

EXAMINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMOTIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME ON THE PEDAGOGY AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE OF TRAINEE TEACHERS

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

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Abstract

This study investigated trainee teachers' delivery of a targeted programme entitled 'Special Me Time' (SMT) whilst on teaching placements in Foundation Phase settings in South Wales, over a training year. As reflective practice formed an integral part of the research, the study also aimed to discover whether students reflected effectively on their practice by employing specific reflective practice skills.

The teaching experiences of two BA Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Year 3 students and six PGCE ITT students were scrutinised, primarily through examination of student reflective diaries and lesson evaluations. In addition, the study explored the rationale for the further development of good practice in pedagogy related to Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Emotional Literacy (PSD/WB/EL) and reflective practice in the School of Education of a large university.

The analysis of results revealed two common themes:

Theme one related to the development of students' pedagogical practice and to the teaching and facilitation of PSD/WB/EL during 'Special Me Time' (SMT). Theme two related to students' use of reflective practice to assess and reflect upon teaching performance and competencies relating to PSD/WB/EL as part of the SMT programme.

Findings from research showed that students gained in knowledge relating to PSD/WB/EL from undertaking the 'Special Me Time' programme. However, students found it difficult to effectively quantify the differences that the programme made. Students were aware however, that they were spending what they termed 'quality time' with the children. Students appreciated the concept of reflective practice, but often did not reflect upon or credit themselves with pedagogical achievements as a result of this process. Although student reflection was evident, students did not use reflection as a fundamental part of their practice. They often viewed reflection as superfluous and either did not wholly engage in the concept or undertook it but did not document the process fully, often engaging in what I termed 'shallow reflection'.

The study concludes by recommending that further research should be conducted in this area. Further evaluation of the benefits of equipping all ITT primary students regardless of age specialism chosen, with skills and knowledge in relation to teaching/facilitating PSD/WB/EL would be pertinent. The importance of ITT students developing skills and knowledge in order to integrate reflective practice into their professional practice is particularly significant. Findings from this research will inform future delivery of ITT primary programmes.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BERA	British Educational Research Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSOE	Cardiff School of Education
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families
DfES	Department for Education and Schools
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IPD	Initial Professional Development
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
PDP	Professional Development Portfolio
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SEWCTET	South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education and Training
SMT	Special Me Time

UWIC	University of Wales Institute Cardiff
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WG	Welsh Government (formerly Welsh Assembly Government)

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Chapter 1: Context

1.1. Introduction and Background

Changes in Early Years education put in place in Wales, have taken the principality further towards its goal of becoming a 'Learning Country'. The Welsh Government, (formerly Welsh Assembly Government), first envisaged Wales as a 'Learning Country' in 2001. Changes in Early Years provision were set out which included improving standards and integrating education and care effectively. The Education Reform Act of 1988 originally set out the requirement for a broad and balanced curriculum, and one that was envisaged as being able to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. A publication by Estyn in 2002 entitled 'Excellent Schools' highlighted that schools needed to devote more attention to factors such as developing children's attitudes for learning, as well as just teaching the basic facts and figures relating to topics or curriculum areas.

The idea of fostering 'learning dispositions' in young children was developed by Carr and Claxton (2002) in the New Zealand school system. They looked at the holistic aspects of the teaching process not just at the end results and ensuing league tables. The rationale was that children should be involved in the learning process as pro-active components of the learning cycle and not just passive recipients of it. The idea of learning dispositions went on to become a key feature of Welsh Government policy in the form of 'The Skills Framework for 3 to 19 year olds in Wales' (WAG, 2008). This document stated that a revised curriculum should have a dedicated focus on learner's needs and developing of a range of strategies by practitioners which 'transforms learning to produce resourceful resilient and reflective lifelong learners' (WAG, 2008, p.3) thus echoing the ideas of Carr and Claxton (2002).

Following on from these themes, the broad and balanced curriculum that Early Years practitioners have been waiting for is in the final stages of implementation, in the form of the Welsh Government Foundation Phase Framework (2008) which began statutory implementation in September 2008. There are seven areas of learning:

- Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity
- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills
- Mathematical Development
- Welsh Language Development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

All areas of learning will be delivered through the medium of play and active discovery and will equip young children with a range of skills. The area of Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity is seen as being at the ‘heart’ of the Foundation Phase.

Supporting children’s Personal and Social Development is vital in helping young children to establish their own identities; central to this is self esteem. Self esteem is not fixed, it can grow or diminish according to the experiences we have in our lives. Positive intervention and focused teaching in the Foundation Phase is necessary to support young children in forming secure attachments in the school setting (Allen and Whalley, 2010, Trevarthen, 2001, David et al., 2003). Practitioners need to be aware that they are role models for young children, and that their attitudes and ideas can have an impact (Haughton 2008). Young children need to be supported and encouraged to be confident and have faith in their own abilities. They need to

be valued and respected as individuals in their own right, with their own interests and sense of personal autonomy, (Dowling, 2000).

Fostering young children's personal, social development is not a panacea for the ills of society. It will not ensure that children work well, achieve in school and ultimately become socially competent. It is important to appreciate, however, that children who have sound social and emotional development tend to have higher self esteem, (Corrie, 2004, Dowling, 2009) and arguably will then be more able to perform competently in social and school situations.

1.2. The Emotional Context of Teaching and Learning

Personal and Social Development (PSD) and well-being (WB) which Roberts (2007, p.5) described as 'resilient well-being' is the process whereby adults equip children with skills to enable them to live their lives remaining 'resilient' to the stresses and strains of life and through the 'challenging transitions of later childhood and youth'. Being emotionally literate (EL) could be described as the acquisition of a 'life skill'. Faupel and Sharp (2003, p.64) described EL as 'the ability to recognise understand handle and appropriately express emotions'. The facilitation, therefore of PSD/WB/EL 'life skills' by trained practitioners is a central tenet of good Early Years education. PSD/WB/EL competencies need to be supported and developed with children. As a senior lecturer on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes, I wished to equip my ITT students with the 'tools' to appreciate the importance of PSD/WB/EL and to reflect on how an understanding of their own PSD/WB/EL equipped them to support young children with their PSD/WB/ EL skills and competencies. I firmly believe that trainee teachers need to care for children in their classrooms as well as teach them. Liston and Garrison (2004, p.5) claim 'When we teach, we teach with ideas and

feelings. When we interact with our pupils, we react and respond with thoughts and emotions'. Price (2004, p.1) emphasised that children's 'subjective emotional experiences including conscious awareness' should be given a high priority when thinking about how they learn. Pollard and Filers' (1999) research on 'learning identity' looked at the formative influence of young children's social relationships with family, peers and teachers. As the Welsh Government stressed in guidance on Personal and Social Development in Foundation Phase curriculum documentation (WAG, 2008, p.4) 'it is now recognised that well-being is essential to becoming an effective learner'. Therefore, as teachers directly control the emotional 'climate' of their classroom, it follows that if the children in their care have well developed self esteem and EL they may learn more effectively. Also, the classroom will be a more harmonious and productive place for all concerned, both teacher and children.

As I have briefly mentioned 'Personal and Social Development and well-being' became a distinct curriculum area within the Foundation Phase in 2008. Changes in the Foundation Phase curriculum meant that modifications would need to be made to the delivery of information to student teachers who were studying towards PGCE and BA Primary programmes, within the School of Education, at the university in which I work as a senior lecturer. Students needed to be made aware of the importance of PSD/WB as a 'core' consideration of Foundation Phase pedagogy, and therefore be able to acquire the necessary skills and in my opinion, mindset, to be able to deliver PSD/WB across the curriculum. I was mindful of the fact that I would need to convey two issues to students. Firstly, students should be aware of the importance of PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice as fundamental to their professional practice, I would therefore need to equip them with skills, knowledge and tools to enable them to carry this out, which would include developing reflective practice skills. Secondly, these students would need support with reflecting on their own Emotional Literacy

(EL). McPhail (2004) talked about levels of ‘emotionality’ and that teachers needed to be aware of children’s emotions in order to cater for their ‘emotional capabilities’. It was important therefore, that I was aware that the students were embarking on an ‘emotional journey’ and also as Spendlove (2007. p.629) said ‘emotional empathy and emotionality are at the very heart of what we are attempting to do in education’. The whole emotional ‘agenda’ relating to this research project can also be quantified at this stage by Plato (429 – 347 BC) who stressed that ‘all learning has an emotional base’.

Recent guidance on the training of teachers in Wales (Estyn 2011) set out ideas on the promotion of student well-being. It stressed the importance of ‘the mental, physical and emotional well-being of trainees which are essential pre-conditions for successful training and sustaining good health in a teaching career’ (2011, p.16). Well-being can be placed within the remit of Emotional Literacy, in as much as it is concerned with the emotional, physical and mental ‘wellness’ of a person. The report also talked about ITT providers having a duty of care to students. Teaching is, according to The National Strategies guidance (DES, 2011, p.1) ‘fundamentally a social activity and staff need high levels of social and emotional skills to do their job effectively’. Sound Emotional Literacy and well-being are, therefore being seen as desirable factors in organisations and this is especially pertinent in the school environment (Sharp, 2001, Weare, 2006, Perry, Lennie and Humphrey, 2008). The importance of children’s well-being was also gaining momentum, with the Welsh Government setting out in guidance related to PSD/WB that well-being is an ‘integral part of learning’ (WAG, 2008, p.4) and more significantly acknowledging that well-being is ‘essential to becoming an effective learner’. The well-being and EL of students was therefore important as this could have an effect on their ability to become effective facilitators of well-being in the Foundation Phase settings.

1.3. Reflection on Undertaking this Research Study

The principle behind this research, was to ascertain whether a targeted PSD/WB /EL programme entitled ‘Special Me Time’ facilitated by ITT students in the School of Education, would develop their pedagogical and reflective skills in the facilitation of good practice in PSD/WB/EL. This would then ultimately support young children in their overall holistic development across these areas. I also wanted to ensure that ITT students were reflective in relation to teaching and facilitating within an ‘emotional dynamic’ therefore ensuring that the ITT students became ‘reflective practitioners’ (Pollard, 2005).

Teaching should be firmly based upon principles of reflection (Carr and Kermis, 1986, Elliot, 2001, Pollard, 2005). I aimed to ensure that the students who took part in the research were taught how to use and apply the principles of reflective practice as an integral part of their practice. It was also pertinent to ensure that other ITT students who were not part of the SMT programme were given input on PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice. The SMT programme students, due to the nature of their interventions with children and reflecting on aspects of WB and EL, were supported with additional targeted teaching. This was an extra professional benefit for them as SMT programme members.

It has been interesting for me as a researcher to reflect on my own practice, in effect to look at how I carried out this research project and the result of this research. Eaude (2001) said that being reflective was how teachers ‘build up expertise’ (2001, p.166). However, it is not sufficient just to think about a process, as according to Leeson (2007, p.173), ‘reflection requires hard systematic thinking leading to a plan of action’. In my experience reflection has been ongoing since the start of this research and my plan of action has often deviated from

what I first envisaged. Moyles et al (2002, p.5) stated 'Pedagogy is both the behaviour of teaching and being able to talk about and reflect on teaching'. The process of reflection, undertaken both by myself and my students, was therefore given high priority during the course of this research.

There were a number of key factors which were pertinent in undertaking this research study. The professional doctorate needed to focus on change. I was also very much aware that the process should involve reflection at an in-depth level and not at a surface level. Boud et al. (1985) viewed reflection as a process consisting of three important elements which involved revisiting experiences, being mindful of your own feelings when reflecting and evaluation of experiences. With this in mind, I felt it was important to focus on the changes which were occurring as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's implementation of the Foundation Phase Framework (2008).

The School of Education where I work offers a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in Primary Education, which is a one year programme and, at the time of commencement of this study, a three year BA (Hons) Primary Education Programme. Both lead to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Students on the programmes come from a range of backgrounds and geographical areas in Wales and the wider UK. The university is one of the largest initial teacher training (ITT) institutions in the UK. It is situated in the capital city of Wales and many students are Welsh domiciled. Both programmes are heavily oversubscribed.

The main focus of this research was based on the premise that I would ask students who chose to be part of this research to use a targeted Emotional Literacy programme, namely 'Special Me Time', (SMT) with the young children that they were teaching on their

Foundation Phase teaching placements. SMT (Davis, 2007) was a programme designed and written by myself, which consisted of six individual lessons on a PSD/WB/EL theme held over a six week period. The sessions were designed as individual sessions. However, students would be able to use them and reflect upon them as they wished, whilst on placement, personalising them, or changing them to suit the circumstances relating to the young children in their placement setting. During the six week period, students would take an initial baseline assessment to gauge children's personal and social development and then another assessment against this baseline at the end of the six week period. The baseline used was taken from Davis et al (2008, p.99). As part of the programme, students would also teach and evaluate and reflect upon a lesson each week which related to a PSD/WB/EL theme. Students would be required to reflect upon and gauge the children's contributions to these lessons and record the children's progress, in the form of observations, and engagement with SMT tasks. A basic premise of the research was for the students to reflect on whether the 'SMT' programme taught by them had any impact on young children's development relating to PSD/WB/EL. Also, whether the ITT students themselves had become more aware of the importance of delivering and assessing an Emotional Literacy programme such as SMT; in effect, their reflections on the scheme and their contribution to it.

To begin my reflective process as their ITT tutor, I thought about what changes needed to be incorporated within teaching sessions to inform and educate students and give them a clear understanding of the basics relating to PSD/WB/EL. This was designed to provide them with a firm basis on which to carry out the SMT programme. (It would also provide other students in the general PGCE and BA cohorts not undertaking SMT with the requisite knowledge). All ITT Foundation Phase students needed to become aware of the developments relating to implementing a curriculum that would be responsive to children's PSD/WB/EL. I therefore

had to adapt my teaching materials and modify early childhood studies modules accordingly to reflect the changes that the Welsh Government had specified. I based this model of change on Gibbs' reflective cycle (1998) in Figure 1.1 below. I also reflected on my own feelings at the enormity of such a task, especially as I had found anecdotally that colleagues and students often viewed PSD/WB/EL as an 'add on', rather than what the Welsh Government now envisaged as an important curriculum area in its own right. I worked with two groups of students for whom I was responsible, the BA Primary year 3 students who had chosen Early Childhood Studies (ECS) as a specialism and the PGCE Foundation Phase cohort of students. As with all research, I found initially that time was a constraint. I was also aware of the fact that I had to keep in mind the overview, or the 'big picture', as it is easy to become distracted whilst researching into a particular area. However, I found the benefits of the research process to be both personal and professional and these outweighed any disadvantages.

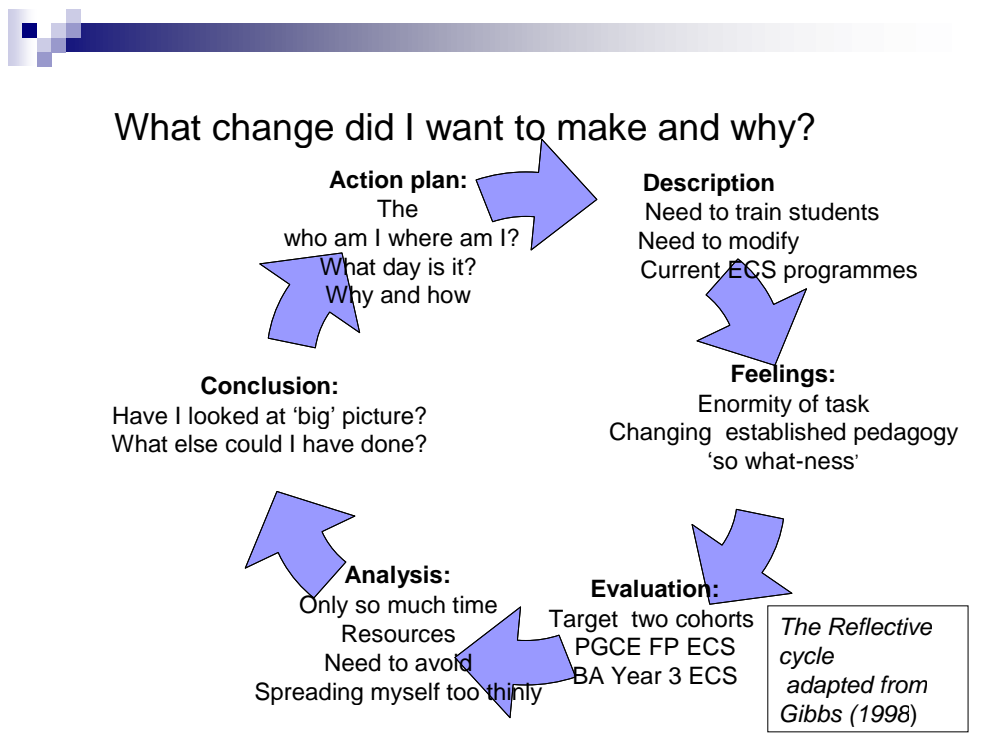


Figure 1.1. Diagram to illustrate the change process - based on Gibbs (1998)

By being aware of this reflective cycle I was able to bear in mind the many facets of this research project. I was especially aware that it was a reflective study and that ultimately as it was set within my everyday work practice and would be an integral part of it, and would influence future thinking and delivery.

1.4. Identification of the Problem / Research Questions

It is necessary for academics to have a ‘specialist’ area of knowledge, for both personal and professional reasons. With regard to this research, my personal interest in PSD/WB/EL springs from experiences as a teacher and lecturer. Having seen evidence in the classroom of the effects of low self esteem on learning and how the role of the teacher / facilitator can in equal parts both motivate and de-motivate young children (and also adult students) this was an area which needed to be explored.

In order to transfer knowledge effectively to the student body, academic staff must have different specialisms. The academic must inspire their student group, albeit that the student group may not always fully understand the topic in question. Therefore as well as simply relaying knowledge, a lecturer ensures its functionality and relevance. This is especially pertinent when working in an area such as education. There must be a process of relaying ‘skills’ in addition to knowledge, for students. New concepts and ideas relating to PSD/WB/EL need to be introduced to students in contextually appropriate ways with specific terms such as ‘Emotional Intelligence’ and ‘Emotional Literacy’ explained and relayed in context. These terms will be further defined during the following chapters.

My role as the facilitator of new knowledge was to reflect on ways in which I could develop the professional understanding and skill base of students, whilst assessing that they were able

to comprehend and are able to apply what they have learned. This was equally applicable to both student cohorts I taught during this research – the BA (Hons) Primary QTS students who had chosen Early Childhood Studies (ECS) as a specialism and the PGCE Primary students who had chosen Foundation Phase as their specialism. Nicholls (2001, p.21) stressed that professionals can ‘reflect on their experience, make it more explicit through having to share it, interpret it and recognise it as a basis for future learning’. This would be a preferable outcome for all parties.

This research was undertaken as a professional doctorate, the process engaged in enabled me to develop a level of meaning and understanding and to solve problems (Klenowski and Lunt, 2008). The process of reflecting on a dynamic and then exploring this as a work based ‘problem’ to be solved, manifested itself as three main research questions:

1. What was the extent, at the beginning of the research project of ITT student knowledge and understanding of PSD/WB/EL?
2. In what ways could using reflective practice engage ITT students and support their understanding and practical pedagogical knowledge of PSD/WB/EL?
3. How could using an action research paradigm enable the researcher to consider whether the ‘Special Me Time’ programme would impact on students’ pedagogy and reflective practice?

1.5. Proposed Change

Through teaching sessions and general contact and discussion with the BA (Hons) Primary students and the PGCE Primary students, I realised that they lacked knowledge in respect of how to support and facilitate PSD/WB/EL and also relating to principles of reflective practice.

This knowledge gap was further defined following skills audits (Appendices 2 and 3) that I undertook with both groups. These audits were developed as part of my ongoing reflection and assessment relating to teaching sessions. My role as a teacher educator was therefore to address this knowledge gap and to prepare my students as competent classroom practitioners to the best of my ability. I was aware of the recommendations of the Select Committee on the training of teachers (House of Commons, 2010) which set out that ‘Teaching needs to be a learning profession. A vital aspect of this is teachers reflecting on their own practice.’ (2010, p.5). The dynamic of ensuring my students were reflecting carefully on PSD/WB/EL factors was a concern.

As well as university based assessment, my role as a school link tutor, visiting students in their teaching placement schools, meant that I witnessed students interacting with and teaching young children. This allowed me to observe students putting PSD/WB/EL skills into practice within the Foundation Phase context. I was therefore, well placed to observe and assess students’ competence and skills and anticipate future training needs as a result of this. I was also able to liaise with school staff in relation to this dynamic and ascertain what class teachers or senior mentors thought about particular student’s competencies and abilities related to PSD/WB/EL pedagogy.

The BA (Hons) Primary and the PGCE Foundation Phase students and the elements of learning, teaching and reflective practice have been the focus of this research study. The students were on two complementary but different ITT programmes and I found that their knowledge, life experience and general attitudes were different. The students, although learners themselves, had to quickly adapt to the role of teacher in order to effectively address the standards of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The BA students had a three year

programme in which to hone their knowledge and skills, whereas the PGCE students had a one year period of training. However, both cohorts were required to gather a range of skills and competencies in a relatively short period of time as well as being able to demonstrate a range of professional values and practice to meet the QTS standards. Whilst my students were on this 'learning journey' I was undertaking a journey of my own as this research centered on my role as a teacher educator, but it also gave me the opportunity to reflect on developing my own knowledge and understanding as a learner and researcher.

Whilst aspects of this study were closely related to my role in the School of Education, the effect of the SMT programme would ultimately have an impact on the schools in which students undertook their teaching placements. The School of Education is fortunate to have close links with its partner schools. I have my own geographical area in South Wales in which I generally place students. This means that I have built strong links with partner schools and have a close relationship with class teachers and senior mentors within those schools. Findings from this research have the potential to impact on classroom practice through sharing at school cluster meetings and annual School of Education training days. Also, skills developed as a result of this research may be used by students in their future careers. Therefore, this research takes on significance in the Foundation Phase as it supports student knowledge, but could impact on Foundation Phase practice in the school setting.

It was important that I reflected on how this research study should be conducted. It has been interesting to look at the work of Coghlan (2007) who talked about the changing nature of research and the challenges associated with researching inside an organisation. He discussed the concept of 'insider action researchers' who may have issues which surround any research undertaken in an organisation, due to role duality and the organisational politics of the

organisation they are working in. In my case, I was both a researcher and lecturer and this brought an interesting dynamic to my studies as I had to be especially aware of ethical issues since I was not only teaching my students but asking them to take part in my research. In researching student participation on the SMT programme, I was concerned that students might feel pressurised to participate in the programme out of obligation to their tutor. It was therefore important as an 'insider researcher' to remain professional at all times and ensure clear ethical boundaries. Ethical principles were at 'the centre of data gathering, data analysis and writing up' (Koshy, 2008, p.142).

The nature of this research meant that I had to involve my students widely during the research process. I was also keen for the students to engage in reflection and enquiry, reflecting on their learning and ultimately their own professional practice. The SMT programme would provide an opportunity for students to reflect and engage with the young children they would be teaching in the school setting. Findings from these interactions would ultimately lead to change in practice on primary teaching programmes within the School of Education.

1.6. Generation of New Knowledge, Application and Understanding

The generation of new knowledge and effective dissemination of existing knowledge is a major responsibility of the Higher Education (HE) sector. Active research is necessary as it informs practice in HE and this should ultimately benefit students. This is especially important in ITT as current thinking relating to the relevance of university based routes to QTS as opposed to solely school based routes is under scrutiny by the Welsh Government. Leighton Andrews, the Welsh Education minister for Children Education and Lifelong Learning stated in a recent lecture that classroom based ITT practice should be given higher priority: 'I have asked officials to examine whether we can revise initial teacher training so

that it becomes a two-year Master's course, with more classroom practice, so that teachers are familiar with advanced teaching skills.' (Andrews, 2011). This would have implications for current ITT provision within the school, although the PGCE primary programme within the School of Education has recently been re-validated and does incorporate a masters element of 60 credits. The revised programme was rolled out in September 2011.

Findings from Hobson et al (2006) in their report on student teacher's experiences of ITT in England found that the majority of students interviewed stated that 'school based experiences were the most valuable aspects of their ITT' (2006, p.v.) However, many students conceded that beneficial aspects to HE based studies related to the acquisition of 'specific knowledge' (2006, p.viii) imparted by HE staff. An outcome of my research was for the ITT students within the School of Education to have improved knowledge in relation to PSD/WB/EL, along with an understanding of the principles of reflective practice. I believe that the process of research that I undertook enabled me to relay 'specific' PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice knowledge to the students, knowledge which I believe they would not have acquired solely from school experience. Korthagen (1999) said that the pressure for a more school based style of teacher education should result in a change of thinking relating to theory and practice. He believed that 'traditional' applications of a theory model were ineffective and should be replaced by 'reflective approaches' It seemed that as an academic and teacher educator, I needed to ensure that students were aware of the benefits of experiences gained both in school and in university. This is especially important in the HE market place and current, uncertain economic conditions. Reflective teaching as Pollard (2005) maintains should be based on 'teacher judgement, informed by evidence based enquiry and insights from other research' (2005, p.19). The premise of the SMT programme was that students would undertake the programme, having had the benefit of sound teaching and support from myself relating to

PSD/WB/EL pedagogy and reflective practice. They would undertake the programme using their skills and professional judgements and competencies. In effect they would be undertaking a cyclical process of reflection as first described by Dewey (1933) which shall be discussed more fully in the following chapters.

1.7. Research Design

In summary this research was designed to investigate ITT students' delivery of 'Special Me Time', a targeted programme which was aimed at supporting young children's PSD/WB/EL in the Foundation Phase setting. It explored the students' delivery, reflective practice and knowledge gained.

The findings of this research have the potential to be of benefit to a wide range of ITT students in the Foundation Phase setting. Well-being is being recognised as an integral part of school life and also within wider society. I was also aware whilst undertaking this research that I needed to be mindful of the well-being of the students involved in the SMT programme. Kinman, Wray and Hindler (2009) discussed how teachers needed to manage 'the emotional demands of teaching' whilst Fried (1995) said teaching required management of the emotions of both the teacher and of the student. It was evident that there is little research on the effects of 'emotional labour' (Wharton and Erickson, 1993) whereby emotional issues generated in the classroom environment permeate into home life. I was therefore aware that I needed to support students undertaking the SMT programme to ensure that they were not unduly burdened with emotional issues and to facilitate 'development of 'healthy' role separation and further emotional boundaries between home and work to ensure that the negative impact of emotional labour does not manifest itself as negative spill over' (Wharton and Erikson, 1993, p.273 – 296). The students who took part in the SMT programme and the effectiveness of the

strategies they used will be discussed in the following chapters of this study. The impact of this study and my reflection on it shall also be discussed. This should be of relevance and benefit to trainee teachers and the children whom they will be working with.

This research study was based on an action research model as I believed this to be the most appropriate methodology. I was drawn to ideas from McNiff et al. (2003, p.4) who stated that action research 'can help people to improve their practice'. This was the ultimate goal both for myself and my students. I also subscribed to their idea that 'Theory and practice transform continuously into each other in a seamless flow' (2003, p.4). This suggestion really appealed to me, as I have found myself becoming increasingly aware of the importance of understanding, theorising and applying knowledge gained during this research.

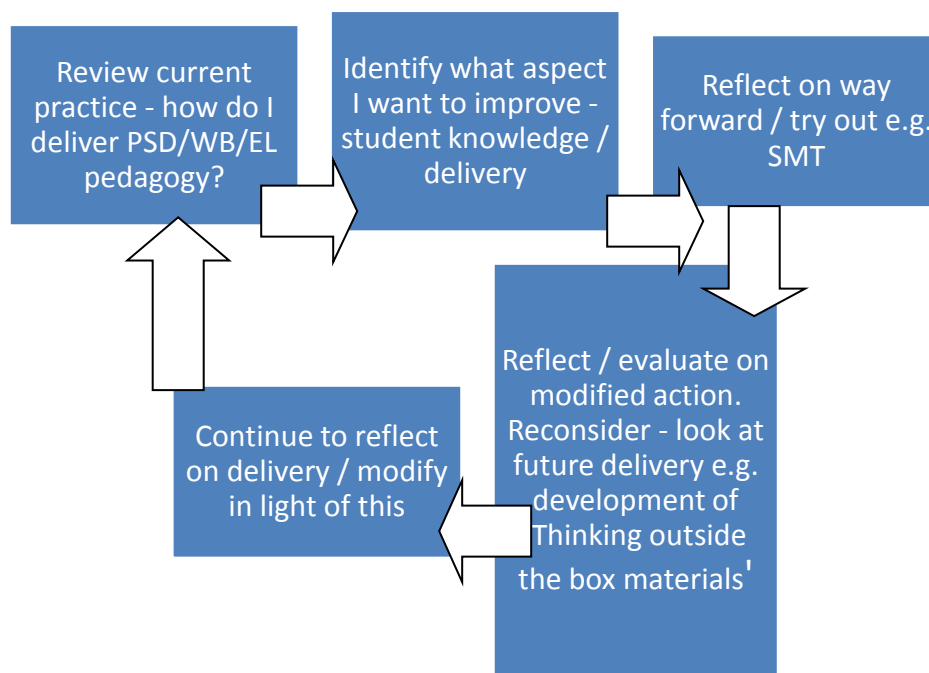


Figure 1.2. Action Research in practice - based on McNiff et al. (2003, p.58)

The figure above shows my thinking on how the action research cycle worked in practice, whilst undertaking this research project. It was evident to me after a ‘knowledge audit’ of prior cohorts of ITT students that they were lacking in knowledge relating to PSD/WB/EL pedagogy. Evidence gained during teaching sessions at that time (reflective diary notes 2007) made me realise that ITT students also lacked knowledge in relation to reflective practice principles. Consequently, I knew that I wanted to improve student knowledge and to adapt and refine my own teaching delivery relating to this area. This was in light of Welsh Government Foundation Phase development relating to PSD and WB and personal interest in this area. I devised the SMT programme as a result of this along with an increased emphasis on PSD/WB/EL in taught sessions with students. Following reflection at the end of the research project, I was able to modify and improve student sessions and develop materials called ‘Thinking outside the box’ which were related to PSD/WB/EL. By using action research as an approach, I was able to reflect, refine and adapt my pedagogy. The methodology used in this research project will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this project.

1.8. Conclusion

In this introductory chapter I have proposed that it is of great importance to underpin young children’s early learning experiences within an emotional context and [have argued](#) the need to train ITT students to appreciate the holistic and emotional aspects of the teaching process. Chapter 2 reviews the literature relating to PSD/WB/EL and addresses the relevance of the material to this research project. Chapter 3 provides further definition relating to the methodology of this research and how the research was carried out in practice. Chapter 4 discusses results and analysis, as a result of carrying out the research.

Chapter 5 presents conclusions and recommendations which have emerged from the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction and background

Research by Raver (2002) suggested that young children who are more emotionally well-adjusted have a greater chance of school success, regardless of their cognitive ability or family background. Longitudinal studies in the USA (Raver and Knitzer 2002; Zins et. al 2004; Kutnick, et. al 2009) have found academic achievements, for example skills such as reading or writing in the early years, were built on a firm foundation of social and emotional competence.

In Wales, the Welsh Government launched their 'Flying Start' initiative in 2005. This was based on evidence from a national evaluation of Sure Start in England. Funding was mostly targeted at 0-3 year olds in 'Communities first' areas (WAG, 2001) or according to a school's percentage of free school meal eligibility. Early intervention is a key factor in the scheme. Welsh Government guidance on Flying Start said: 'Social and Emotional development is seen as being a key measurable outcome for children which Flying Start must target' (WAG, 2005, p2).

The introduction of the Skills Framework (WAG, 2007) proposed that educational settings for children and young people from 3-19 should offer a 'broad and balanced curriculum' which would prepare them for the many opportunities and experiences that later life would offer them. Guidance suggested that pupils should be taught amongst other things to 'listen to the contributions of others and consider their points of view' (2007, p.6.) This in its very essence reflects some of the core values of PSD/WB/EL which relate to empowering children with principles such as respect for others.

Supporting children's Personal and Social Development is vital in helping young children to establish their own identities. Self esteem is not fixed, it can grow or diminish according to the experiences one has in life (Judge et al.1998). The views of others may also have an impact. Young children need to be supported and encouraged to help them become confident and to develop faith in their own abilities. They need to be valued and respected as individuals in their own right, with their own interests and sense of personal autonomy. Sensitive teaching in the early years can facilitate this process.

Dowling (2000) summed this up succinctly:

‘It is generally accepted that a child who has sound self-esteem is well placed to learn. Positive self-esteem is not sufficient in itself; self-knowledge is important in order for people to develop not only an optimistic view of themselves but also one which is realistic. However, in order to learn, young children must believe they are able to do so’. (2000, p.12).

Dowling's ideas link closely with those of Maslow (1970, 1998) who indicated that children who are not confident in their ability to learn will not thrive in the educational setting. Maslow believed that ‘self-actualisation’ is the ability to find self fulfilment and to realise one's own potential, and could not occur until various other physiological and psychological needs were met. Without a positive self image children may never reach their full potential.

Literature related to Personal and Social Development, Well-Being, self esteem and related topics is diverse, with different terms such as Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Literacy used almost interchangeably. This intricate web of terminology shall be further examined in the following sections of this review of literature.

2.2. Reflective Practice

Reflective practice forms a major part of this study. In effect it is the medium on which the study is based. Jones (2010, p.594) defines reflection as ‘a process of critically examining one’s past and present practice as a means of building one’s knowledge and understanding in order to improve practice.’ I would define reflective practice as a ‘thinking audit’, a process of considering and taking stock of a situation in order to improve and support current and future professional skills and practice. Ghaye (2010) is more specific in referring to reflection as a way to ‘enhance human flourishing’ (2010, p.2). Peters (1991) focused on the process of systematic enquiry and the premise that awareness of the reflective process is in itself reflective. I believe that however we view the process, reflection should make a difference. It should underpin professional practice and ultimately professional and personal development (Loughran, 2007).

Throughout the research I was aware of the principles of reflective practice. Also as a teacher educator I used reflective practice as an integral part of my teaching. I closely considered the work of Ghaye and Ghaye (1998, p.149) who proposed five stages of reflection:

1. **Descriptive** – describing or giving an account of the situation e.g. I looked at how the students were reflecting and using their knowledge of PSD/WB/EL to support children in their setting.
2. **Perceptive** – linking the description to feelings about a situation e.g. the practicalities of students supporting children’s PSD/WB/EL in the setting. The rationale that students would need help to understand their own feelings, especially when dealing with children who may have had challenging behaviour.
3. **Receptive** – exploring different perspectives. I was mindful of the fact that due to the ‘all encompassing’ nature of research into an area that you are passionate about, there was a danger that I may have had a ‘blinkered’ view when it came to PSD/WB/EL. There was always more than one way to look at a situation.
4. **Interactive** – creating links with prior and future learning. This was a key aspect of the reflective cycle that I wished to share with students. I was also keen to develop

further training input in PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice pedagogy for students in subsequent years.

5. **Critical** – challenging current practice. This was an important concept, in light of WG Foundation Phase development in the area of PSD/WB, teaching practice needed to be adapted to take these ideas into account.

MacNaughton et al (2004) suggested that research was a ‘tool’ that we can learn how to use. It is an interesting way to look at the process, which can be viewed in relation to the reflective practice model of Ghaye and Ghaye as above. In order to carry out reflective research, which as I alluded to earlier is rooted in day to day teaching practice, it makes sense to make the process as workable and practical as possible; this process is described in Figure 2.1. below:

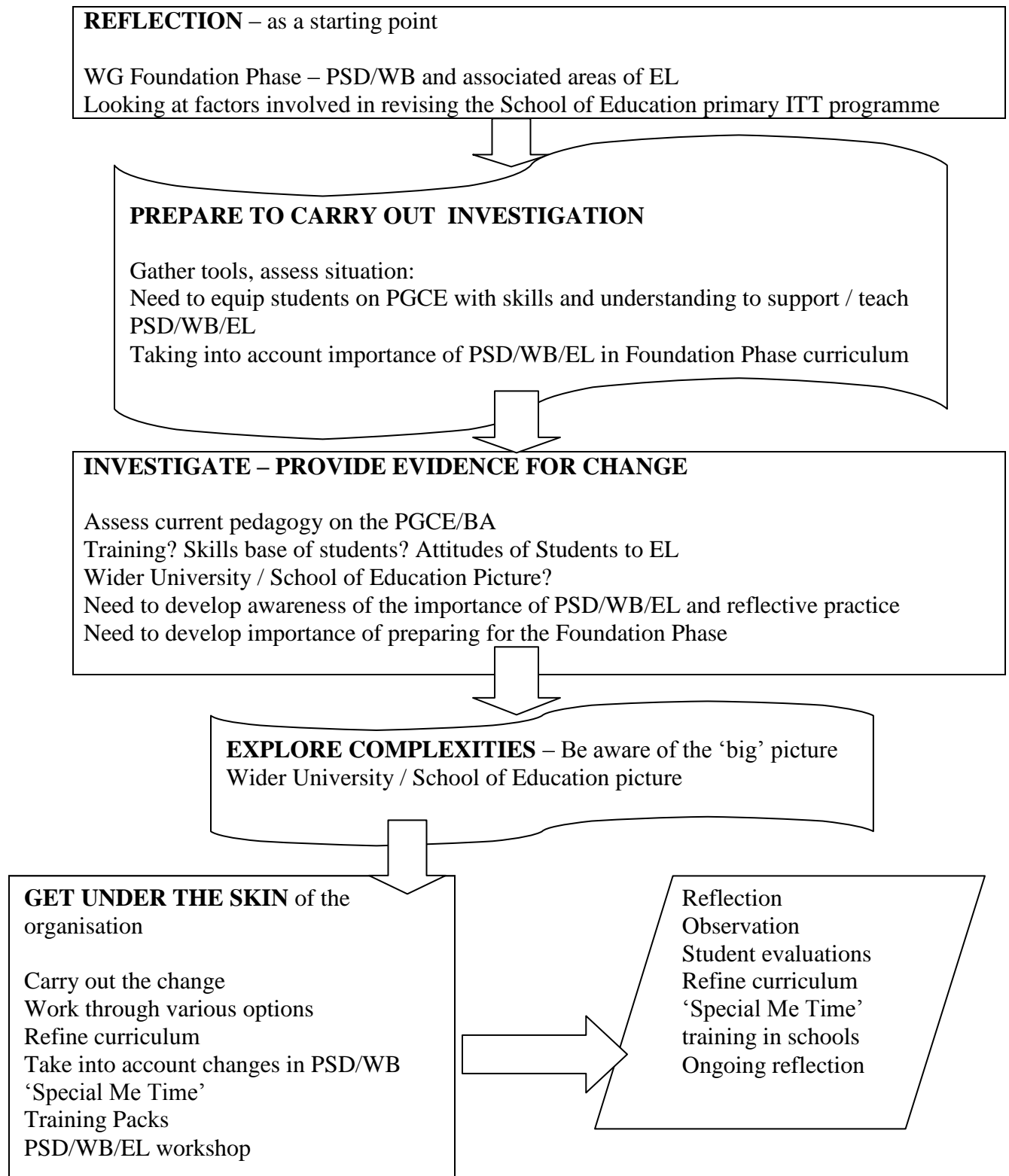


Figure 2.1. Flow chart to show outline and development of reflective practice framework

The completion of reflective diaries by students formed a major part of this study. Goodfellow (2004) documented the usefulness of the reflective diary in ITT as part of a reflective portfolio. She noted that students often found difficulty in ‘critical appreciation of their practice’ (Goodfellow, 2004, p.72) and that not all students found the process meaningful. Wideen et al. (1998) recommended that ITT programmes should encourage students to engage more fully in the reflective process and persuade students to participate in ‘deliberate exploration’ of their ideas and beliefs over extensive periods of time. It is pertinent that a conclusion from this research found this to be the case and suggested that sufficient time should be factored into tutorials within the School of Education to allow students time for reflection on their teaching and to feedback to peers and tutors.

The themes of reflection and reflexivity, are sometimes used interchangeably in literature, will continue to be discussed throughout this thesis. Reflection entails ‘stepping back and pausing to look, listen and reflect’ Plymouth (2010, p.2). Bolton (2010) thought reflection involved working out what had occurred and then thinking in a reflexive way, questioning our initial thoughts and assumptions in light of that reflection. Moore (2004) agreed, that reflexive learners, should not only reflect on what they have done, but also ‘the way in which one has reflected’ (2004, p. 148). For the ITT students, this would mean, a process of initial reflection and then reflexive thinking in relation to a situation. Taking into account issues and findings, rather than simply reacting to them. Reflexivity according to Bolton (2010) is questioning how to understand how ‘one’s own self’ and thus how you influence situations.

I have found through undertaking this research that students employ reflective practice skills to different degrees. Some students engaged fully in the process, whilst others less so. Also as Jones (2010, p.594) said, educators tend to view reflective practice as an end product, in

effect the production of a piece of writing recorded in a journal, when it often occurs solely as a thought process, which can go undocumented. Therefore, if a student does not document their reflective thinking, it does not mean that the process has not occurred, however if it is not recorded, the reflection may become diluted as a result. As a teacher educator, it was my role to ensure that my ITT students were engaging in reflective practice, whereby ideally they recorded thinking in a journal. If a reflective journal was not used, they were able to reflect verbally and share thoughts and insights in relation to their teaching practice in university sessions. I defined verbal reflection as ‘metacognitive dialogue’ (Flavell, 1976). In essence metacognitive dialogue related to the students discussing and reflecting on their ‘knowing about knowing’. Their thoughts and reflections were gained through their professional practice whilst undertaking the SMT programme and personal insights into teaching situations that had occurred or were yet to occur.

As well as engaging in reflection and acknowledging their thought processes, students would be involved in what Mezirow (1991, 2000) termed ‘transformative learning’, the process which adult learners must go through in order to make meaning from their experiences and use in future learning. My role in this process was to facilitate and support transformative learning as part of the students’ reflective journeys. An important factor in this process was to ensure that students began to see themselves as reflective thinkers and use reflective practice principles in everyday teaching. It was necessary to ensure that the students began to think and act in a reflective manner, as Otienoh (2011) established, to encourage students to ‘have ownership of their professional development and to be able to learn and grow from their own practice’ (2011, p.733). In essence, I believe the difficulty with this concept was getting students to conceptualise and act from their own professional viewpoint. Students need to develop confidence in their practice and realise that they are professionals in their own right

and not always awaiting direction from their tutor or school colleagues. This professional 'knowing and reflection' may come with experience. I am more optimistic than Otienoh (2011) who wrote that 'most teachers are unable to critically reflect' (2011, p.733). I would dispute this statement, citing evidence from this study that the student teachers on the SMT programme did carry out critical reflection, to some extent. However, concept and engagement with the reflective process needs to be specifically and robustly embedded into ITT programmes so that students see it as an integral and vital part of their professional thinking and practice. Zhu (2011) found that student teachers engaged reflectively with practice and more readily whilst reflecting 'on action', (Schon, 1983) whereby, they reflect in hindsight on what has already occurred. ITT students reflection 'in action' (whilst situations are occurring), appeared more vague and difficult to document due to 'too many things going on' (Zhu, 2011, p.763). The student teachers had more difficulty consciously evaluating and making changes to practices 'on the spot' preferring to do things as they always had been done and were hesitant to work outside their 'comfort zone'. It is necessary for ITT tutors therefore, to continue to encourage students to undertake reflection in action, in order to develop deeper reflective practices. McGregor and Cartwright (2011, p.7) thought that the aim of reflective practice was to 'support a shift from routine actions rooted in commonsense thinking to reflective action, emerging from professional thinking'. This describes the shift in theory, I believe, which takes the student teacher from novice to professional, and more importantly, the dawning realisation that this process is occurring.

