility of findings.

#### **2.7.2.12 Rationale for the Current Study**

This review highlights the need for research that focuses on building EPs' shared understanding of children's rights, to operationalise the UNCRC in current practice and embed CRBA alongside ethical standards. Findings have indicated a need for research that develops EP practice over time, implementing changes to practice and embedding these systemically. A broader, more holistic focus on children's rights is required in the EP context, as most of the research reviewed focuses on specific rights. This narrow focus may contribute to barriers related to dominant rights within EP practice. The benefits of qualitative discussion-based methods to capture EP perspectives are emphasised in this review. Action research and participatory designs offer an opportunity to work collaboratively with participants to support their development and practice.

These implications provide the rationale for the current study which aims to explore how EPs understand and use CRBA in practice, utilising AI to build on their existing strengths. By building on the facilitators for using CRBA identified in this review, the study seeks to address the gap in existing research by focusing on the practical application of CRBA within an EP team. Through a strengths-based participatory approach, the study aims to inform the development of a practice framework for utilising CRBA. Sharing this framework within the LA, with other EP teams and services could lead to wider adoption of CRBA, benefitting children, families, and schools at a broader level. By using AI and a participatory design, the proposed study aims to shift practice for the EP team involved, to support in ensuring espoused theories about children's

rights translate into tangible actions, thereby increasing EP responsibility and accountability. Additionally, the research aims to evaluate AI as an approach to EP professional practice development, a factor highlighted in this review as crucial for adopting rights-based practice.

#### **2.7.2.13 Research Questions**

For this study, the following research questions are posed:

**RQ1:** What do EPs understand CRBA to be in the context of their work?

**RQ2:** How do EPs use CRBA in their practice?

**RQ3:** What factors enable and facilitate the successful adoption of CRBA within EP work?

**RQ4:** How does appreciative inquiry methodology support the professional development of an EP team in relation to developing their use of CRBA in practice?

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction to Methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted in the current study to address the aims and research questions posed. The methodological orientation of the study is discussed, including the epistemological and ontological position of the research. The chosen research design and associated methodology is described along with the approach to data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations within the study design are provided and an evaluation of research quality associated with the chosen methods is presented.

### **3.2 Methodological Orientation**

#### **3.2.1 Overview**

The current research employs a qualitative methodology to explore what an EP team understand CRBA to be, how they use CRBA in their practice, and what facilitative factors support them to do this. It also examines how these factors can develop practice within the EP team and evaluates the AI approach. To demonstrate the rationale and suitability of the chosen methodology in meeting the research aims, the epistemological and ontological orientation of the research will now be described.

#### **3.2.2 Research Paradigms**

Kuhn (1962) defined a research paradigm as a set of shared ideas, beliefs and assumptions that guide researchers to investigate specific phenomena that is based on their world view and shaped by their ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Cohen et al., 2017; Lincoln et al., 2011). Paradigms therefore guide the choices made by the researcher throughout the research process (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004; Mertens, 2015). Mertens (2015) describes four major paradigms in educational and psychological research, which will be briefly described.

### **3.2.2.1 Post-positivist**

Post-positivism employs scientific method to measure the observable, aiming to discover one knowable truth that can describe the relationship between two variables through experimentation, based on probability (Mertens, 2015). Post-positivism emphasises empirical testing to ascertain truth and is therefore driven by objectivity and generalisability in research. Within post-positivist approaches, quantitative methods are the dominant choice.

### **3.2.2.2 Pragmatic**

The pragmatic paradigm assumes one single reality, but acknowledges individuals' unique perceptions and interpretations of this reality (Mertens, 2015). Pragmatism prioritises common sense and practicality allowing researchers to select the most suitable methods to address specific research questions. For pragmatic researchers, the research question holds more significance than the underlying methods (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). Mixed-method designs, combining qualitative and quantitative methods are often employed within pragmatism based on the purpose and research questions of the study (Mertens, 2015).

### **3.2.2.3 Constructivist versus Constructionist**

Within a constructivist paradigm, reality is viewed as socially constructed, acknowledging that individuals can perceive the same events differently, forming unique mental constructs that are based on their experiences and perceptions, which in turn influence how they interpret events and engage with reality through their individual actions and interactions. Constructivism aligns with Jean Piaget's work (Hyde, 2020) focusing on how individual's cognitively engage in the process of knowledge construction (Young & Collin, 2004).

Social constructionism, a related term, emphasises the influence of socialisation on knowledge and reality construction, suggesting that reality is shaped through socialisation and action (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Young & Collin, 2004).

Though the terms (social) constructivism and (social) constructionism are often used interchangeably (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 2015), their meanings vary depending on disciplinary traditions, relevant to the area of study (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Crotty (1998) distinguishes between the two, highlighting that constructivism prioritises individual perspectives of reality and constructionism prioritises the collective construction of reality through social processes (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Social constructionism therefore emphasises collective sense-making through social action and interaction, shaped by relationships, language and culture (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Young & Collin, 2004; Hyde, 2020).

Both paradigms recognise the researcher's influence and values and the interactive link between researcher and participants, emphasising reflexivity and co-constructing meaning. Qualitative and participatory methodologies are therefore dominant within constructivism and constructionism (Cohen et al., 2017; Robson & McCartan, 2016).

#### **3.2.2.4 Transformative**

The transformative paradigm assumes multiple socially constructed realities and subjective knowledge emphasising social justice, emancipation and power dynamics within society, including factors like gender, ethnicity, disability, political and economic factors (Dube, 2016; Mertens, 2015; Omodan, 2020).

Qualitative and participatory designs are often adopted within transformative research to amplify the voices of marginalised groups and critically examine the power

dynamics within the research process (Mertens, 2015; Omodan, 2020). The interactive and empowering relationship between the participant and researcher is emphasised to address power imbalances, with researchers consciously positioning themselves alongside participants to facilitate social transformation (Mertens, 2015). Transformative methodologies enable personal and systemic change, with cyclical models often adopted within research designs (Mertens, 2017).

### ***3.2.3 Epistemological and Ontological Position of the Current Study***

#### **3.2.3.1 Epistemology**

Epistemology refers to how knowledge is perceived and produced (Cohen et al., 2017). This study employs participatory action research (PAR) and AI to explore an EP team's views and experiences around using CRBA and the factors that support them to do this, focusing on developing their practice. This research seeks to discover the multiple realities within the way an EP team socially construct ideas about children's rights through interacting and sharing their perceptions and experiences, championing the creation of this new knowledge within their context (Jennewein, 2021). A social constructionist paradigm is therefore most closely aligned with the study, which is fitting with existing literature that evidences PAR using AI as a social constructionist approach (Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Borg et al., 2012; Lewis, 2016; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007).

Elements of the transformative paradigm are relevant to the current study, given the topic area and study aims to promote systemic change in EP team practice regarding the use of CRBA. Whilst this research does not directly gather children's views about their rights, it focuses on empowering EPs who have the power and opportunity to implement CRBA, to raise awareness and influence practice changes for

schools and other stakeholders to benefit CYP. This highlights the study's transformative elements, and its goals in promoting social justice by improving outcomes for CYP. Given the participatory and action-oriented nature of the methodology, this research aims for transformative outcomes over informative outcomes, hoping to positively shift EP practice to then impact CYP across the different levels and systems that EPs work. Furthermore, both AI (e.g., Jennewein, 2021) and PAR (e.g., Baldwin, 2012) have been linked with transformative research, further supporting the acknowledgement of this paradigm in the current study.

### **3.2.3.2 Ontology**

Ontology refers to the nature and existence of reality (Cohen et al., 2017) examining whether reality reflects individual perspectives, or whether it exists independently of them (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Within a social constructionist paradigm, a relativist ontology is embraced based on the idea that each individual's construction of reality is equally valid, shaped by their experiences, perceptions and context (Cohen et al., 2017; Pring, 2015). This study adopts a relativist ontology to explore the multiple realities of participants, to gain an in-depth understanding of how reality is socially constructed within their context rather than determining a single universal reality. Throughout the project, participants collaboratively construct a shared understanding of the topic and a shared definition of CRBA through their interactions as a group.

### **3.2.3.3 Axiology**

Axiology encompasses a researcher's values and beliefs, influencing how they conduct their research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2015). Axiology therefore addresses issues of ethics, culture, bias and respect based on these values,

and should align with the researcher's ontological and epistemological stance (Patterson & Williams, 1998).

In this study, the author's axiological stance is shaped by their personal and professional experiences within systems where children's rights are not always respected. It was therefore important to prioritise a participatory approach in this study, ensuring that meanings, interpretations, experiences, and perspectives were collectively shared among participants to develop a comprehensive understanding of CRBA within the EP context. Applying Sarah White's Typology of Interests (1996), this study aspires to achieve transformative participation, balancing the power between the researcher and participants, to empower participants to change their practice through collaborative decision-making. A PAR design utilising AI supports this shift in practice, with the potential to influence wider systemic change and promote rights-respecting practices across the LA. This highlights the link between the outcomes of this research and a social justice agenda. It is also supported by the strengths-based approach of AI and the author's axiological stance, which encourages participation and collaboration to empower positive change.

### **3.3 Research Design**

#### ***3.3.1 Participatory Action Research***

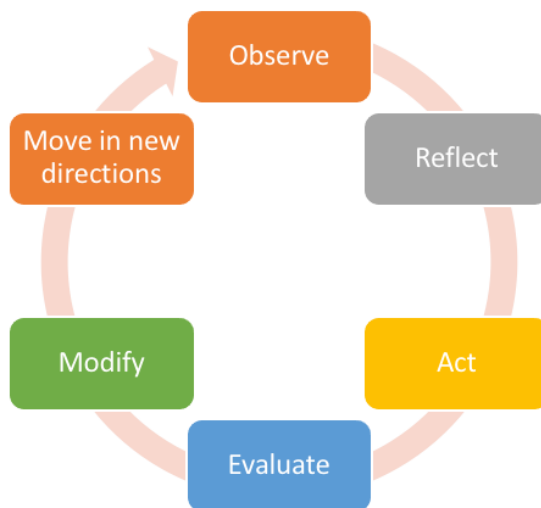
Action research (AR) is recognised as a collaborative orientation to inquiry rather than a particular research method (Kagan et al., 2017). As a participatory process, AR combines action, reflection, theory and practice and promotes working collaboratively to generate practical solutions to problems and support individuals and communities to flourish (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Through iterative cycles of action, reflection, evaluation and data collection, AR instigates positive change to shift the practice at



different levels, including individual, group, organisation, community and society (Reason & Bradbury, 2008; McNiff, 2013). A typical AR action-reflection cycle is shown in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1**

*Typical action-reflection cycle within AR, adapted from McNiff (2017)*



McNiff (2017) describes action researchers as insider researchers, as research is done with participants rather than done to participants and a collaborative approach is prioritised. The researcher situates themselves as part of the context and process, working alongside participants to reach new understandings and generate solutions to create positive systemic change.

The purpose of AR is to generate practical knowledge and real-world solutions in everyday contexts for individuals and teams, by building collaborative relationships, having reflective interactions and empowering participants to make positive changes, based on this new collective understanding (Reason & Bradbury, 2008).

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an approach to AR that involves researchers and participants collaborating to explore and improve a concept, problem or idea (Wadsworth, 1998; Littman et al., 2020). Various participatory methods can be employed in PAR including storytelling, visual diagramming and mapping (Kindon et al., 2007) as well as adapted social science methods like focus groups, semi-structured interviews and observations (Kagan et al., 2017; Kindon et al., 2007).

Whilst PAR follows the same cyclical process as AR, outlined in Figure 3.1, it is distinct and different from AR by inviting participants to become co-researchers, actively involving them in every part of the research process, empowering them to drive change through collaboration and collective action (Kagan et al., 2017; Kindon et al., 2007). PAR processes are therefore inquiry-based and transformative for participants and their wider systems and stakeholders (Rodriguez & Brown, 2009). In addition, PAR values both the process and the product of research emphasising the development of participant knowledge and skills alongside information that is generated (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Kesby et al., 2005).

Consequently, PAR empowers '*ordinary people*' in and through research (Kindon et al., 2007, p.1) challenging the typical hierarchical relationships between research and action and between researchers and participants (Wadsworth, 1998). Power is held by a group of co-researchers (Montero, 2000) fostering a collaborative, flexible, and socially owned process (Kindon et al., 2007).

In this study, PAR involves a partnership between the researcher and the EP team through an AI project. The aim is to develop a shared understanding of CRBA in the EP context and develop EP team practice utilising CRBA.

### **3.3.2 Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a dialogic approach to organisational change (Bushe & Marshak, 2015) based on ideas within social constructionism, developing knowledge by bringing people together to interact within a social system (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) developed AI as an alternative and re-envisioned model of AR, adopting a strengths-based and solution-focused approach to organisational change. AI shifts focus from problem-centric approaches to appreciating the strengths and best practices within organisations and teams (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Lewis, 2016). AI is based on the assumption that every group has a 'positive core' of factors that are working well (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Hammond, 2013) and by amplifying these strengths, resources and energy are created to drive positive change (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Ludema & Fry, 2008). As well as promoting positivity, AI encourages generativity to have a transformational impact on practice (Bushe, 2012). By creating new representations and perspectives through imagery and metaphor within the AI process, practitioners can see things in new ways, co-constructing representations that then enable positive action (Bright et al., 2011).

Within PAR designs, AI can be used as a collaborative tool for change, typically structured around four or five phases, known as the 4D or 5D cycle, explained further in 3.3.2.1 (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Ludema & Fry, 2008). Bushe & Marshak (2015) argue that AI must be conducted in a co-creative and dialogic way to have a transformational effect, highlighting its synergy with PAR.

In education, AI is gaining recognition as an effective approach to collaborative and sustained organisational change (Tosati et al., 2015). Hammond (2013) suggests

AI to generate tangible outcomes grounded in real-life experience and practice, creating a sense of success and hope among participants, therefore contributing to its appeal in educational research.

### **3.3.2.1 Phases of AI**

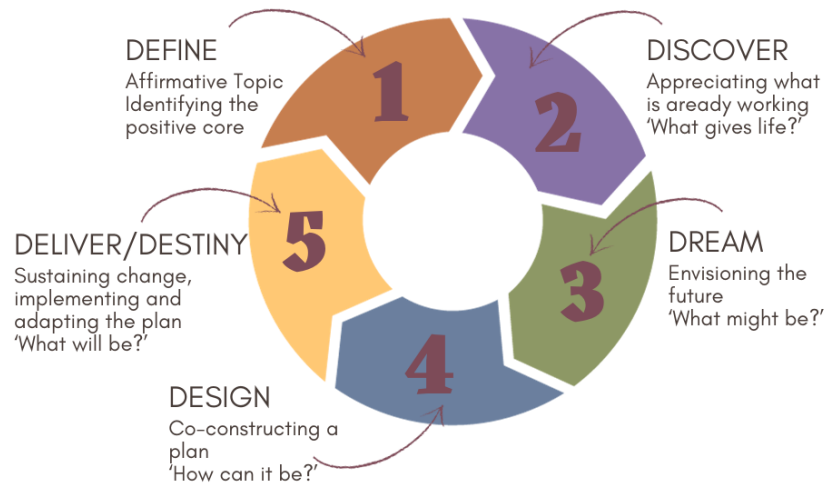
Rooted in positive experiences, the AI cycle supports groups to work through a process of appreciating, envisioning, co-constructing and sustaining to create positive systemic change, building on the strengths, skills and values held at the group's positive core.

AI uses a structured framework to guide the change process, including four distinct phases, known as the 4D cycle (Cooperrider et al., 2008). A fifth phase was later developed to support the definition of an affirmative topic at the beginning, with this iteration known as the 5D cycle (Rowett, 2012; Lewis, 2016, based on and adapted from Cooperrider et al., 2008; Cooperrider, 2012; Hammond, 2013).

In this study, the 5D Cycle was used (Figure 3.2) to allow participants to collectively define CRBA within their context and outline the aspects of CRBA they wished to discover as a group given the researcher imposed topic of CRBA in EP practice.

### **Figure 3.2**

*5D Cycle used in the current study, adapted Rowett (2012) and Lewis (2016), based on Cooperrider et al. (2008).*



**Define:** The 'define' phase aims to collaboratively establish the affirmative topic, collectively explore how the topic is understood and identify aspects of the topic participants wish to discover together (Rowett, 2012).

**Discover:** Within the 'discover' phase, participants identify the best of what is, the things they are doing well and the positive core of the group (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Stories of peak experiences, accomplishments, high points and valuable aspects of the organisation working at its best are explored through unconditionally positive questions.

**Dream:** In the 'dream' phase, participants envision the organisation's future at its best, drawing on historical strengths and the positive core to imagine and envision new possibilities. The dream phase is therefore generative and practical. This phase inspires and empowers participants by grounding the vision for the future in shared stories and practice examples, to create enthusiasm for the future and commitment to change (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Hammond, 2013).

**Design:** Within the ‘design’ phase, participants create symbolic statements called provocative propositions to support the organisation to take action and generate positive changes (Hammond, 2013; Cooperrider et al., 2008). These statements, written in the present tense as if they are already happening, are based on the ideas generated within the discover and dream phases. They provide a shared vision and guide the organisation towards its most positive future (Hammond, 2013).

**Destiny/Deliver:** In the final phase, participants develop an action plan to support the envisioned future to be realised, sustained by the shared purpose and energy established in earlier phases (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Participants identify and commit to actions to support the organisation to develop and progress towards realising the dream.

### 3.3.2.2 AI Principles

Cooperrider et al. (2008) describe five theoretical principles of AI that guide its application in practice. Table 3.1 summarises these principles and their application in the present study.

**Table 3.1**

*Core principles of AI and application in the current study*

Principle	Definition	Application to current research
<b>Constructionist</b>	Through shared language and dialogue, individual ideas and interpretations of the world can be co-constructed and understood (Reed, 2007).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory workshops with collaborative activities to encourage interaction</li> <li>• Collaborative data collection and analysis</li> <li>• Social constructionist approach – participants co-construct narratives relevant to their team in relation to utilising CRBA</li> </ul>
<b>Simultaneity</b>	Inquiry and change are simultaneous and the act of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions/activities positively worded, based on AI research (e.g. Cooperrider et</li> </ul>

	inquiry is intervention (Cooperrider et al., 2008). By asking questions, positive change can be discovered by promoting shared reflection and creating space for new ways of thinking (Bushe, 2011).	al., 2008) to determine how change within the EP team can be discovered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peak experiences captured through storytelling, with activities that promote reflection on strengths, values and facilitative factors regarding embedding CRBA</li> </ul>
<b>Poetic</b>	The way an organisation develops depends on the focus of inquiry. The focus of inquiry is open and can be chosen (Cooperrider et al., 2008).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define phase allows participants to help shape the inquiry and the aspects of the topic they wish to discover.</li> </ul>
<b>Anticipatory</b>	Collective imagination and dialogue about the future is important to generate positive change (Reed, 2007). The image of the future guides the practice of the present (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Possibility-centric thinking is prioritised over problem-centric approaches (Bushe, 2011).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities designed to help participants envision the future (e.g. developing dream pictures). This image guides the change process for participants.</li> </ul>
<b>Positive</b>	Momentum for and sustainability of change is reliant on a positive mindset, hope, inspiration and collaboration with others through social interaction, which is instigated through AI (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Reed, 2007).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive approach is adopted</li> <li>• Collaborative activities/discussions are positive and appreciative to provide hope and inspiration</li> <li>• Building on strengths to instigate change is important in EP climate where pressure is heightened and workload is stretched.</li> </ul>

### 3.3.3 5D Cycle Applied to Current Study

Figure 3.3 in Section 3.6 demonstrates the application of the 5D cycle in this study, referencing where data was collected and analysed in response to each research question. Additional details on the procedure, workshop content and outcomes at each phase of AI is provided in Appendix 6.

### **3.4 Rationale for the Chosen Methodology in the Current Study**

In this section, the rationale related to the different aspects of the chosen methodology will be discussed and linked, including justifications for use of a qualitative participatory design, PAR and AI to meet the aims of the present study.

#### **3.4.1 Qualitative Participatory Design**

A qualitative participatory methodology was used to generate rich data and develop a collective in-depth understanding of the complexity of utilising CRBA in EP practice to meet the research aims. Participatory data collection is congruent with qualitative designs (Mertens, 2015) and valuable for capturing the subjective experiences and views of individuals and groups (Willig, 2008).

#### **3.4.2 Participatory Action Research**

PAR provides a collaborative approach to research, actively involving participants as co-researchers (Kagan et al., 2017; Kindon et al., 2007) and challenging the traditional power hierarchies associated with research (Wadsworth, 1998). This approach supports the research aims that focus on developing EP team practice to create systemic change in relation to using CRBA, providing the rationale for use of PAR in this study. By encouraging transformative participation (White, 1996) within PAR, it is hoped that participants are motivated to drive change through collective action, increasing responsibility and shared ownership over the research process (Barke & Hankins, 2021; Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Darby, 2017). This makes sense if self-determination theory is applied (Ryan & Deci, 2017) as PAR promotes internal motivation through building relationships, giving autonomy and providing a sense of competence in the following ways:

- Participants collaborate to achieve shared goals (*relationships*).



- Immersed in the research process, participants contribute their stories, ideas and views about possible actions and directions (*autonomy*).
- Participants build on areas of strength to bring about change (*competence*).

### **3.4.3 Appreciative Inquiry**

AI was selected as the most appropriate methodology to meet the research aims for a number of reasons.

As a positive and empowering approach, AI invites participants to become co-researchers through the process (Nicholson & Barnes, 2012), overcoming issues of power (e.g., Reed, 2007) which fits with PAR. AI also supports sustained positive organisational change (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Lewis, 2016), which fits with the research aims around EP team development. Cooperrider et al. (2008, p.9) state that '*inquiry is intervention*' highlighting AI's effectiveness in promoting change. This is consistent with existing research where AI has been used to successfully facilitate change in relation to different aspects of EP service delivery (e.g., Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Morris & Atkinson, 2018; Harris, 2013; Looney, 2018; Oakes, 2010; Rogers, 2022; White, 2013).

Existing research that evaluates the impact of AI finds it to be supportive in increasing self-awareness (Tosati et al., 2015), and in turn personal mastery (Senge, 1999), encouraging reflection among practitioners (Hung, 2017; Dickerson, 2012). By building on strengths, AI enhances positive emotions including relatedness, motivation, energy, creativity and courage (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2006), fostering commitment to action through shared sense-making (Senge, 1996). In EP contexts, AI supports professional practice development by encouraging reflection on practice (Rogers, 2022), developing positive narratives (Morris & Atkinson, 2018), making practice more

explicit and visible by surfacing the psychology underpinning it (Oakes, 2010) and by supporting sustained change (Oakes, 2010). This provides justification for using AI in the current study, given the focus on professional practice development within an EP team.

With a focus on developing best practice, in this study, AI also facilitates the dissemination of research into practice, which is important given the limited practice-based evidence in the literature. Focusing on the strengths and factors for success in embedding CRBA in EP practice will support the development of a framework for practice that details what works and what is possible, empowering practitioners to do more of what works.

AI methodology is underpinned by positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and strengths-based approaches which is important in this study for four reasons:

1. To meet the study's aims around identifying facilitative factors for using CRBA and empowering participants to develop their practice.
2. To ensure alignment with the researcher's axiological position and their values around rights-respecting practices, collaboration and humanistic psychology, as described in Section 3.2.3.3.
3. To ensure participants have a positive and rewarding research experience and feel empowered by an AI approach, particularly given the pressures within the current EP context and the sensitivity of the topic (e.g. participants negative perceptions of their own practice).

4. To offer practical experience of using a model to apply in future strengths-based problem solving to support developing practice and organisational growth.

### ***3.4.4 Alternative Methodological Approaches Considered***

#### **3.4.4.1 Alternative Qualitative Methods**

The researcher considered other qualitative methods such as semi-structured individual interviews or focus groups. These methods offer benefits for gathering rich data around individual experiences and perceptions, and facilitating interactions between participants through semi-structured questioning (Brown, 2018; Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001). However, the researcher felt they were less suitable for fostering a creative, collaborative, and participatory approach to data generation and analysis, that would support participants in jointly exploring and developing their practice in action to address the identified gap within the literature. Moreover, these methods would likely lead to greater influence of the researcher's interpretations and constructions on meaning-making than if PAR was adopted, maintaining traditional power hierarchies through the researcher asking specific questions of participants and expecting an answer (Kvale, 2006; Wurm & Napier, 2017).

#### **3.4.4.2 Cooperative Inquiry**

Cooperative Inquiry (CI), pioneered by Reason (1994) and Heron and Reason (1995), was also considered in this study for its action-oriented and participatory approach. In CI, a team of co-researchers work together to engage in cycles of action and reflection through in-depth conversations on a specific topic (Reason, 1999). Whilst CI aligns with the participatory and social constructionist nature of this study and focuses on practice development by identifying areas for change, it lacks a foundation in

positive psychology. This exclusion of strengths-based approaches, important for creating and sustaining change (Pulla, 2017), makes CI less suitable to meet this study's aims. Additionally, CI is less effective in addressing power dynamics and transformative impact (Mertens, 2015) which are central to the study's aims and the researcher's philosophical standpoint.

#### **3.4.4.3 Activity Theory**

Activity Theory (AT) is situated within developmental work research and offers a conceptual framework to understand behaviour within the context of a particular activity system by describing and analysing the different aspects of a system (e.g., subjects, objects, outcomes, mediating artefacts) (Durbin, 2009; Engestrom 1987; 1999; Leadbetter, 2005). By exploring tensions and contradictions within activity systems, through layers of analysis, AT highlights areas for change to practice, by expanding the potential for learning within a particular context (Engestrom, 1987; Leadbetter 2005).

However, AT takes a problem-focused view to instigate change by surfacing tensions within a system (Edwards et al., 2009; Leadbetter, 2005) which contrasts with the positive psychology approach sought by the researcher. The child rights focus of the study could be potentially sensitive, through the discussions around rights-based practice and possible restrictive practices that may arise, and in participants questioning their own practice, compelled an appreciative approach to mitigate potential harm and sensitively address participant concerns.

### **3.5 Research Context and Participants**

#### **3.5.1 Research Setting**

The study was conducted in a local authority (LA) EP service (EPS) in Northern England. A contextual overview of the setting is described below:

- The EPS is a traded service, that serves approximately 90% of mainstream and specialist schools in the area, with a team of 18 EPs, 3 Trainee EPs and 5 Assistant EPs spread across 4 geographical areas.
- There are 141 schools in the area, 55 maintained and 86 academies.
- The local population is estimated at 350,000, with 93% identifying as white (Office for National Statistics, 2021).
- About 18% of CYP in the LA have SEND, with around 90% attending mainstream schools.
- The EPS has strong links with other LA teams, such as SEND advisory teachers, education improvement, portage, education therapy services and the virtual school.
- The demand for statutory work is high and completing requests within timescales is a current service priority.
- Other service priorities include developing relational practice, becoming a trauma-informed organisation, maximising school attendance, staff wellbeing and involvement in the national SEND change programme.

### **3.5.2 Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants in this study, based on the inclusion criteria and recruitment procedures outlined below. As suggested in the literature, purposive sampling enables participant recruitment based on the study's purpose, anticipated to provide unique, rich and valuable insights (Etikan et al., 2016; Maxwell, 2012). This aims of this study focused on exploring and enhancing EP team

practice regarding CRBA. Purposive sampling facilitated the recruitment of participants with the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to address these research aims.

### **3.5.3 Inclusion Criteria**

The research involved Senior EPs, EPs, Trainee EPs and Assistant EPs from one LA EP team. Participation was voluntary and all levels of experience were welcomed. Those involved volunteered some of their allocated time for continued professional development to participate.

### **3.5.4 Recruitment Procedure**

Following ethics approval (see Section 3.12) and consulting with a senior EP from the LA where the researcher is employed, the researcher advertised the study during a whole service meeting in July 2023. Interested members of the EP team expressed their interest to participate via a sign-up sheet (Appendix 7). Additional information about the study was then emailed to individuals who had expressed interest (Appendix 8). This included an information sheet (Appendix 9), outlining inclusion criteria, research aims, procedures, withdrawal processes, data protection measures, and contacts for inquiries or complaints, a consent form (Appendix 10) and a suggested date for the initial workshop. Participants indicated their voluntary agreement to participate by returning the completed and signed consent form.

The study was also advertised at a whole service meeting in September 2023 and by circulating additional information about the project (information sheets, consent forms, proposed initial workshop date) via email to the EP team mailbox, accessible to all team members. Individuals were encouraged to email with further questions and to return completed consent forms if interested in participating. A reminder email was sent to the EP team mailbox in advance of the initial workshop to ensure all potential

participants had the opportunity to submit signed consent forms if they wanted to take part.

Privacy notices outlining data protection procedures and the risk assessment for the study were distributed to participants to review in the initial workshop. The researcher verbally summarised these documents before starting workshop activities, as well as clarifying statements within the consent form and addressing any questions from participants.

Two participants expressed an interest in participation, but were not able to attend the initial workshop. Following discussion with the researcher's supervisor, it was agreed that the researcher would meet these participants separately, to discuss the content and outcomes from the initial workshop and gather any contributions or feedback they wished to provide. This supported their full participation in subsequent workshops and helped them to develop an understanding of the affirmative topic guiding the AI.

Given the exploratory and participatory nature of the research, its voluntary participation and the focus on developing EP team practice, the researcher did not anticipate acting as a gatekeeper to have a negative impact. However, precautions were taken. The study was advertised to the whole team, with responses via email/sign-up sheet, allowing individuals to respond at their discretion, distanced from the researcher. Additionally, the voluntary and participatory nature of the research was communicated to all potential participants.

### ***3.5.5 Participant details***

Following the initial advertisement in July 2023, eleven participants expressed an interest, with eight returning signed consent forms. Subsequent advertising in

September 2023 led to four more participants expressing interest and returning consent forms. In total, twelve participants (10 female, 2 male) formed the research team. A breakdown of their roles is detailed in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2**

*A breakdown of roles and participant numbers per role*

<b>Role in EP Team</b>	<b>Participant Number in Current Study</b>
Senior Educational Psychologist (SEP)	N=1
Main grade Educational Psychologist (EP)	N=5
Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP)	N=2
Assistant Educational Psychologist (AsEP)	N=4

The participant group comprised a range of roles and different levels of seniority, ensuring representation from each of the four main roles within the EP team. This fits with guidance from Cooperrider et al. (2008) who advocate for diverse representation to acknowledge different views and perspectives in shaping future action.

Table 3.3 depicts final participant numbers for each workshop. Participant numbers varied across workshops due to unforeseen circumstances, statutory deadlines and annual leave. Despite efforts to co-ordinate dates among all participants, this was not possible for all workshops. To address this, missed information was recapped and reflected upon at the beginning of each workshop, allowing absent participants to catch up and ask questions.

**Table 3.3**

*Participant numbers in each phase of AI*



<b>Research Phase</b>	<b>Total Participant Number</b>
Workshop 1: Define Phase	N=10
Workshop 2: Discover Phase	N=10
Workshop 3: Dream Phase	N=11
Workshop 4: Design Phase	N=11
Workshop 5: Destiny Phase	N=7
Workshop 6: Evaluation Phase	N=10

### **3.5.6 Stakeholder Involvement**

Approval for the study was obtained through discussions with the EPS leadership team. Recognising the wider LA education team as a key stakeholder, the research aligns with service priorities such as the work around trauma-informed and relational practice, maximising attendance and reducing exclusions.

While it was not possible to recruit the whole EP team given the voluntary nature of the study, the obtained sample size (N=12) represents just less than half of the EP team, across different roles and levels of experience, and is therefore appropriate to meet the research focus on developing team practice. This participant number is also consistent with existing AI research in the EP context (Harris, 2013; Looney, 2018; Morris & Atkinson, 2018; White, 2013).

Conducted as part of the Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham, the university is also considered a stakeholder in the research process.

### **3.6 Procedure**

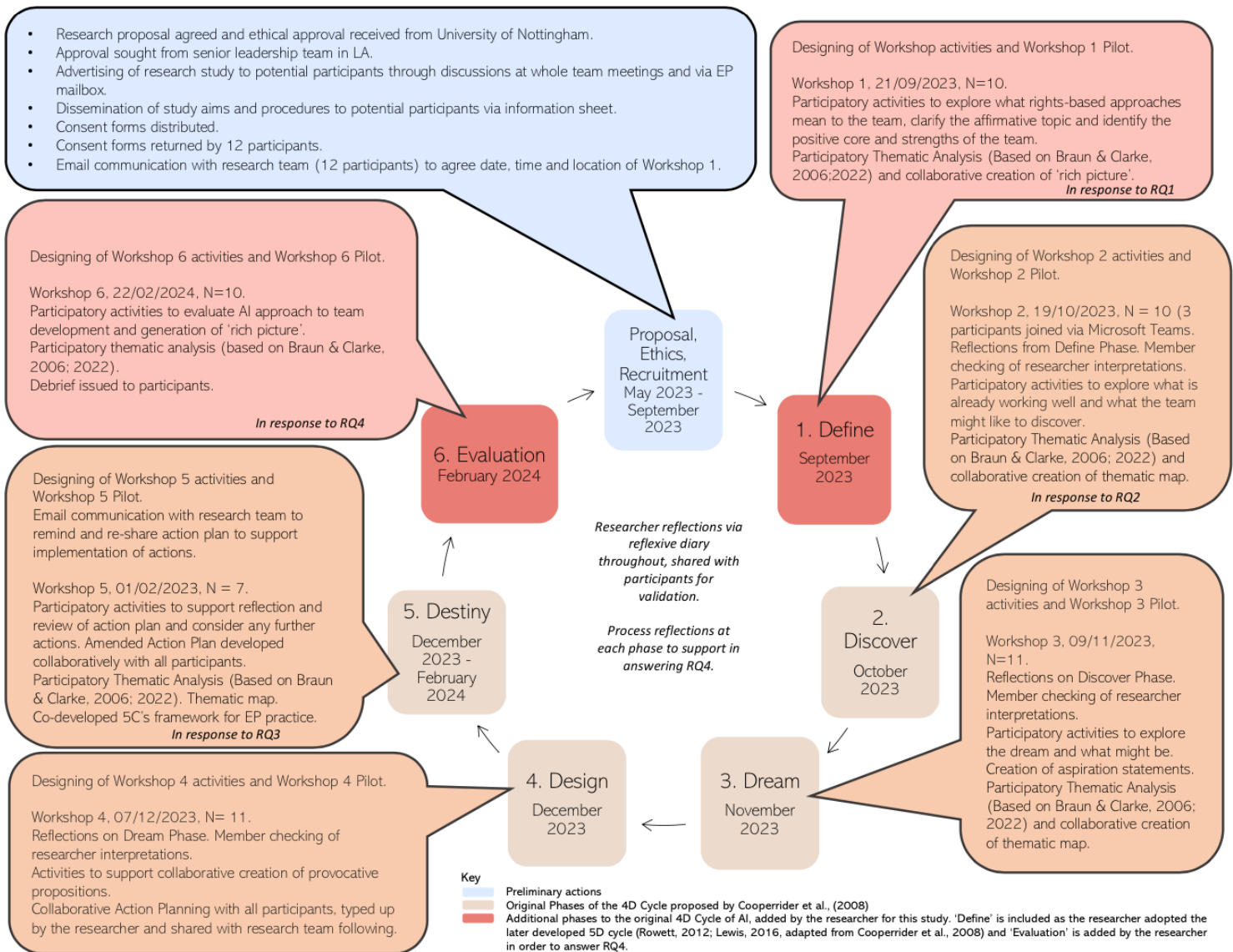
The 5D Cycle of AI was used as a framework to guide the research process in this study, through six participatory workshops, outlined in Figure 3.3. For a detailed breakdown of each workshop's content and outcomes, refer to Appendix 6.

All workshops were planned and facilitated by the researcher following guidance from Cooperrider et al. (2008), particularly around allowing adequate time and flexibility to the process as a first-time facilitator. Workshops were audio-recorded for the researcher's use to aid reflections on each session, that were then presented back to the research team at each subsequent workshop for validation.

The full AI cycle was completed over seven months, with approximately one workshop per month. The first workshop was scheduled for after an EP team meeting, for ease of bringing people together. All subsequent workshop dates were determined collaboratively at the initial session, with calendar reminders sent via email following.

