A SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITY THEORY ANALYSIS OF INTER-AGENCY WORKING BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICERS IN RELATION TO COMPLEX EXTENDED SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE (CESN-A) WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

By

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ABSTRACT

Successive governments have afforded high priority to improving school attendance (DfE, 2012). However, inter-agency collaboration to address non-attendance has been hindered by disparity in the literature and among practitioners regarding terminology, definitions, assessment and intervention practices (Kearney, 2008). The current research offers 'Complex Extended School Non-Attendance' (CESN-A) as a broader conceptualisation of the issue and seeks to explore and analyse inter-agency working between Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) regarding supporting pupils who experience CESN-A.

The research adopts case study design and offers a contextualised account within one Local Authority (LA) that has embraced multi-agency working and where EPs and EWOs work together in multi-agency support teams (MASTs). Activity theory (Engeström, 1987) is employed as a theoretical framework and methodology for: examining the socio-cultural processes that mediate the current models of working; analysing and comparing EP and EWO activity systems; surfacing contradictions and proposing new ways of working. The research utilises semi-structured interviews and Developmental Work Research (DWR) to explore the professional learning required to improve inter-agency collaboration.

The findings illustrate the multi-layered nature of inter-agency working. Suggested improvements include fostering shared understanding, clarifying role demarcations, establishing structures for collaborative problem-solving and building capacity in

schools regarding both understanding the complexities of CESN-A and developing strategies which support attendance. Finally, the research illuminates the value of utilising socio-cultural activity theory as a tool for understanding, analysing and exploring practice and promoting professional learning to facilitate organisational change and ultimately improve service delivery.

<u>DEDICATION</u>

To my wonderful husband Ant

To my parents Suzanne and John Herriotts

To my family

Your love, support and resolute belief in me is invaluable and has provided strong foundations for me to pursue my aspirations and persist in my journey for continued learning and development.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAF	Common assessment framework
CESN-A	Complex extended school non-attendance
DWR	Developmental work research
ECM	Every child matters
EP	Educational psychologist
ESW	Education social worker
EWO	Education welfare officer
EWS	Education welfare service
IA	Inter-agency
LA	Local authority
LSCB	Local safeguarding children board
MA	Multi-agency
MAST	Multi-agency support team
SEN	Special educational needs

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1.0 Introduction

This volume presents research undertaken for the purpose of a three year (2010-2013) Applied Educational and Child Psychology professional training programme at the University of Birmingham.

The research comprises three main strands:

- complex extended school non-attendance;

- inter-agency working; and

- the promotion of professional learning and organisational development through the lens of socio-cultural activity theory.

1.1 International and national context of the research

1.1.1 Complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A)

This introductory section endeavours to situate the thesis in the wider international and national context pertaining to the broad issue of school attendance. Secondary data are utilised from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Department for Education (DfE). Smith (2011, p.2) contended that use of

secondary data enables researchers to access high quality data on a large scale that would be difficult to replicate by an independent researcher.

Internationally, the value of education is increasingly recognised. There are cultural variations between and within countries in relation to education, such as the organisation, governance, curricula, assessment, student-teacher ratios, private sector participation and sensitivity to demand (OECD, 2001). However, many countries of diverse culture insist on compulsory school attendance. Compulsory school attendance, on an international scale, is a recent development and has become the norm in recent decades, worldwide (OECD, 2001).However,

> "only a century ago, universal secondary education was not established in some places and compulsory elementary attendance still in its infancy. Now, they are among the most established features of our society" (OECD, 2001 p.59).

An overview of international compulsory school attendance ages and the duration of compulsory education is presented in Table 1.1. The data from UNESCO (2013) illuminated that the duration of compulsory school attendance is longer for developed nations compared to developing nations. Importantly, the OECD (2012) asserted that the impact of education on human capital is not merely dictated by the duration of compulsory attendance but by the quality of education and resultant educational performance.

Table 1.1: Overview of international compulsory school ages and duration of compulsory education (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2012)

Country	Compulsory school age	Duration of compulsory Education (years)
Australia	5-15 years	11
Bangladesh	6-10 years	5
Belgium	6-17 years	12
China, Hong Kong and Special Administrative Region (SAR)	6-14 years	9
Egypt	6-14 years	9
France	6-16 years	11
Germany	6-18 years	13
Japan	4-17 years	14
Jamaica	6-11 years	6
Malaysia	6-11 years	6
Netherlands	5-17 years	15
Republic of Korea	6-14 years	9
Russian Federation	6-15 years	10
Sweden	7-16 years	10
United Kingdom	5-16 years	12
United States of America	6-17 years	12

International research has associated school attendance with economic success, health and wellbeing (National Educational Welfare Board, 2008). The OECD (2012,

p.5) reinforced that only "small improvements in the skills of the nation's labour force can have very large impacts on future well-being". More specifically, the OECD (2012) investigated the relationship between educational performance and economic growth in the thirty OECD countries (see Box 1.1). The results demonstrated that small improvements in educational performance have a large impact on countries' future well-being and financial health, as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The report stated that if the quality of education across OECD countries improved and promoted educational performance consistent with Finland, OECD's best performing education system, it would result in increased GDP of 260 trillion United States Dollars (OECD, 2012).

Box 1.1

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The educational statistics provided by the UNESCO (2013) Illustrate that school attendance levels are higher for developed regions of the world compared to developing regions. Table 1.2 provides the estimated percentage 'out of school rate' for primary aged children across regions of the world. There are challenges associated with gaining reliable international data regarding school attendance. Therefore, the UNESCO data must be viewed with caution particularly, because they are based on the assumption that data collection systems are in place, published data and estimated or imputed data.

Table 1.2: Percentage out of school rate for primary aged children across regions of the world in 2011 (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2012)

Region of the world	Percentage out of school rate for children of primary age in 2011
Arab States	11
Central Asia	5
Central and Eastern Europe	2
East Asia and the Pacific	3
Latin America and the Caribbean	5
North America and Western Europe	2
South and West Asia	7
Sub-Saharan Africa	22

The OECD (2003) international report of Student Engagement at School identified that low socio-economic status is linked with decreased engagement in education and attendance at school. The report highlighted that schools where the majority of the student population has a low socio-economic status, are at a much higher risk of absenteeism.

The increased level of school non-attendance for developing nations and individuals with low socio-economic status has concerning implications for social justice, particularly because research suggests that children who attend, participate and feel a sense of belonging in school achieve better educational outcomes (OECD, 2003) and therefore experience increased life opportunities.

In England, school attendance continues to be accorded high priority by successive governments. In 2011 Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, commissioned Charlie Taylor, expert adviser on behaviour, to conduct a review of non-attendance and formulate recommendations for improving attendance at school. The review highlighted that although non-attendance figures were gradually declining (see Figure 1.1), 57 million days of school were missed in 2009/2010.

Figure 1.1
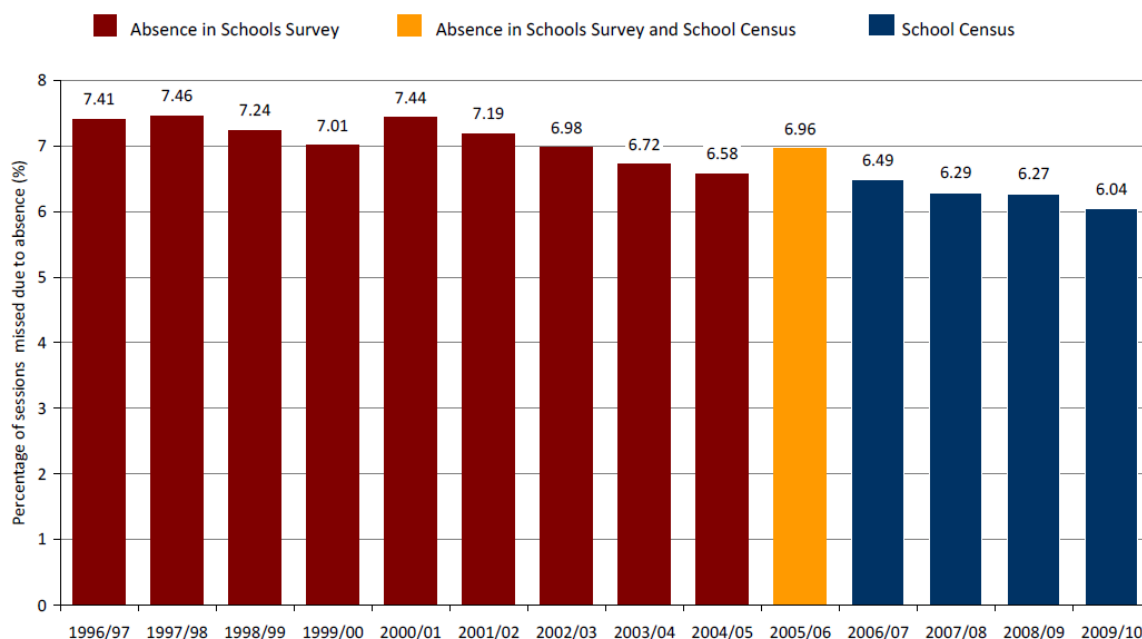
Figure 1.1: *Trends in school non-attendance 1996-2010 (DfE, 2011a, p.4)*

Overall absence rates continued to decline in 2010/11 (5.8%) and 2011/12 (5.1%) (DfE, 2013). However, in 2011/12 the absence levels remained higher for pupils eligible for claiming free school meals (7.4%) compared to pupils not eligible for claiming free school meals (4.6%). Absence levels also remain substantially higher for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) (pupils with a Statement of SEN,

8.2%; School Action Plus, 7.7%; and School Action, 6.4%), compared to those pupils with no identified SEN (3.8%).

Key developments in national policy further underscore the importance bestowed on school attendance. The government definition of persistent absence was expanded in September 2011 to include children and young people whose attendance fell below 85% instead of the previous 80% (DfE, 2012). The fines for parents of children and young people regarded as persistent absentees have increased and where parents receive child benefit, the fine will be taken directly from their child benefit (DfE, 2012). The recently developed Ofsted (2012) framework explicitly states that inspectors will consider pupils' attendance and punctuality at school and in lessons and if attendance is not deemed 'good enough' will set measureable targets that governors and parents can use to hold the school to account. Additionally, in accordance with the statutory requirement to publish school attendance figures, there has been continual refinement and developments in relation to increasing the frequency and depth of data collection regarding school attendance. Prior to 2005/6 school attendance figures were reported and collated annually by the Absence in Schools Survey. However, perhaps reflecting the growing emphasis on school attendance, from 2005 termly pupil-level absence data are collected via the School Census for all but independent schools (DfE, 2011a).

The legal imperative to attend school was enshrined in the Education Act (1996) and Crime and Disorder Act (1998). The Acts state that it is a legal offence for a child or young person of compulsory school age (beginning from age five years and

continuing until the last Friday of June in the school year that the child reaches sixteen years of age) to be absent from school without lawful authority unless the child is receiving efficient and suitable full-time education or the absence is due to leave, sickness, unavoidable cause or days set aside for religious observance. Furthermore, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that pupils attend school (DfE, 2011a).

Further rationale for the research is provided by the national findings that children with poor attendance are less likely to succeed academically and more likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) when they leave school (DfE, 2012). Along with the acknowledged link between non-attendance and future negative outcomes, research demonstrates that certain groups are also more likely to be persistently absent from school: pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils living in areas with high income deprivation, pupils with special educational needs, girls, Irish Traveller and Gypsy Roma pupils and pupils in Year 11 (DfE, 2011a). These findings necessitate a social imperative to interrogate the basis of non-attendance and explore effective strategies to promote attendance.

1.1.2 Inter-agency working

National policy and legislation endorse multi and inter-agency working between professionals in Children's Services to promote improved outcomes for children, young people and their families. The Children Act 2004 required the development of Local Authority Children's Services which bring together professionals in education and social care. The Act specifically necessitated partnership working across all

agencies working with children in a particular Local Authority area. The Children Act 2006 went a step further, and signalled a move towards integrated services and co-located service provision. The research will explore how, specifically, Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs), work collaboratively to support children and young people who experience CESN-A.

1.2 Local context of the research

The research is situated in a Local Authority that has embraced the co-location of services and has organised services into Multi-Agency Support Teams (MASTs) that aspire to offer tailored support to the locality they serve. The research intends to go beyond co-location and investigate integrated working. The research also aims to offer implications for improved service delivery that will ultimately foster positive outcomes for children and young people who experience CESN-A.

The research additionally formulates a distinct part of a response to a Serious Case Review commissioned by the Local Authorities Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) as a result of Child J's death in 2008. The Serious Case Review identified that PQ (female perpetrator) "did not engage with education to any significant extent from primary level until attaining school leaving age in 2007" (LSCB, 2008, p.3). Throughout PQ's education, her mother had been pursued by the Education Welfare Service. The Review cites the "inadequacies in liaison between agencies" as a key conclusion (LSCB, 2008, p.7). Furthermore, the Review states that,

> "Failure to ensure that a child engages effectively with education is as much 'neglect' as a failure to keep that child clean and well fed. Any tendency to treat school attendance and educational failure

generally as an issue separate and distinct from other social care issues must be avoided" (LSCB, 2008, p.9).

The Review criticised the treatment of PQ's school non-attendance as largely an issue of enforcement involving the mother as opposed to focusing on addressing the non-attendance in the context of neglect within the family. The Review recommended that "Education Welfare work is appropriately coordinated with the work of other services involved with a child or a family" (LSCB, 2008, p.12). Additionally, the Psychology Service was obligated to review their role in relation to pupil absence from school. More specifically, the Psychology Service was requested to review the priority assigned to referrals for school absence and the identification and development of means by which the Psychology Service can improve the support offered to Education Welfare Officers in such cases.

1.3 Aims of the research

The research aims to explore the perceptions of EPs and EWOs regarding collaborative practice in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A. The research utilises the lens of socio-cultural activity theory to analyse the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur and that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO collaboration. In addition, the research aims to explore EPs' and EWOs' perceptions of 'new ways' of working to enhance inter-agency collaboration. Ultimately, the research endeavours to stimulate organisational change and offer implications for improved service

delivery to promote positive outcomes for children and young people who exhibit CESN-A.

1.4 Research questions

- What do EPs and EWOs perceive is their professional role in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A?

- What do EPs and EWOs perceive supports or constrains inter-agency collaboration to support children and young people who experience CESN-A?

  Sub-question related to the methodology
- What are the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur, that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

- What new ways of working do EPs and EWOs suggest will enhance inter-agency collaboration between EPs and EWOs in relation to CESN-A?

- Does socio-cultural activity theory afford a useful framework to understand, analyse and explore the professional practice of EPs' and EWOs' inter-agency working in relation to CESN-A?

1.5 Thesis structure (Chapters 2-7)

Chapter 2 of the thesis deconstructs the divergent terminology and conceptualisation employed when considering school non-attendance with specific reference to the dominant legal and clinical discourses.

Chapter 3 investigates the specific roles and responsibilities of EPs and EWOs in promoting attendance. In addition, there is an explanation of the literature concerning multi-agency working with specific reference to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A. The chapter concludes with research examples of EP and EWO collaborative practice and offers critical reflections.

Chapter 4 interrogates the literature in relation to professional learning and organisational development with a particular focus on socio-cultural perspectives.

Chapter 5 considers the case study design of the research and the use of activity theory followed by semi-structured interviews and developmental work research (DWR) as methods of data collection.

Chapter 6 offers a presentation, analysis and discussion of the interview and DWR data. Finally, chapter 7 considers the research conclusions and critical reflections with implications for future research and development. A brief overview of the research is provided in a public domain briefing document in Appendix One.

CHAPTER 2

NON-ATTENDANCE: ISSUES OF CONCEPTUALISATION

2.0 Introduction

A synthesis of the literature crudely reveals two distinct dominant discourses in relation to non-attendance: legal and clinical. This chapter will critically explore the apparent dichotomy with reflections on why it may be unhelpful. The discourses will each be considered in relation to the use of terminology, the conceptualisation and definition and the assumed causes and functions of non-attendance. The dominant discourses will be further contextualised with reference to current Government policy and initiatives. In addition, the discourses have ramifications for the approach employed to promote attendance. The literature review will offer my reflections on the dominant discourses and will consider the implications. The chapter will conclude with suggested terminology and conceptualisation of non-attendance that I have derived from the literature, in an attempt to address some of the criticisms of the predominant legal and clinical approaches.

2.1 Legal discourses

2.1.1 Terminology and conceptualisation

There is extensive literature regarding school non-attendance that typically employs the term 'truancy' (Burt, 1944). The term truancy is used to refer to absence that is not authorised or permitted by authorities but is a conscious "voluntary act on the part

of the child, with or without the consent of the parents" (Fortune-Wood, 2007, p.27). The notion that absence relating to truancy is an intentional and wilful act by the child may be further supported by the DfE (2012) assertion that the term 'truancy' does not apply to pupils in primary school. Truancy implies the child has a preference for not attending, without the presence of any major psychological difficulty and is associated with delinquency and disruptiveness (Elliott and Place, 2004). However, the DfE (2012) recommend a departure from the use of the term 'truant' and suggested that the focus should be placed on improving attendance. This assertion perhaps alludes to the notion that over-emphasis on the labelling of children, particularly when such labels have negative connotations, can distract attention from examining how support may be improved and attendance promoted.

2.1.2 Causes of non-attendance

DfE (2012) asserted that non-attendance in the early years that is approved by parents is the cause of later truancy. Furthermore, Place et al's., (2000) non-clinical sample of seventeen school non-attenders identified evidence of family conflict as a causal factor for non-attendance. The notion that families cause non-attendance has roots in the dominant legal discourse and subsequent punitive action that fines, or in extreme circumstances, imprisons parents. However, the premise that the cause of non-attendance is situated with parents or families has received criticism. Brown (1983, p.225) critiqued the dominant models used to explain truancy as relying on "individual or social pathologies caused by the inadequate, or wilfully perverse nature of truants' parents". Brown (1983) referred to the dominant models as simplistic and based on the perceptions of teachers, researchers and commentators rather than

those concerned. The legal discourse appears narrow and neglects to consider the influence of systemic factors and the views of the child or young person (Pellegrini, 2007). Moreover, excessive attention to the negative contribution of parents may further exacerbate the non-attendance. It may be argued that a progressive approach should conceptualise the parents as a potential part of the solution rather than the main source of the problem.

The legal discourse appears predicated on the assumption that non-attendance occurs when young people and/or their parents choose to deviate from the 'pro-social' expectations of school attendance due to poor behaviour and disillusion (Elliott, 1999). The cause is located with families who do not value education in conjunction with the presence of 'social pathologies' such as alcoholism, violence, mental and physical illness and family disorganisation (Brown, 1983). This position is further accentuated by the finding that schools with the highest rates of absenteeism are in 'deprived' areas (Galloway, 1976), with limited consideration of the impact of 'deprivation', environmental stress and social inequality. The legal perspective is additionally associated with early claims that non-attendance is linked to increased crime rates. Burt (1944, p.455) suggested that truancy was the "first step on the downward stair to crime". However, Coldman (1995) critiqued the popular assertion of a strong or causal link between truancy and crime and suggested that correlational links are only tentatively and superficially established.

2.1.3 National and political context

The legal discourse is endorsed by Government policy. The recent DfE (2012, p.1) report asserted that children who are persistently absent are "more likely to come from families who do not value education and where the parents often missed education themselves". Furthermore, the report emphasised the centrality of the role of the parents and the home environment by the statement that, "poor attendance is often a sign that there are some more serious issues going on in the child's home" (DfE, 2012, p.2). Such assumptions have resulted in punitive legal action taken against families in response to persistent non-attendance. The DfE (2012, p.4) report suggested that, "fining parents or taking them to court is the last resort that schools and EWOs use only very reluctantly when all else has failed". However, the assertion does not elucidate what 'all else' constitutes. Furthermore, the report conceded that the legal system used to punish parents for non-attendance is "protracted and inconsistent", acknowledging that 40-50% of fines are not paid (DfE, 2012, p.4). Paradoxically, the response to these findings is to increase the amount that parents are fined. The Government intends to enforce the payment of fines by deducting money directly from child benefit or, if families do not receive child benefit, recovering the fine through court action (DfE, 2012).

2.2 Clinical discourses

2.2.1 Terminology and conceptualisation

The terms 'school phobia' (Johnson et al. 1941) and 'school refusal' (Hersov, 1960a & 1960b in Galloway 1985; Kearney, 1995) are utilised within clinical accounts of

non-attendance. School phobia suggests psychopathology characterised by anxiety and fearfulness. School phobia is generally regarded to be caused by separation anxiety from the family, particularly the mother (Fourtune-Wood, 2007) or due to fear of a specific stimulus in school (Tyrell, 2005). School phobia has been defined as a persistent "irrational fear or anxiety about attending school" (Heath, 1985, p.1). However, the term 'school phobia' was denunciated due to extensive use of the term, regardless of clinically significant fear or anxiety (Pellegrini, 2007). In addition, the extent to which separation anxiety provides a sole cause for non-attendance has been contested (Elliott, 1999). McShane et al. (2001) identified in a sample of 192 school non-attenders in a child and adolescent psychiatric facility in Australia, that there was a high prevalence of anxiety, mood and disruptive behaviour disorder, but that the onset of the school non-attendance was associated with a range of difficulties and not only restricted to psychiatric diagnosis.

The term 'school refusal' developed following criticisms of 'school phobia'. Despite this, Fortune-Wood (2007) emphasised the continued widespread use of the term 'school phobia', despite general acceptance that it is erroneous and outdated. 'School refusal' is a broad, all-encompassing term used by some to include both truants and children classified as having a school phobia (Kearney, 1995), and continues to connote wilful behaviour. However, Atkinson et al. (1985) offered the methodological criticism that research involving school refusal can mask the significance of the complexity associated with school non-attendance.

2.2.2 The causes of non-attendance

The literature regarding the causes of non-attendance appears to be biased towards clinical constructions of the behaviour (Pellegrini, 2007). A sole focus on the child as the cause has been suggested to have arisen from the notion that,

> "the majority of published studies and reviews have been produced by American researchers (often with a medical background) who have little expertise or professional involvement in educational matters" (Elliott and Place, 2004, p.49).

Theories that focus on the child as the cause of non-attendance offer individual pathologies. The child is conceptualised as experiencing: separation anxiety (Pilkington and Piersel, 1991); trait anxiety associated with the child's personality (Brandibas et al. 2004); depression (Hersov, 1977); psychotic disorder (Hersov, 1977) difficulty with social relationships (Galloway, 1985); emotional immaturity (Hersov, 1960a) and/or learning difficulties (Tyerman, 1958). However, the adoption of a sole focus on the child has been criticised for resulting in a narrow focus that neglects to consider the influence of factors in the school environment or wider community that might be contributing to the non-attendance. Purcell and Tsverik's (2008) research revealed the highly complex nature of school refusal and concluded that the interrelating factors contributing to non-attendance have been somewhat lost due to the current privileging of the medical approach. Fortune-Wood (2007, p.66) offered a more radical criticism of the dominant clinical perspective:

> "in many cases the inescapable conclusion is that the child's refusal to attend school is so inconvenient that 'professionals' are willing to attach a medical label to the behaviour in order to justify the actions necessary to force attendance in the face of a problem they are themselves unable or unwilling to solve. Once again we find that in many cases, school phobia or school refusal is not a condition or disorder, but merely an artificial social construct; a label created to correct an inconvenient, but rational behaviour pattern, using

weapons of threat, psychology and even psychoactive drugs to enforce obedience."

Table 2.1 summarises some of the dominant 'differences' between the legal and clinical approaches to classifying and defining non-attendance.

Table 2.1: The perpetuated distinction in the literature between truancy and school refusal

Truancy	School refusal
Absence of any clinically significant characteristics (Pellegrini, 2007)	Presence of psychopathology (depression, psychotic disorder & personality disorder) (Hersov, 1977)
Conduct disorder (stealing, destructiveness or wandering from home) (Berry et al. 1993)	Fearful of coming to or being in school (Sigmon, 1991)
Lack of interest and motivation in school (Elliott, 1999)	Underlying anxiety disorder (Berry et al. 1993)
Desire to engage in more attractive pastimes as opposed to school attendance (Elliott, 1999)	Separation anxiety (Hersov, 1977)
Unwillingness to conform to school's expectations and code of behaviour (Elliott, 1999)	Phobic manifestation (Hersov, 1977) Eating problems (Hersov, 1960a) Sleep disturbance (Hersov, 1960a) Tension habits (Hersov, 1960a)
Parents may not know about the child's absence (Pellegrini, 2007)	Parents are often aware of the absence (Pellegrini, 2007)
Increased prevalence compared to school refusal (Evans, 2000; Galloway, 1985)	UK and US estimates of school refusal range from 0.4- 2% of the population (Elliott & Place, 2004)

2.2.3 Functions of non-attendance

It is imperative to understand the causes and the function of the behaviour that results in non-attendance (Pellegrini, 2007). It is additionally vital to consider the needs of the child that are met by the non-attendance (Elliott and Place, 2004). Kearney and Silverman (1990) asserted that an examination of these needs was

crucial in order to inform individualised intervention and support. Kearney and Silverman (1990) suggested that school-refusal is maintained by one or more of four factors (See Table 2.2). Evans (2000) proposed three main functional classification subtypes of school refusal according to the variables that maintain the behaviour: reduction of anxiety (anxiety subtype), avoidance of undesirable events (avoidance subtype) and engagement in more desirable activities (malingering subtype). The concept of differing functions of non-attendance suggests that it is not a unitary concept but a complex behaviour that is indicative of a number of potential unmet needs and underlying issues.

Table 2.2: The functions of school-refusal behaviour (adapted from Kearney and Silverman, 1990)

Function	Description
Avoidance	Avoidance of specific fearfulness or general over-anxiousness related to the school setting. This includes cases where one or more particular features of school are feared.
Escape	Escape from aversive situations. This concerns problems based upon negative relationships with others (teachers and/or peers).
Attention-seeking	Attention-seeking or separation 'anxious' behaviour. This may be reflected by somatic complaints or tantrums where the child seeks to remain at home.
Reward	The child or young person experiences rewards outside of school. Non-attendance is rewarding as it offers opportunities for the child to engage in preferred activities. This category includes those children and young people usually identified as truants.

Furthermore, Elliott (1999) argued that an approach that is predicated upon the functions of non-attendance, rather than the 'symptoms' offers the most effective basis for assessment, formulation and the development of individualised intervention.

2.2.4 National and political context

The clinical discourse emphasises the role of psychopathology in non-attendance. The child's anxiety and fearfulness is implicated in the non-attendance (Berry et al. 1993). This may result in the clinical diagnosis of social anxiety or social phobia. The role of parents is delineated by the implication of separation anxiety. The clinical discourse focuses on psychological treatments and therapeutic support for the child (Chitiyo and Wheeler, 2006), concentrating sole emphasis on the child and inferring that the child is 'ill'. However, "the diverse viewpoints maintained concerning the aetiology of school phobia have consequently engendered similarly diverse therapeutic approaches" (Chitiyo and Wheeler 2006, p. 87).

The coalition Government responded to clinical discourses in the review 'No health without mental health' (DoH, 2011) by pledging £22 million for the 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Project' (IAPT) for children and young people. The investment is based on the premise that one in ten children aged 5-16 years has a clinically diagnosable mental health problem that necessitates early intervention in the form of psychological treatment during childhood and adolescence. Although the dominance of clinical discourses may be questioned, the benefits of psychological therapy for children and young people at the more extreme end of the continuum,

who experience anxiety associated with school attendance, can result in reduced levels of anxiety and increased attendance at school (Kearney and Silverman, 1990).

2.3 Reconceptualising non-attendance

A significant hindrance to the development of a shared understanding of school non-attendance relates to the myriad of terminology that has been used to describe it, along with the variety of behaviours that are classified as such (Thambirajah et al. 2008; Elliott, 1999). The interchangeable use of the terms can be problematic and confounds understanding by arguably feeding misunderstanding (Fortune-Wood, 2007).

The legal term 'truancy' and clinical terms 'social phobia' and 'school refusal' infer a difficulty that principally involves the child, and may therefore be obstructive to the development of an holistic understanding that considers multiple ecological influences on the non-attendance. Moreover, Kearney (2007) suggested that school non-attendance cannot be neatly categorised, for example as truancy or school refusal, due to the overlap between such categories. In spite of this, numerous attempts to classify non-attendance appear in the literature (Kennedy 1965; Rutter, 1965; Baker and Willis, 1978). Furthermore, Elliott (1999) acknowledged that conceptual complexities exist in the literature regarding non-attendance. However, there appears to be a history of classification that implicitly and explicitly relates to the dominant legal and clinical discourses. Specific distinction is delineated between truants and school refusers. This dichotomy appears unhelpful as it polarises

conceptualisation and offers only a limited insight into the complex nature of extended school non-attendance. Kearney (2008) identified the definitional challenge in relation to school non-attendance. Kearney suggested that a definition of problematic absenteeism should be multifaceted and account for all aspects of non-attendance, allow for early intervention, and be practical enough for use by researchers, clinicians, educators and others.

Thambirajah et al. (2008) used 'school non-attendance' as a broad umbrella term to refer to all pupils who fail to attend school. The term is utilised as a descriptive term to describe the child's behaviour in the absence of suggesting cause or attributing blame. Additionally, the broad term encompasses absence that may be initiated by the child, parents or peers; may be sanctioned by the parents or school and may be occasional or persistent. Pellegrini (2007) coined the term 'extended school non-attendance' to describe the visible behaviour neutrally, directing attention to the school environment and stressing the persistent nature of the non-attendance.

As debates continue regarding the use of terminology and subsequent conceptualisation of school non-attendance, it may be suggested that such focus detracts from the centrality of the reasons why children and young people may not attend school (Kearney and Sims, 1997). Although contrasting, both discourses construct school non-attendance as a problem ensuing from the child and/or family (Pellegrini, 2007). Consequently, parents are viewed either as active perpetrators who collude with the child or as passive victims. Negligible focus is bestowed upon school-based factors with lateral thought regarding the appropriateness of the school

provision for the child or consideration of social and community factors that may influence the non-attendance (Pellegrini, 2007). Legal and clinical discourses appear to offer a simplistic polarised dichotomy that has limited regard for the complex and heterogeneous nature of non-attendance.

Extended school non-attendance has been described by Pellegrini (2007, p.64) as, "heterogeneous behaviour which does not appear specific to a particular population". In addition researchers who utilise the term 'social phobic' or 'school refuser' have also acknowledged heterogeneity (Coolidge et al. 1957). Moreover, Coldman (1995) contended that truancy is a complex social phenomenon that cannot be fully explained by one conceptual model. The cause and functions of non-attendance are regarded as divergent (Elliott and Place, 2004) and consequently Pellegrini (2007) argued for the necessity of individualised assessment and intervention strategies to ensure increased effectiveness in addressing the specific needs of the non-attender. It is widely accepted that, there is no easy or 'one size fits all' solution to the problem of non-attendance (Stoll, 1995a). These assertions suggest the need for broad conceptualisation and holistic analysis of the interaction between the multiple ecological factors which influence the child or young person.

The finding that most children experience many of the associated characteristics of school refusal at some point (Klein, 1945) raises a fundamental philosophical question regarding what causes children and young people to respond to expectations for school attendance in this way. The perceived causes of non-attendance have significant implications for the tailored supportive approach.

Kearney (2008) offered an integrated summary of proximal and distal factors that influence school absenteeism from three sources: psychology, social/criminal justice and education (see Table 2.3). Four main causes of non-attendance have been suggested in the literature, as Brown (1983) reported: the maladjusted child, families that produce truants, influence of the community, and contribution of the school. However, particular emphasis continues to predominate regarding the 'maladjusted child' and related clinical discourse along with the 'dysfunctional family context', reinforced by the legal discourse.

Table 2.3: Proximal and distal factors related to problematic school absenteeism (taken from Kearney, 2008, p.266-267)

Factors

Key child factors	Extensive work hours outside of school
	Externalising symptoms/psychopathology
	Grade retention
	History of absenteeism
	Internalising symptoms/psychopathology
	Learning-based reinforcers of absenteeism/functions
	Low self-esteem and school commitment
	Personality traits and attributional styles
	Poor health or academic proficiency
	Pregnancy
	Problematic relationships with authority figures
	Race and age
	Trauma
	Underdeveloped social and academic skills
Key parent factors	Inadequate parenting skills
	Low expectations of school performance/attendance
	Maltreatment
	Problematic parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian)
	Poor communication with school officials

	Poor involvement and supervision Psychopathology School dropout in parents and among relatives School withdrawal Single parent
Key family factors	Enmeshment Ethnic difficulties from school personnel Homelessness Intense conflict and chaos Large family size Poor access to educational aids Poor cohesion and expressiveness Poverty Resistance to acculturation Stressful family transitions (divorce, illness, unemployment, moving) Transportation problems
Key peer factors	Participation in gangs and gang related activity Poor participation in extracurricular activities Pressure to conform to group demands for absenteeism or other delinquent acts Proximity to deviant peers Support for alluring activities outside of school such as drug use Victimisation from bullies or otherwise
Key school factors	Dangerousness/poor school climate Frequent teacher absences High systemic levels of grade retention Highly punitive or legal means to address all causes of problematic absenteeism Inadequate, irrelevant, or tedious curricula Inadequate praise for student achievement and attendance Inadequate responsiveness to diversity issues Inconsistent or minimal consequences for absenteeism Poor monitoring of attendance Poor student-teacher relationships School-based racism and discrimination
Key community factors	Disorganised/unsafe neighbourhood

Economic pull factors (e.g. plentiful, well-paying jobs requiring little formal education)
Geographical cultural and subcultural values
High gang-related activity
Intense interracial tension
Lack of social and emotional support services
School district policies and legal statutes regarding absenteeism

Galloway (1985, p.37) acknowledged that, "the school itself exerts an important influence on absence rates". Pilkington and Piersel (1991) additionally highlight that the school can be a source of anxiety. Research has identified school factors that contribute to non-attendance include: bullying (Fortune-Wood, 2007); school violence and victimisation (Kearney, 2008); social isolation in school (Place et al. 2000); school climate (Kearney, 2008); environments characterised by punishment and ridicule (Place et al. 2000); personality clashes with particular teachers (Galloway, 1985); lack of parental involvement in the school (Kearney, 2008); and educational failure (Galloway, 1985). Interestingly, Stoll (1995b, p.86) suggested that the concept that "schools are unquestionably good and anyone rejecting it must be deviant" must be disregarded. Furthermore, Pilkington and Piersel (1991) asserted that non-attendance can be a normal avoidance reaction to an unpleasant, unsatisfying, or even hostile environment. Coldman (1995) went further, and contended that non-attendance is a rational act, and stated that children may truant to miss lessons they deem to be of little benefit. This supports the notion that "truancy may be a sophisticated form of curriculum rejection" (Coldman, 1995, p.77). Debates continue regarding the appropriateness of the curriculum to cater for the needs of all pupils. Moreover, this assumption challenges the deficit model that perpetuates the notion

that children who do not attend school are generally lacking in some way either socially, emotionally or intellectually.

Finally, the contribution of the community has arguably received the least attention. This oversight raises interesting questions and conflicts with the view that behaviour occurs in a social context influenced by culture. More research is required to investigate factors within the social environment and community that influence attendance.

Although the causes of non-attendance identified above have been critically explored, it is important to acknowledge that non-attendance is,

> "multiply determined by factors that operate at various levels of ecology; and occurs when stress exceeds support, when risks are greater than resilience and when 'pull' factors that promote school non-attendance overcome the 'push' factors that encourage attendance" (Grandison, 2008, p.3).

Finally, the adopted discourse also has ramifications for the approach employed to promote attendance. Non-attendance referred to as 'truancy' has legal connotations and endorses punitive action, whereas non-attendance referred to as 'school-refusal' has clinical undertones and results in a sympathetic therapeutic approach. Interestingly, there has been a plethora of literature exploring therapeutic support for school-refusal, while limited attention has been focused on supporting 'truants'. This may imply that 'school refusers' are more deserving of sympathy and support than 'truants'. Furthermore, the notion that truancy is associated with children and young people from deprived areas and results in punishment as opposed to support serves

only further to reinforce social inequalities and raises questions regarding the helpfulness of the polarised dichotomy.

2.3.1 Refining the terminology and conceptualisation of non-attendance

This research will adopt a broader focus on non-attendance, using the term 'complex extended school non-attendance'. For economy, the abbreviation CESN-A will be adopted. The term CESN-A extends Pellegrini's (2007) term 'extended school non-attendance' by the inclusion of 'complex'. CESN-A neutrally describes the non-attendance without attributing blame or a cause and emphasises the complex and multi-faceted nature of extended non-attendance. Reference to the school highlights the notion that schools have an active role in both redressing some of the problematic issues and in facilitating the re-integration of persistent non-attenders, in conjunction with the child, their family and other agencies.

In an attempt to address some of the criticism regarding the conceptualisation of non-attendance I have developed a broader definition. The current paper adopts CESN-A and the related conceptualisation that has been derived from the literature, CESN-A as expressed by *children and young people who persistently do not attend school for an extended period of time. The non-attendance may be initiated by the child, parent(s)/family, peers or school and may be the result of multiple difficulties within the different ecological systems in which the child operates e.g. classroom, school, home and community.*

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has offered a critical perspective on the dominant legal and clinical discourses in the literature. The chapter provides a rationale for the use of broader terminology when referring to non-attendance and offers 'CESN-A' as an alternative to 'truant' or 'school refuser'. The necessity for wider conceptualisation and definition of non-attendance is also considered, in light of the myriad of causes and functions of non-attendance.

The chapter asserts the central premise that CESN-A requires an individually tailored approach that focuses on the multiple ecological levels in which the child operates. The chapter concludes with proposed terminology and conceptualisation and definition of non-attendance that has emerged from the literature review.

The next chapter will focus on the role of Local Authority professionals to promote attendance whilst working in a multi-agency context, with specific reference to Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs).

CHAPTER 3

PROFESSIONAL ROLES AND REMITS AND INTER-AGENCY WORKING

3.0 Introduction

This chapter considers the role of Local Authority (LA) professionals to promote attendance, with specific reference to Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs). The imperative of inter-agency working is critically explored with regard to the supportive and constraining factors implicated in such work. Finally, specific implications are considered for inter-agency working in relation to promoting attendance.

3.1 The role of LA professionals to promote attendance

Archer et al. (2004) acknowledged that there has been limited educational research investigating the strategies that can be adopted by LAs and schools to promote attendance. However, belief in the importance of the role of LA professionals and the school is highlighted by the premise that,

> "It is every teacher's responsibility to support every child effectively, every school's responsibility to support every teacher effectively and every Local Education Authority's [now Local Authority] responsibility to support schools effectively" (Dearden, 1994, p.54).

Stoll (1995a) described a case study of a three year project to promote attendance in a London secondary school. Stoll (1995a) reported that whole school attendance increased from 72% to 90% in the third year by a focus on: making the school a

welcoming place, 'social bases' for each of the year groups, information, incentives, curriculum, registers, staff, additional appointment of an EP and EWO, primary school links and practice, and dissemination. This demonstrates the value of a multi-faceted approach and delineates a role for EPs and EWOs in the promotion of attendance.

3.1.1 Educational Psychologists (EPs)

EPs can provide a distinctive contribution through the application of psychology. Psychology can be applied to create explanatory models to elucidate complex human problems, such as school non-attendance, that occur in complicated real-life contexts (Cameron, 2006). EPs devise problem solving strategies in endeavours to facilitate solutions (Cameron, 2006). This is achieved through assessment, consultation, advice, intervention, training and research (DfES, 2006; The Scottish Government, 2002). The Support and Aspiration green paper (DfE, 2011b, p.104) acknowledged that EPs "make a significant contribution to enabling children and young people to make progress with learning, behaviour and social relationships". This is achieved by EPs conducting direct work with children and young people, direct supportive work with families and work in schools and other educational settings to develop the skills of teachers and other professionals working with children (DfE, 2011b). Furthermore, support and collaboration with families, schools and other professionals may also serve to demystify the role of the EP and promote stakeholders' understanding (Fallon et al. 2010).

The British Psychological Society (BPS, 2010) asserted that EPs have a key role in promoting the effective social inclusion of children at risk of exclusion from school or other settings. This assertion affords a role for EPs in supporting children and young people who experience difficulty with school attendance. Philbrick and Tansey (2000) offered a brief summary of what may constitute the role of an EP specifically in relation to non-attendance (See Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1

- liaise with schools
- meet with children and families for assessment
- refer to other agencies, if necessary, e.g. Education Welfare Service, LA's Support Service or Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Service
- initiate formal assessment under the 1996 Education Act, if necessary
- facilitate communications between other involved agencies
- offer advice and/or support during reintegration into school**.**

Figure 3.1: *Brief summary of the roles of an EP in promoting attendance (taken from Philbrick and Tansey, 2000, p.19).*

Philbrick and Tansey's (2000) summary provides an initial insight into the role of an EP specifically in relation to non-attendance. However, the summary neglects to explicitly refer to the use and application of psychology. The summary fails to acknowledge the therapeutic support that can be provided by EPs. In addition, the summary does not highlight the systemic role that EPs can fulfil by offering staff training and research projects that promote organisational development.

Purcell and Tsverik (2008) argued that the inclusion of children who experience difficulties with attendance can be achieved by further understanding the function which school refusal is serving for the individual child. EPs arguably provide a

distinctive contribution through adopting an interactive view of the child that considers the influence of the multiple ecological levels e.g. home, school, community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) in which the child operates, alongside taking account of the child's characteristics. EPs also endeavour to understand and triangulate the sometimes differing perceptions that e.g. family, school staff and other professionals bring to a problem (Cameron, 2006). In addition, EPs adopt a child-centred approach that advocates the child's voice (Gersch, 2004).

Fallis and Opotow's (2003) study used student focus groups to investigate the views of students regarding 'class cutting'. Interestingly, their findings suggested that,

> "rather than relying on standard punitive approaches, schools can respond to non-attendance more effectively by taking students' concerns seriously, working collaboratively with students, and engaging in institutional self-scrutiny" (Fallis and Opotow, 2003, p.103).

The aforementioned factors, along with the application of psychology with reference to theoretical and research bases, enable an EP to provide a logical analysis and formulation that identifies the multiple factors that may underpin a problem and eschews simple answers to complex questions (Cameron, 2006).

Professional bodies such as the BPS and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) contend that EPs provide psychological formulation to inform interventions to promote positive change and development (BPS, 2010; HPC, 2010). Such interventions may include therapeutic work for children who may experience anxiety associated with school attendance. Additionally, EPs have a key role in the use of

"formulation to assist multi-professional communication and learning" (HPC, 2010, p.21).

Project work and systemic development are additional ways in which EPs can support inclusion and promote attendance. The DfE (2012) contended that best practice schools have high attendance as part of their school ethos. Arguably, engagement in systemic work may be an efficient element of service delivery and may have an impact on a larger number of pupils as opposed to conducting individual work with children (Monsen et al. 1998).

MacKay (2010, p.250) asserted that Educational Psychology is a research-based profession driven by the coherent values of "social justice in dealing with special educational needs, socio-economic disadvantage and the interests of those who are marginalised in society". Furthermore, MacKay (1997) identified that key professionals in schools, 98% of a sample of Head teachers, value the importance of research in informing practice and desire research to formulate part of EPs' service delivery to schools. The HPC (2010, p.17) proposed that EPs must be able to "work with key partners to support the design, implementation, conduct, evaluation and dissemination of research activities and to support evidence based research", the focus of this thesis.

3.1.2 Education Welfare Officers (EWOs)

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) has been described by Reid (2008, p.176) as,

"a specialist education support service which functions in partnership with schools, LAs and other support agencies to provide an effective and quality service to young people and their families who are vulnerable and in need of help and understanding, increasingly in a range of diverse fields which includes truancy and non-attendance. In practice today, EWS staff tend to deal with any problem that may prevent children from getting the most out of their schooling. Often they will operate with the whole family; providing a supportive role between the child's home, school and relevant external agencies".

Reid (2008) constructed a broad role for EWOs to promote attendance. The role is characterised by supportive partnership working between the child, family and school and one that involves collaborative inter-agency working. A brief summary of what may constitute the EWO's role is presented in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2

- assess circumstances which may have led to the breakdown of school attendance
- identify causes and significant factors which can assist in resolving the problem
- plan action with the child, family and the school, involving specialist agencies, if necessary, aimed at re-establishing attendance
- support the child and family to plan, implement and review strategies that can re-establish school attendance
- maintain records of work
- initiate Court action, in appropriate cases, on behalf of the LA should the problem remain unresolved.

Figure 3.2: *Brief summary of the roles of an EWO in promoting attendance (taken from Philbrick and Tansey, 2000, p.19).*

Philbrick and Tansey's (2000) brief summary of the role of an EWO when compared to their outline of the role of an EP (Figure 3.1) illustrate both shared and distinctive roles. Philbrick and Tansey (2000) suggest that both EPs and EWOs endeavour to promote attendance by the assessment of need relating to the child and family and by referral to other external agencies. The summaries also illuminate EPs distinctive

statutory role of conducting psychological assessment under the 1996 Education Act. EWOs distinct contribution is identified as relating to the statutory role of initiating court action if non-attendance persists.

Findings from the DfE (2011) profile of pupil absence in England demonstrated that overall attendance across all maintained schools is improving and that the amount of authorised absences has decreased. However, a consistent and concerning trend illustrates that the number of unauthorised absences is increasing. This finding mandates the continued development of professionals with the responsibility of promoting school attendance. This assertion is further perpetuated by research that indicates that school professionals are increasingly losing confidence in the EWS due to a perceived inability to improve attendance (Swansea Institute of Higher Education, 2003).

The Education Welfare profession are experiencing recursive transformations and significant challenges: the role of EWOs is constantly changing and becoming increasingly complex (Reid, 2008). It could be argued that the roles and responsibilities of EWOs in a changing landscape are undermined by the dearth of professional literature regarding the implications of such changes for the profession. This is further confounded by low number of studies of school attendance which refer to the role of the EWO and/or seek information from EWSs (Galloway, 1985). Moreover, recent developments in policy and practice have resulted in increased involvement of differing professional agencies to support attendance, such as school liaison officers, attendance officers, learning mentors, police support staff, regional

truancy officers, social workers and others (Reid, 2008). The apparent increased multi-agency involvement in relation to attendance has implications for the role and responsibility of the EWO and raises questions regarding role demarcation. It also arguably, poses a real threat to the sustainability of a profession facing significant challenges (Figure 3.3). Reid (2008) asserted that the last review of the role and responsibilities of the EWS was the Ralphs Report (1973), which called for a contemporary review in light of a number of pertinent developments (see Figure 3.3).

However, Reid (2006) examined professional views by collating 431 questionnaires completed by EWO/ESWs throughout England and Wales. He found that one third of EWO/ESWs considered that they are in the best position, over other education professionals, to help truants and absentees. Interestingly two thirds of the EWO/ESWs therefore, did not consider that they are in the best position to help truants and absentees. However, further information regarding this is not explored in the research findings.

The Government has reinforced the paramount importance of the accurate recording of attendance data (DfE, 2012), and here a key role is afforded for EWOs to support and challenge schools to ensure that attendance data are accurate. The DfE (2012, p.2) has criticised schools as "not thorough enough at analysing their data, spotting patterns of absence and dealing with them swiftly". Grandison (2011) contended that accurate data recording is essential to ensure accurate analysis of non-attendance in order to inform effective interventions. However, pressure on schools to improve

attendance from targets, Ofsted and league tables that ultimately influence funding

may result in perverse incentives to authorise absence.

Figure 3.3

- legislative changes, such as Children Act 2004, Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and Education Act 1996;
- policy developments regarding multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary frameworks;
- findings that EWOs have to navigate diverse practice and referral policies between and within Local Authorities and between schools;
- the absence of a united nationally agreed-upon pay scale or terms and conditions of service for EWOs;
- inconsistency in relation to the organisational structures in which EWOs work. Some EWOs are centrally based in LA teams, some regionally based in locality multi-agency teams, and others are based in schools.
- the profession appears divided between those with social work qualifications (previously referred to as Education Social Workers) and those with no formal social work or professional qualifications.
- the divergent professional practice of EWS and individual EWOs.
- the apparent expanding job role of EWOs, with the role not confined solely to attendance combined with the later referral of 'crisis-orientated' cases so that EWOs are becoming involved following escalation and when cases are both more serious and more complex.
- the necessity to respond to the changes in family life in British society such as its increasing fragmentation, complexity, multi-faceted and multi-cultural nature.
- historical trends that the EWS has been vulnerable to cuts in times of economic austerity.

Figure 3.3: *Summary of the issues that Reid (2008) has discussed that warrant a review of the role of an EWO*

EWOs have a statutory responsibility to initiate legal action against parents whose

children are persistently absent from school. However, Reid (2006) found that only a

very small minority of EWO/ESWs deemed the existing legislation to offer an

effective framework within which to manage non-attendance. This is further

supported by the finding that 40-50% of fines are not paid, and claims that the legal

system is "protracted and inconsistent" (DfE, 2012, p.4). The finding that EWO/ESWs generally do not regard legislative action such as fines, jail, education supervision orders, attendance orders, parenting orders and anti-social behavioural orders as effective in managing non-attendance may signal an opportunity for increased systemic, holistic support work to take place through collaboration between the EWOs, schools and other professionals such as EPs. The welfare and punitive aspects of the EWO role are not distinct but represent a continuum. Differences within the profession exist regarding the 'position' that EWOs occupy on this continuum. Consequently, the individual EWOs 'position' will reflect the speed of movement from welfare to punishment.

In contrast, Reid (2006) found that one third of the EWO/ESW sample expressed the view that pupils who miss school should accept the full consequences and not be given extra help/classes to catch up on missed work. These findings suggest that some EWO/ESWs may have negative attitudes towards children who do not attend school and regard punishment, alongside reduced support to catch up on missed work, as appropriate. This attitude implies a narrow belief that the children themselves are responsible for their non-attendance and negates broader consideration of the impact of the school and social environment when conceptualising non-attendance. This presents clear implications in relation to practice and may provide a barrier to inter-agency working with EPs. Fortune-Wood (2007) asserted that the adoption of a punitive approach and threat of legal action and/or imprisonment is inappropriate as it increases the pressure on an already difficult situation and adds to the problems without offering any solution.

Stoll (1995b) contended that preventative work must involve partnership working between EWOs and teachers, directed at working with pupils in school. Reid (2006) found that a slight overall majority of EWO/ESWs suggested that the implementation of more alternative/ vocational curriculum schemes in schools afforded by far the best solution to address non-attendance. In addition, Reid (2006) reported that 81% of the EWOs/ESWs considered that help to counsel non-attenders should be given by staff in schools rather than by specialist outside agencies. This may present a further barrier to inter-agency working with EPs. However, this assertion may also afford a key role for EWOs and EPs to work in a consultative manner and develop school staffs' capacity to offer supportive and therapeutic environments for their pupils. O'Keefe (1995) called for EWOs to rethink their role and suggested that EWOs need to change their focus from children who deem school threatening because of troubled family backgrounds, or because of psychological deficits, to concentrate instead on school based factors such as developing their knowledge of the curriculum, lessons and teaching. Furthermore, O'Keefe (1995) suggested a three pronged strategy for EWOs to improve the level of vigilance and data recording, improve the welcoming aspects of school and improve the quality of lessons.

3.2 Inter-agency working

The impetus for improved collaborative working between professionals was highlighted by Lord Laming (HMSO, 2003) in the Victoria Climbié Inquiry and is reinforced by legislation and policy initiatives. Laming contended that the failure of a

range of services to work together had prevented the protection of a vulnerable child. Following the Inquiry, the Every Child Matters (ECM) Agenda (DfES, 2003) described five key outcomes that were considered fundamental to promoting the wellbeing of children and young people. In order to deliver on the five outcomes, statutory LA services were required to reorganise themselves to form Children's Services. The change in working suggested by the ECM agenda was enshrined in The Children Act 2004. This Act required the development of LA Children's Services which bring together professionals in education and social care. The Act specifically necessitated partnership working across all agencies working with children in a particular LA area, in order to promote positive outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The Children Act 2006 went a step further, and signalled a move towards integrated services and co-located service provision. Furthermore, the DCSF (2007) asserted that Children's Services would benefit from adopting a multidisciplinary structure to shape services around the needs of children as opposed to professional boundaries. In addition, the current Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government has also endorsed "joined-up services" by bringing together education, health and social care through proposing a single assessment, care plan and package of support based on the specific needs of the child and family (DfE, 2011b). Moreover, the Government has pledged that they,

> "want to make it easier for professionals and services to work together, and we want to create conditions that encourage innovative and collaborative ways of providing better support for children, young people and their families" (DfE, 2011b, p.11).

The current research is situated in a LA that has embraced the co-location of services and has organised services into Multi-Agency Support Teams (MASTs) that

aspire to offer tailored support to the locality they serve. The research intends to go beyond investigate integrated working between EPs and EWOs in relation to improving the support for children and young people who exhibit complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A).

Lloyd et al. (2001) proposed a definitional distinction between 'multi-agency' and 'inter-agency' working. Multi-agency working is suggested to occur when more than one agency is supporting a client in the absence of co-ordination and joined-up practice and may result in replication due to a lack of formal, informed inter-agency working. In contrast inter-agency working involves more than one agency working collaboratively in a planned and informed manner at a strategic and/ or operational level. This distinction may also be synonymous with Ledbetter's (2006) illuminated difference between *co-location*, where differing professionals are located and sit together, and *co-working*, where differing professionals work in an integrated manner.

The focus of the current research is inter-agency working. However, for the purposes of this paper, when discussing specific research I will use the same terminology that has been utilised by the researchers, to capture potential semantic nuances.

3.3 The challenges and opportunities presented by inter-agency working

Multi-agency working has been suggested as a means of ensuring that children and young people will be safeguarded from harm, have better opportunities to develop

and reach their full potential, receive effective support if they experience difficulties and be better able to access targeted services faster and with less stigma (DfES, 2004). Furthermore, Wigfall and Moss (2001) highlighted the long-term benefits of preventative multi-agency working. However, Atkinson et al. (2002) identified that multi-agency working is contingent on the following key factors and skills: commitment or willingness; understanding roles/responsibilities; common aims and objectives; communication/information sharing; leadership or drive; involving relevant personnel; funding/resources; good working relationships and having adequate time. Sharp (2003) additionally identified the need for professionals in multi-agency teams to be honest and open, to do what they say they are going to do, to be flexible, to think laterally and creatively and not 'pass the buck'. The Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) (2008, p.12) asserted that "multi-agency work is not easy or easily achieved".

Hughes (2006) accepted the value of multi-agency working but underscored the importance of the 'permission' to reflect critically on the radical changes and rethinking required by multi-agency working. A central challenge to multi-agency working relates to the notion of potential 'threat' to professional identity and expertise. Anning et al. (2006) stated that the sharing of different forms of professional knowledge and different cultural practices is one of the significant barriers to multi-agency working. Furthermore, Beck and Young (2005) described multi-agency teams as a direct assault on professionals' autonomy, and the legitimacy of their claims and expertise based on exclusive possession of specialised knowledge. However, Daniels et al. (2010, p.532) acknowledged the potential 'threat' to professional

identity but contextualised it within the imperative to embrace new ways of multi-agency working,

> "fluid, collaborative and distributed working practices have destabilised traditional professional roles, identities and values. The working practices required to support 'at risk' young people and families are not the discrete province of any one profession but require planned configurations of complementary expertise drawn from across education, health and social services".

Leadbetter et al. (2007) contended that the preservation of professional identity during the transformation to multi-agency teams, when the divisions of labour are renegotiated and established role boundaries are blurred and redefined, is both a complex and multi-faceted challenge. A further potential barrier to multi-agency working relates to the potential for inter-professional jealousies in teams where pay and conditions between professional groups vary.

The majority of the literature concerning multi-agency working espouses the benefits of working in integrated teams (Hymans, 2008). Edwards (2004, p.8) proposed that the development of multi-agency teams required new professional learning, which necessitated:

- "recognising the immensity of the changes needed if provision is to move from being led by service needs and become more directly orientated to promoting the well-being of children, young people and their families;

- clarifying their rationales for inter-agency collaborations;

- identifying what kinds of collaborations are then needed;

- learning from existing local successes;

- analysing the implications for inter-professional staff training at practitioner, management and strategic levels;

- providing training opportunities focused on building and sustaining new networks of trust at operational, management and strategic levels; and

- allocating resources and monitoring provision in ways which give support to new practices".

Multi-agency working has been suggested to provide an opportunity to widen professional remits (Leadbetter, 2006) and flexibly develop skills and knowledge (Gaskell and Leadbetter, 2009), specifically in relation to understanding the roles, cultures, structures, discourses and priorities of other professional groups (AEP, 2008). Moreover, multi-agency teams may also lead to increased inter-professional value for the work of others (Gaskell and Leadbetter, 2009). More specifically, multi-agency working is suggested to be beneficial when navigating complex problems, such as non-attendance, that cannot be resolved in a linear manner (Watson, 2006).

3.4 Inter-agency working to support school attendance

Archer et al. (2004) identified that schools favour a multi-agency approach to promoting attendance, based on a sample of 16 schools ranging in size (1,700-6 pupils) and type (secondary-Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), and spread geographically across the country. In addition, Pellegrini (2007) suggested that effective preventative interventions will involve the support of external agencies that provide an early response to pupils struggling with attendance. Multi-agency analysis of systemic risk factors that may contribute to non-attendance is also deemed vital for effective preventative intervention (Pellegrini, 2007). Furthermore, Philbrick and Tansey (2000,

p.29) argued that the detrimental impact of non-attendance on children's emotional, social and cognitive development can be avoided through,

> "a co-ordinated multi-agency response aimed at maximising their successful reintegration, educationally and socially, promoting their emotional development and reducing the likelihood of mental health problems persisting into adult life".

Pellegrini (2007) urged a multi-agency approach at multiple levels with EWOs, EPs, teachers, other agencies and parents working together to promote attendance. Figure 3.4 presents an overview of what a multi-agency approach may constitute in practice.

Both the literature and practice in relation to multi-agency approaches to promoting attendance have received criticism (Grandison, 2011; Kearney, 2008; Pellegrini, 2007). Furthermore, Pellegrini (2007) called for researchers and practitioners to engage in well-designed empirical research to answer questions still unanswered about school non-attendance behaviour and ways to address it.

Kearney (2008) criticised the apparent incongruent literature in relation to the varying terminology, conceptualisation, frameworks, interventions and methods of addressing school absenteeism. The paper additionally aspired to transform the 'disjointed uncoordinated approaches for resolving the problem' of school absenteeism by proposing a theoretical account of interdisciplinary working and offering an initial model that may be used and developed by professionals.

Figure 3.4

- a multi-agency assessment of the problem
- promotion of a common understanding of the areas of difficulty
- formulation of an action plan with realistic targets and timescales, detailing which agencies should become involved and in what capacity (a process essentially the same as drawing up an Individual Education Plan)
- planning and target-setting with the child to assist him or her to feel more in control
- persisting with agreed targets despite any setbacks, rather than continually seeking new or alternative 'solutions'
- supporting flexible approaches to timetabling, which may include temporarily allowing some part-time attendance.
- alerting all to the need for vigilance following natural breaks e.g. holidays or genuine illness as anxieties often resurface at such times
- ensuring all staff are informed about the child's difficulties
- circulating a progress report to raise the child's profile within school
- in-service training for school staff about the nature and management of anxious school refusal
- seeking advice and/or support from the LAs Learning Support Service or Educational Psychology Service, where appropriate. A range of provision may exist within individual LA's for supporting anxious/school phobic pupils and will be set out in the LAs Behaviour Support Plan
- a range of therapeutic intervention and support for the child and family from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- holding regular informal and formal reviews of progress.

Figure 3.4: *Examples of what may constitute multi-agency involvement to promote attendance (taken from Philbrick and Tansey, 2000, p.14).*

Moreover, Kearney (2008) identified and provided discussion of the salient factors that are necessary for interdisciplinary working. These factors include: consensus on terminology and definition; a comprehensive understanding of the myriad of risk factors that impinge upon school absenteeism; a flexible and fluid approach that accounts for frequent changes in behaviours, attendance, and risk factors; and the interdisciplinary development of assessment (such as interviews and questionnaires) and intervention strategies. In addition, Kearney (2008) suggested a need for training initiatives for parents, teachers and professionals in an attempt to coordinate efforts,

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share knowledge, and develop greater consensus. The paper has the ultimate aspiration of facilitating interdisciplinary working to prevent and reduce non-attendance at individual and systemic levels. However, Kearney's proposed model of interdisciplinary working is theoretical and research is required to examine its use and effectiveness in practice. Moreover, an iterative approach to develop and refine the model would increase credibility.

