

**TITLE OF THESIS**

**How observational material might be used in a collaborative consultation with teachers  
to further their understanding of their pupils.**

**NAME OF CANDIDATE: Anne-Marie Wedd**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 7th April 2017**

**'A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University  
of East London for a Professional Doctorate in Child Psychoanalytic  
Psychotherapy'**

## Abstract

The project was a feasibility study into the usefulness of a collaborative consideration of observational material in an early years special education provision. Children were referred, often for only two terms before returning to their mainstream schools where there was an expectation that the concerns would have been improved or resolved. A Child Psychotherapist observed the classes from behind a screen. These were filmed and then written up later in the tradition of Tavistock young child observation. This material was discussed with the teachers in an exploratory session and then a month later there was a review of this process to see if it had been helpful to the teacher's thinking about the children. The whole process was repeated to allow for some learning from the first phase to be carried forward.

A secondary aim of the study was to explore the aspects of the teacher-pupil relationship that promote learning. This study encompasses the use of observation and video along with consultation in schools to assist work with teachers in early years settings. The themes drawn from the data revealed a passive and active interaction between conscious and unconscious processes as they occurred in the classroom as well as in the discussion of the observations. These themes describe the progression of learning as it was observed.

There emerged a preference among the teachers for the filmed material which yielded a rich data set. It highlighted the importance of the relationship between teacher and child and the extent of the non-verbal nature of this communication. The written observations worked as a foil to the acceptability of video and provoked discussion in post observation sessions. Whilst technically and ethically demanding the use of video here revealed an increasing desire and orientation toward visual media and its application in work with vulnerable children.

**Key Words:** Observation, video, visual media, Child Psychotherapist, consultation, special education, early learning

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the children and staff in the school who participated in this study along with the many others who supported the project and gave generously of their time and experience to assist in its progress and eventual completion.

## Contents

1.	Introduction .....	6
1.1	Background to the research project .....	6
1.1.1	What drew the researcher to this project .....	7
1.1.2	Child mental health and education policy .....	8
1.1.3	Latency age children .....	12
1.1.4	The participants .....	14
1.2	Infant and young child observation .....	17
1.3	Ethical considerations .....	18
2.	Literature review.....	20
2.1	Use of observation in work with children.....	21
2.2	Early learning .....	28
2.3	The Use of Video .....	35
2.4	Consultation in schools .....	42
3.	Methodology.....	51
3.1	Observation as data .....	51
3.2	Choice of study design .....	55
3.3	Data collection .....	56
3.4	Role of the observer in this study .....	61
3.5	Choice of methodology.....	63
3.5.1	Thematic analysis.....	63
3.5.2	Ethno-methodological conversation analysis (EMCA).....	65
3.6	Coding and analysis.....	66
3.7	Subjectivity.....	71
3.8	Counter-transference.....	72
3.9	Reflexivity.....	73
4.	Findings – What goes on in the classroom .....	77
4.1	Theme - Parallel process .....	79
4.1.1	Example one of Parallel process .....	79
4.1.2	Example two of Parallel process .....	82
4.1.3	Example three of Parallel process.....	83
4.2	Theme - Being prepared to learn the child’s mode of communication.....	89
4.2.1	Example one of Being prepared to learn the child’s mode of communication ....	89
4.2.2	Example two of Being prepared to learn the child’s mode of communication ....	93
4.2.3	Example three of Being prepared to learn the child’s mode of communication .	97
4.2.4	Example four of Being prepared to learn the child’s mode of communication .	101

4.3 Theme - Teaching of meaning making .....	105
4.3.1 Example one of Teaching of meaning making .....	105
4.3.2 Example two of Teaching of meaning making .....	110
4.3.3 Example three of Teaching of meaning making.....	113
5. Findings - How the teachers used the process .....	118
5.1 Theme - Focus shift .....	119
5.1.1 Example one of Focus shift .....	119
5.1.2 Example two of Focus shift .....	122
5.1.3 Example three of Focus shift.....	125
5.1.4 Example four of Focus shift.....	129
5.2 Theme - Daring to be curious.....	131
5.2.1 Example one of Daring to be curious .....	132
5.2.2 Example two of Daring to be curious.....	135
5.2.3 Example three of Daring to curious .....	139
5.2.4 Example four of Daring to be curious .....	142
5.3 Thoughts about the process .....	143
5.3.1 Helpfulness of the process.....	144
5.3.2 Suggestions for the model .....	147
6. Summary and Conclusion .....	151
6.1 Evaluation of study design .....	160
6.2 Implications for policy/practice and future research .....	163
7. Bibliography .....	168
8. APPENDICES .....	184

# **1. Introduction**

This project is a feasibility study into the usefulness of a collaborative observation in an early years special education provision. The children in this special school often spend only two terms there and then return to their mainstream school with some expectation that the difficulty which gave rise to the referral would have, by then, been resolved or, at the very least, have become better understood. The project made use of an existing screen in the classroom which allowed the children to be observed in class without the observer becoming a participant. It was based on two phases each of four observations from behind the screen which were also filmed. A week later the observational material, both written from the perspective of the observer and video recorded were shared and discussed with the teachers in an unstructured meeting. The three perspectives, written, video and the teacher's recollection of the period, were then compared and considered in a way that it was hoped would open up new areas to explore thoughts about the children in the study. One month later this 'exploratory' session was reviewed with the teachers to determine if it had any impact upon their thinking about the children in the study. It aimed to examine in fine detail the aspects of the teacher child relationship that promote learning.

## **1.1 Background to the research project**

It was hoped that the teachers, even those who are already aware of the potential of observation both therapeutically and educationally, might find that this way of sharing the material expanded their thinking about the children they work with. This study was seeking to trace what it is that they do that is evidential of their increased awareness and openness to the child's emotional state. Teachers are accustomed to observations by Ofsted inspectors as well as the many visitors and trainees who come into schools. It was hoped that the possibility to be observed and then to think with someone whose sole purpose was to try to understand the experience of the small children they are teaching could carry a certain novelty and potential for a fresh perspective. It was important to acknowledge how different it was to observe from behind a screen to being an observer sharing the same space. The use of the screen reduces the effect of

the observer on the observed and, in this case was necessary because that effect was not one of the objectives of the study. Rather the role of the observer in this study was as a facilitative presence for the teacher in their thinking about the child and not as an active agent during the observation. In this project the aim was to bring together young child observation with consultation to schools to explore the possibilities of a collaborative use of observational material. Also, to use observation as a method of collecting data for analysis using a thematic analysis followed by an ethno-methodological analysis of small sections of video. The detail of this aspect is discussed more fully in the chapter on methodology.

### **1.1.1 What drew the researcher to this project**

I chose to do this because I wanted to see if this approach to using observation could develop into a structured intervention to be used in conjunction with or as an addition to therapeutic support in schools. The idea was suggested by my then service supervisor and the design evolved following discussion in research seminars at the Tavistock clinic. It was suggested that I also use video to accompany my observations despite the additional ethical considerations that this would bring. The design was driven by my desire to represent fairly the individuals observed and therefore had to involve a high degree of collaboration with them. I also consulted Karen Amiran who is a video, installation and conceptual artist for advice on the use of video with children. I come from an artistic family and from an early age had been encouraged to take my time to look at the world around me, to stare even. So, the prospect of observing children and teachers in class just to see what was there to see was irresistible to me personally and professionally as a child psychotherapist.

There follows a description of the context in which the study took place, in a school for children with social, emotional and mental health needs, and then information about changes in policy for children with special educational needs before moving on to a psycho-analytically informed consideration of children of this age, between five and seven years old and the developmental characteristics typical of latency age children. The introduction ends with a brief review of the

history of infant observation (Bick 1964) as this underpins every aspect of the design of the study and its closely related areas of early learning, use of video in work with children to consultation in schools and these four areas form the main headings for each section in the subsequent chapter of reviewed literature.

### **1.1.2 Child mental health and education policy**

Some children who have social, emotional or mental health (SEMH<sup>1</sup>) needs outside of the ordinary range struggle to cope in mainstream education. It is usually those children that communicate very effectively the bad fit between them and the school environment they find themselves in that are referred to special schools. Cooper (1999) describes emotional and behavioural difficulties as,

“perhaps best seen as a loose collection of characteristics, some of which are located within students; others of which are disorders of the environment in which the student operates (such as the school or the family). The third and probably the most common, category involves the interaction between personal characteristics of students and environmental factors.” (Cooper 1999 p9).

The expression of SEMH characteristics can range from withdrawal, social isolation, school-refusal to a preoccupation with emotional difficulties which disrupts learning, becoming a victim of or perpetrator of bullying, challenging and disruptive behaviour in school, causing damage to property, violence, substance abuse, sexual and other risky behaviour. There are many more forms of behaviour which may fall under the category of SEMH or as it used to be called, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). To some extent the context is relevant to all manifestations of these characteristics as Youell (1999) makes the point that while some children’s needs are not felt to be able to be managed by one mainstream school another may suit them very well (1999 p135).

---

<sup>1</sup> SEMH stands for social, emotional and mental health and is the term which in 2015 following another government paper on child mental health, replaced BESD (Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties) as the term to describe children with difficulties in school.



The Government website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)<sup>2</sup> lists a number of things which may affect a child's ability to learn that would constitute special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which are, "behaviour or ability to socialise, for example they struggle to make friends; reading and writing, for example because they have dyslexia; ability to understand things; concentration levels, for example because they have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); physical ability." This information is intended for parents but it may be that it is a member of staff in a nursery or mainstream primary school who are the first people to have concerns about a child's progress. It would be usual practice to share these concerns with the family and offer support as available and considered suitable in the nursery or school before applying for extra support by pursuing an education, health and care (EHC) plan. An EHC plan is requested through the local authority and identifies educational, health and social needs for those children and young people under the age of 25 whose needs cannot be met by special educational needs support already provided in their nursery, school or college. However, it can take up to sixteen weeks for the local authority to issue a decision about a child's or young person's eligibility for an EHC plan.

The cost of special education provision is such that should other services be able to provide the support a family or child requires while in the mainstream system then it would almost certainly be considered before funding for a place in a special school. It may be that the extremity of the behaviour difficulties the child is displaying is masking some factor related to the family's situation which could be addressed more simply via support outside of the education arena. However, the reasons for a child not managing to cope in nursery or school are rarely limited to one thing and tend to be a blend of emotional, social and increasingly economic factors. Crucially, there will be a period of time during which things are tried and found not to work and possibly other things are tried and then finally, a decision is made to send this child to another school because their first school 'cannot meet their needs'. What effect this has on the child of a period of time when

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs> (last updated 02/12/16)  
Viewed on 11/02/17.

school is not working for them and an alternative provision is being sought is not known. It is likely that for a child in this kind of limbo, school becomes a place of shame and punishment. What does a failure to fit in mean for the child and his family and the child and his teachers? This study seeks to ask such questions – what does it mean for the people involved with the child and how does that meaning affect how they relate to the child and the child’s progress through education.

In 1999 a Department of Health commissioned report of a survey of the ‘The mental health of children and adolescents in Great Britain’ was published<sup>3</sup>. Its main purpose was to produce information on the numbers of children and young people with mental health problems, conduct and emotional disorders based on ICD-10 and DSM-IV<sup>4</sup> criteria across Great Britain. The secondary and tertiary aims of the survey were to determine the effect both on the child and on others and to examine what use children with mental disorders made of health, social care, education and voluntary services. The results showed that ten percent of children aged five to fifteen had a mental disorder and five percent had a conduct disorder and four percent had an emotional disorder. Those children with a disorder showed very high rates of absence from school and were approximately three times more likely than other children to have special needs. The survey was repeated in 2004 with very similar results and the only change was a one percent decline in the proportion of boys aged five to ten who had an emotional disorder.

The ‘Every Child Matters’ (ECM) policy document was published as a green paper in 2003 at the same time as the Lord Laming report into the death of Victoria Climbié who was killed by her aunt and her aunt’s partner. The Laming report identified “weak accountability and poor integration” as reasons why

---

<sup>3</sup> The mental health of children and adolescents in Great Britain, the report of a survey carried out in 1999 by Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics on behalf of the Department of Health, the Scottish Health Executive and the National Assembly for Wales. “The surveyed population comprised children and adolescents, aged 5-15, living in private households in England, Scotland and Wales”

<sup>4</sup> ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases, tenth revision) and DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, fourth revision)

concerns about Victoria Climbié were not acted on in time. The ECM document outlines four preventative themes for supporting children from birth to nineteen years of age; they were,

- more support for families and carers,
- interventions to happen before crisis is reached and to prevent children at risk from being overlooked,
- addressing those factors of ‘weak accountability and poor integration’ which meant that services were not able to save Victoria Climbié’s life,
- to improve the standing and conditions of those working with children.

Following legislation of the Children Act 2004, which ensured a statutory requirement for services to prioritise the needs of children and families, there was the publication of ‘Every Child Matters: Change for Children’ in November 2004 and the five outcomes around which support should be structured for children and young people from birth to age nineteen to ensure their wellbeing. The five outcomes are to be healthy, to stay safe, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic wellbeing.

In 2005 the then Department for Education and Skills<sup>5</sup> implemented a National Curriculum for the teaching of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). This decision was based on a movement to research the teaching of emotional literacy sparked by Daniel Goleman’s (1995) bestseller, *Emotional Intelligence – Why it Can Matter More than IQ*, and culminating in a research report commissioned by the then DES, (Weare and Gray, 2003) which suggested that emotional literacy should be taught in schools. The idea was that the means to become a warm, empathic person, capable of forming good personal relationships could be taught in schools under the subject heading of ‘emotional and social competence’ and that this should be regarded as being as important as learning to read, write and do arithmetic. Price (2009) deals with the notion of the teaching of emotional literacy as the fourth “R” as an example of a label being applied to something already familiar to those working in the field, in this case,

---

<sup>5</sup> This department became the Department for Children, Schools and Families or DSCF.

teachers who through experience of having things imposed upon them get on with the business of making it work for them and the children they are teaching.

The Munro (2011)<sup>6</sup> review of child protection argued that reactive services were less effective than preventative measures in reducing abuse and neglect. This led to a change of focus for local authorities whose response to the review was to begin establishing 'early help services' to intervene as soon as problems become apparent. Ofsted published an inspection of early help services called 'Early help: Whose responsibility' (2015) which found that Government, Local authorities and their partner agencies still needed to make improvements to early help services. The report recommended that roles and responsibilities were specified, that adequate provision was ensured, and that this was published annually and that the evaluation, training and monitoring of services was improved.

For some children starting school or nursery coincides with concerns being raised about their wellbeing. If help can be provided early enough then there is a chance that problems can be resolved or ameliorated before they become entrenched. However, policies directed at providing early help also need to be backed up by resources to be effective.

### **1.1.3 Latency age children**

The children in this study are all between five and seven years old which puts them in the developmental period of latency though some of them, as will be shown later, are clearly operating at earlier developmental stages. This is not unusual even for children in the general school population where development takes a 'one step forward and two back' progression in response to the demands of separating from parents or carers and starting school. The latency period of development spans the years from five to twelve years of age. Although latency is a developmental achievement it can be returned to later in life when a

---

<sup>6</sup> Professor Eileen Munro, Munro review of child protection: final report – a child-centred system, Department for Education, 2011; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/munro-review-of-child-protection-final-report-a-child-centred-system](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/munro-review-of-child-protection-final-report-a-child-centred-system).

necessary defensive separation from overwhelming anxiety is required (Edwards 1999). Within this span of approximately eight years there are broadly three phases of early, middle and late latency. The term latency refers to a setting aside or redirecting of the more turbulent aspects of development, aggression and sexuality in favour of a period of organisation and calm in which learning can come to the fore and new skills such as learning to read and write can be acquired in relative peace.

“The laying down of this emotional provision is the central undertaking of these years. At the same time it furnishes the individual child with a sufficiently strong sense of inner identity to enable him to undertake the psycho-social tasks of, for example, going to school in the first place, at five, and contemplating “big school”, at eleven.” (Waddell 2002 p82)

Latency age children often show great interest in crazes or collections such as ‘Moshi Monsters’<sup>7</sup> and the ‘augmented reality game’ Pokemon Go. Games such as these exploit all aspects of latency child’s play such as the desire to find and trade rare examples of Moshlings or Pokemon characters, join clubs where they can compete with and share information with other players, the possibility to customise their own collection and also lots of opportunity to buy merchandising associated with the games. Minecraft<sup>8</sup> is a very popular game among latency age children as it offers the possibility to build worlds with the choice to play it in a creative or a destructive way. The game uses virtual building blocks that tap into the desire for order that fascinates latency age children. All the games above are designed for children and are played online, and are a reflection of the increasing influence of the Internet in children’s lives.

For the latency child feelings that are difficult to deal with are easily split off and located in others or outside of their group. Keeping anxiety away comes at a cost as redirected fears about, aliens or burglars at night are very common at this age. Children’s literature such as ‘Matilda’ (Dahl 1988) and the Alex Rider Series

---

<sup>7</sup> © [Mind Candy Ltd](#). Moshi Monsters is a trademark of Mind Candy Ltd. All rights reserved. Pokemon Go is owned by Niantic Inc.

<sup>8</sup> Minecraft is the property of Mojang AB.

(Horowitz 2001) both feature children who set about solving problems by themselves. The adult characters play either the villains or absent parental figures while the children are left to get on with the really exciting or important stuff and illustrates the latency 'state of mind' (Edwards 1999) quite well. Groups play a very important role for latency children as they can use them in symbolic play to explore inhabiting different roles. Canham (2006) explains this,

“What is going on in the group also illustrates the importance of play for children in latency as a means by which they can externalise and explore conflict. In play, children can explore aspects both of themselves and of other people.” (p50)

Children of this age continue to think in a rather literal and concrete way and are still in need of comfort to help them manage being away from home. Their teacher is still a very important person to them at this time and the same applies to the four child participants here.

#### **1.1.4 The participants**

The children in this study were chosen because the teachers had questions about the meaning of their behaviour. They are an ethnically diverse subset of the children in the Early Years department of an SEMH school in the suburbs of a major city in the UK. They are Simon who is of Indian ethnicity, Errol who is of black Caribbean ethnicity, Danny who is of mixed heritage, black South Asian and Karim who is of North African ethnicity. All four boys are the subject of an education and healthcare plan (EHC) as are all the children in the school. Although they all share some characteristics in common such as that they all struggle with their behaviour in their mainstream schools, they are very different in their presentation.

Six-year-old Simon, speaks rarely and isolates himself in play often laying on the floor. He is rather clumsy and on the occasions when he is encouraged to join the other children in an activity he can be inadvertently destructive. He appears rather cut off and as though he is not listening and frequently shows an intense

interest in inanimate objects such as a particular type of felt-tip pen. He has one older female sibling and they live with both parents.

The other child in the same class as Simon is Karim who is six and of North African ethnicity. He shows signs of hyper-vigilance because he is constantly on the alert for danger and has frequent conflicts with other children in the class. The staff say that they often experience him as manipulative and unaffectionate. He lives with his single mother and they have little support as a family and have experienced lots of difficulties with housing which has meant that they have had to move accommodation a number of times.

In the other class there is Errol who is a year younger than the other children at five years old and has significant learning delay. He is demanding of attention of the staff and often engages them in long explanations which are frequently very hard to understand. Like Karim he is an only child in a single parent family being cared for by his very busy working mother.

The other child being observed in this class is Danny, also five years old, who is a quiet boy who has very rigid behaviours and routines. He appears not to understand social cues in the way the other children do and is often unaware of what the purpose to an activity might be. He copies other children as a way of understanding what is required of him by the staff. Like Simon he has an older female sibling and lives with his parents.

The children in this study along with most of the children in the Early Years Department of this special school have been referred there because their mainstream schools have found their behaviour too difficult to manage. It is accepted by the staff in this school and many of the mainstream schools that some of the behaviour may have been caused by or be masking other difficulties with speech and language or social communication problems. Less accepted particularly by some of their mainstream schools, is the notion that these children have developed strategies for coping with their situation which can appear like autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The teachers, Ms Lareina and Ms Eastman are very experienced in working with young children and combined have about fifteen years of experience in the school. Beyond their teaching qualifications they have both studied a psychoanalytically informed Masters level course and have a lot of experience in training other professionals engaged in work within special education provision and with early years children. Each of the two classes also has a nursery nurse, Ms Farrington in Ms Lareina's class and Ms Lewis in Ms Eastman's class. They too, though newer to the school, each have a great deal of experience in work with young children. For ease of reference all four members of staff are referred to as teachers throughout this thesis. This group of four teaching staff are also well accustomed to participating in work discussion groups (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) and are relatively at ease with the degree of self-exposure that reflecting on one's own feelings about this kind of work with children can demand. It is important to emphasise that what this study does is to build upon the vast store of knowledge about work with young children that these professionals already possess.

For half a year prior to the start of the study and until its conclusion the observer/researcher led the work discussion group for the Early Years department so the staff knew the observer/researcher well before the observations began. The researcher was also quite well known, if not by name, then by sight by many of the children as she was based in the school and used a room in the Early Years department. This has an important bearing on the study as the process could have been very different with an observer/researcher who was unknown to the teachers and pupils. In that scenario the impact on the children would have been minimal but the staff may have had concerns that were difficult to express about the researcher's observations of children if that person knew nothing about the children previously. In this case, these were the same children that were spoken about during the work discussion groups so that some understanding of their difficulties was present before the observations. For the staff, how they felt about being observed by someone they knew rather than a stranger really depended on the relationship they had with the observer/researcher which was, fortunately, of a friendly, non-judgmental and



collaborative nature, but it was still an uncomfortable experience at times and at others barely noticed.

The observer/researcher was a Child Psychotherapy Trainee at the school between 2012 and 2015 and was well known to the staff as she used a room near their classrooms and held a work discussion group with them weekly between 2014 and 2015. She was a familiar face to most of the children as they saw her in the corridors even if she was not known by name.

## **1.2 Infant and young child observation**

One of the key findings from the practice of infant observation (Bick 1964) is that babies are social beings who are actively trying to communicate with us from a much earlier age than previously recognised (Bick 1968, Brazelton 1977, Reid 1997, Beebe, Lachmann and Jaffe 1997, Beebe and Lachmann 2002, Tronick 2007, Bradley, Selby & Urwin 2012) and that through careful and thoughtful observation we can detect the development of the psyche as it happens (Vallotton 2011). Infant observation (Bick 1964, Miller et al 1989, Sternberg 2005) has long been used in the training of child psychotherapists, but it can also serve as a verifiable research methodology which increasingly forges new links with other fields; joining together previously unconnected areas of knowledge, for example, neuroscience and psychoanalysis (Pally 2000). It can also serve as a therapeutic intervention in itself, particularly with babies from families who are unlikely to engage with other therapy (Houzel 1999). Already there exist a number of important theoretical and clinical contributions to the field of psychotherapy which have been derived from infant observation and these in turn have opened up new areas of interest in the use of infant observational methods in research. There has been a lot of debate for and against infant observation and several criticisms of what can be learnt from it, in particular, its use as a research methodology and these are explored in more depth in the chapter on methodology (Green 2000, Groarke 2008).

Esther Bick introduced infant observation as a part of the training at the Tavistock clinic in 1948. Since then it has become a standard training tool for child

psychotherapists. Bick (1964) states that the patterns observed over a period of time” . . . seem to suggest the working of intra-psychic defensive operations” (1964, p49). If we are observing the physical manifestation of feelings (Damasio 1999) then we can, by repeated observation of the same infant, make reasonable guesses as to the feeling states underlying the observed emotion.

The child psychotherapy training teaches one to use one's feelings about what happens in the relationship with the child patient, our counter-transference, in order to better understand the child's internal experience. It also teaches one to monitor which parts of those feelings belong to the self. Similarly, with infant observation one is able to apply this principle but one cannot verify the accuracy of the observation with the pre-verbal infant. Rustin (1997) says,

“For an hour each week, the infant observer shares the mother and the infant's emotional space, and becomes the recipient of some of the projections which go backwards and forwards between mother, infant, and other family members. . . But there seems little doubt that given careful recording, and self-analysis, this data can generate insight into states of mind of mother and baby in the same way that it does into the 'infantile parts' of the minds of older psychotherapy patients.” (p105)

Sharing these observations and the counter-transference feelings arising from them with others, usually four or five trainees with a tutor in a supervision setting, allows for a parallel process to occur in which the mirror image of the affect may be induced in those observers of the observed material.

### **1.3 Ethical considerations**

The ethical considerations when studying such vulnerable children as these meant that decisions had to be made about how the data would be kept for how long and who would have access to the images. This information was given to the children's parents and teachers before the start of the project in the period between receiving ethical consent from the university research ethics board and before requesting consent from the participants (see Appendix B for information

sheets and consent forms). Teaching assistants visiting from mainstream schools were also asked for consent. Any references to the identity of the school were obscured and all the individuals in the study were given pseudonyms. Access to the video and audio material had to be severely restricted as this could not practically be anonymised. This material will be destroyed securely after three years. It was also necessary to obscure the faces of the children in the still shots from the video in the two chapters of findings. The teachers were asked if they would also like to have their faces obscured in the stills but they were happy for them to remain visible.

In the next chapter I review the literature that is of relevance to this research topic covering observation, early learning, the use of video and consultation in schools. Then in the following chapter I outline research methodology used which was a thematic analysis and an ethno-methodological conversation analysis on smaller portions of extracts of data already identified as exemplars of the derived themes. The next two chapters cover the findings from the study and are titled *What goes on in the classroom* and *How the teachers used the process*. Chapter six presents the summary and conclusions, evaluation of study design and methodology and implications for policy/practice in future research.

## **2. Literature review**

This literature review spans four areas: the use of observation in work with children, early learning, the use of video, and consultation in schools and each one will be dealt with under a separate heading. This study seeks to explore the possibility of formalising the use of school observation from a psychoanalytic perspective. The scope of the review of literature on observation in work with children extends beyond work in schools and includes the use of psychoanalytic observation with babies and young children, and as a therapeutic intervention as all these areas are particularly relevant to the study in question. However, the use of observation in schools is limited to those studies which emphasise the emotional content of the interaction as an active ingredient in the learning process and excludes the literature which primarily looks at educational approaches. It includes one paper on observations of classrooms by Nash in 1973 and another seven papers produced in the last ten years. Observation is used widely in all spheres of work with children and its use as a pre-diagnostic tool and as a means of beginning the process of understanding is broadly accepted. Similarly, the role of the teacher being of great importance in a child's learning is also universally recognised and is not in question in the literature. There is also a general agreement on the beneficial effect of an observer offering a third position or alternative view on what it is that happens in the dyadic relationship between the child and the adult. There are other points which are disputed such as the validity of inferences from single case studies and the degree to which a participant can be said to be an observer.

Literature relating to learning is chosen to show the processes which underpin the capacity to learn and how this relates to the developmental stages of childhood. There are also papers relating to the barriers to learning. Psychoanalytic views about the growth of early learning and the impediments to learning are evidenced by the many case studies which support these theories but also provide a framework for evaluating this research.

The use of video in work in schools and with children in other settings is vast and has here been limited to that which links with the other areas of this review i.e.

observation and therapeutic interventions and some visual studies in naturalistic settings. The use of video is a helpful addition to traditional methods of recording what is observed and increasingly commands a more prominent place in the process perhaps reflecting a popular view that video is more reliable than other forms of evidence.

The review of literature concerning consultation work with staff in schools is chosen for its contribution to thinking about the emotional state of children and how this affects their capacity to learn and is limited to those that approach this thinking from a psychoanalytic point of view. It includes eight papers, five of which were produced in the last ten years. There is agreement on the effectiveness of consultation in schools which facilitates a further triangular thinking space particularly where there is confusion or uncertainty (Solomon 2004, 2010). However, there is a question about the boundary between consultation and the therapy room (Maltby 2008).

## **2.1 Use of observation in work with children**

Observation is always from the perspective of the observer and is therefore, subjective and based on our relation to our view of everything else. Perspective is also a philosophical stance about what it means to look out from our own eyes and no one else's (Caper 1999). It touches on what it means to be a separate being, aware of others, and how we understand what is happening when we look at another person and they look back at us. It is deeply rooted in fundamental aspects of the human condition and the philosophical aspects of seeing, and much of what we know about seeing and being seen is learnt in the first few years of life. We looked at faces and expressions, and noted tones in the voice and small movements of the face, and gestures with the hands, and body posture and direction of gaze. We learnt to do this quickly and without apparent effort. We felt something in relation to all of this information without being able to put a label to any of those feelings until we tried to communicate our experience of it. The similarities between an infant's earliest learning and the practice of infant or young child observation are very clear. It follows then that sharing our view of

what we see with others gives depth to our understanding of what is observed. With the increased accessibility of visual media and the tendency to use the image as the message, we will need to develop our thinking and language to be able to communicate our understanding when sharing observations.

Most training in psychoanalytic studies or related fields includes observation which needs to be disengaged from purpose and requires one to observe an infant or young child by allowing oneself to fall into the experience of seeing without looking *for* something. In other words, to be as open to the infant or child's experience as possible. It is a paradox that for observation to be 'useful' it seems to need to start with having virtually no purpose to it at all, i.e. for the observer to have no pre-conceived idea as to how they would use the observation. This is suggestive of a certain passivity where that which is observed enters the mind simply as light and shade and only once it is thought about and shared can something actively be understood, learned or wondered at. However, this is also rather disingenuous as research is rarely undertaken without any thought as to how it might be used. Perhaps a more realistic approach to observation research would be one of being open to the possibility of being surprised by what one learns in the process.

Ideas and hypotheses about early deficit have drawn heavily on infant observation approaches and clinical experience with children. Michael Rustin (2006) mentions Juliet Hopkins' (1996) paper, 'The dangers and deprivations of too-good mothering' and Selma Fraiberg's 'Ghosts in the nursery' (Fraiberg et al 1975) in connection with deficits in containment which have influenced practice with under-fives across many professions. Elsewhere a new way of describing patterns observed in the relationship between infant and carer can be useful when considering the aetiology of later problems such as Gianna Williams (1997) concept of 'Omega function' or 'no-entry' syndrome in relation to anorexia and Stephen Briggs (1997a, 1997b) 'concave, flat and convex' forms of containment which gives a geometry to the infant-carer interface. Theories about the integration of mind and body acquired through infant observation have been influential in work with children with severe developmental difficulties. Rustin (2000 p45) links Maiello's 'Sound Object' (1995) with work by Maria Rhode

(2004), Anne Alvarez (1992) and Genevieve Haag (2000) around integration of psychic function as they use a combination of observational approaches and clinical work with children whose development has not proceeded along optimal lines<sup>9</sup>.

Young child observation (Miller et al 1989) grew out of infant observation and is sometimes seen as the poor relation (Fagan 2014), in part because the setting is often a much more public place than infant observation and therefore it lacks the intimacy of the nursing couple. Also, many young child observations take place in nurseries or schools where several adults interact with the child and this may give the impression that the observation is somehow watered down and less valid.

The reviewed literature has been grouped according to the context in which they were conducted and the first grouping relates to observations in schools. The Tavistock Clinic offers a course<sup>10</sup> aimed at those working in education and a similar course is offered in Vienna which is intended to provide teachers with an understanding of conscious and unconscious processes in their work with children. This is intended to make them better equipped as teachers rather than make them therapists. The teachers in this study were observing themselves and their developing analytic attitude was to be integrated into their teaching role. There are limitations to the degree of observation that is possible in this arrangement given that the teachers already have a task but as in the present study this limitation does not outweigh potential benefit to the child. Diem-Wille (2014) describes the course components as based on the Tavistock model of observation followed by work discussion groups (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) and lists the criteria necessary for evaluating an analytic attitude as: ability to observe, ability to understand, interventions and organising learning arrangements. The paper explores how teachers who are helped to practise observation and work discussion (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) can acquire a psychoanalytic attitude which can inform their work with quite disturbed pupils. A further discussion of this paper takes place in the section on consultation in

---

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, space does not permit a more detailed description of infant observation as used in the areas of clinical work with autism or other developmental problems associated with a deficit in the early relationship.

<sup>10</sup> 'MA in working in education: a psychoanalytic observational approach (D1)'

schools below. In a similar vein, Price (2006) was interested to explore the unconscious processes at play for the child while learning to read and write. Through observation she found that a researcher's attention to psychoanalytically informed thinking and specifically attention to their 'counter-transference' or the feeling evoked in response to the object of study can increase their reflective capacity. This provides valuable information about relationships between the participants. Price (2006) became aware of her own contribution to the transference counter-transference feelings she was studying and found herself caught up in projective-identificatory processes which she was able to think about, albeit, uncomfortably in her discussion of the findings. This study is returned to in the section below on early learning. The experience of receiving a psychoanalytic interpretation of the phenomena an adult can register, when working with a child but cannot make sense of in the relationship, can bring about this kind of learning.

Observation has helped to unearth some unconscious aspects of the teacher-pupil relationship that are often very deeply denied. Nash (1973) observed primary school children in their classrooms and concluded that the teacher's view of their pupils tied in very closely with the children's view of themselves and therefore those children that the teachers expected to do well generally did. Another outcome of the study was that the children were aware of their teacher's perceptions of them as well as the teacher's perceptions of the other pupils in their class. Nash states that,

“It goes without saying that teachers will deny favouring some children at the expense of others. But it is rather less obvious why they invariably deny having likes and dislikes about children and always claim to be scrupulously fair towards them all. It is wishful thinking of the most naïve kind to believe this.” (Nash 1973 p294)

He also states that,



“There is evidence<sup>11</sup> that a child’s self-perception is strongly influenced by the teacher’s perceptions of him.” (Nash 1973 p294)

Then, as now, it was well known that, “Children growing up in poverty and disadvantage are less likely to do well at school.” (Hirsch 2007). Nash queried the reasons for this suggesting that this failure to succeed in school was assumed to lay with the child but he pointed out that the counterpart to these failing children is their teacher. There are theories about the different use of language making it harder for some children to understand their teachers. By the same token some teachers may not be able to adjust their language to the children they teach, and Nash (1973) suggests that trained teachers ought to be able to do this. More than this, the teacher’s expectations of the child seem to be the reason for this underperformance. It is important to state that of the many variables which could lower a teacher’s expectations of a child’s attainment, low morale and stress in the profession, lack of support from the institution and the teacher’s awareness of a child’s disadvantage socially, are but a few.

The next group of studies does not involve teachers and takes a different approach to the use of observation when working with parents, carers. The Gaveriaux, Brizard and Roumegoux (2014) study takes place in a health care centre and describes a protocol which was centred around observations and appointments with the parents and their very young children about whom doctors were concerned. This protocol provided appointments for parents and child together and separately and towards the end an appointment with the referrer. The example concerns a boy about whom there were developmental concerns. The observations were shared with parents and discussed in detail to encourage a space in which to think. Each appointment was a further opportunity to think about the child, and as more was being noticed about him by the workers and shared with the parents it enabled them to think about him in a slightly different way. Once his parents could let go of their anxiety about his development, it was no longer obscuring their view of him. They could see him as he was presenting

---

<sup>11</sup> The evidence Nash refers to here is Brookover and Patterson (1962) *Self-concept of Ability and School Achievement*, Michigan State University Press.

himself to them. This, in turn, meant that he too, could let go of some of his frustration and could take better care of his own safety. The aim here was not to find out but to understand and think in a collaborative way. There is a very small number of observations in this study and the observers are also engaging with parents but like the Diem-Wille (2014) study this limitation is reduced by the triangulation of the material with colleagues and then the family.

The teaching of infant observation prepares observers to tolerate not knowing or understanding and that adopting an attitude of receptivity without expectation (Bion 1967) allows for us to be surprised by the projections of the subject of observation as well as our own feelings about what we observe. This type of “thinking in motion” (Gaveriaux, Brizard and Roumegoux 2014), encourages internal spaces in which to think about the child and thereby changes the child’s perception of themselves from being a cause of anxiety into one of being worthy of interest and understanding. The resultant internalised sense of being able to think about their own thoughts as worthy of interest and understanding could result in children developing a more considerate and facilitative superego. Once the workers in the Gaveriaux, Brizard and Roumegoux study (2014) were helped to think about the dynamics of these feelings and to work on them with the family the projections could be taken back and the concerns located in people who could rightfully act upon them.

Seeking meaning for what is happening for a child is a reflective process and arises when adults are helped to think about the child. The process of helping carers to seek meaning is also the subject of Wakelyn’s (2011) paper in which she describes it as creating a ‘virtuous circle’ of interaction. Like Gaveriaux, Brizard and Roumegoux (2014), Wakelyn (2011) also seeks to enhance the capacity of the carer to be receptive to the child’s emotional state and to inform the network. Her study of a baby in foster care, showed that the method of infant observation can be used with a single case as a therapeutic intervention as well as a means of gathering data. Her aim was to explore what might be learned from the observation with a view to informing clinical services. The baby was observed over a period of ten months at weekly intervals. After the observation, she conducted some semi structured interviews with the carers and social

workers. The observations reveal the delicate growth in the relationship between the baby and his Carer and she suggests descriptions for the characteristics of the child carer interaction. Wakelyn (2011) refers to the study as a therapeutic observation which also aimed to highlight some issues in fostering. She talks about therapeutic observation as occurring in response to a need and carried out by someone pro-actively. A strength of this study is the long duration of the observations which would amass a considerable amount of data about the relationship between carer and baby. The containing function provided by Wakelyn in this observation made her a participant. The observer also has to act as a receptor to the experience of the baby within the setting be it a neo-natal ward or special care baby unit. In the Price (2006) study the observer was also a participant in her role as a literacy support teacher and she acknowledges the difficulty of carrying out a dual function.

