

A study to identify which key behaviours used during a consultation meeting led to it being viewed as effective in Primary Schools.

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Abstract

Aim: The main aim of this research was to explore what educational psychologists and school staff who have had experience of consultation understand effective consultation to be and to identify which key behaviours led to a view of effectiveness. Current literature in the area of effective consultation suggested several key behaviours such as questioning, directive versus collaborative approaches and question type as important aspects of a consultation being viewed as effective. However, due to the contradictory findings in these areas, more research was needed to establish which key behaviours led to the consultation being viewed as effective by both the educational psychologists and the school staff.

Method: A three phase methodology was employed. Phase One used 109 questionnaires to school staff and 11 questionnaires to educational psychologists to establish what educational psychologists and school staff believed the key aspects of an effective consultation to be. Phase Two used eight video recorded consultations (three were later excluded) in which structured observations were used to establish which key behaviours occurred during the consultations. These observations were then correlated with the key aspects identified in Phase One in order to establish which behaviours were associated with both school staff and educational psychologists' views of consultation. Finally Phase Three used 16 questionnaires, 8

to educational psychologists and 8 to school staff, following taking part in the video recorded consultations, to establish what else could be done to make consultations more effective in the future.

Results: Phase One of the research identified four key aspects of an effective consultation. These were advice/way forward; achieves aims; impact/change and explores issues. These key aspects were correlated with the observed behaviours to evaluate the effectiveness of the consultations. Phase Two established that question type and amount of time spent talking were important aspects of an effective consultation. The number of questions asked was not seen as an important aspect in consultations being viewed as effective. A strong correlation was found between the rating of effectiveness of the consultation and the exploration of issues, a key aspect identified in Phase One. Phase Three identified other aspects of consultation which could be used in the future to make consultations more effective. These were more time for the consultations; involving other staff; a multi-agency approach and good interpersonal relationships.

Discussion: Several features of a consultation, such as the content and key behaviours used within consultation were identified. These aspects were deemed by both educational psychologists and school staff as being key elements which led consultations to be viewed as effective. The features of content and key behaviours which were identified, suggest that if these aspects were included within a

consultation it would help improve the school staff and educational psychologists view to become more favourable and therefore the consultation to be deemed as more effective.

Conclusions: The distinctive contribution this research has made is to the field of evaluating consultation as a method of practice for educational psychologists. The research has led to several key features which practitioners can implement into their practice with the aim of them becoming more effective consultants.

Table of Contents

Abstract	4
List of Tables	13
Chapter One: Introduction.....	14
1.1 Genesis of the study – Personal Interest.....	14
1.2 Rationale for Researching Consultation	17
1.3 Problematic Nature of Consultation	18
1.4 Personal Reflections on Consultation.....	19
1.5 Clarification of the term ‘assessment’	20
1.6 Research Aims.....	21
1.7 Context of the Study.....	21
1.8 Conceptual Basis	22
1.9 Distinctive Contribution.....	25
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	28
2.1 Context.....	28
2.2 Research Search Terms.....	29
2.3 Educational Psychology Practice.....	31
2.4 Definitions of Consultation.....	37
2.5 Principles of consultation.....	42
2.6 Consultation in other professions	45
2.7 Models of consultation.....	48

2.8 Theoretical Underpinnings of Consultation	50
2.9 The Process of Consultation	54
2.10 Effective Consultations	58
2.10.1 Interpersonal relationships and consultation effectiveness	66
2.10.2 Collaboration and consultation effectiveness	73
2.10.3 Role of the expert	76
2.10.4 Use of Questions and consultation effectiveness	80
2.11 Gap in Literature/Research questions	87
Chapter Three: Methodology	92
3.1 Methodology and Epistemology.....	92
3.2 Overview	94
3.3 Phase One	98
3.3.1 Phase One - Research Design	98
3.3.2 Phase One – Sampling	112
3.3.3 Phase One – Difficulties in data collection.	114
3.3.4 Phase One – Data Analysis	116
3.4 Phase Two	119
3.4.1 Phase Two – Research Design	119
3.4.2 Phase Two – Sampling	126
3.4.3 Phase Two – Difficulties in Data collection	128
3.4.4 Phase Two – Data Analysis	129
3.4.5 Phase Two Correlation Method	131
3.5 Phase Three.....	132

3.5.1 Phase Three – Research design	132
3.5.2 Phase Three – Sampling	133
3.5.3 Phase Three – Difficulties in data collection	134
3.5.4 Phase Three – Data Analysis	134
3.6 Ethics	134
Chapter Four: Results	139
4.1. Overview	139
4.2 Phase One – Questionnaires	139
4.2.1 School Staff responses to Questionnaires	142
4.2.2 Educational Psychologists’ responses to Questionnaires	145
4.2.3 Overall Themes from Questionnaires	149
4.3 Phase Two – Video Analysis	152
4.3.1 Time to Talk	157
4.3.2 Question Type	159
4.3.3 Percentage of Questions	160
4.3.4 Other Correlations	161
4.4 Phase Three.....	162
Chapter Five: Discussion	167
5.1 Research Questions.....	167
5.2 Phase One	167
5.2.1 School Staff Questionnaire Results	169
5.2.2 Educational Psychologists Questionnaire Results	172
5.2.3 Overall Questionnaire Results	174

5.2.4 Data supporting the theme – Advice/Way forward.....	178
5.2.5 Data supporting the theme – Achieves Aims	180
5.2.6 Data supporting the theme – Impact/Change	181
5.2.7 Data supporting the theme – Explore Issues	182
5.2.8 Use and Limitations of Phase One Definitions	183
5.3 Phase Two	184
5.3.1 Key Behaviour – Time to talk	185
5.3.2 Key Behaviour – Question Type	188
5.3.3 Key Behaviour – Number of Questions	189
5.4 Phase Three	190
5.5 Unexpected Findings.....	197
5.6 Limitations	199
5.7 Further Research	202
5.8 Implications for Future Practice and Service Delivery	205
5.8.1 Future Practice	206
5.8.2 Service Delivery	210
5.9 Personal Reflection	214
Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	219
6.1 Summary	224
References.....	225
Appendices	242
Appendix 1 - Questionnaire for Phase One of reasecrh	243

Appendix 2 – Letter sent to schools with Phase One Questionnaire.....	244
Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for Phase Three of research	245
Appendix 4 – Likert Rating of Consultation for Phase Two	246
Appendix 5a – Letter for Phase Two of research.....	247
Appendix 5b – Consent Form.....	248
Appendix 6 – Phase One Results for school staff responses to question 1	249
Appendix 7 – Phase One Results for school staff responses to question 2	255
Appendix 8 – Phase One Results for school staff responses to question 3	259
Appendix 9 – Phase One Results for educational psychologists responses to question 1	264
Appendix 10 – Phase One Results for educational psychologists responses to question 2	266
Appendix 11 – Phase One Results for educational psychologists responses to question 3	268
Appendix 12 – Phase Two Results (Transcript One).....	270
Appendix 13 – Phase Two Results (Transcript Two).....	285
Appendix 14 – Phase Two Results (Transcript Three)	298
Appendix 15– Phase Two Results (Transcript Four)	310

Appendix 16 – Phase Two Results (Transcript Five)	324
Appendix 17 - Phase Three Results for school staff responses to Question 1.....	332
Appendix 18 - Phase Three Results for school staff responses to Question 2.....	334
Appendix 19 - Phase Three Results for educational psychologists responses to Question 1.	336
Appendix 20 – Phase Three Results for educational psychologists responses to Question 2.	338
Appendix 21 – Phase One and Three Thematic Analysis Diagrams.....	340
Explanation of diagrams and colour coding.	340

List of Tables

Table 1: table to show the key themes established from the school staff responses to the questionnaire. 145

Table 2: table to show the key themes established from the educational psychologists' responses to the questionnaire. 148

Table 3: table to show the key themes shared by both the educational psychologists' and the school staff from the responses to the questionnaires. 151

Table 4: table to show the correlation coefficients between the definition of consultation and the key behaviours. 156

Table 5: table to show the key themes established from the school staff and educational psychologists' responses to the Phase Three questionnaire. 165

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Genesis of the study – Personal Interest

This research initially formed following my personal experiences and interest, subsequent practice as a class teacher, assistant educational psychologist and a trainee educational psychologist. Following this initial interest I had the opportunity to speak to colleagues about whether this area of research would be of interest to the service in which I was employed.

My story.....During my years as a class teacher I had little contact with the educational psychologist for the school. They appeared at the door of my classroom, took a child whom I had expressed concerns about out of the room and returned them a little while later. After a few weeks I would be given a copy of a report from the special educational needs coordinator with the educational psychologist's findings and a few recommendations, these recommendations were often unrealistic or, as a competent teacher, I had usually already tried. The educational psychologist had not spoken to me to identify my concerns, had not seen the child in the classroom environment and had not discussed what had already been done or put in place to support the child within the classroom. This led me to the belief that, as a profession, educational psychologists did not rate either my

opinion or experience of the children in my care with additional needs.

Whilst this may have just been one particular educational psychologist and the way that individual worked, as I made the move to become an educational psychologist I vowed that I would not become one of 'those' educational psychologists. I would aim to work with the teachers and teaching assistants who were close to the child, to include them in any decision making and value their opinions as the professional they were. This would hopefully help improve things for the child and teacher as I would be able to identify the exact concerns, see what had already been tried and hopefully give information which the class teacher or teaching assistants would find useful and support them in making the choices to help support the child, thus giving them ownership of any strategies or recommendations.

As I began my training, initially as an assistant educational psychologist, I learned that this type of approach where you discussed the concerns with the professionals involved and sought to identify the ways forward together, was called 'consultation'. If this type of practice was already around I began to question why more educational psychologists did not use it. Was it because it did not work? Was it because it was not valued? Was it too hard? Were

other ways of working easier? Did other ways of working gain better results for children and young people?

During my practice as an assistant educational psychologist and during my first year as a trainee educational psychologist I began to look at the practice of other educational psychologists and services to see how consultation was used and how other practitioners viewed consultation.

I began to notice that while consultation was seen as valuable by educational psychologists, it was also more time consuming and needed the commitment from and support of the school staff to make it work. This appeared, in my observations, to be a real barrier to consultation being used.

As I went through my training to become an educational psychologist, and the more I read about consultation, it appeared to raise more questions about its use rather than provide answers to it. I therefore considered there was the need to further research this area before I could make a final judgement about the practice of consultation. This became the focus of my thesis.

Through a literature review I identified broad areas of research. The focus of my thesis became 'what made consultation effective?' I hoped that by answering this question I would have a more

persuasive argument to encourage more reluctant educational psychologists and school staff to try consultation as a form of practice, fulfilling my aim of being an educational psychologist who worked alongside the professionals who knew the child the best; the teachers, the support staff and the parents.

1.2 Rationale for Researching Consultation

The role of the educational psychologist has been the focus of much research in the United Kingdom (Farrell et al, 1989; Farrell et al, 1996; Freeman and Miller, 2001; Lokke et al, 1997). The main focus of this research has been centred around the unique contribution of the educational psychologist and the variation of practice of Educational Psychology Services.

One area of focus for this research (Woods and Farrell, 2006) has been the consultation model of service delivery adopted by many Educational Psychology Services in the UK.

Several recommendations have been made which imply that consultation is the way forward for the practice of educational psychologists (The Elton Report, 1989; Gutkin and Conoley, 1990; Larney, 2003).

Therefore due to my interest into the effectiveness of consultation and the recommendations that this is the appropriate way forward for practice, consultation and its effectiveness seemed an area of research which would be valuable to the future practice of myself and other educational psychologists.

1.3 Problematic Nature of Consultation

One issue which arose when reading literature into consultation was the differing definitions and meanings of consultation. Several research articles discussed the use of 'consultation' however this meant different things in different contexts.

These differences in definition and meaning of what consultation is have led to different uses of consultation. This in turn has led to different practices and outcomes for the consultation. One person may have one definition of consultation, they may be using consultation for a specific purpose, this would result in them conducting consultation in a specific way and getting a specific outcome. This may be completely different to another person with a differing definition of consultation. This issue will be discussed further in the literature review.

1.4 Personal Reflections on Consultation

During my practice both as a teacher and an educational psychologist, the opportunity arose to observe consultation in several contexts. This has led to my view that consultation is defined differently by different educational psychologists and in different contexts.

Practice has led me to an initial formation of a view of what consultation actually is: that is, I would initially define a consultation as a meeting or discussion which takes place between an educational psychologist, a teacher, a parent, a pupil or a combination of the above stakeholders surrounding a particular concern which one of the meeting participants is looking for support and advice about.

A similar view was formed by Woods and Farrell (2006) when they carried out research looking at the consultative approach. 'Consultation generally may precede an individual psychological assessment, and the consultation process may, in some cases, be used to "screen out" those children for whom teachers and others can be supported by the psychologist to carry out the necessary assessment and monitoring' (p.391). From the literature review it is hoped that a definition of consultation can be identified.

The focus of the research was therefore on the effectiveness of these consultation meetings/discussions (the individual consultation meeting) rather than the service delivery of consultation within the whole Educational Psychology Service which previous research had already investigated.

1.5 Clarification of the term 'assessment'

Woods and Farrell (2006) refer to the use of psychological assessment following consultation. This term 'assessment' can be a complex issue. Generally the meaning of assessment differs among researchers.

Many researchers refer to the term assessment meaning the individual psychometric testing of children. In my view, this is a narrow view of assessment looking at assessment as a tool.

Other researchers refer to the term assessment in a broader way, meaning a holistic assessment of a child including their ability, environment, family etc. In this instance assessment is looked at as a process. Consultation can be part of this assessment process rather than a separate event.

Although I hold the belief that assessment is a process which utilises several tools, including psychometric testing, consultation, systemic

work etc for the purpose of this research assessment is used synonymously with the term testing.

1.6 Research Aims

The aim of this research was to identify initially a definition of consultation. This definition could then be used to assess whether the consultation was viewed as effective or not.

The research subsequently established which key behaviours led to a single consultation meeting being viewed as effective by both school staff and educational psychologists.

The two main research questions were:

- What do educational psychologists and school staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?
- What behaviours which occur in consultation are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?

1.7 Context of the Study

This research was conducted in a northern, urban Local Authority. The findings from this research are directly related to that Educational Psychology Service and the way in which the service practises. The

results of the study therefore can not be generalised to other Local Authorities or Educational Psychology Services but may enable them to use the study as a basis for their own research into the effectiveness of their consultation practice.

The Educational Psychology Service in which the research took place does not use consultation as a model of service delivery. Consultation was practised by some of the educational psychologists but was not used by all. The area of consultation is a developing practice within the service but not the main method of practice used by the educational psychologists. The approach used within the Educational Psychology Service is eclectic. Some educational psychologists use consultation, others work directly with the child using assessment, and others use a mixture of methods depending on the situation. The area of consultation has been the focus of several service development days to help encourage more confidence in using it. This is why this research was of interest to the development of this particular Educational Psychology Service.

1.8 Conceptual Basis

‘The theory of knowledge is known as epistemology; it is the area of philosophy devoted to describing how we come to know things or believe them to be true or real’ (Barker et al, 2002 p.11).

Although there are different epistemological stances which can be used in research, such as positivism, in this research there was only one stance which could have been utilised. The stance used in this research is that of critical realism.

While positivism aims to gain knowledge from direct observation or experience, although part of this research uses a direct observation approach, positivism does not take into account the relationship between the observation and the values and experiences of the researcher. Positivism states that all observations are free from values. The positivist stance is that 'science becomes credible and possible because every scientist looking at the same bit of reality sees the same thing. However, it has been amply demonstrated that what observers 'see' is not determined simply by the characteristics of the thing observed; the characteristics and perspectives of the observer also have an effect' (Robson, 2008, p21). Therefore, the stance of positivism could not be used in this research.

Another stance is that of relativism. Relativism claims that there is no true reality. Observations we make are interpreted differently due to the differing meanings and classifications which people have. In essence, 'reality can be constructed only by means of a conceptual system, and hence there can be no objective reality because different cultures and societies have different conceptual systems' (Robson, 2008, p22).

As my personal view is that there is an independent reality the stance of relativism did not fit with my own views of the world. This opinion is shared with that of Scott (2007) who stated that 'objects in the world, and in particular social objects, exist whether the observer or researcher is able to know them or not.' (Scott, 2007, p14).

The epistemological stance taken in this research was that of realism. Bhaskar (1975) stated that realism suggests that there is a real world which is independent of whoever is observing it. Within this stance the researcher aims to understand the world as much as possible.

This realist stance evolved into the stance of critical realism. This is where the researcher is aware that the real world, although independent, can be interpreted differently by individuals.

The stance of critical realism maintains the understanding that there is an independent reality which exists; however, it is not possible to understand fully how this reality works due to the ever changing values and experiences of the individuals which interpret and explain the reality. Therefore any attempts at explaining the world are open to critique and individual interpretation. As the social world is constantly changing an individual's interpretation of events and beliefs are also constantly changing. The understanding of the world is therefore only based on the individual's interpretation at that exact moment in time (Scott, 2005).

The stance affected the choice of methodology of this research. The first aim was to establish what individuals view consultation to be, this may be different depending on how individuals view the 'real world / reality' therefore establishing a shared understanding of consultation would help ensure that all individuals have the same interpretation and reduce misconceptions. Another part of the research was to establish key behaviours which led consultation to be viewed as effective. This part of the research would help establish the 'real world / reality', independent of individuals' interpretation.

It was therefore hoped that by using the methods chosen that both the 'real world / reality' and the individual interpretations would be taken into account and therefore a more thorough understanding of consultation could be established.

1.9 Distinctive Contribution

Although a large amount of research has been conducted into consultation: what are the definitions?; what are the processes?; whether consultation is effective, there still remain some areas in which further research is needed. The main area in which the research is limited is looking at what processes in consultation lead the participants to view it as effective. The majority of studies which look at consultation effectiveness focus on only one viewpoint, either the consultants or the consultees, (Medway, 1979; Farouk, 1999).

One deficiency in focus of the previous research is that multiple definitions of consultation are used and these are primarily given from the researcher's experience, (Medway 1979; Bozic, 2004). So although the issue of definitions of consultation is addressed in the previous research and is therefore not a 'gap', it has not been investigated from both participants of the research, the consultant and the consultee. Therefore a definition which has been established by the participants of the consultation is important, both the consultee and the consultant. The second deficiency in focus of the previous research is focusing on the actual behaviours in consultation which led the consultation to be viewed as effective. The key behaviour of questioning has undergone some research, therefore again can not be classified as a 'gap' in the research, but no firm conclusions have been drawn, (Bergan and Tombari, 1976; Hughes and DeForest, 1993; Hughes et al, 1997; Benn et al, 2008). The second key behaviour of time (meaning the amount of time the individuals spend talking in the consultation meetings), which from the researcher's observations appear important, does not appear to have been researched.

Therefore, the distinctive contribution that this piece of research aims to make is whether key behaviours of questions and time have an impact on the view of whether a consultation is effective from the point of view of both the consultant and the consultee. Although these areas have been included in previous research, no firm conclusions

have been drawn and they were not the primary focus of the previous research, therefore although not addressing a 'gap' in the current research this piece of research aims to address the deficiencies of the previous research into the area of consultation.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Context

As previously discussed in Chapter One, experience as both a teacher and during training to become an educational psychologist led to an interest in consultation, most specifically whether the practice of consultation was actually effective in leading to positive change for both the young person and the families and professionals most closely involved with that young person.

The literature review follows the process through initially identifying why consultation has been suggested as the 'way forward' for the practice of educational psychologists to whether research has shown this method of practice to be effective.

To achieve the aims of this study to identify those behaviours in consultation which lead them to be viewed as effective, a wide range of research into consultation needs to be undertaken.

The literature review focuses initially on educational psychology practice and why consultation is being given more attention and used more in the practice of educational psychologists. It is hoped that

consultation would be defined and the processes involved in consultation fully explored.

The literature review will thereafter focus on the area of research which examines what makes consultation effective. This research is likely to highlight what has already been established as key behaviours used during consultation which led them to be viewed as effective, but will also highlight areas of further research and any gaps within the field.

Finally, the literature review will help establish the exact research questions which will be the focus of this research.

2.2 Research Search Terms

To initially identify literature around the area of consultation I started with the journal articles from the Educational Psychology in Practice, special edition in 2000, in which all of the articles had a focus on consultation in educational psychology. From this I was able to extract some key authors and journals with which to continue my searching.

I also carried out an initial search using the online databases, CSA Illumina; Education Databases; Medline and Web of Knowledge through the University library.

The following search terms were used:

- Consultation
- Effective
- Quality
- Positive
- Education
- Educational psychology
- Discussions
- Conversations

Derivatives and various combinations of these search terms were used to identify some of the journal articles. Again once the journal articles had been selected and read, and using the reference sections from these key articles, further reading was identified to expand the area of consultation. These wider references were then used.

Once the journal articles were read they were included if directly related to the topic area of consultation and what makes it effective. Articles were excluded if they were not directly related. The articles which were excluded were read and used to give a more extensive understanding of the overall topic area but were not directly used within the research.

2.3 Educational Psychology Practice

There have been significant changes in Educational Psychology Services in the last twenty years. These changes include the nature of the educational psychologists' role, the training route and the distinctive contribution that educational psychologists make, (The Green Paper, 2011, Farrell, 2009). The role of the educational psychologist and the unique contribution of the profession have come under the spotlight. Several pieces of research have been conducted to look at the role and functions of educational psychologists in these changing times (Kelly and Gray, 2000; Farrell et al, 2006; Squires et al, 2007; Farrell, 2009). These pieces of research have highlighted areas of educational psychology practice which needed to be developed and changed in order to keep up with the needs of the schools and families with which the educational psychologist works. Farrell (2009) stated that educational psychologists still primarily used assessment as the main focus of their work, this approach is rooted in the medical model and fails to take into account the contribution that the family, school and environment can have on the child. As previously discussed in the introduction section, this and the following research studies refer to the term assessment. This term, in these studies, unless stated otherwise means the individual testing of children rather than assessment being a wider process. Farrell et al (2006) found that this method of practice was unproductive and limited and a more

problem solving and collaborative way of practice was the way forward.

The DfEE review (Kelly and Gray, 2000) investigated the practices used by Educational Psychology Services, several functions were listed, these included individual assessment (testing), observation, working with parents and teachers, giving advice and consultation. Consultation was seen as a key aspect of early intervention. However, although Educational Psychology Services claimed that consultation was part of their approach, several schools and teachers in the research claimed that it was not used. The outcome of the research stated that schools, Local Authorities and educational psychologists all valued the use of consultation and problem solving at an earlier stage, in fact the research stated, 'Consultation and problem solving is seen as an important aspect of educational psychology services work in the future..... This approach makes more effective use of educational psychologist time. Rather than assessing and working with one child the educational psychologist might instead consult and problem solve with three or four teachers over three or four individuals or groups of children. It also enables teachers to discuss individual cases with the educational psychologist at a much earlier stage' (p.72).

Several government documents (DFEE 2000; Code of Practice, 2001; Every Child Matters, 2003) have encouraged local authorities

to become more cost and time effective, with a focus on early identification and prevention. This has led to many services adopting consultation as their model of service delivery. Due to the nature and function of consultation in which numerous cases can be discussed at an earlier stage without the need for assessment of individual children, consultation a much less time consuming and resource heavy approach. As this approach can be undertaken 'at an earlier stage' as suggested by the DfEE review in 2000, it is likely to lead to earlier identification of needs and therefore meet the needs of the Local Authority.

Following the implementation of the Every Child Matters agenda, research into the role and functions of educational psychologists was carried out by Farrell et al (2006) and more recently the role was discussed in The Green Paper (2011). The research indicated that despite a recommendation for early intervention and more time and cost effective approaches, educational psychologists were still 'too heavily involved in statutory assessments and that this has prevented them from expanding their work as to make more effective contributions that can maximise the added value to ECM outcomes for children' (p.8). The recommendations from the research were a reduction in statutory assessment (testing) and an expansion in the educational psychologist role in which the change for the child was the focus. One way in which this could be achieved would be the adoption of consultation. 'In essence such work helps to focus the

EPs' attention on the system in which the children live and work and less on the individual child. Hence effective consultation requires EPs to work with other agencies in developing collaborative problem solving strategies' (p.15).

However, the idea of using consultation is not new. The use of consultation has been a recommendation for educational psychologists over the past 30 years. Historically, The Elton Report (1989) recommended consultation for educational psychologists to use in their role in support to school. The idea was supported by Gutkin and Conoley (1990) who suggested that for the educational psychologist to effectively meet the needs of the child, the educational psychologist needs to engage with staff in schools; that it is the adults within a school system that have the capacity to effect change. By using this idea, the adults working within a school should be the main focus of educational psychology involvement.

'The educational psychologist can be a very important resource for the school. The psychologist's knowledge of the school and its context is key. Through regular consultation with the schools, educational psychology services can provide help in clarifying problems and devising problem solving strategies: in carrying out specialised assessments, including techniques for managing behaviour, and in evaluating individual pupil progress. In addition to working with individual children, the educational psychologist can

work with groups of pupils and teachers and learning support assistants at the classroom or whole school level, for example helping to develop knowledge and skills for school staff and assisting with projects to raise achievement and promote inclusion' (DfES, 2001, p136).

Consultation is currently used by educational psychologists for a variety of reasons. One reason suggested by Wagner and Gillies (2001) is that 'consultation has a wider school influence than the more traditional model of educational psychology with its individual focus' (p.149). Consultation can be conducted, rather than at an individual level, at a more systemic level, therefore having a greater impact than on only one child at a time which the traditional model of practice would achieve. Farrell (2009) stated that 'a successful psychological consultant is the evidence of a variety of modes of working e.g. discussions about individual children; curriculum development and systems work across different situations' (p77).

Bramlett and Murphy (1998) stated that 'consultation emerged in response to increasing dissatisfaction with the medical and psychometric approaches to treating school problems. Criticisms were made of the 'refer-test-place' approach that continues to dominate the field of special education, an area in which school psychologists are integrally involved. Many students who need academic or behavioural interventions are excluded from general

education because of a categorical placement system that classifies students based on whether or not they qualify for special education services. Students who do not qualify often remain unserved. Consultation is one possible mechanism for increasing the number of students served and for preventing future problems' (p.30).

This view supports that of Kelly and Gray (2000) who believed that consultation would be a way of reaching more children and giving more support than the traditional model of direct work with the individual child.

Larney (2003) claims 'consultation is fast emerging as a popular alternative to the traditional referral-driven models of working which are characteristic of most educational psychology services in the UK' (p.5).

Leadbetter (2006) identified that consultation is one of the fastest growing practices of educational psychologists in the UK, supported by the research conducted by Farrell et al (2006) and Squires et al (2007) who identify that consultation is an effective approach for early intervention and identification when working alongside both teachers and parents. It moves educational psychologists away from the traditional assessment (testing) method and to an approach with a broader focus than the individual child.

All studies which have been looked at have suggested a move away from the traditional assessment practice to that of a consultation model. This has raised the question of whether this suggested way of practising is actually effective in making a change for the individual child and whether it is the best approach to use. It has to be asked, what is consultation?; what are the processes involved in consultation which would make it the best choice of practice for an educational psychologist?; and what studies have shown it to be effective in making a change for the child?

2.4 Definitions of Consultation

Prior to carrying out research into what makes consultation effective, it is important to establish what the definition of consultation is. Hanko (1990) points out, 'there are as many interpretations of the term consultation as there are contexts in which it is useful to consider jointly and take counsel' (p.56). This idea is supported by Leadbetter (2006) who suggested that consultation is a term which is used in various contexts and situations but also has multiple meanings.

There are numerous definitions of consultation. Without a firm definition of consultation it may lead to different expectations and inevitable confusion. With a firm definition, expectations of the consultation meeting are clearly established and understood, and the

effectiveness can then be measured against these clearly defined criteria.

One definition of consultation suggested by Conoley and Conoley (1982) is a very broad and generic definition. Conoley and Conoley claim, 'consultation is a voluntary, non-supervisory relationship between professionals from differing fields established to aid one on his or her professional functioning' (p.2). This appears to be a very limited view of consultation as it fails to establish what consultation actually entails, other than being a relationship.

Medway (1979) who believed that gaining an agreed definition of consultation was essential prior to researching how effective the consultation was, describes consultation as 'collaborative problem-solving between a mental health specialist (the consultant) and one or more persons (the consultees) who are responsible for providing some form of psychological assistance to another (the client)' (p.276). Medway's definition is taken from the view of several psychologists (Alpert, 1976; Caplan, 1970; and Lambert, 1974) with a common view of what consultation is.

Bramlett and Murphy (1998), using an amalgamation of several researchers in the USA, define consultation as 'an indirect, problem-solving approach whereby school psychologists work with teachers or

other caregivers to assist children with either learning or adjustment concerns or both' (p.31).

Wagner (2000) defines consultation as a 'voluntary, collaborative, non-supervisory approach, established to aid the functioning of a system and its inter-related systems' (p. 11).

The definitions by Medway (1979); Bramlett and Murphy (1998) and Wagner (2000) give a little more insight into consultation by giving some guidelines on the process of consultation being problem solving and aiming to make changes to either an individual, group or system.

Bozic (2004) further defines consultation as 'when an EP effects change for a pupil through working with an important person in the pupil's life such as their teacher or teaching assistant – rather than through direct work with the child' (p.291). Bozic's definition was established by taking the original idea of a consultative style proposed by Caplan (1993). Bozic used the two extremes in consultative style and stated that 'EP consultative work should operate somewhere between these two extremes' (p.293).

Both Medway and Bozic were able to discuss in their research the underlying reasons for their choice of definition of consultation. This lends weight to their definitions as it shows they are based on the amalgamation of several other psychologists' ideas and research

outcomes. However, one criticism of their definitions is that they are solely based on the psychologist's viewpoint rather than a definition from both parties, the consultant and the consultee. This leads to the definition and therefore the expectations of the consultation being about the needs of the consultant and not the needs of the consultee, as they have not been established, are not measured nor assessed.

Stringer et al (1992) suggest 'it does not actually matter that there might be any number of interpretations – in theory and practice. Any differences in approach present opportunities to learn and develop. In addition, and we believe it to be crucial, it is possible to understand and practise consultation in a way which fits best with oneself' (p.88). This view is opposite to my own. It is my view, in agreement with Medway, that whatever consultation approach is adopted, within that there must be an agreed definition between the consultant and consultee which must be established prior to a consultation meeting taking place in order to prevent any misunderstanding of expectations and outcomes.

Although the research has shown that there are numerous definitions of consultation used by the practitioners, the goals of consultation remain the same. According to Larney (2003) there are two main goals, these are to remediate and to prevent. This view was supported by Bramlett and Murphy (1998) who stated that consultation has two main goals, 'the short term goal of resolving a

students presenting problem could be described as remedial, whereas the long term goal of improving consultees' problem solving skills is preventative in nature' (p.31).

Kelly and Gray (2000) claim that the aim of consultation is 'about working with the school to help them think through the issue, clarify the problem and then come up with solutions to the problem. Ownership of the problem remains with the key person raising the concern. The Educational Psychologist works to empower them with the skills and knowledge they need to be part of the solution' (p.72). This supports the idea by Larney that consultation aims to alleviate any current concern and by developing skills the key person is able to prevent further issues. This idea is also supported by Gonzalez et al (2004) in their definition of consultation.

'As an alternative to traditional service delivery approaches (e.g. refer-test-place), consultation's most distinguishing feature is its indirect nature. Through a collaborative and voluntary problem-solving process, a school psychologist delivers services to a teacher who is subsequently responsible for providing services to a student in his or her charge. In doing so, the school psychologist adds to or improves upon the teacher's knowledge and problem solving repertoire, with the net effect of enhancing the teacher's present and future effectiveness with other children' Gonzalez, et al (2004, p31).

The definition by Gonzalez et al (2004) appears to be the closest and most relevant definition of consultation to that of myself, as this is the type of consultation which has been observed as occurring in the practice of educational psychologists. This definition, however, lacks information about the processes involved in the consultation or about what the 'delivered services' actually are. From the information provided in the Gonzalez et al paper it is unclear where this definition of consultation arose from and it appears to be from the perspective of the consultant rather than either the consultee or a joint definition established by all stakeholders involved in the process. This appears to be a similar factor in the previously mentioned definitions. Therefore this current piece of research needs to establish a working definition of consultation from both the consultants and the consultees' perspective. The working definition needs to be established in order to then enable a measure of 'effectiveness' to be taken against the definition.

2.5 Principles of consultation

Gutkin and Curtis (1982), summarising several research studies into consultation, report nine key characteristics which define a consultative approach:

- consultation involves indirect service delivery;
- consultation is characterized by a trusting relationship between consultant and consultee;

- consultant and consultee are of equal status;
- the consultee is actively involved in the problem solving process;
- consultees have the right to accept or reject any suggestions made by the consultant;
- the relationship is voluntary;
- the consultation should be confidential;
- the focus of the consultation is on work related problems of the consultee
- the consultation has dual goals of remediation and prevention.

West and Idol (1987) claim that consultation has six characteristics:

- it is a problem-solving process
- it occurs between a consultant (help-giver) and consultee (help-seeker)
- it is voluntary
- the consultant and consultee share solving the problem
- the aim is to solve the current problem
- the solving of the problems should give the consultee the tools to handle future problems and concerns more skilfully.

These core characteristics given by West and Idol (1987) appear to fit very well with the definition of consultation suggested by Gonzalez et al (2004). It agrees that consultation should be problem solving in a

way that improves the consultee's knowledge and skills, it should be collaborative and voluntary. The characteristics suggested by Gutkin and Curtis and West and Idol are almost a definition of consultation in itself. It also agrees with one of the core principles in the definition suggested by Larney (2003) and supported by Bramlett and Murphy (1998) stating that consultation aims to remediate and prevent.

However, the principles suggested by Gutkin and Curtis (1982) also suggest that in the consultation, although a voluntary process, it may be less collaborative and more directive in nature. They state that one of the principles is that the consultee can accept or reject suggestions made by the consultant. At face value this may suggest that collaboration is not key and the consultant is the expert in the situation. The idea of collaboration and directive consultations are discussed further in the literature review.

These principles were suggested about consultation in general, and not more specifically about consultation practice in educational psychology. Wagner (2000) stated that the key notions central to educational psychology consultation are:

- Psychological processes are intrinsic in the functioning of organisations.
- Schools make a difference in a variety of ways.
- Everything Educational Psychologists do is consultation.

- Educational Psychologists are most effective when they work collaboratively with teachers and the school as a whole organisation.
- Being open and transparent helps promote collaboration and a transfer of skills.
- Consultation is a framework for intervention.
- Consultation is a key aspect in the shifting of teacher's perceptions and leading towards change (Wagner, 2000 p12).

These principles are similar to those suggested previously by West and Idol and Gutkin and Curtis. They are, however, a little more broad and the idea that everything an educational psychologist does is consultation makes consultation a process that is very difficult to define and measure. Wagner also acknowledges that consultation is more effective when it is collaborative but that this is not always the case and that collaboration needs to be built and is a skill which is developed.

2.6 Consultation in other professions

As well as educational psychologists using consultation in their practice, other professions also use consultation. However, the term consultation appears to mean different things in these various

professions. This has further led to confusion about what consultation is and made getting a firm definition of consultation difficult.

The term consultation is widely used in professions such as medicine, social care and business.

'General practice has distinguished itself from other forms of medical practice through its focus on the encounter between doctor and patient.' (Bower et al, 2001, p3) This encounter has been labelled as a consultation.

One definition of consultation in general practice suggested by Tuckett et al (1985) was that consultation should be viewed as 'a meeting between experts, where each party has a unique understanding of the problem and the task faced by both is to effectively communicate these understandings and collaborate over management.' (cited in Bower et al, 2001, p6)

However, Bower et al (2001) identified that a similar issue in general practice was the difficulty in defining what consultation actually is and numerous definitions exist. This problematic nature in defining consultation was previously discussed and appears to also occur in other professions use of the term consultation.

Consultation is also used in clinical psychology. Consultation in this arena was defined by Bryon and Hearst (2005) as 'a process of joint enquiry and exploration – an advice or help-giving relationship between consultee and consultant'. (p115)

Both the definitions of consultation in general practice and clinical psychology focus on the advice giving and expert role of the consultant in solving a given problem by the consultee.

This is even more apparent in the use of consultation in the business arena. Fincham et al (2008) stated that in business the consultant is 'an outsider, who brings privileged knowledge in', and used this knowledge 'as a way of framing their understanding of the client's problem.' (p1147-6).

This suggests that the consultant is the expert and uses this expert knowledge to fix a problem for the consultee, not the collaborative, joint problem solving approach suggested within educational psychology consultation.

In these other professions, although consultation is used it is not necessarily the same thing as discussed in educational psychology research. Consultation in these other professions appears to focus on a more within person problem where the consultee is the problem

holder looking at the consultant to give advice and ways of fixing the problem.

Consultation is a very varied label for various meetings with a consultant and a consultee but the practice, outcomes and intentions of these meetings can differ greatly. Therefore, due to the different nature of consultation in other professions, although acknowledging that it does take place the focus of this research is on consultation within educational psychology.

2.7 Models of consultation

Wagner (2000) identified that the definitions for consultation are broad and 'within this broad definition, there is a possibility for different practices and models.' (p.11) As previously discussed these differences in definitions lead to different practices and outcomes. One reason for the different practices and the different outcomes may be the model of consultation used.

Larney (2003) suggests that the key models of consultation are:

- mental health consultation which is rooted in psychoanalytic theory;
- behavioural consultation which draws from social learning theory;

- process and organizational /systems consultation which draws from a model of group and organizational psychology.

Mental Health consultation was originally developed in the 1960s and was based on psychoanalytic theory. The primary focus of mental health consultation is to establish why the consultee is having difficulties in a particular area and then help the consultee overcome these difficulties to deal with the concern independently (Caplan, 1970).

Behavioural consultation has most widely been used and researched within the field of Educational Psychology (Gutkin and Curtis, 1999). Zins and Erchul (1995) suggest that behavioural consultation is based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and the primary focus is to work collaboratively with the consultee to identify the concern, manipulate the environment to improve the concern and ultimately eliminate the problem.

Process and organizational /systems consultation both come from the field of psychology of groups. Schein (1988) suggest the primary aim is to make people more aware of the events and processes within the environment and how these affect the way people work. This model of consultation is primarily used in business.

While it would appear that general practice and clinical psychology use consultation based on the mental health model where they adhere to the belief that there is a within person problem which can be fixed by an expert giving advice, educational psychology consultation appears to use consultation based on the behavioural model of consultation which focuses on the problem being within the environmental context and not within person and that by joint, collaborative problem solving a solution can be reached. This idea is supported by Gutkin and Curtis (1999) who claim that behavioural consultation is the model most widely used by educational psychologists and has been mostly widely researched in both the USA and the UK.

2.8 Theoretical Underpinnings of Consultation

A number of psychological theories underpin consultation. These include personal construct psychology, symbolic interactionism and social constructivism.

Personal construct psychology argues that people are constantly trying to make sense of the world through experimenting with events and behaviours. Consultation based on personal construct psychology would aim to, through discussion, develop an alternative way to constructing the events (Ravenette, 1999).

Symbolic interactionism is concerned with the world and how people act within it. People develop meanings of themselves, others and behaviours through experiences and social interactions. Consultation is aimed at identifying what a persons' meaning are and then by giving this understanding opening up the possibility of change (Hargreaves, 1972).

Social constructivism is concerned with the way people view the world. Consultation aims to enable teachers and educational psychologists to construct new ways of understanding and describing problems so they can be viewed differently (Burr, 1995).

Psychologists often used to practise under their own theoretical frameworks and were often dismissive and even highly critical of other approaches. However, this conflict appears less noticeable these days (Norcross and Newman, 2003). Norcross and Newman identified that while psychologists may choose to work from one single framework there is a greater tolerance for diversity and even amalgamating models.

House (2003) supported this view suggesting that divisions in theory have become less prominent and new tools have appeared including combined ones.

Consultation may draw upon different areas of psychology. It may not always be apparent to the consultee what psychological underpinning the consultant is drawing upon.

As with the theoretical underpinnings of psychology being different, a number of tools and methods can be used within the consultation. These tools may include solution-focused brief therapy, systems thinking, motivational interviewing, narrative therapy etc.

Motivational Interviewing is concerned with helping a person explore and resolve behaviours by verbalising their own arguments for not changing and developing their own motivations to change (Miller, 1983). Motivational Interviewing is based on Personal Construct Psychology.

Solution focused therapy does not focus on the problems but rather on the hope and possible futures. Consultation aims to help, through conversations and questioning, the consultees to identify their own solutions from what is already working and exceptions to when the problem is occurring (de Shazer, 1985). Solution focused therapy is based within the constructionist framework.

Systems thinking was developed from Family therapy. It claims that understanding is related to social systems. Consultation would aim to encourage teachers to view problems not as within child but as within

the social situation. This shift from within child to environment enables opportunities for change (Burnham, 1986). Systems thinking is based within social constructionism.

Narrative therapy is interested in helping people shape their lives through their life stories. People may have developed stories that are not helpful to explain the problems that they are unable to solve. Consultation aims to enable the person to discover preferred identities through externalising the problem and identifying new stories in which they showed resilience (White and Epston, 1990). Narrative therapy is based within the post-structuralist philosophy.