Grandison (2008) offered an illuminative case study account of multi-agency working in relation to school refusal. The paper is positioned as practitioner research with the aim of ultimately improving practice, with implicit aspirations of improved service delivery. Although it may not be possible to generalise the findings to other LAs, the paper offers a rich insight into practice and arguably affords transferable knowledge through theoretical generalisation. The research asserted that there may be a propensity for professional allegiance and sensitivities that may result in a tendency to blame others for identified problems in relation to school refusal. In addition, Grandison (2011) contended that a further barrier to multi-agency working is that the various agencies that may be involved with children and young people with attendance difficulties have differing priorities and so have different ways of conceptualising non-attendance and classifying young people who do not attend. Grandison (2008) proposed that such working may benefit from:

- a local working definition of school refusal;
- school refusal to be conceptualised as a continuum;
- evidence-based strategic planning;

- strategic planning with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS);

- schools adopting a central role in relation to identification, intervention, planning and monitoring;

- the development of early intervention, training and prevention; and

- the review and evaluation of work from differing perspectives.

EPs in West Sussex County Council (2004) conducted context-specific exploratory research examining the assumptions and practices of teachers, educational support services, medical professionals and others regarding children and young people who experience anxiety associated with school attendance. The LA research identified numerous barriers to multi-agency working (See Figure 3.5).

Although the research's findings are context-specific and focus on the segment of the CESN-A population who experience high levels of anxiety, it affords a valuable insight into potential barriers to multi-agency working in relation to non-attendance. In addition, some of the findings are consistent with those of other research (Kearney, 2008; Grandison, 2008 and 2011), allowing the potential for theoretical generalisations (Yin, 1989). The West Sussex research proposed that some of the potential obstacles to co-ordinated multi-agency working may be addressed by the adoption of a nine phase model of identification, planning and intervention (See Appendix Two).

Figure 3.5

- Lack of a shared definition of emotionally based school refusal and its characteristics
- First course of action by the Education Welfare Service is frequently to seek a medical opinion about a pupil's fitness to attend school
- Current Local Education Authority policy requires a medical opinion to be ratified at Consultant level. Consultant Community Paediatrics often do not have the time available for this purpose. An alternative route is to refer to a Consultant Psychiatrist in CAMHS but this can lead to considerable delay
- Delays mean that pupils remain out of school, or as anxious attenders, for too long and find it increasingly difficult to get into school
- While a medical opinion is being sought, some pressure is removed from the school as a medically sanctioned, authorised, non-attendance is often anticipated
- Non-attendance issues are not readily brought to the attention of the Educational Psychologist, and can be viewed by others as a relatively low priority
- The Educational Psychology role in relation to non-attendance is not sufficiently clearly defined
- Education Welfare Officers often feel that access to Educational Psychologists for consultations on such cases can be difficult
- Lack of lead practitioner or shared, co-ordinated planning across agencies involved
- Information not always sought or shared in an organised way between schools, educational support services and other professionals
- Pupils often referred to Case Management Panel before other professionals have been consulted or had opportunity to become involved. The Case Management Panel may therefore not have sufficient information on which to base a decision.

Figure 3.5: *Barriers to co-ordinated multi-agency working in relation to supporting pupils who experience anxiety associated with school attendance (Identified by West Sussex County Council, 2004, p.18)*

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter explored the role of LA professionals to promote attendance with specific reference to EPs and EWOs. The chapter considered the legislative imperative for multi-agency approaches. Multi-agency working is critically explored

with regard to the constraining and supportive factors pertinent to multiple agencies working together in an integrated manner. The chapter explored the necessity for multi-agency approaches to offer support specifically to children and young people who experience difficulties with attendance. The dearth of research on collaborative inter-agency work, particularly between EPs and EWOs, in relation to promoting attendance is highlighted. The chapter concludes with an exploration of research investigating multi-agency approaches to promoting attendance and consideration of the findings and recommendations for improved practice. The current research endeavours to extend the findings from the aforementioned studies. The next chapter will discuss professional learning with the aspiration of improving practice and outcomes for children and young people who experience complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A), with the ultimate aim of developing service delivery.

CHAPTER 4

WORKING, LEARNING AND CHANGING TOGETHER

4.0 Introduction

Chapter Four considers the process of professional learning. Cameron (2006) asserted that psychology is fundamentally concerned with the way in which individuals and groups learn and develop and how this in turn informs the advancement of society. The chapter explores professional learning in work organisations and draws on socio-cultural perspectives and Engeström's (1999a) theory of expansive learning for organisational development and change. Finally, the chapter considers research that provides a situated socio-cultural analysis and insight into professional learning in complex work organisations which comprise multi-agency teams. The research discussed also illuminates the development of working practices for the purpose of improving the support offered for children and young people.

4.1 Professional learning in work organisations

Professional learning can be considered from individual and socio-cultural perspectives (Eraut, 2007). Wertsch et al. (1995) contended that socio-cultural approaches originate from Vygotskian theory. The term socio-cultural, in the context of this research, is discussed in relation to activity theory. Activity theory is derived from the ideas of Vygotsky and other Soviet theorists, and has most recently been

popularised in Western societies by researchers such as Engeström (Leadbetter, 2008). Boreham and Morgan (2004, p.308) suggested that from a socio-cultural perspective the,

> "concept of learning implies the simultaneous transformation of social practices and the individuals who participate in them, and thus the social and individual dimensions of learning are mutually constitutive".

The imperative to consider the individual and the social context in which learning occurs complements Vygotsky's (1978) proposition that social interaction plays a fundamental role in learning and the development of cognition. Vygotsky contended that learning first occurs at the social level (inter-psychological) and then at the individual level (intra-psychological). Additionally, Edwards et al. (2009) suggested an inextricable link between the individual and organisational learning. Boreham and Morgan (2004, p.307) rejected the notion that individual autonomy is essential for adult learning and proposed the necessity of collective learning in which "autonomy is achieved by building relationships with others". Furthermore, Edwards et al. (2009, p.22) suggested that,

> "professional learning involves being able to recognise, access, use and contribute to the knowledge that is embedded in the social practices of the workplace and the resources used there and is therefore specific to the organisation".

In addition, Dekker (2007) intimated the necessity to first understand the relationships and roles of individuals in systems and offered that research concerned with work-related performance needs to go beyond an individual focus and include systemic factors and interactions. Munro and Hubbard (2011) affirmed the importance of the social context and postulated that the roles of individuals and their

relationships within a system have significant effects on the overall functioning of an organisation.

Socio-cultural perspectives construct learning as a collaborative endeavour that is contextually situated and influenced by culture. Denison (2001) argued that organisational culture is a central aspect of organisational change and development. Leadbetter et al. (2007) suggested that an understanding of the culture and history of a context is important when endeavouring to promote change. Moreover, Leadbetter et al. (2007, p.87) contended that "socio-cultural perspectives and activity theory emphasise the need to ground any analyses of practice within wider contexts that take account of how and why practices developed in the past". Although organisational culture is a contested construct (Boreham and Morgan, 2004), Schein (1992, p.12) defined organisational culture as,

> "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and which has worked well enough to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems".

When describing professional learning Edwards et al. (2009) suggested that it is a process by which individuals internalise the ideas that are important to the culture and organise them into schemas that have logic for increasingly informed sense-making. The schemas are then used to aid problem-solving to inform action.

Argyris (1990) promoted the significance of critical reflection for learning and highlighted the perils of professionals becoming increasingly 'time-constrained' and 'outcome-orientated' in the absence of reflection. Engeström (1995, p.377) proposed the notion of 'innovative organisational learning' and asserted that such learning is

"collaborative learning in work organisations that produce new solutions, procedures, or systemic transformations in organisational practices". Additionally, Boreham and Morgan (2004, p.308) suggested that,

> "most contemporary researchers define learning as organisational to the extent that it is undertaken by members of an organisation to achieve organisational purposes, takes place in teams or other small groups, is distributed widely throughout the organisation and embeds its outcomes in the organisation's system, structures and culture".

The socio-cultural perspective of learning reinforces the importance of individuals within the system to the promotion of organisational change. Engeström (2001) advocated that it is the members within an organisation who represent the central force for authentic organisational change and development. Furthermore, Mezirow (1991) afforded importance to the perceptions of professionals. The perspectives of professionals are constructed to provide principles for interpreting, and subsequently influencing decision-making and action. Sackmann (2001, p.348) emphasised the imperative of the "native's point of view…an understanding of the meaning of a situation from the insider's perspective". Sackmann extended this position when she suggested that an understanding of the various perspectives of the actors/individuals in a context or social setting are fundamental to providing useful insights and ultimately comprehending the meaning of the context or social setting.

Acknowledgement of problems or tensions within the organisation has also been regarded as an essential aspect of organisational change (Engeström, 2008; Denison, 2001). Engeström (2008) suggested that learning is expanded when individuals question accepted practice. Argyris (1990, p.156) asserted that for organisational defences to change, they cannot be ignored. He added that

organisational denial, distortion and delusions can result in organisations that are "strangled by their own defences". In addition, Argyris (1990) contended that developing professionals' capability to deal effectively with embarrassment and threat improves learning capacity and promotes continued development. Denison (2001, p.353) argued that, "to create organisational change it is important to focus on the internal contradictions and paradoxes that exist in any organisation". However, Sackmann (2001, p.157) conceded that, "little is known about the messiness of cultural contexts, about inherent contradictions and paradoxes".

Engeström (2001, p.105) criticised theories of organisational learning as, "typically weak in spelling out the specific processes or actions that make the learning process". Engeström (1999a) proposed the notion of an expansive cycle for organisational learning and development (see Figure 4.1). The expansive learning cycle consists of seven 'epistemic' or 'learning actions'.

Figure 4.1
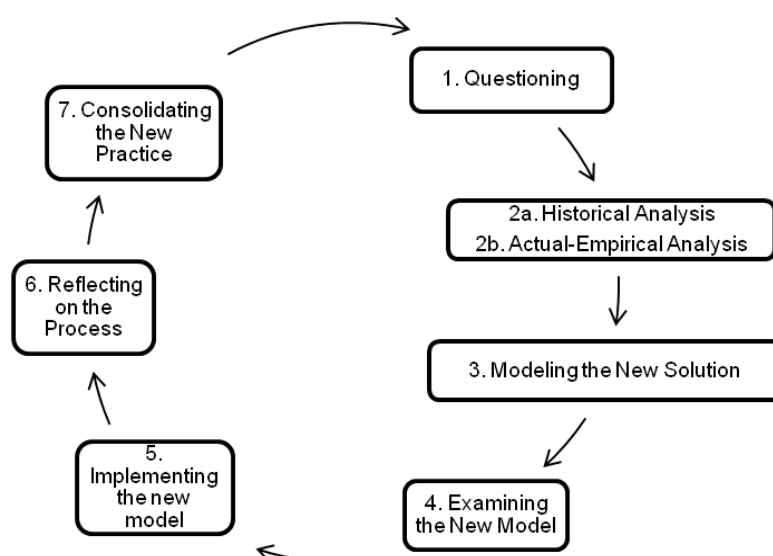
Figure 4.1: *Expansive Learning Cycle (taken from Engeström, 1999a, p.384)*

A description of the seven 'epistemic' or 'learning actions' in an expansive cycle is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: A description of the ideal-typical sequence of learning actions in an expansive cycle (taken from Engeström, 1999a, p.383-384)

Learning Action	Description of the Learning Action
1. Questioning	Questioning, criticising, or rejecting some aspects of accepted practice and existing wisdom.
2. Analysing	Analysing the situation. Analysis involves mental, discursive, or practical transformation of the situation in order to find out causes or explanatory mechanisms.
3. Modeling	Modeling the newly found explanatory relationships in some publicly observable and transmittable medium. This means constructing an explicit, simplified model of new idea that explains and offers a solution to the problematic situation.
4. Examining the Model	Running, operating and experimenting on the model in order to fully grasp its dynamics, potentials and limitations.
5. Implementing the Model	Concretising the model by means of practical applications, enrichments and conceptual extensions.
6. Reflecting	Reflecting on and evaluating the process.
7. Consolidating	Consolidating the outcomes into a new, stable form of practice.

Engeström (2010; 2001) proposed that organisational learning is not 'stable', but a moving target and that we learn new forms of practice as they are created. The expansive learning cycle is conceptualised as recursive, with the acknowledgement that a "large-scale, expansive cycle of organisational transformation always consists of small cycles of innovative learning" (Engeström, 1999a, p.385). The entire cycle is viewed as "energised and often radically refocused by negotiation: questioning,

criticising, even rejecting the accepted wisdom" (Engeström, 1999a, p.385). The expansive cycle is conceptualised as a method of understanding what is being worked upon by "tracing and reproducing theoretically the logic of its development, of its historical formation" (Engeström, 1999a, p.382).

A central premise of the theory is the notion that evolving tensions or contractions that may be identified in the complex organisational system offer potentials for continued learning and development. Engeström (2001) contended that expansive learning relates to the processes in which an activity system (such as a professional group or organisation) recursively resolves contradictions by constructing and implementing new ways of working. Engeström and Sannino (2011) reinforced the importance of identification and resolution of contradictions as a means of promoting organisational change, but asserted the need for researchers to be transparent in their use of the term 'contradiction'. Contradictions are not directly observable, but can be viewed through manifestations (Engeström and Sannino, 2011). More specifically, Engeström and Kerosuo (2007, p.339) suggested that,

> "participants of an activity system take specific learning actions to analyse inner contradictions in their activity, then design and implement a new model for their activity, that radically expands its object, opening up new possibilities for action and development."

Engeström's theory of expansive learning has been utilised as a theoretical framework to transform work and learning in various organisational work settings such as a bank, a primary health care centre, a hi-tech company (Engeström, 2007a) and Local Authorities (Durbin, 2009; Edwards et al. 2009; Leadbetter et al. 2007; Daniels et al. 2010). In accordance with the focus of the current research, I will

concentrate attention on studies that explore expansive learning in Local Authority contexts that are organised into multi-agency teams.

4.2 Research examples of professional learning in LA work organisations

Leadbetter et al. (2007) conducted national research, as part of the 'Learning in and for Inter-agency Working' (LIW) four-year project, to investigate how new ways of professional working were being achieved. Edwards et al. (2009) and Daniels et al. (2010) additionally provided a discussion of the LIW project. Leadbetter et al. (2007) discussed research conducted in five different Children's Service teams across England that had recently been re-organised into multi-agency teams. The researchers adopted socio-cultural activity theory as a methodology to conceptualise, analyse and understand complex work-based practices within their wider social, cultural and historical contexts. Leadbetter et al. (2007) utilised interviews and observations informed by activity theory to collect data regarding working practices. Activity theory was also used to analyse the data. The analysis and intervention consisted of a series of developmental work research (DWR) change labs (Engeström, 1987) with the aim of stimulating professional learning and development.

The research illuminated emerging themes associated with multi-agency working such as issues related to co-location and co-working, evolution of professional identities, discussions of division of labour and professional expertise. Specifically,

Daniels et al. (2010, p.533) stated that inter-agency working requires professional learning that focuses on,

> "asking *with* whom practices are developed, where current practices lead *to,* where practices have emerged *from* and *around* what activities and processes new practices emerge. These are concerns which recognise that professional learning in and for multi-agency working is embedded in fluid social and cultural contexts".

The researcher's concluded that support for 'at risk' children, young people and their families should no longer be the province of one professional group. Daniels et al. (2010) asserted that LAs need to reconfigure professional expertise and ensure on-going partnership and 'joined-up' working between education, health and social care professionals. Daniels et al. (2010) used Engeström et al.'s (1995) concept of *boundary-crossing* to suggest that expertise can be developed when professionals collaborate across professional groups and services. Daniels et al. (2010) argued that distributed and complementary expertise promotes better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Durbin's (2009) research explored professional contributions and learning in a multidisciplinary team whose function is to support the mental health and psychological well-being of children within family and community settings. He utilised socio-cultural activity theory and the theory of expansive learning as a theoretical framework and methodology for the research. Durbin (2009) employed individual interviews with professionals and focus groups with professional groupings to gain and compare professionals' perceptions and surface contradictions. Durbin (2009) conducted developmental work research (Engeström, 1987) with the multi-

disciplinary team to work on the contradictions and promote expansive learning, change and development.

Findings and themes were presented for the outcomes, tools used and the rules that support and constrain the work of individual professional groups and the multidisciplinary team. The research involved one context (case) and the findings may not generalise to other multidisciplinary teams or areas of work that do not relate to the promotion of mental health for children up to 11 years. However, there is an opportunity for analytical generalisation. Durbin (2009) concluded that the application of activity theory enabled useful professional development experience. He argued that the use of activity theory stimulated expansive learning by highlighting contradictions, encouraging professionals to consider activity holistically and by affording professionals space to reflect on their role and explore new ways of working.

The aforementioned research provides authentic analytical accounts and real life insights into the developing working practices of multi-agency teams. The use of activity theory provides a coherent structure to anchor the multiplicity of variables associated with multi-agency working (Leadbetter, 2007). Furthermore, activity theory provides an appropriate theoretical and methodological framework from which to understand, analyse and illuminate the processes involved in professional and team activity in multi-agency teams (Daniels, 2007). Activity theory also provides a dynamic and developmental methodology that complements the rapid changes in practice and offers the opportunity to consider the multi-agency changes with

reference to cultural and historical contexts (Leadbetter, 2008). The findings from the research discussed suggest that surfacing and working on contradictions within activity systems appears to stimulate learning actions and some potentially expansive learning activity within individuals, groups and a whole team, creating the potential for expansive learning in work organisations (Durbin, 2009).

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter considers professional learning and organisational change and development through the lens of socio-cultural perspectives. The chapter affirms Engeström's notion that no action, activity or learning is independent of social, cultural and institutional specifics (Leadbetter, 2008). The theory of expansive learning is explored as a theoretical framework in which to promote professional learning and facilitate organisational change and development. The exploration of LIW project and Durbin's (2009) research illustrates that activity theory provides a framework for understanding the social and cultural aspects of an organisation. Furthermore, interventionist DWR facilitates organisational change and development.

The current research endeavours to contribute towards the learning generated from the aforementioned research by providing a contextually specific insight into professional learning to improve inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs in one LA.

Chapter Five offers a detailed account of the research design for the current study. Activity theory is utilised as a theoretical framework and methodology in an endeavour to design practitioner research that provides in-depth analysis and promotes professional learning and organisational development. Due consideration is given to ethical issues and how they may be addressed. The data collection techniques are informed by activity theory and the data are qualitatively analysed by use of thematic analysis.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

5.0 Research aims and questions

5.0.1 Research aims

The research aims to offer a broad conceptualisation of non-attendance that promotes a shared understanding and affords inter-agency collaboration. The research considers inter-agency working between Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) in one LA by exploring their perceptions in relation to how they collaboratively support children and young people who experience complex extended non-attendance (CESN-A). The research aims to stimulate professional learning and illuminate new ways of working that will improve the support offered for children and young people.

The following key research questions were formulated with regard to the existing literature, activity theory methodology, social constructionism epistemology and case study design.

5.0.2 Research questions

- What do EPs and EWOs perceive is their professional role in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A?

- What do EPs and EWOs perceive facilitates or constrains inter-agency collaboration to support children and young people who experience CESN-A?

Sub-question related to the methodology

- What are the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur, that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

- What new ways of working do EPs and EWOs suggest that will enhance inter-agency collaboration between EPs and EWO's in relation to CESN-A?

- Does socio-cultural activity theory afford a useful framework to understand, analyse and explore the professional practice of EPs' and EWOs' inter-agency working in relation to CESN-A?

5.1 Research methodology

5.1.1 Activity theory

Activity theory is subject to on-going debates regarding its definition, origin, functions and relationship to other concepts (Leadbetter et al. 2007). In spite of this, activity theory is the subject of increasing international acknowledgement and is employed by multidisciplinary researchers and practitioners (Engeström, 1999b). The current research focuses on Engeström's interpretation of activity theory which is

contextualised by an exploration of his tri-generational representation of an activity system (Engeström, 1999b). An activity system relates to a "collective formation that has a complex mediational structure" (Engeström, 2008 p.5). In the context of this research, EPs and EWOs are viewed as two activity systems. Engeström developed a triangular model to depict an activity system in an endeavour to provide a conceptual tool for "concrete research" (Engeström, 1999b, p.30). In an attempt to acknowledge the importance of historicity, I will consider the genealogy of Engeström's three generational models. Engeström's first generation model of an activity system depicts a simple triangular representation (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1
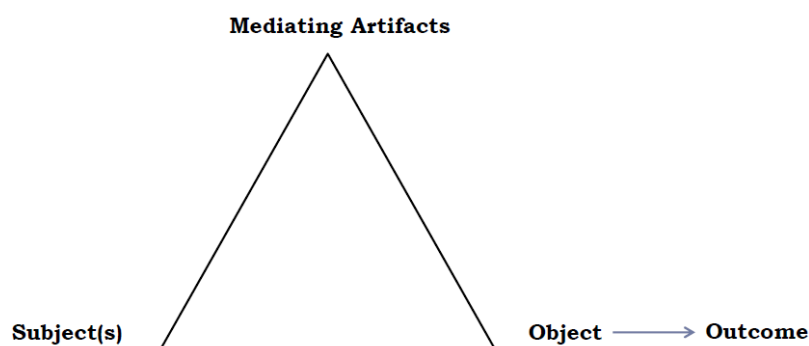
Figure 5.1: *First generation activity theory model (taken from Engeström, 1999b, p.30)*

The first generation is predicated on Vygotsky's idea of mediation (Daniels, 2008) and premise that cultural artifacts such as machines, writing, speaking and gesture mediate human action. Engeström expanded the first generation depiction to address an acknowledged limitation that it did not explicate the societal and collaborative

nature of actions. The second generation model of activity theory is presented in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2
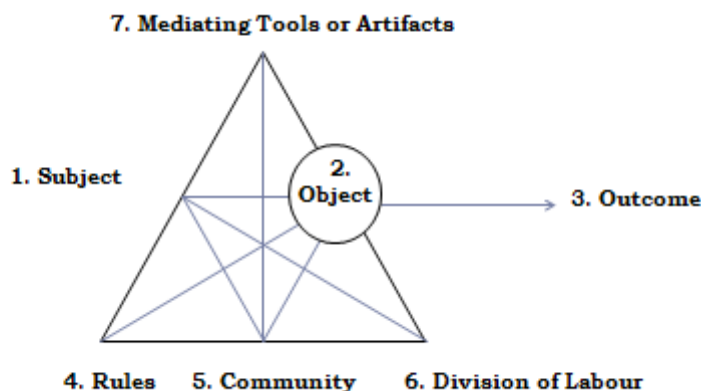
Figure 5.2: *Second generation activity theory model (taken from Engeström, 1999b, p.31)*

The second generation was developed by Engeström in 1987 and drew upon the ideas of Leont'ev (Daniels, 2008). Engeström's second generation model of an activity system expanded the triangular representation to include three additional nodes: 'rules', 'community' and 'division of labour'. Engeström expanded his formulation to "include a much wider 'macro-level' analysis that emphasises contextual and historical factors" (Leadbetter et al. 2007). The object node was also placed in an oval to represent its ambiguity, surprise, interpretation and potential for change (Engeström 1999b). Table 5.1 provides an insight into the functions of each of the seven nodes depicted in the second generation model of an activity system. In addition, Engeström suggested that an analysis of the interaction between and within the nodes of the activity system offers potentials to highlight contradictions. As referred to in Chapter 4 (Sections 4.2 and 4.3), contradictions are construed as potentials for learning and transformation.

Table 5.1: The functions of each node within an activity system (adapted from Leadbetter, 2008)

Node	Description of the Node
Subject	This position can be taken up by an individual, group or dyad taking action.
Object	The object is what is being worked on, acted upon or the focus of activity. There will be a lack of consensus about what the object is, and this object is likely to be interpreted slightly differently depending on a range of factors but particularly upon the motives of the individuals involved. Daniels (2008) suggested that individuals' interpretations of the object can offer a powerful initial insight that supports the identification of systemic contradictions.
Outcome	The outcome is what is hoped to be achieved.
Rules	The rules reflect what supports or constrains the work or activity.
Community	The community identifies who else is involved in the work or activity.
Division of Labour	Division of labour refers to role demarcation and role expectation; for example, who does what, how the work is shared out and why.
Mediating Artifacts	This node presents the mediation that takes place between the subject and the object in order to achieve an outcome. The artifacts (or tools) might be concrete (such as an object, instrument or resource) or may be abstract (such as a common language being used, processes or frameworks).

The current research utilises the second generation activity theory model (Engeström, 1987) as a conceptual tool through which to understand and analyse the perceptions of EPs and EWOs regarding an object that involved EPs and EWOs engaging in inter-agency collaboration to support a child or young person who is experiencing CESN-A. The second generation model was utilised to inform and

develop questions employed in the semi-structured interviews (see Section 5.4.3 (ii) for further discussion).

Engeström expanded the second generation model by proposing the third generation (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3
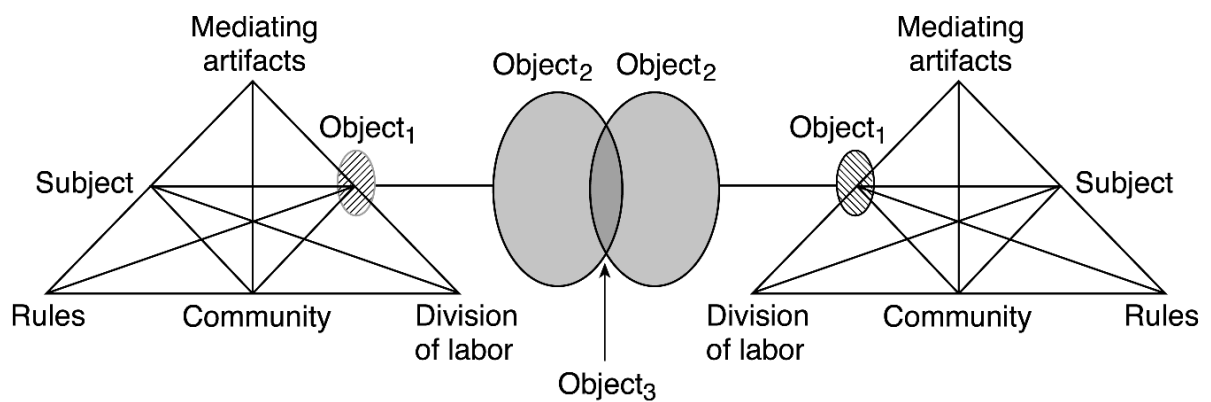
Figure 5.3: *Third generation activity theory model (taken from Engeström, 2001, p.136)*

The third generation model encapsulates the notion of multivoicedness and dialogues. Engeström highlighted that it is "important to extend beyond the singular activity system and to examine and work towards transformation of networks of activity" (Daniels, 2008, p.122). In the third generation model, contradictions are also constructed as a means for creating learning and transformational potentials but are provided by the interacting networks and the motives and object of activity (Daniels, 2008). This concept is expanded by Engeström's notion of 'boundary crossing'. 'Boundary crossing' conceptualises how the collaborative activity of professionals from differing roles can stimulate new professional practices and objects. The third

generation model was utilised as the framework for the developmental work research

(DWR) (see Section 5.4.3 (iii) for further discussion).

Figure 5.4 provides an overview of the key principles of activity theory.

Figure 5.4

- The study of the human mind in its cultural and historical contexts;
- A general conceptual system with these basic principles: the hierarchical structure of activity, object-orientedness, internalization/externalization, tool mediation and development
- Theoretical approaches that place culture and activity at the centre of attempts to understand human nature
- A psychology that focuses not on the individual but on the interaction between an individual, systems of artifacts and other individuals in historically developing institutional settings
- The prime unit of analysis in activity theory is 'a collective, artifact-mediated and object-orientated activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems' (Daniels 2001, p.93)
- Activity Systems are usually multi-voiced as there is always a community of multiple viewpoints with differing interest and traditions
- The historicity of Activity Systems is extremely important in that they develop over long periods of time and are constantly transformed and transforming. Through investigating the historical aspects (formation) of systems, new understanding can be brought to bear on current Activity Systems.
- Contradictions are central to an understanding of activity theory as they are sources of tension, disturbance and eventually, of change and development. By examining contradictions within and between Activity Systems new objects can be created and new ways of working can be developed
- Finally, the transformative nature of Activity Systems is emphasised as Engeström maintains that through examination of contradictions, participants may question established patterns of working, so that new motives and new objects may be formed. These transformations may occur over lengthy periods of time and result in a much wider range of possibilities for action.

Figure 5.4: *Summary of the main principles of activity theory (adapted from Engeström, 1999c cited in Daniels, 2001, p. 93-94 and Holzman, 2006, p.6)*

The current research adopts a socio-cultural perspective (see Chapter 4 for further

discussion) and definition of activity theory that has been derived from the literature.

Wertsch et al. (1995) first made reference to socio-cultural activity theory. Socio-cultural activity theory endorses an approach to research that endeavours to "understand human activity within a systemic context and with reference to the mediating influence of social, cultural and historical components" (Durbin, 2009, p.78).

A key strength of activity theory was described by Leadbetter (2008, p.209) as relating to the notion that it is not "just a static, descriptive or analytical modelling device: it has been developed to be used as a way of engaging with organisations to examine and expand efficient working practices". Activity theory encourages transformation and engenders empowerment by placing an emphasis on the individuals within the system: they are constructed as representing the central force for authentic organisational change and development (Engeström, 2001). Human activity is viewed as the "fundamental unit of analysis through which to understand the historically changing character of organisational work and the specific types of knowledge and learning required by these shifts" (Warmington et al. 2004, p.9).

Activity theory additionally provides a theoretically grounded framework for understanding the social and cultural aspects of an organisation and recognises the inextricable link between,

> "individuals as thinkers and actors, their relationships with others and the purposes, values and knowledge to be found in the practices in the institutions or systems they inhabit. These three elements (individual, interactional and systemic) are not seen as separate; rather they are in a constant mutually shaping dialectic" (Edwards, 2011, p.2).

Moreover, activity theory provides an analytical framework that affords a contextually specific understanding of workplace learning and development (Edwards, 2011).

In contrast, Holzman (2006) identified the critique that activity theory is not a unified theory and added that there are many differing definitions of activity theory. Furthermore, Engeström (1999b, p.20) identified the potentially problematic notion that "activity theory will turn into an eclectic combination of ideas before it has the chance to redefine its core". However, it may be argued that a developing methodology affords researchers a degree of flexibility with which to utilise activity theory as a pragmatic tool in applied settings. Moreover, Engeström (1999b) suggested that theories should not be 'closed systems' but should be open to societal transformations. Pring (2000a; 2000b) argues that distinctions within theoretical paradigms are often as significant as the distinctions between them. Furthermore, Puzyrei (2007, p.86) offered the following analogy of activity theory, suggesting that it

> "is an unfamiliar city, unlike no other we know. It is simultaneously vital, very young, and up to date and a moldering old ruin half-buried under dust and ash. A city that is undergoing unprecedented growth and construction that is also overrun by archaeologists. A city with many streets that are still unnamed and whose central plaza seems to be well hidden from prying eyes. A city whose history holds many secrets. A city with a great future. A city that is destined to not only be a place of pilgrimage but its country's capital".

The premise that activity theory is a tool for organisational development and change brings additional avenues for criticism. The prospect of change and transformation may be perceived as threatening and may render some participants feeling vulnerable. In addition, Engeström (2005a, p.147) discussed an "agony" that confrontation with changes in professional practice and identity may entail,

suggesting that activity theory research and change may be uncomfortable for participants. Furthermore, activity theory utilises specific theoretical constructs and language that may be perceived as inaccessible. Engeström (2007) acknowledged that due to the cognitive orientation of activity theory, participants may view the approach as a thinking process and be reluctant to implement any transformations in practice.

Activity theory was selected as the methodology for the current research with due regard to the aforementioned strengths. Activity theory has been utilised to analyse complex activities in workplaces focusing on a multiplicity of factors (Edwards, 2011), and was therefore considered a robust theoretical framework with which to analyse, understand and transform the collaborative working practices of EPs and EWOs to improve the support offered to children and young people who experience CESN-A.

5.2 Epistemology

Epistemology has been suggested to refer to the study of the bases of knowledge, the nature and forms of knowledge and how it can be acquired and communicated (Cohen et al. 2007). In addition, epistemology has been described as the theory of knowledge and what it means to know, relating to the understanding of knowledge, explanation of truth and of verification (Crotty, 1998; Pring, 2000a). More specifically Maynard (1994) proposes that epistemology provides theoretical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure they are both adequate and legitimate.

5.2.1 Social constructionism

The current research adopts a social constructionist epistemological position. Vygotsky, who is regarded as the founder of activity theory (Leadbetter, 2008) has been identified as "the source of inspiration for social constructionists" (Holzman, 2006, p.6). Furthermore, Engeström (2000, p.301) asserted that "activity theory has an original and potentially powerful approach to the social construction of knowledge". Similarly to activity theory, social constructionism is a theoretical orientation that is influenced by a number of disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology and linguistics (Burr, 1995) and is consequently multidisciplinary in nature.

Social constructionism has received criticism due to the absence of a united definition (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). More specifically, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) asserted that different researchers accept varying versions of what 'social' and 'construction' constitute and refer to. In an endeavour to elucidate the epistemological orientation of social constructionism and the assumptions accepted by the current research, an overview of the key tenets is provided in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Key assumptions associated with social constructionism (adapted from Burr, 1995, p.3-5)

Assumption	Description
A critical stance towards taken for- granted knowledge	Social constructionism argues that we take a critical perspective on accepted ways of understanding the world. It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, and to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world. It urges us to be ever suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be.
Historical and cultural specificity	The ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific and relative. Not only are they specific to particular cultures and periods of history, they are viewed as products of that culture and history, and are dependent upon the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in the culture at that time. The particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are therefore artefacts of it, and we should not assume that *our* ways of understanding are necessarily any better than other ways.
Knowledge is sustained by social processes	People construct knowledge as common ways of understanding the world between them. Through daily interactions between people in the course of everyday social life our versions of knowledge become fabricated. Therefore, social interaction and language are of interest to social constructionists.
Knowledge and social interaction go together	The 'negotiated' understandings can take a variety of different forms, and we can therefore talk of numerous possible 'social constructions' of the world. But each different construction also brings with it, or invites, a different kind of action from human beings. Descriptions or constructions of the world therefore sustain some patterns of social action and exclude others.

Social constructionism suggests that there is no objective truth to be discovered, but

that a variety of truths arise out of our engagement with the world (Crotty, 1998).

Moreover, constructionism is based on the assumption that "social reality is not

objectively given; instead, social reality is actively constructed and reconstructed by people acting and interacting in social settings" (Sackmann, 2001, p.152).

Language assumes a pivotal role when exploring construction (Robson, 2002). In light of the importance bestowed upon language, research that adopts a social constructionist position broadly endorses qualitative approaches (Gergen,) (see Section 5.4.3 (i) for further discussion of qualitative approaches). Social constructionism assumes multiple, apprehendable, and equally valid realities (Schwandt, 1994). Therefore, constructionists consider multiple perspectives in order to understand multiple realities. The researcher and participants collaboratively construct a view of 'reality' and are entwined by the activity of the research. The researcher's and participants' co-constructions and creations of reality are based on interactive dialogue and interpretation (Ponterotto, 2005). The following excerpt from Engeström (1999a, p.35-6) reinforces the social constructionist orientation of activity theory,

> "The type of methodology I have in mind requires that general ideas of activity theory be put to the acid test of practical validity and relevance in interventions that aim at the construction of new models of activity jointly with the participants. Such construction can be successful only when based on careful historical and empirical analyses of the activity in question".

The current research subscribes to this position by the endeavour to explore the multiple voices of professionals and consider how reality is constructed regarding collaborative work to support children and young people who experience CESN-A. In addition, the research considers how the researcher and participants can co-construct a new reality and activity to expand learning and transform practice.

Activity theory embodies a non-dualistic approach to understanding and transforming human life that accepts dialectical human activity as its ontology (Holzman, 2006). Crotty (1998) contended that ontology relates to the nature or essence of the world and reality. Dialectical ontology rejects the notion of unidirectional cause and effect relationships. Toomela (2000, p.354) suggested that a non-dualistic approach contests the view that a 'cause' can remain unchanged or independent when leading to an 'effect'". Dialectical ontology rejects the premise of distinct elements of a system and offers that even opposite elements have complementary roles and are united to form the continuous whole (Daniels, 2008). This reflects the notion that the nodes within the activity system interact and together provide a comprehensive social and cultural understanding of the whole.

5.3 Research design

Hakim (2000) suggested that the research design is the point at which research questions are converted into research projects. De Vaus (2001) highlighted the premise that design is not about how to conduct research, suggesting that this is the subject of research methods, but rather about the logic of inquiry: the links between questions, data and conclusions. The research design is essential, as the logic underlying the design of a study is central in 'warranting' any conclusions that are drawn (White, 2008). The term warrant refers to the premise that a "research claim or conclusion must always be supported by an evidence base/logical and persuasive link between the evidence produced and the conclusions drawn" (Gorard, 2002, p.136).

The current research adopts a case study design. The use of case study design was viewed as an appropriate way in which to capture the complexity and multiple voices represented in the current research which considers the perceptions of EPs and EWOs and explores the professional learning stimulated in multi-agency teams to develop practice in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CENS-A.

5.3.1 Case study design

The case study is a widely accepted research design in a variety of disciplines (Simons, 1996). Case studies provide an understanding of the 'unit' that we seek to analyse as a whole; the 'unit' of analysis is informed by the context in which the whole case exists (De Vaus, 2001). A unit of analysis can comprise organisations such as a Local Authority (Gillham 2000; Robson, 2002): the focus of the current research. Sackmann (2001) asserted that research investigating organisations should principally focus on understanding the complexity of the organisation and added that such research often employs case study design to provide an in-depth specific qualitative analysis of the organisation.

Research that utilises case study design affords enquiry into real life contexts as opposed to artificially contrived contexts as used in much experimental research (Yin, 1993). Stake (1995, p.xi) contended that case study research involves "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances". In addition, Hakim (2000, p.59) suggested that "at the minimum, a case study can provide a richly detailed 'portrait' of a particular social

phenomenon". The detail of the case should also pertain to an investigation of the history of the case in an endeavour to increase the rigour of the research (De Vaus, 2001). The use of case study design is conducive to the principles of socio-cultural activity theory, the methodology adopted by the current research. Case study design reflects the fundamental socio-cultural principles that no activity or learning is independent of social, cultural and institutional specifics (Leadbetter, 2008) and supports the acknowledgement of the value of understanding the history of a context to promote meaningful analysis (Leadbetter et al. 2007).

Thomas (2011) argued that case studies afford a thorough understanding of meaning and can capture the complexity of the subject matter. Case study research enables a focus on a large number of variables and the way in which they interrelate. In addition, case studies afford the use of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1994). Case studies 'tell the story' of a single case or set of cases and provide a full, complex understanding of the whole from many angles (Thomas, 2011). These strengths are particularly pertinent to the current research, which aims to elicit and consider multiple voices and the analysis of an array of factors in a complex work organisation.

Hakim (2000) suggested that critical analysis of the key strengths and weaknesses of the case study design is problematic due to the enormous variation in designs. Yin (1994) asserted that it is difficult to conduct good case study research. Researchers need to be acutely aware of the limitations of their chosen design (White, 2008). Simons (1996) acknowledged that case study design has received criticism from

positivist researchers who articulate concerns regarding generalisation, qualitative research and in-depth exploration of a single case (see Section 5.3.1 (i) for discussion of generalisation). In addition, Hakim (2000) notes the weakness that case study results can be shaped strongly by the interests of the researcher. However, the notion that the researcher is not independent of the research complements the epistemological position of the current study. Moreover, case study research affirms the worldview that individuals are "conscious, purposive actors who have ideas about their world and attach meaning to what is going on around them" (Robson, 2002; p.24) therefore the research endeavours to elicit the perceptions of EPs and EWOs.

The constructs of validity and reliability in relation to research are interpreted differently depending on the researcher's epistemological position (Cohen et al. 2007). Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended that researchers utilise different terminology and argued that qualitative researchers prefer terms such as 'credibility' and 'trustworthiness' than more traditional terminology, such as reliability. I will now consider the concepts of 'validity' or 'generalisation' and 'reliability' or 'trustworthiness' and explore how these relate to and are addressed in the current research.

5.3.1 (i) External validity or generalisation

The construct of external validity refers to "the degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations" (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 136). The notion that case study research affords generalisation is contentious, and case

studies have received criticism regarding external validity. 'A case is just that – a case – and cannot be representative of a larger universe of cases' (De Vaus, 2001 p.237). Furthermore, De Vaus (2001) contended that case study designs cannot provide a basis for making valid generalisations beyond a particular case. Researchers such as Gorard (2002) may therefore be sceptical about the existence of a warrant in case study design for nomothetic or causal claims. However, case studies do not preclude an interest in generalisation (Yin, 1994). Simons (1996, p. 226) contended that, "by focussing in-depth and from a holistic perspective, a case study can generate both unique and universal understandings". She referred to this premise as 'the paradox of case study' and suggested that researching the uniqueness of a particular case enables an understanding of the universal.

Researchers have utilised differing terminologies to refer to the generalisations that are possible from case study research: 'theoretical' (Yin, 1989), 'analytical' (Yin 1994), 'retrospective' (Stenhouse, 1978) and 'fuzzy' (Bassey, 1999) generalisation. Each term offers a nuanced account of the generalisation warranted following case study research.

- *Theoretical generalisation* can be understood by examining the logic of replication in research design (Yin, 1989). Case studies help develop, refine and test theories.
- *Analytical generalisation* may be made from case studies that utilise a previously developed theory as a framework with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. Yin (1994) added that if two or more case

study findings support the propositions of the theory, then replication can be claimed.

- *Retrospective generalisation* generated from the analysis of case studies refers to the process in which data are accumulated (Stenhouse, 1978).

- *Fuzzy generalisations* "typically claim that it is possible or likely, or unlikely that what was found in the singularity [case study] will be found in similar situations elsewhere; it is a qualitative measure" (Bassey, 1999, p.12).

Although the objective of the research was not necessarily to provide generalisations, the legitimacy of cautious theoretical, analytical, retrospective and for fuzzy generalisation, provides the opportunity to consider how the findings may apply within other similar settings. However, Lincoln and Guba (2002) offered an important caveat that such generalisations should be indeterminate, relative, time and context-bound.

5.3.1 (ii) Internal validity or trustworthiness

Cohen et al. (2007, p.135) suggested that, "internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data". The current research endeavours to address the concept of internal validity by adopting a transparent approach to the discussion of the research methods and procedure (see Section 5.4) and considered documentation of the process of data analysis (see Section 5.5). In addition, the data gathered from the research and the identified themes were, at numerous junctures, 'checked' with each participant and professional group to ensure accuracy. The

research additionally employs 'triangulation'. Triangulation is an accepted means of improving the trustworthiness of research (Mathison, 1988). Triangulation was employed by the adoption of two methods of data collection, interviews and developmental work research (DWR), in order to prevent claims that the findings may be an artifact of one specific method of data collection (Cohen et al. 2007). Hakim (2000) asserted that the potential to use a variety of data collection techniques and methods in case study design, allows a more rounded, holistic study than with any other research design.

5.3.2 Local context

The research was conducted in the LA in which I am employed as Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) (see Section 5.4.1 for discussion of the ethical implications). The LA context has embraced multi-agency working and has co-located professionals from different agencies to form multi-agency support teams (MASTs) that are situated in the locality that they serve. EPs and EWOs form part of the MAST and are required to work collaboratively, specifically to promote attendance.

The research was commissioned by the lead EP and EWO as an endeavour to promote continued professional development for both disciplines and support effective service delivery. The research was additionally commissioned to form part of the response to a Serious Case Review which questioned the working practices of EPs and EWOs in relation to promoting attendance (see Chapter 1 Section 1.2 for

further discussion). The case study research is therefore, temporally and spatially demarcated.

Boreham and Morgan (2004, p.310) asserted that, "the stimulus to expansive learning is typically a perceived failure of the activity system to achieve the object of its activity". Therefore, with reference to Engeström's expansive learning cycle (see Chapter 4 Section 4.2 for further discussion), the research was commissioned due to the organisational learning action of 'questioning'. Aspects of accepted practice were questioned and criticised. Consequently, the current research is situated within the 'analysing' and 'modeling' learning actions. The research offers a socio-cultural analysis of past, current and potential future collaboration between EPs and EWOs. The use of the DWR method afforded the collaborative establishment of a new model by collectively exploring solutions to address contradictions and transform practice.

5.4 Research methods

5.4.1 Ethical considerations

A comprehensive account of the ethical issues pertaining to the research and the endeavours adopted to address the ethical implications were considered in the University of Birmingham Application for Ethical Review (AER) form (see Appendix Three). However, the salient ethical issues and the manner in which they have been addressed are summarised in Table 5.3. The ethical issues discussed have been considered in accordance with the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011), Economic and Social Research

Council (ESRC) Framework for Research Ethics (2009), and British Psychological

Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009).

Table 5.3: Ethical issues considered in the research and the manner in which they were addressed

Specific ethical requirements and challenges that are relevant to the research	How the identified potential ethical issues were addressed
Gaining voluntary informed consent from professionals who will be interviewed and who will participate in the DWR.	The necessary steps were taken to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used, how and to whom it will be reported and possible consequences of the research findings. The voluntary nature of participation was stressed to participants to counter any possible feelings of compulsory participation that might be evoked by the commissioning of the research by Managers.
Consideration of the extent to which my reflective research impinges on others and of the extent to which my dual role as researcher and practicing Trainee Educational Psychologist in the Local Authority may introduce explicit and implicit tensions.	My professional affiliation to the EP profession was overtly discussed. Explicit reference was made to the dual commissioning of the research by the lead EP and lead EWO. The research was positioned as a collaborative endeavour to improve service delivery. The researcher respected any role differences.
Uses and ownership of data must adhere to the Data Protection Act (1998).	Participants were briefed on how and why their personal data will be stored. Permission was sought to disclose (anonymously) information gathered in the interviews and DWR to third parties. All data will be kept securely and any form of publication will not directly or indirectly lead to a breach of agreed confidentiality and anonymity.
Protection of the Local Authority and the professionals who will participate in the research.	The challenge of protecting the identity of professionals and the Local Authority discussed in this research was addressed by ensuring that all records and information collected are anonymous. However, the professional titles of the participants (e.g. EP or EWO) were not kept anonymous. The researcher was also

	sensitive to potential perceptions of professional inequality between EPs and EWOs and how these may manifest in the DWR.
Protection of service users and other educational establishments that may be identified in the research.	Participants were encouraged to refrain from using the names of any service users or educational establishments. Participants signed an agreement of confidentiality with respect to any information discussed in the DWR.
Transparency regarding the limited right to withdraw historical data in the DWR	Participants' right to withdraw for any or no reason, at any time was made explicit during the research. However, participants were notified that if they wish to withdraw during the DWR, their data cannot be withdrawn.
Consideration that the participants may experience distress or discomfort in the research process, specifically when identifying tensions and contradictions in the activity system.	Participants were informed that they can decline to answer any specific questions put to them. Participants were reminded that their data will be kept anonymous and only identified by their professional group. Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw.
Participants may disclose practice or conduct that may be harmful to the participant themselves or others.	Participants were made aware of the limitations of maintaining confidentiality. The decision to override agreements on confidentiality and anonymity will be taken after careful and thorough deliberation and following consultation with a professional colleague. The participant will be apprised of any reasons and intentions of the researcher to disclose harmful practice or conduct. In the interests of transparency, contemporaneous notes will be kept on any such decisions and the reasons behind them.

Table 5.4 provides an overview of the research procedure and illustrates the research timeline.

Table 5.4: Overview of research procedure and timeline

Research activity	Date completed
Awareness of need identified by the LA professional who has overall responsibility for all EPs and EWOs employed by the LA	20th September 2011
Meeting with lead EP and lead EWO to discuss the proposed research and ensure that the research is dual commissioned	15th November 2011
Research proposal submitted to the University and LA professionals who commissioned the research	5th December 2011
Research panel conducted at the University. Academics scrutinised the research proposal in an endeavour to ensure rigours and robust research design	8th March 2012
Application for Ethical Review (AER) submitted (see Appendix Three) Full ethical approval granted	4th May 2012 10th May 2012
All EPs (thirteen) and EWOs (nineteen) employed by the LA informed about the research by the receipt of a letter (see Appendix Four) and requested to express an interest in participation	30th May 2012
Deadline for professionals to express an interest in participation	22nd June 2012
All professionals who volunteered to participate, EPs (six) and EWOs (five), sent consent forms (see Appendix Five) to ensure informed consent for phase one of the research, the semi-structured interviews	30th June 2012
Semi-structured interview piloted with an EP Feedback obtained and sent to all participants (see Appendix Six)	10th July 2012 10th July 2012
Phase One: all individual semi-structured interviews conducted. Standardised instructions and ethical considerations read to participants before each interview (see Appendix Seven)	11th July 2012- 9th August 2012

Participants informed of the procedure for reporting harmful misconduct (see Appendix Eight). Participants provided with an overview of activity theory (see Appendix Nine). Interview schedule utilised to offer a flexible structure to the interview (see Appendix Ten). Summary transcriptions of the interview completed by the interviewer during the interview (see Appendix Eleven)	
All interviews transcribed (see Appendix Twelve for an example). All scripts coded (see Appendix Thirteen for an example). Theme tables developed with illustrative quotes (see Appendix Fourteen for an example). Thematic maps created (see Appendix Fifteen for an example). Contradictions identified and organised into tables with illustrative quotes (see Appendix Sixteen)	11th July-31st August 2012
Participants sent an information letter regarding Phase Two of the research, the DWR, and invited to participate (see Appendix Seventeen)	7th August 2012
DWR conducted participants asked to sign the DWR consent form and confidentiality agreement (see Appendix Eighteen). Standardised instructions and ethical considerations read to all of the participants (see Appendix Nineteen). DWR agenda given to participants (see Appendix Twenty). Findings from the individual semi-structured interviews fedback to all participants (see Appendix Twenty-one). Discussion data recorded during the DWR (see Appendix Twenty-two). Research notes completed during the DWR (see Appendix Twenty-three). DWR evaluation forms completed by participants (see Appendix Twenty-four)	3rd October 2012

5.4.2 (i) Sampling

A convenience sample was utilised and participation was voluntary. All of the EPs (thirteen) and EWOs (nineteen) employed by the LA were informed about the research and participation was requested. However, participants were informed that their participation may involve rethinking their current working practices and accepting activity theory as a conceptual tool to promote learning and stimulate organisational change. This reflected suggestions in the literature that participants should be made aware that the DWR, in particular, could "disrupt assumptions and

potentially lead to profound re-positioning" (Edwards et al. 2009 p.191-192). Furthermore, before offering their participation, participants were informed that the research involved two phases: an individual interview and a DWR. Tables 5.5 and 5.6 provide an overview of pertinent participant information.

Table 5.5: Information regarding EP participants

	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5
Role	Area Educational Psychologist (Specialism)	Area Educational Psychologist	Area Educational Psychologist	Area Educational Psychologist (Specialism)	District Senior Educational Psychologist
Highest qualification	Masters in Educational Psychology	Doctorate in Educational Psychology	Doctorate in Educational Psychology	Masters in Educational Psychology	Masters in Educational Psychology
Previous experience	Teacher (15 years) Assistant Educational Psychologist (1 year)	Learning Support Assistant Mentor for children and young people with disabilities	Assistant Educational Psychologist	Teacher (many years) Assistant Educational Psychologist (1 year)	Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) Teacher Assistant Educational Psychologist (1 year)
Time in current post	7 years	2 years	1 year	7 years	9 years

Table 5.6: Information regarding EWO participants

	EWO1	EWO2	EWO3	EWO4	EWO5
Role	Area Education Welfare Officer	Area Education Welfare Officer	Area Education Welfare Officer	Community Education Welfare Officer	Area Education Welfare Officer
Highest qualification	Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW)	NVQ Level 4 in Education Welfare and Social Care	NVQ Level 4 in Learning Development Social Skills	BA Honours in Environmental Science and Women's studies	Process of acquiring a BA Honours in working with children and young people and families NVQ Level 4 in Education Welfare
Previous experience	Social Worker	Education Administrator	School Attendance Officer Truancy Patrol Officer	Voluntary sector supporting a similar client group (5 years)	Nursery Nurse
Time in current post	10 years	11 years	Area EWO (1 year) EWO (6 years)	7 years	Area EWO (18 months) EWO (5 years)

Area EWOs are senior EWOs and supervise Community EWOs.

5.4.3 Data collection methods

5.4.3 (i) Qualitative paradigm

The current research utilises qualitative methods of data collection to gather the perceptions of EPs and EWOs. The research aims to explore the differing perspectives and meanings through which personal reality is understood within the

activity systems. This affirms Engeström's (1999a) assertion that activity systems are multi-layered and multi-voiced. The strengths and limitations of utilising qualitative methods of data collection, for the purposes of the current research, are summarised in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: The strengths and limitations of qualitative research approaches in relation to cultural complexities and organisational development (adapted from Sackmann, 2001, p.156)

Strengths	Limitations
Rich, detailed and meaningful descriptions of the cultural setting under investigation	Difficult to compare findings from the case study with other case studies.
Insights about the dynamics of cultural complexity (e.g. contradictions, paradoxes, shifting group boundaries related to different issues, etc.)	Statistical generalisations beyond the researched setting are not possible. Recommendations for action apply to the specific case but theoretical generalisation is legitimate.
Interactive- researchers get immediate feedback if their questions or research methods may not be adequate for the setting under investigation.	Limited explanations or predictions can be made about the research phenomena.
Adaptive/flexible- all methods, research activities and research questions can be adjusted as research efforts progress to respond to new insights.	Performance issues are rarely a concern. Remaining doubt: has the researcher really captured the essence of the research setting or do the findings and interpretations reflect predominantly the researcher's personal and professional biases?
Insights gained from the research lead to propositions/hypotheses grounded in organisational life.	Costly in terms of time needed for data collection and data analysis.

5.4.3 (ii) Semi-structured interviews

The first phase of the research aimed to explore the perceptions of EPs and EWOs regarding an example of collaborative activity undertaken to support a child or young

person experiencing CESN-A. Semi-structured interviews were employed to gather participant perceptions. Interviews are the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research (Punch, 2009) and are an 'essential part' of most types of social research (Breakwell, 1995). Semi-structured interviews consist of an 'interview guide' of topics and questions; however the 'interview guide' is not rigid and the order and wording of questions can be altered to reflect the flow of the interview (Robson, 2011). Moreover, the interviewer can modify lines of enquiry and follow interesting responses with the freedom to alter the amount of time and attention given to a topic (Robson, 2011).

Semi-structured interviews satisfy the epistemological position of the research as they offer the opportunity for the researcher and the researched to interact and acknowledge that knowledge can be co-constructed (Walford, 2001). Furthermore, the use of self-report measures such as interviews, affirm the world view that the significance or meaning of activity "lies in the ideas, intentions, values and beliefs of the agent" [subject] (Pring, 2000, p.39).

The development of an unstructured interview was avoided as Burman (1994, p.50) describes unstructured interviews as at best 'disingenuous and sometimes a misnomer for refusing to acknowledge prior expectations or agendas'. Furthermore, the use of activity theory as a framework for the interview eliminated the option of an unstructured interview.

The use of a structured interview was rejected due to its inherently rigid and inflexible nature (Cohen et al. 2007). The overriding rationale for utilising semi-structured interviews was to employ an activity theory framework to elicit qualitative, in-depth, rich and illuminating information regarding complex work practices in real world contexts.

The semi-structured interview was piloted with a professional employed by the LA. Robson (2011) contended that the first stage in data gathering should be a small scale 'pilot' of the instruments of data collection. Informed consent was gained from the participant, who was aware that her participation was for the sole purpose of piloting the data collection method and providing feedback as to how it may be improved. Bryman (2001) asserted that pilot interviews enable an opportunity to: provide an insight into how the interview questions function as a whole; identify junctures where interviewees may lose interest; check the adequacy of the interview instructions; identify questions that may cause confusion or may result in the interviewee feeling uncomfortable; and provide the interviewer with experience of utilising the method to elicit information.

The pilot interview facilitated critical reflection in collaboration with the LA professional who participated in the pilot. The pilot participant indicated that it would be beneficial if participants were informed prior to the interview that they would be requested to discuss a specific example of a piece of work that they collaboratively conducted with an EP or EWO relating to CESN-A. A further suggestion related to

providing participants with advanced notice that they would also be asked to discuss their perceptions of past, current and future working practices.

A letter was sent to all of the participants in advance of their interview to address the reflections identified by the pilot interview (see Appendix Six).

The semi-structured interview questions were derived from the second generation activity theory framework (Engeström, 1987) and adapted from Durbin (2009). The semi-structured interview schedule is presented in Figure 5.5. Individual interviews were conducted with all of the five EPs and five EWOs who offered their voluntary participation. All of the interviews were conducted at a venue of the participant's choice. The interviews were all conducted at the participant's workplace, in a quiet room that preserved confidentiality. The average (mean) length of the interviews was one hour and two minutes. Robson (1993) suggested that any single interview under half an hour is unlikely to be valuable and conceded that any interview over an hour may be regarded by interviewees as unreasonable.

I read the standardised instructions and ethical considerations (see Appendix Seven) to the participants. Once the participant had agreed to continue, they were given an overview of activity theory to serve as a reminder (see Appendix Nine) and a copy of the interview schedule (see Appendix Ten). Most of the interviews followed a similar sequence in conjunction with the activity theory framework order of nodes: subject, object, outcomes, rules, community, division of labour and tools. At the end of the interview participants and the researcher considered and highlighted any

contradictions within the nodes (primary contradictions) and between the nodes (secondary contradictions). All of the interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone, and transcription notes were taken by the researcher during the interview (see Appendix Eleven). All of the materials for the interview and transcription notes were transparent and the interviewee was invited to check the accuracy of the transcription notes at the end of the interview.

The subject, rules and mediating artifacts nodes were prioritised for discussion in Chapter 6. The discussion of these nodes was privileged over the remaining four nodes due to the relevance to the research questions (See section 5.0.2 for the research questions).

Roth and Lee (2007, p.215) emphasised the importance of the 'subject' in the activity system. They asserted that during activity and participation in multiple activity systems, subjects produce/reproduce their identity, what "we become and how we act as knowers"; this is mediated by a sense of agency and by our position in the social world. Furthermore, Gaskell and Leadbetter (2009) found that professionals working in multi-agency teams perceived a 'blurring' of roles and boundaries. I therefore, considered it important to gain an insight into how EPs and EWOs perceived their role in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A at the spatially and temporally demarcated juncture during the research. This is the focus of the first research question.

I deemed the rules node as particularly pertinent because it is directly related to the opportunities and challenges that EPs and EWOs perceive to exist within the activity systems. Identifying/clarifying what supports or constrains inter-agency collaboration between EPs and EWOs comprises the second research question. I viewed elicitation of participants' perceptions of the cultural rules as a useful method to gain an insight into how inter-agency collaboration and ultimately service delivery may be improved. Furthermore, Daniels (2008, p.135) asserted that organisational change is possible when professionals re-conceptualise the 'rules' and 'tools' that they use in practice.

The mediating artifacts node is specifically related to the sub-research question. Emphasis is placed on this node to reflect Vygotsky's idea of mediation. Vygotsky contended that all human action is mediated by cultural artifacts (Daniels, 2008). I anticipated that EPs' and EWOs' perceptions of the artifacts which mediate inter-agency collaboration would exemplify the shared artifacts or tools that both EPs and EWOs use, and tools which are distinctive to the professional groups.

The sub-research question is also addressed by the surfacing and analysis of the contradictions. Identifying and resolving contradictions are viewed as potentials for learning (Engeström, 2001), an integral part of the research.

Figure 5.5

Mediating Tools or Artifacts:

What did you use?   Where did you hope to get to by using it?
How did you use it?   How had you come to use it in this way?
Why did you use it?   What do you think might be useful for the
                                     future?

Subject:

What is your perception of your professional role?
What relevant experience do you have?
What date did you qualify/started post your post?
What qualifications do you have?
What professional development opportunities and
training have you experienced?

Object:
Description of an activity undertaken with an EP/EWO to support C&YP who experience issues associated with CESN-A.
Past practice?
Future practice?

Outcomes:
What did you hope to achieve?
What did you achieve?
What were the outcomes (impact)?
Have these outcomes changed compared to practice in the past?
Do you perceive different outcomes being prioritised in the future?

Rules:

What facilitated and supported what you did?
What constrained and restricted what you did?
Were there any other factors that influenced what you did?
How had the above come to be?
Have these factors changed overtime?
Do you foresee different factors impacting on your work in the future?

Community:
Who else worked with you on this activity?
What was their role and working relationship with you?
Who have you worked with in the past?
Who do you envision working with in the future?

Division of Labour:
How were the roles and responsibilities shared/divided between you?
What did you each endeavour to do?
How has that come about? (has it changed as the MASTs have evolved/developed?)
Do you think others will have different expectations of your role in the future?