2.3. Defining Personal and Social Development (PSD)

There are many factors which determine a child's level of 'Personal and Social Development' (PSD). One major element is their social and cultural background and ultimately, the way in which they have been 'parented' and socialised within their family. Dowling (2000, p.125)

asserted ‘our experience of being ‘parented’ is probably the strongest influence on our attitudes and behaviours’. Whilst we cannot ensure that all young children have a positive experience in their home environment, however, practitioners can go some way to addressing any imbalance within a caring and nurturing Foundation Phase setting.

Social competence is now being viewed as an important factor for effective social and educational functioning. Competency in this area can impact on a child’s ability to learn, form relationships, learn and operate in the wider world. The Primary National Strategy, England, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning guidance (SEALS, 2005, p.6) set out five broad aspects for effective social and emotional learning: ‘self awareness; managing feelings; motivation; empathy and social skills’. The guidance stresses the value of developing these skills when working with young children. ‘Social, emotional and behaviour skills underlie almost every aspect of school, home and community life, including effective learning and getting on with people’ (SEALS, 2005, p.7).

Young children’s development is inextricably bound to their feelings of self worth and self esteem. How children view themselves affects their relationships and how they react in certain situations. Guidance from the Department for Children Schools and Families (DSCF) entitled ‘Social and Emotional Aspects of Development’ (SEAD, 2008) was designed to help practitioners support children in their very earliest relationships with others. It is intended for use with children from 0 – 36 months. This age phase is a vital time to embed, support and develop skills relating to personal and social development. The learning of early language for example, is a key component in this stage of development. Early language skills undoubtedly go hand in hand with social development. Young children must master effective

communication and language skills, in order to make requests relating to their needs or preferences.

Stern stressed that children's 'self-reflexive awareness' (1998, p.6) grew along with their awareness of themselves as a part of the world. He also referred to children developing a 'social feel' (1998, p.8) of all that is around them at about eighteen months of age. Lindon (2005) suggested, 'learning is not all intellectual or rational; feelings are equally important. It is important that children develop in confidence so that they can learn', (2005, p.103). The role of early educators therefore, should firstly be to support children's social and emotional development and to allow children to begin to find their place in the social world, and secondly, to help maintain young children's early language skills, in order for the two areas of social and emotional development and language to develop in tandem. It seems evident that development in these areas is complementary, so by supporting one area, this is facilitating growth and confidence in the other.

Defining what PSD encompasses is difficult. Aylward et al. (2003) looked at the key characteristics of PSD and described characteristics such as 'an ongoing focus leading to the development of an individual in their own right and within society' (2003, p.1). They also examined critical factors such as self esteem, respect for oneself and others along with a positive or 'can do' attitude. The wider social benefits of PSD for individuals was stressed. Brazelton and Greenspan (2000) studied this social dynamic and suggested that there were certain 'irreducible' needs that children had. They considered that children required a range of experiences and input in relation to their personal and social development such as stability, individual experiences, continuity and nurturing ongoing relationships. If a society did not meet these needs, children's futures would be jeopardised. If this is the case, then there is a

strong argument that within the school context educators need to work with children to develop these skills.

The definition of Personal and Social Development on which this study is based, also relates to ideas from neuro-science, notably relating the link between enhanced brain development in the early years and conducive or positive environments. (Meade, 2000, Gerhardt, 2004). This dynamic was studied further by Roberts (2007) who explained the complexity of the 'interplay' between genes and early 'experiences.' Roberts asserted that early interactions are not only contextual, but 'directly affect the way the brain is wired', (2007, p.6). Thus babies who have more experiences within a nurturing and empowering environment, will have received greater stimulation and been exposed to a wider range of experiences, compared to babies who are raised in a less conducive situation. The role of a sensitive and responsive carer was documented by Gunnar (1998) who found that brain development in infants was affected by stress in early development. The area of the brain found to be most affected was the hippocampus, which amongst other functions, is important in the acquisition of learning and memory. While positive early life experience may be a positive factor in early development, as Blakemore and Frith (2005) suggested, learning throughout life is also an important aspect.

2.4. Defining Well-Being (WB)

As this chapter demonstrates, theorists and educators have varied opinions about the definition of well-being and how it is achieved. Definitions of well-being can also be extremely ambiguous.

It is pertinent therefore, to establish that any definition of well-being in relation to this study would be dependent on the context to which it was applied. If one views well-being as a multi-national dynamic, the well-being of children living in developing countries would commence from a completely different baseline. A report by the Global Aids Alliance (2007) highlighted a lack of access to education as a critical issue for children and one that clearly impacts on their long-term well-being. This thankfully, is not an issue for children in the UK. Zeitz (2007) outlined the plight of the poorest children throughout the world, which he reported as being ‘desperate and worsening, with one billion children living in poverty world wide and nearly 11 million dying each year from preventable, treatable diseases.’ (2007, p.2). The report continued to discuss issues such as the impact of global resource needs on children’s well-being, as children in developing countries may be orphans or the victims of war or violence as well as victims of diseases such as HIV /AIDS. Poverty in childhood is also a problem, closer to home. In some areas of Wales, children’s life chances are being affected by living in poverty. Egan (2007), in a report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, found that although poverty had been reduced in Wales, one in four Welsh children were still affected, thus having a severe effect on their life chances.

A UNICEF report published in 2007 raised many questions about the well-being of children. The report measured and compared overall child well-being across six dimensions: material well-being, health and safety, education, peer and family relationships, behaviours and risks,

and young people's own subjective sense of their own well-being. The report drew on forty separate indicators relevant to children's lives and their rights. The children were asked to respond to questionnaires, which were designed to assess their views and experiences relating to issues such as bullying or their experience of violence. Children's subjective well-being was categorised and evaluated in relation to rating their health on a scale from fair to poor along with detailing their experiences of school from liking it a lot to not liking it. Children were also asked to measure their life satisfaction on a 'life satisfaction ladder' (2007, p.39). The rationale behind this task was to explore the psychological and social aspects relating to the child's subjective well-being. Familiar childhood feelings were investigated such as feelings of awkwardness, loneliness or being an outsider in social situations. These states were particularly thought to leave children feeling excluded from society, or having an effect on their quality of life.

Northern European countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Finland were found to have the highest child well-being. The UK and the United States were placed at the bottom of the list. The UK was ranked in the bottom third of the countries rankings for five of the six dimensions reviewed. There was some good news for the UK in relation to better scores in the educational well-being dimension. The UK however, scored poorly in terms of relative poverty and deprivation, quality of children's relationships with their parents and peers, child health and safety, behaviour and risk-taking and subjective well-being. Sharp (2001, p.3) believed this makes the UK 'the worst place to grow up in the developed world'.

Research undertaken in Wales by Daly and Limbert (2009) listened to children's 'voices'. Findings showed that older children were happy to talk about their life experiences and perceived well-being and share this with others. This was found to be particularly prevalent if

the researcher was in their early twenties (i.e. a research student) as the children divulged more information to this age group. An example of an initial theme which emerged from the research, was that children needed someone to confide in and to discuss their problems and concerns with. The children reported that teachers did not always listen to what they said. The Welsh Assembly Government signed the UN Declaration of Children's Rights in 2004 and has developed policies to support children's rights, with examples of Welsh Government initiatives such as 'Funky Dragon' an organisation which encourages children / young people to participate in decision making at national level and is a platform for youngsters to have their say. The Children and Young People's Well-Being monitor for Wales (WAG, 2008) found there was scant information available on children and young people's life experiences and well-being from their own perspectives. Schools need to develop further channels of communication, to support their students. Thinking on listening to children's voices is however becoming more apparent. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1990) sets out the rights of children and young people to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account on any matter that affects them. The School Councils (Wales) Regulations, 2005 made it a statutory requirement for all maintained schools in Wales to have a school council. This ensures that pupil voice is represented in the development of school policies and procedures.

Assessment of well-being is closely related to children's life experiences within the construct of community and society, according to Ben-Arieh et al (2001), who explored children's choices and how these contributed to perceptions of their own well-being. They looked at a broad dynamic and multidimensional assessment to explore themes, aiming to capture the circumstances which lead to well-being. As is well recognized, the idea of qualifying or quantifying well-being is not simple. Layard (2005) agreed that a definition is not easy, as each

person will feel differently in relation to feelings about their own well-being. He pointed to several factors which influenced our sense of well-being and suggested that personal values are influenced mainly by upbringing, within the family unit.

Hoti, Bacon, Brophy and Mulgan (2008) aimed to measure well-being by simplifying it into two categories: subjective and objective well-being. They classified subjective well-being as a person's own individual 'assessment' of their happiness (2008, p.20). Positive Psychology is a school of psychological thought which concentrates on the study and promotion of 'positive emotions' such as laughter. Seligman (2004) is a leading proponent of this field of research. Visitors to Seligman's web site can take part in a variety of questionnaires which measure character strengths and aspects of happiness. Objective well-being on the other hand is that which relates to 'conventional indicators' gleaned from the domains of education or local government in the form of data from surveys or customer feedback, which is then collated and used as evidence by that agency or organisation. One questions whether either of these approaches are a valid way of looking at something as complex as EL. The difficulty of measurement in this area continues to be a conundrum.

The question as to whether certain children are more pre-disposed to emotional happiness and thus enjoy better well-being is an interesting one. Ofsted and the DCSF(2008) studied this dynamic and in a major study of children's happiness and found that teenagers in the north of England were more emotionally secure than in other parts of England. The consensus for causes of greater levels of happiness was attributed to better friendships, feelings of belonging and closer family relationships. Information gained from this study came via Local Education Authority (LEA) scores from every local authority in England as part of the Tellus project. LEAs assessed the emotional health of children, looking at factors such as quality of

friendships, dealing with problems, and children's perceptions of happiness. Results from the survey suggested targets for LEAs to improve services for children; these can be seen as a step change in Government policy, being a partial shift away from measuring the effectiveness of different approaches on the educational outcomes for children. Pert (1997) ascribed feelings of security and happiness to productivity, linking changes in our emotional state to those in our physiological state and vice versa. The Experiential Education (EXE) project concluded by Laevers et al (1997) identified two key concepts for quality early years provision, those of well-being and involvement. The project defined well-being as when children: feel at ease; act spontaneously; are open to the world and accessible; express inner rest and relaxation; show vitality and self confidence; are in contact with their feelings and emotions and generally enjoy life. Therefore, in order to support young children's well-being in the school setting, teachers need to meet the child's basic needs, promote / support self esteem and help the child to be in touch with, and understand, their emotions. Involvement can be defined as being a time when a child, concentrates, engages and persists with an activity. The child would also show a high level of motivation, interest and would be open to new stimuli. Children who are involved in an activity are mentally active, show enjoyment and have high energy levels. Laevers (1997) refers to children in this state of well-being, as being like 'fish in water'.

Well-being encompasses a range of physiological and psychological factors. Pert (1997) explored the effects of thoughts and emotions on health. She discussed recent technological innovations which have allowed examination of the 'molecular basis of the emotions' (1997, p.18) which she believes demonstrates that the molecules of our emotions 'share intimate connections with, and are indeed inseparable from, our physiology' (1997, p.18).

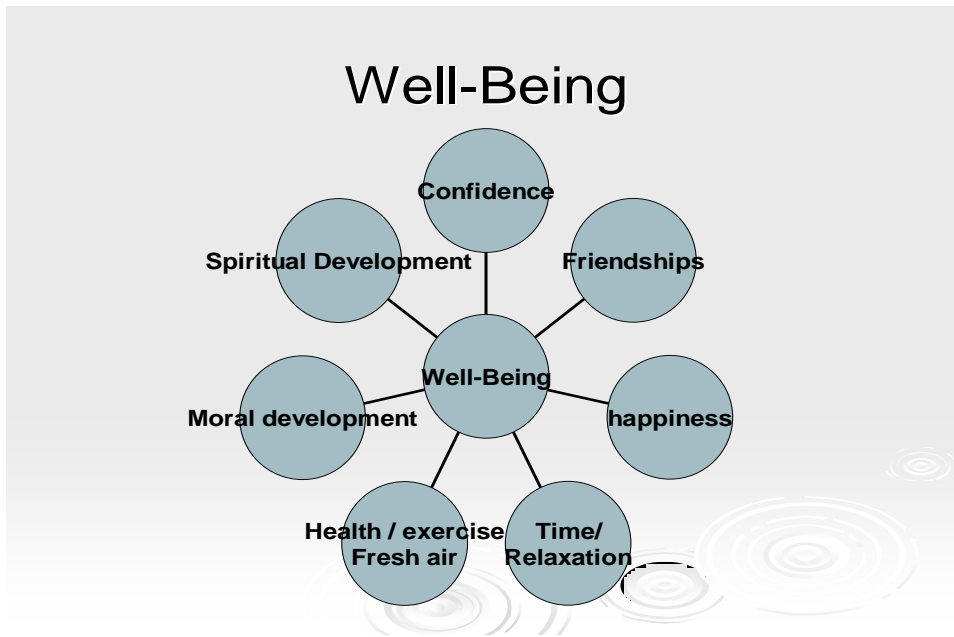


Figure 2.2. Aspects relating to well-being ~ the well-being wheel. (Davis, 2008)

Figure 2.1. shows the components of well-being which are relevant to the young child as a ‘whole’ person. Ideally, the components should be developed and supported within a caring home or Foundation Phase setting. Young children for example, often have strong ideas relating to morality. According to Neam and Tallack (2000, p.99), morality is closely linked to the skill of being ‘sensitive’ towards others, i.e. having a strong sense of ‘social empathy’ with others. If children are encouraged to build on these skills, then they may be more able to realise the consequence of their actions on others. Beliefs and attitudes of parents or Foundation Phase practitioners can help shape young children’s behaviour. Pro-social or altruistic behaviour may be learned from watching others. Moral ‘conscience’ (for want of a better word) is not culturally defined. Different cultural groups will have different ideas on moral or immoral acts and therefore children from those cultures will have a different sense of how they should behave or think as a result.

Robertson (2003, p.12) proposed that well-being is the 'opposite of risk in relation to health'. She measured 'wellness' as a variety of aspects which can be equated to physical health, safety, security, nourishment and being free from risk or danger. Feeling 'well' does indeed stem from physical health. At the opposite end of the scale, some children enjoy risks or activities which others may classify as dangerous, such as climbing trees or swimming in rivers. Well-being can therefore be subjective and can depend on one's view or perception of it.

The Welsh Government (WG) state in their Foundation Phase documentation (2007, p.9) that children should 'value and contribute to their own well-being and to the well-being of others', thus making it a whole school issue. We cannot assume that children will embark on caring about others as a matter of course, strategies must be put in place to facilitate this delicate process.

Young children's early experiences pave the way for their future character formation. There are undoubtedly certain factors which foster positive levels of well-being. Gerhardt (2004, p.14) looked at the importance of relating to others and how young children must get used to the 'ebb and flow of emotions' which are part of everyday life in a social world. She considered that these emotions form not only the psychological make up of the child but also the physiological one. This is in essence the hidden core of a child, which is built through experiences both negative and positive.

Well-being is increasingly being viewed as a priority in young children's development. Many schools are becoming aware of the importance of fostering the emotional and mental well-being of young children. Children from families who are in crisis or difficulty can suffer

a range of problems, which need to be addressed and a caring, safe school environment. A clear routine and structure can go a long way in supporting these children and families. Research from the Office for National Statistics, makes depressing reading. Findings about the mental health of children in England, Scotland and Wales are documented in a 2004 report in which one in ten 5 to 16 year olds were known to have had a clinically diagnosed disorder, phobia or obsessive compulsive disorder. In addition, one in 25 of these children had an emotional disorder such as anxiety or depression. There may be many reasons why young children are suffering in this way. The US National Mental Health Information centre (2007) ascribed mental health disorders in children to either biological causes (genetics or chemical imbalance) or environmental causes (extreme stress, violence or bereavement). In times where the global economy heads into economic downturn for example, it could be that young children who indicate they are depressed, are in fact reflecting on the moods and concerns of the adult role models that they spend much of their time with.

Practitioners in the Foundation Phase have a key role to play in promoting children's emotional and mental health, by encouraging young children to explore their feelings and teaching them how to value and look after themselves. Practitioners also need to be aware of the early signs of emotional difficulties in young children, such as behaviour that is out-of-character or excessive. Observation is a fundamental tool in this process, along with sharing findings with the rest of the Foundation Phase team. In many settings, there will be a number of staff who are involved in the day to day care and education of young children. By keeping careful records and observations of children, behaviour that takes place over a period of time such as lack of interest in activities, feelings of sadness/ worthlessness; distress; anxiety or obsessive behaviour, can be recorded and intervention strategies may be put in place. Clark and Moss (2011) thought that practitioners must make time in their day specifically to listen

to children as well as observing them. In a busy setting, the practitioner may ask a child a question and then become involved with something else before the child has had the time or opportunity to formulate their answer. By listening carefully to children, practitioners are acknowledging that they value what the child has to say and also their contribution or insight. From developing this listening relationship, practitioners may glean information from the child which in turn could be used to support that child's well-being. Lancaster (2006), explored the relationship between listening to and supporting children and the development of their emotional understanding and insight.

2.5. Defining Emotional Intelligence (EI) / Emotional Literacy (EL)

The terms Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Emotional Literacy (EL) are now increasingly used in the fields of management, psychology, health, social science and education. There are many different definitions and categories for both and confusingly the terms are often used interchangeably. Claxton (2005) thought that there was a 'high degree of overlap' between the terms and that there is little to distinguish between them; he also thought that some people may prefer one term to the other (2005, p.9). At this point in the study, I will examine the use of both terms, but as I will explain later on, for personal and professional reasons, I will use the term Emotional Literacy when talking about children's and adults' learning and life experiences within an emotional domain.

EI may be considered as having more of a basis in science. Academics involved in the study of this concept have worked hard to establish specific scientific roots. Findings from a study by Mayer, Di Paolo and Salvoney (1990) demonstrated that emotion and cognition could be combined to achieve certain outcomes. Their research found that some people were more skilled than others at identifying the emotional content in designs and colours. EI is closely

associated with psychological research from the 1980s. Psychologists at that time were beginning to examine how emotions interacted with thought processes and vice versa (Isen et al, 1978, Zajonc, 1980) and how mood states could assist or affect cognition, thought processes and personal judgements (Mayer and Bremer, 1985, Palfai and Salovey, 1993-1994 and Salovey and Birnbaum, 1989). A classic definition of the term EI is attributed to Mayer and Salovey (1977) who defined EI as ‘the processes involved in the recognition, use, understanding and management of ones own and others’ emotional states to solve emotion-laded problems and to regulate behaviour’ (1977, p.i).

In 1999 Mayer, Salovey and Caruso published findings which claimed that EI met traditional standards for an intelligence. These findings were measured on the Multi-factor EI scale (MEIS). This scale took 10 years to produce and was the outcome of both theoretical and empirical work. This was seen as a valid measure to support ideas relating to EI acquisition and development. Ideas relating to EL were developed by people such as Kohn (2005). Many of these ideas looked at competencies which arise from sound personal, social and emotional development, such as sharing, communicating with other children and taking responsibility for their own actions.

Queries relating to the use of the terms EI or EL continue. It does seem that many educationalists favour the term EL over EI. For the purpose of this study, and as my own preference I will employ the term EL and as the study has an intrinsic basis in education, the term EL will be used as the preferred term. However, the term EI will be used, when it is employed specifically by a particular writer or academic. It can also be argued that applying the term EL to children’s abilities illustrates a work in progress, with scope for improvement, rather than a definitive end product. As an educator, I feel more comfortable with this

emphasis on the term EL. Orbach (1999) offered ideas on this theme, defining EL as ‘the attempt to take responsibility for understanding our personal emotions’ (1999, p.3). Even the title of her book ‘Towards Emotional Literacy’ hints at the beginning of a learning journey, rather than a final destination.

Sharp (2001) also wrestled with the conundrum of using the terms EI or EL. He developed some of the first diagnostic work related to EL whilst working for Southampton Psychology Service. Sharp preferred the term EL to EI for two reasons. Firstly, because the word ‘intelligence’ is associated with certain connotations or ‘labels’ and, secondly, he argued that ‘intelligence has frequently been seen as rather fixed or stable’ (2001, p.2). Petrides and Furnham (2004) offered an insight into the term EI by relating it to a trait. They regarded EI as a dimension of personality rather than a form of intelligence. Kids EQ (2008), an online organisation dedicated to EL issues, defines EL as ‘the first step towards Emotional Intelligence’. According to the website, children who are emotionally literate possess attributes such as being able to recognise, understand and express their emotions. It is clear that EL is seen as an ‘essential’ skill, that needs to be developed or learned. Kids EQ rate the acquisition of EL as of fundamental importance, equitable with learning the alphabet. Accordingly, they believe that EL forms the ‘grammar and vocabulary of our emotional life’ (2008, online).

Definitions of EL are therefore, manifold. They are undoubtedly made up of many aspects and individuals have differing views and experiences of them. Chapman (2001) believed a combination of the Intrapersonal+Interpersonal = Emotional Intelligence. The Intrapersonal being ‘The inner intelligence we use to know, understand and motivate ourselves’ (2001, p.12) which can be broken down into steps:

Step 1 Self awareness

Step 2 Managing emotions

Step 3 Self motivation

The Interpersonal aspect can be defined as ‘The outer-intelligence we use to read, sense, understand and manage our relationships with other people’ again in steps:

Step 4 Relationship management

Step 5 Emotion coaching

These steps could arguably be employed as a checklist to becoming more emotionally literate, but in reality some aspects may be gained routinely through life experience, whilst others may need a depth of thought or some kind of affirmative action.

PSD/WB encompasses the associated strands of EI and EL. Bocchino (1999, p.11) described EI as ‘the characteristic, the personality dynamic or the potential, that can be nurtured and developed in a person’. To consider the meaning of the term EI, we can also refer to the work of Gardner (1983) who said that each child had different types of ‘intelligences’ and two of these are closely aligned to the emotional or affective domain. He called them ‘interpersonal’ and ‘intrapersonal’. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand other people, effectively what makes them ‘tick’. Intrapersonal intelligence is to know yourself and your capabilities and be able to use that information.

It must also be stated at this juncture in the study, that there are academics, authors and psychologists who dispute the findings of others who have studied and presented findings in the field of EL. Murphy (2006) is a strong critic of the EL agenda. He disputed the research

of social scientists such as Thorndike (1920), saying that their research was done in culturally restricted ways. He illustrated this example by emphasising that most of Thorndike's research on social intelligence related to the USA, which gave it a very narrow social viewpoint and focus. Murphy also argued against interventions aimed at the development of high self esteem in children. He referred to research by Baumeister, Smart and Boden (1996) citing their ideas that high self esteem may lead to 'denial of problems and excessive self enhancement' (Murphy, 2006, p.19).

It would appear that the human body is closely and inextricably linked to its various emotions. Darwin (1837) talked about an outward expression of emotions and feelings which had a significance related to behavioural matters. He formulated these ideas after studying social structure and hierarchies in colonies of baboons, which he compared to human society. Damasio (1995) described our feelings as indicators, offering us 'a glimpse of what goes on in our flesh' (1995, p.159). The study of social intelligence, especially within the social structures of the Foundation Phase setting, may give some insight in this complicated world, and ultimately the tools and strategies to help young children cope and achieve to the best of their ability.

Goleman offered some of the first fundamental ideas on EI in his books 'Emotional Intelligence' (1995) and 'Working with Emotional Intelligence' (1998). These publications were also embraced by the popular psychology market, which showed that reading and learning about feelings was gaining momentum with the general public. He wrote about how to equip young children with the skills to learn about their emotions and use them to their advantage, both educationally and in the wider social context. Goleman (1998, p.4) referred to EI as a 'different' way of being clever. He saw it as building strategies to be able to 'handle

yourself, get along with people, work in teams’. More specifically, and of special interest to the process of pedagogy, he stressed ‘our level of Emotional Intelligence is not fixed genetically, nor does it develop only in childhood. Emotional Intelligence seems to be largely learned, and it continues to develop as we go through life and learn from our experiences’ (1998, p.7). This echoes the idea of a journey postulated by Orbach (2001).

Salovey and Birnbaum (2000) were sceptical in relation to some of Gardner’s ideas on EI. They believed that Gardner had made ‘extraordinary and difficult to substantiate claims about the importance of EI’ (p.i). Gardner’s ideas about EI differed from Salovey and Birnbaum as they described a broad range of ‘personal’ attributes of EI which included somewhat subjective concepts on themes such as political awareness. These ideas may have contributed to developing the legitimacy of EI as a scientific sphere. Salovey and Birnbaum argued that Gardner’s work on EI went beyond recognised scientific evidence available at that time (Davies, Stankov and Roberts, 1998; Epstein, 1998; and Mayer, Caruso and Salovey, 2002).

2.6. Teaching and Learning and PSD/WB/EL

The difficulty when undertaking research in the realm of human emotions or feelings (EL could be defined as being the barometer of competence in relation to these areas) is that one may be working in the dark. Often, the scientific community equate facts with an outcome, notably the presentation of statistics. Gathering statistics in relation to emotional aspects or feelings may not be fully ethical in all cases. This could prove especially pertinent when working with young children. Also, when delving into emotive topics for research purposes, we may not be able to guarantee the validity of answers, responses or behaviours that are given or observed in human subjects.

If one refers back in time to ancient Greece and philosophical ideas related to emotions and feelings, one can be assured that these dilemmas are not new. As Magee (2001) reflected, ‘it was out of philosophy that science was born’ (2001, p.9). It is interesting to note the views of Xenophanes (6th Century), a philosopher who had a deep knowledge of the human psyche. Xenophanes implied that by learning more and changing our ideas in the light of what we learn, we may get nearer the truth. However, there will always be an element of guesswork involved.

Carr and Claxton (2002) have examined reasons why some children are more successful learners than their peers. They refer to the notion of ‘positive’ dispositions to learning, suggesting that some children have certain characteristics which make them more willing and effective learners. Many of these ideas were about competencies which arise from sound personal, social and emotional development, such as sharing, communicating with other children and taking responsibility for their own actions. Curtis (2002) had similar views, believing ‘high self esteem and positive self concept are crucial to children if they are to ‘learn how to learn’ and achieve their full potential’ (2002, p.51).

Models of good practice in early education, such as the Te Whariki curriculum in New Zealand and Reggio Emilia in Italy have variations on a theme of Emotional Literacy in their curriculums. The Te Whariki curriculum (NZ, 1996, p.9) for example, envisages children growing up as: ‘competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit.’ Loris Malaguzzi founded nursery schools in the Reggio Emilia municipality in northern Italy over 40 years ago. The Reggio Emilia approach can be described as education based on a child’s relationships. These relationships are developed in relation to their peers, family, teachers and the wider community. Malaguzzi (2007) wrote a poem to express his

ideals entitled 'The hundred languages of children' where he discusses and explores the negative effect the school system can have on the child, and how practitioners or other adults do not take into account their feelings or sensibilities and especially the way the school and the culture 'separate the head from the body'.

Being EL equips a child with valuable life and relationship skills. Children need to develop strategies which will enable them to identify their own emotions and then feel confident enough to vocalise them. When young children understand their own feelings, they are more able to recognise and respect the feelings of others. They can learn to develop empathy, understanding and patience when working closely with peers and adults. The value of EL to society as a whole has been emphasised by church leaders such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, who said in an article in the Daily Telegraph (12.04.06) that schools should: 'emphasise communication skills and 'Emotional Literacy', as well as reading and writing'. In the article, he also warns of the dangers of our society becoming one that 'lacks maturity' and the importance of raising children who as adults, can empathise with others.

In the UK, private training organisations such as Antidote began looking at the association between developing EL and enhancing children's learning potential. It is described as 'Developing a language for feelings' (2005, p.34). Collaborative research undertaken by Antidote and the University of Bristol has shown that there is a connection between 'quality' relationships in school and young children's learning potential. Joint research undertaken by both organisations resulted in the ELLI study – Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (2002). The research found that children who had better EL were more able learners. Antidote (2005, p.10) stressed the importance of EL in enabling children to:

- access the emotional states that will support learning
- deploy emotional understanding to enrich their learning
- foster the sort of relationships that energise their experience of learning

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned a study to establish how children's emotional and social competence and well-being could be developed (Weare and Gray, 2003). This research informed the introduction of a pilot programme to support and teach social, emotional and behavioural skills (SEBS) to children in schools (DfES, 2003). More recently, the Every Child Matters documentation (DfES, 2004), highlighted the importance of fostering emotional well-being, and in Wales, guidance from the Welsh Government in 2008 was produced as part of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

In England, the Primary National Strategy materials, 'Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' (SEALS, DfES / Sure Start, 2005) set out the importance of developing the primary curriculum to deliver a responsive Personal and Social Development framework. The documentation looked at school improvement aspects and how PSD can support gains for children's learning and personal development. It states: 'Social, emotional and behaviour skills underlie almost every aspect of school, home and community life, including effective learning and getting on with other people. They are fundamental for school improvement' (2005, p.7). Although, as yet in Wales, there are no dedicated materials such as the SEALS materials, it is possible to draw on the findings from the SEALS programme and use as good practice where appropriate, within the Foundation Phase setting. The final report on the monitoring and evaluation of the Foundation Phase (Blatchford et al 2006) clearly set out among its key recommendations that best practice in early years should

‘Assure an appropriate balance between academic and social emotional aims in the curriculum and in day to day and long term planning’ (2006, p.16).

EL is a two way process, it has to be highlighted by practitioners and it must be ‘experienced’ by children. A definite conundrum Foundation Phase practitioners face is how to actually ‘measure’ children’s development in the area of personal and social development or indeed their ‘well-being’. As practitioners begin to learn how to employ strategies for supporting children’s personal and social development, they must also refine and develop ways of charting children’s development in this area, and using this knowledge to plan for further development.

As a conclusion to this section, it is important to qualify the fact that research into EL is still very much in its infancy. The concept of EL was introduced to a broader audience, in the popular domain, through publications such as Goleman, (1998) ‘Emotional Intelligence’ (1998) and EL by Steiner, (2003) in his book, ‘Emotional Literacy: Intelligence with a Heart’ (2003). Publications such as these and ideas on EI/EL have only become apparent within the last 20 years. Reliable and valid measurements of EL in the scientific sphere are also in the early stages of development. Much is still to be learned in this field.

2.7. Defining Confidence / Self Esteem in Young Children

The foundation of confidence is self-esteem. Confidence is also related to the development of personal autonomy and self-awareness. It is related to how the young child feels about himself and how the world around him deals with him. Bowers (2006, p.89) offered ideas on the way that emotions shape children’s lives, believing that low self esteem in children may be

recognised as a ‘disposition’ or a series of beliefs or expectations that children hold onto or have experienced at some point in their lives.

Confidence can be supported and developed by practitioners within a caring and nurturing Foundation Phase setting. A central principle of the SMT programme was to support young children’s confidence. When young children experience success the ongoing support and nurture by others plays a major role in this process. Finer (2003) suggested celebrating the fact that children’s minds are just beginning to be filled with various concepts and ideas about themselves. Finer (2003) believed that if adults were more childlike, they would also remember the feeling of joy and satisfaction when mastering a skill for the first time. He advocated that we should allow development of skills based on what children can do at that particular time. Working within their comfort zone, until they are ready to move on, this makes children confident. The Welsh Government are advocating that learners from 3 to 19 should be developing skills on a continuum in areas such as ‘thinking skills’, communication, ICT and number. These skills would be embedded in the curriculum from Foundation Phase onwards. ‘Habits of mind’, an approach pioneered by Costa and Kallick, (1991, 2000) was the precursor to ideas in the skills framework. The 16 Habits of mind relate to factors such as persisting in an activity, being a responsible learner (i.e. the learner taking responsibility for their own learning) and the importance of listening and remaining open to different learning experiences. Ideas on ‘thinking skills’ demonstrate how responsive adults may support children to enable them to persevere in tasks and remain interested. Children may sometimes give up if they do not know the answer to a question or particular problem. By equipping children with a range of problem solving and thinking skills, they can be taught to find more flexible solutions to problems. Performing optimally in a task leads to confidence self esteem and a sound skills base.

Bronfenbrenner (1992, 1999) said that there were critical processes involved in positive human development and that this was especially true in relation to babies and children. He stressed the importance of shared interaction between carer and child, with the carer giving unconditional regard for the child's well-being. He warned that children's well-being was being eroded by factors such as parental unemployment, poverty and the hectic pace of modern life. He also felt children were being deprived of essential virtues which contribute to well-being such as compassion, integrity, honesty, and responsibility.

It is vital that young children are nurtured and cared for in their earliest years. The formation of this secure initial attachment to close carers is essential. Trevarthen (1993) studied the interaction between young babies and their main carer. He found that the reciprocal nature of communication was crucial to the infant. The babies who had the best communication skills were those whose carers were in tune with their thoughts, feelings and moods. These babies seemed more contented and connected to their carer.

Partnership with parents / carers is undoubtedly a valuable asset within the Foundation Phase setting, and student teachers need to understand and reflect upon the importance of this dynamic. However parenting styles may have an affect on children's confidence. Some children may set themselves unrealistic goals or have parents / carers who expect too much from them. This can lead to lack of confidence. Dweck (2006) studied this in detail. She described parents / carers who spend time documenting and boasting of their children's intelligence or talent, rather than developing and nurturing it. This may lead to children believing that talent alone creates success. However, without effort and application this will not be the case. Dweck considered that self esteem was not a commodity that we can give to children. We should equip children with the expertise to acquire self esteem and actively

encourage them to build on life skills and experience as part of this process. Dweck (1999) emphasised the need to teach children to ‘value learning over the appearance of smartness, to relish challenge and effort and to use errors as routes to mastery’ (1999, p.8).

Dweck’s work was based on the concept of ‘growth mindsets’ i.e. the realisation that the most basic abilities can be developed through hard work. Mindsets are basically beliefs about oneself. Brain power and talent are obvious advantages, but they are very much a starting point. Joy and love of learning is essential for great accomplishment. The Welsh Government (2006) have emphasised their commitment to fostering and supporting ‘life long learning for all’ (2006, p.13) in the Learning Country 2 documentation entitled ‘Delivering the promise’.

Young children need encouragement and praise when carrying out learning tasks, however Bronson (2007) suggested that parents / carers may ‘over’ praise their children. In an article entitled ‘How not to talk to your kids: the inverse power of praise’, he explored this dynamic. He highlighted his concerns by referring to children who have always been told they are clever. These children may be the offspring of high achieving parents / carers who have great expectations for their child. His concern centred on whether able children lacked confidence in certain situations, simply because they were afraid of failure. He questioned whether children were in danger of becoming complacent if faced with constant praise and whether they became frustrated or lacked motivation if rewards were not immediate. The media in the USA and here in the UK often propose that success can be achieved through easy or quick routes. Television programmes such as the ‘X factor’ (ITV, 2011) present children with images of contestants who achieve fame through what could be considered as relatively little effort.

When parents / carers praise children's intelligence, they believe this is a positive action. However, in some cases, practitioners may be guilty of praising ability rather than effort. It is important that practitioners avoid language such as 'clever' or 'able' when referring to young children. All labels can be restrictive, even if some seem more complimentary than others.

Confident children are able to undertake a range of activities and seem at ease in various situations that other less confident children may feel uncomfortable in. Confident children are able to express their own opinions and ask for particular things. They have the courage to be different, maybe going against 'norms' in order to achieve their desires. They are often more creative and innovative. David et al (2002) support this view, agreeing that children learn most effectively when they feel confident in a situation, are given responsibilities and are treated and 'respected as autonomous and competent learners' (2002, p.6).

The confident child has the wherewithal to accept a challenge and often works outside their comfort zone, they will make their own choices and decisions. The opposite side of the coin, however, may be that confidence can become overconfidence. Research by Twenge and Campbell (2008) in the U.S. found that often, teenage children described themselves as 'A' grade students, even though they were not. The teenagers' over- confidence in their abilities was causing them to set unrealistic goals, which did not relate to their actual academic ability. Lipko, Dunlosky and Merriman (2008) tested pre-school children's recall and prediction skills and then related these to the children's 'perceptions' of their own confidence and ability to undertake these tasks. The children were shown a series of ten pictures over a number of trials and asked to predict how many pictures they would remember each time. The team found that in each trial, the young children's predictions over-stated their actual ability to recall the pictures. The children were also certain that they would remember more pictures

than other peers participating in the research. This research could be interpreted as demonstrating the fact that young children are often genuinely confident in their approach to life and the tasks they carry out, especially if they have practitioners supporting them in the school environment.

2.8. Giving Children Opportunities to Build Self Confidence / Self Esteem

Young children regularly become absorbed in what they are doing and Laevers (1997) believed that children must be given opportunities to strengthen their confidence and be empowered to become self sufficient and able to choose their own activities, which interest and absorb them. He said that an ‘involved child’ gained a ‘deeply intense’ and far- reaching learning experience. The rationale behind Laevers’ theories is the premise that the most productive learning, in the early years, occurs when children are so immersed in their play that they ‘lose’ themselves in it.

Confidence is something that young children learn through interactions with peers and adults, within the Foundation Phase setting and in their home environment. Practitioners can guide children to develop a sense of confidence. However, it is important not to tell children what to do all of the time, as by doing so it may inhibit their decision making skills. If children lack confidence it may affect children’s school success, relationships and ultimately their future adult life. Byron (2005) echoed these views, stressing the importance of routine and clear expectations for behaviour or when carrying out tasks such as ‘tidy up time’. She stressed that if practitioners communicated their intentions well enough and with a level of consistency, the expectations would become those of the child also. Young children’s confidence can be boosted through routine and repetition. Young children enjoy and feel comfortable when they have a consistent daily routine. Children have a deep need to develop

a sense of belonging. For some, the classroom becomes a second home to them- understanding its rhythms and procedures, they feel at ease with the routine and structure (DFEE, 2000).

Ideally, young children should be encouraged to form friendships in the Foundation Phase setting naturally and without too much adult intervention. However, some gentle encouragement may be needed. Social skills are strategies that can be taught, and more importantly, need to be understood in relation to the context that they are to be used within.

From the evidence gathered so far in this literature review, social skills can be classified under three components. These form the basis of any kind of social interaction:

Affiliation – actually understanding the dynamics of social interaction, why we need to get on with others. Co-operation and understanding - how to resolve conflict, for example, equipping young children with the skills to cope in a range of situations. Empathy for others – kindness, care and affection.

Lillvist et al (2009, p.58) aimed to define the ‘socially competent child’. The research categorised children’s social competencies into intrapersonal skills e.g. self esteem and empathy and interpersonal relations e.g. interaction, popularity. A number of factors were used to define and categorise children’s social aptitude, however, Lillvist et al showed that social competence was a ‘multidimensional construct’ (2009, p.65) and that in order to intervene or promote further social competence in this area, the children’s individual characteristics along with wider aspects such as the personal dynamics between other staff and children, needed to be taken into consideration. These findings relay two interesting points. Firstly, the research seems to suggest that young children’s social competence is fluid,

i.e. it depends on how it is nurtured and developed in a particular setting. Secondly, the young child's social competence may be influenced either positively or negatively, according to interactions with their peers and staff members in the setting.

Gresham (1998) claimed that a deficit in social competence equalled an emotional and behavioural disorder. The importance of being socially adept, having the ability and experience to read social cues, is that it ensures the young child's survival in the busy social world which constitutes the playground. Social competence is a defining factor in building and maintaining relationships. Children who have difficulties in this area are undoubtedly at a disadvantage, finding difficulty in making and keeping friends for example. McGrath (2006) supported this dynamic by agreeing that rejection by one's peers puts 'students at greater risk for social, academic and mental health consequences' (2006, p.327). Children with poor relationship skills are more likely to have fewer friends, be less popular, and thus may lead unhappier lives. Children who are adept at forming relationships will have less need for attention and acceptance (Taylor, 2005).

A classic study by the sociologist Goffman (1972) studied the dynamics involved in the rituals of social engagement. He looked at how young children gained access into ongoing play situations, for example, how young children joined in with an ongoing game. He found that children were able to employ a range of strategies which helped this process, such as smiling, using non-verbal gestures and body language, or playing in a parallel activity and then surreptitiously blending into the play of the other children. Children who were either older or more articulate, were able to actually vocalise their requests, asking 'Can I play?' Children with less social awareness, broke into games and caused disruption, often in the form of shouting or pushing.

The playground can be a very hostile place and each day can bring different challenges to the young child. When children use violence or force to enter the play situation, the activity is often brought to a halt. The other children are resentful or may be upset. Adult staff in the setting may have to negotiate or attempt to solve the ensuing problem this has caused. The ITT students involved with the SMT programme may have prepared young children to meet the challenges which occur during the process of making friends. Positive self esteem and sound social skills equip children with the tools to influence learning ability and determine how effective they will be in forming relationships with others. Perls, Hutter-Silver and Laverman (1999) studied happiness, resilience and self esteem in old age. They found that people in their nineties who were well-adjusted and happy with their life had characteristics in common such as being adaptable, assertive, having a sense of humour and being involved with caring towards others.

2.9. PSD/WB/EL and the School Context

The UK Government has declared the aim of providing children with the best possible start in life. This has been demonstrated through legislation such as The Children Act (2004), which provides the framework for a series of major reforms and outlines statutory duties and accountability for all children's services. The Every Child Matters (ECM) Framework (England) (2004) is an example of good practice. The approach has specific aims under five broad themes. Well-being is highlighted as an important area and is inherent in national targets, along with the need to develop the social and emotional skills of young people. Under the ECM framework, children's plan for 2020 the Department for Children, Schools and Families set out goals to improve children and young peoples well-being, especially at key transition points in their lives.

The development of UK Government funded materials for use in schools such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning materials (SEALS, DfES 2005), in England give a clear signal of policy in relation to developing PSD/WB and EL skills in the school environment. In Wales, Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity as an area of learning in the Foundation Phase Framework, progresses onto the Personal and Social Education (PSE) framework for 7 to 19-year olds in Wales (2008). The Welsh Government stated that (PSE) forms part of the ‘basic curriculum for all registered pupils’ in maintained schools (2008, p.3). Another pertinent aspect of the philosophy behind this guidance, is that the Welsh Government emphasise the responsibility of school staff playing a ‘crucial’ part in supporting and planning for PSE to occur, although they recognise that some experiences will be incidental. However, the school ethos and a ‘broad balanced holistic approach to PSE is important’ (WAG, 2008, p.5). It is reassuring that young children in Wales have the benefit of a curriculum that will support, and hopefully enhance, their social and emotional development from their earliest years until they reach school leaving age.