‘Narrative therapy, Solution focused brief therapy and systemic therapy share a lot of the same techniques as they are built on similar philosophies.’ (Smith and Weatherhead, 2012).

These tools have their groundings in the constructionist theory of psychology. The constructionist theory argues that individuals construct their knowledge and meanings from their experiences and by using language can help with critical thinking and problem solving in order to help understand the world around them. Again, as with not necessarily being aware of what the psychological underpinning is that the consultant is using, the tool which the consultant uses may not be apparent or the consultant may use a combination of several

tools during any one consultation meeting, as suggested by Norcross and Newman (2003) and House (2003).

In the Local Authority in which this research is based, consultation is seen as problem solving in nature, this would imply that one suitable tool for the consultation would be that of Solution Focused Therapy. The implication of this would be that in consultation, there would be less focus on the problem and more of a focus on the exceptions to the problem behaviours and suggestions of ways forward. This idea is based on the work of De Shazer (1988). If a different underpinning theory of consultation was taken then the consultation meeting may look different and the emphasis may be on a different area, e.g. the system around the child is looking at consultation from a systems thinking approach.

2.9 The Process of Consultation

‘Conversations that make a difference lie at the heart of consultation’ (Wagner, 2000, p14).

Conversations with school staff explore concerns, patterns, perceptions, beliefs and ideas. The aim of the conversations is to make changes. However, consultation is a more structured approach and is not just about a member of school staff and an educational psychologist having a conversation. Processes involved in these

conversations help bring about a change and make the conversations into 'consultation'.

Wagner (2000) highlights four of the processes in consultation which can help effect change:

- Externalising the problem/concern – helping the consultee externalise the problem or concern and help the consultee view the problem differently and then act differently towards it.
- Taking the 'helicopter' view – by taking a more detached view of the concern, the consultee may begin to access their own problem solving skills.
- The paradigm shift – focussing on connections and patterns in the problem can help the consultee see the interactions between the person and the situation. This can create new opportunities for change linked to both the person and the situation.
- Engaging in self reflexivity – by taking part in the consultation process the consultee is helped to recognise their own pattern of behaviour, change can then develop through taking different actions (p.15).

When working using these processes of consultation, the educational psychologist can open up the opportunity for exploration and discovery (Wagner, 2000). This can be achieved by enabling the consultee to explore the issue and then to look at solutions and ways

forward. This, as suggested by all of the definitions of consultation, is a key aspect. The way in which this is done depends on the psychological underpinning of the consultation used by the consultant, for example in a narrative approach the consultant helps the consultee explore preferred identities in which they had shown some resilience and use this to help them go forward; in systems thinking the consultant would help the consultee explore the systems and environment in which the issue is based and look at changes to these external factors which could result in changes with the issue.

There are several ways in which consultation can be adopted by educational psychologists. Leadbetter (2006) in a review of the literature on consultation found three main ways:

- 'Consultation as the model of service delivery'
- 'Consultation as a defined task'
- 'Consultation as a specific activity.'

Consultation as the model of service delivery appears self-explanatory. It is reported to be 'the model by which an educational psychology service is delivered to schools', (Leadbetter, 2006, p.22). However, Leadbetter concludes that although a service is described as using consultation as a model of service delivery the actual practice used by the educational psychologists varies greatly.

Consultation as a defined task is where the individual educational psychologist sets up a 'consultation meeting' with a member of school staff. The meeting will then use one of the principles of consultation aiming at problem-solving and working collaboratively with the consultee on a particular case or issue. The method of the meeting can take various forms depending on the theoretical basis of the individual educational psychologist, e.g. solution focused. These consultation meetings will then help explore and highlight areas of concern. By working with the key people, solutions will be suggested and discussed and a plan decided upon to try some of the suggested solutions, therefore giving the key person a way forward.

Consultation as a specific activity describes the way educational psychologists and others meet in order to gain and share information, that is, the general way in which an educational psychologist has conversations. This is on a regular and unplanned basis and can be seen as a general skill educational psychologists possess. However, as previously stated, by Wagner (2000), consultation is not just a conversation and it has to follow some of the consultative processes. Leadbetter states that within this regular, unplanned activity there has to be some form of information seeking or eliciting and some sharing of information and advice. Leadbetter concludes that consultation as a specific activity is 'more fluid than a more structured consultation meeting' (p.23).

For the purpose of this research, the focus will be on consultation as a defined task. It will look at the effectiveness of the 'consultation meeting' with the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) or teacher. This was the area chosen, as the service in which the research was undertaken does not use consultation as a model of service delivery, but most of the educational psychologists do carry out 'consultation meetings' with their schools about individual children and concerns. Therefore the service uses consultation as a defined task. This is a new development within the service and an area which has not yet been evaluated.

Consultation is an increasingly popular model of service delivery (Larney, 2003). Individual services have researched the effectiveness of the model within their own services. However, Larney states that the research studies which have looked into consultation effectiveness have not been designed well enough to provide sound evidence to support the claims that consultation can be used as an effective and positive alternative to the more traditional practice of the educational psychologists.

2.10 Effective Consultations

As previously discussed, many services and educational psychologists use consultation in their practice. Research which looks at the actual processes involved in the consultations appears to

be limited and will be the main focus of this research. 'There have been very few studies that have enquired into what exactly educational psychologists do under the guise of consultation, why they choose to do this rather than some other activity and how effective it is' Leadbetter (2006, p.19).

A review of educational psychology practice by the DfEE in 2000 recommends consultation as an appropriate model of practice.

Stoiber and Vanderwood (2008) carried out research into the practice of educational psychologists. Psychologists were asked, through a survey, to identify which practices employed by themselves they identified as using most often, being most competent at and which practice they considered was most valued. The psychologists in the study identified intellectual assessment as the practice that they use most with consultation a close second. Also, the psychologists considered that they were most competent when using intellectual assessment, again followed by consultation. When asked which practice they considered was most valued, the psychologists rated consultation as the most valued with intellectual assessment being in 9th place. These findings indicate that although psychologists consider that consultation is the most valuable practice it is not the practice that they use most commonly or feel they are most competent at using. These findings supported previous studies in which it was identified that despite the proposed shift in practice of

educational psychologists, as discussed previously, the move from more traditional practice methods to consultation has not been made. (Anton-LaHart & Rosenfield, 2004; Curtis et al, 2002). Stoiber and Vanderwood (2008) suggest that this would indicate that further training and research into consultation is needed to enable psychologists to increase their competence in the practice. However, the reduced use of consultation may also have been due to the context of the consultations and the reasons for the consultation, i.e. 40% of the students were below average in maths and reading and therefore intellectual testing may have been a primary need for the schools to establish levels of functioning rather than a more consultative way of working.

A similar study was carried out by Watkins, Crosby and Pearson (2001) who investigated which practices of the educational psychologists were most valued by the consultees. This differed from the Stoiber et al (2008) study in which the consultants were asked the question.

Using a questionnaire, Watkins et al (2001), aimed to establish which practice was most valued by the consultees. The consultees rated consultation as the third most important practice that the educational psychologist uses. This contradicted the findings of Stoiber et al who identified that consultants believed that consultation would be viewed as the most important by the consultees. In fact, Watkins et al

identified that assessment and special education input were viewed as the most important practices of the educational psychologist, a more traditional view of the educational psychologist role. This view that more traditional practices are more valued may impact on any research into the effectiveness of consultation due to the fact that if school staff (the consultees) are interested in more traditional practices they will consider that by getting a 'consultation' they are not receiving the assessment and special educational input they are wanting and will therefore be disappointed in the consultation and view it as not effective. This is one concern which will need to be discussed in this piece of research.

However, the result in the Watkins et al study should be interpreted with caution as the questionnaires were only given to the staff within one school, which could lead to the conclusion that this particular school had a set view of the role of the educational psychologist.

Wagner describes the aim of consultation as follows:

'Consultation in an EPS context aims to bring about difference at the level of the individual child, the group/class or the organisation/whole school level. It involves a process in which concerns are raised, and a collaborative and recursive process is initiated that combines joint problem exploration, assessment, intervention and review' (Wagner, 2000, p.11).

According to Larney (2003) 'the key purpose of consultation is to achieve change, not only within the consultee, but within the system or organization as a whole' (p.9).

Therefore, a question which needs asking is whether consultation is effective in making these changes for the consultee and at the individual, group or system level, and what makes the consultations effective.

Larney (2003) pointed out that: 'perhaps the greatest reason for the slow up-take of consultation as a model of working, however, is simply that it has yet to prove itself as an effective and reliable model of working.' (p.17).

A study carried out by Medway (1979) reviewed several research studies into effective consultations between 1972 and 1979. Medway found that in the 29 studies reviewed, 76% of the research studies into consultation found the consultations to be, at least, partially effective, with 28% stating that the consultations were fully effective and that the consultations resulted in 'consistent positive effects'. (p.276) The consultations were deemed as 'effective' if they returned a 'positive result'. This 'positive result' was not defined and no examples of what positive results occurred to make the consultation effective were given. This means it is difficult from this

piece of research to determine what exactly happens during the consultation meetings to make them be viewed as effective.

Medway's findings were supportive of and similar to those of Mannino and Shore (1975) who also conducted a review of the consultation research during the early 1970s and found a 78% partial success rate for the consultations. Consultations were measured as effective in these studies by having a 'positive effect', including change in behaviour or attitude of the consultees or improvements in the behaviour of the clients. This provides a way to measure whether the consultation was effective or not.

Both the studies by Medway and Mannino and Shore do not state who determined the consultations as effective. It does not state whether the consultation was viewed as effective on the part of the consultant or on the part of the consultee. The studies each evaluated consultation effectiveness from only one of the viewpoints and failed to establish whether the consultation had been effective for both of the parties involved. This could mean that when the consultant viewed the consultation as effective, the consultee had a very different viewpoint and may have not found any 'positive effects' from the consultation whatsoever. Although these studies are rather dated, the findings are still relevant to today's research into consultation effectiveness.

Further research reviews carried out by Sheridan, Welch and Orme (1996) using 46 studies from 1985 to 1995 also found a 76% success rate for consultations. Again consultation was seen as effective if 'positive results', which were not defined, were achieved. This would indicate along with the results of Mannino and Shore (1975) and Medway (1979) that consultations are successful and the consistent results between the three studies would indicate some reliability and validity.

However, the research review by Medway identified several research limitations that affect the results. Medway stated that the studies failed to account for the personal attributes of the consultants and that as the majority of the studies involved using the researcher as the consultant this may have resulted in 'experimenter bias effects influencing the study outcomes' (p.277).

Another limitation of the research carried out into consultation identified by Medway was that the evaluation of the consultation effectiveness was usually obtained from only one party involved in the consultation process.

Sheridan et al (1996) also highlighted several methodological limitations in the research studies reviewed that affect the reliability. These included confusion over the definition of consultation; reliance on descriptive evaluations; the reliance on attitudinal or subjective

data rather than direct, objective data; and, lack of follow-up. It was also pointed out that as the majority of the studies reviewed were published in professional journals 'a bias may exist to publish positive findings, in that, unfortunately, studies with non significant findings are rarely published' (p. 346).

Medway (1979) concluded that although the research into consultation effectiveness appeared to be flawed 'at least on the surface, the practice does appear to be effective in modifying the behaviour and attitudes of consultees and their clients and is being well received by school personnel' (p.279). This was a similar finding to that of Sheridan et al (1996) who stated that 'the results of this review of outcome studies across models suggests that, in general, consultation services yield favourable results on at least some dimensions' (p. 346).

Medway concluded his review of the research into consultation by stating that further research was required into consultation effectiveness, especially into the interpersonal relationships and attributes of the consultants and consultees, an area that he identified as possibly being an important factor into effectiveness.

Piccinin (1999) investigated whether consultation was effective within teaching. Piccinin looked at consultation; one a consultation meeting alone; one a consultation meeting and a classroom observation; and

one a consultation meeting, class observation and student feedback, to see whether the individual consultation had an effect on the level of teaching, as rated by the teachers. The results showed that even following a brief consultation a statistically significant result was found in teaching improvement. Piccinin also found that all of the types of consultation were equally effective. This may be due to the fact that the teachers sought the consultation meetings in order to improve their teaching and therefore had a vested interest in them being successful. Although the results were positive, Piccinin did not look at what occurred within the consultation to make them effective, just that having the consultation had a positive impact.

‘To date, researchers and practitioners in the UK have focused on consultation outcomes, with relatively little attention given to the process of consultation and how it affects change’. (Larney, 2003, p.15). What actually takes place during a consultation meeting which leads to an effective consultation? The question of what takes place in these meetings needs to be addressed to help develop future practise in effective consultations.

2.10.1 Interpersonal relationships and consultation effectiveness

As Medway (1979) suggested in his review of the consultation research in the 1970s, the area of interpersonal relationships and the importance in consultation effectiveness was highlighted as further

research. This appears to have been taken on board by subsequent researchers where a number of research studies have focused on the effects of interpersonal relationships and the effectiveness of consultations (Bramlett and Murphy, 1998; Dennis, 2004; Farouk, 1999; Stringer et al, 1992).

One main area which has been identified as being a key factor in the positive and effective ratings of consultation is the relationship between consultant and consultee.

Bramlett and Murphy (1998) claim that 'consultation is an interpersonal process, and skills that facilitate a positive consultant-consultee relationship are critical to its success' (p.31).

In a study by Gonzalez, Nelson, Gutkin and Shwery (2004) an investigation was undertaken into consultees resistance to taking part in consultation. Gonzalez et al focused on resistance to consultation as they believed that one of the factors in psychologists not spending more time on consultation and a large proportion of their time on traditional assessment practices was due to the resistance that teachers have to consultation. They asked 403 teachers using a Likert scale questionnaire to identify what factors made them resistant to consultation. The questions were coded into nine categories. These included:

- Teacher efficacy

- Teacher perceptions of their problem solving skills
- Teachers perceptions of the psychologists problem solving skills
- Perceptions of the psychologist role
- Psychologists interpersonal and relationship skills
- Support from management for consultation
- Time
- Reciprocity
- Similarities between the psychologist and teacher

The results indicated that the psychologists' characteristics accounted for 36.8% of the reluctance to take part in the consultation. However, this research focused on the resistance to taking part in the consultation rather than what happens during the consultations to make them be viewed as effective.

In discussion, Gonzalez et al stated that no measure of consultation effectiveness was undertaken. The study focussed on what made teachers reluctant to take part in the consultation, it did not evaluate whether the consultations which were undertaken were effective or not. Therefore, a conclusion of personal characteristics leading to an effective consultation can not be drawn, just that a person is more likely to engage in consultation if they like the personal characteristics of the consultant. Gonzalez et al stated that this would need to be an area of further research.

Dennis (2004) did find some link between effectiveness of consultations and the personal characteristics of the consultant.

A study carried out by Dennis (2004) looked at whether the implementation of consultation as the model of service delivery was effective. Educational psychologists were asked to nominate schools to be involved in the study. Twelve SENCOs were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and the data partially transcribed. The data was then analysed to identify 'concepts' about the consultation model.

Dennis found that the personal characteristics of the educational psychologist and the problem holder and the relationship between them were central to whether consultation could be implemented successfully. The interpersonal skills of the educational psychologist, such as being open, honest, supportive and easy to talk to were important qualities which consultants needed in order for the consultation to be accepted by the problem holder. These skills for the consultant would be important in establishing a good working relationship. The personal characteristics of the educational psychologist support the effectiveness of the consultative process by the educational psychologists being viewed as understanding the school ethos and systems and therefore being seen as part of the school rather than an outsider. This may lead to a more collaborative

working practice, rather than one of an outsider coming in and telling the consultee what to do, the 'expert role'.

However, as the educational psychologists nominated the schools and SENCos to be involved this may have led to a bias in the results as they may have selected individuals with whom they had good and established relationships.

Dennis also found that the school where consultation was viewed as positive claimed that the educational psychologist was an 'enabler' rather than an expert and that the consultation had helped develop the skills and competence of the SENCo (consultee). This idea is discussed further later in this section.

Consultation effectiveness also seemed dependent on the attitude and willingness of the consultee involved in the process. Dennis found the characteristics of the consultee to be important in schools in which the consultation was viewed as effective.

'There were a number of common attitudes and characteristics relating to the SENCo. These included: a willingness to try things, take risks and learn from experiences; the ability to view individual differences in terms of whole school development issues, and not being 'precious' about their role, (i.e. willing for the EP to work with the most appropriate staff)' (Dennis, 2004, p.22).

This would support the notion that consultation must be a collaborative and voluntary process.

Where Dennis found consultation to be difficult was when the educational psychologist did not know the school or person well enough and no relationship had had time to develop.

It is suggested that the consultant-consultee relationship is considered to be vital in making consultations effective (Dennis, 2004). This has been supported by a number of studies that investigated the effectiveness of consultation and what made it effective. Stringer et al (1992) claim that 'effective inter-personal skills are the essential foundation of any consultation process' (p.88).

Farouk (1999) identified that 'very little direct research has been carried out into the dialogue that takes place between EPs and teachers' (p.255). Therefore, a study was undertaken to identify current consultation practice and the effectiveness of the consultation using a two-part questionnaire to establish views of consultation from educational psychologists. The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with general data around number of consultations and who was involved. The second part of the questionnaire focused on the views of the educational psychologists about what makes consultation effective. By using open questions, Farouk found that the educational psychologists viewed the consultees maintaining

ownership of the problem as the most important aspect in consultation effectiveness. The consultee had also to be open and committed to the process. The aspect of time was important to the educational psychologists, not only the time for the consultation session to take place but also for the consultee to have time to implement any advice or strategies.

Educational psychologists viewed the inter-personal relationships as one of the factors in the consultation being effective. 'Several EP's commented on the importance of good rapport and the value of having had a previous positive working relationship with the teacher' (p.258). The importance of the rapport and previous working relationship accounted for a high proportion of the comments made by educational psychologists.

Skills identified from the research as being important in the consultant included:

- Acknowledging the teachers commitment and skills
- Taking the concerns of the teachers seriously
- Showing empathy
- Being non-judgemental.

Other factors which led to the consultation being effective included: joint problem solving approach; being practical and realistic; support

from senior management in the school; parental involvement and teacher stress.

This study looked at the effectiveness from the view of the educational psychologists and did not take into account the views of the teachers (consultees) to see what they viewed as important. This is a similar criticism to that given in the research review by Medway in 1979. The educational psychologists in the Farouk study reported that they undertook many of the key principles of consultation during their sessions. However, this was only reported and was not recorded in any objective way.

2.10.2 Collaboration and consultation effectiveness

Suggested by both the definitions of consultation and the principles of consultation was the notion that consultation should be a collaboration between the consultant and consultee. Consultation is labelled as 'collaborative problem-solving' (Medway, 1979); 'collaborative and voluntary' (Gonzalez et al, 2004). Wagner (2000) stated that educational psychologists are most effective when they work in a collaborative manner with other stakeholders.

This notion of collaboration has been widely debated. Witt (1990) first began to suggest that collaborative consultation was not as effective as initially thought and that a more directive consultation

would be viewed as better. He concluded that further research into this debate was needed before any firm conclusions could be sought.

However, Gutkin (1999) claimed that 'teachers would resist being told what to do in their classrooms with their students by outsiders such as school psychologists.' Gutkin also stated in his research that 'Additionally, research up until the late 1980's appeared to support this seemingly obvious conclusion' (p.164).

Schulte and Osborne (2003) identified that the issue of collaboration leading to more positive consultation outcomes continues to lack research and therefore no firm conclusion can be drawn.

This debate has continued to date. Kelleher, Riley-Tillman and Power (2008) stated that 'supporters of a collaborative model have documented that collaboration enhances the consultative process and culminates in increased use of consultation and implementation of consultative plans. Detractors have argued that there is no empirical support for the contention that a collaborative approach to consultation results in more positive outcomes' (p.295).

Gutkin (1999) established four consultation models as a result of his research. They were:

- Collaborative – Directive consultation
- Collaborative – Nondirective consultation

- Coercive – Directive consultation
- Coercive – Nondirective consultation

Gutkin suggested that 'the collaborative – directive approach might be most helpful more often than not' (p.186). There was no research to support this but was the personal view of Gutkin. He also felt that moving from one consultative model to another even within one consultation meeting may occur. However, these ideas require empirical evidence to support them.

In the view of the researcher the least effective form of consultation would be the coercive – nondirective consultation in which the consultant decides to be nondirective and even when requested to give advice or be more prescriptive would refuse to give the consultee this form of support. Gutkin explained that it 'is not uncommon in practice to hear consultees complain about consultants who refuse to come across with any concrete suggestions, despite repeated consultee requests to do so' (p186).

The collaborative – directive consultation model appears to best fit with the main principles of consultation as suggested by Conoley and Conoley, (1990); Gutkin and Curtis, (1990) and West and Idol, (1987); all of whom agreed that consultation should be a collaborative relationship in which the relationship is not hierarchical and the

consultee has a right to reject any consultant suggestions taking an active part in the problem solving process.

2.10.3 Role of the expert

Tied in with the idea that consultation should be collaborative in nature, as suggested by Gutkin (1999) and that the best type of consultation is that in which the consultee plays an active role, either accepting or rejecting the suggestions made by the consultant, is the idea of the role of the expert.

The area of expertise in consultation has caused some debate, primarily about whether consultants are experts or facilitators within the consultation meeting.

As suggested by the previous research is the notion that consultation is collaborative and joint problem solving, this would suggest that both participants in the consultation meeting are equal and that no hierarchy exists. However, in Gutkin's research it was suggested that the collaborative but directive approach was most valued. This idea of directing would suggest some expert knowledge by the consultant.

It may be suggested that consultants are experts as they have had previous experience of consultation meetings and the type of issues which arise. Hoffman (1996) stated that the 'development of

expertise usually requires years of costly training and experience' (p93) and that 'experts are very adept at their usual or familiar tasks' (p88). Whereas, Mayhew (1999) identified that 'length of experience in itself has not been found to be a guarantee of the development of expertise' (p198).

Armstrong (2003) identified that 'psychologists use the term expert to refer to an individual who is significantly more experienced than others in performing a particular task.'

Hoffman (1992) carried out several psychological experiments comparing experts and novices in his study of the psychology of expertise. He identified that the development of expertise involves the move from superficial and literal understanding to a more conceptual and deeper understanding. He identified that this move is primarily dependant on practice and experience.

However, Armstrong argued that experience alone can not account for the differences between experts and novices. Armstrong identified five key differences which indicated expertise. These are:

1. Novices rely on the rules and procedures to carry out a task, whereas experts rely more on their experience.
2. Novices are highly conscious of the process, whereas in experts they can carry out the task automatically, using a cognitive phenomenon called 'automaticity'.

3. Experts have a cognitive processing system which is more efficient than novices. Experts can see the whole picture and can make the complex and difficult task look easy.
4. Experts have more strategies and these strategies are also more effective. They can therefore deal with the unexpected which would cause difficulties for the novice.
5. Experts are more flexible in their thinking and use their intuition, whereas novices tend to revert of the rules and procedures.

An important feature of expertise is the way in which experts are able to retrieve complex information and procedures from their long term memory. They recognise the meaning in situations. This concern with meaning and linking it to a situation helps provide an important link between the individual and social approaches to the development of expertise.

This notion would suggest that the experience is not the only factor in the development of expertise and being seen as an expert. However, Sinclair and Epps (2005) stated that 'consultants are typically seen as experts being called upon to advise' (p137).

So the question is what does make the consultants appear to be the 'experts' in the consultation meeting?

Expert behaviour would not fit with the principles of consultation, in which the process is deemed as equal and collaborative. However, this expert behaviour may fit within the local authority in which the research is undertaken, where consultants are seen as experts. However, it may not be that the consultants are exhibiting expert behaviours but that they are being perceived as being experts.

Martin (1978) claimed that psychologists have 'expert power' in which the consultee attributes the consultant with the knowledge and skills which the consultee feels are needed to achieve their aims. Therefore it is not necessarily that the consultant has the expert skills but that they are perceived to have them by the consultee. This idea of expert power appears to fit with the ethos of the local authority in which this research was undertaken. The educational psychologists are viewed and having an expert role and being in a position of authority by the school staff.

The idea that consultants may be perceived as experts may have an impact on the expectations of the consultees for the consultation meeting. As suggested by the previous research, consultation should be problem solving and if the consultants can be experts and give advice this may make the consultation meeting more effective. As suggested by Gutkin (1999) the best type of consultation is collaborative but also directive, where the consultant can give advice if required by the consultee. Therefore consultees may perceive the

consultation to be more effective if advice is given by the consultants as they are perceived as being more knowledgeable and 'experts'. However, Dennis (2004) identified that the consultants being experts was not viewed as favourably as the consultant being part of the whole school environment and Dennis identified that experts are often viewed as outsiders.

I believe that there is a difference between expertise and being an expert. Expertise is as described by Armstrong that consultants are more automatic and intuitive in their processes, but being an expert would be leading and directing. Therefore consultants can demonstrate expertise as identified by Hoffman and Armstrong by reaching conclusions faster, having more strategies, being more reactive to the unexpected during the consultation meeting but may not come across as experts, therefore keeping the consultation collaborate and equal.

2.10.4 Use of Questions and consultation effectiveness

Although some of the research studies have identified aspects within the consultation which lead to the consultation being viewed as positive/effective, for example, time, personal attributes of the consultant; personal attributes of the consultee and joint problem solving, there still appears to be a gap about the actual process of

consultation and the behaviours therein that lead to this positive/effective view of the consultation session. Several studies have investigated what occurs during the consultation meetings to make them effective. A main focus of this has been the verbalisations of the consultant, primarily a focus on questions. These studies are further discussed in this section.

A study by Bergan and Tombari (1976) aimed to identify aspects of consultation which led to change in order to use this aspect as the focus of instruction for the training of psychologists. One area of focus in this research was the consultant's interviewing skills. Audio transcripts were taken of the consultations and the transcripts coded. A measure was taken to assess the effectiveness of the consultant's verbal processes, this was done by the researchers using a combination of factors. Their skills were determined on three main factors: efficiency, skill in applying psychological knowledge and interviewing skills. Bergan and Tombari identified that when the psychologist lacked the skills or was inefficient in consultation, they were likely to use some other course of action, such as assessment or referral to specialist provision. Overall it was identified that 'when used, the chances were extremely high that consultation would be effective in solving educational problems' (p.12). Bergan and Tombari found that consultants who engaged in using requests for information, primarily using questions, had a higher probability of their advice being implemented, this enabled the problem to be identified

from the consultee. However, this study failed to elicit the views of the consultee and the view of whether the consultee liked the problem being identified and whether the advice which had been implemented was based on the view of the consultant.

Hughes and DeForest (1993) explored the relationship between verbalisations of the consultant and outcomes of the consultation. Using 17 audiotaped consultation meetings, Hughes and DeForest coded the consultations into various types of verbalisations. The whole audiotape was transcribed and as they differed in length the results were changed into percentages to ensure direct comparison between the different sessions. The consultees perceptions of the consultation were elicited using the Consultant Evaluation Form (Erchul, 1987) which is a rating scale giving 12 statements about the consultant with a higher rating representing a more favourable view of the consultant. In general, all consultees were pleased with the consultations. The findings indicated that consultants who generated hypotheses and encouraged the consultee to consider the problem and broaden their understanding were seen as positive. There was a negative correlation between 'positive validation elicitors', defined as questions requiring a yes/no answer (closed questions), and the Consultant Evaluation Form (CEF) rating given by the consultees. It was concluded that 'consultees do not respond well to consultants who ask many closed-ended questions' (Hughes and DeForest 1993 p.369). This finding was contradictory to the Bergan and Tombari

study who found that the more questions asked the more favourably the consultation was viewed. However, in their study the type of question was not specified, other than the question asked for information from the consultee. These differences in results may be accounted for by the fact that Bergan and Tombari did not elicit the consultees' perceptions of the consultation, something which was a main factor in that undertaken in the Hughes and DeForest study.

Hughes and DeForest concluded from their study that 'consultants who adapt an expanded behaviour consultation approach should minimise their use of closed-ended questions that restrict the consultee response, increase their level of supportive statements, and encourage conjoint exploration of the possible reasons for the problem' (Hughes and DeForest, 1993, p.370).

One issue with the Hughes and DeForest study was the use of psychology students as the consultants. This may make the findings generalisable to practising psychologists difficult as their practice in consultation may alter as they use other tools alongside consultation. The consultants received training in establishing open and trusting relationships, communicating respect, and training on interpersonal skills. This specific training is not given to practising psychologists. The consultees in the study volunteered to be involved and they met with the consultant prior to the consultation meeting. As studies have shown the importance of interpersonal relationships and rapport as

being vital in the consultation being viewed as effective, this may have also led the results to be viewed more favourably.

Hughes, Erchul, Yoon, Jackson and Henington (1997) carried out follow up research looking at questions used during consultations and focused on question types. They focused on the use of questions within a consultation meeting and how this influenced the rating of effectiveness. Hughes et al investigated the use of three question types including open questions, inference questions and consultee response. Using 41 psychology students as the consultants and each student having consultations about a specific student, Hughes et al used audio recordings of the consultations and a post consultation questionnaire aiming to establish a correlation between the percentage of question types and positive ratings of the consultations. Hughes et al hypothesised that open questions, allowing the consultee to express their thoughts and feelings more fully, would relate positively to the evaluation of the consultation effectiveness.

Percentages were used due to the varying lengths of the consultations. In the research, 33.25% of the questions were closed with only 8.54% of the questions being open, and the total percentage of questions used in the consultations recorded was 41%. However, Hughes et al found no significant correlations between the question type and the rating of effectiveness. However, they did find

a slight negative correlation (-0.7) with the consultees view of the consultant and the percentage of closed questions used. Also, they found a slight positive correlation (0.11) with the consultees view of the consultant and the use of open questions. This would indicate that although no significant results were found, there is a link between question type and consultee view. This view is shared by Hughes et al (1997) who stated, 'The prevalence of null findings, however, does not mean that consultant processes, such as questioning, are unimportant to consultation's success' (p.293).

One main limitation of both the Hughes et al studies, as highlighted by Hughes, was that the consultants were psychology students who had had no previous experience of consultation. Therefore, the findings may have been different using more experienced consultants. Hughes et al acknowledged this limitation stating in their research that 'this study's results should be interpreted in light of the fact that these consultants were students, and the findings might be different with more experienced consultants'. (p295)

Following the work of Hughes and DeForest (1997), Benn et al (2008) investigated open and closed questions in consultations. Benn et al used six videotaped simulated consultations where an identified concern and teacher profile were presented in each case; the consultants involved were role playing the consultation which may have limited the real-life importance of the consultation; and the

concerns raised were simulated, this again may have limited the real-life importance.

Benn et al (2008) identified that more closed questions were used in the consultations than open questions. This was at a statistically significant level. The question type did not impact on the ratings of the consultants competency level. Competency level of the consultant was rated by a panel of judges, expert in consultations. They rated the consultant based on several factors, including the extent to which consultation skill was employed, appropriateness of the working relationship and the extent of training and practise in consultation the consultant demonstrated. Although no statistically significant relationship was found between question type and the level of competence of the consultant, the observational data highlighted that the consultants who used the most open questions were able to build an open and collaborative relationship. However, as the consultees were not asked to rate the consultations the impact into the effectiveness (as rated by the consultees) was not established.

As the consultations were simulated they could not be used to establish how the consultee felt about the consultation. The focus of this research was looking at how consultants with varying levels of competence, from novice to expert, acted (using questions) in the consultation.

However, when evaluating the effectiveness of consultation Larney (2003) believes that the evaluations 'contribute to conveying a hazy picture of how effective consultation really is, as there are few objective indicators used to measure success' (p.14).

This is still a similar picture to that which was found by Medway (1982) who noted that 'consultation research, though growing, is still too limited in scope to provide any more than a few clear-cut, empirically based recommendations for practice' (p.423).

2.11 Gap in Literature/Research questions

Consultation has been mentioned in many publications as the way forward for the practice of educational psychologists (Farrell et al, 2006; Farrell, 2009; Kelly and Gray, 2000; DfES, 2001).

The first issue identified from the research was that although a considerable body of research has concentrated on 'Consultation' there appears to be no clear definition of what consultation actually is. Therefore, when people have a 'consultation meeting' they must be unsure of what to expect and whether they will find the consultation an effective tool. Leadbetter (2006) suggested that consultation is a term which is used in various contexts and situations but also has multiple meanings. Sheridan et al (1996) supported this

idea in their research study, which identified that many consultees involved in a consultation meeting fail to have a firm understanding of what consultation is and therefore what to expect.

However, although lots of focus has been on moving to this way of working the research into the effectiveness of consultation is limited. The research, which has looked at consultations, always comes back to one main point; consultation is viewed as effective if the interpersonal relationship between the educational psychologist and the member of school staff is good.

The literature read which looks at the effectiveness of consultation focuses on the relationship between the consultant and consultee. The research discusses the importance of a collaborative and positive relationship. So far, it has been difficult to find any research which looks at what actually happens in the consultations, what behaviours occur during the consultations and whether these behaviours can lead to the consultations being viewed as effective or not.

The research in this area is focussing on the use of questions in the consultation meeting. The view is that open questions are better than closed questions as they allow the consultee to explore the issues and maintain ownership. The research into the use of questions in consultation has failed to come to a firm conclusion. Research

carried out by Bergan and Tombari (1976) identified a positive correlation between question usage and effective consultation. Hughes and DeForest (1993) also found a link between question type, stating that consultees did not like too many closed questions used during the consultation. Further research by Hughes et al (1997) found no correlation between question type and effectiveness ratings of the consultation. The study by Benn et al (2008) found in their observations of the consultations that although no statistically significant correlations were revealed, the consultants who used more open questions enabled an open and collaborative relationship to develop. This comes back to the point that the main importance in the consultation is the interpersonal relationship between the consultant and the consultee.

‘The act of consultation is made up of many parts, including: asking questions, listening, problem-solving, facilitating solutions and giving advice’ (Leadbetter, 2006, p26).

This is the area that my thesis will focus on. In Larney (2003) an area of further research suggested as being needed is ‘the need for further research on the consultation process’ (p16).

The main research questions are:

- What do Educational Psychologists and School Staff view as ‘consultation’ and ‘effective consultation’?

- What behaviours occurring in consultations are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?

Research question one will help establish a firm definition of consultation in which to work with, and question two will help identify which key behaviours occurring during the consultation meetings lead the consultants and consultees to view the consultation as effective.

The key behaviours which will be focused on in this research are the use of questioning, whether open or closed questions lead to the consultation being viewed as effective and whether the number of questions used has an impact on the view that consultation is effective. One other area, which the researcher has been unable to find any research into, is the amount of time the participants talk in the consultation. From the researchers own observations of consultation, this has always appeared to have an influence on whether the consultation was viewed as effective or not. However, no research was found to support the notion that time used in the consultation for talking was an important aspect. Therefore, one of the gaps in research thus far is whether the amount of time an individual talks during the consultation has an impact on the rating of effectiveness by the participants. This will be one of the key behaviours researched in this study.

Both the consultant and consultees will establish the definition and effectiveness rating. This is an area of limitation discussed in many of the research studies into consultation so far. The research will also use qualified educational psychologists as the consultants and real-life consultation sessions which again will remove some of the limitations from the previous studies into consultation effectiveness.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Methodology and Epistemology

As the epistemological stance of the researcher is that of critical realism (Bhaskar, 1975), it is believed that there is a truth which can be observed, however, it is also believed that people interpret this truth depending on their own experiences and belief systems.

The main aim of this research was to focus on two research questions. The two research questions were:

- What do educational psychologists and school staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?
- What behaviours which occur in consultation are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?

The research was split into three phases to enable the research questions to be answered.

Due to this epistemological stance a mixed methodology was applied to answer the two research questions. A mixed methodology would enable both of the research questions to be fully investigated.

It has been suggested that quantitative and qualitative research methods are grounded in different epistemological stances (Bryman,

2008). However, Bryman goes on to state that 'there is a recognition that quantitative and qualitative research are each connected with distinctive epistemological and ontological assumptions, but the connections are not viewed as fixed and ineluctable. Research methods are perceived, unlike in the epistemological version, as autonomous. A research method from one research strategy is viewed as capable of being pressed into the service of another.' (Bryman, 2008, p606).

Barker et al (2002) suggested that it can be possible to do research that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods and that the two research methods can often complement each other. For example, using qualitative methods such as questionnaires, interviews or focus groups to develop quantitative measures.

Due to the epistemological stance a mixed methodology would enable both the investigation of the individuals' view of the world, using a qualitative method, and the 'truth' of the world, using a quantitative method. A mixed methodology did not have to be used but it was hoped that by using the methods chosen that both the 'real world / reality' and the individual interpretations would be taken into account and therefore a more thorough understanding of consultation could be established.

It was suggested by Bryman (2008) that a mixed methodology could be used in order to compliment. An approach in which the two research strategies could be used in different parts of the research but link together.

The first and third phase of the research used a qualitative research methodology to help identify the way people interpret the world, in this instance the views of consultation and effective consultation. Thus, aiming to answer the research question, 'What do Educational Psychologists and School Staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?'

The second phase of the research used a quantitative research methodology to help identify the 'truth' which can be observed, unaffected by interpretation. In this research the observable behaviours which occur in the consultation meeting. Thus, aiming to answer the research question, 'What behaviours which occur in consultation are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?'

3.2 Overview

This research has been conducted in three phases. Each phase helps answer a research question. Specifically, each phase helps

provide information which is then used to inform the next phase of the research.

As discussed in Chapter Two, there were two main research questions which this piece of research aimed to answer. These were:

- What do educational psychologists and school staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?
- What behaviours which occur in consultation are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?

One of the aims of this research was to identify a clear definition of consultation. As found by Medway (1979) in his research, an agreed definition of consultation is essential prior to researching whether consultation is effective or not. It is essential to obtain a definition of consultation in order to ensure that there are agreed expectations and outcomes. This helps reduce confusion and obtains a shared understanding. The definition of consultation was obtained in Phase One of the research. Phase One of the research answers the research question, 'What do educational psychologists and school staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?'.

Using the definition of consultation obtained in Phase One of the research, the second phase focused on the research aim of establishing which key behaviours led to an effective view of

consultation. The definition established in Phase One was used to measure the consultation's effectiveness. Key behaviours were correlated with the definition, establishing a link between which behaviours led to a positive view of consultation. Phase Two answers the research question, 'What behaviours which occur in consultation are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?'.

The final phase of the research again focused on what makes an effective consultation. After the participants had taken part in the consultation meeting, they were again asked what makes consultation effective and what else could be done to make the consultations more effective. This helped establish if the important aspects of consultation raised in Phase One of the research were still important following an actual experience of a consultation meeting and if any other issues had arisen. This phase was included as, following taking part in the consultation meeting, participants may be able to identify new aspects of consultation which they had not previously thought of or deemed important. Phase Three follows up the research question, 'What do educational psychologists and school staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?.

The following methodology sections discuss each phase individually and in more detail.

Overview of Methodology

PHASE ONE

Questionnaires sent to all schools in Local Authority to establish definition of consultation.

Thematic analysis carried out on the questionnaire data to establish key aspects of effective consultation.

Key aspects identified.

Correlation between key behaviours from Phase Two and key aspects from Phase One completed.

Several behaviours identified which led to participants viewing consultation as effective established.

PHASE TWO

Consultation meetings between school staff and educational psychologists recorded.

Videos analysed for key behaviours such as time each participant talked, number of questions etc.

Key behaviours identified.

Participants complete rating of consultation using key aspects identified in Phase One.

PHASE THREE

Questionnaires given to all participants in Phase Two to establish any key aspects of consultation which now viewed as important.

Thematic analysis carried out on the questionnaire data to establish key aspects of effective consultation.

Key aspects identified.

3.3 Phase One

3.3.1 Phase One - Research Design

As Hanko (1990) points out, 'there are as many interpretations of the term consultation as there are contexts in which it is useful to consider jointly and take counsel'. (p.56) As there are numerous definitions of consultation, as discussed in the literature review, the aim of the research was to identify what an effective consultation is. The first phase of the research set out to establish what professionals viewed as an effective consultation. As described in the literature review, the views of consultation identified in the existing research on consultation, were primarily taken from the educational psychologists rather than from the viewpoint of the school staff involved in the consultation. It was therefore beneficial to obtain the views of both the educational psychologists and the school staff to establish whether the same views were held about consultation or whether different professionals held different views of what consultation was and what made it effective. This would help establish whether the expectations were the same from both the educational psychologists and the school staff or whether the different groups were hoping to achieve different goals from the consultation meeting. Therefore the views of both the educational psychologists and the school staff were gathered to help give a definition of consultation.

From the literature review it was clear that numerous definitions of consultation have been used by researchers in the past. The research into effective consultations focused on the views of the consultants and no clear definitions of 'effective' were given. Medway (1979) defined effective as having a 'positive result'. This was also how Mannino and Shore (1975) defined effective consultation, as having a 'positive effect'. This 'positive effect/result' was not quantified or qualified.