Figure 5.5: *Semi-structured interview schedule*

5.4.3 (iii) Developmental work research (DWR)

Engeström (2007) developed DWR as a method to be utilised within an activity theory framework. DWR affords the application of "activity theory through interventionist research to develop expansive learning in workplace settings" (Edwards et al. 2009, p.199). Engeström (2008, p.132) asserted that "a large scale expansive learning cycle of organisational transformation always consists of small cycles of innovative learning". The current research discusses one DWR in an iterative cycle and reflects a small cycle of innovative learning referred to as a change lab. However, DWR has been conceptualised as a powerful tool for change. DWR can accelerate professionals' awareness of new forms of work with due regard to the key concept for inter-agency collaboration: the notion that expertise is relational and distributed (Edwards et al. 2009). The purpose of Interventionist DWR is to address the challenges of new forms of learning collaboratively by:

- working with practitioners to "enable them to articulate and refine concepts that we hope help to explain and to take forward understandings of practice" (Edwards et al. 2009, p.191);
- "encouraging the recognition of areas in which there is a need for change in working practices" (Daniels, 2008, p.134);
- "enabling professionals to generate fresh ways of explaining what was going on in both existing and emerging practices" (Edwards et al. 2009, p.191); and
- suggesting the possibilities for change through re-conceptualising the 'objects' that professionals are working on, the 'tools' that professionals use in their

multi-agency work and the 'rules' in which professional practices are embedded (Daniels, 2008, p.135).

DWR has been applied in a variety of work settings and organisations such as, Local Authorities (Ledabetter et al. 2007; Durbin (2009), a school based occupational therapy practice (Villeneuve and Shulha, 2012), library (Engeström et al. 2013), hospital (Kajanaa, 2011) and organic vegetable farm (Seppänen, 2002).The research conducted by Leadbetter et al. (2007) and Durbin (2009), previously discussed in Section 4.2, demonstrate how DWR change laboratories contribute to expansive learning.

Villeneuve and Shulha (2012) used an appreciative inquiry framework and a series of DWR workshops to facilitate professional learning in a school-based occupational therapy (SBOT) practice. The SBOT practice required new and developmental solutions to provide practical guidance about how to coordinate multi-agency service and inter-professional collaboration among program administrators, program providers and service recipients. Villeneuve and Shuha (2012) reported that the facilitated workshop stimulated shared learning and the development of new solutions for improved SBOT, that consisted of the generation of twelve principles for effective collaboration and the development of a new model for delivering SBOT practices.

Engeström et al. (2013, p.81) endeavoured to provide a detailed and comprehensive analysis of a complete cycle of developmental DWR intervention to demonstrate the

"usability and methodological rigour afforded by the theory of expansive learning". The research was conducted in an academic library organisation. Engeström et al. (2013) suggested that the DWR workshops facilitated the workers in the library and their clients to redefine the services the library offered to research groups and, the ways of organising work in the library. They further asserted that the new solutions were generated by participants in the change laboratory questioning and analysing the situation, modelling the new solution and examining the model.

Research that provides 'evidence' of how DWR promotes expansive learning has been criticised due to the dominance of, and large number of publications from Engeström. In addition, Young (2001) questioned whether the learning that is reported in these studies is stimulated by the DWR or instead an example of incidental learning or established knowledge that has been derived from practice.

All participants (five EPs and five EWOs) who participated in Phase One of the research (the individual semi-structured interviews) were provided with information regarding the DWR and invited to participate by receipt of a letter (see Appendix Seventeen). All of the participants who participated in Phase One offered their voluntary participation in the DWR. The DWR took place at one of the LA MAST venues for the duration of three hours, including a 15 minute break. The DWR was recorded using a Dictaphone. The DWR consisted of ten participants: five EPs and five EWOs, and three researchers: Dr Colette Soan (Scribe), Dr Jane Leadbetter (Team Member) and me (Session Leader). Participants were asked to read and sign a consent and confidentiality agreement for the DWR (Appendix Eighteen). I read the

standardised instructions and ethical considerations (see Appendix Nineteen) to all of the participants and participants were given an agenda (see Appendix Twenty). The format and content requirements of the DWR were derived from the literature (Edwards et al. 2009; Daniels, 2008; Engeström, 2007). The DWR was structured by me using a Powerpoint presentation (see Appendix Twenty-one). The DWR concluded with offering the participants time to reflect and comment on the research process (see Appendix Twenty-four).

The DWR utilised Engeström's (2001) third generation activity theory. The two professional groups of EPs and EWOs were constructed as two interacting activity systems. The DWR initially consisted of a presentation of the findings and identified themes from Phase One of the research. The findings were presented in the activity theory framework regarding past, current and future practice (Daniels, 2008). Participants had the collective opportunity to check the validity of the analysis and interpretation as a form of on-going reciprocal feedback between the researcher and participants. Engeström's (2007) DWR method utilises the Vygotskian concept of dual stimulation. Dual stimulation refers to the action of giving the inhabitants of an activity system the "analytic resources of activity theory…as a stimulus for the analysis of the relationships between the elements in the system [to] recognise the emergent contradictions that will lead to change" (Edwards, 2011, p.4). Five of the main contradictions identified from Phase One of the research were presented to the participants, and the participants collectively selected the contradiction that they would like to 'work on' in the DWR. Daniels (2008) offered an overview of the DWR process:

- Discuss the mirror data (interviews); present problems

- Identify structural tensions in practices

- Trace the roots of current difficulties by eliciting experiences from the past

- Refine the concepts embedded in the practices

- Develop concepts or understandings that participants can work with or generalise from

- Draft proposals for concrete changes to be embarked upon

The DWR set out to enable professionals to work collaboratively on contradictions in an effort to transform work-based difficulties and tensions. Daniels (2008, p.136) suggested that the result of a DWR may variously be expansion of the object, development of new tools, development of new rules and for development of new division of labour.

5.5 Data analysis

The case study design continually invites the researcher to interpret data as they are collected. Yin (2009) contended that the collection of data within a case study design should involve the researcher continually reviewing data and critically reflecting on their interpretation of those data. Robson (2011) asserted that analysis should commence at the earliest opportunity from the start of data collection. The social constructionist epistemological position of the research affirms the view that knowledge and meaning are "constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation" (Robson, 2011, p.24), suggesting that the research process

and interactions between the researcher and participants are a continual form of interpretation and analysis. Robson (2011) contended that there is an inescapable focus on interpretation when analysing qualitative data. To ensure the accuracy of analysis and to increase confidence, my interpretations of the data were checked with participants contemporaneously at three junctures: following the individual interview; at the beginning of the DWR; and at the end of the DWR.

5.5.1 Thematic analysis

The interview data were formally analysed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.77) describe thematic analysis as an "accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data". Thematic analysis is a method for qualitative data analysis that is independent of theory and epistemological positioning. Therefore, thematic analysis can be utilised as a data analysis method for research that adopts socio-cultural activity theory as a methodological framework. Moreover, thematic analysis can provide a rich, detailed and complex method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes)" within qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, Cohen et al. (2007) highlighted the accrual of large amounts of data with the potential for multiple interpretations as limitations of qualitative analysis. Researchers must therefore demonstrate clarity and reflexivity when discussing analysis.

The researcher plays an active role in identifying themes. Themes offer an account of something that the researcher perceives as important for the data set with regard to the research questions. The thematic analysis conducted, for the purposes of the

current research, adopted a 'deductive' or 'theoretical' approach that was explicitly analyst-driven. Themes were identified based on researcher judgement (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Deductive approaches to data analysis are theory-driven and data are reduced into pre-existing coding frames. I utilised the activity theory nodes as coding frames and coded themes under each of the seven nodes to provide a detailed analysis of the patterns related to each node. A deductive approach can result in increased specificity and detail. However, deductive approaches may be criticised for offering biased analysis that detracts from the overall richness of the data. On the other hand, I have explicitly acknowledged the potential biases, theoretical affiliations and socio-cultural lens with which data were viewed, analysed and interpreted in order to adopt an explicit, transparent approach.

The themes were coded and identified at the 'latent' level. The themes may reflect a number of similar responses in the interview or may reveal meaning within the data set. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.84) described latent analysis as analysing beyond the specific or surface meanings, the semantic content, of the data and examining the "underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations – and ideologies – that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data". Therefore, some of the identified themes may occur on numerous occasions in the data set and some may only occur once. Analysis at the 'latent' level results in data that are not merely described but already theorised (Braun and Clark, 2006). Cohen et al. (2007) asserted that analysis should move beyond description to explanation and theory generation.

The recursive thematic analysis process employed in the analysis of the interview data is presented in Table 5.8. Braun and Clarke (2006) asserted that, in order to address the criticism that thematic analysis lacks clear and concise guidelines, researchers should afford clarity in their description in the analysis process. Table 5.8 offers an overview of the six phase guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and a description of how each phase was enacted in the research.

Table 5.8: The six phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 87)

Phase	Description of the process	How the process was achieved
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.	Transcription summary completed during the interview. Following the interview, each interview was transcribed verbatim including non-word sounds such as 'er' and 'erm'. Then repeated listening and re-reading of the data, highlighting initial points of interest was conducted in attempts to familiarise myself with the data. (see Appendix Twelve for an example transcription of an interview with an EP and EWO).
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.	Individual transcriptions for each of the professionals groups, were segmented and collated under the nodes and in relation to past, current and future practice. Each interview transcription was examined and coded, based on my interpretation of patterns, under professional group, by node and by past, current and future practice. The data corpus was then re-read to assess if the codes reflected the corpus and as a secondary check for further potential codes (see Appendix Thirteen for an example of a coded EP and EWO transcript).
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.	The codes were examined and the potential grouping of codes was considered. Potential themes were identified from the codes. The themes, codes and illustrative quotes were

		collated into a 'theme table' (see Appendix Fourteen for an example theme table).
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating 'thematic maps' of the analysis under each code.	All of the themes were cross checked with the allocated codes and amended accordingly. Similar themes were combined. All themes were checked with the entire data set and amended accordingly. Thematic maps were produced for each of the nodes for EPs and EWOs perceptions of past, current and future practice (see Appendix Fifteen for an example thematic map).
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to define the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.	All of the theme tables were analysed and again cross referenced with the overall data set. The names and definitions for each of the themes were refined and amended accordingly.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.	Pertinent quotes were selected to illustrate key findings. Overall findings related back to the research question and literature. Discussion of the findings and conclusions drawn.

5.5.2 Analysis of the developmental work research (DWR)

The DWR was facilitated by three researchers (see Section 5.4.3 (iii) for further discussion) in accordance with Edwards et al. (2009) guidelines. The Session Leader's role entailed presenting the data collected and analysed following the individual interviews and facilitating the DWR. Therefore, the Session Leader and participants constructed knowledge and meaning based on the interaction and engagement with interpreting the data presented. Analysis of the DWR was further informed by the notes made by the Scribe during the DWR that utilised the activity theory triangle as a framework. The role of the Scribe was to summarise and present the discussion data gathered during the DWR. The synopses were periodically presented to the participants and checked for accuracy. The analysis of the DWR was also enlightened by the Team Members' narrative accounts of how the session evolved, including précises of the learning stimulated by the DWR (research notes), orientated by activity theory. In addition, the DWR was punctuated by the Team Member presenting the research notes to participants in an endeavour to ensure accuracy. The participants were also provided the opportunity to analyse and evaluate the research process and DWR (see Appendices Twenty-four and Twenty-five).

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has considered the methodology and design employed in the current research. The chapter offered a critical appraisal of methodological and design considerations and provides a rationale for selection. The use of activity theory as a

conceptual framework and methodology was discussed. The social constructionist epistemological positioning of the research was also elucidated. The chapter explored the case study design of the research and discussed the context of the research. An overview of the pertinent ethical considerations was provided in addition to the manner in which they were addressed in the research. The research procedure was presented in conjunction with the methods of data collection. Finally, the approach to data analysis is reviewed and endeavours are made to ensure transparency in relation to the process of analysis.

The following chapter (chapter 6) reports and discusses the research findings. The identified themes regarding EPs' and EWOs' perceptions are reported by professional group under each of the activity theory nodes and are illustrated by verbatim participant quotes. In addition, the findings are described and are critically explored with due regard to the literature considered in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 and the research questions.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

Cohen et al. (2007, p.495) asserted that analysis and interpretation in qualitative research is 'fused' and 'concurrent'. Chapter 6 offers a presentation of the research findings and discussion of the most pertinent of these in relation to the research questions. The results are presented for EPs and EWOs by professional group and theme diagrams are provided. The findings are displayed under the activity theory nodes to reflect the use of activity theory as a framework to analyse, understand and explore the perceptions of EPs and EWOs.

The research questions highlight the salience of the key findings related to the three nodes: subject, rules and mediating tools or artifacts, and also the contradictions identified by the EPs and EWOs. Verbatim quotations are provided to support the themes identified in the salient nodes and contradictions. Discussion of the findings related to the object, outcome, community and division of labour nodes are presented in Appendix Twenty-six.

The research questions are presented below for ease of reference:

- What do EPs and EWOs perceive is their professional role in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A?

- What do EPs and EWOs perceive facilitates or constrains inter-agency collaboration to support children and young people who experience CESN-A?

<u>Sub-question related to the methodology</u>

- What are the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur, that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

- What new ways of working do EPs and EWOs suggest that will enhance inter-agency collaboration between EPs and EWOs in relation to CESN-A?

- Does socio-cultural activity theory afford a useful framework to understand, analyse and explore the professional practice of EPs' and EWOs' inter-agency working in relation to CESN-A?

The contradictions identified by EPs and EWOs are reviewed as potentials for expansive learning. The pertinent findings for current practice are discussed with reference to the literature considered in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. The collaborative professional learning and new ways of working stimulated by the DWR are considered and discussed with due regard to the aforementioned literature. Finally, the utility of socio-cultural activity theory as a methodology and framework to facilitate

understanding and analysis of workplace activity and inter-agency working is explored, along with its value as a conceptual tool to promote professional learning.

An overview of the research findings utilising the activity theory framework for EPs' and EWOs' perceptions of current practice is presented in Figure 6.1. Figure 6.2 provides a summary of EPs' and EWOs' perceptions of past practice and Figure 6.3 offers an outline of the findings related to EPs' and EWOs' perceptions of future practice.

EPs

Concrete tools:
- Social and emotional development assessments
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- Cognitive assessments
Abstract tools:
- Solution-focused approaches
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Consultation

EWOs

Concrete tools:
- Legal guidelines
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- Referral forms
Abstract tools:
- Professional knowledge and skills

EPs

Case:
- Recognised difficulties (Young person & the Family)
- Variable attendance
- Secondary school
- Transition
Activity:
- Information give/receive
- Consultation/advice
- Intervention (Therapeutic support & Systemic development)
- Referral to other agencies
- Assessment
- Monitoring/reviewing
- Problem-solving

ACTIVITY THEORY: EP AND EWO THEMES FOR CURRENT PRACTICE

EPs
- Appropriate educational provision
- Valuable skills for the future
- improved emotional wellbeing
- Academically attained

EWOs
- Ascertained the reason for non-attendance
- Appropriate educational provision
- Adjusted/modified the young person's educational provision
- Increased young person's future opportunities

EPs

- Problem-solving
- Support children and young people 0-19 years (Children and young people who experience behavioural, emotional & social difficulties)
- Support educational settings (Schools, Children's Centres & PRUs)
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Advocacy (Children and young people & Families)
- Application of psychology
- Promote educational engagement
- Consultation
- Supervision

EWOs
- Uphold the law
- Collaborate with other professionals
- Direct work (Children & young people & Families)
- Identify & assess need
- Promote attendance
- Record/audit non-attendance
- Supervise other EWOs
- Preventative work

Tools/Artifacts
7. What is being used?

EWOs

Case:
- Recognised difficulties (Young person & the Family)
- Male
- Secondary school
- Variable attendance
- On-going work/involvement
Activity:
- Information give/receive
- Direct work
- Referral to other agencies
- Developing supportive relationships
- Legal procedures
- Problem solving and action planning
- Review/evaluation

Subject
1. Whose perspective? (role)

Supports

EPs
- Shared understanding and communication with other professionals (Shared knowledge and working practices, Co-location, Role demarcation & Information sharing)
- EPs (Professional autonomy & qualifications and professional skills)
- MASTs (Acknowledged value of EPs, supportive MAST teams & MAST base on locality)
- EWOs (Broad focus on the welfare/needs of the child)
- Educational Settings (Understanding and Flexibility)
- Knowledge of the family and rapport
- Supervision

EWOs
- Collaboration and communication with other professionals (Co-location, Multi-agency meetings, Information sharing & shared knowledge and working practices)
- MAST (Supportive MAST team, MAST base on locality & MAST procedures)
- EPs (Advice/recommendations, Positive working relationships & positive outcomes for young people)

Constraints

EPs
- Time and workload (Limited opportunity for EPs to contribute to the professional development of others)
- EWOs (Re-structure and reduction in staffing, differing conceptualisation of the problem cf EPs, Individual differences between EWO practices & restrictions due to admin tasks (PNIFTED))
- Schools (Understanding and practice & Inflexibility)
- Perceptions of the EP role
- Limited opportunity for preventative working

EWOs
- EPs (Caseload, time constraints/waiting lists & necessity of EP involvement)
- Workload
- Communication (Parents, schools & other agencies not in the MAST)
- Professional isolation in the MAST
- Limited alternative provision places

Object
2. What are people working on? (case & activity)

Outcome
3. What was achieved?

EPs
- EP
- EWO
- Other MAST professionals (PAYP & SIPs)
- School (Mainstream & PRU)
- Family
- Health professionals
- Charities/voluntary agencies/independent sector

EWOs
- EWO
- EP
- School staff (Mainstream & PRU)
- Family
- Health professionals

EPs
- Professional roles and knowledge
- Negotiation
- Graduated response
- Time availability

EWOs
- Professional roles
- Joint [EP and EWO] negotiation
- Availability and time
- On-going negotiation

Division of Labour
6. How is the work shared?

Rules
4. What supports or constrains the work?

Community
5. Who else is involved?

Figure 6.1: *Overview of research findings relating to EPs' and EWOs' perceptions of current practice*

EPs

Qualifications:
- Undergraduate degree in Psychology
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- Masters in Educational Psychology
- Doctorate in Educational Psychology
- Therapeutic skills qualification

Experience:
- Practising EP for 1 year+
- Teacher
- Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP)
- Other role in Educational Settings
Learning Support Assistant:
Mentor for children with disabilities:

Continued Professional Development:
- Therapeutic training and experience
- Delivery of training on non-attendance
- Promotion of positive mental health
- Emotionally based school refusal working group
- Application of psychology to non-attendance
- Large variety

EWOs

Qualifications:
- NVQ Level 4
- Undergraduate degree
- Social Work CQSW

Experience:
- Practising EWO for 5 years+
- Prior role in education
Attendance:
Administration:

Continued Professional Development:
- Child Protection
- Equality
- Administration
- Legal training
- Parenting
- Multi-agency
- Large variety

EPs
- EP experience

EWOs
- Involvement of other agencies
- Information gathering
- Build a supportive relationship with the family
- Workload constraints

ACTIVITY THEORY: EP AND EWO THEMES FOR PAST PRACTICE

EPs
- Similar focus to current practice
- Less co-working
- Consultation

EWOs
- Collaborative work with EPs
- Limited communication with EPs
- Positive relationships with EPs
- Limited awareness/potential for schools to make adjustments

EPs
- Similar outcomes to current practice
- Better outcomes on previous cases
- Every case is individual
- EWOs previously only monitored attendance 80% and below

EWOs
- Similar outcomes to current practice
- Less collaborative 'joined up' working
- Less acceptable to adjust/modify educational provision
- Less professional awareness

Tools/Artifacts
7. What historical factors have influenced tool use?

Subject
1. Whose perspective? (qualifications, experience & CPD)

Object
2. What were people working on?

Outcome
3. What was achieved in the past?

Rules
4. What historical factors have influenced activity?

EPs
- MAST
Communication
Co-location and relationship building
Roles and responsibilities
- EPs previously had more time

EWOs
- Limited multi-agency working
- Government expectations/targets
- Limited parental access to professionals
- Time constraints
- Increase in non-attendance cases
- Limited alternative provision places

Community
5. Who else has been involved?

Division of Labour
6. How was the work shared?

EPs
- Health professionals
- Other MAST professionals
- Charities/voluntary agencies/independent sector
- Police

EWOs
- Charities/voluntary sctor/independent projects
- Other MAST professionals
- Health professionals
- Law enforcement
- Social Care
- Welfare
- Careers

EPs
Division of labour based on:
- Professional roles, knowledge and skills
- Consultation
- Construction of the EP role
- EWOs past limited emphasis on welfare

EWOs
Division of labour based on:
- Communication
- Professional knowledge and skills
- Professional guidelines and boundaries
- Time/caseload

Figure 6.2: *Overview of research findings relating to EPs' and EWOs' perceptions of past practice*

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ACTIVITY THEORY: EP AND EWO THEMES FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

EPs
- Tools to foster an awareness of the issues Related to non-attendance
Schools
EWOs
Other MAST professionals:
- **Tools to promote collaborative working**
- **Tools to develop interventions to support attendance**
- **Tools to promote preventative working**

EWOs
- **Tools to promote collaborative working**
- **Document outlining the support MAST and individual professionals can offer and the threshold for involvement**
- **Linked electronic systems between agencies**
- **Tools to foster an awareness of the issues related to non-attendance**
- **Tools to develop interventions to support attendance**
- **Truancy patrols with the Police**

EPs
- **EPs contributing to the professional development of others**
Training
Development of assessment tools
Supervision
Collaborative practice
- **Similar focus**
- **Early intervention**

EWOs
- **Continued collaboration with EPs**
- **Continued professional development**
- **Developing the awareness of others**
- **Engage the EP earlier**
- **EPs increasing caseload**

EPs
- **EPs developing others' awareness regarding non-attendance**
Schools
EWOs
- **Increase in family/community psychology**
- **EWO retracting job role: focus on Statutory role and monitoring attendance**
- **Time-bound outcomes**
- **Similar outcomes to current practice**

EWOs
- **Extension of the compulsory age to attend education and/or training**
- **Uncertainty**
- **Promote placement maintenance in mainstream schools**
- **Similar outcomes to current practice**
- **Collaborative work**
- **Funding**

EPs   **EWOs**

Tools/Artifacts
7. What tools would be useful for the future?

Subject
1. Whose perspective?

Rules
4. What factors will influence future activity?

Object
2. What will people be working on?

Outcome
3. What will be achieved in the future?

Community
5. Who would it be beneficial to involve in the future?

Division of Labour
6. How will the work be shared?

EPs
- **Funding/staffing cuts**
- **Traded services**
- **Government initiatives**
- **Increase in community psychology**

EWOs
- **Reduction in funding**
- **Increased demands on resources**
- **Increased need for collaborative working**
EPs and EWOs:
Health professionals:
Social Care:

EPs
- **Professionals already identified**
- **Social Care**
- **Health professionals**

EWOs
- **Health professionals**
- **Social Care**
- **Welfare**
- **Police**

EPs
- **Increase in time for EPs to support the professional development of others**
- **EPs varied role in the LA e.g. not only MAST work**

EWOs
- **Role changes/uncertainty**
- **Funding cuts**
- **Increase in the welfare aspect of the EWO role**
- **Increase in attendance monitoring and legal work**
- **Increase in workload**

Figure 6.3: *Overview of research findings relating to EPs' and EWOs' perceptions of future practice*

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The themes identified from the EP and EWO semi-structured interviews are presented under each of the seven activity theory nodes. Theme diagrams are provided to illustrate the overarching themes, main themes and sub-themes. Figure 6.4 demonstrates the colour coding that will be applied through the chapter to afford a coherent presentation of the findings. Quotes are provided to support the main themes identified in the subject, rules and mediating artifacts nodes and to illustrate the main contradictions.

Figure 6.4

Figure 6.4: *Illustration of the colours utilised to depict each theme category*
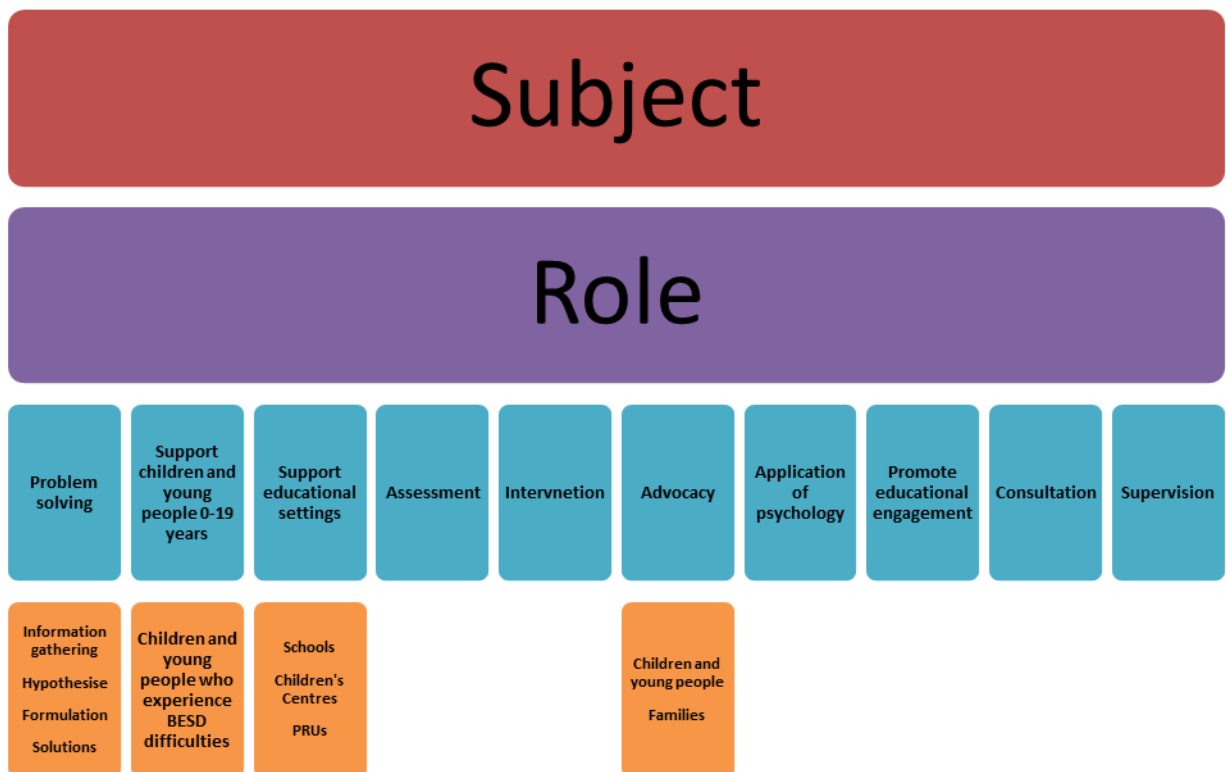
6.1 EP findings and discussion

6.1.1 Subject

Themes identified from the EP interviews within the subject node are presented in Figure 6.5. Discussion of the identified themes regarding the EP role is punctuated with illustrative quotes.

Figure 6.5

Figure 6.5: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme, main themes and sub themes for the subject node for EPs*

The **overarching theme** regarding the EPs' perceptions of their **role** in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A resulted in the abstraction of ten **main themes**. Four of the **main themes** have **sub-themes**.

Research question: What do EPs and EWOs perceive is their professional role in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A?

The findings derived from the EPs' perceptions of their role support Cameron's (2006) contention that EPs, through the application of psychology that draws on theoretical and research bases, devise problem-solving strategies in complex real life situations.

Application of psychology
"...evidenced-based practice (laughs) so yes psychological theories and everything and evidence-based practice, I think that's what separates our role but I think sometimes we don't mention psychology, well I don't and whereas a lot of what we talk about is based on theories and evidence" (EP2).

Problem-solving
"...factors that might be affecting the school non-attendance and actually sort of formulating that into some kind of hypothesis that's erm would help to guide the, support the intervention that would be needed" (EP4).

"working with the family with the young person to try and find some solutions and try and build just a tiny little bit of engagement back in the first instance" (EP5).

Promote educational engagement
"...my role is to try and find ways to re-engage them in education" (EP2).

The DfES (2006) asserted that EPs achieve this by assessment, consultation, advice, intervention, training and research as reflected by the findings.

> ### Assessment
> *"...it is very assessment-based... the CAF meetings also review meeting erm of children who have Statements erm and a lot of the work is Statutory Assessment, I think I probably do... er when I was working full-time I was about I probably did 25-30 Statutory advices a year"* (EP4).
>
> ### Consultation
> *"...working in consultation with teachers to help them promote positive outcomes for children and young people"* (EP3).
>
> ### Intervention
> *"...intervention that continues over a period of time. And sometimes I've done that erm run an intervention"* (EP4).

Specifically, Philbrick and Tansey (2000) delineated a clear assessment role for EPs that could be either formal or informal but involved meeting with the child and family and liaison with other professionals. Thus, EPs adopt an eco-systemic perspective that endeavours to understand the child at multiple eco-systemic levels whilst triangulating the views and perceptions of family, school staff and other professionals (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cameron, 2006).

The EPs in the current research explicitly discussed the focus of their role as supporting children and young people.

> ### Support children and young people 0-19 years
> *"...working with pupils that range from 0-19 [years] and we can deal with a range of complex issues"* (EP1).

The related sub-theme of supporting children and young people who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties was identified. The sub-theme complements the DfE (2011b, p.104) Support and Aspiration Green paper that suggested EPs "make a significant contribution to enabling children and young

people to make progress with learning, behaviour and social relationships".
Furthermore, in accordance with the role of supporting children and young people
who may experience additional needs, EPs claim to be promoting the inclusion of
children who may be at risk of exclusion from school or other settings (BPS, 2010).

In addition, the EPs in the current research considered advocacy for the child as a
key responsibility.

> Advocacy
> *"advocating for the youngsters and parents" (EP5).*

Gersch (2004) highlighted that EPs adopt a child-centred approach that advocates
the child's voice. Fallis and Opotow (2003) further reinforced the need to work
collaboratively with students and to listen, affirm and act on their views in relation to
attendance. Moreover, the findings reflect the BPS (2010) and HPC (2010) proposal
that the role of an EP should involve formulating and conducting direct intervention
work with a child or young person.

The notion that LA professionals have a role to support schools (Archer et al. 2004)
is affirmed by EPs' direct reference to the role that they assume in supporting not
only children, young people and their families but also educational settings.

> Support educational settings
> *"working in consultation with teachers to help them promote positive outcomes for children and young people" (EP3).*

The efficacy of systemic working has been discussed by Monsen et al. (1998), who
argued that systemic work can potentially impact a larger number of pupils than

individual work. The finding that the EPs perceive an aspect of their role as engaging in systemic work reinforces that EPs accept systemic work as a manner in which to work. Systemic work may be achieved by working with "key partners to support the design, implementation, conduct, evaluation and dissemination of research activities and to support evidence-based research" (HPC, 2010, p.17).

6.1.2 Rules

The rules identified by the EPs are represented by **two overarching themes**. The **overarching themes** relate to what **supports** and what **constrains** inter-agency collaboration between EPs and EWOs to support children and young people who experience CESN-A (see Figure 6.6). The **overarching theme** regarding what **supports** inter-agency collaboration consists of seven **main themes** and twelve **sub-themes**. The findings regarding what **constrains** inter-agency collaboration comprises five **main themes** and seven **sub-themes**.

Research question: What do EPs and EWOs perceive supports or constrains inter-agency collaboration to support children and young people who experience CESN-A?
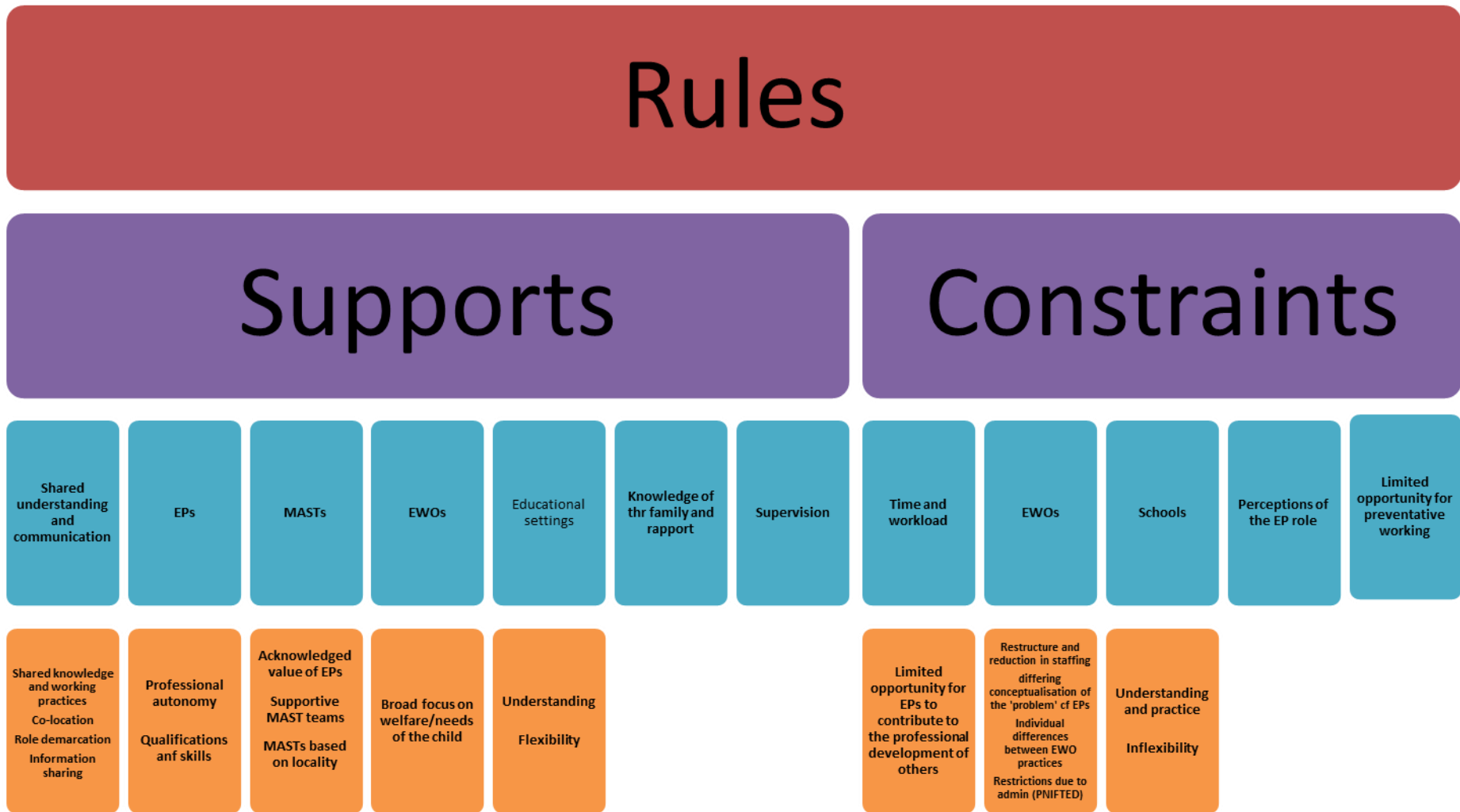
Figure 6.6

Figure 6.6: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme, main themes and sub themes for the rules node for EPs*

6.1.2 (i) Supports

The findings that EPs regard the involvement of multiple professionals as beneficial is congruent with the requirements of the Children Act (2004) which advocated partnership working between agencies. Additionally, the notion that EPs regard co-location of services as supportive reinforces the Children Act (2006) which endorsed integrated services, multidisciplinary structures and co-located service provision. The finding also supports the DfE (2011b) pledge aimed at promoting joined-up working between services and improved collaboration. However, Leadbetter (2006) offered a distinction between *co-location*, where professionals are located in one place, and *co-working*, where professionals work in an integrated manner.

Atkinson et al. (2002) asserted that effective multi-agency working is contingent on shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, and open communication and information sharing, as reflected in the findings.

Shared understanding and communication
"But also I think the main reason that EPs and EWOs work very well together in [LA name] is because is you learn more about each other's job roles and it's that's almost like CPD [continued professional development] itself" (EP3.)

"Well we've got the information sharing protocol erm which all parents have to sign to say yes it's alright to discuss situations or anything that's happening with the MAST" (EP1).

Additionally, Atkinson et al. (2002) contended that good working relationships are a key facilitator to multi-agency working. The sub-theme related to the concept that EPs perceive that they are valued in the MAST and that supportive MASTs are helpful, offers support for Atkinson et al's., (2002) emphasis on the need for positive working relationships. Furthermore, Gaskell and Leadbetter (2009) reported that

multi-agency teams can lead to increased inter-professional value for the work of others.

MASTs

"I do also think we're very valued in the MAST teams and obviously [Service name] as a whole, the Psychology Service is by far in a way the biggest sector of [Service name] that adds value to the City as a whole because of all the variety of different things that we do" (EP5).

"I think the support of others in the service, not just other EPs but all your other colleagues you know?" (EP5).

The finding that EPs valued their professional autonomy highlights Atkinson et al's., (2002) proposal that drive and leadership are important in multi-agency teams.

EPs

"I think we have er a huge autonomy in how we work and it's very flexible, it fits for the families because the sort of the view with how we work in [Service name] is you've got a job to do, these are your tasks these are when they've got to be done by but how you do that and how you fit that together and how much time you allocate to a particular case or a particular family is really left to professional judgement. And I think for EPs that's right because of our level of skill and qualification, experience I guess in terms of when we get to the profession we've done lots of things that that add give us those skills" (EP5).

A further support to inter-agency collaboration, identified by EPs, was EWOs who adopted a focus on the welfare needs of the child as opposed to the adoption of a punitive approach.

EWOs

"I find that generally in [LA name] EWOs erm are very good in terms of taking a holistic view of the child's needs and don't just automatically go down the route of penalty notices and kind of almost punishment approaches and do consider a range of factors erm impacting on a child's non-attendance and very much come from a welfare perspective rather than an erm kind of chastisement punishment perspective for parents" (EP3).

However, this conflicts with the dual aspect of the EWO role and their Statutory responsibility to prosecute parents for persistent absence (DfE, 2012; Reid, 2006; Philbrick and Tansey, 2000).

The finding that relates to the supportive role that educational settings can fulfil demonstrates the significance of ensuring the most appropriate educational setting for the young person. Additionally, it highlights the importance of EPs supporting schools systemically by offering training, facilitating research projects and supporting organisational reflection, self-scrutiny and development (Fallis and Opotow, 2003).

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

<div align="center">Educational settings</div>

"I think it also depends on the the link person within schools and their sort of perception of erm emotionally-based school non-attendance. Er in two secondary schools that we deal with, I think both of the key people, well one has a very good understanding and the other one has a good understanding so that's not an issue"
<div align="center">*(EP4).*</div>

</div>

Moreover, self-scrutiny and the need to identify problems or tensions are deemed by some as imperative to promote organisation change and development (Engeström, 2008, 1999a, 1995; Denison, 2001; Argyris, 1990).

The theme demonstrating the importance that EPs bestow on understanding the family further affirms the notion that EPs are motivated toward understanding the influences on the child based on the multiple ecological levels in which the child operates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cameron, 2006).

> Knowledge of the family and rapport
> *"And I think also we're quite accessible, so families can get to us easily can't they? They can visit us now because we're in MAST Centres which is a little bit easier but they can pick up the phone they can email us. You know, I'm in constant contact with several families I'm working with because I am easy to get hold of because they've got direct lines and that isn't the same as everywhere. When I worked in [other LA name] your calls were all shielded and families won't call as readily if they've gotta gotta go through a secretary. And email as well I always encourage my families to email me, because I check my email everyday I'm not at my desk everyday so sometimes I don't want them waiting if there's something that they want to talk to me about, I know I can find a time the next day to call them back wherever I am". (EP 5*).

6.1.2 (ii) Constraints

The theme identified within the rule node relating to time and workload as constraints for inter-agency collaboration reflect Atkinson et al's., (2002) assertion that effective multi-agency working requires sufficient time. Furthermore, Argyris (1990) highlighted the perils of professionals becoming increasingly 'time-constrained' and 'outcome-orientated' in the absence of reflection.

> Time and workload
> *"Time, time is the major thing really! Erm and that's not just my time that's their [EWO] time as well, especially the fact that we've now got 2 EWOs for 17 schools. That is that is the major constraint" (EP1).*
>
> *"we're supposed to do so many things but there's a danger with that that we're too busy and it gets stressful and er you may not do everything on time and you may not do everything as well as you could have done" (EP5).*

Time constraints prompted EPs' concern regarding their restricted ability to support the professional development of others reinforces the HPC (2010, p.21) professional guideline that EPs have a role to use "formulation to assist multi-professional communication and learning".

Time and workload
"I know one of things that [Head of Service name] really wants of within the Authority is for the EPs to share good practice in casework in terms of collecting information and sort of formulating it into some kind of hypothesis and actually taking some kind of broader view of things and er I think we've probably need formal opportunities to be able to do that particularly with EWOs. I mean you you do it a little bit informally when you meet with them and you discuss issues and emm also when we write reports and we give them copies but that's more of an emm osmotic process it's not a formal process" (EP4).

EPs' perceptions that time constraints and workload are restrictive is interrelated to concerns expressed regarding the limited opportunity to engage in preventative working.

Limited opportunity for preventative working
"I think we we aren't able to do a lot of preventative work because we we're very reactive in terms of casework and I think that can be frustrating because it would be quite nice to do a lot more training with schools to alert them to things so that they can actually be proactive before it gets to the stage where they are having to be reactive. So I think that's probably an organisational issue and that probably goes for all types of casework not just emotionally-based school non-attendance" (EP4).

Pellegrini (2007) suggested that effective preventative interventions will involve the support of external agencies that provide an early response to pupils struggling with attendance. Multi-agency analysis of systemic risk factors that may contribute to non-attendance is also deemed vital for effective preventative intervention (Pellegrini, 2007). More specifically, Philbrick and Tansey (2000) argued that the detrimental impact of non-attendance on children's emotional, social and cognitive development can be avoided through a co-ordinated multi-agency response.

The finding that EPs regard the EWS as under 'threat' due to re-structuring and reduction in staff affirms concerns in the literature that EWSs are vulnerable to cuts in times of economic austerity (Reid, 2008).

EWOs

"…and it's the volume of work and it's the reduction in staffing erm because we did used to have 3 EWOs in this area [tut]" (EP1).

"I think erm the re-structuring of the EWOs perhaps has been a a negative factor as well erm because I think there has been a lot of hard feelings because some people who've been in the service a long time, didn't get the higher level erm Area EWO roles and that had implications for their salaries and has affected morale and their co-operation quite considerably. And I think our MAST does feel that, there are tensions within the between the EWOs as a result of that erm which inevitably effects erm er the way we work" (EP4).

A further perpetuating apprehension relates to the significant changes in the EWO profession, despite an absence of professional literature (Reid, 2008). In addition the reduction in staff may reflect the variety of professional agencies now involved in supporting attendance (Reid, 2008). The reduction in staffing may counter the notion that multi-agency working necessitates adequate funding and resources (Atkinson et al. 2002).

The identified sub-theme that EPs view the varying practice and individual differences between EWOs as a constraint directly reflects Reid's (2008) claim regarding the divergent professional practice of the EWS and individual EWOs and concerns regarding the apparent dearth of a united EWO profession.

> EWOs
> *"I think there were personal factors, I think like with like some other EWOs that I've worked with they might of thought of prosecution much more quickly. Erm because I think like on non-attendance you could of then just straight away given a fine or whereas I think the EWO that I work with she's quite good at taking in like a holistic picture and seeing that that legal route might not be applicable until we have done a few other things. Erm so I think that definitely influences things"* (EP2).

One of the sub-themes illustrated that EPs' perceive, school staff and EWOs' different conceptualisation of the problem as constraining.

> Schools and EWOs
> *"And I think one of the outcomes that you'd like to see is a more sort of sympathetic understanding approach from the school system which you don't always get. You get little pockets of it erm so that's an outcome it would be good to see changed. And also perhaps the attitude of some of the EWOs, that would be a positive outcome"* (EP4).

This supports Grandison's (2011) claim that a significant barrier to multi-agency working is that different agencies have divergent priorities and conceptualisations of non-attendance. Reid (2006) reported that one third of EWOs expressed the view that a punitive approach was necessary for children and young people who do not attend school. However, an alternative view asserted by Fortune-Wood (2007) suggests that the adoption of a punitive approach and threat of legal action and/or imprisonment is inappropriate, increasing the pressure on an already difficult situation and adding to the problems without offering any solution. Furthermore, DfE (2012, p.4) reported that 40-50% of parental fines for non-attendance are not paid, and claimed that the legal system is "protracted and inconsistent".

The EPs additionally reported the varying construction of the EP role as a constraining factor.

> Perceptions of the EP role
> *"I think sometimes people have the frustration that EPs don't necessarily do things quickly enough and I think there may be a view point that other people do things and we do the thinking" (EP5).*

Fallon et al. (2010) postulated that the increasing number of stakeholders and agencies may have resulted in relatively less consistent understandings of the EP role. Another possible explanation of divergent perceptions of the EP role may be specifically related to the EP role in promoting attendance. Others may have a narrow understanding of what EPs can specifically offer in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A.

6.1.3 Mediating tools or artifacts

The findings abstracted from the analysis represent EPs' perceptions regarding the mediating tools or artifacts that they use when they collaborate with EWOs to support a child or young person who experiences issues associated with CESN-A (see Figure 6.7). The **overarching theme** of **tools used** consisted of two **main themes** that related to the use of **concrete tools** and the use of **abstract tools**. Each **main theme** consisted of three **sub-themes**.

Research question (sub-question related to the methodology): What are the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur, that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

Figure 6.7
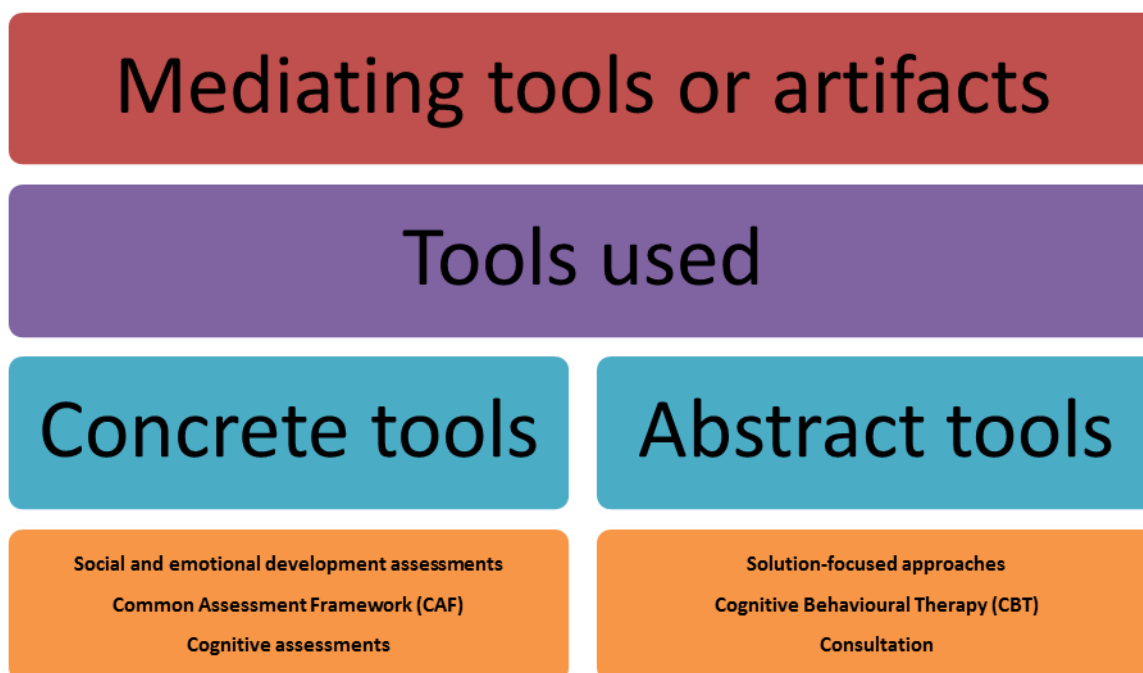
Figure 6.7: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme, main themes and sub-themes for the mediating tools or artifacts node for EPs*

The findings illustrated above indicate that EPs utilise a range of psychological theories, approaches and conceptual frameworks to problem-solve and devise solutions to complex real life situations (Cameron, 2006). The findings suggest that members of the EP group adopt an eclectic approach to their activity rather than drawing on one particular paradigm. The abstract tools that EPs reported that they use demonstrate that EPs employ theoretical tools to support their activity.

Solution-focused approaches
"working together we used like a solution focused type activity" (EP1).

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
"I used CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy] framework for trying to help with her with her anxiety" (EP2).

Consultation
"The main things would have probably been the consultation" (EP1).

The concrete tools of social and emotional development assessments and cognitive assessment are also informed by theoretical approaches.

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Social and emotional development assessments
"I also erm perhaps used I used the BECKs Inventory just to get his views on how he felt about certain things which indicate to me high levels of anxiety and low self-esteem" (EP4).

"Erm in terms of concrete tools, I used the Resilience Scales" (EP2).

Cognitive assessments
"cognitive assessment tools, it wouldn't have been the WIAT because it was too long ago, so it would have been the WORD probably the WOND I would guess to get an idea of where he's at" (EP5).

</div>

EPs reported more use of abstract tools in their work compared to EWOs who focused on the use of concrete tools. This finding may exemplify a distinctive contribution that EPs offer when working collaboratively with EWOs.

Both EPs and EWOs identified the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as a concrete tool that they adopt in their practice.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
"I think well, the professional meetings particularly when err the CAF [Common Assessment Framework] process" (EP4).

</div>

The joint use of the same tool offers support for the requirement for a coordinated multi-agency assessment in non-attendance cases (Philbrick and Tansey, 2000). CAF meetings also provide EPs with the opportunity to facilitate communication between the agencies involved (HPC, 2010; Philbrick and Tansey, 2000).

All of the contradictions identified in the EP activity system are presented in Appendix Sixteen. Contradictions are constructed as potentials for change (Engeström, 2001). The location (node) for the contradiction was determined by the node in which it appeared in the interview. The 'type' of contradiction is also provided in the table located in the Appendix. Engeström (1987) distinguished between primary contradictions and secondary contradictions. Primary contradictions refer to tensions within one node and secondary contradictions refer to tensions between two differing nodes. Although all of the contradictions identified within the EP activity system are presented in Appendix Sixteen, discussion is offered of the most pertinent contradictions. The saliency of the contradictions was determined by their relevance to the research aims and questions and the frequency with which each was referred to by the EPs.

Research question (sub-question related to the methodology): What are the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur, that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

The main contradictions identified within the EP activity system related to how EPs understand and conceptualise the 'problem' compared to EWOs and other professionals. Kearney (2008) highlighted the varying conceptualisation of non-attendance by different professional groups. In addition, Grandison (2008) supported

this assertion and suggested that different professional priorities and varying conceptualisations can result in tensions between practitioners. EPs reported the significance of the manner in which a problem is conceptualised, because it informs activity and professionals aspirations for the desired outcomes. The EPs in the current research referred to the different professional training as a potential source of divergent perspectives. Anning et al. (2006) highlighted that different professional groups can have differing forms of professional knowledge. Beck and Young (2005) suggested that multi-agency working can challenge the legitimacy of professionals' claims and the exclusive possession of specialised knowledge. However, multi-agency working offers an opportunity to develop shared understandings whilst maintaining a distinctive contribution.

Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EPs regarding differing conceptualisations of the problem and related implications for activity and desired outcome.

Other professionals' conceptualisation of the problem and desired outcome v EPs' conceptualisation of the problem and desired outcome
"I suppose this is one thing that that can sometimes be challenging because I think other professionals within the MAST can sometimes ask for your involvement and have already decided what the outcome of that involvement has been" v "if they if a young person comes into City and if they [EWOs] feel that they should go to the [PRU name] or something I've kind of said, the [PRU name] doesn't get mentioned (laughs) until...because that's the outcome of an [EP] assessment, rather than just doing an assessment to say that it's the [PRU name] is the outcome" (EP2).

EPs' awareness and understanding of need v other professionals' understanding of need
"he didn't seem to have any real reason not to go; it was actually just down to confidence and self-esteem but it was that extreme that he thought about ending his life" v "So, you know I think sometimes people [other professionals] underestimate the impact of what these kids are going through and what they may do to avoid going to school" (EP5).

> <u>EP conceptualisation of the problem and desire for systemic solutions and development v Schools' conceptualisation of the problem and desire for 'within child' solutions</u>
> *"Just going back to school, I think they took a very much within child approach…school erm on that specific case were quite inflexible. I think one of our key roles as working together was how we would then approach that with the school in terms of trying to again facilitate their thinking around the fact that this isn't just a problem child whose attendance needs to increase but a child that we actually need to work together to support" v "we [MAST professionals] were taking a systemic approach" (EP3).*

EPs identified a dichotomy within the EWO role that relates to offering support and involvement in promoting the welfare of the child contrasted with the Statutory punitive role that can result in court action against parents. The EPs were overwhelmingly in favour of EWOs focusing their activity on supporting the welfare of the child and were sceptical regarding the helpfulness of punitive action. The effectiveness of punitive action may be further questioned in light of DfE (2012) reports that fines issued to parents are often unpaid. Moreover, Reid (2006) found that only a minority of EWOs deemed existing legislation to support an effective way to manage non-attendance. O'Keefe (1995) suggested that EWOs should concentrate their support on school-based factors that can support the child. Interestingly, EPs reported change following inter-agency working and suggested that collaboration between EPs and EWOs appeared to moderate the amount of punitive work that EWOs engaged in and resulted in the predominant proportion of the role consisting of welfare promotion.

> **Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EPs regarding an apparent dichotomy within the EWO role.**
>
> EWO punitive role v Children and families in need of support
> *"I think they need to take a more holistic view…rather than erm a sort of legal punitive role" v "I think they need to take a more holistic view erm and and look at their role as one of support" (EP4).*
>
> EP rejection of the punitive role of an EWO v EWOs Statutory responsibility
> *"But I think and I think this is EPs generally, but specifically me I don't really advocate going down the court route or the prosecution route" v "oh we'll try this; we've met the family a few times; they haven't engaged so we're gonna prosecute them now" (EP5).*
>
> EWOs punitive role v EWOs supportive welfare role
> *"When I've worked in other services where there hasn't been multi-agency working I have found it to be a lot more punitive erm and a lot more kind of to the rules of let's go down the prosecution route" v "ok what can we actually do to support this child and this family holistically? And I think that the close working with EPs facilitates that line of thinking because you are constantly having that consultation about a case" (EP3).*

EPs identified time constraints as a rule that contradicted other aspects of the rules, subject and object nodes. EPs reported that time constraints conflicted with the large case loads and increasing complexity of CESN-A cases. This presented a tension for EPs who identified the need for meaningful activity and support.

> **Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EPs regarding time constraints and the seemingly increasing case complexity and loads.**
>
> EP casework priorities v need for involvement with non-attendance cases
> *"Caseloads again and that's probably on my side as well. The volume that the amount the volume of cases that you have errrm and the priorities that we as EPs have… if you've got a statutory or a erm school pre-permanent exclusion meeting or something like that that then has to take then has to take priority on top of" v "the priorities that we as EPs have to have, sometimes that can impact on erm trying to get in there as quickly as possible" (EP1).*
>
> Time constraints v caseload
> *"Time, time is the major thing really! Erm and that's not just my time that's their*

[EWO] time as well" v "we've now got 2 EWOs for 17 schools. That is that is the major constraint" (EP1).

Meaningful casework with positive outcomes v time constraints and targets
"I think EPs are the ones that are gonna have to do this the most is to stand by your guns in terms of what you're doing and justify what you're doing and I always say to the EPs that I've supervised, as long as you can justify what you're doing and it works well for that family and it makes things better then you stick by it" v "I think they get pushed into more time-limited, targeted piece of work that aren't necessarily useful and that's my concern sometimes with the court actions, oh we'll try this we've met the family a few times they haven't engaged so we're gonna prosecute them now, because actually you've just touched the tip of the iceberg with those meetings" (EP5).

Broadening role of an EP v time constraints
"being an EP because we're supposed to do so many things" (EP5)" & "EPs to share good practice in casework in terms of collecting information and sort of formulating it into some kind of hypothesis and actually taking some kind of broader view of things" (EP4) v "but there's a danger with that that we're too busy and it gets stressful and er you may not do everything on time and you may not do everything as well as you could have done" (EP5).

Need for a swift assessment of children and young people that are new into the LA area v The need to observe the young person in an educational setting and gather meaningful information
"I think with new with new into City kids erm I always find that you have to make quite a quick judgement on them" v "I think that can sometimes like while you make hypotheses about their behaviour you obviously haven't seen them in setting you haven't you can't have a full discussion with their previous [setting]…So I think my hypotheses were constrained at the start and even later on because I still hadn't seen her in a mainstream setting" (EP2).

Monsen et al. (1998) argued that engaging in systemic work may increase EPs' efficiency and may result in an impact on a larger number of pupils. EPs offered the contradiction that time constraints limited their opportunity to engage in systemic activity. Time constraints also conflicted with EPs' perceived ability to prioritise CESN-A cases, especially due to the perceived broadening of the EP role in the LA. The AEP (2008) acknowledged the need for professionals working in a multi-agency context to understand the roles, cultures, structures, discourses and priorities of other professional groups. Atkinson et al. (2002) emphasised the importance of ensuring

that professionals have adequate time when working with multiple agencies. The discussed contradictions associated with EPs' time constraints offer potentials for expansive learning regarding the development of increasingly efficient working practices.

An additional contradiction related to the on-going concern regarding other professionals' understanding of the EP role and EPs' understanding of other professionals' roles, despite the requirement to work in an integrated manner.

Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EPs regarding understanding of professional roles.

EWOs' understanding of the EP role and approach v EPs limited time to share and discuss their thinking and approach
"I think sometimes people have the frustration that EPs don't necessarily do things quickly enough and I think there may be a view point that other people do things and we do the thinking but then you'll have a discussion with somebody and find a way forward and you might use a particular model or theoretical standpoint and when you talk through that process with them then they see the value of it…" v "…the danger is not having the time to talk about the processes and I think then that, because we don't always have that time to sit down and have those discussions and share our reflections with other people sometimes that doesn't help us because we look a bit precious" (EP5.).

Hostility between MAST and Social Care v Understanding of roles (Subject) and thresholds for involvement (Rules)
"I think there's going to be Social Workers based in the MAST centres erm I think that's a good thing because I think sometimes there is some hostility between [Social Care and MAST]" v "I think sometimes there is some hostility between like, Oh they're [Social Care] not gonna take this, Oh they're [Social Care] passing it back to us [MAST] for a CAF so there's kind of a, whether there's a lack of understanding of thresholds and things or yep and then Social Care might have a lack of understanding of what MAST have done so they might think that we're just passing them and we haven't done a lot" (EP2).

CAMHS set procedure (face to face) regarding the initial meeting and assessment of a young person v EPs advice regarding the young person's needs
"I referred well they sent the face to face" v "I did phone to try and get them [CAMHS] to work in a more solution-focused way with her but...they still did that face to face" (EP2).

The DfE (2011b) reinforced the continued endeavour to provide 'joined-up services' to promote integrated multi-agency working that is based on the needs of the child. The multi-disciplinary landscape of professionals who support children and young people and their families, in the absence of concerted and substantive efforts to promote initial understanding of roles, may have resulted in fragmented understanding of professional roles and responsibilities (Fallon et al. 2010). Moreover, Atkinson et al. (2002) offered that multi-agency working is contingent on understanding roles and responsibilities. Anning et al. (2006) stated that limited sharing of different forms of professional knowledge and different cultural practices are among the significant barriers to multi-agency working. This contradiction presents a fundamental potential for expansive learning.

6.2 EWO findings and discussion

6.2.1 Subject

Themes identified from the EWO interviews within the subject node are presented in Figure 6.8. Discussion of the themes is supported by illustrative quotes regarding the EWO role. The **overarching theme** regarding the EWOs' perceptions of their **role** related to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A has eight related **main themes**. One of the **main themes** has **sub-themes**.

Research question: What do EPs and EWOs perceive is their professional role in relation to supporting children and young people who experience CESN-A?

