An exploration of the ways in which children with Communication Difficulties can be enabled to express views on their experience of meeting Educational Professionals: An Action Research project

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Abstract

This action research explored the ways in which children with Communication Difficulties could be enabled to express views on meeting educational professionals, particularly Educational Psychologists for the purpose of Statutory Assessment (SA). It built upon the body of literature on children's participation and especially the importance of hearing the marginalised voice of children with Communication Difficulties in educational settings. Uniquely, the research elicited children's understandings of the process and outcomes of assessment: looking beyond describing what they did or did not like. The research was framed by Self Determination Theory. Exploring the restraining and enabling factors in this process was the original contribution of this research to the field.

A social constructionist epistemology underpinned this research: positioning children's views as constructed through the interactive, cyclical process of being listened to, and acted upon. Each of the four stages of the research process led serially to the next, culminating in a final detailed piece of research. For this final research stage, thirteen children with Communication Difficulties, aged between six and ten years and attending mainstream settings, were recruited. They were observed giving views on their recent experiences of SA, supported by an adult and using an iPad application developed in the preceding stages. Semi-structured interviews followed the observations, using an explanatory leaflet about SA also developed during the research. These findings were then thematically analysed using a deductive approach.

Findings identified particular socio-contextual factors that are perceived as enabling or restraining by children with Communication Difficulties. They were less likely to have contextually appropriate ways to respond to questions due to a lack of preparation, explanation and previous opportunities to practise giving views. Difficulties in communication were supported by conduits that encouraged alternative methods of communication and provided visual structure. Supporting adults played a key role within collaborative relationships that boosted the children's autonomy and encouraged their competence. Outcomes from the research included the importance of: child-friendly information concerning the SA process and especially with a focus on preparing a child to meet with an EP; a multi-media application to support children's views; a checklist for EPs and good practice guidance for schools.

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Table of Abbreviations

AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASN	Additional Support Needs
BPS	British Psychological Society
CD	Communication Difficulties
CCD	Children with Communication Difficulties
CLA	Children Looked After
CYP	Children and Young People
DDA	Disability and Discrimination Act
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
ECC	Essex County Council
EHC	Education, Health and Care plans
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPQ	Essex Pupil Questionnaire
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council (from August 2012)
HPC	Health Professions Council (prior to August 2012)
LA	Local Authority
LD	Learning Difficulties
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
NC	National Curriculum
PI	Performance Indicators
PIL	Pupil Information Leaflet
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
PPS	Parent Partnership Service
RCSLT	Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
SA	Statutory Assessment
SA+	School Action Plus
SDT	Self Determination Theory

SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SSEN	Statement of Special Educational Needs
UK	United Kingdom

Chapter One: Introduction

This first chapter introduces the area for the present research. It defines the key terms *children's views* and *communication difficulties* (1.1) and explores the socio-historical discourse on children's increased participation, legislative catalysts and educational applications (1.2). The research focuses on children with communication difficulties (CCD) and how their views are sought and used within the process of Statutory Assessment (SA). This introduction also describes the local background to the present research (1.3) and an Educational Psychology Service (EPS) with a pioneering commitment to accessing and acting upon the authentic views of all children.

The later sections of this chapter provide a legal, moral and organisational rationale for deciding upon this area of research. The theoretical framework of self-determination theory (SDT) that underpins this thesis (1.4) provides context for discussion of the researcher's own epistemological position. The introduction closes by describing the distinctive contribution and impact of the research (1.5).

1.1   Definition of terms

1.1.1   Children's Views

Listening to or *hearing children*, *children's views* and *the voice of the child* are synonymously used by authors across sociological, psychological and educational fields (CYPU, 2001; Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Clark, Kjørholt and Moss, 2005). Related to this are the terms *consultation with children* and *enabling pupil participation*, which have been adopted in recent times within political discourse (DfES, 2001b; DfES, 2004; DfE, 2012). Language matters. To be listened to is not conceptually the same as to hold a view; to have a voice does not convey any particular level of participation; and subtle changes in language can reinforce power differentials between children and adults or empower children. Hall (2006) makes a helpful distinction of *consultation* as eliciting views in order to make decisions and of *participation* as more direct

contributions to decision-making. All these terms rely on subjective interpretation and yet are rarely defined in the literature.

Stafford, Laybourn, Hill and Walker assert that:

> "Consultation should be a genuine attempt to listen seriously to young people's views, and then act on them…" (2003, p. 365)

So too Dickins, Emerson and Gordon-Smith (2004) allude to a process that begins by acknowledging that children hold views and are then enabled to share those views by being listened to by respectful adults, whereupon, the adults consult further with the children in order to convert those views into actions. This process has been termed a listening continuum (Gersch, 2001) and Klein's (2003) metareview of national and international research cites numerous examples where children's views have resulted in tangible outcomes. The difficulty is that the use of nebulous, conceptual language permits very varied interpretations of what children's views are, how they are gathered and how much, if at all, they need be acted upon.

For the purposes of this current research, the reading of *children's views* is understood to be:

a) **All communications from children offered in response to a given prompt.**

Communications need not be verbal or written as these are but two of many ways to express thoughts, experiences, feelings, information and ideas (Dickins, Emerson and Gordon-Smith, 2004)

The child's experience of having had their views heard and acted upon forms the crucial other half of this first step. Listening requires reciprocal expectations: children will not voice their opinions into a vacuum. Dickins (2011) reiterates that it is the interactive skill of listening which both acknowledges children's right to be listened to, and validates the importance of their views.

Accepting then, that children's views are constructed through the interactive process of being listened to, the holistic balance to the definition of children's views used here is:

b) Communications that are listened to, understood and responded to.

Children's views can be seen as initiating, perpetuating and informing a cycle of participation as shown in Figure 1.
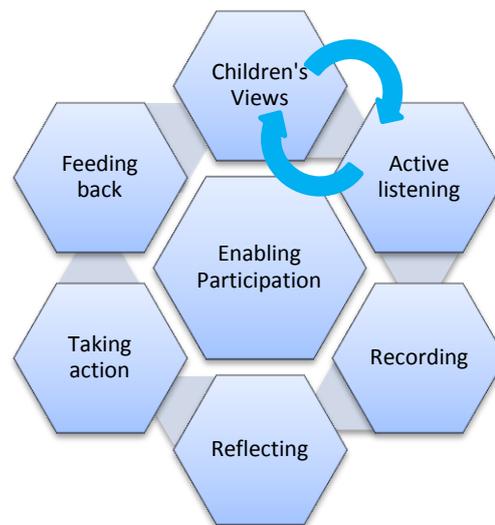
Figure 1.1: A representation of the cycles of participation. Adapted from Clark and Williams (2008, p.9)

1.1.2   Communication Difficulties

According to the Bercow Report, speech, language and communication needs (SLCN):

> "…encompass a wide range of difficulties related to all aspects of communication in children and young people. They can include difficulties with fluency, forming sounds and words, formulating sentences, understanding what others say and using language socially." (Bercow, 2008. p.22)

More recently, the term communication difficulty (CD) has become interchangeable with SLCN and the description expanded to encompass *all* children with any form of need associated with speech, language and/or

communication. For example, hearing impairments, English as an Additional Language or Profound Learning Difficulties.

ICAN[1] (2012) define CCD as experiencing any combination of:

- difficulties articulating speech;
- struggling to say words/sentences;
- misunderstanding words and instructions heard; and
- difficulties knowing how to talk and listen in conversations.

Overlapping but also widening the indications of CD, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) (2010) has categorised competencies which may cause difficulties:

- articulation: effective expression through speaking, writing or non-verbal communication;

- perception: recognising and understanding speech, text, body language and facial expressions;

- listening skills: being able to listen carefully to what is being said;

- recall: remembering information that has previously been given;

- expression: expressing feelings and emotions in an acceptable manner; and

- interaction: relating to others in a socially acceptable manner and thereby promoting social integration.

It is of interest that the RCSLT includes the support of abilities in memory and interaction as integral to a notional picture of CD. Gasgoigne (2012) has called for an agreement on definitions. For the purposes of this thesis the characteristics and competencies used by the RCSLT were adopted as a working definition of CD. This helped to identify pupils for participation who might not have CD (or SLCN, as this term is still in use in the researcher's Local Authority) listed on their Statutory Assessment (SA) paperwork as a principal concern.

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[1] ICAN is a national children's communication charity. ICAN's mission is to ensure that no child who struggles to communicate is left out or left behind. ICAN provides a wide range of information services that provide help and advice to parents and practitioners about speech, language and communication.

Government research specifies that CD as a primary need increased by 58% between 2005 and 2010, but also co-occurs with other types of Special Educational Need (SEN) including autism, learning difficulties and physical impairment (Lindsay, Dockrell and Roulstone, 2011). This may mask the number of children participating in the SA process who experience CD, estimated to affect 7-10 % of all children and rising higher in areas of greater social deprivation (Gasgoigne, 2012). ICAN (2012) estimates that across the UK, CD affects two or three pupils in every classroom.

1.2 National context and background

1.2.1   The legislative and socio-historical landscape

It is reported that support for the involvement of children across the UK in public decision-making is steadily growing (Komulainen, 2007). However, when set against a legislative timeline, it can be seen that the pace of progress reflects just how difficult this seismic shift has been. Over twenty years ago the international scene was set for the awareness of children's rights to be heard in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). This specified that 'all children have the right to express and have their views given due weight in all matters that affect them' (Article 12); 'children have the right to freedom of expression, including the right to see, receive and share information and ideas in ways which make sense to them' (Article 13); and Governments should ensure that children have access to a diverse range of material and information' (Article 17).

In Britain the 1981 Education Act had already gone some way towards taking account of children's feelings and perceptions concerning educational provision. In social care the Children Act (Department of Health [DoH], 1991) gave children the legal right to be consulted regarding their placements. In the SEN Toolkit (DfES, 2001b) the Enabling Pupil Participation guidance stipulates that adults provide children with a supportive, listening environment in order that they can express feelings, participate in discussion and indicate choice. Such policies have a caveat of no guidance as to the level of participation children might be afforded. The capability to express any views was to be determined

according to age and maturity of the child: left unspecified and open to interpretation. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter (2.3.2).

Social studies of child development have informed and supported a changing perspective on children's rights (Hall, 2006). Children are seen as beings, rather than becomings (Cassidy, 2012) with important ideas and experiences to share. Children are now perceived as social agents: active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live (UNICEF, 2007). They have the ability to make their own choices and this is, at least in rhetoric, championed by the majority.

Ensuring that children have a voice is also a moral obligation, encapsulated in the phrase often adopted by marginalised groups 'nothing about us without us'. Children should be involved in and informed about decisions that affect their lives. They need to understand and be able to express their opinions on what is happening, and have their views taken into account. Children also have a right to be provided with any results or data gathered about them in an accessible format, in order that they can understand and comment. Indeed, as Gersch (1996) makes clear, this approach of negotiation and enhanced sense of ownership contributes to successful outcomes.

1.2.2 Educational issues

Children's participation is exemplified in such educational areas as learning processes, individual targets and choice of extra-curricular activities (Gersch, 1996). The level of participation in such activities varies enormously and is usefully seen as a continuum, rather than schools simply adopting an ethos of enabling participation or not (Gersch, 2001). It is an organic process, requiring commitment from staff, which develops over time and at different rates. Hart (1992), a sociologist working for UNICEF, usefully summarised this in his Ladder of Participation.
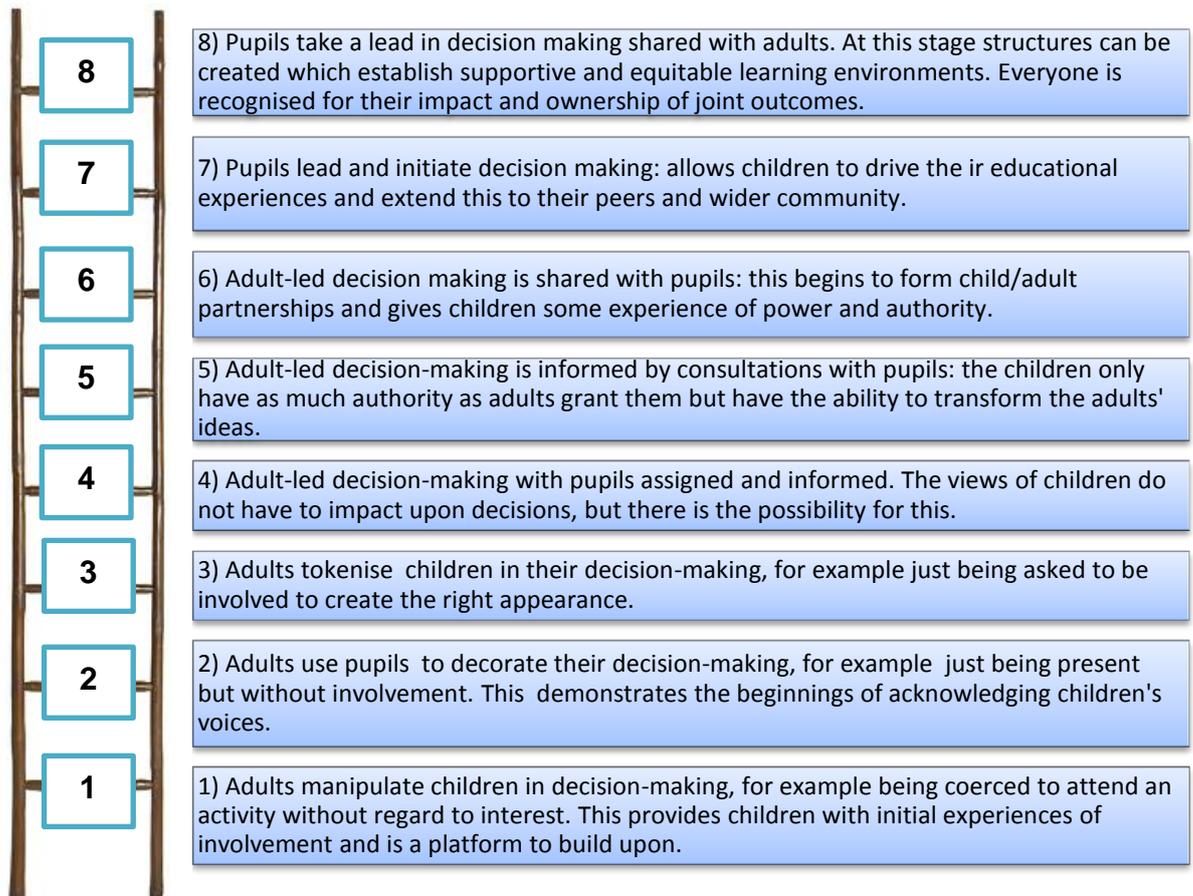
Figure 1.2: A representation of the Ladder of Participation. Adapted from Hart (1992).

The bottom three rungs were originally conceptualised as non-participation and rungs four to eight as degrees of participation. This has been criticised as there are many ways in which children can be enabled to participate in the educational system (Hill, 2006) and it implies a judgement that lower levels of participation must continually be built upon to reach higher, better, levels. For schools and other stakeholders beginning to review their practices of pupil participation and listening to children's views, this would appear to denigrate important small steps and achievements and is much more helpfully seen as a continuum (Klein, 2003). For these reasons Hart's (1992) model is often now represented as a segmented circle showing fluidity rather than hierachy.

It can be seen from the descriptions in Figure 1.2 that a listening ethos is comprised of much more than the interaction of a child-adult dyad, but rather involves a change in the perspectives of all stakeholders involved in the daily life of the school to involve children meaningfully. There are suggestions that participation teaches thinking skills and increases learning and self-esteem

(Jelly, Fuller and Byers, 2000), boosts confidence and self-image (Gersch, 1996), and builds decision-making, problem-solving and self-determinism (Kjørholt, 2005).

In her overview of national and international research, Klein (2003) cites abundant participatory practice in such areas as school councils, playground refurbishments and the quality of school lunches (p.13). She balances this with a note of caution that the evidence for participation enhancing attainment is almost entirely anecdotal and that schools' prioritising of pupil's views can be tokenistic. It is the emphasis on *meaningful* participation that is considered crucial to this thesis. It is laudable to foster a climate of participation but a further philosophical shift is necessary to involve all pupils.

> "The experience of having their views heard and valued by an adult…can provide an enormous boost to the self-esteem of students who believe they have little control over their own lives, and can make a positive contribution to pupils' capacity to learn effectively" (Jelly et al., 2000, p14).

1.2.3 Special Educational Needs

Historically, pupils with special or additional educational needs have been the most marginalised group and often excluded from even basic types of democratic process (Klein, 2003). Their voices have been subsumed into second hand accounts given by professionals or instead reflect the experiences of their parents (Armstrong, 2007). Progress towards meaningful participation is described as 'patchy, unsystematic and slow' (Gersch, 2001. p. 228) and there has been even less advancement in obtaining the views of CCD (Morris, 2003; NCB, 2012).

In part, this tentative pace has to do with the lack of adaptation of appropriate tools (Morris, 2003; Clark, 2005). Gersch (2001) describes children's involvement in the development of a range of new tools for listening to children with a range of simplifications and adaptations to language, headings and the structure of questionnaires. Alternative and creative ways to elicit views are very

important and merit further discussion (see 2.4) but finding the most appropriate conduit is only part of the picture.

> "The genuine involvement of pupils is impossible without appropriate vehicles for children to convey their beliefs" (Gersch, 1996, p.127).

What is being asked of the child is as fundamental as *how* it is asked. A growing number of researchers are exploring the need to elicit the child's feelings on a process (Gersch, 1996, Quicke, 2003) as well as simply describing likes or dislikes. It is quite impossible to separate the child's perspectives, anxieties, motivations or a host of other drives from the activity with which they are engaged. This point of considering affect and process is key to the thesis and therefore is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

> "We found it important to keep asking ourselves how someone's impairment may affect what they pick up or how they respond—rather than their ability to understand or their wish to cooperate" (Morris, 2003, p.344).

The perspective of children taking part in Statutory Assessment (SA) or other SEN procedures receives very little attention in the literature. This raises questions of how prepared the child is, and how their understandings of the purpose of the meeting and everyone's roles impact during and after the meeting. Aston and Lambert (2010) express their concern that the views of young people with CD were not being sought, leaving them unprepared and unpractised in voicing their views. This lack of experience is echoed by Gersch (2001) and Rabiee, Sloper and Beresford (2005). If children do not expect to contribute and their efforts are not supported, they may come to understand that their role is not to question or offer views. They could become disempowered and further marginalised (Jelly et al., 2000). Empowerment can be understood in three parts: to be able to access psychological resources that satisfy basic human needs; to exercise participation and self-determination; and to experience competence and self-efficacy thereby engendering stability and predictability (Prillenltensky, Nelson and Peirson, 2001).

The meaning that children with CD take from their SA could be said to be altered by their expectations, how they experienced the event, their level of understanding of what took place, how they related to those present, whether they felt competent and listened to, and how much choice and autonomy they felt. Gersch, Holgate and Sigston (1993) stress the need for EPs to clearly explain their role at the outset and to encourage children to ask lots of questions about this, perhaps with the aid of a leaflet. The need for clear, child friendly information remains current. As 'Support and Aspiration' (DfE, 2012; DfE 2013) will combine assessments of education and health needs, it is all the more significant that children are helped to understand the value of their participation in the process. EPs form part of the listening ethos that empowers each child to be heard.

> "Listening and acting upon children's voices has historic prevalence in the professional practice of educational psychologists" (Day, 2010, p.54).

1.3   Local context and background

1.3.1 The LA Projects and Research Board

There is a commitment in the researcher's EPS to ensure that parents and children are listened to. This is shown through recent amendments to the pupil's view section of the SA paperwork; a new parents' questionnaire to evaluate their experiences of the EP service; commissioning an external evaluation of the quality of psychological advice produced by EPs in statutory reports, with a focus on reporting pupils' views (Fox, 2011); and two publications: Enabling Pupil Participation (ECC, 2003) and Developing CYP's Participation (EEPS, 2008).

In 2011 the EPS Projects and Research Board notified the researcher of an online questionnaire designed to gather children's views on their experiences of meeting with an EP. This was yet to be piloted and discussion arose as to how it might be usefully adapted to also be trialled with pupils with CD. It was deemed that the e-survey and an enabling tool developed from doctoral research could complement one another. The EPS wished to use feedback from pupils who had met with an EP, to improve service practice and delivery.

1.3.2 Organisational change

The move by the researcher's EPS to fully traded services has increased the accountability of EPs to all stakeholders. It is therefore opportune to develop multiple methods to gather children's views to triangulate with others involved in the evaluation of the range of services provided by the EPS. For example Ashton and Roberts (2006) noted that EPs frequently cite valuing pupils' views as central to their role but that SENCos valued more 'traditional' EP roles. To be able to compare and contrast pupils' perspectives on what an EP does and how this impacted upon the children would be very useful.

From the process of gathering children's views, the researcher also looked to develop a tangible resource that EPs could use in their practice, alongside guidance for school procedures around EP involvement. This would extend the existing documented guidance (ECC, 2003) and help to meet the need for training, highlighted by Clark and Moss (2001) as necessary within a listening and participatory culture.

1.4 Theoretical framework

1.4.1 The researcher's epistemological position

The research explored the factors that enable pupils with communication difficulties to express views with reference to their experiences of Statutory Assessment. Underpinning this research was a social constructionist epistemology, which shaped many of the methodological decisions and the interpretation of data. The position of social constructionism can be summarised as one perspective on how individuals develop subjective meanings of their world (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It holds that there is no single objective meaning or true position. Instead, each object, thing or process is subject to multiple meanings conferred through, and subject to change because of social, cultural and historical context (Cresswell, 2009). It was the researcher's goal to explore this wealth of different interpretations within an emancipatory, action staged model of research.

The researcher's impact upon each stage of the data gathering and interpretation is a vital part of the process of socially constructed knowledge. It

is an inductive process, influenced by the experiences and background of the researcher. Embodying many roles as a student, a mother, a white female born to a middle class, Catholic family predisposes the researcher to hold particular values. Nearly twenty years of working with children with physical, learning and sensory disabilities has also shaped the researcher's constructions of difference and abilities. Much of this work has been within inner London schools, providing a multicultural awareness of different discourses on disabilities and children's agency.

Specialising in assisting children with difficulties communicating has given the researcher a deeper understanding of the particular issues of enabling expression. The researcher believes in every child's right to voice their opinion and has led various initiatives in alternative methods of communication. This vignette is provided to illustrate the researcher's appreciation of the multiple perspectives present in each and every social interaction. Each interview and observation was a product of the interaction between the researcher and participants, their existing constructs of the situation and the new constructs that were formed.

Sensitivity to the preconceptions and interpretations that children are making of the research situation is crucial. The researcher is aware that she arrived to meet children as a badge-wearing adult, and building trust and rapport in these situations was considered as important as any other stage in the data gathering process.

> "The effectiveness of the research communication, in obtaining full and representative data,…embodies the individualised intergenerational relationships between researcher and children, as well as reflecting broader relations between the generations" (Hall, 2006. p.70).

1.4.2   Psychological framework

The nature of the participation and children's motivation and ability to voice their views are influenced by a plethora of social contextual conditions. For example who is present, the children's perceptions of everyone's roles, the tools and language used, the children's understanding, preparation and the listening ethos of the adults.

Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2000) focuses on the intersection between people's intrinsic motivation and their environment. It is highly relevant to this thesis as it is concerned with people's internal drives to want to participate, to exercise their capabilities, and to explore and learn, and the particular social contexts within which this tendency may either be promoted (enabled) or undermined (restrained). It can be summarised as a theory about people's motivation to act on their own behalf (Deci and Ryan, 2002).

SDT argues that children are born with an innate propensity to explore fully their positive potential. This is notably reflected in intrinsic motivation. To achieve full potential, children must have their basic needs met. These are clustered under a triad of needs: competency, autonomy and relatedness. Competency can be described as experienced when children engage in a suitably challenging task, and receive prompt feedback. Autonomy is experienced when children feel supported and secure enough to explore, take the initiative and problem solve for themselves. Relatedness is experienced by children when they feel they have been listened to, and responded to. These needs cannot be achieved in isolation and require adults around the child to foster supportive environments. Deci and Ryan (2002) point to research which sought to specify such environmental conditions. They posit:

- conditions which support autonomy, competence and relatedness facilitate intrinsic motivation;

- conversely, conditions that encourage dependence and control behaviour, or hinder feelings of competence or leave children feeling ignored attenuate intrinsic motivation; and

- external rewards can actually diminish motivation and engagement as they position the locus of causality as more external.

It can be argued then, that the promotion and facilitation of children and young people's participation in decisions that affect them and plans that involve them is an important factor in developing the competence, autonomy and relatedness that can lead to greater intrinsic motivation and active engagement in learning. In line with the findings summarised from their literature review, Ryan and Deci (2000) note that if children are not able to exert agency then they are vulnerable to being coerced into a situation or to become increasingly acquiescent.

To build a strong sense of agency, children need to be able to articulate their views and goals. Repeated and varied opportunities to express views and see tangible outcomes as a result of motivation and effort will build competency, autonomy and relatedness. Challenging the universal application of SDT is research that suggests that children are not able to express views about their learning or motivations until eight years of age (Chapman and Tunmer, 1997). This echoes the age of capability debate given above. There is research in self-determinism showing that much younger children can express views and motivations. For example Baker and Scher (2002) used toys with six year olds as conduits through which they could answer questions on the topic of reading. They found that the children could express views on their motivations, values, perceived competence and enjoyment.

SDT has been criticised for its lack of generalisability to other cultures (Hang, 2009), and for claiming that *all* external rewards decrease intrinsic motivation. Cameron and Pierce (1996) provide a host of counterarguments to this, concluding that there is a place for rewards to be given to pupils, providing they are not contingent upon on-going performance. Cameron and Pierce (1996) include studies showing that tangible rewards such as stickers will maintain intrinsic motivation, whilst verbal rewards such as praise and positive feedback can actually enhance it.

Neither such criticism detracts from the use of SDT as a robust theory, practised across the world. It has been researched across such life domains as health care, work organisations, sport, and a considerable body of research in educational settings (Vansteenkiste, Lens and Deci, 2006). In relation to the topic of this thesis, perhaps the most salient tenet of SDT is that the contexts where children have voice are where they show greatest performance, engagement and wellbeing (Ryan and Niemiec, 2009).

1.5   The impact of the research

This is emancipatory, action research that explores ways in which children with CD can be enabled to express their views on the process of Statutory Assessment. It is emancipatory as the marginalisation of this group of children and the lack of opportunities for them to express opinions is well documented. A

clear goal of this research is to address issues of empowerment by understanding, preparing and listening to CCD. In the formal process of SA, their lack of voice can be exacerbated by the social construction of adult-child/teacher-pupil power dynamics and misunderstandings or lack of preparation of what is happening. Such factors reduce the child's feelings of autonomy and competence, impacting on how they relate to the EP and interpret the process.

There is a clear gap in the literature on children's participation in SA that focusses on how they feel about being involved. Further evidence is required that enables CCD to express more nuanced views on outcomes and achievements. Furthermore the researcher was unable to find an appropriate conduit to gather their views. The enabling set of resources and guidance (MiView) were designed to develop understandings of the perspectives of CCD following their interactions with EPs. They may also provide tangible resources that EPs can use in their practice. It was anticipated that in gathering multiple views on the embedded use of this resource, a number of suggestions would arise for EP practice and school procedures around EP involvement. Such suggestions would help inform staff training, highlighted by Clark and Moss (2001) as necessary within a listening and participatory culture.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to critically review the research in these areas: the barriers to enabling children to express their views; alternative approaches for children to communicate their views; and children's understanding of the process of Statutory Assessment (SA).

A systematic analysis of the literature is described. Where discord and omissions were identified, this broadened the researcher's understanding of the discourses on children's views, and shaped her research questions (2.9). However, this critical review did not only frame the research questions (Cresswell, 2003). In addition, it provided creative stimuli for the development of resources and the body of knowledge by which the themes from this research could later be contrasted and compared (5.1).

2.1 Systematic search

To facilitate the selection of relevant research, a systematic search of the databases PsychINFO and EBSCO Host was carried out, using the search terms 'enabling pupils AND (TX) views AND (AB) psycholog*' and 'pupil participation AND (TX) statutory assessment'. Searches were carried out between August 2011 and August 2012 using the filters of 'full text' and '2000-2012' publication date.

Particular attention was paid to articles where the research methodologies related to questionnaires, interview and focus groups, and those that incorporated the use of digital media into the design. As recommended by Doncaster and Thorne (2000), the researcher also hand searched other relevant publications outside the main databases, such as the *Journal of Educational and Child Psychology* and other online resources. EPNet archives were explored using the terms 'listening', combined with 'children' or 'young people' or 'views'.

Additional references were discovered through the recommendation and references of key academics and practitioners in the field. The researcher borrowed DVDs and other research materials from national organisations involved in enabling children's views, for example The Communication Trust and Triangle. She communicated with many EPSs and Parent Partnerships across the UK to gain a better understanding of the guidance on the SA process that is given to children and gather examples of best practice. Researchers who had recommended future research concerning SA resources were contacted to discuss the implementation of their recommendations, citations and revisions of piloted resources. This generated some key articles and more ideas for the methodology.

2.2   Research findings from systematic review

The systematic search results identified seventy four relevant research studies which explored the views of children and young people (CYP) using focus groups, interviews or surveys across educational, clinical and community settings. With no evident agreement on terminology for age banding, CYP is used to mean anyone 0-21 years of age. Where ages were provided, the majority of participants fell between six and sixteen years of age. The research is almost entirely qualitative which is perhaps unsurprising given the ambiguous and fluid nature of interpreting children's views.

The approach to selecting literature for detailed review followed the recommendations of Hart (2001). From the systematic search results, twenty six potentially useful research studies were identified for critical analysis (Hart, 2001). To support the process of analysis, particular information was extracted from each article to organise the material under these headings: central purpose or problem; methodological information; key results; and a critique to compare and contrast with other studies (Appendix 2).

Three common themes and issues were identified from the research. These were: *barriers to giving views*, *alternative ways to express views* and *understandings of the process of SA*. They are discussed under the subheadings given in Table 2.1. Inevitably, these groupings are not exclusive, reflecting the complexities and ambiguities inherent in any study of children's

communication. For example, a discourse on power relationships permeated different categories. The final selection of ten UK based studies for detailed critical analysis was made with these criteria in mind: those that were methodologically robust; representative of a majority or minority discourse; unusual or controversial; and which demonstrated best practice or innovation. For ease of reference these studies are listed below. In addition, other papers are referred to when they add a critical dimension to the appraisal (Appendix 2).

Table 2.1: Studies selected for critical analysis

Author, Date and Title	Themes and Subthemes Identified
• Chamberlain, George, Golden, Walker and Benton (2010). Tellus4 National Report. • Day (2010). Listening to young children: An investigation of children's day care experiences in Children's Centres. • Gordon and Russo (2009). Children's Views Matter Too! A Pilot Project Assessing Children's and Adolescents' Experiences of Clinical Psychology Services. • Holland, Renold, Ross and Hillman (2010). Power, agency and participatory agendas: A critical exploration of young people's engagement in participative qualitative research. • Lewis (2002). Accessing, through research interviews, the views of children with difficulties in learning. • Lewis, Newton and Vials (2008). Realising child voice: the development of Cue Cards. • Lubel and Greaves (2000). The Development of an EPS Information Booklet for Primary Age Pupils. • McGee and d'Ardenne (2009). 'Netting a winner': tackling ways to question children online. A good practice guide to asking children and young people about sport and physical activity. • Stafford, Laybourn, Hill and Walker (2003). 'Having a Say': Children and Young People Talk about Consultation. • Woolfson and Harker (2002). Consulting with children and young people: Young people's views of a Psychological Service.	**i) Barriers to giving views and being heard** • Previous experiences of participation • Perceived capability and the influence of adult perspectives • The style and content of adults' questions **ii) Alternative ways to express views** • Using visual supports • Assistive technologies and online questionnaires **iii) Children's understanding of the process of SA** • Using a question and answer format • Discussing the process of EPS involvement

2.3 Barriers to enabling children to give their views

2.3.1 Previous experiences of participation

Stafford, Laybourn and Walker's (2003) qualitative study of what children said about consultation is a key piece of research in understanding barriers to consultation. In particular their larger sample size was unusual (n=200) and built a cumulative picture from their previous research. The authors also analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of a range of research methods when consulting with children.

The aim of their research was to break from previous adult-driven agendas in methods of consultation and hear more directly, and therefore more authentically, from children. Their participants, aged six to eighteen, were grouped into three age bands for group interviews. They represented mainstream children and children looked after (CLA) across four Local Authorities (LA) with a spread of socio-economic status (SES). A range of other groups of children were also consulted, including pre-schoolers, Muslim children and children with special needs, though statistics on these other groups are not supplied. The key findings were:

- the CYP had mixed experiences of consultation in school councils, questionnaires and youth forums. They had addressed such topics as school canteen choices, locker provision and the use of playground space. Two reasons given for disappointment were that the views of a few children were not representative of much larger cohorts, and that nothing had been done as a result;

- even if nothing could be achieved, the CYP would still prefer to have had some feedback, in any format (and addressed to them) than none at all. This had led to cynicism regarding future participation;

- small group discussion and questionnaires were the most popular methods of consultation. The authors favour using a combination of methods to most fully engage children and increase their participation; and

- CYP have a strong wish to be consulted but need to know in advance the purpose, constraints and limitations on the decision making process.

This study usefully encapsulates many of the most striking barriers to participation. It took place in Scotland, adding to a body of strong pro-

consultancy views across the UK (e.g. Woolfson and Harker, 2002). Stafford et al. (2003) argue that children are outcome oriented and so are disappointed and disillusioned when they give a view and nothing happens.

There is only one reference given to children with SEN. It is notable that a subtle change in the authors' use of language appears to detract from a more holistic view of this particular group. They are described as 'a special needs group' (p.362), foregrounding the problems that the children experience. Other groups are not categorised in this way, for example the phrases, 'girls from an Asian Muslim background' and 'boys with experiences of homelessness' appear on the same page (p.362).

The particular special needs of the group are not elaborated upon, and therefore the nature and equality of their participation are unknown. For example, the extent to which they were able to complete the questionnaire given to all the children without support is unclear. There is insufficient detail on the groups' composition: the only information provided is that they are all ten years of age. The underrepresentation of and limited attention given to children with special needs is surprising given the authors' findings that different groups of children had drawn their attention to feeling

> "…that adults often assumed members did represent other young people's views, when they don't" (Stafford et al. 2003, p.369).

It should be considered whether the group discussion methodology marginalises the voice of children with SEN in comparison to other groups and cohorts who are represented much more widely and written about in greater detail. More universal barriers to participation are identified by using direct quotes from the participants. The children explained that adults misinterpreted their views or cherry-picked to suit a particular adult-led agenda; that no follow-up or action was taken and that they felt they had no real power on more weighty issues such as the school budget. The researchers caution that poor consultation is worse than no consultation. They encourage feedback to be built into the consultation processes from the outset and provide useful advice on child-friendly adaptations to consultation methods.

Holland, Renold, Ross and Hillman (2010) adopt a slightly different view on power and participatory agendas. Rather than assuming that participation should be the unquestioning gold standard of all research concerning children, they challenge the notion that increasing participation of itself provides research that is more enabling or superior. Their participants were CYP with current or recent experience of living in care: six females, two males, aged 10-20. This was a participatory and longitudinal research project, ethnographically studied. The authors acknowledge that the methodological research design could have been used with any participant group.

To try and seek informed consent, Holland et al. (2010) explained the purpose and data generation methods (for example taking videos or photographs) though a set of accessible information leaflets and a DVD. Their substantive aim was to develop a better understanding of the ethics and power relations involved in this specific type of participatory research and they acknowledge the limitations of generalisation from such a small sample. Their key findings are:

- there are many complexities to the notions of voice, authenticity and representation that the researchers suggest have been ignored or oversimplified in other participant research studies that they have analysed;

- formal engagement in predefined focus groups did not work with the young people in their study. Continual, analytical and informal communication in short bursts proved better suited to the participants;

- working in self-selected groups was favoured by the participants and this was perceived to be more empowering as collectively they held greater influence over the researchers' presence; and

- the variety of ways in which the CYP engaged in participation was more important than reaching a particular level of participation (c.f. Figure 1.2)

It is relevant to this research that the less formal the participatory methods, the more appealing they were to the CYP: the study lists digital cameras, diaries and scrapbooks among a range of useful resources. This multi-modal approach is a recurring theme in the literature and is discussed further (2.4).

Holland et al. (2006) make a well-grounded case that not all participatory methods are equal, not all participatory studies are empowering and that the claim that children's involvement produces better research is not systematically evidenced.

> "Ticking participatory boxes … in research does not necessarily mean that participants experience the process as participatory, nor will it always affect the quality of research outputs" (Holland et al., 2010, p.373).

