

Assessment Experiences and Access Arrangements for Students with Social, Emotional or Mental Health Needs.

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Thesis Abstract

Background

Examination awarding bodies allow students with specific needs to have access arrangements (AA) (reasonable adjustments) when completing formal assessments; this includes those with social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) needs. There is a paucity of research regarding assessment experiences and AA for students with SEMH needs; the present study seeks to address this gap in the literature.

Methods/Participants

Paper One describes a systematic literature review (SLR) exploring which methods of elicitation are effective for use with children and young people (CYP) with SEMH needs; 61 studies were critically appraised and synthesised. Paper Two is an empirical study, exploring the perceptions and experiences of CYP with SEMH needs in relation to formal assessment experiences; potentially helpful AA are also considered. An in-depth survey method was adopted; semi-structured interviews were undertaken with nine students (aged 14-15) identified as having externalising SEMH needs. Interviews were thematically analysed.

Analysis/Findings:

The findings of the SLR suggest that elements of structure (through questioning or integrated features/resources) may be supportive of elicitation for the SEMH population; the importance of flexibility in tailoring approaches to the individual is also outlined. Paper Two details student perceptions and experiences in relation to formal assessments across three main themes: 'The Exam Event'; 'Preparation for the Exam'; and 'Access Arrangements'. Student views on potentially helpful AA are also detailed.

Conclusion/Implications:

Implications for education professionals are discussed. Considerations practitioners would be advised to make when eliciting the views of CYP with SEMH needs are detailed. The importance of involving students in the decisions made about how they access formal assessments is highlighted. Future research implications are considered, and a dissemination strategy is outlined.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Thesis Introduction

SEMH Categorisation

First introduced within the revised special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice (DfE & DoH, 2015), the SEMH categorisation was defined as follows:

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder. (p. 98)

Whilst it is this definition which guided the conceptualisation of the needs under consideration throughout this thesis, it is noteworthy that the researcher determined to utilise the categorisation of 'social, emotional *or* mental health' needs, rather than 'social, emotional *and* mental health' needs. The researcher acknowledges that the SEMH categorisation is intentionally broad, capturing a range of needs which manifest themselves in a variety of ways. However, the researcher would also assert that individuals may have needs in one or more of these areas, without having needs spanning all three. Sheffield and Morgan (2017) found that students often viewed the SEMH categorisation unfavourably and considered that aspects of it did not apply to them. Thus, the use of '*or*', rather than '*and*' sought to address this, whilst ensuring clarity and transparency about the needs under consideration.

Research Aims and Overall Strategy

The overarching objective of this thesis was to explore the formal educational assessment experiences of students with social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) needs, and which access arrangements (AA) they considered to be potentially helpful. As the intention was to elicit the views of students with SEMH needs, the systematic literature review (SLR)

described in Paper One sought to inform the methods employed during data collection for the empirical research detailed in Paper Two. Paper Three provides a detailed consideration of the implications of the findings before outlining a proposed strategy for their dissemination.

The research question for the SLR was: 'Which methods of elicitation of views are effective for use with children/young people (CYP) with SEMH needs?'. In the context of legislation which outlines the rights of children in freely expressing their views regarding matters affecting them (United Nations, 1989), and the SEMH cohort being a population who are oft 'unheard' (Cefai & Cooper, 2010), this was considered a valuable research endeavour, seeking to provide insight into approaches which may support this population to share their views. The SLR findings directly informed the methods used in the research described in Paper Two. They also contributed to a minor amendment to the interview schedule following the first three interviews as the researcher sought to enhance his evaluation of the methods of elicitation used; he reflected that further 'explicit' evaluation in the form of qualitative feedback from participants would enhance the quality of his reporting.

As is the case with many SLRs, the review contains hallmarks of both aggregation and configuration (Gough et al., 2012). The review sought to identify 'what works' (Gough et al., 2012) and pooled findings before providing recommendations and considerations for researchers and practitioners when seeking to elicit the views of those with SEMH needs. Encompassing only studies from across a five-year period, exclusively garnered from database searches, it is acknowledged the review is non-exhaustive, but it 'provides sufficient cases to explore patterns' (Gough et al., 2012, p. 4).

The critical appraisal of research quality is much debated and there are many examples of frameworks to engage in this process. However, as the focus of the SLR related very specifically to the effectiveness of methods of elicitation within the reported research, the evaluation and description of these methods was the defining criterion when seeking to determine study inclusion. Thus, available frameworks to evaluate the quality of an entire research report had limited utility to the researcher's specific focus and so it was necessary to develop a fit-for-purpose taxonomy to appraise the evaluation of method; this was an

example of a process being tailored to fit with the real world of research practice (Sandelowski et al., 2012). In seeking to ensure a robust administration, a high level of joint evaluation between researcher and research supervisor was undertaken. It is acknowledged that there may be studies, which according to many of the aforementioned frameworks, may be considered 'high-quality' and published in high impact academic journals, which may have been omitted due to the limited evaluation of elicitation methods used. Conversely, almost half of the included studies are doctoral theses; the inclusion and synthesis of this potentially less accessed 'grey' literature is considered a strength of the SLR.

The research questions for Paper Two were:

- With regard to formal assessment, what are the perceptions and experiences of students with externalising needs related to social, emotional or mental health?
- What educational assessment provisions and AA do students with externalising needs related to social, emotional or mental health identify as (potentially) helpful?

The researcher noted that there was a paucity of research into exam experiences and AA for those with SEMH needs; it was hoped that a contribution to addressing this gap in the literature could be made. Indeed, Paper Two provides some rare empirical evidence of how the SEMH population engage with examination events. Furthermore, echoing the findings of Tyrrell and Woods (2018), the findings of Paper Two demonstrate the utility of individual consultation with students regarding AA. Woods et al. (2010) devised and piloted a universal protocol and resources to support students to express their assessment needs and experiences; it is intended that the researcher will be involved in undertaking further research into this protocol along with colleagues from the Assessment Experiences Special Interest Group (AESIG) at the host institution.

Researcher's Professional Background and Relevant Experience

Prior to undertaking professional training in educational psychology, the researcher was the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) of a mainstream secondary school. This experience afforded him the opportunity to work closely with students with SEMH needs, seeking to provide provision and support to allow them to achieve positive outcomes.

Within the SENCo role, the researcher also held responsibility for the coordination/administration of AA across the setting; this provided experience of the demands and challenges within the system (Woods, 2007) but also to observe the impact such provision had on students, both prior to, and during, formal examinations. The researcher also previously worked in a parent advocate role for a local authority (LA) Information Advice and Support Service (IASS), providing information, advice and support for parents of children with additional needs. Within the role, the researcher supported the parents of students with SEMH needs, some of whom faced the prospect of school exclusion. Instances where the needs underpinning behaviour were overlooked or misunderstood were not uncommon (Nash et al., 2016); this highlighted to the researcher the vulnerability of this population. At the inception of the host institution's research commissioning process, the researcher acknowledged that these key influences in his biography contributed to his interest in the research area.

Research Commissioning and Preliminary Study

The research was commissioned an educational psychologist based in the North-West of England who is member of the AESIG at the host institution. The commissioner had previously undertaken research into AA and student views, demonstrating the utility of involving students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in organising their AA (Tyrrell & Woods, 2018). The previous research provided a useful template for the current project and the findings of Papers One and Two complement and elevate the status of this previous research.

The researcher undertook a preliminary study which explored the AA currently being implemented for students with SEMH needs in mainstream secondary schools. Semi-structured interviews with SENCos indicated that adjustments for students who experienced internalising needs such as anxiety were common, but for those with externalising SEMH needs, provision was less prevalent. This finding guided the development of the empirical research detailed in Paper Two, prioritising students with externalising SEMH needs during the recruitment process.

Positioning for Data Access

The research sites for the data gathered in Paper Two were four mainstream secondary schools, drawn from across two LA regions in the North-West of England. One of the LAs was the region in which the researcher was working as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP), but he was not previously known to any of the participating settings; this was a measured consideration based on the potential impact an existing relationship/dual role could have on data collection. Recruitment of research sites was supported through professional links within the AESIG at the host institution.

The researcher's previous experience of working within a mainstream secondary school was beneficial for data access, providing enhanced understanding of the systems operative in such settings; this was helpful when negotiating practicalities with SENCo gatekeepers and facilitated a smooth procedure when meeting with students. It is perhaps also noteworthy that the researcher had a personal and geographical connection to one of the host LAs. Whilst this held potential to influence data collection, on reflection, it was considered that knowledge of the local context may have been supportive of the data gathering process, particularly in relation to the building of 'rapport' during the introductory meeting with students.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the research detailed in Paper Two was obtained from the host institution's Research Ethics Committee. At the inception of the research project, the primary ethical consideration related to whether prospective participants, and indeed their parents/carers, were aware of their SEMH classification. Research suggests that many students with SEMH needs may be unaware of their classification and may view such labels negatively (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Thus, the researcher relied heavily on dialogue with SENCo gatekeepers to ascertain participants' understanding of this. Participant information sheets were bespoke and provided a summary of why each prospective participant had been identified, referencing the specific school interventions accessed related to their needs. To ensure transparency, it was explained to prospective participants that, in schools, these needs are sometimes referred to as 'social, emotional or mental health' needs. It is acknowledged that this may have impacted the recruitment process; some SENCos may

have been understandably hesitant to share details of the research with some prospective participants, based on the potential for a negative response. Whilst no ethical issues arose and no negative implications were presented, it is acknowledged that it is impossible to know the full and future implications for those participating. However, it is hoped that participation in the research was a positive experience for students; direct feedback from those involved suggested that this was the case.

Evaluation of Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Stance

Facca et al. (2020) encourage researchers to carefully consider their role in influencing, shaping and interpreting the accounts provided by children. As there is almost always an adult present when seeking their views, power dynamics are in action, which, in the context of those with SEMH needs, may already be particularly sensitised or imbalanced.

Komulainen (2007, p. 13) argues that 'voice' is a changeable social construction which can be influenced by context, meaning that 'listening to voices' is a difficult endeavour. Thus, attempts to gain the voice of CYP and portray it as 'truth' are problematic (Lane et al., 2019).

It is important for researchers to consider their ontological, epistemological and axiological positioning as this impacts their approach in relation to the questions asked, the methods chosen to investigate, and how data are analysed and reported. Briefly, ontology relates to the nature of reality, whilst epistemology relates to how we gain knowledge of this reality (Cohen et al., 2017). Axiology relates to the values and beliefs held by the researcher and their potential impact upon the research process.

Ontologically, the researcher positions himself as a constructivist, considering that meaning is constructed through interactions (Robson & McCarten, 2016). This perspective asserts that phenomena within the social world are constantly being reviewed and reconstructed by the social actors within; the researcher, as a member of this social world, brings meanings and understanding to the research (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The researcher endeavoured to build 'rapport' with participants and sought to minimise the impact of power within the interview situation. Whilst it is acknowledged that rapport-building does not 'level the playing field' (Facca et al., 2020, p. 7), the researcher ensured that participants understood

that their participation was optional, they had the right to discontinue and leave at any point, and that their views would only be shared with school staff with their explicit permission. These considerations provided an arena in which the researcher sought to share power with participants. However, it is acknowledged that aspects of power and social desirability/wanting to please the researcher may have contributed to some of the views shared being sanitised or censored in some instances.

As the researcher sought to understand the individual experiences of participants, epistemologically, he is most aligned with an interpretivist position. Interpretivism considers that knowledge is gathered through individual interpretations of social phenomena, and thus, what is presented in Paper Two is the researcher's interpretation of participants' interpretation of their experiences (Matthews & Ross, 2010). During data collection, the researcher therefore sought to notice and adopt participant vocabulary, paraphrase where appropriate, and check/seek clarification on his interpretations with participants.

In relation to axiology, the researcher acknowledges that his previous experiences have contributed to the development of a set of values and beliefs which impact the research process. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) the researcher believes that all CYP should have the right to express their views in relation to matters affecting them, and have them taken seriously. Given that students with SEMH needs are overrepresented in school exclusion figures (Department for Education, 2019), and they may be less likely to experience democratic schooling than other students (Sellman, 2009), this belief is particularly acute regarding this population. These views likely influenced the data collection methods; when exploring AA with participants, the researcher employed an open-ended approach to what was considered potentially helpful, being 'needs led' rather than 'provision led', which may have represented a more critical-realist position.

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034310341622>

Paper One: Gathering the Views of Children and Young People with Social, Emotional or Mental Health (SEMH) Needs: A Systematic Literature Review.

This paper was prepared in accordance with the author guidelines for the journal Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (Appendix A); an accompanying letter to the editor of the journal can be found in Appendix B.

Abstract

The views of children and young people with social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) needs are underrepresented in educational research, perhaps due to perceptions that they are difficult to elicit. However, when provided with appropriate opportunities, children and young people with SEMH needs can provide significant insight into their experiences. This systematic literature review sought to determine which methods of elicitation of views are effective for use with this population. Searches of electronic research databases yielded 61 relevant papers which were then critically appraised and synthesised. Findings suggest that elements of structure, through questioning or the use of integrated features such as timelines and visual resources, may be supportive of elicitation; the importance of flexibility in tailoring approaches to individuals is also outlined. The review findings highlight considerations that practitioners would be advised to make when working with children and young people with SEMH needs. Limitations of the review are identified and implications for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, child, views, review

Introduction

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

The revised special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) brought forth the classification of 'social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties' as one of the four broad areas of special educational need (SEN). Replacing the category of 'Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development' and due regard to 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' from the 2001 Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2001), the revised terminology made 'behavioural difficulties' less explicit (Law & Woods, 2018). Notably, behavioural problems themselves were no longer considered a special educational need (Norwich & Eaton, 2015) but instead perhaps suggestive of an underlying mental health need (DfE & DoH, 2015).

SEMH is currently the second highest primary area of need represented in SEN statistics in England, accounting for over 258,000 children and young people (CYP) (DfE, 2022). As such figures represent only those CYP who have an Education, Health and Care plan, or who

access SEN support in their schools, and capture only the 'primary area of need', the true figure of CYP experiencing SEMH difficulties may be significantly higher, especially when there is considerable ambiguity and assumed variability around the attributability of the term (Norwich & Eaton, 2015).

The language and terminology used to describe SEMH needs has varied significantly in recent decades. In the United Kingdom alone, the terms Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD); Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD); and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) have all been used, and now largely superseded, by the SEMH classification. Such a revision may be reflective of a shift in the socio-political context of the day, as services and educationalists seek to understand behaviour in relation to mental health (Cosma & Soni, 2019) and the influence of contextual factors upon CYP (Gray & Woods, 2022), rather than through a within-child lens/ diagnostic framework (Hickinbotham & Soni, 2021).

Research into teacher perspectives of 'disruptive behaviour' found that a majority of teachers consider CYP to be able to 'mostly' control, or have 'total' control, over their behaviour, which perhaps neglects the perspective that behaviour may also convey psychological need (Nash et al., 2016). Teacher perspectives have the potential to impact teacher/student relationships and CYP with SEMH needs may feel misunderstood by teachers and may consider that they hold negative perceptions towards them (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017). Given the failures in investigation of the causes of 'poor behaviour', it is perhaps unsurprising that CYP with SEMH needs are over-represented in statistics relating to school exclusion (DfE, 2019).

Gaining the Views of CYP With SEMH Needs

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) outlines the rights of children, including those with disabilities in freely expressing their views on matters affecting them (Articles 12, 23). In the UK, Section 19 of the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014) highlights the importance of the participation of children and parents in decision making processes and the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) states that local authorities must ensure that CYP and their parents are involved in discussions/decisions about their support and provision. However, the relational issues CYP with SEMH needs may experience with adults may explain why they are less likely to experience 'democratic

schooling' (Sellman, 2009, p. 34) and why their views are significantly underrepresented within educational research (Bagnall et al., 2021).

Although there may be perceptions that the views of CYP with SEMH needs are difficult to elicit, they can and should be captured, as 'pupil voice' may link to perceptions of 'being listened to', which could act as a protective factor in the educational experiences of these CYP (Cosma & Soni, 2019). Thus, it is important for the adults who seek the perspectives of these CYP to give careful consideration to 'how' they listen (Caslin, 2019), considering, or innovating the most effective ways to seek their views (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017), and to avoid practices that may be exclusionary (Dimitrellou & Male, 2020).

Rationale for the Present Study

Whilst there have been published reviews of research which synthesise the views of CYP with SEMH needs, highlighting various methods of elicitation (Hickinbotham & Soni, 2021; Cosma & Soni, 2019; Cefai & Cooper, 2009), they primarily focus on the findings of the studies and the views shared. The focus of the present review will be to specifically consider the methods of elicitation used and how the researcher(s) evaluated their chosen method(s). The review will contribute to the research field by informing considerations of the evaluation of methods of elicitation for CYP with SEMH needs and to the field of professional practice for those working with CYP with SEMH needs by providing an evaluative synthesis of elicitation methods.

Methodology

Review Aims and Process

The research question for the review was:

- Which methods of elicitation of views are effective for use with CYP with SEMH needs?

Five databases were searched (Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA); Education Resources Information Center (ERIC); Web of Science (WoS); PsycINFO; Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS)) during August 2021 and September 2021. The following search terms were combined:

child* OR pupil* OR student* OR" young person*" OR "young people*" OR adolescen*AND

experience* OR view* OR voice* OR perspective* OR participat* OR perception*AND
“social emotional and mental health” OR SEMH OR “behavioural emotional and social
difficulties” OR BESD OR “social emotional and behavioural difficulties” OR SEBD OR
“emotional and behavioural difficulties” OR EBD.

Results were filtered so that only papers made available between 2016¹ and 2021 were included. This yielded 1224 results, which was reduced to 847 with the removal of duplicates. There then followed a process of manual screening to identify papers which contained primary data (views of CYP with SEMH needs). In some cases, SEMH needs were inferred from CYP descriptions. In order to be considered for inclusion, it was necessary for the CYP views gathered by researchers to be integral to the findings of the paper (e.g., views gathered at the end of an intervention solely for ‘social validity’ (Kazdin, 2005) purposes were not included); following this process, 134 papers remained, one of which was unretrievable.

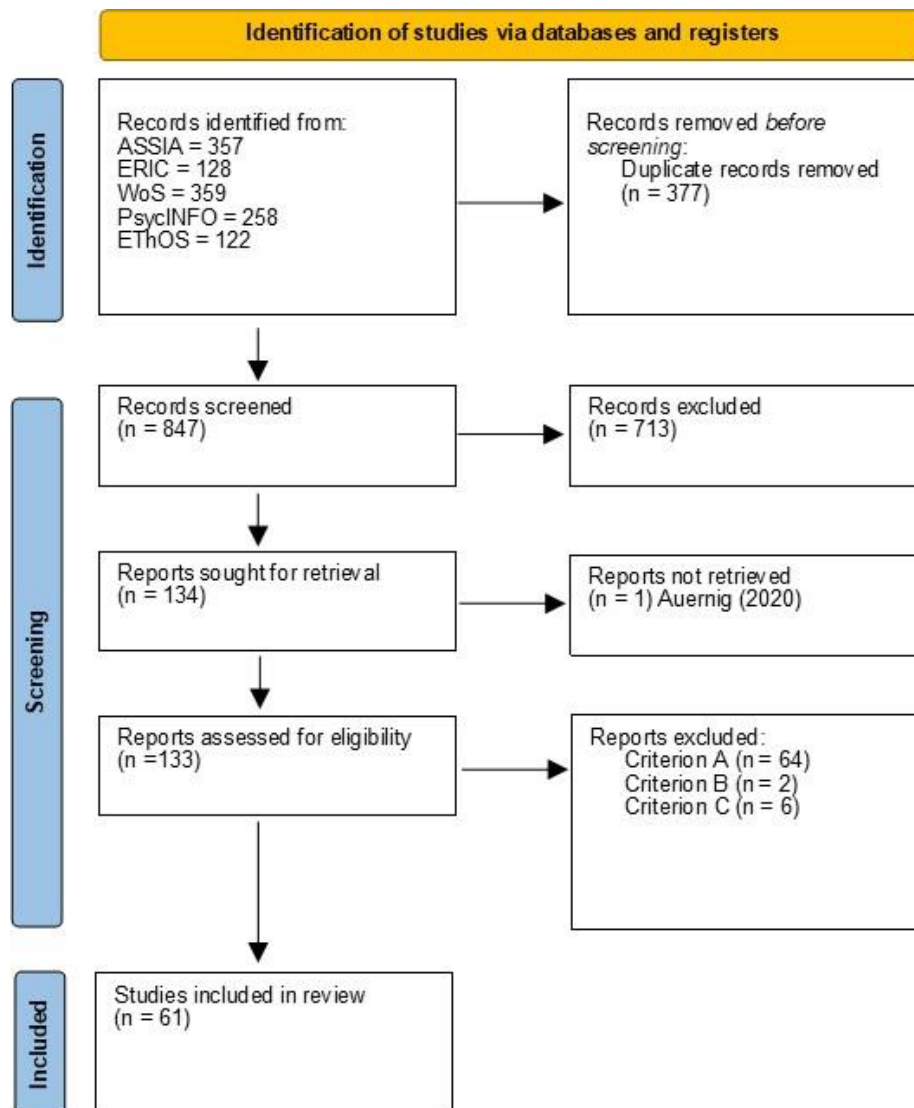
The 133 studies were then subject to further in-depth screening, the focus of which was (Criterion A) the evaluation (and description) of the method of elicitation used. Two descriptive categories were determined: ‘No/Limited Evaluation of method’ and ‘Adequate/Good Evaluation of method’. The taxonomy developed sought explicit evaluation which included (but was not limited to): providing empirical evidence of effectiveness of the method; specific reference to how the method supported elicitation of views; providing comparative reference to other methods; references to attrition, missing data, student refusal/engagement; and qualitative feedback from participants (see Appendix C for further examples). In seeking to ensure this was a robust process, 21 papers (15% of the sample) were jointly evaluated by the researcher and the research supervisor; 12 of these were part of an initial process to ensure reliable operation of the inclusion criteria, whilst others were in cases where the categorisation of the paper was more in question. Following this process, 69 papers remained which were considered to have

¹ Regarding the papers included which are Doctoral Theses, on ten occasions, discrepancies were found between the date reported by online databases/university repositories and the date provided on the document produced by the author. For consistency, the date reported by the author within the document used for the review is reported throughout this paper. This has resulted in one paper from 2015 being included. The papers where a date discrepancy occurred are demarcated with an asterisk within the data table in Appendix D.

‘Adequate/Good Evaluation of method’; a further 8 papers were then removed as the primary data was duplicated in another paper within the sample (Criterion B) (2 papers), or because the participant sample was comprised less than 50% of CYP with SEMH needs (Criterion C) (6 papers). Figure 1 details the process using the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram (Page et al., 2021).

Figure 1

PRISMA reporting flow chart of study identification.



From each of the 61 papers which remained, key information (author; year; country of research; focus of elicitation; participant demographics; method(s) of elicitation; evaluation) was extracted and tabulated (Appendix D). From the researcher’s and research supervisor’s appraisal of the evidence presented within each paper towards the effectiveness of the

elicitation method used, a single broad category label (Positive/Mixed/Negative) was ascribed as an evaluation of the elicitation method(s) used. Whilst it is acknowledged that a 'mixed' category label in isolation may be of limited utility to the reader, the findings section which follows is purposefully detailed and comprehensive, seeking to unpick the aspects of the methods which were both positive and negative. In some of the studies, additional methods to elicit CYP views were used by researchers, but if there was 'No/Limited Evaluation of method' for that aspect, it was not included.

Analysis and Synthesis

Studies using similar methods were grouped; these were then read individually and alongside each other to provide a concise evaluation of each elicitation method. Themes across the evaluations of methods were then identified and are presented for discussion below.

Findings

Overview of the Included Studies

Of the 61 papers identified for inclusion, 33 were conducted in the UK; 13 were undertaken in the USA; three in each of the Netherlands and Malta; two in Israel, Ireland and Canada; and one in each of China (Hong Kong), Belgium and New Zealand. The included papers consisted of 31 peer-reviewed journal articles and 30 doctoral theses/dissertations.

There was significant variability in the number of participants in the included studies; sample sizes ranged from 2 to 272. 28 of the studies included ≤ 10 participants; 40 studies included ≤ 30 participants; and 51 of the studies included ≤ 100 participants. It is noteworthy that in several of the larger samples, not all participants had SEMH needs, though the studies did meet the minimum 50% threshold.

The ages of participants in the included studies ranged from 4-19 years; there were 23 studies with CYP who would be considered to be of Secondary school age in the UK (11-16 years); 10 which included CYP who would be considered of Primary school age (4-11 years); and others bridged age ranges.

Most papers included the views of both male and female participants; nine studies gathered data from only male participants and four studies gathered data from only female

participants. In seven papers, only male/female data are reported (e.g., 32% male); two papers did not report demographic data in relation to gender.

Purposes of elicitation included (but were not limited to): views on school experiences (including Nurture classes, Pupil Referral Units and school exclusion); perspectives of specific school subjects or intervention programmes; perspectives of school belonging or connectedness; relationships with staff members; and views on mental health and well-being.