Figure 6.8
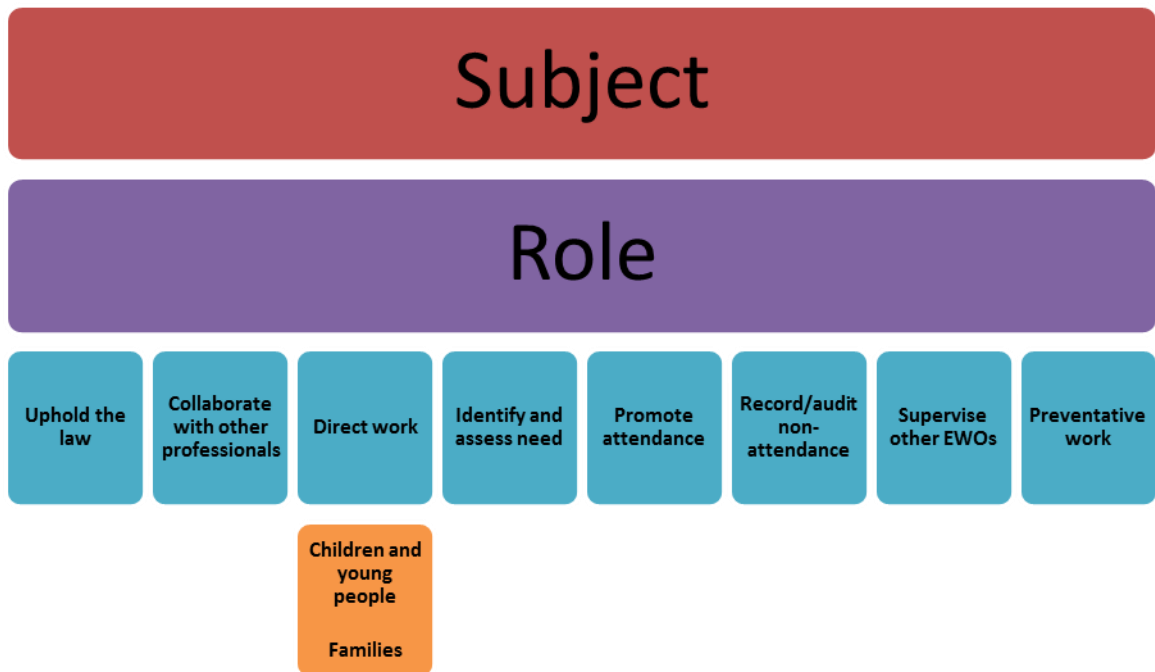
Figure 6.8: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme, main theme and sub themes for the subject node for EWOs*

The findings regarding EWOs' perceptions of their role demonstrate the breadth of the EWO role and reveal the broadening of the role when compared to historical literature that described the role of EWOs (Reid, 2008).

EWOs in the current research confirmed their Statutory responsibility to 'uphold the law' enshrined in the Education Act (1996), by initiating legislative action against the parent if a child or young person of compulsory school age is persistently absent from school without lawful authority, unless it is due to leave, sickness, unavoidable cause or days set aside for religious observance.

The EWOs reported that they fulfilled this aspect of the role by advising schools on the correct legislative practice, chairing legal meetings where parents are warned regarding the persistent non-attendance and prosecuting parents by issuing fixed penalty notices or court action. However, legislative action was largely referred to as the last resort if all attempts to support the child and family do not result in an increase in attendance and if the EWO does not deem that there is a 'reasonable' rationale for non-attendance. This may reflect Reid's (2006) finding that only a small minority of EWOs deem legislative action an effective way to improve attendance.

The themes reflect EWOs' views that they have a key role in collaborating with other professionals.

Collaborate with other professionals
"We run truanting patrols with the police, I am personally attached to the Youth Offending Team... to work with all the other agencies within [Multi-Agency Support Team] MAST: and parenting programmes; [School Inclusion Partners] SIPs or [Behaviour and Mental Health Support workers] BaMHs workers as they are now known; GEM Centre because obviously one of the main reasons why a child may not be attending school may be because of medical or psychological reasons; we constantly talk to [General Practitioners] GPs; School Nurses; or anybody who may have an input whether a child is able to access education as that child should" (EWO2).

This perspective is consistent with discussion in the literature regarding the role of EWOs (Reid, 2008; Philbrick and Tansey, 2000). Furthermore, the increasing landscape of professionals involved in promoting attendance highlights an opportunity for innovative and co-ordinated practice as advocated by the DfE (2011b).

The finding that EWOs acknowledge the need to record and audit non-attendance coincides with the DfE's (2012) assertion regarding the necessity for accurate monitoring and recording of attendance.

Record/audit non-attendance
"So we monitor attendance erm within schools…compiling a data base for those pupils not in full time education PNIFTED [Pupils Not in Full-Time Education]" (EWO1).

In addition to recording non-attendance, EWOs have a further role in analysing attendance and identifying patterns to ensure a swift response to potential difficulties in order to facilitate preventative working (DfE, 2012; Grandison, 2011).

On discussing preventative working, the EWOs referred to supporting the child and family to prevent the escalation of non-attendance.

Preventative work
"we as EWO, as part of MAST are more preventative and we don't prosecute unless we have to do that because we feel that if we can be of a supportive role, it's key really, rather than fighting against families" (EWO5).

However, Stoll (1995b) contended that preventative work should also include the school and that EWOs should additionally work in partnership with teachers. In

addition, O'Keefe (1995) was critical of the EWO role and suggested that EWOs should increase their focus on school-based factors. EWOs have a role in assessing the circumstances that have led to non-attendance and identifying solutions by working with the child, family and school (Philbrick and Tansey, 2000). The findings illustrate that EWOs perceive that they promote attendance through identifying and assessing need and working directly with the child and family.

Promote attendance
"…it is an EWO's job to ensure that that child attends and that any obstacles which prevent that child from attending erm is addressed/overcome and so we make sure that the child is attending 100% of the time" (EWO2).

Identify and assess need
"so it's more of actually assessing the need of that family, why that child is not going to school and then working out ways of how to make it work, whether it be ermm, colleague or myself doing a piece of work or signposting to other agencies" (EWO5)

Direct work
"With the children and families, quite often poor attendance can be an indicator to other issues the family may be experiencing and quite often, when a welfare officer knocks the door and speaks to the family, it can highlight other needs which haven't been met ermm, circumstances the family are experiencing where they may need extra help" (EWO4).

6.2.2 Rules

The rules identified by the EWOs are represented by **two overarching themes**. The **overarching themes** relate to what **supports** and what **constrains** inter-agency collaboration between EPs and EWOs to support children and young people who experience CESN-A. The **supportive factors** consist of three **main themes** and thirteen **sub-themes**. The findings regarding what **constrains** inter-agency collaboration comprise five **main themes** and six **sub-themes**. See Figure 6.9.

Figure 6.9
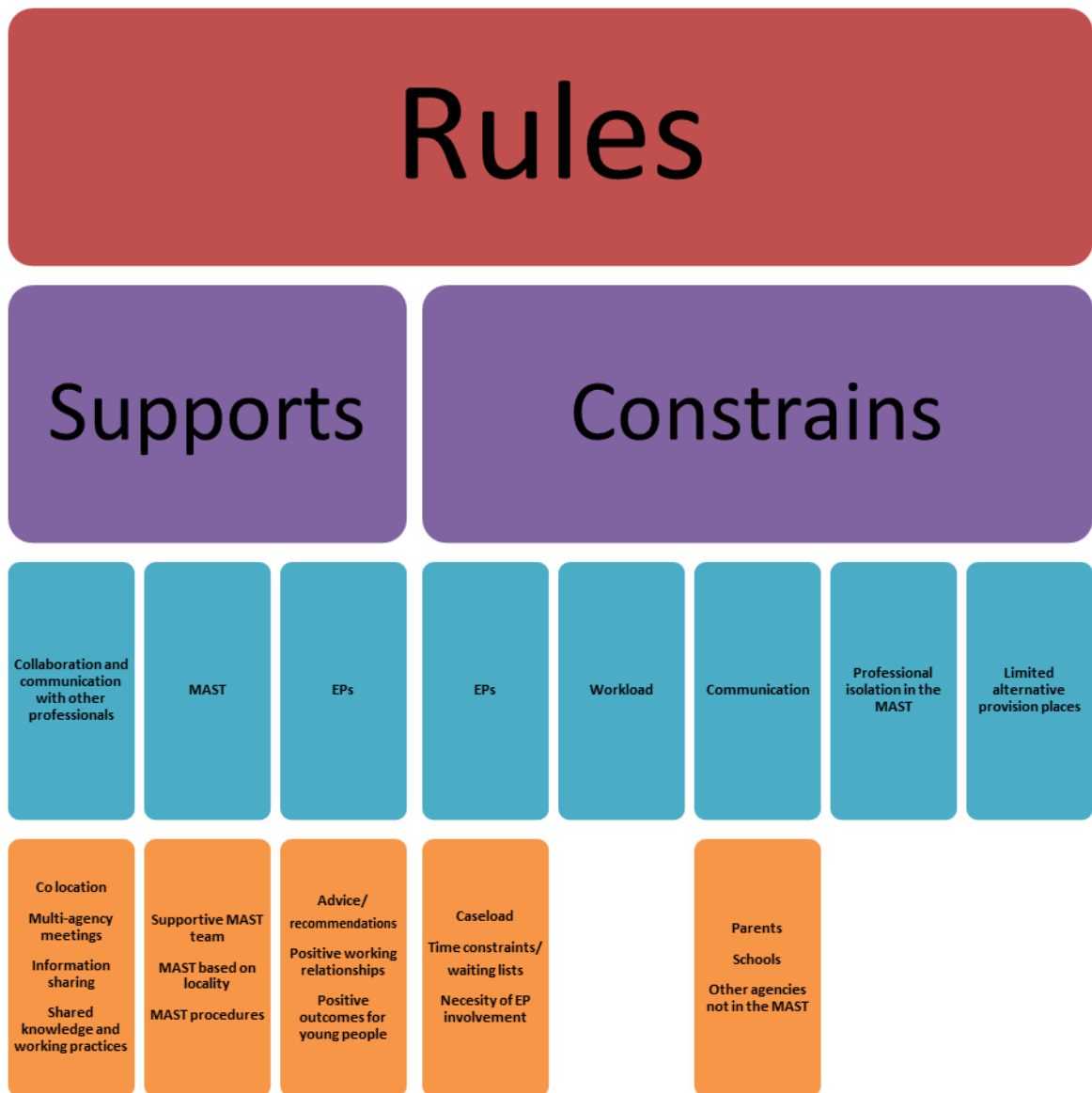
Figure 6.9: *Diagram depicting the overarching themes, main themes and subthemes for the rules node for EWOs*

Research question: What do EPs and EWOs perceive supports or constrains inter-agency collaboration to support children and young people who experience CESN-A?

6.2.2 (i) Supports

Similarly to EPs, the EWOs discussed the involvement of multiple professionals from differing agencies as supportive. The multi-agency working was particularly construed as beneficial due to the co-location of services as advocated in the Children Act (2006).

Collaboration and communication with other professionals
"I think the MAST systems, at the moment, erm encourage more collaborative working because we are individual teams and out from the base" (EWO1).

"...the EP walks into the same room as me and says by the way, little Johnny Jones wasn't in today. And I will say, well hold on a minute let me just have a look at his record and I will pull up his attendance certificate because I have access to the register and I will say, well oh that's funny he wasn't in last Wednesday or the Wednesday before that either or he hasn't been in on the two days previous to or the two days after" (EWO2).

The EWOs identified that good information sharing and communication between professionals enabled joined-up working and improved collaboration (DfE, 2011b; Atkinson et al. 2002).

Collaboration and communication with other professionals
"...within MAST [number] we have a good/a strong communication er with all/everyone in the team" (EWO1).

"...locality conferences that we all, that are compulsory where we do share good practice and talking about issues that we have got in our MAST's or community or with schools (EWO5)

In addition to EPs, the EWOs discussed that co-location enabled some shared understanding between professionals regarding roles and role demarcation, which facilitated practice (Atkinson et al. 2002).

Gaskell and Leadbetter (2009) reported that multi-agency teams can lead to increased inter-professional value for the work of others. The EWOs identified aspects of the EP role, such as the ability to give advice and offer recommendations, as supportive.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

<div align="center">EPs</div>

"I've always known the role of an EP, I have always known when to refer to an EP ermm, but also the EPs I have worked with have always given good advice even if a piece of work isn't open to them, on a consultation they would always give advice and say right try this and if you don't get anywhere with it come back to me" (EWO5).

</div>

EPs have a role to provide advice for educational professionals (DfES, 2006; The Scottish Government, 2002) and develop the skills of other professionals (DfE, 2011b) by using formulation to "assist multi-agency communication and learning" (HPC, 2010, p.21). Furthermore, the EWOs discussed good working relationships with EPs as a key facilitator to collaboration (Atkinson, et al. 2002).

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

<div align="center">EPs</div>

"Because most cases I have worked with EPs, we've had good working relationships and for most of the part successful outcomes for children" (EWO4).

<div align="center">MAST</div>

"...we are very supportive, it is a very supportive team and fortunately we all get on" (EWO1).

"...we work together we need to be a support team" (EWO5).

</div>

The EWOs also discussed the positive impact of EPs as identified in The Support and Aspiration Green paper (DfE, 2011b, p.104) that asserted that EPs "make a significant contribution to enabling children and young people to make progress with learning, behaviour and social relationships".

> EPs
> *"...we've got more Trainee EPs', more AEPs' [Assistant Educational Psychologists] coming on board that can pick up short term pieces of work that maybe a senior or an EP can't do for a lot longer time. Then we've had quite a number of successful pieces of work completed with Trainees or Assistant in our team that has been really good for some of the kids that we have worked with" (EWO5).*

Moreover, the BPS (2010) and HPC (2010) emphasise that by use of psychological formulation to inform interventions, EPs promote positive change and development.

6.2.2 (ii) Constraints

In addition to identifying supportive aspects of the EP role, the EWOs also considered the professional duties and responsibilities of EPs as constraining.

> EPs
> *"think the EPs we have in our team don't have time to get that much in depth because they have got so many cases" (EWO3).*
>
> Workload
> *"...work load is the biggest constraint. We all have an awful lot of work to do and there is maybe only one/two EPs, one/two EWOs in an area" (EWO2).*

Leadbetter (2006) suggested that multi-agency working provides an opportunity to widen professional remits. However, the broadening role of EPs and EWOs was constructed as a barrier due to increasing workloads, alongside time constraints. Atkinson et al. (2002) highlighted that effective multi-agency working is contingent on having adequate time. Additionally, the EWOs were critical of the perceived role of an EP as 'gate keeper' to access to PRU places in light of the absence of any formalised and explicit opportunity for EPs and EWOs to hold collaborative case discussions.

> ### EPs
> *"We have to go through the EP for referrals to the [PRU name]; it has to go through the EP" (EWO1).*
>
> *"there doesn't seem to be a particular forum for EWOs and EPs to sit down together in a professional capacity to discuss cases" (EWO4).*

The AEP (2008) offered that multi-agency working is not easily achieved. The role of open and honest communication in multi-agency working has been identified as essential (Sharpe, 2003; Atkinson et al. 2002). EWOs highlighted that communication with schools and professionals outside of the MAST can be a barrier to effective practice.

> ### Communication
> *"You try and contact families and you can't make contact with them" (EWO1).*
>
> *"...they [parents] don't talk to the school and this child is left to carry on and on and on" (EWO3).*
>
> *"Communication between agencies continues to be an issue" (EWO1).*

This is particularly pertinent as the current Government has announced plans to bring together Services such as education, health and social care by proposing a single assessment, care plan and package of support based on the specific needs of the child and family (DfE, 2011b). The finding that EWOs may experience barriers in communication with parents may reflect the Statutory aspect of their role that can result in prosecuting parents for persistent absence (DfE, 2012; Reid, 2006; Philbrick and Tansey, 2000).

EWOs raised concerns regarding the professional isolation associated with working in a multi-agency team as opposed to teams organised around professional groups.

However, the DCSF (2007) asserted that Children's Services should adopt a multidisciplinary structure to shape services around the needs of children as opposed to professional boundaries. The notion that multi-agency teams can 'threaten' professional identify and expertise has been acknowledged (Anning et al. 2006; Beck and Young, 2005). Leadbetter et al. (2007) contended that the 'threat' to professional identity may be reduced if substantive effort is focused on the preservation of professional identity and the establishment of clear division of labour and role boundaries during the transition to multi-agency teams.

Edwards (2004) suggested that multi-agency learning involves the monitoring of provision by focusing on the ways in which provision can support practice. Furthermore, Atkinson et al. (2002) contended that such working requires adequate funding and resources. The EWOs constructed the limited number of places in alternative provision as a barrier to collaborative working and ultimately reported that it had a detrimental impact on children's progress.

Limited alternative provision places
"I think another issue is lack of provision, ermm whether it be alternative provision, pupil referral units, ermm, it's not enough spaces" (EWO5).
"I think one difficulty that we have is the resources and the space available" (EWO3).

6.2.3 Mediating tools or artifacts

The findings abstracted from the analysis represent EWOs' perceptions regarding the mediating tools or artifacts that they use when they collaborate with EPs to support a child or young person who experiences issues associated with CESN-A (see Figure 6.10). The **overarching theme** of **tools used** consisted of two **main themes** that related to the use of **concrete tools** and the use of **abstract tools**. Three **sub-themes** were identified in the use of **concrete tools** and one **sub-theme** was identified in the use of **abstract tools**.

Figure 6.10
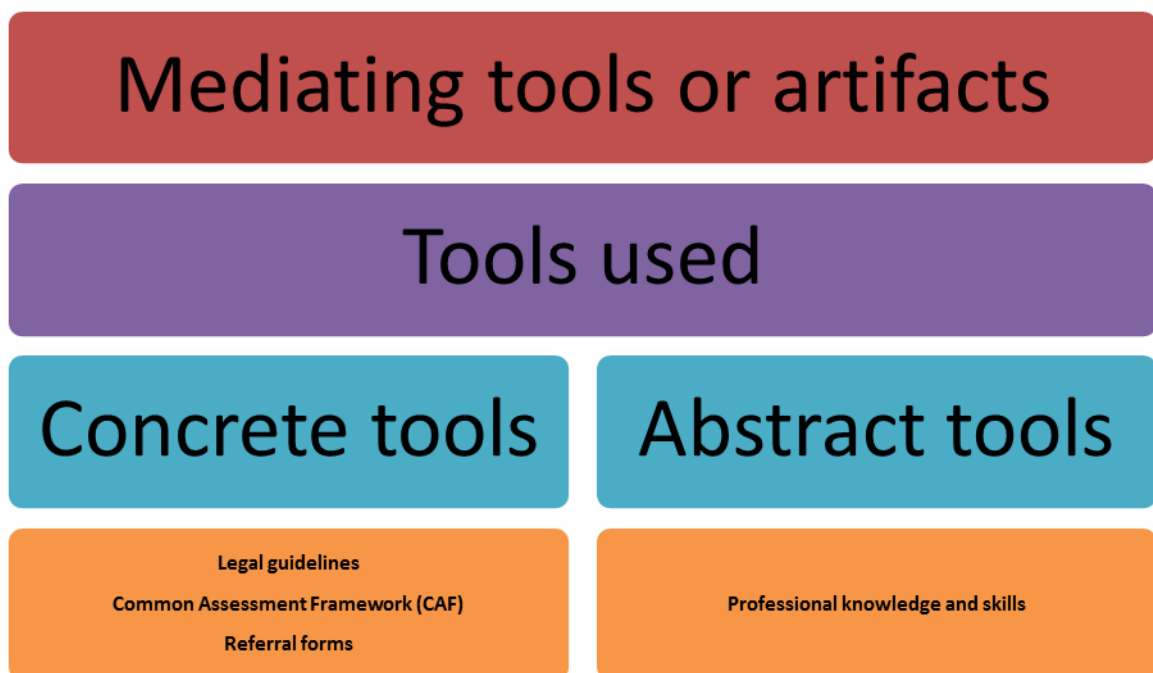
Figure 6.10: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme, main themes and sub-themes for the mediating tools or artifacts node for EWOs*

Research question (sub-question related to the methodology): What are the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur, that mediate the current models of

working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

The findings indicate that EWOs utilise legal guidelines regarding attendance, in accordance with their Statutory role, to mediate their activity (DfE, 2012; Reid, 2006; Philbrick and Tansey, 2000).

Legal guidelines
"*It was my meetings, it was my legal meetings ermm tools, so it was the letters, the legal letters and the legal meetings*" (EWO3). "*Cause I mean as welfare would you use parenting contracts, ermm we do legal meetings, which obviously err, we have a template, like a pro-forma that we have to use (EWO5)*

The findings also suggest that EWOs employ concrete tools explicitly conducive to multi-agency assessment, analysis and working in relation to non-attendance (Reid, 2008; Pellegrini, 2007; Philbrick and Tansey, 2000).

Referral forms
"*we used referral forms, ermm referral forms for [Alternative provision name], referral forms for MAST internal referral*" (EWO3).

Both EWOs and EPs identified the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as a concrete tool that they adopt in their practice.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
"*So the CAF is the assessment tool, so we use it for every referral that comes into our MAST. We use it to identify needs of a family and then to identify who is going to identify that family with that need. Ermm it's a good assessment to coordinate agencies and I think my experience is that it's great for doing that and that's about it really*" (EWO5).

The joint use of the same tool offers support for the requirement for a coordinated multi-agency assessment in non-attendance cases (Philbrick and Tansey, 2000).

The abstract tools that EWOs reported that they use highlights the value placed on professional knowledge and skills as a mediator used by EWOs directed towards the object of facilitating the desired outcome.

Professional knowledge and skills
"*But my main one would certainly be the legal and then any knowledge I have myself*" (EWO1).   "*I think you have to have people skills to do this job, you have to have patience, listening skills. If you do not listen to the client they're not gonna open up to you, you know they can tell you some horrific stories or they can be telling you a pack of lies you know because you still have to listen, because I will do what I need to do what I need to do to ensure that child is educated*" (EWO 4).

6.2.4 Contradictions

All of the contradictions identified in the EWO activity system are presented in Appendix Sixteen. However, the pertinent contradictions are discussed below. The saliency of the contradictions was determined by the relevance to the research aims and questions and the frequency with which each was referred to by the EWOs.

Research question (sub-question related to the methodology): What are the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur, that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

The EWOs identified a contradiction between the co-location of Services to promote collaborative working and the absence of formal structures or procedures to promote inter-agency collaboration. Leadbetter (2006) suggested a distinction between co-location, where differing professionals are located and sit together, and co-working, where differing professionals work in an integrated manner. Furthermore, Lloyd et al. (2001) proposed the definitional distinction between multi-agency and inter-agency working. Multi-agency working is suggested to occur when more than one agency is working with a client in the absence of co-ordination and joint working and may result in replication due to a lack of formal informed inter-agency working. In contrast inter-agency working involves more than one agency working collaboratively in a planned and informed manner at a strategic and or operational level. The contradiction identified by the EWO infers that the context in which the research was conducted practices co-location and multi-agency working. The aim of the developmental work research (DWR) was to stimulate organisational learning to promote co-working and inter-agency collaboration.

Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EWOs regarding limited formal structures for collaboration
Desire to extend co-location to co-working v lack of opportunity/formal structure for co-working *"What has happened now of course is through the development of MASTs and BESTs that hasn't happened, we have all come together. So we are all working in an environment each day together "* v *"I am not sure even if there is a specific protocol for the EWOs working with EPs and if there is, I'm not aware of it" (EWO2).* EWO desire for EP involvement v In practice only school can request EP involvement *"On one of the areas where we would have to look at whether it is responsible are there any reason that an EP can identify as to why a child or young person can't attend that school"* v *"An EP doesn't become involved unless the school feels that there is a need for an EP involvement" (EWO2).*

A contradiction between case prioritisation was discussed by EWOs. The EWO role adopts a main focus on promoting attendance and EWOs reported that, due to their Statutory role, they are obligated to be involved in all persistent absence cases. In contrast EPs have a broad role with several competing Service priorities such as Statutory assessments, critical incidents, exclusions and looked after children (LAC). The EWOs referred to a contradiction between how they might prioritise a non-attendance case and the necessity for EWO and EP collaboration compared to EPs' prioritisation. Leadbetter (2006) offered that multi-agency working can extend professional remits; here, the EWOs discussed the extension of the EP remit and consequent reduced focus on non-attendance. Pellegrini (2007) advocated for external agencies to provide an early response to non-attendance. Despite the contradiction, the EWOs had clear insight into EP culture and EPs' divergent priorities (AEP, 2008) and framed their concern with understanding.

Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EWOs regarding EWO and EP case prioritisation

EWO case prioritisation v EP case prioritisation
"it is prioritising, this [case] might be important for us [EWO]" v "but is it [case] important for the others [EP and other professionals] that are involved?" (EWO1).

"it is prioritising, this [case] might be important for us [EWO]" v "EPs have got so many referrals because everything around that sort of issue has to be going through them so it leads to big delays and it can be months before anything is done...purely due to workloads" (EWO1).

EWOs progress with cases v The necessity for EP involvement
"I'm more aware now of the fact that erm changes can be made within the PRUs and schools particularly with the EP support" v "we are an EP led service, everything has to come through the EP really"(EWO1).

EWOs' future need to engage the EP earlier v EPs broad remit
"it's more important to er engage with the EP earlier rather than erm later" v "And of

> *course those...it is a slow system that is one of the biggest issues really, that it is a slow system, EPs have got so many referrals because everything around that sort of issue has to be going through them so it leads to big delays and it can be months before anything is done...purely due to workloads" (EWO1).*

The EWOs identified a contradiction between the acknowledged need to promote an understanding of special educational needs and the issues surrounding non-attendance and the potential for increased referrals in a landscape of increasing time constraint and pressures.

One aspect of the role of an EP relates to supporting the understanding and skill development of professionals working with children (DfE, 2011b). EPs also have a key role in conducting project work and systemic development to improve the systems that influence children and young people (Monsen et al. 1998). Furthermore, Philbrick and Tansey (2000) asserted that multi-agency support should foster a common understanding of areas of difficulty. Although increased awareness may initially result in additional referrals, Monsen et al. (1998) argued that engagement in systemic work may be a more efficient model of service delivery, compared to conducting individual work, and may impact a larger number of pupils which in turn may reduce referrals to external agencies.

Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EWOs regarding the need to promote an awareness of the issues associated with CESN-A and the potential for increased referrals

Increased awareness of special educational needs and referrals v EP time and resources
"Now, I know for a fact that the schools' requests and parents' requests for EP assessment has increased as people become more aware of things that might be affecting their child. Take ADHD as one of the examples..." v "there is maybe only

In common with EPs, the EWOs reported a dichotomy within the EWO role that relates to offering support by promoting the welfare of the child and family, contrasted with the Statutory punitive role that can result in court action against parents (see Section 6.1.4 for further discussion). However, unlike EPs, the EWOs appeared divided on the usefulness of the dichotomy. Reid (2008) suggested that the EWO profession was not unified and discussed divergent professional practice between EWOs. Some EWOs constructed the Statutory aspect of their role as helpful in terms of use as a last resort to encourage parents to engage with support. On the other hand other EWOs suggested that punitive action reduced the likelihood of engagement and conflicted with the ability to assume a supportive role and, in some cases, conflicted with the EWOs' personal ethics. Reid (2006) highlighted that only a minority of EWOs considered legislative action as an effective way to manage non-attendance. Some EWOs also identified a stark contrast between their Statutory legal role and EPs' supportive role. Moreover, the EWOs differed on their perceptions of the future directions of the EWO role. Some suggested that in the future the EWO role would consist only of their Statutory legal duty whilst others believed that the role would change to focus on only promoting the welfare of the child and family.

Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EWOs in relation to an apparent EWO role dichotomy

EWO Statutory punitive role v EP supportive role
"Historical poor engagement from family, from Mom, from Mother with school, initially it was home visits etc., letters inviting parents in, parents just did not want to engage and course that is a huge barrier to supporting the child if the parent just doesn't want

> *to engage. So of course we had to start legal proceedings. parents saw my role as a threat because she had been prosecuted before"* and *"she [parent] flared up, she switched. 'I'm not working with you [EWO],"* v *"parents were willing to work with the EP"* (EWO4).

> <u>EWO Statutory role to prosecute parents v EWOs' personal ethics</u>
> *"it's my statutory duty, it's in my role under the Education Act 1996 I have powers to fine parents or prosecute parents"* v *"I use it [prosecution] because I had to. I remember when I first came into post I was very apprehensive about using that tool. Whether that was because I was in conflict with my own ethics, I'm not quite sure"* (EWO4 126.)

> <u>Statutory aspect of the role punishes parents v Statutory aspect of the role encourages parents to share information and co-operate</u>
> *"The legal meetings were because, basically because I didn't I didn't have a lot of choice [Statutory role]"* v *"And it was then [following the legal meeting] Dad realised that I had to do this and this was serious, I think Dad was burying his head in the sand a little bit as well about what was going on"* (EWO3).

> <u>EWO future role including increasing amounts of welfare work v EWO future role including mostly Statutory legal and attendance work</u>
> *"So whereas maybe we would have targeted every morning a specific amount of children who hadn't turned up at school, we can't do that anymore because I haven't got the time because I'm doing the other things [welfare] that are needed as well"* (EWO2) v *"I think people are trying to get rid of the welfare part of it…we feel that we do less and less welfare and more of attendance and getting the kids into school and the legal stuff and other areas have gone the same way"* (EWO3).

Finally, similarly to EPs, the EWOs discussed the contradiction in relation to limited understanding of the roles of other professionals and how they work in practice, despite the necessity to work in an integrated manner (see Section 6.1.4 for further discussion).

> **Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EWOs in relation to a limited understanding the roles of other professionals and the necessity of integrated working**
>
> <u>Understanding of each other's role v reality of the roles in practice</u>
> *"I'm trying to think of what might stop us from working together. It could possibly be, not understanding each other's work as much* v *"Maybe if we were more aware of the things that we did together or or individually and how that affected one another"* (EWO2).

In addition, EWOs reflected EPs' concerns regarding time constraints despite increasing caseloads, complexity of cases, demand for early and swift responses to non-attendance, need for on-going involvement and support and amounts of administration tasks and bureaucracy (see Section 6.1.4 for further discussion).

Illustrative examples of the contradiction identified by EWOs regarding time constraints despite increasing pressures and duties.

EWO/EP work and caseload v Resources, number of EWOs and EPs
"work load is the biggest constraint. We all have an awful lot of work to do" v "there is maybe only one/two EPs, one/two EWOs in an area that has maybe two secondary schools and eight or ten primary schools, which has thousands upon thousands of children" (EWO2).

Parents' desire for swift EP involvement v EP time constraints and workload
"But of course if a parent requests an EP assessment, I'm right in saying that it has to be done in a certain amount of time" v "work load is the biggest constraint. We [EP and EWO] all have an awful lot of work to do" (EWO2).

Families need for continued support and involvement v EWOs time constraints and workload
"I would say that we identify something [needs], see it and through CAF continue to monitor it to a certain extent" v "work load is the biggest constraint. We [EP and EWO] all have an awful lot of work to do" (EWO2).

Increased complexity of cases v Necessity for involvement with a large number of children and young people
"Things [cases] seem to be taking a lot of time to work out and because of that time…There seems to be a lot more work for a lot less time to do it in" v "we are not seeing as many children that we would maybe have done before hand" (EWO2).

EWO increasing caseloads v Increase in bureaucracy
"…losing officers, workload increases…" v "to bureaucratic restraints and constraints as well there is far more emphasis on us as officers to complete several forms per file which are totally unnecessary" (EWO4).

6.3 Developmental work research (DWR)

The DWR offered an opportunity for an in-depth analysis of individual professionals' activity when endeavouring to support a child or young person who experiences issues associated with CESN-A. In addition the DWR stimulated collaborative professional learning between EPs and EWOs regarding how they work together and the exploration of new ways of working to further support inter-agency collaboration. These processes affirm the concept of learning from a socio-cultural perspective which suggests that the,

> "concept of learning implies the simultaneous transformation of social practices and the individuals who participate in them, and thus the social and individual dimensions of learning are mutually constitutive" (Boreham and Morgan, 2004, p.308).

Engeström (2008, p.132) contended that expansive learning can stimulate organisational change and development by recursive small cycles of learning. The current research represents one small cycle of innovative learning. Specifically, the research is situated within the learning actions of 'analysing' and 'modeling' in Engeström's (1999a) expansive learning cycle (see Chapter 4 Section 4.2 for further discussion).

6.3.1 Professional learning

Research question: What new ways of working do EPs and EWOs suggest that will enhance inter-agency collaboration between EPs and EWOs in relation to CESN-A?

The five main contradictions identified by EPs and EWOs were:

- EWO case prioritisation v EP case prioritisation

- Conceptualisation of the problem

- Structures and processes for collaboration

- Understanding of the EP and EWO role

- Further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals

(see Appendix Twenty-one for further details).

During this DWR the participants elected to work on the contradiction: *further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals,* in an effort to transform work-based difficulties and tensions related to this specific contradiction. During the DWR, the Scribe utilised activity theory as a framework to record the collaborative discussion (see Appendix Twenty-two). The Team Member compiled a narrative account of how the DWR evolved, including a précis of the learning stimulated by the DWR (see Appendix Twenty-three). The new ways of inter-agency working stimulated by the DWR are presented by the use of third generation activity theory (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.1 for further discussion and Figure 6.11). The third generation activity theory model represents two interacting systems, EPs and EWOs (Daniels, 2008). The third generation model additionally reflects Engeström's notion of 'boundary crossing' which conceptualises how the collaborative activity of

professionals from differing roles can stimulate new professional practices and objects.

Figure 6.11
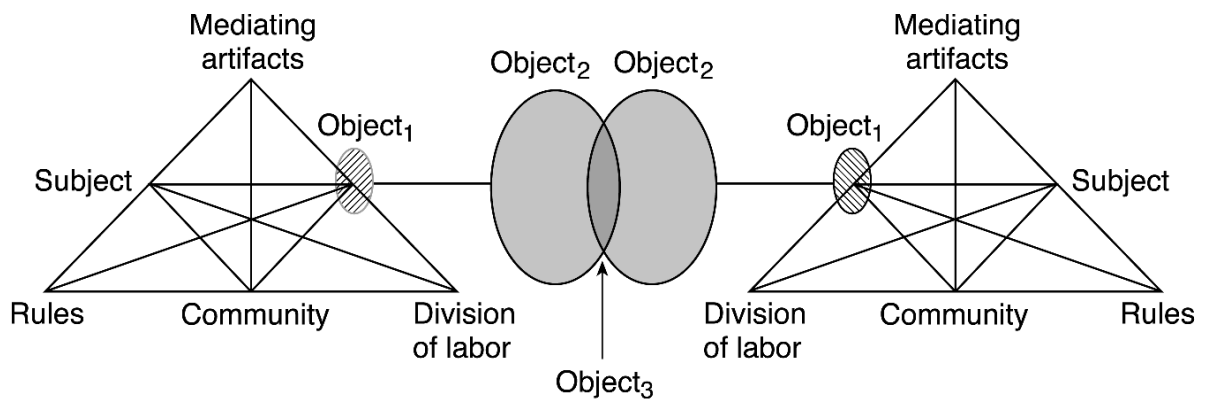
Figure 6.11: *Third generation activity theory model (taken from Engeström, 2001, p.136)*

Daniels (2008, p.136) suggested that the result of a DWR may be: expansion of the object, development of new tools, development of new rules, and development of new division(s) of labour. The findings related to the expanded object, object$_3$, are presented in Box 6.1. Furthermore, Engeström (2000) suggested that the DWR can result in systemic-developmental changes that exemplify how the DWR shapes future activity.

Box 6.1
New ways of working identified by EPs and EWOs regarding future collaborative activity
- reinstate the attendance interest group for EPs and EWOs to: - develop shared LA terminology (Complex Extended School Non-Attendance?) - establish a shared LA definition for complex cases - develop a tool to foster meaningful information gathering and assessment of CESN-A   - organise a service meeting with all of the area EPs and EWOs to: - explore the proposed LA terminology and definition for complex non-attendance cases - consider the inter-agency assessment framework tool developed by the interest group   - EPs and EWOs to have formalised scheduled meetings to problem-solve collaboratively and discuss complex non-attendance cases   - offer joint (EP and EWO) consultation to schools in relation to complex cases   - EPs and EWOs initially to attend staff meetings in the schools that they support to: - discuss the role of an EP and EWO and detail the support that we can offer - explore the assessment framework tool   - EPs and EWOs to develop whole-school training collaboratively to: - further promote an understanding of the roles of EPs and EWOs - develop awareness in relation to the issues associated with non-attendance - build schools' capacity to identify and meet the needs of children and young people who experience CESN-A.

The expanded objects of joint activity indicate that EPs' and EWOs' future activity will involve developing shared terminology in relation to CESN-A (Kearney, 2008; West Sussex County Council, 2004). In addition, future inter-agency activity will consist of the development of shared understanding and a definition of CESN-A (Grandison, 2011; Kearney, 2008; West Sussex County Council, 2004). Joint activity will also be directed towards the development of an assessment framework that can be used collaboratively by EPs and EWOs. This addresses Kearney's (2008) concerns

regarding the divergent and varying frameworks utilised to assess non-attendance and the absence of interdisciplinary assessment tools. The importance of multi-agency assessment in relation to non-attendance has also been reinforced by Pellegrini (2007) and Philbrick and Tansey (2000).

The opportunity for formalised scheduled meetings between EPs and EWOs to engage in collaborative problem-solving, addresses concerns raised in the research conducted by West Sussex County Council (2004). The research highlighted EWOs' perception that access to EPs for consultation can be difficult. In addition, the scheduled meetings will offer an opportunity for CESN-A to be readily brought to the attention of EPs (West Sussex County Council, 2004). Joint problem-solving meetings will also support shared conceptualisations and, in part, address the identified barrier regarding different professional groups' varying conceptualisations of CESN-A (Grandison, 2011; Kearney, 2008; West Sussex County Council, 2004). The offer of joint consultation for schools will include school professionals and further promote shared knowledge, understanding and conceptualisation.

The future activity of collaboratively developing whole school training that facilitates an understanding of the role of an EP and EWO, specifically related to attendance, supports the asserted need for clearly defined roles, role boundaries and division of labour (Leadbetter et al. 2007).

Promoting school professionals' awareness of the issues associated with non-attendance and supporting their capacity to identify and meet the needs of children

and young people who experience CESN-A will ensure a co-ordinated approach to addressing non-attendance that is based on a shared and comprehensive understanding of the issues (Kearney, 2008). Furthermore, offering training and development opportunities for school professionals reinforces the role of EPs and EWOs, as LA professionals, to support schools (Dearden, 1994).

6.3.2 Professional reflections on the DWR process and activity theory

Research question: Does socio-cultural activity theory afford a useful framework to understand, analyse and explore the professional practice of EPs' and EWOs' inter-agency working in relation to CESN-A?

The participants' reflections and comments regarding what mediated their learning during the research process were elicited by the use of anonymous evaluation forms (see Appendix Twenty-four). A summary of all of the participants' responses to the evaluative questions is provided in Appendix Twenty-five. The DWR additionally finished with a round of orally disclosed final comments or reflections to conclude the research cycle. The comments made by the professionals indicated four main ways in which the research mediated their learning:

- in-depth analysis;
- collective reflection;
- team unity; and
- empowerment.

Discussion of the four main ways in which the research mediated participants' learning is punctuated with illustrative quotes. Participants' responses illustrated by quotes relate specifically to questions regarding the most successful aspect of the research, what facilitated and constrained the research and any other comments.

The use of activity theory is considered to afford an in-depth analysis of the perceptions of professionals and an "understanding of the meaning of a situation from the insider's perspective" (Sackmann, 2001, p.348).

In-depth analysis
"The excellent preparation and information-gathering really guided the work and meant that we began from a joint perception of the current situation".

"Perceptions of EPs and EWOs effectively summarised in the presentation of the initial interview findings and the DWR".

"Opportunity for EWOs and EPs to understand each other's roles, viewpoints, difficulties more".

"An open discussion about the work involving EPs and EWOs which I feel led to a better understanding of each other's roles and the opportunities for increased joint working".

Specifically, the analysis endeavours to understand activity within the systemic context and with reference to current, past and future practice (Daniels, 2008). The DWR aims to enable a metaphorical 'mirror' to be held up to represent professionals' perceptions of their working practices (Durbin, 2009) to inform expansive learning.

The participants construed the opportunity for collective reflection as an important mediator of learning.

> ### Collective reflection
> *"A very useful session in helping to develop multi-disciplinary working. Great opportunity for quality reflections".*
>
> *"The interviews and DWR were a luxury, to be out of the chaotic environment to reflect on your practice: this should be done for every part of the work we do".*
>
> *"Bringing strong, respected colleagues of the two professional groups together to joint problem-solve".*
>
> *"'Time out' to consider working practices, "the whys" and "wherefores" of what we do and how both groups view it".*

Argyris (1990) promoted the significance of critical reflection for learning and highlighted the perils of professionals becoming increasingly 'time-constrained' and 'outcome-orientated' in the absence of reflection. Some of the participants discussed the research as a 'luxury' that enabled space for reflection.

Boreham and Morgan (2004, p.307) reject the notion that individual autonomy is essential for adult learning and proposed the necessity of collective learning in which "autonomy is achieved by building relationships with others". Some of the participants reported that the research fostered a sense of team unity and belonging.

> ### Team unity
> *"Demonstrated that we have strong relationships and that we are a united team- 'one team'".*
>
> *"The DWR promoted team belonging".*
>
> *"Interesting to see similarities between EPs and EWOs".*
>
> *"To see the similarities in objectives [between EPs and EWOs]".*
>
> *"Session challenged historical perceptions regarding negative aspects of inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs".*

Munro and Hubbard (2011) offered that the roles of individuals and their relationships within a system have significant effects on the overall functioning of an organisation.

The participants additionally alluded to and explicitly referred to empowerment.

<u>Empowerment</u>
"Consultation approach i.e. more invested in putting action into place than if I had been told I had to do them".

"I have seen the benefits of professionals coming together and meeting and feel empowered to meet with colleagues more regularly".

Edwards et al. (2009) discussed the fundamental concept that activity theory affirms the concept of relational and distributed expertise. Furthermore, activity theory aims to engender empowerment by placing a key emphasis on the individuals within the system, who are constructed as representing the central force for authentic organisational change and development (Engeström, 2001).

In terms of discussing the constraints of the research, some participants commented that not all of the eight MAST areas across the LA were represented. Ideally, the research would have comprised eight EPs and eight EWOs, representing each of the MAST areas. Only six of the MAST areas were represented in the research. However, due to the voluntary nature of participation, it would be difficult to have addressed this criticism. For further discussion of the implications related to sample composition, see Chapter 7 Section 7.4.

The participants made specific positive references to the use of activity theory.

> *"The activity theory model and process was invaluable in eliciting responses aiding understanding of the issues raised".*
>
> *"Focus thoughts/reflections in a very structured way, made Activity Theory model accessible".*
>
> *"Model was useful structure. Nice to get back to some theory!"*
>
> *"Easy to understand theory behind the research".*
>
> *"Demystified activity theory- aware of the practical applications".*
>
> *"Excellent piece of research, very interesting discussions. Easier to understand than first thought!"*
>
> *"Activity theory is more accessible and easier to understand following the DWR".*
>
> *"Activity theory is easier than I initially thought".*

Engeström's (2007) DWR method utilises the Vygotskian concept of dual stimulation. Dual stimulation refers to the action of giving the inhabitants of an activity system the analytic resources of activity theory as a stimulus for analysis. Participants' comments regarding the accessibility of activity theory may have been supported by the numerous junctures in which the researcher's understanding of activity theory was explicitly shared with participants. The participants' comments additionally supported the notion that activity theory provides a coherent structure to anchor the multiplicity of variables associated with complex work organisations (Leadbetter et al. 2007).

6.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the research findings and has offered a discussion of the key findings in relation to the research questions and the literature explored in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. The results from the thematic analysis have been enriched by the inclusion of direct quotations from the participants. The chapter has considered the research findings for EPs and EWOs as distinct professional groups and the outcomes of the DWR which supported EP and EWO collaborative problem-solving. The chapter concludes with the joint future activity and 'next steps' that were collaboratively devised to improve inter-agency working. The identified new ways of working provide implications for improved service delivery. Chapter 7 presents the research conclusions, discusses the implications for practice, explores a critique of the research methodology and design and offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

7.0 Introduction

The final chapter considers the conclusions that have been derived from the research findings outlined in Chapter 6. The research aimed to:

- contribute a contextualised understanding of inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs in relation to CESN-A by exploring professionals' perceptions;

- consider the inter-agency learning that is necessary to provide joined-up responses to complex problems such as CESN-A in a LA;

- Illuminate new ways of working and stimulate the development of professional practices associated with inter-agency working in a specific LA; and

- promote improved service delivery in relation to CESN-A.

The implications of the research for practice are discussed with specific consideration of what EPs may contribute to continued professional development and organisational change. Implications focus on the identified new ways of working that endeavour to improve inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs and ultimately improve the service offered to children and young people who experience CESN-A. Reflections on the research methodology and design are offered. The original

contribution to knowledge is considered and suggestions for future research are provided.

7.1 Conclusions

The socio-cultural analysis of inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs, in the specific LA context, illuminated good practice and shared endeavours. On discussing their role both EPs and EWOs constructed their contribution as focusing on promoting educational engagement. Both professional groups discussed their role in identifying and assessing need and subsequently problem-solving to ensure that the identified needs are supported. EPs identified their distinctive contribution through the application of psychology, providing direct support for educational settings and assuming the role of advocate for the child and family. By contrast, EWOs offered their unique contribution as upholding the law in relation to compulsory attendance, recording and auditing non-attendance and imposing sanctions for persistent absence.

In relation to factors that support inter-agency collaboration, both EPs and EWOs valued the co-location of services based in the locality that they support and the resultant opportunity for frequent formal and informal information sharing. Both professional groups viewed their consequent shared knowledge and working practices as facilitating inter-agency working. EPs discussed their preference for the EWO role to focus on welfare as opposed to Statutory action. EPs perceived their own professional skills as a key strength, with reference to the higher level

professional training qualification required for EPs. This may also explain why EWOs credited EPs' ability to give advice and promote positive outcomes for young people.

Time pressures and workload were identified by both EPs and EWOs as the key constraining factor for inter-agency working. EPs reported that time pressures resulted in limited opportunity for preventative working and for EPs to contribute towards the development of others. The EPs viewed individual differences between EWOs and variance in practice as a barrier. EPs also perceived others' (EWOs' and schools') differing conceptualisations of the 'problem' and construction of the EP role as a constraining factor. EWOs viewed the necessity for EP involvement, in view of EPs' workload and differing case prioritisation, as obstructive. EWOs also discussed their Statutory role and, at times, resultant difficult communication with parents and schools as a barrier. Interestingly, EWOs referred to the professional isolation in the MAST team as a constraining factor.

On analysing the interaction between and within the nodes and considering the interacting activity systems between EPs and EWOs, five main contradictions were identified see Box 7.1. The contradictions provide potentials for learning and transformation. The main contradictions occurred within the rules node. However, other salient contradictions were identified within the object node and between the rules and object nodes.

Box 7.1
Overview of the five main contradictions identified in EPs and EWOs perceptions of inter-agency working to support children and young people who experience CESN-A.
- EWO case prioritisation v EP case prioritisation (rules v rules)   - conceptualisation of the problem (object v object)   - structures and processes for collaboration (artifacts/rules v object)   - understanding of the EP and EWO role (rules v rules)   - further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals (rules v rules)

During the DWR, the participants selected to focus on the last identified main contradiction above. The DWR represented interventionist research that facilitated a small cycle of innovative learning Engeström (2008). Learning and development was conceptualised as iterative.

The participants reported that the use of activity theory stimulated new learning and insight by supporting analysis, reflection, team unity, and by promoting empowerment. The participants reported that the in-depth analysis of activity based on the perceptions of EPs and EWOs regarding past, current and future practice facilitated shared understanding and perspective. Participants additionally commented on the value of having the opportunity for time and space to reflect on their own role and practice, collective practices and transformations that would improve inter-agency working. It was also reported that the research facilitated team unity and cohesion. This may have been achieved by the celebration of good practice, the recognition that EPs and EWOs shared aims and objectives, and the DWR which provided a forum for collaboration. The concept of empowerment was also referred to by participants. The participants stated that they were much more

likely to 'act on' the findings and identified new ways of working because they themselves had invested in the process and had collaboratively developed the new ways of working. The research illustrates the iterative nature of professional learning and development.

7.2 Implications for professional practice

The DWR resulted in the collaborative identification of new ways of working that offered solutions to the identified contradiction. Daniels (2008, p.136) suggested that the result of a DWR may be: "expansion of the object, development of new tools and development of new rules".

The object was expanded by the recognised need to develop LA shared terminology and definition of CESN-A. This endeavour will promote shared conceptualisation of non-attendance and will support a consistent approach that avoids potentially competing agendas and conflicting advice for schools, families and young people. Another outcome of the DWR was the highlighted need to develop new tools. Participants acknowledge the need to develop an inter-agency assessment framework for CESN-A to offer a co-ordinated response. In addition, the need to create whole-school training for school professionals was identified. Participants suggested that the training should be jointly developed and delivered by EPs and EWOs and should aim to promote an understanding of the EP and EWO roles, develop an awareness of issues associated with CESN-A and build capacity in schools to support children and young people who experience CESN-A.

The DWR also illuminated the need for the establishment of new rules. Specifically, the participants identified that EPs and EWOs require formalised opportunities to discuss CESN-A cases and problem-solve collaboratively. In addition, the participants recognised the necessity for EPs and EWOs to offer joint consultation for school staff. Participants proposed the new cultural rule that the attendance interest group should be reinstated to allow EPs and EWOs time to work collaboratively on developing and implementing the outcomes of the DWR. This new rule reflects the value that EPs and EWOs placed on the outcomes of the research and on continued professional development.

The current research offers an illustrative example of practitioner research that aims to facilitate professional learning and promote organisational development. MacKay (2010) asserted that Educational Psychology is a research-based profession. Furthermore, the HPC (2010, p.17) proposed that EPs must be able to "work with key partners to support the design, implementation, conduct, evaluation and dissemination of research activities and to support evidence based research". EPs have research skills that can be utilised to develop research that can stimulate professional learning and ultimately improve the support offered for children, young people and their families.

Through the application of psychology and use of formulation skills (HPC, 2010) EPs can support others' understanding of complex difficulties such as CESN-A. The EP profession has a key role in promoting 'social justice' (MacKay, 2010) and supporting the inclusion of marginalised groups who experience difficulty with attendance. EPs

also have a role in facilitating problem-solving (Cameron, 2006) and can support and develop the skills of other professionals (DfE, 2011b) to improve the support offered to children and young people.

The research additionally highlights that EPs can use their consultation skills (DfES, 2006) to encourage collaboration and joined-up responses to complex difficulties. EPs have a role in triangulating the perspectives of others and facilitating multi-agency communication (HPC, 2010). Moreover, EPs can utilise consultation to capitalise on the skills of others, reinforcing that expertise in activity systems is relational and distributed (Edwards et al. 2009).

7.3 Methodology and design reflections

The use of activity theory as a methodology and framework supported the collection of rich in-depth data. The activity theory framework provided an anchor for the multiplicity of variables associated with CESN-A, inter-agency working and complex work organisations. The research demonstrates how activity theory can be utilised to engender shared understanding in real life work organisations. In addition, the research exemplifies that surfacing the contradictions in an organisation offers potentials for the identification of new ways of working.

The research aimed to explore the perceptions of professionals in one LA in order to develop a contextualised understanding of social practices and organisational culture. However, the research involved a relatively small sample (five EPs and five

EWOs). The research employed a convenience self-selected sample. Robson (2011) identified the concern that those who offer their participation may differ from those who do not. Furthermore, convenience samples have received criticism due to concerns that the sample may not be representative. However, participation was dictated by voluntary informed consent to coincide with ethical guidelines.

All EPs and EWOs employed by the LA were informed that the research consisted of two phases: an individual interview and a DWR. Some professionals may have been reluctant to participate due to a perception that the research may be time-consuming and may constrain their immediate practice due to competing work place pressures. In addition, professionals may have also decided not to participate in the research due to the potential requirement to rethink their current working practices and accept activity theory as a conceptual tool to promote learning and stimulate organisational change.

As the research focuses on organisational change, ideally all EPs and EWOs employed by the LA need to subscribe to the need for continued development and be willing to implement the suggested transformations. Vygotsky (2004) contended that the construction of creative activity in the workplace necessitates contexts that support its enactment. The awareness of need for the research was prompted by the Serious Case Review (LSCB, 2008) and identified by the LA Manager who has overall responsibility for the EPs and EWOs. The research was additionally dually commissioned by the lead EP and EWO. These factors, in part, address the need for a 'willing context' for organisational transformation.

The professionals who did not participate in the research, who may be more reluctance to rethink and change their practice may also be less inclined to accept the suggested new ways of working. In addition, Engeström (2007) acknowledged that due to the cognitive orientation of activity theory and the DWR, participants may even be reluctant to implement any transformations in practice. The notion of change may also render some participants feeling vulnerable. Engeström, (2005a, p.147) refers to an "agony" that confrontation with changes in professional practice and identity may entail. However, expansive learning and development necessitate the ability to overcome organisational defences and to identify and resolve contradictions (Engeström, 2008; Denison, 2001; Argyris, 1990).

In this case, however, the impetus for the research was provided by a Serious Case Review where inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs was criticised. Therefore, LA professionals have a duty to ensure the transformation of practice and continued development of collaborative working in endeavours to safeguard children and young people from harm.

The trustworthiness of the research may have been limited by the researcher's existing knowledge of the context and research areas. The researcher is employed by the LA as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. During the research process it was apparent that participants' responses reflected the assumption that I already possessed knowledge and understanding. I attempted to address this by reinforcing that the interview was an opportunity for participants to share their perceptions of practice and I refrained from discussing or sharing any perceptions that I may have

during the interviews (for further discussion see Chapter 5 Section 5.5.1 entitled ethical considerations). On the other hand, it was not my intention to abstract myself from the research and reference is made to my active role and influence regarding the analysis and interpretation of the results. Furthermore, the epistemological positioning of the research acknowledges that knowledge is co-constructed by interactions between the researcher and research participants (Walford, 2001).

A further reflection relates to the large amount of qualitative data that was gathered and analysed and the absence of discussion of the entire data collected in Chapter 6. However, qualitative research results in the accrual of large amounts of data (Cohen et al. 2007). Unfortunately, discussion of all of the collected and analysed data is beyond the scale of the current research.

A deductive thematic analysis was employed and analysis was driven by activity theory. The theoretical affiliation may have led to certain derived conclusions, while alternative conclusions were overlooked (Cohen et al. 2007). In addition, deductive analysis can result in a reduction in the richness of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, the socio-cultural activity theory lens adopted by the research is transparent and explicitly referred to throughout the thesis. In addition, efforts were made to check the accuracy of my interpretations with participants. My interpretations of the data were checked with participants contemporaneously at three junctures; following the individual interview, at the beginning of the DWR and at the end of the DWR.

The research employed case study design. The design of the research enabled in-depth and contextually specific insight into social and cultural aspects of a real life work organisation. The research provides a rich description and contributes to the body of knowledge regarding attendance, inter-agency working, activity theory and organisational development. It is not possible to make statistical generalisations from case study research (De Vaus, 2001). However, the purpose of the current research was not to draw statistical generalisations. Researchers (Bassey, 1999; Yin, 1994, 1989; Stenhouse, 1978) have highlighted the opportunity for generalisation in the context of case study research. This enables the possibility for transferable knowledge and the potential to draw tentative comparisons of the findings from the current research to other similar settings.

7.4 Original contribution to knowledge and suggestions for future research

The research offers broader conceptualisation of non-attendance that represents a departure from dominant clinical and legal discourses. The research proposes new terminology and a related definition that aims to promote a shared understanding and afford efficient inter-agency collaboration. In addition, the research represents the first, as known by the researcher, attempt to undertake research informed by activity theory regarding inter-agency working specifically between EPs and EWOs whose object is to support children and young people who experience CESN-A. The current research additionally joins only a small number of alternative studies that have applied activity theory through the use of interventionist research, DWR, to accelerate professionals' awareness of new ways of working and promote expansive

learning in the workplace. Finally, the research offers an original and distinctive contribution to the knowledge base by providing rich analysis of activity in one specific LA context and is therefore, spatially and temporally demarcated. The detailed account of how activity theory was applied in the current research facilitates researchers' and practitioners' insight into how the methodology may be applied to other contexts.

Engeström (2008, p.132) asserted that "a large scale expansive learning cycle of organisational transformation always consists of small cycles of innovative learning". The current research focuses on one small cycle of learning. Future research and development could concentrate on the subsequent small cycles of innovative learning in the specific LA context. Further 'cycles' could consist of additional DWRs that 'work on' the remaining four main contradictions. This reflects that development is iterative and would serve to promote further expansive learning and transformation with the ultimate aim of achieving large scale expansive learning and organisational transformation.

Future research could additionally explore the inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs in different LAs. Different LAs across the country have varying structures and models of service delivery. The current research was based in a LA that had embraced multi-agency working and had structured services into multi-agency teams based in the locality that they serve. It would be interesting to compare the findings to research conducted for example, in LAs where professionals are organised by professional group or where EWOs are located and/or employed by a school or

different setting. The current research was also conducted in an urban LA that has a diverse demographic of service users. Yin (1994) discusses the opportunity for 'analytic' generalisation from case study research. The current research could be compared to other case study research that utilised activity theory as a framework to investigate inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs and if similarities occur in relation to the findings, replication may be claimed (Yin, 1994).

Although beyond the scope of the current research, the research would be further enriched by the inclusion of service user perspectives. The current Government's Support and Aspiration green paper (DfE, 2011b) re-emphasised the imperative for the views of parents and children to be at the centre of support and highlighted the need for joined-up working between education, health and social care professionals (DfE, 2011b). The perceptions of EPs and EWOs could be triangulated with the perspectives of families, school staff and other professionals, to reflect the multivoicedness and the interacting nature of the multiple activity systems involved in promoting attendance. Furthermore, Engeström highlighted that it is "important to extend beyond the singular activity system and to examine and work towards transformation of networks of activity" (Daniels, 2008, p.122).

7.5 Concluding comments

The research affirms the importance of continued professional and organisational development for services that support children and young people who experience complex difficulties such as issues associated with CESN-A. In addition, the research

reinforces the utility of activity theory as a methodological framework and practical tool with which to explore, understand and analyse professional practice. The adoption of activity theory emphasises the importance of establishing a contextualised understanding of the social practices and culture of an organisation by exploring past, current and future practice. The research highlights the value of involving members of the organisation as active participants in organisational development. It underscores the significance of collaborative endeavours, to produce new solutions to address tensions or contradictions, when considering inter-agency working and organisational development (Engeström, 1995). The research endorses the assertion that the members of an organisation represent the central force for authentic change and development (Engeström, 2001). Finally, the research supports the current Government's pledge to remove the barriers to professional services working together and to "create conditions that encourage innovative and collaborative ways of providing better support for children, young people and their families" (DfE, 2011b, p.11).

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Public domain briefing

A SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITY THEORY ANALYSIS OF INTER-AGENCY WORKING BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICERS IN RELATION TO COMPLEX EXTENDED SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE (CESN-A) WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

Introduction

Improving school attendance continues to be afforded high priority by successive Governments (DfE, 2012). Nationally, the overall percentage of non-attendance in all maintained schools in England is steadily declining. However, in 2011/12 it has been estimated that approximately 45 million days of school were missed (DfE, 2013). Absence levels also remain higher for pupils eligible for claiming free school meals and pupils identified as experiencing special educational needs (DfE, 2013). The current government has responded to on-going concerns regarding non-attendance by expanding the definition of 'persistent absence' to include children and young people whose attendance falls below 85%. The Government has additionally increased the fines for parents whose compulsory school aged children are persistently absent from education without lawful authority. The recently developed Ofsted (2012) framework explicitly states that inspectors will consider pupils' attendance and punctuality at school and in lessons and if attendance is not deemed 'good enough' will set measureable targets that governors and parents can use to hold the school to account. The government has additionally increased the frequency of data collection and requirement for schools to report attendance figures (DfE, 2011a).

Research has identified that schools favour a multi-agency response to promoting attendance (Archer et al. 2004). The impetus for multi-agency working was enshrined in the Children Act (2004 and 2006). Furthermore, the DCSF (2007) asserted that Children's Services would benefit from adopting a multidisciplinary structure to shape services around the needs of children as opposed to professional boundaries. The current government has pledged that they,

> "want to make it easier for professionals and services to work together, and we want to create conditions that encourage innovative and collaborative ways of providing better support for children, young people and their families" (DfE, 2011b, p.11).

The imperative for and benefits of a multi-agency approach to promoting attendance have been discussed in the literature (Kearney, 2008; Pellegrini, 2007; Philbrick and Tansey 2000). However, disparity between professionals regarding the terminology, definition, assessment and intervention has provided a significant barrier for inter-agency collaboration and ultimately improved outcomes for children and young people (Kearney, 2008). Furthermore, there is limited research exploring the role of

the school and Local Authority professionals to promote attendance. More specifically, there is limited research exploring the inter-agency working of Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs).

Research aims and questions

The research aims to offer a broad conceptualisation of non-attendance that represents a departure from the dominant legal and clinical discourses. The boarder conceptualisation additionally endeavours to promote a shared understanding of non-attendance that supports inter-agency collaboration. The research explores EPs and EWOs perceptions of inter-agency working in relation to supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended non-attendance (CESN-A). It aims to consider the inter-agency learning that is necessary to provide joined-up responses by illuminating new ways of working to enhance collaboration. Ultimately, the research endeavours to stimulate organisational development and offer implications for improved service delivery to promote positive outcomes for children and young people who exhibit CESN-A.