The researchers agree with the moral justification for marginalised voices to be given an 'epistemic advantage' (p.371) to ensure they are heard. However, they take the controversial stance that children's analyses of their lives are not unquestioningly more or less valid than analyses offered by others involved in the children's lives, including social scientists. To make this point the authors and participants have had to undertake a highly resource-intensive process, reflected in the high dropout attrition over a year. An enormous amount of rich data was produced, but ownership was retained by the participants who then decided what would be given to the research team and how that could be used. This was intended to develop co-dependence, in contrast to more usual dichotomous roles of the powerful and the powerless. However, it resulted in a sanitisation of the data in a way that the researchers were unable to control, arguably compromising the reliability or representativeness of the data.

The authors took time to share transcripts and discuss emerging themes with individual participants, but felt it unethical for participants to analyse each other's data. Such was Holland and her colleagues' reluctance to impose any particular research method or to adopt an expert role in order to teach the CYP to become researchers, that they were unable to demonstrate any collaborative research and only limited concomitant analysis. This exemplifies the struggle to balance participation, shared decision making and power sharing, echoed by Norwich and Kelly (2006) who link these ideas to wider notions of responsibility and autonomy.

2.3.2 Perceived capability and the influence of adult perspectives

The degree of autonomy afforded to children is linked to considerable debate about the developmental point at which children become capable of giving their views. Mortimer (2004) and Day (2010) show how children at nursery and the foundation stage can have a definite view on their learning targets, whereas Quicke (2003) suggests that children's views on learning be sought after six years of age. He argues that prior to this children are not able to reflect on *how* they learn but only to give a description of *what* they learn.

Children's perceived capability in giving their views is crucial to this thesis. Gordon and Russo's (2009) study explored factors that may impact upon any qualitative difference in children's views. Their participants (n=15, age seven to seventeen) attended CAMHS. The study aimed to gauge the level of their understanding of the role of Clinical Psychologist, as well as to obtain an account of their experiences of attending. The researchers used semi-structured, individual interviews, carried out by a research assistant. They concluded:

- many of the children were not consulted regarding their referral and did not know why they were attending;

- children as young as seven gave valid and reliable reports about their difficulties, but children over twelve were able to provide a much better insight; and

- the style of questioning and verbal prompts given did not facilitate the younger children to be able to give views on the effectiveness of the service. This accords with Norwich and Kelly (2006) who found that verbal methods elicit fewer views of younger children and those with SEN.

Two service development implications were identified by Gordon and Russo (2009): new leaflets to be sent out to children before they attend clinics(using quotes from the children in this study) and a new questionnaire to give to children to evaluate the service. Both these were designed to complement feedback from parents and referrers.

Particular ethical problems are noted within the methodology of this study. The children were informed about the research by the Clinical Psychologist at the end of their previous session. Their immediate decision may have been influenced by the events of their session with the clinical psychologist or the unequal power dynamic may have caused the child to feel that they must cooperate. They were told that, if they wished to take part that they should then go to a different room whereupon the research assistant obtained their written consent and they were then interviewed. This does not suggest that participants had any cooling-off period to allow them to change their minds, as recommended by the National Health Service's National Research Ethics Service (NRES):

> "Potential participants need time to consider fully the implications of taking part in research. They should be able to ask questions and reflect. Participants should not be rushed into decisions" (NRES, 2010, p.1).

Learning from this, the current research methodology incorporated stages of participant consent and assent into the design and procedures (3.4.1).

It is unclear as to how many children in the sample were representative of each age category but the finding that children of six years could explain their reasons for attending (p.40) would seem to be generalised from rather a small sample. There is growing body of researchers who argue that there should be no age limit on giving views at all, but rather that:

> "All children have a right to and can express their opinions. It is up to adults to consult according to age, and convert children's views into actions" (Dickins, Emerson and Gordon-Smith, 2004, p.5).

This view that young age need not be a barrier to expressing views is supported in a study by Day (2010). She aimed to explore how children experienced their day care in Children's Centres and what could be improved. Day (2010) describes her research design and paradigm with great clarity, making the ethnographic, inductive approach to the research transparent and accessible. Data was collected about her case study children (n=6, aged 20-36 months)

through extended observation, Mosaic Approach methods[2] (for example role play, photographs and tours) and interviews with staff and parents. Key outcomes were:

- the researcher developed specific methods to obtain the views of young children: a photo checklist and a particular use of digital cameras;

- and using these tools the children could express a range of views, including what made them feel happy, what they sought for reassurance and the places, activities and friends who were most important.

Based on these methodologies, guidance for EPs was developed to enable the voices of young children to be heard and acted upon in a range of settings (Day, 2009)

Day (2010) includes a wealth of very useful background literature and contextual research. To have included more methodological detail on exactly how the tools were used and some observational detail capturing the children's responses would help to strengthen Day's case and illuminate her account. This particular detail has been captured in the methodology of the current research in describing the MiView and ensuring verbatim recordings of the children's actual responses (Appendix 22).

Pertinent to this thesis are the particular adaptations Day (2010) needed to make to the Mosaic Approach in order to enable the children to give their views. She states that:

> "…some shortcomings were evident with child interviews …the assumption that children would understand the purpose of an interview and find questions relevant was queried" (Day, 2010, p.49).

2.3.3   The style and content of adults' questions

The questions that children are asked on any given topic depend upon the expectations and perspectives of the adults doing the asking (Komulainen,

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[2] The Mosaic Approach (Clark and Moss, 2001) is the name given to a framework for eliciting the views of young children. It draws together an eclectic range of creative data gathering methods that use each child's communicative strengths and can be adapted for individual abilities and needs.

2007; National Youth Agency [NYA], 2009). Traditionally a question-answer-feedback model has been used and appears in different forms in the methodologies of the literature analysed, for example in semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Increasingly, authors are questioning the underlying purpose of such approaches. Lewis (2002) provides an overview of the key issues in regard to interviewing children. She writes:

> "A range of work with children has shown the value of making statements that prompt a response, rather than a direct question, to elicit views. The tendency for adults…to use question-answer-feedback routines has been described …as reflecting power relationships" (p.113).

Lewis (2002) examined in depth the issues of validity, reliability and informed consent and assent. She notes that the validity of a child's view might be compromised if the child has misunderstood a situation and therefore deliberately gives untrue answers. The reliability of children's views, or how typical their answer is of what they believe, can also be distorted by the questioner's style. Obtaining both informed consent and assent is an ethical standard that should be upheld. Lewis (2002) shows the distinction of these procedures:

> "*Consent* may be given by the child or by another on the child's behalf for (a) the child to be interviewed or (b) the researcher to ask the child to be interviewed. *Assent* refers to the child's agreement to participation in the process when another has given consent" (p.111).

Across all the literature analysed for this thesis, only Lewis' (2002) study stands out as explicitly referring to gaining the children's assent. When reflecting on how adult perspectives might form a barrier to children's expression of their views, searching methodologies that use interviews for their acknowledgement of the issues of validity, reliability and assent has proven a useful measure of the strength of the evidence.

While some researchers have changed their questions to make the language more child-friendly (e.g. Day, 2010) others argue that the notion of asking any questions at all should be reconsidered. In reviewing research on children as service evaluators, Gordon and Russo (2009) comment that the child

satisfaction measures that exist might not reflect those aspects of services that children regard as most important:

> "We should never assume that, through the responses they give to our questions, we have detected all they have to tell us" (p.47).

If questions are less enabling it is also necessary to explore studies that broke from convention and used alternative approaches.

2.4 Alternative ways to express views

2.4.1 Using visual supports

The nuances of language that may undermine the validity of children's responses to questions are brought to the fore by Lewis (2002) in her overview of the methodological challenges of interviewing. Children's interpretation of the interview situation may lead them to simply confirm answers or provide misleading information. Less comprehension of the passage of time, memory difficulties or unintentional verbal leads from the interviewer are also given as possible confounds to validity. One way advocated to try and avoid this is by not asking questions but instead use a system of visual prompts termed Cue Cards[3].

Lewis, Newton and Vials (2008) used this technique in four different Local Authority contexts, and also highlight best practice in the creative potential of university-service relationships. The research provided quotations exemplifying what individual children were able to say or write before the use of the cards, and then again with them. The researchers' key findings were:

- in each case the child's response increased in quantity, detail and fluidity or sequence;

- the Cue Cards provided a tool for discussion of views or issues without the restrictions and disadvantages of adult questioning; and

- the Cue Cards complemented open ended approaches and in combination enabled all children to share their views.

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[3] A series of cards developed by Leicester City Local Authority portraying simple line drawn pictures that act as prompts to assist children in giving their views. Examples are 'action', 'place', 'time', consequence' and 'feeling'.

Very little information on the four children is provided. Two attended Year 2, one in Year 3 and no school age is given for the fourth child. They are reported to have difficulties in writing, CD and lacking confidence to talk. These are descriptions given by their teachers and their needs are not further defined. Lewis et al. (2008) describe the process of the children's exposure to the cards and the refining of the images to match particular communication needs. Again, the use of the direct quotes from the children are very engaging and give strength to the findings, but exemplify only what they could say on a particular adult-guided topic. The views the children give are of *what* they do, not of *how* they felt about their experiences of using cards. The authors recognise this and state that they did not explore the use of the cards for sensitive issues or personal views. In terms of this research thesis, modifying and drawing upon the premise of Cue Cards appeared to be a very useful development.

2.4.2   Assistive technologies and online questionnaires

A related area explored in this literature review is that of enhanced interactions with digital technologies. There is a paucity of participatory studies which have children with CD as their focus which also employ digital technologies in the methodology. The literature focuses on either children with very little language in special schools, or children who are literate, have well-developed language skills and who attend mainstream schools. This left a gap in research with CCD within mainstream settings to be addressed in this research.

Researchers working with children with complex needs have adopted digital videos, photographs and images (Komulainen, 2007) and digital communication books (Mortimer, 2004). These are highly personalised and designed for individual use with children for such purposes as expressing likes and dislikes about their daily activities. The researcher was unable to find any evidence of children with complex needs being asked directly about their views on process or resources[4].

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[4] Some research reports that where children show signs of enjoyment when participating and being given choice, this is often interpreted as a comment *on the process* by key adults who know them well (Harding, 2009). There is debate over the extent to which children with profound cognitive impairments are able to give reasoned views rather than showing preference by their affective responses to stimuli, but that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Children who are able to read and type have been given online questionnaires to complete. As one impetus to this research was the piloting of an EPS online questionnaire (1.3), it has been important to critique some relevant methodologies. The Tellus4 National Report (Chamberlain, George, Golden, Walker and Benton, 2010) surveyed online the views of 253,755 children and young people in school years 6, 8 and 10 in 3,699 schools (p.14). The survey was presented as a multiple choice questionnaire, containing up to 30 items divided across seven sections, themed according to the Every Child Matters' outcomes. Alternative versions were made available (British Sign Language, a spoken version and symbol-supported with Widgit Literacy Symbols[5]) which reportedly reached a further 5322 children (p.14).

Completing the questionnaire appeared to be onerous for some children. The researchers' report that they 'cleaned the data' (p.132) and removed responses with less than six of the 30 items completed. All the responses to the alternative questionnaires were included regardless of how complete they were, but no detail is provided on this proportion or which questions were omitted. This raises questions as to the motivation of this subsection of respondents and their autonomy and engagement with the survey.

The outcomes provided are not concerned with affect or process but instead statistical data is provided on responses to each item, for example 'the number of five-a-day fruit and vegetables eaten yesterday'. Unfortunately, despite having links to Triangle's[6] particular expertise on consultation (as they are named consultees regarding the development of the alternative versions) no reference is made to the children's experiences of completing the survey. It is not possible to know the support any child received, or how they felt to be involved. The children had been asked to complete the survey at school in whole classes, raising unanswered questions of if and how consent and assent were obtained, and how much choice the children believed that they had.

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[5] Widgit Literacy Symbols [TM] covers over 40,000 words which enables people to 'translate' text by combining it with symbols. They are a way to understand, learn and communicate which overcomes the barrier that text represents to many people of all ages and abilities.

[6] Triangle are an national, multidisciplinary team who have extensive expertise in consulting with children and young people (particularly those with CD), ascertaining their wishes and exploring their experiences.

It has proven very difficult to locate studies which directly report on children's views of using online questionnaires. The reaction to online questionnaires from the majority of the teenage participants of Stafford et al. (2003) was largely negative. Their reasons for this were the lack of computer access at home, competition and a lack of privacy to use them at school and the option of internet cafés was too expensive.

Further understanding of the use of online surveys came from the research by McGee and d'Ardenne (2009). They analysed the issues of designing and cognitive testing of online questions with children, supported by follow up interviews. In contrast to Stafford et al. (2003), the reactions of these participants to the digital questionnaires were markedly different: enthusiastic and engaged with the technology. They asked their participants' views of the method and process, detailed the children's views on self-completion questions and reflected on the strategies that respondents adopted for completion. McGee and d'Ardenne's findings were based on 42 participants who were evenly split by gender and age from Year 3 to Year 11.

Key methodological findings:

- online modes were advantageous over other self-completion modes in terms of data quality; anonymity and privacy; visual stimulation and appeal and cost;

- children required assistance at the outset and on-going encouragement. Older children in particular were helped by the use of scaling questions and a progress bar;

- the very youngest children could give feedback on their experiences of using the web-based questions, navigation and process;

- keep the task brief. The questionnaire needed to be a reasonable length or respondents felt disheartened and gave up;

- feeding forward information helped to show the children their personalised responses building up, aided their memory from previous questions and was rated very positively; and

- clarity of instructions was vital. When younger respondents did not understand what was meant they simply skipped the question. Younger children preferred the presence of a familiar adult for comfort, reassurance or support.

While the respondents provided invaluable feedback features *to* the researchers on their technical and visual experiences of accessing the online questionnaire, details of how the respondents received their feedback *from* the research team were not given. Echoing the points made previously concerning the importance of language, the authors referred to their participants as 'readers, skimmers and strugglers' (p.14). While these may be catchy research categories, to infer that the opposite construct to a 'reader' is a 'struggler' is derogatory and unhelpful in terms of describing the children's needs.

There is no information on how this collated data was presented to the students, only that their schools were each given £100 'cash incentive' (p.83) for taking part. The authors referred to a 'captive audience' (p.30) as a positive reason to conduct surveys as part of lessons and stated that future surveys could have the dual purpose of 'being used as a teaching aid in ICT lessons' (p.30). The recommendation to build ICT skills by providing data to meet researchers' aims appeared confused. Moreover, to schedule this activity during lesson time to maximise responses would fly in the face of ethical practice and invalidate the data gathered. This served to heighten the sensitivity of the current research to ensure that ethical protocols around informed participation, and participant withdrawal without penalty were made explicit.

The research in this area would suggest that there remains a gap to address. Namely, an exploration of children's views on a process in order to empower them to express their opinions, that makes use of visual supports on an accessible interface. The particular process at the centre of this research is their experience of what happened before, during and after meeting with the psychologist as part of their SA.

2.5   Children's views in Statutory Assessment

2.5.1   Using a question and answer format

There is little research on the child's voice in SA. This is surprising as the section on SA documentation given to schools and parents entitled 'Pupil's Views' provides a clear route for this process. The majority voice (for example Norwich and Kelly, 2006; Harding and Atkinson, 2009) accords that children,

especially those with CD and other SEN, are left out of decision-making and that simply completing 'I like…' statements is far from adequate.

To produce something that asked (and answered) more relevant questions, Lubel and Greaves (2000) focused their research on the evaluation and implementation of a pupil information booklet about their EPS. This was a natural progression from other EPS initiatives around equal opportunities, inclusion and parent and child involvement. Their purpose was to promote the direct access to, and interaction between children and the EPS. The authors note that 'children's behaviour during interview is influenced by their belief about the purpose of the assessment' (p. 244), and identify the need for pupils to have access to accurate information.

The booklet went through revisions that took into account outcomes from questionnaires to SENCos (n=12) and interviews with EPs (n=11). EPs also used questionnaires to report on their experiences of using the leaflet with eight pupils. Development questions were not only focused on the resource itself, but also asked respondents who would be best placed to introduce the booklet and what they saw as its purpose. The pupil information booklet was then trialled across all the primary and secondary schools in a London borough. Lubel and Greaves (2000) report their key findings as:

- using a cartoon style format is a particular strength;

- the question and answer format was based upon children's own questions in assessment;
- responses to the booklet were positive: clear information and enjoyable graphics; and

- SENCos were reported to be the best people to introduce the booklet to the pupils, before they meet individually with the EP, and after observations.

The most surprising omission from Lubel and Greaves (2000) is that the main feedback they solicited was from adults: EPs and SENCos. Citing children's views on the process of using or the content of the leaflet could have made a valuable addition. There is no detail given about the eight children on whom the

booklet was trialled and it would be beneficial to know their ages and which additional support needs are addressed by the leaflet in this format. The researchers raise the important issue of how preparing a child to meet an EP might also influence the child's behaviour when they are observed.

2.5.2   Discussing the process of EPS involvement

Woolfson and Harker (2002) were commissioned by the Scottish Executive's Programme for Government to seek direct feedback of children's views of one EPS – known as a 'best value' review. This was an initiative that sought to improve the quality of local community services. Their participants (n=8, aged 12-15 years old, five male, three female) had all had recent contact with an EP and took part in a focus group to discuss the process from initial referral to the end of their assessment or intervention. Woolfson and Harker (2002) report their key findings as:

- the group identified the need to produce printed information leaflets for CYP;

- this preparation was all the more important for pupils with additional support needs, to have experience of how, when and why they could give their views;

- any consultation exercise with young people should employ a variety of methods as this will improve the accuracy, reliability and validity of the data gathered; and

- the focus group methodology proved useful to engage and consult with children and young people about the EPS.

This research tackled an issue that was important to a local community. It added to a national picture of best practice in listening to children and encouraging participation. It is important that EPSs proactively seek to improve upon eliciting and acting on the views of CYP and that such studies lead the field.

> "…any evaluation of a local authority Psychological Service should seek the views of children who use the service" (Woolfson and Harker, 2002, p.37).

There is substantial detail provided in the methodology, including ethical measures taken to ensure confidentiality and 'fully informed consent' (p.45). In particular, the paper gives a thorough procedural description of and rationale for the use of a focus group. The researchers decided that it would be unethical to reveal any details amongst the group about the reasons for referral to the EPS. For their write up, some greater (anonymised) detail here would make a useful addition. For example, some children had taken part in interventions and therefore had built relationships with the psychologists over many weeks. For others, a few weeks had passed since they had last seen an EP. Such nonspecific references make it more difficult to see how closely matched the needs of these children might be to the participants of the current study. It is very different to evaluate an experience of an individual meeting with an EP for the purpose of SA, to meeting with them in a group situation over many weeks for a therapeutic intervention.

A distinguishable strength of Woolfson and Harker's (2002) study was their aim to use the focus group's results in order to reform EPS practice in light of the children's perceived strengths and weaknesses in EP's work. The focus group therefore knew what the purpose of their participation was to be and how their comments would be used. A tangible outcome of the study was to produce an accessible leaflet which showed the children that their views resulted in action being taken. This was a paper-based leaflet and it would enhance the article to explain intentions to expand this to alternative media.

The focus group's discussion was framed by prompts that the researchers took from the EPS' Performance Indicators (PI). This provided a particular interpretive lens for the researchers and they acknowledge some predetermined themes in their analysis. It exemplifies some competing demands on the extent of participation: that the authors felt it necessary to use PI benchmarks that might subsequently bring consistency for cross-service comparisons, and transparency for the research commissioners.

2.6 Summary of the research

The literature reviewed has revealed many of the clear barriers to participation, compounded for children in already marginalised groups. These are: the children's existing responses to participation, based on previous experience; their perceived capability, somewhat arbitrarily dictated by age and levels of literacy and communication; the influence of pre-existing agendas of key adults; and how these shaped the questions that children were asked. The researcher found that these barriers chimed with her own experience of working with children with CD. Adults will often speak on children's behalf and the children become habituated to this. They reinforce the cycle by looking to adults for answers and reassurance, even when simple questions are directed to the children.

Though the arguments put forward not to use questions are creative and the resources are advancing, the literature reviewed emphasised the use of a *combination of methods* of consultation. A mixture of visual prompts, photographs and some oral and written questions appears to be more likely to appeal to a range of children, and especially supportive for CCD (see Holland et al., 2010; Lewis, 2002; Morris, 2004). Other stakeholders would perhaps be more interested in children's answers to particular questions or around key topics. Finding a balance between the use of questions and more creative visual methods may enhance the perceived value of the process and outcomes of gathering children's views: from the key adults around them as well as from the children themselves.

A very common finding was that children are most commonly asked about *what* they like, rather than *why* they like it. The researcher was not able to find any literature on children's views of the *process* of SA. Closely aligned, and thus reviewed, were two studies (Lubel and Greaves, 2000; Woolfson and Harker, 2002) which gave insight into how children's views could aid the development of information which left them better prepared.

Children are highly sensitive to research contexts: they will respond to questions according to their perceptions of what the questioner wants them to say, and of the expectations, rules and ethos of the setting (Clark and Williams, 2008). It is not a new proposition that children should be asked about their understanding of SEN processes (Gersch, 2001), and therefore surprising that there is a paucity of research on this topic. EPs are in a prime position to talk to the child about their understanding of assessment, and they appreciate that different understandings will impact differently upon the child's behaviour. It is remarkable that more research, overtly concerned with process and outcomes, has not been undertaken by EPs.

2.7 Conclusions

The literature reviewed has identified issues at a micro level with methodology, semantics and samples. However, there is a more substantive point to be made which relates to the use of verbal content being the predominant means of conveying information to the children in the studies. The studies suggest that CCD are already facing the disadvantages of having fewer opportunities to express views so are likely to have reduced feelings of competence based on prior experiences (Stafford et al, 2003). SA already establishes a situation that exposes power differentials and is more hindering to children's autonomy (Lubel and Greaves, 2000) and if verbal communication is the preferred mode of communication, their ability to relate to others will also be impaired (Lewis, 2002).

The gaps in the research highlighted a need for research which focuses on how CCD might be enabled to express views on their experiences of the SA process. The previous research showed the need for a mixture of tools to be available to the child: to cue them in, to reduce, simplify and repeat language, to use visual supports to allow the child to describe their views rather than only answer direct questions. The theoretical framework (1.4.2) takes account of the interplay of the preconceptions of the child and the particular expectations of a setting and how this might restrain or enable their expressions.

2.8 Overall purpose

The researcher was interested in the pupils' reflections on EPs' practice, and in the reflections of this professional group of which she is also a member. The researcher aimed to improve understandings of the views of CCD when asked to appraise their meeting with educational professionals: what restrains and what enables their views? An important action within this process was to encourage EPs to reflect upon their current practice of enabling children's views and ask what could be done differently within the Educational Psychology Service, particularly to empower the more marginalised voice of CCDs. The researcher wanted to try out ideas to change practice within schools and the EPS: ideas that had the potential to be generalised to assist children's appraisals of their meetings with a range of educational professionals.

2.9 Research questions

1. *What are the enabling or restraining factors when asking Children with Communication Difficulties (CCD) – using a text based questionnaire – for their views on their meeting with an educational professional?*

2. *What would enable CCD to elaborate their views more fully?*

    a. *What do EPs identify as enabling and restraining factors that affect children's involvement in the process and outcomes of their Statutory Assessment?*

    b. *What ideas can be incorporated from research and practitioner based evidence from Local Authorities?*

3. *What are the enabling and restraining factors when asking CCD – using MiView – for their experience of meeting an educational professional?*

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology. It begins with the research paradigm, purpose and design (3.1), and an overview of each research stage (3.2). The key areas of participant recruitment (3.3), ethics (3.4) and issues of reliability and validity are then discussed (3.5). Section 3.6 describes the methods of gathering and analysing the data, including resource development, and explains how the knowledge constructed at each stage was taken into the next

It should be noted that rather more of the analysis is included in this chapter than might be expected. This is necessary as without enough contextual information it would be confusing for the reader to understand how each stage of the action research led serially to the next. It is axiomatic that the findings of each stage will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

3.1   Research paradigm, purpose and design

This research explored enabling and restraining factors for CCD to express views on their experiences of the SA process. The individual experiences of the SA process, or constructions, are developed in the social context of school. Within this, children are placed in a unique formal assessment situation where different constructions afford imbalances of power. This study looked to empower the children in this marginalised position by gathering their views and exploring ways to enable them to meaningfully participate in SA.

3.1.1   Social constructionist ontology and epistemology

The ontological position taken within this research is social constructionism. In subscribing to this world view, one understands that the way in which the world and others are experienced is the product of dynamic and reciprocal social interactions. The social reproduction and transformation of core societal structures, such as meaning, values, discourse, culture and convention, shapes relationships and understandings of other and self. A common acknowledgement of social constructionism is therefore that social processes, predominantly language, are fundamental to everyday life and the creation of knowledge.

Epistemologically, social constructionism proposes that knowledge is constructed within one or more social groups (for example gender, age, families, pupils and EPs). A person can belong to, and simultaneously interact with a number of groups. Knowledge is described by social constructionists in relative and subjective terms. It is relative (intergroup), because each group seeks a consensus and justification for knowledge, and this differs from group to group. Knowledge is also subjective (intragroup) because each individual member of the group brings and shares their previous experiences. Consciously or unconsciously this impacts upon and shapes the understandings of knowledge within the group.

It is necessary to situate social constructionist ontology within the realist-relativist debate, in order to explicate this assertion. The positivist or realist stance posits that an external, measurable world exists quite independently of any analysis or interpretation of it. The opposing position (relativist) is that the world is unknowable – there is no independent single reality or truth, only different interpretations through the eyes of the knower. There are many positions between these two extremes, and many versions of constructionism: also known as interpretive or naturalistic (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Authors such as Edwards, Ashmore and Potter (1995) take an extreme relativist position on social constructionism. They assert that reality can only be constructed through discourse. This view has been criticised for not taking account of 'real' material things present in the world, or 'facts'. The position with which the researcher is more closely aligned is that expressed by Harre (1990) who explains that there is a real world, but all that it is possible to know of it is limited by one's physiology and sensory abilities. He terms this world that can only be known within these real limitations an *ummwelt* or sub-world, constructed, principally through language.

This research is focussed on children with communication difficulties (CCD). Such a term is read as a social construction, with multiple perspectives on the children's abilities arising through different discourses, co-constructed with different groups. Constructionist explorations hold an inherent problem for this research in that the comparatively powerful research the comparatively powerless (Hart and Bond, 1996). The emancipatory paradigm reflected this understanding. As has been explained in Chapters One and Two, the power

imbalance facing CCD is profound. To help give the participants a voice the design chosen was rooted in the tenets of social constructionism and aimed to elicit children's views on the process and as an outcome. The research intended to bring greater understanding of the views of this marginalised group and to empower the participants.

3.1.2   Action research, staged design

The design that naturally flowed from the principles above was based on action research. It was selected after careful consideration of the manageability of the research topic, the participatory intent of the research purpose and a flexibility of design. Action research encompasses a diverse range of strategies and has been adopted widely since its proposal by Lewin in the 1940s. Rooted in the move towards worker democracy and interest in social process, action research was originally conceptualised as a way in which scientists and practitioners might collaborate. It is seen as the forerunner to many different forms of modern empowering research (Hart and Bond, 1996). The application of action research appears dependent upon the ontology of the researcher and participants, rather than any one set of definitive criteria (Masters, 1995).

Fundamentally it is research which proceeds

> "…in a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of planning, action and the evaluation of the result of action" (Kemmis and McTaggert, 1990, p.8).

Critics of action research have interpreted the lack of precision in defining action research, and disagreement over what may constitute its core characteristics as an 'anything goes' approach: that any combination of research and action will suffice. There are however typologies which clearly show that action research has a distinct identity. Hart and Bond (1996) established seven criteria which distinguishes action research from other methodologies:

1) it has an educative base;
2) it sees individuals as members of social groups;
3) it is problem-focused, context specific and future oriented;
4) it involves a change intervention;
5) it aims at improvement and involvement;

6) it involves a cyclic process where research, action and evaluation are interlinked; and

7) it is founded on a research relationship where those involved are participants in the change.

Hart and Bond's typology plots these criteria across four action research approaches or types: *experimental, organisational, professionalising* and *empowering*. The types are not intended to be separate, but are expected to overlap in research within social contexts. The types identify points along a continuum of design from experimental to social constructionist. The criteria vary according to the type within which they are located. The researcher recognised the flexibility for the research to be positioned at different points of the continuum according to the stage being undertaken as a strength.

In this research the aim was to increase the power of the participants and to raise the profile of the marginalised voice of CCD over the longer term. The particular mode of action research that best describes such an approach is termed empowering or emancipatory, using a practical design (Masters, 1995).

The empowering type is characterised by explicitly attempting to raise awareness of the issues of vulnerable people and demonstrate their valued place in society. Under this type, the above criteria are thus applied. (1) The educative, or value base informing this position is that knowledge is rooted in experience. Moreover that knowledge is constructed in and by groups with fluid membership (2). The 'problem focus' (3) can be seen as an identified need for change in a specific context and time frame, the nature and extent of which is negotiated with participants.

(4) Change, in this sense, can be read as opening channels of communication, reframing an issue or helping to bring new perspectives. Improvement and involvement are subjective and were revised along the research journey as new understandings developed (5). Evaluation was key to this: highlighting successes and reflecting on how to build on these. Action research brings together evaluation, research and action in cycles (6), each dynamically impacts on the others and their relative dominance differs according to the particular stage. In an empowering approach the action component is more dominant and participants' views on the process are sought.

The final criterion is the degree of collaboration that the research achieves (7). This is described in Chapter One (Figure 1.2) and the researcher attempted to position herself and participants as co-change agents wherever possible. Pragmatic and durational confines of the research did not permit power to be wholly transferred to the participants. Instead the researcher sought praxis – putting theory into action through reflective cycles – through mutual collaboration with participants at different stages. The purpose of this methodological approach was to learn from the children, Learning Support Assistants (LSA) and EPs: to improve practice and understandings through their applied knowledge and personal insights.

3.2   An overview of each research stage

The four research stages described here show how each stage constructed a particular layer of knowledge which informed the next stage and helped to answer each research question (2.8). The overall aim was to explore enabling and restraining factors in helping CCD to elaborate their views on SA.

Stage One: To identify enabling and restraining factors when pupils talk about a meeting with an educational professional, supported with the Essex Pupil Questionnaire (EPQ).

The researcher observed seven CCD expressing their opinions on the preparations, process and outcomes of meeting with an educational professional, supported by an adult and using the EPQ. The pupils were then interviewed to facilitate and elicit the children's views on this conduit and to identify the enabling and restraining factors within this process.

Each cycle of observations and interviews helped revise the approach and questions used. Content analysis of the videoed observations and interviews were summarised as Problems, Positives and Possibilities (PPP [Table 4.2]). The information gathered was used to develop the EP Checklist and the semi-structured questions (Appendices 9 and 11), used in Stage Two.

Stage Two: To understand EPs' perceptions of pupils' involvement in the process and outcomes of assessments.

The next stage was to bring the initial issues on the PPP back to professionals to stimulate discussion on their experiences of pupils' involvement in SA. They also evaluated the EP Checklist. Five EPs participated in a focus group, facilitated by the researcher. The discussion followed a semi-structured format and the group were videoed so that notes on non-verbal communication could also be included in the full transcription (Appendix 12).

The data was thematically analysed. The main and sub-themes from the focus group data were combined with the PPP to create a taxonomy of factors which appeared to enable or restrain children's expression of their views. The focus group discussed current practice and suggested changes to the process and conveying information about outcomes. The EPs responded favourably to the checklist and PPP sheet, which took the dialogue in new directions.

Stage Three: To draw upon the ideas, research and resources from Local Authorities that enable pupils with CD to contribute to Statutory Assessment.

The researcher contacted EPSs, Parent Partnership Services and charities across the UK to request examples of child-friendly explanations of SA. The resulting 22 documents were critiqued against the taxonomy developed in Stage Two (Appendix 15). A content analysis was carried out and the features of the documents appraised as most enabling were noted.

The findings of Stages One, Two and Three collectively informed the development of a Pupil Information Leaflet (PIL) and new iPad resource to help support children to express their opinions, termed 'MiView' (Appendices 17, 18).

Stage Four: To identify enabling and restraining factors when pupils express their views on the preparations, process and outcomes of meeting with an Educational Psychologist, supported with PIL and MiView.

The purpose of this fourth stage was to explore whether a modified approach to eliciting children's views would give them a greater understanding of their involvement in the SA process. The child and their parents received the PIL before meeting with the EP. This was to give them accurate information about the process in advance. When the pupil met with the EP they were again shown this information. The MiView was used as a conduit to support pupils to express opinions on meeting an EP for SA.

Thirteen CCD, supported by adults, were observed using the MiView .The pupils were then interviewed by the researcher to facilitate and elicit the children's views on this conduit and to identify the enabling and restraining factors within this process. Data from the videoed observations and interviews were fully transcribed, coded in NVivo™ and thematically analysed.

Figure 3.1: An overview of the research stages

Figure showing four research stages with linked text boxes:

- ♦ Strengths and weaknesses of PIL and MiView
- ♦ Recommendations to EPS

- ♦ Pupil Information Leaflet (PIL)
- ♦ MiView

- ♦ Criteria for document analysis

- ♦ EP Checklist
- ♦ PPP Summary
- ♦ Semi-structured framework

Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3, Stage 4
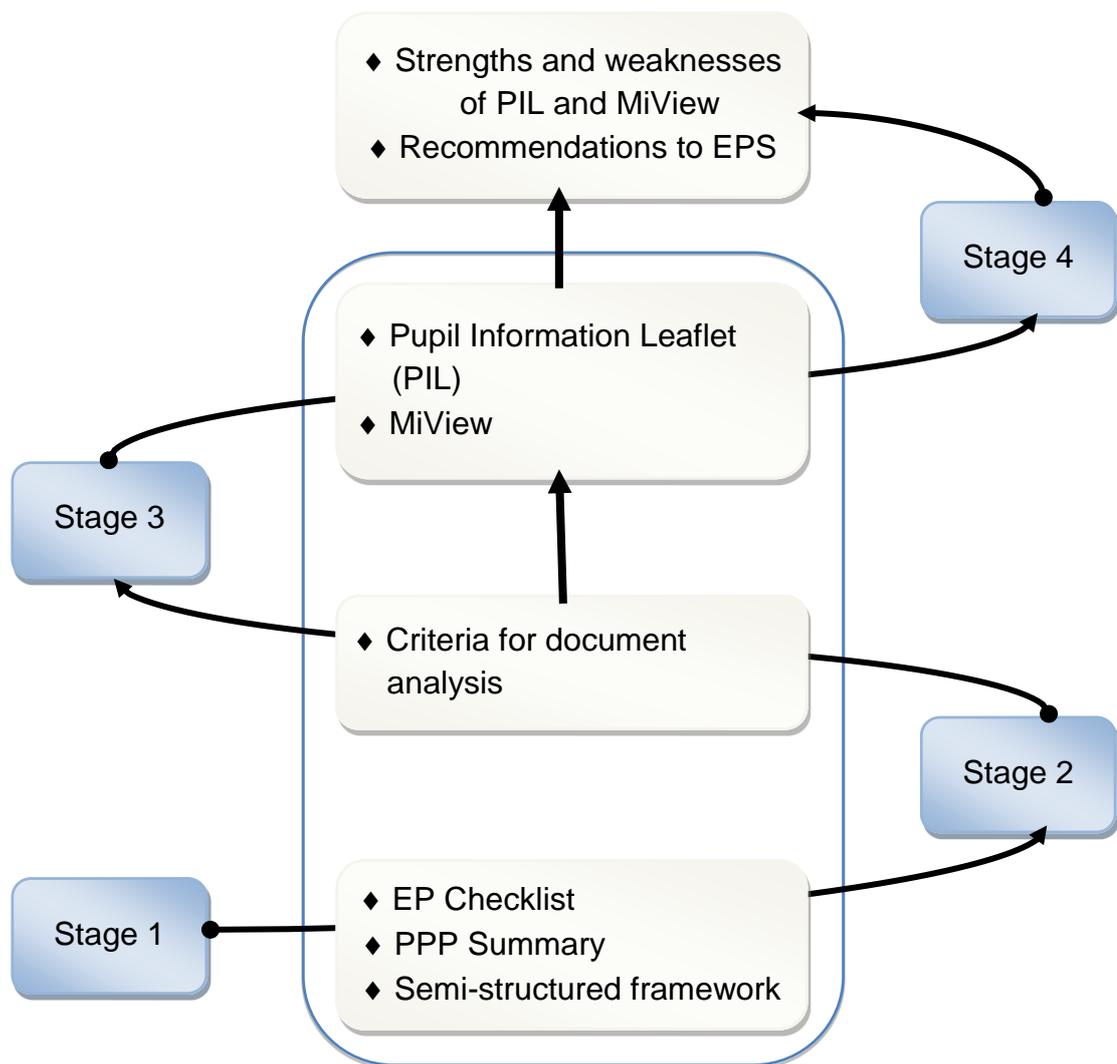
3.3 Participant selection and recruitment procedures

3.3.1 Stage One

Chapter Two has outlined the debate on researching whether there is an age based cut off to the ability to express views on the process of involvement. It was decided to focus on Primary pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. Secondary pupils would have quite different experiences of meeting an EP and might need quite different methods of data gathering to those developed for this research.

