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**‘A reflective account of my professional learning as an NQT
using a solution-focused method to encourage behaviour
management’.**

Ed D Thesis.
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Abstract.

The use of a solution-focused method to encourage behaviour management of Year

9 pupils by a newly-qualified teacher

This research investigates how the use of Solution Oriented Schools processes can have an impact on behaviour management and relationships between teachers and pupils in secondary schools. This qualitative research focuses upon the sensitive issue of poor classroom behaviour and the pressure on teachers to manage it, at a time when unacceptable behaviour is deemed to be increasing both in and out of school. Solution Oriented Therapy takes a holistic view of behaviour, so this research seeks to get a range of perspectives, beginning with listening to how pupils regard this approach. Their experiences, explored through Focus Group interviews and structured tasks, are set alongside the views of SOS trained teachers in telephone interviews, face to face interviews with teachers in the school where the research took place and the experiences of the author, an SOS- trained practitioner and recently qualified teacher, gathered through a research journal.

Key findings from this research are the impact that the processes of SOS can have on the development and enrichment of teacher – pupil relationships. From this, effective contracts can be made between teachers and pupils that lead to more effective behaviour management strategies and, over time, the motivation of students to behave well and the empowerment of students to manage their own behaviour are increased.

The implications of this work, that teachers themselves can improve behaviour by recognising that their personality directly affects their style of classroom management, which in turn effects how much power/control pupils are given over their own learning and self-management. Thus a teacher who views herself as a facilitator will be flexible and relational, using different techniques to help pupils control their own behaviour; she will endeavour to enable pupils to work collaboratively and actively seek the pupil voice, and then include ideas from the pupils in the strategies for behaviour and learning.

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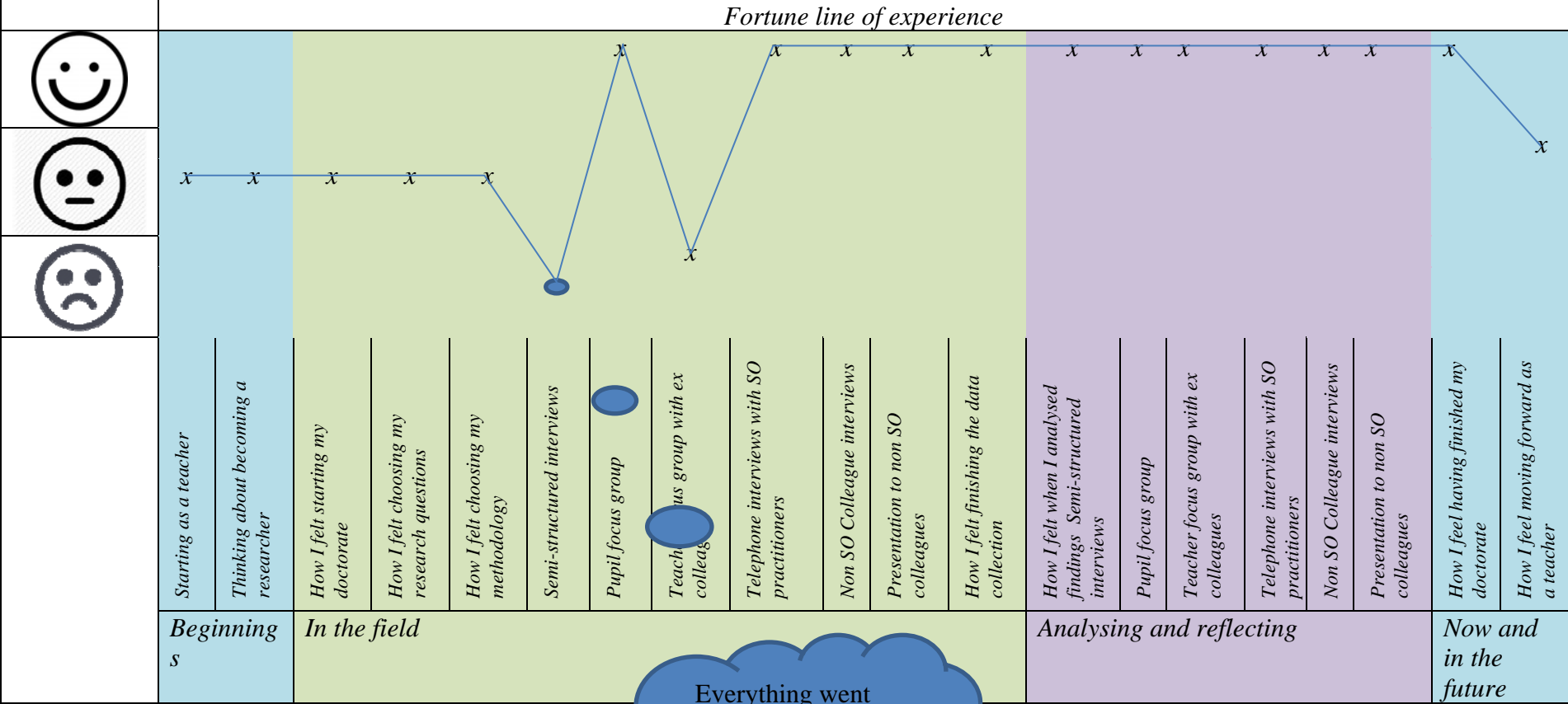
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Chapter 1. Introduction.

This thesis outlines the research I conducted using a Solution Focused (SF) approach known as SOS (Solution Oriented Schools), to improve behaviour management of Year 9 pupils. The introduction will describe how I came to choose this topic, and set it in the context of my developing career as a secondary school teacher. An overview of the history of Solution Focused techniques shall also be given. Firstly my journey as a teacher researcher will be outlined using a fortune line (Fig. 1), which is a graph that displayed how I felt: happy, sad or mixed emotions during the different activities that comprised my time researching my doctorate.

Fig.1 Fortune Line.



At the beginning of my Doctorate course I had mixed emotions as I was excited to take on such a huge challenge and felt privileged to be able to finally set out to achieve something I had wanted to do since childhood. However, I was working full time, commuting three hours a day and attending university sessions on Saturdays and evenings, so whilst enjoying the new learning I was engaging in I felt I was stretching myself physically and mentally to my limits. When I chose my research questions I was sure that was an area that would be useful to my practice as a teacher, and therefore would be interesting as a researcher. However, not having completed a project of this size before I had small nagging doubts as to whether I would be able to gain enough data to warrant writing a thesis about it. At first when I chose my methodology I was confused at the vast choice of methods available for use in research as to which methods would best suit my research questions, although once I decided to go for qualitative methods rather than quantitative I felt more confident as I had used qualitative research methods before, I then believed I would be able to carry out my research successfully.

When I carried out the Semi-structured Interviews with the pupils that was a low point in my research as it did not reveal the data I hoped to gain from the pupils. Initially I believed it to be a huge waste of time, however, it did make me change my philosophy on how much involvement I felt I had to have in the process of attaining data from pupils and it led me to reflect upon my practice and develop the 'Diamond nine' activity. During the Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond nine' task I was really excited about the responses I was receiving from the pupils and I felt that doing this piece of research helped my relationship with the pupils enormously, however, it also massively increased my understanding of the pupil's perception of me as a supply teacher.

After I had completed the Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond nine’ task I decided that I had gained all the data I needed for my research from the pupils, and that I needed to find out how colleagues I trained with in SOS were using the approach and if they had any further tips for me to improve my practice and reach pupils that had not responded to the method. This was a low point in my research as initially, when I tried to arrange the focus group there were no responses from participants and it was difficult to gain access to the teachers. Then when I met two ex-colleagues informally I found they were not using SOS I was devastated as the world was not how I presumed it to be. This led me to critically reflect upon my own practice and why I had liked SOS.

Since my ex-colleagues were not using SOS I contacted the trainers to be put in touch with other teachers using SOS. However, when I rang the numbers I was given the contacts turned out to be ex-teachers working as SO practitioners to support behaviour challenged pupils in schools. Speaking to these practitioners was really enlightening as they all used variations on SFT and it made me see that as an NQT I was keen to stick to the rules/guidelines I’d been given, but that perhaps if I was a little more flexible I would be able to establish better relationships with the pupils. Similarly when I interviewed my Non SO Colleagues I had a huge revelation as they admitted that they were not always the ‘strict’ teacher they had previously encouraged me to be, so this really made me feel more comfortable to be more myself in the classroom.

During the Presentation to Non SO Colleagues I was really happy to have the chance to share my research with SOS as it was the first time that I had been invited to by my colleagues. They were receptive to the idea, willing to try it with their pupils and asked me to adapt the form I had developed with pupils for them to use which I did. As I analysed my findings my confidence grew as I realised that the research that did not go as I had planned, namely the Semi-structured interviews where all part of my journey as

a researcher, when these events had gone wrong it led me to try other methods which were more successful such as the Diamond 9 Pupil Focus Group. After speaking to the SO practitioners and my colleagues and analysing their comments, I realised that I did not have to be a teacher persona that was not me, i.e. 'strict/admonishing' and I believe this realisation made me relax more in the classroom when I was teaching and I felt more confidence to be myself. Again this impacted upon my teaching as I was prepared to take more risks such as including fun activities such as role play, and trust the pupils more to bring ideas to lessons to alter activities I'd planned e.g. using computers to make leaflets instead of pens and paper.

At the end of my research I felt that completing my doctorate had made me much more confident as a teacher, and had allowed me to be myself in the classroom. When engaging in classroom research I felt really confident as completing my doctorate gave me knowledge and skills to complete the research, analyse findings and apply changes needed. However, I finished with mixed emotions as I also realised in order to keep on developing as a teacher I would not have the high level of support without my university supervisors. Next an overview of behaviour concerns in schools shall be given.

Behaviour issues had clearly been a concern of teachers for some time: "Children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise..." (Socrates in McNamara, 1999:1).

Staffroom talk at break times in schools usually centred upon the behaviour of pupils in the schools that I had trained and worked in. Whilst I believed it was an opportunity for some teachers to let off steam, other teachers claimed that poor behaviour of pupils led to serious effects upon their personal lives and teaching. Indeed,

Lines (2002:10) claimed that: "...many older teachers are going off sick through stress and are not able to get counselling for themselves, let alone for their pupils". (Lines, 2002:10). Kelly *et al.* (2008:5), pointed out that when pupils were not willing to cooperate with teachers this often led the teachers to claim about the pupils that: "...he/she just doesn't care..." (Kelly *et al.* 2008:5), about learning. As well as pupils displaying negative attitudes to learning teachers were faced with other issues that could effect children's ability to function well enough to be able to learn such as: "school violence, bullying, gang activity, and other illicit behaviour happening on school grounds..." (ibid, 2008:5). Importantly, Kelly *et al.* (2008:5), claimed that: "...while school administrators try to maintain "zero tolerance" for these behaviours on the one hand, and on the other, try hard to foster a positive, child-centered learning environment to increase academic achievement for all students." (ibid, 2008:5). I believed that an authoritarian attitude of zero tolerance often conflicted with an empowering attitude towards pupils. Indeed the respected Brazilian educator Paulo Freire believed that how people acted in the world "...is, to a large extent, a function of how they perceive themselves in the world." (Freire in Pollard, 2002:366). He promoted the idea of continuously reflecting upon your actions, then acting upon this reflection which I believed pupils ought to do to improve their situation when they found themselves in trouble in school.

Lambert and Miller (2010), reported that Ofsted found: "...behaviour in primary schools had gradually improved between 1996 and 2004, although there had been a decrease over the same period for secondary schools, from three-quarters to two-thirds of these being judged as displaying 'good or better levels' of general behaviour..." (Lambert and Miller, 2010:600). Houghton *et al.* (1988), surveyed two hundred and fifty-one secondary school teachers to find the most common types of misbehaviour and

found that pupils: "...talking out of turn..." and "...hindering others..." (Houghton *et al.* 1988:305), were the most common causes of classroom behaviour. As the authors did not clarify whether 'talking out of turn' meant talking over the teacher, other pupils or off task when working - from my practice I presumed this to mean talking over the teacher or another pupil. Similarly because what 'hindering others,' involved I presumed this meant actions that would distract other pupils so they were not getting on with the task set in the lesson. As a new classroom teacher this irritated me, because to me this behaviour was bad manners. However, bad mannered behaviour such as talking over other pupils or the teachers, I grew to learn from observing more teachers teach, was the norm in classrooms whereas criminal behaviour such as physical violence was rare.

Other factors Houghton *et al.* noted that teachers regarded as disruptive behaviours were: "...idleness/slowness... non-verbal noise... disobedience... unpunctuality... untidiness... out of seat... verbal abuse and physical aggression." (ibid, 1988:305), I believed that idleness/slowness could be when pupils did not work continuously to complete a written task or if they were working collaboratively (with others in a group), if they let the others do most or all of the work, which again I agreed with as I thought it was unfair if some did not complete the equivalent amount of work to others.

Non-verbal distracting behaviour could distract my train of thought while instructing a class, as well as the concentration of pupils whilst they were working, other pupils complained about unnecessary noise from individuals. Non-verbal distracting behaviours I had observed in a classroom included whistling, banging the table/floor (often seemingly sub-consciously), flicking a pen on and off while others were talking. I had seen some teachers annoyed by pupils drinking from their water

bottles whilst the teacher was giving instructions (although personally I did not mind it as I wanted the pupil to be hydrated and believed pupils could listen and drink at the same time). 'Disobedience' I presumed was not following the teacher's instructions either to complete a task or to give back something they had taken from another pupil when the owner did not want them to. Unpunctuality to a lesson was an interruption to the flow of the lesson, which occurred if the teacher had set the whole class off on a task, then had to repeat instructions and speak to the latecomer individually to check the reason for lateness, which was expected in my school. I believed untidiness was not tidying equipment away that the pupil was responsible for during a lesson, although it was also untidiness in presentation of work or self. Lastly verbal abuse and physical aggression was towards other pupils or the teacher. Interestingly, fifty cases of 'talking out of turn' were recorded at the same time there was one case of physical aggression and fifty per cent of teachers regarded 'talking out of turn' as the worst behaviour they had to deal with (Houghton *et al.* 1988:304). The findings of Houghton *et al.* were summarised in the table below:

Table no. 1.

Most troublesome behaviours (first choice) (rounded percentages)

Behaviour categories	Overall	Male	Female
talking out of turn	50	44	57
hindering others	17	13	21
idleness/slowness	13	17	9
non-verbal noise	6	8	4
disobedience	4	5	3
unpunctuality	4	5	3
untidiness	3	5	2
out of seat	1	2	1
verbal abuse	1	2	1
physical aggression	1	1	1

(sourced from Houghton *et al.* 1988:305).

As I observed teachers in lessons I realised that different teachers would react to similar behaviours in different ways to their colleagues.

Riley (2007:221), recorded how children suspected of anti-social behaviour in the community had their behaviour monitored and possibly reported upon by their schools, so clearly poor behaviour in schools had an impact upon pupil's lives outside of school. Furthermore the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 according to Riley (2007:227), gave teachers the power to contract parents into helping to enforce good behaviour in their children. For pupils who had received one of the most severe punishments from school exclusion – parents were required to oversee that their children completed work set by the school during these periods out of their institution.

I began to look for another approach to 'behaviour management' during my Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in 2005/6, because I realised that for some students detentions did not seem to deter them from distracting others in lessons, or even encourage that individual to focus and try to work in lessons. In the schools I trained in I saw the same pupils regularly attending detentions, I was frustrated by this as it seemed to me to be a pointless exercise if the pupil did not modify their behaviour because of these. An outline of the approach I used with pupils to help them to control their behaviour 'Solution Oriented Schools' ('SOS') follows.

Solution Oriented Schools.

Whilst working as a supply teacher (on a six month contract) in a secondary school for 13-19 year olds in a rural Northumberland High School in 2007, I began attending evening training sessions on 'Solution Oriented Schools' (known as the 'SOS' training programme). In total I attended three, one and a half hour sessions before the summer holidays in 2007, with 'homework' being set after each session to be reported back upon on in the next session. Then post summer holidays two more evening sessions in the Autumn term of the school year 2007/8.

The approach involved sitting at an angle (not face on as the teacher's body language may seem aggressive), with a pupil who had misbehaved and asking them to rate themselves out of ten (known as 'scaling' - with ten being good), how they had behaved. The teacher was not allowed to scale the pupil, and had to accept any number the pupil offered. The pupil was then asked what number they were going to aim to be in the next lesson (known as 'goaling'), again the teacher had to accept the number offered by the pupil. The pupil was then to be asked to identify an 'exception' lesson/activity (e.g. football), when they did not experience any behaviour issues. The pupil would then be asked what skills they used during their 'exception' activity in

order to maintain their focus (refrain from misbehaving). Once the pupil identified these skills the teacher was to identify the virtues/attributes (e.g. patience), the pupil had when completing their skill, then finally the pupil was to be asked to bring these virtues/attributes to the subject where they had got into trouble.

The training sessions usually began by the course leaders explaining the theory behind SOS then the attendees would work in pairs or small groups to test/practice the ideas. For example during the session where we were informed about the pupils scaling themselves out of ten, we then worked in pairs to tell each other about a problem from our professional life (e.g. workload), then say what we were going to do to change the issue for the next meeting. At the next session we would state what we had done about our problem and rate where we thought the situation was out of ten. I especially found the coaching sessions we had on supportive listening helpful, both colleagues and myself admitted it was hard not to offer suggestions, but the core belief of SOS was that the person with the issue finds their own way to resolve it. However, I knew in practice teachers continually tell pupils what to do to improve their behaviour so whilst I was attracted to the idea, some of my colleagues openly said the method was too radical for them and they were not comfortable with giving the pupil so much control.

When I attended the Solution Oriented Schools training sessions I was introduced to a new way of working with disaffected pupils, and I wondered if using this different approach based upon Solution Focused Brief Therapy, (SFBT) would work. Often in detentions (I had witnessed other teachers conducting), pupils sat and did nothing for half an hour, did extra work, or caught up work missed in the lesson. For most students they would be so mortified at being given a detention, or the threat of a detention would be enough to prevent them from earning another. However, I believed for the 'repeat offenders' something had to change in these detentions, I had noticed that

teacher - pupil talk in these were very one sided – the teacher told the pupil their behaviour was unacceptable and vented their spleens at the pupil, and I could tell from the body language and comments from those pupils they resented this. This often led to complete relationship breakdown between that pupil and members of staff. Moreover, in some detentions I had witnessed the teacher did not interact with the pupil at all – when queried the teachers commented it was to avoid confrontation, or it was to reinforce the teacher’s authority and remind the pupil their free time had been taken away as a punishment; talking to the pupil would make it appear as if the teacher was being friendly.

I was curious to investigate whether working on developing a relationship through the positive discourse the SOS approach allowed for would make a difference to pupils with repeated behaviour issues. As a trainee teacher I had noticed pupils who had misbehaved for me in detention who were then passed to the Head of Department for detention, were all laughs and smiles when they left the detention of someone who kept the detention upbeat, and had made jokes about the pupils behaviour or taste in personal choices – for example favourite band or football team. I will now outline how SOS fitted into my practice as a teacher.

My context.

I was interested in the SOS approach as I had found success in working with difficult pupils individually, and it was my preferred personal style. As a teacher of philosophy I was used to talking and listening to pupils’ ideas, and preferred to teach by getting the pupils to share ideas with each other rather than me lecture or give information. I enjoyed seeing the pupils interact with each other and discover new data themselves rather than be informed of it by myself. For example, in lessons I would use a video clip to stimulate pair discussion about an issue such as war. For another topic, to provoke

ideas about man-made and natural evil and suffering I would use techniques such as ‘universal café’; where pupils looked at a picture of evil or suffering as a group on one table they wrote comments stimulated by that picture on the table cloth, then moved as a group to the next table with a different picture to read and discuss previous comments then added their own.

I also felt comfortable conversing with pupils on a one to one basis, and believed as a new teacher by listening to pupils that I could improve professionally by learning from pupils – often pupils would help me with my IT skills in lessons, and I enjoyed learning from them. In addition in my Initial Teacher Training practices I had managed to help some individuals completely change their classroom behaviour by listening to them, and talking to them on breaks/ lunchtimes instead of giving them a detention, especially students who seem to be on detention every single day; in my opinion regular daily detentions were not working for them, and I believed that this would not move my classroom practice forward. However, my approach did not seem to work with every individual and when I started the ‘SOS’ training, I realised that this may offer a further structure that would suit and improve my preferred style of working with pupils, and perhaps help students I had previously found no success in working with.

Rewarding good behaviour was an approach teaching borrowed from psychology and sociology to get pupils to work hard in school. Just as Pavlov’s dogs were rewarded with food, we rewarded children with stickers. Through school in England I was as a student encouraged to believe that education was part of a meritocratic society, where even if I started society at a disadvantage, I could earn a wealthier position for myself by working hard at school and gaining qualifications that would allow me to achieve a better paid job than someone with fewer qualifications than myself. “...a meritocracy is by definition a society with structured social

inequality; all it promises is equal opportunity to compete for unequal power and reward.” (Bilton *et al.*, 1981:314). Indeed, I completely accepted this as a fact of life and was willing to conform to the system, as I regarded anyone at school too lazy to work as fools to themselves.

Education was reinforcing the meritocracy: “In a meritocracy the education system is not expected to eradicate privilege and disadvantage: it merely offers a new sorting mechanism for recruiting people to subordinate or dominant positions.” (Bilton *et al.*, 1981:314). It was only through this research that I came to realise that other young people in my research may not have been given the values at home to make them want to strive to achieve. Also, I had come to question a society where wealth was unfairly distributed, so that pupils from financially poor homes who may want to do well may not have been able to afford resources such as computers or books to help their academic research. Thus, I could understand that some pupils may not have been given the values I had been given to want to strive at school, yet I could see the modern schools I was now teaching in offered resources such as computer access and teaching support to pupils outside school hours, hence removing a barrier to their success. I believed if I spent time with pupils to show that they counted, and that they could be successful it would offer them a different outlook upon their own chances, and I felt SOS offered a tool for this interaction to take place.

For me the beauty of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) was that it was brief and not highly regimented, so that as a busy teacher, it could fit into a hectic schedule, whereas other more time consuming therapies with many systems and methods would not. (A model of how I used the SOS intervention in school can be found in Chapter Three). Where funding was possible in schools a counsellor practicing a different type of therapy may help some pupils, therefore SFBT seemed to offer a

convenient tool for teachers for improving the quality of the teaching and learning experience for both teachers and pupils, in filling the gap where school counsellors and Educational Psychologists could not help. Moreover, as a teacher you already had a sophisticated understanding of any ethical implications of anything that you did with pupils, being in such a responsible position, and this type of therapy (SFBT) suited someone, such as a teacher who had highly developed inter-personal skills. However, it was difficult for a teacher to hold a 'problem free position.' Thus, I was aware as I conducted my SOS meetings that I may be the cause of the problem for an individual pupil. Also, I was aware that I was biased in wanting a favourable outcome, indeed this bias could also affect my research results (judging whether SOS was a useful technique to use with pupils), in that I would have felt that it would have been embarrassing to have invested time in pupils for them to continue to be off task and unengaged in my lessons.

In the following chapter I analyse traditional approaches to behaviour management of pupils by teachers. I will describe ideas surrounding the influence of social relationships and mindsets upon pupil behaviour. The difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of Solution Focused approaches in schools shall be outlined as well as differing beliefs concerning the role of therapeutic approaches in schools.

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

This literature review will cover a general background of how teachers have tried to manage behaviour within schools in the past, including examples of motivations that have been used in order to demonstrate how traditional approaches have been used in the past rather than therapeutic ones like SOS. Factors which can contribute to pupils behaving poorly such as social relationships and mindsets shall be considered, because it was necessary to understand that some pupil behaviour and outlooks were a result of their socialisation. A critique of the use of SF methods shall be given, as well as an analysis of using Pupil Voice. Teacher attitudes towards in service training (professional development), will be outlined. Also, a discussion of the role of therapeutic approaches in schools shall be outlined, so as to reveal the opposite opinions amongst educationalists upon teachers using therapeutic methods such as SOS with pupils.

A very brief history of managing behaviour in secondary schools.

Psychologists tried to explain behaviour and how to control behaviour which influenced how pupils were treated and controlled by teachers in school. The ideas behind the SOS approach were partly rooted in the psychological school of Behaviourism. Skinner based his ideas of 'behaviourism' upon the work conducted by Watson, who was regarded as the founder of behaviourism (Stevenson, 1974:91). Watson believed that one's environment was more important than genetic factors for determining how people would behave, and claimed if he was given a set of babies he would: "...guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any kind of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief, and yes even beggar-man..." (Watson in Stevenson, 1974:93). Famously his idea was evidenced by Pavlov's experiment where he trained dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell, eventually to the point when the dogs would salivate even when no food was present just to the ring of the bell. Thus, it was

believed by some psychologists such as Skinner that what applied to animals also applied to humans (Stevenson, 1974:94), therefore in schools children could be trained to modify their behaviour according to certain signals – rewards or punishments from teachers.

Thus, Skinner’s ideas seemed to imply that it would be wrong to blame pupils for their poor behaviour, because we were all victims of our environment and were therefore not making decisions for ourselves, because our reactions were determined by our environment and that we had no freewill over our responses to situations. However, Skinner believed that psychology had come to such knowledge that it was possible to program individuals into believing that they wanted to change. He thought that this could be done by: “...a combination of education and positive inducements, not necessarily by propaganda or any concealed manipulation.” (Stevenson, 1974:103). Stevenson (1974:103), pointed out that such scientific control could lead to despotism if unjust rulers were able to manipulate their own population. Clearly for me this had ethical implications, as when I used SOS technique the idea of changing someone’s behaviour was not taken lightly by myself. I believed that in order to use SOS I had to be confident that the government and school’s policies were fundamentally good, and appropriate for society and this individual. Basically, I was using this process in the hope that by influencing a small part of that pupil’s life I was giving them the tools to be able to function more effectively in society, and also to be able to achieve qualifications that would enable them to be successful in society. (However, I acknowledged at the end of the day it was that pupil’s choice as to how they then went on to behave after my intervention). Indeed, Skinner believed: “Self-knowledge and self-management are of social origin, and the selves known and managed are the product of both contingencies of survival and contingencies of reinforcement.”

(Skinner, 1974:225). My belief was that experiencing an SOS meeting with myself allowed the pupil to take a step to one side to analyse, or think about their own behaviour by rating themselves, then giving them the choice to fit in with our society (on a classroom level), more appropriately in their future. Thus, I did not believe that SOS was strictly behaviourism at its purist, as I hoped the pupils ultimately would be able to gain skills to be able to succeed in formal education.

Indeed, Stevenson pointed out several drawbacks to Skinner's ideas. Stevenson asserted that Skinner was wrong to rule out 'mental causes' of behaviour just because they were not according to him empirically measurable (Stevenson, 1974:96). Thus, Skinner was implying 'universal determinism,' if nature's laws control all of our actions, then our environment controls us and rules out any free will to choose our actions in life (ibid, 1974:97). Also, Skinner was presuming that his work on rats and pigeons, whilst being esteemed in revealing motivation in these animals was transferable to humans, which was an idea that some educationalists would not agree with - they would say that we were responsible for our own behaviour. However, traditionally educationalists did use rewards and punishments for controlling pupil behaviour in school as behaviourism did. Stevenson (1974:104) reported that Skinner's ideas from behaviourism could be used to control people, and produce the perfect society; yet clearly there were ethical issues to consider such as what right do leaders have to control another individual.

I believed that this problem was reflected in school as teachers had power over pupils as they could inflict punishments such as detention, so there was an unfair power balance. Indeed, Punch (2002), asserted: "Children are marginalized in adult-centred society. They experience unequal power relations with adults and much in their lives is controlled and limited by adults." (Punch, 2002:323). I hoped through the use of SOS to

develop a relationship with my pupils where they trusted me and saw that I was working to try and make their life chances better, through helping them to improve their GCSE grades. Punch found that building a trusting relationship could help to balance the unequal proportion of power adults hold when researching with children: “The nature of childhood in adult society means that children are used to having to try to please adults, and they may fear adults’ reactions to what they say. Time needs to be invested to form a relationship and gain their trust.” (Punch, 2002:328). Thus, as a teacher I believed that this unequal power relationship where I assessed and gave feedback upon their behaviour and work, was done for the long-term good of the individual, namely to help them to produce behaviour that would help them, and their peers to gain the best qualifications possible at school and go on to have the best possible life afterwards. An outline of rewards and sanctions used in schools to encourage pupils to behave correctly follows.

Pupil motivation.

McNamara recorded how the Elton Report was commissioned in 1988 to investigate discipline in schools, and how it reported in 1989: “...the causes of pupil problem behaviour are multiple and diverse...” (HMSO in McNamara, 1999:1). Thus, the solutions to this had to be: “...multiple and diverse.” (HMSO in McNamara, 1999:1). It was deemed ‘unrealistic’ (McNamara, 1999:1) to expect a complete cure for poor behaviour in pupils however, it was advised that schools should have: “...effective school systems in place to respond to pupil misbehaviour so that problems of pupil discipline could be handled comfortably and not dominate the school’s agenda.” (McNamara, 1999:1). The Elton report found that causes of pupil misbehaviour included emotional issues and home background, but also could be triggered by

situations within a classroom (seating plans, teaching behaviours or 'school system factors' - rules, school sanctions).

MacNamara pointed out that: "The most efficient use of teachers' skills and time is achieved by directing it at those factors over which they have most control and therefore can have most influence." (ibid, 1999:2). McNamara then went on to advise how poor behaviour could be addressed by checking that teaching resources were appropriate to the ability levels of pupils; that teachers planned where pupils sat and decided groupings within a classroom, as well as ensuring pupils were given clear instructions. It was also deemed important by McNamara that teachers used positively phrased rules for conveying expected standards of behaviour to pupils, and that teachers gave more positive feedback/comments to pupils than negative ones. These were ideas for classroom management that had been clearly passed on to me during my Initial Teacher Training programme, however, I was aware that despite working on my seating plans, classroom rules and positive feedback that there was in my opinion, still room for improvement in some of my classes.

McNamara (1999:27), recorded how the idea of placing pupils 'on-report' began in the 1960's. This was a system my school used where pupils handed a chart to their teachers at the beginning of lessons, and received it back at the end of their lessons filled in by the teacher as to various study skills on a range of 1-4 (1 being good). I found that pupils generally hated being on report, so it was a good motivation for pupils to behave appropriately in lessons. Interestingly, McNamara pointed out that this system could be improved if positive behaviour examples were recorded, which I always tried to do if the pupil had been compliant in the lesson.

Extrinsic motivation ideas were used in my school for Key Stage 3 pupils (young people aged 11-13), such as merits and stickers. After hearing Key Stage 4

pupils (young people aged 13-16), complaining they ‘never got any,’ I tried unsuccessfully to give merits to them as well (pupils kept saying ‘what was the point’ collecting them from me when other teachers didn’t give them out). However, I started giving stickers on Key Assessments where pupils gained a B or above; after initial ridicule these quite soon became sought after – even to the point of pupils begging for one if they were one mark off a B in their test! McNamara noted that this type of reward was: “...less age appropriate in the Secondary educational sector; to the extent that there is an expectation that as pupils grow older so they will become less reliant on external motivational systems and will become more self-motivating.” (ibid, 1999:137). However, in my experience I found that not all pupils displayed the maturity required to be self-motivating. Indeed, I found this to be especially true of tasks such as tests, so I would offer an extrinsic reward of a sticker for pupils who achieved a grade B or above. Also, I felt that I would rather spend a little money on a fun positive reinforcement than carrying on doing what I regularly found myself doing at the start of my career – keeping pupils back to complete Key Assessments over lunch, or worse still having to track them down to come back to finish them, when no effort had been made in the lesson time (something that rarely happened after I introduced the sticker scheme).

In my school a pupil not behaving appropriately in a lesson was treated with the school system of Positive Behavioural Management (known to staff and pupils as PBM). This was a structured approach where the pupil was first given a ‘formal warning’ to adjust their behaviour, a ten minute detention if the inappropriate behaviour continued, then a 30 minute detention if misbehaviour ensued then a ‘call out’ where the pupil would be sent out of the lesson to the ‘Quiet Room’. (A model of how I used the SOS intervention in school can be found in Chapter Three). McNamara (1999:22), recorded how many schools had a ‘Personal Guidance Unit,’ where pupils who were

unable to stay in a lesson because of their behaviour could be sent to, either because they displayed: "... a *lack of commitment* to the behavioural standards of the school or *social skill deficits*. In the former case the pupil *may not want* to conform to the behavioural requirements of the school and in the latter case the pupil *may be unable* to conform..." (ibid, 1999:23). As mentioned in McNamara similarly the staff in the unit in my school worked with the pupil to enable them to return to their lessons in as quick a time period as possible, so that valuable learning time was not lost. The pupil recorded on an official document why their teacher asked them to leave the lesson. Usually pupils went back to the teacher to apologise; however, sometimes staff accompanied the pupil in order to reinforce the behaviours necessary to enable the pupil to engage in the following lesson.

Detentions were noted by Cowley (2001:104), as being more effective if purposeful work was given to pupils to complete during the sanction, and if pupils understood why they had received it. Whilst my school agreed with detentions I knew that not all teachers set them; and that some teachers allowed pupils to do nothing or talk to their friends during the 'punishment'. I believed the time would be more productively used if I used it to try and prevent the pupil earning another detention by having a SOS meeting, or if I asked the pupil if the work set in the lesson had been too hard; then discussed ways to avoid similar negative situations reoccurring in the future. My school gave exclusions to pupils who swore in lessons and subject teachers had to set work for the duration of the absence in order to avoid pupils regarding it as: "... 'a day off school to do what you want' ..." (Cowley, 2001:106).

McNamara (1999:45), stated that pupil behavioural contracts were used as our culture was used to making contracts, and that this could be an effective method of producing good behaviour in pupils. He noted that when pupils signed an agreement it

was more effective than a verbal agreement. This was used by my school for every pupil at the beginning of every school year; I referred to this 'Home/school agreement' sometimes when pupils initially were not engaging in a lesson, after hearing a Head of Year reminding a pupil that they had signed to say that they would behave appropriately in school, thereafter I learned that this could be effective in getting the pupils back on task.

Cowley (2001:58), described shouting as a sanction and commented that some pupils: "...seem to respond better to a teacher who shouts than others." (ibid, 2001:58). Whilst I had often heard students being shouted at by teachers, being in a room with that happening whilst teacher training made me physically cringe, although I could usually see why the teacher had been driven to this. I observed that some pupils would often be working because they were scared, and I knew I did not want this type of atmosphere in my classroom. Once when a senior teacher started shouting at a pupil at the end of an assembly about the child's incorrect footwear I had to remove myself from the room, it reminded me of my feelings of being shouted at as a child. Shouting when angry by teachers was not advised by Cowley (2001:58), which I agreed with as it caused a bad atmosphere and made me feel physically ill, however, I believed it was useful to raise my voice on some occasions - when stopping a child quickly from doing something dangerous for example fighting. Cowley recommended being 'calm' (2001:8), when dealing with and when sanctioning even the most naughty pupils, the Senior Management Team at my school advocated this too. This was supported by my findings from my Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond 9' activity outlined in the Results chapter. I believed that if you were known by the pupils as a calm person they were less likely to be stressed with you, and it made raising my voice more effective on the rare occasions

when I did (usually to stop a physical fight), as it was such an obvious contrast to my usual manner.

Another way of encouraging good behaviour in pupils was by using rewards. Cowley (2001:65), commented that using merits as a reward system was useful for Year 7 pupils but rarely with older pupils which I found to be true in my school. She also mentioned that positive comments were an important motivator, which I agreed with – in a difficult low ability class where I sometimes felt that I was clutching at straws to find something positive to praise, I had noticed that praising someone for underlining their title produced a rush for rulers amongst many of the others. Cowley mentioned writing home as a useful method, which again I found produced a little competition to behave well with some of the older pupils. However, she also recommended (2001:66), a trip, which I felt to be out of my jurisdiction as the school policy was a whole year group had to be offered the opportunity to go (in order for fairness), or five/ten minutes chat at the end of the lesson which I knew in my school would be frowned upon as wasting valuable learning time. Furthermore, Cowley (2001:64), advised allowing internet time at the end of a lesson, which was another reward strictly forbidden in my school, despite there being sites blocked by the authority occasionally inappropriate materials sometimes slipped through the filter and could be accessed by the pupils; in addition to this there was a strict rule for teachers to research sites, and give pupils hyperlinks to permitted sites in lessons. Although, I appreciated that pupils would respond to this positively, as when talking to them I knew that many pupils regarded coming to school as a prison sentence, and they would rather be at home gaming or on their computers as that was how they chose to spend their spare time outside of school.

Solomon and Rogers (2001:332), noted that Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) became popular in the 1970's and 80's, as it was found that some pupils needed to be

removed from classrooms, as their persistent poor behaviour was damaging to the learning of others. At my school pupils were put in isolation – made to start school, leave and take breaks away from their friends, and made to work with senior members of staff before they were sent to a PRU. A visit to a PRU by pupils from my school was usually just for one or two days before the pupil was able to work in a class again.

Solomon and Rogers (2001:332), found that: "...interventions designed to assist disaffected pupils need to be located within the context of regular schooling itself. They should be aimed at raising self-efficacy in specific curriculum areas rather than at a general raising of self-esteem." (Solomon and Rogers, 2001:344). It was believed that this would help to motivate the pupil to want to stay on task in lessons. Our school aimed to do by providing extra assistance by the Special Educational Needs coordinator (SENCO), who gave staff assistance in differentiating lesson tasks in order to make them accessible to low ability pupils. Observations of misbehaving pupils were also used, and pupil interviews with an educational psychologist also occurred, and recommendations to teachers were circulated via e-mail and training sessions. During my training I was advised by one of my mentors to try to give three times as much positive praise to negative/corrective comments to pupils, this ratio was supported by Boxer and McCarthy (1987:93), for both verbal comments to pupils and rewards and sanctions. Boxer and McCarthy (1987), found that pupils preferred rewards such as their parents being notified of good behaviour or work, similarly the most disliked sanctions were their parents being told about poor behaviour or work. An analysis of how pupils thinking - their 'mindset' can affect their ability to change their behaviour shall now be given.

Mindsets.

Dweck (2012), described how human's styles of thinking could be described as belonging to one of two mindsets: either a fixed mindset or a growth mindset. According to Dweck, students who achieved poor scores on a test who possessed a fixed mindset instead of working out ways to improve (as someone in a growth mindset would do), they would: "...simply try to repair their self-esteem." (ibid, 2012:36). She noted in her research that students with a fixed mindset would look at other poor work to make themselves feel better, because they believed that intelligence was fixed and did not see the value in finding out other ways to improve their achievement. This echoed in my observations of the pupils involved in my Focus Group, when they received their tests back they would compare scores instead of reading the advice/target I had given them for improving. Sometimes pupils when writing tests would refer to their last poor mark to use as an excuse for not trying for the present test, when I spoke to them about the importance of making an effort for the new topic and working upon their target, I felt it was me having to do all the motivating/encouraging with little coming from the students. Dweck recorded that depressed students with a growth mindset would still make an effort and find some way to motivate themselves. Time and time again I would ask poorly achieving students what they had done to prepare for their next test so they could improve, and I was frequently disappointed that they had not revised or made any effort, however, Dweck pointed out: "Nothing is harder than saying, 'I gave it my all and it wasn't good enough.'" (ibid, 2012:42). I suspected that this applied to some of my pupils who claimed that they did not revise for tests.

Dweck, (2012:51), found that students who began a course with similar abilities would by the end of the course be achieving worse if they possessed a fixed mindset. As they encountered problems they lost confidence and looked for ways to bolster their

confidence, whereas students within the same class who had a growth mindset looked upon mistakes as learning opportunities, and looked for ways to learn from them. Interestingly, Dweck reported that fixed mindset pupils often suffered most when they moved to High School where: “The work gets much harder, the grading policies toughen up, the teaching gets less personalised. And all this happens while students are coping with their new adolescent bodies and roles.” (ibid, 2012:57). I had always been mindful of the physical and emotional developmental changes my students were enduring. Dweck’s comment about the teaching being less personalised rang with a concern of mine, and linked to Focus Group pupils in the ‘Diamond 9’ activity (I conducted as part of my research for this thesis see Methodology chapter - Pupil Focus Group, ‘Diamond 9’ activity section and Discussion chapter – Improvement in teacher – pupil relationships section), placing statements that involved me, their class teacher as ranking high. Dweck found that pupils with fixed mindsets had grades that grew worse in high school, whilst students with growth mindsets had grades that improved.

Importantly, Dweck discovered that pupils with the fixed mindset admitted to agreeing with ideas such as: “In school my main goal is to do things as easily as possible so I don’t have to work very hard.” (ibid, 2012:58). Again, this finding linked to what I found in my students, some of them would have had to make very little effort to improve their grade yet would not, and in some cases incurred detentions too because of off-task behaviour they committed, instead of making this extra bit of effort. Dweck believed the reasons behind students non-compliance was:

“...a way that adolescents assert their independence from adults, but it is also a way that students with the fixed mindset protect themselves. They view the adults as saying, “Now we will measure you and see what you’ve got.” And they are answering, “No, you won’t.” (ibid, 2012:58).

Dweck commented that the fixed mindset sees other people as: “...judges instead of allies.” (ibid, 2012:67). Which explained to me why some students would not act upon

the advise/targets given to them – they do not recognise a teacher as being an ally - but rather we were an enemy who marks their written effort then criticises them. She also pointed out (2012:76), how a student with a growth mindset does not view themselves as having a fixed intelligence/ability they would work to overcome setbacks, which was an attitude that seemed to be initially lacking in my students that I had completed SOS interviews with. An evaluation of ‘Pupil Voice’ – listening to student ideas and opinions about their learning, teaching and school follows.

Pupil voice.

Moran and Murphy (2012), noted that pupil voice had become popular as it recognised: “A strong part of its attraction lies in its objective of identifying pupils as stakeholders in education...” (Moran and Murphy, 2012:171). My background in retail gave me the philosophy that you had to ensure that your customers were happy in order to maintain them, I used to feedback to head office comments that customers had made about products and requests for products we did not sell so the company could continuously adapt to survive, so it made sense to me when I became a teacher to listen to the opinions of my pupils as they were in effect my customers. Thus, I believed that pupil voice would be a valuable way to improving the teaching and learning in my classroom.

Indeed, DfES (2008), stated that pupil voice could:

“...improve engagement in learning, help develop a more inclusive school environment and improve behaviour and attendance. Through effective pupil participation, schools give young people the opportunity to develop critical thinking, advocacy and influencing skills, helping every child to fulfil their potential.” (DfES, 2008 in Cremin *et al.* 2011:586).

Moreover, I was aware that I had to find a way to improve on task behaviour in my classroom and promote critical thinking, including argumentative skills for the GCSE RE exam. Lansdown in Wood (2011), supported the idea of pupils having some control over their education: “Evidence indicates that schools involving children and

introducing more democratic structures are likely to be more harmonious, have better staff/pupil relationships and a more effective learning environment.” (Lansdown in Wood, 2011:3). Basically this is what I hoped would happen when I used pupil voice, that it would improve my relationship with my pupils and create a better learning environment by increasing their engagement in my lessons.