Key research questions were formulated with reference to the existing literature:

- What do EPs and EWOs perceive is their professional role in relation to supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with CESN-A?

- What do EPs and EWOs perceive facilitates or constrains inter-agency collaboration to support children and young people who experience issues associated with CESN-A?

  Sub-question related to the methodology
- What are the socio-cultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artifacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur, that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

- What new ways of working do EPs and EWOs suggest will enhance inter-agency collaboration in relation to CESN-A?

- Does socio-cultural activity theory afford a useful framework to understand, analyse and explore the professional practice of EPs' and EWOs' inter-agency working in relation to CESN-A?

Methodology

The research utilises socio-cultural activity theory (Engeström, 1987) as a lens to explore EPs and EWOs perceptions of inter-agency working and analyse the socio-cultural processes that mediate past, current and future models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration. The seven activity theory nodes: subject, object, outcome, rules, community, division of labour

and mediating tools or artifacts provided a framework for the research. The research employs case study design within a Local Authority (LA) that has embraced multi-agency working and where EPs and EWOs work together in multi-agency support teams (MASTs).

Socio-cultural activity theory was utilised as a framework to conduct individual semi-structured interviews. Five EPs and five EWOs participated in the research. The research comprised of two phases: phase one involved an individual semi-structured interview and phase two consisted of a developmental work research (DWR) change lab (Engeström, 1999b). The interviews and DWR were employed to explore and analyse the two activity systems (EPs and EWOs) and to surface and 'work on' contradictions in order to facilitate new ways of working.

The interviews were transcribed and the qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Themes were identified for EPs and EWOs. The themes were identified by analysis of each of the participant's transcripts and across the five participants related to EP and EWO professional groups. Activity theory was used as a framework to support the analysis and themes were identified for each of the seven activity theory nodes.

Key findings

The research questions highlight the saliency of the key findings related to the three nodes: subject, rules and mediating tools or artifacts nodes and also the identified contradictions.

Subject
EPs and EWOs constructed their role as involving the identification and assessment of need and subsequent problem-solving to ensure that the child or young person receives the appropriate support to attend educational provision. EPs identified their distinctive contribution through the application of psychology, providing direct support for educational settings and assuming the role of advocate for the child and family. Whereas, EWOs offered their unique contribution by upholding the law in relation to compulsory attendance, recording and auditing non-attendance and imposing sanctions for persistent absence.

Rules
In relation to factors that support inter-agency collaboration, both EPs and EWOs valued the co-location of services based in the locality that they support and resulting opportunity for frequent formal and informal information sharing. Both professional groups viewed their consequent shared knowledge and working practices as facilitating inter-agency working. EPs discussed their preference for the EWO role to focus on welfare as opposed to Statutory action. EPs perceived their professional skills as a key strength, with reference to the higher level professional training qualification required for EPs. This may also explain why EWOs credited EPs ability to give advice and promote positive outcomes for young people.

Time pressures and workload were identified by both EPs and EWOs as the key constraining factor for inter-agency working. EPs reported that time pressures resulted in limited opportunity for preventative working and for EPs to contribute towards the development of others. The EPs viewed individual differences between EWOs and variance in practice as a barrier. EPs also perceived other professionals differing conceptualisations of the 'problem' and construction of the EP role as a constraint. On the other hand, EWOs were critical of the necessity for EP involvement, in view of their workload and differing case prioritisation. EWOs also discussed their Statutory role and, at times, resultant difficult communication with parents and schools as a barrier. Interestingly, EWOs referred to the professional isolation in the MAST team as a further constraining factor.

Mediating tools or artifacts
EPs and EWOs identified the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as a tool that is used to mediate practice. Members of the EP group distinctively reported the use of a range of psychological theories, approaches and conceptual frameworks rather than relying on one particular paradigm. EWOs referred to their Statutory role and consequent use of legal guidelines as a tool that mediates practice.

Contradictions
The five main contradictions identified by EPs and EWOs were:

- EWO case prioritisation v EP case prioritisation
- Conceptualisation of the problem
- Structures and processes for collaboration
- Understanding of the EP and EWO role
- Further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals

During this DWR the participants elected to work on the contradiction: *further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals,* in an effort to transform work-based difficulties and tensions related to this specific contradiction. The DWR enabled participants to collaboratively illuminate new ways of working that would enhance inter-agency working:

New ways of working identified by EPs and EWOs regarding future collaborative activity

- reinstate the attendance interest group for EPs and EWOs to:
- develop shared LA terminology (Complex Extended School Non-Attendance?)
- establish a shared LA definition for complex cases
- develop a tool to foster meaningful information gathering and assessment of CESN-A

- organise a service meeting with all of the area EPs and EWOs to:
- explore the proposed LA terminology and definition for complex non-

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> attendance cases
> - consider the inter-agency assessment framework tool developed by the interest group
>
> - EPs and EWOs to have formalised scheduled meetings to problem-solve collaboratively and discuss complex non-attendance cases.
>
> - offer joint (EP and EWO) consultation to schools in relation to complex cases.
>
> - EPs and EWOs to initially attend staff meetings in the schools that they support to:
> - discuss the role of an EP and EWO and detail the support that we can offer
> - explore the assessment framework tool
>
> - EPs and EWOs to develop whole-school training collaboratively to:
> - further promote an understanding of the roles of EPs and EWOs
> - develop awareness in relation to the issues associated with non-attendance
> - build schools' capacity to identify and meet the needs of children and young people who experience issues associated with CESN-A.

Finally, the research illuminates the value of utilising socio-cultural activity theory as a methodology for understanding, analysing and exploring professional practice and promoting professional learning to facilitate organisational change and ultimately improve service delivery.

Limitations of the research

The research offers a contextualised analysis of the perceptions of inter-agency working in one Local Authority. The objective of the research was not necessarily to provide generalisations. However, Researchers' (Bassey, 1999; Yin, 1994; Stenhouse, 1978) have highlighted the opportunity for generalisation in the context of case study research. This enables the possibility of transferable knowledge and the potential to make tentative comparisons of the findings from the current research to other similar settings.

The research only represents the views of EPs and EWOs who were willing to participate in the research process despite competing workplace pressures. The sample size was limited and comprised of five EPs and five EWOs. As the research focuses on organisational change, ideally all EPs and EWOs employed by the LA would have participated in the research and would subscribe to implementing the suggested new ways of working. However, ethical guidelines dictate that participation is voluntary.

The findings only relate to the views that the participants were prepared to reveal about their subjective perceptions, which are likely to change both over time and in accordance with circumstance (Walford, 2001). Therefore the research and findings are temporally demarcated.

Activity theory has also received criticism for the use of complex theoretical constructs and language and the notion that it is not a unified theory (Holzman, 2006). In an attempt to address these criticisms, I have explicitly referred to the use of Engeström's interpretation of activity theory and have endeavoured to clarify and explain the theoretical constructs and language (Engeström, 1999b).

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Appendix Two

West Sussex nine phase model of multi-agency identification, planning and intervention

PHASE 1. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

- Where a pupil is deemed to be at risk of emotionally-based school refusal (EBSR), the pupil's attendance needs to be closely monitored.
- How the monitoring is done should be decided between the school (named person) and the EWO. Pro-active, weekly analysis of attendance patterns is recommended.

PHASE 2. ALERTING

- When parents report difficulty getting the pupil to school, or actual attendance of a pupil becomes a concern, an alert process needs to be started, wherein, in the first instance the school's named person and the EWO undertake a structured analysis of the situation.
- Such an analysis can be undertaken with the use of the PRE Schedule (Profile of Risk of EBSR) explained in section 4.2.
- If the PRE Schedule identifies significant risks of EBSR, dialogue with the pupil and parents will need to occur as soon as possible. This can be undertaken via the completion of the Attendance Risk Monitoring (ARM) Schedule (explained in section 4.3).
- It is crucial that this schedule is completed objectively and is, as far as possible, based on evidence rather than conjecture, speculation etc.

PHASE 3. INITIAL RESPONSE

The school needs to be proactive and central within this phase because it emphasises the principle of the pupil retaining contact with the school.

- The school's named person should make immediate contact with the family and encourage parents and pupil to come into school as soon as possible to discuss the situation.
- School may wish to consult more widely in preparation for this initial meeting (E.P., medical professionals involved etc.) – the ARM Schedule should inform whoever may be consulted.
- The key principle of the initial response is that **parents retain direct contact with the school,** and have a **key link person** with whom they can communicate, share information etc.

PHASE 4. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The school needs to be proactive and central within this phase because it emphasises the principle of the pupil retaining contact with the school via, if necessary, an adapted attendance plan.

- Based on the outcome of the initial response meeting and the principle of maintaining direct contact with school, it may be appropriate to instigate an adapted attendance plan.
- The plan should of course be agreed with parents and pupil and implemented immediately.
- Considerations for the nature of the adapted attendance plan can include when and how often the pupil comes to school, allocation of a mentor/buddy when the pupil is in school, and where the pupil will be located in school, if not his/her usual class base.

PHASES 2 – 4 NEED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IMMEDIATELY ATTENDANCE MONITORING REVEALS AN EBSR PROBLEM

PHASE 5. ELABORATION OF ISSUES

Undertaken collaboratively by school and relevant agencies.

- It will be necessary for school and other relevant agencies to consider in more depth the issues and precursors leading to ESBR
- This is important even if the adapted attendance plan seems to be working, as much as possible.
- Information analysis wherein key professionals can be involved to make sense of and clarify issues should occur – either via a meeting or via paper/e-mail/telephone contributions.
- Having a clear and common understanding of the issues is necessary.

PHASE 6. DEVISING AN ACTION PLAN

A multi-agency collaboration, involving parents and pupil, and with school at its heart.

- Those professionals who have analysed and clarified the issues should devise the action plan in collaboration with the parents and pupil, and also with any new professionals who may be asked to become involved.
- Whatever the action plan is (and this manual contains examples of strategies, approaches etc.) a KEY PERSON must be identified as the contact for the family, both in terms of explaining the plan, and being the known person available for the family should questions, issues etc. arise.
- That person can also be the link between other professionals involved and the school.

PHASES 7 AND 8. COMMUNICATING/IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN

- A lead professional from the information analysis forum should liaise with the family's KEY PERSON in order that the plan is communicated clearly and unambiguously to all involved.
- A central part of the communication is to ensure absolute clarity about roles and responsibilities within the action plan.

PHASES 9. MONITORING AND ADJUSTING THE ACTION PLAN

A central principle is that the plan needs to be monitored daily in its early phases. Monitoring needs to consider factors such as:
- Practical arrangements
- How the pupil is reacting and coping
- Feedback from parents

The Attendance Risk Monitoring (ARM) Schedule could be used as a framework for monitoring, although flexibility and being alert to the unforeseen is crucial. There needs to be agreed timescales wherein the plan can be modified to incorporate:
- Changing practical arrangements
- Strategies to increase the pupil's independence in school
- Gradual reduction of adult support.

All adjustments need to be carried out via consultation with the pupil, parents and key professionals and should again be based on objective observations and evidence.

Appendix Three

Application for ethical review (AER)

Relevant extracts from my application for ethical review have been included below. A full copy can be made available upon request. Appendices have not been included but are also available upon request.

1. **PARTICIPANTS AS THE SUBJECTS OF THE RESEARCH**
   Describe the number of participants and important characteristics (such as age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc.). Specify any inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

All of the Educational Psychologists (thirteen in total) employed by *** Local Authority will be approached to indicate their voluntary informed consent to participate in the research. All of the Educational Welfare Officers (nineteen in total) employed by *** Local Authority will also be approached to indicate their voluntary informed consent to participate in the research (refer to the attached participation letter).

The age and gender of the participants is expected to vary. However, neither age nor gender are significant elements of this study. All participants will work within (LA name) or its suburbs.

I aim to have at least one Educational Psychologist and one Education Welfare Officer from each Multi-Agency Support Team. There are eight MASTs in total. The aim is to have at least eight Educational Psychologists and eight Education Welfare Officers volunteer to participate in the research. The minimum requirement for the research to be conducted is five Educational Psychologists and five Educational Welfare Officers.

Each participant will be requested to offer their voluntary participation for an individual semi-structured interview. I will conduct the interviews which will last no longer than 1 hour. All participants will also be requested to offer their voluntary participation in the Developmental Work Research (DWR) focus group. The DWR focus group will consist (pending consent) of all the participants that completed the semi-structured interviews. The DWR focus group will therefore consist of participants from both of the professional groups e.g. Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers. If as hoped, at least sixteen professionals (eight EPs and eight EWOs) participate in the individual semi-structured interviews, it is hoped that all sixteen will also participate in the DWR focus group. I will conduct the DWR focus group along with two University Associate Tutors on the Doctorate in Applied Child and Educational Psychology (Colette Soan and Jane Leadbetter). The DWR will last no more than two hours and a half and will be divided by a break. The DWR is anticipated to take place in Sept/Oct 2012 and will take place at the main researcher, Stephanie Herriotts-Smith's, MAST Centre.

The inclusion criteria are that the participants have to work for *** Local Authority and must have the job role of either Educational Psychologist or Education Welfare Officer (see attached Job Descriptions for EPs and EWOs). Participants will not be able to participate if they will not sign the confidentiality agreement prior to the DWR focus group (preventing any disclosure of content of the DWR focus group to third parties) (see attached DWR Confidentiality Agreement). Participants will also be requested to cease their participation if they disregard the established DWR focus group ground rules. See attached DWR script. If a larger number than expected volunteer to participate in the research, every effort will be made to accommodate participation. Should this not be possible I will look at the demographic details of the participants and endeavour to get a representative sample from all of the MASTs.

2. RECRUITMENT

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student).

Note: Attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.

Potential participants will be identified from published staff lists provided by the Principal Educational Psychologist and the Lead Education Welfare Officer. A participation letter will be sent out to all of the staff identified on the staff listings (thirty five in total) (again, see attached Participation Letter). It was decided that I would not present the proposed research at any service day or training event to avoid any possible perceptions that professionals may be under any coercion or duress to participate (BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011). The participation letter attempts to ensure that all participants understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported (BERA, 2011, p. 5); offering the opportunity for informed voluntary consent (ESCR, Framework for Research Ethics, 2009). The participation letter also offers information about anonymity and explains the limits of confidentiality within the research (see question 15 for further details). The letter also emphasises the voluntary nature of participation and highlights that participations have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without reason (see question 13 for further details).

An ethical consideration is my multiple relationships and allegiance (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2011, p.6). I am conducting research in a Local Authority where I am also employed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. My professional affiliation to the EP profession will be overtly discussed. Explicit reference will be made to the dual commissioning of the research by EP's and EWO's (ESCR Framework for Research Ethics, 2009). The research will be positioned as a collaborative endeavour to improve service delivery. I will also ensure that I respect any role differences, knowledge, insight, experience and expertise of the EPs and EWOs participating (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2011, p. 10).

3. **CONSENT**
   a) Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why. If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent, including any permission / information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the consent.

Informed consent for service representation will be gained from the Managers of the EPs and the EWOs and from the individual participants.

The informed consent from the Managers of the EPs and EWOs will be gained in a meeting to ensure adherence to the ethical principle that "appropriate consent should be sought from local authorities in cultures that adopt a collective approach to consent (e.g. local government officials)" (BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011 p. 5). The meeting will involve discussion about the precise nature of the research. The planned discussion areas for the individual interviews and the DWR focus group will be shared. However, it will be made clear that both the interviews and DWR focus group are semi-structured and that discussions will therefore be led by the professionals that participate. This will reduce the researcher control over the discussion. Although the overall discussion areas will be specified, the direction of the discussion will be led by the professionals. However, procedures will be put in place to support the discussion if it becomes too controversial, emotive or heads in a direction that is not within the scope of the research (see question 19 for further details). The Managers of the EPs and EWOs will not play an active role in the research in a further attempt to emphasise the voluntary nature of participation and alleviate any potential constraints.

All of the participants approached will be either qualified: Educational Psychologists (lowest qualification, Masters MSc) or Education Welfare Officers (lowest qualification, post 16 qualification such as NVQ Level 4), each of whom hold key competences and Statutory responsibilities (again, see attached Job Descriptions for EPs and EWOs). The participants are deemed as fully competent to consent to the research. There will be no subterfuge and a policy of transparency will be consistent throughout the research to promote mutual respect and confidence between the participants and researcher(s) (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2011). Participants will be asked to sign a consent form and indicate their understanding of the following issues by ticking the relevant box that they: have had the opportunity to ask questions; understand that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without question; understand data storage and protection; and agree to allow the interview and DWR focus group to be audio-taped for subsequent written transcription.

Participants will also be requested to give their consent to uphold a confidentiality agreement in relation to their participation in the DWR focus group (again, see attached DWR Confidentiality Agreement). Once the ground rules for the DWR focus group have been established, participants will also be requested to consent to observe the rules.

The participants will be requested to take part in an individual semi-structured interview that will last no longer than one hour and a DWR focus group that will last no longer than 2 and a half hours, in an attempt to minimise the impact of the research on the normal working and workloads of participants (BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011).

My contact details will be available to the participants in case, despite the precautions taken, related questions or cause for concern arises at any point during the research. However, in light of the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2011, p.20) I will "exercise particular caution when responding to requests for advice from research participants concerning psychological or other issues, and [will] offer to make a referral for assistance if the inquiry appears to involve issues sufficiently serious to warrant professional services".

Note: Attach a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (if applicable), the Consent Form (if applicable), the content of any telephone script (if applicable) and any other material that will be used in the consent process.

b) Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study? **Yes** ☐ **No X**

4. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Explain what feedback/ information will be provided to the participants after participation in the research. (For example, a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

Once the individual interviews have been conducted and transcribed, the transcriptions will be sent to the participant to assess the accuracy. The transcriptions will then be analysed and themes identified. The themes from all of the interviews will be presented in a general manner and anonymously (apart from professional title) to all of the participants collectively in the DWR focus group. If for any reason, an individual that participated in the individual semi-structured interview does not participate in the DWR focus group, I will endeavour to arrange to present all of the identified themes from the interviews to them on a separate occasion. Individual participant's data or themes will not be identifiable. I will take particular care when presenting the themes to avoid any seemingly evaluative statements that may carry unintended weight (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2011).

Following the DWR focus group, I intend to present the findings to the Principal Educational Psychologist (Manager of the EPs) and Lead Education Welfare Officer (Manager of the EWOs). A summary report of the findings will also be provided for all EP's and EWO's, as well as access to the public domain briefing and the research paper which will be included in my Thesis. The summary report for all participants will inform them of the outcomes and nature of the research. The summary report will ensure that the findings are communicated and the practical significance of the research, in a clear, straightforward fashion and in language judged appropriate to the intended audience (BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011).

The research findings will also be reported at a service Day, this will offer an opportunity to identify any unforeseen harm, discomfort, or misconceptions, and in order to arrange for assistance if needed (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2011).

5. **PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL**
   a) Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project.

The right to withdraw will be made clear to all of the participants throughout the research. The right to withdraw will be described in both oral and written forms. Participants will be verbally reminded of their right to withdraw, at any point without having to give a reason, at each stage in the research process. The participants' right to withdraw may mean that they withdraw: before the individual interview; during the interview; their participation for a specific question during the interview; before the DWR focus group; and during the DWR focus group. The DWR focus group data will not be stored against individuals' names so, participants will not be able to withdraw their data after participation in the DWR focus group.

If participants do decide to withdraw from the research I will examine my own actions to assess whether I have contributed to the decision to withdraw (BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011). However, if participants do indicate their desire to withdraw, no attempts will be made to persuade participants to re-engage with the research process (BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011).

b) Explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant's data if they withdraw.

There will be no consequences for participants who exercise their right to withdraw prior to, during or after the individual semi-structured interview. There will also be no consequences for participants who exercise their right to withdraw prior to the DWR focus group. However, if participants withdraw during or after the DWR focus group, their data cannot be removed. The DWR focus group data will be audio taped and it will not be possible to delete individual contributions off the tape. The DWR focus group data will also not be stored against individual's names so, participants will not be able to withdraw their data after participation in the DWR focus group.

The data will be stored in a safe and secure manner and no unauthorised personnel with have access to them. Authorised personnel only include Stephanie Herriotts-Smith, Colette Soan and Jane Leadbetter. The data will also be stored in accordance with *** Local Authorities Confidentiality and Data Storage Policy (see attached Policy).

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

a) Will all participants be anonymous?   **Yes**   **No X**
b) Will all data be treated as confidential?   **Yes**   **No X**

Note: Participants' identity/data will be confidential if an assigned ID code or number is used, but it will not be anonymous. Anonymous data cannot be traced back to an individual participant.

Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of data both during the conduct of the research and in the release of its findings.

Participants will be assigned a code for the individual semi-structured interview. The code will be based on their professional group and will prevent any identifiable name being attributed to data, in an attempt to protect confidentiality. The only record of participant names will be on the consent form, the consent forms will be stored in accordance with the secure data procedure previously discussed. Confidentiality and anonymity is guaranteed with regards to the storage and presentation/reporting of data.

Although participants of the DWR focus group will be asked to sign confidentiality agreements before their participation, it may not be possible to definitely assure that the participants will maintain their agreed confidentiality. Participants will be made aware that the researchers will be available following the DWR focus group, should they feel that they would like to contribute any response or share any experiences in private. This is to ensure that participants do not feel that personal answers have to be given during the focus group discussion, but gives the opportunity for exploration of these in private with the researchers (BPS Ethical Guidelines, 2011). Every effort will be made by the researcher to maintain confidentiality. None of the views expressed in the semi-structured interviews or DWR focus group will be attributed to individual participants by name.

The semi-structure interviews and DWR focus group will be conducted in a room that is not accessible to any other persons. In relation to the DWR focus group, this will ensure that the only people who hear the focus group discussion are those that are involved in the research and those that have agreed to the ground rules and signed confidentiality agreements.

Participants will be informed that the researchers will keep their contributions confidential; however participants will also be made aware of the limitations of maintaining confidentiality. If despite the researchers attempt to ensure discussion is general and not related to specific experiences fails, and a participant discloses practice that is harmful to them or others, certain procedures will be followed (see attached Procedure for Reporting Harmful Misconduct). The decision to override

agreements on confidentiality and anonymity will be taken after careful and thorough deliberation and following consultation with a professional colleague. The participant will be apprised of any reasons and intentions of the researcher to disclose harmful practice or conduct. In the interests of transparency, contemporaneous notes will be kept on any such decisions and the reasons behind them (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011).

The themes derived from the research will be reported in a general manner and the only identifiable factor will be professional role. The researcher will not disclose the names of the professionals that agree to participate in the research to the Manager of the EPs or the EWOs.

If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, explain, providing details of how all participants will be advised of the fact that data will not be anonymous or confidential.

Anonymity cannot be guaranteed during the process of the DWR focus group, as the participants will be able to identify other individuals that participate and their contributions. In an attempt to address this issue, participants will be asked to adhere to the ground rules and to sign a confidentiality agreement. The confidentiality agreement requires that participants do not disclose the name of other participants or any of the discussions in the DWR focus group to third parties.

Participants will be advised that their data will be kept confidential and anonymous once the DWR focus group has been completed and that individuals will not be identifiable from the raw data or research paper.

7. STORAGE, ACCESS AND DISPOSAL OF DATA

Describe what research data will be stored, where, for what period of time, the measures that will be put in place to ensure security of the data, who will have access to the data, and the method and timing of disposal of the data.

Data will be kept and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998, modified 2003).

Data will be collected from the individual semi-structured interviews and the DWR focus group by audio-tape for subsequent transcription. Written notes will also be taken during the interview and DWR focus group. The data will not be attributed to any individual. Names will only be stored on consent forms. Data will be kept securely, on an encrypted memory stick. Data will also be backed up onto a secure, password-protected University system.

Participants will be briefed on how and why their personal data are being stored. Permission will be sought to disclose (anonymously) information gathered in the

interviews and DWR to third parties. All data will be kept securely and any form of publication will not directly or indirectly lead to a breach of agreed confidentiality and anonymity.

The data will be preserved and accessible and stored in a locked cabinet for ten years from the date of first publication. Data will be stored in accordance with (LA name) City Council's confidential file procedures (again, see attached local authority confidentiality procedure). Only authorised personnel with have access to the data (Colette Soan University Associate Tutor, Jane Ledbetter University Associate Tutor, and I), this will be made explicit on the consent form.

8. **RISKS**

a) Outline any potential risks to **INDIVIDUALS**, including <u>research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research</u> and the measures that will be taken to <u>minimise</u> any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap

All of the potential risks will be made transparent to participants along with the protective factors that will be established to counter such risks (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011).

- Participants may experience distress or discomfort in the research process, specifically when identifying tensions and contradictions in the Activity System (interagency working between EPs and EWOs in relation to CESN-A).

In order to ascertain how working practices may be improved, participants will be asked to identify possible tensions and contradictions in current working and practice. The identification of tension or contradictions may be an emotive task and may cause distress.

The identification of tensions or contractions will be positively reframed as indicators of potential in accordance with the Activity Theory literature. However, participants will be informed that they can decline to answer any specific questions put to them. Participants will be reminded that their data will be kept confidential (within the described limits) and only identified by their professional group. The research questions will be clearly defined and subdivided. This will ensure the purposes and boundaries of discussions are clearly communicated. If at any time during the individual interview or DWR focus group the discussion becomes particularly emotive, steps will be taken to prevent escalation through mediation by the researcher to prevent any emotional harm (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011). In a further attempt to prevent any possible emotional distress the researcher will attempt to identify any potential unforeseen harm and arrange for any appropriate assistance needed to support the participant (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2011). The implications that this has for confidentiality will be explained to professionals at the beginning of the research. Additionally, participants will be encouraged to report any

research process(es) that they are not entirely comfortable with.

- Participants may disclose practice or conduct that may be harmful to the participant themselves or others (e.g. service users).

The research and research questions relate directly to practice, participants will be encouraged to talk openly but generally about their practice (with the caveat of not mentioning any service user's names or the names of any education establishments). This may result in participants disclosing potential harmful practice.

Participants will be made aware of the limitations of maintaining confidentiality. The decision to override agreements on confidentiality and anonymity will be taken by the researcher after careful and thorough deliberation and following consultation with a professional colleague. The participant will be apprised of any reasons and intentions of the researcher to disclose harmful practice or conduct. In the interests of transparency, contemporaneous notes will be kept on any such decisions and the reasons behind them. The outlined procedure will be followed in case a misconduct complaint or any other serious consequence arises (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011).

- Protection of service users and educational establishments that may be referred to in the research.

Again, as the research relates directly to practice, the anonymity of service users and educational establishments must be protected. Participants will be encouraged to refrain from using the names of any service users or educational establishments during the research process. Participants will also be asked to sign an agreement of confidentiality with respect to maintaining confidentiality in relation to any information that will be discussed in the DWR focus group. Participants will be encouraged to talk generally about their practice and avoid any obvious specific examples/cases that may be identifiable to others in the DWR focus group.

b) Outline any potential risks to **THE ENVIRONMENT and/or SOCIETY** and the measures that will be taken to <u>minimise</u> any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.

Families in the community may have negative perceptions regarding professionals that endeavour to promote school attendance. The misconception that professionals such as EWOs serve simply to prosecute families whose children or young people do not attend school requires consideration. The research challenges such negative perceptions by adopting a focus on how practice can be improved to support children and young people who experience CESN-A and their families.

Participant information letter

Dear (EP/EWO name)

Supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A).

You are invited to take part in new and highly purposeful action-orientated research regarding interagency working between Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs).

This is an opportunity to contribute to improved Service delivery with the aim of promoting better outcomes for young people. It involves an individual semi-structured interview lasting a maximum of one hour (July 2012) and a focus group lasting a maximum of two and a half hours (September/October 2012). The research is being conducted by Stephanie Herriotts-Smith, Trainee Educational Psychologist working in MAST 7, and it serves several purposes.

Firstly, it will form part of the Service's response to the Serious Case Review for Child J, in which the *** Safeguarding Children Board (2008) made the following recommendations:

- there is a need for appropriate co-ordination of the work of EWOs and other involved agencies

- the EP Service should review the priority assigned to referrals for school absence and develop ways of improving support to EWO colleagues in cases such as that of Child J.

This research also addresses national-level priorities, in particular the imperative of the Children Acts (2004 and 2006) for Local Authorities to bring together the Services working to support children in their area. The research also relates to how The Education Act (1996) may be effectively upheld by professional development and improved Service delivery.

Finally, I am studying for a Doctorate in Applied Child and Educational Psychology at the University of Birmingham and the research will form Volume One of my Thesis. I would greatly appreciate your support.

I intend to explore the interagency working between EPs and EWOs by using socio-cultural Activity Theory as a theoretical basis and methodology (Engeström, 1987). This model was designed by Engeström (1987) for the purpose of viewing, analysing and working on professional activities. The reason for selecting this methodology is that it recognises the professionals working in an organisation as the central force for authentic organisational change and development (Engeström, 2001). The questions which will be considered, drawn from Activity Theory, are as follows:

1. Subject – *whose perspective?*
2. Outcomes – *what are people working on?*
3. Object – *what are we trying to achieve?*
4. Rules – *what supports or constrains the work?*
5. Community – *who else is involved?*
6. Division of labour – *how is the work shared?*
7. Tools – *what is being used?*

The semi-structured interviews will be audio-taped and the information transcribed. The information will then be themed using Activity Theory and presented back to all of the participants in a Developmental Work Research (DWR) focus group, to ensure transparency and to check for face validity. The focus group will be led by myself and two University colleagues, Colette Soan and Jane Leadbetter. The group will be invited to comment and elaborate on the initial findings and themes and to present further comments and any counter-arguments. Through reflection on working practices it is intended that means will be identified by which they might be improved upon, in order to produce more positive outcomes for children and young people who experience issues associated with CESN-A. A final briefing document will be produced which will be presented to Mr *** (Head of Social Inclusion) who was instrumental in the commissioning of this research, and to Mrs ***, (Lead Education Welfare Officer). The final briefing document will also be available to all participants and professionals in the Local Authority. It is possible that the research will be published and its outcomes and conclusions shared with a wider professional audience.

Confidentiality

Evidently, being asked for your views on working practices requires you to be able to trust that there will be appropriate regard for confidentiality. This is of paramount importance to good research practice. The researchers assure you that the following measures will be taken to ensure that no individual's views are identifiable in the process or the reporting of the research:

- All participants will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the DWR focus group, stating that all views expressed in the group remain confidential among the professionals who attend the group.
- No written or audio-taped notes from the interviews or focus group will contain individuals' names; no comment will be attributed to an individual.
- Paper copies and audio-tapes of raw data will be stored in a locked cabinet, accessible only to myself and University colleagues, for 10 years. After the 10 years, the written and audio-taped material will be destroyed.
- You can withdraw your participation or data from the semi-structured interviews anytime until the date of the DWR in October 2012 without any need to offer explanation. You may elect not to answer a particular question or questions. You can withdraw your participation or data up until the date of the DWR by informing the researcher (Stephanie Herriotts-Smith): in person/telephone/letter/email. If you wish your data to be destroyed at any

point it will be. However, it should be noted that it will not be possible to remove an individual's data from the DWR focus group data as no names will be attached to specific comments.

- If at any time you have any concerns about confidentiality, these will be addressed immediately by the researchers.

Thank you for considering this request for your participation in what I hope will be an interesting and valuable piece of research. If you would like to be included in the project, please complete and return the attached consent slip to me at MAST 7 by **Friday 22nd June 2012**. Also, if you would like to discuss the research further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Herriotts-Smith
Trainee Educational Psychologist (MAST 7)
Tel: 01*** 555887
Email: stephanie.herriotts-smith@***.gov.uk

University Supervisor: Colette Soan

Appendix Five

Consent form: Individual interview (phase one)

Title of project: **A Socio-Cultural Activity Theory Analysis of: Interagency Working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to Complex Extended School Non-Attendance (CESN-A) with Implications for Improved Service Delivery**

Researcher: Stephanie Herriotts-Smith
stephanie.herriotts-smith@***.gov.uk
0**** 555887

This research is part of my Doctoral Studies at The University of Birmingham.

Purpose of the study
- To investigate interagency working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance.

1. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and have received satisfactory answers to any questions I have asked.	☐
2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I may withdraw my participation or data from the semi-structured interview at any time before the DWR focus group in October 2012, without explanation, by advising the researcher in person/telephone/letter/email.	☐
3. I understand that only the researcher will have access to the personal data provided, that data will be stored securely and used only for research purposes.	☐
4. I agree to take part in this study.	☐
5. I agree to audio tape recording of the interview and DWR and give my permission for the tape to be used for transcription, analysis and as part of the researcher's studies at The University of Birmingham.	☐

Information received as part of this procedure will be treated in confidence. The data obtained through interviews will be analysed and themes will be fed back in the DWR focus group to those taking part. Any quotes used from the interviews or DWR (used to illustrate themes) will remain anonymous.

Name..

Signed..

Job Title...

MAST...

Date...

<u>Appendix Six</u>

<u>Pilot feedback</u>

Dear [participant name]

<u>Supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A)</u>

Thank you again for offering to participate in my research.

Following a phase of piloting the semi-structure interview schedule, it was identified that advance information about the questions would be beneficial.

During the interview I will ask you to describe a specific example of a piece of work that you have collaboratively undertaken with an [Education Welfare Officer/Educational Psychologist] to support a child who is experiencing issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance. Therefore, it may be advantageous for you to have already prepared/thought about an example that you would like to share in the interview.

I am also interested in finding out about your thoughts in relation to current practice, past practice and future practice. When thinking about future practice, it would be useful if you could share any ideas that you may have about how collaborative practice between EPs and EWOs could be improved.

This information is not intended to increase any potential workload, it is just an attempt to share the helpful feedback expressed by other participants when piloting the interview.

I look forward to conducting the interview with you on **[interview date and time]** at **[interview venue]**.

Best wishes

Stephanie Herriotts-Smith
Trainee Educational Psychologist (MAST 7)
Tel: 01*** 555887
Email: stephanie.herriotts-smith@***.gov.uk

<u>**Appendix Seven**</u>

<u>**Interview instructions and ethical considerations**</u>

<u>**Supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A).**</u>

I would like to begin by thanking you for offering your voluntary participation in the research. The aim of the research is to investigate interagency working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance.

Can I again remind you that your participation is voluntary and that you can decline to answer any of the questions without any need to offer an explanation. You can also terminate the interview at any point without giving a reason. If you decide after the interview that you do not want your data to be used in the research, please contact me and your data will be destroyed.

I can assure you that the answers you give will remain anonymous. No records of the interview will contain individuals' names. No comment(s) will be attributed to an individual. The interview should take about 1 hour but this time may vary depending on your answers. The interview will last no longer than 1 hour and 30 minutes.

I would like to again check that you consent to the interview being audio-taped and that you give your permission for the tape to be used for transcription, analysis and as part of the researcher's studies at The University of Birmingham. All data will be stored securely and will only be used for research purposes.

Procedure for reporting potential harmful misconduct

Title of project: **A Socio-Cultural Activity Theory Analysis of: Interagency Working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to Complex Extended School Non-Attendance (CESN-A) with Implications for Improved Service Delivery**

Researcher: Stephanie Herriotts-Smith
stephanie.herriotts-smith@***.gov.uk
0**** 555887

Introduction

This procedure will be followed if a participant discloses practice that may be regarded as harmful misconduct. In accordance with the British Educational Research Association's (BERA, 2011) Ethical Guidelines, participants will waiver the right to confidentiality and anonymity if they report practice or conduct that may be regarded as harmful.

Reporting potential misconduct

Following any disclosure of potential misconduct, service protocols will be followed.

The decision to override agreements on confidentiality and anonymity will be taken after careful and thorough deliberation and following consultation with a professional colleague. The participant will be apprised of any reasons and intentions of the researcher to report any potentially harmful practice or conduct. In the interests of transparency, contemporaneous notes will be kept on any such decisions including the rationale.

Once the researcher and another professional colleague has deemed it appropriate to report the potentially harmful practice or conduct, the Manager of the participant's MAST will be informed. In the first instance, the MAST Manager will take the details and investigate the cause for concern. A written receipt of the complaint will be provided by the MAST Manager within 7 days. The response to the complaint will be made by the MAST Manager within an agreed timescale (usually not more than 28 days). If the complaint is complex, more time may be needed to do a thorough investigation. All involved parties will be informed if this is the case.

Should complaints not be resolved at this level they will be escalated to the Head of Social Inclusion or taken to a further line manager.

Information for participants regarding activity theory

Activity Theory: 'Second Generation' (Engström, 1987)

7. This part of the triangle presents the mediation that takes place between the subject and the object in order to achieve an outcome. The artefacts (or tools) might be concrete (such as an object, instrument or resource) or maybe abstract (such as a common language being used, processes or frameworks).

7. Mediating Tools or Artifacts

2. The object is what is being worked on, acted upon or the focus of activity. There will invariably be a lack of clarity about what the object is, and this object is likely to be interpreted slightly differently depending on a range of factors but particularly upon the motives of the individuals involved.

1. Subject

2. Object

3. Outcome

1. This position can be taken up by an individual, group or dyad taking action.

3. The outcome is what is hoped to be achieved.

4. Rules   **5. Community**   **6. Division of Labour**

4. The rules reflect what supports or constrains the work or activity.

5. The community identifies who else is involved in the work or activity.

6. Division of labour refers to role demarcation and role expectation, for example, who does what and how is the work shared out and why.

Semi-structured interview schedule

Supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A).

Interview Questions

1. Subject

- What is your professional role?
- What relevant experience do you have?
- What date did you qualified/ when did you start your post?
- What qualifications and training do you have?
- What professional development opportunities have you experienced?
- What do you perceive is your professional role in relation to CESN-A?

2. Object

- Can you please describe a specific example of an activity undertaken with an EP/EWO to promote positive outcomes for C&YP who experience issues associated with CESN-A?
- Does the current focus of your work differ from how you have worked in the past?
- Do you foresee the focus of your work changing significantly in the future?

3. Outcomes

- What did you hope to achieve?
- What did you achieve?
- What were the outcomes (impact)?
- Have these outcomes changed compared to practice in the past?
- Do you perceive different outcomes being prioritised in the future?

4. Rules

- What facilitated and supported what you did?
- What constrained and restricted what you did?
- Were there any other factors that influenced what you did?
- How had the above come to be?
- Have these factors changed overtime?
- Do you foresee different factors impacting on your work in the future?

5. Community

- Who else worked with you on this activity?
- What was their role and working relationship with you?

- Who have you worked with in the past?
- Who do you envision working with in the future?

6. Division of Labour

- How were the roles and responsibilities shared/divided between you?
- What did you each endeavour to do?
- How has that come about? (has it changed as the MASTs have evolved/developed?)
- Do you think others will have different expectations of your role in the future?

7. Mediating Tools or Artefacts

- What did you use?
- How did you use it?
- Why did you use it?
- Where did you hope to get to by using it?
- How had you come to use it in this way?
- What do you think might be useful for the future?

Appendix Eleven

Example summary transcription completed during the interviews

Appendix Twelve

Example post interview transcription (EP)

EP Perception of Practice

Interviewee / respondent	Researcher	Method of data capture
EP1	SH-S	Written notes X / audio X
Date of interview	**Duration of interview**	**Location of interview**
23/07/12	1 hour 10 minutes	EPs MAST
Date of transcription	**Transcriber**	**Notes**
27, 28 & 30/07/12	SH-S	

Voice	Transcription		thread no.	Notes
R	I would like to begin by thanking you for offering your voluntary participation in the research. The aim of the research is to investigate interagency working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance. Can I again remind you that your participation is voluntary and that you can decline to answer any of the questions without any need to offer an explanation. You can also terminate the interview at any point without giving a reason. If you decide after the interview that you do not want your data to be used in the	Line	1.	PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

	research, please contact me and your data will be destroyed. I can assure you that the answers you give will remain anonymous. No records of the interview will contain individuals' names. No comment(s) will be attributed to an individual. The interview should take about 1 hour but this time may vary depending on your answers. The interview will last no longer than 1 hour and 30 minutes. I would like to again check that you consent to the interview being audio-taped and that you give your permission for the tape to be used for transcription, analysis and as part of the researcher's studies at The University of Birmingham.			
EP1	Ok		2.	
R	Thank you! All data will be stored securely and will only be used for research purposes. Are you happy to continue?		3.	
EP1	Yes		4.	
R	Thank you! Right then so the first node that we are going to look at is the subject node. So this is about you and your professional role. So could you tell me a little bit about your professional role please?		5.	SUBJECT
EP1	I'm an EP erm do you want to know about erm past experiences as well or do you just...		6.	
R	Yeah can do yeah...what you think your role entails?		7.	
EP1	Ok, EP working in MAST [number] erm we have 17 schools in the MAST and 2 children's centres. So working with pupils that range from 0-19 [years] and we can deal with a range of complex issues. Erm there might be PMLD [profound and multiple learning difficulties] might be school based refusal, might be learning and		8.	

	doing lots of assessments, training, consultation to other staff, supervision with the staff, we may use different therapeutic approaches or things like solution focused to actually help to support work that's happening in schools as well. So a broad range of activities can be undertaken. I also work for one day a week at the YOT [youth offending team] as a senior and that has involved erm co-ordinating a lot of the work between the YOT and the MASTs and then doing some systemic work as well looking at their practice and their policies and procedures and again how it dovetails into MASTs. Erm to basically improve the service young people get and also improve the data and the assessments that are being done at the YOT to help with developing more appropriate...well [tut] not more, appropriate interventions for young people. So if they have got speech and language needs or if they have got er a statement so helping to co-ordinate all of the information. Erm and we are currently looking at protocols for sharing information and for er assessments, initial assessments when a young person has been allocated to the YOT again to look at making sure the intervention is appropriate and that's going to be in conjunction with schools. And we are doing a pilot at the moment with [KS4 PRU named for behaviour, emotional and social needs].		
R	Thank You! And what relevant experience do you have for your role?	9.	
EP1	Erm erm right, qualified in erm 2005. Erm prior to that I taught for 15 years as a, well taught as a primary teacher and middle school and then taught at [Primary PRU named for behaviour, social and emotional needs] for 2 years and then was an assistant psychologist for a year before going on to do the course and then since that its been looking at evidence based practice research	10.	

	and information, everything you learn on the course [EP training] to put into practice. Erm, I think one of the most important things has been trying to keep up with recent research and interventions that have got a good evidence base. But also er trying to be a reflective practitioner and develop practice along the way.		
R	So when you did the course was that a Masters?	11.	
EP1	Yeah, it was a Masters, one year at Birmingham	12.	
R	And was your undergrad degree in primary teaching?	13.	
EP1	No it was psychology no sorry it wasn't psychology. It was majoring in psychology, it was a social science degree.	14.	
R	And then did you do a PGCE?	15.	
EP1	Yeah I did a PGCE at Leicester erm which had got a tutorial group for erm students that wanted to be an EP. So it was the only one in the country and so I was on that for a year and that was, that was really good. We had EPs that had just erm just got their qualification coming in and telling us quite a lot about how they felt about the role and whether or not it had actually met their expectations.	16.	
R	I bet that was good!	17.	
EP1	It was very good erm and so again we looked at a quite a lot of things that you would look at as an EP. But the one came in and erm she said that after doing the course, she loved the course, she loved teaching, she loved the course but after doing one year of practice she decided it wasn't going to be for her. So we got a very balanced role knowing that although you have gone through all of this, it might not be exactly how you think its going to be. But then we had the other side of people coming in thinking that it was brilliant. So yeah that was a very good course to do.	18.	
R	Thank you! And what professional development opportunities have you experienced that you think are relevant to your role?	19.	
EP1	Ooh gosh erm there's been lots of things. I mean we have the EP	20.	

	development days and then there has been lots of things at the West Midlands practice. So continued doing some of the sessions if possible at the Uni especially if its regards to supervision and things like that. I've tried to I've tried to do as much as I can to broaden my experience. I've also done things that have helped to develop policies and support for critical incidents er and again been on courses for that erm it's been its been a range of things. I've been on courses for lots of different things so, it might be from oooo erm oh gosh [researcher's name] [laughs]! Oooo it might be on, things like Autism, ADHD you know you know the the conditions that you would expect er to then looking at things that will help develop practice as well erm and there has been lots of in house training. We have done lots of CBT and things that that which has again, been developed and then we've got the sexual harmful behaviour policy and strategies that we are looking at that I am part of as well so tried to tried to keep up as much as possible with current practice but also try and broaden things but then also look at the things that I am really interested in and try to develop those.		
R	Thank you!

Right then so, the second node relates to what we call the object. So this is a description of a specific example of an activity undertaken with yourself and the EWO to promote positive outcomes for a child or young person that has engaged in CESN-A. | 21. | OBJECT |
EP1	Ok	22.	
R	So can you think of an example?	23.	
EP1	Yes, ok I've got an example.	24.	
R	Can you tell me about that example please?	25.	
EP1	OK, right erm it was a young person in secondary. I think that they were year 8. Erm they had got an older brother at the same	26.	

	secondary school. Erm and I was alerted to the fact that he was not attending school by the EWO erm and it was thought that it was purely medical reasons. He had got a bowel condition and so when he was at school becoming extremely anxious about having accidents. Erm he was under a consultant erm and so that was the information that I was given erm initially, along with the fact that the family were not as proactive and although they appeared to be supportive they had also got a lot of medical needs themselves. So at times couldn't be as proactive as they would like to have been.		
R	uuummm	27.	
EP1	So I arranged to do the home visit with the EWO she had got a lot of involvement with them and was trying to encourage him to go back into school. His attendance had fallen dramatically. Erm so we did a home visits, when we went to see him met with Mom and Dad as well erm brother was at school and I think his attendance at that point was ok. Erm and what happened was we, I tried to I tried to do a holistic assessment because I felt that there were some underlying...talking to them there was some underlying issues: it wasn't just a medical issue. Erm eventually when we spoke to parents, Dad had got chronic pulmonary disorder and was terminal, erm Mom had got lots of relatives erm very close relatives that had died from bowel cancer and was herself undergoing tests and so this young person was extremely anxious about leaving the home.	28.	
R	uuuummm	29.	
EP1	And it was impacting on his health condition as well. Erm so the more stressed he was... it wasn't irritable bowel but the more stressed he was the more likely it was for him to have accidents. But he didn't want to go out of the home partly because he thought he would have accidents but also the fact that he felt that if he left the home, at one point he might come back and his Dad	30.	

	might not be there. So there was a lot of things to consider.		
R	Yeah! And can you tell me about the work you did in collaboration with the EWO?	31.	
EP1	Well erm we looked at doing a bit of... we did ooohh we looked at modifying his timetable to start with to try and ensure that he was able to have access to toilet facilitates and things like that if he needed it. Erm but made sure that his days were quite sort as well. Erm then did a bit of CBT with him looking at his perceptions of the situation and the fact that parents were being supported as much as possible and that things were not a grim as he thought they were [laughs]. Erm...	32.	
R	Did you conduct the individual therapeutic work?	33.	
EP1	Yes errrmmm but also we did a referral to the [PRU name] to look at helping to support him first of all in school if possible erm but then as as it developed he went to the [PRU name] erm.	34.	
R	So was it outreach support first?	35.	
EP1	Yeah	36.	
R	And then	37.	
EP1	Yeah	38.	
R	Placed?	39.	
EP1	Yeah	40.	
R	And how did you support parents?	41.	
EP1	Parents were supported via the EWO. I think for parents it was the EWO went there regularly to make sure that they were...that they thought that everything was fine and that things were moving in the right direction for them. But for parents, I think their main levels of anxiety were the fact that he wasn't attending any educational provision and once he was, he seemed more positive and was attending. To start with as I said, it was school erm but then as time went by I thought it was going to be more beneficial for him to be at the [PRU name] because of the small groups and	42.	

	because of the nurturing environment that they have got there and once that was that was all set up and he seemed happy there, they were happier in themselves that he was being supported as best as you know? They thought he should be. Which helped alleviate a lot of their anxieties as well. So it made, they said that it made the home a happy home because he just seemed so down at that point.		
R	Uuummmm	43.	
EP1	So yeah.	44.	
R	So how did you work with the EWO? So you said that the EWO was involved first of all...	45.	
EP1	Yeah, we met on a regular basis erm being in a multi-agency support team it is very easy to have the informal conversations and the formal conversations and so we would have a lot of informal conversations talking about what was happening. Erm [tut] and if there wasn't any advice that was then needed. For instance she was monitoring his attendance erm whilst he was on this modified timetable which we had set up with school. Erm and if she thought that his attendance wasn't the way it should be or if she had noted any other concerns within in the school. Because we had had meetings with the school to say that this was the way we were going to be looking at it, and they needed to help to support. Erm if there was anything that she thought was going a little bit wrong erm wasn't as positive as it should be we would then have a discussion around which ways we could look at to help improve the situation. So there was a lot of consultation.	46.	
R	Yeah	47.	
EP1	And she [EWO] was a good link between school and myself and home as well. So she would help with a lot of the feedback that was happening as well prior to any review meetings that were then being held.	48.	
R	So the EWO was a link between school, yourself and what did you	49.	

	say?			
EP1	The family		50.	
R	The family

So you had joint meetings with the EWO, and you did home visits with the EWO? | | 51. | |
EP1	Ummhuh		52.	
R	Was there anything else that you did with the EWO?		53.	
EP1	Erm problem solving to start with at the beginning er a lot of problem solving. We were looking at solution focused ways in which we could help to develop the situation. Erm but erm a lot of it was the problem solving, the assessment process, revisiting you know, you know? The cycle.		54.	
R	Yeah		55.	
EP1	Revisiting the the hypotheses over and over again, especially when she first come to me to say that it was a medical condition to start with and she thought that was that was her main concern. Then looking at all the factors that were actually impacting on that. Erm that's really how we worked together. Yeah.		56.	
R	Does the current focus of your work differ from how you might have worked in the past?		57.	PAST
EP1	Currently what I would like to do is erm so training with the EWOs looking at emotional school based refusers and with schools to look at erm assessments that they could be doing and putting into place and process that they could be putting into practice. Er and place within the school setting to help to support these young people. Erm so we've got training that's going to be held in September/October time erm erm I'm hoping to use the ARM and rope [EP named] as well to help to deliver that training so, it would be cause at one point [EP named] and myself were talking about doing that training for as many EWOs that wanted to actually be involved in it. So I think that that's probably the way I would look at		58.	Future

	trying to develop it. So then that they've got more of an awareness. I know that they are using the CAF at the moment but I think it needed to be more specific then that, so that they have got more of an awareness and schools have got more of an awareness and not just thinking, well they are just truanting or... So really to broaden everybody's everybody's awareness of the situation and then hopefully that interventions can be done at a much early point instead of leaving in until crisis point.		
R	So do you think you would have worked differently with the EWO in the past?	59.	
EP1	Ummmmm no, I think I think that erm because there is a lot of discussion within the MAST centre and a lot of a lot of the informal discussions that you have. I think that that is the best way of working instead of having to book an appointment and that you know, you can be part and parcel of...and then that because you are in a multi agency team then having everybody else in the team that might be able to give that contribution as well. So, I think the informal discussions consultations that we have about cases.

The only other possible thing might be probably some peer supervision with the EWOs which is something I don't do. At the moment I'm doing peer supervision with SIPs [School Inclusion Partners], PSAs [Parent Support Advisors] but EWOs are something that I'd like to bring in and possibly then look at things like complex cases and then look at brain storming not brain storming, shower thoughts | 60. | PAST

FUTURE |
| R | Thought shower | 61. | |
| EP1 | (laughs) erm then look at the assessment process. What I'd like to do now is to look at trying to develop their own assessment procedures and the ways that they formulate their own hypotheses as well. | 62. | |

R	Ok, thank you! Right then the third node relates to the outcomes of the specific case.		63.	OUTCOMES
EP1	Ummhuh		64.	
R	So what did you hope to achieve?		65.	
EP1	Engagement engagement with education again re-engagement I should have said. Erm and also to help promote his own emotional wellbeing and to help the family feel that he was being supported to the best of him to, you know? As much as we could possibly support him. Those were the three main things.		66.	
R	And what did you achieve do you think?		67.	
EP1	I think we achieved all three. Erm and the nice thing is that he went to the [PRU name] erm and he went to the [PRU name] stayed there for a while and was then re-integrated back into school. Erm and that must have been for nearly a year but, then the situation deteriorated again and again it was because of Dad's condition had deteriorated as well and so his medical condition also deteriorated so he was taken back into [PRU name]. But the fact that he was able to go back into mainstream for a year was really positive.		68.	
R	And how long did he go back to mainstream for?		69.	
EP1	It was about a year!		70.	
R	A year		71.	
EP1	Mmm		72.	
R	So was he a year in the PRU?		73.	
EP1	He was oohh probably about...because it was part way through the school year so it would have been probably about January/February so probably about the September/October I think he was back into mainstream but then the following September no! the following June er it was going pear shaped		74.	

	again and again that was consultation with the [PRU name], consultation with the school and the EWO being very integral into monitoring what was happening and linking with parents again. He actually achieved quite well with his exams as well which was quite lovely. That was key stage three results.		
R	Yeah, key stage three	75.	
EP1	Yeah	76.	
R	And have these outcomes, do you think, changed compared to practice in the past?	77.	PAST
EP1	No no erm the EWOs are in MAST [number] are very proactive and very good at identifying erm identifying issues that are happening within school or within families erm I think probably the only difference now would be the fact that they are monitoring attendance at a different level now. So they have gone down they have gone up to 85% now haven't they? Or have they gone to 80% then?	78.	
R	From September 2011 less than 85% attendance is referred to as persistent absence.	79.	
EP1	Yeah

So they are monitoring...so we are actually probably finding that we are getting children at a much earlier point than we used to. Erm the other thing is that although I said no, the other thing is that having done a lot of consultation with the EWOs, they are now very adept at saying to parents "right if it's a medical condition and we are looking at a [PRU name] referral we need to have a letter from a consultant stating that it is purely a medical condition. Do you know what I mean? Erm so that that's that changed practice quite a bit. Erm because at one point it was thought that if a child need to go to the [PRU name] then they probably needed to have an EP assessment but if it's a medical condition a purely medical condition then they could be accessing | 80. | |

	[PRU name] support that way as long as they've got the information.		
R	Right	81.	
EP1	Erm, that if it is a purely medical condition	82.	
R	Purely medical	83.	
EP1	Yeah so I think our EWOs have been very proactive in actually making sure that although although this one initially seemed to be a purely medical condition, following the home visit we found out it was much bigger than that. They [EWOs] are very good at making sure that they've got as much of the information they can get.	84.	
R	Yeah	85.	
EP1	It was very interesting because maybe that is a part of our training as well as EPs but when we went to do the home visit erm (laughs) when we came out, the EWO said they had not told me half of that information! So it it's our training it's the way we actually elicit views from parents or from other professionals isn't it? and from other agencies.	86.	
R	I'll put that one in the other node [Rules: supportive factor?]. And then lastly for this node, do you perceive different outcomes being prioritised in the future?	87.	FUTURE
EP1	Er, looking at their priorities at the moment erm I'm not sure. Erm I'm hoping that the training that we do will help to increase awareness of certain things that they could be looking at but, their priorities their priorities they've em they've got their 80% that they are looking at erm and sometimes they don't actually then know about might be happening with the pupils that are above that 80% erm but that's because that's not part of their threshold. Erm I'm not sure about that one [researchers name]. Erm they have regular meetings with the schools erm where they do ask, and SIPs are involved as well, where they do ask about pupils that are not engaging to the level that they should be er and so SIPs look	88.	

	at more of the modified timetables which can at times hide things that are happening. Er but the EWOs are very good at working with SIPs as well to look at what might be happening there. Er I think, if anything it's going to be about erm about that peer supervision and looking at how we prioritise things really probably.		
R	Yeah	89.	
EP1	I think they're erm they're own criteria of what they are looking at is very specific already.	90.	
R	Yeah	91.	
EP1	But hopefully with the training that we will do, schools and EWOs will then be able to look at prioritising some of the CESN-A cases as well (laughs). The other thing that I have thought of doing is, erm we have our EP planning meetings um but it has been boarded because they have got the Area SENCo [special educational needs co-ordinator] and SIPs coming, so the other thing that I have thought of is asking the EWOs if they would like to come to that so that it is more like a case meeting rather than an EP planning meeting.	92.	
R	Is that something that you have done in just this MAST?	93.	
EP1	That's something I'm looking to do in September. We've already talked about doing it and I think that might be quite beneficial. If the EWOs don't need to be present for all of it then that's great. But I just thought that that might give us more of a holistic view of what's happening in the school as well and what's happening with each case.	94.	
R	And would that be on top of the MAST meeting that you have in school?	95.	
EP1	We already have EP planning meetings once a term.	96.	
R	Yes	97.	
EP1	And the school planning meetings we have two of those a year for	98.	

	each school. Erm we've recently asked them [school] because of the new MAST review and everything and the outcomes of that we have recently asked them if they just want one school planning meeting. But the majority of them have been saying that they still want two so that is additional to and the EWOs also have their own meetings, on a weekly or fortnightly basis, with the SENCo in the school as well. Er SIPs are also having meetings so we just thought if we could...			
R	Yeah bring it all together?		99.	Donation
EP1	Yeah, it might make a more efficient use of time really.		100.	
R	No that sounds like a good idea. So the fourth node relates to rules, so what do you think is supportive of you working collaboratively with an EWO in [LA name]?		101.	RULES SUPPORTIVE FACTORS 112.
EP1	Well we've got the information sharing protocol erm which all parents have to sign to say yes it's alright to discuss situations or anything that's happening with the MAST. Erm you've also got, he didn't have a CAF [Common Assessment Framework] at that point but you've also got the CAF, if you're going to be using that erm and then I think the other things are for me erm ethical standpoints and you know? Rules guidelines from the BPS [British Psychological Society] and things like that really.		102.	
R	Is there anything else about working in [LA name] that is particularly supportive of you working collaboratively with the EWO?		103.	
EP1	It's the MAST setup in particular. Er I mean before that we were area teams and that was still very good erm and I I think that the fact that you the fact that you've got erm you've got direct access to a professional instead of keep having to go on the emails trying to get them or phone them or whatever. Erm I think that that's invaluable. I think each I think everybody in the MAST as well		104.	

	have got their own professional stand point they've got their own professionalism. Erm and they are every good at making sure that they stay within those boundaries and the other thing is in conjunction with the BPS and whatever, informed consent. Erm if they come and they say, you know, this pupil blah blah blah one of the things I'd say is I can't we can't talk about this pupil as a pupil it does need to be anonymous and they are very good at doing that as well.			
R	Is there anything that constrains or restricts how you can work collaboratively with EWOs?		105.	CONSTRAINING OR RESTRICTIVE FACTORS
EP1	Time, time is the major thing really! Erm and that's not just my time that's their [EWO] time as well, especially the fact that we've now got 2 EWOs for 17 schools. That is that is the major constraint. I mean they are still they are still very good at making sure, you know? If they've got concerns or erm that they come and talk to me and you know? We'll have have a discussion around what is happening, consultation with them. It is the time factor and having to do, I shouldn't say this but, having to do the PNIFTED lists and everything they have to do. It's it's the time factor that is the most erm the biggest the biggest restraint I I can think of.		106.	
R	Can you think of any other factors that are quite constraining or restrictive of working collaboratively, other than time?		107.	
EP1	Erm caseloads. Caseloads again and that's probably on my side as well. The volume that the amount the volume of cases that you have errrm and the priorities that we as EPs have to have, sometimes that can impact on erm trying to get in there as quickly as possible. Especially if you've got a statutory or a erm school pre-permanent exclusion meeting or something like that that then has to take then has to take priority on top of. But It it's it's erm it's it's the same old same old it's the er it's time and it's the volume of work and it's the reduction in staffing erm because we did use to		108.	

	have 3 EWOs in this area [tut]. But because of budget cuts and you know? The bigger picture. So really it's about, that's probably why I am saying as well about having those meetings, it's about looking at more efficient ways of conserving our time really.			
R	Was there any other factors that influenced what you did?		109.	
EP1	With that young person?		110.	
R	Yeah, with the EWO?		111.	
EP1	Erm I think factors that influenced myself were things that you learn as an EP. So all the skills that you learn, making sure that you've got a holistic view of what's happening er looking at models of practice, looking at formulating your ideas. It was all part and parcel of the way that we are trained as an EP really. And and the reflective practice that is instilled in you as well, making sure that you go back and check your hypothesis it's it's that really and that that's what I that's that's what I'd like to instil in every well everyone working in the MAST. It has to be that cycle of re-checking re-testing re-formulating. I think erm the other thing that I probably need to be thinking about as well is looking at erm research and other evidence based practice that can help to develop my ideas on erm interventions or procedures that might be successful that re-integrating pupil's who have got complex needs like this and then again that knowledge can also be transferred to the EWOs. So I'm hoping that the training that we are going to be doing will be a starting point.		112.	SUPPORTIVE FACTORS
R	And how do you think that the factors that we have already discussed so far have come to influence what you did? So this is a question about the past. So why do you think these factors are important now?		113.	PAST
EP1	Can you repeat that question again?		114.	
R	So how have these factors come to be important in working collaboratively with the EWO?		115.	
EP1	Erm		116.	