Methods Used to Elicit Views

Studies Which Used Semi-Structured Interviews. Two studies reported a positive evaluation of this method (Dyce, 2019; Creagh, 2016); four studies reported a mixed evaluation (Wilcox, 2016; Harrison, 2019; Charles-Nelson, 2020; Balampanidou, 2019). Semi-structured interviews were reported to afford flexibility, providing opportunities to: deviate from interview schedules; seek further explanation/clarification; and adapt language to support participants' understanding. Views elicited were described as 'rich' (e.g. Balampanidou, 2019; Charles-Nelson, 2020) and the creation of a safe and personalised environment allowed CYP to use their 'authentic voice' (Dyce, 2019). Wilcox (2016) found a conversational approach supportive of elicitation but recommended the use of a follow-up interview to permit elaboration. However, Balampanidou (2019) reflected that younger CYP found it more difficult to provide comprehensive answers.

Following a pilot study, from which amendments to the interview schedule were made, Creagh (2016) referenced that participants had varying levels of ability and that 'communication issues' potentially impacted responses. Similarly, in a study with Primary school aged children, Balampanidou (2019) reflected that participants struggled to respond to 'Why?' questions and younger children (Year 3) struggled to retrieve information based on past experiences; their responses were uncomprehensive.

In studies where the researcher was known to some participants (through professional roles in the research/educational setting), advantages were cited in relation to trusting relationships already being established (Creagh, 2016) along with challenges including social desirability and power differentials (Harrison, 2019). Charles-Nelson (2020) sought to engage with each CYP in an introductory session, prior to undertaking interviews; this was

not always possible which was considered to have impacted the accounts given. Charles-Nelson (2020) also reflected that a visual aid such as a timeline may have been a useful integrated feature to support the elicitation of views. The section that follows details research which employed such integrated features.

Studies Which Used Semi-Structured Interviews with Integrated Features. Six studies reported a positive evaluation of this method (Dolton et al., 2020; Lapinski, 2019; Brooks, 2016; Jalali & Morgan, 2018; Brickley, 2018; Martin, 2019); five studies reported a mixed evaluation (Leyland, 2016; Nicholson-Roberts, 2019; de Leeuw et al., 2018; McCarthy-Singh, 2019; Quigley, 2016).

11 papers combined semi-structured interviews with supporting integrated features. Following an elicitation protocol interview to build rapport, Leyland (2016) undertook semi-structured interviews and invited participants to share their experiences through creative drawing. Leyland (2016) referenced the flexibility of the semi-structured interview but reported varied levels of engagement with the drawing method.

Dolton et al. (2020) employed 'participatory techniques' ('How I feel about my school' questionnaire, pictorial games and resources) alongside semi-structured interviews to facilitate conversation. With the support of these techniques and an interviewer sensitive to the needs of the individuals, the views elicited were 'articulate and effectively communicated'. de Leeuw et al. (2018) presented scenarios that were made 'more comprehensive' using drawings; although CYP feedback was positive, in light of some surprising findings, it was considered that some CYP may not have felt sufficiently safe to discuss the sensitive topics of victimisation and social exclusion.

Lapinski (2019) conducted four interviews with CYP; the first was a rapport building session, whilst the third employed 'belonging activities' (including mapping places of belonging and scenario activities). Activities were considered helpful in supporting CYP to discuss belonging by depersonalising the concept. However, the practicalities and suitability of undertaking four, one-hour interviews was raised; flexibility was considered essential as some CYP struggled to sustain attention. To support those with short attention spans, Quigley (2016) kept interviews short (maximum 10 minutes); on reflection, the researcher considered that this made the process 'artificial' and yielded many monosyllabic responses.

However, a visual aid was considered effective in supporting communication and CYP were more talkative towards the end. Quigley (2016) also provided CYP with the option to be interviewed individually or with a partner; all chose an individual interview.

Brooks (2016) undertook a series of three semi-structured interviews which incorporated a 'Blob Trees' visual aid (see Wilson & Long, 2018), cartoon vignettes and a visual scaling activity. The integrated features enabled all CYP to participate but it was reflected that, in the second interview, referring back to previous scales, Blob Trees and vignettes, could be counterproductive by presenting distracting prior references, rather than a helpful connection. Nicholson-Roberts (2019) found scaling activities supportive in allowing participants to 'explore their more concrete feelings' around topics, with follow up questions allowing further exploration. However, within the semi-structured interview, the structure may have restricted participants from exploring the issues which were most pertinent, despite relevant conversational diversions being incorporated. The researcher considered that piloting interview schedules with CYP and allocating additional time to build rapport would have been helpful.

In several studies, participants were asked to consider key periods of their lives using a visual timeline activity (sometimes referred to as 'life paths' or 'life journeys'). Broadly, the timelines were used as a discussion aid and whilst predetermined time intervals (e.g., Primary school, Secondary school) were sometimes presented to provide structure (Jalali & Morgan, 2018; Brickley, 2018) there was sufficient flexibility for participants to identify which episodes they wished to focus on. In some cases, CYP were offered the opportunity to create the timeline themselves (McCarthy-Singh, 2019; Martin, 2019). The timelines were effective in the exploration of 'critical moments' in CYP's lives (Brickley, 2018) without the necessity for direct questioning; provided a summary of the interview (Jalali & Morgan, 2018); and opportunity to consider the future/next steps (McCarthy-Singh, 2019). In addition to the timeline, Martin (2019) used a 'Drawing the Ideal Self' technique (see Moran, 2001); the two integrated features were considered accessible and provided 'something to focus on'. A concluding interview to negotiate themes and meanings was convened by Martin (2019), providing additional validation. However, of the three participants in McCarthy-Singh's (2019) study, one chose not to engage with the timeline; another engaged but his literacy difficulties were evident; the third participant found the

process helpful but was reportedly worried about the accuracy and comprehensiveness of her responses. Several of these studies referenced the importance of building rapport with CYP; this was achieved by spending time in settings in advance of obtaining consent (Jalai & Morgan, 2018; Martin, 2019) and scheduling 'rapport building' sessions (McCarthy-Singh, 2019).

Studies Which Used Other Interview Types (Including Those with Integrated Features). Three studies reported a positive evaluation of this method (Tellis-James & Fox, 2016; Thacker, 2017; Stracey, 2020); three studies reported a mixed evaluation (Want, 2020; Phull, 2019; Bar Ilan et al., 2018).

Tellis-James and Fox (2016) also employed a 'life path' timeline activity, alongside an unstructured informant style interview which sought to elicit narratives. With minimal structure imposed, CYP had the 'freedom to tell their story in their own way', which provided 'deeper and richer data' (p. 330). The 'life path' was considered helpful to facilitate thinking, and to help 'attach meaning to their experiences' (p. 340). The importance of developing trust with CYP was also highlighted; this was achieved by 'getting to know the young people on their 'turf' first' (p. 339). Want (2020) and Thacker (2017) used guided narrative interviews alongside a timeline ('life path'). It was considered that the narrative method allowed 'rich exploration and insight' and permitted CYP to share as much/little as they wished which minimised power differentials (Want, 2020); CYP were reported to be 'engaged and willing' to share detailed accounts (Thacker, 2017). However, in both studies, there was a necessity to deviate from the unstructured process, with some CYP needing direction (Want, 2020), and questions being asked to facilitate comparisons between participants (Thacker, 2017). Thus, both researchers reflected that the method, in action, was perhaps more akin to a semi-structured interview, enriched by narration. In both papers, though the visual life path tool was described, there was limited evaluation of it in relation to its effectiveness as a method of elicitation. Stracey (2020) had originally planned to undertake semi-structured interviews with CYP, but following a pilot study, difficulties with rapport-building were highlighted, resulting in a change to an unstructured interview which allowed conversation to focus on the areas CYP wished to discuss. This was combined with 'photovoice methodology'; CYP took photographs to create journals which

provided data and supportive prompts for interviews. The researcher reported that the combined methodology created 'meaningful and insightful idiographic data'.

Two interview studies sought to explore specific constructs. Phull (2019) used an 'Attachment Style Interview for Adolescents' (ASI-AD) which is a semi-structured interview. It provided a 'detailed account', but it was considered that some CYP struggled to articulate their responses and the 'tight structure' may have contributed to some potentially valuable lines of enquiry not being pursued. Bar Ilan et al. (2018) examined the reliability and validity of the Pictorial Interview of Children's Metacognition and Executive Functions (PIC-ME), which is a 44-item ecological pictorial interview. CYP were asked to respond to situations related to executive function and strengths portrayed pictorially. The length of the assessment (30-45 minutes) was considered potentially too long for use in clinical settings, and whilst the Cronbach's α score was high for the total CYP PIC-ME executive function score ($\alpha = .953$), they were 'lower and questionable' across individual scales ($\alpha = .541 - .775$). The authors suggested the lack of consistency may be related to respondents' 'underdeveloped cognitive abilities' and issues with self-monitoring, recommending that parental measures are used to supplement CYP's self-report measures.

Studies Which Used Group Interviews/Focus Groups (Including Those Which Used Other Methods and Integrated Features Alongside). Three studies reported a positive evaluation of this method (Swerts et al., 2019; Cefai & Pizzuto, 2017; Bagnall et al., 2021); one reported a mixed evaluation (Hajdukova et al., 2016); and one reported a negative evaluation (Thomson & Tawell, 2017).

Two studies combined semi-structured interviews with group interviews/focus groups. Hajdukova et al. (2016) found that individual interviews using the 'Interview Guide Approach' (see Patton, 2002) enabled the process to be 'systematic and comprehensive', whilst also remaining 'fairly conversational'. A second individual interview provided further validation, but follow-up focus groups (3-6 CYP) generated limited new data; CYP often repeated statements made in individual interviews. Thomson and Tawell (2017) found that CYP were reluctant to participate in a group interview; there was a possible 'lack of confidence or trust in the social arena of group talk' (p. 24). One CYP reported that it would be 'awkward' but was open to an individual interview. Thus, the researchers amended the methodology and undertook individual interviews. For 8/11 CYP, a drawing activity was also

incorporated which provided a stimulus for discussion during interviews; 5/8 CYP opted to engage in this.

In focus groups convened by Swerts et al. (2019), participants (3-6 per group) 'talked extensively' and shared 'rich information' but the frequency of responses differed across CYP. Cefai and Pizzuto (2017) combined semi-structured focus groups with well-being tasks (collaborative mapping and poster design). CYP viewed their participation positively and although some younger children found it difficult to express themselves in some verbally-mediated tasks, they enjoyed the 'hands on' nature of the activities; older children appreciated being asked about their experiences. Bagnall et al. (2019) used photo elicitation focus groups which were considered effective in providing 'in-depth insight', supporting CYP to construct 'more thoughtful' responses, especially when given time to consider how they presented their views. However, some CYP struggled to put their feelings into language and it was acknowledged that some may have found it difficult to share their feelings around the subject matter (school transition) and may have generalised or masked them.

Studies Which Used Semi-Structured Interviews with Questionnaire Measures.

Positive by individual evaluation (Cockerill, 2019; Price, 2016); Mixed by individual evaluation (Desai, 2015; Hopkins, 2020; Yeager et al., 2021); Positive by combined evaluation (Yeager et al., 2020) Mixed by combined evaluation (Maddalozzo, 2019; Hambidge, 2017).²

Eight papers combined semi-structured interviews with a questionnaire measure; in most cases, this was an existing tool designed to measure a specific construct. Cockerill (2019) considered the semi-structured interviews undertaken positive in allowing CYP to discuss their thoughts and feelings around 'school belonging', with the integrated visual components facilitating discussion and making the process less formal. The interviews were combined with 'The Psychological Sense of School Membership' (PSSM) scale; Cronbach's α for the main scale was .93. Desai (2015) critiqued quantitative measures used (Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM); Five-Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ))

² 'By individual evaluation' refers to the authors providing an evaluation of each of the methods utilised (e.g., semi-structured interview and questionnaire). 'By combined evaluation' refers to the authors providing an evaluation of the methods in combination.

as not being validated for use with all youth populations and referenced CYP's inconsistent and conflicting responses, perhaps attributed to mood and circumstances on the day of completion; the researcher reflected that an accompanying mood-related instrument could have provided an opportunity to measure this. The lack of validity scales within the measures was highlighted and it was suggested that the incorporation of parent or teacher views would provide triangulation. Student journalling (which was not well-received by some CYP) was also used to inform semi-structured interviews.

In Hopkins' (2020) mixed methods design, self-report questionnaires (Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire for Youth 8-Item (AFQ-Y8); Beck Youth Inventories (BYI-2)) were combined with semi-structured interviews. The researcher considered the inclusion of quantitative data essential in minimising researcher bias, but reflected that CYP responses may have been subject to social desirability; items were administered verbally by the researcher. The semi-structured interviews varied in length and in CYP engagement level; some CYP expressed frustration at the questioning, which Hopkins (2020) reflected perhaps should have been piloted.

In some cases, follow-up semi-structured interviews were used to confirm and expand upon the results from the quantitative measures (Yeager et al., 2020; Maddalozzo, 2019; Hambidge, 2017); perhaps disprove them (Hambidge, 2017); or to seek to explore and gain clarification on discrepancies between data sources (Yeager et al., 2021). Hambidge (2017) reflected that, often, psychometric data is insufficiently subtle to detect minor changes in well-being, and gathering of qualitative data was therefore supportive of making evaluative conclusions by presenting CYP's 'self-reported progressions'. Hambidge (2017) reflected on the importance of taking the time to establish a relationship of trust with the CYP, while Yeager et al. (2021) highlighted that had additional trust been developed, or further interviews scheduled, CYP 'may have provided more or different responses'. Price (2016) employed semi-structured interviews alongside a devised questionnaire. Through the adaptation of language and lines of enquiry, which the researcher reflected would not have been possible with questionnaires, the interviews produced 'rich data'. The questionnaire was designed to be 'attractive' using smiley faces (on a 5-point scale). It minimised the need for writing, and reading support was provided; all participants completed the measure.

Studies Which Used Questionnaire Measures. As shown in Table 1, a significant majority of studies reported internal consistency coefficients in their evaluation of questionnaire methods. Whilst there is no clear consensus on what is an acceptable threshold for reliability, in the present study, a ‘positive’ evaluation of the measure is based on the common practice of using $\alpha \geq .70$ as being representative of a reliable instrument (Taber, 2018).

Two studies (Van Loan & Garwood, 2020; Knowles et al., 2020) used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to establish or seek to reaffirm the assumed construct validity of measures. Van Loan and Garwood (2020) reported ‘adequate’ construct validity of their new student version of the Student–Teacher Relationships Scale (STRS), but recommended further research with larger samples be undertaken to seek to further establish this. Knowles et al. (2020) used an adapted version of the Classroom Working Alliance Inventory (CWA) which combined the ‘task’ and ‘goals’ domains, based on suggestion from previous research. ‘Robust’ factor loadings were reported which aligned with previous research and supported the two-factor solution which combined task/goal (Knowles et al., 2020, p757).

Some researchers also reported offering/providing support to CYP in the completion of the measures, but the frequency of such necessity is unclear (Breeman et al., 2018; Granot, 2016). Midgley et al. (2019) found that it was essential to read items from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to younger participants; it was acknowledged that the measure is not validated for CYP below the age of 11. In seeking to minimise the impact of potential literacy difficulties, other researchers also read statements aloud for participants (Hambidge, 2017, (see previous section); Marsh et al., 2019; Williamson et al., 2017). Breeman et al. (2018) did not ask younger participants (Grade 1) to complete the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction due to the developmental stage of their literacy and writing skills. Whilst not individually evaluated, Neville (2017) reflected that the questionnaires administered required understanding and introspection and whilst ‘most’ CYP asked for support when unsure of an item, others may not have done so. It was also noted that CYP were willing to engage in the research some days, but not on others – raising questions about the test-retest reliability of self-report measures with this population.

Following a pilot of materials, Gold (2019) amended the Likert scale and some of the language in the measures used. With regard to the Profile of Mood States questionnaire,

Gold (2019) reflected that CYP may have had difficulties identifying their emotions and interpreting the words presented. Van Loan and Garwood (2020) piloted their questionnaire with students with EBD, in seeking to examine the appropriateness of the instrument; amendments were made to some items. In instances where questionnaires were being specifically devised for the study (Marsh et al., 2019), or new versions of existing measures were being developed (Van Loan & Garwood, 2020), advice was sought from professionals in the field of EBD (Van Loan & Garwood, 2020; Marsh et al., 2019) or from students with EBD (Marsh et al., 2019).

Opportunities for triangulation were highlighted by Knowles et al. (2019) as the CWAI measures parallel student and teacher perspectives. Relatedly, Fung et al. (2019) reflected that since all measures used were self-report, social desirability may have impacted responses and multiple-informant methods of data would be useful for future trials.

Studies Which Used Other Methods. Chiumento et al., (2018): mixed by individual evaluation; Atkinson & Rowley (2019): mixed; de Leeuw et al., (2019): mixed; Camenzuli (2018): positive; Boorman (2016): positive; Hill (2020): mixed by individual evaluation; Moula (2020): positive, mixed by individual evaluation; Pace (2018): positive.

Despite adaptations for theoretical simplification, Chiumento et al. (2018) reported problems of respondent attention span and understanding, and age appropriateness, using the Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWIA). The researchers also used Wellbeing Check Cards with adaptations of simplified language and an emoji Likert scale, though they queried whether CYP were able to respond in relation to 'the last few weeks' rather than feelings at that moment, which would limit its utility to capturing change over time.

A Q methodology approach (see Stephenson, 1953) was used in two studies (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019; de Leeuw et al., 2019). Whilst de Leeuw et al. (2019) considered the approach to 'add value' to the exploration of CYP's perceptions, less than half of CYP elaborated on their sorting. Researchers reflected that this may have been related to younger CYP's difficulties with reflecting on and verbalising their thinking, or due to poor motivation/attention for the activity. Furthermore, Atkinson and Rowley (2019) questioned whether the pre-written statements, and employment of a fixed distribution for sorting, limited CYP in fully expressing their views.

Table 1*Studies which used questionnaire methods.*

Author(s)	Measure (s) used	Reliability coefficients (where provided)	Evaluation
Knowles et al. (2019)	Classroom Working Alliance Inventory (CWA) - adapted	Bond factor ($\alpha = .82$) Task/goal factor ($\alpha = .79$)	Positive
Van Loan & Garwood (2020)	New student version of the Student–Teacher Relationships Scale (STRS)	Three factor structure: Conflict ($\omega = .72$) Closeness ($\omega = .87$) Dependency ($\omega = .65$) Two factor structure: Conflict ($\omega = .81$) Closeness ($\omega = .93$)	Mixed
Granot (2016)	Attachment Security Scale (ASS)	($\alpha = .80$)	Positive
	Children’s Appraisal of Teacher as a Secure Base Scale (CATSBS)	($\alpha = .87$)	Positive
Breeman et al. (2018)	Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI)	($\alpha = .88; .91; .91$) 3 data collection points	Positive
Garwood (2020)	Reader Self-Perception Scale 2	Progress (.91) Physiological States (.90) Observational Comparison (.89) Social Feedback (.84)	Positive
	Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire	Externalizing behavior (.71) Hyper-activity/inattention (.77) Internalizing behavior (.72).	Positive
Kern et al. (2019)	Adapted version of Check & Connect Subject Survey	Talk ($\alpha = .70$) Relationship quality ($\alpha = .94$)	Positive
Wells et al. (2020)	The Self Perception Profile for Children (SPPC)	($\alpha = .82$)	Positive
Thomson (2016)	Inventory of Callous and Unemotional Traits (ICU)	($\alpha = .82$)	Positive

Author(s)	Measure (s) used	Reliability coefficients (where provided)	Evaluation
Marsh et al. (2019)	Likert scale questionnaire created specifically for the study	School bonding ($\alpha = .72$) School attachment ($\alpha = .45$) School engagement ($\alpha = .63$) School climate ($\alpha = .74$).	Mixed
Martin-Storey et al. (2021)	Barratt Impulsivity Scale-II (BIS)	($\alpha = .80$)	Positive
Williamson et al. (2017)	Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ)	Mothers' negative parenting ($\alpha = .68$) Fathers' negative parenting ($\alpha = .64$)	Mixed
Wynne et al. (2016)	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)	($\alpha = .70$)	Positive
	Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale-25 (RCADS)	($\alpha > .91$)	Positive
	Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale-21 (DASS)	($\alpha > .8$ for all subscales)	Positive
	The McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD)	($\alpha > .88$)	Positive
Flynn et al. (2019)	Borderline Symptom List (BSL)	($\alpha = .94$)	Positive
	Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS)	($\alpha = .91$)	Positive
	Beck Depression Inventory – Youth (BDI-Y)	($\alpha = .89$)	Positive
	Questionnaire for Suicidal Ideation (QSI)	($\alpha = .90$)	Positive
	DBT Ways of Coping Checklist (DBT-WCCL)	Frequency of DBT skills used in the last month ($\alpha = .90$) Non-DBT, dysfunctional coping strategies ($\alpha = .80$)	Positive
	State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 Child and Adolescent (STAXI-2)	Trait anger ($\alpha = .85$) Anger expression ($\alpha = .72$)	Positive

Author(s)	Measure (s) used	Reliability coefficients (where provided)	Evaluation
Fung et al. (2019)	Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)	($\alpha = .73$) at baseline	Positive
	Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) for Children and Adolescents	Cognitive reappraisal ($\alpha = .82$) Expressive suppression ($\alpha = .68$)	Mixed
	Emotional Approach Coping Scale	Emotional expression ($\alpha = .84$) Emotional processing $\alpha = .74$	Positive
	Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire for Youth (AFQ-Y8)	($\alpha = .79$) at baseline	Positive
	Rumination subscale of the Children's Response Styles Questionnaire (CRSQ)	($\alpha = .91$) at baseline	Positive
	Heritage language enculturation scale	($\alpha = .87$).	Positive
Neville (2017)	The Resiliency Scale for Children and Adolescents (RSCA)	Not provided	Mixed (reported collectively; see process evaluation)
	Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF)		
	Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM)		
	McGill Friendship Questionnaire- Friendship Function (MFQ-FF)		
Gold (2019)	Profile of Mood States (POMS)	Not provided	Mixed
	Felt security scale (FSS)		Mixed (see process evaluation)
Midgley et al. (2019)	Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire	Not provided	Mixed (see process evaluation)

Two studies used video diaries to elicit views (Camenzuli, 2018; Boorman, 2016). It was considered that by removing the presence of the researcher and allowing CYP to record their views, it was easier for them to 'talk freely'; views elicited were 'poignant' and had 'depth' (Camenzuli, 2018). One of many methods made available by Boorman (2016) was the use of a 'Big Brother Diary Room' for video interviews. This reportedly generated a sense of excitement in CYP and allowed them to review their contributions as they watched them back. Whilst CYP engaged enthusiastically, it should be acknowledged that within the study there were many options provided to CYP in relation to how they shared their views (including digital, visual, and multimedia approaches). Thus, with just two participants, the success of this method may be related to the choice and autonomy provided, rather than the method itself, since Boorman (2016) also explained that flexibility was supportive of engagement. In both studies, follow-up interviews allowed for further clarification and exploration. Video interviews, along with photo elicitation groups, focus groups and interviews, were also utilised by Hill (2020). Interviews produced 'detailed and rich data', but some CYP may have struggled to, or have been reluctant to, articulate their thoughts. Hill (2020) reflected that in the photo elicitation groups, some CYP were overshadowed by others and perhaps did not contribute due to fear of rebuke. The researcher also provided interview transcripts for CYP to check for accuracy, but participants were reluctant to do so; some also referenced their eligibility for adult reading support, but the researcher reflected that introducing additional adults into the research process could have impacted the authenticity of views shared. In what was described as a 'novel development' of the research, some CYP took on the role of 'pupil investigators' and conducted video interviews with other CYP. Although pupil investigators reportedly brought 'rigour' and 'challenge' to participants where they considered responses untruthful, despite training, follow-up questioning was limited.

Moula (2020) combined interviews with arts-based methods reporting that CYP shared a great number of feelings and thoughts in interviews. However, the researcher reflected that it was challenging to interpret all forms of art media. Across methods, member checking was employed, seeking to ensure that interpretations were accurate. However, the researcher acknowledged that the CYP may not have felt comfortable to make known an inaccuracy of interpretation. Pace (2018) used journal writing and drawing to elicit views;

some CYP found it hard to draw or write and it was helpful when guidance was provided through leading statements. CYP were provided choice of how they communicated their ideas in the journals (e.g., stories, bullet points, drawing). However, the researcher noted that participants in the study were self-selecting and had shown interest in using journaling to express themselves; the importance of finding strategies and approaches that work for the individual was highlighted.

Discussion

Whilst most methods of elicitation were positively evaluated, a significant proportion of studies reported a mixed evaluation, providing positive evidence of self-criticality (Stenhouse, 1975). However, only one study reported a negative evaluation of methods, from which the researchers subsequently adapted a group interview to individual interviews. Several researchers referenced pilot studies which led to amendments to interview schedules and questionnaire measures; others reflected that piloting materials may have been beneficial. Some researchers may have undertaken pilot activities which were unreported lest such reporting would be less appealing to potential publishers (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Nevertheless, as issues such as attention span, topic sensitivity and frustration were raised by researchers, despite the time and resource implications, piloting may be a prudent step when working with CYP with SEMH needs.