As discussed earlier, self esteem may have a strong influence on a child’s success both academically and socially (Thomas 1980; Lawrence, 1987; Purkey, 1970; and Burns, 1982). Qualter, Gardner and Whiteley (2007) refer to a possible link between EI and later ‘life success’ (2007, p.14). Research findings from the Emotional Intelligence Unit at Swinbourne University (Australia) (2008) state that EL appears to be a ‘key predictor’ of children’s ability to form suitable peer relationships, develop a balanced outlook on life and enable them to reach their academic potential. Cook, Greenburg and Kusche (1994) examined individual differences in children’s levels of emotional understanding. Results indicated that children who were identified as having behaviour problems showed greater difficulties relating to emotional understanding. Children with social and emotional behavioural difficulties who are

in need of attention often seek attention by inappropriate means (Webster-Stratton, 2006). These children often have few positive social skills and have difficulty co-operating and playing with peers. McGrath (2006) evaluated social skills programmes designed to support children with social and emotional difficulties. She advocated that programmes should be whole-class based and taught by practitioners as part of the curriculum. Social skills programmes should commence in the Early Years and involve social skills training with an element of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). The training implication relating to practitioner's use of CBT was less clear.

It may be inappropriate for practitioners in schools to deal with what could be termed as 'mental health' issues. Welsh Assembly Government guidelines in a consultation document entitled 'Thinking Positively Emotional Health and Well-Being in Schools and Early Years Settings' (2009) set out ideas on how to develop an 'emotionally healthy school', (2009, p.19). The All Wales Mental Health Network echoed these ideas in a press statement relating to this publication (2009) by emphasising 'the role' that school staff play in providing what they term 'preventative services' and in improving the emotional well-being of children and young people. This advice does not seem to be compatible with earlier advice from the Welsh Government in a document entitled 'School-based Counselling Services in Wales: A National Strategy' (2008) which advised that was not good practice for school based staff to hold a dual teaching-counselling role due to blurring of boundaries. The report stated that 'pupils may become confused and staff may feel that they are faced with ethical dilemmas or conflicting situations' (WAG, 2006, p.6).

Evans (2009) also voiced concern over the agenda to promote emotional well-being at all costs. His article in the TES (27.03.09, p.3) 'Teachers say emphasis on well-being is being

misguided' cited teachers' views and disquiet that teaching and learning would be affected if well-being was seen as a panacea for all ills. The tone of Evans's article portrayed the concerns and reservations of the professionals who would be implementing this agenda towards well-being with the launch of yet another strategy. The nurture group model of promoting emotional well-being for example, is well documented. Nurture groups have been a feature in some schools for over 30 years, being used in both primary and secondary schools. Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2003) indicated that nurture groups were very effective, not only in integrating children with a social emotional behavioural difficulty (SEBD) back into the mainstream classroom, but more notably, having a real effect on other children and staff in the rest of the school. The research showed that along with improved behaviour, children had better school attendance. The study also looked at a control group of children with similar difficulties in other schools which did not run nurture group programmes. Children in these schools did not show such marked improvements relating to well-being and behaviour.

Hallam et al (2006) in the evaluation of the Primary Behaviour and Attendance Pilot for the DfES, tested out the effectiveness of a range of measures proposed by the DfES to improve behaviour and attendance for children in KS1 and KS2. Key findings from the research were that when certain intervention strategies such as the SEALs programme (DfES 2007) or the implementation of the teacher 'coaches' programme there was a distinct change both in children's attitudes and outlook. These were quantified as changes in children's well-being, confidence, social and communication skills and relationships, including bullying, playtime behaviour, pro-social behaviour and attitudes towards school. The researchers also found that by employing these intervention strategies there was an increase in children's awareness of emotions in others, which directly resulted in a calmer environment in the classroom. This in

turn led to some perceived improvement in learning, for example students noted that lessons were quieter, along with higher attainment in group tasks. The use of teacher coaches was found to be particularly effective whilst working in small groups and it was also effective in improving the emotional issues and pro-social behaviour of the children involved.

2.10. Pedagogy and PSD/WB/EL

There have been a number of studies which have looked at the feasibility of ‘teaching’ EL skills or strategies in order to improve children’s academic performance (Lam and Kirby 2002; Marquez, Martin and Brackett, 2006). Perry, Lennie and Humphrey (2008) offered words of caution stating that research which has been carried out in relation to this dynamic offered little information on the circumstances in which the teaching of EL had occurred. Also, questions can be raised in relation to the actual mechanics or approaches used, along with challenges and successes achieved.

Qualter et al (2007, p.15) believed ‘that both trait and ability EI have been linked to life success’. Rodeiro, Bell and Emery (2008, p.4) also studied this dynamic. Their research examined competence in EL in relation to greater academic success in GCSE science examinations. Students’ EL was measured with the ‘trait Emotional Intelligence questionnaire’ which gave a ‘global EI trait score’. The children were asked to rate their competencies in areas such as adaptability, emotional regulation and optimism. Results showed that some aspects of trait EI accurately predicted attainment in GCSE science. Key personality traits which were found to be particularly related to success were self motivation and low impulsivity.

It is important for educators, therefore, to bear in mind the possibilities and benefits that developing pedagogy in relation to an emotional dynamic may bring. It can be argued that children who are self motivated and not easily distracted (or have low impulsivity) will achieve well. Conversely, as Welsh Government have realised, it is the role of Government to develop curriculum frameworks which have an emotional context which incorporates a well-being agenda at its core, to support and nurture children in their learning journey. Schools should not, however, be single handedly expected to foster well-being in young children. It needs to be developed and nurtured in a three-way relationship between government, school and parents.

Claxton (2005) explored some of the more controversial questions about EL. In a study commissioned by the education union ATL, he examined teaching and learning issues related to the use of EL as a pedagogical tool. Claxton questions whether EI (as he terms it) is related to traditional ways of measuring intelligence, as it uses different measures of ability and the extent to which emotional competence can actually be developed. He also questioned its place in teaching, asking:

‘Is there really such a thing as ‘Emotional Intelligence’, from which all its various manifestations – empathy, optimism, self regulation and so on – naturally flow? Or are these separate traits that have been lumped together for convenience but which have no more connection than pieces of chalk and cheese that happen to find themselves in the same basket’, (Claxton, 2005, p.14).

Teaching styles vary immensely from teacher to teacher, it may be that some teachers are more receptive to supporting strategies which foster children’s Emotional Literacy. As Claxton said, ‘Emotional Intelligence is of interest to so many teachers because they believe they can do something to help’ (2005, p.9.). Adey (2005) speculates that teachers support the notion of EL from a liberal viewpoint. He felt the problem with using an EL approach, arose

when it was used and accepted ‘uncritically’ as a cure-all for certain behavioural problems or as a management tool.

Often, research related to EL focuses on children rather than teachers. Studies which focus on the role of the teacher in this process are less common. Power (2007) recalled a conversation with a disruptive teenage school pupil who, on being told that a teacher’s feelings had been hurt, stated adamantly that teachers ‘don’t have feelings’. In many schools, teachers deal with children’s social emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBDs) but may have little chance to express the pressures of dealing with these issues. This study contributes to the field because student teachers are participants in the research. The research aimed to support the student’s EL, especially whilst dealing with some of the emotive issues that working with young children may bring. By studying students’ pedagogy in the form of PSD/WB/EL focused teaching sessions during SMT, an insight into the teaching and learning and process can be discovered. There is also a question as to whether there should be a whole school approach to delivering PSD/WB/EL. Research evidence supports this idea (Lister-Sharpe et al. 2000; Catalano et al. 2002; Wells, Barlow and Stewart-Brown, 2003). The suggestion of a whole school approach would most probably be labeled as ‘Personal and Social Education’ (PSE). The idea of putting PSD/WB/EL on the school agenda serves an important purpose as schools recognise that along with promoting and supporting academic success they must concern themselves with developing the child in a holistic way. Weare (2006) suggested that schools need to put emotion ‘at the heart of the school’ (2006, p.105). The link between effective learning and a positive emotional state is gaining recognition in education.

Stewart (2009), on the other hand, argued that trying to teach children to be happy may prove disadvantageous. He postulated that teaching well-being may leave children more depressed.

In an interview in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) with Carol Craig, the Chief Executive of the Centre for Confidence and Wellbeing in Glasgow, Stewart reported on Craig's 'severe misgivings about the systematic teaching of happiness being encouraged in schools in England and Wales through the SEALs programme' (2009, p.10). Stewart continued to elaborate on these ideas, wondering whether the Government was manipulating children's personalities and encouraging them to become self-obsessed with their feelings.

It may be that young children are now more at risk of developing mental health problems. Elkind (2006) in his book the 'Hurried child' describes how children are growing up too fast and this has a resultant effect on their mental health. Palmer (2004) writes at length about her worries of children experiencing a 'toxic' childhood, being bombarded with negative ideas from the media, exposure to junk food, over testing in school and lack of physical exercise. Carpenter (2007) warned that failing to highlight a well-being agenda for our children, may result in the doubling of mental health issues, especially amongst children with special needs. The latest Office for National Statistics survey (2004) revealed that 10 per cent of children have mental health problems. In an address to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust conference Knight (2008) suggested that growing economic instability in the UK could lead to worsening behaviour in schools and suggested that educators should offer emotional support to parents as well as children. The notion of a 'triangle of care' was discussed in the Start Right report (Ball, 1994). This described the idea of a reciprocal partnership between parents and professionals. Work with parents at integrated centres such as Pen Green in Corby, North Hants, focused on building relationships, sharing knowledge and experiences. Practitioners at the centre were thus able to get a deeper understanding of the child's home background, they were able to adapt their nursery practice to support this (Whalley, 2004).

Many practitioners working in the mental health arena such as Atkinson and Hornby (2002) think that a framework for promoting effective well-being, and thus good mental health, involves a whole-school approach, and more importantly a whole-school ethos. Daniel and Wassell (2002) are more definite in their ideas, making the concept of promoting resilience in children an integral part of their education. They view the school as the hub of this, with education being a process and the educators as people who view children as individuals. The importance of teachers understanding children's starting points in their emotional journey is paramount here. This is especially pertinent in light of research undertaken by Cameron et al (2009) which recommended that education should be built around the tenets of 'Every Child Matters' (2004) and The Children's Plan (2007) and that well-being should be viewed as the foundation to the curriculum, not an additional bolt on. The research concluded that the curriculum should encompass well-being along with attainment, taking into consideration a multi-agency perspective to include different professionals and organisations that work with school aged children.

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s researchers such as MacLean (1990) and LeDoux (1998) documented the relationship between the brain and its emotional functioning. Education in the past has traditionally taken the view that children's feelings were additional or, in the worse case scenario, irrelevant to their learning. Weare (2006) recalled schooling in the past, when some educators took the view that children learned better when 'stressed, humiliated, anxious and under pressure' (2006, p.93). Black (1991) described how half an hour of stress can affect the functioning of the brain for up to a fortnight. Children therefore, need to be in a secure emotional state in order to learn effectively. It follows that if the classroom is run by an emotionally literate teacher, children's chances of being taught in a positive environment will be higher. It follows that in order to support a child's EL, the

teacher should adhere to and support the principles of EL teaching. Perry, Lennie and Humpreys' research (2008) centred on the qualities which related to an EL teacher. On questioning staff in their target school, the staff described an EL teacher as one who was emotionally aware, in tune with their feelings, who listened to and understood children, were empathetic and provided 'a secure and comfortable environment for the children to learn in' (2008, p.36).

2. 11. Assessing PSD/WB/EL

This section deals with issues relating to assessment of PSD/WB/EL in young children. It is inevitably more difficult to observe and assess PSD/WB/EL in the school environment and in comparison to other areas of development. This is mostly due to the breadth and complexity of the area, but also because it is not always clear what one should look for. As practitioners get to know the children they are working with, this may become an easier process. The somewhat abstract nature of gauging PSD/WB/EL may mean that trying to assess children's competencies in this may prove elusive. Inman, Buck and Burke (1998) found that assessing competence in this area was not only difficult but posed 'intellectual and ethical problems' (1998, p.1). This may prove to be true, especially if we are judging competencies such as confidence. There would need to be specific parameters on which to base judgements.

A key component of assessing children's PSD//WB/EL is the use of reflection, by both children and practitioners. Children need to be active in this process through self assessment of their own competencies in this area, through educational philosophies such as 'Values Education' (Hawkes, 2003). Values Education is a philosophy which allows children thinking time and space to reflect on their PSD/WB/EL. A values-based school promotes an educational ethos which is based on children valuing themselves, valuing others and caring

for the environment using a system based on ethical values. Children are guided to explore a different value each week, for example, compassion, and then use a set of principles to guide their behaviour in relation to the week's theme. By doing so, children are empowered to explore a range of emotions and the consequences of their actions.

Another method which allows children autonomy in their thinking and gives them skills and strategies to offer their own ideas and opinions is Philosophy for Children (P4C), conceived in the late 1960s by Professor Matthew Lipman. It is an approach which aims to build communities of enquiry within schools (SAPERRE 2009). The programme aims to give children of all ages the ability to be able to communicate in meaningful ways with peers and adults. As well as developing language and philosophical skills, children are encouraged to put forward their views on everything from everyday topics to larger concepts such as global warming. By offering views in a non-judgemental forum children are empowered to value their own ideas and develop these (Topping and Trickey, 2004).

Holtom (2008) thought that we should look at what we can actually measure in relation to PSD/WB/EL. Outcomes in this area would therefore relate to issues such as children's achievements, for example: 'Joshua played co-operatively in the sand and water today'. Practitioners would need to chart children's attainments in a particular area e.g. moral and spiritual development (WAG, 2008) or record any changes which may become evident either in the Foundation Phase setting or following conversations with parents. Observational records could be kept, as long as they were specific, for example: 'Joshua was sitting quietly on the carpet during snack time when previously he had found this challenging'.

Changes may be defined as ‘soft outcomes.’ Goleman (1995) pointed out that these would include any differences seen in children’s awareness or moods and also how they handle those moods. Following a period of teaching EL skills, children may begin to show more empathy and friendship skills than previously observed. Soft outcomes therefore, may comprise of achievements relating to interpersonal skills or skills such as insight or motivation. Dewson et al (2000) proposed that a competency such as ‘confidence’ could be defined as a soft outcome. It may prove difficult to actually measure confidence in young children. It may not be the most vocal children who are the most confident, for example. Young children often need to build confidence, over a period of time, especially in relation to carrying out tasks. If they do well in a task, this will undoubtedly boost their confidence. By becoming more confident, young children will become more motivated to carry out another task and so on. Soft outcomes could be defined as personal and social skills. ‘Hard outcomes’ on the other hand are seen as clearly definable and quantifiable according to the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO, 2003) who view them as ‘usually straightforward’ both to identify and measure. These outcomes are seen as definite quantifiable progress such as gaining a qualification. In relation to the Foundation Phase child, learning to read would be a hard outcome.

Changes in children’s PSD/WB/EL would need to be recorded, however small. Whilst ITT students were carrying out teaching activities within the ‘Special Me Time’ programme on their school experience placement they found many benefits of this approach. However, the recording and assessment of children’s abilities in this area proved to be more problematic. A BA primary student based an Independent Enquiry, (research project) on her involvement in the ‘Special Me Time’ programme. She noted in her presentation of evidence and analysis section that ‘observations were subject to interpretation of the researcher and

progress/development of individual children was reliant on baseline data negotiated with the teacher' (Brown, 2008, p.9). Findings from student research will be discussed further in the results section. However, it is interesting to note here that students often stressed that their findings were based on their own interpretations, almost as if these interpretations were 'superfluous' rather than actual findings gained through training and experience.

In our society, it may be that we value soft outcomes less. Ideally, they should be seen as a valuable goal in their own right, rather than being viewed as a stepping stone to a 'hard outcome', such as learning to read. Therefore, to facilitate the process of recording 'soft outcomes', practitioners need to ensure that they document achievement. Celebration of achievements is also important such as certificates and notes home to parents. In order to make more formal records, practitioners could devise tools to measure 'soft outcomes' such as grids and proformas, which could be annotated into children's progress files. In order to measure outcomes in relation to EL and PSD/WB, practitioners need to be able to gauge whether children have high, medium or low level skills in a particular area. The baseline assessment sheet (Appendix 7) is based on the work of Laevers (1997). His 'Emotional Well-being and involvement scales' enable practitioners to rate children's well-being and involvement in the Early Years setting. The baseline I designed takes into account good practice from the Laevers (1997) model. Following observation of good practice in the assessment of well-being at a Cardiff City Centre nursery, where the nursery used a well-being baseline sheet, I decided to incorporate ideas from the Laevers model and also ideas from Goleman (1995, 1998) who documented competencies of emotional intelligence. The design of the baseline assessment sheet is discussed further in Chapter 3.

2.12. Conclusion

Fumoto (2011) stressed the significance of the quality of teacher-child relationships to children's well-being. Teachers can support and facilitate the PSD/WB/EL dynamic in the school context by using a targeted approach or in a more holistic way through use of 'Circle Time' or during whole school assemblies. The promoting alternative thinking (PATHS) curriculum provided young children in the USA with instruction in a variety of issues relating to the expression, understanding and control of their emotions. This was achieved by providing them with a series of taught sessions over a period of time and with the use of a selection of specialised resources. Greenberg, Kushe and Cook (1991, p.12), the originators of the programme, argued that the transmission of skills that relate to the acquisition of social and emotional competence, was in itself an emotive process for young children. The development of any skill by the young child can be a slow process. Greenberg, Kushe and Cook's findings from the evaluation of the PATHS programme demonstrated that 'aspects of emotional understanding can successfully be taught in the school environment by classroom teachers of elementary school aged children.' The PATHS curriculum seemed to encompass for the first time a demonstration of the link between teaching and learning with a distinct outcome, which directly related to enhanced PSD/WB/EL. This study develops ideas first documented on the PATHS programme.

Another important aspect of building children's PSD/WB/EL is providing the right climate for learning. Collins (2007, p.7) reflected on the importance of 'creating a positive classroom environment' which celebrated academic success along with personal qualities such as kindness and tolerance. The 'Special Me Time' programme was designed to allow students time and space to get to know the children they worked with and thus create a 'positive' climate.

Hawkey (2006) explored the dynamic of preparing and equipping Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students with the knowledge and skills to facilitate EL with children. She argued that teacher educators must ensure that students' own social competence is intact, before they are able to commence this process. She reflected on research by Weare and Gray (2003) whose study found evidence that 'only a small minority of teachers appear to be in favour of work to promote emotional wellbeing and that the majority are reluctant to get involved, in part because they are not trained in how to do it' (Weare and Gray 2003, p.74, cited in Hawkey, 2006). This suggests there is a skills / knowledge gap in relation to the training process for students, in relation to the importance of PSD/WB/EL.

Weare and Gray (2003, p.7) recommend the use of 'explicit' programmes and curriculum guidance which outline key principles for delivery of an emotionally responsive curriculum. They thought this should include prepared materials and examples of lesson plans. The 'Special Me Time' intervention programme was mindful of this advice, however, it also pertinent to be aware of children's input into any 'emotional curriculum'. Papatheodorou (2002) suggested the emotional climate of the school should foster 'environments that provide a range of growth promoting experiences' (2002, p.445) signifying that children's views and voice should also be taken into account, supported and nurtured, this is vital. Further recommendations by Weare and Gray were also adhered to during this research project, namely that teachers 'cannot transmit social competence and wellbeing effectively if their own emotional and social needs are not met' (2003, p.7). I was mindful throughout the research project of the emotional well-being of the students in the research group, ensuring that regular support and feedback and advice was available for them.

The findings from this study will contribute to this area of knowledge, examining how the training of teachers in PSD/WB pedagogy and development of EL through the use of the ‘Special Me Time’ within a professional programme adds to our understanding of personal and social development, well-being and Emotional Literacy and the implications for Early Years Foundation Phase pedagogy in the School of Education.

Reflective practice was also an integral part of this study. The use of reflection by the ITT students involved with the SMT programme has been scrutinised fully. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the use of reflection as a means of benefiting student learning is well documented (Smith, 2011, Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985, Johns, 2004). Reflection therefore, can support the professional and personal development of trainee teachers and can lead to improvements in pedagogy and knowledge (McGarr and Moody, 2010, Marcos, Miguel and Tillema, 2009). This study will continue to explore utilising the principles of reflective practice and attempt to provide evidence to support the value of implementing a reflective approach in ITT.

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Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction - in Quest of Knowledge

My initial hypothesis was that students needed to have a greater knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and the principles of reflective practice in order to be more effective and responsive practitioners in the Foundation Phase setting. Isaacs (1954, p.20) postulated ‘No method of education based upon the notion that the little child is a simple bodily machine or a mere creature of habit and reflex response can sustain him in his deepest difficulties.’ Teaching young children is a combination of practical teaching knowledge and what can only be described as a feeling or ‘sense’ and understanding. Nias (1993) explored this dynamic, suggesting that teaching young children involved a deep level of personal involvement and an ‘investment’ of the teacher’s ‘self’ (1993, p.297). Reflective thought, according to Dewey, (1910) requires specific thought and consideration on actions taken and their consequences.

Student teachers have a responsibility to provide young children with the tools to understand both themselves and their social world. I believed that, in order to facilitate this process Foundation Phase ITT students in the School of Education needed to be taught how to appreciate the holistic nature of learning in the Foundation Phase. A holistic approach to early years education would relate to the practitioner being mindful of children’s overall development in a range of complementary and inter-linked areas, namely, physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and cultural. The ITT students I worked with on this research also needed to be equipped with specialist knowledge in relation to this dynamic and to appreciate and have a clear idea of the close relationship between feelings and learning. I believed that current training provision for students in this area was insufficient within the School of Education.

As this study was designed to examine the dynamic of implementing an Emotional Literacy programme on the pedagogy and reflective practice of trainee teachers, it was essential that I investigated the process whereby the students learned and then employed reflective practice skills. It was essential that the SMT students engaged in reflective practice and used these skills as a way of improving teaching practice in their placement settings rather than simply regurgitating professional knowledge (Barnett, 1994). This research aimed to provide answers to, and some ways of facilitating, this process. The research explored theoretical ideas on pedagogy such as the acquisition of ‘craft knowledge’ which is seen by Shimahara (1998) as ‘pedagogical content knowledge’. Therefore, I was aiming to build upon my students’ own understanding of pedagogy and reflective practice, which was reflected in their individual way of working with very young children. Brown and McIntyre (1998) carried out research in the Australian school system and found that there was a wealth of untapped professional knowledge which teachers acquired routinely through practical experience in the classroom. The interpersonal dynamics between the student and the class teacher educator mean that much pedagogical knowledge is gained through ‘hands on’ experience. Also, the student teacher may absorb another teacher’s style or ideas consciously or unconsciously. Reflective practice is an area of professional interest to myself, thus wherever possible during general ITT teaching sessions, I introduced the process of reflection as an absolute fundamental for effective pedagogy. As Mycroft and Gurton (2011, p.107) stated, ‘ a key issue for any beginning teacher is the ability to think outside the box’.

This methodology chapter explored the development of student teachers’ professional knowledge of PSD/WB/EL pedagogy and reflective practice and how they implement this knowledge in the Foundation Phase setting on their teaching placements.

The students' role within the Foundation Phase setting was undergoing a process of change, due to the implementation of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The expectations for them were also shifting, with the renewed emphasis on PSD in the Foundation Phase curriculum. They were therefore, not only being asked to teach, but also to facilitate and take responsibility for children's developing PSD/WB/EL. Brannan et al (2007) found that the changing nature of employment and the demands placed upon employees (in this case the students) 'can only be fully understood through the use of ethnographic techniques' (2007, p.396). Thus the observation of the system, or ways of working within that system are crucial to understanding professional practice. The students were faced with a different set of expectations on their placements, they were tasked with teaching, supporting and facilitating a range of skills relating to PSD/WB/EL. As discussed previously, the Welsh Government (WG) has put the PSD/WB/EL agenda very prominently within the Foundation Phase curriculum. The heightened emphasis on supporting and facilitating young children's PSD/WB/EL suggests that educators consider this philosophy and mindset (WG agenda) or, as Willmott (1993) suggested, become part of a 'corporate identity'. The corporate identity in this case can be translated as WG policy on promoting well being. By products of this approach, would therefore be examples such as the development, production and implementation of curriculum materials on supporting and developing well being, as in the WG Foundation Phase training pack (2008). The materials in the 'Special Me Time' programme were specifically designed to complement WG policy relating to PSD/WB/EL.

Whilst the students were undertaking the programme during 2008 I was instrumental in delivering a national Foundation Phase conference at UWIC entitled 'Personal and social development, well being and cultural diversity in the Foundation Phase setting'. The conference on the 12th April 2008 was designed for practitioners in the field, but my rationale

for delivery of the conference was that it would also be especially accessible to ITT students. All school of education students were given a special student rate to attend. Key note speakers were Marion Dowling author of 'Young Children's Personal and Social Development' and Catherine Corrie author and trainer in Emotional Literacy. Eight out of 12 'Special Me Time' students attended the conference. The conference was instrumental in developing my knowledge and that of the students and practitioners who attended it. The conference also addressed research aim two of this project, by equipping students with additional skills or knowledge, which would be useful for them on their Foundation Phase teaching placements.

Along with the students, I engaged fully in reflective practice, the knowledge I have gained during the process of this research has highlighted to me the advantages of undertaking such research as a practitioner. I was mindful of the dynamic explored by Mukherji and Albon (2010) whereby the research process is instrumental in facilitating and 'invigorating the practitioners' professional development' (2010, p.94). I have certainly found this research process beneficial to my professional development and believe in the importance of sharing and disseminating the knowledge I have gained during this process.

3.2. Research Questions

The aims of this research were to: 'Examine the implementation of an Emotional Literacy programme on the pedagogy and reflective practice of trainee teachers'. This was achieved through exploration of the following research questions:

1. What was the extent, at the beginning of the research project of ITT student knowledge and understanding of PSD/WB/EL?
2. In what ways could using reflective practice engage ITT students and support their understanding and practical pedagogical knowledge of PSD/WB/EL?

3. How could using an action research paradigm enable the researcher to consider whether the 'Special Me Time' programme would impact on students' pedagogy and reflective practice?

3.3. Methodologies Considered

To begin this methodology section, I am mindful of the advice that Gray (2009) offered that not only is there is a 'bewildering array of theoretical perspectives and methodologies' but also that 'the terminology applied to them is often inconsistent (or even contradictory)' (2009 p.16). The challenge for the professional doctorate student is therefore to tease out the main issues which are pertinent in order to gain a clearer perspective relevant to their area of research, along with the understanding to inform professional practice and thus future pedagogy.

Researchers may often find that they are faced with a dilemma over what research methodology to use. All methods have differing strengths and weaknesses and many can in some way address the research questions posed in the original research hypotheses. It was therefore helpful to read that Bell (1999, p.101) found 'The initial question is not 'Which methodology?' but 'What do I need to know and why?'. Looking at a research method simply as a means to an end takes away some of the concern regarding whether one particular method is superior to another.

Following this idea, MacNaughton et al (2004, p.7) looked at how 'research is just a tool we can learn to use.' It is an interesting way to look at the process. In order to carry out a reflective research study, especially one such as this, which is concerned with day-to-day practice, one must de-mystify the process and view it as something that is completed as part of every working day. MacNaughton et al. continue; 'Thinking about research as a tool

means that you as the researcher control the research process, not vice versa. (2004, p.7). This gives reassurance to the researcher, providing confidence in using the appropriate methods which arise from the nature of the research. (Personally, I think the key to effective research is finding a method you feel comfortable with, but appreciating that there is not necessarily one method that is superior to others or one method which is the definitive one to employ).

David (1998, p.12) suggested ‘There is no unambiguous foolproof way of doing research, of following the thread of an idea, through a maze of practice and then explaining it to others.’ However, the method must be effective for answering the research questions.

The issue of transferability of knowledge is, however, very relevant. It is necessary to choose a method which will produce a satisfactory end result, as the ultimate research goal must be to test our hypotheses and thus be able to share these with interested parties. Research of the sort undertaken in this study in isolation would serve little purpose. Beginning a research project is similar to the start of a long journey, there may be diversions along the way, but hopefully the destination will become apparent in the end. Walford (2001, p.98) emphasised the fact that ‘All research is researching yourself’. By undertaking a research project, the researcher is liable therefore, to make many discoveries, some may be more routine, but many of which may occur unexpectedly.

I was aware that being a professional doctorate student, I needed to relate theory very much to practice, with the outcome being that any knowledge gained through the research process would underpin and strengthen everyday professional practice and delivery of taught sessions in the School of Education. Gray (2009) pondered when undertaking research, ‘whether the researcher should ‘begin with theory or should theory itself result from the research?’ (2009,

p.14). What I found to be useful, whilst undertaking the research, was to bear in mind the ideas of Dewey (1933) who discussed a general paradigm of enquiry that was based upon discovery e.g. the researcher actively uncovering evidence or facts – an essential part of any methodology and deduction, deducing what to make of a particular situation, once the research process has been completed (or indeed whilst ongoing).

Crotty (1998) implied that there was a synchronicity between the theoretical ideology of the researcher, the methods employed and the researcher's view of the epistemology. I agree with this, and have reflected that this research project must employ methods that take into account social research. I observed the social interaction between student teachers and the children in their settings and the interplay and dynamics of the emotions involved in this social discourse. I was drawn to ideas related to symbolic interactionism for example. Social psychologists such as George Herbert Mead (1967) and John Dewey (1933) originally looked at how to 'conceptualise' human behaviour, and also how to make sense of social interactions and social situations. The social dynamic is inextricably part of the school setting. The school itself can be seen as a 'micro' society with most elements of wider society condensed into it in some form or another.

As this research was based firmly within a work dynamic, reflection on professional practice formed an integral part of the methodology. Reed and Canning (2010) expand on this idea, stressing the importance of reflection in teaching pedagogy because 'developments, policies and practices have to be thought about, tested considered and delivered in practice.' (2010, p.1). This process of testing, considering and delivering is the very essence of this research. Reflection is a key tool in my everyday professional interactions with staff and students. There is a clear expectation in the School of Education that professional practice and research

should be central to a lecturer's job specification. Staff are encouraged to engage with research, investigate current developments in practice, and deliver innovative pedagogy to students. It was also pertinent for my own professional development that I embarked on reflective practice, in the current economic climate, as it is necessary to be skilled and knowledgeable in relation to your subject and job role as possible. From a personal viewpoint, I find learning new things to be very rewarding. I am fortunate that I have discovered a passion for learning about personal and social development, well-being and emotional literacy (PSD/WB/EL). I subscribe to Claxton's idea relating to 'learning power' (1997, p.18) and I have developed many skills on my journey.

Thinking about the research design, I was informed by the Interpretive research tradition. Interpretive research demonstrates how humans classify, generate and build the social world through interactions with others (Roberts-Holmes 2005). However, I was also mindful of the time frame to carry out this research. I was limited to school teaching placement weeks within school terms, so the time frame was months and not years as in the case of interpretive research projects. The interesting aspect relating to social research is that each person will interpret the same (social) situation in a different way, depending on the life (social) experiences they have had. The idea of individuals constructing meaning, thoughts and beliefs is echoed by Radnor (2002) who explored how education professionals construct meaning relating to the social world of educational policy and then implement that policy, through their everyday practice relating to children, school and thus ultimately wider society. Therefore, it was pertinent that in order to study Personal and Social Development, Well Being (PSD/WB) and Emotional Literacy (EL) it was also necessary to be mindful of ethnography, from a theoretical viewpoint, which according to Mukherji and Albon (2010, p.71) is 'intensive and continuous study of a setting or group, over a period of time, in order

to gain detailed insights into the particular setting or group.’ Also, as Hoey (2008) observed, the term ethnography can be loosely assigned to qualitative research where the outcome is to provide some insight into everyday life or practice.

Participant observation was another method employed, albeit in a very small way and very much within the remit of a wider case study of the work the students were undertaking. Here, participant observation meant that as the researcher, I observed the student teachers in practice as an external observer. As Greig (2007, p.145) pointed out, the use of case study in educational research, is as ‘an investigation’ and can be the investigation of a variety of things including an intervention, which in the case of this research is very much the case. The premise of using these approaches, would be that I could gain a ‘familiarity’ with the group of students, through involvement in their school surroundings. My role within the group was that of an outside observer, only interacting on a deeper level with their permission, for example, if they asked my advice on issues, lesson plans etc. Participant observation was relevant as the methods involved informal interviews with students, directly observing their teaching sessions and participating in their group activities. Participant observation is usually carried out over a period of time and in the case of this study it was over a training year.

Therefore, I began my research by employing reflective practice within an action research model. I believed it was possible to reflect effectively on the field work undertaken by students when implementing the ‘Special Me Time’ programme. This involved the ensuing development of inter-personal relationships and working practices carried out by my students whilst working with young children in the school environment. The action research model also enabled me to research my teaching practice and that of my students. In effect I was undertaking the pedagogical action research process by ‘engaging in action research seek to

review an aspect of practice in a focused and systematic way’ (McGregor and Cartwright 2011, p.240). I was also mindful of Mills’ (2007) definition of action research as a ‘systematic inquiry into ones own practice’ for the purpose of ‘gathering information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how their students learn.’ (2007, p.4). This seemed to sum up my research aims succinctly, therefore I realised that action research was the most appropriate overall methodological paradigm to adopt for this research project, I also identified with the ideas of McGregor and Cartwright who explained that in reflective action research ‘you are taking a deep look at the present with an eye on the future’. (2011, p.242).

3.4. Research Methodology / Research Design

My research design was influenced by the ideas of Gillham (2000, p.11) who advised when commencing research, that researchers in all disciplines should be concerned with looking for ‘evidence and theory’ and this was an ongoing aim. The overall rationale of the research methodology has been to use action research with reflective practice underpinning this. Having employed both methods in past studies it appeared that they have certain points in common. It is this complementary aspect which I believe has enhanced this research.

The use of an action research model in relation to this process of research was to endeavour to arrive at an understanding of the issue involved. A focus of the research was the investigation of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students’ delivery of the ‘Special Me Time’ programme, and how the students reflected on their delivery of the programme in the Foundation Phase setting. Action research is often employed to explore real life situations and as the students were undertaking teaching practice in the school setting, it seemed fair to assume that they would be undertaking what Parsons and Brown (2002) described as an action research process

consisting of ‘observing – doing – observing – adjusting’ (2002, p.8). I was also mindful of the advice that Parsons and Brown (2002) gave to the action researcher that worthwhile teacher-led action research should be based on their own questions and the extent to which the final results are meaningful to them.

Research Design

Boden (2006) advised the researcher to think about the ‘so what-ness’ of a project. In essence this can be translated into the justification and reasons for your research, what the resulting consequences of this action might be for you as the researcher, your organisation and ultimately the validity and value of the end product. The ‘so what-ness’ of the project, therefore was the rationale for doing it, who would be interested in the outcomes of the research. From my perspective, the ‘so what-ness’ would be supporting students to adapt to changes resulting from Welsh Government Foundation Phase policy. For myself, as the researcher, the research would inform future pedagogy and teaching ideas, and, with regard to the organisation, it would mean adapting and changing future ITT modules to allow greater emphasis on PSD/WB/ EL and reflective practice.

Jones (2005) stressed the need for researchers to decide on a focus and identify a problem. Reflecting on past and recent experiences is important, especially those which have had some direct impact on how you see yourself in relation to the role or situation. He highlighted the idea of ‘critical incidents’ which are ‘part of every reflective teachers normal experience’ (2005, p.193). With regard to the ‘change’ aspect of this project, the ‘critical incident’ is that change is inevitable, this is a factor related to teaching and also following WG policy decisions on the way forward for the early years curriculum. As an early years lecturer and teacher educator, I have to refine and adapt teaching programmes to reflect WG policy. In

effect I have no choice. However, by taking charge of the ‘critical incident’, this gave me autonomy over the situation and ultimately a large degree of choice and new opportunities. I decided to look at the factors involved in the processes of this project as in Figure 3.1. below:

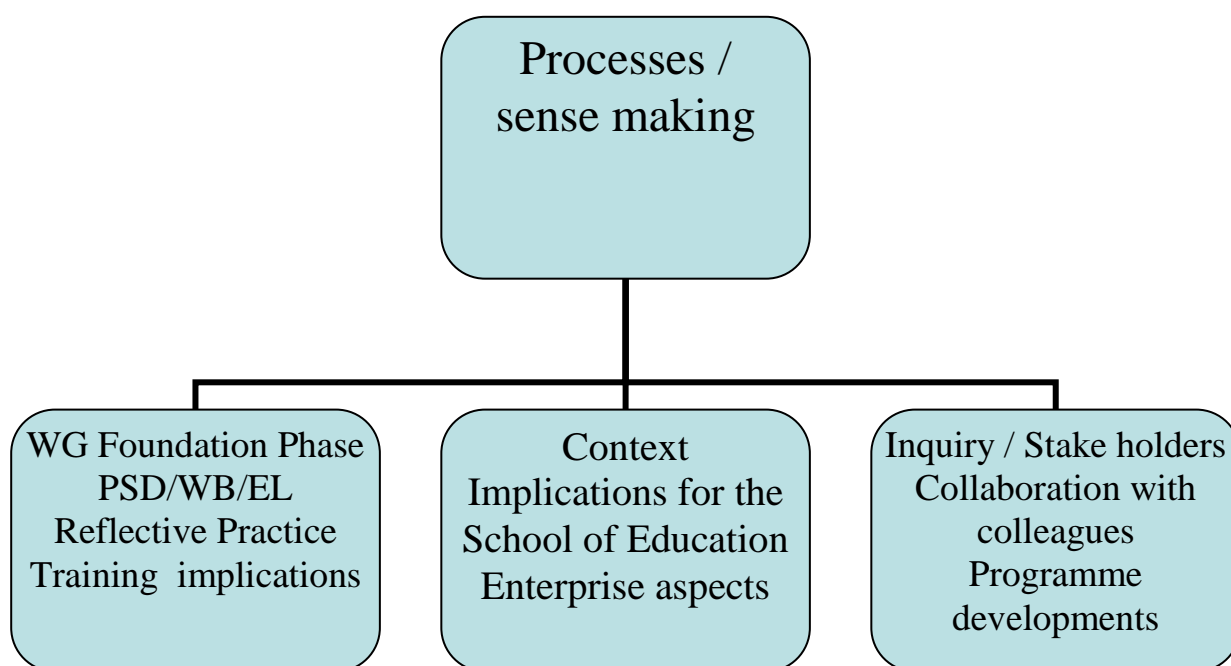


Figure 3.1. A structured model for sense making. Adapted from Reeves et al. (2002, p. 77)

The diagram in Figure 3.2. sets out some of the considerations which must be undertaken during the research process. Table 3.1. below, addresses the issues:

Table 3.2. A checklist for sense making

External (wider picture)	Internal (within the School of Education)
WG Foundation Phase and associated PSD & Well being curriculum area Reflective Practice	Inquiry – need to evaluate current School of Education programmes / Training issues
What are the associated training aspects for the School of Education? On PGCE / BA Primary	Student knowledge base? Student enthusiasm / empathy towards Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Literacy ideas. Reflective Practice.
Issues relating to cross-age phase training?	Stake holders – students? / children in school setting?
Scope for offering training on a wider basis – enterprise opportunities Short courses?	Opportunities for collaborative work with other colleagues – in relation to producing training materials?

Accreditation ?	
	Sharing information / resources
	Development of ECS programmes in the School of Education Possibility of accreditation for short courses – academic considerations? Financial implications? Staffing implications?

It is vital to reflect on certain factors when embarking on a large study:

1. Personal motives for the study – interest; academic challenge; potential for enhanced career prospects.
2. Purpose and audience – preparation for changes to Foundation Phase; preparing students and other staff; audience will be other staff, students and partnership schools
3. Who will be affected by the change? – School of Education staff; students; children in school
4. Who will be interested? – School of Education staff; students; partnership staff.

When carrying out research in a large organisation such as my institution, although one has a degree of autonomy, ultimately the change process will impact on other colleagues and students. It was necessary to be aware of issues such as finance and time constraints. Also, it became evident that not all colleagues had the same level of enthusiasm for this project. Therefore, when working with colleagues or asking for input into the project, I needed to negotiate a timescale or put in place a system for ‘chasing up’ information or resources needed. Another pertinent consideration here is as Reeves et al (2002, p.75) pointed out ‘change for the better will almost certainly involve unpicking or challenging the prevailing view of practice.’ Thus the change process may involve ‘ruffling some feathers’ along the way, especially for example if this relates to changes in working practices for other colleagues.

Schon (1983) makes reference to the reflective and social dynamic of learning. I believe, most learning by its nature is a two way process, involving the teacher and student. With regard to research, the researcher will share findings with others giving a social context to the inquiry. By looking at the interweaving aspects of the process for making sense of the learning process it is clear that there are many agents involved.

3.5. Rationale for the Use of Action Research as the Principal Methodology

The reason / rationale for choosing this method: I wanted to employ a flexible methodology. Mertler (2008) set out some compelling reasons for the educational researcher to employ action research, notably that it ‘provides educators with opportunities to better understand and therefore improve their educational practices’ (2008, p.19). This was certainly a key consideration for this research project. Kemmis and Mc Taggart (2000) thought that action research should pursue a question, this study does that in looking at how to adapt pedagogy in the School of Education in relation to WAG Foundation Phase changes. The research also explored other issues relating to the action research process such as looking at specific problems – how to develop student knowledge and how it involves change – adapting training for students in relation to relaying knowledge about PSD/WB/EL and Reflective Practice.

Academic writing: The action research process demonstrates a story unfolding. The research process allowed the researcher to engage with and develop theories that ideally develop good practice. Johnson (2008) stressed the importance of a ‘two-way’ flow of information, if researchers use research findings to inform practice and to make sense of what is happening in the school setting. An aim of this research was to address any shortfall in students’ knowledge relating to PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice. A consideration of the academic writing process was that eventual findings would be published and shared with students.

Parsons and Brown (2002) neatly sum up the action research process by describing it as being ‘reflective and collaborative and that it can ultimately lead to improvements in educational practice’ (2002, p.7). These sentiments echoed my thoughts exactly.

Action Research can allow for a process of examination; this research project was reflective in its approach. I critically analysed student practice to establish an understanding of the implementation of ‘Special Me Time’ in the Early Years settings and how the students were engaged reflectively whilst undertaking the SMT programme.

The study aimed to inform practice: Action research was a key tool in this process. It also pursued a question according to Kemmis and Mc Taggart (2000) in relation to adapting pedagogy in the School of Education. It was also a reflective process which generated knowledge through ongoing reflection on practice and was developmental as it built on existing practice and knowledge. It was part of a cyclical process which O’Leary (2004) viewed as taking shape ‘as knowledge emerges’ (2004, p.140). The research culminated in changes in pedagogy and the employment of different processes or different pedagogical approaches.

3.6. Comparison of Action Research to Case Study

Whilst I strongly believe that action research was the best methodology to employ for this research project, I was drawn to the case study approach. I found that the research could be defined in places as a case study because it met many of the criteria of an educational case study as proposed by Bassey (1999). It may be further categorised thus as guidelines set out by Bassey (1999, p.20) as a ‘theory seeking case study’. It was similar to such ideas, in that:

- It was an empirical enquiry conducted within a localised boundary of space and time.
- It examined an aspect of an educational activity i.e. looking at students teaching practice.
- It aimed to inform the judgements and decisions of practitioners, policy makers and/or theoreticians.
- It aimed to explore significant features of the case.
- It aimed to create plausible interpretations.
- It aimed to test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations.

However, one must be aware, that the end product of the research could have become what Stake (1995) called an ‘intrinsic case study’ as it followed Stake’s idea of ‘story telling’ by having a high degree of narrative content. As the study was based on the principles of reflective practice (Dewey, 1933, Schon 1983, 1987), reflection and narrative were seen as an integral part of the research process. Case study as the sole methodological approach would not have been wholly appropriate with regard to this research. Action research fitted better as Johnson (2008) said, simply because the goal of action research is to promote improvement and change, exactly what this research set out to do. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, action research was employed.