In the context of nurseries are two studies: Datler et al 2014 and Elfer 2014, which are both featured in 'Young Child Observation' (Adamo and Rustin 2014). From this collection, the Datler et al (2014) study seeks to illuminate the processes which contribute to a child's transition from home care to out of home care using the Tavistock model of young child observation. This study wanted to observe over a hundred children as they moved from care at home to day care elsewhere. The researcher's initial questions were: how does the process of adaptation (or not) to out of home care develop over these first six months, which aspects are helpful or a hindrance regarding the way very young children experience the transitional process, and what are the conclusions to be drawn from the results of the study in terms of the education and training of caregivers. The questions focus rather narrowly on aspects of the children's experience of transition but with such a large sample size some narrowing of focus is necessary. It would be interesting to know if other data collected in this study will be analysed in future. Also, using observation in a nursery, the Elfer (2014) study takes a different perspective comparing approaches to encouraging children's attachments to staff members. This is similar to my study in that it seeks to make use of the potential of the free-flowing narrative style of observation to say something about the young child's experience. Elfer (2014) concludes that observation can help to

determine a child's individual needs and advocates for an individual child-centred approach to attachments over ideological policy decisions. Imposing an ideological approach on staff working with children can stifle their helpful natural instincts as well as inhibiting an otherwise thoughtful professional and encourage social defences against anxiety (Menzies 1970). Elfer (2014) compares the evolving function of nurseries to the current view that they need to combine early-years education, family support and child care for working parents. This reflects a trend in which education generally is expected to take on more responsibility for children's overall health and wellbeing leading to a colonisation of schools by other services (Tucker 2010) as they are required to take on the functions which previously were the domain of other institutions including families.

## **2.2 Early learning**

Saltzberger-Wittenberg (1983) says,

“Our learning, in infancy and for a considerable period, takes place within a dependent relationship to another human being.” (p xiii)

The learning in the first relationship between the baby and the caregiver is driven by the epistemophilic instinct to find out about the mother's body. Youell (2006) notes that the baby does not always like what they find out or innately know. Coran (1997) talks about the necessity of splitting, but that it can also inhibit learning. He says,

“Psychoanalysis can help us understand the journey from learning to want to wanting to learn, and the obstacles along the way.” (p ix)

Bion's (1962) ideas about the theory of thinking are amplified by Coran's (1997) statement that, “One cannot learn or think without some recognition of an absence in oneself.” (p 60). The recognition of a lack in the self that can be supplied by another is integral to learning but requires a foundation in the primary relationship which allows the individual to accept that another has something good to give them.

Following a call for more attention to the relationships between teachers and children “as the place where young children ‘do’ their learning.” (Pollard 1996), Price (2006, p146) sought to continue this line of enquiry and saw these relational and affective dimensions to learning as contributing to the child’s ‘identity as a learner’. She approached her research from a psychoanalytic perspective, choosing to view the unconscious interconnectedness of the child learner to the people and objects in the classroom as a major factor in the child’s expectation and subsequent success or failure in school. Likewise, Burhouse (2014) used psychoanalytically oriented observation to describe the development of three-person relationships which develop out of two-person relationships with the caregiver in the first nine months of life. She contends that ‘primary inter-subjectivity’ (Trevarthen 1975, 1979a, 1979b, 1980) involving lots of ‘face to face’ contact along with some joint attention skills form the basis of triadic thinking which drives curiosity to learn. The infant’s capacity to share interest with, and be interested in, their caregiver is apparent in their enjoyment and curiosity about the external world, a curiosity which seems also to be about the nature of the caregiver’s internal world. This creates a loop of rewarding stimuli in which the infant is an active part.

“The infant learns through this type of exchange (via intra-psycho mechanisms of projection, introjection, and projective identification and sensory-motor action, etc.) that people are “psychological” beings – that is, capable of sharing and communicating mental and affective states with others.” (Burhouse 2014 p262).

The child becomes aware of themselves as held in mind by the caregiver which in turn allows for an idea that even when apart this can continue at a distance.

“Central to this is the infant’s ability to form links on several different levels: first, between two external objects and himself, second, between internal thoughts, phantasies, and external reality, and, third, over time and space.” (Burhouse 2014 p261)

The development of triangular relationships involves lots of intense feelings on the way to oedipal resolution and to a position of self-observation. Burhouse

conducted a single case study in the child's home and it is therefore limited to describing the experience of one child. The observer was present in the room with the child and therefore could be viewed as a participant which would also have an influence on the observation. However, these possible limitations are mitigated for by the long duration of the observation along with discussion of the material in a group.

Studies of classroom interaction were reviewed by Wolfe and Alexander (2008) to explore the possibilities and needs of new ways of teaching and learning in which teachers give more value to speaking and listening in the classroom. This 'dialogic teaching' rather than the more traditional approach requires teachers to become guides in learning and the process is closer to a conversation. The observations in my study feature a lot of learning through conversation and the teachers expressed a desire to have more time to converse with the children. "Psychotherapy and education are at best, or at least, conversations with another." (Coran 1997 p ix). Margaret Rustin (2011) refers to the teacher-learner relationship as,

". . . full of intensity. It concerns giving and receiving, reciprocity, dependence, growth and conflict – all primary human experiences, which arouse profound feelings." (p1)

If the 'where' of learning takes place in the relationship with the teacher and the things in the classroom, the 'what' of learning, its substance, also needs to be defined.

What the child takes in, as Barlow (1990) cautions, is strongly constrained by what they perceive, and is dependent upon what they have experienced. This point is more easily illustrated by considering the process of early learning when it has been disturbed as can happen when a depressed mother, for example, is unable to provide the kind of containment and reverie (Bion 1962) that the baby needs. Often a baby will intensify his efforts to gain access to his mother's mind to be understood and have his experience made manageable for him. The baby may unconsciously experience his mother's inability to receive his communication as wilfully misunderstanding him resulting in the intensification of

feelings of persecution. Increased attempts to gain the attention of an unresponsive mother can appear like ADHD. Emanuel (2008) describes how children with such difficult early experiences can seem disruptive or depressed themselves later in school and have problems with concentration and attentiveness.

“In the classroom one can later see an inert, seemingly empty unresponsive child, whom teachers describe as difficult to ‘get through to’.” (Emanuel 2008 p140).

Another response of the child might be a flight from feelings of dependency and helplessness to one of control and precocious self-sufficiency where the child finds it extremely hard to be in the position of not knowing as this makes them feel extremely anxious. Margaret Rustin (2011) defines the kind of containment required when the task is the growth of the mind,

“The containment that I am describing is that of the anxieties that are inherent in the demands posed by learning – not a responsive process of holding things in to prevent disorder (containment understood as a policing function), but a more fluid and responsive openness to the painful disturbance of learning.” (p2)

Prior to this stage of development is the birth of thought. Bion (1962) suggested that “thinking connotes frustration”, and that there is a need for the mother’s reverie and containment to digest the experience for the baby and when these functions are not present the child is left with “nameless dread”.

For a learner to be curious is risky as it requires “. . . the ability to risk the suspension of an idea in the search for something new.” (Coran 1997 p70). However, the risk is worth taking as,

“It may well be that the most formative experience in education is in learning something quite different from what has been taught; that is, as in the interaction between parent and child which produces something novel.” (Coran 1997 p70)

In relation to Bion's ideas about the relationship between container and that which is contained Sutton (2014) describes a dynamic relationship that,

“Applying Klein's theory of the internal world (1958) to this thinking gives rise to the idea that the child will take in not only the content of any one particular example of this process of attributing meaning, but the nature and qualities of the process itself - what the containing relationship feels like.”  
(Sutton 2014 p12)

These ideas suggest that taking in something of the process itself seems to provide a base level of meaning upon which all further learning depends. Furthermore, the process of meaning-making is a mutual one and is also dependent upon the quality of the relationship with the other.

The purpose of education is beyond the scope of this study but Coran (1997) notes that it can be sought as a means of personal transformation which is not about the search for knowledge or surprise at finding out but rather an illusion of metamorphosis,

“. . . transformational object seeking is an endless memorial search for something in the future that resides in the past . . .” (Bollas 1987 p40)

Coran (1997) says of this “Consequently, the process embodies concurrent hope and disappointment.” (p 76)

The phantasy of a perfectly synchronised dyad is possible but the reality is not and moments of miss-steps (Stern 1977) or de-synchronous behaviour help the child to learn about differences aided by tricking, teasing and joking. This in turn helps the child recognise that they are separate and that the other has a separate mind which can be thought about and therefore can have different thoughts to one's self.

In France, Houzel (1999), began using infant observation with high risk families and then offered individual psychotherapy when the children were two years of age. This intervention sought to tread a fine line between appearing helpful but not intrusive; developing trust through consistency of visits and observing unobtrusively with the aim of treating “dysfunctional interactions in the primary



relationship between mother and infant” (Rustin 2006 p46). This method provides containment through the presence of a thinking adult and supports a mother's capacity to give attention.

Children in a classroom need to have established an early dyadic learning relationship before starting school to derive any benefit from the group experience of a class of their peers. If they have not achieved this developmental task because of trauma or some other deficit in their young lives, then other children can be perceived as rivals for the teacher's attention and this poses a significant barrier to learning. When development into latency is not typical or does not proceed on healthy lines and the helpful defences of latency are not established, the calm that children need during this period to be able to learn is missing. They are unable to employ helpful defences that split off difficult feelings about sexuality and aggression and allow them to act them out through play. It may be that play is not yet possible for some children. Canham (2006) talks about a 'failure of latency',

“ . . . children whose real-life experiences clamour for attention in ways that cannot be ignored. These cannot wait, and they intrude relentlessly into every facet of the child's life. These children carry around such painful undigested feelings that they cannot achieve the state of mind necessary for concentrating in class, doing homework, having friendships . . .” (p56)

Without the calm of latency following babyhood many children are forced into a premature adolescence or adulthood which means there has been no opportunity to sort out the kinds of feelings described above. School with its routines and consistent adults can lessen the impact of this deficit as it often provides the only secure and predictable environment for these children. Canham (2006) calls for a delay on the introduction of adolescent media or merchandise which further curtails the latency period.

Learning and forming relationships with teachers and peers for those children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties is particularly hard. Their disturbance means that they cannot make good use of the education on offer to them and are hard to manage in a mainstream school environment as they also

disrupt the learning of others. These difficulties often run alongside problems within their families or in the community. Youell (1999) describes the observed phenomena that children with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties are hard to teach, to parent and to treat in psychotherapy as often they cannot or will not allow themselves to be helped. Youell (1999) states that the EBD population is over represented with children in care, and those who have been neglected, abused or traumatised. The experience of early trauma leaves some children living with an internal hypersensitivity and hyperarousal (Youell 1999). She talks about the perception among teachers that a small group for a child with EBD is thought to be something the child would prefer but in fact, it can replicate a very painful family situation,

“Feelings of rivalry with siblings, of competing for parental attention, of oedipal conflict, are stirred up in a most powerful way. The child is incapable of managing what is an explosive cocktail of unconscious memories of past experiences and current emotions.” (Youell 1999 p137)

Before a child can take in that which the teacher offers they have first to have internalised a sense of being thought about by a receptive other. This is required for the process of thinking to begin and for thinking thoughts to become a tolerable activity. Internalising the process of thinking and developing a sense of the pleasure that the resultant interaction with the other entails is a necessary precursor for a child to be receptive to learning. If these stages are not already in place when the child begins school, they are unlikely to be easily re-built in a class of thirty ordinarily demanding children.

The next section looks at the use of video in observation and its pervasive influence on modern life.

## 2.3 The Use of Video

Currently two thirds of the people in this country own a smart phone<sup>12</sup> with applications like Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp and Kik which allow access to sophisticated messaging, capture, manipulation and sharing of images. The popularity of these applications is fuelled by the desire to communicate via visual imagery and for some has become more commonplace than speaking. A recent report<sup>13</sup> found that one third of users of the internet are under eighteen, and the part it plays in the lives of under-fives has increased from six hours forty-eight minutes to eight hours eighteen minutes a week in one year. The use of visual imagery among children and young people is changing as concerns about the use of their images and other data by major corporations has increased. There is a movement away from the social media giants model of encouraging their users to show an online profile depicting their life as they would like it to be rather than how it is, in reality, to something more 'of the moment' and less staged via messaging applications (apps) mentioned above. This is a refreshing move by young people striking out on their own away from the "establishment" of social media corporations which encouraged their parents and grandparents to join up. This shift in use of new media has fuelled the popularity of apps which suit a more immediate and ephemeral kind of communication where often the image is the message and images can be built into stories which persist for twenty-four hours before disappearing, as on Snapchat. These images may not disappear completely and can be stored via other means which arouses concern about the vulnerability of young people when using such apps. Children who have grown up in this digital age use this imagery with the same ease that previous generations produced hand-drawn pictures to be given away and with no expectation that they would be troubled by them at the time or later as adults. Images and video clips could be regarded as new toys to be played with, shared, thought about and discarded.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ofcom's 2015 Communications Market Report, published on 6 August 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Children's Commissioner (2017) A report of the Growing up digital Taskforce downloaded from [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk) 11/02/17

There is a tendency to record images of events, perhaps to provide proof of what we say we have seen or done ('pics or it didn't happen'). Recording an event provides a place to store the experience almost as a kind of external memory. Perhaps filming an event on a smart-phone is an unconscious acknowledgement of being unable to think about what is seen and posting the images to be thought about by others online relieves one of the effort and responsibility involved in trying to understand. Another perspective might be that once recorded events can be defensively relegated to the realm of entertainment. At the dawn of the digital revolution in 1980 Jay Ruby said prophetically,

“we have invented devices which can freeze time and memory and allow us to see things in a way that the unaided eye will never see, devices which allow us to tell each other stories about our world. Increasingly, we are coming to know the world through the symbolically mediated versions of it we make for each other’ (Ruby 1980, p173)

Perhaps the apparent ease with which the current digital generation interpret, contextualise and understand an image is something that older generations must learn in order to cope with its inherent difficulties. As the use of technology is becoming more embedded in the lives of younger children, the ethical and moral issues associated with images become more complex and this is the subject of next section.

The ethics and morals of imagery is not a new area as one hundred years ago Stalin had people removed from photographic images as they fell out of favour during the Russian revolution. However, the ease with which visual images can now be produced and spread especially those of and by children makes this an issue for everyone. A reaction to this could be a form of “visual determinism” in which all images are banned as in Plato’s Republic where he advocates banning artists because of concerns about the power of images.

A visual study presenting complex ethical considerations was made by Davidov (2004) filming at Ground Zero<sup>14</sup>. This study was a documentary film called

---

<sup>14</sup> Ground Zero is the name given to the site of the collapsed World Trade Center towers in New York following the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 attack.

September Signs and Symbols which focussed on the objects created and sold to commemorate the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York. Some of the objects Davidov filmed had been appended with other meanings. There were images of the World Trade Center with symbols of patriotism such as the American flag, or military aircraft as symbols of war. She wanted to draw attention to this joining of 9/11 symbols with those of the War on Terror. She says, "Documenting this discourse meant that I was inscribing myself in it, and throughout filming I was forced to interrogate my own complicity in the practices I was trying to deconstruct." (p162). She said that she,

"was sharply aware that the cameras surrounding me became either media of production, or media of consumption. The lenses of the mass media were constantly producing the site as Ground Zero for a spot on the nightly news . . . while the tourists capturing the static construction site behind the fence . . . and the goings on around them with their cameras, were consuming Ground Zero," (p162).

Davidov (2004) also had to consider her responsibility to the subjects of her film, the street vendors and their customers, those making money from "the circulation of images and the objectification of memory" and its consumers, as well as accepting that she herself featured in both roles. She resolved this issue by placing the ethical discussion at a point where all her experience and training came together with her personal views and relationships with the subjects. This use of an informed personal and professional responsibility for the practice of image production and consumption assumes the three core principles of ethical standards in research involving human subjects: respect for individuals' rights, beneficence and justice, do no harm, and fairness. (Belmont Report 1979<sup>15</sup>). The International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA) publishes its own Code of Research Ethics and Guidelines ([www.visualsociology.org](http://www.visualsociology.org)) which lays down the

---

<sup>15</sup> The Belmont Report (1979) grew out of a series of revisions of ethical codes in biomedical research originating with the Nuremberg War Tribunal (1947) which tried a group of German doctors and their staff for war crimes and crimes against humanity involving procedures carried out on concentration camp prisoners without their consent.

principles and ethical standards for conducting visual research and is applicable to many professions including Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy.

The use of video in this study required careful consideration of the treatment of the images of the child participants as well as the adults (see section 1.3).

Edoardo Gianotti (2002) produced powerful photographic images of children working in harsh conditions in gold mines in the Peruvian mountains. Gianotti's images and those of other visitors to the area prompted intervention to assist the workers and their families with unintended consequences. He describes how the images of children working inside the mine had more impact than those out in the daylight, and therefore quite possibly focussed the relief in this area. Whilst the children were relieved of their heavy toil inside the mine it meant that those children were then put to work on the refining of the ore which exposed them to harmful material and was potentially more hazardous to their health. However, Gianotti maintains,

“The intention to depict the worst form of child labour has taken me to places rarely visited by reporters or photojournalists, so that through the images I passed information about places that have been almost ignored. The images may further stimulate humanitarian intervention.” (2004 p133).

Lomax and Casey (1998) investigated the accepted yet opposing beliefs that a record of visual data is a faithful representation of reality and on the other side that data collected in this way distorts what is being observed. People being videoed show a reactive effect to being filmed and it was thought that measures would be required to combat this such as covert filming or the corroboration of the video with other methods of triangulating the data. They filmed midwives at work and found that,

“video text-as-data is neither a representation of social life as it would have occurred had the researcher not been present, but neither is activity so contaminated by the research process as to make the data invalid.” (8.2)

They found that how the process is managed by the researchers and participants can make it a fruitful source of data about the process itself which also enriches

the intended area of study. As Harrison (2002) suggests, "In visual methods, it may be that we have to think about a different kind of 'reactivity', rather than whether it is there or not." A reactivity which gives the possibility of establishing the parameters of normative frameworks.

The observations from behind a screen of the children who were unable to see the observer carried unexpected overtones of voyeurism. The observer/researcher invited a trainee social worker on a training placement in the school to accompany her on the first observations. This involved sharing the room behind the screen with the social worker who had been briefed by the observer/researcher in advance about the project, its aims and the protocols of this kind of observation. In supervision, I realised that I had circumvented my discomfort by appending a training opportunity to the observation. This ensured that I was not alone and staring from behind the screen. I also found myself hiding behind my objective researcher mask and avoiding using 'I' to further distance myself from the voyeuristic eye, the all-powerful eye. (Behar 1996)

Much clinical practice with infants, children and their families in a variety of professional spheres has been, and continues to be influenced by methods developed from infant observational data using cameras, of which Ainsworth's strange situation test (1978) and still-face phenomena observed by Tronick (2007), are just two examples. The Robertson's films of two-year old Laura going to hospital (1952) John, Aged Seventeen Months, for Nine Days in a Residential Nursery (1969) helped to change thinking and policy in the care of young children. Vallotton's (2011) research into infant's signs can inform us about their mental states. She suggests,

"Through infant signing, babies reveal their minds to us; if we are watchful, we can see their worlds from their perspectives. We can see the minds of infants develop in their own everyday contexts." (Vallotton 2011, p130)

The examination of the earliest relationship through infant observation has often suggested an intervention. The signs Vallotton (2011) discusses are communications specific to each infant and with supportive and mindful observation parents can be helped to derive meaning from what their babies are

communicating. This would be very similar to the model on which the Brazelton (1977) method is based.

The Datler et al (2014) study uses a mixed method approach and having a large sample size it was possible to group certain things during the analysis of the video material. However, the video pieces used were quite short, thus limiting the amount of video data, and this design may not have fully exploited the richness of the video data. The study also used young child observation according to the Tavistock model. The central aim was to identify and summarise the ideas and thoughts potentially about points of similarity or difference in the viewing of the material and using video enabled this to be done in such a way that these points could be returned to weeks later (Datler et al 2014).

Bradley, Selby & Urwin's study on 'The Group Life of Babies' (2012) used video to closely observe babies interacting in a group. They observed groups of three or four babies aged between six months and one year while they were secured in baby walkers so that they could see and touch one another. The babies were previously unknown to each other. The groups were video recorded in a room alone while parents and observers looked on via CCTV. The babies were observed interacting with one another in a conversation-like structure. One baby was vocalising while the other three looked on before one of the listening babies took over as the speaker. Some of the babies reached out to touch a neighbour, make eye contact and smile or wave. They appeared to be engaging in very ordinary social contact. The researchers concluded that previous views of infant social interaction as dyadic were now challenged by this "clan infant . . . who needs not just one but several others, and who can manage interactions with several at the same time." (Bradley, Selby & Urwin 2012 p147). Whilst adults may not be designed to relate to numerous children at once (Elfer 2014), there is a need for adults to provide opportunities for young children to participate in groups and it would seem that there is a desire in babies to relate to a group of others (Bradley, Selby & Urwin 2012). Rustin (2006 p50) calls for more research to be carried out using infant observational material gathered for educative purposes. There is still much more to be observed and understood about early life and child development and video can play an integral part in this.



Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) is based on the work of Harrie Biemans and colleagues in the Netherlands that began as Video Home Training (VHT) (Biemans, 1990). Since it was originally conceived other ways of using the method have been developed such as Video feedback Intervention to promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline (VIPPS-SD) which is a preventative intervention aimed at increasing parental sensitivity. Video feedback and intervention is defined by the non-intrusive use of video and video feedback and was developed as a means of demonstrating to parents the times when they are positively in tune with their children. As such, it is a 'strengths-based' intervention designed to be collaborative and build confidence in parent's capacity to relate in an enjoyable way with their children. It is based on the premise that seeing video of oneself has a much greater learning effect than watching or listening to someone else.

There is now a body of what is widely considered to be the 'gold standard' evidence (randomised control trials) to support the use of various types of video feedback and interaction as a therapeutic intervention. In some respects, the camera represents an internal third space for reflection and learning, occupying a place inside the mind of the object and then the subject. It highlights the difference between the internal and external world view. Video feedback and interaction is frequently referred to as promoting healthy attachment between parents and children and in work with parents who have been labelled as highly resistant (Forrester et al 2012). It is logical to see that the necessity of having another adult present while filming sequences of parent and child interaction could have a containing and facilitative effect on the relationship but this effect is also seen in many other interventions such as Wakelyn (2011) and Houzel (1999) to name but two, and is also a commonplace occurrence of ordinary family life. Where Video feedback and interaction succeeds is in building the confidence of parents so that the person delivering the intervention is trusted by the family and robust enough to challenge some of the less helpful aspects of their parenting, thereby, allowing for a more questioning and exploratory state of mind to develop. It is a delicate process to address what may be a profound ambivalence in

severely disturbed people towards the helping relationship and is largely dependent on the quality of the relationship between the adults.

There is a similarity with video feedback and interaction and the aims of psychoanalysis in the way that psychoanalytic psychotherapy seeks to develop a third space within the mind of the recipient through the relationship and interpretation of the transference as it happens in the therapy. What Video feedback and interaction is unable to do however, is to work with children for whom this capacity to develop a third place is even more compromised by their disturbance such as those with SEMH difficulties. Perhaps there is a place for video in child psychotherapy sessions which might, for example, only use the visual images to share with the child a very literal example of that third position. There are benefits to this along with many ethical considerations and theoretical objections. In cases of work with the most vulnerable children it could also provide a safer framework for both the child and the child psychotherapist.

The vulnerable children in this study have first to learn how to learn, and then to develop the capacity to attend to the learning task before they can have a relationship with the task of learning which also involves regarding themselves as learners. The next section looks at consultation in schools.

## **2.4 Consultation in schools**

The Tavistock model of consultation in schools is based on an observational approach to thinking about work with children so these two areas are closely linked. Harris (1987) describes a 'Consultation project in a comprehensive school' with the aim of seeing how the school might benefit from the specialised knowledge of two experienced child psychotherapists. At the end of the project the two consultants, Martha Harris and Edna O'Shaughnessy found that there were many long and enduring difficulties within families who would be very unlikely to access mental health services in any other way. They also found it challenging to find the time and space within the organisation of the school to address individual problems. However, despite these difficulties they realised the

potential of the school to provide a dual function as an educative and therapeutic institution for its pupils. Though this project took place half a century ago the challenges and difficulties are generally the same despite the arrival in 1994 of the role of 'Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, (SENCO). This was created to ensure that each school had dedicated staff to ensure that children's special needs were addressed. In recent years it has become a matter of government policy that schools are required to show what they are doing to support the 'wellbeing' of the children they also teach<sup>16</sup>. Solomon and Nashat (2010) describe a 'therapeutic presence' in schools in their conceptual framework for psychoanalytically-informed work in education and argue that such a 'presence' when embedded in a school is better placed to provide an integrated mental health service within that school community.

Integrating mental health and education is complicated by many variables both on an individual and organisational level. When a child psychotherapist consults to school staff in the Tavistock model, the teachers are requested to carefully record an account of their interactions and thoughts about an individual child during the school day (Emanuel 1999). Importantly, the teachers are encouraged to detail their feeling states in response to the child as this can be an indicator of the child's state of mind. Jackson (2008) describes how after a successful establishment of such a work group the staff begin to incorporate the containing function of the work discussion group (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) and to provide it for themselves.

Working outside of a clinic environment is challenging as it requires some accommodation to the setting and in a school setting movement is constant as children progress through and eventually out of the school. Maltby (2008) considers the prevalence of issues of change and loss in her work as a consultant with children, parents and staff in school settings and this is returned to below. More recently, Evans (2013) discusses her work with SENCOs in three primary schools who were the subject of powerful projections from the children they worked with and these were in turn projected onto her as the consultant. She

---

<sup>16</sup> In 2008 the government introduced a three-year model for Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) with the aim of encouraging development of new ways of supporting child mental health.

describes her role as a consultant as helping to contain the SENCOs anxieties to be able to manage the projections from the pupils. These papers along with a discussion of the work of Datler et al (2014), Elfer (2014), Gaveriaux, Brizard and Roumegoux (2014) and Diem-Wille (2014) will be dealt with in more detail below.

Datler et al (2014) go into particular detail about the seminar group discussion of each of the observations. A group member is tasked with taking notes of this discussion as she says,

“The note taker faces the task of re-visualising, once more the process of the discussion of the account and recasting it once again in his or her mind.”  
(p285)

In this case the group is trying to find answers to specific questions which can then also be reframed. A young girl was observed in her nursery and she appears to cope but after discussion in the seminar group it was pointed out that perhaps it was harder for her than had at first been thought because she ran away from her mother before her mother could leave the nursery. She also played with toys she could connect together as though symbolically trying to repair the separation of herself and her parents and she was also rather ambivalent on her mother's return.

As there were certain questions to be addressed by the study it was important that they were not answered too early in the process. This study has similarities to the present one in that it was staged, so that the researchers had to avoid seeking answers to the research questions too early in the process. The present study had a review stage to consider, with the teachers, the question of how helpful the process had been. A difference between the Datler et al (2014) study and the present study is that the themes had already been chosen in the Datler study and the material had to be adapted with this in mind, leading towards and making a connection with the third phase of the project. This study is an adaptation of this process as the exploration of the observation with the teacher takes the place of a group. The recorded and later transcribed notes from the exploration session are the account of our attempt (the teachers and my own) to

reconstruct the observation in our minds and to discuss it together and think about our differing perceptions of the same events with the children.

Elfer (2014) maintains that discussion and support to think about detailed observational data of young children based on the Tavistock model can improve outcomes for children. With this kind of support staff can be helped to better represent the individual child's needs by increasing their capacity to reflect on their relationship with the child. Similarly, the Diem-Wille (2014) study of the experiences of those in the Viennese training<sup>17</sup>, found the most important outcome cited was that the teachers had to use fewer sanctions with children. This was because they found that given time and space with the children they were better equipped to resolve difficulties. Their training and work discussion groups (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) allowed them to compare such experiences and therefore make links possible for this learning to take place.

Jackson (2008) found that the staff group become so habituated to a work discussion group that it becomes part of the culture of the school. He stresses the importance of the structure and setting up of work discussion groups with staff to ensure that any misconceptions about the meaning of the group can be dispelled early in the process. The time spent setting up the group in terms of boundaries, context and structural issues, according to Jackson, is vital to the group's viability. Jackson (2008) describes,

“. . . the most compelling benefit and outcome of the work discussion is the sense of validation, being understood and accepted, that is frequently reported by group members after having shared their concerns. Indeed, a key aim of work discussion groups is to create a forum in which workers feel able to share issues, concerns, and preoccupations that they would previously not have wanted others to know about – for instance due to shame, fear or exposure, or possible criticism.” (Jackson 2008 p59).

---

<sup>17</sup> A training for those working in education based on the Tavistock model of observation followed by work discussion (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) groups.

He talks about the teachers learning to view the feelings their pupils evoked in them as possible communication which is enlightening and helps the teachers manage those feelings.

Maltby (2008) describes the experience of engaging a consultant to work in a school where she was the Head Teacher as an, “invaluable support and resource”. Following her own psychoanalytic psychotherapy training, she notes the high frequency of themes of loss and mourning in her work as a consultant with children, parents and staff in school settings. She explores the complexity of the role of consultant in schools and illustrates that by adhering to the psychoanalytic approach whilst also remaining flexible to the setting she helped bring some clarity to the staff’s thinking about children’s experience. A consultant in a school setting is engaged because they are from the ‘outside’ and are invited in precisely for their ‘independent’ perspective, which it is hoped, will help the situation. The consultant, says Maltby (2008), can occupy a place on the edge of the organisation in an area which is between the conscious and unconscious life of the school community. This can help the staff to form their own links between the two and render some of the child’s experience and subsequent behaviour more manageable. This equates to the external perspective in this study of the observer/researcher situated outside of the classroom looking in from behind the screen. Maltby (2008) cautions against crossing the line between consultation and therapy as a, “working on the edge” between internal and external. Difficulties with pupils, she shows, sometimes reawaken the teachers’ personal experience of unresolved loss. Though she describes the use of her transference and counter-transference feelings it was also important to stay in role as well as to be flexible in her consultative work in schools. She found that as so much of her consulting work involved loss that her task was in helping teachers and families to access what was not lost to mobilise their own internal resources.

Emanuel (1999) talks about her consultation with a head teacher of a special school who lamented the lack of job satisfaction among SEND teachers. Emanuel likened this to the low level of satisfaction parents of children with disabilities may feel they get from parenting. This lack of job satisfaction is often

contributed to by a sense of teachers in such institutions being near the bottom of the profession and further undermined by less well qualified but sometimes older and more judgmental assistants and support staff.

“Apparently incomprehensible behaviour began to make sense as staff recognized through discussion that events and details that may be considered irrelevant or unimportant are often imbued with meaning.”  
(Emanuel 1999 p189)

Small changes such as changes in worker and routine and movements from one room to another for breaks and mealtimes were noted as having considerable effect on children. Acknowledging the importance of certain relationships for the children was hard for the teachers to accept when confronted with the impact of changes for the children. “Knowing that it makes a difference who exactly changes the child's nappy, or feeds him, places an extra burden of awareness and thinking on staff.” The children would also try to avoid the pain of the loss of a member of staff who was important to them, “. . . because this involves tolerating anxiety about the possibility of loss and separation.” (Emanuel 1999 p190).

Solomon and Nashat's (2010) innovative framework for a psychoanalytically-informed 'therapeutic presence' in schools is set against what they describe as three clinical approaches to working in and with schools, i.e. that of individual work with children, work discussion group facilitation (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) and organisational consultancy. Often the latter is sought from an external provider. They contend that although the usual referral model emphasises work with individual pupils and or their parent/carer and has a very important place in services in schools, there is an argument that in certain situations other interventions might be indicated which for example may involve the whole school community or subsections of it. On flexibility, they say that therapeutic professionals can “offer informal, spontaneous opportunities to reflect on specific interactions that can promote a dynamic way of thinking” (Solomon and Nashat 2010 p6). They refer to the value teachers place on the opportunity to have an informal conversation about a child's mental health. It seems as though the

informality takes on something of a more collaborative conversation rather than a more formal consultation where the teacher may feel themselves to be in the position of a learner to the therapist's teacher. This could indicate that the teacher undervalues their own knowledge about a pupil's internal world and could be addressed in a work discussion (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) setting. The therapist's role also includes containing projections of unbearable or unprocessed feelings so that teachers can see the communication as signals, clues and intelligence (Armstrong 2004). These be received, processed and returned in a digested form rather than reacted to (Bion 1962).

Evans (2013) work with a group of SENCOs found that she and the SENCOs as well as the children they worked felt themselves to be on the edge of the school. This sense of being on edge of the school was a projection of the children's concept of themselves as troublesome and unwanted by the school and can sometimes have some basis in external reality if the child is close to permanent exclusion. But, she suggests, it can also hook into something the SENCOs felt about being undervalued. The SENCOs may have experienced themselves as failing by not managing to 'fix' the children. This failure would, in turn arouse fears that the school wanted to get them out too and such that they could even find themselves wishing for the children to leave. This tapping into an unconscious fear of failing in their task makes the projection even easier to take on.

The provision of containment is essential for learning.

“This means containment both at the individual level of the teacher – student relationship, but, more broadly, also at the level of the organization of the learning task and the school as an institution.” (Margaret Rustin 2011)

Is it expecting too much of teachers to become responsible for children's wellbeing as well as their learning? The issues which made it difficult for Martha Harris and Edna O'Shaughnessy in their project in a secondary school in 1968 are still very much the case fifty years later. Government policy recognises the value of mental health in schools and is updated on a regular basis but signally fails to provide the means to implement best practice and instead schools are expected to use existing funds. The fact that learning will not happen for children



who have difficulties of a social, emotional or behavioural nature would suggest that it is not expecting too much of teachers, particularly as many teachers are very aware of what is lacking for their pupils when they come to school. As has been shown above, teachers value and benefit from discussing their thoughts and feelings about the children they teach but they also have many more demands on their time.

This study's purpose was to determine the feasibility of a protocol for collaborative use of written and recorded observational material with teachers. A secondary aim was to examine in detail the aspects of the teacher pupil relationship that promote learning. The reviewed literature sits astride the use of observation and video in informing work with young children and the role of consultation in schools. The literature related to observational studies is grouped according to the context in which the observations were conducted, i.e. schools, nurseries, a clinic and parents or carers home, and what binds them together with this study is the desire to derive the maximum benefit with the least cost or disruption to those being observed. What these studies show is that it is not easy or even desirable to devise a protocol which fits many different contexts. There is also an argument in some situations such as work with severely disturbed children for tailoring an observation to the individual child. They also demonstrate the necessity to take a pragmatic approach to the use of observation of young children so that the ethical and practical considerations do not become insurmountable.

The literature reviewed concurs with the beneficial effect of observation in work with young children. Similarly, the benefits of consultation from a psychoanalytic perspective with schools are also not in question. Although it could be argued that the schools who request this resource are already amenable to this kind of approach and therefore constitute a self-selecting sample. It would seem that some thinking about unconscious processes is welcomed by school staff more readily when they feel supported by all parts of the school. It is also necessary for them to have the time and space to become immersed in such discussions

and this is only possible when the timetable allows sufficient space for such groups. This suggests that thinking about the painful experience of the children with whom they work is something that some teachers feel they can afford to do if the school prioritises their need to have their own feelings about their work acknowledged and contained.

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter will begin with a discussion about observation as data and methodology before going on to outline the structure of the study and the rationale for the choice of study design, the type of data collected and the process of data collection. There are important considerations when designing a study involving observation of such vulnerable groups as young children in a special school and their teachers, and some of these are covered in a section on the role of the observer. The choice of methodologies applied in analysing the data along with their theoretical justification is then detailed followed by a description of the coding process and analysis of the data with worked examples of how the themes were derived and the subsequent incorporation of the video data in support of the thematic analysis. This chapter ends with a discussion about subjectivity, and reflexivity.

#### **3.1 Observation as data**

Psychotherapy research currently follows two different approaches. One is research as justification for the validity of its claims to be effective and tends to use outcome data quantitatively and the other is research as exploration which tends to be qualitative in approach and this is where this study predominantly lies. The principle value of infant observation remains as a way of learning to observe and record sensitively the baby's first days of life and our reaction to it. We have also learned its value in terms of strengthening a mother baby relationship when a parent observes their baby naturally or is helped to appreciate and value the things their baby shows them as part of a therapeutic intervention. What we do when we observe an infant is an important function for them of being held in mind and this function needs to be carried out by a benign and protective individual for the baby to survive psychically and emotionally. This contact changes not only the baby but the observer and has an intersubjective and relational element to it. The observed material also has potential for research purposes even though the content could not be said to constitute a clinical fact (Quinodoz 1994) as it does not occur in the context of a therapy session. Rustin examines the differences

between clinical and observational practice in relation to their use in psychoanalytic research (2012 p16) and notes that infant observation unlike cases of those seeking psychoanalytic treatment is not a self-selecting sample. The infant observation cases are not chosen for their difficulties though some may well become apparent. They are more likely to be representative of the general population and therefore developing into a substantial body of data for possible future research.