As this research was focused on evaluating what behaviours led to the consultation as being viewed as effective, there was a need to establish a definition of 'consultation' and 'effective consultation' in which to later measure the consultation's effectiveness against.

The data needed from this phase of the research were the views and opinions of people about what consultation was and what aspects made consultation effective. These views were gathered from both educational psychologists and school staff. These opinions and views led to a definition of consultation.

To elicit the views of school staff and educational psychologists and answer the first of the two research questions - 'What do educational psychologists and school staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?', several research methods were considered.

As the aim of the first phase of the research was to establish what people thought consultation was and what they thought an effective consultation was then, using Robson's (2002) simple rule of thumb for choosing research methods, 'to find out what people think, feel and/or believe, use interviews, questionnaires or attitude scales.' (p.224), these research methods of interviews, questionnaires and attitude scales appeared to suit the aim of the research.

As there was a need to gather the views of several members of teaching staff and educational psychologists, research methods such as interviews, focus groups, or questionnaires could have been used. Each of these methods have strengths and weaknesses and would have added different information to the research.

It was decided that a questionnaire method would be the better method to use in this research, rather than utilising one of the alternative research methods of interviews or focus groups. This was done for a variety of reasons.

There are a number of positives and negatives for using questionnaires. Gillham (2007) listed the positives and negatives for using questionnaires. He gave the following positives:

- Questionnaires are not timely or costly
- They are an easy way to get information from people quickly

- People can complete the questionnaires in their own time, when they have it
- Analysis of questionnaires is relatively straight forward
- People can take their time with the questionnaires
- The completion of the questionnaire is usually anonymous
- The questions are standardised
- A questionnaire lacks bias from the researcher.

However, Gillham (2007) also highlighted several negative aspects of using questionnaires. These included:

- The quality of the data obtained
- Low response rates
- Problems with making the respondents enthusiastic
- Having to use short and simple questions
- The development of the questionnaire is not always good
- Lack of control over the respondents and how they will answer the questions
- Controlling for literacy difficulties
- People often find talking easier than writing
- Can't check the answers given are either truthful or genuine

Some of the negatives to using questionnaires such as; having to use short and simple questions and controlling for literacy difficulties, would not have applied to this research as the questions were aiming to be short and simple and due to the professional qualifications of

the participants, literacy difficulties were not an issue. The negative, as suggested by Gillham, of lack of control over the respondents and how they will answer the question was actually a positive in this research. As educational psychologists, in the local authority in which the research was conducted, were often perceived as an authority figure, the participants being able to answer the questions without the presence of the educational psychologist, may have helped reduce the bias. As the questionnaires were completed anonymously, one of the positives suggested by Gillham, this may also have helped reduce the researchers effect on the responses.

These positives and negatives of questionnaires were also supported by Oppenheim (2000). Oppenheim stated that, 'the advantages and disadvantages of the interview are almost a mirror-image..... Interviews often have a higher response rate; they offer the opportunity to correct misunderstandings and to carry out observations and ratings while controlling from incompleteness and for answering sequence; and interviews can often succeed with respondents who have reading or language difficulties. But interviews are expensive and time-consuming to conduct and to process, there are always the risks of interviewer bias, and interviews are usually too expensive to reach a widely dispersed population' (Oppenheim, 2000, p 102).

By using questionnaires as a research method this interviewer bias and interviewer effect would hopefully have been taken out of the equation.

Interviews or focus groups could also have been used to elicit the same data from the school staff and educational psychologists. These methods might have enabled a fuller and more in depth data collection as the researcher would have been able to directly respond to the comments made and clarify meanings.

'Face-to-face interviews offer the possibility of modifying ones line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and self-administered questionnaires cannot' (Robson, 2002, p272).

The one negative of using questionnaires for this research, again as suggested by Gillham and Oppenheim, is the ability to get the respondents to clarify or expand or explain their answers.

In the context of the study, the researcher was employed by the Local Authority as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. In the researcher's view, and with an understanding of the participants involved, having the researcher present would potentially have biased the results as the researcher would have been perceived by them as being in a position of authority. Given this, the participants would have been

unlikely to have given a full answer in a face to face interview or focus group for fear of repercussions.

Another factor in interviews was the actual interviews themselves and the transcriptions requiring a large amount of time to complete. 'Notes have to be written up; tapes, if used, must be transcribed, in full or part' (Robson, 2002, p273). This may have led to a considerable amount of unnecessary information being obtained and taking time and resources to sift through for answers to the questions. By using questionnaires, the answers given tend to be shorter and more to the point. They are already written down which reduces some of the time which would be taken to transcribe.

Focus groups would be less time consuming than face-to-face interviews as they are not done on an individual basis, and like questionnaires can be given to a number of people at the same time. As multiple participants are questioned at the same time, but all in one place, unlike questionnaires, this may bias individual responses and some participants may not feel they have been heard or feel able to give an honest opinion due to the presence of the other participants

Robson (2002) suggests that focus groups show signs of taking over from questionnaires as the automatic response to the question, 'what method should we use?'. This is in part because they share with

postal questionnaires the advantages of being an efficient way of generating substantial amounts of data, and apparently being easy to carry out. However, as with questionnaires, those perceived advantages are offset by considerable disadvantages. For example, it is difficult or impossible to follow up the views of individuals; and group dynamics or power hierarchies effect who speaks and what they say. A particular problem is when one or more persons dominate' (Robson, 2002, p284).

By using questionnaires the views of everyone who wish to give their views are heard. This, however, is in a much shorter format and without the ability to expand their responses.

Despite a number of negatives involved with the use of questionnaires; such as the lack of being able to clarify meanings and answers, the researcher still considered that an approach which did not provide anonymity carried the potential for bias and that the use of a questionnaire was the most appropriate method for this research.

An initial questionnaire was given to all schools, both primary and secondary, to elicit their views of consultation.

The questions were designed to elicit school staffs views on what defined 'effective' and an 'effective consultation'. This was to help when evaluating the consultations in the next part of the research as

it enabled the use of 'real life' definitions of effective and effective consultations. The questionnaire was also given to educational psychologists. By giving the questionnaire to both school staff and educational psychologists it helped establish a collective view of consultation which was held by both the consultant and the consultee, the questionnaire helped define what different professionals viewed as 'effective consultation'. This was missing from the previous research where views were only obtained from the consultants (Farouk, 1999; Bergan and Tombari, 1976; Hughes et al, 1993, 1997).

Questionnaires are a valuable research tool. However, in acknowledging that they are not the most effective way of gaining in-depth information which would be better achieved with interviews or focus groups where the interviewer would be able to gather more detailed information by expanding on the issues raised by the participants, questionnaires make it possible to gather information from a large number of people.

Questionnaires were also used due to the data required. The research aimed to gather a definition of consultation and a number of key aspects which made the consultations effective from a large number of individuals. This suggested that questionnaires were an appropriate research tool to use to gather this information.

Hayes (2000) suggested that questionnaires could be effectively used to identify people's attitudes and opinions. As the aim was to identify what participants opinions were of what consultation was and what made it effective then questionnaires would gather this information.

Postal questionnaires were chosen rather than face-to-face questionnaires due to time constraints. By administering the questionnaire by post this increased the anonymity of the answers and stopped any bias caused by interpersonal relationships.

Postal questionnaires are self-administered. As the respondents are not helped in their understanding by a trained interviewer, the questions need to be 'easy to follow and the meaning of questions should be self-explanatory' (De Vaus, 2002, p123).

As Gillham (2007) stated, 'questions about attitudes, opinions, beliefs, etc, are the most difficult to write and the most problematic to answer'. (p26) It was therefore necessary to conduct a pilot of the questions to ensure they were asking what they intended to ask, they were easy to follow and easy to understand.

'No matter how much time and thought have been spent on developing and writing the questions, until they have been tried out on someone, you do not know whether what you mean or intend is going to be clear to those answering them' (Gillham, 2007, p35).

The questionnaire focused on three main questions. Using considerations as suggested by Bryman (2001) the questions were ordered to enable an easy flow. The questions were formed to answer the central research question. The language used was clear and did not contain jargon, as identified in the pilot study. The questions were open as opposed to closed to elicit a more detailed response and due to the aim of the research. The same data could have been collected using a fixed choice questionnaire. This, however, would have imposed the researchers own view on what makes a consultation effective and may not have elicited a true view from the participants. Open questions allowed the participants the freedom to give whatever response they wanted, rather than choosing a 'best fit' from a fixed choice list. As the aim of the research was to get the participants own views rather than the preconceived notion held by the researcher, open questions were the best method to elicit the information without imposing or biasing the participants.

Coolican (1996), supported the view of using open rather than closed questions in the questionnaire as it was found that by asking open-ended questions there will be a reduced chance of imposing views and ambiguity as the respondent can state exactly what they think. This was seen as necessary following Hanko's (1990) view, which states 'there are as many interpretations of the term consultation as

there are contexts in which it is useful to consider jointly and take counsel' (1990, p56).

Prior to a pilot study the questions, as suggested by Gillham, were given to people not linked to the target audience. This helped to establish whether the questions were understandable and jargon free. Following this, the questionnaire was piloted with the pilot study carried out with individuals in the teaching profession who were not linked to the target local authority. The questionnaires were given to 10 individuals all of whom had some knowledge of what consultation was from a professional point of view either as a consultant or a consultee. All of the individuals in the pilot study were familiar with consultation used by educational psychologists either as a teacher or an educational psychologist who had been a consultee in a consultation meeting with an educational psychologist. The individuals chosen for the pilot study were in the same profession and therefore had commonalities with the participants of the study. The questionnaires were issued to them in the researcher's presence so any difficulties with the questions could be identified immediately. The results were analysed using the same analysis method planned for the research proper to see if the questions were achieving the expected responses and what the pattern of results would show. A true pilot, that is a smaller scale study where the exact research method used, was not carried out due to time constraints and lack of participants.

From the pilot study carried out it was clear that the questions were easy to read, easy to follow and jargon free. This was established by discussing the questions with the individuals in the pilot study and as they had no issues with the questions and were similar to the actual participants in the research it was concluded by the researcher that no issue with the questions were found. The questionnaire was therefore ready to be sent out.

Self-administered postal questionnaires are cheap and easy to administer. However, a draw-back to using postal questionnaires is the poor response rate. The response rate of postal questionnaires is much poorer than either telephone or personal interviews. However, that being said, Dillman (2000) found that when sending postal questionnaires to a specific group e.g. teachers, nurses or members of an organisation, then postal questionnaires receive a similar response rate to other techniques. Dillman found that response rates increased when the topic was particularly relevant to the specific group in question.

In some cases the more anonymous questionnaire methods e.g. postal questionnaires and Internet questionnaires may achieve better response rates for sensitive topics, (de Leeuw and Collins, 1997). This may be due to the anonymous and impersonal methods of postal questionnaires that increase confidentiality and appear less threatening. Although the topics discussed in this research were not

sensitive or personal, a postal questionnaire was chosen as the researcher thought this would get a more honest answer to the questions than in a face to face interview. As previously discussed, the nature of the Local Authority in which the research was conducted suggest that the participants would have viewed the researcher as an authority figure and might therefore have been reluctant to answer face to face questions with utmost honesty in case of reprimand or a feeling that they were being judged. The use of a postal questionnaire eliminated this aspect of possible bias.

As well as receiving better response rates in anonymous questionnaires, the type of response can also differ.

‘Responses to sensitive or controversial questions can be affected by social desirability considerations – giving acceptable rather than true answers. While this danger exists regardless of the administration method, it will be greater with more personalised methods of questionnaire administration’ (De Vaus, 2002, p. 130).

This view by De Vaus, that the participants may give socially desirable rather than true answers supports the researcher’s opinion previously discussed. Therefore, the more personalised the method, such as interview, focus group or face to face questionnaires, the less true the answer may be, giving a bias in the results and giving the

researcher the answers which the participants think that they should give.

The views obtained by the participants in this phase of the research were used in the later stages of the research to define consultation for the participants and the views of effective consultation were used to evaluate the consultations.

The same questionnaire (Appendix 1) was given to both school staff and educational psychologists. This ensured that both the consultant and consultees view of consultation were gathered rather than in previous research where only the view of one stakeholder was obtained (Farouk, 1999; Bergan and Tombari, 1976). This same questionnaire was given to obtain consistency with the two groups, school staff and educational psychologists and to ensure that the same questions were asked of both stakeholders.

3.3.2 Phase One – Sampling

The questionnaire was given to all Educational Psychology Service staff, excluding Admin Support, who worked for the Local Authority, Educational Psychology Service. In total, 11 Educational Psychology Service staff were asked to complete the questionnaire. These included two Assistant Educational Psychologists, one Trainee Educational Psychologist, two Main grade Educational Psychologists,

one Advanced Practitioner Educational Psychologist, two Senior Specialist Educational Psychologists, two Senior Educational Psychologists and one Principal Educational Psychologist. All questionnaires were completed and returned.

The questionnaires to school staff were sent, by post, to all 109 schools in the local authority. This included nine Nursery Schools, 83 Primary Schools and 17 Secondary Schools. The questionnaires were sent to all types of schools to try to ensure that the responses obtained were representative of the whole authority and not just of one type of sector within the authority. The questionnaire and the accompanying letters (Appendix 2) were addressed to the schools Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). This person was chosen as the contact person for the questionnaires due to the structure of the local authority. The structure in the local authority requires that the first point of contact for the educational psychologists is the SENCo. This is the contact person within the school with which educational psychologists would have any initial consultation regarding either the children or issues within the school. That being said, depending on the school's own structure, the educational psychologist may have consultations with other staff within the school in addition.

As the data was collected from participants only associated with the one local authority, generalisations to other authorities is impossible.

However, the results may be able to illuminate findings for the staff in this local authority and also give other local authorities some suggestions for their own research.

The letter sent with the questionnaire asked for a specific date for the questionnaire to be returned. The time scale was half a school term. As the questionnaires returned were anonymous it was unclear whether the response came primarily from Nursery, Primary or Secondary sectors and what the proportion of each was. This was a limitation of the study as it did not allow the researcher to establish whether staff from different school types had a different opinion of what consultation was and what would make an effective consultation. This, although not the main focus of the research, would have added an additional aspect which may have highlighted further areas for research. However, from the literature review it was not a factor that different sectors viewed consultation differently, but as the definitions were given from the researcher point of view this aspect can not be eliminated and could be a possible area of further research. A response rate of 33% was achieved, an overall rate from all sectors.

3.3.3 Phase One – Difficulties in data collection.

The main difficulty in the questionnaire data collection was the lack of opportunity to give questionnaires to school staff and educational

psychologists from other Local Authorities. This lack of data collection limited the ability to generalise the research. Therefore, one main limitation of the research is that the views and definition collected can only be interpreted as the views of staff within Sunderland Local Authority. However, as previously discussed, the results of this research are to support the working practices within one Local Authority and therefore the results do not need to be generalisable but may give other Local Authorities a basis for their own research.

As the questionnaires were only addressed to school SENCOs, the views collected can only be attributed to this type of staff member who has considerable experience in dealing with educational psychologists. Again, this is a limitation in the data collection.

The other difficulty was that as postal questionnaires were issued the responses cannot be guaranteed to come from the person sent the initial letter. The only way to guarantee this would have been to have held interviews or focus groups which is a more time consuming research method and as not anonymous may not have elicited the same responses.

3.3.4 Phase One – Data Analysis

To analyse the data collected from the self-administered questionnaires a thematic analysis was conducted on the questionnaire responses.

Thematic analysis, as described by Leininger (1985, p60) is a process in which 'raw data are analysed by identifying and bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone'.

Although thematic analysis is talked about as the methodology of many research articles, the research methodologies lack a specified procedure for identifying themes. There appears to be no one method of identifying themes and as suggested by Dey (1993, p110) 'There is no single set of categories (themes) waiting to be discovered. There are as many ways of 'seeing' the data as one can invent'. This means that when establishing the themes in this data set there may be alternative interpretations to the data. This would suggest that the themes identified in the data are subjective to the researcher and if the data was read by another individual then alternative themes may be identified. To control for this factor, the data was given to a co-researcher, who read the data and identified the pertinent themes. These themes were then compared with the themes identified by the researcher to see if the same themes were

identified or if any were missed. From this method, the same themes were identified but were not necessarily given the same label. No themes appeared to be missed. This helped ensure that the data was read correctly and all themes correctly identified and, therefore, reduced the risk that themes were seen in a different way, as suggested by Dey (1993).

Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggested several techniques to identify themes in data. It is suggested that the technique used is dependent on the type and volume of data collected.

Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggested that themes in the data can come from either an inductive or theoretical approach. This research used an inductive approach, meaning that the themes were strongly linked to the data rather than based on the previous research in the literature review.

The data was read and coded without trying to fit the data into any preconceived themes or categories which had been suggested in the previous research.

However, as a researcher I was unable to completely free myself from information gathered in the literature review and the previous research. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that this may have impacted on identifying the themes and certain aspects of the data

may have been more easily identified and coded due to pre-existing ideas.

The thematic analysis was done at the semantic level, using the surface meanings of the data rather than at the deeper latent level. At the semantic level, thematic analysis attempts to theorise the patterns and meanings in the data rather than look at the underlying assumptions and ideologies behind what the data initially says.

Sandelowski (1995) observed that the first stage of deciding themes is to proof read the data and underline the key phrases. Sandelowski (1995) deemed that for the purpose of questionnaire data it is an appropriate method to use to look for repetitions, which are the ideas that occur and reoccur in the data. This method was used as the answers were short and not detailed enough to look for linguistic characteristics, e.g. metaphors, linguistic connectors. It was also not seen as appropriate to look for missing themes in the data, as the questions were too narrow for this to have yielded much information.

The thematic analysis and the establishing of the themes was done using the process suggested by Gillham (2007). The process involves 11 stages:

- read each question
- list key statements

- note categories from the statements
- reflect
- derive names of categories
- combine categories
- put statements into categories, re-reading all of the questionnaires
- put categories into grid
- ensure all statements are in a category
- write up analysis
- interpret

Once the themes had been established by reading the questionnaire and underlining the key information the data was represented in the way of diagrams. These diagrams allowed a visual representation of the themes and made linking key themes clear. This enabled the data to be analysed and interpreted.

3.4 Phase Two

3.4.1 Phase Two – Research Design

As pointed out by Larney (2003) 'To date, researchers and practitioners in the UK have focused on consultation outcomes, with relatively little attention given to the process of consultation and how it affects change' (p.15).

From the literature review, where it was made clear that the research conducted had found it difficult to establish what processes occurred during consultations in order for them to be viewed as effective, the second phase of the research aimed to identify what behaviours occurred during consultation which led to them being viewed as effective. Using the definition of consultation established in Phase One of the research, the key behaviours which were identified either from observations of consultation during time as a Trainee and Assistant educational psychologist and behaviours suggested in the research as being linked to consultation effectiveness were correlated. The correlation between the definition and the key behaviours helped to identify which key behaviours were linked to a positive view of the consultation.

To identify the key behaviours the consultations needed to be observed and the key behaviours recorded. This enabled the key behaviours to be correlated with the definition and established which of the behaviours led to the positive view of the consultation. As the researcher was aiming to identify what the participants did in the consultation, the behaviour occurring in the actual consultation meetings needed to be recorded. There were two methods which would achieve this aim. The first, by asking the participants what they did during the consultation meetings, has several drawbacks. One main drawback is that when people comment on their behaviour they may not have a true view of what they actually do. As Gillham (2008)

states, 'We all have a preferred way of viewing ourselves' (p1). The other method, by observing the consultation. Gillham (2008) states that we use observations, 'not just for its own sake but because it reflects those elusive internal states that underlie what people do, and of which they may not be fully aware' (p18).

To establish what behaviours were occurring during the consultation, using the Hughes and DeForest (1993) and Hughes et al (1997) research, it was decided that an observational method would be conducted. The consultations were video recorded, rather than audio recorded to ensure that all the behaviours could be seen and that nothing would be missed in an initial viewing.

'Observation has one overpowering claim to validity: it deals not with what people say they do but what they actually do – to the extent that their behaviour is open to observation, and insofar as observation is as objective as it seems to be' (Gillham, 2008, p1).

One of the main advantages of using an observation method is that it allows behaviours to be observed directly. 'You do not ask people about their views, feelings or attitudes, you watch what they do and listen to what they say' (Robson, 2002, p310).

However, observation holds one major disadvantage. It is unclear to what extent an observer affects the situation under observation. One

way to control this would be for the people observed to be unaware that they are being observed. This, however, raises several ethical issues around informed consent. For example, if the participants did not know they were being observed and for what purpose they would be unable to give their full and informed consent. This also leads to issues of participation being entirely voluntary.

As well as the observer affecting the situation there may also be the issue of the observer interpreting the observation of the behaviours differently and seeing what they want or expect to see, or misinterpreting behaviour to suit their own ideas of what they expect.

Another problem with observation is that it tends to be time consuming. Stenhouse (1982) claimed that in applied fields such as education, there tends to be a move towards a more 'condensed field experience', but this still requires a large amount of time.

A more structured observation approach could reduce the time commitments and the observer bias.

'Structured observations is a method that is relatively underused in social research. It entails the direct observation of behaviour and the recording of that behaviour in terms of categories that have been devised prior to the start of the data collection' (Bryman, 2008, p254).

For the purposes of this research, observation was used as a supportive method to collect data, in that it can set into perspective the data obtained by other means. From the literature review and other observations of consultation it was identified that time, questions and listening were key aspects in effective consultations. This research aimed to identify whether there was a link between these aspects and a positive view of consultation from both the consultant and consultee. Therefore, the method of observation was to identify when these behaviours occurred and link them with the view of effectiveness gained in Phase One of the research. In this research the observations were used to support the findings from the literature review about time, questions and listening, a significant component of effective consultations.

Structured observations are a formal observation method.

'Formal approaches impose a large amount of structure and direction on what is to be observed. The observer has only to attend to these pre specified aspects; everything else is considered irrelevant for the purposes of the study' (Robson, 2002, p313).

As the aim of the study was to look for occurrences of key behaviours, established from both observations of consultation and the previous literature and research, then a structured observation where all other behaviours could largely be ignored was a good

research method to use. This is not to say that the other behaviours occurring in the consultation are not important and would not be valuable to interpret, but that this piece of research was focusing on the key behaviours identified from experience of consultation and from the literature review. The analysis of the other behaviours which occurred in the consultation meetings could be an area of further research.

When carrying out observations, the researcher had the choice to be either a participant observer or a pure observer. A participant observer is where they became part of the group/setting being observed. This can have a positive impact on the research as it is suggested it can reduce the impact the observer has on the observed situation, a disadvantage of observation previously mentioned. However, a difficulty in being a participant observer in this research was that multiple consultants could have had an effect on the meeting being observed. As the consultants may already be seen as authority figures having more than one consultant present may have increased this effect.

It was therefore necessary to employ the use of a pure observer. A pure observer does not take part in the consultation meeting, the situation being observed, but aims to be unobtrusive and unnoticeable. However, as the researcher was in the room when the consultation was taking place, the impact the researcher had on the

research can not fully be ignored and must be listed as one of the limitations of the study. The impact that the researcher had on the consultations may have had some influence on the behaviours which occurred. As the participants were not aware of which key behaviours the researcher was looking for it was hoped that the impact of the researcher in the key behaviours was minimal.

In this research the consultations were video recorded and then the recordings viewed and analysed using a structured observation checklist of predetermined categories/behaviours.

Following the recording of the consultations, the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. The first questionnaire, given immediately following the consultation asked the participants whether the consultation was effective (see Appendix 3). Following a short period of time, approximately one month, the school staff participants were asked to complete a further questionnaire, using the definition of effective consultations established in Phase one of the research. The educational psychologists were not asked to complete this questionnaire as it was seeking information about how effective the consultation had been in achieving its aims and making an impact on the consultee. As the educational psychologists were not working with the child or young person that the consultation was about and they were not the problem holder, they would have been unable to monitor impact of changes to the problem holder (consultees) view.

Using a Likert scale the participants were asked to rate the consultation for effectiveness in the key areas established by the initial questionnaire in Phase one. This enabled the researcher to identify whether the participants viewed the consultations as effective and then make predictions of which of the key behaviours led to the view of effectiveness (see Appendix 4). As the definition of effectiveness listed impact as one of the key aspects of effectiveness, the evaluation needed to be done after a period of time to enable the participants to see any impact which the consultation had on the situation.

3.4.2 Phase Two – Sampling

In total, eight consultations were recorded. The consultants in the consultation meetings were fully qualified and experienced educational psychologists. They all worked as educational psychologists within the local authority. Fully qualified educational psychologists were used as consultants following the literature review in which Hughes and colleagues (1993/97) identified a limitation in their study as using students with little consultation experience. Although consultation was not used as a model of service delivery within the local authority and therefore was not a guaranteed way for the educational psychologists to practise, all of the consultants who took part in the research had had experience of using consultation and used consultation on a regular basis as part of their own toolkit.

The consultees who took part in the consultations were all primary school teachers, six out of the eight consultees were also the school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCo). Primary Schools were chosen to be the focus of the consultation meetings due to the nature of Primary Schools in the local authority. The person with the concern (consultee), who asked for support from the educational psychologist (consultant) is generally the person who spends the majority of time with the individual (client) they are concerned about. In this research all of the consultees were the class teacher of the 'client' and therefore were the people who spent the majority of time with them. The consultee was the problem holder about the focused child or young person. This would enable the consultee to put into place any strategies or advice agreed upon in the consultation and then be able to evaluate the impact that the consultation meeting had. In a secondary school environment, the consultee may only see the client they are concerned about a few times a week and therefore may not be able to fully implement strategies and advice to then measure the impact of the consultation.

Using the limitations suggested about the research conducted by Benn et al (2008), who used simulated consultations with pre-determined issues for the consultees to discuss, in this research the consultees were genuine and the issues discussed were genuine concerns within their schools in which a referral for support had been made to the educational psychologist. This was done to enable the

views of the consultee to be established, an area which was not looked at in the research by Farouk (1999).

All the consultants and consultees took part in the research on a voluntary basis. This was necessary due to the fundamental principle of consultation being a voluntary process (Meyer, 1979; Gutkin and Curtis, 1982 and Wagner, 2000).

Prior to the recording of the consultation both the consultant and the consultee were given information about the purpose of the video recording and asked to complete a consent form allowing the video recording to take place (see Appendix 5a and 5b). The consultant and consultee were also asked not to use any full names of the children discussed, although parental permission had been given for the children to be discussed in the consultations.

Following the video recording of the consultations, three consultations were excluded. One at the request of the teacher involved and two due to the poor sound/recording quality where analysis would not have been able to be done.

3.4.3 Phase Two – Difficulties in Data collection

The main difficulty in the data collection was the reluctance of both the consultants and consultees to being observed during a

consultation meeting. This limited the sample size as several educational psychologists (consultants) were reluctant to have their consultations recorded. This was a major limitation in the study and it made the data set very small and therefore reduced the possible methods of data analysis. This will be discussed later in the results section.

Another difficulty was the lack of opportunity for consultations to take place. As previously mentioned, consultation is not a normal way of working for the some of the educational psychologists in the target local authority. Requests for consultation meetings to be done, so they could be observed by the researcher, were seen as an additional task which had to be fitted into other work. This reduced the number of opportunities for a consultation meeting to occur.

3.4.4 Phase Two – Data Analysis

To analyse the data collected from the structured observations, the videos were watched and key behaviours coded. The behaviours coded were determined by the literature review which highlighted several factors as being important in consultations. These behaviours included question type, listening and time (Leadbetter, 2006; Hughes and colleagues, 1993/97; Benn et al, 2008).

The participants gave a rating on a Likert scale for the key aspects of effective consultation they had given on the initial questionnaire (Phase One). These ratings and the key behaviours were analysed using a correlation to see if any link could be made from the data about which behaviours in the consultation would lead to a positive view of whether the consultation was effective. This method of data analysis was chosen due to the size of the data set. If more data had been collected a linear regression or multiple regression could have been carried out, this type of analysis would not only have indicated a link but also enabled a prediction of which behaviours were more strongly affecting an evaluation of an effective consultation. Due to the size of the data set a correlation was carried out, a limitation of a correlation being that it can draw the conclusion that there is a link but not a predictive aspect which a more robust data analysis method would have enabled.

Due to the small amount of data which was collected the possibilities of which analysis could be carried out were small. The researcher's preferred method would have been a multiple regression. However, a large number of videos would have been needed to make this possible. Again this leads to a limitation in the study, as with a multiple regression the results would have been more powerful and have had a better predictive ability.

3.4.5 Phase Two Correlation Method

Step One – the participants who took part in the video consultations were asked to rate the consultation using a Likert scale in the following aspects:

- Advice
- Achieves Aims
- Positive Impact
- Addresses Issues
- Consultation effectiveness overall

This gave each consultation five ratings out of five, one for each aspect and one for the consultation as a whole.

Step Two – the ratings given for advice, achieves aims, positive impact and addresses issues were added together to give a score out of 20, this was then divided by four to give an actual overall rating of the consultation. This ensured that the overall rating given by the participants reflected the individual aspects of the consultation rather than being a subjective view of the consultation.

Step Three – the key behaviours in the consultation were analysed and put into percentages or into values per minute e.g. the percentage of time the educational psychologist talked, the percentage of open questions or the number of questions asked per minute.

Step Four – the values from step one, step two and step three were inputted into SPSS.

Step Five – a Spearman's Rho correlation was carried out to correlate each key behaviour with each key aspect, for example the percentage of open questions was correlated with the advice given.

3.5 Phase Three

3.5.1 Phase Three – Research design

This phase of the research was included to ensure that following the consultation the participants had the opportunity to discuss any aspects of the consultation which they felt were missing or any aspects which would have helped the consultation be more effective in the future. This helped to establish what made the consultation effective and highlighted any factors which had been missed in Phase One of the research or highlighted any aspects which were of more importance in the consultation than originally thought.

Following the video recording of the consultations, together with the participants being asked whether the consultation was effective or not, the participants were also asked to answer two questions. The first asked what in the consultation had made it either effective or not effective. The second question asked the participants what else

could have been done in the consultation to make it more effective. The questionnaire was used in this part of the research for the same reasons as previously suggested, the information asked of the participants could have been sensitive, as they were asked about what had just taken place, but by asking them to complete a questionnaire they did not have to answer the question face-to-face with the person who had been involved in the consultation, therefore not upsetting them or having their presence bias the results. The questionnaire method was also used so the participants could take the questionnaire away and think about their response rather than having to give an initial response to the questions which may not have been their true or honest response. Although an interview could have been used, that may have reduced the honesty in their answer as they might have felt pressured by the researcher and by having to answer immediately following the consultation they would be unable to think about their responses.

3.5.2 Phase Three – Sampling

As with the sample in Phase Two of the research, all participants who took part in the video consultations were asked to complete the questionnaire for phase three of the research. No data was excluded from this phase, therefore, 16 participants completed the questionnaire, eight members of School Staff and eight Educational Psychologists.

3.5.3 Phase Three – Difficulties in data collection

The main difficulty in the data collection for Phase Three was the lack of volunteers for Phase Two of the research. As the questionnaire asking about the consultations could only be given to the people involved in the Phase Two of the research this limited the data set available.

3.5.4 Phase Three – Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires was analysed using a thematic analysis. As previously discussed in section 3.3.4 of this research, the thematic analysis conducted used an inductive process, where the themes were established from the data rather than from the previous research in the literature review. The analysis was conducted at the semantic level, looking at the patterns and meanings in the data collected. Commonalities in the responses were looked for and key responses coded. These key responses were established as themes.

3.6 Ethics

As the research involved the use of human participants, specifically School Staff and Educational Psychologists, certain ethical issues

were considered and addressed. This consideration was deemed necessary by the researcher to ensure the privacy and safety of the participants.

Among the ethical issues, which were considered in this research, were the notions of confidentiality and informed consent.

As stated in the British Psychological Society Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines, 'Good psychological research is possible only if there is mutual respect and confidence between investigators and participants' (p8).

To ensure mutual respect, a full disclosure of the aims of the research was made to all of the participants. This enabled all of the participants to give informed consent as to their involvement in the research. By explaining the aims and purposes of the research the participants were able to understand the importance of their role in the completion of the research.

As stated in the British Psychological Society Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines, 'Whenever possible, the investigator should inform all participants of the objectives of the investigation. The investigator should inform the participants of all aspects of the research or intervention that might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate. The investigator

should, normally, explain all other aspects of the research or intervention about which the participants enquire' (p9).

As observations were used in the research it had to be ensured that the participants gave the consent to be observed, as their behaviour was not something which would have been expected to be observed by strangers.

Written consent was obtained from all participants (See Appendix 5b).

Together with ensuring that the participants gave informed consent to take part in the research they were also advised that they could withdraw from the research at any time. By doing this, participants were able to feel that their participation was truly voluntary and if they were not happy it would not be taken out of their control. This also helped build the mutual respect, which is deemed by both myself and the British Psychological Society as necessary in research.

Although the participants in the research were the School Staff and the Educational Psychologists, as the cases discussed were real, following a limitation from Benn et al (2008), the children who were discussed on the videos were actual cases referred to the Educational Psychology Service. To limit the identification of the children in the video the participants were asked to use only the

child's first name. However, despite this request some of the videos contained the child's full name. As the children were already referred to the Educational Psychology Service, written consent had been obtained for the child to be discussed by the School Staff and the Educational Psychologist. However, because there was a video recording of the consultation, to be certain of consent the researcher contacted the parents to obtain explicit agreement for the child to be discussed as part of the research. This was done over the telephone as the researcher felt that this would ensure that the parents were fully aware of the research and the processes involved, and the purpose of the research was then able to be discussed and any questions which the parents had were answered immediately, alleviating any concerns. Telephone consent was obtained rather than by letter due to the literacy levels of some of the parents whose children were involved in the research.

As with the actual participants in the research, the parents were also given the option to withdraw consent at any time and withdraw from the research. The telephone consent from the parents, as with the written consent, was recorded in the individual child's Educational Psychology Service file.

Following the observations, the participants were assured that all information about them would remain confidential. They were assured that the viewing of the videos would be limited only to those

directly involved in the research process, and those required to view the videos as part of the research evaluation. No information would be included in the research write up which would allow the participants to be identified. As with the names of the children, these would all be anonymous in the transcripts to ensure their confidentiality.

This adheres to the ethical guidelines which state 'participants in psychological research have a right to expect that information they provide will be treated confidentially and, if published, will not be identifiable as theirs'.

The same assurances were given to the participants involved in the questionnaire aspect of the research. They were assured that their answers would not be attributed to any one individual and as they did not include any identifiable data on the response forms then the researcher was unable to identify who completed the questionnaires. This was clearly explained to all participants in the letter which accompanied the questionnaire (see Appendix 2).

Chapter Four: Results

4.1. Overview

As discussed in the Methodology Chapter, the research has been conducted in three phases, each phase helping to provide information which was then used to inform the next phase. Given this, the Results Chapter was separated into the three phases.

4.2 Phase One – Questionnaires

The questionnaires from the school staff and the educational psychologists were used to answer the research question, 'What do school staff and educational psychologists view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?'.

Once the questionnaire data was gathered from the school staff and the educational psychologists, the data was analysed using thematic analysis to identify the key themes in each of the answers to the questions.

Thematic analysis aims to identify the key themes in a set of data, in this instance, questionnaire responses.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe themes as 'classification is discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon. Thus, the concepts are grouped together under a higher order, more abstract concept called a category' (p61).

Ryan and Bernard (2003) claim 'themes come both from the data (an inductive approach) and from the investigators prior theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study (an a priori approach)' (p88).

However, even when using questionnaires with open questions 'one cannot anticipate all the themes that arise before analysing the data' (Dey, 1993, p97-98).

In this research, the themes were established from the data alone. The themes could have been pre-selected using the evidence from the Literature Review and the data read to identify if these themes could be found. This has its advantages as it can prove a hypothesis established from the literature review of what the definition of consultation is. However, it imposes the findings from other peoples research into this piece of research. Although previous research had highlighted aspects of consultations which were viewed as important, these preconceived themes were not used as the researcher wanted the definition that was identified in this research to be pertinent to the

experiences of the participants. As suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2003) an inductive approach, where the themes are established without preconceived ideas and just from the information in the data, was used in the thematic analysis to establish the key themes from school staff and educational psychologists.

Each question was looked at individually, the themes were then collated to identify common/core themes which could be related to the topic area of 'effective consultation'. This was done both for the school staff questionnaires and the educational psychologists' questionnaires (See Appendices 6 – 11 for questionnaire data).

The key themes identified in this phase of the research were used to rate the video consultations in Phase Two. The key themes and definitions of consultation and effective consultation were used as the definitions against which to judge the effectiveness of the video consultations.

The questions as a whole were analysed and themes established. The results can be seen displayed in several diagrams. It was decided to utilise thematic networks to display the data with the aim of facilitating the structuring and depiction of the themes. The diagrams are a clear and visual representation of the data collected.

4.2.1 School Staff responses to Questionnaires

From the question 'What is your understanding of consultation between educational psychologists and school staff?' several themes emerged. Once these basic themes were represented on a thematic network (Diagram 1 – see appendix 21 for diagrams and explanation) it could be seen that some of the basic themes were similar e.g. strategies and advice; conversation and discussion. It was therefore necessary to re-read the data and check for meaning of these particular themes. From re-reading the data it was identified that these themes did in fact have the same meaning but were simply worded slightly differently. It was then possible to condense the themes through finding similar themes and grouping them into one organising theme (Diagram 2). The following organising themes emerged:

- Discussion
- Help/Support
- Advice
- Information Sharing
- Impact for child
- Desirable Outcomes
- Assessment/Direct work with the child

From the question 'What is your definition of effective?' key themes emerged. Again these basic themes were represented on a thematic

network (Diagram 3). The similar themes were identified and grouped depending on the overall meaning of the statement e.g. makes a difference and impact. It was then possible to establish the organising themes (Diagram 4). These were:

- Desirable outcome
- Action
- Makes a difference
- Advice
- Help/Support
- Questions Answered
- Confidence

From the question 'How would you describe an effective consultation?' key themes emerged and were represented on a thematic network (Diagram 5). The organising themes were then identified by identifying themes of a similar meaning and re-reading the original data. Seven organising themes emerged (Diagram 6).

These were:

- Positive Impact
- Discussion
- Assessment Feedback
- Problem Solving
- Strategies
- Information Sharing
- Advice

Once the questions were separately analysed it was considered that it would be beneficial to look at the data as a whole and identify if any organising theme occurred in more than one question. Doing this would enable the researcher to answer the overall research question of what is an effective consultation and the results then used in a further phase of the research. Again the results were represented on a thematic network due to the visual nature of the networks and the clarity that this approach can bring to the data.

The thematic network shows that from the questions asked, four global themes emerged (Diagram 7). These global themes were colour coded to help see the link clearly on the diagram. These global themes were labelled:

- Advice
- Strategies/Action
- Achieves Aims
- Impact

Table 1: the key themes established from the school staff responses to the questionnaire.

Question	Organising Themes	Global Themes
What is your understanding of consultation between educational psychologists and school staff?	Discussion Help/Support Advice Information Sharing Impact for child Desirable Outcomes Assessment/Direct work with the child	Advice Strategies/Action Achieves Aims Impact
What is your definition of effective?	Desirable outcome Action Makes a difference Advice Help/Support Questions Answered Confidence	
How would you describe an effective consultation?	Positive Impact Discussion Assessment Feedback Problem Solving Strategies Information Sharing Advice	

4.2.2 Educational Psychologists' responses to Questionnaires

The same thematic analysis was carried out on the questionnaires given to the educational psychologists. Each question was individually analysed with the organising themes represented on a thematic network and the data from the educational psychologists' questionnaires analysed to identify global themes for educational psychologists.

From the question 'What is your understanding of consultation between educational psychologists and school staff?' 19 basic themes emerged. These themes were placed into a thematic network and from the visual representation it was clear that several of the themes were similar (Diagram 8). The data was re-read to identify the underlying meaning of these themes and the similar themes grouped and placed on a second thematic network (Diagram 9). The following organising themes emerged:

- Joint/Collaboration
- Confidential
- Effect Change
- Enhance Skills
- Way forward
- Intervention
- Listening
- Helpful
- Explore issues

From the question 'What is your definition of effective?' multiple basic themes emerged (Diagram 10). They were then grouped according to meaning and organising themes were established. (Diagram 11)

These were:

- Effect Change
- Able to generalise
- Way forward

- Positive
- Achieves Aims
- Purposeful
- Desired Outcomes
- Shared Understanding

From the question 'How would you describe an effective consultation?' several basic themes emerged (Diagram 12). Organising themes were established by linking themes into similar groups according to their original meaning rather than the wording used. (Diagram 13) These were:

- Supportive
- Positive
- Mutual
- Addresses Concerns
- Helpful
- Conversation
- Way Forward
- Explore Issues

The three questions and the organising themes were placed onto one thematic network for the views of educational psychologists (Diagram 14). The thematic network shows that from the questions asked, six global themes emerged, again these global themes were colour coded. These themes were labelled:

- Helpful
- Collaborative
- Achieves Aims
- Effects Change
- Way forward/Solutions
- Positive Experience

Table 2: the key themes established from the educational psychologists' responses to the questionnaire.