However, Moran and Murphy pointed out that not all uses of pupil voice had the pupil’s best intentions at heart as some adults used: “...pupil voice for a convenient foil for more conservative agendas...” (Moran and Murphy, 2012:171). Indeed they found in the work of Thomson and Gunter: “...that senior policy makers have a tendency “to bring ‘pupil voice’ into the policy conversation as a means of achieving school improvement and higher standards of attainment, rather than as a matter of the UN convention, citizenship and rights.” (Thomson and Gunter, 2006 in Moran and Murphy, 2012:172). Moreover, Moran and Murphy, (2012:172) believed that pupil voice could be diluted within the school by the adults and the policy makers, as the adults hold more power than the pupils. Whitty and Ball (in Cremin *et al.* 2011), supported this: “...where the degree of central control over what happens in school on a day-to-day basis has reached unprecedented levels, is there really a political and professional will to hear what young people have to say?” (Whitty, 2002 & Ball, 2006 in Cremin *et al.* 2011:586,7). Furthermore Cremin *et al.* added: “...is there the capacity to act on what they say, even if their voices are sought? To what degree can young people really be involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of services?” (Cremin *et al.* 2011:587). Certainly within my practice I felt that I was willing to adapt my practice to include the pupil’s ideas, although I acknowledged that some areas of school life would be too expensive or impractical to change, for example I knew that the pupils wanted an indoor common room for bad weather and they felt there would be no point asking for one to

be built as it would be too expensive, I agreed as I knew the Senior Management Team had already spent many months looking for funding to build classrooms for a sixth form block and unfortunately had not been successful. Finally, Cremin asserted that whilst schools were required to include pupil's opinions in shaping and evaluating school systems, there was a limit as to what power pupils actually had:

“Several commentators have noted, however, that schools are not well placed to engage with pupil voice, due in part to cultures of accountability that leave little room for adults, let alone young people, to determine what happens in schools on a day-today basis.” (Cremin *et al.* 2011:601).

I believed this to be true as there were many restrictions and rules as to what teachers had to comply with within a school, and the school had to comply with direction from government, however, I believed that it was possible to look for gaps and tweak small areas using pupil voice - such as how detentions were carried out which was the area I wished to investigate.

Furthermore, I was aware that there were teachers who were not keen on pupil voice and the power pupils had to choose their score out of ten in SOS. Wood acknowledged this in her research using pupil voice: “...there may be those who feel cynical about or threatened by the idea of children gaining more of a voice.” (Wood, 2011:11). Many of the teachers I worked with liked to have ‘control’ over their pupils, and did not feel comfortable handing over any control to pupils or asking for their feedback, as they felt that this would give the pupils an opportunity to undermine their authority. Cook-Sather in Elwood 2013 argued that giving pupils a voice was a method of: “...altering dominant power imbalances between adults and young people...” (Cook-Sather in Elwood, 2013:99). She also pointed out that there were imbalances of power within the pupil community:

“...assumptions about a single ‘student voice’ ultimately deny diversity and difference in student’s needs and opinions, and hide those hierarchies of power and privilege within and across student groups that can elevate

certain student's views beyond those of others." (Cook-Sather in Elwood, 2013:100).

At school, I had heard some pupils claiming that there was no point in expressing their views as they were not on the student council (group that fed back opinions on school changes to the Senior Management Team). However, the group of pupils I worked with for my research were not on the council, and I would describe as being disaffected as they did not see the point in trying hard at school. Next an analysis of in-service training, (teacher's professional development), shall be given.

In-service training – teacher's professional development.

Nielsen (2008), reported that teachers constantly changed their practice and they changed their thinking as a consequence of: "...discussion with other teachers, professional reading..." (Nielsen, 2008:1289), I found this to be true as I began teaching but there were many compulsory training sessions given to me by the school, and some changes required in teaching were set by the government. Nielson noted that: "This is essentially a top-down model. Thus, teachers are recipients of the "knowledge" shared by a researcher or other outsider, and teachers are expected to make the "changes" outlined." (Nielsen, 2008:1289). When I attended the SOS training programme this was a training session required by the school I was working at, however, I voluntarily attended further sessions to learn more about the technique as I thought it suited my beliefs about pupils – that they had to make the change in their behaviour themselves.

Whilst teachers were required to attend training for professional development in the schools I worked in, not all teachers welcomed this compulsory training. Worryingly, many of my teaching colleagues said that they did not find the training helpful. Indeed, in the research of Opfer *et al.* (2011), on teacher attitudes towards training highlighted that: "As the OECD TALIS (2009) study showed, teacher professional development is generally not meeting the needs of teachers in most

countries.” (OECD, 2009 in Opfer *et al.*, 2011:443). However, schools placed great emphasis on attending and using the training as they required us teachers to be constantly developing our practice to improve results for our pupils. Opfer *et al.* asserted that: “Getting the balance correct between the internal and external orientations to learning may be the difference between a school that continuously learns and one that continuously engages in reform churn without real effect.” (Opfer *et al.*, 2011:444-445). Indeed, I found it difficult to apply all of the training sometimes as there seemed to be no time to reflect upon it, and implement it in my own practice as my free time was used up planning lessons and meeting the required marking targets.

My school required me to attend five Teacher Training (INSET) days per year, on top of this there were also weekly meetings for me to attend. This gradually led me to understand why some of my colleagues resented spending time in training meetings, when it meant you had to leave work later than normal to start the never ending pile of marking, or which in many of weeks of the year also meant your time was stretched between leading revision classes, or giving feedback to parents by writing reports or attending parent’s evenings. Maskit (2011), researched the attitude of primary and secondary teachers in Israel towards changes in pedagogy. Maskit, reported that one of the teachers interviewed about in-service training after years of staying up late making resources for each new change commented: “Now I don’t get excited about it. I’m tired of all of this and the speed with which every new teaching method is replaced.” (Maskit, 2011:857). Another of Maskit’s interviewees, stated that she wavered from working on time consuming changes to her teaching which made her feel guilty at her lack of family time, which made her stop working as hard in order to spend time with her family, in a vicious circle she had to stop this when work demanded more from her.

Furthermore, Opfer, found that: "...we see change being driven by personal beliefs, interests, motivations and social/historical contexts and processes rather than solely through rational and logical accumulation of knowledge and skills via participation in a learning activity." (Opfer *et al.*, 2011:446). Thus, the researchers were aware that teachers would not act upon every bit of training that they received: "Whether or not a teacher learns and then engages in a form of professional change is influenced by their beliefs, practices and experiential context." (Opfer *et al.*, 2011:451). I believed that I had engaged with the SOS training programme because as an NQT behaviour management was a fundamental daily concern of mine, and again the idea that the pupil had to generate the change fitted my beliefs about behaviour 'control' also, I could see an opportunity namely using detention times where I would be able to conduct the SOS meetings with pupils.

My research using SOS was based upon therapeutic ideas taken from Solution Focused Brief Therapy. The background and main features of Solution Focused Brief Therapy are described in appendix A: The origins of and methods used in solution focused brief therapy. An outline of the use of counselling based approaches to dealing with behaviour issues in schools follows.

'Therapy culture' and the role of therapeutic approaches in schools.

The idea of educating the 'whole child' had existed before recent government initiatives. During the early nineteenth century when describing the philosophy behind his system of education Steiner asserted that: "...our action takes hold of the whole child." (Steiner, 1937:22). Steiner also declared: "...we are concerned with a certain harmonizing of the spirit and soul with the physical body." (Steiner, 1937:9). Steiner's belief in educating the whole child was reflected in recent educational initiatives such as 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) and 'SEAL' (social and emotional aspects of learning).

Stern records the principles of ECM as: "...the five Every Child Matters outcomes of children being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being." (Stern, 2007:289). Again, this was reflected in my research, as the SOS approach involved the teacher taking a step away from subject educating the child, to in addition using a more therapeutic approach where the teacher was required to listen to the child, and facilitate the child to identify the traits they possessed that were deemed to be unacceptable; traits which were preventing them from engaging in the learning activity. Also, to guide the child to identify behaviours that would enable them to be able to participate in the learning that they were entitled to.

Stern (2007:285), asserted that Tony Blair whose government initiated ECM based his ideas on the theories of Scottish philosopher John Macmurray who stated: "You are not training children to be mathematicians or accountants or teachers or linguists; you are training them to be men and women, to live human lives properly." (Macmurray in Stern, 2007:285). This suggested to me that Blair saw schools as being fundamental in helping pupils acquire skills to function in society as individuals capable of appropriate interactions with other citizens, which was what SOS hoped to instil.

SEAL was a strategy introduced by the New Labour Government, and teachers were to include aspects of it as part of lesson planning, there was a focus on increasing self-esteem in pupils through: "...the SEAL strategy centres on five core domains of self-awareness, managing feelings, empathy, motivation and social skills." (Gillies, 2011:188). However, Gillies (2011:188), pointed out that in her opinion there was not much evidence to show that boosting the self-esteem of pupils improved their academic achievements. Furthermore, in her research in a deprived inner city area with multi-ethnic teenagers regularly facing stabbings and crime, she claimed: "Curriculum

resources supporting the SEAL initiative appear to assume a white, privileged standpoint, in which ‘difficult feelings’ rarely involve anything more testing than rowing with friends or feeling left out.” (ibid, 2011:193). She noted how pupils declared disinterest in Madeline McCain’s abduction because no-one would be interested if it happened to them, because of their lack of social status compared to Maddy’s, (Maddy being the daughter of white doctors, from an affluent area of Britain). However, the research of Pollard with Filer (1996:311), reported that improving the confidence of pupils where: “the classroom context poses manageable risks and they receive sufficient appropriate instruction and support. The need for suitable social conditions in classrooms complements the necessity for appropriate levels of cognitive challenge...” (Pollard with Filer, 1996:311), were the best conditions for enabling learning. Therefore, the teacher was the facilitator who set and monitored the appropriate climate for interactions to take place.

Whilst Gillies found that pupils were often involved in caring for sick relatives at home, showing that they could be kind; within the social arena of a classroom their behaviour was often unacceptable mainly because of: “Breeched social codes, moral frameworks, personal loyalty and misplaced humour...” (Gillies, 2011:199). Indeed, I found that these were the circumstances that often led to my pupils having confrontations with each other which led to SOS meetings with me. Gillies (2011:200), recorded that pupils often did not express emotions such as empathy or fear where it was expected by teachers, and that pupils often retold stories of frightening experiences as if they were in control of the situation. I found this to be true of some pupils that I gave SOS meetings to, pupils who were mean to someone in the class, often I thought it was because of the pupils’ culture – showing empathy was regarded as being weak, and showing that vulnerability would leave them open to being a target of others.

Interestingly, contrary to the ideals of SEAL where school was a forum where pupils could manage feelings Gillies (2011:200), reported a cheery teenager who frequently engaged in violent fights with other pupils who at the end of the research revealed his mother had been seriously ill in hospital unbeknown to the staff. Demonstrating that for some pupils, school was an escape from dealing with difficult feelings, or not the arena where they wished to air their feelings in public. This portrayed that the aims of SEAL may not have been acceptable to all individuals – which I believed to be similar to my findings that two pupils (who had behavioural problems elsewhere in school), did not respond to my SOS meetings. This showed how many individuals make up a society; and how it seemed impossible to find a ‘one size fits all’ answer to societal and classroom issues.

The idea in SOS of having a formal discussion, recording the discussion; then a review of action taken, may be viewed as the teacher and pupil making a form of contract with each other. The notion that society needed to form a social contract in order for it to operate successfully was put forward by Hobbs and supported by Rousseau (Bloom in Rousseau, 1979:5). I definitely agreed with this concept as I viewed each class as a mini society, within the mini society of each year group which in turn were within the mini society of the school, which was in turn within the immediate society of the local community and so on. Locke pointed out that people had to give up some of their individual rights in order to live in a community (Dewar, 2002:162). Yet Rousseau believed that the social contract led to individual liberties within societies (Dewar, 2002:162). Thus, civilization had benefits yet also led to inequality for individuals. Therefore, this eradicated the ‘primitive state’ idea where everyone lives together in harmony. Indeed, Blair (2003), asserted that there was a requirement where young people were: “...corroding their communities...to develop the respect and

responsibility on which any cohesive society is founded.” (Blair, 2003:6). I related to this idea because the images of perfect lessons in a modernistic style, utopian ideal of classes I expected to encounter as a trainee teacher; I learned through time rarely happens for more experienced practitioners or me.

However, the idea of teachers using therapeutic approaches in schools was not supported by all educationalists. Ecclestone and Hayes claimed that therapeutic practices in schools were lowering the standard of education available to young people, and that this was happening due to the policies of the New Labour government, (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009:xi). Indeed, they stated that: “Children who are emotionally damaged need therapy from mental health specialists outside the classroom.” (ibid, 2009:147). However, they did not state which types of ‘emotional damage’ would necessitate in outside help, thus this appeared to be a blanket idea for all types of emotional damage. As a practising teacher I knew that it was very difficult for outside help to be given to all pupils due to expense. Also, there were pupils who could suffer short term emotional damage or different degrees of emotional damage that would respond to a teacher – someone they saw everyday rather than a professional who had every chance of being an equally flawed personality. Additionally Ecclestone and Hayes, seemed to imply that it was normal that the majority of children went through life without any emotional episodes that would detract from their ability to learn. From my own experience I remember working well through school until my teenage years when my father became terminally ill and I had to support my mum (who became very ill after Dad’s death), and younger sisters. At this time my teachers would take time either during or outside of lessons to listen and offer support to me – on days when I found it difficult to focus in school their care helped me to refocus. Indeed, during this time I even attended school on school closure days (due to heavy snowfall), I definitely

believed their support helped me to complete my qualifications, and recognised that this was an essential part of being a good teacher.

Although I knew teaching colleagues that hated teaching PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education), which included citizenship and mentoring – I thought treating pupils that way; namely talking to them about issues concerning them outside of subject areas was a skill perhaps not all teachers wanted to possess or develop. However, the school I worked in treated pupils with behavioural issues in such a way, that they were counselled in school, but at the end of the session they were always encouraged to go back to lessons and try to succeed academically. After one year of teaching I had taught pupils who had eventually changed their attitudes, and I believed that this was because the members of staff were ‘all singing off the same hymn sheet’ and eventually the message to behave acceptably got through to the pupil.

Ecclestone and Hayes (2009:150), seemed to believe the role of the teacher was solely to teach. In my school most experienced teachers said that the role of the teacher had, even within the nearly two decades of my working life changed, the skills needed and careers available to school leavers had changed dramatically. Indeed, they described how therapeutic education meant that pupils did not want to: “...be taught...” (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009:156). To me this notion of ‘teaching’ as in something I did to the pupils, did not take into account the view that I had of myself as being a facilitator, where in a lesson I could set pupils a task to use the internet and work cooperatively as a group to find out knowledge for themselves. In surveys (within my school), pupils claimed to enjoy this type of activity and often this activity discouraged confrontation (directed at the teacher), from pupils who misbehaved in lessons, yet they still achieved the same learning outcomes that they would have done at the end of an hour long lecture from me. Interestingly, Ecclestone and Hayes did not mention the

pupils who left school without qualifications prior to the New Labour therapeutic initiatives in education. Indeed, they seemed to promote a very extreme view of therapeutic education in that it resulted in: "...no child or young person is capable of education." (ibid, 2009:161). For me this missed the point of why I used SOS – it was a necessary therapeutic side step in order for pupils to be enabled to achieve educational goals. Thus, it seemed to me that Ecclestone and Hayes had set up a false dichotomy between teachers who teach and teachers who see themselves as therapists.

One of the ideas that Ecclestone and Hayes (2009:155), were keen to attack was emotional intelligence. They claimed that too much time was spent in schools encouraging pupils to know themselves. However, I wondered if they had misunderstood one of the main ideas of emotional intelligence was that you learn to recognise and understand your own reactions to situations in life, and this knowledge then allowed you to control and manage any negative reactions that stop you from proceeding through life and achieving your own potential. Which was what the SOS approach aimed to enable pupils to do – during a lesson misbehaving pupils could be asked what number they were achieving at the moment in order to help them to analyse themselves and refocus.

Finally, I was very surprised at the exemplar pupil case study put forward by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009:163), the authors were very patronising in that they bothered to mention the pupil's parent's jobs – which clearly was unnecessary, and thus implied that having a university education was the only way to be recognised as a valued member of society. They also mentioned that the girl's role model was Margaret Thatcher thus revealing their political bias; they did not acknowledge that Thatcher would not be accepted as a role model for some sections of society. Indeed, I had taught pupils the year New Labour lost the election, who expressed concerns over the new

Conservative – Liberal Democrat Coalition government quoting examples of Thatcher’s deeds.

Indeed, Gillies (2005:837), pointed out that to live successfully in a meritocratic society that financially poor parents lacked the skills that middle class parents possessed when trying to succeed: “...while poverty and disadvantage is associated with poor self-management.” (Gillies, 2005:837). Clearly, when using SOS I had hoped that pupils were going to learn or use self-management of their own behaviour, although I had not conducted any investigation into whether the pupils I used SOS with were from financially poor backgrounds. Interestingly, Gillies (2005:838), asserted that New Labour were expecting pupils from poor backgrounds to improve their chances of success by acquiring skills, rather than by being given resources that would put them on an equal footing to middle class pupils. Gillies (2005:843), cited a case study of a boy who was having problems in school with his behaviour, who changed to be someone caring for others at school; which made his parents regard him as being a success. Although, because he was still not achieving academically he would have been regarded as a potential failure, according to the government’s criteria for success in society.

Gillies (2005:847), also compared a case where a dyslexic girl with a middle class mum who made a fuss within school to get all available help to her daughter, to a case of a boy with literacy problems from a working class background, who was withdrawn from school to be part time home schooled, as an example of the difference between the attitudes of working and middle class parents towards their skills in fighting for the rights of their children. However, I felt that it was unfair to compare these two cases, as it did not mention in the article how similar the pupil’s abilities were, or any other factors such as the pupil’s wishes or receptiveness to help.

This notion of a cultural gap between some parents and teachers was supported by the research of Todd and Higgins upon power relationships between parents and teachers in deprived areas of Newcastle: “The standards of the school are not neutral; their requests for parental involvement may be laden with the cultural experiences of intellectual and economic elites.” (Lareau in Todd and Higgins, 1998:230). They found that teachers did not use the social capital of parent’s relationships, despite the fact that pupils in their lifetimes had more contact with their parents than teachers. Todd and Higgins discovered that teachers were happy to allow parents to fund raise (and the parents were successful at this type of project), however, teachers were reticent in allowing parents to interfere with teaching: “Indeed, it could be argued that their tentativeness in this area supported the teacher’s hegemony and that their behaviour was implicit collusion with the teacher’s use of power.” (ibid, 1998:231). Whilst I agreed with Todd and Higgins when they pointed out that a teacher’s job was complex enough developing a relationship with a class of 30 or so individuals, without having to develop relationships with their parents too. In my case I had 21 classes of pupils to develop relationships with 600 pupils every academic year, which was difficult enough without dealing with all of their parents too.

However, I agreed with Todd and Higgins’s view in that parents did have a lot of power, and I felt that was an area my research could develop towards after this project. In my school there were several other job roles whose responsibility was to contact home before the class teacher did about issues in lessons, so there was a natural barrier to that relationship (class teacher – parent) forming; although it could be an area for my research to develop into outside the time boundaries of this piece of research. Whilst the terms ‘working class’ and ‘middle class’ used by Ecclestone and Hayes stuck in my throat, I appreciated there was a difference between working class economics and

working class values. Todd and Higgins (1998:230), believed some of the main factors hindering their parents in supporting their children, were that the parents had no experience of further or higher education themselves, and were unemployed. This made me accept that schools had a middle class culture and values, and I came to believe that pupils and parents needed access to acquire these values, so that they could achieve their full potential in this culture. In SOS I hoped to prepare pupils for success in the world by helping pupils to develop these skills, for me this was an equality issue that all pupils had a right to this.

Mercer (2010:4), reported that good language skills in primary school pupils were indicators of success in high school; he highlighted the fact that some pupils may never have had the opportunity to acquire the language skills in earlier life to be able to engage in collaborative learning tasks, such as the ones I asked my pupils to participate in daily. Furthermore he stated: "...school may provide the only opportunity for them to acquire some extremely important speaking, listening and thinking skills." (ibid, 2010:4). Mercer went on to declare that even though working in groups had been proven to improve learning unfortunately: "...in most classrooms, most of the time, group work is quite unproductive, even a waste of time. The solution to this paradox is that many students, perhaps most, need to be taught how to talk and work together, but are rarely offered that guidance." (ibid, 2010:6). Mercer was clear that pupils could not just be put into groups and for them to magically know how to interact appropriately together. Indeed, many of the detentions that I had issued were due to pupils behaving disrespectfully towards each other. For example some pupil's social skills were so bad that they would complain within earshot of the whole class that they hated a certain individual, and were not prepared to work with them. Mercer was clear in his viewpoint that some pupils benefit from acquiring conversational skills:

“When students are ...given guidance in developing skills...the quality of their talk and group work improves and so do the *individual* learning outcomes. For young people whose out-of-school lives give them little exposure to reasoned discussion, this can be a life-changing experience.” (ibid, 2010:4).

This for me reinforced the importance of having the SOS meetings with pupils that had behaved in an inappropriate manner in my classroom.

The research of Pedder and McIntyre (2006), involved interviewing teachers and pupils for ideas to improve learning in lessons. They found that a two-way relationship between teacher and pupil was fundamental to success in the classroom: “Insufficient teacher responsiveness to pupil’s ideas may be viewed by pupils as a breach of the ‘norm of reciprocity’ which risks jeopardizing pupil cooperation in future consultation process.” (Pedder and McIntyre, 2006:148). Indeed one of the findings was that pupils believed that they progressed more when teachers: “...engaged with their contributions seriously.” (ibid, 2006:149), which for me, was what SOS aimed to do when teachers had to accept the score out of ten the pupils gave themselves for their behaviour, and where teachers had to ask pupils how they were going to achieve their next target score out of ten, (teachers were not allowed to tell them what behaviour they wanted to see). Importantly, Pedder and McIntyre, (2006:148) pointed out that problems could arise in a classroom where different viewpoints about activities occurred, that was when different pupils wanted to take different approaches to complete a task, then the problem would arise of making sure that all pupils were equally heard in their viewpoints. Furthermore, the authors asserted: “...one of the central problems of schooling is this lack of shared agenda among pupils and between teachers and less academically successful pupils.” (ibid, 2006:151), to me an SOS meeting was an ideal opportunity to start a relationship that hopefully could be an arena in negotiating an understanding between pupils and teachers. The work of Pedder and McIntyre (2006:151), agreed with

the findings of Mercer (2010), in that the pupils that struggled to fit in with the school community were pupils who did not possess the language skills to be able to access the school culture successfully.

As a teacher I believed that there was a lot to learn from psychotherapy to help my practice as a professional. During my early days as an NQT I was advised by a teacher who was deemed to have good behaviour management of her pupils, to act and practice different facial expressions and to listen to other teachers rants, borrow lines from experienced ‘ranters,’ and rehearse rants at home so that they would flow off the tongue, and therefore be more effective when I used them on pupils. Indeed: “...facial expressions...are the language of humanity.” (Lewis *et al.* 2000:39). However, whilst these actions seemed to help with controlling the majority of a class, for some pupils I came to believe that the feeling of threat they felt from these rants was too much for them, and seemed to provoke additional angry outbursts (even when that pupil had not had the rebuke directed at them).

Lewis *et al.* (2000:46), recorded how people would remember facial expressions from certain horrible past events in their lives, and how thinking about these events could arouse that emotion (they felt at the time), which may lead to sustained high blood pressure, and how our bodies were not built to cope with that. This led me to relate this to pupils that I had reprimanded that flew off the handle disproportionately to the level of ‘anger’ I was acting out. I realised that it was important for me to be exceptionally calm with some pupils, because they were associating my body language with a past experience: “The limbic brain evaluates the nature of another’s intention...based on...its genetically specified wiring scheme and past experience of similar situations.” (Lewis *et al.* 2000:53). Due to humans evolving from reptiles we still possessed areas of brain which reacted like a reptile’s, and this for me explained

why some pupils acted in a seemingly irrational manner sometimes in school, there was no thinking through of their angry reactions it was sometimes instant, and in my opinion was totally disproportionate to the circumstances that triggered it.

Fortunately as a teacher I believed there was a way to overcome this issue: “Because limbic states can leap between minds, feelings are contagious, while notions are not.” (Lewis *et al.* 2000:64). So hopefully by keeping calm myself whilst dealing with an angry pupil that would help to calm them; and SOS was an approach where the pupil was listened to in a calm environment. However, the notion that ideas were not contagious showed why reasoning with some pupils did not work. Interestingly, the researchers found that: “...maltreated children flipping through pictures of faces exhibit a hugely amplified brain wave when they encounter an angry expression.” (ibid, 2000:131). They also noted that: “Such a person finds he can’t shake an unpleasant emotion once it gets going.” (ibid, 2000:131). Which to me explained why some pupils seemed to have an over the top angry reaction to seemingly minor rebukes that went on so long (after the reprimand was finished), and why the pupils had to be removed from the lesson, in order to allow other pupils to continue with their learning.

Lewis *et al.* (2000:182), pointed out that therapy sometimes failed people, which explained to me how some pupils end up being excluded, despite numerous sessions with senior members of staff within school: “New lessons must fight an uphill battle against the patterns already ingrained...” (Lewis *et al.* 2000:164). In my practice I would sometimes go over to pupils in lessons after their SOS meeting, and quietly ask them what number they thought they were working at, in order to help them to re-focus on a task, which was usually enough to help them to work better and complete tasks. I found the comment of Lewis *et al.* (2000:189), about having few sessions in therapy invalid because with some individuals long term therapy could be very negative if a

client became dependent upon the therapist. As a teacher I went without my break in order to conduct an SOS meeting, but found it was a worthwhile short term suffering for a long term investment. I believed it was worth giving a pupil a chance at SOS, as I thought I was letting that child down by not investing some time with them, after all professional therapists could get it wrong sometimes as Lewis *et al.* (2000:182) very honestly pointed out.

Indeed, the research of Cornelius-White (2007), found that having a good relationship with teachers could have a positive academic effect upon pupils, which contradicted the fears of Ecclestone and Hayes (2009). Cornelius-White (2007), pointed out that as well as improving the pupils emotional well-being, small sacrifices in teaching time to help to establish good relationships were beneficial in the overall scheme of things, as the pupils achieved higher and became more rounded as a person as being able to inter-relate with others was a fundamental skill in being successful in society. An evaluation of Solution Focused methods shall now be given.

Critique of Solution Focused Therapy.

It would appear, therefore that a personalised, relational and language-rich approach like SFBT would be a good tool for schools to use. However, there were specific criticisms of SFBT that shall now be considered.

Held in Miller *et al.* (1996), stated that she believed Solution Focused Therapy to be steeped in postmodern anti-realism, also known as ‘constructivism’ that was to say therapists were helping clients construct their own meanings of words according to their own situation, therefore making a subjective, biased and thus unrealistic interpretation of the situation. Therefore, that was why Solution Focused Therapists reframed their client’s problems, and believed that each individual’s reality was correct to them and

that they could not completely understand someone else's reality. Held stated this philosophy was unnecessary to the success of the therapy:

“... solution-focused therapists have burdened themselves with a philosophical doctrine they neither can adhere to with any consistency nor must adhere to in order to fulfil their mission.” (Held, B. A. in Miller *et al.*, 1996:28).

She stated that there was direct evidence of this in the writings of some of the most influential figures in Solution Focused Therapy: “There are no wet beds, no voices without people, no depressions. There is only *talk* about wet beds, *talk* about voices without people, *talk* about depression.” (de Shazer, 1993:89 in Held in Miller *et al.*, 1996:29). Held pointed out the inconsistency of anti-realism: “...how can we presume to know that there really are clients...” (Held in Miller *et al.*, 1996:31), she concluded that if de Shazer denied there were wet beds to follow this argument logically you could not prove that neither the therapist nor client existed! Held stated it: “...is a logical problem that even the most ardent antirealists have trouble circumventing.” (Held in Miller *et al.*, 1996:31). She also asserted that (to a lesser degree than de Shazer), O’Hanlon and Weiner-Davis were influenced by antirealism:

“There is no way to ascertain which of the views is most “correct”; rather, it is evident that each view is merely a small portion of the total picture and is colored by each person’s biases and assumptions....As the different views are described, rather than thinking of each as “right” or “wrong,” we assume that each person’s perception represents an equally valid, integral part of the situation.” (O’Hanlon and Weiner Davis, 1989:46-47 in Held in Miller *et al.*, 1996:29).

O’Hanlon and Weiner-Davis (Miller *et al.*, 1996:29) went on to explain that they did not believe clients were right or wrong, however, they believed that the way that the client’s viewed their problem affected the chances of them finding a solution.

Held (1996), suggested that there may have been different reasons for the adoption of antirealism in therapy - because of trends in thinking, also because of the

difficulty in applying some therapies strictly. On a more positive note she pointed out that this approach could help to maintain the individualism of the client. Held believed that Solution Focused Therapists needed to investigate why people developed problems, and what skills people needed to develop to overcome these problems, rather than therapists engaging in ‘problem free’ talk, and reconstructing client’s realities by investigating exceptions and manipulating language so that: “We can count on no generality or stability, not even of meaning itself.” (Held in Miller *et al.*, 1996:36). Held (1996), went further to attack the antirealist position, by questioning whether antirealism was harmful in therapy and what qualifies as therapist expertise, further to these ethical implications she stated: “...in my opinion the point of therapy is to help people cope with reality; surely one must know something about reality in order to cope with it.” (Held in Miller *et al.*, 1996:40). She also believed that the lack of theory in some postmodern therapies meant that the therapy could not be empirically tested, which she believed was ethically necessary.

In my opinion I agreed that there were huge ethical implications to consider, (these shall be outlined in the Methodology chapter in the Ethics section), but because of the success of Solution Focused Therapy this did not mean that there was not space for more regimented therapies as well as more individualised therapies, because from my experience as a teacher, I believed that a ‘one size fits all’ approach did not work for everybody. Indeed Solution Focused Brief Therapy actually helped the people that the ‘one size fits all’ approach missed.

For me the beauty of Solution Focused Brief Therapy was that it was brief and not highly regimented, so that as a busy teacher, it could fit into a hectic schedule, whereas other more time consuming therapies with many systems and methods would not. Where funding was possible in schools a counsellor practicing a different type of

therapy may help some pupils, therefore SFBT seemed to offer a convenient tool for teachers for improving the quality of the teaching and learning experience for both teachers and pupils, in filling the gap where school counsellors and Educational Psychologists could not help. Moreover, as a teacher you already had a sophisticated understanding of any ethical implications of anything that you did with pupils, being in such a responsible position, and this type of therapy (SFBT) suited someone, such as a teacher who had highly developed inter-personal skills. However, it was difficult for a teacher to hold a 'problem free position'. I was aware as I conducted my SOS meetings that I may be the cause of the problem for an individual pupil, and therefore was biased in wanting a favourable outcome.

Interestingly Ratner, (2003:96) reported how therapists using SFBT in schools encountered pupils who said the problem was improving, whilst at the same time their teachers complained that the pupils were not improving. The therapists in order to maintain a problem free position asked the pupils how they thought that they could get the teachers to stop complaining that they had not improved; a tactic I intended to use if the situation arose for me. Therefore, I felt that the practice of SFBT in school would be more aligned with Held's ideas than the antirealists.

Franklin *et al.* (2001), commented that one of the difficulties in conducting experimental research in the Solution Focused approach was: "Because there is often a wide gap between clinical researchers and practitioners, the effectiveness of the model has not been established using experimental methods." (Franklin *et al.*, 2001:412). They reported that during the 1990's several single case studies were carried out using quasi-experimental research methods, to evaluate the effectiveness of Solution Focused Therapy. Further to these studies Franklin *et al.* (2001), investigated the effectiveness of Solution Focused Therapy with students in a school setting; using seven single case

studies. In order to keep to the Solution Focused model (they were personally advised by Berg and de Shazer in 1997 that in order for their methods to be Solution Focused they had to use at least three of the main Solution Focused strategies, Franklin *et al.*, 2001:414). They used the ‘miracle question’, scaling and homework tasks, but because of the flexible nature of Solution Focused Therapy, the strategies were not automatically used in the same order with the students. The researchers used the Connors Teacher Rating Scale (Franklin *et al.*, 2001:412) in order to assess the behaviour of the students, which had seven subscales: hyperactivity, conduct problem, emotional indulgent, anxious passive, asocial, daydream-attention problem and a hyperactivity index. Observations using this scale were made at several stages in each subject’s sessions, including one month after therapy was finished for each child.

The researchers found that: “...there were clear, observable, positive changes in five of the cases...” (Franklin *et al.*, 2001:428). Thus, they concluded that Solution Focused Therapy would be a useful model in working with students with learning disabilities in schools, they found however, that not all teachers saw the same change in the students, and that there were not positive changes in all of the subscales and commented that: “...mixed findings raise questions in relation to the clinical effectiveness of the therapy and make the overall effects of the case studies more difficult to interpret.” (ibid, 2001:430). Interestingly, they found that teachers who had, had more involvement with the study witnessed the positive changes in pupils, and the researchers recommended more teacher involvement with future research predicting: “This would undoubtedly increase teacher effectiveness with individual students.” (ibid, 2001:432). They concluded that: “The research team agreed that it would be important for all teachers to be trained in the Solution Focused therapy model.” (ibid, 2001:432). The researchers admitted that there were some positive changes in some students before

and as therapy began, and this could have affected the validity of their findings however, it was unclear how to measure how the effect of the researchers just being in the school had affected the student's positive behavioural changes.

In this chapter approaches to tackling poor behaviour have been considered. The importance of social relationships of pupils and pupil mindsets have been analysed, and the history and main features of SFBT have been described. Finally a critique of using therapeutic approaches within schools was given. The next chapter shall describe my intervention with pupils using SOS.

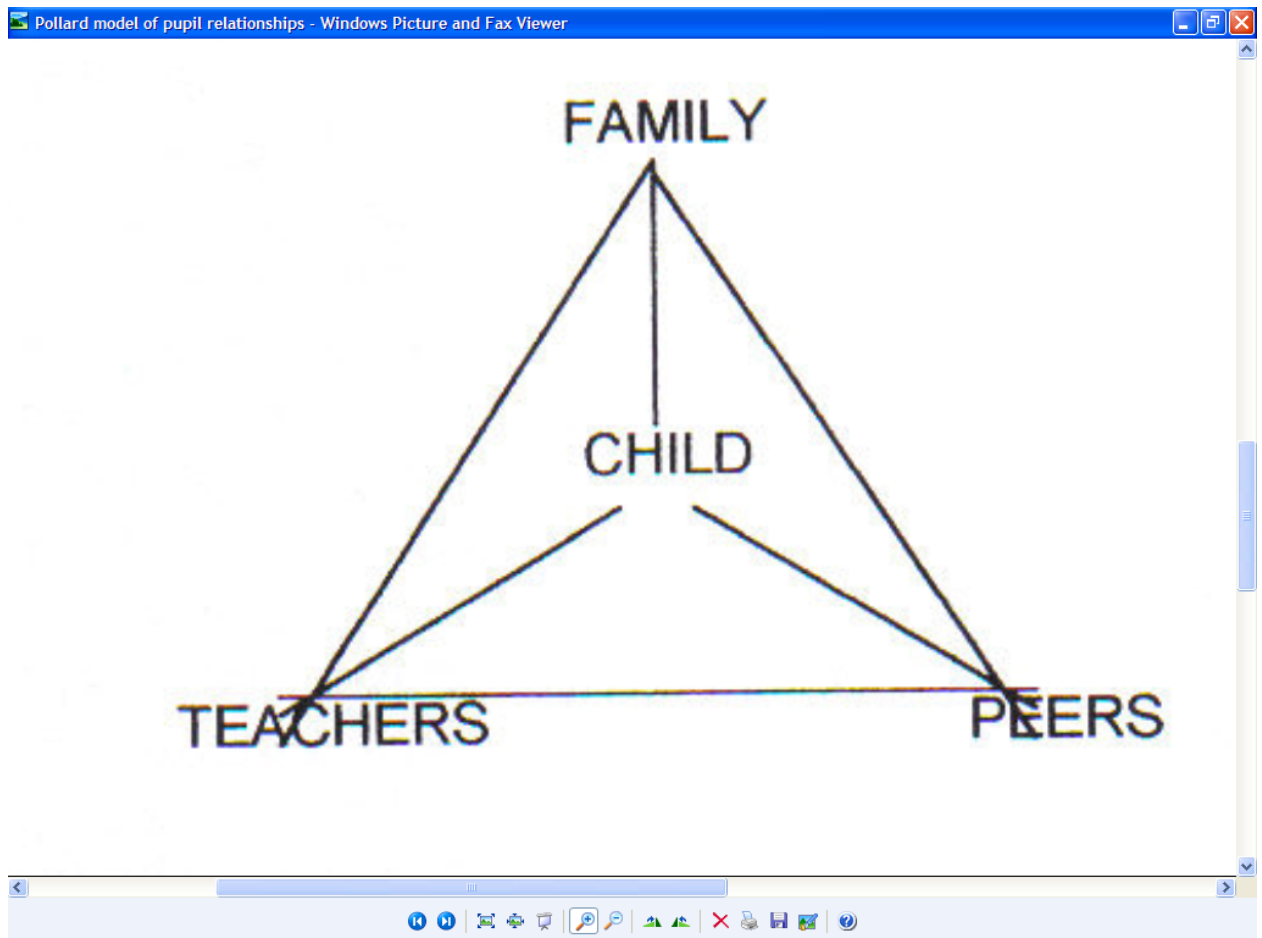
Chapter 3. My intervention.

This chapter considers the impact upon pupils of some of their social relationships. Following this there is a description with some examples, of how I used SOS with my pupils. Finally, how some of the advice and guidelines were used that were given to me by experienced teachers on managing pupil behaviour shall be described.

Impact of social relations upon pupils.

One aspect of SFBT that was important, was to ask a client who would notice if improvements were made in their lives, I knew with pupils they were pleased to receive postcards home from me as it meant their parents/carers got to hear of good work/effort in school. The research of Pollard *et al.* (2001), also demonstrated the importance of social relations upon pupils; their research was a longitudinal case study of children which began in Primary School, and followed the pupils through to Secondary School. Pollard *et al.* (2001:2) produced a model of the influences they believed a pupil had upon them:

Model 1.
Model of pupil's social relationships.



(Pollard *et al.*, 2001:2).

Thus, they asserted that a child would be influenced by members of their family, their friends and their teachers, therefore a child's actions would be based upon ethics and morals made from these three sources. Indeed, it was claimed that these social influences were important as they affected: "...the development of the citizens who create our societies over the long term." (Pollard with Filer, 1996:316). I was aware that the SOS approach potentially helped the pupils to develop skills that they would hopefully use in other areas of life outside of my lessons.

Interestingly, their research found contrary to popularly held opinion that working class fathers did not involve themselves with their children's education – they actually found working class fathers were more likely than middle class fathers to get

involved with extra-curricular clubs and help with homework. Despite this working class parents were: "...disadvantaged in relation to school systems. Their knowledge or confidence often failed at crucial times. Compared to middle class parents, they were more trusting of teachers and school systems that were sometimes badly failing their children." (Pollard *et al.*, 2001:2). The work of Todd and Higgins (1998:230), showed that teachers would allow working class parents to help with extra-curricular activities such as clubs or fundraising, but teachers did not encourage working class parents to help in the classroom or directly with their children's academic learning. Pollard *et al.* (2001:2) found that pupil identities were adjusted in Year 9 in response to social relations, and that they tried new strategies to solve problems. This was interesting to me as my research was upon Year 9 pupils. Pollard *et al.* (2001:3) reported that: "Where parents or teachers broke free from routine systems of punishment and control with *personal* responses, tailored to individual difficulties, problems were swiftly turned around." (Pollard *et al.*, 2001:3). I thought that this was highly relevant to my research, as the SOS approach to me fitted this description, because it was a different approach to behavioural issues than pupils had previously experienced. This appealed to my belief in the Freirian idea of: "...reality in process, in transformation." (Freire in Pollard, 2002:366). Namely that people's behaviours could be changed after they were encouraged to reflect upon their actions. Thus when I asked pupils to reflect upon their situation/behaviour that had resulted in an SOS meeting with me, that encounter led to the pupil setting themselves a target to change their behaviour in the future, with the intention of improving the situation for them and others – namely showing on task behaviour that would help them to achieve higher.

Indeed, Pollard with Filer (1996:310), described some pupils as 're-definers'. They said that these pupils were clever enough to solve behavioural issues by redefining

the rules of the situation: "...they will seek to manage a positive identity with both their peers and their teachers and thus to maximize their opportunities to learn whilst not losing their peer-group status." (Pollard with Filer, 1996:310). Although, as a supply teacher and an NQT I felt very tentative about this, as I was not sure exactly where the boundaries lay with this, because I strongly felt I ought not to get too friendly with the pupils, because my school review performance management targets encouraged me to be disciplinarian with the students.

The work of Pollard *et al.* (2001:14) asserted that although working class pupils were not achieving academically as high grades as middle class children, the working class children were: "...socially confident, ambitious..." (Pollard *et al.*, 2001:14), and were continuing on to higher education. This was the opportunity I hoped all my pupils would be entitled to, and I hoped through SOS to achieve behaviour for learning so that pupils could achieve grades high enough for entry to such courses. One of the key results from the research of Pollard *et al.* (200:19), was: "...the importance of schools affirming individual pupils' identities, cultures and experiences, and the significance of allowing pupils to incorporate their distinct identities and experiences into their classroom learning." (Pollard *et al.*, 2001:19). I certainly found that the SOS interviews I held with the pupils allowed me to inquire about pupils' hobbies – for example how did you do in the match last night? This type of interaction I believed helped me to begin to establish a relationship with pupils, and set a good tone in lessons. Occasionally it helped me to develop resources for lessons too – for example whilst developing a quiz on world poverty I added a question about capacity of a local football stadium to demonstrate how many children die a day from starvation, which hooked pupils, but also brought the point home to them (previous to SOS I would not have made this improvement to the lesson, as I had no interest in football).

Pollard with Filer (1996:268), stated influences upon the pupil included their parents and significantly their mums at primary age, sibling rivalries, and parents choosing their friends or forbidding certain friendships. The authors noted that peer groups influenced pupils, and that worryingly: "...the playground was an uncertain, and at times threatening, context." (Pollard with Filer, 1996:269). I was aware that all of these factors may have affected my pupil's behaviour negatively whilst completing my research, but felt that these were outside of the realms of resources available to my research to address – I felt that the SOS approach offered a positive window to some pupils perhaps otherwise difficult days. Pollard with Filer (1996:274), said that: "Most of the time pupils were concerned to do as well as they could, thus satisfying the expectations of significant others such as parents, teachers and, as awareness and status grew, peers." (ibid, 1996:269). I believed that I was using the SOS approach to get pupils who had lost this desire to do well get back on track.

Pollard with Filer (1996:281), reported that one of their case studies Daniel was unconfident about tackling tasks for fear of completing them incorrectly and that he felt: "...vulnerable and at times, frightened." (Pollard with Filer, 1996:281). Whilst I suspected some of the boys I taught were frightened of failure in a task, and that was why they would not engage in activities; I had not considered up until this point that they may be frightened or vulnerable in the classroom. This was because in my head whatever happened outside the classroom to make them feel this way, ended as soon as they were in my space – this made me realise that this may not have been the pupil's perspective.

Pollard with Filer (1996:281), made an important point that two of the pupils had met the school's expectations of them, whilst: "...both mothers were uneasy at the level of their achievements and not entirely confident of their capabilities." (ibid, 1996:281).

Thus portraying how difficult it could be for school and parents to see eye to eye on issues concerning pupils. Pollard with Filer (1996:308), went further to say that: "...the notion of 'parents as consumers' did not recognise the vital role that mothers and fathers play in supporting children's identities, self-confidence and learning. The danger was that it could recreate detachment and division." (ibid, 1996:308). Indeed, they recommended that parents and teachers collaborated in supporting children. However, I often felt pupils were more interested in pleasing their peers when they were misbehaving, and I intended to conduct my research with pupils working with their peers, although Pollard with Filer (1996:309), commented the: "...two major sources of support and claims on the allegiance of pupils when they act in school – their peers and their teachers." (Pollard with Filer, 1996:309). This confirmed to me that SOS with me leading it with my own pupils could potentially be successful. How I used SOS shall now be described.