Rice and Greenberg (1984) called for a new research methodology that could make use of the clinical experience of therapists in ways which draw out rigorous description of the patterns they observe. The 'Turning point concept' makes the case for the fractal nature of episodes in therapy which contain the same structure regardless of the level of magnification as do many self-organising systems. Lush (2011) argues for the suitability of the turning point concept as a research method,

“As the researcher does not start with a particular story in mind nor does she have the aim of persuading, but rather of investigating what is there, it would seem to be a method more in line with the psychoanalytic process.” (p43).

Lush (2011) reviewed the papers concerning the issue of what is a clinical fact and found a lot of common ground among writers,

“Firstly, central to the concept of clinical facts is the immediate emotional reality of the session. Secondly, as it is widely agreed that it is desirable to include as much of what happened in the session as is possible (primary data) so that the data are open to other interpretations. . . Thirdly, there are widespread misgivings about the traditional style of psychoanalytic case reporting, in which extensive periods of analysis have been covered in a chronological order.” (p40)

The debate about the value of infant observation as a method of research has helped to clarify the need to be more transparent and rigorous in its use. This, in turn, has encouraged links with other areas of research and other disciplines giving rise to studies such as the “Group life of babies” (Bradley, Selby & Urwin 2012) project. Lisa Miller (2012) concludes that,

“Infant observation is research into the emotional life and growth of the child that underpins all other levels of development – intellectual, social, moral – levels that are also present and available for our attention as long as we can bear to give it.” (2012 p182)

When used in training, the observations and counter-transference feelings arising from them are shared with others, usually four or five trainees with a tutor in a supervision setting, and this allows for a parallel process to occur in which the mirror image of the affect may be induced in those observers of the observed material. The group process also helps to acknowledge the effect of the observer as a participant by drawing attention to those aspects of the observation in which the observer is too close to or involved in the action.

“The problems of understanding how 'sense' is made of unstructured observations, recorded as narratives of events and conversations, are not unique to psychoanalytic observation.” (Rustin 1989 p61)

He goes on to explain that the setting “means that material does not come pre-coded or pre-sorted . . . [and therefore one needs] . . . to be as explicit and self-aware as possible . . . [and that there is a need for the] . . . procedure of interpretation to be as open to inspection as possible.” He insists that joint reflection on findings ensures the “. . . maximum consistency and minimum obtrusiveness. . .” and provides the “best conditions possible in the circumstances for disciplined thought.” (Rustin 1989, 61). He says of infant observation, “The main purpose of this reflection is to identify and clarify the psychoanalytic significance of the situation observed, including the subjective experience of the observer.” (Rustin 2006, p36). Bick (1963) makes the point that infant observation as training for scientific data collection and thought requires one to choose one’s words very carefully for,

“As soon as these facts have been described in language we find that every word is loaded with a penumbra of implication. . . In fact, he finds that he chooses a particular word because observing and thinking are almost inseparable. This is an important lesson, for it teaches caution and reliance on consecutive observations for confirmation.” (p26)

In this study, the question of transparency and openness raised above is addressed by including as much of the primary data in the form of transcripts of the discussion as space allows. In common with social sciences such as anthropology and sociology, infant observation has been used to “relate 'surface observations' to deeper levels of theoretical explanation, seeing observed cases as instances of a theoretically consistent model of behaviour. . .” (Rustin 1997 p98).

One of the main criticisms of infant observation as a research method is that it does not apply scientific rigour in testing hypotheses. This is because infant observation does not allow for the views and opinions of the observer to be verified with the observed as they would be in a clinical session via “the outcome of clinical therapeutic dialogue, and the response of the analysand to the analytic process itself.” (Rustin 1997 p105). Rustin concedes that this is an important lack. Andre Green (2000) criticised the infant observation method thus,

“I do not question the necessity for studies based on a significant number of patients to compare what can be observed from the range of confrontations with experience. But we must also know that the facts that lend themselves to this type of investigation are of limited significance. I also accept the idea that it is interesting to observe more carefully the development of the infant, but psychological development should not be confused with the psychoanalytic one and I have doubts about the possibility of describing this last through procedures of observation.” (p26)

The joint reflection of observation has been criticised on the ground that it reconstructs the material of the observation and thereby invalidates the findings (Groarke 2008 p302). However, all attempts to create a laboratory from infant observation are confounded by the simple fact that “. . . The act of observing disturbs the observed.” (Adams 1982). In order to observe anything properly one needs distance and perspective and the process of reviewing infant observation material in groups is aptly suited to this (Midgely 2009). Esther Bick arrived at this conclusion during her many years of supervising trainees engaged in infant observation at the Tavistock Clinic and this contributed to her innovation of the concept of second skin formation (Bick 1968). Outcomes of child psychotherapy

work presented as single case studies contain potential new measures of qualitative evidence (Midgley 2004, 2006, 2009).

### **3.2 Choice of study design**

The aim of the study was to explore the feasibility of using observational material of children in the classroom and subsequent collaborative discussion of the observed material with their teachers to determine its usefulness in enhancing the teachers understanding of the child and to assess its potential for use in special schools. A secondary aim of the study was to explore what emerged from the observations and subsequent discussion of them with the teachers.

The Early Years Department of the school for children with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) where the study took place is made up of two classes. Each class had six children, one teacher and one nursery nurse at the beginning of the study. The plan was to recruit all four staff members and three or four children based on an estimate of what would be manageable for the staff and cause the least disruption to the children. The number of child participants was planned to be subject to the staff's concerns about individuals. However, when I discussed the participants with the staff, they felt that most of the children in their classes, which numbered six in each at the time, would benefit from further consideration. One child would be ineligible as they were not expected to stay in the school and would not, therefore, be present for the second phase of observations. Of the remaining eleven children, consent was sought from all the parents. In the event that all parents consented, ethically I would have been obligated to include all eleven children in the study. Just four sets of parents completed and returned their consent forms giving an even spread of two child participants from each class. All four members of staff had already consented to participate.

The research was based on eight forty-five-minute observations from behind a screen, both written and video recorded of children as they worked in the classroom with their teachers. The written observations were recalled and written up as soon as possible after the observation. The observational material was

shared with the teachers in exploratory sessions which took place about a week after the observations. They were a collaborative consideration of the observation material viewed from three different perspectives i.e., that of the observer/researcher in written form, the video recorded material and the teacher's recollection of the period in question. These exploratory sessions were audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

Approximately one month after the exploratory sessions I conducted the review sessions with the teachers pertaining to each child in the study. The purpose was to establish if anything had been learned from the joint consideration of the observational material which the teachers had found helpful in furthering their understanding of the child. Initially, the review sessions were intended to think about the usefulness of the exploratory sessions which preceded them. It became clear following the first few exploratory sessions that it was increasingly difficult to distinguish between them and the review sessions and therefore it was agreed between the staff and the observer/researcher that it would be less confusing and more helpful to use these review sessions to think about each of the children separately.

There were two phases to the study, running consecutively, to provide two sets of four observations, two sets of four exploratory sessions and two sets of four review sessions. This phased approach was to enable some comparison to be made between the first and the second phase and allow an opportunity for the teachers to contribute and for us all to learn from the experience of the first phase.

The decision to use a camera to film the observations of the children in class was taken because it would add another and very rich view to the observation. It also helped the staff to recall the particular period in class by being able to see it on video. The impact of the camera is taken up again later.

### **3.3 Data collection**

The data collected formed three groups. The first group were written accounts of the forty-five-minute observations from behind the screen and a video and audio



recording of the children in the classroom. The second group included the transcriptions of the audio recorded exploratory sessions with the teachers in which we viewed the video and discussed the content of the first group. It was planned that the third group of data would comprise the transcripts of the audio recorded review sessions. These would be a discussion about the whole process of being observed/observing the video and reading the written observation along with the discussion in the exploratory session and whether all of this had any effect on the teachers view of the child participants.

In total, there were approximately twenty-two hours of data comprising six hours of observational material based on the Tavistock model of young child observation from behind a screen, eight hours of transcripts of sessions with the teachers to talk about the written, video recorded and recollected material from the observation and eight hours of transcripts from the review sessions with the teachers.

There is a further discussion about how these data from different sources were treated in the analysis later on but there is a point to be made here about the role of the written observation on influencing the discussion in the post observation sessions. The written observation of the class contained the observer/researcher's subjective perspective and thoughts about what was seen and possibly directed the subsequent discussion with the teachers. That discussion may have progressed in a different direction had we only viewed the video of the observation. However, there was a need to assist the discussion in order to achieve the aims of the project i.e. to assess how helpful the process had been to the teachers thinking about the children in the study. As we were approaching the second phase review sessions the observer/researcher decided to email some questions to the teaching staff in advance to consider and to focus attention on the research question. These questions are in Appendix J. There is also a discussion about the observer/researcher's subjectivity in a separate section.

The process of gaining ethical approval for this study took considerably longer than had been anticipated which meant that instead of starting to recruit participants in the first term of the school year, the process could only begin in

the Spring. The teaching staff had already consented to participate and the parents were approached individually in the mornings when they brought their children to school. Information leaflets and consent forms (see Appendix B) were handed to the parents or carers of all eligible participants. It was explained to them that the observer/researcher would be on hand on certain mornings to answer any questions they may have or if they chose to make contact via email or through the school, then she would be happy to respond in that way too. There were a few questions at the door of the school. These were two questions about what parents needed to do for their children to be included in the study and one question asking what would be required of the children. One of the parents specifically requested in a conversation with the teacher that her child not be filmed. The teachers were very helpful in reminding parents who had expressed an interest to return completed consent forms. Several weeks including a half term break had been allowed for the consent gathering process. It became clear after three weeks that of the potential eleven children only four sets of parents/carers were interested in allowing their children to take part. These parents returned their signed consent forms.

It was the middle of March 2015 before I could begin the observations but while waiting for consent I carried out a pilot observation to test the equipment and to test what it would be like to observe from behind a screen for the first time. The screen resembles a large mirror on the wall of the classroom but the children are familiar with the small room behind it which they refer to as the 'quiet room' as this is where they are sometimes taken with a member of staff when they need some calming down. The room is located between the two classrooms and has a screen and door into each classroom. There is a drawing of the layout of the classrooms showing the position of the camera and sound equipment in Appendix C.

Following the pilot observation, a number of technical issues came to light related to using a camera in the classroom and observing from behind a screen. The camera's angle needed to be sufficiently narrow to show facial expressions but also wide enough to cover the class. Some compromise on the width of the view of the class available to the camera was inevitable without resorting to a wide

angled lens. A method to convey the sound from the classroom into the room behind the screen was also required so that the observations would be audible. This was resolved with the use of a baby monitor. Also for audio reasons, it was necessary to place a camera in the classroom rather than behind the screen with the observer/researcher which meant that the camera had to be trained on only one area of the classroom. Occasionally, all of the children were out of view of the cameras and myself or were seated on the floor behind furniture. I resolved this issue for future observations with another camera in the observation room with me but the drawback to this was that the sound quality was poor once it had been picked up by the baby monitor in the classroom and then re-recorded by the second camera in the observation room. This issue was resolved by using a digital voice recorder in the classroom and software to over-dub the clear sound file on top of any muffled dialogue on video from the second camera. Video from the second camera with over-dubbed sound was only used when the first camera did not have a clear view. It seemed that all the technical issues had been highlighted and resolved by the pilot.

I scheduled the first observation in March 2015 at 9:00am. A student social worker had recently joined the school on a placement and it seemed like a good training opportunity for her to join me in the room to observe the class. There was a special quality to this first and long awaited observation and sharing it with another person seemed to add yet another dimension to it. Unfortunately, owing to unforeseen equipment charging issues and a camera operator error<sup>18</sup>, I later found that I had no usable video material. I wrote up the observation anyway, and so did my observation companion and she shared her written account with me (for her training purposes only). It was interesting how we each had a very different perspective on the same period in the classroom despite sitting side-by-side. However, it is worth noting that this person was not observing specific individuals, as the observer/researcher was, and that they were also unfamiliar with the practice of observation.

---

<sup>18</sup> I had inadvertently nudged the camera when turning it on which meant that it was pointing at a wall rather than into the classroom.

It had been planned to carry out one observation of each of the four child participants in the study before the end of the school spring term which meant observing at every opportunity over the remaining two weeks of term time. This also meant that there would not be time to carry out the exploratory sessions with the teachers until the start of the new summer term. The next observations took place in the last week of March and the beginning of April just before the Easter school holiday. It became clear very quickly that there would be bits of each observation pertaining to each of the two participants in each class, rather than, as had been hoped, the children neatly doing interesting things with their teachers in separate observations. As already mentioned there were observations where the children were occasionally out of view of the cameras and myself. Despite this, these four observations were fascinating in the variety and depth of the interaction they contained. All four observations began at 9am and contained a period of unstructured play just after the children arrived for the day followed by breakfast. For two of the observations the observer/researcher was again joined by the student social worker. It was not possible to plan any exploratory sessions before the Easter break and because the teachers were curious to know how things were going we discussed some of the key moments informally just before the end of term.

The subsequent exploratory and review sessions took place at the beginning of the summer term. There was some overlap between the first and second phase of the observations with some second phase observations taking place before reviews of the first phase had happened. However, to avoid confusion between the phases these overlapping phases did not occur for the same class but it did result in the phases being rather more bunched up than had been intended. The second set of observations began at the beginning of June 2015. Three of them took place at 9:00 am and one at 11:30 am. Observing at a later time for one of the observations was a necessity of trying to schedule all the observations and post observation sessions before the end of the school term. This one observation at the end of the morning also did not feature Karim who was not present in school on that day.

The following Autumn the observer/researcher met with the teachers again to see if they had any further thoughts about the project and advise them of the progress. At this point the data from the post observation sessions was still being transcribed and this meeting became a discussion about the individual children in the project and their return to school after the summer break. Karim had returned to his mainstream school after the summer and Errol and Simon had moved up to the next class. Danny had remained in the same class.

### **3.4 Role of the observer in this study**

The teachers were accustomed to observations by Ofsted inspectors as well as the many visitors and trainees who came into the school. It is important to acknowledge how different it was to observe from behind a screen to being an observer sharing the same space. The use of the screen reduced some, though not all, of the effect of the observer on the observed and, in this case was necessary because that effect was not one of the objectives of the study. Rather the role of the observer in this study was as a facilitative presence for the teacher in their thinking about the child and not as an active agent during the observation. The observer/researcher's relationship with the teachers and the children also had an impact on the participants. It was quite different to be watched from behind a screen by someone you know well as was the case for the teachers with whom I had a work discussion group (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) for a year prior to the start of this study. The children were also familiar with the observer/researcher as someone who worked in the school and the acceptance and trust that exists within schools (for people who have a good reason to be there) also covered the occasionally glimpsed figure behind the screen. This implies that forgetting that I was there but occasionally remembering was less frightening as I was a familiar face to them.

Child psychotherapy training teaches observers to use their counter-transference feelings to try to understand the child's internal experience. These feelings are in a sense a reflection of the child's inner world albeit in need of unravelling and interpretation. When observations are shared and reflected on in groups (Rustin

1989 p61) it is the group process which also helps acknowledge the effect of the observer as a participant by drawing attention to those aspects in which the observer is too close to or involved to see clearly. During the pilot observation, a child came very close to the screen and examined something on the desk against the wall and just beneath the screen on his side. I was very aware that I was invisible to him and also that I felt totally absent from his mind even though I was very conscious of him and what he was thinking about and doing on the other side of the screen. This was an unexpected point of interest from the pilot phase. I decided to note the experience and then to put it aside so that I could try to approach the observations as unclouded by expectation as possible. Looking back on that moment after the end of the project I can see how it related quite specifically to that child and was therefore not necessarily applicable elsewhere.

There are questions about the degree of effect the observer has on an observation. The legitimacy given to the subjective experience of the observer would have to be recognised as being a view from a distance. This view is outside of the relationship but unlike a camera which is also at a distance, there is an internal view on the observation. This internal view requires consideration as different from both the view of the camera which is unthinking and that of the view inside the relationship. There may arise difficulties in a group of such a reflection about one view being the correct view rather than just different and the challenge is to bring them together in a way which can be enriching rather than persecutory. One could argue that the role of the observer is never a passive one as it provides an extra layer of containment for the infant-caregiver dyad (Wakelyn 2011). However, it is the presence of the attentive mind of the observer which is the active agent rather than the process.

Qualitative sociology uses fieldwork of non-participant-observation of everyday activity, just as in the present study and these studies have added much to theory. There is a question as to how much the non-participant study of social interaction is able to help us explain the details of human conduct by itself. Social interaction lies at the heart of organisational life (Heath and Hindmarsh 2002 p99). How social interaction is produced was rarely studied in detail until recent years when there has been more emphasis on the detail of interaction involving conversation

analysis and the study of 'talk at work' (Boden and Zimmerman 1991, Drew and Heritage 1992). Heath and Hindmarsh (2002 p102) consider the use of additional resources such as bodily conduct and the use of material features of the setting in social interaction. In the present study for example, this would include the classroom and its contents and the children's familiarity with the structure of the school morning. Another level of detail is added with the use of video cameras. Video allows us to capture,

"The tacit, 'seen but unnoticed' character of human and social organisation, coupled with the complexity of action and interaction, suggests that we need additional resources if we are to hope to explicate the details of human conduct in its 'naturally occurring' environments." (Heath and Hindmarsh in May 2002 p103)

The need to work on a task in any field they say ". . . is to examine and explicate the interactional and contingent character of practice and action." (Heath and Hindmarsh 2002)

The point about additional resources is returned to lower down in a discussion of the use of counter-transference in this study combined with subsequent reflection.

## **3.5 Choice of methodology**

### **3.5.1 Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is very often the methodology of choice for qualitative studies using data derived from interviews with participants which is then transcribed (Attride-Stirling 2001, Boyatzis 1998).

"A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set." (Braun and Clarke 2006 p82)

While there is no agreement on what thematic analysis actually is (Braun and Clarke 2006 p79), there is agreement that the process of thematic analysis needs

to detail all the choices and assumptions made during the analysis. A reflexivity journal is helpful in this regard as it provides a narrative to the decision-making process in qualitative research. This study made use of a reflexivity journal and extracts from it are included in the worked examples below. In this study the identification of patterns in the data is driven by the researcher's psychoanalytic orientation toward the material and is similarly orientated to what constitutes a fact. O'Shaughnessy (1994) states that,

“That reality is known through the mind's categories is no ground for lamenting that we can never know the facts. This lament is for non-existent entities. Rather, that facts are bound up with the nature of persons brings us a better understanding of what a fact is.” (p166)

The theoretical position of this study is contextualist in its method as it approaches the data acquired from conversation with teachers about their experience of observation. It brings together their expression of that reality with the interpretive constructionist lens of the child psychotherapist researcher. In this way, it aims to reflect a jointly constructed reality at the same time as peering beneath the surface of that reality (Braun and Clarke 2006)

Boyatzis (1998) describes a coding process which highlights key moments in the data and defines themes as,

“a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (p 161).

Attride-Stirling (2001) advocates the use of thematic networks to present how themes are built from textual material as she argues that this technique facilitates greater transparency in the qualitative data analysis. This study produced linked non-hierarchical codes which lend themselves to a thematic network presentation (see Appendix E) Worked examples of themes are shown below.



### **3.5.2 Ethno-methodological conversation analysis (EMCA)**

The use of video in this study produced a very rich data set which lent itself to further analysis of those sections of visual data connected with the themes that had already been developed. The suggested approach to exploit the visual data in this study was that of ethno-methodological conversation analysis (EMCA). There is not one unified method of EMCA but more of an orientation or stance for looking at ordinarily occurring activities. Garfinkel (1967) and Sacks (1992) outline three key perspectives of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. They are – that social action takes the form of speech and physical contact; that the meaning and importance of social action cannot be separated from the context of the instant in which they emerge; and that the individuals involved use ‘methodological resources’ which are the behaviours, protocols and the ways of understanding them to produce their own social activity and comprehend those of other people.

“In face to face interaction therefore, bodily conduct and the mutual environment plays a critical part in the production and intelligibility of social action.” (Heath and Hindmarsh 2002 p104)

It is unfortunate that research in non-verbal communication has tended to play down the interdependence of talk and bodily conduct in the day to day tasks of natural activity (Heath and Hindmarsh 202 p105). It also takes little account of environment and its effect upon the participant’s capacity to make sense of communication and use their environment to form their actions.

The impact of the physical environment and its features depends upon them being brought into play and how that happens. There is a notion of ‘situated action’ (Heath and Hindmarsh 2002 p105) which can be considered as the environment causing certain kinds of conduct. However, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis take a different stance i.e. that of the context as arising from the actions and activities of the participants. Heath and Hindmarsh note that meaning and future actions are produced moment by moment in that context and are designed to encourage further actions in a particular direction. This is described as an ‘architecture of intersubjectivity’ (Heritage 1984 p254). In this

study, it is recognisable as a school 'context' and the use of this approach is mainly to present the richness of the data from the observations.

### **3.6 Coding and analysis**

During the data collection phase the time between the observation and the review session with the teachers was too short to allow sufficient time to analyse the data. Therefore, I proposed to analyse the data once both series of observations, exploratory sessions and reviews had taken place in July 2015. I started to transcribe the audio-taped exploratory and review sessions which I quickly realised would take longer than the three weeks I had allowed. Once finished, I checked the transcripts against the audio files. This was arduous as some parts of the dialogue were spoken over the sound of the video of the classroom and it was difficult to pick out the voices of the teachers discussing the observation from them speaking in the classroom on the video and all of this behind the voices of the children. However, this meant that I became much more familiar with the data and as I had been present throughout these sessions, I was able to recall the flow of our conversation. I then re-viewed the video of the observations and re-read my written observations. I then re-listened to the exploratory and review session recordings reading through the transcripts of these sessions at the same time noting down things of interest in my reflexivity journal as follows.

“I had not completed all sixteen of the transcriptions when I had to stop for a period of three months where I did no work on this at all until a few weeks ago when I re-read my notes and completed this first pass across all the data.

There seem to be differences between the exploratory sessions and review sessions. The review sessions do appear to have gathered up some thinking particularly in one class with Simon and Karim e.g.

- Sense of how much more is happening in the classroom than can be attended to at the time
- Sense of how much more children are communicating but is not necessarily being picked up by the staff.
- Reactivity to the cameras, or lack of reactivity to the cameras

- Tendency to drift away from the particular observation to a more general discussion and when and how this happened. (I think it's a defence against becoming overwhelmed by the first two points above.)
- Discussion of the process itself seems to bookend the sessions particularly the first exploratory sessions. (Nov 2015)"

Both classes considered how they might use this kind of process or one very similar in future and expressed a view that it had helped to focus their attention on certain children as well as on their own practice."

Each transcript needed to be coded and this was approached by summarising the text in an extra column on the right as in the extracts from worked examples below. This was also very time consuming and was an iterative process as it involved frequent reference to the video material to make sense of the text or to identify who was being talked about. These comments were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet and saved in sixteen separate sheets – one for each exploratory or review session where it was easier to sort and test out ways of grouping the data. These were combined giving a total of 2366 records, (160528 Themes dba V2.xls). The data needed to be reduced so I sorted on groupings of words or names of the participants to establish some commonality among the summary notes in order to reduce the volume. This process led to movement backwards and forwards to the original text to recapture a feeling for what the summary meant and also led to some revision of the summaries which were becoming prototype codes. As I repeated this process I was able to refine the prototype codes. There were approximately 1300 codes which I re-sorted, refined and transferred to a file called '160701 theme list' which held the remaining 337 codes though some were very similar or occurred in several different groupings. These codes began to coalesce around some ideas and they were noted in the journal along with thoughts and questions about them and possible examples (see Appendix D). Some of these ideas were found not to apply to all the participants e.g. 'the mismatch in perception or understanding of a passage of video among those watching during the exploratory sessions', although a part of it was merged with another theme. This was also an iterative process which I decided to stop when there seemed to be no more definition between them giving

codes grouped into six themes and approximately fifty subthemes. This is presented as a thematic network (Attride-Stirling 2006) (see Appendix E). There follow two examples showing how themes were derived from the primary data.

This worked example demonstrates how the theme called parallel process was arrived at. It features a piece of transcript of an exploratory session in which Ms Lareina is watching the video of herself returning to the classroom from the corridor and effectively stepping over Karim who is sulking behind a chair. She expresses her surprise that he would be watching her movements in an out of the classroom. She expressed her reaction to watching video of Karim sulking thus,

“It’s interesting to see what he does because when he does that I try not to pay a lot of attention, I’m trying to find out what happened so it’s interesting to see that I walk out and he looks up to see” (3, 06:27)

Exploratory session transcript in full (3, 4:20) with the coded entry ringed

Line no.	Speaker	Comment	Time	Code
12	Observer/researcher	Well it was um the editing was err quite complicated. Um ok so this first clip here	04:20	Process technical
13	Ms Lareina	It’s interest.. can I say something?	06.25	
14	Observer/researcher	Yeah		
15	Ms Lareina	It’s interesting to see what he does because when he does that I try not to pay a lot of attention, I’m trying to find out what happened so it’s interesting to see that I walk out? and he looks up to see, you know cause I, you don’t know those things do you	06:27	E noticing how much attention Karim pays her
16	Observer/researcher	Yeah so I’d set the camera up but of course [Ms Lareina yeah] everything was going on [Ms Lareina yeah] elsewhere but does it does it remind you of a session, do you remember,[mm] do you remember that bit .. I know it’s quite	07.10	Recalling the session as there had been a long gap since the observation

In the following extract, there is another reference to Karim and Ms Lareina’s relationship with the coded item ringed.

	Ms Lareina	By the same token, if I try to be close to him, he can't accept it, he can't. But I understand why he can't accept it because it's to, eh, it's too risky because I think with his mum if he makes himself vulnerable she can, you know, just shun him, really quickly reject him.	15:20	Karim's difficulty in accepting closeness and how Ms Lareina understands it as a reaction to feeling vulnerable and rejected.
	Observer/ researcher	He wants the closeness but he also is afraid of it. Errm.	15:45	Reflection

These codes along with all others were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet (160528 ThemesDbA v2) for sorting (see Appendix F). There were approximately two thousand five hundred codes which needed to be reduced so numerous groupings were attempted. These codes were further refined and grouped into approximately 350 subthemes in a file called 160701 Theme list (see Appendix F). Below is a sheet within that file which shows the worked example in the reduced theme list and showing the main themes to which it belongs (ACE) which relate to the themes, parallel process, the teaching of meaning making and daring to be curious.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1		This file shows all 189 themes grouped into main themes - 1 some sub themes appear in several main theme	A	Parallel process	15	Being prepared to learn the child's mode of communication	98	Teaching of meaning making	37	Focus
91	91	How process has helped thinking about Errol								
92	92	Invisibility behind screen								
93	93	Inviting teachers to reflect on period.								
94	94	Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship	94	Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship	94	Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship	94	Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship		
95	95	Karim's progress								
96	96	Karim's relationship with others	96	Karim's relationship with others	96	Karim's relationship with others	96	Karim's relationship with others		
97	97	Karim's sneakiness	97	Karim's sneakiness	97	Karim's sneakiness	97	Karim's sneakiness		
98	98	Lack of reactivity linked to lots of adults coming in and out in their lives								
99	99	Learning from technical difficulty								
100	100	Link between wobbliness and ending								100 Link bet
101	101	Locating in time								
102	102	Mixed messages from mainstream						102 Mixed messages from mainstream		
103	103	Ms E anticipates the hard part of the session								
104	104	Ms E feels she zones out								
105	105	Ms E provides words for Errol				105 Ms E provides words for	105	Ms E provides words for Errol		
106	106	Ms Eastman accepts reassurance from Ms Lewis	106	Ms Eastman accepts reassurance from Ms Lewis						
107	107	Ms Eastman reflecting on her own behaviour								
108	108	Ms Lewis in Paternal role		108 Ms Lewis in Paternal role						

The second worked example relates to an observation in which Errol was showing his teaching assistant from his mainstream school, who was visiting on that day, how he had learnt to open the comic without touching it.

(Watching a video of Errol flapping a comic to make the air waft open the pages of another comic on the table)

Ms Eastman                      Nobody really took much notice did they

Observer  
researcher                      I think Barbara was quite interested (laugh)

Line no	Speaker	Comment	Time	Code
144		Video		
145	Ms Lewis	He keeps making the papers blow up	20:28	Errol fanning the comics
146	Ms Eastman	She thinks it's good and I just I thought he was just going to pull the comics to bits. I remember that	20:32	Barbara and Ms Eastman have a different view about Errol's behaviour
147		Video		
148	Observer/ researcher	It looks like he found it so impressive that he'd maybe had an impact on something that he wasn't actually touching that it seemed almost magical to him	20:50	Errol learning a new skill and wanting to share it

This code was subsequently grouped together with those relating to a wondering about Errol's mind and then became more generalised to all the children as the subtheme "wondering about a child's mind" and was included in four of the eventual six main themes.

	C	D	E
	<b>Teaching of meaning making 37</b>	<b>Focus shift 15</b>	<b>Daring to be curious 29</b>
2	4 Being persistent with Simon	2 ASD wondering	6 Challenged about an assumption
3	9 Child being challenging	3 Attention spread evenly	7 Changes since the observation
4	17 Containment	13 Commentary on another child	43 Daring to be curious
5	39 Danny's pink plate	16 Confusion	44 Defending Karim
6	40 Danny's progress	81 Focus maintained	51 Errol being aggressive
7	47 Endings	82 Focus on Danny is hard to maintain as only lightly	72 Errol's progress
8	48 Engaging Danny	83 Focus shift	73 Errol's reaction to praise of others
9	61 Errol showing empathy	100 Link between wobbliness and ending	74 Errol's relationship to others
10	63 Errol very young	114 No meaning	86 Handing over
11	71 Errol's physicality	117 Normative behaviour	87 Hard to articulate feelings about a child
12	72 Errol's progress	119 Noticing who is not there	88 Hard to stay with focus on a child
13	80 Fine detail of observation	163 Staying with the material	94 Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship
14	85 Get up Simon	174 Thoughts about ASD at mainstream	95 Karim's progress
15	86 Handing over	183 What is seen and felt	97 Karim's sneakiness
16	94 Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship	188 Wondering about a child's mind	100 Link between wobbliness and ending
17	95 Karim's progress		103 Ms E anticipates the hard part of the session
18	96 Karim's relationship with others		104 Ms E feels she zones out
19	97 Karim's sneakiness		107 Ms Eastman reflecting on her own behaviour
20	102 Mixed messages from mainstream		109 Ms Lewis reflecting on her reaction
21	105 Ms E provides words for Errol		113 New view of the session
22	111 Ms Lewis wanting to finish a piece of work		164 Surprise at children taking notice
23	154 Simon and Ms L's relationship		166 Taking something in

### 3.7 Subjectivity

A frequent criticism of qualitative research is that it is too subjective or 'anything goes' (Braun and Clarke 2006). The value of subjectivity was demonstrated by Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2002) who developed three overlapping levels in their analysis, which were: a face value account or narrative, a first pass of the data looking at unconscious aspects via words, images, metaphor, inconsistencies, and contradictions and other notable movements in the narrative. There is a similarity with this study and its theme of 'Focus shift' where the unifying principle within the theme is the question of what is it that gets in the way of understanding. In Walkerdine, Lucey and melody (2002) they asked themselves questions after the interview: how was I feeling and who do I represent for the subject and who does the subject represent for me? Similar questions to these occurred to me in the written observations in this study where I noted my own thoughts about what was going on which was then written into the narrative. The third level of Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2002), is one in which they reflect as a team on their individual responses to and interpretations of the unconscious to unconscious communication. Notable in this level, was an

appreciation for the way they valued their subjective experience and a confidence that out of that experience something useful could be learned.

They discuss the difficulty in qualitative research of valuing one's own subjectivity and its capacity to communicate something useful about the researched while recognising the factors which affect our ways of knowing. They describe three factors which are always present for the researcher and the researched which are; "hidden or unconscious processes, that human subjects are never completely rational and, finally, anxiety and defences against anxiety". The presence of these aspects in this kind of research ensures "that subjectivity always intrudes" (Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody 2002 p194). Despite the intrusion, they regarded their subjectivity as a valuable source of information.

### **3.8 Counter-transference**

The psychoanalytic observational stance considers the counter-transference of the observer as a useful resource. When it is combined with subsequent reflection it provides another step towards understanding what lies beneath the surface.

Holloway (2016) has shown how the counter-transference of the observer, "provides access to a research paradigm consistent with their professional training" (p19). Use of the self as a tool in research raised some questions for me around how much of my own thinking I should include in the written observations. I had kept this to a minimum as I had not wanted to have too much influence on the discussion. I took the decision to maintain a descriptive account and only include my counter-transference feelings when they occurred particularly strongly during the observation. Here I am referring only to an overt sense of something as arising from my counter-transference because it is accepted that anything included in my written observation would be influenced by my feeling about what was observed. This meant that some potentially useful counter-transference thoughts were left out of the written observations and gives a rather bland appearance to some of the description. Furthermore, as some of these thoughts occurred after the event during the process of writing up the



observation it could be argued that they would be too removed from the observation and too subjective as they were based on my feelings about the content as I was recalling it and writing it down. This does not apply to the exploratory and review sessions where I did share my counter-transference feelings with the teachers in relation to the discussion of the video material. In this respect my counter-transference feelings were very much a part of the discussion and the subsequent thematic analysis of this data.

### **3.9 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity in qualitative research is the acknowledgment on the part of the researcher of their role in the world they study. Acceptance of this means that there is no possibility of separating oneself from the data collected and analysed and any interpretations made about it or conclusions drawn from it (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Porter, 1993; Mason, 1996). In the introduction to this thesis, the rationale for observing from behind a screen is given as the observer not wanting to play a part in the observation. This is only partially achievable from behind a screen as the teachers and the children were aware of my presence even though they could not see me and occasionally forgot that I was there. The observations in video and written form became the material that was considered in the subsequent exploratory and review sessions with the teachers. The data that was later analysed was comprised of the transcriptions from these sessions along with shorter pieces of video material mainly to illustrate some of the themes derived from the transcriptions. These transcriptions contained the conversation between the teachers and myself while watching and discussing the observational material and included my thoughts and interpretations about the interaction between staff and children and as such are completely suffused with my ideas, life experiences, training and hopes for the project. In recognition of this I have sought to be as transparent as possible in presenting the research process and product.

I have included examples from all four participants across the data set to show how the themes applied to each child, and endeavoured to provide this in as much detail as space allows. It was important to include examples of each of the

themes for each child participant to show a consistency across the participants but it has come at the expense of some detail as I have had to heavily edit some of the extracts. The choice of which examples to use was based on how clearly and succinctly they demonstrated the themes and meant that many other possible examples which could have been included have been left out. I found this extremely difficult and feel that this decision more than any other in the whole study was emotionally driven.

I have also used two of these same examples to show how the data was analysed, and described the decisions made at each step. The process of coding and categorising the data was done in stages and some of those stages had to be repeated several times over as the categorisation in some attempts produced groupings which were insufficiently distinct enough to clearly identify separate themes. After several attempts to group the codes it became clear that the groupings would always overlap with one another and were interdependent which is consistent with the nature of the human interaction being studied.

The transcriptions are referenced and annotated to link with the written and filmed observations<sup>19</sup>. In this way, I have aimed to remain as true to the data as possible as well as to provide an audit trail from base data, through process to product. The findings of this kind of qualitative research are not facts as Guba & Lincoln (1995) suggest, so much as the product of the value systems and interaction of the parties involved in their making and the time and context in which they were formed. Had another researcher completed the same process at the same time with the same group of participants, their findings would probably have been very different.

The existing personal and professional relationship with the staff in this school would have also affected the interpretations I could make about their interaction with the children. This is because I had a desire to show the teachers in a good light and I was very aware of their trust in me to be fair to them particularly as they are justifiably considered to be the experts in their field.

---

<sup>19</sup> The column indicating time relates to the minutes and seconds into the audio recording of the post observation sessions. Details of the video pieces being viewed are also included in the transcriptions.

The data used the teacher's responses to viewing the observational material with the researcher and this was frequently acknowledged as being dependent upon the context of the observation. The wider context in which the study took place also influenced some of this discussion between the researcher and the staff group. The participants' voices in the data were central to the main aim of the study. For the secondary aim, to explore the learning relationship there was some degree of interpretation. As Morse (1999) says, qualitative research needs to;

“ . . . add something more to the participants' words for it to be considered a research contribution, whether it be a synthesis, interpretation, or development of a concept, model, or theory.” (p 163)

Some sharing of the developed themes with the participants relating to the secondary aim was possible before the end of the study but it was much more of an invitation than a part of the study design.

The desire to ensure that the primary aim of the study, determining its feasibility, could be considered before running out of time drove me to set the teachers some questions (see Appendix J). These were intended to direct attention to reviewing the process rather than just reviewing the video of the observations again as had tended to happen in the first phase of review sessions.

The potential benefit to research participants is that they were afforded an additional opportunity in which to think about the children they are teaching. It also offered the chance to consider in a very detailed way their interaction with the child which may have helped them to reflect on both their relationship with a child as well as their professional practice in a more general way. The potential benefits to the children who were observed related to a deeper understanding of their emotional experience in the classroom which it was hoped would translate into a more tailored approach to their learning needs and might return with them to their mainstream schools.

