Using Video to Promote the Development of a Collaborative Approach between Parents and Teachers around Pupil Behaviour

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that I have correctly acknowledged the work of others. This submission is in accordance with University guidance on good academic conduct.

I certify that no part of the material offered has been previously submitted by me for a degree or other qualification in this or any other University.

I confirm that the word length is within the prescribed range as advised by my school and faculty.

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Abstract

Studies of difficult pupil behaviour suggest that this is a complex and multifaceted phenomena, which can be seen as involving individuals and interactions both within and across the boundaries of the school and family system. Difficulties in achieving collaborative home-school relationships and effective partnership are well documented in the research literature, particularly in the often highly emotionally charged circumstances where pupil behaviour is an issue. The literature and the experience of the researcher suggested the need for an approach which enabled a collaborative approach between the parent, teacher and child, and video emerged as a possible facilitating tool.

This study set out to examine the effects of a video intervention based upon the principles of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), upon the home-school relationship in a situation where there was a perceived difficulty with pupil behaviour. Adopting a constructivist approach, the case study used an action research model to explore changes in the experiences, perceptions and attributions of the parent, teacher and child as portrayed within the differing narratives that unfolded and were shared about the situation and relationships as the intervention progressed.

Findings of the study suggested that the video intervention was perceived as promoting the development of a collaborative relationship between the parent and teacher. There was a focus on the interaction between individual and social psychological factors in relation to the situation, with changes in the situation being interactive and circular. More positive communication and interaction was also reported in the parent-child and teacher-pupil relationships, and beyond the parent-pupil-teacher sub-system to the child's relationships with peers and other family members. Increased self-efficacy and self-awareness were reported by those involved and strengths based narratives highlighting the capacity and resources of those involved, particularly the child were found to develop overtime.

Based upon the findings of the study a two stage psychosocial model of collaborative development is proposed and discussed in relation to future implications for the professional practice of Educational Psychologists. Further consideration is also given to ways in which the model may be further tested and possibilities for the application of the video intervention in relation to research and practice more broadly.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Rationale

The focus of this thesis arose as a result of my personal reflections upon a multi-agency review meeting I attended during a year one placement during my doctoral training. The meeting was held in relation to a three year old boy, who had a statement of special educational needs and was at risk of exclusion from the school nursery due to disciplinary issues.

I observed that during the meeting there were momentary glimpses of many contradictory and contentious views, beliefs and attitudes, though these were never fully and openly acknowledged or discussed. One particularly pertinent area of agreement amongst those present appeared to be a belief that something or someone, was responsible for the child's behaviour. Thus the issues of blame and responsibility, though again never openly discussed, hung thickly in the air.

In this particular instance it appeared that the differences in perceptions and beliefs militated against the government's espoused desire for partnership between professionals and between professionals and parents. Rather, they served as a significant barrier to the possibility of joint planning and working to initiate positive change and achieve the best possible outcome for the child.

Difficulties in achieving effective collaborative practice and joint-working are well documented, between professionals (Parsons, 1999; Stead et al, 2004, Milbourne, 2005) and between teachers and parents (Miller, 2003; Miller et al 2002, Todd and Higgins, 1998, Todd, 2007).

Miller (2003) highlights that difficult classroom behaviour can produce highly emotionally charged circumstances, creating a context in which effective collaboration and joint-working become more difficult to achieve. He goes on to

suggest that a critical aspect of this is the conflicting attributions and perspectives found within the teacher-pupil-parent subsystem.

Parfrey (1994), highlights the importance of our attitudes and beliefs with respect to the way in which pupil behaviour is perceived and addressed, writing,

> Exclusion from school is a matter of attitudes to our children who misbehave, our attitudes to the staff and schools who try to cater for their needs, our attitude to the parents of such children, our attitude to how we think they should be treated (pg.108).

This resonated to some extent with my own experience and as such, I became particularly interested in considering positive approaches to supporting collaborative work in such circumstances between home and school, aimed at acknowledging and addressing differing perceptions and beliefs, and which would empower those involved to facilitate more inclusive solutions.

Fresh in my mind was also a two day workshop I had recently undertaken on the theory and practice of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), an intervention which aims to develop communication and relationships through video enhanced reflection. I had been very interested in both the underpinning values and assumptions of this way of working and with its potential to create positive change in a range of situations through a focus on the strengths and capacity of those involved. Reflecting upon the intervention and the situation I had encountered I felt increasingly that the values, principles and process of VIG, could help create a more collaborative approach in such sensitive situations, where issues of difference hindered positive progress.

1.2 Literature Review

In order to gain greater clarity and focus upon the issue to consider further my approach to research in this area, I needed to come to a greater understanding of the perceived nature of 'the problem' in the different ways in which the problem of pupil behaviour is variously defined, explained and subsequently addressed. In this respect the following literature review consists of four sections; the first will consider the current level of concern in the United Kingdom in relation to issues of pupil

behaviour and discipline and the relevant legislative framework; the second will examine the various ways in which difficult pupil behaviour is conceptualised and understood and the ways in which this informs subsequent interventions; the third section will look at the benefits of parent partnership and the identified barriers and facilitators to home school collaboration. The final section will consider ways in which video has been used to create change in a range of situations with an emphasis upon work undertaken with parents.

1.2.1 A climate of exclusion

The current move toward inclusive education in the UK embraces to some extent the concept of the active engagement and participation of all children within mainstream education (Salamanca Statement, UNESCO, 1994). At the same time there is recognition of the detrimental effects of school failure upon the individual in respect to future personal and economic wellbeing and ultimately their inclusion in society (Farrington, 1997). This has encouraged increased governmental attention and intervention in the areas of attendance, behaviour and attainment to achieve better educational outcomes for all children and young people.

As O'Hanlon (2003) highlights however, the increased emphasis upon widening participation and access to education is challenged somewhat by a 'climate of exclusion'. This alludes to the situation in the UK where 'difficult' or 'challenging' children and young people can be excluded from school.

Exclusion occurs in a variety of forms, some of which became regulated in England by the Education Act (DfES, 1986) and subsequent Education Acts.

Broadly speaking, school disciplinary exclusion can be seen to fall into the following categories:

- Fixed term exclusion: occurs where a pupil is excluded from school for a time-limited period, which cannot be more than 15 days in any one term (DfES, 2004a, pg.7). According to official statistics this form of exclusion accounts for the majority of all exclusions.

- Permanent exclusion: occurs where a pupil is removed from a school's roll and permanently refused readmission to the school. It then becomes the responsibility of the Local Authority to secure alternative provision.
- Voluntary exclusion: is the practice whereby a parent/carer is asked to remove a pupil from a school, often with the understanding that failure to do so will lead to permanent exclusion. Although this practice is discouraged by the DfES, it uses the power of the social stigma of being permanently excluded to encourage parents' co-operation.
- Unofficial or Informal exclusion: is the practice whereby a pupil is discouraged from attending school without having to go through the procedures of an official exclusion. It is argued that these types of exclusions account for the majority of exclusions, though are not recorded in official statistics. (Gordon, 2001, pg.71)

Other commentators however, would argue that such narrow definitions do not consider the very subtle ways in which schools and the education system fail to include many children and young people (Slee, 1999; Parsons, 2005; Hall et al, 2004; Hilton, 2006). For example, Southwell (2006) suggests that,

> a truantist perspective sees truancy as a self-actuated exclusion, imposed by defective schools that have failed to meet the special educational needs of truants - needs that must be met to ensure inclusion (pg.94).

Such arguments suggest that officially recorded statistics relating to school exclusion are merely the 'tip of the iceberg'. Vulliamy and Webb (2001) discuss the 'social construction' of exclusion rates and highlight the unreliability of recorded exclusion rates, particularly given their increased use as performance indicators.

In recent years, high levels of recorded disciplinary exclusion have given rise to expressions of concern such as that made by OFSTED in 1996, stating,

> No democracy can afford to write off thousands of its young people (pg.31).

Research exploring possible causative factors in increased rates of school exclusion suggests the issue is complex and multifaceted, with explanations ranging from changes in national educational policy and practice (Parsons, 1999), social and

economic factors such as family breakdown, poverty and unemployment, to individual factors, such as an increase in childhood psychiatric disorders (see Vulliamy & Webb, 2003, pg.34) and teacher attitudes and teacher self-efficacy (Stannovich & Jordan, 1998)

Despite increasingly rigid requirements of policy and guidance to be met by excluding schools (DfEE 2004 a,b,c), aimed at decreasing the rates of exclusion, and the emphasis upon the use of school exclusion as 'a last resort', there appears to be little change in the recorded statistics in England.

An examination of the most recently published figures on exclusion in schools in England released by DFES (2006) suggests that rates remain unacceptably high, with only slight fluctuations since 2000/01. Statistics for 2004/5 indicate that 9,440 pupils were permanently excluded from primary, secondary and all special schools. A particularly concerning figure when we consider that two thirds of young people excluded from secondary school will never return to full time mainstream education (McConville, 1998).

Statistics also indicate some concerning differences relative to age, gender and ethnicity. Again, those of most significance in this study show that boys are much more likely to be excluded at a younger age than girls, representing the majority of primary school exclusions and also represent a disproportionate amount of permanent exclusions each year, around 80%.

Such figures serve to fuel a growing debate and concern around the problem of school discipline and more specifically disruptive pupil behaviour, and how best to deal with this. As highlighted by Cohen (1976) however, the discussion of the amoral nature and lack of discipline of children and young people is not a new phenomena, but has a long history, intrinsically linked to the discourse of control.

1.2.2 The construction of school discipline

An exploration of the discourse surrounding the issue of school discipline and pupil behaviour may be helpful in promoting a greater understanding of the way in which different perspectives and beliefs are developed and reinforced within our everyday interactions and come to be accepted as our 'reality'.

Foucault's ideas and analysis of discipline and punishment can be seen to be relevant to the experiences of all children within education, particularly those who become perceived as 'different' or 'deviant' in some way. Foucault describes the mechanisms of surveillance which he believes occur within the 'focal centres' of power/knowledge, for example in relationships between children and adults. According to Foucault,

> inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is everywhere (Foucault,1977b, pg.195).

It is 'the gaze' which Foucault sees as constructing individuals as both subjects and objects of knowledge and power; in the sense of being a subject to someone else, through control and restraint and as a subject tied to their identity by their conscience and self knowledge.

Examination of the discourse around difficult behaviour/behavioural difficulties and poor school discipline suggests that an individual focus tends to be at the fore of much of the way in which 'the problem' has, and continues to be defined, explained and responded to. Responsibility and blame is often firmly placed at the door of individual pupils themselves, their families and their teachers (Mercer, 1998, Miller, 1999), though more recently we have seen the 'culture of blame' extending to the 'failing school'. As Parsons (2005), highlights

> The placing of blame is a most important step in making decisions, allocating resources and generating policy to relate to and mange these young people (pg.188).

Clarke (2002) suggests that social problems tend to be attributed to and discussed in terms of the individual, thus becoming an 'individual trouble' rather than a 'social problem'. He argues that this serves the function of diverting attention from wider social causation and structures thus maintaining societal equilibrium and the status quo. As such, some commentators such as Slee (1995) and Southwell (2006) have suggested that the rhetoric of school discipline serves to shield both a quest for compliance and the complex origins of disruptive behaviour itself.

For some, school discipline has become synonymous with an authoritarian approach which embraces the notion of control and regulation of pupils through retribution and punishment (Parsons, 2005; Slee,1995). Slee suggests that this is counterproductive and does not fit well with a dialogical approach to the production of knowledge in education. He points to studies which suggest that such an approach encourages adversarial stances to be adopted in the teacher pupil relationship and an increase in oppositional behaviour.

Slee (1995), argues that an authoritative rather than democratic approach to discipline serves to feed and legitimate the focus upon the individual as the location of the problem, whereby the individual is perceived as dysfunctional or deviant, and requiring increased surveillance and in need of support or punishment. Like Clarke (2002), he suggests that such an approach can be perceived as perpetuating a culture of blame which legitimises responses to pupil behaviour that may best serve institutional needs rather than the needs of pupils.

This line of thinking is taken up by Searle (1996), whom for example, suggests the possibility that the appeal of exclusion for schools lies within the respite of the teaching body from the pupil.

> …the frustration and stress that many teachers experience because of this squeeze on time which they can devote to pastoral issues has sometimes reinforced a 'culture of exclusion' in schools, whose managements turn prematurely to exclusion as a response to their hard-pressed colleagues and as an expedient to relieve them of the pressure and responsibility of dealing with their disaffected pupils' (Searle, 1996, pg.45)

This may be seen to be supported by studies by Forlin (1995, 2001), in which disruptive behaviour was rated as one of the most stressful classroom issues for teachers, particularly when this involved aggression toward other children, or was disruptive, thus disturbing other children . Whilst Conway & Foreman (1998 cited in Forlin, 2001), found a link between disruptive behaviour and lower acceptance by teachers.

Gray (1997) highlights that difficult behaviour poses a particular challenge to adults, in undermining their sense of personal and professional effectiveness. Consequently, some teachers may question their own efficacy and adequacy to

'cope', whilst others may search for external causation for the difficulties, which often becomes located within the individual pupil and/or their family (Miller, 2003).

Causal attributions have been found to be highly significant in determining negative responses to challenging behaviour, with attributions of controllability and responsibility predicting the most negative reactions (Dagnan et al,1998; Chivara, 2000 cited in Hastings & Brown, 2002). This is also supported by findings from Miller's 'Successful Strategies Study', which found that where difficult behaviour was perceived to be under the control of the person seen as responsible, teachers were more likely to express feelings of blame and disapproval. It could be argued therefore that this explicit exclusion is legitimised in its use for those pupils (and parents) perceived as deliberately deviant and personally responsible for the behaviour, who are thus required to make retribution and are deserving of punishment.

A less explicit form of control and punishment may be seen to be exerted in relation to those individuals perceived as 'troubled' and in need of support. Slee and Cook (1993a) highlight the way in which, the deficit discourse of special educational needs provision, enables a more subtle exclusion and/or greater supervision and surveillance of such individuals, through categorisation according to the degree of their behavioural deficits. This can be seen to be legitimised within a utilitarian ethical framework of being in the best interests of both the pupil themselves and their peers.

As discussed by Jordan et al (1993) this 'norm-referenced' process tends to be self-confirming thereby confirming the belief of teachers and others that the child needs 'fixing'. Their study of teacher attitudes toward inclusion found that teachers who viewed the problem as within the child tended to rate the withdrawal of pupils from the classroom as a more desirable resource, than those who adopted a broader and more interactionist perspective. Armstrong et al (1993) suggest, that the process enables challenging pupils to be legitimately identified as the responsibility of others, thereby maintaining teachers' sense of themselves as skilled professionals. This could also be argued in relation to maintaining the status quo in relation to school policy, culture and practice.

As Slee (1995) suggests, such discourse may be perceived to serve the multiple functions of acting as a deterrent to other 'miscreants', reinforcing the individual

nature of ‘the problem’ and providing further clientele for the increasing number of ‘expert helpers’ and ‘professionals’ involved in the process of identification, support and intervention; all of whom can be viewed as an integral part of the surveillance network of school discipline. In this way, the discourse around Special Educational Needs (SEN) for example, can be viewed as producing the everyday accepted arrangements through which children are identified, described, assessed, documented and managed, producing different subjects e.g. children with SEN and children without SEN and subject positions which indicate different behaviours and powers to act (Clarke, 2002).

The identification and classification of individuals therefore is not neutral, as described by Becker (1963) in his discussion of ‘labelling theory’. In defining the problem of difficult behaviour and poor discipline in terms of individual deficits or deviations from a subjective ‘norm’, such individuals are classified and labelled accordingly as troubled or troubling and a ‘deviant identity constructed’.

Control over the problem definition lies in the main within the domain of the ‘expert’ or professional, rather than the child or parent. Thus pupils (and parents) find themselves constructed and positioned by the dominant discourse surrounding school discipline and

> the expected norms for behaviour and the ways in which certain groups are situated within the culture of schools (Roffey, pg.96, 2004).

The location of responsibility and assignation of blame for poor discipline and difficult behaviour may have far reaching consequences for those involved. Indeed, recent studies such as that of Hall et al (2004) suggest that some teachers operate a construct of ‘worthiness’, comprising those individual pupils whom are deemed as worthy of additional time and support and those who are not. A similar construct may be seen to function with respect to the issue of perceived responsibility for pupil behaviour. As discussed by Hargreaves (1976) such labels may often become accepted and fulfilled by those to whom they are attached through a process of ‘secondary socialisation’, resulting in a ‘self-fulfilling prophesy’.

1.2.3 Addressing issues of pupil behaviour in school

An important aspect in respect of addressing issues of pupil behaviour concerns the perception of pupils who are thought to have behavioural problems as a homogenous group. Maras (2001) suggests that this is not the case and that as such there is therefore a need for a range of different and targeted interventions. Broadly speaking school interventions can be addressed at individual, group or classroom and whole school levels, though as previously suggested, individual approaches tend to proliferate.

Consideration of the language and terminology of the political discourse and government guidance (DfES, 2001a; DfES, 2004a) in relation to addressing issues of pupil behaviour tells us much about the way in which the problem is conceptualised and about the theoretical positions informing the various suggestions for intervening. The focus upon Individual Education Plans (IEP's), Pastoral Support Plans (PSP's), smart targets, sanctions and rewards for example, can be seen to be drawn from the language of behaviourism that continues to play a significant role in the ways in which issues of pupil and classroom management are addressed, both in training and practice.

It is to this extent that many of the interventions focus upon changing individual pupil behaviour to fit the broader expectations of the classroom, the institution and more widely those of society. Whilst there is evidence to suggest the success of some such strategies (La Vigna & Willis, 1995), one of the criticisms of this approach tends to be in relation to the lack of account given to the 'internal world' of the child and the way in which the child makes sense of and understands the world around them, nor of issues of difference in relation to culture and community.

Some interventions which have been shown to be successful in addressing behavioural issues aim to change behaviour through engaging peer support to modify behaviour as in some social skills groups (Maddern et al., 2004), or peer mentoring schemes (Maras et al., 2000) for example. Peer mentoring usually involves an older pupil supporting a younger pupil in a specific, bounded one to one relationship with clear aims and objectives, whereas social skills groups may often involve a target pupil within a small peer group where social skills may be taught, modelled, practiced and reinforced through a range of interpersonal activities.

An intervention which has been gaining increasing attention and anecdotal support more recently is the nurture group approach (Boxman,1969), which is a developmental approach which focuses upon promoting the emotional and social development of young children from disadvantaged environments to prepare them to access the full primary school curriculum. Children usually attend a small class of approximately twelve children for around two to four terms, though remain part of their mainstream class and the wider school community. The nurture group is aimed at providing a secure, predictable environment which caters for the developmental needs of each individual child.

Whilst all of the above approaches have evidence (both anecdotal and empirical) to support their efficacy in creating change where there are concerns about pupil behaviour, the specific focus upon the individual prevails and does appear to be a somewhat one dimensional approach to what is widely acknowledged to be a highly complex issue. In looking at the child within a more holistic or ecological framework, a multifaceted and richer understanding of the child may be gained, leading us to question the adequacy of individualistic explanations and interventions based upon simplistic, linear reductionist approaches to pupil behaviour and disciplinary exclusion, which are best divisive and at worst harmful. As Lawson, 1997 writes,

> Children's learning, development, health and wellbeing occur in family, neighbourhood and community organisational contexts and when any of these developmental indicators is threatened, the search for explanations and intervention strategies cannot be limited to the child in isolation' (pg.21).

It must also be acknowledged that attention to the influence of the school environment, systems and culture is also increasingly more directly the focus of preventative interventions within 'whole school' approaches such as solution oriented and restorative justice approaches however, the focus of such interventions continue to remain somewhat separated from the other most influential social 'institution' in the child's life, the family.

The following section is concerned with exploring the relevant literature discussing the possible benefits and barriers to working collaboratively with parents, with a particular focus upon how this relates to the situation where there are concerns around pupil behaviour.

1.3 Working with parents

1.3.1 Perceived benefits and barriers

The incompatibility of the deficit discourse with concepts of empowerment, collaboration and partnership is increasingly highlighted and discussed in a growing body of literature related to professional practice. Together with a recognition that new ways of understanding, explaining and defining need to inform our everyday practice and interventions, to guide us in finding new ways of working together toward solutions to the presenting issues and concerns.

One important aspect of embracing a more ecological approach relates to gaining a greater respect for, insight into and understanding of the inherent strengths, capacity for agency and resources of parents and families in supporting their children. Desfoges and Abouchaar (2003) highlight this in their suggestion that parental involvement in schooling has a bigger effect on educational outcomes than the effects of the schooling itself. Indeed the value of parental support and the benefits to pupils of positive home-school partnerships and collaboration has for some time now been recognised by academics (Atkenson & Forehand, 1979; Barth, 1979; Roffey, 2004), and parents (Kinder and Wilkin, 1998; Fredrickson et al, 2004; Roffey, 2004), and increasingly formalised in government policy and guidance as a requirement of effective professional practice (DfEE, 2000; DfES, 2001a; DfES, 2004a).

Various definitions of the concept of partnership have been espoused, which tend to focus upon shared power, understandings, strengths and expertise, responsibility and participation. The concept of partnership which most closely fits my own understanding is defined by Roffey (2004) as involving,

> mutual understanding and respect, shared aims and objectives, a consensual approach and equality of power, as well as shared knowledge and skills (pg.95)

However, it is in the deconstruction and exploration of the notions of partnership as they relate to real experiences of parent partnership in practice that the problem arises, where a growing body of evidence suggests that 'authentic partnership' between parents and professionals despite its apparent beneficial influence upon outcomes for children, can be elusive, and at worst self-serving and demeaning for parents. Crozier (1998) for example, suggests a major function of partnership in

education is as a surveillance mechanism, serving to socialise parents into the values and beliefs of the 'institution' and the notions of the 'good parent' and 'good child'.

As previously indicated where a pupil's behaviour is perceived as difficult or challenging, the disciplinary gaze extends beyond the pupil to the parents/family, often accompanied by the rhetoric of blame and responsibility. In this sense, it has been suggested that parents may become marginalised within the education system (Roffey, 2004; Miller, 2003) with parents positioned in a relationship with school that is different from that of other parents (Todd, 2007) and as Vincent (1996) has suggested, which may be experienced as oppressive. Such positions of powerlessness may serve to exacerbate the well documented barriers to true collaborative partnerships between home and school (Todd, 2003; Dunsmuir et al, 2004; Miller, 2003; Hood, 1999; Todd & Higgins, 1998; Vincent, 1996)

Within the literature, the main obstacles to collaborative relationships between teachers and parents concerning pupil behaviour tend to be linked to issues related to power differentials, responsibility for action, communication, and differing attributions and constructs (particularly the notion of parental responsibility for the problem) of those most directly involved i.e. pupils, parents and teachers. A significant barrier to home school collaboration is seen to be the way in which parents are problematised, leading to models of parent partnership based upon deficit or compensatory assumptions, that construe parents as in need of improving or changing (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Dunsmuir, Fredrickson & Lang, 2004)

This is supported by Todd (2007) who highlights that parents relationships with schools tend to be based upon normative assumptions of parenting and ways in which both parties should interact, which can alienate many parents who do not fulfil such criteria. She also points to the damaging effects of the deficit model of parents upon the aim of partnership and collaborative working, whereby parents may be vilified or seen as lacking in competence (Todd & Higgins, 1998; Todd, 2000a, cited in Todd, 2007). Whilst Miller (2003) points to,

> …a long standing tendency on the part of teachers to see difficult classroom behaviour as being caused predominantly by parents and other home circumstances (pg.145)

Miller goes on to discuss the way in which an individual deficit discourse of school discipline and individual responsibility for 'the problem' serves to promote the development of negative attributions between teachers, parents and pupils. This often results in defensive attitudes, which further strengthen negative beliefs and thus can be seen as a circular, interactive process.

This suggests a growing recognition that there is a need to move past the rhetoric towards new ways of interacting and relating to one another in practice, which move away from individualised notions of deficit and deviance and embrace new constructions of difference. Thus, Todd (2007) for example suggests that collaborative working requires an engagement with people on their own terms, rather than in terms of their constructed identity. She proposes The PPC model of collaboration, which considers the domains of the Profession, the Person and the Context. The model emphasises a critical approach, de-centred relationships with children and parents, keeping 'the problem' as the problem, rather than the individual and a recognition of the agent of change as communal (pg.137).

Miller (2003) also advocates a broad framework for collaborative practice, suggesting a psychosocial approach to the issue, enabling the consideration of the perceptions, beliefs and attributions of those within the system as well as exchanges across the system. Similarly, Roffey (2004) suggests a conceptual framework which addresses the

> dual strands that underpin the ability of schools to work effectively with families and address their mutual concerns; how the parent population is constructed and how students are constructed in relation to their challenging behaviour (pg.106).

1.3.2 Towards Collaboration

Since Miller's call in 1994 for greater understanding of how to work positively and productively in the emotionally charged circumstances where pupil behaviour is an issue, more interactive and systemic approaches have been developed, often based around consultation focussing upon the interactions between home and school to develop strategies and intervention to support the pupil. Continued research into this area has also helped to provide information about what works.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a central aspect of effective collaboration has been found to be effective communication (Roffey, 2004; Miller 2003), more specifically reciprocal communication and regular updates regarding pupil progress (Dunsmuir et al, 2004) and effective responsive communication channels that provide opportunities for cooperative relationships to develop (Fredrickson et al, 2004). Higher levels of trust have also been linked with more positive and effective collaboration between parents and teachers (Adams & Christenson, 2000, cited in Dunsmuir et al 2004). Effective interpersonal skills are also identified as a key aspect of the collaborative process, particularly those of teachers (Roffey, 2004) and external agents/facilitators e.g. Educational Psychologists (Miller, 2003).

Both Roffey (2004) and Miller (2003) highlight the importance of taking parental contexts into account and advocate understanding and flexibility. The issue of flexibility is also taken up in some studies exploring multiagency work with pupils and families such as Milbourne (2004).

Positive approaches, ideas and action and the need for a non-judgemental approach are also key elements in achieving positive relationships with parents (Milbourne, 2004, Miller 2003). Of particular relevance to this proposed study is the finding of Roffey (2004) that more positive interactions with families led to the perception of more positive outcomes for pupils, in raised self-esteem, inability to manipulate home/school differences, and in improvements in relationships at school and with parents at home. These changes were perceived and described as accumulative and circular. Differences for parents were reported in the quality of the relationship with both the school and their child, and increased feelings of confidence and efficacy in their parental role.

In the following section I will explore the literature relating to the way in which video has been used to create positive change in relation to children's behaviour, with a particular focus upon the way this has been utilised in working with parents, moving on to explore the possible advantages of this approach in its application to collaborative working.

1.4 Using video as a vehicle for change

1.4.1 Observational learning and video modeling

The concept of modeling, or observational learning, was introduced by Bandura (1977, 1997) as part of the development of his work on social learning theory. Bandura demonstrated that individuals can acquire a vast array of skills vicariously, without the need for direct experience. Bandura proposed that the most effective models were those whom the individual perceived as competent and were similar to themselves in some way, for example in their physical characteristics, age, or gender.

Self-efficacy is a further important concept defined by Bandura (1997, pg.3) as the,

> Beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of actions required to produce given attainments.

According to Bandura (ibid), both personal experience of success and observation of one's own success are ways in which self-efficacy may be developed.

Video modeling is a technique based upon social learning theory and typically involves an individual watching a video demonstration and then imitating the behaviour of the model. Video modeling can be used with peers, siblings, adults, or self as a model (video self-modeling).

Video self-modeling (VSM) is a specific application of video modeling that allows the individual to imitate targeted behaviours by observing themselves successfully performing a behaviour (Dowrick, 1986). In using the self as a model the aim is to maximise the individual's motivation to attend to the behaviour modeled and to increase their perceived self-efficay in performing the behaviour. The underpinning philosophy of the approach is about developing new skills through positive, errorless self-review of performance (Dowrick, 1991).

Video modeling and video self-modeling have been applied in a range of different ways across a variety of different settings and have been found to be an effective tool in creating behavioural change. The techniques have been successfully utilised for

example in teaching children with autism a variety of social skills (Scattone, 2007), to increasing classroom participation (Hartley et al, 1998) and has be used successfully to support pupils' behaviour and communication in school as well as their academic performance (Hitchcock et al, 2003). Video feedback and modeling have also been used successfully as a key component within some parenting programmes, such as Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton, 1981) and Mellow Parenting (Puckering et al, 1994).

Within the context of the aforementioned parenting programmes there are some differences as to the way in which the particular techniques are utilised. The Incredible Years Programme sessions involve demonstrating parent-child interactions through 'video vignettes' using models from different class and cultural backgrounds to increase the possibility for empathy and rapport with those attending. Deliberately 'good' and 'bad' examples of parenting skills are used to reflect parental experience (Webster-Stratton, 1991).

The Mellow Parenting Programme (Puckering et al,1994) moves closer to the concept of video self-modeling in that parents review video vignettes of their own interaction with their child filmed during a regular meal time. In this respect we would expect the parent to show higher levels of motivation and attention to the behaviour modeled in the video recording. However, like the Incredible Years Programme the video feedback involves both a review of positive aspects and those that may not have gone as parents would have wanted. Reflecting on the effects upon parents of viewing the video recordings, Puckering, recalls the difficulties parent's experienced in identifying positive aspects of their interaction with their child in the video, suggesting parents low self- confidence and self-efficacy, and writes,

> Mutual learning and self-monitoring made the experience valuable, and most mothers agreed that they had gained extraordinary insight through the experience. When one mother, reflecting on her own interaction with her child, asked herself out loud "I wonder how that feels for him", it felt as though a significant process had begun towards the empathy that was previously conspicuously lacking in their relationship (Puckering, 1994, pg.2).

Whilst the above quotation gives some sense of the powerful nature of the use of video, it could be argued that the true potency of positive self review may have been lost to some extent in applying it in this way.

Indeed Webster-Stratton & Herbert (1993) highlight the importance of raising the perceived self-efficacy of parents,

> …who are often seeking help for their children's problems at a vulnerable time of low self-confidence and intense feelings of guilt and self-blame (pg.411).

They suggest that this is to be achieved through the collaborative relationship developed between the parents and therapist leading the programme, though appear not to acknowledge the possible potential of positive review of the video recordings in this respect.

In considering the way in which video has been applied within the context of the aforementioned parenting programmes I was drawn to the comments of Scott (2006), who highlights the apparent convergence of two approaches often perceived as 'philosophically incompatible', that is the therapeutic approach based upon parental insight and emotional support, together with behavioural skills teaching in achieving successful outcomes for children and families. Scott suggests that this combined approach may be useful in achieving successful outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged and hard to reach families.

Reviewing the ways in which video has been used to address issues relating to children's behaviour, particularly with respect to working with parents, there appears to be a continued focus upon individual change and a lack of acknowledgement of the nature and benefits of positive self-review, which brings along with it issues of responsibility, guilt and blame. In this respect it would appear difficult for true collaborative working to be achieved. In the following section I will consider the application and evidence base relating to Video Interaction Guidance, which embraces, amongst others, the concept of change relating to video self-modeling (Dowrick, 1991) and will discuss how this might inform a video intervention which might better facilitate the development of collaborative relationships.

1.4.2 Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)

Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) is based upon the work of Trevarthen (1979) into the development of communication in mother and infant interactions and was first developed within Child Care Services in the Netherlands by Biemans, (1990, cited in Kennedy & Sked, 2007). The intervention is aimed at developing and extending

communication and the quality of the relationship between children and their carers, however the focus of VIG is upon the interaction between people, rather than the behaviour of individuals, thus the discourse of blame and deficit is ameliorated.

VIG can be viewed as optimistic rather than pathological in its approach in that it is aimed at developing capacity, focusing upon moments of optimal communication and exploring how these may be further developed, adopting a solution rather than problem orientated framework (Forsyth et al 1995). The evidence base supporting VIG as an effective intervention in a range of contexts has developed over the last twenty years in the Netherlands and the UK, consisting in the main of small scale evaluation studies. However, results suggest it has been used successfully across family and educational contexts and that the flexibility of the intervention may lend itself to an increasingly wide range of contexts (Savage, 2005; Kennedy & Sked, 2007)

Forsyth et al, (1995) suggest that VIG is a particularly effective form of intervention with children and adults who experience social and emotional difficulties and/or difficulties in their relationships. The VIG process involves providing the opportunity for parents/carers and professionals to reflect upon, and give and receive feedback on their own successful interactions by reviewing these through a 'micro analysis of video clips' with a VIG facilitator. Collaborative reflection encourages shared problem solving and enables the individual to identify ways in which their interaction is contributing to achieving their goals and enables further exploration of their thoughts, feelings and intentions with a view to identifying future goals and strategies (VIG, Guider Handbook, 2006/07). This aspect of the process suggests a more equal power base to the parent-practitioner relationship, with greater opportunities for respectful sharing and exchange of the skills and knowledge of those involved.

As highlighted by Forsyth et al (1995) the use of video as an integral part of VIG is a very compelling, powerful and empowering form of feedback, in that individuals self-model positive, successful interactions. This emphasises their strengths, skills and resources and how they are actively employing these within the given context. This has some resonance with the technique of 'finding exceptions' within solution focused and narrative approaches, which aim to support individuals in moving away from a problem saturated perception, drawing attention to occasions when the problem does not occur. This can provide a space within which new narratives and

identities can be constructed and old ones challenged. However, it could be argued that the technique is even more potent in its visual presentation.

In addition, the medium of video can be particularly useful in its neutrality as a mediator in relation to encouraging self-reflection and raising self-awareness (Forsyth et al, 1995), and its flexibility with regard to playback and freeze frame to capture a moment or second in time (Togneri & Montgomery, 2001). As such this can provide excellent opportunities to revisit, reflect upon and reframe moments that may have easily been overlooked or forgotten, particularly where a negative, problem saturated perspective dominates.

The intervention draws upon several theoretical frameworks, including theories of change related to developmental, construtivist, social learning and humanistic approaches as outlined below:

- The theory of inter-subjectivity (Trevarthen, 1979). Elements observed and analysed in the development of inter-subjectivity and developed into 'contact principles' by Beimans (1990) provide a format for evaluating communication in feedback sessions.

- Theories of mediated learning (Bruner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978). Mediation forms an integral component of the VIG process in the sharing of meaning between the facilitator and parent/carer/professional in discussion of the content of the video clip. This is mirrored in the supervision undertaken by facilitators, which forms a key part of the process.

- Theories of observational learning and video self-modelling (Bandura, Dowrick) The use of positive, collaborative review of video clips showing exclusively successful and adaptive behaviour is used to promote behavioural change and 'therapeutic benefits'

- Person centred, solution focussed principles (Rogers, 1959; De Shazer, 1988). These underpin an ethical framework and good practice guidance which facilitate empowerment, positive change and collaborative working.

1.4.3 Theories of intersubjectivity and mediated learning

Theories of intersubjectivity and mediated learning, located within developmental psychology and ethology are central to the principles of video interaction guidance, which draws upon the elements of these theories to provide a framework for practice. (Kaye et al, 2000).