Over half of the included studies employed an interview method, most of which were semi-structured. There is evidence that the individualised flexibility this method provides aids participant understanding, allows further elaboration or clarification, and permits conversational diversions; however, 'structure' may restrict participants. Unstructured interviews can provide CYP with autonomy to focus on areas important to them though, with this population, clear direction may also be facilitative.

Structure within interviews was also facilitated through integrated features. The visual life path tool provided opportunity for exploration without the need for direct questioning when seeking to explore CYP's 'journeys' over time; Blob Trees and 'Drawing the Ideal Self' are also supportive in opening up, and providing a focus for, discussion. It may be the case that some external focus may be supportive for CYP with SEMH needs, some of whom may have lower self-regulation capacities.

Cefai and Pizzuto (2017) highlight that attempts to gain the voice of CYP with SEMH needs can be potentially disempowering as CYP may not have the requisite skills or confidence to engage with tasks presented; they therefore note the importance of 'child-friendly and emancipatory approaches' (Cefai & Pizzuto, 2017, p255). Although CYP in Cefai and Pizzuto's (2017) study reportedly enjoyed the 'hands on' activities, particularly drawing, in several studies (e.g. Leyland, 2016) evaluations of drawing were more varied, with some CYP choosing not to participate; some CYP may not like drawing, some may consider their abilities in this area limited, and older CYP may consider it an activity more befitting of younger children (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). Pace (2018) reflected on the importance of finding a strategy which works for the individual, and Boorman (2016) provided participants with a range of methods through which to share their views, confirming that choice and autonomy across methods may be an important factor.

Some studies indicated that CYP may have difficulties with understanding or using language in some aspects of the research process (e.g., Cefai & Pizzuto, 2017; Bagnall et al., 2019). Given the established, though sometimes overlooked, links between SEMH needs and language impairment (Hollo et al., 2014), it is notable that Neville (2017) reported some CYP asked for support in reading/understanding a questionnaire item, whilst others did not. This underlines the importance of triangulation of findings, researcher flexibility and piloting of data gathering methods.

Many qualitative studies referenced the importance of developing rapport with CYP. While it is acknowledged that rapport is a key tenet of qualitative interviewing, its impact on the interview process is unclear, perhaps due to it being poorly theorised and conceptualised (Prior, 2018). In the studies reviewed, seeking to establish familiarity with CYP, and engaging in friendly conversation in advance of data gathering, appeared to be positive aspects. In other studies, although rapport was not specifically referenced, the skills and experiences of researchers were highlighted as supportive in eliciting CYP views; one might assume that skills/qualities such as active listening, conveying of respect, genuineness, empathy and acceptance (Rogers, 1957) may be attributes that would be supportive of elicitation.

A common, seemingly positive, evaluation of qualitative methods was that 'rich' data and responses were elicited. However, it is perhaps open to interpretation what is meant by the

term 'rich'. Studies using qualitative methods largely provided comprehensive finding sections with direct quotations and interpretations (allowing the reader to see examples of the data and draw conclusions of their own). However, in seeking to evaluate the method used, terms such as 'detailed', 'comprehensive', 'contextualised', 'interconnected', and 'multifaceted' may provide the reader with a more precise evaluation of the validity of the views elicited.

Most of the studies which used questionnaire methods employed existing, standardised measures; this is not uncommon due to the time and resource required to develop and validate an instrument (Knehta et al., 2019). Researchers often provide a rationale for the use of chosen instruments, based on previous research, with reference to reliability and validity. However, the validity and reliability of an instrument's use within any specific sample may depend upon the similarity of that sample to samples used in previous research. In seeking to evaluate the use of the measure within the context of their study, most researchers reported the Cronbach's alpha for the present research dataset, as a warrant to the internal consistency of sample participants' responses to an instrument or its subscales (Taber, 2018). Two studies also used CFA to establish/reaffirm the assumed construct validity of the measures; this confers an additional level of methodological rigour. Levine et al. (2006, p. 314) consider validity to be a 'process' requiring 'multiple studies and replications'; they encourage the regular use of CFA, even when previous evidence of validity is presented. Thus, examination of the construct validity of quantitative measures using CFA may be advisable, particularly when using the measure with a specific population, and also periodically, as psychological constructs can be seen to vary across social contexts and time.

Strengths and Limitations

Whilst the current review has critically evaluated a substantial body of research and range of elicitation methods, there are methods encountered during the research process which are not included as studies reviewed did not describe and evaluate their methods in sufficient detail. Researchers must make decisions about which aspects of their research they will include within a manuscript for publication within word limits. It is, thus, perhaps unsurprising that almost half of the included studies are doctoral theses, where there may be much greater word space and a specific requirement for explicit critical

reflection/analysis; the inclusion of this tranche of unpublished research is a strength of the current review.

It is acknowledged that when screening papers, Inclusion Criterion A (the evaluation and description of the method of elicitation used), whilst being underpinned by a robust process including a high proportion of joint researcher evaluation, carried an element of judgement. Different thresholds or boundaries could have been chosen by other researchers.

A further potential limitation of the present review process is that the studies considered were garnered solely from database searches; reference harvesting was not employed which may have identified further studies to be considered for inclusion. However, as the focus of the review was on the methods of elicitation used, the likely relevant yield from reference harvesting within a specific topic area would likely not justify the resource required for the process.

Implications for Practice

The review findings provide a bridge between research and practice by highlighting considerations practitioners would be advised to make when seeking to elicit the views of CYP with SEMH needs. Although this review has found evidence that an element of structure may be supportive of elicitation (through questioning or integrated features), providing flexibility and choice should take precedence. Thus, practitioners should have a range of methods available and seek to tailor the approach to the individual. Seeking the views of CYP in relation to not only the intended focus of elicitation, but also the method through which they share their voice, may directly benefit CYP, particularly those with SEMH needs, by conveying respect and acceptance, in turn supporting the development of 'rapport'.

The importance of triangulation when working with this population is a further implication for practitioners. Through multi-method and multi-informant data collection, additional validation of views gathered can be sought; this may be particularly pertinent with reference to the use of closed data collection methods such as quantitative measures, where flexibility is less available, and autonomy may be compromised.

Implications for Future Research

Given the potentially uneven reporting of pilot and aborted approaches, it would be beneficial for the research field if these were included in the description and evaluation of methods of elicitation used. Furthermore, with regard to quantitative measures, in addition to the commonplace reporting of Cronbach's alpha as a measure of reliability, researchers could also usefully provide further evidence of validity (e.g. CFA). The questionnaire process evaluation included by some studies also provides insight into practical and administrative factors arising and could also be usefully provided in future research, especially when working with specific populations.

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Paper Two: Formal Assessment Experiences and Access Arrangements (AA) for Students with Social, Emotional or Mental Health (SEMH) Needs.

This paper was prepared in accordance with the author guidelines for the journal Pastoral Care in Education (Appendix E)

Abstract

Formal examinations are a significant aspect of assessment activity in education, the outcomes of which can have implications for future trajectories. Examination awarding bodies permit students with specific needs to have access arrangements (AA) (reasonable adjustments) when completing formal assessments; this includes students with social, emotional, or mental health (SEMH) needs. The assessment needs of this subgroup, and those with externalising SEMH needs in particular, may be underestimated. This study explores the experiences of students aged 14/15 years with externalising SEMH needs in relation to their formal assessment experiences; their views on potentially helpful AA are also considered. A reflexive thematic analysis was employed to analyse data from semi-structured interviews. Findings indicate that students from this subgroup consider formal assessments to be a significant aspect of upper secondary school life, presenting academic and emotional challenges. All students interviewed had AA in place, but staff/student consultation in relation to their implementation was limited. AA considered potentially helpful included a smaller room with fewer students, extra time, and rest-breaks. The presence of familiar adults was also considered supportive. The utility and legitimacy of consultation with students in relation to their assessment experiences and AA is highlighted. Implications for policy, practice, and future research are considered.

Keywords: Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, access arrangements, examinations

Introduction

Assessment activity in education can be regarded as a spectrum, ranging from informal teacher/student exchanges to high stakes examinations undertaken at the end of educational phases (Broadfoot & Black, 2004). Across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) qualifications are the primary means of assessment for students upon completion of their compulsory secondary education (Brown & Woods, 2022). These qualifications are regarded as having important consequences, representing a pathway into further education and career opportunities (Putwain et al., 2015; Denscombe, 2000; Woods, 2007), making the examination components of such qualifications pressurised and high-stakes (Soares & Woods, 2022; Putwain et al., 2015). Reform of the GCSE examination system in 2017 sought to increase

rigour and make curriculum content more challenging (Burgess & Thomson, 2019); coursework and controlled assessment opportunities were also reduced, with 'terminal examinations' prioritised (Brown & Woods, 2022, p. 52). Such changes contribute to a more pressurised experience for staff and students alike (Soares & Woods, 2020). School league tables and attainment accountability measures may be contributing to a school culture predominated by examination preparation and 'teaching to the test'; this has led some critics to question whether schools are becoming 'exam factories' (Hutchings, 2015). Indeed, students themselves report that the frequency of testing and assessment increases in secondary education (aged 11-16) and by the age of 14, some students perceive that they are tested 'constantly' (Elwood, 2012, p. 504).

In the UK, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) is a membership organisation for examination awarding bodies, providing common administration guidelines. These guidelines include students with specific needs, such as special educational needs (SEN), being permitted to have examination access arrangements (AA), which are reasonable adjustments seeking to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge/understanding, whilst maintaining the integrity of the assessment and without changing its demands (JCQ, 2022a). AA commonly include adjustments to the format in which the assessment is presented; how the student responds; the location in which the assessment is undertaken; and the time allocated for completion (Thompson et al., 2002). Some AA (e.g., 25% extra time) require additional assessment of student need, whilst others (e.g., reader) require supporting evidence and awarding body approval. Some AA, such as the use of a 'prompter' (an adult who is permitted to keep a student focused on the assessment through brief verbal prompts or gestures (JCQ, 2022b)), are delegated to staff within the centre and can be implemented provided they reflect the student's 'normal way of working' (JCQ, 2022a, p. 25). For the 2021-2022 academic year in England, 92.9% of all schools, colleges and other examination centres had awarding body approved AA in place for students; the most commonly approved adjustment was 25% extra time, accounting for 65.3% of all approved AA (Ofqual, 2022).

Students with additional needs related to SEMH are a subgroup for whom AA may be appropriate. The category of SEMH, brought forth in the revised special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice, is a broad term, encompassing 'a wide range of social

and emotional difficulties which may manifest themselves in many ways' (DfE & DoH, 2015, p. 98). Whilst SEMH represents the second highest primary area of SEN (>258,000 students) (DfE, 2022), there is no clear process/threshold for SEMH identification (Norwich & Eaton, 2015), and so it is possible that the true figure is significantly higher. With reference to the social and emotional difficulties experienced, First coined by Achenbach (1966), a distinction between internalising and externalising needs is often made; these relate, respectively, to those who experience conflict within the self and those who experience conflict within the environment (see also Bongers et al. (2003); Yong et al. (2014)). Woods (2007) contends that the assessment needs of students with externalising SEMH, in particular, may be underestimated, as school staff may consider students to be in control of their behaviour, implying that it is a choice, with the needs underpinning the behaviour overlooked or misunderstood (Nash et al., 2016). In studies undertaken by Woods (1998) and Griffiths and Woods (2010), some school staff voiced a degree of scepticism in relation to implementing AA for students with externalising SEMH needs; due to their 'behaviour', they may be considered undeserving of adjustments which could support their engagement with assessments. Though such perceptions may be different in the contemporary educational context, such perceptions suggest that research with this subgroup of students may yield different findings to other areas of SEN.

Whilst there is some literature relating to AA for students with developmental learning difficulties (Woods, 2004; Griffiths & Woods, 2010; Duncan & Purcell, 2017) and autism spectrum disorder (VanBergeijk et al., 2008; Tyrrell & Woods, 2018), there is a currently a paucity of research in relation to those with SEMH needs. Woods et al. (2010) included a group of students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (n=14) who reported attention control difficulties during assessments. All Primary school age (4-11) students with ADHD involved in the study received AA, but only 50% of Secondary age (11-16) did so; this perhaps relates to a perception amongst some school staff of students 'growing out' of such difficulties (Woods, 1998, p. 199). Worryingly, some AA implemented may be detrimental; this has been noted in relation to the use of a 'prompter' (Woods et al., 2010; Woods & Reason, 1999), with suggestion some students may find it distracting. Although this highlights the importance of dialogue with students regarding their AA, Woods et al. (2010) found that 88% of students with AA were not consulted. Article 12 of the United

Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989) outlines the rights of children in freely expressing their views with regard to matters affecting them; in accordance with this, Woods et al. (2019) propose a system of feedback from students regarding their assessment experiences and needs.

Students with SEMH needs are oft 'unheard' (Cefai & Cooper, 2010), but when provided with appropriate opportunities, they can provide valuable insight to their experiences (Caslin, 2019). The present study sought to listen directly to the views of students with externalising SEMH needs with regard to their formal assessment experiences; this included assessments undertaken at the end of a unit of work; at the end of a school term/school year; internal mock/rehearsal examinations; and external examinations. The assessment provisions/AA that students with externalising SEMH needs considered to be potentially helpful were also explored. It is hoped that the findings of the study will contribute to the developing knowledge and research base of best practice in administering AA to those with SEN and externalising SEMH needs specifically.

The research questions explored were:

- With regard to formal assessment, what are the perceptions and experiences of students with externalising needs related to social, emotional or mental health? (Exam Experiences)
- What educational assessment provisions and AA do students with externalising needs related to social, emotional or mental health identify as (potentially) helpful? (Potentially Helpful AA)

Methodology

Participant Recruitment

A convenience-purposive sampling method was employed to recruit four mainstream Secondary schools. The researcher made initial email contact with staff members in the role of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) to provide information, a summary of expectations, and to offer opportunity for further discussion. Seven settings, identified through professional links held by the researcher, were approached; the first four providing agreement to participate were selected. Two settings opted not to participate; reasons cited included not having any students who met the inclusion criteria, and potential time

demands placed upon the SENCo gatekeepers. The researcher also reflected that school staff may have been reluctant for their setting to participate due to the SEMH focus of the research; many students with an SEMH categorisation are unaware of how schools describe their needs (Sheffield & Morgan, 2017) and this may have contributed to a degree of hesitancy. Participating schools were drawn from across two local authority (LA) regions in the North-West of England. Three of the schools were co-educational and one was a single sex school for boys. At the time of data collection, one school was judged as being 'Outstanding' by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted); this setting provided three participants. Two schools were judged as 'Requires Improvement'; the first provided three participants and the second two participants. The final setting had not yet been inspected due to its recent conversion to academy status; one participant was recruited from this school.

The SENCo gatekeepers identified potential participants; the inclusion criteria provided were:

- Year 10 students³ (aged 14-15).
- Primary area of need SEMH (as defined within the register of special educational need held by the setting), with reference to externalising behaviours. The following definition, informed by the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) was provided:

[Identified students] may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include [...] displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.' (p. 98)

³ Whilst students in Year 11 may have had more formal assessment experiences to share, the researcher considered the potential for negative consequences to be greater for those students who were scheduled to undertake terminal examinations within the same academic year. Thus, Year 10 students were prioritised.

Once potential participants were identified, written consent was obtained from parents. SENCo gatekeepers reported that five students approached opted not to participate; this was pleasing as it provided assurance that students were aware that participation was voluntary. Nine students participated (seven male; two female⁴). Such a gender ratio is reflective of the externalising SEMH needs population (Hamblin, 2016), and thus, the sample was representative of the relevant subgroup. Whilst the primary area of need for all participating students was identified as SEMH, in some instances, SENCo gatekeepers highlighted that participating students also had other needs, these included: Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyslexia and Developmental Co-ordination Disorder. Although it was not necessary for students to already have AA in place, all of those selected by the SENCo gatekeepers did so.

Data Collection

The researcher met each student twice. The first session provided opportunity for students to ask questions; to ensure they understood their right to withdraw; to establish familiarity; and to engage in personalised conversation. If they had not already done so, following the first session, students provided their written assent; having spoken to the students directly, this afforded the researcher some assurance that their participation was voluntary and fully informed. The researcher held a personal and geographical connection to one of the host LAs. It was considered that knowledge of the local context may have been supportive of the building of trust, 'rapport' and a sense of shared identity during the introductory meeting with students; this may have been supportive of the elicitation of views. During the second session, an audio recorded semi-structured interview was undertaken; this focused upon perceptions and experiences of formal assessments/examinations and which AA students considered to be potentially helpful (see Appendix F for interview schedule). A card-sort activity (Appendix G), based on that used by Tyrrell (2018), featuring commonly applied AA, was incorporated to facilitate discussion. The flexibility of the interview method allowed: re-wording/re-phrasing to aid student understanding; opportunities for elaboration or clarification; and conversational diversions. Student interview responses were comprehensive and contextualised; interviews ranged from 22 minutes to 48 minutes

⁴ No demographic information was collected from students in relation to this. Accordingly, 'assumed genders' are reported, based on information shared by SENCo gatekeepers.

(mean duration: 37 minutes). Interviews were transcribed verbatim in preparation for analysis.

Feedback from students on the methods used in this research was positive. Students considered that semi-structured interview allowed them to express their thoughts/feelings and they appreciated the direct interaction that this method offered; they felt like someone was listening. They liked that questions could be re-phrased/further explained; and considered the card-sort helpful to provide an external focus. Some students noted that the 1:1 interview was helpful as if others were present, they may have downplayed the difficulties they experience, perhaps due to embarrassment. It is also likely that the initial session, in which familiarity with students was established and personalised conversation was engaged in, helped to allow students to feel at ease with the researcher and the research process; this then allowed them to share their views openly in the subsequent interview.

Data Analysis

The analysis was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis approach, initially using an inductive process and semantic orientation. During data familiarisation, points of analytic interest were discussed between the researcher and research supervisor, before a process of coding was undertaken by the researcher using qualitative data analysis computer software programme NVivo 12. When coding data, the researcher, a former secondary school SENCo, acknowledged and interrogated his experiential knowledge and its impact on the analysis; this subjectivity was not considered problematic, but rather a valued resource within the process (Braun & Clarke, 2021). A coding consultation was undertaken with a postgraduate educational psychology researcher studying at doctoral level, who jointly reviewed four pages of interview transcript; this was not to seek consensus, but to consider interpretations as part of the reflexive process (Byrne, 2021). Following the coding phase, paper-based/manual methods of analysis were utilised to cluster codes in relation to the research questions and themes and sub-themes were developed; these were reviewed, defined and named in collaboration with the research supervisor. Visual representation of the themes developed was produced in the form of thematic maps. Further information on the data analysis process is contained within Appendix H.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the host institution's Research Ethics Committee (Appendix I). Parents and students provided written consent/assent (Appendices J and K) following the review of participant information sheets (Appendices L and M) and opportunities to ask questions. Students were reminded that they could withdraw at any time without detriment to themselves or others. By utilising the SENCo gatekeepers' knowledge of the students' individual circumstances, the potential for negative effects of an ill-timed participant meeting were minimised and the interview schedule was made available for students to review in advance. A trusted member of staff was available during the interviews, should a student become distressed or wish to withdraw their participation, neither of which occurred. In this report, identifiable information in relation to students and their settings has been removed; demographic information provided is purposefully minimal and self-chosen pseudonyms preserve anonymity. During the research process, all information was stored securely in accordance with GDPR regulations.

Findings

The following section provides analyses relating to the two research questions, with embedded data extracts which reflect the essence of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Main themes are demarcated using subheadings, whilst sub-themes are referenced using bold typeface. The term 'exams' will be used to describe 'formal assessments'.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Exam Experiences

Three themes were developed, each of which had a varying number of sub-themes (see Figure 2).

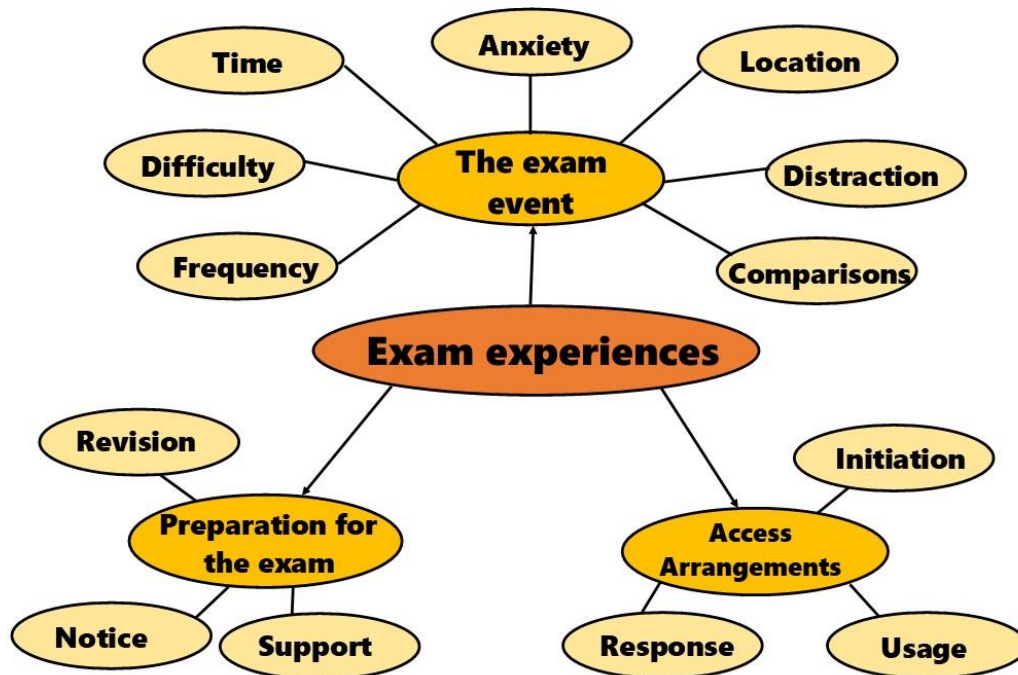
Main Theme: The Exam Event

Students reported that exams were typically convened at the beginning or end of each half-term (every 6-7 weeks) in what some referred to as a '*test week*'. In some curriculum areas, exams were more frequent, during timetabled lessons; these exams typically focused on recently taught content rather than a summative assessment of knowledge/understanding across the programme of study. Dave considered the **frequency** of exams to be '*a lot*' and Lewis referred to them as occurring '*all the time*'.

All students referenced the **difficulty** of exams. Jack, Gabe, and Steven referred to *'struggling'* whilst Dwayne, Dave and Jake suggested they were *'hard'*. Dwayne commented, *'I don't really get it that much'* referencing difficulties with subject knowledge/understanding; Dave reported that he had *'never found a test easy'*.

Figure 2

Exam Experiences – themes and subthemes



Many students referenced the format of exam questions, with *'tick-box'* and *'multiple choice'* questions considered more accessible than those requiring written content; Grace felt reassured by these because *'you know the answer is there'*. Several students highlighted that exams sometimes contained content which had not been taught in the classroom. Dave described the inclusion of this *'new stuff'* as *'madness'*. Steven felt that it was helpful for teachers to make students aware if the exam contained untaught content as this provided reassurance that he was not the only person finding some questions difficult.

Dwayne and Gabe referenced difficulties reading exam questions; in such situations they reported raising their hands to ask an adult to read content to them. Dave commented that he often found reading in exams difficult; in previous years he'd had support with this in exams, but this had since been withdrawn. He also commented on an inconsistency of approach from staff members:

'I always ask... but the teachers say they can't help us or nothing... like some teachers like [Mr X]... he'll read it out for me...but like some teachers... 'I'm not allowed to speak.' And I'm like... 'Well, can't you read it for me? I can't read it.' (Dave)

Most exams were administered within the allocated **time** slot for a timetabled lesson, the duration of which (50-60 minutes) most students considered appropriate. However, Lewis considered it too long; he explained that he often finished exams early and then became distracted and started '*messing*'. Some more formal exams (GCSEs/mocks) had recently been introduced/scheduled which were significantly longer (100+ minutes). Jack expressed concern at such a prospect:

'Normally, they're only like 50 minutes, but I swear these ones are like...an hour and 45.... I don't know what I'm going to do... I get very...agitated if I'm sitting in there for an hour and 50 minutes.'

Dave had experienced an exam which was 105 minutes; he considered this to be too long, reporting difficulties remaining seated and silent:

'I was just sat there clicking my fingers, I can't stay still...it's hard because I couldn't speak or nothing.'