I shared the findings with the teachers and discussed some of the examples that I planned to use with them in order to invite their views and maintain the collaboration in the project right through to the end. I showed them a draft copy

of the findings and conclusions and the two members of staff who responded expressed the view that they felt it was a fair representation of the observations and subsequent discussion.

## **4. Findings – What goes on in the classroom**

After coding and analysis of the transcripts of the post observation sessions, the data were grouped into related themes. These themes fell naturally into two distinct chapters of which this is the first, “What goes on in the classroom” and the second chapter “How the teachers used the process” follows on. Each chapter is made up of three related themes encompassing most of the data. There is a natural progression from one chapter to the next. This chapter looks at what is happening in the classroom during the observations and the subsequent discussion and it reveals some of the unconscious processes at work there. The exploratory and review sessions provided time and space for a questioning state of mind to be applied to the material, and when this could happen freely, existing thoughts and feelings about individual children could be updated, enhanced or challenged. The content of the material itself sometimes meant that it was not possible to freely explore and challenge previously held ideas about some of the children and this is also considered.

What goes on in the classroom is a potent and sometimes volatile mixture of conscious and unconscious processes continuously moving and shaping the interaction between the children and the adults and all other combinations of the two. The primary purpose of this interaction is to bring an educative frame of mind into contact with a more, or less receptive state of mind in children. The real substance of this interaction is the quality and texture to these relationships which is a product of the attitude of mind of the teacher and their preparedness to engage with the child’s particular interest or mode of communication in order to open them up to the greater possibilities of learning (Salzberger-Wittenberg 1983).

“The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards.” (France 1881)

In the following examples, there are excerpts of written observations, transcripts of the filmed observations including stills as well as excerpts of the discussion

with the teachers followed by a discussion of the theme with reference to the material. To include as many examples as possible, some of the transcripts are presented as a narrative to save space and the transcript which has been treated in this way can be found in the appendices.

The themes that were arrived at after analysing the data were related to three areas, firstly: to “Parallel process” where what happened in the classroom took on something of what was going on at home or in their mainstream schools for some of the children. The staff found themselves inhabiting familial roles and in the process of reviewing the material enacting these roles in ways that were more akin to the family makeup of the children in the study. Interestingly, both classes were very different in this respect, and it would seem, that this difference is partly related to the age of the children and the dynamic within the class as well as something about the differing styles of each teacher. The first theme seems to be an unconscious manifestation of ‘transferential’ feelings and projections enacted by the staff in response to the children as well as the other way around. The second theme is more of a state of mind and is called “Being prepared to learn the child’s mode of communication”. It was as though the teachers needed to venture into the child’s world of understanding and allow themselves to be led around and shown the wonders that exist there before being able to entice the child into something less particular. After repeated viewing and re-viewing of the material it seemed that this theme was a precursor to the last theme in this chapter which I am calling “Teaching of meaning making”. This group of teachers were accustomed to making connections temporally and socially with the children about their experiences as they occurred in the classroom (Burhouse 2014). This is usual in early-years education but with children who are a little older and whose developmental trajectory could be described as atypical there could be unexpected gaps in their understanding of others and the world leading to confusion in their mainstream schools about their abilities. In some areas, they could be quite advanced for their age and yet in others severely lacking. This kind of uneven development is sometimes attributed to a social communication disorder or other cognitive deficit rather than simply a gap in the child’s repertoire of interactional abilities. This is not to say that there may not have been any

underlying neurological or cognitive difficulties but to resort prematurely to diagnosis before considering a learning option would be a closing down of possibilities for resolution through learning. Repeatedly, during the observations and subsequent discussions with the teachers it was clear that they were able to identify these gaps and could tailor their communication with the child in an almost didactic but helpfully direct way. It seemed that being able to think about and concentrate on very small details of their interaction with a child enabled them to identify the gaps. There was also the sense that this was a worthwhile endeavour which had been fostered by the use of work discussion groups (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) in the school which encouraged them in pursuing an interest in the fine detail of their interaction with children. The small class sizes made it possible to have the time to conduct their interaction with the children in the ways described but it is also vital to possess the necessary personal attributes and the inclination to work in this way; as one of the teachers explained, “I am more interested in children than in teaching”.

## **4.1 Theme - Parallel process**

### **4.1.1 Example one of Parallel process**

The first example of parallel process features Simon and his relationship with his teacher Ms Lareina. The first extract includes the discussion about several pieces of video of Simon. During the first phase of observations Simon spoke very little, barely made eye contact and appeared to take very little notice of the other children and would very rarely engage them in conversation. If he did not feel like doing something he tended to lay down on the floor wherever he happened to be.

The discussion in the following extract is of a video clip which referred to a comment made by the observer about Simon’s baby-like body language in response to intrusion.

Ms Lareina	“. . . he can do quite complicated bits of maths but everything about his body language sort of would say
------------	---

otherwise. . . He is falling forward like a baby would before they get that strength to sit up. . .

And all the time I'm trying to get him to move his body into a more, erm, powerful position, [Ms Lareina then gives examples of things she says to Simon] 'Move your chair closer to the table', 'Sit up straight'. . . , although he is a great big strong boy.

Observer/  
researcher

There is quite a lack of purpose in some of those clips isn't there? . . .

[The observer plays another section of video showing Simon laying on the floor]



Ms Lareina

I think it's this, it's coming to an end, everything's coming to an end and everything's starting

Observer/  
researcher

It's almost like he was drawing you into laying on the floor with him. . . Now he is sort of moving away a bit.

. . .





Ms Lareina            His dad at the meeting yesterday said, 'I always give him two rules and that's, one, be safe, and listen to the teachers', and he said, 'Now he gives me the third rule', . . . 'No laying on the floor!'.

The teachers routinely talked about beginnings and endings of the children's days at school and Ms Lareina makes the connection between Simon lying on the floor and periods of transition when she mentions 'everything coming to an end'. Children have to employ many means to cope with transitions during the school day and they are a significant element in the rhythm and stress points of school (Rustin 2011 p6). Transitions are an intrusion and a reminder of previous painful separations. Simon copes with transition in this example by laying on the floor and retreating to a more infantile state. It is understood by both Ms Lareina and his family that when he lays on the floor he is trying to remove himself from the painful experience of ending one thing and starting another. This is an effective strategy because he is a heavy boy for the staff at his mainstream school to lift so they used to call his parents in to pick him up.

Initially, Ms Lareina tries to interact with him but perhaps he is aware of her intention to draw him back into the group and he moves away from her as though in the hope that she might give up and leave him on the floor. Simon was described by Ms Lareina as 'used to being part of an audience of one' and this view of him paralleled his lack of participation in the activity of the classroom and in relationships with others. His disconnected behaviour made him appear disinterested in contact with others and had the effect of making people give up trying to interact with him.

This extract illustrates how in their use body language, Ms Lareina and Simon are re-enacting something which happens both at home and at his mainstream school where Simon will lay on the floor effectively withdrawing himself from whatever is happening elsewhere in the classroom. Ms Lareina initially tries to go with him and interact with him via the toys but he manages to roll away from her enough that she eventually stops trying and gets up again leaving Simon to play by himself. There is something very infantile about Simon laying on the floor

reminding us of a baby who cannot yet walk being put on the floor where rolling around cannot hurt him. Simon is a seven-year old boy but could not be described here as functioning like a latency age child. The separation required of the children when they go to school along with all the other challenges of learning to read and write and develop friendships, means that the teacher is still a very important person to them as they stand in for the parental figure.

#### **4.1.2 Example two of Parallel process**

The second example of this theme features an exploratory session in which Ms Lareina is watching the video of herself returning to the classroom from the corridor and effectively stepping over Karim who is sulking behind a chair. She expresses her surprise that he should be looking to see where she was.

“It’s interesting to see what he does because when he does that I try not to pay a lot of attention, I’m trying to find out what happened so it’s interesting to see that I walk out and he looks up to see” (3, 06:27)



Behind the boy standing Karim sits with his head in his hands while Ms Lareina returns to the classroom.

Following the next observation while discussing Karim’s aversion to closeness she said,

“if I try to be close to him, he can’t accept it, he can’t. But I understand why he can’t accept it because it’s too, eh, it’s too risky because I think with his mum if he makes himself vulnerable. She can, you know, just shun him, really quickly reject him.” A little further along in this discussion she recalls when he first arrived at the school and how he used her ‘restraining holds’ to get physical closeness. She described how she had talked with him about this, about his need to have a certain number of ‘cuddles daily’. “So he used to come in and say ‘I haven’t had any cuddles’ and we’d go through a thing like, . . . and he was like chilly and it was like . . . ‘one, two’. It was like we were just going through the formality of this. . . . And now sometimes I’d say I’ve only had about three today and he goes ‘No No’”

Then in the review session (5, 13:30) she said,

“I think that what I’m really struck by is my lack of natural warmth and . . . that is probably his projections on to me. . . . I feel like I always have to be really vigilant . . . about . . . how much I give because . . . it could be abused and chucked back at me.”

Here she expresses her insight about being made the subject of a projective identification (Klein, 1946) with his somewhat cold internal object. She also recognises her need to be vigilant like him and careful about what she offers him in case he tries to spoil or denigrate it. It could be that this is a reflection of the relationship between mother and son where the contact is felt by both of them to be tricky and liable to switch at any moment from something good into something bad. The following is an example of parallel process as it became manifest in the other class.

#### **4.1.3 Example three of Parallel process**

Ms Eastman’s class contained the youngest children in the school as both of the study’s child participants in this class, Errol and Danny, were just five years old at the time. Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis also had several new children join the class towards the end of the school year which proved disruptive to the whole class. Ms Eastman described herself as feeling ‘quite wobbly’ on occasions as it was difficult to manage how unsettled the class could become since the new

children had arrived. She spoke about her feeling of not coping with so few adults and a group of very needy children. In the following extracts, Ms Eastman was alone in class with the five children, Errol and Danny, Marcel, Sonny and Leroy, while Ms Lewis was preparing breakfast in the kitchen. They were all seated around the table and were supposed to be engaging in reading or writing activities.

The following is an extract from the written observation (19, 04/06).

“Danny asked if he had been good today . . . Ms Eastman said that he had had some trouble with the reading books. Danny started reading but stopped when Ms Eastman turned her attention to Marcel and then he started again. He [Danny] was reading quite loudly but had no inflection in his voice as though not understanding what he was reading. Errol was counting quite loudly and I wondered if they were each trying to speak louder than the other.

Danny said that Errol was being silly. Ms Eastman corrected Danny that Errol was not being silly, he was counting. Danny stood up to flick through the books. Ms Eastman asked Errol not to draw on the comics and that she was trying to read with Sonny. Danny remained with his hands on the books. Then he leant on them. Sonny asked angrily for everyone to be quiet. Danny left his seat and Sonny still wanted Ms Eastman to help him. Danny read a book out loud. He closed the book before the end and shouted, “I done it” and flapped the book at Mrs Eastman and Errol. Errol was counting again.

Ms Eastman explained to Sonny that she would have to listen to Errol reading and then she asked Danny to sit down. I was struck by how demanding of attention these three children are in different ways.”

See Appendix G for the excerpt of the transcript of the filmed observation on 04/06/15



Seated around the table clockwise are Ms Eastman, Sonny, Danny, Marcel, Leroy and Errol.



Marcel and Leroy had left the table and Sonny asked for everyone to be quiet

There follows a transcript of the discussion of this piece of video in exploratory session (20, 24:09)

[While watching the video of reading time]

Ms Eastman: This is where it all goes wobbly. (laugh)

Ms Lewis: I think it's once they've finished something, . . . they can't keep themselves occupied. Can they? [in relation to Marcel and Leroy leaving the table]

Ms Eastman: No. No.

. . . [Watching some more of the video of trying to get everyone involved in an activity connected to reading and writing]

Ms Eastman: When it's like this I'm trying to think of ways that I can keep them all, erm, focused but I was quite aware that Sonny really wanted to read to me and there's something about a child wanting to read or wanting to write or do something, and you can't facilitate that, it's really frustrating

Ms Eastman: . . . I suppose what I'm interested in is how calm I look cos I didn't feel calm. Maybe I didn't come across as calm.

Observer/  
researcher: Em. Yeah you did

Ms Eastman: Did I? (laugh)

[Watching more of the video as Marcel and Leroy drift away from the table]

Ms Eastman: Danny is just sitting there isn't he

Ms Lewis: None of them are aware that you are trying to read to Sonny and ... They don't care

Observer/ researcher: Mm

Ms Lewis: No understanding that there's a space for others

Ms Eastman: Yeah

Observer/ researcher: They're very, very needy

Ms Eastman: Yeah

[Pause while watching the video]

Ms Eastman: See like Errol is doing the right thing isn't he 'if I count like this the teacher should listen' and the two of us didn't even look 'cos I'm doing a good thing'

[Pause while watching the video]

. . .

Ms Eastman: I can see why he's getting frustrated [about Sonny]

Ms Lewis: Cos he's had about two seconds of your time.

. . .

Ms Eastman: And actually, out of everybody Danny is doing nothing but I would have said Danny was the less challenging and that's not right because everybody else is engaged with something however much they're trying to draw me in but he's not doing anything. Is he?

. . .

Ms Eastman: There you go [in relation to Sonny on the video telling everyone to be quiet]

. . .

Ms Eastman: (Laugh) It wasn't a long time, was it? [about her time reading with Sonny]

There was something rather staccato in the writing up of the observation of this episode in class. This is partly because it was hard to convey just how much noise a few children all clamouring for attention at the same time can make. Events were described as happening in a rather unpredictable and unrelated way possibly reflecting the mood in the class on that day which was one of reacting to changing events.

Ms Eastman's reference to where "it all goes wobbly" related to the time she spent in class on her own with the group of five children while Ms Lewis was in the kitchen preparing breakfast. There is a parallel here with the home lives of some of the children in her class where there are several children being cared for by only one adult. The class had recently received several new children with very unsettled backgrounds. The 'wobbliness' for the teacher connects to a feeling that she is on the brink of becoming overwhelmed by the needs of this group of children. This sense of them all needing individual attention is a direct response to their unconscious communication and is picked up on very directly by Ms Eastman who communicates it via her comments about not being able to read with Sonny for more than a few minutes. This is amplified by the note of resigned frustration in Sonny's plea for everyone to 'just be quiet'. There was considerable regret in Ms Eastman's voice as she reflected on not being able to provide enough for each of them in her remark about reading with Sonny. Along with this was a recognition of Errol's need to misbehave to attract attention when she imagined herself in his mind and reading his thoughts, ". . . 'if I count like this the teacher should listen', . . . 'cos I'm doing a good thing'".

As in the first example of this theme, the teacher as 'stand-in mummy' comes across quite strongly as does the fact that these are all children who find it very hard to share attention. This group still have to learn individually how to be the third person watching two others interact (Britton 1998). Triangular relationships are an oedipal (Freud 1905) dilemma for children and exist everywhere. Rustin (2011) says that this dilemma is one we all share,



“All of us, not only when we are children, continue throughout life to be subject to the painful aspects of triangular relationships. Feeling jealous, left out, passed over, intrusively curious about what we are not part of, possessive, or envious are the emotions that are stirred by this constellation. Parents, children, and teachers all have to cope with such feelings.” (p11).

As painful as oedipal anxieties are to cope with, some resolution is essential for, as Burhouse (2014) describes,

“The triangular mental space formed in this way stimulates a sense of curiosity in the infant with which he begins to think more clearly about the implicit relatedness of his mother and father,” (p265)

The parallels with the family constellation are inescapable in early years education but perhaps even more so with children such as these whose experience of school has been disrupted several times over. Most of them would not have been emotionally ready to start school and then they experienced being referred from their mainstream schools to this special school where their class has practically doubled in size towards the end of their first year. The next series of examples looks at the teachers’ task to understand the children.

## **4.2 Theme - Being prepared to learn the child’s mode of communication**

The second theme in this first chapter of findings was described in the introduction as a state of mind, an openness to think about what is happening in the classroom in detail.

### **4.2.1 Example one of Being prepared to learn the child’s mode of communication**

The following excerpts show Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis trying to understand the meaning of the plates for Danny (7, 26/03).

“Danny arrived first and said something about breakfast before racing over to the sink and then to the table to lay out the plates. Ms Eastman asked him questions about running around in the corridor. He held the stack of plates on top of his head while answering her. Initially, he said that he likes to run at playtime. In response to one of her questions about running around at school, he answered “Why?” Ms Eastman said she did not know why. Then Danny seemed to be saying that he ran around because he was at school and that it was okay to run at school. Ms Eastman said she would have to give him fewer tokens for running and for throwing his coat on the floor.

He resumed laying the table and almost threw the plates down. Ms Eastman asked him how many children are in the class today. He named some of them as he laid out the plates saying, “One for [Sonny]”. He gave Ms Eastman the pink plate and she thanked him. Ms Lewis was also sitting at the table and she commented that he would have to learn to share (in relation to the pink plate) and that if he goes to Primary he will have to get used to not having the pink plate because they don’t have one. Ms Lewis asked him where her pink plate was and he looked worried momentarily and then slowly smiled at her and Ms Eastman. He said that Ms Eastman had it. He laughed. It felt to me that he was laughing nervously, unsure about the situation or what was expected of him and also that he is not yet comfortable with teasing.”



Ms Eastman, Ms Lewis and Danny before the other children arrived

#### Extract from the exploratory session

Ms Lewis: He has to do something familiar, he has to follow the routine, the pattern.

Ms Eastman: Yeah

Ms Lewis: Who has the pink plate, who doesn't, you know. And one of your, [this remark is addressed to the observer/researcher] I don't think it was this one actually was it, where you said, I've, it felt like teasing and he didn't really understand the teasing. I've sort of taken that on board a bit. He doesn't really, doesn't understand

Ms Eastman: Yeah, yeah

Ms Lewis: He'll smile but it's not, I think it's on the other one [Discussion about which written observation had suggested that Danny did not understand that Ms Lewis was joking]

Ms Eastman: (Reading) "Unsure about the situation or what's expected of him"

Ms Lewis: Yeah

Ms Eastman: I think he does. He looks at you. You might say something and he's like he's trying to weigh it up isn't he? Is this alright. Is it not alright.

Ms Lewis: What should I be doing [Speaking thoughts Danny may have had]

Ms Eastman: Yeah

Ms Lewis: To be a good boy that's sort of  
[Ms Eastman: So much Danny good boy! Danny good boy!]  
...

Ms Eastman: I can see people . . . telling him what he can have to try . . . To try to get him to conform somehow which is quite scary.

Ms Lewis: I think it's just trying to communicate with him about something familiar, that he finds interesting to do but I suppose that's why we do it, isn't it? Especially when he's on his own.  
[Ms Eastman: Yeah]  
It's trying to engage him in some sort of conversation even if it is just about the big plates  
...

Observer/  
researcher: But that moment with the, erm, you know, the plate. 'Where's my plate?' It's something different and he seemed to watch for quite a while to see what was ok didn't he?  
[Ms Eastman: Hmm]  
Before deciding that you were just laughing with him so I, it seemed as though that was different. It was out of the routine. Err

Ms Eastman: I suppose we were pushing him a little bit more  
weren't we?  
[Observer: Yeah it's quite a, quite a challenge  
[Ms Eastman: hmmm]

Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis showed how prepared they were to struggle with trying to understand the meaning of the plates for Danny though they seemed a little disappointed that the observer/researcher was not able to provide an explanation for this. It may be that they felt frustrated at not being able to make use of the observation in any meaningful way (Solomon and Nashat 2010). The observer's suggestion that Ms Lewis interaction with Danny was something different which he found hard to understand seemed to be received quite cautiously by Ms Lewis. Ms Eastman offered a slight defence which seemed to suggest that Danny did understand the remark. This interaction conveyed a sense to the observer/researcher that the teachers felt slightly defended and were feeling as though their knowledge of Danny was being challenged by the observer/researcher as an outsider. Looking at this several months later it appeared that it was the process of wondering which was helpful to Danny. His teachers' willingness and perseverance in trying to understand him would have been apparent to him even though it left the adults feeling no further on than when they started. Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) says,

“What is essential to the client is the caseworker's willingness to try to understand how he feels, to be prepared to listen and respect him as a unique personality. Her actions as well as her words will show whether she is really concerned about him. . .” (p163)

#### **4.2.2 Example two of Being prepared to learn the child's mode of communication**

A second example of this theme relates to discussion about the meaning of Errol putting his coat on and taking it off again from one of the exploratory sessions (9, 20:22). Like the previous example, we were left, speculating and not knowing for

sure what his behaviour meant, but with the understanding that he needed to be able to communicate something of his internal world via his external actions.



Errol putting his coat on the back of a chair

Ms Eastman: Errol went to take his coat off and Danny went as well

Ms Lewis: And then he's put his coat on the back of a chair because that is what we do at the end of the morning isn't it?

Ms Eastman: Yeah Yeah. Just before they go back to their other schools. I wonder if he was, I don't know if he realises what day. He doesn't like PE particularly, he doesn't like getting changed, he doesn't like getting sweaty. So something about Play-Doh isn't it but I don't.

Ms Lewis: There is some sort of connection with Thursdays and his behaviour changing.



Errol puts his coat on again

In this extract, there was an attempt to connect Errol's behaviour with his coat to his dislike of PE which involves changing and transition as does arriving at school and removing his coat in preparation for the start of the school day. There was also a possible connection to Thursdays. A little later in the same exploratory session, there was an exchange where both teachers took opposing positions in relation to authority with Ms Lewis appearing to laugh at catching herself sounding 'authoritarian' and this was immediately followed by Ms Eastman expressing her feeling about Errol's rebelliousness in connection with keeping his coat on in class (9, 23:35).

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Ms Lewis   | I'm such an authoritarian (laughing at video of herself asking Errol to bring the Play-Doh back to the table) Don't do this don't do that! |
| Ms Eastman | I quite liked the fact that he had his coat on.  |
| Ms Lewis   | Why  |
| Ms Eastman | I don't know. I quite  |
| Ms Lewis   | I think what Miss Patel [his LSA from his mainstream school] was saying yesterday,   |

because when he enters the classroom and has to take his coat off and hang it up. It's a rule they've got. So I think that was what she was trying to say yesterday

[Miss Patel] She was saying like this is what we do, you've got to do it everyday

Ms Eastman Yeah. She did that with his hat yesterday. Got to take your hat off, you can't have your hat on in the classroom

Ms Lewis I try not to make such a, I think picking what you sometimes you know

[Ms Eastman: Yeah]

You think that's necessary to er, to get into battle over as it were. I suppose is it, is it unsafe? No. Its not unsafe, you know, its maybe not helping part of his well-being

[Ms Eastman: I think that too]

Ms Eastman You are helping his separation from mum and He is already communicating quite a lot by leaving it on so

The teachers were shown here being aware of being in opposing positions in relation to authority both within this class as well as with the mainstream school's LSA. It suggested to the observer/researcher that the 'coat on or off' event provided a vehicle for both teachers and for Errol to orientate themselves in relation to the differences in expectation between the two schools. His coat provided him with a medium through which to understand the subtleties of what is and is not acceptable in both places as well as to exercise some choice in his life. In the earlier discussion, there was a suggestion that Errol may feel exposed by PE in a rather concrete sense and therefore wish to keep his coat on. The teachers were accustomed to him arriving at school with something to say which seemed quite important to him but was very hard for them to understand as Errol's associations and the meaning of some of the things he shared with them



were so idiosyncratic. Had we been able to discuss this after the analysis of the data we may have talked about the symbolic meaning of his 'coat on, coat off', in connection with his understanding of the many comings and goings in his life. However, his teachers were able to tolerate not understanding and to allow him the space to try to explain.

#### **4.2.3 Example three of Being prepared to learn the child's mode of communication**

A third example of being prepared to learn the child's mode of communication came from the observation (2, 31/03). Here is an extract of the written observation.

“Ms Lareina spoke to Simon to ask him if he wanted to help her use the trimmer. She called to him several times to get his attention and said that he did not have to if he did not want to. He came over without appearing to say anything and stood next to her with his right hand on her arm as she gave him instructions about pulling the trimmer towards him. He followed her instructions wordlessly, at one point, swapping hands while maintaining one hand on her arm or leg. When the task was finished Ms Lareina said it was nice to have help and Simon wandered over to the far side of the room and Ms Lareina followed.”



Ms Lareina explained what she wanted him to do and encourages him to do it.



Simon operates the trimmer by himself



The task completed, Simon leaves the table but Ms Lareina waits to catch his eye and smiles at him as he turns around and they share a moment of eye contact.

The next extract is of the discussion with Ms Lareina and Ms Farrington from the subsequent exploratory session (4, 19:00) and is followed by the discussion.

Observer/  
researcher . . . What I noticed . . . in this one where he came over and . . . , almost absentmindedly, the way he leant on you. He's got his arm on your arm there and it's the sort of closeness

Ms Lareina Mm

Observer/  
researcher Almost as though, sort of, so you won't notice

Ms Lareina Do you think it's like that?

Observer/  
researcher I don't know. What do you think?

Ms Lareina What it feels like is when he does that is that he wants to make contact but he's not quite, [Voicing what she thinks are Simon's thoughts], 'I've seen it done but I can't remember exactly how it was done now'. Because sometimes, you know, he'll walk around and he'll just lay on me or like in the morning he comes over he just goes like that (poses as Simon falling sideways on to her) as if he's forgotten the other bits that go (laugh) but maybe that bit was cos I think I knew that he would want to do something like that and other times I've been doing like something like that, he's not been safe and I just wanted him to see that when you are in a different state of mind that you can do different things, that those things are available for him.

Observer/  
researcher Mm yeah he was quite eager, wasn't he? He did get up straight away like you said.

Ms Lareina Yeah

Observer/  
researcher Do you think that was to use the trimmer or was that just to be, to spend a bit of time with you?

Ms Lareina	Yeah. Both things, both things. To make an interaction that is, he sees other people interacting and I think he always feels like he's on the periphery sort of looking at other people managing it so that, that fulfils that doesn't it cos he's doing something. It's like a crutch for us to be together I suppose
Observer/ researcher	Eh and there's a reason to be together and then he makes quite good use of it doesn't he by . . .
Ms Lareina	I do think they like doing that. There's something about that sort of cutting something straight, you know makes them feel like they're accomplishing something, straightening things up. Errm

This exemplifies the connection between the objects in the room and the learning experience. Simon used the trimmer because he wanted to but also to be close to Ms Lareina and he touched her while he performed the task. It was a well-structured interaction and she gave him instructions that he could follow so that he could feel a sense of achievement. She also did this in a way which took account of Simon's way of interacting via the use of another object. Rhode (2001) characterised her work with an autistic child with whom primary inter-subjectivity had to be preceded by a secondary inter-subjectivity mediated via joint attention skills thus,

"It was as though the threesome of joint attention had to be securely established before the child could dare to attempt a direct, "you and me" relationship with one other person." (p 132)

Though this may be more extreme than in Simon's case it highlights the complexities of uneven development. In the excerpt of the exploratory session, Ms Lareina seemed almost reluctant to speak about Simon touching her arm but when encouraged she demonstrated how much thinking had taken place about what Simon was communicating through his actions. She took up the challenge by giving words to his potential thought process as he steadied himself psychically by leaning on her. His approaches did appear quite infantile and her

response was rather like a mother with her baby trying to work out what the baby was trying to tell her from his movements and expressions. This extract showed that Simon is a long way from a latency state of mind.

Ms Lareina also took up Simon's position on the periphery of things as in the first theme where he positions himself as 'the audience', i.e. not having any effect on his surroundings. In this example, Ms Lareina states that he was doing something, suggesting that he was having an experience of a developing sense of agency which was also recognised and acknowledged by another person. Following the analysis, the observer/researcher's counter-transference feeling about this interaction was that Simon experienced it as a realisation that others can also be in the position of being an audience and watching him. What was happening here appears as simply teaching at the level of Early Years education. However, the understanding of how an adult mind can help an immature one to think and make connections which then give that child a sense of achievement can be under-valued and can go virtually unnoticed particularly when carried out with ease as in this case. There is a view that for such social actions and activities to succeed, the ways they are produced need to be glossed over (Garfinkel 1967, Goffman 1963). Yet, when the interaction is examined and broken down it can reveal a method, a way of thinking or a state of mind which can be learned or acquired through supervised practice (Diem-Wille 2014, Price 2006, Datler et al 2014, Elfer 2014). This learning can then have a transformative effect on a child about whom there are concerns about possible ASD. Simon's teacher recognised and responded to his infantile need for experiences of his mind exerting itself in action and producing effects on another mind. (Alvarez and Furgiuele 1997 p123)

#### **4.2.4 Example four of Being prepared to learn the child's mode of communication**

The final example of this theme of being prepared to learn the child's mode of communication shows Karim doing things the teachers had not previously seen him do in class. This example shows him pulling faces at other children but ensuring that he is not seen doing this by any of the adults in the room. Once

they were made aware of his antics, they could think about the communication behind them.

During an exploratory session (3, 31:04) we were watching the video of Karim when he made a face at another boy at the breakfast table and the discussion was around how he can make himself quite unlikeable.

Ms Farringdon I just saw that now  
[observer/researcher: Laughing]  
He's so sneaky

. . .

Ms Lareina That was probably a bit of envy, that Olwyn had his  
lady in, [referring to a mainstream school staff LSA]  
. . . he hasn't had anyone.

[Ms Farringdon: No]

I think sometimes Karim's viewpoint might be that  
everyone else is getting so much more than him.

. . .

Observer/  
Researcher He can be quite unlikeable, can't he, at times . . .

Ms Lareina Oh definitely

[Ms Farringdon: Yeah]

It's like a vicious circle though really because he  
can be, he can be

[Ms Farringdon: Really lovely]

. . .

Ms Lareina I noticed it when he very first came when we'd have  
long holds and afterwards he might say something  
and you think, he's a baby really.

[observer/researcher: Hmm]

He's like a poor little baby, he's had awful things said to him, . . . and now I notice it more 'cause I think he's he's got a core against that now, but I think he, I noticed that when he's learning, when he's asking things with innocence, that's when I think he's but he can be quite unlikeable 'cause he's he's like quite grasping

[Ms Farrington: Yeah]

He he doesn't really seem to care about anyone else, he'll tread over anyone else so that he's ok.

Ms Lareina

Sometimes I think with Karim, erm, I wonder if it's like 'I'm top dog here 'cause I know what's spoken about at the breakfast table, at the breakfast table we'll often talk about what happened yesterday, you're just a new boy, you don't you don't you're not following the thread of the conversation, I sometimes think the whole, it's like the superiority, erm

[observer/researcher: Yeah]

Sounds like he can't do anything to redeem him doesn't it really but

. . .

Ms Farrington

He's very quick with her [in reference to his behaviour with another pupil]

[observer/researcher: Hmm]

He likes her doesn't he

Ms Lareina

Just like mum

Ms Lareina

She can run rings around him if she wants. Can't she?

Much of the discussion was about how unlikeable Karim could make himself and his 'sneakiness', making faces at other children when he knew his teacher could not see him. His attempt to avoid being seen was undoubtedly to avoid being told off but also belied his desire not to further damage his teacher's impression of him. In the exploratory session, there was acknowledgement of his sense of deprivation shown by his envy of other children when their LSAs visited from their mainstream schools. However, his 'sneakiness' made it hard for adults to think about him and what he may be communicating on an unconscious level. There was something spoiling about the interaction which seems to have prevented them from staying with this thinking and as Ms Lareina says, 'he is a poor baby'. It seems that there was something impoverished about him which was so hard to think about and even infected the thinking about his deprivation and envy. Ms Lareina tried to interpret Karim's meaning when watching video of him correcting another boy. The other boy had stated that Simon had been naughty. Karim leapt to Simon's defence and may have been identifying with Simon as someone who does not always get it right but that does not mean that he always gets it wrong and sometimes he can have a good day. So perhaps Ms Lareina's understanding stopped short of recognising why Karim would do things like make faces at other children but it did admit the possibility that there was a reason for his behaviour.

The next step to teaching children how to learn is to give them the means to derive meaning from their experience such that they are able to learn from it and develop habits of thought which will encourage further learning.

This theme contends that the teachers had to work to acquire an understanding of each child and their idiosyncrasies to then begin the learning process with them. In some of the cases above the teachers needed to be encouraged to speak about their thinking in this respect. It appeared to the observer/researcher that this reluctance to describe the process is because so much of it is about an attitude and state of mind that with long experience, tends to become second nature and to speak about it would be to state the obvious. However, through observation and its subsequent collaborative discussion it is revealed as a skill that can be facilitated and potentially taught. (Burhouse 2014, Datler 2014, Diem-



Wille 2014, Elfer 2014, Gaveriaux, Brizard and Roumegoux 2014, Price 2006, Wakelyn 2011).

### **4.3 Theme - Teaching of meaning making**

The final theme in this chapter looks at how the understanding acquired through the state of mind discussed above was then applied to the teaching role. Saltzberger-Wittenberg's (1983) states that,

“. . . the hopefulness required to remain curious and open to new experiences, the capacity to perceive connections and to discover their meaning is deeply affected by the quality of the relationship with another during infancy and beyond.” (p xiii)

Where this hopefulness has been present in the first relationship some of the qualities of that relationship can be transferred to the person of the teacher. However, for some children who appear profoundly incurious it is possible that the primary relationship did not contain these qualities and it is the teacher's task here to begin to establish a new form of relationship for this child in which curiosity can grow. The following examples aim to show how the teachers used that relationship to develop links for the children to help them to gather-up their experience into something meaningful.

#### **4.3.1 Example one of Teaching of meaning making**

The following is an extract from a written observation.

“Karim moved to the floor and was tracking Simon's progress around the room. Karim quickly pushed his cars into the corner of the room while still watching Simon who noticed and followed the cars almost as though this was something Karim had intended to happen. As Simon made for the corner of the room Karim raced after him and there was a yell of protest from Simon before he emerged closely followed by Karim. Simon told Ms Lareina that Karim had pinched him and Karim immediately denied it and said Simon was lying. Karim made a face that looked like disgust at having

been accused of pinching. Ms Lareina said that she did not see what had happened and she needed them to explain it to her. Karim looked as though he might cry and threw the cars he had been playing with into the box and left the room.

. . .

Karim could just be seen peering into the classroom through the glass pane in the door while the other children were finishing laying the table. Ms Lareina spoke to him from the table to come back in and explain why he had left the classroom. He was looking serious and very aggrieved as he edged around the door leaning on it with one shoulder, his arms crossed. Ms Lareina said she thought it was a shame that he had left the room without telling her what had happened. He stepped further into the classroom. Simon was holding a toy helicopter up as though pretending to fly it around the room and came very close in front of Karim. Karim winced when Simon came between him and Ms Lareina. She was now leaning toward Karim across the table perhaps, in order to hear him better as it was now quite busy and noisy in the classroom. Simon moved away still engrossed with his helicopter.

Ms Lareina may have been briefly distracted by Simon obscuring Karim from her view, as she was asking another child if he had been given a job. She returned her attention to Karim who moved across the space to the table and grasped hold of the back of a chair as he spoke quietly with Ms Lareina. I could not hear what they were saying but his expression seemed less forlorn as he conversed with her and then he took hold of the cups and began to distribute them around the table. “

There follows a series of stills showing Karim gradually returning to the classroom from the corridor while Ms Lareina talked to him at the same time as maintaining contact with Simon and the other children who are playing with Ms Farrington out of shot on the left hand-side of the classroom.





Karim finally steps inside the classroom but maintains a slightly defiant posture



Karim approaches the table and Ms Lareina orientates her posture toward him

These two stills show how much of the communication between Karim and his teacher in this instance was non-verbal. As Karim stepped into the class he adopted a slightly defiant body posture with his arms crossed and Ms Lareina retained her posture facing slightly toward the other children (out of shot). The next still shows that Karim approached the table in a more open and receptive stance and that this is mirrored by Ms Lareina who turns to face him.

Ms Lareina shared her feeling with Karim that she felt sad that he had left the classroom and then her thoughts that if she had known what had been the problem she might have been able to help him with it. She made the point very clearly that she understood that it was how he had been feeling that made him leave the room. He had frequently left his classroom when in his mainstream school and was often to be found 'running the corridors'. When Ms Lareina visited to observe him there she frequently had to go and find him as no-one in his class knew where he was. There was no suggestion that he would come to any harm or leave the school grounds. However, as Karim's teacher from his special school was visiting hints at them not really minding his absence from class. Solomon (2011) explains this attitude,

"These motivations can be thought of as societal defences against anxiety, as collective unconscious wishes for disturbance and distress to be split off and projected into excluded pupils and the settings that work with them."  
(p44)

When he first arrived at the special school he would leave the room frequently and his resistance at being brought back in would result in being held. It had become unusual for him to run out at the time of this observation so there was certainly something troubling him. Ms Lareina maintained her posture, being slightly inclined towards him throughout the interaction and this conveyed to him that she retains the intention to communicate with him despite having to manage the rest of the class. Karim had been in this class with the same teacher for two years and was at the time of the observation very familiar with the meaning of her body language. It was surprising to the observer/researcher just how much of the communication was non-verbal. In this example the dialogue between both parties was frequently drowned out by noise from elsewhere in the class and yet the meaning of the interaction was clearly conveyed by the postural attitude of Ms Lareina and Karim.