Reflection formed a major basis for the work undertaken in relation to this research. Part of the reflective process encompassed analysis of current practice and eventual refinement of this. Reflective practice is often linked to action research. Bassey (1999, p.93) described action research as ‘an enquiry which is carried out in order to understand, to evaluate and then to change, in order to improve educational practice’. Bell (1999) also spoke of the ‘problem-solving’ nature of action research and the fact that action research should result in improvements to practice over a specific period of time. The reflective cycle is highlighted in

the work of O’Leary (2004) who showed that action research is a cyclical process which is defined and changed as knowledge is gained. The process of observing (research / data collection), reflection, acting (implementation) and planning (2004, p.141) will be repeated over and over until a consensus is achieved.

Bassey (1999, p.67) stressed that case studies are ‘analytical accounts of educational events, projects, programmes or systems aimed at illuminating theory.’ A central tenet of this research was to study educational events and then reflect and refine teaching procedures and pedagogy following this process. The case study approach may seem hard to define as it can encompass a wide variety of context and approaches and some academics may have misgivings over its workability. Brown and Dowling (1998) were sceptical as to whether the case study method actually exists. However, they clarify this statement when discussing within the context of a specific research study,

‘the use of the term ‘case’ is probably best interpreted as simply a way of describing one’s sampling procedures. Our position then, is that research must constitute its object just as educational practices have constituted ‘the case study approach’. Research must impose selective and organisational principles upon its object site in establishing the empirical basis for its data. (Brown and Dowling, 1998, p.167).

Interestingly, Abbott (1992) described thinking in a narrative way, in effect, thinking along cases, rather than across them. Abbott’s suggestion of employing a methodology that allowed consideration of multi-case narratives (1992, p.148) gives a flexible framework to work with. I was also mindful of the methodological framework defined by Scott and Usher (1996) who viewed this as a dynamic which could be defined as a distinct way of approaching research.

On reflection, although I was drawn to the idea of undertaking a case study in relation to this research, I believe that action research enabled me to effectively engage with the data collected on many levels, identify components and ultimately to answer my research questions more effectively.

3.7. Methodological Framework and Research Hypothesis

My initial hypothesis was that my students would need to develop an in depth knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and the principles of reflective practice in order to be able to teach, reflect, assess and plan for young children's PSD/ WB and EL in the Foundation Phase setting. By effectively planning for PSD/WB and facilitating young children's EL in the Foundation Phase setting, this should enhance the learning experiences of the young children in their settings. As the WG point out, children need to be 'supported in becoming confident, competent and independent thinkers and learners' (2008, p.15).

I believe that one of the most difficult aspects of the research was to take into consideration the EL of the students themselves. This was a very necessary preamble. Although there is an abundance of research into children's EL (Weare, 2006, Corrie, 2004) research related to teacher's EL (or lack of it) is less prevalent. This phenomenon was also documented by Perry, Lennie and Humphrey (2008). Hawkey (2006) noted that there is a culture in schools that tends to be very cautious in relation to 'matters emotional' (2006, p.138). In order to gauge understanding of EL amongst students on the 'Special Me Time' programme, during the training day all eleven students who took part in the day were asked them to complete an EL inventory in the form of a 'well-being o'meter' (Appendix 4) this was an informal method to judge knowledge and how the students rated their own EL. I gained much information on the students' level of EL and their ideas in relation to reflective practice.

Findings from the questionnaire informed me that:

- Following an initial teaching input relating to EL and its definition / relevance to practice all 11 students were able to define and describe how they used / would use the concept
- 8 students rated themselves as being EL themselves
- 3 rated that they 'may be' EL

Interestingly, when asked about reflective practice only one student considered herself to be a 'reflective practitioner'. Clearly much more input and work was needed here.

I was aware of the need to select a methodological framework which was suitable for the purpose of the research project and consequently sought guidance from a number of sources. When commencing a research project, it seemed pertinent to refer to McNiff et al. (2003) who posed the question 'how do I produce evidence and not simply illustrations of my practice'. (2005, p.23) In my case, I needed to discover:

- The students' current level of knowledge in relation to PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice.
- How to prepare my students to be able to teach, observe and support young children in relation to PSD/WB/EL and then reflect on this process.
- Then ultimately, what difference this additional student knowledge / awareness might make to young children in the Foundation Phase setting.

Both methodological approaches seemed to fit a more 'people-related' way of working. As Gomm (2007) suggested, 'The object (target) of social inquiry is seldom an individual person or enterprise' (2007, p.23) and to use Smith's (1978) term it can be whatever 'bounded system' is of interest to the researcher. Cresswell (1998) enlarges on this idea as he defines a

case study as an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time, through detailed, data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context.

Given the topic, a qualitative approach was seen as being the most appropriate. A qualitative approach as described by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.20) is where 'Events and individuals are unique and largely non-generalisable'. This seemed to echo the key aspects relating to teaching practice in the Foundation Phase setting.

Additionally, employing a reflective approach (MacNaughton 2004, Ghaye and Ghaye 1998) gave an opportunity to investigate an academic question in a 'holistic' way. I felt this was especially pertinent, since young children learn in a holistic way. Therefore as Lindon (2005, p.91) said 'it makes no developmental sense to attempt to study cognitive progress as if it is separate from emotional development and social relationships'. Also as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) pointed out action research is a 'powerful tool for change' (2007, p.297). The fact that on completion of the research, changes would be made to future teaching pedagogy, related closely to this point.

Further, based along narrative / reflective lines of enquiry, as opposed to more purely statistical or numerical models, Webster and Mertova (2007) stressed that 'traditional' empirical research methods cannot 'sufficiently address issues such as complexity, multiplicity of perspectives and human centredness' (2007, p.31). Young children share their narratives with the adults they work with, they will use reflection, thinking over events if we give them the space and time to do so. This was a key idea in the SMT programme – sessions were designed to give the children reflection time. It is this reflection or thinking time, which then informs us about their thoughts and learning. By using action research, I found a

research method which allowed the flexibility to investigate as Yin (1993) suggested both ‘the phenomenon and the context’ (1993, p.31). In this case, the phenomenon was the Foundation Phase pedagogy in relation to PSD/WB/EL. The context was the student teachers’ interactions, intervention (in the form of the ‘Special Me Time’ programme) assessment and therefore, ultimately the process of building relationships with the children. The action research dynamic related to this work, can be defined in the words of Cohen and Manion (1994, p.186) as a ‘small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention’.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations should be a constant concern to the researcher. According to Bush (2002, p.75) ‘ethical issues can arise at any stage of a research project’. This is especially true when working in a large organisation, as in my study and with students and children. Ethical issues such as confidentiality were strictly adhered to. All material generated as a result of this study was stored securely. Anonymity has been maintained through the writing process by not referring to the institution, school or any individual students by name. At no point during the research process were any of the participants knowingly deceived. Voluntary informed consent (Appendix 9) was established before any data collection or interaction with the students took place. The research was explained to participants through an initial Power Point presentation and question and answer session. Students were given written information (Appendix 9) regarding the nature of the research and why their co-operation and participation was being sought. They were informed that at any point during the research they had the right to withdraw without giving explanation.

Cohen et al. (2007, p.49) considered that ethical issues are related to various factors such as 'the nature of the project itself and the context of the research'. Cohen et al referred to procedures, the methods and nature of data collection and participants involved in a project. Ethical issues can be related to the type of data collected, what is done with the data and how it is disseminated.

When carrying out a workplace research project, Pring (2000) explored the concept of the ethical dilemmas facing the 'insider' researcher. Research within an organisation, may allow privileged access to certain types of information. An 'external' researcher may not be able to access information such as minutes from meetings or other internal documents. The 'internal' researcher may also be faced with acquiring information in an informal way, such as through internal e-mail traffic or conversations 'at the water cooler'.

Within this 'internal dynamic', the researcher may face ethical problems, when gaining information by default, especially if for example, information is picked up at meetings, which would be useful for research purposes. Conversely, other staff members who are aware of research being undertaken in the organisation, may target the researcher for their own personal agendas, for example, by trying to influence the outcome of the research. The researcher should therefore, be aware that when carrying out research in an organisation, especially if it may change working practices, that the sensibilities of other staff should be taken into account. Informally keeping colleagues up to date with any developments in the research project which may be pertinent to them is a way of doing this. Pring (2000, p.148) was also aware of 'negotiating access' to research with colleagues. This idea of 'openness' within the research project should benefit the researcher. When sharing research findings,

possibly through team meetings, a 'collegiate' dynamic could be fostered. Colleagues may then be receptive to team working and / or sharing their own ideas within the research remit. MacNaughton and Hughes (2008) explored the dynamic of openness, when looking at procedures for working with others following research or reflection into working practices. They mention that staff who were responsible for implementing change following research findings had 'preparedness to change' (2008, p.4). Some staff may not be as enthused as the researcher about having to implement changes to working practices.

Koshy (2008) reminds us that we must explain the purpose of the research to the participants, this was done as a matter of course in dialogue with the students. Students were also given a set of ethical guidelines. Educational research is bound by BERA (2004) guidelines. The three main tenets of educational research as set out in BERA guidance formed the central core of this research: ensuring informed consent of participants, ensuring participants' confidentiality and anonymity and the avoidance of harm to participants. These aspects are discussed throughout this research.

Ethical approval for the research was given by the university ethics committee on 30th October 2007. Throughout this study, I have carefully considered research ethics. I ensured that the research was conducted in an ethical and confidential manner. Throughout the study confidentiality was maintained at all times. No real names were used in relation to students, or school / nursery settings. Students were assured that they were that were under no obligation to take part in the study. Students were not disadvantaged or advantaged through participation or non participation. Since the change in emphasis on PSD/WB in the WG Foundation Phase, in the academic year 2007/8, all students received more input on Personal Social Development and Emotional Literacy. They also had access to the UWIC Foundation

Phase conference and accompanying book, Personal and Social Development, Well Being and Cultural Diversity, A Resource Reader for the Foundation Phase Practitioner, which was written by myself and other colleagues, specifically to support student knowledge in that area. Research findings were shared with all students, in the course of subsequent sessions/lectures.

Students who were part of the SMT programme were free to leave the research at any time, if they found that it was in conflict with their studies or family commitments. Two students did initially sign up for the programme, but withdrew citing pressure of studies as the reason for withdrawal. If any child protection issues became apparent as a result of any student undertaking this research, students were made aware of the procedures as a matter of course as befits students on an ITT programme. Child protection information was given to the students during a lead lecture on both ITT programmes, within their first weeks of study. Students were aware of the procedure to follow in cases of disclosure by a child through the nature of their work on the SMT programme. Students were also aware of the designated member of staff for child protection in their placement. Students were informed in writing of these procedures in the programme placement handbook.

There is also a danger relating to being a solo observer as Bell (2005) pointed out, as solo observers can impose their own interpretations of what has been observed. In a way this is inevitable, however, I was mindful of bias and especially the dynamic relating to close relationships with my students. When informed consent is obtained from the participants, it removes some level of responsibility from the researcher. Bias may occur as participants believe they have a particular role to play in the overall research process. This may be especially true when participants are students and there may be an unequal power balance

between the researcher as a teacher educator and the ITT students as participants. It could be that the ITT students were willing to participate in order to please the tutor, creating a conflict in roles which may have impacted upon the study, therefore care had to be taken in this respect.

3.9. Methods of Academic Enquiry

A number of methods were employed by the researcher. Information has been gathered as follows:

1. Academic enquiry ~ to establish what research had already been undertaken in this area. Research took the form of a literature review.
2. Questionnaires to students ~ these were used to obtain basic quantitative and qualitative information. Questionnaires were initially used to gauge knowledge and understanding of the terms PSD/WB/ EL.
3. Placement visits to students in Foundation Phase settings ~ this was for the purpose of observation and assessment of the students whilst undertaking SMT activities.
4. Questionnaires and exit interviews with students to obtain further qualitative information~ these could then be evaluated and utilised for research purposes.
5. Students' 'reflective diary' information~ any pertinent or interesting narrative could be examined.
6. Students' planning and lesson evaluations from their PSD/WB sessions
7. Students' observations and baseline assessments of placement children
8. Interviews with class teachers in placement schools.

This is an extensive list of data sources. The rationale behind such a data set was that it was designed to be a 'mix and match' approach, I believed that the students in the SMT programme would use a variety of approaches to recording their findings, choosing the methods most suited to their individual preferences and placement conditions. Therefore, I

thought it pertinent to have a variety of methods of gathering data, which I could then sift and sort upon the completion of the SMT programme. I was unaware at that time, what the preferred methods were that the students would employ. Some were particularly labour intensive, such as the reflective diary. The use of these methods and related findings are detailed in the results section of this study.

3.10. Action Research Loops

I envisaged the SMT programme as a series of action research loops. I based this idea on the work of and Schon (1974) and their theory that people have blueprints or ‘mental maps’ on how to act and think in certain situations, which means that they plan, implement and review their actions constantly. The notion of ‘loops’ of learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978) involved scrutinising actions, thus ‘double loop’ learning would lead to a shift in thinking following the thought processes and actions which were involved in the first thinking loop (single loop learning).

Argyris (1982) argued that organisations must increase capacity for double loop learning in order for the organisation or practitioners within the organisation to make informed choices or decisions in a constantly changing work environment. I have adapted the ideas of Argyris and Schon and looked at what I term ‘action research loops’. Figure 3.4 sets out my research vision relating to this concept. It demonstrates how the research process unfolded – in steps or loops with an:

action ---- reflection ----consolidation ---- action phase.

I was also mindful of Kolb’s ideas on experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) as I will discuss later on in this study. In experiential learning the educator (in this case myself) is seen as a

facilitator of a students learning cycle. Figure 3.4. shows how I envisaged the student learning cycle (as part of the SMT programme) unfolding over the course of the academic year from September 2007 to July 2008. Finger and Asun (2000) also linked the role of the teacher to growth in the reflective thought of their students, in effect, supporting the students to develop strategies 'to reflect upon their theories-in-action' (2000, p.46).

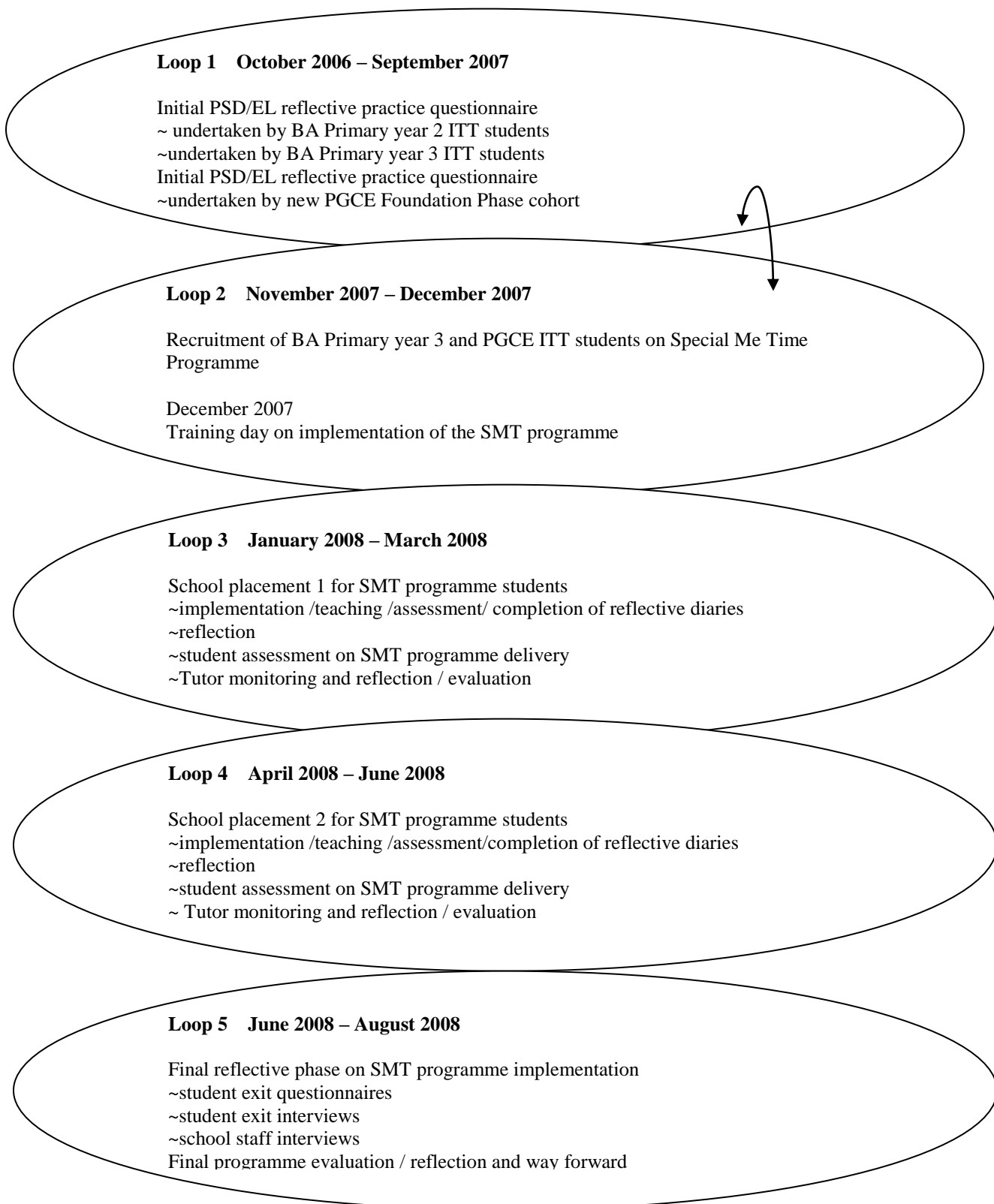


Figure 3.3. SMT programme Action Research Loops October 2006 – August 2008

3.11. Implementation of an Emotional Literacy Programme

The basis of this research was the implementation and examination of an Emotional Literacy programme called ‘Special Me Time’, it was designed, specifically to be implemented by BA and PGCE ITT students from the School of Education and then delivered by them in a range of Foundation Phase settings.

What was Special Me Time?

‘Special Me Time’ consisted of six planned PSD/WB/EL lessons / sessions designed to be delivered over two six week blocks, during two school teaching placements. My remit as the student’s tutor was to reflect on their delivery of the programme and their reflective ‘learning journey’ over the period of one academic year. Activities were designed to enable students to explore a range of PSD/WB /EL ‘themes’ with the children in their setting. The ‘themes’ were related to PSD/WB/EL concepts such as developing confidence, co-operation and friendship, jealousy and pride. The idea behind the programme was that students would take an initial baseline of children’s knowledge and understanding relating to PSD/WB/EL matters. They would then deliver the pre-planned sessions over the six week period and record and reflect on their findings on how the children related to the themes and whether there was any noticeable change in the children’s knowledge and understanding relating to PSD/WB/ EL aspects (such as behaviour, confidence, attentiveness, being able to share / relate to other children more successfully).

Who undertook it?

A total of twelve students initially became members of placement 1 on the ‘Special Me Time’ programme. Eight students were from the PGCE Primary Foundation Phase Initial Professional Development (IPD) cohort 2007/8 and four students from the Year 3 BA Primary

(Hons) with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Early Childhood Specialism cohort 2007/8. However, students did withdraw from the programme, due to various issues, such as bereavement and perceived increased work load, so the total number of students concerned was six PGCE students and two BA Primary students making an overall final total of eight.

What did the students do?

Students were given six pre-planned PSD/WB activities at the ‘Special Me Time’ Training day and full instructions on how to carry out the programme with the children in their placement schools (further details follow in this section). The rationale behind giving the students pre-planned activities was that this would not only save them valuable planning time, but ensure that the students would be delivering the same sessions to different groups of children. This would reduce the number of variables and permit some triangulation; student sessions could be compared. Silverman (1993, p.99) called this ‘investigator triangulation’.

The students were asked to undertake up to six sessions of ‘Special Me Time’. The sessions were designed to be delivered in a flexible manner; this was because students were in different settings with different organisational issues. Therefore, it was difficult to quantify what an average timescale would be for a session, but each session was designed to last about an hour. A baseline of children’s PSD/WB and EL (Appendix 7) was also undertaken by the students on commencing the programme and on cessation. Students undertook observations of the children’s PSD/WB/EL during the programme and kept a ‘reflective diary’ which enabled them to note any pertinent findings. A reflective diary is a medium for recording thoughts, feelings and experiences rather than just detailing everyday occurrences. The aim of the reflective diary was to encourage students to explore and reflect on the experiences they gained as part of the ‘Special Me Time’ programme. Ideally as Bolton (2005) suggested,

reflective diaries enable the practitioner to recall significant incidents, make sense of them and then use the experience gained. Reed and Canning (2010) viewed the reflective diary as a valuable tool in which to record thoughts as well as being a ‘stimulus for a deeper learning and personal change’ (2010, p.18). From my perspective as tutor for these students, I envisaged that the reflective diaries would record clear evidence of the students’ reflective practice and would be used to scrutinise how the students implemented the Emotional Literacy programme which was SMT.

When / Where did the research occur?

The research took place as follows:

Placement 1 delivery of ‘Special Me Time’

BA primary students:

- for six weeks from 10.12.07 until 08.02.08 (2 students)

PGCE primary students:

- for six weeks from 07.01.08 until 22.02.08 (6 students)

Placement 2 delivery of ‘Special Me Time’

PGCE primary students:

- for six weeks during the period 28.04.08 until 07.07.08. (3 PGCE students)

The students were placed in a variety of Foundation Phase settings, in either primary or nursery schools in the Cardiff area, the Vale of Glamorgan and the South Wales Valleys.

Overall Time scale

The research took place over academic years 2006-7 to 2007-8. There were three components to the research:

1 - Initial knowledge audit, development and trial of the 'Special Me Time' materials.

Summer term 2007.

2 - (Placement 1). All eight students were part of this process. Following the training day in December 2007 the students carried out the 'Special Me Time' programme and activities for a six week block from December 2007 to February 2008.

3 - (Placement 2). This took place during the summer term 2008, from April 2008 until early July 2008. Three PGCE students opted to become part of this group. These students carried out the 'Special Me Time' programme and activities for a second time during this six week block.

The Research Sample

As a senior lecturer within the School of Education, I was fortunate to be able to conduct the research with groups of students who were willing to become involved. It was also fortunate that these students saw value in my research, from their own professional viewpoint, especially as it related directly to their own teaching practice. Evaluations from the student training day (10.12.07) demonstrated that out of a total of 12 students who attended the day, 11 of students rated the training day and the 'Special Me Time' teaching materials as 'very good' and relevant to furthering their professional understanding / pedagogical development

relating to the delivery of PSD/WB/EL. The remaining student rated the materials as good.

The two cohorts of students involved in the study were:

- the BA QTS year three 2007/8 and
- the PGCE Foundation Phase cohort 2007/8

The choice of these two groups of students was for a number of reasons. Firstly, accessibility, since I taught both groups and was thus able to have contact with them through teaching sessions. I taught the BA (Hons) QTS year three students during a module entitled EDU 354 Early Childhood Specialism. This was a twelve week module delivered in the autumn term 2007, whereby I taught the students each week for a two hour session, a total of 24 hours. I taught the PGCE students each Friday for two hours, for the duration of the academic year 2007/8 on their initial professional development (IPD) module, a total of 60 hours. The second reason for the choice of these students as research subjects was that I was able to visit and observe them in their Foundation Phase settings carrying out their professional practice and undertaking the specific teaching sessions which formed part of the 'Special Me Time' programme.

BA Primary QTS year three cohort (2005 – 2008) These students had opted to take an Early Childhood studies module on the BA Primary in year two and then a further module in year three. This training would enable them to classify themselves as Foundation Phase specialists.

The year three BA group originally consisted of twelve students. Of these twelve students four decided to join the 'Special Me Time' programme (one student left after a few weeks).

The Year three BA students would undertake two placements in their third year. I would visit these students twice whilst on their placements.

PGCE Foundation Phase IPD cohort 2007/8 This group of students was the first cohort to be enrolled on the new PGCE programme with a choice of age phase. I was responsible for a group of 42 students, who had chosen the Foundation Phase pathway. During induction week in September 2007, I arranged to speak to the students about my research interests and to enlist their help. I informed them about the ‘Special Me Time’ programme and enquired if anyone would be interested in joining the research project. I was aware that both groups of students had a heavy work load. I was therefore, dependent on the goodwill and interest of students. I found the students who had a clear interest in PSD/WB/EL were the most enthusiastic to be involved.

Out of 42 PGCE Foundation Phase IPD students, eight initially wished to participate in ‘Special Me Time’. This could be described according to Mukherji and Albon, (2010) as a self-selecting sample, as the students volunteered to take part in the research process. I was initially disappointed with this small number. In reality however, I found that eight students was sufficient for research purposes. This was due to the fact that I had to be mindful of time and resource constraints. My EdD research had to be carried out within the constraints of a full-time job in the School of Education. As well as teaching the BA year three cohort and the PGCE cohort, I had a full teaching timetable on other programmes. Therefore, this number of students was manageable, especially as I had planned to visit each student in their placement setting twice, at the beginning of their placement and on completion of the placement. I had also set aside a day for training purposes relating to ‘Special Me Time’ (all students who took part in the ‘Special Me Time’ attended a one day training day. The one year PGCE is also a

particularly time-consuming programme. The students undertook three different placements in one academic year. As another part of my role within the School of Education, was to visit students on placement.

Other information

Both groups of students would be taking on additional work related to this study, which was supplementary to the requirements for their chosen programme. Students were informed that the workload would be complimentary to their studies and that I would ensure that the additional work would not be too onerous, but would form part of their placement teaching duties. By delivering the ‘Special Me Time’ programme in their placement schools, I had envisaged saving the students’ planning time.

Placement 2 of the ‘Special Me Time’ programme consisted of three PGCE students and was run at a later date (the second student placement). Again students self selected their attendance on placement 2. The lower number of students signing up for this round of the study was noticeable (3 out of the original 12). None of the BA Primary students were interested in repeating the research a second time. I ascribed this to a number of factors, but it seemed pressure of studies was a major factor. Student G (2008), informed me that she had enjoyed placement 1, but that she felt she could not do ‘justice’ to placement 2 due to pressures on her time, and because it was her final placement and she wanted to concentrate all her efforts on that without any distractions. She did however base her final piece of coursework, in the form of her Independent Enquiry (a 3000 word piece of action research), on her experiences during ‘Special Me Time’.

Awareness of young children's cultural identity is an integral part of the Foundation Phase curriculum and students must possess sound knowledge and application of teaching skills in these areas. As a teacher educator, my role was ultimately to pass on knowledge and experience in order to equip students with the skills and pedagogical knowledge they would need to carry out their teaching practice, being mindful of the importance of PSD/WB/EL. I was also aware that students would need to explore or revisit aspects of their own PSD/WB/EL so I ensured that I was available to offer advice and nurture to students along their 'journey' in this area. I have found through experience that student teachers expend a great deal of their own 'emotional energy' whilst working with young children. Student teachers may find themselves dealing with emotive issues, including child protection, for example.

Another consideration was to ensure that students understood how to observe and assess young children's development relating to PSD/WB/EL. I ensured that students were given the knowledge to do this job, i.e. training, information /strategies in the form of a prepared baseline for use on commencement of the trial and on cessation. The premise was that the approach, facilitation, planning and application of PSD/WB/EL in their Foundation Phase setting, would be achievable whilst on their teaching placements.

3.12. Quality Indicators -Validity, Reliability and Triangulation

Ensuring that the issues of validity, reliability and triangulation are adhered to, whilst carrying out social research, can be complex. I pondered over the use of different methods of academic enquiry. I believed that by using a variety of data, this would give a more cumulative view of the research picture. Also, Silverman (2010, p.133) referred to 'being able to 'triangulate the true state of affairs by examining where the different data intersect'. Much of the data used

did complement the other data, but also some of the types of data sources used were different enough to give an interesting contrast e.g. the use of reflective diaries versus more formal lesson plans and evaluations.

I reflected in depth as to whether another researcher, on carrying out this study, would draw similar conclusions to the ones I had. Mac Naughton et al (2004) looked at the degree of ‘fit between the data and their theoretical interpretation of it’ (2004, p.203). The question of how action research can be used to collect many different representations and definitions and how research can be the subject of different interpretations is a key concern for any researcher. Replication of research by another researcher in this instance, and whether any subsequent researchers would obtain similar results, can be achieved by providing a clear and detailed methodology, which is what I have endeavoured to do.

3.13. The Research Process / Research Strategy and Process

As with all research, the process seems relatively clear to the researcher, but often it appears less clear to other people who are trying to understand or replicate the process. I was therefore mindful of this and believe that a clear rationale for the research process will help the reader to decipher the complexities and nuances of the project. With this idea in mind, I have set out my research timetable in Appendix 1.

The research took place during the period October 2006 to June 2008, with a consolidation and re-reflection phase in October 2011 to April 2012.

Data collection

Data were collected during a period of eighteen months between October 2006 – June 2008, over the course of two academic years. This occurred as detailed in Table 3.3. below:

Table 3.4. Table detailing data collection during the SMT research process

September 2006 – December 2007	Preliminary research, trial and development of training programme – ‘Special Me Time’. Trial of ‘Special Me Time’ in three Foundation Phase settings. Six school staff in total undertook activities and reflected upon them.
October 2006	Initial knowledge audit (questionnaire) to BA Primary QTS Early childhood Studies (ECS) students (42 students in total)
January 2008 – June 2008	‘Special Me Time’ programme delivered by 8 students on placement 1 and 3 students on placement 2. Observation of students on placement. Students recorded findings in reflective diaries. Interviews with students.
July 2008 – March 2011	Analysis of results using student planning, reflective diaries, observation notes and writing up research project. Re-reflection interviews / consolidation phase.

Special Me Time research process

Initial knowledge audit

I was keen to begin the research process by ascertaining student knowledge relating to their ideas on PSD/WB/EL which they would be teaching the following academic year. I began initially with the BA Primary (Hons) with QTS students who opt for a specific module in Early Childhood Studies (ECS) in year two (42 students) and year three of the programme (15 students). Questionnaires (see Appendices 1 and 2) were given out to BA students in year two (69% return rate) and year three (93% return rate) in October and November 2006.

I had taught the BA Primary year three cohort on the ECS module EDU 342 ‘Challenge in Early Childhood Studies’ and a colleague taught the year two version of the module. Year three students therefore, had received my input during teaching sessions, where I ensured that

PSD/WB/EL was mentioned as a matter of course. I had less control over what was delivered to the year two cohort by my colleague.

The pertinent point here was that in the academic year 2007/2008 only some of the year two students would become my year three students, since in year three the ECS module was optional. It was therefore in my interest to ensure that I was aware of the current knowledge base of the year two students, some of whom I would be teaching in year three and some whom I would not. The students were asked a range of questions such as:

- ‘have you heard of the term ‘Emotional Literacy?’
- ‘what do you understand by the term ‘Emotional Literacy?’
- ‘have your taught sessions at UWIC in Early Childhood Studies helped your understanding of the above concepts?’

The questions were designed to ascertain knowledge about Welsh Government Foundation Phase developments at that time, in relation to PSD / WB and also to gauge understanding relating to the concept of EL. The full findings from these questions are discussed in Chapter four.

Modifications / development

Initial analysis of the questionnaires made it clear that modifications were required to the current ITT ECS and Initial Professional Development (IPD) programmes, in order to further facilitate student knowledge and understanding relating to PSD/WB/EL. Student needs and knowledge requirements had to be taken into consideration to ensure they were suitably prepared by having a clear understanding of the concept of Emotional Literacy and in relation to WG Foundation Phase policy. Students would eventually need to deliver / facilitate the area

of learning within the Foundation Phase curriculum, namely Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity.

I wanted to provide students with practical knowledge relating to PSD/WB/EL but I believed that it was also extremely relevant to provide them with a set of skills and teaching competencies relating to this area. I envisaged the ‘Special Me Time’ programme as being a teaching resource pack that students could use to support their pedagogical skills in this area. The Special Me Time pack was also a flexible resource. I did not want the SMT materials to be too prescriptive, they were designed to be flexible, in that students could follow them as lesson / session plans if they wished, but they would also be able to adapt them and to reflect on their own ideas and circumstances in which they were delivering the sessions.

A pilot initial run of the ‘Special Me Time’ programme materials was implemented in three different Foundation Phase settings in the Autumn term 2006. School staff delivered a selection of ‘Special Me Time’ materials and then evaluated them. The selection of the schools used in this initial run was based on professional links built up between myself and the schools over a period of time. All of the schools were ‘partnership’ schools, i.e. they were in partnership with the School of Education, training students whilst on teaching placement. Evaluations of the ‘Special Me Time’ programme materials were positive and comments received from school staff were fed into the further development of the materials for use with the student group.

Training day (10.12.07) for students and subsequent implementation / monitoring and assessment of the ‘Special Me Time’ programme.

The ‘Special Me Time’ programme was designed to be a series of six sessions relating to PSD/WB/EL for ITT students to carry out whilst on teaching practice. Students from two cohorts of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes within the School of Education were invited to form the initial focus of the study. The student cohorts initially consisted of four students who volunteered from the BA Primary year three (Early Childhood Studies specialism), and eight students who volunteered from the PGCE primary Initial Professional Development Foundation Phase cohort.

The students would undertake teaching as part of the programme whilst on a teaching placement of at least six weeks during the Spring Term 2008. Students were given background information about PSD/WB/EL and information on implementing the programme at the training day in the form of a programme handbook which included:

- A baseline sheet for students to complete to gauge children’s PSD/WB/EL on commencing and cessation of the programme. This baseline sheet is detailed in Davis et al. (2008, p.99) and a copy at Appendix 7.
- A series of six pre-written session plans designed to encompass a range of PSD/WB/EL areas relating to the WG Foundation Phase area of learning e.g. moral and spiritual development, personal development, social development and wellbeing. One session was to be taught and assessed each week. Copies at Appendix 6.
- Information on how to deliver the programme, how to complete the baseline assessment and how to complete a reflective diary. Copies in SMT handbook – Appendix 6.
- A blank reflective diary
- Photocopied sheets from the WG Foundation Phase Framework for Children’s Learning, Consultation Document (2007) detailing the area of learning for personal and social development.
- An evaluation sheet for the programme as a whole. Copy at Appendix 8.

What students were asked to do:

The research took place in the students' placement schools, where they were assigned for a block of teaching placement. There were twelve schools in total. The schools were situated in a geographical area which included Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and the South Wales Valleys. Head teachers in all schools were made aware of the trial and their permission sought for the student to carry out the 'Special Me Time' programme, during their placement and also for myself as their tutor to visit and record findings. As the students were involved in general teaching duties whilst on their teaching placements and SMT was part of this process, it was not thought necessary to ask parental consent for carrying out the SMT programme. The children themselves were involved in the SMT activities and these were deemed to be part of everyday Foundation Phase teaching and learning.

Both groups of students were asked if they would partake in the 'Special Me Programme' as follows:

- To become a member of the 'Special Me Time' group.
- To attend the training day on 10.12.07, which would give them additional input in relation to PSD/WB/EL and would explain how the 'Special Me Time' programme was to be organised before their placement began.

On each placement students were asked:

- To carry out six PSD/WB/EL activities, one per week as part of the 'Special Me Time' programme, with the children in their Foundation Phase placement. Details of the activities would be given to them, along with a training pack and training (see above) The activities would then be evaluated by the students.
- To carry out a baseline assessment of six children that they had identified (using whatever criteria for identification they felt was appropriate, for example class teacher selection, or random selection) in the setting on commencing the trial period and on completion.
- To observe their six children whilst on their placement, during or following the 'Special Me Time' activities.

- To keep a 'reflective diary' noting anything of interest in relation to the children's PSD/WB and EL, following implementation of the 'Special Me Time' activities or in the course of a typical school day. The students were also asked to note their own feelings in relation to carrying out SMT.
- To evaluate and reflect all sessions taught on a proforma, these evaluations would then be used to inform future teaching and learning.

Implementation / Monitoring of the 'Special Me Time' programme:

- This consisted of a period covering two school placements (placement 1 and 2).
- I arranged to visit each student at least once at their placement to observe them undertaking a PSD/WB/EL activity.
- Students were required to feedback to myself during the trial, via email and on completion of the programme period.
- I conducted informal interviews with the students on completion of their trial. This consisted of semi-structured questions (see Appendix 13). During these interviews I took notes and recorded students' answers (see Appendix 11 and 12).
- Students used an adapted baseline or record sheet to reflect on children's personal and social development, well being and Emotional Literacy. They completed these sheets – by ticking or colouring in segments which equated to achievement / competence in a particular area. The baselines used, were designed by myself (Appendix 7) and were based on the work of Comrie (2008) who initially developed similar baselines for use in her nursery in the Cardiff area, whereby the children were screened each term, for competencies relating to 'well-being and involvement' (Comrie, 2008, p.94) and in a number of areas relating to PSD/WB/EL. ITT students on the SMT programme used an adapted version of the chart which equated these competencies to a level or a numerical score e.g. low = 1 and high = 5. Using these baselines, students were able to gauge where children may have needed extra support, for example where levels of well being were low. Where this was the case, students would have been able to tailor strategies to help support the child in that specific area.
- Students completed a reflective diary / notebook which recorded their reflections and findings. WG (2007, p.17) suggest using index cards, adhesive labels and technology such as digital photographs, to record progress - students also undertook these methods.

Three PGCE students on completion of the trial in their first school (placement 1) decided that they would like to run the trial again in their next placement, so the steps above (excluding the training day) were replicated in their second placement ('Special Me Time' placement 2).

Data organisation for analysis – Grounded Theory Method (GTM)

The analytical process

The data gathered during this research was qualitative, consisting solely of students' opinions, reflections and work products. Therefore, I was aware that I needed to employ a robust method of analysis in order to reach justifiable conclusions. The Grounded Theory Method (GTM) has its roots in the work of social scientists such as Cooley (1864-1929) and Mead (1863-1931). Mead purported the idea of symbolic interactionism, the study of social interactions and the resultant process of interpretation of these outcomes when social interactions occur. Grounded theory is 'theory grounded in data which have been systematically obtained through 'social research' (Goulding, 1999, p.6).

As a more formal methodology, GTM is accredited to Glaser and Strauss (1967). They developed their ideas to produce a framework and intellectual justification for the use of qualitative research to expand theoretical analysis. Grounded theory extracts meaning from data gathered in a systematic integrated way. Strauss and Corbin demonstrate Strauss's ideas on systematic coding in their book 'The Basics of Qualitative Research, (1990); these ideas were later disputed by Glaser. Nonetheless, the rationale behind using a coded system to document and identify themes in data has become embedded in qualitative research methodology.

The data gathered during this research project was analysed using grounded theory and the coding methodology was based on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) who looked at the development of a practical analysis framework. The origin of employing Braun and Clarke's rationale for data interpretation was purely academic interest in their methodological system. From studying their system, I also believed that it was one which I would be able to employ

effectively. Other researchers (Cassell et al 2005, Bryman, 1988) have noted the difficulty of effectively quantifying qualitative data. I believed that by basing my data analysis on Braun and Clarke's thematic approach which codifies data, the thematic analysis method would help to identify and highlight patterns or themes within the qualitative data that I had gathered during this research study. Another benefit of using a thematic approach was that it offered a more flexible process for analysing qualitative data; this was appropriate as I had accumulated an interesting variety of data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that the approach gives researchers 'theoretical freedom' and offers a method that 'can potentially provide a rich and detailed yet complex account of data.' (2006, p.78).

The approach I used therefore was related to reading and re-reading the data to enable me to familiarise myself completely with the content and begin to identify any regular or reoccurring experiences and reflections that the ITT students had whilst carrying out the SMT programme activities. These regular or reoccurring patterns were then organised into themes as Table 3.5. below shows:

Table 3.5. Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system used to analyse data gathered

Numerical code	Perceived Themes	Colour code	No. of references to themes
1	Student reflection / reflective practice evident		
2	Student Knowledge / Student confidence		
3	Teaching and Pedagogy		
4	Student's professional judgements / perceptions of children's PSD/WB/EL		
5	Perceived improvements to professional practice / growth as a professional		

These themes were designed to give an overall view of the way that the students responded, engaged and reflected in relation to the SMT programme.

The eventual outcome of this method of data analysis was therefore to identify themes which were related to the students' reflective practice skills and knowledge and adaptation of these skills; also, PSD/WB/EL skills and knowledge which were transferred into their day to day teaching pedagogy whilst on teaching placement. By identifying and reflecting on these themes I was then able to ascertain issues such as student knowledge, application of knowledge and reflective practice. I have described and reflected upon how GTM was used to analyse the data in more detail in Chapter 4.

A large volume of data was gathered by both groups of students over the two placements. I decided that I would use a variety of data generated from the students and this evidence would form the main focus of analysis. I did find however, that the PGCE students were more organised and committed to gathering the data than the BA students. Also, the PGCE students seemed to take the data gathering on board as an integral part of their practice, the BA students did seem to view data gathering as an additional work load. This dynamic will be explored further in the results and analysis section. Examples of the data gathered from the students were:

- Field notes from observing students in practice
- Analysis and evaluation of student planning for the session concerned, students reflective diaries, student observations on children in their placement setting
- Analysis and evaluation of student work whilst on teaching practice such as displays or whole class activities relating to PSD/WB/EL which were additional or complementary to the 'Special Me Time' programme.
- Analysis and evaluation of any work products the students submitted, for example assignments
- Interviews and questionnaires given to students during and following 'Special Me Time'

The selection criteria for this data was complicated, as the students were undertaking a variety of activities as part of their placements and students would be teaching the sessions which were the basis of SMT in their own individual ways, thus generating different data e.g. work products. I believed that all the types of data were relevant to this research and would give me a clear picture of a number of issues. Therefore, I envisaged that the data would have relevance, scope and cover my topic and give me a depth of detail and background information.

I was aware that ethical issues needed to be adhered to; this was especially pertinent as some of the data was gathered from students' direct dealings with young children, e.g. work products. As student involvement in the programme was considered to be an indication of their willingness to take part in the programme, I assumed that this meant they had consented freely to taking part. I assured students that confidentiality and anonymity would be of paramount importance to the project, and as previously discussed, neither student names or school names would be referred to. Throughout the data collection process, I was mindful of questions posed by Kirby et al. (2006) relating to my expectations, what I expected to find, what benefits I believed I would gain and whether there were any risks to participants. I also had responsibilities to my students, ensuring their well-being on the programme, especially in light of their already heavy workload. By bearing these questions in mind, I was able to focus more clearly on the data gathered. Further detail on this process is in the results section.

3.14. Research Tools

Baseline assessment sheet

In relation to this research as detailed above, I devised an EL and PSD/WB baseline assessment sheet (Appendix 7). This was based on an original assessment model devised by

Laevers (1997), who documented how to assess children's well-being and involvement in the Early Years setting. The baseline sheet was designed for students' use in observing and assessing young children's EL and PSD/WB but the main aim was for students to use it as a guide in their teaching practice. The rationale behind the sheet was that it could be adapted to be used within the students' own specifications. The sheet was designed so that students could colour in the heart shaped sections on the sheet, to record initial competencies at the beginning of the SMT programme, relating to a particular child and then again at the end of the end of the SMT programme. Each sheet was designed to cover the six week period of the placement (SMT programme).