**Figure 3.3**

*5D AI Cycle applied to the current study*



### 3.7 Approach to Data Gathering

#### 3.7.1 Workshops as a Method of Data Gathering

Workshops provide platforms where groups of people can work together to engage in learning, problem-solving and innovation for domain-specific concerns (Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017). Within research, workshop designs date back to Osborn's

(1948) pioneering work on creative problem-solving with groups and since then, their use in research across different fields and designs has expanded.

According to Ørngreen and Levinsen (2017), workshops fulfil three primary functions: a method for research, a practice to support development, and a means to achieve specific goals and acquire new knowledge and skills. Despite these distinct roles, common features of workshop designs include active participation, participant influence over the workshop direction, and collaborative working towards shared outcomes, insights and future directions, ensuring everybody's viewpoint is heard.

Participatory approaches and workshop methodologies are closely linked (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Kensing & Blomberg, 1998; Ehn & Kyng 1987; Holtzblatt & Beyer, 1997), advantageous for promoting genuine involvement in the research process (Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017).

### ***3.7.2 Participatory Workshops in AI***

In AI literature, workshops are frequently cited as supportive approaches to drive systemic and organisational change (Stratton-Berkessel, 2010; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Shuayb et al., 2009; Whitney & Cooperrider, 1998). Participatory designs often accompany AI as they complement each other theoretically and methodologically (Bushe, 2005; Egan & Lancaster, 2005; Martyn et al., 2019) with participatory AI workshops proven effective for instigating change within existing research (e.g., Trajkovski et al., 2015; Martyn et al., 2019; Scerri et al., 2019).

This rationale supports the use of participatory workshops alongside AI in this study, to encourage collaboration and sharing experiences, ideas and perspectives through group interactions.

### ***3.7.3 Rationale for the use of Workshops in the Current Study***

Workshops were selected over other qualitative data gathering methods (e.g., focus groups, interviews) to promote genuine participation and collaboration among participants, in line with the study's aims and research questions that focus on exploring and understanding CRBA in the EP context and developing EP team practice.

Workshops promote openness and creativity among participants (Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017) as well as collaboration, cooperation (Bushe, 2011; Trajkovski et al., 2015; Kavanagh et al., 2010; Scerri et al., 2019), trust and increased knowledge and understanding (Patel et al., 2007; Dreelin & Rose, 2008).

Interactive and multi-faceted workshops generate better outcomes than traditional non-interactive methods (Rampatige et al., 2009), especially as small-group activities and discussions effectively facilitate knowledge sharing (Patel et al., 2007). This supports the researcher's decision to include interactive small group activities to support data gathering in this study. Workshops are shown to be useful within real time applications, for emerging and unpredictable studies that focus on interactions (Darsø, 2001). Within PAR designs, workshops are also seen to initiate change through reciprocal learning, reinforced through cycles of feedback, reflection and action (Moschitz & Home, 2014; Chambers, 2002; Caretta & Vacchelli, 2015). Given the focus of this study on understanding and developing EP team practice using CRBA, utilising AI workshops for data collection is suitable for real-world application within an EP team, to support learning, development and positive change.

### ***3.7.4 Limitations Associated with Workshops***

Workshops are criticised within the literature for being poorly defined, particularly concerning their application in academic research (Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017) with their typical development and use favoured in real-world contexts. Other methodological

limitations include insufficient guidance on data generation or documentation, affecting the reliability and validity of data gathered, particularly during analysis (Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017).

Further limitations include possible conflicts of interests, ethical challenges and unclear participant and researcher roles that can arise as a result of differing expectations and interests (Durance & Godet, 2010; Darsø, 2001). Darsø (2001) emphasises the importance of researchers balancing participant needs with the research focus, and maintaining an awareness of their role and influence to mitigate these risks.

To navigate these challenges, researcher facilitation skills, awareness of group dynamics, and researcher self-awareness and reflexivity are crucial when employing AI workshop methodologies (Chambers, 2002; Clouder & King, 2015; Rogers & Fraser, 2003) to enhance productivity, participation (Kavanagh et al., 2010) and transparency (Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017).

#### **3.7.4.1 Addressing Limitations in the Current Study**

The researcher implemented the following measures to mitigate the risks associated with workshop methodologies:

- Clearly defining roles, expectations and interests at the research outset, with roles reiterated at the start of each workshop.
- Maintaining a positive and open-minded demeanour, embodying the AI philosophy and consciously appreciating points raised in discussions (Clouder & King, 2015; Driesen, 2021; Rogers & Fraser, 2003).
- Maintaining awareness of process facilitation skills, to balance participant needs and researcher focus (Darsø, 2001). This included re-framing negative narratives

positively, summarising activities, recapping previous workshops, active listening, reflecting ideas back to the group, asking appreciative questions and sharing knowledge of AI in plain English (Kavanagh et al., 2010; Driesen, 2021).

- Being mindful of group dynamics to support the group to be cohesive, using tools like establishing ground rules, ensuring equal participation by encouraging contributions from everyone and incorporating individual, paired and group approaches when designing activities (Kavanagh et al., 2010; Driesen, 2021).
- Keeping a reflective journal to enhance reflexivity and continually examine the researcher's position and influence as well as potential conflicts and successes (Driesen, 2021; Reed, 2007).
- Documenting personal reflections and interpretations following every workshop, sharing these with participants for validation and incorporating any suggested amendments.

### ***3.7.5 Workshop Development in the Current Study***

Workshops were devised by the researcher based on AI literature relevant to the topic and phase of inquiry. The researcher designed activities to support collaboration among the research team regarding their practice in relation to CRBA. Each 90-minute workshop included activities to generate data and time for participatory discussion, collaborative recording and co-analysis. Planning for all workshops was undertaken by the researcher. However, given the iterative nature of AI, the researcher was open to adapting and evolving workshop content and methods as participants gained new learning and knowledge.

An overview of workshop content at each phase of AI as applied in this study is provided in Figure 3.3 (Section 3.6) and detailed further in Appendix 6. Illustrative

examples of materials and activities designed by the researcher (Appendix 11) and facilitation prompts (Appendix 12) are provided.

Workshop activities were piloted to enhance reliability and ensure they elicited the required information. Two TEPs from the University of Nottingham volunteered their participation in the pilot, following receiving verbal information from the researcher. Planned activities and workshop materials were shared with pilot participants, who were invited to provide feedback relating to the clarity and appropriateness of questions and materials through informal discussion. Pilots were completed virtually using Microsoft Teams prior to each workshop, to allow time to make suggested changes before facilitating workshops with participants in the main study (see Appendix 13).

### **3.8 Data Collection in the Current Study**

Data was collected through six participatory workshops, following the AI process. At each phase of AI, participants engaged in small group activities and discussions to generate ideas around the particular topic area, linked to the phase of AI. Whole group discussion was then facilitated by the researcher, and participants in each smaller group were invited to feedback and discuss the ideas they had generated within their smaller group discussions to synthesise ideas relating to the topic from the whole research team. Further details of data collection procedures and outcomes for each workshop are shown in Figure 3.3 (Section 3.6) and Appendix 6. The researcher followed Cooperrider et al's (2008) guidance throughout data collection, to ensure that activities used to gather data were aligned with AI literature, as evidenced in Appendix 6.

Workshops took place during working hours in a meeting room at participants' place of work. Data collection was predominantly face to face, except for the Discover workshop, where three participants joined virtually due to unforeseen circumstances.



Workshop data was recorded collaboratively and visually by the research team using a variety of methods. For smaller group activities and discussions, participants noted their ideas on flipchart paper/post it notes, using words and images. The purpose of these visual recordings was to prompt their contributions to later whole group discussion and feedback. For whole group discussions/feedback, rich pictures or thematic maps were created by different volunteers within the research team, and comprised of words and graphics to document and capture key discussion points raised around particular topics linked to the phase of AI. In the Discover workshop, the researcher produced templates (Appendix 14) to aid participants in capturing details from a storytelling exercise, centred around peak experiences that were then shared and recorded on a thematic map. Templates were designed using guidance from AI literature (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Rowett, 2012).

The approach to data collection and methods used align with existing literature on PAR methods (Kindon et al., 2007) and link with literature around the use of visual research methods within qualitative psychology research, as the research team created visual artifacts (e.g. thematic maps, rich pictures) within the research process (Reavey & Prosser, 2012). Qualitative visual methods are suggested to emphasise research with, rather than about, participants (Reavey & Prosser, 2012), which fits with the PAR design of this study, as participants are able to be a part of the visual recording processes by collaboratively creating the graphics produced (e.g. thematic maps/rich pictures).

All workshops were audio-recorded to support the researcher in clarifying themes that evolved through co-analysis with participants, and in checking that no data had been missed. The process involved the following three steps:

- 1) Following each workshop, the researcher listened back to the audio recording of whole-group discussions and reviewed the visual recording (rich picture/thematic map) produced. The researcher noted down the themes and associated key discussion points as captured within the workshop session, that evolved from co-analysis with participants, as well as any missed data within a reflective account.
- 2) At the start of the next workshop, this reflective account was shared with participants and any missed data highlighted. Time was allowed for participants to review the reflective account collaboratively and consider any missed data. This enabled the research team to determine whether missed data should be included within the visual recording for that workshop (thematic map/rich picture) and review and validate themes that evolved through co-analysis.
- 3) Visual recordings were adjusted and amended as appropriate, based on the review of reflective accounts.

An illustrative example of the researcher's reflections shared with participants following each workshop is provided in Appendix 26.

An overview of AI based on Cooperrider et al's (2008) guidance was provided in the initial workshop to set the context for participants. Ground rules were established

and re-iterated at each workshop to encourage respect and collaboration within the research team (Appendix 15).

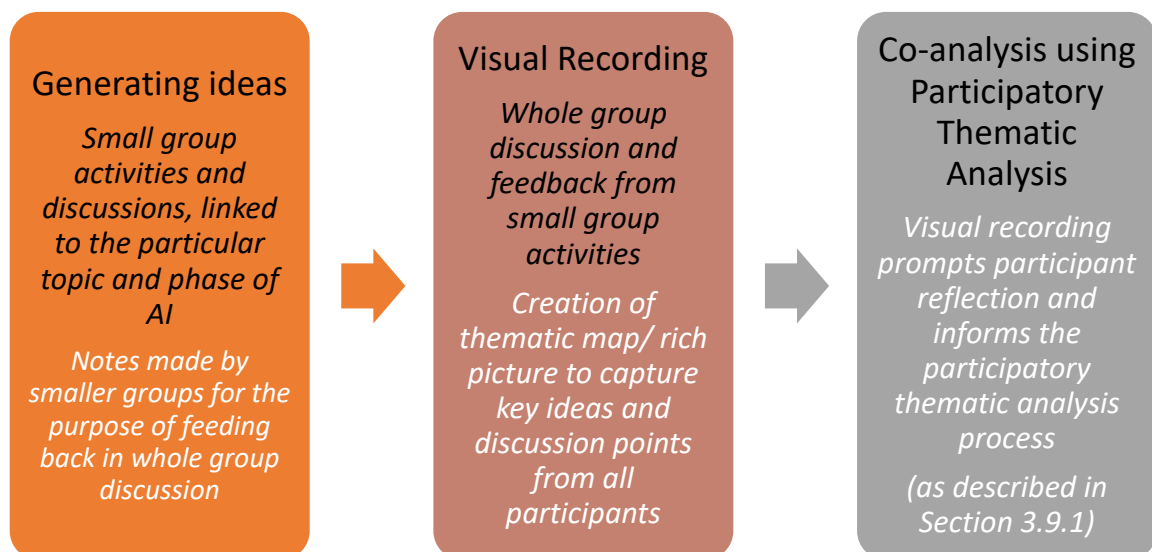
### 3.9 Approach to Data Analysis in the Current Study

Due to the iterative, cyclical and participatory nature of AI in this study, data generated through workshop activities was co-analysed by participants during each workshop to synthesise findings and identify themes and patterns from discussions. A collaborative analysis approach is fundamental to key principles of participation, inclusivity and control over knowledge production within AI (Reed, 2007), important to inform action within PAR designs (Cornish et al., 2023).

The role of visual data recordings can be understood by reviewing the process flow in Figure 3.4 below.

#### Figure 3.4

*Flow diagram to show the general process of data collection and analysis within workshops and how visual data recordings were created and used.*



The role of visual data recordings was;

- 1) To capture the main points of the whole group discussions relating to the particular topics being explored. This may be in words or visuals and was graphiced by a volunteer from the research team.
- 2) To provide a stimuli or trigger to prompt reflection following the initial whole group discussion and feedback from smaller group activities, to support and inform the process of participatory thematic analysis (PTA) that followed (as outlined in section 3.9.1).
- 3) To capture themes co-analysed as a result of PTA that were transferred to the visual recording (thematic map/ rich picture).

The final themes co-analysed by the research team evolved from whole-group discussion, with visual data recordings (thematic maps/rich picture) used to prompt reflection and inform the co-analysis process, utilising PTA. The visual data recordings (e.g. thematic maps/rich pictures) that were created by the research team were not analysed in and of themselves. This is fitting with the analytical approaches within visual research that are described by Reavey & Prosser (2012).

It must be noted that not all of the data gathered throughout the six phases of the AI process was used to answer the four research questions posed. Table 3.4 outlines the outputs that were used as data to be analysed in relation to the research questions, and the outputs that were a product of the AI process and not used specifically to respond to the research questions. Further detail about the procedure and how data outputs were generated is provided in Appendix 6.

**Table 3.4**

*Data outputs analysed in response to the research questions and data outputs that were a product of the AI process.*

<b>Phase of AI in current study</b>	<b>Outputs used as data and analysed in response to the research questions (including which research question data output was analysed in response to)</b>	<b>Additional outputs that were a product of AI, and not used specifically in response to the research questions</b>
<b><i>Define</i></b>	<p>Rich Picture (in response to RQ1) created during whole group discussion and feedback following smaller group discussion task around defining CRBA in the EP context.</p> <p>Pre-AI scaling activity and process reflections (used to inform RQ4).</p>	<p>Ground Rules</p> <p>Graphics and notes generated by smaller groups in relation to defining the affirmative topic choice.</p> <p>Positive Core – identified through whole group activity, documented on the rich picture.</p>
<b><i>Discover</i></b>	<p>Thematic Map (in response to RQ2) created during whole group discussion and feedback following a smaller group story telling exercise around peak experiences of using CRBA in practice and what gives the EP team life.</p> <p>Process reflections (used to inform RQ4).</p>	<p>Whole-group feedback to warm up activity around what gives the EP team life and meaning in their work.</p> <p>Story telling prompt/recording sheets completed by each co-researcher in a pairs activity around sharing stories of peak experiences (see template in Appendix 14).</p>
<b><i>Dream</i></b>	<p>Process reflections (used to inform RQ4).</p>	<p>Dream pictures created in small groups to visually reflect what future practice would look like, using the Miracle Question as a prompt.</p> <p>Thematic map, based on whole group discussion and feedback when sharing dream pictures related to dreams for future EP team practice in relation to CRBA.</p> <p>Opportunities and possibilities for future practice identified through whole group discussion, listed on flipchart paper and ranked by each member of the research team.</p> <p>Aspiration statement to capture the shared vision for future practice identified by the research team, written on flipchart paper.</p>
<b><i>Design</i></b>	<p>Process reflections (used to inform RQ4).</p>	<p>Provocative propositions generated through small group discussions and finalised through whole group discussion and</p>

		feedback (recorded on whole group action plan). Action plan, developed and recorded collaboratively through whole group discussion, recorded visually with actions written on poster paper.
<b><i>Destiny</i></b>	Thematic map (in response to RQ3) created during whole group discussion and feedback following small group activities around the factors that support and enable the use of CRBA in EP work. A framework for practice was developed by the research team based on themes identified - 5C's of Children's Rights-Based Approaches, A Framework for Educational Psychology Practice.  Process reflections (used to inform RQ4).	Amended action plan, recorded visually with review of actions/ new actions written on poster paper. Graphics and notes produced in small group discussions around the factors that support and enable the use of CRBA in EP work.
<b><i>Evaluation</i></b>	Thematic map (in response to RQ4) created during whole group discussion and feedback following smaller group discussions around how the AI process supported team practice and development.  Post-AI scaling activity and process reflections (used to inform RQ4).	

### ***3.9.1 Participatory Thematic Analysis***

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) is recognised as an accessible and systematic process to develop, analyse and interpret patterns within qualitative data, involving data coding and theme development (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

A participatory adaptation of RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2022) was used to analyse data produced within workshops, similar to that described by Muchenje (2020). Themes were co-analysed by the research team, by following the steps outlined in Table 3.5. These are based on the approach first described by Braun & Clarke (2006) and further refined in their more recent work (Braun & Clarke, 2022), that have been condensed and modified by the researcher to ensure suitability with the PAR design

and AI approach in the current study and the time constraints of this doctoral research. Reflective questions and statements were used by the researcher within the participatory adaptation, to support the research team to effectively engage in the TA process, as outlined in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5**

*Process of participatory TA adopted in the current study, adapted from Muchenje (2020), based on Braun & Clarke (2006; 2022)*

<b>Phases of RTA (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; 2022)</b>	<b>Participatory adaptation in the current research study – guiding questions and statements</b>
1. Familiarisation with the data	<i>'Take some time to reflect on our discussions today'</i>
2. Generating initial codes	<i>'Think about and note down the key words and phrases that kept coming up or that you feel were significant on the post-it notes'</i>
3. Searching for themes	<i>'Have a look at the post-it notes. How can we move them around so that similar ideas are together?' 'How can we group these ideas into themes?'</i>
4. Reviewing themes	<i>'Is there anything we might change about how we have grouped the ideas?' 'How might we rank them in order of importance?'</i>
5. Refining themes	<i>'Is there anything we have missed or that hasn't come up that we want to add?' 'Feel free to annotate this or label this on the map/picture'</i>
6. Writing report	<i>'The researcher will write notes and reflections from today, including on the data gathered and themes generated to review together at the next workshop'</i>

Co-analysis was completed within the workshops where data was generated, and it was therefore felt that data familiarisation could be achieved by offering time for reflection on discussions and associated notes and graphics produced. The reflections

from participants on key words and phrases pertinent to discussions within the workshops acted as 'codes'. Resources such as post-it notes were used to note down codes.

The approach to coding was inductive and data-driven, with most coding completed at the semantic level, interpreting discussions based on what was explicitly stated. Coding was completed collaboratively, with participants, to ensure democratic validity (Cahill et al., 2007) and to enhance understanding, interpretation and reflexivity (Braun & Clarke, 2022), with participants sharing ownership over meaning making within the data.

Codes were grouped and labelled into theme headings, themes and sub-themes through collaborative discussion among the research team, facilitated by the researcher, and recorded visually on rich pictures and thematic maps by transferring the information on post-it notes to the graphic and using strategies such as colour coding and drawing lines/arrows to make links between theme headings/themes/subthemes. Different participants volunteered to graphic these discussions to record the themes generated by the participant group within workshops.

A summary of specific data generated and analysed using participatory TA (PTA) and the corresponding output recording (e.g. thematic map/rich picture) in response to each research question is provided in Appendix 16.

### **3.9.2 Rationale for Participatory RTA**

RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2022) is recognised for its flexibility across research paradigms and questions (Braun & Clarke, 2022), and is therefore appropriate for the social constructionist epistemology and relativist ontology of the current participatory study. Furthermore, RTA supports the identification of patterns within data pertaining to



experiential research (Clarke & Braun, 2017), which supports this study's exploration of EP team experiences and perspectives of CRBA, providing further rationale for its use.

A participatory adaptation of RTA was selected for several reasons. Firstly, to amplify participants' experiential knowledge to have greater relevance, impact, and meaning for them (Byrne et al., 2009). This is because PTA would facilitate co-construction of data interpretations by participants throughout the analysis process, fostering continuous input into subsequent AI phases, supporting the development of team practice. Engaging participants in co-analysis, guided by researcher facilitation, was expected to enhance the implementation of change within the research context, more so than if analysis was completed solely by the researcher. This idea is consistent with literature suggesting that participation positively influences commitment and ownership over the change process (Barke & Hankins, 2021; Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Darby, 2017).

Secondly, PTA facilitated the co-construction of research outcomes with participants, which is relevant within an action-oriented design to meet the research aims.

Finally, the approach to data analysis fits with the research design and the theoretical position of the researcher. Balancing power dynamics between the researcher and participants, and providing an opportunity for co-constructed meaning making based on the data participants had presented was important to the researcher. By adopting PTA, the traditional separation between expert researcher and participants was surpassed (Wadsworth, 1998; Daly, 2000) offering additional rationale for its use.

### ***3.9.3 Limitations of Participatory RTA***

The participatory adaptation of RTA in this study is novel and has possible limitations given the collaborative and interactive nature of co-analysis under time constraints. For example, reliance on participant memory of discussions and group dynamics may have meant some participant interpretations were prioritised over others. Furthermore, given the continuous nature of session-by-session analysis, and the time constraints associated with this doctoral research, enough time may not have been allowed to review codes and themes as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022). This potentially limits the robustness of the coding process employed. Mitigations were considered by the researcher to minimise the risk of this, including step-by-step facilitation of participatory RTA, sharing the intentions and purposes of the analysis procedure to support understanding and member checking the researcher's reflections to allow missed data to be reviewed.

Despite these possible limitations, the researcher felt the participatory adaptation of RTA adopted was most appropriate to meet the research aims and encourage interactive and collaborative knowledge building with participants, given the importance of this in PAR designs (Kemmis, 2006)

### **3.10 Approach to Evaluation**

The approaches to data collection and analysis in response to RQ4, focusing on how AI methodology impacted the EP team's professional development, are presented below.

#### **3.10.1 Data Collection**

In the final workshop, small group activities and whole group discussions were used to enable the research team to reflect on their experiences of AI and its impact on

their personal and professional development regarding CRBA. Further detail is provided in Appendix 6.

To measure participants' confidence around CRBA, a simple scaling activity (Appendix 27) was employed at the beginning and end of the AI process (Workshops 1 and 6). This, along with participant process reflections throughout AI (Appendix 28) were used in addition to data obtained through workshop discussions to address RQ4.

### **3.10.2 Data Analysis**

A participatory adaptation of RTA was used to analyse evaluation data, as described in Section 3.9.1. Within workshop 6, participant process reflections and scaling data were presented back to prompt participant discussions, to incorporate this data within the overall analysis.

## **3.11 Evaluating Research Quality in the Current Study**

Criteria to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research includes credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and reflexivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stenfors et al., 2020). These quality standards can be applied to PAR designs (Elliott, 2008; Lennie, 2006), making them relevant to this research. Phronesis will be explored as an additional measure of quality, relating to the practical wisdom gained by participants given the action-oriented design (Salite et al., 2009), in line with AI principles (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987).

Table 3.6 outlines the criteria for trustworthiness considered and the researcher's steps to address this in the current study, drawing on various sources (Elliott, 2008; Kornbluh, 2015; Lennie, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stahl & King, 2020; Stenfors et al., 2020).

Researcher reflexivity and positionality in the present study are further discussed in sections 3.11.1 and 3.11.2 respectively, given the importance of these matters to address research quality within a qualitative participatory design (e.g.. Bourke, 2014).

**Table 3.6**

*Criteria for trustworthiness, applied to the current study*

<b>Criteria for trustworthiness and rigour</b>	<b>Steps taken to address this in current study, informed by suggestions in research (Lincoln &amp; Guba, 1985; Stenfors et al., 2020; Lennie, 2006; Klornbluh, 2015; Elliott 2008)</b>
<p><b><i>Credibility:</i></b> Research findings are plausible and trustworthy (Stenfors et al., 2020). There is congruence between findings and reality for participants (Stahl &amp; King, 2020).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing researcher reflections at each phase of AI and through reflexive journal.</li> <li>• Participant member checking throughout the process, for all researcher reflections.</li> <li>• Researcher-facilitator role within workshops to build mutual trust and support open communication.</li> <li>• Prolonged engagement with the research team over 7 month period.</li> <li>• Multiple data collection tools within workshops (paired/small group activities, story-telling, whole group discussion, scaling, graphic recording) to support participant engagement and communication.</li> <li>• Data triangulation from multiple methods (e.g. workshop data, researcher reflections, participant process reflections, reflexive journal) and interpreter triangulation from various participant roles (AsEPs, TEPs, EPs, SEPs) at multiple time points.</li> <li>• Collaborative and participatory AI approach supportive to participants providing true and honest contributions given they become co-researchers and share control of the research process (Argyris &amp; Schon, 1978).</li> <li>• Description of researcher epistemology, ontology, axiology and positionality offered.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Transferability:</i></b> Findings may be transferred to another setting, context or group (Stenfors et al., 2020; Stahl &amp; King, 2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of the context of the research setting and participant group offered, to enable readers to ascertain their own transferability.</li> <li>• Reported data collection and analysis methods and time frames.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Dependability:</i></b> Extent to which the research could be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlined data gathering processes and research design in detail, supported by appendices (e.g. Appendix 6).</li> </ul>

replicated in similar conditions (Stenfors et al., 2020; Stahl & King, 2020)	
<b>Confirmability:</b> Clear relationship between data and findings, interpretations and outcomes (Stenfors et al., 2020; Stahl & King, 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher's positionality disclosed (Section 3.11.2)</li> <li>• Researcher reflexivity maintained through reflexive journal (Appendix 17).</li> <li>• Researcher reflections on the data created within each phase of AI, presented back to participants for member checking.</li> <li>• Indicated researcher's theoretical and methodological assumptions and choices.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflexivity:</b> Continual process of engaging with and articulating the position of the researcher and context of the research (Stenfors et al., 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflexive journal documented reflections, observations and decisions throughout the research process (Appendix 17)</li> <li>• Researcher reflections on the data created within each phase of the AI process were member checked by participants (e.g. Appendix 26).</li> <li>• Researcher's positionality disclosed (Section 3.11.2)</li> </ul>
<b>Phronesis:</b> the virtue of practical wisdom, the practical knowledge and learning gained from the research (Salite et al., 2009).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AI design aids understanding and learning, creating new possibilities for action to develop EP practice in relation to CRBA.</li> <li>• Topic is of practical concern to the EP team involved.</li> <li>• Participant involvement in data collection and analysis, aware of findings at each phase.</li> <li>• Dissemination plans to share research findings with wider EPS at whole service event.</li> </ul>

### 3.11.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is crucial in qualitative research (Willig, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2022; Yardley, 2017) to enhance credibility (Berger, 2015), integral to this study given the PAR design adopted. To ensure reflexivity, the researcher acknowledges their role and influence as an active agent in the research process, and reflects on the ways in which their responses, reactions and relationships with participants and the data shape knowledge gained. In this way, the researcher adopts the view that subjectivity is an asset to the research process, rather than a hindrance (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Parker, 1994). Excerpts of the researcher's reflexive journal are provided in Appendix 17.

### **3.11.2 Positionality**

The role of the researcher in the discovery and interpretation of knowledge is determined by examining positionality, recognising that the researcher becomes immersed in the subject and situation of qualitative research (Bourke, 2014).

In this study, my position was one of insider researcher (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Holmes, 2020) meaning I was an active agent in the research study. It is important that I recognise that my position influences the nature of the data generated, the choices, interpretations and observations made (Foote & Bartell, 2011). Savin-Baden and Major (2013) provide guidance on aspects of positionality that should be considered by researchers, that have guided my reflections.

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist employed within the same team as participants, I hold multiple roles: colleague, researcher and AI facilitator. The benefits of this include awareness of group dynamics and team context, supporting the development of actions and easing facilitation due to existing relationships. However, I recognise the possible limiting influence of existing relationships on research outcomes should participants alter their responses in light of knowing the facilitator. To address this, I maintain a positive approach, focusing on existing strengths, building rapport with the group through facilitating multiple workshops. Ground rules were established and activities carefully planned to foster collaboration and interaction within the group. My role was clearly defined at the start of each workshop to support participant understanding.

As a white, middle class, cis-gendered, able-bodied British woman, I have assumed significant social privileges including educational opportunities shaped by my race, gender, age and class. I completed an undergraduate and masters degree before

undertaking this doctoral research. These factors may influence my perspectives and contributions to this research, potentially differing from those of other participants. I understand that each participant may interpret the topic differently based on their unique backgrounds and positions.

My interests and values as a researcher focus on applying strengths-based and participatory approaches to foster systemic change and enhance the development of EP practice concerning children's rights (see also Section 3.2.3.3). Given my personal and professional experiences, I have been aware of systems where children's rights are not always respected, and have assumed the role of advocate for many. Advocacy, collaboration, true participation and the values of humanistic and positive psychology have always been important to me, influencing my decision to pursue EP training and in shaping my approach to EP practice. As such, I am invested in the findings of the current study, which will support the continuing development of my practice in this area.

Whilst there are many positives to my position, there are also drawbacks. I'm aware that my role and position influences how I facilitate workshops and interpret findings, potentially differing from participants or other researchers. I acknowledge that this may create bias without careful mitigations. However, by acknowledging my position and blind spots and by employing methods like member checking, a participatory design, and maintaining a reflexive journal, I aim to limit these risks, enhance transparency and improve my research practice (Holmes, 2020).

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the individual positionality of all participants will have contributed to the knowledge and data generated in this study, given their involvement in data collection and analysis.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval for the current study was obtained from The University of Nottingham in May 2023 (Appendix 18), and is therefore aligned with their ethical guidelines. This research was also informed by the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021) and the University of Nottingham Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (2023).

A number of ethical considerations were required to be addressed by the researcher, as outlined below.

#### **3.12.1 Informed Consent**

All participants who volunteered their participation were provided with information about the study via an information sheet (Appendix 9) and given an opportunity to ask questions about the research study. Informed consent was obtained via a consent form (Appendix 10) for all participants who chose to take part. Further information about the study was given at the start of the define workshop, to ensure all participants were aware of the study's aims and purposes and what was expected of them.

#### **3.12.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Participants were informed about secure information storage procedures. Confidentiality measures were maintained during workshops through agreed ground rules, including avoiding the use of names or identifying information when referring to case examples, which is consistent with EP working practices. Audio recordings were used by the researcher for reflection purposes only and were therefore not transcribed. To protect participant anonymity, all data was anonymised and identifiers removed. All participants received a data privacy notice outlining The University of Nottingham's data usage and storage procedures, given their affiliation with this research.



### **3.12.3 Right to withdraw**

The right to withdraw at any point before or during the study, without providing a reason, was explained to participants in the information sheet and verbally at the start of the initial workshop.

### **3.12.4 Storage of Data**

Audio data was recorded using a digital voice recording device and then transferred to be stored securely on the University of Nottingham's managed virtual environment, in line with their Research Data Management Policy (University of Nottingham, n.d). Upon completion of this research study, audio files will be permanently deleted.

### **3.12.5 Offsetting Potential Negative Effects of the Research**

Dates and times for all workshops were agreed with the research team to minimise any disruption for participants. The researcher's skills in active listening and process facilitation gained through doctoral training and professional experience, supported group cohesion and enabled monitoring of participant interactions to notice signs of tension or conflict and manage these sensitively. Ground rules co-constructed at the beginning of the AI process promoted effective collaboration and respectful communication.

Considering the potential sensitivity of the topic, linked to participants own experiences of their rights as a child and the process of reflecting on personal practice, the researcher remained attuned to participants' emotional needs, provided well-being check-ins, breaks, and signposts to supervision arrangements for participants who felt distressed or concerned by topics discussed.

### **3.12.6 Debrief**

A debrief was offered within the final AI workshop through discussion with participants, inviting their reflections and questions around the research. A debrief letter (Appendix 19) was provided for all participants, providing an overview of the research, researcher contact details and signposting further support.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### 4.1 Overview

Within this chapter, the findings and outcomes of each phase of Appreciative Inquiry will be presented. The research questions were addressed as follows:

- *RQ1: What do EPs understand CRBA to be in the context of their work?*  
Outcomes of the define phase address this research question, presented in Section 4.2.
- *RQ2: How do EPs use CRBA in their practice?* Outcomes from the discover phase address this research question, presented in Section 4.3.
- *RQ3: What factors enable and facilitate the successful adoption of CRBA within EP work?* Data from the destiny phase addresses this research question, supported by a framework for practice that was co-created by the research team, as presented in Section 4.6.
- *RQ4: How does AI methodology support the professional development of an EP team in relation to developing their use of CRBA in practice?* Multiple sources were triangulated to address this research question including data gathered in the evaluation phase, scaling data, participant process reflections and researcher reflections, as outlined in Section 4.7.

For all AI phases, the findings presented will comprise of data that has been co-analysed with participants during workshop sessions and the corresponding researcher reflections. All researcher reflections captured participants' theme headings, themes and subthemes as co-analysed within workshops and were presented back for validation at the start of each subsequent workshop, to allow for potential missed data

to be reviewed. An illustrative example of the researcher's reflections provided following workshops is provided in Appendix 26.

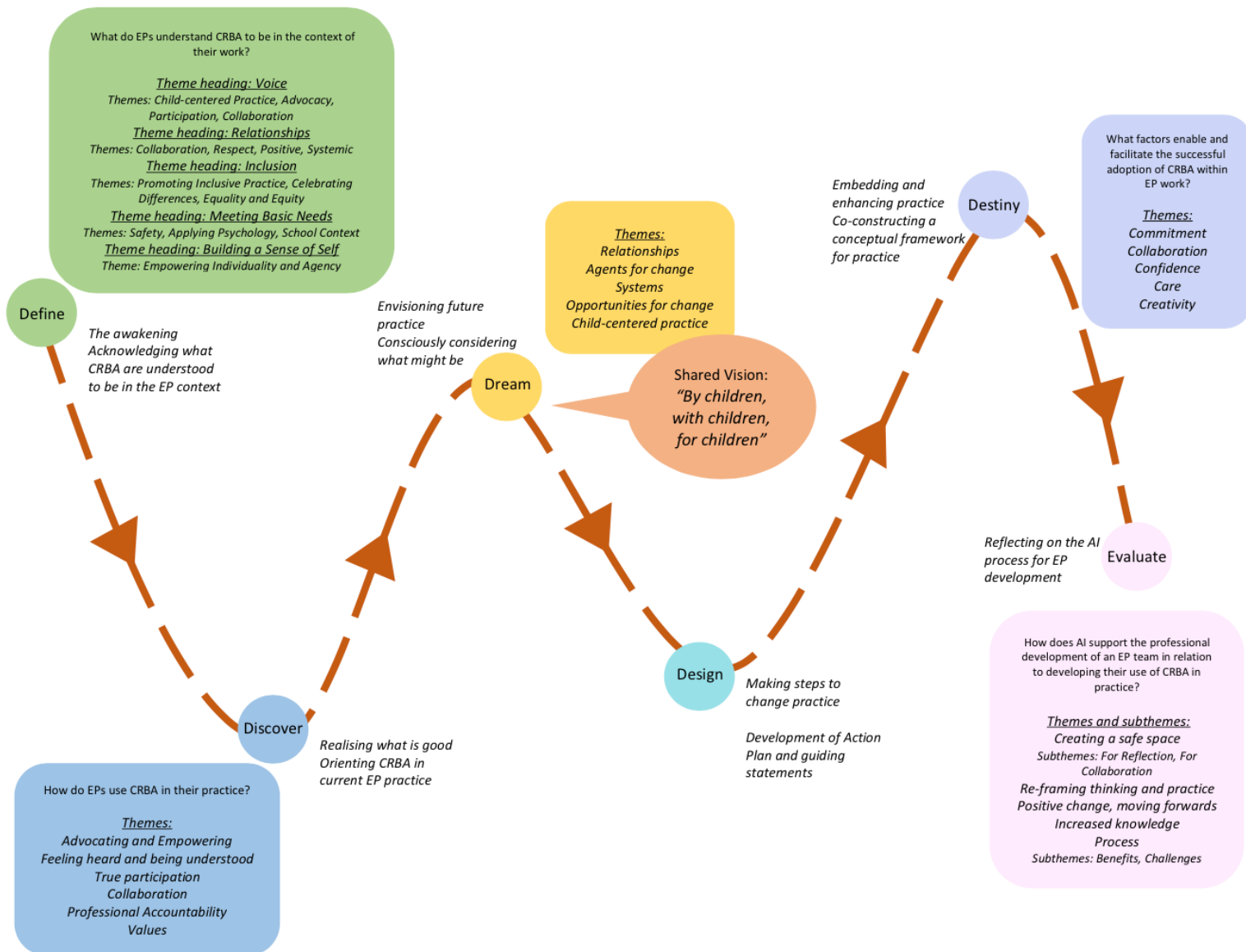
Although data from the dream and design phases does not directly address the research questions of this study, it is presented to contextualise AI outcomes for the reader. These phases were vital in implementing the AI cycle, contributing to data generated within the destiny and evaluation phases. They therefore support the reader to understand the participant journey to embedding CRBA in practice, and what informed the co-created action plan and practice framework.