Most students felt that they were able to complete exams in the standard allocated time. However, Steven reported often running out of time. Juliette explained that, upon completion, she liked to read through her answers repeatedly. These two students also referred to staff providing whole cohort time prompts, which could be unhelpful and generate anxiety:

'I'll still freak out even though like I'm almost done... someone goes, 'You've got 10 minutes left,' ...it'll proper freak me out.' (Juliette)

Most students referenced the emotions and feelings of **anxiety** that exam events can provoke, often linked to the perceived implications of underperformance. Students reported feeling '*nervous*' (Lewis and Grace), '*anxious*' (Dwayne) and '*worried*' (Dave). Exams could be '*overwhelming*' (Grace), '*stressful*' (Steven) and sometimes induced '*panic*' (Steven). These feelings largely related to future aspirations such as college/university entry

and employment. Steven also cited the increased importance of mock exams, in the context of the alternative assessment procedures implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some students reported that the **location** for their exams had been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, with classrooms used rather than the exam hall. This aside, most students completed their exams in a smaller room (containing 5-20 students), rather than the exam hall; Grace had recently completed a GCSE exam in an individual room. The provision of a smaller room was largely well received. It was considered '*easier*' (Dwayne), '*a little bit better*' (Gabe), and preferable to '*that massive hall*' (Dave). Juliette felt that being in a smaller room increased her confidence, allowing her to work more efficiently, while Jake explained it was easier to '*focus*' in a smaller room. Following some reflection, Jack felt that a smaller room was preferable to the exam hall, but both were '*bad*'; he preferred the system of completing exams in class groups (due to the Covid-19 pandemic):

'I don't do tests like in the normal hall. I do tests separate and...it's worse really... But...both of them are bad...I'd rather do it...in classrooms, like we're doing it...'

Juliette explained that although many of her exams were completed in a smaller room, for more formal exams (GCSEs/mocks), she was expected to go to the hall as she did not yet have the medical evidence required by the school for more consistent implementation. Conversely, these were the exams which '*stressed*' her more.

Most students cited **distraction** during exams; this included '*daydreaming*' (Grace), looking around/out of the window (Gabe, Dave, Steven), turning around in response to noises (Jack, Dwayne), and turning around to look at other people (Dwayne, Lewis, Grace). Dave, Steven and Jake referred to staff members sometimes providing a prompt (e.g., tap on the desk) if they perceived them to be distracted. Dwayne felt that his distraction was greater in exams for the curriculum subjects he may '*struggle with*'.

Finally, several students explained that, during exams, they often observed peers engaging with the exam content and made **comparisons**, assuming that others were performing better; this could contribute to negative feelings:

'You can see all them writing, they're doing like well better than me... that's what makes it bad about going in the hall.' (Jack)

'I'll be sitting there struggling and I'm seeing these people whizz through the test.' (Steven)

Main Theme: Access Arrangements

All students had experienced adjustments/AA for exams; in some cases, their **initiation** was explained to them, but not always. With regard to students from School 1, Dwayne explained that the provision of a smaller room was instigated through a parental request. His exam paper was also always labelled '25% extra time'; this had never been discussed with him: *'I don't really know much about it...it's just always been on my paper'*. The provision of a smaller room had also not been discussed with Gabe or Jack:

'I just found out I was changing... I just went in the hall, and they said...

'You're not in here, you're in the IT room.' (Gabe)

At School 2, Dave and Steven explained that they had attended a meeting where a group of students were informed that they would be allocated separate rooms and additional time for exams; both students recalled being asked their views on the adjustments. Dave felt this was important because, *'...everyone's just got their own thing innit?'*, suggesting that AA should be tailored to the individual and their specific needs. Lewis believed that he was *'supposed to have extra time or something'* but he consistently finished exams early and had never used it; he did not believe it had ever been discussed with him.

At School 3, Jake believed that he completed his exams in a smaller room due to space issues in the hall; the provision had never been discussed with him. Juliette had initiated the provision of the smaller room herself by approaching a staff member:

'I ran to the head of year, and I was like, '...I don't want to...do a test...like with everyone...' And I just said, 'Can I just sit in a different room?'

At School 4, Grace had completed a recent GCSE exam in an individual room with an invigilator; this was not discussed with her and nor was she aware as to whether this would be the case with future exams: *'I don't know.... I just got to do it in a*

room on my own.'

Despite limited consultation regarding the AA, Gabe's **response** was that it was '*fine*'. However, Jack's response was less positive; he felt that the provision of a separate room was exclusionary:

'When you're in a separate room, it makes you feel like the odd...like...odd one out, you know what I mean?' (Jack)

Dave and Steven, who were asked their views on the adjustments, responded positively; both considered them helpful. Juliette was highly appreciative of the adjustments for some of her exams; she referred to it as an '*advantage*' which isn't afforded to everyone. Grace felt '*fine*' about being in an individual room.

Although several students were allocated 'extra time', **usage** was variable. Gabe and Dwayne typically finished exams in the allocated time, but both could recall an occasion when they had required more time. Dave explained that as most exams were currently scheduled in timetabled lesson slots, he often used extra time in the lesson that followed. However, in the recent exam he completed (105 minutes), he had opted not to use the extra time: '*I get to choose when I need it... I said no... I'd already finished.*' Steven reported often making use of the extra time allocated.

Main Theme: Preparation for the Exam

All students referred to '**revision** lessons' prior to exams. Often, teachers would also provide revision lists, 'past papers' and other revision activities. Juliette explained that some teachers also offered additional revision sessions but her attendance at these was impacted by her relationship with the teacher: '*I don't like my teacher, I don't want to spend more time with him.*' Several students referenced teachers offering additional sessions on an informal basis, encouraging students to attend lunchtime revision support.

Most teachers provided advance **notice** of scheduled exams. However, across settings, and teachers, there was variability; in some cases, there was no/limited notice period:

'Sometimes we don't even get told... Some just say we've got a test the next day...or say, 'This lesson we're doing a test,' (Dave)

Grace said that typically ‘a few days’ notice ‘was provided, while Jake said it was often ‘a couple of weeks’ which was helpful as it allowed time to revise. Juliette explained that she was usually provided with an exam timetable.

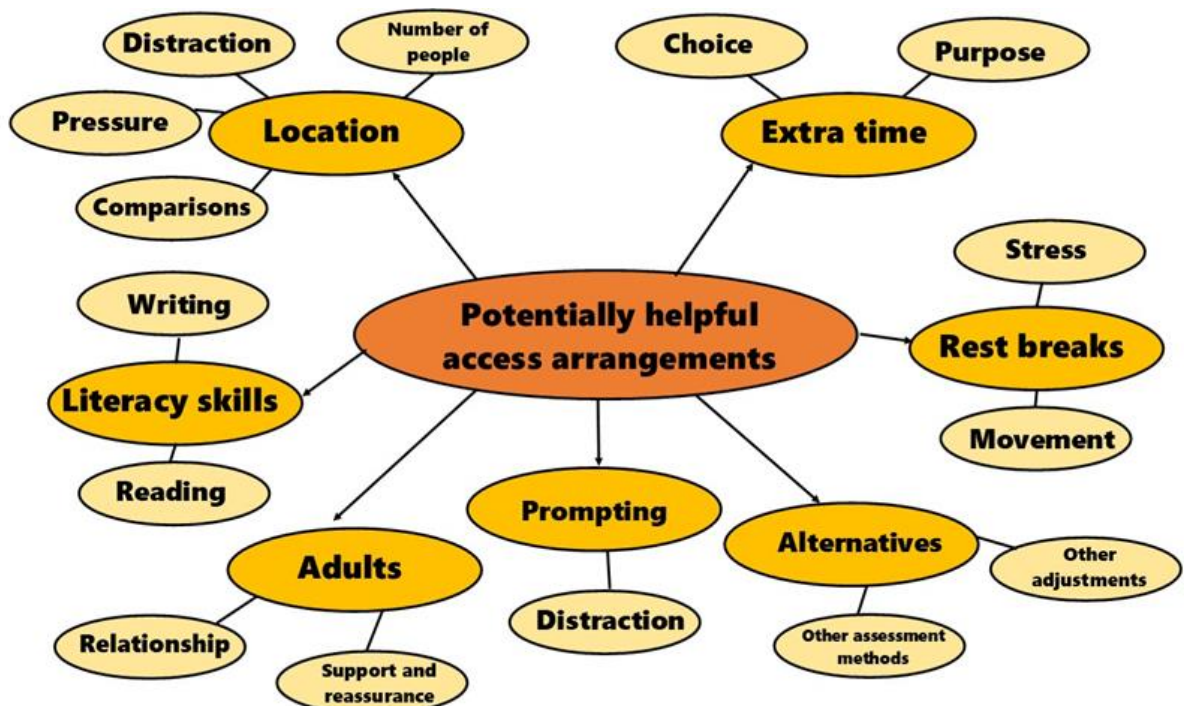
Regarding other types of **support**, students could not recall occasions when emotional support had been provided/offered; several considered it unnecessary or were unsure of how helpful it would be. Juliette felt that the best way staff could support students was to help get them ‘mentally prepared’ through revising curriculum content. Similarly, Grace stated that ‘support’ was largely revision based, but ‘if you went to someone for help, they would... try to calm you down.’

Research Question 2 (RQ2): Potentially Helpful AA

In relation to RQ2, seven themes were developed, each of which had a varying number of sub-themes (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Potentially Helpful AA – themes and subthemes



Main theme: Location

All students considered the provision of a smaller room to be potentially helpful. Gabe felt that the **number of people present** was an important factor; the fewer people, the less the **distraction**. Gabe and Grace both felt they would likely perform best in a room completely

on their own. Lewis and Dwayne considered that with fewer people present, there was less likelihood of *'knowing'* those within the vicinity, meaning they would be less likely to look around or seek to communicate.

Steven, Juliette and Jack also considered a smaller room potentially helpful but this was related to **comparisons** that they would make with peers; with fewer people, fewer comparisons could be drawn.:

(In the exam hall) *'I can see people getting on really, really well and they're like doing things dead quick and I'm like, 'Oh dear...'* (Juliette)

Jack, Steven and Juliette considered that being in a smaller room also helped to relieve some **pressure**:

'I think it's just like there's less...pressure, like I know there is just the same amount, but there's just less because less people in the same room as me.'
(Juliette)

Several students considered a room divider/screen to be potentially helpful, as it would reduce the number of other students visible, reducing distraction and comparisons drawn. Jack and Dwayne also cited their seating position within the room as having an impact on their levels of distraction.

Main theme: Extra Time

Invariably completing exams early, Lewis did not consider the provision of extra time to be potentially helpful, but all other students did. Allowing students **choice** in whether they used the extra time was important. Many students felt that 25% additional time would be sufficient, and some felt that they often would not use it anyway. However, Dave, Steven and Grace considered the more time they were allowed, the better. In relation to the **purpose** of the extra time, it was considered helpful if time had been lost due to distraction (Dwayne); for processing/organising information and thinking of things to write (Steven); and for additional checking of work (Juliette).

Main theme: Rest Breaks

Apart from Dwayne, all students considered rest breaks to be potentially helpful. Gabe and Jake felt that this adjustment would help to reduce the **stress** of the exam:

'...help me calm down... take a breather...if I got stressed out....' (Jake)

Dave, Lewis, Grace and Juliette felt that a rest break involving **movement** (leaving the room) would be helpful. Dave explained that he had an 'exit pass' to allow him a movement break during lessons and Lewis was permitted to move around in the classroom, but these adjustments were not reflected in exam situations:

'I need that... that's what I've got my exit pass for...I'd rather use it in my test, but ... when I finished. I said, 'Can I use my pass?' And she said no.'

(Dave)

The duration of the rest break considered helpful ranged from '*a minute or two*' (Gabe) to '*ten minutes*' (Dave). Most students felt that one rest break would be sufficient, but in longer exams, perhaps two would be better.

Main Theme: Literacy Skills

Most students felt that support with **reading** would be helpful; Dwayne, Gabe and Steven explained that when someone else read a question aloud, it seemed to make more sense. Jack agreed but explained that he doesn't like other people helping him, and instead suggested that a computer reader would be preferable; several other students felt that this would be irritating due to the computerised voice. Dave said he often found reading '*hard*'; he reported that there had been exams when he felt that difficulties with reading had limited his outcomes.

Dave explained that in the classroom, he often has support with **writing**/scribing his responses, but this was not implemented for exams; he considered that it would be helpful. Both Steven and Grace felt that they were more competent providing verbal responses and having someone scribe these for them would be beneficial. Jack also felt that a scribe would be '*good*' but referenced the importance of being independent:

'It'd be good, but you've got to learn to do stuff on your own... you can't get...other people to do it all your life, can you?'

Most students also felt that the use of a word processor would be helpful, rather than writing; many considered this to be '*easier*'.

Main Theme: Prompting

Several students explained that having someone to prompt them back onto the task in the event of **distraction** would be helpful. Steven also suggested it would be useful to encourage him to move on to the next question when he became '*stuck*'. However, Lewis and Juliette said a prompter would frustrate them.

Main Theme: Adults

Most students felt that familiar adults, with whom they enjoyed a positive **relationship**, being present prior to, or during, the exam would be helpful. Dwyane suggested he would feel '*more comfortable*' with familiar staff rather than having '*strangers*' invigilate. Gabe felt that it would be easier to put his hand up to ask for support if the adults present were familiar. Some students felt that familiar adults could provide **support and reassurance**; Juliette commented that the staff members would not have to say or do anything, their mere presence would increase her confidence. However, Grace suggested that if the staff members present were familiar, it could be distracting, as she would likely '*start talking to them.*'

Main Theme: Alternatives

Students cited **other adjustments** that they considered potentially helpful which included:

- Ear plugs/ear defenders (Jack, Gabe, Jake, Juliette)
- Make the tests easier (Jack)
- Crib/key facts sheet (Juliette)
- Comfortable chairs (Juliette)
- Dark room with individual desk light (Juliette)
- Listening to music (Dwayne, Juliette)
- Reader pen (Dave)
- Leaving early/upon completion (Lewis)

Some students highlighted **other assessment methods** considered preferable to exams. Programmes of study which used '*assignments*' or '*coursework*' to assess knowledge/understanding were positively viewed as they relied less on remembering content (Grace) and were completed over a period of weeks (Grace, Dave). Juliette liked

the assessment methods in Art, where students have '*10 hours... from lesson to lesson*' to demonstrate their ability. She also positively cited assessment methods in other countries where students may be permitted to use their notes/books to complete exams. Dave suggested that opportunities to re-sit exams were positive, citing an example where he achieved a '*pass*' but hoped to obtain a '*merit*' next time.

Discussion

This research has listened directly to the views of students with externalising SEMH needs regarding their formal assessment experiences and AA, providing some rare empirical evidence of how this subgroup engages with examination events. Whilst the researcher endorses Komulainen's (2007) stance that voice is a changeable social construction which is influenced by context, and attempts to gain the voice of students and portray it as 'truth' are problematic (Lane et al., 2019), the researcher would assert that the introductory sessions with participants was supportive in developing trust and 'rapport'. Whilst this may have not achieved 'truth' or 'authenticity', a complex understanding of the subject under consideration was obtained (Spyrou, 2011) and it is considered that the development of trust was supportive in ensuring that students did not seek to sanitise or censor their views.

Within the present study, students commented to the effect that exams occurred too frequently and were a significant aspect of upper secondary school life. For most, Year 10 represented the first occasion that they were faced with a 'full' mock or GCSE examination, the difficulty and duration of which presented academic and emotional challenges, especially when they contained unfamiliar content. Students reported anxiety in advance of exams in relation to perceived implications of underperformance. However, anxiety within the exam event itself was also referenced, as students made comparisons with peers, perceiving others to be performing better; this is a seemingly novel finding. All students who participated had AA in place. The provision of a smaller room with fewer students was the most common AA, helping to reduce peer comparisons and lessening opportunities for distraction, so being perceived to be a less pressurised environment. The provision of extra time was considered potentially helpful, as were rest-breaks and having 'familiar adults' present in the exam; the potential use of a prompter received mixed appraisals. Students were not commonly consulted about the AA implemented for them; some noted that AA should be tailored to the individual and their specific needs. Teacher-led revision

opportunities were considered the most helpful support for exams that school staff could provide. More generally, the positive evaluation of the research methods used in this study may be useful for other researchers who seek to elicit the views of students with SEMH needs.

Caslin (2019) asserts that if students with SEMH needs are provided with appropriate opportunities to 'be heard', they can provide valuable insight to their experiences; the present study supports this assertion. Although most students reported never to have previously been asked about their assessment experiences/AA, the views shared highlight the utility and legitimacy of consultation with students regarding these matters.

Unfortunately, there is currently an absence of a systematic process for gathering the views of student stakeholders (Woods et al., 2018); whilst participatory rights in education more generally may have progressed in recent decades, in accordance with the UNCRC (Woods et al., 2019), such processes in relation to student assessment needs are perhaps lagging behind (Woods et al., 2018). Following on from UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA), Woods et al. (2019) propose 'rights respecting educational assessment', a key component of which would include the gathering, reporting and utilisation of mass feedback from all student stakeholders. The views shared by students within the present study suggest that this would be a useful enterprise, at the level of the individual, the school, awarding bodies and regulators.

The management and administration of AA within schools can be complex to navigate and there are significant resource implications. Many school staff with such responsibilities consider the system to be unmanageable (Woods et al., 2018; McGhee & Masterson, 2022) and gathering additional feedback carries further resource implications (Woods et al., 2019). In the present study, most of the students who had AA assigned reported not to have been consulted prior to their implementation. Whilst all students accepted the adjustments, Jack considered the provision of a smaller room to be exclusionary; this perhaps illustrates how lack of effective service user engagement may act counterproductively. Woods et al. (2010) cite examples of AA being implemented which were potentially detrimental, noting that students may be reluctant to accept AA because of feelings of shame and embarrassment; similarly, Griffiths and Woods (2010) report examples of students refusing AA in relation to reading support because they wished to remain in the exam hall.

The JCQ highlights that ‘learners should be fully involved in any decisions about adjustments/adaptations’ (JCQ, 2022a, p. 17). Although ‘fully involved’ is perhaps ambiguous, it may be reasonable to assume that consultation with students prior to AA implementation would be an appropriate step. Hipkiss et al. (2021, p.52) conclude that AA, generally, may not be easily ‘amenable to prediction’; the present findings suggest that this conclusion may be particularly relevant for the SEMH sub-population, rendering student consultation essential. Skerrit et al. (2021) note that teachers are often surprised by the insight students can provide when undertaking student voice activities with researchers. Thus, practitioners such as educational psychologists may be appropriately positioned to offer guidance/training to school staff on effective methods to elicit the views of students, including those from within specific student subgroups; and to provide consultation regarding how to act upon/utilise such student feedback. Given the potential for embarrassment, staff/student AA consultation may be most effective on a 1:1 basis, with a trusted, and appropriately trained, school staff member. This would also provide opportunity for school staff to explain possible AA to students, to help them to manage ambivalence, and support them in the development of a more agentic view. Such dialogue may be supportive in building trust with, and conveying respect for, students (Cook-Sather, 2006; Woods et al., 2019); these steps may be particularly pertinent for students with SEMH needs, as they are reported to often feel ‘unheard’ (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). Woods et al. (2010) devised and piloted a universal protocol and Assessment Needs Toolkit (ANT) which was utilised in allowing students to express their assessment needs and experiences. The present study, and that of Tyrrell and Woods (2018), further demonstrate the utility of individual consultation with students regarding AA. Although the subgroups and methodologies in these two studies differed, there is perhaps sufficient commonality of findings to suggest that future research into the development of a universal protocol and toolkit to gather the views of students regarding AA, would be a useful endeavour.

The JCQ (2022a) also suggests that teaching staff should be involved in the implementation of AA to ensure that adjustments reflect a student’s ‘normal way of working’ in the classroom. In the present study, several examples were noted where students had access to supportive classroom provisions (e.g., reader, movement breaks, scribe), but these were not to their knowledge (perhaps, as yet) in place for exams. Whilst AA implementation may,

primarily, be the responsibility of the SENCo, the most effective processes are likely those which involve teaching staff providing information about 'normal way of working'; relatedly, Hipkiss (2018) highlights the importance of staff awareness training in relation to AA.

In this research, students reported perceptions that exams occurred too frequently. This is perhaps surprising in the context of 2017 GCSE Reforms that brought reductions in modular examinations and prioritisation of 'terminal examinations' (Burgess & Thompson, 2019). It is possible that the perceptions of students with SEMH needs reported in the present study relate to the level of 'in-house' testing being utilised in schools, seeking to consolidate learning throughout the programme of study and to provide familiarity with 'exam-style' questions. Whilst these opportunities may be beneficial for some students, others prefer to benefit from such exposure in the context of classroom learning (Putwain, 2009), which may be particularly the case for students with SEMH.

In this research, students cited 'stress', 'worry' and 'anxiety' in advance of exams; such experiences are commonly identified as aspects of 'test anxiety' (Putwain et al., 2022). In a study by Putwain and Daly (2014), from a sample of 2,435 students from Year 10 and Year 11, 16.4% reported experiencing high levels of test anxiety, demonstrating the prevalence of the issue. Echoing the findings of Denscombe (2000) and Putwain (2009), students in the present study expressed concern related to the perceived impact of underperformance on future aspirations. They were unsure of how school staff could support them with managing these feelings. Some considered that school staff could best support by providing revision opportunities, preparing them through familiarity with examination syllabus content and 'exam style' questions; such practical support may indirectly reduce test anxiety (Putwain, 2008). However, there may also be a necessity for schools to look beyond syllabus content and revision techniques to provide structured emotional support in relation to test anxiety. There is evidence that intervention programmes can reduce test anxiety (e.g., Brown et al., 2022; Soares & Woods, 2022; Putwain & von der Embse, 2021) and with appropriate training, school staff could deliver such interventions (Putwain et al., 2022).

Limitations

As the recruitment of participants was achieved through SENCo gatekeepers, there is a potential that some students, whose views may have been harder to reach, may have been omitted. Furthermore, although it was not a requirement for participation, all students

selected by SENCo gatekeepers had AA in place; this may not be wholly representative of the externalising SEMH needs subgroup. The small sample size, with students recruited from four settings, across two LA regions, may limit the transferability of findings from this research. However, the characterisation of the sample provided, along with the comprehensive and well-described data gathering methods, facilitate transferability inferences and allow the reader to critically evaluate the likely match to students in other settings (Shenton, 2004).

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Paper Three: The Dissemination of Evidence to Professional Practice

Introduction

This paper will commence by considering the concepts of evidence-based practice (EBP) and practice-based evidence (PBE) within the context of educational psychologists (EPs) as scientist practitioners (section A). There will then follow an overview of dissemination of research which will include discussion on evaluating the impact of research undertaken (section B). The paper will then consider the implications of the research presented in Papers One and Two (section C) before a proposed strategy for the dissemination of the research will be presented (section D).

Section A: Evidence-Based Practice

EPs as Scientist Practitioners

In recent decades, there has been an acknowledgement that the role of EPs combines the 'pragmatic and the scientific' through the use of the scientist-practitioner model (Fallon et al., 2010, p. 3). This is further affirmed by guidelines outlined by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for practitioner psychologists, who detail that EPs should be able to use professional and research skills based on a scientist practitioner model (HCPC, 2015). In 2006, the training route for EPs transitioned to a three-year doctoral level qualification; one of the perceived benefits of this shift was considered to be the enhanced links between theory/research and practice, with new members of the profession being equipped with research skills and orientation (Cameron et al., 2008). Indeed, the reformed pathway into the profession required trainees to undertake research within their field, meaning that, in accordance with the scientist practitioner model, EPs were both consumer and producer of research (Crane & Hafen, 2002). According to Jones and Mehr (2007), consumers of research will evaluate, and as appropriate, incorporate relevant research into their professional practice; this is a key tenet of the scientist-practitioner model.

Evidence-Based Practice

EBP has its roots in the field of medicine (Frederickson, 2002) and has been adopted by a number of other professional groups, seeking to justify professional practice against a political landscape of providing consistency within, and improving, public services (Fox, 2002). In recent decades, despite changes of government, policy and legislation has highlighted the necessity for education professionals to use, and be guided by, evidence

(O'Hare, 2015). These movements are reflected in the standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists, where there is a requirement to 'be able to engage in evidence-based and evidence-informed practice'; also, there are also further specific references for educational psychologists who are expected to understand evidence related psychological intervention (HCPC, 2015, p. 12).

Within the field of psychology, the American Psychological Association (APA) defines EBP as 'the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences' (APA, 2006, p.273). The use of the term 'best available research' perhaps relates to the notion that research varies in quality and can be appraised in accordance with a hierarchy; one such has been developed in the field of medicine (Frederickson, 2002). Within this hierarchy, the gold standard of research is considered to be several systematic reviews of randomised control trials (RCTs); less favourably viewed evidence might include non-experimental descriptive studies and opinions provided by those with clinical experience (Frederickson, 2002). However, Frederickson (2002) asserts that such a hierarchy may not have the same applicability and utility within the field of educational psychology and the use of RCTs to evaluate real world interventions may present both practical and ethical challenges. Harrington (2001) makes the distinction between 'efficacy' and 'effectiveness' (p. 65). Whilst the former may be determined through RCTs, the effectiveness within a real-life context, may be more questionable as the ecological conditions found within schools are unlikely to reflect the research laboratory (Stoiber & Waas, 2002). Thus, professional expertise should be integrated with available evidence when seeking to determine its relevance and applicability in a given context (Frederickson, 2002); there will also be occasions where the availability of research is limited (Dunsmuir et al., 2009). Indeed, Fox (2002) asserts that whilst research evidence is a key tenet of EBP, professional experience and the values of the client should also combine to form a wider platform upon which EP practice is based.