The work of Trevarthen into early infant, carer interactions (1979, 1984) has helped to identify and define intersubjectivity, which he proposes is composed of two skills, the ability to display individual consciousness and intentionality (subjectivity) and the ability to adapt or fit this subjective control to the subjectivity of others (intersubjectivity). Trevarthen further defines intersubjectivty as comprising primary intersubjectivity which highlights the microsecond bi-directional responsivities between the infant and adult facilitating attunement in the early months; and secondary intersubjectivity, which he proposes builds upon the elements observed in primary subjectivity. This emerges near the end of the first year, and sees the infant able to engage in co-operative acts on objects and to refer to objects or ideas within their interactions with others. Sanders, (1995) considers both the awareness of one's own inner experience of the self as agent and the awareness of one's engagement with the world is relevant not only to infant adult interactions but is an essential lifelong process. Whilst Beebe et al (2005) propose different forms of subjectivity, suggesting that presymbolic forms of intersubjectivity in infancy are different from symbolic forms in adulthood and emphasising the integration of self and mutual regulation as one way of conceptualising the organisation of experience.

Fogel (1992a,b) emphasises an integrated, interactive approach and has argued that a person's emotions and expressions are not discrete entities encased in the individual, but are socially constructed out of the fabric of both present and past interactions and similarly Stern (1989) has suggested that a relationship pattern resides within the dyadic system, rather than the individual.

As suggested above, the theory of inter-subjectivity offers rich explanations and exploration of how individuals may negotiate each others unique 'personhood' and the way our interactions and communication from birth into adulthood affect both our self regulation and interactive regulation, and the reciprocal affects on our behaviour and relationships.

Two fundamental ideas from this theory have been highly influential in video interaction guidance, the adult's ability to be sensitive to the child's actions and communicative intent and the active role the adult plays in mediating children's learning experiences towards culturally shared knowledge (Simpson et al,1995). This refers to what has been described as scaffolding (Bruner, 1978); the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) and mediated learning (Feirstein & Klein, 1985). As such the process plays an integral part in the video interaction process, where adults mediate each other's learning by 'referencing' or looking to each other to give meaning to their shared experiences in video feedback and supervision sessions.

1.4.5 Video interaction guidance and collaboration

In examining the principles and process of VIG, there are key aspects of the approach, which I felt may be particularly important in promoting a collaborative relationship between those involved in the process, and thus may be particularly helpful in addressing situations where there are concerns about pupil behaviour. These relate to:

- the cyclical process itself, involving filming, positive review and supervision,
- the shift in focus from the individual to the relationship and interaction between people
- the positive focus upon the existing strengths and capabilities of those involved and
- the opportunities provided for sharing experience, beliefs and understanding within the video feedback sessions

In reviewing the literature on VIG, a study undertaken by Togneri & Montgomery (2001) which evaluated the use of VIG in the assessment and monitoring of Individual Action Plans (IAP's) for children within the autistic continuum was of particular interest. This relates to the way in which the process of VIG was applied, which involved both the teacher and the parents of the pupil, whereby video footage was taken both at home and at school and shared in feedback sessions.

The results of the study suggested that both the teacher and parents perceived positive change in their relationship as a result of the intervention as indicated in the quotations below,

> In discussions with the teacher and in analysing the feedback sessions ……The senior teacher recognised she was working in a more collaborative way. The project had involved her in more direct work with parents where a shared problem solving approach had been taken' (Togneri & Montgomery 2001, pg.122).
>
> The parents did feel they were being listened to and felt they had a valuable contribution to make' (Togneri & Montgomery 2001, pg.122).

In sharing the video footage taken in both the home and school context a more holistic approach can be seen to be taken, one which appears to offer a forum for genuine sharing and exchange with a focus upon the social aspect of relationships rather than upon individual behaviour. This last aspect of sharing between home and school I felt held great potential for the development of collaboration within the particular context in which I hoped to apply the video intervention. As such I determined to draw upon and develop the idea of sharing between the home and school context, through including opportunities for 'joint feedback sessions'.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the origins and impetus of this study and considered and drawn upon a range of relevant literature bases to clarify and define the issue under exploration.

I have highlighted current concerns about pupil behaviour and exclusion, suggesting ways in which our understandings of pupil behaviour may be constructed and how this is reflected in the way we define pupil behaviour and discipline and subsequently the ways in which such issues are addressed. The literature indicates that whilst there is an increasing recognition of the multifaceted and complex nature of pupil discipline and behaviour, to a large extent interventions continue to adopt an individualist focus, which promotes change in 'isolation' and locates 'the problem' within individuals. In many respects this reflects my own experience outlined in the rationale for this study, and suggests a different way of looking at the issue of pupil behaviour needs to be found to break away from the negative cycles of blame often found in such situations.

I have briefly highlighted the relevant literature emphasising the benefits of parent partnership and collaboration upon pupil outcomes and reviewed the growing body of literature suggesting a range of barriers to 'authentic partnership' and collaboration. Moving on, I have examined the findings of research in relation to factors which may facilitate home-school partnership and collaboration. In reviewing this literature it became clear that whilst there is considerable evidence that collaboration between home and school has a range of benefits in relation to pupil outcomes, to be effective, greater consideration needs to be given to the ways in which this can happen in practice, rather than at the level of rhetoric.

This theme was continued in exploring the literature relating to the use of video in addressing pupil behaviour, with a particular focus upon its utility and application in practice with parents of children perceived to have behaviour difficulties. A range of variations on the theme of utilising video as an intervention were outlined, including Video Modeling, Video Self-Modeling and Video Intervention Guidance (VIG). The literature highlights the success and flexibility of video as a vehicle for positive change across a range of contexts. In particular, the evidence relating to intervention using video interaction guidance also suggests a key role for video in helping to shift the focus of intervention away from the individual towards interaction between individuals, and in adopting a positive, optimistic and collaborative approach to change.

Finally I have highlighted the key process and principles I aim to utilise in applying and researching a video intervention in a situation where there is concern about pupil behaviour, drawing upon a joint feedback model previously used in a small scale study where video interaction guidance was used and shown to promote greater collaboration between a teacher and parents in that situation.

Chapter 2

Methodology

This chapter considers how I went about this research, looking first at the way the research was conducted, followed by the way in which the data collected was looked at and analysed.

It starts with an outline of the research aims, questions and methodological framework utilised. It then moves on to consider the action research model and methods used in the data gathering process. The action research and video intervention process and procedure are then explained and a visual representation of this displayed. Some consideration is then given to the consistency, credibility and generalisation of the research methodology.

The chapter then moves on to consider the framework and method of analysis used in the study and describes the process of thematic analysis as it was applied to the data. The chapter ends with a discussion of the possible ethical implications pertaining to the research and the challenges presented by the methodology in this respect.

2.1 Identifying an appropriate methodology

This first section considers the aims of the research and the research questions, together with the underlying assumptions and criteria which led to the methodological framework used.

2.1.1 Research Aims

This research set out to explore how as an Educational Psychologist I could work to facilitate collaborative home school relationships in the often difficult and contentious situation where there is a problem with pupil behaviour. The research was based upon my personal beliefs, experience and assumptions outlined below:

- Collaborative practice can be difficult to achieve and is rarely found within situations where this is a perceived difficulty with pupil behaviour

- Parent's and teachers tend to have different perceptions and views in relation to the situation
- Approaches based upon a deficit model are unhelpful
- Positive modeling and positivity of approach is important to help people to move forward in 'problem situations'
- Effective communication and positive relationships are key to the development of positive attitudes, beliefs and behaviour
- All people have the capacity to communicate effectively and develop positive relationships

This research was also based crucially on the literature summarised in Chapter 2, which suggests that a video intervention based upon the principles of the principles of Video Intervention Guidance may provide the conditions necessary to promote the development of collaborative relationships in situations as outlined above.

The primary aim of the research was therefore to use a video intervention to explore the development of collaborative relationships between teachers and parents in a situation where there is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour.

A secondary aim, which developed from the above, was to gain the perspective of those involved about the use of video to address issues of pupil behaviour.

2.1.2 Research Questions

The above aims gave rise to the primary, overarching research question:

- Can the video intervention promote the development of a collaborative approach between parents and teachers in a situation where there is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour?

which encompassed the following related questions:

- What are some of the barriers to collaboration between parents and teachers in situations where there is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour?

- How does the video intervention affect the perceptions and portrayal of the situation and those involved?

- What is the perceived role of the Educational Psychologist in delivering the intervention?

2.1.3 Underpinning philosophy and research paradigm

The research is broadly based upon a critical realist stance which proposes that an external reality exists independent of our beliefs and understanding, but that reality is only knowable through the human mind and socially constructed meanings (Bhasker, 1978; Hammersley, 1992) As such it sets out to discover and uncover the beliefs, expectations, attitudes and attributions of those involved within a particular situation, and how these may be affected by the intervention introduced.

Adopting a constructivist paradigm, I acknowledge the notion of the construction of multiple realities across and within individuals (Robson, 2002). The idea of 'subject position' is used to suggest that all participants, i.e. parents, pupils, teachers, and educational psychologists are acting subjects, who act on the basis of others' expectations of how they should act and take up different positions depending on unequal power relations.

A further assumption relates to Foucault's poststructuralist concepts, in that educational discursive practices position social actors in interaction and through that positioning, contribute to the construction of the social identity of pupils and parents and teachers and educational practitioners (Hall et al, 2004 pg.802). Within this paradigm changes in behaviour and beliefs are seen as emerging out of new constructions of reality (Robson, 2002).

This research also draws upon dynamic systems theory which focuses upon the interactive processes at different levels of an ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this instance the research focus is upon communication and relationships both within and across the school and family systems.

2.1.4 Consideration of an appropriate methodology

In selecting an appropriate methodology I considered the following factors:

- The research was grounded in the practice of educational psychology and as such required a methodology that would allow me to examine everyday practice as well as 'psychology in action', in my role as an educational psychologist working directly with teachers, parents and pupils
- The research question was 'developmental' in nature requiring the exploration of change and progress over time in relation to the video intervention. This necessitated opportunities for review and reflection.
- The focus of the research was upon exploring the development of collaboration through the stories, expectations and beliefs of those involved, therefore the research methodology needed to provide the opportunity to gather detailed and in-depth information relating to these aspects
- The collaborative focus of the research required a methodology that would enable participants to actively engage and participate in the research process

These factors then became the criteria that I used to assist in the consideration and selection of an appropriate methodological framework, and the methods utilised.

2.2 A Rationale for the Selection of a Qualitative Methodology

Traditionally, much research within the field of Psychology and Educational Psychology Practice has fallen within the 'natural science' or positivist model, underpinned by assumptions of the world which emphasise its lawful, orderly and therefore predictable nature, and which seeks to identify 'objective' truths. (Gray & Denicolo,1998; Burden, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln; 2003).

The primacy of this model has been increasingly challenged however; especially over the last two decades. In particular questions have been raised about the efficacy of this model when applied to the complex, unpredictable, nuanced and dynamic nature of the 'real world' and all that is social. In the search for objectivity, critics suggest that the very uniqueness and individuality that people bring to human activity and interaction is lost. Similarly, the objective stance and researcher control and manipulation of differing variables is seen as creating artificial settings, which may have little relevance to those settings and situations that it sets out to examine. This

then raises doubts about its value and applicability to practice. Usher (1996) for example, suggests that positivist assumptions lead to research that emphasises determinacy, rationality, impersonality, predictability and which is not reflexive, as in focusing exclusively on methods and outcomes it fails to ask questions about the research process itself (pg.13)

This has led to the suggestion of a 'new paradigm' to replace the 'old' (Reason & Rowan, 1981) and calls for different and more appropriate methodologies within the study of social sciences, including education, and a growing shift towards qualitative methodologies. Taylor and Burden (2002) for example question the appropriateness of experimental and control group designs for evaluating 'real world' interventions,

> As well as being impractical, it would be unethical to attempt to do so. What is needed instead is a cumulative series of small-scale in-situ evaluations of single case-studies employing an ethically grounded, replicable research methodology. Only in this way will a body of knowledge be collected which will apply across a wide range of different contexts and circumstances (pg.2).

In considering an appropriate methodology for this research I was concerned to both locate it within practice and to contribute to professional knowledge and understanding of practice.

Initially my focus of attention was drawn to the developmental aspect of the research and a consideration of how I might demonstrate or measure change in collaboration in relation to the video intervention. This prompted me to consider a mixed methodology involving a pre-test, post-test design, together with qualitative methods to provide some more detailed and subjective description and understanding of the process.

I was also mindful of the ongoing debate around the nature, and definition of, 'defensible evidence' (Fredrickson, 2002) and of the continuing emphasis, particularly in America and the European psychological communities, upon scientific and experimental methodologies as the 'gold standard' of research especially with respect to developing knowledge of particular interventions (Fredrickson, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Further consideration around the research aim, my own values and beliefs and the application of criteria as mentioned above however; prompted a gradual shift in my thinking towards a purely qualitative methodology.

As suggested by Harrington (2001), a distinction can be drawn between the questions 'Can it work?', 'Does it work' and is it worth it ?'. Reflecting upon this, I concluded that my research aim was connected to the question of 'does it work' (i.e. does the video intervention facilitate collaborative relationships) in practice, with an emphasis placed upon understanding the mechanisms of how it works, (Hughes, 2000). As a result of this reflection it became clearer that I was interested not in identifying and quantifying change in relationships, but in gaining more in-depth knowledge about the process of change and subjective experiences of those involved, including myself.

Furthermore, it became apparent that I felt a certain unease with what I began to see as a lack of congruence between my own values and beliefs, and the objective, remote and somewhat rigid position I believed I would be taking in adopting a positivist, quasi-experimental approach.

Finally, in applying the criteria I had identified to assist in the selection of a suitable methodology, the limitations of an experimental methodology as an appropriate framework for this research became increasingly obvious, being unable to fully meet any of the five criteria.

In this sense I believe my methodological selection for this research was founded on the basis of 'methodological appropriateness', rather than 'methodological orthodoxy' (Patton, 1990), in selecting a qualitative framework defined by Denzin & Lincoln (2005) as:

> …a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices…turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world (pg.3).

2.2.1 Practitioner Research

My desire to explore a practice related issue with the aim of informing and developing my practice in relation to a particular issue, suggested a practitioner research approach to my enquiry.

Practitioner research can be broadly described as a type of research in which one's own work as a practitioner and the thinking that informs it are the focus for examination and development.

Practitioner research can be seen to be influenced by the work of Donald Schon (1983) on reflective practice. Schon railed against positivist, 'technical-rationality' approaches to developing professional practice, instead advocating an approach which emphasised 'reflection in action' (thinking on your feet) and reflection on action (later reflection) which then contributed to the development of questions and ideas that informed future action and professional practice.

Both Schon's model of reflective practice, and practitioner research have become well established frameworks for the development of practice in education however, there are many differing interpretations of what constitutes practitioner research. To some extent this can be seen to be related to Schon's arguments against technical rationality, in that there continue to be ongoing tensions around the degree to which practitioner research should rely upon technical 'outsider' methodologies; or whether it should be conducted entirely upon the basis of the practitioners own critical thinking and interpretive resources, developed from and grounded in experience, 'insider' knowledge and understanding of practice (Hart, 1995).

A particularly important aspect involved in practitioner research is critical reflection, required to transform a possible limitation of the approach i.e. difficulties moving beyond the everyday, taken for granted assumptions, beliefs, customs and practices of a familiar context; into a significant strength in that the familiar and everyday can be viewed through a different lens and in doing so, may be critically 'deconstructed', to allow space for uncovering and examining underpinning beliefs, attitudes and ideology. This aspect of practitioner research appeared to be particularly congruent with the aim of my research enquiry, being to examine the mechanisms of

collaboration within my role as an Educational Psychologist within a specific context and setting.

A related and equally important aspect of this approach is the role of the self of the researcher in the research and the importance of reflexivity, where the researcher becomes both the subject and object of the research. In such circumstances, tensions are inevitably produced between maintaining a professional identity and being 'immersed' in practice on one hand, and the need to develop a researcher identity with the capacity for some degree of detachment and critical reflection on the other. Achieving an effective balance between the subjective and objective is therefore vitally important in undertaking this type of research.

Again I felt this aspect had particular resonance with both the aim of my research and the video intervention to be utilised. The need for reflexivity in all aspects of the research had occurred to me in the early stages of its conceptualisation, not least in the consideration of the therapeutic element of the video intervention I aimed to use.

As suggested by Etherington (2004) there are different types of reflexivity that operate at a number of different levels. For example, reflexivity in the 'helping relationship' is viewed as empowering, enabling people to become agents in their own lives, whereas reflexivity in research she describes as,

> the capacity of the researcher to acknowledge how their own experiences and contexts (which might be fluid and changing) inform the process and outcomes of inquiry (pg.32).

The ability to move in and out of these differing types and levels of reflexivity I believed would be an integral part of the research process.

Further thought around how I might structure and plan the research, particularly with respect to incorporating the necessary video intervention cycles into the research process led me to narrow further my methodological selection to that of action research.

2.2.3 Action Research in Practice

> Action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situation in which the practices are carried out. It is most rationally empowering when undertaken with participants collaboratively, and sometimes with 'outsiders' (Kemmis 1993, pg.177).

Upon reading the above definition, it seemed to me to capture the essence of what I hoped to achieve in undertaking this piece of research. Furthermore it was able to fully meet the first of my criteria for identifying an appropriate methodology:

- **The research was grounded in the practice of educational psychology and as such required a methodology that would allow me to examine everyday practice as well as 'psychology in action'….**

Reading further around the approach confirmed that it could adequately fulfil all four selection criteria:

- **….opportunities for review and reflection**.

Action and evaluation proceeds separately but simultaneously with the aim of attempting to change people's behaviour. While gathering data in traditional or innovative ways, practiioners intervene and study in a series of feedback loops (Taylor, 1994). The essential features of the action research cycle are planning, execution and fact finding (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996)

- **…..the opportunity to gather detailed and in-depth information…**

A range of data gathering techniques can be used, ranging from the more innovative to the traditional (Taylor, 1994; McNiff, 1988)

- **….enable participants to actively engage and participate in the research process**

Current practice increasingly accords 'equality of status' to those who are researched and with it the right to speak and have their views seen as central to the research enterprise' (Taylor, 1994)

Finally I felt that this approach encompassed my own values and beliefs and was congruent with the aspects of myself as a practitioner that I would like to continue to develop. Bassey (1998) for example argues that action researchers commit themselves to a form of research which is aware of social and political systems and their impact. There is a recognition that knowledge is socially constructed and that all research is embedded within a system of values and power relations. There is also an emphasis upon participatory and emancipatory research as advocated by Carr and Kemmis (1986).

McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead (1996, pg.9) highlight that,

> action researchers tend to be working intentionally toward the implementation of ideas that come from deep seated values that motivate them to intervene.

In my own case these relate strongly to my personal and professional experiences of working in social services and study of social science, developing a strong sense of social justice, anti-oppressive practice and collaborative working.

Despite the fact that there continue to be suggestions that action research tends not to be seen as a priority in much EP practice as lamented by Burden (1997), there does appear to be a recognition that small scale research aimed at developing theory and practice does have an important role to play in the development of credible, evidence based practice as highlighted by Fredrickson (2002). It is within this area that I hope to be able to make a contribution, both in terms of my own self-development and practice and through the public sharing of this, to the understanding and practice of others.

2.2.4 The Action Research Model

Action research differs from reflective practice in that it provides a structured framework for systematic enquiry into practice, which involves informed committed action with an emphasis upon developing knowledge, not just successful action.
Many different models of the process of action research have been developed, which attempt to capture the dynamics of the research enterprise and the complexities encountered by the action researcher in the 'messy' real world of practice (McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 1996). These may involve for example, 'side spirals' or 'spin off

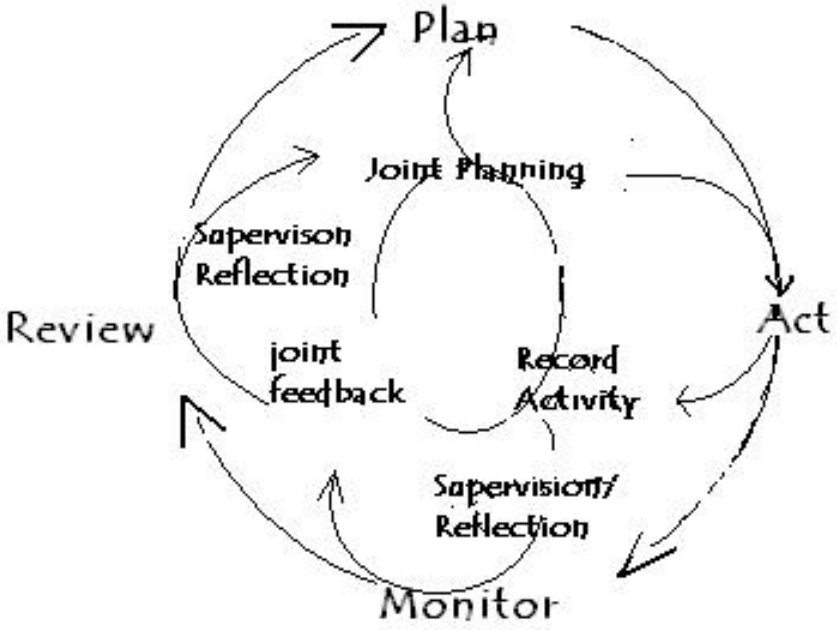
spirals' as suggested by McNiff (1988) or differing 'feedback' loops, as proposed by Griffiths (1990), which include an inner loop of reflection in action (Shon, 1983), and an outer loop of longer term reflection. The model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) based upon the work of Kurt Lewin, provides perhaps the most concise example, which despite being criticised by some with respect to its apparent lack of ability to deal with everyday complexities as previously described (Atkinson, 1994), provides a clear outline of four specific phases in action research:

- **Plan**
- **Act**
- **Observe/monitor**
- **Reflect**

Drawing upon the models suggested by both Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) and Griffiths (1990), I was able to develop an action research cycle (see Fig. 1) that was also able to accommodate the video intervention cycle, based around the Video Interaction Guidance Cycle of:

- **Plan** - the video recording of the activity with participants
- **Act** – Recording the activity
- **Review and Reflect** - upon the recorded activity with supervisor
- **Feedback** - with participants
- **Review and Reflect –** upon feedback session with supervisor

Figure 1: Intertwining cycles of action research and video intervention



2.2.5 Reflexivity in the action research process

The above model of the action research process simultaneously allowed for, and required, a sense of self-awareness, and reflexivity with respect to my influences and impact upon the design, data collection, analysis and presentation of the research. It also provided regular structured opportunities for joint planning, action and reflection. As suggested by Etherington, reflexivity creates,

> …a dynamic process of interaction within *and* between ourselves and our participants, *and* the data that inform decisions, actions and interpretations at all stages of research' (2004, pg.36).

The involvement of the participants in the research process in helping to construct the meaning and 'reality' of what was observed, experienced and reported was a crucial component of the research methodology and design, aimed at providing depth, richness and detail as well as increased reliability and validity. The involvement of participants at all stages of the research process, including planning, data gathering and analysis, was actively sought and encouraged. This was facilitated to a great extent by the methods utilised within the research.

2.2.6 A narrative approach

The primary focus of a narrative approach is people's expressions of their experiences of life, from a narrative perspective it is through such expressions that people shape and reshape their lives. As the focus of the study was upon exploring the development of collaboration through the stories, perceptions and expectations of those involved, I adopted a narrative approach to all aspects of the research process. This included the design and methods used, the action research and video intervention process as well as the analysis and writing up of the study.

The narrative approach draws upon a constructivist ontology and embraces the following assumptions:

- All expressions of lived experience engage people in interpretive acts and it is through these that people give meaning to their experiences of the world

- These interpretive acts help to make people's experiences of life sensible to themselves and others. Meaning does not pre-exist the interpretation of experience
- Making sense and giving meaning to experience is a relational achievement in that it requires a frame of intelligibility; people traffic in meanings that are relevant to and shared by communities of people; and that the meanings of experiences that are initially ambiguous are negotiated in communities of people according to established procedures.
- The structure of narrative provides the principle frame of intelligibility for people in their day to day lives. It is through this frame that people link together the events of life in sequences that unfold through time according to specific themes.

(Adapted from White, 2009)

The approach aims to be respectful and non-blaming, it seeks to separate the individual from the problem, views people as 'expert's' in their own lives and as having many skills, competencies, values and abilities to support themselves in creating changes in their lives (Morgan, 2000). As such the approach is congruent with the ontological and epistemological positions of this study and resonates strongly with my own personal and professional values and with the principles of VIG, which underpin the video intervention used in the study.

From the outset, in thinking about and engaging in the journey that I shared with my fellow travellers, a great deal of consideration was given to my own positioning as the facilitator of the intervention and as suggested by White (2007), I aimed to adopt an 'investigative', decentred approach. Close attention was given to way in which I used language, particularly with respect to 'externalising the problem' from the beginning of the study e.g. from the 1st semi structured interviews, to the individual and joint feedback sessions, and through to the final semi structured interviews. I was also aware of the power of metaphor in exploring and co-constructing narratives and became increasingly more at ease with both using metaphor myself and listening for the different ways in which metaphor was used within the different narratives that were shared, which included my own. This development was particularly noticeable both within the way in which I was drawn to metaphor when framing the questions for the final semi structured interviews, and in the way this was reciprocated in the conversations that developed from these. Similarly, within feedback sessions,

attention was given to listening for exceptions to support the 'deconstruction' of the problem, whilst supporting the identification of favoured moments and accounts and to raise the awareness of those engaged of emerging alternative and preferred narratives.

However, at the same time as I acknowledge this conscious, cognisant approach, in many respects the narrative principles, ethos and practice embodied within this study were co-constructed and developed and grew as the study progressed, facilitated through the action research model. Being aware that narrative practice is a 'way of being' spurred on by curiosity and reciprocity rather than a set formula (Monk, 1998) I would suggest that this is also congruent with a narrative philosophy.

2.3 Methods of Data Gathering

As previously identified the aim of this research was to gain a rich, in-depth understanding of the development of collaborative relationships within a specific context based upon the narratives and accounts of those involved. As such the methods used in gathering data were selected on the basis of their compatibility with this aim and their ability to provide a breadth of opportunity and spaces for different narratives relating to the multiple perspectives and experiences of those involved, to be shared with different people involved and in different ways e.g. visually, orally, and in text, face to face and in written communication.

2.3.1 Case Study

A case study approach was adopted due to its concern with establishing the 'how and why' of a complex human situation, involving in-depth, intensive and sharply focussed exploration of a 'natural occurrence with definable boundaries' (Bromley, 1986, p8) and therefore being highly compatible with the action research process.

A further advantage of the case study with respect to this research, was perceived in its focus upon change and development, as well as the possibilities presented for triangulation. These aspects were thought to be important in facilitating the integration of information from differing sources and perspectives, with a view to

illuminating ways in which bounded, yet integrated (in the respect of the reciprocal influence each has upon the other) systems function over time.

2.3.2 Semi Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with the participants were undertaken prior to and upon completing the video intervention. The interview schedules (see app. 1a – 1d) were designed to facilitate the gathering of the different views expressed by the individuals involved in the study, with myself, as the researcher playing an active role in the development of the data and meaning as suggested by Krale (1996), who uses the metaphor of the researcher as a traveller accompanying the interviewee upon a journey.

> The traveller….asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world, and converses with them in the original Latin meaning of conversation as "wandering together with it" (pg.4).

This 'non-directive' method of data gathering was viewed as particularly useful in its focus upon the participant's perspective, including their beliefs, attributions and expectations. As suggested by Miller and Glassner (1997), the interview is of itself a 'symbolic interaction', however it can also provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social world. Given the in-depth, nuanced and interactive nature of this method the interviews were 'captured in their natural form' on video tape and later transcribed.

2.3.3 Written Relflections

Written reflections were used to gather information from both the participants i.e. the teacher and parent, as well as myself in relation to the intervention and research process. The aim being to provide a regular record and account of their experiences of 'the journey' over time and from differing perspectives. I believed ongoing recordings could address problems associated with retrospective reporting, which may be influenced by an individual's current circumstances as well as their retrospective interpretation of events.

A further advantage that I perceived in using this method was the suggestion that written diaries and reflections can facilitate access to information that may otherwise be difficult to obtain, e.g. personal or sensitive information that may not emerge in face to face interactions and interviews. Given that a large amount of the data gathering would be undertaken in such circumstances, I believed that this method might provide the opportunity to explore the situation in a different way that may facilitate different expression and meaning.

Participants were asked to complete a 'Reflection on Feedback' sheet following each feedback session (see app.2a) which provided a number of suggested general headings under which reflections could be structured.

The same headings were used to structure my own reflections following feedback sessions and these in turn formed part of my research diary (see app.7c). The research diary recorded the action research process and its cycles and included supervision sessions, as well as less structured reflections upon different aspects of the research process.

2.3.4 Video Recording

The video intervention itself generated an effective means of data gathering in the cycle of filmed activity and feedback sessions undertaken as part of the process. This visual method of data gathering operated at several different levels.

(i) video footage of the 'activity session' provided a platform for discussion, exploration and 'meaning making' within the feedback sessions, that was contextual and situational.

(ii) The video recording of feedback sessions thus provided an audio visual representation of interactions, narratives and constructions of meaning within a particular moment in time within the intervention and research process.

(iii) The video recording of the different feedback sessions throughout the intervention and research process provided an audio visual representation of interactions over time, helping to explore the developmental aspects involved.

(iv) The video recording of feedback sessions also provided insights into the experiences of those involved in the research/intervention i.e. the child,

parent, teacher and me. This was a specific aim of the second feedback session conducted with the child, in what I hoped was a more child centred approach than conducting a semi-structured interview.

2.4 Context

2.4.1 Consideration of criteria for involvement in the study

The research aimed to explore the development of collaborative relationships within a specific context i.e. between home and school where there was an issue with pupil behaviour. A number of factors needed to be considered in selecting pupils for inclusion in the research, and to reflect this a purposive or criterion based sampling method (Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002) was used based upon the following:

- **Pupils should be attending mainstream educational provision at a Local Authority Primary School**

This criterion was based upon my concern around the high numbers of Primary School exclusions in the UK, and current thinking, policy and practice in relation to early intervention as a preventative approach.

A further consideration in this respect was the difference in the nature of school organisation and systems between Primary and Secondary Schools. In Primary School, organisation and systems enable increased opportunities for the development of relationships over time between the child, teaching staff and parent, therefore affording greater scope and opportunity to research this particular area.

Finally consideration was given to the locality in which the research would be undertaken. Mindful of the sensitive nature of the area of my study and possible issues in relation to the use of video and time commitment involved for participants, I approached schools with whom I had already developed a professional relationship in my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist within a Local Authority within the North East of England.

- **Pupils should be perceived as having behavioural issues within the educational setting**

This criterion was intended to be as broad as possible to include as wide a range of possible interpretations of 'behavioural issues' as possible.

2.4.2 Setting up the research

Approaches to schools for signposting to possible participants i.e. parents and teachers of pupils meeting the above criteria, were made in the first instance through initial discussions with Head Teachers and SENCo's, who then discussed this further with relevant teaching staff.

Whilst there was a great deal of interest expressed at this stage, a number of issues emerged that suggested some barriers to school involvement in the study. The most frequently cited being that of staff time; whereby school had difficulty releasing teaching staff for the time required for feedback sessions which were an integral part of the intervention. There were also some anxieties expressed by teaching staff around being recorded and how this would be used. This resulted in limiting the number of possible participants, as well as hindering the identification of possible participants and served to delay moving onto the next step, of approaching parents.

The next stage involved school approaching parents to outline the study, and pass on expressions of interest to myself. This resulted in the identification of three sets of possible parent/teacher participants from two Primary Schools.

I arranged to meet with each set of parent/teacher participants to provide more in-depth information in relation to the proposed research to answer any questions and explain issues of consent and confidentiality. At this stage it became apparent that due to staff shortages, one of the schools would be unable to release a member of teaching staff to participate in the research for the foreseeable future. At the second primary school the agreed meetings were attended by only one set of parents, whom it transpired were keen to participate.

At this point, given the delay caused by the difficulties in enlisting participants and an acknowledgement of the time consuming nature of the selected methodological approach, I took the decision to proceed with a single in-depth case study, rather than a multiple case study approach as originally intended. The case study embraced a particular situation within a specific context over a period of several

months, involving the parent-child-teacher subsystem, rather than a focus upon an individual or single event. As such a range of detailed data was able to be gathered over a period of time, providing both a breadth of information as well a rich and detailed data set from a single case study.

2.4.3 The school context

The study was carried out within a mainstream primary school in the North East of England, catering for families drawn from the school catchment area in a relatively deprived socio-economic area. The school have a creative and forward thinking ethos and are keen to try out and embrace new ideas and solutions to supporting pupil achievement and wellbeing.

School raised the pupil who participated in the intervention as one of three priorities with respect to behavioural concerns, and whom also fulfilled the criteria for inclusion in the study as outlined previously. The intervention was negotiated and undertaken as additional to and alongside the school's allocated hours from the Educational Psychology Service, with school allocating time and supporting school staff to participate in both video recording of activity sessions and feedback sessions over the period of the intervention. The intervention was focussed upon the parent-child-teacher subsystem, with a view to the possibility of creating change at this level.

2.4.4 The participants

At the outset, the research involved the mother and teacher of a Y3 boy attending the school discussed above. However, whilst initially the aim was to achieve change at the level of parent, child, teacher subsystem through a focus upon video feedback with the parent and teacher, as the action research process unfolded, the pupil also became actively involved as a participant.

- **The Child** - there had been increasing concerns about the child's behaviour from Y1 with respect to ongoing 'low level disruption', 'attention seeking' and 'oppositional behaviour'. Difficulties with the child's behaviour were also reported in home context. Various strategies were reported to have been employed, some of which appeared to work for short periods of time.

- **The Parent(s)** - Both parents were supportive of the intervention and attended the initial meeting, before deciding that the child's mother would be the most appropriate person to be involved, given her level of previous and current involvement in relation to the situation concerning the child in school. The mother was employed as a full time teaching assistant within the foundation stage at the same school, though tended to see her son infrequently during the school day due the foundation stage provision being self-contained. Both parents hoped for positive change in the child's behaviour within home and school, stating they were willing to try anything that might help.

- **The Teacher** – the teacher had taught the child previously in Y1, when his behaviour had also been a cause for concern. The teacher had also been witness to periods of more settled behaviour with respect to the child and hoped that the intervention might help the child develop less negative attention seeking behaviour and more positive and appropriate behaviour in school. The teacher did express some concerns about how this would be achieved through a focus upon the adults in the situation

2.5 The procedure

2.5.1 Initial meeting

As indicated above an initial meeting was arranged with the pupil's parents and teacher to discuss the intervention and research in more detail and to address issues of confidentiality and consent. Once all parties agreed they would like to be involved, parents discussed and nominated which one of them would directly participate. Consent and video release forms were outlined and signed (see app.2). Consideration was given to the rights of the pupil to be informed about the research and around issues of pupil consent. It was agreed that the pupil should be informed of the research and that verbal consent should be requested by the participating parent. Verbal consent would also be requested from the pupil by me prior to each recording session.

Issues relating to making the video recordings were discussed and the participants were given the choice of recording activity sessions themselves, or having the activity

sessions recorded by me. Once these decisions had been made, provisional dates were then agreed to complete the semi-structured interviews with both the parent and teacher and to undertake the first 'activity recording' and individual feedback sessions.

2.5.2 The video intervention

As previously discussed the research and intervention proceeded in an 'intertwined cycle', drawing upon the process and principle's of action research and VIG, as shown in Fig 1 (pg.45). An integral part of this was the video recording of activity sessions and subsequent feedback based upon the recordings.