### 4.3.2 Example two of Teaching of meaning making

The next example of the teaching of meaning making features both Danny and Errol and there follows several extracts of transcripts and written observations as well as stills which are then followed by a discussion linking all the material together.

This is an extract from an exploratory session (10, 29:09)

Ms Eastman            We went around the table yesterday morning and we said . . . what we wanted to be when we are grown up and . . . Sonny said he wanted to be a footballer, Danny was a bit vague so we sort of suggested that he did some jobs and then he said he wanted to be a teacher and Errol sat there and said he wanted to be a baby.

Observer/  
researcher            He wants to be whose baby?

[Ms Lewis: He wants to be fed]

Ms Eastman            Yeah. He wants to eat and he wants to be a baby

There follows an extract from written observation (8, 01/04) in which Errol was sitting next to Ms Eastman at the table and Danny was sitting on the other side.

“Errol clapped his hands one of either side of Ms Eastman’s hand causing her to say “Oww”. Danny immediately copied him and she asked them both to be gentle. They both tried to slap her hands and when she said she likes gentle boys Errol got to his feet and cuddled her and she remarked on his gentle cuddle. Danny was also standing now and seemed uncertain as to what to do. Errol put out an arm and grabbed hold of Danny’s jumper and pulled him close and then put his arm across Danny’s shoulder pulling him into the cuddle also.

They seemed to sigh collectively as they broke away and the two boys played at rolling plates across the table. This was initiated by Errol and Danny copied him laughing at what Errol was doing.”



Errol cuddles Ms Eastman and reaches out to Danny



Danny gets pulled into the cuddle with Ms Eastman by Errol

Below is the discussion of this event in the exploratory session (10, 38:33)

Ms Lewis: He has a limited understanding of personal space  
and

Ms Eastman: Oh he's pulled Danny in. Oh that's nice

. . .  
 Ms Eastman: I didn't realise that I just sort of thought Danny copied but he didn't  
 Observer/  
 researcher: Well . . . Danny is standing there not seeming to  
 [Ms Eastman: Ohhh]  
 know what to do. . .  
 Ms Lewis: Yeah because he doesn't do contact at all or anything like that  
 . . .  
 Ms Lewis: Watching everything your observing he reminds me of a toddler  
 Observer/  
 researcher: They could almost be like a toddler with an older sibling

In a review session (24, 21:00) Ms Lewis described Danny's attempts to get attention with inappropriate behaviour as, "because he doesn't quite know like Errol how to . . . engage you with interest or showing you things. He doesn't quite know how to do that whereas Errol has got those skills." There is recognition among the teachers that Errol is able to help Danny to learn about relationships because Errol possesses "those skills" as Ms Lewis puts it. In this way, the teachers are supporting the conditions for Danny to learn from Errol. In the discussion in the exploratory session the teachers were initially surprised that Errol would allow Danny to join in with his exclusive cuddle with Ms Eastman. Then they spoke about Danny as like a toddler and the observer/researcher notes that Errol behaved a bit like an older sibling in this instance. Reference to this event is made again later in the section on Focus shift in relation to Danny.

Later in this observation Errol became angry when Ms Eastman asked him about his new baby cousin and he said angrily that he was not friends with a baby. Her response was, "Can't you be a big cousin to a baby". There follows a discussion of this in the exploratory session (10 43:52).

Observer/      You were talking to Errol about his cousin having, or



researcher his auntie having a baby and the baby was a cousin  
and he was disputing this

Ms Lewis: I think sometimes his understanding is not great . . .  
but I think, but he thought you were calling him a baby  
[to Ms Eastman]

Observer/  
researcher: That's right yeah

Ms Lewis: There was some confusion over, maybe he wasn't  
really listening to what you were saying and only got  
a bit of it or whether sometimes when you  
communicate with him he doesn't always quite  
understand what you're saying

Observer/  
researcher: He was quite upset at the thought of being friends  
with a baby. (Laughs)

Ms Eastman: Really, it's interesting what he said about growing up  
to be a baby.

The meaning behind Errol's indignation at being friends with a baby or his desire to grow up to be a baby might be related to his realisation that he is able to teach Danny some things and is, therefore, no longer the baby of the class. The process of connecting ideas that was modelled by his teacher's interaction with him were causing Errol to try to make himself better understood.

#### **4.3.3 Example three of Teaching of meaning making**

The last example in this chapter features a section of dialogue which took place at the breakfast table in which Ms Lareina encouraged Simon to have a conversation with her about his afternoon at his mainstream school on the

previous day. Ms Lareina had also been at Simon's mainstream school and she had joined in with a game that Simon and his mainstream classmates had played.

There follows a section from the written observation of 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015

“Simon needed encouragement to speak about the ‘Time Shock’ game. Ms Lareina asked him who else was there with him and he did not respond but continued to eat his toast and look blankly at her and she said, “he is your friend”. By now everyone was looking at Simon. He eventually said, “I don't know”.



Seated around the table clockwise are Tommy, Karim, Ms Farrington, Simon, Ms Patel, Olwyn and Ms Lareina

In the following transcript of the exploratory session the teachers and the observer/researcher discuss this section of video immediately after viewing it for the first time.

Ms Lareina            I really wanted to know if he remembered yesterday because . . . it's not always a good experience but . . . he was really laughing and he was really sort of engaged. He began it, finished it, had a, you know, it was a, a good enough

experience and I wanted to know if he could keep it in mind.

. . .

Ms Lareina He just loved that game. . . he could love it on the same sort of level as the other children, like they were laughing as well and he was part of the group and when he come to finishing, which often he doesn't manage, and he wasn't laying on the floor, he was at the table, he was very different and . . . I wanted to see how he did remember and I think

Ms Lareina Do you think he did remember . . .

Ms Farrington Yeah I think he just was uncomfortable, he was thinking about his toast.

Ms Lareina But then he did say Khadar didn't he?

[Ms Farrington: Mmm]

. . .

Observer/  
researcher: He seemed to lean away at one point

Ms Lareina: I think, It's unbearable . . .

Observer/  
researcher: Everyone's waiting for him

. . .

Ms Lareina: We have a lot of unbearable moments at the breakfast table don't we

[Ms Farrington: Yeah]

Ms Lareina was thinking about Simon's thoughts about his experience in his mainstream school and encouraging him to revisit them in memory and express them in words via a conversation with her which could then become a shared experience with his class in this school. She also expressed a desire to find out if he had enjoyed it and had retained this feeling connected to the experience along with the feeling she suspected he had of enjoying being part of the group

and taking pleasure in a shared experience. There were a number of complex emotional experiences to be processed in this task and there was recognition by her that it is hard for him, indeed, unbearable, and that he was also being watched by the rest of his class. Everyone virtually held their breath while waiting for Simon to produce the name of the child he sat next to, 'Khadar'. By visiting him in his mainstream school Ms Lareina is supporting him across the organisation boundary that Solomon (2011) describes thus helping to maintain a sense of movement between the two places on an external organisational level as well as encouraging that same movement on an internal and relational level by helping him to share his experience with his classmates in both schools.

### **Summary**

The examples of the first theme of "Parallel process" aim to expose the unconscious processes present within small extracts of interaction in the classroom and in the subsequent discussion of these extracts in the post observational sessions. The differences between the two classes seem to be related to the developmental age of the children. The second theme, "Being prepared to learn the child's modes of communication" charted the struggle the teachers had in trying to understand what the children were trying to tell them. There were many extracts and subsequent wondering about the meaning of certain rituals or quirks of behaviour which appeared throughout the observations and subsequent discussion of the material. The teachers of both classes had very different styles of teaching and yet they both appeared willing to go through the stages of struggling to understand the often, confusing content of the child's behaviour in an attempt to discern what it meant to the child before subsequently being able to offer an alternative way of deriving meaning from the shared experience of being in a classroom in a school. The task of the "Teaching of meaning making", was made all the more difficult by the fact that prior to joining the special school many of the children had experienced mainstream education not as a shared experience with other children but rather as an only child with one or even two adults. Their day to day lives in their original schools could only nominally be described as an experience of inclusion in mainstream education and was likely to have been a dissatisfying encounter on many levels for all

parties concerned. Solomon (2011 p44) describes a societal wish of 'turning a blind eye' to children who are too vulnerable to cope within mainstream schools. Evans (2013) found that this sense of exclusion can also extend to those tasked to provide a holding function with such children in mainstream education where they can experience themselves and the children they work with as on the edge of the school. What these data illustrate is how this group of teachers are able to tolerate and work with the unconscious processes in the classroom and to remain attentive to the child's communication until they can develop a facilitative teacher-pupil relationship with the child. They approach this task with a confidence borne of experience that they will be successful if only they can keep the children long enough to complete their work.

## **5. Findings - How the teachers used the process**

This second chapter of findings, like the previous chapter comprises three themes. The first of these is “Focus shift” which looks at what the factors are that prevent the attention remaining on the child subject of the video or the passage under discussion, and they appear to be largely unconscious. The second theme in this section is “Daring to be curious” and like the second theme of the first chapter is a state of mind. When conditions were favourable for certain aspects of the relationship between teacher and child to be explored freely then they could be open to challenge and change. This theme also parallels what learning requires of the child, so it is almost a reversal of the role from teacher to child. The last theme in this chapter is called “Thoughts about the process” and incorporates subthemes about the teachers use of the elements of the process and thoughts about how the model might be used or adapted. As in the previous chapter, the discussion of the material in exploratory and review sessions allowed for some questioning of thoughts and feelings about individual children opening-up the possibility of change. There was a similar progression to that described in the first chapter though this chapter reveals that the teachers use of the process was more playful, perhaps because of the familiarity with the process and consequently they were able to take more risks. Though this was less apparent in the second phase review sessions where questions intended to keep the process on track had the effect of inhibiting some of the freedom seen in the earlier post observation sessions.

As previously mentioned the staff participants in this study had become accustomed to work discussion groups (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) for several years already and were in a group with the observer/researcher which ran concurrently with the research project. This meant that the staff were familiar with discussing their work in this way with the researcher and were therefore less likely to experience the kind of anxieties that an unfamiliar worker might evoke. Youell (2006) makes the point that when adults are encouraged to share their own emotional experience about the work they do in work discussion groups it arouses in them all kinds of anxieties.

“This can be very difficult at first, particularly when they fear that their reactions to some children are not worthy of a committed, professional teacher. They find it hard to admit to feelings of dislike or intolerance and are understandably reluctant to describe disorganized lessons or to write about their own fears of losing control.” (p85)

Even allowing for a familiarity with the observer/researcher and the experience of work discussion (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) this group of staff along with the observer/researcher were at times caught up in unconscious defensive means to avoid being faced with a child’s pain.

## **5.1 Theme - Focus shift**

This theme considers what it was that got in the way of thinking about the observed material. It includes subthemes about allowing oneself to be distracted by something else happening in class, trying not to be overwhelmed by the emotional content of communication and looking elsewhere because it was hard to stay with some aspects of the emotional response to children in the classroom. These subthemes seem very similar but are subtly different as illustrated by the examples below.

### **5.1.1 Example one of Focus shift**

The following extract (22, 20:23) is a discussion of video of Errol learning about the effect he can have on something he is not physically touching. This example shows how the adults in the class respond to Errol in quite different ways because of their feeling states in relation to other things happening in the room at the time.



Errol is showing Barbara the TA from his mainstream school how he has learnt to blow open the comic without touching it.

(Watching a video of Errol flapping a comic to make the air waft open the pages of another comic on the table)

Ms Eastman Nobody really took much notice did they

Observer  
researcher I think Barbara was quite interested (laugh)

Ms Eastman Was she?

(Pause while watching the video)

Ms Lewis But he didn't really, he was quite happy doing it, wasn't he? If he really wanted you to know that he'd have persisted. He'd have dragged you over wouldn't he? [this comment was addressed to Ms Eastman]

Ms Eastman I do remember him showing me and I was thinking 'he's going to tear all those magazines



that I've just bought' (laugh) which is so sad to think like that. I shouldn't, I shouldn't so?

Ms Lewis I think . . . he has to really engage with something. If you say, 'oh if you keep going like that you'll break it'. He likes to test it just to see if it breaks (Comparing Errol with another child)

. . .

(Pause while watching the video)

Observer/  
researcher He looked like he was protecting himself there didn't he? (in relation to Zahir the new child seeming to flinch when an adult approaches)

Ms Eastman He did

Ms Lewis He has seen a lot of violence

The observer/researcher registered a connection between the learning that Errol was enjoying with the TA from his mainstream school which was outside the reach of his teachers, simply because it was rather ordinary. Errol was a rather baby-like and tactile child. He was described in one of our exploratory sessions as taking no notice of other children in the playground unless they made physical contact with him, (12, 37:00). In this example, he was learning that he could have an impact on something which was separate from his own body by wafting the air. Meanwhile his teachers were distracted as they were gripped by something more dangerous and destructive and could only see his actions in this light. They were distracted by the observer/researchers comment about the child Zahir who seemed to flinch. When it was brought to their attention they felt guilty for not noticing Errol's achievement. The TA, Barbara, appeared well insulated from the more unconscious aspects of the dynamics in the classroom and appeared to be enjoying Errol's achievement on a very straightforward level as she seemed to find him very engaging. Her 'insulation' may have been the result of unfamiliarity with this group of children and consequent lack of exposure to their projections.

It could also have been a defensive turning away, particularly if she regards visits to this school as a break from her usual routine which probably involves whole days spent with one of these children.

Ms Lewis' comment about Errol's achievement not being noticed by Ms Eastman, "if he really wanted you to know, he'd have dragged you over", may have been to reassure Ms Eastman that Errol was content even though she had not noticed and, therefore, not to feel guilty about it. It was also a response to the observer's comment about the teaching assistant, Barbara, being quite interested. In fact, Ms Lewis appeared to be trying to protect Ms Eastman from the observer's comments and she likened Errol's behaviour with the comics to that of another pupil who tests things to see if they will break as a kind of experiment to test the trustworthiness of the teacher. The observer then noticed the new child Zahir, appearing to flinch in response to a movement by an adult and this echoed the experience of the teachers being 'slapped' by the observer/researcher's comments and flinching away from the perceived criticism of lack of attention. Ms Lewis offered an explanation for Zahir's behaviour, that he had seen a lot of violence. The observer/researcher's counter-transference feeling about this comment was that it served to shield the expected violence from his view. In the same way that the need to turn a blind eye can be triggered by being afraid of what one might see.

So much of what comes into the classroom with children with disrupted and disturbed backgrounds needs to be defended against. It imbues ordinary classroom interaction and activity with disproportionate significance and attacks at the very roots of what a learning experience should be about. For some of the children learning is about exposure to danger and paralysing fear. This example demonstrates that what comes into the classroom can also make some ordinary learning tainted by extraordinary experience.

### **5.1.2 Example two of Focus shift**

The previous example showed how easy it was to be distracted by other things that seemed more serious. It also appears that there is a tendency to attribute

meaning to what is observed according to what is tolerable and thereby perhaps missing other possible explanations. This next example features Danny seeking to repeat a moment of physical contact with his teacher and closely followed the second example of “Teaching of meaning making” in the previous chapter which showed Errol pulling Danny in to a cuddle with himself and Ms Eastman.

In the written observation, it was noted that “Danny was trying to slap Ms Eastman again but he stopped as she asked him not to hurt her.” The slapping had earlier preceded the cuddle which had been initiated by Errol.



Danny trying to slap Ms Eastman’s as Errol had done just before sharing a cuddle with her and Danny.

There follows an extract of the exploratory session in which we discussed this piece of observation (10, 38:54).

Ms Lewis . . . He [Danny] doesn’t do contact at all . . .

Ms Eastman No. . . . I don’t feel that he pulls away but he doesn’t initiate it. Does he?

. . .

Ms Eastman It is sort of like Danny wants, wants, that social

interaction but doesn't know how to do it or doesn't know how to get it. . . .

Ms Lewis            He's trying to get in line to do it again yeah?

Ms Eastman        He never complains when you tell him something he never reacts.

Ms Lewis            Saying that, did you say No originally  
[Ms Eastman: Yeah]

Ms Eastman        He used to hit didn't he. I don't think he's hit us but he hit the person that's supporting him.

Ms Lewis            Yeah if he didn't want to do something.  
[Ms Eastman: Yeah]  
He seems to have stopped doing that now. Hasn't he?  
[Ms Eastman: Yeah]

In the above extract, it was noted that Danny was trying to repeat the earlier sequence which had begun with slapping his teacher. The discussion was about his lack of interest in physical contact though it was recognised that he wanted to interact with others even though he did not know how to initiate it. The conversation continued for several minutes and flowed backwards and forwards between Danny not knowing how to initiate affection with his teachers and not actually wanting it. This discussion showed that they were aware that Danny did not seek affection readily but accepted it when offered. Significantly, the teachers viewed this as Danny deciding when and if he wanted close contact rather than being unfamiliar with the protocols around the giving and receiving of affection. This felt to the observer/researcher like a more defensive way of not seeing the painfulness of such a situation for a six-year old child. It was so much easier to

shift the focus to a dislike of close personal contact than to think about any of the painful alternatives.

### **5.1.3 Example three of Focus shift**

Another example of shift of focus occurred during the exploratory session of the first observation and involved Karim. It begins with a video clip of him becoming upset when the marble run collapsed. He went and sat on the floor behind a chair which meant that Ms Lareina needed to step over him when she came back into the classroom from the corridor. She later said that she had wanted to avoid catching his gaze for fear of being drawn into something he was trying to control. This example shows that Ms Lareina was trying to protect herself from his neediness. It was quite difficult for us to get to the nub of this issue when discussing it. The discussion sounded tortuous as we wrestled with this episode and Ms Lareina's thoughts and feelings about it. She turned it over and around in her mind and in her words while the observer/researcher struggled to understand her. There follows a narrative of the extract from the exploratory session with the teachers where we discussed aspects of Karim's behaviour after watching him on the video clips. The transcript of these sections is in Appendix H.

The observer/researcher asked if that was familiar behaviour from Karim. Ms Lareina described it as a development for him because, during his early days at the school, if he found he could not control a situation or things were not going his way he would hit out at adults or run out of the room. At those times she had experienced his behaviour as controlling. Both teachers had agreed that they would wait before responding to him until 'the dust had settled' before trying to find out what was troubling him. She said that it was unusual for him to leave the classroom in recent months. Since then it was noted that Karim only behaved that way during free time with other children. Ms Lareina said that, in this respect, he had changed because he used to do the same thing during lessons but then he seemed to feel contained by the lessons because he knew how they worked.



Karim sitting on the floor behind a chair with his head on his arms while the other children continue to play just out of shot.

Ms Lareina spent some time talking about how they had handled his earlier departures from class and how they had viewed them at the time which made this recent departure seem even more significant. The observer/researcher gave her view of the cause of the rupture i.e. that Karim had watched Simon's affectionate hug with Ms Lareina and had reacted to that. The conversation abruptly changed focus to Simon but later returned to Karim in a discussion of his comments in a video clip of the class at the breakfast table.

In this section of video Ms Lareina talked about Simon having a good afternoon the previous day and Tommy had said, "He was not good, he had been naughty", to which Karim retorted "No! At mainstream." In the discussion of this piece of video Ms Lareina said "If I'm being more charitable to Karim' it is that he recognises that Simon can be good sometimes just like himself". Ms Lareina felt that Karim was defending Simon. The observer/researcher offered a view that Karim was supporting Ms Lareina when Tommy contradicted her because he felt grateful to her for helping him to come back into class. Ms Lareina responded that she felt reticent to praise him for doing the right thing for fear that he would turn the tables again and that this behaviour needs to become more embedded before she could respond in that way. The observer/researcher likened his

behaviour to a see-saw. Ms Lareina talked about a previous occasion when she had had to hold Karim to prevent him from hurting himself or others. He had asked her to let go and she had told him, "I'm going to have to start to trust you again." She described feeling the same way about him leaving the room. She said that she waits to see if he has digested something before she can acknowledge his good behaviour. The observer/researcher tried to voice her own understanding of Ms Lareina's feeling but found it difficult to put it into words. In fact, both adults struggled to express themselves.

Ms Lareina gave an example of how this was managed in the class in the form of token giving after breakfast. During this she voiced what she thought was Karim's thought process, "I think he thinks 'oh I've sodded it up this morning' but then he thinks, 'oh they said I came in nicely'. Her intention was to let him know that interaction with others does not always have to be conflict ridden or conducted with high drama. She expanded on this, "It can be something that you take in and you know you've got him in mind and you're not always going to be responding to him quickly erm so like, your time will come really, with him." The conversation moved to another boy, Olwyn. Ms Farrington felt that he waits for them to say something nice and then he repeats his misdemeanour. Ms Farrington said, "Its almost like they've got one over on you." The observer/researcher comments on the perversity of this behaviour.

We were approaching the end of this exploratory session and the observer/researcher asked what it was like for them looking at themselves. Ms Lareina said she would like to do it more often and Ms Farrington said, "Its really interesting . . . your focus is usually on one person so to see what happens with the others". She mentioned the looks that Karim gives to people and remarked that she was more mindful of those now. The final remark in this segment came from the observer/researcher who noted that there is so much happening that one has to choose where to look.

The sudden change of focus immediately after the observer/researcher had shared her view of what had caused Karim to leave the class went unnoticed and unacknowledged by all three adults involved in the discussion and was only apparent on examining the transcript of the session and was therefore not

available for discussion in itself. At a distance, it was possible to speculate that it would have been painful to acknowledge Karim's feelings of rejection and speak openly about feeling the guilt associated with it when it was much easier to simply look away. The final remark about having to choose where to look could have been an unconscious recognition that all three of us *had* looked elsewhere.

The discussion about Karim not being able to take in something from his consequences, and Olwyn repeating his bad behaviour as soon as he feels he is back in his teacher's 'good books' are two examples of interaction where there is no learning from what happened. Ms Farrington's comment about the children 'getting one over on you' revealed the perversity of the behaviour and triumph at sabotaging themselves and any attempt to reward them for doing the right thing. This was probably a reflection of their sense of themselves as irredeemable. This reaction restored normality with the notion that they were indeed 'badly behaved' children. It also had the effect of wrong footing the teachers whose sense of being tricked by the children was perceived as a kind of triumph when, in fact, it was a signifier of emotional abuse and it aimed to spoil any gains made.

In the discussion at the breakfast table, it seemed to the observer/researcher that Karim was identifying with Simon rather than feeling rivalrous toward him. Perhaps the experience of having his feelings of rejection managed by Ms Lareina following his earlier departure from the class had enabled him to be 'more charitable' toward Simon. It was the observer/researcher's opinion that Karim was beginning to experience himself as a member of a class with other children rather than omnipotently "running the corridors" alone as he did in his mainstream school.

The focus was shifted in this example partly through the avoidance of painful feelings, and also through a complicity among the adults in this case. This example showed how an environment where emotions are complex and expressed in perverse ways can cause three adults to collude to avoid noticing the very thing that at least one of us had set out to study. Perhaps the choice of the name for this theme, 'Focus shift' had been chosen for its very banality but belying its capacity to cause harm. It is harmful to look away when dealing with children who have been traumatised and whose defences against psychic pain



invade the people around them including those who purport to remain open to their experiences. It conveys the message that things can be too awful to think about. I think this example also illustrates how much easier it was for Ms Lareina to tolerate Karim's hatred more than his love.

#### **5.1.4 Example four of Focus shift**

The next example of this theme involves material which was not observed but was discussed in the exploratory and review sessions.

Simon was observed laying on the floor in his mainstream school during a visit by Ms Lareina (6, 22:30).

Ms Lareina: I remember I went to an afternoon session [at his mainstream school] and they had him outside and he was in the wildlife area which is all covered in gravel and everybody was all walking about smelling lavender and thyme and sage and he was laying there on the floor just like lying flat on the floor.

Observer/  
researcher: On the gravel?

Ms Lareina: . . . all the rest of the class had to walk around him and the teacher said oh he's really been working hard (laughter) and I'm thinking, "What!" (laughter) . . . but no one said to him, well I did but before that I was watching and no one said to him 'Get up Simon!'

We were surprised at how easily his mainstream school had managed not to try to get him to stand up. They had simply accommodated his floored protest and walked around him.

Simon's lack of affect seemed to prevent people from thinking about his feeling states as they were rarely on show. It also seemed to ensure that he remained in his own little world if those around him chose to ignore his passive protests from ground level. It was only when they tried to move him that he would make any noise and then they could feel disempowered by him. In the observations, he could be seen on a number of occasions lying on the floor seemingly happy to be there but also not very noticeable and not making any demands on staff.

In the next extract from the same exploratory session a few minutes later (16, 25:09), Ms Lareina and Ms Farrington talk about Simon's relationship with his mother

Ms Lareina: I think he has, you know, he is on the autistic spectrum so maybe he did not respond to, err, I don't want to blame it on to mum because they always get all the blame but I'm assuming mum was his initial care-giver. Maybe he didn't respond and she got a little bit prickly with him and never offered herself as much and then it becomes like a big chasm. . .

. . .

I think most times babies are out there ready to give aren't they? You know they want to, they smile, they are looking for response.

. . .

Simon was withdrawing and employing an autistic defence to avoid contact with other people. The effectiveness of his withdrawal suggested that he neither expected nor wanted to be pursued. If this was to be acknowledged as a loss of hope, then it would be very hard to bear him laying down like a helpless baby waiting for his mummy. He was very heavy and required at least two adults to lift him. The teachers seemed aware though that they needed to carry for him the knowledge that he and the rest of the world existed. (Alvarez 1992). In the next theme this is referred to by Ms Lareina when she refers to Simon as 'not being seen as a real person'. It also connects with her drawing attention to something

which was not seen in our observations but occurred in another setting. When Simon was not lying on the floor he was able to make good use of the attention of the adults around him and this probably contributed to the huge improvements in his social abilities that occurred toward the end of the project.

It was surprisingly easy to allow ourselves to be distracted, to reframe what was observed into something more tolerable or to simply not notice. It was also disquieting to then realise that we had been deploying such defences. In the next theme the possibility of putting some of that knowledge to use was explored.

## **5.2 Theme - Daring to be curious**

Daring to be curious about the darker or less noble aspects of the teaching relationship is a risky thing to do because of the effect it has on the teachers. It is challenging professionally and personally for a teacher to have their views and assumptions about a child or their relationship with that child questioned because it is exposing and it requires a framework to contain the inevitable anxieties. It also requires honesty and trust in the other people involved to be able to question oneself in this way and is what teaching requires of children; to dare to be curious. Solomon and Nashat (2010) outline three stages to the process of group functioning during consultation. The first stage they link to basic assumption behaviour (Bion 1961) in which unconscious desires of the group are acted out, the second phase ushered in a period of more understanding through the sharing of experiences and the third phase saw the opening up of a space which was less about containment for projections of anxiety and more as a playful creative space. In this study the next theme is almost a reversal of the role from teacher to child. Being curious is natural for children who have not experienced trauma but is an act of bravery for the children and staff who work in the context of special education as it carries the risk of finding out that which one would prefer not to know. Therefore, the pull to settle for a more easily accepted explanation is very strong and it takes courage to persevere with curiosity.

### **5.2.1 Example one of Daring to be curious**

The first example of this theme concerns Karim's reaction upon seeing his teacher in conversation with his classmates. The following is an extract from the written observation of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

“Two of the boys opened out the shop just in front of the screen but facing into the classroom. Karim was sitting on the floor just the other side of the shop and it looked, from my position, as though he was sitting inside a television screen. He continued to play with the Lego while talking to the other two boys who were playing with a toy dog. Karim told them that this was not their dog to play with and they argued with him.

Ms Lareina stood up behind Karim and was explaining to him and one of the other boys (who had, at one time, been the only two children in this class) that they had to share things now that there are more children in the class. The other boy was indignant and said that he had been trying to tell Karim the same thing.

...

Ms Lareina went over to talk with Ms Farrington about making a pictogram. Karim glanced up several times at Ms Lareina as she was speaking but then became very interested when she began to speak to one of the other boys. He looked from one face to the other repeatedly and then made an impish face at Jordan out of sight of Ms Lareina.”



Karim pulls an impish face at Jordan while he was in conversation with Ms Lareina.

The following is the narrative version of a conversation that we had while watching this extract on video during the exploratory session (the transcript is in Appendix I)

The observer/researcher comments that Karim takes no notice while the adults are conversing but as soon as Ms Lareina speaks to Jordan, Karim pulls a face at him as though to distract him. Ms Lareina remarks that the children often say that Karim pulls faces at them and Ms Farrington notes that it is a fleeting thing. Ms Lareina wonders if it is intended to put the other person down and the observer/researcher offers her view that it is to get between Ms Lareina and whoever she is speaking to in order to disturb them. Ms Lareina said, “Do you think that’s about power, because I don’t think he likes me. I think, it’s like, maybe he just thinks if he undermines them then he’s more powerful, do you know what I mean, if he puts them down in my eyes then he’s more powerful.” Then Ms Farrington said, “I think he likes you. . . I do, I think he tries to be sort of, like, I don’t really like you, but I think he does.” The observer shares this opinion and her view that Karim is resentful of the other children having Ms Lareina’s attention and that there seemed to be nothing else in this observation leading up to that moment that would have prompted his reaction. Ms Lareina said that

Karim can hold on to things for months and has been known to bring up something eighteen months later.

This subject was returned to when we had the review session a week later when the observer/researcher asked if there had been any changes in their thinking since the exploratory session. Ms Lareina said that she had been thinking about Karim's attachment to her and she thought she had become a bit more sensitive to that. She explained that she felt her thinking about him was coloured by his omnipotence. She described his advances to adults since arriving at the school as cold. This had made her feel that Karim wanted to be in control much more than he wanted to make a connection. She said that she felt more aware of his need to make a connection but that there was something perverse in his expression of this need that created a barrier for her. She said, "My feel was he wanted to take the power and run with it." Ms Farrington agreed with the view of Karim wanting to be in control. We began to talk about whether this was in fact the beginning of Karim expressing his wish to make connections. The observer/researcher referred to Karim's reaction when he observed Simon being affectionate towards Ms Lareina (Karim ran out of the class shortly afterwards). Ms Lareina talked about Karim having rejected affection previously and was wondering if his rejection was not always genuine. We discussed his ambivalence about wanting affection and rejecting it and then wondered at what it felt like for him when he watched Ms Lareina interacting with the other children. Ms Lareina considered Karim's struggle with his ambivalent feelings toward his mother and herself, "He probably feels like that towards me. That I'm setting a boundary and he's furious but he probably wants to, you know, be alright with me as well . . . can't put the two together." This sentiment was also echoed by Ms Farrington.

Ms Lareina viewed her relationship with Karim via the mirror of the video and exploratory and review sessions. She was then able to have it challenged by Ms Farrington and the observer/researcher to the point where she felt she needed to revise it a little because she was made to confront her dislike of this child. This aspect of the teaching and learning relationship is discussed by Nash (1973)

where negative feelings towards children were found to have a direct relationship to the child's academic achievement. In this example, Ms Lareina expressed her view of the status of her relationship with Karim which was challenged by Ms Farrington. The observer/researcher supported this challenge drawing attention to the evidence of the video and this triangulation of perspectives was something the teacher was able to use and learn from.

### **5.2.2 Example two of Daring to be curious**

The second example of daring to be curious relates to a discussion from a review session (23, 33:11) in which we were discussing the written observation of Danny. It reveals how uncomfortable the staff felt about having their practice observed and commented on.

- Ms Eastman: I quite liked reading them [the written observations]. I felt em what did I think? I was really, I remember you [the observer/researcher] giving them to us and I was like 'oh I've got to do this and I've got to do this but I want to read this' (laugh) I felt like that. Did you? I wanted that bit of insight
- Ms Lewis Yeah. I always I found the actual watching it a lot easier to remember and picture in my mind
- Observer/  
researcher Yeah
- Ms Lewis Em sometimes I can read things and pictures pop up and you know but sometimes it was good to see it
- Observer/  
researcher Did you find it difficult to recognize the session or the time from the written observation
- Ms Eastman No I didn't, did you?

Ms Lewis I think putting it into place to where it was sometimes yeah. I think like cos I felt for a lot of the observations I was actually out of the room

Observer/  
researcher Laugh

Ms Lewis I was usually busy doing something else

Observer/  
researcher It's breakfast, isn't it?

Ms Lewis Yeah. It's quite a funny time for us isn't it?

Observer/  
researcher People arriving

Ms Lewis Yeah

Ms Eastman I think with the written observations I was very aware that it was you'd, your perception

Observer/  
researcher Yeah

Ms Eastman Of what was going on whereas if we watched the video it was like watching a video but I suppose you were more directing us into what

Observer/  
researcher Well it was just one perspective on it

Ms Eastman Yeah

Observer/  
researcher Really

Ms Eastman Yeah which was quite interesting cos it was quite nice to have your

Observer/  
researcher Just through my lens

Ms Eastman Perspective

Observer/  
researcher The things I noticed could have been very different from what your experience of it was



Ms Eastman Mm. but I thought it was quite good to have your, to look at it from your, from your viewpoint that was

Ms Lewis I think that's important sometimes isn't it to have feedback

Ms Eastman Yeah

Ms Lewis From someone else how something looks cos I think there was the point em maybe in the first observation with the pink plate and I was joking with Danny about the plate and you could see that he didn't really get it and that made me think after that that he's not really understanding my, my joke and maybe I should do it or not do it or think about why he's doing it and try and make a connection there. Cos that's how we try to make a connection with him wasn't it

Ms Eastman Yeah

Ms Lewis Being on his own first thing, but that was, that was quite interesting seeing how it looks to somebody else and your point of view on it

Observer/  
researcher It was, it looked a little bit like a routine in a way he understood how the routine would go

Ms Lewis And I was trying to upset the routine (laugh)

Observer/  
researcher Well you were introducing a sort of another element to it but kind of it that had meaning but maybe his understanding of it was not quite

Ms Lewis Yeah and I think at that point was when I realised that you know a lot of what we say and do with him - is it understood? Erm. Yeah. So that was, that was good. I think to.. cos I remember reading that and reading it again and thinking 'oh' (laugh)

Observer/ researcher	(laugh) Was it a little bit uncomfortable?
Ms Lewis	It is sometimes I think yeah cos I don't think it feels so uncomfortable when you watch stuff but when you actually read it and it's down in writing it's sort of there but I think we need that it's a good point of having things cos you can go back to things can't you
Ms Eastman	Yeah
Ms Lewis	And read it over and over
Ms Eastman	Yeah
Observer/ researcher	And it is, it's been through someone else's mind hasn't it whereas the video is just there it is
Ms Lewis	Yeah a video
Observer/ researcher	And yet you can come to it fresh almost every time can't you
Ms Eastman	Yeah

There was some ambivalence to the written observations as expressed by the teachers. Ms Eastman's comment about having things to do and yet wanting to read the observations. It sounded as though being asked to read the observations felt like a chore. Ms Lewis talked about finding the video easier to access and that she felt as though she had been out of the classroom for much of this observation. However, when considering if Danny was able to participate in the joke she questioned her own previously expressed view that he understood and then asked herself the question, does he understand? She said "Yeah and I think at that point was when I realised that you know a lot of what we say and do with him, is it understood erm, Yeah. So that was, that was good I think too cos I remember reading that and reading it again and thinking 'oh' (laugh)". Then she acknowledged, ". . . I don't think it feels so uncomfortable when you watch stuff but when you actually read it and it's down in writing it's sort of there . . . you can go back to things can't you". Ms Lewis acknowledged her discomfort when reading what had been the observer/researcher's counter-transference feeling

that Danny did not understand Ms Lewis joke about the pink plate but she was also able to question herself.

### 5.2.3 Example three of Daring to curious

This next example includes several extracts from the exploratory sessions in which we were discussing Simon laying on the floor in protest (16, 25:09).

Ms Farrington: He had a superhero day in the afternoon and he didn't have a costume and he'd been really upset that she [his mother] did not get him a costume and he'd been kicking but not actually someone, . . . he cried when he saw her after school and she said, . . . 'We're in public', like he was embarrassing her and he was only crying.  
...

Ms Lareina: . . . I think he feels he is not good enough. He's not got the, he don't quite know how to get in but he knows that you need a superhero outfit. He hasn't got it. He don't feel good enough and then mum don't feel good enough either, and he's bringing it to everybody's notice by laying on the floor and crying.

In the next extract, Ms Lareina talks about how Simon is not seen as a proper person (16, 30:28)

Ms Lareina And I think there is a bit of a thing that sometimes it seems like . . . there is a feeling that Simon is not really a person you know? Like a, you know, a being

Ms Farrington: Just . . .  
...

Observer/  
researcher: A bit more of an unknown quantity almost?

Ms Lareina: Yeah

Ms Farrington: . . .

Ms Lareina: . . .

Ms Farrington: But he has moved on really quick.

Ms Lareina: I'm sort of a bit staggered by how fast he's moved on.  
. . . I feel like it's like fragile.  
. . .

Ms Lareina: . . . if he comes back [to the school for new school year] and people take it seriously and pick up on him, he is quite accomplished at giving people the idea that he isn't a proper person. He, like he, he, you know, he will ignore people. Will people give up on him? and, erm, it would appear that he can't do the things that he can do.

Observer/  
researcher: Not consolidated yet, these things are a long way from being something that he thinks about and has really taken on.