Practice-Based Evidence

Barkham and Margison (2007) define the use of PBE as:

the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current evidence drawn from practice settings in making decisions about the care of individual patients. [The use of] Practice-

based evidence means integrating both individual clinical expertise and service-level parameters with the best available evidence drawn from rigorous research activity carried out in routine clinical settings. (p. 446)

PBE is garnered from within professional practice, and it is therefore contextualised and has high external validity. As ‘research’ is considered one of the key functions of EP work (Fallon et al., 2010), these practitioners are appropriately positioned to undertake practice-based research which can enhance the evidence base of an intervention/approach. The differing approaches of EBP and PBE can complement each other, and in combination, create a model of practice which is ‘both rigorous and relevant’ (Barkham & Mellor-Clark, p. 323). In the context of educational psychology, O’Hare (2015) notes that a more holistic understanding of ‘evidence’ might be required. A conceptualisation of evidence as broader than research alone, will support EPs to draw on a range of ‘legitimate sources of evidence’ which includes practitioner experience and expertise, evidence from within the local context, and evidence provided by those affected (O’Hare, 2015). Thus, the researcher would assert that rather than being considered a dichotomy, PBE may sit within EBP as one of several types of evidence which can support professional decision-making. Referring back to Harrington’s (2001) distinction between efficacy and effectiveness, although RCTs may provide evidence that an intervention ‘can’ work, PBE may be able to consider whether it is effective in a given context and with a specific subpopulation. Indeed, rather than focusing on a hierarchy of research, acknowledging that different research designs have utility in seeking to answer different questions (APA, 2005), and evaluating the research in the context of the situation presented, may be most aligned with the role of the scientist-practitioner.

Evidence-Based Practice and the Elicitation of Views Within the SEMH Subgroup

As noted by Bagnall et al. (2021), despite the SEMH subgroup population growing, the views of this cohort are underrepresented within educational research. The synthesis provided in Paper One seeks to contribute to the evidence base in this area and supports Cosma and Soni’s (2019) assertion that despite perceived difficulties, the views of students with SEMH needs can be elicited. The synthesis suggests that the most appropriate methods of elicitation for this subgroup may not be easily amenable to prediction and therefore research findings alone may not be sufficient ‘evidence’ to determine the most appropriate

methods of elicitation in a given context. Thus, gathering ‘evidence’ on elicitation methods from those from within the situation (O’Hare, 2015), including teachers, parents and students themselves, may be a well-advised step. In relation to Paper Two, the findings present some rare empirical evidence of how the SEMH subgroup engage with formal assessments.

Section B: Research Dissemination

Effective Dissemination of Research

Dissemination of research is an integral component in the development of EBP; without dissemination, research might be considered a fruitless and potentially costly pursuit (Derman & Jaeger, 2018). Acknowledging its close relationships with concepts such as ‘diffusion’ and ‘knowledge transfer’, Wilson et al. (2010a) define dissemination as:

a planned process that involves consideration of target audiences and the settings in which research findings are to be received and, where appropriate, communicating and interacting with wider policy and health service audiences in ways that will facilitate research uptake in decision-making processes and practice. (p. 2)

Tripathy et al. (2017) note that even the best research ‘does not find an audience on its own’ (p. 10) and thus, it is essential that a strategy to share findings is carefully considered, developed and actioned.

Brownson et al. (2018) note that there exists a research-practice gap which they attribute to ineffective dissemination. Keen and Todres (2007) question whether nonchalance is a contributing factor, with research sometimes left to ‘remain on shelves’ (p. 1); indeed, researchers may be passive in relation to the process of dissemination (Brownson et al., 2018). Despite this, many researchers do value and are committed to dissemination but would benefit from additional guidance on how to plan and action an effective strategy (Wilson et al. 2010b). With reference to educational psychology, in the UK, those seeking to enter the profession do so via doctoral level training programmes. Upon completion, newly qualified EPs re-enter the world of employment and thus, dissemination of research findings may be deferred, delayed or discontinued due to personal and professional demands. Such is the importance of dissemination, some doctoral programme institutions include

requirements that research be prepared as a manuscript for publication, along with a strategy for dissemination being outlined.

In a study undertaken by Wilson et al. (2010b), principal investigators (n= 485) were surveyed regarding their dissemination practice. The most common communication channel employed was that of academic journals (98%), closely followed by conference presentations (96%). However, if the primary objective of dissemination is to achieve impact (Brownson et al., 2018), within the context of education, there may be a necessity to reach beyond platforms of academia and to impact a wider audience. Seeking to disseminate research to a range of audiences may require a degree of 'audience segmentation' (Brownson et al., 2018, p. 104) with issues such as framing the findings for usefulness and accessibility being pertinent factors (Oliver & Cairney, 2019).

Harmsworth et al. (2001) suggest that researchers should consider dissemination a three-level process: dissemination for awareness; dissemination for understanding; and dissemination for action. The first level, dissemination for awareness, is the level which is likely to have the widest reach; at this level, the audience may not require an in-depth understanding of the project or its findings, but their awareness to the project is alerted. This could help to facilitate future signposting to the research and can support 'word of mouth' dissemination (p. 3). At the second level, dissemination for understanding, the audience will be more targeted. The audience at this level is perceived to be those for whom the findings could have direct implications or benefits and they will therefore require a more detailed understanding. The final level, dissemination for action, will reach a smaller population than the two preceding levels. At this level, the audience will require a detailed understanding of the research and may hold positions in which change to practice, based on the findings, can be implemented. Harmsworth et al. (2001) argue that dissemination planning should be considered at the outset of a research project; failure to do so can restrict opportunities to engage potential users of the findings. However, the author would contend that whilst consideration can be given in the early stages of a project, in some instances, it may only be once data is analysed and findings developed that the most appropriate audiences, and relatedly avenues for dissemination, are established.

Wilson et al. (2010a) undertook a scoping review of conceptual/organising frameworks used for dissemination of research. A significant majority of the frameworks included in the study

were underpinned by one, or more, of three theories: Persuasive Communication Matrix (McGuire, 1969, as cited in Wilson et al., 2010a)⁵; Diffusion of Innovations theory (Rogers, 2003); and Social Marketing (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). The most common theoretical underpinning was the Persuasive Communication Matrix which highlights five components: source, message, receiver/recipient, message channel, and message destination (McGuire, 1969, as cited in Aghazadeh et al., 2022). The framework outlined by Harmsworth et al. (2001), was included in the study and, though not explicitly stated, was considered to include three of the five matrix components: message, audience and channel. This framework informs the dissemination strategy detailed later in the present paper.

Evaluating the Impact of Research

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2023) define research impact as the ‘demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy’; this refers to both academic impact, focused on improving understanding, and economic or societal impact, which relates to the direct benefits for the population. They suggest that impact can include: instrumental impact which relates to policy, practice and legislation; conceptual impact which relates to enhancing understanding; and capacity building in relation to technical and personal skill development.

Whilst researchers are actively encouraged to create impact with their findings (Oliver & Cairney, 2019), defining and measuring impact is a complex endeavour (Brownson et al., 2018). Oliver and Cairney (2019) argue that whilst there exists an abundance of material regarding how to create impact with research, they are largely opinion pieces and there is a dearth of empirical evidence in this area. Furthermore, within a research process, different potential stakeholders (e.g., academics, policy makers, practitioners) are likely to have different perspectives of what the essential hallmarks of ‘impact’ are (Brownson et al., 2018).

As academic journals appear to be the most prevalent dissemination route for researchers (Wilson et al., 2010b), quantitative measures such as bibliometrics and citation data may be able to offer researchers an indication of engagement with their research output.

Furthermore, Congleton et al. (2022) suggest that downloads can also offer a measure of

⁵ Secondary citation utilised as unable to access the primary source electronically.

impact, believing that even without citation, reading an article can influence reader's future perspectives and research. However, as noted by Smith et al. (2011), concerns have been raised regarding how accurately such quantitative measures reflect 'user value and impact' in relation to the research (p. 1370). Brownson et al. (2018) also note the emergence of companies, such as Altmetric, that provide users with data in relation to how their research has been cited across other online media, including social media; this perhaps provides researchers with information on how their research is being referenced beyond the academic community. Despite some journal articles now being open access, in relation to educational research, the extent to which education professionals have the time, resource, inclination, or requisite skills to critically appraise and apply such research is questionable. Thus, to achieve instrumental impact, making research relevant and communicating it to those in positions to put it into practice is required. In relation to the findings of Papers One and Two in this thesis, there are clear implications for education professionals working with students with SEMH needs. Thus, in seeking impact which brings about change to practice, it is imperative that a strategy for dissemination carefully considers how this audience might be reached and engaged.

Section C: Research Implications of Papers One and Two

The findings of Papers One and Two have implications for practice; these will now be considered across three levels: implications for the research site, implications at the organisational level, and implications at the professional level.

Implications for the Research Site

The research sites for Paper Two consisted of four mainstream secondary schools in the North-West of England. There were direct and immediate implications for participating students and SENCo gatekeepers. During the initial meeting with students, the researcher explained that a preliminary study had been undertaken where the views of SENCos were gained in relation to the assessment experiences and access arrangements (AA) of students with SEMH needs. However, the researcher informed participants that he believed students themselves to be the experts in their own experiences, and to learn what is beneficial for them, it was important to gain their views directly – allowing them to be heard and understood. This may have supported the conveyance of respect; several students expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to share their views. All students

provided assent for the views shared in relation to AA to be directly communicated with SENCo gatekeepers. Whilst it was made explicit that some of the AA preferences noted and discussed may not be possible or practical within the current setting, upon providing feedback to SENCos, in several instances, it was suggested that changes could be made based on the views shared; this may have subsequently had a positive impact upon the ways in which participants engaged with formal assessments. These conversations with SENCo gatekeepers also raised awareness within the research sites of the benefits and utility of involving students in decision-making in relation to AA and assessment needs.

Implications at the Organisational Level

The findings of Paper One hold significance for education professionals by highlighting considerations which should be made when seeking to elicit the views of students with SEMH needs. Paper One provides evidence that when seeking to gain the views of the SEMH subgroup, elements of structure (through questioning or integrated features) and an external focus (e.g., visual resources) may be supportive of elicitation. However, providing flexibility and choice in relation to how views are shared was the most important factor; this, in particular, has implications for settings who have whole school systems in place for the sharing of 'pupil voice' (e.g., online questionnaires). It is hoped that the findings will support education professionals when seeking to gain the views of students with SEMH needs for purposes such as progress reviews, Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) annual reviews, and in conversations about AA and assessment needs. Seeking the individual perspectives of students regarding how they might share their views may also support staff/student relationships by conveying respect. Relatedly, the positive evaluation of the research methods used in Paper Two may also have implications for education professionals. Students reported that they felt able to share their views authentically as they were engaging with the researcher individually, without the presence of peers; it was suggested that they may have sought to mask/downplay difficulties in more open forum. Thus, when seeking the views of students with SEMH needs, schools may seek to do so individually, particularly when the views sought are in relation to potentially sensitive subject matter.

The finding from Paper Two that students were unsure of how school staff could support them with managing feelings related to exam anxiety perhaps suggests that structured support programmes are not currently in place within the settings sampled. This may have

implications for schools as there is evidence that intervention programmes can reduce test anxiety (e.g., Brown et al., 2022; Soares & Woods, 2022; Putwain & von der Embse, 2021); it may be helpful for school staff to receive training in this area and develop an understanding that exam anxiety is ‘amenable to intervention’ (Putwain et al., 2022, p. 390). At the level of Educational Psychology Services (EPSs), EPs may be appropriately positioned to deliver training on such intervention programmes.

Paper Two also found that supportive classroom practices and provisions implemented (e.g., reader, movement breaks, scribe), were not always reflected in assessment situations. This has implications for schools in relation to the involvement of teaching staff in determining AA, ensuring that adjustments reflect students’ ‘normal way of working’ in the classroom.

Implications at the Professional Level

Whilst it may be perceived that the 2017 GCSE reform which prioritised ‘terminal examinations’ (Burgess & Thompson, 2019) would reduce the number of formal assessments students would engage with, findings from Paper Two suggest that the level of ‘in-house’ testing being utilised in schools is considered excessive by some students. Thus, the findings have implications for policy makers; in seeking to ensure that schools do not become ‘exam factories’ (Hutchings, 2015), they would be well-advised to directly seek the views of a range of student groups when undertaking future reform.

The finding that many students experienced aspects of ‘exam anxiety’ has implications at a policy level. The prevalence of the issue has been raised in previous research (Putwain & Daly, 2014) and the findings of Paper Two suggest that students from within the SEMH subgroup may be particularly susceptible to aspects of exam anxiety. Whilst government agencies such as Ofqual provide blogs and guides in relation to exam pressure (e.g., Keating, 2019; Meadows, 2020), there may be a necessity to go beyond this and incorporate programmes of learning into the secondary school curriculum. Furthermore, EPs may be appropriately placed to provide training for schools in this area, seeking to ensure that there are designated staff members to deliver programmes of targeted support for identified students in relation to exam anxiety (e.g., Soares & Woods, 2022; Brown et al., 2022).

As mentioned previously, the findings of Paper Two highlight the benefits and utility of involving students in decision-making in relation to AA and assessment needs. This, along

with the findings of Paper One, in relation to methods of elicitation for students with SEMH needs, could be incorporated into training for SENCOs. The findings related to methods of elicitation in Paper One also have implications for EPs, who routinely seek to gather the views of students within a holistic assessment process. O'Hare (2015) reports an instance of an EP being able to gain the views of a student, when school staff had 'given up' (p. 215); indeed, EPs are adept at using a range of tools to adapt their practice to facilitate the engagement of students. The findings of Paper One provide some considerations of which EPs should be cognisant when working with members of the SEMH subgroup – specifically in relation to elicitation methods and the importance of triangulation. Other professionals who seek to gain the views of students with SEMH needs could be informed by the findings of Paper One; this might include Ofsted inspectors, who may speak to students from a range of different populations to learn about their school experiences.

The findings of both Papers One and Two provide further evidence that, despite perceived difficulties, when provided with appropriate opportunities, students with SEMH needs can provide considerable insight to their experiences (Caslin, 2019); this has implications for those undertaking future research with this population. Furthermore, in Paper One, the importance of reporting pilot and aborted studies within the dissemination process is highlighted; as noted by Derman and Jaeger (2018), even those approaches with 'less than ideal results can provide new and valuable knowledge' (p. 121).

Section D: Strategy for Promoting and Evaluating the Dissemination and Impact of the Research

The framework outlined by Harmsworth et al. (2001), informs the dissemination strategy outlined in the following section. The strategy follows a three-level process for dissemination (awareness, understanding and action), seeking to maximise the impact of the research and bring about positive change; this is summarised in Table 2 and further detail is provided in the sections which follow.

Table 2*Dissemination strategy*

Level	Aim	Audience	Proposed dissemination activities
Awareness	<p>Develop awareness of effective methods of elicitation of views for students with SEMH needs (Paper One).</p> <p>Develop awareness of the benefits and utility of involving students with SEMH needs in educational decision-making (Paper Two).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionals working with children and young people (e.g., school staff, education professionals/organisations, educational psychologists). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of a magazine article. Presentations and seminars. Sharing of infographics with relevant stakeholder networks. Social media. Word of mouth.
Understanding	<p>Enhance understanding of effective methods of elicitation of views for students with SEMH needs (Paper One).</p> <p>Enhance understanding of the benefits and utility of involving students with SEMH needs in educational decision-making (Paper Two).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School professionals including SENCOs, senior leaders, examination officers and teaching staff. Research sites. Educational psychology services. Researchers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of a magazine article. Dissemination within professional practice. Presentations (including conferences) tailored to specific audiences. Publication in academic journals.
Action	<p>Promote action in relation to incorporating effective methods of elicitation of views into professional practice (Paper One).</p> <p>Promote action in relation to the routine reporting of practical/administrative factors arising when undertaking research (particularly when working with specific populations) (Paper One).</p> <p>Promote action in relation to involving students with SEMH needs in educational decision-making (Paper Two).</p> <p>Promote action in relation to the delivery of training to enhance understanding of exam anxiety in schools (Paper Two).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School professionals including SENCOs, senior leaders and teaching staff. Educational psychology services. Researchers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of a magazine article. Dissemination within professional practice. Presentations (including conferences) tailored to specific audiences. Publication in academic journals.

Dissemination for Awareness

At this level, dissemination will seek to raise awareness of the research undertaken with specific reference to the effective methods of elicitation of views for students with SEMH needs, along with the benefits and utility of involving students in decision-making in relation to AA and formal assessments. Strategies utilised to raise awareness will include: the use of social media; production of a magazine article; presentations; seminars; and through the production of infographics shared with relevant stakeholder networks and fora.

Upon the publication of Papers One and Two, the Twitter social media platform will be used to produce a 'tweet' with a brief outline of the respective papers, along with a link to where the abstract to the paper can be accessed. The 'tweet' will be shared through the account of the educational psychology service (EPS) in which the researcher undertakes professional practice; this has an audience of over 1300 accounts, including those held by schools, SENCos, teachers, EPs, EPSs, and other educational professionals and organisations. This method will disseminate awareness of the findings, providing a brief overview, from which it is anticipated interest may be piqued; this could contribute to further engagement with the researcher or word-of-mouth dissemination.

SEN magazine is the UK's leading journal for Special Educational Needs, providing articles written by specialists in the field. At the time of writing, the researcher was engaging in dialogue with members of the editorial team for the magazine, with a view to producing an article incorporating findings from across both Paper One and Paper Two. The magazine is accessed by many SENCos and other education professionals, and whilst the article may not be read/of interest to all, its presence within the publication will raise awareness of the research and professionals may be refer back to it at a later date, if/when its utility is more relevant to their practice.

Awareness of the research findings will also be disseminated through seminars and presentations. The researcher has presented a seminar to a group of 24 trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) as part of their Doctorate level professional training; this included discussion of Paper Two, including some of the key findings. The presentation contributed to increased awareness of the research being undertaken and may contribute to enhanced engagement with the research once published. The researcher will also seek to engage with

the SENCo networks within the two local authorities from which the research sites were drawn. Should leaders within the networks consider it appropriate, a presentation of the key findings and implications for school professionals will be prepared and presented. It is also intended that infographics (see Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2016) summarising the research findings will be produced, which can be circulated through the online fora of the two host local authorities; these can also be shared with SENCo fora with wider reach, such as the NASEN SENCo forum, which has international membership.

Dissemination for Understanding

At this level, dissemination will seek to engage with audiences who would benefit from a more detailed understanding of the research findings and their implications. Strategies utilised at this level will include: the magazine article; dissemination within professional practice; presentations which are tailored to specific audiences; and publication in academic journals.

The magazine article, along with presentations at SENCo networks, will be tailored to a SENCo audience and will be presented for understanding. Whilst they may not provide the level of detail or academic rigour as a paper presented for journal publication, they will make explicit the utility of involving students with SEMH needs in the decisions made in relation to their education and provide a synthesis of effective methods which could potentially be applied.

All four research sites were informed during the initial phases of the recruitment process that, once the findings of Paper Two were established, the researcher would provide a feedback presentation on the findings in relation to AA and formal assessment experiences. The audience of the presentation will be determined by the individual settings and is anticipated to include SENCos, school senior leaders and examination officers. However, as noted within Paper Two, the most effective processes for AA are likely those which involve teaching staff, and thus, the presentation used for dissemination at individual research sites could seek to reach a wider school audience and will be tailored accordingly.

The researcher will also seek to disseminate findings at conference level; this could take place locally, nationally and potentially internationally. The researcher has put forth a proposal to present the research findings of Paper One and Paper Two to a regional

audience at the North-West Educational Psychology CPD conference in 2023. The audience at the conference will include Principal educational psychologists (PEPs), EPs, TEPs and Assistant EPs; this would provide opportunity to share findings with professionals who work directly with students with SEMH needs. The face-to-face nature of the presentation, and opportunity for questioning and elaboration, will help to facilitate a more detailed understanding for interested parties.

The researcher is a member of the Assessment Experiences Special Interest Group (AESIG) at the host institution, which is comprised of a group of current and former teachers, SENCOs, EPs and TEPs; the group seek to develop and use research about assessment to support schools, teachers and students. During the research process, the researcher regularly briefed the group on the progress of the project and it is intended that a more formal presentation will be undertaken upon completion.

Publication in academic journals will also provide opportunity for dissemination for understanding. Paper One will be submitted to *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, a journal which seeks to cater for a wide range of professionals including teachers, social workers, psychologists and counsellors. All such professionals may seek to gain the views of students with SEMH needs and thus, an in depth understanding of the findings of Paper One may help to facilitate the potential for action and impact. The target journal for Paper Two is *Pastoral Care in Education* which is an international journal aimed at teachers, professionals, researchers and academics. The journal publishes research in relation to contemporary issues in education including social and emotional development, alongside a curriculum focus; such a combination deems it an appropriate outlet for research into formal assessment experiences of students with SEMH needs.

Finally, there is scope for dissemination opportunities to be facilitated within the researcher's professional practice. Through consultation with relevant stakeholders (e.g., SENCOs) the researcher will be able to share the findings of the research and would be appropriately positioned to support these professionals, at an organisational level, should they wish to act upon the acquired knowledge.

Dissemination for Action

Many of those who have enhanced understanding of the research findings may be appropriately positioned to take action within their professional practice or at policy level. Strategies utilised at this level will include: the magazine article; presentations which are tailored to specific audiences; and publication in academic journals.

All SENCOs are appropriately positioned to make use of the findings of Paper One, both at an individual level and potentially an organisational level. Thus, dissemination of these findings through the magazine article and the SENCO networks carries the potential for action at both practice and organisational policy level. In relation to Paper Two, whilst the majority of findings may be more relevant to secondary school SENCOs, the potential benefits and utility of involving students with SEMH needs in decision-making, is relevant to all SENCOs. As the research findings highlight the utility/potential benefits of involving students with SEMH needs in educational decision-making, and further details methods which are effective, it is hoped that the end point beneficiaries of the research will be the SEMH population themselves. It is anticipated that the findings will support school staff to feel more equipped to elicit the views of this population for purposes such as progress reviews and EHCP annual reviews, as a minimum. In accordance with legislation (United Nations, 1989), doing so may help to convey respect for students, allow them to experience more 'democratic schooling' (Sellman, 2009, p. 34) and support the development of more positive staff/student relationships.

Disseminating findings of Paper One to EPs through individual EPS and conference presentations, along with through journal publication, may lead to action at an individual practitioner level. Whilst EPs are adept at tailoring approaches to suit the needs of the individual, the more effective methods of elicitation could be incorporated into their professional practice. The likelihood of this could be further enhanced by sharing examples of the positively evaluated resources and integrated features when disseminating at EPS and EP conference level. As conferences and journal articles may be accessed by PEPs, there is potential for the findings of Paper Two to impact at the EPS policy level; an example of such might be increased service involvement or training for schools in relation to exam anxiety.

There is also potential that those who undertake research, upon reading the positive evaluation of elicitation methods within both Papers One and Two within published journal

articles, may seek to utilise such methods when working with the SEMH population. The implication for research that reporting insight into practical and administrative factors arising, particularly when working with specific populations, also has utility for the research field. This may result in action in the form of researchers more routinely reporting such information within journal articles.

Evaluating Impact

The impact of dissemination through social media could be measured through the monitoring of engagements (e.g., retweets, likes, comments) on the platform and through any subsequent direct contact made with the researcher through this medium. The impact of infographics shared within SENCo fora could be evaluated through consideration of the level of engagement through replies, subsequent discussion, and seeking of further information. It will be difficult to measure the impact of the magazine article. However, should the editors permit, providing researcher contact details for further information and discussion, may provide indication of those who seek further understanding with a view to action. Presentations at SENCo network level and individual EPS level could be evaluated through the development of tailored, in-house, measures. At conference level, more formal evaluation processes may be in place; the researcher may be able to access evaluations in relation to his presentation from conference organisers. The impact of publication in academic journals could be evaluated using bibliometrics, citation data and downloads. However, such quantitative data may underestimate the true impact of the findings as the extent to which an article can influence a reader's future perspectives and research is difficult to measure (Congleton et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Although there may be perceptions that gaining the views of the SEMH subgroup is difficult (Cosma & Soni, 2019), the findings of Paper One and Paper Two provide evidence that when provided with appropriate opportunity, these students can offer valuable insight into their experiences (Caslin, 2019). In accordance with policy (SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015)) and children's rights (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989)), the findings of Paper Two highlight the benefit and utility of involving children and young people with SEMH needs in educational decision-making. Effective and targeted dissemination of these findings will seek to bridge the research-practice gap and

ensure that the knowledge developed in Papers One and Two is shared with those professionals and organisations who are appropriately positioned to take action; the end point beneficiaries of which will be the SEMH population.

The researcher would reflect that the research 'journey' has enhanced his ability to critically evaluate research; this is a key tenet of the scientist-practitioner model (Jones & Mehr, 2007) which he will take forward in his professional practice as an educational psychologist who is now both consumer and producer of research (Crane & Hafen, 2002).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Journal guidance for Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (Paper One)

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Updated 17th March 2023

Appendix B: Email communication to the Editor of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Dear Professor Daniels,

I am contacting you regarding our prepared manuscript entitled:

Gathering the Views of Children and Young People with Social, Emotional or Mental Health (SEMH) Needs: A Systematic Literature Review.

The manuscript addresses the research question: 'Which methods of elicitation of views are effective for use with children and young people with SEMH needs?' We very much hope that the findings of the paper will be highly significant to the wide audience of *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, providing critical insights to approaches which may support the SEMH population to share their views.

The systematic literature review is broad and comprehensive, providing a synthesis of 61 research papers. Almost half of the included studies are doctoral theses; we consider the inclusion of this tranche of unpublished research to be a strength of the review.

I understand that the word limit for a 'typical' paper for your journal is 8000 words, inclusive of tables, references, and endnotes. The prepared manuscript exceeds this word limit, standing at 10,500, though by the nature of a broad review this includes a reference list of almost 3000 words. Consideration has been given as to whether any of the material is extraneous, and the manuscript has already been through several phases of redrafting, but at this stage, we feel that it cannot be further reduced without affecting the quality of the reporting. We are enquiring, therefore, whether the manuscript as it stands (7,500 words + 3,000 word reference list) could be considered for review by *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, given its achievement of a synthesis of a very large number of studies.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage in further dialogue regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew McLoughlin (corresponding author).

andrew.mcloughlin-2@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Appendix C: Examples of ‘explicit evaluation’ for study inclusion

Due to the very specific focus of the research question for the SLR, it was not possible to pre-define a list of the types of evaluation of method that would be considered for study inclusion.

Initially, the researcher and research supervisor considered implicit and explicit evaluation of methods. Implicit evaluation might have included those papers with comprehensive findings sections incorporating embedded data extracts. By reviewing the data extracts, a judgment could have been made on how effective the method of elicitation was. However, it was considered that deciding on such would carry too great an element of judgement and potential subjectivity. In seeking to ensure a robust operationalisation of the taxonomy developed, study inclusion in the present SLR was based on ‘explicit’ evaluation of the effectiveness of the method, reported by the author(s). The researcher would suggest that studies were screened favourably and there was a degree of ‘leniency’ applied when making judgements; if a study included sufficient evaluation for knowledge to be developed from it, it was included. It is acknowledged that this has likely contributed to the large number of studies included (61).

A more comprehensive list of examples of ‘explicit evaluation’ (categorised as ‘Good/Adequate’ evaluation) is detailed in the table below:

Reporting of coefficient alpha
Reporting of coefficient omega
Reporting the outcomes of confirmatory factor analysis
Reporting of participants who required support to access the method: reading
Reporting of participants who required support to access the method: writing
Reporting of participants who required support to access the method: verbal mediation
Reporting number of participants who did/did not engage in methods
Reporting how the methods had to be adapted in-situ to support elicitation
Comments on student engagement
Reporting of member checking
Comments on student presentation (e.g., appeared upset, frustrated, uncomfortable etc.)
Reporting attrition, along with reasons cited (where appropriate). E.g., too boring, too long etc.
Comparisons made with other methods. E.g., ‘this would not have been possible with...’
Reporting of pilot studies and subsequent amendments (where appropriate)
Reporting the involvement of ‘experts from within the field’ in development of methods.
Reporting the involvement of children/young people in development of methods
Student reports (e.g., fatigue, excitement etc.)
Researcher reflections on method (e.g., missed opportunities to follow-up, use of leading questions)
Direct feedback from students in relation to the methods used (e.g., ‘what would you change?’)
Reporting alternative methods offered to participants which were not taken-up
Researcher reflections on how methods specifically supported elicitation (e.g., integrated features)
Researcher reflections on how power dynamics (or their reduction) may have impacted elicitation
Researcher reflections on interview length and potential impact

Appendix D: Summary of studies included in review

Author(s) /Year / Country of data collection	Focus of elicitation	Participants	Method of elicitation	Evaluation label and Reported evaluation notes
Dyce (2019)*, USA	In-school mentoring programme	CYP considered 'At risk youth'; aged 11-15 (n=15); 9 male, 6 female	Semi-structured interviews	POSITIVE: Rich, appropriate, and invaluable responses; a safe, confidential and personalized environment allowed participants to use their authentic voice.
Wilcox (2016), USA	Experiences of group homes	CYP with EBD, conduct disorder, depression; aged 15-17 (n=8); 2 male, 6 female	Semi-structured interviews	MIXED: Open-ended forum encouraged conversation; CYP freely defined, shaped, and weighed their perspectives and experiences; states interviewer should have probed more for elaboration when participants answered concisely with yes/no.
Harrison (2019), China (HK)	Processes in school-based counselling	CYP with various presenting issues related to 'relationship problems' and 'stress'; aged 14-19 (n=25); 9 male, 16 female	Semi-structured interviews	MIXED: CYP generally willing to share openly and did not self-censor to a very great extent; interviews conducted in English may have made it difficult as not in 'mother tongue'; social desirability and insider researcher may have impacted responses (power differential).
Charles-Nelson (2020), UK	Experiences of Alternative Provision (AP)	CYP attending AP in Years 7-11 (n=9); 5 male, 4 female	Semi-structured interviews	MIXED: CYP demonstrated openness; reflection and an astute awareness; researcher able to get alongside and hear voices; use of a visual aid such as a timeline may have supported CYP; researcher hoped to meet all CYP in advance (not possible) - this may have altered accounts.
Balampanidou (2019), UK	Experiences of ELSA intervention	CYP in Key Stage 2 who had completed ELSA intervention; (n=8); 2 male, 6 female	Semi-structured interviews	MIXED: Interviews rich and replete with information; CYP open and willing to share experiences; CYP struggled to answer 'Why?' questions; younger CYP (Year 3) struggled to retrieve information and give comprehensive answers; impact of female researcher raised (females talked more than males).
Creagh (2016), UK	Views on educational journey	CYP presenting with SEBD; aged 14-16 (n=6); 3 male, 3 female	Semi-structured interviews (Also used Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire; limited evaluation of method)	POSITIVE: CYP proved very able in responding with insight and enthusiasm; method allowed flexibility/scope for further clarification and explanations. Some younger CYP declined to participate citing not wanting to be recorded; it was too boring to sit that long; and could not be bothered. Insider researcher meant trusting relationship already established with CYP.

Leyland (2016), UK	Impact of ADHD diagnosis	CYP with ADHD; aged 7-11 (n=4); 3 male, 1 female	Semi-structured interviews (with option to use creative drawing)	MIXED: Elicitation protocol interview helped build rapport before research interview; expertise of researcher referenced in working with CYP. CYP invited to use drawing; CYP1 enjoyed taking part – particularly after using creative media; CYP2 asked for support person to aid communication; CYP3 reluctant to voice he didn't want to draw; CYP4 although shy and quiet, was reflective, coherent and responded fully.
Dolton et al. (2020), UK	Gain views regarding Primary school experience	CYP with SEMH difficulties; aged 6-11 (n=11); 8 male, 3 female	Semi-structured interviews and participatory techniques ('How I feel about my school' questionnaire; pictorial games and resources)	POSITIVE: Allowed flexibility to tailor interviews to the needs the individual; CYP relaxed and comfortable; sometimes appeared excited and seemed to value the opportunity to express their views; CYP were reflective and introspective in their reports; CYP were articulate and effectively communicated how they felt, with the support of the participatory techniques and sensitive interviewer.
Nicholson-Roberts (2019), UK	Experiences of ELSA intervention	CYP who had received ELSA intervention; aged 14-15 (n=4); 4 male	Semi-structured interviews and scaling activity. (Also offered drawing materials; limited evaluation of method)	MIXED: CYP appeared comfortable and capable of expressing views. Curious and supportive interviewer reduced power dynamics; semi-structured nature may have restricted CYP in discussing issues they felt were pertinent; variability in length of interviews may reflect a difference in ease with the process. Scaling believed to enable the pupils to explore more concrete feelings about their experience; follow up questions allowed more detailed exploration.
Brooks (2016)*, UK	Perceptions of child/coach relationship within Early Intervention programme	CYP with vulnerability factors to SEMHD; aged 9-11 (n=7); 6 male, 1 female	Semi-structured interviews (series of 3) with scaling, Blobs and cartoon vignettes	POSITIVE: CYP cooperative and liked talking. Semi-structured interviews allowed CYP to discuss issues most relevant to their experience. Use of scaling/blobs/vignettes enabled all CYP to participate and engage. Blobs a non-threatening way to open up discussions. Vignettes helped to support children to reflect on their hopes regarding impact. Referring to previous scales, blob trees and cartoons sometimes distracting for CYP's current perceptions. Issues of maximum scaling responses considered.
de Leeuw et al. (2018), Netherlands	Experiences of victimisation and social exclusion	CYP considered 'socially excluded'; aged 10-13 (n=27 included in analysis); 22 male, 5 female	Semi structured interviews with hypothetical scenarios/drawings	MIXED: CYP reported enjoying participating and considered the questions well formulated; CYP engaged in a lot of small talk implying good rapport/no trust issues. Scenarios made more comprehensive through use of illustrations; one CYP did not wish to discuss being victimized as it was too upsetting; CYP may not have felt safe enough to discuss victimization; perceptions may have changed over time.
Quigley (2016)*, UK	Views/experiences of learning Mathematics	CYP categorised as having BESD; aged 14-15 (n=7); 4 male, 3 female	Semi-structured interviews with visual aids (Followed by group interview; limited evaluation of this aspect)	MIXED: CYP given option to be interviewed with a partner but all chose individually; generally seemed to enjoy the process. Follow up discussions to clarify interpretation; style of questioning was varied, to reduce the issue of inattention; interviews an artificial process which yielded many monosyllabic responses; CYP were more talkative towards the end of interview. Reports the use visual aids to have provided a useful way to assist with communication.

Lapinski (2019)*, USA	Experiences of school belonging	CYP 'labelled' as having EBD; aged 13-16 (n=10); 5 male, 5 female	Series of semi-structured interviews and 'belonging activities'	POSITIVE: 'Specific activities that allowed for a more robust understanding' of experiences and understanding of belonging; initial interview built rapport; structure of interview helped to make concept more accessible; activities helped participants discuss belonging in depersonalized ways.
Jalali & Morgan (2018), UK	Perceptions of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)	CYP attending PRUs; aged 7-16 (n=13); 11 male, 2 female	Semi-structured interviews with timeline	POSITIVE: Provided flexibility in delivery of questions; extensive efforts to build rapport; uncertain as to what this had on the accuracy of responses. Timeline was a discussion aid which supported the flow of conversation and exploration of 'critical moments' rather than direct questioning; enabled a summary of the interview to be collected.
McCarthy-Singh (2019)*, UK	Experiences of finding out that they had been identified as having SEMH difficulties	CYP identified as having SEMH needs; aged 13-16 (n=3), 2 male, 1 female	Semi-structured interviews with timeline	MIXED: Rapport building session reduced power dynamics and supported discussion of sensitive issues; initial interview had some leading questions. Timeline allowed consideration of the future and the CYP's next steps. CYP1: difficulty articulating thoughts – engaged in timeline but literacy difficulties evident. CYP2: positive experience – seeing experiences written down was helpful for her; spoke quickly may have been nervous. CYP3: interview a positive experience – did not engage with timeline and did not write anything down.
Brickley (2018), UK	Views of one-to-one mentoring within a Learning support unit (LSU)	CYP attending a LSU; aged 13-18 (n=9); 2 male, 7 female	Semi-structured interviews with Life Journey tool (Also used scaling; limited evaluation of method)	POSITIVE: Students were 'frank' and 'open'; feedback on the process from young people was 'positive'; interviewer a skilled facilitator able to develop rapport; interviews presented as an 'informal discussion'; was not necessary to re-focus or move back to an agenda. Life journey approach was 'received well' and provided a helpful framework to consider different periods of lives – presented openly allowing CYP to choose which periods they wanted to discuss.
Martin (2019)*, UK	Views of mainstream school; Alternative Provision (AP); and sense of self/identity	CYP attending AP; upper secondary school age (n=6); 6 female	Semi-structured interviews underpinned by narrative thinking and principles; life path tool; 'Ideal-self' activity	POSITIVE: Interview questions and methodology informed via the knowledge given by CYP and with consideration of research conducted with similar cohorts. Life path supported CYP to have ownership of the interview process. Development of rapport enabled CYP to engage in a relaxed manner; most described involvement in research as 'helpful' or interesting; most said they wouldn't change the research process; being provided with a space to express views was powerful, and for some, potentially transformative. CYP felt 'understood' and considered activities generally accessible and interesting; life path and Ideal self 'provided something to focus on'.
Thacker (2017), UK	School experiences of permanently excluded students; past and future selves	CYP attending a Pupil Referral Unit; aged 15-16 (n=3); 3 female	Narrative interview (Also included use of visual life path tool; limited	POSITIVE: CYP engaged and willing to share detailed account of their experiences, reflections, hopes and fears; appeared to leave CYP with a sense of agency and motivation; sensitive researcher developed empathy and built rapport. The

			evaluation of this method included)	description 'semi structured interviews enriched by narration' may be more appropriate due to blurred boundaries.
Want (2020), UK	Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)	CYP who have experienced EBSA; aged 14-15 (n=2); 1 male, 1 female	Guided narrative interviews (Also included use of visual life path tool; limited evaluation of this method included)	MIXED: Two interviews helped to avoid fatigue; rich exploration and insight into how CYP understand their individual experiences; narrative interview enabled participants to share as much/little about their stories that they wanted reducing power differential; social communication needs of CYP a barrier to engagement and elicitation. Time framing prompts needed; this could arguably redefine approach as a more semi-structured interview format, enriched by narration.
Tellis-James & Fox (2016), UK	Narratives of past, future, strengths and resources.	CYP who had been excluded or 'at risk' of exclusion; aged 14-16 (n=8); 3 male, 5 female	Unstructured informant-style interviews with life path	POSITIVE: Freedom to tell stories in their own way provided deeper and richer data; time taken to build trust/address power imbalances; Narrative as a method of interviewing proved to be very successful. Life path helped to structure thinking, provided a shared focus and reduced the intensity of interviews by removing the need for direct questioning; Life path may also support CYP to attach meaning to experiences, gain insights into their feelings/behaviour and develop a sense of coherence over their lives.
Phull (2019), UK	Explore relationships to assess attachment style	(Study 2) CYP experiencing SEBD; aged 14-18 (n=8); 3 male, 5 female	Attachment Style Interview for Adolescents ASI-AD	MIXED: Researcher trained in ASI administration (essential). Importance of rapport highlighted; some CYP struggled to articulate responses. Provided a 'more detailed account' that a questionnaire would not be able to. Tightly structured interview schedule may have led to missed opportunities.
Bar-Ilan et al. (2018), Israel	Appraisal of executive function (EF) in daily life	CYP with ADHD (n=100) aged 5-10; 64 male, 36 female) and typically developing children (n=44); 22 male, 22 female	Pictorial Interview of Children's Metacognition and Executive Functions' (PIC-ME's)	MIXED: Cronbach's alpha high for the total PIC-ME EF score for child ratings (a = .953) Values of Cronbach's a questionable for most of the CYP ratings (a = .541-.775). Lack of consistency may be attributable to underdeveloped cognitive abilities and insufficient self-monitoring processes. Length of assessment may limit applicability in clinical settings; different administration methods (such as computerised formats) or abbreviated versions recommended. Recommends CYP self-reports should be supplemented with parent reports because of the CYP demonstrated bias in overestimating EF abilities and underestimating strengths.
Thompson & Tawell (2017), UK	Effects of an arts-based intervention	CYP exhibiting SEBD; aged 11-16 (n=11); 5 male, 6 female	Interviews: group (then individual) and task-based (drawing)	NEGATIVE: Despite strong rapport built in advance, for group interview only three CYP agreed to participate; very little information gained, possibly a lack of confidence or trust in the social arena of group talk; one CYP did not want to take part due to it being 'awkward', but gave individual interview leading to change of approach for all CYP with individual semi-structured interviews where more information was obtained

				MIXED: Drawing: -5/11 participated (3 declined, 3 were not asked) provided a visual timeline, which CYP used as a stimulus during interviews; allowed CYP to reflect on their experiences and any changes in their behaviour or perspectives.
Hajdukova et al. (2016), New Zealand	School experiences	CYP attending a school for those with 'severe SEBD'; aged 9-13 (n=29); 29 male	Semi-structured interviews followed by focus groups	<p>POSITIVE: Interviews based on 'Interview guide approach' - enabled systematic and comprehensive process; still flexible with relaxed atmosphere that allowed CYP to better engage and express themselves openly; second individual meeting with the same CYP arranged to add validity/credibility. CYP reviewed transcripts (amendments made and new statements added).</p> <p>MIXED: Series of focus group interviews; only a small portion of new data was obtained; students often repeated and confirmed statements previously made; added credibility</p>
Swerts et al. (2019), Belgium	Personal perspectives on quality of life	CYP with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders in Residential Youth Care (n=25); aged 13-17; 18 male, 7 female	Focus groups (3-6 participants)	POSITIVE: CYP clearly demonstrated abilities to share rich information about issues regarding their own experiences and perceptions; talked extensively and in-depth about their lives; on average, discussions lasted 72 min. However, frequency of responses differed across participants.
Cefai & Pizzuto (2017), Malta	Being a pupil in a Nurture class	CYP from a nurture class; aged 4-7 (n=18); 11 male, 7 female	Semi-structured focus groups with well-being tasks (collaborative mapping and poster design)	POSITIVE: CYP reported it a positive experience to talk about themselves, their feelings and experiences through 'hands-on' activities and games. Younger group CYP reported tasks to be 'fun' and 'enjoyable'; 'particularly liked the drawings/pictures and working together'. Older group CYP liked talking about nurture class; stated they would like to be asked more about what they like doing; could not suggest how it could be improved. In two of the more verbally mediated tasks, 2 of the younger group found it difficult to express themselves.
Bagnall et al. (2021), UK	Experiences of primary-secondary school transition	CYP with SEMH difficulties in Year 6 (n=11), 10 male	Photo elicitation focus groups (unstructured)	POSITIVE: Invoked honest and in-depth insight; empowered participants. Helped CYP to be heard and aided construction of unanticipated and meaningful responses. Method can help children construct more thoughtful answers - especially when given time to consider how to present. Some CYP felt confident disclosing how they felt, others found this difficult; some struggled to put into language and may have generalised feelings or masked feelings.
Hill (2020), UK	Perspectives of Physical Education (PE)	CYP labelled as having BESD (initially n=4); aged 15; 4 male	Photo elicitation, focus group meetings, individual	MIXED: Photo elicitation – practical and safeguarding issues raised; visual acted as a tool to reduce power imbalances and increase co-operation. Follow up discussion in group format - possibility that the voices of some CYP were

			interviews, video interviews with pupil investigators.	<p>overshadowed by more vocal peers. Possibility that CYP were not making comments for personal reasons or fearing rebuke from others</p> <p>MIXED: Focus group – CYP empowered to explore their feelings; some were keen to have their views heard; others stated that they were not used to or willing to say what they felt.</p> <p>MIXED: Interviews - Data produced detailed and rich. In instances where the CYP response was ‘I don’t know’ / ‘I don’t remember’ - responses accepted as being true position; some deviation to topics only loosely linked to interview topics at times. Sympathetic interviewer paraphrasing when necessary helpful. Some reluctance or lack of ability to articulate experiences.</p> <p>MIXED: Video interviews with pupil investigators: Pupil interviewers were able to bring more rigor as they knew the pupils being interviewed and could challenge when they considered responses untruthful. Training for interviewers provided but limited follow up questions.</p>
Stracey (2020), UK	Experiences of an Equine Facilitated Psychotherapeutic Intervention	CYP attending a Pupil Referral Unit (n=2); aged 13-15; 2 female	Unstructured interview with photovoice methodology	<p>POSITIVE: Rapport built through regular advance visits; positive relationship allowed CYP to engage enthusiastically. Unstructured interview allowed conversation to develop organically around experiences that CYP wished to articulate; sensitive scaffolding positively received and allowed for ‘co-construction’. CYP given disposable camera and chose to create journals, with pictures which provided data, but also served as prompts or visual aids when conducting the open interview; recommends providing camera as early as possible and using approach with those with anxiety about verbalising views.</p>
de Leeuw et al. (2019), Netherlands	Perspectives on social exclusion and victimisation	CYP with or at risk of SEBD; aged 6-8 (n=45); 28 male, 17 female	Interview-based approach grounded in principles of Q-methodology	<p>MIXED: CYP saw process as useful and appreciated being able to share their views; approach can add value to efforts in exploring the perceptions of young children even when addressing sensitive topics. Less than half of CYP elaborated on sorting (possible difficulties reflecting/verbalising thinking; not used to being asked for opinions; decline in motivation or attention span). CYP should be asked if other statements (not on Q-sort) are missing. Some CYP felt completing the sort twice was intensive and long; two separate occasions may have been preferable.</p>
Atkinson & Rowley (2019), UK	Views on mainstream reintegration from alternative provision (AP)	CYP who had experienced school exclusion, AP and successful reintegration; aged 10-	Q methodology (Followed by short questionnaire – limited)	<p>MIXED: Refinements made using member-checking and a pilot-study; CYP asked to provide information about the statements they had placed at the extreme left and right-hand side of the Q-grid - allowing clarification. Questioned whether the items in the Q-set (pre-written statements), and the process of Q-sorting (which involved a fixed distribution) may have limited CYP in fully expressing their views.</p>

		16 (n=9); 7 male, 2 female	evaluation of this aspect included)	
Price (2016)*, UK	Perspectives of an outdoor learning programme	CYP identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; aged 12-13 (n=7); 7 male	Semi-structured interviews Devised questionnaire	<p>POSITIVE: Semi-structured interviews - allowed direct human contact; CYP talked more freely and were keen to provide rich data to the questions; language and lines of enquiry modified and followed up in a way that is not possible with questionnaires.</p> <p>POSITIVE: Questionnaire- five-point scale (smiley faces ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) used; additional questions allowed CYP to expand answers. Need for writing minimised to make questionnaires more attractive and to achieve a higher completion rate. All learners completed questionnaire.</p>
Cockerill (2019), UK	Perspectives of shared school placement (mainstream/alternative) and school belonging	CYP accessing shared placement; aged 10-16 (n=11), 9 male, 2 female	Semi structured interviews (with visual component) and Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM)	<p>POSITIVE: Semi structured interviews - all pupils able to discuss feelings and thoughts; range of considerations made with large visual component which facilitated discussion and made process less formal. Some open questions but some others specific to factors the researcher considered important; some potentially important factors may therefore have been missed.</p> <p>POSITIVE: PSSM - Cronbach's alpha for main scale was .93, indicating a very high internal consistency of the scale. Analysis led to participants being placed into one of three outcome groups - this decision was made jointly with the CYP, staff and the researcher (providing some triangulation).</p>
Yeager et al. (2020), USA	Perspectives on social support and support for transition to adulthood	CYP with EBD; aged 14-17 (n=8); 8 male	Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS) and semi-structured interviews	<p>POSITIVE: CASSS - Means and standard deviations provided a general description of the trends and allowed researchers to generalise which CYP had higher/lower overall levels of social support. Triangulation as descriptive statistics support qualitative findings. Semi structured interviews: One to one interviews due to potentially sensitive nature of subject matter; informal conversations in advance helped develop rapport; students were able to describe the factors that contributed to issues; triangulation as findings confirmed and expanded results from the CASSS.</p>
Yeager et al. (2021), USA	Perceptions of transition strengths and needs	CYP with EBD; aged 14-17 (n=8); 8 male	Transition Planning Inventory-2 and semi-structured interviews	<p>MIXED: Transition Planning Inventory-2. Most CYP rated their strengths higher than their teachers - statistically significant differences between ratings on 8/11 domains; some scores queried by researchers during member checks (one CYP gave himself the highest possible score in every domain) responses confirmed; did not triangulate with teacher perspective.</p>

				MIXED: Semi structured interviews –discrepancies between data sources explored during member checks and clarification sought. Informal conversations in advance helped develop rapport; CYP may have provided more or different responses if there was additional trust or there were additional rounds of interviews
Hopkins (2020), UK	Impact of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) based intervention	CYP attending alternative provision to support ‘challenging behaviour’; aged 15-16 (n=8); 4 male, 4 female	Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire for Youth 8-Item (AFQ-Y8); Beck Youth Inventory 2 (BYI-2) Semi-structured interviews	MIXED: BYI-2 and AFQ-Y8 - inclusion of quantitative measure of wellbeing was important to limit researcher bias of interpreting experiences through interviews alone. Measures administered verbally by researcher - a lack of social desirability cannot be definitively claimed. Researcher known to CYP increased likelihood of interviewer bias - may have responded in favour of perceived hopes of researcher. MIXED: Semi-structured interviews - questions developed by researcher not piloted; this would have helped; focus group would not have been appropriate to discuss individuals’ experiences; interview length ranged across CYP, some engaged in discussion more than others. Some CYP frustrated with questions.
Maddalozzo (2019)*, USA	Transition process and self-determination	CYP with a label of EBD; aged 17-18 (initially n=16); 14 identified as male, 2 as female	AIR and ARC Self-Determination Scales with semi-structured interviews	MIXED: Semi-structured Interview allowed CYP to verbalise constructs from AIRs and ARCs scales. Through member checking CYP explained statements and reflected; engagement mixed – some participated more as the interview progressed.
Desai (2015)*, USA	Views on mindfulness and mindfulness training programme	CYP with EBD; aged 15-18 (n=6); 4 male, 2 female	Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM), Five-Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) Semi-structured interviews (using student journals as prompts)	MIXED: CAMM & FFMQ: Difficult to tell how honestly CYP responded as they often endorsed conflicting items or answered inconsistently. Impact of mood of participants on responses cited and self-report bias referenced. CAMM and FFMQ, were not validated for all youth populations. MIXED: Some CYP considered the journal as useful/helpful, although most did not. However, these were used to inform semi-structured interviews.
Hambidge (2017), UK	Impact of care farm intervention	CYP with BESDs from low-socioeconomic backgrounds who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education and	Validated questionnaire pack (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ); Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21); Adolescent Coping Scale II (short version); Brief	MIXED: Range of techniques ensured that young people had the ability to participate and reflect as accurately as possible on their experiences. Questionnaires - researcher read out each question to some CYP allowing all eligible and consenting CYP to contribute (reducing literacy issues). Semi-structured interviews – Open and expanded questions encouraged CYP to talk; rich data obtained confirmed (or disproved) data from questionnaires; importance of trust highlighted – researcher having spent time with CYP in advance. Across methods - similar conclusions adding greater credibility to the results. However,

		Training); aged 14-16 (n=6); 4 male, 2 female	Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS-PTPB); Nature Relatedness Scale (NRS) and semi-structured interviews	some discordance occurred, whereby the qualitative and quantitative findings were inconsistent (DASS-21 scores and participants self-reported or observed levels of depression, anxiety or stress)
Marsh et al. (2019), USA	School connectedness	CYP with EBD; aged 8-18 (n=136); no demographic information in relation to gender included.	Likert scale questionnaire created specifically for the study	MIXED: Teachers read statements aloud to students and written at the first-grade level. Researchers in field of EBD, teachers of CYP with EBD and CYP with EBD supported in construction of questionnaire providing feedback on understanding and readability. Reliability calculated for each of the four domains: (1) school bonding ($\alpha = .72$), (2) school attachment ($\alpha = .45$), (3) school engagement ($\alpha = .63$), and (4) school climate ($\alpha = .74$).
Knowles et al. (2020), USA	Quality of teacher-student classroom working alliance	Children with EBD, in grades 1-6, (n=182); 73.1% male	Classroom Working Alliance Inventory (CWAII)	POSITIVE: Internal consistency of the bond factor showed good reliability for student report ($\alpha = .82$) as did the task/goal factor ($\alpha = .79$). CFA item loadings for student ratings of alliance: Bond .74-.84; Task/Goal .53-.76. Possible that older CYP in sample were better equipped to discuss the quality of student-teacher alliance (compared to previous research by Toste et al. 2015). Another strength of the CWAII is that it measures parallel student and teacher perspectives providing opportunities for triangulation.
Kern et al. (2019), USA	Check and Connect mentor programme experience; quality of relationship between mentors and mentees	CYP with social, emotional, and/or behavioral challenges; (Grades 8-11) (n=166); 74.7% male	Adapted version of Check & Connect Subject Survey	POSITIVE: Coefficient alpha for talk, mentee survey, was .70; relationship quality, mentee survey, was .94 (internal consistency in the acceptable to excellent range).
Breeman et al. (2018), Netherlands	Teacher-child closeness	CYP with EBD (n=150) and boys with ASD (n=122); aged 6-13; 272 male	Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI)	POSITIVE: Cronbach's alpha for proximity was good (T1 EBD = 0.88, T1 ASD = 0.79; T2 EBD = 0.91, T2 ASD = 0.86; T3 EBD = 0.91, T3 ASD = 0.89), indicating that CYP understood the items and could reliably indicate their perception of teacher-child closeness. Missing data minimal as research assistants checked questionnaires when collecting. CYP in grade 1 participated but did not provide data themselves (due to literacy skills). CYP in grade 2 upwards provided with help (research assistant conducted a face-to-face interview) if required.
Wells et al. (2020), UK	Self-esteem and self-perception	CYP with behavioural problems (n=78) and	The Self Perception Profile for Children (SPPC)	POSITIVE: Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 indicating good internal consistency.

		typically developing children (n=54); aged 8-11; 102 male and 30 female		
Van Loan & Garwood (2020), USA	Perspectives of student-teacher relationship quality	CYP with EBD (n=92); average age 13.3; 75% male, 25% female.	New student version of the Student-Teacher Relationships Scale (STRS)	MIXED: Amendments made from STRS; advice sought from teachers and administrators of CYP with EBD and panel of experts (research university faculty members) in the field of EBD who agreed with amendments. Pilot study with five students identified with EBD and two teachers conducted and revisions made. Reliability coefficients for the STRS-Student Version for conflict ($\omega = .72$) and closeness ($\omega = .87$) were acceptable, dependency ($\omega = .65$) subscale was low. Results from CFA suggested the three-factor structure did not fit the data well. Based on results from the original CFAs and the notion that dependency as developed for children may not be an accurate indicator of relationship quality, all five item-level indicators of the dependency subscale in the STRS-SV were removed from analysis. A second CFA was conducted to assess the adequacy of a two-factor model adjustments made as necessary; item loadings $< .55$ removed. Conflict: .55-.70; Closeness .56-.71. Reliability coefficients for the STRS-SV for conflict ($\omega = .81$) and closeness ($\omega = .93$). Adequate construct validity reported.
Thomson (2016), UK	Callous and Unemotional Traits	CYP from EBD schools (n=60); aged 11-16; 50 male, 10 female	Inventory of Callous and Unemotional Traits (ICU) (Also used Self-Assessment Manikin; limited evaluation)	POSITIVE: ICU yielded good internal consistency ($\alpha = .82$).
Martin-Storey et al. (2021), Canada	Impulsivity	CYP with and without histories of 'conduct problems' (n=744); aged 13-17; 47% female	Barratt Impulsivity Scale-II (Other measures used; limited evaluation)	POSITIVE: Cronbach's alpha of 0.80 in the current study
Williamson et al. (2017), Canada	Negative parenting	CYP with ADHD (n=126) and 'typically developing' CYP (n=53); aged 5-13; 179 male	Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ)	MIXED: Alphas = 0.68 and 0.64 (mothers negative parenting and fathers negative parenting respectively) To avoid reading difficulties, the questionnaire was read aloud to CYP

Midgley et al. (2019), UK	Appropriateness as a screening/primary outcome measure	CYP in foster care with some level of difficulty as identified by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire; aged 5-16 (n=36); 20 male	Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (Also used interview method but limited evaluation included)	MIXED: Research team offered to read questionnaires to CYP, for very young CYP this was essential; some CYP said they wanted to continue with the research and enjoyed completing the questionnaires. Some CYP reported finding the questions boring, but most said they were fun/enjoyable; research team did not report any difficulties with using the measure. Not validated for children below the age of 11. Lacks items which cover issues relevant to children in foster care.
Garwood (2020), USA	Reader self-perceptions	CYP with, or at risk of, EBD; grades 7-12 – (mean age 13.7,) (n=152); 84 male, 68 female	Reader Self-Perception Scale 2 Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire	POSITIVE: Reliability coefficients were calculated; all subscales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency. RSPS2: Progress (.91), Physiological States (.90), Observational Comparison (.89), and Social Feedback (.84). POSITIVE: SDQ - externalizing behavior (.71), hyper-activity/inattention (.77), and internalising behavior (.72). Acknowledged that surveys suffer from the issue of social desirability, but it is the only way to measure self-perceptions.
Gold (2019), UK	Anxious and depressed mood; felt security	CYP people with SEMH difficulties (n=100); aged 11 – 19; 57 male, 43 female	Profile of Mood States (POMS) Felt security scale	MIXED: POMS - Reliability coefficients provided from previous research; pilot (n=7) led to change in Likert (from 5-point to 10-point) and order of adjectives in the post-measures were different to the pre-measures to ensure that participants did not remember and simply reproduce the same POMS rating. CYP only seemed to use the lower end of the mood measure scales (i.e., 1 - 3) rather than the whole scale (i.e., 1 - 10) when rating their anxious and depressed mood at baseline and post prime. MIXED: Felt security scale - Reliability coefficients provided from previous research. Pilot – based on the participants’ responses five words were removed as the participants were unsure of their meaning. The novelty of the study meant that many of the measures had to be modified in order to be suitable for chosen sample. Unexpected results (no difference between special and mainstream school participants in their ratings of felt security, depressed mood or anxious mood) - could be related to CYP reduced ability to identify own emotions and correctly interpret the words within the questionnaire. Noteworthy that n=150 initially: 6 withdrew, 37 were omitted as they did not complete one of the tasks involved in the study appropriately, 7 outliers removed.
Granot (2016), Israel	Attachment security, student teacher relationship	CYP with disabilities (LD, ADHD, and LD/ADHD); aged 8-14	Attachment Security Scale (ASS), Children’s Appraisal	Researcher confirmed that CYP understood items and helped when necessary. POSITIVE: ASS showed high internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .80).

		(n=65); 33 male, 32 female	of Teacher as a Secure Base Scale (CATSBS)	POSITIVE: CATSBS showed high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .87)
Wynne et al. (2016), Ireland	SEBD, Anxiety, Depression, Stress, Family functioning	CYP with SEBD attending Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (n=93); , aged 11-17; 39% male, 61% female	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) The McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD) Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale-25 (RCADS) Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale-21 (DASS)	POSITIVE: SDQ - The Cronbach's alpha was 0.70 which is considered acceptable. POSITIVE: FAD - Cronbach's alpha was satisfactorily over 0.88 for the self-report version. POSITIVE: RCADS - Cronbach's alpha was satisfactorily over 0.91. POSITIVE: DASS - Cronbach's alpha values were over 0.8 for all subscales. Data collected by the same clinicians who carried out the intervention - potential to introduce bias.
Flynn et al. (2019), Ireland	Evaluate the effectiveness of a Dialectical behaviour therapy for adolescents (DBT-A) intervention programme	CYP with emotional and behavioural dysregulation who had accessed a DBT-A intervention programme; aged 13-18 (n=84); 85% female	Borderline Symptom List (BSL) Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) Beck Depression Inventory – Youth (BDI-Y) Questionnaire for Suicidal Ideation (QSI) - DBT Ways of Coping Checklist (DBT-WCCL) - State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 Child and Adolescent (STAXI-2) -	POSITIVE: Borderline Symptom List (BSL) - The internal consistency of the BSL-23 was high (Cronbach's alpha = .94). POSITIVE: Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) – Internal consistency of the BHS was high (Cronbach's alpha = .91) POSITIVE: Beck Depression Inventory – Youth (BDI-Y) - The internal consistency of the BDI-Y in the current study was good (Cronbach's alpha = .89). POSITIVE: Questionnaire for Suicidal Ideation (QSI) - In the current study, Cronbach's alpha value for the QSI was .90. POSITIVE: DBT Ways of Coping Checklist (DBT-WCCL) - The Cronbach's alpha values for the two subscales in the present study (frequency of DBT skills used in the last month and non-DBT, dysfunctional coping strategies) were .90 and .80 respectively POSITIVE: State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 Child and Adolescent (STAXI-2) - the Cronbach's alpha values for these two subscales (trait anger and anger expression) were .85 and .72 respectively

Fung et al. (2019), USA	Emotional regulation and mental health symptoms	CYP described as 'Ethnic minority Youth' (Asian and Latino) with elevated mood symptoms who had accessed a mindfulness intervention; aged 13-15 (n=145); 32.4% male	<p>Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)</p> <p>Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) for Children and Adolescents</p> <p>Emotional Approach Coping Scale</p> <p>Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire for Youth (AFQ-Y8)</p> <p>Rumination subscale of the Children's Response Styles Questionnaire (CRSQ)</p> <p>Heritage language enculturation scale</p> <p>(Also used Youth self-report; limited evaluation of method)</p>	<p>POSITIVE: PSS showed acceptable reliability at baseline ($\alpha = 0.73$).</p> <p>POSITIVE: ERQ - Both cognitive reappraisal ($\alpha = 0.82$) and expressive suppression ($\alpha = 0.68$) subscale show acceptable reliability.</p> <p>POSITIVE: Emotional Approach Coping Scale -Emotional expression $\alpha = 0.84$; Emotional processing $\alpha = 0.74$</p> <p>POSITIVE: AFQ-Y8 - The measure illustrated good reliability at baseline ($\alpha = 0.79$).</p> <p>POSITIVE: CRSQ The scale illustrated strong reliability for our sample of adolescents at baseline ($\alpha = 0.91$)</p> <p>POSITIVE: Heritage language enculturation scale was developed by adapting a pre-existing measure 3-item of heritage language fluency. The current enculturation scale also showed high reliability with our sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$).</p> <p>Outcomes were assessed solely by youth self-report and could be subject to social desirability. Future trials should include multiple-informant, multi-method assessments</p>
Neville (2017), UK	Role of specialist provisions in fostering resilience	CYP from SEBD schools (n=38); aged 11-18; 32 male, 6 female	<p>Questionnaire methods</p> <p>(The Resiliency Scale for Children and Adolescents (RSCA); Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire; Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF); Psychological Sense of School Membership; McGill Friendship Questionnaire-</p>	<p>MIXED: For most CYP, the researcher read each question aloud. Possible that questionnaires used did not enable enough scope for subtleties to be identified. Some CYP unwilling to do the research one day, but be very willing another time; questions the test-retest reliability of self-report questionnaires with this population. All questionnaires self-report which required introspection as well as ability to understand the content. Questions extent to which constructs are different to one another - some of the items within the TEI measure may replicate elements of the resources and friendship questionnaires. Limited evaluation of individual measures.</p>

			Friendship Function (MFQ-FF)	
Chiumento et al. (2018), UK	Mental health and wellbeing	CYP experiencing behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (n=36); aged 9-15; 22 male, 14 female	Adapted Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWIA) Adapted Wellbeing Check Cards	MIXED: MWIA designed to be conducted over a full day (shortened to 2h workshops). Some activities removed as considered too theoretical and abstract for CYP, others shortened to suit the attention span of CYP and make more age appropriate. Despite adaptations, the adult terminology for MWIA factors raises questions about how these were understood by CYP. MIXED: Wellbeing Check Cards - based upon the 7-item version of the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (validated for children over 13 years of age). Adaptations included simplified language and incorporation of faces reflecting emotions in a Likert scale. Questionable that children responded in relation to 'the last few weeks' as the measure requests; responses may have been impacted by experiences of specific sessions and the timings of administration. Considered to be limited in intended ability to capture change over time.
Pace (2018), Malta	How children make sense of experiences	CYP experiencing SEBD accessing a Nurture group; aged 7-11, (n=6), 4 male, 2 female	CYP diaries/conversations with the CYP about diary entries (journal writing and drawing)	POSITIVE: Research tools helped enhance CYP voices. Some found it hard to draw or write in their journal –guiding through leading statements was helpful. CYP given choice of how to engage (writing stories, bullet points, drawing). Noted that the data was collected by researcher with established relationship with CYP and they were eager to use journaling to express themselves– highlights finding a strategy that works for the individual.
Camenzuli (2018), Malta	Learning experience of Mathematics	CYP exhibiting with SEBD; aged 12-13 (n=4); 4 male	Video diaries with follow-up semi-structured interviews	POSITIVE: Video diaries enabled students to talk about personal experiences; comments poignant and had depth; easier to talk without presence of researcher. Interviews enriched and clarified video entries; participants articulate and able to express themselves well; in first interview researcher may have led participants – reflected upon for subsequent interviews.
Boorman (2016)*, UK	Perspectives of creative learning and relationships at a specialist provision	CYP with a label of behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties (n=2); aged 13-14; 2 female	Methods designed to improve participation including digital, visual and multimedia accounts (Art exhibition, Big Brother Diary room) (Limited evaluation of art exhibition, photographs,	Flexibility of choice supported engagement; CYP engaged with enthusiasm; methods fitted particular style of communication and addressed power differentials; importance of trusting relationships being established cited. In making available a range of methods that could be triangulated, a more nuanced understanding was developed. POSITIVE: Big Brother diary room - sense of excitement generated and familiarity of the technology among CYP, and the affordance of immediate review by CYP and therefore greater control of data; visual images provided a springboard for

			comic strips, audio recordings, videos, poetry, interviews)	discussion. Diary Room method was employed by setting to support CYP in annual review meetings (research legacy).
Moula (2020), UK	Outcome evaluation of arts therapies	CYP with mild emotional and behavioural difficulties (n=62); aged 5-12; no demographic information in relation to gender included.	Interviews Arts-based methods (Also used questionnaire methods - Quality of Life scale for Children (EQ-5D-Y); Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS); Child Session Rating Scale (CSRS) – limited evaluation of these aspects)	<p>POSITIVE: Interviews. CYP expressed a vast amount of feelings and thoughts. Member cross-checking was employed - interpretations from interviews were made available to children to express their opinions as to whether they represent their own viewpoints and to evaluate their accuracy.</p> <p>MIXED: Arts based methods - CYP expressed that they enjoyed the activities where they could share things with others and work collaboratively, others found it challenging and led to arguments; sometimes found each other's stories upsetting. Difficult to understand in depth all forms of arts media. Difficulties with interpretations - findings should be interpreted with caution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance - Two CYP looked shy and did not seem comfortable with sharing or expressing themselves through movement. • Drawing - CYP expressed enjoyment when they had the opportunity to draw in new ways that they had not tried before. • Puppets - Most CYP reported this to be one of their favourite sessions; gave them the chance to share their own stories, but also keep them private as nobody knew whether they were real or not. Process allowed CYP to recreate previous repressed experiences, gain control over them, and gradually resolve conflicting emotions associated with these experiences.

* Papers where a date discrepancy were found between online databases/repositories and the date on the document used for the purposes of the review. The dates reported on the documents provided by authors are used throughout this thesis.

Appendix E: Journal guidance for Pastoral Care in Education (Paper Two)

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Appendix F: Semi-structured interview schedule

Introductions.

Review participant information sheet and consent form; offer a further opportunity for questions.

Explain:

- that the interview will be audio recorded for transcription.
- data management procedures.
- that the transcription will be anonymised and may be seen by University staff.
- that participants can see the transcript upon request should they wish to.
- the right to withdraw at any time, during or post interview without detriment.
- that it may not be possible to withdraw data once anonymised.
- that participants do not have to answer any question that they are not comfortable with.
- the aims and rationale for the research with reference to the participant information sheet. Discussion of why participant has been selected.
- that school staff will not be told their interview responses unless they want them to be told and I will check in with participants which aspects they are happy to be shared (with particular reference to aspects which could improve outcomes for participants).
- Explain that we may talk about situations 'in an ideal world', which may not be possible in practice. Ensure participants understand that the scenarios considered are hypothetical and may not be possible or practical within their settings.
- Explain that the researcher is working from UoM and is interested in how people manage in their tests and exams to seek to make things better for everybody in the future. Explain that we are doing this by speaking to people who might sometimes get extra help in school for (insert information from SENCo based on understanding of needs/difficulties).

Questions

Perceptions and experiences of formal assessment/examinations (RQ1)

- This research is about formal assessments. These are things like end of year exams, end of term tests, end of module tests etc. What do you call them in your school? Assessments? Exams? Tests?
- Could you tell me a little bit about your experiences of (tests, formal assessments, exams)?
 - How often do you do them?
 - Which subjects/curriculum areas do you do them in?
 - How long are they? Is that too long? Too short? Just right? Is it different at different times or for different subjects?
 - Where do you do them? Does this change at different times of year?
 - Is there anything different about the way you do your exams, compared to others? If so, how is it different?
 - How do you find them?
 - What tends to go well?
 - What do you tend to find difficult?
 - How do they make you feel?
 - What support are you offered in preparation for them?

- Have any school staff ever spoken to you about the way you experience (exams/formal assessments/tests)?
- Do you think it would be helpful if you were asked about the way you experience exams/formal assessments/tests?

Access arrangements (RQ2)

These are some of the AA arrangements* that some schools may implement for some students. They may not be possible for you. However, do you think any of them would be useful during (exams/formal assessments/tests)? Provide pictorial prompt and sorting activity (Very useful/A little bit useful/Not at all useful)

- Can you explain why you've put it there?

In an 'ideal world' are there any other things that you think would be useful for you? (Opportunity for additional cards to be drawn up and added to sorting diagram.)

- Can you explain why this would be useful?

We discussed at the beginning that the reason we wanted to hear your views was because you may have needs which contribute to challenging or disruptive behaviour. Do you think there are any access arrangements which would help other students who may have similar needs and display similar behaviours?

*List to be drawn up based on JCQ regulations, but also through consultation with SENCos from host settings.

Evaluation of method (questions added following interview 3)

The purpose of this research is to gain the views of students who may have needs which may contribute to challenging or disruptive behaviour. The way I've done that today is to use a 1:1 interview and the sorting activity.

- How have you found it today?
- Was it too long? Too short?
- How did you find the sorting activity?
- Do you think it would have been better if I would have used different methods to gain your views? Questionnaire? Group interview/focus group? Other methods?

Sorting activity based on:

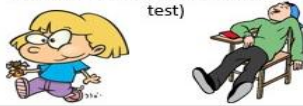












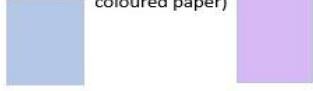


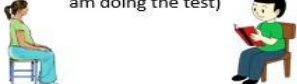
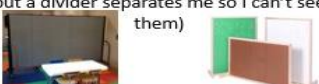








Tyrrell, B. (2018). *Involving Young People with ASD in Organising their Examination Access Arrangements*. [Doctoral thesis, University of Manchester].

<https://research.manchester.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/involving-young-people-with-asd-in-organising-their-examination-a>

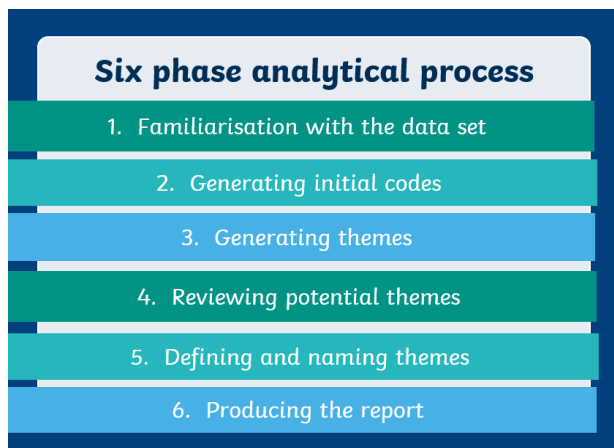
Appendix G: Sorting activity

Tyrrell, B. (2018). *Involving young people with ASD in organising their examination access arrangements*. University of Manchester.

Sorting cards for present study to be developed following initial discussions with SENCo gatekeepers, based on the current JCQ guidelines and resources/capacity within the participating settings. However, it is anticipated that the sorting activity provided by Tyrrell (2018) will capture the significant majority of AA and adjustments that will be discussed.