The 'activity recordings' took place within the home and school context, the main focus of which was upon capturing the interaction between the pupil and parent/teacher. The parent/teacher was asked to undertake an enjoyable activity with the pupil within the relevant context for approximately ten to fifteen minutes, which would be filmed and reviewed during feedback sessions.

The parent/teacher was given a choice with regards to whether the recording was undertaken by the parent/teacher themselves or someone of their choice, or by me. This resulted in the home activity sessions being recorded by me at agreed times, and those in school being organised and recorded by the teacher in accordance with an agreed timescale. In all, two activity sessions were recorded within each setting.

Feedback sessions all took place within the school, which was identified as the most accessible arrangement for the pupil, parent and teacher. The feedback sessions were based around a review of positive moments from the activity sessions and as outlined below, involved both individual and joint feedback. In these sessions the video recording was used as a platform for exploration, discussion, sharing, discovery and 'meaning making'. All feedback sessions were recorded, effectively becoming 'activity sessions', in the main for review and feedback between myself and my supervisor within supervision sessions, as illustrated in Fig.1 (pg.45) though this format was used for one of the joint parent/teacher feedback sessions.

In all a total of seven feedback sessions were undertaken in various formats, which reflected the particular dynamic, flexible and participative nature of the 'intertwining

model' used. Fig. 2 (pg.57), provides a timeline depicting the way in which the video recording and feedback process unfolded as discussed below.

2.5.3 Activity recording and feedback

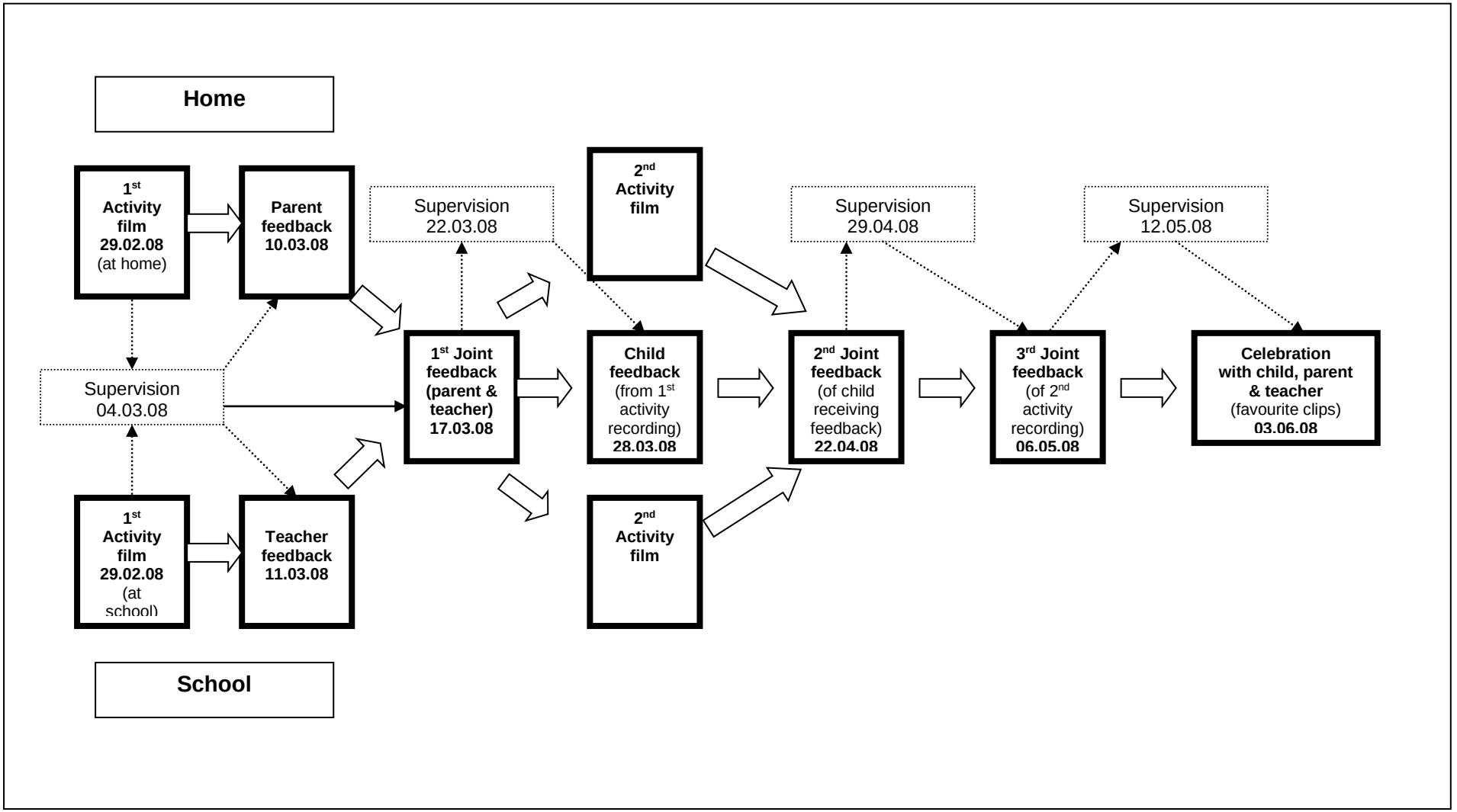
To help to familiarise participants with the process and enable them to be fully involved and feel at ease within the joint feedback sessions, the first feedback of the first recorded activity was undertaken **individually** with the parent and the teacher (see app.3 & 4). This feedback session reviewed film only of the activity in which the individual had participated with the pupil e.g. the parent reviewed the film of the home activity, whilst the teacher reviewed the film of the school activity.

In the first **joint** feedback, the same activity recordings were used, but these were shared, allowing the teacher to view the home activity and the parent to view the school activity (see app.5). It was hoped that introducing joint feedback in this manner would begin to develop trust, and help participants to feel more confident in sharing thoughts, feelings, strategies etc. in this forum.

As a result of discussion and planning that occurred in the first parent/teacher joint feedback session an individual feedback with the pupil was undertaken (see app.6). Again this involved sharing both of the 1st activity recordings with the pupil. The recording of the pupil feedback was then reviewed in the second joint parent/teacher feedback (see app.7).

Following this the second home/school activity recordings were planned and filmed. These were reviewed in the third joint parent/teacher feedback (see app.8). A final joint feedback was undertaken as a 'celebration', in which all participants i.e. child, parent, teacher and myself, selected their favourite film clip from the activity sessions. These were collated and reviewed within the feedback session with each person sharing why they had selected this particular piece of film and what it meant for them. This also provided the opportunity for 'debriefing' and space to discuss 'endings', acknowledging the therapeutic aspect of the intervention and showing respect for the relationships that were developed along the way.

Figure 2: Timeline depicting the video recording and feedback process



2.6 Consistency, Credibility and Generalisation

When discussing the quality of qualitative research, terms such as consistency, credibility and generalisation are often perceived as more appropriate terms, than 'reliability' and 'validity' which tend to be more relevant and applicable to quantitative approaches; however these issues are of no less importance in the pursuit of good practice and sound evidence within the field of qualitative research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005).

There are a number of ways in which the design of this research aims to address issues of consistency, credibility and generalisation, as outlined below.

2.6.1 Consistency

As suggested by Seal (1999) good practice in relation to external consistency can be achieved through reflexivity and transparency. In this respect the aim is to reveal as much as possible of the procedures and processes that have led to a particular set of conclusions. As discussed earlier, this is supported by Etherington (2004), who also perceives the acknowledgement of the influence of the researcher in informing the process and outcomes of research as an important aspect of reflexivity in qualitative enquiry.

Throughout the research process I actively sought to achieve transparency, attempting to include as far as possible an openness of information to all those who were participating in the research. In this way I hoped to avoid as far as possible the division between the researcher and the researched.

In maintaining a research diary throughout the research process, I hoped to be able to capture not only the procedures and processes involved, but also my own experiences, thoughts, feelings and reflections as the process unfolded with the aim of using the ongoing recordings in all aspects of the research process, from planning the research design to the analysis and writing up of the research; one of the aims of this being to provide as transparent an account as possible of the research process and outcomes.

Internal consistency can be seen as the extent to which assessments, judgements, ratings etc. internal to the research are agreed between different researchers or assessors. The issue of internal consistency was addressed within this study in the following ways:

- Review of feedback sessions as part of the video intervention, facilitating the identification and recording of emergent themes with my supervisor within supervision sessions
- Independent review and thematic analysis of one feedback session by my supervisor to ascertain the degree of consistency in identified themes
- Retaining and referring to all the material collected throughout the research without preference for particular kinds of sources of data,

2.6.2 Credibility

Using the strategy of data and method 'triangulation' (Denzin, 1970), I hoped to be able to begin to address the issue of credibility and to strengthen confidence in the conclusions of the research.

Some commentators such as McFee (1992) challenge the notion that triangulation allows the 'measurement' of the same phenomenon from different angles or positions, therefore allowing an accurate reading of it.

In this particular instance however, the use of triangulation of data and methods was prompted by my concern not to produce an absolute measure or truth; but to undertake an exploration of the social phenomena of collaboration and how this may develop, from a rounded and multi-faceted perspective. Thus the individual perspectives included and methods used in the data collection I believe acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of the social world and assist in providing the depth and richness required to begin to draw hypotheses from the data.

A further factor relating to the credibility of the research relates to the participative nature of the research process itself. Participants were involved in the planning, interpretation and making of meaning during the process of data gathering in feedback sessions. During analysis participants were also consulted and involved in confirming the meaning and interpretation assigned to some parts of the data in a process of 'respondent validation'.

2.6.3 Generalisation

The issue of generalisation tends to refer to the extent to which wider inferences, which extend beyond the context and sample of the study itself, can be made with regard to the findings. However there continues to be much debate around the specific definitions of the term and the extent to which qualitative research findings are thought to be able to support such wider inferences (Seale, 1999).

Patton (2002) argues that generalisation should be seen as a form of extrapolation which he describes as,

> …modest speculation on the likely applicability of the findings to other situations, under similar but not identical conditions. Extrapolations are logical, thoughtful and problem oriented rather than statistical or probabilistic (pg. 584).

Therefore it is at the level of concepts, categories and explanation that generalisations can be made. Ritchie & Lewis (2005) express the view that qualitative research can provide data that can be generalised in a number of ways, one of which they describe as 'theoretical generalisation', suggesting that,

> …qualitative research studies can contribute to social theories where they have something to tell us about the underlying social process and structures that form part of the context of and explanation for individual behaviours and beliefs (pg.267).

In respect of the above views, I believe that one aspect of particular value in this research lies within its in-depth exploration of issues from the perspectives of different participants whereby the concepts, meanings and explanations are developed inductively from the data. In using the findings to cross reference with those of other research findings to assess the degree to which it supports existing and established theory; as well as the extent to which it is able to explain behaviour in individual cases, I hope to be able to extrapolate and to draw theoretical propositions, principles or statements from the study for more general application.

2.7 Analysis

The following section considers the framework and method of analysis used in the study. It outlines the way in which the data was managed and describes the process of thematic analysis as it was applied to the data. The section concludes with a discussion of the possible ethical implications pertaining to the research.

2.7.1 Selecting an appropriate method of analysis

In considering an appropriate method of analysis I feel it is important to return once more to the underpinning ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research itself.

As previously outlined a broadly critical realist approach was adopted, which acknowledges the ways individuals make sense of their experience, and in turn, the ways the broader social context intrudes upon those meanings, acknowledging material and other limits of 'reality'. Hence the method of analysis required needed to be flexible enough to capture how individuals make sense of their personal and social world, and also to acknowledge the dynamic and active interpretative role of the researcher.

In this respect an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach was initially considered as the most appropriate, with its focus upon the meanings that particular experiences, events and states hold for participants, together with a combination of empathic and questioning hermeneutics (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

This approach however appeared somewhat limited in being able to bridge the gap between the two poles of realism and constructionism, to embrace an analysis of the broader social context and its impact upon individual perceptions and meaning making, as required by the critical realist stance adopted within the research.

A thematic analysis approach, being unfettered by any pre-existing theoretical framework, such as IPA, grounded theory or discourse analysis, appeared to offer the most flexible method of analysis that, according to Braun & Clarke (2006, pg.77)

> …can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of 'reality'.

Further consideration of what I hoped to be able to achieve through the analysis of the data helped to further clarify the way in which the method could most usefully be applied to the data as outlined below:

- to provide a rich overall description of the predominant or important themes from the entire data set
- to adopt an inductive, bottom up approach to analysis in an attempt to maintain strong links between themes identified and discussed and the data itself
- to conduct the analysis at the 'latent level', exploring the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations that are theorised as informing the semantic content of the data

(Braun & Clarke, 2006)

2.7.2 Data management

Having decided upon the method of analysis, the procedure for applying this needed to be considered, given the amount and diversity of the data gathered.

Together with text in the form of written reflections, audio visual material formed a considerable amount of the data to be analysed. As such, consideration was given to the transcription of the video taped material. The method of transcription of tape recorded data is seen by some such as Lapadat & Lindsay (1999), as an interpretive act of itself and an important part of the interpretive process in analysis.

Etherington (2004) emphasises the importance of transcription as way of getting close to the data and of checking the ethics of the research undertaken

> When we listen to the tapes and transcribe them personally, we have an opportunity to pick up on nuances, hesitations, pauses, emphasis and the many other ways that people add meaning to their words….Not only does it help us to listen and hear more of what might have been missed in the moment, but it also gives us a chance to check that we have been ethical (pg.78).

The sheer volume of audio visual data collected rendered the transcription of the entire data set an impossible task given the time constrictions. However, I was also keen to 'immerse' myself within the data, acknowledging that familiarisation with the data is a key factor in the recursive process of 'latent' analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005).

A further consideration with respect to data management related to whether 'cross sectional' or 'non cross sectional' organisation and analysis, should be adopted. Non cross sectional analysis involves looking at particular parts of the data separately, each which may require different conceptualisations of categories, rather than applying a common system of categories across the entire data set.

Non cross sectional organisation and analysis appeared to be the most appropriate for this study in that it is thought to provide the opportunity to:

- gain a sense of distinctiveness of particular sections of the material
- understand complex narratives or processes
- organise the data around themes which do not appear in all parts of the data
- identify overall structures within each case or interview

(Ritchie & Lewis, 2005, pg.203)

This approach would I hoped enable an analysis that acknowledged and incorporated the individual perspectives and experiences of the different participants, by looking in detail at the semi-structured interviews conducted before and after the video intervention, whilst also acknowledging the developmental focus of the research enquiry by gradually working up towards more general categorisations or claims across the data set.

I therefore took the decision to transcribe the video recorded semi-structured interviews with the parent and teacher and also the last video feedback session with the child, which was aimed at eliciting his views and experiences in relation to the intervention. The remainder of the video feedback sessions would be viewed rather than transcribed, and the same method of analysis applied (see app.9).

This was based on the reasoning that the video taped data provided a permanent, demarcated record which could be returned to throughout the process of analysis, in a similar manner to that of textual data. Being essentially different from using text as a unit of analysis, it could also be argued that video is able to capture more fundamentally the original nature of the interaction than transcription, whilst remaining an interpretive act.

As described by Mason (2002) analysing the video recordings of feedback sessions in this way, would also have the advantage of enabling a 'reflexive reading of the visual data', promoting an active understanding of my own role and experience in generating or operating within the video feedback sessions in examining their meaning and how they worked and developed.

Finally, the very nature of the video intervention cycle itself ensured that as the researcher and facilitator I remained very close to the data from the beginning, through the need to review the video recordings in preparation for supervision and feedback sessions. Supervision sessions also provided opportunities for co-authoring meaning and identifying some emergent themes with my supervisor, which were then recorded within my research diary.

2.7.3 Using thematic networks in thematic analysis

The following description sets out the different stages undertaken in analysing the transcribed data from the video recordings of the semi–structured interviews using a thematic network approach.

Stage 1. Involved transcription and familiarisation with the data through reading and re-reading transcripts in detail, looking at each phrase, sentence and paragraph to capture the essence of what was said. Each transcript was analysed separately before moving to the next.

Each page and line of text within the transcript was numbered. Notes were made in the margins of the transcript using the words of the participants to paraphrase or summarise what was said, as well as comments on associations, connections and on the use of language (see app.10a).

Stage 2. Having read, numbered and annotated the transcript, the next stage involved the generation of initial ideas or codes arising from the data, to form a coding framework. Each data item was then listed under one or more codes, accompanied by an identifying page and line number, locating it within the transcript. This was undertaken systematically, throughout the entire transcript, giving full and equal attention to each data item (see app.10b).

Stage 3. From initial coding the data were sorted into broader, potential themes. The themes were each given an identifying symbol and coded items were then allocated to one or more of the initial themes to provide a table or index of emergent themes (see app.10c).

Stage 4. Emergent themes were then refined through a process of selecting those that were specific enough to be discrete, but broad enough to encapsulate sets of ideas contained within text segments. These were then grouped into similar coherent groups forming the basis of the thematic network, represented as non-hierarchical web like structures and consisting of a distinct 'global theme' supported by discrete 'organising' and 'basic themes' (see app. 10d).

Stage 5. Entailed defining and naming the identified themes through writing a detailed analysis, identifying the 'story' of each theme and considering how it fits into to broader story of the data in relation to my research question.

(adapted from: Attride-Stirling, 2001;Smith & Osborn, 2003; Braun & Clarke, 2006)

2.8 Ethical considerations

The British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Conduct (2004) sets out ethical guidelines for carrying out research with humans and emphasises the need for consideration of the ethical implications and consequences for participants. The following section will discuss the way in which ethical issues were both considered and addressed throughout the research.

2.8.1 Consent

The use of video recording equipment required careful consideration of ethical issues relating to consent, ownership and control and the ways in which the recordings would be used.

Due to the proposed use of video recording equipment around pupils within the context of school, consent needed to be sought from a wider range of individuals than those participating in the study, for example the head teacher and the parents of children in the class of the 'participating pupil'.

Verbal consent and permission to undertake the research within school was gained in the first instance from the head teacher. Parental consent to use video recording equipment in school was identified by the head teacher as being covered by the school's request for permissions for every child at the beginning of each school year. The above consent and permission was given by the head teacher only after a meeting in which a full and honest outline of the research proposal had been provided and fully discussed.

School believed they could identify two sets of possible participants and agreed to discuss the research proposal with them. At this stage no individuals were specifically identified. Where an interest was expressed a meeting was arranged to discuss the research proposal in more detail and both verbal and written consent was sought and gained from the parent and teacher involved.

The rights of the child to be informed and to give or withhold consent were discussed and acknowledged in this initial meeting. It was agreed that information relating to the research would be given to the child and verbal consent of the child would be sought in the first instance by the participating parent. If this was given then the verbal consent of the child would also be requested prior to each 'activity recording' involving them.

As highlighted by Biggs (1983, cited in Forsyth et al, 1995) consideration needs to be given specifically to the ethical use of video, particularly with regard to issues of power and control, therefore it was essential that strict protocols were adhered to with regard to the ownership and use of video material. These issues were clearly outlined and discussed using a written protocol as the basis of discussion, which was

then agreed and signed by the participants and myself as the facilitator/researcher (see app.2).

Once consent was given I ensured at each recording or feedback session, all individuals involved were reminded and made aware of their rights to withdraw at any time and to request the return or destruction of any data pertaining to them.

2.8.2 Information

When seeking consent I was mindful of the need to try to ensure that those giving consent had as full and clear an understanding of what they were consenting to as possible. When outlining the research and what it would entail I endeavoured to communicate as clearly as possible and in a manner appropriate to the individual.

Participants were made aware of the way in which the data collected would be used, who could be expected to view the data and what would happen to it when the study was complete. Similarly the expectations in terms of time, commitment and motivation were discussed openly and honestly to ensure participants had realistic expectations relating to their participation.

The sensitive nature of this area of research as previously discussed and the reported 'therapeutic' aspects of the intervention, which required the development of a mutually trusting and respectful relationship between the participants and me as the facilitator/researcher, were given specific consideration with regard to ethical practice.

Throughout the study I tried to ensure a transparent, open and honest approach, to enable participants to fully understand and know what to expect from the process at each stage of the research. By actively facilitating the involvement of the participants in the research process as subjects rather than objects, I hoped they would develop a sense of agency and self-determinism. I believed that this would also assist with the process of debriefing when the intervention was completed.

The issue of debriefing was also directly addressed within the final joint feedback 'celebration', as previously discussed, where favourite clips of film were selected and discussed by all those involved in the intervention/research. This provided space to

acknowledge ‘endings’ and to show respect for the relationships that were developed within the process.

2.8.3 Confidentiality

Particular attention was also given to issues of confidentiality. Participants were informed of the ways in which their information and identity would be protected by means of coding data and as previously discussed, of those people who would have access to their data and the purpose of this.

Participants also needed to feel safe in sharing and discussing their stories, understanding and beliefs in relation to a highly emotionally charged situation. This entailed the discussion and identification of a set of agreed ‘ground rules’ to be applied to the joint video feedback sessions. This was perceived as a particularly important aspect by the participants themselves, given the different roles and connections each had with one another and the school.

2.8.4 Conclusion

The aim of the selected methodological approach in this study was to enable the gathering of data which would help me to gain a more in-depth understanding about the way in which collaborative relationships develop over time and the subjective experiences of those involved in such developments, including myself. Whilst I selected the methodology on the basis of its relevance to both my practical requirements and value position in relation to my area of enquiry, it remained challenging in several respects.

One of the significant challenges of undertaking this study in relation to the methodology was the very delicate nature of the intervention, within the particular context. This proposed recording the interactions of individuals, within a context of high emotion and sensitivity, for later shared review and analysis between individuals for whom effective communication and trust had become problematic.

As such there was a need for the purpose of the research and the positive, capacity building approach of the intervention to be emphasised and actively promoted. As outlined within the methodology section in my own experience a degree of social

capital developed within my professional relationships with schools as a Trainee Educational Psychologist was almost a pre-requisite to my initial discussions around the study. This aspect then would appear to suggest that this may be a crucial determining factor in relation to whether the video intervention might be an appropriate intervention within a particular context. Where there is an element of trust and social capital with respect to the individual facilitating the intervention it may be more likely that parents and teachers may be more willing to engage.

A further important aspect relating to the methodology was the continuing need to reflect upon, revisit and remain responsive and aware of the ethical aspects of the video intervention and research as it progressed, given the organic nature of the action research. Whilst careful consideration at the start of the intervention enabled clear protocols to be agreed with participants, an essential aspect of ensuring ethical practice as the study developed involved the integral role of supervision in adhering to the principles and process of video intervention guidance. In many respects this can be seen as a safeguard for all those involved.

The following chapter begins the process of analysis which aims to examine the outcomes of the video intervention in relation to the development of collaborative relationships of those involved in the situation.

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Chapter 3

Initial Analysis and Results

The main aim of the research was to explore the possibilities for the development of collaborative relationships between parents and teachers in a situation where there is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour, using a video intervention based upon the principles of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG).

A secondary aim was to gain the perspectives of those involved about the use of video to bring about change in the situation.

The above aims gave rise to the primary, overarching research question:

- Can a video intervention promote the development of a collaborative approach between parents and teachers in a situation where there is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour?

which encompassed the following related questions:

- What are some of the barriers to collaboration between parents and teachers in situations where these is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour?

- How does the video intervention affect the perceptions and portrayal of the situation and those involved?

- What is the perceived role of the Educational Psychologist in delivering the intervention?

3.1 Analysis and results

In writing up this research I have continued to be drawn to the narrative form in order to help bring order and structure to the findings that emerged from the data, and to enable me to present these in a coherent and meaningful way.

As such, my aim in the following section is to develop a narrative framework, using the above research questions to structure and display the initial analysis and results obtained from the thematic analysis of the data collected in the study.

The questions are organised in such a way that there is a beginning, middle and end. Therefore we begin at the outset of the 'journey' to set the scene i.e. an exploration of the narratives relating to the perceived barriers to collaboration within the situation.

The middle section details the experience of the intervention and the changes that emerged in the accounts around the situation and those involved, including myself as both the Educational Psychologist and researcher. As such this is related to the questions about the way in which the intervention affects the perceptions and portrayal of the situation and the role of the Educational Psychologist.

Finally, the ending draws these strands together and concerns the narratives about the impact of the intervention upon the situation and those involved. This relates to the overarching question; can a video intervention promote collaboration?

3.1.2 Presentation

The results will be presented in four sub-sections each heading relating to a specific research question. A descriptive summary of each of the key themes identified in relation to each question, together with supporting evidence in the form of quotations taken directly from the raw data, will be presented. This will be followed by an overview in the form of a thematic network, summarising the key themes relating to each question.

As previously indicated within the methodology section, each of the video feedback sessions was video taped and analysed, initially through the process of supervision, where the video clips were shared with my supervisor. During the more 'formal analysis' the video tapes were viewed again by myself and analysed using a similar method to that used for the semi-structured interviews. From this a set of ‘thematic process maps’ was developed, which tracked the process of change overtime in relation to two key factors i.e. the content of the communication (what was shared) and the ways in which the interaction and communication changed (how was it shared) within each of the video feedback sessions.

These maps helped to make sense of the way in which the process impacted upon the situation and those involved. As these maps relate specifically to the 'middle' of the story of this research they are located prior to the final and overarching question of whether the intervention can promote collaboration, with the aim of presenting a concise overview of the experience of change.

3.1.3 Locating the data

As with everyday life and experience, the themes identified within and across the data sets did not fit neatly into an orderly stage like progression, but reflected the complex and multifaceted influences and changes that occurred overtime in relation to the situation and all those involved. Therefore it is important to point out that consideration to the entire data set was given in relation to the identification of themes. In this manner, some important aspects that could have otherwise been overlooked in a more 'compartmentalised' analysis emerged.

One example of this would be the expectation that an analysis of the semi-structured interviews prior to the intervention would provide information with respect to the 'barriers' to collaboration within the situation. Indeed this was in the main the case; however as the intervention progressed further, a more privately held attribution of blame emerged within the stories of both the parent and teacher, which was perceived as a barrier to collaboration. This was openly expressed within the teachers reflection on the 1st joint feedback session, but not apparent within the parents narratives until much later and finally explicitly expressed within the final semi-structured interview .

The above explanation is given as a cautionary note with respect to the interpretation of the expressed and documented experience of change as being entirely smooth and progressive. When presenting and describing themes within the results section I have therefore identified the data set(s) from which they emerged and referenced the quotations used to illustrate the themes.

3.2 Barriers to collaboration between parents and teachers in situations where there is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour

The following section presents the results of the study in relation to the perceived barriers to collaboration between the parent and teacher at the beginning of the intervention. A visual summary of the key themes discussed below is presented at the end of this section in the form of a thematic network (Fig. 3, pg.80).

Five key themes were identified in relation to perceived barriers to collaboration between the parent and teacher, as outlined below:

- The parents sense of hopelessness and confusion
- The teachers professional distance
- Poor communication
- Lack of trust
- Negative narratives of individualised responsibility

The analysis and results in relation to these themes will be presented in the following section in the order outlined above.

3.2.2 Parent's sense of hopelessness and confusion

The parent's sense of hopelessness and confusion seemed to be highlighted very powerfully within the first semi-structured interviews of both the parent and teacher.

The situation appeared to be perceived by the parent as 'all consuming', with no prospect for change, impacting upon the parent's physical and emotion wellbeing. The parent perceived herself as undertaking conflicting roles and appeared to experience some confusion and ambivalence with respect to attributions of responsibility for the situation.

The parent's sense of being 'stuck' in a hopeless situation and confusion about what action to take was evident in her descriptions of the situation at the beginning of the intervention:

Parent: *'Er…his behaviour, he's, he's…erm, his mood swings, I want to find out really what, what triggers them, what makes him tick, cos I'm just at a loss what to do now,*

I just haven't got a clue…but it's quite upsetting and it's becoming like a vicious circle at home you know…it's affecting everybody. And then nothing's getting any better (Interview 1, pg.1, 33).
and again in the final semi-structured interview when she reflected:

Parent: ...*at the beginning, can you remember at the beginning the first session we had, an' I just bawled my eyes out…when I think back to that I was so depressed with his behaviour …. I felt a little bit alone, like d'you know like you're in a dark room and you don't know which way to turn to get out? It was a little bit like that. I didn't know…I thought this was it – forever (pg.3, 19).*

The parents description of recursive interactions crossing the boundaries of both the home and school systems suggests the complexity of the situation;

Parent: *…I'd find out what he [child] did [at school] and then I'd go home and row with [child] and then I'd end up rowing with [stepfather], because I'd come home in a mood. It was kind of like this vicious circle and I found myself drifting away from the girls because I was so involved with [child] and …and [stepfather] and rowing with them (Interview 3, pg.16, 11).*

The wearing effects of the situation upon the parent both physically and mentally were also apparent in her explanation of how she felt about the situation.

Parent: *Fed up, worn out, exhausted, erm…really upset [becomes tearful] and erm I think like at a loss now you know, like I don't know what to do next, tried everything. At home it's like piggy in the middle like I'm just trying to resolve everything all of the time you know (pg.7, 16)*

The teacher said similar things in her first semi-structured interview and highlighted this as a particular barrier to the parent and teacher working together.

Teacher: *…so more I would say erm…[parent's] self-esteem and [parent's] self-confidence, knowing she's doing the right thing…and I'd say that was a main barrier…because I think she's at a point now where it's …just been going on for so long that she really feels there isn't going to be and end to it…(Interview 2, pg.15, 19)*

The confusion felt by the parent was also indicated by her apparent ambivalence with respect to her attributions of responsibility for the situation. On the one hand suggesting responsibility lay with herself and on the other with the school, or perhaps with the child.

Parent: *…when you're going through that [referring to situation prior to intervention] you do question everything, is it [child], is it the teacher, is it you… (Interview 3, pg.27, 8)*

3.2.3 Teacher's professional distance

The above theme was found to run to differing degrees across the data set (semi-structured interviews, written reflections by both the teacher and myself and in recordings of video feedback) suggesting that the teacher appeared to adopt a professionally 'defensive' position and 'outward looking' gaze.

The teacher's feelings were stated as 'on behalf of the child' and there appeared to be some resistance to the focus upon the pupil – teacher relationship.

Teacher: *Oh yeah…very upset for him, very upset for him, but not to the point where erm…not to the point where I don't feel as if I could cope or anything like that…just disappointed (Interview 2, pg.9, 22).*

Teacher: *I feel very sad for him and disappointed that erm…he's not got the control that I remember him having…I'd say that I'm just genuinely disappointed, frustrated when he's actually kicking off, but it's more a frustration not for myself, for…for him, because I believe he's better than that (Interview 2, pg.10, 17).*

A sense of professional distance and defensiveness was apparent from the beginning of the research as the following entry from my research journal suggests.

' I felt she chose with great care her responses, highlighting what she would do as a good teacher ……even moments of revelation were kept at a distance e.g. "…it was a revelation for S (other child in video clip), she's not seen him like this before" (Reflection on video feedback, session 1, 3)

This was highlighted to some extent by the teacher herself in the first individual video feedback (11.03.08).

As soon as you turn on the video camera it makes me conscious. I can see that just by watching myself on the screen, it's the defensiveness…whereas normally that defensiveness wouldn't have been there (36 min: 20).

This defensiveness appeared to be a reflection of the concern that the focus was very much upon her as a teacher as suggested in her written reflection on the first individual video feedback (App.4, 11.03.08)

I felt as though the meeting was designed to gain access to my thoughts and feelings without actually moving forward with new strategies

And again in the final interview with the teacher

Teacher: *And some people could find it quite threatening, to be there on the camera and you know then observe, right lets pick through this, sort of thing….not that it was in that way, but in an extreme situation…an for all parties to realise you know we're there as a support for [child] and that's what we're doing (Interview 4, pg.9, 5).*

Teacher: *I feel as if it was a lot of me…a lot of me, which I'm sure isn't the case' (Interview 4, pg.11,16)….I don't know what the word to describe it would be really…very much my opinion …analysing the thing and…why, what I thought about it really… (Interview 4, pg.11, 36)*

3.2.4 Poor communication

The theme of poor communication between home and school was identified within the semi-structured interviews of both the parent and teacher. This involved difficulties with the negative focus of communication between home and school, underlying tensions, conflicting and mixed messages, and guarded communication between the parent and teacher.

Issues around communication for the parent related to a lack of continuity in the system and a sense of discomfort felt by the parent with the negative focus of the

home-school relationship and the way in which this influenced communication as suggested within her first interview,

Parent: …*but then he's had different teachers, and things like …I've had an erm a…book that we used to…they used to send home about his…because they were sick of phoning me up and telling me what he'd done, and I was sick of going in…it was worse then, because it was written down, it was evidence…(Interview 1, pg. 13, 26)*

And clarified in the parent's final interview,

Parent: *Yeah, see a lot of the times when I used to go to [teacher] I used to learn about the bad things that he'd done and I used to think…think, well you're not telling me about the good things that he's done…(Interview 3, pg.23,1)*

There was also a sense that the parent perceived her views and contribution to achieving change in the situation to be of less value than those of the school

Parent: *…I have been in and …and said that mebbie a personal reward or something like that, might…might work, and I wasn't sure whether that was put in place… I don't think it was…(Interview 1, pg.13, 18)*

Parent:…I think he might need some you know extra kinds of support, who am I to say…but my feeling is…(Interview 1, pg.6,14)

Parent: *But she did say to me 'come and see me everyday, and see how he's getting on, I don't mind', and…and I …I felt like I was just being a bit of a nuisance really (Interview 1, pg.19, 32)*

Issues relating to communication for the teacher were very much related to a concern around tensions underlying the parent-teacher communication, which were linked to a lack of open communication and mixed messages.

Teacher: …*I must admit when I'm talking to [parent] she seems to be quite happy with what we're talking about an' feeling that we're working together, erm…but then..you find out other little things that suggest that she's not been quite happy with what you're talking about…(Interview 2, pg.6, 10).*

3.2.5 Lack of trust

A lack of trust in the parent–teacher relationship resulting from issues of blame, manipulation, a lack of honest and open discussion, and a lack of confidence and commitment to agreed actions was a further issue identified within the semi-structured interviews of both the parent and teacher and the teacher's written reflections.

Following the intervention the parent reflected that:

Parent: *…I found myself blaming everyone, including myself…(Interview 3, pg.27, 29) …when you're going through that you do question everything, is it [child], is it the teacher, is it the children at school, is it you…(Interview 3, pg.27, 8)*

The parent also referred to the positioning of herself as her son's 'protector', creating a 'barrier' between her son and herself and those who judged and blamed them.

Parent: *…you have this barrier up all the time you know, cos it's kind of like you know, I'm here with [child] behind my barrier and you can't get us…it was just to protect him all the time (Interview 3, pg.27, 22)*

References to manipulation by the child were made by both the parent and teacher,

Parent: *I think I …took on board what he [child] was saying, like he used to blame everybody else, and I took that on board and…and I did have a moment where I thought it was [teacher's] way of teaching (Interview 3. pg.21, 38)*

Teacher: It's things like [child] and I's relationship. [Child] was previously going home and saying [teacher] did this, [teacher] doesn't…you know the same way he would say the exact same things about home, you know, erm in school (Interview 4, pg.6, 13)

Issues of trust for the teacher were related to a lack of open and honest communication and a perception that a lack of confidence on behalf of the parent led her to canvass opinion, undermining the collaborative relationship.