Ms Lareina: [no definitely,]

There follows another extract of discussion about an episode of laying on the floor which occurred during lunchtime the day before the exploratory session (4, 37:47).

Ms Lareina: . . . he lay down on the dining room floor and I just thought I think if we walk out he'll follow us because he's in there with people he don't know as well and I think this is a real conscious thing, it's like too, its coming to the end of, not only the end of lunch, it's also the transition back to school. It's very iffy for him more so because of his lady coming from mainstream for him. She's very anxious

. . .

Ms Lareina: Lunchtime yesterday he was particularly anxious, he doesn't always do that but I think he'd had a morning of her sitting next to him not being able to manage her anxiety and then . . .

Ms Farrington: He dropped his yoghurt at lunchtime and sort of

In the first extract above the teachers were thinking about the effect of Simon's protest on his mother and how she may have felt embarrassed by him lying on the floor crying and that both mother and son felt that they were somehow not good enough. This led on to the next example which concerned the idea that Simon could give the impression of not being a proper person. There was a reaction to the boldness of this statement which was to say that he had made a lot of progress very quickly. In the last example, Ms Lareina mentioned that she thought Simon lay on the floor as a conscious protest at ending, change and transition, the major stress points in a child's day at school (Rustin 2011 p6). He also had a stressful relationship with his LSA from his mainstream school as she was very anxious. The teachers described how they had to trust him to get up and, on that occasion, he did get up. Simon's teachers were able to bear the possibility of not looking good enough in their roles in front of other teachers and pupils because they had a child who they could not get off the floor. They had to actively cope with their own feelings about his behaviour in the moment as well as maintain their thinking about his collapsed emotional state rather than just his collapsed physical state. He had become accustomed to shaming the adults with him and possibly to feel ashamed himself to the point of not wanting to appear as a 'proper person'. This would seem to be evident in the way his mainstream class managed to walk around him, ignoring him while he lay on the ground. However, Ms Lareina and Ms Farrington maintained their thinking about him and his actions as purposeful and allowed him to make a thinking choice to abandon his

floor protest and to go with them back to class. Simon's capacity to induce in others the kind of powerlessness and emotional collapse he felt himself was so difficult to tolerate that it was sometimes overlooked. However, his teachers in the special school were empowered not to turn away and by opening themselves to his communication helped him muster the strength to get up off the floor.

#### **5.2.4 Example four of Daring to be curious**

A final example of Daring to be curious involved Errol, the youngest child in the school at five years old. He was by no means the smallest and was frequently mistaken for being much older by people who did not know him. Ms Eastman talked about finding herself giving him an extra slice of toast at breakfast in anticipation of him asking for more. Below is an extract from the exploratory session (22, 27:48) where this was discussed. There had been no mention of this in the written observation as the observer had not noticed that Errol had been given more to eat.

Ms Eastman: More recently I've found myself giving Errol more toast when he asks for it . . .

Ms Lewis: I never normally let him have more than two [slices]

Ms Eastman: Nooo

Ms Lewis: I think we should limit it to one

Ms Eastman: . . . what I used to do was . . . to make sure that everybody, that it was fared - shared out fairly - and make him wait until everybody else had decided if they wanted more but more recently I feel like I've just been putting it on his plate (laugh) . . .

Ms Eastman: [Yeah] to keep him quiet I think yeah

Ms Lewis: I mean, It was because he was going swimming

Ms Eastman: Yeah

Ms Lewis: on that day  
Ms Eastman: Yeah  
Ms Lewis: and he had to hurry up didn't he?  
Ms Eastman: Yeah

Ms Eastman was aware of behaving differently in this respect and suggests herself that perhaps her actions were also unfair on the other children by describing what she had tended to do at other times and that this was unusual for her. She inadvertently emphasised that her breach of her own practice was specifically in relation to food by mixing up the words 'fared and shared'. Ms Lewis provided a plausible reason for giving him more to eat, 'because he was going swimming and had to hurry up'. This had something of the flavour of Ms Lewis taking on a paternal role to protect Ms Eastman in her maternal role from potential criticism from outside the family (the observer/researcher) but also from her own super-ego. Ms Eastman was responding in an unconscious way to the expression of a need in Errol for which food seemed the most appropriate response. However, it seems that Ms Eastman's recognition of Errol's hunger for attention was only slightly unconscious and his physical way of communicating probably influenced her response. His need for sustenance might have been about needing to be listened to and understood which may have been what he really hungered for. Had there been more space between the first and second phase of the observations there might have been more opportunity to take up points like this which became apparent following analysis of the data. The teachers would have been happy to discuss points such as this one but unfortunately, this was a casualty of the bunching of the later phases of data collection.

### **5.3 Thoughts about the process**

The final theme contains the thoughts of the teachers about the process and their thoughts and ideas about how it might be improved or adapted. The second phase of observations and post observation sessions took place toward the end

of the school year. This meant that they coincided with the approach of the end of the school year. Perhaps because of this, thoughts about the process began to turn towards the future and ending of this project and the work with some of the children involved with the study. Some of the children were due to return to their mainstream schools while others were expected to move up to the primary school. During discussion of children moving on to other classes in our final exploratory and review sessions, the teachers concentrated on the experience of moving on for the children rather than just the process of handing over. This increased capacity was described by Solomon and Nashat's (2010) who observed teachers being able to think sensitively about children's experience of reintegration more than a depersonalised procedure of integration.

Views about how helpful the process had been in enhancing the teachers thinking about the four children involved were asked for directly in the final review sessions. Some questions were addressed to the teachers in advance of the review sessions (see Appendix J) to try to prevent the session from becoming a repeat of the earlier exploratory sessions which sometimes became dominated by watching the video. Though there would undoubtedly be value in reviewing the video a second time it was, however, key to the project as a feasibility study to have these opinions from the adults involved. These views were grouped together in the subtheme of helpfulness of the process. This section also included thoughts about reactivity to the camera. A second major subtheme follows with suggestions for the model. It also included ideas about how the model could be used to send information when handing over children to other teachers. There was a desire among the teachers to use the video from the observations as evidence to support their views about children when communicating with other schools or professionals.

### **5.3.1 Helpfulness of the process**

In the case of Ms Lareina's class, the children were held together emotionally by the structures within the class formed by timings around activities such as the breakfast routine and the giving of tokens. These routines and structures had



been internalised by the children who had been in the class long enough to incorporate them. In the class in question both Karim and Jordan had learned these structures and this meant that they were also able to teach the other children about the formalities of the class and what happens when. The other children, Giselle and Tommy and Olwyn also seemed to have had some appreciation for order and structure acquired possibly from their mainstream schools. This picture contrasted quite sharply with the group in Ms Eastman's class, many of whom had very little experience of school and order. The two senior members of the class in terms of time in the school were Errol and Danny. The other children in the class, Leroy, Sonny, Marcel and Zahir had so little experience of school or even settled environments that it is doubtful that they would have been able to accept anything from Errol and Danny. It was the observers view that the age of the children along with the different dynamic in each of the classes played a part in determining the different styles of the teachers. As has already been stated above many of the children in Ms Eastman's and Ms Lewis' class were unused to being in school whereas many of those in Ms Lareina's and Ms Farrington's class had already been in this school or their mainstream school for the previous year and that this meant they were much more advanced and the active phase of beginning learning could start to take place.

In Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis class the children were generally unaccustomed to being in a class as many of them had missed a great deal of school with many absences and frequent lateness so this was reflected in the study where discussing the helpfulness of the process was hard to keep on track. The first phase of the study showed that the video of the observation was so long that viewing it could take up almost all of the exploratory session and therefore left little time for discussion. Then we would find ourselves watching the video again during the review sessions rather than thinking about the usefulness of the process. Therefore, in phase two, to keep the process on track I decided to give the teachers questions in advance of the review session (see Appendix J) to try to maintain some degree of focus. This approach helped the teachers to

articulate their views about the helpfulness of the process for the individual children as follows.

Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis noticed that Danny's cognition was not as good as everyone had at first thought and that perhaps his capacity to cope with the level they were trying to get him to work at was limited. In relation to Errol, his long explanations remained a mystery but he clearly appreciated their attempts to understand him and they used the process to think about his communication. Ms Lewis, in particular, seemed surprised and pleased by his skills in socialising and Ms Eastman was touched by his treatment of Danny. Both boys seemed to be able to provide one another with something that the other lacked. Errol provided instruction to Danny on how to give and receive affection and for Errol, Danny provided an unthreatening and amenable playmate and someone who functioned as a younger sibling. Errol was afforded an opportunity to teach someone else thus elevating him out of the position of the 'baby' of the class.

Ms Lareina and Ms Farrington had the older group of children including Karim and Jordan, though the latter was not a participant in the study. As previously mentioned both boys had been in this class for some time and had already negotiated many of the tasks associated with becoming habituated to being in a group of children in a classroom. They had also negotiated some of the processes described in these two chapters on findings. In relation to Karim, Ms Lareina said that perhaps it was because he had been with them for so long that they did not feel they had learnt as much about him as they had about Simon who had arrived in the school more recently. However, Ms Lareina expressed her surprise at how much notice Karim took of her and she questioned her view about the meaning of Karim's behaviour toward her. Karim also benefitted as Ms Lareina found a way to feel softer and warmer towards him reflecting his growing capacity not to spoil good attention. Simon appeared to take large developmental strides during the course of the study and progressed from being a boy who rarely spoke or made eye contact to showing a degree of sensitivity to the feelings of others. Simon had been the boy who stood very close to the screen in the pilot observation before the start of the project. At the time I noted that I felt very absent from his mind and attributed this to the fact that he could not see me.

Though there was no suggestion that the observations and discussion were the cause of the changes in him, it was hard to completely discount the effect on him of his teachers being able to think about him in such depth. It was clear that Simon had changed from the boy in earlier observations as he now sought the attention of adults. There was less recognition of the challenge to the teachers thinking as helpful and more emphasis placed on the benefits of having a protected and dedicated time to think about the children. Despite the lack of enthusiasm for specifics about how the study had helped thinking about the individual child participants there were considerably more ideas about using the model which is the next major subtheme in this section.

### **5.3.2 Suggestions for the model**

The suggestions for the use of the model were gratifying as they suggested that the teacher participants could recognise how they might use it in their current roles. They talked about using it to support report writing and contact and advice to mainstream schools or even to inform teachers in the Primary Department of this school when children moved up to the next class. These ideas clustered around the use of video to support views and show instances of 'difficult to describe' behaviour when handing over children or trying to advise other professionals. There was an idea that what appeared on video would be regarded more as evidence than as the teachers own opinion and would therefore be perceived as less judgmental and be more easily accepted. There was also a desire to use some of the present video in this respect but unfortunately, I could not sanction that on ethical grounds (as it was not the purpose for which the video data was originally collected and therefore not permissible). We discussed that they would be able to film independently of this study if they requested consent specifically for that. However, It was felt that the technical difficulties involved in filming would be best left to someone else as they were clearly time consuming and technically demanding.

For the teachers looking at themselves was revealing and uncomfortable but also strangely compulsive. This might also have been that small details of their

interaction with the children echoed their larger and more pervasive ways of relating to others and possibly revealing the fractal nature of the contact or strange attractors perhaps. It would have been interesting to discuss this with the teachers had the design allowed for this point of interest to be available for the review sessions. We were able to consider some aspects of normative behaviour, or doing what one 'should' rather than what one 'would' when being filmed which occurred during the study. Ms Eastman revealed that she allowed the children to bury toy figures of policemen in the Play-Doh because she had a feeling that her natural inclination to prevent this from happening would portray her as a teacher who does not properly encourage free play. The cause of this was revealed as her accommodation to being filmed by a child psychotherapist. The observer/researcher would not have known that Ms Eastman had changed her behaviour had she not voiced it later in the discussion of the video. There was a second less obvious instance of normative function with Errol flapping at the comics though this time, the fact that it was changed behaviour was merely hinted at as having been thought about (i.e. "don't break those magazines" she said in our exploratory session).

The children, though advised and frequently aware that the observer/researcher was in the 'quiet room' between the classes, rarely reacted to it. In Ms Eastman's class Leroy asked about the box containing the camera on the shelf in his classroom. When he was asked what he thought was in the box he said that he thought it contained sweets. Danny, Leroy and Sonny all came into the room where I was observing once holding torches and earlier they had shone them through the two-way mirror perhaps expressing their partially conscious forgotten knowledge that someone was on the other side trying to shed some light on what was happening in the classroom. They made no fuss or even comment when ushered back out into the classroom. Perhaps it was their knowledge of the observer/researcher as someone they recognised but very rarely spoke with that to find this person in the 'quiet room' made complete sense.

The design of the project had meant that the video of the observations was approximately the same length as the exploratory and review sessions and to allow sufficient time to discuss the video this is something I would change were I

to repeat the study. The filmed sections were too long and provided far too much material to be able to use all of it let alone discuss it all in fine detail. However, during the review sessions it was clearly voiced that there was a preference for the video material over the written material and that this was because it was more accessible. The written observations were perceived as just from the perspective of the observer/researcher whereas the video was considered less judgemental or more neutral and was more accessible, albeit, unprocessed. In a review session Ms Farrington stated that she would like to film the whole morning at school and review it in the afternoon. This seemed to represent for her an ideal learning experience, to be able to go over effectively the whole day. Things that were not understood could be investigated and where discipline had been meted out it could be checked to see if it was delivered fairly and, if not, then it could be put right.

### **Summary**

The first theme in this chapter, 'Focus shift' deals with the factors which occasionally made it impossible to maintain an enquiring and open state of mind in relation to some of the interaction in the classroom observations. Some aspects of the interaction were obscured by the other things going on in the room at the same time or were distorted by the disturbing early experience of some of the children. This sometimes affected their teachers causing them to use defensive means of protecting themselves from painful realisation of the extent of privation and deprivation in this group of children. The second theme. 'Daring to be curious' with this group of children does seem to be quite risky as it could involve finding out things one would rather not know. For the children, their experience of finding things out may have had connotations of deep disappointment and loss of innocence. I think these examples show how it is also difficult for the teachers who cannot avoid being affected by the projections from the children which make being curious something which carries a real risk for them. Turning a blind eye is often easier and less painful than remaining open to the child's experience. The sense of having let the children down as they experienced while reviewing some of these observations has exposed the teachers to guilt and distress at not being able to fulfil all the expectations of them.

That said, they continued to try to allow themselves to remain open to all levels of communication and where this can happen unimpeded the children can benefit. The next theme, thoughts about the process contained the main subthemes relating to the helpfulness of the process and suggestions for the model. The helpfulness of the process revealed a rather limited effect on the teachers thinking about the child participants though some of this could be attributed to the design of the project and a fuller discussion of this will be returned to in the summary and conclusions. The last subtheme of suggestions for the model showed that the teachers certainly felt there was a place for such a model or adaptation of this model in work with children in special schools. Again, there is a fuller discussion of ways that this model might be improved upon in the summary and conclusions. This subtheme also included the teacher's thoughts about being videoed and showed how comfortable they and the children were with the concept perhaps reflecting a general trend toward the use of video in ordinary daily communication. This study would benefit from being repeated in different settings to test the generalisability of these findings.

## **6. Summary and Conclusion**

To fall into the experience of observation is to allow a more primitive experiencing of feeling to float up to the surface of our minds. It is an uncritical, unprocessed source of information and, as mentioned in the introduction, its acquisition resembles the process of early learning. This is our counter-transference. To harness this ability for the purpose of informing work with vulnerable children in schools, nurseries or other settings requires an understanding of the power and complexity of this information source. Use of one's self as an instrument in this way requires specific training as it can very easily lead to distortion or misinterpretation of the material. Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy training combined with supervision, work discussion, and triangulation with others who have knowledge of unconscious processes in young children is uniquely well suited to this kind of work. The use of video can give a depth and richness to the observational material particularly for time limited observations where decisions need to be made about children in short timeframes. Other ways of using observed video material which advocate positivity and strengths based approaches work well with motivated and co-operative participants and are less well suited to the more resistant or disruptive children such as those referred to CAMHS services or special schools.

The purpose of the research presented here was a feasibility study into the usefulness of a collaborative consideration of observation in an Early Years department of a special education provision. A secondary aim of the project was to explore in detail the aspects of the teacher child relationship that promote learning.

The area where the school is located has seen a fluctuating population of families fleeing war in the Middle East and persecution and poverty elsewhere. Many of these families have been separated from close relatives who would have been helpful to them and many of the parents and siblings of the children in the school were traumatised by their experience of leaving their homes and extended families. Add to this uncertainty about housing with the threat of frequent moves and financial insecurity which all makes for very stressed parenting and,

therefore, it was not surprising that these children found it hard to integrate into mainstream schools.

The data were collected over a period of five months from a series of observations of two classes in a special school. The observations were of the children going about their usual activities with their teachers in class while being observed from behind a screen. The screen was intended to reduce, as much as possible, any interference from the observer in the classes daily activity. These observations were filmed as well as written in accordance with psychoanalytic young child observation in the Tavistock tradition. Approximately, one week later the filmed and written observations were shared with the teaching staff and viewed and discussed in exploratory sessions which were audio recorded. About a month later there was a review session to discuss how helpful it had been to view and discuss the observations in the exploratory session. These review sessions were also audio recorded for later analysis. The three stages of the process of observation followed by exploratory session followed by review session were repeated to provide a possibility for learning and adaptation between the two phases. The data were then coded and a thematic analysis produced two groups of linked themes relating to what happened in the classroom and how the teachers used the process. These themes provide answers to the research questions about the feasibility of such a model and what was observed in the relationship between pupil and the teacher that assisted the child's learning.

The reviewed literature which involved observation of young children is grouped according to the context in which the observations were conducted, i.e schools, nurseries, a clinic and parents or carers homes. They all share with my own study the common aim to extract as much benefit to the child with the least amount of disruption to those being observed. This rather heuristic approach to research is a necessity when there exist so many practical constraints and variables associated with observation in work with vulnerable children. They also all triangulate the outcome of the observations by a combination of supervision, work discussion or meetings with professionals or carers/family members in which observations are shared and discussed. They differ from my study in that only



one of the reviewed papers used cameras to film the observations (Datler et al 2014). Although the Datler study used video in quite a restricted way and only utilised very short pieces of video and more as a support for the traditional Tavistock/Bick observation method. There are visual studies of young children in naturalistic settings (Gianotti 2004) but they are not incorporated into a study which aims to discuss the material with the professionals working with the children in such an active way. Similarly, there are video feedback schemes which are designed for work with vulnerable children and their families or carers but these tend not to be psychoanalytically orientated and are usually strengths based. This study occupies a place in which it shares much with the other protocols for using observation and consultation in work with vulnerable children but the centrality of the use of video material by a child psychotherapist sets it slightly apart.

The themes identified in the two chapters of findings described what was observed happening in the classroom; the appearance of unconscious processes, a state of mind which could tolerate being bombarded by projections and continue to think, and then how these two previous themes could be brought together with teaching skills to begin the learning process. The second grouping of themes concerned how the teachers used the process. It began with what could not be seen and why and this revealed itself to be an unconscious shielding from view to defend against painful feelings but once they could be thought about there appeared a more creative state of mind in the second theme in the second chapter of findings. The final theme gathered together the thoughts about the process and how it might be used, changed or adapted. The themes are summarised separately in the next section.

The first chapter of findings detailed the three themes; parallel process, being prepared to learn the child's mode of communication and the teaching of meaning making. The first theme of parallel process sought to describe the appearance of unconscious processes as they showed themselves in the material of the observations in class. The apparent transference and projective phenomena were manifest in staff's thoughts about and responses to the children and vice versa. Despite being something which occurs naturally in all forms of relationship

it is, in this case, the particular quality to these phenomena that is notable as they involve reflections and clear traces of the sometimes chaotic and all too often traumatised families of origin of children who find themselves in alternative education provision. This study does not seek to make the link between the circumstances of the families and their children's' difficulties with education but rather that additional thought and consideration needs to be present to mitigate the effect on a child's education, educators and fellow pupils of all of the 'baggage' that comes into the school with them. The effect on the teachers was more marked in the class with the younger pupils who had also spent less time in school. In a similar way to the Burhouse (2014) study which links triadic thinking to development in young child observation this study also considers developmental issues and their impact on learning (Price 2006, Wakelyn 2011). This tacitly accepts that with time all the children would improve in this environment as the teachers would learn to read them and then to find the means to invite the children to become learners themselves (Youell 2006).

This commitment to a state of mind in which the teachers needed to understand how the child communicated provided the second theme. It was a pre-learning, pre-teaching stage much more like the learning a small child does when becoming habituated to nursery school and the routines and practices of moving between different people and places and the protocols associated with them (Datler et al 2014, Elfer 2014). Like nursery school staff, the teachers in this study, were aware of the stresses these comings and goings place on small children and used this knowledge to mitigate the children's anxieties whilst not preventing them from acquiring the new skills. What was different about learning to read the children in this context to that of a nursery school setting was that unlike a nursery context where the understanding is about ordinary development and therefore applicable to most children, in the special education provision a body of knowledge was acquired specifically for each child. In that setting, therefore, quite a lot of work had to have already taken place before the child could be said to have done any learning in the traditional sense. What occurred in the first two stages of the learning process was that the child's projections were taken on and contained rather than acted out, their idiosyncratic ways of

communicating their understanding of the world were thought about and they were beginning to feel understood. By then they also had a rudimentary understanding of what it was like to be in a classroom with teachers and other children. There was a shared understanding of 'we know how this works' and the next phase was to see 'how we can make use of it'.

The next theme began to get to grips with the nuts and bolts of learning and was called the teaching of meaning making. This essentially, described how things connect and join up to form more understanding. Again, the knowledge of the individual child's gaps in understanding or missing skills was required so that the teachers could tailor their interaction in the most beneficial way for each child. These teachers like teachers in other early years settings used connections between time, place and people to help the children link their thoughts to memories and to put them into words. This, in turn, allowed the children to think about their thoughts and derive meaning from them. This kind of learning with a teacher who has acquired a psychoanalytic attitude can help develop a more facilitative superego in the child. (Gaveriaux, Brizard and Roumegoux 2014). The task of teaching of meaning making, as it was described here, was made all the more difficult by the fact that prior to joining this school many of the children had experienced mainstream education not as a shared experience with other children, learning to be part of a class, being with other people, but rather as an only child with one or two quite possibly bored or distracted adults. Their day to day lives in their original schools could only nominally be described as an experience of inclusion in mainstream education and was likely to have been a dissatisfying encounter on many levels for all parties concerned. Solomon (2011 p44) describes a societal wish of 'turning a blind eye' to children who are too vulnerable to cope within mainstream schools. Evans (2013) found that this sense of exclusion can also extend to those tasked to provide a holding function with such children in mainstream education where they can experience themselves and the children they work with as on the edge of the school. The teaching of meaning making was frequently delivered in a very direct way by the teachers. This often occurred after the teachers struggled to understand the often-confusing content of the child's behaviour to discern what it might mean to

them before subsequently being able to offer an alternative way of deriving meaning from a shared experience of being in a classroom in a school.

What went on in the classroom was, in essence, a teaching of how to conduct a relationship which is mutually nourishing for both parties. The learning that came from this could then be extended to form a relationship to the learning task itself. This study occupies a position in parallel to that of Diem-Wille (2014) as the first three themes described here broadly equate to those that Diem-Wille lists as necessary for the evaluation of an analytic attitude, namely, the ability to observe, ability to understand, and interventions and organising learning arrangements.

The teachers use of the process was presented in the second chapter of findings and was also divided into three themes; focus shift, daring to be curious and thoughts about the process. The first of these, focus shift looked at what it was that got in the way of thinking about the internal worlds of the children in this school. It grouped together some of the defences employed to protect the teachers from the painfulness of what they had to work with each day. The first of these was allowing oneself to be distracted by something else and the second was a reframing of what was seen and understood but was too hard to acknowledge. The last of these defences was simply not noticing in response to an unconscious desire not to know which when drawn attention to provoked a strongly defensive response from the staff. Teachers are increasingly expected to be the first to recognise difficulties or deficits in the child which inhibit their learning. However, this places quite a burden on teachers unless they are in schools which are sufficiently well-resourced to follow-up any such concerns. This point is returned to in the section below on implications for policy and practice.

The next theme of 'Daring to be curious' was here described as a state of mind in which the teachers allowed themselves to explore some of the darker recesses of their relationships with the children thereby exposing themselves to possible criticism and judgement. For it to be possible to take the risk of opening themselves up in this way they needed to feel contained and safe to express sentiments teachers are unaccustomed to sharing with others, such as not understanding or knowing what is happening in the classroom. They also needed

to explore their own feelings about children in an un-teacher-like way, i.e. without fear of unprofessional sounding views and opinions. To put yourself in the position of one who does not know and without the prospect of obtaining answers, but for the sole purpose of trying out the process to see what will happen could appear very unrewarding. However, when this exploration could be carried out in as free a way as was possible some creative thought could be generated and some shifts in thinking were noted as evidenced by Ms Lareina's reframing of her relationship with Karim and finding his vulnerability easier to discern and with Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis' surprise at how little Danny actually understood when they spoke to him. The teachers' views on these two children were not vastly altered. In both cases, they felt they already knew the boys very well but in each case though the change was small there was nevertheless a shift. That the teachers themselves did not acknowledge this may also have been a failing of the scheduling of the sessions or the design of the project as the observer was not able to take up this shift with them prior to the analysis stage. In the case of the other two participants, Simon's teachers had to risk him shaming them in front of other teachers by tolerating his collapsed physical state while holding his collapsed emotional state in mind at the same time as trusting his functioning part to get himself off the floor. Errol expressed himself in very physical ways grabbing at people and objects in the class and it was suggested that his teacher's response to his unconscious desire for attention was to give him more toast.

The observer was surprised by the physical nature of the communication both from the children and the teachers and how much of the learning was brought about through touch whether through; feeding them breakfast, hugging, body posture and position, on the floor for example or drawing nearer or further away. It was the observer/researcher's opinion that this physicality was more intuitive than considered but was also further indication of a state of mind that was holistically orientated toward the individual child.

The final theme, thoughts about the process, included the teachers views of how useful the process had been to them as well as any suggestions they had in relation to the project. The teachers declared that it had been useful to them as a means of evidencing and formalising their views and opinions to help inform

and guide other teaching professionals in their work with these children once they move on. Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis stated that it had been helpful to have the time set aside to consider individual children in some depth. Ms Lareina and Ms Farrington expressed a view that it was rather less useful to them in enhancing their own thinking about the individual children because they had known these children for some months before the project began and felt they had gained a lot of understanding already. Whilst this could appear as though they did not feel the process had benefitted their professional practice, to the observer it felt more like a reaction to having to let the children go prematurely. There was a constant awareness among the teaching staff that they are part of the process of moving these children on and of often feeling that they could work with them much longer than they are allowed. There was also a desire to send the child with something of value, something concrete which could be read or viewed and understood in their mainstream schools by the grown-ups there who struggle to read the children.

Another aspect to the complexity of this process is that the teachers were being asked to observe themselves. Despite being prepared for this intellectually by the knowledge that we would be looking at video of them in class, the reality of it was probably rather more surprising and uncomfortable than perhaps they could have imagined. More space to consider this aspect would be an improvement on this design.

It could also be argued that the teachers may have experienced the findings of the study as the product of an outsider's opinion and as an intrusion on to their 'patch' where they are the experts whose role it is to inform and train the mainstream school staff. It is the observer/researcher's view that a possible adaptation to the present model would facilitate this. In this possible adaptation, the output from a first phase of observations followed by exploratory sessions could be analysed and the data shared with the teachers prior to the review sessions. The data could then be dissected and discussed in the review sessions and would potentially produce more of a sense of joint ownership of the findings that might also be free of questions about 'expertise'.

The additional perspective of the camera which is perceived as capturing accurately everything it films helped relieve both the teachers and the observer's anxiety about remembering the observed periods in class whilst also standing as a kind of independent third person who is non-judgmental and has no opinions, almost a kind of independent arbitrator. There was a preference for the video material over the written observations which was linked to the idea that the written observations were less neutral than the video. The observer/researcher wondered if the preference for the video material which was shared by all four staff members but was more explicitly expressed by Ms Farrington, the youngest member of staff was a reflection of a more comfortable approach to visual imagery and as a learning tool than for the previous generation. Unfortunately, this was not something which could be followed up as it emerged after the end of the project.

Following analysis of the material, the observer noted a difference between the two classes which appears to be connected to one being more active than the other. The beginning of a child's entry into the school requires a certain passivity from the teaching staff in order to see just what it is that they have with this child. The next stage is the process of facilitating the acquisition of those skills or abilities associated with being in a class with other children. At this point it is important to note that some of these children had not experienced being in a class through lack of time in a school or that they had been segregated so as not to disrupt the rest of their class in their mainstream schools. Once these first stages of being in school, developing a routine and the children learning to expect the same routine and the same response from their teachers, have been acquired then they can begin to settle. It is clear that an adaptation to school life is affected by a child's age and as many of the children in Ms Lareina's class had already been in the school for the previous year they were much more advanced and the active phase of beginning learning could take place. As mentioned earlier, the effect of displacement and consequent losses, continuing uncertainty about housing and historical trauma in the families was felt most strongly in Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis class where all the children had one or more of these external difficulties to contend with. The observer/researcher was allowed into the

relationship between the teacher and the child that is often not available to mainstream teaching staff or parents or others as it is justifiably feared that it could be misinterpreted and misunderstood. For this I feel I was allowed a very privileged access and therefore I am not disappointed that the outcome has not produced stronger results. An evaluation of the study design will be returned to in the next section. The project itself was a kind of scrutiny of a very particular nature and therefore required considerable trust and courage from the teachers.

Every school would possibly have a slightly different view about the value of this kind of observation and consultation as each school system is unique. It follows therefore that a resource such as this would need to be adjusted and refined to suit the institution, the context, and possibly even the individuals.

## **6.1 Evaluation of study design**

What worked well was the use of the video of the observations alongside the written observations of the sessions. The teachers and the observer/researcher found the video material very helpful in thinking about the child participants. It proved to be very rich in content and revealed things about some of the children that the staff had not previously seen in their interaction with them in class. An example of this is Karim making faces at the other children while being careful not to be seen by the adults in the room. The richness of the data was both something which worked well but almost too well in that it meant that there was far more material than could be fully utilised and took a very long time to analyse.

The number of child participants, four in total, two from each class was a manageable number and provided sufficient variety when demonstrating the consistency of the themes across the participants. The number of participants for the study was determined by ethical considerations but could have been limited to two from each class if the study were to be repeated or developed into a model which would ensure that the focus is retained.



The use of the screen worked well as it meant the observations were not intruding into the activity in the classroom and helped the participants to forget that they were being observed though this also brought its own problems in terms of relaying the sound from the classroom into the room behind the screen. It is unusual to find a classroom with a screen so a possible adaptation to this would be real time remote video via a laptop or tablet. There is an unconscious and as yet indefinable aspect to the observer sitting behind the screen being physically present, possibly sensed and yet unseen.

What did not work so well was that the length of the video material was the same as the length of the post observation sessions and this meant that decisions had to be made about which parts to view so as to allow some space for discussion. If the study were to be repeated the length of the observation could be reduced slightly and the post observation sessions lengthened. There were also some technical issues, principally concerning the sound quality of some of the recordings. It was hard to hear some of the dialogue occasionally against the background of a noisy classroom. This issue was not resolved completely although positioning more microphones around the classroom would have improved the situation. However, it highlighted just how much was happening in a small class as well as how much of the communication in the classroom between the staff and the children was non-verbal.

The timetabling of the observations and post observation sessions had to be adjusted to accommodate trips and teacher absence from class. Additionally, the fact that the ethical process had taken longer than expected and had moved the whole schedule of observations into one term instead of two meant that the sessions became quite bunched up towards the end of the school year. This resulted in making it difficult to distinguish between the first and second phase of observations and that any learning acquired from the first phase had too little time to be tested and evaluated before the second phase began. It also meant that there was no time to analyse the data from the first phase which did yield some points of interest which could then have been shared with the teachers before embarking on the second phase of observations. A suggestion was made that

any future model developed from this research could incorporate an observation at the beginning and the end of a term to be able to draw comparisons between them as well as limiting the intervention to one term. Similarly, reducing the length of the video material while increasing the length of the post observation sessions as mentioned above would ensure that the material is given enough time to be thoroughly considered. The previous points about the ratio of video material to discussion time along with the gap between the first and second phase of the study had an effect on the separation of findings into two areas. The review sessions were designed to allow the participants to consider how the previous stages had helped their thinking about the children in the study but for the reasons outlined above the distinction between the exploratory and review sessions was much more blurred than had been anticipated in the design. Some degree of bleeding between the two was expected as it was an iterative process but it became difficult to distinguish some of the first round of review sessions from their exploratory sessions as the length of video data left us all feeling as though we had insufficient time in the first exploratory session to properly consider all of the observation. With this in mind, I provided the teachers with a list of questions to consider in the interval between the exploratory and review sessions (see Appendix J). Though this helped to keep the process on track by encouraging the staff to think about how they had used the process rather than continuing the unfinished work of reviewing the observations it also introduced an element of rigidity into the final review sessions which is apparent in the transcripts and seems to have stifled some of the creativity with which they approached the first phase of review sessions.

A further adaptation to the model could involve offering weekly work discussion (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) for a term before the start of the intervention or between the first series of observations and the second. This would give an opportunity for teaching staff to learn about work discussion and the value of considering the detail of the interaction in advance of beginning the observations.

Flawed as this study was by unforeseen difficulties in scheduling and design, it was, nevertheless, feasible. It made few demands upon the teachers' time and

caused minimal disruption to the class, as it made use of an existing screen in the classroom which allowed the children to be observed in class without the observer becoming a participant.

## **6.2 Implications for policy/practice and future research**

The reviewed literature featured a variety of approaches to using observation and yet they all showed that it is important to develop the application of observation to suit the context in which it happens. There is an argument that a tailor-made approach is sometimes indicated in work with severely disturbed children. All the reviewed literature in this field also included some means of verifying the findings of the observation and triangulating any conclusions drawn from it via supervision and work discussion. However, those who have responsibility for commissioning services may feel inclined to choose a packaged, 'rights protected', protocol with an easily remembered acronym for a name. Some such products may claim to be effective in multiple situations and those delivering them may be very well trained to deliver their product whilst having limited experience of other work involving children and families. There may also exist a body of research evidence which lends weight to claims of effectiveness and the use of cameras may give them a legitimacy perhaps based on the assumption that the 'evidence' is also on camera. This point is taken up again below.

While certainly feasible, this study would benefit from refining as the variables of duration and timing of sessions allowing for a little bit more space between phases for the analysis of the material would certainly improve the collaborative element of the process. It would lend more of a sense of it being worked out together as opposed to being imposed upon the participants. It is a passive/active form of intervention which unlike other interventions employing the use of film, such as Video Interactive Guidance (VIG), imposes few demands upon the participants whilst providing a possible window into an unseen yet very rich vein of information to assist those working with the child. It can also be completed, with the adjustments to the model as outlined above, within a relatively short period of time perhaps over the course of a twelve-week term with minimal

disruption to the school and strain on resources. Teachers tend to be very resourceful and when presented with anything new will begin to think about how they might use it in their school. It is well understood that teachers welcome the time for work discussion (Jackson 2002, 2005, 2008) when it is sufficiently prioritised and long enough. This would suggest that thinking about the painful experience of the children with whom they work is something that some teachers feel they can afford to do if their own feelings about their work are also acknowledged and contained particularly where there is an understanding of 'social defence systems' (Menzies 1959).

As mentioned in the summary and conclusions school staff are increasingly required to be the people who draw attention to cognitive deficit or other neurological problems as well as social welfare issues that interfere with a child's learning. Some schools are well resourced to monitor and follow up concerns raised about a child's welfare but they tend to be those in areas where such difficulties reach levels of ordinary rarity for a population of otherwise well-provided-for children. Some schools in urban areas are dealing with a school population where poverty and poor housing combined with traumatic and displaced family history is the norm. This makes it difficult to retain a sense of an ordinary range of difficulties beyond which would be the trigger-point to call in other services. Unfortunately, when demands on health and social care services are so great it is possible that some children need's will not be addressed with lasting consequences for their education, prospects and mental health. Throughout this study this group of teachers commented on how they might use the information gained from it. The increasing demands upon teachers to carry out functions which are not directly related to teaching is indicative of the need for them to have additional support when working with children with very disrupted lives and that an intervention such as this which can be carried out while they work is a helpful resource.

The observer/researcher would like to repeat this study with the changes outlined above and perhaps in another setting e.g. nursery school. This model would also

benefit from being repeated by other child psychoanalytic psychotherapist observer/researchers in similar or other settings to compare the process and conclusions and potentially provide an additional tool to the staff consultation model already well established in some schools (Jackson 2008).