The sheet also featured various EL 'competencies' with boxes with spaces to enable the students to enter brief notes in relation to the child being observed. The sheet was designed to be used in tandem with the WG Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7 year olds in Wales (2008). The PSD/WB assessment sheet reflects the key areas of the framework. Skills covered in this area relate to perceived 'competencies' in Personal Development, Social Development, Moral and Spiritual Development and Well- Being.

The sheet was divided into four areas: Personal Development, Social Development, Moral and Spiritual Development and Well Being. The 'hearts' on the sheet represent these four areas. Students were asked to colour in a heart if they found a child was competent in that area. If they found that the child was 'working towards' a certain area, the students were advised to colour in half of the heart and date this. The sheet was designed to be completed twice, thus giving a much more comprehensive picture of that child's EL and PSD / WB. The grid in the middle of the sheet was based on ideas by Goleman (1995, 1998) and his original five competencies of emotional intelligence.

By completing the section ‘competencies of Emotional Literacy’ it was hoped that students would begin to be able to see a comprehensive picture of the child’s level of engagement in a specific area such as empathy or social skills. It was however recognised by myself and the students that this is a difficult area to assess with real confidence. Students therefore were gauging ideas or looking at an overview of the children’s competencies in this area.

The sheets were designed to be completed by the students as set out above. However, on completion of the SMT programme, I would then analyse the comments and findings in order to develop an understanding of the way in which the students had assessed the children in their placement school class or in relation to their PSD/WB and EL and especially as noted above, in relation to children’s levels of engagement in tasks on the SMT programme.

Student assessment / lesson evaluation file

Students were also asked to set up an assessment file for each child in the class. This file could hold copies of the three PSD/WB/EL assessments along with a range of other material, such as: photographic evidence (which was subject to ethical considerations); reflective diary pages; copies of achievement awards; documentary evidence of awards e.g. from other staff; evidence of collaborative work and notes / information about friendships, preferences, likes and dislikes. The files were designed to hold material which would show a cumulative picture of the child in relation to aspects relating to PSD/WB/EL.

Once students had carried out observations in the Foundation Phase setting, planning for future learning and development they were equipped to begin planning for young children’s EL and PSD/WB. By putting PSD/WB at the heart of the Foundation Phase, the WG lay out

their strategy in the Foundation Phase framework document (2008) whereby they state that ‘Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity is at the heart of the Foundation Phase and children’s skills are developed across all Areas of Learning’ (2008, p.15) The WG also set out their commitment to PSD/WB in the Personal and Social Education framework for 7 to 19 year olds in Wales (2008), stating that Personal and Social education should form ‘part of the basic curriculum for all registered pupils aged 7 to 16 at maintained schools’ (2003, p.3). The documentation sets out guidelines for schools and that schools need to develop policies to ensure personal and social education occurs as a matter of course within the school curriculum and is indeed part of the whole school ethos. The WG have in effect laid down the gauntlet and challenged pedagogic practice in this respect. Foundation Phase practitioners must rise to this challenge and not just pay ‘lip service’ to PSD/WB but ensure that, as well as supporting young children’s PSD / WB in an holistic way across the Foundation Phase Framework, planning is effective, along with comprehensive sessions that will develop and build young children’s competencies in this area. The SMT programme has been designed with these ideas in mind and should be seen as a complementary approach to the PSD/WB/EL developments occurring in school settings. Students were also made aware that they could support children’s PSD/WB/EL holistically across the curriculum e.g. supporting children’s self esteem, helping children to reach targets and goals, modelling positive behaviour and not just in specific SMT activities.

The students’ files were designed to hold a wealth of evaluative material relating to the SMT programme. I gathered samples of student planning, evaluations and any children’s work that the students had placed in these files to use for reflection and evaluation relating to student participation on the SMT programme. From analysis of this material, I was able to gain an insight into the way that students had engaged with the SMT programme and their findings

about children's learning relating to PSD/WB and EL whilst involved with the SMT activities.

Observations of students whilst on placement / Interviews with students

I aimed to visit each student at least once whilst they were on placement. The purpose of the visit was to observe the student undertaking the SMT programme activities. By observing the student in the school setting I was able to obtain a clear picture of how the student was interpreting the SMT programme materials, how they facilitated the session and ultimately how they engaged with the children. I was also keen to ensure that I reflected on my research aims. In this case, mindful of research aim 2, I was keen to find out whether students were using knowledge gained through taught sessions in the School of Education. The next step was then to ascertain, if they were then using that knowledge to facilitate and assess the PSD/WB /EL of the children in their placement school, whilst using the SMT programme as a vehicle to do so.

On completion of each round of the SMT programme (placements 1 and 2), I carried out semi structured interviews with the students in the form of exit interviews. This was to ascertain their findings relating to the programme and to use this information to gauge their progress and knowledge in relation to teaching the SMT programme and in relation to knowledge of PSD/WB/EL.

Reflective diary / Reflective practice

Students were asked to complete a reflective diary. In this diary they were able to record findings and jot down ideas or record any relevant aspects of their practice, relating to

PSD/WB/ EL. The reflective diary was designed to be used on an informal basis and the rationale behind it was that students should record their own thoughts, rather than more formal observations about children as those were meant to be recorded on the session evaluation sheets. As Allin and Turnock (2007, p.2) suggested, reflective diaries should be used to record 'thoughts, feelings and opinions rather than merely the factual events of the day'.

The aim of providing the students with reflective diaries was to gain an insight into their thinking on pedagogy relating to PSD/WB and EL and their reflections on how they were performing as teachers whilst facilitating the SMT programme. I also hoped to gain an insight into their thoughts on assessment, or particular children's capabilities, strengths and weaknesses in relation to PSD/WB/EL competencies.

I believed it very pertinent to include aspects of reflective practice in this study and consider it to be an effective research tool. The students were equipped with a reflective diary, which was a tool for their use. As discussed previously, the premise of the reflective diary was that students would record their thoughts and reflections on their practice in the diary. Reflective practice according to Bolton (2005), allows us the flexibility 'to come to terms with [our] powerful emotions [and] learn from... mistakes and successes' (2005, p.9). Reflective practice allows thinking time and space to explore feeling and understanding across the boundary between professional practice and the wider outside world.

The ITT students who took part in 'Special Me Time' were working with young children during their school experience. Young children are essentially social beings, who are a direct product of their unique social and cultural backgrounds. Perhaps, by reflecting on our

narratives as Bolton suggested, it would become clear that they are no less important for being ordinary 'everyday stories'. The students had the privilege of becoming part of young children's lives for the duration of their placement. During this time, according to Bolton (2005), they would become 'data banks of skill, knowledge and experience: much of our knowing is in our doing' and that the development of practice is made possible 'because the outcomes of reflection are taken back into practice, improving and developing it' (2005, p.13).

I envisaged that the reflective diaries would form a sound basis for reflection and work and act as a springboard for further learning. They were also designed to give a 'pen picture' of the students' ideas, hopes and fears and scenarios that they found themselves in, both personally and professionally. The reflective diary was also designed to be an informal assessment tool; students would detail observations and reflections from their everyday work with children. These reflections could then be used for formative assessments if required. Students were encouraged to use the diaries and to record their thoughts on how sessions had been implemented or how particular children responded to certain teaching strategies.

The reflective process is viewed by Judge et al (1998, p.48) as 'a means of learning'. Goodfellow (2004) found that the development of a reflective diary 'displays professional thinking and research of that practice' (2004, p.66). Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2007) agreed and suggested that it provided a process for examination and reflection through the 'unfolding' of understanding about teaching and learning. The process of professional portfolio development (including a reflective diary) may also be considered to be a 'powerful technique in assisting the professional to attain skills of critical thinking' (Matthews-Smith et al, 2001, p.79). Reflective practice techniques of exploration and questioning are invaluable

to the social research dynamic, and can help to establish bridges between these two areas. Reflective practice can also help to integrate the growing technical expertise of the student teacher, with the professional, personal and emotional qualities of the individual.

Action research with aspects of reflective practice, formed the basic tools of the research and facilitated reflective enquiry. Reflective practice is in essence, the process of examining our everyday work / actions, feelings, interpretations and judgements from the perspective of an external observer. It is particularly necessary to do this when researching one's own work area. It is easy to become too closely enmeshed in everyday practice and unable to view the 'wider picture'. Reflective practice as Dewey (1933, p.29) put it, is 'An active desire to listen to more sides than one, to give heed to facts from whatever source they come, to give full attention to alternative possibilities'. It is crucial therefore, when looking at professional practice, that the practitioner is able to differentiate 'the wood from the trees'. It is easy to become caught up with the minutiae of details without looking out at bigger aspects which may have a bearing on forthcoming events.

I especially identify with the idea of 'double loop learning'. Argyris (1982) proposes that this is a reflective phase, where new things become evident through enquiry, which then leads to a paradigm shift in ideas, or 'emergent knowing' or the beginning of a 'light bulb moment.' Figure 3.2. below looks at the learning and reflection that may have taken place for students on the 'Special Me Time' programme.

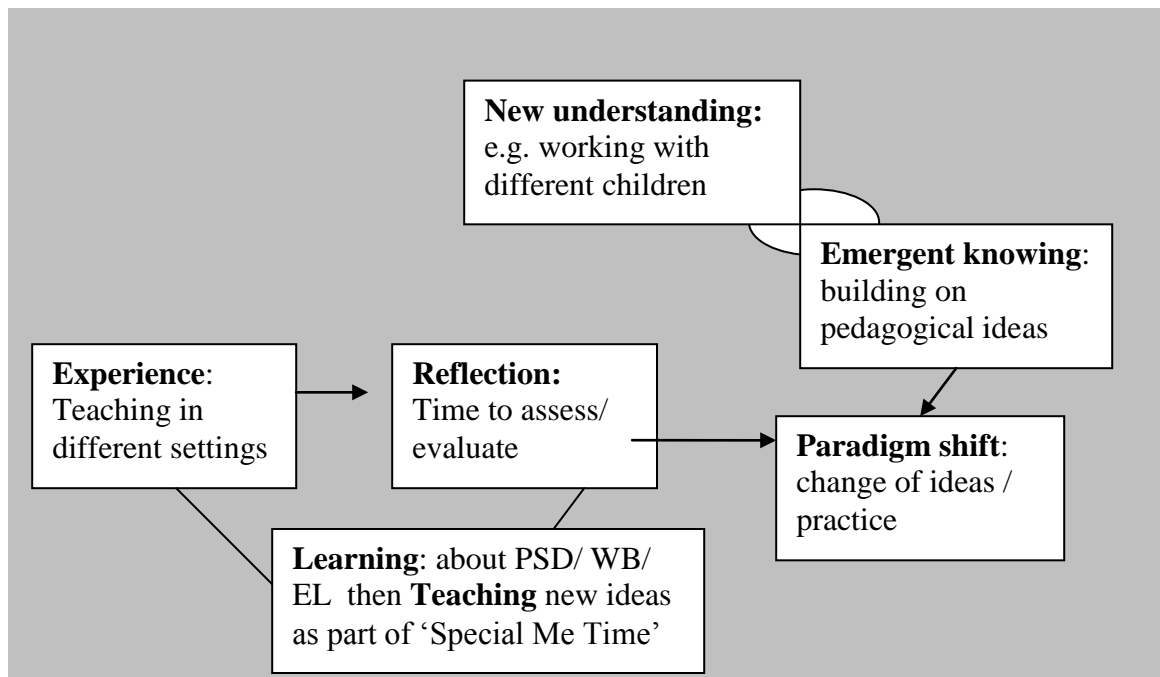


Figure 3.6. Double loop learning – based on Argyris (1982)

Dewey (1933) advocated that researchers should take a ‘reflective pose’ when carrying out research. This is what I aimed to do. Dewey’s ideas on reflection maintain that the researcher engages with and builds on that learning. This research informed my practice and that of the students in the research groups. Table 3.5. below details my thought process further. I found the process of developing this table to be a particularly useful reflective process. Setting out ideas in this format, gave me a clear idea and was useful in relation to being mindful of the ‘big picture’.

Table 3.7. ‘Reflective pose’ – based on Dewey (1933)

What I am going to do (action) →	<p>I am aware of MacNaughton and Hughes’ (2008) ideas on action research, in that I have chosen to change an aspect of my own teaching practice. MacNaughton and Hughes, described action research is “a cyclical process of ‘think – do - think’ to research and create change”. (p.1) Therefore I :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessed student knowledge in relation to PSD/WB/EL. • Reviewed my teaching of PSD/WB/EL. • Looked at how to support students understanding and pedagogy in this process in light of developments relating to WG Foundation Phase. • Looked at how to support student’s well-being and Emotional Literacy. • Helped students to assess young children’s PSD/WB and EL and facilitate effective teaching strategies in this area – using the ‘Special Me Time’ programme materials.
Rationale for action? →	<p>The Welsh Government has highlighted the importance of sound social and emotional development in young children. WG state the PSD/WB “is the necessary context for all other curriculum learning to take place” (2007, p11).</p> <p>Therefore, this research project reflected on current developments and good practice in the area of PSD/WB and EL</p>
Timescale for action →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research period began in June 2007 and culminated in analysing and reflecting on the research findings and then writing up the EdD dissertation in June 2011. • Initial research findings impacted on my teaching pedagogy in relation to the PGCE IPD Foundation cohort for September 2009. • A presentation of a series of ‘Thinking outside the box’ sessions relating to PSD/WB and EL was offered to all PGCE ITT students in February / March 2010. Then May 2011.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of PSD/WB/EL pedagogy for all ITT students from September 2010. • Presentation of a paper relating to my research at the BERA conference in Warwick September 2010
With whom? →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGCE IPD Foundation Phase Students • BA Primary QTS Year three Foundation Phase students. (BA primary ceased delivery in the School of Education from July 2011.) • Children in Foundation Phase primary schools via Students as above • School staff • School of Education staff team.
Form of data →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations of students / placement visits • Reflective diaries – undertaken by students / myself • Students carrying out ‘Special Me Time’ activities in schools – evaluations of these activities • Baseline data from partner schools / Observation and assessment • Interviews with students / school staff • Student work products in the form of assignments, displays / children’s work etc. in placement school.
Rationale for analysis of data / Use of Grounded Theory Method →	<p>Looking at what did and didn’t change since the project began. Research findings are evidence of this process. I was heartened by the advice of MacNaughton and Hughes (2008, p.215) who wrote encouragingly “you can never revert to how you thought and acted at the start of your project...it’s possible that while your project didn’t change your circumstances, it generated new questions about them”.</p> <p>This was good advice. I aimed to use any data to look at the ‘big picture’ as well as what I immediately found out about my pedagogy.</p> <p>I was also aware of the use of qualitative analysis during this research study, which is</p>

	a process according to Corbin et al (2008, p.1) ‘of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge’. The use of grounded theory as a method of data analysis, strengthened this study and enabled theoretical constructs to be derived from the qualitative analysis of the data effectively.
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I also aimed to employ reflection based on the ideas of Schon (1983, 1987) such as ‘reflection on action’ (on the spot experimentation). This occurs while something is happening. When observing students in a school setting, one may never quite be sure what may occur next. It is also vital to review and deconstruct research undertaken, therefore ‘reflection on action’ which focuses on what happened after the event is also very important.

As I was teaching each group of students on a regular basis, I was able to use teaching opportunities to meet up or have interviews with students within the School of Education. I used this time to monitor their progress and offer help and support if they needed it in relation to their activities on the ‘Special Me Time’ programme.

3.15. Evaluation of Methodology

The research aim was to employ rigorous research methods to ensure a high quality of academic rigour. However, possible areas for development in relation to this methodology could include the following:

More targeted questionnaires – the use of questionnaires to ascertain the thoughts of specific individuals. Questionnaires are one of the most popular research techniques. However, Gillham (2008) warned that using questionnaires often proves challenging to the researcher. He stressed that composing a question that will enable you to fully answer your query can be

difficult. I found this to be the case, in a number of situations, often pre-empting what I thought would be the answer a student would give me in an interview situation.

Focus group feedback – I had originally intended to conduct a focus group as there are some advantages to using focus groups. Johnson and Christensen (2008) discussed how focus groups are more likely to stimulate discussion. However, one disadvantage of the method could include domination of the group by an individual or individuals. I found that limits on student time and my time, meant that this method of obtaining research data did not occur. In hindsight, this might have generated rich data and opinions/ideas.

Bias - as the researcher, I admit that I was immersed in the Foundation Phase ethos relating to the benefits of developing children's Personal and Social Development and Emotional Literacy and of the discipline of employing reflective practice. I feel passionate about developing ITT students' ideas on the 'holistic' aspects of teaching young children and the importance of developing young children's PSD/WB and EL. I found little research which disproved the worthiness of these concepts. I aimed however, to present this methodology and in effect all academic writing relating to this research project, in an unbiased, reflective professional manner as possible at all times.

I believe also, that it is pertinent to end this methodology chapter on a reflective note, since reflective practice has been a key theme during the research process. I agree with Hinett (2002) who believed learning was 'developmental'. The next chapter will address some of the learning that I have achieved and aims to 'make sense' of the information gathered during the research process. It is important in the reflective cycle to integrate knowledge gained into an existing framework (my professional practice). By developing and refining this process, I

aim to make informed choices about what to do next and how to develop my own understanding of the research that occurred. By making sense of the research, I will be able to plan for future teaching and learning, which I will develop within the School of Education.

The learning journey will continue long after this research project has been completed. Learning should involve experiences which transform your thinking and provide the researcher with plenty of food for thought. My learning journey which I embarked on during the course of this research, has also led me many times to remember the words of Confucius (551-479 BCE) 'by three methods we may learn wisdom: first by reflection which is the noblest, second by imitation, which is the easiest and third by experience which is the most bitter'. I have certainly encountered all three of these concepts during the course of this research. However, I have been mindful of the fact that reflection is the best course of action in a research project and would also add that I have used this reflective thought process often and as Canning and Callan (2010) pointed out 'reflection' on experience or experiences, should be an integral part of the working patterns and processes, and part of a professional's everyday work remit. By employing reflective practice and embarking on reflection, I found that it enabled me to re-visit and refine strategies and techniques in order to develop and improve professional practice, which was a central aim of this research. This was especially pertinent whilst carrying out work for this methodology chapter.

My concluding thought for this chapter is based on the premise highlighted by Reed and Canning (2010, p.17) that 'the accommodation of different perspectives, can be an emotional as well as an intellectual experience.' In essence it is pertinent as a researcher to be open minded and responsive to learning. There can be many answers to the same question and

searching for one right answer may limit new and dynamic ways of thinking. The results and analysis chapter of this research continues to explore, reflect and expand on these themes.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

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Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

As discussed in previous chapters, the area of PSD/WB/EL is very relevant to my professional role within the School of Education. Sound PSD/WB/EL skills are the bedrock for young children's future school and life experiences. As Foundation Phase practitioners, ITT students need to be aware that they have the privilege of implementing systems and ideas within pedagogical methods that can have long lasting influences on young children. As Whalley et al. (2004, p.69) stated: 'each child's emotional well-being is the foundation on which their education is built'.

In my professional capacity I also believe it is important to carry out research. I consider myself to be a reflective practitioner, so it follows that I should embark on a study that investigates this area and also focuses on the reflective practice of my students. My professional interest in a relevant area such as emotional literacy is also a factor. McNamara (2002, p.31) pointed out 'There is a need for wider perspectives beyond the school, and for critical reflection and evaluation, engagement with thinking, literature and other studies'.

Therefore, through embarking on this research, it ultimately enhanced my professional development, reflective practice and ultimately that of students in the School of Education. There was also a potential for the children that the students taught whilst on their placements to benefit as a result of this process. This research study amongst other things, explored the two- way process of teaching and learning. It followed the training journey of a group of ITT students and focused on their development during the course of a training year. It was important for me to stress my understanding of what Reid (2011, p.293) termed 'how education gets done in the world' the realisation that there are constructs and processes that

have to be upheld and engaged with, time constraints and differences in placement experiences just being two examples.

This knowledge enabled me to prepare the ITT students to become new teachers, by facilitating their knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and supporting their reflective practice. I was developing their and my own understanding of how teaching works, on both the mind and the body (Reid, 2011).

Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2004) suggested a significant issue for teacher educators was that student teachers had to progress in the professional practice through stages from novice / beginner at the early stages, allowing professional development to take place in the school setting. The personal growth of the student will thus develop from beginner to expert over a period of time and experience. The process from novice teacher to expert according to Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2004) takes 5 years.

The ITT students involved in this study were observed during the course of one training year. One of the findings of this research was that although the students did partake in reflection and reflective practice, they did not always do so to a significant extent. It was also pertinent to note that the students' reflections were often 'on the surface' of their practice. By that I mean, they reflected and identified issues, but did not always follow these through and implement soundly into their teaching pedagogy. There was evidence that the students were reflecting, but not then necessarily using their reflections to improve their teaching pedagogy as a result. They were also reluctant in some cases, to credit any achievements the children made as a result of taking part in the 'Special Me Time' programme' to their own teaching competencies. I believe this was because they were, as Green (2009) discovered, pre-

occupied with mastering the basic core principles of the teaching and learning process. As a result of this pre-occupation and focus, it inhibited ‘deep’ reflection and consideration of the ‘bigger’ teaching picture. According to Reid (2011), students were thinking less about the effects their teaching had on young children’s learning (in the case of this study children’s PSD/WB/EL) and more about its implementation. These ideas will be engaged with further during the course of this chapter.

4.2. Ascertaining Student Knowledge

From undertaking initial research as part of my everyday teaching and assessment of students, I discovered that there was a shortfall in knowledge relating to aspects of PSD/WB/EL in the ITT students that I was teaching on the PGCE primary programmes and the BA QTS. Therefore, I needed to investigate how best to equip ITT students with the knowledge and skills to facilitate the ‘Special Me Time’ programme. Therefore, I embarked on ascertaining their initial knowledge base. I therefore undertook some initial audits (Appendices 2 and 3) on groups of students, to ascertain knowledge and understanding of the concepts relating to PSD/WB/EL. I carried out the audits on 43 BA primary QTS students in October 2006: year 2 (33 students) and year 3 (10 students). The year 2 students would go on to become my Foundation Phase cohort in the subsequent September (September 2007). Students were either confused in relation to what PSD/WB/EL was or were unsure about how to teach and facilitate within these areas. They were also unsure of how to implement PSD/WB/EL strategies or approaches in relation to their use, execution and pertinence to Foundation Phase pedagogy.

In the first week of their programme (September 2007), I gave the new PGCE cohort a short presentation on my proposed research relating to PD/WB and EL. I then gave them a similar

questionnaire to the one that I had given to the BA cohorts (Appendices 1 and 2). As this was early in their programme, I kept the questionnaire more general and not as related to the Foundation Phase curriculum since I assumed they would have less knowledge relating to specific curriculum issues. The questionnaire was designed to ascertain if the PGCE students had any prior knowledge about PSD/WB and EL. I also asked if any students had an interest in the area and whether any of them would like to join the research programme. These questionnaires gave me a good insight into the students' thinking and reflection relating to this area. The results of both surveys are outlined below, beginning with the BA primary students.

4.3. Analysis of Questionnaires given to BA Primary Year 2 and 3 – Knowledge of Concepts

I asked the students a number of questions (questionnaire at Appendix 2) to ascertain their understanding of concepts as follows:

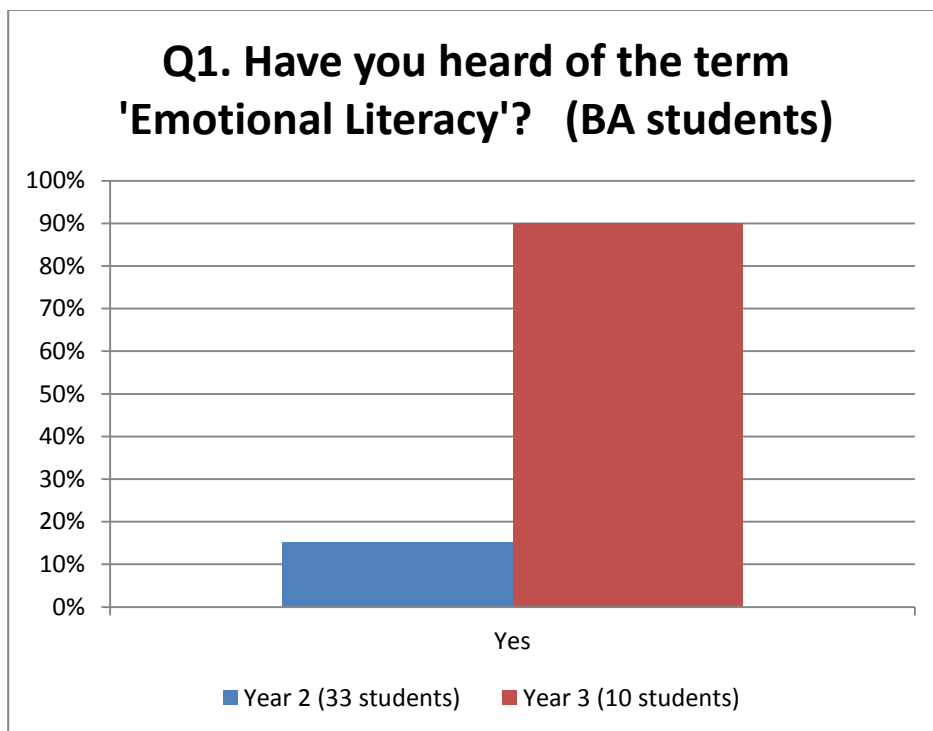


Figure 4.1. Question 1 to BA Students

There was clearly a greater awareness of the term ‘Emotional Literacy’ amongst the year 3 students which was, on reflection, in line with expectations as at the time I was teaching them on their third year early childhood module.

There was a very low awareness (15%) of the term EL amongst the Year 2 students who I had not taught but this was also to be expected. They had a year’s less experience and were only likely to have become aware of the term through their wider studies and proactive research beyond the minimum requirement. It was disappointing to note that the students had not researched more widely. It was evident that the students were neither engaging with current developments in the educational press nor environmental scanning of research being conducted, or in relation to the wider PSD/WB/EL agenda.

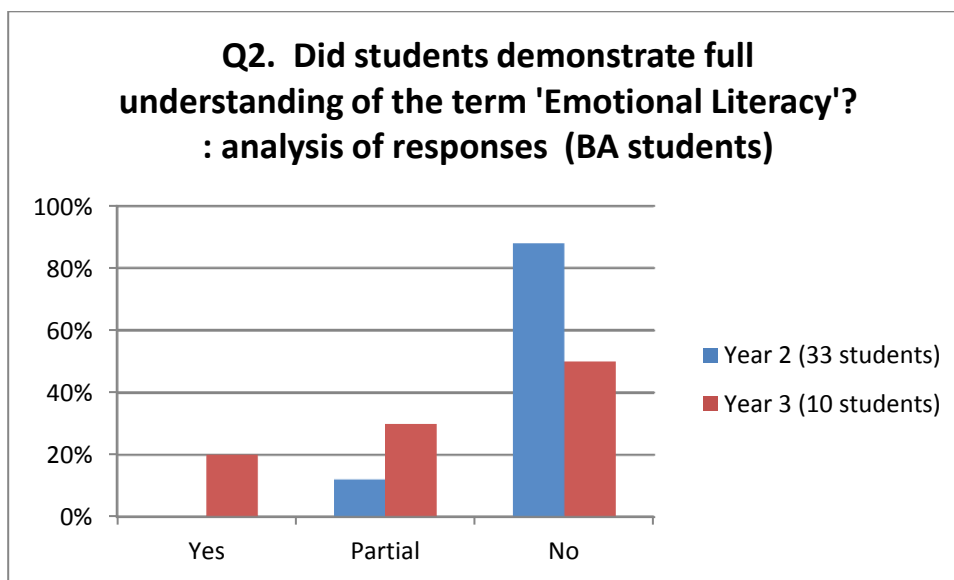


Figure 4.2. Question 2 to BA students

Responses to this question clearly follow on from Q1 in that if you have not heard of the term EL, you cannot have a thorough understanding of it but could perhaps deduce an outline

definition. I analysed the student's responses to this question and I categorised them (see Figure 4.2) as:

Yes = full understanding of the term

No = no understanding of the term

Partial = some understanding of the term

Even though 9 out of the 10 Year 3 students had heard of the term Emotional Literacy, I ascertained that only two considered that they understood the term and only half had any level of understanding. It was evident that the students were not engaging sufficiently, in relation to reflective practice during their general studies on the programme. This highlighted to me a seminal point in this research, namely, that I must ensure in future that students are given tools to enable them to become more pro-active and reflective in their studies. It was not sufficient for student teachers to attend lectures, plan lessons and write assignments without the means to be able to reflect and engage with this process. They should not merely view it as a means to an end i.e. qualified teacher status (QTS). Guidance from the WG supports this point: in 'Becoming a Qualified Teacher: Handbook of guidance' the WG detail under standard S1.7 Professional development, that in order 'to teach effectively, teachers need to have the capacity and commitment to analyse and reflect on their own practice and to improve it throughout their careers through professional development and engagement with new knowledge and ideas' (DCELLS/WAG 2009, p.23) The nub of this matter, is that ITT training institutions must ensure that students are taught the skills to become reflective practitioners and are empowered to have a thirst for knowledge and reflection and are not just passive recipients of knowledge. Students need to be able to link information that they have been told to information that they have researched to enable them to build a 'bigger picture' and then

transform these ideas into practice. Basically, as a teacher educator, I needed to ensure that students engaged, reflected and converted theory into practice. This should not be a static process, and so I needed to reflect on how I could enable students to become active participants in their learning, becoming ‘doers’ rather than receivers.

As I have stated previously, reflective practice and the engagement with the reflective process has been an integral part of this research process. Chinn and Kramer (1999) discussed their ideas relating to ‘personal knowing’ which is the method whereby you reflect on your role within a process. It is also the aspect of viewing yourself with regard to your relationships with others. In the students’ case this was reflecting on how they responded to / would respond to the young children they were working with and how they envisaged supporting a range of PSD/WB/EL competencies. As I will discuss later on in this chapter and in Chapter 5, this voyage of self reflection was often challenging.

As shown in Figure 4.2. above, the year 2 students had minimal understanding with only 12% having even partial understanding. This indicates that they similarly had not researched outside of the course materials and only the most proactive students had come across the terminology.

In the context of education in Wales, it was important to assess students’ familiarity with these areas in the Foundation Phase, as is shown in Figure 4.3 below:

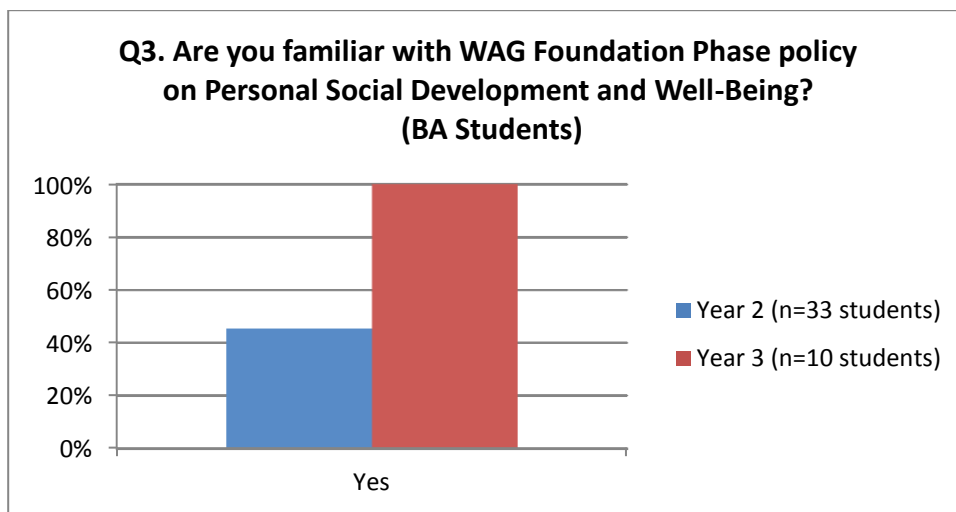


Figure 4.3. Question 3 to BA students

Question 3 above, was much less challenging as it is a core theme of current developments in the WAG Foundation Phase curriculum. All of the year 3 students were familiar with the WAG Foundation Phase curriculum documents as I expected given its core nature. Disappointingly though, less than half (45%) of the year 2 students were familiar, showing a lack of awareness of a basic concept. This reflected the answers to the first 2 questions where the year 2 students did not seem to have a good grounding in the subject.

I asked similar questions to the new PGCE cohort, omitting question 3 as I believed this was too Foundation Phase specific. These students had just begun the PGCE programme. I gave a short input on the SMT programme, to ascertain if any potential students would be interested in becoming volunteers on the project and gave them a questionnaire (questionnaire at Appendix 3) to ascertain their knowledge base relating to PSD/WB/EL.

4.4. Analysis of PGCE questionnaires

I asked the PGCE student cohort the following question – ‘Have you heard of the term ‘Emotional Literacy’? as detailed in Figure 4.4. below.

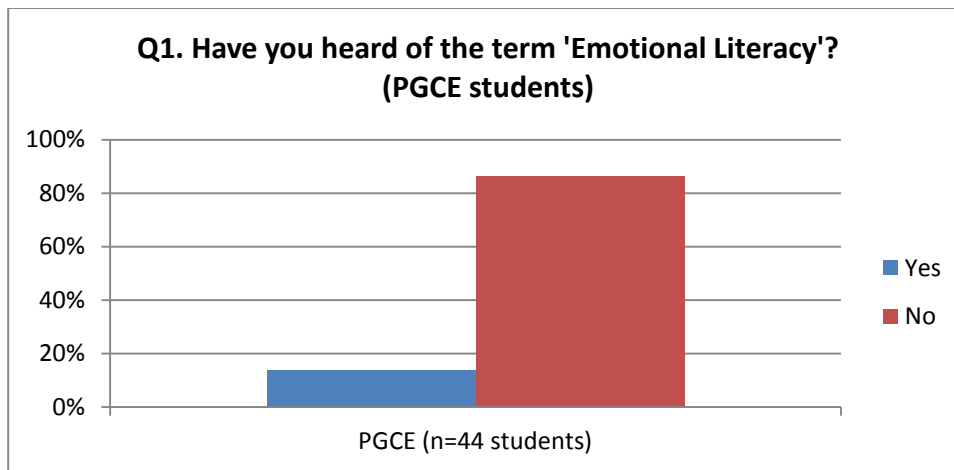


Figure 4.4. Question 1 to PGCE students

14% of the PGCE students had heard of EL, compared to 15% of the year 2 BA primary students. This was not a like for like comparison, as the students were on different courses, but it has some relevance as a comparison. My hypothesis in relation to this question was that the PGCE students would have had a greater life experience and therefore, be more able to identify and define this term. Some of the students had studied psychology at degree level for example, giving them more of an insight into social and emotional issues. It may have also been the case that some PGCE students came from non QTS educational studies programmes, thus may have had prior relevant knowledge.

However the results show that there was no apparent difference between the two groups in the proportion of students who were aware of the term EL.

Question 2 If answered yes to question 1, what do you understand by the term ‘Emotional Literacy’?

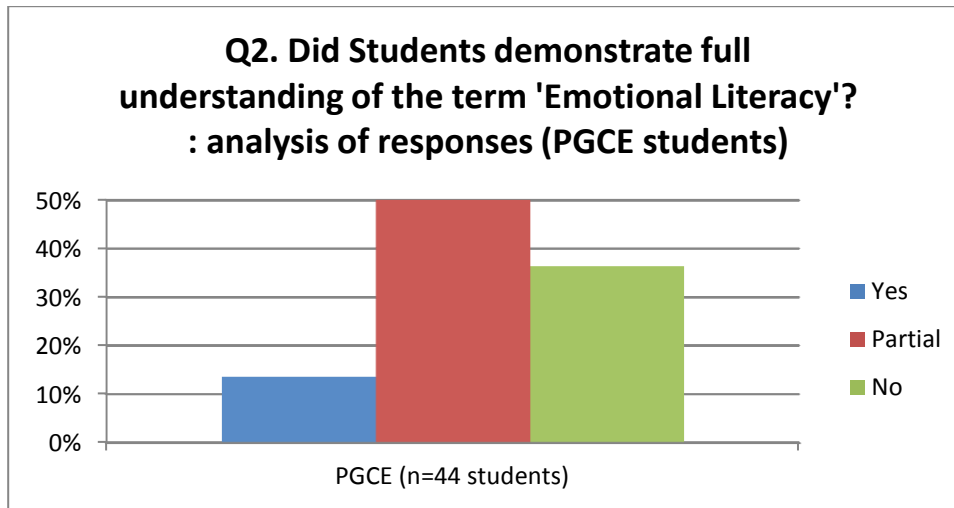


Figure 4.5. Question 2 to PGCE students

Figure 4.5 shows that 50% of PGCE students were able to give a partial explanation of what they thought emotional literacy meant even though they had said they had not heard of the term. In other words, they were more aware of the concept than they thought they were, or at least were able to conceptualise or deduce what it was to good effect. This was in contrast to the BA Primary year 2 students who had been poor in comparison with only 12% having even partial understanding of the term.

It became obvious from the results of these initial knowledge audits that I needed to rethink pedagogy and training issues for ITT students in light of the Foundation Phase and changes to current pedagogy within the School of Education. The audits suggested that in both groups of students there were significant numbers of students who did not understand the terms PSD/WB/EL. They also had gaps in knowledge in relation to facilitating and teaching PSD/WB/EL within the Foundation Phase setting. This made me realise that some kind of intervention was necessary to up-skill, inform and ultimately train the students I was responsible for.

I pondered over how to ensure that my new student cohorts from September 2007 (both PGCE and BA Primary year 3) would have the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to understand, facilitate and support young children's PSD/WB/EL. I decided to implement a targeted approach to this. I began by ensuring that I had a PSD/WB/EL focus within all teaching sessions. This meant in practice that I continued to reinforce concepts relating to PSD/WB/EL ensuring students' understanding of these areas.

A further part of this targeted approach, meant that I was enthusiastic to begin training students in the use of the SMT programme, as discussed in the last chapter. I wanted to include all students who were interested, but felt that if I carried out the SMT training with all Foundation Phase students (the whole cohort of PGCE and BA Primary year 3) that this would be too great a number of students to manage effectively. I believed it was preferable to carry out the programme with a smaller number of students, who were motivated to take part, then reflect on this process with a view to disseminating to greater numbers in the future. Out of 44 PGCE Foundation Phase students in the 2007/8 cohort, 8 students signed up for the SMT programme. Out of a possible 10 BA Primary students (that had opted to take early years studies as an optional module in year 3), 4 signed up for the SMT programme. Out of a possible 54 students I had 12 who were keen to embark on the SMT programme.

4.5. Student Cohorts involved in the SMT programme

As previously discussed, two cohorts of students were involved in the study:

- the BA Primary (Hons) with QTS year three 2007/8 (4 students)
- the PGCE Foundation Phase cohort 2007/8 (8 students)

For confidentiality purposes, the students were identified as student A, B etc. Both groups were initially very keen to participate in the ‘Special Me Time’ programme. Twelve students attended the initial ‘Special Me Time’ training day at a local golf club on 10th December 2007. The training day was designed to provide information on the programme and to equip students with the necessary skills and background to carry out the SMT programme effectively.

I was fortunate to have had some money allocated to me via the School of Education, which enabled me to hire a room in the local golf club. The training day was therefore undertaken in another environment, far removed from the university ‘classroom’. I found that as a result of the change in setting, the students accessed the training in a different way. Also, as the students had volunteered to be part of the programme and thus the training, I found during the day that the students were engaged and interested in the SMT programme. Evaluations of the day (see below) showed that it had been useful and worthwhile. From evaluation evidence I was aware that the students were now more knowledgeable in relation to PSD/WB/EL and keen to commence the SMT programme in their placement school. Evaluation evidence was as follows:

<p>‘Gave a new meaning to emotional literacy’</p> <p>‘I feel that I have a much clearer understanding of EL/PSD/WB’</p> <p>‘It was very informative and thought provoking...I am a lot more knowledgeable now’</p> <p>‘I feel well prepared after all the information and support given’</p> <p>‘Has expanded my knowledge considerably and has given me a wider interest in the topic’</p> <p>‘My professional understanding on Emotional literacy has been developed to the extent that I understand the concept and can use what I’ve learnt in the future.’</p>

Student evaluations of SMT training day 10.12.07

The students were aware that the setting of the training in the golf club was an exception to their previous experience and they were grateful for lunch provided 'the free lunch was a nice touch' (Student E 10.12.07) My original premise in asking for additional funding to hold the training day outside the typical university classroom was to give the students a different experience, and to nurture them to an extent with comfortable surroundings, green areas in which to walk and relax during breaks and a free lunch. The message I hoped to convey here was that their time and input were valuable to the SMT programme.

As the students began their teaching placements, however, it became evident that the PGCE students were more motivated and engaged with the programme, i.e. more motivated to participate and carry out the activities on placement. This was also obvious from the evaluations of the training day which was viewed as a treat and a day out 'Thanks for the opportunity to undertake this excellent day' (Student A, PGCE student). The BA Primary students were less impressed and did not appreciate that this was in effect a rare opportunity for students. A day out in a golf club along with lunch and refreshments seemed to mean less to them e.g. 'long time in the same room' (Student G, BA Primary year 3 student).

Differences in motivation for undertaking tasks may have been for a number of reasons. I taught the PGCE students each Friday (from September 2007 until the end of term June 2008) as part of their Initial Professional development (IPD) sessions. I therefore had a much greater level of interaction and a better relationship with them. During this time I also saw these students for their professional development as their personal tutor, and for completion of their professional development portfolios. The PGCE programme is a post graduate programme, this meant that all students were at least 21 years of age and thus I found that they had greater life experience. Two of the students, Student A and Student B, had been Learning Support

Assistants in school prior to commencing the PGCE and three of the students had children of their own: Student A, Student B and Student C. Student C had given as one of her reasons for joining the SMT programme, that she would be able to use some of the knowledge gained in relation to supporting her own child's PSD/WB/EL (interview with Student C 10.12.07). I found that the PGCE students were more engaged with the programme, supplying me with work products (e.g. photos) and information with minimal prompting from myself, providing me with in-depth lesson plans and entries in their reflective diaries. The BA students on the other hand, although initially keen to participate in the programme, produced poorer quality evidence of their interactions with children during the programme (see Table 4.6.). My contact time with this cohort was less, as I only taught them during a twelve week module: EdU356 – Early Childhood Specialism. I spent two hours per week with them over the twelve Mondays. The module ran from September 2007 – December 2007. Initially there were 4 volunteers in the BA cohort, but one of these dropped out fairly early on in the placement due to a family bereavement. Another BA student found her teaching practice to be extremely challenging and although keen to participate fully on the programme, found that embarking on the full range of 'Special Me Time' activities was too difficult for her. Therefore, only two BA students Student G and Student H completed placement 1 of 'Special Me Time'. No BA primary students participated in placement 2 of 'Special Me Time'.

When the BA ECS module was completed, my only contact with the BA students was via email, visits to placements and any personal contact which either they or I initiated. In effect, I spent much more of my time with the PGCE students (each Friday morning for two hours for the whole year) and this resulted in obtaining better quality research data from that cohort, to the detriment of the BA cohort. I built stronger professional and personal relationships with the PGCE group.

4.6. The SMT Programme – Implementation and methods of Academic Enquiry. Rationale for analysis of data

Below I have listed a number of methods used to gather information about SMT from student activities.