Background

As an NQT supply teacher of Religious Education (RE), using SOS. I used SOS with pupils with the aim of developing a positive relationship with pupils, in order to prevent pupils from incurring repeating detentions with me. I viewed SOS as potentially being a tool to avoid negative behaviour cycles occurring in my classroom. The most common behaviours that would lead to a pupil receiving an SOS meeting with me would be for talking over me whilst I was instructing the class, talking over other pupils whilst they were sharing their opinions with the rest of the class, and not following the instructions of myself or a classroom assistant. Pupils were not aware that the name of the method I was using with them was SOS, however, they were aware that they were receiving a detention for poor behaviour. When I began as a supply teacher of RE in my current school, between the November 2008 and July 2009 I conducted SOS interviews with

twenty-one students, eighteen of the pupils were talking over me when I was instructing the class, one pupil for a second time brought sweets into the lesson (against school rules), the other two students were not getting on with the tasks given them, and were distracting others from their work. Of these pupils four were in Year 7, twelve were in Year 8, three were in Year 9, and two were in Year 10, two of the Year 8 pupils were girls, one pupil in Year 9 was female all the other students were male. As shown in table 2 below:

Table 2. Pupils involved in SOS meetings.

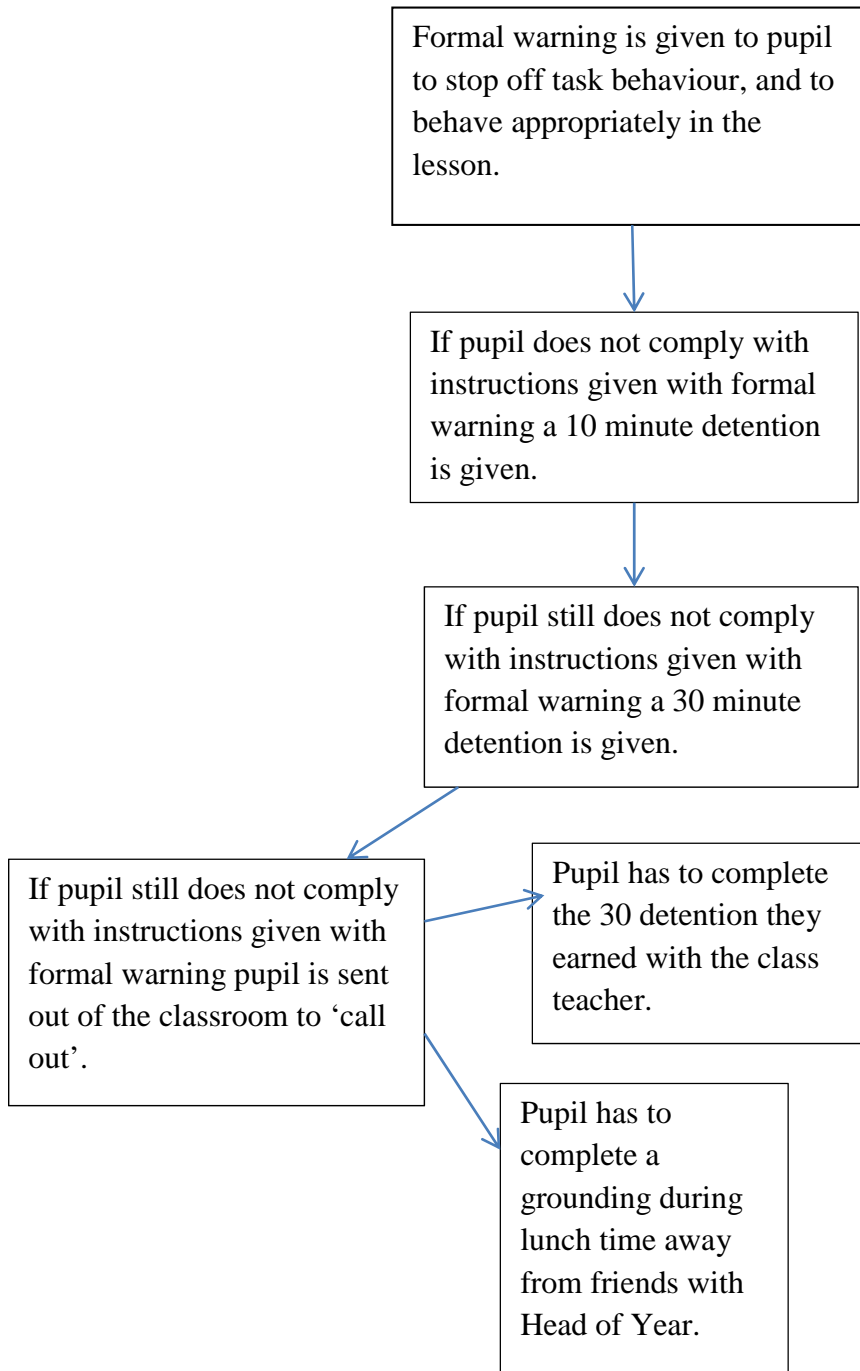
	Male	Female
Year 7	4	
Year 8	10	2
Year 9	2	1
Year 10	2	

One of the main features of SFBT (which SOS was based upon), was that the therapy was brief. Indeed, I found that most SOS meetings with a pupil could be conducted in less than five minutes, and mostly it would only take one meeting then the pupil would work and behave at an acceptable level in lessons thereafter. The meetings were conducted in the morning and lunchtime breaks. I would follow the school's discipline pattern of Positive behaviour management (PBM), and issue pupils with a 'formal warning', then if misbehaviour continued a ten minute detention, then a thirty minute detention if poor behaviour continued, (if further poor behaviour ensued we sent the pupils to 'call out' a separate room away from the lesson. Pupils then had to complete a lunchtime 'grounding' (a detention led by a Head of Year), away from their

peers, and a thirty minute detention with me if this was the case). As shown in diagram

1.

Diagram 1 PBM



The SOS meetings would be conducted in the ten and thirty minute detention periods of morning and lunchtime breaks.

When the pupil arrived for their SOS meeting I would calmly greet them and try to find something to compliment them upon such as being on time, or remembering to bring their planner – in order to start the meeting off on a positive note. I was always careful to open the SOS meeting with praise, even though it was sometimes difficult if I was feeling stuck to find something good they had done, I sometimes asked the pupil to help to clear books off the tables or tuck chairs in, which gave the pupil space to burn their anger off and me the chance to praise them.

I would then sit next to the pupil but at an angle to them so as my body language would not appear to be threatening to them (i.e. not directly facing them), again as per SOS guidelines. Subsequently, I would then make a record of their name on the record sheet I had created for the meetings. Next I would ask the pupils to give themselves a rating out of ten (with ten being very good), of their behaviour and attitude during the lesson that had led to the SOS meeting, I would accept whatever number they gave me and write it on the record sheet. Following this I would ask them to give themselves a behaviour target out of ten for the next lesson, again I would accept whatever number they gave me, then record this on the record sheet then ask them what their 'exception' (explained below) was. As per SOS it was important to accept the information being given to me without interrupting the student, again I would note this on the record sheet. The pupil would then be asked to tell me about their 'exception' which would usually be a lesson or activity e.g. football when they were totally focused and would not misbehave. We would then talk about the skill/behaviours the pupil had to display during these activities in order to stay on task. I then would ask them what skills/behaviours they could bring from their exception to my lesson in order to help

them to meet their target; these skills would also be noted on the record sheet. Following this I would inform the pupil I was making a note of their skills and target in my planner on the section for the next lesson, and that I would be reminding them of these at the beginning of next lesson in order to help them to meet their target. The meeting would then end, usually with the pupil apologising for their disruptive behaviour and promising to improve. Sometimes another student may be waiting for their meeting, if I had several pupils waiting for an SOS meeting I would choose the calmest and politest pupils to go first in order to model the behaviour for the others. As portrayed in appendix B SOS teacher worksheet 1, six out of eight pupils aimed to be a nine or ten out of ten (with ten being good) during the next lesson.

Exceptions and problem free talk.

Pupils had to identify their 'exceptions' i.e. times when poor behaviour did not happen. I found when I asked pupils what their exception was most pupils were able to quite easily give me an answer - it could be in another lesson for example History, Science or PE or playing a sport (see appendix B SOS teacher worksheet 1). Often the pupil's exception would be during a sporting activity such as football, and the pupil's eyes would light up when they talked about how they had to behave on the pitch. When my students told me about their exception I would ask them what would happen if they behaved in the way they had just done for me during their exception, again pupils were easily able to identify the consequences of not focusing. For example students whose exception was football would often say they could lose the match, and their team mates would be upset with them, and they could even get thrown off the team. It was interesting to me to see them enthusiastic about something, and I could praise them upon being able to identify the skills they needed to stay on task in a match, then I would ask them to bring those skills to RE lessons.

One of my Year 9 students had said that his exception was English so I asked his English teacher if I could go along to a lesson and observe how he worked in the lesson. This was really valuable to me as I noticed she kept the atmosphere light and happy, and although he did not complete as much written work as I normally expected him to in a lesson (the pupils were working in group to complete a group writing activity). When the teacher noticed he had not written much she made a joke about him wanting to spend his lunch with her which spurred him on to try a bit harder in a fun way, instead of causing a confrontation, I immediately employed this ruse into my own practice and I found it helped to stop potential confrontations at an earlier stage. For the first two years of my research my colleagues were not aware of the SOS method and were not interested when I tried to explain my research. However, I was invited to present the method in Spring 2010 to colleagues within my department which is described in the Methodology and Results chapters in the presentation to non SO colleagues sections.

Tasks.

Sometimes when students were describing their exceptions they would offer suggestions as to what may help them to make improvements to their behaviour in lessons. When pupils offered this suggestion – to move away from distracting friends, during our SOS meetings I would adapt my seating plans to try out the pupil's suggestion. Often the pupil asked me to make it seem like a new seating plan was my idea not the pupils, so that their friends were not upset with them moving away, which I would do because it felt like I was meeting the student half way, as they were offering the idea for change and showing me that they were prepared to adapt. One suggestion given to me from a pupil was that the pupil intended to tell their friend that they were sick of getting into trouble for talking over the teacher/other pupils, and would tell their

friend they were going to save their chat for break time, which I praised as being a very mature suggestion.

Targets and small changes.

When one of my students (in appendix B SOS teacher worksheet 1) aimed to be a seven out of ten, rather than a six (his rating of his current behaviour), I praised him for aiming to improve, (whilst secretly worrying inside that a seven may be enough to potentially disrupt the next lesson). I would always accept the number the pupils gave me then say 'we will have another meeting to review your progress towards your target number out of ten'. However, students who gave themselves less than a nine out of ten (my secret hope was for them to be at least a nine), quite often would be a ten next lesson – in my opinion. When I reviewed with them at the end of the lesson, and asked what had encouraged them to be a ten they would often say they had decided it was 'not worth it' to misbehave, meaning they did not want the hassle of another SOS meeting. I felt many of them felt embarrassed at the thought of misbehaving on further occasions when they could see the effort I had made to encourage them to behave appropriately, and get to know them and the things they were good at doing. One student (in appendix C SOS teacher worksheet 2) aimed to be eight of ten in his lesson achieved this in the next two lessons, yet was kept back for detention on the third lesson, so I followed the SOS guidelines and went back to the start with him and accepted the small steps of progress that he was able to make.

Targets.

I believed that asking pupils to set a target during SOS meetings was requiring pupils to engage in growth mindset behaviour (Dweck, 2012), because it was inviting them to see that change was possible. However, I appreciated that it was important to understand why pupils had a fixed mindset, it could have been because they hated school, indeed

one of my pupils (appendix B SOS teacher worksheet 1), said to 'leave school' would solve their behaviour problems. I was also aware of the fact that to a certain extent the system I was working within had a fixed mindset, in that the school had rules that were to be enforced for the benefit of the majority of pupils, and the rules were not meant to be bent or broken.

One of the rules that pupils in my current school hated and questioned the point of was that coats and outdoor clothing had to be black with logos 'no bigger than a 50p coin'. I regularly heard pupils questioning this rule and staff giving no other reason other than 'that's the rule', whilst the offending articles were removed and phone calls made home. (The most frequent season for this was especially after the Christmas holidays when pupils were proudly wearing their presents). Whilst these school rules were officially rigidly adhered to as part of what the Head used to call the 'inch war' (reminding the pupils who had the power in the building), they could be damaging to teacher pupil relationships. What would start as what seemed to be a simple bit of rule enforcing could become a full blown war between a teacher and pupil/school and home, and could lead to a pupil causing disruption when they saw you as they got immediately defensive or tried to get the 'first blow'. Gradually as I gained experience in school I realised that some of my colleagues were 'picking their battles' instead of picking up on every naughty deed with every child; in order to maintain pupil interest in their subject. However, as an inexperienced teacher I felt it was difficult to decide which battles to pick, and I was being constantly told to crack down on all unacceptable behaviour, so I felt a lot of pressure to have no behaviour issues with my classes.

Summary.

Thus, when completing the SOS training I felt that the fundamental ideas of Solution Focused Therapy, which SOS was based upon, fitted my beliefs that pupils were able to

control their own behaviour, and that they had the answers as to how to solve their behaviour problems. I believed if pupils made their own behaviour targets that they would be more likely to keep them and improve, than if they had targets bestowed upon them. I also felt that as a new teacher the structure of SOS meetings allowed me to start to develop a positive relationship with my new pupils. I shall now describe the advice and guidance given to me about behaviour management and this sometimes conflicted with my practice.

Guidelines given by colleagues upon dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

Types of behaviour that teachers regarded as unacceptable in a secondary school survey in 1989 by Wheldall and Merrit were: “Verbal abuse...making unnecessary noise...disobedience...talking out of turn...idleness...unpunctuality...hindering other children...physical aggression...untidiness...out of seat...” (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:5). In 2007 during my first supply contract I found the same activities were causing a barrier to learning. During further performance management observations, during my second year of teaching I was also advised to be aware of environmental factors which could contribute to disruptive behaviour, such as having the room too hot or too cold, and not having easy access to the pupils for learning materials. Wheldall and Merrett agreed: “...specific actions by a teacher or another pupil to more global aspects of the environment such as heating and lighting levels, the arrangement of furniture and materials and the management of classroom seating.” (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:38). It occurred to me that taking avoidance tactics for pupil disruption was a minefield, I knew that adults sitting in a room could not agree as to whether to have a window open or not, yet I was expected to put the pupils in a seating plan – obviously putting pupils who feel the cold more near a window was going to cause trouble. I was expected to have learning materials accessible, yet punish pupils for not

bringing learning materials to the lesson – the administering of the punishment often caused even more confrontation as they would say ‘Mr _____ just gives us a pen’.

As a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT), more experienced professionals who observed my lessons, as part of my professional development were always ready to offer me advice on how to ‘manage’ the behaviour of pupils who were off task. I became increasingly concerned about off task behaviour. I had agreed with my mentor during my ITT (Initial Teacher Training), that teachers needed to tackle poor behaviour in order to allow learning to occur. However, during my NQT year initially the emphasis was put upon what I could do to manage poor behaviour, after classroom observations my targets for improvement were to investigate ways of dealing with poor behaviour. I was keen to act upon my targets as I wanted to be the best teacher I could possibly become, so I actively sought ways in which I could improve my behaviour management such as observing experienced professionals, and asking more experienced teachers for ideas and strategies. I believed that poor behaviour was caused by the students, and therefore they had to take some responsibility for their actions because I believed that all humans were responsible for their own actions.

However, unfortunately sometimes the manner of professionals giving me advice was a little patronising because I was an NQT, also probably because I was approaching them as being ‘the expert’ and sometimes these teachers led me to believe that they had no ‘behaviour problems’, to be fair some would say “no behaviour problems now” admitting to experiencing them as an NQT. So gradually, I became more and more concerned about tackling poor behaviour, I became convinced that learning in my lessons was not as good as it could be, as I knew few pupils were on task one hundred per cent of the time. Whilst completing my Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in 2005/6, many of my peers admitted it was the aspect of teaching

that they were most terrified about whilst embarking upon their careers. However, at that point I had felt quietly confident that I would be able to overcome poor behaviour, and at that stage was not worried, due to my previous career background prior to 2005 in retail management and where I was known for the skills I had acquired in successfully handling customer complaints, public speaking and managing staff. Unfortunately, the reality of my NQT year (2007), and the pressure I felt from comments about improving behaviour management had eroded my confidence.

After completing my NQT year, I began to realise that some of the teachers that had instructed me to improve my behaviour management of pupils actually had badly behaved pupils in their own classes, (I had begun to believe when they were advising me on pupil behaviour issues that they had no behaviour management issues). This was also what I had observed in my PGCE training schools prior to this, which was one of the factors that had motivated me to want to try something different (like the SOS approach), to what other teachers were using. I realised fairly early on in my practice that I was being given disingenuous advice about behaviour management of pupils, and that teachers were not always practicing what they preached. Moreover, after being at the same school for over a year, I began to be included in staffroom conversations where teachers were complaining about pupil behaviour and blatantly had behaviour management issues themselves with individuals, groups of pupils, sometimes whole classes. This was a light bulb moment and I sought opportunities to observe these teachers who bravely allowed me to see them in action, and as well as gaining tips for working with difficult pupils this also helped me to regain my confidence. This helped to develop my relationship with members of staff where I felt more their equal, and I realised to encounter behaviour management issues was normal. Indeed, "Managing troublesome behaviour in the classroom is a problem faced by all secondary teachers at

some time in their careers.” (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:i). Although I did realise that the way I preferred to work with off task pupils (SOS), was different from the way my colleagues worked with students. My experiences in exploring behaviour management techniques with pupils, and conversations with colleagues led to me beginning my research, as I wished to come to a fuller understanding of my practice.

I came to realise that different teachers would deal with the same type of disruption differently from colleagues, within the same school, for example talking over the teacher - some teachers would threaten the pupil with a detention, others would ignore the talking, other teachers would politely yet firmly ask the pupils to stop and listen, whereas some teachers would be sarcastic - asking the pupil if they would like to take the lesson as they obviously knew so much that they did not need to listen. Through time I realised through listening to pupils, that pupils who stopped talking over when a detention was threatened would stop talking straight away, if that teacher had a reputation for giving out detentions, as pupils were aware of individual teacher’s rules and tolerance levels of disruptive behaviour. Cowley commented that detentions as a sanction were worth setting however: “...it is essential that you follow up any students who do not attend your detentions.” (Cowley, 2003:66). Indeed, she went further to report that pupils had: “...mixed feelings about detentions. Depending upon how they were run...” (ibid, 2003:118), thus pupils were aware that some detentions were not effective. She also noted that: “Some students said that they didn’t turn up to detentions, because there was no real pressure to do so. Others said that if they understood *why* the detention was given they would turn up for it.” (ibid, 2003:118). When I started my career I found that pupils would often not turn up for a detention if they did not agree with me that they had earned one, some pupils who had not completed the work set in the lesson had earned a detention because they had talked off task, despite me warning

them and reminding them of the written task in the lesson, and others did not think I was being fair as they claimed that other teachers ‘let them off’ the work or let them talk over them, (although I was aware there may be an element of truth in their protests I also thought pupils were testing me to see if I would back down and let them off the detention).

In the first stages of my profession it was often difficult to work out who my true allies were amongst colleagues. As a supply teacher some members of staff understandably did not want to risk their relationships with pupils by publicly supporting me. Others offered help but regularly ‘forgot’ to pop into lessons when I requested a visit for classes or individuals that I felt were difficult, or they ‘forgot’ promises to catch and speak to a pupil who was a persistent offender. I even accidentally caught some staff who’d taken pupils from me for a detention laughing, and using the fact I was a supply teacher to score popularity points with difficult pupils; which I felt was truly unprofessional, but put this down to life lessons about who to trust. I realised that teaching could be a lonely profession when you had to tackle difficult behaviours on your own, I thought that this happened partially because different teachers had different standards as to what behaviours they deemed acceptable in the classroom. This was confirmed by Wheldall and Merrit, (1989): “Most teachers will have noticed how the behaviour of a class varies depending on who is teaching them, where they are being taught or even who has been teaching them the previous lesson.” (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:37). Other factors that had been identified as to causing poor behaviour were changes in the weather according to Badger and O’Hare (1989): “Effects of weather may be as powerful as the effects of any other variable measured, e.g. school practices. They may also have different effects on pupils than on teachers.” (Badger and O’Hare, 1989:93). Clearly this may have been a causal factor of poor behaviour that teachers

may have felt unable to change, but it was important to be aware of it. Whilst training it was mentioned to me and I thought it was unlikely to be true, however, in practice I had seen the unsettling effects upon children whilst teaching in a class room where the wind howls and occasionally blows air vents open! Also, I believed that teachers were unwilling to talk sometimes because due to bad press, as they had so much pressure put upon them, they do not wish to be regarded as weak or being unable to solve issues.

During my ITT I had heard some of my peers talking about a ‘positive behaviour management’ approach to tackling poor behaviour, although listening to my colleagues there seemed to be no uniform agreement to what it was. One student teacher’s training school asked them to use no negative comments about behaviour in the classroom at all, whilst another student teacher said that was not what his school called positive behaviour management it was to give more positive comments than negative ones.

Other advice that was given to me by several colleagues was to show the pupils ‘who was boss’ by putting pupils into seating plans with tables in straight rows, boys sitting next to girls. This was confirmed by the research of Wheldall and Merrett (1989): “Average on-task behaviour for the class during the customary (same-sex) seating was 76% but this rose to 91% during the mixed-sex seating intervention.” (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:44). However, I found that this advice would not work for some pupils as sitting with the opposite sex was too distracting and caused more off task behaviour than if they were sitting in same sex groups.

I realised after a couple of years of teaching experience that all classes did not have to be placed in seating plans to be motivated, actually in some classes it positively disrupted their learning, and it was better to instruct pupils to sit with someone that they knew that they could learn with and not be distracted by. I also became brave enough to

go against colleagues' advice to sit pupils in rows facing the front of the room because they said this meant pupil behaviour would be better, and decided to make my tables face each other in groups of fours and sixes as I wanted to include more collaborative learning activities in my lessons, which I felt especially suited RE and Philosophy issues I wanted pupils to discuss. Again with many classes I found this to be successful, and actually encouraged engagement in lessons where pupils could support each other's learning in a group situation.

I believed that one reason that pupils may talk over the teacher or over other pupils was because they felt that their views were not being heard. Indeed, Gillies (in Gillies and Boyle 2010), found that students working collaboratively in a group: "...engage in fewer interruptions when others speak..." (Gillies 2006, in Gillies & Boyle, 2010:933). I developed the practice of 'Talking partners' where I would ask pupils to discuss a question/statement, and share ideas before some students would share their thoughts with the rest of the class. This had the benefit of allowing pupils time to think, everyone got to share their view and it gave the pupils confidence to share their opinion, I felt that this was one of the most significant activities I developed which helped the pupils to stop talking over me and each other. Indeed, Baines *et al.* (in Gillies & Boyle 2010), found that in secondary schools: "Grouping practices were aimed at maintaining control and on-task attention and maximising individual and teacher directed learning." (Baines *et al.* in Gillies & Boyle, 2010:933). Thus, Baines found that: "In short Baines *et al.* suggested that cooperative learning is not widely used as a practice to facilitate student interaction and learning." (Gillies & Boyle, 2010:933). I believed group work techniques which encouraged pupils to work collaboratively such as talking partners were crucial to help pupils learn skills as to how to socially interact with others in a correct manner, especially to listen respectfully to someone else's

opinion, even when it differed from their own. Kyriacou (1983) when researching teacher effectiveness, found that Denscombe reported that whilst teachers were expected to keep classes quiet, it may not be the best conditions for learning to take place: “Indeed, keeping a class fairly quiet may be regarded by many teachers as an important aspect of teaching ability, although it may not necessarily be associated with pupil gains...” (Kyriacou, 1983:75). Indeed, after teaching for a while I noticed that not all cases of ‘talking over’ (the most annoying form of off task behaviour according to the research of Houghton *et al.* discussed earlier), was the pupil being completely off task. Sometimes a pupil was explaining to another pupil something they had ‘switched off’, and missed or something I had not explained or not explained clearly enough.

I began to realise advice about seating plans, room temperature, lighting, resources were not hard and fast rules that would work with every class, but more of a bank of ideas of things to try to alter if members of a class were off task. Wheldall and Merrit in their research agreed: “In some situations it is a good idea to allow pupils to choose where they sit. In others it can be a recipe for disaster.” (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:41). Sometimes on one lesson a week, it could take nearly a whole school year to find the ‘perfect conditions’ for some classes to be learning without disruption, however, the important thing was to keep trying different ideas with a class – never to give up.

After I had completed my NQT year I heard teachers talking about factors that may disrupt learning which seemed to be out of a teachers control – thirst, hunger, stress caused by circumstances outside the lesson. In a school culture where there were strict time slots available where everyone had to eat, drink and answer the call of nature outside of lessons, it could be a disruption if a child had not been mature enough to manage their break time effectively. Sometimes pupils claimed to have had this

thwarted through queues, lack of money or being in a detention by another teacher, which again could be difficult or sensitive factors to overcome.

Useful advice was given to me following observations to make sure pupils know what the task was being set in order to avoid off task behaviour. Suggestions given to me such as making my voice loud also, clear using different tones and giving written instructions on the board, on tables or getting pupils to repeat and reword instructions were useful ideas. Wheldall and Merrit, (1989) noted that keeping pupils occupied was also a good tactic to avoid off task behaviour: "...work which they find absorbing and which is within their capacities,..." (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:47). Over the years I had worked hard to survey pupils to find out what they enjoyed doing, and which type of activities they believed helped them to learn. I also worked with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), to make activities appropriate. It took time and experience to build up appropriate banks of resources for stretching pupils who finish tasks earlier and thoroughly, so they did not distract others. Indeed, O'Brien (1998) argued that off-task pupils needed: "...further differentiation of 'the learning': an in-depth consideration of how lessons may be designed to penetrate the façade of difficult behaviour..." (O'Brien, 1998:i). When I had surveyed misbehaving pupils as to what they claimed would make them engage in the lessons more, they frequently said they wanted to do more fun activities, so my first few years as a teacher I concentrated on adapting lessons to include the pupil's ideas in order to improve engagement.

I felt ideas in how to build relationships with pupils was lacking in my training – maybe it was something some teachers had the ability to do. I believed that a lot of what made me successful was due to my mostly positive outlook on life, so it was easy for me to find actions to compliment in pupils. Maybe developing positive relationships could not be taught. I naturally found it easy to speak to pupils respectfully, as I

genuinely thought that I could learn from them, and I saw them as amazing individuals worthy of respect. My calm outlook was useful for teaching and I believed many pupils found me non-threatening because of this. As my experience built I brought more of my own ideas to learning, felt more relaxed and built in an increased amount of fun activities to my lessons, which I felt improved pupils to engagement with my lessons/issues. Generally I was confident in trying new ideas as my experience built up, whereas as a new teacher feeling criticised all the time and having to meet so many targets for professional development, it was difficult, it eventually became easier to take risks in lessons.

However, I continued to ask for pupil's opinions on new lesson activities as I believed that they were the customers at the end of the day – I could not do this job successfully without their engagement and feedback. O'Brien (1998), commented that teachers ought to: "...recognise the connections between the strategies and select those that work best for them...The approaches are based on respectful, positive and responsive relationships and are combined with sensitive, flexible and needs-driven strategies." (O'Brien, 1998:87). Being prepared to be flexible and accept advice and ideas and being willing to change were vital qualities to do the job well. I shall now outline a conflict in the ethics of my research where against university guidelines, pupils stated that they wished to be named.

Ethics and experience of research.

During the first stage of my research I conducted Semi-structured Interviews with Year 9 pupils, giving them a cassette recorder and a list of questions about their experience of SOS which they found difficult to understand and answer. Initially, I had worried about the ethics of being present, as I had felt that the pupils would try and give answers to please me, because as their teacher I knew that the power to give detentions, award

grades made me dominant in the minds of the pupils. However, in order to probe the pupil's views I decided to be present in the next activity (Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond 9' activity), to gain data from the pupils, indeed: "...the researcher cannot be distanced from the research process as his beliefs will be fundamental in generating and interpreting the data and as such should be recognised and embraced." (Baumfield *et al.*, 2013:28). The authors pointed out that it was necessary to be clear about my involvement when writing up my research, which I believed I had done.

When I asked my pupils for permission to use their ideas in my research for my Doctorate they said that they would like their names to be published, this gave me an ethical dilemma. The ethical guidelines recommended by my university stated that participant's identities ought to be protected, however, the pupils seemed proud that they were helping me, and some of them stated it would be their only chance to be involved in university work, as they did not feel they would be able to gain entry qualifications for themselves. Baumfield *et al.*, cautioned researchers to consider if they were: "...using people in a way that we would object to being used ourselves." (Baumfield *et al.*, 2013:33). I knew as a teenager I had happily participated in educational research at school some of which I did not believe harmed me, some of which I later found out was unfair. I was aware that the pupil's parents had given permission for the pupils to participate under the guarantee of confidentiality, yet as Baumfield *et al.*, (2013:34), pointed out it was essential that if pupil's points of view were being requested that the pupils give permission. As it was the pupil's and not parent's perspectives being collected and the pupils argued that their names should be made available, I felt in a difficult position as the data being collected was the children's ideas. I believed it was arguable that the pupils ought to have had their wishes respected as they owned their opinions which I needed for my research needed to succeed. Indeed:

“There is an argument here that if there is a co-production of knowledge, all contributors should be credited and by anonymising half of the team that produced this thinking you are being unethical.” (Baumfield *et al.*, 2013:36). I believed my research would not harm pupils, but it may embarrass them in the future (which I believed to be a form of harm, although relatively minor), to read their names attached to research concerning poor behaviour in school, so I decided not to publish their names.

Furthermore, “School is a place in which the division between the weak and the powerful is clearly drawn...teachers are indeed more powerful than students...” (Jackson in Moon, 1994:160). Whilst I was aware that the pupils were powerful in that they had data I needed to use to help me, I also felt that students may have felt that they had to help me because I was the one who could control their time by giving detentions, I assessed their work and wrote their reports home. Even though I made it explicit that participation in the research was voluntary, and that they were doing me a favour. When I interviewed my colleagues and the other adults in my research I believed they were more powerful than myself, as again they held data that I needed for my research. Also, they had all worked in the profession for longer than me, and I felt their opinions and knowledge was superior to mine.

After trying the SOS approach with some initial success whilst working as a supply teacher, I wished to investigate what pupil views were of the approach. Therefore I aimed to interview pupils to ascertain their viewpoints about the method’s strengths and weaknesses. I was also interested to discover the view of professionals (other teachers) using the SOS strategy, in order to discover why they preferred to use SOS over other systems of behaviour management; I wanted to glean any tips from these professionals as to how I could improve my own practise of SOS. A discussion of

the methodological and ethical considerations of this exploration can be found in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Methodology.

Context.

In this chapter I shall describe the methods that I used to collect the data for my research. When I began my training in the SOS technique I was an NQT on a supply contract in a rural Northumberland High School (Spring and Summer term 2007). After this I was employed as a supply teacher in a high school in South Tyneside (Autumn term 2007), where I completed my time as an NQT, then I accepted a permanent post at the same school as a teacher of RE and English (Summer term 2008). During the final stages of my data collection I was promoted to the post of Head of Subject (Summer term 2010). I found that through these stages in my career – from being an NQT developing to become Head of Subject, it was useful to be reflective upon my work and my research influenced my technique as a teacher. However, sometimes it was difficult to find similar research to my own and this shaped my research by forcing me to look at methods other researchers used, I thought carefully about how they could be used to suit my own area of study, thus I chose key studies to make direct comparisons to my own research.

Reflexivity.

Reflexivity in research meant to make clear how the researcher's standpoints and presence affected their research. As a reaction to Positivism which believed researchers could be objective about their subjects Reflexivism acknowledged that researchers could not be truly objective: "To suppose...that we possess criteria of rationality which are independent of our understanding of the essentials of the scientific process is to open the door to cloud-cuckoo land." (Kuhn in Lakatos and Musgrave, in Fetzer, 2001:374). In my research I believed that it was unrealistic to believe one could be objective when judging pupil behaviour for a number of reasons. For example from my

observations with other teachers who taught the same pupils as myself, I noticed that different teachers had different levels of behaviour expectations from pupils, no behaviour issues would arise when observing another teacher, and at the end of the lesson the teacher would comment, that the pupil had been unusually well behaved that lesson. Teachers were only human and certain behavioural traits would irritate one, whilst another teacher could ignore the same trait, for example I had observed teachers that allowed pupils to pass comments to each other, or drink from their water bottles whilst receiving instructions from the teacher, whilst other teachers immediately checked these behaviours and found them unacceptable. It was my experience, whilst using the SOS technique that pupils admitted that they behaved in some lessons because they liked the teacher or the subject matter more so than with others, which they claimed they did not behave well in.

Epistemological reflexivity was one of the main types of reflexivity that affected researchers work. What problem a researcher wished to answer and how the researcher wished to find information to answer that problem could be approached completely differently by a researcher within the same field with a different ontological viewpoint. I shall now give an example of this within my field of study researching the Solution Oriented Schools (SOS), technique where pupils were asked to set themselves goals to improve their own behaviour.

If I came from an Ontological viewpoint of Positivism my research question may be 'Which age group is SOS most successful with?', in order to answer this question I would use research methodology that would create quantitative data, e.g. questionnaires with a Lickert scale, in order to gain more accurate information, I would have the same researchers train everyone who were to fill in the questionnaires to the same standard, I would aim to have the number of respondents into hundreds, preferably

thousands in order to increase the statistical reliability of the research. On the other hand if I came from an Anti-Positivist standpoint, my question could be ‘How can key characteristics of Solution Focused Brief Therapy be used effectively to support secondary school pupils with their behaviour management?’ I would aim to gain qualitative data using research methodology such as case studies, which would describe the use and effects of SOS technique on probably less than 10 individuals.

For my research I chose to take a qualitative approach to my methodology, because I believed this style of approach would best fit my belief that humans were all individuals. Therefore, what I found worked for me in my context, I felt may not work for others, also because I wanted to see what data I could find from the pupil’s point of view, and practitioners of SOS point of view. I acknowledged that the success I felt that I had found with my pupils may not be repeated with another teacher whose personality and style of teaching were different to mine, nor with pupils with different personalities to pupils I had used the method with. Thus, I was interested to see if I could find out why the pupils believed that they had responded positively to the SOS approach, and I wanted to see if I could improve my own practice by speaking to other practitioners, because I still had some pupils who were not responding positively to the approach.

My research included an evaluation of the intervention of using SOS with pupils to help them to control their behaviour in my lessons; personal reflexivity – reflecting upon how the intervention had effected my professional development as a teacher. I kept a Learning Journal during my research (year one was academic year 08/09, and year two was academic year 09/10). This helped me to evaluate my SOS interventions. My research also examined the relationship between myself and my pupils that I had used SOS with, for my methodology for this I conducted Semi-structured Interviews (Summer term 08), and a Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond 9’ activity (Summer term 09), in

order to obtain pupil voice data upon my use of SOS. I have also investigated how professionals, view their own practice with regard to behaviour management. My research tools for this included a Focus Group with ex-colleagues who were teachers trained in SOS at the same time as myself (Summer holiday 09), telephone interviews with Solution Oriented (SO) practitioners (Autumn term 09), interviews with non-SO colleagues (Spring term 10). Finally, I presented my research to non-SO colleagues within my department (Spring term 10), in order to attain views of professionals about the approach.

Personal Reflexivity was an area I considered in my field of research, I acknowledged what influenced my research such as the context of my research. I described my context – which I believed to be important to do as I felt this meant that readers of my research would be better able to judge whether they worked in a similar situation and would be able to draw upon elements of my research. My context included my community, the rules and programmes within my school for pupil behavioural expectations, political influences upon pupil behaviour expectations, my own pupil behavioural expectations and experiences. In my research I stated that I worked as a supply teacher of Religious Education, and I found that pupil behaviour was accepted within some schools to be worse with supply teachers, because pupils did not get time to build up a relationship with the teacher, and get to know the teacher and their expectations. Also, in some of the schools I worked in, RE was generally viewed as a low status subject to teach, and often behavioural issues that arose were not dealt with effectively, by members of staff within the school. I felt that staff did not wish to risk the relationship they had built up with pupils, for the sake of a subject they did not believe should be taught. I also made clear my own reflections upon how my research affected my practice and values. I felt that sometimes after an SOS session I was more

lenient towards the pupil during the next lesson, as I knew I had given them an extra chance to gain their goal, as I believed giving them an extra reminder would enable them to meet their target. Personal reflexivity in my research would therefore help my readers assess my own biases, which was important to take into consideration when considering the ethics of my research.

Methodology.

I decided for the purpose of this research not to collect statistical data to try to apply my research to the general population, because I did not believe a positivist approach and methodology would answer my research question. Indeed, Cohen and Manion pointed out that a weakness with using a positivist approach in classrooms; was that the complex human interactions that occurred could be very difficult to measure in this way. My research methodology was to gain qualitative data and to try to gain insights into the human mind, from an 'anti-positive' stance: "...anti-positivists would argue that individual's behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing their frame of reference..." (Cohen and Manion, 1994:26). Therefore, from this point of view it was believed that researchers would get more sophisticated data from finding out what was happening on the inside of individuals, rather than observing and recording outward behaviour. This was what I was interested in finding out – what the pupils opinions were of the process that they had been through.

Ethics.

During my research I followed guidelines given by BERA (2004), who offered clear guidelines upon ethics for educational researchers in order to protect pupil participants. BERA recommended that: "The Association takes voluntary informed consent to be the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway." (BERA, 2011:5). (See appendix D,

Briefing forms). Voluntary informed consent was asked of the pupils in accordance with BERA's advice (ibid, 2011:5), so the pupils were told they were participating in research on pupils behaviour in lessons. The pupils gave verbal informed consent to having their views recorded. I made it clear to them prior to the activity that they had been chosen to participate because they had mis-behaved in the past and completed a SOS meeting with me. I informed all participants (pupils and adults), that I was using the comments that they gave me for the task towards my thesis, and for journal publication. BERA stated: "The securing of participants' voluntary informed consent, before research gets underway, is considered the norm for the conduct of research." (BERA, 2011:5). So pupils and teachers were requested to give consent before I worked with them (see appendix E pupil consent form and appendix F adult consent form).

I told all participants that their comments would not be linked to their names, whilst several of the pupils said they would like their names to be made known I said this was not possible, as I was required by the ethical guidelines of the university to protect their identity. Whilst I appreciated that the pupils had a feeling of pride in helping me, as they understood my research was an important project for me, and that they wanted their names to be 'famous' (to anyone reading about the research). I was also, worried that when the pupils got older they may be embarrassed that they misbehaved in school, because I was sure I would be if I was them so I did my best to keep their names confidential. Indeed, educational research guidelines encourage confidentiality of participants: "The confidential and anonymous treatment of participant's data is considered the norm for the conduct of research." (BERA, 2011:7). Therefore, I gave the participants codes rather than used their names when writing up my research, no-one but myself had access to these codes and data. Finally the participants were, in line with BERA guidelines told they were able to withdraw their

consent during or after the research. “Researchers must recognize the right of any participant to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time, and they must inform them of this right.” (BERA, 2011:6). Indeed, when I invited the pupils to debriefing where they proof read my transcript in order to check I had represented their views accurately and fairly, I reminded them of this right. Thus, in accordance with (ibid,2001:9) I sought to represent all information given to me accurately.

When I invited the pupils to participate in the task I made it clear to them that attendance was non-compulsory, and arranged the activity to take place at lunchtime rather than in a lesson, so they did not feel forced to attend. Again according to BERA guidelines (ibid, 2011:7), no reward was offered for attendance, and no sanctions for non-attendance. I sought permission from the pupil’s parents via my school for the pupils to participate. Similarly when I was interviewing my non SO colleagues when it was more convenient for them to be interviewed at times and places where I had no available recorder I accented to their wishes, so not to place an extra burden upon them by asking them to be interviewed at another time, (ibid, 2011:7).

BERA advised (2011:5) that all participants should be treated with respect, in my research (and in my teaching), I tried to treat others as I would like to be treated. In line with BERA guidelines (ibid, 2011:6), I was aware that action was to be taken if due to the research, pupils showed signs of distress, and that I had a duty to disclose to the school and parent any child protection information that is revealed by them (I am confident that neither of these circumstances arose during my research).

My first piece of research concerning SOS was a Semi-structured Interview investigation during the summer term of 2008, where I wanted to hear pupil views about the approach, I asked pupils whom I had used SOS with to record their answers to questions I had about their feelings and views on SOS. I had wanted to allow pupils to

speak their minds without me being present to potentially influence their answers so I sent them away with a tape recorder, however, they misinterpreted one of my questions and answered a simple 'yes' or 'no' to all the questions which led me to realise that I needed to be present to probe and to clarify. Thus very little data was gained, however, I realised that I needed to change my methods to get the information that I wanted.

Research question and research design.

My research questions were: 'Do pupils like the SOS approach? If so, what do they like about it?' Fundamentally, I wanted to find out what pupil views were about the SOS technique and colleagues views. This is a table of the methodology I used to find this out (table 2):

Table 2. Methodology table

Methodology:	Timescale:	Sample size:
Learning Journal	2008-09 (year 1) 2009-10 (year 2)	Na
Pupil SOS meetings/intervention	2008-09 (year 1) 2009-10 (year 2)	21
Semi-structured Interview	Summer term 08	7 Year 9 pupils
Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond 9' activity	Summer term 09	7 Year 9 pupils
Teacher focus group with SOS ex-colleagues	Summer holiday 09	2
Telephone interviews with SO practitioners	Autumn term 09	4
Non SO Colleague interviews	Spring 10	2
Presentation to Non SO colleagues	Spring 10	2

Learning Journal as a methodological tool.

During my research I kept a Learning Journal (year one was academic year 2008/09, and year 2 was academic year 2009/10), which was a fundamental tool to help me to reflect upon my practice. Gerstl-Pepin and Partizio (2009), asserted that a Learning Journal worked like the pensive in the Harry Potter books where memories could be stored and explored later by oneself and crucially others:

“...notes can function as a repository for personal reflections, document changes in understanding, and invite the sharing of memories with others so that one has an opportunity to engage in a more in-depth discussion about experiences and interpretations.” (Gerstl-Pepin and Partizio 2009:300).

Indeed, I found it useful to keep the Learning Journal as my experience developed in behaviour management widened, I used the Learning Journal to reflect upon my previous experiences and this helped to deepen my knowledge and understanding of behaviour management.

When completing my Learning Journal during my first year I tended to write my journal on a Friday night at the end of a school week. I was travelling three hours every day to school and making a nightly entry did not suit my lifestyle, however, I found making a weekly entry summed up my week, and helped me to reflect upon everything that had happened. I wrote my Learning Journal using Microsoft Word and usually entered two or three sentences for each day: “Year 10’s period 5 first detentions of the year. Had to be quite firm with Learning Support Assistants (LSA’s), that I wanted them picking up tomorrow for detention, as they hate doing this. One Year 10 escaped before I could record his detention in his planner, so I stayed back to contact his form tutor to do it – there’s no escape. This has given me at least one hour extra work.” (Day 17, Learning Journal year 1). During the second year of completing my Learning Journal I kept it to the same weekly slot on a Friday night but instead of making daily entries I summed up the week which felt more natural, as my focus seemed to have changed by then: “SOS ed a Year 9 pupil who has deliberately missed two detentions with me he was very reasonable. A Year 10 I’d SOS’ed earlier this term voluntarily came to detention and quietly got on with the homework he’d not done.” (Week 7, Learning Journal year 2). I tended to write two or three sentences summing up the whole week.

Interestingly, Gerstl-Pepin and Partizio (2009:302), noted how a Learning Journal could aid a researcher in highlighting their own biases, and I felt that this idea was crucial to my research as I felt that my research was very much a product of my own context and situation in my life at that time and place.

Semi-structured Interviews.

I regularly practiced the SOS technique for 18 months in my permanent school. After working in the school for six months I conducted a Semi-structured Interview with seven pupils (see table 2), to try to ascertain what pupils felt about the SOS method, partly because I felt the approach was a useful tool for myself, yet also because whilst reading about the approach I found that the literature available did not reflect ‘pupil voice’ in this area. As a classroom teacher I believed that some of the best lessons were when pupils led work, and when pupils were given the opportunity to voice an opinion this in turn led to improvements in my own teaching techniques, so I was keen to discover what pupils thought about the SOS approach.