The traditional reluctance of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists (CAPT) to entertain cameras in their sessions with children is because it would feel like a violation of the therapeutic space. However, many CAPTs routinely use cameras in aspects of their work in clinics and other settings and what this study shows is that a CAPT is ideally placed to tailor an existing<sup>20</sup>, or devise a new observation protocol for any situation involving vulnerable children and families. Additionally, this approach can be supported by the growing body of evidence that such studies (Burhouse 2014, Datler et al 2014, Diem-Wille 2014, Elfer 2014, Gaveriaux, Brizard and Roumegoux 2014, Price 2006, Wakelyn 2011) are helpful to children and the professionals working with them. The key elements are a child psychoanalytic psychotherapeutic attitude to the process of observation and the sharing of that material with teachers, nursery school staff, carers/parents, social workers and family support workers. What CAPTs perhaps do not do so well is to explain to those outside the profession that their training equips them to use any method of observation in virtually any context with the usual exceptions<sup>21</sup> There exists already an informal network of CAPTs who share their experience of observational work with one another. It is only a few steps away from becoming another 'right's protected' protocol using cameras with an easily remembered name<sup>22</sup> and supported by a body of rigorous qualitative evidence that would be both effective and of interest to those commissioning services.

The teaching staff who participated in this project generously allowed me access to their professional practice and their thinking in a very open and honest way. Teaching is not precise, clinical, or scientific but is often messy, unpredictable

---

<sup>20</sup> This refers to observational studies carried out by other members of the Child Psychotherapy profession who are willing to share their work and does not refer to rights protected protocols.

<sup>21</sup> The usual exceptions are those mentioned above and those protocols where practitioners are required to have completed the approved training.

<sup>22</sup> I suggest for this the name CAPTION Child and Adolescent Psycho-Therapeutic Intensive Observation Network, to be delivered only by Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists.

and full of all human emotions many of which are unthinkable so to open this to discussion and scrutiny is a very courageous thing to do. Whilst the observations were carried out in a passive way without expectation or desire (Bion 1962) the discussion of the material they generated was very active and challenged the teachers' and the observer/researcher's ability to understand the material, to find the language with which to describe it and discuss it as well as our capacity to tolerate some of what was seen.

The importance of the relationship between the child and the teacher is vital as Saltzberger-Wittenberg (1983) says teachers, ". . . provide a framework which either assists or hinders emotional and mental growth." She goes on to highlight the need for a space to be able to continuously review the relationship with their pupils. It is a pity that people who work in teaching and nursing and many other professions who work closely with people are not routinely offered supervision even though the contact they have with the individuals they see daily can be of a life-changing nature.

The necessity to think about a child's experience is sometimes considered as burdensome (Menzies 1970, Emanuel 1999; Nash 1973) for teaching staff. If these feelings are not addressed it can lead to a defensive 'turning a blind eye', or if recognised but not allowed an outlet can have a deleterious effect on both parties in the teacher pupil interaction. However, when professionals working with children can have a space and support to share and reflect on their thoughts about a child's experience they can develop a psychoanalytic attitude to their work which can help contain their anxieties as well as helping them to contain those of the child (Diem-Wille 2014, Price 2006, Datler et al 2014, Elfer 2014). On the subject of consultation in schools, one could argue that any service embedded in a school already functions informally as a 'therapeutic presence' (Solomon and Nashat 2010) because of the permeability of the relationship between school staff and therapeutic staff when discussing referrals and that this contact could spark ideas about 'whole school system' interventions (Price 2006). However, that would depend upon the support of the senior management of the school to ensure that this 'therapeutic presence' is allowed a place near the

centre of the school (Evans 2013, Maltby 2008). If that kind of relationship with the senior management team does not exist or is so proscribed as to be impermeable to creative exchange, or, where such services are delegated to an already 'edge-of-system' department, then this service may not be truly embedded. In this case, a 'therapeutic presence' may only be felt as beneficial by those who are closely associated with it, and elsewhere in the school system it could be experienced as spectral and to be feared and avoided. Perhaps the trust of the whole school is something which must be won first and for this to happen some degree of familiarity or informality with the therapeutic staff has to be established.

Child psychoanalytic psychotherapy training is particularly good at preparing professionals to think about the process of the work they do and to allow the output of that work to remain unknown until it makes itself knowable and this is particularly applicable to the task of research. Of course, there are desired outcomes in therapeutic treatment, if not in research, that the child improves or finds ways of managing which are better adapted to a healthy, happy and productive life but otherwise the process is a carefully considered exploration of the unknown. Child psychotherapists are well placed therefore to experiment with new ways of working and new tools such as social media and the use of visual imagery and video.

## 7. Bibliography

- Adamo, S., and Rustin, M.E. (eds.) (2014). *Young child observation. A development in theory and method of infant observation*. London: Karnac
- Adams, C. (1982) *The story of Schroedinger's cat (an epic poem)* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/113/the-story-of-schroedingers-cat-an-epic-poem> (Accessed: 25 March 2017)
- Ainsworth, M. D. S. (1978) *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Alvarez, A. (1992) *Live company: Psychoanalytic psychotherapy with autistic, border-line deprived and abused children*. London: Routledge
- Alvarez, A. and Furgiuele, P. (1997) 'Speculations on components in the infant's sense of agency: the sense of abundance and the capacity to think in parentheses'. In Reid, S., (ed.) *Developments in Infant Observation: The Tavistock Model*. Hove: Routledge pp.123-139
- Armstrong, D. (2004) 'Emotions in organisations: disturbance or intelligence?', in Huffington, C., Halton, W., Armstrong, D. and Pooley, J. (eds.) (2004) *Working Below the Surface: The Emotional Life of Contemporary Organizations*, London: Karnac pp.11:27
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001) 'Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research', *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), pp.385-405
- Barlow, H. B. (1990) 'Conditions for versatile learning: Helmholtz's unconscious inference, and the task of perception'. *Vision research*, 30 pp.1561-1571
- Beebe, B. and Lachmann, F. M., Jaffe J. (1997) 'Mother-Infant Interaction Structures and Pre-Symbolic Self and Object Representations'. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 7 pp.133-182
- Beebe, B. and Lachmann, F. M. (2002) *Infant Research and Adult Attachment: Co-constructing interactions*. London: Analytic Press



Behar, R. (1996) *The Vulnerable Observer, Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press

Belmont Report (1979) Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research, [Online] Available at: <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/> (Accessed: 11 February 2017)

Biemans, H. (1990) 'Video home training: theory, method and organization of SPIN'. In Kool et al, (eds) *International Seminar for Innovative Institutions*. Ministry of Welfare Health and Culture, Ryswyck, The Netherlands

Bick, E. (1963) 'Infant observation in psycho-analytic training. A paper read to the British Psycho-Analytical Society in July 1963'. In Thomson-Salo, F. (eds) (2014) *Infant Observation: Creating Transformative Relationships*, London: Karnac

Bick, E. (1964). 'Notes on infant observation in psycho-analytic training'. repr. In *Collected Papers of Martha Harris and Esther Bick*. London: Clunie Press, (1987).

Bick, E. (1968) 'The experience of the skin in early object relations'. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 49, repr. In Briggs, A. (ed.) (2002) *Surviving Space*, London: Karnac, pp.55-59

Bion, W.R. (1961) *Experiences in groups and other papers*. London: Tavistock Publications, repr. (1989), London: Routledge, (2001) London: Brunner-Routledge

Bion, W. R. (1962). 'A theory of thinking', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 43, repr. (1967) in *Second Thoughts*, London: Heinemann

Boden, D. and Zimmerman, D. (eds.) (1991) *Talk and Social Structure*, Oxford: Polity, repr. (1992) University of California Press.

Bolas, C. (1987) *The shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis and the Unthought Known*. USA: Free Association Books

Boyatzis, R. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bradley, B., Selby, J., & Urwin, C. (2012). 'Group life in babies: Opening up perceptions and possibilities'. In C. Urwin & J Sternberg (eds.), *Infant observation and research. Emotional processes in everyday lives*' (pp. 137–148). Hove: Routledge.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology'. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 pp.77-101

Brazelton et al. (1977) 'The Brazelton Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (BNBAS)'. *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 5(3) pp.215-229

Briggs, A. (ed.) (2002), *Surviving space. Papers on infant observation. Essays on the centenary of Esther Bick*, London: Karnac, repr., London: Karnac, 2005

Briggs, S. (1997a). *Growth and risk in infancy*. London: Jessica Kingsley Press

Briggs, St. (1997b) 'Observing when infants are at potential risk: reflections from a study of five infants, concentrating on observations of a Bengali infant. In Reid, S. (Ed.), *Developments in infant observation: The Tavistock Model*, London: Routledge, pp.207–227.

Britton, R. (1998), *Belief and Imagination: Explorations in psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge

Britton, R. (1998) 'The missing link: Parental sexuality in the Oedipus complex'. In Britton, R., Feldman, M. and O'Shaughnessy, E. (eds.) *The Oedipus Complex Today: Clinical Implications* pp.83-101. London: Karnac

- Burhouse, A. (2014) 'Now we are two, going on three: triadic thinking and its link with development in the context of Young Child Observations', In Adamo, S. and Rustin, M. (eds.), *Young child observation. A development in theory and method of infant observation*, London: Karnac. pp.259-273
- Canham, H. (2006) 'Latency' in Youell, B. (2006) *The Learning Relationship: Psychoanalytic thinking in education*. London: Karnac, pp.47-58
- Caper, R. (2009) *Building Out into the Dark: Theory and Observation in Science and Psychoanalysis*. Hove: Routledge
- Children's Commissioner (2017) A report of the Growing up digital Taskforce [Online] Available at: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk> (Accessed: 11 February 2017)
- Cooper P. (eds.) (1999) *Understanding and Supporting children with emotional and behavioural difficulties*, London: Jessica Kingsley Press
- Coren, A. (1997) *A Psychodynamic Approach to Education*, London: Sheldon Press
- Dahl, R. (1988) *Matilda*, London: Puffin
- Damasio, A. (1999) *The Feeling of What Happens. Body, emotion and the making of consciousness*. London: Heinemann
- Datler, W., Hover-Reisner, N., Fürstaller, M., and Datler, M. (2014). 'Young child observation used as a research tool: Investigating toddlers' development in day care nurseries. In Adamo, S. and Rustin, M. (eds.), *Young child observation. A development in theory and method of infant observation*, London: Karnac. pp.274-294
- Davidov, V. M. (2004) 'Representing representations: the ethics of filming at Ground Zero', *Visual Studies* 19(2) pp.162-168

Diem-Wille, G. (2014) 'Applying a psychoanalytic attitude acquired through infant observation towards as a teacher. A case study'. *International Conference for Teachers of Infant Observation*, London 28-30 August 2014.

Drew, P. and Heritage, J. (eds.) (1992) *Talk at Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Edwards, J. (1999) 'Kings, queens and factors: The latency period revisited'. In Hindle, D. and Smith, M. V.(eds.) *Personality Development: A Psychoanalytic Perspective*. London: Routledge

Edwards, J. (ed.) (2001) *Being Alive: Building on the work of Anne Alvarez*, Hove: Routledge, repr. Hove: Routledge, 2013

Elfer, P. (2014). 'Young children's relationships with staff and peers in nursery: observations of two girls aged 29 months and 25 months'. In Adamo, S. and Rustin, M. (eds.), *Young child observation. A development in theory and method of infant observation*, London: Karnac. pp.295-319

Emanuel, L. (1997) 'Infant observation research seminar – The first years'. *International Journal of Infant Observation*, 1, pp.166–170.

Emanuel, L. (1999) 'From individual to institution: How the psychotherapy of a mentally handicapped girl has informed my consultation work in a school', *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 19(2), pp.185-200

Emanuel, L. and E. Bradley (eds.) (2008) *What can the Matter be? Therapeutic Interventions with Parents, Infants and Young Children*. London: Karnac.

Evans, A. (2013) 'From exclusion to inclusion; supporting Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators to keep children in mainstream education: a qualitative psychoanalytic research project', *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 39(3), pp.286-302

Fagan, M. (2014) 'The Young Child Observation seminar: new steps in developing the observer role', In Adamo, S., and Rustin, M.E. (eds.) (2014).

*Young child observation. A development in theory and method of infant observation.* London: Karnac pp. 80-95

Forrester, D., Westlake, D., Glynn, G. (2012) 'Parental resistance and social worker skills: towards a theory of motivational social work'. *Child and Family Social Work*, 17(2), pp.118-29

Fraiberg, S., Adelson, E., and Shapiro, V. (1975) 'Ghosts in the nursery: A psychoanalytic approach to the problems of impaired infant-mother relationships.' *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 14(3), pp.387-421.

France, A. (1881) *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* Project Gutenberg [www.gutenberg.org/ebooks](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks). (Accessed: 26 February 2017)

Freud, S. (1905) *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Standard Edition, 7: pp.125-245 London: Hogarth

Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall

Gaveriaux, O., Brizard, Y. and Roumegoux, F. (2014) 'A protocol for the observation of young children at the CMPP [Centre Medico-Psycho-Pedagogique – Lorient] based on psychoanalytic observation'. *Conférence Internationale de la Tavistock Clinic sur l'Observation du Nourrisson*, Londres, 28-30 aout 2014.

Gianotti, E. (2004) 'Through the lens of the camera in remote mining sites in the Peruvian highlands'. *Visual Studies* 19(2) pp.126-134

Goleman, D. (1995) *Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ*, London: Bloomsbury

Green, A. (2000) 'Science and science fiction in infant research'. In Sandler, J., Sandler, A.M., Davies, R. (eds.) (2000) *Clinical and Observational Psychoanalytic Research: Roots of a Controversy*, London: Karnac, pp.41-72

Groarke, S. (2008) 'Psychoanalytical infant observation: a critical assessment'. *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*. 10(4), pp. 299-321.

- Guba E.G. & Lincoln Y.S. (1995) *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Sage Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Haag, G. (2000) 'In the footsteps of Frances Tustin: Further reflections in the construction of the body ego', *International Journal of Infant Observation*, 3(3) 7-22
- Harris, R., Rendell, S. and Nashat, S. (eds ) (2011) *Engaging with complexity: Child & Adolescent Mental Health and Education*, London: Karnac
- Harris, M. (1976). 'The contribution of observation of mother-infant interaction and development to the equipment of a psychoanalyst' In Williams, M. H. (ed.) (2011) *The Tavistock Model: Papers on Child Development and Psychoanalytic Training by Martha Harris and Esther Bick*, London: Karnac, pp.117–132.
- Harris, M. (1977) 'The Tavistock training and philosophy'. In Williams, M. H. (ed.) (2011) *The Tavistock Model: Papers on Child Development and Psychoanalytic Training by Martha Harris and Esther Bick*, London: Karnac, pp.1–24.
- Harris, M. (1987) 'Consultation project in a comprehensive school' In Williams, M. H. (ed.) (2011) *The Tavistock Model: Papers on Child Development and Psychoanalytic Training by Martha Harris and Esther Bick*, London: Karnac, pp.283-310.
- Harris, R., Rendall, S. and Nashat, S. (eds.) (2011) *Engaging with complexity. Child & adolescent mental health and Education*, London: Karnac
- Harrison, B. (2002) 'Seeing health and illness worlds – using visual methodologies in a sociology of health and illness: a methodological review', *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 24,(6) pp.856-872
- Heath, C. and Hindmarsh, J. (2002) 'Analysing Interaction: Video, Ethnography and Situated Conduct', in May, T. (ed.) (2002) *Qualitative Research in Action*, London: Sage, repr. (2003) London: Sage, pp.99-121

Henwood, K. and Pidgeon, N. (1993) 'Qualitative research and psychological theorising'. In Hammersley, M. (ed.) *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*, Sage: London.

Heritage, J. (1984) *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity

Hirsch, D. (2007). 'Experiences of poverty and educational disadvantage', [Online] *Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Round-up reviewing the evidence ref: 2123*, Available at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk> (Accessed: 28 February 2017)

Holloway, W. (2016) 'Emotional experience plus reflection: counter-transference and reflexivity in research.' *Special issue 'The creative use of self in research: explorations of reflexivity and research relationships in psychotherapy.'* *The Psychotherapist*, 62(Spring), pp.19-21.

Hopkins, J. (1996) 'The dangers and deprivations of too-good mothering'. *The Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 22(3), pp.407-422

Horowitz, A. (2001) *Stormbreaker*, London: Philomel Books

Houzel, D. (1999) 'A therapeutic application of infant observation in child psychiatry'. *International Journal of Infant Observation*, 2(3), pp.42-53.

Hoxter, S. (1988) 'Review of Collected Papers of Martha Harris and Esther Bick', *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 14(a) pp.101–106

Jackson, E (2002) Mental Health in schools: What about the staff? *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 28(2), pp.129-146

Jackson, E. (2005) 'Developing observation skills in school settings: the importance and impact of 'work discussion groups' for staff'. *International Journal of Infant Observation*, 8(1) pp.5-17

Jackson, E. (2008) 'Work Discussion groups at work'. In Rustin, M. and Bradley, J. (eds.) *Work Discussion. Learning from reflective practice in work with children and families*. London: Karnac, pp.51-72

Klein, M. (1946) 'Notes on some schizoid mechanisms'. In: *The Writings of Melanie Klein, 3: Envy and Gratitude and Other Works, 1946-1963*. London: Hogarth, repr. 1975.

Klein, M. (1958) 'On the development of mental functioning', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 39 pp.84-90

Lazar, R.A. (2000) 'Explore and experience: Participant infant observation – empathy-training or empirical research'. *Analytical Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, 31, pp.399–417.

Lomax, H., Casey, N. (1998) 'Recording social life: reflexivity and video methodology', *Sociology Research Online*, 3(2), 1.1- 8.2

Lush, M. (2011) 'Clinical facts, turning points and complexity theory', *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 37(1) pp.31:51

Maiello, S. (1995) 'The sound-object: A hypothesis about pre-natal auditory experience and memory', *Journal of Child Psychotherapy* 21(2) pp.23-42

Maltby, J. (2008) 'Consultation in Schools: helping staff and pupils with unresolved loss and mourning'. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*. 34(1), pp.83-100

Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage

Menzies, I. (1959) 'The functioning of social systems as a defence against anxiety'. In Menzies, I. *Containing anxiety in institutions, Selected Essays, Vol 1*, London: Free Association Books, 1988 pp.43-85.

Menzies, I (1970) *The Functioning of Social Systems as a Defence against Anxiety*, London: Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

Midgley, N. (2004) 'Sailing between Scylla and Charybdis: Incorporating qualitative approaches into child psychotherapy research.' *Journal of child psychotherapy*, 30(1), pp.89-111.



- Midgley, N. (2006) 'The 'inseparable bond between cure and research': Clinical case study as a method of psychoanalytic inquiry.' *Journal of child psychotherapy*, 32(2), pp.122-147.
- Midgley, N., Anderson, J., Grainger, E., Nestic-Vuckovic, T. and Urwin, C. (eds.) (2009) *Child Psychotherapy and Research: New Approaches, Emerging Findings*, Hove: Routledge
- Miller, L., Rustin, M., Rustin, M.J., Shuttleworth, J. (eds.) (1989) *Closely Observed Infants*. London: Duckworth Press.
- Morse, J.M. (1999) 'Qualitative generalizability'. *Qualitative Health Research* 9(1), pp.5-6
- Munro, E. (2011) The Munro review of child protection: final report – a child-centred system, London: Department for Education, [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/munro-review-of-child-protection-final-report-a-child-centred-system>. (Accessed: 26 February 2017).
- Nash, (1973) *Classrooms observed*, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul
- Ofcom (2015) *Communications Market Report*, [Online] Available at: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/cmfr/cmfr/15> (Accessed 26 February 2017)
- Ofsted (2015) *Early help: Whose responsibility?*, [Online] Available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/4103781/Early\\_help\\_whose\\_responsibility](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4103781/Early_help_whose_responsibility) (Accessed 26 February 2017)
- O'Shaughnessy, E. (1994) 'What is a clinical fact?' *International journal of psycho-Analysis*, 75, pp.939-47 In Lemma, A. (eds.) (2015) *Inquiries in Psychoanalysis Collective Papers of Edna O'Shaughnessy*, Hove Routledge
- Pally, R. (1997) 'Memory: Brain systems that link past, present and future', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 78(6) pp.1223-1234
- Plato. *The Republic*.

Pollard, A. and with Filer, A. (1996) *The Social World of Children's Learning*, London: Cassell

Porter, S. (1993) 'Nursing research conventions: objectivity or obfuscation?' *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 18, pp.137-143

Price, H. (2006) Jumping at Shadows: 'Catching the unconscious in the classroom'. *Journal of social work practice*, 20(2) pp.145-161

Price, H. (2009) 'Emotional literacy in schools: a psychosocial perspective', In *Emotion: New Psychosocial Perspectives*, Day Sclater, S., Jones, D, Price, H. and Yates, C., (eds.) London: Palgrave Macmillan pp.197-211

Quinodoz, J. M. (1994) 'Clinical facts or psychoanalytic clinical facts?', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 75 pp.963-76

Reid, S., (Ed.) (1997) *Developments in Infant Observation: The Tavistock Model*. Hove: Routledge

Rhode, M. (2001) 'The sense of abundance in relation to technique'. In Edwards, J. (ed.) (2001) *Being Alive: Building on the work of Anne Alvarez*, Hove: Routledge, repr. Hove: Routledge, 2013 pp.128-139

Rhode, M. (2004) 'Sensory aspects of language development in relation to primitive anxieties'. *International Journal of Infant Observation*, 6(2), pp.12-32

Rice, L. N. and Greenberg, L. S. (eds.) (1984) *Patterns of Change: Intensive Analysis of Psychotherapeutic Process*, New York: Guilford

Robertson, J. and Robertson, J. (1952) 'A two-year old goes to hospital' and (1969) 'John, Aged 17 months, for 9 days in a residential nursery' [Online]. *Young Children in Brief Separation*, Available at: [http://www.robertsonfims.info/young\\_children\\_in\\_brief\\_separation.htm](http://www.robertsonfims.info/young_children_in_brief_separation.htm) (Accessed: 26 February 2017).

Ruby, J. (1980) 'Exposing yourself: reflexivity, anthropology, and film,' *Semiotica*, 30(1/2) pp.153-179

- Rustin, M. and Bradley, J. (eds.) (2008) *Work discussion: Learning from Reflective Practice in Work with Children and Families*, London: Karnac.
- Rustin, M., (2009). 'Esther Bick's legacy of infant observation at the Tavistock – some reflections 60 years on', *International Journal of Infant Observation and Its Applications*, 12(1), pp.32.
- Rustin, M. (2011) 'Passion in the classroom: understanding some vicissitudes in teacher-pupil relationships and the unavoidable anxieties of learning', In Harris, R., Rendall, S., Nashat, S. (eds.) *Engaging with complexity: Child and adolescent mental health and education*. London: Karnac, pp.1-19.
- Rustin, M. J. (1989) 'Observing Infants: Reflections on Methods'. In: Miller, L. et al. (eds) *Closely Observed Infants*. London: Duckworth Press. pp.52-75.
- Rustin, M. J. (1997) 'What do we see in the nursery? Infant observation as "laboratory work"'. *International Journal of Infant Observation*. 1(1), pp.93-110.
- Rustin, M. J. (2002) 'Looking in the right place: Complexity theory, psychoanalysis and infant observation'. In Briggs, A. (Ed.), *Surviving space. Papers on infant observation. Essays on the centenary of Esther Bick*, London: Karnac. pp.256–278.
- Rustin, M. J. (2006) 'Infant observation research: What have we learned so far?' *International Journal of Infant Observation*, 9(1), pp.35–52.
- Rustin, M. J. (2011a) 'In defence of infant observational research'. *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*, 13(2), pp.153–168.
- Rustin, M. J. (2011b) 'Infant observation and research: A reply to Steven Groarke'. *International Journal of Infant Observation*, 14(2), pp.179–190.
- Sacks, H. (1992) *Lectures in Conversation, Volumes I and II*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Salzberger-Wittenberg, I. (1970) *Psycho-Analytic Insight and Relationships: A Kleinian Approach*, London: Routledge

Salzberger-Wittenberg, I., Williams, G. and Osborne, E. (1983) *The emotional experience of learning and teaching*, London: Routledge; repr, London: Karnac, 1999

Salzberger-Wittenberg, I. (2001) 'The transition from home to nursery school', *Infant Observation*, 4(2), pp.23–35.

Salzberger-Wittenberg, I. (2013) *Experiencing Endings and Beginnings*, London: Karnac

Solomon, M. and Nashat, S. (2010) 'Offering a 'therapeutic presence' in schools and education settings'. *Psychodynamic Practice: Individuals, Groups and Organisations*, 16(3) pp.289-304

Solomon, M. (2011) 'Integrating reintegration: the role of child & adolescent mental health professionals in supporting the inclusion of excluded pupils'. In Harris, R., Rendall, S. and Nashat, S. (eds.) (2011) *Engaging with complexity. Child & adolescent mental health and Education*, London: Karnac pp.35-52

Stern, D. (1977) *The First Relationship: Infant and Mother*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Repr., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002

Sternberg, J. (2005). *Infant Observation at the Heart of Training*. London: Karnac

Sutton, S. (2014) *Being Taken in: The Framing Relationship*, London: Karnac

Thomson-Salo, F. (ed.) (2014) *Infant Observation: Creating Transformative Relationships*, London: Karnac

Trevarthen, C. (1975) 'Early attempts at speech'. In Lewin, R. (ed.) (1975) *Child Alive!*. London: Temple Smith

Trevarthen, C. (1979a) 'Infant play and the creation of culture'. *New Scientist*, 81, pp.566-569

Trevarthen, C. (1979b) 'Communication and co-operation in early infancy: A description of primary intersubjectivity'. In Bullowa, M. (ed.) (1979) *Before Speech: The beginning of Interpersonal Communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Trevarthen, C. (1980) 'Foundations of intersubjectivity: Development of interpersonal and co-operative understanding in infants'. In Olsen, D. (ed.) (1980) *The Social Foundations of Language and Thought*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Trevarthen, C. and Hubley, P. (1979) 'Secondary intersubjectivity: confidence, confiding and acts of meaning in the first year', in A. Lock (ed.) *Action, Gesture and Symbol: The Emergence of Language*, London: Academic Press.

Tronick, E. (2007) 'The mutual regulation model: The infant's self and interactive regulation coping and defensive capacities', In: Tronick, E. *The neurobehavioral and social emotional development of infants and children*. New York: Norton, pp.177-194.

Tucker, S. (2010) 'An investigation of the stresses, pressures and challenges faced by primary school head teachers in a context of organisational change in schools', *Journal of Social Work Practice: Psychotherapeutic Approaches in Health, Welfare and the Community*, 24(1), pp.63-74

Urwin, C. (ed.) (2007) 'Becoming a mother: Changing identities: Infant observation in a research project (special issue)'. *Infant Observation*, 10, pp.231–334.

Urwin, C., and Sternberg, J. (eds.). (2012). *Infant observation and research. Emotional processes in everyday lives*. Hove: Routledge.

Vallotton, C. (2011) 'Babies open our minds to their minds: How "listening" to infant signs complements and extends our knowledge of infants and their development', *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 32, pp.115–133.

Waddell, M. (1998) *Inside Lives: Psychoanalysis and the Growth of the*

*Personality*. London: Duckworth; repr, London: Karnac, 2002

Waddell, M. (2013) 'Infant observation in Britain: a Tavistock approach'. *Infant Observation: International Journal of Infant Observation and Its Applications*, 16(1), pp. 4-22.

Wakelyn, J. (2011) 'Therapeutic observation of an infant in foster care', *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 37(3), pp. 280-310.

Wakelyn, J. (2012) 'Observation as a therapeutic intervention for infants and young children in care', *Infant Observation*, 15(1), pp. 49-66.

Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. and Melody, J. (2002) 'Subjectivity and Qualitative Method'. In May, T. (ed.) (2002) *Qualitative Research in Action*, London: Sage, repr. (2003) London: Sage, pp.179-196

Weare, K., Gray, G. (2003) *What Works in Developing Children's Emotional and Social Competence and Wellbeing*, for The Health Education Unit, Research and Graduate School of Education, University of Southampton for the Department of Education and Skills London: Crown printers (RR 456)

Wiles, R., Coffey, A., Robinson, A. and Prosser, J. (2013) 'Ethical Regulation and Visual Methods: Making Visual Research Impossible or Developing Good Practice', *Social Research Online*, 18(1)

Williams, G. (1997) *Internal landscapes and foreign bodies: Eating disorders and other pathologies*. London: Duckworth

Wolfe, S. and Alexander, R.J. (2008) 'Argumentation and dialogic teaching: alternative pedagogies for a changing world'. [Online] Available at: <http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk> (Accessed: 17 June 2014)

Youell, B. (1999) 'Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy with Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties' in Cooper, P. (1999) (ed) *Understanding and Supporting children with emotional and behavioural difficulties*. Jessica Kingsley: London

Youell, B. (2006) *The Learning Relationship: Psychoanalytic thinking in education*. London: Karnac

## **8.APPENDICES**





03 February 2015

Dear Anne-Marie,

<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>How observational material might be used in a collaborative consultation with teachers to further their understanding of their pupils</b>
<b>Researcher(s):</b>	<b>Anne-Marie Wedd</b>
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	<b>Margaret Lush</b>
<b>Reference Number:</b>	<b>UREC_1415_48</b>

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered at the meeting on **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

**Approved Research Site**

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

<b>Research Site</b>	<b>Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator</b>
[REDACTED]	Margaret Lush

**Approved Documents**

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

<b>Document</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>
UREC Application Form	2.0	02 February 2015
Information sheet for teacher participants	2.0	02 February 2015

Docklands Campus, University Way, London E16 2RD  
 Tel: +44 (0)20 8223 3322 Fax: +44 (0)20 8223 3394 MINICOM 020 8223 2853  
 Email: r.carter@uel.ac.uk



EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

uel.ac.uk/qa

Quality Assurance and Enhancement



Information sheet for child participants	2.0	02 February 2015
Information sheet for parents	2.0	02 February 2015
Consent form for teachers	2.0	02 February 2015
Consent form for parents	2.0	02 February 2015
NRES letter	1.0	06 January 2015
Text of email to Chief Services Officer to Young People, [REDACTED]	1.0	06 January 2015
Approval letter from [REDACTED] School	1.0	02 February 2015

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Good Practice in Research](#) is adhered to.

**Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.**

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Rosalind Eccles  
 University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)  
 UREC Servicing Officer  
 Email: [researchethics@uel.ac.uk](mailto:researchethics@uel.ac.uk)





### **Information sheet for parents of child participants**

**Title of Project:** “How observational material might be used in a collaborative consultation with teachers to further their understanding of their pupils”

#### **Why am I doing this project?**

I am doing this because I am interested in looking into how observing children in class using video and written notes and then discussing this with their teachers might help the teachers understanding of their pupils. The aim of this study is to explore this approach and to see if it could develop into a structured intervention to be used as a form of therapeutic support in schools. The study is also seeking to trace what it is that teachers do, that provides evidence of their increased awareness and openness to the child’s emotional state.

#### **Contact Details**

- Principal Investigator: Anne-Marie Wedd (annemariewed@.sch.uk,)
- Director of Studies:
- Advisor:
- School where the project takes place:
- If you have any concerns about the research or wish to make a complaint please contact, Ethics Integrity Manager, University of East London, Graduate School, Docklands Campus, Room EB 1.43, London, E16 2RD: [ResearchEthics@UEL.ac.uk](mailto:ResearchEthics@UEL.ac.uk). Tel: 0208 223 6683

#### **What will be required of your child?**

- To be observed and video and audio recorded while your child works in class with his or her teacher for one hour and again the following term.
- Participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your child at any time and withdraw any unprocessed data with no consequences.

**Will there be any risks involved?**

There are no risks involved as your child will be in class and working as usual with his or her teacher.

**Confidentiality**

To preserve anonymity details are changed and the school, the staff and families are unidentifiable.

Process notes will be kept in a locked cabinet and any electronic data will be password protected.

**Other information**

- UEL and The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust are the sponsors of the research.
- The investigator has passed appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
  
- The research has received formal ethical approval from the University Research Ethics Committee.
- Data collected will be retained in accordance with the university's data policy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne-Marie Wedd

Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist



Anne-Marie Wedd – Research Project

**Informed Consent Form for parents of child participants**

**Title of Research Project:** How observational material might be used in a collaborative consultation with teachers to further their understanding of their pupils.

**Name of principal investigator:** Anne-Marie Wedd

1. I confirm that I have read and understand that you intend to use the written notes, video recordings and transcriptions of the observations of my child and subsequent feedback and review sessions in your thesis as explained in your information sheet dated 30/01/15. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my agreement is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw it at any time without giving a reason.
3. I agree to your using the observational notes and transcriptions of your feedback and review sessions with my child's teacher for your thesis and have read the information sheet thoroughly, understanding what the research will entail.
4. Direct quotations will be used in this research. By agreeing to take part I am willing for this to happen.
5. This research may be published in journals in the future and by agreeing to participate I am willing for this to happen.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*If you want to take part in my project, and you understand it please fill in the consent form with your parent or carer.*



### What happens to all this data?

All the **data** in my **research** which has things about you in it that I cannot disguise, such as the video of you in class, will be kept safe for three years and then it will be destroyed. What I mean by safe is that I will make sure that only people who are allowed to see it can have the password. For everything else I will disguise you and your teacher by using different names to yours when I write about your observation.

*When it is finished you will be asked if you want to hear about your part in the research project.*

*'Research' is what we do when we have an idea about something and we want to find out if our idea will work.*

*To 'transcribe' is what we do when we want to move information from one place where it is stored to another and often refers to writing down the words people have said.*

*'Data' is information we have collected such as written notes of observations, video and voice recordings of observations and transcriptions of conversations.*

*'Informed consent' means that you are saying yes to something you understand.*

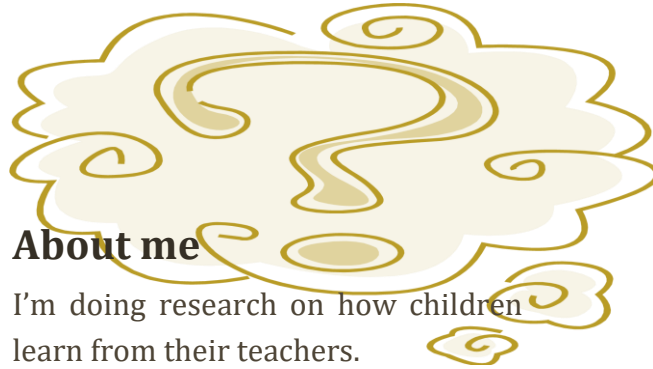
**If you have questions for me:  
ask your teacher or phone or  
write to me at the school**



**CHILDRENS  
INFORMATION  
SHEET**

*To explain my  
research*

## My name is Ms. Wedd



This information sheet explains how I do this and why I am asking for your help.

### What is research?

'**Research**' is what we do when we have an idea about something and we want to find out if our idea will work. For example, if you have an idea about how you could make a boat out of paper and then you try it out in your bath to see if it floats. That is **research**!

This **research** is about how observing children in class can help their teachers to understand the children's needs better. I want to find out if this would work and also if it would be helpful to other children and their teachers in other schools.

To find out how children learn from their teachers I want to observe you in class while you work with your teacher. Because I do not want to disturb you and the rest of the class, I will do this from behind a screen. I will let your teacher know when I will be observing and ask her to let you know on that morning. While I observe, I will also video you and your teacher and then later I will write notes about what I observed and share these with your teacher. While we think about the observation together your teacher and me will also look at the video and think about what it was like for you during the observation. I will voice record this meeting with your teacher.

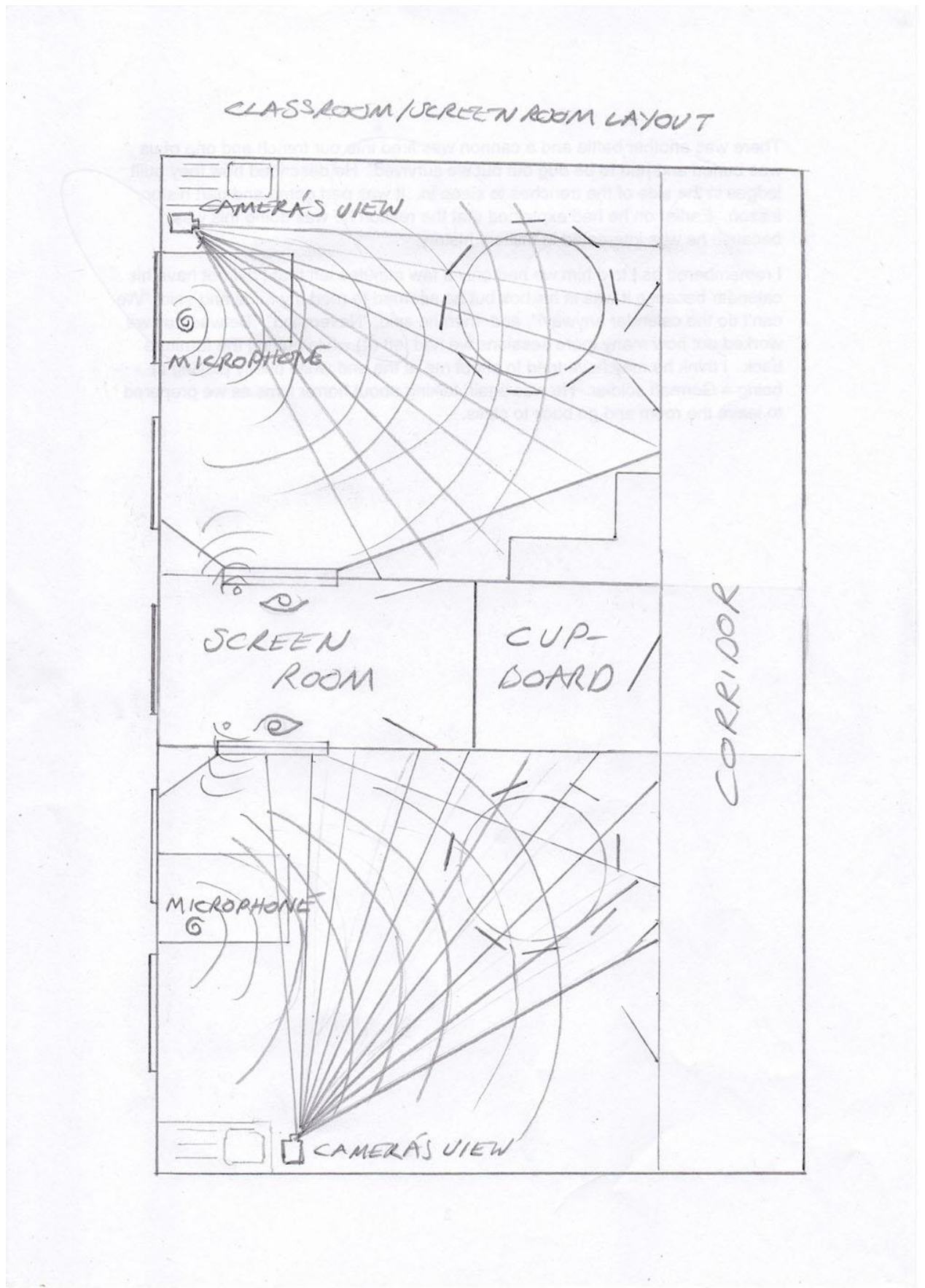
To '**transcribe**' is what we do when we want to move information from one place where it is stored to another. For example, when Miss wants to let your parent or carer know how well you write she puts it in your report. So she has **transcribed** it into your report from her laptop. All year long Miss has been collecting information about your learning journey. That information is also called '**data**'. The **data** I will be collecting are the written notes of my observation of you and your teacher, the video of the observation and the **transcription** of the talk I have with your teacher about the observation.