Given the participatory design adopted, data collection and analysis were collaborative co-constructed processes, involving all participants. The findings presented therefore refer to participants collectively, based on the data generated and analysed as a collective group. The terms 'participants', 'practitioners', 'co-researchers' and 'EPs' are used interchangeably to refer to the research team throughout this section. Quotations are drawn out by the researcher where pertinent to group discussions, based on the audio-recording. Theme headings and theme names are consistent with participants' co-analysis within workshops.

Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the participant journey, capturing the key theme headings, themes and subthemes at each phase. The findings from each phase will now be presented in turn.

#### **Figure 4.1**

*A visual representation of the participant journey, capturing theme headings, themes and subthemes at each phase of AI.*



## 4.2 Define Phase

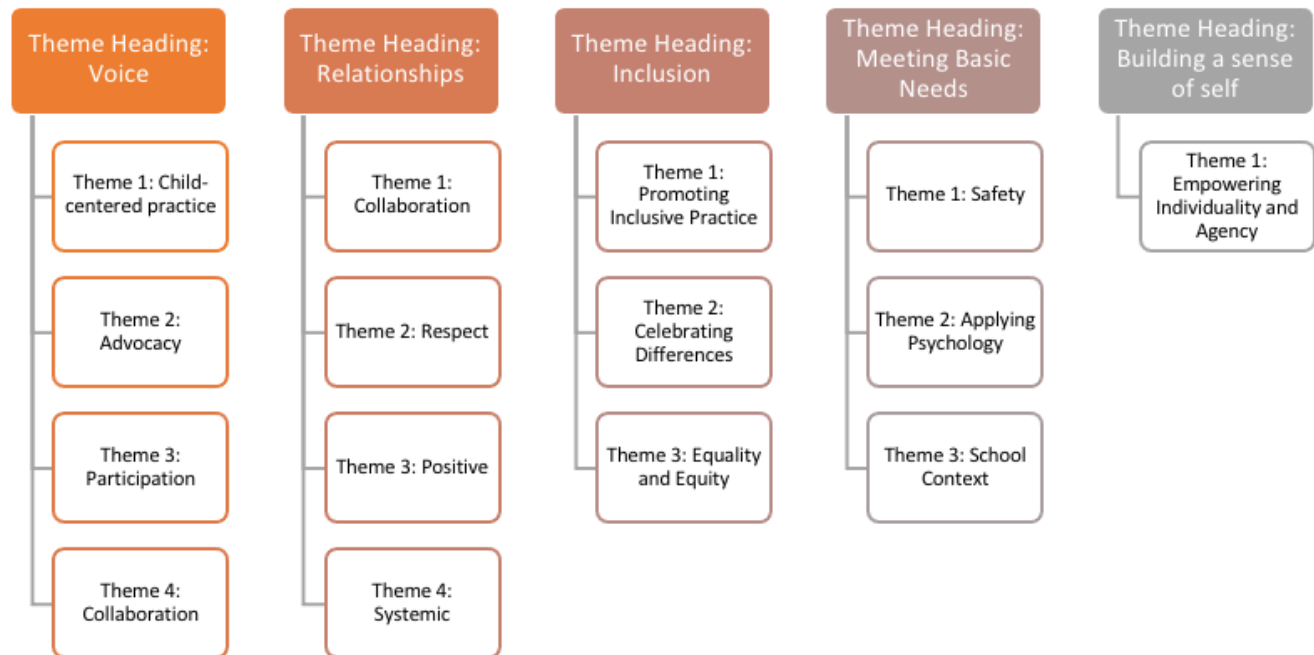
### 4.2.1 Overview

Figure 4.2 provides a summary of the theme headings and themes identified through co-analysis with participants. A rich picture was created by participants in Workshop 1; a visual representation of the group discussion using words and graphics to capture

theme headings and themes in relation to how CRBA are understood in the EP context and the positive core of the group as identified by participants (Appendix 20).

**Figure 4.2**

*Theme headings and themes in the define phase*



## 4.2.2 Voice

### 4.2.2.1 Child-centered Practice

Participants described child voice to be important to defining CRBA. This included giving CYP a voice, empowering them to share their views, and using tools and resources to support them to express their voice. Participants emphasised the need for this to be genuine and authentic rather than tokenistic. Acceptance of CYP views was also seen to be important.

*'asking them [CYP] and actually taking it seriously'*

In defining CRBA, as part of child-centered practice, participants talked about the importance of respect for CYP. EPs described careful consideration of language used to speak and write about CYP as fundamental to accurately represent their views, maintain respect and ensure accessibility.

*'they [CYP] have a right to access reports in a way that works for them'*

#### **4.2.2.2 Advocacy**

Advocacy was seen as an important part of the EP role when defining CRBA. Participants described the power and influence associated with the position of being an EP, and the need to use this to advocate for CYP, particularly those least valued, and those in marginalised groups.

*'We are well-positioned in our role to advocate for CYP whose views are the least valued within systems'*

Practitioners emphasised the importance of listening to CYP to advocate for them, suggesting EPs perceive themselves as being able to listen when other people do not.

*'In my experience, people are telling you what they want, whether it's through behaviour or physically telling you, it's just people aren't listening, but we can'*

Co-researchers described EPs to hold a meta-perspective and greater objectivity, which they felt was important to advocate for CYP in their work, particularly when working with educational settings.

*'We have this meta-perspective and can be more objective'*

#### **4.2.2.3 Participation**

In defining CRBA, participants stressed the importance of affording opportunities for CYP to make choices that are respected by adults. Active participation and agency

were described to be important, to allow CYP to be involved in and have influence over decision making about their own lives.

*'if children and young people are encouraged to participate, they can say this is who I am and this is what I want'*

Participants shared an example of how active participation can be achieved, through co-production meetings and by meeting with CYP to discuss written feedback.

*'in co-production meetings, children are there with us, making decisions about what happens'*

Practitioners highlighted the importance of CYP aspirations within CRBA, suggesting the need for CYP to be given the freedom to *'guide and follow their own life path'*. The EP role was seen as crucial in supporting this, by signposting to the various options available to CYP, to enable them to make informed choices about their next steps, independently of external influences and expectations (e.g., from schools/parents). Co-researchers also described the need to authentically represent child views and aspirations in their roles, and support other stakeholders to do the same.

Participants described the importance of informed consent in defining CRBA. They highlighted the need for CYP to understand the EP role, the purpose of involvement, what will happen, and how information will be shared. EPs described the dynamic nature of consent within CRBA, referencing the right for CYP to withdraw consent at any time.



*'checking their consent throughout, always making sure they feel comfortable to work with us ... just because the parent has given consent doesn't mean the child has to work with you'*

Participants identified barriers to adopting true participation in relation to their work with schools, which related to the following five narratives:

- Decisions made without CYP due to adults suggesting this protects them from something
- CYP not consulted due to being perceived as incapable of coping with certain information
- Apprehension among adults about the consequences of genuine participation
- Decisions made without CYP input, even in matters that directly impact them, due to competing agendas, e.g. the drive for good GCSE results means that some children are not given a choice of GCSE subjects
- Lack of education for CYP on how to participate and advocate for themselves in school.

#### **4.2.2.4 Collaboration**

Participants described joint working and co-production to be important in defining CRBA. They described CRBA as collaborative and talked about working alongside CYP to understand and explore their views, keeping them informed throughout the process of EP involvement.

*'doing with rather than doing to, that's important'*

Practitioners described utilising their psychological skills to help CYP feel heard and empowered to share their views.

Time, resources and limited capacity were noted as barriers to achieving co-production and collaboration with and for CYP within the EP role.

### **4.2.3 Relationships**

#### **4.2.3.1 Collaboration**

Co-researchers described collaborative and multi-disciplinary working to be fundamental within CBRA. Working alongside CYP and promoting relational practice at different levels (with individuals, groups, whole schools) was highlighted as supportive within CRBA.

*'relationships and working together is the most important part of what we do'*

Practitioners provided examples of how they have enabled school staff to reflect on their own practice, by creating safe spaces to discuss what is working well and offer alternative perspectives, supporting staff to question policies, procedures and practices. Positive relationships and collaboration were noted as key to enable this.

*'we can be that person that helps them [teachers] reflect on the stuff that they don't have time to think about ... and draw out that alternative perspective'*

Participants identified challenges in building and sustaining school relationships as a barrier to collaboration in some instances.

*'but you need staff to buy-in'*

#### **4.2.3.2 Respect**

Respect within relationships, including using respectful language when discussing children and re-framing disrespectful language was described as important to CRBA.

Practitioners noted that the language used to describe CYP within the systems they work to be disrespectful and assuming at times, affecting individuality. They

described the EP role to be crucial in establishing respectful relationships, to lead by example, *'elegantly challenge'* disrespectful narratives, and implement CRBA effectively.

*'Relationships underpin EP work and create spaces to challenge practice that isn't rights-based'*

#### **4.2.3.3 Positive**

In defining CRBA, participants described the need to develop positive relationships with all key stakeholders, including CYP, parents, staff and other professionals. Participants referred to *'being their authentic selves'* to build rapport and develop trust.

*'not being the psychologist who sits there and looks at the child and makes people uncomfortable, it's about being authentic and being you'*

Practitioners emphasised that positive relationships are essential to challenge narratives, expectations and assumptions in a supportive way. They situated the EP as a *'critical friend'*, responsible for addressing exclusionary practice.

*'As EPs, we have a responsibility to challenge these practices'*

#### **4.2.3.4 Systemic**

Co-researchers described the significance of relationships in influencing the culture, ethos, and practices of educational settings to support systemic change when defining CRBA. They noted the importance of developing policies and practice simultaneously in schools to achieve this.

*'being able to build relationships at the level where you can influence systems that underpin practice and the culture and ethos of the whole school or trust'*

#### **4.2.4 Inclusion**

#### 4.2.4.1 Promoting Inclusive Practice

Participants highlighted the importance of inclusivity within CRBA, advocating for the active inclusion of all children in schools. They suggested that school systems, processes and teaching should be adapted and flexible to accommodate children's needs, rather than expecting CYP to fit in.

*'the right fit for you, not you fitting in'*

Promoting an inclusive culture as fundamental to CRBA was important to EPs. Practitioners described the need to challenge exclusionary practices, such as isolations and exclusions for SEND students and whole class sanctions (e.g., missing break time).

*'the most important thing that we are trying to promote is inclusion, belonging to something and opportunities'*

'The right to education that is right for the CYP' and 'promoting the right to play' were described as essential to champion inclusive practice within schools. Participants emphasised the need for access, engagement and development to be considered to ensure children's rights are upheld.

Referring to the right to play:

*'it's just taken away at secondary'*

*'they're forced to continue with instructional learning even when they are not developmentally ready'*

Referring to the right to education:

*'it's more than just being in school, it needs to be appropriate, like can they keep up, are they actually engaged ... just because they are in the room doesn't mean they are included'*

Practitioners described inclusion to support other aspects of CRBA, specifically feeling safe and sharing views.

*'if you felt included and inclusion was right then you would feel heard and safe to express your views'*

Participants described schools to be *'like prisons'*, highlighting the significant challenges they face in promoting inclusion due to broader issues within the education system.

Trauma informed and relational approaches were cited by co-researchers as supportive for EP teams in promoting a culture of inclusion in the spaces where they work.

#### **4.2.4.2 Celebrating Differences**

Practitioners highlighted the importance of individuality in defining CRBA, advocating for education that embraces and caters for each child's individual needs. Participants acknowledged the EP role in differentiating for children's unique strengths and needs, to promote inclusion.

*'it's like the right to have a personality and the right to not conform'*

EPs also described the importance of developing empathy for children's needs and experiences using tools such as consultation, person-centered planning, and Circle of Adults.

*'there are tools available to us, things like Circle of Adults, that actually help develop empathy for the child's lived experience ...rather than they are just not doing maths, maybe they are not getting breakfast... I think we have a role in that'*

#### **4.2.4.3 Equality and Equity**

Within CRBA, recognising that all children have rights and deserve equal opportunities was deemed important by participants.

*'equal opportunities regardless of SEND or their own needs'*

EPs described treating CYP as *'equal partners'*, sharing their perceived responsibility to balance the power between adults and children in EP work to create feelings of mutual respect.

Participants used the term *'childism'* to describe the discrimination and unequal treatment of children compared to adults that is relevant within school settings that they work with. Practitioners shared examples such as different expectations for uniform and times to use the toilets, referring to this as a *'power battle'* between CYP and adults.

#### **4.2.5 Meeting Basic Needs**

##### **4.2.5.1 Safety**

Participants described CRBA to be about meeting basic needs, reflecting on the importance of children feeling safe in school to thrive.

*'ensuring the school environment is a place where children feel safe'*

##### **4.2.5.2 Applying Psychology**

Co-researchers referenced psychological theorists, such as Maslow, to illustrate their understanding of how meeting basic needs aligns with a CRBA, and how basic needs must be met before other skills can develop. Ensuring basic needs are considered within EP assessments was viewed as important.

*'If you think about Maslow, you've got to start with your basic needs, all that other stuff like agency comes when you've got your basic needs met, and we always should ask about basic needs when we are doing assessments'*

##### **4.2.5.3 School Context**

Participants described the pressures on CYP in schools, with many sharing examples of having witnessed practices that withhold basic needs, for example, using the toilet, getting a drink.

*'their [CYP] basic needs are restricted in schools'*

#### **4.2.6 Building a Sense of Self**

##### **4.2.6.1 Empowering Individuality and Agency**

Empowering CYP to be themselves was seen as important in defining CRBA. Practitioners emphasised the need to teach children self-advocacy skills, through their involvement, and the curriculum in schools.

*'it's about giving them the skills to advocate for themselves, but these skills are not emphasised in school and it is important'*

Participants described developing CYP agency through enhancing children's understanding of their own rights, preparing them for adulthood so they can advocate for themselves.

*'we can help children build a sense of self and encourage them to be individuals, building their skills and confidence to prepare for them being adults, when they don't have someone to advocate for them'*

#### **4.3 Discover Phase**

##### **4.3.1 Overview**

Figure 4.3 provides an overview of the six themes identified by participants through co-analysis. During workshop 2, participants created a thematic map to capture how they use CBRA in practice and their wishes for future practice (Appendix 21). This was based on whole group discussion and feedback around a story telling activity,

whereby participants were asked to share peak experiences of using CRBA, with prompt questions provided based on AI research (Appendix 14).

### Figure 4.3

*Themes from the discover phase*



#### **4.3.2 Advocating and Empowering**

Participants described the ways that they advocate for CYP and their parents, amplifying their voices, and using their power and position to do this effectively.

Advocacy was seen as a shared value within the EP team, that allows EPs to use a rights-respecting approach.

*'we are fighting their corner'*

Practitioners described their use of interpersonal skills to adopt CRBA; listening, empathising and connecting with others allows them to advocate effectively and offer support where there has been a breakdown in relationships (e.g., home/school), helping families to feel relieved.



*'parents and child were having a difficult time which wasn't being heard by school, so really it was about us having that empathy, to really listen and to really hear them, to then be able to advocate'*

*'you can see the relief lifting from them, like they have actually been listened to, like a weight has been lifted.'*

Participants described the way they empower adults within schools to give them a voice and enable them to work in a different way.

*'giving them permission to work in a way that is going to benefit that child, that might go against conflicting narratives in school that are dominant'*

Persistence, reliability, *'not giving up'* and *'going above and beyond expectations'* to ensure that CYP and families know that they are valued was emphasised in the stories co-researchers shared around using CRBA successfully in their work.

Practitioners described the ways they apply psychology to adopt CRBA in their practice, using different tools and frameworks, such as consultation, to facilitate and empower everybody to be part of the journey of change for a child.

#### **4.3.3 Feeling Heard and Being Understood**

Participants described CYP voice to be central in their work, at the heart of everything and a guiding factor in decision making. Participants stressed the importance of taking time to gather and understand CYP in a way that is meaningful, checking what the child wants and what something means for them, in order that they feel heard and understood.

*'how important and powerful it is to see things from the pupil's point of view'*

*‘we should check what the child wants and actually take time to understand what that means for them’*

Participants described the ways they support other stakeholders to feel heard and to be able to represent CYP in a meaningful way, to challenge the narratives of others and change perceptions, particularly for CYP in vulnerable groups.

#### **4.3.4 True Participation**

Participants described ongoing participation to be important in their work, identifying how they use CRBA through being part of the child’s journey over time.

*‘being part of that child’s journey, by building those relationships and consistency in my patch, supporting children to participate in an ongoing way’*

Practitioners also shared examples of the ways they create time to feedback to CYP on their work to promote participation.

#### **4.3.5 Collaboration**

Participants described collaboration to be a core feature of their work, reflecting on how they bring people together to create a sense of cohesion, with the child at the centre, particularly in challenging or complex situations, and when other demands and pressures mean that this has been lost.

*‘bringing people together to understand the child, to build that cohesion and a full picture’*

Practitioners described the way that they amplify the CYP’s voice, and help the adults around a child to work in a way that aligns with the CYP’s views to achieve collaboration.

*‘working together, giving them permission to break the mould’ [referring to staff]*

Multi-agency working and joint problem-solving were referenced as core aspects of EP work that are rights-respecting, particularly when the child is involved and when their views and wishes provide the focus of the meeting. Participants described this kind of collaboration to create positive change and better outcomes for CYP.

Co-researchers described feeling rewarded when collaboration led to positive changes in children's lives. Practitioners described their role as facilitators of the change process, applying psychology through various frameworks, including consultation. They talked about creating safe spaces to enable a shared and holistic understanding of CYP, that were associated with feelings of happiness and growth.

*'happy and thriving people around a happy and thriving child'*

A collaborative approach was seen to support the use and promotion of trauma-informed and relational approaches within EP work with schools, to move to preventative ways of working when supporting CYP.

*'preventative rather than reactive, using psychology to help, like trauma-informed practices'*

Participants described a strong sense of teamwork and trust within the EP team that supports them to use CRBA in practice. Participants also described the ways that they invest in learning from other teams within the LA, collaborating in a multi-agency way to support CYP.

#### **4.3.6 Professional Accountability**

Participants described their personal and professional accountability in using CRBA in their practice, and how they maintain a curious approach to ensure assessments provide an accurate reflection of the child. Practitioners recognised the

influence of EP assessments and advice on decision making, highlighting the responsibility and influence of the EP role in ensuring the right outcomes for CYP.

*'We really are the voice for that child, what the EP report said changed the decision'*

Flexibility and autonomy in the approach to practice was valued by EPs, allowing them to use their intuition and ensure a bespoke approach for each CYP, enabling them to use CRBA.

Participants expressed confidence in applying psychology to use CRBA in their work. They described acting as a critical friend to sensitively challenge non-rights-based practice in schools

*'it's that golden thread ... applying your values, the evidence base, hypothesising to make a difference'*

Engaging in reflection, through formal and informal supervision, supported co-researchers to use CRBA, encouraging continued development and learning from practice. Participants described feeling supported by team members who were always there to *'check in'* and offer reassurance.

*'Everybody always has your back'*

A commitment to learning and engaging in research was emphasised by EPs as integral to their professional accountability. They described themselves as research practitioner psychologists and talked about investing time in reading and research to acquire new knowledge.

Challenges associated with the EP title and issues around being positioned as *'experts'* were described by co-researchers. This led to the identification of possibilities for positive change (Appendix 21).

### **4.3.7 Values**

Participants emphasised having the flexibility and autonomy to work in alignment with their personal values to enable them to use CRBA. They described their personal values to support them to work in their preferred way, overcome challenges and ensure positive outcomes, particularly when professionally challenging actions or decisions.

*'you've got to go back to what your values are and why you wanted to be an EP so in that moment you do the right thing'*

Connectedness was highlighted as a shared value within the team. Participants described feeling proud of being part of the EP team and valued working together to create positive outcomes for CYP.

*'it's teamwork and working for a common cause, I'm proud of being part of this team'*

Authenticity and trust were referenced as important by practitioners, to maintain the positive reputation of the EP team.

### **4.3.8 Possibilities for Positive Change**

Within the discover phase, through the activities presented, participants identified possibilities for positive change, as shown in Appendix 21. Whilst this data does not answer RQ2, it is included to support the reader to understand how participants moved through the inquiry and arrived at the dream, design and destiny phases.

## **4.4 Dream Phase**

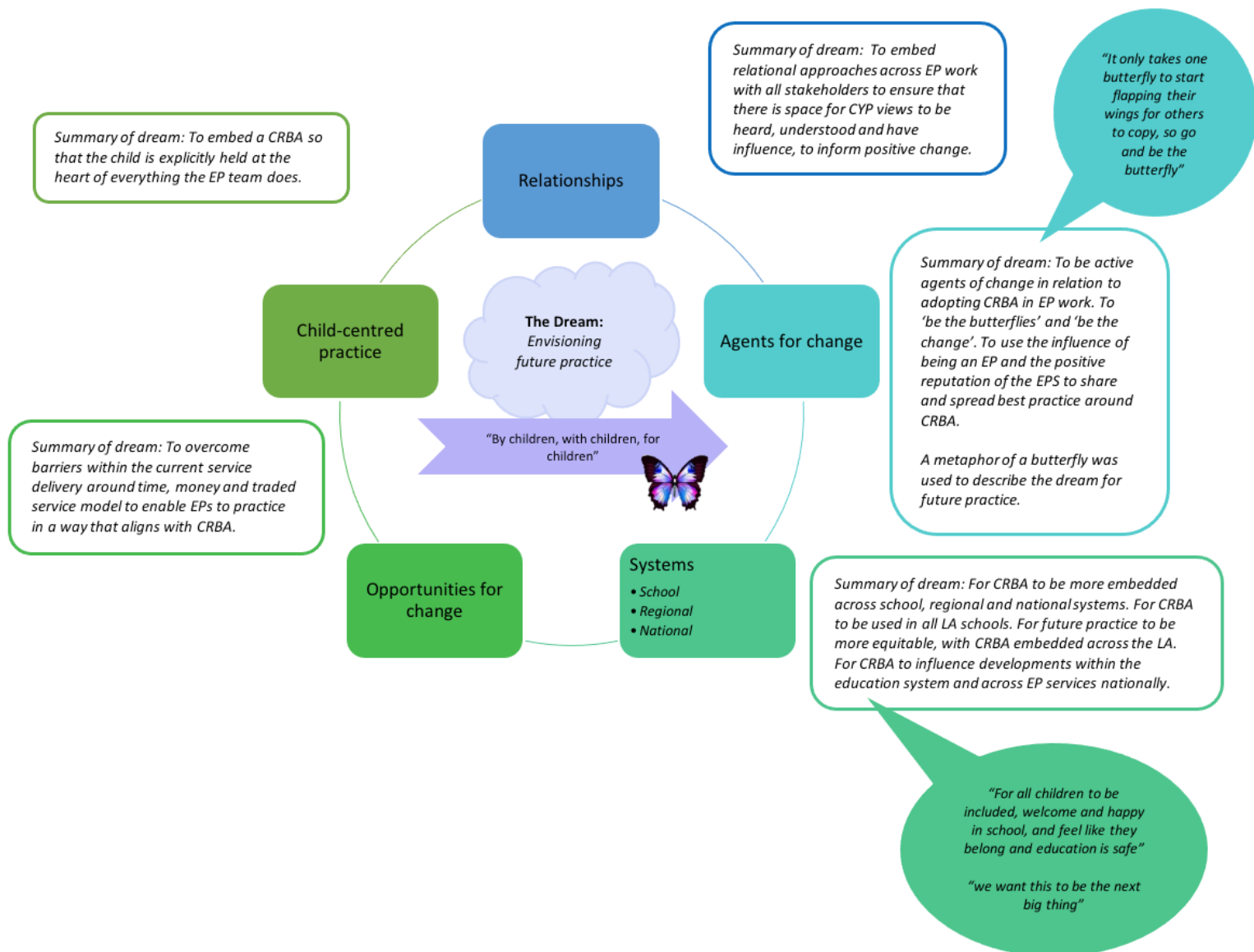
Data from the dream phase is presented to show outcomes of the full AI cycle. Although this data does not directly address the research questions, it contributes to the development of the action plan (design phase), the framework for practice (destiny phase), and the evaluation of AI (evaluation phase).

### **4.4.1 Overview**

Figure 4.4 provides a visual overview of the five themes co-analysed in the dream phase, and a summary of the dreams identified within each theme. A thematic map was created by participants to capture these themes within Workshop 3, based on the use of the miracle question to prompt discussion, reflection and the creation of dream pictures that visually mapped out how the dreams of the team would look and feel in practice. Appendix 22 details the thematic map created by participants and a summary of all dreams identified.

**Figure 4.4**

*Visual overview of themes and dreams captured in the dream phase*



#### 4.4.2 Shared Vision

Within the dream phase, participants were asked to create a shared vision statement to summarise the future they envisioned for the EP team. Participants came up with the following, as displayed within Figure 4.4:

*'By children, with children, for children'*

This statement was paired with a visual symbol of a butterfly, to capture the way that participants viewed themselves as *'being the change'*.

## 4.5 Design Phase

Design phase data is presented to show outcomes from the full AI cycle completed with participants. It does not directly address the research questions, but shows the development of the action plan used to develop practice, contributing to later phases of AI (destiny and evaluation).

### 4.5.1 Provocative Propositions

Participants reviewed the top opportunities identified within the dream phase and five were selected and refined by the research team. For each identified opportunity, participants developed a provocative proposition, which formed the guiding statement for action planning, as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

*Provocative propositions developed by participants in the design phase*

1. As an EP team, we explore creative ways to include pupil voice in our verbal and written feedback.
2. As an EP team, we proudly communicate our mission statement and shared vision in all correspondence and will revisit this regularly to ensure it remains relevant to our practice.
3. As an EP team, we actively seek CYP participation in research to improve the delivery of our service and associated services.
4. As an EP team, we promote CRBA in our work with other stakeholders and show a commitment to supporting those we work with to develop their own practice and ensure that it is rights-respecting.
5. As an EP team, we encourage collaboration and sharing our development in relation to adopting CRBA in practice.

### 4.5.2 Action Planning

Actions were co-constructed by the research team, based on the provocative propositions (Table 4.1), and divided up among the group with timescales identified.

The final action plan is provided in Appendix 23.

## 4.6 Destiny Phase



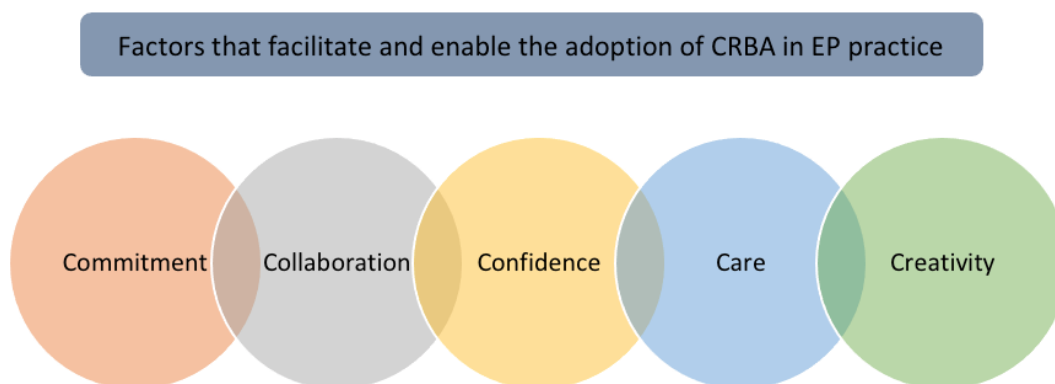
### 4.6.1 Overview

Initially, within the destiny phase, the action plan created within the design phase was reviewed and amended based on the progress established. Additional actions were co-constructed as required. The final action plan, amended with participants can be seen in Appendix 23.

Figure 4.5 shows the five themes co-analysed by participants in the destiny phase. A thematic map was created by participants in Workshop 5, based on small group and whole group discussions around the facilitative factors for using CRBA in EP practice, drawing on skills, values, knowledge and resources (Appendix 24).

### Figure 4.5

*Themes generated in the destiny phase*



### 4.6.2 Framework for Practice

Participants co-designed a framework for practice (shown in Figure 4.6 and Appendix 24) based on the five themes identified, with questions to prompt reflection in practice, to support them in embedding CRBA.

Participants included their shared vision and images of butterflies, in line with the metaphor for future practice created within the dream phase around *'being the change'* as this was identified as important to shape practice within the team moving forwards.

**Figure 4.6**

*The 5C's of CRBA, A Framework for Educational Psychology Practice - A practice framework developed by participants in the destiny phase*

## *The 5 C's of Children's Rights-Based Approaches:*

### *Care*

*Do we take care in how we talk to and about children?*

*Do we reflect on this?*

### *Collaboration*

*Are we facilitating and sharing ideas, knowledge and resources in a collaborative way to promote children's rights-based approaches within and outside the service?*

### *Confidence*

*Are we confident in our knowledge about children's rights-based approaches?*

Image covered for the purpose of confidentiality as contains EPS logo

*By children, with children, for children*

### *Creativity*

*Do we creatively employ the skills and knowledge to work in a children's rights-based way?*

### *Commitment*

*Are we committed to prioritising and advocating children's rights based approaches in our practice?*

*A Framework for Educational Psychology Practice*

The five themes identified in the destiny phase, will now be discussed in turn.

#### **4.6.3 Commitment**

Participants identified staying committed to using and embedding CRBA within their work as a facilitating factor. They found the action plan to support this, and suggested allocating time for project work, research and further exploration of CRBA with schools to support them to prioritise CYP rights.

*'it's about keeping it alive'*

*'keeping it at the forefront for everybody in the team, to ensure a consistent approach to our practice'*

Co-researchers emphasised the importance of explicit communication with schools regarding the adoption of CRBA within the EPS approach and core values as facilitative to embedding CRBA in practice. Participants described the potential for this to support in overcoming current challenges around schools directing EPs work, in particular deficit-focused assessments, as schools would be buying in to the service and the CRBA it upholds.

*'CRBA enable a holistic picture rather than one that is solely focused on deficits or all the things a child cannot do'*

Being committed to understanding how CRBA fits within other legal frameworks and guidance relevant to the EP profession, such as the Equality Act (2010), was described as important to using CRBA effectively within EP work.

#### **4.6.4 Collaboration**

Practitioners identified sharing skills, knowledge and resources as a team to enable CRBA to be in their work. Specifically, this included report examples and templates and ensuring accessibility of tools and resources within the team.

Creating space for ongoing collaboration was described as a facilitative factor to adopting CRBA. EPs suggested incorporating this into the service model to continually revisit and reflect on the use of CRBA in practice and to collaboratively develop tools and resources to embed CRBA.

*‘creating time for it, doing more things like this’*

Participants reflected that having a shared understanding was a facilitating factor in adopting CRBA in practice. They described their shared vision and action plan to be supportive, and suggested developing a mission statement for the EP team to ensure a consistent approach to practice, and increase motivation for prioritising CRBA.

Collaborating with stakeholders was described to support using CRBA in EP work. Co-researchers identified the need to collaborate with other teams within the LA, schools, parents, and carers to share knowledge and upskill others around how CRBA can be understood and utilised.

Shared values and ethics within the EP team were noted as facilitative for adopting CRBA in practice, extending to the wider profession as underpinning EP doctoral training and EP practice.

*‘being an EP is about being child-centred it’s a thread that runs through the training process to becoming an EP and working as an EP when qualified, it’s part of the profession’*

#### **4.6.5 Confidence**

Participants stressed the importance of their confidence in CRBA to support implementation in practice, specifically around how CRBA are defined and map onto different elements of EP practice.

To embed CRBA more widely, practitioners described the need to build confidence and upskill stakeholders through training and more explicit communication about the way the EPS adopts CRBA in their approach.

Participants described strengths-based approaches to enable CRBA, particularly in helping parents to feel more confident discussing their child's strengths as well as needs. They reflected on the deficit-focused conversations that sometimes occur with parents, particularly as a means to gain professional support.

*'if we are more confident, they are more confident ... we can help them to talk about their child's strengths and they can understand this is what we want to hear too'*

Practitioners described sharing frameworks and resources more widely, such as a mission statement and framework for practice, to enhance confidence and understanding of CRBA and promote their adoption in practice.

#### **4.6.6 Care**

Caring about CRBA was identified as key to embedding their use in practice. Participants reflected on their dedication to embedding CRBA, which links to their shared ethics and values, particularly regarding inclusion.

Using rights-respecting language when talking and writing about children was highlighted as crucial to adopting CRBA by EPs. An explicit focus on rights-respecting language, holding this in mind within the EP team and with other stakeholders, was described by participants to support the use of CRBA more widely.

*'Imagine that you are writing/saying this for or about your own child'*

#### **4.6.7 Creativity**

Co-researchers identified autonomy and flexibility as key to supporting their creativity. They suggested that having the freedom to decide how they work, use

resources, and write reports for children and their families enables them to adopt CRBA within their practice by applying their skills creatively.

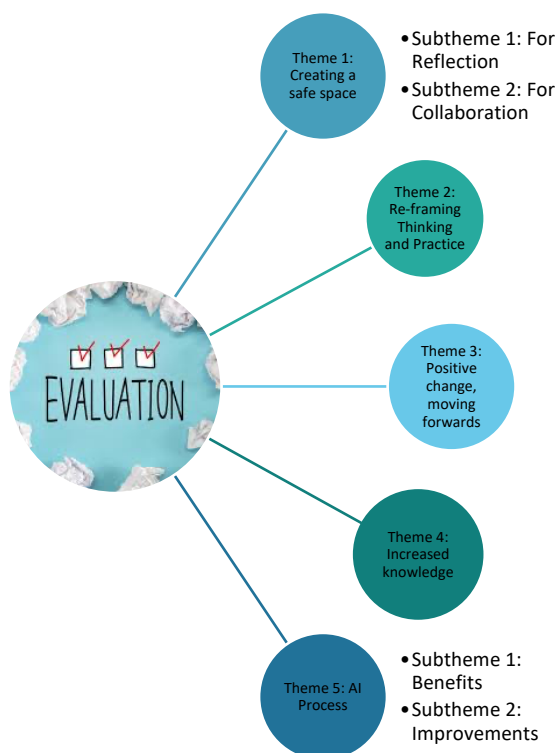
## 4.7 Evaluation Phase

### 4.7.1 Overview

Figure 4.7 shows the five themes and four subthemes identified by participants through co-analysis. A thematic map was created within workshop 6, based on discussions around the impact of AI on the EP team's professional development and practice (Appendix 25).

### Figure 4.7

*Themes and subthemes identified in the evaluation phase*



### 4.7.2 Creating a Safe Space

Within this theme, co-researchers identified the value of AI in creating a safe space to explore different aspects of their practice in relation to children's rights. Practitioners acknowledged the need for the AI process to be facilitated in order for this kind of work to happen, expressing that without this research project, it would not happen in practice due to time pressures within EP work. This highlights co-researcher's perceived importance of creating time and space for action research approaches like AI to support practice change within EP teams. Participants described the value of AI in creating space for reflection and collaboration to be particularly important to developing their practice, as captured in the subthemes 'for reflection' and 'for collaboration' that are described below in 4.7.2.1 and 4.7.2.2.

#### **4.7.2.1 For Reflection**

Participants talked positively about the AI process facilitating a space for reflection and action, describing this to be valuable.

*'it was really nice to have a space to reflect on our practice and how we can shape things moving forwards'*

Practitioners described AI to increase their self-awareness through offering a space for reflection on practice, emphasising the impact of AI in supporting practice to develop.

#### **4.7.2.2 For Collaboration**

Participants shared positive emotions associated with collaborating with colleagues using AI, describing this to be exciting and motivational.

*'it's exciting to be part of a joint project and have joint discussions about CRBA'*

Practitioners described the AI process to foster teamwork, learning from each other and the development of shared values, passion and goals. Participants talked



about the process nurturing their strengths (the positive core, as identified in the define phase).

*'we are all on the same page'*

Participants also noted how the AI process facilitated working together to develop a framework to guide practice, by sharing best practice and supporting each other to develop. Practitioners found the process to be different from the norm and supportive of their development through shared sense-making.

*'it's something different, we are put on the spot a lot in our role, our day to day is being expected to know things, having to know the answer, but making time for something collaborative like this helps to see that it is ok to not know, other people can help bring that work together to make sense of it'*

Participants linked the AI process to the EP role, suggesting it to be fitting with how the EP role is conceptualised linked to the idea of being a facilitator of positive change.

*'it fits in with the EP role, its part and parcel of being an EP'*

Participants reflected positively on the value of having lots of team members in a variety of roles participate.

Participants expressed that without the space for collaboration, created by AI, they would be *'missing out'*. They talked about the value of social time and having a shared purpose.

#### **4.7.3 Re-framing Thinking and Practice**

Participants reflected on the AI process as supportive for facilitating positive changes to practice and EP development. The metaphor of a butterfly was used to describe the process as a whole, specifically that it only takes one butterfly to start

flapping their wings to create change within a system. Participants referred to the AI process supporting them to *'be the change'*.

*'We are the butterflies who will champion and support change – moving forwards CRBA will be at the heart of the EPS'*

Practitioners described specific changes to their practice as a result of engaging with AI, to include changes in use of language within consultation meetings, a greater focus on child-centered report writing, and greater advocacy for CYP within meetings. Regarding report writing, practitioners described focusing on ensuring the language used is rights-respecting and accessible by considering the feelings of CYP if they were to read what was written.

*'I am talking more about children being able to advocate for themselves, shifting that narrative around behaviour, using language about advocacy'*

*'we are thinking more about the purpose of reports and how children's views are reflected considering the different types of reports that we can use... I now think would I be happy if this was written about me?'*

Co-researchers described the AI process to support them to make their existing practice more explicit, which suggests that AI supports to build the theory-practice link.

*'we think more explicitly about how we understand and promote CRBA in our work and it feels more concrete'*

Participants also described the AI process to have supported them to have an impact on the thinking and practice of other stakeholders, by re-framing problem-focused language used by adults in schools.

*'it has supported me to challenge the language, when they [school] said they [child] are a nightmare I have been able to say it sounds like they are doing a good job of advocating for themselves'*

Practitioners reflected on the impact of this within secondary schools in particular, sharing stories of how they feel it has also helped the adults working in schools to take a step back and think about the language they are using.

#### **4.7.4 Positive change, moving forwards**

Co-researchers found the AI process empowering and motivating, supporting proactive change. They noted its positive focus on building on strengths and voiced having observed a positive shift in their talk, with less talk about barriers between the research team as the process progressed.

Participants reflected on the AI process as supporting sustained change, considering their engagement in the project as *'the start of the journey'* and *'the springboard to do more'* through the actions set. Practitioners also noted how the process brought attention to CRBA, bringing it to the forefront, providing space for exploration.

*'having some attention on CRBA, rather than it being silently in the background is what has supported positive change'*

Co-researchers suggested that having tangible actions to focus on is helpful for their development. They reflected on feeling *'a wave of emotions'* through the AI process and acknowledged the role of these emotions in driving action and encouraging them to continue to engage and shift their practice.

Participants talked about the ways that practice has changed as a result of AI, which has supported them to begin to shape positive changes within school systems.

#### **4.7.5 Increased knowledge**

EPs described how engaging in AI has increased their knowledge, understanding and confidence in adopting CRBA in practice.

*'we now know what CRBA and feel more informed, and because of that we can now look at our experiences and work through that lens'*

Similarly, participants report that the AI process has supported them to integrate existing knowledge into a new CRBA framework, and apply it in a different way. It has broadened their conceptual understanding of CRBA, highlighting the relevance of children's rights to all aspects of EP work.

Participants described the process as supportive for their continued professional development, noting CRBA alignment with HCPC standards and EP competencies. Practitioners highlighted the importance of CRBA within the EP role and the value of AI can to support professional growth, as an empowering experience with lots of *'lightbulb moments'*. This highlights how AI facilitates a positive approach for new learning.

*'it has been smashing for CPD'*

*'it has been empowering for our own development and practice'*

Co-researchers described mixed feelings about the AI process. Some shared feeling overwhelmed by the amount of new information and what they did not know. At the same time, practitioners expressed feeling excited by opportunities to further their knowledge, listen, and collaborate.

#### **4.7.6 AI Process**

Participants identified the AI process as a theme, and shared ideas that were specifically related to the way the process of AI influenced their practice and development both individually and as a team. Practitioners shared examples of benefits

and challenges linked to the AI process, that are captured within the subthemes 'benefits' and 'challenges' described below in 4.7.6.1 and 4.7.6.2.

#### **4.7.6.1 Benefits**

Participants valued engaging in the AI process, expressing their enjoyment for taking part. They reflected on the group dynamics positively, describing the group to have '*a nice make-up*' with a '*range of roles*' represented. Overall, practitioners described the process to instil shared values, purpose, and mission, initiating positive changes in practice and team development.

#### **4.7.6.2 Challenges**

Co-researchers found the time required for the AI process to be a challenge, due to the high workload and demands of the EP role, leading to feelings of stress for some. Regarding group dynamics, some practitioners suggested potential changes for future AI iterations, such as involving more senior team members. They reflected on the positive impact this may have on action plan development and implementation, but also the potential negative impact on the openness of the research group.

#### **4.7.7 Scaling Activity**

Participants completed a scaling activity at the start and end of the AI process (Workshop 1 and Workshop 6) to determine how engaging with AI had impacted on their confidence in using CRBA. This data indicated a mean increase in participant confidence following AI, supporting the findings presented in section 4.7.5. Further details of the activity and outcomes are provided in Appendix 27.

#### **4.7.8 Process Reflections**

At each phase of the AI process, participants were given an opportunity to provide their reflections on the process. Reflections provided by participants reinforce findings presented within the evaluation phase (Section 4.7), including the AI process

increasing learning and understanding around CRBA, igniting energy and excitement and supporting positive changes in practice. Process reflections at each phase are further detailed in Appendix 28.

#### **4.8 Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings of this study at each phase of AI in relation to each research question. In the following chapter, the findings presented will be discussed in the context of existing literature, with limitations and future implications for practice also considered.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This study aimed to explore an EP team's understanding of CRBA, their application in practice, and the factors that enable them to be embedded. Additionally, it aimed to examine how these factors can support professional and practice development within the team, evaluating the use of AI methodology for this purpose.

In this chapter, the researcher intends to address the research questions by:

- Firstly, exploring the current findings in the context of literature previously discussed within Chapter 2, to validate the present study's findings against existing literature.
- Secondly, by reflecting on how current findings connect to other wider literature, to explain the novel aspects of the present study's findings that add to the current evidence base.

In the context of the research questions posed, this will be addressed as follows:

Section 5.1 addresses what EPs in the current study understand CRBA to be. Findings were mainly consistent with existing literature, therefore this section focuses on describing links to the existing research. Insights around factors such as the power and influence of the EP role in advocacy, promoting participation and increasing children's own rights-consciousness, that the findings of the present study add to the literature, are also discussed.

Section 5.2 addresses how EPs in the present study use CRBA in practice. This builds on the points discussed within Section 5.1, with links drawn to existing literature as appropriate. Psychological theories are applied to explain findings related to the importance of the alignment of EP personal values within CRBA.

Section 5.3 discusses the facilitators and enablers to using CRBA for EPs in this study that link to the conceptual framework co-developed through AI. Grounded in EP practice, these findings add to the evidence base and support in addressing the research gap within the literature around understanding how CRBA can be operationalised within EP practice. The researcher will therefore present links to literature previously discussed, as well as offering new insights that connect with additional wider literature.

Section 5.4 addresses the evaluation of AI as a tool for EP professional and practice development. Links to existing literature around AI as presented in Chapter 3 will be drawn out by the researcher. New insights connecting with wider AI literature around reflective spaces, increased self-awareness and transformational systemic impact are also offered, based on the findings of the present study.

In addition, the stages of participants' journey through the research process will be described, along with implications for practice. Strengths, limitations, the researcher's reflections and an evaluation of the current study's contribution will also be included.

## **5.1 Understanding CRBA in the EP Context**

*RQ1: What do EPs understand CRBA to be in the context of their work?*

EPs understand CRBA to be related to amplifying the voice of the child, collaborating with others, promoting inclusion, meeting CYP basic needs and fostering a sense of self within CYP when defining what CRBA mean in the context of their work. These themes will now be discussed in turn.

### **5.1.1. Voice**



In defining CRBA, EPs in this study emphasised the significance of giving voice to children as fundamental to a child-centered approach. This aligns with Articles 12 and 13 in the UNCRC, respecting the views of the child and freedom of expression (United Nations, 1989) and relevant legislation for EPs which prioritise gathering children's views for positive outcomes (e.g. Children Act, 1989; Children and Families Act, 2014; SEND Code of Practice, 2015).

In addition, EPs described their role in enabling CYP to express themselves, leveraging their power and influence in gathering and amplifying of children's voices through fostering participatory and collaborative spaces. These concepts will be discussed to explain EPs understanding of CRBA in their professional context.

#### **5.1.1.1 Gathering views**

The EP role in eliciting CYP views is well-evidenced within existing literature (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Farrell et al., 2006; Fox, 2015; Ingram, 2013; Smillie & Newton, 2020). The findings of the current study reaffirm this view, and suggest EPs use a variety of tools and resources to empower CYP to express themselves.

A child-centered approach to elicit CYP views was described in the present study, consistent with literature emphasising person-centered methods to be supportive in involving the child (Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021). Commitment to gathering CYP views authentically, avoiding tokenistic practices, was emphasised by EPs in this study, in contrast to findings within the QRS (presented in Section 2.7.2) that evidence EPs using tokenistic practices (Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). This suggests a potential discrepancy between espoused ideas and practice in reality, as EPs understand CRBA to include authentically gathering CYP views, but this does not always translate in practice. This

implies a need to consider how CRBA can be operationalised in EP practice, to ensure authentic CYP involvement and to avoid tokenism.

#### **5.1.1.2 Amplifying voice**

The present study suggests that EPs perceive themselves as advocates, uniquely positioned to authentically gather children's voices, offering something different to other professionals (Ashton & Roberts, 2006). For EPs in this study, this difference relates to advocacy and ensuring CYP views are truthfully represented within the wider systems that surround them. This indicates the need to go beyond gathering the child's view, to ensure it is taken seriously, used to inform decisions, and have a positive systemic impact. This resonates with the UNCRC general principle of the right to be heard and demonstrates EPs key position in upholding children's rights, concurrent with existing literature that confirms the importance of advocacy in EP practice (Fox, 2015).

The findings of the present study go further, emphasising the power and influence held by EPs within their role.

Firstly, EPs described their power and influence in advocating for marginalised children, whose views are least valued. This is important given the evidence of exclusionary practices within education for children with SEND (e.g., Glazzard, 2014). These findings therefore imply a role for EPs in championing wider social justice agendas through adopting CRBA, going beyond advocacy to promote inclusive practice and universal rights for all CYP, regardless of SEND (e.g., Cumber, 2022; Zaniolo, 2021).

Secondly, EPs described the way they adopt a 'meta-perspective' in advocating for CYP across systems to promote their holistic development. This concurs with existing literature, that conceptualises EPs as 'meta' to the child's system, observing the

relationships, influences and functioning of the system to influence positive change when problem-solving (Beaver, 2011; Wagner, 2000). This shows EPs are well-placed to operationalise the UNCRC to have a systemic impact, given their goals around developing the whole child align (Wessells & Kostelny, 2020).

Finally, EPs emphasised the importance of respectful language when talking and writing about children, to provide an authentic representation of their views and ensure accessibility. This echoes existing research that shows the significance of EPs representing CYP views authentically, in a way that sensitively advocates for their needs, and highlights the challenges EPs face in achieving this (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). The current findings also shed light on the intricate relationship between language and power within EP practice. Fox & Walther (2012) suggest the narratives used by educational professionals about CYP carry a power and truth status, which can be problematic if deficit focused or misrepresentative, reducing children's lives to a single story. Applying this idea to the present study suggests that EPs can either use language to balance power, empowering the CYP by using language respectfully to promote their views and preferred story about their lives, or by using language that exerts power, misrepresenting the child, their views and their story.

#### **5.1.1.3 Creating Space for Participation, Through Collaboration**

Creating space to enable active participation, collaboration and co-production to empower CYP to share their aspirations, was important in the way EPs defined CRBA in this study, validating existing research discussed in the QRS (e.g., Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). Within the UNCRC, participation is fundamental to realising all rights within the convention. For EPs in this study, participation was viewed as a mechanism for realising children's rights within

their role, crucial for advocating for children and amplifying their voices. This emphasises EP's alignment with the UNCRC and their influence in facilitating participatory practices that create opportunities for CYP perspectives to be heard, valued and understood.

The current study also highlighted the significance of informed consent in defining CRBA for EPs, relating to existing findings around the challenges in ascertaining consent versus assent, by clarifying the need for accessible information about EP involvement to support CYP to make informed choices (Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021).

Barriers to adopting participation and co-production within the findings of this study included time and resource constraints, consistent with existing literature (Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021). EPs also noted barriers to participation within school settings around 'childism', adults perceiving children as inferior, leading to decision making without consulting CYP, driven by competing agendas around achieving good GCSE results or a desire to protect. The existence of 'childism' in education is mirrored in the literature (Adami, 2023) and discussed further in section 5.1.3.2. The present study's findings evidence how EPs try to address these barriers by creating opportunities for participation and collaboration, authentically representing CYP views and advocating for their rights, positioning themselves as agents for change.

### **5.1.2 Relationships**

In this research, EPs emphasised the importance of positive and trusting relationships in defining CRBA within EP work, as well as the need for collaboration to amplify CYP voices. These ideas will now be discussed.

### **5.1.2.1 Collaboration**

When defining CRBA, EPs emphasise the necessity of teamwork and relationships in amplifying CYP voices, recognising that this amplification cannot be achieved without positive, respectful, and collaborative relationships with both CYP and other stakeholders, fostering trust. Existing literature stresses collaboration as essential in adopting CRBA, with references to collaboration and multi-agency working in key legislation (e.g., SEND CoP) and professional standards relevant to EPs (HCPC Standards of Proficiency). Collaboration is also recognised as integral to EP practice (e.g. Ashton & Roberts, 2006) to meet children's needs (Miller & Ahmad, 2000; Greenhouse, 2013) and EP professional identity (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009), although some studies suggest a gap between the potential and actual practice in collaboration by EPs (Erasmus, 2013; Howarth-Lees, 2020; Parnes, 2017). The findings of this research suggest that collaboration and multi-agency work are important in defining CRBA, warranting further exploration in practice to ascertain whether EPs are implementing this in relation to adopting CRBA.

### **5.1.2.2 Relationships Need to be Positive, Trusting and Respectful**

EPs define relationships within CRBA as positive, respectful, fostering trust with both children and other stakeholders. This supports the findings of the QRS (Marshall, 2021) and broader literature linking CRBA with relational practices and child-centered approaches, emphasising the importance of building relationships to promote the best interests of children (McMahon, 1993).

In the present study, EPs position themselves as responsible for establishing trust within relationships, building rapport to garner support from other stakeholders, to create a favourable environment for promoting rights-based practices and challenging negative narratives about CYP. This reasserts their belief in the importance of collaboration for achieving CRBA and demonstrates their role in transforming restrictive practices and narratives. This concept of creating space is linked to the way EPs collaborate, building positive relationships across systems, as evidenced in existing research (Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021).

#### **5.1.2.3 Relationships Across Systems to Instigate Change**

In understanding CRBA within their context, the EP team in the present study defined the importance of relational approaches across different levels of their work; individual, group, whole school, and systemic. They highlight the significance of relationships in shaping the wider culture, ethos, and practices of educational settings, and their role in supporting schools to ensure policies are enacted in practice, to foster positive systemic change and have a wider positive impact for CYP. This concurs with literature that highlights the value of developing positive relationships and collaborating across systems within CRBA (e.g. Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020) and supports literature that outlines the role of EPs as duty-bearers, with a responsibility to monitor practice to ensure it actually protects CRBA, holding others accountable (Goodfellow, 2021; Jerome & Starkey, 2022).

#### **5.1.3 Inclusive Practice**

Inclusive practice is integral to defining CRBA in EP work as a means to promote a culture of inclusion and ensure equal opportunities for CYP. These concepts will now be explored within the context of this research.

### **5.1.3.1 Culture of Inclusion**

In the current study, EPs described their role in shaping inclusive practices and promoting a culture of inclusion to be important to their understanding of CRBA. This included the importance of challenging exclusionary practices within schools (e.g., Birnhack et al., 2018; Byrd, 2019; Struthers, 2015) and supporting to shape curriculum structure, teaching and the school environment (Atkinson et al., 2017; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall 2021) so that all children can be included and actively participate in school activities. This affirms broader literature that advocates for a shift away from deficit-led approaches, to those that are rights-respecting within EP practice (Fox, 2015; Lansdown et al., 2014) and situates the EP role as important for promoting inclusive education (DECP, 2019; Zaniolo, 2021).

Furthermore, for EPs in this study, inclusive practice was viewed as a precursor to realising other rights, including safety, protection, and the freedom of CYP to express their views. Inclusion is consistently identified as a fundamental aspect of CRBA initiatives (e.g., RRSA, Human Rights-Based Education for all) within schools as discussed in sections 2.4.3 and 2.5.1 (e.g., Covell & Howe, 2011; UNICEF, 2016; UNESCO, 2007). Given EPs' regular engagement with schools, this suggests a role for them in supporting the integration of CRBA to promote inclusive education and encourage inclusive practice within schools.

The findings of this study show that EPs define CRBA contextually, based on meeting CYP rights that are prevalent within their work. They confidently describe the rights to education and play, emphasising the importance of factors such as access, engagement and style of delivery. This is consistent with existing research (Atkinson et

al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021) and relevant legislation within the EP context (e.g., Education Act, Children and Families Act, SEND CoP). However, it also indicates the need to explore CRBA holistically within EP practice, to ensure all rights within the UNCRC are promoted.

#### **5.1.3.2 Equality and Equity**

In defining CRBA, EPs recognised the importance of equal opportunities to promote inclusion for all CYP, regardless of their needs, which is supported in key legislation (Equality Act, 2010).

EPs described the concept of 'childism', referring to the discrimination some children face by being treated differently to adults in schools with distinct expectations placed on them. Within the literature, 'childism' is defined as the presumption of adult superiority and the prioritisation of adult needs (Pierce & Allen, 1975; Young-Bruehl, 2012), evident in education through behaviour policies and data-driven curriculums (Ockwell-Smith, 2023).

EPs emphasised the need to combat 'childism' to protect children from discrimination by treating them as equal partners and taking responsibility for addressing any power imbalances to promote equality and inclusion. This perspective aligns with the way EPs are conceptualised in literature as holding the power to remove barriers to participation and counter discrimination (Fox, 2015; Wallace & Giles, 2019), using tools such as collaborative consultation to re-balance power within the child's system (Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Pickup, 2021; Wagner, 2017).

#### **5.1.4 Meeting Basic Needs**

In this study, children's basic needs were emphasised as a fundamental aspect of CRBA. EPs described using Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1943;



1954; 1970) to inform their assessments, in order to ensure basic physiological and safety needs are met for CYP, to ensure that they feel safe and protected within school. This supports the intrinsic connection between children's rights and children's needs that is evident in literature (Doyal, 2001; Kinderman, 2007).

The integration of psychological theories into definitions of CRBA links to findings from existing research (Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021), but this study adds to what is already known by using Maslow's hierarchy to inform EPs understanding of children's rights in practice, resonating with Marshall (2021), who uses Maslow's hierarchy to support in defining participation rights.

### ***5.1.5 Building CYP Sense of Self***

Fostering agency and a sense of self for CYP are key components of EPs understanding of CRBA in their professional context. These concepts will now be explored.

#### **5.1.5.1 Empowering CYP to be Themselves**

Empowering CYP to develop a strong sense of self was central to EP's definition of CRBA in this study. Celebrating their individuality, strengths, and personalities was emphasised, highlighting the importance of nurturing self-identity, self-esteem, and self-concept as fundamental aspects of children's rights. This finding aligns with humanistic psychological theories (Rogers, 1957; Maslow, 1954) that recognise CYP's uniqueness (Martin, 2007), but also implies a role for EPs in supporting children's education about their own rights, offering a promising avenue for future research.

Enhancing empathy toward CYP's individual experiences was also deemed crucial in understanding CRBA, with specific tools such as consultation and person-

centered planning highlighted for this purpose. Research supports the value of these methods in building understanding and empathy for children's needs and experiences, validating the findings of this study (Bouvier, 2019; Gray & Woods, 2022; Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Parker et al., 2020; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

#### **5.1.5.2 Increasing Agency**

Promoting CYP agency and teaching advocacy skills were highlighted as key aspects of CRBA according to the EP team in this study. This is consistent with previous education research that demonstrates the positive impact of CRBA on enhancing CYP's awareness of their rights (Akengin, 2008; Činčera, 2018; Covell & Howe, 1999). It indicates that EPs perceive their role as integral to promoting CYP participation, knowledge of their rights, and self-advocacy, thereby potentially enhancing their future life outcomes, which is supported in existing literature (e.g., Kay, 2019). This expands the current understanding of CRBA within the EP context and suggests avenues for further investigation, also noted by Goodfellow (2021).

#### **5.1.6. Summary**

EPs contextualise CRBA by emphasising the importance of prioritising and amplifying children's voices, promoting participation, ensuring inclusive practices, meeting basic needs, and fostering a sense of self. Collaboration and positive relationships are key to their understanding of CRBA, recognising that achieving amplification requires collective effort. Positioned as advocates, EPs acknowledge their influential role in adopting and promoting CRBA. However, while they focus on rights relevant to their context, the legislative context in education does not explicitly address all children's rights, with some rights only implicitly assumed. This gap may contribute to challenges in realising and respecting children's rights within educational settings as

observed in research (discussed in section 2.5.2), as the legislative frameworks guiding practice are not explicit in their reference to, or understanding of, the broad range of rights CYP have.

## **5.2 Application and Practice**

*RQ2: How do EPs use CRBA in their practice?*

The findings related to this research question were primarily gathered during the discovery phase. EPs use CRBA by advocating for CYP and empowering others to do the same, utilising their positional influence and interpersonal skills. EPs also employ CRBA by fostering participation, encouraging CYP involvement in meetings, and genuinely representing their voices. Collaboration with various stakeholders and accountability for rights-respecting practice are essential components of how EPs apply CRBA. These six themes will be considered sequentially.

### **5.2.1 EPs Advocate and Empower**

Building on the points discussed in Section 5.1.1.2, EPs use CRBA in practice by advocating for CYP and families, using their position and influence to act as an agent of change, validating this conceptualisation of the EP role in existing research (Roffey, 2015).

The application of advocacy by EPs within CRBA extends beyond children and families to adults within school systems, empowering them to work in a rights-respecting way. The findings of this study show that EPs use their interpersonal skills to empathise with stakeholders, understand their experience and advocate for their views. In this way, EPs support to bridge gaps between systems and empower others to become agents of change, which aligns with ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Collaborative consultation is a psychological approach used by EPs to achieve this, as

referenced within the findings of this study and existing literature (Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021; Crothers, 2020; Ingraham, 2017).

The above points imply that EPs are uniquely positioned to advocate for CYP and families at different levels. Research supports different forms of advocacy; empowering others to advocate for themselves, advocating directly for children and families, and advocating indirectly through professional development (Briggs, 2013; Speight & Vera, 2009). The current study reinforces this within the context of CRBA and invites further exploration around exactly how advocacy is applied in EP practice to meet children's rights and elevate their status.

### ***5.2.2 EPs Support CYP to Feel Heard and Understood***

For EPs in the present study, child voice was central, informing all aspects of EP practice, which is fitting with existing literature (Farrell et al., 2006; Marshall, 2021; Nastasi & Naser, 2020; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Furthering the points raised in Section 5.1.1.1, EPs use a range of approaches to gather the voice of the child in a meaningful way, supporting them to feel heard and understood, which is fundamental to CRBA. These include the application of psychological approaches, such as personal construct psychology and solution-focused psychology (Smillie & Newton, 2020), underpinning the findings of the current study.

However, existing literature also acknowledges challenges in representing child voice accurately and sensitively (Smillie & Newton, 2020). A rights-based framework may address this given that EPs in this study described the power associated with listening to and representing the child's point of view.

### **5.2.3 EPs Promote True Participation**

EPs in this study adopt CRBA by facilitating genuine participation through positive relationships, by being part of a child's journey over time and by meeting with CYP to feedback on reports and agree what will happen next. Within the literature (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021; Roffey, 2015) and legislation (e.g., SEND Code of Practice), EPs have an important role in creating space for participation in line with CRBA, validating these findings. The current study's findings also add to the wider literature by suggesting the need for EPs to be involved for a sustained period of time to be able to offer the greatest opportunities for true participation. This is in addition to offering some ideas around additional strategies that can be used to foster participation in the EP context (i.e. meeting with CYP to feedback).

Given the time constraints evident for EPs discussed in Section 5.1.1.3, there is not the time to be involved over long periods to build trust and facilitate participatory practices (Larkins et al., 2020). This implies that EPs need to explore the best ways to maximise sustained involvement through consistent school allocations and traded service models.

### **5.2.4 EPs Collaborate**

The findings of the present study demonstrate how collaboration is core to the way EPs use CRBA in practice, to bring people together, create cohesion, problem-solve and as a mechanism for positive change, with the child held at the centre. EPs stressed the importance of collaboration, particularly in complex scenarios, where the child's needs might be overshadowed by competing demands within the system. They also positioned themselves as facilitators of change, leveraging their psychological

expertise to foster collaboration among stakeholders and create safe spaces for joint problem-solving to develop a shared understanding of children's strengths and needs. Multi-agency work and joint problem-solving, especially involving children's perspectives, were highlighted as essential CRBA practices. This aligns with eco-systemic theories of psychology, namely the child rights ecology model (Nastasi & Naser, 2020) described in Section 2.6, suggesting that EPs serve as crucial mediators, and become the 'meso-system', fostering collaboration across various systems to promote and protect children's rights.

EPs in this study found collaborative consultation to be a source of happiness and personal growth benefitting all involved parties, including CYP, their caregivers, and EPs themselves.

This adds to the literature that indicates consultation to be beneficial for teachers, children, and parents, (McNab, 2008; O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018; Underwood, 2022; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020), highlighting the perceived value for EPs. Collaborative practices, used within CRBA are therefore fulfilling and rewarding for EPs, reflecting the principles of positive psychology relating to engaging with activities that align with one's values and strengths to enhance well-being (Park & Peterson, 2008; Seligman, 2010). This sense of reward and fulfilment from collaborating with others that allows EPs to makes a difference in CYP lives, aligns with Gaskell and Leadbetter's (2009) findings relating to multi-agency working enhancing feelings of professional identity.

This builds on points discussed within Section 5.1.2.1, where it is noted that collaboration and multi-agency work are important in defining CRBA for EPs, as these findings suggest that in practice, EPs are adopting CRBA by using collaborative

consultation, positioning themselves as part of a child's system to work with stakeholders to facilitate change.

### **5.2.5 EPs are Accountable**

This study indicates that EPs use CRBA by upholding personal and professional accountability in their practice, maintaining a curious approach to assessments to accurately represent the strengths and needs of the child. This sense of accountability aligns with EPs' recognition of their role as duty-bearers in upholding and respecting CYP rights, as suggested by existing literature (Goodfellow, 2021; Jerome & Starkey, 2022). EPs understand that their assessments and advice carry weight and significantly influence LA decisions (Cameron & Monsen, 2005), stressing the importance of EPs adopting CRBA to ensure optimal outcomes for CYP given the power associated with their position. This research suggests that EPs' adherence to CRBA prompts them to acknowledge their accountability, echoing the need highlighted by Nastasi and Naser (2014) to integrate child rights into EP standards for ethics, training, and practice. This presents a possible direction for future research with university training providers.

EPs in this study described the importance of flexibility and autonomy to allow for intuitive and personalised approaches in practice, tailored to CYP needs. Although flexibility is recognised for assisting co-production (Boswell et al., 2021), this study suggests its broader significance in using CRBA to ensure child-centered practice across the breadth of EP work, implying the need for further exploration in practice to determine how this can be achieved.

EPs use CRBA by confidently applying psychology in their work to challenge practices that restrict children's rights. They described acting as a critical friend, drawing on their interpersonal and problem-solving skills to promote inclusion (Hick, 2005).

These ideas are also supported by Marshall (2021) who emphasises the importance of confidence and experience to challenge non-rights respecting practice.

Engaging in reflective practice and supervision, and investing in learning and development supports EPs to use CRBA as it enables EPs to feel supported by peers, offers reassurance and fosters growth in their knowledge, skills and practice. This concurs with existing research that shows reflective practice to be important to address ethical challenges and prioritise CYP best interests (Goodfellow, 2021) and the need for EPs to enhance their knowledge of CRBA (Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021). This indicates ongoing learning and reflection to be important to use CRBA, supporting the rationale for an AI approach in the current study.

#### **5.2.6 EPs are Values led**

EPs in the present study use CRBA, guided by their personal values, particularly when they need to challenge actions or decisions. These values, largely centered around CRBA, emphasise the importance of aligning theoretical positions and values in practice, as echoed in existing research (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). This alignment is crucial, especially for establishing a shared understanding of CYP rights within wider systems (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021). The findings of this study suggest that practising in line with personal values instils autonomy, allows EPs to utilise their skills effectively, and empowers them to challenge non-rights-based actions or decisions, adding to existing research. This aligns with self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), indicating that affiliating with personal values fosters autonomy and competence, leading to intrinsic motivation and positive outcomes for CYP, as EPs can direct the way



they work and be successful in overcoming challenges. These implications are significant for EP services aiming to integrate CRBA into their practice.

EPs expressed pride in using CRBA, noting its positive impact on CYP's lives and in fostering a cohesive team dynamic further highlighting the significance of CRBA for EP well-being.

Authenticity and trust were crucial to using CRBA and maintaining a positive reputation within the LA for EPs in the present study, which concurs with existing literature on authenticity in psychology, emphasising the importance of aligning personal values with practice (Burks & Robbins, 2012). This reflects an appreciation for practising outwardly in a way that reflects inward thoughts, ideas or concepts, that links to wider literature around espoused theories and theories in use (Argyris & Schon, 1974; 1978). The current study's findings therefore support the idea that EPs strive to bridge the gap between their beliefs and actual practice when utilising CRBA, reflecting this alignment to be important to successful implementation. This has implications for services that hope to embed CRBA in EP practice which differs from existing research, that finds a discrepancy between EP beliefs and EP practice in relation to CRBA (Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021).

### **5.2.7 Summary**

EPs incorporate CRBA into various facets of their practice, using their position to advocate for CYP and empower others to adopt rights-respecting approaches. This involves employing collaborative consultation to foster inclusivity and represent CYP voices authentically. By building trusting relationships and collaborating across systems, EPs facilitate positive change by applying systems psychology (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979) within a CRBA framework. Collaboration not only serves as a mechanism for

change but also enhances EPs' sense of fulfilment and empowerment, enhancing feelings of professional identity. Upholding ethical standards and accountability, EPs recognise the influence of their assessments on children's outcomes. Flexibility, reflection, and continuous learning further characterise CRBA, guided by EPs' personal values and supported by a sense of autonomy and competence within their team. This alignment highlights the importance of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) for EPs to effectively adopt CRBA, and to ensure EP beliefs about practice and actual practice align.

### **5.3 Enhancing and Embedding**

*RQ3: What factors enable and facilitate the successful adoption of CRBA within EP work?*

The findings related to this research question were predominantly gathered within the destiny phase of AI. The factors that facilitate the use of CRBA and support them to be embedded within EP practice are commitment, collaboration, confidence, care and creativity. These five themes form the basis of the practice framework developed by the EP team in this study (see Figure 4.6, Section 4.6.3), each of which will be discussed to address RQ3.

#### **5.3.1 Commitment to CRBA**

Staying committed to CRBA facilitated its adoption in EP work, characterised by developing and reviewing action plans, allocating time for innovative CRBA initiatives, and conducting further research alongside schools. Project work emerged as another avenue for maintaining commitment and ensuring CRBA implementation. This aligns with existing research (e.g., Boswell et al., 2021), emphasising the long-term nature of embedding CRBA in EP services and the need for ongoing dedication. The present

research extends these findings by offering practical suggestions and proposing a reflective framework (Figure 4.6) to support EPs in embedding CRBA effectively.

This research indicates that explicit communication regarding CRBA as part of the core values within the EPS could enhance commitment to CRBA and support integration to EP and school-wide practices. EPs emphasised the importance of incorporating CRBA into the communication with schools purchasing EP services to align values and expectations. They suggested potential positive shifts in school-EPS dynamics if CRBA was embedded in the traded service model. For example, a more holistic and positive approach to supporting CYP as opposed to the deficit-focused requests currently received. Further challenges associated with traded service models, include schools directing EP work and marketing themselves ethically, increasing the risk of omitting children's views and rights (Lee & Woods, 2017; Ovenstone, 2020). Adopting CRBA is therefore imperative to move towards more inclusive and positive practices, advocating for children's strengths and rights, with open communication a priority within traded service models to ensure transparency around the EP role and approach for children, families and schools. This concurs with existing literature that identifies increased transparency as a required improvement within EP practice (Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021), echoing the aspirations of the EP team in this study (see Section 4.5.1 and Appendix 22).

Within the findings of this research, the importance of EPs' commitment to the legislative context around CRBA aligns with their role as duty-bearers in embedding CRBA in practice, as highlighted in previous literature (Goodfellow, 2021; Jerome & Starkey, 2022).

### **5.3.2 Collaboration to Embed CRBA**

Creating space for collaboration within the team, sharing skills, knowledge and resources was identified as a facilitative factor to embedding CRBA within EP work, with participants acknowledging the importance of incorporating this into the service delivery model. Collaboration was viewed as essential for reflective practice, growth, and learning around implementing CRBA, suggesting the value of EPs working together and drawing from peer support and group supervision, as highlighted in previous literature (Bold, 2008; Rawlings, 2013), particularly in relation to adopting CRBA (Nastasi & Naser, 2020). This emphasises the necessity of creating space for collaboration to sustain CRBA within EP practice systemically, highlighting an important future direction in the field, particularly for EP services that wish to embed CRBA in practice.

A shared understanding of CRBA facilitated its adoption in practice, with the shared vision and action plan generated through AI seen as instrumental in promoting consistency and motivation around prioritising CRBA in practice. This links back to relatedness and team collaboration increasing motivation, in line with self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2017). Further suggestions to embed this include an EP team mission statement, supporting previous research advocating for a culture that prioritises children's rights through developing a shared understanding (Boswell et al., 2021; Marshall, 2021).

EPs in this study emphasised the connection between a shared understanding of CRBA and the profession's child-centered values and ethics, that are integral to both EP training and ongoing practice. This alignment is supported by existing literature and the way EPs conceptualise their role (Bloom et al., 2020; Peake, 1988; Smillie & Newton, 2020; Taylor, 2023), as well as legislative guidance (e.g. Children and Families Act,

SEND CoP), and standards of practice (e.g. HCPC Standards of Proficiency). This highlights a future direction for exploration around embedding awareness of CRBA within EP doctoral training (as previously outlined in Section 5.2.5) to make the links between CRBA, EP values and EP practice more explicit. This has the potential to have a wider impact on EP praxis, particularly as to the researcher's knowledge, there is a dearth of research in this area.

Collaboration with stakeholders like parents, carers, schools, and LA teams was also deemed crucial in embedding CRBA in EP work, enhancing knowledge and understanding through upskilling, consistent with existing literature advocating for this collaborative partnership (Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall et al., 2021). Such collaboration is vital as it influences the attitudes and confidence of supporting adults, thereby promoting CRBA more widely to benefit CYP across systems (Boswell et al., 2021; Marshall, 2021).

### **5.3.3 Confidence to Enhance use of CRBA**

A good understanding and confidence in application were key to embedding CRBA in EP practice. This is consistent with research that finds the importance of EP experience and confidence in challenging non-rights-based practices (Marshall, 2021). A lack of understanding around CRBA is cited in some studies (Atkinson et al., 2017; Goodfellow, 2021), except for rights prevalent to EP everyday practice (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). This evidences the importance of the present study's findings that suggest the need to build confidence to consistently embed CRBA. This indicates an ongoing learning requirement for EP teams to invest time to reflect on CRBA in practice to increase confidence in application.

Increasing knowledge and confidence around CRBA among stakeholders through training, research and clear communication around the EPS approach (e.g., mission statement/practice framework) in the present study was key to its broader integration in practice. This concurs with existing literature that advocates similar approaches for EPs to embed CRBA in wider school and LA systems (Boswell et al., 2021; Marshall, 2021). The idea of upskilling others resonates with broader literature on the EP role in education systems (Atfield et al., 2023; Lyonette et al., 2019) and multi-agency teams (Maxwell, 2013; Price, 2017), reflecting EPs' appreciation for this way of working (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009).

Adopting strengths-based approaches was noted to facilitate CRBA in EP practice within the present study. EPs discussed importance of increasing parent confidence by adopting strengths-based approaches, to encourage discussions that build on CYP strengths. This supports the move away from deficit models towards strengths-based support, that is evident within broader literature (Goodfellow & Burman, 2019; O'Neill, 2023).

Despite this, the findings of this study also evidence the implicit perceptions of the EP role as a gatekeeper to accessing professional support that are still apparent, particularly in the way deficit models are present in conversations with other stakeholders, an idea which is mirrored in broader research findings (Frederickson & Reason, 1995; Miller & Frederickson, 2006; Price, 2017; Squires et al., 2007). This suggests potential hurdles in embedding CRBA, stressing the importance of systemic strengths-based approaches, including effective communication among stakeholders, as supported by existing research (D'Amato et al., 2005; Wilding & Griffey, 2015),

indicating the careful considerations required when embedding CRBA in the broader systems supporting CYP.

#### **5.3.4 Care for CYP Rights**

For EPs in this study, caring about CYP rights promotes the integration of CRBA in practice, based on the shared ethics and values that guide their approach to practice, particularly regarding inclusion.

These insights align with ideas previously discussed in sections 4.2.6 and 4.3.2 around the importance of an alignment of values to using CRBA that is also evident in existing literature (Goodfellow, 2021; Marshall, 2021). Furthermore, this study highlights the need for values to be collaboratively created to foster a shared sense of responsibility, ethics, care, and motivation for CRBA adoption in EP teams. This collaborative approach is supported by wider literature (Atkinson et al., 2017; Boswell et al., 2021; Goodfellow, 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), as a sense of relatedness is built through developing shared values, which supports the motivation to embed CRBA in practice.

Caring and respectful use of language to talk and write about CYP was deemed important to facilitate CRBA in EP practice to encourage broader adoption of CRBA across the systems within which EPs work. They described the potential impact of language on the feelings of CYP and advocated for language use as if speaking about their own children. Existing literature highlights the need for a shared language of respect to empower others (Cornell & Verlenden, 2020; Mulser & Naser, 2020) and to represent CYP views authentically (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). These examples validate this study's findings and emphasise the importance of language considerations,

which has implications for EP services particularly around developing EP's use of language within meetings and reports.

### **5.3.5 Creativity to use Skills in a way That Promotes CRBA**

Autonomy and flexibility are crucial in fostering creativity, which in turn aids EPs in embracing CRBA in their practice. These elements empower EPs to determine their working methods, resource utilisation, assessment approaches, and report writing style. EPs in this study found that autonomy and flexibility supported them in applying their skills creatively. This is consistent with existing literature linking autonomy to creativity (Amabile, 1983; 1996; Deci & Ryan, 1987; Hennessey, 2000), reinforcing the importance of encouraging autonomy for EP services aiming to work in a rights-respecting manner.

### **5.3.6 Summary**

EPs in this study identified five factors (5C's) that facilitate the use of CRBA in their work that were used to frame the co-developed practice framework shown in Figure 4.6.

Commitment to CRBA involves consistently prioritising its integration, dedicating time for its development, further research, and engagement in projects to embed it in practice. Transparent communication with stakeholders and increased accountability foster a shift towards rights-based service delivery, moving away from deficit models. Collaboration within and beyond the EP team facilitates sharing resources, best practices, and ongoing learning. A shared understanding of CRBA promotes consistency, motivation, and a shared ethos within the team. Understanding CRBA and having confidence in applying them in practice supports wider implementation, with ongoing reflection crucial for EP development. Beyond the EP team, training, research,



and transparency around the EP team's commitment to CRBA are all supportive to building confidence, understanding, and effective rights-respecting communication with stakeholders. Care for children's rights and establishing shared ethics and values within the EP team motivates the application of CRBA. Respectful language ensures authenticity in representing children's views and aids the integration of CRBA.

Autonomy and flexibility in employing skills creatively supports EP adoption of CRBA, aligning with self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

#### **5.4. Developing and Sustaining Practice**

*RQ4: How does AI methodology support the professional development of an EP team in relation to developing their use of CRBA in practice?*

The findings related to this research question were predominantly gathered in the evaluation phase of AI. AI methodology supports EP professional development and practice by creating a safe space for reflection and collaboration, re-framing thinking and practice, empowering practitioners to make positive and sustained change, and increasing EP knowledge and confidence. Participants reflected on both the benefits and challenges of the AI process, which will be explored in how they affect professional development and practice. These themes will be discussed sequentially, to address RQ4.

##### **5.4.1 Creating Safe Spaces**

EPs in this study described AI to create space for reflection on practice, increasing their self-awareness, enabling them to make changes to better utilise CRBA. This highlights the importance of reflective spaces for continued personal development, linking to Senge's (1999) concept of personal mastery, where participants described their increased self-awareness as supportive to develop practice through the AI

process. This concurs with broader literature that finds AI to create space for reflective discussions that support practice development (Dickerson, 2012; Hung, 2017) including within the EP context (Rogers, 2022). It also fits with research connecting increased self-awareness and self-knowing to AI (e.g., Tosati et al., 2015).

AI created space for collaboration, enabling EPs in this study to share good practice, learn from one another, improve team cohesion and develop a shared passion for CRBA, through common values and goals. Working together evoked positive emotions such as excitement and motivation for the EPs in this study, supporting the positivity principle of AI that emphasises the way social bonding instigates positive emotions of hope and inspiration that then drive change (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Ultimately, this led EPs in the present study to co-develop a framework to guide practice around CRBA highlighting the value of AI as a practical tool for EP development, that fosters shared sense-making and tangible outcomes to drive positive change. This study therefore supports the constructionist principle of AI as through collaborative knowledge construction and shared sense-making, the team's generative capacity and motivation for action was increased leading to tangible changes in practice (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Senge, 1999).

EPs valued the opportunity to participate in the AI in this study, noting that without this research project, opportunities for shared sense-making, reflection and collaboration around CRBA in team practice would have been missed due to the workload pressures, time demands and high levels of stress associated with the current EP context (Gersch & Teuma, 2005; Lyonette, 2019; Rogers, 2022; Willdridge, 2013).

The value of AI approaches in creating space for practice development is emphasised in light of this.

AI methodology facilitated EP learning and development, by fostering a space where CRBA could be explored collaboratively, which EPs in this study described as different to their norm as within their everyday work, they are positioned as experts and expected to have all the answers. This perception of EPs is well documented within literature (e.g., Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Wagner, 2000; Waters, 2014), though recent research acknowledges a shift towards a more collaborative position for EPs (e.g., Kjaer & Dannesboe, 2019; Lee & Woods, 2017; Nkoma & Hay, 2018; Zaniolo 2021). However, this study highlights that the way EPs are positioned remains a challenge in practice, stressing the importance of AI in offering an alternative, more collaborative conceptualisation of the EP role, particularly if AI is adopted alongside other stakeholders, as this provides potential for wider shifts in perceptions around the EP role.

#### **5.4.2 Re-framing Thinking and Practice**

In the present study, EP practice became more rights-respecting as a consequence of engaging in AI, with EPs using rights-respecting language more frequently in consultation meetings, re-framing narratives to advocate for CYP and explicitly considering the language used within reports to ensure authentic representation of the child and their views. EPs described feeling empowered to '*be the butterflies*' and '*be the change*' using the metaphor of butterflies flapping their wings to symbolise creating change within systems. This signifies the transformative impact of AI allowing EPs to create a new image of the future, guided by a generative metaphor around making change happen, leading to positive shifts in practice in line with Bushe

(2012). This is consistent with the simultaneity principle, the idea that inquiry serves as intervention (Cooperrider et al., 2008) as by engaging in AI, EPs were able to shift their thinking and develop team practice in using CRBA, enhancing skills and knowledge.

AI also supported the EPs in this study to make existing practice more explicitly linked to CRBA by providing the space to reflect on and articulate practice using a child rights lens. This highlights the value of AI as a reflective tool to bridge theory and practice, one that supports EPs to apply existing skills, knowledge and resources in new ways to enhance practice. This concurs with existing AI research exploring EP practice that refers to this idea as making the invisible visible (Oakes, 2010).

Additionally, the AI process supported EPs to influence the thinking and practice of other stakeholders and systems by reframing problem-focused language in schools to advocate for children's rights. This highlights the impact of EP's developing practice around re-framing narratives on the wider systems they engage with, further evidencing the potential transformational impact of AI (Bushe & Kassam, 2005).

#### ***5.4.3 Positive and Empowering Tool for Change***

EPs in this study viewed the AI process as positive, empowering, and motivating, instigating proactive change by building upon strengths. As the process progressed, there was a noticeable shift in how EPs discussed CRBA, with less emphasis on barriers. This aligns with the concept of mobilising strengths to drive positive systemic change, as emphasised in AI literature (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Hammond, 2013; Ludema & Fry, 2008). In addition, EPs in the present study described AI to evoke 'a *wave of emotions*' that fuelled action and commitment to the process, highlighting emotions elicited by AI to be important in driving sustained change for participants.

Participants viewed AI as the start of their journey towards sustained change, and the springboard for beginning to enhance practice and embed positive systemic change regarding CRBA. Their enthusiasm and motivation to carry the work forward was evident through their commitment to implementing the changes outlined in the co-developed action plan and practice framework. This aligns with the concept of self-sustaining transformation in AI literature (Bushe & Kassam, 2005), suggesting that AI energises and motivates individuals to maintain positive changes that become self-sustaining over time.

Within education research, AI is recognised as an effective approach to collaborative and sustained organisational change (Tosati et al., 2015), that provides tangible results grounded in real life experience and practice, fuelled by positive emotions such as hope for the future (Hammond, 2013). In research specific to the practice development of EPs, Oakes (2010) finds AI to be supportive of sustained change, validating this study's findings.

#### ***5.4.4 Increasing Knowledge and Confidence***

EPs in the present study found engaging in AI to increase their knowledge, broaden their understanding and boost their confidence around CRBA and applying this in practice by examining current practices through a child-rights lens. Pre and post AI scaling (Appendix 27) further confirmed participants increased confidence in using CRBA following participation in the AI. These findings align with existing AI literature that suggests AI to build knowledge, enhance confidence, self-efficacy and positive anticipation (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider, 2012), which reinforces the value of AI in supporting EP professional development.

In this study, EPs described AI to be useful for their continued professional development (CPD) outlining the clear alignment of CRBA with the HCPC standards and competencies for EP practice that are also reflected in existing literature (Nastasi & Naser, 2014; Woods & Bond, 2014). These findings indicate the value of AI as a tool for providing CPD, promoting its use for EP CPD to encourage the link between developing knowledge and applying new learning in practice to have a greater real-world impact.

The positive emotions around excitement for expanding knowledge and collaborating to shape practice that were shared by EPs in this study concur with research that reinforces the positive emotions created by AI, to include relatedness, motivation, energy, creativity, and courage (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2006). However, in the present study, some participants shared feeling overwhelmed by the amount of new information to process. Difficult feelings are not typically associated with AI in the literature, given that it is a positive and strengths-based approach. In the context of the present research, these feelings may reflect the limited time allowed for exploring AI language and methods. As these feelings were shared by Assistant Educational Psychologists, who were also preparing for doctoral interviews at the time of participation, external stressors may have contributed to these feelings more so than the AI process itself. This sheds light on specific considerations when conducting AI, including the need to allow plenty of time to familiarise participants with AI and consider their individual circumstances, to maximise the positive impact of AI on professional practice development for EP teams.

#### **5.4.5 AI as a Process**

Positive aspects of the AI process included enjoyment, appreciation for taking part, positive group dynamics, the supportive nature of AI in developing a shared

purpose and values, and positive changes to practice. These findings align with existing research that uses AI to explore the development of EP practice (e.g., Looney, 2018; Morris & Atkinson, 2018; Oakes, 2010; Rogers, 2022) and support AI principles, particularly the positivity principle, emphasising positive emotions, collaboration, and social bonding as drivers of change (Cooperrider et al., 2008). This demonstrates the power of the positivity principle in EP practice development, with implications for framing organisational development within EP services, as evidenced in the AI evaluation of Looney's (2018) research.

Challenges associated with the AI process included the time commitment, particularly given EPs high workload in the current climate (Lyonette et al., 2019). Group dynamics were considered by EPs in the present study for future AI cycles, with the potential benefits of involving more senior team members to support action plan implementation noted and weighed up against potential concerns this might create around openness and power hierarchies within the group. These considerations are supported in AI literature. Ludema and Fry (2008) suggest the participation of key stakeholders in positions of power to be crucial for successfully implementing actions yet Cooperrider et al. (2008) emphasises the importance of active and equal roles for all team members avoiding power hierarchies. This implies the need for careful consideration of group dynamics and protected time when facilitating AI.

#### **5.4.6 Summary**

The present study demonstrates how AI facilitated the adoption of CRBA by creating space for reflection, collaboration, and learning among participants. Through a social knowledge-building approach, AI enhanced team cohesion, generativity, and commitment to sustained positive change. AI offered a collaborative learning

opportunity for participants, which was welcomed as something different to their positioning as 'experts' in their everyday work. These findings emphasise the benefits of integrating AI into EP service delivery as a tool to enhance team development.

Through AI, EPs embraced the idea of '*being the change*', using their strengths, knowledge and resources in new ways to make existing practices more explicit and facilitate change to embed CRBA. Engagement in AI provided intervention for participants (Cooperrider et al., 2008), elevating rights-respecting practice by raising consciousness around CRBA. This highlights the value of AI in professional practice development, supporting the theory-practice link, and making practice more conscious, explicit and theoretically informed (Henderson, 1995). The impact of AI in this study extended beyond individual EP practice also contributing to wider systemic change within the systems EPs work, aligning with the research aims.

While AI proved empowering for EPs, increasing their knowledge, confidence and motivation for sustained change, challenges around time constraints, group dynamics and feelings of overwhelm were noted. These findings point to several considerations for future implementations of AI to maximise the positive impact, including seniority of participants and protecting time to complete AI and familiarise participants with the process.

AI fosters many of the factors identified by participants to facilitate CRBA in practice: collaboration, co-construction, commitment to reflection and action, knowledge building, confidence, and creativity in generating new learning. By highlighting strengths and generating creativity through collaboration, AI makes practice more explicit. This is



an interesting finding, that signifies how AI methodology nurtures factors conducive to CRBA implementation.

The AI process initiated a journey for participants, fostering a shift in thinking and commitment to continuous and collaborative improvements to practice. Though limited by the time constraints of this doctoral research, the single cycle of AI undertaken and the impact of this, demonstrates the potential of AI to support ongoing EP development and systemic change within EP services.

## **5.5 Strengths and Limitations of the Current Study**

The strengths and limitations of the present study will be discussed with reference to aspects of the research design and methods. An understanding of how quality, rigour and trustworthiness (based on measures outlined in Section 3.11) were achieved in this study is interwoven, linked to specific strengths and limitations outlined.

### ***5.5.1 Research Setting and Participants***

Due to time constraints associated with this doctoral research, and the voluntary nature of participation, this study is limited in that it involved a relatively small sample of twelve members from one EP service. However, it was not the intention of this research to be representative of all professionals, as this does not align with the social constructionist stand point adopted (Burr, 2015). Instead, the findings of this research reflect the real world and applied focus of the study. Additionally, within the action plan of this research, it was agreed that findings will be shared with the wider EP team to extend the impact, somewhat mitigating potential drawbacks of not involving the whole team in the outset.

To broaden the impact on CRBA within the LA, future research could involve other professional groups, considering that CRBA concern all adults as duty-bearers.

Given the context of the researcher, it was felt that targeting EPs was an important first step, as EPs work across systems at different levels, and can therefore shape practice in these systems through their work.

CYP were not involved in this research, despite the topic focusing on children's rights. Although their inclusion could have enriched the outcomes of the AI workshops and provided insights into how EPs can operationalise CRBA in practice, this study focused on exploring the experiences, perceptions, and reflections of EP teams to develop their practice. EPs typically offer indirect services for CYP, working with adults around the child to provide support (Birch et al., 2015; Conoley & Gutkin, 2017; Farrell et al., 2006). As advocates for CYP rights, adults hold significant power in promoting CYP rights (e.g., Collins & Paré, 2016; Lansdown et al., 2014), and play a crucial role in the adoption of CRBA within educational contexts (e.g., Quennerstedt & Moody, 2020). By enhancing the thinking and practice of EP teams, the study hoped to have a broader impact on CYP by influencing practice at a LA level. Involving CYP in future studies would contribute to ensuring CRBA are embedded within EP teams in a way that reflects the perspectives and needs of CYP as service users, enhancing the validity and representativeness of the research.

Opportunities to include CYP in future studies could include running participatory research projects where CYP are invited to become co-researchers, using the same methodology as in the current study, so that CYP can share their views about the issues that affect them and the things they feel are important within a rights-based approach. By engaging in projects as co-researchers, CYP can be involved in shaping the rights-based practice of EPs and further developing the framework for EP practice. Adopting a

participatory methodology as in the design of the current study is an important opportunity for including CYP in future research studies, as it enables them to truly participate in a way that is conscious of their safety and well-being, and in an approach where the power hierarchies associated with researcher-participant relationships are acknowledged, so that they can choose to be involved on their own terms, understand what their involvement means, and how it contributes to shifting professional practice.

### ***5.5.2 Data Gathering***

The use of AI proved instrumental in this study, serving both as a means to address the research questions and to facilitate development within the EP team regarding applying CRBA in practice. Through the AI journey, the EP team introduced meaningful changes to their practice, beginning to embed CRBA by building on their strengths and working through cycles of collaborative action and reflection. This aligns with the social constructionist position of the research, as AI facilitated a shared understanding and co-construction of knowledge around CRBA through interaction. The co-construction of an action plan and conceptual framework supports the transformative elements of this research, enabling practice to develop and laying the groundwork for broader systemic change within the EP team if actions are carried out and change is sustained.

Using AI methodology and a participatory design empowered participants to become co-researchers, enabling them to represent their views, perceptions, and experiences while sharing control in the inquiry process. This collaborative approach, as suggested by Argyris and Schon (1978), enhances rigour. The facilitative role of the researcher was therefore a strength, fostering collaboration and participation within the research team, ensuring everyone had the opportunity to contribute their ideas.

Despite this, it is important to consider the possible limitations associated with group dynamics and whether quieter voices were heard and represented in the current study. Employing paired and small group activities/discussions alongside whole group discussions, and different ways of recording ideas (post-it notes/ large paper/ drawings) supported to minimise the risk of this, as quieter group members were able to share and record their views in different ways. Collaborative co-analysis and member checking further ensured that participant views were accurately captured and represented.

AI has been criticised for its overly positive nature, with concerns raised about its exclusion of problem narratives (Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Mertens, 2015). Negative narratives did arise in this study, particularly around barriers to implementing CRBA in practice. It was important that the researcher created space to discuss these experiences, so as not to invalidate participants experiences, and then support participants to re-frame negative ideas into positive directions.

### **5.5.3 Data Analysis**

A participatory adaptation of reflexive thematic analysis (PTA) was employed in the present study, aligning with the participatory research design and aims around exploring and developing applied EP practice. Co-analysis of the data was therefore a strength, as it levelled power dynamics and promoted participation, collaboration and shared control over interpretation of the data, making this more meaningful for participants who were exploring CRBA in relation to developing team practice. Sharing the researcher's reflections at each phase of AI for member checking enhanced the credibility and authenticity of findings by allowing missed information to be captured and ensuring the views of the research team were accurately portrayed.

However, the co-analysis of data in this study had limitations that challenge the robustness of outcomes. The condensed, time-limited and interactive nature of the PTA risked missing some participant contributions and led to overlapping within the themes, as evident in the findings. Given more time to review and revisit generated codes and themes, these issues could have been addressed, but this was not feasible in this case due to the time constraints of this doctoral research project.

Additionally, PTA as employed in this study is a novel approach, that has only been used once before within the EP context (Muchenje, 2020) and was new to team members in this study. Whilst the researcher provided information about the aims and stages of PTA to ensure participant understanding, additional time would have been beneficial to practice and embed this.

Many themes in this study broadly align with existing literature, such as the importance of collaboration for adoption of CRBA in practice (e.g., Boswell et al., 2021; Jackson-Taft et al., 2020; Marshall, 2021), indicating a degree of credibility. However, the primary aim of this research was not to generalise findings of existing research in other settings, but to gain phronesis, practical knowledge that can be applied in context (Salite et al., 2009). Therefore, this research offers insights for similar EP teams on applying CRBA to practice and utilising AI for EP professional and practice development.

Finally, the co-analysis completed reflects the unique interpretations of the EP team and the researcher, acknowledging that different interpretations are possible. The transferability of findings are at the discretion of others who deem them appropriate and applicable to their specific context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). By openly

discussing positionality and reflexivity, as is appropriate for the participatory action research design adopted, the researcher hopes that confirmability, transferability and dependability are enhanced, and any potential for bias is addressed.

### **5.6 Evaluation of Research Aims and Original Contribution**

The current study successfully achieved its aims by eliciting rich data around EP perspectives of CRBA and supporting EPs to develop their practice. This included an understanding of how EPs define and use CRBA, and the factors that facilitate this in practice, embedded through cycles of action and reflection to enhance EP practice in real time. The study resulted in the co-development of a conceptual framework to guide the current EP team's practice in relation to embedding CRBA, with potential for wider dissemination within the LA and other contextually similar EP services to promote and inform rights-respecting practice more widely.

Using AI in this study enabled the EPs in the present study to focus on building on what is already working, offering a new perspective and something different to their norm. It is hoped that this work will continue to evolve, given the actions set by the team that are currently in motion, including:

- disseminating the research and outcomes with the wider EP team at a whole service event in July 2024
- setting up an innovation group to keep CRBA on the agenda within the EPS
- developing mission statements and shared documents that make the focus on CRBA explicit for stakeholders
- developing training and materials around children's rights to share more widely within the LA and with schools

This outlines the contribution of the research for the EP team involved, but also highlights the potential wider impact it will have for CYP across the LA if these actions are completed.

The original contribution of this research study is detailed as follows:

- Strengthens existing knowledge around CRBA in applied EP practice, providing a comprehensive understanding of how EPs understand, use and embed CRBA.
- Provides insight in shaping EP service delivery models and approaches to ensure rights-respecting practices become a reality for EPs, to uphold UNCRC goals in their role as duty-bearers.
- Provides a conceptual framework that can be used as a flexible and reflective tool for EP teams to explore their own practice in relation to respecting children's rights, which can be adapted to suit the individual needs and contexts of different EP services.
- Supports the evolution of applied educational psychology in becoming more consciously rights-respecting with a wide scope in positively impacting CYP, families and schools, given that EPs work across different systems, at different levels and are positioned as agents of change.
- Shows how AI is a valuable tool for EP professional practice development, by providing a worked example of a successful approach to initiating meaningful and positive change to practice over time, that may be used by other EP teams.

- Offers insight into key considerations around set up and facilitation of AI for team development to ensure success (e.g. participatory design, group dynamics, seniority of staff involved, allocating time out of service delivery).

## **5.7 Implications**

### **5.7.1 For EP Practice**

Existing research highlights that EPs have a responsibility to practice in a rights-respecting way (e.g., Goodfellow, 2021; Hart & Hart, 2014), yet there is a limited understanding of how to achieve this in practice. This study addresses this gap by utilising AI to build on what is working and shift practice to be consciously more rights-respecting. This has implications for EP practice, as it highlights the factors that facilitate the implementation of CRBA and demonstrates the use of AI as a strengths-based tool for EP team development. A conceptual framework is offered to support EP reflection in and on practice, to enhance and embed CRBA and contextually operationalise the UNCRC. This tentative framework seeks to address existing concerns in the literature about CRBA being hidden in EP practice. If shared and used, it has the potential to effect positive change across the EP profession, by increasing CRBA in practice.

### **5.7.2 For LA/Policy Makers**

The findings of this study suggest the potential of AI to support professional development and practice in an applied and contextual way for other professionals in the field of education. Extending this approach within LAs and within other professional teams could facilitate widespread embedding of CRBA, to have a greater impact for CYP. EPs collaborating with other teams within the LA is another implication of the



present study's findings, to action change relating to CRBA at a higher level and positively impact the lives of more CYP.

At the policy level, the outcomes of this research suggest a call for government leaders to work with EPs to integrate CRBA into educational systems, including curriculum, teaching and behaviour management approaches, to reduce restrictive practices and protect CYP rights. EPs are well-placed to support schools to embed CRBA through their everyday work and so involving EPs at a government level in this way could support wider embedding, monitoring and accountability for CRBA within education.

Finally, the findings of this research highlight the need to incorporate CRBA into EP doctoral training and within training programmes for other educational professionals, to increase awareness, accountability and confidence in applying CRBA.

### ***5.7.3 For Future Research***

CYP and other stakeholders were not included in this study for three key reasons. Firstly, the study's aims to focus on EP perspectives and practice, given the gap within the existing knowledge base. Secondly, understanding the power and influence EPs have in facilitating change for CYP across different systems and therefore the potential scope of this focus. Thirdly, due to the constraints of the doctoral research timeline. Future research should explore the role of EPs alongside CYP, families, and schools to enable CRBA to be adopted within these different contexts, and to better inform EP practice based on the views and rights of these key stakeholders.

In addition, greater research involving CYP is needed within the EP profession, to increase their participation and ensure EP practice aligns with their views and needs. Research of this kind may also inform wider educational systems and practices locally

and nationally, with EPs playing a pivotal role in gathering and disseminating this information within larger systems (e.g., unions, government, training providers) to instigate wider systemic change.

Considering the effectiveness of AI in this study, future EP research projects could benefit from using AI and participatory designs to drive change. Further evaluation research is necessary within applied educational psychology to fully understand the benefits and challenges associated with AI approaches.

### **5.8 Researcher Reflections**

As participants moved through the AI process, their understanding of CRBA and confidence with the AI approach developed, supporting their collaboration and engagement. The research team and the ideas they generated became increasingly cohesive and coherent, which is reflected in the data participants produced at each phase of AI and the write up of this thesis. This reflects the exciting journey of the EP team and the researcher that conveys collaborative growth, commitment, understanding and a depth of insight, contributing to meaningful changes in EP practice. The researcher felt they could see social constructionism in action through the relationships and interactions with and between participants, that enabled a shared construction of CRBA in context moving from defining to embedding in practice. This has been inspiring, and will inform her future practice when working with groups in the EP context.

The researcher's facilitation skills, honed through doctoral training, were instrumental in guiding AI, to elicit rich data and encourage collaboration, reflection and action for positive change. This learning, as well as the development of applied research skills and solution-oriented approaches, will be essential for future systemic work with schools.

In emphasising the fundamental role of EPs in enacting CRBA to amplify children's voices and advocate for their rights, this research has fuelled the researcher's ongoing passion for child rights advocacy, that will continue to shape their future practice and influence how they support others. The metaphor developed by the research team about '*being the butterfly*' and '*being the change*' is one that the researcher will carry through their career as a reminder of the reasons for being an EP in times of challenge. EPs practicing in alignment with CRBA supports humanistic psychology, seeing and valuing the whole child, which aligns with the researcher's core values.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

Children's rights are important within educational psychology, with the role of the EP central in upholding children's rights, yet there is limited understanding of how the UNCRC can be operationalised and integrated into EP practice. Given the benefits associated with CRBA in education (discussed in Section 2.5.1), and the links with EP practice and ethical standards (discussed in Section 2.6), it is crucial for EPs to be aware of how to apply CRBA in practice.

This study, by employing participatory action research, using AI, has explored EPs' understanding and use of CRBA, alongside the factors that facilitate embedding this in EP work. Additionally, this research has evaluated the impact of AI on EP professional development and practice. Through this AI, the EP team have co-constructed a conceptual framework to guide EP practice, to support CRBA to be enhanced and embedded. If shared, this framework has the potential to impact CRBA in EP practice at a broader level.

The findings of this research aim to enrich the evidence base regarding the role of the EP in adopting CRBA, to shape EP practice, particularly when constructing service delivery. In addition, the findings advocate for the consideration of AI as a viable approach for professional practice development in educational psychology.

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### Appendices:

**Appendix 1** – Table showing the key characteristics of studies included in the qualitative synthesis

Author(s) Year Country Publication Type	Sample and Setting	Aims and RQs	Topic (+relevance to review question)	Methodology  Epistemology/ Ontology	Data collection Data analysis	Main themes and concepts identified by authors
Atkinson et al. 2017 England Journal article	6 qualified Educational Psychologists from one LA in England  All female. 5-15 years EP experience.  Purposive sampling  For SCED: Year 1 child Supporting adults – keyworker and mother	How do EPs perceive the importance of play for children up to the age of seven years?  How do EPs perceive their role in promoting play for children with SEND up to the age of seven years?  How do EPs promote the aims of General Comment No.17 for children up to the age of seven years with SEND within their role? What are the barriers	Possibilities for EPs in supporting children's right to play (Article 31 of the UNCRC, 1989)	Exploratory, qualitative design  Followed by exploratory single-case-study design  Epistemology or Ontology not mentioned	Phase 1: Qualitative in-depth survey with EP focus group, semi-structured questions  Thematic analysis – Braun & Clarke 2006  Phase 2: Followed by 6 30 minute play observations using time-sampling method.  Interview with keyworker and mother.  Analysis of school policy docs.  Mapping play onto Hughes play taxonomy (2002).  Thematic analysis	Recognition of the instrumental use of play  Valued for social, developmental, learning and intrinsic purposes.  Potential role of EP  Restricted and reduced role of EP  Barriers to typical play for children with SEND  Wider environment  Then in SCED Facilitators and barriers to right to play for 1 child identified.
Boswell et al. 2021 England Journal Article	One LA in England EPS and linked neighbouring EPS  9 Educational Psychologists	How do CYP wish to participate and share their ideas about their EPS?  What do children and	Aimed to explore the views of CYP and what co-production might mean to them	Action research 12 stages of the RADIO model Tripp's (2003) cycles of action research	CYP and EPs – focus groups, interviews, drawing and mapping methods  Mapping and drawing – 16	CYP identified lots of things that are important when working with an EP, in terms of: Accessibility Understanding EP role

	<p>CYP – 16 from youth council, 4 from a primary school, 7 from a secondary school, 2 from young parents group, 12 from young carers group took part on focus group (25)</p> <p>Did not state male/female EPs</p>	<p>young people see as important when working with an EP?</p> <p>What do EPs see as the facilitators and barriers to working with the ideas of CYP with SEND?</p> <p>What is the impact for CYP and professionals in co-constructing an EPS?</p>		<p>E: Critical realist</p>	<p>CYP from youth council Focus group 25 CYP (2 young parents, 7 secondary school, 4 primary school, 12 young carers) Semi-structured interview (EP A, PEP A, YP A) Review meetings with EPS and YP from youth council</p> <p>Content analysis Inductive approach Themes emerge from data</p>	<p>Feedback following Being included in referral process Longer term involvement Flexibility – space Working towards goals/actions for future Evaluating involvement</p> <p>EPs – facilitators and barriers: Managing expectations Participation Co-production as a process – regular meetings Appointed person to drive agenda forwards</p> <p>Also findings around impact for CYP and EPS in co-constructing EP service: Positive Personal development Questioning barriers Changing viewpoints Seeing views being actioned</p>
<p>Goodfellow 2021 England Thesis – Doctor of Philosophy. University of Manchester</p>	<p>8 Qualified EPs working in England.</p> <p>With experience of LA work (not necessarily in one LA)</p> <p>Purposive sampling / snowball sampling</p> <p>Male and female</p>		<p>EPs understanding and enactment of the UNCRC</p>	<p>Foucauldian Approach</p> <p>Acknowledges issue of reflexivity</p> <p>Doesn't state E but discusses why this is in relation to Foucault approach</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews with 8 EPs</p> <p>Transcription (for content) and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis</p>	<p>Human rights discourse</p> <p>Status of rights</p> <p>Power of rights</p> <p>Children vs humans</p> <p>Non-negotiable and inalienable</p> <p>Aspirational or expectation</p> <p>Expectation</p>

	pseudonyms suggested – though not explicitly stated. PPs chose their own pseudonyms so this may not be accurate.					<p>Children's rights and evolving capacities</p> <p>Status in EP practice Knowledge Everyday understanding Policy status</p> <p>LA and children's rights Duty bearers Fits and bits</p>
Jackson-Taft, Woods & Ford 2020 England Journal article	<p>1 LA in England 6 EPs and 3 TEPs attended initial focus group</p> <p>+2EPs for final 2 focus groups</p> <p>One TEP only attended first focus group</p> <p>Female only pps</p>	<p>In what ways can an EPS envisage contributing to the promotion of community cohesion?</p> <p>What are the potential facilitators and barriers to the promotion of community cohesion through EP practice</p>	Examines the potential role of EPs in addressing UNCRC call to promote community cohesion through their work in schools	<p>Action Research – developing the practice of an EPS</p> <p>Participatory approach</p> <p>Appreciative Inquiry</p> <p>E: Social constructivist</p>	<p>Appreciative Inquiry</p> <p>Initial introductory meeting</p> <p>4 focus groups</p> <p>Cumulative analysis – recorded, transcribed, coding, thematic analysis Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006</p>	<p>EP practices and skills – working with communities - casework and strategic work, power and values, interpersonal skills, threats and change</p> <p>Community cohesion in society – segregation - SES, community conflict</p> <p>Schools as communities – cohesion in schools - segregation in schools, incohesion in schools</p> <p>Psychology of community cohesion - skills psychological understanding – preaching and teaching peace, practising peace, educational psychology as culturally located</p>

<p>Marshall 2021 England Thesis – Doctoral, Bristol</p>	<p>EPs/ Trainee EPs in Y2/3 working in England Convenience sampling Self-selecting purposive sampling Snowballing sampling 100 participants</p> <p>32% TEP 56% EP 9% SEP 2% PEP 1% other</p> <p>For interviews Had to have included CYP in consultation 6 participants (maingrade EPs) interviewed (random selection from 23 who registered interest). 4 LA EPs, 1 private company, 1 independent practitioner)</p> <p>Did not state male/female</p>	<p>What are EPs' current practice, attitudes and views regarding CYP's participation in EP consultation meetings?</p> <p>From the perspectives of EPs and young people, what is perceived as helpful in supporting CYP to participate in EP consultation meetings?</p> <p>What are the perceptions of EPs and young people regarding best future practice to support CYP to participate in EP consultation meetings?</p>	<p>CYP participation within EP consultation meetings</p> <p>Perceptions of CYP and EPs as to what helps and what would be helpful in the future to support CYP participation in EP consultation meetings</p>	<p>Multiple methods 2 or more qualitative methods utilised</p> <p>O: constructivist E: interpretivism Paradigm: interpretivist</p> <p>Acknowledges personal reflexivity under interpretivist paradigm throughout</p>	<p>Questionnaire (What are EPs' current practice, attitudes and views regarding CYP's participation in EP consultation meetings?). Likert and open ended qs.</p> <p>Content analysis and descriptive frequency analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured appreciative EP interviews Thematic analysis</p>	<p>Consultation meetings are used commonly by EPs and TEPs Themes are: Positive impact/effect CYP rights EP values CYP voice Case dependent Alternative approaches preferred/Not the best approach</p> <p>Discrepancy between EPs' beliefs regarding CYP's participation and actual practice</p> <p>Factors that increase CYP engagement in consultation: Age CYP choice CYP skills Specific outcome/reason for CYP involvement Supportive adults</p> <p>Factors that decrease CYP engagement: Age (younger) Ethical reasons CYP choice CYP skills Negative or lack of relationships</p> <p>Barriers to including CYP in consultation time, logistics, individual CYP factors, consent, adult attitudes, understanding and beliefs</p>
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						<p>Methods, tools and approaches to include CYP Visuals, CYP voice activities, gaining CYP views before, preparation meetings, person-centered approaches</p> <p>Interview themes: Organising CYP participation Child-centered meeting</p> <p>Importance of the facilitator</p> <p>Ethos</p>
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**Appendix 2 - Gough's weight of evidence framework criteria applied to the systematic literature review search (Gough, 2007)**

	<b>Weight of Evidence A – Methodological quality of the research</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence B – Relevance of the evidence</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence C – Relevance of the focus to the review question</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence D – Overall judgement</b>
<b>High</b>	CASP score of 10 or above	Qualitative methods that elicited rich data through discussion with Educational Psychologists, such as interviews or focus groups  Inductive data analysis	Primary focus on how Educational Psychologist's utilised children's rights in their work.  Primary focus on children's rights (more than one Article of UNCRC).  Primary focus on EP participants sharing their views.	Overall rating that assesses the extent to which the research contributes to existing literature, the overall weight of evidence.
<b>Medium</b>	CASP score of 7 to 9.5	Qualitative methodologies that elicit rich data (as described above) alongside other qualitative methods, that are more indirect and less discussion based, e.g. surveys that use open-ended text based questions.  Inductive and deductive data analysis.	Less of a focus on how EP's utilise children's right's within their work.  Research focuses on one article of the UNCRC.  Includes EP participants, and their views and perspectives, but has a primary focus on views of another group, e.g. CYP	Rated using descriptors 'High', 'Medium' or 'Low', based on the average of ratings from WoE
<b>Low</b>	CASP score of 6.5 or below.	Only qualitative methods, that are more indirect and less discussion based, e.g.	Reference to the implications for EP practice, but not a focus of the study.	A, WoE B and WoE C combined.



		<p>surveys that use open-ended text based questions, or mixed with quantitative data (e.g. frequency of response) in data gathering methods such as surveys.</p> <p>Inductive/deductive or deductive data analysis.</p>	<p>Research references children's rights rather than this being the focus of the study.</p> <p>Focus on other participant groups, with reference made to EPs.</p>	
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### Appendix 3 – CASP checklist answers across included studies and overall scoring

Questions from the CASP checklist (Long et al, 2022)	Atkinson et al, 2017	Boswell et al, 2021	Goodfellow, 2021	Jackson-Taft et al, 2020	Marshall, 2021
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	CT/S	Y	Y	Y	Y
4. Are the study's theoretical underpinnings clear, consistent, and conceptually coherent?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Y	Y	Y	CT/S	Y
6. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	N	Y	Y	N	Y
8. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	CT/S	CT/S	Y	Y	Y
9. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
10. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11. How valuable is the research?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
CASP score (out of 11, based on the following: Y=1, CT/S = 0.5, N=0)	8	10.5	11	9.5	11
Y = Yes, CT/S = Can't Tell/Somewhat, N = No					

**Appendix 4** – Tables to show answers to individual questions in CASP for each included study, to support judgement of methodological quality

<b>Study: Atkinson et al, 2017</b>	
<b>Question from CASP checklist (modified version as outlined in Long et al, 2022)</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes – RQs are clearly listed as is the context and rationale for the research.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes – the focus of the study is about understanding the perceptions of EPs in relation to children’s right to play, their role in promoting this and the barriers to promoting it.
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Can’t Tell/somewhat – use of exploratory qualitative in-depth survey via EP focus group is compared with questionnaire survey design. Though, no real discussion around why a focus group was selected.
4. Are the study’s theoretical underpinnings clear, consistent, and conceptually coherent?	No – not mentioned
5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes – purposive sampling used to recruit qualified EPs. Reasons given for not including TEPs.
6. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes – setting for data collection justified, clear how data was collected. Semi-structured questions and prompts provided in Appendix. Sufficient detail around data from focus group, i.e. audio-recorded discussion and transcribed. Data saturation not discussed.
7. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No – no critical examination of researcher’s own role or influence on participants. Some consideration of how researcher responded to events during the study – but this relates more to ethics/validity.
8. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	CT/somewhat – ethical risk identified and ideas around action to minimise this risk. Ethical approval not documented. Consent/confidentiality for EP participants not discussed.
9. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes – inductive, without presumption, thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke (2006) 6 step approach. Emergent themes checked with participants and inter-rater coding. Sufficient data presented to support themes, with different views/contradictions considered. Though researcher own role/bias/influence in selection and analysis of data not considered.
10. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes – findings are discussed in relation to RQs. Evidence for and against presented. Some limitations are addressed.
11. How valuable is the research?	Yes – identify new areas for further research. Discussed transferability. Discuss contribution of paper.

**Study: Boswell et al, 2021**

<b>Question from CASP checklist (modified version as outlined in Long et al, 2022)</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes – aim clearly identified, clear RQs, explanation for why important and relevance in context of literature
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes – aim to explore views of CYP and explore what co-production might mean to them, based on their experiences and perspectives.
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes – Action research discussed with reference to developing EP practice
4. Are the study's theoretical underpinnings clear, consistent, and conceptually coherent?	Yes – critical realist paradigm, with explanation given as to why this fits the research
5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes – sufficient explanation of how participants were selected, with reference to context of the study
6. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes – setting for data justified in research context, clear description of how data was collected. Some justifications for methods chosen – selected by CYP involved. Form of data described. Interview guides not included, but aims of each stage/part of the process described in Table. Data saturation not discussed. Changes to method/data collection discussed.
7. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes – role of researcher as facilitator discussed. Researcher reflections evidenced through research diary. Power balances discussed.
8. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	CT/S – brief explanation of how research was shared with participants. No discussion around consent/confidentiality, or mention of ethics approval.
9. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes - Data analysis procedures described and referenced, with justifications. Description around presentation of data. Data presented to support findings – quotes. Contrasting viewpoints presented and discussed. Researcher diary describes reflections/some influence.
10. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes – findings are discussed in relation to RQs. Evidence for and against presented. Validation procedures.
11. How valuable is the research?	Yes – identify contribution and implications for practice and further research. new areas for further research. Discussed some limitations/ways to improve research.

<b>Study: Goodfellow, 2021</b>	
<b>Question from CASP checklist (modified version as outlined in Long et al, 2022)</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes – aim clearly identified, clear RQs, explanation for why important and relevance in context of literature

2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes – to meet the RQs and aims. Seeks to understand how EPs understand the UNCRC through gathering their views and perspectives, based on experiences and highlighting discourses used and those not used.
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes – uses Foucauldian approach and Foucauldian discourse analysis to understand how EPs understand UNCRC, drawing attention to the unsaid to bring to the surface discourses that were less known.
4. Are the study's theoretical underpinnings clear, consistent, and conceptually coherent?	Yes – Foucauldian approach congruent with methods chosen.
5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes - Purposive sampling. Justification around participants selected in relation to aims of research. Recruitment strategy appropriate. Sample size also justified.
6. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes – interviews used to introduce, co-create and construct knowledge and challenge dominant discourses. Linked to answering RQs. Interview questions informed by literature review and shared in appendices. Clear process for how data was collected, methods justified. Saturation not discussed.
7. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes - Researcher role and relationship addressed. As well as researcher reflexivity.
8. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes – addressed in Table 1
9. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes – described in detail. Clear explanation of how data presented was selected. Sufficient data provided to support findings – with contrasting views considered.
10. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes – clearly identified and discussed. Credibility also discussed. Findings discussed in relation to RQs.
11. How valuable is the research?	Yes - Implications for future research discussed. Limitations considered including transferability. Knowledge contributions and methodological contributions provided.

<b>Study:</b> Jackson-Taft et al, 2020	
<b>Question from CASP checklist (modified version as outlined in Long et al, 2022)</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes – aim clearly identified, clear RQs, explanation for why important and relevance in context of literature review
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes – based on how an EPS could promote community cohesion, participatory research including views and perspectives of those involved to shift practice.
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes – to meet the RQs and aims. Action research model and participatory approach to address how EPS can contribute to community cohesion.

4. Are the study's theoretical underpinnings clear, consistent, and conceptually coherent?	Yes – social constructivist, within action research model Focusing on developing practice
5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	CT/S – recruitment strategy not described in detail. Sample info provided. Some discussions around who participated in which aspects of the design.
6. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes – through appreciative focus groups, following AI structure and phases. Setting was justified, clarity around how data was collected, some detail provided in tables as to what was addressed/collected at each stage.
7. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No – not considered
8. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes – addressed ethical issues around participant safety, consent and right to withdraw. Referenced ethical approval and safe storage of data.
9. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes – described in detail. Sufficient data provided to support findings – with contrasting views considered.
10. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes – clearly identified and discussed. Findings discussed in relation to RQs.
11. How valuable is the research?	Yes - Implications for future research and practice discussed. Limitations considered including transferability.

<b>Study: Marshall, 2021</b>	
<b>Question from CASP checklist (modified version as outlined in Long et al, 2022)</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes – aims clearly identified, clear RQs, explanation for why important and relevance in context of literature review
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes – based on EPs current practice, attitudes, views
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes – to meet the RQs and aims. Multiple methods design justified – multiple qualitative tools used to address RQs.
4. Are the study's theoretical underpinnings clear, consistent, and conceptually coherent?	Yes – fully considered. Constructionist and interpretivism identified. Personal reflexivity addressed also. Linked back to choice of methods.
5. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes – recruitment strategy described and justified based on those most appropriate in relation to research aims.
6. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes – qualitative methods including questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Addressed RQs – justifications provided.
7. Has the relationship between researcher and participants	Yes – for both data collection and data analysis, informed by theoretical position

been adequately considered?	
8. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes – addressed in 3.8. Ethical approval gained.
9. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes – described in detail. Sufficient data provided to support findings – with contrasting views considered. Justifications and rationale provided.
10. Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes – clearly identified and discussed. Findings discussed in relation to RQs.
11. How valuable is the research?	Yes - Implications for future research and practice discussed, as well as implications for other key stakeholders. Limitations considered. Strengths also considered as well as quality criteria.

**Appendix 5 – Table to show descriptive and analytical themes and subthemes as part of thematic synthesis of included studies**

Analytical theme	Superordinate descriptive theme	Descriptive theme and subthemes <i>(subthemes in italics)</i>	Example codes	Example quotations	No of papers
Applying psychology supports the use of CRBA in practice	Facilitator	<b>Child-centered practices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Collaboration/Co-construction</i></li> <li><i>Relationships</i></li> <li><i>Accessibility</i></li> </ul>	'child led' 'giving a choice' 'child as partner'	"If I've got ideas I'll say what about this, what do you think of that, do you think that would help?" (Marshall, 2021) "I think through the relationship that had been able to build over time with that child" (Marshall, 2021) "Worked to carve out spaces for CYP participation" (Goodfellow, 2021)	5
	Facilitator	<b>Psychological approaches</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Consultation skills</i></li> <li><i>Person-centered approaches</i></li> <li><i>Group processes</i></li> <li><i>Psychological paradigms and theories</i></li> </ul>	'consultation' 'attachment' 'facilitating' 'person-centered approach'	"EPs explained that through consultation they influence other agencies to see the value in children's ideas" (Boswell et al, 2021) "Carry out person-centered planning meetings which involve the child themselves" (Marshall, 2021) "so with the person-centered planning what kind of ontological assumptions – this goes back to what paradigms do psychology – what do you base your thinking on" (Goodfellow, 2021)	5
Understanding of CRBA impacts on EP use in practice	Barrier	<b>Lack of understanding around children's rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Rights not seen as universal</i></li> <li><i>Rights dependent on individual factors</i></li> <li><i>Rights dependent on contextual factors</i></li> <li><i>Aspirational view of children's rights</i></li> </ul>	'lack of awareness' 'rights dependent on skill level' 'rights dependent on age' 'aspirational view limits use'	"I would probably assume that older CYP are more likely to be able to contribute" (Marshall, 2021) "perception of children's needs may outweigh children's rights" (Goodfellow, 2021) "It's not necessarily been core practice to look at the UNCRC" (Goodfellow, 2021) "children's rights practice within educational psychology where how to enact rights is murky and unclear" (Goodfellow, 2021) "I think my understanding would be certainly it feels like an aspirational document" (Goodfellow, 2021)	4
	Facilitator	<b>Good understanding of children's rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Knowledge and awareness</i></li> <li><i>Experience</i></li> <li><i>Responsibility</i></li> </ul>	'EP knowledge of UNCRC' 'responsibility for children's rights'	"my everyday understanding is about a children's right to education and right to express their views" (Goodfellow, 2021) "was not getting an education appropriate to him" (Goodfellow, 2021) "as I've become more experienced being able to challenge people ... have the confidence to manage those situations" (Marshall, 2021)	2
	Barrier and Facilitator	<b>Shared understanding of children's rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>EP positioning</i></li> <li><i>Ethos, culture and values</i></li> <li><i>Attitudes of others</i></li> </ul>	'value or culture' 'EP position' 'attitudes of others as a barrier to CR' 'lack of responsibility'	"so there's the kind of attitude and value I think is really key" (Marshall, 2021) "having a strong value that CYP's voice is important" (Marshall, 2021) "attitudes of other adults – if other adults are confident in working in a child-centered way then I'm more likely to ..." (Marshall, 2021) "lack of specificity for who was responsible" (Goodfellow, 2021)	5



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges to establishing shared understanding</li> </ul>			
Wider systems relevant to EP practice, influence the use of CRBA	Barrier	<b>Wider systems that challenge children's rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School system</li> <li>Local Authority system</li> <li>Government system</li> </ul>	'time as a barrier' 'not embedded in LA' 'reduced and restricted role' 'systemic working = barrier' 'context restricts'	"time constraints and the demands of evidencing impact and value for money" (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020) "schools unwilling to allow additional time" (Marshall, 2021) "difficult to fulfil these expectations due to reliance on other systems" (Boswell et al, 2021) "educational psychology is subject to wider government discourse in terms of how practice is shaped by constructions of children's needs" (Goodfellow 2021)	5
	Facilitator	<b>Supportive systems to realise and respect children's rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School</li> <li>Home</li> <li>Policy and guidance</li> </ul>	'parent support' 'UNCRC embedded in EP practice' 'legislation impact attitudes' 'school system as supportive of CR'	"I've been in schools for 10, over 10 years, I've got a feel of how that community works and I think that makes my support in school richer" (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020) "It's [UNCRC] the root of a lot of our understanding of children's rights in regard to the way we think about planning for their education, their contribution to decision making and their right to be informed about what's happening to them so we have always used it" (Goodfellow, 2021) "importance of making decisions in collaboration with the school, who often have more knowledge of the young person than the EP does" (Marshall, 2021) "support for parents which seemed to be about supporting parents to support their child's independence that kind of their child's developing independence and I think EPs do a lot of that and I hadn't previously connected that." (Goodfellow, 2021)	4
Commitment to long-term development supports the use of CRBA in practice	Facilitator	<b>EP development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal development</li> <li>Professional development</li> </ul>	'developing practice' 'process' 'sustainability of CR' 'important to embed practice'	"need to kind of broaden out my thinking a little bit" (Marshall, 2021) So in all honesty I probably involve children and young people in consultation meetings about 40% of the time I think. Which is, I would like it to be higher." (Marshall, 2021) "EPs saw this work as being long-term" (Boswell et al, 2021) "how CYP views can be incorporated in a way that is sustainable and integral" (Boswell et al, 2021) "you don't get chance to do it, you're never gonna use it" (Marshall, 2021)	4
	Facilitator	<b>Future developments in practice</b>	'future developments' 'service development'	"a future action to support planning EP time allocation" (Boswell et al, 2021) "maybe some more information sheets ... we could share with young people so they know what is going to happen" (Marshall, 2021) "giving CYP choice was important for future development of practice" (Marshall, 2021) "use of PATH and MAP frameworks might support the process of CYP being involved" (Marshall, 2021)	3
Espoused theory vs reality in practice	Barrier	<b>Silence culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not talked about</li> <li>What EPs should do vs what EPs actually do</li> <li>Assumptions</li> </ul>	'EP beliefs vs EP practice' 'negative impact of assumptions'	"can you imagine that somebody would take offence and not be happy with that? And that's when you just avoid it" (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020) "the elephant in the room" (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020)	4

			'elephant in the room'	"it's not something we talk about" (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020) "discrepancy between beliefs and current practice" (Marshall, 2021) "highlighting the importance of not making assumptions about what CYP want" (Marshall, 2021)	
	Barrier	<b>Restrictive or tokenistic practices</b>	'tokenistic practice' 'restrictive practice' 'rights not realised' 'too much direction'	"we often pay lip service to children's voice in the sense that we say let's get their voice and then do what with it?" (Goodfellow, 2021) "curious and valuing what CYP said rather than not acting upon their views, thus making their participation tokenistic" (Marshall, 2021) "we're directing the children" (Atkinson et al, 2017)	3
	Barrier	<b>Ethical dilemmas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Competing rights</i></li> <li>• <i>Consent</i></li> <li>• <i>Rights vs needs</i></li> </ul>	'ethical consideration' 'consent as a barrier' 'rights vs needs'	"yes those rights do compete and it is about in the moment, the swampy lowlands of practice, what do you do, it is an ethical dilemma ... navigating those sorts of waters is part of practice" (Goodfellow, 2021) "the question is if assent is significantly different to consent and what this means for children's rights" (Goodfellow, 2021) "I would not want to place the child in a situation that would cause any stress or anxiety" (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020) "at a certain point perhaps giving too much control to the young people could be harmful" (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020) "Making decisions to protect CYP, EPs ultimately end up excluding CYP from being able to participate" (Marshall, 2021) "there was a lack of understanding about his needs, he was not getting an education appropriate to him", outlining how the understanding of need influences the right to education, forging a link between how understandings of children's rights are constituted by perceptions of children's needs" (Goodfellow, 2021)	4
<b>Conceptualisations of the EP role influence the use of CRBA in practice</b>	Facilitator	<b>EPs working at different levels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Casework</i></li> <li>• <i>Systemic work</i></li> <li>• <i>Community work</i></li> </ul>	'EPs facilitating community work' 'work with parents' 'sure start programme' 'casework to promote children's rights' 'systemic work'	"benefits of casework including 'proving yourself' to school staff that casework can inform strategic work" – (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020) "casework examples of promoting play" (Atkinson et al, 2017) "how others' attitudes towards CYP participation could be developed ... training could be helpful" (Marshall, 2021) "working with communities was identified as an example of how EP working practices could effectively support the promotion of community cohesion" (Jackson-Taft et al, 2020)	5

**Appendix 6** – Table outlining application of AI in current procedure, describing activities and outcomes at each phase

<b>AI Phase &amp; Workshop details</b>	<b>Description and links to AI guidance</b>	<b>Application in the procedure of the current study</b>	<b>Outcomes of each phase within current study</b>
Define Phase Workshop 1 September 2023	Within the define phase, the affirmative topic is clarified and defined by the participant group (Rowett, 2012). Topics can either be pre-determined by the researcher or an organisation, or set out by the group (Cooperrider et al., 2008).	<p>Participants were introduced to the AI process, the research background and aims of the current study. Roles were clarified and ground rules were established.</p> <p>The broad topic of CRBA was imposed by the researcher, given the nature of the research as part of the researcher's doctoral studies. Within workshop 1, the researcher designed activities to support the participant group to engage in discussion and reflection around their definition of the topic, specifically how they defined children's rights-based approaches and how they did/could use CRBA within their current practice, both individually and as a team. This was important to develop a shared understanding of the topic by participants, in their context, and to allow the participant group to establish the areas they would like to focus on, and the things they would like to discover within the topic area to ensure the inquiry was based on their views and goals. A rich picture was created through whole group discussion based on participants sharing feedback from their small group discussions. Collaborative whole group analysis (using participatory thematic analysis) was completed to analyse themes.</p> <p>A scaling activity was completed by all participants to determine how the research team rated their own confidence in using CRBA in their practice at the start of the AI process.</p> <p>Participants were given the opportunity to share their reflections on the AI process within the define phase workshop.</p>	<p>Ground Rules developed collaboratively by the research team (Appendix 15).</p> <p>Thematic maps generated from appreciative task, defining the affirmative topic choice.</p> <p>Rich picture created by the research team through whole group discussion (Appendix 20).</p> <p>The positive core of the EP team was identified through a whole group activity, and documented on the rich picture, in the centre (Appendix 20).</p> <p>Participatory Thematic Analysis as a collaborative group was completed to generate themes in response to research question 1 (see rich picture within Appendix 20).</p> <p>Scaling activity completed by all participants to support evaluation of the AI process (Appendix 27) in response to research question 4.</p> <p>Process reflections shared by participants were noted by the researcher (Appendix 28) in response to research question 4.</p>
Discover Phase Workshop 2	Cooperrider et al. (2008) suggests that the discovery phase	Researcher reflections from the Define Phase were shared with participants with opportunity given for discussion,	Story telling prompt/recording sheets completed by each

October 2023	<p>aims to identify the things that are already working well within the organisation or team, and uncover the factors that give life. Peak experiences are shared in pairs and stories are told about best practices and times where the participant has felt proud of their work in relation to the topic. Through these peak experience stories, the positive core of the organisation can be identified.</p>	<p>questions and making appropriate amendments.</p> <p>Participants engaged in warm up activity to share ideas in pairs about what gives them life and meaning in their work and what about their current practice attracts them to their role. Whole group verbal feedback/discussion facilitated by the researcher.</p> <p>Participants engaged in story-telling and listening activity in pairs, to share peak experiences with prompt questions provided as guided by the AI research (see Appendix 14 for prompt/recording sheets). The aim of this exercise was to support the research team to identify positive experiences of their practice in relation to CRBA and to think about what these experiences uncovered about their strengths, values and wishes for future practice as well as what gives them life and in their work.</p> <p>Whole group discussion and feedback was recorded in a thematic map. Participatory Thematic Analysis was used as a whole group analysis to support the identification of key themes that would describe successful practice in relation to CRBA and possibilities for future practice.</p> <p>Participants were given the opportunity to share their reflections on the AI process within the discover phase workshop.</p>	<p>participant (in pairs). Please see Appendix 14.</p> <p>Thematic map that captures key codes and themes based on discussions following story-telling/listening activity around peak experiences and what gives the EP team meaning, as well as possibilities for positive change in practice (Appendix 21). Codes and themes captured were derived using Participatory TA as a group, in response to research question 2 that focuses on understanding how the EP team is already using CRBA in practice.</p> <p>Process reflections shared by participants were noted by the researcher (Appendix 28) in response to research question 4.</p>
Dream Phase Workshop 3 November 2023	<p>Cooperrider et al. (2008) suggests that the dream phase begins with an energizing activity to ignite creativity, synergy and excitement as this promotes thinking outside the box about future aspirations (Rowett, 2012).</p>	<p>Researcher reflections from the Discover Phase were shared with participants with opportunity given for discussion, questions and making appropriate amendments.</p> <p>Participants engaged in an energising activity to build connection within the team and support them to feel energised, hopeful and positive.</p> <p>The Miracle Question was used to prompt reflection about possible future directions for EP practice in relation to CRBA. Initially, participants were given</p>	<p>Dream pictures generated by smaller sub-groups within the research team.</p> <p>Thematic Map to capture key codes and themes shared through dream pictures to capture a shared understanding of how participants envision the future practice of the EP team (Appendix 22).</p> <p>List of opportunities/possibilities</p>

	<p>The aim of the dream phase is to creatively envision what is possible for the team in terms of their future practice by exploring positive past experiences to ground the dream in past strengths. This shared vision is captured in an aspiration statement, co-constructed to guide the team. (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Hammond, 2013).</p> <p>Rowett (2012) suggests that visions for future practice are driven by three sources: 'spreading the good practice' - things that are already effective and in place, 'improvements to practice' - things that are in place but need to be improved, and 'blue sky thinking' - things that are not in place that should be.</p> <p>Through exploring opportunities, the possibilities and visions for the future can be realised</p>	<p>time and space to reflect individually, before working in small groups to create dream pictures that would capture the dream for future practice to the fullest extent and help the smaller groups to envision what might be. Dream pictures were creative and designed to visually or verbally reflect how the team's dreams would look and feel in practice within their context.</p> <p>Each group were given time to share their dream pictures and visions for future practice with the rest of the research team. Whole group discussion followed to generate a thematic map and Participatory TA was used to capture the key codes and themes from all dream pictures shared.</p> <p>The researcher led a whole group activity whereby participants were asked to reflect on their dream pictures and visions for the future and consider the areas of their practice that they would most like to develop moving forwards. A list of opportunities/ possibilities or wishes for the future was created. All participants then engaged in a group ranking exercise, individually identifying their top 3 opportunities from the list generated and noting this down on a post-it note. Post-it notes were collated by the researcher to identify the most popular opportunities that would be elaborated on and form the basis of action planning in the Design Phase.</p> <p>The participant group engaged in discussion around a shared vision for future practice, based on the themes identified from dream pictures shared and all discussions within the dream workshop. This was discussed and once finalised was noted down on flipchart by the researcher in the form of an aspiration statement.</p> <p>Finally, participants were given the opportunity to share their reflections on the AI process within the dream phase workshop.</p>	<p>for future practice (used to inform Design phase).</p> <p>Visual recording of the shared vision of the group in the form of an aspiration statement.</p> <p>Process reflections shared by participants were noted by the researcher (Appendix 28) in response to research question 4.</p>
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	(Cooperrider et al., 2008).		
Design Phase Workshop 4 December 2023	In this phase of AI, provocative propositions are created that define the social architecture of the organisation or team and help to focus and guide the dreams previously explored. Provocative propositions are guiding statements, written in the present tense using affirmative and bold language to describe the ideal way the organisation or team will be, related to a specific area of development (Hammond, 2013; Cooperrider et al., 2008).	<p>Researcher reflections from the Dream Phase were shared with participants with opportunity given for discussion, questions and making appropriate amendments.</p> <p>The researcher led an activity whereby the opportunities identified in the dream phase were reviewed. The outcomes of the group ranking activity were shared with participants and opportunities were refined by the participant group. This led to opportunities to elaborate on to make the dream a reality within the design phase.</p> <p>Following information given by the researcher around what constitutes a provocative proposition, based on the AI research, participants engaged in a small group activity, working with others to develop possible provocative propositions (guiding possibility statements) based on the opportunities identified. Examples were provided by the researcher to support participant understanding and engagement. Feedback was facilitated through whole group discussion to arrive at the provocative propositions agreed by the whole research team, in relation to the opportunities identified for further elaboration to reach the dream identified previously.</p> <p>The whole group engaged in an action planning task, facilitated by the researcher, using the provocative propositions as guiding statements. Actions were identified and elaborated on to ensure they were SMART. Actions were divided up amongst the team.</p> <p>Participants were given the opportunity to share their reflections on the AI process within the design phase workshop.</p> <p>Following the design workshop, the researcher typed up the agreed action plan and circulated this to all participants within the research team for their reference, to aid the</p>	<p>Provocative Propositions for each opportunity decided by the whole group, recorded visually on flipchart paper.</p> <p>Action Plan, recorded visually on poster paper based on whole group discussion facilitated by the researcher (Appendix 23).</p> <p>Process reflections shared by participants were noted by the researcher (Appendix 28) in response to research question 4.</p>

		implementation of agreed actions in advance of the destiny phase.	
Destiny Phase Workshop 5 February 2024	The destiny phase of AI supports the organisation to deliver their design over time, by following an agreed action plan. Momentum and potential for change are high. Once participants have committed to actioning next steps to support the dream to be realised as captured within the provocative propositions, the process of destiny is ongoing. This creates the AI cycle, and once achieved, should bring the team or organisation back to the discover phase (Cooperrider et al., 2008).	<p>Researcher reflections from the Design Phase were shared with participants with opportunity given for discussion, questions and making appropriate amendments.</p> <p>The researcher facilitated whole group discussion to support the action plan developed in the design phase to be reviewed. Each action was reviewed, with the progress made and additional actions noted, based on discussion amongst the whole team.</p> <p>Participants engaged in small group discussions about the factors that support good practice in relation to utilising CRBA in the EP context and the skills, tools, resources and values needed to demonstrate good team practice in relation to CRBA, based on the learning from the AI process. Whole group feedback and discussion following, to identify key themes, captured in a thematic map.</p> <p>Based on the themes identified and the discussions shared, the researcher facilitated a whole group exercise to support the development of a framework to guide EP team practice in relation to using CRBA, based on the learning shared by participants.</p> <p>Participants were given the opportunity to share their reflections on the AI process within the destiny phase workshop.</p>	<p>Amended Action Plan, recorded visually on poster paper based on whole group discussion facilitated by the researcher (Appendix 23).</p> <p>Thematic Map capturing key codes and themes related to the factors that support good practice in relation to CRBA in the EP context (skills, knowledge, tools, resources, values etc.) (Appendix 24). This links to research question 3.</p> <p>Framework for good practice, developed by the whole team and documented visually on poster paper (Appendix 24).</p> <p>Process reflections shared by participants were noted by the researcher (Appendix 28) in response to research question 4.</p>
Evaluation Phase Workshop 6 February 2024	This phase is not directly linked to the AI cycle, and isn't included as a separate phase within AI. To meet the aims of the current study, an evaluation phase was included in response to research question 4, to	<p>Researcher reflections from the Destiny Phase were shared with participants with opportunity given for discussion, questions and making appropriate amendments.</p> <p>Participants engaged in small group discussion, with prompts provided by the researcher, around how the AI process has supported team practice and development.</p>	<p>Thematic map capturing key codes and themes related to how AI has supported the development of EP team practice in response to research question 4. (Appendix 25).</p> <p>Scaling activity completed by all participants to support evaluation of the AI process (Appendix 27) in</p>

	<p>understand how AI methodology supports the development of EP team practice in relation to using CRBA.</p>	<p>Feedback from small group discussions was taken and whole group discussion facilitated. Creation of thematic map to capture discussion. Participatory thematic analysis used to identify key themes.</p> <p>Participants were asked to complete a scaling activity to determine how they rated their own confidence in using CRBA in their practice at the end of the AI process.</p> <p>All participants were issued with a debrief letter (see Appendix 19) and given an opportunity to ask questions or seek additional advice/support from the researcher. Details were shared with all participants about how they could access a summary of the results of the study. Information about the data that would be included within the final write up was shared and member checked.</p>	<p>response to research question 4.</p>
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**Appendix 7** – Sign up sheet, used by the researcher to gain expressions of interest at EPS whole service event

### **Exploring children’s rights-based approaches within an Educational Psychology Service using Appreciative Inquiry**

#### **Overview of the study:**

I’m planning to conduct an **Appreciative Inquiry** within the service to look at **how EPs use children’s rights-based approaches within their work**. Research and our standards of ethical practice (HCPC SoP and BPS Code of Conduct) acknowledge the important role of EPs in realising, respecting and advocating for children’s rights, and the links to other key priorities for EPs (relational practice, trauma-informed approaches, person-centered work) yet there is currently no research that looks at how this is/can be achieved in EP practice.

The aim of the Appreciative Inquiry is to **explore how as EPs/TEPs/AsEPs we use rights-based approaches within our work, with a view to developing practice as a team**. The study is **offered as CPD /supervision as it focuses on developing practice and would require voluntary participation by giving up some of your allocated time for supervision or CPD** (which will support continued registration with the HCPC) should you choose to take part.

If you do choose to take part you’ll be required to **attend six participatory workshop sessions of around 90 minutes over the course of one academic year** (approx. 1 workshop per month for the first 6 months of the academic year, from September 23 to February 24). The workshops will **start in September 2023**, with the initial workshop introducing the topic and the final workshop evaluating the process of appreciative inquiry for EP professional development.

Workshops are designed to be participatory, and your views, values, experiences, and participation are welcomed through a series of discussions and activities. Workshops will be held in person (due to their participatory nature) and I will try to plan these for a time that works for everybody that wants to participate – perhaps before/after a team meeting.

The only requirement for participation is to be a **SEP, EP, TEP or AsEP**. You may feel that you are experienced in using children’s rights-based approaches, or you may feel you have very little knowledge about what it entails. Any level of experience is fine, and the more varied the group the better.

**If you are interested and would like to register your interest to take part, please note your name and email address on the sign-up sheet**. I’ll then get in touch with some more information and will send over the information sheet and consent forms. If possible, I’m looking to try and have my participant group confirmed by the first week in September, with the first workshop to take place before the end of September.

Any questions? I can be reached at [hannah.joyce@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.joyce@nottingham.ac.uk)

Thanks you in advance.

**Register your interest to participate in an Appreciative Inquiry that aims to explore how as EPs/TEPs/AsEPs we use rights-based approaches within our work, with a view to developing our practice as a team.**



**Appendix 8** – Email to EP team members who had expressed an interest

Subject: Thesis research: Exploring children's rights-based practice within an Educational Psychology service using Appreciative Inquiry

Hi all,

I hope that you are well and enjoyed some time off over summer!

Firstly, thank you so much for expressing an interest in taking part in my research. For my thesis I am planning to conduct an Appreciative Inquiry within the service to look at how EPs use children's rights-based approaches within their work. Research and our standards of ethical practice (HCPC SoP and BPS Code of Conduct) acknowledge the important role of EPs in realising, respecting and advocating for children's rights, and the links to other key priorities for EPs (relational practice, trauma-informed approaches, person-centered work) yet there is currently no research that looks at how this is/can be achieved in EP practice.

The aim of the Appreciative Inquiry is to explore how as EPs/TEPs/AsEPs we use rights-based approaches within our work, with a view to developing practice as a team. The study is offered as CPD/Supervision as it focuses on developing practice and so would require voluntary participation by giving up some of your allocated time for CPD/Supervision (which will support continued registration with the HCPC) should you choose to take part.

The only requirement for participation is to be a SEP, EP, TEP or AsEP. You may feel that you are experienced in using children's rights-based approaches, or you may feel you have very little knowledge about what it entails. Any level of experience is fine, and the more varied the group the better. If you choose to take part, you will be required to attend six participatory workshop sessions of around 90 minutes over the course of one academic year – approximately 1 per month for the first 6/7 months of the academic year (from September 2023 to February/March 2024). Workshops are designed to be participatory, and your views, values, experiences, and participation are welcomed through a series of discussions and activities. The initial workshop will introduce the topic and the final workshop will evaluate the process of appreciative inquiry for your personal/team development. The hope is to collaboratively develop some form of framework for practice, that supports and guides the way the EP team work in a children's right's respecting way. Workshops will be held in person (due to their participatory nature) and will likely be scheduled before or after a team meeting for ease of bringing people together, though this can be decided collaboratively at a time that suits everybody once the participant group has been established.

I am hoping to facilitate the first workshop on Thursday 21st September following the team briefing. In this initial workshop, I will introduce the topic and we will think together about what children's rights-based approaches in EP practice mean to us as a research team. This workshop will be 90 minutes and I will organise a room in the office. Within

this session we can then agree dates/times for future workshops whilst everybody is together.

I have attached the information sheet and consent form here – if you are still interested and would like to take part, please read the information sheet and complete the consent form and return to me.

If you do wish to participate, it would also be helpful if you could indicate whether you are available to attend on Thursday 21st September.

If you have any questions at all, or would like to clarify anything, please do just get in touch.

Thank you again in advance.

Hannah

Hannah Joyce

Trainee Educational Psychologist

## Appendix 9 – Participant Information Sheet

**School of Psychology  
Information Sheet**



The University of  
**Nottingham**

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

*Title of Project: **Exploring children’s rights-based practice within an Educational Psychology service using Appreciative Inquiry***

*Ethics Approval Reference: S1513*

*Researcher: **Hannah Joyce***

*Supervisors: **Sarah Godwin***

*Contact Details: **Hannah:** [hannah.joyce@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.joyce@nottingham.ac.uk)*

***Sarah:** [ssasg2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ssasg2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)*

This is an invitation to take part in a research study that looks to explore how Educational Psychologists (EPs), Trainee Educational Psychologist’s (TEPs) and Assistant Educational Psychologists (AsEPs) use children’s rights-based approaches in their practice and what factors support them to do this. The study is designed to support those that work in an EP team to develop their own practice in relation to using children’s rights-based approaches in their work, by building on what works to create positive change. Through Appreciative Inquiry, the study adopts a participatory design, meaning your collaborative participation is valued and encouraged throughout, in all aspects of the research.

The research study will be reported as part of a doctoral thesis and is assessed as part of the researcher’s Professional Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham.

Before you decide if you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The study aims to discover the factors that facilitate and promote the use of children’s rights-based approaches in EP practice through the use of appreciative inquiry with an EP team. It is hoped that through a series of participatory workshops, the research will offer insights into how EP teams can transform their practice in relation to using children’s

rights-based approaches, and consider the impact this may have across different systems in which they work by collaboratively developing a framework for good practice.

If you participate, you will be asked to attend six participatory workshops over a 6/7 month period (approximately one 90 minute workshop per month). Dates and times for these workshops will be agreed with participants in advance. Figure-1 shows the appreciative inquiry 5D cycle that will be used to frame the process of the research. The general content is outlined in the orange bubbles, to clarify the nature and purpose of activities that participants will be asked to engage with if they choose to participate.

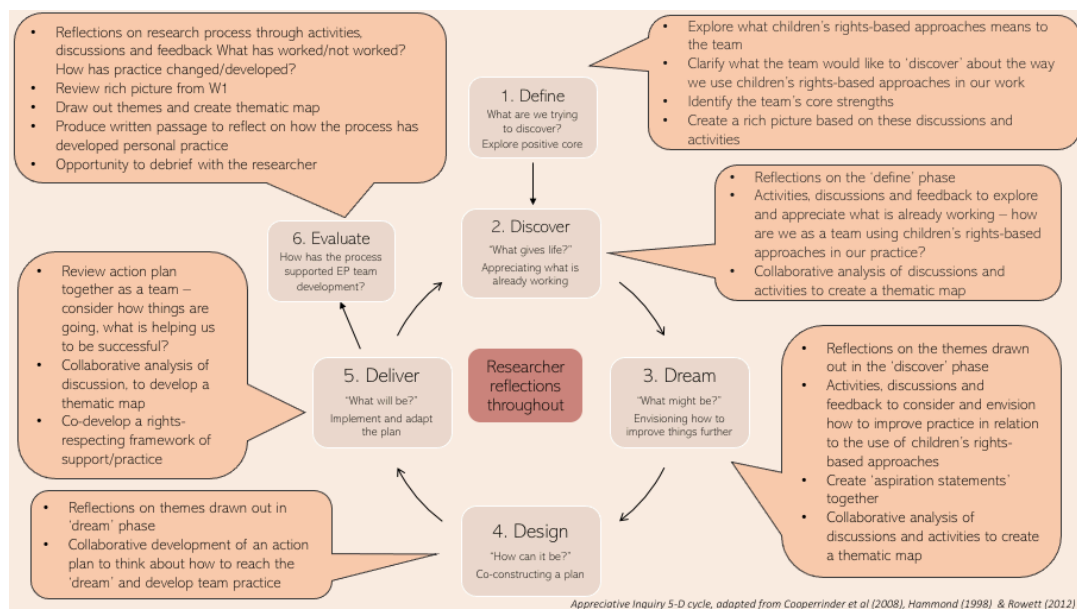


Figure 1 - A visual depiction of the 6 participatory workshops and their content based on the 5D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry

In each workshop, the researcher will facilitate discussions and activities based on the overall question posed for the particular phase of the process (e.g. in the 'discover' phase, activities and discussions will focus on discovering 'what gives life' and appreciating what is already working, how the team are already using children's rights-based approaches in their work). Further detail about the general content for each workshop is given in Figure-1. As a participant, in each workshop you will also be involved in collaborative analysis, identifying key themes based on the outcomes of the discussions and activities within that particular workshop. As a participant, you will be asked to join in and work with other participants to share your ideas, perspectives and thoughts. All workshops will focus on the topic of children's rights-based approaches within the EP team context, but each workshop has a slightly different focus (as outlined in Figure-1) that is based on the appreciative inquiry process, and its focus on developing and transforming practice to bring about positive change. Within the final workshop you will be asked to write a narrative passage using prompts provided by the researcher, to reflect on how being part

of the workshops has impacted on your professional practice as a member of the EP team.

Your participation will be six participatory workshops (approximately one workshop per month) that are each 90 minutes in length. The whole process will take place over one academic year, commencing in September 2023. The total amount of time is therefore 9 hours, over one academic year. If you choose to participate, you will volunteer 9 hours of your allocated time for continued professional development as an Educational Psychologist, Trainee Educational Psychologist, or Assistant Educational Psychologist.

All of the workshops will be audio-recorded for the researcher's use, to support their interpretations and reflections of the data collated and analysed collaboratively. Audio-recordings will be stored safely in line with guidance set out by the University of Nottingham.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part. You are free to withdraw at any point before or during the study. All data collected will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. It will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me (Hannah Joyce) or my research supervisor (Sarah Godwin). Our contact email addresses can be found at the top of this information sheet. We can also be contacted after your participation at the above email addresses.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:  
Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee, University of Nottingham)  
stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

## Appendix 10 – Consent form

<p><b>School of Psychology</b></p> <p>Consent Form</p>
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*Title of Project: **Exploring children’s rights-based practice within an Educational Psychology service using Appreciative Inquiry***

*Ethics Approval Reference: S1513*

*Researcher: **Hannah Joyce** [[hannah.joyce@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.joyce@nottingham.ac.uk)]  
Supervisors: **Sarah Godwin** [[ssasg2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ssasg2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)]*

The participant should answer these questions independently:

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?   | YES/NO |
| Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?  | YES/NO |
| Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)?   | YES/NO |
| Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study?<br>(at any time and without giving a reason)  | YES/NO |
| I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected.   | YES/NO |
| I agree that the workshops will be audio-recorded for the researcher’s use.   | YES/NO |
| I understand the participatory nature of the research, that I will be working with other participants and completing activities and discussions where I will be asked to share my thoughts, views and perspectives. | YES/NO |
| Do you agree to take part in this study?  | YES/NO |



“This study has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and I agree to take part. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time.”

Signature of the Participant:

Date:

Name (in block capitals):

I have explained the study to the above participant and he/she/they has/have agreed to take part.

Signature of researcher:

Date:


**Appendix 11 – Illustrative example of workshop slides, including materials and activities presented to participants.**


**Exploring children's rights-based practice within an EP service using Appreciative Inquiry**

Workshop 2: Discover

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October

11am – 12.30pm





- Introductions and Roles
- Ground Rules
- Introduction to 'Discover'
- Reflections on Workshop 1
- Activity 1 – What gives you meaning in your work?
- Discussion and feedback on Activity 1
- Activity 2 – Story telling
- Discussion and feedback on Activity 2
- Comfort break
- Creating a thematic map
- Round up and reflections

**Agenda**

**Roles**


Facilitator \_\_\_\_\_

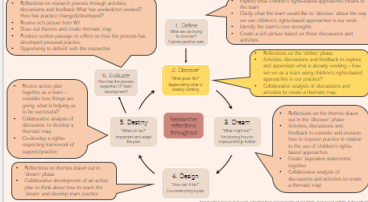
Time Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Graphicing \_\_\_\_\_

The Research Team \_\_\_\_\_


A reminder ...





**Reflections on Workshop 1 – the Define Phase**

Please take a few minutes to read through the researcher's reflections on Workshop 1 and look at the graphics generated.




Is there anything you would like to add, amend or change?  
Does this capture your interpretation of the session?

**Activity 1:**


What is it about what you do now in your work that most attracted you to the EP role?

It might be something that brings energy, is meaningful, valuable, challenging or exciting.

2 minutes to discuss with a partner. Be prepared to feedback one key point.



**Discussion and Feedback**



**Activity 2:**  
Think about an experience or an example of a time when you have used a children's rights-based approach in your work that you are proud of.

**Theme A - The experience**  
Tell Partner A a story about an experience or example of a time in your work when you used a children's rights-based approach that you are proud of. This should be a 'high point' and a time when you feel you were working at your best.

Use the following prompts to help you:

- What did you do?
- How did you use a children's rights-based approach?
- Why was it important to you that you did the things you did?
- What did you value about the nature of your work?
- What were you proud of yourself for?
- What did you value most about the part you played?
- What did you learn about the experience?
- How did it make you feel?
- What would you suggest you do about your work with regard to this experience (eg. skills, relationships, without adding pressure)?
- What did the experience make you feel about your life/work?

**Theme B - The listener**  
Listen to partner A, tell their story and note down any key words or phrases about the following:

- What strengths did they show?
- What was partner A's attitude about themselves?
- What inspired them?
- What are their aspirations in their work?

**Partner B** Summarise the following questions and note down a couple of key words or phrases about the experience:

Based on your story, if you were to imagine your practice and your team engaged in a search for children's rights-based approaches in 5 years time, what would your 3 wishes be for that time to look like?

**It's STORY TIME**

10

**Discussion and Feedback**

What were the core factors that 'gave life' in our stories?  
What had to be in place to allow these experiences to happen as 'high points'?

What are the possibilities that have emerged from our stories, for positive change in relation to children's rights-based approaches in our work?  
What are our wishes?

Strengths  
Aspirations  
Values  
Feelings

Wishes  
Aspirations  
Abilities  
Change

11

Take a 10-minute break

12

**Thematic Map**

Go back to mind-map based on our discussion around the core factors that 'give life' and the possibilities of our work.

Take a moment to reflect and review our ideas – you can discuss with a partner. Note down any key words or phrases that come to mind.

How can the ideas be grouped together into themes?

13

**Analysis – a participatory adaptation of thematic analysis**

Take some time to reflect on our discussions and activities today.

Think about and note down the key words or phrases that kept coming up and were significant (we provide to help if you like).

Take a look at the post-it notes/ key words. How can we move them around so that similar ones are together? How well do group ideas link together?

Is there anything we might change about how we have grouped the ideas? How could we make them a more of importance?

Is there anything we have missed or that hasn't come up that we want to add? How best to add or develop our ideas maps to capture these things?

Remember we will come down notes and reflections from today, including ideas generated and themes generated to review at the next workshop.

14

**Round up and reflections**

15

**Next time ...**

The next workshop will be held on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November at 1.30pm-3pm.**

We will focus on the 'dream' phase and explore the future and opportunities to work in children's rights-respecting way within our team.

16

## Appendix 12 – Illustrative example of facilitator prompts

### Facilitator Prompts: Workshop 2 – Discover

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October, 11am-12.30pm

#### Set up:

Agenda (A3), Ground Rules (A3), Thematic maps and rich picture from W1 (A3), 12 printed copies of reflections from W1 (A4), Flipchart – ‘what gives you meaning in your work?’

Large paper, Pens and post it notes, Tape

#### Outline:

- Introductions and Roles (5 mins)
- Ground Rules (2 mins)
- Introduction to ‘Discover’ (3 mins)
- Reflections on Workshop 1 (10 mins)
- Activity 1 – What gives you meaning in your work? (5 mins)
- Discussion and feedback on Activity 1 (5 mins)
- Activity 2 – Story telling (25 mins)
- Discussion and feedback on Activity 2 (10 mins)
- Comfort break (5 mins)
- Creating a thematic map (10 mins)
- Round up and reflections (5 mins)

**Outline/Agenda – to be displayed visually for research group to see (including timings)**

**Slide 1 – as people walk in**

**Slide 2 – Welcome back [3 mins]**

Cover the following:

- Thank you
- Refreshments / Toilets
- Introductions
- Outline/Agenda and timings for the workshop

**Slide 3 – [2 mins]**

Outline/Agenda and timings for the workshop

**Slide 4 – [1 min]**

**Time keeper identified as:** *[name of person identified]*

Role of time keeper clarified – to keep the group to time, using timings identified and displayed within agenda/outline. Please do not interrupt the group to keep us to time.

Graphicor identified as *[NAME]*

Will swap and change roles through the process – we are a research team

**Slide 5** – Reminder of ground rules  
Signpost to printed copy, displayed on wall

**Slide 6 – Discover phase [3 mins]**

Outline what the aim of today is – to discover what give us life and to think about what we are already doing in relation to using children’s rights-based approaches, to appreciate what we are doing well and consider possibilities for positive change.

**Slide 7 – Reflections on Workshop 1 [10 mins]**

Hand out reflections and display graphics  
Give time to read and look at graphics  
Note down any changes, additions, amendments on post its

**Slide 8 - Activity 1 [2 mins]**

**What is it about what you do now in your work that most attracted you to the EP role?**

It might be something that brings energy, is meaningful, valuable, challenging or exciting.

2 minutes to discuss with a partner. Be prepared to feedback one key point.

**Slide 9 – 3 mins**

Feedback and flipchart on ... what gives life to the EP team

**Slide 10 – Activity 2**

**Stories**

**[25 mins]**

See slide for instructions  
Handouts to take notes

10 minutes for each person to tell their story (set timer to remind to swap over)

**Slide 11 -10 mins**

**Discussion and feedback, graphic on the large paper**

**Comfort break [5 minutes]**

Slide 13 [10 mins]

**Create a thematic map** - Aim is to create shared understanding of what gives life and possibilities for positive change

**Go to slide 14** – reminder of PTA process, use post-its to support coding

Slide 15 – 5 mins

Round up and reflections

Summarise what we have done today  
Does anybody have any reflections to share?

Slide 16

**Next time**

Our next workshop is on 9<sup>th</sup> November at 1.30pm-3pm before area meeting  
It will focus on – dream phase

**Appendix 13** – Table to show feedback from pilot phase and changes made as a result.

Phase	Key comments from feedback	Changes made
Define	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helpful to have background of AI</li> <li>• Visual clear for participants</li> <li>• Helpful to provide visual prompt of UNCRC – can this be bigger?</li> <li>• Some participants may feel that they should be doing more in their work, which might be uncomfortable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNCRC image printed on A3 for participants</li> <li>• Comment added to facilitator prompts <i>'no judgement here about what we might not be doing, just exploring what CRBA means in our context'</i></li> </ul>
Discover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lovely to give space for reflections and time to read and review these</li> <li>• Could participants have a prompt sheet, as the writing on the slide is quite small</li> <li>• How will participants remember what to feedback?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure space for reflection in all workshops with print outs for participants</li> <li>• Make prompt sheet hand out for participants – one for the listener and one for the story teller</li> <li>• Make space on prompt sheet for notes/comments around key phrases/words to support coding and theming</li> </ul>
Dream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I really like the energiser activity – it feels like a nice opportunity for the team to work together</li> <li>• Maybe you could give participants a few minutes to reflect on the Miracle Question for themselves, so that they go into the group discussions with some ideas</li> <li>• I think it would be helpful to emphasise that participants can be creative with the dream pictures, because that is something I'd really like to know.</li> <li>• Maybe some prompts for the dream pictures too so that they know what kinds of things to be thinking of.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided space for personal reflection on the miracle question before small group discussion</li> <li>• Emphasis on creativity for dream pictures, with examples provided by facilitator, e.g., poster, pictures, song, poem, story</li> <li>• Prompts for the dream pictures provided, based on the AI literature.</li> </ul>
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I didn't really understand the provocative proposition – could you explain this a bit more and give some possible examples</li> <li>• Good to focus in on specific opportunities from last time – this would help me to be focused in my thinking</li> <li>• I like the idea of a collaborative action plan – it might help to be specific about the kind of targets needed and timescales. It would also be good to think about the impact of the change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional explanation around provocative propositions, with examples provided</li> <li>• Started with opportunities identified in previous workshop to focus participants</li> <li>• Added a section to the action plan about impact, and used SMART targets to support action planning</li> </ul>
Destiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good to have the space to review the action plan</li> <li>• You talked about appreciative learning cultures – can you have a slide on this, to explain it a bit more?</li> <li>• The practice framework examples were helpful as a starting point</li> <li>• It might be helpful to add some prompt questions or ideas of what to think about</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gave time and space to review the action plan</li> <li>• Added slide and information on appreciative learning cultures based on AI literature</li> <li>• Printed practice framework examples, and allowed space for discussion, to support participants with this activity</li> </ul>

	<p>when developing their own framework, like, What is the purpose? What will it look like? Etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added prompt questions to support development of framework, to prompt participant thinking</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think it would be nice to include all the things participants have done – all of the data they have created together, to give an overview, to support their reflections</li> <li>Maybe have the graphics for participants to look at too</li> <li>I like how you have given prompts for participants - like the things to reflect on in terms of the process and their development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created 'participant journey' slide and included images of rich pictures/thematic maps/action plans at the relevant phases. Talked participants through what we have done and what they have achieved to recap.</li> </ul>



## Appendix 14 – Storytelling activity template, used in the discover phase (Workshop 2).

Activity 2 – Workshop 2

### Partner A – Storyteller prompts

Tell Partner B a story about an experience or example of a time in your work when you have used a children's rights-based approach that you are proud of. This should be a 'high point' and a time when you feel you were working at your best.

Use the following prompts to help you:

- What did you do?
- How did you use a children's rights-based approach?
- Why was it important to you that you did the things you did?
- What did you value about the nature of your work?
- What were you proud of yourself for?
- What did you value most about the part you played?
- What did you admire about this experience?
- How did it make you feel?
- What would other people say about you about this experience (e.g. SENCo/Headteacher/school staff/ parents/ child!)
- What did this experience make you feel about your EP team?

Activity 2 – Workshop 2

### Partner B – listener prompts and recording sheet

Listen to partner A tell their story and note down any key words or phrases about the following:

- What strengths did they show?
- What does partner A value about:
  - Themselves
  - The nature of their work
  - Their team
- What inspires them?
- What are their aspirations in their work?

Note down key words/phrases here: |

When partner A has finished telling their story, ask them:

*Based on your story, if you were to imagine your practice and your team's practice in relation to using a children's rights-based approach in 5 years' time what would your 3 wishes be for what this would look like?*

Note down key words/phrases here:

**Appendix 15** – Ground Rules established by the research team in Workshop 1.**Ground Rules:**

Confidentiality

Try not to use identifying information when talking about examples

Safe environment – no question is a stupid question

Non-judgemental

Respect different opinions to your own

Value the contribution of everyone

Listen to each other

Be kind to yourself

**Appendix 16** – Table to show the data generated and analysed in response to each research question

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>AI workshop</b>	<b>Data generated in response to research question</b>	<b>Data analysed in response to research question</b>	<b>Output for recording themes, with links to appendices</b>
RQ1: What do EPs understand CRBA to be in the context of their work?	Define	Small group discussions defining CRBA and how they are and can be used in EP practice. Followed by whole group feedback captured graphically. Whole group discussion around positive core.	Whole group feedback and corresponding graphic recording.	Rich Picture (Appendix 20)
RQ2: How do EPs use CRBA in their practice?	Discover	Small group activity to explore 'what gives life' in EP work. Paired story-telling/listening activity around peak experiences. Followed by whole group discussion.	Whole group feedback on story-telling/listening exercise.	Thematic Map (Appendix 21)
RQ3: What factors enable and facilitate the successful adoption of CRBA within EP work?	Destiny	Small group discussions around what facilitates good practice in relation to CRBA in the EP team, based on learning from the AI process. Whole group feedback and whole group exercise to develop framework for good practice following.	Whole group feedback on facilitative factors for good practice.	Thematic Map (Appendix 24)  Framework for good practice (Appendix 24)
RQ4: How does AI methodology support the professional development of an EP team in relation to developing their use of CRBA in practice?	Evaluation	Small group discussion around AI process and influence on development. Followed by whole group feedback.	Whole group feedback on small group discussions.	Thematic Map (Appendix 25)

## Appendix 17 – Illustrative excerpts of the researcher’s reflexive journal

### ***Reflexive journal entry following Workshop 1 (Define Phase):***

I am feeling positive about the initial workshop – the participant group appear to get along well. Initially, I observed them to be apprehensive of the topic and possibly the AI approach as something new. With time, and support to engage in activities, participants appeared more comfortable and showed greater enthusiasm and engagement. Particularly as they started to explore their definition of CRBA, and further their knowledge and awareness through learning from one another. Further reading around Appreciative Inquiry prompted me to reflect on the ‘shift’ and how this was achieved within the initial workshop. There was a noticeable shift from me talking to the group talking. Small group activities supported this, though post-it notes were tricky to manage – think about changing the way this is managed in Workshop 2.

### ***Reflexive journal entry following meeting with participants who were unable to attend Workshop 1, in advance of Workshop 2:***

Participant made some suggestions around adding in the need to be genuine and authentic when gathering CYP as important to them when defining CRBA. This participant talked about how this needs to be applied to all children, including those that are pre-verbal.

Researcher to add these ideas into reflections, and member check with participant group in Workshop 2, when reflections are presented back for validation.

### ***Reflexive journal entry in advance of Workshop 2 (Discover Phase). Notes made whilst preparing activities and materials for the workshop:***

Reading around the discover phase (Lewis, 2016; Cooperrider et al, 2008) prompted me to think about how to support participants to identify the best of what has been and the best of what is. Decided to create a story-telling exercise, to prompt participants to reflect, in pairs, on a time when they have used CRBA successfully. Decided to create a prompt sheet/ recording sheet to support participants to take notes on the key areas that are important in relation to the research question and the discover phase of the AI process. Note taking would support participants to share their ideas following to support the generation of codes and themes for co-analysis. Reflecting on Workshop 1 – decided to create a template rather than using post-it notes for the activity, to avoid having activity post-it notes and then code post-it notes – as this became messy and confusing in Workshop 1. I felt the activity generated would be positive for participants – and stimulate positive feelings around reflecting on their practice, drawing out their strengths, values and the ways they use CRBA in their current practice. Important for me to remember that the data generated should be strengths-based and future focused.

### ***Reflexive journal entry following Workshop 3 (Discover Phase). Notes made whilst listening back to the audio-recording and writing researcher reflections:***

It is really important that I reflect on the data produced within the workshop and the co-analysis completed as a research team. I am being careful that my interpretations are consistent with the themes co-constructed by participants. I recognised that I could have interpreted the codes differently, or named them differently, however, given the PAR design it is important I remain

close to the co-analysis completed within the workshop. I did identify some information that had been missed from the graphic – I will take this back to participants for validation at the next workshop.

I have noticed that participants are becoming more confident in the co-analysis process. Confidently offering ideas around how codes group to make themes.

***Reflexive journal entry following Workshop 5 (Destiny Phase):***

It was really helpful to provide examples of frameworks, to support understanding and spark thinking for the group. The whole group discussion activity was helpful to support the process of developing our own framework for practice. The research team were engaged and enthusiastic, taking control of the discussion and points raised – I reflected that I was much less of a ‘facilitator’ here and that this felt like the culmination of the work completed together over the course of AI. Participants were confident to describe the facilitative factors, and turn this into a framework. The group came up with framework quite organically, from the discussion points raised. I reflected on the idea of appreciative learning cultures as the group showed real commitment to the approach, that they hope to embed beyond the scope of the research.

The team were much more reflective – they were offering reflections around their learning over the course of the AI. One group member spoke about how at the start they felt as though they had no idea what CRBA was ... and now it seems simple and embedded in practice ... they didn’t realise how much of their actual practice mapped on to CRBA and how many of the standards of proficiency around EP work relates to CRBA. I feel that the team have become more cohesive and confident, developing their knowledge, understanding and practice in using CRBA. Links were made to many aspects of service delivery and other key areas of priority within the service, e.g. innovation groups, to make change and move this learning forwards. This extends to my own practice – through working with and learning from the other members of the group, I have been able to make shifts in my practice as a TEP, particularly around developing child-friendly reports, and thinking carefully about the language I use to describe children, and to make my writing accessible.

Another reflection from group member about the way in which we have naturally as a group focused in on children’s voice, but that our definition of CRBA was much more than this. At times our thinking has narrowed, but perhaps this reflects where we feel we can have the most impact. It is important for us to remember all of the other aspects of CRBA that we defined initially when we apply in practice, e.g. inclusivity, equity, diversity.

Further reflection around actually describing CRBA to others and the words or language we use to describe CRBA. Broad concept, sometimes abstract and confusing for others (just like it was for us at the start). Difficult concept to unpick, doesn’t feel natural to talk about it, but in practice it comes naturally.

I feel proud of the research team and our efforts in creating such a useable framework to support practice. I am excited about sharing this with the wider team and continuing to support this work to evolve.

**Appendix 18** – Letter of ethical approval

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

SJ/tp

Ref: **S1513**

Tuesday 16th May 2023

Dear Hannah Joyce and Sarah Godwin,

**Ethics Committee Review**

Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research 'Exploring children's rights based approaches within an Educational Psychology Service using Appreciative Inquiry'

That proposal has now been reviewed by the Ethics Committee and I am pleased to tell you that your submission has met with the committee's approval.

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice. The Committee should be informed immediately should any participant complaints or adverse events arise during the study.

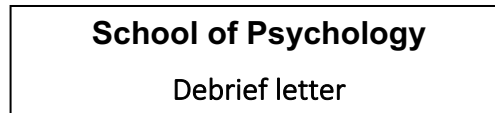
Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Yours sincerely



*Professor Stephen Jackson Chair, Ethics Committee*

## Appendix 19 – Participant Debrief Letter



*Title of Project: **Exploring children’s rights-based practice within an Educational Psychology service using Appreciative Inquiry***

*Ethical approval reference: S1513*

*Researcher: **Hannah Joyce** [[hannah.joyce@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.joyce@nottingham.ac.uk)]  
Supervisors: **Sarah Godwin** [[ssasg2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ssasg2@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)]*

Thank you for your recent participation in the above research study. I really appreciate you taking the time to participate and hope that it has been a positive experience for you.

**Study aims:** This study aimed to explore what Educational Psychologist’s understand children’s rights-based approaches to be, how they use children’s rights-based approaches in their practice, and what factors support them to do this well. Alongside this, the study was also designed to support participants to develop their own practice in relation to using children’s rights-based approaches in their work, by using an appreciative inquiry process to build on what works and create positive change. The study therefore hoped to evaluate the use of an appreciative inquiry process as an approach to continued professional development for an EP team.

### **Outcomes:**

#### **Define Phase:**

In this phase we explored how we define children’s rights within the EP context and considered how we use (or could use) CRBA within our work. We identified the following five themes based on these discussions that capture how we define children’s rights and CRBA in the EP context, and created a rich picture, with our positive core identified around the centre.

**Voice** – collaboration and co-production, doing with not to, CYP feeling heard and empowered to share their voice, time and resources can be barrier to this, ensuring participation and influence over decision making, informed consent, supporting aspirations, advocating for CYP and using power and influence in

position to do this, adopting a meta-perspective, respectful language when talking and writing about CYP, using tools and resources creatively to support expression of views, being genuine and authentic, holding CYP at the centre of our work

***Inclusion*** – promoting inclusive practice and a culture of inclusion, that challenges exclusionary practice and is adaptable and flexible to meet the needs of all CYP, ensuring the right to an education that is right, making sure children have their right to play fulfilled, making the system work for the child so they don't have to fit in, promoting equality and equity, creating equal opportunities and addressing the power imbalances associated with childism, celebrating individual differences, differentiating for the strengths and needs of the individual and developing empathy around CYP needs

***Relationships*** – positive relationships with CYP, parents and other stakeholders, through a relational approach, as this creates space to challenge when things are not rights-based in a supportive way, using respectful language and re-framing narratives, working systemically to create change, collaborating with others to highlight positives and support reflection, being a critical friend, buy in from others recognised as a barrier

***Building a sense of self*** – encouraging individuality, differences in personality and the right to not conform, promoting agency through CYP knowledge about rights and preparing them for adulthood, empowering CYP to be themselves and teaching the skills so that they can advocate for themselves as adults

***Meeting basic needs*** – applying psychology (Maslow) to highlight basic needs first as a priority within CRBA with recognition that basic needs are not always met in schools, ensuring children feel safe and protected and that the environment for learning fosters this, EP role in ensuring basic needs are met

[Image of Rich Picture from Workshop 1]

#### **Discover Phase:**

In this phase we told stories of times when we have used CRBA effectively in our practice, to capture what we are already doing well and what gives us life in our work. We reflected on possibilities for positive change. The following themes were identified, which are captured within the thematic map:

***Advocating and Empowering*** – using our power and influence to amplify the voices of CYP, particularly those in vulnerable groups, advocating for CYP and as a team, showing empathy to others' experiences and valuing CYP/parent views, empowering the CYP, parents and staff that we work with, embedding CRBA within the team



***Feeling heard and being understood*** – CYP voice at the centre of our practice, gathering and presenting views in a meaningful way, changing perceptions and narratives around CYP, supporting CYP aspirations and preparing for adulthood

***True participation*** – having more time with CYP to support their participation and creating opportunities to feedback to them, consistent relationships within patch of schools, being part of a CYP's journey over time, supporting other stakeholders to understand true participation and agency

***Collaboration*** – facilitating collaboration and cohesion and creating safety, bringing people together around the child, joint problem-solving to work towards positive change, applying psychology to support collaboration and change, using trauma-informed and relational approaches and supporting other stakeholders to also use these approaches, working systemically to improve outcomes, investing in learning and development by working with other teams in a multi-agency way, strong teamwork within the EPS

***Professional Accountability*** – being curious within our assessments, maintaining personal and professional accountability, recognising power and influence of advice given our role, reflection on and in practice, flexibility in how we work, confidence in applying psychology, critical thinking, elegant challenging, supervision and support within the EP team, hypothesis testing to ensure evidence-based assessment, focus on CPD and keeping up to date with research, barriers associated with the role in terms of positioning as expert and working with parents

***Values*** – driven by personal and team values which support us to professionally challenge when needed, autonomy to practice in a way that aligns with values within the team, variety of the role is valuable, making a difference and creating positive outcomes for CYP is important within the team, being authentic and ourselves in the ways we interact and work with others, trust within the team, connectedness and pride for being part of the team, greater clarity around the role to share with others

[Image of Thematic map from Workshop 2]

#### **Dream phase:**

In this phase we used the miracle question to envision the future, and think about our aspirations, what we would like our practice in relation to utilising CRBA to look like. We created dream pictures and a shared vision to capture this. We also identified a list of opportunities for change to build on within the design phase.

The following themes were identified in relation to our dream for CRBA in EP practice:

**Relationships** – using a relational approach with all stakeholders, working collaboratively, a joined up multi-agency approach, building relationships in the community, having greater presence as a profession within society

**Agents for change** – being the butterflies, being the change, using our influence to model and share good practice, doing research with CYP, challenging practice of others when needed, sharing resources, a mission statement and meet the team documents to have a greater presence

**Systems** – working across school, regional and national systems to promote CRBA in EP work, through our interactions, training, research, service level agreements and by creating a framework for practice

**Creating opportunities for change** – looking at the factors that hinder the use of CRBA and seeing them as opportunities for change, e.g. time, money, statutory demand, accessibility, knowledge about EP team and profession, others' ideas about the way we work

**Child-centred** – sharing knowledge with children, schools and families about EP services and support, developing child focused feedback, advocating genuinely at all levels of EP work, having child-centred values at the core of our practice, with CYP voice and participation providing the golden thread

**Our shared vision:** By children, with children, for children

[Image of Thematic Map from Workshop 3]

#### **Design phase:**

In this phase we co-constructed an action plan, guided by a series of provocative propositions (guiding statements) based on the opportunities for change we had identified, to support us to begin to realise our dream for future practice in relation to CRBA.

#### **Action Plan:**

A summary of the provocative propositions and overall actions identified is provided below. For a full copy of the action plan, that details specific actions, who will oversee them, resources needed and how impact will be monitored, please refer to the document sent via email by the researcher.

[Action plan inserted here]

It is hoped that this action plan can continue to be reviewed and developed to continue to support EP practice.

**Destiny phase:**

In this phase we reviewed and updated our action plan, reflecting on what had been achieved, what was still outstanding and whether any changes were needed. Additional actions were identified to continue to support us in realising our dream for EP practice in relation to CRBA. We acknowledged the need for continued momentum and a need to embed CRBA in our work, and created a framework for practice to support us to achieve this.

**[Framework for practice inserted here]**

Within the destiny phase, we reflected on the factors that enable us to use CRBA in our work, which supported the development of the 5C's framework. The 5 C's (Care, Confidence, Commitment, Collaboration and Creativity) were the themes identified in this phase.

**Implications:** It is hoped that this study can help the EP team who participated, the local authority, and other EP teams in the country, to promote the use of children's rights-based approaches in their practice, based on the positive factors identified within this study and the framework for practice that was developed as a result. By influencing the practice of EP teams, it is hoped that this research will have a wider impact on the development of children's rights-based approaches within schools, to positively impact all children and young people within the local authority.

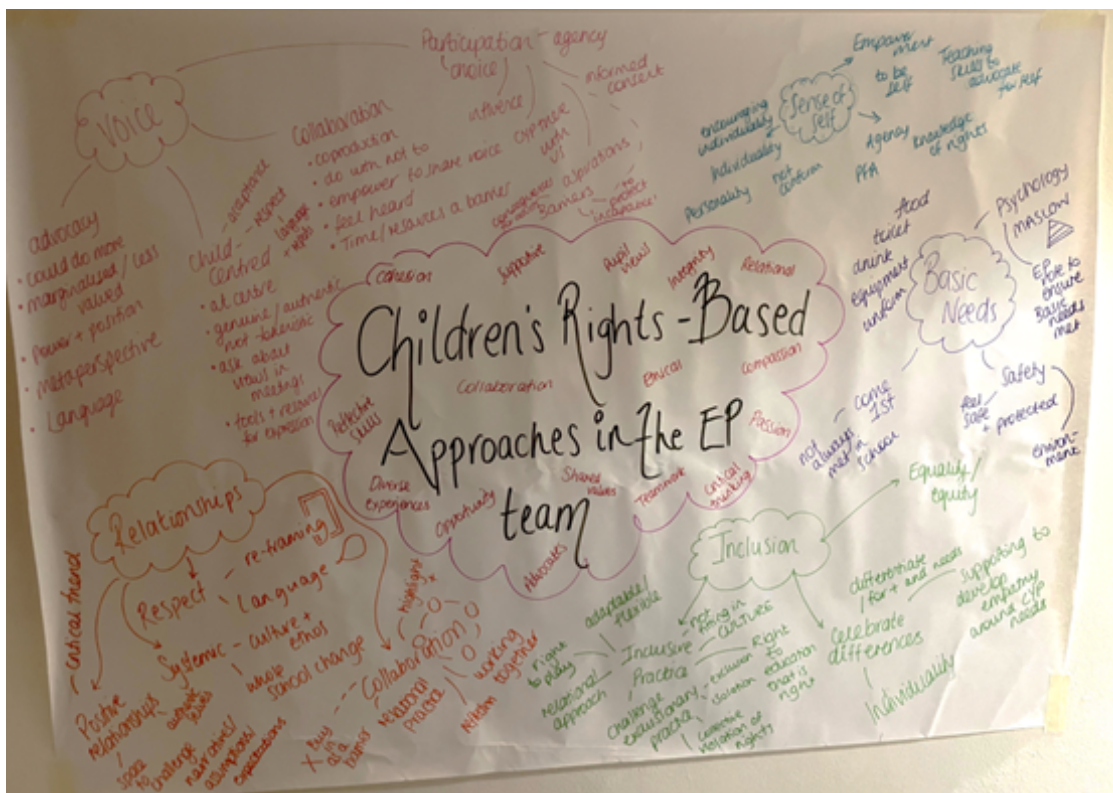
Participant's reflections on the process of AI highlight that participants benefitted from being given an opportunity to develop their personal, professional and team practice alongside colleagues, and felt the AI process was supportive to developing their practice. It is hoped that the reflections shared around the process of AI for supporting the continued professional development of an EP team therefore offers some evidence for the effectiveness of the appreciative inquiry process to bring about positive change, that provides support for the use of this approach within EP teams in the future.

**Further information:** If you would like any further information about this study, please contact the researcher or her supervisor using the contact details above.

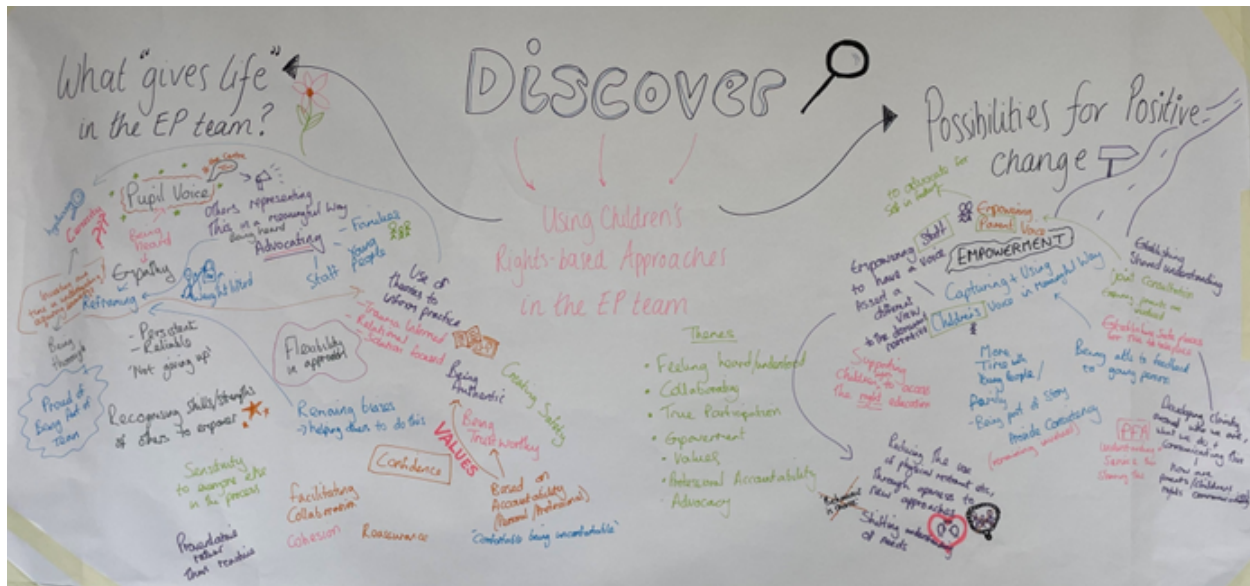
**Further support:** If you wish to seek further support or talk to somebody about your feelings in relation to this study, please do so with your supervisor. You may wish to contact them or utilise your next supervision session to discuss your feelings or concerns.

**Thank you once again for your time and participation.**

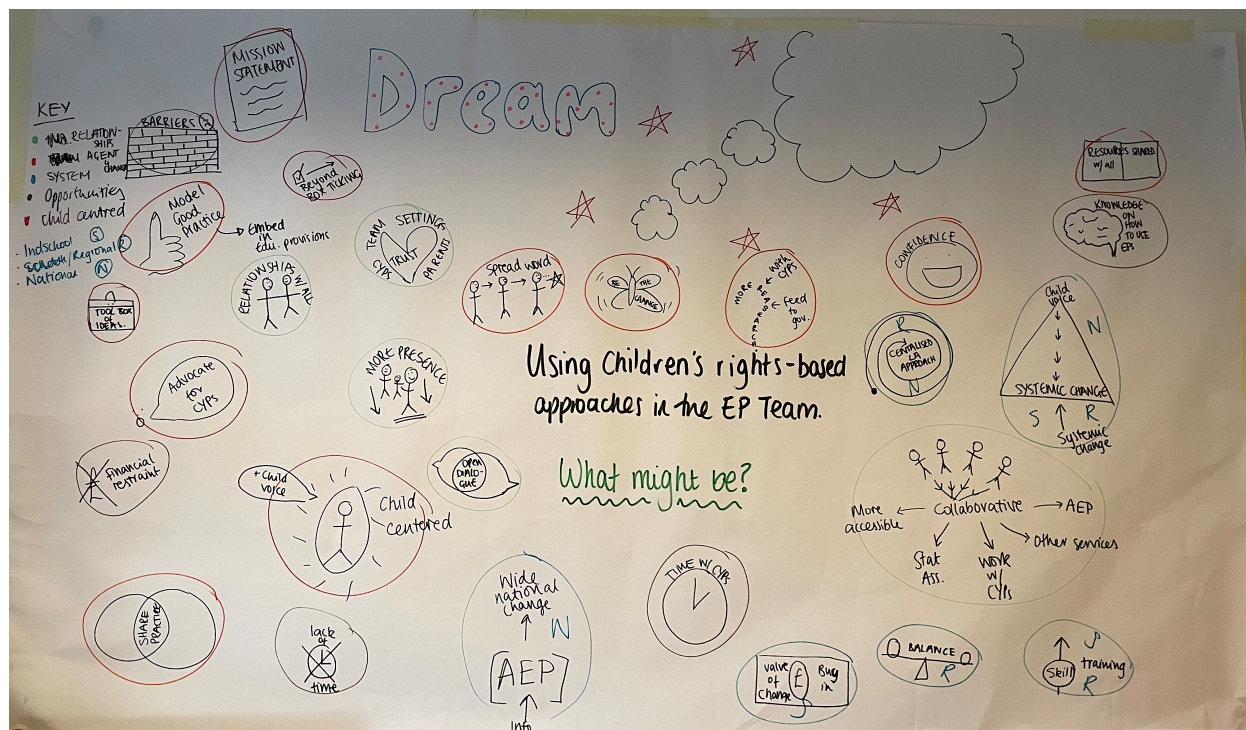
Appendix 20 – Image of rich picture created by participants in Workshop 1



Appendix 21 – Image of Thematic Map, created by participants in Workshop 2



**Appendix 22** – Image of Thematic Map created by participants in Workshop 3, and a table to detail all dreams identified by participants.



Theme	Dreams identified
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding a relational approach within the EP team and modelling this through interactions – maintaining the trust we have developed with schools, other services and CYP, and in the advice provided by the EPS.</li> <li>• Exploring how CRBA fits with existing work around relational approaches that is going on with schools in the LA.</li> <li>• Supporting all schools within the LA to develop relational approaches to their practice.</li> <li>• Building better relationships with the local community, to ensure they know who the EP team are, the kinds of work they do and the values that underpin this work.</li> <li>• Having open dialogues with schools around how they are gathering children's views and how this informs practices within schools.</li> <li>• Greater collaboration and a more joined up approach with other services and professionals.</li> <li>• A more collaborative process for statutory assessments, that is child-centered and based on children's rights, such as joint meetings including the child and all professionals to write the plan.</li> <li>• Greater presence as a profession within wider society to increase awareness around the EP role through engaging in interviews,</li> </ul>

	producing articles and publications that are accessible to a wider audience.
<b>Agents for change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being involved with more research that collects CYP views and using them to inform practice, both within the LA and within education regionally and nationally.</li> <li>• Modelling good practice and embedding CRBA in EP work, and sharing this good practice with other stakeholders so that they can also move towards adopting CRBA in their work.</li> <li>• Developing confidence in challenging negative language used to describe CYP and their needs by having a greater understanding and awareness of CRBA and being able to embed this knowledge as a team.</li> <li>• Develop an EPS mission statement to share our values around adopting CRBA with those that we work with.</li> <li>• Develop a centralised place for families and schools to access information and resources that promote children's rights.</li> <li>• Greater engagement with community and school events to share our work and approach around children's rights to have greater influence for CYP and families across the LA.</li> </ul>
<b>Systems (school, regional, national)</b>	<p>School system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding a CRBA within the EP team that is used consistently to support schools to guide and shape their practice over time; a gradual approach to changing narratives and practice.</li> <li>• Greater buy in to EP services and support.</li> <li>• Developing a training package around CRBA for schools to raise awareness and understanding, and support the adoption of CRBA embedded within whole school systems, culture and practice.</li> <li>• Supporting schools to recognise the positive aspects of their existing practice that is rights-respecting and building on this.</li> <li>• Upskilling staff and empowering them to be agents of change to better the outcomes of all children.</li> <li>• Working with CYP to ensure their views and voice is used to create systemic change within schools.</li> </ul>
	<p>Regional System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more equitable service delivery model that is accessible for all children, families and schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To achieve this, participants identified a short term goal of ensuring some aspects of EP services that promote CRBA can be accessed by everyone for free and a longer term goal of ensuring all schools have equal access to EP services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Service Level Agreements that allow greater time to work with CYP and schools in a way that aligns with a CRBA.</li> <li>• Developing training and a framework for best practice around CRBA that can be shared with other services within the LA and EP teams regionally so that they understand how they can shape their practice to be more rights-respecting.</li> <li>• Developing a LA mission statement and a centralised LA approach that are informed by children's rights to ensure everybody is working to these values.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging in participatory research with CYP as an EP team to inform practice within the LA and create systemic change that is underpinned by the views of CYP within the LA.</li> </ul> <p>National System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A centralised LA approach that is rights-respecting, that can be shared nationally with other LAs.</li> <li>• Sharing information and the outcomes of our practice and research in relation to CRBA with the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) to inspire wider national change to government practice from the bottom up, by linking with those in positions of power and influence.</li> <li>• Ensuring child voice is central and underpins all systemic change.</li> <li>• Supporting a change in the curriculum so that it is more child-centered and rights-respecting.</li> <li>• Greater presence as a profession nationally, to ensure that we are respected, trusted and consulted in government level issues around education.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities for change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring service level agreements and how these are set up so that practice is not as restricted and a CRBA can be employed more consistently to support schools to sustain positive change.</li> <li>• Negotiating time to spend with CYP to adopt child-centred approaches that are rights-based.</li> <li>• Exploring different ways to overcome the statutory pressures and demands associated with the EP role, as this reduces the time EPs have to work with schools using CRBA.</li> <li>• Removing the barriers to providing an accessible service for all children, families and schools so that everybody can access EP services that promote children's rights.</li> <li>• Finding a balance between accessibility and maintaining integrity and rigour within the services we provide.</li> <li>• Sharing knowledge about the EP team, the role and the values underpinning practice so that schools and families know what services can be provided, and to extend the ways schools work with EPs by promoting different ways of working that adopt CRBA to use SLA time more effectively.</li> </ul>
<b>Child-centred practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing knowledge around the EP team, the EP role and the values that underpin practice within the team so that CYP, families and schools know about the services offered and the approaches used, to avoid EPs being seen as the gatekeepers for statutory assessment or a box ticking exercise.</li> <li>• Developing knowledge and use of child-focused feedback and report writing within the EP team.</li> <li>• Greater flexibility in the use of the EP toolkit when working with CYP and schools to ensure a CRBA that is based on the individual needs of the CYP.</li> <li>• Embedding advocacy for CYP views in EP work at all levels, for consultation, traded work and statutory work, and developing confidence with this.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing a mission statement that includes the EP team's child-centred values</li><li>• Promoting total communication environments and voice-inclusive approaches to ensure that the views of all CYP can be captured and heard, and so that every child has a trusted adult they can talk to in school.</li><li>• Empower CYP to advocate for themselves and represent their own views and experiences.</li><li>• Ensuring CYP voice underpins all aspects of EP work and provides the golden thread to what EPs do.</li><li>• Support all schools to establish positive ways of gathering CYP voice and using this to inform their practice within schools, at the individual, group and whole school levels.</li></ul>
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**Appendix 23** – Amended action plan, initially generated by the research team in Workshop 4 (Design) and reviewed in Workshop 5 (Destiny).

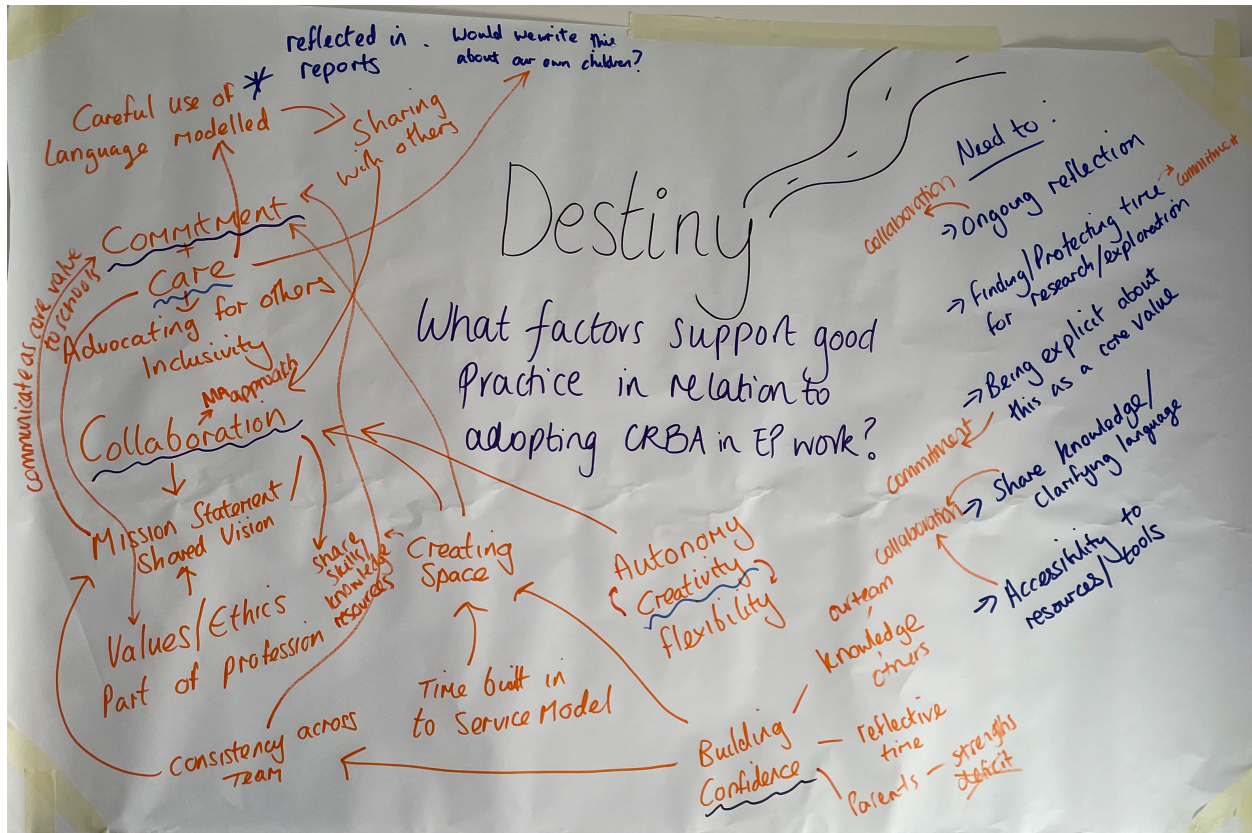
<b>Action Plan</b>							
<b>Provocative Proposition/ Guiding statement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>How?</b>	<b>When?</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>How will we know it has had an impact?</b>	<b>Review 01/02/2024</b>
We explore creative ways to include pupil voice in our verbal and written feedback.	Look at the language we use when speaking and writing about children.	Link in with the trauma informed innovation group to explore rights-respecting language use and explore how this fits with the work we are doing. Attend this innovation group and feedback to the research team.	Discuss at next innovation group.  Feedback to research team at next workshop on 01/02/24.	3 participants	N/A	Shift in the language used in all communication by the EP team and eventually those that we work with (schools, parents, other professionals).	3 participants discussed with innovation group.  Service day planned to discuss with wider team – specifically focused around trauma-informed practice and language used in report writing, which links in with rights-respecting language.  Therapeutic letter examples that one participant has developed will be shared with wider team.
	Gather templates of child-centred reports.	Review and update the existing folder on the shared drive that contains child-centred reports.	Everybody to add examples and templates of child friendly reports to the folder.	One participant to lead. Everybody to contribute.	Examples and templates.	Templates that have been collated are being used by the EP team when report writing.	One participant has created a folder on the shared drive. The team have saved a selection of child-centred reports in this location.  This links with service day input, exploring this as a wider team. Next step – further reminder and request to team to add child-centred reports.

							Have a go at using these templates and continue discussions around how they can/are being used.
We proudly communicate our mission statement and shared vision in all correspondence and will revisit this regularly to ensure it remains relevant to our practice.	Discuss the idea of creating a new mission statement with the team.	Speak to SLT to discuss possibility of developing a new mission statement.  Add to agenda of next team meeting.	Before the next workshop on 01/02/24.	Researcher to speak to SEP. SEP to raise at SLT meeting.  One participant to add to team meeting agenda to discuss with wider EP team.	N/A	We will have a discussion with the wider team at an EP team meeting. Feedback and ideas generated from this discussion.	Researcher has spoken to SLT – will be raised in their meeting.  Await feedback from SLT and then add to team meeting agenda.  Links in with innovation group around creating better links with parents and carers.
We actively seek children and young people's participation in research to improve the delivery of our service and associated services.	Ask our schools what they are currently doing to obtain child voice and encourage participation.	Have a conversation with our own schools to determine what they are currently doing and resources they are currently using.	Before the next workshop on 01/02/24.	All group members.	N/A	The group will have further information about tools that are currently being used, to inform future ideas around research.	Feedback from group around the ways that schools are obtaining child voice: Student council, nominated peers from each year group Within 1 academy trust children from each year group are selected for sessions throughout the year. Sessions focused on general topics to explore CYP understanding, e.g. PHSE, safety in school, curriculum focus, well-being). Appears to be from Ofsted perspective. Feedback from working directly with CYP in secondary

							schools – they don't care what I think/say Next step – to use this information to inform possible research projects in this area.
	Have a conversation with the senior EP team to determine whether it is possible to collaborate with trainee EP research in this area moving forwards.	Researcher to speak to SEP. SEP to raise in SLT meeting as a point of discussion	Before the next workshop on 01/02/24.	Researcher SEP Other participants can support co-ordination through links with University moving forwards if agreed.	N/A	Feedback from SLT around whether linking up with trainee research is possible.	Researcher raised with SLT – on the agenda for next SLT meeting.  Participants supporting co-ordination with universities to consider possible projects.  Team considered possible directions for this research, if EPS were to propose a project. Focus on: Do children know what their rights are? Do they think their rights are being met in school?
We promote children's rights-based approaches in our work with other stakeholders and show a commitment to supporting those that we work with to develop their own practice and ensure that it is rights-respecting.	Develop training around children's rights-based approaches based on the outcomes of this research project.	Discuss possibility of developing training at whole service level in September 2024 when research is complete.  Consider innovation group to support development.	September 2024 when research project is complete.	Researcher to lead. Support from other group members TBC.	Time to develop training and consultation with SLT to develop package for schools/other stakeholders to roll training out.	Schools will be signing up to training package and utilising approach within their work.	Action not yet met as research project not complete.  Team raised that this training could link in with training around relate to educate/relational approaches which is currently in development.  Opportunities to disseminate learning from this project through training. Explore

							possibilities of sharing this training more widely at SENCo conference, regional conference, head teacher forum, with the virtual school, other organisations.
As an EP team we encourage collaboration and sharing our development in relation to adopting children's rights-based approaches in practice.	Feedback on the project to the wider EP team at a whole service day.	Discuss as a group what we would like to feedback and who will be involved.	Whole service day at the end of the academic year?  Group discussion prior to this to plan (June 2023).	Researcher to lead, other group members to be involved TBC.	Time to meet together and plan service day input.	Wider team will have an understanding of the work completed.	Time booked in at whole service day in July to present back to wider team.  Organisation about what this will look like and who will be involved TBC.  Explore possibility of continuing to embed this work through an innovation group next year – acknowledged by the team that it is important to keep meeting and talking about this to support embedding it in our practice.

**Appendix 24** – Thematic Map and Framework for practice co-developed by participants in Workshop 5 (Destiny).



### Care

Do we take care in how we talk to and about children?  
Do we reflect on this?

### Collaboration

Are we facilitating and sharing ideas, knowledge and resources in a collaborative way to promote CRBA within and outside the service?

### Confidence

Are we confident in our knowledge about CRBA?

Image covered to maintain confidentiality as participants included the service logo within their framework for practice

### Creativity

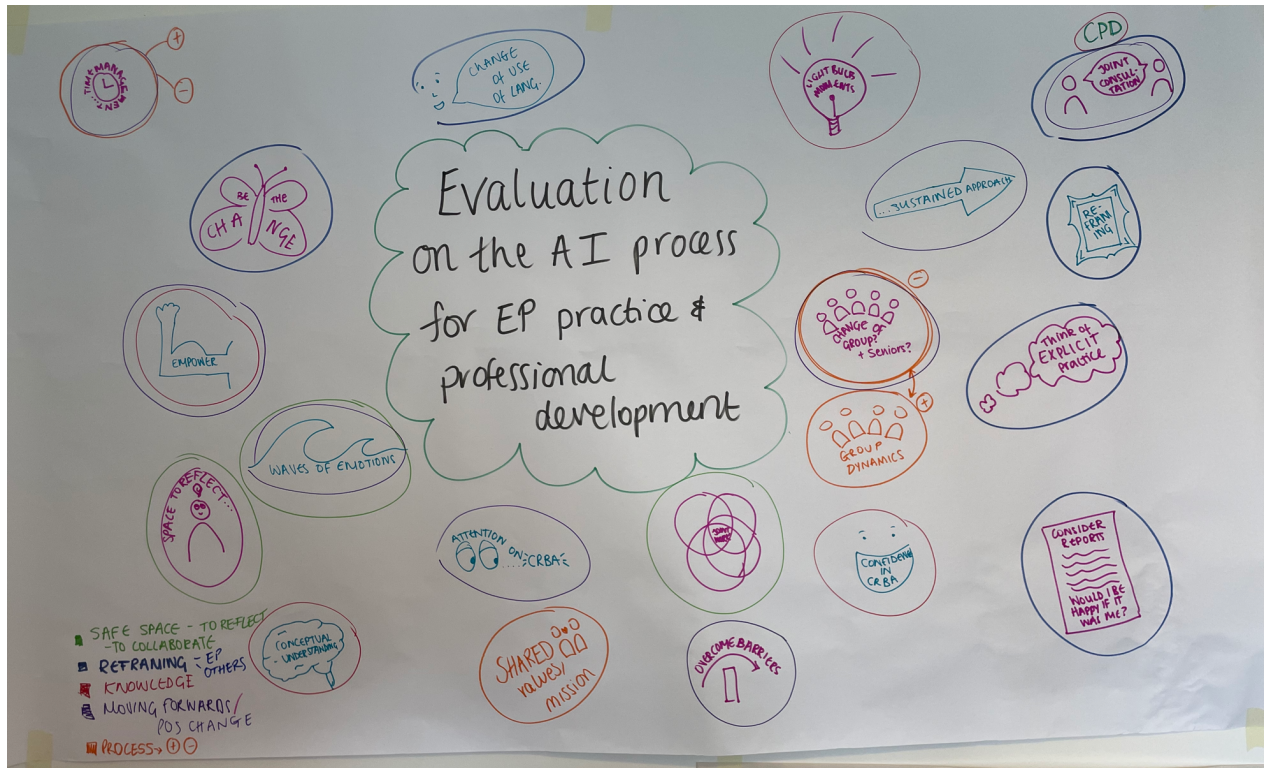
Do we creatively employ the skills and knowledge to work in a CRBA way?

### Commitment

Are we committed to prioritizing and advocating CRBA in our practice?

By children, with children, for children

Appendix 25 – Thematic Map, created by participants in Workshop 6 (Evaluation)





**Appendix 26** – Illustrative example of researcher reflections, that were generated by the researcher after each phase of AI, and shared with participants at the subsequent workshop for member checking and review/amendment.

*This example was provided based on data gathered in the dream phase:*

**WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TODAY TO MAKE YOU FEEL PROUD?**

### Reflections on Workshop 3 – The Dream Phase

Relationships	Agents for change	Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are trusted within the team, with parents and within settings. We build positive relationships and when we give advice it is trusted to be appropriate. We support CYP to feel safe when we are involved; they trust us. These are factors we want to keep and embed in our work.</li> <li>We want to use relational approaches with all stakeholders to ensure that there is the space for CYP views to be heard, understood, and have influence, they are used to inform change.</li> <li>Modelling a relational approach within our own interactions and encouraging and supporting the development of relational approaches within all of our schools to support positive outcomes for all children, and to support schools to buy in to our services. We want to explore how children's rights-based approaches and language fits with this to promote it as part of this work that is already underway with schools.</li> <li>Collaboration supports us to work in a children's rights-based way. We want to strive to always create a collaborative approach through positive relationships with other teams so that we can embed and promote a rights-respecting approach to practice.</li> <li>We want the statutory assessment process to be more collaborative and joined up so that it is child-centered and based on children's rights, e.g. sitting down with everybody, including the child, to write the plan.</li> <li>We would like to have a more joined up approach with other services.</li> <li>We want to have open dialogue with our schools and try to find out what they are doing to gather children's voices and bring this to the forefront.</li> <li>We want to build relationships with our local community and ensure that our community knows who we are, what we do and what our values are as an EP team. The more people know about us, the more we are trusted and respected, which could have a wider positive systemic impact at a national level, if we can build relationships based on this respect.</li> <li>We need to have greater presence as a profession so that people within wider society know what Educational Psychologists do. We could go to interviews, produce articles, papers or publications that are accessible to a wider audience by building relationships and links with communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We want to be the butterflies and be the change – <i>'It only takes one butterfly to start flapping their wings for others to copy, so go and be the butterfly'</i></li> <li>We can use our influence as an EPS to share and spread practice around children's rights because we are well-respected and have a good reputation.</li> <li>We would like to do more research with CYP where we collect their views to inform our practice and wider practice within education regionally and nationally by presenting and promoting the outcomes of this research in accessible ways. 'Our children have said ... so we have done ...'. One way this could be achieved based on current work of <b>AsEPs</b> within the team is through the EBSA work.</li> <li>We want to feel confident to challenge negative language used to describe children and their needs and to be able to link this back to a rights-based approach and embed this as a team.</li> <li>We model good practice and would like to continue to do this and embed it into all of our work.</li> <li>We want to share good practice around adopting rights-based approaches with other stakeholders, so that they can also adopt rights-respecting practice to benefit CYP.</li> <li>We would like to have a centralised place for families and schools to access our resources and be better at sharing our resources that promote children's rights with all, using resources such as the website, online platforms, sharing directly with schools, attending more events (open days/coffee mornings). This will support us to have a greater influence in all LA schools.</li> <li>We would like to have an EPS mission statement that can be shared with others to show what are core values are in adopting children's rights-based approaches. We would also like to have met the team documents so that we can share our values with those that we work with.</li> </ul>	<p><b>School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We want to support schools to see the value of the changes they make and build, sustain and maintain positive relationships with our schools over time to create buy in for our services and support. Embedding a children's rights-based approach within our team so that this can be used consistently with schools to guide and facilitate a journey of change over time, working with different ideas and slowly changing narratives and approaches to practice.</li> <li>We want to develop training for schools that focuses on children's rights and supports them to better understand children's rights and how their practice can be rights-respecting, as well as noticing the aspects of their practice that are already rights-respecting and how power dynamics fit in with rights-based practice too. This will raise awareness of children's rights and rights-respecting practice in schools.</li> <li>We want schools to be invested in learning more and adopting children's rights-based approaches. We want this to be the next 'big thing' and for them to feel that there is a perceived benefit to embracing it.</li> <li>We want to upskill staff in schools and empower them to be agents of whole school change, embedding this practice within their own systems to better the outcomes for all children and young people and making this a key value and principles within our schools.</li> <li>We want to use child voice to create systemic change, ensuring change is underpinned by this.</li> <li>We would like all children in our schools to be included, welcome, feel happy in school and like they belong and that education is safe.</li> </ul> <p><b>Regional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We want to ensure that our service model is equitable. This means looking at the SLAs schools buy with us as this directly impacts on the time we have to work with schools and the kind of support we can offer.</li> <li>We want to provide a more accessible service for all of our children, families and schools to ensure that everybody can access aspects of our services that promote children's rights, e.g. EBSA webinar, relational approaches.</li> <li>We want to provide a more accessible service for all children, families and schools so that those that don't have SLAs can still access our services.</li> <li>In the longer term, we want to ensure that all schools have equal access to our services.</li> <li>We want to develop training and frameworks for best practice that focuses on children's rights and upskills other services to understand how children's rights-based approaches to practice can be adopted by EP teams. We want to share our work with other teams within the local authority to support them to understand what they can do to be more rights-respecting.</li> <li>Having a local authority mission statement and a centralised LA approach so that everybody is working to the same set of values and practices that are child-centered and rights-respecting.</li> <li>Using child voice to create systemic change, ensuring change is underpinned by children's voices and they understand how their voice has influenced change. These voices could be gathered through EP research that is participatory and involves CYP in our LA.</li> </ul> <p><b>National</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having a centralised LA approach that is recognised and shared nationally.</li> <li>Sharing information with AEP (via the AEP rep) to create change from the bottom up and inspire wider national change at a government level via sharing information with those in a position of power and influence. Sharing the outcomes of our work, practice and research would support us to do this.</li> <li>Using child voice to create systemic change, ensuring change is underpinned by this</li> <li>We would like to support a change in the curriculum so that it can be more child-centered and rights-respecting. We would like all children to be included, welcome, feel happy in school and like they belong and that education is safe. We would like there to be less formal assessments.</li> <li>We would like to have more presence as a profession nationally, so that people know about us and respect us and consult with us about education issues at a government level.</li> </ul>



## Reflections on Workshop 3 – The Dream Phase Continued

### Factors that hinder - creating opportunities for change

- We want to consider the financial factors that are present for and restrict schools in accessing our services and prevent us from always being able to adopt a children's rights-based approach.
- We want to think about the barriers associated with SLA time and how these can be overcome as they have a knock-on effect on our ability to build strong and positive relationships with schools to bring in children's rights-based approaches and use these more consistently, particularly as this is a journey of systemic change.
- We would love to have more time to spend with CYP so that we can adopt child-centered approaches that are truly rights-based wherever possible, which means overcoming the barriers around the restrictiveness of service level agreements and statutory demands.
- We need to consider the time constraints on our work and the factors that influence this to understand how this has an impact on our ability to consistently deliver a children's rights-based approach in our practice.
- We want to try and remove the barriers to providing an accessible service for all of our children, families and schools to ensure that everybody can access our services that promote children's rights, e.g. if a school cannot afford to buy SLA time.
- We want to find the right balance between accessibility and maintaining our integrity and rigour within the services we provide so that this is manageable.
- We want to share knowledge about our EP team, our values and our role so that others (schools and families) know what kind of services we can provide to support and benefit children and the school system as a whole and extend the ways in which schools work with us to have the best outcomes for the children and young people, balancing what school want with how we feel this may be best delivered. This would also support in schools and families understanding us as more than a box ticking exercise, or a gatekeeper to the EHCP process.
- We want to try and extend schools understanding of the ways that we work and try to promote different ways of working with schools so that we don't fall into a routine of only delivering particular ways of working that are less systemic and may not be the best way to adopt a rights-based approach and we can use their SLA time more efficiently.

### Child-centered

- We want to share knowledge about our EP team, our values and our role so that others (schools and families) know what kind of services we can provide to support children to try and limit only being seen as the gatekeepers to a statutory assessment or a box ticking exercise.
- We want to develop our knowledge and use of child-focused feedback and reports within the EP team, writing to the child rather than it being aimed at others or written more formally.
- We would like to be able to use our toolbox of ideas and strategies flexibly for the children that we work with, and support schools to understand the different tools we have available to support CYP.
- We try as much as possible to advocate for CYP in a genuine way at all levels of our work. This is something we want to embed across consultation, traded work, and statutory work and we do this with confidence.
- Child focused values underpin all aspects of our work and sit at the core of our practice. The child is held at the centre of our work; they are seen as the client. We want to hold on to this and practice in a way that makes this explicit.
- We would like to promote total communication environments and voice-inclusive approaches so that every child's voice can be heard and they all have a trusted adult to talk to in school.
- We want to empower and support CYP to better advocate for themselves and represent their own views and experiences.
- We want to ensure that children's voice underpins all of our work and provides a golden thread to what we do. We want to make sure we are promoting true participation for all CYP that we work with.
- We want to have open dialogue with our schools and try to find out what they are doing to gather children's voices and bring this to the forefront.



### Top 5 opportunities

1. Shorter/alternative child focused reports and child centered feedback
  2. EPS mission statement and associated documents
  3. Research with CYP
  4. Training around children's rights and rights-based approaches for schools and other stakeholders
  5. More time with CYP
- Feedback around this project to the wider team  
Bringing links for CRBA within innovation groups

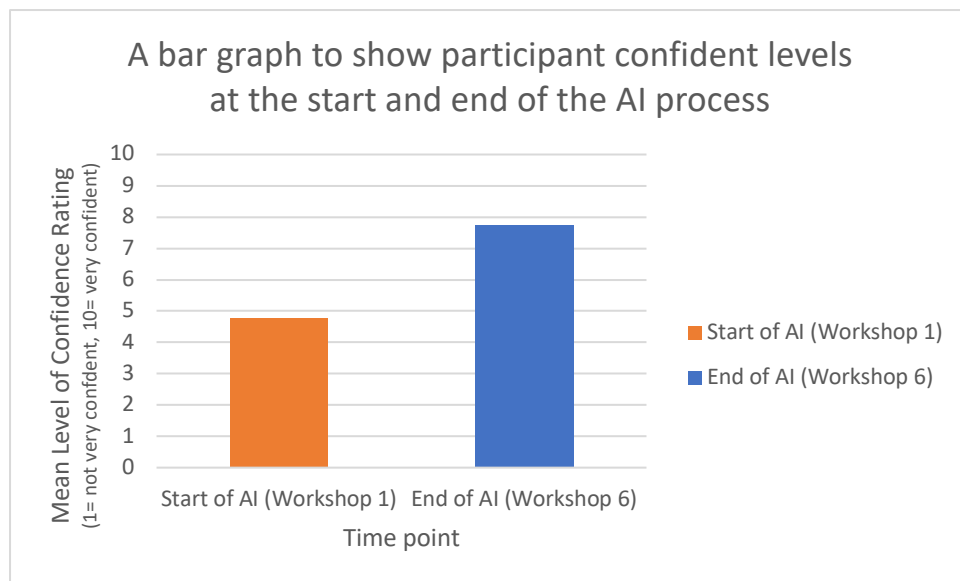
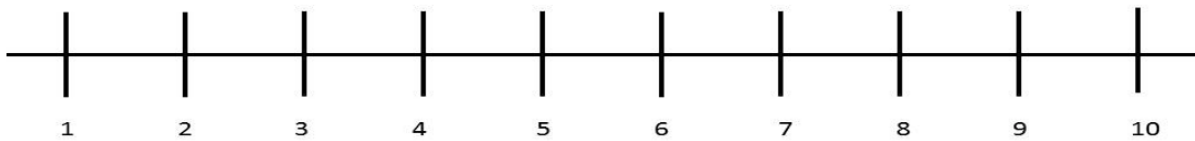
### Our shared vision

BY CHILDREN, WITH CHILDREN,  
FOR CHILDREN



**Appendix 27** – Scaling activity completed by participants at the start and end of the AI process, to measure confidence levels – including template of scale used and graph to show findings pre and post AI.

How confident do you feel about using children's rights-based approaches in your practice at this stage?



**Appendix 28** – Table to show participant process reflections at each phase of AI

<b>Phase of AI</b>	<b>Participant's reflections</b>
<b>Define</b>	<p><i>'how have we got to this point'</i></p> <p><i>'it has re-invigorated me to think, this is what we do and why we do it, and we can do it'</i></p> <p><i>'it's hard to make time for this kind of thing, but you do it and you appreciate it so much and it makes you realize what you appreciate about our role'</i></p>
<b>Discover</b>	<p><i>'useful'</i></p> <p><i>'I'm learning a lot'</i></p> <p><i>'so useful to think about the things we are already doing well'</i></p> <p><i>'it will be helpful to think about what we can do as a service to make things better in the next session'</i></p>
<b>Dream</b>	<p><i>'such a positive session'</i></p> <p><i>'I feel excited and apprehensive'</i></p>
<b>Design</b>	<i>'It is helpful to have an action plan'</i>
<b>Destiny</b>	<p><i>'I'm proud of us'</i></p> <p><i>'I've really enjoyed being part of this'</i></p>