When preparing the research I was aware that as a participant observer I may influence the pupil’s responses, which I did not want to do, therefore I chose the methodology of a Semi-structured Interview (see appendix G), ‘Pupil Semi-structured Interview’), with the pupils taping their responses, without me present, then I transcribed (see appendix H), ‘Pupil’s Semi-Structured Interview Transcript from the Semi-structured Interviews conducted Summer Term 2008’), the recording of their discussion. I gave seven Year 9 pupils the questionnaire and the tape recorder and explained they were to record the questions and answers, and that everyone could give their truthful opinion without me listening – I was working with a group of students at the other end of the classroom. Whilst transcribing the recording I realised several disadvantages of this methodology; one of the questions had been misunderstood by the

pupils: “Are you motivated to learn more now in school?” (P4, line 8, appendix H) seemed to be interpreted (by the pupil who answered), as asking for a definition of the word ‘motivated’ who replied: “If I am motivated I get something done” (P7, line 11, appendix H), some pupils kept quiet and did not say anything (P1, P2 and P3 see appendix H), also due to the fact that I was not present I was unable to probe meaning in the pupil’s responses, or encourage them to extend their answers. I realised I had to structure the interview activity to draw more information from the pupils, and be present to clarify any misunderstandings. This led me to develop the Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond 9’ activity.

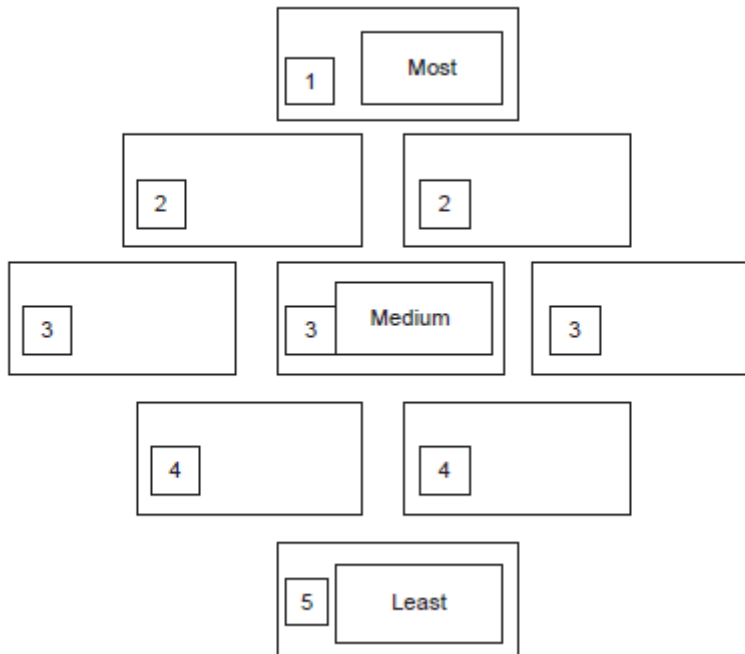
Pupil Focus Group, ‘Diamond 9’ activity.

I therefore developed a ‘Diamond 9’ activity using statements that pupils had made to me during our SOS meetings. Clark (2012) asserted that Diamond 9’s during this ranking activity pupils reasoning was verbalised: “...thus making their understandings available for scrutiny and comparison.” (Clark 2012:223). This was what I wished to do gain a window into the pupil’s thought processes concerning SOS. In order for the pupils to have a stimulus to discuss the SOS approach, I developed a ‘Diamond 9’ activity, for the group to rank. I felt that this would serve to semi-structure the conversation and also allow the pupils to express and discuss their opinions, as they would have to defend the order of importance of the statements (a ‘Diamond 9’ was a tool to get individuals to discuss and rank ideas – for this activity I typed a statement I wished the group to discuss, and printed it onto a slip of paper and placed it with other statements into an envelope. It was called a ‘Diamond 9’ because some statements could be viewed as having equal importance to individuals, and the group members could wish to place them alongside each other, ‘9’ came from the fact that nine statements were generally used but I had seen fewer than and more than nine being used by

professionals in lessons). In a Diamond 9 task participants would rank the statements as shown in model 2:

Model 2.

Organisation of Diamond ranking.



Organisation of Diamond ranking, (Clark 2012:224).

Clark commented:

“The important feature of diamond ranking, is not the actual position of the statements as there are no right or wrong answers but the process of discussion, reflection, negotiation, accommodation to other perspectives and consensus seeking that takes place in agreeing the ranking.” (Clark 2012:223-24).

Whilst I did wish to see which statements the pupils thought to be the most important to them, it was their reflections I wished to hear.

I invited pupils to sort the statements in a Pupil Focus Group session in the summer term of 2009. During this I facilitated and ensured points were clarified, and all pupils had a turn to speak. The Pupil Focus Group, ‘Diamond 9’ session was data rich with pupil’s views, and I was genuinely surprised at some of the information that it produced – including the fact they said what the teacher thought of them was important.

The sample was seven Year 9 pupils who took part in SOS meetings in 2008. In the current academic year I had had to remind them (by showing them the form we filled in appendix I) 'Completed Pupil SOS form'), of their agreed SOS targets from last year when they had misbehaved in class, and this had been enough in lessons to encourage them to improve their behaviour. As with the previous academic year I still taught the pupils RE two hours a fortnight. I wished to gain 'Fully Informed Consent' from the pupils and told them that I was conducting a research task for my Doctoral Thesis for Newcastle University, and that I wished to seek their opinions upon the SOS technique meetings we had conducted to help them with their behaviour management. I told them that other people would be able to read their comments, but would not know who said it, because I would use a code 'P' and a number so their identity would be only known to me. I told the pupils that they could change their mind and withdraw themselves and their comments (from the research), if they wished, before, during or after their Focus Group meeting. I told the pupils that I would type up their comments and show them the work that they had produced after the meeting so they could check it; I felt that this would validate the research: "...validation is achieved when others, particularly the subjects of the research, recognise its authenticity." (McCormick and James in Cohen and Manion, 1994:241). I also believed that this was being fair to the pupils as it gave them an opportunity to withdraw or amend their comments, if they felt that I had unfairly represented their opinions or views.

These were the statements that I asked the pupils to sort:

'Diamond 9 statements'.

Being able to tell Miss Henderson what I'm good at, (other subjects/games).

I am pleased when I reach my target.

I can tell other people when I have met my target.

Miss Henderson reminds me what my target is.

I can have several goes at getting 10/10.

Miss Henderson isn't cross if I don't get 10/10 straightaway.

Miss Henderson listens when I tell her what I'm good at.

Miss Henderson is pleased when I reach my target.

I can use my target to help me behave in other lessons.

I can tell other people when I have met my target.

?

I invited seven Year 9 pupils (see table 2), who I had conducted SOS meetings with to come and do the 'Diamond 9' in their lunch break. I informed the pupils why I was doing the activity, then when I gained their consent to tape I started recording and gave the pupils the statements to sort. I intervened in the pupil's conversation to clarify points and to try and include quieter pupils.

I developed the comments for the Diamond 9 based upon what the pupils had said about the SOS technique in my previous work with them – principally from comments individuals had made after SOS meetings. I was anxious to be present in this activity at this stage in the research so I could keep the conversation going and flowing. Also, so that I could clarify statements and probe meaning in pupil's views, I wanted to be more dominant, and ensure that pupils who had not spoken during the Semi-structured Interview had the opportunity to express their viewpoint this time. Cohen *et al.* (2000), pointed out that it was vital to be aware of your input into the process: "...so that a balance is struck between being too directive and veering off the point..." (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:288). I was anxious to ensure that this activity would reveal more information about the pupil's thoughts (than the Semi-structured Interview had done), but was aware that I would have to emphasise because of my presence (during the

recording), this time, that this did not make the pupils think that I expected certain answers from them.

After the transcription was completed I invited the pupils to meet to read through it, so they would have had the opportunity to correct any mistakes or misconceptions made by myself. Qualitative data gathered in this way should have internal validity, however Miles and Huberman (1994), pointed out that qualitative data lacked external validity (because findings were not used to generalise in other situations), and reliability. Therefore, I recognised that the findings of my research were applicable to my context only, and did not make claims that the methods used would work for all pupils everywhere.

Research using Pupil Focus Groups.

Using a Focus Group to gain information from teenagers was a method that I found was a really rewarding activity. I shall now compare my Pupil Focus Group research with pupils to the research of Marsh (2012), who used Focus Groups with adolescents in a rural secondary school in Cambridgeshire to gain information about what provoked lesson engagement in teenagers. Marsh viewed a focus group as being an ideal tool to gain the type of information that was a similar interest to mine, in that they wanted to hear the ‘pupil voice’ in their field of study.

Research links and methodology.

Marsh surveyed Year 8 and Year 10 pupils with a questionnaire, following this colleagues of hers led pupil focus groups, then interviews with pupils. She asked the pupils what made them engage in lessons and said there was a marked difference between the Year group findings, but did not state what that difference was. She did not make clear how many pupils were used in the focus groups and why she asked other colleagues to lead them, nor why other colleagues lead the interviews with pupils.

Which I felt it was important in my research to make clear, so readers could judge my work, or adapt it. She shared a general theme for the focus groups: “I know a teacher is interested in me when they:...” and “ I know I have a good relationship with a teacher when they:...” (Marsh, 2012:161). However, she did not share the interview questions which were designed to probe the pupils further after the focus group activity. Again, I thought it important to share questions/statements I wanted the pupils to discuss so my work was transparent to my audience. Marsh did not make it clear if she asked for the pupil’s permission from the pupils themselves, or offered an explanation to the pupils as to why the research was being done, and an opportunity to validate or withdraw their data, which I had been careful to do in my research.

In my research I transcribed the Pupil Focus Group session, analysed it and compared it with the ‘Diamond 9’ the pupils produced. However, because all of the ‘Diamond 9’ statements bar one, (‘I can use my target to help me behave in other lessons’), were derived from comments that pupils had already made about SOS. I analysed the group dynamics within my Focus Group whereas Marsh, did not, which I consider to be a weakness in the research.

Research conclusions.

In my research with the Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond 9’ activity I felt that there was an important correlation between good teacher-pupil relationships and good pupil engagement in lessons, Marsh, also concluded this to be true. She also queried whether training for all teachers on establishing good teacher-pupil relationships would be useful to do, rather than having schools have some teachers with good relationships and not all of the staff. This intrigued me as I believed that I had to establish good relationships with pupils in order to encourage their engagement.

For this piece of research I wanted to explore the use of a Pupil Focus Group as I believed that would be a useful method for discovering ‘pupil voice’, I wanted to test this methodology with a group of Year 9 pupils (all from set three out of four), I had worked with the pupils for 18 months. This time I hoped to help the pupils open up and give more information and opinions, as I had felt that in my Semi-structured Interview that I had failed to gain this. Indeed, one advantage of organising a discussion in a Focus Group was that it gained information that one may get from an interview, but pupils felt enabled to: “...self-disclose...when they feel comfortable and when the environment is permissive and non-judgemental” (Krueger and Casey, 2000:9). They also pointed out that if the group perceived they had a similarity with each other they were more likely to disclose. I was clear to point out when I invited the pupils that all of them had been through the SOS process due to their poor behaviour and by the time of the Pupil Focus Group (summer term 2009), were according to themselves and myself improving, and I would be grateful to them to come together to help me with my research so other people could hear about our work.

Teacher Focus Group.

Teacher Focus Group literature review.

There were several reasons as to why I chose to use a Focus Group rather than a more structured interview. At that stage in my research I was not working with anyone else using the SOS technique, and I wanted to gain an understanding of how other teachers were using it. Spradley in Gubrium and Holstein (2001:85), remarked that when interviewing common patterns or themes could sometimes be detected in the content of what participants say, I hoped to identify any of these as I listened to the Teacher Focus Group with SOS ex-colleagues, then intended to use them to develop a more structured interview schedule in order to probe my understanding of my research area.

Another reason I had for selecting a Teacher Focus Group to be part of my methodology was due to my prior experience in using this tool - during my Pupil Focus Group (with the 'Diamond 9' activity), I had found it to be data rich compared to other tools such as my Semi-structured Interview. Parker and Tritter asserted that: "...Focus Groups generate far more data than a range of other methods in relation to face-to-face contact between researchers and participants..." (Parker and Tritter, 2006:25). They also claimed that in recent years there had been an increase in the use of Focus Groups as a tool in the social sciences for this reason.

I was also aware that there was very little published research on the area that I was interested in discovering data – the viewpoints of teachers using SOS and that one of the main strengths of Focus Groups was that: "The most common purpose of a Focus Group interview is for an in-depth exploration of a topic about which little is known." (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990, in Parker and Tritter, 2006:24). Therefore, this was another reason why a Focus Group was the best tool to use at this stage in my research. Also, because I was ultimately investigating what the beliefs were of the participants about behaviour management, and I wanted to know if that had had any influence upon the teachers participating in the SOS training, Bloor commented that Focus Groups revealed: "...underlying issues (norms, beliefs, values), common to the lives of all participants..." (Bloor *et al.*, 2001, in Parker and Tritter, 2006:24). Therefore, I felt that the Focus Group method ought to give epistemologically useful data, which fitted my ontological position as to what data I was able to obtain in my context.

I preferred the style of Focus Group as I felt that participants revealed more than in a group interview situation, and I did not feel it was correct that I took on the role of group interviewer in this situation, because although I had completed my SOS training in the school of the participants, I had left the school (due to my supply contract

ending). Thus, I felt that it was no longer relevant for me to control the dynamics of the interview, as I was no longer a team member of the school, and I felt I may influence their answers by my perceptions of how I believed that they may use the technique. Also, I felt that having worked with the group I had developed my own opinion as to what their ontology may have been concerning behaviour management, but I was aware that as humans we tend to take facts about people then often make presumptions about their beliefs and motivations, (also I believed that these could change in individuals).

Indeed, as I had become a *slightly* more experienced teacher I appreciated that sometimes teachers were often put into situations where they had to act not according to their own beliefs e.g. I trained with a colleague who I observed on a yard break time duty shouting at pupils (like a sergeant at soldiers on parade), to get them lined up for lessons, who afterwards turned to me and said ‘I know you think all the shouting is horrible – I would not have believed in doing it at your stage (teacher in training), – but it is the best way when you are faced with a mass of pupils who you need to be quickly ordered and calmed after a break, you have to assert your authority and pick on some to make an example for the rest to fall into order – the ethos and the atmosphere is tense, but it’s necessary’.

Another reason I did not want to conduct a group interview was that often they were used with the intention of them being replicated in different settings. I did not wish to do this because I acknowledged that what I discovered was relevant to my context. At this stage I intended to develop a more probing interview from themes and patterns that emerged from conducting a more informal style of interview, namely the Focus Group. I perceived that this style with a less structured interview would give me data in an area that I had not expected or predicted, as I was not working with a team of teachers using SOS yet I believed that the participants were.

Parker and Tritter, (2006:31) reported that Focus Groups revealed how individuals see a situation rather than ‘social processes,’ which they viewed as being a weakness of this methodology. However, I acknowledged this and believed that my investigation was to discover individual viewpoints, which I did not expect to apply to everyone who used this technique.

According to Parker and Tritter, (2006:32) it was important when analysing data from a Focus Group to include ‘sensitive moments’, be aware of participants who dominate the group, those who contributed less, and be aware of how the participants judged the facilitator. They asserted that how the data was analysed made an epistemological difference to how data would be analysed from a group interview. Parker and Tritter, believed that when analysing the data from Focus Groups it was especially important to pay attention to the dynamics of the group they said: “...for it is this dynamic nature which is at the heart of Focus Groups and which endows them with the power to generate insight often negated by other methods.” (Parker and Tritter, 2006:34). Therefore, they regarded ‘dominant’ and ‘quiet’ members of the group to be important to note and to record their influence on the data, whereas ‘dominant’ and ‘quiet’ members of the group had been regarded as a weakness of Focus Group methodology.

Focus Groups as a methodological tool had been used by researchers before to gain data from teachers. When I planned my Focus Group data planning and writing up I also compared my research with teachers in a Focus Group to that of Zuckerman-Parker and Shank (2008).

Research focus.

The research conducted by Zuckerman-Parker and Shank commented upon how previous Focus Group research had concentrated upon making guidelines for how to

conduct a Focus Group, and how to analyse data produced by a Focus Group. Yet they did not make specifically clear what their research focus was, they stated they had gathered: "...unique and interesting data." (Zuckerman-Parker and Shank, 2008:630). Although, they did make it clear what this data was they did not state what questions that they wanted their group of teachers to discuss, indeed even if they gave their participants a list of questions, I thought that declaring how I was going to stimulate conversation was fundamentally important. Therefore, in my research I made it clear what information I had found and stated my Focus Group questions.

Research links and methodology.

Zuckerman-Parker and Shank (2008), did not make it clear where either their ontology lies or how their data was analysed, therefore I found it impossible to say how their research fits in to other research. This made me wish to make my ontology for this research very clear as well as my methodology so that other researchers could be fully informed if they wish to critique my research.

Extraneous Variables.

At the beginning of their research Zuckerman-Parker and Shank planned to have: "...ideally six to eight participants..." (Zuckerman-Parker and Shank, 2008:630), in their Focus Groups, and they offered participants the chance to attend the session on one of two dates. Even though the participants worked at different schools they all arrived upon the same date, and instead of sticking to their original plan to divide the participants into groups of six to eight, they saw the participants were sitting in friendship groups, and decided to conduct the session with eight groups of two or three people.

Research findings.

Zuckerman-Parker and Shank (2008), found that having smaller Focus Groups than they had planned allowed for all the team members to contribute. However, they commented that: "...teams of like-minded or similar people can be used as if they were single individuals." (Zuckerman-Parker and Shank, 2008:632), I did find this a little naïve as I believed even within small friendship groups like this, some people may have been passive if they were placed with a dominant work colleague, especially if that colleague was in a position of authority over them. I personally found with my Focus Group that this could be the case, and I felt that a one to one telephone interview would possibly be the solution to investigating this.

Research conclusions.

In the research of Zuckerman-Parker and Shank (2008), they recommended that it was possible to have a large number of participants within a Focus Group, yet they still concluded that six to eight participants was the optimum number, despite stating that they obtained desirable results from groups of two or three people which seemed to me to be a contradiction. I actually initially asked for two to five volunteers as I felt that I would find it difficult to identify the viewpoints of a higher number of participants. Zuckerman-Parker and Shank also recommended allowing participants to choose their own groups, which for my research worked well as it eventually worked out as being a spontaneous event also, as I knew that the participants were not used to helping in research and I wanted them to feel at ease. The researchers also recommended that each participant be allowed to speak at least twice, however I did not feel that it was fair or appropriate to force someone to speak if they were attending the session voluntarily as they obviously as adults, had their own reasons for not speaking if they were offered the opportunity to but chose not to.

Teacher Focus Group implementation.

Due to the Pupil Focus Group ('Diamond 9' activity), being so successful in producing data I decided to use the Focus Group tool to approach my ex-colleagues to find out their views on using SOS. I conducted a focus group with two teachers who I had trained with in the SOS technique. I e-mailed the Head teacher of my ex-school to arrange permission and access for this, during the summer term of 2009. I then reflected upon my own practice and considered how to move forward with pupils who had not responded to SOS with me. I also wanted to know if how the teachers used SOS in my ex-school, could help me adapt my approach so I could reach difficult pupils I had not seen improvement with in my own practice. I wanted to ask the teachers who used SOS, two main questions:

- 1) 'When do you find it useful to use SOS?' (Do you use it all the time or just when other methods of behaviour management do not work)?
- 2) 'In your opinion what benefits does SOS have over other methods of behaviour management?'

The Head teacher asked for a copy of the questions to be considered by the group before an appointment date was agreed, I realised that if the teachers were aware of the questions before I attended, that this may have had the advantage of giving the teachers time to reflect upon their own practice before I arrived. Moreover, I appreciated that it may also have made them over analyse their practice, and be less open about what they shared with me; however, these were the agreed terms of my visit. Due to the fact that I intended to be present in the Teacher Focus Group, I foresaw that I would be able to probe their reactions to the questions, and check my understanding of the answers given.

Teacher Focus Group Results.

The Head teacher of the school was contacted to request permission to speak to the staff to gain data for my Doctoral thesis, and the questions to be used were submitted to the Head teacher (upon his request), with a guarantee of protecting the identity of the staff involved. The Head teacher then posted an invitation to attend upon the staff notice board thus, the participants were to be volunteers invited to attend the Teacher Focus Group after school on the last day of summer term. The first arrangement for the Teacher Focus Group had to be cancelled as it was at the end of Summer term, and there was a lack of availability of participants, the reason given was that it was because many of the teachers were out of school on the day that it was arranged for, so we agreed we would attempt to arrange a second date during the autumn term of the next school year.

However, for convenience of time and travel, the second attempt at conducting the Teacher Focus Group with professionals working full time jobs, actually occurred during the school holidays of 2009 at a coffee shop. Two teachers were present; I informed them that why I was researching the use of SOS - for my doctoral thesis and that I was interested in collecting data upon teachers' views of the approach. The information I gathered during the session caused me to reflect upon my research, as the teachers were not using SOS which led me to change my methodology, as following up the Teacher Focus Group with telephone interviews to probe for a deeper level of information was no longer viable. Instead, I decided to try contact practitioners elsewhere using the SOS approach.

Problems encountered during the research.

There were no respondents from the teachers invited to the initial teacher Focus Group; this was probably because they were not using the SOS technique. I contacted the Principal leader at the headquarters of Sycol the SOS training providers in Britain, and

he suggested that I contact my trainers. When I followed up the e-mail contact details he had given me, I found that one trainer had moved to another area of the country, and the other had been replaced by a lady who said that she would be able to put me in touch with teachers using SOS. I then planned my interview schedule which included a model of types of teaching personality, in order for the interviewee's to pin-point where they felt their personality lay.

Telephone interviews with SO practitioners.

Due to full time work constraints and distance between participants I had planned to use telephone interviews for the next stage of the research, these telephone interviews were conducted in the autumn term of 2009. Telephone interviews had been criticised as not revealing as much as face-to-face interviews. However, Sturges and Hanrahan, (2004), argued that in qualitative research there was no difference, whereas in the past researchers conducting quantitative research had gained different data from those interviewed in the two different methods. Another reason I had for using telephone interviewing was because it complimented my first methodology of a Focus Group, where one 'quiet' participant did not want to reveal something in front of their colleagues. Especially as I was interested in how the teachers used SOS as a team, I believed that people often disclose more over the phone indeed Sturges and Hanrahan stated that: "For topics that are sensitive because they are embarrassing, interviewing by telephone may increase data quality". (ibid, 2004:108). They measured the amount of data collected from the two types of interview in their investigation of prison visiting conditions, and found that: "...virtually the same amount and quality of data were gathered regardless of whether the interviews were conducted over the telephone or face-to-face." (Ibid, 2004:112). Sturges and Hanrahan, (2004) commented that although telephone interviewing did not allow the interviewer to pick up on visual clues, often

something the respondent did showed that probing may be necessary there were other cues such as: "...hesitation, sighs..." (ibid, 2004:114). Although, I believed visual signals with audio mannerisms helped humans to interpret information more easily, I felt that on the phone; that distance away from the participant would allow me to query what a sigh meant.

They also reported an advantage of telephone interviewing over face-to-face interviewing was that it was easier and less distracting to the interviewee to take notes when telephone interviewing, which could later (within the same interview), be probed and followed up. From my prior experience with face-to-face interviews I had found taking notes difficult, as I had had to lose eye contact with the interviewee (it seemed to me that the interviewer looks impolite when this happens), and they often stopped talking either because of my lack of attention to them, or to allow me to write which interrupted the flow of the interview, and sometimes made them lose their train of thought. Therefore I felt that I had perhaps lost interview data. Also, because I did not tend to take notes during face-to-face interviews, I had sometimes discovered when I transcribed an interview, points I had made a mental note of probing later when the interviewee had finished speaking their point of view, were forgotten about – because I had forgotten to follow it up.

The researchers noted that another potential problem of telephone interviews, as opposed to face-to-face interviews was the lack of visual clues to help the researcher assess the respondent's attitude towards the research/researcher they said to get around this problem: "...the interviewer can note verbal cues such as hesitation, hurried answers and the like, and make notes to guide use of the data." (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004:115). The researchers acknowledged that some of their success may be due to the fact that they recruited their participants face-to-face, so that personal contact was made

then – even though the participant may have opted to have a telephone interview. Bearing this in mind I invited some of the participants in my Teacher Focus Group to be included in the telephone interviews for this reason, but another reason I had for this was so I could probe the quieter member of the group, and follow up points that I may have missed during the Teacher Focus Group session. Ultimately, I did not use these contacts as upon reflection, I believed I would not gain further data from them to help my research. Sturges and Hanrahan, (2004), pointed out that the telephone interview was useful for revealing information that may be of a sensitive topic, when I conducted my telephone interviews, some of the participants revealed that they used the SOS slightly differently from each other, which I regarded as being a sensitive issue, so this to me was an appropriate methodology for this reason.

Another reason I used telephone interviewing was because the participants were very busy and face-to-face interviews would have been more difficult to fit in with their hectic schedules. Sturges and Hanrahan, (2004) found that this was a reason for many of their participants opting to engage in a telephone interview rather than a face-to-face interview. Since I had had to postpone the Teacher Focus Group once with a group of teachers for this very reason (too busy), then it seemed prudent to use a methodology that would suit their needs as well as mine.

I ruled out using the methodology of using a postal questionnaire, because initially I needed to investigate themes and patterns in the ideas and practice of the teachers. I felt that a questionnaire would have limited the response, and I would not have been able to immediately probe the meaning of the data given with the participants. After my experience with lack of data from the pupil's Semi-structured Interviews I was aware of the importance of probing participants for my research. I also felt that a paper questionnaire would have meant that I would not have been able to

assess the dynamics of the situation, and that this method may have hidden participant's true feelings about issues. Again my prior research with the Teacher Focus Group with SOS ex-colleagues, made me aware of the importance to my research of assessing dynamics. However, I did acknowledge that it would have been convenient and less time consuming for myself, and it would have helped me access busy professionals as my participants were. Thus, I felt that it would not have allowed me to access the type of data I wished to for this research.

Respondents for the telephone interviews were to be voluntary participants from the Teacher Focus Group. Also SO practitioners/ex-teachers contacted via the training co-ordinator of the SOS programme; hence all participants were voluntary and worked in different schools so their views and contexts varied.

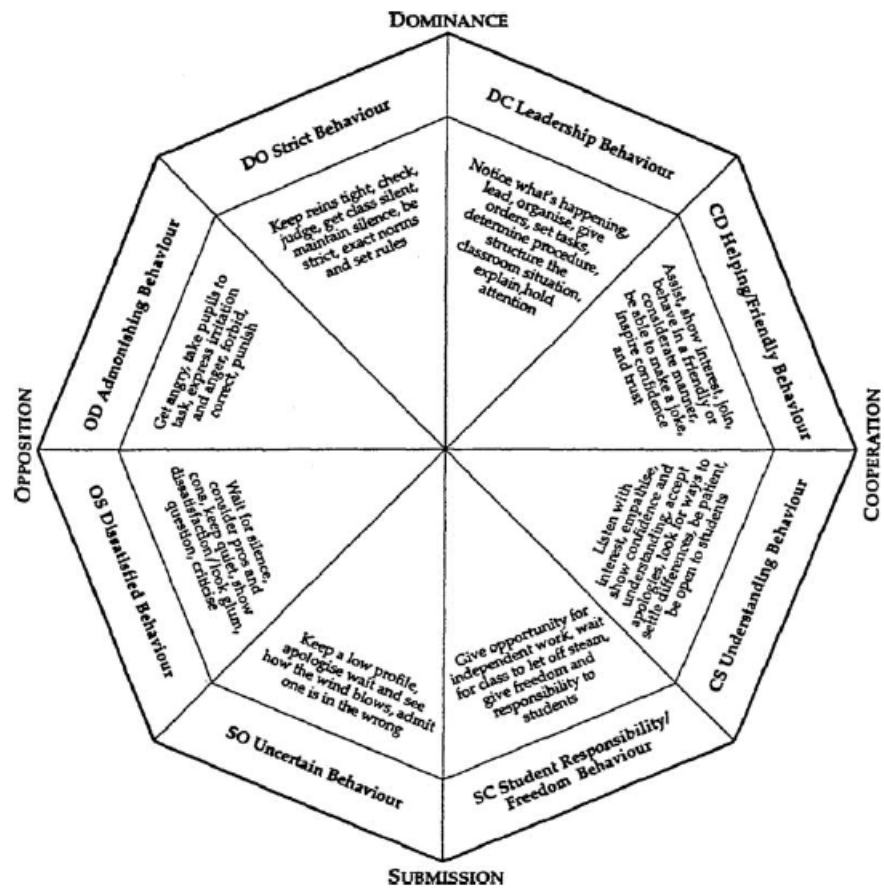
The questions I asked the SO practitioners were:

- 1) 'What memories do you have of the SOS training?'
- 2) 'Where would you place yourself on the teacher personality model?'

See fig. 2 teacher personality model.

Fig. 2 teacher personality model.

(Wubbels *et al.* 1992:51)



(Wubbels *et al.* 1992:51)

- 3) 'What is your current practice of SOS ?'
- 4) 'Is there anything else you would like to say about SOS or discipline you think is important, but I haven't asked about?'

Telephone interview problems.

Shuy (2001), highlighted the disadvantages of telephone interviews compared to face-to-face interviews, and said that telephone interviews lacked a naturalness that face-to-

face interviews allowed. He pointed out that: "...face-to-face interaction compels more small talk, politeness routines, joking, nonverbal communication, and asides in which people can more fully express their humanity." (Shuy, 2001:541). In order to overcome this I tried to include some small talk in my interview in order to relax my interviewees. Shuy also pointed out that telephone interviews tended to be shorter than face-to-face interviews, thus lack of time to reflect could be a problem for the interviewees. Shuy also believed that the shorter duration of telephone interviews was one of the reasons telephone interviews were not a good medium for dealing with complex issues. Again I was aware of this criticism of telephone interviews, and had actually chosen to do telephone interviews because they both suited myself and interviewees, because they were quicker than face-to-face interviews. I tried to overcome the problem of lack of time to think for the respondents by giving them time to think, and giving them the questions before hand.

Shuy asserted that telephone interviews had a poorer response rate than face-to-face interviews and they did not reach marginalized respondents. I felt that this may have been negligible upon my participants, as I believed because they were busy they would have preferred to have a telephone interview. Shuy also reported that telephone interviews gain less data on sensitive issues than telephone interviews, however, the examples he quoted were concerning substance abuse, although I believed I was inquiring in a slightly sensitive area, I did not believe this data was a comparable level of sensitivity. Shuy believed that the balance of power between the interviewer and interviewee was unfair in telephone interviews. However, I felt that was just as big an issue with face-to-face interviews, for example when I led the Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond 9' activity I probed the pupil's reasons also, I was conscious the whole time

that I was their teacher, and I was sure they were as they seemed embarrassed to admit that they knew they had been naughty for a supply teacher.

I disagreed with Shuy's point that face-to-face interviews had a lower workload, this seemed to me to be a contradiction, as he pointed out that telephone interviews were usually shorter than face-to-face interviews, to me this was an advantage as it would mean that there was surely less to transcribe in order to get to the main points, also the researcher did not have to allow time to travel for a telephone interview so therefore, to me this was a more time effective method. Finally, I could not concur with Shuy when he stated that telephone interviews were likely to produce answers that the interviewer was expecting to hear, because closed questions tended to be asked in this type of interview. I believed it was up to the individual to design a schedule of open-ended questions, and I thought that this was more down to the interviewer rather than the type of interview (telephone or face-to-face), that would affect the type of data collected.

Problems encountered during the research with professionals.

When the time came to begin my interviews I discovered that the respondents were not actually who I had asked the training co-ordinator for – teachers using SOS, but they were actually ex-teachers currently working as Behaviour Support Practitioners, I went ahead with the interviews to find out what their perspective was as ex-teachers, and currently using the technique they described what they were doing as 'SO' (Solution Oriented), as they were no longer teachers. Indeed, Gilchrist & Williams in Crabtree and Miller (1999), describe finding key informants for research as often happening through: "Good luck..." (Gilchrist & Williams in Crabtree and Miller 1999:75). I certainly found this to be the case with my research as the information they gave me led

to a breakthrough for me, despite them not being currently practising teachers whom I initially wanted to interview.

Another problem I encountered was because of the interviewees and my own work hours, interviewing using a mobile phone rather than a landline was the only practical way to obtain data. However, a recorder to fit a mobile phone proved to be unobtainable which I had not anticipated (as in my ignorance of technology I thought a recorder would fit any type of phone), so I took notes during the interviews and recorded my notes on tape immediately after the event.

Some participants e-mailed me back their answers (probably because the coordinator had asked me to e-mail the questions – this was necessary as I needed them to see the model). Moreover, one did not respond to the phone number offered, and another said little else other than what she e-mailed me back even when I rang her, another participant was unreachable due to long term sickness absence during the interview window. Fundamentally, Gilchrist & Williams in Crabtree and Miller (1999), asserted: “...one cannot interview or observe everything. One cannot be in all places at all times.” (Gilchrist & Williams in Crabtree and Miller 1999:74), I found this to be very true in my research. It took three calls to track down some participants due to their absence from their offices, one rang me back while I was shopping – which made taking notes difficult so I ran back to my car and took the notes there!

Colleague interviews.

During the Spring term of 2010, after I had completed the Telephone interviews I decided to interview two of my non- SOS practicing colleagues, in order to ascertain the similarities and differences between their views of teacher personality and the views I had collected from the SO practitioners from the telephone interviews. Crabtree and Miller (1999), stated: “The key informant(s) will help transform the researcher’s limited

understanding of the culture into something with meaning for the researcher's own culture." (Crabtree and Miller, 1999:74).

The question I asked my colleagues were:

- 1) 'Where would you place yourself on the teacher personality model?'

(See fig. 2 teacher personality model.)

I gave the teachers the model to look at in advance of the interview, as I had done with the telephone interviewees in order to give them time to reflect upon their replies. I had intended to record the interviews however; the first participant caught me at the end of a breaktime in the staffroom and eagerly blurted out her ideas and thoughts upon the model. She had earlier agreed to be taped for my interview and the recorder was on another floor of the building, in my classroom. After our conversation I realised that it was pointless to ask her to record her views as re-doing the interview would have gained no further answers, and she was under huge workload pressures at the time. Whilst setting up after school to interview the second participant, that teacher arrived early for the interview (just as the pupils were leaving my classroom), and as I turned to talk to her I knocked a chair I was lifting into the one I had placed the tape recorder on, and broke the recorder. I still went ahead with the interview as again catching the interviewee on another occasion would have been inconvenient, due to my deadlines and her workload pressures. Ultimately, I found a major advantage of speaking to the respondents on the phone and face to face in interviews, meant that I was able to repeat back to them their points and clarify meaning/check my understanding of their points of view.

Colleague presentations.

During the Spring term 2010 I then made a presentation to my Head of Subject and the other RE teacher about SOS and described my research within the school, how I had

used SOS and how the pupils had responded. My Head of Subject then asked me to develop the SOS meeting sheet I used with pupils for the other members of the RE team to use.

Evaluation of methodology.

Reliability of research in Telephone interviews and Non-SO colleague interviews.

When I conducted parts of my research that were repeated with different participants namely the telephone interviews with SO practitioners then the non- SO colleague interviews, I used the teacher personality model and with the telephone interviews I also used the same set of questions to increase the reliability of my research. Boeije (2010:169) commented that: "...when reliable methods are being used, repeated observation should lead to comparable outcomes." (Boeije, 2010:169). I had hoped that this would give my research internal reliability, indeed: "...a well-trained interviewer with a structured questionnaire is considered a reliable instrument." (Boeije, 2010:169). Silverman (2005:221), reported that it increased reliability when research recorded full transcripts of conversations, in order to allow the reader to make his own judgement upon the participants responses, which was what I did which my transcript from my Pupil Focus Group with the 'Diamond 9' activity.

Triangulation.

Triangulation in the positivist sense – using different methods to check the validity of my data was not appropriate to my research, because my research question favoured gathering qualitative data to answer it. Moran-Ellis *et al.* (2006), commented that: "...while validity of measurement cannot be claimed, methods can be triangulated to reveal the different dimensions of a phenomenon and to enrich understandings of the multi-faceted, complex nature of the social world." (Moran-Ellis *et al.* 2006:48). Therefore, I intended to take patterns and themes discovered in data collected from the

Teacher Focus Group. I then intended to use the themes to inform my telephone interview schedule, and because I believed teachers would believe different things about behaviour management I expected there would be a variety in views, because they were individuals and they all worked in different contexts.

Traditionally in psychology pre- and post testing of the participants would be conducted; often there would be a control group. However, I felt this was not possible with this area of study as pupils were individuals, and I did not believe that a scientific positivist approach was relevant to this type of research. Yet I could see the value in this form of research, in that once a hypothesis was tested and proven it could be applied to a general population. There were pragmatic limitations of repeating my research as I was unable to repeat my NQT year.

Hammersley (1993), pointed out that the weaknesses of outside researchers carrying out educational research rather than teachers included: "...that conventional research is irrelevant to practice; ... that it is invalid because it lacks an insider perspective..." (Hammersley 1993:247). Thus, I believed that the strengths of my practitioner enquiry were that my research was highly relevant to my practice as a teacher, and that it had an insider perspective so it had produced trustworthy data. I made my findings transparent and highlighted issues with my methodology during the research process. I believed that my research had construct validity, as I gained opinions from my participants - which was what I set out to do. My use of SOS had internal consistency, as I used the same process with a range of groups of pupils of different ages (11-16). I believed that my research had rigour – that it was relevant to my own practice; I kept to my chosen epistemology by using Focus Groups to help to gather data. I gave a clear and honest discussion of my data, so that the reader could make a judgement as to whether my research was trustworthy. I used the unforeseen obstacles

in my research as learning opportunities for myself, which was what I understood contributed to a strong practitioner enquiry. Finally, I portrayed how SOS could be successfully fused into a school's existing behaviour policy.

Several times during my research I discovered that what I had planned to research or use did not fit real life, and I felt that I my conceptions of the practice of SOS, and how to conduct successful research were being continually challenged. I discovered that my expectation that all my fellow trainees to need and want to use SOS in the same manner that I had been doing was false. Also trying to reach other teachers using the technique was difficult due to the fluidness of the technique, and the difficulty of reaching teachers to use as participants in research. This was also hampered by people moving jobs, and misunderstanding my needs when I tried to follow up volunteers to interview. I then faced challenges such as unavailability of technology that I wished to use when I originally planned my research.

The Semi-structured Interview with pupils revealed little data and had to be restructured, however when this was done it revealed so much data from the pupil's perspective it then urged me to investigate adult perceptions of SOS technique. Again my initial research into adult viewpoints had to be adapted this time, because my expectation of how SOS was being used was not concurrent with what was actually happening within the school I trained in SOS in. This meant that I had to ask for help in finding participants to interview, even though this was unexpected I was very fortunate to have the person replace my trainer be so willing and helpful to find participants to help me. Before selecting recorded telephone interviews as a methodology I ought to have checked the recording equipment could record from mobile phones (I had checked there was telephone recording equipment available to borrow from my university, and because so many people use mobiles did not expect the equipment to be unavailable).

The SO telephone interviewees were very helpful, yet as with the non-SO colleague interviews, it proved to be very difficult to get a time slot which suited both myself and the interviewee together due to work constraints. During my colleague interviews I should have provided a back up recorder for when I broke my recorder with the chair. (Ironically, I had brought an extra cassette recorder during my other pieces of research, but that day just felt fed up with carrying so much equipment around). However, as I was conducting the interviews I could see several themes emerging in that Solution Focused ideas were being practiced in many variations, and teacher classroom personalities were not what I perceived them to be.

Hammersley (2007), when criticising teacher practitioner enquiry pointed out that the main problems were: "...the measurement of social phenomena and the validation of causal relationships amongst those phenomena." (Hammersley, 2007:23). Where researchers were outsiders to the teaching situation he believed that they were more likely to produce research that was scientifically measurable, and able to be applied to wider contexts, which I accepted could be a weakness in my research in that I believed the data I collected was very much due to the situation I found myself in - being an NQT, a supply teacher and wishing to form stable relationships with teenagers, and encourage them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Hammersley (2007:23), also noted in teaching styles studies that it was difficult to say why what worked in some situations due to the complex nature of human interaction, meaning that education research was hard to validate, as there were no two individuals who were the same who would react to a situation in a similar way, which I also thought was true of my research it was very much of a particular time and context.

Fundamentally, I wanted to know why pupils had responded to the SOS approach positively, and I hoped that I would be able to improve upon my practice by

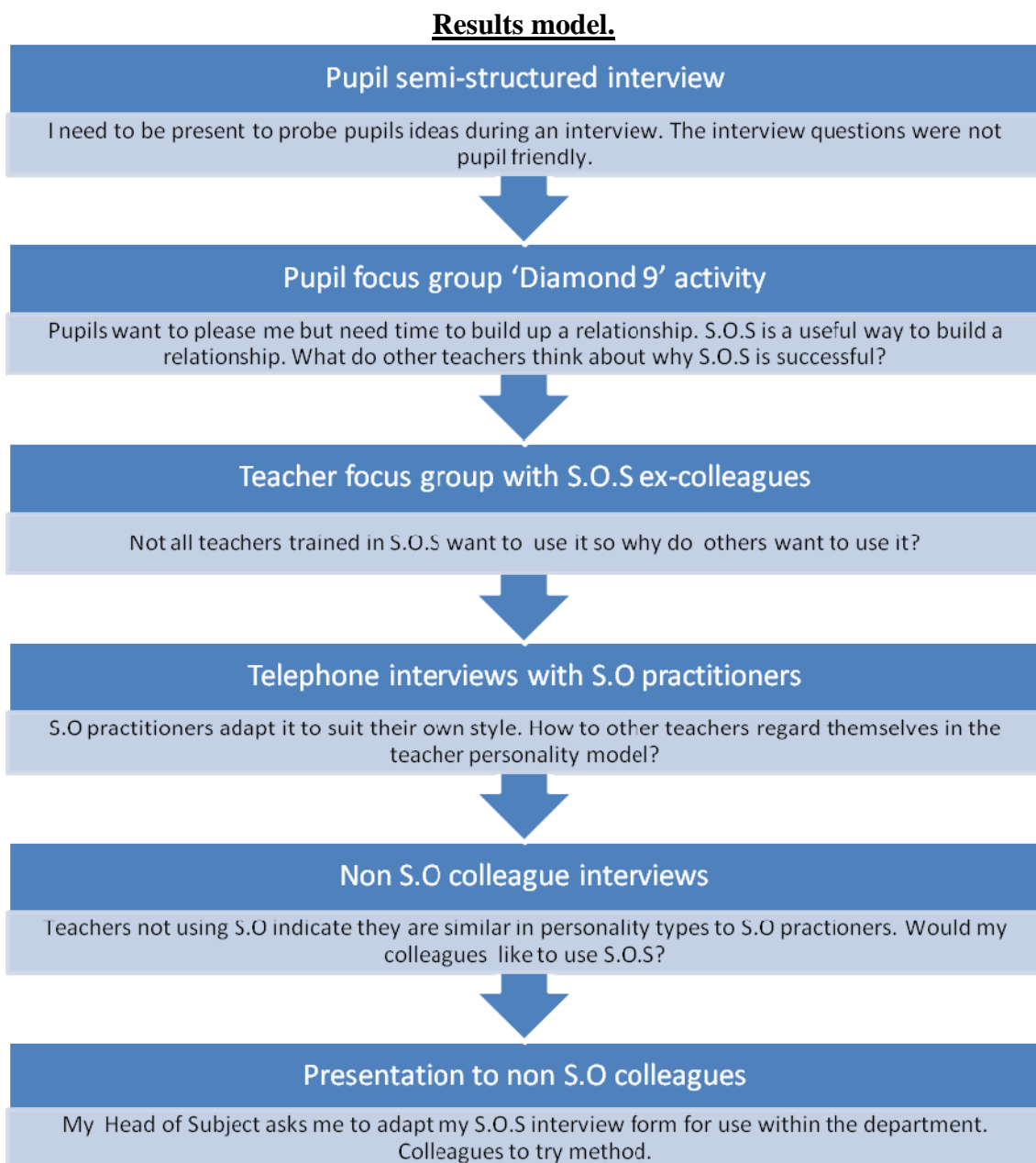
reflecting upon the pupil viewpoints. I also wanted to know why professionals preferred to use the SOS approach, and again I felt that I would be able to adapt my practice by sharing ideas from them, and perhaps reach pupils that I had not initially responded to SOS with me.