Table 4.6. Completion of tasks on ‘Special Me Time’ programme by BA students.

Initials of student	Reflective diary	Baseline assessments	Photos / work products	Planning / session evaluations	Other material
Student G	No	7 initial baselines taken but no final comparison	No	No	Literature review End of SMT exit interview Interview with Head teacher Assignment for education module
Student H	No	6	Yes	4 planners 4 assessments	End of SMT exit interview Interview with class teacher

There were 4 BA students initially, but two of them, Student I and Student J did not submit any work during the SMT programme. Consequently they are excluded from the analysis.

Table 4.7. Completion of tasks on ‘Special Me Time’ programme by PGCE students.

Student	Reflective diary	Baseline assessments	Photos / work products	Planning session / evaluations	Other material
Student A	No however, Student A did complete a reflective diary but mislaid it.	13	Yes	10 planners and evaluations Student B carried out SMT twice in two separate placements)	Session observation /Interview with SD End of SMT exit interview
Student B	Yes	18	No	(Student B carried out SMT twice in two separate placements) 12 planners 11 evaluations	Session Observation Evaluation sheet End of SMT exit interview
Student C	Yes	No	Yes	5 planning sheets. 5 assessments	Session observation – SD Interview with SD End of SMT exit interview
Student D	Yes	5	Yes	5 evaluations	Session observation -SD SMT evaluation sheet. End of SMT exit interview
Student E	No	12	No	4 evaluations	Session observation – SD End of SMT exit interview
Student F	Yes	6	Yes	13 (Student F carried out SMT twice in two separate placements) 2 evaluations	Session Observation - SD SMT Evaluation sheet End of SMT exit interview Interview with class teacher

These tables detail the work products / involvement of the two cohorts on the programme.

From this it is evident that the PGCE cohort were more motivated and engaged. Three of the PGCE students, Student A, Student B and Student F, when undertaking their second placement in the summer term (2008) volunteered to repeat the programme. These were the only students who did so.

Methods of analysis: emergent themes

The next stage consisted of organising the data set in preparation for analysis of results from a variety of data gathering methods. As discussed in Chapter 3 the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) Glaser and Strauss (1967) was adopted as part of this process. Comparisons of the data gathered were made as Charmaz (2006) advised between ‘incidents’ that occurred rather than word by word or line by line coding. This was pertinent in my case as the data set consisted of reflective diary notes, student evaluations and reflections amongst other items.

GTM was therefore employed as a systematic approach in order to sift, sort and analyse the copious volume of data which was generated as result of this study. GTM enabled me to have consistent interaction with data, while remaining constantly involved with my emerging analysis, Bryant et al (2010). As the reflective practice cycle emerged during the course of this research, the grounded theory approach, enabled data collection and analysis, as processes which ‘simultaneously informed and streamlined the other’ (Bryant et al. 2010, p.17).

I analysed the data using GTM and a thematic system which I had devised myself, as detailed in Chapter 3. This was based on the methods of Braun and Clarke (2006) who developed a system for coding data which I found a useful and logical approach, which was well suited to my study. I believed that by looking at how and when the student participants referred to

particular themes relating to the research, I would have a good insight into their thinking and reflections on practice. I assigned colour coded indicators to the data, which equated to the incidence and prevalence of each theme I identified in the data I collected. On the basis of these codings, I then aimed to classify and evidence themes relating to the SMT programme. Therefore, the process cumulated in an illustration of what the analysis had achieved. The various themes were grouped into 5 overall themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified that in thematic analysis the researcher needed to undertake systematic evaluation of data gathered as follows.

1. Familiarising yourself with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87).

It was important therefore, to recognise that analysis of qualitative data gathered needed careful scrutiny; recognising when and where patterns and themes were emerging and categorising these effectively. In essence, seeing an important or relevant pattern and encoding it before beginning to interpret it (Boyatzis, 1998). This was my intention and I ensured that I was meticulous in assigning coding to data gathered.

I was mindful of my research aims and as a result produced the grid shown at Table 4.8. This grid was formulated as a result of the following process and based on Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87).

Sorting and sifting and initial reading of the text:

I was aware that the thematic analysis of data should, if done properly, allow themes to emerge from the data, rather than searching for pre-defined themes. The themes listed in Table 4.8 were therefore generated from the data. I believed these themes were important and necessary to ensure a clear sense of the various topics embedded in the data.

Re-reading the text and annotating any findings /thoughts:

Close re-examination of the text was necessary to facilitate a micro analysis of the data. This second reading promoted and enabled me to identify any new information by de-contextualising bits of data embedded within the primary material. Primary material was data gathered from individual students as set out in Tables 4.6 and 4.7. As students submitted a variety of primary material, it was difficult to compare like for like e.g. a tally for 'reflective practice' across all reflective diaries, as not all students had submitted a reflective diary. Also, some of the material recorded in the reflective diary was often just a written description of what had occurred that day with little or no analysis, thus making it difficult to pick out themes to analyse.

Sorting items of interest into themes:

This was where themes began to emerge. I organised items relating to similar topics into themes. At this stage, I found it was important to keep the themes as simple as possible. The more themes generated, the more difficulty there was in categorising and analysing. An example of how themes were categorised is in appendix 14. Table 4.9 gives an example of the 5 point analysis coding in practice.

Reviewing the themes in the text carefully for relevant incidents:

This second process of trawling back through the data is also called axial coding (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). It involves re-contextualisation, whereby any data is now considered in terms of the themes developed through this analysis. Taking each theme separately and re-examining the original data for information relating to that theme is a vital stage in the analytic process. Relevant data could have been overlooked, without this scrutiny.

Defining and naming themes:

The name, definition and supporting data was re-examined at this stage in order to construct each theme, using all the material relating to it. This stage of re-contextualisation focused more closely upon the underlying meaning of each theme. This was especially pertinent with themes which were more difficult to quantify, for example ‘perceptions’.

Concluding and reporting on each theme:

Once the themes were finalized, the name of each theme was put into a grid and I used this to assign data collected to a specific theme. I described the event and illustrated it with some quotations from the original text to help communicate its meaning. The end product gave me a clearer idea of how the students had engaged with the SMT programme, their pedagogical knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and their engagement with reflective practice. An example of Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system is detailed below:

Table 4.8. The 5 main themes in thematic analysis of students' engagement with SMT programme / knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice – Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system

Numerical code	Perceived themes	Colour code	Number of references to themes
1	Student reflection / reflective practice evident		
2	Student Knowledge / Student confidence		
3	Teaching and Pedagogy		
4	Student's professional judgements / perceptions of children's PSD/WB/EL		
5	Perceived improvements to professional practice / growth as a professional		

The next stage of the process, once the 5 main themes had emerged was to use these themes to analyse data gathered. This was completed for each student. As discussed in Chapter 3 the students produced a range of data in the form of work products such as session evaluations, and baselines. Not all students produced full reflective diaries but reflection was evident in evaluations or other written material. As the students did not uniformly collect reflective evidence, some produced more detailed and reflective findings than others. For example, whilst being mindful of my 5 point analysis system model, I believed that the best way forward in data analysis was to look at each student and their work products individually. Data analysis was undertaken using the 5 main themes for each individual student and then reported on individually (see example at Table 4.9.) By doing so, I was able to gather a picture which I believe demonstrated each individual student's knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice. I was also able to put the data which I had gathered together to form a clearer idea of the skill set and reflective practice of the ITT cohort overall.

At Table 4.9 below I have given an example of how I coded data and was able to use this. In the example below I show how a small part of Student D's lesson evaluation on 20.02.08 related to themes in my 5 point analysis system.

Table 4.9 Example of Davis (2012) 5 point analysis system approach applied to student

Student	Type of data e.g. reflective diary, lesson evaluation	Student response	Perceived theme	Coding
Student D	Lesson evaluation 20.02.08	JB was very uncooperative today.	Teaching and pedagogy	3
		Thought it was best not to challenge him.	Reflection	1
		Will ensure that I sit him next to me on the carpet next time and encourage him to join in earlier.	PSD/WB/EL	4

Difficulties found in categorising and generating data

The main difficulty I found in categorising the data was that some of the themes could be substituted for others. In the example above at Table 4.9 the themes I had assigned to the events could have easily been reassigned or doubled up. For example, I could have assigned 'Thought it was best not to challenge him' to teaching and pedagogy and student confidence could have been related to 'will ensure that I sit him next to me on the carpet'. This was a conundrum over which I pondered for a long time. I finally decided that it was pertinent to go with a 'best fit approach' i.e. the first category I had assigned the data event to, was probably the most appropriate. I recognised that there were pitfalls in using the thematic analysis

approach as all methods of research may have their limitations. I recognised that there were difficulties in coding and assigning data to codes and as Braun and Clarke (2006) state these problems can occur if the researcher fails to fully analyse the data. It was not enough to simply collect the data then paraphrase snippets from it, it was important to illustrate what Braun and Clarke term 'analytic points' (2006, p.94). I aimed to adhere to this advice.

Another issue relating to student reflection was that there was a lack of deep reflection i.e. when a student had said something such as 'I think' or 'thought' as in this case. This showed that reflection was taking place, but mostly, the students did not qualify this statement or take their reflective thinking further, or relate reflective findings to future practice. I have termed this 'shallow reflection' meaning the students were reflecting, but not always fully continuing the reflective cycle by acting upon that finding. The students were not as McGregor and Cartwright (2011) wrote, engaging in 'deeper' reflection, they weren't 'deepening thinking to develop reflexivity' (2011, p.236). The students were not using the 'what', and 'why' of the situation and then exploring new strategies. Categorically, as Moore (2004) pointed out reflective thinking not only depends on the ability to reflect but on the way in which you have reflected. In other words, reflective learners 'are able to understand themselves: the values and beliefs that underpin their actions and why they think in the way that they do' (McGregor and Cartwright (2011, p.237). My judgement of the situation was that although I had advocated and described reflective practice and its benefits to the ITT students (and to their credit, they were engaging in reflection to some extent), I found that they were not always engaging in 'deep' reflection. They did reflect, but did not use these reflections fully in their practice, hence this could be termed 'shallow reflection' as I have previously discussed. It was almost as if they were aware of aspects such as children's behaviour but were unable to fully make the link. The students did not seem to be taking into account 'cause and effect' in

enough detail and then using this knowledge or awareness in relation to future practice. My reflection on this situation was that I must ensure that future students are aware of the need to develop ‘reflexive actions’ i.e. that they needed to use reflection in a more cyclical way, to review and refine their practice, actually acting on reflections, rather than proposing what could have been done next (Jasper 2003, p.100). However, I believe it is something that needs to be explicitly taught during ITT professional development sessions, in order for students to begin the process of thinking and acting in a reflective way.

In the spirit of reflective practice it was therefore important to make ‘deep’ sense of the data and interpret its meaning as fully as I could. The importance of identifying themes and patterns was therefore paramount to carry out analysis. A weak or unconvincing analysis would have been as Braun and Clarke (2006, p.94) said ‘where themes do not appear to work, where there is too much overlap’. I ensured that the themes I chose were robust and basically ‘stood alone’ this meant that there was no overlap as far as I was concerned, but obviously had a complementary relationship within the data set as a whole. I aimed to ensure coherence and consistency of themes and picked out central ideas or concepts which I believed related wholly to my research aims.

4.7. Student Reflective Diary

The students were asked to complete a reflective diary as part of the SMT programme. At the training day on 10.12.07 students were given a SMT programme handbook (Appendix 6) which included an information page detailing how to use the reflective diary. The advice students were given included the statement ‘The reflective diary should not be an onerous task and will serve a number of purposes’ (Appendix 6). I was disappointed that the students did not engage with the reflective diary in as much detail as I would have liked. However as

Heron (undated, p.3) suggested, students often need ‘convincing of the real value of true reflective work’. It is apparent to me now, that I did not succeed in convincing the students that the reflective diary was both integral to the SMT programme and valuable to their practice.

I first used reflective diaries in practice whilst working with students on the Foundation Degree in Learning Support Award (FdA). These students were Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) in schools and they embraced the concept fully. Student A, who was originally one of the LSAs on the Foundation Degree programme, completed her diary faithfully, but unfortunately mislaid it at the end of the SMT programme. The reflective diary was evidently the most labour intensive product. Again, I believed that the students would enjoy the process of recording their thoughts in the diary, akin to Schon’s (1987) ideas on reflection on action. The students clearly did not view the reflective diary as a worthwhile use of their time, or assign as much importance to it as I did. As highlighted previously, it seems the concept of reflective practice was not foremost in their thoughts or priorities, despite my emphasis on its importance to their teaching practice. However in a study where you are dependent on students’ good will in completion of tasks, I have discovered that you are reliant on whatever materials are submitted. It is also important not to attach your own preferences, priorities or beliefs to a task that others are undertaking.

All students were therefore supplied with a blank diary and asked to complete this as a reflective diary whilst on their placement to record events and findings. None of the BA Primary students completed a reflective diary. However, five out of the six PGCE students did with one student mislaying theirs.

Analysis of reflective diaries

I have analysed the five reflective diaries that were submitted and reported on what I believed to be the findings in the section below. The diaries are not examined in any particular order.

Examples of thematic analysis of reflective diaries (numbers in grey brackets refer to the numerical codings in Table 4.8 (Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system)

Reflective diary 1. Student D – PGCE student

Student D was placed in a nursery class in a primary school in the Gwent Valleys. She began the diary with bullet points which she highlighted. She had major concerns relating to the general PSD/WB/EL within the school. (1,4) She wrote that in her opinion. ‘The adults who work with the children are well known to them, often having little or no respect for them’ (Student D, 2008). Student D noted a blurring of boundaries in relation to PSD/WB/EL aspects, due to the fact that often, support staff in the school were friends of parents, or related to the children, and would sometimes discipline children ineffectually. (1,4) Consistent approaches to behaviour management are important, children need defined boundaries and as Weare (2006) pointed out, whole school approaches and the ‘overall school climate’ (2006, p.57) should support emotional literacy.

Student D found that the children often had little or no support from the home environment, ‘over half term the children were asked to do a simple home task of colouring in circles, only two out of twenty six brought it back in’ (Student D, 2008). (1,2,3,4)

It was evident from the reflective diary that Student D believed many of the children had low self esteem. Positive self image and self esteem are a factor in school success. Kamakura, Ando and Ono (2007) subscribe to the view that self esteem is inherited, so in effect some

children are ‘born’ more confident than others or have a tendency towards confidence. I believe Harter and Whitesell’s (2004) idea is preferable, that some children just received more positive ‘social’ feedback than others. If this is the case, the diary excerpt below shows how a child was lacking in confidence and viewed himself as a ‘failure’, a sad situation for a child in reception class. With support from Student D during the SMT period, she noted his growing confidence and changes to his initial perceptions of his own abilities. (1,2,3)

At the start of my placement JT was very low in confidence (1,4) and whenever I’d ask him to take part in an activity he’d always say “I can’t do it” He needed a lot of encouragement and I felt he was being left behind to some degree – he wouldn’t willingly partake in activities and would often say no one was being his friend. Upon talking to the teacher, she told me he lived in a very ‘adult’ house, where he was treated and talked to very much like an adult. He was very aware of things he couldn’t do e.g. he would constantly repeat, “I can’t write, I can only scribble” and “I can’t paint properly, its only lines.” In comparison, his peers were also using emergent writing and would happily tell me what they’d written. It was sad to see as I felt he was being brought up too quickly, and was therefore expected too much of and this led to failure in his eyes. When I worked with him on a one to one basis (during special me time) and helped him even if it was writing a word and he’d copy it he became more confident. (1,3,4)

Reflective diary excerpt Student D 20.02.08

On completion of the implementation of ‘Special Me Time’ with the children in this placement, Student D noted some changes with the children she worked with, notably JT as above who showed an awareness of their own self worth / growing in confidence. (1,2,3,4)

It was interesting to see further in Student D’s diary that she reflected on the importance of the adult role in nurturing and supporting the children’s behaviour. The fact that many staff members were related to the children they worked with was unusual. The area that the school was situated was close knit; there was an aspect of parents, support staff and children often highly interconnected with each other. This also related to reading books and activities such as taking home ‘Teddy’: ‘if you give home school tasks or Timmy Teddy to some children they don’t bring them back in’ (Student D, 2008). This was a difficult issue, home-school

links are so important in the Foundation Phase setting. Partnership with parents is a key factor to school success according to research (Desforges 2004, DfES 2007). The report on parental involvement from the DfES (2007) stressed the role of parents in their children's education, stating that 'parents and the home environment they create are the single most important factor in shaping their children's well-being, achievements and prospects' (2007, p.1). I reflected here that it was vital to ensure students were aware of how important parents were in the facilitation of early learning and providing a nurturing environment for their children. However, this was the ideal 'dynamic' and students would need to be aware that children who did not receive a great deal of learning support or nurture at home would need additional care, support and understanding in school. The role of the FP teacher was, as Griffin (1997) rightly said and I discussed in Chapter 2, as an 'educarer' combining education and care to enable children to be supported and developed.

I believe Student D discovered, whilst teaching in this particular community, that there were many children who have challenging home environments and used her emotional literacy to empathise and support the children's PSD/WB/EL effectively and sensitively. I have often thought that some of the younger ITT students have quite a 'sheltered' view of life relating to children's experiences in more disadvantaged communities. Student D was undoubtedly placed in one of the most deprived areas in the Gwent Valleys and the school reflected this level of deprivation. Throughout her experience at the school, she commented on her experiences and how she was 'unaware' of the effects of poverty and social disadvantage on young children's development. In a conversation with me (18.06.08) she commented that the placement had been 'a real eye opener' and that when she undertook the 'Jam Sandwich' activity during SMT she could not believe the children had never undertaken any cooking

with their parents ‘I couldn’t believe that some of the children hadn’t even had jam sandwiches before’ (Student D 18.06.08).

Categorising findings using thematic analysis:

By analysing the data gathered above in a thematic way I was able to ascertain the following:

Table 4.10. PGCE Student D - number of references to Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system in reflective diary excerpt

1	Student reflection / reflective practice evident		7 refs
2	Student Knowledge / Student confidence		3 refs
3	Teaching and Pedagogy		4 refs
4	Student’s professional judgements / perceptions of children’s PSD/WB/EL		6 refs
5	Perceived improvements to professional practice / growth as a professional		0 refs

It was evident from scrutiny of the reflective diary excerpt that Student D had indeed reflected on the learning and development of the child concerned, 7 times in this short extract. I believe in this instance Student D was showing what Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009, p.235) described as ‘practical wisdom’ she was working sensitively within this particular educational situation. I found that she described 6 different times where she had made professional judgements and perceived the child’s PSD/WB/EL to be at a particular level. Her support, professionalism and knowledge was evident throughout, yet she does not reflect on her own ‘professional practice’ or evidence any professional learning or way forward from her reflections.

It was evident that Student D did not ‘reflect on the way in which one has reflected’ (Moore, 2004, p.148). Reflection was evident, but she did not demonstrate why she had thought in the way she did and how any beliefs gained underpinned any actions taken.

Reflective diary 2. Student F – PGCE student

Student F was placed in a year two class. The school was in the South Wales Valleys, in a mixed catchment area. Student F said in conversation with me (Davis, reflective diary notes 04.02.08) that she found the children to be mostly polite and well behaved, but certain children had parents who did not set clear boundaries and often gave in to the children on behaviour matters. (1,2,3,4) She believed that this caused some disruption especially when parents were dropping off children in the mornings.

She told me that she spent a lot of her time with certain parents who were over anxious about their children. It was particularly interesting for me in this case, because on talking to Student F, I observed her make the link between theory and practice having experienced first hand the effect that parenting styles can have on children’s behaviour. JG was one of her target children for her PSD/WB/EL observations. She reported in her diary that he often displayed poor behaviour, for example hitting and kicking other children and playing rough games on the playground, with particular incidents occurring after break times and lunch. She found that using short ‘Special Me Time’ slots each day after lunch to discuss any issues that went on in the playground was an effective behaviour strategy. (1,2,3,4) This was also interesting as she had used SMT in a diagnostic way as a means of calming the children and reflecting on behaviour. (1,2,3) This relates to the approach employed by Killick (2006) who in his training materials for schools advised practitioners to ‘use reflective and empathic listening to help the young person verbally label their emotions’ (2006, p.138).

I was surprised and pleased by this finding. The idea of using empathic listening as part of the SMT approach had not wholly occurred to me, I believe the students on the SMT programme became so ‘emotionally tuned in’ to the children that they were working with during their placements, that they were employing a range of pertinent and highly valuable EL approaches in a holistic way. The students were leading their own SMT approach across their teaching. They were in effect using a range of PSD/WB/EL strategies, adapting, refining and tailoring them to individual children’s needs. This was a really responsive way of teaching and completely in tune with effective PSD/WB/EL pedagogy.

Reasoning and listening to children is a vital part of effective FP pedagogy. Research has shown (Rogers and McPherson, 2008, Kohn 2005) that talking to children about the effect their behaviour has on other children is effective in promoting empathy and pro-social behaviour. Talking and spending time with children to discuss their behaviour and subsequent feelings is vital work, but it seems that often teachers find it really difficult to do because it takes time. There are many examples in my reflective notes from the class teachers of the SMT students who viewed the SMT programme as ‘quality time’ with the children. This quality time was defined as ‘having time to listen’ by one class teacher (TJ 16.01.08). It was ironic that listening to children was seen as a ‘luxury’, and to be able to sit and listen to children as an ‘add on’ rather than an integral essential part of PSD/EB/EL pedagogy.

‘Big problems at playtime with JG today. He has been warned, had ‘sad face’ and sanctions, staying in at play, then going to see the head, none of this worked – now on sticker reward chart of his own. Home are not reinforcing ideas about good/ bad. A teacher saw him out of school smash a window and have no punishment / reprimand. He has no consequences of his actions. He has a very blank expression on his face when you give him a row about anything. Looks genuinely confused. (1,2,4)

In Special Me Time this week .. the class as a whole discuss playtimes regularly, especially after lunch. Self assessment techniques used.. “How can we stop this happening?... “What do we need to change?”....

Fabulous technique for reflection, analysis of emotions behaviour, consequences of actions, A time for Soul searching – seems effective. (1,2,3,4)

Reflective diary excerpt Student F 30.01.08.

Student F’s reflective diary excerpt shows real understanding of JG’s behaviour issues and his general competencies relating to PSD/WB/EL. She reflected on the fact that the home environment did not support needs in this area. She noted that he showed confusion and his emotions were a blank expression. When interviewing Student F at the end of this placement, I discovered she had invested much time and effort into supporting JG and one of her regrets was that she ‘would be sorry to leave him’ (Student F 21.02.08).

Nias (1993) explored the dynamics of the emotional relationship that teachers have with their work as it often involved intense personal interactions. It was obvious that Student F had built a strong bond with JG and was genuinely concerned about his welfare. As Nias said (1993, p.297) Student F had ‘invested herself’ in relation to her work with JG and this can be problematic, getting too involved with individual children’s circumstances can mean that you spend time with that child to the detriment of others. However, teachers are human beings and as Fullan (1995) reflected ‘teaching is a moral enterprise. It is about making a difference in the lives of pupils and in some ways making them better’ (1995, p.253). Again, I made a discovery that the students would need support and guidance in relation to maintaining professional relationships with the young children they would be working with. I am not

saying that Student F's relationship with JG was unprofessional, quite the contrary. However, I was made aware that students do form strong bonds with certain children and it was evident to me that they need support to be able to manage that support, in effect to be able to leave any worries about children at the school gate when they leave a placement.

I believe in future that I need to give students some 'reflection' time at the end of placements to be able to discuss and share any issues that may have caused them stress. This idea relates to the work of practitioners such as Redl (1996) and Wood and Long (1991), who advocated the idea of 'life space intervention' which was in effect, an interview using 'talking therapies' to diffuse a crisis or discuss emotional concerns. Hromek (2006) developed these ideas further and his work as an educational psychologist was based on asking teachers to use 'reflective listening' when working with children in an emotional capacity. As reflection is a key theme throughout this research project this idea is most interesting to me and one which I intend to explore further.

Table 4.11 PGCE Student F - number of references to Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system in reflective diary excerpt

1	Student reflection / reflective practice evident		5 refs
2	Student Knowledge / Student confidence		5 refs
3	Teaching and Pedagogy		4 refs
4	Student's professional judgements / perceptions of children's PSD/WB/EL		4 refs
5	Perceived improvements to professional practice / growth as a professional		0 refs

Reflection is evident in the reflective diary excerpts. Student F had taken time to get to know parents in her placement setting and had realised how in the Foundation Phase setting parental involvement is particularly important (Dowling 2000). Student F had made a considerable effort to support the child detailed in her reflective diary excerpt. It was clear that she had made a difference to his behaviour and general attitude. Again, in my opinion, Student F does not credit herself with this change, there are no references to improvements in her professional practice, although she does acknowledge that she will be sorry to leave him. I think in this case, she saw that there was still work to be done.

Reflective diary 3. Student C PGCE student

Student C was placed in a year one class in a ‘leafy suburb’ area in the Vale of Glamorgan. The children were mostly from advantaged households with professional parents. Her reflective diary excerpts show that she found that the children were mostly well behaved, but that some of them often wanted ‘their own way’ in class matters. She found that some of the children could be ‘self centred’. The example given below of a child called LJ shows how over the period of the six week ‘Special Me Time’ programme, LJ’s off task behaviour in relation to his relationships with other children changed.

First ‘Special Me Time’ session. (session 1)

LJ was very keen to offer his thoughts and feelings, but found listening to the other children difficult. (1,4) He was very keen to touch, feel, look and smell the flowers, but waiting his turn was something that he constantly needed to be reminded about. (1,3,4)

Reflective diary excerpt Student C 10.01.08

Final 'Special Me Time' session. (session 6)

The children were fully engaged during the session, the children put a great deal of thought into their answers. I was particularly pleased with LJ and AG who both listened and respected the other children really well. (1,4)

Reflective diary excerpt Student C 21.02.08

Student C's diary shows that she was aware that over the six week period of 'Special Me Time' that there was a positive change in the behaviour and attitude of LG. At the end of the programme, she noted that he was much more engaged in sessions and would take time to listen to and appreciate the views and ideas of the other children, something which he did not do on commencement of the programme.

Student C was able to adapt situations and use different pedagogical strategies, to support children's PSD/WB/EL. I observed her SMT session (on 14.01.08) and was impressed with the way she had set up the home corner as a 'tropical café' for her 'Jam Sandwich activity'. She had provided a large straw umbrella, picnic tables and tablecloths. The children were fully engaged with the task. It was interesting to note that the children seemed very confident and at ease with the activity. The idea of the activity was that the children would prepare the sandwiches and then serve to their 'guests'. Student C ensured that the children shared and took turns, although some children did take charge, placing plates of sandwiches on the tables or informing 'guests' where to sit.

Student C had a very calming effect on the children, she was mindful of the additional help and support that some children needed. At the end of the session, I sat with Student C and we discussed how the activity had gone. Student C reflected that the majority of the children were very 'socially capable' and had 'experience' of social situations. This was the complete

opposite of Student D's session where the children had little experience of social situations. Student C told me that some of the children were very confident and she was aware that they expected things to be done in certain ways. However, she recalled that they were very polite and she believed they were aware that they were being observed. To demonstrate this point, as I was observing them, a child came up to me and said 'it's nice to say please and thank you. People listen to you more then' (observation notes Davis, 14.01.08). I was quite surprised by this, and on discussing this with Student C following the session, Student C informed me that the child was 'very capable and liked getting things right'.

Table 4.12. PGCE Student C - number of references to Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system in reflective diary excerpt

1	Student reflection / reflective practice evident		3 refs
2	Student Knowledge / Student confidence		0 refs
3	Teaching and Pedagogy		1 ref
4	Student's professional judgements / perceptions of children's PSD/WB/EL		3 refs
5	Perceived improvements to professional practice / growth as a professional		0 refs

Looking at the grid above in relation to Student C's experiences which are reflected in the reflective diary excerpts above, it is clear that Student C was aware of a change in the behaviour of a particular child, owing to her engagement with him. From analysis of the reflective diary, I found that she had charted the child's progress over the 6 week period. However, nowhere in the diary or during interviews with Student C did she credit herself with the fact that she has helped a child to modify his behaviour or tailored her teaching to support this. It is interesting to note here that during the course of this research, I have found that ITT students rarely praise themselves in respect of their teaching achievements; in fact it is often the

opposite. I noted in my observation notes that ‘Student C was reluctant to accept praise for her achievements during the observation of her professional practice. I gave feedback following the observation and congratulated her on an excellent lesson. She remarked ‘the children are excellent and that helps’ (Observation notes Davis, 14.01.08). Modesty relating to professional achievements was a trait amongst the SMT students. The transcript of the exit interview with Student C (06.06.08) revealed that she was also reluctant to credit any gains in the children’s PSD/WB/EL to her efforts. As the following transcript reveals:

SD	Do you think you have made a difference to the children’s PSD/WB/EL since you have been teaching them?
Student C	I don’t know, If it’s me.... well, they were very EL to start so I’m not sure, I have probably supported that process.

Transcript of exit interview with Student C (18.06.08)

Reflective diary 4. Student B – PGCE student

Student B was placed in a year 1 class in a mixed catchment school in the Cardiff area. Student B was a mature student who had previously been a counsellor. She was extremely aware of the needs of the children in her class and her reflective diary and session evaluations were extremely detailed.

Student B thought carefully about the link between sound PSD/WB/EL and learning. I believe that she was very empathetic and used her counselling background to inform her thinking. As stated previously, the immediate vicinity of the school was an affluent area. Student B informed me that on a number of occasions she spent considerable time with parents at the beginning and end of the day, chatting about reading books or other issues. In fact she told me in conversation (reflective notes, Davis, 15.01.08) that she found the parents ‘more challenging than the children’ I took this to mean that the parents took up considerable

amounts of time at the beginning and end of the day and presumably more demanding with their requirements. Student B found the children to be quite self-sufficient in this placement. She found that the class teacher often had high expectations of the children's abilities. Some parents also had high expectations of their children and many of the children participated in a variety of out of school activities such as music lessons, dancing and sport.

Student B found that the children were self aware (1,4) and much of her time was spent sorting out classroom disputes (1,4) (Student B reflective diary 22.01.08). Student B pointed out that there were often low level behaviour issues relating to the children 'telling tales' on each other, this took up a lot of her time. During the session (05.02.08) where the children share something they feel proud about with the other children, Student B was surprised by one girl RD, who was in the top ability group. RD was quite a serious child, who had been identified as being 'more able and talented' (MAT). Student B noted that RD struggled with forming friendships and often sat alone in the classroom, engaged in writing or drawing. She noted that RD found the 'Special Me Time' sessions a challenge as often there were no right or wrong answers to questions. Student B noted in a baseline evaluation (Student B 14.1.08) that RD showed a positive self identity only when answering fact based questions, this also applied to her motivation. According to Student B (14.01.08) 'she is positive when she knows she can succeed. Less so where the criteria is less well defined.'

It was heartbreaking how difficult RD found it to receive praise at 5 years old, the thing she was happy and proud about was that two friends were coming for tea...not actually something she had done at all. It took quite a while for her to build up the confidence to take part as well. (1,4).

Reflective diary excerpt Student B 19.02.08

One of my research aims was for students to be able to use knowledge gained through the implementation of 'SMT' to support, facilitate and assess young children's PSD/WB/EL in the Foundation Phase setting. It is clear that Student B was doing this in relation to RD. It is also clear that she had established a comprehensive picture of the way RD had attempted the SMT activity in the extract above. Student B wrote at length in her diary about her concerns for RD and the fact that she realised that high achieving girls 'have difficulties when there is no right or wrong answer' (Student B 19.02.08). Student B based this finding on her observations of RD in the classroom and also on observations of five other high achieving girls in the top ability group. These findings took us both by surprise. I was drawn to Bandura's ideas (1986) here on self efficacy, which is how an individual makes a judgement about their ability when performing a particular task. He found there was a link between self-efficacy and academic performance. Children would build a theoretical model of their performance, based on what they believed to be the case. Reis (2002) believed that girls with high academic abilities lack opportunities for developing self efficacy. She said that they receive 'less verbal persuasion from their parents and friends, observe fewer role models, and produce less creative work' (online 15.03.11). Student B and I pondered over this idea at the time and Student B reflected on her worries for RD in forming friendships. She was particularly surprised when RH shared on the 'proud mat' that she was having two friends over to tea. Student B had spoken to RD's mother the previous day who said that the two friends were being invited for RD's benefit and not at RD's instigation. Mum in effect was providing friends for her to play with.

Student B identified that another high achieving girl (CM) had difficulties in one of the SMT sessions. The session concerned related to the children receiving praise in relation to their achievements on the 'Proud mat'. According to Student B's reflective notes:

CM took one look at her certificate and gave it straight back to me, telling me that she did not want it. She began to shout and sulk. I asked her why she didn't want it. She told me that she did not want orange and couldn't write on it because it was orange. I explained to her that I had made it especially for her, and that it was special for her. She continued to shout. I asked her how she thought it made me feel that she didn't want something that I had made for her especially. She looked at me, and then took it and wrote on it. She later apologised to me. (4)

Student B Evaluation of session 05.02.08

Student B reflected on the implications for future teaching and learning as below:

The situation with CM did have the potential to cause distress to both her and the other children. By taking her to one side and talking to her, she was able to calm down and to see the situation from another point of view. (1,4) CM can be very stubborn and easily turns tantrums to tears. By turning the situation around CM needed to put herself in another's shoes. By talking to her she was able to see that her attitude had an affect on me and the other children. CM can be difficult at times when she doesn't have her own way. This way of dealing with CM was very effective and has been the most successful way of dealing with her tantrums so far. (1,2,3,4)

Student B Evaluation of session 05.02.08

It is clear from this second reflective account that Student B had found a way of diffusing CM's tantrums. The fact that CM did not initially want to receive her certificate was interesting. It is clear that Student B learned about more able girls having a tendency to think deeply about issues relating to their ability. It is also evident that as Dweck (1986) found, able girls may accept responsibility for failure but not success. As Student B pointed out both girls had obvious discomfort in an emotional situation, whereby they were put forward for praise or had to give a non specific 'open-ended' answer to a question.

Table 4.13 PGCE Student B - number of references to Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system in reflective diary excerpt

1	Student reflection / reflective practice evident		4 refs
2	Student Knowledge / Student confidence		1 ref
3	Teaching and Pedagogy		1 ref
4	Student's professional judgements / perceptions of children's PSD/WB/EL		5 refs
5	Perceived improvements to professional practice / growth as a professional		0 refs

Student B's findings in her reflective diary interested me greatly. She was an extremely perceptive student, and as I have stated earlier I believe this was due to her counselling background. She seemed to really engage and empathise with the children. She was particularly keen to undertake the SMT programme and her contribution was extremely effective. She was the student who delved deeply into the placement children's EL and wrote at length about her case study child CM above, appearing fascinated by the complexities of girls' self esteem, or lack of it in this case. However, although Student B reflected in some depth on these issues, she did not always link this reflection to her practice. It was merely an observation and an interesting finding to her. Student B did not in effect, make use of this reflection fully in her teaching, she failed to think reflectively in enough depth and as McGregor and Cartwright (2011) pointed out and in my opinion, she did not look at how her reflections would improve her pedagogy, nor how it would 'enhance pupils learning' (2011, p.37). Student B's discovery of a link between high achieving girls and lack of self esteem is highly interesting and something which I believe needs further investigation.

I have reflected on this concept and have passed Student B's findings on to ITT students in subsequent cohorts. As Tripp (1993) found, reflection can be deepened by what he termed

‘critical incidents’ Student B’s discovery of a link between high ability in girls and low self esteem is not new, but it was important, and in effect a ‘critical incident’, as it made her think deeply about an occurrence and gain insight and understanding from it. The next stage for Student B, following her reflective findings, should have been her implementation of practical strategies to support the self esteem of high achieving girls in a more differentiated way, within the Foundation Phase classroom. Often, students spend much time with children who lack confidence due to low ability and forget that high ability children also need support and encouragement and nurture.

4.8. Baseline Assessments / Final Assessments of SMT Programme

Baseline assessments of the children were based on competencies highlighted by Laevers (1997) and work by Comrie (2008). As discussed previously, students were asked to complete a sheet which I had prepared (Appendix 7). These competencies were then re-assessed at the end of the SMT programme.

The take up for completion of baseline assessments was more comprehensive. The students did grasp the importance of the assessment for learning cycle (AFL) and as Eaude (2011, p.145) pointed out ‘the value of assessment depends on how results are understood and used’. All students apart from one, had completed an initial baseline of what they believed children’s competencies were in relation to PSD/WB/EL and then completed a final assessment on completion of the SMT programme. These assessments give a clear picture of the children’s development relating to PSD/WB/EL over a period of time. The next section analyses the baseline assessments undertaken by the students. It also examines the subsequent findings relating to the differences in children’s competencies following the implementation of the SMT programme.

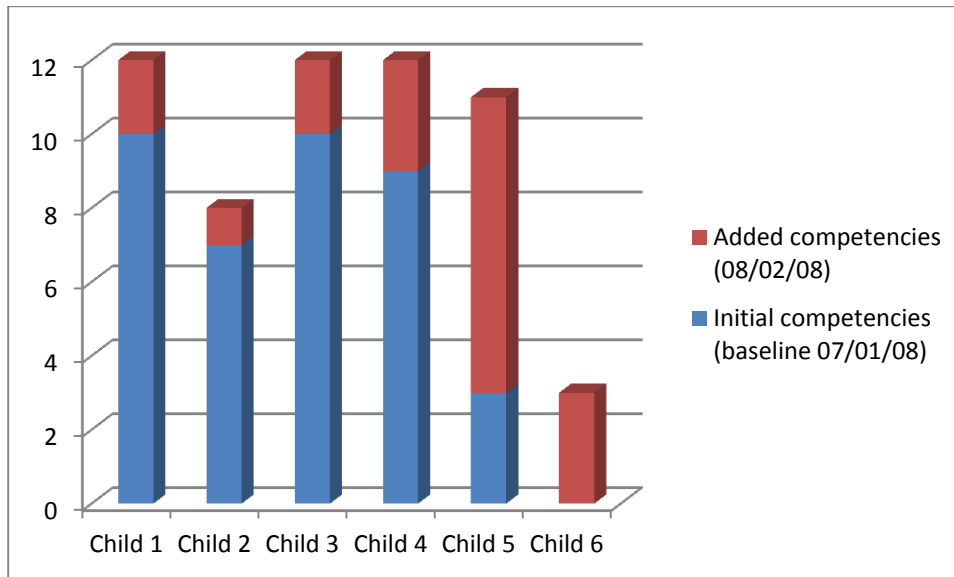


Figure 4.14. BA Primary Student H - Initial baseline of PSD/WB/EL competencies and end of SMT programme evaluations based on baseline assessment sheets (6 children)

As Figure 4.14 above shows Student H provided this study with rich data. Student H was a mature student on the BA primary programme. It was interesting to note that Student H showed a good level of understanding of children's abilities relating to PSD/WB/EL in her evaluations. She had children of her own and gave her initial reason for joining the SMT programme as wanting to further her knowledge and to 'understand my own children more' (SMT training day evaluation 10.12.07). It was evident from Student H's baseline that on undertaking the baseline assessment on child 6, he was assessed initially as having no skills. Following the SMT programme, five weeks later, he was assessed as having gained three competencies. These competencies are taken from the baseline assessment sheet which the students used. This shows the possible impact on this child by the programme / support given by Student H. The child was initially judged by Student H to have had a very low starting point relating to PSD/WB/EL. From evaluations, Student H gave a pen portrait of child 6 describing him as having initial behavioural problems, lack of respect for teachers and peers and a poor concentration span. Student H noted that following the SMT programme intervention, child 6 had changed noting: 'Since my arrival child 6 is working hard to behave

appropriately’ and is ‘beginning to learn that physical aggression does not have a place in the classroom’. ‘He has enjoyed the Pirate theme and has been a main contributor of pirate ideas throughout the last 5 weeks’ (08.02.08).

It would seem that child 5 had the most improvement from undertaking the SMT programme, rising from three competencies initially to eleven at the cessation of the programme. Student H (08.02.08) stated that child 5 had ‘grown in confidence. He is able to join in during whole class discussions and will come up to the front of the class’ She also reported that he showed ‘greater confidence in his mathematical abilities’.

Student H reflected that child 4 started with 9 competencies. At the end of the SMT programme, she had improved by three competencies to achieve a full set. Student H stated that ‘Over the 5-week block she has grown in confidence and is willing to join in when in a whole class situation. ‘Child 4 continues to be a popular member of the class who is becoming more confident and is beginning to express her feelings.’

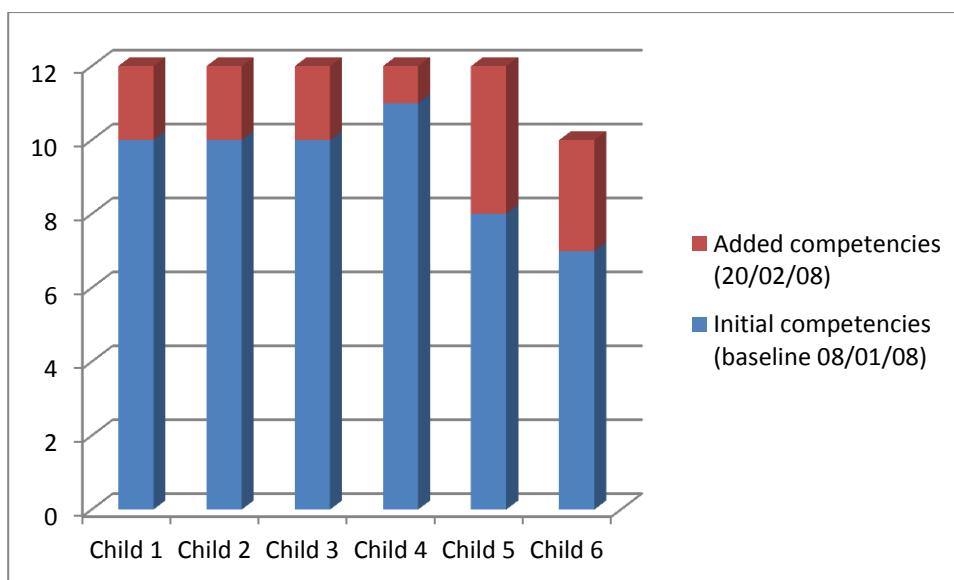


Figure 4.15. PGCE Student A - Initial baseline of PSD/WB/EL competencies and end of SMT programme evaluations based on baseline assessment sheets (6 children)

Student A was a meticulous student. The evidence that she provided for the SMT programme was detailed and comprehensive. She undertook two rounds of the SMT programme on two separate placements. In order to compare findings with other students in the cohort I have concentrated on results gained in the first placement. In the second placement, she used assessments of her own design, which have not been included in the above chart. By implementing her own design for assessment this told me that Student A took the SMT programme very seriously. Student A was an extremely dedicated student. She was the student that I knew best on the PGCE programme as I had taught her previously on the Foundation Degree in Learning Support. Whilst on the Foundation Degree Award (FdA) she worked full time as a Learning Support Assistant whilst bringing up her family. The FdA was a four year part-time programme. Student A regularly achieved marks in the high 80s for her academic assignments. I considered her to be a really exceptional student and a completely intuitive practitioner. When she transferred to the BA (Hons) Educational Studies within the School of Education, she completed the programme obtaining a first class honours degree. As a student on the PGCE Primary programme she had to give up her full time job and become a full time student. As a PGCE student she again achieved top marks in assignments and on teaching practice. When she eventually completed the PGCE programme, she won the programme team award for academic excellence. I knew that Student A would be interested in the SMT programme from the outset of her studies on the PGCE. We had built a sound relationship and I knew that the extra ‘skill set’ that she would achieve from undertaking the SMT programme would appeal to her. It didn’t surprise me when I discovered that she was adapting the baseline assessments, this was typical of her depth of commitment to any activity that she embarked upon. It also showed that she was using reflection to inform her practice.