R	Anything about how the service has developed in [LA name] that you think is relevant to how the factors have come to influence what you've done.	117.	
EP1	I think I think it is multi-agency multi-agency way of working erm I think that's been the main thing and also developing the relationships, the roles and responsibilities in the team.	118.	
R	Yeah	119.	
EP1	And having a good understanding of each other's roles and also developing having said the relationships but also developing the skills and the knowledge erm and being a good you know all the things that you're told when you are doing when you're doing your Masters or your PhD about the good listening skills and whatever. Erm and i think sometimes as the EP in the team you are also being a 'sounding board' for a lot of the other professionals that are in there. So it's it's it's making the time to do all of that.	120.	
R	And do you foresee different factors impacting on your work in the future?	121.	
EP1	Um my work or the work with the EWO?	122.	
R	Your work collaboratively with the EWO.	123.	
EP1	Erm I'm hoping that over the next few weeks we will have erm as [Year 3 TEP named] and we will also have erm we've also got an Assistant Psychologist so I'm hoping that I will be able to dedicate more time to actually having the consultations and helping to develop some of the training with the EWOs to help to develop their practice even more. I mean their practice is already very good, I think we've got excellent EWOs within our MAST within our team. So, it's just helping to develop those skills even further. And again for me as well it's then over the 6 weeks holidays doing the reading and then doing some more doing some more erm getting some more knowledge about, especially when we do the training, about things that could be put into practice that have got a good evidence base. Because we have got some schools that	124.	

	have got pockets of complex pupils. You know? The Year 8's got, the Year 9's in particular erm Year 8 Year 9's erm and I think although it doesn't happen so much in primary you still have got some complex cases in primary as well. So, I think it's looking to support those as much as we can, but through what I've discussed.			
R	Ok, thank you! And then the next node relates to the community. So who else worked with you on the specific activity that you did with the EWO?		125.	COMMUNITY
EP1	It was school erm we'd also got erm although they never came to a meeting, we had also got information from a consultant. And so it was school, it was the [PRU name], and family, family were integral to the intervention. They they [the family] were the ones that we actually worked with on that intervention.		126.	
R	So you said, my next question is about what was their role and working relationship with you? So you've already said that the consultant didn't attending meetings but that they'd sent a letter.		127.	
EP1	Yeah, we'd got information about his medical condition and any reviews that they had for his medical condition, they've sent letters out for that as well.		128.	
R	Yeah		129.	
EP1	So we were kept update on what was happening with it.		130.	
R	And what was the role of the school?		131.	
EP1	The schools' role was to help to facilitate the educational process really. So, they were very supportive of looking at modified timetables, making sure that they'd allocated: whether it was a room or additional staffing to help to make sure that he was actually engaging, erm they were good at working with		132.	

	collaborating with the [PRU name] to make sure that the [PRU name] then knew the times that they needed support within schools, within the school time within the school day erm and if things weren't going as well they were they would relay back to the EWO and meetings were convened so that we could all then, although there wasn't a CAF in place, meeting would convene so that we could continue monitoring what was happening and then if anything review the situation, review the intervention and look at more appropriate ways to move forward.		
R	Yeah So did you have any contact with the school or was that all through the EWO?	133.	
EP1	Yeah, No I had contact with the school as well erm so they'd ring me every so often but the EWO was the one that was monitoring his attendance on a weekly basis. So I met with the school to discuss in conjunction with the EWO, we were the ones meeting with the school to say, this is, and parents to say this is what we think should be happening and then formulate that into a plan.	134.	
R	So the EWOs role then was to monitor the attendance on a weekly basis.	135.	
EP1	Monitor the attendance on a weekly basis, they met with family erm frequently erm and they also helped to support the young person. So for instance, if it was say he was meant to be there in the morning, initially they would actually take him take him there as well and then he would make his own way back home. But again that was a process of making sure that he was confident about going into the school that things were set up. So they worked very closely with the pupil and the school and myself to make sure that that was happening. They did go out of their way to make sure they supported him as much as possible.	136.	
R	So what was the family's role and working relationship with you?	137.	

EP1	The family I thought were very open about erm talking about erm all the difficulties the issues that they'd got erm it was for me it was the fact that they had got erm very in depth knowledge about their son. The issues that were impacting on him erm so it was building that rapport with them erm and trying to make them, well not trust but, building that rapport and then making them realise that we were there to help to support and that then in turn they were supporting him to go into school so they were helping with relaxation techniques and things like that that we discussed. So yeah it was, they helped to support him in the home setting and then they'd also get feedback about how he was in school. And then at the [PRU name] feedback about how he was doing. So and then they could help to praise and support and help to develop his self-confidence as well.		138.	
R	And what was the role of the PRU?		139.	
EP1	They are a very nurturing environment so it was it was giving him the space to have somebody of necessary that he could talk to erm looking at his education package as well. So supporting his education so that he could get the best possible outcome. And they also liaised with the school and myself and the EWO erm and they would then get letter as well from the consultant to say what was happening update on anything that was happening. So they used a very multi-agency approach as well.		140.	
R	Who have you worked with in the past on similar cases?		141.	PAST
EP1	Oh gosh... Gem Centre, CAMHS [child and adolescent mental health] erm Gem Centre, CAMHS apart from other agencies within the MAST team they've probably been the most productive that I've worked with. Because there have been other cases where erm within CBT [cognitive behavioural therapy] sessions, it didn't happen with this one, but within CBT sessions erm a young person disclosed that they erm that they were erm starting to self-harm erm so they were becoming bulimic and so liaising with		142.	

	CAMHS at that point once she'd said yes it was ok you can, she hadn't said yes it was ok, but I said I need to be taking this further are you going to be alright with that? yeah yeah yeah she was saying that she did want help. So I was able to refer her to CAMHS with Mom and then we had a lot of discussions and a lot of review meetings about how she, even if it was just a phone call about how she was getting on and how we could best support her in school so yeah we had a very close relationship with CAMHS.			
R	And then do you envisage working with anyone else in the future, any other agency?		143.	FUTURE
EP1	Errrrrm I think you've got I think you've got most the agencies that I would be looking at working with. If anything it's er it's the majority of the team the agencies within the team so PAYPE things like that, the Youth services erm and Connexions if necessary but it's it's already you've already got everyone in the MAST team and in theory you've then got Social Care who will be coming on board and if Health we actually part of the MAST as well... you you've got quite a lot of agencies there, you can already get access to. So outside of that I'm not really sure on who else I would engage.		144.	
R	Ok, thank you!

The sixth... | | 145. | |
EP1	Apart from schools, maybe the school Nurse but then again that's health.		146.	
R	That's health isn't it?		147.	
EP1	Yeah		148.	
R	Then the sixth node relates to the division of labour. So how were the roles and responsibilities shared and divided between yourself and the EWO?		149.	DIVISION OF LABOUR
EP1	Right erm we've got a very good understanding of what our roles and responsibilities were so, erm as an EWO it was, their		150.	

	involvement was initiated because of the fact his attendance had fallen so they did all the normal things that they would do. They went out they did home visits, they monitored his attendance, all the things that you would expect. Erm and then because of their understanding of what an EP does it was, we think that he needs an EP assessment to look at his needs and look at appropriate provision for him erm once we'd established that and we then did the home visit erm our roles and responsibilities were determined at the actual planning meeting looking at erm how we could support the young person. So, as I said for instance, they were able to pick him up in the mornings take him in erm we looked at the modified timetable which we both did with the school erm and then because the EWO is in there on a weekly basis she...and is monitoring attendance she was able to keep that up. Well the parents were concerned again because of because of the EWOs er because of the way that they can work, they were able to just keep tabs and part of it is the fact that they know that that's integral part of making sure that he is engaging within the educational setting and helping to monitor his attendance as well. Erm so our roles and responsibilities were really set out from the beginning, part of it was because we've got good understanding of what we both do.		
R	What did you each endeavour to do?	151.	
EP1	Well I was co-ordinating, er and as I said I was doing some of the therapeutic work with him er and chairing the reviews as well to make sure that everything was in place and using a consultation type of approach to make sure that things were moving forward. Er and the EWO was, as I've already said, she was the one that was monitoring everything within school within the home erm to help to move things forward or to help to identify any further issues and then again it was part of the the cycle of making sure that we've got all the information in going through things on a	152.	

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	regular basis within the team.			
R	And how do you think it's come about that you each endeavour to do the things that you have said? For example, your role is more about co-ordinating and chairing the support whereas the EWOs roles is more about monitoring things on a weekly or even daily basis. How do you think that has come about?		153.	PAST
EP1	Well mine was also about doing the therapeutic work and part of that is the fact that the EWOs are not trained to do that therapeutic work er and erm the chairing part and the co-ordinating part is is because it came through a consultation type of approach erm so I just I take that on board as part as part as our role because as EPs you've got a hu, quite a range of skills haven't you? So being able to elicit views in meetings, as I said when we came out of this meeting with parents that the EWO said they've not told me that at all. So it's em it although chairing it it was my way as well of monitoring what was happening with the case and making sure that if it did need to go further to the [PRU name] for him to go in, then I'd I'd got all the information that would then be pertinent to be able to complete the reports or make the referrals or whatever. So it also helped with the therapeutic work that I was doing with him to make sure that I was in the loop with everything else that was needed.		154.	
R	And do you think that others will have different expectations about your role in the future?		155.	FUTURE
EP1	I don't think so. Er I think that, I think that as erm as because we've been established for so long, I think they've got a very good understanding of what we do and how we do it erm and roles and responsibilities and communications and so I don't think there will be a difference. If anything I hoping that it will be enhanced with the training and everything else that we are looking at doing er. And as I said, an integral part of being in a MAST is that you either a 'sounding board' or you're doing a lot of consultations		156.	

	around around issues and cases and whatever. So, there's always that collaborative working and that shared understanding of role you know we could be looking at this or really you could be looking at this, do you know what I mean? There's always that understanding so I think I think that's what's established in our area.			
R	Thank you! Right then the last node relates to any tools that you might have used. So these could be abstract tools such as language erm or a shared understanding about what non-attendance is or they could be concrete tools like an assessment tool that you use collaboratively together. So what tools do you think you used on this specific case?		157.	TOOLS
EP1	Erm shared understanding erm and all the skills that you are taught, the listening the paraphrasing you know? All those all those tool all those skills. Er, erm working together we used like a solution focused type activity. Erm home visits erm again that was a consultation type of approach and with the school erm and then I used I used my own assessment but then feedback. So for instance, I used a BECKs Youth Inventory and things like that and then feedback that those that information to the EWO on, you know? Like the levels of anxiety and things like that. Er, erm gosh! When you have to think about it its quite difficult because it's part of the practice, part and parcel of your everyday practice isn't it? Erm		158.	
R	What about things like terminology? Do you think you used similar terminology to the EWO or do you think you used different terminology?		159.	
EP1	I I used I probably use emotional school-based refusal erm that's that's the terminology that erm that we've been use to and the terminology that everybody would be erm ok with. To parents I I to		160.	

	parents I probably didn't use that term but discussed it around that term erm because I think you've got to have you've got to be able to communicate with everyone and everyone's got to have that shared understanding. So I try not to use acronyms if possible to everybody if possible erm but erm yeah it was it was definitely a shared understanding erm and that was a shared understanding of everybody. The main things would have probably been the consultation then based on the assessments that I've done and with him it was the CBT er type of approach as well.			
R	Ok then so I've got a few questions to ask you about each of the tools that you've used. You've identified that consultation, the EP assessment, the CBT were the main tools. So, what I've got to ask you is: how did you use them? Why did you use them? And where you hoped to get to by using them? So if we just focus on the three. How did you use consultation?	161.		
EP1	Erm I used consultation by er I used the [LA name] er type of consultation er that has already been set out so you've seen that.	162.		
R	Ummm	163.		
EP1	So it was getting everyone er again looking at a shared understanding but also looking at the current situation er the ways forward without me being the er what is the word? Without me being the person with the magical wand so it was everyone being able to contribute to the actual actual plan and outcomes and interventions and ways forward and then using that on a review basis so that it was the same format and the same ratings rating scales and thinks like that that were being used so it was a very familiar format for everyone to be able to access.	164.		
R	Why did you use consultation?	165.		
EP1	Because I wanted everybody to feel as if they were part and parcel of the process and what was happening erm and all the literature, I didn't want anyone to feel as if... I didn't want school to feel as if it was right we've handed it over to you, it's your it's your	166.		

	erm bag. I wanted everybody to feel as if they were part and parcel of it and they could contribute and that they all had to part of the problem solving type framework it wasn't just the EP is then on the case. And I was hoping that using that type of approach would actually help them as well, I think it did, would actually help them to be able to use that type of approach in other type of cases as well.		
R	The next one then is the EP assessment and you said that you used the BECK Youth Inventory. How did you use the BECK?	167.	
EP1	I used it as a type of semi-structured type of interview with him. Erm to to look at him anxieties erm I also looked at, because he did present at times as being a bit depressed, so I also looked at whether he was feeling depressed. I looked at his self-concept. So I didn't use all of it because I didn't think it was all going to be appropriate. He wasn't displaying any disruptive behaviours or anything like that erm so we used it as a discussion really and that gave me more of an insight into the way he perceived things and the way he was feeling about things. Erm it also then helped to develop some of the formulations to help with the CBT intervention that was then used. It gave a structure to the interview for him as well. It meant he could elaborate on, it yeah it gave a structure because we were then able to elaborate on a lot of the issues that were actually impacting on him. And one of the other things was that if he did need to go forward to CAMHS, I'd got evidence as well which I know they use er to be able to say, you know? He's got elevated levels of x y and z. So, but he didn't need to go forward to CAMHS but yeah.	168.	
R	And then the CBT? So how did you use it? Why did you use it? And where did you hope to get to by using it?	169.	
EP1	Erm I used it to, I used it to help look at some of the negative automatic thoughts [NATs] he was erm he was erm coming out with. Erm and I was hoping that it would give him a more positive	170.	

	outlook and some of the coping strategies that he needed to be able to to deal with things that were happening. Erm and as part of that I was hoping that the relaxation exercises that you can implement as well would help with his levels of anxiety and his sleeping patterns and I was hoping that he he would do the homework (laughs) and help put things into practice and transfer the skills that we were discussing during the CBT. I was hoping that it would reduce some of the anxieties that he was having erm			
R	And do you think that any other tools might be useful for the future?		171.	FUTURE
EP1	Yeah		172.	
R	Is there anything that could be developed or		173.	
EP1	Yeah, I think they will be very useful for the future and I'd continue to use all of those erm and erm I mean the other thing I could of used is the Resiliency Scale but I didn't use that at that point but erm I think all of those would still be very useful in conjunction with a lot of the other things that we've now got in the Service. And so yeah I'd carry on using all of that and so and again any further reading that I do around the subject and evidenced based erm interventions or assessments that are actually in there, I'd be using some of those as well.		174.	
R	And is there anything that you could think of now, that you think would be useful to develop for the future or to use for the future?		175.	
EP1	Erm at the moment it's just it's the ARM that I'm looking at so, we'll take it from there really and see. But erm I now [other EP named] had done quite a lot on this and I know you're doing quite a lot on this so anything you've got that would be very useful would be lovely.		176.	
R	What is the ARM?		177.	
EP1	It's it's basically, I think, an assessment tool erm and processes that look at supporting and identifying and so the identification of risk factors and possibly protective factors for young people that		178.	

	are er that are at risk of being school based refusers. But it's a process that can be put into school and worked in collaboration with the EWO.			
R	And was it developed in the Service?		179.	
EP1	It's something that [other EP named] has done training on erm I think she had been on a course and so she'd brought it into the Service. Erm it's something she had done in a couple of schools and I'm hoping that we will be able to develop it in our particular secondary schools in the area.		180.	
R	It sounds really good! Right then that is all of my questions. Is there anything else that you feel you'd like to add to your answers? Or anything that you think that I've missed?		181.	
EP1	Erm no...thinking about professional development as well, erm I had thought apart from what we are doing within the Service and things like that, you've also got you're EPRS and supervision. And then things that are highlighted within those and developmental practice and then within the supervision as well you've also got the chance to talk about the complex issues you may have and the ways forward. And the EPRS also identifies erm training, research opportunities and things like that.		182.	SUBJECT
R	What is the EPRS?		183.	
EP1	Your performance management.		184.	
R	Aahhh		185.	
EP1	Yeah I said I didn't use acronyms (laughs)		186.	
R	(Laughs) It's easier when it is somebody that is training [to be an EP] though, isn't it?		187.	
EP1	Yeah. It develops it's supposed to look at developing your professional development and also the HPC [Health Professionals Council] and keeping up to date with your portfolio and		188.	

	everything.			
R	Ok, anything else?		189.	
EP1	No, I can't think of anything else!		190.	
R	Ok then, thank you very much!		191.	

Example post interview transcription (EWO)

EWO Perception of Practice

Interviewee / respondent EWO1	Researcher SH-S	Method of data capture Written notes x / audio x
Date of interview 11/07/2012	Duration of interview 1 hour 2 minutes	Location of interview EWOs MAST
Date of transcription 12/07/2012	Transcriber SH-S	Notes

Voice	Transcription		thread no.	Notes
R	I would like to begin by thanking you for offering your voluntary participation in the research. The aim of the research is to investigate interagency working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance. Can I again remind you that your participation is voluntary and that you can decline to answer any of the questions without any need to offer an explanation. You can also terminate the interview at any point without giving a reason. If you decide after the interview that you do not want your data to be used in the research, please contact me and your data will be destroyed.	Line	1.	PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

	I can assure you that the answers you give will remain anonymous. No records of the interview will contain individuals' names. No comment(s) will be attributed to an individual. The interview should take about 1 hour but this time may vary depending on your answers. The interview will last no longer than 1 hour and 30 minutes. I would like to again check that you consent to the interview being audio-taped and that you give your permission for the tape to be used for transcription, analysis and as part of the researcher's studies at The University of Birmingham.			
EWO1	Umhuh yeah		2.	
R	All data will be stored securely and will only be used for research purposes.		3.	
EWO1	Umhuh		4.	
R	So if you are happy to start we will start the interview So could you tell me a little bit about your professional role as an Education Welfare Officer please?		5.	SUBJECT
EWO1	Erm... what my role entails exactly?		6.	
R	Yeah		7.	
EWO1	As Education Welfare we are...our main interest is in encouraging children and young people to attend school erm and to find out why they are not attending if they are not attending. So we monitor attendance erm within schools erm. We discuss with school staff reasons for absence erm and we will discuss with them as well ways of addressing that, those absences and ultimately we will take them on ourselves and deal with those families. We will also make contact with children erm where we know that are not registered at a school new to the city erm and encourage attendance at a school erm. We will attend meeting		8.	

	CIN [Child in Need], CAF [Common Assessment Framework], CP [Child Protection] where attendance is a factor erm. We as an Area EW, because I'm an Area EWO I am responsible also for supervising EWOs within the team so, ensuring that they are carrying out their role also. Erm attending meeting with the YOT [Youth Offending Team], with LAC [Looked After Children] erm compiling a data base for those pupils not in full time education PNIFTED and any other jobs that require doing that don't fit into anything else (laughs). Social care referrals we get drawn into there is all sorts it is expanding...			
R	And what experience did you have before you took up your post?		9.	
EWO1	Erm... I've been an EWO 10 years er prior to that I am actually a qualified social worker but I haven't maintained my post qualification you are now supposed to be registered and I haven't maintained that for the last 4 years. Erm purely because of circumstance at that time... my Mom died and I've always been passionate about education, I find it's crucial... to me it is everything.		10.	
R	So what training have you had other than your social work qualifications?		11.	
EWO1	Erm I've done... like lots of us I have done in-service training so, child protection, domestic violence, admin for the ONE system for all those systems erm equality, gypsy Roma, traveller training, drugs and substance misuse erm it's just all that what is available erm I'll take up. I've done positive, the Triple P programme parenting positive parenting programme it is. I've done the nurturing because I think parenting is key to children being able to access their education.		12.	
R	And did you have to do a formal qualification to become an EWO or?		13.	
EWO1	No		14.	
R	Because you are a qualified Social Worker?		15.	

EWO1	That is seen as appropriate training		16.	
R	And was the Social Work qualification an undergraduate degree or diploma?		17.	
EWO1	Postgrad my degree was in something else and then I did a one year CQSW (Certificate of Qualification in Social Work) at Birmingham University (laughs). CQSW doesn't exist now it has been superseded by the Diploma in SW which is why it was two, I was given the two because the CQSW was being faded out.		18.	
R	And what was your undergraduate degree in?		19.	
EWO1	Er Public Administration (laughs) one of the weird and wonderful ones		20.	
R	And have you experienced any professional development opportunities that you think have been useful for your role other than the ones you have outlined. I know you have spoken about the in service training: so the...child protection, domestic violence, admin ONE system, equality, traveller children, drugs and substance misuse. Has there been any other opportunities that you think you have had since you started the role...I know that is quite a lot!		21.	
EWO1	No not...there have been some courses that have been generally available that are available to all in the LA. But It is having the... being encouraged to take it up and the opportunity. Workloads tend to impact I think. So training is there, but you sometimes feel you go on the training you've then go to catch up with everything as well.		22.	
R	Thank you

Right then, so if we move on to the next node which is the Object. This is about describing a specific piece of work that you have undertaken with an EP around non-attendance. So could you tell me a little bit about that piece of work that you did? | | 23. | OBJECT |
| EWO1 | Erm it's sort of ongoing it is still ongoing where there is a young | | 24. | |

	person who is attending a PRU. So there are recognised difficulties already. EP involved via that. Erm wasn't attending, this particular piece is just the norm stuff really because erm. I tired visiting to engage, the EP tried to engage, get contact with the family. Finally did get contact, er I was able to make the contact, I spoke to Mom, set up meetings in school with the [PRU name] that didn't work out. Set up a meeting then here which Mom then did attend as did the EP and [PRU named] and we were just able to draw up a plan to move forward. What made it easier really was the fact that the EP was there at the meeting as well. So that we were all there rather than, as often happens your...you have your information, you discuss it but then you have a meeting and not everyone is there so you then have to come away again so. Erm my contacts with the EPs have generally been on where referral has been made because of concerns and then we have tried to move forward in that way. I haven't done a specific piece of work in in that erm we... over a period of weeks you know, it's always been...this is what we are going to try and do er and then we will get there if we can or work out what we are going to do if it doesn't...if it doesn't happen.		
R	And did you do that collaboratively then with everybody in the meeting?		25.	
EWO1	Yes, well before hand it had been discussed with [PRU name], discussed with the EP and my own input as well with a view of how we wanted to address the concerns for this young person. Erm and then there was the added issue that the GEM Centre was also involved. Mom was telling us one lot of information from the GEM Centre that did not necessarily tally with what the EP understood. So it is trying to move forward. I think the biggest problem throughout is always getting/being able to get everybody together and that is a time factor generally, it's a time factor, I think, peoples time is precious and then it is prioritising, this might		26.	

	be important for us but is it important for the others that are involved?			
R	So what was the focus of your work for this specific case?		27.	
EWO1	The focus was really that we wanted the young person to be re-engaging with er education. So we were not expecting 25 hours a week. We were expecting him to re-engage and build up and to establish exactly what he was wanting and how we could deliver what he was wanting because there were clearly issues.		28.	
R	And what year was the young man in?		29.	
EWO1	10, Year 10...so he will be going into 11		30.	
R	So the focus of your role then for this specific piece of work was: to encourage the young person to re-engage with education you weren't expecting him to engage to the full extent of 25 hours. But you were expecting him to engage in some form and you wanted to find out what he was wanting to then inform the provision		31.	
EWO1	Yes, so [PRU name] would be able to erm offer...because apparently he hadn't...he did not like the one subject that had been given and since that subject had been offered he hadn't been going to school. So it was to establish what he would have.		32.	
R	And has the focus of your work changed from how it has happened in the past or how it has emerged in the past, would you have worked differently previously, do you think?		33.	PAST
EWO1	Erm I think I have always tried to work with er all those parties involved. I'm more aware now of the fact that erm changes can be made within the PRUs and schools particularly with the EP support. As you will know...we are an EP led service, everything has to come through the EP really. And that is not to say that it will happen, it's that they [EP] can have more influence.		34.	
R	And do you foresee the focus of your wok changing significantly in the future?		35.	FUTURE
EWO1	I think probably you become more aware. Young person are		36.	

	individual every case is different and it's been able to address the needs within the systems that we have and what can be offered. So I don't think the focus would change significantly in that I would be wanting to address the issues and work with others to address those issues. But whether it might be that I'd learn different ways of doing that. Whether perhaps, it's more important to er engage with the EP earlier rather than erm later. There has been other cases where young people have not wanted to go to school so you refer to the EP and then er you are waiting to see what the outcome of the assessment is as to whether or not you then take further action. So everything does depend on how the EP takes it. And of course those...it is a slow system that is one of the biggest issues really, that it is a slow system, EPs have got so many referrals because everything around that sort of issue has to be going through them so it leads to big delays and it can be months before anything is done...purely due to work loads and then to resources available. We refer on to [PRU name] outreach and perhaps that is only a few hours a day. Adolescent mental health is such a big issue and again where are the resources to deal with that?			
R	Thank you Right then the third node is about the outcomes of the specific piece of work, so what did you hope to achieve?		37.	OUTCOMES
EWO1	Hoped to have the young person back into [PRU name], accessing education is what we hoped.		38.	
R	And have you achieved that?		39.	
EWO1	Er not at the moment because he has gone away. But have been able to draw up a more acceptable programme for him at the [PRU name]. So, we hope so, but I can't say yes at the moment because he is away [on holiday]. Systems are in place for his return in September.		40.	

R	Do you think these outcomes would have changed to the outcomes that would have happened previously?		41.	PAST
EWO1	Erm that is hard to say really, do you mean prior to any involvement or during my involvement?		42.	
R	So during your time as an EWO do you think that in previous years there would be different outcomes?		43.	
EWO1	Overtime it has become more acceptable, I think, to draw up the more individual learning plan.		44.	
R	Why do you think that is?		45.	
EWO1	Generally we are all becoming more aware, I think. It all does depend on individuals: we all are very different aren't we? we approach things in a very different way. From schools point of view as well they are becoming more er willing to adjust, accommodate if you like.		46.	
R	What about the future then, do you think the outcomes will be different in the future?		47.	FUTURE
EWO1	Within education?		48.	
R	Yeah		49.	
EWO1	I think that is a very unknown area now. Because of course, the young people are being expected to say in training until they are 18. I think that is going to have massive impact on schools and obviously then on our services because nobody really knows what is happening at the moment so, it is a very uncertain time. Certainly from a EWO point of view, we don't even know about the legal aspect and whether we are expected to prosecute...and who we prosecute. I just think it is an uncertain time.		50.	
R	Thank you If we move on to the next one then, the next one is about, what is it about the way we work in [LA name] that is helpful or/and supports your collaborative work with the EP or your work in		51.	RULES SUPPORTIVE FACTORS

	general?		
EWO1	Erm... emmm...I think the MAST systems, at the moment, erm encourage more collaborative working because we are individual teams and out from the base, from JLC. Because it used to be area teams which were similar and EP led but we were all within the JLC. I think because we are out on our own we have to work as a unit. Erm so there are advantages and disadvantages to that, in that, obviously you are more isolated within the MAST and you don't have the ability to share with other colleagues from other teams in the same way erm.	52.	
R	Anything else that is particularly supportive of the work that you do?	53.	
EWO1	Erm it's difficult to say erm... the management structure erm is strong for EWOs. Erm and within our particular team, I can only speak for our team within MAST [number] we have a good/a strong communication er with all/everyone in the team. We see each other in the team room and we'll raise cases, we will discuss and say what do you think? Erm so that is very supportive and the MAST manager that is there and supports and encourages. Erm so I think that is the strong side really that we do have the support within our team, the supports the MAST team in particular, we are very supportive, it is a very supportive team and fortunately we all get on.	54.	
R	So what is it about how things work in [LA name] that might be seen to constraint or restrict?	55.	CONSTRAINING OR RESTRICTIVE FACTORS 120. 128.
EWO1	For me, I think the biggest problem is that it is a very slow process and that is because, as I have said already, because of workloads. So, whilst you can get things done pretty quickly if there is an erm emergency erm, I know the EP will respond erm but generally, we don't necessary react as quickly as we like. No	56.	

	we do react but we don't get a resolution as quickly as we would like because the processes erm are not erm that quick. Communication between agencies continues to be an issue. Because You make phone calls you wait for the response you don't get it, you send emails, you don't necessary get the response either. You try and contact families and you can't make contact with them... you don't know where they have gone. So it can be quite a frustrating er job. What is more difficult is that we are far more target led than ever.			
R	Is that as a MAST or an EWO?		57.	
EWO1	EWO and as a MAST and Education generally. I mean that's within schools, that's within Education Welfare, probably even for EPs. Erm from school point of view they are measured on their attendance so they are less willing to erm accommodate young people that er are going to create problems. From an achievement point of view, obviously they do not want to have young people in there that are not going to achieve. That is the case...they don't...they are reluctant to work with, I'm not saying they don't work with because they will attempted its just that if the resources are not there, how are we meant to offer anything to support them. It is the fact that we are...that targets are there all the time, how may CAFs have you done? How many helpfulness questionnaires have you completed?		58.	
R	Any other factors then that have influenced what you did?		59.	
EWO1	With er...In that one er. Well not really. There were concerns for him anyway in that his mental health well not so much his mental health. He was just being at home so, obviously you don't want him just being at home you want to broaden his education but I think... erm. No no he needed he just needed to be back in school it was just ordinary.		60.	
R	How do you think these factors have come to be important in what you do? I know that is quite a broad question. So this is a question		61.	PAST

	about the past, so why do you think there are these supportive factors and constraining factors?		
EWO1	Because the government lays down the rules, expectations and the targets. Once they are there it impacts on your work and how you go about your work. So it is less about how you have worked with the family and more about the outcome. So disregard the erm fact that you have worked tremendously hard to get a family to say 80% attending, it is not good enough because they are below 85%. You are not taking into account the fact that actually that 80% is good for them given what has been going on and that has become more and more the case since I started 10 years ago. Erm so I can see that we will need to work with EPs far more closely and the demands on them will be become far greater because you are getting things like emotional based school refusal, we are seeing that more and more now. We are... we need to be able to address that. Then of course you are getting far more erm say, eastern Europeans coming in whose language is not good, erm in terms of being able to speak English, whose culture is quite different so their expectation was that your child went to school at 7 and it doesn't matter if they don't go to school, then they come into this and they have to go to school and we have to be able to get that over to them given their language barrier and we don't have easy access to translators because they cost. Everything is money based isn't it (laughs)? So yes, I think...EPs and EWOs have always tried to work together but I think it's going to get more so.	62.	
R	Right then the next one is about the community, so who worked with you on the specific activity that you described?	63.	COMMUNITY
EWO1	Erm it was erm [PRU named] but we did bring in information from the GEM. So we did have the GEM really.	64.	
R	Was there anybody specifically at the GEM, professional title, paediatrician? clinical psychologist?	65.	

EWO1	It would be erm...do you know, I'm not sure if it was the clinical psychologist...I don't think it was the paediatrician. I think it might have been the clinical psychologist.	66.	
R	And was that the assessment about possible mental health difficulties?	67.	
EWO1	It was it was erm... yes because Mom was saying that there was, he was ADHD or Autistic but the GEM was saying that they weren't 100% certain on that or on mental health.	68.	
R	So we have got the PRU, we've got the clinical psychologist, obviously yourself, EP and the Mother.	69.	
EWO1	Mom parent and sister actually	70.	
R	Mom's sister?	71.	
EWO1	No her daughter, his sister, He didn't come to the meeting.	72.	
R	Ok, so what was the role of the PRU?	73.	
EWO1	They had been trying to engage him in coming in to access his education so that they could also work with him if he needed any support.	74.	
R	What about the role of the clinical psychologist?	75.	
EWO1	I think they had just been erm... in this specific...yeah they had been seeing him regularly and were er advising us on his erm er condition, condition is not the right word is it? On his needs.	76.	
R	And then the EPs specific role?	77.	
EWO1	I'm just trying to think if he is statemented, I should of thought about that one. Er she had been involved for some while in assessing and advising.	78.	
R	And then your role?	79.	
EWO1	To erm encourage him to access his education and take legal action if needs be.	80.	
R	Who have you worked with in the past?	81.	PAST
EWO1	With this?	82.	
R	On non-attendance?	83.	

EWO1	Oh gosh...I've worked with SIPs, EPs, different agencies Social Care... I've actually worked with Horizon house for substance misuse, Haven for domestic violence. I'll work with anyone who is involved that might be able to impact.	84.	
R	And what about the future? Do you envisage working with anyone else in the future? Or do you think it would be useful to work with anybody else?	85.	FUTURE
EWO1	I think it would be very useful if the Health services were able to work more closely with us. It is still a bit of a struggle to be able to get that access. I think health is er definitely one of the big ones. School Nurses I have worked with as well actually.	86.	
R	Thank you! The next one relates to the division of labour, how were the roles and responsibilities between yourself and the EP shared and divided?	87.	DIVISION OF LABOUR
EWO1	Erm erm we discussed what was needed. I think probably erm the EP led the meeting, I did a few of the phone calls but then so did the EP as well. It was as we could do things so as things were highlighted we responded between us so whoever could do what was needed. We shared it really. But the EP led the meeting and ultimately erm er made the decisions but we all agreed to those decisions.	88.	
R	What did you both try to do?	89.	
EWO1	We both wanted the young person to access, we wanted a positive outcome from the meeting. So we both were aware that we...we knew how the parent was, we both wanted to encourage that parent to erm accept the need erm for the young person to be in...access education, to be able to erm provide an acceptable plan. So we knew the tack we were going to take.	90.	
R	So do you feel that you both endeavoured to do the same thing?	91.	
EWO1	Yes	92.	

R	And was there any differences between what you both endeavoured to do, do you think?		93.	
EWO1	No. I mean the EP obviously had more information with regard to the young person's past er history and erm concerns er that the er [PRU name] er because she had been involved longer. But as I said, we had talked about it, we knew what we wanted. It was just a matter of achieving something that was er acceptable to all. There was just one issue around the holiday that came up that I was able to er deal with. My knowledge was the greater at that time. It was a positive use of er combined efforts (laughs).		94.	
R	And was that practical knowledge about whether or not he could take that holiday?		95.	
EWO1	What the implications of the holiday were and how the PRU would need to be marking it in the register.		96.	
R	And that is part of your legal statutory role isn't it?		97.	
EWO1	Yes		98.	
R	And how do you think it has come about, the way you shared the work?		99.	PAST
EWO1	Erm just purely on knowing how, what time constraints we both have. Respecting one another's professional er knowledge and qualities or whatever. Just being able to communicate with one another really. I trust the EP and the EP trusts me. And we were able to...er we communicated beforehand.		100.	
R	Do you think that other people might have different expectations of your role in the future?		101.	FUTURE
EWO1	Erm...yes		102.	
R	What might they be?		103.	
EWO1	Erm...I think there is going to be major changes. I think the more we become involved with social care...the more our role will change. Er to either purely legal role er or it will be more erm		104.	

	responding to social care issues whether within/from schools or from social care. It is quite a big period of change at the moment so there is a statutory responsibility placed upon the Local Authority but it does have to be the way it is delivered at the moment. So, I do envisage quite a lot of change. I've not yet quite worked out how it is going to be (laughs).			
R	Ok thank you. And then the last node relates to any tools that you might have used, these might be concrete like an assessment framework or a checklist or criteria that you might use when you are conducting your assessments or it might be more abstract like use of similar terminology or a shared understanding between the different terms that might be used.		105.	TOOLS OR ARTIFACTS
EWO1	Erm I think there is a shared understanding of different terms without a doubt. Erm my assessment would be guided by the fact that erm there is an expectation that the young person is not attending school and is not accessing any provision so that is going against the legal requirements. So obviously needed some input.		106.	
R	So would you say that the legal guidelines are a tool for you?		107.	
EWO1	Yeah Erm other than that... that would have to be the major one initially and then erm... I would be guided by the EPs knowledge and the PRUs understanding of the situation and their... its a combination of er information available information and how we can progress. But my main one would certainly be the legal and then any knowledge I have myself. I didn't use a tick list or anything.		108.	
R	Ok, so the next question relates to how you use the tools and I think you have spoken about that a little bit already so when you have been talking about the knowledge of the PRU and EP you		109.	

	have spoken about how you have used it in combination to get a bigger picture of the case. How did you use the legal guidelines?			
EWO1	Erm they inform me er of er possible consequences of non-school attendance. They advise on ways I can er move forward that the legal guidelines plus the local advice around those. So my knowledge of our legal systems and the er requirements around those. So the procedures we need to follow such like.		110.	
R	And why do you use those?		111.	
EWO1	Because it is a legal requirement and the basis of our job but it is not the only aspect of our job. It underlines all that we do but it is not the be all and end all.		112.	Interesting quote re legal aspect of the role.
R	So where do you hope to get by using the tools that you have outlined that you use?		113.	
EWO1	Generally you mean?		114.	
R	Yes		115.	
EWO1	Always for me the outcome I want is for children and young people to access their education and improve their access to education. Because to me education is paramount to their future. So sometimes in doing that it is working with the families, generally more often than not its working with that parents to erm help them understand the need for the child to be in school.		116.	
R	You seem to have alluded to the main tools that you use are the legal guidelines and the knowledge of other professional and your own knowledge. Do you use those for the same ends? So, in terms of what you have said about always hoping for the young person to improve their access to education. Do you think both of those tools lend themselves to that end?		117.	
EWO1	Yeah I think that's what I would always hope for. But sometimes it doesn't matter what we do, we can take legal action and the child's attendance doesn't always improve but underlying it all is the hope that we can do that. So if we improve it slightly that to me is positive. Sometimes it is a matter of just chipping away at		118.	Interesting quote regarding

	long held beliefs.			beliefs about education
R	So the next question is about how have you come to use the tools in the way that you use them. I think it is quite clear from what you have said already that the legal guidelines that you use are used as part of your statutory role, it is a legal requirement. But how have you come to use the knowledge of other professionals?		119.	PAST
EWO1	Erm because if they are... if other agencies are involved with a family it maybe that there is a CAF involved around this child so obviously you have far more information available to you. If the family responds better to one agency it is better to be able to work through them. Just knowing more about the family and young people can help you erm relate better to them or deal better with them. One of the biggest... another difficulty now within our services are that the workloads are becoming so heavy that you are not having the time to give to individual cases so it just stops you doing the amount that you want to do with them or they need because you can't. You can do give an awful lot to one case and everything else is falling. Massive constraining factor.		120.	CONSTRAINING FACTOR
R	Finally then, what tools do you think might be useful in the future? If something could be developed what do you think would be useful?		121.	FUTURE
EWO1	In terms of working with EPs it's er probably helpful it would be very helpful I think to have erm an indication of at what stage should we be involving them with non-school attendance. Erm so especially when it is so of erm entrenched or yeah. Knowing what they can offer really... having said that erm I realise that EPs are constrained by time as well and resources. Erm t is erm schools as well erm information for schools really so that they know how to erm deal with non-school attendance not just from our point of view from the legal point of view because as EWOs we talk to staff and we advise around that but the other aspects of it so the emotional aspects or just the general concerns around behaviour.		122.	

	You know how... so that schools have that input as well.			
R	Any other tools that you think would be useful?		123.	
EWO1	Mmmm no I'll probably think of something at another stage. I mean resources are just not... its availability of resources I suppose and that is time and access to other er er methods I suppose that are offered by outside agencies but we can't access because they are too expensive. It would be nice as well I suppose to have the time to be able to think around what we are doing... yeah think around it. So this is quite therapeutic in some ways in that, getting ourselves to think about... it should be written in to everyone's, every service.		124.	
R	So we have gone through each of the seven nodes of activity theory, is there anything else that you would like to add to what you have said, I know you have said quite a lot?		125.	
EWO1	No, I think probably I have said most of it... communication is key. Erm time factors.		126.	
R	I think they were highlighted quite clearly in the constraining factors, the time factor and the communication between agencies.		127.	
EWO1	I suppose parts of it as well it is EP led. We have to go through the EP for referrals to the [PRU name] it has to go through the EP. That just as I say, creates delays. So young people are out of school because of the delays. From our point of view attendance becomes poorer. But we can't do anymore because the referral has been made and that is not a criticism of the EPs it is purely that the system is under too much pressure. So that yeah that all of the key stage panels and everything.		128.	CONSTRAINING FACTOR?
R	Thank you very much! I'll now stop the recording.		129.	

Example coded transcript (EP)

Generating Initial Codes
EPs: EP1
Date codes identified: 17/08/2012

1. Subject

EPs view of their role:
Schools (8.)
Children's Centres (8.)
Pupils aged 0-19 years (8.)
Working with pupils' with complex issues (8.)
Assessment (8.)
Training (8.)
Consultation (8.)
Supervision (8.)
Therapeutic work (8.)
Specialist post working with the Youth Offending team (8.)
Systemic work (8.)
Advice on the appropriateness of interventions (8.)

EPs qualifications:
Masters in Educational Psychology (12.)
PGCE (16.)
Undergraduate degree in social sciences (14.)

EPs experience:
Practising EP for 7 years (10.)
Previously was a Teacher for 15 years (10.)
Previously was an Assistant Educational Psychologist for 1 year (10.)
Keeping up to date with the literature and evidence based interventions (10.)
Reflective practitioner (10.)
University tutorial group for aspiring Educational Psychologists (16.)

EPs training or continued professional development (CPD):
Lots (20.)
EP Development days (20.)
West Midlands CPD days (20.)
University sessions on supervision (20.)
Critical incidents (20.)
Autism (20.)
ADHD (20.)
In-service training (20.)
CBT (20.)
Harmful Sexual Behaviour (20.)

Keeping up to date with practice (20.)
Special interests (20.)
Performance management (EPRS)
Supervision

2. Object

EP perception of the focus of the activity when working collaboratively with the EWO:
Case
Year 8 (26.)
Older brother at the same school (26.)
Medical concerns, bowel condition (26.)
Anxious about bowel accidents in school (26.)
Consultant involved (26.)
Family not proactive (26.)
Family have medical needs (26.)
Young person's attendance had fallen dramatically (28.)
Variable attendance (28.)
Young person extremely anxious about leaving home (28.)

Activity
EWO alerted EP to the young person's non-attendance (26.)
Joint [EP and EWO] home visit (28.)
EWO previously endeavoured to promote attendance (28.)
EP completed a holistic assessment (28.)
Modified the young person's timetable (32.)
EP conducted CBT (32.)
EWO supported parents (32. & 42.)
EWO regular home visits (42.)
Joint [EP and EWO] referral to the PRU for outreach support (34.)
Joint [EP and EWO] regular informal meetings (46.)
Joint [EP and EWO] meetings with school staff to discuss the support (46.)
EWO consulted the EP (46.)
EWO liaised with and between EP, school and the family (48.)
Joint [EP and EWO] review meetings (48.)
Joint [EP and EWO] problem solving (54.)
Joint [EP and EWO] re-visiting and re-testing hypotheses (56.)
EWO monitored attendance (74.)
Joint [EP and EWO] consultation with the PRU and family (74.)

EPs perception of the focus of past activity:
Continuous informal discussions between professionals (60.)
Consultation (60.)

EPs perception of the focus the future activity:
EPs to offer training for EWOs around emotionally based school refusal (58.)
EPs to train schools in assessment and support for non-attendance (58.)

Increase professionals awareness of non-attendance (58.)
Develop a specific assessment tool for non-attendance (58.)
Encourage early intervention (58.)
Peer supervision with EWOs (60.)
EP, Area SENCo and SIPs case planning meetings to include EWO (92.)

3. Outcome

EPs perception of what they [EP and EWO] hoped to achieve:
Re-engagement with education (66.)
Promote the young person's emotional wellbeing (66.)
Ensure the family feel that we are supporting the young person (66.)

EPs perception of what they [EP and EWO] achieved:
Re-engagement with education (66. & 68.)
Promote the young person's emotional wellbeing (66. & 68.)
Ensure the family feel that we are supporting the young person (66. & 68.)
Young person attended the PRU(68.)
Young person was re-integrated back into mainstream school for 1 year (68.)
Young person has now returned to the PRU (68.)
Young person achieved good academic attainment (74.)

EPs perception of the past outcomes:
EWOs very proactive (78.)
EWOs good at identifying issues (78.)
EWOs monitored attendance 80% and below now it is 85% and below (78.)
EWOs previously thought PRU places could only be accessed via the EP (80.)
EWOs good at gathering information (84.)

EPs perception of the prioritisation of outcomes in the future:
Peer supervision (88.)
Investigate how cases are prioritised EWOs and schools (88.)

4. Rules

Supportive factors:
Information sharing protocol to enable case discussion (102.)
CAF (102.)
Ethical guidelines (102.)
MAST structure (104.)
Direct access to other professionals (104.)
Individual professional identity (104.)
Clear role demarcation (104.)
EP skill set (112.)
EP reflective practitioner (112.)
EP consultation with research and evidence based practice (112.)
EP sharing knowledge (112.)

Constraining factors:
Time [EPs and EWOs] (106.)
Caseload [EPs and EWOs] (106. & 108.)
EWO admin tasks e.g. PNIFTED (106.)
EP priorities (108.)
Reduction in EWO staffing (108.)
Budget cuts (108.)

EP perception of the history regarding the factors that influenced the activity:
Previously Area teams (multi-agency history) (104. &118.)
Developing team relationships (118.)
Developing roles and responsibilities (118.)

EP perception of the potential factors that will influence future activity:
Increased EP time due to additional staff (120.)
EP develop the practise of EWOs (120.)
EP increasing knowledge base e.g. reading (120.)

5. Community

EPs perception of the other Individuals involved in the activity:
School (126.)
Consultant (126.)
PRU (126.0
Family (126.)

The EPs perception of the role of the individuals' involved:
School: Facilitate the educational process, collaborated with the PRU, share information with the EWO, attend meetings, review progress and facilitate solutions to any difficulties (132.)

Consultant: Shared information via letter regarding the young person's condition and review of their medical needs (128. & 130.)

EWO: monitor attendance on a weekly basis, regularly meet with the family, take the young person to school and work with the young person, school and EP (136.)

PRU: Nurturing environment, providing somebody that the young person could talk to, supporting the young person's education, liaising with school, EP and EWO and information sharing (140.)

Family: Sharing information, understanding that professionals were there to support, supporting the young person to attend school, liaising with school and the PRU and praising/rewarding the young person's achievements (138.)

Who the EP has worked with in the past on similar activities:
GEM Centre (142.)

CAMHS (142.)
Other MAST professionals (142.)
PAYPE (144.)
Youth Service (144.)
Connexions (144.)

EPs perception of who it would be useful to work with on future activities:
Social Care (144.)
Health (144.)

6. Division of Labour

EPs perception of how the roles and responsibilities were divided between the EP and EWO:
Good understanding of roles and responsibilities (150.)
EWO initially involved due to poor attendance (150.)
Consultation (150.)
Labour divided at the planning meeting (150.)

EPs perception of what the EP and EWO endeavoured to do:
EWO monitors attendance (150.)
EP assesses to child's needs and the appropriateness of the provision (150.)
EWO in school on a weekly basis (150.)
EWO took the young person to school (150.)
EWO statutory role regarding prosecution (150.)
EP co-ordinate the work (152.)
EP conducted therapeutic work with the young person (152.)
EP chairing the meetings (152.)
EP using a consultation approach (152.)
EWO monitored issues at school and home (152.)
EWO Identified difficulties (152.)
EWO shared information (152.)

EP perception of the history of how roles and responsibilities are divided:
EP training (154.)
Consultation approach (154.)
EP skills (154.)

EP perception of the future expectations from others about the role of an EP:
MAST has been established for a long time (156.)
Continued development e.g. training (156.)
EP as the consultant for other MAST professionals (156.)

7. Mediating tools or artifacts

EP perception of the tools or artifacts used:
Concrete
Beck Youth Inventory (158.)

Abstract
Shared understanding (158.)
EPs skills (158.)
Solution focused approach (158.)
Consultation (158.)
Shared terminology (160.)
CBT (160.)

EP perception of how they used the tools, why they used the tools and where they hoped to get to by using the tools:
Consultation: to investigate a shared understanding, to jointly look at the situation, joint problem solving, joint development of solutions and interventions, used as a review tool and used repeatedly (familiar format) (164.). Used to foster a collaborative approach, EP not the expert or problem holder and used for skill development in other professionals (166.)

BECK Youth Inventory: Used as a semi-structured interview, not fully administered, investigate the young person's anxiety, potential depression and self-concept, provided an insight into the young person's feelings and thoughts, assisted the CBT formulation, could be used as evidence for a CAMHS referral (168.)

CBT: Used to explore the young person's negative automatic thoughts, to develop the young person's positive thinking, to provide the young person with coping strategies, explore relaxation techniques with the young person, give the young person the opportunity to practice transferring skills (homework) and to reduce the young person's levels of anxiety (170.)

EPs perception of what tools might be useful for the future:
Resiliency Scales (174.)
Evidence based interventions and assessments (174.)
ARM (176.)
Other EP with more knowledge about non-attendance (176.)

Example coded transcript (EWO)

Step 2: Generating Initial Codes

EWOs: EWO1
Date codes identified: 11/08/2012

1. **Subject**

   EWOs view of their role:
   Encourage attendance
   Investigate the reason(s) for non-attendance
   Monitor attendance
   Direct work with children
   Direct work with families
   Liaise with school staff
   Attend meetings
   Supervision (Area EWOs)
   Compiling a database of non-attendance
   Referrals to other agencies

   EWOs qualifications:
   Qualified Social Worker (10.)
   CQSW (Certificate of Qualification in Social Work) one year postgraduate qualification (18.)
   Undergraduate degree in Public Administration (20.)

   EWOs experience:
   Practising EWO for 10 years (10.)

   EWOs training or continued professional development (CPD):
   In-service training
   Child-protection (and including domestic violence)
   Substance misuse
   Admin
   Equality
   Vulnerable groups (Gypsy Roma and travellers)
   Parenting (Triple P)

2. **Object**

   EWO perception of the focus of the activity when working collaboratively with the EP:
   Case
   Ongoing work (24.)
   Young person attending a PRU (24.)

Male (28. "Him")
Year 10 (30.)
Young person with recognised difficulties (24.)
Not attending PRU due to dislike for offered subject (32.)

Activity
Home visit (24.)
EWO and EP tried to initiate contact with Mother (24.)
Setup meetings in the PRU (24.)
Setup meeting in the MAST (24.)
Joint [EWO and EP] attendance at meetings (24.)
Joint [EWO, EP and Mom] action planning (24.)
Joint [EWO and EP] review of progress and accordingly amending actions (24.)
Case discussion with PRU staff and EP (26.)
EP mediating different perceptions between professionals and parent (26.)
Focus was to engage the young person with education (28.)
Build up to fulltime engagement (28.)
Establish want the young person wanted (28.)
Investigate how we could deliver what the young person wants (28.)

EWOs perception of the focus of past activity:
Always tried to work collaboratively with all involved (34.)
Previously limited awareness of the potential for PRUs and schools to make adjustments (34.)
Previously not as aware that, particularly with EP support schools and PRUs will make adjustments (34.)

EWOs perception of the focus the future activity:
Ongoing development and awareness (36.)
Young people are all different and every case is individual (36.)
Focus will stay the same: address issues and work with others to address the issues (36.)
Potential development to learn different methods of addressing the issues and working with others to address the issues (36.)
Engage with the EP earlier rather than later (36.)

3. Outcome

EWOs perception of what they [EP and EWO] hoped to achieve:
Young person attending the PRU (38.)
Young person accessing education (38.)

EWOs perception of what they [EP and EWO] achieved:
Devised a more acceptable programme for the young person at the PRU (40.)
Ensured systems are in place for the young person's return to the PRU (40.)

EWOs perception of the past outcomes:
Previously less acceptable to devise individual learning plans (44.)

Less professional awareness of the issues associated with non-attendance (46.)
Schools less willing to adjust and accommodate for young people (46.)

EWOs perception of the prioritisation of outcomes in the future:
Unknown area (50.)
Expectation that young people will stay in training until 18 years (50.)
Impact of extending the attendance age on schools (50.)
Impact of extending the attendance age on our service (50.)
Uncertain time, nobody really knows what is happening (50.)
Don't know if EWOs will be expected to prosecute for non-attendance up to 18 years (50.)

4. Rules

Supportive factors:
MAST systems (52.)-   Individual teams (52.)
                         -    Based in the local area (52.)
Strong management structure for EWOs (54.)
Good and strong communication in the MAST team (54.)
Regular face to face contact with other professionals (54.)
Supportive and encouraging MAST Manager (54.)
Supportive team (54.)
Individuals in the team get on (54.)

Constraining factors:
MAST systems (52.)-   Isolating (52.)
                         -    Limited ability to share with other colleagues from other teams (52.)
Slow process (56.)
High workloads (56.)
Only EPs can make referrals for PRU places (128.)
Communication between agencies that aren't co-located continues to be an issue (56.)
Difficulty contacting families and tacking their whereabouts (56.)
Target led (Education generally) (56.)
Schools less willing to accommodate pupils with difficulties due to targets (58.)
Schools are reluctant to take pupils that are not going to achieve because of targets (58.)

EWO perception of the history regarding the factors that influenced the activity:
Government rules, expectations and targets (62.)
Lack of value for work unless it results in the required outcome (62.)
Outcome focus of 85% plus attendance irrespective of individual needs (62.)
Now increased cases of emotionally based school-refusal (62.)??
Previously less immigration and therefore fewer issues with differing cultural expectations about school attendance (62.)??

EWO perception of the potential factors that will influence future activity:
Increased demands on EPs due to increase in cases of emotionally based school refusal (62.)
Increased immigration and issues with differing cultural expectations about school attendance (62.)
Increase demand for resources and money e.g. translators (62.)
Increased need for EPs and EWOs to work together (62.)

5. Community

EWOs perception of the other Individuals involved in the activity:
EWO (69.)
EP (69.)
PRU staff (64.)
GEM Centre (NHS) (64.)
Clinical Psychologist (66.)
Mother and young person's Sister (70.)

The EWOs perception of the role of the individuals' involved:
PRU:
Engage the young person in education (74.)
Offer additional support (74.)
Clinical Psychologist:
See the young person regularly (76.)
Advise others on the young person's needs (76.)
EP:
Assessment (78.)
Advising (78.)
EWO:
Encourage the young person to access education (80.)
Take legal action if it is required (80.)

Who the EWO has worked with in the past on similar activities:
SIPs (84.)
EPs (84.)
Different agencies (84.)
Social Care (84.)
Horizon- substance misuse (84.)
Haven- domestic violence (84.)
School Nurses (86.)

EWOs perception of who it would be useful to work with on future activities:
The involvement of Health Services (86.)
Difficult to get access to Health professionals (86.)

6. Division of Labour

EWOs perception of how the roles and responsibilities were divided between the EP and EWO:
Joint [EP and EWO] discussion of what was needed (88.)
Ongoing negotiation regarding the division of labour in response to needs (88.)
Divided based on whoever could do what was needed (88.)
Both EWO and EP made phone calls (88.)
Shared (88.)
EP ultimately made the decisions, but all agreed (88.)
Positive use of combined efforts (94.)

EWOs perception of what the EP and EWO endeavoured to do:
EP led meetings (88.)
EP ultimately made the decisions (88.)
EP had more information regarding the young person's history and concerns from the PRU (94.)
EP involved over a longer period of time (94.)
EWO legal knowledge of implications for PRU regarding registering the young person's holiday (94. & 96.)
Joint [EP and EWO] access education (90.)
Joint [EP and EWO] positive outcome (90.)
Joint [EP and EWO] encourage parents to acknowledge the need for the young person to attend an educational setting (90.)
Joint [EP and EWO] provide an acceptable plan of support (90.)

EWO perception of the history of how roles and responsibilities are divided:
Knowledge of time constraints (100.)
Respecting each other's professional knowledge (100.)
Respecting each other's qualities (100.)
Communication (100.)
Trust (100.)

EWO perception of the future expectations from others about the role of an EWO:
Major changes (104.)
Separation of the legal aspect and the welfare aspect of the role (104.)
Increased involvement with Social Care (104.)
Statutory obligation regarding legal aspect of the role but the way that is delivered may change (104.)
Uncertainty regarding the potential future changes (104.)

7. Mediating tools or artifacts

EWO perception of the tools or artifacts used:
Concrete
Legal guidelines (108.)

Abstract
Shared understanding about different terms (106.)
EPs knowledge (108.)
EWOs own knowledge (108.)
PRUs understanding of the situation (108.)

EWO perception of how they used the tools, why they used the tools and where they hoped to get to by using the tools:
Leal guidelines: *(identified as the main tool)*
How?
Provide information regarding the consequences of non-attendance (110.)
Advise on ways to promote attendance (110.)
Provide the procedures that need to be followed (110.)
Why?
Legal requirement (112.)
Underlines all that the EWO does (112)
Where the EWO hoped to get to by using it?
Young people to access their education (114.)
Improve access to education (114.)
Improving families and parents understating of the necessity of education (114.)

EWOs perception of the history of why the tools were used in the way(s) described:
Involvement of other agencies (120.)
Information already gathered via a CAF (120.)
Relationships between the family and other agencies (120.)
Knowledge of the family as beneficial for building a relationship (120.)
Knowledge of the family resulting in improved outcomes (120.)
Workload constraints (120.)

EWOs perception of what tools might be useful for the future:
Indication of when to involve the EP in a case: thresholds? (122.)
Knowledge of what an EP can offer (122.)
Training for schools regarding causes and how to deal with non-attendance (122.)
Access to resources and other agencies (124.)
Time to think and reflect on our role (124.)