An outline of the findings from this research can be found in the next chapter.

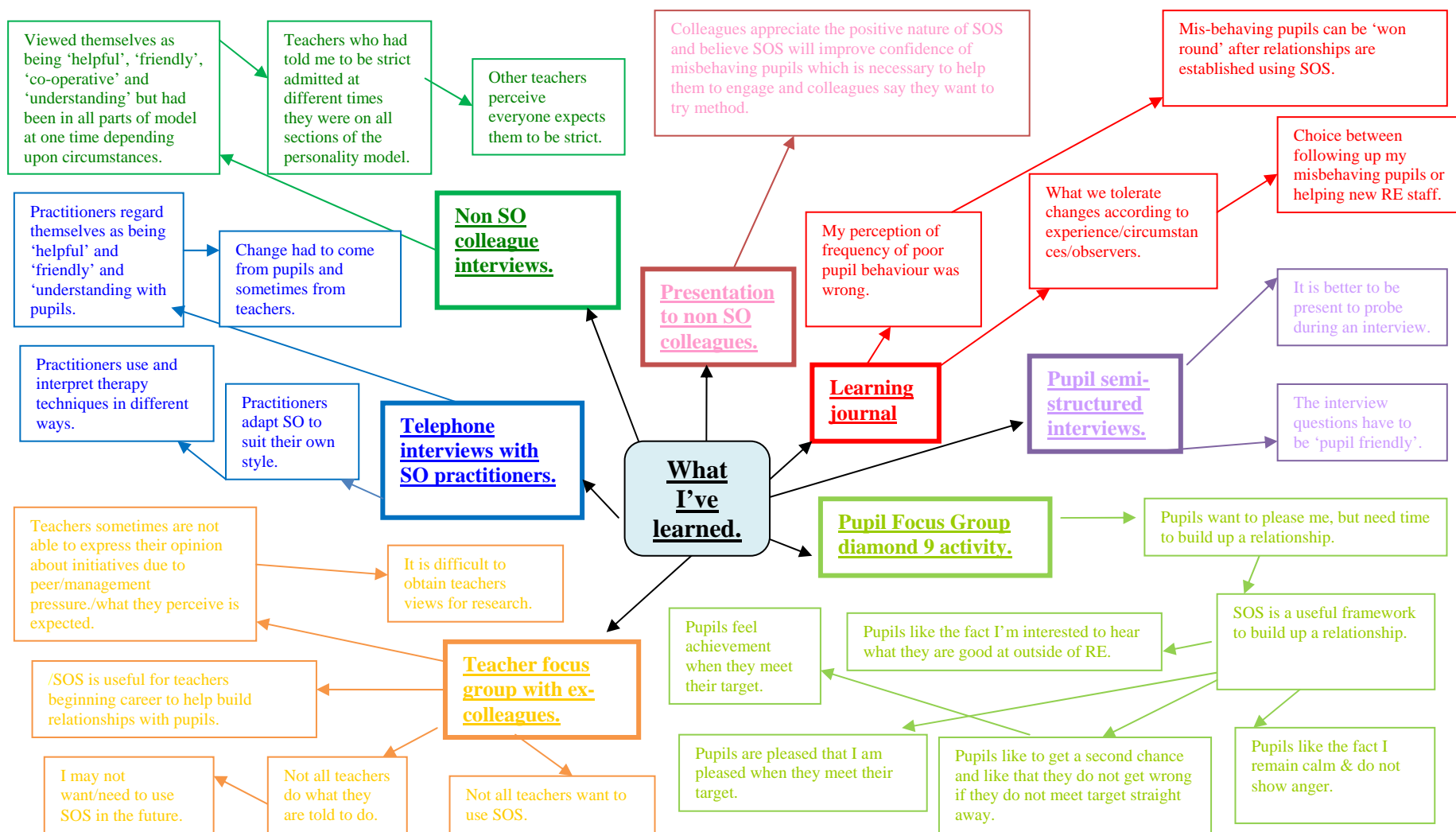
Chapter 5. Results.

In this chapter I shall outline the results from my methodology. Model 3 shows the tools that I used to complete the research; it also includes a brief summary of how each experience shaped my thinking and led to evolution of the next event in the research. My Learning Journal ran alongside the methods in the model shown below.

Model 3.

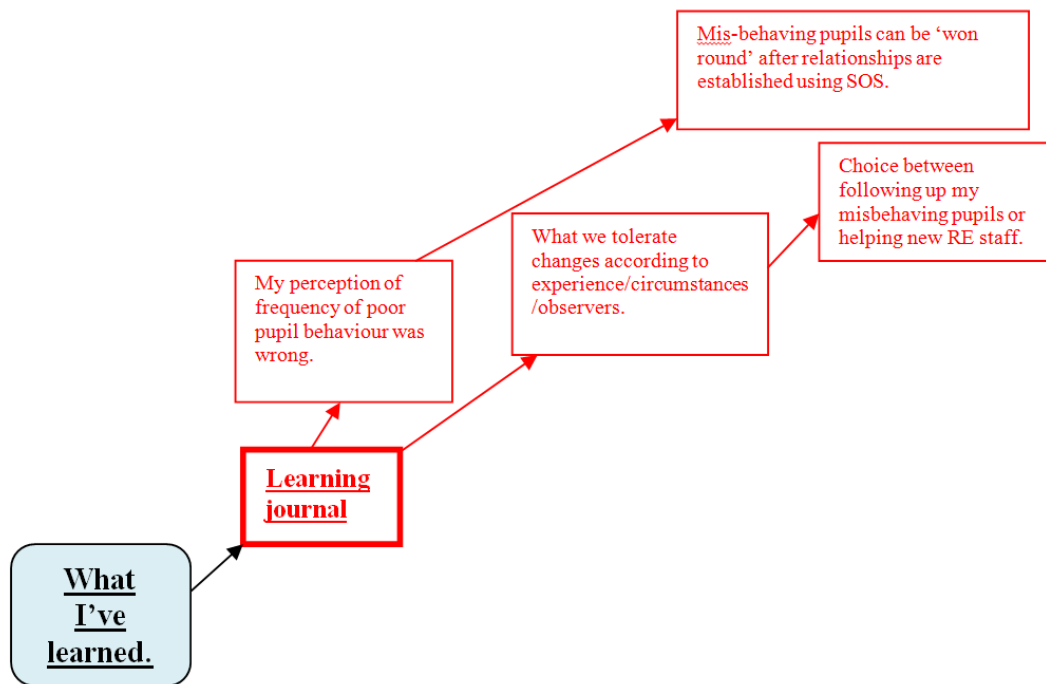


The diagram below shows a brief summary of the main findings from each part of the research. Subsequent sections of this chapter will explore each element in turn and will use sections of this mind map.



Mind map section showing a summary of the main findings from the Learning Journal.

Learning Journal results.



In my first year entries tended to focus on the behaviour of pupils, and although this remained a focus during my second year, I perceived that there were eventually fewer incidents of poor pupil behaviour throughout the year. However, in year one of my Learning Journal 33% of entries reflected a poor behavioural experience in a lesson, in year two it was at 54% (appendix J Learning Journal). Due to my sudden promotion to Head of Subject (Summer term 2010), my daily focus changed as I had to ensure staff members had sufficient resources to teach lessons. There were occasions where I had to choose whether to use my breaks to help staff in my department or follow up my misbehaving pupils, and I decided the priority was ensuring the RE staff were supported so that the majority of lessons within the department could flow.

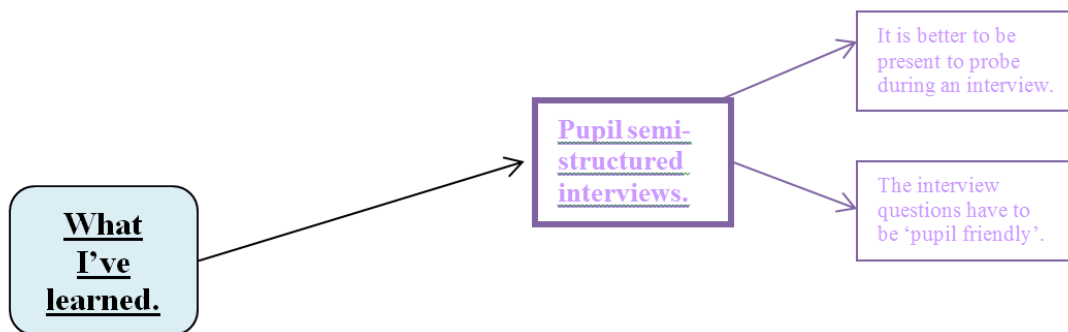
The main use to which I put the Journal as a reflexive tool was to look back and not see the world of my work through rose tinted spectacles, every time I looked back to the previous year I could see that I was just as tired and just as frustrated with pupil behaviour at times. It made me realise that there was a pupil behaviour issue on a Friday

night, but the next time I saw the pupil next week their attitude had changed – they were more amenable, so certain times of year/day everyone was more tired and I needed to allow for this in my teaching.

During the first year of keeping the Learning Journal out of twenty-two pupils, I sought further support and intervention for two pupils who were also involved in whole school interventions. I was able to work with the other twenty sometimes involving further SOS meetings to enable them to complete tasks in lessons, and stop distracting others. Two of the pupils I initially conducted SOS meetings with due to their off task behaviour, eventually went on to re-sit their first RE modular exams to improve their grade from C to A*, they had become so determined to get a good grade in RE, when I originally taught them they had claimed not to be interested in the subject and did not see the point in trying hard to get a good result.

Work with others.

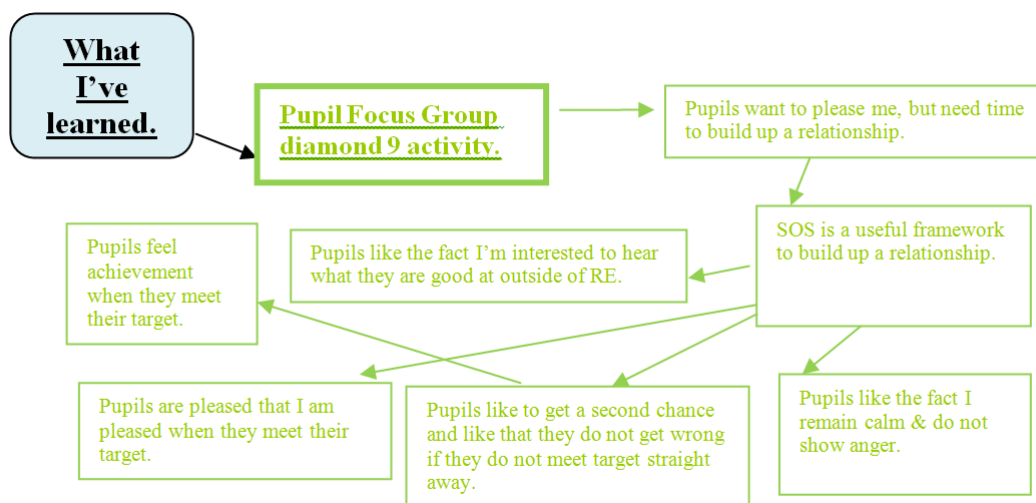
Semi-structured Interview results.



The pupil Semi-structured Interviews did not provide much data from the pupils however; they did show me the problems in my methodology and made me adapt my research technique. I had wanted the pupils to go away with my recorder and answer my questions without me present, as I had felt that this would make them give more honest

answers. However, when I played the tape back the pupils were giggling nervously and sounded like they did not want to answer the questions, most of the questions were answered with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ which did not reveal their thoughts or thinking. Unfortunately one question was completely misinterpreted by the group which led me to develop the ‘Diamond 9’ Pupil Focus Group activity which was more structured, and I decided to be present to try to clarify any points the pupils made, probe their thinking and try to make sure all pupils took a turn to share their thoughts.

Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond 9’ activity results.



The Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond 9’ activity involved two female Year 9 pupils and five male Year 9 pupils as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4 Pupils involved in the Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond 9’ activity.

<u>Pupil code:</u>	<u>Year group and gender.</u>
P8	Year 9 & female.
P9	Year 9 & male.
P10	Year 9 & male.
P11	Year 9 & male.
P12	Year 9 & male.
P13	Year 9 & male.
P14	Year 9 & female.

The statements I used for the ‘Diamond 9’ were statements individual pupils had made at the end of SOS sessions, and I was interested to hear what pupils thought about these in a group situation. They completed the Diamond 9 in a straight line even though I’d said to make a diamond shape, when I queried the pupils about this they said they were happy with this shape, this is shown in fig. 3

Fig. 3 Scan of pupil's 'Diamond 9' result.

Being able to tell Miss Henderson what I am good at. (Other subjects/games).

Miss Henderson is pleased when I reach my target.

I am pleased when I reach my target.

Miss Henderson listens when I tell her what I am good at.

Miss Henderson isn't cross if I don't get 10/10 straightaway.

I can use my target to help me behave in other lessons.

Miss Henderson reminds me what my target is.

I can have several goes at getting 10/10.

I can tell other people when I have met my target.

?

Four out of the pupil's top five statements included me (see fig. 3), showing how their relationship to me was important to them. Two of the pupils top five statements include my emotions, namely that I am pleased or 'not cross'. Procedural statements, and those involving others outside our relationship seems less relevant to the pupils as 'using the target in other lessons' and 'telling others about meeting my target' were in the bottom five.

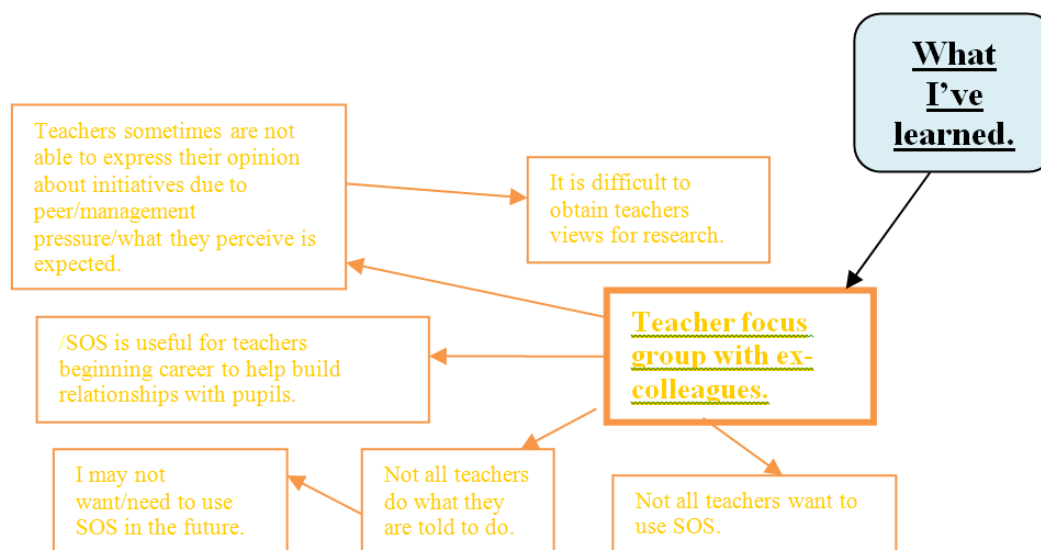
At this point I wanted to check if P11 agreed with this (I had been supporting pupils in his English class, but not personally with him because his mood could be very

explosive. I sensed it was triggered when I directed my attention on him - positive or negative, during whole class activities, so I had developed a technique of making a quick comment/question to him by quietly speaking to him when his peers were not listening or he was packing up), he said “Yeah” (P11, line 143, appendix K, ‘Diamond 9 transcript’), but gave no explanation, which for me would have been interesting to probe in a later interview if talking directly to that pupil had been possible.

The statement that created the most disagreement within the group was ‘I can set my own target’ roughly half of the pupils liked this aspect of SOS and the other half did not, P10 said that to him - it was: “...not as important as the teachers watch you in the lesson and they know what you are good and what you are bad at...” (P10, lines 241-243, appendix K), however, P12 pointed out that if you make your own target: “...it’s more personal so you’ll want to keep it more...” (P12, line 249, appendix K).

As part of the ‘Diamond 9’ I left an opportunity for the pupils to make up their own statement, this was because I wanted to hear their opinions as to whether anything they had not mentioned to me in their individual meetings, P10 commented that: “...you sat us down and said what did you do bad, and what can you improve on” (P10, lines 278-279, appendix K), also P9 commented that: “You made us think about it” (P9, line 280, appendix K). This seemed to me to reinforce the earlier comments the pupils made about wanting to be treated as individuals, yet I observed that they seemed to appreciate the opportunity to be able to reflect upon their own poor behaviour, and to be offered the chance to make amends for it, in a calm environment away from their peers (as they would be polite and respectful towards me when they were in a one to one situation) - where there was a clear dynamic in their class and pressure was on them to act up.

Teacher Focus Group Results.



The Teacher Focus Group with SOS ex-colleagues session provided information I had not anticipated. The questions that I had planned to ask the teachers if the planned teacher Focus Group had gone ahead in school were:

- 1) 'When do you find it useful to use SOS?' (Do you use it all the time or just when other methods of behaviour management do not work)?
- 2) 'In your opinion what benefits does SOS have over other methods of behaviour management?'

We met in an informal setting outside of school (a café), and it involved two members of staff (teachers with over ten years of classroom experience), who came voluntarily. One member of staff commented that she did not use the SOS training as she had not found it suitable for her style of teaching, and considered it to be just one of the many training initiatives she had received in the last couple of years. I then asked if they knew anyone else using SOS within the school – they replied in the negative. At this point I was totally thrown as to what to ask them as their answers did not meet my expectations of how SOS was being used in their school. Also, the teacher that commented that it

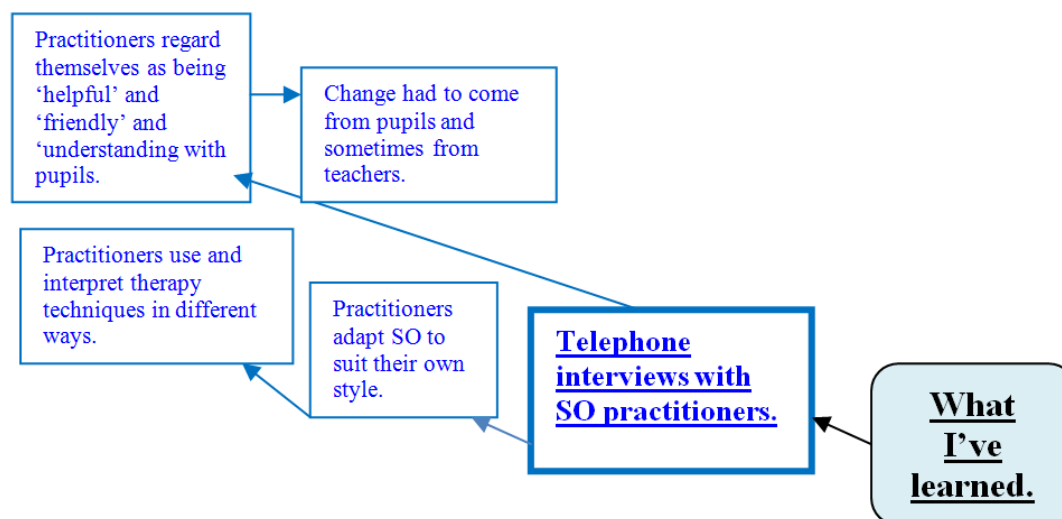
was 'just another government initiative' seemed irritated by my questions about SOS. There was a definite uncomfortable atmosphere so I ended my questioning.

I had prepared two questions for the group to discuss and asked them to read the questions; I wanted to be there to clarify any comments, but not to direct the conversation because I was aware that I was no longer part of the school community and I needed to learn about their practice. During the meeting I observed that the Focus Group questions I had developed were not appropriate to the participant's situation, because their practice of SOS was not how I had imagined it to be. I observed that I would have to develop questions for an individual interviews schedule, to give to a wider pool of participants who used SOS to discover how others used SOS.

Group dynamic.

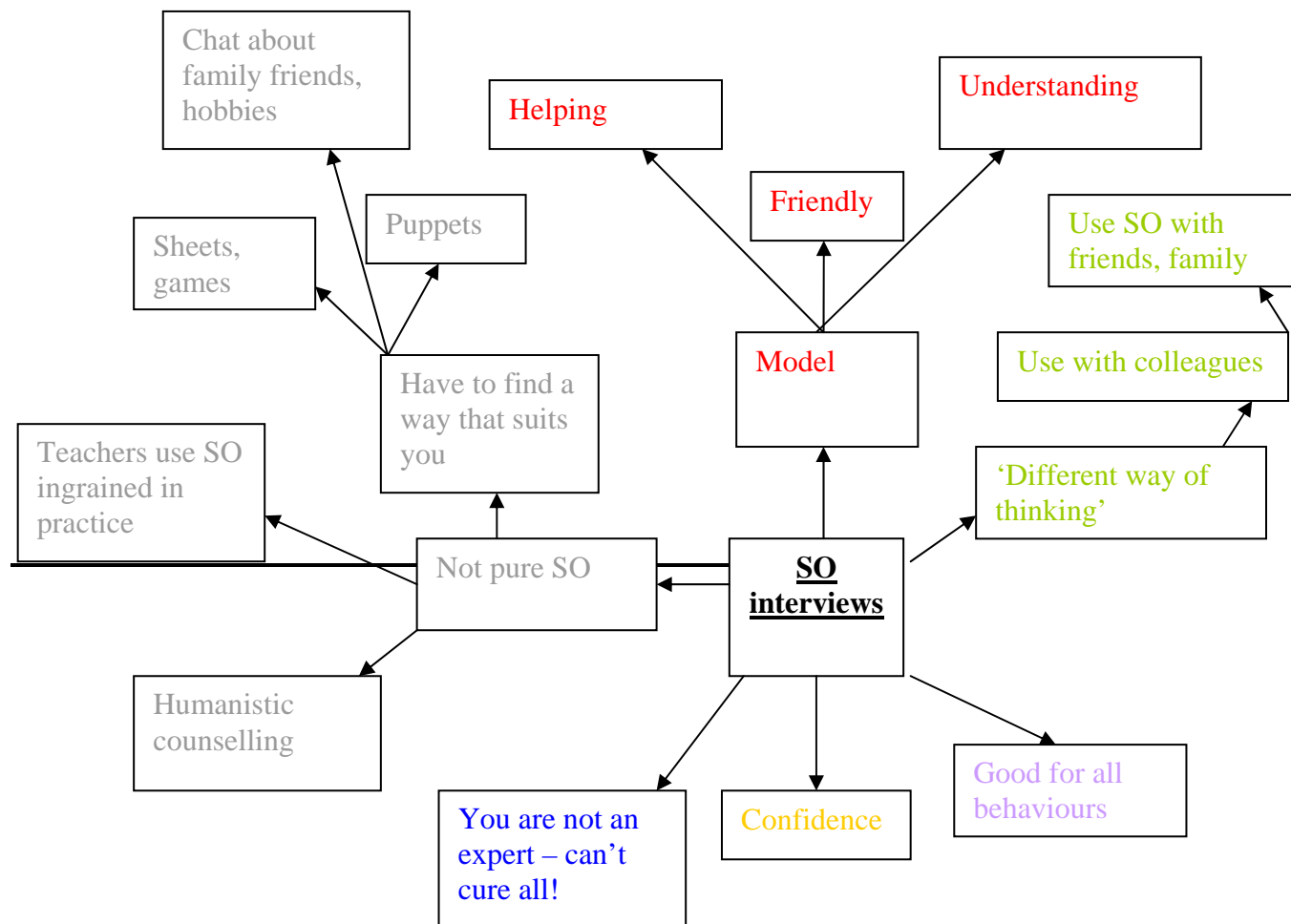
One of the teachers made very little comment and when I tried to ask her point of view she just nodded, smiled or gave simple 'yes' 'no' answers. I respected her right to withhold her views in this context, and asked if both teachers would be willing to participate in a follow-up telephone interview, where I hoped to probe in case the quiet teacher actually disagreed with the dominant teacher, they agreed.

Telephone Interviews with SO Practitioners findings.



The SO practitioners were ex-teachers now working with schools to help assist where individual pupils were showing problem behaviours. All of the interviewees were female, I1 did not wish to answer which age bracket she fell into, I2 had taught for 0-5 years and was aged between 20-30 years, I3 had taught between 10-20 years and was aged over 51 years and I4 had taught for over 21 years and was also aged over 51 years. I1 e-mailed me back her answers even though I had requested telephone interviews from her boss. I think she e-mailed me because her boss had asked me to e-mail the questions that I wanted to ask her staff. Also it took several phone calls to catch some of the interviewees in their office as some of their work entails them going out to schools. All the staff e-mailed me their office telephone numbers so I phoned I1 back to clarify her points. Also, I was worried that an e-mail answer was not the method I had declared I would use to gather this data. I3 rang me back when I was shopping so I quickly ran back to the car to rest on the dashboard to make notes of her responses to the questionnaire. Diagram 1 shows a summary of my findings from the telephone interviews with the SO practitioners.

Diagram 1 showing a summary of findings from telephone interviews with SO practitioners.

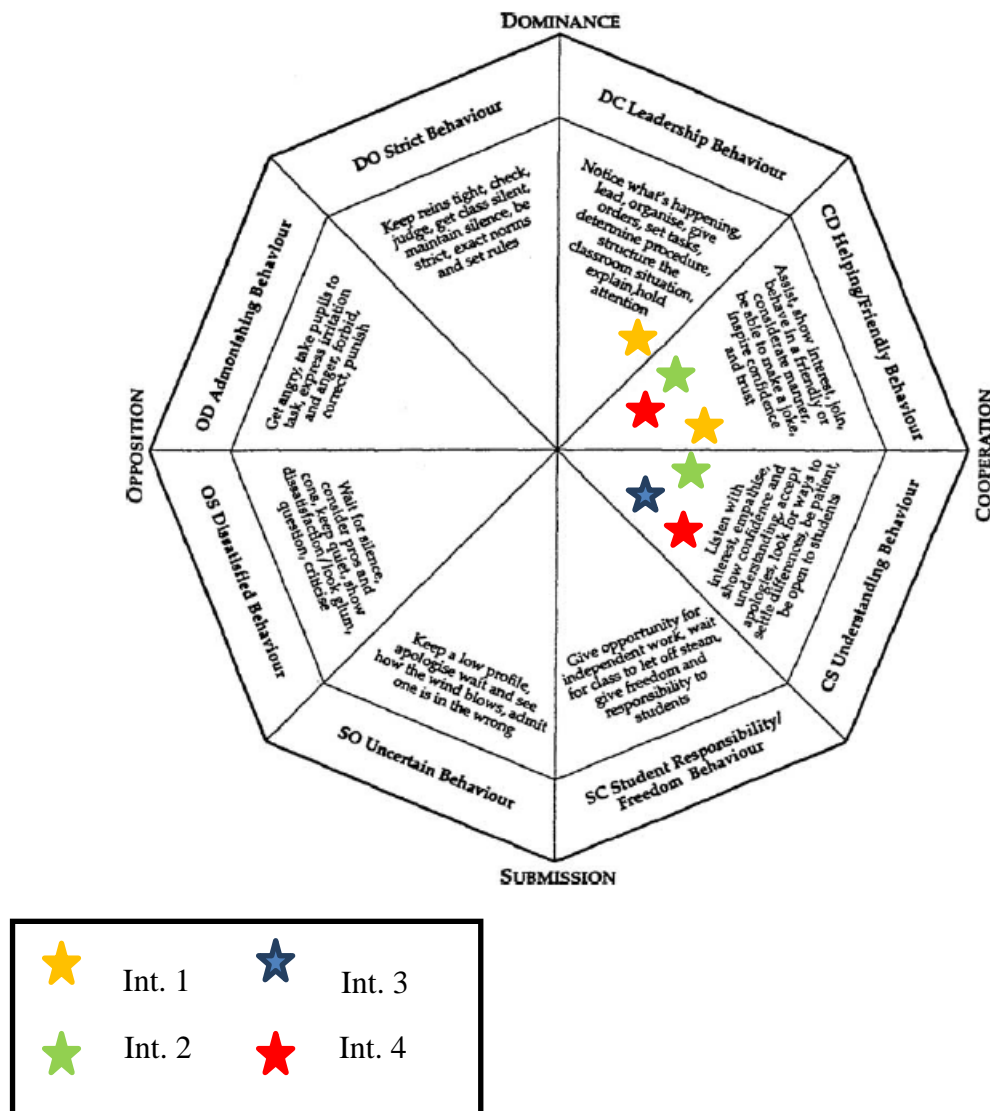


1) ‘What memories do you have of the SOS training?’

When asked ‘What memories do you have of the SOS training?’ I2 responded that it was ‘liberating’ I4 described it as being a ‘light bulb moment’, I3 said for her it was ‘a different way of thinking’ they all clarified that it was the onus being put onto the individual causing the poor behaviour, and the view of SO as the answer having to come from the pupil as being the major attraction of the technique.

2) ‘Where would you place yourself on the teacher personality model?’

Fig. 4 teacher personality model from SO practitioner interviews.



(Wubbels *et al.*1992:51)

When asked to look at the Teacher personality model in fig. 4 (I had e-mailed ahead of the interview to the participants), all of the participants viewed themselves as being within the ‘understanding’ and ‘helping/friendly’ sections of the teacher personality model; except I3 who did not place herself in ‘helping/friendly’, and I1 who did not

place herself in 'understanding', but placed herself in the leadership section as she saw her role as instigating change. The practicing teachers not using SO that I interviewed placed themselves as being within the 'understanding' and 'helping/friendly' sections of the teacher personality model too.

3) 'What is your current practice of SOS ?'

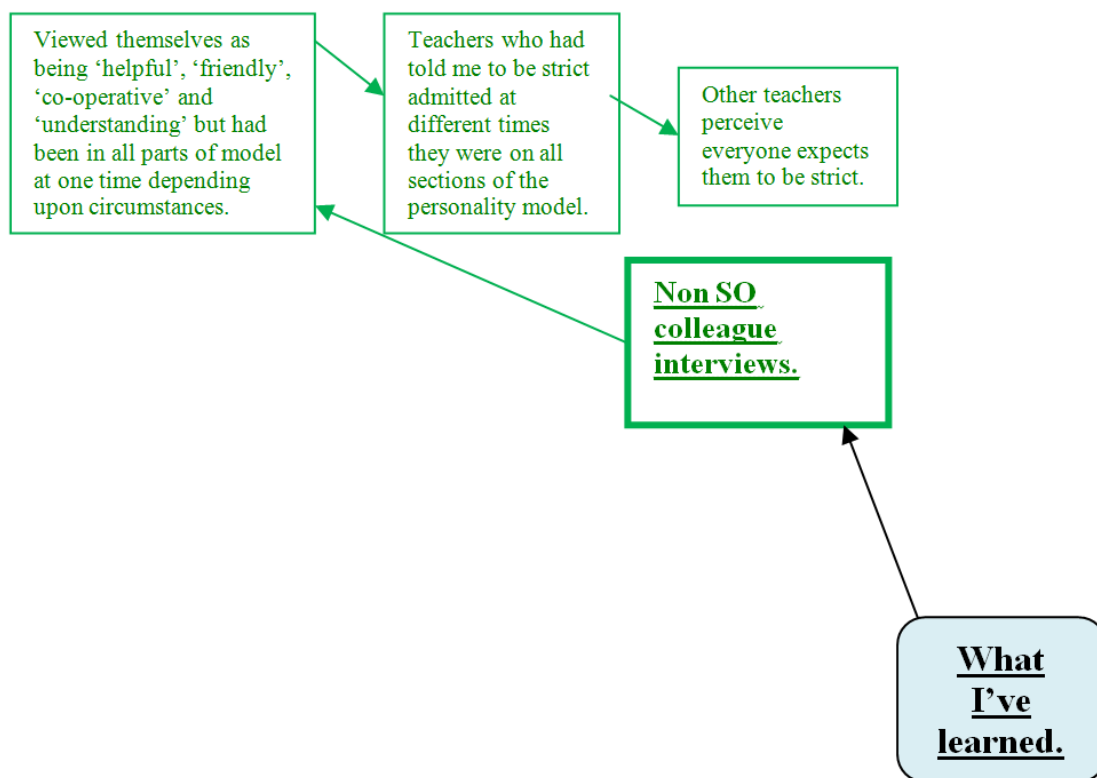
All of the participants of the telephone interviews said that they used SO rather than SOS (as they were not practicing teachers anymore). All of the participants said they used it as their main strategy in helping teachers and pupils change behaviours. I2 was the only practitioner who said that she had not adapted it from her initial training, I4 had adapted it and was using puppets with pupils, I3 said that if she had a 'reluctant' teenager that she used 'the tricks of the trade' - when probed to clarify this she said that she would get them into conversation about their friends, family or hobbies to relax them first; I1 said that she used worksheets and games and that when using SO the idea of it was that 'you find your own way' she also said that she saw links between SO and Humanistic counselling. All of the participants said it worked for all age ranges, and types of behaviour I3 commented that 'even the most difficult [children] engage' with the process.

4) 'Is there anything else you would like to say about SOS or discipline you think is important, but I haven't asked about?'

Finally, when I asked 'Is there anything else you would like to say about SOS or discipline you think is important, but I haven't asked about?' I1 responded that 'discipline is the weakest form of any change... change should come from something positive... because schools use this discipline schools are weak'. I3 said that she thought that SO worked because for some pupils it was 'the only time they got to talk about their strengths and virtues in school'. I2 and I3 pointed out that teachers who may

have been SOS trained may use all or parts of it, but not necessarily describe themselves as ‘doing SO’ as the approach was meant to be adapted. I2 asserted that one of the main reasons why SO worked was because ‘teachers think pupils have the ‘problem’ but at the end of the day they’ve still got to teach that class/individual’, and the format was a ‘way of helping people to see this’ and ‘sometimes teachers took a long time to see this’. I2 also added that the main thing about the SO approach was that you are not the ‘expert’ in this ‘aspect of pupil coaching’.

Non SO Colleague interview findings.



The following table 5 shows the main findings from the interviews with Non- SO colleagues.

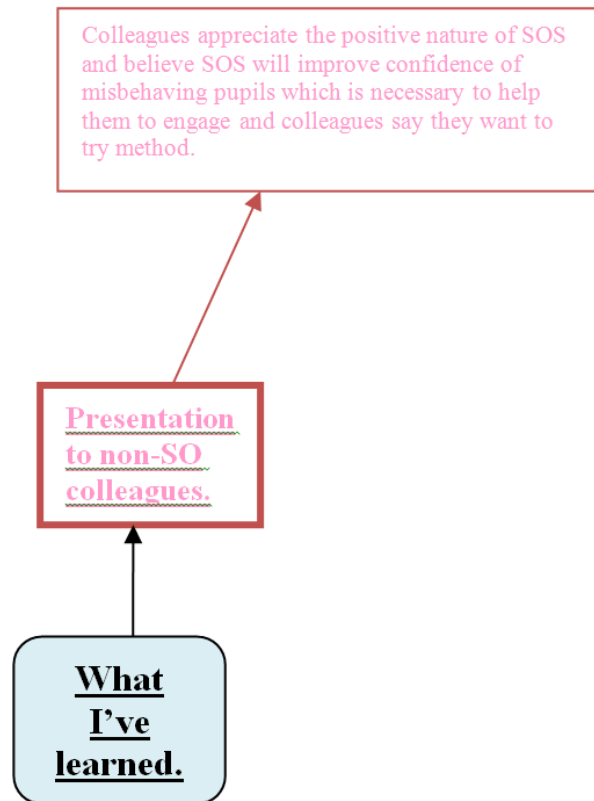
Table 5 showing the results from the interviews with non- SO colleagues.

<p>Non SO colleague reference and their comment:</p> <p>C1: ‘with top sets you could give them freedom responsibility, but less so with bottom sets’ ‘if you were having a bad day you could be uncertain and dissatisfied she knew it was ‘wrong’ but ‘sometimes if you are tired or ill it happens you are only human’’ Teacher personality model - mainly in the ‘cooperation’ segment of the model – both in ‘understanding’ and in ‘helping/friendly’. Had probably been in all parts at different times.</p> <p>C2 ‘the ideal would be to be ‘different personas to different classes – with a difficult class you may start the lesson being strict but it was hard to keep it up if that is not your true personality and the pupils can see through it if you aren’t being genuine’’ Teacher personality model - mainly in the ‘cooperation’ segment of the model – both in ‘understanding’ and in ‘helping/friendly’. Had probably been in all parts at different times.</p>

They both said that different teachers had different teaching personas and no one was right, C1 said that with top sets you could give them freedom responsibility, but less so with bottom sets. C1 said that if you were having a bad day you could be uncertain and dissatisfied she knew it was ‘wrong’ but ‘sometimes if you are tired or ill it happens you are only human’. C2 said that the ideal would be to be ‘different personas to different classes – with a difficult class you may start the lesson being strict, but it was hard to keep it up if that is not your true personality and the pupils can see through it if you aren’t being genuine’. Both teachers felt they were mainly in the ‘cooperation’ segment of the model – both in ‘understanding’ and in ‘helping/friendly’ which matched what the SO Behaviour Management Support practitioners said during the telephone interviews, this surprised me initially as I perceived them to be doing different jobs – however, ultimately their goal – to encourage pupils to learn was the same.

After I had collected data from the SO practitioners I believed it would further develop reflexivity in my thought processes by interviewing my non-SO colleagues. I also believed that it would validate the findings from the telephone interviews with the SO practitioners.

Presentation to Non SO colleagues findings.



The following table 5 shows the results of the presentation to non SO colleagues.

Table 5 findings from the presentation to Non SO colleagues.

Department colleague reference and their comment:
R1 'an interesting intervention strategy' 'most pupils with behaviour issues have no confidence' 'sounded like a positive way to improve the confidence of pupils'
R2 'a positive focus for detentions'

I wished to present my research to my colleagues within my department at my school. After the presentation R1 commented that she thought it was 'an interesting intervention strategy', and said that she had found 'most pupils with behaviour issues have no confidence', she commented that at school and home that they got negative feedback from adults and that the SOS technique 'sounded like a positive way to improve the confidence of pupils'. R2 said that he liked the idea of having 'a positive focus for detentions', which he said could see 'could work' as 'some days you are so sick it's

hard no matter how hard you try to keep positive' when dealing with detainees. I had to clarify to R1 that I was conducting SOS interviews only when I had followed the school's PBM (Positive Behaviour Management system – Formal warning, then 10 minutes detention, then 30 minutes detention then pupils were to be sent out to 'call out' room, at first she presumed that I was retaining them and objected as they already had a lot of pressure and commitments at lunchtimes such as clubs, revision sessions e.t.c. to attend). However, when I made it clear that I had only done the interviews with pupils who had earned at least 10 minutes detention, and had used that time to go through the SOS programme with them, she then asked me to develop an SOS interview sheet for use within the department.

Summary of teacher personality findings.

Once I was satisfied that I had an accurate picture of the pupil's voice, I wondered how other teachers were using the SOS technique. Due to the Pupil Focus Group working so well as methodological tool I wanted to use the same tool to interview my ex-colleagues, again this activity taught me that the perfect world I imagined with SOS being used in the exact formula we had been trained in did not exist. When I telephone interviewed other practitioners of SO they confirmed this as they were using adaptations of SF technique. Again this caused me to reflect upon my ideas and my practice and changed the direction of my research. This in turn led me to wonder how my current colleagues who were not using SOS viewed the technique, but first I wanted to get a feel for how my current colleagues viewed their teaching personalities. This again was a revelation for me, as colleagues who had been urging me to get this perfect behaviour in lessons admitted they were at times in all sectors of the teacher personality model.

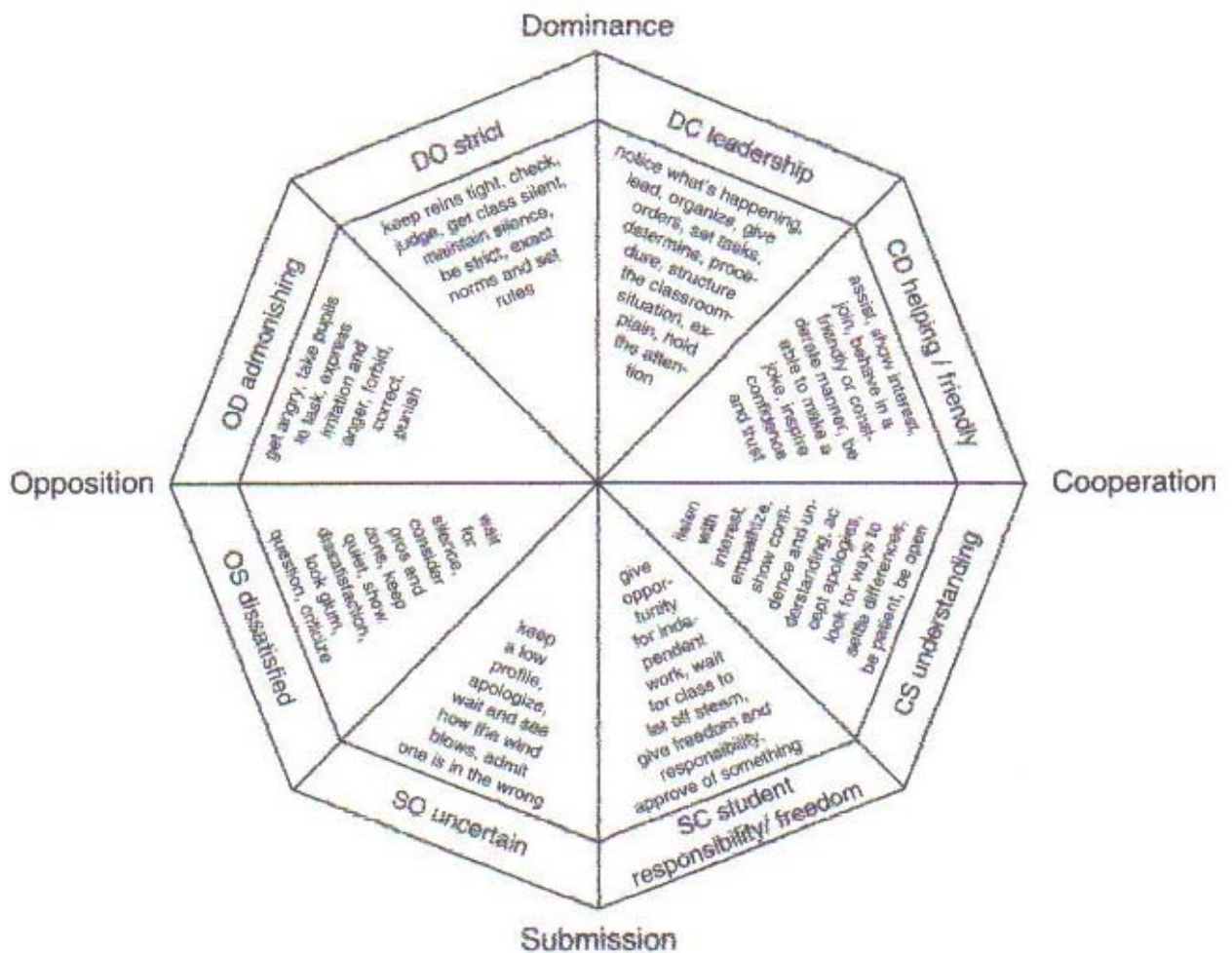


Fig. 2. Model for interpersonal teacher behavior.

Finally, when I presented my research to my department colleagues and my Head of Subject asked me to adapt the SOS sheet for the department to use within the school, I felt my research had come full circle in that something I was using from outside the school was being recognised as being useful within the school.

In the following chapter I shall examine how these findings influence my teaching. Namely how my research influenced my outlook upon teacher-pupil relationships, how I have used behaviour management strategies and how I have tried to improve pupil empowerment.

Chapter 6. Discussion.