In order to locate pupils the LA's four Specialist Teacher teams and EP teams were emailed to request that they notified the researcher when they had arranged to visit a pupil meeting the criteria listed below. Participants were selected if they:

- attended mainstream school between Year 2 and Year 6;

- experienced difficulties in communication as defined in 1.1.2 (RCSLT, 2010); and

- were about to meet with an EP or Specialist Teacher.

The researcher then contacted the Head Teacher and SENCo of each pupil's school by telephone and by letter to ask if they would kindly send out invitation and consent forms to the pupil and their parents/carers. Schools then sent out letters and consent forms to parents, pupils and LSA. Documents for pupils were symbol-supported (Examples of all are provided in Appendix 4).

The researcher continued to recruit participants alongside the iterative process of observing, interviewing, reviewing and revising the observation schedule and interview questions until saturation of the data was deemed to have been reached. The final observation schedule is shown in Appendix 5. This was a purposive sample, suited to this type of small scale research. There was no intention of generalising from the sample but rather to initially explore factors that present barriers to empowerment or enable expression (Robson, 2002).

Twelve children were originally identified to take part but for various reasons of illness and timings, seven children participated in this first stage, as detailed in Table 3.1. The description of CD, National Curriculum or P-Levels and current provision model were all provided by the pupils' school SENCos. Those pupils at School Action+ were in the process of applying for a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Table 3.1: Stage One Participants (anonymised)

Pupil and interview date	Gender	Ethnicity	Year Grp	Age	Description of CD, Provision Model and National Curriculum Levels for Speaking and Listening / Reading / Writing
John : 27/02/2012	M	White British	3	7y7m	Echolaic speech. Great difficulties with verbal processing and comprehension. Unable to focus attention on task. School Action Plus (SA+) p8/1c/p6
Paul : 24/04/2012	M	White British	4	9y6m	Diagnosis of autism. Volunteers very little speech. Misunderstanding of words and meanings. Statement of Special Educational Needs (SSEN) p7/1b/1b
Georgia : 24/04/2012	F	White British	2	7y5m	Global delay. Difficulties across literacy and verbal comprehension. Poor articulation. SSEN p8/1b/1c
Matilda : 28/02/2012	F	White British	3	8y3m	Sociable but difficulties in recognising and processing emotions and body language of others. Writing is delayed. Reliant on LSA to scribe. SA+ 1c/1c/p8
Emily : 29/03/2012	F	White British	4	8y7m	Difficulty maintaining attention, remembering instructions, weak receptive language. SA+ 1a/1a/2a
Peter : 28/03/2012	M	White British	4	9y5m	Diagnosis of Asperger syndrome. Difficulties in social communication: misunderstandings related to others and understanding tone and expression. Expressive language is limited. SSEN 2a/2a/2b
Summer : 28/03/2012	F	White British	6	10y 10m	Difficulties with fluency of speech and speech production. Writing is laborious. LSA will often scribe. SSEN 2c/2b/1a

3.3.2 Stage Two

The purpose of the focus group was to bring the initial findings from the observations and interviews with the children back to professionals in order to ensure the relevance of this research across the EPS. Murphy and Cornell (2010) employed focus groups in their research into student feedback. They highlight particular disadvantages as distortion of the data, untruthful answers and information being withheld due to group pressures. Balanced against this are the opportunities for the facilitator to explore and extend unforeseen conversational turns, to see what unites a group or highlights dissent.

The researcher approached her regional EPS team for colleagues to take part in the focus group. This was a convenience sample but there was heterogeneity between the team in terms of their length of service, specialisms and seniority. Four EPs and one final year TEP volunteered to take part: (two males, three females). The EPs' experience ranged from one to twenty seven years, the average was eleven years. One participant was also the team leader.

The researcher took time to consider her membership of the group as this may have restricted or inhibited other members, particularly those most recently qualified. It was decided on balance that the group would function better with more people, representing a range of experience and roles. In this cohesive and friendly team it was thought that Murphy and Cornell's (2010) cautions of opinions being suppressed would be extremely unlikely.

To help reduce inhibitions, the researcher ensured that each member of the group had answered two icebreaker questions once recording had begun. Learning from the Stage One interviews, the camera was mounted high up to capture non-verbal cues without being intrusive. The focus group lasted for one hour, including a summary by the researcher. Following verification of the data (Appendix 12), they were each thanked and given a box of chocolates as a token of recognition of their help.

3.3.3   Stage Three

Although no participants were formally recruited to Stage Three, the researcher did liaise with EPs across the UK by telephone and email to locate documents for analysis. Staff were also contacted from voluntary and charitable organisations connected with supporting children and parents through the process of SA. This is discussed in greater detail in section 3.6.3.

3.3.4   Stage Four

The purpose of Stage Four was to explore how to help CCD express views on their experience of SA, using MiView. The criteria used for participant selection were the same as for Stage One (3.3.1). In order to provide pupils and their parents/carers with information prior to meeting with an EP, selection at this stage was assisted by support from the SA Service's Local Management Team (LMT).

It was important to identify pupils immediately their SA had been agreed. The researcher was copied into the LMT Record of Decisions minutes for each of four LA regions. The process of recruitment is depicted in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Sequence of recruitment procedures for Stage Four participants
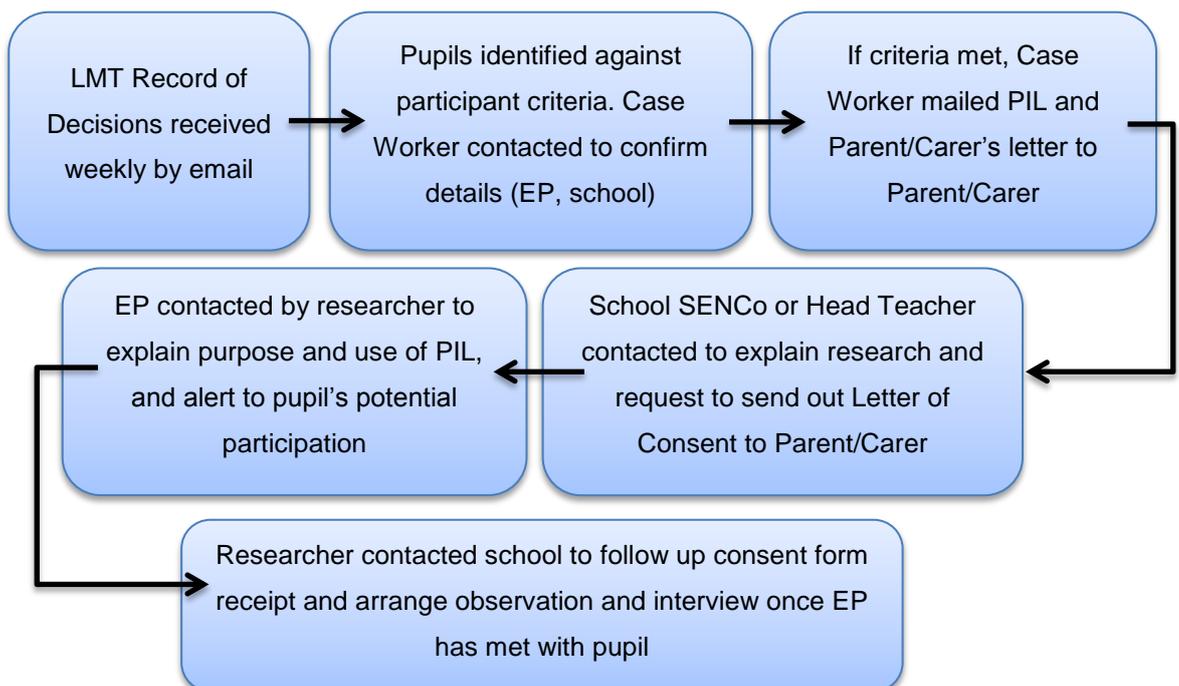
Thirteen pupils, aged six to ten participated in this fourth stage (Table 3.2). Learning from Stage One, the researcher recruited participants alongside the iterative process of observing, interviewing, evaluating and revising the MiView application and interview questions until saturation of the data was deemed to have been reached. See Appendices 18 and 20 for final versions. The sample type was purposive, as in Stage One.

The description of CD, National Curriculum levels and current provision model were all provided by the pupils' school SENCos. All the pupils were in the process of applying for a Statement of SEN.

Table 3.2: Stage Four Participants (anonymised)

Pupil and interview date	Gender	Ethnicity	Year Group	Age	Description of CD. National Curriculum Levels for Speaking and Listening / Reading / Writing
Calvin 23/11/2012	M	White British	2	6y 4m	Difficulties with learning. Dyspraxia p8/p8/p8
Jay: 26/11/12	M	White British	4	8y 6m	High functioning autism, ADHD. p7/2a/2c
Oskar : 28/11/2012	M	White British	2	7y 5m	Global delay. Poor articulation. p8/1b/1c
Adam 28/11/2012	M	White British	5	9y 5m	Difficulties with written communication and a very literal interpretation of meaning. 2a/2b/2c
Emily 3/12/2012	F	White British	5	9y 4m	Difficulty maintaining attention, remembering instructions, weak receptive language. 2a/2a/2b
Theresa 3/12/2012	F	White British	3	7y 10m	Difficulty processing verbal information. Poor articulation. Reading age significantly delayed. p8/p5/p5
Charlie 7/12/2012	F	White British	2	6y 9m	Significant delay. Very short periods of focus and concentration. p8/p6/p5
Sarah 7/12/2012	F	White British	2	7y 4m	High functioning autism. Very expressive with literal interpretations. Very anxious of unexpected change. 1a/2a/2a
Harvey 7/12/2012	M	White British	5	10y 0m	Dyslexia and difficulties with concentration. Highly anxious in new social situations. 2b/1c/1c
John 11/12/12	M	Black British	3	7y 10m	Difficulties articulating ideas/ inappropriate verbal communication with peers. Avoidance of eye contact and often positions body/head side on to communicate. 1c/2a/1c

Jake 13/12/12	M	White British	2	6y 6m	Global delay and autism. Problems forming speech and maintaining attention to context. Problems with temporal sequencing. p6/p6/p6
Jacob 13/12/12	M	White British	5	8y 5m	Learning disability, ADHD, dyspraxia. Particular difficulties in semantic understanding. 1c/2c/1a
David 20/12/12	M	White British	2	6y 6m	Autism. Particular difficulties in semantic understanding 1c/1b/p8

3.4   Ethical considerations

3.4.1 Obtaining consent and assent

Obtaining ethical consent was paramount in this research. In Stage One parents/carers, pupils and LSAs were all provided with information prior to being asked for their consent. This was in a written format and it accompanied pupils' information which was simplified and visually supported (Appendix 4). Parents were then given a consent form from school. When an appointment at school had been provisionally agreed, letters of consent were sent out via school to the pupil and their LSA. The information letters contained a description of the nature of the research and the participants' roles within it. They explained that the observations and interviews would be videoed, and set out participants' rights.

In Stage Two the researcher sent information to each team member outlining the purpose of the research and how the focus group aimed to complement other data gathering methods. As with the interview procedures above, those invited to participate were given time to consider taking part in the focus group before being given a consent form. Again, following ethical standards (3.4.2), the consent forms addressed issues of confidentiality (individual and group), anonymity, right to withdraw, video-recording and feedback (Appendix 10).

Stage Three involved no issues of consent, as all materials were publicly available. The EPSs contacted were made aware of the purpose of the document analysis and the nature of how this research was positioned within the literature on children's views.

At Stage Four the letters used were very similar to Stage One, with slight revisions to simplify language and make reference to participating in SA (Appendix 19). One difference was in ensuring pupils gave informed assent, in addition to their parent/carer's consent. In practice the same pupil's form was used as Stage One (Appendix 4) but the change reflected the researcher's understanding and upholding of the important ethical distinction of consent and assent (Lewis, 2002), explained in Chapter 2.2.

Assent forms (Appendix 19) were given to the pupils by the researcher prior to their being observed. This ensured that they had time to ask the researcher any additional questions. It served as a check for the retention of information by pupils and anything that may not have previously understood about the research could be explained.

3.4.2 Ethical standards

This research conformed to the *Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics* (HPC, 2009), the *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (BPS, 2009), and the *Guidelines for Professional Practice in Educational Psychology* (DECP, 2002). The main ethical sensitivities for this research were informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, data storage and feedback.

All the letters sent to parents/carers, pupils, SENCOs, LSAs and EPs were approved by the UEL Ethics Board. Additional approval was sought from the LA Senior Management Team and Essex EPS Ethics Board members for the Pupil Leaflet and MiView that were developed. UEL Ethical Approval is appended to this research.

The researcher ensured that parents/carers, pupils, LSAs and EPs had time to consider information about the research prior to being asked whether or not they wished to give their consent or assent. Consent letters explained the participants' right to withdraw at any time, confidentiality and data anonymity. Signatures were obtained from all participants on consent forms. Children additionally ticked an answer choice of yes/no/not sure against a series of questions to build their understanding in small steps. This proved very useful

when pupils ticked 'not sure' or 'no', even though they had not been able to verbally express their misunderstanding. The researcher was able to repeat and explain the questions in different ways as many times as each pupil needed. She ensured all pupils had assented to each part of the form and were happy to proceed before any data was gathered.

3.5 Validity and reliability

Validity usually refers to the extent to which something measures what it is that it is designed to measure (Howitt, 2010). This is problematic in qualitative research as it implies an objective, realist perspective in having something to measure. It was more helpful to this research to interpret validity as how well the methods of analysis fitted the data. Thus the validity of the analysis itself was explored, rather than any particular instrument or measure. Accordingly, the participants in the focus group were asked to check the accuracy of the transcript and emergent themes.

The questions asked at Stages One, Two and Four were focused on the research questions to be addressed. The researcher also applied the validity criterion of triangulation. This is conceived by Howitt (2010) as a way of finding out more about a phenomenon over and above what each method might achieve in isolation. The researcher explored the perspectives of EPs and CCD, as well as observing the responses of adults supporting the children.

As Cresswell (2003) notes, reliability measures are considered less relevant in qualitative research of this nature because the data gathered is bound inextricably to each particular social situation. One would not be expected to be able to generalise findings to larger populations. More appropriate was the reflexive approach of the researcher and her credibility with all participants to sensitively interpret their views and experiences.

Reliability was also conceptualised in this research as the consistency of the observer to assign codes to the same categories over time. The issue was addressed by the researcher being the sole observer and interviewer, which sought to reduce differences in interview style or coding anomalies. The researcher showed her coded texts to peers for a measure of consistency. As the nature of action research is to assimilate changes over iterative cycles, each interview was necessarily slightly different to the last, as described earlier in this chapter (3.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.4).

3.6   Data gathering methods and analyses

Multiple forms of data were collected through: the observation and interview of pupils accompanied by their LSAs; a focus group of EPs; and a search of available resources in the UK for children and parents about meeting EPs. Each method was common to qualitative data collection procedures and informed successive stages of the action research. At each stage the relevant method generated data that answered the research questions and cumulatively built on the previous stage. This spiral of steps is summarised at the end of this section (Table 3.8).

3.6.1   Stage One: Observations and Interviews

To record the restraining and enabling factors to pupils using the EPQ with the help of a familiar adult, the researcher assumed a non-participant, unobtrusive observer role. Each observation was immediately followed by a semi-structured interview with the child. The LSA helped the child, or in some cases just remained present as a source of comfort. Each interview took place in a quiet, familiar setting organised by the school (usually the SENCo's office or SEN room). The earlier observations and interviews took just over 40 minutes on average, but this was evidently too long and later revised to under 20 minutes. All the pupils opted to have a familiar LSA present, though not all schools were able to provide pupils with a choice as to who this would be.

There are obvious power imbalances of status, position and perception when an adult asks a child for an interview (Costley, 2002), so at the outset of each observational session the researcher took time to put each pupil at ease and to answer any questions that they had. This discussion included the length of time that the observation and interview would take and the resources that would be used. Pupils were invited to watch a replay of themselves on video at the end, an option that was generally taken up with enthusiasm.

3.6.1.1   Observations

It was felt important to use direct observation for the researcher to see first-hand the types of difficulties the pupils had in completing the questionnaire. It has been described as an 'enlightening research method' (Winn-Oakley, 2002) and revealed unusual behaviours, reactions to questions, points of fatigue or disinterest and what engaged the pupils. An observation protocol was used (Appendix 5) which underwent two revisions to increase the speed at which the researcher could take notes. Alongside questions from the EPQ was space for behavioural observations, communications or anything that the video camera might not have recorded. These observations were then used in the interview that followed.

Limitations set by the researcher's skills of attention and observation are noted by Cresswell (2003) and the observation protocol was revised to make it as efficient as possible. This afforded the researcher maximum time to look, rather than write. In her studies of the preparation of CYP for care proceedings, Winn-Oakley (2002) has argued that combining observation with interviews can reduce overall ambiguities. The researcher intended that observational data would contrast with and complement questionnaire answers and interview responses about the preparation for, experiences during and outcomes of meeting an EP.

Although directly observing behaviours can be said to be less artificial or open to response bias than other techniques (Robson, 2002), these benefits must be balanced against recognised disadvantages. Critical to the current research was the unknown effect of the presence of the researcher. Given her social

constructionist perspective (3.1.1) the researcher was acutely aware that despite trying to be unobtrusive during observation (for example initial reassurance and careful consideration of seat positioning), her presence would still impact upon the interactions between pupil and LSA. This newly constructed, shared experience would underpin the pupil's responses in the interview that followed.

The use of video captured fleeting expressions and the timing of interactions: subtleties that may otherwise have been lost. It is also possible that it inhibited or altered the behaviours of the pupil and their LSA. The decisions made about where to position the camera and the width of focus impact upon the usability of the video recording as data (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005). Whilst this is understood, the researcher was sensitive to be discreet about filming and a gorillapod™ was used to mount a small video camera close enough to pick up good quality audio but not directly in the pupil's view. This was set up before the participants entered the room, but only began recording once full assent was given to participate, including being filmed. The video camera was operated with a remote control so as not to draw attention to it unduly.

Alongside equipment failure, Edwards and Talbot (1999) list a narrow focus and over-analysis as disadvantages of video use. In this study the researcher sought the narrow focus on the pupil and LSA, actively looking for the minutiae of their interactions to support the notes on her observation protocol. In the analysis of the data careful and repeated attention to the video recording was invaluable, again contrasting with Edwards and Talbot (1999) and suggesting that the context of the research is key to how advantages or disadvantages are construed.

3.6.1.2   *Semi-structured interviews*

The use of semi-structured interviews is a technique common to social and educational research (Lewis and Lindsay, 2002). Such interviews are more flexible and though questions are predetermined to focus respondents on particular areas, the sequence and wording is used reactively by the researcher (Robson, 2002). This was perfectly suited to the action research paradigm as

the instrument evolved according to the pupils' verbal and non-verbal responses. Robson (2002) cautions that this lack of uniformity compromises the reliability and generalisability of the data. Such concerns are elaborated earlier in this chapter (3.5) and are also addressed in the content analysis (3.6.3.1).

The interview questions (Appendix 5) stemmed from the researcher's aim to seek what could be enabling about the process and outcomes: the *what* as well as the *how* (see Chapter One, 1.2.3). The areas for discussion were drawn from conversations with the EPs responsible for developing the original EPQ, and from observations of what had appeared easier or more difficult for the pupils. The prompt questions below were used in a semi-structured way: sometimes the researcher shortened, omitted or differently sequenced them according to the pupil's verbal and non-verbal feedback. The pupils could express their answers in any way they chose, including drawing.

Questions were gradually refined into four sections:

(i)   What helps the pupil recall and describe the event?
        e.g.   Are we in the same room now? Does that make it easier to remember?

(ii)   What engages and / or supports the pupil in the process?
        e.g.   Who would <u>you</u> choose to help you?

(iii)   How might the preparation and follow up help the pupil be better informed?
        e.g.   How could adults make the meeting easier for you to understand: <u>Before</u> it happens?

(iv)   Is the pupil aware of enabling factors or barriers to expressing their views in other school-based contexts?
        e.g.   What decisions have you talked about in school? Who listened? What happened afterwards?

The full list of questions included *affect* "Did you like to be asked about your meeting with [EP Name]?", *process* "What is the best way to answer questions?", *description* "Which question/s would you change? How?" and *outcomes* "Describe to me what will happen next?" Linked to the discussion in Chapter One (1.4.2) of the underlying framework of Self Determination Theory, these questions were designed to explore the children's experience of

competency, autonomy and relatedness. For example, how did they find the process, were they prepared, did they receive feedback, did they feel supported and able to say what they thought, and did they feel listened to? Following the suggestions of Howitt (2010), the researcher used closed questions only to give the pupil confidence in answering, but then each was followed with a more open question, and time was given for the pupil to process before answering.

The flexibility of the interview contrasted with the observed survey-format questionnaire and brought greater insight as to enabling factors and barriers. The semi-structured approach also permitted the researcher to adapt each interview to suit particular needs, defined as much by the setting and timing as by the particular communicative strengths and difficulties of the pupils. This approach allowed for some unscripted interactions from which emergent themes, as well as predetermined themes, could be explored.

3.6.1.3 Stage One: Content analysis (inductive)

Content analysis is a method that can be used to construct patterns across qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is similar to thematic analysis (used later on: 3.6.2.2 and 3.6.4.3) but considers smaller units of meaning such as words or phrases to provide a primary analysis of the data (Woods, 2006). The systematic process of analysing text and video permitted analysis to a level of category and concept formation which addressed the needs of this Stage.

Each video was watched through by the researcher at least four times. This gave a good sense of the data and ideas were noted regarding the children's responses and the level and type of the LSA's input – for example reading, paraphrasing or simplifying questions, helping the child refocus, asking further questions to break items down or help child retrieve information. In order to provide an example of this process, an extended extract from a fully transcribed observation and interview is included (Appendix 6). With each replay, the researcher looked for repetition, similarity of phrases and recurring ideas, culminating in a list of issues that could be usefully addressed.

Alongside each issue were examples of the category, behavioural or situational observations, transcribed excerpts and non-verbal communication to evidence

each category and a final column for the researcher's reflections. The emphasis on reflection is a common feature to action research and was purposefully undertaken at each analytical stage.

This process was cyclical and inductive: dynamically responsive to the views and behaviours of each child. The researcher found that the addition and assimilation of each new set of data was an excellent test of the discreteness of each issue, prompting many revisions. For further details of Stage One Content Analysis see Appendix 8.

The areas, observed behaviours, words and phrases were summarised under six main themes and linked to the SDT framework.

Table 3.3: Overview of Content Analysis [i] (inductive)

Issue	Theme	Descriptor	SDT framework
1. Misunderstanding questions 2. Missing the purpose behind the question	Communication	(Pupil's ability across expressive and receptive communication; their experience of giving views)	*Competence Autonomy*
3. Lack of motivation to answer questions	Motivation	(The questionnaire aesthetics; timing of meeting with researcher; task expectation)	*Autonomy*
4. Confusion of role of Educational Psychologist	Preparation	(Who has said what to the pupil beforehand; resources used)	*Competence*
5. Unable to recall meeting 6. No understanding of next steps	Explanation	(Who has said what to the pupil at the time and afterwards; resources used)	*Relatedness*

For each theme a list of positives was created from what the children had shown or had said (Appendix 7, Data Set A). For example, under **motivation**: "*Engagement improved when duration and expectation of task clearly explained to pupil.*" The data from the interviews (Appendix 7b, Data Set B) was also added, to include pupils' ideas for developing or enhancing the conduit for, and

process by which their views were sought. Each problem therefore generated a series of ideas for possible improvements, and these were listed as 'possibilities' or ideas to be taken forwards to the next stage. For example "*using a progress indicator.*"

These themes were used as the basis for the structure of the focus group and presented to the group as a sheet entitled Problems, Positives and Possibilities (Table 4.2). Additionally, the themes of **preparation** and **explanation** had also identified issues that could be addressed by the EPs having a checklist. Such a list was created for the EPs in the focus group to evaluate (Appendix 9).

3.6.2 Stage Two: Focus group

A focus group was convened to gather data on EPs' perspectives of current practice of pupils' contributions to and understandings of SA. Focus groups share similarities with semi-structured interviews in that they follow a predetermined set of questions, but can also generate novel ideas and suggestions from the dynamic interaction between participants. Woolfson and Harker (2002) postulate that hearing one participant's perspective on a particular topic can bring another sufficient confidence to also make a contribution, and so the group dynamic gains a momentum which cannot be achieved in individual interviews. This elicits much important contextual information including non-verbal cues. Cohen, Manion and Lawrence (2011) warn against methodological problems where transcription in the focus group is the sole record of data, losing other details of this social encounter. The use of video was seen as important for this reason.

3.6.2.1   Focus group questions

Areas for discussion were grouped into three sections, within which the researcher had a series of prompts (Appendix 11). These were:

(i)   issues directly related to the role of EPs;
> e.g. *What information would you like to know about the child's experience of their meeting with you?*

(ii)   issues relating to the evaluation of children's views; and
e.g. What do you think the best way to get this data would be?

(iii)   issues relating to the questionnaire.
e.g. A summary of the Problems, Positives and Possibilities sheet

3.6.2.2 Stage Two: Thematic analysis (i)

The aim of this analysis was to interpret EPs' constructs of how pupils currently contribute to SA, and their thoughts to improve best practice across the EPS. Several types of qualitative analyses were considered at Stage Two and Stage Four, including Grounded Theory Analysis, Narrative Analysis and Thematic Analysis. Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992) is tightly linked to the data and commits to generate theories through an inductive process. To follow this process of theory development would have required a greater breadth and depth to the data available than this research would generate.

Narrative Analysis (Riessman, 2008) also shares a search for patterns across a data set and is frequently used in social constructionist approaches. Narrative Analysis is concerned with the function, structure and content of individuals' stories (Murray, 2003). These stories have to do with social interactions and identities. Such a method of analysis could be usefully applied to the sense that children make of being involved in SA. To compare this to the narrative of the EPs would have been very interesting. The requirements of this research were such that individual personal extended narratives were not collected and so a more appropriate analytical method was sought.

Thematic analysis shares much in common with the qualitative analytical methods above. It is a straightforward method by which major and minor themes from a whole data set are generated. It does not require the researcher to generate theory or be committed to particular technical constraints. This lack of consistency and transparency in formulation is also levied as a criticism of the method (Howitt, 2010). The researcher felt that Thematic Analysis was apt for analysing the data at Stages Two and Four because of the accessible yet

rigorous way that it can be applied within a constructionist paradigm (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

It was appropriate at Stage Two because the researcher wanted to go further than simply organising and describing the data. She intended to understand the meaning that EPs made of children's involvement in SA and other related topics that arose within the group's discussion. Paramount to bring confidence to the value of this analysis was transparency at each step: how the themes were developed and to what extent they were distinctive and discreet.

Starting with a full transcription of the videoed focus group (see Appendix 12 for an example), the researcher followed the structured steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). She took an active role in identifying and reporting patterns in the data. This helped move from a speculative analysis through to socially produced themes and subthemes. Braun and Clarke define a theme as capturing:

> "…something important about the data in relation to the research question and (which) represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (2006, p.9).

Step 1: Becoming familiar with the data

The researcher did all her own transcription and the process of familiarisation with the data was seen here as a continuation of having been present in all the observations and interviews. The video gave an added visual and contextual dimension that aided recall of the participants' verbal and non-verbal communications. As in Stage One the video was replayed many times during transcription to ensure accuracy.

Step 2: Generating initial codes

Code ideas were now revised by trying them in relation to the data. This began interplay between data and data analysis, which continued throughout the steps. The codings were partially guided by researcher's perspective on the research, but the process was essentially an inductive one. 51 codes were created at this step (Appendix 13b).

Step 3: Searching for themes

A deeper analytical process at this step began to arrange the codes into themes that spoke to or explained to socio-cultural constructs and contexts, such as the external constraints on EPs or the discourse around a child. This involved moving between steps two and three, to begin to identify patterns in the codes, rearrange sections of text and revisit the codes to try and group them under different headings or themes. This process of collapsing codes into initial themes and sub themes is shown in Appendix 13. Constructs which appeared to embrace a number of the initial codes generated five themes: parental involvement; preparation and explanation; pupil understanding; EP constraints and practice; and the child's emotional experience. All the coded extracts were then placed under these headings to check the accuracy of the initial theme's label. This helped to show whether the material should be subdivided or conflated.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

Some codes were collated under more than one theme. The researcher ensured that the extracts were inclusive as this can be a criticism of Thematic Analysis where surrounding context is lost. Mind mapping software was used to create an initial thematic map (Appendix 14) and to look at the relationships between themes. Steps two to four were not linear and the researcher frequently checked the analysis of the data against the data to ensure her analysis presented a close fit. This was a lengthy process that Howitt (2010) terms 'analytic effort'.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

Six main themes were identified, with subthemes and two floating categories.

1. *EP best practice*
2. *(SSEN issues of) data gathering*
3. *Constraints on EP*
4. *Child variables*
5. *Preparation*
6. *Child's emotional experience*
7. *Downplaying the importance of the SA*
8. *Suggestions for improvements*

These are provided here to show how Stages Two, Three and Four link together in Table 4.5. The descriptors and further findings of Stage Two are elaborated in the next chapter.

3.6.3 Stage Three: Document search

The focus of the next step of this action research was to draw on the best practice of what enabled pupils to contribute to SA. The researcher contacted EPSs all over the UK to request examples of what they gave to pupils to explain SA. She contacted mailing lists, EP-specific social network groups, directly emailed many EPs and telephoned EPSs. Revealingly, very few EPs advised that their services gave out anything specifically designed for children. The document search was therefore broadened to include hard copy leaflets and digital materials originating from regional Parent Partnership Services (PPS), online articles on the SA process and DVDs. All such artefacts are referred to as documents for the purposes of this search and subsequent analysis (Robson, 2002). The researcher also needed to expand the remit of the documents to befit any meeting with an Educational Psychologist as very few specifically related to SA.

With these revisions a total of 22 documents for analysis were located, all publically available and representative across the UK. Whilst no generalisations of this sample were possible, the dearth of relevant materials did provide cross-validation in support of a marginalised voice and a disempowered position for children undergoing SA. The researcher contacted the publishers of each document to enquire as to newer versions or alternative formats. Three leaflets were also available in braille and four in different languages. The two DVD resources were also signed in British Sign Language (BSL).

3.6.3.1 Stage Three: Content analysis (deductive)

The purpose of this analysis was to draw out the characteristics of the different sources that follow best practise as defined by previous stages. As explained by Robson (2002), using content analysis deductively as well as inductively is an 'entirely appropriate strategy' (p.353) and both have been flexibly applied in

this research (see also 3.6.1.3). In Stage Three there was a formulated notion of qualities that the researcher sought in each document. There was also space to note new examples of best practice that had not already been identified in the previous stages.

Following the guidance of Robson (2002) and Howitt (2010) the researcher undertook a systematic process of examining each document against construct categories for analysis. Taking what she had learned from Stages One and Two, the researcher explicitly specified what indicators she looked for in categorisation. This is a process that Robson (2002) terms 'operationalizing categories' (p.355). The categories were:

1. *Reference and description*
2. *Purpose or aim*
3. *Seeking to encourage change prior to meeting*
4. *Promoting agency of child*
5. *Type of questions/ level of language*
6. *Visual supports*
7. *Effort and resources*
8. *References to outcomes*
9. *Level of personalisation*
10. *Motivation, rewards, engagement*
11. *Does it encourage the pupil to express their views?*
12. *Internal coherence and validity?*
13. *What's missing?*
14. *Additional ideas and best practice*

A full description of the indicators used to evaluate all relevant aspects of each document is provided in the next chapter (Table 4.5) and also as Appendix 15. Examples of the documents can be seen in Appendix 16.

When the categories had been revised to encompass all the relevant aspects of each document, the next step was to transform these categories into criteria. This was in order to provide a measure of their usefulness to be taken forward and used as part of the resources within Stage Four. The criteria were:

1. *Explicitly for children's use?*
2. *Uses visual supports?*
3. *Promotes independent use?*
4. *Describes meeting with EP?*
5. *Makes reference to outcomes?*
6. *Can be personalised by the child?*
7. *Uses multimedia?*

8.   ***Uses a friendly and engaging format?***
9.   ***Encourages the child to express views?***
10. ***Has internal coherence and validity?***

The findings of this process are further detailed in the next chapter.

3.6.4 Stage Four: Observations and Interviews

The data gathered in the first three stages was used to inform the researcher's understanding of how systems might change in order to help pupils express views on their experience of Statutory Assessment. Interim outcomes from this participatory process were the ideas from pupils, EPs, LSAs and documents that guided the development of a Pupil Information Leaflet and an iPad survey tool termed 'MiView'. The focus of this stage was to record the elicit pupil views on the SA process using MiView to support and facilitate. It was explained to the pupils that the suggestions for the contents of the MiView had come from other pupils just like them who had also met with EPs. This acknowledgement of the value of each child's opinion was considered paramount to the ideology of the research.

Observations followed the same procedure as in Stage One (3.6.1.1) and again preceded an interview with each child (3.6.1.2). They took place in a familiar school setting and an adult was present to assist the pupil. Where possible this was the same room where the pupil had met with the EP. Learning from the first stage, the whole process was much shorter, lasting an average of 20 minutes including the initial discussion around informed assent. The sessions were videoed and each child was invited to watch a clip of themselves at the end.

In addition to the information and consent forms, pupils had also been given a Pupil Information Leaflet (PIL) in advance of meeting the EP. This had been sent to their parents or carers to share with them. Where possible the EPs had also used the PIL with the pupil during the session, to give them additional exposure to, and familiarity with, the contents and images. There follows a description of the development of both these key resources to supporting the data gathering methods in Stage Four.

3.6.4.1   Pupil Information Leaflet (PIL)

The purpose of this was to ensure that pupils (and their families) were given simple and accurate information. It was designed to use clear conceptual images that divided the meeting with the EP into three chronological phases. The style and content drew upon:

- Stage One: pupils' suggestions captured in the PPP table;
- Stage Two: EPs' opinions on the PPP table, supported by their experiences of what would help the pupils' understanding of SA;
- Stage Three: criterion referenced best practice across multiple documents; and
- Research into Cue Cards and visual supports as described in Chapter Two (2.4.1)

The leaflet contained three sets of information: giving simple information, sequencing the visit and space to take ownership of the document. The first two pages contained images that were drawn to accompany short amounts of text under the headings:

- What is an Educational Psychologist?
- What is a Statutory Assessment?
- What sort of things might happen?
- Why is what you think important?

The next two pages linked directly to what would happen before, during and after meeting with the EP. The simple images were replicated on the MiView screen and were intended to help the child sequence their experience by providing visual, temporal markers.

The last two pages were left blank, so that the pupil could write or draw anything that they wanted to ask the EP. On the back page more information was provided for parents, giving them direct access to EPs via a telephone helpline, and contact details for the Statutory Assessment Service local bases.

The leaflet was produced in a4 size for feedback and shown to the researcher's EPS team members, as well as school staff and pupils. These suggestions enabled the researcher to amend the phrasing and design still further, finally producing the PIL leaflet. Figure 3.3 shows an extract from the PIL, with the full version appended to this thesis (Appendix 17; 17b).

Figure 3.3: Example pages from the Pupil Information Leaflet (PIL)

It could help to think and talk about...

The place where you might meet the EP...

...and which people could be there.

What you and the EP might talk about...

...or what sort of activities you could do together.

How meeting the EP might make you feel...

...and how you could talk about that.
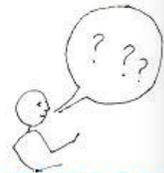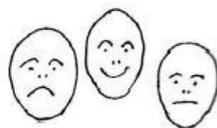
How what you say might help...

...and the sort of changes that could happen.

What is an Educational Psychologist?

An Educational Psychologist is also called an EP. They visit children at school and at home.

This is because they are interested in how children think, talk, play and learn. EPs want to help children to enjoy school and be happy at home.

What is a Statutory Assessment?

Different people write about what you do well, what you find difficult and how things could go better. This is to help you with your learning, your feelings and your confidence.
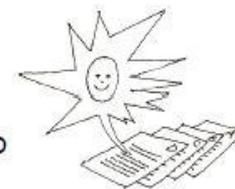
These ideas come from you, your parents or carers, school teachers, doctors, therapists and EPs. It is called a Statutory Assessment.