Student A also faithfully recorded her thoughts in a reflective diary and was genuinely upset at the end of the programme, when she told me that she had mislaid it and was unable to submit it as part of the programme evidence that she had collected. I was also very disappointed as I knew the level of detail and accuracy that she would have employed using the diary as a medium for recording her thoughts and reflections. Also, Student A was in my opinion, the only student to directly link her reflective findings to her practice at a high level. She was as Dewey (1933), pointed out engaged in ‘reflective action’ which is ‘doing made up of changed actions informed by self appraisal’ (McGregor and Cartwright, 2011, p.6). The loss of her reflective diary meant that I was unable to evidence many of those links. This meant that on the whole, the findings of this research centred on the premise that students engaged in ‘shallow reflection’. To reiterate what I have discussed previously in this chapter, students did reflect, but unfortunately, they did not necessarily link reflection to their pedagogy and change or adapt practice as a result. The link between reflection and practice is evident from the work that Student A did in relation to the adaptation of her baselines.

Student A’s placement was in a primary school in an affluent area. The children in her sample group all started the SMT programme with high scores in PSD/WB/EL competencies. Despite this, Figure 4.10 shows that all children achieved an improved PSD/WB/EL score during the SMT programme. Five out of six children achieved the maximum score of 12.

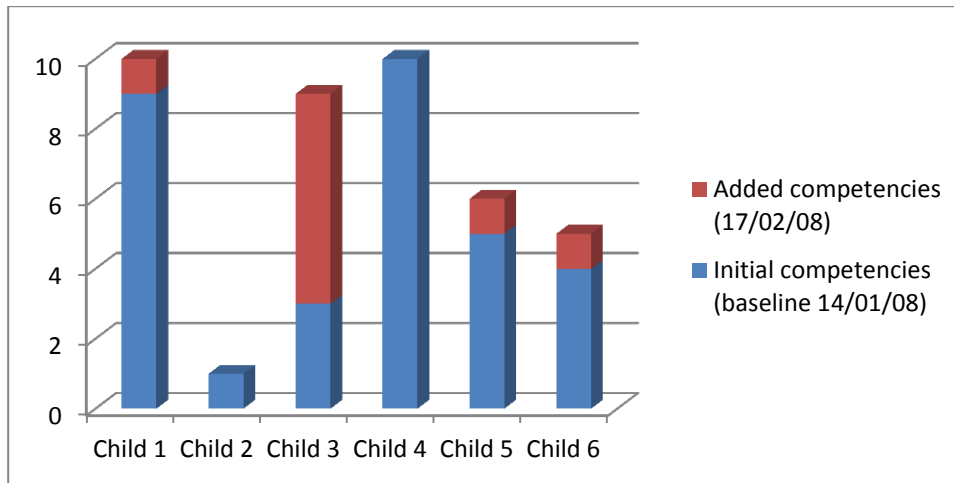


Figure 4.16. PGCE Student E - Initial baseline of PSD/WB/EL competencies and end of SMT programme evaluations based on baseline assessment sheets (6 children)

Student E was placed in a mixed catchment primary school in the South Wales Valleys. This was an intriguing set of results, as Figure 4.16 shows. At one extreme, Child 2 was assessed as having had only one competency and did not improve on this. This finding goes against the general trend of children with low competency levels improving significantly. Child 3 is a classic example of this trend.

Child 5 and Child 6 had mid-range competency levels and made some improvement and Child 1 and Child 4 were towards the top end of the scale. Student E did not complete a reflective diary, citing time pressure in the end of SMT interview as the reason for non completion. I was therefore unable to reflect on her thoughts during the programme to the same extent as the other students. Student E was one of the quieter members of the group. She was hard working but, it is evident from the level of reflection shown, that she did not engage with the programme to the same extent as the other students.

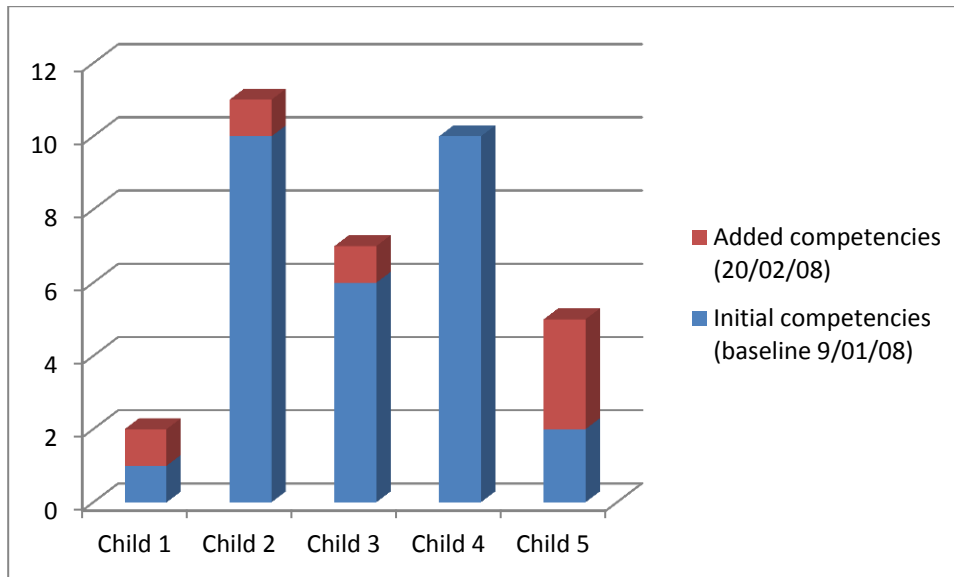


Figure 4.17. PGCE Student D - Initial baseline of PSD/WB/EL competencies and end of SMT programme evaluations based on baseline assessment sheets (5 children)

Student D was placed in a socio-economically deprived area in the South Wales Valleys. There is much debate surrounding the implications of poverty on children's well-being and development. Payne (2003) looked at the relationship between socio-economic status and achievement in school and concluded that low socio-economic backgrounds were not always conducive to academic success. Knitzer and Klein (2007) said that children in low income families began school with less language ability and a more limited vocabulary. Supporting all children was central to the research on the SMT programme. Students on the programme were aware that supporting children's self esteem and well-being was paramount in building learning resilience and ultimately motivation for learning (Kernis 1995).

As Figure 4.12 shows the children were initially assessed by Student D as having a mixed range of competencies relating to PSD/WB/EL. Almost all improved, however child 1 only improved from one competency to two.

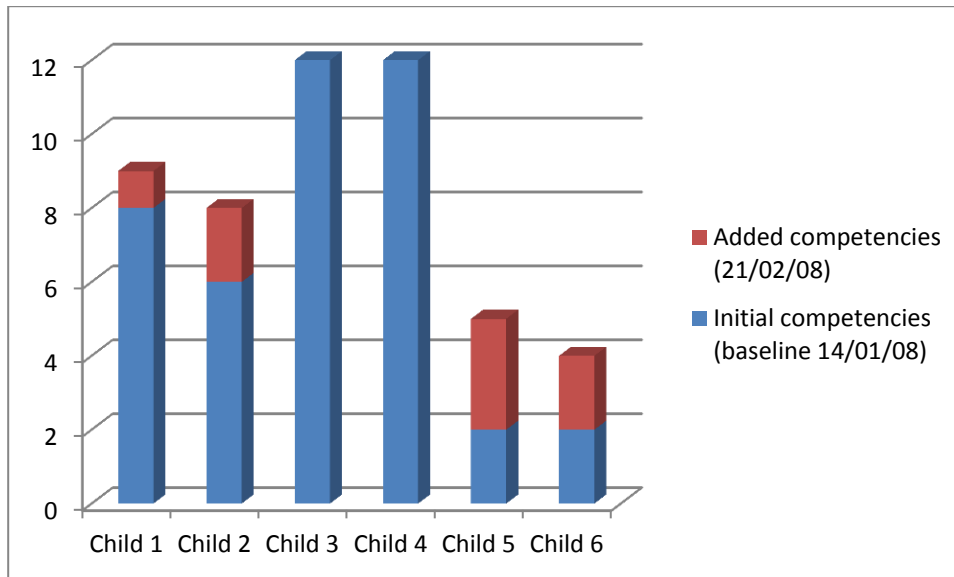


Figure 4.18. PGCE Student F - Initial baseline of PSD/WB/EL competencies and end of SMT programme evaluations based on baseline assessment sheets (6 children)

Student F was placed in a mixed catchment primary school in the South Wales Valleys. As expected the baseline results were mixed. Figure 4.18 shows that there were clear improvements for all children except for the two who already had a complete set of competencies.

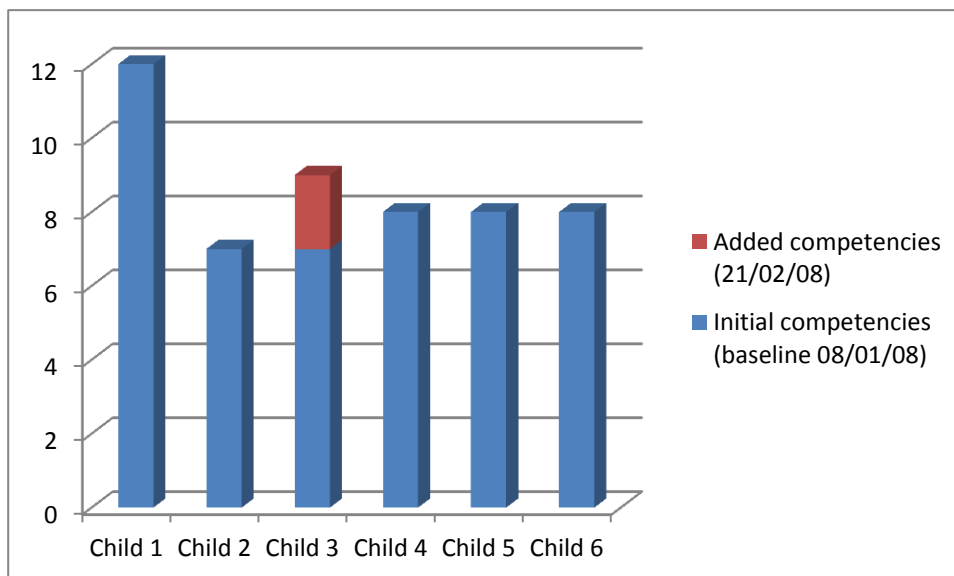


Figure 4.19. PGCE Student B - Initial baseline of PSD/WB/EL competencies and end of SMT programme evaluations based on baseline assessment sheet (6 children)

Student B was in an affluent city area. Interestingly her first degree was in Psychology. This may have given her a different approach to undertaking assessments. Figure 4.19 shows very similar baseline levels but little improvement. However she recorded partial improvements in several competencies for most children.

Summary of baseline data gained

Analysing the students' baseline data, I was able to ascertain that the majority of children on the SMT programme who did not already have a full set of competencies gained at least one competency on the PSD/WB/EL baseline during the SMT programme period. Four of the children were assessed as gaining a positive self identity during the SMT programme input. Four children gained more awareness of their own feelings and became able to express them in an appropriate way. Three children gained the ability to respect the needs of others. Three children had achieved all the competencies by the end of the assessment period. It is difficult to say with certainty whether the children gained these competencies through natural development, input from SMT, the skills of the particular student or a combination of all three. It did, however, tell me that the students had been implementing SMT in a comprehensive way.

The programme input was having some impact on the children that the students were working with, and both parties were spending dedicated time together each week during SMT sessions. As Student A noted in a session evaluation (10.01.08) 'I have learnt that when you give children the time to talk in a positive and calm atmosphere they respond in a truly insightful way'. It also told me that the students were carrying out the programme competently and showing some relevant reflection on what was going on during this intervention programme. The children seemed to be benefiting from the SMT programme intervention and gaining a

range of PSD/WB/EL skills which had either not been evident on commencement of the programme or were further developed by the programme. More importantly the students were also giving the children time and space to think, reflect and respond. As Student A continues (10.01.08) ‘They can appreciate beautiful things when you give them time to look and the scaffolding of their knowledge: and most importantly listening to them gives them the confidence to talk and share their ideas’.

The Cambridge Primary Review (2010) emphasised the need ‘for teachers to be qualified and knowledgeable but also caring’. (Alexander 2010, p.408). The report also sets out the need for teachers to have ‘shared dialogue’ with children and ‘genuine listening and responding’. I believe that the students who undertook the SMT programme demonstrated, especially through the production of the baseline assessments, that their intervention with the children over the six week SMT programme, gave them the scope and opportunity to ‘listen’ effectively to the young children they were working with and subsequently respond to their needs. In an interview with the head teacher at the inner city nursery where Student G, a year 3 BA student was placed, the head teacher told me ‘Student G had a number of lively boys in her group, which made it difficult for her sometimes, I think the fact that Student G had dedicated time for SMT activities each week helped her understand the children’s needs. She had time to get to know and understand the children, and think about why they behaved in certain ways and to tailor her next session accordingly.’ (JC, Head teacher 15.02.08). I believe it was evident that students gained a deep understanding of young children’s needs, an understanding they did not have on commencing the SMT programme. This was a research aim, I believe that this aim was met. Student G (14.03.08) commented in her exit questionnaire that through the SMT programme she had ‘Got to know the children really well’. Whilst I would expect this to be the case for all ITT students who spent time with

young children during a placement, I believe the students formed a deep understanding of the children they were working with, based on an understanding and appreciation of their PSD/WB/EL needs. I also believe that the programme developed the students' empathy for the young children they were working with. As Eaude (2011, p.158) pointed out 'Effective pedagogy, especially with young children, relies on attention to little, ordinary everyday human actions and responses as well as lesson plans and schemes of work.' As Eaude goes on to suggest 'much of this involves the small interactions, the comment the smile which show that you care for individuals'. It was evident that the students on the SMT programme were undertaking these 'small interactions'. However, going back to my theme of student reflection, although the students showed clear findings in relation to differences made to children as a result of SMT, there was less emphasis on changes in pedagogy or professional thinking as result of those findings.

4.9. Other SMT Methods of Academic Enquiry / Range of Themes Identified

There were a range of other types of evidence relating to student engagement with the children on the SMT programme. I found that although these items were of interest, I did not use them in my analysis, as I decided that they were not a specific focus of this research. Items included work products that students submitted, photos and samples of children's work.

Other material included a copy of a student assignment related to the SMT programme (Student G) and a series of exit interviews with the students and interviews with head teachers or the student's class teachers. These items were of interest and have been referred to during this chapter. Evidence gained from exit interviews with the students is discussed below:

Exit Interviews / questionnaires with students

On cessation of the programme I carried out exit interviews with all students to ascertain perceptions of undertaking the programme, reflections and knowledge gained (Appendix 13).

Students were asked the following questions:

- What did you learn / gain from undertaking the SMT programme? Do you believe you have grown as a professional?
- What were your main findings/ reflections on carrying out the programme?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Did you feel you have sufficient training / knowledge in order to carry out the SMT programme? Has your knowledge of PSD/WB/EL pedagogy improved?
- What will you remember most about SMT?
- Did SMT make any difference to particular children?
- Was children's PSD/WB/EL improved as a result of implementing SMT? - yes/no/maybe Can you give an example?

I carried out two in depth interviews with students as a random sample – Student A and Student F. These were undertaken in their placement school and I was able to record responses on my Dictaphone (Appendices 11 and 12). Conclusions drawn from the in depth interviews show students demonstrated a low level of reflection in relation to the 'bigger pedagogical picture'. I aimed to pose questions that would explore reflective practice, but in hindsight, maybe I was not specific enough in my questions, as I found that the students did not respond to questions with a great level of detail in relation to their reflections. The answers they gave mostly were related to the children and with some aspects of learning relating to their pedagogical practice. In the interview with Student A although I asked: 'what did you find from your evaluations?' she responded with 'the children are all very

different...' when I posed the question as to why, she relayed that some of the children had speech and language difficulties, but 'we can't have fuss as there are 39 who all sit and listen to registration'. This was not really the answer I would have expected from a reflective practitioner, I would have liked her to show how she had taken on board the children's difficulties and what strategies she was going to implement to support them further. The interview I undertook with Student C was similar in that although she was reflective in relation to the positive benefits of the implementation of the Foundation Phase she was less reflective in relation to aspects of her own practice. Here as I discussed earlier Student C was reluctant to credit herself with professional achievements. I asked: 'do you think that you have made a difference to the children's PSD/WB/EL?' Student C responded 'Well I think the staff make a difference here'.

The table below summarises student answers from general SMT exit questionnaires (Appendix 13). Analysis was undertaken using my 5 point thematic analysis system and then coded in order to produce the tables 4.20 and 4.21.

Table 4.20. Summary of exit interviews for BA/PGCE students (part 1)

Student	Q1: What did you learn / gain from undertaking the SMT programme? Have you grown as a professional?	Q2: What were your main findings / reflections on carrying out the programme?	Q3: What would you do differently next time?	Q4: Did you have sufficient training / knowledge in order to carry out the SMT programme? Has your knowledge of PSD/WB/EL pedagogy improved?
Student A	Skills, knowledge, patience and a range of strategies.	Children responded to activities differently. The morning children were more responsive than the afternoon.	-----	Yes.
Student B	I enjoyed SMT. I learned a lot.	It takes time to listen to young children.	-----	Yes.
Student C	Range of strategies. Knowledge of PSD/WB/EL. All children are different	Try not to have fixed ideas about children's abilities.	Need more time to develop SMT.	Yes. I especially liked the pre-planned sessions.
Student D	Knowledge and Understanding.	SMT should be part of all Foundation Phase sessions.	Try smaller groups.	Yes.
Student E	I feel more confident in my role as a potential teacher.	Children became more imaginative and creative.	-----	Yes. Confidence.
Student F	Learnt about myself.	Improved behaviour.	Give PSD/WB/EL a higher focus.	Yes.
Student G	About PSD/WB/EL	I got to know the children really well.	I would undertake daily SMT activities.	Yes. Improved knowledge, more confidence.
Student H	Knowledge. I look for EL skills. More confident in relation to PSD/WB	Many children found sharing with others difficult. They appreciated special group time.	-----	Yes. Improved knowledge.

Table 4.21. Summary of exit interviews for BA/PGCE students (part 2)

Student	Q5: What will you remember most about SMT?	Q6: Did SMT make any difference to particular children?	Q7: Was children's PSD/WB/EL improved as a result of implementing SMT? Yes/No/Maybe – can you give an example?
Student A	Circle Time – I discovered had a real interest in doing circle time and I will continue to do this in future.	SMT benefited all children, especially in respect to the way that they now listen.	Yes in too many ways to mention. However, mostly in allowing children thinking time and helping them to have 'quiet moments' these are really important.
Student B	Quiet high achieving children can still have self esteem issues.	SMT helped children to relax. It gave the class an identity.	Yes. Having that time with the children was lovely and very rewarding.
Student C	Circle Time. Their faces when I introduced certain ideas e.g. What's in the box?	More co-operation, greater enjoyment. Quiet children who were initially reserved showed marked improvement.	Yes. Co-operation, confidence and patience.
Student D	Outside tasks were very memorable, especially Bear Hunt.	Children looked forward to sessions and were open about their feelings. I saw improvement in their behaviour.	Behaviour was improved. Certain boys did respond and behave in sessions.
Student E	Quietly appreciating beautiful things taught them that it's OK to sit and think rather than constantly doing.	Enthusiasm and other concepts such as exploring feelings.	Yes but needed more time.
Student F	Quality time with the children	My baselines show a definite improvement in the children's PSD/WB/EL skills.	A child who had previously had behavioural problems and didn't have a positive attitude to learning had improved by the end of SMT, this was evident from my baseline.
Student G	Bear Hunt activity.	Yes a child who was restless had improved concentration.	Maybe – It would need to be done over a longer period.
Student H	Everything, but especially special group time.	Children were better at listening to others at the end of the programme.	Yes. I think EL training should be available for all children.

From analysing the answers given by all students in the tables above using my 5 point analysis system, I have been able to ascertain the following information: Figures 1 to 5 which summarise the accumulated data from SMT programme exit questionnaires. Using my 5 point thematic analysis system, I judged each answer as to which of the points were evidenced and coded the answers. As a result of this process I was able to ascertain the following results for Q1 shown in Figure 4.22 below:

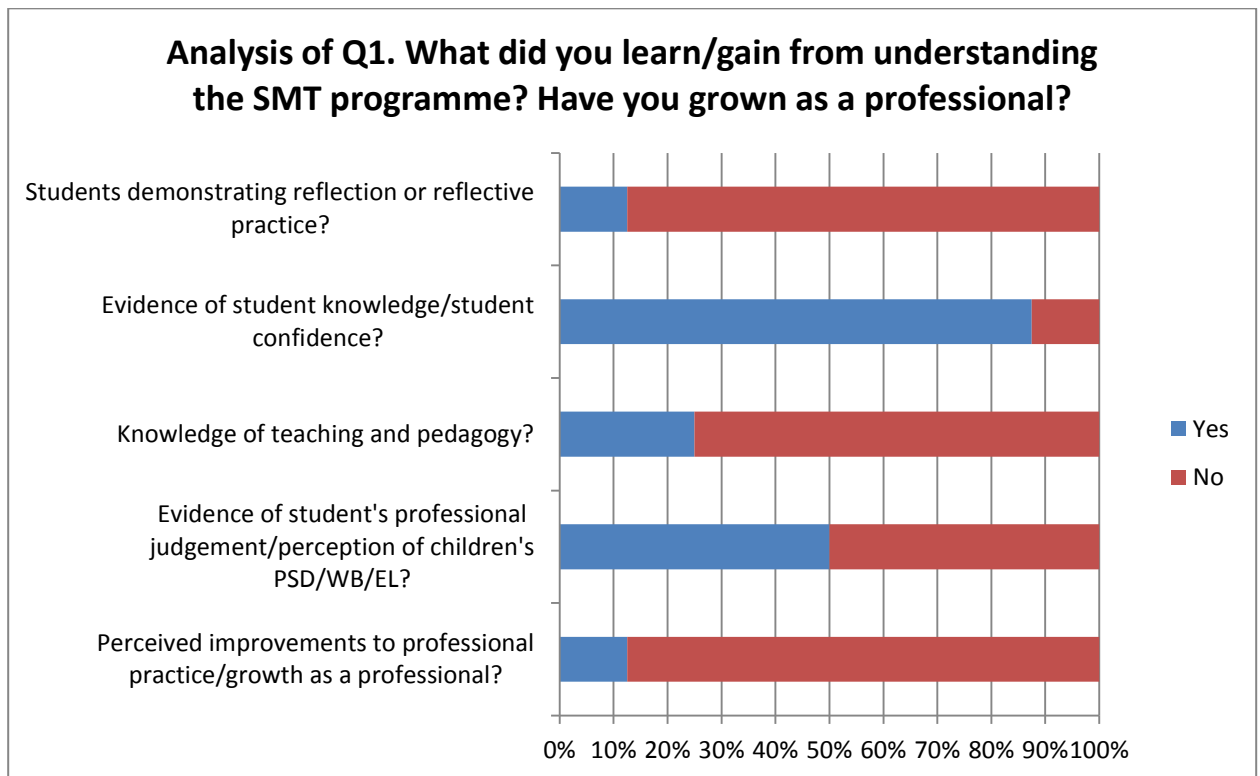


Figure 4.22. Analysis of Q1 SMT exit interview questionnaire (n =8 students)

From the analysis of Q1, I found that most of the cohort did not evidence learning in relation to reflective practice to a significant enough extent on the SMT programme. The exception was that one student was able to evidence that she had grown as a professional during the SMT programme. The majority of students did however, show that they had knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and were confident in delivery of sessions. From my findings I believe that

students acknowledged they had learned both academically and professionally from undertaking the programme. There was less evidence that they had reflected upon or equated growth in this learning to their own professional success or in relation to children's improved learning outcomes.

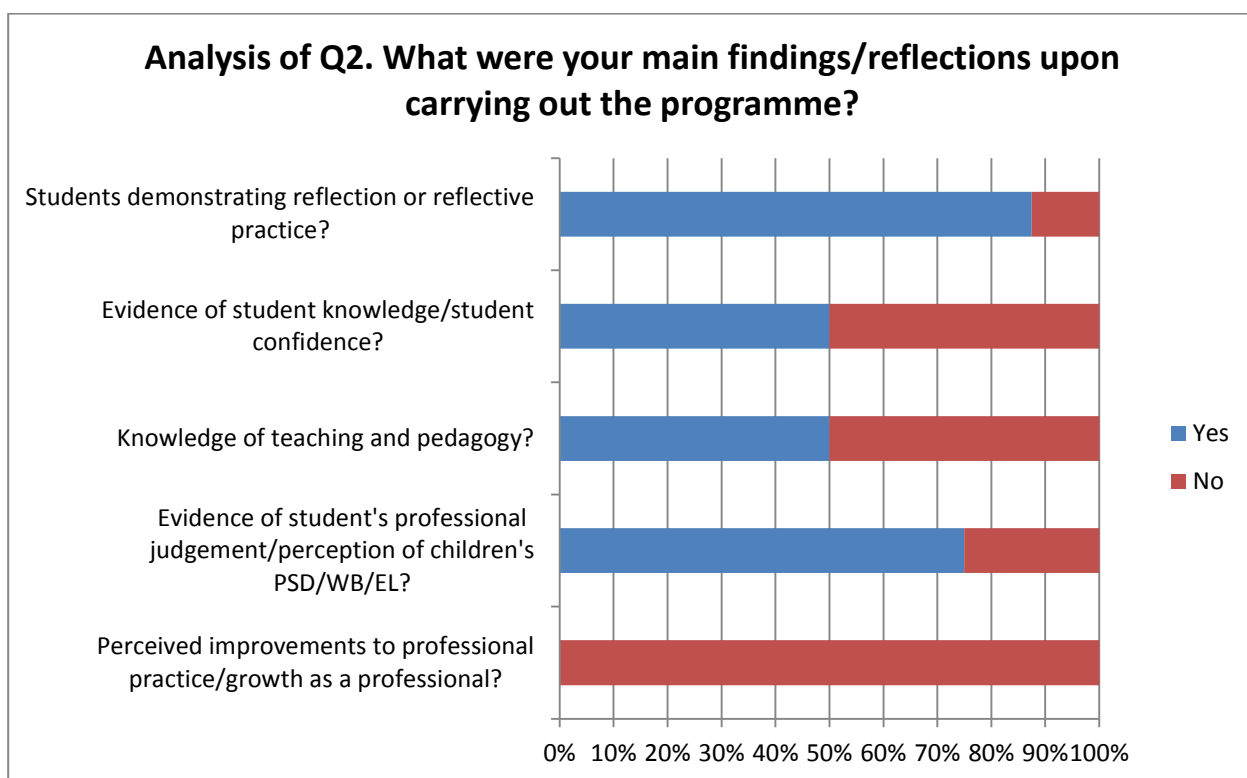


Figure 4.23. Analysis of Q2 SMT exit interview questionnaire (n =8 students)

This question (see Figure 4.23) seemed to elicit and generate more detailed responses. The students were more able to report on their reflections and provide evidence in relation to the first 4 points. Again, however I was unable to evidence perceived improvements to professional practice / growth as a professional.

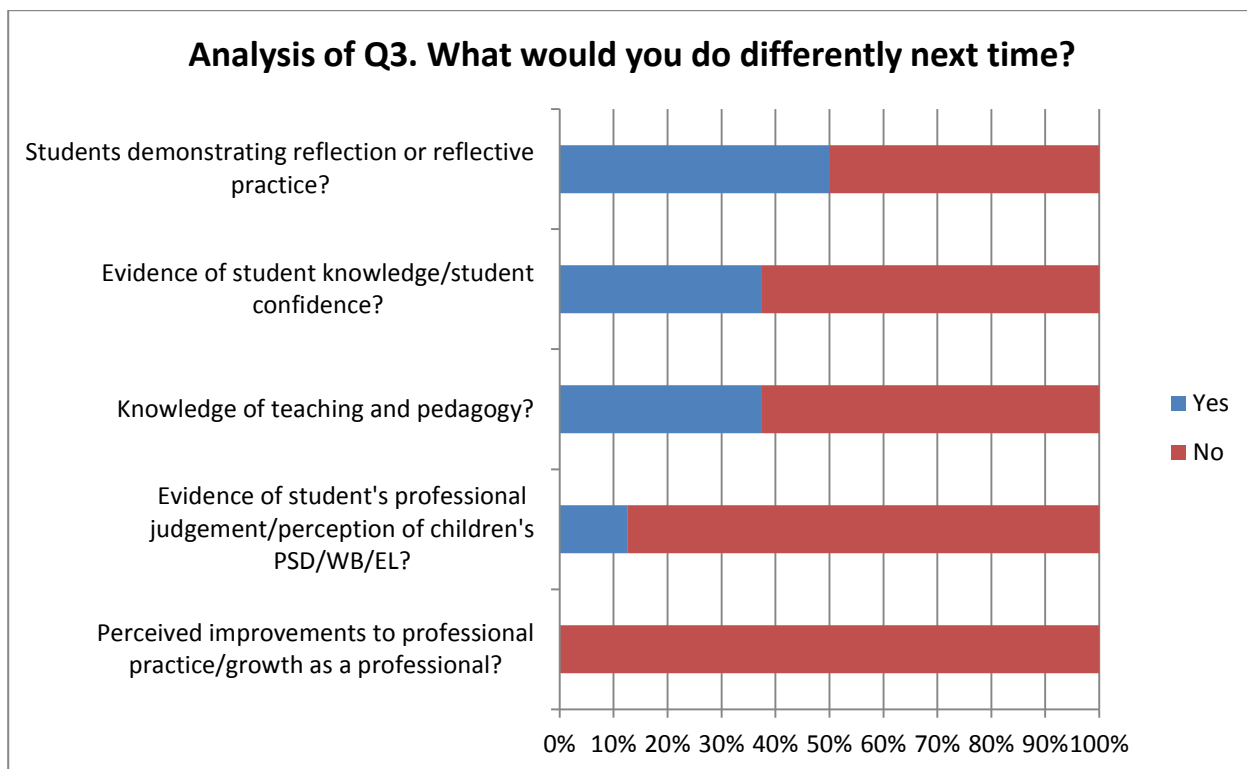


Figure 4.24. Analysis of Q3 SMT exit interview questionnaire (n=8 students)

The students were recipients of knowledge, (see Figure 4.24) they acknowledged their learning and knowledge relating to PSD/WB/EL but seemed less able to think reflectively in a pro-active way in relation to changing aspects of the SMT programme. They reported in their questionnaires ‘I wouldn’t change a thing’ Student B (18.06.08). Whilst this may have been a credit to the SMT materials, I believe it did not show sufficient reflection, autonomy or engagement with the materials. Students seemed content to deliver the programme without any major amendments to it, thus demonstrating that they were often unable or unwilling to reflect more deeply in relation to innovation. I was surprised that mostly, students seemed to show little innovation or reflection in relation to the SMT materials. My observation notes which I recorded during school placement visits (Student B and Student F) are as follows:

The Jam Sandwich activity was carried out by Student B exactly almost to the letter of the SMT lesson plan
 Student F carried out the bear hunt activity exactly as the SMT lesson plan had been written
Excerpt from observation notes (Davis, 2008)

I found this lack of innovation quite surprising. As a group we had talked at length both during the training day and during the following months about refining and adapting ideas to personalise the programme – in effect, to take the SMT lesson plans and adapt and refine them and to personalise the programme more. This did not happen to the extent I would have liked.

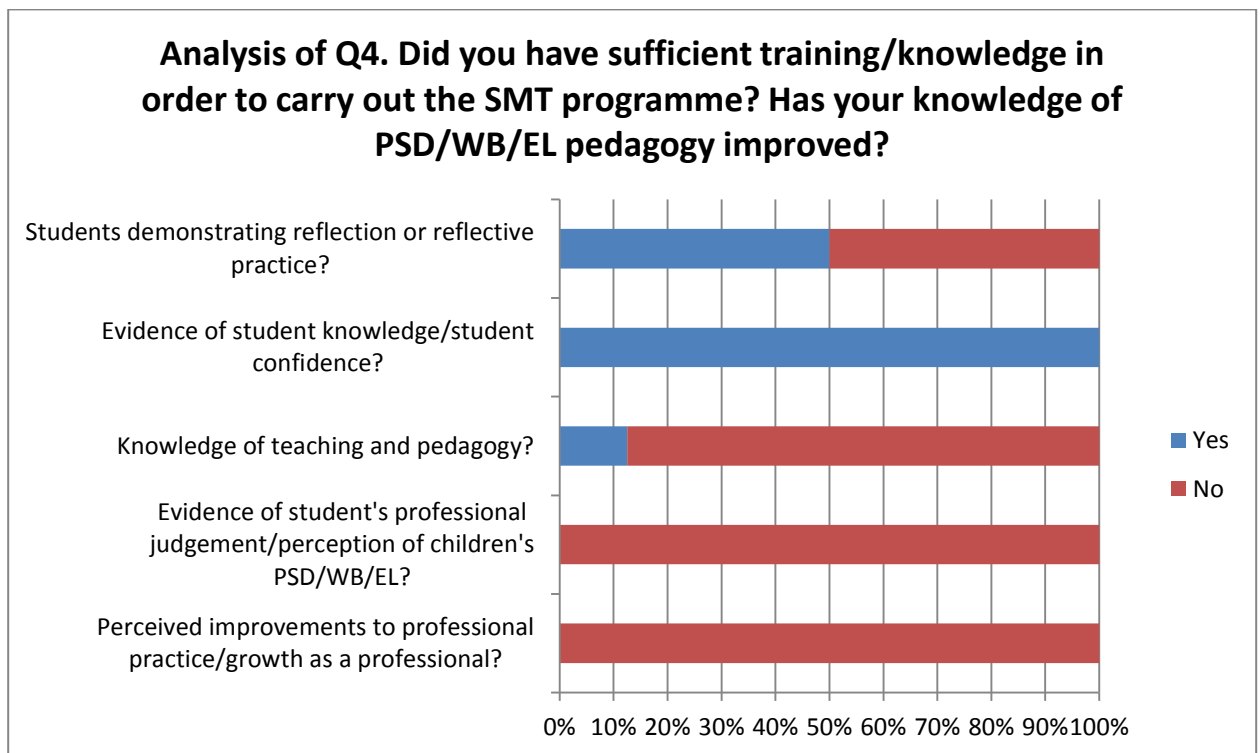


Figure 4.25. Analysis of Q4 SMT exit interview questionnaire (n=8 students)

This was a question (see Figure 4.25) that confirmed student knowledge and confidence relating to PSD/WB/EL delivery thus proving that the SMT programme training PSD/WB/EL was well regarded. However, I believe that most students did not consider that they had improved in relation to pedagogical knowledge. In student interviews they were able to say that they had improved knowledge and confidence. They were unable to evidence how their

knowledge of PSD/WB/EL had improved their pedagogy or professional practice or how any gains in knowledge would benefit future practice.

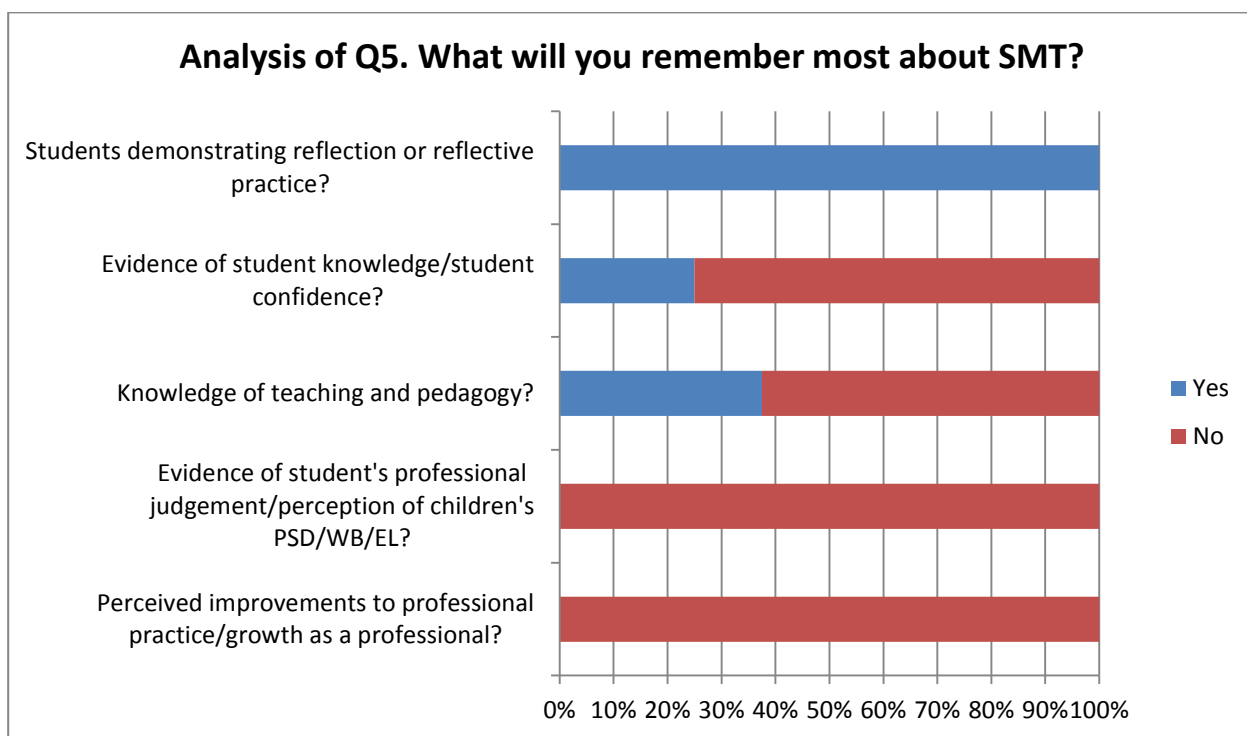


Figure 4.26. Analysis of Q5 SMT exit interview questionnaire (n=8 students)

Here the first question is the exception, (see Figure 4.26) with evidence of student reflection throughout the questionnaires. It was ironic that the students did not appear to credit themselves with improvements to their professional practice; however this was evident in their practice, from my observations of them in the school setting. This was a finding which surprised me and may possibly be due to self confidence issues. Goodfellow (2004) suggested that students would go through a journey of ‘self discovery’ during the reflective process. It seemed that students were happy to talk about the children they had taught and supported during the SMT programme, but found it difficult to write about their own personal and professional achievements whilst on the programme. As Goodfellow (2004) concludes, ‘the language used to describe professional qualities is in itself a revelation of personal

qualities and attributes' (2004, p.71). It may have been that the students genuinely did not enjoy documenting their professional achievements, had difficulty expressing these or modesty may have restricted them.

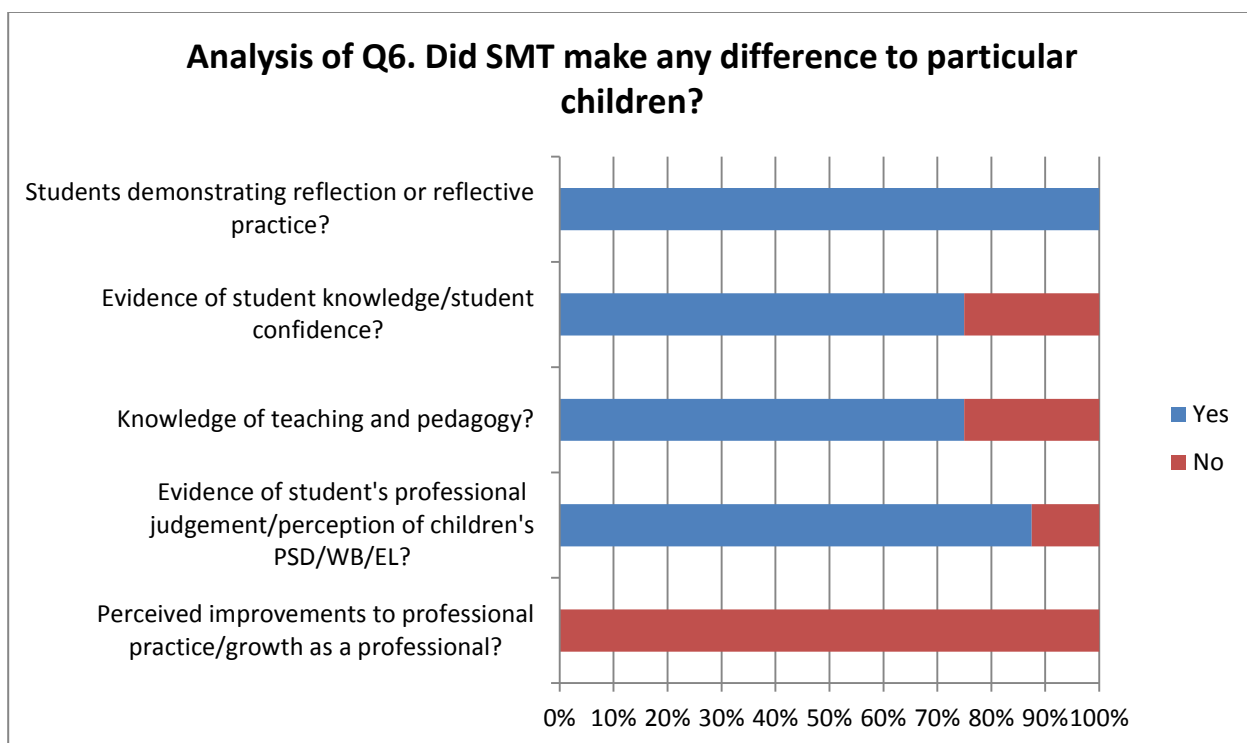


Figure 4.27. Analysis of Q6 SMT exit interview questionnaire (n=8 students)

Most of the students demonstrated (see Figure 4.27) across the first 4 points relevant evidence that the SMT programme did in fact make a difference to particular children. It was interesting to note that, as in previous analysis (see Figures 4.22 to 4.26), the students did not credit themselves with making this difference. None of the students noted that they had improved their professional practice as a result of undertaking the SMT programme or that they had grown as professionals. It is a paradox therefore, that the students were evidencing growth and improvements in the children they were working with, but not in relation to themselves.