In this chapter I shall discuss how the results from my research have influenced my practice and my beliefs about behaviour management. Teacher – pupil relationships, behaviour management strategies and the motivation and empowerment of students shall be covered. Also, how I developed as a teacher researcher.

Behaviour management in general.

Poor behaviour in schools fuelled headlines in the media, often the flavour of the reports was that poor behaviour was increasing. Usually when I met people and they found out I was a teacher one of their first questions was ‘are the pupils well behaved?’ Indeed: “...the public climate regarding school behaviour is regularly a critical one, made so by the way in which national and local media select and sensationalize their coverage.” (Watkins and Wagner, 2000:xiii). They pointed out that the research into behaviour incidents in American schools did not indicate that behaviour was worsening, over the twenty years prior to 1998 according to Welsh, Green and Jenkins (1999), (2000:xiv). Thus, I believed that teachers often felt under pressure to control pupil behaviour due to public perceptions of behaviour in schools. Indeed, a fundamental part of my journey as a teacher researcher was realising that the strict teacher image that the media, public and some of my colleagues expected of me actually did not suit me (as shown in my fortune line, analysis section). This realisation made me a better teacher as it allowed me to be myself and do more fun activities which engaged the pupils and made their behaviour improve.

Warrant from the research.

Miller and Crabtree (1999:5) described how qualitative research used: “...designs that evolve throughout the research process.” (Miller and Crabtree, 1999:5). This was what I discovered happened through my research as several tools I anticipated would produce useful data about SOS did not – namely the pupil Semi-structured Interview and the

teacher Focus Group. Miller and Crabtree (1999:5) noted that in field research: “The field is viewed through the experientially engaged and perceptually limited lens of the researcher using a qualitative filter.” (ibid, 1999:5). I agreed with this as I acknowledged that I was involved in the matter that I was researching. However, they pointed out that reflexivity was fundamental to this type of research. “Reflexivity refers to self-reflection, self-criticism, and is based on the premise that the engaged field researcher is an active part of the setting, relationships, and interpretations.” (Altheide and Johnson in Miller and Crabtree, 1999:14). I found this to be true as the research made me constantly analyse my actions throughout. As displayed earlier in the results chapter in the model showing how one tool in my research informed the next.

Larson (2009) argued that there were different ways to understand generalization in qualitative research. One way was to obtain different participants in interviews by using interviewees involved in the phenomena, rather than using a random selection over the whole population. He believed that: “Covering more of the variation in qualitative different views will enhance the generalizability of the study.” (Ibid, 2009:31). Thus this type of sampling would deepen the understanding of the phenomena known. I believed my research to have this type of generalisation, as I interviewed SO practitioners using SO techniques in different ways to each other. Indeed, Larsson (2009:32), pointed out that this could be a problem with this type of generalization in that it was impossible to ascertain how many variations of the phenomenon there were.

Larsson, (2009:33) also pointed out that generalisation of research can happen when the research is transferable to different circumstances. He outlined that it was accepted that researchers ought to describe their context and research, in order for other researchers to judge whether the research was transferable to another context. However, Larsson believed that it was up to the audience of the research rather than the

researchers to judge if the research was transferable to their context. Indeed, he concluded: “Rules are collective wisdom in universalistic form, but they must be subordinated to clever judgements about the specific case. (Ibid, 2009:37). For me this was reflected in the use of SO approaches in that SO is a general idea, however, when it is practised there are local alterations to it that practitioners use to suit their own, and their clients styles. Larsson (2009:33), acknowledged that a weakness with this type of generalization was that it was debateable between researchers as to what counted as similarities. However, I believed that another NQT wanting to develop relationships with pupils, and prepared to allow pupils to take over their own targets would be in a similar context to myself.

Finally, Larsson (2009:35), described another interpretation of generalization as the audience being able to spot patterns whilst reading descriptive research. Whilst a criticism of this usage of the term ‘generalization’ was that this perhaps undermined the authority of the researcher, for me this was showing that the research was useful to others if patterns could be observed by my readers.

Improvement in teacher – pupil relationships.

One of the most important outcomes of using SOS and completing this research was that it allowed me to develop relationships with my pupils. After conducting the Semi-structured Interviews with the pupils and gathering very little data this led me to construct an activity – the Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond 9’ activity in order to probe the pupil’s thoughts and ideas about SOS. I wanted the pupil voice to be heard as I was still striving towards perfect lessons with no poor behaviour and because I believed school to be about pupils, I felt they would give me the answer I wanted. I believed because I manufactured the ‘Diamond 9’ comments from what pupils had said to me, this meant that the pupils were able to relate to the statements. I felt the data that this activity

produced gave me a very clear picture of what pupils were thinking. They taught me that their poor behaviour was normal for a supply teacher, and in the lessons after the activity, I realised that the activity was helpful in establishing a better relationship between myself and those individuals. Looking back I realised I was fortunate that the pupils turned up in their own free time to engage with me. Referring back to my fortune line completing and analysing the data from this activity was a high point in my research, as I realised that it was possible to gain the pupil's voice using a different method. Indeed, if I had just given up after the Semi-structured Interviews failed I would not have got this success, so it showed me the importance of not giving up and doing something different. This affected my teaching too as it showed me that pupils need good quality stimulus for activities, the importance of guiding and wording activities appropriately to the pupils level of understanding. Furthermore, it showed me that with behaviour management not giving up on a pupil was important and trying something different was sometimes necessary, for example if the schools guidelines for giving pupils detention did not change the behaviour of a pupil I would ask them what could I do to help to support them to make a change. Often just saying that seemed to make a pupil want to try harder in future lessons, and they would allow me to support them more.

The Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond 9' activity seemed to me, to confirm the idea that it was the relationship between the SOS practitioner and the client that was the key to the success of this approach. Indeed: "Building upon earlier Rogerian conceptualizations of the relationship, the alliance includes both therapist and client contributions and emphasizes the collaborative partnership of the therapist and client in achieving the goals of therapy." (Marmar, Horowitz, Weiss, & Marziali, 1986 in Metcalf *et al.* in Miller *et al.*, 1996:335). Clearly, it was important for a positive

relationship to be established between client and therapist in order for the therapy to be successful.

I was aware that there were obstacles in the way of establishing a good relationship with my pupils, such as an unfair power balance where I was able to give sanctions/rewards and had to grade work for the pupils. Balmforth (2009), pointed out: “The client has come for help, may be feeling vulnerable and not in control of events; the counsellor is on his or her own territory, knows ‘how it works’ and is in control of the relationship.” (Balmforth, 2009:366). Thus, I was aware that by giving the pupils the ‘Diamond 9’ statements made out of their own comments about SOS I was giving them some ownership of the task. Also, hopefully by making them feel welcome, showing interest in their comments by probing their meaning, and gaining their informed consent to participate in the task I wanted to make them feel relaxed and confident.

Indeed, in the description of an ideal relationship Rogers asserted these features would be present:

“The therapist sees the patient as a co-worker on a common problem.

The therapist treats the patient as an individual.

The therapist is well able to understand the patient’s feelings.

The therapist really tries to understand the patient’s feelings.

The therapist always follows the patient’s line of thought.

The therapist’s tone of voice conveys the complete ability to share the patient’s feelings.” (Rogers, 1967:54).

I always endeavoured to treat the pupils in this way in my practice, as I could remember being at school and not always wanting to do what the teachers directed me to do. I always explained to the pupils that I thought that my job was to help them to get good grades so they could potentially have a better life than without good grades. I believed that if I treated the pupils in a respectful manner eventually they would come to treat me in the same way. Again this was an ideal that Rogers encouraged between client and therapist, (Rogers, 1967:54). Rogers promoted the idea that the counsellor should

respect the client: "...as he is...", (Rogers, 1967:209), whilst at the same time supporting the client grow whilst not making them feel supported. Which again I hoped to do, I wanted to help the pupils change but accepted it would have to be at their own rate and that not all of the pupils would get to the level that I wanted them to. I wanted them to know I was there to help them, whilst I was aware that they knew their poor behaviour was not giving them the ideal circumstances to fulfil their potential in our school community.

An area for development of the SOS technique perhaps would be the pupils using their behaviour target in other lessons, as when I questioned them about this they said they were but did not seem convincing. I thought they may not be telling the truth as they gave each other shifty sideways glances, and they gave me one word answers: "Yeah" (P8, line 149, appendix K), and P9 slightly changed the subject: "I thought like Humanity teachers are in touch with each other like if I'm bad in one lesson it will go to Miss _____(Head of Faculty), 'cos they all find out about it." (P9, lines 150-152, appendix K). I believed this may be addressed if other teachers within the school were to use the SOS system.

I was genuinely surprised when P9 chose the statement 'Being able to tell Miss Henderson what I'm good at' (Line 49, appendix K, 'Pupil Focus Group transcript' highlighted in green) as being important, and by the fact that the others agreed with him. This was because when pupils misbehaved it seemed (to me), that entertaining their peers was more important than pleasing their teacher. Especially as some of these pupils had misbehaved in class several times, so they had gone past the formal warning, ten minute, 30 minute detentions to being sent down to the isolation unit. As the pupils spoke there appeared a slightly embarrassed air, and in order to put the pupils at ease I acknowledged (line 69, appendix K), that I realised that some of their poor behaviour

may have been due to the fact that they thought that I was a temporary addition to their lives, which they accepted, (P9, line 73, appendix K, highlighted in green). I wondered if this meant that they now accepted me as part of the culture of the school, if so I felt that the SOS meetings were a major tool for allowing me to get to know these pupils as individuals rather than just being names in a class. This was confirmed later in the session when P12 (line 127, appendix K), began making a point about teachers not listening to pupils, interrupted by P11: "...don't listen, but like you – you do", (P11, line 128, appendix K), P10 then commented that teachers: "Just don't take in what you are telling them..." (P10, line 129, appendix K), P12 was able to finish this point he raised: "That teachers like, some teachers just like treat you as a class and not as an individual person." (P12, line 136, appendix K).

Another interesting comment was that pupils liked the fact that I reminded them of their targets discreetly at the beginning of lessons, originally I started doing this because pupils did not remember without prompting and would fall into poor behaviour during lessons, and I felt that reminding SOS pupils as soon as they came in to the classroom would act as a prevention which would be better than a cure. P10 said that he liked this because his friends: "...don't need to know what goes on in your life..." (P10, line 169, appendix K), and P8 commented that: "...it makes you get embarrassed." (P8, line 191, appendix K), which for me was a breakthrough as these pupils did not seem to me to be outwardly embarrassed about their poor behaviour. After this activity they really showed signs of embarrassment if I had to remind them of their target in lessons, I would observe the pupils going red faced, lowering their gaze or shuffling uncomfortably in their seats. I believe this session in itself helped to establish a better relationship between these pupils and myself.

When pupils fed back to the Focus Group about making their own targets, it was interesting for me because this was the central rule in SOS, that pupils made their own target. I had noticed that during termly school target setting sessions with pupils I had tended to ask pupils to set their own targets, (I always checked through their reports first so I had an idea of the areas that they need to work on in case they got stuck), whilst I knew other teachers made targets for the pupils. However, I strongly believed that pupils had or should have had the skills and self-awareness to be able to identify their own strengths and weakness'.

I was surprised to find during the Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond 9' activity that pupils were anxious to please me, yet this had been found by other researchers: "...the vast majority of pupils (over 80%) claimed to value their teachers' opinions about their work and their conduct more highly than that of their peers." (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:56). I learned through reflecting upon my practice to 'lighten up' in the classroom and try and jolly the pupils along instead of going straight to warnings and detentions. The Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond 9' activity showed me that the pupils were keen to impress me after all, and I believed after this event that I could use this relationship to try and use encouragements rather than punishments to get the pupils to complete tasks.

After completing the 'Diamond 9' Pupil Focus Group I realised at this point that I had made progress with the pupils as they had turned up in their free time to complete the activity, and they were bothered enough about their progress to share their ideas. Since this experience I have regularly asked pupils for their comments on lessons and ideas for change. Moreover, I have continuously adapted lessons according to the pupil's feedback or included new topics that have captured their interest in the media, whereas, when I started teaching I believed once I had designed a lesson it would be

used forever in the same format, however, listening to the pupils has helped me to keep the lessons more interesting for them and myself.

Indeed, I found reading back through my Learning Journal helped me to realise that the ideal class I expected to have when I entered teaching where students stay on task all lesson, be polite and respectful to every one rarely happens. Whilst this did not make me lower expectations of my pupils, I felt experience had given me a more realist viewpoint than my naïve outlook as an NQT expecting perfectly behaved classes to be the norm. As I encountered a variety of pupil misbehaving incidents I developed reaction responses to situations that I did not even think about. Whereas as an inexperienced NQT my natural tendency was to think about situations and my reactions were slower, I was sure that pupils could pick up on this and they probably used the situation to their advantage. Indeed, Schön (1991:239), stated that when in training managers come to develop ‘intuition’ for dealing with difficult situations, perhaps as a result of working in stressful quickly changing conditions which to me, mirrored a teacher’s situation. Moreover, Schön asserted that managers became effective due to “...long and varied practice in the analysis of business problems, which builds up a generic, essentially unanalyzable capacity for problem solving.” (ibid, 1991:240). Schön believed that rather than studying theory and techniques of management the skill of analysis was a more important tool for new recruits to master, in order for them to be successful. Thus, my understanding of pupil behaviour changed as senior and more experienced members of staff within my own school counselled me, shared their own experiences and informed me that even the most experienced of teachers had pupils whose behaviour was challenging to them, one particularly useful tool in my research that helped to inform me of this was the non-SO colleague interviews. Indeed, as shown in my fortune line this activity and analysing this activity was fundamental to me

accepting myself and allowed me to acknowledge that I was doing well in school, my colleagues were relaxed enough to be honest and say they were not always strict, where previously they had told me to be strict when training me, so this was a huge turning point in my outlook as it allowed me to relax and be more myself in my role.

My research led me to feel increased confidence in allowing pupils more control over aspects of their learning when I found out that their relationship with me was important to them after the 'Diamond 9' Pupil Focus Group activity. Examples of this was when I gave them the theme for the following lesson and invited them to come up with a starter idea e.g. a youtube clip of a song on the theme. During IT lessons if they had a question or an area they wished to investigate I encouraged it, (this also became easier to do when the school relaxed the rules on only using hyperlinks that the teachers had given). I also started to give pupils control over who they sat with and worked with for parts of/whole lessons - as with the SOS meetings pupils have mainly handled the use of their choices maturely. I tentatively began using role play in some lessons but with my new confidence I allowed the pupils to make more noise and bring new ideas e.g. using backing tracks, making props which improved creativity and engagement, without worrying about what colleagues thought of the noise levels or my apparent 'lack of control' (compared to sitting in seat, text book lessons). Whilst I felt happy to allow the pupils more empowerment I appreciated that other teachers would not relate to my pedagogy on a moral or ethical level, as they may wish to be seen to be in control of the pupils learning at all times.

O'Brien stated: "A teacher may have less control over the emotional aspects that the child brings to the teaching and learning process, but they gain increased power to make a change over time." (ibid, 1998:34). During my time as a teacher so far I believed that I had worked hard to build up relationships with the children, but with

time I found that I had built up a reputation within a school, and that pupil's gossip got around about what I was like, so taking time to be consistent and fair with pupils paid off eventually. I thought it was important to be strong, and have faith that bad relationships would improve, and to acknowledge that relationships were like a rollercoaster, and that all relationships required hard work. Therefore, the reflections that my Learning Journal and 'Diamond 9' Pupil Focus Group allowed for me to accept that I was progressing well with the pupils, and it enabled me to feel more confident that I was heading in the right direction with the pupils. Indeed, this was shown in my fortune line at the end of my doctoral research I felt that this process has helped me to reflect upon my practice, and I came to the conclusion that I was successful as a teacher in the stage of my career I was in at that point.

More effective behaviour management strategies.

The Teacher Focus Group led me to reflect upon why I had become so enthusiastic about the SOS programme, because it was such a miserable point in my research – as shown in my fortune line, I felt alone when I realised no-one else was using the approach and I worried that this would mean the end of my research at that point. I thought that one of the reasons I had become excited about the programme was because it was relevant to me both as a supply teacher and as a NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher), and also because it was important to me to build relationships with pupils, and I had recognised the framework as offering an opportunity for this. I realised at this point that not all the members of staff I had trained with were as in need of this help with behaviour management as me. This prompted me to recall a comment from a more experienced member of staff who said (during an SOS training session), that the SOS method was 'similar' to an initiative she'd heard about twenty years earlier in her career, (at the time I remember thinking her comment a bit cynical). Yet this Teacher

Focus Group made me realise that my perspective may change in the future given time and more experience, this also made me realise how wrapped up in my own situation I had been at the time. I reflected upon this and I realised that over the past academic year (my first full year of teaching), my own priorities had changed as I became more established within my school and other demanding issues (e.g. personal performance management targets and developing active learning tasks for co-operative learning in lessons), that I was not aware of existing or necessary when I completed my SOS, had become prominent in my work as I endured fewer behaviour management issues. Thus, I realised within my own practice SOS had helped me to progress as a practitioner, as I recognised that my concerns for each lesson had moved from ensuring there was appropriate behaviour for learning, to developing tools to promote this by finding exciting, engaging learning activities to use in lessons. Thus, because the Teacher Focus Group led to a dead end in my research, when I analysed this and understood why I needed to use SOS, and how I could move forward as a researcher I felt better as shown in my fortune line.

When one of the teachers commented during the Teacher Focus Group that there was no-one using SOS in the school this was a huge revelation. This made me realise that I had imagined a centrally controlled system set up where teachers were able to access pupil's goals and targets, (at this point I realised that there may have been one, but because she had not found the approach useful she obviously had no interest in this, even if it had been set up years earlier and forgotten about). I realised that this was wrong of me to imagine this had been done for several reasons: I remembered that the staff in this school were very good at communicating with each other during staff breaks about pupil behaviour and may have just preferred to carry on doing this, or they may have been restricted by time and were either unable to, or did not wish to fill in a

form every time they spoke to a pupil; they may not have felt a need to use SOS; I also remembered post training, a member of staff commented that behaviour some teachers would want to correct in their lesson other teachers would not, within the same school. So this led me to conclude that it would be difficult for some staff to liaise with other members who did not have the same beliefs or standards concerning behaviour management. Upon reflection one reason why one of the teachers did not make any comments, may have been that she was worried about getting into trouble for not using SOS as the Head teacher had funded the training and directed staff to use it. During the Teacher Focus Group I felt that I was an inexperienced teacher compared to the members of the group, connected to them because of our profession, but felt outside of their school community, since I had by then left their school and was working elsewhere.

Indeed, the data I gained from the Non SO colleague interviews led to another huge revelation for me. Up until this point in time the interviewees (who were at the time in positions of responsibility above me), had always told me I had to take responsibility to control/punish individuals/classes who had behaviour problems. However, during the interview my colleagues actually said that on different days/different times in their career that they had been in all parts of the model. Gilchrist & Williams (1999), pointed out that when faced with a low number of participants it was more important: "... to develop a relationship with them to ensure the richness of the information." (Gilchrist & Williams in Crabtree and Miller 1999:74), I certainly felt that the respondents were giving me honest answers, as their tone was honest and a different picture of pupil behaviour was described as to what we had discussed informally in the staffroom in the past. Indeed, through their confidence in saying they accepted behaviour in lessons wasn't always perfect after the interviews I felt a closer

working relationship with these teachers, hence this was shown as a high point in my fortune line. Furthermore, Gilchrist & Williams commented: “A key informant provides information through formal interviews and informal verbal exchanges or conversation.” (*ibid* 1999:73), I found this applied to my interviews with my colleagues.

I came to realise that there were times when acting was required to direct a pupil back on task, but that some mannerisms did not suit some teacher personalities, and that pupils knew when you were being genuine with them. O’Brien (1998:88) found that pupils liked a teacher to be strict. I believed that pupils liked to know where the boundaries were and what was expected of them. According to O’Brien (1998), pupils also liked teachers to be: “...well organised...understanding...say something that makes you feel better inside like ‘we all make mistakes’ ...not rude...fun.” (*ibid* 1998:88,89). They also wanted teachers to be respectful towards them, have high standards to push them to try to do their best, give them purposeful work and to be inspiring. All qualities I had tried to portray as I developed my practice.

Some factors to help pupils stay on task I found out by chance. Such as my calm nature had helped to stop confrontations, as I gave nothing back to the pupil to incite them, also not shouting threats across the classroom, as my instinct was to quietly and respectfully go over to off task pupils to ask them if they knew what they should be doing. Wheldall and Merrett found that: “In order to make reprimands effective they should be delivered from close quarters, not shouted across the room for everyone to hear.” (*ibid*, 1989:57). Again, this ties in with my findings from my Pupil Focus Group ‘Diamond 9’ when pupils stated that they did not want everyone to know their business (appendix K line 69). The SOS work had helped me be more confident that the pupils actually wanted a positive relationship with me, and this knowledge led to confidence which helped me to be more comfortable in my own skin and be myself in lessons

rather than my image of 'the strict teacher'. Indeed, "teachers are judged by how strict they are." (Taylor, T. & James, G., 2012), thus the more strict a teacher was the better they were deemed to be by the general public. As I have felt happier to allow the pupils to have more control, and I believed that subconsciously pupils picked up on this and were more relaxed in lessons, because I felt more relaxed.

It was strongly emphasised to me during my training that behaviour should be criticised not the pupil, and that sarcasm should not be used which I had always been careful to follow. I had heard some teachers speak to pupils shouting or making personal comments, and I had always gone by my own rule that if I would not speak to an adult that way/like to be treated that way myself, I should not speak to a child/adolescent that way. This idea was reflected in the research of Wheldall and Merrett: "The abrupt manner of speaking, sometimes verging on rudeness, that some teachers employ can be quite offensive to other adults let alone sensitive adolescents." (ibid, 1989:61). O'Brien agreed: "Every child...should be afforded the dignity of interactions that respect them as humans and learners." (O'Brien, 1998:13). Indeed, there had been times when I walked away from some senior teachers reprimanding pupils in a manner I thought to be unsuitable, as I did not wish to be associated with those words. I believed that part of our job as teachers was to model the behaviour we would have pupils show: "We may have to teach adolescents how to engage the attention of adults, how to address them, how to express an alternative point of view without giving offence, how to break off an exchange politely and so on." (Wheldall and Merrit, 1989:62). I felt that encouraging these social skills was just as important as encouraging pupils to give their all academically, as these skills were needed to function socially in the world successfully.

I believed that the SOS approach appealed to some pupils because it was a democratic process, which allowed pupils to be treated as responsible individuals in their own right, and that many pupils took the responsibility and stepped up to the grade when they were given the opportunity to prove themselves. For me this tied into Freire's belief where the idea that teacher and student are not at opposite poles, he believed that in education: "...both are simultaneously teachers and students." (Freire, 1972:46). I felt the pupils could tell me a lot about how I could improve my behaviour management/teaching. Indeed, for some students strict rules could create misbehaviour, for example for the Year 10 boy whose Christmas present was a black coat with a logo bigger than a 50p piece, who was instructed to go home to ask to replace the coat for one with a smaller or no logo. I suspected he shouted at the member of staff so much about the rule as it may have been a financial impossibility to replace a coat for his family, and he created a scene by shouting in order to hide his embarrassment about this, as he perhaps did not want to discuss his family's difficult financial position with his teachers.

As regards to what behaviours were reprimanded when I observed more experienced colleagues I learned that different behaviours irritated different individuals, and experience with individuals and groups taught me to pick my battles carefully. Sometimes a pupil would not respond to a reprimand 3.30 on a Friday, yet would be humble and apologetic on the Monday morning. Also, reflection after experience had taught me that I sometimes need time to cool off myself, I came to realise teachers were only human and were more tired and less tolerant on various occasions. Wheldall and Merrit, (1989) found: "teachers can simply ignore some trivial incidents completely....If teachers continually comment adversely on every minor misdemeanour they can sometimes make matters worse." (ibid, 1989:59). I found that falling into this

trap of nagging was easy when I was tired. Furthermore, it made pupils unsettled and more likely to cause disruption as it eroded the positive calm classroom atmosphere into a tense one, where pupils were waiting to be picked on. I also found from my own studies it was difficult to concentrate for five hours of learning a day, and almost impossible to be on task one hundred per cent of that learning time. I found through my own experience that sometimes taking a break to talk or joke about another topic could help pupils to refocus. It created a calmer teacher and classroom atmosphere to praise pupils rather than nag them, however: "It is very important that pupils should know exactly what they are being praised or blamed for." (ibid, 1989:63). I believed that if you stated what was good it was easier for other pupils to copy that behaviour. I intentionally started attending arts and sports events that the pupils were participating in so that I would have topics of conversation with the pupils in order to feed my relationships with them. Again, like the SOS meetings pupils said they liked the support of being seen outside my lesson and it often encouraged them to focus and try harder in my lessons afterwards.

Due to the need to control large numbers of students in one institution namely, within school, I understood why there were rules, as it made the flow of the society easier. Also, it was important for the individuals within the society to perceive that they were being treated equally and fairly, thus the rules helped to maintain the social order which allowed the institution to function well. However, enforcing rules could sometimes make it difficult for pupils to relate to teachers, as teachers were expected to 'perform' behaviour management by other colleagues during performance management observations, and because of the structure of this society teachers had an unequal power advantage over pupils.

After I completed the interviews with SO practitioners and Non SO colleagues I realised that I had been playing to an image of the ‘strict’ teacher popularised by media and the public, and that I no longer had to. I realised that professionals that I respected were not always this personality of teacher, and it did not suit me being this person indeed some pupils commented to me that I was ‘not that type of person’. I then went on to share my practice of SOS with new teachers. Thus, my research with colleagues and other professionals helped me to accept who I was and gave me confidence in my own gut feelings about teaching, after this I was less self-conscious about what others thought of my practice and was willing to risk trying new activities with pupils e.g. role plays and noisy games without worrying what other teachers would be saying about my practice. After several years of maintaining excellent exam results I realised pupils who were noisy and having fun learning, got just as good results as pupils sitting quietly working out of text books, moreover noisy lessons helped to develop good relationships and engagement in the subject area. This process has helped me to change my outlook as an ITT student I believed a successful lesson was a quiet one, however, I learned through my research that pupils do want to try but are not always engaged in ‘quiet lesson’ activities. Thus, listening to the pupil’s ideas and livening up my lessons has improved my practice.

Improved motivation and increased empowerment of pupils.

One of the aspects of SOS that some of my colleagues did not like was that the approach allowed pupils to make their own target, decide whether they met their target as they did not like the idea of handing control of this to the pupil. However, I was willing to try to see if giving pupils this responsibility would encourage them to improve their behaviour. O’Brien commented: “In order to promote positive behaviour, the teacher must be willing to share power and accept that the child has a significant and

ultimately vital role to play in altering their behaviour.” (ibid, 1998:90). This appealed to my core belief that you controlled your own behaviour and bad behaviour was to be addressed by the pupil. After using SOS I felt confident enough to trust the pupil’s judgement and from then onwards always asked pupils to make their own termly targets.

After receiving test results back pupils would be despondent. I would try to encourage them and boost their confidence I believed confidence boosting was key to helping the pupils improve their work (as the work of Pollard and Filler mentioned earlier pointed out). When I explained to them and gave them exemplars of work to show what I meant by a little bit more effort they just said ‘what is the point’, ‘I’m not a swot’, ‘I don’t need A/A*s for the course I want to do.

Eventually after receiving several test results that individual pupils claimed to be disappointed in, I started to suspect that some pupils were saying they had not revised when they had in order to hide their shame. I felt it could be because they were in a fixed mindset (Dweck, 2012). I believed that they thought if they had revised then still achieved badly, it would seem to me and their peers that they were less clever than if they had not tried to prepare for the test. I felt they lied about not revising as they were keen to impress their peers and myself, I believed they did want to improve because after the ‘Diamond 9’ Pupil Focus Group and SOS meetings nearly all of these students would write for the full twenty five minutes of a test, whereas when I first started in the school some of this group would barely write a sentence in twenty five minutes during a test. Indeed, one of my Focus Group achieved her worse ever grade from me just (a ‘U’), before the ‘Diamond 9’ activity in 2008, initially she said she could not do better because ‘she was thick’, however when I pointed out she had not had a U before so this was a one off which meant she was not ‘thick’ she tried again and improved her grade.

This led me to produce a record sheet for pupils (see appendix L Pupil target record sheet); I would ask them to fill this in after a test with their target for how to improve their score. Thanks to my research I have developed another change in my practice to challenge fixed mindsets. At the beginning of the lesson of their written activities and before their next test, as part of their revision I would ask them to read their record sheet, and tell their talk partner what they were going to do to meet their target today in their written work/test. I found that aiding pupils with their metacognition - thinking about what they were doing and how they could improve, enabled them to improve their grades, I believed this to be not only an important skill to possess in my lessons, but it was also an important life skill. Indeed, empowering pupils in this manner tied into Freire's philosophy that I also strongly upheld: "...looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so they can more wisely build the future." (Freire in Pollard, 2002:366). Thus, the skills that pupils were developing were allowing them to change, and hopefully meet their potential.

Another key finding was when during the Pupil Focus Group 'Diamond 9' activity pupils said they liked it when I was happy with their work. This surprised me because as a supply teacher I found that misbehaving pupils did not appear to want to please me – even at the threat of contacting parents, many of my Year 9 French pupils at my temporary school in 2007 (who had opted not to study GCSE French when I started teaching them on the supply contract), told me their parents said to them 'they didn't know why schools bothered to teach it anymore as most people go on holiday to Spanish speaking countries.' This new knowledge helped to motivate me to keep on trying with pupils who appeared not to be engaged (as reflected in my fortune line), as I learned that they had become good at acting 'not bothered'/interested perhaps due to

lack of confidence in their own abilities, however, I knew if I could keep motivating them to keep trying eventually they could achieve.

Initially, when I began teaching any pupils off task were an annoyance to me, as I had a false vision in my mind to have every class sitting working perfectly for a whole hour as I had seen on T.V images. I viewed off task behaviour as being an irritation, which prevented me from doing my main task of teaching. Rogers quoted a professor who said: “I have always complained that my work was constantly interrupted until I slowly discovered that my interruptions were my work.” (Henri Nouwen in Rogers, 2006:7). This research had made me realise how important it was to engage with the off task pupils with a more positive attitude, namely that it was to be expected, because humans were not perfect and teachers were using their power to get individuals to perform tasks which may have been outside of their comfort zones. Whilst I acknowledge that due to my research I had a huge personal investment in SOS, I believed SOS has made a large contribution to my success as a teacher, and helped to pupils to take charge of their behaviour, so that they could achieve grades which will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

My main findings from my research were that a teachers’ personality directly affects their style of classroom management, which in turn effects how much power/control pupils are given over their own learning. Thus a teacher like myself, who views herself as a facilitator will be flexible using different techniques to help pupils control their own behaviour; she will endeavour to enable pupils to work collaboratively and actively seek the pupil voice, and then include ideas from the pupils for activities in lessons.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: The origins of and methods used in solution focused brief therapy:

The origins of solution focused brief therapy.

Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), was popular as it was 'brief'. Namely that it took less time for clients to finish therapy compared to other methods. Thus, this was seen as an advantage, because less therapy time was needed before clients felt they no longer needed the support of a therapist in their lives. Time was not spent upon analysing problems during the therapy, hence the name 'Solution Focused' (SF), because it was believed that dwelling upon problems stopped clients from moving forward with their lives, therefore, the focus of the therapy was upon solutions to issues. SFBT was used for adults for any problems that would lead to people requesting therapy, e.g. divorce, relationship problems, including parents of teenagers displaying behaviour issues.

Milton H. Erickson was known as 'The Father of Brief Therapy' (Selekman, 1999:3) according to Selekman brief therapy had developed from his therapeutic ideas and included the belief that: "...the view that personality can only be understood in a psycho-social context..." (Tudor and Hobbes in Dryden, 2002:238). Indeed, Simon (1996:46 in Miller *et al.*) found that Erickson's awareness of how use of language was important in therapy influenced SFBT and his idea that: "...an understanding of the problem does not necessarily lead to its solution" (Simon, 1996:46 in Miller *et al.*). This in turn had been influenced by therapists such as de Shazer and his colleagues, the work of W. H. O'Hanlon and Weiner Davis in the 1980's, had also particularly influenced the development of Solution Oriented Brief Therapy. There were several key characteristics of Solution Focused Brief Therapy including that clients had to identify their 'exceptions' - circumstances where the negative behaviours did not occur, set their own

targets for improvement, therapists asked the ‘miracle question’ where clients had to describe life if they woke up and a miracle had happened and they no longer had the problem; therapists suggested clients make manageable changes, complimented clients – no matter how small their progress was, and urged clients to ‘do something different’ according to O’Connell (in O’Connell, B., Palmer, S. (Edts). 2003:2). This idea appealed to me as I believed repeating the same actions would lead to the same outcome, including when trying to behaviour manage a pupil.

Although Solution Focused Brief Therapy originated in Family Therapy Practice according to Rhodes and Ajmal (1995), it had been developed and used successfully by some therapists in schools. According to Ratner (2003), in one case study therapists had had one to one meetings with pupil clients, conducted democratic goal setting where the pupil clients negotiated targets, therapists accepted even the smallest changes and used ipsative assessment of pupil change by the pupils rating their own behaviour and improvement. Indeed, Ratner reported that in research with 13 difficult students:

“Staff concluded that there had been either complete or partial improvement in 69 per cent of the cases. The average number of sessions was four. Although many of the students had been excluded at different times prior to being seen, and in some cases were considered to be at a risk of permanent exclusion, none had subsequently been permanently excluded.” (Ratner in O’Connell and Palmer, 2003:95).

Having such a high success rate over such a short period (each session in this type of therapy was usually no longer than an hour), fitted very well into the busy school system where teachers were under huge time limitations. Also, this therapy was low budget which was attractive in times when school budgets were restricted.

The main features of Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

Exceptions.

Solution Focused Brief Therapy was a therapy which aimed to empower the client, so that they were able to use skills they developed in therapy to deal with problems that may arise later in life, after therapy for their current issues had finished. Importantly, clients were active in the therapeutic process, as they were seen as possessing the answers. Therefore it was the therapist's role to act as a facilitator in order to help the client extract these answers. Indeed, according to Selekman:

“de Shazer and his colleagues built their model around the core assumption that all clients have the strengths and resources to change and the idea that no problem happens all of the time – there are exceptions to the rule.” (Selekman, 1993:7).

Thus, it was believed that exceptions to the bad behaviour held the key to the solution of the problem; this was done by identifying and using skills from occasions where the person would never be off task and transferring these skills to events when they felt they were going off task. This was tied to another key feature of Solution Focused Brief Therapy, which was that the emphasis of the therapy was working upon solution of the problem, that is on the future, as it was believed that focusing on the problem itself, and discussing the past could lead to hopelessness (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995). Moreover, in therapy Solution Focused Brief Therapists would intentionally steer conversation away from the past unless the client insists upon dwelling on this:

“...solution focused therapists have found that in many cases it is more useful to spend the bulk of the time on the search for solutions”. (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:9).

Fundamentally, Solution Focused Brief Therapy unlike therapies such as Psychoanalysis did not place emphasis on examining the past in order to find answers to present problems. Furthermore, in highlighting and investigating occasions where there

were exceptions to the problem, for example when a 'naughty' pupil was not naughty, it's focus was upon using resources that the client was already using on these occasions, in order to find an answer to the problem, again unlike some other therapies.

Concerning exceptions: "It will be easier for someone to repeat a behaviour they deliberately carried out than one they think "just happened"." (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:14). They reported that when a client identified an exception the therapist would then ask a sequence of questions:

"What is different about those times?"

"What do you do differently?"

"Who else is involved, or notices these differences?"

"How could more of that happen?"

"How do you explain these differences?"

"How did you get that to happen?" (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:14).

So for example, if a student was well behaved with one teacher, but not with others a therapist would ask the pupil what was different in that situation, and together they would work out how that difference could be applied to other lessons.

Clients identifying goals was another important aspect of Solution Focused Brief Therapy. These were seen as being fundamental to the success of the therapy: "If you do not know where you are going with your clients you will end up somewhere else." (O'Hanlon and Weiner-Davis, 1989, in Selekman, 1993:41). Indeed, work on goal identification usually began immediately as therapy started as a client may be asked:

"What would you like to achieve from this session? What would you like to talk about that would make you feel that coming here had been worthwhile?" (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:16).

The language used in this question was important as the therapist was not imposing a goal upon the client; instead the client was identifying their own goal which they were more likely to achieve. Indeed, Hubble *et al.*, (2000), pointed out that Solution Focused Brief Therapy had to work from the client's perspective:

“First, to increase the chances that the client becomes involved in the therapy and experiences the relationship positively, practitioners need to ensure they are working on what the client deems important. From this perspective, treatment is best understood as a partnership for change.” (Hubble *et al.*, 2000:416).

The language the therapist used was extremely important at this point because if the therapist asked ‘what would you like to change’ according to O’Connell: “It implies that the client has the potential to make changes and is motivated to do so.” (O’Connell, 1998:22). A long term goal may also have been identified by the therapist asking: “How will you know the problem is finally over?” (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:16). It was then the responsibility of the therapist to help the client identify precise, yet manageable goals; these may have been achieved by the setting of tasks.

Understanding the meaning of words.

In order to help to build a good rapport with a client Solution Focused Brief Therapists observed and took note of some of the behaviours of their clients such as the way they used words, and therapists were careful when talking to clients to use these phrases and words like the clients did, this also ensured that the therapist was fully understood by the client.

How language was used in SFBT was considered to be extremely important by de Shazer. He pointed out that there were four ways in which words could be used; firstly to presume that they only had one meaning, however he found this insufficient as phrases such as ‘marital problems’ did not have one specific meaning; secondly to take a ‘structuralists’ view one could look at the meaning behind words, thirdly the Buddhist concept of language pointed out that language could stop us from reaching ‘reality’ (real meaning). Fourthly, De Shazer (1994:9), stated that one of the ways in which language may be used was according to ‘post-structuralism’ where the meaning of words changes, meaning that: “...language is reality.” (De Shazer 1994:9). De Shazer was

highlighting how important it was to choose words carefully with the client, as it could have affected the client's belief in whether they had the power to change their situation, and also how they should go about making change:

“What we talk about and how we talk about it makes a difference, and it is such differences that can be used to make a difference (to the client). Thus reframing a “marital problem” into an “individual problem” or an “individual problem” into a “marital problem” makes a difference both in how we talk about things and in where we look for solutions.” (De Shazer, 1993:10).

De Shazer (1994:38), pointed out that how others understand the meaning of words could never be the same as the author intended, this was sometimes labelled as ‘misreading’ by deconstructionists, (De Shazer preferred the term ‘text-focused reading’, and recognised the importance of both understanding what the clients actual meaning was of the words they used, *and* avoiding the fundamental error of therapists not placing their own meaning/interpretation upon client's words). De Shazer (1994), believed that if words only had one meaning there would be no need for talking, and as we would totally understand one another, and it was through talking about ‘exceptions’ that therapists could understand what a client meant.

Client assessment and task strategies.

Another feature of Solution Focused Brief Therapy was that clients were often given tasks, for example after the first session a client may be given the task of noticing exceptions. When a client recognised what they did in some situations to avoid the problem for example a pupil might sit separately from others that distracted them in one subject, the therapist would advise them to ‘do more of the same’ and therefore sit separately from distracters in other subjects where the problem occurred, hence the problem may be solved.

If a client reported that there were no exceptions or doing more was not working, another task that may be given to a client was to ‘do something different’ when they were in a situation where their set response was not working. In the next session the therapist received feedback upon the task and worked on from this. So if exceptions had been noted and ‘do something different’ had worked, clients were usually encouraged to do more of the same thing that helped them to avoid the problem. During a session a therapist usually took a break away from the client for five minutes or so to collect their thoughts, re-read notes and think about what had been said during the session, and to decide upon an appropriate task to be given (if there were other therapists observing, all this would be discussed and advice given to the active therapist). Upon returning to the client the therapist made a point of finding something to compliment the client upon - for example turning up for the appointment, or noting the strengths, or resources of the client, before the task was set.

Another type of task clients were often given, was to notice positive things that were happening in their lives despite the problem:

“Between now and the next time we meet we (I) would like you to observe, so that you can describe to us (me) next time, what happens in your (pick one: family, life, marriage, relationship), that you want to continue have happen.” (de Shazer, 1985b in Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:22).

Sometimes if I was struggling to engage a pupil in the SOS method I would ask a pupil who (possibly parents, carers, teachers), would be pleased if they were improving their behaviour at school. Although, this technique was part of SFBT it was not part the SOS method. When I queried why this part of the technique from SFBT was not used within SOS the course leader said that it was excluded as it was not deemed necessary and because the course leader wanted to keep the therapy as brief as possible.

Problem-Free Talk.

Murphy indicated that a positive relationship between the therapist and client was fundamental to successful therapy:

“Relationship factors, the second most important ingredient of effective therapy, include variables such as empathy, warmth, caring, genuineness, acceptance and encouragement.” (Murphy in Hubble *et al.*, 2000:363).

One of the ways that Solution Focused therapists created a good rapport with clients was to engage in ‘problem-free talk’. This could be done by engaging the client in conversation about their family, friends and interests, from this the therapist could identify the personal strengths of the client for example they were a loyal friend, had stamina – if they were good at sports.

“Some of these strengths and resources may be useful when looking at changes the client would like to make in other areas of their life.” (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:12).

Therapists pointed out the skills clients had and were using in order to make the successful relationships work in their lives, or skills used in being successful in their hobbies, and investigated with the clients how these skills could be translated to help in the problem areas of the client’s lives. De Shazer (1994), asserted that if a client talked at length about their problems to the therapist, it would likely make them and the therapist feel quite negative, whereas if they talked about solutions both parties were likely to feel more positive.

Rating Scales and small changes.

An important technique in Solution Focused Brief Therapy was the use of rating scales. Therapists used this technique to find out where the person viewed themselves as being in relation to the problem. Often a therapist would use scaling when a client was finding it difficult to describe anything that they were good at, so if a client gave themselves a 3

out of 10, then the therapist would say ‘well that is better than a 1, what are you doing to get as high as a 3?’ In SFBT it was important to find out where the client wanted to be on their scale, and for the therapist not to say that they had to be a 10, so if a client’s goal was to finish therapy where this would have had meant moving from 3 out of 10 to 6 out of 10, it was the therapist’s role to accept the client’s goal:

“We have also found it useful to ascertain what would be an acceptable point to reach on the scale – not everyone wants to get to a 10 and may be quite satisfied with a 6.” (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:19).

Sometimes therapists used scaling when a task was set in order to ascertain whether the task was achievable for the client, the therapist may have asked:

“On a scale of 1-10 where 1 denotes no confidence and 10 equals full confidence, how confident are you that you will be able to carry out this task?” (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:20).

If a client did not feel confident that the task was achievable, then the therapist’s role was to negotiate the task so that the task was more manageable for the client to achieve. The therapist altered the task by asking the client: “What would help you feel more confident you could move to the next point on the scale?” (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:20). Selekman (1993), reported that he found scaling useful when at a stalemate when trying to find a way forward in therapy with adolescents and their families he worked with the two parties to:

“...negotiate with the parents and adolescent what each party will have to do to get at least a half to a whole point higher on the scale in 1 week’s time.” (Selekman, 1993:67).

Thus, getting the client to make *small* changes was another characteristic of Solution Focused Brief Therapy. Rosenbaum, Hoyt and Talmon in O’Connell (1998), pointed

out that the advantage of this was threefold: clients often found it difficult to change, and having to make a small change, took the pressure off the client; most clients were keener to make a small change, rather than a large one; success at making a small change would give the client hope and confidence, as the therapist's role was to praise and compliment the client upon achieving change. De Shazer found in his work that making a small positive change could have had a "...ripple effect..." (de Shazer, 1985b, in Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:10), therefore he found that making small changes often led to the client making bigger changes.

'Miracle question' technique.