3.6.4.2 MiView

The MiView app was designed as a child-friendly, multimedia and engaging way to help pupils talk about their assessment and their experience of meeting with the EP. An iPad was chosen as the conduit as this technology was to be introduced to all EPs across the LA. This also complemented a LA target of listening to the views of children and parents as stakeholders in the improvement of service delivery.

Sourcing the right application involved many emails to colleagues specialising in assistive technology, discussions on iPad and SEN community online forums (referenced), and many conversations with the iSurvey™ software developers, on which the MiView is based. Stages One, Two and Three had demonstrated the need to move away from text-only questions on paper, to use visual support, sound, video and feedback. Children had said that multiple choice formats were preferable. The literature review had shown that questions alone would limit what children were able to express and could reinforce power dynamics.

The research therefore tried to include the following components:

- Multiple choice questions, using own pictures on an uncluttered background

- Answers uploaded to be stored anonymously online

- Very simple interface with the ability to go back and review answers

- Options to make a choice or leave out a question

- Speech output (screen reading)

- Answering open questions in a choice of formats (speech, drawing, video, text…)

- Building personalised responses and flow (initial answers influence what appears on subsequent screens)

Figure 3.4: Example screens from MiView
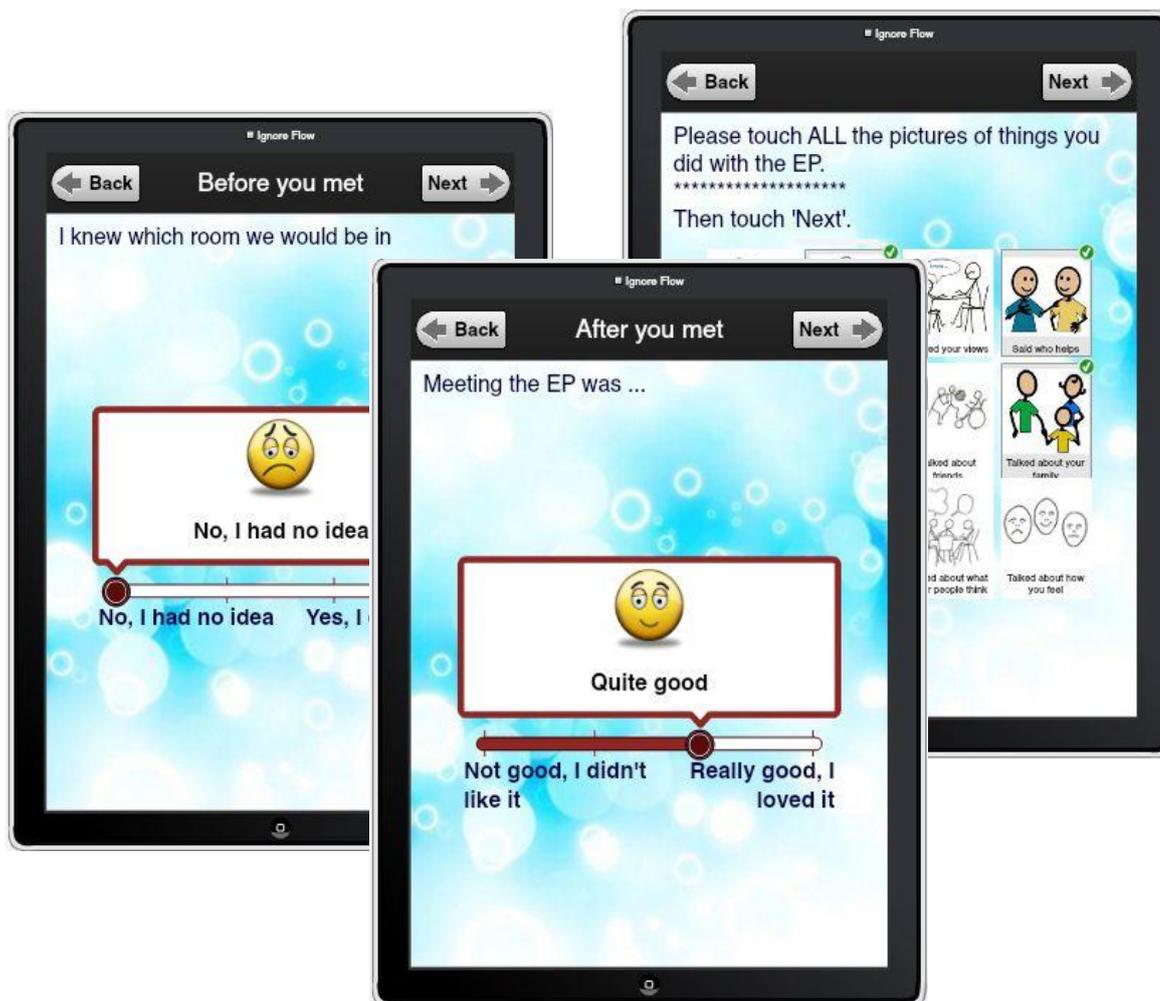
The application that could be adapted to meet the majority of these criteria was iSurvey™. This had an interface designed for large consumer surveys and it needed work to isolate the most useful, pictorial components for this research. Although speech and video feedback are planned for a later version these were not available at the time of the research. As with other resources used in the course of the research stages, the design underwent revisions according to the pupils' feedback during interviews. The researcher also sought opinions from her EPS and university colleagues.

The final app used multiple choice questions, open questions and drawing as responses. It was interactive and supported with clear text, simple line drawn images and emoticons to support slider questions. Some examples are provided in Figure 3.4 and the full list of questions and app screen prints are appended (Appendix 18; 18b).

Throughout the development of PIL and MiView, there was also a future focus which acknowledged the potential impact of legislation on the Education, Health and Care plans (DfE, 2013). This unified approach will necessitate changes to current SA procedures. The researcher felt it important to create formats that could be used across the service in different ways and by different groups of multiagency professionals. The need being addressed was to support children's voices about the *process* of being assessed as well as a better understanding of *outcomes.*

3.6.4.3 Stage Four: Thematic analysis (ii)

The aim of this analysis was to identify themes which explored the enabling and restraining factors for CCD to express views on their experience of SA, helped by using MiView. A separate data set containing the pupils' survey responses was anonymously uploaded to the iSurvey website. This was organised into a spread sheet for ease of reference (Appendix 21) and then added to the NVivo dataset for analysis.

As discussed in 3.6.2.2, Thematic Analysis was suited to exploring the interview and observational data. Again the systematic approach of Braun and Clarke (2006) and the same six steps as described in 3.6.2.2 were used.

Step 1: Becoming familiar with the data
This process started with the researcher transcribing each pupil observation and interview. A column was left to the right of the transcript for line by line coding. This was refined by subsequent viewing of each video clip as more codes were added. With over 200 pages of transcribed data, the researcher then uploaded these to NVivo[7] to keep the task of multiple coding of multiple extracts manageable.

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[7] The researcher used NVivo 10™: software to support her organisation and analysis

Table 3.4: Example transcript extract at Step 1:

Line	Notes (Video location markers; non-verbal communication)	Transcript	Initial coding ideas
1)		R: (to P) …and let go. That's it, off you go. A: (to R) Are you ok for me to read this out? R: Yes, of course.	Immediate disempowering of pupil
2)	A holds up a picture of K, P nods. P engaged with screen. P makes eye contact with A and nods P presses	A: *Thank you for taking part. This is all about what it was like for you to meet the Educational Psychologist. EP.* A: *Please touch the start button.* (points) A: *Here is a practise question to help you. Anything you want to put is ok. When you are ready please press 'Next'.* A: Now we're going to have a practise question first of all, to get us used to the iPad. So, when you're ready for the practise question, you can press next. (Indicates where this is). P: (smiles). A: Well done	A is using visual supports well. 'We' 'us' vocabulary is of togetherness, relationships, mutuality
3)	A doesn't stop to let P try. A promotes independence P presses each choice in turn. Chooses. Pupil makes eye contact with A. A's voice is notably quiet and calm. Emphasising key words. A: Signs 'finished'.	A: It says *There are five choices to answer this question. Try them all out by touching each little line.* *Now try this. I think chocolate ice-cream is…* A: Is it *disgusting….?* A: touch the next one and see A: Is it *not very tasty* A*: touch the disgusting one and see the disgusting* A: Do you remember what that one there was? (points) A: *ok* A: The next one after Ok says *quite tasty* and the top one is *delicious.* A: So, for all these questions you can choose. A: So you can choose which one you think. Ice cream is disgusting, not very tasty, ok quite tasty or delicious. (P nods). A Which one do you think? P: (touches delicious) A: *delicious.* So, we've done the first question.	A misunderstands instructions Promoting independence Third repetition Competence, understanding. 'we' mutual language

Step 2: Generating initial codes

Working back through each line of the transcripts in NVivo began to determine early codes, code shorthand and descriptions. As this progressed some additions and redundancies to the codes became necessary. For example 'Clarifying Question' was added, 'Reassurance' was divided into 'Verbal', 'Seeking' and 'Gestural', and Summarising and Rephrasing were conflated to 'Paraphrasing'. The coding of each transcript was then checked for overall consistency. See Appendix 22 for an example of coding analysis. 45 codes were created shown in the full transcripts (Appendix 22b). The researcher added annotations throughout the coding process as frequently occurring patterns and ideas took shape.

Step 3: Searching for themes

The codes were visually mapped to look for associations and relationships between them (Appendix 23). This identified factors that were supportive, empowering, disempowering and so forth. The researcher then used the factors from the data to build themes. NVivo enabled the gathering of all the extracts pertaining to each group of codes together in a matrix. The data was reassembled and examined under themes and subthemes to address research question 3 (2.8).

During Step 3 some changes to the codes were felt necessary to better fit the data. For example 'praise' and 'feedback' conflated to one code: positive feedback. There was not enough information on context and preparation for this to be a standalone theme and it was subsumed within a broader theme to encompass the opposite of collaboration: disenfranchising pupils in different ways. Some terminology also changed at this time, for example 'Implicit Disempowerment' became 'Undermining Pupil Involvement' which better described the data and linked to Hart's Ladder of Participation discussed in Chapter One (1.2.2).

Step 4: Reviewing themes

The researcher tentatively divided the codes into enabling and restraining factors. The evidence in support of each theme was reviewed to reflect how the

variables of each unique situation combined to impact upon each child. The final six themes and two subthemes clearly linked to the previous discussion of competence, autonomy and relatedness as needs described in Self Determination Theory (1.4.2).

Taking a step back from the data at this step allowed the researcher to look at the groupings of codes into themes through a social constructionist lens. The temptation to group by behaviours that co-occurred had masked responses that reflected very different power dynamics. 'Comment' as a set was subdivided to 'descriptive', 'improvements', 'off topic' and 'process'. These were now placed according to the function of the type of comment. 'Autonomy and confidence' became 'encouraging views' to encompass the process and interrelated nature of the positive, reassuring dynamic as well as outcomes. Relationship with adult became 'Collaborative Relationship'. The division of 'empowerment' through verbal and non-verbal means was removed as the data clearly showed that they were inseparable in practice. It was very helpful to ensure that data extracts were grouped by the enabling or restraining function of specific behaviours, rather than abstract description.

Step 5: Theme definition and labelling

The researcher aimed to define each theme so as to ensure that each was conceptually discrete. To help with such conceptual distinctions, the researcher consulted with university colleagues and presented her analysis at the Division of Educational and Child Psychology's Annual Conference. The feedback proved extremely useful in incorporating others' analytical ideas. Ensuring for example, that the themes were internally coherent, and also in revising and shortening the descriptors.

The findings for all four Stages are presented in detail in the next Chapter.

Table 3.5 An overview of each research stage and timeline

Research Questions	Stages and Descriptions	Participants	Methods and Resources	Analysis and Outcomes	Timeline
1) What are the enabling or restraining factors when asking CCD – using a text based questionnaire - for views on their meeting with an educational professional?	**Stage One:** Observing pupils use the Essex Pupil Questionnaire (EPQ) to talk about assessment. Interviewing pupils about the experience of using this EPQ and of meeting with the Psychologist/ Specialist Teacher	Seven (F=4, M=3); Age 7yrs 5m to 10yrs 10m; Each supported by a familiar LSA	Interview Protocol; Video camera; EPQ Interview Protocol; Video camera; EPQ	Transcripts (full and extracts); Content analysis. Revised Interview Protocol; Problems, Positives and Possibilities table.	March-May 2012
2) What would enable CCD to elaborate their views more fully? **a) What do EPs identify as enabling and restraining factors that affect children's involvement in the process and outcomes of their SA?**	**Stage Two:** Facilitating a focus group of TEPs / EPs. Exploring their perspectives of current practice of pupil's contribution to and understanding of SA	One TEP, four EPs (F=3; M=2). Experience range 1yr to 27 yrs.	Focus group. Problems, Positives and Possibilities table.	Full transcript. Thematic analysis. Criteria against which to critically evaluate UK-wide resources in Stage Three.	June 2012

b) What ideas can be incorporated from research and practitioner based evidence from Local Authorities?	**Stage Three**: Analysis of documents drawn from across the UK. Given to pupils and parents/carers which focus on meeting an EP, especially as part of SA.	No formally recruited participants at this stage.	Criterion referenced document analysis. 22 documents (leaflets, DVD, online interactive information)	Document analysis. Best practice ideas from documents matching greatest number of criteria. All outcomes from Stages One, Two and Three underpin the action in Stage Four.	July-August 2012
3) What are the enabling and restraining factors when asking CCD – using MiView – for their experience of meeting with an educational professional?	**Stage Four**: Observing pupils giving views on Statutory Assessment, using MiView Interviewing pupils about their experience of meeting with the EP	13 (3=F, 10=M); Age 6 to 10yrs; Optionally accompanied by a familiar LSA	Interview Protocol; Video camera; MiView	MiView survey responses. Full transcription of each observation and interview. Thematic analysis. Revisions to Interview Protocol and MiView with each pupil seen.	October – December 2012

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter reports the findings of Stages One to Three and then describes how this information was used to develop and observe a new process. Stage Four is then discussed separately as this generated a large amount of rich data which formed the major part of this research. For ease of reference the research questions that pertain to each action research stage are repeated at the start of each section.

4.1   Stage One

> **Research Question 1:**
>
> ***What are the enabling or restraining factors when asking CCD – using a text based questionnaire – for their views on their meeting with an educational professional?***

Children were observed giving their views on their experiences of a recent meeting with an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher. They were supported in this by a familiar adult, and by using the Essex Pupil Questionnaire (EPQ) to structure their responses.

Immediately following this, the children were asked about their views on the process. What it had been like to be asked? What did they like or dislike about the EPQ format? The findings for this stage will therefore be divided into observed behaviours and reported views.

4.1.1   Observations of children using the EPQ (Data set A)

The EPQ contained 15 questions, 11 of which were closed questions. Appendix 7 provides an example of the responses to each question. As described in Chapter Three (3.6.1) this generated a taxonomy of current issues which are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Stage One, Data Set A: How does the pupil respond to the questions presented in the EPQ? (P =Pupil; A=Supporting adult)

Current Issues	Sub themes	Examples of Supporting Evidence
Pupil misunderstands the questions	• Vocabulary is too difficult • Instructions are misunderstood • Only responding to key words • Answers are tentative	Georgia, Q4 *"What were the most helpful things about meeting with the Psychologist?"* P: "Hmmm…" (pupil looks away, sucks hand) A: "Shall we forget that one and come back to that one in a minute?"
Pupil is not able to answer	• Supporting adult omits questions • Pupil is echolaic or gives no answer • Pupil lacks the information to be able to answer the question • Question too broad or complex	Emily, Q2 "*Why did you meet with the Psychologist?"* P takes a long time to answer Q1, eventually saying "I don't know". Question 2 is then omitted by A who moves to Q3.
Confusion of role of Psychologist	• Mixing up with other professionals • Psychologist didn't explain their role	Paul, Q2 "*Why did you meet with the Psychologist?"* P: "Because of my speech"
Unable to recall the meeting	• Occurred too far in the past	Matilda, Q8 *"Is there anything else you'd like to say about meeting with the Psychologist?"* P: "Can't remember
Lack of motivation to answer questions	• Put off by quantity/ presentation	John, Q1 *"Whose idea was it for you to meet with the Psychologist?"* P: "Do I have to do *all* of it?"
No understanding of next steps	• No-one has explained the plan of what will happen next to the pupil.	Georgia, Q6 "Has your teacher, SENCo or EP talked to you about what the plan is now to help you?" A: When (EP) came, and then went again, did (SENCo) explain to you what the plan was going to be? P: No

4.1.2   Children's views on this process (Data set B)

The children participating in Stage One were able to make many suggestions for improvements to the EPQ and some also talked about aspects of the process of meeting an educational professional that they enjoyed or would change. Appendix 7b provides the full data responses to each question, summarised in Table 4.2 in the form of 'Possibilities'.

The Problems, Positives and Possibilities table was a useful tool to indicate the findings of Stage One to the Focus Group in Stage Two. When all the data was analysed it became clear that particular themes overlapped. For example not being able to answer and confusion as to the EP's role were brought under the wider theme of lack of preparation and underlying skills. This evolved into five sets of 'problems' or restraining factors:

1. ***Misunderstanding questions***
2. ***Preparation / underlying skills not present***
3. ***Impact of communication and other difficulties***
4. ***Lack of motivation to answer***
5. ***Lack of knowledge of outcomes***

The video observations and data set B were then reviewed to list what was already working and what the pupils reported to be helpful. These were entered in the column 'Positives' and matched across the rows to counter a 'Problem' wherever possible. Finally, the Data Set B was used to list all the pupils' suggested improvements. These were categorised into five sets of 'Possibilities':

1. ***Simplify and reduce questions***
2. ***Introducing the EP, helping to remember the SA process***
3. ***Differentiation***
4. ***Make the resource appealing, interesting, and shorter***
5. ***Leave further information for the pupil / parent / carer***

Collectively, positives and possibilities were understood in this research to be enabling factors.

Table 4.2 Stage One: Problems, Positives and Possibilities

Problems (From Data Set A)	Positives (From Data Sets A and B)	Possibilities (From Data Set B)
Research Question 1: **(Restraining Factors)**	**Research Question 1:** **(Enabling Factors)**	**Research Question 1:** **(Ideas for Change)**
1. Misunderstanding questions Vocabulary too difficult Not understanding instructions Only responding to key words	Particular questions, especially once rephrased were understood.	*1. Simplify and reduce questions* Pre-taught topic vocabulary /concepts; themed sections; multiple choice questions; shorter questions; key words at the beginning. Tangible key words need to relate to concrete resources, experiences…not abstract terminology such as 'helpful'
2. Preparation / underlying skills not present Confusion of the role of the EP No understanding of SA No previous experience of giving opinion	SENCos were willing to explain role of EP in advance. Pupils reported that recalling the room and layout aided their memory of the event	*2. Introducing the EP, helping to remember the SA process* Setting the scene for listening to pupils: that this isn't just about EP visit, but that their opinion will be valued and acted upon. Podcast – explaining that the EP is there **for them – sense of agency.** Photos taken of resources and of room / layout / people present
3. Impact of communication and other difficulties Need greater processing time Need reassurance, positive feedback Unable to recall the meeting	Pupils were helped by choice to pass, and then return to questions. Digital format would enable this.	*3. Differentiation* Pupil to be asked within two days of EP visit Digital questions can be read aloud, repeated; and completed over two or more sessions Pupils could wear headphones to aid independence and concentration

Problems (From Data Set A)	Positives (From Data Sets A and B)	Possibilities (From Data Set B)
Research Question 1: (Restraining Factors)	**Research Question 1: (Enabling Factors)**	**Research Question 1: (Ideas for Change)**
4. Lack of motivation to answer Timing – pupil perceives they are missing out on something Questionnaire looks daunting Questionnaire takes too long	Engagement improved when duration and expectation of task clearly explained to pupil. Helped to give combination of visual indication of progress and verbal reassurance.	*4. Make the resource appealing, interesting, and shorter* Pupils wish the software to say 'hello' and 'goodbye'; for one question to appear at a time; to use colour and pictures or photos. They like the idea of choosing a screen colour scheme and other personalisation such as the use of the pupil's name throughout then anonymised. Pupils would like a pictorial progress indicator, intermittent and final rewards: verbal prompts, animation…
5. Lack of knowledge of outcomes Pupil unsure of what will happen next. Often (not always) they have received verbal feedback but are unable to recall. There is no clear guidance for the role of parent/carer	Using 'next steps' instead of 'plan' is preferable. Already used in school terminology.	*5. Leave further information for the pupil / parent / carer* The software could print out a simple plan with pictures in situ. Verbal information needs backing up with visual prompts and kept somewhere the pupil can access it. The pupils asked for greater explanations of terms and concepts. They also wanted to know when or if they would see the EP again

Research Question 2a:

What would enable CCD to elaborate their views more fully?

a. *What do EPs identify as enabling and restraining factors that affect children's involvement in the process and outcomes of their Statutory Assessment?*

Thematic analysis of the focus group data identified key factors in EPs' perception of children's involvement in SA and suggestions for adaptations to practice. To enhance transparency in the data, the full transcript is provided (Appendix 12; 12b) and the extracts are also listed by theme (Appendix 13). The themes, subthemes and two floating categories are visually represented in Figure 4.1.

The six main themes were:

1. *EPs sharing best practice (enabling)*
2. *SSEN issues of data gathering (restraining)*
3. *Child variables (restraining)*
4. *Preparation (both enabling or restraining depending upon the quality and accuracy of information given)*
5. *Child's emotional experience (enabling)*
6. *Constraints on the EP (restraining)*

The first floating theme was '**Downplaying the importance of the SA'** which was loosely linked to reducing the child's anxiety (a subtheme of the child's emotional experience) but was also borne of the uncertainty that EPs have of the outcomes of each SA. It was not therefore internally homogeneous to include this floating theme in the child's emotional experience or the EP constraints as it overlapped both.

'Suggestions for improvements' was also left as a floating theme as it was not externally heterogeneous: the suggestions each substantially overlapped with other themes. For example the child and parent receiving information in advance of their meeting the EP would also belong in 'Preparation' but to separate out each useful suggestion across the themes seemed less practically useful than grouping them as a set to take forward.

Figure 4.1: Stage Two: A thematic map exploring the views of EPs on the involvement of children in the process and outcomes of their Statutory Assessment

Theme 1	EP best practice
Descriptor	Skills and approaches fundamental to SA and reflections on how feedback could have systemic impact

(Line 244 – 6/08:24)

"…it's an interesting area that, erm, I think nobody particularly in the service had highlighted and gosh, we need to do a bit of work around that. Now you've highlighted it, it makes us think, ooh, perhaps we should be doing something like that"

(Line 167 – 4/08:54)

"…if we did have a way of sharing that information more with each other that could help us to improve our practice…more."

Theme 2	SSEN issues of data gathering
Descriptor	Inherent problems with the way in which information for SSEN is obtained.

(Line 92 – 2/02:57)

"Because we're with the child on our own and we're actually asking them, whereas I think maybe schools tend to make an assumption about the child's views, rather than asking them the direct question."

(Line 164 4/08:26)

"It would be interesting to know how children felt, you know, related to different approaches that different EPs use, for example scaling, or whether they've been doing cognitive assessments or, or whatever it is."

Theme 3	Child variables
Descriptor	Individual differences in level of understanding due to age, communication difficulties and abilities.

(Line 12 – 05:40)

"If they've got Speech and Language difficulties, I think they can find it hard to communicate what they think about their own needs and their own difficulties."

(Line 7 – 04:18)

"Children in Key Stage one tend to not really know at all what's going on, and who all the people are and why they're going to see different people and what it's all about."

Theme 4	Preparation
Descriptor	Information explained to the child before meeting with the EP, concerning their role and purpose.

(Line 5 – 03:31)

"Do they know why I'm there…what this is all about and has anybody explained it to them? More than likely they say no."

(Line 33 – 2/00:36)

"I don't really think that unless the parents have explained it that they have any understanding generally."

Theme 5	Child's emotional experience
Descriptor	Factors describing the impact of SA on the child's self-perception and expression of views.

(Line 93 – 3/03:33)

"We're privileged really, to be privy to what they actually think themselves about what's going on."

(Line 134 – 4/00:47)

"…as an EP going in to do the Statutory Assessment – the Appendix D – we need to… I feel… I need to be doing something engaging with the child, and get a feel for how they're reacting to what I'm asking."

Theme 6	Constraints on EP
Descriptor	Factors of the SA process and traded services which limit the EP's time with each child.

(Line 127 - 4/00:15)

"I think, because of the time constraints, I think it's difficult to necessarily do two visits in a school."

(Line 25 – 08:31)

"You just don't get back into the schools enough to find out how the child felt at all? "
"Generally, yeah."

Theme 7	**Downplaying the importance of the SA** (Miscellaneous (1)
Descriptor	Information omitted or kept deliberately brief with the intention of putting the child at ease

(Line 32 – 2/00:13)

"I kind of feel that if…if we make the child very aware that this is a very important thing and you know, then we're not really doing our job properly."

(Line 60 – 2/07:10)

"I don't use the words Educational Psychologist…ever, I don't think…"

Theme 8	**Suggestions for improvements** (Miscellaneous 2)
Descriptor	Ideas for changes to the SA process that are considered more enabling to children and more helpful to elicit feedback for EPs

(Line 222 – 6/04:11)

"Giving a child an expectation of how long this is likely to be … that would be a useful thing on the checklist as well."

(Line 202 –6/ 01:27)

"Introducing the EP and helping to remember the Statutory Process' so, setting the scene for listening to the pupils…that this isn't just about the EP visit in isolation, that their opinion counts and getting them to be able to do that first."

4.3   Stage Three

Research Question 2b:

What would enable CCD to elaborate their views more fully?

> *b. What ideas can be incorporated from research and practitioner based evidence from Local Authorities?*

Table 4.4 shows the locations and media of the 22 documents identified for analysis.

Table 4.4: Overview of documents

Originated from ⬇ ***Available format*** ➜

	Paper copy only	Download: uneditable	Download: editable	Digital and interactive	Video /DVD
EPS	✓	✓✓✓✓		✓✓	
LA / London Borough		✓✓✓✓	✓		✓
Parent Partnership		✓✓✓✓			
Online Resource		✓			
Other organisations					✓

As described in the previous chapter (3.6.3) each document was evaluated against ten specific criteria, which had been developed through the previous action research stages. Stage One's PPP Data, led to Stage Two's themes. These can be seen in Table 4.5, which then links the themes to criteria to be utilised during Stage Three.

Table 4.5: Linking the themes and the stages

Categories from 3.6.3.1 (Formulated essential qualities)	*Themes from Stage 2*	*Description and indicators to evaluate all relevant aspects of each document*	*Criteria to take forward to Stage 3 (from 3.6.3.1)*
Reference and description	EP Best practice	*Who is this produced by, for which organisation? In what media is it available?*	Explicitly for children?
Purpose or aim	Preparation	*Does this provide information for the child, parent, staff? Is it to be used for data gathering? Does it aim to facilitate the process?*	Promotes independence?
Seeking to encourage change prior to meeting:	Preparation	*Does this help to prepare the child/adult for their meeting? Does it appear to be solution oriented? What is the epistemology, if this can be ascertained?*	Describes meeting?
Promoting agency of child:	Emotional experience	*How is the child encouraged to understand their ability to contribute and be heard and valued?*	Encourages views?
Type of questions/ level of language:	Child variables	*How the questions are formed – are they open, multiple -choice, short or differentiated according to age?*	Promotes independence?
Visual supports:	Child variables	*Which type of graphics if any are used? How are they used? Photos?*	Multimedia?
Effort and resources:	Emotional experience	*How much time or support is needed to use this? How independent can the child be?*	Promotes independence?
References to outcomes:	EP Best practice / Constraints	*Does the resource make clear what the next steps will be? Who will be involved?*	Reference to outcomes?

Categories from 3.6.3.1 (Formulated essential qualities)	Themes from Stage 2	Description and indicators to evaluate all relevant aspects of each document	Criteria to take forward to Stage 3 (from 3.6.3.1)
Level of personalisation:	Data gathering	*Can the child's name be added? Are there spaces for photos and additional personal information?*	Can be personalised?
Motivation, rewards, engagement:	Emotional experience	*Why would a child or parents use this? Is the format friendly? Self-explanatory or needs adult interpretation?*	Friendly and engaging?
Does it encourage the pupil to express their views?	Emotional experience	*Is this simply giving information or does it exploring and enhancing their understanding? Direct questions? Does it elicit feedback?*	Encourages views?
Internal coherence and validity?	EP Best practice	*Does it do what it seeks to do?*	Has internal coherence and validity?
What's missing?	Suggested improvements	*E.g. specific information about the SA process or the child's opportunity to comment on being involved.*	(This information was included in PIL: 3.5.4.1)
Additional ideas and best practice	EP Best practice	*What from this resource may be useful either within the resources of Stage Four or included as general discussion on best practice?*	

These findings are summarised in Table 4.6 and in answer to Research Question 2b. The full evaluations are appended to this thesis (Appendix 15; 15b). The presence of each criterion was simply recorded as yes, and the absence as no. For ease of reference the table is shaded where criteria are met and left white where they were absent.

Table 4.6: Stage Three: Content Analysis ii (Deductive)

Criteria   *Document #*

Criteria	1 ✓	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 ✓	9 ✓	10	11 ✓	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20 ✓	21	22 ✓
Explicitly for children's use?	■				■			■	■		■											■
Uses visual supports?	■				■			■	■		■								■			■
Promotes independent use?	■							■	■		■											
Describes meeting with EP?	■						■	■							■				■			
Makes reference to outcomes?	■						■	■			■		■	■	■					■		
Can be personalised by child?	■				■				■		■							■		■		■
Uses multimedia?						■								■	■				■	■		
Uses a friendly and engaging format?	■		■		■	■	■				■			■	■				■	■		■
Encourages child to express views?	■			■			■	■	■		■									■		■
Has internal coherence and validity?	■					■		■	■		■								■	■		■

To minimise subjectivity the researcher was assisted by a colleague. Working together to reach a high a rate of inter-observer agreement gave this content analysis greater reliability. Where six or more of the criteria in Table 4.6 were met, the document was regarded as being useful to draw upon in the development of the resources discussed in 3.6.4. In total six documents met the criteria. These were:

Document #	Publisher and title	Available media type(s)
1	Barking and Dagenham LA *All about the Educational Psychologist* (Junior and Secondary versions)	Printed Leaflets
8	Falkirk EPS *An Educational Psychologist comes to Our School* (Infant, Junior and Secondary versions)	Online printable PDF
9	Essex LA *Enabling Pupil Participation, Section 3 (Statutory Assessment*)	Online printable PDF
11	Kent LA *Children's Views of the Statutory Assessment Process*	Online printable PDF
20	Triangle, Brighton *Three Way Street*	DVD
22	North Yorkshire *The Pupil's View*	Word document. Not editable.

Examples of each of these documents can be viewed in Appendices 16 and 16b. The reference for the DVD is provided.

4.4 Stage Four

> **Research Question 3:**
>
> *What are the enabling and restraining factors when asking CCD –
> using MiView – for their experience of meeting with an educational
> professional?*

Observations and interviews with the children and their supporting adults
generated many interesting answers to this question. They were grouped into
the themes depicted in Table 4.7 and are each discussed in the next chapter.

4.4.1   Survey responses to MiView

MiView answers could be given in a variety of formats: pictorial multiple choice,
pictorial scale, and drawing, typing or speaking. Children were asked to respond
to the following statements with multiple choice answers:

- I knew that the EP was coming to see me
- I understood why the EP was coming to see me
- I knew which room we would be in
- I was told who else would be there
- After meeting the EP, I know what the next steps are
- Meeting the EP was …

They also had multiple choices to recall activities from their meeting with the EP
and emotions pictures to help them state how it felt to be asked their views
All children completed the survey. Some also chose to draw their answers
which helped greatly and highlighted the power of being lost in the flow of the
activity. The format appeared to enable CCD to sustain attention to the matter
of giving their views. To enable quick reference to the children's responses,
they were grouped together and set out in Figure 4.2 below. A more detailed
record of the children's individual responses is provided in Appendix 21. The
bar chart indicates that children were able to communicate views about many
aspects of the process, activities, feelings and outcomes. This will be
discussed further in the next chapter.

Figure 4.2: Children's survey responses to MiView

MiView: Stage 4 Pupil Responses
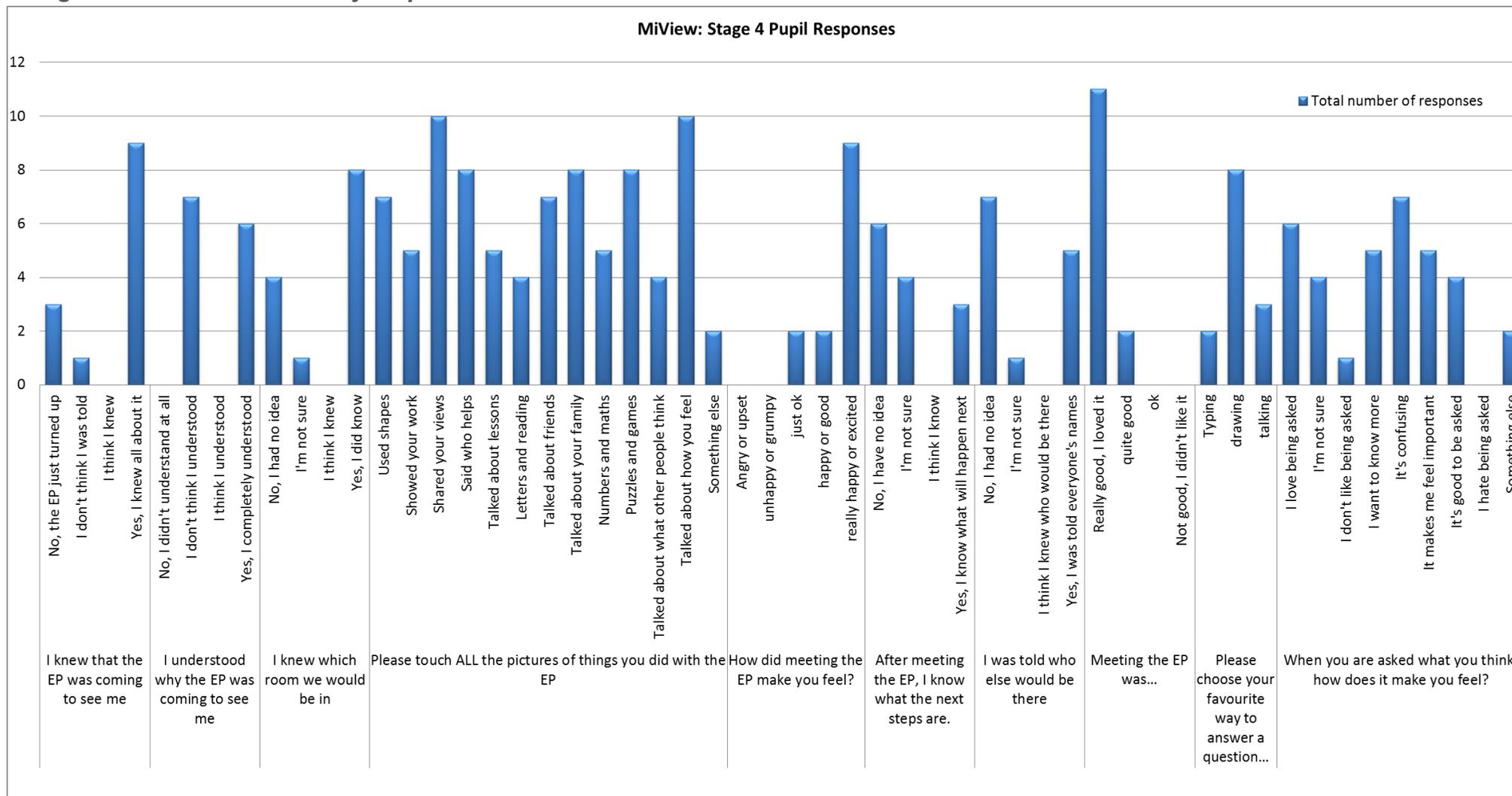
4.4.2 Observed and direct communications from children and the responses of the adults supporting them.

This was the largest data set: a culmination of all the information of all the previous stages as portrayed in Figure 3.1 of the Methodology chapter. The researcher looked for what the children were able to say, how the adults supporting them responded, and what the role the resources played in enabling and sequencing the children's communications. Appended to this thesis are the full coded transcripts (Appendix 22; 22b) and an initial thematic map (Appendix 23). The themes were:

1) The presence of a _collaborative relationship_ (Enabling)
2) The use of _specific support strategies_ (verbal and non-verbal) (Enabling)
3) How a pupil might _transcend a communication difficulty_ (Enabling)
4) How a _pupil's views might be encouraged_ (Enabling)
5) Factors which negatively _impact upon a communication difficulty_ (Restraining)
6) How a _pupil might be disenfranchised_ (Restraining)

Table 4.7 provides a summary of this data, displaying each theme with its descriptor and illustrative quotes for each code. For ease of reference the colours of each quote match those used in Figure 4.3 which visually represents the themes, subthemes and associations. Given the children's difficulties in communication, it was important that all type of communications within the context were included in the coding. This necessarily encompassed all verbal and non-verbal interactions, including those of the supporting adults and researcher.