Question	Organising Themes	Global Themes
What is your understanding of consultation between educational psychologists and school staff?	Joint/Collaboration Confidential Effect Change Enhance Skills Way forward Intervention Listening Helpful Explore issues	Helpful Collaborative Achieves Aims Effects Change Way forward/Solutions Positive Experience
What is your definition of effective?	Effect Change Able to generalise Way forward Positive Achieves Aims Purposeful Desired Outcomes Shared Understanding	
How would you describe an effective consultation?	Supportive Positive Mutual Addresses Concerns Helpful Conversation Way Forward Explore Issues	

4.2.3 Overall Themes from Questionnaires

The data from the educational psychologists' questionnaires and the school staff questionnaire were also analysed to identify any commonalities between the views of the educational psychologists and the views of the school staff regarding their definitions of 'effective consultations'.

Three themes were shared by both the school staff and the educational psychologists as being a global theme. These were:

- Advice/solutions
- Achieves aims
- Impact/change

It can be suggested that these were the global themes which a consultation would need to feature in order to lead to both educational psychologists and school staff viewing the consultation as effective.

The data was then analysed as a whole to see if any themes which had not been previously seen as a global theme could be identified when all of the data was looked at collectively. Again the themes can be shown in the diagrams and were colour coded to show the links clearly. (Diagram 15).

The results from the Thematic Analysis (Phase One) identified that school staff and educational psychologists share a similar understanding of what consultation is and what makes an effective consultation.

The thematic analysis of the questionnaire data highlighted four global themes.

- Advice/way forward
- Achieves aims
- Impact/Change
- Explore issues

It can therefore be suggested that for a consultation to be viewed as effective by both school staff and educational psychologists the consultation needs to contain a measure of these four aspects. However, the educational psychologists and school staff also require different aspects for the consultation to be effective.

Table 3: the key themes shared by both the educational psychologists’ and the school staff from the responses to the questionnaires.

	Global Themes	Shared Global Themes	Overarching themes from the data
Educational psychologists	Helpful Collaborative Achieves Aims Effects Change Way forward/Solutions Positive Experience	Advice / Solutions Achieves Aims Impact / Change	Explore Issues
School staff	Advice Strategies/Action Achieves Aims Impact		

In addition to these global themes, school staff required the consultation to include the giving of strategies or some form of action from the educational psychologist, e.g. assessment feedback. This was not an area which the educational psychologists considered an important aspect.

Educational psychologists required the consultation to include collaboration and being seen as helpful. School staff did not highlight these as important aspects of consultation for them.

It can therefore be suggested that for consultation to be viewed as effective by school staff the consultation needs to be ‘a discussion in

which advice and strategies are given which result in impact for the child and achieve the aims for which it was held'. This is the definition which has been established from the thematic analysis of the school staff questionnaire data.

For consultation to be viewed as effective by the educational psychologists it needs to be 'a collaborative act which effects change and finds solutions, achieving the aims in a helpful way and being a positive experience'. Again, this is the definition which has been established from the thematic analysis of the educational psychologists questionnaire data.

4.3 Phase Two – Video Analysis

The second phase of the research identified which key behaviours were occurring within the consultations which led to the consultation being viewed as effective, thus answering the second research question of 'What behaviours which occur in consultations are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?'

Using the themes identified in Phase One of the research and the information about which behaviours were suggested as part of an effective consultation from the literature review a structured observation of the consultations was conducted. As previously discussed in Chapter Three, Methodology, a structured observation

was chosen as the best method to gather the data to answer the research question.

The consultations were video recorded so that the consultations could be re-watched and the structured observation schedule completed. By recording the consultation it allowed several key behaviours to be observed rather than just one or two. It also allowed the researcher to ensure that all of the key behaviours were recorded accurately. This was done by watching the consultations several times and ensuring a consistent record of the key behaviours was achieved.

The consultations were also transcribed to ensure that behaviours such as question type and number of questions could be accurately recorded (See Appendices 12 – 16 for transcripts).

From the literature review and observations of consultations, five key behaviours were identified as being important in consultations and their ratings of effectiveness. These are:

- Percentage of time the educational psychologist talks
- Percentage of time the member of School Staff talks
- Percentage of open questions
- Percentage of closed questions
- Number of question used in the consultation per minute.

Following the video analysis both the educational psychologists and the school staff were asked to complete a Likert rating scale asking about the key themes identified in Phase one of the research. These were:

- Advice
- Achieves aims
- Positive impact
- Addresses issues

The Likert scale ranged from 1-5 (with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent) for each of the areas highlighted in Phase One of the research. Following the consultation, the school staff were also asked to rate the consultation as a whole, this was labelled 'overall'. Each of these individual aspects was looked at on the correlation to identify which led to the consultation being viewed as effective. The educational psychologists were asked to rate the consultation as a whole using a Likert scale.

Using the ratings given on these four themes together with the overall rating and using the results from the structured observation a Spearman Rho correlation was carried out to identify if any of the behaviours could predict the 'effectiveness' of the consultation', based on the four identified themes of effectiveness established in Phase one.

Using the interpretation of the correlation coefficient established by Cohen (1988), who states that although the correlation coefficient depends on the context and purpose; a correlation of 0.9 in the context of social sciences can be regarded as very high. Cohen gave the following guidelines for correlation coefficients:

Correlation	Negative	Positive
Small	-0.3 to -0.1	0.1 to 0.3
Medium	-0.5 to -0.3	0.3 to 0.5
Large	-1.0 to -0.5	0.5 to 1.0

The following results were obtained from the Spearman Rho correlation:

Table 4: the correlation coefficients between the definition of consultation and the key behaviours.

			advice	achieve _aim	impact	issues	overall	act_ove rall	ep_over all
Spearman 's rho	teach _talk	Correlation	.000	.211	.894*	.738	.289	.616	-.205
		Coefficient							
		Sig. (2- tailed)	1.000	.734	.041	.155	.638	.269	.741
		N	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	ep_tal k	Correlation	.474	-.369	-.783	-.791	-.289	-.718	.718
		Coefficient							
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.420	.541	.118	.111	.638	.172	.172
		N	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	Close d_q	Correlation	-.730	-.351	-.688	-.433	-.148	-.553	-.026
		Coefficient							
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.161	.562	.199	.467	.812	.334	.966
		N	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	open_ q	Correlation	.730	.351	.688	.433	.148	.553	.026
		Coefficient							
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.161	.562	.199	.467	.812	.334	.966
		N	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	q_per _min	Correlation	.158	-.264	.447	.000	-.577	.103	-.103
		Coefficient							
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.800	.668	.450	1.000	.308	.870	.870
		N	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

4.3.1 Time to Talk

From the Spearman's Rho Correlation, the school staff's overall rating of the effectiveness of the consultation indicated a large correlation with the amount of time the school staff spent talking in the consultation (Correlation Coefficient 0.616). There was a large negative correlation with the school staff rating of effectiveness of the consultation and the time that the educational psychologists spent talking during the consultation (Correlation Coefficient -0.718). Therefore, this suggests that the school staff found the consultation more effective when they spent the majority of this time talking and found the consultation less effective when they did not talk as much and the educational psychologist talked more.

These results show a contrast to the ratings given by the educational psychologists. The educational psychologists' rating of the effectiveness of the consultation and the time that the school staff talked indicated a small negative correlation (Correlation Coefficient -0.205). There was a large positive correlation between the educational psychologists rating of the effectiveness of the consultation and the amount of time they talked (Correlation Coefficient 0.718). This would indicate the opposite of what was found from the school staff rating. Educational psychologists rated the consultation as more effective when they spent the larger

proportion of the time talking - a direct opposite of what the school staff found helped the consultation to be rated as effective.

There was a large correlation between the amount of time the school staff talked and issues (Correlation Coefficient 0.738). This would indicate that the more time the school staff spent talking the more time they considered they had to discuss their issues within the consultation.

A significant correlation at the 0.05 significance level was identified between amount of teacher talk and impact (0.894). This would indicate that the more time school staff spent talking the more impact the consultation was considered to have had.

There was a small correlation between the amount of time the school staff talked and the consultation achieving its aims (Correlation Coefficient 0.211). This would indicate that the amount of time the school staff talked had an influence on the view that the consultation had achieved its aims.

No correlation was found between the amount of time the school staff talked and advice. This was to be expected as the more time the school staff were talking, the less time educational psychologists would have to give advice.

Large negative correlations were found between the amount of time the educational psychologists spent talking and the consultations having impact (Correlation Coefficient -0.783) and discussing issues (Correlation Coefficient -0.791). A medium negative correlation was found between achieving aims and the amount of time the educational psychologists spent talking (Correlation Coefficient -0.369). This would indicate that the more the educational psychologists talked the less the school staff believed they were afforded the opportunity to discuss issues and that the consultation did not have as much impact or achieve its aims.

A medium correlation was found between the amount of time the educational psychologists talked and advice (Correlation Coefficient 0.474). This would indicate that the more time educational psychologists spent talking led to advice being given.

4.3.2 Question Type

The 'overall' rating of the consultation by the school staff indicated a large negative correlation between the rating of the effectiveness of the consultation and the number of closed questions (Correlation Coefficient -0.553). A large positive correlation between overall rating by the school staff and the number of open questions was found (Correlation Coefficient 0.553). This indicated that the school staff

found the consultations more effective when they were asked open questions rather than closed questions.

No correlation was found between the educational psychologists rating of the effectiveness of the consultation and either open or closed questions. This would indicate that the type of question asked was not of importance to the educational psychologists and their rating of consultation effectiveness.

Closed questions negatively correlated with all aspects of the consultation according to the school staff. Large negative correlations were found between closed questions and advice and impact. Medium negative correlations were found between closed questions and achieve aims and issues. Open questions positively correlated with all aspects of consultation. This would indicate that open questions helped make the consultation to be viewed as effective.

4.3.3 Percentage of Questions

Only a small correlation was found between the overall school staff rating and the number of questions asked (Correlation Coefficient 0.103). A small negative correlation was found between the educational psychologists rating of the consultation and the number of questions asked (Correlation Coefficient -0.103). This indicated

that the number of questions asked was not as important as the type of questions.

The number of question asked did have a medium correlation with the school staff's rating of impact (Correlation Coefficient 0.447). This would indicate that the more questions that were asked the more impact the consultation appeared to have had. The type of question had a larger impact than just the number of questions; therefore it was not just the number of questions but also the use of open rather than closed questions.

4.3.4 Other Correlations

A significant correlation at the 0.01 significance level was found between the school staff's overall rating of the effectiveness of the consultation and issues (Correlation Coefficient 0.973). This would indicate that the members of school staff needed to feel that the issues had been explored during the consultation in order for the consultation to be viewed as effective.

A large correlation was found between the school staff's rating of the effectiveness of the consultation and achieving aims (Correlation Coefficient 0.865) and impact (Correlation Coefficient 0.803). This would indicate that both achieving aims and impact were important aspects for the consultation to be viewed as effective.

No correlation was found between the school staff rating of effectiveness and advice, which would indicate that although the school staff considered that this was an important aspect of consultation the results showed that it was not actually that important. This area was correlated with the educational psychologists' rating of the consultation, indicating that giving advice was important to the educational psychologist and their rating of consultation effectiveness.

4.4 Phase Three

Educational psychologists and school staff were asked to complete a second questionnaire following the consultation that was recorded. This asked two questions. The aim of this part of the research was to identify what else could be done to make consultation effective for school staff and educational psychologists (See Appendices 17 – 20 for questionnaire data).

For the question 'What can be done to make consultation more effective?' three global themes emerged (Diagram 16). These were:

- More time to talk
- Involving other staff
- Preparation before consultation

None of these three key themes were identified in the initial questionnaires that asked, 'What makes an effective consultation?' This would suggest that although they were important to the consultation being viewed as effective they were not as important as the four global themes identified in Phase One. This may suggest that these aspects may enhance the consultations. However, it would appear that the consultation could be effective without the involvement of other staff, time for preparation before the consultation and additional time to talk. The presence of these aspects would make the consultation better and extend / enhance the view of effectiveness.

Educational psychologists also wanted written records and viewed the interpersonal relationships as important. The idea of written records, again appears to be an aspect which would enhance the consultation but was not seen as vital in the consultation's effectiveness.

The research from the literature review highlighted the importance of the interpersonal relationship between educational psychologist and school staff. This had not previously been identified as a key theme from this research. However, following the consultation several educational psychologists discussed the importance of a good interpersonal relationship. This may have been suggested after the consultation as the experience of being in the consultation highlighted

that where there were good interpersonal relationships the experience was better.

For the question 'How did you know consultation was effective?' three global themes emerged (Diagram 17). These were:

- Strategies / way forward agreed
- Shared / clear picture achieved
- Time to talk by teacher

School staff viewed a multi agency approach as important. Educational psychologists wanted schools to maintain ownership of the issues and viewed both the giving and receiving of information as important.

One of the three themes highlighted in this question was also highlighted in the initial questionnaire. This was 'strategies'.

The two new themes which emerged were 'shared picture' and 'time to talk'. The school staff mentioned that they knew the consultation had been effective due to these key themes but had not initially seen them as important aspects of an effective consultation. Time to talk, although not raised in Phase One, was clear from the Literature Review as important. From Phase Two of the research, time to talk was clearly an important aspect of the consultation effectiveness.

The time for school staff to talk had a large correlation with the overall rating of effectiveness, as identified in Phase Two of the research.

The issue of multi agency approach was initially highlighted by the educational psychologists as being important in effective consultations during Phase One of the research. From Phase Three it was clear that this was an aspect that was also key to school staff.

Throughout Phase One and Three, educational psychologists considered that the schools maintaining ownership of the issues was important. The school staff did not highlight this as being a key aspect.

Table 5: the key themes established from the school staff and educational psychologists’ responses to the Phase Three questionnaire.

Questions	Global Themes
What can be done to make consultation more effective?	More time to talk Involving other staff Preparation before consultation
How did you know consultation was effective?	Strategies / way forward agreed Shared / clear picture achieved Time to talk by teacher

Although these new aspects were highlighted as being important to the process of consultation in Phase Three of the research, it may be that they were highlighted / suggested in answer to the questions as

an artefact of taking part in the consultation meeting rather than to do with the actual process of consultation itself.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Research Questions

The main aim of this research was to answer two research questions.

The two research questions were:

1. What do educational psychologists and school staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?
2. What behaviours which occur in consultation are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?

The research was split into three phases to enable the research questions to be answered.

5.2 Phase One

Phase One of the research focused on obtaining a definition of 'consultation' and 'effective consultation' from both educational psychologists and school staff. The researcher deemed this an important aspect of the research following the literature review where numerous definitions of consultation had been used by researchers (Conoley and Conoley, 1982; Bramlett and Murphy, 1979; Wagner, 2000; Bozic, 2004; Gonzalez et al, 2004). These numerous definitions of consultation may have led to confusion (Sheridan et al,

1996). It was therefore deemed important to obtain a definition of consultation from the participants involved in the study against which to measure effectiveness. This was suggested following the study by Medway (1979) who discussed the importance of establishing a definition of consultation prior to undertaking research into the effectiveness, this would help ascertain the goals and expectations of the consultation and enable a measure of effectiveness to be taken against some agreed criteria. A definition could have been imposed on the participants but this may have led to different ratings of effectiveness, as the imposed definition may not have correlated with what the participants viewed as 'effective consultation'.

In this study the definition of consultation had to be established from both the perspectives of the consultant and the consultee. This was necessary as in the previous research, such as Medway (1979) and Bozic (2004), one of the criticisms could be that they only obtained a definition from one perspective. It was important, therefore, to ensure that both the consultant and the consultee had the opportunity to express their views of what consultation actually is.

From the questionnaires and thematic analysis a definition was obtained from both the educational psychologists and the school staff.

5.2.1 School Staff Questionnaire Results

The thematic analysis for the school staff highlighted four global themes, which were:

- Advice
- Strategies / Action
- Achieves Aims
- Impact

The research highlighted the importance of the educational psychologist giving advice / strategies / actions. This was not mentioned in any of the previous research studies as being an important aspect. In fact, the research by Farouk (1999) highlighted the importance of a joint problem solving approach rather than the educational psychologists being directive and the study by Dennis (2004) identified that the consultation was viewed as more effective when the consultant was an 'enabler' rather than an expert. These studies by Farouk and Dennis would therefore show contradictory results to this research, which highlighted the importance of a more directive approach. However, these differences in what the school staff viewed as effective consultation and what the research highlighted as effective consultation may have occurred due to the fact that the research, such as Farouk (1999), asked for the opinion of the consultant rather than the consultee, meaning that the

consultee may have wanted a more directive approach where they were given advice / strategies / actions.

This idea of giving advice / strategies / actions has been considered to be important in other professions use of consultation, as previously discussed in the literature review. The idea that in some professions (general practice, clinical psychology and business) and models of consultation, such as the mental health model, the consultants are seen as experts who will be able to use their knowledge to give advice to 'fix' a problem of the consultee. The notion that consultees would like this advice giving would imply that they are looking for a more within child problem based model with a focus on the expert rather than the more collaborative nature as suggested by the research such as Dennis (2004). This focus on the expert would fit with the ethos of the local authority in which this research was conducted. As previously discussed the educational psychologists in this local authority are perceived to be in a position of authority. Martin (1978) stated that this can lead to the psychologists being perceived as having 'expert power' and therefore having the necessary skills and knowledge to 'solve' the problem presented by the consultee in the consultation meeting.

The idea of achieving aims was a feature of some of the studies which investigated effectiveness. The studies by Mannino and Shore (1975), Medway (1979), and Sheridan, Welch and Orme (1996) all

found that consultation was viewed as effective if it returned a 'positive result'. However, the example of a 'positive result' was not determined. From this piece of research the school staff stated that for the consultation to be viewed as effective, it must achieve its aims. In some of the questionnaire data, the school staff suggested ways in which the consultation could have achieved its aims, this did differ among the responses.

School Staff 1, 'effective in this case means that SENCo / staff have their questions answered and feel confident to move on.'

School Staff 2, 'Educational Psychologist will provide evidence / assessment data to support implementation.'

This could be a criticism of the current research, as the exact way in which the aims are achieved is the perception of the consultee. The aims of the consultation could be different among consultees but also in different consultation meetings. This would suggest that for future consultation meetings to achieve their aim, the aim should be established prior to the meeting. This would help the consultee feel that the aim had been established and would then give a goal for the consultation to meet.

From the thematic analysis of the questionnaire data from the school staff the following definition of consultation was established. For

consultation to be viewed as effective by school staff the consultation needs to be 'a discussion in which advice and strategies are given which result in impact for the child and achieve the aims for which it was held.'

5.2.2 Educational Psychologists Questionnaire Results

The thematic analysis for the educational psychologists highlighted six global themes. These were:

- Helpful
- Collaborative
- Achieves aims
- Effects Change
- Way forward / Solutions
- Positive Experience

One of the global themes which the educational psychologists believed was important in consultation being viewed as effective was 'collaboration'. This is one of the main principles of consultation highlighted in the research (Medway, 1979; Wagner, 2000; Gonzalez et al, 2004). The idea of being collaborative would suit the guiding principles of consultation discussed in the literature review. (West and Idol, 1987 and Wagner, 2000).

The educational psychologists stated that for the consultation to be seen as effective it must result in way forward / solutions. This is also a guiding principle of consultation which was discussed in the literature review. Meyers et al (1979) stated that one of the principles is that the consultation aims to solve the current problem. Gutkin and Curtis (1982) stated in consultation, the consultees have the right to accept or reject any suggestions made by the consultant. This would support the notion that the consultants suggest that for the consultation to be effective they must solve the problem (solutions) and make suggestions (way forward). However, this is different from the consultees view that the consultant should give advice. The consultants viewed the way forward and solutions as being a collaborative process rather than them being the experts and telling the consultee what they need to do. This would support the work of Dennis (2004) who stated that consultants who are experts are seen as outsiders and not seen as part of the collaborative process which is viewed more favourably.

From the thematic analysis of the questionnaire data from the educational psychologists the following definition of consultation was established. For consultation to be viewed as effective by the educational psychologists it needs to be 'a collaborative act which effects change and finds solutions, achieving the aims in a helpful way and being a positive experience'.

5.2.3 Overall Questionnaire Results

Although a slight difference can be identified in the definitions of consultation, for the school staff and the educational psychologist the thematic analysis of the questionnaire data would suggest some commonalities between the data for the school staff and the educational psychologists.

When the themes were compared together, four global themes emerged which were deemed by the participants (both educational psychologists and school staff) as being essential to a consultation being viewed as effective. These were:

- Advice / Way forward
- Achieves Aims
- Impact / Change
- Explore Issues

The notion of advice and way forward as a theme would directly support the idea established by Gutkin (1999) in his suggestions that there can be different types of consultation. The fact that both the consultants and the consultees wanted the other party to make suggestions would support the idea of collaborative consultation rather than coercive consultation. The consultees also wanted the consultants to give advice about supporting the children and suggest ways forward, this would support the notion of directive consultation

rather than nondirective. In nondirective consultation, no advice or suggestions are made by the consultant, all of the suggestions and plans come from the consultee. For this research, that type of consultation would not fit with their definitions of what effective means. From this research it would appear that the consultants and the consultees would like a collaborative – directive consultation style, which supports the theory of Gutkin that this would be the most effective consultation type.

The slight differences in the views of the educational psychologists and the school staff in what leads to the consultation meeting being viewed as effective may be a result of the previous expectations of the participants. School staff may be expecting a more mental health consultation style (Caplan, 1970) with the focus on the consultant being the expert and solving the problem rather than a more collaborative and problem solving approach familiar to the educational psychologists.

Another reason for the differing views the educational psychologists and school staff have about consultation may be due to the epistemological stance of the participants. (Robson, 2008)

People working under different stances would expect different things from a consultation meeting.

For example, a person working under a social constructionist framework using solution focused therapy (de Shazer, 1985) would expect the consultation to be led by the consultee with the consultant taking the role of facilitator and not giving suggestion / strategies or advice but leading the consultee to their own findings. This would differ from someone working under another stance.

Again, for example, under a positivist stance, there is the belief that there is a universal set of truths / facts upon which decisions can be made. The social aspects of the concern or environmental factors which may influence the situation, but can not be measured, would not be taken into account.

It is evident from this research that the consultees expect that the consultation meeting will have some strategies / direction and therefore not working under a solution focused framework, however, the consultants appear to be more in this stance, wanting the consultation meeting to be led by the consultee and more collaborative in nature.

The different views of the consultants on what is seen as important in a consultation meeting may be a result of their own self efficacy. Bandura (1977) defined self efficacy as a person's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations. Self efficacy lies at the centre of social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy theory determines that

efficacy perceptions impact choices, effort, and emotions, it is possible that psychologists' feelings of efficacy affect the extent to which they approach or avoid consultation opportunities.

The theory of Self-determination (Deci and Ryan, 1991) may also affect a consultant's willingness to engage in consultation meetings. Self-determination theory proposes that humans have an innate need for personal growth and development, the environment either helps or hinders this growth. The optimal conditions for the development include the individual's need for competence, autonomy and relatedness. (Deci and Ryan, 2009). When the environment is optimal the individual will have motivation. Therefore if the consultants do not feel they have the ability, they may be reluctant to engage in the consultation meeting.

The context of the research also plays a role in the expectations of the consultation meeting and the differing views of the professionals. Deal and Kennedy (1982) initially suggested the concept of corporate / organisational culture. The idea is that organisations have a shared set of values, visions, beliefs and behaviours. These beliefs and behaviours are taught to new members of the organisation. Organisational culture affects the way in which people within the group interact with each other within the organisation but also externally. Ravasi and Schulte (2006) state that organisational culture is a set of shared assumptions which guide interpretation and

action by giving a definition of appropriate behaviours and responses in various situations. The idea of organisational culture may have had an impact in this research, in that, the expectations that both the consultants and consultees came to the consultation meeting with may have been influenced by the local authority ideals and beliefs. It may have also affected the way in which the consultant and the consultees interacted. As previously discussed, the local authority in which this research was undertaken, the consultants are seen as experts. The consultees would therefore expect that the consultation meeting would contain some key aspects, such as advice and strategies and be more directive in nature. The consultants in this local authority view their role as being a more collaborative partnership, therefore may be expecting the collaboration to be highlighted as a key aspect. If the research had been undertaken in a different local authority, different expectations and key behaviours may have arisen from the research. Therefore the context of the research can not be underestimated in leading to different views. As this research is influenced by local authority practice then care would need to be taken in generalising the findings to other areas.

5.2.4 Data supporting the theme – Advice/Way forward

School Staff 1, 'School staff, through the SENCo, can consult with the Educational Psychologist to gain advice about how to support children with specific educational needs.'

School Staff 2, '(consultation) would result in appropriate advice with regard to how best support children.'

School Staff 3, 'a way forward to be established and both parties to understand fully their part to play in the process.'

School Staff 4, 'effective consultation should provide a way forward in supporting a child / group of children / family as well as meeting schools needs of provision.'

Educational Psychologist 1, 'A confidential meeting where the consultant's role is to help identify the problem and indicate the way forward.'

Educational Psychologist 2, 'Useful / moves things forward / made a difference.'

Educational Psychologist 3, 'The process whereby the EP and School Staff work together to agree an appropriate programme of work / intervention by Educational Psychologist.'

Educational Psychologist 4, 'consultee is able to consider new / different ways forward to reduce the problem.'

5.2.5 Data supporting the theme – Achieves Aims

School Staff 1, 'where a desired outcome is achieved.'

School Staff 2, 'means producing the intended result or outcome.'

School Staff 3, 'successful – producing an effect or leading to a result.'

School Staff 4, 'needs to be successful and achieve its aim and have a far reaching positive impact.'

Educational Psychologist 1, 'Working together to provide effective resolution of difficulties staff are facing with children.'

Educational Psychologist 2, 'jointly identifying actions and an action plan designed to achieve these aims.'

Educational Psychologist 3, 'Achieves the purpose for which it is employed.'

Educational Psychologist 4, 'A consultation that works i.e. all parties are in agreement and consulted to identify aims and actions. That the interaction is supportive and open and that aims and actions are achievable and realistic.'

5.2.6 Data supporting the theme – Impact/Change

School Staff 1, '(consultation) is seen to have had a positive impact.'

School Staff 2, 'Something that produces a desirable outcome.'

School Staff 3, 'results in an effective, long-lasting change on the circumstances of the subject in question.'

Educational Psychologist 1, 'Everyone feels that the consultation has helped to move the problem forward.'

Educational Psychologist 2, 'One in which both parties involved in the discussion come away feeling that the situation has moved on/progressed in a positive direction and that there now seems to be a plan to move forward.'

Educational Psychologist 3, 'Leads to positive change. Makes a difference – perceived by participants as being so. Achieves what it set out to do. Resolves.'

Educational Psychologist 4, 'Something which has reached its intended goal or has brought about a positive change in circumstances.'

5.2.7 Data supporting the theme – Explore Issues

School Staff 1, 'a sharing of information between the Educational Psychologist and the member of staff.'

School Staff 2, 'discussion regarding concerns.'

School Staff 3, 'to share information and concerns about individual children, to question and gather a true picture of the child's capabilities.'

Educational Psychologist 1, 'No sense of expert, instead an opportunity to explore school based issues in a reflective context.'

Educational Psychologist 2, 'Exploration of an issue relating to a child or group of children specifically aimed at meeting or evaluating an SEN requirement (i.e. learning, behavioural, social or emotional difficulty).'

Educational Psychologist 3, 'Effective consultation should have provided the opportunity to explore issues / concerns within a framework that is rooted in psychological theory.'

5.2.8 Use and Limitations of Phase One Definitions

The four components which both school staff and educational psychologists deemed as essential in an 'effective consultation' were correlated, using the video recorded observations of the consultations, with the key behaviours.

By using the participants own effectiveness measures and definitions it was felt that no confusion about consultation would arise (Sheridan et al, 1996).

Gaining a definition which was established by both the consultant and the consultee, and not imposed on the participants by the researcher, avoids the criticism of some of the previous research (Medway, 1979; Bozic, 2004) where the definition was given by the researcher and not from the perspective of the participants.

Also, by achieving a definition from both the consultant and consultee and asking for a rating of effectiveness from both the consultant and consultee this would limit the critique from previous research, such as Farouk (1999), that the view of effective consultation was taken from only one viewpoint.

One main limitation of my research when establishing a definition of 'consultation' and 'effective consultation' was that the definition could only be established from participants in the target Local Authority. This was due to both time constraints and participants. It does, however, give some ideas for other educational psychologists as a starting point for their own research into consultation effectiveness between educational psychologists and school staff in other local authorities.

5.3 Phase Two

Phase Two of the research aimed to identify which key behaviours led to a view of an effective consultation. The key behaviours of time for educational psychologist to talk; time for school staff to talk; number of open questions; number of closed questions; and number of questions used in the consultation were correlated with the key aspects of consultation, these were advice / way forward; achieves aims; impact / change; and explore issues. This helped establish which of the key behaviours linked to the rating of effectiveness and, therefore, could help establish which of the key behaviours could lead to the consultation being viewed as effective.

5.3.1 Key Behaviour – Time to talk

The main finding from this research study was that the proportion of the consultation the school staff spent talking was directly related to the rating of effectiveness. When the school staff talked for a longer amount of time than the educational psychologist they rated the consultation more positively. This was a large correlation, although not statistically significant. The school staff rated the consultation as less effective when the educational psychologist spent more of the time talking. This could be linked to the aspect of 'issues', which showed a large correlation with the time the school staff talked and a large negative correlation with the time the educational psychologist talked, meaning that the more time the school staff had to talk the more they believed that they had been given the opportunity to explore the issues. The time the school staff talked also showed a large correlation with impact, at a statistically significant level. This would indicate that the more time the school staff spent talking the more impact the consultation was believed to have had. When the educational psychologist spent the majority of time talking, this was negatively correlated with impact meaning that the school staff believed that such consultations were less effective than when the school staff talked more.

This was contradictory to the view held by the educational psychologists. The educational psychologists found the consultation where they spent the majority of the consultation talking more effective than when the school staff spent the time talking.

As no literature was found in this area, in looking at the importance of time, it can be concluded from this research alone that the time the consultant and consultee talk leads to different ratings of effectiveness. This could be due to the quality and content of the talking rather than the time alone. There was a high correlation between the amount of time the school staff talked and the idea of exploring issues and having an impact. This would suggest that if the school staff are allowed to talk it gives them the opportunity to explore the issues that they have about the concern and potentially result in them changing their view of the issue, and therefore having an impact following the consultation on either the way in which they manage the issue or view it. This would appear to link the idea of effective consultation with several of the psychological underpinnings. Most closely linked would be the notion of personal construct psychology, solution focused therapy and social constructivism, in which consultation would aim to allow, through talking about an issue, to give the consultee the opportunity to develop alternative interpretations and view the issue differently. Therefore, it might not be as simple as time alone but what psychology is actually employed by the consultant in their questions which allows the consultee to

change their thinking of the issue and gives them the opportunity to explore the issue. This could be a suggestion for further research.

However, one issue with this idea is that the consultants also wanted to spend the time talking and viewed the consultation as more effective when they had spent the majority of the time talking. This again may be linked to the idea of giving advice and way forward. The consultants may feel that if they have talked less then they have not shared their knowledge and helped give the consultees and view to the next steps in their issues.

This finding causes a problem for practice. Both parties are unable to come out of the consultation viewing it as effective unless the amount of time they spend talking is exactly balanced. One party will always be happier with the consultation directly relating to the amount of time they have spent talking. If the consultee spends more time talking then they will view the consultation as effective but the consultant will not hold the same view, and vice versa, when the consultant spends the time talking then they will view the consultation to be effective but the consultee will not deem it to have been. Therefore, it might be a suggestion that the amount of time spent talking is balanced between the consultant and the consultee and the other key behaviours also employed to ensure that all of the aspects of an effective consultation are achieved. This would be difficult to achieve, however, as the consultant would be aware that a balance between the time they

spent talking and the time the consultee spent talking would lead to a positive view of consultation, it would be suggested that the onus would be on the consultant for timing and ensuring that a balance in time could be achieved in the consultation meeting. It may also be a suggestion that moments of reflection be given to allow both the consultant and the consultee to add anything relevant but not earlier discussed. This would help ensure satisfaction with the consultation meeting for both the consultant and the consultee.

5.3.2 Key Behaviour – Question Type

The overall rating of the consultation by the school staff indicated a large negative correlation with the use of closed questions and a large positive correlation with the use of open questions. This indicated that the school staff found the consultation more effective when they were asked open questions.

This finding supported the work conducted by Hughes and DeForest (1993) who also found that when consultants asked too many closed questions the rating of the consultation was less positive.

The figures found in this study of a -0.553 correlation co-efficient between the rating of effectiveness and closed questions was very similar to the figure found in the Hughes et al (1997) study, in which a

-0.7 correlation co-efficient was found. The results from this study indicated no correlation between the consultants rating of effectiveness and the use of open or closed questions. As the Hughes and DeForest (1993) and Hughes et al (1997) studies did not ask the consultants for a rating of effectiveness, this finding could not be compared directly with previous studies and it is unclear whether this finding is common amongst studies looking at consultation effectiveness. Other studies would have to be undertaken in which the views of the consultants was also obtained to see if similar results were obtained.

5.3.3 Key Behaviour – Number of Questions

Results indicated only a small correlation between the number of questions asked and the rating of consultation effectiveness. This finding is directly opposed to the finding from the study conducted by Bergan and Tombari (1976) who found that the more questions asked the more positively the consultation was rated. However, the work by Bergan and Tombari only asked the opinion of the consultants and did not take into account that of the consultees.

In this study the results did show a small negative correlation between the number of questions asked and the educational

psychologists rating of effectiveness. This would directly contradict the findings of Bergan and Tombari .

The findings from my research would indicate that the type of question asked was more important than the number of questions. In fact, it could be suggested that by asking more questions the rating of effectiveness of the consultation would be decreased. This could be an area of further research in which the number of questions asked could be correlated with the effectiveness to see if the more questions asked actually lead to a decrease in the rating of effectiveness; this would help find if there is an optimum number of questions to use in a consultation meeting.

5.4 Phase Three

Phase Three of the research focused on following up from the consultation with the educational psychologist and member of school staff any other thoughts they had on what would have made the consultation more effective and reflecting on what happened during the consultation which made it effective.

The participants were asked two questions:

- What can be done to make consultation more effective?
- How did you know the consultation was effective?

The first question 'What can be done to make consultation more effective?' was asked to establish what else could be done in the consultation meetings, especially future meetings with the same member of staff and educational psychologist, to make them more effective.

Three themes emerged from this question. These were:

- More time to talk
- Involving other staff
- Preparation before consultation

These themes had not been highlighted in the Phase One questionnaire before the consultations occurred. This would suggest that although they are important for the consultation to be viewed as effective, they enhance the experience rather than being a vital aspect. A possible explanation for the idea of 'more time to talk' may have resulted from the school staff feeling that they would like more time with the educational psychologist to discuss other children and concerns due to the success they felt they had had in the initial consultation meeting. Using a different research method such as interviews could have enabled this question to be answered as this question of 'more time to talk' could have been followed up in an interview from the initial response given. A limitation of using questionnaires is that answers can not be followed up. This could support the idea that consultation is a good way forward for

educational psychologists to practise as it can act as an early intervention to identify and prevent issues, as previously suggested in the literature review (DfEE, 2000; Code of Practice, 2001; Every Child Matters, 2003). It is a method of practice which is valued by the individuals who take part (Bramlett and Murphy, 1998; Farrell et al, 2006; Squires et al, 2007).

The issue of 'involving other staff' also ties in with the more time to talk. As the consultations were seen as effective in this research, as suggested by the responses from the participants, then it would suggest that by having consultations with more staff other than just the SENCo, this would also lead to more positive consultation and, therefore, could lead to more change for children. As suggested by Gutkin and Conoley (1990) it is by working with the staff involved in the child or young person's life which enables change to be made. By involving more staff in the consultation it is sharing this with other people in the child's life and creating more opportunities for change. This idea was supported by a DfES paper in 2001 in which they concluded that the educational psychologists' role could be to develop the knowledge and skills of both teachers and support staff through consultation in order to 'raise achievement and promote inclusion' (DfES, 2001, p136). This is an area of further study as the effectiveness of consultation with other staff members would need to be established.

Another key theme which emerged was the idea of 'preparation prior to the consultation' and from the point of view of the educational psychologists they also wanted 'written records'. These aspects may enhance the consultation but it does not appear that without these two aspects the consultation would be seen as not effective.

Following the consultations the educational psychologists highlighted that interpersonal relationships were important in making consultations more effective. This issue was discussed in the literature review but had not previously been raised as a theme from this piece of research. In fact, this aspect was mentioned by only the educational psychologists (consultants), but was never a global theme in this research, meaning that it was not seen as being as important as the other aspects. The global themes given by the school staff (consultees) did not include the interpersonal relationship between themselves and the educational psychologists which is contradictory to the research studies carried out by several psychologists such as Bramlett and Murphy, (1998); Dennis, (2004); Farouk, (1999), who highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships and the personal characteristics of the educational psychologist (consultant). The school staff in this research did not highlight the relationship or interpersonal skills of the consultant as being an important component in the consultation being effective or not.

There could be a number of reasons why the interpersonal relationships were not mentioned as a key aspect of consultation effectiveness.

One possible explanation for the importance of the interpersonal relationships not being raised may be the impersonal data collection method of the questionnaires; following the actual experience of the consultation, then with some time to reflect and meeting with their familiar educational psychologist, may have reminded the consultees about the importance of the interpersonal relationship. Following one consultation, an educational psychologist and the school staff were discussing the research and they said that they do not necessarily ask or answer questions in full due to their relationship and the fact that they know how the other person works. This highlighted how important they found the interpersonal relationships in making the consultation effective. In the study by Dennis (2004) it was concluded that the relationship between the consultant and the consultee was central to whether the consultation was successful. Therefore, despite the findings from my research it would appear that the interpersonal relationships are important in how effective consultations meetings are. The personal skills of the consultant help in establishing a good working relationship. A better relationship could result in a more collaborative approach.

The second question, 'How did you know the consultation was effective?', was asked to help establish what exactly had occurred during the consultation that was deemed effective.

From the second question three themes emerged. These were:-

- Strategies
- Shared picture
- Time for the teacher to talk

The theme of strategies was initially highlighted in Phase One of the research and therefore continued to be seen as an important aspect of effective consultations.

The theme of shared picture was new from the school staff and educational psychologists. This appeared from the questionnaire to be a similar theme to that of 'explore issues' but appeared to follow on, that, by exploring the issues both the educational psychologists and the school staff would achieve a shared picture of the child and the concerns held by the consultee. This would have implications for the practice of the educational psychologist as it would appear that having a shared picture of the child and the concerns of the consultee would help the educational psychologist to work more effectively. By the educational psychologist being able to explore the issues to gain an understanding and feedback this to the consultee it may make the consultee feel that they have been listened to and the educational

psychologist show empathy and understanding. This may help build the interpersonal relationship with the consultee and in turn enable the future consultations to be more effective and, as suggested by Wagner (2000), collaboration is something which needs to be built. This may be a method of building that collaboration as both the consultant and consultee feel that they are involved in the issue and therefore can work together to establish solutions and ways forward.

The theme of time for the teacher to talk, although not previously highlighted in the questionnaires was highlighted as an aspect in Phase Two of the research. This theme appeared from the research results to be vital in the rating of effectiveness for consultation and therefore can be seen as the key aspect of a consultation being viewed as effective. The consultees rated the consultation as more effective the more time they were given during the consultation to talk. The inverse of this was true for the educational psychologists who rated a consultation as more effective when they were given more of the time to talk. This is an issue if the consultant wants to feel the consultation was effective because by talking more they will reduce the effectiveness for the consultee. As previously discussed, it may not just be the idea of time which is important but the fact that by the school staff spending the time talking they are able to explore the issues, in turn resulting in the new theme of establishing a shared picture. By the educational psychologist spending the time talking they are enabling the opportunity to explore solutions and give

advice, thus developing the skills of the school staff. An implication for the practice of educational psychologists is that a balance needs to be made between the time both the consultant and the consultee talk in the consultation meeting but ensuring that the consultee has time to explore the issues and the educational psychologist has time to either help the consultee find the solutions or give advice. The combination of these factors appear to be what is needed to ensure that the consultation is deemed as effective by both the educational psychologists and the school staff.

These new aspects which were highlighted in Phase Three of the research suggest some new processes which could be used in the consultation meeting to make it be viewed as more effective, however, these new aspects may have been highlighted, not as a missing part of the process of consultation but more as an artefact of taking part in the actual research.

5.5 Unexpected Findings

In this research it was identified that school staff view a consultation to be more effective if they are able to spend more of the time in the consultation meeting talking. The reverse of this is true for the educational psychologists who rated a consultation as more effective when they were given the opportunity to spend more of the time in the consultation meeting talking. This would, on first impression,

suggest that the only way for the consultation meeting to be viewed as effective is to let the other party do the majority of the talking. However, on further reflection, time to talk was also highly correlated with consultation having an impact and exploring issues. This would suggest that the more time the school staff spent talking the more time they had to explore the issues and this resulted in a greater impact. The more time the educational psychologist spent talking was correlated with advice, this would suggest that the more time the educational psychologist spent talking would result in more advice being given by the educational psychologist to the school staff.

Another unexpected finding from the research was the idea that school staff, as the consultees, wanted to be given direct advice from the educational psychologists (consultants). This idea differs slightly from the definition and principles of consultation in which the idea is for 'joint / collaborative problem solving', (Medway, 1979; Gonzalez et al, 2004) which was suggested as one of the key foundations for consultation. The idea of giving advice is a more directive approach. This supports the suggestion by Gutkin (1999) who suggested that one of his four consultation styles would be more effective, the style of collaborative – directive consultation. This style suggests that consultation should be a collaborative relationship in which the relationship is not hierarchical and the consultee has a right to reject any consultant suggestions having an active part in the problem solving process.

5.6 Limitations

As previously discussed in this chapter, the idea of 'more time to talk' was raised as a theme in Phase Three of the research. A limitation of this research was the inability to further explore the ideas raised from the questionnaire data. Following the initial questionnaire, a more focused survey, such as an interview or case study could have been undertaken to establish the views of the participants from the various groups. To gather more in depth information an interview could have been used, this would have enabled further exploration of the comments made in the questionnaires. This is a limitation to the study as the questionnaire data was only able to be taken at face value and the interpretation of the meaning of the data was only the view of the researcher, no underlying meanings were able to be established. One reason for this not being done was due to the time constraints that undertaking interviews, focus groups or case studies would have entailed. It was also not done due to the influence the research may have had on the participants, as previously discussed the educational psychologists in this local authority are seen as experts and authority figures, by direct questioning in an interview or a focus group, a true view would be unlikely to be obtained due to this influence.

This research was conducted in one local authority; therefore the results are only representative of that focus authority. This is one

further limitation of the research. By obtaining the views of staff in other local authorities and observing consultations in other local authorities, this may have broadened the results. This would have allowed the findings to have been more generalisable to other local authorities as the findings would not just have been from the target local authority.

Another limitation was that the views of only the school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), who the questionnaire was addressed to, were obtained. In the observation of the consultation meeting the only parties involved were the educational psychologist and the teacher / SENCo. In Phase three of the research it was suggested that consultation would be more effective if other members of staff were involved. It is a limitation of this study that other members of staff were not asked what they thought effective consultation was or involved in the consultation meetings. Sampling could also have included other staff members e.g. Head Teachers, Class Teachers and Support Staff. It could have included all of the individuals who are involved within school with working with the educational psychologist and consultations. Other members of staff such as support staff may also benefit from taking part in consultation meetings. As suggested by Gutkin and Conoley (1990) it is by working with the staff in the schools which enables the largest impact on the needs of the child as the adults are the people who can affect the most change.

However, this could be an area of further research, to ensure that the views of different authorities and different staff members were obtained and all groups of individuals were equally represented.

In this research the consultation meetings were only observed in primary school settings. This was due, primarily, to opportunity. This is a further limitation as the results can not be generalised to secondary schools or special schools, as they had no part in the second phase of the research. They were involved in the first phase where their views of consultation were obtained. Therefore, further work needs to be done on other sectors, e.g. secondary and special schools to ensure findings are the same.

Another limitation in this piece of research was that the researcher was present in the room during the consultation meetings. As previously discussed, the researcher may have had an impact on the outcome of the research due to the perception of the educational psychologists. Having the researcher present may have had an impact on the way in which the school staff and the educational psychologists behaved and responded to questions. The research could have been done using a remote controlled video recorder; however, these facilities and equipment were not available.

A final limitation in this research was the size of the data sample. Eight consultation meetings were recorded and then three were

discounted due to quality of the video recordings. This impacted on the choice of data analysis that could be used to analyse and interpret the results. This limited the research to a correlation, which can only show an association, rather than a cause and effect. By having a larger sample size a multiple regression could have been used, this would have enabled a predictive quality to the results. Further consultation meetings were not recorded due to the reluctance of some of the educational psychologists to have their consultation meetings recorded. As previously discussed, consultation in this local authority was used by individual educational psychologists as a method / tool of practice rather than as a model of service delivery. Therefore, the opportunity for some educational psychologist to use consultation was limited, and some educational psychologist, as not using consultation very often, were reluctant to be the focus of the research.

5.7 Further Research

Further research could include a focus on all behaviours which occur in the consultation. In this research only behaviours identified from the literature review were recorded during the structured observation. Further research could use a less structured observation where all behaviours are recorded. This would enable the researcher to identify if any other behaviours which occur in the consultation lead the

consultation to be viewed as effective. Analysis of the other behaviours which were occurring in the consultation rather than just the focused behaviours from the literature review may produce some additional behaviours which are important in effective consultations.

This research was conducted in only one local authority, and as previously mentioned this makes generalisation of the results impossible. The results of this study can give other local authorities an indication of which key behaviour led to the consultations being viewed as effective. Further research would be to conduct the same study in more than one local authority, this would identify whether similar results could be obtained. If similar results were obtained the results of this study would be more generalisable.

Also, as previously discussed, this research could be replicated in other educational settings, such as secondary school or special schools. Again, if similar results were obtained this would add strength to the findings from this research and make the results more generalised to consultation as a whole rather than consultation in one local authority.

This research was conducted in an authority which does not use consultation as a model of service delivery. Consultation is used by individual educational psychologists as a method / tool of practice. Schools within the authority tend to still adhere to the traditional view

of educational psychologists such as using individual assessment. Consultation is a relatively new concept for some school staff and some educational psychologists use consultation rarely. It may be useful to conduct this research in an authority which uses consultation as a model of service delivery in which the educational psychologists use the practice on a regular basis and the schools are used to this type of working and are receptive to it. This may result in more participants being willing to take part and more opportunities to observe consultation practise. It would be interesting to see if similar results could be obtained in an authority in which consultation had been used for a period of time rather than a new concept.

As previously discussed, one limitation of this study was that the questionnaire data had to be taken at face value and no further explanation or interpretation could be made. By conducting further research using a different methodology such as interviews or case studies, a more in depth piece of research could be conducted. This would enable a deeper understanding of the thinking behind the answers and ensure that the researcher would not be able to misinterpret the thinking behind any of the answers. By conducting a case study or interview with the consultant and the consultee this would enable a further exploration of the issues suggested by school staff and educational psychologists in phase one and three of the research and would enable further questioning about the key behaviours following phase two of the research.

One of the limitations of this research was not involving other staff members in the consultation meeting, such as support assistants or mentors. This is done within the local authority but was not observed as part of this research. It may be a piece of further research to conduct the research with these members of staff to see if similar results are obtained. If similar results were obtained this would strengthen the findings from this research.

5.8 Implications for Future Practice and Service Delivery

From the findings of this research there are several implications for future practice for both myself and other educational psychologists.

Consultation is a method of practice which has been recommended, after several studies into the changing face of educational psychology, to be the way forward for educational psychologists (Farrell, 2009). This research has highlighted that consultation can be effective for both educational psychologists and school staff and that by using several key aspects in a consultation meeting it can be viewed as even more effective.

5.8.1 Future Practice

The first implication for the future practice of educational psychologists is that the definition of consultation needs to be agreed upon and established by both the educational psychologists (consultant) and the member of school staff (consultee). By having a clear definition of consultation it helps establish the expectations for the consultation meetings and the piece of work, this ensures that both parties are aware of what will take place, thus eliminating any confusion.

One of the key findings from the research was that for consultation to be deemed as effective it needed to 'achieve its aims'. For future practice it would be important to establish the aims of the consultation prior to the consultation meeting, this could be done at the beginning of the meeting where the consultant and consultee set out the purpose of the consultation and what they both hope to achieve from the consultation meeting.

This idea of establishing the aims could lead to another implication for future practice. It was discussed in phase three of the research that by having written feedback from the consultation this may have also led to a more effective view. The aims of the consultation could be written down at the beginning of the consultation meeting, then the

strategies, actions, way forward recorded and finally at the end of the meeting the consultation could be reviewed to ensure that the aims had been met. This could also be recorded. This would ensure that both the consultant and the consultee left the consultation meeting feeling that the consultation had been useful and effective. If it had not achieved its aims, this would have been raised, discussed, and hopefully resolved, as part of the consultation recording sheet.

Another implication for future practice became clear following phase two of the research. Several key behaviours need to be employed by the consultant and the consultee in a consultation meeting in order for both parties to view the consultation as effective. The idea of time to talk was raised as an important aspect of effective consultation. This has been discussed in depth earlier in the chapter. For both the consultant and the consultee to view the consultation as effective there needs to be a balance between the amount of time the consultant and the consultee talk. This will ensure that both parties feel they have had the chance to express their views and explore the issues. They will each feel that they have been able to talk. This in conjunction with some of the other behaviours will hopefully lead to a consultation being viewed as effective. Other behaviours, such as using open questions were also highlighted as being an important aspect in effective consultation. This is because the use of open questions is correlated with the consultation having an impact. In future practice, the consultant would also have to avoid using too

many closed questions, as this was negatively correlated with all of the key aspects of consultation raised in phase one of the research.

Another key aspect of consultation which was identified from the research was the idea of the consultation containing advice and strategies for the consultee to try and use. This was highlighted in phase one of the research and in phase two of the research these two aspects were correlated with an overall rating of an effective consultation. These two key aspects would need to be included in the practise of consultation to ensure that the consultee felt that the consultation had been effective.

To make consultation even more effective, one suggestion which came from phase three of the research was to have other people involved in the consultation. As previously discussed by Gutkin and Conoley (1990) that the more people involved the wider the impact the consultation meeting could have. My research would support the importance of that notion. However, the idea of involving more than one consultee in a consultation meeting was an idea that was not found in the previous research discussed in the literature review, where the research generally was conducted between a consultant and a consultee only. My research would suggest that by having both the teacher and support assistant in primary school or several of the teachers / support assistants who work with the individual child / young person in secondary school involved in the consultation

meeting then the participants would perceive that the outcome may be more successful. It would help all interested parties involved to get a shared picture of the child / young person and also ensure that all parties had the same strategies and way forward to work with the child / young person in the future. This may lead to a more whole school, system approach. Therefore, for future practice this may be a beneficial way to use consultation, with all parties in a school who share the concern or issue. This may also lead to a more systemic way of practising in that rather than regarding an individual child or concern the focus is on a whole school issue or concern.

The idea of collaboration was raised in the majority of research into consultation, as previously discussed in the literature review. Most researchers included the idea that consultation should be collaborative following their research into consultation (Medway, 1979; Wagner, 2000; Gonzalez et al, 2004). This notion was not raised by school staff but was a key theme from the educational psychologist, this would imply that for the educational psychologist to conclude that they had been effective in their consultation they would have to feel that the decisions and strategies and way forward agreed was a collaborative act. Again, this may contradict the idea of advice giving which the school staff felt was important. However, as suggested by Gutkin (1999), the idea of collaboration and directiveness are not mutually exclusive and can be used in conjunction with each other. Therefore, this research would support

the suggestion by Gutkin that the best type of consultation is the collaborative – directive approach. Therefore, for future practice educational psychologists need to be aware that they can work in collaboration and give advice within the same consultation meeting without it being viewed unfavourably. In fact, this type of consultation would appear to give the most positive views of the participants.

One final implication for practice is the notion of interpersonal relationships. Although this was raised in a lot of the previous research discussed in the literature review, it was not raised as an important aspect of this research until phase three. This may be that the idea of interpersonal relationships being important is just generic to all of the work the educational psychologist does, and by the educational psychologist having a good relationship with their schools and having good interpersonal skills they will be more effective overall and not just in consultation meetings. Therefore, for future practice it is important to establish good interpersonal and working relationships with both schools and staff which the educational psychologist comes into contact with.

5.8.2 Service Delivery

This research has identified that consultation is an effective process and that school staff find that using consultation can help improve

outcomes for children and young people. This has certain implications for service delivery.

As previously discussed, the local authority in which this research was conducted does not use consultation as part of their service delivery and some of the educational psychologists do not use consultation as part of their practice. These research findings would therefore suggest a significant change for service delivery if consultation was to be adopted by the whole local authority.

One implication is a training need. As suggested by this research, to use consultation effectively several key behaviours and key aspects of consultation need to be utilised within the consultation meeting. Training would need to be given to disseminate the findings of this research and ensure that all educational psychologists were aware of what types of behaviours and aspects they would need to include in their consultation meetings. This would ensure that all educational psychologists within the local authority were consistent in their use and practise of consultation. This idea was supported by Larney (2003) who stated that a 'significant implication is the need for pre-service and in-service training to support school psychologists in the effective use of this method of service delivery.' (p16)

Another implication of this research would be to move away from more assessment (testing) driven methods of practice favoured by

several educational psychologists within the local authority. This research has highlighted that consultation is viewed as effective by both educational psychologists and school staff, however implementing the use of consultation as a model of service delivery would require some educational psychologists to make drastic changes in their practice. This would be in line with the advice from the government papers which suggest using consultation is a more effective use of an educational psychologists time rather than more traditional based practices.

A final implication would be to use consultation not just within educational psychology but other areas of the local authority. Within the local authority other services also hold discussions with school staff around issues within their classrooms and with children. These services, such as behaviour support, learning support and autism outreach team, could also use consultation as a tool for these meetings. By other services also using consultation it would become a whole local authority approach and would hopefully widen the use and effectiveness of consultation as part of a model of service delivery.

However, there are several barriers to the implementation of consultation within the local authority.

Firstly, training is both timely and costly. To commit the whole service to training and then looking at widening the training to other professionals within the local authority would be undertaking a large commitment. Before undertaking this commitment the local authority would have to be sure that the practice of consultation would be valued by the educational psychologists and the school staff.

This leads to the second barrier which may be the reluctance of some educational psychologists to use consultation as part of their practice. Some of the educational psychologists have already been reluctant to use consultation as identified by the limited amount of consultations to observe as part of this research. Even with the research findings indicating the importance of consultation and the effectiveness of consultation meetings, some educational psychologists may still be unsure about using it as a regular part of their practice rather than just an occasional tool. It would not be cost effective to train staff to use consultation only occasionally rather than a part of the service delivery.

Another barrier may be the reluctance of school staff to have consultation used as part of the service delivery. School staff, as demonstrated by this research, are still focused on the idea of an expert giving advice and strategies rather than working in a more collaborative manner. The research has also shown that school staff value the use of assessment (testing) which using consultation may

reduce the need for. This may be a barrier as school staff may initially be unhappy until they experience consultation and see the effectiveness of the practice first hand.

A final barrier to implementing consultation within the wider context of professionals within the local authority may be the idea of educational psychologists giving away their unique contribution, making them different from other support services.

This research has demonstrated that consultation is an effective tool for educational psychologists to use and is valued and seen as effective by school staff if consultation is conducted in a certain way. This may be the starting point of changing individual's minds about using consultation on a more regular basis and in a wider arena.

5.9 Personal Reflection

As discussed in the introduction, this area of interest initially arose from a desire to involve the people who work directly with the children and young people in the education system who are having difficulties, in order to be more effective in helping make a difference for them. As previously identified the research indicated that consultation was an effective way for educational psychologists to practise, but not as widely used as it could be. Following carrying out this research I have fully established the belief that consultation is an effective and

important way of practising. The findings from the research indicates that when consultation is effective it is deemed that way as it allows the consultee (problem holder) to talk about their concerns and express these concerns to someone who is willing to listen. This in itself appears to be a way for the consultee to help alleviate some of the concerns and make the problem a little better. This may be that by discussing the concerns individuals are able to refocus and look at the problem in a different way, therefore being able to tackle the situation in a better and different way to help make a difference for the child or young person.

Following the research I am a firm believer that consultation is a very valuable tool which can be used by educational psychologists in order to make a positive contribution to the lives of children and young people within education and also make school staff who work with the children a young people feel more valued.

My personal reflections on this research process are not as clear cut.

This research was a very long and difficult journey, with lots of bends, wrong turns and rerouting to get to the final destination.

Looking back, one question I have repeatedly asked is if it was worth the extensive time and effort? The only answer to this question is 'yes'. I have carried out a piece of research which has given insight

into a complex and worthwhile area of practice for educational psychologists and will hopefully shape the way in which I and others practise for the rest of our careers.

The final piece of work produced was worth the complexities and difficulties.

However, I also have to acknowledge that at times it appeared that I would never get the answers which I sought and never reach the end. It was a process which definitely took me longer than it should have. During the research process I stopped on several occasions and asked if I should continue and if I was clever enough or capable enough to reach the end. Although the answer to most of these questions remains unresolved, I realised that reaching the end was the only option. Through this perseverance I have learned a great deal about the area of consultation and about myself.

Firstly, I have learned that my time keeping and diary management is not the greatest. I have always worked best to deadlines and not been able to focus until the deadline was fast approaching. However, I never realised until undertaking this research that self imposed deadlines do not have the same effect. I have struggled throughout to get work completed in a timely manner, often setting myself too much work to do in too short a time and then when the self imposed deadline passed, the motivation also passed. This lack of diary

management surprised me because at work I am always able to achieve my deadlines and although I always try to do too much in the time frame I always seem to complete the task by the deadline. This was probably the area within my research which I found most difficult and raised awareness that I do leave things until the last minute a little too much.

I have also realised through my research that I struggle to be critical. I have found critiquing other peoples work very difficult. Naively I have always assumed that to have work published in a journal then the piece of work must be robust and thorough. I have learned through this research that this is not always the case and I need to look more closely. By doing this research I have realised that this difficulty in being critical is also something which I struggle with in other aspects of my life. I like to be liked. It has taken doing this research to understand that by being critical I am sometimes being a better friend than just taking things at face value. This is something which can be applied both to my professional and personal life.

I have also realised that my organisation is a definite strength. During the research process I have always been able to put my hand to what I need, whether being a journal article read months previously or a note I have jotted down. Not only is organisation a strength but is something I enjoy. I have become the 'queen of colour coding' to everyone who has been around me while this work was carried out.

This organisation has come in very useful at work in juggling tasks and finding where things are when sharing desks and cupboard spaces but also more recently at home, keeping track of two children and their various commitments.

Finally I have realised something which my family and friends were probably already very aware of, I can talk a lot better than I can write. I have often asked myself if I was clever enough to complete this doctorate and write a thesis, I think through this research I have found that yes I am clever enough to complete the doctorate but have struggled to write a thesis. When asked about my research I have always been able to talk about it confidently and knowledgeably. However, when asked to write down in my thesis my thoughts, ideas and findings I have found this incredibly difficult to do. This difficulty in writing things down has led me to develop different methods throughout my research. To compensate for my lack of writing ability I have talked to everyone and anyone about my research before putting pen to paper, just to enable me to get my thoughts and ideas organised. Again, this is a method which I have employed in my work, talking to people about my reports and written work prior to putting pen to paper.

These lessons, which I have learned about myself through carrying out this research, are ones I will use for not only the rest of my career but the rest of my life.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This final chapter is aimed at summing up the main findings from this research and ensuring that the research questions and the title of the thesis have been answered fully from the findings of the research.

The title of this thesis was, **‘A study to identify which key behaviours used during a consultation meeting led to it being viewed as effective in Primary Schools.’**

Therefore, the main aim of this research was to identify from observing consultation meetings if any behaviours used during a consultation meeting were key in the consultation being viewed as effective. To answer this overall aim two research questions were needed. The two research questions were:

1. What do educational psychologists and school staff view as ‘consultation’ and ‘effective consultation’?
2. What behaviours which occur in consultation are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?

Prior to identifying the key behaviours it needed to be established what the participants, both the consultants and consultees, viewed as effective consultation. This was done using a qualitative method, a

questionnaire. The main findings from the questionnaire data were that school staff viewed consultation as having several key aspects.

These included:

- Advice
- Strategies/Action
- Achieves Aims
- Impact

Thus leading to the definition of effective consultation as: 'a discussion in which advice and strategies are given which result in impact for the child and achieve the aims for which it was held'.

The main findings from the educational psychologists questionnaire were that the key aspects needed for effective consultation were:

- Helpful
- Collaborative
- Achieves Aims
- Effects Change
- Way forward/Solutions
- Positive Experience

Thus leading to the definition of effective consultation as: 'a collaborative act which effects change and finds solutions, achieving the aims in a helpful way and being a positive experience'.

The common themes between the school staff and the educational psychologists were:

- Advice/way forward
- Achieves aims
- Impact/Change
- Explore issues

Therefore, the answer to the first research question of 'What do educational psychologists and school staff view as 'consultation' and 'effective consultation'?', is that effective consultation is a discussion which **explores the issues**, includes **advice and ways forward**, it **achieves its aims** and has an **impact or change** on the issue.

The findings from this first research question were used to identify which key behaviours used in a consultation meeting were correlated with a rating of effectiveness, this was done using the quantitative research method of a structured observation. The key behaviours identified from previous research and observations of consultation were correlated with the aspects of effective consultation identified in the first research question.

The key behaviours were:

- Percentage of time the educational psychologist talks
- Percentage of time the member of school staff talks
- Percentage of open questions

- Percentage of closed questions
- Number of questions used in the consultation per minute.

Using a correlation, the data analysis method, the following key findings were established:

- Percentage of time the educational psychologists talked was negatively correlated with the school staff rating of effectiveness and positively correlated with the educational psychologists rating of effectiveness.
- Percentage of time the school staff talked was positively correlated with the school staff rating of effectiveness.
- Percentage of time the educational psychologist talked was positively correlated with advice.
- Percentage of time the school staff talked was positively correlated with exploring issues and impact / change.
- Percentage of closed questions was negatively correlated with effectiveness and with all aspects of an effective consultation.
- Percentage of open questions was positively correlated with effectiveness and all aspects of an effective consultation.
- There was no correlation between the number of questions and effectiveness of consultation.
- There was a positive correlation between effective consultation and exploring issues.
- There was a positive correlation between effective consultation and achieving aims.

- There was a correlation for the educational psychologists between giving advice and effective consultation but not so for the school staff, where no correlation was found between advice and effective consultation.

Therefore, to answer the second research question of, 'What behaviours which occur in consultation are the best predictors of whether they are viewed as effective?', the results from the structured observation indicate that **time to talk**, using **open questions**, **exploring the issues** and having an **impact** are the main aspects which lead to a consultation meeting being viewed as effective. **Advice** giving is also an important aspect for educational psychologists.

Therefore, to answer the main aim of this thesis of '**A study to identify which key behaviours used during a consultation meeting led to it being viewed as effective**', the key behaviours needed to lead to a consultation being viewed as effective are, giving both the consultant and consultee time to talk, but including in that time to talk the elements of exploring the issues, using open rather than closed questions in this discussion, and giving advice which leads to an impact.

6.1 Summary

To sum up, as the aim of consultation is to improve outcomes for children and young people, the most important viewpoint of whether the consultation is effective or not comes from the members of school staff who work most closely with the children and young people to implement any changes/improvements to their environments. Therefore for the consultation meetings to be viewed as effective the form of consultation taken should be that favoured by the school staff rather than the educational psychologists. In short, meaning that the educational psychologists need to be quiet and let the school staff do the talking!

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire for Phase One of reasecrh

Thesis Questionnaire.

Please could you complete the answers to the following questions? The data will be used in my thesis and will not be identified as coming from any one individual.

Role in School:

1. What is your understanding of consultation between Educational Psychologists and School Staff?
2. What is your definition of effective?
3. How would you describe an effective consultation?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Letter sent to schools with Phase One Questionnaire

School

School Lane

Place

England

Date:

Our ref:

Your ref:

Dear SENCo

I am gathering data about consultations for my Doctoral Thesis. I would appreciate if you could complete the attached questionnaire and return in the envelope provided by the end of March.

The data will not be identified as coming from any one individual.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your help in my data collection is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Tamworth

Educational Psychologist in Training

Direct Line 0191 553 5695

E-mail Helen.Pringle@sunderland.gov.uk

Enc:

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for Phase Three of research

Thesis Questionnaire.

Please could you complete the answers to the following questions? The data will be used in my thesis and will not be identified as coming from any one individual.

1. Was the consultation you have taken part in effective?

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

2. What could be done to make consultations more effective?

3. How did you know the consultation was effective/ not effective?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix 4 – Likert Rating of Consultation for Phase Two

Rating of Consultation

Following your consultation with your school EP a few weeks ago, could you please rate the consultation on the following aspects?

A rating of 1 is poor and a rating of 5 is excellent. Please tick the appropriate rating.

Advice				
1	2	3	4	5

Achieved Aims				
1	2	3	4	5

Impact on/for child/young person				
1	2	3	4	5

Explored issues				
1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for taking the time to complete this rating scale.

Appendix 5a – Letter for Phase Two of research

Letter

My thesis is looking at what takes place in effective consultations. The work will focus on the behaviours, both verbal and non-verbal, used by the Educational Psychologist and School Staff.

To gather data I need to video record consultations between EP's and a member of school staff regarding an issue they have with a primary school child. The focus is on the initial information gathering consultation prior to any work being undertaken with the child.

I was wondering if you would volunteer to take part in my thesis research. Each consultation need only to last for between 15 and 30 minutes. It can be with any member of school staff that works closely with the child or has knowledge of the child.

Following the consultation being recorded there is a short questionnaire to be completed by both yourself and the Educational Psychologist.

I would really appreciate your help.

You can contact me on

Helen.pringle@sunderland.gov.uk

Or

07963 469298

Thanks,

Helen Tamworth.

Appendix 5b – Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Project Participants

Project Title: Exploring which key behaviours lead to effective consultations with Key Stage 1/2 staff discussing children perceived as having Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. (Provisional Title)

I agree to take part in the above research project. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to be interviewed by the researcher

- allow the interview to be videotaped/audiotaped
- complete questionnaires asking me about consultation
- make myself available for a further interview should that be required

Data Protection

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project. No identifiable personal data will be published.

The identifiable data will be shared with Sunderland Educational Psychology Service and Newcastle University, only if needed. These organisations have made a written agreement with the University to abide by the Data Protection Principles.

I consent to the videotapes being shown to other researchers and interested professionals.

Withdrawal from study

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Name:.....(please print)

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 6 – Phase One Results for school staff responses to question 1

What is your understanding of consultation between Educational Psychologists and School staff? (school staff responses)

- I consult my EP at the beginning of an academic year to discuss/review current caseload/concerns and plan years events/EP involvement. EP then will contact parents and observe/assess pupil and provide “advice” to staff.
It may be necessary to see child more than once and give ongoing advice re strategies/resources/ideas.
EP will be invited to attend some review meetings.
EP is at the other end of a phone if I need help/advice at any other time.
- Consultation is when an EP is asked by school to observe and assess a child to give advice to school staff to support them in school.
- Educational Psychologist's provide support to the school in determining specific information with regards to SEN children. This is used when assessment for a Statement is needed.
- Discussion re concerns for individual children, either following advice previously given or as a first time referral.
- Discussion related to specific, individual children with a view to setting out in-school strategies and support.
- Ed Psych will provide evidence/assessment data to support implementation.

- Sharing of information regarding SEN pupils involving various members of school staff (SENCo, TA's, Class Teachers and Senior Management) and the Educational Psychologist.
- A planned meeting to discuss children in school known to EP Service and children put forward by school staff. Prioritise action which children are to be assessed by EP, which are not, which staff to talk to.
- Information sharing and advice on ways forward.
- Consultation is available but is extremely difficult within the secondary setting. It is often more appropriate for this to happen through the SENCo.
- School staff, through the SENCo, can consult with Educational Psychologist's to gain advice about how to support children with specific educational needs. Often consultation is initiated through the referral process although advice can be sought less formally if appropriate. Educational Psychologist's consult with staff verbally or through written reports to inform of their findings.
- I believe that my termly consultation between myself and the EP is crucial. From this we feedback together to parents and then I speak to involved staff.
- To share knowledge about individual pupils and for Educational Psychologist's to offer advice/provide more detailed assessment of child's needs and give an indication of what we can do in school to help the child cope/overcome their problems.
- An exchange of dialogue and sharing of information that will lead to a decision.

- Discussion regarding concerns and ways of moving the child forward. Consultations planned by staff priorities.
- To discuss the needs of a child with an Educational Psychologist without them actual seeing the child – the teacher can offer an overview of the difficulties and the EP offer advice – maybe a decision to arrange a visit to see the child.
- Educational Psychologists provide advice for school staff based on information from staff, observation and ‘tests’.
- It is a way of discussing pupils, their problems, if we need Educational Psychology’s help at that time, or as a school to continue in a monitoring capacity.
- It gives us an opportunity to highlight areas of concern and ask for advice and guidance.
- A professional conversation to consider the needs of a child/a group of children and determine appropriate support/strategies, involvement as necessary of others.
- A complementary partnership.
- A friendly two way dialogue. A request to provide additional and/or expert assessment to the school when a child has more significant problems. The school would provide appropriate background information.

- My understanding is that after a referral has been received and a visit arranged, the EP would meet with relevant staff to discuss cases and support would then be given.
- To share information and concerns about individual children. To question and gather a true picture of the child's capabilities.
- Consultation can entail one-to-one conversations between teaching/support staff and EPs about the difficulties of a particular child. The EP can also assess the levels at which a child is working and discuss with school staff the best possible ways of meeting a child's needs.
- To discuss the needs of children and to work together to meet those needs and the needs of the school.
- Discussion regarding target children – identifying strengths and weaknesses; setting realistic achievable targets; monitoring progress closely – through a meeting with class teacher and SEN Co-ordinator.
- I understand a consultation between EP and school staff to be a dialogue to either gain or pass on information. Hopefully this should result in a greater understanding of better provision for a child.
- Excellent resource – use of expertise – strategies suggested. Unfortunately EP's work to quotas so sometimes advice is diluted.
- A meeting between EP and teacher of pupil to plan intervention/support.
A meeting between school and service which challenges and supports work done.

- Good working relationship. Regular contact. Help and advice.
- A discussion about a child with an SEN diagnosis and the next steps in their education and support.
- To discuss the needs of individual children and support staff by helping children and support staff by helping with targets/advice/strategies and 'next move'.
- Educational Psychologist's discuss issues/concerns about identified pupils with SENCo/school staff and suggests/negotiates targets for improvement.
- A forum where advice/support can be provided on children whose needs can not necessarily be met by a differentiated school curriculum.
- It is a dialogue when both parties discuss the child's needs and strategies that have been tried and could be tried.
- Pyramid Meetings between EP staff and SENCo on a termly basis. Termly consultations re individual children in school i.e. discussing status etc.
- Consultation following referrals of new children – information gathering.
- Reviews.

- Something that produces a desirable outcome.

- All done through SENCo to keep staff/paperwork etc to a minimum and to keep some control over EP time etc.

Appendix 7 – Phase One Results for school staff responses to question 2

What is your definition of effective? (school staff responses)

- Effective in this case means that SENCo/staff have their questions answered and feel confident to move on.
- Something that makes a difference and which can be acted upon – not something that is already in place.
- When a sound path to progression is provided – for the child. When action can be taken and it meets everyone's needs.
- When an action is monitored over time and is seen to have had a positive impact.
- Where things get done – where children within the school setting are supported through multi agency work that delivers.
- Successful – producing an effect or leading to a result.
- Successful (in terms of everyone in dialogue). Time effective – professional, smart talk, focused, evidence of preparation. Clear in way forward in terms of roles of responsibilities – who is doing what.

- Good shared working practice in order to achieve successful outcomes for the child.
- Timely, purposeful, practice and useful.
- Effective means that it gives some direction and use.
- Working well and producing the intended results.
- Effective would be an action that is taken to produce a positive effort and desirable outcome.
- Impacts on the child's needs.
- To give advice (resources and strategies) that has not been tried before. Something that makes a difference to the child/adults dealing with the child. To give reassurance that what the school is doing is appropriate to the child.
- A measure put into place which has a positive effect.
- Effective means that a workable/manageable outcome is achieved with correct guidance to ensure a practice solution.
- Useful and meaningful.

- Of benefit to the child. The advice would be easy to understand and easy to put into practice.
- For something to be effective it needs to be successful and achieve its aim and have a far reaching positive impact.
- Both EP and school staff to be supportive of each other including issues such as 'time restraints'. Both parties to "work together" to meet needs of child.
- If something is 'effective' in this context it has a positive impact on the child with particular difficulties as well as on the way in which teaching/support staff work with that child.
- When EP's listen to those who work with the child every day and don't just rely on tests/assessments to plan for children's needs or to determine what they see as the best way forward.
- Effective means producing the intended result or outcome.
- Having the power to accomplish what has been decided/planned.
- Positive effect on child. It works. Not wishy-washy. Sometimes advice is saying what you are doing without recognising you do it.
- Desired outcome reached – All parties feel supported – Effective conclusion – may mean onward referral.

- Prompt response to requests. Help and relevant advice on dealing with problems.
- Where help has aided a child/adult to move on effective learning.
- Where the child/family/school feel that they are benefiting and making a difference to the child's progress, with 'Every Child Matters' in mind.
- Something that works/answers a question/helps resolve an issue.
- Where a desired outcome is achieved.
- Effective is when advice given can be acted upon. A clear plan of action is decided.
- Something that produces a desirable outcome.
- Getting the right help for children/staff/parents so that teaching and learning can take place.

Appendix 8 – Phase One Results for school staff responses to question 3

How would you describe an effective consultation? (school staff responses)

- To consult with someone simply means to communicate with the purpose of solving a problem/gathering or sharing information. My 'consultation' time with my EP is very effective when we are succinct and clear about what both of us desire as an outcome. I prefer to see the 'whole picture' and share with my EP all my concerns and preferred outcomes. I want my EP to complete certain assessments that I myself cannot do and to provide additional advice to staff so that we can support our children in their development.
- One where both advice and resources can be used effectively and have an impact both on the child's progress and the schools ability to improve the learning.
- Someone who listens and takes the needs of the child and school and parents into consideration. Empathy.
- Proactive outcome for school/EPs/pupils/staff.
- Something that provides answers to 'hunches' about a child. Effective consultation also should provide a way forward in supporting a child/group of children/family as well as meeting schools needs of provision.

- A sharing of information between the EP and the member of staff which results in an improved understanding of the pupils special educational needs. Advice given to school by the EP and that advice acted upon by the school.
- Opportunity to discuss in some detail prioritised children. Clarity about action involving EP service for next 3 months. Opportunity to discuss briefly any other issues e.g. Pyramid Meetings, changes to service delivery, SEN issues. Dates set for involvement with children and parents, staff and next planning meeting.
- Assessment in order to identify areas of difficulty/need. Sharing of the results of this and suggestions of ways of implementing advice/strategies to help the child improve their performance.
- An effective consultation would involve the 'right people' having a discussion which would result in appropriate advice with regard to how best to support children. It would suggest suitable targets/intervention which would be clear and would allow the children to progress.
- Effective is where the discussion previous to the child being seen is useful to direct which way to go. The work then gives feedback directing you as to where to go next.
- A meeting between 2 parties that set up procedures that give school ideas/procedures that help children overcome barriers to learning.
- One where the sharing of information and exchange of dialogue results in an effective long-lasting change on the circumstances of the subject in question. (e.g. EP input that results in or contributes toward the securing of a Statement (Formal Statutory Assessment) for a particular child.
- Both parties offering advice, working together to address concerns and ensure the child's needs are met.

- Where teacher and support staff share strategies/resources. Where EP has a good knowledge based on experience about resources and strategies available to them for different needs. Opportunities for follow-up discussion if necessary.
- One in which information was received that would enable the educationalist to improve the progress of learning.
- One in which both parties have input highlighting areas of concern and maintaining an open dialogue about the pupils concerned.
- Mutual agreement regarding “next steps” – Equal/shared responsibility for outcomes – I would be left feeling that I could do something/had regained “control”/had learned something/was not alone – That a child’s needs would be better met in the future (increased confidence) – Positive professional alliance.
- In an effective consultation the EP would take on board the ‘whole child’ information provided by school staff and may be able to consider limitations experienced by the school in terms of resources when formulating advice. In turn staff should endeavour to implement the advice and seek clarification of areas of uncertainty regarding assessments.
- Effective consultation is when all involved parties come together to discuss and work towards improving/diagnosing the difficulties. Help goes where it is needed most.
- Both school and EP to share information and make observations/judgements concerning child’s specific needs and compile possible action plan, meetings with parents and/or other agencies. “A way forward” to be established and both parties to understand fully their part to play in the process.

- An 'effective' consultation is one where a child's parents are left to believe their child's difficulties are addressed in a way which means the child is happier at school and achieving more academically. It is also 'effective' if the teaching/support staff believe that they are providing more appropriately for a child's needs which is then rewarded with a child coping better with school life.
- Working with children and suggesting/delivering effective strategies. Would like to see EP's working more with groups/individual children instead of having to do so much assessing/testing. Authority problem ??.
- A meeting where the discussion results in the intended outcome being achieved – next steps are clear and understood by all.
- An effective consultation is a dialogue that leads to achieving a positive action plan with a defined strategy with timescales for achievement.
- Positive result – move forward – advice = practical = will have an effect. Not keep a diary and we will leave it 6 weeks and no change and nothing happens.
- When all parties concerned are happy with the agreed outcome. Compromises may have had to be made, but all parties are now in agreement.
- As above and quick reply. Reports detailing problems and findings sent back quickly.
- To plan an appropriate learning/education task/tasks for an individual and see progress/understanding being made.

- Two-way conversation. Understanding of needs and way forward for both parties. One where there is honest discussion about what needs to be done. A consultation which is made with ease and mutual respect from both parties.
- Effective consultation is where all parties feel they have put forward their point/concerns etc and that this is genuinely acknowledged.
- Where advice/support enable a process to occur which achieves a desired outcome.
- Clear communication between the parties involved. Plan of action with suggested strategies/resources and monitoring procedures.
- A consultation in which a course of action is planned for a child and in which all parties play a part. EG. EP agrees to take a course of action (assessment), SENCo, teachers and parents agree to take a course of action following advice being given.
- Agreement as to way forward. Sharing of ideas/knowledge. Agreed timescales.

Appendix 9 – Phase One Results for educational psychologists responses to question 1

What is your understanding of consultation between Educational Psychologists and School staff? (educational psychologist responses)

- Joint/collaborative problems solving approach between EP's and School Staff.
Aims to solve problems and enhance skills. Informed by activities such as conversations, data gathering, hypothesis testing. Working individually with school staff and those most likely to effect change in schools, to the benefit of children. A pragmatic approach – seeks to find a way forward.
- Consultation in a joint problem solve, looking at the issues and agreeing a range of possible solutions.
- A process involving key concepts of: solution focused problem solving. No sense of “expert”, instead an opportunity to explore school based issues in a reflective context. Rooted in psychological theory, symbolic interactionist, personal consult theory and systems work (Wagner model). Collaboration leading to genuinely agreed actions. Should also operate at a multi agency level. Encourages the asking of reflective questions on both sides. Should serve to empower those involved.
- A discussion between interested parties where together they look at a situation and the evidence linked to that situation and discuss ways of moving it forward. Ownership of issue should lie with the party bringing the concern.
- A confidential meeting where the consultant's role is to help identify the problem and indicate ways forward through listening and questioning such that the ‘problem’ is better understood and the consultee is able to consider new/different ways forward to resolve the problem.
- The process whereby EP and School staff work together to agree an appropriate programme of work/intervention by EP (or other agency?).

- It provides a framework for finding solutions to problems which empowers the consultee and facilitates creative thought. The school is the main context and focus for intervention and change.
- A sharing of ideas between professionals. The EP should make an effort to provide and seek out information that will be helpful to school staff. The EP should be available to speak on the phone or in person when required.
- Exploration of an issue relating to a child or group of children specifically aimed at meeting or evaluating an SEN requirement (i.e. learning, behavioural, social or emotional difficulty).
- Working together to provide effective resolution of difficulties staff are facing with children, including feedback on previously agreed interventions. A mutual process within which both parties agree upon an action or actions to support a 'child'.
- A process for sharing information and joint problem solving with everyone as equal partners/taking shared responsibility/a role in moving things forward.
- Collaborative discussion within a set framework, aimed at jointly identifying aims and an action plan designed to achieve these aims.

Appendix 10 – Phase One Results for educational psychologists responses to question 2

What is your definition of effective? (educational psychologist responses)

- Leads to positive change. Makes a difference (for the better), perceived by participants as doing so. Achieves what it sets out to do. Resolves.
- Effective is a “win win” situation where all parties involved in the consultation feel it was a purposeful and useful “tool” with clear outcomes.
- Combines the following: enables positive/meaningful outcomes perceived by someone as valuable.
- A positive response. It works!. It helps move things on from where they were. Brings desired response.
- Something which is effective is something which works in the desired way within a reasonable period of time.
- Something which has reached its intended goal or has brought about a positive change in circumstances.
- To generalise learning from the presenting problem resolution to a similar problem in the future.
- Effective is a situation where a solution is sought and is agreed.

- The mutual exploration of an issue culminating in a shared understanding of a problem and the identification of a way forward or plan of action to address it.
- An outcome which 'works' for all parties involved, and that involves 'progress' on the child's part.
- 'Useful' – 'moved things forward' – 'made a difference'.
- A consultation that works i.e. all parties are in agreement and consulted to identified aims and actions.

Appendix 11 – Phase One Results for educational psychologists responses to question 3

How would you describe an effective consultation? (educational psychologist responses)

- School Staff feel supported in their work & enabled to address areas of concern. Participants have mutual understanding of process and ground rules. Addresses issues that are important to the consultee. Successful joint process. A creative process – end result may not have been predicted from initial stance. Involves effective listening as well as dialogue (or conversation between more than two people). School staff continue to “own” the problems and feel empowered to resolve it. Consultee(s) feel that it has been a helpful process.
- An “effective consultation” is when all partners share their thoughts around a common problem e.g. Childs behaviour, could be parents, school, EP, or other agencies. By sharing ‘what works’/what doesn’t, professional guidance can be encouraged with the success of others to agree a consistent approach ie to arrive at an agreed solution that can be acted on.
- Effective consultation should incorporate all of the above. It should have provided an opportunity to explore issues/concerns within a framework that is rooted in psychological theory and which leads onto agreed actions with a sense of hopefulness as to outcomes.
- One in which both parties (or more) involved in the discussion come away feeling that the situation has (or will be) moved on/progressed in a positive direction and that there now seems to be a plan to move forward.
- When the answer to Q1 is deemed to be helpful by the school staff. The problem has been identified and clarified, strategies for dealing with the problem have been considered and a plan of action is made using the strategy. The effectiveness ought to be evaluated after the strategies have been tried.

- Where the child's situation is fully explored/discussed, alongside possible intervention strategies that could be implemented, and appropriate end - goals identified.
- The responsibility for the problem remains the consultees.
- Where both parties feel that they have benefited from the consultation process. There is no magic wand, but an 'effective' meeting should take you closer to a resolution of the problem. Both should feel positive. It should be a meeting of equals.
- The free exchange of information and exploration of:
 - a. The issue or perceived problem
 - b. What's been tried
 - c. What works/does not work
 - d. A way forward/what is expected from the consultation.
- One in which both parties agree upon action to be taken after discussions.
- Everyone has had an opportunity to contribute. All input acknowledged and regarded as equally important. Everyone is clear of next steps. Everyone feels that the consultation has helped to move the 'problem' forward.
- Achieves the purpose for which it is employed. That the intervention is supportive and open and that the aims and actions are achievable and realistic.

Appendix 12 – Phase Two Results (Transcript One)

Transcript One.

Bob – Kieran, you've got one or two issues with him

Teacher – yes, you could say that. Kieran is now a year 8, we've had him almost two years and he has a statement of special needs for learning and access to the curriculum but we do wonder whether we have a chicken and egg syndrome. Kieran's behaviour wasn't great when he came to us and it's deteriorating with puberty, I think. He doesn't interact particularly well with his peers and he gets very defensive and aggressive the minute you contradict him, challenge him or check him on anything. It could be as simple as "good morning Kieran, come in, sit down take your coat off" if he doesn't want to take his coat off that's what he'll pick up on and there's an explosion.

Bob – so he came to you with a statement

Teacher – yes – he's had since he was 9

Bob – since 9, right and that's for learning. What was the transition like

Teacher – initially very good, he went into a special nurture/tutor group if you like, where we were talking about primary style curriculum and I had them, had that group. nearly half their curriculum. They didn't move around school

much, there wasn't much interaction outside and he settled quite well until somewhere through the second half of the first term, November ish. And then he started to walk around the classroom and help himself to pens pencils, bottles out of peoples pockets. He'd just walk past, pick someone's planner up off the desk just to get a reaction. He's become increasingly tactile with all pupils especially girls, hanging over their shoulder, got his arm round them. He's touching, stroking people's hair and the girls started to get a little bit "aw Miss tell him". Their sort of weirded out by it. Its all attention seeking behaviours, what we are struggling to differentiate out is how much of the attention seeking behaviour is because he's struggling to access and how much of the difficulty he has accessing is because of he spends so much time on the attention seeking behaviours.

Bob – but his is statement specifically is learning

Teacher – yes we are considering having that reassessed to include behaviour problems

Bob – to include behavioural problems. so how long is it since the statement was actually reviewed

Teacher – the statement was reviewed last summer and it's due for review again in a couple of weeks

Bob – so the review last summer didn't look at behaviours

Teacher - It was discussed in terms of IBP targets in school. he was put in our interim term target report, targets being things like – stay in his seat and keep his hands and comments to himself, which on good a day Kieran can do.

Bob – so that was the 3rd July, wasn't it.

Teacher – that would be about right

Bob – if that was the one right, Allan Grey had been involved.

Teacher – yes he's had input from all over the place actually, from Allan. I believe he's had some Wear kids input and all our internal systems, our LSU, our BSU, he's now part of a behavioural support withdrawal group.

Bob – so what's the wear kids bit, there's nothing about Wear kids

Teacher – I'm sure it was Kieran, maybe it wasn't, I'm sure he's been in touch with them just for around socialisation activities

Bob - Allan has been in touch with them, or they've been in touch with Kieran

Teacher – they've worked with Kieran, I'm sure.

Bob – they've worked with Kieran, right, but we don't know about that side.

Teacher – no. It was an informal intervention if you like to try and modify these social skills because, he is a very popular lad that gets on very well in non classroom situations with his peers but he is in danger of alienating himself because of his classroom behaviour and there is a lot more now

Bob – this is getting on with male peers rather than the girls

Teacher – both

Bob – getting on well with the girls. Because you seem to be saying they weren't.

Teacher - Kieran like the girls, the girls aren't as fond of Kieran anymore.

Bob – ah right, so he doesn't get on so well with them. I'm confused.

Teacher - no the girls don't get on with Kieran

Bob – he thinks he gets on well with them

Teacher – yes, he's all over them, leaning over shoulders and hugging them, sitting on their seats with them, whatever, but the girls are really quite, 'miss get him away from me'.

Bob – so he's really not getting on so well with the girls.

Teacher – no, he's not reading the signals at all or he's choosing to ignore them.

Bob – and what is it that wear kids have done

Teacher – I think its just been, some of the activities and the outings that they do. He's been involved in that. As part of socialisation

Bob – so has there been a kind of programme in there or has he just been sort of going out with them?

Teacher – I think he has just been going out with them

Bob - So there's been nothing structured. And no feedback to school. Or has there been feedback to school

Teacher – not that I know of yet

Bob –. So we are not absolutely sure that wear kids are working with him, we don't know what they are doing even if they are

Teacher – not formally. He did spend some time at the Stadium last year, last academic year

Bob – is that the Stadium o light

Teacher – on the foundation course. and they have written us, its more of an academic report, now Kieran can cope fairly well at a his own level in small groups with the right support. He'd have enjoyed that individual attention, its something different, its out of school he hasn't got the catalyts of time and time keeping and they've written quite a good report.

Bob - so what did they saying

Teacher – basically though he struggled a little bit with the technical parts of the computing aspect, he enjoyed what he did and tried hard, his behaviour was good to fair, the only blip on the graph is concentration and learning skills disappear off the scale after lunch.

Bob – is that anything to do with what he's eaten

Teacher - That wouldn't surprise me he's always got a bottle of blue pop in his pocket.

Bob- what's blue pop

Teacher – bubblegum flavour I believe.

Bob – bubblegum flavour

Teacher – or raspberry, have you ever had a blue raspberry?

Bob – I don't think I've ever come across blue raspberries

Teacher - its really sweet, sort of sherberty, its saturated with sugar and its bright blue. Copper sulphate blue. That can't be good for you can it really.

Bob - because you've got a science background, haven't you.

Teacher – yes

Bob - so what do you thinks in it

Teacher – I dread to think really, I don't even read the labels anymore when I take them off kids, put them to one side and say you can have them back at three thirty. Heavens knows it will be full of e's

Bob – do you think that those actually affect youngsters

Teacher – yes there's some definite in a previous life before I came to Pennywell, I've worked in another school in the authority, we actually did a survey of incidents in lessons am and pm and for all 3 lessons in the morning and two in the afternoon, there were nearly twice as many incidents in the

afternoon and two thirds of those were in the first lesson after lunch when the kids are all full of colours and sugars and complex carbs and bouncy innocence. It definitely has an impact, concentration span and their cooperation and their social skills go out the window. Some kids more than others. and with my own children I'd still much rather that they didn't have coke thank you very much despite the fact that they've grown up. Its just like different metabolisms, their effected in different ways

Bob – so how old are yours.

Teacher – my youngest, step children is 18, University and beyond, I'd much rather him have 14 pints of lager than too much coke, it's the caffeine and sugar.

Bob - So you think that's what happening with Kieran

Teacher – I don't think its insignificant but it's not the only factor

Bob – Its just you saying it's happening in the first lesson in the afternoon.

Teacher - It doesn't actually it just says am and pm, he got from 1 being good to 5 excellent we've got 5 and 4's all over the place, couple of 3's and one 1 on the first day which was learning skills. With my scientific analytical head on that's a big blip on the graph.

Bob – but everything else was fine, his behaviour was fine if so it was just concentration

Teacher – Kieron has no real problem but his basic skills issues need to be looked at and needs to come to terms with this. I would say that is a fair comment and that Kieron wouldn't necessarily recognise or admit to himself or anybody else that part of the problem is the fact that he can't because he won't. He started to use this as an excuse to do nothing near the end of his time with pit stop

Bob – That kind of goes back to that original statement about his learning problems. What does his statement actually say, what the specifics, what's is actually saying about his learning

Teacher – here we go, copy of Kieran's statement last amendment nearly two years ago. intellectual abilities at time of initial assessment 7th percentile, reading age of 5, chronological age of 9. Now at just gone 12 he is reading about 8.

Bob – so he has made 3 years in the last 3 years

Teacher – It has been very intensive, very intensive

Bob – but that's a year on year progress that is really good

Teacher – It is but its only where its maintained

Bob – so its only when you say maintain what do you mean by maintain

Teacher – we have to actively pick him up, almost daily, and push him and make him read. He's reluctant

Bob – is there anything to stimulate his reading at all. Any sort of books that he really enjoys

Teacher – There is a blanket block, reading don't do it, I don't like it

Bob – nevertheless he has put 3 years on

Teacher – he can if you sit with him.

Bob – that's good

Teacher - It's still very phonetic, he's still sort of sounding and building he has those tools, he can sound and build.

Bob – you say sounding and building phonetically, does he have specific areas that he is struggling with in that

Teacher – I couldn't tell you currently because I'm not reading with him personally but it used to be that he had individual letter sounds and most paired sounds.

Bob – both initial and final paired sounds

Teacher - Final he would sometimes have a get a stab in the dark, work out the rest of the word, pick something that would work. If you give him the individual break downs he can

Bob – with a reading age of 8 he's not that far short of being...

Teacher – almost functional.

Bob - yes He's going to be able to make a fairly decent stab as long as the stuff is within his reading level. Are you giving them books that are specific to his reading age so you've got high interest books...

Teacher – you've got high interest low ability series.

Bob- which one's have you got

Teacher – Live wire, we've got a set about sports teams and personalities and such like. We've got some pack of horror / ghost stories and we've also got full reading schemes spells, Chris Bell always uses writing square with

him. We've kept that ticking over at his level for the comprehension work that goes with it. There's a lot of background to the stuff that goes round.

Bob – what's he like with that comprehension stuff

Teacher – it really does depend on what day it is, how the winds blowing for Kieran that day, but at the level

Bob – so is that the reading level

Bob – What's he like with literacy, he's understanding what he is reading

Teacher – He will comprehend well to just below it, when you're getting up to his reading level he is having to work out what he is reading and his comprehension starts to suffer.

Bob – going back to the statement, difficulty in completing tasks independently presumably meaning there some written tasks working to the books, so is his written work still weak, is his spelling weak

Teacher – his independent spelling is quite limited, you can understand what he is saying but the accuracy is poor. I teach him specifically this year I have him for science, and key words are sort of taken out of the equation, I have to given them those. but really it doesn't matter what you give Kieron to do whether it's a glue stick a piece of paper work, even in a science situation, an

experiment a practical task, he will only do it if he wants to and as soon as you say stop doing that Kieron, come and do this Kieron, or try doing it this way or anything he sees as a slight criticism then potentially you've got an explosion on your hands. Even down to when he walked past a child. When he's just walked past and took bottle out of a blazer pocket and walked off with it. Miss Miss he's got my bottle. Kieran And we have all this it wasn't me, it wasn't me. Everybody else got themselves upset and Kieron threw the bottle on the wall and stormed out.

Bob – you saying something about giving specific words in science. Key words. Is this everyone doing that. In subject areas

Teacher –it's not a blanket rule, it's common practice within low ability groups. Because otherwise they'll never get it. You know, you're dealing with words like oesophagus and separation

Bob – what does he do with a word like oesophagus or spell oesophagus

Teacher – Looks a bit blank

Bob – I'm not surprised

Teacher – which is fair enough really. he seems to have a kind of handle on he'll work out what it means, what it is and he'll say that thing, that bit there. other kids will refer to wind pipe, rather than... which is fine. Oesophagus is

quite high order, I just like to introduce the technical terms that their likely to meet later, because I can't change what the exam board will put on the papers. Because if you introduce the words as quickly as possible although it seems a child abuse at only 12 it does gives them an extra chance to get used to it

Bob – so really you are constrained by the exam boards on that

Teacher – yes, I've got to familiarise them with the terms

Bob – right, so if an exam question is 'what is an oesophagus?' potentially their stuck if he doesn't know it's a wind pipe

Teacher – yes

Bob – what about written work on exams, can you use windpipe, is that acceptable

Teacher – in some circumstances and because Kieran is only in year 8 I don't know whether he'll have readers, writing support in exams. At foundation level

Bob – we'll look at him for exams in year 9, not least because he has a statement which is talking about learning difficulties. We'll look at concessions next year. I think he'll get them, quite on what I'm not sure.

Teacher – exam questions and mark schemes, they're quite tight and if they want a particular answer or term used then that's what they want and you don't get the mark if you don't...

Bob – so that vocabularies important, so he's just got to learn it

Teacher – that's only with use and classes like Kieran's in there's a lot of verbal work, a lot of oral stuff to use the words so at least they recognise them and don't panic when they do see or hear them somewhere.

Appendix 13 – Phase Two Results (Transcript Two)

Transcript Two

Jan – So I mean really it's picking up from where we left off before

CT – well this year there has been a change again, back to soiling again and also he's just refusing to do any work, and when you tell him he has this just sort of like, he just like looks at you. He just looks at you and it's like Lewis have you heard, and just doesn't answer you at all, he just doesn't look to be comprehending or he's just using that as his excuse not to work.

Jan – so how frequently is that happening

CT – he's soiled, I think it's been two or three times in the last few weeks he's done that and now we just phone his mam and she'll come and do it or his grandma who comes and cleans it up.

Jan – and have you had any sort of contact with.....

CT – Well yesterday I had the reviews Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, parent review was on Monday, she didn't come to that but I have actually been on the phone to her today and she said she cannot come during the day so I've made an appointment and she is actually coming at 12:30 on Monday because she works all day and can't come at night time, till a night time

Jan – well that would seem they were both working quite long hours, wouldn't it.

CT – There has also been a change in teacher, you know the teacher finished at Christmas so we've got a new teacher as well so he's had someone else to get used to as well. I don't know if it is a clash of personality or what but, he's just not working as well

Jan – so how did he, when he made the transition in September.....

CT – well he wasn't much different to how he had been but he was producing some work I think, I mean now its just intermittent. He comes to me and even in small group situations he really doesn't do an awful lot. That's what we said before Jan, does he know, can he do it, is he understanding, I really don't know and I suppose I'm asking you now, I know you have done assessments, I don't know whether you can do more but

Jan – I think the thing that came out before was that he actually has a broad ability and that actually he does have quite good verbal reasoning skills and understanding but I think what we picked up on is that there wasn't anything to really inspire him about learning in school.

CT – have you actually spoken to parents, have you had a meeting with them?

Jan – I did, I met with you and them in school I met with them just the two of them and I know there was an issue around what they perceived as, I think, bullying

CT – I mean he is dead small for his age. I mean you watch him at play times and he doesn't go to his peer group, he looks as if he is on the edge trying to, as if he doesn't look like he knows how to make friends really, although, I think he can hold his own, I wouldn't think, that he is small but I wouldn't think that is a problem to him, that he can't fight his corner.

Jan – do you think he has friendships

CT – I don't think he has particular friendships, I mean I've got his report from teachers if you want to look at that. She's the one that's seen that when she actually speaks to him he looks as though he's not got any idea of what she's talking about, but then sometimes, its like I said before, he'll just do something and you think Oh I didn't think you could do that. I don't know, I think that he's a puzzled little boy, you know he is, I mean if you ask him, do you do any work at home, he says well I have to go to bed, I say have you done your homework and I know that's a struggle getting his homework done at night or when he does I think the parents are having to get in a big fight with him just to get it done.

Jan – actually that's what we talked about before. Before we talked about a home school diary but I think it was one of those funny ones where I think the

parents were saying things about wanting to engage and communicate, I don't think...

CT – but I don't think that's the case. I'm not sure how much, I've had a conversation and I said, well his reading is very very poor, and his understanding of what he's actual reading and I said to him do you read at home and I've said what books do you like to read, I know really he does like non fiction if you get him onto something he likes he's quite verbal and really gets quite excited for Lewis, he said but hasn't got many books at home. I said you could take one of ours, take library books but he said, you know he doesn't have many books at home. Its funny I don't know what his dads got, what kind of outfit,

Jan – he's got a business.

CT - a business, I don't know what it is , we have our weekend news on a Monday he's really in... that's when I see him quite animated. It seems like he's been at the weekend in with his dad so he's sorting out wood and he's building things , so he's obviously....., I don't know what he does. Some place, I don't know what it is but Lewis loves being there and he's obviously there most of the weekend so I don't know whether.

Jan – I mean I noticed that his class teachers mentioned here there are actually quite a lot of positives but she's saying things around self esteem

and confidence. And... I don't now, I mean obviously this soiling himself again that.....

CT –I see do we go down the medical route but

Jan – well I was going to say he's had all of his medical investigation, didn't he

CT – that's it, he just seems to use it, you know, it's not just that he's doing it at school, sometimes coming in and its happened before he's got to school as well.

Jan – well I remember that was the pattern before, and when I talked to his parents and talked to mam, he goes to a childminder first thing and was trying to get a sense of actually how happy he was at the childminders and he simple things about how comfortable to was to use the toilet when he was there or, Now what I didn't get from the parents was the sense of wanting to explore that.

CT – If he's been down the medical route, I don't know how many and the reports had from there and theres nothing physical

Jan – that's what I remember from before.

CT – so really I don't know what I'm asking you actually Jan you to do, Its just come up again, it's weird but the thing that's teachers say is its just blankness

is he just stands and has this blank look, as if he just goes away somewhere and then he comes back, you know, are you listening Lewis and I'm forever saying look at me Lewis, look at me.

Jan – I mean just reading this I think , I think teachers pulling out quite a lot where as I notice at the end she said that he mentioned that he would like to join some after school clubs, and I don't know if it has changed, what I remember from before is that he was with the childminder first thing and then with the childminder after school,

CT – he's not really...it doesn't seem to be an option, I think for Lewis something like that would be a really good thing for him. But erm...

Jan –certainly the thing that struck me from before was that he didn't seem to have any sense that he was motivated or engaged or felt inspired by anything that happened at school. I mean and in a way this is nice there are some positives and I supposed I'm wondering would it be helpful to meet with the parents again and I'm certainly happy to come and do some observations and I think it's trying to get to explore what the world is for him.

CT – you know I think that, you are asking the impossible. To me he just doesn't seem a happy little boy. You know you very rarely see what you said, emotional, you know happiness you know how little boys are rough and tough he just doesn't seem , we do try to find something an avenue, a project or something like that, that he can get his teeth into that he can really really try

Jan – He's quite a flat.....thats what I remember

CT- and you never see it, you never see him, even when you say to him , ah Lewis you've finished a piece of work, he'll smile at you but its like not Aw I've done kind of thing. You would think of all the time he's in trouble, somebody saying you've done really well Lewis, he would think, that's one up to me, but he doesn't. I just don't know how happy or how unhappy he is

Jan – I think that's what I suppose, now I think about it now, just reading that that , thinking back to what we've talked about before things are, I suppose his emotional well being that's the, because I think we've gone down the medical route and that came back fairly conclusive, we've set up home school diary and we are trying to encourage, but I think my impression of all this is both the parents..... his dad was very strong at one point about an alternative placement for him but nothings come...

CT – I don't know... nothings going to change on that front as really . well we haven't heard anything,

Jan – so what would be helpful

CT – I suppose because the soiling has started again, I think I will just need to get to know what that issue is really, why that happening, I know that's the big question really

Jan – has that been broached with parents. I suppose it must have been, because mother comes....

CT – well, it's like, ive just phoned her there, you can hear in her voice and I say it's Clare for school. And I say oh no it's nothing, I just want to make arrangements. she went Aw means that ...so you know it's is obviously a concern to them as well but whether I mean that it is unfortunate that she hasn't been in, that's something else that I was going to ask, whether he had that at home, whether there was stil a problem. Cos when it was at school they were having it at home as well, but I don't know whether they are. Haven't heard from her to speech to her

Jan – he's had a change of class teacher

CT - a new class teacher,

Jan –and it sounds like the transition that he made into.... in September , I won't say it went wonderfully, but it didn't go too badly. Considering when I came in before he wasn't raised as a so

CT – not an issue

Jan – surely there were some positives.

CT –oh yes, I suppose that's what I'm saying, is it, you know, with the class teacher, clash of personality, is it something triggered it off at home and really I'm asking you, cos in response the teachers asking me. she keeps coming to me and I think, that's why I keep coming to you

Jan – I'm very happy, I suppose it's trying to think together whats going to be the best way. You're meeting with Mum

CT – the mums coming on Monday at 12.30

Jan – so would it be helpful to say to mum that you have spoken to me, because I've been involved before , that I'm very happy to be involved and that one way forward would be to meet with family just to tlk through how they see things and then be thinking of a way forward

CT- what happens if they don't think it's an issue. You know if they don't have the issues or don't perceive that what wev'e got, if it's not happening at home, you know, sometimes parents think that it is not there issue. I think that's maybe something....

Jan – are you concerned she might say that.

CT – I think, no I think she will take it on board, that it will be a concern , I think maybe she will do that

Jan – I mean, maybe I suppose, the fact that they have meet me before may make that slightly less....i suppose it's just saying that were happy to be involved and really what we want is to try and explore what might be the issues for Lewis, and we want him to be ahppy at school.

CT – I don't know if the dada is coming, because I've just obviously made it this morning, but he might come as well.

Jan – theres certainly difference....

CT – that's what I'm saying, I think we would get difference if one came or they both came together, that might be interesting

Jan – so would that be a way, if you're meeting on Monday to say...and then, and if she's happy I'll contact mum and then we'll see about doing some observations in school

CT – what kind of time are you talking about, I'm not putting you under pressure, but would it be.....no I'm just saying would we be leaving it to next term

Jan – no, no, no, no

CT – no I don't want a date, I just, I'll go back and say.....

Jan – given that you’ve seen a change and also I think yes, it’s better that we at least start. I mean, my suspicion is that this is something we don’t have an easy solution to, but I think we certainly need to start.

CT – I think why as well, is we sort of kept it hasn’t reared its head, ok I think there’s been the problem there but it’s been.... controlled, but I think with the soiling himself, the defiance of not doing any work and the looking that he is not even there on this planet, it’s moved on a bit more.

Jan – yes, and you know, we can certainly fit in a start something this term it may well be that it will go over into next term

CT – I don’t know, did you want to speak to the teacher involved or are you just happy to make.....

Jan – If you’re happy could I just have a copy of that report.

CT – ok

Jan - i think , I think if we leave there for the moment, and certainly when I come in it would be helpful.....I’m partly conscious of the of the sort of time this morning

CT – that fine, I’ll just email, I’m seeing you on Tuesday so I could just.....

Jan – the other thing, I was going to talk to the family about a referral to CAMHS in the past, I think they were reluctant to go down that route and it might be that we have to gently sow some seeds and that might be in terms of the needs of greater therapeutic....

CT – you know if you were to that, has it got to be...that the school can't do it...without

Jan – a CAMHS referral, I'm pretty sure we can do a CAMHS referral. The way that the panel works at the moment, if you are actively involved, then we take responsibility for the onward referral, because usually we provide some information to support that onward referral. We couldn't do it without parents. I think trying to talk through with them about the impact about friendships and his emotional well being, this isn't something that we want to not do something about

CT – I think that if I leave it this time, because, it's sort of like the second time, isn't it. The first time we were trial and error it.

Jan – and I think the fact that we've put in place things like the home school diary, like the withdrawal work and that sort of monitoring. so let me know how it goes.....

CT –well I'll probably wait and tell you next Tuesday

Jan – thats great

Appendix 14 – Phase Two Results (Transcript Three)

Transcript Three

Keith – Right, I've got to see Jay, he's been referred by the school, I know nothing about him other than these very brief bits. You know the situation, where we're at is, he's here and the school think that he should go to Maplewood rather than return back. So what I want to do today is really just to get the background information and then to probably see him for a bit, I might need to come back and do some more tests and then write a report so I can go back to school and say yes we should start a statement or we should leave him here a bit longer or with a view to him going back, if you could just..... let me know how he's been?

Teacher – He started here in September, obviously he'd had lots of difficulties in school behaviour wise, I mean he'd had been put in the back of a police van one day, very violent, aggressive, running around, but that comes on the back of Mum being seriously ill with terminal cancer at that time, but then I think there were parenting issues before that point as well, I think there'd been problems prior to Mum becoming ill anyway and obviously that just made things worse. So he came here in September, and I think he came in the first maybe day or two, then he started running away home, hiding, locking himself in rooms, running out the house when the taxi turned up. He just became a non attender. mum was too ill to bring him here, wasn't able obviously able to go and collect him so there was nothing that could be done at that point.

Keith – so sorry, just go back. He came for 2 days in September

Teacher – yeah about two days, I've got the dates here, but then he stopped attending.

Keith – and were things ok in that time

Teacher – no

Keith – no

Teacher – No, he wouldn't buy into anything, just sat, he wasn't happy , wouldn't no, just would not buy into anything here really, was very quiet , wouldn't try any work, he just didn't want to be here.

Keith – so he wasn't aggressive or anything

Teacher – more the opposite, he would just sit there you wouldn't get anything out of him. He would have literally just sat all day on his own , not speaking without any, you know...quite long, he was very very stubborn so he just wouldn't back down. So anyway, so he started absconding and err..... he just wasn't coming into school and he became a non attender and as I say Mums condition deteriorated so she couldn't get him through. And this went on for a few weeks and got home and hospital involved and erm one of their tutors made contact with mum and started to go out, the first visit was ok, he

sat on the computer next to her, answered a couple of questions, yes and nos and that was it. The second time she went

Keith: so the home and hospital, that's the education unit

Teacher: yeah he was almost a school refuser at that point.

Keith – yeah, right, yeah

Teacher – so, the second visit she went, she came in he ran upstairs, locked himself in the bathroom and wouldn't come out. So that wasn't working either. So at that point we would have thought well we've tried sort of everything and as I say mum wasn't really managing at that point either and gran was there as well. But because of his behaviour it wasn't helping mums condition. So Social Services got involved, they were going to anyway because of mums condition needing to know what was going to happen to the two children, he's got an older brother Jack, in year 8 at Houghton Kiepier, and they then got uncle involved who hadn't really been on the scene for a long time, but he came back due to mums illness to help. He started bringing Jay into school. He'd bring him in on a morning and collect him on an afternoon and that started to work. He came in

Keith – so when was that

Teacher - about October, two weeks possibly before the October half term

Keith – so the uncles got a car

Teacher – he brought him in the van , yeah, brought him in with Andy or somebody else and they were coming to collect him on an evening, 3 o'clock. So that seemed to be ok. He did sort of get used to coming in and going home, so after October half term he started coming in a taxi, because uncle was having to leave work and bring him in, go back to work, leave work on the afternoon and bring him so it was quite a lot for uncle to take on. So he started attending full time but then when he is in school

Gap answers phone

Keith – so we're into October

Teacher – so he started attending obviously because of uncles input, and then as I say after that the coming into school became much easier and that's the case with everything he's does, he takes an awful long time to build up his confidence to do anything unknown or that he doesn't think he can manage or he thinks he's going to fail at. So the school was one thing that took up to three months to get him confident enough to come in properly, on his own, so erm, that's reflected in everything at school, it's taken us until three weeks ago to get him to do swimming so February, from September. He refused to get changed for swimming. He can swim apparently he enjoys swimming but he won't do it, he does it know, same with PE, it took till about the beginning of February to get him to actually get changed for PE lessons, he just flatly

refused. So he now goes into the art cupboard inside another classroom away from everyone else to get changed and then he does PE quite happily. It's the same with lessons, from day one he wouldn't try anything on his own, if he thought.. if he didn't know what to do he wouldn't do it, and even if he did know what to do every question he did, every word he was reading he would need reassurance. Very very poor self esteem, no confidence, he needs constant reassurance. He doesn't cope that well with praise, I don't think he really knows what to do with praise still, he's getting better. We've had since September now, we're into March and it's still very very high staff input , it's not so much behaviour here, it's being managed quite well, he's in a small group, he has a lot of support that he needs erm his difficulties are more emotional I think, very very vulnerable, very, I'm sorry, in amongst all of that Mum died in December, about a week before we broke up for school holidays, erm so he now lives with gran, him and his brother. So since mum died, a week after mum died he came into school and he was different he was more relaxed, he was a bit happy, he wasn't as angry. So I think, we think, reading between the lines it's been the case of he was quite resentful that everyone's time was taken up with mum, mum didn't have any energy or any time for him because she was very very ill. I think once that was over people were thinking more about him. I don't think he's being selfish, he's only 7 so I assume it was just a case of he knew mum was ill but he couldn't understand why he wasn't getting any attention at home nad then you know from mum, from gran, from brother, anyone. There were lots of people coming into the house, the Macmillan nurse, there were social workers and things like that so it was quite a traumatic time, but since then he's actually made more progress since

mums died than beforehand and I think that's because that weights gone. But slow, very very slow progress, he does need a high level of support and he started with us in September and from day one it wasn't going to be a twelve week placement, it was going to be here till summer, with a look to get a statement before the summer, and start possible at Maplewood in September. I think everyone at the panel sort of reading the files and what we have seen here anyway, I think we all pretty much feel that he needs the sort of group he has got here, because even in this group two members of staff with 6 pupils he needs a high level of support and it's not behaviour, well there's behaviour there but its emotional, it confidence, self esteems, very vulnerable, goes in a huff at the drop of a hat and he will not come out, it takes a lot of talking to him, reasoning with him and explaining things before he calms down and can yeah, see what we are trying to help him with.

Keith – so he's a typical EBD

Teacher – yeah yeah, very very vulnerable though he doesn't lose his temper, he goes the other way, he closes down, he just closes down. Now in school he was losing his temper, but I suppose in that environment that was probably his coping strategy, it's a different environment here and he does the opposite, and he knows we'll deal with the behaviours in a different way to school. He just closes down here instead.

Keith – there's a meeting, I think last week, with Gran and school

Teacher - Yes, and social services, it was just really more to do with how grans coping at home and then you know grans noticing an improvement as well, you know she still has bad days with him but really she says at home, I think its because he's more settled here as well, and things are settling down at home but social services have now withdrawn, I think they were ready to, now things have settled but erm....

Keith – so he's not in care, he's just being looked after

Teacher – yeah, grans now his guardian, his legal guardian.

Keith – so he's year 2, is that right

Teacher - 3

Keith: right, what are his attainments

Teacher: He is probably ok (**leaves to get file**) when he started here his erm number age was 7, his chronological was 7 years and 6 months, he was ok. His reading age was 4 years and 10 months. When he came

Keith – what test was that

Teacher – sorry that was the Salford reading test

Keith – 4 years 10 months

Teacher – yeah, he knew 43 of the high frequency words first 100, he now knows, he was last tested on those on the 29th January and he knew 84 then. I haven't done....

Keith – so that's doubled

Teacher – yeah, as I said bearing in mind from then to when he started to then, it's half the time, I think he's at least average ability, possible he could be a little bit brighter. What's holding him back is his confidence and his self esteem, he's terrified, absolutely terrified to try anything on his own , so he's probably working slightly lower than he could because he won't try anything on his own. His PIVATs levels, his PIVATS levels I've got him on comprehension as 1bb, and that's erm.. expression 2bb, reading 1cb, writing is a p7c,

Keith – so the 1, they mean the national curriculum levels,

Teacher – yeah, and they relate to those

Keith – the writing is below p

Teacher – yeah p7, so its not, it's not, it's w really. Number is 2c, and then are we do interact work and these are the sort of behaviour ones, he's a psd7 for interacting with others

Keith – what's that

Teacher – PSD7c, then independent and organisation skills he's psd8.

Keith – right

Teacher – and then, attention, last one attention is psd12c.

Keith – they didn't give you the KS1 SATs scores by any chance

Teacher – I don't think.... They might have

Keith - you get them from schools

Teacher – they.. I've got them here. Speaking and listening, well all of his English are w, a low w,

Keith – right

Teacher – speaking and listening, reading and writing are all w. and then maths was 2b

Keith - his maths is better than his.....

Teacher – yeah, I mean his reading has come on quite a lot and his when you remind him about phonic blends and things he's ok, as soon as you leave him to his own devices and ask for him to write a sentence it goes out the window.

Keith – so he needs a one to one to do work

Teacher – yeah, erm, well, he's in a class with year 5's, all my other pupils are year 5 and he's doing work as good if not slightly better than them, so, in a way it's difficult for me, I think he's probably below average but not far below and I think the way he is coming on I think he could make that up because he's quite bright.

Keith – right, so the expectation from this last meeting was to start a statement,

Teacher – Yes

Keith - and would you do that automatically or would school do it

Teacher –school would do that, I think I've signed the form and written a report, I think everyone else was agreement. Gran been to visit Maplewood, because mum was very anxious about, she did not want him to go back to

Shiney Row, this was... we were making moves on this, while mum was still around. She didn't want him to go back to Shiney, she knew another pupil had gone to Maplewood and I think she thought oh, it's not that I don't want him to go to that school but I think she agreed he needed somewhere, she agreed for Gran to go and have a visit and mum died the following week, Gram went in January with John Roberts from BEST to Maplewood on a visit, and I think this put grans mind at rest. So she seemed to think... she agreed to sign the FSA referral, we obviously said that could be an option for him to go there, I think everyone at the meeting that we went to at that point in time agreed that going back to mainstream would be the worst thing that could happen to Jay at that point in time and I said to Gran that the way he has made progress maybe, next year, the year after whatever, it'll be an annual review and there a possibility of him going back into mainstream when he's ready but I genuinely think he's not ready yet. I think it'll be a little time before he is.

Keith – right, So there is no chance of an assessment placement out of all this. Before the statement gets through

Teacher: Well the agreement was he was going to stay with us for a year to give, well what we did was when he came in was to see what would happen with mum, and with mum passing away at Christmas time we felt might as well stay here while the assessment, it means he's got a lit of stability. And he can start the new school year, we thought another change might be a step too much for him anyway. Because as I say he's very vulnerable and I think that

would set him back a little bit, so we felt there might be better, and the panel agreed, that staying here for the year, his needs are being met, he's following the curriculum here and he's settled and for Jay at the moment that's more important than anything, you know, until things at home settle down a little bit as well. So the thought was he would come and stay here until the end of this year and then it means the statement can do its thing hopefully and then start in a new school in September. It means he's got a chance there as well. While he's here we can take him, if Maplewoods going to be the place, I think everyone who's worked with him recently agrees then he would be able to go on visits and get to know the school as well, so its not such a big change for him.

Keith: right, so he'll start in September

Teacher: well, that's the plan

Keith - good

Appendix 15– Phase Two Results (Transcript Four)

Transcript Four

Keith: right Paul, I've come in to assess Paul today, and I'm really just getting a background of what he's like at school and what you know about home, that's really what we need to do today. So what years he in now

Teacher – year 3

Keith – so he's in year 3

Teacher: Yes, it's like a nurture group.

Keith – so perhaps if you could just tell me what he gets in school, he's in nurture group and then he's in mainstream in the afternoon. How many kids are in

Teacher – theres 13 kids in the morning and 17 on an afternoon. Theres more individual teaching, and they're doing moving around, short, snappy, punchy lessons to keep with their attention, it's work thats at their level and ability

Keith – and the 13, what year group are they

Teacher – their all year 3

Keith – and so their all low ability

Teacher – yeah, yeah,

Keith – and you get 4 extra ones in the afternoon

Teacher – yes, actually theres only 3 now, 16 in the afternoon

Keith – so where do they come from

Teacher – they come from the other year 3 class, they are the higher ability from the lower group, they work with the bigger class on the morning. And on the afternoon the are working with me in the nurture group

Keith – so how manys in the year, approx

Teacher – 36

Keith – so there'd be about 20 in the bigger group, yeah

Teacher – yeah

Keith – good, and does he get anything else, like taking out for reading or

Teacher – we have we do individual reading in class, he goes out with, he's meant to go to dinosaur club

Keith – that'd be somewhere else, Wesington or Valley Road. And within that group of 13 what's the staffing like

Teacher – what who's in there

Keith – yeah

Teacher – well, theres me and Mrs Churley, a nursery nurse

Keith – good, so what about Paul, whats his difficulties

Teacher - his attention span is quite short, and when he has something to say he has to say it whether or not he's just doing it to disrupt, which he can do or if he has to say it out, hes got to, if he has something in his head he just has to say it out, regardless of whose talking. He has a thing for shouting out, interrupting .he talks over the top of everything, literally everything. He has poor self esteem and he says I cant do it, needs constant reassurance that he can do it, after he's been encouraged. And if he's told to work in the group by himself he turns it back on the teachers and says I cant do this because you didn't do that. So it's not, he doesn't take responsibility for his own work, its somebody else's fault if he cant do it

Keith - so hes being defensive, he thinks youre criticising him, when you're not really, when youre trying to help

Teacher – he has a thing with taunting the other children in the class, if they cant get the answer he'll shout 'ah well that's easy' or calls them a loser. He can be quite aggressive to them, on the playground. Hes aggressive in class, its as if hes not aware of whats around him, he throws himself at things or at people, he doesn't realise that hes hurting them

Keith – so he's quite physical with them

Teacher – yeah. Spatially unaware as well, he doesn't realise how, if he's in someone else's space

Keith – and can he be nasty if he wants to be

Teacher – can be, but he has got... either can be very nasty but he's also very loving at the same time, and you know he's able to do something or he's been successful in something, all day he's on a high

Keith – so his mood changes, can you normally see on a morning

Teacher – yes, you can tell when he's coming in if he's in a mood or if he's in a bright cheerful mood, and it always...often comes in without breakfast and by innertime, or jus like an hour before dinnertime he strats to really come

down, I mean he can be quite mean and nasty, disruptive, and until he's had something to eat. The same thing happens when he doesn't have his glasses, he needs his glasses and he's constantly either breaking them or playing with them, its as if when hes got them on its as if hes got blinkers on and it stops him from distracting others being distracted.

Keith – do you have like a breakfast club or snacks for kids

Teaher – we do but he doesn't come in early enough for breakfast club because its half past 7 till half 8.

Keith – can anyone come to that

Teacher – yes.....he has to have the last say, and recently he's taken to hen hes asked to line up with the rest of the class he'll take himself away and start playing on the computer and when hes on the computer if hes enjoying doing something he won't stop doing it he won't share and take it in turns to move on. He doesn't bring his home reader back, fro the last five weks hes brought it back three times and that could just be three different days it not given out weekly, its daily the home readers. And it's a shame because we keep giving him aminal books because hes got a real interest in animals, drawing them, he loves, weve got a class guinea pig, he loves that. But he's not bringing it back regularly at all.

Keith – its down to his parents, do you think

Teacher – yeah, we've got..hes working in a group of 4, their the low SEN and their given individual teaching, their all getting real individual teaching. We've put him on Rigby Star reading books making it a fresh start for reading. The works set at his level, we differentiate, throughout, theres a real difference in that group and its all at hs, his works set at his level for his ability

Keith – do you know what his SATs were, were they kind of....

Teacher – he's working towards, I've got his PIVATS here, hes working towards, he's better at speaking and listening than he is at reading and writing, hes on p7 for English which is nursery, p8 for numeracy, and hes got a 1c for shape and space. So hes equal along them all but at a low level.

Keith – so out of that group of 4, or all the children in your class, where is he

Teacher – eithetr second or third, it depends, I've brought his assessments, weve done three assessment son him, one January, one February one March, and some of them, there not, there tending not to be totally consistent but he is improving but so I'll let you look at that.

Keith – so he's second, so is Lewis in the bottom

Teacher – yes, theres Lewis, either, well its definitely Lewis at the bottom and then it's the other Lewis or Paul take it in turns to be second off bottom or third

Keith – who's the other Lewis

Teacher – Lewis Allan, Lewis Anderson

Keith – ah right, I've seen both of those, yeah. So with Lewis Allan, its justb
all learning, ll learning and behaviour, is he mainly learning

Teacher – bit of both

Keith – right

Teacher – poor learning, his behaviour because he doesn't want, I think its he
doesn't want to do the work, well, because he hasn't had to when he's outside
of school and therefore he disrupts and his behaviour is linked to his learning.

Keith – because hes come to me in a round about way, from CAMHS so, the
situation now, do you think he should be referred, still, is he a priority

Teacher – Paul

Keith - Yeah

Teacher – yes

Keith – Yes

Teacher – and when, when you come in on a morning, when you're with him, is he there in your mind a lot, are you treading on eggshells, or is he ok, you got him under control, you know what his problems are

Teacher: um, I plan, when I do my lesson plans, I always think of the ones, like the 3 the 4 groups sorry then I think of the ones and he is always one of the ones to plan for. No I don't think, not walking on eggshells because if he starts to misbehave or he starts to disrupt and shout out it then you go through like a chain of consequence with him and he seems to like when we do in this school with the system of the yellow card red card but sometimes he'll forget and if you've taken the card back off him he forgets and he will do it again.

Keith: Because there are some kids in the school you know who kind of hit teachers and throw things, constantly you know annoy but he's not that, he's really a low level disruption

Teacher: I wouldn't say low level because he is constantly disruptive

Keith – yeah

Teacher- but he is not sort of physically disruptive to to us, but I'm thinking more of the teachers, I mean yes to the children he can be, not sort of hitting them constantly or but he will lash out on the yard

Keith: So you could turn your back and walk away out of the classroom and you're fairly certain that he's, he might be distracting but he's ok

Teacher: Yeah he's calmed down a lot since September when I had him first

Keith: So he's going to this dinosaur school, is that mainly because of the home problems or school?

Teacher: I think so, Yes

Keith: what else, what else

Teacher: but we are encouraging his love of animals and art. He just loves animals and loves drawing he's very good at drawing actually he's very good at handwriting as well, like copying something, he can't physically you can't sit him down and say write about your weekend it has to be sort of written for him, he's got nice handwriting though and he really loves the class guinea pig that we've got and the home reading books we've sent home have animals in and we encourage him although he may not be able to read every single word we're encouraging him to look at the pictures, draw a picture, talk about what that animal does, what does it eat and he's not bringing them back, I think he would like to bring them back

Keith: sorry what would you like him to bring back

Teacher: The books, I think he'd like to sit and talk about them

Keith: So I suppose you're not giving him new ones because he's keeps the other ones at home

Teacher: they're staying at home

Keith: so It sounds like his needs are being met because of the organisation of school, if it was just you in a class of 25 then it would be very difficult to deal with him, but the way the've organised school, would that be right.

Teacher – um hu

Keith - So you're happy with, he's making some progress

Teacher: He is making some progress, I'll show you that

Keith: you said, it's not been that long you've had this system is it

Teacher: No since we came back from Christmas break. That's when we first tested him, he knew a few words, a few numbers. That's the second time we didn't test him on that bit we tested him on words and sounds. And then the recent one . So he may not be consistent with some of the words and on a day to day basis you can test him one day and he knows and you can test him

another day and he doesn't know them it just depends on the mood or if he can be bothered.

Keith: So that is very good isn't it because if you look at that and its only January to that (counts sheet) – 9 and that's just looking at them and reading them (counts sheet) –

Teacher: I mean these are the reception words

Keith: you must have magic dust, But that's a big difference isn't it.

Teacher – um hu

Keith – so theres not a lot for me to do really. What else do you think I should.... need to do? I'll testing him, just to check on his level like I did with Lewis, just to see you know his potential because I suppose if hes got problems at home he might have more potential, do you think hes got more potential or do you think he king of working at his level?

Teacher: I think he can go up a few stages, I don't think, I dunno, I'm not sure

Keith: you're a bit stuck, you don't really know

Teacher: I'm not sure, I don't think he's ever going to do something,like hes not going tohe's always going to be below and quite a lot below. I mean

we're talking year 3 and he's working, I mean this is reception and he's still struggling on reception so I don't think he's going to be a high flyer.

Keith: I suppose hes an august birthday so and also some children don't start reading until they are about 7. So that's at school and hes fine, hes distractable but I suppose that him isn't it. So what about home is that where, because originally this went to CAMHS

Teacher – yeah

Keith - so a lot of its a home problems is that right.

Teacher – yes

Keith - So how is that affecting him, whats happening, hows that affecting the school

Teacher: I don't know how, what I'm allowed to say, he is really influenced by his dad but recently his dad is off the scene.

Keith: hes left home has he

Teacher: Well his dad. His mam and dad have separated, they don't live together and I don't think they have for a while, and he used to live for the weekend to see his dad but dad has since not been allowed to see him, and

mam has a new partner, and Paul and his younger brother, they obviously see a lot of what goes on in the house, Paul is quite affected by what he sees in the house and hes quite clever in the fact he knows what to say, what not to say and when to say it. He will, he knows, if hes seen something he knows not to say it,even though it will play on his mind that's why he might be in a mood there is no getting out of him, he does know how to clam up, keeps somethings secret whereas his younger brother doesn't know how to and he will say it

Keith: so is this new partner good or bad, or the same as the old one,would you say, has this improvement been because everything is wonderful or....whats going on there

Teacher: new partner isn't good, but recently Paul's quite influenced by him and his behaviour has improved but whether or not that's going to last because of what going to happen at home

Keith: So new partners not very good but his behaviours got better

Teacher: New partner and mam weren't a good combination and they still not a good combination but they're engaged now. Paul's come in recently saying I'm going to have a new dad because hes going to have a new dad, hes forgotten about old dad well his dad who'll have him on a weekend and suddenly he's got that father figure in his life and its boosted him a bit, for

however long this is going to last, this partnership between mother and partner

Keith: So does the school know

Teacher – yes

Keith – about the, new partner, its not positive

Teacher: I'm not sure, I don't think so. I think hes related to Dillon

Keith: Right good that's great, Thank you very much. So is there anything else

Teacher: I don't think so. I've got his PIVATs here if you want to look at them. Just his what work he's on

Keith: probably photocopy them for the file.

Teacher: I think so yes. They were updated last month

Keith: so are you available to see the parents when they come, are you available then

Teacher – yes, mums coming in at half eleven

Appendix 16 – Phase Two Results (Transcript Five)

Transcript Five

Keith: the referral for behaviour and speech problems. I'll just writ it down, I have the referral form here. How do you find her problems?

CT: Well her problems are she can find it difficult to relate to other children and to adults and her speech is very limited as well. I knew when she was in the circle time, just now, you'll fin that she'd often listen to what the other children are saying and she'd repeat what they say and I don't think she had a lot of understanding. The children have just been telling me what they were doing during the weeks holiday then she'd often say the same thing but I don't really think she understands what she is saying.

Keith: Has she seen the speech therapist?

CT: Yes. She is also going to a group several mornings at Southwick as well. A couple of mornings and a couple of afternoons to help develop that, she is seeing a speech therapist.

Keith: Do you know who she is seeing?

CT: Dawn..... Scott would it be

Keith: Jo Scott, she's that teacher that comes in, is that the one?

CT: think so, yes, I can find out for you.

Keith: She's not a speech therapist is she Janet, she's from the speech and language unit. That one there.

CT: yes she's the one that referred her to the Southwick place.

Keith: She referred her, so theres somebody else then?

CT: she referred her to Southwick place and she does two mornings and I think two afternoons.

Keith: Every week?

CT: yes, but only for a limited amount of time, but she be reassessed. Now when she actually does speak her speech is so quiet, you can't, it's just a mumble

Keith: Yes and you don't know whether that's her or whether she's just particularly nervous in class. Be cause she knows that she can't

CT: lacking of confidence

Keith: in fact they all were, maybe theres something in the water over here.

CT: there not normally that quiet

Keith: perhaps because I'm here

CT: there not very quiet a lot of the time

Keith: to me that seemed a big problem, that is the thing stuck out from the tests that I did with her. The puzzles she can do them ok, yeah they weren't brilliant but just like the depth of control with the puzzles, would that be right?. I'm just looking at... she's drawn a circle, straight line and a cross.

CT: I think anything to do with verbal explanations anything like that she finds it very difficult or anything where you are actually speaking to the group she'll roll around on the floor and she'll pull at other childrens hair and she'll poke them and push them and she doesn't seem to have any concentration.

Keith: I was wondering, it seemed to me that when she was doing that, she was rolling her eyes, wasn't she, that seemed to mean that she wasn't understanding, would that be right?

CT: I would think so, yes

Keith: because when she was with me she had the concentration when it was one to one. In fact she went away and came back and she showed Helen the teddy, so she was willing to interact but its just in a group it looks like she

needs the one to one support, so it looks as if it is different from Jude, because his seems to be like... well it's autism type of.... You know he's got something else hasn't he, with her it seems to be specific to speech.

CT: Yes, yes,

Keith: Would I be right?

CT: it's odd, just you can't pin point it can you. A lot of it is the verbal thing and she does when we're listening to stories and things like this she does poke at things and when we're sitting in here and she's listening to a story she'll pull the files out of the boxes and things like this, whereas Jude is hyperactive.

Keith: Yeah he's clearly got behavioural problems and his speech are attached, her it seems to be that she doesn't seem to be engaging in, see that when speech comes, she's looking... when you have her face there looking at her then shes concentrating and she can say.....

CT: She doesn't seem to understand to language. I think Jude understand the language part more than she does, in some ways. I mean when she was having her photograph taken with the school photographer he was trying to get her to look at the camera and smile and he had take about 6 or 7 shots before he got one that was reasonable because she was just, her eyes were

all over the place, she wouldn't look at him and smile. Really the photograph that I've got to hang on her peg is very odd.

Keith: she has an odd face hasn't she

CT: Yes she has. She's got the sort of face which I mean, it sounds unpleasant, but she looks like handicapped, her facial expression is, her mouth is just twisted and things like this when she's looking, it seems an unkind thing to say but she has the sort of face that looks like shes sort of.....her mouths twisted this ways and that way and her eyes are all over the place, it's almost as if she doesn't have complete control over her facial features.

Keith: So I think the way to go forward I would think would be one is the speech therapy to get really them to say what exactly her problems are with speech. Now we see her going towards like a language unit. Have you had children in the language unit before

CT: In the nursery?

Keith: Yeah going from the nursery but probably would have gone later on. Theres one at Hylton Red House. I would think then probably a paediatrician, I don't know, have you got any thoughts, Dr Despande or anybody

CT: we do go through post from doctors yes. But it's definitely the understanding of what you actually say to her. That's the problem,

Keith: yeah, it's the understanding that their sign of speech

CT: understanding, it's so important isn't it, it's all part of it, that's the key isn't it

Keith: When you actually then showing her things, like the puzzles, so its not a learning difficulty.

CT: this business also there is a big thing where she eats everything, even down to she spills sand out of the sand tray and puts it on her mouth and eats its

Keith: has that stopped now

CT: no she still does it. I mean we were watching the other day, I mean she eats playdough which all of the children do, but she a spoon full of sand and ate it, you'd think that would be....

Keith: more of a kind of an odd behaviour

CT: yeah very strange and she licks everything, the water off the floor, the slides outside if its been raining, she licks glue she licks, and I don't just

mean pritt sticks, she licks every sort of glue, theres really nothing I can think of that she doesn't put in her mouth. She bites the foam from the little yellow balls we have made out of sponge, she bites it and eats it and I mean that all babies do that sort of thing but you'd think that by the time she is four year old she would start to realise that it dangerous or well dangerous or not really what you should be doing and her mum says she does all that sort of thing at home as well.

Keith: has she got brothers and sisters

CT: she's just got a baby brother, called Troy

Keith: so we might be looking at a statement if with all especially with of this biting and eating and speech but in the past you needed a statement for language unit but I don't think you do now do you?, the latest, seems to change every week but you don't need a statement you can just get a recommendation from the speech therapist.

CT: I know that Jo Scott, who came to see her and was very concerned about her speech.

Keith: So what I think that we need is to get the information together from the paediatrician and from the speech therapist and have a meeting like we normally do

CT: right

Keith: well at least invite them and then decide whether we need a statement whether it's that severe or whether we push. There is a service called SLI speech and language impairment that's the speech therapist and they come into school quite regularly once a week, maybe more but there'll be a waiting list. From there they decide if they respond or leave her, but if she's still struggling with speech they recommend the language unit, there are spaces at Red House.

Appendix 17 - Phase Three Results for school staff responses to Question 1.

What could be done to make consultation more effective? **(school staff responses)**

- Nothing
- Prior consultation re what information required would have enabled me to answer more fully.
- We feel that the child in question has severe special needs and should be recommended for a place in a special school.
- Was effective but again could be useful to make time for other staff in school to attend.
- It would be useful for more staff involved with the child to be made available to attend but in terms of information exchanged –very effective.
- No comment
- No comment
- More time given for them e.g. after school or before school not as class are expecting to be taught. Case notes shared prior to consultations might leave more time for consultations providing solutions rather than just discussing what is already known.
- No comment
- Some ideas of information required prior to consultation. (Checklist to save time during consultation).
- Time allotted to discuss. A location in private – rather than a classroom.
- More time. Regular meetings.

- A multi agency approach after the initial consultation.
- Perhaps more thought, by myself, beforehand to clarify what areas/ideas/questions are most important.

Appendix 18 - Phase Three Results for school staff responses to Question 2.

How did you know the consultation was effective/not effective? **(school staff responses)**

- I feel that I have the support of a fellow professional. I know from past experience that Jan will carry out a thorough assessment and will give me relevant advice. Past consultations have always resulted in successful strategies.
- Clarification of key issues surrounding pupil's learning and barriers to learning. Update from last statement on recent progress and intervention.
- Because it was suggested that the way forward was for the child in question to remain in school and attend sessions at speech therapy etc.
- Have a clear understanding of what Eve needs in terms of support and a carefully structured transition back into mainstream.
- Clear understanding at where Bernard is in terms of ability and changes since last visit. This information combined with school's knowledge of child has provided a full picture of child's current situation and future needs and therefore we know where to move forward.
- The consultation was effective because after the EP's questions and our given responses it has enabled us to look closely at the pupil and move in a direction that will help the pupil.
- Questions posed by EP made me really analyse pupil responses and actions in school. EP steered the consultation. Plan of action by the end.
- At this moment in time the child is in exactly the same position as before. No extra support for him in class, no solutions or different strategies for class teacher to use, disrupted lessons for his peers.

- Response from EP was positive. Dates were set for observation of individual children. Needs of individuals were discussed. Actions were set.
- Information will be included in a report that will inform staff/carers and future schools of support/recommendation that will help the pupil.
- Time to talk through list and points on child. Able to discuss what the next step should be without interruptions – area in private – confidential.
- As we discussed transition pupils it was difficult to assess whether the consultation was effective in the majority of cases. However, there were a number of issues raised around individual pupils which has resulted in a multi agency approach prior to the pupils starting year 7. Some of the information shared was of value to the EP service, as they were unaware of information the school had received at the SEN reviews.
- I believe it was effective as the child discussed has huge issues and we were able to plan, discuss strategies and who else should be involved and when.
- Because I felt listened to! Often although I'm the person on the frontline as it were, my views are not taken into account. Billy listened seriously to the points I raised. His professional 'weight' led to a discussion with the SMT and my point of view was given some consideration.

Appendix 19 - Phase Three Results for educational psychologists responses to Question 1.

What could be done to make consultation more effective? **(educational psychologist responses)**

- Personal belief that the effectiveness is linked to the development of a positive relationship overtime – also linked to opportunities for that relationship to develop outside of “ pure “ consultation e.g. pyramid meetings, reviews, training, EP involvement in school Ofsted.
- Focused more on behaviours. Acknowledged differences and looked for solutions. Better eye contact.
- I could say less and wait longer for the teacher to express herself.
- It would have been useful to have involved class teacher – get more of an in class perspective.
- This consultation was effective – in general to be ‘more effective’ – need to ensure both parties has an opportunity to put forward points of view etc/respect each other’s contribution.
- Agreed agenda/structure. Checking out other people’s perspective. Construction of issue.
- Had I not been in such a rush (I was late), or if the Head Teacher had been more supportive towards the Class teacher having a full hour (cover arrangements broke down due to sickness but it turned out , that Head Teacher was available to support). Had I been more flexible (in the short time available, it would have been better to have given the Class Teacher more time to talk).
- Maybe had details of all children to be discussed beforehand.
- Key staff need to be available. Quiet room, information on hand. Staff need to be respectful of EP role.

- Time and space and preparation time given to staff so that they can feel relaxed and not 'time' pressured during the consultation. More than one member of staff released if appropriate.
- Could have had a formal process of recording actions, and some record of agreed as joint outcome.
- There was information revealed that had not previously come to light. A written record would have been more effective to ensure actions agreed.
- Ensuring that participants are aware of the process and aims of consultation. Making it a consistent feature of working jointly with schools and not something that is a 'one-off' experience. Identifying 'successful' outcomes so that participants are more likely to engage in consultation in the future.

Appendix 20 – Phase Three Results for educational psychologists responses to Question 2.

How did you know the consultation was effective/not effective?

(educational psychologist responses)

- Sense that there were several agreed outcomes where there was ownership and initiation from SENCO. Very aware from earlier discussions that the “process” of consultation was very telescoped- lots of shorthand- also a sense that the relationship is such that it would be ok/expected that the SENCO would be honest about her views re any next steps.
- No solutions. No strategies for schools to follow. Lacked focus-darted around-failed to connect with differences.
- The non verbal and verbal cues from the teacher were positive. I gained all the information I required from the consultation.
- I got out of the consultation what I wanted – to pass on information and to ensure that everyone is aware of Eve’s needs plus support is an issue for parents – Head Teacher needs to address.
- Passed on information which school will need to meet needs. Expressed parents concerns. Made suggestions for supporting child once time in school is increased.
- If it helps to address schools + parents concerns it will hopefully be effective.
- I spent too much time introducing the theme, insufficient time spent listening and allowing the Class Teacher to introduce her concerns. No time to explore ways forward and achieve shared understanding. It turned out that the school have decided to ‘go for FSA’ and therefore want my support to proceed. After the unsatisfactory consultation the Head Teacher spent a considerable time outlining the case for FSA. Since alternative placement is sought, I felt that the attempt to work with the Class Teacher was undermined.
- Plans made to move things forward. SENCO seemed happy with next steps to be taken.

- It was effective because I was able to receive all the information I needed about the background and academic ability of the child. The teacher was relaxed, prepared (she had the child's file available), helpful, knowledgeable. The teacher's non-verbal signs i.e. smiling indicated that it was effective.
- Ask member of staff concerned. Ask SENCO/Deputy Head etc to ask the member of staff whether it was effective. Random questionnaire.
- From my point of view as EP, it was helpful to know school had already highlighted pupils of concern in their transition discussions, and were already planning interventions e.g. ASD pupils, video, and social skills group.
- We were able to problem solve, and school arrived at an outcome, and actions that they needed to take. EP felt effective as a 'facilitator' in moving towards resolving issues.
- With this particular consultation, each person seemed able to express their views/opinions openly. The views seemed valued by all present. There was no 'expert' seeking a solution but more a sharing of 'expertise'. These reflections are based on how I thought the consultation was progressing. It appeared that people were relatively pleased with the process. However, feedback was gathered from participants following the consultation in order to establish their views. This feedback was positive and indicated that the consultation had been 'effective'.

Appendix 21 – Phase One and Three Thematic Analysis Diagrams

Explanation of diagrams and colour coding.

1. The data from the questionnaires was analysed and the themes were established. These themes were placed on diagram. (See Diagrams 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12.)
2. The diagrams were looked at and it was clear that some of the themes had been represented more than once using different labels e.g. help and support; advice and strategies; discussion and dialogue and conversation.
3. These themes were then grouped together using the most appropriate of the labels, e.g. advice and strategies became 'advice'; discussion and dialogue and conversation became 'discussion'. (See Diagrams 2,4,6,9,11,13) This was done with each individual question form the questionnaire.
4. The themes from each question were then placed on one diagram to see if any of the themes occurred in all three of the questions. The common themes were colour coded to make them clearer and to make it easier to see the links.
5. These colour coded themes were identified as the key themes from the data. In Diagram 7 – advice(yellow), strategies/action(purple), achieves aim(green) and impact(blue). In Diagram 14 – helpful(lilac),

collaborative(orange), achieves aim(green), effects change(blue), way forward/solutions(yellow) and positive experience(pink).

6. All of the key themes were then placed on one diagram (diagram 15) to see if any theme was consistent across the three questions and the participants. These were again colour coded. The following themes were coded: advice/way forward(yellow), achieves aims(green), impact/change(blue) and explores issues(pink waves). As these themes occurred across all of the data they were identified as global themes.
7. This same method was used for Phase Three of the research and the themes were represented on diagrams. The global themes were colour coded again to show the links. Diagram 16 and 17 showed the key themes: more time to talk(blue), involving other staff(yellow), preparation before consultation(red), strategies(green) and shared picture(orange).

Diagram 1 : Key themes from the school staff questionnaires for question 1.

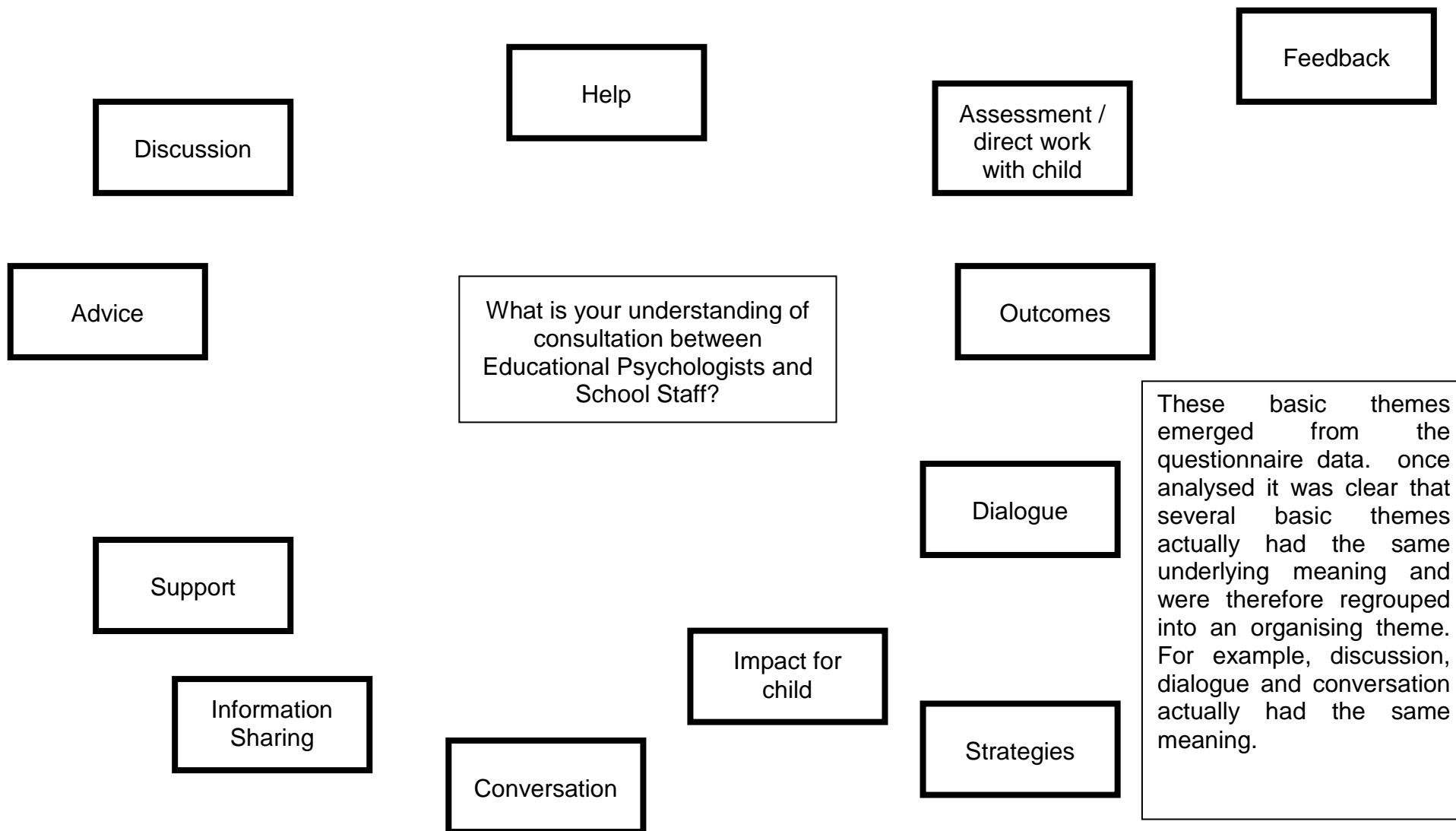


Diagram 2 : Key themes from the school staff questionnaires for question 1.

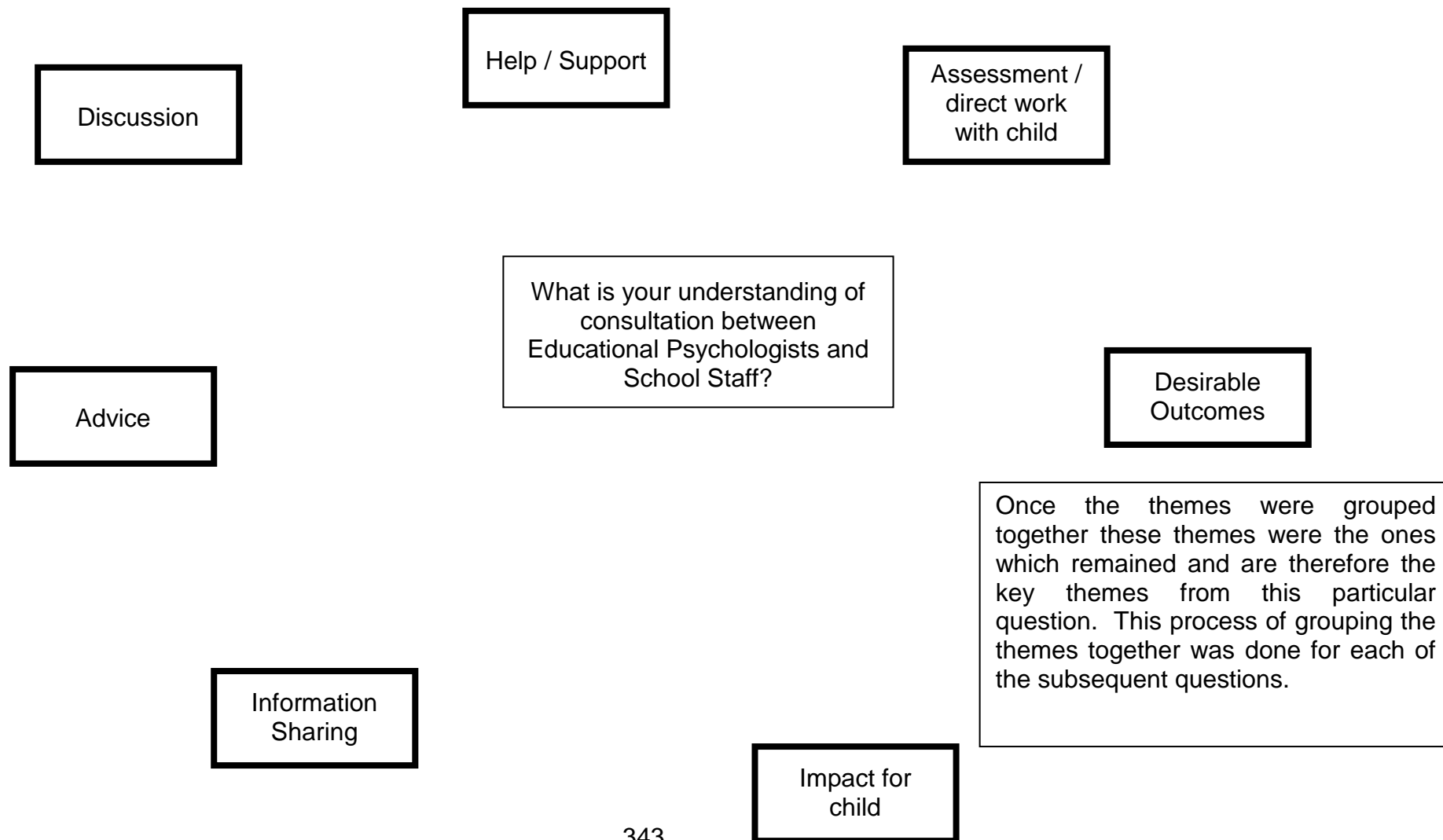


Diagram 3 : Key themes from the school staff questionnaires for question 2.

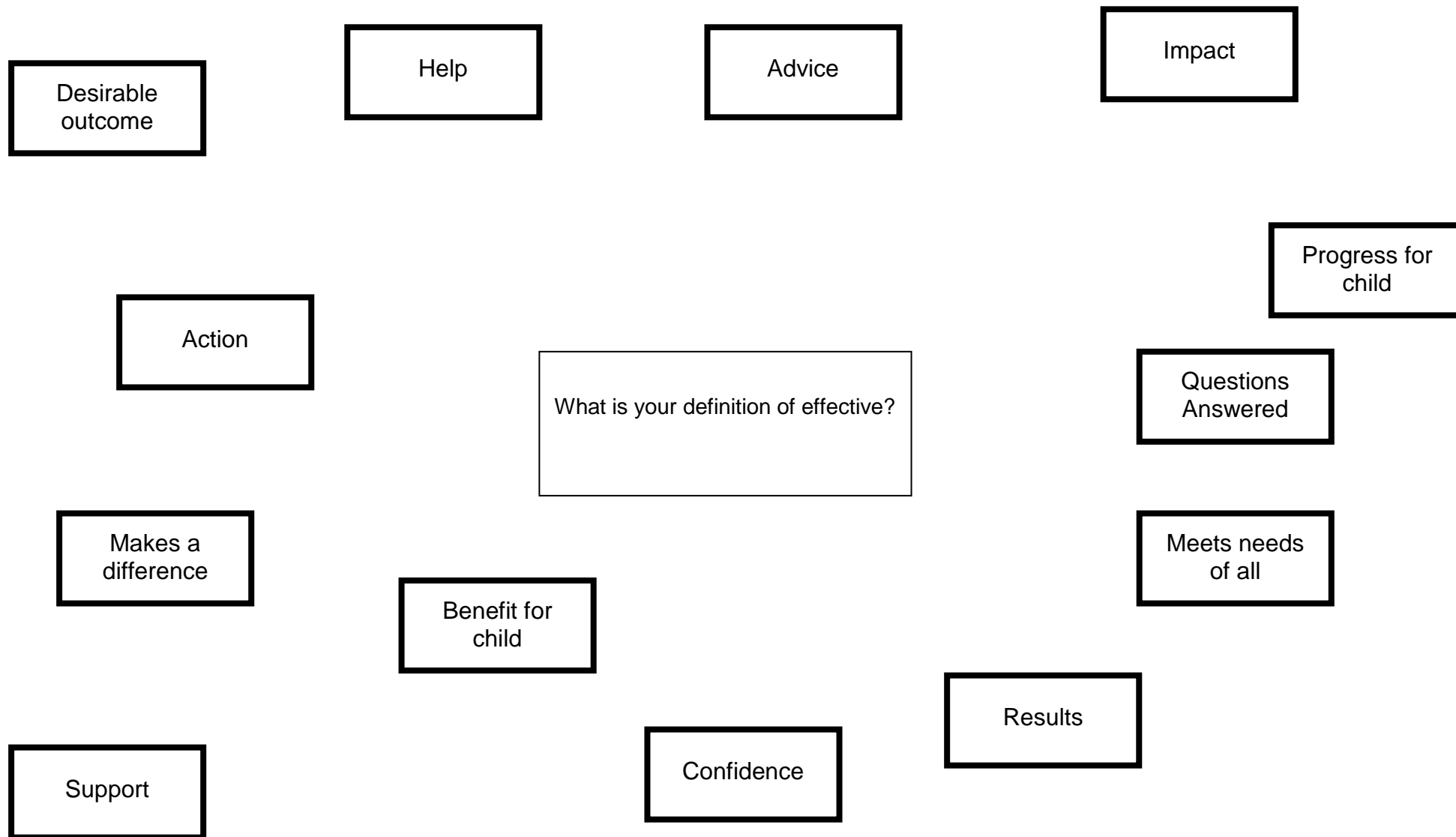


Diagram 4 : Key themes from the school staff questionnaires for question 2.

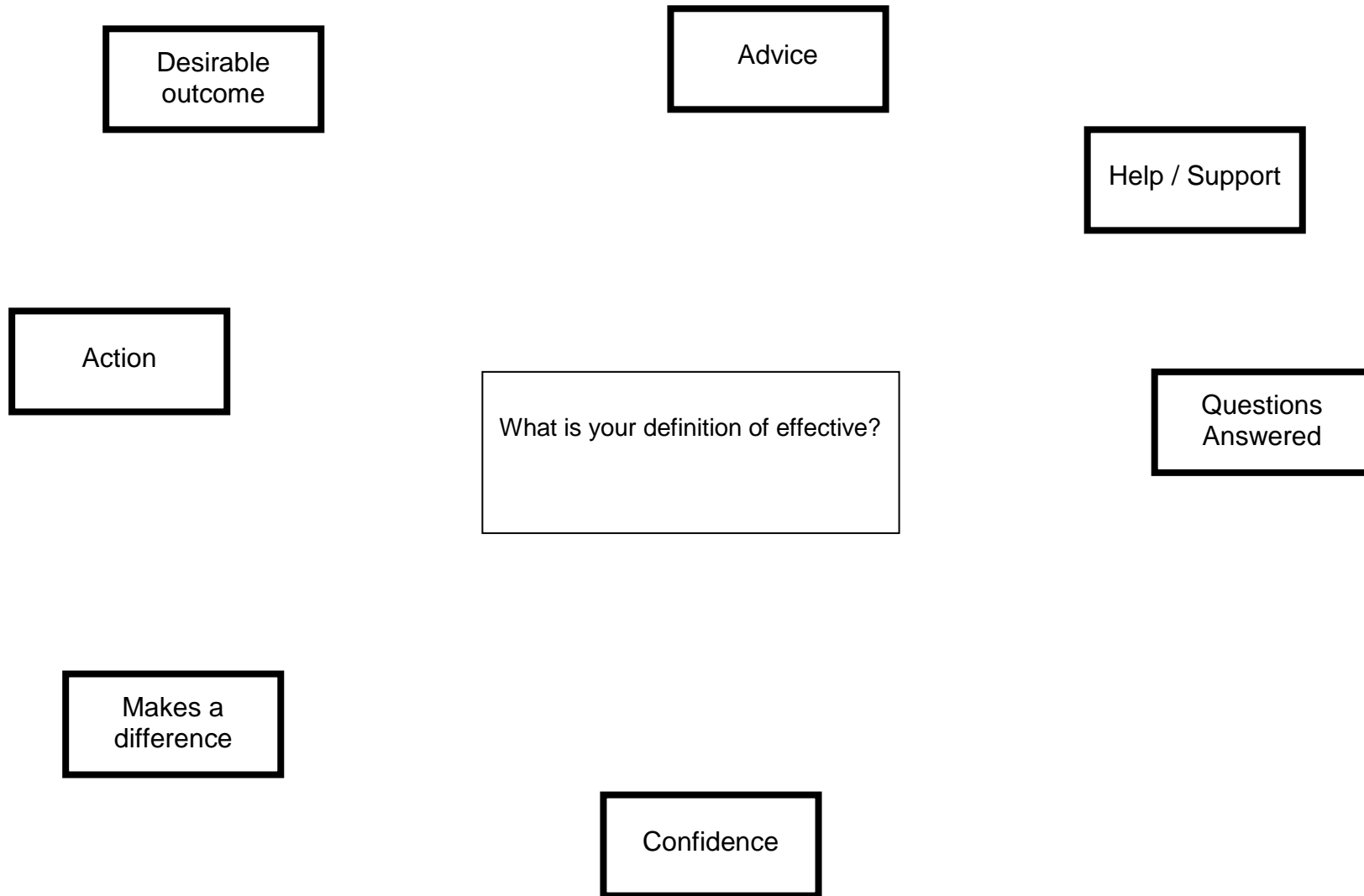


Diagram 5 : Key themes from the school staff questionnaires for question 3.

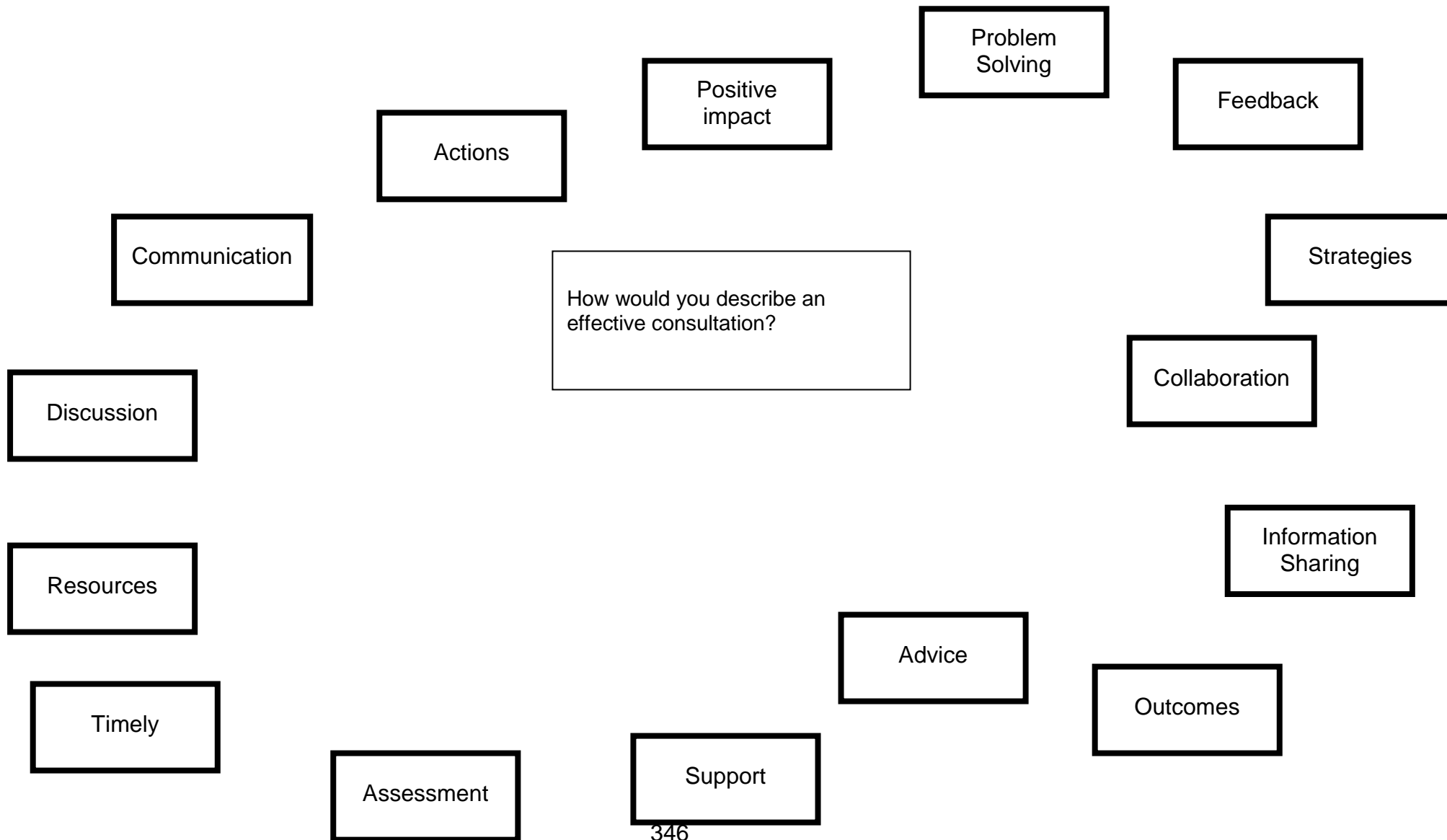


Diagram 6 : Key themes from the school staff questionnaires for question 3.

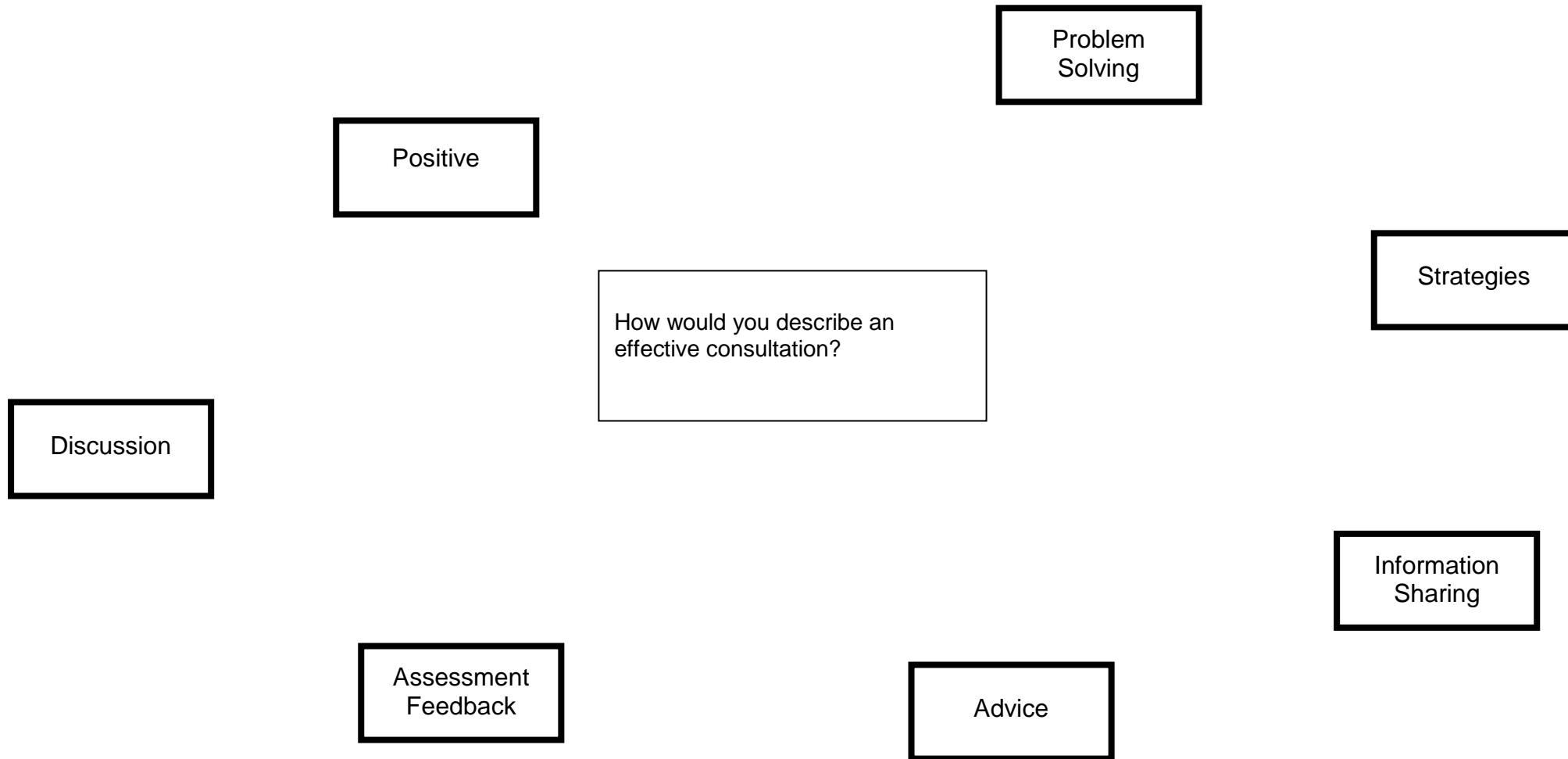


Diagram 7 : Overarching themes from the school staff questionnaires.

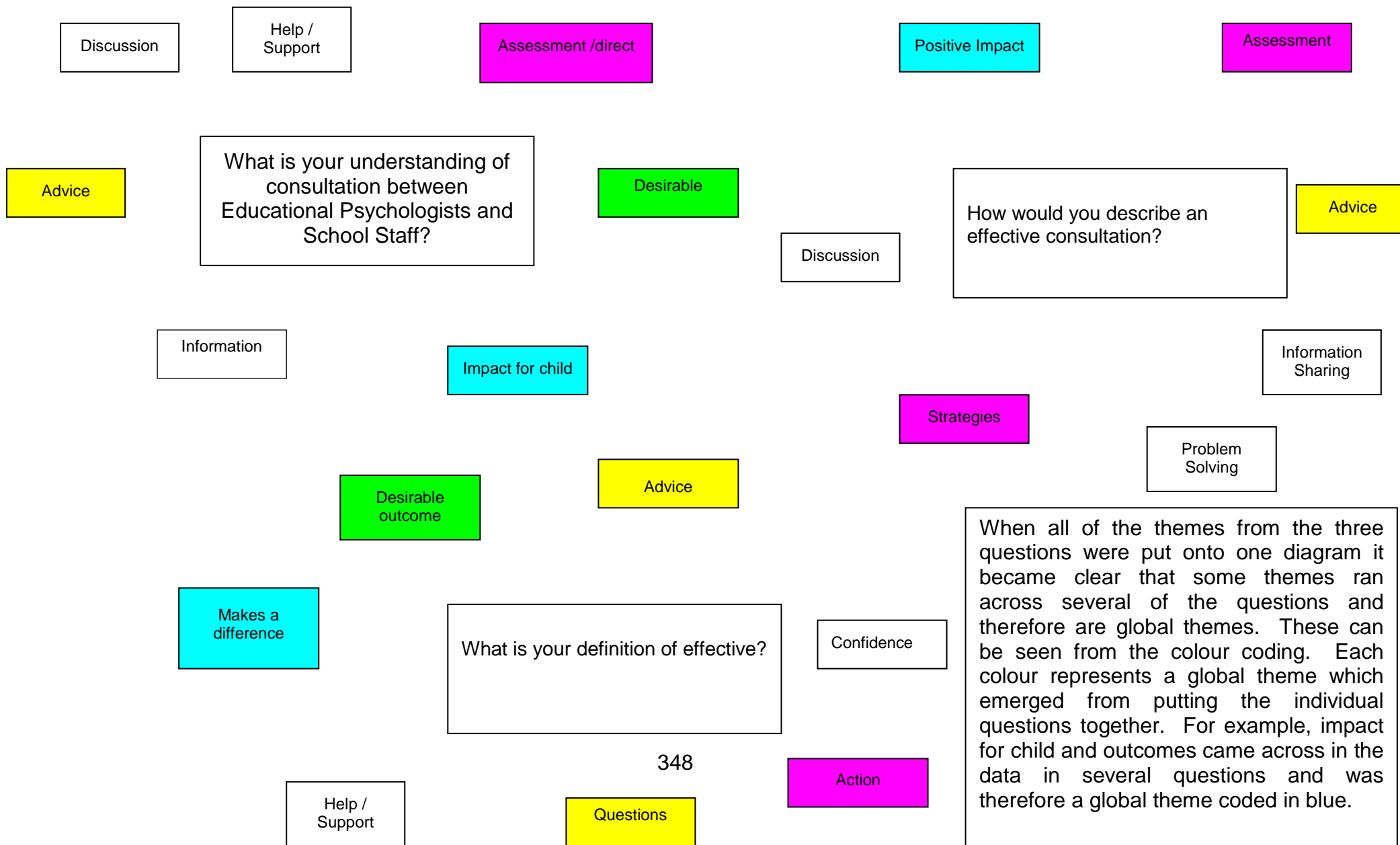


Diagram 8 : Key themes from the Educational Psychologists questionnaires for question 1.

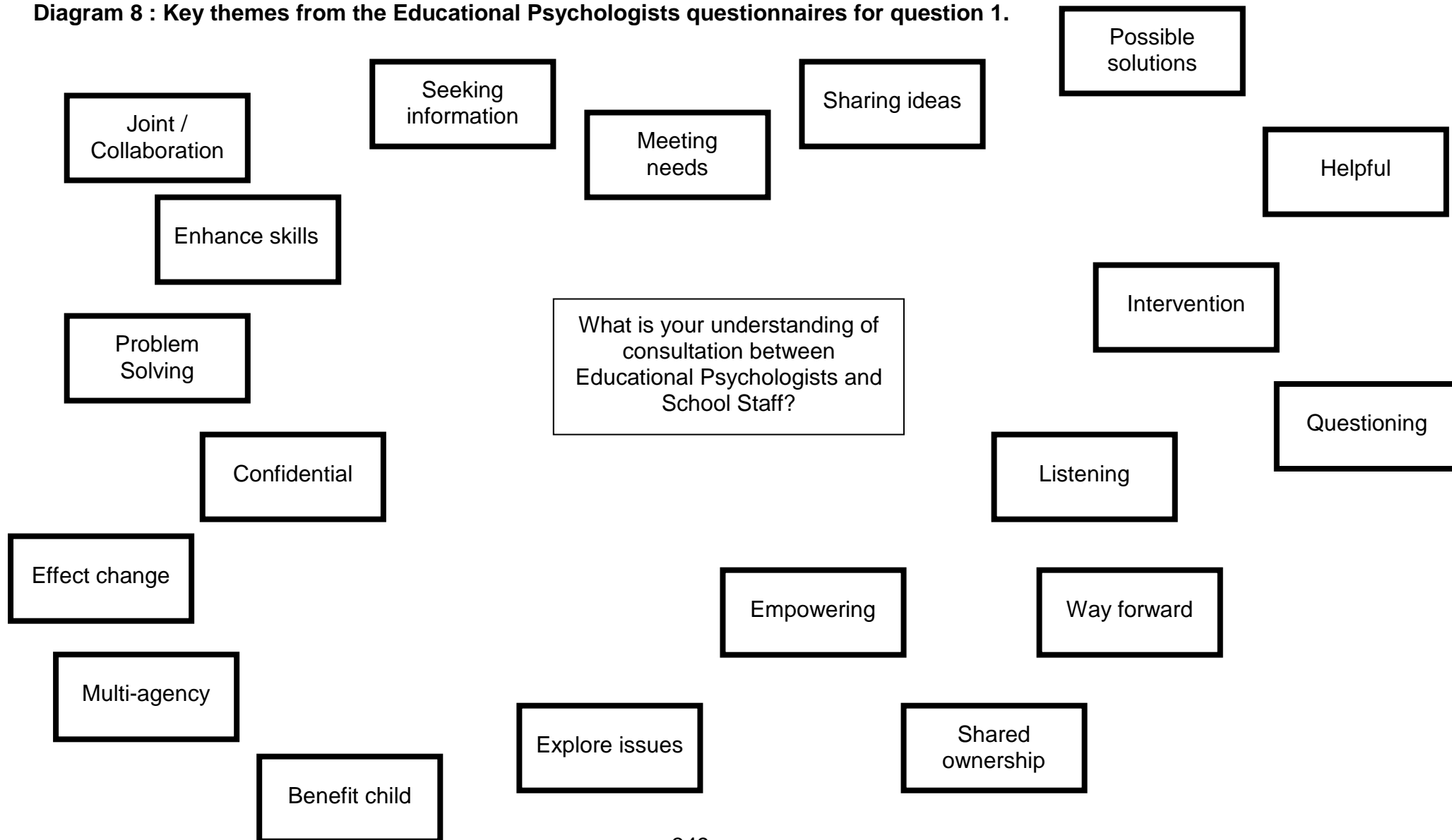


Diagram 9 : Key themes from the Educational Psychologists questionnaires for question 1.

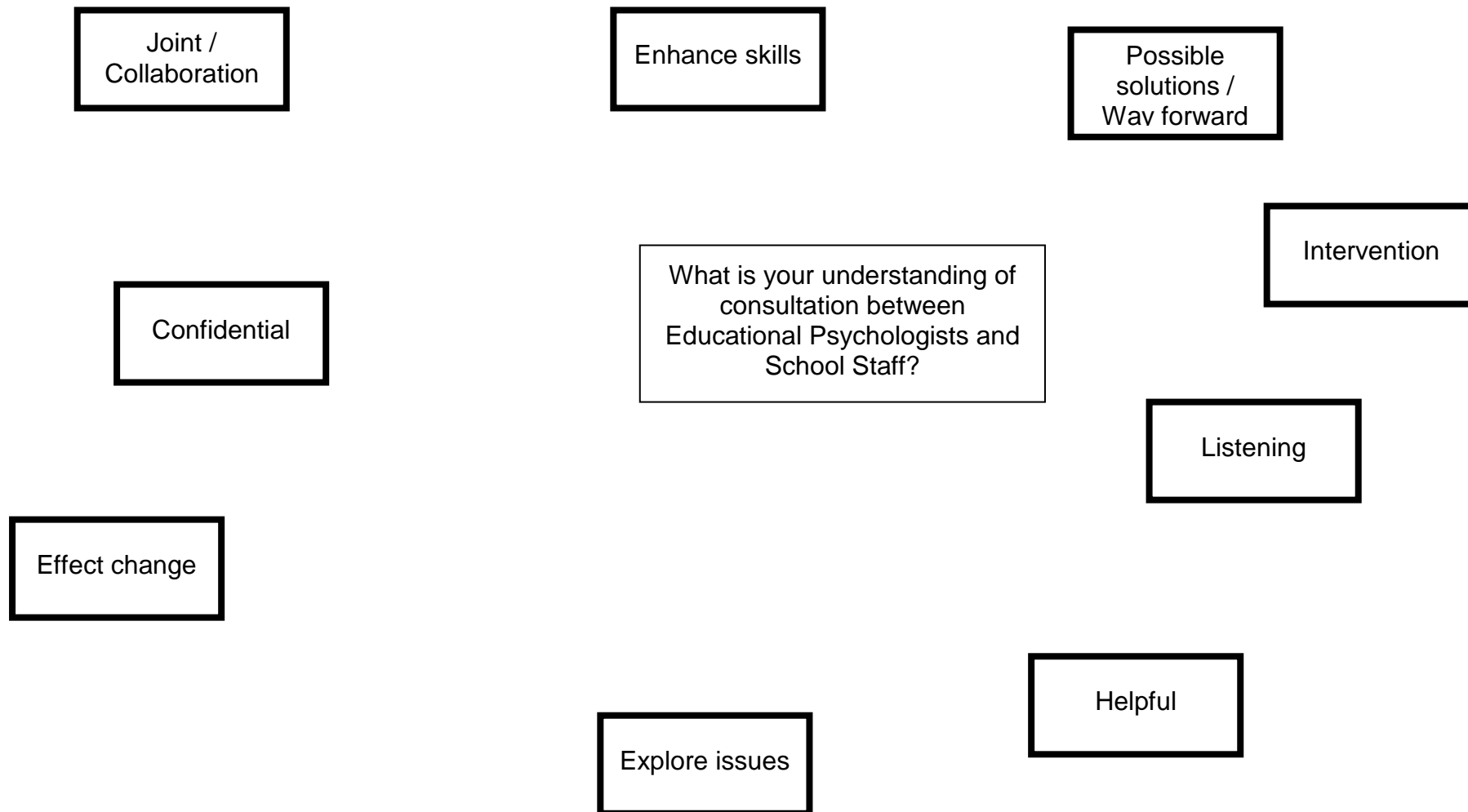


Diagram 10 : Key themes from the Educational Psychologists questionnaires for question 2.

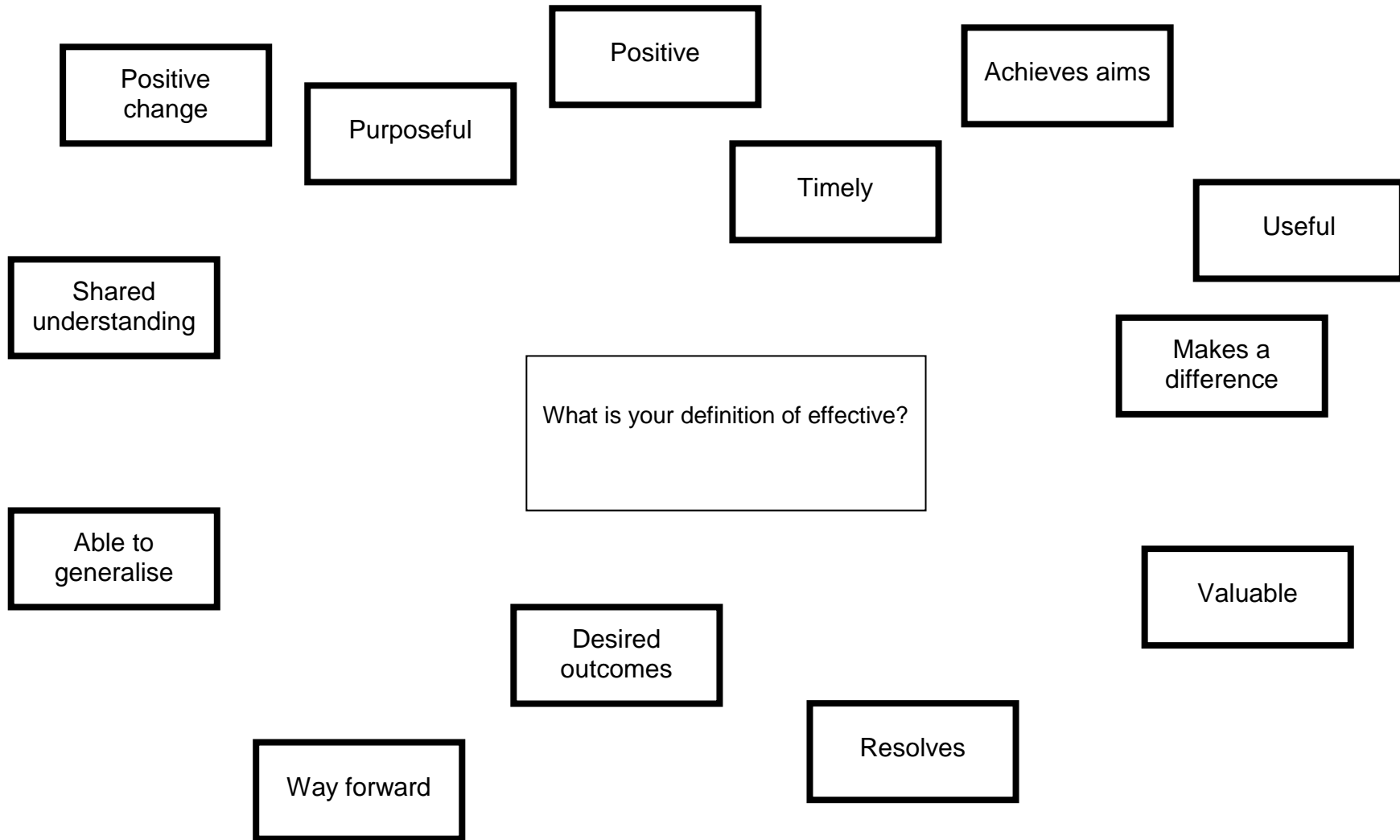


Diagram 11 : Key themes from the Educational Psychologists questionnaires for question 2.

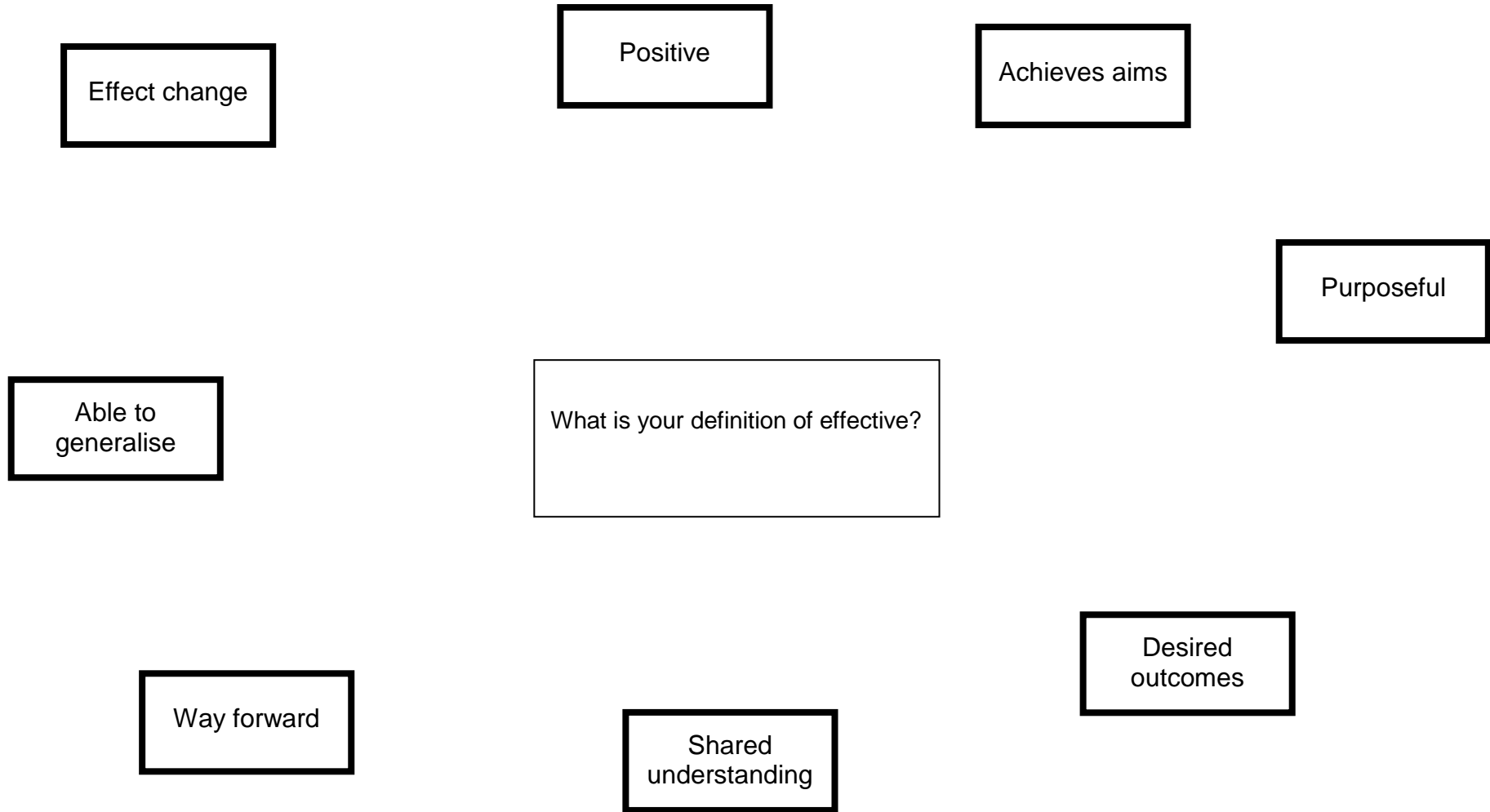


Diagram 12 : Key themes from the Educational Psychologists questionnaires for question 3.

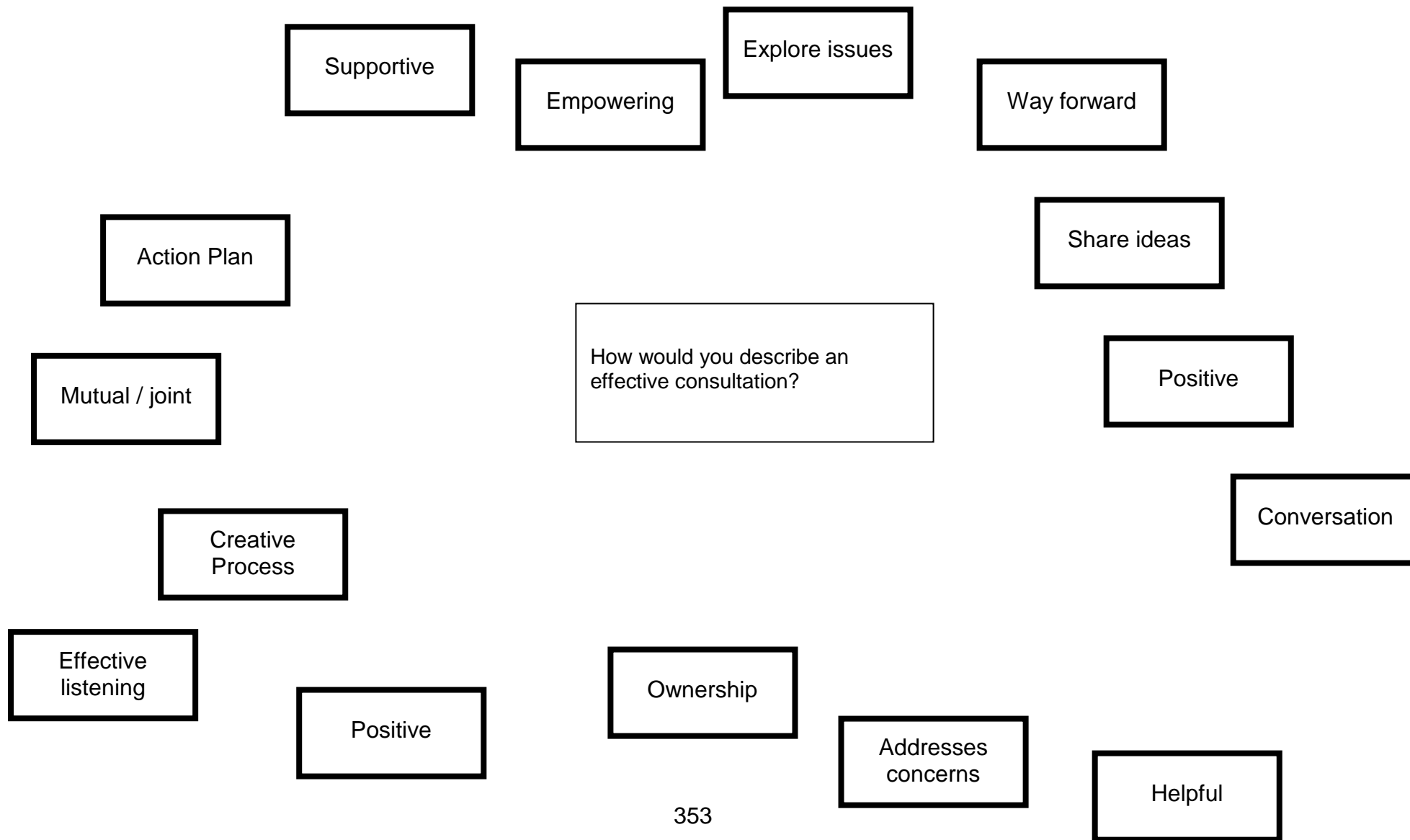


Diagram 13 : Key themes from the Educational Psychologists questionnaires for question 3.

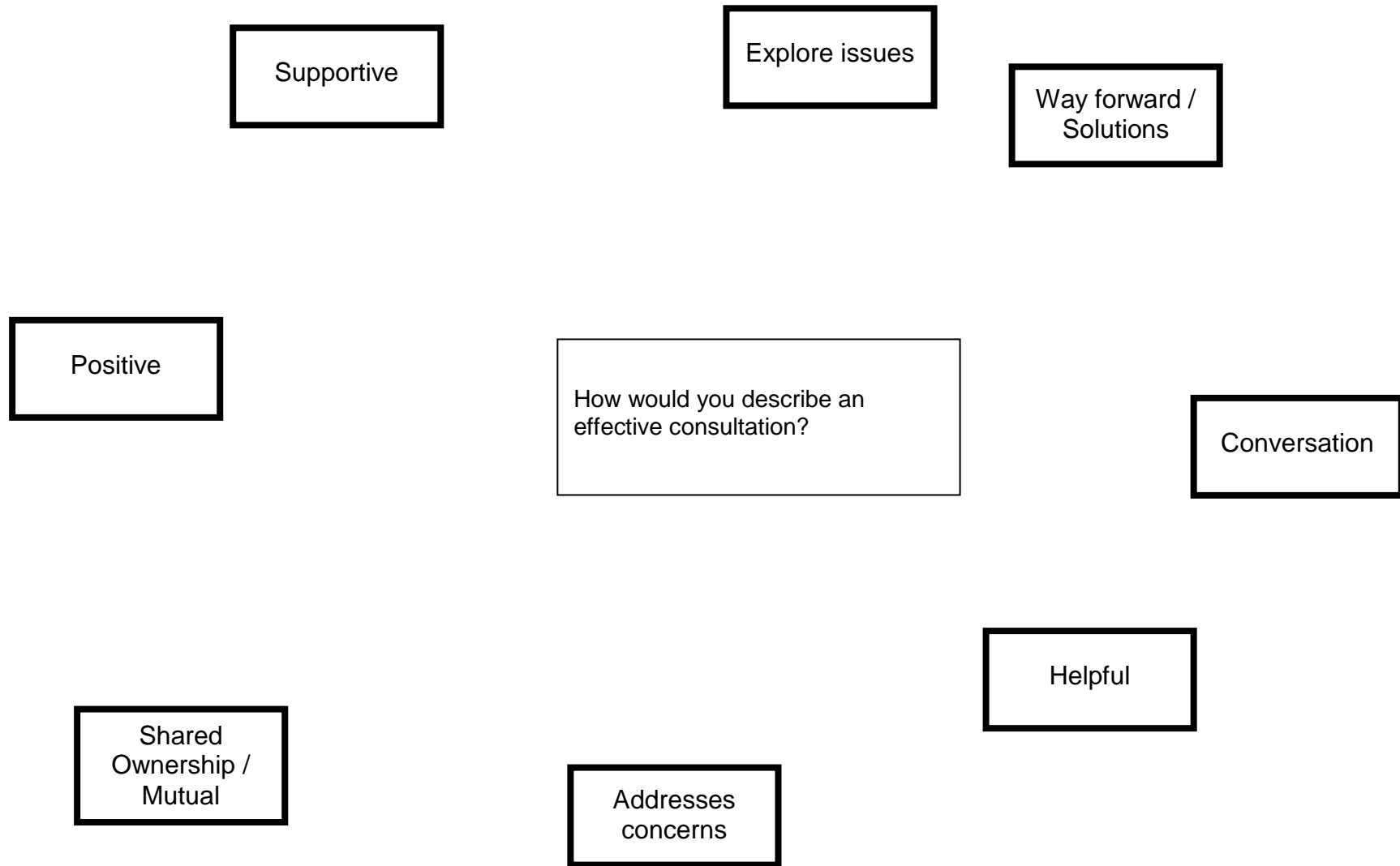
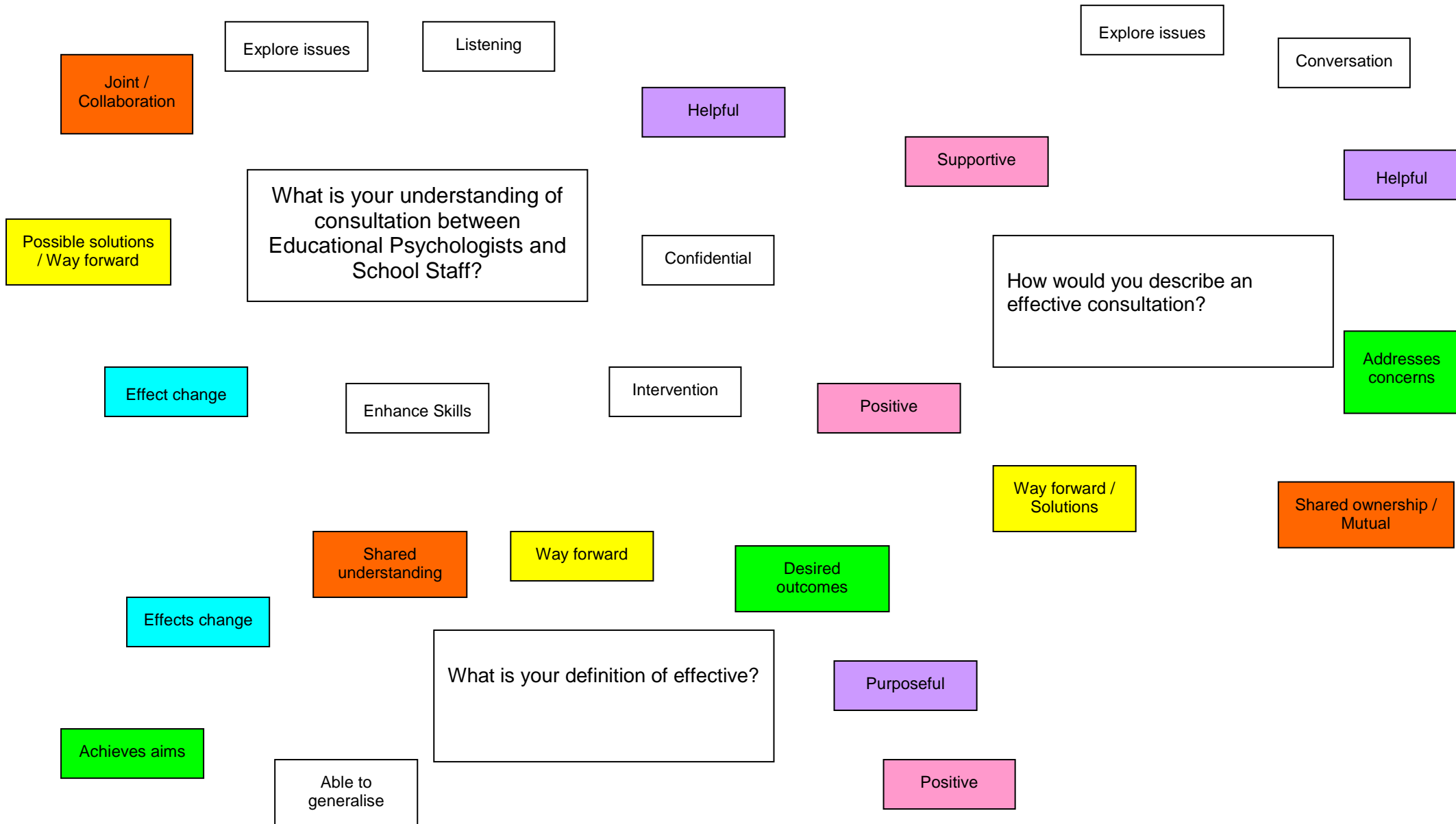


Diagram 14 : Overarching themes from the Educational Psychologists questionnaires.



This diagram shows all of the organising themes from the school staff and educational psychologists questions. The data was looked at to see if any themes were seen across the data. These common themes which emerged were then the key features identified as being in an effective consultation. Again the common themes are depicted in the various colours for example impact and change shown again in blue.

Diagram 15 : Key themes from the school staff and Educational Psychologists answers on the questionnaires.

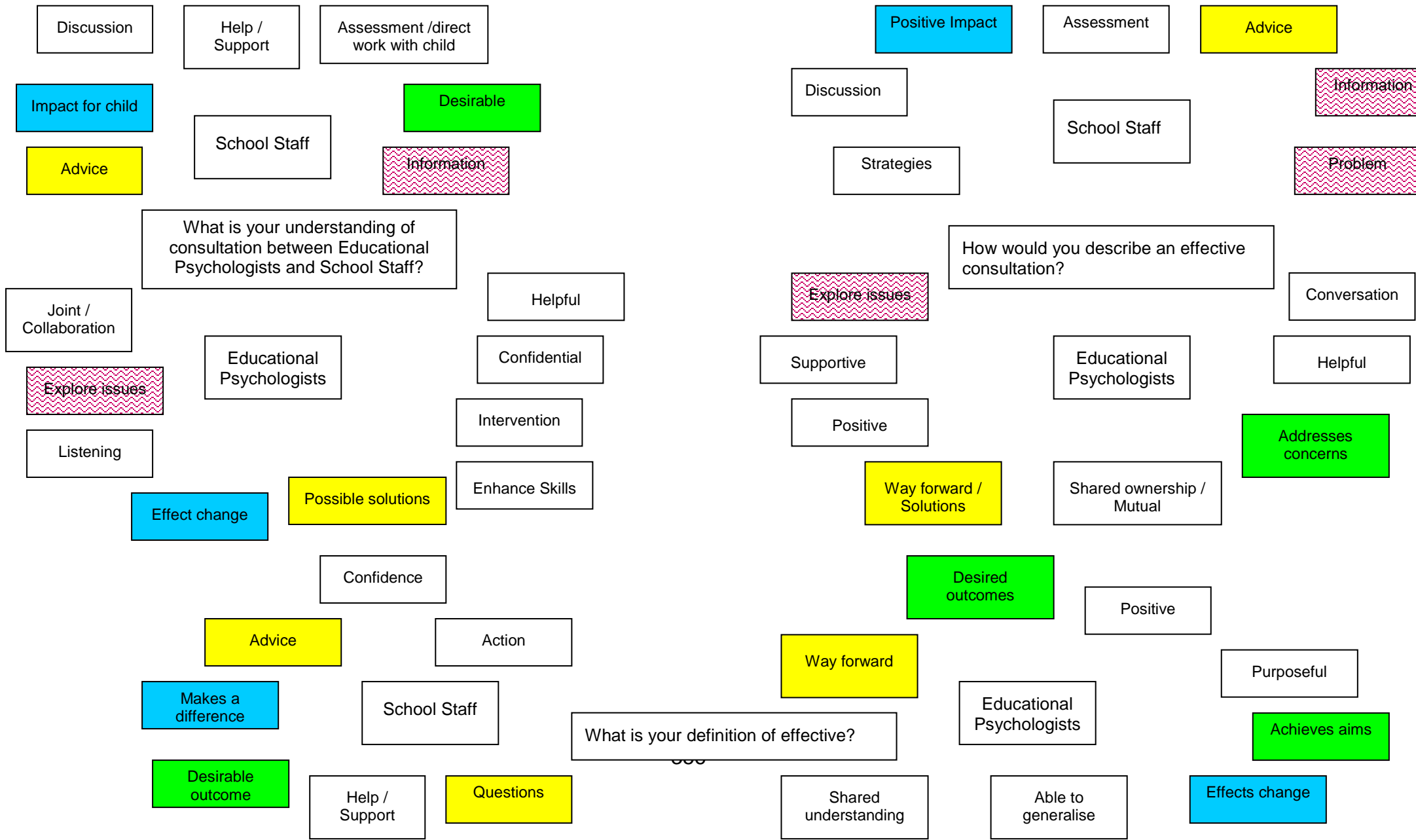


Diagram 16 : Key themes from the school staff and Educational Psychologists answers to post question ‘What could be done to make Consultations more Effective?’

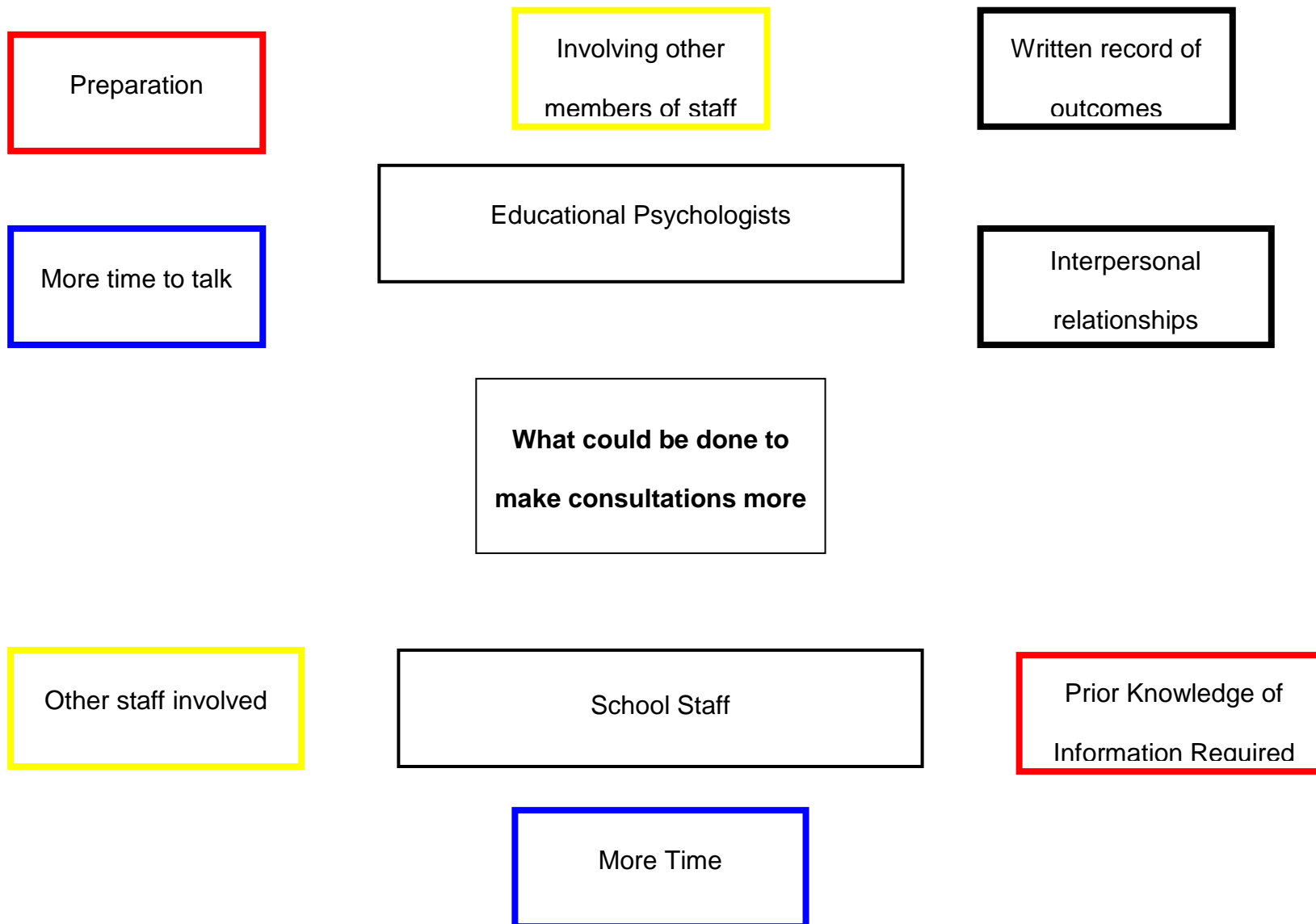


Diagram 17 : Key themes from the school staff and Educational Psychologists answers to post question ‘How did you know the consultation was effective / not effective?’