Selekman reported that Erickson put his clients in a trance in a process he called 'pseudo-orientation in time' and moved his clients forward in time, to a time when they had overcome their problem, he then would ask them what they had done to overcome the problem, he would then relay the solution to the client. From this strategy de Shazer (1988), developed the 'miracle question' which put the client forward in time, (without being put in a trance):

“Suppose that one night, while you were asleep, there was a miracle and this problem was solved. The miracle occurs while you are sleeping so you do not immediately know it has happened. When you wake up, what is the first thing you will notice that will let you know that there has been a miracle?” (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:17).

Clients were often without hope of resolving the problem, and this technique demonstrates what their lives would be like without the problem. This technique was best done when 'the miracle' was described in as much detail as possible, de Shazer then suggested further questions, which would help a client identify what behaviours they would have had to demonstrate in order to achieve change, (this miracle):

“What would you find yourself doing that will be a sign of the miracle?”

“Who else would notice that the miracle had happened? How would you know that they had noticed?” (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:17).

If a client identified something external to themselves as achieving ‘the miracle’, Rhodes and Ajmal recommend not questioning whether this was possible (if for example the client was a teacher saying they needed an extra specialist support teacher for a pupil), but to ask questions such as:

“Ideally, what would meet this student’s needs? How could things be arranged? What would be provided?”

“How would you know this resource has been successful?”

“What differences would you notice?”

“How would you use the resources?”

“What will you be doing differently?”

“What changes would someone else notice?” (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:18).

As De Shazer (1994:115), demonstrated by using the ‘miracle question’ in a case study, a client’s answers to these questions could show what a client expected to achieve from therapy. Rhodes and Ajmal also asked clients to imagine their situation improving one month ahead, they asked clients what they would have to do to achieve this improvement – which could help them to identify tasks that would help the client achieve their goal. When I contacted the SOS course leader they commented that the miracle question was not part of SOS, because it would make the session take longer to conduct, which would not be practical for a teacher.

The influence of social relationships on behaviour.

It was important in Solution Focused Brief Therapy to use where possible, the support of family, friends, and significant people in the client’s life, and the therapist may have asked when goal setting: “Who would be the first to notice you had moved toward your goals?” “What might they notice?” Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995:17). Furman and Ahola (1992), reported that when they began practising Solution Focused Therapy they encouraged clients to bring as many friends, family, colleagues as possible, however

later due to experience: "...advise clients to decide for themselves who to invite along." (Furman and Ahola, 1992:9). De Shazer outlined the importance of this: "Obviously, the various people involved in a situation were part of the context for each individual's behaviour." (de Shazer, 1994:246). Therefore, in SFBT it was acknowledged that the people around the problem could have been having an effect upon the problem itself. Selekman (1993:47), recommended separating people into different rooms if they would not stop arguing in therapy, and used the scaling technique to try to negotiate compromises in tasks:

"During the therapy session, it is essential for the brief therapist to be able to demonstrate to the adolescent and parents that he or she can provide structure in the session, negotiate goals, and disrupt unhelpful patterns of interaction occurring during the session." (Selekman, 1993:48).

He recommended as part of his rapport building with 'visitor' adolescent clients to ask them:

"“What do you think gave [the referring person] the idea that you needed to go for counseling?"; "What do you think [the referring person] needs to see happen in counseling that would convince [him or her] that you wouldn't have to come here anymore?"” (Selekman, 1993:49).

Thus, he actively tried to reach the adolescent on their level, and encouraged them to engage in therapy. When I had several pupils from the same class for detention I would choose the pupil being the most compliant to go first to rate, goal and state exceptions in order to model the behaviour I expected to the others, on the rare occasion I would send a pupil disrupting the detention/meeting to stand outside the classroom in order to complete the process successfully with the other students.

Change and 're-framing' the situation.

An important task of a Solution Focused Brief Therapist was to help a client achieve change: "An important concept in solution focused therapy, based on the Buddhist idea

of the illusion of stability, is that change is happening all the time.” (George *et al.*, 1999:10). In SFBT it was believed that change could be achieved by regarding a situation with a positive viewpoint: “Change, it is argued, can arise from either a difference in how a person views his or her world or by a person doing something different, or both.” (George *et al.*, 1999:10). In SFBT this was often labelled as ‘reframing the problem’ Murphy and Duncan commented:

“When we are stuck in a problem, we generally pick a particular way of viewing the problem, and we get locked into whatever solution attempts flow from our view...” (Murphy and Duncan, 1997:79).

It was therefore the role of the therapist to rewrite a client’s situation drawing out the positive aspects of their problem, O’Connell and Palmer (2003:4), commented that clients sometimes lost their self-belief and forgot the personal strengths they had used in the past to overcome problems. Therapists upon hearing about these capabilities could compliment clients upon having these strengths in the past, remind clients that they had these skills, and highlight how they may offer a solution to the problem that the client was currently suffering from. O’Connell and Palmer stated that the alternative viewpoint of the client’s story had to be offered in a genuine and realistic manner:

“Stories need to fit well enough for client’s to recognise themselves. If the new story co-authored between the client and the helper is too fanciful or obscure, the client will reject it and possibly the helper as well.” (O’Connell and Palmer, 2003:4).

They advised that this should not happen if the client worked out most of this information themselves, Berg and Steiner (2003:192), commented that this could often be achieved in shy clients by asking them what positive aspects a friend would describe them as having. I found that pupils were able to identify what they had to do to improve the situation, and some pupils recalled skills they had learned from previous sessions for anger management.

O'Connell and Palmer reported that Weiner-Davis, de Shazer and Gingerich (1987), found that 66 per cent of patients in one study reported pre-treatment changes; that was - positive changes happening in their lives between making the appointment for therapy and the first session.

Solution-Focused Teaching.

The research of Franklin *et al.* (2001), used SFBT in a High School and was conducted by therapists, teachers were mainly used as observers. They concluded that in order to improve the SFBT model: "...it would be important for all teachers to be trained in the solution-focused model." (Franklin *et al.*, 2001:432). Burns and Hulusi (2005), reported a study on four secondary school aged pupils, where teachers aided pupils with rating their goal attainment (where the students gave permission in their lessons), and also contributed informal observations about the pupils progress during the research. This study found that teacher contribution increased relations in the school between teachers and the school's learning support centre. However, in order for the approach to succeed further in the future teacher involvement ought to be increased and that:

"...this was difficult due to the already high demands placed on teaching staff and educational psychologist's time. This would help to support teachers in their work in the classroom and provide increased opportunities for staff to feedback positive comments about pupil's progress towards their goals for use in the group sessions." (Burns and Hulusi, 2005:130).

Doveston and Keenaghan (2006), reported than in their work with a primary school teacher (using Solution Focused and Appreciative Inquiry approaches), they found that they were able to improve relationships between students in the classroom which improved their behaviour and learning. However, they concluded that the time spent consulting the class teacher would probably be difficult to find in a secondary school setting.

The SFBT approach had been used largely by Educational Psychologists in schools, however Metcalf (2003), described how a Solution Focused teacher approached their work:

“...she lets the student’s competencies guide her to solutions. She sees her task as helping the student to identify his abilities through observations. In fact, his abilities are all she looks for; she doesn’t mention the deficits. This approach lends itself to a more collaborative relationship that often results in a student feeling as if the teacher is on his side.” (ibid, 2003:4).

Metcalf described this as being an effective approach in dealing with pupils who were resistant to the teacher. She believed that the school counsellor should act as an adviser to the teacher not as a mediator:

“It seems more realistic and helpful for the teacher *and* the student to talk privately and develop solutions to *their* concerns without becoming defensive with each other.” (ibid, 2003:105 & 106).

She recognised the problems in the relationships between teachers and pupils may have been caused by: “...students who refuse to take responsibility for their actions and are resistant to authority and compliance.” (ibid, 2003:117). In Metcalf’s opinion students who had relationship problems with teachers were displaying a perfectly normal stage in their development as human beings.

When working with academically challenged pupils Metcalf advised that:

“Whatever the solution, you may find that when you meet resistance in the classroom, it’s time to cooperate with where the student is. In other words, it’s time to stop trying to change students to *fit your* description and believe in who the student is and help him or her tell you what would work instead.” (ibid, 2003:126).

She recognised that it may take time to differentiate work for students who learn differently. However, she pointed out that as a teacher it was part of your job to learn

how to do this, as there was not enough funding in schools to expect support for all students who find learning challenging:

“Learning why humans behave as they do may be fascinating but it does not give us clues as to changing them.” (ibid, 2003:106).

Thus it was deemed to be part of the teacher’s job to explore methods that would encouraged pupils to engage with work set.

Appendix B SOS teacher worksheet 1.

9 P2

History.

get on/listen.

$\frac{4}{10} \rightarrow \frac{10}{10} 9?$

$\frac{3}{10} \rightarrow \frac{10}{10}$

3 to leave this sch.

listen $\frac{1}{10} \rightarrow \frac{8}{10}$

$\frac{6}{10}$ not mess about. $\frac{7}{10}$ PE gd.

$\frac{7}{10}$ concentrate
take resp. $\frac{9}{10}$
science

$\frac{8}{10}$ stop distracting. $\frac{9}{10}$
not talking with teacher.
all.
football

$\frac{8}{10}$ talking over teacher. $\frac{9}{10}$

13

$\frac{9}{10}$ $\frac{10}{10}$ writing pen
not gd.

Watch writing.

Appendix C SOS teacher worksheet 2.

<p>Group <u>Year 9</u></p>	<p>(Pupil names blocked out/covered to preserve anonymity.)</p>
<p>Lesson Detail</p>	<p>P5 10/10 P2 10/10 P6 8/10</p>
<p>pp lesson 12 L.O Proof God Boardworks Looking God 5-15 <u>Threaten to move.</u> <small>Craig give back test.</small> One world many issues pp 8, 9 WS 3 then 4. Plenary lesson 12</p>	<p>P7 7/10 P4 9-10/10 P1 11/10!! P3 9/10</p>
<p>L.O. Science answers how. Rel. why Q: Can science & rel go together? Boardworks Looking God slide 8. Big Bang video</p>	
<p>¹⁴ Mindmap evolution. Video - The question is - evol. Film Evolu Plenary. does evol get rid of God?</p>	<p>P6 Detention kept back.</p>
<p>17. Tian teachings & animal rights. Bk Beliefs, values & tradi p 56 + 57 Table Why for Why against Tian Pov 1-2005. Plenary dilemma. Poster.</p>	
<p>18. Vivisection Boardworks slide 1. PP. Vivisection Group q's (circle time) Boardworks slide 18 Have you changed your view?</p>	

Appendix D, Briefing form.



This is a research project for a doctoral thesis for Newcastle University. It is researching the use of Solution Oriented Schools (SOS), in behaviour management of Year 9 pupils.

Miss Henderson has been having SOS meetings with pupils to help them to behave better in lessons. She has asked them to give themselves a mark out of ten for their behaviour, then make a target mark out of ten for next lesson then identify the behaviours that will help them to meet their target.

Miss Henderson wants to hear your views on the SOS method, as she thinks that it is very important for pupils to be able to control their own behaviour.

Information given will be treated confidentially and the information gathered will be used to in a doctoral thesis and for journal publication.

The research supervisors are Elaine Hall and Simon Gibbs at Newcastle University (Tel: 0191 2226000), or write to Newcastle University, King George VI Building, University of Newcastle, Newcastle Upon Tyne. NE1 7RU. The research leader is Miss Henderson contact via school main reception.

Thank you for taking part in the research if you wish to change your mind contact Miss Henderson at the school main reception.

Appendix E, Pupil consent form.



This is a research study for a doctoral thesis and journal publication into the use of Solution Oriented Schools (SOS), for behaviour management of pupils. The research is conducted by Miss Henderson who is contactable through the school main reception.

You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, which means if you change your mind about being involved in the research that you can pull out at any time and any data you have given will not be used in publication.

Participation in this research is voluntary which means you are not being paid or offered any rewards for helping with the research.

You have the right to ask any questions about the research to Miss Henderson or her University supervisors: Elaine Hall and Simon Gibbs Tel: 0191 2226000, or write to Newcastle University, King George V1 Building, University of Newcastle, Newcastle Upon Tyne. NE1 7RU.

All participants (people involved in the research), will remain anonymous which means no-one will know who has helped in the research. The identity of the participants will be password protected by Miss Henderson.

Please tick either yes or no in the boxes below:

	Yes	No
I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time.		
I understand that my work will be confidential and the researcher will not disclose my name or pass on my name to anyone else.		
I agree to be interviewed for the purposes of this research.		
I give permission for my voice to be taped.		

Signed.....

Print name.....

Date.....

Thank you for taking part in this research if you wish to change your mind please tell Miss Henderson or one of her university supervisors.

Appendix F, Adult consent form.



I understand that I am giving my consent to take part in research for Jill Henderson's doctoral thesis and journal publication which seeks to gain data on teacher personalities connected to behaviour management control of pupils.

I agree to be interviewed for the purposes of this evaluation Yes No

I agree that the researchers can contact me again in the future Yes No

I understand that all the information will be strictly confidential to the researcher and that she is bound by the Data Protection Act 1998. *The Act includes provisions that:-*

- (a) *My personal information will not be used for any purpose except the purpose that I have been told about and that I have agreed to.*
- (b) *My personal information will be protected from disclosure to anyone except the researcher and her legal adviser.*

I understand that I will not be personally identified in any reports written as a result of the research and which may be circulated to anyone other than the researchers.

Signature: _____

NAME: _____
(Please use block capitals)

Date: _____

Thank you for taking part in the research. If you wish to change your mind and withdraw your permission for the data you supplied to be used for the purposes of the evaluation, please contact the lead researcher for the project:

Jill Henderson.
School main reception.

Appendix G, 'Pupil Semi-Structured Interview'.

- 1) What do you like about the S.O.S approach?
- 2) What do you dislike about the S.O.S approach?
- 3) Have you been able to control your behaviour, using the S.O.S approach in other areas e.g lessons, clubs, home?
- 4) Are you motivated to learn more now in school?
- 5) What can be improved with S.O.S?
- 6) Any other comments?

Appendix H, 'Pupil's Semi-Structured Interview Transcript from the Semi-structured Interviews conducted Summer Term 2008'.

Who	talk
T	Right urm so it's ready, ready now thank you very much for saying erm that you are willing to do this, do you want to come a bit closer so that can hear your voice? OK? Right I'm going away now so its all up to you guys
P4	What do you like about the S.O.S approach? (Silence) anyone? Anyone! (giggling). [P4 Stops tape to bring pupils to order] What do you like about the S.O.S approach?
P5	I think that it gives pupils a chance to Erm that you have to stick to your target and you know what you, what you have to do.
P4	What do you dislike about the S.O.S approach?
P6	That you have to self set the targets, I'd rather the teachers gave you it.
P4	Have you been able to control your behaviour, using the S.O.S approach in other areas e.g lessons, clubs, home?
?	Erm, no
P4	Are you motivated to learn more now in school?
?	Yes
P6	Yes because I feel that...
P7	If I am motivated I get something done
P4	Are you motivated to learn more now in school?
P6	Your overall behaviour towards class and lessons.
P4	Are you receiving help from any other teachers with your behaviour management at the moment?
	No
P4	Any other comments?
	No
P4	Any other comments?
	No

Appendix I 'Completed Pupil SOS form'.

Class	Scale	Exception	Goal	Method
8Q3	7/10	Science	8/10	Quiet when teacher talks. Control your reactions.
8P3	2 1/2/10	History.	10/10	Not talk over me.
8P3	4 5/10	Music is sits between. Move.	8P/10	On task. not talk over PL Move away? ? next lesson.
8P3	2 1/3/10	Music sits next to PL . PL 2	7,8,9/10	On with work. Move PL
10Q1.	5/10	Last Aking sweets Lesson didn't PL	9/10	Not eating.
9P3	3/10	moved to work.	10/10	Listen to teacher. Be good, be quiet.
9P3	0/10	works well with PL in history	10/10	Listen to teacher. Contribute more for task
8P3	9/10	English, Maths, PE.	10/10	Do work keep self to self. not shout but
8P3	4/10	Science, Art ignore distractions	8/10	Concentrate, ignore distractions
8	7/10	Gen	10/10	Not talk to PL get on with work.
8P3	4/10	History wraps to talk	8/10	Good behaviour, Not talking over teacher Not try hard, concentrate
8P4	5/10	Gen	10/10	Finds on work. listen & pay attention. work on their work.
8Q3	5/10	Gen	10/10	

Rehman det

Appendix J Learning Journal.

Learning Journal Year 1 (2008/09).

Key:

Behaviour concerns.

Week 1.	<p><u>Day 1</u> Inset Day. Really nervous, despite just listening all day, getting worse as day goes on.</p> <p><u>Day 2</u> Three bad nights sleep. Really, really nervous, it's my first time working September term; don't understand why I'm so bad can't focus. Felt slightly better by home time.</p> <p><u>Day 3</u> Feel more normal today. Anticipate last class of 15 boys, Year 10 could be potentially a nightmare by end of year.</p> <p><u>Day 4</u> Getting more into a routine, some Year 7's raising their heads today.</p> <p><u>Day 5</u> Went home feeling better.</p>
Week 2.	<p><u>Day 6</u> Slightly nervous, but managed to quell nerves, very busy before work sorting worksheets for lessons. Teaching four subjects this week so have to plan meetings with subject leaders as well as lessons.</p> <p><u>Day 7</u> Got straight into work today without worrying about nerves. A Year 11 pupil swore in front of me about another member of staff, nasty to sort out as she denied this, she has been excluded for one day, anticipate this will make her tricky next lesson. I was surprised at how many pupils were prepared to drop her in it, as she appears to be the 'it' bad girl in school at the minute – I did not think they liked me or RE enough to be bothered – they must just be tolerating her.</p> <p><u>Day 8</u> Member of my form class is struggling with change from Junior school, was temporarily mortified (as I am used to hugging my young relatives, and I know I can't do this at work), when she suddenly burst into tears at the end of registration, a passing deputy head firmly told her to immerse herself in new school and new friends to help her forget it – she just kept crying.</p> <p><u>Day 9</u> More members of my form class have been breaking down today. Plan to offer circle time at lunch time today.</p>

	<p>For the first time I gave positive postcards home today to three students – these seem to be valued. Will use this again.</p> <p><u>Day 10</u> Form Class seem more chilled after getting them to work in groups in a lesson. No-one turned up for circle time!</p>
Week 3.	<p><u>Day 11</u> Heard that a school initiative this year is to be working on GCSE grade A and A* I need to find out more about this.</p> <p><u>Day 12</u> Year 11 class that had moaned about having me as a supply teacher last year actually seemed grateful for me today.</p> <p><u>Day 13</u> Realised today that this is the third week of term and I have not had to conduct any detentions! I had been thinking that the research stage of my project may be best starting immediately in September to rule out other factors in helping the pupils improve their behaviour, also maybe to do it with Year 7 as they have not experienced any other Behaviour management systems from me. I am pleased that I listened to University Tutor's advice to wait before collecting data.</p> <p><u>Day 14</u> Continuing on from yesterday's realisation I think the Year 10's are worse behaved than the Year 7's. I was going to study Year 9's; however, I used S.O.S extensively with my one Year 9 class last year, so I need to have a rethink about sample.</p> <p><u>Day 15</u> Decided to focus on one Year 10 class in particular for the S.O.S technique, this is the first Year that they have been in mixed ability settings and I suspect some less able pupils are feeling self conscious that they will not be able to keep up.</p>
Week 4.	<p><u>Day 16</u> Feeling back in a routine again, frustrated at not having enough time with form class – so much information to give them.</p> <p><u>Day 17</u> Year 10's period 5 first detentions of the year. Had to be quite firm with Learning Support Assistants (LSA's), that I wanted them picking up tomorrow for detention, as they hate doing this. One Year 10 escaped before I could record his detention in his planner, so I stayed back to contact his form tutor to do it – there's no escape. This has given me at least one hour extra work.</p> <p><u>Day 18</u> Three of the Year 10's from yesterday have the same form teacher and have</p>

	<p>been given a roasting. They were all delivered to me for detention, and were spoken to by the HOY, ISA and I conducted an S.O.S session with all of them, I did it with the most difficult student last, (I taught him last year and found him quite arrogant), so he could hear the others answering maturely. This made me realise my study using S.O.S has many other factors that may affect outcome that I can't control. I had thought a study using Year 7's would be best to do at the beginning of term, however, I realise now that they will be affected by what has occurred previously in Primary School.</p> <p><u>Day 19</u> Kept a Year 7 Thinking Skills student back 10 mins for being 10 mins late for the second time, his excuse was getting lost – in his fourth week? Found it hard to judge how genuine he was but class are quite noisy and wanted to make an example.</p> <p><u>Day 20</u> Own class have lots of merits, have warned them they need to get planners organised or detentions will start. Have told them I would prefer to give them positive attention, and I have shown them an example of a good planner. I am amazed at how merits seem to motivate these students.</p>
Week 5.	<p><u>Day 21</u> Asked a language teacher for help who I only know because of disciplining a member of her form class, she was so ready to help me, I was so grateful I thought that this was a very good reflection upon the school.</p> <p><u>Day 22</u> A Year 11 that has been great so far this term was terrible (as bad as she was when I started teaching her last year). I've booked her for a detention. I used S.O.S with her last year; it did not seem to work.</p> <p><u>Day 23</u> Yesterday's Year 11 girl did not arrive for detention. For the first time I had to be quite firm about an LSA getting her picked up for her replacement detention, I do not teach her until next week, so the detention will be a week after the event, which seems silly.</p> <p><u>Day 24</u> Walked into my classroom after having to teach in another room and the carpeted floor was covered in pencil shavings, I uttered shock and realised the Deputy Head whose class it was, was still sitting in the room. She apologised, she had let the pupils sharpen pencils on their desks instead of holding them over the bin. My form class had apparently commented to her about the mess as well. I'm really pleased that they are proud of their form room!</p> <p><u>Day 25</u> I needed to leave school on time tonight, because I'm driving to within half an hour of London. I did not feel too resentful of finishing 20 minutes after I</p>

	<p>needed to despite arriving 12.30! This made me realise that I am enjoying my job!</p>
Week 6.	<p><u>Day 26</u> Had a migraine all day today which started yesterday, for the first time in this school I didn't have to tell the pupils this, in order to urge them to behave well.</p> <p><u>Day 27</u> The Year 11 girl was escorted in lying and complaining about her detention. She was so hyper that I did not do SOS, she kept shouting out random comments; she really appears to resent me. I kept her in as I knew she would run off rather than go down to the quiet room. The Year 11 boy I had in from the same class, (not SOS didn't work last year), was perfect, he did not join in with her, I was amazed she ran off five minutes early, which I reported she has her IBP meeting on Friday this week.</p> <p><u>Day 28</u> Today I disagreed with the Head of Department about what she had set for the Year 11 mock exam – material they were not due to cover before the exam. I was really disappointed in her attitude because she left questions on the paper that they have not studied for and their grade will go towards their final school report.</p> <p><u>Day 29</u> Year 9 boys that I SOS ed last year, went through SOS with me in detention today, they have been good so far this year until yesterday. I decided that perhaps one session of SOS is not enough (maybe I should have done this with the Year 11 girl on Tuesday – but she was probably too hyper to talk sensibly), the boys responded maturely, I will teach them next week.</p> <p><u>Day 30</u> Enterprise Day we did a fabulous historical village trail, I loved being outside with the pupils. Caught the boy who did not turn up yesterday to detention, his naughty friend offered to remind him to come to see me next Wednesday! Can't wait to see if this happens!</p>
Week 7.	<p><u>Day 31</u> Teacher Training day, road closure meant I had to walk into a full staff meeting 10 minutes late, was totally mortified and apologised through e-mail to Senior management team. Got a nice not to worry e-mail back from the Head, have spoken to her several times, for the first time this week I really admire her choice of words when she speaks she must think about her words really carefully.</p> <p><u>Day 32</u> Two Year 7 boys are returning tomorrow for a detention, intend to SOS them. My form football team are falling out with each other, is this normal in a football team? They are top of the league, wonder if we can have an SOS/person centred cure for this?</p>

	<p><u>Day 33</u> Year 7's did not turn up.</p> <p><u>Day 34</u> Threatened Year 7's with a longer detention if they didn't turn up today. SOSed one.</p> <p><u>Day 35</u> He worked like mad today! I made sure I made a big fuss of praising him.</p>
Week 8.	<p><u>Day 36</u> Have previously offered extra merits to my form class for the able to help the less able to meet the deadlines for their homework projects this week, and it seems they have not taken the carrot. Perhaps because this is task is too individualist? On the other hand the class football team have work well together to improve and have come joint top of the league and we have won the attendance trophy this week! Felt really proud of class. Realised today how much I like my form class, despite being worried before term that I they could never match up to the form I had last year.</p> <p><u>Day 37</u> Was told to give some underachievers a detention for no homework attempts today, I had to ask their form teacher via e-mail to book them in - she did not reply.</p> <p><u>Day 38</u> Went to see the form teacher this morning, I explained because she had chased the lack of homework, this is what I had been instructed to do, she appeared unhappy! I ended up helping the students to produce their homework in the detention – I thought this was more appropriate than a punishment. I then had to approach one of my seniors who has not been told to give detentions for missing homework and I subtly offered to 'remind' some of my form class to do this homework project. It seems there is a hierarchy to all of this! Parents evening for my form class, only three parents did not come, one who I asked the school to call to come did not arrive at their reluctant appointment.</p> <p><u>Day 39</u> I asked the child I was concerned about why his parent did not come, he told me he thought that he had as he heard him leave the house, but then he returned 20 minutes later, without coming, strange. Can he not face school? My reward stickers have arrived, students seem to like this reward; I plan to use them more. Today I went to see the school play after work, there were a lot of students involved who were in the top sets I taught last year when I was covering for the Head of Department, (this year I do not have any top sets), some of them made eye contact, (I was on the front row), and they looked really happy to see me. I felt very emotional at the end, it was a great show; I felt really</p>

	<p>proud to be part of the school. I wondered why there were none of the children in that I teach now – are they so disaffected that they won't commit to the rehearsal time, or do they not have the confidence to audition and perform?</p> <p><u>Day 40</u></p> <p>The standard of my form class' planners are excellent, bar two pupils (one whose parents I explained the planners to two nights ago – including their role in signing it), positive reinforcement seems to have worked. Felt like a zombie today, have had two days of migraine then I felt one of my bosses was unreasonable today, this was in the loo's with a witness! By end of school I had several people rallying round me sympathising and offering practical help, I was not actually upset about the incident – I wondered why – other people obviously thought I ought to be – am I just too tired to be upset? I thought the incident showed the person up, rather than me. The good thing to come out of it was that people I barely know commented on how they knew how hard I work, and I got offers of help from unexpected sources which for me, was extremely touching. Half term now.</p>
Week 9.	<p><u>Day 41</u></p> <p>Back in to the fire - several department members of my non specialist subject were absent and was pleased I'd prepared a lesson yesterday 'just in case', as when I enquired last term what I was to teach today I was told I'd be told this morning.</p> <p>The Head of Department asked me to do the time saving job (give out pupil work), for another teacher that she refused to let me do on Day 40, normally I would not have commented, however before I knew what came out of my mouth I had calmly said 'this is the job you refused to let me ask of others before half-term, however, I don't mind doing it because I don't mind helping others out'. I am aware I am feeling more confident of myself but am also aware that in this job there is a fine balance between getting enough confidence to control a group of teenagers, and not appearing too confident in front of more experienced professionals than yourself and getting people's backs up.</p> <p><u>Day 42</u></p> <p>Getting used to moving rooms more now, and I've noticed this 'inconvenience' has made me improve the timing of the endings of my lessons, which has helped tonight when I had to leave to get to the university lecture. Felt really calm as I had e-mailed the tutor, explaining I could only arrive half an hour late because of my job, but then got a shock as there were about a hundred people in the room, I was expecting a dozen. We were put into groups after the lecture, I think I was the only person with English as my first language, this was great I feel really connected with the rest of the world when my courses have overseas students on them, I loved hearing the other people's views, yet felt they had a better grasp of the philosophical terms, despite my prior reading which has worried me whilst making me admire the other students.</p> <p><u>Day 43</u></p>

	<p>Bad Migraine day everything is difficult, was being observed and had to open the classroom door and freeze the pupils to avoid being physically ill.</p> <p><u>Day 44</u> At University I am seriously struggling with the philosophical terms, and can't do anymore reading than I am, I'm not panicking about this (as I would have done a year ago), as I know over the last few years, my brain will absorb things when it's ready.</p> <p><u>Day 45</u> SOS'ed a Thinking Skills student who just looked vacant throughout. I asked him what he was thinking about – he said 'going home'. A Year 10 student did not turn up for detention, he was SOS'ed last year, has had a detention this year, on Day 18 and he was told off by several members of staff. I feel irritated by his actions, he ignored me, (on day 42), and walked around class to get a marker pen to sign a plaster cast, I am surprised as this would not normally feel so irritated.</p>
<p>Week 10.</p>	<p><u>Day 46</u> My set 2 Year 11's worked like mad to do well in a test today, they say they hate RE and were making excuses as to why they were trying, am now trying to remember what I have said/done to make them so keen.</p> <p><u>Day 47</u> My bottom set Year 11's did the same test as yesterday and several have got B's, I am so proud. The Year 10 student who didn't turn up for SOS on day 45, was acting up again, I've booked him in again for SOS detention tomorrow.</p> <p><u>Day 48</u> Saw my Year 10 detainee this morning in the corridor and reminded him to turn up at lunchtime, not thinking he would, he did, I tried to hide my surprise, we looked at his SOS mark from last year, he looked shocked, I asked him where he is now /10. He revealed he is having anger management issues, I'm not sure if I believe him 100%, I feel he's trying to play me, I asked him to suggest how our situation can be improved, he said I had to stop saying his name when I was reprimanding him, I said it would be easier for me to do that if he was not exhibiting any behaviour that would make me say his name, he agreed to try. Roll on next Tuesday.</p> <p><u>Day 49</u> Have had excellent feedback from my lesson observation on Day 43, but struggled to understand Performance Management Lingo, asked three other colleagues about target setting. Have been studying until 11pm every night this week, I plan to relax more this weekend as I need my brain for work!</p> <p><u>Day 50</u> My Year 10 from Day 48 got an A for his test. I was so amazed I made a point of congratulating him away from his friends when I saw him at lunchtime.</p>

<p>Week 11.</p>	<p><u>Day 51</u> Helped another teacher who uses my room to move the tables around into 'groups' instead of lines, I asked her to keep it that way I want to see if it helps behaviour especially my Year 9 class, on Wednesday afternoons.</p> <p><u>Day 52</u> Year 10 from Day 50 was a 10/10 today – he asked me 'was I a 10/10?' when all the students had left, he was helpful and focused, he looked different, like a calmer person, I asked him what techniques he had used, he said he just focused on his work.</p> <p><u>Day 53</u> Migraine started after first class (my Year 9 class), were badly behaved during an assessment, had to call the Head of Faculty to get them silent. Over the last three lessons this class' behaviour has been getting worse, they were horrendous when I took them over last year, I want to stop this before we go back to square one – is it Wednesday afternoon syndrome creeping up to Wednesday morning or just because it's a test? 10 students have to do a detention with her (HOF), tomorrow as a result of this.</p> <p><u>Day 54</u> Migraine. One of the Year 9's from yesterday's written test was so illegible I spent the detention helping him help me understand, he seemed genuinely bothered to do better. This is an improvement in his attitude since last year.</p> <p><u>Day 55</u> Spent 'lunch hour' in a training meeting. Wacked.</p>
<p>Week 12.</p>	<p><u>Day 56</u> Year 11 mocks this week, English can not replace someone on maternity leave, and interim reports are due at the beginning of next week. Plan to miss my hobby evening classes and one of my University sessions (non-compulsory), there is just not enough hours in the day!</p> <p><u>Day 57</u> A Year 11 who did not write anything all lesson, did not turn up for detention, his mock exam is tomorrow.</p> <p><u>Day 58</u> Asked Head of Faculty to pop into my noisy Year 9 class with advance notice for this afternoon. The LSA had suggested the strategy of 5 mins quiet reading time for the first five minutes of the lesson as she has observed the SEN coordinator using this strategy to settle the class, I have been trying this for the last four weeks, the class wouldn't settle as a queuing class outside had no teacher, (she was setting off an exam), I e-mailed for extra help. 15 minutes later help arrived. What a nightmare. I spoke to one form teacher afterwards of one of the pupils who is refusing to come back to RE and he informed me one of his peers is refusing to go to maths! What a handful. The Year 11 who did not turn up yesterday only answered one of the four</p>

	<p>exam questions.</p> <p><u>Day 59</u> Three of the five from my Year 9 class actually arrived in very pleasant calm moods, (without being delivered) for detention (not doing homework), one of the noisiest said he wished his class was quieter, a bluff?</p> <p><u>Day 60</u> Had to put two of my form class (Year 7's), outside classroom to cool off this morning – has the 'honeymoon worn off?'</p>
<p>Week 13.</p>	<p><u>Day 61</u> Got Year 11 mock marking finished today (despite a heavy weekend of being observed and assessed for my diploma), I think I am getting quicker at marking. One of my bottom set has got a B, quite a few C's in this set.</p> <p><u>Day 62</u> Year 7 bottom set English talked in a test this afternoon despite repeated warnings.</p> <p><u>Day 63</u> Have mentioned Year 7's talking in test to my English mentor she has given me support and allowed me to use the LSA to collect the pupils for a detention at luntime. SOS'ed two of the pupils, they seem genuinely sorry and mortified. Mentor has promised to reinforce the rule (no speaking during test) when she teaches this class next. Brilliant to have support like this. Loads of IT problems today. Coped, pupils were very patient. (Year 10 Wednesday afternoon). Year 9 class this morning were not too bad, the one who's form teacher I had spoken to was positively helpful, he has changed seats. When I did this class' reports on Friday I noted that 11 out of the 26 have behaviour issues. The ISA appeared in the last five minutes of the lesson, (I had requested she came for all of the lesson, but she was busy elsewhere), I pointed out the noisy pupils to her, she said she'd pass comments to the Head of Year, I told her I wanted the problem nipped in the bud as they are my worst class (behaviourwise). I also reported that I suspected some of bullying one boy who they kept blaming for throwing things/knocking things off desks, which I find hard to believe about this individual. I haven't had the LSA in this lesson for nearly six weeks now.</p> <p><u>Day 64</u> HOF just told me today that she has only just managed to get the last two Year 9's who have been avoiding detentions with her from Day 53, my heart sank a bit because this is a long time after the event, but then I realised that she is very busy and she has persisted with this with them and she was very supportive of me last year. Pupils coming in soaking from snow, socks and shoes drenched Year 7</p>

	<p>pupils seem to want to be mothered!</p> <p><u>Day 65</u> Projector reported again have realised I can't live without it!</p>
Week 14.	<p><u>Day 66</u> Projector will last 15 mins then it cuts out complete with horrible burning smell, still not fixed. None stop day by last lesson, projector has totally made me very frustrated about lack of facility for delivering lessons.</p> <p><u>Day 67</u> Projector will last 15 mins then it cuts out complete with horrible burning smell, still not fixed. Year 11 has spent an hour redoing his mock has written six sentences in an hour with the Head of Faculty supervising. He has blatantly lied about missing a detention with me have spoken to the Head of Year and this is an all round problem, she will chase.</p> <p><u>Day 68</u> Projector will last 15 mins then it cuts out complete with horrible burning smell, still not fixed. Convinced Year 9's were not so bad today. Have two key players missing and changed seating slightly.</p> <p><u>Day 69</u> Projector will last 15 mins then it cuts out complete with horrible burning smell, still not fixed. Had two Year 9's picked up for detention today, one I showed him his S.O.S score from last year and he seemed visibly bothered that he is not showing any improvement. The other pupil I girl who slipped the net last year three times due to absences refused to acknowledge other students in her class were following her lead, refused for 10 mins to give herself a target/ goal, she seemed to have a mistrust of me accepting a score less than 10, and did not want to stop talking to her friends to listen to me 'because she didn't want to loose her friends', I pointed out she may be keeping her friends, but she couldn't speak to them at lunchtime as she was spending her time with me.</p> <p><u>Day 70</u> Projector has been removed. Year 7's SOS'ed from Day 62 behaved much better in English, last lesson today.</p>
Week 15.	<p><u>Day 71</u> Year 11 excluded for religious prejudice comments on exam today returned, he apologised. I told him he had a warning last year for the same thing and I felt sorry for him if he believed his own comments. After he'd gone I read a letter he'd given me, I hope for him he believes what he has written in his apology letter or he's going to have a very sad life.</p> <p><u>Day 72</u> Still no projector. Year 7 has missed two detentions with me this week.</p>

	<p>Decide to chase after the holiday. My own Year 7 worked really hard in detention and went to see a teacher afterwards he'd missed two detentions with already. He even seemed quite positive about going to the extra literacy sessions, he had been refusing to go to.</p> <p><u>Day 73</u> Projector returned hooray! A Year 10 asked me why we study Islam as 'they' weren't the same as 'us'. When I said are you meaning that 'we' are Christian because I'm not and he's told me before he is not, he said 'no'. I explained to him again how Islam, Judaism and Christianity come from the same root and worked really hard after that. Had he not heard me explain it before? Had he not understood? Or not listened? The ISA commented at the end of the lesson how good his behaviour was for me, as he and others in the class are regularly in trouble. I actually find him one of the keenest and reflective members of the class. Year 9 class really good, made a map from memory for them, made no fuss over no reading books. Have started making a list of activities they like next to where I plan their lessons in my diary. Made more seating changes. No feedback on individual who deliberately left his report with me, (I got it posted to his parents).</p> <p><u>Day 74</u> Still full steam ahead on lessons. Have got marking to a good place and have started planning lessons for first day back. Carol service last lesson.</p> <p><u>Day 75</u> Year 7 from day 72, came to registration instead of extra literacy and trotted off very happily when I reminded him! Result!</p>
<p>Week 16.</p>	<p><u>Day 76</u> Year 10 ISA sat through two identical lessons this morning pupils were strangely quiet after returning from holidays, handled 'divorce' very maturely!</p> <p><u>Day 77</u> Year 11's seem to be being a handful this week, they are complaining about their work/revision load.</p> <p><u>Day 78</u> Year 9's really quite good, I asked the Head of Year to call by to check they had settled down, she named several who'd missed detentions with the new supply teacher. When she went I told them this was there chance to have a teacher give a good report back to her about their behaviour – I said that they must be sick of getting wrong, and I would report they'd been good if they worked hard. They got their first full class merit from me for this academic year today.</p> <p><u>Day 79</u></p>

	<p>Spoke to a member of staff today about doing a doctorate, she is the first person to be overtly supportive of the qualification since I came into education, I promised to get her details.</p> <p><u>Day 80</u> My form got their second trophy for attendance and punctuality! Chased one member for homework, (also moved him in English lesson), I had recommended homework club to him, the ISA has now and he says he will attend – he asked me what I did on the evenings, I said probably the same as him homework, TV and friends – he looked amazed!</p>
Week 17.	<p><u>Day 81</u> Asked my Head of Faculty to visit my Year 11's who were a bit uncooperative last week. They worked well again today – talking to her about it later – maybe it was because they were hyper after the holiday.</p> <p><u>Day 82</u> When I returned to work after the dentist feeling like I had been slapped in the face by a plank, I had an e-mail about a pupil (Year 7 girl), I'd become concerned about on Friday not eating at lunch time. On Friday I'd spoken to her and sent her off with her friends as she has recently had friendship issues. I am very concerned because the day she knew I wasn't hear over lunch she tried to hide in my classroom and was fortunately spotted and quizzed by the cover teacher who is worth her weight in gold.</p> <p><u>Day 83</u> I have spent lunch break with my Year 7 girl in tears again and she still has not been eating breakfast or lunch. The Head of Year is involved the girls Mum has been contacted and is aware and unconcerned about the situation. Mortified.</p> <p><u>Day 84</u> I have e-mailed the Head of Year and copied in other staff to request further intervention with this situation as I believe it needs professional intervention now.</p> <p><u>Day 85</u> One of my bosses shouted at me today about a change in test, in front of other members of staff, (with the staffroom door open), I was really calm and did not shout back but another member of staff who agreed with me earlier that morning did not back me up when I included them in the 'discussion'. Felt really stunned by the situation. Upon discussing it with another member of staff this situation does not appear to be my fault but I need a senior member of staff to help me resolve it and I am concerned about this.</p>
Week 18.	<p><u>Day 86</u> Feeling really worried about seeing the person I was shouted at by on day 85 in front of pupils. Really busy day. She was still unfriendly at the staff meeting.</p>

	<p><u>Day 87</u> Feel worn out, am sure its stress. Three bottom set Year 11 boys shouted at me in the lesson, other pupils complained, have asked other members of staff to help me resolve this before next weeks lesson, everyone is busy and stressed. Working towards my professional targets lesson went well today.</p> <p><u>Day 88</u> Year 9's got 4 Formal warnings 5 minutes into the lesson, called for back up to save it going to detentions, none came, but the class were worried someone was going to arrive and behaved after that! Good lesson again, gave merits. I am going to be observed with this class soon. Uni tonight.</p> <p><u>Day 89</u> Staff situation calming down, have worked professionally with that colleague now, am feeling better about the situation.</p> <p><u>Day 90</u> Got moral support from a teacher I don't know very well. Situation better.</p>
<p>Week 19.</p>	<p><u>Day 91</u> Year 11's bottom set from day 87 got them outside 1 by one they were very reasonable and worked better today in a test. Pre – arranged with ISA to be present, got apology from student sent to quiet room last week – he came top of the class with a B today.</p> <p><u>Day 92</u> Booked Year 11's (set 2), in for detention who have been identified as underachievers, they did not turn up.</p> <p><u>Day 93</u> Pupils surprisingly not hyper at prospect of having long weekend – is it because they know their parents are coming in tomorrow?</p> <p><u>Day 94</u> Parents day. All very interested and supportive except for one who talked about herself for 15 minutes then asked me personal questions. Gave advice to a new tutor about the day when asked – felt like an old hand.</p> <p><u>Day 95</u> Inset day – had to put a sheet of blank paper on our backs, walk around the room and colleagues wrote nice comments about us on them, was very moved about the comments I received. Second thing this week that makes me feel like 'I've arrived'!</p>
<p>Week 20.</p>	<p><u>Day 96</u> Was handed a slight change of timetable this morning, training going well I really appreciate the opportunities I'm having.</p>

	<p><u>Day 97</u> Head of Faculty has once again shown massive support to me chasing Year 11 boys for detention. They are my bottom set I'm worried they are feeling the pressure and may blow their chances of repeating the A and C grades they achieved in the mocks.</p> <p><u>Day 98</u> Year 9's getting more biddable, just taking a bit longer to get down to task; all are attempting the work today. Year 11 parents evening tonight, parents really supportive and keen for pupils to do well in RE how refreshing!</p> <p><u>Day 99</u> Spoke to ISA about Year 9 class I'm about to inherit which I've heard are lively.</p> <p><u>Day 100</u> A colleague has questioned how my faith stance (I'm agnostic and if asked by pupils explain this as it comes up as a GCSE question, I link my reasons to arguments they need to know for the exam e.g. Design/ Suffering etc), affects my ability to teach RE. Quite shocked.</p>
<p>Week 21.</p>	<p><u>Day 101</u> Busy weekend. Day started busy was underpressure to write two lesson plans (for my Wednesday Year 9's), tonight after our department meeting and before my night class. Found out Ofsted are coming on Thursday. At least my observation has been cancelled – the first time ever I haven't written a lesson plan this far in advance! What luck! However, I now have to plan five amazing lessons for Thursday.</p> <p><u>Day 102</u> Worked till the point I couldn't think doing lesson plans. Four of my lessons on Thursday are for non-specialist subjects I teach.</p> <p><u>Day 103</u> Having panic sent my lesson plans to Subject Leaders, just in case.</p> <p><u>Day 104</u> Heavy snow has excited the pupils this afternoon. No sign of inspectors. Management team working really hard.</p> <p><u>Day 105</u> Outstanding across the board - everyone delighted. Found out after work that my lesson plans were good too!</p>
<p>Week 22.</p>	<p><u>Day 106</u> One of my form class is leaving to go to another country, was really amazed that I nearly cried when she told me, felt sad all day about it.</p> <p><u>Day 107</u></p>