<p>Rest Break (One or more short breaks, during the test)</p> 	<p>25% Extra Time (more time to finish the test)</p> 	<p>50% Extra Time (even more time to finish the test)</p> 
<p>Computer Reader (the computer reads the questions/ my answers to me)</p> 	<p>Reader (member of staff reads the questions/ my answers to me)</p> 	<p>Scribe (I tell a member of staff my answer, and they write it for me)</p> 
<p>Use of a Word Processor (I use a laptop/ computer to type my answers)</p> 	<p>Braille (the questions are provided in Braille)</p> 	<p>Prompter (an adult is there to help me keep calm, and remind me to concentrate)</p> 
<p>Sign Language Interpreter (an adult uses sign language to translate tests)</p> 	<p>Practical Assistant (an adult helps me, for example by holding a ruler whilst I draw the line in maths)</p> 	<p>Different Room (I take my tests in a different room to other people in my class. It might be a room on my own.)</p> 
<p>Enlarged Paper (the test paper is made bigger)</p> 	<p>Coloured Paper (the test questions are printed on coloured paper)</p> 	<p>PDF Question Papers (test papers are put onto a computer/ laptop screen)</p> 
<p>Ear Defenders/ Ear Plugs (I wear these whilst doing the test)</p> 	<p>Familiar Adult (an adult I like sits in the room, whilst I am doing the test)</p> 	<p>Room Divider (I sit in the same room as other pupils, but a divider separates me so I can't see them)</p> 
<p>Help with Test Anxiety</p> 	<p>Help with Test/ Revision Motivation</p> 	<p>Transport to School on the Day of Test</p> 
<p>Help with Organising my Revision</p> 	<p>Help with Revision</p> 	
<p>Would Help Me</p> 	<p>Might Help Me</p> 	<p>Would Not Help Me</p> 

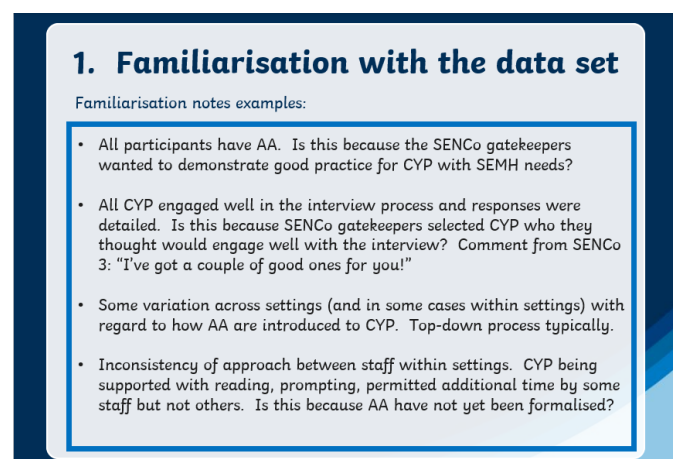
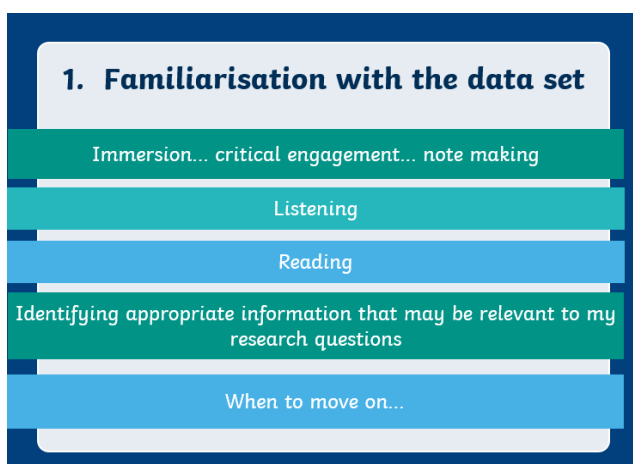
Appendix H: Qualitative data analysis process



The researcher utilised an approach to data analysis which was informed by Braun & Clarke's (2019) Reflexive Thematic Analysis; the following section provides an overview of the process. Information contained within selected presentation slides developed by the researcher are included; these were utilised when presenting his research process to a group of 24 trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) as part of their Doctorate level professional training.

Familiarisation with the data set

Following each interview, the researcher listened to each audio recording before engaging in discussion with the research supervisor. In preparation for meeting with the research supervisor, the researcher made familiarisation notes (see examples below), noting what he had started to notice about the data in relation to the research questions. The researcher listened to all interviews a second time once all data was collected. This was for more critical engagement as the researcher started to consider the links and connections across the data set as a whole. Once interview transcripts were obtained, the researcher re-listened to the interviews whilst reading the transcript to check for accuracy and to fill in any missing content. The researcher then read each interview in turn, starting to consider how he was making sense of the data and whether there were possible alternative interpretations. The researcher considered that it was an appropriate time to move on when he was becoming aware of patterns and interesting features across the data set.



Generating initial codes

As the researcher was interested in the experiences and perspectives of participants, he utilised a largely inductive and semantic orientation, taking the dataset as the starting point for engaging with meaning. The computer assisted qualitative data analysis software programme N-vivo 12 was utilised at this stage of the analysis process. Coding focused largely on explicitly expressed meaning and often stayed close to the language used by participants, but not always; the focus was on capturing the idea.

The researcher did not code line-by-line but instead focused on data relevant to the research questions. When coding, sections of the text were ‘tagged’; this was sometimes a few words, a sentence, or in some cases a longer section of text (see examples below). When undertaking this process, the researcher considered whether an appropriate code had already been developed, whether an existing code could be amended/tweaked, or whether a new code was required. Progressively, as new codes were created, there was a necessity for the researcher to move back and forth between the interviews. A coding consultation was undertaken at this stage with a postgraduate educational psychology researcher studying at doctoral level, who jointly reviewed four pages of interview transcript; this was not to seek consensus, but to consider interpretations as part of the reflexive process.

2. Generating initial codes

Pressure in the exam hall

Jack: Because...I don't know. The hall's just very...dull...it seems like there's a lot of pressure on you when you're in the hall...like everyone's silent, around you and you think that everyone's like...Normally, I think...you can see all them writing; they're doing like well better than me and that's what like...that's what makes it bad about going in the hall.

Comparisons with others

Silence

Coding example in which several codes were developed within a short passage.

2. Generating initial codes

Format of exam questions

Steven: Usually like the...I know...this is probably the same for most people, the tick-box questions, the one-sentence questions and...like the...drawing the lines ones, I get them ones...really easily, like most people would but...it's not usually...it's just like...going off like common knowledge, like...in one of my geography questions, it was...it was...name features of the...red-eyed frog...red-eyed tree frog on what it uses to protect itself from predators and it's adapted, so it's adapted its body to look poisonous, so it's completely fine, it's not poisonous, but it's adapted to look poisonous, so the animals look at it colourful and want to go away from it.

Coding example in which a large section of text was uncoded as it was not relevant to the research questions.

2. Generating initial codes

Researcher: Okay. How did that come about that you were asked to come into this room rather than go into the main hall? Did someone come and speak to you about it or...?

Juliette: I asked...because people were talking about it and I had no idea of a test and people were like, 'Oh, we've got a test...third lesson.' And I was like, 'What?' So I ran to the head of year, and I was like, '...I don't want to...do a test...like with everyone.' And he was like, 'Okay, we'll try and figure something out.' And I just said, 'Can I just sit in a different room?' And he was like, 'Yeah okay.'

Number of people present

Initiation of AA: student request

Coding example in which the same section of text contained more than one code.

2. Generating initial codes

<Files\INTERVIEWS\Interview 4 - Dave (1)> - 2 references coded [0.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.15% Coverage

so I was just sat there clicking my fingers, I can't stay still...

Reference 2 - 0.63% Coverage

Dave: It's just staying in one place for that hour and 40...I was just sat there spinning on my chair and everyone saying to stop it...I just can't stay in one place because I got it done after that hour...I'd done it and I had to sit there for 40 minutes just being quiet.

<Files\INTERVIEWS\Interview 5 - Lewis (1)> - 6 references coded [5.76% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.45% Coverage

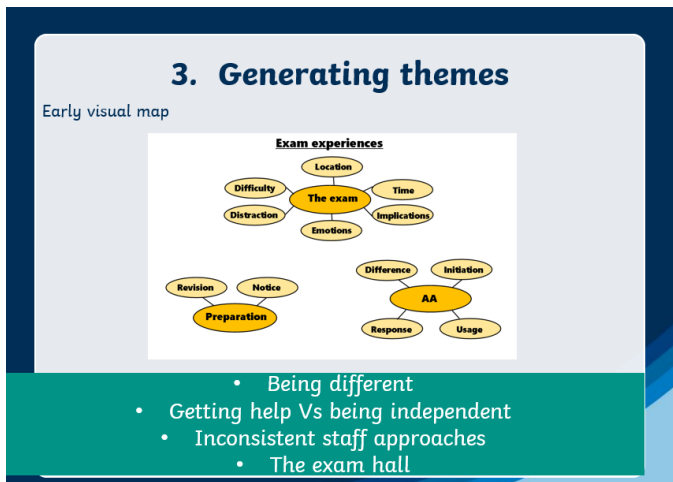
Researcher: Was there anything that you did find difficult in it?

Lewis: Not really, no. Just sitting still really but...

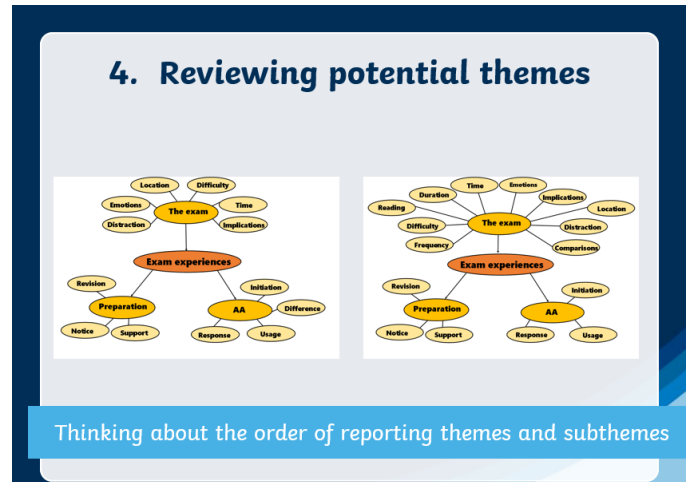
Codes grouped together within N-vivo 12.

Generating themes

At this stage, the researcher moved to paper-based methods as he sought to collapse or cluster codes which shared a concept or feature. Although not yet at the stage of 'naming' themes, the researcher provided shorthand names for the clusters he had started to develop. The researcher started to develop early visual maps of the themes which were developing; some developing themes were removed or integrated at this stage (see below).appdix g



Early visual map.



Examples of early thematic maps developed.

Reviewing potential themes

The researcher acknowledges that this stage was both challenging and time consuming; he had anxieties about what to include/what not to include and many changes were made over a period of several weeks. The researcher considered carefully whether the themes developed were too broad or thin and whether there was enough he could say about each theme. Another process of consultation with a postgraduate educational psychology researcher studying at doctoral level took place at this stage, as thematic maps were shared and the 'story behind them' was told.

Defining and naming themes

At this stage, the researcher further considered the 'story' behind each theme and sought to identify extracts of data which helped to define themes and subthemes. Theme and subtheme labels were assigned, in some cases making use of the working labels from earlier thematic maps. At this stage, the researcher reviewed the thematic maps developed with the research supervisor, who provided feedback that they were 'Clear, and engaging in a way that makes the reader think they'd like to know more about each subtheme'.

Producing the report

The final stage of the process was to provide a descriptive/illustrative write up within the 'Findings' section of the manuscript. Going beyond a description of the themes/subthemes, within the report, data extracts were embedded to enhance trustworthiness and to provide the reader with examples of the original data.

Appendix I: Letter confirming ethical approval



Environment, Education and Development School Panel PGR
School for Environment, Education and Development
Humanities Bridgeford Street 1.17
The University of Manchester
Manchester
M13 9PL
Email: PGR.ethics.seed@manchester.ac.uk

Ref: 2021-12808-20362

09/09/2021

Dear Mr Andrew McLoughlin, Prof Kevin Woods

Study Title: Formal assessment experiences and access arrangements for students with social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) needs.

Environment, Education and Development School Panel PGR

I write to thank you for submitting the final version of your documents for your project to the Committee on 11/08/2021 18:48. I am pleased to confirm a favourable ethical opinion for the above research on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation as submitted and approved by the Committee.

COVID-19 Important Note

Please ensure you read the information on the [Research Ethics website](#) in relation to data collection in the COVID environment as well as the [guidance issued by the University](#) in relation to face-to-face (in person) data collection both on and off campus.

[A word document version of this guidance is also available.](#)

Please see below for a table of the titles, version numbers and dates of all the final approved documents for your project:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Additional docs	Semi structured interview schedule	02/08/2021	1
Additional docs	SORTING ACTIVITY (TYRRELL 2018)	02/08/2021	1
Consent Form	Parent carer consent form	02/08/2021	2
Participant Information Sheet	Participant information sheet	02/08/2021	2
Consent Form	CYP assent form	02/08/2021	2
Participant Information Sheet	CYP participant information sheet	02/08/2021	2
Letters of Permission	DBS 1	02/08/2021	1
Letters of Permission	DBS 2	02/08/2021	1
Letters of Permission	Email for participant recruitment	02/08/2021	1
Data Management Plan	DMP Version 1	10/08/2021	1
Additional docs	risk assessment	10/08/2021	1

This approval is effective for a period of five years and is on delegated authority of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) however please note that it is only valid for the specifications of the research project as outlined in the approved documentation set. If the project continues beyond the 5 year period or if you wish to propose any changes to the methodology or any other specifics within the project an application to seek an amendment must be submitted for review. Failure to do so could invalidate the insurance and constitute research misconduct.

You are reminded that, in accordance with University policy, any data carrying personal identifiers must be encrypted when not held on a secure university computer or kept securely as a hard copy in a location which is accessible only to those involved with the research.

For those undertaking research requiring a DBS Certificate: As you have now completed your ethical application if required a colleague at the University of Manchester will be in touch for you to undertake a DBS check. Please note that you do not have DBS approval until you have received a DBS Certificate completed by the University of Manchester, or you are an MA Teach First student who holds a DBS certificate for your current teaching role.

Reporting Requirements:

You are required to report to us the following:

1. [Amendments](#): Guidance on what constitutes an amendment
2. [Amendments](#): How to submit an amendment in the ERM system
3. [Ethics Breaches and adverse events](#)
4. [Data breaches](#)

We wish you every success with the research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Kate Rowlands

Environment, Education and Development School Panel PGR



Participant Consent Forms (Parent/Carer)

Assessment experiences and provisions for students with additional needs, relating social or personal difficulties in mainstream Secondary schools

Consent Form - Version 2, Date 02/08/21

If you are happy for your child to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

	Activities	Initials
1	I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet (Version 2, Date 02/08/2021) for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.	
2	I understand that my child's participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself or my child. I understand that it will not be possible to remove my child's data from the project once it has been anonymised and forms part of the data set. I understand that my child will also be asked to assent and sign a child-friendly assent form. I agree to take part on this basis	
3	I agree to the interviews being audio recorded.	
5	I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, reports or journals	
6	I agree that the researcher may contact me in future about other research projects.	
7	I agree that the researcher may retain my contact details in order to provide me with a summary of the findings for this study.	
8	I understand that there may be instances where during the course of the interview information is revealed which means that the researcher will be	

	obliged to break confidentiality and this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet.	
9	I agree to take part in this study	

Data Protection

The personal information we collect and use to conduct this research will be processed in accordance with data protection law as explained in the Participant Information Sheet and the [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#).

Name of Participant Signature Date

Name of the person taking consent Signature Date

[An electronic (typed) signature will be accepted, due to social distancing guidelines. The signed consent form should be sent directly to the researcher, meaning that both researcher and participant will hold an electronic copy.]

Appendix K: Young person assent form

Participant assent form

If you are happy to be a part of this research, please complete the form below.

Remember, you can always ask your teachers if you aren't sure about anything.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have read the information sheet.• I have had opportunity to ask questions about the research, and think about whether I would like to take part.• All my questions have been answered.	My initials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I understand that if I don't want to meet with Andrew, I don't have to, and I can stop taking part at any time.	My initials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I understand that Andrew will not tell other people something I have said, if I ask him not to (unless he thinks I, or someone else, might be in danger).• I understand that Andrew will check with me which parts of what I've said I'm happy to be shared with school staff.	My initials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I understand that my spoken responses will be audio recorded.	My initials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I understand that other researchers might read about my opinions.• The other researchers will not know the opinions came from me and they won't know my name or the name of my school.	My initials

Data Protection

The personal information we collect and use to conduct this research will be processed in accordance with data protection law as explained in the Participant Information Sheet and the [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#).

I agree to take part in the research project.

(My Name)

(Date)

(My Signature)



Assessment experiences and provisions for students with additional needs, relating social or personal difficulties in mainstream Secondary schools

Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study which will seek to explore the assessment experiences and needs of students who receive additional support in school, relating to social or personal difficulties. It will seek to explore which access arrangements (AA) these students consider to be potentially useful when undertaking formal assessments and examinations. Before you decide whether you wish for your child to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

About the research

➤ **Who will conduct the research?**

Principal researcher: **Andrew McLoughlin**: Year two Trainee Educational Psychologist, enrolled on the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology programme at the University of Manchester (School of Environment, Education and Development).

Research supervisor: **Professor Kevin Woods**. Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, University of Manchester.

➤ **What is the purpose of the research?**

The research seeks to investigate the perceptions, experiences and related emotions of children and young people (CYP) with additional needs, who may experience social, emotional or mental health needs which contribute to challenging or disruptive behaviour. The focus of the research will be with regard to their formal educational assessments/examinations. Listening directly to the voices of the students, the research will endeavour to determine which adjustments or AA these students consider to be potentially useful when accessing such formal assessments.

Formal educational assessments such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, generally taken at age sixteen, present many CYP with a challenging period of high pressure. Accordingly, settings are able to implement 'reasonable adjustments' known as AA for students with specific needs in order to allow them to evidence their knowledge and understanding, without changing the demands of the assessment.

Although there has been some research into the assessment needs of students with developmental learning difficulties and Autism Spectrum Disorder, research regarding AA and reasonable

adjustments for students with needs relating to social, emotional or mental health needs is sparse. The present study seeks to address such a gap in the literature.

➤ **Why has my child been chosen?**

Your child has been chosen to participate in the research as they are in Year 10 and have been identified by school staff as having additional needs, related to social, emotional or mental health.

(Include bespoke reference to intervention group/pastoral support accessed by individual as signposted by SENCo gatekeeper. E.g. 'Mrs Jones informed us that you attend weekly sessions with her Emotional regulation skills group.')

Your child will be able to provide insight into their formal assessment experiences and which AA they would find potentially useful. Your child is one child of 12 students, across several schools in the North West of England who have been invited to participate.

➤ **Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

The primary purpose of this research is for a Doctoral thesis as part of the University of Manchester as part of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology assessment requirements. Findings potentially may be used in future research and could contribute to research submitted for publication in a peer reviewed journal.

➤ **Who has reviewed the research project?**

The project has been reviewed by the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee.

➤ **Who is funding the research project?**

Funding has been provided from the DfE Initial Training for Educational Psychologists bid (£15,950 pa bursary)

What would my child's involvement be?

➤ **What would my child be asked to do if they took part?**

Upon completion of the associated assent and consent forms, the researcher will contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time to conduct the research. Your child's involvement will take the form of a semi structured interview with the researcher for approximately an hour. Some short activities may be completed to help your child give their views and opinions. The interview will be audio recorded for transcription purposes. Once downloaded, the audio recording will be held securely on the University of Manchester network. The researcher will make himself available to participants both in advance of the interview, should have any questions, and also after the interview, should participants wish to engage in a debrief. The interview schedule is attached with example questions. Although no negative effects are anticipated from the research, arrangements will be in place for a trusted member of staff to be available during the interviews, should the student become distressed or wish to withdraw their participation. Prior to the interviews, students will be reminded of their right to withdraw without detriment to themselves or others.

➤ **What happens if I do not want my child to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not your child takes part. If you would like your child to participate, please complete the attached consent form. If you would like to take part but change your mind, you are free to withdraw your child at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself or your child. However, it will not be possible to remove your data from the project once it has been anonymised as we will not be able to identify your specific data. This does not affect your data protection rights. If you decide you do not wish for your child to take part you do not need to do anything further.

While audio recordings are an essential requirement to your participation in the study, should your child feel uncomfortable with the recording process at any point during the interview, they are able to request that the researcher stops recording at any time.

Are there any additional considerations that I need to know about before deciding whether I should take part?

Social distancing will be upheld during the course of interviews. Materials utilised will be allocated on a single use, individual basis. If government guidance changes pending the interview, the researcher will contact you to discuss the required amendments to the undertaking of the study.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

➤ What information will you collect about me?

In order to participate in this research project we will need to collect information that could identify you and your child, called “personal identifiable information”. Specifically we will need to collect:

- Names and signatures on assent/consent forms
- Audio recordings (obtained during interview)
- Anonymised transcripts of data

➤ Under what legal basis are you collecting this information?

We are collecting and storing this personal identifiable information in accordance with UK data protection law which protect your rights. These state that we must have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is “a public interest task” and “a process necessary for research purposes”.

➤ What are my rights in relation to the information you will collect about me?

You have a number of rights under data protection law regarding your personal information. For example you can request a copy of the information we hold about you, including audio recordings. If you would like to know more about your different rights or the way we use your personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult our [Privacy Notice for Research](#).

➤ Will my participation in the study be confidential and my personal identifiable information be protected?

In accordance with data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that we are responsible for making sure personal information is kept secure, confidential and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained with this in mind, and your data will be looked after in the following way:

Only the study team at The University of Manchester will have access to personal information, but they will anonymise it using pseudonyms as soon as possible. Names and any other identifying information will be removed and replaced with a random ID number. Only the research team will have access to the key that links this ID number to your personal information. In line with The University of Manchester retention policy, data will be stored for a period of five years in secure locations on the researcher's P Drive.

Audio recordings will be used to create transcripts. The transcription will be undertaken by a third party who is a University of Manchester approved supplier; a confidentiality agreement is in place between their organisation and University of Manchester. All personal identifiable information will be removed in the final transcript as pseudonyms will be used. The anonymised transcript will be archived securely at the University of Manchester for a period of five years and then destroyed. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings.

Potential disclosures:

Whilst unlikely, there could be circumstances where during the course of the interview information is revealed which means that the researcher will be obliged to break confidentiality. Examples of this could include:

- If, during the study, your child discloses information that leads the researcher has concerns about his/her safety or the safety of others.
- If, during the study, your child discloses information about any current or future illegal activities, we have a legal obligation to report this and will therefore need to inform the relevant authorities.

Individuals from the University, the site where the research is taking place and regulatory authorities may need to review the study information for auditing and monitoring purposes or in the event of an incident.

Please also note that individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. This may involve looking at identifiable data. All individuals involved in auditing and monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant.

What if I have a complaint?

If you have a complaint that you wish to direct to members of the research team, please contact:

PROFESSOR KEVIN WOODS (Research Supervisor)

kevin.a.woods@manchester.ac.uk

Telephone Number: 0161 275 3511

School of Environment, Education and Development Ellen Wilkinson Building Oxford Road,
University of Manchester

If you wish to make a formal complaint to someone independent of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance, then please contact:

The Research Ethics Manager, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, by emailing: research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk or by telephoning 0161 275 2674.

If you wish to contact us about your data protection rights, please email dataprotection@manchester.ac.uk or write to The Information Governance Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL at the University and we will guide you through the process of exercising your rights.

You also have a right to complain to the [Information Commissioner's Office about complaints relating to your personal identifiable information](#) Tel 0303 123 1113

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the study then please contact the researcher:

ANDREW MCLOUGHLIN (Principal researcher)

andrew.mcloughlin-2@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Telephone Number: 0161 275 3511

School of Environment, Education and Development Ellen Wilkinson Building Oxford Road,
University of Manchester

Appendix M: Young person information sheet

Young person participant information sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study about your experiences of formal assessments and exams at school.

Before you decide if you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what you would have to do if you decided to take part.

I'd like you to read the information below carefully and talk to others about it if you wish.

Please ask if there is anything you're not sure about or if you would like to know more information.

Have a think about whether you would like to take part. If you do want to take part, please complete the assent form below. I'll then make contact with your parent/carer to make sure they're also happy for you take part.

Thank you for your time and for reading this.

Who is doing the research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My name is Andrew McLoughlin and I'm a Trainee Educational Psychologist at Manchester University.
Why are you doing this research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know that formal assessments and exams can be a difficult and stressful experience for many students. • We want to know your views about it and to hear what you think could be done to make it better.
Why have I been chosen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to speak to students who are currently in Year 10 and who may experience social, emotional or mental health needs which contribute to challenging or disruptive behaviour. <p>(Include bespoke reference to intervention group/pastoral support accessed by individual as signposted by SENCo gatekeeper. E.g. 'Mrs Jones informed us that you attend weekly sessions with her Emotional regulation skills group.')</p>
What will taking part involve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will come into your school and meet with you. • I'll ask you some questions about exams and we may do some short activities so I can get your opinions. • Your spoken responses will be audio recorded.
What happens with the information I give you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information from you, and other students across other several schools will be used to write a report about student experiences of exams and assessments. • Other researchers might read the report, but your name and the name of your school will not be included so nobody will be able to identify you as having taken part. • Any information you tell us will be kept safe.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your teachers will not be told your responses unless you want them to be told. I will check with you which bits you'd like me to share with your teachers. • The information you give will be kept safe at The University of Manchester office. • However, if you say something that worries us about your safety or somebody else's safety we will have to pass this information on. If this is the case, then we will talk to you about it before we talk to your parents/carers and teacher.
Do I have to take part?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. It is entirely up to you whether you take part. • If you do not want to take part, you do not have to give a reason. • If you do decide to take part in the research, you can also change your mind and stop being part of it at any time.
How long will it take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About an hour.
Where and when will it happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At school, during school time.
Who has checked your research plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has been reviewed by the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee.
What if I want to complain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to your parent/carer. They have been given details about how the University can be contacted.
I still have some questions, who can I speak to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can speak to your teacher, who may be able to answer them. If not they will arrange for me to speak to you to answer your questions.