Teacher: …*but then just the slightest little doubt if you like to be fed, or…in discussion with somebody else, I think you can often have the discussion with too many people…and I think that's very much a…a main issue (Interview 2, pg.6, 17)*

3.2.6 Negative narratives of individual responsibility

A further theme identified within semi-structured interviews was that of negative narratives of individual responsibility relating to all those involved in the situation i.e. child, parent, teacher. Narratives relating to the child and his part in the situation were more prevalent and publicly shared, than those relating to the parent and teacher. These were more subtle narratives, shared privately, which gradually surfaced as the intervention proceeded.

The most dominant narrative identified within the first semi-structured interviews of the parent and teacher was that of the 'attention seeking' child, choosing to misbehave.

Parent: *…I don't know whether it's kind of, like an er attention thing, mebbies the attention we're giving him, for doing that, is mebbie's what's kinda feeding him…(Interview 1. pg.2, 31).*

Teacher: *Really I think it's attention, I really do, and that's where it tends to come from, then on top of that attention seeking if something happens, or he's decided that he doesn't like…what someone has said… (Interview 2, pg.2,).*

The following quotations from the first semi-structured interviews with the parent and teacher show the dominance of this story in the degree of similarity between the descriptions of 'the situation' in the separate accounts given within the interviews.

…he does seem to be in control of what he's saying and what he's doing and the way he's reacting... (Interview 2, pg.2, 14).

It's not that he doesn't know how to…to behave in the correct way, he just chooses not to. (Interview 1, pg.2, 26).

Sometimes there's a spark…other times…he can decide it's not going to be for him… (Interview 2, pg. 1).

…he'll be looking around for situations to get himself in to… (Interview 2, pg. 3).

…he can turn the tables in a second… (Interview 1, pg.2).

…he has a bad attitude toward everything… (Interview 1, pg.2).

…show no respect at all… (Interview 2, pg.16).

The emphasis in the above descriptions is as previously suggested upon the choice of the child to behave in certain ways. Below the shared story is one which supports the notion of the child choosing to do the 'wrong thing', highlighting that he does have the ability to 'do the right thing' and behave well if he so chooses.

…but that will go from being absolutely gorgeous one minute and crazy the next… (Interview 1, pg. 4)

One minute he's the most adorable child…the next minute he can disrupt the class completely (Interview 2, pg.1)

The story then goes on to provide a rationale for the child's choice suggesting that the child is both an 'attention seeker' and 'manipulative'

…he craves attention… (Interview1, pg.6)

…he needs attention to be happy… (Interview 2, pg.12)

…he knows how to pull mum and play at her heart strings… (Interview 2, pg.7)

If things don't go his way, just the slightest little thing (Interview 1, pg.4)

Furthermore the child refuses to take responsibility for his behaviour, continuously blaming others

…it's always some one else's fault… (Interview 2, pg.3)

…he thinks everyone is against him… (Interview 2, pg.4)

…he always thinks I'm at his throat even when I'm not… (Interview 1, pg.7)

There was also the implication that in controlling his relationship with his mother the child was eroding her belief in herself as an effective parent. This 'manipulation' by the child was perceived by the teacher as impeding the parent's ability to work in partnership.

Teacher: …. I think [parent] very much blames herself erm…for [child] and the way [child] is, and I think for a very long time in the beginning of it, I think [child] very quickly cottoned on to that, and I think he knows how to pull mum and play at her heart strings so that mum then feels immediately upset an'…as all parents do…I think there's a very clever boy in there who knows how to push buttons…(Interview 2, pg.6-7, 40)

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of this narrative was the use of language, particularly with respect to the way in which metaphor appeared to be unconsciously employed, which gave a certain emphasis to the negative affective aspect of the story. Some examples of this are given below:

…quite manic really… (Interview 1, pg.4)

…his mood swings.. (Interview 1, pg.1)

…blow his top… (Interview 1, pg.10)

…storms off… (Interview 1, pg.4)

…anything could trigger it… (Interview 1, pg.4)

…he's kicking off… (Interview 2, pg.7)

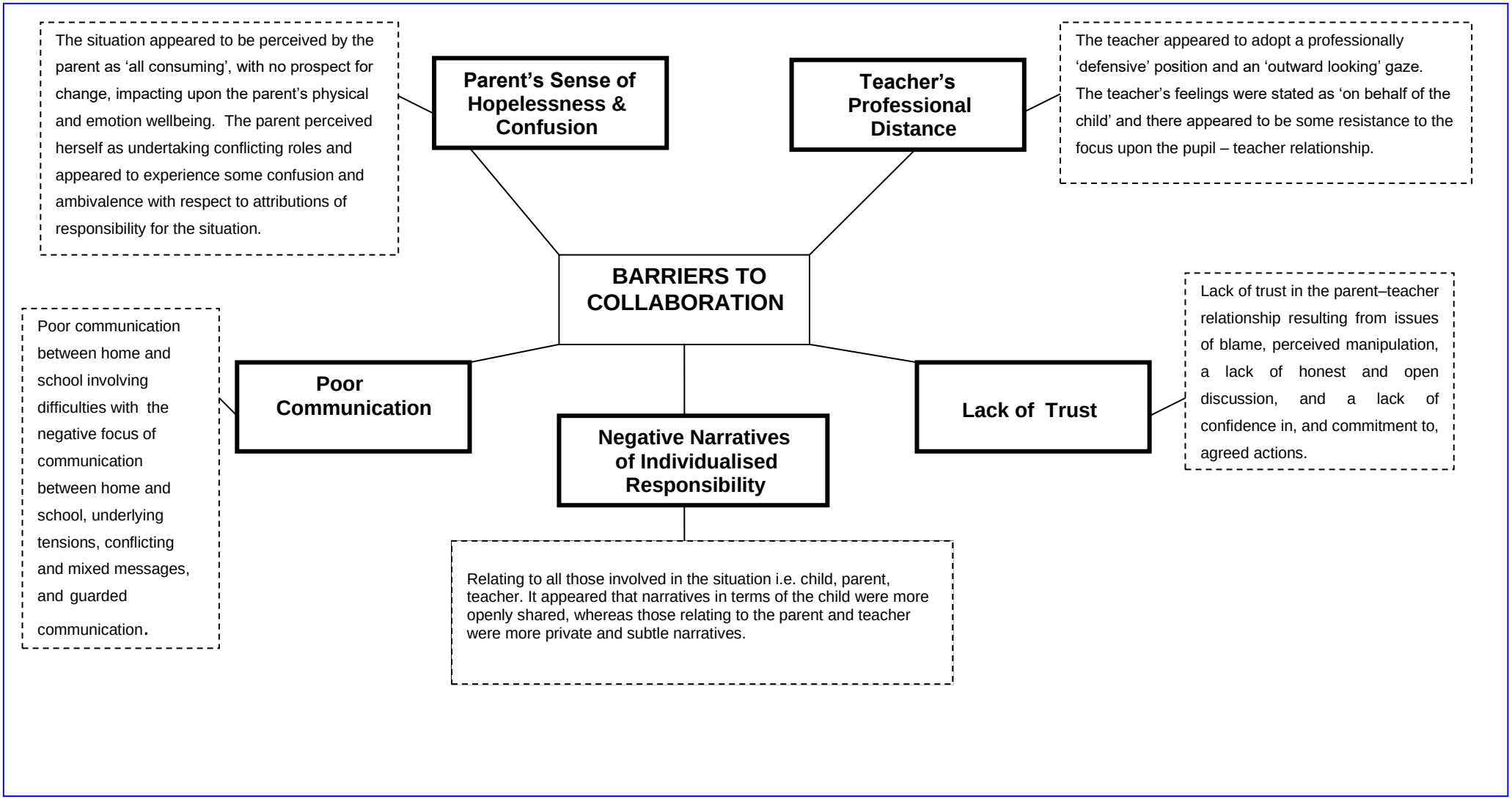
…he'll still lash out… (Interview 2, pg.16)

…has sparked him off… (Interview 2, pg.4)

The metaphor used seemed to give a strong affective element to the narrative and to suggest both personal agency and the unpredictable nature of the behaviour described.

In this section of the initial analysis and results I have identified the five key themes related to the barriers to collaboration between the parent and teacher in this study and presented these together with supporting evidence in the form of verbatim quotations from the raw data. Figure 3 (pg.83), provides a brief overview of this section in the form of a thematic network.

Figure 3:Thematic network showing the barriers to collaboration between parents and teachers in situations where there are perceived difficulties with pupil behaviour



3.3 How does the video intervention affect the perceptions and portrayal of the situation and those involved?

The following section presents the results of the study in relation to the effects of the intervention upon the portrayal of the situation and those involved. A visual summary of the key themes discussed below is presented at the end of this section in the form of a thematic network (Fig. 4, pg.94).

In analysing the data for the possible effects of the video intervention in relation to the situation and those involved, two key themes were identified, as outlined below:

- Challenging the focus upon existing negative perceptions
- Promoting change

The analysis and results in relation to these themes will be presented in the following section in the order outlined above.

3.3.1 Challenging the focus upon existing negative perceptions

This theme was identified across the data set of semi-structured interviews, written reflections and video feedback recordings (Figure 6, maps 5 & 6). Within this theme three sub-themes were identified:

i. Providing a window onto 'the truth'
ii. Positive focus
iii. Self-modeling

- **Providing a window onto 'the truth'**

Participant's appeared to perceive the video footage as valid and objective evidence with respect to the situation and its component parts, which appeared to promote reflection and reframing.

Parent: *So I think you know, watching the video interaction and seeing the way she was with him, and he was with her…because if it was just for the camera's you…you'd have been able to tell…(Interview 3, pg.22,1)*

Teacher: Relief that what I was trying to say you know was …was finally being understood and was finally being witnessed. (Interview 4, pg.4, 1)

Teacher: …allowed me to see his relationship with mum and his sisters, and allowed erm [parent] to see his relationship with myself and other children…and neither of them could be staged, you can't put on a show that can't be seen through, you know I strongly believe in that…(Interview 4, pg.6,19)

- **Positive focus**

The video footage showing positive interaction and communication appeared to create a challenge to some of the negative beliefs, attributions and expectations which appeared to underpin many of the existing narratives about the situation. This was an aspect identified by all those involved in the intervention, including the child whom described himself as,

Child*: Happy… seeing myself being helpful and every one else…. proud…[about sharing the video with his parent and teacher] (Interview 5, pg.4 -5)*

Child: *Excited and impressed with what I did, like I never shouted at [sister](Individual feedback on 28.3.08, 32min:30)*

This is also reflected in the parent's written reflection on the first (individual) feedback (10.03.08)

Parent: *After the* feedback *session I felt really positive like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. My expectations were that the video clip may have shown a lot of negatives due to the conflict prior to the videoed activity. …I feel much more positive about the whole situation.*

My own reflections of the above session taken from my research journal highlight the way in which the feedback session prompted the parent's reflection on the situation.

The parent commented that what she was seeing, she hadn't realise happened, i.e. she noted positive aspects of the child's behaviour…After the session the parent began to reflect upon how she described her feelings around the situation i.e. 'hurt' and 'let down' …and to reflect upon how the child might be feeling…(10.3.08, pg.1, 7)

Whilst the teacher's comments below suggest some reflection upon the prevalence of a negative focus within the situation.

Teacher: …*I think sometimes as parents and as teachers you can get blinkered by the negative things that happen, an…it's been good to highlight the positives because people do easily forget the positives…and you take the negatives away from the day …(Interview 4, pg.2, 15)*

- **Self- modeling**

The opportunity for participants to see themselves in situations interacting and communicating positively, and for positive self-evaluation appeared to have a considerable and almost immediate impact upon participants self-perception and beliefs. This is clearly demonstrated within the comments of the parent and teacher throughout the intervention (Figure 6, thematic process maps 5 & 6) and across the data set. The quotation below, for example highlights the effects of the video feedback of those involved;

Parent*: …it's not just confidence for me as well, it's confidence for [child]…(Interview 3, pg.15, 9)*

Particularly striking was the apparent immediacy of these effects suggested from the reflections on feedback completed by the parent and teacher, as highlighted by the parent's written reflection below;

Parent: *I realise from all of this that there are changes to be made, but I now feel I have the strength and capability to make these changes (Written reflections on individual feedback session 10.0308)*

The following results will present the second theme and associated sub-themes, related to the question of the way in which the intervention affected the portrayal and perception of the situation and those involved.

3.3.2 Promoting change

Again this theme was identified across the data set of semi-structured interviews, written reflections and video feedback recordings. As previously described it can also

be tracked across the set of thematic process maps in Figure 6. Within this theme a further three subthemes were identified:

i. Thinking
ii. Strengths based narratives
iii. Behaviour and relationships

- **Thinking**

This involved changes with respect to how participants thought about the situation e.g. increased openness to broader and more positive alternative perspectives and ways of understanding, increased self-efficacy as well as a greater self-awareness and an awareness of the individuals own interaction and behaviour i.e. self-regulation. Data supporting changes in thinking are presented below:

<u>Broader and more positive perspectives</u>

An openness to different perspectives and changes in understanding of the situation were particularly noticeable from the video footage of the second joint feedback session (Thematic Process Map 5 - 22.04.04). This included a greater capacity for empathy and exploring the child's perspective, noticing and highlighting the child's personal strengths and capabilities, and 'normalising' discussions. Below is a section of dialogue taken from the 2nd joint feedback in which the parent and teacher are watching the individual feedback I undertook with the child and are reflecting upon their first experiences of video feedback and empathising with the child.

Teacher: …*and you can see and you can picture yourself thinking yeah well actually when I was getting those questions thrown at me I was the same, and you can see that reflected in him, both of us actually felt the same…*

Parent: …*and [child] being quite grown up about it all really…it makes me quite proud actually (22.04.08, 18:16 mins)*

The changes in the way the situation and those involved were discussed can be seen to be developed upon in the video footage of the third and final joint feedback session (Thematic Process Map 6 - 06.05.08). A strengths based focus prevailed with both the parent and teacher agreeing 'he can do it', with an acknowledgement that everyone including the child was working towards a shared goal. The child was perceived as self-aware, capable and responsible. Interpersonal and social

influences were discussed and acknowledged in relation to the situation as suggested in the quotation below.

Parent: *I kind, kind of feel the negatives being lifted, it's like a weight lifted and now I think more positively and notice a lot more of the positives. So then he's [child] obviously feeling more positive himself because I'm positive behaviour is rubbing off on him you know what I mean? (3rd Joint Feedback, 6.05.08, 37:09 mins)*

Changes in thinking were also highlighted in the semi-structured interviews, as in the following comment from the teacher

Teacher:… *I think it's [video intervention] changed the dynamics in the fact that it's just taken away, previous thoughts and beliefs (Interview 4, pg.6, 11)*

Increased self-efficacy and self-awareness

The positive focus of the video feedback appeared to increase the self-efficacy and self-confidence of those involved. This is reflected in the parent's comments during her first (individual) feedback (10.03.08)

See it's eye opening because I thought I was bad, I …I thought I was…wasn't doing a very good job [as a parent], but obviously I am you know…(31min:18)

And again in her written reflection upon the feedback session

Parent: *I now don't carry any guilt or blame, I realise that I'm not bad. In fact I feel that I'm a good role model for my children.*

This is also captured in the teachers written reflections on her first (individual) feedback session (11.03.08)

Teacher: *Following the feedback I felt very positive, believing in my relationship with [child]… I liked to see the positive relationship we have.*

Both the teacher and the parent indicated that the video intervention promoted increased self-awareness and self-regulation in both themselves and the child as suggested in the following quote.

Teacher: Yeah, because I suppose it's bringing the positive [focus] from the back of your mind to the front of your mind, you know making…making you think about it regularly…and using it [positive communication]…and being aware that you do use it…(Interview 4, pg.7, 5)

- **Strengths based, progressive narratives**

Language used in relation to describing the situation became increasingly positive.

…so much happier, like lighter… more bouncy …(Interview 3, pg.28, 15)

…we're all working together…(Interview 3, pg.24, 1)

…I can see the light at the end of the tunnel…(Interview 3, pg.19,14)

…being able to recognise the good things he does...(Interview 3, pg. 12, 20)

…it's a joint effort, it's a team effort…(3rd Joint feedback, 6.05.08, 38:32 mins)

…all understanding all sides of the story and gaining an insight into each other (Interview 4, pg.3, 20)

…we're giving him the opportunity to show the positive side of himself (Interview 4, pg.5, 11)

Descriptions of the child were also more positive

…he loves it (Interview 3, pg.2, 35)

…he's trying…he's really proud of himself (Interview 3, pg.24, 35)

…he's really chuffed (interview 3, pg.10, 2)

…it's within his grasp (Interview 3, pg.19, 23)

…a lot better (Interview 3, pg.16, 31)

… he can do it (3rd Joint feedback, 6.05.08, 35:40 mins)

…his heart is in the right place…he wants to do the right thing (3rd Joint feedback, 6.05.08, 60 mins)

…more approachable…(Interview 4, pg.7, 25)
…more willing to engage and more willing to understand (Interview 4, pg.13, 21)

Strengths based narratives around the situation and those involved, particularly the child, developed overtime as the process of joint feedback evolved. An example of this being the narrative of the child as 'a good leader' which emerged in the third joint feedback session (06.05.08) based upon aspects that had previously been commented upon negatively, e.g. eager to help (interfering), sense of humour (disruptive), good at organising and telling people what to do (bossy)

These narratives were also prevalent within the semi-structured interviews undertaken after the intervention with the parent and teacher. In the following quotation there appears to be a recognition of the reciprocal nature of communication and the way this had changed for the better.

Parent: *he's been easier to handle than he was before, I find it easier to handle…his behaviour…(Interview 3, pg.2, 2)*

Progressive narratives expressing hope for the future, and in continuing to maintain and further develop the changes in the situation both within the home and school context began to emerge in video feedback sessions particularly within the final session (Figure 6, thematic process map 6)

Again these were also clearly articulated within the final semi-structured interviews of the parent and teacher.

Parent: *It…it…it's been quite emotional, I've been in a lot of tears haven't I?...Erm, but it's been lovely to see the progress that we've [parent and child] made together, and I think we've become a lot closer (Interview 3, pg.1,31).*

Parent *…it's so much better than what it used to be an' I feel really, really happy about how…I mean I know…I know it's going to be a slow process and we have to maintain it, but it is getting better and that makes me feel really happy…(Interview 3, pg.3, 27)*

Parent: *See I didn't expect these changes to have happened you know, all these different things that you know, [teacher] took on board, and [stepfather] at home, and my mam and everything's changed really, erm and…[child]. So really now I'm just expecting all of this to kind of carry on [both laugh] …that might be a big expectation, but erm for [child] benefit I think that's what needs to happen (Interview 3, pg.26,16)*

Teacher: …*hopefully it'll continue [positive change] as [child] moves to the next teacher and the next…(Interview 4, pg.4, 5)*

Teacher: *His journey will hopefully keep going and we just then hopefully need to keep reminding him of the good things that he is doing…(Interview 4, pg.18, 30)*

Narratives of mutual trust and respect were experienced by those involved in the situation as highlighted in Figure 6, thematic process map 6.

These were expressed in the following ways by the parent and teacher;

Parent: *[Teacher] is fair with him, yeah, she's there to support him, she's there to help him and she's doing the best she can for him and in fact she's doing a cracking job! (Interview 3, pg.24, 21)*

Teacher: *I think if you model that, same as you must do at home and I think that's why [child] is so good at doing the right thing when he's actually doing the activities. He does do it and he can do it and if he wasn't getting that role model at home and he didn't have it through the teacher's, he wouldn't do it…(3rd Joint feedback, 6.05.08, 45:31 mins)*

Parent: *But it's now knowing I don't have to do that because I trust her and you know, it's just so much better… I think like life's so much better (Interview 3, pg.28, 22)*

Teacher: *…what I witnessed on the tapes is the sort of relationship I thought mum has with [child] anyway, and I had full faith in the fact that mum has a good relationship with [child] and is supporting him in whatever way she can... (Interview 4, pg.18, 13)*

- **Behaviour and relationships**

As the intervention progressed positive changes in behaviour and relationships were identified by participants, which in some cases were more wide ranging than the teacher – pupil – parent triad, as indicated in the extracts below:

Changes in family relationships were highlighted by the parent,

Parent: Well, erm at home I think we're all happier as a family…*I don't know if you can remember when I said, it was like a vicious circle. I'd find out what he [child] did and then I'd go home and row with [child] and then I'd end up rowing with [father], because I'd come home in a mood. It was kind of like this vicious circle and I found myself drifting away from the girls because I was so involved with [child] and …and [father] and rowing with them. So yeah we've all come closer together as a whole, you know (Interview 3, pg.16, 11).*

The parent also acknowledged thinking differently about the teacher

Parent*: …It made me think of her differently you know…(Interview 3, pg.22, 12)*
…[teacher] really helped me throughout this, she's really helped me…like in the sense that I know she knows [child] now, you know. She was…she didn't just have it in for him, all the time…..she knew what I knew about him …because she was going through exactly the same…(pg.23, 20)

Changes in the adult-child relationships were also identified by both the parent and teacher, highlighting more reciprocal and positive communication as suggested in the teachers comments,

Teacher*: [child] is much more willing to engage and more willing to understand where I'm coming from…that I am trying to support him…so I think in that way in our relationship it's made an impact (Interview 4, pg.13, 21)*

The child identified changes both at home and school indicating that things were better in both settings. At home he said things were better because;

Child: …*ages ago we were…it was all boring, but now it's dead fun*

His relationship with his younger sisters had improved…. *Cos we get to play outside more now…they're not allowed in my room any more and it's got better (Interview 5, pg.12, 4)*

At school he said things were better because;

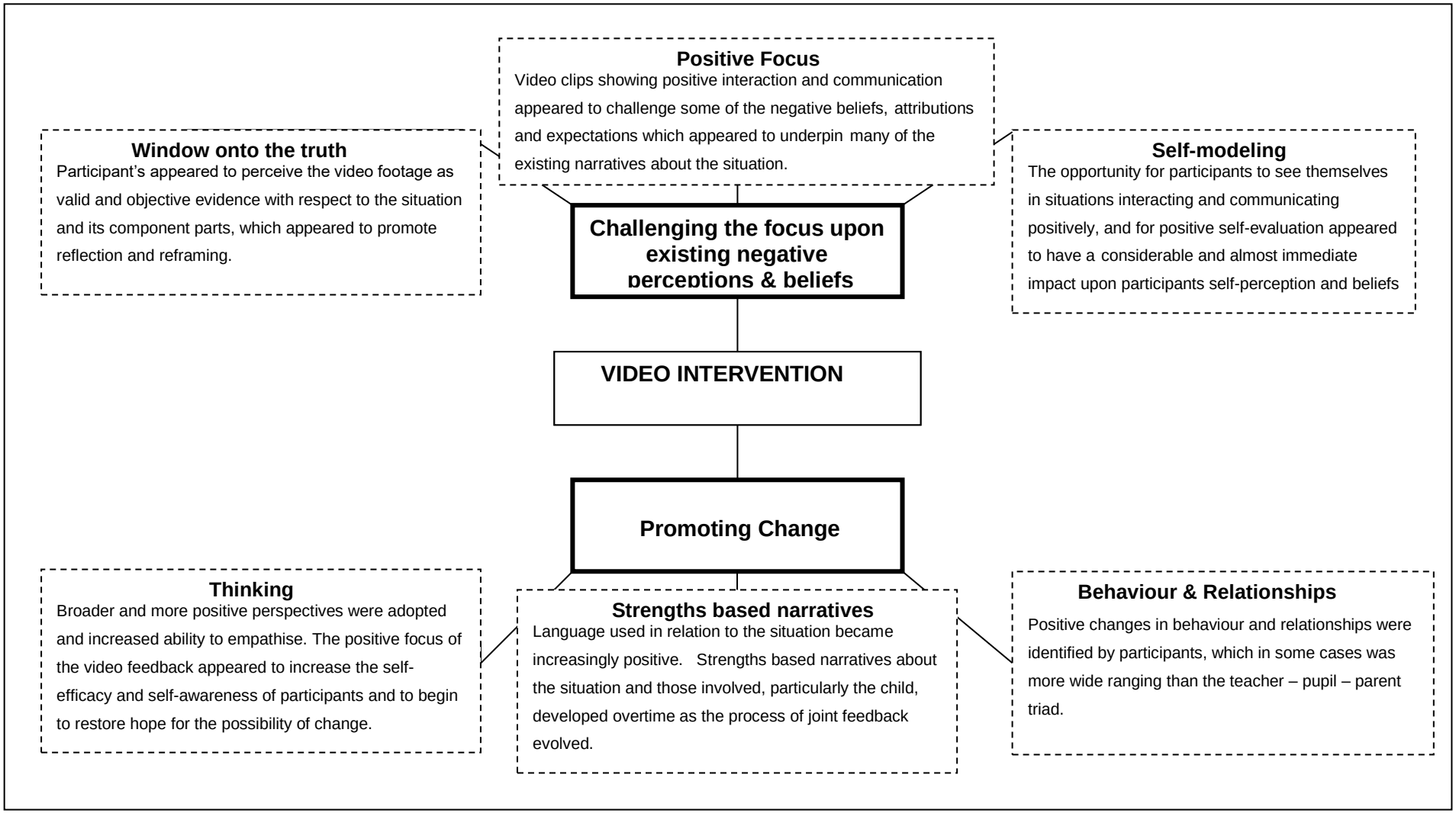
> Child: *I've got eight plus points in a day and I've got ten plus points in a week… (Interview 5, pg.12, 9)…. [teacher is] best teacher I've had…for a start she's dead funny! (pg.13, 6)*

The child appeared to appreciate the teacher's use of humour in diffusing potentially confrontational situations as suggested in his comments earlier in the same interview;

> Child: *That's what my teacher does every time we're like naughty, she just makes it out as a laugh…it makes it better cos we don't have a big row (pg.10, 15)*

In this section of the results I have identified the key themes and sub-themes relating to the way in which the video intervention affected the perceptions and portrayal of the situation and those involved. These have been presented together with supporting evidence in the form of verbatim quotations from the raw data. Figure 4 (pg.94) provides a brief overview of this section in the form of a thematic network

Figure 4: Thematic network showing the way in which the video intervention affected the perceptions and portrayal of the situation and those involved



3.4 What is the perceived role of the Educational Psychologist in delivering the intervention?

The following section presents the results of the study in relation to the way in which my role, as the Educational Psychologist was perceived in delivering the intervention. A visual summary of the key themes discussed below is presented at the end of this section in the form of a thematic network (Fig. 5, pg.100).

Two key themes were identified relating to the perceived role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) in the intervention as indicated below:

- The EP as a 'skilled outsider'
- Challenging Expectations

The analysis and results in relation to these themes will be presented in the following section in the order outlined above.

3.4.1 The EP as a 'skilled outsider'

This theme was identified within the final semi-structured interviews of the parent and teacher and across the set of thematic process maps (Figure 6, pgs.101-107). The theme incorporated the following sub-themes:

i. Therapeutic/Interpersonal skills
ii. Facilitator/Centraliser
iii. Different Perspective/Objective stance

- **Therapeutic/Interpersonal skills**

Therapeutic and interpersonal skills based upon person centred, solution focused and narrative frameworks played a significant role within the video feedback sessions, as can be seen in looking across the thematic process maps (Figure 6), particularly within the early sessions. This aspect was appreciated by participants in promoting change with the teacher identifying the EP as a 'thought provoker' (Interview 4, pg.16, 13)

Whereas the parent appreciated more being able to tell her story and feeling received and listened to.

Parent: *I think just being listened to and things you know…and just the chat, just the chat and like what is happening, so I could say what was happening. It was just kinda getting it off my chest, rather than bottling it up and taking it home…(Interview 3, pg.5, 17)*

- **Facilitator/Centraliser**

The role of facilitator was perceived by the teacher as a key aspect in bringing everything together to 'see the whole picture'

Teacher:…*without you centralising it, without…there would have been no point whatsoever in just [child] and I working with you on it, cos then there would have been no outside link at home, in which case it wouldn't have been the whole package (interview 4, pg.5, 32)*

- **Different perspective/Objective stance**

The EP was perceived by participants as set apart from the context and emotions of the situation

Parent: *[it was helpful talking to someone]…who didn't know him and then couldn't judge us, you know. Somebody…an outsider, their opinion meant lot because …you could see from an outside point of view and see his good points as well, you know. (Interview 3, pg.5, 23)*

The following results will present the second theme and associated sub-themes related to the perceived role of the Educational Psychologist in delivering the intervention.

3.4.2 Challenging expectations

This theme was identified across the data set of semi-structured interviews, written reflections and video feedback recordings. As previously described it can also be tracked across the set of thematic process maps in Figure 6. This theme is comprised of two subthemes as identified below:

i. Focus upon relationships
ii. Non directive approach

- **Focus upon relationships**

The principles of the Video Intervention Guidance approach upon which the intervention used in the study was based, maintains a focus upon positive interaction and relationships. This required a shift in the focus of those involved in the situation, away from individualised accounts, which appeared to present a significant challenge particularly within the initial stages of the intervention where the dominant narratives tended to locate the problem within the child. This is suggested in the following quotation taken from my reflective research journal prior to starting the intervention.

Some concern expressed [by teacher] that judgements are being made about individual communication and interaction - 'so the focus is on me?'. Also questions around how improving communication and interaction with specific individuals will make a difference to the situation (Reflection on 1st meeting with teacher to outline the intervention, 26.02.08)

This issue of focus and interpretation is closely linked to issues of approach, in that the way in which a problem or situation is defined and explained has implications for the way in which we address the situation or intervene.

- **Non directive approach**

Some challenges to the expectations of participants were identified with respect to the process and the role of the EP within the process as indicated by the teacher's comments below

Teacher: *It took a while to realise that it was more about me and my opinions than…guiding somewhere to go from here …you take on these things with a view to, right lets get support and help for (child)…erm and then it's like well right come on then, what are we going to try, yeah let's move on, d'you see what I mean? Erm, so to actually come across and just listen to myself 'blathering on' [both laugh]...was kind of very strange and very different (Interview 4, pg.10, 15)*

The implication in the above quotation appears to be related to the teachers expectations of the EP to bring along solutions to address the 'child's problem', and also suggests an initial level of discomfort with the strangeness and difference of this approach.

Reflections taken from my research journal give some insight into my own challenges in this respect.

Feeling that I have not met with the [parents & teachers] expectations re providing strategies and support to effect change. Feel that my own skills, knowledge and experience are not sufficient to deliver the intervention effectively, as I now realise my strong conviction that this <u>should</u> work. Frustrated that I seem unable to move away from the deficit model and at times allow myself to be dragged into this discourse, colluding with the viewpoint that the problem is 'within child', 'attention seeking' etc. Not able to reframe and move on (1st April 2008).

The above quotation suggests my own frustration and uncertainty in relation the move away from a more didactic approach to bringing about change in this situation in my role as EP, toward a more constructivist/constructionist approach. This theme was taken up again in the following reflection upon the second joint feedback session with the parent and teacher,

<u>Expectations</u> [of 2nd Joint video feedback session]
My expectations were mixed, though I feel I had convinced myself that both pp's were not 'signed up' with regards to the intervention due to their expectations about being 'given' strategies via my 'expert role'. Also the reports that the situation was deteriorating both at home and at school. This was reported by the parent at my last visit to school to do feedback with [child] and also by the teacher who invited me to speak to a member of staff who had experienced [child] 'being naughty and cheeky'. Was almost as though this was a 'vindication' of blame. Issues of blame and self-efficacy appear to be strong themes/feelings/undercurrents affecting those involved (including myself – as previously documented I have questioned my own self-efficacy in bringing about change). Overall my expectations were quite negative, though I felt I needed to address this by trying to adhere more to a non directive, collaborative way of working, trying to bring to the fore VIG principles and narrative ways of working (Reflections on 2nd Joint video feedback session, 22nd April '08 – see app.7c*)*

Interestingly despite my quite pessimistic expectations, it was within this session that the beginnings of alternative possibilities and the suggestion of change began to appear. I believe my own exploration of my personal and professional narratives in video feedback supervision helped me to adopt a less resistant and more open and curious approach to listening to and exploring the within child accounts that were

initially shared in the video feedback forum. In doing so an 'interactive space' was created in which exploration moved on to discovery and creation of alternative possibilities and accounts.

In this section of the results I have identified the key themes and sub-themes relating to the perceived role of the Educational Psychologist. These have been presented together with supporting evidence in the form of verbatim quotations from the raw data. Figure 5 (pg.100), provides a brief overview of this section in the form of a thematic network.

Figure 5: Thematic network showing the perceived role of the Educational Psychologist in delivering the intervention

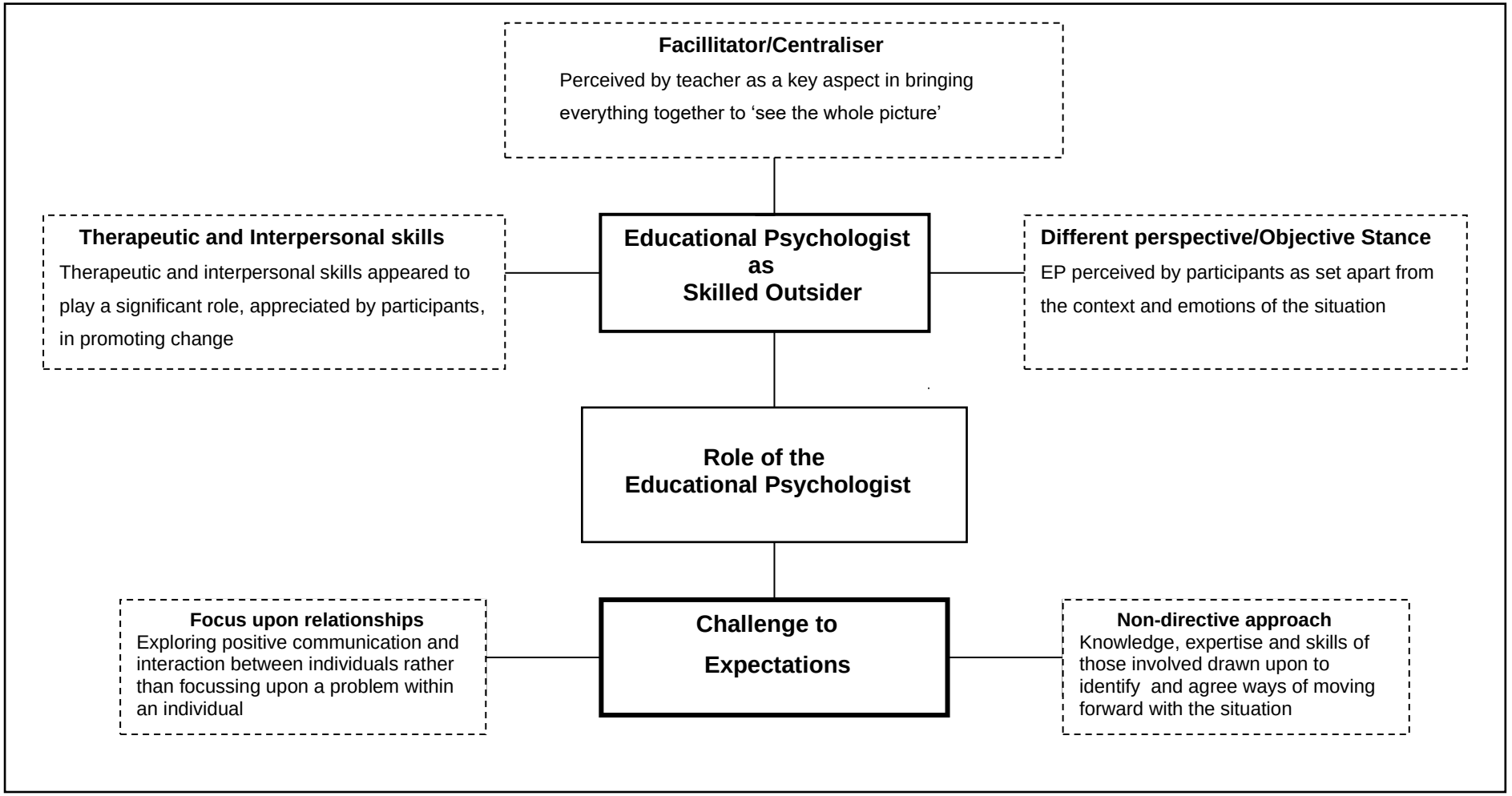
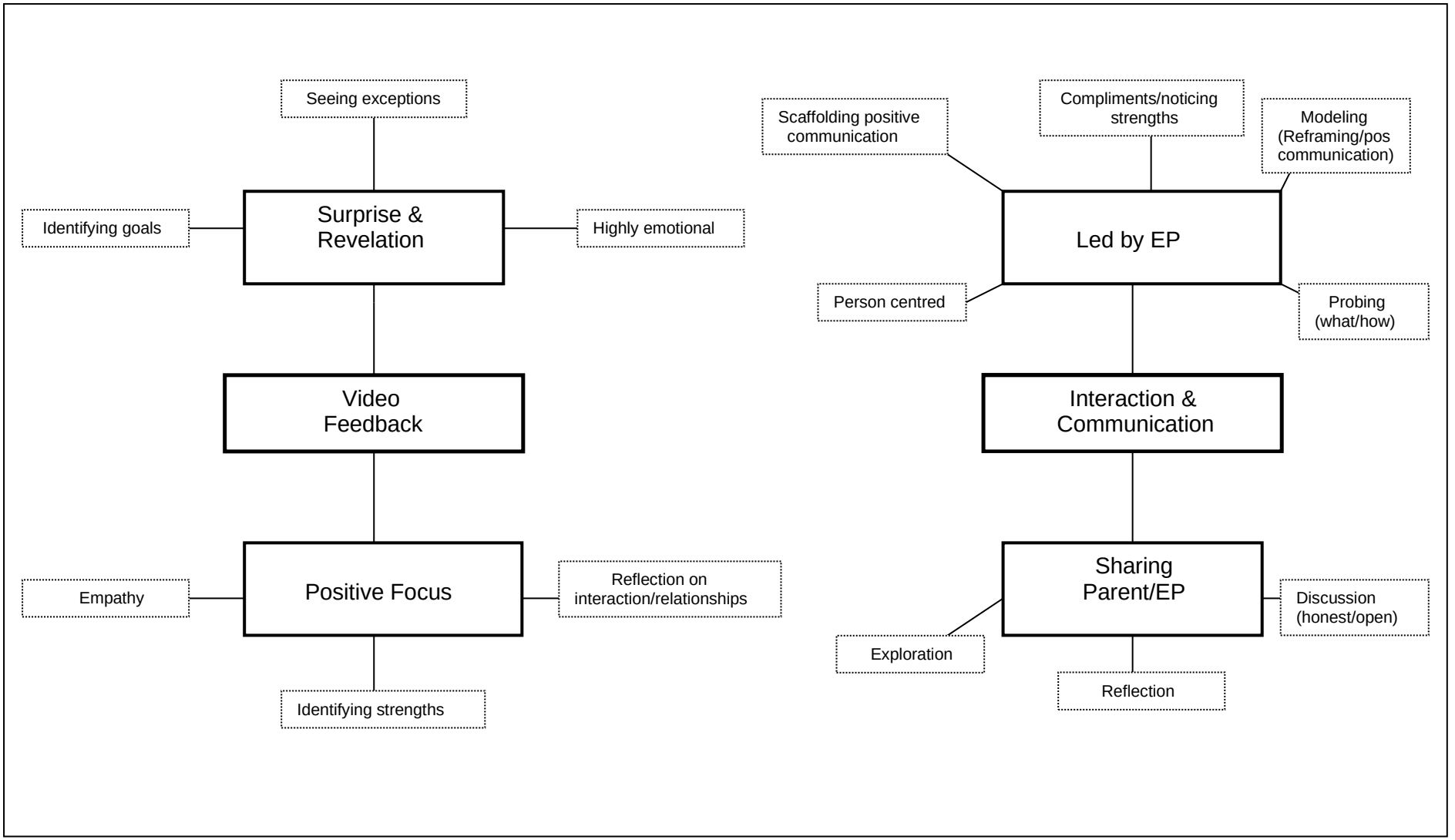


Figure 6: Thematic Process Maps

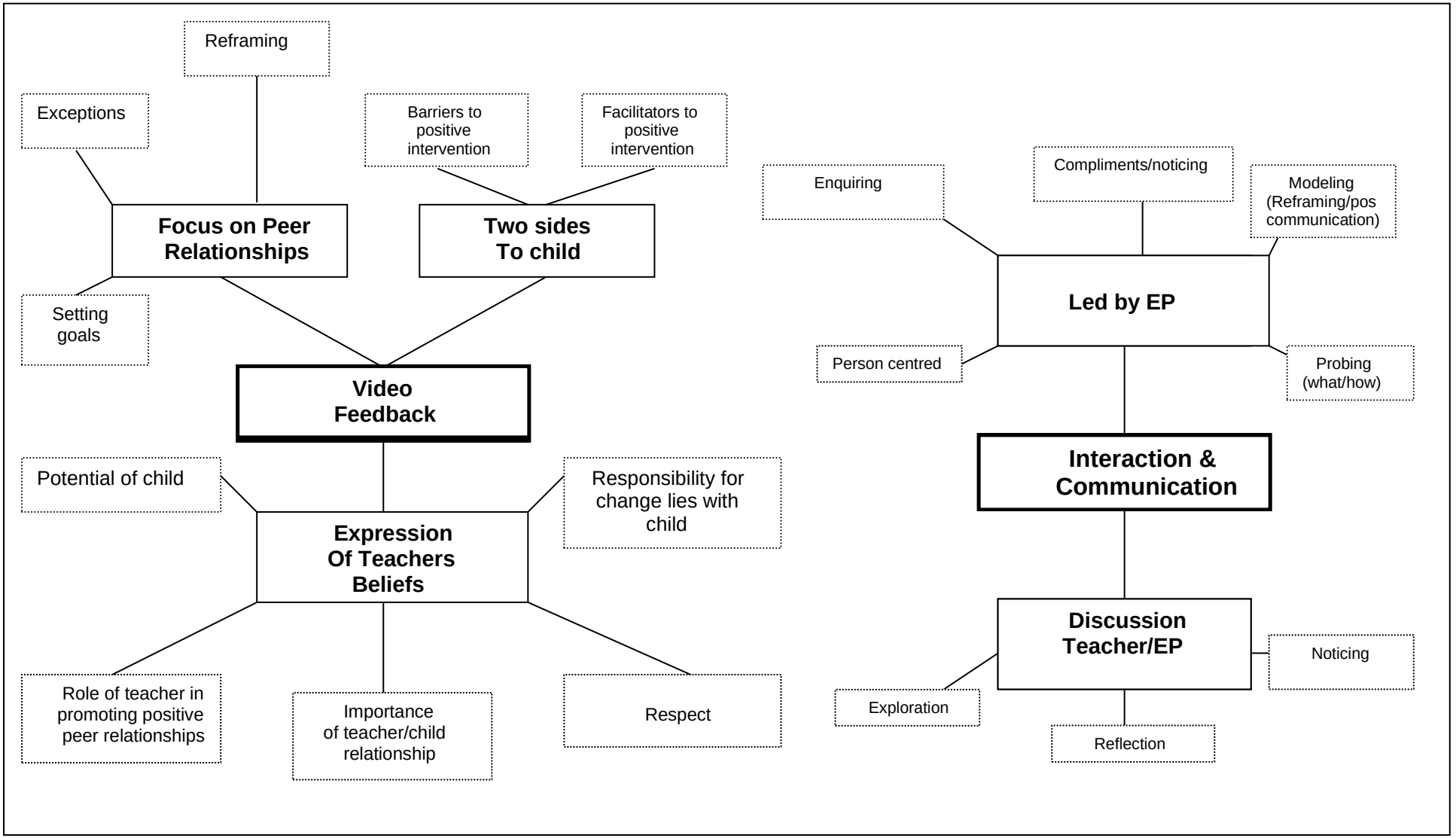
The following set of thematic process maps were developed from my analysis of the recorded video feedback sessions, and track the process of the intervention overtime in relation to two key factors i.e. Video Feedback and Interaction and Communication within each of the video feedback sessions.

The maps were developed to assist in following and describing the experience of change as the intervention progressed to help to make sense of the way in which the process impacted upon the situation and those involved. As these maps relate specifically to the 'middle' of the story of this research they are located prior to the last question, with the aim of presenting an overall summary of the experience of change.

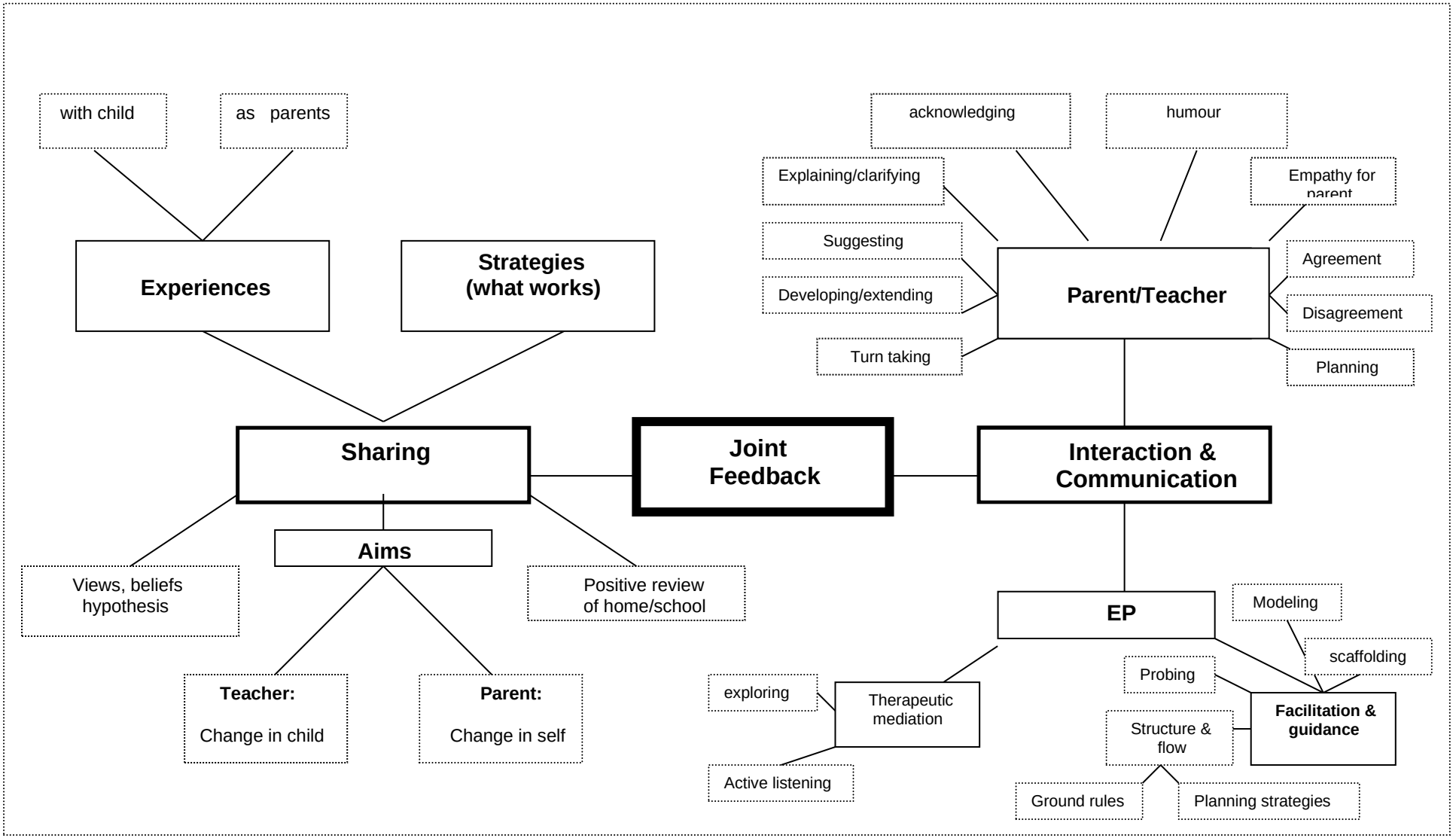
Thematic process map 1: First individual feedback with parent (10.03.08)



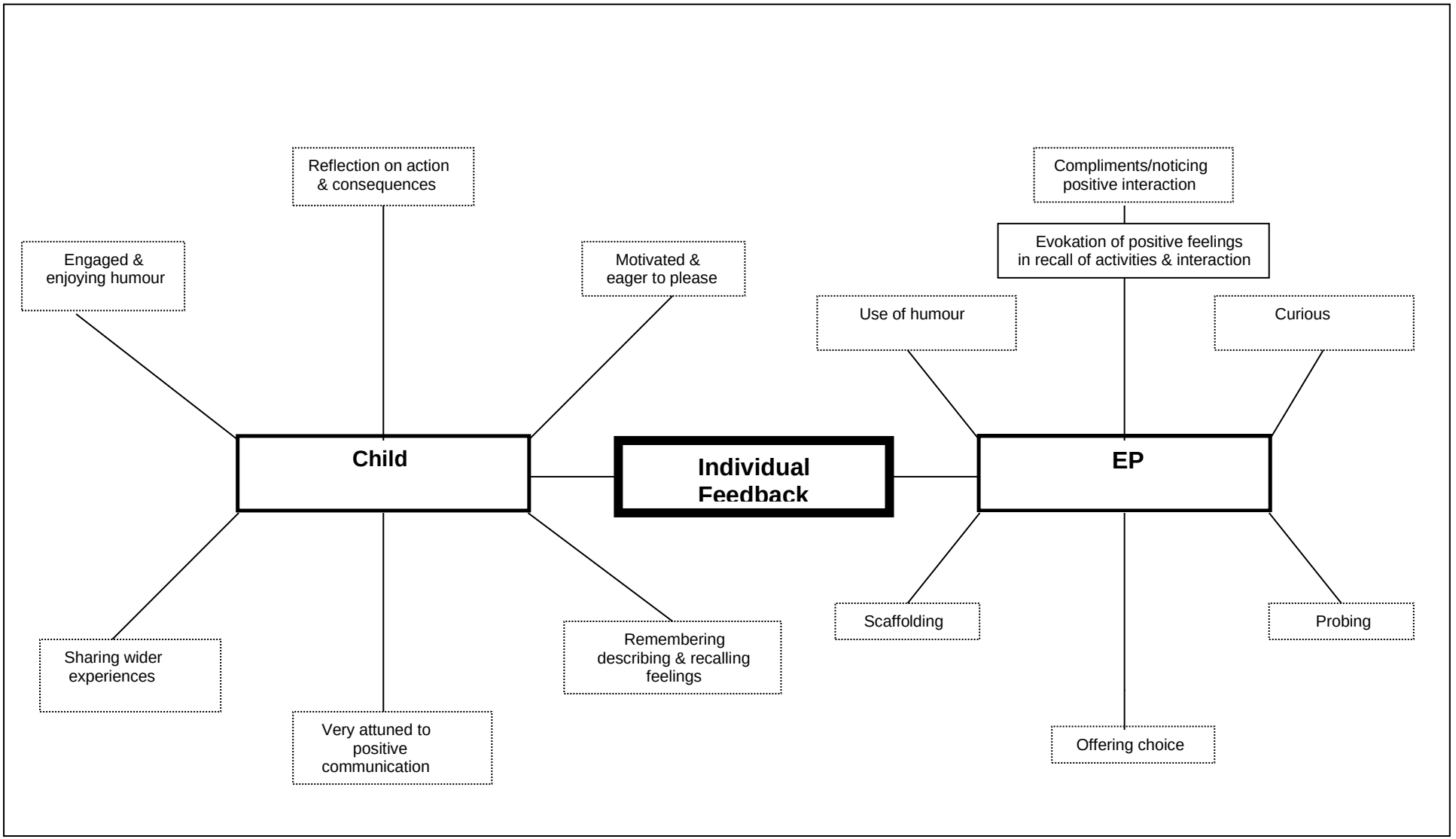
Thematic process map 2: First individual feedback with teacher (11.03.08)



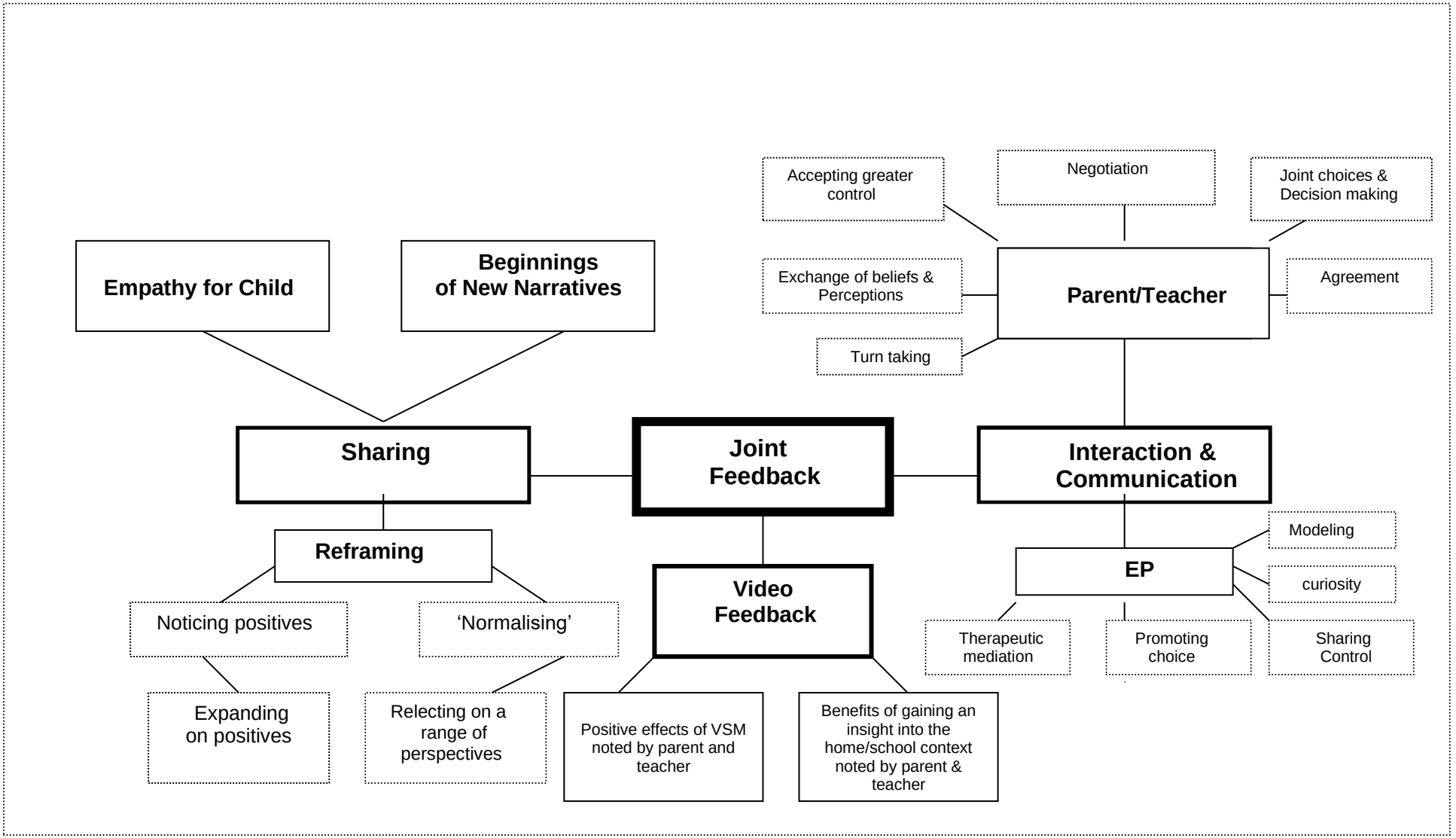
Thematic process map 3: 1st Joint feedback with parent and teacher (17.03.08)



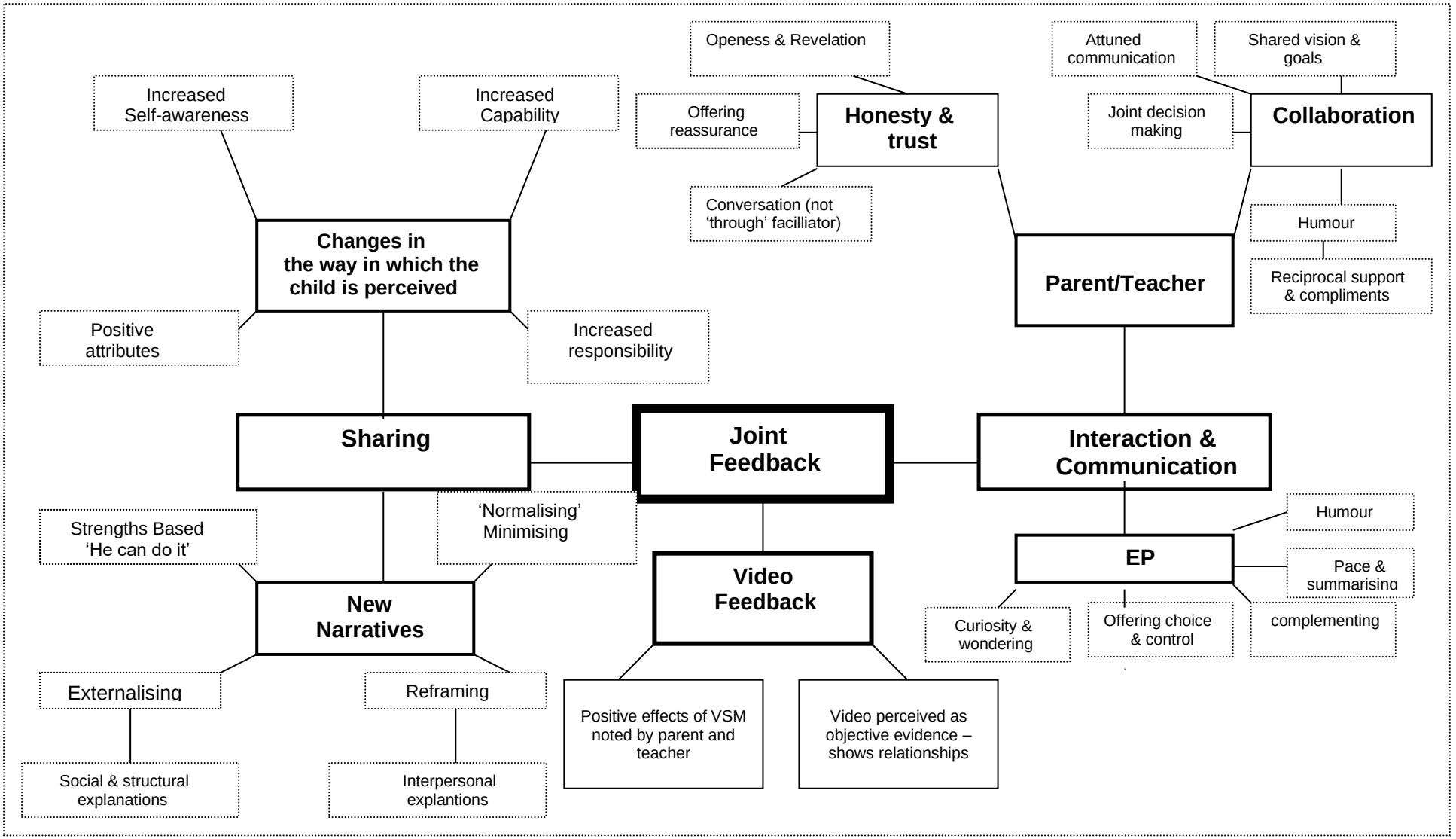
Thematic process map 4: Individual feedback with child (28.03.08)



Thematic process map 5: 2nd Joint feedback with parent and teacher (22.4.08)



Thematic process map 6: 3rd Joint feedback with parent and teacher (6.05.08)



3.5 Can video intervention promote the development of a collaborative approach between parents and teachers in situations where there is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour?

The following section presents the results of the study in relation to the whether the intervention was perceived as promoting collaboration between the parent and teacher within the situation explored. A visual summary of the key themes discussed below is presented at the end of this section in the form of a thematic network (Fig. 7, pg.113).

3.5.1 Developing collaborative relationships

Analysis across the data set, including semi-structured interviews, written reflections and video feedback footage, suggests that a collaborative approach between the parent and teacher was achieved overtime as a result of the video intervention. As previously discussed the process of change was tracked and analysed using notes transcribed from viewing the video recordings of the feedback sessions. This has been represented visually in the set of thematic process maps presented in Figure 6. The focus of the maps was upon identifying the changes that occurred in relation to the content of the communication (i.e. what was shared) within the sessions and the ways in which the interaction and relationships between individuals within the feedback sessions changed ((i.e. how was it changed). The key findings from the thematic process maps are outlined below.

3.5.2 The process of change

Thematic Process Maps

Maps 1,2 & 4, individual video feedback with the parent, teacher and child respectively (Figure 6, pgs.102, 103, 105) highlight a difference between the content of the communication within these video feedback sessions, which appears to reflect to some extent the different positions of those involved at the beginning of the intervention, for example in the parent's individual feedback the key themes within the communication relate to a positive focus and surprise and revelation. Within the teacher's individual feedback key themes within the communication relate to the expression of the teacher's beliefs, the child's peer relationships and two different sides to the child. The content of the communication in the child's individual feedback related to unprompted sharing of wider experiences and prompted recall and

reflection on actions and consequences viewed in the activity recordings of positive interaction.

Differences between the teacher and parent in relation to their goals with respect to achieving change in the situation were also highlighted in the first joint feedback (Figure 6, Map 3 – 17.03.08, pg.104) with the teacher aiming to achieve a change in the child and parent aiming to achieve a change in herself.

Looking across the maps from the first individual feedback session to the final joint feedback session the following key changes are highlighted:

Interaction and Relationships

2nd Joint feedback (Figure 6, Map 5 – 22.04.08, pg.106)

- More equitable roles undertaken within the feedback session, less expectation upon facilitator to lead, greater acceptance of control by the parent and teacher
- Negotiation, joint choices and decision making
- Exchange of personal beliefs and perceptions

3rd Joint feedback (Figure 6, Map 6 – 6.05.08, pg.107)

- Openness and honesty
- Conversations rather than facilitated discussions
- Reciprocal support and reassurance
- Shared vision and goal
- Humour and attuned communication

Content of the Communication (what was shared)

2nd Joint feedback session (Figure 6, Map 5 – 22.04.08, pg.106)

- Shared expressions of empathy for the child
- Expanding on positives to reframe events, normalising
- Reflection on a broader range of perspectives
- Beginnings of new narratives

3rd Joint feedback session (Figure 6, Map 6 – 6.05.08, pg.107)

- New narratives – strengths based and progressive
- Some acknowledgement of broader influences and alternative possibilities in relation to the situation
- Change in perceptions of child

The changes in the relationships between those involved in relation to the intervention were also highlighted in the final semi-structured interviews of both the teacher and parent. For the teacher collaborative relationships were not the exclusive domain of the adults, but also included the child as highlighted in the quotation below.

Teacher: *…if it hadn't involved [child] and if it hadn't involved all of us, then I don't think it would've worked… I think it had to be all parties, cos otherwise it…it goes back to the preconceptions, and are you moving on from the preconceptions that you've already got, erm …(Interview 4, pg.14, 20)….And until you actually are able to bring all parties together and put all the mixed messages together and come up with the truth it doesn't [work] (Interview 4, pg.15, 3)*

This is echoed by the parent in her final interview,

Parent: *Now we…we're all working together and he [child] knows it …And he knows we're…we're there for him, but we're all there for each other as well…(Interview 3, pg.24, 1)*

The effects of the collaboration were also commented upon by the teacher, who emphasised the increased motivation and commitment to achieving shared goals brought about by a shared understanding and involvement in planning and decision making as highlighted in the quotations below:

Teacher: *…you can presume people know where they stand, but they don't really until they're involved in the decision making process (Interview 4, pg.15, 10)*

Teacher: *…if somebody comes and says right we'll do that, that and that, well it's not necessarily gonna be put into place as well as involving somebody in the decision making. If you involve them in the decision making they're gonna do their untmost to make sure it happens, and then they understand the full…thought process…(Interview 4, pg.15, 35)*

3.6 A Model of Collaboration

Based upon the analysis of the data presented of the development of a collaborative approach between those involved in the situation an interactive psychosocial model of collaboration is proposed below involving four key components:

- Use of video footage showing positive, adaptive interaction
- Sharing and perspective taking
- Effective communication
- Co-authoring new narratives

Video of positive, adaptive interaction

- Change of focus
- Challenging existing perceptions and beliefs
- Facilitating increased self-efficacy
- Offering valid alternative 'realities'

Sharing and perspective taking

- Acknowledging multiple perspectives
- Knowledge and competences
- Vision and goal
- Experience and empathy
- Opportunities to edit and 'co-author' memory and experience

- **Sharing power and control**

i) Joint planning and decision making
ii) increased commitment and responsibility

Effective communication

- Honesty and openness
- Mutual support and respect
- Trust

Co-authoring new narratives

- Broader perspectives
- New/shared understandings
- Strengths based and progressive narratives

As outlined above the proposed model is conceptualised as dynamic and interactive in which individuals are perceived as active agents within the social world and where change can occur where people are given opportunities to become more connected with their own interpretative, meaning making abilities and a greater selection of available possibilities. Figure 7 (pg.113), provides a visual representation of the proposed model.

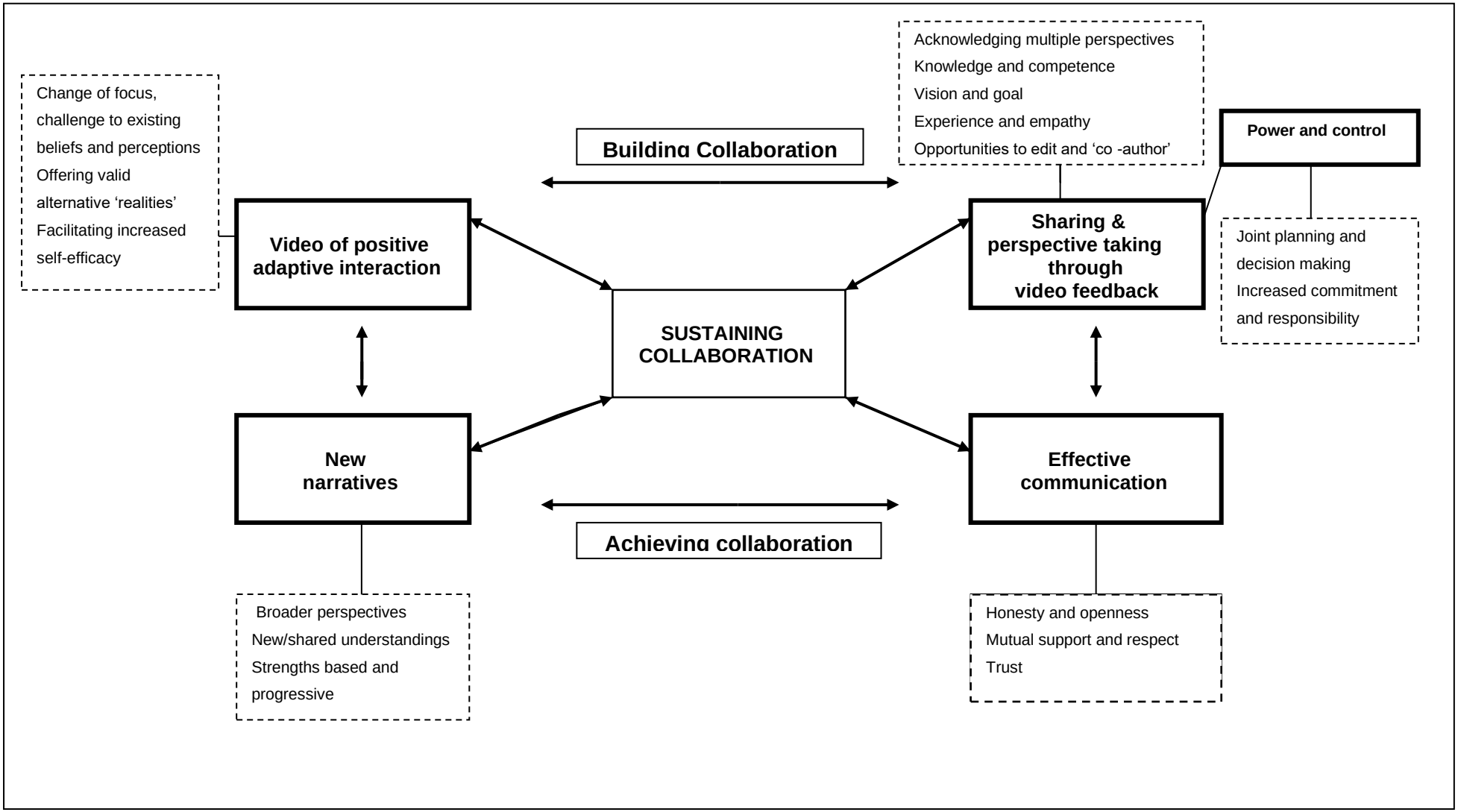
3.7 Concluding Comments

The findings of the study suggest that despite considerable barriers to collaboration at the outset of the study, the video intervention was effective as a means of promoting and building collaborative relationships within the pupil, parent, teacher sub-system, in the given context. There is also some indication that positive change in a wider range of relationships was promoted.

There is the suggestion that the video intervention acted to challenge a predominantly negative focus influencing the beliefs and perceptions of those involved in relation to the situation, and actively promoted change in the ways in which people perceived and talked about the situation and each other, which became more positive, hopeful and strengths based.

Findings in relation to my own role in the process, as the Educational Psychologist suggests that the interpersonal, therapeutic and facilitative skills utilised as part of the process were an important aspect of the movement forward toward change. Being 'outside' of the situation was also important in this respect. However, the non-directive approach and focus upon relationships rather than individuals was highlighted as a challenge to the expectations of some of those involved in the situation.

Figure 7: Thematic network showing the way in which collaboration between the parent and teacher developed in relation to the video intervention



Chapter 4

Summary and Discussion

This research came about as a result of my desire to continue to develop my practice with respect to collaborative working, particularly within the context of home-school relationships where there is an issue with pupil behaviour. My own experience of working with parents and professionals in such situations suggested that this is a complex and often contentious area; an assertion which is supported by an increasing body of evidence, as previously discussed.

Recognising what Todd and Higgins (1998) refer to as a 'culture of blame' in such situations, I was keen to explore whether a shift in the focus upon the individual to one which rests upon that which occurs *between* individuals i.e. the communication and relationships between people; might serve to nurture the development of collaboration. I was also interested in exploring how I might work within the situation to help to 'free up' some of the entrenched positions, perspectives and stories, which I experienced within my own encounters.

I was aware of an increasing number of small scale studies indicating the success of the use of video as an intervention, particularly with respect to Video Self-modeling and also Video Interaction Guidance. As such I became interested in whether a video intervention based upon the principles of these approaches might promote the development of collaboration between teachers and parents in the circumstances outlined above. From this interest the main thrust of this enquiry was borne, giving rise to the research aims and questions, which the previous Chapter has started to address in the initial analysis and presentation of results.

4.1 Discussion

The following Chapter sets out to explore, discuss and further define the story of the findings outlined in Chapter 3 as they relate to the research questions, to enable the story of the process and development of collaboration to be constructed and shared in a coherent manner.

4.2 What are some of the barriers to collaboration between parents and teachers in situations where there is a perceived problem with pupil behaviour?

One of the assumptions of this research, based upon my own experiences within similar situations and upon evidence from studies of partnership, collaboration and challenging pupil behaviour was that in this situation there would be identifiable barriers to the teacher and parent working collaboratively to support the pupil. As such I explored this with the parent and teacher in the initial semi-structured interviews in relation to what had made a difference in the situation, raising the issue of barriers as a prompt if necessary (see app.1)

Some of the barriers as perceived at that time by the parent and teacher were touched upon tentatively either directly or indirectly within the initial semi-structured interviews. Others were less visible within the context of the interviews and gradually emerged within the stories that were shared between those involved (including myself) sometimes, particularly within the early stages, outside of the video feedback. However, as the intervention progressed this was shared more frequently as part of the video feedback. This suggests some issues with trust within the early stages of my own relationships with the parent and teacher and within the parent teacher relationship, which will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

From my own perspective the most significant barriers to collaboration in this situation were the very different positions occupied by the parent and teacher with respect to the child, identified within the themes of :

- Parent's sense of hopelessness and confusion

- Teachers professional distance

4.2.1 The positioning of the parent and teacher in relation to the situation

The themes of the parent's 'hopelessness and confusion' and the teacher's 'professional distance' clearly emphasise the different positions taken up by each in relation to the situation, as seen in the ways in which each described their experience and perceptions. As outlined in the results section the parent's perception of the situation was that it was ‘all consuming’, overwhelming and never ending, leaving her exhausted mentally and physically and appearing to lack confidence in her own judgements and ability to effect change in the situation. In contrast the teacher’s description of the situation appeared to maintain a ‘professional distance’ and outward looking gaze, which suggested a more detached and bounded position.

One interesting aspect of this was the way in which some common understandings relating to the situation were given different degrees of attention and interpreted differently by the parent and teacher. An example of this being the parent's perceived lack of confidence and self esteem in relation to the situation. This was discussed by the parent in the first semi-structured interview and linked to the theme of 'hopelessness and confusion'. It was also highlighted by the teacher at the beginning of the intervention as a ‘main issue’ with respect to hindering joint work between the teacher and the parent.

The teacher's account of this suggested some empathy with the parent, positioning the child as 'manipulative', though also suggesting a 'permissive' parenting style (Interview 2, pg.6-7, 40).

However, whilst the parent acknowledged her own sense of hopelessness and confusion within the situation, from her perspective the situation was much more complex, helping to explain the enormous stress and pressure she felt herself to be under and her difficulties with ‘knowing the right thing to do’.

This relates to the parent’s apparent ambivalence with respect to attributions of responsibility. As suggested by the teacher the parent did describe herself as a ‘bad

parent' and appear to blame herself for the situation, though the parent also acknowledged that she also blamed the teacher and the child. Where the responsibility lay with respect to the situation at any one time, appeared to be related to the particular context, which also informed the role that the parent perceived herself to undertake.

The parent's perspective of differing attributions of responsibility accords in some respects with the findings of Miller et al (2002) whose exploration of parents attributions for the cause of difficult behaviour in school suggested that parents tend to adopt a more systemic or inter-actionist perspective of causation. In this instance however, this perspective rather than promoting greater clarity and understanding of the situation appeared to contribute to the parent's uncertainty.

The parent's reference to being 'piggy-in-the-middle' suggested some sense of being pulled in several directions at once and appeared to be linked in particular to the conflicting roles of 'the victim', and 'the protector' that she saw herself as undertaking within both the home and school context.

- 'the victim'

  When referring to herself within the role of 'the victim' the parent referred to feeling a sense of 'being let down' or 'disappointed' or afraid of what the child was going to do next, stating she was 'walking on egg shells' and 'it shouldn't have to be like this'. This tended to run alongside a 'within child' narrative of responsibility.

- 'the protector'

  When referring to herself in the role of 'the protector' the parent spoke of representing the child and advocating on his behalf, presenting alternative suggestions for the situation and standing up for his best interests within both the school and family context. This tended to concur with both systems and individual narratives of responsibility.

Within school the parent primarily saw herself as her son's protector, as suggested in her reflection on the situation following the intervention

Parent: *…you have this barrier up all the time you know, cos it's kind of like you know, I'm here with [child] behind my barrier and you can't get us…it was just to protect him all the time (Interview 3, pg.27, 22)*

The parents sense of herself as her son's protector appeared to be underpinned by a more generalised concept relating to the increased vulnerability of children in today's society and the responsibility of parents for the protection and nurturing of their children, suggested in the initial semi-structured interview (Interview 1, pg.17 -18). The parent explained that the child was not allowed to play out in the street because it was too dangerous and because of the possible negative influences of other children in the neighbourhood. The parent also acknowledged that she was becoming increasingly protective, the more she perceived the child's behaviour to be worsening, the more protective she felt she was becoming.

In exploring the beliefs and understandings in relation to the parent's perceived lack of self-esteem and confidence in her parenting, we can see the marked difference between the multi-faceted account of the parent and the narrowly focused account of the teacher. These very different perspectives may be seen to be both created by and maintained by the positions occupied by the parent and teacher within the 'education system' particularly in relation to issues of behaviour and discipline.

The theme of the teacher's 'professional distance' illustrates this further. As suggested in the results section the teacher appeared to maintain a level of 'emotional detachment' and 'defensiveness' identified within the theme of the 'teacher's professional distance'. One aspect of this was the teacher's apparent resistance to acknowledging her own feelings in relation to the situation, emphasising that the feelings she expressed were on behalf of the child and were not her own *(Interview 2, pg.9, 22).*

This appears to run contrary to evidence which suggests that disruptive pupil behaviour can be one of the most stressful aspects of work for teachers (Forlin, 1996; 2001). It appeared that the teacher's feeling's were externalised and expressed more indirectly, through expressions of empathy for example, initially with the parent and then later in feedback sessions two and three, with the child. This 'detachment' could be seen to be

linked to the teacher's perceived defensiveness as suggested in the teacher's comment when the issue of her feelings around the situation was explored.

Teacher: *Oh yeah…very upset for him, very upset for him, but not to the point where erm…not to the point where I don't feel as if I could cope or anything like that…just disappointed (Interview 2, pg.9, 22)*

The implication within the statement seems to be two fold:

i) that 'owning' the feelings ascribed by the teacher in relation to the situation may be indicative of a failure to manage or cope

ii) that 'the problem' lies with the child

In the first individual feedback the teacher referred to and commented upon a sense of defensiveness when watching her interactions in the video clip, linking it to the relatively novel and somewhat anxiety provoking experience at that time of being recorded. However later, following the intervention, she described how she quickly became accustomed to the video recording as part of the intervention; though as the data suggests the teacher appeared to continue to feel a level of discomfort throughout the intervention, in the belief that her professional practice was under scrutiny.

Both individual influences suggested in studies of teacher self-efficacy and causal attributions for difficult pupil behaviour; together with cultural influences explored within social and organisational research, may assist with exploring the theme of the teacher's perceived 'professional distance'.

As previously highlighted Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as a person's beliefs in their capabilities to plan and carry out the actions required to 'produce given attainments'. Bandura proposed four main sources of efficacy beliefs: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and physiological and affective states (1977, 1997). The difficult and challenging behaviour of children can therefore be seen as posing a particular challenge to the sources of self-efficacy for adults, undermining their sense of personal and professional efficacy. This may prompt some to question their 'effectiveness and ability to 'cope' (Gray, 1997), whilst others may search for external causation for the difficulties, avoiding a threat to the self-concept.

This questioning of self-efficacy was particularly evident within the parent's narratives relating to the situation when attributing responsibility to herself, but appeared to be absent from the teachers narratives, which throughout, seemed to firmly assert a sense of professional efficacy. Interestingly, studies into the relationship between pupil behaviour and teacher stress and 'burnout', suggests that self-efficacy may be an important protective factor with respect to an individual's emotional and physical well being and general effectiveness (Forlin, 1996; Forlin, 2001; Hastings and Bham, 2003). This suggestion may help in explaining some of the effects upon the parent's wellbeing and general functioning highlighted by both the parent and teacher in their accounts of the situation. Additionally, viewed from this perspective the teacher's professional distance may be perceived as both a means of maintaining professional efficacy and a strategy for managing stress within the workplace.

Broader influences upon teachers' beliefs, expectations and behaviour, have been explored in studies of school organisation and culture. Drawing upon these, Miller (2003) identifies a number of factors which may contribute to what has been suggested as a preference of teachers for maintaining a sense of boundedness at the cost of professional isolation. These include:

- the major reward for teachers, the development and responses of pupils, being something most easily earned away from colleagues
- the high value placed upon being able to keep a class under control, leading both to a wariness of being observed and a desire to keep a class within a more bounded space where it can be more easily managed

The point Miller highlights above in relation to the value ascribed to classroom management and control appears to have a particular resonance with another aspect for consideration with respect to the teacher's apparent defensiveness in this study. This concerns tensions that exist with respect to the expectations of the teacher's role; highlighted by the teacher's perceptions of the 'common mindset' of parents in the school and her own perceptions of her teaching role in relation to behaviour and classroom management.

In this study the teacher appeared to perceive her primary function to be the delivery of education to groups of children, and the notion of classroom control was highlighted as a critical factor in facilitating this. The emphasis placed upon control and management within the classroom is however unsurprising given the vast amount of literature which deals with this issue in education and it's perceived links to the teacher's professional, moral and legal responsibility to all of the children within the class. However, the issue of the way in which control and management is exercised in the classroom can become an area of contention between teachers and parents, as suggested by the teacher's comment in the first interview, where she refers to the perception of parent's that their child is being 'picked on' by the teacher.

Whilst the teacher initially identified this as the 'mindset' of parents of children within that particular school, following the intervention the notion was raised again in terms of a much broader, social phenomenon. *(Interview 4, pg.19, 20).* This suggested the teacher's belief in a change in the social perception and thinking around adult-child interactions and relationships and how they function in relation to issues of power, authority and control. Maintaining classroom order and discipline to facilitate children's education was perceived as an important function of the teacher's role; however it was one in which the teacher appeared to perceive herself to be increasingly open to criticism within a 'social justice' or rights based construction of childhood.

In exploring the themes of the parent's sense of hopelessness and confusion and the teachers professional distance, a number of factors have been highlighted in relation to the positioning of parents and teacher's and the ways in which this appears to have influenced their beliefs, expectations and interpretations of experience in relation to the situation, as summarised below (Figure 8, pg.122). This would appear to concur with the assertion of Todd and Higgins (1998) that it is the socially constructed subject positions assigned to parents and teachers that serve to inform expectations and beliefs about behaviour and powers to act within systems, and it is in the taking up of these positions, which have implications for subjectivity and experience, that the perspectives of parents and professionals become so different.

The differing beliefs, expectations and perspectives of teachers and parents can be seen to be strengthened and perpetuated through both a 'self-confirming bias', whereby

individuals seek out and attend to information that supports their beliefs (Duncan, 1976), and within the recursive interactions that occur within and across the systems of the family and the school, as suggested by the parent's description of the situation as being like a '*vicious circle…affecting everybody' (Interview 1, pg.1, 36 & pg.2, 1).*

Figure 8: Differences constructed in taking up the subject positions of parent and teacher in relation to the situation

Parent	**Teacher**
• A significant long term emotional attachment and investment in the adult – child relationship creating a highly emotive climate • An ambivalence with respect to attributions of responsibility, creating difficulties with consistency, planning, decision making and action • Undertaking conflicting multiple roles creating increased pressure upon effective communication and relationships • An increasing emphasis upon the perceived need for parental vigilance and 'protection' in the social perception of the role of 'the good parent'	• A time limited and bounded adult-child relationship based upon and developed within assumptions of professional, moral and legal responsibility and power • A concern to maintain a sense of professional self-efficacy, underpinning a resistant external gaze • Cultural preferences for maintaining 'boundedness' within aspects of the teaching role, leading to a wariness of being observed and inclination toward individual, autonomous practice • Tensions around the expectations of the role of the teacher with respect to issues of control and discipline in relation to a right's based construction of 'the child'

This metaphor can be linked to ideas from 'systems theory' in relation to problem maintenance through the circularity of interactions within a system where each part of the system interacts with and influences the other (Tomm, 1984).

In this way it is possible to see the way in which attributions of causality might develop into negative narratives of individual blame and responsibility within and across the home school boundaries, which have the potential to become increasingly dominant over time.

4.2.2 A self-perpetuating situation

Running throughout all of the initial accounts given by both the parent and teacher of the situation, was a negative and individualistic focus, which allowed the problem to be defined and explained in terms of the individual and where issues of causality, responsibility and blame were either hinted at, or often in relation to the child clearly ascribed. The story that seemed to be most often shared meaningfully between the teacher and the parent were those of the deliberately challenging and manipulative child.

This story, initially told separately by both the parent and teacher in the semi-structured interviews prior to the intervention was particularly potent in its depth and use of particularly emotive and negative metaphor. Whilst the parent did attribute blame to the teacher and perceive herself to be her child's 'protector', she also perceived herself as a 'victim' of the child's behaviour based upon an account of the situation which accorded agency to the child's deviant behaviour. In this respect there did appear to be some sense of shared meaning and understanding between the parent and teacher *(Interview 1, pg.2, 26; Interview 2, pg.2, 14).*

As Miller (2003) highlights, this is often not the case for the majority of pupil's where there is concern expressed about pupil behaviour. Miller points to differences in the perceived behaviour of pupils between home and school and suggests that this may relate to both issues of context and the process of 'socialisation' into an institution that occurs when joining; serving to facilitate common frameworks for developing shared meaning and understanding. In this instance it may be argued that working as a Teaching Assistant within school enabled the parent to undertake this process of socialisation to some extent, thus sharing the common understanding and meanings within the organisation relating to behaviour and discipline *(Interview 1, pg.12, 25).*

This may then help to understand the dominance of this particular narrative with respect to the situation and the parent's perception of herself as a 'victim' with respect to her feelings of being let down as discussed earlier. Equally however; this also suggests that despite some 'common ground' between the parent and teacher, the positioning of the parent and teacher and the disparity between their perspectives were sufficient not just to maintain the status quo, but to militate against collaborative working as has been

increasingly highlighted in the literature relating to home school partnerships and collaboration (Crozier, 1999; Vincent & Tomlinson, 1997). The alternative beliefs, attributions of the parent and teacher, together with the negative narratives of responsibility less publicly and widely shared, appeared to exacerbate many of the difficulties with communication and trust between the parent and teacher, creating what appeared to be a self-perpetuating situation.

The central roles of communication and trust in building and maintaining collaborative relationships between home and school are widely recognised (Miller, 2003; Roffey, 2004; Dunsmuir, Frederickson and Lang, 2004) and it is suggested that it is within the communication between home and school that differences in attributions and perceptions can be seen to be improved or exacerbated, and power shared or wielded.

Issues relating to communication were identified within the semi-structured interviews of both the parent and teacher. These involved difficulties with the negative focus of communication between home and school, underlying tensions, conflicting and mixed messages, and guarded communication between the parent and teacher. One of the difficulties with communication from the parent's perspective related to a lack of continuity of teaching staff, that the parent felt affected the sense of responsibility undertaken by individuals, hindered reciprocity and the flow of information and left the parent uncertain as to the value placed upon her views and participation *(Interview 1, pg.13, 1; Interview 1, pg.6,14).*

The parent also expressed a sense of discomfort with the negative focus of the home-school relationship and the way in which this influenced both communication and the parent-teacher relationship *(Interview1, pg. 13, 26)* and clarified in the parent's final interview *(Interview 3, pg.23,1).* In this respect the parent felt that she continuously received negative messages with respect to her child, which she found very distressing, undermined her sense of effectiveness as a parent, and contributed to her sense of hopelessness. In some respects this may be seen to be likened to a state of 'learned helplessness' (Seligman, 1975) whereby an individual comes to believe that they have no agency or control within a particular situation. The negative focus and narratives that developed around the child's behaviour appeared at times to be accepted by the parent

and at others refuted, which may be related to both the context and the parent's affect and perceptions with respect to her role at that time e.g. 'protector' or 'victim'

The parent suggested that she found this negativity pervasive and found it increasingly difficult to challenge and to identify the positive within the situation, therefore the parent's alternative attributions of responsibility were not openly shared or discussed, but appeared to go 'underground' and were shared more privately. Whilst the parent did not explain the reasons as to why she found it difficult to challenge the dominance of the negative 'within child' narrative, it is reasonable to suggest that both issues of power and school culture, given the parent's position as a TA in school, may have been influential in this respect.

The teacher's concerns around communication very much emphasised the parent's communication and behaviour as responsible for tensions underlying the parent-teacher relationship, and the perceived lack of open communication and mixed messages *(Interview 2, pg.6, 10)*.

The teacher explained the parent's propensity for seeking a wide range of views from various individuals within school, despite apparently concurring with the views, plans and action discussed with the teacher. From the teacher's perspective this demonstrated some dissatisfaction and distrust on behalf of the parent with respect to the parent-teacher relationship. This apparent lack of trust appeared to be reciprocated in terms of an erosion of the teachers trust as a result of the parent's action

The lack of trust in the parent–teacher relationship appeared to be inextricably bound up with the issues of communication discussed above. This is similar to the findings of a study carried out by Dunsmuir, Fredrickson and Lang (2004) into the development of home-school trust, which identified a central role for communication in building and developing trust.

One of the interesting aspects within the current study was the particular nature of the parent-teacher relationship in the given circumstances. Todd (2007) has argued that where there is an issue with pupil behaviour, parents are positioned in a relationship with school that is different from that of other parents. There is also evidence which suggests

that parents who have lower levels of trust in the home –school relationship demonstrate a greater desire for reciprocal communication with teachers about their individual child and regular updated progress reports as necessary and in addition to formal meetings, such as parents' evenings (Dunsmuir, Fredrickson & Lang, 2004).

Parent: …*because I used to go to her nearly every…every home time an' say 'what's he been like, what's he been like' an', and really inside me I thought… I was thinking, well it's you as a teacher, it's you as a teacher you know… and because it was stressful and because it was hard work that was where the going home an' taking it home an' taking it out on [child] an' [father] was coming from you know. It was exhausting to do that every day (Interview 3, pg.22, 16).*

In this study, following the intervention the parent described having previously been caught up in a relationship with the teacher where, despite the negativity and distressing effects of the communication, she felt compelled to seek regular interactions and meetings, to ensure she was fulfilling her role as a 'good parent' in protecting and defending her son. However, one of the difficulties with increased communication is that depending upon the quality of the communication, it has the capacity not only to improve a situation and bring people closer together, but also to open up or sustain disagreements and misunderstandings and emphasise power differentials. This is suggested in the parents comment where she describes herself as feeling a 'nuisance' when going to see the teacher *(Interview 1, pg.19, 32)*

In summary, prior to the intervention in this study, the parent and teacher appeared to be positioned in a relationship, which was caught in a series of recursive interactions, perpetuating a lack of trust, poor communication and a culture of blame. This acted to strengthen differences in their lived experience and perspectives with respect to the situation and to militate against collaboration. This would largely concur with the existing literature relating to barriers to home school partnership and collaboration where there are concerns about pupil behaviour.

4.3 How does the video intervention affect the perceptions and portrayal of the situation?

As suggested by Becker (1999) the use of narrative is particularly prominent in the way in which we make sense of 'disruption' or problems in our lives. Becker maintains that to understand disruption, we must also understand cultural definitions of normalcy. She suggests that western society is bounded by order and rationality, emphasising linearity and predictability, which enables people to organise their plans and expectations. In this sense disruption is perceived to be particularly unsettling, which serves to motivate us to restore a sense of order and continuity, primarily through narrative.

Narrative accounts may be seen as functioning within different dimensions, including the intrapersonal, for example stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, interpersonal, and social dimensions.

> Thus the study of narrative breaks down the traditional psychological/social distinction and develops a more complex psycho-social subject. The narrator is an active agent who is part of a social world. Through narrative, the agent engages with that world (Murray, 2003, pg.116)

The accounts relating to the situation given by those involved in this study may therefore be seen as their attempts to make sense of and explain the perceived 'disruption' they were experiencing in relation to the situation. Furthermore in the telling of the story the individuals involved are also able to say something about issues of human agency or lack or it, in shaping the events that are recounted. An important aspect of this, which has been noted by some writers such as Murray (2003) and Wood & Kroger (2000) is our apparent eagerness to emphasise our 'reasonableness' when sharing and explaining our experience of disruption. This has particular resonance with this study given the prominence of individualised accounts of responsibility identified prior to the intervention.

In the following section I will look at the way in which the perceptions and portrayal of the situation were affected by the intervention through discussion of the narratives relating to

the situation in general and reflexively the construction of personal narratives of identity in relation to the situation. This will involve:

- A brief outline of the narratives of the parent and teacher in relation to the situation prior to the intervention and the ways in which these were framed, developed and expressed.
- A discussion of the way in which narratives appeared to be affected by the intervention, drawing upon the threefold classification model developed by Gergen and Gergen (1986)
- Finally I will move on to consider possible explanations for the effects identified, drawing broadly upon constructivist, narrative and positive psychology.

4.3.1 Making sense of the situation

As previously discussed the central narratives shared by the teacher and parent and reportedly the child, prior to and in the initial stages of the video intervention, were highly individualised accounts, sharing the common element of according responsibility and accountability for the situation.

- **Family functioning**

The story of family functioning touched upon to some extent by both the parent and teacher, appeared almost as a backdrop against which the more detailed and individualised narratives of the parent and child were outlined. These accounts related to changes in family structure, family dynamics and relationships, that had taken place in the child's early years, and the possible effects of this upon his social and emotional development. This story appeared to have been shared between the teacher and parent to a limited extent, though this sharing appeared to be as part of a justification for the 'within child' narrative of the child's attention seeking and manipulative behaviour. The suggestion here appeared to be one whereby the difficulties created were not deliberate but inadvertent consequences of change within the family that perhaps could have been handled differently within the family. This story was framed in a way which negated agency with respect to the actions of the family and suggested a (prior) need for support and guidance with respect to parenting.

- **Parenting skills and the parent child relationship**

Again this story was related by both the parent and teacher. Whilst there were slightly different versions of this story, key elements related to notions of the 'good' and 'bad parent'. The concept of 'expert knowledge' as related to good parenting, parenting skills and the parent child relationship appeared to run through these narratives. Self-reproach and guilt together with perceived ineffectuality were common elements within the parent's accounts, whilst some lack of skills and the parent as in need of support were common strands within the stories as told by both the parent and teacher. Again there is the suggestion of a lack of agency with respect to the parent's actions in these accounts. It also appeared that this was a more private narrative that was less openly and directly shared between the parent and teacher.

- **The parent's personal narrative**

The parent's personal narrative appeared to be very much defined by the theme of hopelessness and confusion as previously discussed. The account given by the parent was one in which she saw herself as unable to effect change in the situation and as the person caught in the middle of the situation, the mediator within and across the home school boundaries. The notion of being a 'bad parent' was dominant within the parents account as suggested above and the implication that she was pulled in so may directions she was unable to fulfil adequately the social roles expected of her, as a wife and mother.

- **Teaching skills and the teacher pupil relationship**

This narrative appeared to be equally as developed an account as that relating to parenting skills, though seemed to be far more private. Indeed it was only more openly shared and acknowledged towards the end of the intervention by the parent, though recognised as one of the many accounts a little earlier by the teacher. This story related to the interpretation of the teacher's relationship with and approach to the child in class. The teacher's skills in behaviour and classroom management also appeared to be called into question. There appeared to be some inconsistency with respect to the agency given to the actions of the teacher in these stories, though the notion of agency and direct responsibility was clearly identifiable. This may help to account for the more private sharing of this story, which may have been perceived to have been potentially controversial, challenging and detrimental to the situation.

- **The teacher's personal narrative**

The teacher's personal narrative appeared to be one in which professional efficacy and issues of good practice and classroom management were emphasised. The teacher described her desire to work together with the parent to address the situation. She also spoke of her need to carefully consider what she shared with others and how this was shared, due to her concerns that she was being held to account for the situation.

- **Child's attention seeking and manipulation**

As outlined in the results section, this appeared to be the most dominant, frequently and publicly shared narrative relating to the situation, and as a reflection of this a little more time will be given to discussing this story both within the current section and later when I move on to explore the effects of the intervention upon the portrayal of the situation. Within this account, the dominant meaning was accorded to the interpretation of the child as being 'attention seeking' and 'manipulative'. As suggested by Wood & Kroger, (2000) if a person is constructed as an agent, he or she can be allocated responsibility for their actions. This particular narrative clearly and consistently ascribed agency to the child's actions, whereby he was responsible for conscious choices he made in respect of his behaviour and therefore was understood to be deliberately 'deviant' and directly accountable. The use of metaphor within this account appeared to emphasise the intensity and unpredictability of the child's behaviour as suggested in the quotations below:

…he's like a whirl wind, he'll just go off the wall (Interview 1, pg.4)

…he can flare up… (Interview 2, pg.7)

Wood and Kroger (ibid) suggest that there are many 'discursive devices' for positioning ourselves and others as agents and patients. The distinct way of using metaphor in telling this particular story, could be seen as a means of adding a particular emphasis, authenticity and 'truth' to this account.

However, from a narrative perspective, such a story may be viewed as a 'thin description', which has the effect of making exceptions to the interpretations and meanings given to the situation less visible. In this respect the focus of the story

obscures other possible meanings, such as broader social and cultural interpretations (Morgan, 2000). One particularly dominant theme in this story was that of the child's refusal to take responsibility for his wrong doing and blaming those around him for his actions.

It may be argued that in the case in question, the dominant negative narrative appeared to be primarily developed and maintained by adults. Given the power differentials between adults and children in most cases, this might allow little room for the child to articulate his own meanings and interpretations with respect to the situation. It is reasonable to suggest that in such a situation we may see the child as being compelled to adopt a defensive position, in an attempt to protect his sense of self, and in so doing, becoming increasingly resistant to accepting responsibility ascribed to him by others.

We might also see the way in which the dominant negative 'within child' narrative in this respect may have the potential to isolate and marginalise the child within the contexts in which it is shared, as it becomes perceived as part of the child's identity and he is defined as 'manipulative' and 'naughty'. Certainly in the case of this study, examples of this occurring within both the home and the school context were identified by the parent and teacher.

Parent*:…But we couldn't go out as a whole family because he wouldn't have all the attention and he wouldn't like it (Interview 1, pg.10, 26)*

Parent*….He's kind of…I don't know whether I should say this either…labelled I think as…as being… "[child] is naughty" by other children (Interview1, pg.12, 35)*

Teacher*:…other children will generally say "oh please don't do that [child]" (Interview 2, pg.32)*

The consequences of 'thin descriptions' may have far reaching consequences for the way in which the child identifies and experiences themselves and it is not impossible to imagine the way in which an 'expressed truth' becomes experienced as a reality.

Parent: ...*he say's "I hate myself and no-one likes me" (2nd joint feedback session, 22.04.08, 41:54)*

Here again then we seem to return to the circularity or 'wheels within wheels' that appear to be in operation within such complex 'problem' saturated situations, whereby the child may be seen to begin to construct his personal narrative in relation to the dominant accounts of the situation as described by those people who are significant within his life.

In the narrative accounts outlined above I have suggested the way in which, in seeking to give meaning to and explain the experience of 'disruption' related to the situation, those involved apply a cultural model of understanding based upon a linear, cause and effect approach. One consequence of this is that issues of agency and responsibility are then implied, which has both personal and social implications for those involved within the ongoing dynamic and interactive process of meaning making.

Up to this point the discussion has in the main been concerned with exploring the situation as it was experienced, perceived and recounted by the parent and the teacher prior to the intervention. I shall now move on to look at the way in which the narratives and perceptions of the situation appeared to change, following which I will discuss the process of change in relation to the intervention.

4.3.2 Co-authored narratives of change

As highlighted in the results section there were significant changes identified in the accounts given by the child, parent and teacher in relation to the situation following the intervention. The following section is concerned with the discussion of the changes that were identified in the portrayal and perceptions of the situation as highlighted in the different stories that were increasingly shared as the intervention progressed. This involves changes in both the structure of the narratives and their expression.

In looking at the structure of the narratives I have used the threefold classification model developed by Gergen and Gergen (1986), which proposes three 'organising' structures found within narrative accounts:

- The progressive, in which there is movement towards a goal
- The regressive, in which there is movement away from a goal
- The stable in which there is little change

To begin, I will look at the changes in individual accounts of the situation in relation to the parent, teacher and child, moving on to discuss changes within the dominant narrative about the situation, which as previously discussed related to a within-child account of the disruption.

- **Parent**

The parent's account of the situation prior to the intervention can be described as stable/regressive in it's portrayal of the circularity of negative interactions within and across the home-school contexts and repeated failed attempts to bring about change in the situation. The challenges presented by the situation were portrayed as being overwhelming and it appeared that all possible avenues to resolving the situation had been exhausted. The parent's personal narrative as outlined in the previous section can be seen to be interwoven with this account and therefore reflects the stable/regressive structure.

The most immediate change in relation to the intervention occurred within the parent's personal narrative in which, following the first individual feedback she portrayed herself as being an effective parent, who was once again hopeful and believed in her ability to meet the challenges of creating change. Whilst appearing to be a dramatic change, the degree and immediacy of change reported by the parent would concur with the findings of a review of video self-modeling in school based settings undertaken by Hitchcock et al (2003) who highlighted this particular aspect as a significant advantage of this technique.

The parent's new personal narrative then appeared to become part of a broader narrative, which embraced a strength's based focus and a greater acknowledgement of interpersonal and social influences with respect to the situation. This produced more balanced accounts of the situation that moved significantly and, from the parent's account of her 'journey', relatively steadily from stable/regressive to progressive narratives, where goals were not only redefined but shared by those involved in the situation.

- **Teacher**

The teacher's account of the situation prior to the intervention can be described as stable, in its portrayal of the situation as unchanging and in some respects unremarkable, with the potential for change being entirely in the hands of the child. Again this broader narrative can be seen to be reflected within the teacher's personal narrative as suggested in the above section.

As highlighted in the results it appeared that changes in the teacher's narratives occurred less immediately and progressively, than for the parent, for example the teacher's reflections on the first individual feedback suggest that her personal narrative of professional efficacy was validated, therefore retaining the stable structure of the narrative. However, following the first joint feedback the teacher's narrative appeared to become more regressive, in her perception that her belief that she was being blamed by the parent for the situation had been confirmed (Interview 4, pg.3 & teacher's reflection on feedback, 17.03.08). Following the second joint feedback the teacher's narrative again appeared to shift, becoming more stable/progressive in structure, where there begins to be some sharing of experience and empathy. In the third and final feedback session the progressive narrative appears to reach what is likened by Murray (2003) to an 'epiphany', where the narrator sees the world in a different way and goals are redefined. For the teacher, as with the parent, this appears to occur in relation to a sharing of goals and vision that takes place in this session that is perceived to be shared by all those involved in the situation including the child.

- **Child**

Whilst I did not directly and systematically seek out the child's narratives prior to intervention, I am able to draw upon the results gained from the analysis of both the individual video feedback session (28.03.08) and the semi-structured interview following the intervention, in discussing his accounts of the situation.

The child's account of the situation within the individual feedback in the early stages of the intervention, appeared to adopt a stable/regressive narrative structure portrayed in his account that despite his best attempts he was often in trouble, which was not always his fault. Not only did he often get into trouble his behaviour prevented him from joining

in with good things which meant he missed out on a lot e.g. school trips. The child's personal narrative was one which portrayed him as being isolated, unable to join in and singled out for blame, at home and at school.

Following the intervention the child's narrative appeared to be more progressive in his account of positive changes that had occurred both at home and at school, which broadly appeared to involve increased trust, autonomy and improved relationships. This narrative could also be identified within the child's personal narrative in which he portrayed himself as being the 'lucky one' with respect to being involved in the research, and described personal changes which made him feel 'proud'.

However drawing upon the parent's narrative account of the 'journey', there is the suggestion that the child's story is not as smoothly progressive as the above would imply, in that prior to his own direct involvement and experience of individual feedback, his account of the situation began to take a more regressive direction in relation to his concerns around what was being discussed by the adults in the feedback sessions. Having shared the video clips and positive stories shared by the adults in his own video feedback session, both the child's personal and more general narratives around the situation were noticed to be highly progressive by both his parent and teacher.

In general then the changes that occurred appeared to demonstrate a shift towards shared understandings, vision and goals, encompassed within 'co-authored' narrative accounts which moved away from deficit explanations of the situation, toward a focus upon strengths and competences. Within these 'new' narratives was a greater acknowledgement of the reciprocity of communication and of interpersonal and social influences in relation to the situation. The extent to which these broader narratives, which focussed more upon what happened between people, were developed by those involved differed, with the parent giving this account more frequently. Individualised narratives relating to the situation did persist therefore to differing degrees, the difference being however, that these were for the most part competence based and progressive with respect to the aims of building upon strengths and developing potential.

Thus the dominant individualised narrative within the situation continued to focus upon the child, portraying the child's behaviour as being the most significant positive change in

relation to the intervention or journey, as outlined in the results section. The narrative structure of the journey as told by the parent, child and teacher differed to some extent as highlighted above, however the spirit of the journey was portrayed similarly. That is, that change in the situation did not occur in isolation, but was achieved by everyone involved including the child and myself as 'the outsider' pulling in the same direction. Personal change was perceived to have occurred for everyone as a result of undertaking the journey, for the adults, the experience of adopting a positive focus in both their meaning making and communication and relationships was described as a significant part of this.

The aim of the next section is to look at possible explanations for the perceived changes in relation to the situation as portrayed within the narratives discussed above.

4.3.3 A positive focus: changing the 'gaze'

As suggested in the results section the positive focus of the intervention itself was perceived by the parent and teacher to have had an immense impact upon their interactions within, and their approach to the particular situation; but also much more broadly with respect to the way in which they looked at and made sense of their experiences, and in their perceptions of their communication and relationships with others. Both identified the positive focus as one of most significant aspects that they would take away from the intervention and as something which had implications for both their personal and professional lives.This finding would support the assertion of Roffey (2004) that,

> both negativity and the opposite pole of positive discussion and action have far reaching implications for home-school liaison (pg.103)

From a positive psychology perspective, positivity of approach can be seen to have wide ranging benefits for the way in which we experience and give meaning to our lives. Much research has shown that positive illusions can serve an adaptive function in allowing people to interpret their experience of reality in the best light possible (Carr, 2007; Bonniwell, 2001).

Positive illusions as identified by Taylor and Brown (1988, 1994) involve the four cognitive processes of selective attention, benign forgetting, maintaining pockets of incompetence and maintaining negative self schemas.

The process of selective attention and benign forgetting appear to have particular resonance with the video intervention in this study, which in effect turned the predominant way of seeing and experiencing the situation on its head, therefore a focus upon the positive rather than the negative was given predominance and the negative aspects were subject to benign forgetting.

This can also be related to the concept of hope, defined by Rick Snyder (2000) as a cognitive process rather than an emotion, involving the ability to plan pathways to desired goals despite obstacles and the agency or motivation to use these pathways.

Snyder suggests that three factors will be influential in determining the degree of hope a person may have in any situation:

1. The degree to which the outcome or goal is valued
2. Thoughts about possible pathways to goals and related expectations about how effective these will be in achieving the outcome
3. Thoughts about personal agency and how effective one will be in following paths to goals.

In turn the above will be dependent upon thoughts brought to the situation based upon past experience and development.

Taking the example of the parent whom as previously discussed reported an overwhelming sense of hopelessness with respect to the situation prior to the intervention, we might see the way in which a negative focus may both increasingly erode the parent's hope and maintain a sense of hopelessness in relation to the situation. In the first semi-structured interview, prior to the intervention, the parent emphasised the immense value placed upon the goal of achieving change in the situation, Snyder's first factor in influencing hope.

Parent:…*I'd never give up on him…(Interview 1, pg.7, 31)*

However, with respect to the second factor, the parent indicated that she felt that she had exhausted all possible pathways to the goal, which had been ineffective and created the expectation that nothing would work. Furthermore the parent clearly questioned her own efficacy as a parent, which influenced her expectations with respect to her own efforts in bringing about change in the situation, the final factor identified in Snyder's model of hope. Therefore, despite the immense value placed upon the goal or outcome of creating change, the negative thoughts and beliefs held by the parent in relation to perceived pathways and self-efficacy appeared to have a significant impact upon her sense of hope and optimism in relation to the situation.

It may be argued that new possibilities and different pathways for achieving change in the situation were brought about directly as a result of adopting the technique of selective attention to achieve a positive focus. This offered alternative ways of constructing reality and permitted the process of benign forgetting to relegate perceived obstacles to the goal of achieving change to a less dominant position in the way in which the situation was perceived. The results also suggest a significant positive change in the way in which the parent thought about her personal agency, which will be considered in greater detail later in this section. In this manner we can see how this might have a significant impact upon the degree of hopefulness experienced by those involved in the intervention. In this study a sense of increased hope was immediately evident in the case of the parent as can be seen in her written reflection following the first individual video feedback, it was also evident across the data set with respect to the parent, the teacher and myself.

4.3.4 Using video as a catalyst for change

'Self-focusing stimuli' are those in the physical world which generate self-awareness, for example, mirrors, photographs, video film and audio recordings; as such these objects can also be thought of as self-reflecting devices in that they can provide us with information about the 'public self' and how others see us. In this study, whilst the child reported that he especially enjoyed the experience of watching himself in the video clips, for the adults involved, being presented with and sharing the 'public self' on video was an experience that was initially a little uncomfortable, and was something that we all

confessed to avoiding in day to day life. However, as the intervention progressed there is the suggestion that we became more comfortable with this aspect of the intervention and around sharing the information reflected by the recordings.

Morin (1998) has suggested that imagery or mental images can internally reproduce and expand social mechanisms responsible for self-awareness. Imagery represents the phenomenon of visual experiences in the absence of any visual stimulus from the outside world. Mental images enable us to literally see ourselves acting, and when we reflect upon these mental images, we can acquire self-information and build a self-concept. Within this study, in directly reflecting back information about our public selves and our relationships and in sharing these reflections with others within the video feedback sessions the intervention can be seen to immediately raise the self-awareness and self-reflection of those involved. In recalling the mental images provided by viewing the video recordings of positive interaction within the video feedback sessions the results suggest that individuals acquired information about themselves that served to develop a more positive self-concept.

As described by the parent and teacher, the visual nature of the clips also created very powerful and emotive positive visual images. Both the parent and teacher referred to the way in which certain favoured images stayed with them, almost 'imprinted' and were often recalled and visualised. In some situations this was actively used as a strategy to remind themselves of the multidimensional nature of the child's identity and the situation, when feeling challenged by particular situations in which a negative cycle of communication was developing between the adult and child. One such example was described by the parent in the first joint parent teacher feedback (17.3.08),

Parent: *I recap the images I saw on the DVD, you know…I just grasp that vision of me and him looking at each other and smiling, an' when he stomps in and say's 'I hate you', I think no you don't cos we had that little moment there…(16:12 – 17:60)*

In this respect it would appear that particular images were retained mentally by the participant's and used as 'cues' with respect to participant's self-regulation and interaction within particular situations. This is further demonstrated in the discussions and comments of the parent and teacher in the final semi–structured interviews and the

latter stages of the video interventions, which suggested an increase in their own awareness of and focus upon positive communication and interaction in both a personal and professional capacity.

Similarly, references to the increased self-regulation of the child were made by the parent and teacher from the 3rd Joint Feedback Session (Figure 6, Map 6, pg.104) onwards, and this was highlighted by the teacher as the most significant change in the situation in the final semi-structured interview.

According to Bandura, (1986) self regulation comprises three major levels:

- Self-observation, which refers to deliberate attention to specific aspects of one's behaviour (video recordings of communication and interaction)
- Self-judgement, which refers to comparing current performance with a standard (successful performances of targeted behaviour i.e. positive cycles of communication and interaction)
- Self-reaction, which involves making evaluative responses to judgements of one's own performance (reflection in video feedback)

If we apply this model to the perceived increase in self-regulation suggested in the accounts of those involved in the study, we can see the way in which the video feedback sessions appear to address all three identified levels. This would support a growing body of evidence which suggests the efficacy of video self-modeling in facilitating positive change in a range of behavioural, functional and academic skills as highlighted in a recent review undertaken by Hitchcock et al (2003), and in improving parent-child interactions (Webster-Stratton, 1981). The third and final level of the model of self-regulation outlined above, self-reaction, can be seen as an integral part of perceived self-efficacy, which was also identified as an area of change within this study.

Bandura (1997) suggests that seeing oneself perform successfully 'provides clear information on how best to perform skills' and also 'strengthens beliefs in one's capability' (pg.94). In the first stage of this study the parent, teacher and child all participated in an individual feedback session, which used edited video footage highlighting positive and 'adaptive' communication and relationships. The positive self-review (Dowrick, 1991) of interactions and communication was highlighted in the data as

a significant factor in challenging existing negative self-evaluations and beliefs that some individuals appeared to hold about themselves, or in validating existing positive self-evaluations with respect to the situation prior to the intervention.

Data from the written reflections of the first individual video feedback sessions of the parent and teacher, suggest that their self-efficacy in relation to the situation was increased and/or reaffirmed with respect to the situation. Having experienced the self-affirming nature of the individual feedback sessions, the parent and teacher believed that this experience would be particularly beneficial for the child. This emerged during discussion in the first joint video feedback session and was jointly agreed, acted upon in the individual video feedback undertaken with the child, and reflected upon within the 2nd joint feedback session with the parent and teacher.

Following the intervention, both the parent and teacher highlighted this aspect as particularly valuable in promoting change with respect to the child's sense of self, his interactions and behaviour across both the home and school context.

This hypothesis can be seen to be supported by a large body of evidence collated over the years by various researchers from differing disciplines which indicates that the changes in the beliefs of individuals with respect to their perceived efficacy, creates changes in the expectations of outcomes (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Where self efficacy is increased, expectations of successful performance result, which makes the expression of that behaviour more likely, increased self-efficacy has also been shown to have a positive affect on performance (Bouffard-Bouchard,1990).

The positive experience of video self-modeling was also captured in the child's responses during his video feedback session, *(Individual feedback on 28.3.08, 32min:30.)*

And in the semi-structured interview with the child following the intervention, where he perceived himself to be 'the lucky one' (Interview 5, pg.7, 16) amongst his peers for being involved in the intervention, commenting that 'It's been brilliant' (pg.10, 24) and confirming that he enjoyed being videoed and would like to do more.

As outlined in Figure 1 (pg.45) the video intervention process was cyclical involving video feedback given to me by my supervisor from clips of the recorded video feedback sessions that I had undertaken with those involved in the situation. My own experiences of these video feedback sessions were similar to those described for the parent, teacher and child, in that my sense of efficacy with respect to facilitating the intervention was elevated by these sessions. Whilst this tended to fluctuate in relation to my perception of my success in response to feedback from those involved about changes in the situation, I continued to believe in my ability to support those involved in bringing about positive change, *(Record of supervision, 4.03.08).*

Bandura & Locke (2003) suggest that

> Whatever other factors serve as guides and motivators, they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce desired effects (pg.87)

It could be argued therefore that in promoting increased self-efficacy and more positive self-evaluation in the initial stages of the intervention through self-modeling in individual video feedback sessions, participant's confidence with respect to allowing others 'in to witness' their relationship was also increased, alongside a greater motivation and commitment to engage meaningfully with the intervention.

Whilst as previously discussed the teacher appeared to have an unwavering sense of self-efficacy, her written reflections on the individual feedback session suggest that it appeared to serve to validate and strengthen her self-belief as shown in her comments within the results section. This would suggest that the position of defensiveness and distance that appeared to be adopted by the teacher within the situation may have become more amenable to change.

For the parent increased self-efficacy appeared to provide a sense of belief in her capacity to bring about change and to contribute to the discovery of new, shared pathways to achieve change in the situation. This combined with the immense value the parent appeared to place upon her goal of creating change, as previously discussed, can be seen to have worked to rekindle the spark of hope that had seemed previously

to have lain dormant beneath the overwhelmingly negative thoughts, beliefs and expectations connected to the situation.

The child's comments on the video feedback suggested a positive affect on how he perceived himself in the context of the particular video recording. This appeared to be further supported by the observations of the teacher and parent that following the individual video feedback session with the child, he appeared to reengage more positively in his relationships across both the home and school context. It was hypothesised by the parent and teacher that this was a result of the positive review of his relationships and communication within the feedback session, (*discussion during 2nd joint feedback session on 22.04.08, 16:30.* Such changes in participatory behaviour in the classroom and in affective behaviour have also been suggested in previous studies of video self-modeling e.g. Hartley et al, (1998) and Kahn et al, (1990).

From my own perspective the video intervention itself presented a significant challenge to my expectations and beliefs around my ability to work flexibly, responding creatively to changes and challenges as they arose, given my preference for being as prepared as possible for every eventuality. However, similar to the changes described above in relation to the child, parent and teacher, I also found that the video feedback I received from my supervisor increased my perceived efficacy in my ability to work with others in a facilitative and collaborative way.

In this respect then we might begin to see the way in which the use of video showing only positive and successful interactions facilitated more positive self-evaluations by individuals involved in the situation, of their communication and interaction within particular relationships, and how this may serve to promote the beginnings of positive change in the degree of hope and positive expectation experienced. It could also be reasonably suggested that this would also increase their performance and the levels of intrinsic motivation experienced by individuals with respect to continuing to achieve the effective and successful communications they know themselves to be capable of in relation to the situation. Finally, it is reasonable to suggest that more positive self-evaluation by those involved in the situation promoted a greater openness to, and confidence in, the sharing of individual experience and perspectives with others, creating

a springboard for everyone involved in the intervention to begin to move forwards together.

4.3.5 Sharing, witnessing and co-constructing

When talking about the video intervention the parent and teacher appeared to perceive the video footage as a 'window onto the truth', the next best thing to actually 'being there' at the time of filming. They likened watching the video as similar to being a 'witness' to events that were perceived as valid and objective, and where the possibility of deception was ruled out as being impossible. The video clips of the interaction as they were presented were perceived to be a truthful and accurate record of the relationship and communication between individuals in the situation, despite the fact that participants were aware that initially the clips were edited to show only positive moments of interaction. In this respect the video clips appeared to present a significant and 'concrete' challenge to some of the negative beliefs, attributions and perspectives that participants seemed to hold with respect to the situation prior to the intervention. These challenges appeared to be created by the witnessing of 'alternative possibilities' or 'realities' presented on video tape, prompting a more reflective approach rather than a 'taken for granted' approach to constructing meaning and experience. This reflection then could be seen to begin to lay the foundations for 'paving the way' for change.

As previously suggested the actual act of sharing the video clips with others i.e. an audience, within the video feedback sessions may have promoted a heightened self-focus, together with a more in-depth self-awareness. It may also be seen to actively promote a more sophisticated interactive understanding with respect to the social process of perspective taking that occurred within the video feedback sessions. As suggested by Mead (1934), in our social environment we are continuously presented with other ways of thinking, feeling, or behaving; in perceiving these differences we become motivated to take the other persons' perspective, to develop an objective vision of ourselves and to examine our own intellectual, emotional and behavioural patterns. As previously highlighted the video footage itself, together with the sharing of different perspectives and stories relating to the situation during the video feedback sessions presented a significant challenge to the previous beliefs and expectations of participants.

The analysis of data across the video intervention in this study, highlighted the increased ability of those involved to take the perspective of other's involved in the situation, particularly with respect to taking the child's perspective. This first became apparent within the 2nd Joint Feedback Session (Figure 6, Map 5, pg.97), where it was noted that both the parent and teacher expressed empathy with the child and began to reflect upon the child's feelings in relation to certain experiences. This would suggest that the process of social perspective-taking was an integral part of the overall changes that were perceived as occurring within the situation, and also in developing an increased understanding and awareness of 'the self' in those participating. This would concur with a number of studies within the social psychology literature, exploring the concept of perspective-taking.

Jones and Nisbett (1971) have suggested that the taking up of different perspectives changes the way in which we process information, therefore as observers, the behaviour of the individual has the greatest relevance, whereas for the actor's attention is focused outwards. This has particular resonance when we think about the prevalence of individualised narratives of responsibility and the strength of the within child narrative identified prior to the intervention.

Studies of perspective taking using video recordings of individuals in conversation have indicated the way in which a psychological shift in perspective results in changes of causal attributions. Where individuals watched video recordings and thus became *observers* of themselves in conversation, their causal attributions became more dispositional than situational (Storms, 1973). Alternatively when they were shown video recordings and asked to actively take the perspective of the person they were observing, more situational attributions were found to be made.

Again, this can be seen to reflect some of the changes in the narratives of those involved in the situation in this study as the intervention progressed, particularly with respect to the broader narratives that were identified, encompassing more outwardly focused interpersonal and social accounts of the situation, as previously discussed. As such it may be reasonable to suggest that the process of sharing through the video feedback sessions appeared to facilitate the development of interpersonal perspective-taking ultimately achieving a level of simultaneous co-ordination of perspectives (Murray, 2003).

Despite an increase in 'broader narratives' that were found to develop as the intervention progressed, the dominant progressive and strengths based narratives tended to focus

upon the child. The continuity of this within child approach may be linked to the findings of a study of perspective taking in relation to decreasing stereotype expression, undertaken by Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000), who found that perspective taking increased the expression of positive evaluations of the 'target'. Whilst the focus of the intervention in this study was aimed at the interaction between individuals, the child was the common element within all the video feedback sessions, which may explain the continuing emphasis upon the child in relation to narratives of change around the situation.

Exploring the concept of sharing further, it may be suggested that in many respects the video feedback process can be seen as similar to the concept of the 'outsider witness' within narrative practice (Russell & Carey, 2004). This concept is about the sharing of our preferred stories with others and the acknowledgement and validation of our identity claims through the process of sharing. The video feedback sessions appeared to clear a space to provide opportunities for those individuals involved in the situation to share and reflect upon their own preferred stories and identities and to listen to and acknowledge those of the others involved in the situation, as suggested in the teachers comments below when discussing her experiences of the video feedback sessions,

Teacher: *Relief that what I was trying to say you know was …was finally being understood and was finally being witnessed. (Interview 4, pg.4, 1)*

Whilst the child was only directly involved in the final 'celebration' joint feedback session at the end of the intervention, the 2nd joint feedback session with the parent and teacher in which they watched the video recording of the individual video feedback with child (with the child's permission), provided space for the child's preferred story and identity to be expressed and witnessed, freed up to some extent from the negative narratives and interactions that had begun to define him.

Finally, the actual act of sharing the video clips could be seen as a significant factor, not only in terms of the actual process but also symbolically, with respect to challenging existing negative perceptions and beliefs. The issue of trust for example, identified as a barrier to collaboration between the parent and teacher, was addressed directly from the beginning of the intervention, due to the very nature of the process.

Both participants expressed their initial anxieties in relation to having their interactions recorded and in sharing these, with respect to a perception of vulnerability in presenting their relationships for scrutiny and comment, *(Interview 4, pg.9, 5).*

The agreement to go ahead with this undertaking and commitment to proceed with it, of itself appeared to establish a foundation of trust, which was developed overtime as the sharing and co-construction of meaning increased both within and outside of the intervention as suggested in both the thematic process maps (Figure 6) and semi-structured interviews following the intervention. Whilst this would suggest that this particular intervention may not be appropriate where trust is perceived to be so eroded that it acts as a barrier even to the consideration of involvement in the intervention, it would appear to be a significant advantage in quickly establishing a common bond and foundation of trust to be further developed.

4.3.6 Summary

In this section I have outlined and discussed the way in which the dominant narratives in relation to the situation and those involved appeared to change overtime in relation to the intervention. In exploring the way in which meaning was constructed within these accounts I focussed upon two aspects in particular i.e. the way in which the narratives were structured and the portrayal of agency with respect to the situation. The findings of the study suggest that there was a considerable change in the accounts given of both the situation and those involved following the intervention, which related to more progressive and strengths based narratives, particularly in relation to the child.

Drawing upon narrative, constructivist and positive psychological theory and research I have suggested some possible influences with respect to the specific changes identified in relation to the narratives, perceptions and expectations relating to the situation and those involved.

I have suggested the way in which the predominantly negative narrative accounts conveyed prior to the intervention appeared to be challenged and 'deconstructed' as part of the process of the video intervention, more specifically in relation to the initial individual video feedback sessions primarily involving the technique of video self-

modeling. Thus providing a 'springboard' for joint progression towards collaboration based upon increased hope and positive expectation, self-efficacy and greater willingness to share and to experience validation of these emergent preferred narrative identities.

In the sharing that took place within the joint video feedback sessions, I have suggested that those involved became motivated towards taking the perspective of others, which involved not only increasing empathy and trust but a gradual shift toward a more complex level of interpersonal perspective taking involving the eventual coordination of perspectives. This process is seen as developing in line with opportunities for alternative realities and preferred identities to be shared and witnessed and the co-construction of narratives drawn from these, facilitated through the video intervention feedback.

4.4 What is the perceived role of the Educational Psychologist in delivering the intervention?

Given that the focus and aim of my research enquiry was to examine the development and mechanisms of collaboration in my role as an Educational Psychologist within a specific context and setting, the discussion to this point has to a large extent centred upon the relationships and narratives of those directly involved in the situation, that is the child, parent and teacher. It is however, important to acknowledge that for a period of time I too became involved in the situation in delivering the intervention and as such was a fellow traveller for at least a part of the journey. As both a subject and object of the study, I was also the helper (in my role as practitioner) and the helped (in my role as researcher). As such, some consideration of my own place and positioning and the impact of this within the narrative accounts of the journey needs to be given, both with respect to the ways in which this was perceived by those involved in the situation and my own critical reflection upon my preferred story.

The following section therefore sets out to provide a reflexive discussion of my own role as a practitioner researcher in relation to the intervention and draws upon the themes

identified from both my personal reflections, perceptions and narratives and those of the parent and teacher to develop a greater understanding of the process of collaboration as it relates to EP practice.

4.4.1 Starting out - connecting with my own personal narratives

As discussed in the previous section the video feedback sessions, which were an integral part of the video intervention, provided a powerful catalyst for challenging and deconstructing some quite resistant dominant narratives, and through the process of sharing alternative possibilities, allowed space for the co-construction of preferred stories. As a 'co-researcher' in the action research and a fellow participant within the process of exploration and the construction of meaning within the video feedback sessions with those involved in the situation, and in those with my supervisor, my own personal and professional narratives were also subject to challenge and change.

Findings of the study highlight both the different points at which the parent, teacher and I started the journey relevant to the subject positions we adopted, as well as the difference in our motivations and goals at this time. At the beginning, a significant aspect of this for me was the difference of perspective between myself and the parent and teacher in relation to my role as the Educational Psychologist and researcher, where I believed that I appeared to be positioned by those I accompanied on the journey as 'the expert'. I perceived this to be very clearly conveyed by the parent and teacher within the early stages of the intervention, whom when asked in the initial semi-structured interviews what they hoped to gain from our work together, indicated they wanted strategies that could bring about a change in the child's behaviour, to help him behave 'normally', like his peers.

In some respects this may be seen to be related to the dominant discourse in relation to the 'helping professions' in which the professions themselves have actively constructed hierarchy and positions of power through the narratives of 'expert knowledge' (Hugman, 1991). For me, the issue of strategies was very much linked to the linear, cause and effect discourse of 'the expert', and deficit models of intervention, which I hoped to move away from in working together with the parent and teacher. As such I felt this created a considerable tension in relation to collaborative working, which I believed should involve

power sharing and exchange of the different knowledge, skills and experiences between all those involved to promote change in the situation.

In acknowledging and making sense of these tensions, my own account of the journey, similar to that of the teacher and child is not a smoothly progressive narrative, but one which swings between the points of progressive and regressive structures, returning again to a progressive structure in the final stages of my involvement. Like the parent, my own story involves an aspect of ambivalence with respect to my position of being both the helper and the helped, and as I have come to realise, it also involved an element of self-protection and resistance, which I was able to begin to identify and reflect upon through the video feedback sessions with my supervisor.

This is highlighted in excerpts from my reflective journal in the results section, part of which is reproduced below. This gives an insight into my own struggles to have my preferred narratives of personal and professional identity acknowledged, and the way in which initially, my own positioning and that of the parent and teacher, served to close down rather than open up opportunities for developing a shared understanding and meaning.

<u>Expectations</u> [of 2nd Joint video feedback session]

My expectations were mixed, though I feel I had convinced myself that both pp's were not 'signed up' with regards to the intervention due to their expectations about being 'given' strategies via my 'expert role'. Also the reports that the situation was deteriorating both at home and at school. This was reported by the parent at my last visit to school to do feedback with [child] and also by the teacher who invited me to speak to a member of staff who had experienced [child] 'being naughty and cheeky'. Was almost as though this was a 'vindication' of blame. Issues of blame and self-efficacy appear to be strong themes/feelings/undercurrents affecting those involved (including myself – as previously documented I have questioned my own self-efficacy in bringing about change). Overall my expectations were quite negative, though I felt I needed to address this by trying to adhere more to a non directive, collaborative way of working, trying to bring to the fore VIG principles and narrative ways of working (Reflections on 2nd Joint video feedback session, 22nd April '08)

The above excerpt reveals my own vulnerabilities and uncertainties, and suggests the way in which my personal and professional narratives were very much intertwined and interdependent, which was an aspect which I believe my experience of video feedback within supervision supported me to examine more fully. Whilst I have always perceived myself to be a naturally reflective person, I found the video feedback sessions with my supervisor provided the space for me to explore some aspects of my professional relationships at a deeper level. The sessions provided a safe place, where like my fellow participant's, my personal and professional efficacy was validated and increased through the positive review of my communication and interactions within feedback sessions undertaken with the child, parent and teacher. This created the conditions in which I felt supported and enabled to explore reflexively my own communication and develop a greater awareness and acceptance of my own needs and motives in relation to my interactions and relationships with others.

My own position in relation to the situation was one in which I perceived the dominant within child narrative to be both unhelpful and at times uncomfortable in the way in which it was articulated. I began to realise that despite my desire to work collaboratively with the parent and teacher, I was not fully acknowledging their experience and expectations in my resistance to the positioning of the child as depicted in their accounts of the situation. Through the objective review in supervision of the video feedback sessions I was able to see the way in which my responses to this narrative could become resistant and defensive, which resulted at times in my closing down opportunities for exploration rather than adopting a genuinely curious approach to exploring particular narratives. This resulted in a tension in terms of attempting to work in a collaborative and non-directive way, whilst perhaps adhering subconsciously to the 'expert model' as implicitly suggested above in my frustrations with respect to a continuing focus upon within child deficit narratives and my desire to change this focus.

As suggested by Hawkins & Shohet (2000)

> clinging to our role makes it difficult to see the strengths in clients, the vulnerability in ourselves as helpers and interdependence' (pg.6).

Further reflection upon this and exploration with my supervisor helped me consider more openly my own need to be able to help in the situation and 'not to let people down', and what this meant for my sense of self. In thinking more openly about my own personal and professional narratives and in acknowledging my own needs as a 'successful helper' in respect of my role within the situation, I believe I was able to move more confidently towards less resistant and more open communication and to relinquish to a great extent the control and protection that my previous positioning and interaction supported. In effect I feel I needed to acknowledge my own fear of powerlessness which served to maintain a continuing grasp upon my position as 'expert helper' and the power this embodied, to enable me to truly begin to reach out and to trust and respect and acknowledge the strengths and capabilities of those I was working together with.

As observed by Monk (1997) curiosity can be used as a safeguard against the use of professional expertise to steer a person in the direction the professional deems appropriate and also allows the professional to,

> …live with confusion and ambiguity and to avoid moving to quickly to a quick [therapeutic] fix' (pg.26)

In addition to the above, I believe I was also supported in working towards a more collaborative approach at a more functional level through supervision, where I was able to gain a great deal from the way in which my supervisor modelled a narrative approach in our own communications within supervision. This was particularly effective in facilitating my own skills and confidence in adopting a more open, non-directive and curious approach in my own interactions within the video feedback sessions with the child, parent and teacher. In this way my experiences of supervision served to both mirror and influence the joint feedback sessions involving myself, the parent and teacher, whilst simultaneously providing opportunities for more objective review of my own interactions and influence as the journey progressed. This provided a highly interactive and reflexive model for addressing the competing and complex demands made of me as the practitioner-researcher, and as I also discovered, reflected and in effect appeared to replace the previously negative circular interactions within and across the home-school systems, that had appeared to maintain the situation prior to the intervention.

My experiences as outlined above helped me to make sense of the tensions I perceived, as an articulation of difference rather than unmet needs, which helped to free up my thinking and response's from the expert model and the resultant responsibility for 'fixing the situation', to a position akin to the 'caretaker' of the interactive space which facilitated open review and exploration of the 'multiple perspectives' which existed within the situation and, which the data suggests, increasingly empowered the parent and teacher to take up positions of ownership as agents of change within the situation (Winslade & Cotter, 1997

4.4.2 Moving on – activating and caretaking

As highlighted by Miller (2003) and Webster-Stratton (1993) the interpersonal skills and personal qualities of professionals are perceived as central to achieving collaborative working, and both highlight the importance of developing supportive relationships. In Miller's (ibid) 'Successful Strategies Study' teachers identified active listening skills, questioning, problem solving, empathy and a positive approach as the most helpful skills and personal qualities of Educational Psychologists within consultations involving the teacher and parents. Webster-Stratton and Herbert (1993) described the therapeutic processes involved in a parent training programme based upon a collaborative model of practice. These were identified as building a supportive relationship, empowering parents, teaching, interpreting, leading and challenging and prophesising.

My role as the Educational Psychologist can to a certain extent, be seen to involve many of skills and processes identified above, though in a flexible and reflexive rather than prescriptive and highly structured manner. This is suggested across the data, and also in the ways in which the parent and teacher highlighted both similar and different factors as being perceived as the most useful in relation to my role as the journey progressed. The parent for example highlighted just being listened to and 'getting things off her chest' as being a key aspect of the intervention for her. Whilst the teacher on the other hand found the centralising role, bringing everyone together and 'gaining insights into each other' as one of the most helpful aspects of my role. Both the parent and teacher found the perceived 'objective' stance and different perspective e.g. 'being able to see the positives' to be a particularly important aspect of my involvement. These differences in perspective again serve to highlight the very different points at which each of us started

the journey and the need for flexibility, openness and belief in the capacity and strengths of those involved, to be able to begin from the point where each individual perceived themselves to be, at the start of the intervention.

Miller (2003) acknowledged the differing and additional demands of working with the changing relationship of the parent and teacher, placed upon consultants when working together with them, in relation to the complex and sensitive area of pupil behaviour. As such he proposed a model of the knowledge bases that inform teacher-parent consultations, which builds upon that of West and Idol (1987, cited in Miller, 2003). Miller (ibid) retains the concept of two different knowledge bases, with knowledge base 2 remaining focused upon techniques and insights to be used by the parent and teacher working together with the child. Knowledge base 1 however, is potentially more complex in its accommodation of the knowledge and skills required in facilitating the relationship between the parent and teacher, particularly with respect to arbitration and facilitating interaction.

Broadly speaking, as the Educational Psychologist involved in delivering the video intervention in this situation, I could be seen as undertaking the dual role of both the 'activator' and 'caretaker' in relation to my participation in the journey. Both roles required a reflexive and therapeutic approach. As the 'activator' my role was to stimulate the conditions necessary to begin to re-connect individuals with their own capacity for meaning making, through the use video interaction guidance principles incorporating video self modeling as previously described. This connection was then further developed within the interactive space created within the joint video feedback sessions.

My role as the caretaker of this space involved maintaining this a safe and non-judgemental place in which personal narratives and accounts of the situation could be openly shared and witnessed and preferred stories validated and affirmed. My approach to creating and maintaining the interactive space was eclectic in that I drew upon a number of different therapeutic skills from complimentary approaches such as humanistic, solution focused and narrative.

The data collected and my own experience of undertaking the above roles would concur with Miller's assertion that successful consultation needs to consist of 'more than

providing tips and techniques', and that a crucial factor in successful intervention are 'Knowledge Base 1' interpersonal skills including arbitration and social facilitation (2003, pg. 90)

It was noticeable that the various functions of my therapeutic role appeared to change and decrease overtime (See Figure 6, process maps) in relation to the increased trust, communication, agency and collaboration of the parent and teacher as the journey progressed. Initially for example there was a significant element of vicarious and experiential learning within the video feedback sessions initiated through my own modeling of skills, such as active listening, positive communication (based upon the principles of VIG), curiosity, reflection and reframing. This decreased considerably within the final video feedback session in which the parent and teacher took up a much more central and collaborative position within the session, actively co-constructing and co-authoring narratives of change.

This suggests that the social cognitive process of modeling and self-modeling worked at different levels to activate and empower the parent and teacher within video feedback sessions to further develop their own skills through the recognition and validation of their own unique strengths, experience and understanding and the confidence and motivation this engendered, to build upon these and to share them with one another in their own way.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have set out to present and discuss the story of the process of change and the development of collaboration in relation to the findings from the data gathered from those involved and with reference to relevant supporting evidence within the literature.

I have discussed the findings in relation to the perceived barriers to collaboration between the parent and the teacher at the start of the intervention, which appear mostly to concur with those already identified within the literature.

From here I moved on to explore in more detail the positive strengths based narratives that emerged as the intervention progressed. I have suggested that the individual feedback, involving shared attention, positive review and the self as model, acted as a catalyst for change and 'springboard' toward collaboration, which was further promoted through joint feedback. The latter was discussed in relation to the proposed potential for promoting increased empathy and interpersonal perspective taking allowing the sharing and witnessing of alternative realities and preferred identities.

Finally I discussed further the findings in relation to my own role as the practitioner/researcher. The tensions relating to the differing positions and expectations of myself, the parent and teacher were explored suggesting a need to start where individuals are, rather than imposing personal or professional assumptions upon those with whom we hope to work. The importance accorded to the therapeutic and interpersonal skills factors in relation to the role were highlighted, together with the crucial role of supervision in mirroring and modeling the interactive process and relationships, and maintaining a safe, interactive space.

In the next and final chapter, I will discuss the findings of the study in relation to a proposed working model of collaboration that may be useful in supporting the work of educational psychologists and other professionals in situations that can appear to be 'stuck'.

Chapter 5

Future suggestions, implications and conclusion

This last Chapter is aimed at setting the findings of the study within the context of current practice in Educational Psychology and professional practice more broadly. It begins by relating the findings of the study to the conceptual framework for practice developed by Miller & Layden (1999), before moving on to propose a working model for the development of collaborative relationships. The possible application to and implications for practice are then considered and discussed, before moving on to evaluate the possible limitations of the model and outline some suggestions for ways in which it may be 'tested' in the future. The Chapter is brought to a close with my reflections upon my personal and professional development in relation to the research journey and outcomes together with concluding comments.

5.1 Towards an interactive psychosocial model of collaboration

The data collected and analysed in this study suggests that the video intervention applied within the context of the situation explored, can serve as a powerful tool for promoting rapid positive change in situations where there are perceived difficulties with communication and where there may be conflicting multiple perspectives within complex systems of interaction. The perceived empowerment of the parent and teacher as 'agents of change' in the situation as discussed in chapter four, is one which in this study, can be seen to have developed not in isolation but within the context of the 'coming together' of the home-school 'subsystem', within the interactive space created in the video feedback sessions. In this respect the video intervention can be seen as moving towards a more inter-actionist model of practice that many commentators have suggested is required in beginning to achieve collaborative working both generally (Roffey 2004; Todd, 2007) and more specifically within the arena of pupil behaviour.

5.1.1 The psychosocial framework

Whilst in this particular instance the focus of the video intervention was more at the micro level of practice rather than the macro level of school organisation and culture, it could be argued that the intervention was able to directly address a particular subsection of what Miller & Leydon (1999) described as the 'psychosocial system' that exists within schools. Within this framework, the child, parent and teacher subsystem form the focal point for convergence of the home and school systems. Other 'processes', which are identified as psychological and social in nature are viewed as surrounding this subsystem as part of the broader psychosocial framework, for example the grouping of staff, pupil culture and family culture.

Miller (2003) suggests that in order to achieve successful outcomes in joint work at the level of the child, parent, teacher subsystem within the psychosocial framework a number of prerequisites are required, which he identifies as:

- Teachers will need to be aware of the attributions that they make for the causes of difficult behaviour
- Once acknowledged, a way must be found to 'put to one side' these attributions
- Teachers will also need to be aware of the attributions being made by pupils and parents, whether or not these are actually voiced
- Similarly, ways must also be found to allow all parties to step to one side of these attributions, in the quest for an acceptable strategy. Engaging directly with beliefs about blame and responsibility, debating, challenging or seeking to establish the one ultimate truth are all likely to be extremely counterproductive, whereas acting as if they do not exist can sometimes feel like dishonesty or a failure of nerve. (pg.153)

The findings of this study would suggest that the video intervention applied, provided the opportunity to address all of the above prerequisites by

- acknowledging the different narratives and perspectives of those involved in the situation.
- challenging and changing the balance of the dominant negative psychosocial dynamics arising from the existing beliefs, perceptions and accounts, through a

focus upon the strengths and capacity of those involved using the principles of video interaction guidance to create narratives of change and progress.

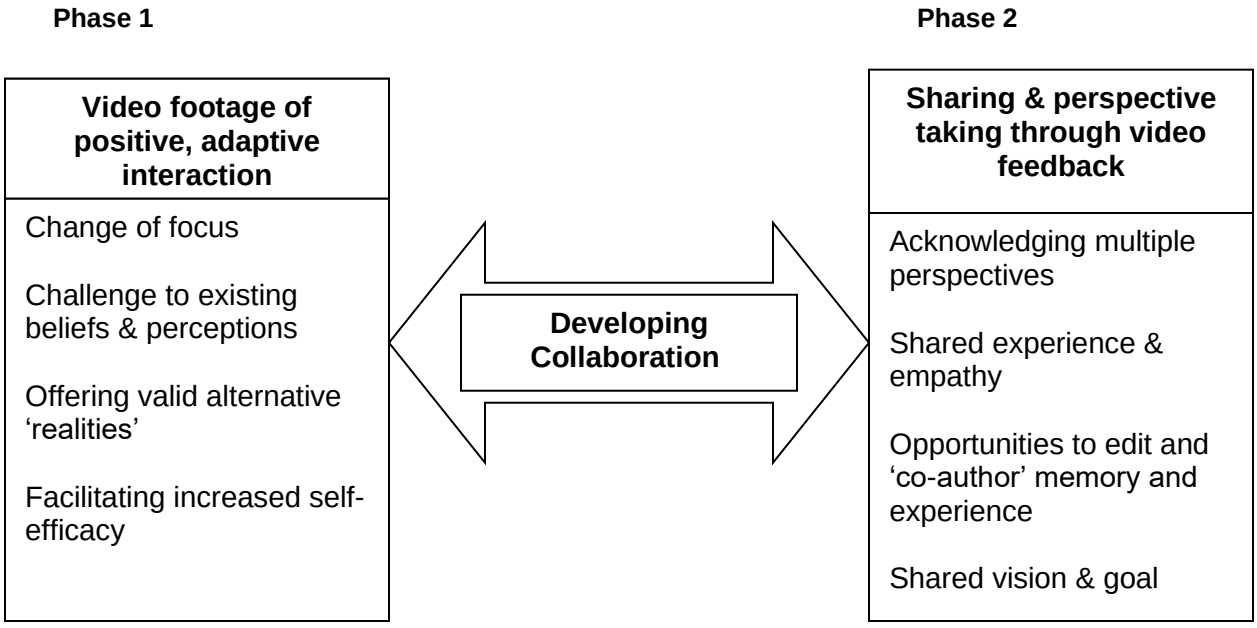
The various narratives identified and discussed within this study highlight the way in which the video intervention both enabled the exploration of, and addressed the links between, social factors and individual experience, perceptions and behaviour as has been described in some detail earlier in chapter four. Furthermore, the video intervention provided a flexible approach to working both at an individual level and at the level of the child, parent, teacher subsystem. As such I believe the video intervention could therefore be described and applied as an interactive psychosocial model of collaboration.

5.1.2 A psychosocial model of collaboration

The proposed two phase model (see Figure 9, pg.160), draws upon the findings of the study in relation to the focus upon the development of collaboration (see Figure 7, pg.113) and provides a possible working model through which Educational Psychologist's might be able to work across the home-school boundary to promote the conditions necessary to enable parents and teachers to reach a point where they are able work together in a spirit of collaboration, in complex and sensitive situations that can appear to be entrenched.

The model acknowledges the multiple perspectives and accounts in relation to the situation, however it supports individuals to move beyond suggestions of blame, responsibility, debate and direct challenge, through the use of video footage focusing upon positive and adaptive communication between individuals in the context of the child, parent, teacher subsystem. The proposed model is conceptualised as dynamic and interactive in which individuals are perceived as active agents within the social world and where change can occur where people are given opportunities to become more connected with their own interpretative, meaning making abilities and a greater selection of available possibilities.

Figure 9: Interactive psychosocial model of the development of collaboration



Phase 1 – Individual Video Feedback

The findings of this study highlight the powerful nature of the first individual video feedback, in 'revealing' new and different 'truths' and 'realities' giving rise to the suggestion of new possibilities with respect to the situation and those involved (see pg.84-86). Therefore initially, the model uses individual video feedback based upon the principles of VIG to promote change at the level of the individual, their personal narrative and the influence of this in relation to their behaviour and their broader perceptions and narratives around the situation.

The data suggests that in many respects the initial individual video feedback session can be seen as taking the 'path of least resistance', in enabling individuals to step to one side of the negative beliefs, attributions and narratives that act as barriers to collaboration in such situations through a focus upon positive review of videotaped interactions (see pg.85). This can be seen as a catalyst for change with respect to promoting the enhancement and/ or validation of self-efficacy, increasing hopefulness and motivation and in stimulating and increasing self-awareness and self-reflection (see pg.88); whilst simultaneously, implicitly beginning to challenge some existing individual beliefs and perceptions and offering alternative views of the situation.

In approaching the situation in this way the psychosocial model supports individuals to identify and reflect upon their own unique strengths and capabilities, both in relation to the situation and more broadly. This helps to highlight their individual agency and capacity for creating and supporting positive change in the situation, and to some extent, can be seen to begin to address some of the perceived power differentials that may act as a barrier to the development of collaboration within the given situation. In this respect the parent and teacher are therefore enabled to enter into the prospect of 'sharing' from a relative position of strength, believing in themselves, the value of their contributions and in their capacity to share this to bring about change, creating a 'spring board' from which those involved can begin to move forwards together.

Phase 2 – Joint Video Feedback Sessions

The second phase of the psychosocial model brings together those involved in the situation for joint video feedback sessions, in which they each invite the other to share in witnessing, reviewing and reflecting upon video footage of their own successful interactions within their given context. The findings of the study suggest that sharing and reflecting upon the video clips promotes a greater sense of trust, empathy and increased understanding of and openness to the different perspectives in those involved (see pgs. 87, 91 & 92). There is also the suggestion that it promotes the development of interpersonal perspective-taking, which may ultimately result in a simultaneous co-ordination of perspective taking.

At the same time, the joint feedback sessions can be seen to create an 'interactive space', where those involved are able to share alternative narratives and to have witnessed and validated preferred personal narratives (see pg.85), helping them to become more aware of the ways in which they make sense of and perceive their lived experience and of a greater selection of available possibilities (see pg.109). In this sense the joint video feedback sessions provide opportunities for memories and experience to be edited and co-authored by those involved and in so doing individuals can begin to find some 'common ground' from which to develop shared meaning, vision and goals in their work together.

The proposed 'psychosocial model' of collaboration can be seen to embrace the four principles of social contructivism; pluralism, participation, power and performance proposed by Howe (1994) and as such is I feel congruent with the current developments in legislation and policy relating to EP practice and service delivery which emphasise concepts of empowerment, partnership and participation (Every Child Matters, 2003; Code of Practice, DfES, 2001a). This suggests that the model may be useful not only in situations relating to pupil behaviour, but also in relation to home-school relationships more broadly. For example Russel & Granville, (2005) found that school's perceptions and expectations of parental involvement and parents' expectations as regards the roles and responsibilities of school vary widely. Additionally parent's requirements may vary widely, with some desiring guidance and information and a more directive approach, whilst alternatively, others may be ready to share power and responsibility with schools. Such differences in perception and expectation can create tensions and the possibility of conflict, which to some extent have tended to be overlooked in the Government's enthusiasm for parental participation, partnership and choice, as previously discussed in chapter one.

In many respects therefore, the proposed psychosocial model of collaboration can be seen as negotiating the space between the underpinning assumptions of the homogeneity of 'schools' and 'parents' found in government policy, and the application of this in practice to the development of home-school partnerships, where issues of power, control and the potential for conflict are frequently highlighted within the relevant literature as significant barriers (Hood,1999; Crozier, 1999; Vincent & Tomlinson, 1997; Gascoigne & Wolfendale, 1995). As such it would seem reasonable to suggest that the psychosocial model of collaboration could be used flexibly and applied more widely by Educational Psychologist's to promote more attuned relationships and communication across the home-school boundary within the context of the pupil, parent, school subsystem.

In this section I have drawn upon the evidence gathered for this study to present a possible psychosocial model of collaboration, which I have proposed may be useful in supporting Educational Psychology practice within the specific context of home-school relations. The following section aims to consider further the possible broader application of the model and its implications for the practice of Educational Psychologists.

5.2 Implications for Professional Practice

Based upon the evidence presented from this study, the following section will discuss the way in which the model of video intervention applied in this study might be used to develop collaborative practice and promote positive change in communication and relationships across a range of settings and contexts.

5.2.1 Contribution to practice as a model of collaborative intervention

The suggestion of increasing levels of mental health and emotional difficulties in children and young people (Rutter & Smith, 1995) was recently highlighted and brought to the fore in the joint (former) DFES and Treasury review, 'Aiming High for Children: supporting families' published in March 2007. The review identified a lack of capacity in 'lower level' mental health support as a barrier to delivering early interventions for children at risk of mental health problems. As a result the Targeted Mental Health in Schools project (TaMHS) was proposed and funded with the aim of working within, and close to schools to address the needs of children and young people at risk of and/or experiencing mental health problems.

Some practitioners such as Stobie et al (2005) and MacKay (2008), have argued that there is a compelling case for the involvement of Local Authority Psychological Services in the provision of therapeutic services for children and families. MacKay (2008) points to recent reviews of Educational Psychology Practice in Scotland (2002) and England and Wales (2006), which suggest a place for Educational Psychologists to become involved in holistic interventions across the home, school and community contexts. Referring to the increasing 'political imperative' to address the issues of mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and families within integrated services, he suggests there are key opportunities for Educational Psychologists to make a significant contribution in this respect.

Within this context it would be reasonable to suggest that the psychosocial model of collaboration may be usefully applied by Educational Psychologist's whom are well placed to deliver interventions both within and across the school, home and community settings. The flexibility of the model with respect to its application to individual

relationships and to wider systems, together with the ability of the model to embrace different contexts can be seen as a considerable strength in addressing mental health, taking a holistic and ecological approach.

The ability to make and sustain positive relationships with others is widely perceived as an essential determinant of mental health as recognised by the HEA (1997). As such the particular focus of the psychosocial model upon relationships and the interaction between people can also be seen to be appropriate to addressing mental health and emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, the model is based upon a positive, strengths based and participative philosophy rather than that of a deficit model, which can serve to stigmatise, label and disempower individuals. As previously discussed the findings of this study suggest that the psychosocial model may promote quite dramatic increases in levels of hopefulness and motivation, self-efficacy and positive self-perception within a relatively short time frame. As such this model could be a useful tool for Educational Psychologists in promoting the mental health and emotional well being of children and families.

However, the issue of mental health and emotional well being is not only the providence of children and families but also extends to staff working within the school system. As argued by Murphy and Claridge (2000),

> LEA's, naturally, are required to give high priority to their statutory duties under educational legislation. However, occupational stress management also has statutory status under health and safety legislation. Educational Psychologists have an opportunity to develop services in this important statutory area (pg.202).

As discussed in the literature review for this study there is evidence to suggest that the two most important factors implicated in teacher stress relate to teacher self-efficacy and disruptive pupil behaviour (Forlin, 1995; Forlin, 2001). Similarly, Hasting's & Bahm, (2003) found that teachers who feel they have no means of influencing particular types of behaviour may be at higher risk of 'burn out'. Greenwood, (2002a) suggests that conflicting pressure to meet individual and group needs, whilst perceiving pupil behaviour as a continuous personal 'attack', can lead to teachers 'giving up' emotionally or professionally. Reviewing such evidence suggests the potential for a highly charged

emotional climate within schools, particularly where school systems and culture lack positive management feedback and peer support and where schools may be 'poor emotional containers', (Hanko, 2003), which may impact upon the teachers capacity to model effective emotional management.

The evidence from this study suggests that the psychosocial model of collaboration could be used as flexible tool, focusing upon relationships within the various subsystems within the psychosocial framework of schools and across the contexts of home and the community to promote positive perspectives, attributions and expectations, raising self-efficacy, competence, engagement and motivation; whilst supporting the development of emotional resilience and more trusting and open, empathic and positive communication and relationships.

Within the guidance from the Department for Children Schools and Families with respect to TaMHS is the requirement that work funded by the government through this project will be undertaken in partnership and will be evidence based. This reflects the way in which increasingly, concepts of partnership and evidence based practice have become key imperatives for all those working within Children's Services. With this in mind I will move on to discuss the possible implications of this study in relation to contributing to the development of multi-agency working and evidence based practice.

5.2.2 Contributing to multi-agency working

As previously highlighted, the importance of multi-agency working has been high on the political agenda for a number of years and is highlighted as one of the key ways in which the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters (ECM) green paper (DfES, 2003) can be addressed. The work force reform strategy proposed in the ECM (ibid) heralded the recent development of Children's Services, which has resulted in significant changes in the ways in which services work with one another and with children and families. The Children's Plan (DfCSF, 2007) develops this further in emphasising services which are shaped around childhood need rather than professional boundaries, moving further towards the government's vision of practitioners from different disciplines working effectively together, sharing a common language and understanding.

Equally, however there is a body of research that suggests that achieving this vision can be difficult and a number of barriers to effective multi-agency working have been highlighted which include differences in professional skills and knowledge; cultural difference e.g. language and models of practice, thresholds and priorities; pre-conceptions about professional roles; perceived hierarchies and issues of professional identity and role, (Rose & Norwich, 2008; Anning et al, 2006; Frost & Robinson, 2007; Sloper, 2004)

In considering the facilitators of multi-agency working, Atkinson et al (2002) found that key factors and skills identified for multi-agency working included:

- Commitment and willingness
- Understanding roles and responsibilities
- Common aims and objectives
- Communication and information sharing
- Good working relationships

Other key factors were trust and honesty, flexibility, review and development, inter-agency protocols for shared working and using examples of successful multi-agency working as examplars.

Robinson et al (2005) suggest that a key factor underpinning positive professional attitudes in multi-agency teams is the enhancement of individual professional identity. Whilst Hymans (2008) in his study of the effects of personal constructs of 'professional identity' in multi-agency working, concludes that one of the major inhibiting factors to multi-agency working is the sharing of different forms of professional knowledge and different cultural practices. He argues that;

> Professionals, including Educational Psychologists require time to develop shared language and attitudes with other professionals and to negotiate efficient ways of working which ensures that professionals are working at an appropriate level of intervention, making the most of their own skills and those of others (pg.33).

He goes on to suggest that a co-construction process to address these issues could be usefully considered by practitioners.

Reviewing the barriers and facilitators to multi-agency working in relation to the findings of this study, does suggest there may be a role for the psychosocial model of collaboration, which could be used creatively within multi-agency teams to address many of the identified barriers to professional collaboration and strengthen and develop those areas identified as facilitators. As previously outlined the flexibility of the model lends itself to a range of applications which may be useful within the context of a multiagency team. Within joint working and co-working the model could be used effectively as a way of sharing, reviewing and reflecting upon practice, providing a forum for both informal peer supervision and more formalised supervisory practice with the possibility of making a significant contribution to the experiential learning and continued professional development of practitioners. In its use of video as a medium for change the model also provides excellent opportunities to share examplar's of good practice (assuming ethical issues and confidentiality had been fully considered) at a wider level in more formal joint training at both pre and post qualification level.

As suggested by Hymans (2008) there appears to be a requirement for a process or vehicle by which 'co-construction' and 'commonality of construing' can be achieved. As previously outlined the findings of this study suggest the proposed psychosocial model could provide opportunities to both validate individual personal and professional identity and to begin to negotiate and co-construct new narratives of identity, through identifying and acknowledging the strengths and capacity of those involved and building and developing upon these within the process of joint feedback. In this regard the psychosocial model could be applied as vehicle to enable positive professional identities to be developed through opportunities to work and learn together, and the facilitation of a positive sharing and learning culture, alongside retention and strengthening of core professional links which focus upon the need for professionally relevant supervision and continuous professional development as proposed by Wegner (1998).

In exploring the possible potential of the psychosocial model as a vehicle for supporting effective multi-agency working within the changing context of services for children, schools and families the issue of learning and professional development has featured prominently. This can take many different forms as suggested above; one aspect of this that is currently increasingly emphasised is the concept of developing professional efficacy through evidence based practice. The following discussion will therefore

consider the possible advantages of using the psychosocial model with respect to developing evidence based practice.

5.2.3 Contribution to continued professional development and evidence based practice

As a profession, EP's are committed to the application of theory and research in psychology to promote child development and learning (British Psychological Society, 1999). As such there has been much discussion in relation to the move toward evidence based practice, clarified by Fredrickson (2002), as an emphasis upon the integration of professional expertise with 'the best available external evidence from systematic research' (pg.97). Fredrickson however, has questioned the extent of the commitment of current practice in Educational psychology to evidence based practice, calling for greater emphasis to be placed in practice upon the evaluation of interventions to raise the profile of EP's in both developing and using research. This call has been supported by many other commentators, who highlight the position of EP's to make a unique contribution to developing research (McKay, 2002; Stobie, 2005; Cameron, 2006) and highlight the particular skills, knowledge and training of EP's in undertaking research.

Burdon (1997) suggested one of the reasons for the situation where a minority of the EP profession engages in research and evaluation activities, relates to a traditional emphasis upon positivist research methodologies, which he has suggested are often not suited for purpose in naturalistic settings. Burden proposed that what was required were more appropriate research paradigms and designs that could be applied to real world situations,

> of far more value is a psychology which seeks to make sense of how and why people think and feel and act in the ways that they do in specific (educational) contexts'(pg.19).

It is within this context that the psychosocial model of video intervention could be considered to provide increased options for research and evaluation, ideally designed to address the key factors identified by Burden in the above quotation.

As previously discussed, the psychosocial video intervention model draws upon the principles and process of Video Interaction Guidance, which it was proposed formed an 'intertwining cycle' with the action research process (see Figure 1, pg.44). As such, I would suggest that the benefits of this model for those involved in practitioner research relate to the following factors:

- The visual method of gathering data operates at several different levels;
    i. Video footage provides a platform for discussion which is contextual and situational
    ii. Provides an audio visual representation of the research interest within a particular moment in time
    iii. Provides an audio visual representation of the research interest over time, helping to explore the developmental aspects involved
    iv. Provides a platform for gaining insights into the experiences, thoughts, feelings and actions of those involved
- The integral position of supervision within the intertwined cycles provides opportunities for objective review, helping to achieve a balance between the subjective and objective by providing a space for critical reflection upon the situation.
- The model also supports the consistency of analysis in facilitating the identification and recording of emergent themes within the review of feedback sessions in supervision.
- As previously discussed, the model of video intervention appears to both empower the participants within the process and to facilitate the development of a collaborative approach, which can be seen as vital aspects of achieving effective practitioner research, where those most involved in the situation and it's outcomes can participate meaningfully.

Thus far in this section, I have explored the possible implications and applications of the proposed model for EP practice and professional development. I have discussed the possible potential of the psychosocial model to make a positive contribution to the work of Education Psychologist's within and across contexts in their work with children, schools and families. I have also suggested ways in which the model might usefully be applied with the context of supporting the development of inter-agency working and to

contributing to evidence based practice. The following section will be concerned with the consideration of some of the implications with respect to the possible challenges of applying the model in practice.

5.3 Possible challenges in applying the model to practice

This section is aimed at exploring some of potential challenges of applying the psychosocial model of collaboration in practice based upon the accounts of those involved in the study, and my own experiences as the practitioner and researcher.

5.3.1 Move away from an individual problem discourse

In drawing upon a social constructivist philosophy, narrative psychology, and the principles of Video Intervention Guidance, the video intervention can be seen to challenge some 'essential truths' and attitudes about the nature of 'the problem', moral responsibility and professional roles and relationships.

Through a focus upon the interface between the social and individual at the level of 'the relationship' we begin to move away from the way in which we traditionally understand moral responsibility, and the individualised nature of the 'trouble' or 'problem' towards a social understanding, whereby we are participants in producing our own and other people's worlds (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). However, bringing relationships to the fore in this way could be construed as having little value in addressing the 'root cause' of the problem, or even as threatening by some in its challenges to the way in which the individual has experienced and perceives the world, resulting in the possibility of resistance and defensiveness. Indeed at the outset of this study, when approaching parents and schools for possible participants, one of the aspects that individuals appeared to find most challenging was to understand how an intervention that was not directly aimed at the child, and where the psychologist worked in the main with the parent and teacher, could bring about change in a situation of concern about pupil behaviour.

My own experience in this aspect highlighted the need to be respectful of the various 'truths' that existed in relation to the situation and the networks of meaning and values that were attached to this, to avoid exacerbating a difficult situation or causing people to 'withdraw'. Thus the emphasis I have placed upon the importance that should be accorded to 'starting where the individual is', rather than imposing our own perceptions upon those with whom we work. To this extent however, this could be seen as one of the challenges to working together with people using this model of intervention.

5.3.2 Resistance to video recording

A further challenge to using the video intervention to address difficulties with communication and within situations where there may be conflicting multiple perspectives, relates to the motivation of those involved to bring about change. As previously discussed this is linked to their perception of the stake involved and their likelihood of success. The use of video as a vehicle for change can then be perceived as a strength as suggested by this study. However, it can also be seen as a challenge, given that the intervention actively requires a significant commitment to participation from those involved in what may often be strained relationships and emotive and difficult circumstances, in which some of their interactions will be recorded and shared in video feedback, therefore moving from the realm of the private into the public arena.

With respect to the specific context of pupil behaviour for example, we know that difficult behaviour can be very challenging to the personal and professional efficacy of adults and as such, both individuals and educational institutions may lack the confidence and feel particularly vulnerable and reticent about 'opening up', exploring and illuminating their own relationships and interactions. This may be further exacerbated by the idea of this being captured on video, which in itself can be a significant barrier for some people, with respect to increasing self-awareness and raised awareness of the public self.

As such, I found an important factor in whether schools and families would consider or dismiss out of hand participating in the video intervention, to be having already established a trusting and mutually respectful relationship with the school, as the key social institution mediating EP relationships with children and families. A further

consideration in this respect I found was the need for the positive, capacity building approach of the intervention to be emphasised and actively promoted.

5.3.3 The breadth and effects of change

A criticism that could be made of the psychosocial model of video intervention relates to the point emphasised by Milbourne (2005) that interventions related to disciplinary issues continue to focus in the main upon 'individual inclusion', whereby there is an emphasis upon the child, parent or teacher managing the behaviour more effectively, thus leaving the wider school system and culture intact.

However, conversely, Miller (1994a) has suggested that in a situation where the EP works collaboratively with the teacher and parent to address issues of pupil behaviour, new boundaries are negotiated and drawn around the child, parent, teacher and EP, to develop a new temporary system in which the home school borders overlap. He argues that it is the very fact that the intervention is perceived as separate and distinct from the whole school system, enabling school policy, culture and practice to continue to function unchallenged, that enables the intervention to be accommodated within the system.

It could be argued that the video intervention used in this study has the flexibility to move the focus from changing individual behaviour to concentrating upon improving the quality of the interactions and relationships within the various subsystems of both the school and family system. The particular focus of the intervention therefore provides much greater scope for breadth of change across different levels of a particular system.

However, I do feel that changes would be more likely to become more embedded if the intervention addressed more than one subsystem at a time, for example in this instance a logical next step would perhaps involve using the intervention to work with the staff 'reference group' within the school psychosocial system. This could be aimed at the group working collaboratively to develop positive interactions within the classroom for example (Brown, 2004), using the video intervention to both facilitate the process and evaluate the outcome, that is, as collaborative action research.

Whilst the use of video can be perceived by some as a particular barrier to becoming involved in the intervention, I would argue that its strengths lie within the powerful nature of self-modeling and the opportunities that video feedback offers for objective, collaborative, positive review to address the psychosocial aspect of situations and contexts, together with the flexibility of the medium of video in its application.

In the next section I will consider ways in which the model might be usefully 'tested' in the future, before moving on to outline my reflections on the research and provide my concluding comments.

5.4 Suggestions for the future – testing the model

The proposed model of psychosocial collaboration was developed as a result of a small-scale action research study, which can be seen to be ethically grounded in relation to the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the methodology, and which, despite being an in-depth case-study, I would suggest employed a replicable methodology.

The model draws upon a range of theories, which have a well established evidence base in their own right such as learning theory, inter-subjectivity and narrative theory. Despite the fact that the original multiple case study design was not undertaken due to time and resources limitations, the case study itself involved an in-depth exploration of a particular situation within a given context, producing rich, detailed, contextually sensitive and meaningful data. As such the study itself can be seen to contribute to the initial stages of the development of a working model of collaborative intervention, and as previously discussed in chapter two, helps us to begin to answer the question 'can it work?'.

In order to be able to respond that 'yes it can' with greater confidence, it is clear that the model will need to be further tested at this practical and naturalistic level, to gain corroborated information about its efficacy when applied to the unpredictable and sometimes chaotic circumstances of professional practice, and to ascertain if the process of the development of collaboration as identified within this study, is something that is replicated in similar situations within this context.

In turn, a series of cumulative practitioner-researcher studies as suggested above could serve to form the foundations for further research in the development of specific hypothesis relating to outcomes, which could be tested using methodological approaches based upon a more positivist epistemology as discussed by Fredrickson (2002).

Some specific questions raised by this study in relation to the development of collaboration that could be explored further in future studies relate to the following:

- Could a narrative approach alone facilitate the development of collaboration?
- How effective is the model compared to other available models of intervention such as a narrative approach as above or solution focussed consultation?
- Are there an optimum number of feedback sessions in developing collaborative relationships? The evidence from this study suggests one individual video feedback and three joint feedback sessions (a total of four) were sufficient to bring about a collaborative approach between those involved in this situation
- How effective would each phase of the model be without the other, that is:
    i. testing the model using only phase 1, involving individual video feedback sessions for all those involved in the situation, and
    ii. testing the model using only phase 2, involving only collaborative review in joint video feedback sessions
- Some follow-up in relation to the maintenance of change in relationships would be useful, particularly with respect to its use in relation to one subsystem versus it's use to address more that one subsystem within the school psychosocial system

More broadly, the evidence from the current study suggests that the model could be tested in relation to it's effectiveness in any area of practice where there may be perceived difficulties with communication and where there may be conflicting multiple perspectives within complex systems of interaction e.g. multi-agency working.

Finally, as previous discussed the efficacy of the model in its application to continued professional development and as a tool for evaluating and contributing to professional practice, would also be further avenues of exploration.

5.5 Personal reflections on my learning journey and research outcomes

I undertook this study due to my real desire to develop my own practice in working collaboratively with others (especially parents), particularly in situations where positions appeared to be entrenched and the situation difficult to move on. My belief that an intervention based upon the principles of Video Interaction Guidance could make a difference in such situations prompted me to undertake practitioner research perhaps without a full acknowledgement or understanding of the possible challenges to my own position in this respect. In my eagerness for self-development as well as my hopes to contribute to professional practice, I readily embraced an acceptance of change, but was unprepared for the extent to which venturing into the unknown would often leave me feeling vulnerable and de-skilled.

As the study unfolded I found myself facing a number of personal and professional challenges, which I had not anticipated, but which ultimately have helped to both free up my thinking and increase my confidence, changing my personal and professional narrative identity. This relates to an increased confidence in sharing my practice with others, a more tolerant attitude to my own challenges and limitations and a greater awareness of my own motivations with respect to the 'helping relationship'.

One aspect with which I struggled (like the parent and teacher in the study) was my perceived efficacy, in my various roles as trainee, practitioner and researcher. My practical training and skills particularly with respect to using audio video equipment, in understanding and applying the principles of Video Interaction Guidance and using a narrative approach were very limited. To this extent my theoretical knowledge and understanding at this time appeared far greater and more embedded that my abilities to apply it in practice.

Reflecting upon my learning journey I see it as two distinct but intertwined narratives, one relating to the development of my self-awareness and understanding and the other in relation to the development of particular competences. I began the journey therefore with what I felt to be a reasonable notion of my area's of competence and those for

further development. and relatively confident of my understanding of myself and my 'motives'.

As the journey progressed and I was involved in video feedback sessions with the parent and teacher and separately with my supervisor I found myself becoming more aware of an area of myself that was previously hidden to me, or that I chose to avoid (Johari Window, Ingham & Luft, 1950). I came to understand that despite my apparent acceptance of change there was a level of resistance in my moving away from my area of comfort with respect to my knowledge, competence and 'expertise', as explored in chapter four.

Returning to reflect upon this, as I write up this study I have come to the understanding that this involved my reliance upon a level of tacit knowledge, or 'unconscious competence', developed over time in relation to my work with people over a number of years which has included social care, social work and teaching. My unconscious reliance upon my interpersonal skills based in the main upon a person centred approach, could be seen as a 'safeguard', which in some respects served to hinder my truly moving on in my learning. Reawakening my awareness of this ' tacit' knowledge and skills provided me with the confidence to consciously move on to slightly different ways of interacting, in some respects returning temporarily to the somewhat vulnerable and at times uncomfortable position of 'conscious incompetence'. In raising my awareness of my resistance within the video feedback sessions, as described in chapter four, I was able to acknowledge and rationalise this, which enabled me to be more open to the experiential learning opportunities created as the journey progressed.

A further challenging aspect of the study related to my ethical position in my dual role as practitioner-researcher. Despite the fact that I believed the underpinning philosophical values of the research were highly ethical, aiming to achieve a process of power sharing and participation within the research process itself, I am aware that I did feel a tension in this respect. Ultimately this lay within the following factors:

- knowledge of my own professional interests and possible gains in completing the study; that is completing my programme of study
- the degree to which the participants could be perceived as giving genuine consent within the 'political' context of perceived pupil behaviour, given the

pressure's that may be perceived to be brought to bear by institutional and social systems upon the individuals involved in such situations

- the nature of the process; that is power sharing and participation were gradually embraced by the parent and teacher in relation to the intertwined video intervention and action research process, though ultimately the research methodology and consequent writing up remained my own

In reflecting upon these tensions I have referred to the suggestions of Gray and Denicolo, (1998) for developing a more ethical approach to research:

- ***tangible progression – the prime objective of research is the creation of results that have some practical implications for participants***.

  I believe the primary objective of the study meets this criterion in respect of aiming to gain a greater understanding of, and ability to, promote the development of collaborative relationships within a specific context. Due to the process and form of the study, the results were at once practical actions that were implemented and reflections upon these, giving rise to practical implications for the future for those directly involved and for practitioners more generally. To ensure as far as possible 'genuine consent', I attempted from my first meetings with those involved to make the aims and process of the study transparent and meaningful, emphasising ethical principles and rights in relation to the process.
- ***intimate continuity/active participation– focuses upon the development of longer-term relationships, and participants as acting subjects rather than objects of the research.***

  As highlighted previously this was achieved to a large extent as a result of the intertwined cycles of intervention and action research, though with more time I acknowledge that this aspect could be further developed in the latter stages of analysis and writing up of the study.
- ***Critical reflection – involves researchers acknowledging their own vested interests and motives in the products and processes of the research.***

  Both joint and individual reflection occupied key positions within this study, for all those involved. With respect to my own personal and professional gains in relation to the study, I have been honest with those with whom I have worked, about the contribution of the research to my own personal and professional

development. As the study has progressed from its initial inception, through to the planning, implementation and the writing up I have acknowledged the need to remain aware of and to take account of the possible influences of these issues.

Finally, some reflection upon and consideration my personal role and influence upon the outcomes of the study needs to be undertaken. One particular question that may be raised in this respect relates to the question of researcher bias, given the nature of the relationships developed to undertake the intervention and the duration of the intervention. Acknowledging the position of the researcher in practitioner research, there was never the intent that the findings of the study could be viewed as separate from my involvement or influence. The aim was rather to gain an in depth understanding of the different experiences and understanding of different individuals in a particular situation and explore with those individuals how these changed over a period of time in relation to particular intervention.

Looking at the data there is the suggestion that the different methods of data collection used, for example the reflective journals and individual video feedback sessions, facilitated the presentation and exchange of open and honest views, more especially in the initial stages of the research, where individuals including myself, felt more secure in voicing more privately held views in writing. In the latter stages, honest views and the confidence to constructively deconstruct or challenge some views increasingly became a part of the process of sharing and exchange within the video feedback sessions. To this extent the views gathered in the study would appear to provide a valid representation of the voices of those individuals involved at the time they were accessed. In an attempt to give as true an account of these as possible I have included verbatim quotations in the results section to support and illustrate the findings from the study.

At all stages of the research I have attempted to be both thorough and transparent in gathering, managing, analysing and presenting all the information and material as clearly as possible. The research process itself as in keeping with the model of action research utilised, changed as it unfolded in relation to the contributions from the all those involved and could indeed be described as organic. As such, as the researcher I found I moved very quickly from an expectation of positive outcomes in relation to the study, to uncertainty and at times a lack of clarity of focus in relation to the development of

collaborative relationships, being swept up with the dominant narratives in relation to the situation.

To this extent it would be fair to say that in some of the implementation it was at times difficult to 'see the wood from the trees' and that as such some of the outcomes of the research were not expected, for example the degree of positive change reported by those involved within the situation and way in which the video recordings of feedback when reviewed overall, tracked the way in which relationships changed over time. In this sense the themes and findings were gained directly from the data collected from the voices and recorded interactions of those involved. All of the material gathered in the study has been carefully reviewed both with those involved in the situation and within supervision sessions with my supervisor, as part of the video intervention, and finally by myself in the final coding and analysis and as such has been revisited many times. The entire data set was given equal consideration in the final coding and analysis and as part of this process I continued to search for and explore differences and contradictions, however I do acknowledge that this process is of itself selective and ultimately serves to mediate and filter meaning in ways congruent with my own perceptions and constructions of meaning.

5.6 Concluding Comments

The main aim of this study was to explore the possible development of collaboration between home and school within a context of concern around pupil behaviour, using a video intervention focused upon communication and relationships.

One of the least surprising aspects of the outcomes of the study related to the finding that the perceived barriers to collaborative working between home and school largely concurred with the existing evidence base, highlighting the differing positions, perceptions and attributions of parents, teachers and children in situations where there are perceived problems with pupil behaviour.

However, in considering the outcomes of the study overall, I am struck by a comment made by Miller (2003) who emphasises that.

> …*what to do* if teachers and parents are able to work together is not really the main issue. *How to get there*, to the position where this cooperation can take place, on the other hand, very much is (pg.176).

It is in this respect that the outcomes of this study appear to have something of value to add to our existing understanding, that is in illuminating and providing some insight into the process of 'getting there'.

The study highlights a number of factors that may help to begin to move parents and teachers forwards towards more positive and productive relationships within the context of perceived difficulties with pupil behaviour, which relate to:

- A positive, strengths based, psychosocial focus
- Supporting the development of personal and professional efficacy through self-modeling and positive review
- Working at the interface of the home school system
- Acknowledging and addressing the power dynamics with a situation
- Offering a therapeutic space, and
- Opportunities for sharing, exchanging and reflecting upon meaning and experience

The findings of the study suggest that the video intervention was perceived by the parent and teacher as instrumental in creating positive change in the situation, particularly within the context of the home-school subsystem. Collaborative relationships were found to have developed between the parent and teacher across the time frame of the intervention. A somewhat unexpected outcome was the reported change in relationships beyond the immediate home-school subsystem, which included reported changes in relationships between the child involved and his peers and the child and his extended family. This finding would highlight the assumptions of systems theory in relation to change occurring in one part of the system, affecting change in other parts.

Based upon the outcomes of the study I have suggested a psychosocial model of collaborative intervention, which attempts to draw upon a social constructivist epistemology to enable practitioners to engage parents, teachers and children in a

journey towards the development of more collaborative, reciprocal relationships with one another. In may respects the model would fit with the assertion of Moore (2005) that 'change through exchange' appears to offer a different way of engaging in professional practice whereby a more ethical educational and practical process of change can be facilitated through a primary focus upon interpersonal interaction and the challenges of engaging with difference within relationships.

> ethical, because it is mindful and prompts vigilance to power issues within relationships; educational, because working in conditions of uncertainty, while highly challenging, can also be highly rewarding and uniquely illuminative, and that ultimately it may prove to be very practical, since collaboratively derived practice outcomes, in which others have also had an active role in devising, are likely to be more relevant, accepted, widely supported and thereby sustainable' (pg.113).

It may be that the proposed model of collaborative intervention can offer practitioners one way of embracing the challenges highlighted by Moore (ibid) of the social complexities that arise within everyday life and professional practice, within a modern society.

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