Example theme table with illustrative quotes (EP and EWO)

Theme Tables: Subject

EPs view of their subject position	EWOs view of their subject position
Role:	**Role:**
1. Problem solving **Information gathering:** *... look at why they're not making progress and kind of come up with hypotheses why they are not progressing (EP2)* *I would say specifically it's looking at the causes of non-attendance (EP3)* *I suppose in the case there was direct working, joint working with Mom where we would have the CAF meetings (EP4)* *Finding out actually why they are not attending (EP5)* **Hypotheses:** *... look at why they're not making progress and kind of come up with hypotheses why they are not progressing (EP2)* *...factors that might be effecting the school non-attendance and actually sort of formulating that into some kind of hypothesis (EP4)* *...we've got hypotheses then working with the family with the young person to try and find some solutions(EP5)* **Formulation:** *...formulating that into some kind of hypothesis that's erm would help to guide the, support the intervention that would*	**1. Uphold the law** *An EWO is to ensure the Education Act of 1996 is upheld, that means that the law says that every child should be educated to his or her age ability and aptitude (EWO2)* *If it is in the environment at home because that parent has decided to home educate, the law states that that is perfectly legal and if the parent chooses to do that then we need to make sure that that child is still being educated to an acceptable level (EWO2)* *So we are there to make sure that a child attends school, we are there to make sure that if a child doesn't attend school the correct procedures are followed in relation to prosecutions, exclusions, personal learning plans or any other thing that may not give a child 100% attendance at school (EWO2)* *Also means that we need to check in school that the school are following the regulations in registering the children correctly. So, for instance, we need to make sure that: if a child is in school today, the register needs to say that the child is in school today; if that child is at an alternative provision then it needs to say that its' in an alternative provision; and so we do what we call register checks (EWO2)* *We have to make a determined decision as to whether those reasons that that*

be needed (EP4)

...work with the with the people around them [child] largely to put in solutions so that they can make that progress (EP2)

...try and find ways to re-engage them in education or looking to other, so that might be within the mainstream school or there might be other provisions that can re-engage them (EP2)

...looking at removing barriers to learning, whether those are social and emotional barriers (EP3)

working with the family with the young person to try and find some solutions and try and build just a tiny little bit of engagement back in the first instance (EP5)

2. Support children and young people aged 0-19 years

...working with pupils that range from 0-19 [years] (EP1)

I work with children and young people from kind of 0-18 [years] (EP2)

I work with children across the 0 to 19 age range erm looking at removing barriers to learning (EP3)

casework and assessment of the learning and behaviour needs of young people from the ages of 3 to 19 [years] (EP4)

Support children and young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties:

...working with pupils that range from 0-19 [years] and we can deal with a range of complex issues (EP1)

parent is giving that child not attending school are reasonable or not (EWO2)

We are not there to prosecute for prosecutions sake. We are there to make sure that we have identified a problem that can be rectified to give that child a 100% attendance (EWO2)

I monitor school attendance in all of the schools, take legal action if there is persistent non-attendance (EWO3) Regarding the schools we advise on legislation, law ermm, correct practice, ensuring they are using the correct marks in the register which is all important cause the registration certificate is actually a legal document by law (EWO4)

with regard to schools we support them by doing regular register checks to make sure schools are using the right codes, getting the right attendance for children (EWO5)

the law states that we prosecute parents under the Education Act for non-school attendance (EWO5)

So dependent upon the severity of the attendance we would either send out fixed penalty notice which is a fine to parents, we have legal meetings, ermm so just rewind, the first process would be to call the parents into school about the issues, you would assume by that point that we would've already met with parents and tried to support them, if we feel we've got nowhere then we would call a legal meeting. Ermm to state, right, this is where we are, again in a supportive role we need this attendance to improve. From that meeting then we would closely monitor, with school, that child's attendance, if it continued to deteriorate or didn't improve yes we would either send a fixed penalty notice out, which is a fine through the door to

I work with children and young people ...if there are difficulties at school, if a child is not making progress for any reason in terms of their learning or their behaviour erm or their emotional and social wellbeing (EP2)

...removing barriers to learning, whether those are social and emotional barriers erm supporting cognitive development and erm promoting positive mental health (EP3)

...casework and assessment of the learning and behaviour needs of young people (EP4)

I am the link EP for the [PRU name] and [BESD PRU Name] at the moment (EP5)

3. Support educational settings
Schools:

...working in MAST [number] erm we have 17 schools (EP1)

I work with children and young people ... I am involved if there are difficulties at school (EP2)

I work with children, families and schools to work towards solutions for that young person (EP2)

working in consultation with Teachers to help them promote positive outcome for children and young people (EP3)

Children's Centres:

...we have 17 schools in the MAST and 2 children's centres (EP1)

I'm a Senior EP erm responsibility for erm part management of the Service, Early Years work within the Child Development Centre (EP5)

parents or if it was, or they had previously been penalty notice before then we could prosecute. Ermmm which would be straight to court ermm or if the attendance was that bad or if we had no engagement from parents we would go straight to court anyway. Ermm but that's our legal duty to do the prosecution side (EWO5)

2. Collaborate with other professionals

We discuss with school staff reasons for absence erm and we will discuss with them as well ways of addressing that, those absences (EWO1)

We will attend meeting CIN [Child in Need], CAF[Common Assessment Framework], CP [Child Protection] where attendance is a factor... Erm attending meeting with the YOT [Youth Offending Team], with LAC [Looked After Children] (EWO1)

Social care referrals we get drawn into there is all sorts it is expanding... (EWO1)

We run truanting patrols with the police, I am personally attached to the Youth Offending Team... to work with all the other agencies within [Multi-Agency Support Team] MAST: and parenting programmes; [School Inclusion Partners] SIPs or [Behaviour and Mental Health Support workers] BaMHs workers as they are now known; GEM Centre because obviously one of the main reasons why a child may not be attending school may be because of medical or psychological reasons; we constantly talk to [General Practitioners] GPs; School Nurses; or anybody who may have an input whether a child is able to access education as that child should (EWO2)

I also lead on some of the CAF's

PRUs:

I am the link EP for the [PRU name] and [BESD PRU Name] at the moment (EP5)

4. Assessment

...we can deal with a range of complex issues. Erm there might be PMLD [profound and multiple learning difficulties] might be school based refusal, might be learning and doing lots of assessments (EP1)

...it is very assessment based... the CAF meetings also review meeting erm of children who have Statements erm and a lot of the work is Statutory Assessment, I think I probably do... er when I was working full time I was about I probably did 25-30 Statutory advices a year (EP4)

5. Intervention

...look at making sure the intervention is appropriate (EP1)

...to look at ways we can put intervention into place to move to move the case forward (EP3)

...intervention that continues over a period of time. And sometimes I've done that erm run an intervention (EP4)

...support the intervention that would be needed (EP4)

6. Advocacy
Children and young people:

advocating for the youngsters (EP5)

Families:

I work with children, families and schools to work towards solutions for that young

(EWO3)

To support schools ermm children families and young people with any issues relating to attendance (EWO4)

supporting school for example we can give talks, workshops assemblies (EWO4)

to staff so that they have a greater understanding of it because what I have found is often staff in school, teachers and support staff aren't really aware of our role and what we do, so just about increasing understanding of fellow professionals working with children (EWO4)

we pick up safeguarding issues as well, where we are the first professional to note them and pass them on to Social Care (EWO4)

My practice has always been multi-agency ...we practised multi-agency work ... supporting other professionals (EWO4)`

... my role is as an EWO is predominately focused on school attendance ermm to support schools... (EWO5)

...signposting to other agencies ermm, internal referrals to a MAST professional or supporting the family in whatever needs possible to get that child into school (EWO5)

also links within different panels I have to sit on ermm, the ermm Youth Offending Panel to look at vulnerable children, Child Missing Education Panel, ermm the Early Intervention Vulnerable Families Panel (EWO5)

3. Direct work
Children and young people:

person (EP2)

advocating for the youngsters and the parents (EP5)

7. Application of psychology

...evidenced based practice (laughs) so yes psychological theories and everything and evidence based practice, I think that's what separates our role but I think sometimes we don't mention psychology, well I don't and whereas a lot of what we talk about is based on theories and evidence (EP2)

... looking in more detail from a psychological perspective at what some of the barriers are to the child erm attending school (EP3)

8. Promote educational engagement

...my role is to try and find ways to re-engage them in education (EP2)

...re-engage them in education or looking to other, so that might be within the mainstream school or there might be other provisions that can re-engage them as well (EP2)

...gather information a wider sort of view on all the different precipitating factors that might be effecting the school non-attendance and actually sort of formulating that into some kind of hypothesis that's erm would help to guide the, support the intervention that would be needed (EP4)

9. Consultation

...working with pupils that range from 0-19 [years] and we can deal with a range of complex issues. Erm there might be PMLD [profound and multiple learning

We discuss with school staff reasons for absence erm and we will discuss with them as well ways of addressing that, those absences and ultimately we will take them [child or young person] on ourselves and deal with those families. (EWO1)

We will also make contact with children erm where we know that are not registered at a school (EWO1)

We run truanting patrols with the police (EWO2)

I deal with those children who have got themselves into trouble (EWO2)

…supporting other professionals and children and families (EWO4)

Families:

We will attend meeting CIN [Child in Need], CAF[Common Assessment Framework], CP [Child Protection] where attendance is a factor (EWO1)

I work with the families of the pupils and try and help them find strategies to get the children into school more regular. (EWO3)

With the children and families quite often poor attendance can be an indicator to other issues the family may be experiencing and quite often when a welfare officer knocks the door and speaks to the family it can highlight other needs which haven't been met ermm, circumstances the family are experiencing where they may need extra help (EWO4)

...support schools and children and young people and their families to get children into school to improve school

difficulties] might be school based refusal, might be learning and doing lots of assessments, training, consultation to other staff (EP1)

...working in consultation with Teachers to help them promote positive outcome for children and young people (EP3)

10. Supervision

...supervision with the staff (EP1)

I'm an Area EP meaning that I supervise erm any Assistant [EPs] or Trainees [EPs] (EP2)

attendance (EWO5)

...call the parents into school about the issues (EWO5)

...doing a piece of work or signposting to other agencies ermm, internal referrals to a MAST professional or supporting the family in whatever needs possible to get that child into school (EWO5)

4. Identify and assess need

...find out why they are not attending if they are not attending. So we monitor attendance erm within schools erm. We discuss with school staff reasons for absence erm and we will discuss with them as well ways of addressing that, those absences and ultimately we will take them on ourselves and deal with those families (EWO1)

If it is a percentage that is below 80% that child is considered a persistently absent child and the procedure of checking and putting into place the correct procedures to deal with non-attendance will take place (EWO2)

...you will find many different parts of what the EW service does (EWO2)

...often when a welfare officer knocks the door and speaks to the family it can highlight other needs which haven't been met (EWO4)

...circumstances the family are experiencing where they may need extra help (EWO4)

...so it's more of actually assessing the need of that family, why that child is not going to school (EWO5)

...why that child is not going to school and then working out ways of how to

	make it work, whether it be ermm, colleague or myself doing a piece of work or signposting to other agencies (EWO5) **5. Promote attendance** *As Education Welfare we are...our main interest is in encouraging children and young people to attend school* (EWO1) *…it is and EWOs job to ensure that that child attends and that any obstacles which prevent that child from attending erm is addressed/overcome and so we make sure that the child is attending 100% of the time* (EWO2) *my role is as an EWO is predominately focused on school attendance ermm to support schools and children and young people and their families to get children into school to improve school attendance* (EWO5) *It's more of actually assessing the need of that family, why that child is not going to school and then working out ways of how to make it work* (EWO5) *Ermm that's our key role as EWO's and obviously if a child isn't attending and we've put that supportive role* (EWO5) **6. Record/audit non-attendance** *So we monitor attendance erm within schools* (EWO1) *…compiling a data base for those pupils not in full time education PNIFTED* (EWO1) *I monitor school attendance in all of the schools* (EWO3) *closely monitor, with school, that child's attendance* (EWO5)

	7. **Supervise other EWOs**
	I'm an Area EWO I am responsible also for supervising EWOs within the team so, ensuring that they are carrying out their role also (EWO1)
	I've got a Community EWO I supervise who covers some of the schools (EWO3)
	As AEWO [Area Educational Welfare Officer] I am responsible for 2 members of staff, community EWOs ermm and part of that includes 3 weekly supervision which includes going through their cases with them, offering them advice and support with direction on cases (EWO5)
	8. **Preventative work**
	…take a pro-active role in preventing absences in the first place (EWO3)
	…we as EWO, as part of MAST are more preventative and we don't prosecute unless we have to do that because we feel that if we can be of a supportive role, it's key really, rather than fighting against families (EWO5)
Qualifications:	**Qualifications:**
1. **Undergraduate degree in psychology/social sciences**	1. **NVQ Level 4**
It was majoring in psychology, it was a social science degree (EP1)	*I then did 2-3 yrs working in the field then took the NVQ Level 4 in Education Welfare and Social Care (EW02)*
...undergraduate Psychology Degree and everything before that (EP2)	*I have got the NVQ level 4 the Learning Development Social Skills(EWO3)*
...degree in psychology (EP3)	*Since being in post I took an opportunity to become a qualified EWO when the authority offered us the chance for an NVQ level 4 LDSS which is learning development and supporting families, schools, children, young people etc.(EWO4)*
I've BEA in Psychology	
2. **Postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE)**	
I did a PGCE (EP1)	

PGCE (EP4) *PGCE (EP5)* **3. Masters in educational psychology** *...it was a Masters, one year (EP1)* *...then an MSc (EP4)* *...Masters (EP5)* **4. Doctorate in educational psychology** *I've got the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (EP2)* *...and did my thesis looking at peer mentoring and the effects that that had on social and emotional wellbeing and school attendance (EDP2)* *Doctorate in Educational Psychology (EP3)* **5. Therapeutic skills qualification** I did a basic skills counselling course (EP2) I've done a lot of CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy] training (EP5)	*I have my NVQ Level 4 EW qualification (EWO5)* **2. Undergraduate degree** *Public Administration (laughs) one of the weird and wonderful ones (EWO1)* *I attained a BA Hons combined studies honours degree, environmental science and womens studies (EWO4)* *I am currently doing my BA honours in working with Children and Families and Working with Young People at Birmingham, Newman University (EWO5)* **3. Social Work CQSW** *I did a one year CQSW (Certificate of Qualification in Social Work) at Birmingham University (EWO1)*
Experience: **1. Practising EP for 1 year +** *...qualified in erm 2005 (EP1)* *I've been in [LA name] 3 no 4 years now I started here as a trainee EP in my second year of training. Erm was a Trainee for 2 years then qualified (EP2)* *...have been a qualified EP for a year (EP3)*	**Experience:** **1. Practising EWO for 5 years +** *I've been an EWO 10 years er prior to that I am actually a qualified social worker (EWO1)* *I've been an EWO for 6 years (EWO3)* *I am an EWO been in post since September 2005 (EWO4)*

September 2005 (EP4)

I've done EP practice for 11 years (EP5)

2. Teacher

Teacher:

I taught for 15 years (EP1)

Yes! Secondary school Teacher and I taught Technology for many years and later Psychology A Level EP4)

I was a primary school Teacher

SENCo:

...and a SENCo [Special Educational Needs Coordinator] (EP5)

PRU Teacher:

And since qualifying I have worked erm with the [PRU name] from date of qualifying (EP5)

3. Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP)

...then was an assistant psychologist for a year(EP1)

...various placements as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (EP3)

I was here as an Assistant [EP] (EP4)

I qualified 9 years ago and was an Assistant EP for the year before I qualified

4. Other role in educational setting
Learning Support Assistant (LSA):

I was an er Learning Support Assistant (EP2)

Mentor for children with disabilities:

Five years ermm my role is as an EWO (EWO5)

2. Prior role in education

Attendance:

I was an EWO and then before that I was a Truancy Patrol Officer and I was also a School Attendance Officer so I have worked directly in schools as well (EWO3)

The Attendance Officer was in school, the Truancy Patrol Officer was outside with the Police. So I think I have got an in-depth experience into why children truant or pupil absences from working in a school and being outside on the other side, speaking to the pupils and finding out why they are truanting (EWO3)

Administration:

I worked here in education as an administrator (EWO2)

3. Prior role supporting a similar client group

Before I came into post I had 5 years in the voluntary sector working with a similar client group (EWO4)

I was a mentor for erm children and young people with disabilities	
Continued Professional Development:	**Continued Professional Development:**

1. Therapeutic training and experience *We have done lots of CBT (EP1)* *I've done a CBT course (EP2)* *...oh I'm going to be running the Tambis course, well co-running (EP2)* *I've done a lot of CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy] training and work (EP5)* *...always got at least 2 CBT cases ongoing (EP5)*	**1. Child protection** ***...** domestic violence (EWO1)* *I have done child protection training, domestic violence training (EWO3)* *...done the Guns and Gangs(EWO3)* *training courses relevant to the client group we support for example ermm child protection, safeguarding (EWO4)* *...we have done a number of other courses looking at ... substance, alcohol misuse, domestic violence training (EWO5)*
2. Delivery of training on non-attendance *I co-delivered some training with an EP looking at emotionally based school refusal (EP3)* *I also had training on the Doctorate looking at school refusal and assessment techniques that we could use to look at barriers children were facing with with attendance (EP1)* *...well I first got interested in the the non-attendance when I went to the AEP [Association of Educational Psychologists] ...That's when I went to a workshop which kind of inspired my interested in the subject ...I've led an interest group on emotionally based non-attendance (EP4)*	**2. Equality** *...equality, gypsy Roma, traveller (EWO1) other* *...training courses for example gender matters (EWO4)* **3. Administration** *...admin for the ONE system (EWO1)* *I have done the Management of Attendance (EWO3)* *CAF training as well that was in 2007 (EWO4)* **4. Legal training** *CAF training as well that was in 2007, legal profession training (EWO4)* *... legalities of school attendance (EWO5)*
3. Promotion of positive mental health *I went to a conference... a few weeks ago looking at anxiety disorders (EP3)*	**5. Parenting**

I think some of the the work erm on sort of emotional health erm and mental health difficulties erm has probably sort of supported it rather than being direct(EP4)

I've done a lot of professional development around self-harm, erm abuse, erm school phobia and school refusal, erm bullying type issues, self-esteem (EP5)

4. Emotionally based school refusal working group

I've led an interest group on emotionally based non-attendance (EP4)

I've been in the working group around emotionally based school refusal and worked around developing some of the tools and erm piloting the tools for that (EP5)

5. Application of psychology to non-attendance

...you can apply the theory and the principles to your learning on these CPD events to your hypotheses and assessment of school-refusal cases (EP3)

6. Large variety

...there's been lots of things. I mean we have the EP development day and then there has been lots of things at the [area] practice there has been lots of in house training... strategies that we are looking at that I am part of as well so tried to tried to keep up as much as possible with current practice (EP1)

Triple P programme parenting positive parenting programme it is (EWO1)

I've done the Triple P parenting programme (EWO5)

6. Multi-agency

...through the development of MASTs and BESTs that hasn't happened, we have all come together. So we are all working in an environment each day together, discussing cases together, having meetings on a weekly basis together so we are all aware of the children we are working with and if we have anything to say about that, we have any information that we believe my help each professional around the time, that can be raised or brought up. So it is about bringing all those professionals that are working with an individual child or family (EWO2)
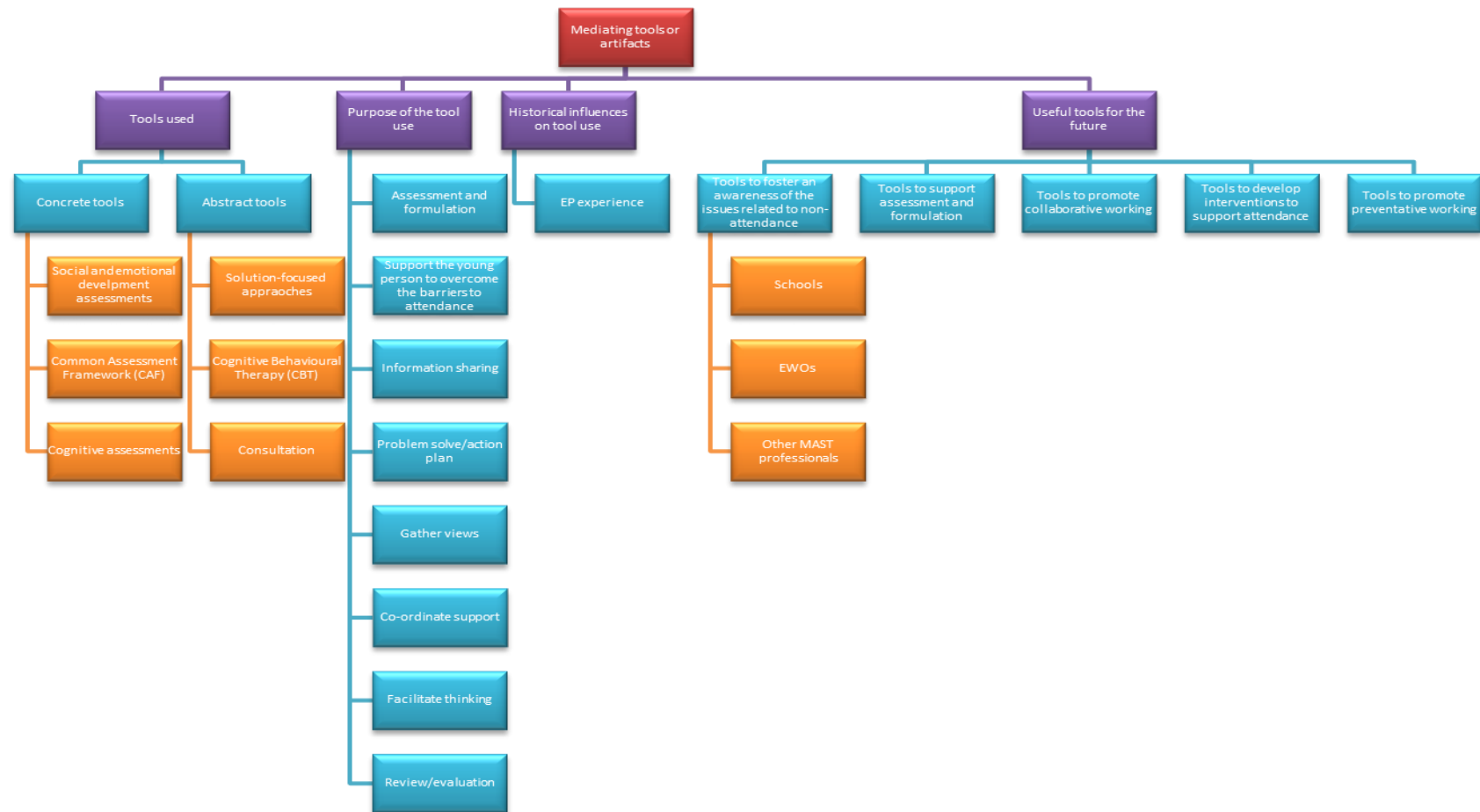
7. Large variety

I've done all the training (EWO3)

...there have been a lot of courses, often quite a lot since I have been here (EWO3)

...I've done... like lots (EWO5)
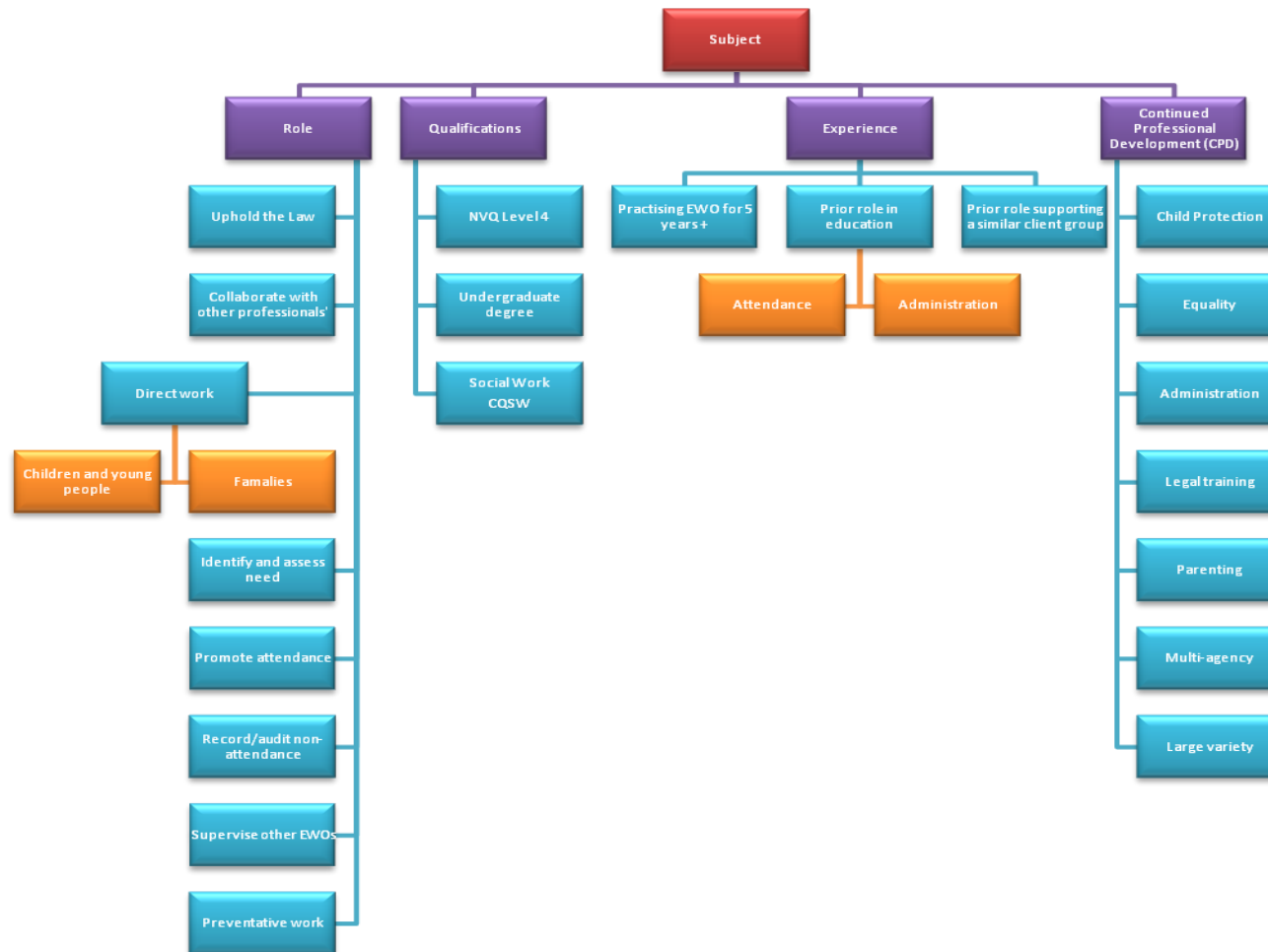
Appendix Fifteen

Example thematic map (EP)

Initial thematic map for the EP overarching mediating tools or artifacts theme

Example thematic map (EWO)

Initial thematic map for the EWO overarching subject theme

Contradictions with illustrative quotes (EP)

EP1 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Subject v Outcome	EP training compared to EWO training v gathering information and views	S	*"So it it's our [EP] training it's the way we actually elicit views from parents or from other professionals isn't it? and from other agencies" v "the EWO said they had not told me half of that information" (EP1 86.)*
Rules v Rules	Time constraints v caseload	P	*"Time, time is the major thing really! Erm and that's not just my time that's their [EWO] time as well" v "we've now got 2 EWOs for 17 schools. That is that is the major constraint" (EP1 106.)*
Rules v Rules	EP casework priorities v need for involvement with non-attendance cases	P	*"Caseloads again and that's probably on my side as well. The volume that the amount the volume of cases that you have errrm and the priorities that we as EPs have… if you've got a statutory or a erm school pre-permanent exclusion meeting or something like that that then has to take then has to take priority on top of" v "the priorities that we as EPs have to have, sometimes that can impact on erm trying to get in there as quickly as possible" (EP1 108.)*

EP2 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Rules v Rules	Professional autonomy v time restrictions, workload and Service priorities	P	*"I think [LA name] has quite a free way of working, like you can kind of choose what you're interested in and then take that forward" v "while the aims and the kind of overarching principles are the same across everyone working within Children and Family Service and Social Inclusion" (EP2 40.)*
Rules v Rules	Need for a swift assessment of children and young people that are new into the LA area v The need to observe the young person in an educational setting and gather meaningful information	P	*"I think with new with new into City kids erm I always find that you have to make quite a quick judgement on them" v "I think that can sometimes like while you make hypotheses about their behaviour you obviously haven't seen them in setting you haven't you can't have a full discussion with their previous [setting]…So I think my hypotheses were constrained at the start and even later on because I still hadn't seen her in a mainstream setting" (EP2 46.)*
Community v Subject Community v Rules	Hostility between MAST and Social Care v Understanding of roles (Subject) and thresholds for involvement (Rules)	S	*"I think there's going to be Social Workers based in the MAST centres erm I think that's a good thing because I think sometimes there is some hostility between [Social Care and MAST]" v "I think sometimes there is some hostility between like, Oh they're [Social Care] not gonna take this, Oh there [Social Care] passing it back to us [MAST] for a CAF so there's kind of a, whether there's a lack of*

			understanding of thresholds and things or yep and then Social Care might have a lack of understanding of what MAST have done so they might think that we're just passing them and we haven't done a lot" (EP2 128.)
Rules v Object	CAMHS set procedure (face to face) regarding the initial meeting and assessment of a young person v EPs advice regarding the young person's needs	S	*"I referred well they sent the face to face" v "I did phone to try and get them [CAMHS] to work in a more solution focused way with her but...they still did that face to face" (EP2 122.)*
Object v Object Outcome v Outcome	Other professionals conceptualisation of the problem and desired outcome v EPs conceptualisation of the problem and desired outcome	P	*"I suppose this is one thing that that can sometimes be challenging because I think other professionals within the MAST can sometimes ask for your involvement and have already decided what the outcome of that involvement has been" v "if they if a young person comes into City and if they [EWOs] feel that they should go to the [PRU name] or something I've kind of said, the [PRU name] doesn't get mentioned (laughs) until...because that's the outcome of an[EP] assessment rather than just doing an assessment to say that it's the [PRU name] is the outcome" (EP2 130.)*

EP3 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Subject v Subject	EWOs punitive role v EWOs	P	*"When I've worked in other services where*

	supportive welfare role		*there hasn't been multi-agency working I have found it to be a lot more punitive erm and a lot more kind of to the rules of let's go down the prosecution route" v "ok what can we actually do to support this child and this family holistically? And I think that the close working with EPs facilitates that line of thinking because you are constantly having that consultation about a case" (EP3 42.)*
Object v Object	EP conceptualisation of the problem and desire for systemic solutions and development v Schools conceptualisation of the problem and desire for 'within child' solutions	P	*"Just going back to school, I think they took a very much within child approach (70.)…school erm on that specific case were quite inflexible. I think one of our key roles as working together was how we would then approach that with the school in terms of trying to again facilitate their thinking around the fact that this isn't just a problem child whose attendance needs to increase but a child that we actually need to work together to support (48.)" v "we [MAST professionals] were taking a systemic approach (70.)" (EP3 48. & 70.)*

EP4 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Subject v Object	EWO punitive role v Children and families in need of support	S	*"I think they need to take a more holistic view…rather than erm a sort of legal punitive role" v "I think they need to take a more holistic view erm and and look at their role as one of support" (EP4 60.)*

Community v Community	Small number of school staff aware of the issues surrounding non-attendance and supportive v need for whole school awareness and support	P	*"school only a few people within the school probably have become more aware of the issues and how to support" v "And I think one of the outcomes that you'd like to see is a more sort of sympathetic understanding approach from the school system which you don't always get" (EP4 58.)*
Rules v Rules	EPs service agenda to promote the professional development of others in the MAST v Lack of formal opportunity and time to support others	P	*". I know one of things that [Head of Service name] really wants of within the Authority is for the EPs to share good practice in casework in terms of collecting information and sort of formulating it into some kind of hypothesis and actually taking some kind of broader view of things…" v "…I think we've probably need formal opportunities to be able to do that particularly with EWOs. I mean you you do it a little bit informally when you meet with them and you discuss issues and emm also when we write reports and we give them copies but that's more of an emm osmotic process it's not a formal process" (EP4 72.)*
Rule v Object	Schools approach to completing registers v the need for early identification of non-attendance	S	*"I think some schools are with the way that they are filling in their registers isn't always helpful in picking out when there maybe issues er particularly higher up school when young people are put on to, you know? Sort of modified timetables or alternative provision and thinks. And I think they [schools] tend to blank it erm the, their attendance figures…" v "…which I think can mask some of the issues. So I think that's can be detrimental" (EP4 80.)*

EP5 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Subject v Subject	EP rejection of the punitive role of an EWO v EWOs punitive role	P	*"But I think and I think this is EPs generally, but specifically me I don't really advocate going down the court route or the prosecution route (18.)" v "oh we'll try this we've met the family a few times they haven't engaged so we're gonna prosecute them now (40.)" (EP5 18. & 40.)*
Subject v Subject	EPs awareness and understanding of need v other professionals' understanding of need	P	*"he didn't seem to have any real reason not to go, it was actually just down to confidence and self-esteem but it was that extreme that he thought about ending his life" v "So, you know I think sometimes people underestimate the impact of what these kids going through and what they may do to avoid going to school" (EP5 18.)*
Object v Rules	The complex needs of young people who attend PRUs and their families v time constraints and targets	S	*"I think we've got to be careful how we work and not be too hasty to try and limit things. We're so now into an erm sort of target driven world aren't we?..." v "And with the kids in the PRUs that that doesn't always fit, well it it rarely fits because they need time and they need a lot more time to build that rapport and that relationship and as you can see with his case, it's been years of getting to know this family" (EP5 40.)*
Object v Rules	Meaningful casework with positive outcomes v time	S	*"I think EPs are the ones that are gonna have to do this the most is to stand by your guns in*

	constraints and targets		*terms of what you're doing and justify what you're doing and I always say to the EPs that I've supervised, as long as you can justify what you're doing and it works well for that family and it makes things better then you stick by it" v ". I think they get pushed into more time limited, targeted piece of work that aren't necessarily useful and that's my concern sometimes with the court actions, oh we'll try this we've met the family a few times they haven't engaged so we're gonna prosecute them now, because actually you've just touched the tip of the iceberg with those meetings" (EP5 40.)*
Object v Rules	The needs of young people attending PRUs v Uniform access and entitlement to CAMHS provision for all young people, with no additional targeted support for young people with more complex needs	S	*"they [Children and young people attending PRUs] have significantly more mental health needs" v "…because they don't get enough CAMHS support! That's been one of the issues for the PRU kids is that they don't seem to have any more entitlement than any other kid in the City" (ep5 82.)*
Rule v Rule	EWOs understanding of the EP role and approach v EPs limited time to share and discuss their thinking and approach	P	*"I think sometimes people have the frustration that EPs don't necessarily do things quickly enough and I think there may be a view point that other people do things and we do the thinking but then you'll have a discussion with somebody and find a way forward and you might use a particular model or theoretical standpoint and when you talk through that process with them then they see the value of it…" v "…the danger is not having the time to*

			talk about the processes and I think then that, because we don't always have that time to sit down and have those discussions and share our reflections with other people sometimes that doesn't help us because we look a bit precious" (EP5 90.)

Contradictions within the EP activity system

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Outcomes v Outcomes	EP outcomes relate to 'within child' development v EP acknowledgement for the necessity of systemic development for effective prevention	P	*"[Outcomes]…to develop their, I dunno sort of resilience to be able to deal with situations that don't quite go their way. Also to develop their social interactions erm and help them have a feeling of belonging within the school environment and I suppose we hope that that would sort of have ramifications in terms of erm helping them deal with some of the issues that that they'd find themselves in at home really. And in this case because there was a Statement for a specific learning difficulty, also hope that their em basic skills would develop" v "I think we we aren't able to do a lot of preventative work because we we're very reactive in terms of casework and I think that can be frustrating because it would be quite nice to do a lot more training with schools to alert them to things so that they can actually be proactive before it gets to the stage where they are having to be reactive" (EP4 68.) & ". I*

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			think one of our key roles as working together was how we would then approach that with the school in terms of trying to again facilitate their thinking around the fact that this isn't just a problem child whose attendance needs to increase but a child that we actually need to work together to support" (EP3 48.)
Subject v Rules	Broadening role of an EP v time constraints	S	*"being an EP because we're supposed to do so many things (EP5 42.)" & "EPs to share good practice in casework in terms of collecting information and sort of formulating it into some kind of hypothesis and actually taking some kind of broader view of things (EP4 72.)" v "but there's a danger with that that we're too busy and it gets stressful and er you may not do everything on time and you may not do everything as well as you could have done (EP5.42)"*

Contradictions with illustrative quotes (EWO)

EWO1 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Subject v Rules	Desire for training v time	S	*"there have been some courses that have been generally available that are available to all in the LA" v "But It is having the... being encouraged to take it up and the opportunity. Workloads tend to impact I think. So training is there, but you sometimes feel you go on the training you've then go to catch up with everything as well" (EWO1 21.)*
Object v Rules	EWO case prioritisation v EP case prioritisation	S	*"it is prioritising, this [case] might be important for us [EWO]" v "but is it [case] important for the others [EP and other professionals] that are involved?" (EWO1 26.)* *(36.)*
Object v Rules	EWO case prioritisation v EP time for casework	S	*"it is prioritising, this [case] might be important for us [EWO]" v "EPs have got so many referrals because everything around that sort of issue has to be going through them so it leads to big delays and it can be months before anything is done...purely due to workloads" (EWO1 26. and 36.)* *(56.) and (122.)*

Outcome v Rules Rules v Outcomes	EWOs progress with cases v The necessity for EP involvement The necessity for EP involvement to gain a PRU place v outcomes for the child	S	*"I'm more aware now of the fact that erm changes can be made within the PRUs and schools particularly with the EP support" v "we are an EP led service, everything has to come through the EP really"(EWO1 34.)*
Object v Rules	Needs of the child v support that can be offered	S	*"Young person [people] are individual every case is different" v "it's been able to address the needs within the systems that we have and what can be offered"* *(EWO1 36.)*
Object v Rules	Adolescent mental health v limited resources to support adolescent mental health	S	*"Adolescent mental health is such a big issue" v "where are the resources to deal with that [Adolescent mental health]?"(EWO1 36.)* *"…if the resources are not there, how are we meant to offer anything to support them?" (EWO1 58.)* *"…its availability of resources I suppose and that is time and access to other er er methods I suppose that are offered by outside agencies but we can't access because they are too expensive" (EWO1 124.)*
Subject v Outcome	Individual differences in EWO practice v outcome	S	"It all does depend on individuals: we [EWOs] all are very different aren't we? we approach things in a very different way" (EWO1 46.)
Division of labour v Rules	EWO future need to engage the EP earlier v EPs time constraints	S	*"it's more important to er engage with the EP earlier rather than erm later" v "And of course those...it is a slow system that is one of the*

| | | | *biggest issues really, that it is a slow system, EPs have got so many referrals because everything around that sort of issue has to be going through them so it leads to big delays and it can be months before anything is done...purely due to workloads" (EWO1 26. and 36.)* |

EWO2 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Subject v Rules/Tools	Desire to extend co-location to co-working v lack of opportunity/formal structure for co-working	S	*"What has happened now of course is through the development of MASTs and BESTs that hasn't happened, we have all come together. So we are all working in an environment each day together " v "I am not sure even if there is a specific protocol for the EWOs working with EPs and if there is, I'm not aware of it" (EWO2 12.)*
Community v Rules	EWO desire for EP involvement v School only requesting EP involvement in practice	S	*"On one of the areas where we would have to look at whether it is responsible are there any reason that an EP can identify as to why a child or young person can't attend that school" v "An EP doesn't become involved unless the school feels that there is a need for an EP involvement" (EWO2 14.)*
Rules v Rules	EWO/EP work and caseload v Resources, number of EWOs and EPs	P	*"work load is the biggest constraint. We all have an awful lot of work to do" v "there is maybe only one/two EPs, one/two EWOs in an area that has maybe two secondary schools*

			and eight or ten primary schools, which has thousands upon thousands of children" (EWO2 42.)
Community v Rules (Community: parents and schools)	Increased awareness of special educational needs and referrals v EP time and resources	S	*"Now, I know for a fact that the schools requests and parents requests for EP assessment has increased as people become more aware of things that might be affecting their child. Take ADHD as one of the examples…" v "there is maybe only one/two EPs… in an area that has maybe two secondary schools and eight or ten primary schools, which has thousands upon thousands of children" (EWO2 42.)*
Rules v Rules	Parents desire for swift EP involvement v Graduated response	P	*"But of course if a parent requests an EP assessment, I'm right in saying that it has to be done in a certain amount of time" v "That constrains that EP to have to do that work [work based on parental request]. And so that means that their ability to work with maybe me who has got another agenda isn't quite as good or isn't quite as, you know? In line with each other" (EWO2 42.)*
Rules v Rules	Parents desire for swift EP involvement v EP time constraints and workload	P	*"But of course if a parent requests an EP assessment, I'm right in saying that it has to be done in a certain amount of time" v "work load is the biggest constraint. We [EP and EWO] all have an awful lot of work to do" (EWO2 42.)*
Rules v Rules	Understanding of each other's role v reality of the	P	*"I'm trying to think of what might stop us from working together. It could possibly be, not*

	roles in practice		*understanding each other's work as much v "Maybe if we were more aware of the things that we did together or or individually and how that affected one another" (EWO2 44.)*
Object v Rules	Families need for continued support and involvement v EWOs time constraints and workload	S	*"I would say that we identify something [needs], see it and through CAF continue to monitor it to a certain extent" v ""work load is the biggest constraint. We [EP and EWO] all have an awful lot of work to do" (EWO2 62.)*
Object v Rule	Need for collaborative working v Health professionals charging to share information	S	*"If you consider what Every Child Matters says, and the five principles there. Education and health are the core of those...staying safe, playing safe, enjoying and achieving all those things which we talk about. The GP is at the heart of and health is really really important" v "I have also known cases where the Doctors have demanded fees of up to £45 to send a letter to confirm whether a child is good, bad or indifferent" (EWO2 62.)*
Rules v Rules	Need to collect post evaluation data v EWO time constraints and workload	P	*"…the richter scale is is that it is a tool where we would score on a scale from 1-10. We would ask a family or child, ten questions and in those ten questions that person would rate themselves...We carry out those goals and then after an amount of time a month/ 2 months we come back and ask the same questions again and see whether that answer has changed" v "it's about the time constraints of of having the the time to go into a school to*

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
			sit down with somebody or go to a family home and sit down with somebody and spend an hour/an hour and a half going through this process to evaluate" (EWO2 98.)
Object v Rules	Increased complexity of cases v Necessity for involvement with a large number of children and young people	S	*"Things [cases] seem to be taking a lot of time to work out and because of that time…There seems to be a lot more work for a lot less time to do it in" v "we are not seeing as many children that we would maybe have done before hand" (EWO2 98.)*

EWO3 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Object v Rules	Child's needs and their postcode v LA resources and funding	S	*"The place was officially allocated saying he was suitable for the [PRU name] for his emotional difficulties but the family lived in [other LA area]" v "the[PRU] place could not be funded because it was not a [LA name] child" (EWO3 48.)*
Object v Rules	Need to gather in-depth information regarding the complex problem and build relationships v EP time constraints and caseload	S	*"find out more in depth what was going on in his life and why he was like he was" v "I think the EP's we have in our team don't have time to get that much in depth because they have got so many cases" (EWO3 108.)*
Subject v Rules	EWO Statutory role negates the possibility of a waiting list v EWO caseload	S	*"well I can't have a queuing system because it's legal, so I have to take on the amount of cases there is and that's it" v "It's caseload for EWO's caseload for EP's ermm which are issues" (EWO3 116.)*

Object v Rules	Needs of the child or young person v EP time constraints and workload	S	*"I know this child is struggling and suffering in school" v "EP's don't take on as many cases because they haven't got time to take on the cases so if I'd got this case and our EP was full to capacity I actually be stuck" (EWO3 116.)*
Object v Rules	Needs of the child or young person v staffing	S	*"I know this child is struggling and suffering in school" v "I mean last September there was only four members left in our team because everybody had gone and we had to invite people to come in, and that's another thing if you don't have an EP in your area or you're waiting for a new EP to come or an AEP, you've only got one person covering the whole MAST you can't expect to take up all of their time" (EWO3 116.)*
Rules v Subject	Funding cuts v limited capacity to fulfil the welfare (non-statutory) aspect of the EWO role	S	*"We are lucky at the moment we have managed to keep all of our staff but with job cuts and the way things are, if they cut us any more we will end up only being able to do the legal work and I think it is important that we do the welfare side of our job"* *v "…with the mountains of paperwork we have to do these days I think people are trying to get rid of the welfare part of it, well not literally but in the name but we feel that we do less and less welfare and more of attendance and getting the kids into school and the legal stuff" (EWO3 164.)*
Subject v Subject	Statutory aspect of the role punishes parents v Statutory aspect of the role	P	*"The legal meetings were because, basically because I didn't I didn't have a lot of choice [Statutory role]" v "And it was then [following*

	encourages parents to share information and co-operate		*the legal meeting] Dad realised that I had to do this and this was serious, I think Dad was burying his head in the sand a little bit as well about what was going on" (EWO3 188.)*

EWO4 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Subject v Rules	Desire for training v opportunity	S	*"…that's paramount that we keep on top of that with legislation changing policies " v "Training isn't as good as it used to be ermm because the past 3 to 4 years several leaders in Educational Welfare have moved on which has left a gap for someone to deliver ermm relevant training, workshops etc., to our profession" (EWO4 14.)*
Subject v Subject	EWO Statutory punitive role v EP supportive role	P	*"Historical poor engagement from family, from Mom, from Mother with school, initially it was home visits etc., letters inviting parents in, parents just did not want to engage and course that is a huge barrier to supporting the child if the parent just doesn't want to engage. So of course we had to start legal proceedings. parents saw my role as a threat because she had been prosecuted before" v "parents were willing to work with the EP" (EWO4 24.)* *"she [parent] flared up, she switched. 'I'm not working with you [EWO]," (EWO4 68.)*

| Rules v Rules | EWO increasing caseloads v Increase in bureaucracy e.g. care plans and action plans | P | *"…losing officers, workload increases…" v "to bureaucratic restraints and constraints as well there is far more emphasis on us as officers to complete several forms per file which are totally unnecessary" (EWO4 116.)*

"More time and less work load, would give me the opportunity to be more intense on cases rather than just touching the surface. Some cases you think you could more and then it's just not possible, the capacity you've got as a professional, you can only do so much and this is where the bureaucracy takes over, just takes over and for me when I just came into post it was probably 60/40 – 60% client group, 40% bureaucracy. Now it's 70/30 – 70% paperwork and 30 % with the client group which is not productive at all" (EWO 4 136.) |
| Rules v Rules | EWO increasing caseload v Lengthy administration tasks e.g. PNIFTED | P | *"…losing officers, workload increases…" v "We are required to update the data base throughout the academic year for persistent absentees, which is very time consuming. Every half term, 2 to 3 days sitting in front of a computer updating this data base. Laborious indeed, however, the data which we collate and input can also be pulled off in a report off the same data base. We can spend 3 days updating and I can spend 2 minutes pulling off a report which tells me exactly the same information. It's very frustrating, very time consuming, and totally unnecessary" (EWO4 116.)* |

Tools v Object	Lack of shared knowledge, understanding and terminology with parents v the need to engage parents and build supportive relationships	S	*"I think there needs to be more of a shared language and a shared understanding between professionals and client group" v "I think it [language] needs to be tweaked a bit, to make it more user friendly for the client group and for them to understand this is a good process to help you, let us help you" (EWO4 116.)*
Subject v Subject	EWO Statutory role to prosecute parents v EWOs personal ethics	P	*"it's my statutory duty, it's in my role under the Education Act 1996 I have powers to fine parents or prosecute parents" v "I use it [prosecution] because I had to. I remember when I first came into post I was very apprehensive about using that tool. Whether that was because I was in conflict with my own ethics, I'm not quite sure" (EWO4 126.)* *"So there's me coming from the ethic, the support and all he's bothered about is…wave his enforcement stick. I couldn't work like that, I wouldn't be comfortable, that's not me as a person anyway" (EWO4 128.)*

EWO5 Contradictions

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Subject v Rules	EWOs Statutory aspect of the role and need for swift action/responses v EPs time constraints and workload	S	*"EWO's work differently in that sense because if a school rings up and says Joe Bloggs isn't in school we have to go out that day and deal with the issue" v "EP's have huge waiting*

			lists… Now if we refer to an EP we may be waiting months even to start a piece of work which leaves us with a bit of a problem in the short term because we need something done with that child" (EWO5 36.)
	resulting in waiting lists		

Contradictions within the EWO activity system

Location of the contradiction in the node(s)	Contradiction	Contradiction type e.g. primary or secondary	Extract from interview
Division of labour v Division of labour	EWO future role including increasing amounts of welfare work v EWO future role including mostly Statutory legal and attendance work	P	*"So whereas maybe we would have targeted every morning a specific amount of children who hadn't turned up at school, we can't do that anymore because I haven't got the time because I'm doing the other things [welfare] that are needed as well" (EWO2 88.) v "I think people are trying to get rid of the welfare part of it…we feel that we do less and less welfare and more of attendance and getting the kids into school and the legal stuff and other areas have gone the same way" (EWO3 164.)*
Object v Rules	Need to promote schools awareness of issues relating to non-attendance and early identification v Impact on EP and EWO caseload	S	*"…schools as well erm information for schools really so that they know how to erm deal with non-school attendance not just from our point of view from the legal point of view because as EWOs we talk to staff and we advise around that but the other aspects of it so the emotional aspects or just the general concerns around behaviour" (EWO1122.) v "Now, I know for a fact that the schools requests and parents requests for EP*

			assessment has increased as people become more aware of things that might be affecting their child. Take ADHD as one of the examples" (EWO2 42.)

Appendix Seventeen

DWR information and invitation

Dear all

Supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A).

Thank you to all of you who participated in the first phase of the research and completed an individual semi-structure interview. I have now conducted nine of the ten interviews and am due to conduct the last interview very soon. All of the interviews to date have provided broad In-depth rich information for me to analyse over the coming weeks.

The second phase of the research will consist of the DWR (Developmental Work Research) change lab (similar to a focus group).The purpose of the DWR is to provide participant's with a collective opportunity to comment and elaborate, counter, and engage with the initial findings and themes presented from the individual semi-structured interviews. The DWR focus group will also offer an opportunity to consider the learning that the focus group generates and allow us to explore how working practices may be improved to promote positive outcomes for children and young people who experience issues associated with CESN-A.

The DWR has been planned to take place on **Wednesday 3rd October 2012** at MAST 7 in the Conference room. The DWR will last approximately 2 and a half hours and will start at **9.30am** and will be divided by a break at approximately 10.30am. The DWR should be finished by between 12pm and 12.30pm.

During the DWR, I will facilitate the session by presenting the initial findings and themes (mirror data) from the individual interviews that will then be discussed. Two Associate Tutors from the University of Birmingham will be assisting the DWR: Dr Colette Soan will adopt the role of the Scribe. Colette will summarise and present discussion data on flip charts. Dr Jane Leadbetter will take the role of the Team Member who will construct a research note on the possible learning outcomes of the session.

It is important that professionals' who participated in the interview also attend the DWR. I would appreciate it if you could please confirm your attendance at the DWR at the next available opportunity. If the suggested date is not convenient, please let me know as soon as possible but, by no later than **Monday 3rd September 2012**.

Best wishes

Stephanie Herriotts-Smith
Trainee Educational Psychologist (MAST 7)
Tel: 01*** 555887
Email: stephanie.herriotts-smith@***.gov.uk

Consent form and confidentiality agreement (phase two)

Title of project: **A Socio-Cultural Activity Theory Analysis of: Interagency Working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to Complex Extended School Non-Attendance (CESN-A) with Implications for Improved Service Delivery**

Researcher: Stephanie Herriotts-Smith
                    stephanie.herriotts-smith@***.gov.uk
                    0**** 555887

This research is part of my Doctoral Studies at The University of Birmingham.

Purpose of the DWR focus group

- Participants will have an opportunity to comment upon, counter, elaborate upon and engage with the initial findings and themes presented from the individual semi-structured interviews. The DWR focus group will offer an opportunity to consider the learning that the focus group generates and explore how working practices may be improved to promote positive outcomes for children and young people who experience issues associated with CESN-A.

1. I understand that the information discussed and views expressed in the DWR focus group must remain confidential and anonymous and cannot be discussed with third parties.	☐
2. During the DWR focus group, I agree to talk generally about practice and avoid any specific recognisable examples.	☐
3. I agree to ensure that I refrain from naming any service user, educational or other form of establishment, or professional.	☐
4. I understand that if, at any point, I have concerns regarding confidentiality I can alert the researchers.	☐

The data obtained through the DWR focus groups will remain anonymous.

Name..

Signed..

Job Title...

MAST..

Date..

DWR instructions and ethical considerations

Supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A).

I would like to begin by thanking you for offering your voluntary participation in the research. The aim of the research is to investigate interagency working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance.

Can I again remind you that your participation is voluntary and that you can decline to participate in the discussion(s) without any need to offer an explanation. You can also terminate your participation in the DWR at any point without giving a reason. However, if you decide during or after the DWR that you do not want to participate, unfortunately your data cannot be removed. The reason that your individual data cannot be removed is because your data will not be stored against your name.

I would like to assure you that the data obtained from the DWR will remain anonymous. I would like to request that you try not to use individual's names during the DWR and that you refrain from naming establishments. None of the comment(s) made during the DWR will be attributed to an individual. Please read and sign the DWR Confidentiality Agreement.

Can I again check that you consent to the DWR being audio-taped and that you give your permission for the tape to be used for transcription, analysis and as part of the researcher's studies at The University of Birmingham. All data will be stored securely and will only be used for research purposes.

The purpose of the DWR is provide you with an opportunity to comment upon, counter, elaborate upon and engage with the initial findings and themes presented from the individual semi-structured interviews. The DWR focus group will also offer an opportunity to consider the learning that the focus group generates and allow us to explore how working practices may be improved to promote positive outcomes for children and young people who experience issues associated with CESN-A. The above will be accomplished through the lens and model of socio-cultural activity theory.

The session will last approximately 2 hours and will be divided by a break at approximately 10.30am for 15 minutes. I will act as the Session Leader (Facilitator) and will present the initial findings and themes (mirror data) for discussion. I would now like to take the opportunity to introduce the Associate Tutors for the Educational Psychology Doctorate that will be assisting the research: Dr Colette Soan who will adopt the role of the Scribe. Colette will summarise and present discussion data on the flip charts. I would also like to introduce Dr Jane Leadbetter. Jane will take the

role of the Team Member who will construct a research note on the possible learning outcomes of the session.

Before we start the DWR you need to establish some ground rules. I would like to invite you to offer some ground rules that we will note down and display so that they are visible during the DWR. I would like to ask that once you have all agreed to adhere to the ground rules that they are observed for the duration of the DWR and thereafter.

[establish ground rules]

DWR agenda

Supporting children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A).

START: 9.30am

- Ethical Considerations
  - Consent and confidentiality forms
  - Instructions

- Overview of the current research

- Synopsis of research methodology (activity theory)

- Phase 1: Findings

- Contradictions

BREAK (approximately 10.30am for 15 minutes)

- Discuss chosen contradiction

- Propose action points and next steps

- Reflections

FINISH: 12/12.30pm

A Socio-Cultural Activity Theory Analysis of: Interagency Working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to Complex Extended School Non-Attendance (CESN-A) with Implications for Improved Service Delivery

Stephanie Herriotts-Smith
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Aims

▸ To provide an overview of the current research and activity theory methodology

▸ To present and interrogate the findings from phase 1 (individual interviews) of the research and provide a synopsis of EPs and EWOs perceptions of current, past and future practices

▸ To provide examples of EPs and EWOs questioning accepted practice through the surfacing of contradictions

▸ To facilitate EPs and EWOs exploration of new ways of working to enhance inter-agency collaboration in relation to Complex Extended School Non-Attendance (CESN-A)

Long Term Aim:
▸ Stimulate organisational change

▸ 2

Background

Rationale:

▸ Complex Extended School Non-attendance
▸ Inter-agency Working
▸ Local Authority Context

Remit:

▸ Professional voice and development
▸ Organisation learning for improved Service delivery

▸ 3

Research Questions

▸ What do EP's and EWO's perceive that they contribute to the promotion of positive outcomes for children and young people presenting with CESN-A?

Sub-question related to the methodology

▸ What are the sociocultural processes: the shared meanings, use of common artefacts and the conflicts and disagreements that occur; that mediate the current models of working and professional contributions within EP and EWO inter-agency collaboration?

▸ What new ways of working do EPs and EWOs suggest will enhance inter-agency collaboration between EPs and EWOs in relation to CESN-A?

▸ Is sociocultural activity theory a useful theoretical basis and methodology to understand, analyse and explore the professional practice of EP's and EWO's and inter-agency working in relation to CESN-A?
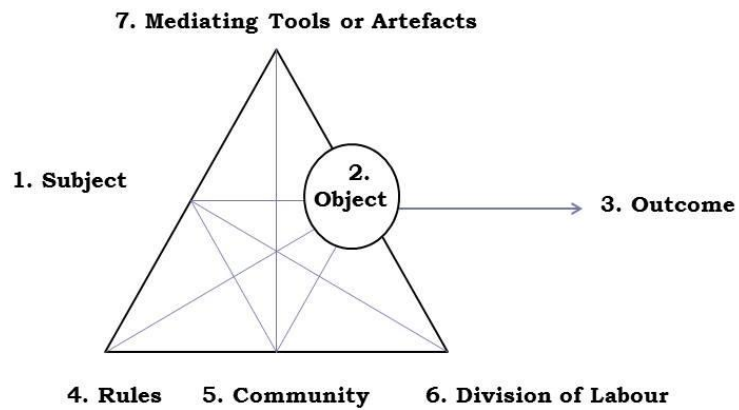
Future research

▸ Will improved inter-agency collaboration between EP's and EWO's result in improved service delivery/better outcomes for children and young people presenting with CESN-A?
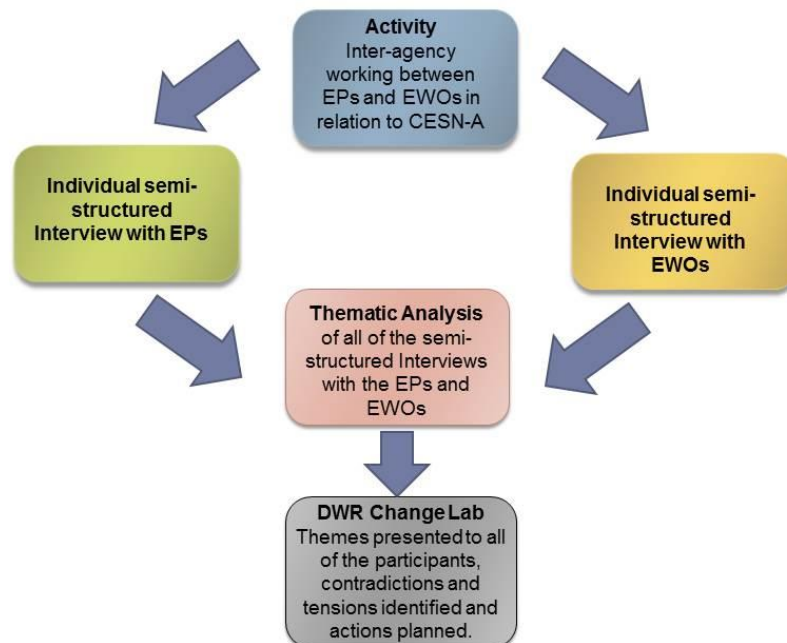
▸ 4

Methodology: Activity Theory

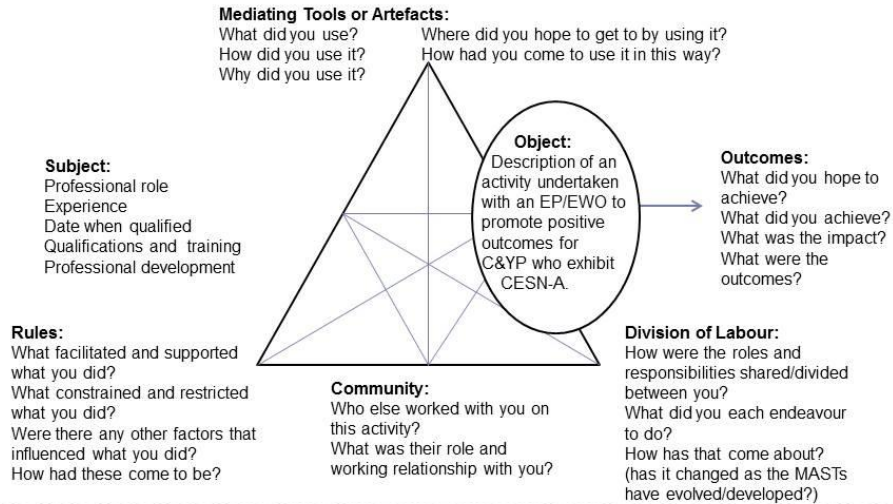**Second-generation Activity Theory Model (Engeström, 1987)**

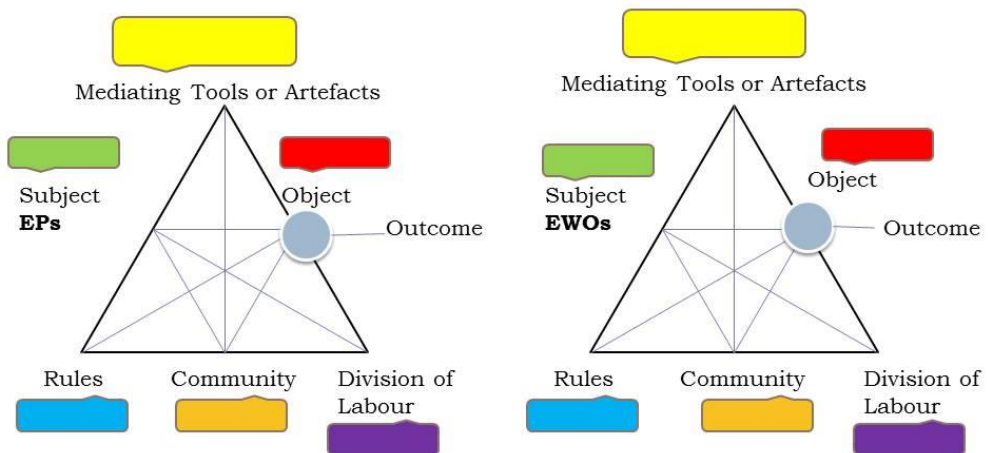7. Mediating Tools or Artefacts

1. Subject

2. Object

3. Outcome

4. Rules   5. Community   6. Division of Labour

Activity
Inter-agency working between EPs and EWOs in relation to CESN-A

Individual semi-structured Interview with EPs

Individual semi-structured Interview with EWOs

Thematic Analysis of all of the semi-structured Interviews with the EPs and EWOs

DWR Change Lab
Themes presented to all of the participants, contradictions and tensions identified and actions planned.