	<p>Year 11 set 4 resealed to help focus. Set 2 was very firm with two to move during test over all effort was better.</p> <p><u>Day 108</u> Year 9's really tried hard during test. Requested S.O.S students to come next week, said I'd remind them next lesson for a pilot focus group activity with Diamond 9.</p> <p><u>Day 109</u> Bad migraine all day some of my Year 7's have been really naughty around school this week – really letting the form down.</p> <p><u>Day 110</u> Had fabulous PSHE lesson Year 7's are really witty, some very good drama students in class and four got awarded pens for their reading in assembly. Very proud.</p>
Week 23.	<p><u>Day 111</u> Angry Year 11 boy who is bottom set but got an A in the mock nearly wrecked the end of the lesson this morning, I'm determined to give this class top quality revision as several members are really all out trying my persistence with them is paying off now. Only eight more weeks to go – some of them have realised this is it and they are on the last leg and are really trying.</p> <p><u>Day 112</u> Recorded part of lesson with Year 10's last lesson for my Professional Development Targets – they responded really well to this.</p> <p><u>Day 113</u> Conducted S.O.S focus group at dinner time it went fabulously well – except for the fact that two boys had forgot to write in their planners it was on and they received groundings from other subjects so I had some last minute stress to sort this out! The pupils were very helpful and the atmosphere was great – I would never have thought it would happen a year ago! Can't wait to do the transcription! The Year 9 class have worked well for a few weeks now without extra intervention. They will settle down much quicker now.</p> <p><u>Day 114</u> There was a palpable sense of sadness this morning as my Year 7 left yesterday, the pupils were really sad, to make it worse I accidentally read out her name – I made sure I crossed it out straightaway after apologising to the class.</p> <p><u>Day 115</u> Have offered to use recording from Day 112 for SIAS inspection! Year 7's being silly today several detentions issued, will S.O.S them.</p>
Week	<u>Day 116</u>

24.	<p>Have decided to S.O.S the two groups of Year 7 boys that I teach on alternative Fridays (Period 5), as their behaviour has not been good. The H.O.Y commented that several Year 7's are starting to raise their heads.</p> <p><u>Day 117</u> Work load is horrendous am expecting to have no weekend to myself, plan to start Year 10 marking Thursday night as boss has given staff target of getting it all marked by inspection day next Thursday.</p> <p><u>Day 118</u> Two Year 11's who are underachieving have not turned up for their detention. Year 9's who did the focus group recording on S.O.S on day 113 came in joking about them having to come because they were thick – it was very good natured – I think they were trying not to look swotty as the more I protested that they weren't thick the louder they shouted it – I'm sure it was for the benefit of their peers as they were laughing their socks off and asking to do extra lunchtime study as they were thick!</p> <p><u>Day 119</u> Conducted S.O.S with a boy I've done it with before, Year 7 who is having a lot of trouble in school, he talked more this time, I have him tomorrow, feel quite optimistic.</p> <p><u>Day 120</u> Lesson with Year 7 from yesterday started badly when boy refused to work with him in his new seat, it went from bad to worse and he has detention with me on Monday. Major disappointment. Think will have to persist with S.O.S meetings for this boy many more times – probably more than I've done with anyone else.</p>
Week 25.	<p><u>Day 121</u> Feel like death marked Year 10 exams all weekend ready for an inspection on Thursday. Feel proud I've done it though. Realised that I was actually looking forward to S.O.Sing naughty Year 7 from Day 120. The S.O.S sessions went very positively I've noticed that's twice in two weeks now, having the weekend to cool down has helped the pupils be more honest and realistic about their behaviour and attitude. Tried to perfect my lesson plans for Inspection on Thursday but too tired to concentrate due to extreme weekend marking activities so I gave up – I hope I can do it tomorrow.</p> <p><u>Day 122</u> It was the right thing to do leaving the Lesson Plans last night – had a good nights sleep and finished and checked them with no problems tonight. I wouldn't have had the sense to do that a year ago. I have been pacing myself a lot better over the last couple of months and believe I'm still getting through as much work, but resting first on weekends.</p> <p><u>Day 123</u> Year 9's fab today they are still joking about them being thick meaning that's why they did the S.O.S focus group pilot – even to another teacher I</p>

	<p>observed most of them with later this morning (I am now totally convinced that they are teasing me as they know I don't think they are thick, and they were killing themselves laughing when I protest). I noticed in this lesson (English), they loved the drama the teacher made out of the Shakespeare play they are studying so I hammed up emphasizing they were not thick which they loved – I'm sure it's to avoid getting stick for helping me out with the pilot in their own time, and to laugh out the stigma of having to get a detention for poor behaviour. This morning I just had to take a planner from one of them (without giving a detention), and he stopped misbehaving. This will be great if we can maintain this relationship.</p> <p><u>Day 124 Day 120</u> Day of the inspection. The Inspector did not arrive for the beginning of my lesson wasn't sure whether to wait to show off the pupils with the fab starter, no-one to ask so I began the lesson. During an active task a pupil pushed another. Twice pupils made an over the top fuss when old chewing gum got stuck to a boys pullover – in fact the second time I was tackling a huge string of chewing gum as the Inspector left thanking me I couldn't shake his hand as it was full of tissue and gum!</p> <p><u>Day 125</u> Year 7's who had very disrespectful attitude that I've S.O.S'ed were really good last lesson today. All completed their work without major fall outs, several had not eaten lunch – this will not have helped their concentration. After school a Deputy Head said I had excellent feedback from the inspection yesterday – I think I flew home!</p>
<p>Week 26.</p>	<p><u>Day 126</u> Year 11's last period several now are up to date finally after weeks of detentions to catch up starting to work in lessons.</p> <p><u>Day 127</u> Really good revision lesson with bottom set Year 11's today – some are getting really good at peer assessment, taped one of the silliest members and he was excellently behaved.</p> <p><u>Day 128</u> Raised voice at Year 9 class this afternoon that I S.O.S'ed for focus group – they really listened and looked shamefaced for the first time ever, maybe I've established a relationship enough with them now that they are bothered about pleasing me, or maybe it was just the shock of hearing me with a raised voice!</p> <p><u>Day 129</u> Had terrible migraine and several computer problems in lessons – don't know how I survived! Was really pleased because a Year 11 came with her friend for an after school revision session, I said half an hour would be enough for her brain – but she stayed for nearly an hour. When you see such a complete change in attitude for your subject it makes it all worthwhile.</p>

	<p><u>Day 130</u> Madly trying to get loads of marking done today before we start packing everything next Thursday for the move to the new school building. I haven't caught apprehension yet – I hope I don't as we will have a lot of new facilities. Year 7Q3 S.O.S pupils well behaved last thing today – seems to be working!</p>
Week 27.	<p><u>Day 131</u> Year 11 bottom set worked well in class but – some have not taken their revision guides and books home to revise with! ARRGH! On the other hand – it was the best revision session they've done with me yet.</p> <p><u>Day 132</u> Bottom set Year 7's I S.O.S'ed arrived late and noisy. I went over to each individual and asked them their behaviour target out of 10, some complied then three of them started shouting across the room that they didn't know what I was on about. I momentarily felt defeated I thought I'd have to resort to going through detention sanctions, instead I got the file I recorded their S.O.S meetings in and showed them our conversations the first one said I don't remember this the next pupil said the same the third said sorry miss I'll be a 10 from now on, I turned to the other two and said if you can't remember you'll have to come back and we'll go over it at lunchtime – they instantly remembered and behaved – a thinking on your feet S.O.S success! Some pupils actually <u>asked me</u> for extra RE revision from my set two class today!</p> <p><u>Day 133</u> Final assembly today my Year 7's have been here six months and already have a bond with the old buildings, but are VERY excited about the new school. Lovely words from our Headteacher and four of my form class read prayers they'd written in front of the whole school and dignitaries – what heros!</p> <p><u>Day 134</u> Packed and threw out all day. The place is bare.</p> <p><u>Day 135</u> Everything is packed sat at back of a very hot hall with boisterous Year 11 boys during an RE revision session this morning (a colleague described me as brave for choosing that seat but I could see the need), I practiced RE by stealth (my speciality), so they know their stuff but didn't realise they were doing RE.</p>
Week 28.	<p><u>Day 136</u> Into the new school building beautiful! Unpacking cases all day really enjoyed the physical work. The views of the sea from the staff room balcony are amazing.</p> <p><u>Day 137</u></p>

	<p>Spent all day in the library unpacking books and following the Dewey system – nobody wanted the job, several people said I was very patient but I quite enjoyed the lifting and sorting!</p> <p><u>Day 138</u> Key Stage 4 pupils arrived today, they are very impressed.</p> <p><u>Day 139</u> My form class were over the moon with the building, the hall, their form room it is so nice to see them so appreciative.</p> <p><u>Day 140</u> Year 7's last lesson were well behaved despite being more on top of each other (in a smaller room), than in the last building. When pupils have been slightly naughty over the last two days I've noticed words have been out of my mouth without me having to think about what to say.</p>
Week 29.	<p><u>Day 141</u></p> <p><u>Day 142</u> Last time I may see my set 2 RE class before their GCSE 14 days, seems like a long time.</p> <p><u>Day 143</u> Year 9's worked well in revision for their exam.</p> <p><u>Day 144</u> Told off my new set 2 Thinking Skills class they actually appeared to be listening.</p> <p><u>Day 145</u> Good day. Set 3 Yr 7's good in English, S.O.S pupils really appeared to be trying to behave well. All stopped doing off task things when I asked them to.</p>
Week 30.	<p><u>Day 146</u> Bank hol.</p> <p><u>Day 147</u> Bottom set Yr 11's asked me for an after school revision session tomorrow. Exam in 7 days.</p> <p><u>Day 148</u> Year 9's arrived wound up had to teach them in a different room from last week and they are more packed in together. Nearly lost a class when I was timetabled for the wrong room!</p> <p><u>Day 149</u> Conducted detentions for late arrivals and no homework today, no problems. All Year 7 reports in, just the form tutor ones to sort out now due next Friday. Really heavy couple of weeks.</p>

	<p><u>Day 150</u> Charity day today some of my form class gave me a fright dressed up in fake moustaches and silly glasses! I was volunteered to take part in the staff v's students relay race, massive humiliation. Good day then got a late e-mail instructing me to plan session for Monday morning full year group revision session!</p>
Week 31.	<p><u>Day 151</u> Got notice to plan a revision session Friday pm. Very nervous, spent yesterday planning a whole year group revision activity for Yr 11 who get three different teachers and studying different religions for the RE exam tomorrow pm. Only used half of my material due to late entry into revision hall. Trying to do form class reports too.</p> <p><u>Day 152</u> No-chance to use rest of material as H.O.S used all revision time today. When I spoke to pupils afterwards they said what I did with them was useful – even the pupils I don't teach. Good feedback from observing teachers too. Next year I will survey pupils earlier in case there are more extra revision sessions again.</p> <p><u>Day 153</u> My Yr 9's have their exam tomorrow but expected to teach them today but the timetable issued last minute means they have an exam instead, I hope they will still try.</p> <p><u>Day 154</u> Arrived at school and there were police on the gates. A member of the Senior management team came into registration and read out a note to my form stating the police were there to protect us from the press as an ex-pupil had died the previous night 'tombstoning' into the sea from the cliffs nearby, several of our pupils knew him or our current pupils who were present and tried to rescue him. My form class were really shocked, several said that they felt safer having the police at the gates. When I went upstairs to teach several pupils were upset and crying I got to my first lesson which was to be on Grace Darling's rescue, I quickly changed this. I feel desperately sad for all involved.</p> <p><u>Day 155</u> Pupils still a little subdued today, Year 7's last thing were interesting, the whole class were laughing when I said I was surprised that one youngster obviously wanted to spend a couple of minutes with me at 3.30 rather than go straight home! He later left immediately and another naughty who behaved after I said this chased after two who left without waiting for me to sign their report they came back!</p>
Week 32.	<p><u>Day 156</u> Year 11's moaned when they finished their Maths exam and came to me for 20 mins, period 5 when I gave them paper for revision mind maps or</p>

	<p>Simpsons DVD to discuss vegetarianism! (Part of RE course but they did their GCSE last week).</p> <p><u>Day 157</u> Observed by English teacher as part of her threshold target today, received positive feedback.</p> <p><u>Day 158</u> Long reg. ob. Got excellent feedback. Year 9's bad. Several detentions.</p> <p><u>Day 159</u> Two Year 9's actually turned up for detention unescorted!</p> <p><u>Day 160</u> Got very frustrated with assessment data today, then I realised that it was just because I was so tired decided I would have to take it home for the holidays to do accurately. Three sessions of drama today pupils enjoyed it – I think I did even more. Form class objected to working with some members for the first time ever today, I reminded them of my expectations for them to co-operate and they achieved some excellent role plays in PSHE.</p>
<p>Week 33.</p>	<p><u>Day 161</u> Many Year 7's have been put on report due to receiving poor report comments from their subject teachers.</p> <p><u>Day 162</u> My form class were really excited to start preparing for their form assembly on 'love'.</p> <p><u>Day 163</u> Raised voice to Year 9's today while Head of Faculty was in room. They had an assessment. Two had missed detention with me from last week Head of Faculty helped me 'pin them down'!</p> <p><u>Day 164</u> Have been gossiped about by another member of staff, got terrible migraine feel stunned.</p> <p><u>Day 165</u> Made point of thanking Head of Faculty for all of her help.</p>
<p>Week 34.</p>	<p><u>Day 166</u> Year 11's have left me a thank you card which is very nice.</p> <p><u>Day 167</u> Actually got Year 9 reports finished a day before the deadline – a miracle!</p> <p><u>Day 168</u> Year 9's this afternoon better after their detentions last week.</p>

	<p><u>Day 169</u> Videoing Form class for assembly is becoming more stressful than I anticipated as one member in particular is getting far too excited – will have to edit carefully!</p> <p><u>Day 170</u> Really good lesson with Year 7's last lesson who appeared to be looking forward to writing a newspaper article Monday period 1!</p>
Week 35.	<p><u>Day 171</u> One of my form class punched another pupil five minutes after being warned any misbehaviour this week would result in not being allowed on the school trip on Friday.</p> <p><u>Day 172</u> Spent ages planning an ICT lesson for tomorrow for my Year 9s.</p> <p><u>Day 173</u> Year 9 pupil threw someone else's key out of the ICT room window when I was trying to dash away for my panel interview – it was a good lesson up to 5 minutes afterwards when a secretary informed me of this! Passed panel.</p> <p><u>Day 174</u> Have marked like mad this week – just have Year 7 RE left to do for this academic year – much further ahead than last year.</p> <p><u>Day 175</u> Pupils watched as a few teachers and myself went on a ride that turned us upside down and suspended us. Several pupils said to me afterwards they didn't think I'd go on a ride like that – I agree I should have had more sense! I was ill on the bus on the way back after racing up the full length of the bus to bring to the front a sick pupil – the human body – the great leveller!</p>
Week 36.	<p><u>Day 176</u> Teachers who helped me when I was ill on Friday asked me if I was feeling better – was very touched by their concern. Presentation to Faculty went very well for my Professional Management Targets – got some good feedback feel boosted.</p> <p><u>Day 177</u> Wasted a whole hour trying to edit low quality tape for assembly on Monday, can't get camera to re-book, can't believe I started filming three weeks ago and still need to do last minute re-filming – how is this possible? ARRGH! Excellent last lesson Yr 10 suggested a tweak to my lesson and it worked much better!</p> <p><u>Day 178</u> Really hot again today, pupils really trying hard though.</p>

	<p><u>Day 179</u> Last of filming completed, managed to postpone assembly so I could eat today!</p> <p><u>Day 180</u> Teacher Training day feel very motivated by Top Tips! Feel in awe of all my colleagues!</p>
Week 37.	<p><u>Day 181</u> Finally got assembly video edited for Monday.</p> <p><u>Day 182</u> Class I had to leave half way through ICT activity to go to dentist worked really well.</p> <p><u>Day 183</u> Year 9's still responding to my 'sharper tone'.</p> <p><u>Day 184</u> Enterprise Day had Zulu visitors amazing day.</p> <p><u>Day 185</u> Official New School Building Opening Day, pupils hyper.</p>
Week 38.	<p><u>Day 186</u> Spent non-contact editing – note to self –filming is fun, but takes ages to edit!</p> <p><u>Day 187</u> Heard my Year 10's screaming as they got soaked coming in from P.E but were really chilled when they came in the lesson – we watched the DVD they made.</p> <p><u>Day 188</u> Swine flu scare – pupils very worried.</p> <p><u>Day 189</u> Last assessments marked for the year!</p> <p><u>Day 190</u> Given 2 ICT covers – second class actually cheered when they got me! Feel like I've finally arrived!</p>
Week 39.	<p><u>Day 191</u> Got new timetable with loads of room changes as we haven't enough teaching rooms. Similar to this year.</p> <p><u>Day 192</u> Got a new timetable with an offer of the use of a room away from my faculty</p>

– which I accepted thinking I would be ok with being away from the immediate support of my very helpful Head of Faculty.

Day 193

My Head of Faculty has overruled some of my classes being away from her as there are some worrying mixtures in the Year 10 classes I've got next year apparently. S.O.S has given me a lot of confidence, but I trust her opinion. I discussed with her how I thought the Year 7 and Year 8 students were easier as regards to behaviour management and how I suspected that that was because I'd been here for most of the time that they had, she agreed, she said if you've been here before them it gives them the edge.

Day 194

Received observation feedback from Tuesday's ob. It's amazing what different standards/ideas staff have just within one school.

Day 195

New timetabling room changes seem fewer for next year thank goodness! Let's hope this is the final version!

Have made it to the end of my first full year teaching from the beginning of September, I have met my usual work target and took no days off sick!

One of my mentors warned me that teaching is like a rollercoaster you have days when everything is amazing and you are on a high, and other days when everything feels like it's bad and you have to pick yourself up for the sake of the pupils and keep going no matter what – she was so right and I'm so grateful she shared this with me.

My form class were lovely and gave me thank you cards; I will miss them over the holidays.

I think one of the main changes in my philosophy of behaviour management is that over the year, from being terrified and expecting to deal with misbehaving pupils I now expect them to behave and now I am aware of myself automatically sometimes saying things to misbehaving pupils as part of a new teacher 'persona' I have developed that makes them stop misbehaving.

Learning Journal Year 2 (2009/10).

Week 1.	Had a really good week. Looked back to learning journal this time last year I was a nervous wreck, I feel really confident now. Think it's because I have taught most of what I am teaching this year at least once now. Only new GCSE syllabus is concerning me that I can make it attractive enough to the new Year 10's.
Week 2.	Year 7's are still being very quiet my H.O.L believes every other year we get a group of disruptive individuals, these are by and large very good so far. The Year 10's seem to be my noisiest groups – but they are working.
Week 3.	Had several Year 10's on detention this week. They are new to me and seem to be testing the boundaries, caught one who'd disappeared without waiting for his detention and caught him in the corridor – he shouted at me and I felt horrible afterwards. He came to me suitably humble the next day I S.O.S'ed him. It seemed to break the ice after a confrontation like that.
Week 4.	Can't believe it's week 4 already. Have hit ground running this term am on top of marking and own classes and have been helping supply sort cover lessons out for absentee. Year 10 boys I S.O.S'ed last week were much more responsive this week. Year 10 Charity day Senior Management did a group Karaoke pupils were in uproar very funny.
Week 5.	Kept all bar 4 students back to finish work from lesson on Thursday they all stayed without complaint! They just accepted it. Bottom set Year 10 struggling with basic key terms, they have their exam in May – what a nightmare! Good week until Wednesday afternoon when ended up with 5 Year 9's on detention from one lesson after lunch, had to send one to call out planned a really active lesson and feel drained. Boss still absent. Next boss up has said big thank you for my help in planning so feel better!!!
Week 6.	Got the bulk of my assessments done this term – nice feeling. Noisy Bottom Set Yr 9 class were totally silent and got 2 B's, C's and 2 D's at GCSE level. Am on top of the world. Yr 10's have REALLY tried too. Had very interesting speech on Thursday and excellent INSET day feel totally inspired!
Week 7.	S.O.S ed a Year 9 pupil who has deliberately missed two detentions with me he was very reasonable. A Year 10 I'd S.O.S'ed earlier this term voluntarily came to detention and quietly got on with the homework he'd not done.
Week 8.	Very hard week had three classes this week were I've had to raise my voice and reprimand the whole class. The Year 8's were ticked off at the end of my Form class assembly (the assembly was brilliant); the HOY said that there was about 10% of the Year group causing trouble. I just happened to hear some of my colleagues talking in the staff room at the end of school tonight – they are all experienced teachers who I look up to they were

	<p>commenting on how rude the Year 8's are – mainly they are talking over the teachers. One science teacher who has taught for about 9 years said she would normally have them in check by this half term but believes she hasn't because of the timetabling – she only teaches them twice a fortnight, she said therefore it is hard to get them for detentions, because if they don't turn up it's so long before you teach them again it goes on. I said well we only get them twice a fortnight in RE, I'm used to that! She replied – yes we shouldn't be complaining really. Another Science teacher said that even some of the nice pupils in my form class (who have an excellent reputation), are starting to be drawn into this culture of talking over the teacher, I was mortified and am going to speak to them on Monday. I did notice they were good compared to the other class we were paired up with in PSHE (we had a speaker on the topic of relationships), today, however, I was aware that I checked the pupils more and quicker than their teacher.</p>
Week 9.	<p>Had Year 9 girl for detention today for behaviour and lack of homework – she said she enjoyed my lessons – in front of her friends!</p> <p>Have had very considerate pupils this week, have had a heavy cold and virtually no voice and the students have been lovely. A Year 11 class fell about laughing (in a good humoured way) when I put the classroom microphone on, a Year 7 class begged me to put it on – they seemed to find it entertaining!</p>
Week 10.	<p>Everyone is really stressed at work, it's the week before the Year 11 mocks, I'll get the mocks to mark next Thurs night so that's at least two weeks of pressure. The pupils are showing it too. I can remember it was the same last year.</p> <p>The help I got last year to chase pupils who missed detentions has gone, very difficult week. The only way I can see to tackle the issue of my difficult Year 10 class is to pick them up one by one on my non-contact periods before lunch, it'll take weeks but I'm determined to do it to get good discipline.</p>
Week 11.	<p>This has been a very hard week. Yr 11 mocks. Yr 10 behaviour advice had meant more paperwork. Several members of staff have been very supportive. One of my bosses observed me two lessons in a row – I had requested this with two difficult classes. She said I was not issuing detentions quickly enough for the behaviour that was shown and had to get on top of them now as their first GCSE is in May. So the next lesson I was quicker to give detentions. This Yr 10 behaviour advice had meant more paperwork as I was filling some of it out at lunchtime the teacher came and apologised to me and said perhaps she'd been too quick to judge, and that her style was that she liked them sitting in their seats and was more experienced and stricter, she said she admired me for getting them out of their seats and doing active tasks, and I'd obviously established a good relationships with them in a difficult context and subject to teach and one pupil had said to her 'What's the matter with Miss Henderson this morning?'</p>

	I think I'm having a behaviour management meltdown.
Week 12.	Mock and English marking, everyone is very tired and stressed as we have two weeks to get the Yr 11 reports done too. Yr 10 Friday afternoon class listened to each other for the first time today, praised them – three main characters absent. Have learned how to use the student programme so I can track students (focusing on Year 10's this week), and pick them up for detentions in the three lessons I have non-contact before break times. I feel this is going to have impact.
Week 13.	The Year 10's I collected and S.O.Sed from lessons last week have behaved much better in the lesson this week. However, the class I thought were settling down were poorly behaved this week. AAAARGH. Had a very interesting interview with Thesis interviewee, she said as you get older you learn how to handle more difficult children and she has 'tweaked' the S.O.S approach (asks them about family, I think I might try it).
Week 14.	
Week 15.	Many schools in area closed due to snow, we've been open all week, pupils are complaining about this, but are getting on with it. Tranquil atmosphere in school although adults are tense about the icy journeys.
Week 16.	Yr 10 class assessment had to call in HOF they arrived excited about their 'Sex' lesson in P.S.H.E. beforehand.
Week 17.	Had to give evidence leading to a possible exclusion today, horrible feeling not even a typically naughty pupil.
Week 18.	Experienced a very angry mum who came over to me without an appointment and started a personal attack, I went into my old 'shop manager/customer services' mode and listened to her, gave her the full picture of her son who sheepishly came over and tried to get her away twice. It will be interesting to see how he will be next time I teach him! We had a wonderful teacher training day when Professor Mitra from Newcastle University told us about his research placing computers in remote/less affluent areas for children to teach themselves computer literacy and English in order to give them better life chances, I was totally in awe, it was such a simple idea I wondered why no-one else had done it. It gave you faith back in human nature, it was funny to see some of my colleagues reaction as a threat to their careers, but I have seen pupils totally disengaged in lessons then get good grades in their GCSE they only way they can be doing this is revising with their friends and because it's actually got the point when they are ready to want to learn for themselves. I think there is room in the world for everything.
Week 19.	Head of Faculty forgot to come and support me at break again as requested keeping back difficult Yr 10's who I suspected would not have done their homework – despite warnings, they were horribly behaved in the lesson, then all stayed back for detention like mice. Bizarre.

	<p>One boy told his parent detention was the best part of the day as other pupils were being horrible.</p> <p>Everyone is very tired as we had our Yr 11 parents evening this week and are snowed under with reports.</p>
Week 20.	<p>Had a very difficult Faculty meeting led by the Head where she instructed several members of staff to change their style of teaching following interviews with Year 8 pupils. The atmosphere was very tense in the department for the rest of the week. I got praised.</p>
Week 21.	<p>Felt shattered from a heavy head cold over half term then on Tuesday gave a presentation of my SOS department which went down well and totally revived me! Got excellent comments from the department which actually linked back to reasons why I took on SOS, the HOS has asked me to adapt my first SOS sheet for the department. The next day the HOF said the HOS had been to see her and had been very enthusiastic about my research and she has asked me to do another presentation for her. Brilliant.</p>
Week 22.	<p>Boss is off having I was having a really hard time enduring interruptions to my lessons. Then on Wednesday night I thought why be stressed I absolutely don't mind helping the people who've got the cover, my pupils are bearing with me while I have to pop out or pause the lesson now they have settled into a routine with me I can trust them to stay on task for a couple of minutes. I realised I was being too anal as I like everything to be organised. Today I asked the HOF in to observe me with a difficult Yr 10 class. I am SOSing them one by one due to them talking over each other. She was very encouraging and said they were a difficult class and were working just probably slower than I expected them too. Maybe I've been wrong to compare them to my other classes in my head.</p>
Week 23.	<p>Kept a Year 9 pupil in a cover lesson for the first time today major achievement, used ISA and told him I'd taught his brothers who were fab so I expected him to be fab and he was! Tons of Yr 10 papers to mark this weekend (4 classes worth). Hooray!</p>
Week 24.	<p>Have done 12 hours of marking for my four Yr 10 GCSE RE classes and still have to record marks. It is going to be a big challenge to prepare them for the exam in a couple of months. The governing body is wanting voluntary redundancies due to overstaffing in our department.</p>
Week 25.	<p>My difficult classes that I have taken over while my boss is off sick are getting easier to manage, however, my usual classes who've had cover teachers whilst I've taken on more GCSE are getting worse. It's all swings and roundabouts aaargh!! (I remember my mentor saying that teaching is a rollercoaster and to expect it to be like this is the best advice ever)!</p>
Week 26.	<p>Found out Monday morning my Head of Subject has taken early retirement with immediate effect and I have taken her post, the news was a shock and I am exhausted just keeping things going with yet another supply teacher this week. My Head Teacher was very complimentary about my work but I know I have a huge job</p>

	ahead of me as the new GCSE syllabus needs a year and a half of lesson planning/writing. I am sure I can do it – the non-subject specialists are worried though about teaching it so I need straight forward lessons which I think is my style.
Week 27.	My head was spinning by Monday lunchtime trying to sort out all the lessons for all the different teachers now teaching RE. One Senior teacher has four revision lessons to deliver for the Year 11's she was really nervous because she hasn't taught it before, I said not to worry as I know she has the skills if not the knowledge and I remembered being in the same situation during teaching practice during my PGCE, so could understand her, and know it is possible. On Friday a part-time supply teacher arrived; who seems to be really thorough and hard working thank goodness! Have five new teachers for RE, but they are good teachers and am sure everything will be fine! Went to the school 'Music and Movement' show and was amazed at the teamwork, talent and hard work of the pupils in dance and music presentations – wonderful night.
Week 28.	Got home last weekend and found out that my dog had just died. Couldn't face marking or wasn't sure I'd be clearheaded enough to do it fairly so more pressure on me to work evenings this week to get the work back to the pupils – I try to give them their marks back by their next lesson, this helps as it is still in their heads and with the amount of classes an RE teacher gets it stops a backlog from building up. Was really shaky at the start of the week every time I told a someone about the dog I cried, one teacher was especially supportive and I didn't tell anyone else after that as I didn't want the pupils to see me crying, however, when I got to thinking why – its only human to cry that seemed to make it easier. Head of Department role going well and Ed. D work going well, which is brilliant and helping to take some of the sadness away.
Week 29.	Energy sagging this week after a really busy weekend. Met with new Assistant Head Teacher this morning whose role is to support me in my new role, excellent first meeting. Conservatives have won more seats than Labour many of the teachers are looking worried as this will mean more educational changes we have an Ofsted next week on our subject specialism.
Week 30.	Everyone's tired after another report deadline has been met; working weekends has been the only way to meet the deadline. Ofsted and job interviews this week have only added to the stress levels going up! Pupils are tired of revising it is their GCSE's this week.
Week 31.	Am absolutely wrecked have been doing lunchtime revision sessions for two weeks solid with Yr 10's and Yr 11's – exam is over now. My Yr 11's were very calm in lessons after the exam and brought revision and got on with the maths revision I gave them – best year group yet for this! Yr 10's were hyper after their exam but most of them seem to be pleased that they were doing the full GSCE when I told them that they were going to be the

	first year group in the school to do it.
Week 32.	Another teacher took one of my form class outside during registration this morning and shouted at the pupil loudly and for so long it made me feel sick, the teacher then came inside the room and told me why, I think she expected me to shout at the pupil but I calmly went over and expressed my disappointment in her – I don't understand why the pupil did what she did and need to find out why, but I won't find out today the pupil has clamed up.
Week 33.	Have been given a major task to work on for the RE syllabus - Year 11's finish today so that's my new spare time sorted! Went into a difficult class at the end of the day and spoke to two naughty boys on behalf of the supply teacher – they looked stunned but wanted to back the supply teacher up, but he has not given them detention and he's leaving in a week, hard to get the balance right.
Week 34.	Had panel this week – was really useful for consolidating my thoughts such as realisation I don't use S.O.S every detention now – I usually use it as a work catch up, and now have entire weeks without any detentions. Interviewer made me think more about motivations of S.O.S course designer – which was interesting.
Week 35.	Went on trip to Centre for Life which was too young for Year 8's they were really bored, saw programme on TV how the recession has made many US children homeless felt guilty, our school has announced its application to become an academy in order to get more money, world money situation is quite worrying.
Week 36.	Am very excited to be up to writing up stage with my thesis. Have had some very difficult Yr 10 behaviour issues this week. Some have barely written anything in an assessment have booked them for detention next week – will use SOS.
Week 37.	Have had many Year 10's back for lunchtime detentions to do an assessment they did not attempt in the lesson properly, they've had a really good attitude – without SOS – have got one who refused to come in room will SOS him when catch him! Have forgotten how management involves mopping up other peoples mistakes!
Week 38.	Year 7's are really getting very excitable and some are been very silly – previously they have been known to be a very well behaved Year group. My form received to awards out of three in the annual awards ceremony. Very tiring week have lost 6 hours moping up someone else's mistake. Woke up last night at 5am couldn't get back to sleep different encounters with pupils kept playing over in my head. None of us can wait until the end of term.
Week 39.	Have had to work late every night this week and still have loads to do over holidays. Non-specialist staff have been very positive about teaching RE in the meetings this week – I am so impressed by their thoroughness. Have been totally touched by pupil's kindness on their end of term gifts to me.

Appendix K, 'Diamond 9 transcript'.

Who	Line	Talk
T	1 5 10	Right so thank you very much for coming along erm what it is for, its for Newcastle University for something I'm writing about, about how students think about having marks, about having the grids (points to them), that we had in our meetings, its called S.O.S which means em 'Schools Oriented Schools Programme' which basically means it gets the pupils to em set your own behaviour targets, and I know you've all done very well since we've had our little meetings and you seem to be trying a lot better in lessons. What I've got for you to do today is look at some statements about the work that I did with you and to put them into a 'Diamond 9' – do you know what a 'Diamond 9' is?
P8	13	No
T	14 15	You've probably done it in Thinking Skills (a lesson all KS3 pupils receive once a week), so there's, there's several statements and what I'd like you to try and do as a group is to try and put the statements in order, so you know how a diamonds got a point at the top of it...
	19	M hum (agreeing)
T	20 25	So its to put the statements that are the most important ones at the top, and then the ones that are less important... near the bottom, now what'll happen, the reason why we are taping it is just to get you discussing why you think these statements should be at the top, why you think other statements aren't as important and I'm going to write up what you say and your names will not be known to anyone, you know it's a secret between all of us here Ok? Has anybody got any questions? (eye contact made with all of group

	30	members each shakes head indicating no). OK, so if you want to pick one up – you're probably nearest, and read one out and pick whether it should be near the top or further down near the bottom
P9	32	Door bangs 'Whatsup' (pupil arrives late) Is it recording?
T	33 35	Hi P9 do you want to nip round here its probably easier to see what's going on round here – we are doing a 'Diamond 9' so its based on the S.O.S statements, you know the meetings that we had where you gave yourself a target out of 10 for behaviour
P9	37	Yeah
T	38 40	So have a look at these statements and I would like you to discuss as a group which of these would you would like to go to the top
P9	41	Are these our statements?
T	42 45	These are statements I've made based on comments that you've said, that different people have said to me when, when we've had our little meeting, when you've said your mark out of 10, so things like you don't like the other teachers shouting at you when you get wrong and that you like to have the chance to say to me...
P9	48	I liked that one
T	49 50	OK (surprised), so why do you like that one - being able to tell Miss Henderson what you good at?
P9	51	Because you took like, like, like you weren't just suspecting that I was bad in one lesson, you were like asking us about other lessons, and about how I was in them, like what skills I can do and what games I'm good at and stuff.
T	55	Oh that's a good reason yeah so (clarifying his sense), I wasn't just automatically thinking that you were bad all the time...

P9	57	Yeah
T	58	Oh cool thank you that's good – does anybody agree with that then? Do you all think that is important that then...
most	60	Yeah
T	61	That I saw you outside of the situation
P9	62	I was talking to Miss (another teacher in this school), last lesson about how your theory and she said 'Yeah I believe that as well'
T	65	Oh that's good
P9	66	so she backs you up on it
T	67	Oh that's useful to hear that another teacher in this school has said the same thing, thank you that's really useful P9. So I know when I first came to this school last year, I was a supply teacher, and probably a lot of you thought that I wasn't going to be - here for very long and I think that's probably why a lot of stuff happened.
	70	
P9	73	Yeah that's supply teachers as well like a lot of pupils sometimes like take advantage and that
T	75	Yes definitely,
P9	76	And break your rules and stuff
T	77	But now I'm here to stay (dramatic voice) you can't get rid of me!
	79	Everyone laughs
T	80	So do you all agree that that one should be quite near the top?
all	81	yeah
T	82	So if we make this our diamond here (putting A4 sheet down in middle of table) we'll get something (inaudible)
P10	84	Yeah get another question
T	85	So we'll pretend this is a Diamond...
P9	86	We'll just put it on its side and it's a diamond!
T	87	(Laughs) yeah there we are! So that's quite near the top. Right who's got

		another statement?
P8	89	Erm that one
T	90	Er what have you got? Miss Henderson is pleased when I reach my target, is that important to you (to group)?
P11	92	yeah
P10	93	yeah
P9	94	yeah
T	95	Do you would you have that near the top In the middle...
P11	96	I would say near the top...
P9	97	(interrupting) when a teacher is pleased for you, you like, sometimes feel pleased about yourself like you've achieved something
T	100	Yeah? (surprised)
P9	101	Yeah (confirming)
T	102	Oh that's good (sounding pleased), that's good to know. (Conscious that P9 has said a lot of his views and other pupils are indicating they want a turn to speak). What have you got P10?
P10	105	Miss Henderson isn't cross if I don't get 10/10 straightaway...
P9	106	You are right 'cos on one of the things I said, I said quite a low mark out of ten and then you were like and you just like and you told us like, how I could like (correcting self), and like we discussed together how we could be better about it.
T	110	Yeah
P12	111	I've got 'I am pleased when I reached my target' which is like the same as that one (pointing to 'Miss Henderson is pleased when I reach my target'), apart from the, instead of the 'Miss Henderson'
T	114 115	Yeah so do you think its equal or more (emphasis) important for you? How you (emphasis)...
P10	116	Equal

P12	117	Equal
P9	118	Equal
T	119 120	Ok? (Looking at other members who are nodding in agreement). Thank you.
P11	121	I've got 'Miss Henderson listens when I tell her what I'm good at'
T	123	So did you, did you like that chance?
P11	124	(nods)
T	125	Why did you think that was important?
P11	126	'cos... (looks stumped)
P12	127	Some teachers just, just treat ...
P11	128	... don't listen, don't listen but like you – you do
P10	129	Just don't take in what you are telling them and that...
T	130	Right so you think that the teacher is not listening?
P9	131	They only see the bad things in you, and not the good things.
P8	132	Yeah
T	133 135	Thank you that's important (confirming) P12 (who got interrupted), could you say a little bit more, could you explain a little bit more what you were saying?
P12	136	That teachers just like, some teachers just like treat you as a class and not as an individual person
T	138 140	Ah that's important as well because you are quite a big class as well – did you want to add anything to that P11 'cos that was your – is it important for people, for me to see, to see you outside of RE ? (I have been supporting members of his class in English lessons)
P11	143	Ah yeah
T	144 145	That's made a difference (he nods), good. Right P8 you've got one there

P8	146	Erm 'I can use my target to help me behave in other lessons'
T	147	So have, have you used that to er help you, have you thought about what we've done in RE?
P8	149	Yeah (nods)
P9	150	I've been I thought like, I thought like Humanity teachers are in touch with each other like if I'm bad in one lesson it will go to Miss _____(Head of Faculty), 'cos they all find out about it.
T	153 155	Yeah that's true, so what about you P13? Would that make a difference to you as well, other teachers em you being able to use your target in other lesssons
P13	156	Yeah
T	157	Yeah?
P13	158	Well like (inaudible)
P10	159 160	What's that for? (Pointing to the slip of paper with a question mark).
T	161	Well the question mark one was for you if you thought of something else really good about S.O.S
P10	163	I don't think that matters because its what you think (meaning teacher)
T	165	So what have you got there? 'I can tell other people when I have met my targets' so you think that's important?
P10	167	No
T	168	You think that is not as important? So...
P10	169 170	Because they don't need to know what goes on in your life and you ... what happens
T	171	So P10 what were you, who were those other people you were thinking of that you wouldn't
P10	173	Your friends in the class
P9	174	I'd be quite happy to tell my mam

P9	175	Yes
T	176	Right? (looks at rest of group).
P11	177	Yeah your parents and that
P9	178	Like your social friends and like....
T	179	Oh that's interesting!
P9	180	...it's had nothing to do with them.
T	181	Do you know, that, that's just struck me then that it must have been really important then, I hadn't really thought about it very much that I came over to you quietly and said 'oh you said you were going to be an 8/10 today' 'you said you were going to be a 9/10 today', 'you said you were going to be a 9.5/10' so it was obviously very important that I did that in a discreet way and I didn't sort of stand at the front of the class and go 'Right today you are going to be a 10/10' (mock shouting), (I had seen a teacher do this in my previous school), (pupils all nodding), so you all think that's important then?
	185	
	190	
P8	191	Yes it makes you get embarrassed
T	192	Oh thank you that's really (stressed), that's something I hadn't thought of that's really useful
P8	194	No bother Miss!
P9	195	Like so many teachers think like, like you are going to be bad one minute and you except you are going to be the best you possibly can
T	198	Yeah
P9	199	Like slowly build it up until you are back to normal again
T	200	Right thank you, that's good P13 would you agree with that, that it's important that not everyone knows in the class, your friends in the class
P13	203	Yeah
T	204	And you were in a different class last year and so would have been the same

	205	for that class there do you think?
P13	206	Yeah
T	207	Right thank you (so pointing to slip) 'I can tell other people' do you think it's ...
P9	209	Quite low
T	210	Do you think its fairly low not like the end of the world if ...
P9	211	Er I wouldn't mind if anyone knew about it, discussing it but... I wouldn't really ...
T	213	You'd prefer not to?
P10	214 215	I wouldn't mind but I wouldn't like, like discuss it I wouldn't like go around telling everyone...
P9	216	Oh like you wouldn't tell me? (another pupil questions)
P10	217	Oh aye if another pupil asked me I would tell them but I wouldn't bring it up in conversation
T	219 220	Yeah right thank you very much, right what other ones have we got?
P8	221	Em 'Miss Henderson reminds me what my target is'
T	222	Was, was that helpful me coming over at the beginning of the lesson after the meetings that we had
P8	224	yeah
P10	225	yeah
T	226	Yeah just to remind you that, 'cos obviously when I teach you RE once a week you can forget stuff, and I appreciate that from one week to the next I think it must be really hard for you ...(several raised eyebrows in group)!
P8	230	Yeah
T	231	...you know to try and remember what happened the week before it would do my head in to try and remember it! (Pupils laugh). Thank you. Right P11 what have you got?

P11	234	'I can set my own target'
T	235	What was important about that - did you think P11?
P10	236	I don't think that's important...
P9	237	Yeah you can like freely think of your own target
P11	238 240	It is, because if you have teachers like ...giving you ... like you (emphasis) can improve on the targets, you've (emphasis), like thought of
P10	241	Yeah but its not as important as the teachers watch you in the lesson and they know what you are good and what you are bad at ...
P11	244	You should know yourself
P10	245	I know but they watch you
P11	246	But if you set your own target then you can improve on the target that you (emphasis) thought of
P8	248	Put it in the middle
P12	249 250	But it's more personal so you'll want to keep it more, I'm not saying the teacher ones that you get set isn't the thing,
T	251	Yeah
P12	252	But if you set it yourself its more personal
T	253	Yeah it's an individual achievement, so are you saying P10 that you like the back up of the teachers' opinion?
P10	255	Yeah
P9	256	'cos when you get the teachers opinion you get what the teacher thinks you are not good at and which well...
P10	258	But you could say a target and then to your teacher and then er make an agreement more er, I dunno...
P12	260	Change it slightly
P10	261	Yeah change it slightly
T	262	Thank you. Right you are ... so can I have a show of hands how many people

	265	think that they like the teacher to set the targets (one, two, three, four – P9 puts hand up after has looked around appears to want to follow friends)
P9	266	I don't really I just like the teacher agreeing with what I say.
T	267	(laughs) – it's nice to have an opportunity to say something different. Right so have we got any other statements?
P12	269	Just the question mark.
T	270	Right anyone else think anything else was important about the that that – to have our detention that way to have you set your own targets
P10	273	Yeah
T	274	What else?
P10	275	'cos normally in detention teachers go 'oh get your work out – do this'
T	277	Yeah
P10	278	And like, like you sat us down and said what did you do bad, and what can you improve on
P9	280	You made us think about it
T	281	Yeah so that important?...
P9	282	Yeah 'cos in normally detentions teachers just get you down and get some work for us
T	284 285	Right and it's been of value to you to express your opinion? (group nods), does anyone else have any comments on that about this or what we've done today? (silence)
T	287	Well thank you very much for coming today, I really appreciate you giving up your lunch break for this so thank you very much

Appendix L Pupil target record sheet.

Name: _____

RE and Philosophy Key Assessment Target Record Sheet.



End of Year target level/ Grade:	
Yr 7	
Yr 8	
Yr 9	
Yr 10	
Yr 11	

Date:	Assessment Title:	Target:	Level/Grade: