

# Nurture Groups and Self-Esteem:

A study exploring the role and effectiveness of Nurture Groups in addressing children's and older students' self-esteem

By Judith Kirtley Dodd

Submitted as part of the Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology qualification,  
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## **Abstract**

This study considers the effectiveness and role of Nurture Groups in addressing children's and older students' self-esteem. It is suggested that self-esteem is nebulous in the field, calling for a re-conceptualisation. In light of existing models of self-esteem, the Nurture Group literature is systematically reviewed to ascertain Nurture Groups' effectiveness in promoting academic self-esteem specifically. Following the application of criteria, eleven quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method studies are analysed. Findings suggest that there is limited rigorous research and an emphasis on younger children. There is little evidence that Nurture Groups lead to increased academic competency and modest evidence of increased academic engagement. Children's reflection on learning cannot be gauged. It is argued that more varied, rigorous research is required and greater clarity needed among Nurture Group staff with regards to group goals and their role in bringing these about. In light of this, Nurture Group staff perspectives on the goals and practice within a Key Stage 3 Nurture Group are explored. Self-esteem is again examined and a multi-dimensional model of the development of self-esteem proposed. Nurture Group staff views are mapped onto this model. Findings highlight that staff view self-esteem as both inherent and as developing through experience, with an emphasis upon the latter. Findings suggest that staff predominantly view their role as impacting on students' self-appraisal, incorporating the specific areas of: personal behaviour management; inter-personal skills; and academic engagement. The study highlights that staff within this Nurture Group address self-esteem within these domains in several capacities, to differing extents. Suggested implications for staff are: the requirement to adhere to a multi-dimensional model of self-esteem; the need to promote students' academic self-esteem in particular; as well as to work closely with students' social contexts. Findings have implications for training and practice and are therefore pertinent for pastoral managers and decision-makers.

## **Acknowledgements**

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# **A Systematic Review - The Effectiveness of Nurture Groups in Developing Children's Academic Self-Esteem**

## **Abstract:**

### **Introduction: -**

Boxall (2002) established Nurture Groups (NGs) to support vulnerable children in schools. It is considered that NGs are effective in raising children's self-esteem (DfEE, 1997). However, this current review found that self-esteem was nebulous in the literature, calling for a re-conceptualisation. In light of this re-conceptualisation, the literature was reviewed to ascertain NGs' effectiveness in promoting academic self-esteem.

### **Methodology: -**

The review was systematic, following a process outlined by Pettigrew and Roberts (2006). Eleven studies were selected for in-depth analysis. These studies were qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method.

### **Results: -**

Findings highlighted that there is a dearth of rigorous research in the field. The review found limited evidence to suggest NGs led to increased academic competency. Although there was some evidence to suggest increased academic engagement, this was limited to the intervention period. It could not be ascertained whether NGs promoted reflection on learning.

### **Conclusions: -**

It is suggested that more rigorous research is required, with a greater diversity of children, in order to inform policy-makers and educationalists alike. It is argued that there is a need for clarity among NG staff with regards to the objectives of NGs and the role of NG staff in addressing these, in order to ensure effectiveness. It is suggested findings have direct implications for staff training.



## **1.1 Introduction:**

The government has highlighted that Nurture Groups (NGs) constitute effective intervention for children demonstrating emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) (DfEE, 1997). However, there has been little rigorous research into NG effectiveness (Evan, Harden & Thomas, 2004). One area in which NGs are considered to be effective is in raising children's self-esteem (Colwell & O' Connor, 2003; DfEE, 1997). In reviewing literature, it became clear that self-esteem, though alluded to, was ill-defined (Bailey, 2007). This necessitated the development of an alternative conceptualisation, drawing upon cognitive models of self-esteem (Ferkany, 2008). The focus of this review became the effectiveness of NGs in addressing children's academic self-esteem.

### **1.1.1 Nurture Groups**

The first NGs were established by Boxall, an Educational Psychologist, in the 1970s (Bennathan, 1997). Boxall (2002) defined these as an: 'in-school resource for primary school children whose emotional, social, behavioural and formal learning needs cannot be met in the mainstream class' (p. 1). The classic model includes Key Stage 1 pupils in a withdrawn group of 10 – 12 pupils. A connection with mainstream classrooms is upheld and there is on-going access to the curriculum. NG attendance is for at least three terms before re-integration. Children's PSED is monitored through the Boxall Profile (BP), a normative, observational instrument consisting of themed scales (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007).

Cooper and Whitebread (2007) have identified national variations to the above model which differ in terms of organisation and which include Key Stage 2 children. They label these NGs as Variant 2 groups. They have also highlighted the existence of Variant 3 NGs, describing such groups as being based on nurturing principles but lacking an academic focus. These NGs are identified as generally including older students.

### **1.1.2 Nurture Groups and Self-Esteem**

It is claimed that in carrying out re-nurture, NGs impact on children's self-esteem (Colwell & O' Connor, 2003; Izatt & Wasilewska, 1997). Deriving from Bowlby's (1969) work on attachment, it is thought that early attachment relationships, in determining how we perceive others' intentions, influence how we esteem ourselves (Bennathan, 1997; Cassidy, 2001). NGs are designed to instil in children a positive view of themselves through nurture, creating a platform for learning (Bennathan & Boxall, 1996). However, notions that self-esteem can be boosted through re-nurture, and the mechanisms assumed, may be problematic (Bailey, 2007). Boxall (2002) has described NGs as therapeutic, however, psychotherapeutic attempts to enhance self-esteem have been judged simplistic and of questionable value in education (Bailey, 2007; Cigman, 2004; Clegg, Bradley & Smith, 2006; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009).

### **1.1.3 Self-Esteem and Self-Concept**

Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976), writing from the cognitive psychological tradition, suggest that self-esteem is self-appraisal. Mruk (2006) considers affect to be involved, while Marsh (2006) emphasises cognition. O'Mara, Marsh, Craven and Debus (2006) have highlighted that historically academics consider self-esteem as incorporating an *evaluatory* component, with self-concept reflecting the *descriptive*. However, Shavelson *et al.* (1976) suggest that self-concept statements may involve both. Therefore, alternative cognitive and affective conceptualisations of self-esteem may subsume notions of self-concept. Accordingly, for the purposes of this review, I will consider these terms synonymous.

### **1.1.4 A Linear Versus a Reciprocal Conceptualisation of Self-Esteem**

The NG perception is that self-appraisal is informed by an inherent construct. From this perspective, re-nurture impacts self-appraisal which impacts learning (Bennathan, 1997). I argue that this linear model narrows the focus of NGs to re-nurture. An alternative view is that on-going experience interacts with affect and self-appraisal in a reciprocal way. Shavelson *et al.* (1976) suggest self-appraisals are dynamically formed through experience. Unlike the NG

perception, the notion is that self-esteem is emergent. Cigman (2004) has suggested that this notion 'is the only kind that should matter in education' (p.101). Arguably, this necessitates a reconsideration of the goals of NGs. In regarding learning experiences as a crucible, the requirement that NGs offer these experiences is emphasised. Marsh (2006) has suggested that there may be a reciprocal effect between competency and academic self-concept. Arguably, a focus of NGs should therefore be to both encourage academic competency and reflection.

### ***1.1.5 Global Versus Domain Specific Self-Esteem***

The NG focus on re-nurture implies a fostering of global self-appraisal. Marsh (2006) suggests that self-appraisal is in fact multi-dimensional, with judgements made within domains. Studies have suggested that children's academic outcomes are related to academic self-judgements that dissociate from global measures (Marsh, 2006). I argue that as the goal of education is to facilitate children's academic learning, academic self-esteem is highly relevant within this field. In ascertaining the impact of NGs, a focus on academic self-esteem is therefore timely, in order to gauge effectiveness.

### ***1.1.6 The Focus of this Review***

This review considered NGs effectiveness in addressing children's academic self-esteem. Drawing upon the above notions, academic self-esteem was defined as one's self-concept within the academic context, as influenced by perceived abilities, demonstrable through interaction with the environment. In light of this definition, I suggest the following model outlines a role for NGs:

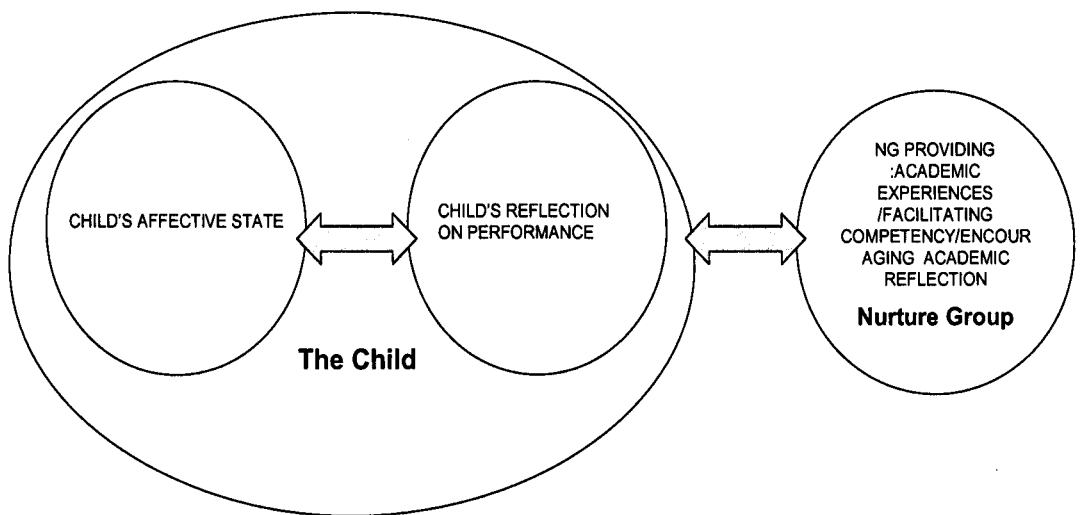


Figure 1.1: Nurture Groups' promotion of children's academic self-esteem

In order to determine the effectiveness of NGs in addressing children's academic self-esteem, the literature was reviewed and the following questions posed:

- Do NGs promote academic competency?
- Do NGs impact on children's on-going engagement with learning?
- Do NGs support children to reflect on their academic performance?

## 1.2 Method:

This review was systematic, following steps outlined by Pettigrew and Roberts (2006):

1. Clearly define the review question in consultation with anticipated users
2. Determine the types of studies needed to answer the question
3. Carry out a comprehensive literature search to locate these studies
4. Screen the studies found using inclusion criteria to identify studies for in-depth review
5. Describe the included studies to 'map' the field, and critically appraise them for quality and relevance
6. Synthesise studies' findings
7. Communicate outcomes of the review

Table 1.1: Table outlining Pettigrew & Roberts (2006) phases of the systematic review process

### 1.2.1 Searching for Studies

Database searches were carried out between August 2009 - September 2009. Search terms are set out below:

Target Population Terms: (Child* or Adolescen* or Vulnerable Child* or EBD Child* or Teenage* or First School or Primary School or Secondary School or High School)
Outcome Terms: (Self-esteem or Self-concept or Social and Emotional Development or Social and Emotional Wellbeing or Resilienc* or Child* Efficac* or Emotional Literacy or Emotional Intelligence or attainment or academic outcome*)
Intervention Terms: (Nurture Group* or Transition* Group* or Withdrawal Group* or PSE group* or PSHE group* Intervention or Intervention Group* or Remedial Group*Kangaroo Group* Pull-Out Group*)

Table 1.2: Terms used in electronic database searches

Terms were generated through the use of on-line thesauri, however several were emergent (Cooper, 1982). The following databases were searched: Zetoc, British Education Index, ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, Web of Knowledge, Ingenta, Cochrane Library, CSA Illumina, PsychInfo, COPAC, Jstor, Worldcat, www.thesesanddissertations.com. Hand searches were made of: *British Journal of Special Education, Child and Educational Psychology, Educational Psychology, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, Journal of Early Adolescence, Support for Learning and Educational Psychology in Practice.*

Citation and hand searches of *Educational and Child Psychology* were also carried out. Figure 2 highlights the sources of the initial studies:

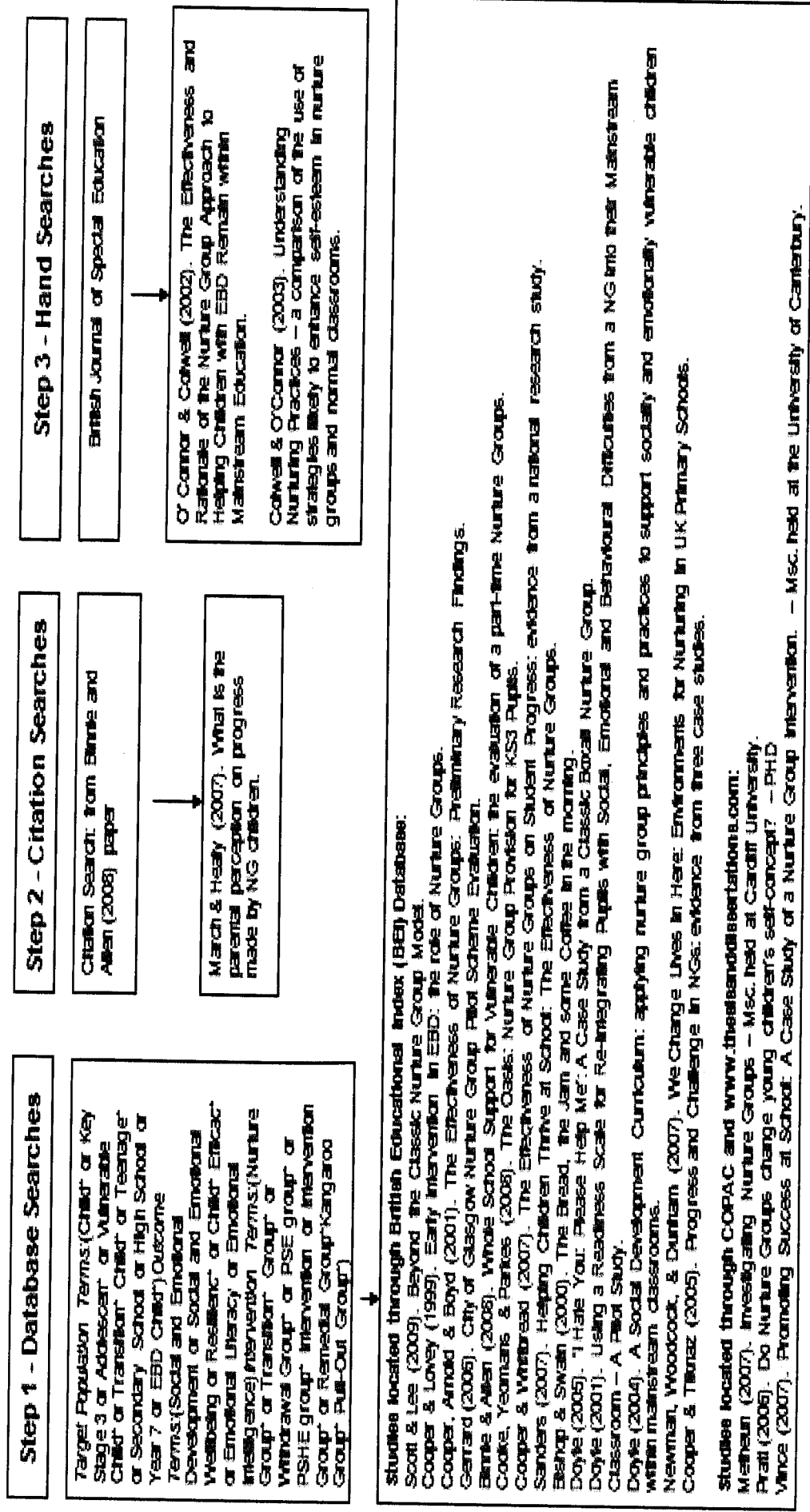


Figure 1.2: Initial twenty studies located

### **1.2.2 Inclusion Criteria**

In order for the above studies to be included the following criteria was applied:

- PARTICIPANTS: Between 5 – 16 years
- SETTINGS: Educational settings within the United Kingdom
- INTERVENTION: Studies focusing on NGs
- STUDY DESIGN: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method
- TIME, PLACE AND LANGUAGE: Studies were reported in English and completed within the last ten years.