Methods/Data Collection: Semi-structured Interviews

Second-generation Activity Theory Model (Engeström, 1987)

Mediating Tools or Artefacts:
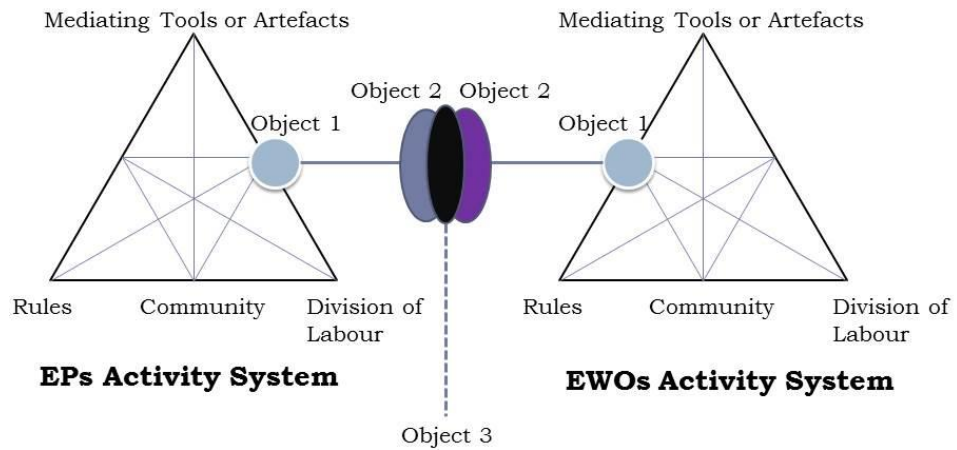What did you use?
How did you use it?
Why did you use it?
Where did you hope to get to by using it?
How had you come to use it in this way?

Subject:
Professional role
Experience
Date when qualified
Qualifications and training
Professional development

Object:
Description of an activity undertaken with an EP/EWO to promote positive outcomes for C&YP who exhibit CESN-A.

Outcomes:
What did you hope to achieve?
What did you achieve?
What was the impact?
What were the outcomes?

Rules:
What facilitated and supported what you did?
What constrained and restricted what you did?
Were there any other factors that influenced what you did?
How had these come to be?

Community:
Who else worked with you on this activity?
What was their role and working relationship with you?

Division of Labour:
How were the roles and responsibilities shared/divided between you?
What did you each endeavour to do?
How has that come about?
(has it changed as the MASTs have evolved/developed?)

▶ 7

Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

▶ 8

332

DWR Outcome
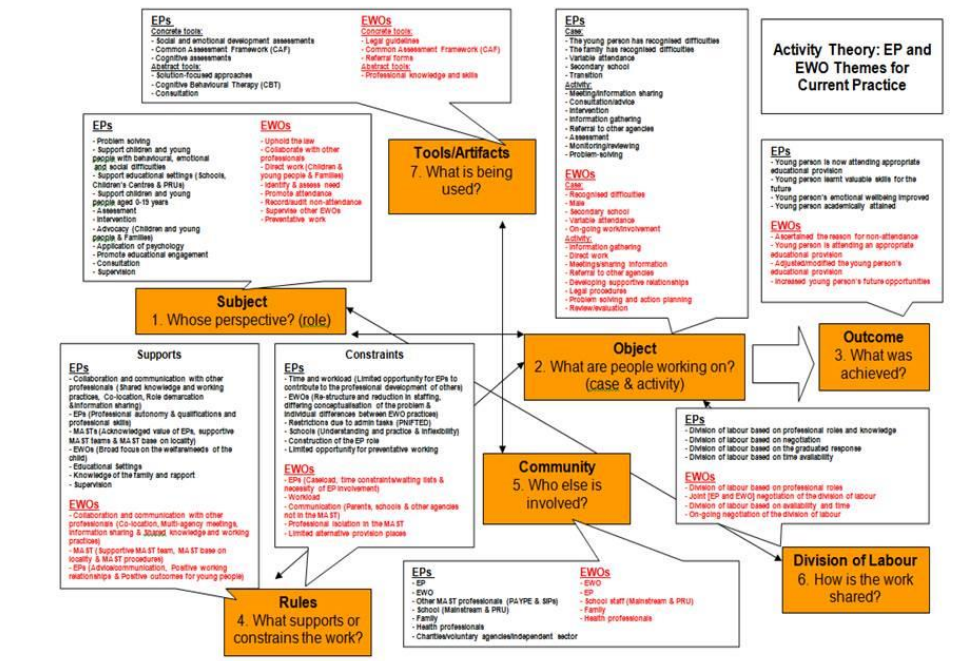
Third-generation Activity Theory Model (Engeström, 1999)

Mediating Tools or Artefacts

Object 2   Object 2

Mediating Tools or Artefacts

Object 1

Object 1

Rules   Community   Division of Labour

Rules   Community   Division of Labour

EPs Activity System

EWOs Activity System

Object 3

9

Methods/Data Collection: DWR Change Lab

MODEL, VISIONS

IDEAS, TOOLS

FUTURE

PRESENT

PAST

MIRROR

Interview data

Researcher-Scribe

Researcher-Facilitator

Researcher-Team Member

EPs and EWOs (participants)

Engeström, (2007a)

10

Activity Theory: EP and EWO Themes for Current Practice

▶ 11

Activity Theory: EP and EWO Themes for Past Practice

▶ 12
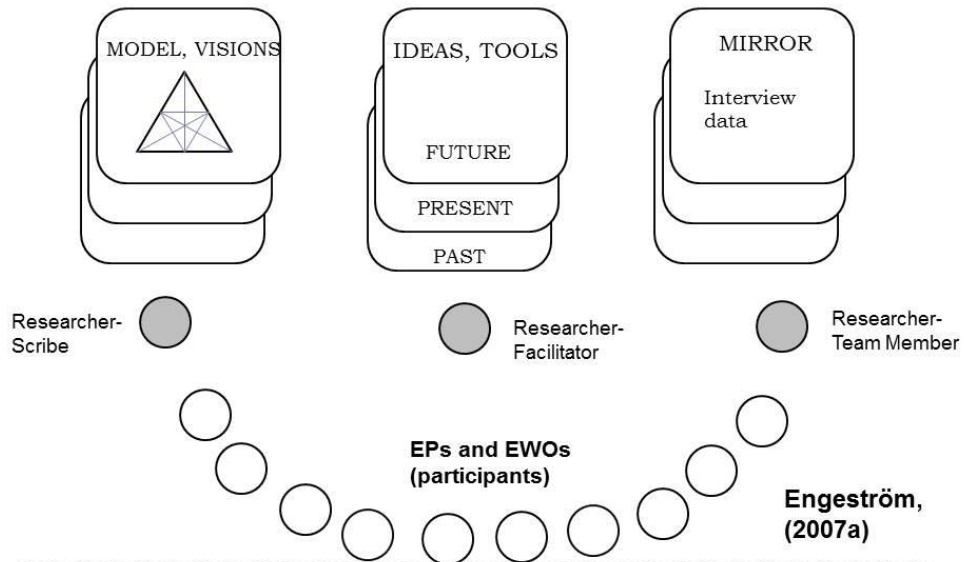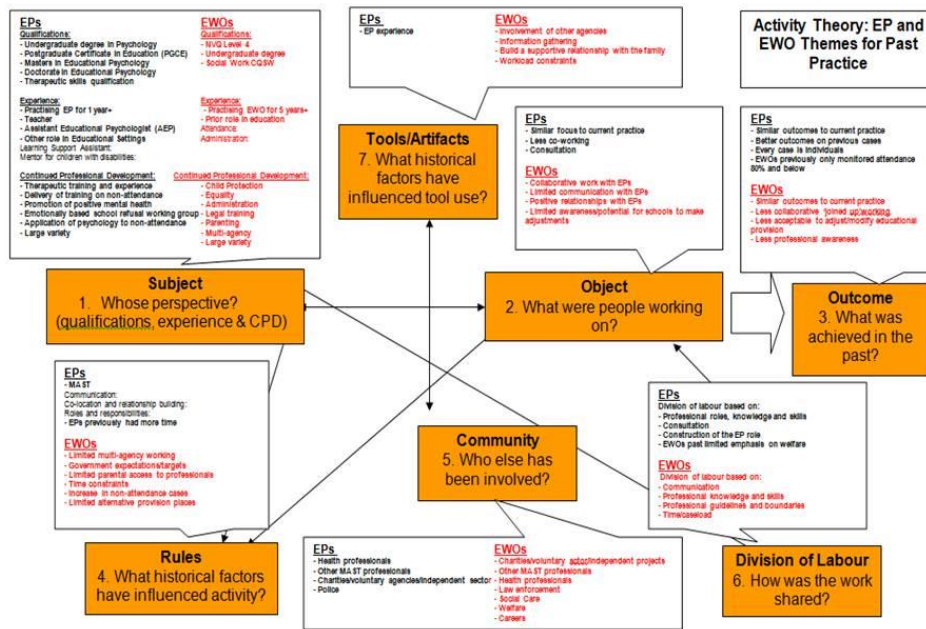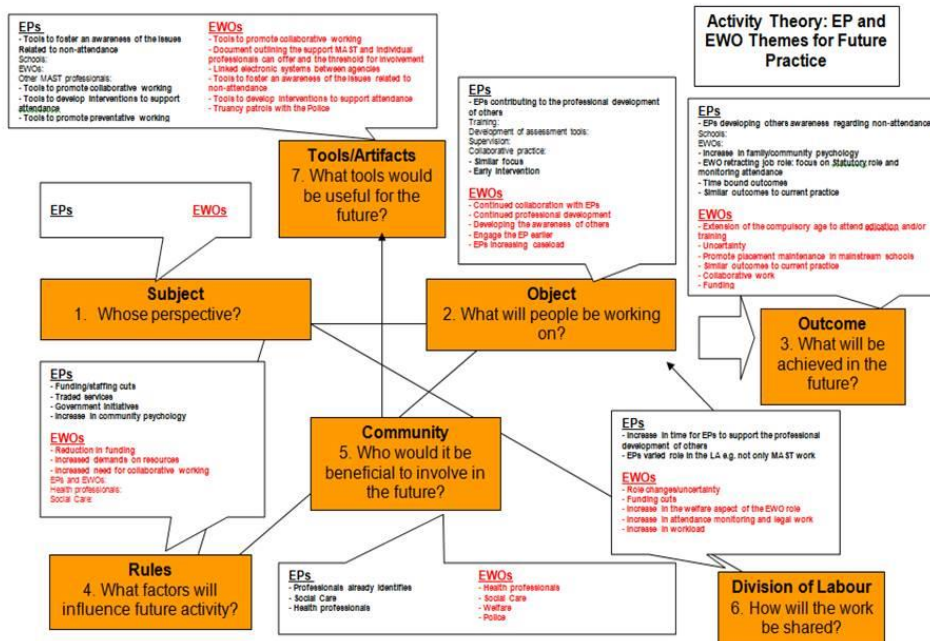
Contradictions

Contradictions and tensions are conceptualised as the driving force of change and development in professional and organisational practice.

Contradictions are not the same as problems or conflicts. Contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems.

(Engeström, 2010)

Contradictions

Five main contradictions:

1. **EWO case prioritisation v EP case prioritisation**
2. **Conceptualisation of the problem**
3. **Structures and process for collaboration**
4. **Understanding of the EP and EWO role**
5. **Further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals**

▶ 15

DWR Outcome

1. EWO case prioritisation v EP case prioritisation

EPs Activity System   EWOs Activity System
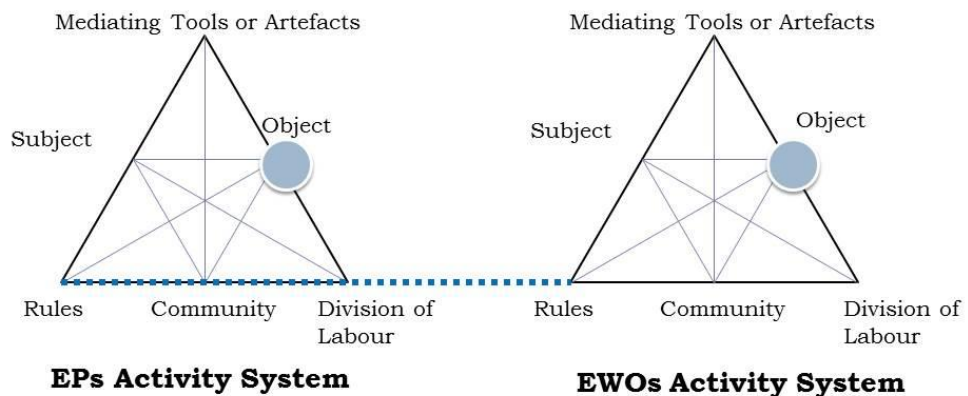
▶ 16

Contradictions

1. EWO case prioritisation v EP case prioritisation

EWO case prioritisation v EP time for casework

"it is prioritising, this [case] might be important for us [EWO]" v "but is it [case] important for the others [EP and other professionals] that are involved?" (EWO)

EP casework priorities v need for involvement with non-attendance cases

"Caseloads again and that's probably on my side as well. The volume that the amount the volume of cases that you have errrm and the priorities that we as EPs have… if you've got a statutory or a erm school pre-permanent exclusion meeting or something like that that then has to take then has to take priority on top of" v "the priorities that we as EPs have to have, sometimes that can impact on erm trying to get in there as quickly as possible" (EP)

EWOs Statutory aspect of the role and need for swift action/responses v EPs time constraints and workload resulting in waiting lists

"EWO's work differently in that sense because if a school rings up and says Joe Bloggs isn't in school we have to go out that day and deal with the issue" v "EP's have huge waiting lists… Now if we refer to an EP we may be waiting months even to start a piece of work which leaves us with a bit of a problem in the short term because we need something done with that child" (EWO)

▶ 17

Contradictions

2. Conceptualisation of the problem

EPs Activity System   EWOs Activity System
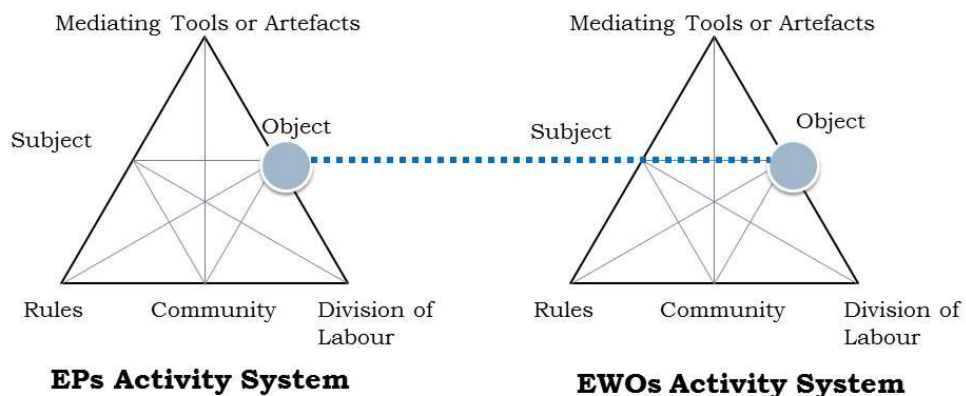
▶ 18

Contradictions

2. Conceptualisation of the problem

Other professionals conceptualisation of the problem and desired outcome v EPs conceptualisation of the problem and desired outcome

"I suppose this is one thing that that can sometimes be challenging because I think other professionals within the MAST can sometimes ask for your involvement and have already decided what the outcome of that involvement has been" v "if they if a young person comes into City and if they [EWOs] feel that they should go to the [PRU name] or something I've kind of said, the [PRU name] doesn't get mentioned because that's the outcome of an[EP] assessment rather than just doing an assessment to say that it's the [PRU name] is the outcome" (EP)

EPs awareness and understanding of need v other professionals' understanding of need

"he didn't seem to have any real reason not to go, it was actually just down to confidence and self-esteem but it was that extreme that he thought about ending his life" v "So, you know I think sometimes [other] people underestimate the impact of what these kids going through and what they may do to avoid going to school" (EP)

▶ 19

Contradictions

3. Structures and process for collaboration

EPs Activity System   **EWOs Activity System**
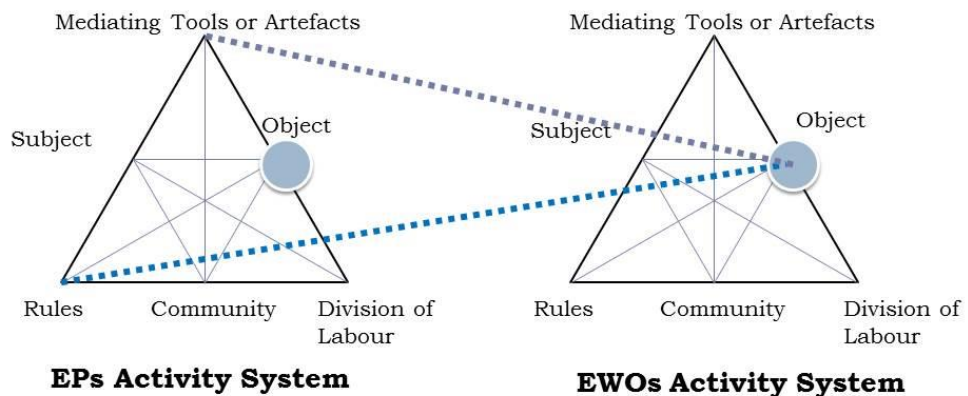
▶ 20

Contradictions

3. Structures and process for collaboration

Desire to extend co-location to co-working v lack of opportunity/formal structure for co-working

"What has happened now of course is through the development of MASTs and BESTs… we have all come together. So we are all working in an environment each day together " v *"I am not sure even if there is a specific protocol for the EWOs working with EPs and if there is, I'm not aware of it"* (EWO)

▶ 21

Contradictions

4. Understanding of the EP and EWO role

EPs Activity System   **EWOs Activity System**
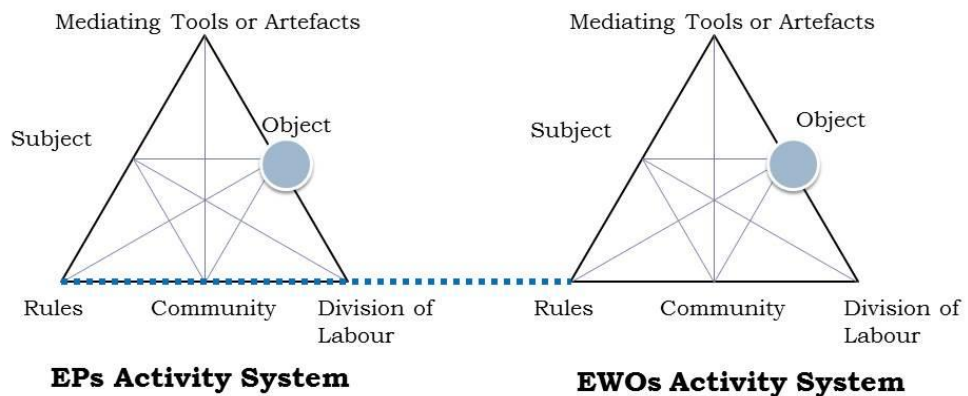
▶ 22

Contradictions

4. Understanding of the EP and EWO role

Understanding of each other's role v reality of the roles in practice

"I'm trying to think of what might stop us from working together. It could possibly be, not understanding each other's work as much v "Maybe if we were more aware of the things that we did together or or individually and how that affected one another" (EWO)

EWOs understanding of the EP role and approach v EPs limited time to share and discuss their thinking and approach

"I think sometimes people have the frustration that EPs don't necessarily do things quickly enough and I think there may be a view point that other people do things and we do the thinking but then you'll have a discussion with somebody and find a way forward and you might use a particular model or theoretical standpoint and when you talk through that process with them then they see the value of it…" v "…the danger is not having the time to talk about the processes and I think then that, because we don't always have that time to sit down and have those discussions and share our reflections with other people sometimes that doesn't help us because we look a bit precious" (EP)

▶ 23

Contradictions

5. Further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals

EPs Activity System   **EWOs Activity System**
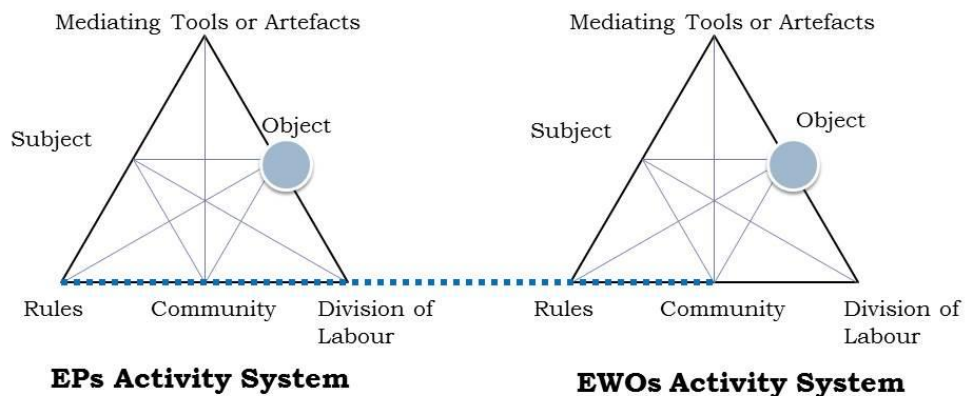
▶ 24

Contradictions

5. Further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals

Increased awareness of special educational needs and referrals v EP time and resources

"Now, I know for a fact that the schools requests and parents requests for EP assessment has increased as people become more aware of things that might be affecting their child. Take ADHD as one of the examples…" v "there is maybe only one/two EPs… in an area that has maybe two secondary schools and eight or ten primary schools, which has thousands upon thousands of children" (EWO)

▶ 25

And Finally….

▶ 26

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

PLEASE COMPLETE AN EVALUATION FORM

▶ 27

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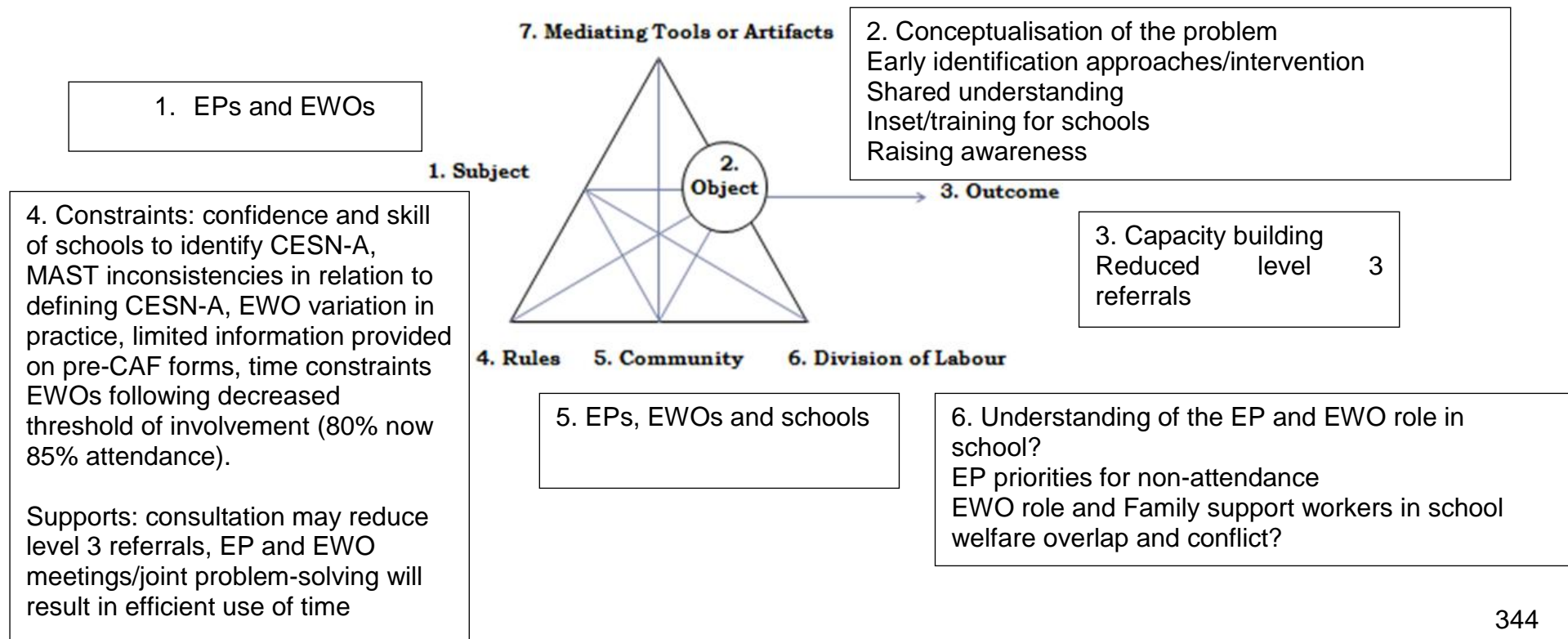
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DWR discussion data (Scribe: Dr Colette Soan)

7. EPs and EWOs formalise time to meet/collaboratively problem-solve together in MASTs e.g. monthly
Tool to define CESN-A
Information gathering tool (Protective and risk factors) to supplement the MAST referral
Staff Meeting (clarification of EP and EWO roles and introduction of an information gathering tool)
Schools commissioning training?
Whole-school training
Consultation (EP and EWO) with schools

7. Mediating Tools or Artifacts

1. EPs and EWOs

1. Subject

2. Object

3. Outcome

4. Rules   5. Community   6. Division of Labour

2. Conceptualisation of the problem
Early identification approaches/intervention
Shared understanding
Inset/training for schools
Raising awareness

4. Constraints: confidence and skill of schools to identify CESN-A, MAST inconsistencies in relation to defining CESN-A, EWO variation in practice, limited information provided on pre-CAF forms, time constraints EWOs following decreased threshold of involvement (80% now 85% attendance).

Supports: consultation may reduce level 3 referrals, EP and EWO meetings/joint problem-solving will result in efficient use of time

3. Capacity building
Reduced level 3 referrals

5. EPs, EWOs and schools

6. Understanding of the EP and EWO role in school?
EP priorities for non-attendance
EWO role and Family support workers in school welfare overlap and conflict?

344

Appendix Twenty-three

DWR research notes (Team Member: Dr Jane Leadbetter)

Notes from the DWR session in *** Local Authority: 3rd October 2012-11-30 EPs and EWOs working together to support children and young people who experience issues associated with complex extended school non-attendance (CESN-A).

Introductions welcome, signing consent forms, ethical considerations. Establishing ground rules. Presentation of findings from phase 1 of research (individual interviews with EWOs and EPs).

Learning points from the DWR session:

1. Impressive amount of data achieved from the ten interviews; very action-focused, wide-ranging, specific.
2. Comment from audience, perhaps interviews did not sufficiently take account of increasing powers of schools.
3. Specific point about schools employing their own staff so it may be that when cases become more serious they then involve outside services, so there is less chance for preventative or systemic work.
4. Is there a disconnect between statutory roles and wider supportive roles for both professionals? How can the MAST teams develop to integrate both roles?

Steph moves on to describing the five contradictions identified by the research.

Topic chosen was: further training for schools and other professionals v potential increase in referrals. NB need to check the definition of the problem for next session. NB important to keep them on task re. what they would be working on and why to be very clear at the start of the workshop.

Second session:
NB might have been more powerful for Steph to read out the quotes and bring them to life. Would be the focus of the training? It may not necessarily increase referral levels. Confidence levels of staff in school: if this was increased then perhaps EPs could be involved at a consultative level.

Differences in referral criteria across MAT teams. How well the pre-CAF assessment forms are completed?

Key aspects of roles, how each profession priorities and what can be done about individual professionals prioritising differently. Tool development summarised by Steph, there were two possible tools outlined.

Wider view of problem brought up by LD including consultation, joint processes and problem-solving earlier. Suggested that the group move on to discuss this more widely. Not quite reformulated but Colette turned to new AS.

Possible new tool a time when EP and EWOs in each MAST can talk about collaborative problems-solving about particular priority cases.

The contradiction between a referral process and a move towards a more consultation-based service. Summarised by Steph to include a training element might result in an increase to begin with in some schools.

Colette summarises the work covered to date on the two AS that have been developed.

Again clarity needed about what constitutes a complex case. If schools don't take attendance seriously, difficult for EWOs to become involved and this might become a safe-guarding issue.

Suggestions that training in school should be jointly undertaken by the two services. This might be better presented at a twilight session or staff meeting? This could lead to them commissioning a specific training package?

Suggestion that a new object could be devised from this workshop. Proposal that wider group be involved to develop a new tool. Look at devising a new meeting between EWOs and EP within each MAST. Who decides which are complex cases: schools or professionals? This related to firming up definition. Need a way of demonstrating to schools what at complex case is.

NB: from DWR point of view, it is difficult from facilitator point of view to decide how directive to be. Should the group be in total control of the content? Confusion over consultation/referral processes across MASTs, schools.

Summary from Colette with new object and several action steps.

Evaluation forms given out and then reflections on the process.

NB: three hours is better than two!

Reflection on session, process, AT as a framework, interviews.

Luxury to have time in interview and session to reflect properly. Having had discussion likely to be more investment to change. Increasing confidence as can compare practices and good to see common practices.

Good to discuss commonalities, improving practices, very positive atmosphere. Each services need time to talk together as professional groups. Less of a support network now organised in MAST teams. This needs to be put into place for EWOs. Cultural differences between professional groups. This needs to be made clear that it has come from this work. AT useful, demystifies it using it as a tool. Bringing it together today makes it clearer, can see how it fits

Appendix Twenty-four

Research and DWR evaluation form

Title of project: **A Socio-Cultural Activity Theory Analysis of: Interagency Working between Educational Psychologists and Education Welfare Officers in relation to Complex Extended School Non-Attendance (CESN-A) with Implications for Improved Service Delivery**

Researchers: Stephanie Herriotts-Smith, Dr Colette Soan and Dr Jane Leadbetter

Please assess the following aspects of the research/session:

	Rating				
	Excellent				**Poor**
To what extent did the session meet the stated aims?	5	4	3	2	1
Was the content useful?	5	4	3	2	1
Was the facilitator well prepared and organised?	5	4	3	2	1
Was the information communicated clearly?	5	4	3	2	1

1. **What was the most successful aspect of the research/session?**

2. **What facilitated or constrained the session?**

3. **What have you gained from the research/session? What will you do differently?**

4. **What kind of follow-up/further development would you like in this area?**

5. **Any other comments?**

Name:...(optional)

Signed:..

Summary of research evaluation form responses

Ratings

To what extend did the training meet the stated aims? (5= excellent and 1= poor)
  9 participants scored – 5
  1 participant scored – 4

Was the content useful? (5= excellent and 1= poor)
  9 participants scored – 5
  1 participant scored – 4

Was the facilitator well prepared and organised? (5= excellent and 1= poor)
10 participants scored – 5

Was the information communicated clearly? (5= excellent and 1= poor)
10 participants scored – 5

1) **What was the most successful aspect of the training?**

- Focus thoughts / reflections in a very structured way, made Activity Theory model accessible. Opportunity for EWO and EPs to understand each other's roles, viewpoints, difficulties more.
- Discussion about how we can increase joint working opportunities to support schools with early identification and intervention. Consultation approach i.e. more invested in putting action into place than if I had been told I had to do them.
- Bringing strong, respected colleagues of the two professional groups together to joint problem solve.
- An open discussion about the work involving EPs and EWOs which I feel led to a better understanding of each other's roles and the opportunities for increased joint working.
- 'Time out' to consider working practices, "the whys" and "wherefores" of what we do and how both groups view it.
- Identifying future actions to be implemented both in MASTs and schools. Interesting to see similarities between EPs and EWOs.
- Improving working practise with EWOs / EPs. More collaborative working therefore more holistic and positive outcomes for children, young people and schools.
- Coming up with new ideas to fulfil objectives for collaborative working. EWOs and EPs having joint ideas on how to work together.
- Coming to a shared understanding of the strengths and areas of development for the EWO and EP service. Development of action plan / next steps to gain a positive outcome for young people.
- To see the similarities in objectives.

2) What facilitated or constrained the session?

- Model was useful structure. Nice to get back to some theory!
- Constraints – Nothing really, maybe circle format rather than rectangles so you can see everyone. Facilitated – Very well chaired and led, reflecting back key points.
- Sometimes hard to get points made to interject. Very useful to have 3 facilitators to help process. I you perhaps got a good outcome due to prior knowledge of EPs of model which helps facilitation. Well done Steph.
- The excellent preparation and information gathering really guided the work and meant that we began from a joint perception of the current situation.
- Welcoming environment; well prepared and presented; encouraged participation.
- Not all MASTs were represented. Easy to understand theory behind the research.
- Subject relevant discussions.
- Everyone contributing to ideas in order for EWOs and EPs to work together. Constraints: Not all MASTs here, another meeting needed to confirm new models to be fed into schools.
- The Activity Theory model and process was invaluable in eliciting responses aiding understanding of the issues raised.
- Lots of different opinions and working practises which made it difficult to pin down what we needed.

3) What have you gained from the research / session? What will you do differently?

- Have a more structured collaboration with EWOs. Go back to previous work done and see what would be useful to bring forward into the planned LA wide collaboration.
- Will arrange formal meetings with EWOs.
- Really enjoyed the process, we need to do more sessions like this for service delivery.
- I will put in structured time to meet with the EWOs in my team. I look forward to developing a tool for schools to use alongside the MAST referral.
- Greater awareness, time to think through practices. Hopefully, will meet on a regular basis with EP and will challenge schools more.
- Building stronger relationships both with EWOs and EPs. Build stronger relationships with schools, for MASTs to be seen as one.
- Increased knowledge to work collaboratively. Enhanced understanding of improving working practises between professional groups.
- Arrange another meeting to fulfil the objectives to ensure joint working is the same within each MAST.
- Shared understanding of the constraints and commonalities in both services. Meeting in a more formal was with EWOs and also promote communication at all levels in school of appropriate staff e.g. SATCO and SENCo.
- Understanding of what a complex non-attender might be and how to assess it.

4) What kind of follow-up / further development would you like in this area?

- A more unified approach for EWOs and EPs across MASTs in our understanding of CESN-A and our support of schools in their data collection, formation and support of children and families.
- Working group to look at assessment tools and to develop training. Feedback to whole team.
- To make sure the actions actually happen in MAST teams and the working group plans the tool.
- Joint meeting with Area EWOs and EPs to move the actions identified forward.
- Need to follow on with the findings to allow / promote co-operation and improve working practices, for the benefit of the young people.
- Identify tools that can be used that have been identified during the process to assist both schools and MASTs in the long run.
- Update on research. Update on implementations of new working tools EP/EWO/School.
- Additional meeting to achieve objectives, working closer with school.
- Development of a tool that could be used to identify pupils, protective and risk factors. Along with training in schools etc as identified in the next step.
- Joint working body to explore further actions.

5) Any other comments?

- A very useful session in helping to develop multi-disciplinary working. Great opportunity for quality reflections.
- Excellently facilitated Steph, you were very good at keeping the discussion on track by bringing peoples points back to the nodes / key constraint. Well done.
- Thanks, this has been a really useful session.
- Impressed! Well done.
- Excellent piece of research, very interesting discussions. Easier to understand than first thought! Well done Steph!
- It was a useful exercise to get co-workers to think how we can all work together to achieve the same goal.
- Well done. An excellent, enjoyable session. Thank you.
- *3 participants left this question blank.*

Round of evaluative words/statements

- The interviews and DWR were a luxury, to be out of the chaotic environment to reflect on your practice: this should be done for every part of the work we do
- We have invested in the process and generated the actions and next steps, and have not been 'directed' and are therefore more likely to implement them
- The process has increased my confidence in what I am doing
- Common practise and shared understandings have been illuminated and we have had the opportunity to celebrate how we work together
- I have seen the benefits of professionals coming together and meeting and feel empowered to meet with colleagues more regularly
- Identified a need to feedback the process to the LA

- Demonstrated that we have strong relationships and that we are a united team- 'one team'
- Demystified activity theory- aware of the practical applications.
- Perceptions of EPs and EWOs effectively summarised in the presentation of the initial interview findings and the DWR
- Activity theory is more accessible and easier to understand following the DWR
- Activity theory is easier than I initially thought
- Session challenged historical perceptions regarding EPs and EWOs
- The DWR promoted team belonging

Discussion of the findings related to the object, outcome, community and division of labour nodes

EP findings

Object
The objects identified in the EPs activity are represented by **two overarching themes**. The **overarching themes** relate to information about the **case** and information regarding the **activity** undertaken. The information regarding the **case** has four **main themes** and two **sub-themes**. The **activity** undertaken consists of seven **main themes** and four **sub-themes**. The findings related to EPs activity reflect the previous findings from the subject node in relation to EPs perceptions of their role, therefore representing a link between perception and activity. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the identified themes.

Figure 1
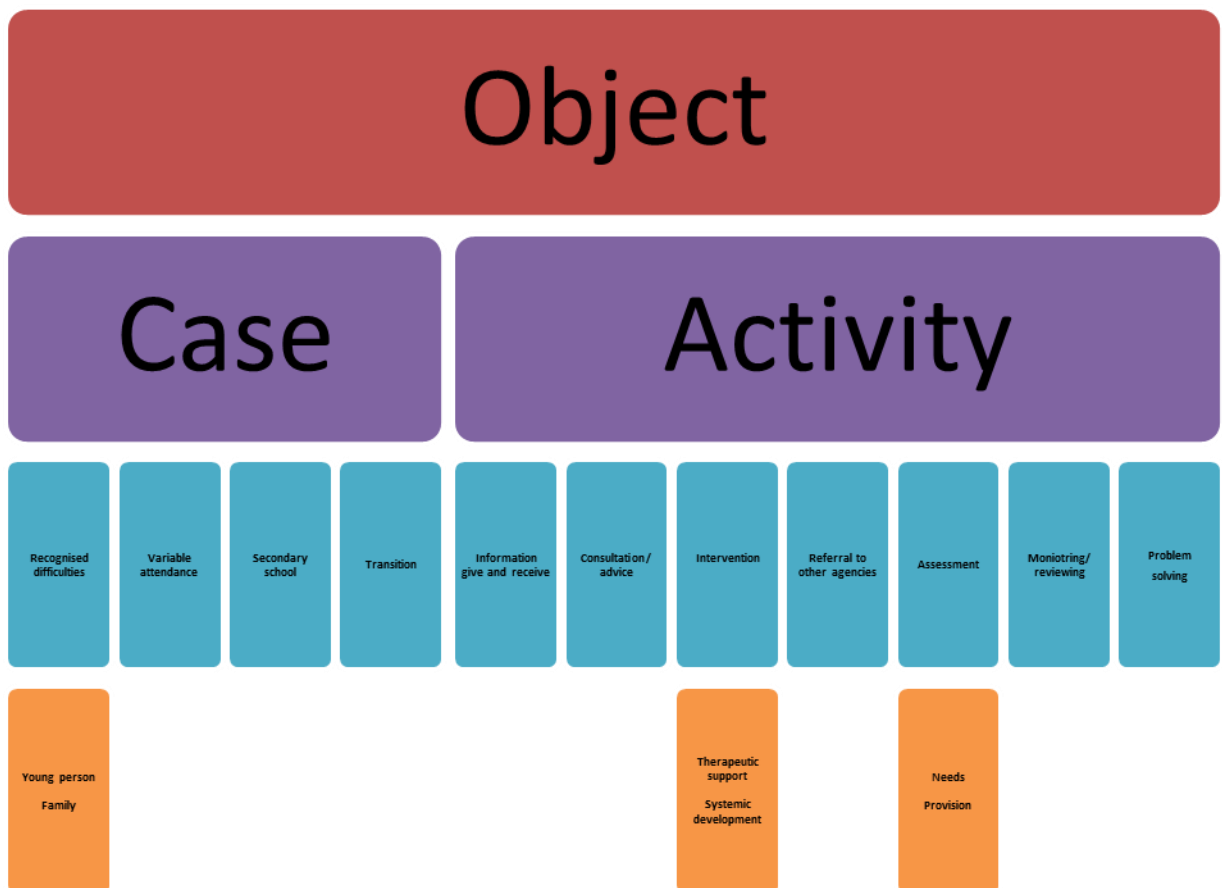
Figure 1: *Diagram depicting the overarching themes, main themes and sub themes for the object node for EPs*

The themes related to information about the case reflect the complex nature of non-attendance. The sub-themes recognise that difficulties may be experienced by both the child (Kearney, 2008; Brandibas et al. 2004; Berry et al. 1993; Pilkington and Piersel, 1991; Heath, 1985; Hersov, 1977; Tyerman, 1958) and family (DfE, 2012; Kearney, 2008; Place et al. 2000). The main themes offer support for the notion that CESN-A is more likely to occur in secondary aged pupils (DfE, 2012) and may reflect the imperative for early intervention as a preventative measure to redirect the development of unhelp trajectories (Grandison, 2008).

The themes regarding EPs activity reflect the previous findings in relation to their perceptions of the EP role. This finding affirms the notion that perceptions, schemas and thoughts inform action (Edwards et al. 2009; Mezirow, 1991). However, questions related to the object node elicited additional information regarding the premise that EPs 'sign post' and refer on to other agencies (Philbrick and Tansey, 2000). The findings additionally highlight that EPs offer therapeutic support for the child (BPS, 2010; HPC, 2010) whilst acknowledging the need to also deliver systemic support and promote systemic development (Pellegrini, 2007).

<u>Outcome</u>
Themes identified from the EP interviews within the outcome node are presented in Figure 2. The **overarching theme** regarding the EP's perception of what they **achieved** as a result of their support for a specific child or young person experiencing issues associated with CESNA has four related **main themes**.
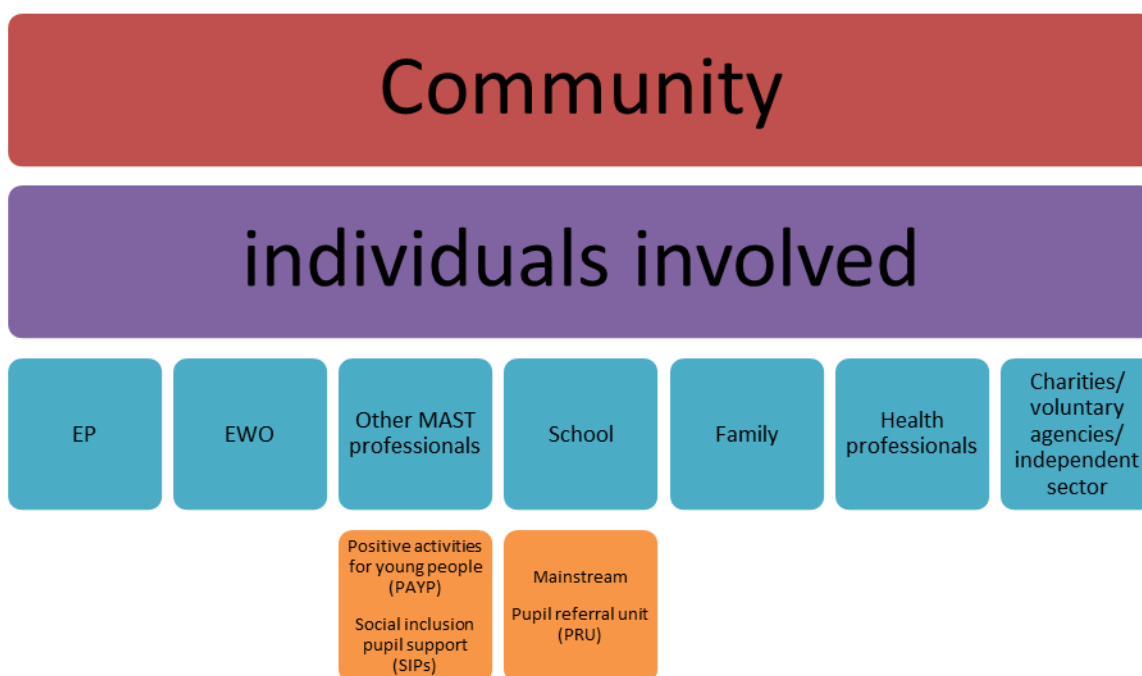
Figure 2

Figure 2: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme and main themes for the outcome node for EPs*

Figure 2 exemplifies the outcomes that EPs activity is principally directed towards and affirms the premise that the primary client for EPs is the child (Cameron, 2006). The findings also affirm the view that the child can be supported by highlighting school-based factors and ensuring that the school environment is appropriate for the child (Kearney, 2008; Fortune-Wood, 2007; Pellegrini, 2007; Place et al. 2000; Pilkington and Piersel, 1991; Coldman, 1995; Stoll, 1995b; Galloway, 1985).

Community
The findings from the thematic analysis exemplify EPs perceptions regarding the professionals that they work with when supporting a child or young person who experiences issues associated with CESN-A (see Figure 3). The **overarching theme** of **individuals involved** in supporting the child or young person consisted of seven **main themes** and four **sub-themes**.

Figure 3

Figure 3: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme, main themes and sub-themes for the community node for EPs*

The EPs account of the individuals involved in supporting a child or young person who experiences issues associated with CESN-A reinforce the notion that in the specific context, non-attendance elicits a multi-agency response. Furthermore, the imperative of a multi-agency response to non-attendance is reinforced in the literature (Grandison, 2011; Kearney, 2008; Pellegrini, 2007; DfES, 2004; Archer et al. 2004; Wigfall and Moss, 2001; Philbrick and Tansey, 2000).

Division of Labour
The findings abstracted from the analysis demonstrate EPs perceptions of how activity and work is divided when working collaboratively with an EWO (see Figure 4).

The **overarching theme** relating to **how the roles and responsibilities were divided between the EP and EWO** comprised of four **main themes**.

Figure 4

Figure 4: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme and main themes for the division of labour node for EPs*

Understanding of professional roles is imperative to successful multi-agency working (Atkinson et al. 2002). Daniels et al. (2010) contended that a shared understanding of roles and knowledge and complementary expertise drawn across differing professional agencies was essential for supporting 'at risk' young people. Furthermore, Leadbetter et al. (2007) offered that negotiated division of labour and agreed and defined role boundaries are conducive to effective multi-agency working. West Sussex County Council (2004) developed a nine phase graduated model of multi-agency support in an endeavour to overcome some of the identified barriers to multi-agency working (see Appendix 2). The notion that a graduated multi-agency response is necessary supports the research findings illustrated in Figure 4. Interestingly, the findings also indicate that practical factors such as time and availability influenced how labour was divided between EPs and EWOs. Atkinson et al. (2002) identified time as a key factor to promote multi-agency working.

EWO findings

Object
The objects identified in the EWOs activity are represented by **two overarching themes**. The **overarching themes** relate to information about the **case** and information regarding the **activity** undertaken. The information regarding the **case** has five **main themes** and one of the **main themes** has **sub-themes**. The **activity**

undertaken consists of eight **main themes**. Figure 6.14 provides an illustration of the identified themes.

Figure 5
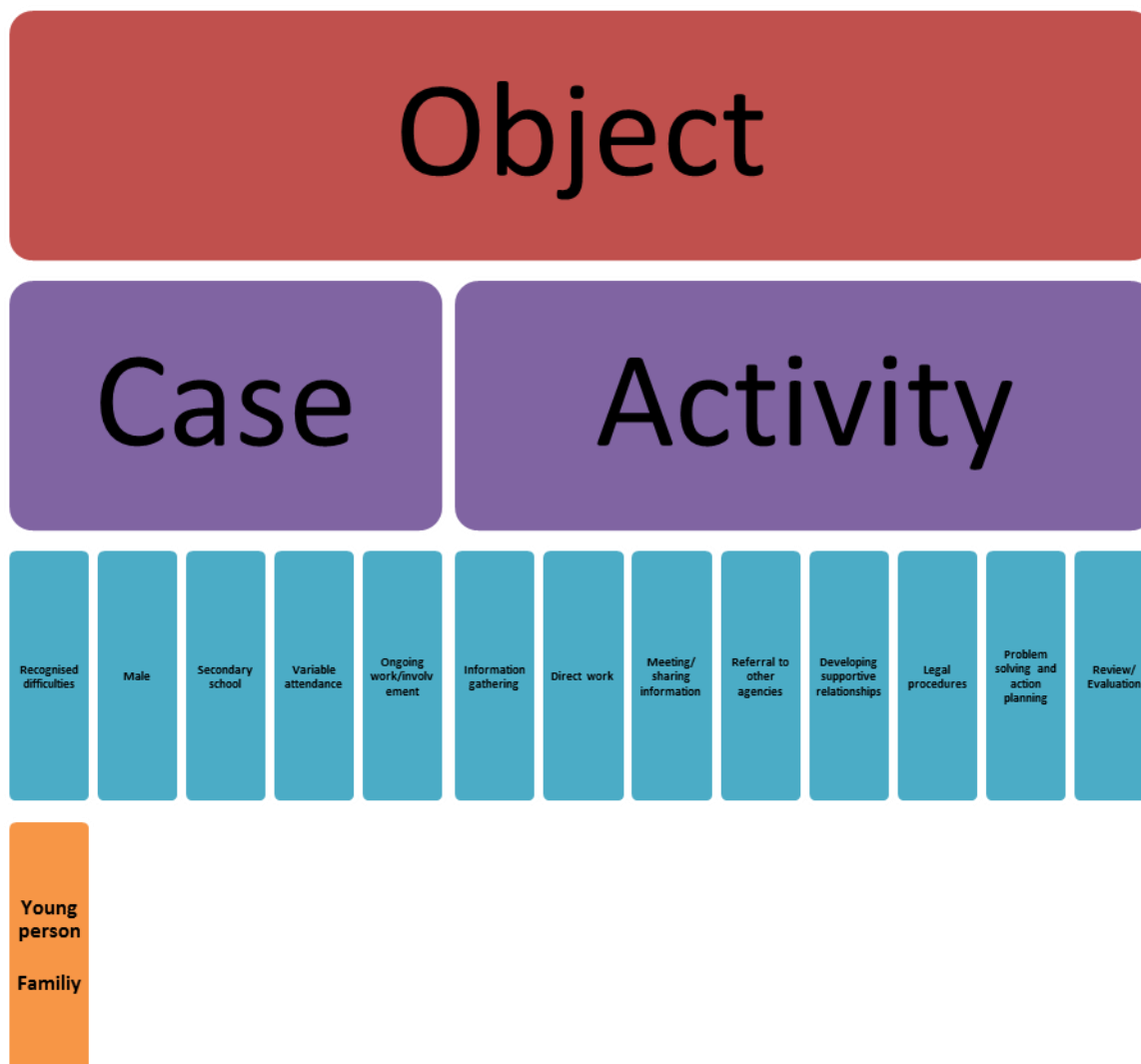
Figure 5: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme, main themes and sub themes for the object node for EWOs*

The information identified by EWOs regarding the CESN-A case that they referred to in the interview, largely concur with aspects of the case identified by EPs. However, Pellegrini (2007) highlights non-attendance as a heterogeneous behaviour. The findings allude to the complex nature of non-attendance and highlight that difficulties are experienced by the young person and family and are pervasive enough to be recognised and long standing. The findings also demonstrate the variable nature of non-attendance and the need to acknowledge the likelihood of attendance peaks and troughs. The dynamic nature of attendance may be explained by Grandison's (2008, p.3) conceptualisation that non-attendance "occurs when stress exceeds support, when risks are greater than resilience and when 'pull' factors that promote school

non-attendance overcome the 'push' factors that encourage attendance". Related to the variable nature of non-attendance is the necessity for on-going support and involvement of external agencies.

The themes regarding EWOs activity reflect the previous findings in relation to their perceptions of the EWO role. This finding additionally affirms the previously discussed notion that perceptions, schemas and thoughts inform action (Edwards et al. 2009; Mezirow, 1991). However, questions related to the object node elicited additional information regarding the importance of developing supportive relationships. The supportive aspect of the EWO role was reinforced by Reid (2008, p.176) who contended that EWOs support young people and their families who are "vulnerable and in need of help and understanding, increasingly in a range of diverse fields". The supportive aspect of the EWO role emphasises the welfare of the young person and family (Philbrick and Tansey, 2000). Furthermore, Reid (2008, p.176) identified that EWOs often "operate with the whole family providing a supportive role between the child's home, school and relevant external agencies".

Outcomes
Themes identified from the EWO interviews within the outcome node are presented in Figure 6. The **overarching theme** regarding the EWO's perception of what they **achieved** as a result of their support for a specific child or young person experiencing issues associated with CESNA has four related **main themes**.
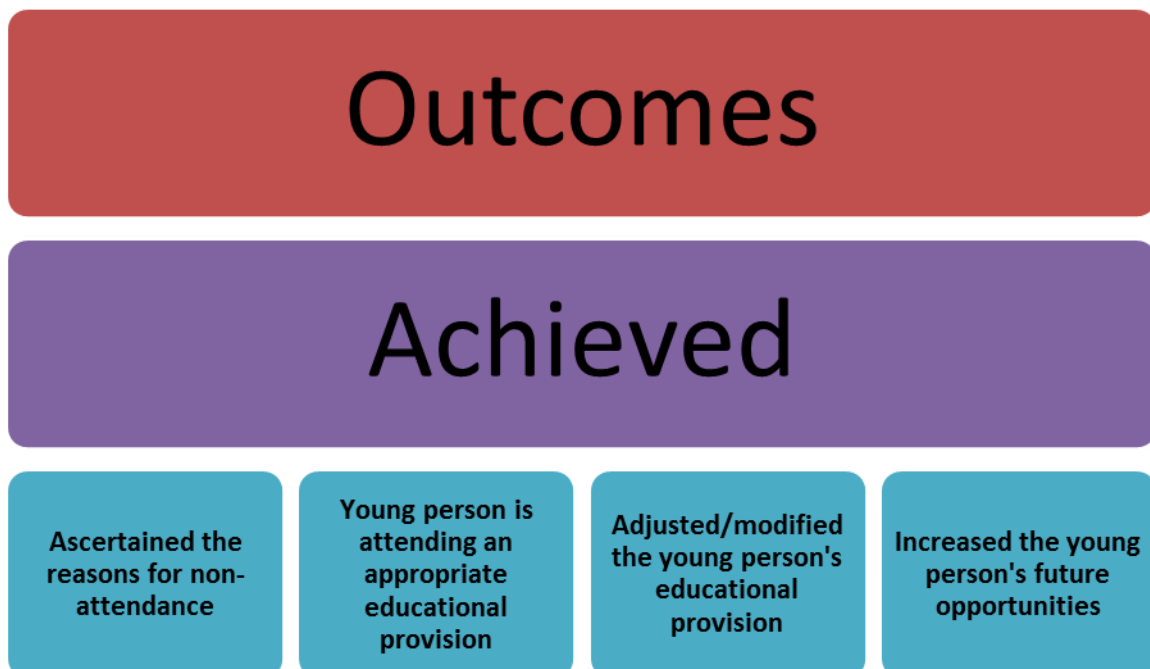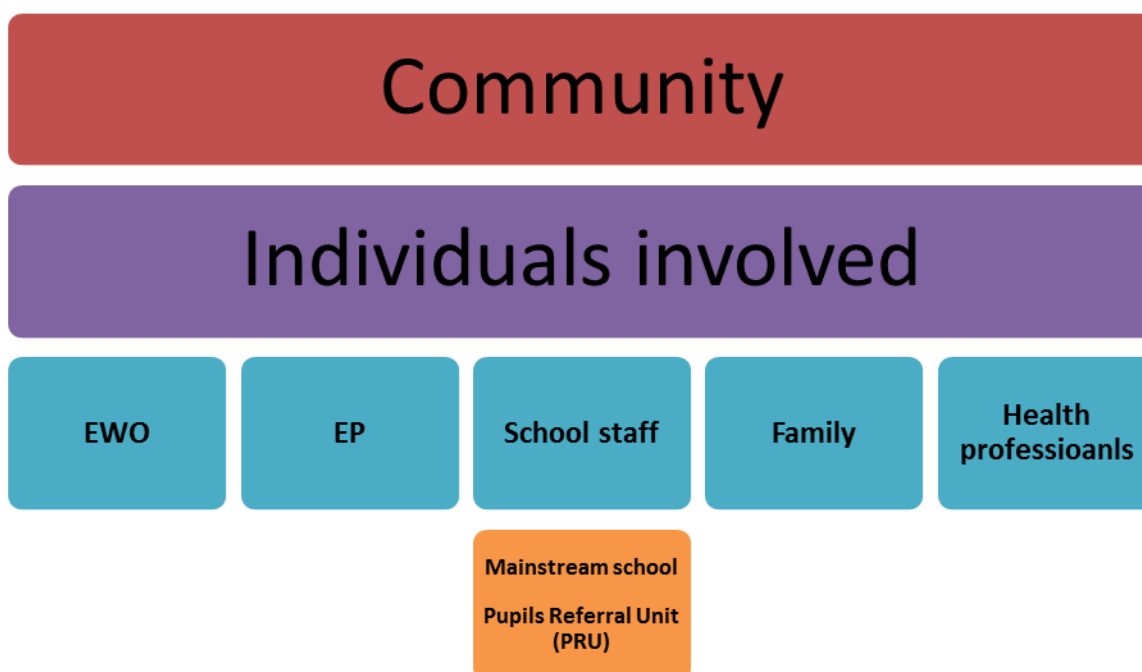
Figure 6

Figure 6: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme and main themes for the outcome node for EWOs*

Figure 6 exemplifies that what EWOs perceive they achieve as the outcome of their practice complements what EP also perceive as their outcomes. Both EPs and EWOs referred to outcomes that solely related to the child alluding to the premise that the child is constructed as the client. The similarity in terms of the outcomes achieved may reflect that the premise that's Services are shaped around the needs of the child as opposed to professional boundaries (DCSF, 2007).

Community
The findings from the thematic analysis exemplify EWOs perceptions regarding the professionals that they work with when supporting a child or young person who experiences issues associated with CESN-A (see Figure 7). The **overarching theme** of **individuals involved** in supporting the child or young person consisted of five **main themes** and **two sub-themes**.

Figure 7

Figure 7: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme, main themes and subthemes for the community node for EWOs*

As with the EPs account of the individuals involved in supporting the child or young person who experiences issues associated with CESN-A, the EWOs additionally referred to multiple agencies. The imperative of a multi-agency response to non-attendance is reinforced in the literature (Grandison, 2011; Kearney, 2008; Pellegrini, 2007; DfES, 2004; Archer et al. 2004; Wigfall and Moss, 2001; Philbrick and Tansey, 2000). Furthermore, the reference to the involvement of health professionals demonstrates that, in line with future Government plans in relation to the single assessment care plan, educational professionals and health professionals are collaborating (DfE, 2011b).

Division of Labour

The findings abstracted from the analysis demonstrate EWOs perceptions of how activity and work is divided when working collaboratively with an EP (see Figure 8). The **overarching theme** relating to **how the roles and responsibilities were divided between the EP and EWO** comprised of four **main themes**.

Figure 8
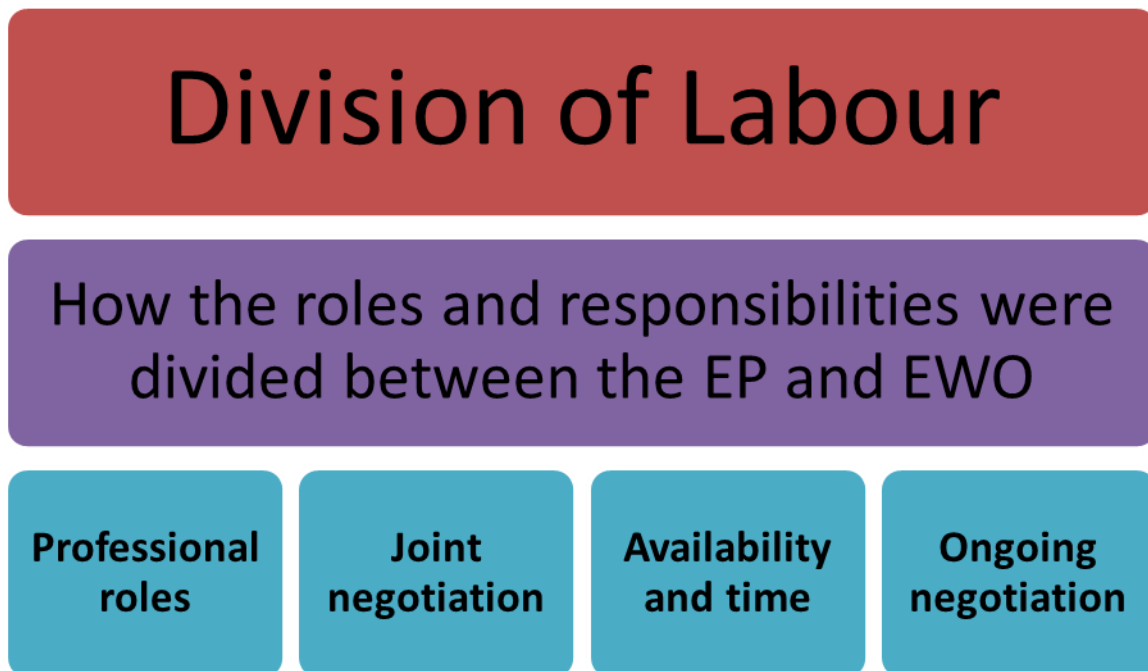
Figure 8: *Diagram depicting the overarching theme and main themes for the division of labour node for EWOs*

The identified themes relating to EWOs perceptions of the division of labour reflect the findings regarding EPs perceptions of how labour is divided. The additional finding that labour is continually negotiated between EPs and EWOs may reflect the acknowledged shared aims and objectives (Atkinson et al. 2002) to promote positive outcomes for the young person alongside a commitment to do what you say you are going to do in conjunction with a willingness to be flexible and think laterally (Sharpe, 2003).