A few weeks later I will meet with your teacher again to see if what we did was helpful when working with you in class. I will collect more **data** from this which will be a **transcription** of a recording of the meeting. Then next term I will do it all over again just like before and once I have finished I will look at all my **data** and write a report which I will show to my college which is the University of East London.



### How you can help

For me to observe you I need to ask for your consent. '**Consent**' means that you are saying '**yes**' to something. '**Informed**' means you know what something is about and you understand. So, '**Informed consent**' means that you are saying '**yes**' to something you understand.



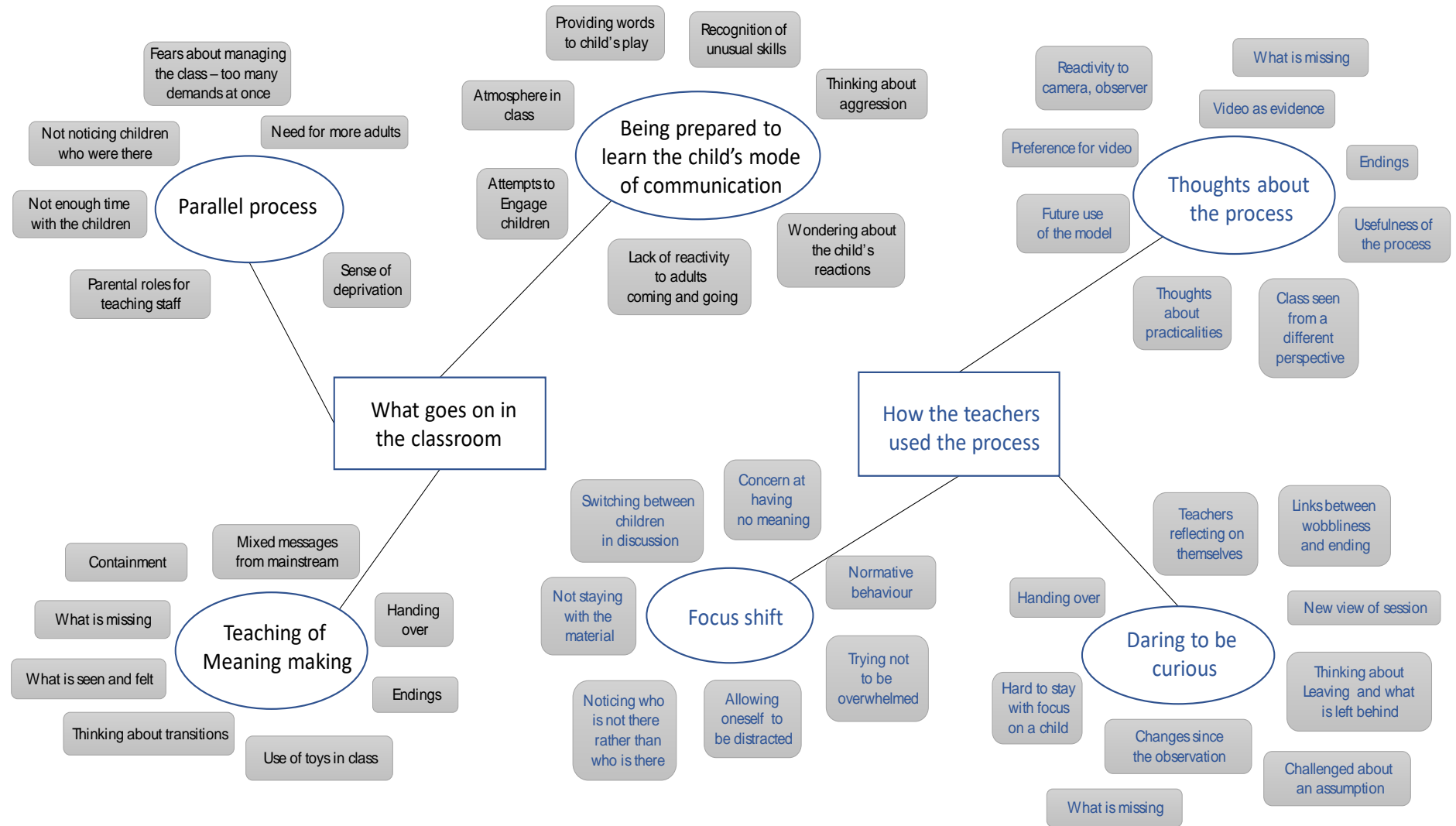


Some initial ideas for themes

Extract from journal

1. Process – discussion of the process itself seems to bookend the sessions particularly the first exploratory sessions as one would expect and moved to thoughts about how the data could be used in the final review sessions.
2. Parallel process – what is happening in the classroom with the child can sometimes appear to be mirrored in the discussion of the material, e.g. with Danny becoming overlooked
3. Difficulty in maintaining focus – not being able to stay with the focus on one child in reviews in particular – maybe this is also parallel process with what happens in class.
4. In my written observations I saw a very relationally rich form of teaching happening in which the teachers try to learn the child's language of expression in order to draw them into a learning relationship. (e.g. 1 meaning of plates for Danny, 2 taking coat off and wearing it on his body for Errol, 3 naked animals for Errol, 4 Peter Rabbit for Danny. Ms Lareina 1. Karim and his comment about ladies, 2 Simon and mind your own business).
5. Noticing one's own emotional reaction to something already heard, only while watching the video replayed, (E.g. Giselle going under the table, Ms Lareina not looking at Karim)
6. The teacher's awareness of what is missing from a child's social repertoire seems unusually acute to me, as though they are very aware of the gaps or are able to identify the skill that is lacking which implies a capacity to build a mental idea of a particular child's potential.
7. The teachers do a lot of making connections temporally for the children – this happened and then that happened, and interpersonally by describing how another child may have handled a situation and involving all the group in finding solutions such as what Simon could have said instead of 'mind your own business'
8. The teachers seem very comfortable with discussing very small details of interaction that perhaps other teachers might take for granted. E.g. Being able to name some feeling states which a child usually has when they start school. Was this because of their familiarity with work discussion and the space it provides to think in depth about particular aspects or thoughts they have about their work.

9. Difficulty with staying with not having a meaning for some behaviour. Again a difference between the classes about degree of this i.e. Ms Eastman and Ms Lewis seemed to want to find the meaning and were less comfortable with just exploring the behaviour. I wondered if this was because being a little younger or less able to express themselves they felt the burden of responsibility to explain this for the children whereas by comparison Ms Lareina's class were fairly articulate if not necessarily more emotionally articulate.
10. Difficulty with articulating our thoughts when discussing our own feelings about a child. Fighting the desire not to express a dislike for a child was very hard.
11. Mismatch in perception or understanding of a passage of video among those watching during the exploratory sessions (e.g. Errol and Ms Lewis and Ms Eastman over P.E. section, and Simon wanting to sit next to Karim). A kind of screen mode which detaches from the processing of emotion.
12. Surprise at how much more notice of staff the children are taking when reviewing the video footage and to a lesser extent after reading the written observation. Again, this could be about the seeing around corners / what is seen or unseen or video evidence - proof.
13. The written observations caused greater anxiety for the teachers than the video. The video is objective and has no opinion but my observation was considered subjective.“



**THEMATIC NETWORK**

APPENDIX F

Worked example no 1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	3	EXPL	EL	15.01	Process technical difficulties in answer to wanting to	06:00:14	00:14	00:14								
2	3	EXPL	EL	30.06	Noting Simons discomfort	12:01:26	01:26	01:26								
3	3	EXPL	EL	35.08	Able to focus on Karim	14:01:55	01:55	01:55								
4	3	EXPL	EL	47.58	Process	19:01:55	01:55	01:55								
5	3	EXPL	EL	7.59	Karim and asking about his withdrawal from the	03:02:10	02:10	02:10								
6	3	EXPL	EL	02:37	Process	00:02:37	02:37	02:37								
7	3	EXPL	EL	45.11	Process – needing to end soon. What was it like for	18:02:38	02:38	02:38								
8	3	EXPL	EL	03:04	E feeling uncomfortable about her voice recorded	00:03:04	03:04	03:04								
9	3	EXPL	EL	03:32	Process – how the video will be presented and	00:03:32	03:32	03:32								
10	3	EXPL	EL	04:20	Process technical	00:04:20	04:20	04:20								
11	3	EXPL	EL	40.25	Ms Lareina takes a more charitable view of Karims	16:06:00	06:00	06:00								
12	3	EXPL	EL	06:27	E noticing how much attention Karim pays her	00:06:27	06:27	06:27								
13	3	EXPL	EL	07:20	Mainstream staff member who was unsure about	00:07:20	07:20	07:20								
14	3	EXPL	EL	07:27	Confidentiality	00:07:27	07:27	07:27								
15	3	EXPL	EL	07:43	The mainstream staff member	00:07:43	07:43	07:43								
16	3	EXPL	EL	09:31	Karim feeling contained by lessons	00:09:31	09:31	09:31								
17	3	EXPL	EL	10:05	More about Karim	00:10:05	10:05	10:05								
18	3	EXPL	EL	10:09	Process	00:10:09	10:09	10:09								
19	3	EXPL	EL	10:16	Process	00:10:16	10:16	10:16								
20	3	EXPL	EL	23.02	Simons lack of eye contact	09:12:29	12:29	12:29								
21	3	EXPL	EL	14:19	Defending Karim	00:14:19	14:19	14:19								
22	3	EXPL	EL	14:37	Karim's sneakiness	00:14:37	14:37	14:37								
23	3	EXPL	EL	14:37	E feeling self-conscious	00:14:37	14:37	14:37								

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1			File name 160530 Theme list.xls sheet - Ordered by code								
36	4	EXP	Sneaky Karim at 17:00		Karim's sneakiness	ABCE	E				
37	4	EXP	Simon and Ms L's relationship 17:00 to 21:25		Simon and Ms Lareina's relationship	ABCE	E				
38	4	EXP	Simon and Ms Es relationship 32:02 – 42:44		Simon and Ms Lareina's relationship	ABCE	E				
53	4	EXP	Karim's and Ms L's relationship 13:37 I don't think he likes me thru to 17:00		Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship	ACE	E				
54	4	EXP	Briefly Karim 45:12		Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship	CE	E				
78	4	EXP	Focus shift to Olwin from K 24:52		Focus shift	D	E				
79	4	EXP	Focus shift to G 47:36		Focus shift	D	E				
104	4	EXP	Process I confused with the review session or I made it sound that way for the first couple of minutes.		Process -	F	E				
105	4	EXP	Process 28:33		Process	F	E				
131	4	EXP	4 15.05.15 Explo of Obs 31.03.15 with Ms Lareina and Ms F		None	N	E				
132	4	EXP	Lots of quiet watching of videos		None	N	E				
144											
145											
146											
147											
148											
149											
150											
151											
152											
153											
154											
155											

# APPENDIX F

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

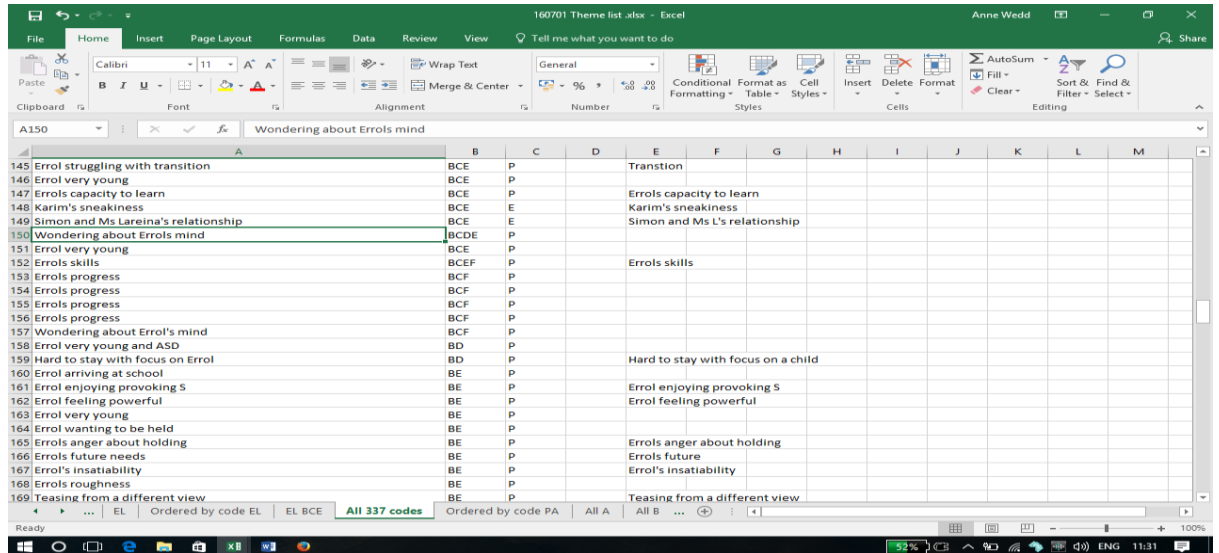
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
81	17	REV	Much more focus which was partly improved by me sending some questions we might think about in advance of the review.	Focus shift, Process - struc	DF	E					
82	3	EXP	Defending Karim 16:57 Back to Karim's progress 17:07	Defending Karim	E	E					
83	3	EXP	Defending Karim with his wanting to ally with Ms L	Defending Karim	E	E					
84	3	EXP	NB Was the dislike projected on to the TA from mainstream at 36:06 I suggested that Ms Lareina don't like him causing her to agree and then rush to his defence and then to move to he doesn't care about other children. I challenged with my observation of him being protective of Simon which is refuted and then that he cannot be redeemed is acknowledged 37:24.	Defending Karim	E	E					
85	3	EXP	Defending Karim by reframing 40:25 a more charitable view of his reaction to Simon.	Defending Karim	E	E					
86	3	EXP	Defending Karim - spotlight focus change of 41:21 relationship with Ms Lareina and K. Sets theme thereafter of	Defending Karim	E	E					
87	3	EXP	Difficulty of articulating our thoughts when discussing feelings about a child	Hard to articulate feelings	E	E					
88	3	EXP	Surprise at how much more notice of staff the children are taking when seeing the video footage. Thoughts about changed thinking 2:47 about Karim's overtures to people and how they can be misunderstood	Surprise at children taking notice	E	E					
89	5	REV	Inability to integrate good and bad feelings in 1 person 6:46	Defending Karim	E	E					
90	5	REV	Taking something in 13:14, 14:36 - 15:31	Taking something in	E	E					
91	5	REV	Compassion for Karim - no omelette 28:3 SEAMs Farrington point for managing his feelings	Defending Karim	E	E					
92	5	REV	Thinking about what gets left behind when the Child leaves and what criticism might they subsequently receive from the new class teacher. Having to compete with the new teacher. He is in my class now!	Defending Karim	E	E					
93	17	REV	Then back to process re the mainstream staff member who did not want to be filmed and mention of confidentiality and you could say me filling out blank before 1st clip which was of an initially empty room for 10 minutes	What gets left behind	E	E					
94	3	EXP	Trying to see beyond the shot, around corners (hoping to see everything) 14:02 and wondering about	Process - filming staff	F	E					

The 2.5K codes needed to be reduced so groupings were attempted

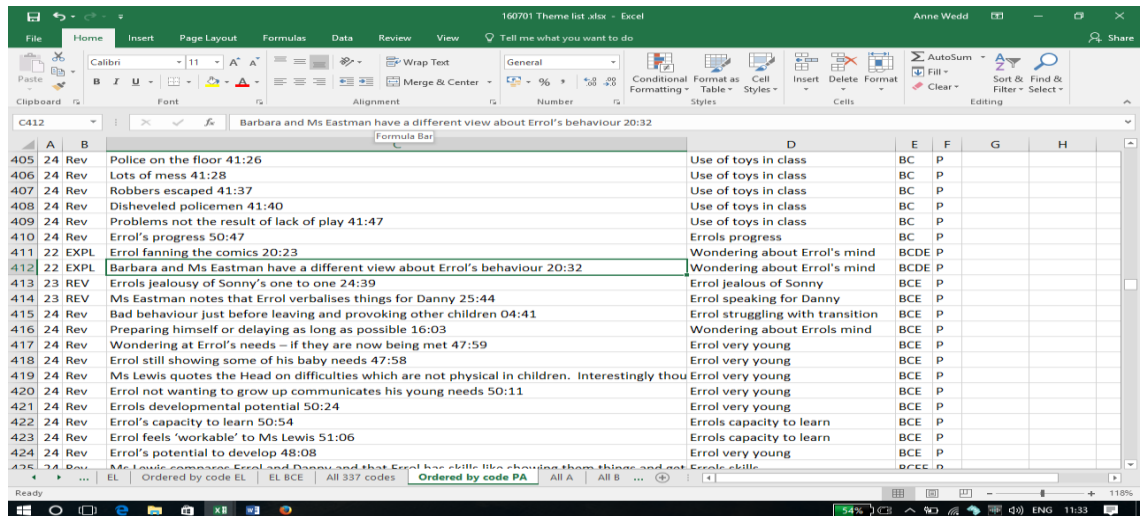
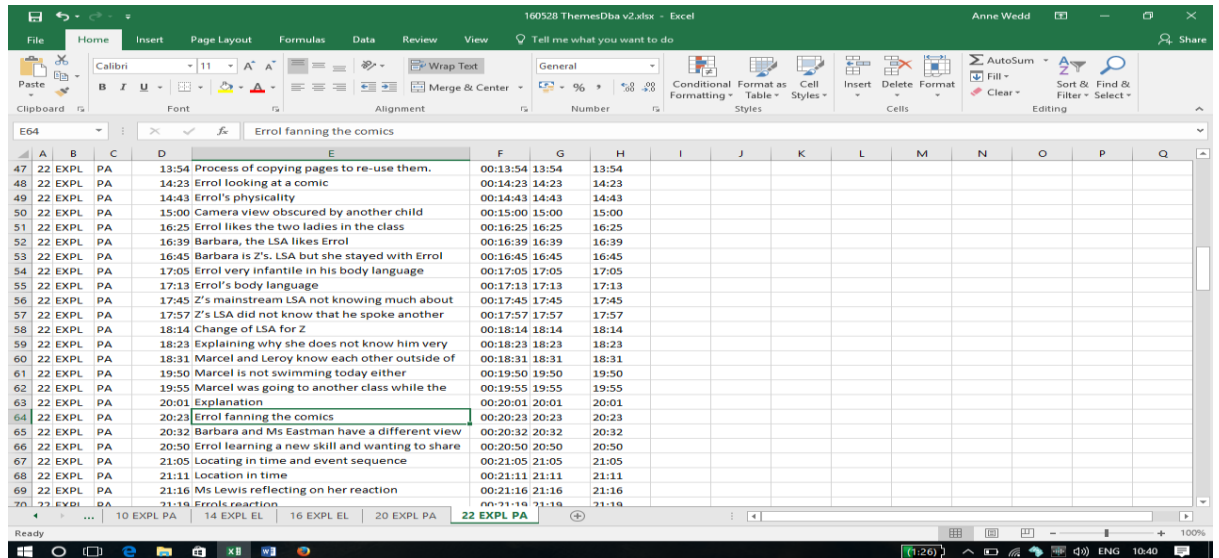
The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
215	Get up Simon	C	E		Get up Simon								
228	Karim's progress	CDE	E										
229	Karim's progress, endings	CDEF	E		Karim's progress								
234	Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship	CE	E		Karim and Ms Lareina's relationship								
235	NB clear link with 3 where she says she thinks he does not like her	CE	E		He does not like her								
236	Handing over, Endings	CEF	E		Handing over								
239	Endings	CF	E										
242	Focus shift	D	E		Focus shift								
252	No meaning	D	E		No meaning								
258	Focus shift, Process - structure	DF	E										
264	Defending Karim	E	E		Defending Karim								
268	Hard to articulate feelings about a child	E	E		Hard to articulate feelings about a child								
276	surprise at children taking notice	A	E		Surprise at children taking notice								
277	Taking something in	E	E		Taking something in								
280	What gets left behind	E	E		What is left behind								
206	Process	F	E										
309	Process - difficult to hear	F	E										
310	Process - filming staff	F	E		Process - filming staff								
315	Process - structure	F	E		Process - structure								
316	Process - technical	F	E		Process - technical								
321	Process - difficult to hear	F	E		Process - difficult to hear								
323	Process - looking forward	F	E		Process - looking forward								
324	Reactivity to camera	F	E										
335	Video as evidence	F	E		Video as evidence								
338													

# APPENDIX F



The second worked example



**Excerpt of the transcript of the filmed observation 04.06.15**

Errol:	Three four nine six
Danny:	No. Six
Danny:	He's being silly
Ms Eastman:	He's not being silly now Danny. He's counting.
Sonny:	One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten [quickly]
Errol:	One, two, three, four, five, six,
Errol:	One, two, three, four, five, six,
Sonny:	It's not. I'm finishing off a page
Errol:	Teeeee [very slowly]
Marcel:	Miss?
Errol:	Seven
Danny:	[indistinct singing]
Leroy:	Look! [holding up a comic]
Leroy:	Mr Art Head
Ms Eastman:	Right!
	Ohhh! [to Leroy]
	You know what! Eeehh [to the whole class]
	This is really hard work!

## Exploratory session 3 lines 25-30, 52-58

Line no.	Speaker	Comment	Time
25	Ms Lareina	Um I suppose it's been a development because when he very first come, he would as soon as something didn't happen, it was as soon as he couldn't control an event, he would sort of rear up, get really cross um and uh sort of hit out at adults if they were putting in a boundary or run out of the room. So it's like changed and I suppose that's why there's that response of not saying ooh what's wrong Karim because I felt that it's a controlling [Observer Researcher mmhm] that he'll go away and sort of we do ask what's wrong but normally after it's all settled, you know the sort of dust has settled we'll say what happened and um	08:34
26	Ms Lareina	Does he do it a lot?	09:20
27	Ms Farringdon	He can do it at two people?	09:21
28	Ms Lareina	Not not not in lessons	09:22
29	Ms Farringdon	Sort of in free time with other children [Ms Lareina yeah]	09:27
30	Ms Lareina	It used to be all the time, it used to be in lessons, it could just be when he very first come it could just be the smallest thing, if he went to get the yellow pencil and somebody had it and he sort of like pulled it off them and you mentioned it to him, acknowledged it that would happen, he would just, that would be the end of that but now he never really does it in lessons [Ms Farringdon no] lessons I think are a bit therapeutic for him, he knows where he's going, it's sort of very contained but he does it, as you say, in free, unstructured activity	09:31
		[Later in the same discussion]	
52	Ms Lareina	Can I just say that's quite unusual that he would leave the class	16:51
53	Observer Researcher	Is it?	16:55
54	Ms Lareina	Now it is, he he always does that	16:57
55	Observer Researcher	Shall I pause it	17:04
56	Ms Lareina	Yeah. He went through a period of um, it was like things were very black and white, he was out of the class and we used to um, if he'd just gone out of the class a little bit we'd count that as not getting your target because what he'd do is he'd look at you to	17:05



APPENDIX H

		see if you had made up your mind really. So um and then there'd be other occasions where he really never meant to go out the class and he'd be going and he'd stop and, and, he'd go 'Miss, look' and that's like it's like a real, the fact that he's like actually gone out of the class sort of significant really	
57	Observer Researcher	He stayed out for quite, quite a while [Ms Lareina Yeah, yeah] And um but I it looked, observing as though it had to be connected to what he was watching earlier where [Ms Lareina Where he was sitting behind the chair] Having a cuddle [Ms Lareina Oh yeah, yeah] When Simon came up for a cuddle and um, and sitting, yes, and earlier sitting behind the chair and not, not, not getting any attention. Shall I start it again?	17:35
58	Ms Lareina	I feel like Simon does know that something could've, it's hard isn't it	22:16

Exploratory session no.3, lines 120-131

Line no.	Speaker	Comment	Time
120	Ms Lareina	Erm, I think it's like tentative, erm, it's like they've both realised they're powerful [observer/researcher Mm] In different ways, umm and I mean another way of looking at Karim erm correcting Tommy, you know, if if I'm being more charitable to Karim, is that he's recognising that bit in Simon where he did do something right well, you know, 'cause Karim can do something right [Observer Researcher Mm] Erm I mean Tommy said, like, you know, he's done the wrong thing whatever he's said, he's like, 'No, he wears this at mainstream and, you know, he was being a good boy', that's like you know, don't just tar him with the brush that he's always [observer/researcher Yeah] It could be that	40:25
121	Observer Researcher	Yeah I suppose there's also, I mean I, I, I, felt that he was he was wanting to agree with you, or to support your your err trying to draw Simon out but but after the falling out and leaving the classroom and then coming back in he seemed to, he, he put the cups out and then you asked, I think you'd asked him to clear the table, erm to clear the, put	41:21

		some toys away, to the people who were already sitting at the table, he went 'oh I did that' and then it was as though he was supporting you, decided he would support you for a while, or maybe Simon as well, but erm	
122	Ms Lareina	Oh I think that's what he does, he comes in, it's, he is really interesting to look at [Ms Farrington Yeah] Because I know of other children if they come back in and they did something I say 'oh fantastic', but with Karim I always feel a bit reticent to do that because I think if I say 'fantastic', the tables will be turned again and I think we have to go sort of slowly slowly [observer/researcher Mhmm] And it has to like the, a bit more embedded that he's back in the room now he's back in the group, 'cause I I suppose history has been that he'll be back in the room and as soon as the next thing erm, he's out of the room again, erm	41:58
123	Observer Researcher	Bit like a seesaw, you know, or like that's [Ms Lareina Yeah yeah] The end of him doing doing the right thing	42:42
124	Ms Lareina	I feel like I have to keep up that erm thing of like I'm you know I've probably said it in holds when he goes 'I'm going safe now let me go' and it's like well how will I know what will that look like and erm you know, so I have to impress upon him that this is not going to be a quick thing, I'm gonna have to start to trust you again and I think that's what that's like in the room [observer/researcher Mhmm] Erm and sometimes I can find myself consciously thinking 'right ten minutes has gone now gone now, he's you know he seems like he's digested that and now I can say something that I can recognise something good [Ms Farrington Yeah]	42:49
125	Observer Researcher	Need needing some sort of evidence [Ms Lareina and Ms Farrington Yeah] A sort of a staged sort of, err there's no sort of including in your thought process about how you [Ms Lareina Yeah] Decide how you're going to respond to him next in a way that he he's not really very used to but is	43:28
126	Ms Lareina	Yeah I mean the structure of the morning is that after we have breakfast we give them tokens and it's in recognition of what went on in the morning, and sometimes it might be until that time, and I think	43:57

		<p>he knows at that time to come and I think sometimes he thinks 'oh I've sodded it up this morning' but then he thinks 'oh they said I came in and said hello nicely' They did catch me doing that' and then it's like it's like almost letting him know that things don't have to be.. Urr!, Aaah! Ohh!</p> <p>[Ms Farringdon: Yeah]</p> <p>All the time, it can be something that you take in and you know you've got him in mind and you're not always going to be responding to him quickly erm so like your time will come really with him so, whereas maybe with somebody like Tommy.. not necessarily Tommy 'cause I think he can be a bit controlling as well 'cause when he does the morning</p> <p>[Ms Farringdon Yeah]</p> <p>Erm Olwyn</p> <p>[Ms Farringdon Yeah he needs a bit more]</p> <p>I could see it straight away, certainly to Olwyn and then, like just watch him and then if he does start to erm join the group again, say something to let him know that I've noticed him quicker</p> <p>[observer/researcher Mm]</p> <p>'Cause I think</p>	
127	Ms Farringdon	<p>I think Olwyn almost waits for you to say something nice</p> <p>[Ms Lareina Yeah]</p> <p>And then he'll just do it again</p> <p>[observer/researcher and Ms Lareina Yeah]</p> <p>It's almost like they've got one over on you</p> <p>[observer/researcher Yeah]</p> <p>If you say something nice to him</p>	45:02
128	Observer Researcher	<p>It's a little bit perverse isn't it</p> <p>[Ms Lareina and Ms Farringdon Yeah]</p> <p>Erm we're getting quite near to needing to stop, but I just wondered what what it was like, was like looking at these err looking at yourself</p>	45:11
129	Ms Lareina	<p>I'd like to do it more often really</p>	45:26
130	Ms Farringdon	<p>Yeah it's really interesting and sort of 'cause your focus is usually on one person so to see what happens with the others</p> <p>[observer/researcher Yeah]</p> <p>Even the looks</p> <p>[Ms Lareina Yeah]</p> <p>The looks that Karim gives to people can be really interesting, and I can see how people take it the wrong way. I being more mindful of that now</p>	45:28

APPENDIX H

131	Observer Researcher	Well, there is so much happening, even doing this, looking at it like this you have to choose where you look don't you [Ms Lareina Yeah, true] So it's, it's very difficult to	45:50
-----	------------------------	--	-------

## Transcript from Exploratory session no. 4, lines 41-65

Line no.	Speaker	Comment	Time
		Watching the video of Karim pulling a face at another child while they were in conversation with Ms Lareina.	
41	Observer researcher	Looks the same doesn't it? He's taking no notice while you're speaking to [Ms Farrington] and then when you start talking to Jordan he tries to, sort of, distract him by making a face	12:00
42		Watching the video	
43	Ms Lareina	That is exactly what they say happens with Karim	12:24
44	Ms Farrington	It's just a little quick thing isn't it	12:31
45	Ms Lareina	Mm. Do you think that's more about (cough) putting that person down to put yourself up. What do you think that is?	12:35
46	Observer researcher	Well I've seen him, I've seen it happen several times during these two observations and I was just trying to, I'll pause it [pauses video]. Err, It seems to be when you are interacting with somebody else and, particularly if you are talking to that person, he makes a face to, to, sort of, to get in there between, you know, to disturb them while they are looking at you, Errm.	12:46
47	Ms Lareina	Do you think that's about power, cos I don't think he likes me. I think, it's like, maybe he just thinks if he undermines them then he's more powerful, do you know what I mean, if he puts them down in my eyes then he's more powerful	13:17
48	Observer researcher	Well it looked a bit more like competition for your attention actually	13:33
49	Ms Lareina	But it does seem weird cos I don't think he likes me	13:37
50	Ms Farrington	I think he likes you	13:40
51	Ms Lareina	Yeah?	13:41
52	Ms Farrington	Yeah	13:41
53	Ms Lareina	Like	
54	Ms Farrington	Yeah I do, I think he tries to be sort of, like, I don't really like you but I think he does	13:46
55	Ms Lareina	Mm	13:53

APPENDIX I

56	Observer researcher	I think he's trying, he's resentful of em	13:57
57	Ms Lareina	Everyone I think	13:58
58	Observer researcher	But particularly when they have your, your, attention	14:00
59	Ms Lareina	Yeah mm	14:04
60	Observer researcher	And that seemed to be what motivated that. There hadn't been anything prior to that, that I've noticed that would have caused him to want to do something like that	14:06
61	Ms Lareina	Except that he carries things for months and months and months so that might be the prior	14:16
62	Observer researcher	Laughs	
63	Ms Lareina	But he really does doesn't he?	14:23
64	Ms Farrington	Yeah	
65	Ms Lareina	And he can bring something up that happened eighteen months ago like it was yesterday.	14:24

Transcript from the Review session no 5, line nos 13-27

Line no.	Speaker	Comment	Time
13	Ms Lareina	Erm as far as changing thinking err in as much as I you know I said last week I did not think he liked me laughter errrm I suppose like is a different it's like wanting that attachment isn't it more than like and I'm just surprised he does want that so that so that's changed. I think I'm a bit more sensitive to that because what I've been thinking before is so when he arrived he was so omnipotent.	2:47
14	Observer researcher	Hmm	
15	Ms Lareina	Alright and then to have adults here become the people that were in charge so I felt a lot of that stuff was around errm because his overtures to adults are really not very warm or I've felt a lot of that stuff was wanting power rather than wanting to make a connection so I suppose I	3:17

APPENDIX I

		<p>am more aware of his need to make a connection but even though because he comes across like some sort of perverse sort of connection I think maybe there was some barrier there with me but I know I know that he is needy and I know that his erm you know his relationship with his mum is really like impoverished but erm pause I think before I thought it was about errr because he wants, my feel was he wanted to take the power and run with it.</p> <p>[Ms Farrington Yeah to be in control. Yeah]</p>	
16	Observer researcher	<p>Ok yeah rather than just seeking to be err well I was thinking more sort of Ms Lareina [I suppose it's the start of him trying to make an attachment isn't it really. When he sort of you know]</p>	4:33
17	Observer researcher	<p>It certainly seemed that way didn't it well it erm It looked to me that way looking observing it as though it was erm being particularly err he seemed to be particularly aware of other people's time you and what they were doing and it did actually seem to affect him like when errr he was watching Simon being quite affectionate towards you.</p>	4:48
18	Ms Lareina	<p>You see that surprises me but I suppose that is just me not me not thinking enough because I've tried to be affectionate to him sometimes it is I'm trying to maybe he can sniff that and he goes no, no, no, no, no, like that and I know that no don't always mean no. (Laughs) I sound like the Sun. I know that but it feels like it with him. It feels like you know I only want you so that I can do this. I only want you so that and maybe it's a bit of both maybe and maybe he doesn't know what it's like to have an attachment and he's like so all his little ways in to get the attachment err don't register with like your normal sense of an attachment.</p>	5:16
19	Observer researcher	<p>Yeah he sort of pushes pulls you and pushes you away. Very, very, ambivalent about it [Ms Lareina Yeah, yeah]</p> <p>But obviously very, errr, interested in what other children are doing with you and and he's seems he did seem quite affected by it he seemed quite irritated by it which erm would suggest that he that was something he wanted but</p>	6:08

## APPENDIX I

		maybe he was irritated by his own erm incapacity to just ask for affection.	
20	Ms Lareina	And also maybe it brings his stuff back about his mum because I think he like he in conversation he will always say how much he loves his mum so I think he finds that hard to hold in his head that he loves his mum and I think he just despises and hates her in his mind as well and he probably feels like that towards me that I'm setting a boundary and he's furious but he probably wants to you know be alright with me as well err he can't put the two he can't put the your either one or the other.	6:46
21	Observer researcher	Yeah	
22	Ms Lareina	And you can't put the two together I suppose	7:19
23	Observer researcher	Difficult to accept both from being in the same same person	7:22
24	Ms Lareina	He does the same with you doesn't he? (To Ms Farringdon)	7:30
25	Ms Farringdon	Yeah	
26	Ms Lareina	He always wants to be close to you and, erm, but as time's gone by he's more experienced and he's going to want to, you get to know each other and I feel that, I mean, is that what you feel?	7:32
27	Ms Farringdon	Yeah. No. As soon as it's not something not exactly how he wants it he moves away or his whole body language is the complete opposite to what	7:42



Some questions to consider in advance of the review.

1. How might we think about the ways in which this process of observation followed by exploratory sessions has helped or hindered your thinking about the child?

2. In what ways do you think being observed and filmed affected you and the class?

3. What was it like to read the written observations?

4. What was it like to view the filmed observation?

5. Would you do it again?

a. If yes why?

b. If no why?

c. Would you change anything? E.g.

1) Timing of the observations and exploratory sessions

2) Length of the observations and exploratory sessions

3) Format of the exploratory sessions

4) Spacing of observations to exploratory sessions and then review

Many thanks

Anne-Marie