### **1.2.3 Unobtainable Materials**

Searches included unpublished materials in order to eliminate bias (Slavin, 2009). However, the Pratt (2006) paper had not been digitised for inclusion on the ETHOS database. The Pratt (2006), Metheun (2007) and March and Healy (2007) papers were unobtainable through inter-library loan.

Figure 3 shows the seventeen studies remaining:

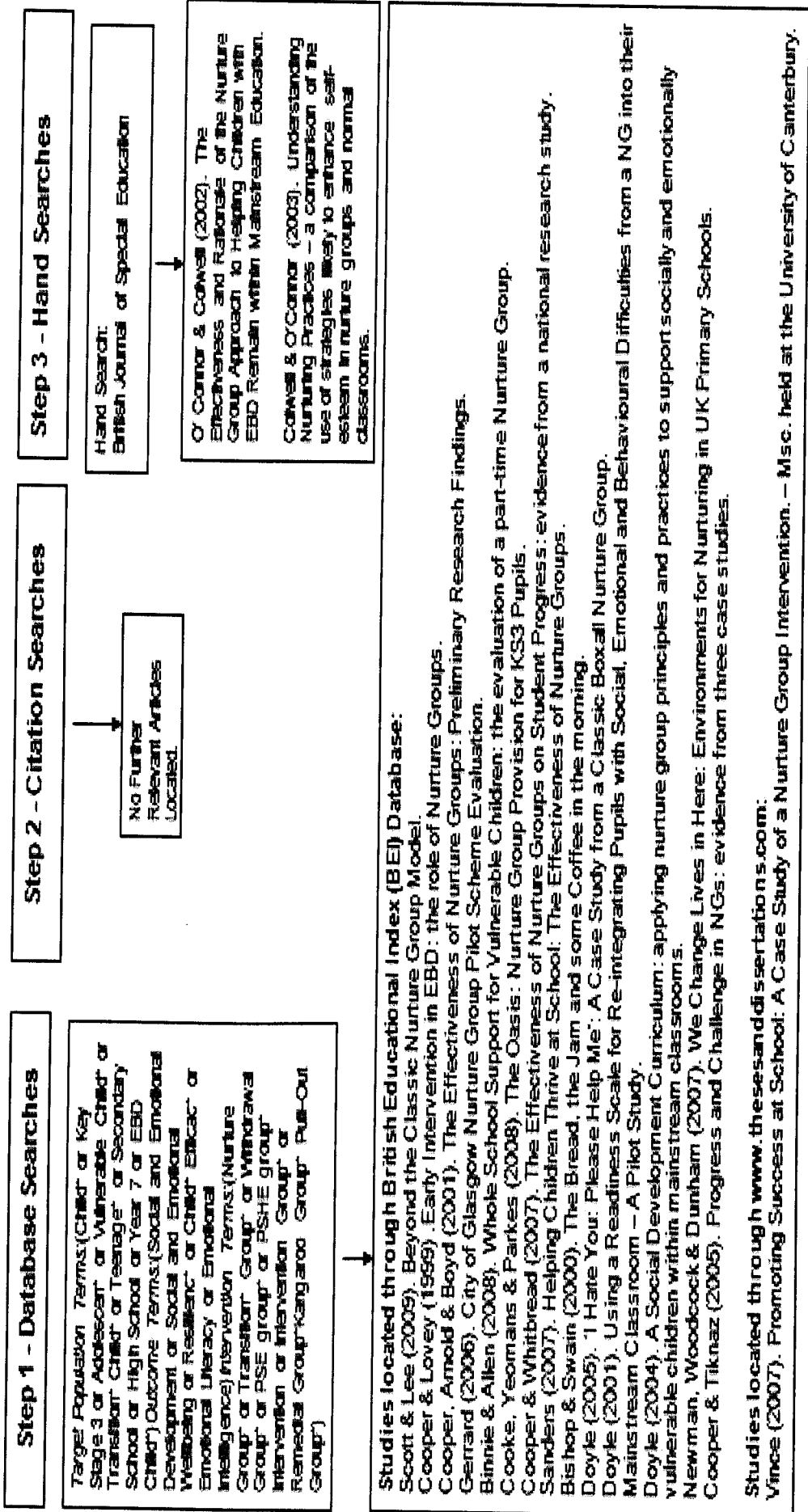


Figure 1.3: Studies following the removal of unobtainable papers



#### **1.2.4 Inclusion Criteria for Studies Selected for In-depth Analysis**

Additional criteria were then applied:

- INTERVENTION: Conformed to NG principles as set out by Boxall (2002) or reflecting Cooper and Whitebread's (2007) Variant 2 model. One study, focusing on Cooper and Whitebread's (2007) Variant 3 model, was included as the group adhered to criteria outlined by the Nurture Group Network
- STUDY FOCUS: Studies which predominantly focused on the impact of NGs were included.

Figure 4 highlights the sources of the eleven studies selected for in-depth analysis:

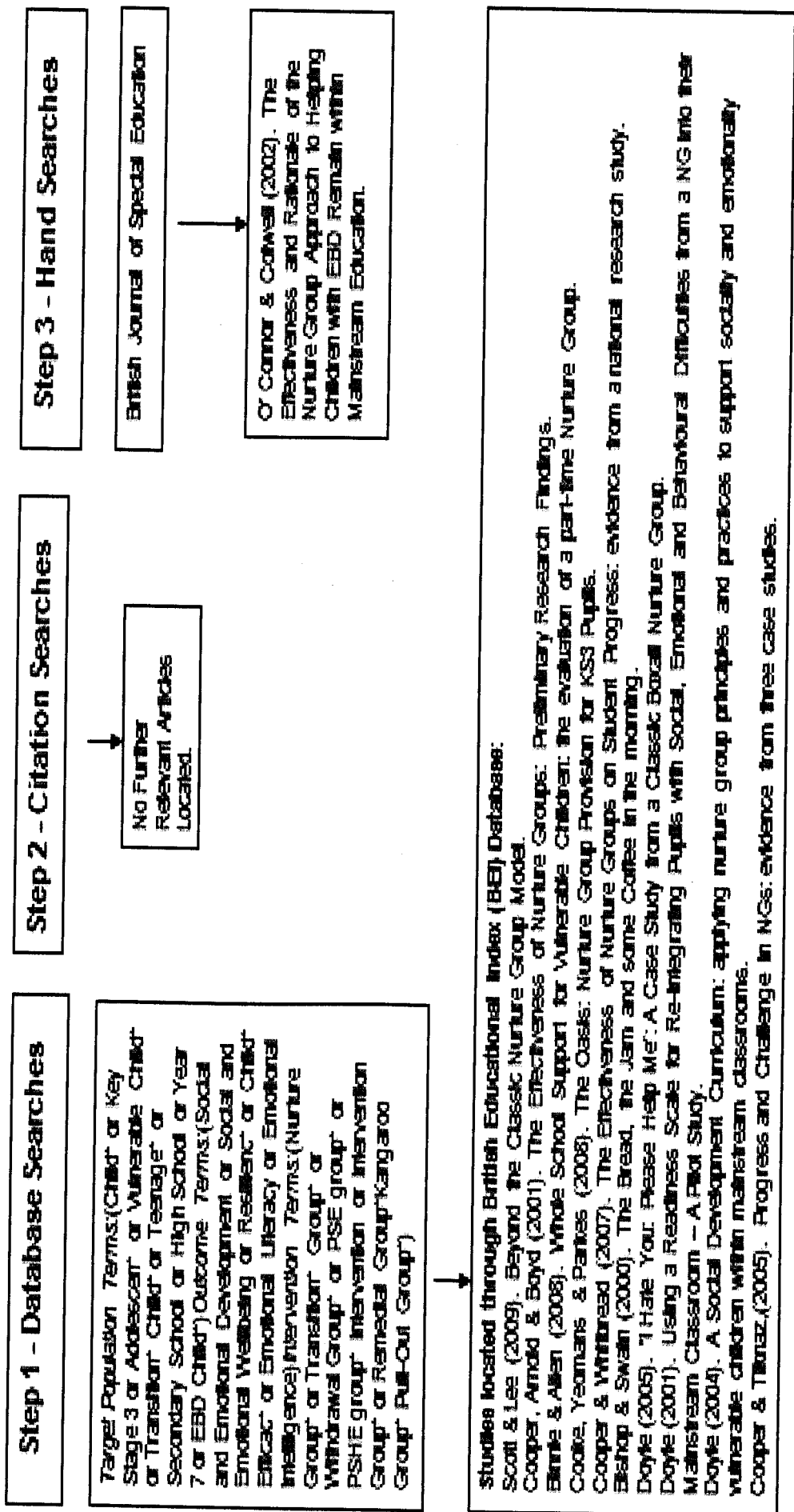


Figure 1.4: Studies included for in-depth analysis

### **1.2.5 Application of Further Inclusion Criteria**

In light of the above inclusion criteria, the following were discounted:

- Gerrard (2006) and Sanders (2007): Specific characteristics of NG interventions could not be ascertained
- Cooper and Lovey (1999): Not within the time-frame
- Colwell and O' Connor (2003): Did not focus on effectiveness
- Newman, Woodcock and Dunham (2007): Focused on physical characteristics of NGs only
- Vince (2007): Focused on applicability of NGs to the New Zealand context
- Qualitative data from the Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) study was included as quantitative data was reported by Cooper and Whitbread (2007).

### **1.2.6 Tabulation of Included Studies**

Each study was tabulated including information about the following (Appendix A):

- PARTICIPANTS: Age and number
- CONTEXT: Setting and location
- INTERVENTION: Details and duration
- AIM: Research aim
- METHODOLOGY/STUDY DESIGN
- FOLLOW UP measures
- RESULTS
- EFFECT SIZES (ES).

Where ES were included these were reported. Where ES were not reported in repeated measures studies, Cohen's  $d$  was calculated in accordance with Becker's standardised mean change (Morris, 2000). In repeated measures studies reporting t-tests, Cohen's  $d$  was labelled unobtainable (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002). It is notable that out of the six studies reporting quantitative data, four did not give sufficient information to calculate ES. Cohen's  $d$  was used over other ES measurements due to its popularity, allowing for comparison

(Thalheimer & Cook, 2002). ES of 0.2 and below were considered small, 0.8 and over were considered large and ESs between were considered medium (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002).

### **1.2.7 Assessing Weight of Evidence**

Each study was evaluated in terms of quality and relevance. Initial assessment was carried out using Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) (2004; 2006a; 2006b) materials. These invite consideration of studies through application of design-specific questions. Studies were then analysed using the EPPI-Centre Weight of Evidence (WoE) tool which applied the following criteria:

- Soundness of studies
- Appropriateness of the research design and analysis for answering the review question
- Relevance of the focus to the review question
- An overall weighting.

### **1.2.8 Synthesis of Data**

The review was comprehensive in incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data (Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Jones, Young & Sutton, 2005). Thematic analysis was carried out to identify themes through the identification of codes, which were clustered into broader categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Willig, 2008). The identification of themes was carried out by two independent researchers and data was compared, though not discussed. The review is integrative in combining and summarising existing data (Dixon-Woods *et al*, 2005).

### 1.3 Results:

#### 1.3.1 General Characteristics of the Eleven Included Studies

Six of the articles featured part-time groups, while seven featured classic groups:

Study	Nature of NG
Scott & Lee (2009)	Part-Time NG
O' Connor & Colwell (2002)	Classic Model
Cooper, Arnold & Boyd (2001)	17 Classic Model, 1 Full-Time NG, 2 NGs in secondary schools, 5 Part-Time NGs
Binnie & Allen (2008)	Part-Time NG
Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes (2008)	Part-Time NG in secondary setting
Cooper & Whitebread (2007)	Established NGs: 21 Classic Model, 1 NG secondary setting Part-Time, 1 Part-Time, Newly Established NGs: 6 Classic Model (upper primary), 2 Part-Time NGs
Bishop & Swain (2000)	Part-Time NG
Doyle (2005)	Classic Model
Doyle (2001)	Classic Model
Doyle (2004)	Classic Model
Cooper & Tiknaz (2005)	Classic Model

Table 1.3: Characteristics of Nurture Groups

Ten of the included studies focused on primary-aged children, with only Cooper *et al* (2001), Cooke, Yeomans and Parkes (2008) and Cooper and Whitebread (2007) featuring Key Stage 3 (KS 3) pupils. KS 3 pupils made up only 2% of participants in the latter. Four articles focused predominantly upon NGs in areas of low socio-economic status. In articles which included qualitative data, the following table highlights the contributors of this data:

Study	Contributors
Scott & Lee (2009)	Mainstream Teachers, Anecdotal information from the researcher
Cooper, Arnold & Boyd (2001)	Parents, Children
Binnie & Allen (2008)	Mainstream Teachers, Parents, Head Teacher
Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes (2008)	Anecdotal information from the researcher
Bishop & Swain (2000)	Mainstream Teachers, Parents, Governors, Children, Anecdotal information from the researcher, Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, SENCo Link Co-ordinator, Nurture Group Teachers
Doyle (2005)	Anecdotal information from the researcher
Doyle (2001)	Anecdotal information from the researcher
Doyle (2004)	Anecdotal information from the researcher
Cooper & Tiknaz (2005)	Mainstream Teachers, Nurture Group Teachers, Children

Table 1.4: Contributors of qualitative data within included articles

Parents and children contributed to three articles, while researchers provided data within six. Mainstream teachers provided data in four, with NG teachers contributing to two. The table highlights that the NG field is relatively small, featuring key researchers, with Cooper and Doyle both contributing to three studies.

Overall there was a concentration on PSED, which accords with the view that NGs focus on emotional growth (Doyle, 2004). With regards to studies reporting quantitative data, instruments employed were: the Boxall Profile (Bennathan & Boxall, 1998); the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (GSDQ) (Goodman, 1997); and the Behavioral (sic.) Indicators of Self-Esteem Scale (BIOS) (Burnett, 1998). The former two measure progress in the area of PSED. While the latter gauges measures of global self-esteem, it has been suggested this has limited utility within specific areas (Marsh, 2006). Similarly, qualitative data revealed that the primary focus was upon children's PSED.

### 1.3.2 Weight of Evidence

WoE judgements were made of all eleven studies included in the in-depth analysis. These are summarised below:

Study	A (Trustworthy in terms of own question)	B (Appropriate design and analysis)	C (Relevance of focus)	D (Overall weight)
Scott & Lee (2009)	Low	Low/Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
O' Connor & Colwell (2002)	Low	Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
Cooper, Arnold & Boyd (2001)	Low/Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
Binnie & Allen (2008)	Low	Low/Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes (2008)	Low	Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
Cooper & Whitebread (2007)	Medium	Low	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
Bishop & Swain (2000)	Low	Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
Doyle (2005)	Low	Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
Doyle (2001)	Low	High	Low/Medium	Medium
Doyle (2004)	Low	Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium
Cooper & Tiknaz (2005)	Low/Medium	Medium	Low/Medium	Low/Medium

Table 1.5: EPPI Weight of Evidence Tool judgements

Generally the articles had low trustworthiness. Scott and Lee (2009), O' Connor and Colwell (2002), Binnie and Allen (2008), Cooke *et al* (2008) and Doyle (2005), which all reported quantitative data, had low sample sizes. Cooper *et al* (2001) and Cooper and Whitebread (2007) had relatively large sample sizes, which contributed to their higher rating. For studies which reported quantitative data, case-control studies were preferred to ensure confounding variables were minimised (Robson, 2002). Scott and Lee (2009) and Cooper and Whitebread (2007) used this design. However, the former had a low number of participants and controls who were not comparable, resulting in a low trustworthiness rating. Cooper and Whitebread (2007) also used a relatively low number of controls, who were poorly matched. However, the treatment population was large

(N=359). The presence of confounding variables was marked in Binnie and Allen (2008), as it featured a NG support network. In studies where qualitative data was reported, there was generally a lack of methodological transparency. Both quantitative and qualitative data tended to be collected from, and by, practitioners involved in NGs, or employed by schools. This may have resulted in bias (Robson, 2002). Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) gathered views from practitioners across a local authority which contributed to its higher trustworthiness rating. Allocation to NGs was determined by staff, which may have resulted in bias towards including children with disruptive behaviours due to staff seeking respite.

With regards to appropriateness of study design and analysis, studies were scored on pertinent criteria relating to the review questions:

Study	Attainment Information	Academic Engagement Information	Self-Appraisal/Mediation Information	Follow-Up Information
Scott & Lee (2009)	Yes	Yes	No	No
O' Connor & Colwell (2002)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cooper & Boyd (2001)	Yes	Yes	No	No
Binnie & Allen (2008)	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes (2008)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cooper & Whitebread (2007)	No	Yes	No	No
Bishop & Swain (2000)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Doyle (2005)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Doyle (2001)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Doyle (2004)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cooper & Tiknaz (2005)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Table 1.6: Study relevance to review question



Positive responses were then allocated qualitative labels: 1 = Low, 2 = Low/Medium, 3 = Medium and 4 = High.

With regards to relevance, the majority of studies focused broadly on PSED, rather than on self-esteem specifically. However, article ratings were determined by the presence of relevant characteristics.

### ***1.3.3 Developing academic competency***

Studies predominantly focused upon children's progress in PSED. Scott and Lee (2009) alone reported quantitative data on academic progress, while Cooper *et al* (2001) and Binnie and Allen (2008) reported staff and parental views on academic progress. Similarly, qualitative data focused primarily upon PSED, academic information was included to a lesser extent and was largely anecdotal.

Cooper *et al* (2001) reported interim findings, after one year. Authors reported that 20% of mainstream teachers (N= 79) thought that children had made 'a lot of progress' in English and Maths, while 60% thought 'some progress' had been made; and 15% reported 'no change'. Authors also reported 60% of parents (N=89) perceived their child's academic progress as 'better', 16% thought there was 'no change' and 3% thought it worse. Interestingly, qualitative data suggested that dissatisfaction shown by parents was due to a lack of progress in children's academic performance. It is notable that authors highlighted that these findings should be interpreted in light of a lack of comparative data. It may also be noted that children were allocated to the NG partly due to a lack of academic progress.

Binnie and Allen (2008), similarly reported staff and parental perceptions regarding children's academic progress, however these were gathered from a more limited sample (Parental N=11; Staff N=21). They reported that 91% of parents gave positive responses, while 67% of teachers gave positive responses. This contrast is notable despite the small sample size and low trustworthy rating of the study.

Doyle (2001) outlined the use of the author's own tool, the *Reintegration Readiness Scale*, in ascertaining progress. This predominantly focused on PSED, of the 78 items included, only 3 focused on attainment. The author anecdotally highlighted that use of the tool determined that progress had been made by two pupils. Anecdotal information was given regarding a child who had, after three terms back in mainstream, achieved greater success in SATs than 'predictions...would have indicated' (p. 130). In Doyle (2005) the same researcher reported anecdotally that a child who had experienced the NG provision was now meeting age expectations. In Cooke *et al* (2008) a child who was the subject of a case-study was reported to have made 3 years 7 months progress in a reading test and achieved appropriately in writing, though time-frames were not specified.

With regards to Scott and Lee (2009), mainstream staff anecdotally reported that they thought children were making academic progress. In this study, children's progress in the areas of literacy and numeracy was measured across a year. The former measured by the test of *Phonological Awareness and Early Reading Skills* (West Dunbartonshire Council, 2006) and the latter by *The Simon Strategy* (1989). The study reported there were no significant improvements in children's literacy and numeracy skills compared to controls. Despite this, authors concluded that children's academic progress was not compromised.

This perception contrasts with qualitative data in Binnie and Allen (2008) which suggests that although staff thought NGs supported academic skills, they also perceived that academic opportunity loss may have occurred. Like this study, Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) reported that mainstream staff thought that children faced opportunity loss through being in a smaller group. Further, in Binnie and Allen (2008), a limited number of staff (N=3) mentioned that providing a balanced curriculum was challenging.

In Bishop and Swain (2000) mainstream staff reported that a contributory factor toward ensuring academic progress was that an academic link was upheld between NGs and mainstream. Staff (N=8) stated, in Binnie and Allen (2008), that securing liaison time was difficult. In Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) a lack of opportunity for liaison was again cited by mainstream staff as a potential challenge to supporting children's academic progress.

In Scott and Lee (2009) staff cited the fact NG children were cared for in the NG as a reason for academic progress. Similarly, in Doyle (2005), the author suggested academic progress was predominantly due to a focusing on emotional needs in NGs. Bishop and Swain (2000) suggested that the nurturing approach of the NG contrasted with the transmission of learning approach of mainstream. In Cooper and Tiknaz (2005), NG staff suggested addressing emotional needs impacted on progress; however effective target setting was also alluded to.

In Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) it is suggested that the individualised curriculum offered in NGs facilitated academic progress. In similar vein, parents in Bishop and Swain (2000) suggested that tailored provision in the NG affected their children's progress. The Deputy Head Teacher also mentioned that a holistic approach facilitated progress. Binnie and Allen (2008) reported that in terms of academic opportunities a small number of staff (N=8) thought that NGs provided a structured focus for each child and a smaller number (N=2) mentioned that NGs provided increased curriculum access. In Binnie and Allen (2008) the Head Teacher reported that children made academic gains in the NG and cited the reason as flexible provision. Mainstream teachers also suggested an awareness of individual children's difficulties aided progression. Qualitative data in Bishop and Swain (2000) revealed that NG children felt excluded within the mainstream setting, perceiving work as difficult.

#### ***1.3.4 Demonstrating on-going engagement with learning***

Quantitative instruments did not target engagement with learning specifically. However, the BP developmental strands A – E focusing on organisation of

experience, and strand Q of the diagnostic profile, were deemed to reflect engagement (Mackay, Reynolds & Kearney, 2010). The BIOS and GSDQ were not reported in detail, making it impossible to determine links with engagement.

Scott and Lee (2009), O' Connor and Colwell (2002), Binnie and Allen (2008), Cooke *et al* (2008), Cooper and Whitebread (2007) and Doyle (2005) reported BP data, however enough information was given to calculate ES in only O'Connor and Colwell (2002) and Cooper and Whitebread (2007). In the latter study an umbrella ES was reported for each sub-section. This allowed for a calculation of ES in the area of organisation of experience; however it prevented the computation of an ES for strand Q specifically. The study, which did not include follow-up measures, reported medium ESs between terms 1 – 2 and 2 - 4. A large ES was reported between terms 1 -4. The ESs, together with the number of participants, suggests a positive effect occurred (see Scatter-plot – Appendix B: A. no.59; B. no. 64; C. no. 69). However, this must be considered in light of the studies medium trustworthiness rating.

O' Connor and Colwell (2002) allowed for the calculation of ES with regards each sub-strand. The study took BP measures at NG entry (T1) and exit (T2) (minimum attendance – three school terms) and at follow up (T3) (mean length – 2.67 years). The following table reports those sub-strands deemed reflective of engagement:

BP Sub-Strands	ES T1 – T2	ES T1 – T3	ES T2 – T3
A. Gives Purposeful Attention	1.64	1.15	-0.45
B. Participates Constructively	2.07	1.98	0.05
C. Connects Up Experiences	1.55	1.26	-0.72
D. Shows Insightful Involvement	1.40	2.28	0.39
E. Engages Cognitively with Peers	1.17	1.74	-0.04
Q. Disengaged (reversed ES to reflect engagement)	1.51	0.6	-0.3

Table 1.7: Effect Sizes in O' Connor and Colwell (2002)

Between entry and exit, large ESs were reported, which when considered alongside participant numbers appear significant (Appendix B no.s 1-5, 11). Similarly, between entry and follow up large ES were reported for items A to E, while Q was medium. Despite the participant numbers being low at follow up (N=12), the size of the ES for items A – E still suggested a positive effect. However it is uncertain whether strand Q resulted in a positive effect (see Appendix B no.s 21-25, 30). Between exit and follow up, strands B and D alone showed positive ES, with the former showing a small effect and the latter, medium. The other strands showed a negative effect, A and E showing medium effects, while E and Q showed small. Due to the number of participants and the ES, it was uncertain whether there was any change between exit and follow-up (see Appendix B no.s 40-44, 49). Apparent effects in this study must be viewed in light of the study's low trustworthiness rating.

As Binnie and Allen (2008) reported sub-strands as clusters, it was impossible to gauge ES for strand Q specifically. However, significant change in the area of organisation of experience was reported across the eight month intervention ( $p=0.0001$ ). This must be viewed in light of the low number of participants and confounding variables resulting in the study's low trustworthiness rating. An unspecified amount of parents reported that their children's attendance in the NG had led to increased enjoyment. Interestingly, of the 28 staff comments, 6 focused on mainstream re-integration difficulties. Staff also reported that children had increased independence and were motivated to attend school, but this was not related to academic work specifically

Cooke *et al* (2008) and Doyle (2005) reported raw BP scores collected after an academic year in the NG. With regard the former scores, all sub-strands in the area of organisation of experience reached the normal range after intervention, however strand Q did not. This must be considered in light of the author's failure to report participant numbers and the low trustworthiness rating. Doyle (2005) reported the scores of one child who improved across all organisation of experience sub-strands and sub-strand Q. However, the child failed to reach the

normal range in the cognitive engagement sub-strand. Using a case-study the researcher also highlighted that the child's academic pride increased. Again, results must be viewed in light of their being from one participant and the low trustworthiness rating. With regards to the former study, a focus child is reported as displaying increased motivation and engagement. This is generic however, a single allusion to increased *academic* engagement being her newfound motivation in lessons. A contributory factor offered was children's imitation of adults.

Scott and Lee (2009) reported scores on the developmental and diagnostic sub-strands as *p* values. It is notable that not enough information was given to calculate ES. It was impossible to ascertain whether the NG impacted engagement with learning as a result. However, anecdotal information gathered from mainstream teachers suggested that they thought NG children could work independently and took pride in their work. Again, there was a perception that this is due to care in the NG. They also described children as happier. What is implicit in anecdotal reports of children transitioning successfully back into mainstream is their engagement in classroom activities.

In Binnie and Allen (2008), 59% of responses in a staff questionnaire (N=17), following an eight month NG intervention, reported improved independent working by NG children. Also, 65% reported greater classroom inclusion.

Doyle (2001), Doyle (2004) and Doyle (2005) used the author's own *Reintegration Readiness Scale*. Items within the 'Self-Awareness and Confidence' and 'Skills for Learning' scales were deemed to reflect engagement. Although the author reported that children made progress across the scale, no scores are reported. Interestingly, in Doyle (2001) the researcher highlighted that the NG resulted in a child having poor skills for learning as measured in the mainstream classroom, reflecting his lack of engagement in independent academic tasks. However, within the NG the study reported that the child showed increased motivation to join in with literacy and numeracy and

was successfully reintegrated. The researcher cited that this was due to a focus on nurture and a transitional plan.

Cooper *et al* (2001) reported that an unspecified amount of parents thought that the NG had increased their children's motivation and improved their attitude towards school. Their engagement with academic tasks specifically is not alluded to. Interestingly, in the same article children cited: quality of interpersonal relationships with staff; opportunities provided for chosen activities; calmness; nature of activities; predictability of routine and physical features as positive aspects of the NG. In Bishop and Swain (2000) a governor anecdotally reported that a previously disruptive child was now doing well at secondary school. Although on-going academic engagement was not alluded to, it is implicit in this statement.

In Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) it is highlighted that one member of NG staff, out of three, perceived academic engagement as a focus in the NG. The other members of staff focused on pupils' needs in the areas of: self-esteem; confidence; and behaviour. Mainstream teachers commented most frequently on the progress pupils made with regards participation in the classroom. However, there was also a sense that children generally had difficulty sustaining progress in mainstream. This lack of engagement with academic activities in mainstream was reported by NG children as being due to: an emphasis on direct teaching; difficult work; large classrooms; and a lack of support.

### ***1.3.5 Making accurate appraisals of performance***

None of the articles focused on children's academic appraisal, however item D in the BP, shows insightful engagement, was judged by me to be related. Only O' Connor and Colwell (2002), Cooke *et al* (2008) and Doyle (2005) reported results for item D specifically. O' Connor and Colwell (2002) alone allowed computation of ES with regards to item D. As outlined earlier, large ESs of 1.40 and 2.28 are reported from entry to exit of NG (T1 – T2) and entry to follow-up (T1 – T3) respectively (Appendix B no. 4, 24). These suggest a positive change across time in this area. However, this must be judged in light of the study's low

trustworthiness rating. The ES reported for change between exit and follow-up (T2 – T3) was medium at 0.39 (Appendix B no. 43). Due to the size of the ES and the limited number of participants it is uncertain whether any positive change took place. With regards Cooke *et al* (2008), scores for item D reached the normal range following intervention. In Doyle (2005), scores for item D rose 6 points to reach the normal range following intervention.

None of the articles focused upon specific interactions taking place in NGs. Therefore it was impossible to ascertain whether academic self-appraisal was taking place or encouraged. However, Cooke *et al* (2008), Doyle (2001), Doyle (2004) and Doyle (2005) included case-studies reporting anecdotal information which was deemed indirectly related. The major emphasis in case-studies was how children's behaviour and social skills improved and were supported. Of these articles, Doyle (2001) and Doyle (2004) contained information relevant to this area. In Doyle (2001) the researcher reported that a child had requested more time to continue a task in the NG. Interestingly, it is also reported that this engagement does not transfer to mainstream. It is stated that a child also showed a willingness to improve academic levels in the NG. Doyle (2004) alluded to NG staff supporting a child to review classroom behaviour.

Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) reported that NG staff considered their role as co-constructing meaning in order to support educational engagement. However, the study also highlighted that across the NG staff interviewed, perceptions differed. Children in this study reported that NG staff helped them. This perception of themselves as supported contrasts with their experiences of mainstream. Similarly, in Bishop and Swain (2000) children described themselves as helped in NGs. It is suggested that such interaction contrasts with the transmission of knowledge approach adopted in mainstream. However, although NG staff were described as helpful in both of these articles, the nature of interactions is unclear.



## **1.4 Conclusion and Recommendations:**

### ***1.4.1 Limitations of the Review***

This review has several limitations. Primarily, the lack of unpublished research can be regarded as leading to publication bias (Pettigrew & Roberts, 2006). Arguably, this bias towards including only published papers emphasised significant results (Cole, 2008).

Another drawback is the lack of multiple coders, both with regards tabulating studies and determining WoE judgements. Although I have sought to be both transparent and systematic, the inevitable subjectivity of coding judgements is acknowledged. With regards to thematic coding, although an attempt was made to compare coding from dual researchers, the lack of discussion informing this process is a drawback.

As highlighted throughout, the broad focus taken by researchers has made it difficult to ascertain NG effectiveness in specific areas. This has led me to make inferences based on existing data. This further introduced subjectivity as relevancy judgements were made by a single researcher.

Finally, although I have sought through the application of criteria, to include studies with common characteristics, differences in studies are existent. Such differences relate to duration, frequency of intervention, context and the skill base of staff.

### ***1.4.2 Conclusions***

This review has highlighted that the NG field is a relatively limited one. There remains a lack of rigor in the carrying out of research and in the reporting of methods. In addition, most articles broadly focused on children's PSED and general effectiveness. This lack of specificity did not allow for a rigorous exploration of discrete areas, such as self-esteem. Arguably, the above calls into question the claims that NGs constitute effective intervention in the area of self-esteem. I suggest rigorous research is required to ensure sound provision and allocation of funding.

The majority of studies focused on primary children with only three including KS 3 pupils. Numbers of KS 3 pupils were generally small. Future research is needed into the impact of NGs on older children, as from experience there is increased use of NGs in this area. Research will ensure policymakers and educationalists are cognisant of effectiveness with regards to this group.

Another focus was children in low socio-economic groups, with four of the eleven studies featuring this group. Although it was not emphasised, what was implicit was that this particular group required re-nurture. Arguably, future research should take a broader focus, as NGs constitute universal provision. This will ensure policymakers and educationalists are informed about the impact of NGs for children from diverse socio-economic groups.

As the voices of parents and NG children featured in only three of the eleven studies, and NG staff in only two, I suggest future research should focus upon the views of these marginalised groups. Arguably, there needs to be greater exploration of how NG staff perceive their role, in order to gauge goals. I suggest in eliciting the views of NG children greater clarity will be reached regarding how they have been affected by NGs. In gaining views from NG staff and children, I suggest there will be a greater insight into any discrepancy between intended and actual outcomes. This has implications for staff training.

#### ***1.4.3 Developing academic competency***

There is little evidence to suggest NGs lead to heightened academic attainment. There is some limited evidence to suggest mainstream staff viewed NGs, in focusing on PSED, as resulting in lost academic opportunity. The lack of liaison time between staff was perceived as further thwarting academic progression. Arguably, more rigorous research is needed into whether NGs facilitate academic attainment. In so doing, policymakers and educationalists may ascertain whether NGs are an effective intervention in this domain. This has pertinence as academic failure and long-term social exclusion has been linked (KPMG Foundation, 2006).

A theme running through the articles was that NGs impacted attainment through focusing on emotional needs. However, it was not outlined how this was done. A parallel theme featuring in several articles was the provision of a flexible curriculum. This can be seen as evidencing how NG staff support children's academic progress. Bishop and Swain (2000) suggested that nurture provided in NGs contrasts with the transmission of knowledge approach. This would seem to suggest that the notion of nurture reflects rather the application of constructivist pedagogy. Arguably, future research needs to focus upon how NG staff *pragmatically* support academic competency. Again, I suggest findings would have ramifications for the professional development of NG staff.

#### ***1.4.4 Demonstrating on-going engagement with learning***

Although studies reported that NGs raised pupils' enjoyment and motivation there was also the suggestion that engagement was brought about predominantly in NGs. There was limited evidence to suggest NGs positively impacted on children's *on-going* engagement. Notably, O' Connor and Colwell, (2002) reported large ESs in measuring BP organisation of experience strands between entry to NG and follow up. However, this study was given a low trustworthy rating. Although there was some evidence to suggest that children's engagement is promoted for the duration of the intervention, problems with unsupported re-integration may suggest that children's *on-going* engagement is not promoted. Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) highlighted that while some staff regarded themselves as having a role in this area, this was not consistent. This highlights the need for clarity about the objectives of NG staff. Again, future research is needed to explore how children's academic engagement is supported and whether staff perceive themselves as influential in this particular area.

#### ***1.4.5 Making appraisals of domain-specific competencies***

As none of the articles included details of interactions between NG staff and children there is limited evidence to suggest children are encouraged to reflect on their competency. There was some evidence that children showed insightful involvement within the NG but this cannot be directly related to academic

appraisal. I suggest future research is needed to explore practice within NGOs, and again, how staff perceive their role.

Word count - 5471

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1.6 Appendices:

Appendix A – Synthesis table detailing included studies

Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Scott & Lee (2009)	25	4-10	Four primary schools in one Scottish LA	Based on NG principles but part-time and extended to include older age group	Study looks at whether a part-time NG for older children can lead to positive outcomes	Case-Control Design - measures taken pre-, mid- and post-intervention using the Boxall Profile (BP) and qualitative data. Literacy assessed using <i>Concepts of Print. The Simon Strategy</i> provided the baseline for number skills	None	BP: dev. strands 0.012 (p score) BP: diag. strand 0.007 (p score) Literacy 0.946 (p score) Numeracy 0.438 (p score)

Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
O' Connor & Colwell (2002)	68 12 - at follow up	mean age of 5.25 yrs  mean age of 8.42 yrs at follow up	NGs in two infant schools & three primary schools in Enfield	Children attended a Full-Time 'classic' NG (attendance of least 3 terms)	To measure any improvement in PSED	Within group design – BP assessment on entry (T1)/exit (T2) and at 2 year follow up (T3)  One-tailed related T-Tests carried out to test for predicted improvements	Two years after re-integration	(Appendix B): - <u>T1 – T2</u> A 1.64 (1) B 2.07 (2) C 1.55 (3) D 1.40 (4) E 1.17 (5) Q 1.51 (11) <u>T1 – T3</u> A 1.15 (21) B 1.98 (22) C 1.26 (23) D 2.28 (24) E 1.74 (25) Q 0.60 (30) <u>T2 – T3</u> A -0.45 (40) B 0.05 (41) C -0.72(42) D 0.39 (43) E -0.04 (44) Q -0.3 (49)

Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Cooper, Arnold & Boyd (2001)	216 in NGs/64 with SEBD label in main stream/ 62 non-SEBD labelled children in main stream	84% - 7 yrs, 16% - 10 yrs	Children between 25 state-funded schools - 23 in primary sector and 2 in secondary . Across eight UK LAS	17 NG are based on the 'classic' Boxall model. With variations being: x1 full time group, x2 groups in secondary settings and x5 part-time groups. Longest attendance in NG was 1 year	To find out what the effects of NGs are on children's PSED	Mixed-Method, Comparative, Longitudinal Study (over 2 years)  Qualitative Data is being included in this review	N/A	Qualitative information

Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Binnie & Allen (2008)	36	Mean age 7 yrs	NGs in six schools in one UK LA	Eight month NG intervention, four mornings per week. NG staffed by two adults who have been 'Nurture Group Network' Trained. NG support system put in place by LA. Links forged between NG staff and outside agencies	Study looks at NG impact on SEBD & self esteem	Within-group/Repeated Measures design. Testing with BP, BIOS and Goodman's SDQ (GSDQ -- collected by teachers and parents, N=23, within 5 schools) at pre- and post-intervention (over an eight month period). Questionnaires	None	<u>BP</u> – sig. difference overall (across schools) <u>BIOS</u> – sig. difference reported <u>GSDQ</u> – All schools and parents reported a positive change in Social and Emotional Development <u>Parent Questionnaire Results</u> - 97% reported NG had positive impact with 80% reporting a positive impact on their child's confidence/self-esteem

					<p>given to parents (N=30) /staff (N=40) /Head Teachers (N=6) post- intervention</p>	<p><b><u>Staff Questionnaire Results -</u></b>            94% reported that NG had a positive impact on the children attending with 95% reporting a positive improvement in confidence/self-esteem, 59% reported improvements in independent working, 64% reported positive improvements in engagement in group activities within class.</p> <p><b><u>Head Teacher Questionnaire Results -</u></b>            83% reported NGs had a positive impact</p>
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Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes (2008)	Unknown	11-14 yrs	One main stream, secondary school where SEN dept. developed an NG for KS3 pupils following staff training	NG adheres to NG principles incorporated in Boxall's original model. Year 7 pupils attend every afternoon, Year 8 twice a week, two consistent adults, children are gradually included back in mainstream classes with individualised package of support	To look at the social and emotional gains made from NG intervention. Case-study focuses on development of improved self-image and positive interactions	BP used pre- and post- intervention (One year time lapse between these). Case-study also included	None	BP dev. strands showed clear improvement across all strands although some did not reach normal range. BP diag. profile showed less consistent patterns of scores with some improving while others did not

Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Cooper & Whitebread (2007)	359 in NGs: Establish ed NGs (1a) and Newly Establish ed NGs (1b). Control 1 - 64 Control 2 - 62 Control 3 - 31	85% 4-7 yrs, 15% 8-10 yr. 2% 13-14 yrs	34 schools with NGs. Spread across 11 LEAs of varying sizes, including rural, urban, unitary and metropolit an. All schools in	21 of 22 'classic' NGs, while secondary is variant 3. Remaining primary a variant 2 i.e. running 50% of week	Looks at the effectiveness of NGs in promoting social, emotional and educational development. Measures the effects of NGs in promoting pupil improvement in NGs, the extent to which the	Longitudinal study over two years. Case-controlled. SEBD levels assessed using the teacher version of Goodman's SDQ and by the BP (NG staff only). NG and Control Group data were gathered over four consecutive terms. Control group 3 & 4 gathered at	None	<b>GSDQ:</b> - Improvements in SEBD greater in NGs than for ch. in same school not attending NGs. NG ch. improved more quickly. Improvement rate for NG pupils was sig. greater than non-SEBD controls (Control 2) from term 1 to term 2. The difference was not sig. for NG ch. and Control 1. There was a non-sig difference between NG children and Control 1

	Control 4 - 27		lowest quartile of SAT league tables in LEAs	improvements generalise into mainstream schools and the impact of NGs on schools	beginning and end of two school terms. SDQ and BP data gathered on all students on entry to NG. Measures repeated during 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> terms of their attendance in the NG or on FT return to mainstream class. Academic progress data were gathered at beginning of NG attendance. Comparison group data was taken	between terms 1 & 4. GSDQ scores improved for NG ch. and Control 1 SEBD same-school controls between T1 and T2, the period of greatest improvement for both groups was between T1 and T2. Pupils in NG groups established over 2 years made sig. greater improvements than those in newly established groups. There was no sig difference found between Group 1b and Control 1. <b><u>BP</u></b> (NG children only): There were sig.
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				<p>over the same time scale using SDQ only. SDQ data on NG pupils gathered by mainstream teachers therefore reflective of the NG pupils' performance in the mainstream setting</p>	<p>improvements between terms 1 and 2. SEBD tended to be more marked in the first 2 terms, improvements in behaviour associated with engagement with learning tasks continued into term 4</p> <p><b><u>BP (Appendix B)</u></b> (N=253)</p> <p><u>Term 1-Term 2</u> Org of Exp. 0.76 (59) (N=86)</p> <p><u>Term 1-Term 4</u> Org of Exp. 1.39 (64) (N=76)</p> <p><u>Term 2-Term 4</u> Org of Exp. 0.46 (69) (73)</p>
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Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Bishop & Swain (2000)	Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, 2 ex-NG staff, 2 MS staff, 2 ex-NG pupils, 2 parents of NG and 2 governors	6 – 8 years.	One inner-city primary school in the UK. NG, which ran from Oct 1993 – summer 1998	For 8 children labelled EBD. Staffed by a teacher and a TA. Children spent half their time in group and half in MS. Developed along the lines of the 'classic' model with the emphasis on the qualities of the teacher – pupil relationship in nurturing growth and development	To evaluate the effectiveness of the NG; the education provided within the NG in relation to other classes in the school; policies of inclusion and co-operation between school staff and parents	Semi-structured interviews conducted by researchers and audio-taped, transcribed and analysed in relation to the aims of research. Secondary sources of data: documentation including minutes from staff meetings	None	Qualitative information

Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results	
	N	Age						Qualitative information	BP Raw Scores
Doyle (2005)	1	5yrs	Infant School setting with NG	'Classic' NG – after three terms in NG staggered reintegration happens	Highlighting how NG impacts on SEBD and the usefulness of re-integration scale to ascertain when a child is ready to return to mainstream classrooms	Observational case-study. Also the use of the BP to ascertain PSED. Re-integration scale utilised to determine the child's readiness to transition back into MS	Anecdotal report of child re-integrating and achieving well in SATS at the end of infant school	Qualitative information	<u>BP Raw Scores</u> <u>Dev. scale</u> Pre/post A 10 19 B 4 10 C 4 10 D 8 14 E 3 5 F 3 12 G 4 12 H 6 12 I 2 5 J 2 5  <u>Diag. profile</u> Pre post Q 3 0 R 5 2 S 2 1 T 10 3 U 4 2 V 8 2 W 8 3 X 9 4 Y 17 5 Z 5 3

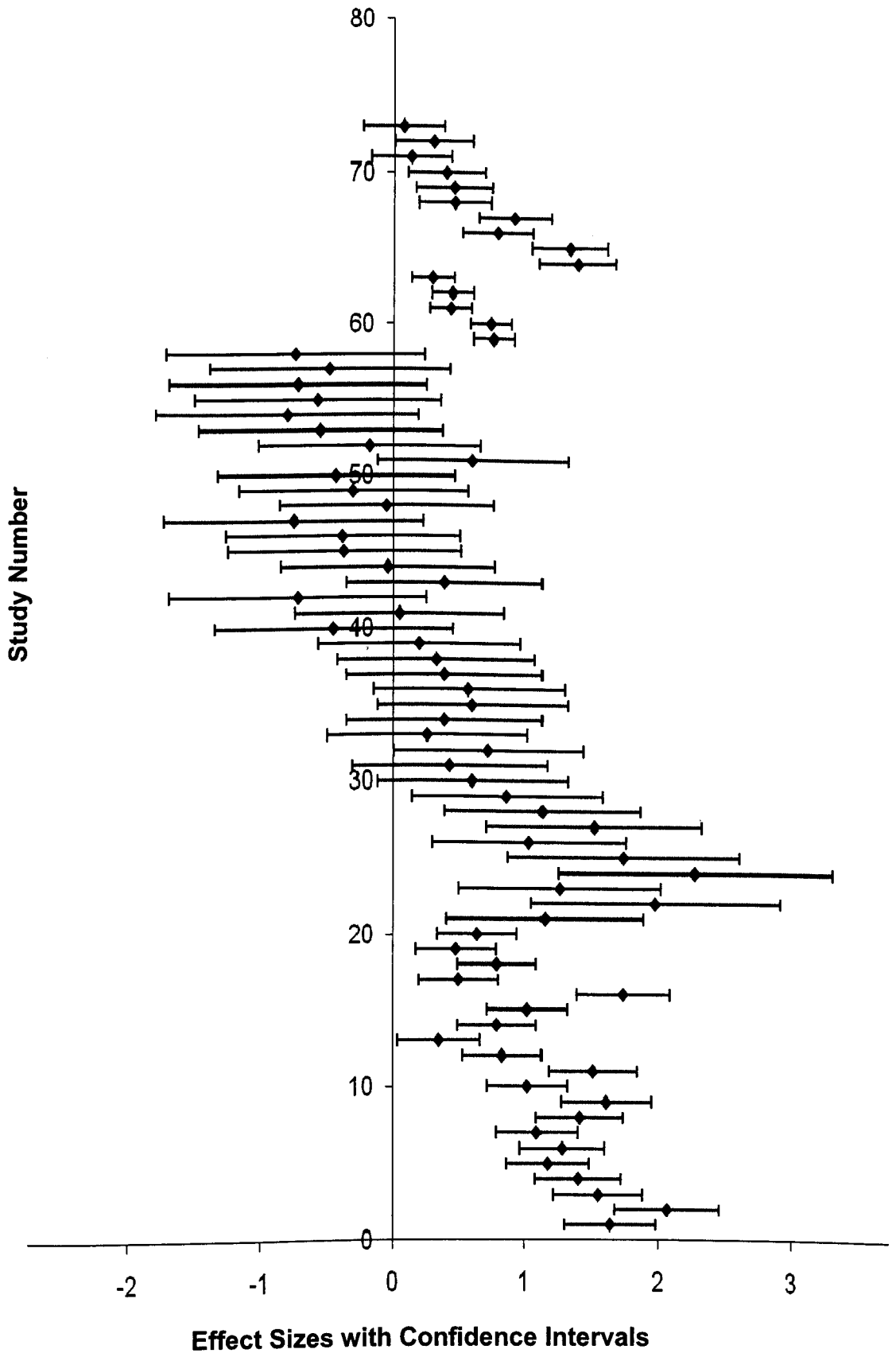
Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Doyle (2001)	2	KS1	Infant school setting with NG	'Classic' NG	To demonstrate how a <i>Reintegration Readiness</i> Scale can be used as a tool to ascertain when integration from NG should occur	Observational case-study. Re-integration scale utilised to determine readiness of children to transition back into mainstream	Anecdotal report of child re-integrating and achieving well. Also, anecdotal report of child making progress in MS	Qualitative information

Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Doyle (2004)	2	6 yrs	Infant school setting with NG	'Classic' NG	To illustrate the use of a <i>Social Development Curriculum</i> for mainstream teachers with pupils transitioning back into MS from NGs	Case-study of two children – observational study. Re-integration scale utilised to determine children's readiness to transition back into mainstream	Anecdotal report of successful re-integration	Qualitative information



Study	Participants		Context	Intervention and Duration	Aim	Methods/Design	Follow Up	Effect Size (d)/Results
	N	Age						
Cooper & Tiknaz (2005)	21	N/A	Schools in a medium sized city in the Midlands	Three schools - Year 1 and 2 <u>Nurture Group 1</u> – Ten pupils attending for four days part-time <u>Nurture Group 2</u> – Pupils attending for three days part-time, Mon and Fri full-time <u>Nurture Group 3</u> – Eight pupils attending for three days part-time, Mon and Fri full-time	Exploration of the perceptions of MS and NG staff regarding NGs	Analysis of interviews with NG teachers, NG Teaching Assistants, Head Teacher, mainstream teachers and NG children	None	Qualitative information

**Appendix B – Scatter Plot showing Effect Sizes**



## **Bridging Document**

### **2.1 Formulation of the Research Question**

The overall focus of this research study was the role and effectiveness of Nurture Groups (NGs) in addressing children's and older students' self-esteem. This focus was agreed in liaison with the Senior Management Team of an Educational Psychology Service in the North of England. The research was requested to review the effectiveness of NG provision and therefore the financial efficiency of this intervention. It has been noted that NGs constitute a costly intervention for children demonstrating social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Mackay, Reynolds & Kearney, 2010). Although the initial focus was upon self-esteem, the research process was iterative, with the focus shifting to academic self-esteem as the concept was interrogated. Indeed, the concept of self-esteem evolved across the research process. This interrogation of a seemingly simplistic notion, I suggest, allowed for greater criticality which brought a rigour to the research process. Arguably, this is a distinctive contribution Educational Psychology can make to local authority systems.

#### ***2.1.1 Exploring the Concept of Self-Esteem***

Self-esteem is a concept frequently referred to by educationalists and other professionals working to support children and their families. From experience, I have frequently witnessed negative outcomes being attributed to children's low self-esteem. Cigman (2004) has suggested that this notion of self-esteem is the simplistic view commonly held. She argues that from this viewpoint, self-esteem is constructed as a personal commodity, which when low has universally negative affects. Cigman (2004) argues that this view, which emanates from therapy culture, is pervasive within education. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) highlight the unquestioned proliferation of such notions within education, stating that such assumptions have 'become unthinking' (p. 36). Rather Cigman (2004) highlights the fractured quality of the concept by plotting its migration across the contexts of: the Self-Help industry; Social Sciences; Therapy; and Education. In summary, Cigman (2004) argues that a simplistic view of self-esteem development encourages an emphasis upon therapeutic solipsism which jars within the educational world. As an alternative to a simplistic view of self-

esteem, Cigman (2004) offers a model of the development of self-esteem which is embedded within the social context. Rather than self-esteem being addressed through introspection, it is perceived as developing within the crucible of our exchanges with the social world. Cigman (2004) is suggesting that we may only come to know ourselves, our strengths and short-comings, within our social context. Further, the work of Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton (1976) and later Marsh (2006) implies that how we perceive the self differs across social contexts and is determined by what that specific context affords.

This alternative view of the development of self-esteem is dynamic and draws upon models developed within the cognitive psychological tradition (Ferkany, 2008). This contrasts with the model of self-esteem development outlined within Attachment Theory, which informs NG provision (Bowlby, 1969; Boxall, 2002; Ferkany, 2008). From this theoretical stance self-esteem is governed by an inherent, abiding template, or an Internal Working Model, established as a result of the quality of the early caregiver-child dyadic relationship. Slater (2007) has defined this as: 'the organisation of the attachment behavioural system involving a cognitive component; mental representations of the attachment figure, the self and the environment' (p.208). Boxall's original, or classic model of NGs, was created to give infants an early reparative experience and the opportunity to develop a positive view of the self within a context designed to emulate the early nurturing environment (Boxall, 2002).

Slater (2007) has highlighted that due to the deterministic quality of Attachment Theory, its usefulness to those wishing to bring about long-term positive outcomes for children, has been questioned. In recent years, information drawn from Neuroscience, provides an evidential base for Attachment Theory (Fonagy & Target, 2005; Stansfeld, Head, Bartley & Fonagy, 2008). Such evidence suggests that early relationships determine both the architecture and long-term chemical environment of the brain. Does such evidence suggest that interventions focused upon addressing children's self-esteem later within school, such as NG provision, can only ever have limited impact? Alongside evidence emphasising the importance of early attachment, there is also neuro-

scientific evidence to suggest that resilience may be developed across the life-span through the on-going creation of neural developmental pathways (Gerhardt, 2004). I suggest such evidence hints at both a bottom-up and top-down model of the development of self-esteem. This is a model of self-esteem development which I have proposed within this current study.

### **2.1.2 The Evolution of a Model of Self-Esteem Development**

My exploration of the various conceptualisations of self-esteem resulted in the development of a model which evolved over the research process. On reviewing the NG literature it became apparent that there was a dearth of evidence with regards to NGs effectiveness in addressing children's self-esteem. Drawing upon cognitive models of self-esteem, I defined self-esteem within the specific domain of the academic as: one's concept of the self within the academic context, as influenced by one's perceived abilities, demonstrable through interaction with the environment. This definition reflects a dynamic model of self-esteem development and suggests a clear role for NGs within this process. The role of NGs in providing learning opportunities, promoting competency and encouraging reflection is reflected in Figure 1.1, on page 5 of this study.

This model highlights the role NGs play in the development of self-esteem as an on-going process. However, during the research process I reflected that the model did not incorporate the inherent, or top-down, component of self-esteem. Arguably, this is the conceptualisation of self-esteem adhered to within Attachment Theory. Accordingly, in acknowledging an inherent self-image which is abiding across contexts and experiences, I added a self-worth component. It is suggested that this proves a top-down influence, in determining how qualities and skills are individually construed. It also became clear that children's reflection on competency would also be affected by the worth placed upon that skill or quality within the child's social context. There is evidence to suggest that as children mature the opinion of peers becomes increasingly relevant (Colley, 2009; Cooke *et al*, 2008). In light of this, a component was added to the model which acknowledged the influence of peers in determining self-appraisal. In

approaching the empirical research study the model of the development of self-esteem had itself developed from that reflected in Figure 1.1, page 5, to that outlined in Figure 3.1, page 68. I argue that the self-worth component of Figure 3.1 reflects the model of self-esteem outlined within Attachment Theory. In incorporating this as a factor in the development of self-esteem, rather than as self-esteem per se, I argue that greater consideration may be given to how NG staff can make a difference. I suggest this has particular pertinence for older students within NGs.

### **2.1.3 Nurture Groups and Older Students**

Boxall's intention was that the NGs should bridge infants' transition into school through offering early nurturing experiences (Boxall, 2002). The intention was that children would catch up with their peers and move positively through the education system. However, as this study highlights, NGs are now provided for children in Key Stage 3. What implications does this have for NG provision and goals? Brisch (2009) has suggested that adolescence is a particularly challenging time for children who have experienced early attachment difficulties, as there is greater onus on independently forming positive personal and peer relationships. Brisch (2009) has stated that adolescents' dependence often transfers from key individuals to the wider peer group. I suggest this means that NGs for older children require a re-appraisal of their practice. I argue that in NGs for older students there should be less emphasis on early re-nurture and greater emphasis placed upon facilitating positive peer support and building pro-social competencies to impact self-esteem. Colley (2009) has pointed out that:

*'poor attachment may often underpin many of the difficulties faced by young people requiring nurture in secondary schools but the teenage years throw up issues around self-image and peer relationships that are not necessarily linked to Bowlby's Attachment Theory' (p.299)*

Arguably therefore, NGs for older children should focus upon building resilience to challenge, through the promotion of skills and positive relationships which are

relevant to this developmental stage. I suggest that the model of the development of self-esteem which has evolved over the research process and is outlined in Figure 3.1, page 68, allows for this focus. Brisch (2009) also suggests that adolescence is a time when pathological attachment patterns have become so entrenched as to warrant medical diagnosis. From this may be acknowledged the need for more specialised support for individuals for whom it is recognised that attachment disorder continues to constitute the main catalyst for their difficulty within school. However, for the majority of older students, rather than a focus on re-visiting earlier stages to instil a sense of self-worth, positive self-esteem may be developed dynamically within the context of the experiences of adolescence. It is this model which Cigman (2004) has referred to as the only one having pertinence within the field of education, as opposed to those models emanating from the therapeutic world.

## **2.2 Therapy and Education**

### **2.2.1 Therapy and Nurture Groups**

In carrying out this study I have reflected on the role of therapy in the field of education, and specifically the relevance for Educational Psychologists working within this domain. In describing the rationale behind NGs, Boxall (2002) suggested that while NGs constituted a therapeutic intervention they were essentially an education-based provision:

*'The Nurture Group is educational provision, and although therapeutic, is not a form of psychotherapy and the qualities of a good strong primary school Class Teacher with academic objectives are essential' (p.155)*

The above quote suggests that a clear distinction was made by Boxall between the role of the therapist and the educator. While in the original NGs educational outcomes were pursued in the context of a nurturing approach, arguably, many NGs now emphasise therapeutic goals. This may be regarded as mirroring a general shift within the wider field of education (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009). Many NGs for older students are groups which are removed from the academic

and social context of school and which focus on re-nurture (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). I suggest that such groups, in moving away from the educational context, attempt to constitute a de-contextualised psycho-therapeutic intervention. This can be seen to jar with the philosophy underpinning the original NG movement. Arguably, this shift casts educators in the role of therapists, which has been highlighted as an inappropriate dynamic (Cigman, 2004; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009). I suggest such inappropriateness relates to the short-term nature of the NG intervention and the potential for the confusion of roles. This necessitates a re-appraisal of the goals of many NGs, especially NGs for older children, which differ from the original model. This current study sought to address this issue.

### ***2.2.2 Therapy and the Educational Psychologist***

In light of the above, I suggest Educational Psychology has a role to play in supporting educational staff delivering therapeutic interventions to reach clarity about their focus, contribution and intended outcomes. Indeed, the model of self-esteem as developed within this current study has been an attempt to contribute within this area. Educational Psychology, in this way, can support educators to make a difference where a difference can be made. In parallel, Educational Psychology has a role in promoting therapeutic foster and adoptive placements which do not have an educational focus. I suggest that within this context, children's emotional development may be sustained, thus promoting inherent self-worth. I further suggest that in drawing upon a range of psychological models, Educational Psychologists can determine the most appropriate intervention for children and young people across contexts, taking a broad ecological view. As Greig and Mackay (2007) have highlighted in considering therapeutic approaches and the Educational Psychologist: 'different contexts are at times best supported by different approaches' (p. 6).

Mackay (2007) has highlighted that although therapy, alongside psychometrics, shaped the early development of Educational Psychology; this focus has fallen out of favour in recent years. Mackay (2007) cites the reconstruction of the profession, which emphasised systemic and collaborative practice over



individualised therapeutic approaches delivered by an expert-therapist as one reason for this. I argue however that Educational Psychologists have a key role in working systemically and collaboratively with people within the child's context to promote appropriate therapeutic approaches. It may be further argued that in adopting this stance, therapeutic intervention may be more meaningful and efficacious. In completing this research study, which has informed NG staff training, I have attempted to offer a distinctive contribution within this area.

## **2.3 Research Considerations**

### ***2.3.1 Ontological Approach***

During the research process, I acknowledged the plurality of ontological approaches underpinning the various constructions of the concept of self-esteem. Bryman (2008) has described ontology as one's assumptions about the nature of reality and of human society. In exploring assumptions underpinning the alternative constructions of self-esteem, I aligned myself to the world-view that is Critical Realist. Robson (2002) has described this stance as recognising the existence of mechanisms operating within reality, while acknowledging that how phenomenon is understood can only ever be subjective. In assuming this stance, I set out to gauge meanings constructed about mechanisms within a NG i.e. staff practice and NG outcomes (Bhaskar & Danermark, 2006).

In reflecting upon ontology, I acknowledged the influence of the social context. The Local Authority, in commissioning my research, was eager to secure data about the NG's effectiveness in addressing students' self-esteem. In determining the agreed outcomes with commissioners, it was suggested that a self-esteem scaling instrument be employed pre- and post- intervention. This can be regarded, in assuming self-esteem is a commodity which can be observed and measured, as reflecting positivist ontology (Robson, 2002). Robson (2002) has described such an approach as assuming that facts about reality can be ascertained through the senses. However, in acknowledging the diversity of ways self-esteem is understood, I rejected this assumption and therefore this ontological approach.

In acknowledging subjectivity, I interrogated the concept of self-esteem from a constructionist perspective (Gergen, 1997). This ontological approach has been defined as one which does not assume the existence of an objective reality but insists that all knowledge is constructed (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 2006). This approach highlights the role of powerful societal forces in constructing what is understood to be true. From this perspective, self-esteem may thus be regarded as a construction which serves socio-political interests. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) assume such a critical stance in questioning educational therapeutic interventions, including those aimed at addressing students' self-esteem. They suggest that the way the self is constructed within the therapeutic world, and its influence within education, serves to reposition the site of human improvement from the political arena to the individual. In acknowledging the reality of the mechanism of self-appraisal, I rejected the assumption that the concept of self-esteem is solely a socio-political construct. In rejecting this assumption I did not assume a more radically relativist ontological stance.

Bhaskar and Danermark (2006) have suggested that Critical Realism allows for a direction to be taken within the research process, alongside the appreciation of context specificity. In rejecting the above approaches, I sought to satisfy the Local Authority request for meaningful data, while resisting the claim to objectivity. Taking a Critical Realist ontological approach, I was able to gauge views upon mechanisms to inform Local Authority provision while highlighting the subjective nature of such data. It has been suggested that in the Educational Psychology profession such an approach allows for an acknowledgment of the context-specific nature of issues, while drawing upon known mechanisms. Such mechanisms may be ascertained through appealing to evidence-based research emanating from a realist paradigm (Fox, 2003; Kelly, 2008). Due to Critical Realism's pragmatic benefits, I assume this stance within my practice as an Applied Educational Psychologist and it is this approach which I have chosen within this current study.

### **2.3.2 Epistemology and Methodology**

Bryson (2008) has stated that in carrying out research a link should be evident between the researcher's ontological assumptions and their epistemological approach. In adhering to a view about *what* may be known, epistemology is concerned with *how* such phenomenon may be known, which in turn dictates methodology (Bryson, 2008). In adopting a Critical Realist stance I set out to gauge subjective meanings regarding mechanisms at work within a NG. This was carried out in order to map data to a further mechanism i.e. the development of self-esteem. In proposing a model of the development of self-esteem, I recognised the subjectivity I brought to the study. Despite this acknowledgement, the epistemological implications of taking a Critical Realist approach allows for the identification and exploration of patterns within reality. This may be perceived as the imposition by the researcher of a research direction:

*'...Epistemologically, critical realism indicates more clearly than the other positions the appropriate direction and context of explanatory research...'*  
(Bhaskar & Danermark, 2006 p.280)

In light of this, subjective data was gathered and analysed in order to illuminate inter-related patterns. Semi-structured interviewing was selected to allow for the initiation of a research direction, while allowing for the exploration and expression of emergent meanings. Again, in applying such direction I acknowledged my role in the construction of meaning elicited through applying this methodology (Banister *et al*, 2006). In analysing the data using Thematic Analysis, my role in the identification of themes is similarly acknowledged. This method of analysis was selected as it is commensurate with the epistemological approach taken. In facilitating the identification of themes pertinent to the research focus, this form of analysis allowed for the imposition of direction, characteristic of more essentialist approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, in assuming a critical stance, the emergent quality of the themes was called into question and the potentiality of meanings being imposed by the researcher was acknowledged.

Word count - 2772

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## **Staff Perspectives on an Area Nurture Group**

### **Intervention for Key Stage 3 Students**

#### **Abstract:**

This study explores nurture group (NG) staff perspectives on their goals and practice within an area NG intervention for Key Stage 3 students demonstrating social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Alternative conceptualisations of self-esteem are examined and a multi-dimensional model of the development of self-esteem proposed. This model portrays the development of self-esteem as both a 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' process. In light of this model, staff views are explored to determine the intervention's effectiveness in addressing students' self-esteem, incorporating differing domains. The study also considers staff assumptions about self-esteem as a concept. In exploring meanings and considering these interpretations of practice, a Critical Realist stance is adopted. The study employs a case-study design in order to carry out in-depth exploration of one intervention. Views from two participants are gauged using semi-structured interviews and data is analysed using Thematic Analysis. This study highlights that staff view self-esteem as a central goal of their intervention, portraying self-esteem as both a trait formed in early life and as developing through on-going experience. Findings suggest that staff view their role as promoting school attendance through predominantly supporting students to manage behaviour, but also through promoting inter-personal skills and engagement with learning. The study highlights that staff address students' self-esteem within these domains in several capacities, to differing extents. Implications of this study are that staff within this NG would benefit from: referring to a model of the development of self-esteem relevant to adolescents; focusing upon students' academic self-esteem particularly; and liaising closely with students' social contexts. It is suggested that implications of this study have direct ramifications for NG staff training and practice and are thus pertinent for pastoral managers.

### **3.1 Introduction:**

#### ***3.1.1 Nurture Groups: The National Context***

Government documentation has suggested Nurture Groups (NGs) constitute sound provision for children demonstrating social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) (DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2004; DfES & Coram Family, 2002). NGs were introduced by Boxall, an Educational Psychologist (EP) working in the 1970s, in response to the rising prevalence of infants entering education apparently unprepared for learning (Bennathan & Boxall, 1996). With its roots in Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969), this intervention claimed to address children's need for re-nurture, to enable them to develop positive self-esteem, in order to learn (Bennathan & Boxall, 1996).

Despite a gradual decline in the 80s there has been a recent resurgence in NG provision (Bailey, 2007; Cooper, 2004). It has been suggested that renewed interest is the result of rising exclusion rates in the United Kingdom, as well as the publication of Boxall's book (Charlton, Panting & Willis, 2004; Cooper, 2004). However, the return to favour of NGs could be better understood as reflecting the current educational context, where educational goals have become fused with meanings borrowed from the therapeutic world (Bailey, 2007; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009). The introduction of the *Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning* (SEAL) (DfES, 2005) curriculum is commensurate with this. This curriculum, which includes modules on addressing children's self-esteem, cements the role of education as promoting children's non-academic development. I suggest this focus upon the educator's role in supporting children holistically is consistent with the spirit NGs were founded upon. I further suggest the current saliency of NG provision, makes this a timely area of research.

Although classic Boxall NGs included younger children and involved almost full-time support, variants upon this model have emerged (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). NGs are now more various in terms of organisation, with many groups offering reduced access (Binnie & Allen, 2008; Scott & Lee, 2009). Notably,



recent years have also witnessed a rise in NGs for Key Stage 3 (KS 3) students (Colley, 2009; Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes, 2008; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). It has been highlighted that early adolescence is often a time of difficulty for students, with this pivotal point in maturation coinciding with school transition (Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm & Splittgerber, 2000; Frydenberg, Lewis, Bugalski, Cotta, McCarthy, Luscombe-smith & Poole, 2004; Qualter, Whiteley & Pope, 2007). It is suggested that such vulnerability warrants NG intervention (Colley, 2009; Cooke *et al*, 2008). I suggest the advent of variant NGs calls for the exploration of discrete NG provision. I further posit that the growing trend for NGs for older students warrants a re-appraisal of what NGs offer students at this stage.

### **3.1.2 Current Research into Nurture Group Effectiveness**

NGs are regarded as effective provision and are lauded in government publications (DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2004), however a review of literature gauging the effectiveness of EBD interventions concluded that historically, there has been a dearth of good quality research in this field (Evans, Harden & Thomas, 2004). This has been particularly true of NGs for secondary school students (Colley, 2009 ). While more recent research has suggested there is a link between NG provision and academic attainment, the research is limited to classic NGs for younger children (Mackay, Reynolds & Kearney, 2010; Reynolds, Mackay & Kearney, 2009).

Reynolds *et al* (2009) point out that although a link has been made between NGs and academic attainment, further research is required in order to isolate specific pertinent factors. Arguably one such factor is children's concept of themselves as learners. Marsh (2006) has suggested that appraisal of oneself in domain specific areas, such as the academic, has a reciprocal effect on subsequent achievement. Arguably therefore NGs efficacy in addressing students' self-esteem is a valuable area of research. However, NG's focus upon addressing children's view of themselves to promote positive outcomes is another area in which there is a paucity of information (Bailey, 2007). Bailey (2007) has suggested that alongside nurture, self-esteem is a concept which is

not interrogated within NG literature. I suggest such an interrogation is required so that clarity is reached about the goals of NGs, as Mruk (2006) has stated: 'a good place to start when asking specific questions is by defining how terms are being used' (p.10). It is to the area of self-esteem that I now turn.

### **3.1.3 Self-Esteem**

There has been extensive debate about the nature and development of self-esteem within the social sciences (Brown & Marshall, 2006). James (1890) suggested self-esteem consists of a 'self-feeling' (p. 296) resulting from the interaction between our perceived competencies and our aspirations. James was thus suggesting self-esteem: a) has an affective component; b) is dynamic in being impacted by competency; and c) relates to *desirable* outcomes.

Historically, there has been a distinction drawn between self-concept and self-esteem, with the latter incorporating an affective component (Brown & Marshall, 2006). How may this affective component be understood? Rosenberg (1968) has suggested that esteem is a feeling about oneself which is a trait. This can be recognised as differing from James' conceptualisation that highlights the importance of competency appraisal in influencing self-esteem. Similarly, Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) suggest that self-concept is formed dynamically through bottom-up self-appraisals in discrete domains. In uniting these perspectives, the affective component of self-esteem may be understood as both a general self-feeling and as informed by discrete self-concepts influenced, in turn, by competency appraisal (Marsh, 2006).

Mruk (2006) has pointed out that for competency to lead to positive esteem it must be 'deemed worthy' (p. 13). Although this can be seen to relate to Rosenberg's notion of trait self-esteem, I suggest the perception of worthiness is also influenced by contextual factors. Arguably, in experiencing a positive feeling about competency, such competency is likely to be valued within one's context. Hence, self-esteem can be understood as an interaction between: a) how we inherently feel about ourselves; b) the recognition of competency and c) the value we place upon competency, which is impacted by the social. In

incorporating self-feeling about qualities and skills, positive self-esteem can be seen as mediated by affect.

In light of the above, the development of self-esteem can be regarded as multi-faceted (Figure 1). In contrast, I suggest the conceptualisation employed within many NGs is simplistic.

### ***3.1.4 Nurture Groups and Self-Esteem***

NGs adhere to a conceptualisation of the self that is essentially psychodynamic. This approach holds that the self is formed by early experiences informing the subconscious (Freud, 2002; Jacobs, 2007; Winnicott, 1965). From this perspective, the self is passive and layered and esteemed in the long-term through an innate lens. Due to its deterministic quality, I suggest this model reflects Rosenberg's concept of self-esteem as one's inherent feeling of worthiness. As Mruk (2006) has highlighted; Rosenberg's simplistic model results in the development of simplistic solutions to address feelings of unworthiness. I suggest such simplicity is reflected in government rhetoric exhorting schools to build children's confidence and repair self-esteem. I argue that this simplicity pervades NG literature.

### ***3.1.5 Do Nurture Groups Address Students' Self-Esteem?***

Within NG literature there is the idea that NGs raise children's self-esteem by instilling a feeling of worthiness missed in childhood (Boxall, 2002; Holmes, 1999). The notion that esteem can be raised through introspection is dominant within therapeutic culture, which is influential within education (Bailey, 2007; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009). Arguably, this influence has resulted in there being an emphasis upon raising children's self-esteem in a de-contextualised way (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009). An example of this is the SEAL curriculum, which addresses self-esteem through talk within circle times (DfES, 2005). Arguably this approach characterises many NGs for older students in particular, which tend to be time-limited and lacking an educational focus (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). Cigman (2004) has suggested that such a notion of self-esteem assumes that: a) the self can be known through introspection; and b) self-esteem is an unbounded, personal commodity. Cigman (2004) has argued that

healthy self-esteem is, rather, developed dynamically in real contexts and bounded by experience, a notion which she refers to as 'situated self-esteem' (p. 98).

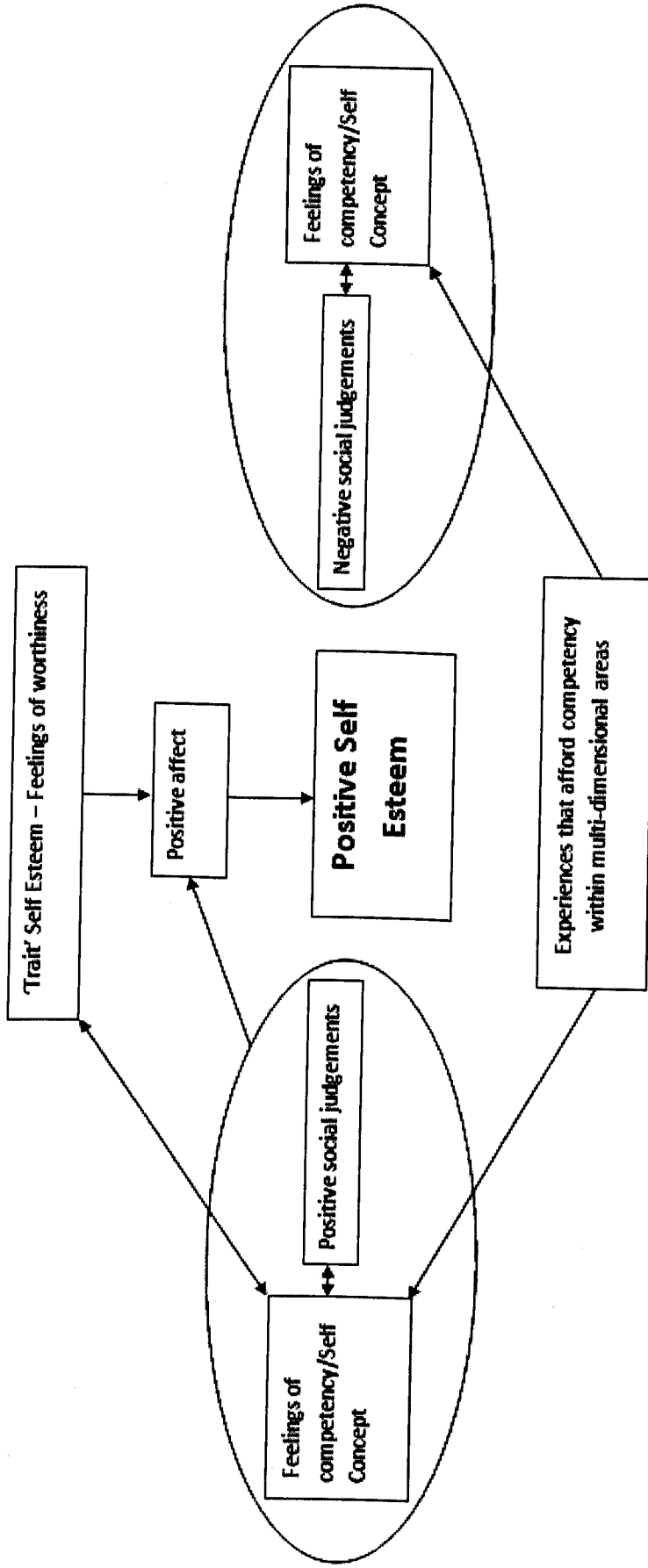


Figure 3.1: Multi-dimensional model of the development of self-esteem

Such a view may be perceived as according with models of self-esteem which highlight the significance of the recognition of competency and the influence of the social. While I agree with Cigman's emphasis on the dynamic nature of the development of self-esteem, I argue that this should not be regarded as an alternative to the notion that children can be supported also to recognise their inherent worthiness in a de-contextualised way. Further, I suggest that Cigman hints at this in recognising the importance of 'a solipsistic, emotional foundation' (p 99) from which to develop self-esteem. Arguably, therefore the development of self-esteem may be perceived as both a 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' process (Figure 1).

### **3.1.6 Research Questions**

This study sought to explore staff perspectives about what a NG for Key Stage 3 students set out to achieve and how this is brought about, in order to map goals and practice to a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of the development of self-esteem as outlined in this paper (Figure 1). I suggest in employing a multi-dimensional model a richer understanding of a Key Stage 3 NG's contribution in this area may be gained. The following questions were thus posed:

- What do NG staff see as their goals?
- How do NG staff think that they achieve their goals?

### **3.1.7 The Intervention**

The focus of this study was an intervention for students in KS 3, attending schools across one borough in North East England, who were identified by mainstream staff as demonstrating SEBD. Schools referred students into the project, for the following support:

- A programme of intervention for one day per week, for approximately twelve weeks, based at an outreach centre. The students were grouped with approximately 5 others
- A programme of small group work, usually co-delivered by project and mainstream staff, at the students' school. Schools identified students whom they thought would benefit from support.

Project staff also worked in an outreach capacity, both during and post-intervention. Such outreach work included therapeutic work and in-class support. Staff also worked alongside local high school staff to develop interventions for students demonstrating SEBD.

The initiative was funded in order to carry out preventative work with younger students in high schools and students transitioning into high school settings. The project aims to '*develop the skills and qualities of students who have been referred in order to improve their self-esteem*' to '*prepare them for learning*' (2009, personal communication). There have been 44 male individual referrals and 12 female referrals since inception. With regards to group referrals, 31 have been male students and 9 female.

The project is managed by a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at the base school and is supported by a local authority EP. The intervention is delivered by two workers, one of whom acts as project co-ordinator.

A typical day at the base consists of themed individual and group activities, which are a variety of practical and reflective tasks. Staff followed an overarching programme of work developed by the EP.

### **3.2 Methods:**

#### **3.2.1 Background**

Data was gathered at a time when the local authority was questioning the efficacy of provision. This study reports data gathered as part of a wider project to evaluate the NG intervention, as commissioned by an Education Inclusion Partnership.

#### **3.2.2 Research Design**

Cohen and Manion (1989) have highlighted that case-studies allow for complex readings of a case, in a way which is ecologically valid and directs action.

Therefore, a case-study design was deemed appropriate to explore and outline implications within this specific context.

### **3.2.3 Methodology**

The method used was interviewing, which allowed for exploration of perspectives. Semi-structured interviewing was selected, as this method has been described as an effective means of exploring meanings (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 2006), while also being consistent with the theory-driven nature of the study (Bryman, 2008).

### **3.2.4 Participants**

The study focused upon perspectives of two project workers, who are the only group facilitators at the provision. *Participant 1* is a male staff member who previously worked for 5 years in a residential setting, supporting children demonstrating SEBD. *Participant 2* is a female member of staff who has worked with children and young people identified as demonstrating SEBD for 14 years. She has worked in specialist education, as well as within social services and the youth justice system.

### **3.2.5 Procedures**

Following consent, both participants were twice interviewed separately, using a flexible interview schedule. Interviews took place in a secluded room, with only the researcher and interviewee present and were recorded using a Dictaphone. The first interviews lasted for approximately 30 minutes. Video footage of the staff interacting with pupils is routinely used by staff for professional development. This footage was utilised during second interviews, as a catalyst for discussion. A reflective framework as employed during the national Study of Primary Interactive Teaching (SPRINT) Project was adapted to promote reflection (Moyles, Hargreaves, Merry, Paterson & Estarte-Sarries, 2003). The second interviews lasted approximately 80 minutes. Interviews were then transcribed and analysed by the researcher.



### **3.2.6 Ethics**

During formulation of the research question and process, consideration was given to ethics. Willig (2008) has described this as an intrinsic part of research (p. 21). In light of this current study feeding into a local government evaluation, the requirements to gain consent and fully de-brief participants were acknowledged. In this, the study followed guidelines outlined by the British Psychological Society. Participants were told in a preliminary meeting that they could withdraw from the study or withhold their data at any point during the research process and up to two months following the debriefing session. Participants were also informed of the intention to communicate findings to senior managers within the local authority. It was highlighted that although confidentiality of individuals would be maintained, that the research would be limited to their NG, which is the sole area NG provision within the borough. Written consent was gained from both participants prior to carrying out the research. Participants were invited to a debriefing session following the research process, where research goals were shared.

It was ascertained that full consent had been secured by staff for video recording of students. Confidentiality, anonymity and safeguarding considerations were extended to students featured within the video. Audio recordings of interviews featuring video (sound) were held securely in a locked storage unit and destroyed following transcription. All names and other means of identification were removed during transcription.

### **3.2.7 Data Analysis**

Thematic Analysis (TA) was employed to identify subjective patterns of meaning, or themes, within the data-set. TA was selected as it is commensurate with the aim of the study: to identify and explore subjective meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA was also selected as it is a method 'sitting between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism' (Willig, 2008 p. 81). TA, in allowing for the comprehensive exploration of data is useful in illuminating under-researched areas (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hayes, 2002).

Procedures were followed in accordance with guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The data was read and re-read, while codes were recorded (Appendix A). Codes were then attached labels, as themes emerged, and grouped (Appendix B). Themes indicating NG goals were identified then reviewed for the identification of sub-themes (Appendix C). Themes and sub-themes were represented in spider diagrams (Appendix D). Dominance of a theme was determined by noting prevalence within the data-set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Analysis was deductive, in being theory-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.2.8 Limitations**

The research design and methods selected were compatible with the overall ontological approach which was Critical Realist (Bryman, 2008). Willig (2008) has described compatible epistemology as adhering to 'the realist ambition to gain a better understanding of what 'really' is going on in the world' (p. 13), while acknowledging that data can only ever be a subjective account of such a reality. In light of this, data consisted of subjective perspectives about 'mechanisms' operating within a specific NG (Robson, 2002 p. 40). Such mechanisms were regarded as NG practice and outcomes. The role of the researcher in directing the research and introducing subjectivity to the research process is highlighted. In assuming this approach and recognising data as subjective, it is acknowledged that findings from this study cannot be generalised to other contexts. This has been highlighted as a limitation of this approach (Bryman, 2008).

Due to time constraints it was not possible to hold focus groups with participants. It has been suggested that data from such groups provide additional information to that which is generated by individual interviews (Bryman, 2008). This lack of data may be regarded as a drawback of this study.

A further limitation is that data was coded and subsequent themes were identified by a single researcher. This did not allow for a thorough re-exploration

of themes through joint discussion, which again may be considered a drawback.

### 3.3 Results:

The following table outlines identified NG goals, listed as dominant and sub-themes (see Appendix E for hierarchical table):

Goals	
Students' Positive Self-Appraisal (57)	Self-Concept (32)
	Self-Esteem (25)
Students' Personal Behaviour Management (48)	Emotional Literacy (35)
	Emotional Regulation (7)
	Normalised Emotions (6)
Students' Improved Inter-Personal Skills (31)	Social Skills (12)
	Listening Skills (11)
	Friendship Skills (8)
Students' School Attendance (26)	
Students' Academic Engagement (22)	Academic Success (7)
Students' Respite (3)	

Table 3.1: Overall themes and sub-themes

#### 3.3.1 Self-Appraisal

Supporting students to positively appraise themselves was a major theme. Staff described NG students as initially having poor self-esteem:

*'...a lot of kids that come through here are just like vulnerable...they have no confidence or self-esteem...'*

Staff referred to themselves as *'building'* the students' self-esteem and:

*'...Giving the kids the...self-esteem that they missed out on...'*

However, this was a minor sub-theme with staff predominantly suggesting that self-esteem is addressed by the NG in more dynamic ways. A main sub-theme

was supporting students to reflect. Although it was suggested that reflection in circle-time tapped into deep-rooted issues, use of the Solution-Oriented approach suggested that students were supported to proactively reframe their experiences (Ajmal, 2001). This approach was described as representing the entire ethos of the NG.

Staff stated that they provided tasks which were appropriately challenging, which developed competency leading to positive self-esteem:

*'...so we might do some cookery instead and it's always very good doing cookery for their self-esteem and things like that...because they achieve it ...'*

The role of positive judgements was also implicated in the development of positive self-esteem:

*'...if you can...get it through to them then a bigger, better self-esteem...and letting them know when they are doing things right...'*

Self-esteem was portrayed as having a distal effect on academic engagement.

Self-esteem, as an explicit theme, was subsumed by the major theme of supporting students' positive self-appraisal:

*'...it's not just their perception of school but it's their perception of themselves...because they can be quite...down on themselves...not recognising their own strengths...'*

As well as the provision outlined above, staff stated that students' self-appraisal was also addressed during sessions of compliment giving, where staff and peers acknowledged students' skills and qualities:

*'...it's about helping them see the qualities and... the potential...'*

### **3.3.2 Personal Behavioural Management**

The major goal for staff was addressing students' behaviour in school:

*'...I just think we let them see it's alright to be yourself ...but there are... things that's acceptable behaviour and things that aren't...'*

Ensuring staff supported students to demonstrate appropriate behaviour was regarded as directly relating to improving attendance:

*'...they're looking for a way out and they don't know how to...so the next step is to escalate...so they can walk out the classroom...'*

The main sub-theme in this area was promoting Emotional Literacy. This was directly linked with supporting students to attend:

*'...so they don't have any permanent exclusions...but obviously within that it's to improve their emotional literacy...'*

Staff suggested that they supported students to recognise emotions in an on-going way by promoting reflection upon their own and other's emotions through the use of questions:

*'...saying to him 'what are you feeling now? ...your feelings are changing as we're speaking'...'*

Staff employed role-play and video as a catalyst for reflection:

*'...sometimes it's on video... we show them pictures of real people losing their temper...and we say 'what do you think if that was happening... in your front street?'...'*

Staff also offered positive judgements in response to students' recognition of the emotions of themselves and others.

Closely linked with the above is another sub-theme of supporting students to regulate their emotions:

*'...and to actually go out of here being able to control... their emotions...'*

With regards to provision, a main theme with regards to bringing about emotional regulation was equipping students with strategies to be used in school:

*'...we do things like breathing exercises so that they feel like they have more self-control...'*

Staff highlighted such strategies as emanating from an anger management programme.

Another theme was supporting students to reflect positively upon their ability to control their emotions using the Solution-Oriented approach (Ajmal, 2001):

*'...it's trying to get them to think in a different way...it's trying to get them thinking about what's going well and what could go better...they are like saying everything's rubbish...but actually it's not coz nine lessons out of ten you're staying in that class...'*

Another sub-theme in the area of reflection was supporting students to recognise alternative behavioural responses:

*'...Then asking him for alternatives, what could he have done instead?...'*

In order to do this staff highlighted that they employed role-play and encouraged students to reflect in circle times, using topical examples:

*'...I say 'was that passive, assertive or aggressive the way \_\_\_\_\_ spoke there?' Trying to show them again a real world example...'*

As well as offering positive judgements:

*'...and letting him know that he's handling his feelings quite well at the minute...'*

A sub-theme in the general area of Students' Personal Behaviour Management was supporting students to acknowledge their emotional responses as normal. This was done through facilitating peer support and offering judgements:

*'...and even if its anger, that it's normal to have these feelings...'*

### **3.3.3 Inter-personal Skills**

Another major theme was supporting the development of students' inter-personal skills. Alongside promoting behaviour management, staff suggested that this directly fed into supporting attendance. In this area were the sub-themes of promoting social, listening and friendship skills:

*'...it's the whole environment where they can talk together, the sharing and the friendship skills come in, all of that is done at the same time...'*

*'...we teach the children it's important to have the listening skills, for people to speak but also to listen as well...'*

Staff highlighted that this was achieved through introducing themes to the students which were explored through reflective talk and activities:

*'...This little session where I ask what if a friend does something that you don't like, should you tell them? And it provoked a little bit of discussion...'*

Tasks were regarded as a means of supporting students to develop competency. Tasks offered were practical, such as cookery:

*'...They have like three sets of scales so they have to go about sharing and waiting...'*

, or play-based, such as 'Chinese Whispers'. Staff highlighted the requirement to tailor such activities:

*'...three really short sentences and then when I say 'half it' he still opts out and says 'go around the other way', so that he's the last one in the game...'*

Again peer judgements were regarded as instrumental:

*'...I'm aware that when they tell each other things it often sticks more, or has more power, so I'm trying to get \_\_\_\_\_ to tell \_\_\_\_\_ here what he just told me ...'*

A more minor theme was students' ability to draw upon their relationships with staff and peers in the NG as behavioural templates.

### **3.3.4 Encouraging Academic Engagement**

A less dominant theme within the data-set was promoting academic engagement. Staff perceived the NG as having an indirect impact on academic success through students': attendance; emotional regulation; positive outlook; increased self-esteem and resiliency:

*'...if their staying in school and they're a bit calmer and they've got more self-esteem and they're a bit more positive... then...ultimately exam grades ...will go up...'*

However, generally there was a clear distinction made by staff between school and NG provision:

*'...we're so relaxed and it's not meant to feel like school in any way...'*

Although, academic tasks were alluded to, a theme was the distinction between NG and school tasks:

*'...we are not here to help children revise for exams or anything like that we don't do any curriculum stuff...'*

Staff described how they supported students to reflect upon their work and efforts in a more positive light:

*'...its letting them see that when they go back that it's just about the taking part...'*

As well as this, staff highlighted how they supported students through a differentiated approach to develop strategies for goal-setting within school and reflect on the importance of this:

*'...we talk about...footballers having targets ...once they are excited and can see the value of a goal we bring it down to how can that help you in school?...'*



As well as this, staff suggested that learning difficulties were noted in the group and passed to school staff:

*'...And you can pick up straight away if someone says 'arr no, I thought there was no writing involved' so it's just reading their body language straight off...'*

Another sub-theme in the area of encouraging academic engagement was giving and facilitating positive peer judgements of such engagement.

### **3.4 Discussion:**

Although promoting students' self-esteem was seen as a key focus for NG staff, the concept can be perceived as fractured. In alluding to supporting students to revisit earlier developmental stages to address self-esteem, staff can be regarded as adhering to a psychodynamic conceptualisation (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978; Boxall, 2002). This viewpoint promotes the notion that low self-esteem may be boosted in a de-contextualised way. Cigman (2004) has referred to this as promoting the assumption that positive self-appraisal may occur independently of experience. Staff can indeed be perceived as adhering to this approach in focusing upon students' inherent qualities as well as skills. Although incorporated in the model of the development of self-esteem outlined within this paper, arguably, an emphasis on this area may be less appropriate for KS 3 students. It is notable that Boxall's classic model focused on infants in order to promote intervention effectiveness (Boxall, 2002). Colley (2009) has suggested that in KS 3 groups a wider approach should be adopted to address adolescents' poor self-judgements in particular. This accords with the notion that self-concept develops dynamically within context. Within this present study staff predominantly adhered to a dynamic model of self-esteem development, brought about through practical engagement with tasks and the recognition of competency (Shavelson *et al*, 1976). In alluding to their role as promoting reflection, staff can be perceived as encouraging students to recognise competency, therefore to develop a self-concept. I suggest NG staff focusing on making positive judgements of students' skills, alongside facilitating positive peer judgements, allows for the development of the affective component of self-

esteem. The value placed upon the skill by staff and peers, results in the skill being valued by students and subsequently impacting on students' esteem.

This study has found that the main focus area for staff was promoting students' ability to demonstrate personal behavioural management. NG staff focused upon this area, seeing it as having direct implications for maintaining school attendance. It has been highlighted that self-concept is domain specific and staff can be regarded as targeting students' self-judgements in this domain primarily (Marsh, 2006; Shavelson *et al*, 1976). Staff addressed students' personal behaviour management through a variety of means: employing role play; supporting students to reflect on the implications of behaviour; giving students practical strategies for regulating emotions; and giving and encouraging positive judgement of behaviours. With regards to a multi-dimensional model of self-esteem, staff can therefore be regarded as comprehensively promoting students' self-esteem in this area. In offering students opportunities to practise behavioural responses, NG staff can be seen to raise competency, leading to a more positive self-concept (Marsh, 2006; Shavelson *et al*, 1976). In encouraging reflection, staff can also be seen to support students' recognition of such competency. In addition, staff may be regarded as promoting positive self-esteem through giving positive judgements of behavioural responses and facilitating positive peer judgements.

Promoting students' interpersonal skills was emphasised to a lesser extent. However staff may be again regarded as promoting students' self-esteem in diverse ways. Activities were introduced to develop competency e.g. listening and sharing were promoted through games and collaborative tasks. Peer judgements were harnessed to support students to value such pro-social behaviour. Similarly, students were supported to reflect positively on incidents of positive social engagement. However, staff also described how themes, such as friendship, were discussed more abstractly during circle times. In this way, staff can be regarded as addressing students' judgement of themselves as social agents within several areas.

Academic engagement was a minor theme within the data-set. Academic competency was not targeted in the group, as NG staff drew a marked distinction between activities within the group and academic activities. However, staff highlighted that they passed on information to school with regards to academic difficulties demonstrated during tasks. In this way, NG staff can be regarded as supporting effectively differentiated teaching practice, therefore the students' development of competency outside the group and in the longer-term. Staff also suggested they offer tailored strategies to support students to plan on-going engagement on transferring to mainstream e.g. incremental goal setting. Through encouraging students to reflect upon their ability to engage positively within school, staff can be regarded as supporting them to recognise their competency with regards to engagement. Also, staff again offer positive judgements and facilitate positive peer judgements in response to engagement with more academic tasks, supporting students to value this skill.

### ***3.4.1 Implications***

An implication of this study is that clarity is required about the concept of self-esteem employed by staff in this NG, so that mechanisms affecting its development may be understood. It has been suggested that a focus on addressing challenges faced by adolescents particularly, is more appropriate than the traditional re-nurture approach for older students (Colley, 2009). I propose a multi-dimensional model of self-esteem, as outlined in this paper, allows for a clearer focus for NG staff and managers. Such a model could be used in staff training to heighten awareness of group goals. Arguably, this would lead to targeted practice and greater efficiency in the allocation of pastoral funding. Similarly, I suggest that this model allows for more fine-grained evaluation.

The model of self-esteem outlined in this paper portrays self-esteem development as dynamic, this means there is a heightened requirement that NG staff liaise closely with students' families and educators. Such liaison will ensure positive judgements about students' behaviour continue within schools. There may be a particular requirement to ensure key adults facilitate positive peer

judgements as it has been documented that appropriate school behaviour is often viewed negatively by disaffected students' peer groups (Miller, 2003). This response may influence the affective component of on-going self-esteem development. Such liaison should also comprise sharing assessment information leading to differentiated approaches, as well as working with mainstream staff to ensure students are given opportunities to reflect on their skills across domains. Such liaison may necessitate the establishment of school and NG link-workers.

Although this study found that staff regarded themselves as facilitating academic engagement, this was a relatively minor theme. Arguably, there needs to be a greater emphasis on engagement with learning so that students may develop a positive concept of themselves as learners. However, the lack of emphasis upon academic tasks in the NG may be necessary to secure the engagement of students disaffected from school. I suggest this again emphasises the requirement that NG staff communicate with schools so that school tasks are tailored and thus competency developed in the longer-term. A focus for future researchers may be the effectiveness of NGs which incorporate academic tasks and emphasise academic engagement, in raising older students' academic self-esteem in the longer-term.

### **3.5 Conclusion:**

This study explored the views of two NG staff about the goals of, and practice within, an area KS 3 NG. Staff perspectives were explored and mapped onto a multi-dimensional model of self-esteem development. Staff views about self-esteem as an explicit concept were also discussed. This study found that these staff adhered to both a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' model of the development of self-esteem. Staff described addressing students' self-esteem as a key function of the NG and promoting students' positive self-judgements was a major theme. Generally, staff suggested they did this by: encouraging reflection to both address deep-rooted issues and support students' positive reframing; supporting competency; offering positive judgements and facilitating positive

peer judgements. Staff considered that the NG promoted students' skills in the areas of: personal behaviour management; social skills and academic engagement. However, this latter area was a relatively minor theme in the data-set. This study found that staff primarily focused upon addressing students' personal behaviour management, therefore chiefly targeting their self-esteem in this area. However, staff could be regarded as promoting positive self-esteem in all three areas in several capacities (Figure 2). The study's findings imply that a multi-dimensional model of self-esteem development would allow for greater clarity about NG goals, specifically with regards to older students. This has direct ramifications for staff training. Further, it is argued that close liaison between NG and school staff is needed to support on-going self-esteem development. The study highlights the importance of supporting on-going academic self-esteem particularly, suggesting this area should be emphasised by NG and mainstream staff alike.

Word count - 5291

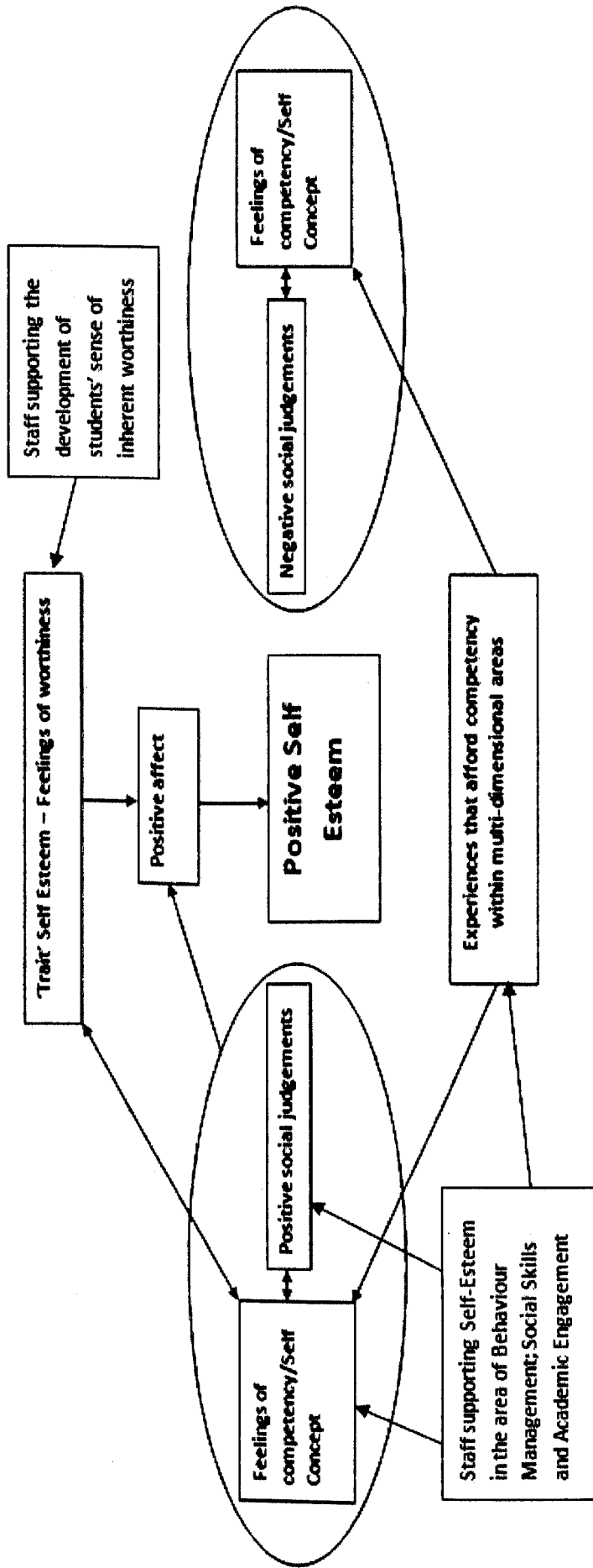


Figure 3.2: Nurture Group staff contribution to self-esteem development

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### 3.7 Appendices:

#### *Appendix A – Example of initial coding process*

Interview Transcript	Coding
<p>Interviewee: - It could be anything from having the confidence to actually speak to someone in school to where, usually, their first reaction would be to walk out because they can't face it coz they find it difficult or they're struggling with things in class...but I think to be able to actually have the confidence to talk to someone and say 'this is how I feel' or 'this is what's happening' where in the past they're not able to do that...and to actually go out of here being able to control, control their emotions and they know why they're having the emotion, quite often they don't know why they're having these emotions when they come here...and understanding that its normal and even if its anger, that its normal to have these feelings...it's how we control them and how we handle them ourselves. So it's not that they're being told that they're doing anything wrong...and they all come here with the same thing that they think they're naughty, but they're not naughty...they're just struggling...</p>	<p>Group gives students confidence to highlight difficulties, feelings in school/walking out</p> <p>Students leave able to control and understand their emotions</p> <p>Students leave with normalised feelings</p> <p>Students learn that they have agency in dealing with emotions</p> <p>Staff adopt positive approach – normalisation 'not naughty'</p>

## **Appendix B – Example of themed codes**

### **Listening Skills**

Staff teach students listening skills LISTENING SKILLS

Staff support students to stop and listening a little bit more LISTENING SKILLS

Staff supporting students' listening skills in class by giving them reading time

LISTENING SKILLS, TASK AS DEVELOPING SOCIAL SKILLS

Staff supporting students to reflect on theme of the day – listening skills

LISTENING SKILLS, STAFF SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO REFLECT ON  
THEME

Ch as 'working' and 'listening' without recognising this GROUP

WORK/SCHOOL WORK, LISTENING SKILLS

Ch as finding it difficult to listen LISTENING SKILLS

Staff promoting listening skills LISTENING SKILLS

Staff compromising with students – allowing 'whispers' to start the other way

STAFF OFFER FLEXIBLE ENGAGEMENT, USE OF STRATEGIES TO  
PROMOTE LISTENING SKILLS

Staff offering a differentiated approach to tasks – shorter sentences in chinese

whispers TAILORED APPROACH, USE OF STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE  
LISTENING SKILLS

Staff use tasks such as 'Chinese Whispers' to promote listening and imp of

listening LISTENING SKILLS, USE OF STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE  
LISTENING SKILLS

Staff teach children listening skills LISTENING SKILLS

## ***Appendix C – Example of identified sub-themes within wider themes***

### Listening Skills – (11 items)

#### Goal of Group

Staff teach students listening skills LISTENING SKILLS

Staff support students to stop and listen 'a little bit more' LISTENING SKILLS

Ch as finding it difficult to listen LISTENING SKILLS

Staff promoting listening skills LISTENING SKILLS

Ch as 'working' and 'listening' without recognising this GROUP

WORK/SCHOOL WORK, LISTENING SKILLS

Staff teach children listening skills LISTENING SKILLS

#### Building Competency

Staff supporting students' listening skills in class by giving them reading time

LISTENING SKILLS, TASK AS DEVELOPING SOCIAL SKILLS

Staff use tasks such as 'Chinese Whispers' to promote listening and imp of

listening LISTENING SKILLS, USE OF STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE

LISTENING SKILLS

#### Differentiated Tasks -

Staff compromising with students – allowing 'Chinese Whispers' to start the

other way STAFF OFFER FLEXIBLE ENGAGEMENT, USE OF STRATEGIES

TO PROMOTE LISTENING SKILLS

Staff offering a differentiated approach to tasks – shorter sentences in 'Chinese

Whispers' TAILORED APPROACH, USE OF STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE

LISTENING SKILLS

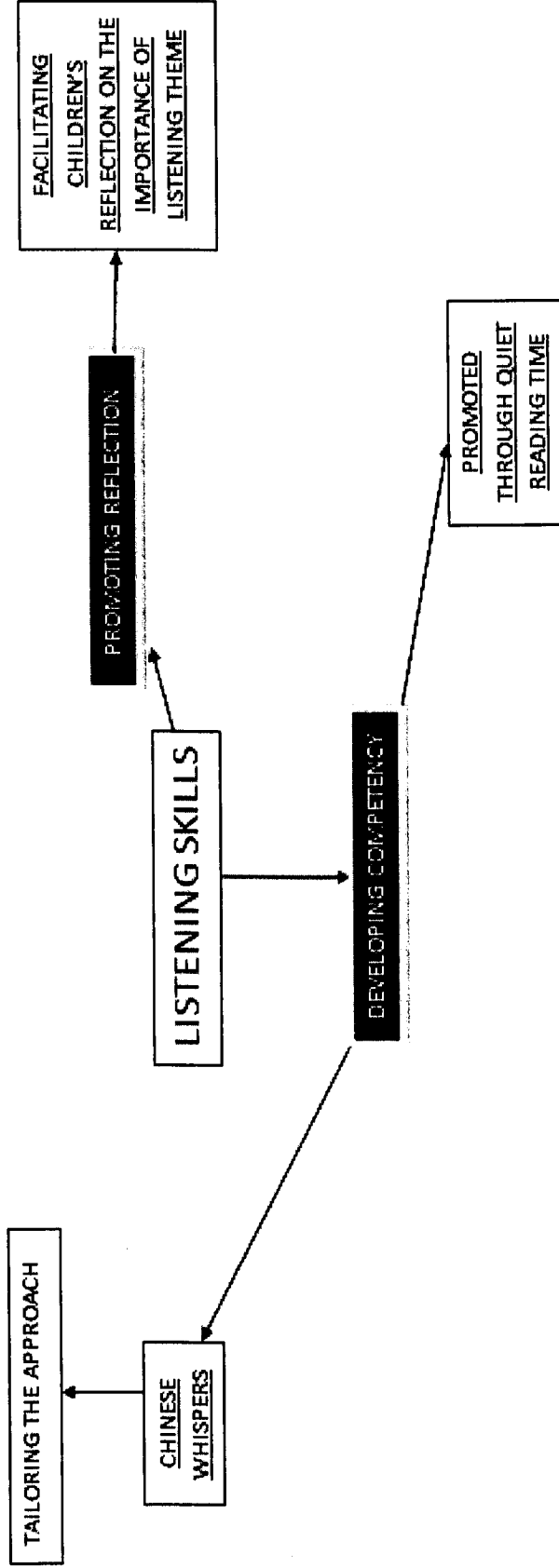
#### Supporting Students' Reflection

Staff supporting students to reflect on theme of the day – listening skills

LISTENING SKILLS, STAFF SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO REFLECT ON

THEME

**Appendix D – Example of spider diagram: Listening skills diagram outlining sub-themes**



## **Appendix E – Table outlining hierarchy of main and sub-themes**

### **Goals/Provision**

#### **Students' Positive Self-Appraisal (57)**

- Self-Concept (32)
  - ❖ Encourage children to reflect
    - Use of Solution-Oriented Approach
    - Use of Narrative Therapy Techniques
  - ❖ Give positive judgements
  - ❖ Facilitate peer support
  - ❖ Provide tasks to build competency
- Self-Esteem (25)
  - ❖ Encourage children to reflect
    - Use of Solution-Oriented Approach
    - Addressing deep seated issues
  - ❖ Provide tasks to build competency
  - ❖ Give positive judgements
  - ❖ Positive self-esteem leading to academic engagement
  - ❖ Support students to visit earlier stages to address self-esteem
  - ❖ Self-esteem as being lacking in students in the NG

#### **Students' Personal Behaviour Management (48)**

- Emotional Literacy (35)
  - ❖ Encourage children to reflect
    - Use of role-play
    - Use of questions
    - Use of video
  - ❖ Give positive judgements
- Emotional Regulation (7)
  - ❖ Provide tasks to build competency
    - Strategies developed to control behaviour
      - Access to Anger Programme
  - ❖ Encourage children to reflect
    - Identification of alternative behavioural responses



- Use of role-play
- Use of circle-times
- Use of Solution-Oriented Approach
  - ❖ Give positive judgements
- Normalised Feelings (6)
  - ❖ Give positive judgements
  - ❖ Facilitate peer support

#### Students' Improved Inter-Personal Skills (31)

- Social Skills (12)
  - ❖ Provide tasks to build competency
  - ❖ Encourage children to reflect
    - Use of staff-student positive relationship as template
  - ❖ Give positive judgements
- Listening Skills (11)
  - ❖ Provide tasks to build competency
    - Differentiated tasks offered
  - ❖ Encourage children to reflect
- Friendship Skills (8)
  - ❖ Encourage children to reflect
    - Use of peer positive relationships as template
  - ❖ Provide tasks to build competency

#### Students' School Attendance (26)

- Official goal
- Academic success because of school attendance
- Encourage children to reflect
  - ❖ Use of Solution-Oriented Approach
- Strategies handed to school staff
  - ❖ Link with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators

#### Students' Academic Engagement (22)

- Indirect impact on academic success:
  - ❖ Academic success through improved intrapersonal skills
    - Promoting emotional regulation

- Positive outlook
- Increased self-esteem
- Improved self-concept
  - Improved self-respect
- Resiliency
- ❖ Academic success through attendance
- ❖ Contrast between NG tasks and school tasks
- Encourage children to reflect on engagement
  - ❖ Differentiated approach
- Strategies handed to school staff
- Facilitate peer support
- Give positive judgements

#### Students' Increased Confidence (15)

- Provide tasks to build competency
  - ❖ Emotional Regulation
- Give positive judgements
- Encourage students to reflect on confidence
  - ❖ Circle times
    - Behaviour in NG group as template

#### Students' Positive Affect (9)

- Approach of staff
  - ❖ Non-judgemental
  - ❖ Listening to students
  - ❖ Relaxed
    - Contrast between NG approach and school approach
- Recognition of skills

#### Students' Respite (3)