Table 4.7: Stage Four: Themes, evidence and descriptors (P = Pupil; R = Researcher; A = Supporting adult). Words read from the iPad screen are in italics. <u>Phrases relating to codes are underlined</u>. [Researcher's notes are in square brackets]. (Nonverbal behaviours are in parentheses).

Theme 1	Collaborative Relationship
Descriptor	The adult explicitly values and respects the child's views as authentic, encourages them to extend their answers and to suggest improvements in the process. Inclusive language (we, us), familiarity and a child-led pace help to maintain this respectful dynamic.
Codes encompassed	Authentic response ❶; Empowerment ❷; Extending ❸; Familiarity ❹; Improvements ❺; Power dynamic ❻; Rapport ❼; Valuing ❽.

(i)(Theresa [06:45] Line 120)
A: <u>So, let's look at them again</u>. Do you *love it*? (P nods, presses), *I'm not sure, don't like it* ❻
P: <u>Sometimes I'm not sure (presses)</u>❶
A: <u>Sometimes I'm not sure</u>.❽

(ii)(Sarah [03:22] Line 116)
R: Do you want to ask me any questions about meeting Mr (EP)? Are you curious about anything? …
<u>Do you want to know why he came, or what's going to happen next, or anything like that?</u>❷
(P thinks, then types)
P: <u>Why he came</u> (looks at R). Why did he come? ❶

(iii)(Charlie [02:39] Line 13)
R: What is happening in that picture?
P: Erm? Sitting down
R: <u>Someone's sitting down?</u>❸
P: Daddy and mum

(iv)(Harvey [03:57] Line 17)
A: *Tell the people with you what you think is happening in the pictures.*
P: Me remembering what I told the EP ❶
<u>[P speaks more audibly. Gives prompt answer.]</u> ❹

(v)(Jake [03:45] Line 30)
P: Daddy
A: With daddy. So J (EP) has gone for meeting with daddy after she met you.
<u>(A has leant forward so eye line is horizontal / level.)</u> ❹
P: <u>Yeah</u> (almost imperceptible) ❶
A: <u>Yeah</u>? <u>Alright</u>. You ready to touch next? (gestures) ❹, ❶

(vi)(David [05:06] Line 15)
P: I think...like…reporting back to me…they are reporting back to me
R: So all the adults are going to report back to you?
P: Yeah
R: <u>Would you like that to happen?</u> <u>Would you like to know what all the adults have found out?</u> ❺
P: Yeah

(vii)(Adam [01:40] Line 20
R: Ok, so maybe if I had a button on there, and you pressed it, and you could speak your answer then that would be even better?
P: <u>Yes (nods)</u> ❺

(viii)(Jake [07:25] Line 18)
A: (laughs) Oh, so more blocks, ok. So, <u>we can sound that out can't we</u> Jake. Blocks…b…l…o…c… curly C…and kicking K… and then that's 'blocks'. ❻

(ix)(Jacob [08:37] Line 22)
P: (EP)'s gone (smiles)
R: Pardon? Oh, (EP)'s gone…<u>shall we bring her back</u>? ❻
[Picture of EP is on R's phone. Screen saver times out and needs tapping to bring photo back on]
[<u>P helping R</u> (reverse dynamic)] ❷, ❻

(x)(Charlie [02:30] Line 16)
R: What do you think chocolate ice cream is?
P: (Presses along each option again) (<u>Scrunches up nose and smiles at R</u>). (Stops on delicious). ❼
R: Delicious? Yes?
P: (<u>Smiles</u> and presses 'Next') ❶, ❼

(xi)(David [04:39] Line 35)
[P looks deep in thought. Unsure if this is lack of understanding or uncertainty of memory. A is calm, polite and patient.]
P: I'm not sure.
A: <u>Do you want me to go through them again? Through the answers again</u>? ❼, ❽
P: Yeah
A: So that says, *I don't think I was told, I think I knew,* or…*yes I knew all about it…*or *no, the EP just turned up*, <u>so S just turned up</u>❽

As can be seen from the quotes above, the theme of collaborative relationship came through strongly, notably in terms of the authentic, extended and empowered responses of children who had their views explicitly acknowledged and valued. Key to this was the role taken by the adult, for example in attempting to reduce the power imbalance, seen in (ix) and in modelling attunement, interest and respect, shown in (xi).

Theme 2	Specific Support Strategies
	(Divided into subthemes: Verbal and Non-Verbal Tools)
Descriptor	The adult responds to careful reading of the child's entire communications with specific forms of help. Modelling multimodal strategies assists the child to recall and generalise knowledge across contexts.
Codes Encompassed	Checking attention ❶; Generalisation or recall ❷; Checking understanding ❸; Clarifying or staging ❹; Descriptive ❺; Emphasis ❻; Instructions ❼, Paraphrasing ❽; Repetition ❾; Processing time ❿

(i)(Calvin [06:51] Line 3)
R: So, my question is…how do you think…? <u>Calvin?</u> ❶
<u>[R checks P able to attend to question]</u> ❶
(P looks at R, smiles, makes eye contact)

(ii)(Calvin [10:05] Line 6)
A: Yeah, you'd like that wouldn't you? You like it in Lexia: <u>when the man talks to you. You like that don't you</u>? ❷
P: Nods, smiles

(iii)(Adam [02:04] Line 2)
R: Ok, are there....when you were going through the sliders…you tended to choose the middle one, or the outside one, even if you had five choices. So, do you think I should have three?
R: <u>Do you know what I mean</u>? ❸
P: Yes
R: <u>Shall I show you what I mean?</u> ❸
P: Yes

(iv)(Jake [06:32] Line 104)
A: Right. This is about *when you met*. Look at the pictures. <u>You are in the bumblebee room. J is there</u> (points). <u>Is that J? Is that you</u>? ❷, ❺, ❾
(Points to other picture) <u>And what is this? What is there? What can you see</u>? ❹, ❺, ❼
[Building on previous knowledge. Breaks down question [1] naming, [2] inference.]

(v)(Oskar [02:04] Line 2)
A: Ok, shall we tick that one then? ❼
P: It's already ticked.
A: <u>No *Who helps you* is just there – it hasn't got a tick yet</u> (P presses to tick). ❹
A: Ah, lovely

(vi)(David [02:52] Line 30)
A: <u>So, you've got two pictures here</u> (points) [Stage 1] A: <u>What do you think is happening in that picture</u>? [Stage 2] ❹, ❺
P: They're chatting about stuff ❺
A: <u>What are you chatting about</u>? ❽
P: Erm…uh…stuff.

(vii)(David [07:34] Line 34)
P: I'm doing the…erm…erm…someone is helping me practise all...practise all the…um…learning stuff
R: That's a good answer, well done!
A: What about the other picture D? ❸, ❾
P: <u>Um…doing all aptimities</u> ❺
A: Activities, that's a good word. ❽

(viii)(Emily [08:05] Line 34)
P: *What I liked the most about meeting the EP was…*
A*:* So you chose talking about it didn't you? ❸
P: Yeah. Me trying to explain what I meant but he wasn't sure.
A: Ok, so <u>what you liked *most* about the meeting was</u>? ❻, ❾, ❿
P: Doing... showing him my books

(ix)(Harvey [02:44] Line 89)
A: Ok. *Please <u>touch all the pictures of things you did or talked about with the EP. Then touch next</u>.*❼

(x)(Theresa [04:36] Line 126)
A: Ah, interesting. You've got lots of pictures here haven't you?
A: *Please touch <u>all</u> the pictures of things you did or talked about with* <u>this lady here</u> *and then touch next.* ❻
A: So, <u>all the things you did with the lady.</u> ❽, ❾

(xi)(Adam [02:04] Line 2)
A: *I was told that the EP was coming to see me.* Now, <u>did you know that this lady was coming to see you</u>? ❹, ❾
P: Yeah (nods)
A: Yes, so (points) *no, I didn't know, not sure or yes, I was told.* <u>So, before she actually came, did you know she was going to come and see you?</u> ❽, ❾
[A Provides repetition and processing time] ❾, ❿
P: Yes
A: Ok

The careful scaffolding of multimodal and specific support strategies occurred repeatedly as a powerful theme across all transcripts. Adults showed many different examples of great sensitivity towards interpreting the child's verbal and non-verbal communications. This engaged and enabled the children to go beyond learned responses and use knowledge cross-contextually. Repetition, paraphrasing and the cued use of pictures and gesture was especially beneficial, exemplified in (vi) and again in (x). Particular emphasis on salient information helped to maximise the pupil's understanding and reduce the information load, demonstrated in (v) and (xi).

Theme 3	Transcending Communication Difficulty
Descriptor	The child demonstrates transferable skills that might otherwise be masked by communication difficulties. High expectations enable the child to have the confidence to question and independently request appropriate support.
Codes Encompassed	Clarifying question ❶; Engagement ❷; Exploration ❸; Independence ❹; Navigation: Independent ❺

(i)(Harvey [06:54] Line 4)
P: I would have liked to know when I was gonna be going.
R: What…that when it would be finished? Or… ❶
P: Like when I was gonna be like going to meet him.

(ii)(Theresa [09:05] Line 72)
(R supports to lift iPad and take picture)
R: Do you want to press…
(P reaches directly for camera button and presses) ❷ , ❺
R:…ah, you know what to do (smiles).

(iii)(Charlie [07:50] Line 32)
(P plays on keyboard, pressing all letters). ❸
P: Have you got numbers? ❸
R: Yes. You've just pressed the number key. You need to play more with an iPad, don't you? (laughs)
P: (laughs) ❷
[Pupil uses multiple touch as well as just single index finger. Makes high pitches noise 'dee, dee'] ❷ , ❸

(iii)(Jacob [05:44] Line 60)
P: *How would you like to answer the next question?* ❹
A: So we've got...
(A tries to move P's arm to see options. P pulls away and answers himself). ❹
P: ah…ah… (chooses) drawing. ❹ , ❺
[P both admonishes A and asserts independence in this exchange]

(iv)(Calvin [02:48] Line 11)
A: *"I knew where we would meet". 'No, I didn't know', 'not sure', 'yes, I did'.*
(P makes selection and moves on) ❺
[P able to move to next question independently] ❺

The theme of transcending communication difficulty was most evident when the children explored the MiView resource. They were engaged by the interface and through this began to demonstrate transferrable skills. For example the joint focus of the interface gave Harvey the confidence to clarify his question (i), and Jacob actively took back control of his choice in (iii), navigating the question and answer independently.

Theme 4	Encouraging Views
Descriptor	The adult insightfully gauges the balance of providing reassurance whilst encouraging the child to express their views on the process These communications are met with positive feedback and praise in a virtuous cycle.
Codes Encompassed	Autonomy ❶; Competence ❷; Confident response ❸; Positive feedback ❹; Feelings regarding process ❺; Reassurance ❻

(i)(Sarah [09:04] Line 68)
R: You'll have to think really hard about what you did with him, and what you *liked*
(P thinks for a moment, then writes 'everything' on the paper).❶, ❸
R: (laughs) and would you change anything? That says *I would change…?*
(P stops, then writes 'nothing' on other side) ❶, ❸

(ii)(Emily [02:38] Line 23)
P: *What was told that the EP was coming to see me* (presses) ❷
P: *I understand why the EP was coming to see me* (presses) ❷
P: *I knew which room we would be in* (presses) ❷
P: *I was told who else would be there* (presses) ❷
[P makes some reading errors but shows competence in her rapid ability to answer these questions – friendly format] ❶, ❷

(iii)(David [09:34] Line 15)
A: Talked about *what other people think* (points). Which is that one. *What other people
think.*
P: That's the feelings. (P's face brightens with greater understanding) ❷
A: Yeah, it is. It says *Talked about how you feel.* ❹
P: Yeah, that one. ❸

(iv)(Adam [2/01:11] Line 2)
[P uses arm gestures as he speaks. Increasingly relaxed.] ❸
R: Why do you think it's called *MiView?*
P: Because it's actually your view of what you think. ❸
R: Well done. You're the first person who has been able to answer that. (P smiles and turns wrist band from between red/yellow, to full yellow). ❹ , ❻

(v)(Adam [04:11] Line 5)
R: She could send you a letter afterward and that would help you remember meeting her?
P: (nods) ❸
R: Send you a letter to your house, or to school?
P: To my house ❸
R: Ok, that's a really good idea… a really good idea. ❹

(vi)(Theresa [09:25] Line 155)
A: How did meeting this lady <u>make you feel</u>? ❺
P: <u>Good</u> ❺
A: <u>It was good, brilliant</u>. So *really liked it.* Is that ok? ❹
P: <u>Yea</u> ❸
<u>(P responds audibly and immediately.)</u> ❸

(vii)(Adam [05:16] Line 10)
R: How does it feel to be asked what you think?
P: <u>Very nice…and…and I think it's very polite to ask children about what they think of their</u>
<u>lessons</u>, so ..yes…very polite to ask. ❺
R: <u>Fantastic answer, thank you.</u> ❹

(viii)(Harvey [00:46] Line 3)
R: Do you remember that I told you that last bit there (<u>points</u>) about all the different reports, that M was going to write a report. ❻
<u>(R holds out PIL open on centre page)</u> ❻

(ix)(Calvin [05:57] Line 3)
[P looks at screen but seems unable to read the text.]
R (to A): <u>Would you like to read that to him?</u> ❻
A: Yea, yea, yea… it says "Thank you for taking part"
<u>P smiles when A says she will read.</u> ❻

How to encourage children's views was a theme that encompassed pupils' enjoyment at being able to give their opinion and the very positive and encouraging responses from those to whom they communicated their views. Again the notion of balance and reading the child's reactions arose, shown in the exchange with Adam (v) where the feedback was specific. This contrasted with Sarah (i) who it was suggested may have been confused to receive overtly positive feedback. Sometimes more indirect verbal reassurance was necessary such as with Calvin (ix) or sharing a focus on the pictures instead, as with Harvey (viii).

Theme 5	Impact Upon Communication Difficulty
Descriptor	Factors within the social context of expressing views on Statutory Assessment which, where negative, may exacerbate the child's difficulties with communication.
Codes Encompassed	Expected response ❶; Learned response ❷; Misunderstands ❸; No generalisation ❹; Off topic ❺; Reassurance seeking ❻; Situational anxiety ❼; Temporal difficulty ❽; Uncertain response ❾

(i)(Jacob [2/00:19] Line 22)
R: What do you think of the pictures?
P: Good ❶
R: Ok, erm, can you give me more of an answer on that? Perhaps why you think they're good?
P: Erm…excellent? ❶

(ii)(Jacob [2/00:27] Line 23)
R: So, when somebody says 'why have you got a sticker', what are you going to be able to say?
P: Because I've been good ❷

(iii)(Emily [03:21] Line 23)
R: What decisions have you talked about in school? When do people ask you your views?
P: Erm…the view outside ❸
R: Not that sort of view. I mean an opinion on something

(iv)(Charlie [03:34] Line 36)
P: Erm... (presses randomly) ❾
R: It seems like you're…? Did you know why she was coming to see you?
P: Yes (presses next) ❶
[P presses in short taps on all points of slider. Doesn't appear to understand. Appears to be choosing happiest face.] ❸

(v)(Oskar [2/09:58] Line 45)
A: Did we talk about what you think?
(P presses to tick)
A: Did we?
P: Uh huh   [P looks confused, as if he can't quite recall]. ❹
…
(vi)(Oskar [3/00:06] Line 47)
P: …yes J (pupil) and , er , it's not me and J…it's another boy – I can't remember his name❹

(vii)(Sarah [07:50] Line 45)
P: Listen to this (tries to whistle)
R: That sounds like a whirling wind. Like (whistles)
P: (gasps) you whistled!
R: Are you learning to whistle?
P: I can't whistle
R: You're so nearly there…if you keep practising like that you'll do it. You

need to put your lips more closely together…that's it. Practise like that. ❺

(viii)(Oskar [3/00:00] Line 46)
P: I know what guinea pigs are. They're rabbits with shorter ears. ❺
R: O, have you finished the questionnaire?
A: Is there anything else you'd like to say about meeting K?
P: Not really. (presses finish)

(ix)(Adam [03:43] Line 4)
P: *Which bits would you like to change?*
[Looks to R for support with answer] ❻
R: What would you change or do differently about meeting K?

(x)(David [03:16] Line 8)
P: I can't remember.
[P looks directly at camera. Troubled by it?]
A: What about the other picture?
P: (to R) you forgot to do that (points to camera) ❼
A: No, it is still…it is doing it, it's just it's covered.

(xi)(John [05:59] Line 20)
P: *I was told who else would be there*
R: Did you know who was going to be with you and La?
P: (to R) because no one was. It was just me and La ❽
R: Yes, but did you *know* it was just going to be you and La?

(xii)(Oskar [03:38] Line 35)
A: …and the second one…"*I understood why the EP was coming to see me*"
P: Yea, to do some activities.
A: Did you understand that before she came? ❽
P: um hm (presses 'Next')
[P appears to answer with hindsight rather than be able to recall a time before he knew]

(xiii)(Emily [2/00:59] Line 21)
P: *Remember that this is about you think so now it's your turn what would you like to ask?*
P: What does it mean? ❾
[P reads in one sentence and misses out word so misses meaning].

A number of factors markedly impacted upon the child's communication and these quotes illustrate their difficulties. Rapidly giving up or saying what the child thought was the expected answer often featured, for example Charlie (iv) just saying 'yes'. A notable aptitude in avoiding a misunderstood question was to change the topic, as with Sarah (vii) and Oskar (viii). Some children struggled with questions that required them to hold incomplete sentences or transition between topics. A reoccurring difficulty lay in suppressing current information to recall previous knowledge shown here by both John (xi) and Oskar (xii).

Theme 6	Disenfranchising Pupil
Descriptor	In response to an overt power imbalance and inappropriate resources the child shows infantilised, dependent behaviours and is disempowered.
Codes Encompassed	Changing meaning ❶; Disempowerment ❷; Navigation: Supported ❸

(i)(Calvin [04:50] Line 16)
A*:* Now it says "*How did the Educational Psychologist make you feel?*
[A omits 'meeting' and changes semantics] ❶

(ii)(David [05:12] Line 5)
A: *I understood why the EP was coming to see me*
A: So, that one says *I think I understood. I don't think I understood. No, I don't understand at all. Yes, I was completely understood.* ❶
[A's misread makes this more difficult to answer].

(iii)(Harvey [01:58] Line 8)
A*: I knew which room we would be in.* Did you know which room you were going to see him in yesterday?
P: No (shakes head)
A: Ok (chooses no for P). Ok. ❷, ❸
[P lets A choose the answer for him.] ❷

(iv)(David [06:09] Line 10)
P: [Waiting for instruction to move on]. ❷
A: Well, you've got *I think I knew.* So, if you want *Yes, I did know*, that would be that one,
wouldn't it (points)
P: (presses as directed) ❷
[P doesn't appear to give an informed answer to this question.] ❷

(v)(Oskar [00:02] Line 2)
[P presses start immediately without reading. He tries to go back but ends up on the cover screen.]
(P holds finger down but uses two so it doesn't work.)
R: One finger
A: Lift off (gestures) P lifts ❸
A: Take your fingers off again…that's it ❸

The theme of disenfranchising the pupil provided an important contrast to the above themes where adults have provided such nuanced and enduring support. A lack of preparation characterised this theme, both specifically within the context of SA, and more widely in the pupil's daily experiences of not being heard. This could be implicit, such as Harvey's adult choosing for him (iii) or David awaiting direction (iv).

Figure 4.3: A thematic map exploring the factors that impact upon children's observed and reported experiences of giving views on Statutory Assessment, using MiView

Inappropriate Conduit and Lack of Preparation add to perceived lack of value of child's views

Changing the Meaning
Disempowerment
Navigation Requires Support

Disenfranchising Pupil

Gives Expected Response
Gives a Learned Response
Misunderstands
Is not able to Generalise
Goes Off Topic
Seeks Reassurance
Shows Situational Anxiety
Shows Temporal Difficulty
Gives Uncertain Response

Impact Upon Communication Difficulty

Autonomy
Shows Competence
Gives a Confident Response
Receives Positive Feedback
Gives Views on, or Feelings Regarding, Process
Given Reassurance: Verbal
Given Reassurance: Non-Verbal

Encouraging Views

Observed and direct communications from children, and the responses of the adults supporting them, when describing their experience of Statutory Assessment, using MiView.

Collaborative Relationship with Adult

Child Gives Authentic Responses
Adult Empowers Child
Child is Encouraged to Extend Response
Familiarity
Child is Able to Suggest Improvements
Power Dynamic is More Balanced
Rapport
Adult is Valuing or Respecting

Child feels valued as an outcome

Adult employs targeted, responsive strategies

Specific Support Strategies

Checking Attention
Adult Cues Generalisation or Recall

Verbal Tools
Checking Understanding
Clarifying or Staging: Verbal
Descriptive
Emphasis: Verbal
Instructions: Verbal
Paraphrasing
Repetition

Non-Verbal Tools
Clarifying or Staging: Gestural
Emphasis: Gestural
Instructions: Gestural
Processing Time

Transcending Communication Difficulty
Asks Clarifying Questions
Shows Engagement
Shows Exploration
Shows Independence
Navigates Without Support

4.5 Summary of Findings

The findings for each stage have been presented in chronological sequence to establish a clear audit trail and maximise the trustworthiness of the data and levels of analysis within this research. At each Stage the relevant research question has been answered. Stage One charted the issues that CCD had when trying to give views on meeting an educational professional. The researcher established five sets of restraining factors experienced by the children. They were also able to make many suggestions as to what could improve their understanding of such a meeting. Suggestions focused not only on the resource but also on the role of a supporting adult and the preparation and follow up.

This information was taken to the Focus Group in Stage Two, who discussed what changes EPs might make to their practice in order to improve children's understandings of Statutory Assessment. This elicited a further six themes, which highlighted systemic difficulties as well as sharing some commonalities with the themes of Stage One, for example in the child's lack of preparation. Stage Three then used this data to form a taxonomy against which to review documents about Statutory Assessment from all over the UK, with the aim of including as much current best practice as possible in a new, more enabling process. At the end of Stage Three the researcher had amassed a wealth of data from the perspectives of children with CD, their supporting adults, EPs and a national document analysis.

All this information was used in the design of the PIL and MiView, which aimed to support children with a framework so they could provide more extended and authentic views on Statutory Assessment. Stage Four was concerned with a thorough analysis of the enabling and restraining factors experienced by CCD. They were responsive to using MiView to support this process, and their verbal and non-verbal communications evidenced a range of views. Importantly, the thematic analysis suggested that the supporting adults and their intuitive use of specific support strategies were fundamental to the children's understanding. This appeared to determine the level of impact of any underlying difficulties in the children's communication.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Future Research

This action research had four stages as described in Chapter Three (3.2) and summarised in 3.6.4. The final chapter discusses the findings in relation to the literature review (5.1). A critical evaluation of the research methods is presented in 5.2, including the resources developed for use in Stage Four. Suggestions are made for further research (5.3). Implications for EPs, schools and families are discussed in 5.4, in the current context of significant changes to the assessment and delivery of SEN provision (DfE, 2013). 5.5 describes the feedback to stakeholders and section 5.6 reflects on the researcher's new understandings derived through the process of undertaking this research. The chapter concludes with a summary of how the findings connected to the issues outlined (5.7).

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The major findings from this research are discussed under the six theme headings given in Stage Four (Table 4.7). They were drawn from the observed and direct communications from children and the responses of the adults supporting them. The children were able to communicate a range of views and it became evident that the enabling or restraining social environment strongly influenced the extent and nature of these views. This sits well within the psychological framework of this research (Self Determination Theory, see 1.4.2) and the social contexts which might promote or undermine participation.

These findings are set out below, together with an indicator of their enabling or restraining influence:

1) **The presence of a _collaborative relationship_** *(Enabling)*
2) **The use of _specific support strategies_ (verbal and non-verbal)** *(Enabling)*
3) **How pupils _transcend a communication difficulty (CD)_** *(Enabling)*
4) **How _pupils' views are encouraged_** *(Enabling)*
5) **Which factors negatively _impact upon a communication difficulty (CD)_** *(Restraining)*
6) **How _pupils are disenfranchised_** *(Restraining)*

Findings that augment the major themes will also be reintroduced into the discussion in this section. These additional findings have been drawn from Stages One, Two and Three of the action research (4.1; 4.2 and 4.3). In the following sections new quotes are introduced to illustrate the conceptual areas rather than specific codes as given in the findings chapter.

5.1.1 Collaborative Relationship (Findings: Theme 1, Table 4.7)

The literature suggests that there are significant power imbalances in a meeting between adult and child (Lewis, 2002). Establishing a collaborative, adult-child dyad in this action research was shown to be important: a context where the supporting adults often used a language of togetherness such as 'we' and 'us'. The pace was child-led and the child's views were explicitly acknowledged, clarified and valued. These findings supported the dominant discourse in the literature (for example Holland et al., 2010) that adults should seek to empower children:

(Jake [01:35] Line 4)

A: Oh, (to R) we need to press them, yeah? (to P) … you touch them (points).
A: …and the next one…it says *not very tasty*…touch this one…and that's *ok…quite tasty…*and *delicious.* (P smiles at last option and chooses this)*.*

[A=Supporting Adult; P=Pupil; R-Researcher]

Jake's TA regularly adopted inclusive language and ensured every question was delivered and answered at his pace. The researcher found that when the child's responses were unconditionally accepted, it engendered an atmosphere of trust and respect and the child's communication levels steadily grew. David had some significant speech difficulties and was helped to extend his answers with positive exchanges where his views were encouraged.

(David [05:02] Line 11)

A: Yes, *I knew all about it* that one says.
P: Yeah
A: Sure? Happy with that? [A appears doubtful]
P: Yeah
A: Ok [Accepts P's answer: Respectful position].

There were challenges to the collaborative relationship too. For example some pupils wanted to constantly touch the iPad. On one occasion with Charlie this led to the researcher imposing the rule 'quiet hands' which inevitably served to reinforce the power dynamic. This chimed with the difficulties in balancing participation, shared decision making and power sharing cited by Norwich and Kelly (2006).

Examples in the literature of children being asked about or influencing the process were not forthcoming, also noted by Lubel and Greaves (2000) and Woolfson and Harker (2002). The present research encouraged pupils to express their views without invoking adult judgement. This enabled the children to make multiple suggestions for improvements to both the process and the outcomes. Furthermore, the findings also supported the suggestion that young children can critique, as well as simply describe a process in which they are involved (Gersch, 2001; McGee and D'Ardenne, 2009). The age and ability level at which children can express views on a process is contested (Quicke, 2003). It was useful to demonstrate that primary aged children can express views on a process, consistent with the perspectives of Baker and Scher (2002), Mortimer (2004) and Day (2010). For example, pupils wanted to be better prepared. Harvey gave this excellent and workable suggestion:

(Harvey [06:54] Line 16)

P: I would have liked to know when I was gonna be going…Like when I was gonna be like… going to meet him.
A: You knew…mummy did tell you yesterday morning that you was gonna meet him.
P: But I didn't know what time.
A: You would have liked to have been told, like, before lunch / after lunch?
P: (nods) Yeah.

[Later in the script (**Line 36**) Harvey says that he would like to know the exact time that he was to meet with the EP and draws a clock face to represent this view on the process.]

Additional comments on the process and outcomes included Adam who asked that the EP write to him afterwards, and David requested child-friendly information from all those professionals involved in submitting reports for his Statutory Assessment. Jacob wanted to know in which room the meeting would

take place, and Sarah wondered if the EP would see her just in class or on her own. These suggestions were relayed to the schools' SENCos. The majority acknowledged the pupils' need for increased information and advised there would be greater preparation for the children on these issues.

Pupils also shared ideas for the functions of the tools or resources that could help other children. These included a speech output button and more coloured pictures (Adam), larger and greater array of pictures along a five-point slider (Harvey), using the Pupil Information Leaflet (PIL) beforehand so that the pictures are familiar (Emily), drawing directly onto the iPad (Oskar), and using photographs of the room and resources (Theresa). Similar resources can be found in use in the literature, but in specialist rather than mainstream settings (for example Lewis et al., 2008). The children's suggestions built on those already conceptualised in Stage One, in the Problems, Positives and Possibilities (PPP) (Table 4.2). These included ways to personalise a resource, shortening questions and using a progress indicator. Other suggestions pertained to more specific support, so are discussed in the next section.

5.1.2 *Specific Support Strategies (Findings: Theme 2, Table 4.7)*

With the scope of iPad technology there was a possibility that the more subtle elements of human interaction, even in a social constructionist paradigm, might take on less significance. It was all the more surprising then that the verbal and non-verbal strategies used by the supporting adults came through so prevalently in analysis. Children showed particular difficulties in receptive language, leading them to misunderstand questions. They needed additional processing time, staged instructions, and repetition. The judicious use of a broad range of strategies by supporting adults was evident, and appeared paramount to the child's success.

5.1.2.1 *Verbal*

Verbal methods are the predominant way of conveying information to children in the literature. Paradoxically, they are reported to elicit fewer views (Norwich and Kelly, 2006) and give unintentional leads (Lewis, 2002). There is little attention paid explicitly to the benefits of verbal assistance in the literature. Contrasting with Norwich and Kelly (2006), this action research found that the children

benefitted from verbal support. This was provided by adults simplifying, paraphrasing and emphasising information-carrying words. Most gave such support automatically and minimally. Similarly differentiated was the assistance adults gave to pupils to help them generalise and recall information. Pupils were given brief reminders that they had been successful in similar situations previously. In this example David's TA gently prompts his memory of an earlier question:

(David [03:33] Line 10)

A: *I know what the EP was coming to see me for.* So, you've got this again; remember how we did it with the chocolate?
P: Yeah
A: Yeah, so if you press each one again.

Theresa initially needed a much higher level of support. When she struggled to recall her time with the EP, the SENCo took her to where she had met with the EP. Theresa was given the additional time to walk around the room and encouraged to describe what had taken place in the room. This happened immediately prior to the observation and interview which noticeably boosted Theresa's confidence to participate.

A related type of verbal support was that of 'checking' behaviours: ensuring that the pupil was able to attend to the activity, and that they had understood a question or task. There were many occasions where, had such support not been given, the pupil would have misunderstood or avoided a question. To illustrate, Oskar's TA gently guided him back to the task, using his name and explaining the task requirements whilst acknowledging alternatives:

(Oskar [09:00] Line 30)

A: Now what this says, 'Oskar', is *I liked this best* so this is for a picture of what you liked best about meeting (EP's name).
(A points at question / heading). (P looks up at his name being used).

P: Well I thought I could just do, well…my ordinary drawing
A: Oh, right….well, you could do that at the end…on your other EP leaflet…but if you could draw what you liked best (emphasises) …about meeting (EP's name).

One interesting discovery had to do with the art of questioning. There were occasions where the adults would follow the researcher's open question with a closed one. Initially this seemed disempowering, removing as it did the deliberate intention of giving the pupils opportunity to open up instead of close down dialogue. However, the researcher reflected that perhaps a closed question served an important role. This contrasts with Lewis (2002) who took steps to avoid a verbal lead. Instead, it appeared that closed questions gave pupils necessary additional security and confidence to practise giving answers that were valued. From this the children discovered for themselves that they could recall meeting the EP in detail.

Common to both the literature and to this research was the use of a series of question and answer-based formats. The researcher was aware of the legitimate concern that the questions asked of children will inevitably reflect the adults' perspectives and expectations (Komulainen, 2007) or the reliability and authenticity of a child's reply will be distorted by the questioner's style (Lewis, 2002). Despite reservations, time constraints and being a stranger to the children and setting necessitated a question-based format. In recognition of this dilemma, the researcher attempted to simplify and support the process. Many questions actually required two levels of understanding and needed breaking down. It was considered preferable to elicit a more authentic answer to just the first part of the question, than receive a response to the whole, predicated on an assumed level of understanding which the pupil might not have.

> **(Charlie [04:18] Line 9)**
>
> R: *I knew which room we would be in* **(2).** Which room were you in when you met her? **(1)** (Points to picture of EP)
> P: Erm…don't remember (shakes head)
> R: Ok then, leave it on *no, I didn't know*
>
> (P looks at the slider options and chooses). [P seems to understand this question (1). Pointless to ask (2) before establishing (1)]

Pupils were empowered by being able to answer an easier question, and then perhaps another. By way of example, Emily struggled with "How does it feel when you are asked what you think?" **(Line 12, [07:35])** but this could be revised to "How do people show you that they care what you think?" **(1)** "How

do you feel when they do this?"**(2)**. Both these questions would be multiple-choice and pictorially supported.

5.1.2.2   Non-Verbal

This research supports the literature on the usefulness of photographs, pictures and video to provide non-verbal support for pupils expressing views (Lewis et al., 2008; Day, 2010). What appears unique to this research is that the vital role of a much wider interpretation of non-verbal communications and interactions was also documented.

The range of non-verbal support encompassed gesture, facial expression, visual props such as the EP's photo or PIL, and body positioning. Less immediately obvious strategies included long pauses, denoted by (…), where adults would calmly wait in order to allow processing time, a behaviour that was observed to be helpful to many of the pupils.

(Jake [02:27] Line 24)

A: Good… anything else? *I love this, I'm not sure, I don't like it, I'm important, I want to know more, it's good, it's confusing, I hate it, something else?*
P: (chooses)
A: *It's confusing* sometimes. (A animates with exaggerated facial expressions/ intonation).
P: (nods almost imperceptibly)
A: Yeah? Have you done them all? …You want to click any other do you think is related to you?
P: (shrugs) … (Chooses another)
A: Do you *want to know more*? Yeah? Ok.

5.1.3   Transcending Communication Difficulty (CD)
(Findings: Theme 3, Table 4.7)

None of the pupils needed any encouragement to explore the iPad app. The device was highly motivating and gave non-readers or children with weak expressive skills a chance to show independence within an established zone of comfort: competence with an intuitive interface. The text being presented in simple, short sentences accompanied by pictures was of benefit. Irrespective of

reading ability, the app also provided an opportunity for individuals to demonstrate levels of exploration, comprehension and literacy.

The children in this study were already motivated to use, and could demonstrate a range of competencies with the iPad.   For the older children especially, it was observed that there was kudos in using the app and the digital presentation sparked great interest. Differentiation from a mainstream device is the reverse of the methodologies in the literature where children were required to learn to use a previously unfamiliar method of communication before they could start to use it to express their views. For example, Lewis et al. (2008) matched the complexity of their images on Cue Cards to the communicative abilities of the children and Mortimer (2004) used digital communication books containing photos taken by adults. The researcher felt it important that the pupils' responses shaped the adaptations to the technology, rather than the opposite.

5.1.4   Encouraging Views (Findings: Theme 4, Table 4.7)

This pivotal theme was drawn from the autonomous behaviours seen in Stage Four and the ways in which children were able to confidently discuss their views on the Statutory Assessment process. It was interesting to note that the children's views were invariably met with positive feedback and targeted praise. This modelled high expectations of contributing, having views validated and appropriate responses to others' views.

Strong arguments are made in the literature regarding the importance of children's views in shaping and critiquing the process, rather than merely describing likes or dislikes (Gersch, 2001; Holland et al., 2006). This research found that children of six were able to comment upon what they enjoyed or would change, and also why and how they would change it. This contrasts with Gordon and Russo (2009) who report that, before twelve years of age, children's insight to their experiences of meeting with a psychologist was somewhat limited. It is suggested that the style of questioning and reliance on verbal methods may have contributed to this difference in findings.

A powerful way to engage the children in the process was for them to draw their responses, photograph the drawings and then see their photos incorporated into the MiView survey.   This idea was raised by the children in Stage One and

the benefits of personalising resources are discussed by Komulainen (2007) and Mortimer (2004). The act of drawing leads the child into flow (being immersed in a feeling of energised focus). Figure 5.1 illustrates how Oskar provided a very detailed drawing and accompanying narrative (Appendix 22b). Drawing

Figure 5.1 Oskar's drawings: Oskar and the EP look together for a happy picture (left); 'SuperKid' and his men (right)

allowed the children to feel competent and there was clearly no wrong answer. It helped to reduce power imbalances and gave the children processing time where they did not have to sustain their communication skills. In this sense it provided a break from the intensity of the unfamiliar social situation.

5.1.5 Impact upon Communication Difficulty (CD) (Findings: Theme 5, Table 4.7)

The overarching finding to be discussed here is how socio-contextual factors can exacerbate CD. This was evident at each stage. In Stage One problems with the conduit and process were highlighted (Table 4.2). In Stage Two EPs talked about the lack of time they have to explore the children's views and how these are sometimes not directly sought at all. Stage Three stressed the very few resources that are child-friendly and focus on the specific role of the EP and the expectations of children and families. Stage Four provided specific examples of children giving learned, echolaic or expected answers: confused as to what they had been part of and anxious about how to respond.

An unexpected finding was that in some instances the adults were so keen to promote every communication from the child that they became less circumspect with their approval. Thus, even when a pupil gave an expected or echolaic

response, they might have received praise for this. This had the inadvertent effect of infantilising the child and also positively reinforcing a disempowered response.

As described in the introduction (1.1.2), the term CD is used to describe heterogeneous needs. It was interesting to note relationships between patterns of difficulties and responses in this research. Children with autism experienced particular difficulties with coherence and a sense of self. Sections of the MiView survey rely on the participant having both of these. Children with lower emotional literacy found feelings questions and the slider scales problematic, as they did not necessarily recognise any similarity between their interpretation of a feeling and the conceptual smiley faces. McGee and d'Ardenne (2009) found that older children (without CD) reported finding scaling questions useful. This research suggests that particular attention be focused on how children with low emotional literacy are presented with questions and benefit from a different or more multisensory approach, an area not addressed in the literature.

The children used a range of coping strategies to mask their difficulties, including interrupting a question with a learned response. This did not even give time to even process the question, let alone formulate answer. Pupils also changed the topic or missed out the question entirely, a finding that corresponded with Chamberlain et al. (2010). The greatest common difficulty was in suppressing current knowledge in order to adopt a previously held perspective. For example the question "I knew which room we would be in" requires the child to suppress their knowledge of where they met the EP, and go back in time to recall if they had already known the location beforehand. Such questions, phrased in this way are disempowering and use abstract language. There is a need to recognise and account for children's temporal difficulties by situating resources in present time, not future or past. Discussion of this issue was not found in the literature reviewed and is revisited in 5.2.2.

Section 1.4.2 set out the relationship between environmental factors and children's drive to participate as part of the discussion of the tenets of Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan and Niemiec, 2009). Where such environmental restraints exist as those outlined above, they are likely to impact on any communication difficulties experienced by children and undermine their drive to participate, explore and learn. Subtly restricting factors were present

even in verbal and non-verbal interactions that adults had intended to be positively reinforcing and empowering for the child.

5.1.6   Disenfranchising Pupil (Findings: Theme 6, Table 4.7)

The final major finding was centred on the wider systems around the child that acted as restraining forces to communicating their views. To exemplify, the supporting adult inadvertently changed the meaning of the question, the conduit (MiView or the PIL) was not always intuitive and the adult implicitly reinforced the power imbalance, for example by talking over the child to the researcher. Such illustrations accord with research on the power dynamics of eliciting children's views within educational settings (Jelly et al. 2000; Lewis, 2002) and Statutory Assessment as a system in which power differentials are exposed (Lubel and Greaves, 2000).

Paradoxically, some aspects of disempowerment actually stemmed from the adults trying to be more helpful in their role with the child. They often seemed to want the child to be able to give any answer in preference to none. This very understandable position sometimes resulted in the adult asking leading questions or directing the child to choose a particular answer:

> **(David [02:55] Line 30)**
> A: *Something I would change about meeting the EP is …*what would you do differently? Something that you would change?
> P: What?
> A: Or was it all wonderful, you wouldn't change anything?
>
> [P looks confused. Appears to zone out and forget the question, then just repeat A's suggestion.]
> P: No, I wouldn't change anything
> A: You wouldn't change anything? Wow. That was a good meeting. Can you press next?

Stages One, Two and Three exposed broader systems which also disenfranchised the pupils: a lack of initial preparation and general understanding of Statutory Assessment (SA). Clark and Williams (2008) stress the importance of sensitivity to the research context: school rules and ethos. How the school explains SA to parents and children, and how the staff view this process themselves based on experience and preconceptions, will all shape the

children's ideas about expected responses, and their engagement with the process. The children in this action research reported variable levels of support and explanation in preparation for, during and after their EP's visit. Only three of the thirteen children in Stage Four had an idea that there were any outcomes of their meeting with the EP (Figure 4.2) and, when interviewed, none could explain what they might be. This lack of explanation highlights a wider issue of a ceiling on pupil involvement.

5.1.6.1   Preparation, process and knowledge of outcomes

In accord with Woolfson and Harker (2002), this research noted that despite the importance of children building repeated experiences of how, when and why they could give their views, they lacked opportunities to express views in other school-based contexts.

A poignant illustration of this was given during an interview with David. His TA explained that he was unable to take part in the school councillor's meeting as this took place at the same time as his literacy group (Appendix 22, David, Line 48). David appeared unaware that the meeting could include him, or that this was a forum for him to express views.

Limited preparation for the children was a strong thread running through every research stage, and is also reflected in the literature (Lubel and Greaves, 2000). Stafford et al. (2003) reported that children felt their views were misrepresented and trivialised. In support of this position, the researcher heard from the pupils that their views were rarely sought. The few examples they gave were concerned with voting on an adult's agenda items, such as choosing playground equipment. The views elicited were of description, not process and pupils were not given feedback on outcomes.

Returning to the principles of SDT, children need to express views and see tangible outcomes in order to develop a strong sense of agency (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The children who participated in Stages One and Four were not able to describe any outcomes beyond a vague notion that they may receive more help at school. The EPs in Stage Two commented that they felt unable to discuss outcomes, especially with children, as funding allocation was unknown at the point of assessment. The researcher believes that there is a greater role

for schools and families to provide children with a context of why they are seeing an EP. EPs could be more transparent about their purpose, and children could be given an explanatory, personalised summary of what took place, distinct from subsequent decisions around funding and allocation.

5.2   Critical Evaluation of Methods, Resources and Process

Completing the four stages of this empowering action research was logistically complex. Methods were selected at each stage which best suited the research question and the social constructionist framework. The methods used were observation, interview and focus group. At each stage different resources were employed to support the participants, and their feedback shaped revision of these resources. Discussed here are the PPP, the EP Checklist, the PIL, EPs' photos and MiView. This section will evaluate the process of the research, detailing issues of recruitment and analysis.

5.2.1 Methods

5.2.1.1 Observation

Observing the children's interactions first hand preserved detail of minute exchanges and contextual knowledge. Conversely, the presence of the researcher inevitably changed the behaviours of the child and adult. In social constructionist terms each data set was a product of the interaction between the researcher and participants, their existing constructs of the situation and the new constructs that were subsequently formed (see 1.4.1).

To reduce anxieties the researcher aimed to be unobtrusive (see 3.6.1.1). In practice, the quiet spaces that schools provided were too small for this ideal and the researcher felt that interactions were somewhat compromised by this. If time had allowed, it would have been preferable to meet with each child-adult dyad at school the preceding day. Matters of consent and assent could have then been completed separately and a mutually suitable time and location for the observations agreed.

5.2.1.2   Interview

A critique of semi-structured interviews is offered in 3.6.1.2. During Stage One the researcher learned to break questions down and build a child's incremental understanding. Closed questions increased children's confidence and it was apparent that many items on the EPQ (Appendix 3) were simply unanswerable without greater background knowledge. Questions were incorporated into the MiView app format instead, as the children appeared to find this easier. On reflection, it would be preferable to focus the interview questions upon the children's views of being part of a process. This would be alongside a greater use of visual supports.

Reflecting on the nonverbal detail captured by video was extremely helpful. The pupils clearly began to disengage around the fifteen minute mark. Seeing body language replayed was a very effective counter to the researcher's agenda. Faced with this the researcher included drawing, and shortened and reordered questions.

The interviews were relaxed and informal. Good rapport was established with the children and their supporting adults. This style enabled the researcher to clarify some of the answers she had observed, and encouraged the children to elaborate. Issues with this type of interview can be that questions are non-standardised between participants and the interviewer omits or adds questions reactively. With the deliberate intention of reviewing and adapting the methods after each interview, the flexibility of using only a semi-structured approach was well suited to the tangential conversations that sometimes arose and the interviews were richer for it.

5.2.1.1   Focus Group

A critique of focus groups is that members can dominate or suppress minority views. As all group members were already a cohesive team, they all ensured that everyone had opportunity to speak. However, the researcher noted that the more senior members of the group tended to have more anecdotal examples to draw upon and the transcripts showed that they spoke for longer overall. A future alteration to facilitation might be to use a nominal group technique

(Manktelow and Carlson, 2013), where individuals write down their points and these are introduced to the group by the facilitator.

The focus group was an efficient method to access multiple opinions on the same subjects, and also see how different group members concurred on or disputed different points. In practise, the disadvantages to this method were few, and lay mainly in the difficulty of transcribing where many people spoke at once or there were additional environmental sounds. An additional microphone positioned on the floor in the centre of the group would have solved the issue.

The focus group members reported that they had benefitted from taking part. It was unexpected that this group discussion would have any immediate impact upon the EPs' practice, but four of the members discussed plans to explicitly ask children's opinions of the resources they used. In a sense this slight shift of perspective was seen as a positive outcome of the research.

5.2.2 Resources

5.2.2.1   Problems Positives Possibilities (PPP)

The PPP chart (Table 4.2) was a useful quick reference tool that distilled the content analysis (Appendix 8) from Stage One and was presented to EPs in Stage Two. To create a manageable resource for the group, themes from the content analysis (3.6.1.3) were divided into the PPP categories by the researcher.

This process was inevitably subject to potential bias and it would have increased the reliability to have asked a colleague to review the data. Presenting information on one sheet proved a practical tool and the EPs drew upon it as the basis for further discussion.

5.2.2.2   EP Checklist

The focus group were also given an EP Checklist (Appendix 9) for comment. The idea of having prompts for standardisation to ensure quality of practice was

favourably received. It was interesting that the group felt it would apply to other EPs perhaps more than them, despite sharing that they seldom carried out particular items on the list. The checklist was modified slightly in response to the feedback from the focus group.

5.2.2.3   Pupil Information Leaflet (PIL)

The PIL (3.6.4.1 and Appendix 17) was designed to give children accurate information that would prepare them for their meeting with the EP. It incorporated space for children to personalise the resource and to write down any questions or comments. Unfortunately, most children did not recall seeing the copy of the PIL sent home.

Where the PIL had reached the child, and then been revisited by the EP during their assessment, it made a significant difference to what the children could recall. The images were intentionally the same on the PIL and MiView to aid familiarity, which two children commented had been beneficial. There was a preference expressed for coloured drawings. Some of the graphical concepts, such as location, were misunderstood and would need to be redrawn before a wider distribution was trialled.

5.2.2.4   EPs' Photos

The researcher attempted to get a photo of the EP to use at each interview. This proved difficult as there was no central bank of staff photos and they were received in different formats. In use, having a paper photo was preferable to digital. The children found it extremely useful to help recall the meeting: sometimes with great amusement.

5.2.2.5   MiView

MiView (3.6.4.2) is an iPad app based on a survey tool. Though children were motivated to use the iPad, this resource highlighted some unexpected difficulties. The survey app was not fully customisable which meant only an uppercase keyboard could be used, it had no sound output, the speech output was so poor that it was better turned off and video couldn't be imported. There were particular suggestions from the pupils at Stage Four which would really

improve the access of CCD to this software and need to be considered for future revisions.

At another level, observing the children use MiView showed the probable benefits of such a resource. It could achieve a consistency and familiarity that current methods of giving pupils just text or blank boxes to fill do not. The iPad app has the potential to summarise, repeat, give targeted praise, give visual and verbal cues (including signing), encourage drawing on screen, bring in photos, and have each pupil shape this whole process and experience in exactly the right way for them.

What the iPad would not replace is the need for a supportive adult, to help with navigation, or explanation, or cueing and recall, or the hundreds of attuned responses that have been observed during this action research. Also, it would be necessary to divide the questions so that some were asked before the child actually met the EP. This would address the issues faced by children with temporal difficulties in suppressing current knowledge to comment on a previous state of mind. Those questions relevant to ask after meeting the EP would be best given later the same day or the next, to enable pupils' maximum recall of the event.

5.2.3 Process

5.2.3.1   Recruitment and representativeness

Thirteen pupils with communication difficulties, aged six to ten took part in Stage Four of this action research. A further seven children participated in Stage One, and five EPs in Stage Two. The research settings were all mainstream primary schools within the same Educational Psychology Service. With such a small and exploratory piece of research, generalisations would not be expected to wider populations or other cultures or settings.

Most especially in Stage Four, the recruitment relied on others and this presented many complications. The researcher needed pupils to have recently seen an EP. It was considered that the best way to achieve this was for caseworkers from the Statutory Assessment Service to send out information

alongside other statutory paperwork to parents (see Figure 3.2). Despite assurances that all caseworkers would be informed of the research, many were not aware and sought permission from their line managers before agreeing to forward information. Caseworkers' part-time hours or annual leave contributed to the enormous amount of time and emails involved in this part of the process.

Schools were sent a separate set of information to seek parental consent for the research to take place. Inevitably, with this amount of people involved before consent was given, there was high pre-inclusion attrition. There were also difficulties with the timings of EPs' assignment to assess children: sometimes the researcher unwittingly contacted the school ahead of the EP. The research highlighted the tensions of the deadlines of the casework teams, communication across the service and the capacity of the EPs to carry out the assessments. It was notable to the researcher that in all this the child's voice was entirely silent, with a multi-layered process happening between many adults around them that the child knew nothing about.

Recruitment issues would be better addressed by taking the Statutory Assessment Service out of the process and working directly with EPs. Lessons learned included to allow a much greater time for recruitment and to always have plenty of spare copies of paperwork for schools.

5.2.3.2 Analysis

The levels of analysis were chosen to best suit the types of data gathered and to answer the research questions at each Stage. Content analysis was used inductively in Stage One (3.6.1.3) and enabled the researcher to describe enabling or restraining factors of the EPQ. In Stage Three (3.6.3.1) it was used deductively, to draw out the characteristics of best practice in documents. It fitted the researcher's epistemology and provided findings that were easy for participants to utilise. The flexibility of content analysis allowed the researcher to usefully focus at a primary level of analysis. This was deemed more helpful than other methods of analysis (see 3.6.1; 3.6.3) which could have broadened the themes or imposed technical constraints.

Stages Two and Four required a more detailed approach than organising and describing data. Thematic analysis (3.6.2.2; 3.6.4.3) was considered apt for the large quantities of data gathered. In Stage Two, it was utilised to identify themes, subthemes and floating categories from the EPs' perspectives of children's voice in assessment. Thematic analysis had the flexibility to hold the data together in these broader relationships and also to dig deeper for patterns of concurrence and unexpected findings.

In Stage Four, NVivo 10™ was accessed to aid the analysis of transcripts. The software could simultaneously present different query results and was useful to edit codes. Beyond this, the researcher found NVivo to have limited applications in this method of analysis. Ultimately, it was immersion in the data which allowed the researcher to interpret the social, psychological and interactional contexts that framed the children's expression of their views.

One criticism levied at thematic analysis is that it can be anecdotal, building themes from very limited data (Cresswell, 2007). The themes in this research were representative of all Stage Four transcripts. Three previous stages had undergone thorough and robust analyses, cumulatively building data that had been checked with peers and colleagues, and revised with the input of children and their supporting adults. This satisfied the researcher that steps had been taken to counter claims of data extrapolated from only anecdotal findings.

Thematic analysis is also criticised for decisions around themes being subjective and themes too broad (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this research the themes were drawn from observations of the connections and similarities between the children's communications, as well as what was unique to each situation. It was understood that there would be an element of the researcher imposing her interpretations upon this process, and that this was part of a social constructionist paradigm.

5.3   Suggestions for Further Research

This research has indicated that there is a need to improve dissemination of child-friendly information about the process and outcomes of Statutory Assessment. Further research could usefully revise the MiView app and pilot it with different populations of children in other circumstances:

- of Secondary age;
- with English as an additional language;
- without communication difficulties; and
- online and with adult facilitation.

This research has added to the cumulative body of literature in the areas of the importance of the voice of the child, the supportive role of Learning Support Assistants and opportunities for choice making. In answering the particular research questions posed, more questions have arisen and it is hoped that there are opportunities for the researcher to continue to conduct research in the future.

Fortuitously, research into children's increased participation is currently receiving increased attention due to a stipulation of the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2013) that CYP are involved in shaping, developing and evaluating the services they use. Projects such as VIPER (Voice, Inclusion, Participation, Empowerment, Research) (CDC, 2012) and initiatives by Early Support (NCB, 2012) are examples of current pathfinder research to raise the voice of marginalised children. It is envisaged that more opportunities for similar research will present themselves as the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2013) is implemented from 2014.

5.4   Implications for Developing Practice

Ideas for future developments in best practice were drawn from each stage. They included:

- creating podcasts of EPs defining and explaining their role to children;
- explaining the meeting to the child beforehand using comic-strip style conversations;
- helping a child to generate questions before meeting the EP;
- taking photos of the room, people present and resources used;
- pupils giving their views over more than one session; and
- asking the child more about their life outside school.

When contacted, many of the Parent Partnership and EPS staff advised the researcher that they had plans to develop more child-friendly literature in the future. Digital resources are in development that could be explored to assist

children's views such as putting Cue Cards on an iPad (Evans, 2013). An issue with technology raised in this research is that it accepts all answers as authentic. For example *exploration* was coded when the pupil was simply enjoying the experience of choosing, playing, or ticking at random, or indeed just behaving as they thought they were expected to. Whilst the researcher drew on contextual information to interpret these communications, an app would not.

Further stages would be necessary to carry all best practice forward. In systemic terms, this research has punctuated the first four action research stages. It is recognised that there would be a fifth, sixth and beyond, to revise and evaluate MiView, and to increase children's involvement in the action research process.

5.4.1   Implications for EPs

This research suggests that an alternative approach for children to give their views would be more empowering. The children would like:

- photos of the EP who is to see them in advance;
- to meet with each professional whose views are sought by the Statutory Assessment Service beforehand to explain why, what they will be doing and how it will potentially help them; and
- simple, accessible and engaging resources to aid their preparation, understanding and subsequent recall.

An EP Checklist would help standardise the level of information and participation of pupils undergoing SA. EPs also have a role in offering inset training to raise staff awareness of how support is given, with a focus on enabling, noticing and encouraging views with targeted praise. Training would promote and make explicit the links between psychological research and eliciting children's views in practice: competence, autonomy, relatedness and wellbeing.

5.4.2 Implications for Schools

It was clear from the research that the setting's ethos around children's capacity for views, acted to enable or restrain the pupils' opportunities to practise having

a voice, and to see outcomes. For children with CD this was all the more important: ensuring they were supported by Learning Support Assistants who understood the importance of maintaining collaborative relationships.

Good practice guidance for schools to address some of these difficulties would include:

- ensuring that all relevant staff, including LSAs, knew about the SA process and its possible outcomes so that they could answer any queries that the child may have;

- senior staff ensuring that the pupil was prepared in advance of the meeting and knew where and when the EP intended to meet with them; and

- preparation for meeting the EP (for example a podcast or using the PIL) extending over a period that gave the child sufficient time to process, question and understand.

Underpinning these suggestions for best practice is an implicit need for closer working relations between schools and EPSs.

5.4.3   Implications for Children and Families

This research has shown that small changes which help prepare children and provide simple and accurate information to families are perceived as very helpful and empowering. Readying the children with greater knowledge of what the SA process is all about, and how they can contribute and influence outcomes could elicit more authentic views and therefore maximise the benefits of assessment.

An important implication of the research for children is that they would be given a personalised response from the EP that included a visually-supported record of their meeting. Only two of the children in Stage Four had previously met the EP who assessed their needs and none knew if they would see that EP again. A record is suggested as a method to demonstrate to the pupils that their opinion is valued. Such 360º feedback would complement other local initiatives such as parental evaluations of their experiences of the EPS. It would enhance the quality and weight of pupils' views within statutory reports.

5.4.4 Implications for Local Authorities

This research occurred in a time of transition for the delivery of SEN services. The Children and Families Act (DfE, 2013) requires local authorities to work more closely with health authorities and extends the SEN system from birth to 25 years, replacing statements with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. The CYP voice is likely to become key to assessments. This increased scope offers a chance to reduce overlap and repetition in the system, freeing professionals to work more closely with children and their families. The implications of this research fit well within this new way of working and emphasised the need for LAs to support EPs to:

- be able to spend more time with children, and arrange follow up visits;

- carry out a quality assessment that integrates professional understanding and takes time to hear and act on the views of children; and

- invest enough time to provide effective and appropriate interventions and provision.

The final major implication for local authorities concerned communicating the process and procedures of SA more effectively, to schools, parents and EPs. To improve communications with timing, a section of the local authority website is being developed where parents can check the status and progression of their application for SA. The researcher suggests that this would be an ideal location for some child-friendly materials.

5.5 Feedback to stakeholders

The researcher has written to children and schools with individual letters and discussed findings with the EP focus group in team meetings. She has arranged to present her feedback to the EPS and senior management team regionally at a Service Day in September 2013. Her research up to Stage Four and initial findings have been presented at a professional conference (DECP, 2013) and she has been invited to present the finished research at the same conference in 2014. The findings will also be published in a peer-reviewed journal.

5.6 Reflections

At every stage of this research the importance of reflexivity has been paramount. I kept a reflective log to particularly detail those events that have helped me deepen my understanding of the research area, eureka moments, and self-reflexivity on my own learning. Within these, though the temptation was to reflect on successes, it was the less positive or most challenging times that have offered me the greatest personal development. This section discusses reflections on the positions adopted, the research journey and role tensions, my positioning and new considerations of the area explored.

5.6.1   The positions adopted within action research

Freebody (2003) commented that action research involves a planned and self-consciously focused examination of changing practice. My role as a practitioner seeking to promote change from within the EPS thus determined how the problems were defined as well as what counted as solutions.   My reflexive practice facilitated the development of this action research and, in section 3.1.2, I acknowledged the necessary flexibility to take different epistemological positions along a social constructionist continuum according to the stage being undertaken. My diary helped to record such shifts in my thoughts and experiences throughout the research process.

Within this research I adopted the positions of researcher, practitioner, student representative and trainee member of the EPS. I was positioned by schools as a representative of the local authority, or as an academic outsider, and by the EPs as a member of their team. As a researcher, I was concerned to effect changes that reduced power differentials, as well as increasing understandings of the social and contextual factors involved in listening to children. This was tempered by the pragmatics of timescales and participant recruitment and a statutory system that constrained the potential for collaborative, participatory action research.

As a practitioner I wanted to better understand the immediate systems, and wider political and social influences that both located me within and shaped prevailing discourses on children's voice. I have been privileged to be accepted

as an insider to these member groups in such a way as to be able to discuss EPs and children's views with them, and gain insight to wider social and schools contexts. Identifying the subject positions available to me has helped illuminate the social construction of listening to children.

5.6.2 Reflections on the research journey and role tensions

The role of researcher was very different to that of trainee EP. In setting out my epistemological position (1.4.1) I acknowledged how the roles I embody as student, mother, and practitioner might influence my perspectives. There were tensions in remaining in the role of researcher. For example, when facilitating the focus group it was difficult to step out of the role of team member and instead listen and respond with greater objectivity. When visiting a school to gather data, staff sometimes asked me for psychological advice or comment on the SA process. Representing the local authority and EPS positioned me on paper long before my arrival in schools and I took additional measures to try and help school staff make the distinction.

There were times when psychological hypotheses predominated my research and I needed to sensitively share concerns. For example a particular observation about the lack of preparation or transition time given to a child with autism was discussed with a colleague who was the school's link EP. The EP had asked me for additional feedback to help address autism specific training needs at the school. EPs were generally quite interested to know what the children had said about them. If at interview the child specifically mentioned something about the EP, I asked them if they would like me to pass this on. The children's responses varied and confidentialities were always respected.

5.6.3 The researcher's theoretical perspective

I have benefitted from reflections as part of a peer group and within supervision. Conversations with other professionals have led me at times to question my beliefs about children's development and ultimately to articulate a more informed view. The most interesting discussions have been around my positioning as a social constructionist and I have found the tenets of SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2000) to offer a very helpful framework.

In my reflexive log I often returned to question what sense the children were making of their meeting with the EP, and subsequently of meeting with me. I noted that the pupils did not demonstrate an understanding that the EP was there for them. Rather that the EP was there to ask the child to do some activities for the EP: a passive and externalised perception of EP involvement. I considered the impact of this on children's sense of autonomy and relatedness, and wondered how it compared to children's perceptions of other visiting professionals. With the current focus on multiagency assessment this merits further research.

> "Two or three people who are working together will be able to make a better analysis and reflect more deeply in relation to both theory and practice" (Clark, Kjørholt and Moss, 2005 p.85)

By using the term Communication Difficulties, I recognised that I had described a particular reality and felt that perhaps I had ascribed to critical realism. However, this was balanced against needing to adopt the same method as schools and the EPS for identifying children who met participant criteria. I considered that my social constructionist position had been strengthened by appreciating all the different perspectives that were drawn from the research.

The use of the focus group provided a significant leap in my understanding of different perspectives on SA. It was revelatory that most group members did not explain their role to the primary aged children they assessed. Furthermore, that EPs would accept that particular children had no views on the SA process and therefore not seek them. It served to reinforce my own strong beliefs that children have a right to know and I resolved to always be transparent about my role. This has changed my thinking on the information that I would give to schools to pass on to children in advance of meeting with them.

5.6.4   New understandings

Mellor (1998) describes professional reflections as moving beyond an awareness of thoughts and feelings, to challenging one's own assumptions. Within each entry of my reflexive log, I asked myself such questions as 'why did I do as I did?', 'how could I do this differently?' and 'how has my experience changed my understanding of my ways of knowing?'.

I was surprised by the ethical conundrum of balancing obtaining data on a schedule against concerns for the children and adults. Braun and Clarke (2006) advocate that surprise manifests a difference in a researcher's values and beliefs. This is true as, were the research repeated, I would take an entirely different approach that involved children in framing the areas for discussion from the outset, rather than this starting point of imposing a set of questions that proved largely unanswerable. Given my emphasis on empowering children, I would have preferred to take a multiple case study approach and follow a smaller number of children through the SA process. I believe that this would have told me more about how they and their families felt. Nonetheless, with the methodology adopted, I recognise my enhanced awareness of socio-contextual barriers that children experience before meeting with an EP, and how to use multimedia to improve their engagement and encourage their views.

In this research journey I have grown in confidence to take more informed methodological decisions or challenge those presented to me. My attitude to the research process as an EP practitioner has evolved. Placement experiences have provided an appreciation of the necessity of a robust evidence-based practice, and carrying out this research has demonstrated how this might be achieved. It is important to me that I number among the EPs who continue to conduct and publish topical research, especially in the area of children's views in which I now feel more emotionally invested.

5.6.5   Reflections on fulfilment of the overall purpose

Section 2.8 set out the overall purpose of this research and I feel that these objectives have been reached. It has been possible to hear the reflections of the pupils and of EPs, and to learn a great deal more about what enables children to given their views. Specifically, the research has looked at the influence of socio-contextual factors, the impact of communication difficulties and identified the crucial role of the supporting adults within a listening ethos.

I aimed to look at current local practice and combine the most successful aspects of this with best practice from across the UK, as determined by criteria which were established through listening to participants. I have been able to

disseminate this information to the children and adults participating in this research, and more widely to audiences at the DECP conference, fellow university TEPs and tutors, and the whole EPS at a recent service day.

The outcomes have so far been well received. EPs have told me that they think that this is useful and will adopt the checklist. They explained the importance to them of checking that school staff understand the statutory process and the work of the EP. There are different aspects to this research which have already been the subject of debates and conversation within the service. Interestingly these have centred on the rights of the child to give their assent to see an EP, and the notion of the EP's photograph being shown to the children in advance. The discourse clearly influenced practitioners to reflect upon their own practice. I greatly appreciated the opportunity given by the senior management to present this research to colleagues.

Looking to the possibilities of how this research could have a wider impact, the DfE have digital ways to seek stakeholder views in education as one of their current foci. It is a possibility that this research could be useful to inform such enquiries and my use of the iPad has been promoted by senior management to relevant officials in the DfE for comment. The EPS plan to introduce the use of iPads more often in EPs casework and there are plans to invest in the further development and piloting of MiView.

5.7   Conclusions

This action research explored how children with communication difficulties might be enabled to express views on their experiences of SA. It identified some of the socio-contextual factors that are perceived as enabling or restraining by this group of children. It discussed alternative resources and systems through which they might be encouraged to express themselves.

Four stages of data gathering and the development of resources have focused on how EPs, families and schools might enable pupils to understand and contribute to the SA process. The findings in relation to the issues raised in this context were that CCD are less likely to have a contextually appropriate way to attempt to answer questions that rely on:

- an understanding of abstract concepts;
- complex vocabulary;
- processing, holding and retrieving longer questions;
- unknown information; and
- recall of an event after a week.

Children's difficulties with expressive or receptive communication are compounded by a lack of experience of giving views on a range of issues, and not having been prepared for their meeting with the EP. The children observed did not demonstrate an understanding that the EP's visit had been to help them, nor had expectation of further involvement or outcomes. The children had developed a range of disempowered responses to not understanding or being misrepresented. Ultimately none of these enabled their views to be heard. This led the researcher to concur with the literature that a misunderstood child is a silenced child.

Children can be enabled to express their views by adults in supporting roles who use particular methods that boost the child's autonomy and encourage their competence. These occur both within a collaborative relationship and as part of system with an ethos of listening to children. Specific forms of communication found to be useful in this research were:

- breaking down questions to build up and check understanding at different levels of increasing complexity;
- building confidence with simpler closed questions preceding open ones;
- emphasising and paraphrasing with intonation and gesture;
- allowing processing time and repetition;
- using visual supports; and
- knowing the child, so that responses are targeted and attuned

This research contributed to the knowledge of:
- how children can be enabled to give views on their perceptions of the process, activities and outcomes of SA;
- socio-contextual factors that can enable or restrain this process;
- child-friendly information concerning the SA process and especially with a focus on preparing a child to meet with an EP;
- an appropriate multi-media conduit that provides a child with a range of ways to express themselves; and
- how EPs and schools might work more closely to listen to children as part of a dynamic, on-going process of internal evaluation in the EPS.

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Included for reference are a list of websites and online communities which have been invaluable to this research:

Websites:

http://actionresearch.net/ A collection of living educational theories based on action research, with action planning process examples and guides for researchers.
www.cognable.com/ the pioneering site of Simon Evans, a researcher and developer with particular interest in use of the internet, assistive technologies and new media by and for people with Intellectual Disabilities (ID).

http://involver.org.uk/ Involver is an award-winning social enterprise that improves school councils and student voice.

www.nya.org.uk/ The National Youth Agency works in partnership across public, private and voluntary organisations to improve services for CYP.

www.participationworks.org.uk Participation Works is a partnership of six national children and young people's agencies.

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2612/communication_difficulties_-_facts_and_stats.pdf Facts and statistics on the prevalence and impact of CD.

www.selfdeterminationtheory.org/ Presents a brief overview of SDT and resources on human needs, values, intrinsic motivation, development, motivation across cultures, individual differences, and psychological well-being.

www.triangle.org.uk/what-we-do/consultation-with-children Triangle are national experts in a range of work directly with CYP, including enabling communication and consultation.

Online Communities:

EPNet   www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=EPNET The Educational Psychology List - A forum for the exchange of ideas and information among University research/teaching staff working in the field of Educational Psychology and Educational Psychologists throughout the UK and elsewhere.

QIAL   http://lsv.uky.edu/archives/QIAT.html Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology. A huge amount of practical expertise in using different technologies with students of all ages and abilities.

SENIT   http://lists.education.gov.uk/mailman/listinfo/senit DfE hosted forum to support teachers, advisers, and others working within education, to share practical advice about how ICT can be used to support pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Appendices

Appendix 1   UEL Ethical approval

ETHICAL PRACTICE CHECKLIST (Professional Doctorates)

SUPERVISOR: Mark Fox   **ASSESSOR:** Paul Penn

STUDENT: Imogen Howarth   **DATE (sent to assessor):** 20/01/2012

Proposed research topic: **An exploration of the ways in which children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) can be enabled to express views on what it was like to meet an Educational Psychologist**

Course: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

1. Will free and informed consent of participants be obtained?   YES /

2. If there is any deception is it justified?   N/A

3. Will information obtained remain confidential?   YES

4. Will participants be made aware of their right to withdraw at any time?   YES

5. Will participants be adequately debriefed?   YES

6. If this study involves observation does it respect participants' privacy?   NA

7. If the proposal involves participants whose free and informed
    consent may be in question (e.g. for reasons of age, mental or
    emotional incapacity), are they treated ethically?   YES

8. Is procedure that might cause distress to participants ethical?   NA

9. If there are inducements to take part in the project is this ethical? YES / NO / NA

10. If there are any other ethical issues involved, are they a problem? NO

APPROVED

YES	YES, PENDING MINOR CONDITIONS	NO

MINOR CONDITIONS:

REASONS FOR NON APPROVAL:

Assessor initials: PP   Date: 20/01/12

RESEARCHER RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

SUPERVISOR: Mark Fox   **ASSESSOR:** Paul Penn

STUDENT: Imogen Howarth   **DATE (sent to assessor):** 20/01/2012

Proposed research topic: An exploration of the ways in which children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) can be enabled to express views on what it was like to meet an Educational Psychologist

Course: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Would the proposed project expose the <u>researcher</u> to any of the following kinds of hazard?

1   Emotional   NO

2.   Physical   NO

3.   Other   NO
         (e.g. health and safety issues)

If you've answered YES to any of the above please estimate the chance of the researcher being harmed as: HIGH / MED / LOW

APPROVED

YES	YES, PENDING MINOR CONDITIONS	NO

MINOR CONDITIONS:

REASONS FOR NON APPROVAL:

Assessor initials: PP   Date: 10/01/12

UEL
University of
East London

www.uel.ac.uk

School of Psychology

Professional Doctorate Programmes

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to confirm that the Professional Doctorate candidate named in the attached ethics approval is conducting research as part of the requirements of the Professional Doctorate programme on which he/she is enrolled.

The Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, University of East London, has approved this candidate's research ethics application and he/she is therefore covered by the University's indemnity insurance policy while conducting the research. This policy should normally cover for any untoward event. The University does not offer 'no fault' cover, so in the event of an untoward occurrence leading to a claim against the institution, the claimant would be obliged to bring an action against the University and seek compensation through the courts.

As the candidate is a student of the University of East London, the University will act as the sponsor of his/her research. UEL will also fund expenses arising from the research, such as photocopying and postage.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Mark Finn

Chair of the School of Psychology Ethics Sub-Committee

Stratford Campus, Water Lane, Stratford, London E15 4LZ
tel: +44 (0)20 8223 4966   fax: +44 (0)20 8223 4937
e-mail: mno.davies@uel.ac.uk   web: www.uel.ac.uk/psychology

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The University of East London has campuses at London Docklands and Stratford
If you have any special access or communication requirements for your visit, please let us know. MINICOM 020 8223 2853

Appendix 2   Systematic search results – A summary of the research identified through a systematic search.
(The full results, including all information on purpose, methodology, results and critique are provided on the attached disc).

	Author, Date Title, Location (Starred papers were selected for the literature review)
	Anastasiou and Kauffman (2011) A Social Constructionist Approach to Disability: Implications for Special Education. **Greece** *Criticises inclusion as policy / dominant discourse. Links to the development of universal design – i.e. for all pupils' benefit.*
	Armstrong (2007) Disability, Education and Social Change in England since 1960 **UK** *Useful to help set scene of why children's voices are marginalised. Argues for no divide but a fluidity of schooling experience.*
	Armstrong, Galloway and Tomlinson (1993) Assessing special educational needs: The child's contribution. **UK** *Supports the suggestions that in practice psychologists are constrained to negotiate a solution acceptable to the school (client)*
	Ashton and Roberts (2006) What is Valuable and Unique about the Educational Psychologist? **UK** *EPs cite 'valuing pupil's views' as central to their role – much more frequently than SENCOs*
	Aston and Lambert. (2010) Young people's views about their involvement in decision-making.**UK** *Teacher's, parent's and CYP's expectations of EPs' role were unhelpful when trying to ensure CYP's voice were heard. EPs need to be clear about why, when and how they seek CYP views. Calls for debate on this issue.*
	Cavet and Sloper (2004) The participation of children and young people in decisions about UK service development **UK** *Notes lack of studies following participation – what changed as a result? How did children feel about being participants?*
★	**Chamberlain, George, Golden, Walker and Benton** (2010) Tellus4 National Report **UK** *Considers the methodological process to increase access to the online survey as well as gather children's views on ECM outcomes.*
	Clark and Williams (2008) Beyond listening: translating research into practice **UK** *Children's descriptions are of what they like to do, not a view on a service (c.f. description, process, outcomes)*
★	**Day** (2010) Listening to young children: An investigation of children's day care experiences in Children's Centres **UK** *Developed guidance and tools relevant to the practice of EPs, to enable the voices of children to be heard and acted upon in a range of settings.*
	Dickins, Emerson and Gordon-Smith (2004) Starting with Choice. Inclusive Strategies for Consulting Young Children **UK** *The child friendly approaches of mapping and ranking referred to were considered of use for the methodology.*
	Frazier-Norbury and Bishop (2003) Narrative skills of children with communication impairments **UK** *Links with Lewis et al. (2008) regarding sequencing and narrative structure.*
	Gersch (2001) Listening to Children **UK** *Very good example of cultural competency and plans outlined for multi-lingual translation of information. Deemed more useful to include this in the introduction as it provides rich context.*

	Author, Date Title, Location (Starred papers were selected for the literature review)
★	**Gordon and Russo** (2009) Children's Views Matter Too! A Pilot Project Assessing Children's and Adolescents' Experiences of Clinical Psychology Services **UK** *Concurs with recent lit: children at seven are able to give valid and reliable self-reports regarding their difficulties; children over twelve are able to provide a much better understanding of their difficulties*
	Harding and Atkinson (2009) How EPs record the voice of the child **UK** *A very helpful paper to compare and contrast with the focus group data of this research. For example time constraints are a recurring theme.*
★	**Holland, Renold, Ross and Hillman** (2010) Power, agency and participatory agendas: A critical exploration of young people's engagement in participative qualitative research **UK** *An interesting minority discourse, innovative methodology and critical discussion of power dynamics.*
	Jelly, Fuller and Byers (2000) Involving Pupils in Practice – promoting partnerships with pupils with SEN **UK** *This text refers very little to empirical research – predominantly an opinion practitioner-focused book*
	Klein (2003) We want our say: Children as active participants in their education **UK** *Links to discussions concerning participation, legislation, children not used to participating, and disabled children being the most marginalised group*
	Komulainen (2007) The Ambiguity of the Child's 'Voice' in Social Research **UK** *A useful paper for developing understanding of an ethnographic approach and the reflexivity of the researcher*
★	**Lewis** (2002) Accessing, through research interviews, the views of children with difficulties in learning **UK** *Weak on evaluation – but interesting perspective on how children's views can be sought with ethical consideration/conscience in interview*
★	**Lewis, Newton and Vials** (2008) Realising child voice: the development of Cue Cards **UK** *One of very few papers to explore alternatives to dominant question and answer methodologies.*
★	**Lubel and Greaves** (2000) The Development of an EPS Information Booklet for Primary Age Pupils **UK** *A forward thinking piece of research that offers a critique of EP practice in gathering views contrasted with SENCos' perspectives.*
★	**McGee and d'Ardenne** (2009) 'Netting a winner': tackling ways to question children online. A good practice guide to asking children and young people about sport and physical activity **UK** *One of the few studies attempting to understand participants' views of the method and process of questionnaire completion*
	Morris (2003) Including all children: finding out about the experiences of children with communication and/or cognitive impairments **UK** *Made useful distinction between disability (something external to the child, e.g. attitudes / expertise) and impairment (communication needs – e.g. people understanding speech/signing)*
	Mortimer (2004) Hearing children's voices in the early years **UK** *Children's opinions should be considered valid on equal opportunities, educational and psychological grounds*
	Norwich and Kelly (2006) Evaluating Children's Participation in SEN Procedures: Lessons for educational psychologists **UK**

	Author, Date Title, Location (Starred papers were selected for the literature review)
	Identifies a list of constraining factors as given by pupils: token consultation, consequences of participation slow in coming; pupil not in control about what is written about their views
	Quicke (2003) Educating the pupil voice **UK** *Provides examples of how to create a participatory style of pedagogy that fits the National Curriculum but also gives pupils many more opportunities to use reflection in context*
	Rabiee, Sloper and Beresford (2005) Doing research with children and young people who do not use speech for communication **UK** *No discussion of how research findings are subsequently used- seems to stop at point of proving children can be heard*
★	**Stafford, Laybourn, Hill and Walker** (2003) 'Having a Say': Children and Young People Talk about Consultation **UK** *A methodologically robust piece of relevant research on children's views*
	Woolfson, Harker, Lowe, Shields and Mackintosh (2007) Consulting with CYP who have disabilities: views of accessibility to education **UK** *Sparse methodological information provided to be able to consider this research for critical review.*
★	**Woolfson and Harker** (2002) Consulting with CYP: Young people's views of an EPS **UK** *Identified the need for better preparation: leaflets, focus groups, school councils. Consultation with CYP should involve varied methods, in order to improve the accuracy, validity and reliability of the data collected.*

Survey Monkey – Existing questionnaire items:

1. Whose idea was it for you to meet with the Psychologist?

2. Why did you meet with the Psychologist?

3. Who explained the Psychologist's job to you?

4. What were the most helpful things about meeting with the Psychologist?

5. What else might you have liked the Psychologist to do to help?

6. Has your Teacher, SENCO or the Psychologist talked with you about what the plan is now to help you?

7. Do you think meeting the Psychologist will help you to:

	Yes	Not sure	No
Be happier?	☐	☐	☐
Learn better	☐	☐	☐
Enjoy school more?	☐	☐	☐
Get on better with others?	☐	☐	☐
Get better help?	☐	☐	☐
Feel safer?	☐	☐	☐
Have a better life?	☐	☐	☐

8. Is there anything else you'd like to say about meeting with the Psychologist? If so, you can put it here.

9. What did you like or not like about this survey?

UEL Stratford Campus, Water Lane, Stratford. E15 4LZ
EPS – address removed

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

To _____

Hello. My name is Imogen Howarth. I am training to be an Educational Psychologist.

I am trying to find out more about what children think about when they meet with an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher.

I would like to ask you about what it was like to meet your visitor. I have some questions to ask and you can have as much help as you need from (LSA).

We will talk about what it was like to meet your visitor: what happened before and afterwards.

I will record everything that we all say so that I can remember it all later on.

You can decide to stop at any time. If there are any questions that you do not want to answer then you do not have to.

Everything said in our meeting will be kept confidential, unless you are at risk. I will not use your real name when I tell other people about my research.

How would you like me to tell you about my research? Maybe by letter, email, telephone conversation, or a different way? You can think about this now and tell me later.

If you would like to take part in my research, please can you tell _____so that they can tell me?

Best wishes, *Imogen*

UEL Stratford Campus, Water Lane, Stratford. E15 4LZ
EPS Address removed
ECC | **telephone:** (removed) | **extension:** # | **email:** **imogen@ removed**

Pupil's Consent Form:

My name is _____

1) **I have read the letter about this research and have my own copy**

Yes   No   Not sure

2) **I understand what is going to happen and what we will talk about**

Yes   No   Not sure

3) **I understand that what I say will be recorded and kept in a safe place**

Yes   No   Not sure

4) **I understand that my name and personal information will be removed**

Yes   No   Not sure

5) **I understand that I can stop whenever I want to**

Yes   No   Not sure

Today's date is _____

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

To the Parents/Carers of _____

My name is Imogen Howarth and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my second year of doctoral study at the University of East London. I am interested in finding out what children think about before, during and after they have met with a professional visitor at school. Examples of such visitors might include a Specialist Teacher, or an Educational Psychologist.

I am conducting research into how children can be helped to explain their views. Essex Educational Psychology Service has created a questionnaire to ask children about their views. I would like to see how this can be used with a range of children, and what, if anything needs to be changed to improve future practice.

The Head Teacher of your child's school has kindly agreed to help with my research. This research is entirely separate and distinct from the educational support that your child receives. My role is as a researcher, and there is no connection between the involvement of the Educational Psychologist with your child and their participation in my research. It will involve your child working through the questionnaire in school at a time that is convenient for them. They can be helped by a Learning Support Assistant if they prefer this.

Afterwards, I will talk with them about how they found the questionnaire to use. The short session will be video-recorded. I will be observing and talking to many different children in exactly the same way, to try and establish what works well about the questionnaire, and how it might be improved. I have a separate letter for (child's name) to explain this to them.

At any time either you or your child can withdraw your consent for this research without needing to provide any reason and there is no disadvantage in choosing to withdraw. In such an instance I reserve the right to use your anonymised data in the write-up of the study and any further analysis that may be conducted. All the information that I gather will be kept confidential and securely stored. No names or other means of identification will be included when I write up the research.

At the end of this first stage I will summarise all the information from all the children and Learning Support Assistants who have taken part. I will share this with you and your child if you would like me to. I can do this by email, telephone or letter, whichever you prefer.

When you have had time to consider this invitation to participate, I will send you a consent form. <u>I need you to sign this before I can undertake any research with your child.</u> You can contact me by email or telephone if this is an easier way for you to give consent, or if you would like more information. I will be very happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Consent to Participate in Research Involving the Use of Human Participants

An exploration of the ways in which children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) can be enabled to express views on what it was like to meet an Educational Psychologist

I have read the letter relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I/my child will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my/my child's involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. Supervisors and examiners will be able to read extracts from the interviews which are completely anonymised. It has been explained to me what will happen to the data once the research has been completed.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study, which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data in the write-up of the study and in any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):
        ....

Participant's signature:
        ....

PARENT/CARER CONSENT (For pupils)

I give/do not give (please circle) my consent for (TEP) to work with _____

Name   _____Signature _____

Today's date   _____

Researcher's name: Imogen Howarth

Researcher's signature: .... Date: ....

Consent to Participate in a Research Study:

Assisting _____ to give their views

My name is Imogen Howarth and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my second year of doctoral study at the University of East London. I am interested in finding out what children think about before, during and after they have met with a professional visitor at school. Examples of such visitors might include a Specialist Teacher, or an Educational Psychologist.

I am conducting research into how children can be helped to explain their views. Essex Educational Psychology Service has created a questionnaire to ask children about their views. I would like to see how this can be used with a range of children, and what, if anything needs to be changed to improve future practice.

Your school have kindly agreed to help me with my research. This research is entirely separate and distinct from the educational support that the pupil receives. My role is as a researcher, and there is no connection between the involvement of the Educational Psychologist with the pupil and their participation in my research.   It will involve observing you help the pupil/s named above to give their views on meeting the EP by using the questionnaire. We will have a short discussion afterwards about how you both found it to use.

I will be observing and talking to many different children in exactly the same way, to find out more about how their views are listened to, and acted upon. The session will be video-recorded. I have separate letters for pupils to explain this to them. At any time either you or the pupil/s named above can withdraw your consent for this research without needing to provide any reason and there is no disadvantage in choosing to withdraw. All the information that I gather will be kept confidential and securely stored. No names or other means of identification will be included when I write up the research.

When you have had time to consider this invitation to participate, I will send you a consent form. You can contact me by email or telephone if this is an easier way for you to give consent, or if you would like more information. I will be very happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Imogen Howarth (BSc. Psychology; MEd. Autism)
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Telephone: removed   Email: removed

<mark>Anonymised Name</mark>:   DoB/ Yr Group ☐   Gender: M/F   Ethnicity:

NC Levels: Speech and Language: Writing: Reading:

Provision currently received   SA/SA+/SSEN

Who was their visitor? (Title / Name)

When was the visit?   Today's Date:

EPQ: 'What is it like to meet with a Psychologist?'

Script for pupil and LSA interview:

Before EPQ

- Hello (*child's name*). Who did you bring with you today? (*LSA's name*).
- My name is Imogen. I am talking to lots of children to listen to what they think of meeting with a *psychologist (Specialist Teacher etc.).*
- I sent you a letter about today (go through letter). If you are happy to take part in my research then please can you both sign these consent forms (go through consent form)
- Today I will be with you for about 30 minutes. In the first part you will be asked a few questions about your visit from **EP Name**
- (*LSA*) can help you whenever you need it.
- I will not talk to you as you answer this first set of questions.
- (to LSA) Please submit **EP Name/CT/SENCo etc** as necessary
- Afterwards I will talk to both of you about what you thought of the questions.

(Check all is ok, any questions that pupil or LSA have before start? Turn vid on)

After EPQ

- Thank you. Your answers were very helpful.
- Now I would like to talk to you about being asked those questions, and your ideas to make them easier.
- Is it still ok for us to talk about that?

(Reiterate confidentiality, anonymity and freedom to finish this interview at any point)

Qn:	Anon:	Obs:
1	Whose idea was it for you to meet with **X?**	
2	Why did you meet with **X**?	
3	Who explained **X's** job to you?	
4	What were the most helpful things about meeting with **X**?	
5	What else might you have liked **EP Name** to do to help?	
6	Has your CT, SENCO or **EP Name** talked with you about what the plan is now to help you?	
7	Do you think meeting **EP Name** will help you to: ECM	
8	Is there anything else you'd like to say about meeting with **EP Name**?	
9	What did you like or not like about this survey?	

Qn:	Anon:			
A	Was it easy to remember what you did with **EP Name?**	Yes	No	Other
Ai	Are we in the same room now? Does that make it easier to remember?	Yes	No	Other
Aii	How many days after meeting **EP Name** should we have met?	Day	Week	Other
B	What could help you to remember meeting **X**?	Photo	Pictures	Other
D	What is the best way to answer questions? **Draw sketch?**	Paper	PC	Other
E	Which question/s would you change? How?	Don't know	Shorter	Tick box format?
F	Did you like to be asked about your meeting with **EP Name?**	Yes	No	Other
H	Who would <u>you</u> choose to help you?	Staff	Friend	Other
Ji	How could adults make the meeting easier for you to understand: **Before** it happens?	Talk to:	When	Resource:
Jii	**After** it has finished?	Talk to:	When	Resource?
Ki	Describe to me what will happen **next?**			
Kii	What decisions have you talked about in school? Who listened? What happened afterwards?			
L	If an adult wants to find out about how you feel about something in school, do they usually ask you, or ask (*LSA*)?	Me	LSA/TA	Other:
M	Can you think of when this happened today?	Yes	No	Other:
PS	Thank you very much for your help today. Is there anything else that you wished I had asked you?	Yes	No	Other:
	Do you have any other questions?	Yes	No	Other:

(Explanation of what will happen next, how they can contact me, how I will get back in touch with them)

Stage 1 Transcript Date: 28/3/12   Time: 09:30   Name: Matilda

P=Pupil; R=Researcher; A=Assistant; J=EP

↑= intonation; … = pause; *italics* = structured question

Line	Notes	Transcript	Notes
1)		A: *Whose idea was it for you to meet with J?* Do you remember? … Are you not sure? ↑	
2)		P: Not sure	
3)	A automatically has taken pencil and completes form	A: You're not sure, ok.	
4)		A: *Who explained to you what J's job was?*	
5)		P: Erm, well we had to do like these words…(gestures a 4x4 grid/square on table)...like that	Misunderstands Qn
6)	A uses the pupil's name to cue her back in	A: Did somebody explain to you what J's job was (P name)?	A: attempts to break down qn
7)		P: …erm	
8)	This is a different qn – A trying to simplify for P	A: …why you were meeting with J?	A: attempts to break down qn again
9)		P: …erm, we did some letters…	Misunderstands Qn
10)	A notes this down	A: did you? ↑	A: abandons qn
11)		P: uh hum	
12)	Has added 'what do you think' to beginning of sentence. Pupil drums fingers on face –first sign of disengagement with task?	A: lots of words and lots of reading. *What do you think were the most helpful things for you, about meeting with J?*	P is misunderstanding 'helpful'. Is it possible to understand this meaning? It is a subjective term, context bound, used by adults.

Line	Notes	Transcript	Notes
13)		P: Erm…erm…I liked the games	
14)	Has TA picked up on pupil NV signals? A smiles at the next qn – perhaps sensing it is too complex? Adds 'you' to end of question	A: You liked the games (nods approvingly). Ok, good girl. You're doing really well. *What else might you have liked J to do to help you?*	A:Gives reassurance
15)		P: …erm…(drums fingers on face)…she helps me with … letters.	As before, this qn requires a particular understanding of 'help' that the pupil is unlikely to have.
16)		A: She..she helps you with your letters (writes this down) *Has Mrs S, or Mrs C, or J talked to you about what the plan in now to help you…?*	
17)		P: …er…	
18)		A: …so what help you might be getting	
19)	Pupil drumming fingers against face, seems distracted. Unsure she has heard question correctly.	P: …erm...happy?...	
20)	Interprets this for P, as if to validate her answer.	A: You feel very happy?	
21)		P: Mmm	
22)		A: Ok, *do you think that meeting J will help you to be happier?* ⬆ You've just answered that haven't ya? Do you think meeting J will help you to be happier?	
23)	Is reengaged by A's tone of voice	P: Erm, yeah (nods)	I want to ask 'why'? Does pupil really understand?
24)		*A: Do you think that meeting J*	

Line	Notes	Transcript	Notes
		will help you to learn better?	
25)	A notes down. (Hasn't read out yes/not sure/no options for P yet)	P: (nods)	Again, how? Why?
26)		A: *Enjoy school more?* ⬆	
27)	P shifts position in seat	P: Yea	
28)	Adapts question	A: How about *getting on better with others…*getting on better with other people in your class?	
29)	Supporting head in hand, shifting in seat.	P: (nods) mmm	
30)		A: *Better help?* ⬆	
31)		P: mm hmm	
32)	Recaps question	A: Do you think meeting with J will help you to *feel safer*?	
33)		P: Yea (nods head enthusiastically)	
34)	P & A in tune with each other – as A's intonation falls, P's responses shorten	A: Do you think meeting with J will help you to *have a better life*?	Pupil hasn't demonstrated understanding of these qns, only appears to reflect A's
35)		P: mm hmm (nods)	
36)	P reaches over to look at questionnaire	A: Good girl, well done, you're doing really well. *Is there anything else that you'd like to say about your meeting with J?*	Reassurance
37)		P: No (shakes head)	
38)	Changes 'survey' to 'questions'	A: *What did you like, or not like, about these questions* (A gestures to questions on paper)	Question is very broad. Needs breaking down.
39)		P: Er….erm…I liked them all	
40)		A: You liked the questions…you didn't mind?	Qualifying 'like' in a particular way. As antonym of 'mind'
41)		P: (nods) uh huh	
42)		R: ok?	
43)	P lifts up questionnaire to have her own look at it	A: Thank you so much (pupil's name)! ⬆	

Appendix 7: Stage One: Example of Children's Responses to the EPQ (Full responses are provided on the attached disc)

Questions for Data Set A: Pupil's response to qnnr	1) Whose idea was it for you to meet with the Psychologist?	1) TA Reword/ Assist	2) Why did you meet with the Psychologist?	2) TA Reword/ Assist	3) Who explained the Psychologist's job to you?	3) TA Reword/ Assist	4) What were the most helpful things about meeting with the Psychologist?	4) TA Reword/ Assist	5) What else might you have liked the Psychologist to do to help?	5) TA Reword/ Assist	6) Has your Teacher, SENCO or the Psychologist talked with you about what the plan is now to help you?	6) TA Reword/ Assist
Pupil												
John	Explains the procedure of one part of assessment	Repeats Qn	So I can learn stuff	Extends Qn, completes writing	Nobody	_	She made me a cup of tea	Summarises pupil's responses back to him	"She gave me a biscuit".."I don't know what it means"	Explains Qn	Pass	_
Paul	SENCo	Pupil: "Do I have to do ALL of it?"	Because she wanted to talk to you…because if you're good at reading, or good at cards"	TA asks if EP came to visit pupil as well. Pupil agrees, but says "She talked to you first".	No, nobody told me	Did anyone tell you what she did?	To talk to us…" Pupil unable to answer question - just shakes his head	What helped you? Did it help you? How did it help you?	"If I'm stuck on a word she can help me and I can put my hand up"	TA repeats qn in two parts. What else might X have done to help? To help *you*?	Reads question laboriously. "Dunno. "	
Georgia	EP			To do some work	-	Shakes head	"No-one explained this to you?"	Doing some work ..playing games	You liked doing those?	Do some words and do some colouring	You like colouring don't you?	P doesn't understand question…stays silent. TA repeats. P answers SENCo. Appears just to choose from the list.	Do you understand that question? It was a long one, wasn't it

Appendix 8   Stage One Content Analysis, excerpt.

(Full ten-page analysis is provided on the attached disc)

Taxonomy of current issues • Subthemes	Behavioural / Situational Observations	Transcription / Supporting Evidence	Reflections
Misunderstanding questions • Vocab too difficult	A rewords, uses voice inflection and pupil's name to assist.	PAUL, Q9 What did you like or not like about this survey? P: "What did you like or not like about the, this…sur..survery?" A: "This is a survey [Paul]" (Gestures to all questions). "Did you like it, or did you not like it?"	The rewording of the question by the TA loses its original meaning.
	A: automatically fills in questionnaire for pupil. A: senses child unable to answer question and quickly moves on.	S11.2, Q4 What were the most helpful things about meeting with the Psychologist? P: ummm A: What did (EP) do to make you think oh, this is a good idea, we could try that? What did she do? Can you remember? Did she give you any ideas about things that we could do in school together…things like that? P: Hmmm… (pupil looks away, sucks hand) A: Shall we forget that one and come back to that	P reads the question but seems to make no meaning of it. When reworded for her this doesn't appear to help. Question appears far too abstract. Pupil happier to move on. Pupil seems to understand the question this time, but still not able to answer it in any detail. Processing time and context an issue.

Taxonomy of current issues • **Subthemes**	Behavioural / Situational Observations	Transcription / Supporting Evidence	Reflections
	Later, in response to Q9, Pupil says "that one was a bit hard" points to Q4.	one in a minute? P: Yes A: Yes, forget that one. We'll come back to that. (Later) A: Would you like to try number 4 again? What were the most helpful things about meeting with (EP)? P: Everything	
• Not understanding instructions	Random selection, influenced selection or no selection for the multiple choice questions	S11.2 Q7 Do you think meeting the EP will help you to… • be *happier*? A: (adds) do you *think*? P: Yes • learn *better*? A: Yes, not sure or no? P: Yes • enjoy school more? P:Not sure A: you're not sure… • get on better with *others*? P:Yes • get better *help*?	Italics signal rising inflection of TA's voice. Corresponds directly to pupil's answers: tone up = positive answer; tone flat = not sure

Checklist of areas for EPs to emphasise when meeting with a child

☐   Name and description of role as Educational Psychologist

☐   The reason for today's meeting

☐   The time it will finish / how long it is likely to be

☐   A description of the activities / topics of discussion

☐   What sort of information will this create?

☐   How will the information be used?

☐   What will happen next?

☐   Does the child have any questions for the Educational Psychologist?

☐   How has the Educational Psychologist checked the child understands?

Consent to Participate in a Focus Group

Dear Colleague

As you are perhaps aware my current research interest is in exploring children's views of the Statutory Assessment process and in particular their meeting with an Educational Psychologist (EP). To help pupils provide this information EPs in Essex have already created a questionnaire which I have piloted with a small group of children who have additional needs in speech, language and communication. I intend talking multiple perspectives on this issue and therefore invite you to participate in a small focus group.

The purpose of this group is to consider the type of information and format that would be most useful to you as EPs. It allows me to share the children's responses and suggestions. I am interested in what would be most helpful to you and how you would improve future practice in involving children in the process and outcomes of their Statutory Assessment?

The short session will be video-recorded. At any time either you can withdraw your consent for this research without needing to provide any reason and there is no disadvantage in choosing to withdraw. In such an instance I reserve the right to use your anonymised data in the write-up of the study and any further analysis that may be conducted. All the information that I gather will be kept confidential and securely stored. No names or other means of identification will be included when I write up the research.

At the end of this stage of my research I will synthesise all the information from the focus group, the responses to the pilot and a literature search of best practice in other EPSs. I will share this with you if you would like me to. I can do this by email, telephone or letter, whichever you prefer.

When you have had time to consider this invitation to participate, I will give you a consent form. <u>I need you to sign this before you can take part in the focus group.</u> Please contact me if you would like more information. I will be very happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Consent to Participate in Research Involving the Use of Human Participants

An exploration of the ways in which children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) can be enabled to express views on what it was like to meet an Educational Psychologist

I have read the letter relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. Supervisors and examiners will be able to read extracts from the focus group transcript which are completely anonymised. It has been explained to me what will happen to the data once the research has been completed.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study, which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data in the write-up of the study and in any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):   ....

Participant's signature: ....

Researcher's name: Imogen Howarth

Researcher's signature: .... Date: ....

Appendix 11   Stage Two: Facilitator questions

<u>Main purpose:</u> To explore with EPs the information that would be most helpful to them of children's experiences of Statutory Assessment. What information needs to be sought, for whom, and with what direction/ potential use?

<u>Materials</u>
- Video camera, new tape. To be positioned behind facilitator such that camera is mounted high (unobtrusive) but group are all facing towards facilitator. Group are seated so as to be facing camera where possible, in a circle; Refreshments (nothing crinkly/crunchy as this may affect the recording); Pens and paper

<u>Intro and Roles</u>
- Offering thanks, attending to participants' comfort, e.g. refreshments. Are there any questions?
- Restating the aim of the discussion: seeking your comments, explanations, experience and ideas)
- Recap of research area
- Consent forms, anonymity, group confidentiality
- Recording and notes. Turn take to assist the recording process.

<u>Ice-breaker – ease inhibitions of speaking on camera</u>
- (i) what is your favourite type of weather and why? (ii) share one thing that you enjoy about your work.

<u>Structure</u>
1) **Issues directly related to the role of EPs:**
    o What is your current experience of a child's input to Statutory Assessment?
        - Before; During; Afterwards
    o What information would you like to know about the child's experience of their meeting with you?
        - Items on a checklist?
    o What do you find exciting or interesting about hearing children's views on SA?
2) **Issues relating to the evaluation of children's views:**
    o What do you think the best way to get this data would be?
    o How might it impact on your practice?
    o How would it be useful for EPs' CPD across the EPS?
3) **Issues relating to the questionnaire:**
    o A summary of the Problems, Positives and Possibilities sheet
    o Which particular ideas would you want to implement?

<u>General</u>
- Facilitator provides summary of main issues during the interview
- Is there anything else we should have discussed?
- Evaluation of session: how might a future focus group be improved?
- Reiterating thanks and confidentiality
- When to feedback – preferred method?

Appendix 12   Stage Two: Excerpt Transcript of the Focus Group

(Full ten-page transcript is provided on the attached disc)

Date: 27/6/12   Time: 13:30   Name: Focus Group

M, **Ja, S, Ji, Jo** = Participants; **R**=Researcher

Line	Notes (Video location markers; non-verbal communication)	Transcript	Coding / Reflections
1)	Intro – issues of consent, anonymity, group confidentiality (12062901)	(*following ice-breaker questions*) **R:** Everyone's had a go at talking, and has talked on film, and you are all ok? *M, Ja, S, Ji, Jo nod and smile* **R:** Lovely. So the first question I have for you is… …and rather than directing your answers at me, if you want to jump in … we're not going around the room anymore (*gestures clockwise*) so please do answer one another …	Group appear relaxed.
2)	Qualifiers provided	**R: What is your current experience of a child's input to their Statutory Assessment?** • I need you to think about before, during and afterwards. • What is your experience of, or feeling about what happens…anything you want to say about that at all.	
3)	03:22 *Jo also nodding*	**S:** I think that's quite difficult, I think it depends very much on how much the parents have talked to the child, and how much the child's picked up from the parents about their anxiety. Erm, so it varies tremendously from parents who've really indoctrinated their child to think that they've got a lot of problems, to parents that really haven't mentioned much about it and have kept it to themselves.	Parental involvement Preparation Parental anxiety

Line	Notes (Video location markers; non-verbal communication)	Transcript	Coding / Reflections
4)		**R:** does anyone else have anything to add?	R Facilitates
5)	03:31 *Gestures left to right at word 'process'* *Jo and Ji both nodding.* 03:34 *Jo nodding.*	**Ja:** hmmm, I guess my input…it depends what you mean by input. I suppose if you're thinking about how much knowledge they have about the process, and how much knowledge they have about their own needs, and what they want to happen to them throughout that process…then I've found that they often don't have much knowledge or understanding of it at all…in my experience. I do ask them about it…and say do they know why I'm there…what this is all about and has anybody explained it to them? More than likely they say no (laughs).	Child's knowledge of process Child's u/standing Preparation Child's u/standing
6)	04:02	Erm, sometimes the older children I think tend to know a bit more about it than the younger ones do.	Age
7)	04:18	Erm I've certainly found children in Key Stage one tend to not really know at all what's going on, and who all the people are and why they're going to see different people and what it's all about.	Age U/standing Role of EP
8)	05:11	They sometimes know what they find difficult and what they find easy to do at school but they don't really have a full understanding of their needs and difficulties. Whereas some of the older children perhaps…end of Key Stage two and certainly at secondary level, they know more about what they want don't they I think, well, in my experience they do – and often it's been explained to them and they know a little bit about what's going on, and why they need to have this process, and what it's going to result in and that they might be getting more help at the end of it.	Age Level of u/standing
9)	05:20	**S:** it also depends on the nature of their difficulty doesn't it	Nature of difficulty
10)	05:21	**Ja:** it does, yes	

Appendix 13   Stage Two: Excerpt thematic analysis (Main Themes and Subthemes)

(Full twelve-page analysis is provided on the attached disc)

Preparation	Main: What had been explained to the child before meeting the EP? Sub: How is this explanation affected by others' understanding, discourse or understanding, especially of parents?		
"I think it depends very much on how much the parents have talked to the child, and how much the child's picked up from the parents about their anxiety." (Line 3 – 03:22)	"it varies tremendously from parents who've really indoctrinated their child to think that they've got a lot of problems, to parents that really haven't mentioned much about it and have kept it to themselves." (Line 3 – 03:23)	"do they know why I'm there…what this is all about and has anybody explained it to them? More than likely they say no" (Line 5 – 03:31)	"'…preparation and underlying skills' aren't actually there in the first place, so they can't comment on the impact of an EP if they didn't understand what an EP was or why they were there in the first place. They haven't got any understanding of the Statutory Assessment process" (Line 196 – 5/06:38)
"I don't really think that unless the parents have explained it that they have any understanding generally" (Line 33 – 2/00:36)	"I think that they tend to pick up on the fact that, that they need a little bit of extra help with certain things and that perhaps I might be there to help to do that in some way" (Line 33 -2/00:42)	"I think it's quite simplistic and it can be a little bit misleading. I think it depends on the parents' understanding doesn't it? Of the process as well…as to whether they fully understood what happened…and how they explain it to their child" (Line 37 – 2/01:53)	I think that the ones that know about it are the older children, in my experience, and the ones whose parents have explained. 'Cos they'll say to me oh yes, 'my mum said that you'd be coming to see me today', and then I might pursue that with 'has your mum explained what's happening and what it's all about?' 'oh yes, you know, she said this or she said that'…or no, they haven't … (Line 35 –2/ 01:48)

Child variables	Age, CD/SCLN, level of understanding, any other difficulties, intrinsic motivation		
"how much knowledge they have about the process, and how much knowledge they have about their own needs, and what they want to happen to them throughout that process…then I've found that they often don't have much knowledge or understanding of it at all…in my experience" (Line 5 – 03:34)	"sometimes the older children I think tend to know a bit more about it than the younger ones do" (Line 6 – 04:02) "children in Key Stage one tend to not really know at all what's going on, and who all the people are and why they're going to see different people and what it's all about." (Line 7 – 04:18)	"the older children perhaps…end of Key Stage two and certainly at secondary level, they know more about what they want don't they I think, well, in my experience they do – and often it's been explained to them and they know a little bit about what's going on, and why they need to have this process, and what it's going to result in and that they might be getting more help at the end of it" (Line 8 – 05:11)	"it also depends on the nature of their difficulty" (Line 9 – 05:20) "some children with quite severe difficulties haven't got the understanding, have they." (Line 11- 05:26) "if they've got Speech and Language difficulties, I think they can find it hard to communicate what they think about their own needs and their own difficulties" (Line 12 – 05:40)
"I would often do that (referring to areas on checklist) , but I wouldn't necessarily always, it would very much depend on the child, the age, and whatever. You know, if it's a child that's got er, is quite hyperactive and so on – you might want to get straight into doing something, you know, rather than sit and listen and….to those sorts of questions" (Line 84 – 3/01:12)	"I have used those words (EP) with older children, especially if I know they've seen one before… but with little ones it doesn't mean anything to them anyway, so I don't tend to use my role" (Line 74 – 2/09:43) "I think it (getting the child's views) depends on the age of the child – I think that's quite important. As what will work for younger ones will not necessarily be appropriate for younger ones and vice-versa" (Line 96 – 3/04:34)	"I don't think they have a full understanding of the whole process and what it means unless they're older and it's been explained to them." (Line 33 – 3/00:42) "They haven't got any understanding of the Statutory Assessment process, or they've got no previous experience of giving their opinion 'cos these are children who are marginalised in the first place." (Line 196 – 5/06:38)	"sometimes if they don't have perhaps um the communication skills generally or the vocabulary or the understanding about what's going on then that's going to limit what they're able to understand and explain…and what the process is all about" (Line 12 – 05:40)

"…the pupil perceives that they're missing out on something, or the questionnaire just looks too daunting, or they're not really engaged by reading tasks in the first place." (Line 198 – 5/07:28)	"Would they say something else to that independent person they wouldn't have told the EP about the EP, or vice versa? Depending on what level's appropriate for their communication needs and understanding." (Line 137 - 4/02:01)	"…for example vocabulary's too difficult, or they only hear the key words because they have a receptive difficulty themselves." (Line 196 – 5/06:38)	"The next theme was 'impact of communication and other difficulties' so it might just be that they need a lot longer processing time, or they need reassurance, they need positive feedback constantly and that wasn't / isn't provided in the current format of the questionnaire." (Line 197 – 5/07:03)
EP constraints	**Reduction in time spent with pupil and lack of follow up, school's priorities**		
"we've got three days to gather and write this information… practically, sometimes we're having to do it in less time than that because we're squeezing other things in" (Line 14 – 06:12)	"other people have gathered the young person's views… some of it is logistical and opportunistic." (Line 14 – 06:31)	"How much priority (can) you give to that (given the competing priorities)" (Line 14 – 06:40) "the actual child's input themselves therefore is reduced" (Line 17 – 07:12)	"(after the assessment) we really don't see them at that point. Do we? I mean the next…very often … the next time we would be involved is at Year five at the Annual Review" (Line 20 – 07:39)
"I think, because of the time constraints, I think it's difficult to necessarily do two visits in a school" (Line 127 – 4/00:15)		"you just don't get back into the schools enough to find out how the child felt at all? " "Generally, yeah" (Line 25 – 08:31)	"although we might be in the school and aware of those youngsters, unless there's special reasons why the school would want us to work with them, we'll be directed somewhere else" (Line 23 – 08:05)

Appendix 14   Stage Two: Initial thematic map
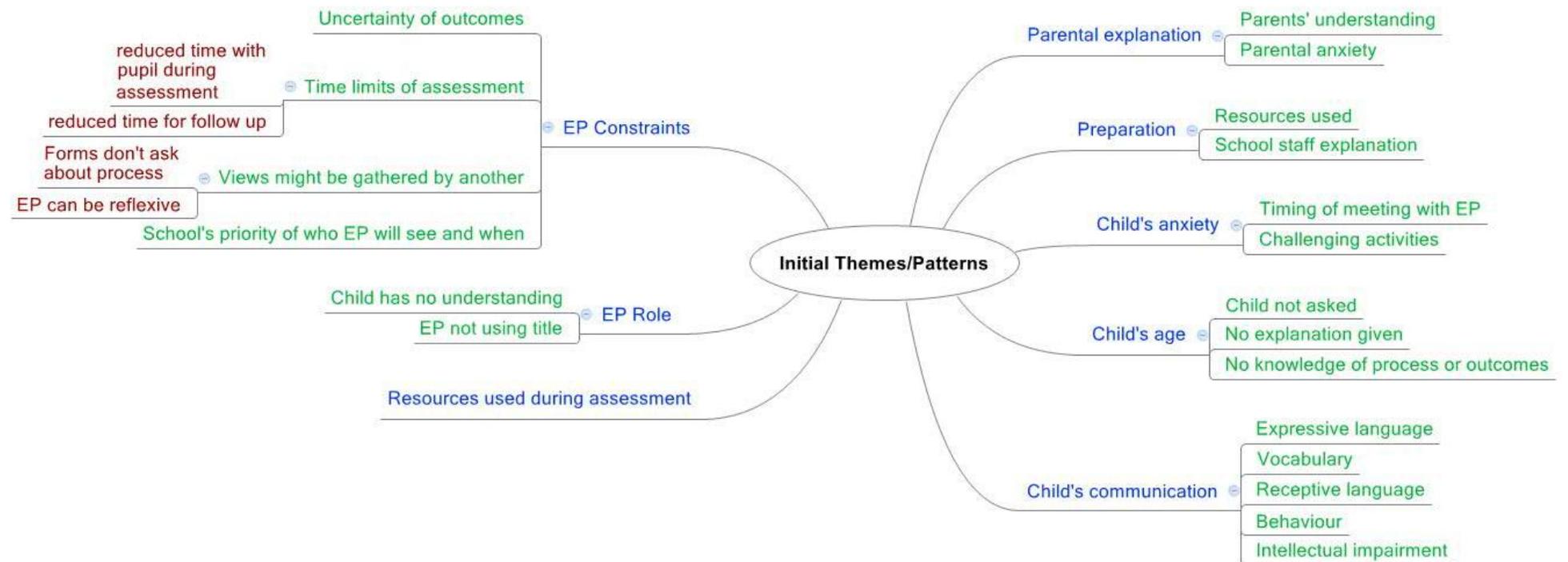
Appendix 15   Stage Three: Criteria for material resource analysis

(Full twenty eight page analysis of all documents is provided on the attached disc)

| **Reference and Description of resource:** *Who is this produced by, for whom? Media?*	Marchant, R., Julyan, A & Jones, M. (2009) *Three Way Street*. Brighton: **Triangle** DVD for a multi-professional audience, especially those whose role requires them to communicate with CYP who find communication challenging.	Lubel, R. & Cass, S (2002) *My Plan*; Lubel, R (2001) *All About the Educational Psychologist* (Junior and Secondary versions) **Barking and Dagenham** Downloadable leaflets. Paper format only.
Purpose or aim of resource: *Does this provide information for the child, parent, staff? Is it to be used for data gathering? Does it aim to facilitate the process?*	Providing a model for three-way communication in which the child is central. Depicts children communicating in a variety of ways: speech, sign, behaviour, body language, eye-gaze, facial expression, gesture, play, art, symbols, non-speech sounds, movement. Aims to improve practice of communicating with a child in the presence of another adult: • Summarising evidence base for three way communication with children • Reflecting on common ways that this is impeded • Demonstrating ways to facilitate communication • Representing children as active agents and communicators	Resulting from a published research project (Lubel and Greaves, 2000), this series of leaflets gives children information on meeting an EP and some structure for expressing likes, dislikes and areas to include in an IEP.

Does it seek to encourage change prior to meeting? *In terms of preparing the child/adult? Solution oriented? Epistemology?*	For the adult, yes, as this is more of a general training tool and for professional reflection. For the child, no. This is unlikely to be watched with a child, though possibly could be in terms of empowerment and role modelling.	Yes, it prepares the child and gives them time to formulate questions. Secondary booklet has 'Questions I want to ask' section. Not overtly solution oriented, just conveying information. Positions EP as collaborative helper
Agency of child: *How is the child encouraged to understand their ability to contribute and be heard?*	The DVD focuses on foregrounding the child's views and maximising their opportunity to input. This is more about the skills of the adult than expectations of the child. Child has a 'Realistic Involvement'.	Describes the EP as interested in what child does/how they learn, but why or how they might express their views isn't mentioned.
Type of questions/ level of language: *Open, multiple -choice, short, differentiated according to age?*	Very responsive to child on the day- reflexive use of questions. Short and prefixed with child's name. Delivered verbally as is the context of the DVD	Child-friendly language with space for child to write/draw. All answers are in sentence format on 'My Plan', no questions asked on the other leaflets.
Visual supports: *Type of graphics, how used? Photos?*	Supports used were very personal to the child – e.g. their symbol-system. Director informed me in a telephone conversation that Triangle staff also use timelines, photos and artwork.	Different line drawings and smiley faces used.

| **Effort and resources necessary to complete/use:** *How much time, support is needed to use this? How independent can child be?*	53 minute DVD, divided into six chapters: planning, starting, engaging child, engaging adult, best practice, closing.	Junior booklet has 20 pages. Designed for interaction between pupil and parent/EP/SENCo etc. Secondary leaflet has seven pages and could be used by pupil. My Plan – five pages but pupil would need considerable help to complete, for example, the names of all those professionals involved.
References to outcomes: *Does the resource make clear what the next steps will be? Who will be involved?*	Yes, the DVD encourages • Checking the child's understanding • Letting the child know what will happen next • Offering the child a direct route to contact the professional • Asking the child for feedback	Yes My Plan describes a meeting of key adults; the Junior and Secondary booklets have a 'Then what happens' section.
Level of Personalisation: *Can the child's name be added? Photos?*	Not to the DVD, but it models the use of bespoke communication.	Space for photo in My Plan. Lots of space to annotate the other booklets.
Motivation, rewards, engagement: *Why would a child or parents use this? Friendly format? Self-explanatory or needs adult interpretation?*	Self-explanatory for professional audience. Colour coded. Chapter referenced. Easy to use.	Useful A5 size booklets. Larger font and reduced text in Junior version. Sequenced and clear explanations given, but no other motivation to complete. Would need adult support unless independent / older child.

Does it encourage pupil to express views? *Exploring and enhancing their understanding? Direct questions? Does it elicit feedback?*	Indirectly as a professional's resource and in encouraging best practice.	Signposts child to ask questions of SENCo and EP but no catch-all 'have you understood this' type questions asked nor feedback elicited.
Internal coherence and validity? *Does it do what it seeks to do?*	N/A	Yes (booklets)– thorough explanation of an EP visit given, as well as outcomes. No (My Plan) – this is designed to explain the assessment and review process to pupils and fully involve them. Instead it provides a structure for them to record preferences and ideas for their IEP. It would need a lot of explanation and adult support to achieve its aim.
What's missing?	EP meets with child mainly on their own, so this is less relevant in that sense.	The child's perspective on why they are meeting an EP. Explicitly stating that the child themselves / their views can make a difference.
Additional ideas and best practice	Meeting the child beforehand and controlling the information that they receive.	Helping child generate questions beforehand. (But not leaving this as a blank list of bullet points – giving it more structure)

Barking and Dagenham LA: *All about the Educational Psychologist* (Junior version)
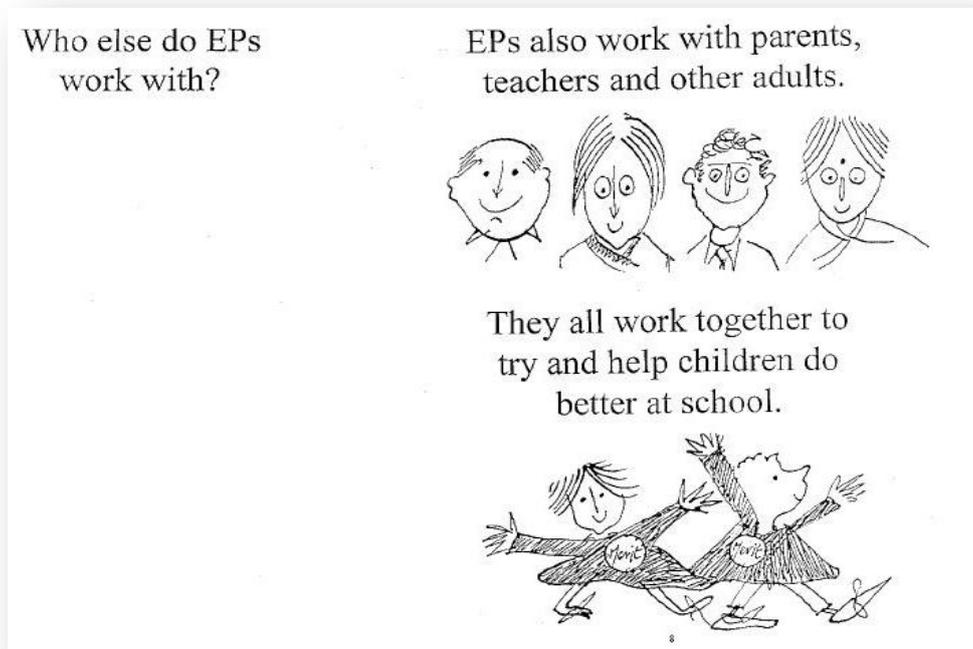
Falkirk EPS: *An Educational Psychologist comes to Our School* (Junior version)
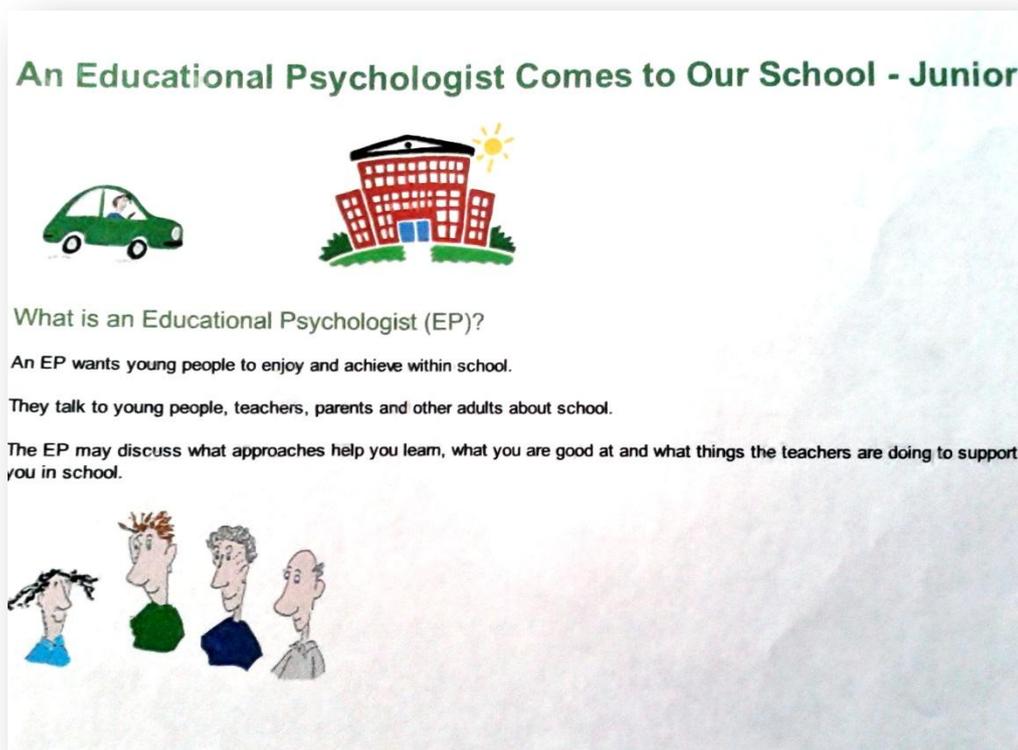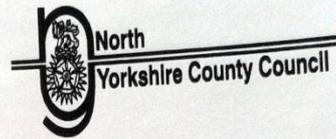
North Yorkshire County Council: *The Pupil's View*

Tick the Faces	Like ☺	Don't mind 😐	Dislike ☹
Numeracy/Maths	☺	😐	☹
Reading	☺	😐	☹
Writing	☺	😐	☹
Science	☺	😐	☹
PE	☺	😐	☹
History	☺	😐	☹
Geography	☺	😐	☹
ICT	☺	😐	☹
Design & Tech	☺	😐	☹
Music	☺	😐	☹
Art	☺	😐	☹
Swimming	☺	😐	☹
RE	☺	😐	☹
	☺	😐	☹

North Yorkshire County Council

THE PUPIL'S VIEW

What I think

and

would like to say

....has

helped me to fill in this form

Signed...

Date.................................

PUPIL PARTICIPATION

Appendix 17   Pupil Information Leaflet (PIL) (Full copy of all pages is appended in 17b)

It could help to think and talk about...

The place where you might meet the EP...

...and which people could be there.

What you and the EP might talk about...

...or what sort of activities you could do together.

How meeting the EP might make you feel...

...and how you could talk about that.

How what you say might help...

...and the sort of changes that could happen.

4

Use this space to draw or write

(?) (??)

What sort of things might happen?

The EP may talk to you about how things are at home and at school. You can tell them about ...ns or activities you really ..., and anything you find ... difficult.

...EP may bring some games ...zzles for you to try. The EP will talk to your ...ers and parents or carers about how things ... change to help you.

...y is what you think important?

...Statutory Assessment is about **you**—what ...need and your future. The EP is very ...ested in listening to what you think.

It is **really important** that you have time to tell the EP how you feel about school and any ideas you have for making things better.

3
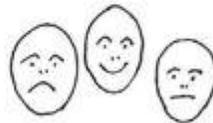
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Appendix 18   MiView screens

(Please see attached disc for all twenty screens)
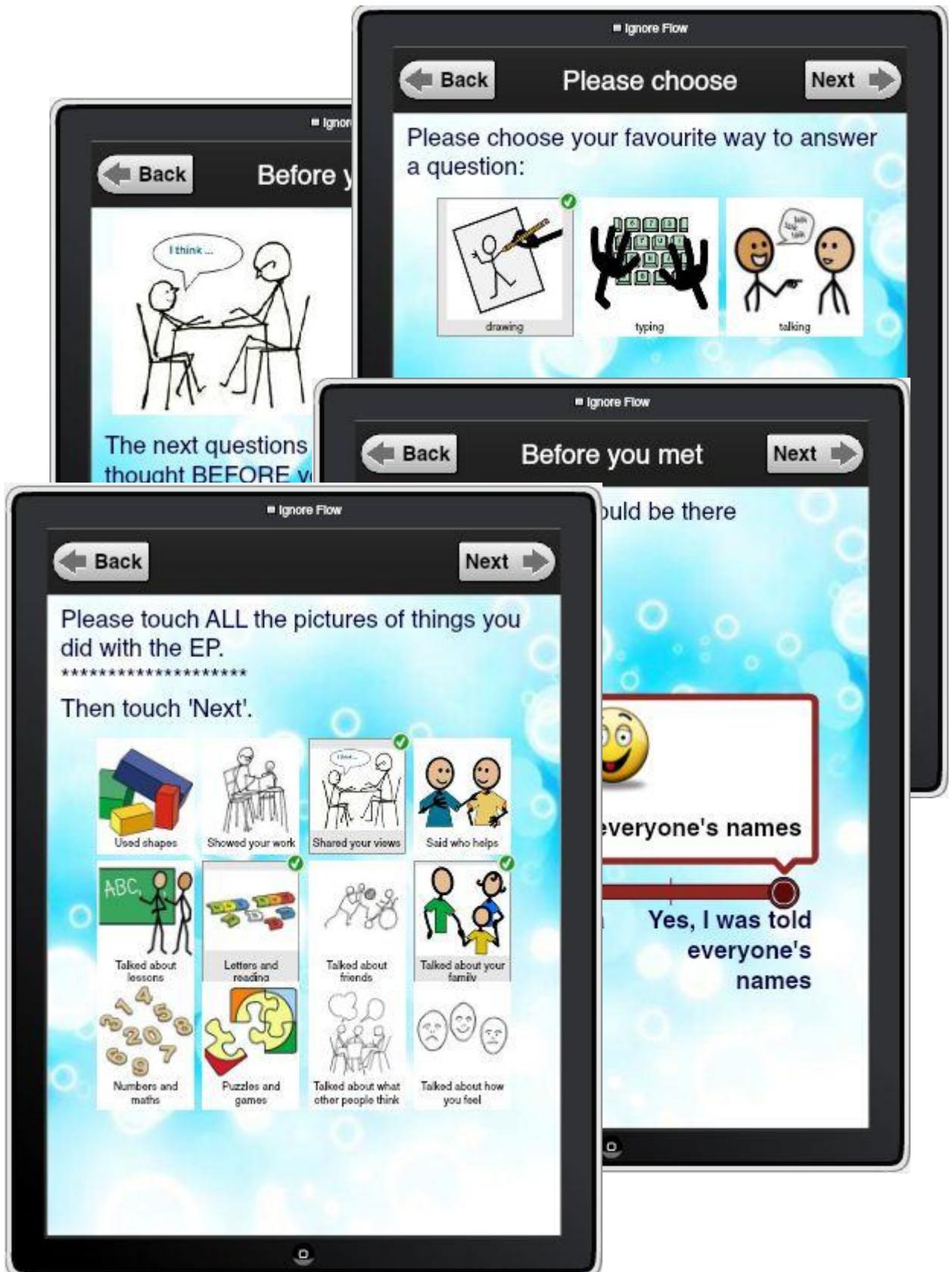
Appendix 19   Stage Four: Participant forms

Essex County Council

To: <???>

Our ref: Research invitation
Date: <???>

Dear <Sir / Madam>

As part of the Educational Psychology Service's commitment to listening to feedback from parents and children, research is being undertaken into different ways of asking children their views. A researcher is working with children to find ways of helping them express their views about statutory assessment. She would be delighted to work with your child in school, a few days after their meeting with the Educational Psychologist.

Taking part would involve your child working through a very short questionnaire on an iPad, helped by a Teaching Assistant. Afterwards they will talk with the researcher about how they found it to use. The researcher will be observing and talking to many different children to improve the way in which children's voices and opinions can be heard.

The researcher has requested that you are sent a letter from your child's school, to remind you of this research nearer the time that the statutory assessment takes place. She will then give you more information and ask for your consent. Participation is entirely voluntary and distinct from the educational support that your child receives. There is no connection between the involvement of the Educational Psychologist with your child and their participation in this research.

In the meantime, a booklet is enclosed for you to share with your child. It helps explain the meeting with an Educational Psychologist. It is designed to give your child accurate information using simple language. The purpose of this is to help your child have a better understanding of what a statutory assessment is and how it might help them. There are also some useful telephone numbers on the last page if you have any questions.

With kind regards,

<Your name>
<Job title>

Enquiries: Imogen Howarth (Researcher)
Telephone: removed
Email: removed

Dear (SENCo/ Head),

My name is Imogen Howarth and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my second year of doctoral study at the University of East London. I am interested in finding out what children think about before, during and after they have met with an Educational Psychologist.

I am conducting research into how children, especially those with additional communicational needs, can be helped to explain their views, and I have created an enabling resource to assist them. I would like to see how this can be implemented with a range of children, and what, if anything needs to be changed to improve future practice

I am writing to ask if your school would consider participating in this research. It would involve individual observations of children who have recently met with an Educational Psychologist. These pupils would be selected as they have a communication difficulty, though this need not necessarily be their primary need.

I will be observing and talking to many different children (with support from Learning Support Assistants if required) in different schools in exactly the same way. The short sessions will be audio-recorded. I have a separate letter for each identified child and their parents/carers for you to send out which explains this to them. At any time they are free to withdraw their consent for this research. All the information that I gather will be kept confidential and securely stored. No names or other means of identification will be included when I write up the research. Those involved at each stage of my research are welcome to a summary of findings, shared through email, telephone or letter, whichever you prefer.

If you feel able to assist me then <u>please contact me at your earliest convenience</u>. I will be very happy to answer any questions that you may have and give you further details of the research.

Yours sincerely,

Consent to Participate in Research Involving the Use of Human Participants

An exploration of the ways in which children with communication difficulties can be enabled to express views on their experience of meeting an Educational Psychologist for statutory assessment.

I have read the letter relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I/my child will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my/my child's involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. Supervisors and examiners will be able to read extracts from the interviews which are completely anonymised. It has been explained to me what will happen to the data once the research has been completed.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study, which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data in the write-up of the study and in any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Participant's name (**For pupil or LSA**): ....

Participant's signature: (**For LSA**) ....

PARENT/CARER CONSENT (For pupils)

I give/do not give (please circle) my consent for Imogen Howarth to work with _____

Name   _____   **Signature** _____

Today's date _____

Researcher's name: Imogen Howarth

Researcher's signature: ....   Date: ....

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE WITHIN TWO DAYS.

Stage 4/ parent/carer/LSA /consent form

Reference: Consent to participate in a research study

Dear <Parent/ Carer name>

You may remember that you received a letter a few weeks ago inviting your child to take part in research into different ways of asking children their views. You were also sent a leaflet in simpler language to share with your child. A researcher is working with children to find ways of helping them express their views about statutory assessment. She would be delighted to work with your child in school, a few days after their meeting with the Educational Psychologist.

Our school have agreed to help with this valuable research. It would involve your child working through a very short questionnaire on an iPad, helped by a Learning Support Assistant. The session would take place at a convenient time for your child and be video-recorded. Afterwards your child and the researcher would talk about what your child remembers of the statutory assessment and their opinions. The researcher will be observing and talking to many different children to improve the way in which children's voices and opinions can be heard. A separate letter is enclosed to explain this research to your child.

Taking part is entirely voluntary. Either you or your child can withdraw your consent for this research at any time. You do not need to provide any reason. There is no disadvantage in choosing to withdraw and the research is distinct from the educational support that your child receives. There is no connection between the involvement of the Educational Psychologist with your child and their participation in this research.

All the data gathered is kept confidential and securely stored. No names or other means of identification will be included in writing up the research. This will form part of the researcher's doctoral thesis for the University of East London. The researcher reserves the right to use all anonymised data in the write-up of the study and any further analysis that may be conducted.

At the end of the research all the information from all the children and Learning Support Assistants who have taken part will be summarised. The results can be shared with you and your child if you would like this, via email, telephone or letter, whichever you prefer.

A consent form is attached <u>which you need to sign and return before the researcher can undertake any research with your child.</u> Please return the form to the School Office.

With kind regards,

<Your name>
<Job title>

Consent to Participate in a Research Study (LSAs)

My name is Imogen Howarth and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my second year of doctoral study at the University of East London. I am interested in finding out what children think about before, during and after they have met with an Educational Psychologist.

I am conducting research into how children can be helped to explain their views, and I have created an iPad resource to assist them. I would like to see how this can be used with a range of children, and what, if anything needs to be changed to improve future practice.

Your school have kindly agreed to help me with my research. This research is entirely separate and distinct from the educational support that the pupil receives. My role is as a researcher, and there is no connection between the involvement of the Educational Psychologist with the pupil and their participation in my research.   It will involve observing you help a pupil to give their views on meeting the EP by using the enabling resource. We will have a short discussion afterwards about how you both found it to use.

I will be observing and talking to many different children in exactly the same way, to find out more about how their views are listened to, and acted upon. The session will be videoed. I have a separate letter to explain this to the pupil. At any time either you or the pupil can withdraw your consent for this research without needing to provide any reason and there is no disadvantage in choosing to withdraw. All the information that I gather will be kept confidential and securely stored. No names or other means of identification will be included when I write up the research.

When you have had time to consider this invitation to participate, I will send you a consent form. You can contact me by email or telephone if this is an easier way for you to give consent, or if you would like more information. I will be very happy to answer any questions that you may have.
Yours sincerely,

Stage Four: Pupil Consent:

To _____

Hello. My name is Imogen Howarth.

I am asking lots of children what they think about meeting an EP for statutory assessment.

I would like to ask you about when you met your EP. You can have as much help as you need. You do not need to write.

I have some questions, drawings and choices for you. Some are on my iPad. Some I will ask you.

I will record everything we all say, so I can remember it all later.

You can decide to stop at any time. You can choose not to answer questions.

Everything we say will be kept confidential, unless you are at risk. I will not use your real name when I tell people about my research.

I will write to you at the end of my research. My letter will tell you what I have found out from all the children I met.

If you would like to take part in my research, please tell _____ Then they can tell me.

Best wishes, *Imogen*

Stage Four: Pupil Assent:

My name is _____

1) I have read the letter about this research and have my own copy

Yes   No   Not sure

2) I understand what is going to happen and what we will talk about

Yes   No   Not sure

3) I understand what I say will be recorded and kept in a safe place

Yes   No   Not sure

4) I understand my name and personal information will be removed

Yes   No   Not sure

5) I understand I can stop whenever I want to

Yes   No   Not sure

Today's date is _____

Stage 4 Check list for schools

Please could you complete this form and give it to me at the time of my visit, along with the signed consent forms from parents/ carers and LSAs. Following my visit all personal and school data will be anonymised.

Pupil's name: _____   Date of EP visit: _____

Gender: Male / Female

- ☐ Signed parental/carer consent form (parent/carer's section)

- ☐ Signed pupil assent form (I will do this at the time I meet with the pupil)

- ☐ Signed LSA consent form (participant's section)

- ☐ DoB checked

  - ○ Year group _____

  - ○ Age   _____ years   _____ months

- ☐ Diagnosis / description of difficulty with communication (written/spoken)

  _____

  _____

- ☐ National Curriculum / P Levels

  - ○ Speaking and Listening _____

  - ○ Reading   _____

  - ○ Writing _____

- ☐ Ethnicity _____

Thank you very much for your help with this research. When my findings are complete in a few months' time, I will send a summary to school and include a child-friendly format for participants.

Prior to visit
- ☐ Camera, tripod, blank tape, charger
- ☐ iPad: latest version uploaded, charger
- ☐ Picture of EP
- ☐ Stickers / stretchy men
- ☐ Drawing paper, pens
- ☐ Name and address of school, SENCo, telephone

During visit
- ☐ Completed form from school
- ☐ Signed copies of consent/assent forms:

    - o Parent Consent
    - o Parent Info
    - o Pupil Leaflet
    - o Pupil Assent
    - o LSA Consent

- ☐ Stretchy man / sticker to pupil

Afterwards
- ☐ Upload results
- ☐ Upload video
- ☐ File drawings
- ☐ Anonymise data
- ☐ Email to SENCo

Semi-structured questions
1. Were you given this leaflet beforehand?
2. Who showed it to you?
3. What do you think of the pictures?
4. What else would you want to know before you met the EP?
5. Why do you think the EP came to see you?
6. What else do you remember about meeting the EP?
7. Why do you think this is called MiView?
8. How did the pictures help you remember the meeting?
9. What were your favourite type of questions? slider/ choose pictures/ drawing/ speaking/ writing
10. Enough points on sliders?
11. Are there any bits missing?
12. What else could help you remember the meeting?
13. What decisions have you talked about in school? Who listened?
14. What happened afterwards?
15. How does it feel to be asked what you think?
16. Thank you very much for your help today. Is there anything else that you wished I had asked you about?

Explain what happens next.

Appendix 21   Stage Four: Example Children's responses to MiView   (Please see attached disc for all responses and drawings). This demonstrates how the questions were revised over the course of Stage Four in response to feedback.

Result Id	Device Name	Surveyed Date	Surveyed Time	I think chocolate ice cream is …	I was told that the EP was coming to see me	I understood why the EP was coming to see me	I knew where we would meet	I was told who else would be there	What did you do or talk about?	Meeting the EP was …	Would you like to type your next answer, or draw a picture?	What did you like best?	Which bits would you change?	Please draw what you liked or didn't like on the paper. Then take a photo of your drawing.	How did meeting the EP make you feel?	I know what the next steps are.	What else would you like to say?
1683783	imogen_h	2012-11-23	10:10:59	Delicious	Yes, I was told	Yes, I understood	Yes, I did know	Yes, I was told	Shapes and blocks	Really good	drawing			View	Really liked it	No, I don't know	Weipmilitq
									People in your family								
									How you feel								

Result Id	Device Name	Surveyed Date	Surveyed Time	There are five choices to answer this question. Try them all out. I think chocolate ice cream is …	I was told that the EP was coming to see me	I understood why the EP was coming to see me	I knew where we would meet	I was told who else would be there	What did you do or talk about?	Meeting the EP was …	Would you like to type your next answer, or draw a picture?	What did you like best?	Which bits would you change?	Please draw what you liked or didn't like on the paper. Then take a photo of your drawing.	How did meeting the EP make you feel?	I know what the next steps are.	What else would you like to say?
1696176	imogen_h	2012-11-26	14:36:05	Delicious	No, I didn't know	No, I didn't understand	No, I didn't know	No, I wasn't told	Lessons and teachers	Really good	typing		Miting her		Really liked it	Yes, I know what will happen next	

Name: Transcript_David

Stage 4 Transcript Date: 23/12/12 Time: 1:30 Duration: 25 min

P=Pupil; R=Researcher; A=Assistant; S=EP; ↑ = intonation; … = pause; *italics* = structured question. Words are <u>underlined</u> where A/P omits or adds words that alter the meaning of the question.

The penultimate day of school before Christmas. P opts to see R rather than be part of indoor play. P's speech is very unclear at times, though he tries hard to make himself understood. R suspects there is a mixing up of personal pronouns in this interview which further confuses P.

Line	Notes (Video location markers; non-verbal communication)	Transcript	Initial coding ideas
1)	**(00:00)**	R: So, what you need to do is just hold your finger down anywhere on the screen … and let go, perfect. R: If you can read all the instructions out loud as you go, that would be really helpful, and if you would like Mrs B (A) to help then that's fine. A: Yes. P: Yeah. R: Off you go then	Praise. Competence. Curiosity.
2)	**(00:31)** P looks much happier at this suggestion	P: H…he…hello A: Hello R: (to A) if you want to read it out for P then that's fine. A: Yes. Do you want me to read it? P: (nods) yea A: Yeah, ok, it says…*Hello, thank you for taking part. This is all about what it was like for you to meet the Educational Psychologist. EP.* Remember, the lady you saw yesterday. P: Yes A: *Please touch the start button.*	Struggling with reading Checks with P. Relationship. Empowerment through decision making.

		Put your finger there, good boy.	
3)	**(01:03)** Emphasises 'Nnnnext. P tries to press the word 'next' in the script rather than the button.	A: *First, there is a practise question to help you.* Anything you want to put is ok. Alright? So, *anything* you want to say, is *ok.* Are you ready↑? P: Yeah A: Press that word. That says '*next'.* R: The button, up there (points). A: Oh, yes press there D	Repeating, emphasising key words Interface not intuitive.
4)	A holds up five fingers to visually support words. Doesn't try choices. Interface not intuitive. P looks confused. P touches line	A: *Try all five↑ choices.* So you've got five choices, Yeah. P: Uh huh A: *Touch each little line. Now try this. I think chocolate ice cream is…* A: So you've got (points to each) *disgusting, ok or delicious.* Which do you think? Chocolate ice cream. Which one do you think it is? … A: So you can touch which one you think it is. So this side is *disgusting,* that says *quite tasty,* and that says *delicious.* Chocolate ice cream. R: (demonstrates) Can you see they're all different? (To P). A: Oh, I see. Oh, right. So, if you touch the line…oh, that's why it said about the five (smiles). You do it, D. Touch the line and that changes.	Emphasis. Ensuring understanding and breaking down. Repeats key words. Waiting for instructions. Infantilised?
5)	**(02:02)** P begins to explore interface P Smiles	P: already (? unintelligible) A: So it says *not very tasty,* that's *disgusting.* Can you see the change of the face as well? P: Yeah A: That says *quite tasty…delicious↑…* A: Which one do you think? P: (very definitely) that one! A: Delicious? Yeah? Chocolate	Highlighting key visual points. Deliberate intonation

		ice cream. P: Yeah! A: I think that's a good choice! P: Yeah. A: Good boy!	
6)	**(02:22)**	A: Ok, *there are ten questions. Please ask if you need any help.* Ok? P: Yeah A: Ready? P: (nods) A: Alright then, away you go. Press next...up there.	
7)	A pauses at the end of each sentence. Then recaps slowly with emphasis.	A: Ok. *The next questions are about what you thought before the EP.* So, before S came, how did you feel, ok. *There are pictures to help you remember. Say what you think is happening in the pictures. Then touch next.*	Breaking down. Checking understanding line by line.
8)	**(02:52)** P uses 'they' A uses 'you'.[1] P pronounces this more carefully. A's tone of voice is of confusion	A: So, you've got two pictures here (points). (1) A: What do you think is happening in that picture? (2) P: They're chatting about stuff A: What are you chatting about? P: Erm…uh…stuff. A So, when you were talking to S, can you remember what you were talking about? A: (to R) Is that what it's asking?[2] R: That's ok, just 'chatting about stuff' R: …and what do you think's happening in that picture? (points). P: Erm…it's about the family under… understood me. A: On the what? P: Understood me A: Oh, *understand* you, the family understand you. P: Yeah, yeah. A: Oh, right, ok. R: Fantastic,. A: Next (points)	Directs attention to salient visual cues. Breaks down to one level instructions (1), (2) Waiting for instruction to move on.
9)	**(03:33)** A is also	A: *I know what the EP was coming to see me for.* So, you've got this again, remember how we	Helping P to generalise knowledge.

	confident with the interface now. She is motivating P with a very positive and confident approach.	did it with the chocolate? P: Yeah A: Yeah, so if you press each one again.	'we'
	P presses each in turn as they are read out. P places finger on side of mouth in thinking pose.	A: So, *I knew that the EP was coming to see me.* Ok? A: That says *I think I knew, I don't think I was told, no, the EP just turned up, yes, I knew all about it.* P: (chooses, smiles). A: *I think I knew.* Did you know all about it? Or do you think you knew? Or you wasn't told? P: I wasn't told A: So, you didn't know that she was coming? S. P: No A: No. Ok. So, find the one…(indicates)…press it again…that says *no, the EP just turned up* … A: *I don't think I was told* A: Is that the one you want to use? P: I think so, yeah. A: Are you sure? P: Yeah A: Ok, well done.	A seeks authentic reply. Checking understanding. Is 'turned up' understood? literal interpretation? Checking Processing time Allowing to change mind Praise[3]
10)	**(04:39)** P looks deep in thought. Unsure if this is lack of understanding or uncertain of memory.	P: I'm not sure. A: Do you want me to go through them again. Through the answers again? P: Yeah A: Ok, press the next one again there (gestures) A: So that says, *I don't think I was told, I think I knew,* or…*yes I knew all about it*…or *no, the EP just turned up*, so S just turned up.	A is calm, polite and patient.
11)	**(05:02)**	P: (chooses) A: *Yes, I knew all about it* that one says. P: Yeah A: Sure? Happy with that?	Accepts P's answer.

		P: Yeah A: Ok	Respectful position.
12)	**(05:12)** P explores interface without prompt. P screws eyes tight shut for two seconds. Tiredness? P chooses	A: *I understood why the EP was coming to see me* A: So, that one says *I think I understood. I don't think I understood. No, I don't understand at all. Yes, I was completely understood.* A: Which one is it? P: That one's a big smile…(imitates) A: Do you want to go through them again? P: Yeah A: Go on then, press it again. That says *no, I don't understand at all, I don't think I understood, I think I understood,* or *yes, I completely understood.* A: Yep? Good boy.	A's misread makes this more difficult to answer. Should read **No, I didn't understand at all.** Temporal aspect of qn?
13)	**(06:04)**	A: *I knew which room we would be in* P: the sensory room	Misunderstands. Answers question 'which room were you in?' (1)
14)	**(06:09)** P doesn't seem to understand. Looks confused. P doesn't appear to give an informed answer to this question. Needs rewording. Matching symbols?	A: Did you go into the sensory room? P: Yeah↑ A: And you knew which one you would be in, yeah? P: So, which one…which one? A: That says *I think I knew.* That one there (points) says *Yes, I did know.* P: (Chooses) A: *Yes, I did know* P: Yeah, that one A: Well, you've got *I think I knew.* So, if you want *Yes, I did know,* that would be that one, wouldn't it (points) P: (presses as directed) A: The other one. Ok.[4]	Seems that qn doesn't make sense to P. Combined with not understanding how the choices line up with particular answers. Lack of competence. Lack of independence.

|			
	P manages two choices, then tries sliding finger with considerable pressure which doesn't work	…just press…that's it. That says *ok*. Try that one. That little line there (points) *quite tasty*. What's that last one? *delicious*. R: The question is…*now try this. I think chocolate ice cream is↑…*	
4)	P presses all options again, once each. Perfectly accurate this time R emphasises each word choice.	R: Which one are you going to choose? *Quite tasty*? Ok. *Not very tasty*, or *disgusting*. What do you think chocolate ice cream is? P: (presses along each option again) (Scrunches up nose and smiles at R). (Stops on delicious). R: Delicious? Yes? P: (Smiles and presses 'Next') R: Is that your answer? Ok.	Competence with interface
5)	(02:10) P attempts to press 'Next' straightaway on each screen. Doesn't appear to listen to instructions.	R: *There are 10 questions. Please ask if you need any help. Ready? Please press Next.*[3] R: Gently, just tap it once. That's it. *The next questions are about what you thought before you met the EP. The pictures (points) there are to help you remember. Tell me what you think is happening in the pictures. What do you think's happening in that picture?*	Curiosity to explore interface. Mastering competence. Enjoying stimu[4]li.
6)	(02:39) Engaged with iPad.	R: Try not to touch it (P presses picture repeatedly). What is happening in that picture? P: Em…sitting down R: Someone's sitting down P: Daddy and mum…oh (presses picture and changes screen) R: (laughs) don't touch it. P: And what's happening in that picture (points) P: Mum, sister and dad. R: Now press next.	P describes parts of picture, not relating to context. P doesn't mention herself
7)	(03:06) P immediately starts pressing slider choices. P looks at picture of EP when directed	R: This says *I was told that this lady* (shows picture) *was coming to see me. Were you told she was coming to see you?* R: *No I didn't know, not sure, or yes, I was told* P: Plays with interface R: Which one do you think the answer is? P: Em..Yes R: Somebody told you? That this (points) lady was coming to see you? P: Yes (nods) continues to play with slider.	Exploring interface