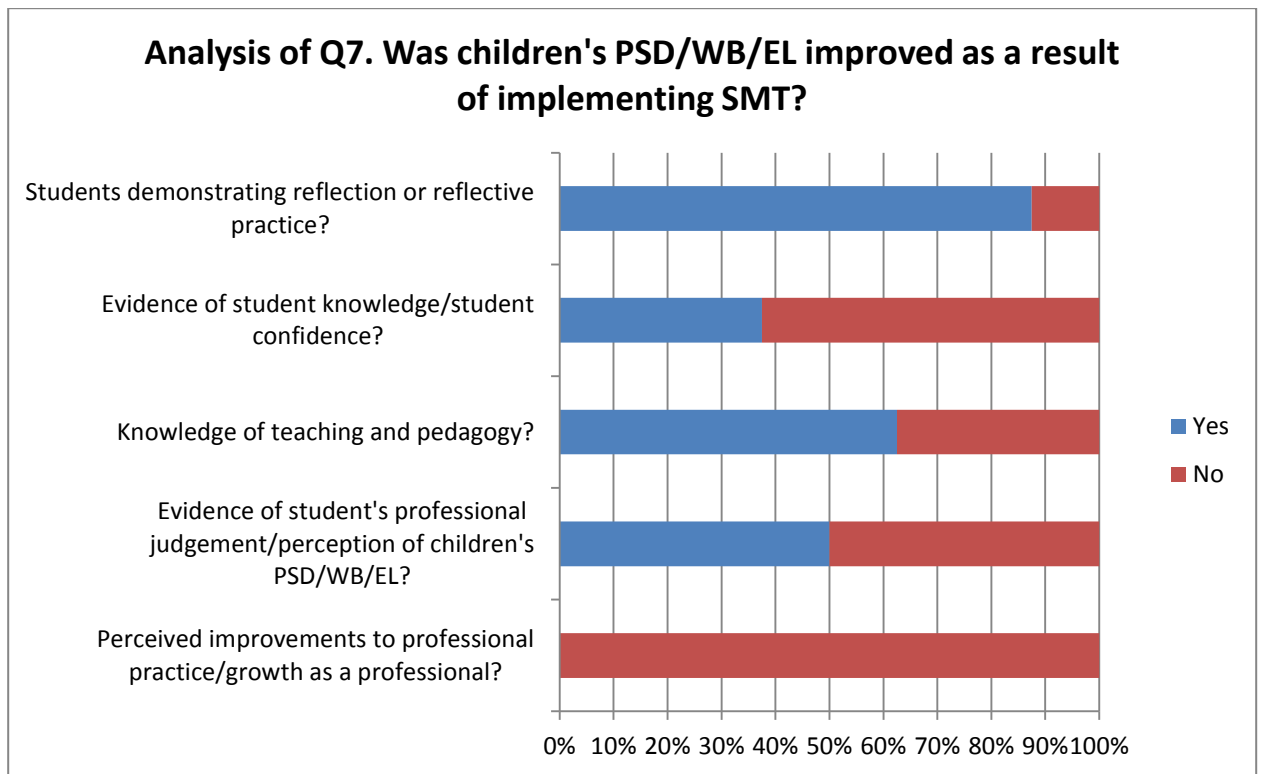


Figure 4.28. Analysis of Q7 SMT exit interview questionnaire (n=8 students)

A fairly positive result (see Figure 4.28). Students acknowledged that the SMT programme did improve children's PSD/WB/EL but were often unable to quantify how exactly. This again proves that the students were reflecting, but engaging in as I termed earlier 'shallow reflection'. They were aware of developments that had occurred, but unable to qualify or quantify in sufficient detail or in relation to the 'so whatness' (Boden 2006) specifically the 'what, why, how, when and where'. They were also often unable to say how findings would inform future practice in enough reflective detail.

Out of eight students, seven believed that SMT had improved the PSD/WB/EL of the children that they worked with over the 6 week SMT programme. One student believed that it may have improved their PSD/WB/EL but that she needed to undertake the programme over a

longer period of time to be more certain. Figure 4.29. below presents the findings relating to associated themes.

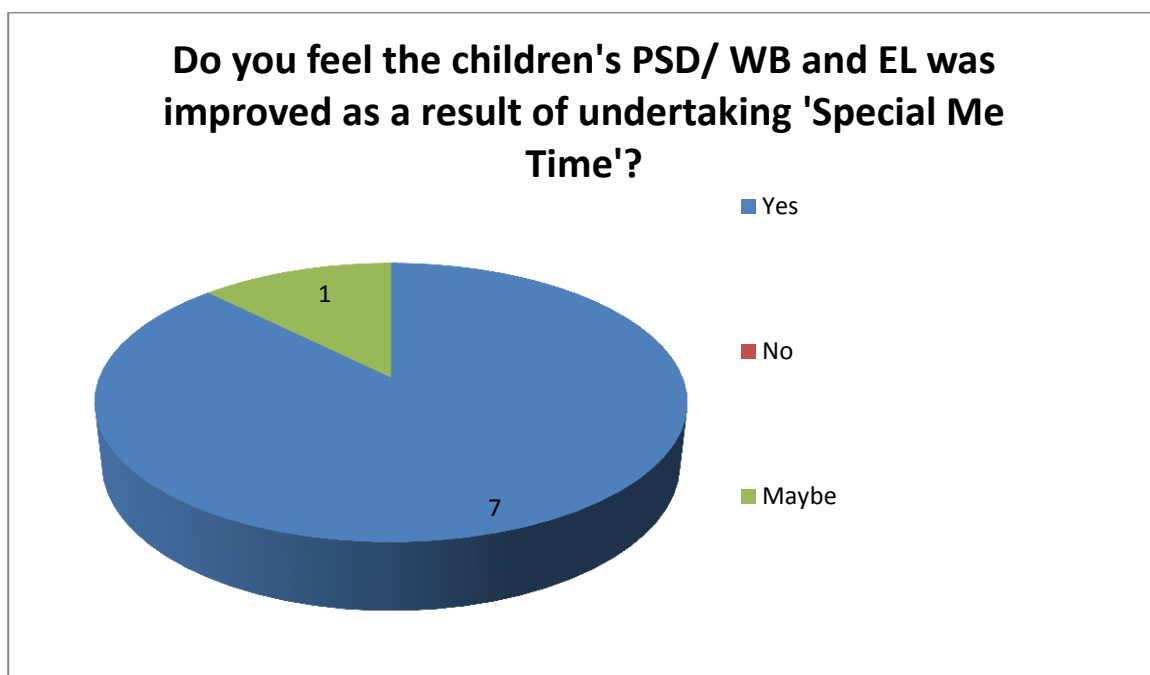


Figure 4.29. Students' perception of children's improvement in PSD/WB/EL following SMT (Q7) (n=8 students)

A supplementary theme, which interested me during the research, was the extent to which the SMT programme had supported young children. Although not a focus of the research, I was interested to discover if the students found the programme to be beneficial to the children they were working with. I have ascertained this from the responses to the student exit interview question Q6: 'Did SMT make any difference to a particular child / children?' and have summarised them in the chart below. As reflective practice formed such an integral part of the research it was pertinent to 'investigate the ITT students' delivery of SMT and reflect on any outcomes.' The outcomes of SMT for children, according to the students' findings, are as shown in Figure 4.30. below:

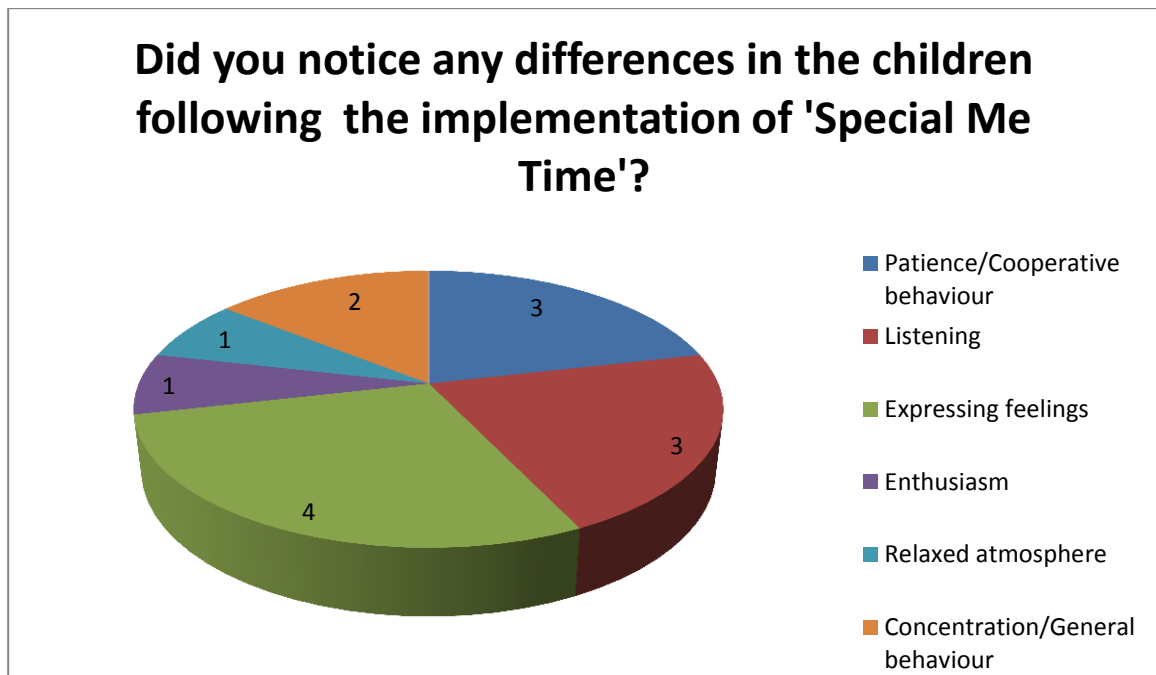


Figure 4.30. Students' perceptions of the differences in the children following SMT (Q6) (n=8 students)

The SMT programme was undertaken by a small number of ITT students who worked with a small number of children. It would be pertinent to undertake this study with a wider sample to be able to draw any sound conclusions on the benefits of the programme. However, it is clear that the programme was beneficial to both students and children in as far as it raised awareness amongst students of the benefits of fostering a sound 'emotional climate' in relation to their teaching pedagogy.

Student interviews / school teaching staff interviews

I was able to interview some students in depth with regard to their thoughts and ideas whilst undertaking the SMT programme. I was also able to interview teachers in their school settings. A selection of interview data is set out below:

SD – what have you gained from undertaking the 'Special Me Time' programmes
 Student D - Following both trials I feel that I have improved my knowledge of PSD/WB/EL. I found that the children also grew in confidence and experience. In my first placement, the children had very limited experiences. When I undertook the Tea party activity, I really could

not believe that some of the children had not eaten a jam sandwich before. I feel that this may have been because a few of the children came from really deprived backgrounds, for example, whose parents had drug and alcohol problems. The children also needed much prompting to share and take turns. Over the course of the Special Me Time programme, I worked hard to establish rules for sharing and turn taking and tried to get the children to appreciate other points of view. I found that the six week intervention was not long enough to do this to the standard I would have liked.

Excerpt of placement interview with Student D 19.05.08

The conclusion of the interview with Student D was no surprise to me, she stated that the six week intervention was not sufficient. It was also interesting that she reflected that she had not completed the programme to the standard she would have liked. Student D was a perfectionist. She was a capable thoughtful student. I know that she completely immersed herself in the programme.

The below excerpt of the interview demonstrates perceptions of school staff in relation to the SMT programme. I interviewed a teacher MJ as the interview transcript below details:

SD. Have you noticed a difference in the children since Student H has been carrying out 'Special Me Time'?

MJ. I have loved the way the children were calmer following the sessions, especially some of the boys. I think she had time to really get to know the children over a relatively short period as she was spending quality time with them. That was the real benefit I feel – knowledge gained about them through spending quality time with them

Interview with class teacher MJ (18.05.08)

In relation to my research aims, this told me that the students had been very effective in using knowledge gained through the implementation of 'SMT'.

In an interview with the class teacher MJ, she told me that she had noticed a 'calmness' amongst the children, she informed me that they were a lively class, but that they really enjoyed the SMT programme. She was particularly complimentary about Student H, her

teaching and the way in which she carried out the programme, engaging all the children in the class and facilitating a calmness which she described as permeating across sessions.

4.10. Emotional Literacy of the students

As part of this study, I recorded in my observation notes, interviews and reflective diaries (2007 – 2008) that the BA Primary and the PGCE students possessed similar qualities. I was interested in the work of Elliot (2005) who wrote about participants in research groups who were ‘active narrators’ (2005, p.129). I thought that students who had chosen to embark on a teaching career would be the type of individuals who would be able to ‘tell a good story’ – especially in relation to their own experiences. From subsequent interviews with the students, my ideas here proved to be accurate. I found I was able to elicit a range of information in the form of narrative from all of the students who took part in the programme. These were recorded in written form and took place on school visits, or informal meetings with the students. From analysing narratives and observations on students, I was able to gain a flavour of the way the students perceived issues relating to PSD/WB / EL.

From observing their taught EL sessions and from analysing the results of questionnaires, interviews and lesson evaluations they produced, I found there were common ‘themes’ amongst the students which I observed and recorded. These themes could be classified - for example, as kindness, empathy, co-operation and patience, common themes which you would hope to observe in trainee teachers. It is important to note here however, that I was not assessing their emotional intelligence. There is a marked difference between making a judgement on their professional competencies as Foundation Phase teachers as opposed to making value judgements on them as people. I did, however, notice that the students were very receptive to the children that they were working with in their school placements. I found

that the students were especially capable in forming and establishing relationships with the children they worked with during ‘Special Me Time’ and establishing sound relationships, based on emotional literacy and dialogue, explaining how they felt and allowing the children to engage with a range of issues relating to EL. In notes from student placement observations I reflected as follows:

‘Student E has a lovely manner with the children, she is kind and caring and mindful of a range of learners, she used differentiation accordingly and her session was planned with this in mind.

Placement observation on Student E 13.02.08

‘Student A’ is a really ‘natural’ teacher. She is very empathetic towards the children. She ‘sees’ what children need and is able to anticipate any possible behavioural issues that may occur. She has a very calm, peaceful manner which children respond really well to.

Placement observation on Student A 19.02.08

I believe the fact that Student E was a calm and quiet student did have an effect on the children. Fullan (1995) recognised that teaching is ‘a moral enterprise. It is about making a difference to the lives of pupils’ (1995, p.253). There was no question that Student A was working sensitively with the children, she was in effect making a difference by promoting the moral climate in the classroom through her sensitive use of the SMT programme. Therefore, I am unable to effectively quantify that the SMT programme itself made a difference to the children here, but that by supporting the children and acting as a positive role model her classroom practice was emotionally literate. I do believe however, from my observations of Student E, that she was taking a very holistic view of the children she was working with and was aware of the link ‘between behaviour, learning and emotion’ (Weare 2006, p.67).

Discussing Feelings

The students were capable of exploring and discussing ‘feelings’ with the children they worked with. One of the key tenets of facilitating and teaching is having a holistic approach to PSD/WB/EL. The WAG (2008) echo this idea in the Personal and Social Education framework for Wales. The WAG advocate that PSE ‘enables’ children and by equipping children with social and emotional skills, especially the ability to be able to work through difficult situations, this ensures that ‘learners are equipped to be more informed, confident and skilled in order to take an active and responsible part in society’ (2008, p.5). As the following excerpt from Student B’s diary sets out, it demonstrates how they had worked with a child to come to a sound resolution, following an emotional upset.

The children all really enjoyed being involved in the process of making their certificates, and took great pride in doing so. CM became difficult and had a tantrum, as she did not like the colour card that I had backed her certificate onto. She decided she didn’t want it and refused to talk about it. She became stubborn and her attitude and behaviour was beginning to affect the other children. I made the decision to take her out of the situation and talk to her. I explained to her that I had taken the time to make her certificate special, and asked her how she thought her behaviour was making me feel. After several minutes, she came around and apologised to me and wanted to rejoin the others.

Diary excerpt – Student B 05.02.08

Altruism

The students were also altruistic in their motives for becoming student volunteers on the ‘Special Me Time’ programme. Attendance on the programme was optional and work related to it was in some cases additional to their specified course work. I was fortunate that I had built up sound relationships with the students who became ‘Special Me Time’ volunteers. The fact that they voluntarily became members of the programme could have been a result of the relationship that we had built up. These students also had a clear interest in the area of PSD/WB/EL and were able to use it effectively in their practice as the diary excerpt from

Student B above also clearly shows. I believe that the students shared the same understanding of young children's needs as I did. They wanted to participate in the programme because of their interest and motivation for discovering more about PSD/WB/EL and as such we shared similar ideas and goals. Anderson et al (2004) looked at the development of the relationships between teacher and student and found a link between the closeness of the teacher to the student, quality of the relationship and improved engagement of the student. It was evident that close bonds were formed between myself and the SMT students, this close relationship meant the students were engaged and dedicated to the programme and in effect, carried out the programme in addition to their teaching placement workload.

The students' work products also demonstrated their commitment to the promotion of PSD/WB/EL strategies through their teaching practice. Student G, a BA Primary student, was particularly interested in the 'Special Me Time' programme. As a result she undertook the programme and on completion produced her final BA Independent Enquiry (IE), which was a large piece of work, entitled 'The Promotion of Children's Emotional Literacy in a Nursery Setting.' Her summary stated:

'This article discusses and explores the strategies and methods which can be utilised to promote the development of emotional literacy of pupils in the early years. Evidence was gathered through the employment of six planned activities as part of 'Special Me Time' a programme to develop children's PSD/WB/EL. The results were interesting, highlighting the need for an emotional curriculum. The more physically interactive activities seemed to be most successful in both gathering and providing opportunities for the development of emotional literacy (Student G 2008).

The IE discussed the strategies and methods that she had utilized to promote the development of EL in children in her placement Nursery school. Her results highlighted the need for what she termed an 'emotional curriculum' (2008, p.5). Recommendations from the IE included how she would continue to develop opportunities for children to explore EL when she had

achieved QTS, offering her class ‘a broad and balanced curriculum, where children can explore and develop their EL through interactive activities’ (2008, p.9).

4.11. Reflective Practice

On commencing ‘Special Me Time’ students were initially unsure how to facilitate and teach in relation to children’s PSD/WB/EL. I found that the students worked hard to establish how to do this and the rationale behind why they should do this became more obvious to them as the ‘Special Me Time’ programme was rolled out in their placement school. I also found that some of the students were particularly reflective in relation to their own EL and how to deliver the ‘Special Me Time’ programme effectively, however they were less able to vocalise or record this. Student A in my opinion was a particularly reflective student. As previously stated I had been fortunate in watching her grow both academically and professionally. In an interview with Student A (28.05.08) I asked her a range of questions relating to the programme and if she believed her own EL had grown as a result. She informed me that she had learned much about PSD/WB/EL and was happy to be implementing such strategies, not just in relation to ‘Special Me Time’ but in her everyday teaching practice.

Student A - I like circle time – I have never done that before...it does show the children how to listen and respect each other... they like it... they like that people are listening to them. It’s all about respecting each other. As time has gone on you tend to do things more naturally, rather than at the beginning... you are thinking to yourself how should I do this? I didn’t know anything about EL before, but I have learned an awful lot, although Special Me Time are specific activities it comes into so much more, listening and respecting each other... look at the speaker, it comes into every day life really.

Placement Interview with Student A 28.04.08.

This interview in placement, gave me a good background on Student A’s thoughts and reflections on the SMT programme. It was positive to note that she focused on the importance of listening to children and respecting them. Moss (2006) stressed that listening to children was integral to ethical practice whilst working with young children. A theme of

this research has been that SMT gave students the time and space to be able to listen to children effectively. It was also good to note that Student A believed that the SMT activities were part of ‘everyday life’. This showed me that the students were using SMT approaches not only in sessions but as an integral part of their everyday practice which is essential good practice in Foundation Phase teaching.

4.12. Student Retention on the SMT Programme

Retaining students on the programme was a challenge. Both cohorts had real constraints and pressures on their time, undertaking full time ITT programmes. As well as undertaking the ‘Special Me Time’ programme, students were on teaching placement, with all the associated difficulties and challenges that produces, plus they had academic work to undertake alongside this process. The student involvement during the programme was patchy. Some students produced a good quantity of work products in the form of completed baselines, lesson plans and other materials, others less so. I was in a difficult position with regard to asking students for evidence in the form of work products, as this was purely voluntary and a non compulsory part of their course. I found the best way to elicit information from them was to ensure that I visited the students in placement and sought to interview them, following placement observations, as this was a good way to access them and observe their practice in relation to the SMT activities.

I found that interviewing students on completion of the programme and completing the final reflection questionnaire gave me the most detailed results. I had previously emailed the questionnaire to the students and had nil responses. I therefore, set aside a day (18.06.08) which I called ‘reflection day’ organised a room, tea and biscuits and asked the students one at a time, to complete the final reflection on SMT questionnaire (Appendix 13). Although I

only met with each student for about quarter of an hour, I was able to gather some very rich data, which illustrated their experiences. The question ‘What do you think you learned from undertaking SMT?’ gave some really interesting answers. Student B told me that ‘you need to take time to listen to young children and it takes a long time to get to know them’. Student H said she gained ‘knowledge’ and that she will look for ‘emotional literacy skills in children from now on’. I had interviewed Student C previously at length in placement on 20.05.08, so her exit questionnaire was similar to the interview transcript. In the interview, she told me ‘I have really seen the benefit of taking the time to get to know the children and spending real quality time with them – it seems like its away from academic work, but it is all so integral in the Foundation Phase isn’t it? They are learning lots of skills – and they don’t even know it. I’m so glad I took part in the programme, I have learned so much.’

4.13. Conclusion

Welsh Assembly Government Foundation Policy has undoubtedly placed Wales in a unique situation. This research project ran alongside the implementation of Welsh Assembly Government Foundation Phase policy. This dissertation was reaching completion as Foundation Phase policy was being implemented. It was fortuitous that this project was able to access Foundation Phase policy, ideology and resources and employ / assess these within the study at this point in time. From my own pedagogical viewpoint, findings relating to professional practice could be shared with colleagues in the School of Education and other Higher Education Institutions in Wales who are implementing the Foundation Phase related curriculum in their Initial Teacher Training programmes and Early Childhood Studies programmes.

It is pertinent to end the analysis section of this research with evidence of how my ‘findings sit alongside the body of research literature already available and which you have reviewed’ (Sharp 2009, p.122). A seminal work as far as I was concerned and one that I consulted often, were the findings of Goodfellow (2004) and her ideas on how to document professional practice through the use of a professional portfolio. Her conclusions on this process were similar to mine, in that she demonstrated the benefits of the use of a portfolio approach in early childhood settings. She showed how reflective practice can be used effectively in ITT by allowing students to ‘provide analytical and interpretative records of reflection on practices and so enhance the skills of critical thinking; and to identify professional growth and establish a basis for furthering one’s own professional development.’ (Goodfellow, 2004 p.72). From carrying out this research, I have come to the conclusion that students need much more structured support in the use of a reflective diary. The reflective process needs to be more firmly embedded into everyday teaching pedagogy. Students must be empowered to embrace the concept and see it as an ‘unconscious’ part of their practice. It should not be viewed as an add on, something that is unimportant or merely a form filling exercise.

Sternberg (2010) explored the professional development of student teachers and this research mirrored some of her ideas. Stenberg explored aspects relating to high quality teaching (and learning). She believed this process requires the student teacher to be aware of ‘the sources for making pedagogical decisions’. Stenberg advocated that trainee teachers must develop self knowledge, which then feeds into their professional development. This self knowledge comes from self reflection and asking critical questions about themselves and their practice. Self knowledge enables teachers to recognise why they act and teach in a particular way (Wagenheim, Clark and Crisbo, 2009).

During the reflection day (18.06.08) the students were asked a number of questions. One question asked was ‘Do you feel that the children’s PSD and WB and EL was improved as a result of implementing ‘Special Me Time’: Yes / No / Maybe?’. Whilst this study was only carried out with a small selection of students / children and over a very limited time scale, the findings, however, are encouraging. The consensus amongst the students was ‘Yes’ – the SMT programme did improve a range of PSD/WB/EL competencies, but that it was difficult to quantify exactly how or why this was the case. The questionnaires employed gave a snapshot of the students’ opinions at that time and a real flavour that even a limited amount of dedicated time spent on PSD/WB/EL can be effective. It is also important to state at this point, that although the students showed little concrete evidence of the reflective process, reflection did occur. An important finding for me is that I must look at ways in which to support future ITT students in this process and aim for them not only to engage in reflection, but to employ more robust ways of documenting it and using that documentary evidence to inform future practice. This is important in order to continue the process of developing and extending students’ self knowledge (Sternberg 2010).

Research evidence and ideas for future development which were generated as a result of this research has been shared with colleagues who teach on other education programmes. Recently (07.07.11) I delivered a workshop detailing my research to colleagues at the South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education and Training (SEWCTET) conference at University Wales Newport (UWN). The work shop was attended by professional school colleagues from UWIC/UWN partner schools in the Newport and Cardiff area.

Sharing of expertise and knowledge with colleagues will hopefully result in a team approach to teaching in this area. The research may also draw on other colleague’s professional

expertise. Therefore, hopefully, the research will be of benefit to the School of Education 'team' as a whole and ultimately, other professional colleagues.

It is a huge responsibility to provide young children with the means to understand both themselves and their social world. In order to begin this process, ITT students need to be taught how to appreciate the holistic nature of learning in the Foundation Phase. They also, must be equipped with specialist knowledge and have a clear idea of the close relationship between feelings and learning. McLaughlin (2008) explored the developing emotional well-being agenda in schools and classrooms. She argued that there were dangers in adopting 'an individualistic programmatic approach' (2008, p.353) within classrooms. The SMT programme could be described as an individualistic programme, as it was used as an intervention over a short period and had constraints on its implementation such as scale and the number of children it was delivered to. I agree with McLaughlin (2008) in that there should be a 'wider emphasis on relationships, pedagogy and community building....to the development of emotional well-being in young people' (2008, p.353). I have found that the PSD/WB/EL pedagogy I have been delivering to students is really only the 'tip of the iceberg'; there is much more to be shared and discovered and it is important that ITT students are given the opportunity to develop skills in this area, in order to facilitate PSD/WB/EL as an unconscious, integral part of everyday good practice.

Another concept which I explored was the students' teacher - child relationships. Whilst I was supporting the ITT students' reflection and acquisition of PSD/WB/EL knowledge, it was pertinent to reflect on the emotional dynamic involved between teacher and child.

Killick (2006) valued the facilitation of respect, co-operation and consideration when working with children. He believes the teacher's role is especially important in demonstrating and modelling empathetic behaviour, with values being 'caught rather than taught' (2006, p.17). This demonstrates the importance of the Foundation Phase practitioner in modelling behaviour, being aware of young children's individual needs and in being cognisant with their own EL.

This research aimed to look at ITT students 'learning journey' over the course of a training year and how students gained knowledge and skills through the facilitation of the 'Special Me Time' programme. It is evident that students did gain theoretical knowledge both of PSD/WB/EL pedagogy and also the theory of reflective practice.

I have shown in this chapter that I followed the students 'learning journey' and monitored and reflected upon student progress. I also believe that I have demonstrated how the SMT programme impacted on the students PSD/WB/EL pedagogy and how they used reflective practice to some extent. I will discuss further in Chapter 5 my thoughts and reflections on this process and how my findings will contribute to my own teaching pedagogy and consider ways to produce producing quality training for future ITT students in the School of Education. I also hope that my findings will be of benefit to other interested parties.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

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Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This research study was entitled: ‘Examining the implementation of an emotional literacy programme on the pedagogy and reflective practice of Trainee Teachers’. A basic premise of reflective practice in ITT as McGregor (2011) found, is that ‘reflection often begins when you pause to ‘think back’ (2011, p.1). Undertaking this research has allowed me the privilege of being able to ‘think back’ over the past six years of study. During that time, my belief that ITT students must teach young children within an emotional domain has only strengthened. Education professionals now realise that when they teach children in the school environment, they need to be aware of children’s growing ‘identity formation’ (Kernis, 1995) and that feelings of well-being are strongly linked to life experiences and success (Collins, 2007).

Throughout the research process I have learned much not only with regard to my own teaching pedagogy but how I transmit ideas and concepts to the ITT students I teach. I have become aware that I am equipping students with a range of skills and competencies which will remain with them throughout their teaching career. I am drawn to the ‘pedagogical model’ of teaching, especially in relation to teaching young children. Moss and Petrie (2002, p.143) stated: ‘the pedagogue does not see him/herself as an isolated worker, working for children, carrying out actions on children. The approach is relational. The child is not regarded as an autonomous and detached subject, but as living in networks of relationships, involving both children and adults’.

5.2. Reviewing the Research Questions

In concluding this investigation, it is pertinent to return to the original research questions, in order to assess how far this study has been able to address them. Each stage of the research has had its focus on PSD/WB/EL and student reflection on how they implemented PSD/WB/EL within their professional practice. I will aim in this chapter to revisit each research question and draw together the main themes of the study and related data to support the ideas which are set out below:

Research question 1:

What was the extent at the beginning of the research project of ITT student knowledge and understanding of PSD/WB/EL?

I was aware from the initial student questionnaires undertaken (2007) that there was a shortfall of knowledge relating to PSD/WB/EL amongst BA Primary QTS ITT students and PGCE Primary ITT students. I was also aware that within the BA Primary and the PGCE curricula in the School of Education, there were no dedicated sessions relating specifically to PSD/WB/EL so I considered that these concepts were not being covered sufficiently. As the teaching sessions for the year had already been planned, I realised that I would not be able to deliver full sessions on PSD/WB/EL. I was however, able to introduce aspects of PSD/WB/EL into some teaching situations. Also, there was a disparity between the lengths of time for which I taught the two groups as previously discussed. I only had twelve sessions of two hours in length with the BA cohort. I decided on a three steps to rectify this situation.

Step 1 - I was aware that the students needed to continue to refine, develop and research as part of their professional practice. To support their subject knowledge in relation to PSD/WB/EL, I initiated a PSD book and with other colleagues in the School of Education produced a 'reader' for students to address knowledge shortfall. The book is entitled 'Personal

and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity, A Resource Reader for the Foundation Phase Practitioner' (2008). It was based on the WAG Foundation Phase area of learning with that name. The resource reader was designed for students and practitioners working with young children, in the Foundation Phase setting. The reader consisted of six chapters. The first two chapters related directly to personal and social development and well-being. Chapter 3 related to building emotional resilience in young children, Chapter 4 dealt with behaviour issues. Chapters 5 and 6 were more practice based. Chapter 5 was designed to support students in how to observe personal and social development/well-being and Chapter 6 detailed 24 PSD/WB activities to be used in the school environment.

Step 2- I developed the materials for SMT which the students would be able to use to facilitate and support young children's PSD/WB/EL in the Foundation Phase setting. On commencement of the SMT programme students were invited to a training day on Monday 10th December 2008. They were each given a handbook (Appendix 6) For the students who had not opted to become members of the SMT programme, they were able to take advantage of the pre-planned activities as these were available in the resource reader along with the baseline sheet.

Step 3 – I organised and facilitated a national early childhood conference at my institution in order to raise awareness of the curriculum area. Two renowned key note speakers led the conference – Marion Dowling, author of 'Young Children's Personal and Social Development' and Catherine Corrie author of 'Becoming Emotionally Intelligent'. As well as the key note speakers, I organised a range of relevant workshops for the delegates to attend which related to aspects of PSD/WB/EL.

I was very keen that students from within the school were able to attend so I negotiated a special student rate for them. Out of 87 delegates, 24 were students on either the BA primary or the PGCE. Out of the 24 students, 8 of them were SMT programme students. Evaluations from delegates on the day were extremely positive, with student evaluations rating it as mostly very good or good. (see Appendix 15 for student comments). The comments demonstrated clearly that the students had gained effectively in their knowledge and understanding relating to PSD/WB/EL and would be using the strategies and ideas in their teaching practice. Most of the students who attended felt the conference was a good addition to their professional knowledge. I was aware of these comments and used them as a focus in tailoring the following year's curriculum accordingly.

As a result I developed and implemented a programme with subsequent cohorts on the PGCE primary called 'Thinking outside the box'. This was first delivered in the academic year 2009/10. This eventually became a three hour session which I taught to 116 students in groups usually of 20. The sessions introduced students to the importance of facilitating a holistic PSD/WB/EL curriculum and aimed to give them a range of skills and knowledge to be able to do this. The sessions combined theory on PSD/WB/EL with practical elements such as how to deliver circle time and the use of games and activities which could be used to support PSD/WB/EL in the school setting.

Research question 2

In what ways could using Reflective Practice engage ITT students and support their understanding and practical pedagogical knowledge of PSD/WB/EL?

The use of reflective practice was demonstrated to some extent, particularly through the reflections students made in their diaries and their use of baseline data to explore children's achievements relating to PSD/WB/EL competencies. This is also evident in the exit questionnaire answers and in the interviews I undertook with the students. Analysis of reflective diaries allowed me to monitor and reflect upon student progress and reflective practice on the SMT programme. As a teacher educator I learned many things from undertaking this research study. I found that some students were more reflective than others and the students who showed the most reflection, in my opinion, were the students who I perceived to be the most 'emotionally literate'. They were the students who empathised and really got to know the children they were working with. Gerlach and Bird (2006) found the most emotionally literate teachers to be those who interacted with children 'in ways that soothe, calm, contain, stimulate and accompany them as they learn' (2006, p.5). I also thought this was the case, that those students also created a 'learning climate' in their classrooms, fostering deep quality relationships with the children.

It was evident that the student participants in the research project engaged fully with the SMT programme and in doing so became more confident in relation to the delivery of PSD/WB/EL pedagogy. This was in part due to the knowledge that they gained whilst undertaking the programme. This is demonstrated below.

SD – what have you gained from undertaking the 'Special Me Time' programmes?

Student A - I feel that I have improved my knowledge of PSD/WB and EL. I found that the six week intervention was not long enough to do this to the standard I would have liked.

Excerpt of Interview with Student A PGCE student 18.06.08

I know that Student A completely immersed herself in the programme. On completion of the SMT programme, Student A carried on with PSD/WB/EL activities of her own design; she was particularly capable in facilitating circle time, which she used effectively up until the end of her

teaching placement. I also gained evidence from class teachers on the effectiveness of students' implementation of the programme. (interview with class teacher MJ 18.05.08).

Research question 3

How could using an action research paradigm enable the researcher to consider whether the 'Special Me Time' programme would impact on students' pedagogy and reflective practice?

The use of an action research paradigm enabled me to draw firm conclusions from the research undertaken as set out in my findings section in 5.4 . As MacNaughton and Hughes (2008) pointed out 'drawing a conclusion about your action research project requires you to decide what has (and hasn't) changed since you began the research project' (2008, p. 215). My findings and reflections in the chapter show I have drawn conclusions from research undertaken.

5.3. Key Issues

The Reggio Emilia model of early childhood education offers many influential ideas on effective pedagogical approaches to early learning. One such model is the 'teacher as learner' idea, whereby practitioners continue to attribute importance to the role of the environment, how the nursery is organised and the equipment the children have access to. The Reggio Emilia information site states that 'Teachers' long-term commitment to enhancing their understanding of children is at the crux of the Reggio Emilia approach' (accessed online undated). It is important for all teachers to know their pupils well; this is especially important for trainee teachers who are still formulating ideas on child development and the associated aspects of this which relate to effective teaching pedagogy. A programme such as SMT can help support this process.

I have learned much about the importance of ‘learning about teaching teachers’ through my own studies and reflections during this research project (Loughran, 2007). I am fortunate to have taken this ‘learning journey’ along with my students and also that I have learned both ‘from’ and ‘with’ the ITT students. The process of sharing knowledge with my students, rather than simply just enhancing theirs has been empowering. I have also learned that a limitation of this study was that I did not factor in enough time during sessions for the students to reflect on their findings in a collaborative way and thus there was as Clandinn (2007) suggested, a lack of ‘formal opportunities’ to engage in reflective dialogue with each other. This was ironic as the Special Me Time programme made a feature of celebrating children’s successes and achievements. This is something I have reflected on in depth and now ensure that my student groups have sufficient ‘sharing’ sessions with each other in which they reflect on each others achievements and indeed areas for development.

It is important that as a teacher educator, I am aware of the well-being of my students. Estyn (2011) has set out guidance relating to ITT providers’ ‘duty of care towards trainees’ (2011, p.20). It also states that the ‘mental, physical and emotional well-being of trainees are essential pre-conditions for successful training and sustaining good health in a teaching career’ (2011, p.20). These ideas were also initially set out in the National Healthy Schools Standard Report (NHS, 2002) which emphasised that a healthy school is one that promotes physical and emotional health for both children and teaching staff. The stress that students may be subject to whilst undertaking an ITT programme of study has been documented (Chaplain 2008, Cornelius et al 2011) but research into this area is scant. Murray-Harvey et al (2000) ascribe this to the fact that students’ ‘stress’ whilst undertaking ITT and that this is often seen as ‘a normal’ part of becoming a qualified teacher. Brember et al (2002, p.175)

point out the need for ITT tutors to include ‘stress identification and management in teacher training’.

Catherine Corrie in her key note speech (12.04.08) at the Foundation Phase conference said that the job of the early years educator was to ‘assist children in finding their inner genius’. As a teacher educator, I believed it was my role to ensure that my students realised the importance that their thinking and ethos made to the young children they would teach and care for. Another theme which was relevant to the students’ beliefs was a thought which Marion Dowling offered at the conference. She talked about planting a ‘golden seed’ which she described as hope or optimism, of making young children realise that up to a point, they are able to shape their own destinies, and as educators we have a responsibility to help children develop their self belief and develop the ‘super skills’ of resilience and confidence (Dowling 12.04.08).

Throughout the research process, I was fortunate to work with a group of students who were motivated, professional and engaged. They showed me that they had sound Emotional Literacy and were interested and keen to develop a wide range of PSD/WB/EL skills in the children that they were working with, as well as within themselves. As Llewellyn-Williams (2009, p.233) found; ‘The greatest quality of any teacher is that of empathy as this predisposes the individual to cope with the wide range of learners’ needs and aspirations.’ I believe that the students on the SMT programme showed sound empathy skills and this enabled them to be highly responsive to young children’s needs.

An effective teacher, in my opinion, is one who is prepared to work outside their comfort zone, to challenge themselves and maybe make mistakes along the way. The effective

Foundation Phase practitioner must respect and value young children and in effect, learn from them. The role of the teacher in the Foundation Phase setting is a complex one. Teachers need to deliver effective pedagogy but they must also be mindful of the love and care that young children need daily. The key to understanding young children's PSD/WB/EL is getting to know them and developing a caring relationship with them. It is also important to listen to them and take time to reflect on their questions and insights.

In addition the Foundation Phase practitioner needs to build effective relationships with parents and have some understanding of the dynamics which are present in the child's home environment. It is a huge responsibility to support young children in learning about both themselves and their world. In order to facilitate this process, I believe the ITT students had begun to appreciate the holistic nature of learning in the Foundation Phase. I aimed where possible to provide them with specialist knowledge relating to PSD/WB/EL. One of the concepts we explored as part of the SMT training day was the link between feelings and learning (Peart, 2002) and if children's emotional feelings are good, that is they feel confident, it follows that they will be more ready to learn, and to take on new challenges.

The English Government has recently given the well-being agenda a higher national profile. In April 2011 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) began work on a 'National Well-being Project' which will measure factors relating to people's well-being. Potential indicators of well-being would include health, levels of education, inequalities in income and environmental factors. David Cameron (25.11.10) said 'we will start measuring our progress as a country not just by how our economy is growing, but by how our lives are improving, not

just by our standard of living, but by our quality of life'. This is a considerable change in thinking. The profile of well-being has been raised by such initiatives.

5.4. Findings / Range of Themes Identified as a result of carrying out the SMT Programme

My findings from carrying out this research project cumulated in a range of themes relating to PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice. These themes became evident to me following the implementation of the SMT programme by the students. These were varied and would be what was hoped for in a responsive emotionally literate classroom. Morris and Scott (2002) referred to 'Emotional literacy indicators' in the school setting such as motivation and class climate. I believe that the students had set their own emotional climate through carrying out SMT in their settings over the six week period. It was interesting to note that Student B described implementing the programme as giving the class an 'identity', another student Student H said that the children 'appreciated' their special group time. The theme of special or quality time was echoed by many of the students. Student E noted that the activity 'quietly appreciating beautiful things' taught the children that it was acceptable to sit and think rather than have to be constantly 'doing things'. It seems clear that often educators worry about ensuring children are constantly engaging in activities when often they just need time and space to reflect and think. The WG stressed the need for young children to be allowed to develop their thinking skills across areas of learning within the Foundation Phase. The processes of 'planning developing and reflecting' (WAG 2007, p.4) are seen as particularly important. Two of the students used circle time to good effect during SMT. Both students said that it was the thing they would remember the most about undertaking SMT. The findings which I discovered as a result of undertaking this research have been organised into two main themes and are as follows:

Theme 1: Pedagogical themes

Students used ‘empathetic listening’ (Killick, 2006, p.138) as a diagnostic tool and as a means of calming children and reflecting on their behaviour. This theme was linked to the following point whereby students highlighted that SMT gave them dedicated time with the children.

The students highlighted that SMT gave them what they termed ‘quality time’ with children - this is something that all teachers should have and should not be classed as a luxury or ‘add on’. Students used and engaged in ‘empathetic listening’ (Killick, 2006. p.138) as a diagnostic tool and a means of calming children and reflecting on their behaviour. Students recalled that SMT gave them ‘dedicated’ time with the children. They highlighted that SMT gave them what they termed ‘quality time’ with children, this is something that all teachers should have and should not be classed as a ‘luxury’ or ‘add on’.

Students need support and guidance - in relation to maintaining professional relationships. They need ‘reflection time’ themselves to be able to discuss emotional issues which may manifest themselves during the course of placements. I identified that the students often needed time to talk about emotional issues that were part of the school day. I believe it is important to develop a ‘cognitive coaching framework’ (Costa and Garnston 1994, Clinard and Ariav 1998 and Garnston and Dyer 1999) to emphasise reflective thinking and non-judgmental feedback to students. This is important, especially if students have experienced emotional ‘situations’ in the school setting, which they wish to discuss. The importance of mutual learning between the tutor and student should be a feature of good practice. Murray-Harvey (1999) talked about ‘coaching conversations’ to build a sense of trust and rapport between the student and tutor. She described a dynamic whereby ‘students should be

encouraged to think positively in relation to their performance but also to have realistic expectations of that performance' (1999, p.11).

Two students found that high achieving girls found SMT activities challenging - as there were no 'right or wrong' answers – the girls struggled with some of the concepts in the 'emotional' context of the sessions. Student B documented this at length, the other student wrote this in an SMT session evaluation.

The student / child relationship is of vital importance - students need to be continually aware of this dynamic and work sensitively within this relationship. As a teacher educator, I need to ensure that all students are aware of this dynamic. It is important that all students are aware of the importance of nurturing and caring for young children, as well as educating them. I believe it is therefore, essential to train ITT students in the importance of teaching within an 'emotional dynamic'.

Students believed that they needed specialised training - in relation to knowledge of PSD / WB / EL to be able to teach and support young children more effectively - Students highlighted that the PSD/WB training they had received as a result of the SMT programme should be compulsory for all PGCE primary students irrespective of their chosen age phase.

Students believed that they needed to improve their own EL - especially in relation to dealing with more emotive issues which occurred during the course of the SMT activities. Students saw a definite benefit from undertaking the 'Special Me Time' activities, although sometimes they found it difficult to effectively quantify the differences that the activities made. However, they were aware that they were spending what they termed 'quality time'

with the children. All students noted a positive change in their classroom management and the general well-being of the children.

Theme 2: Reflective Practice themes

Shallow reflection – I discovered the students were using reflection to some degree and in the case of two students especially (Student A and Student B) to a good extent in their professional practice. However, as I have discussed in Chapter 4, I have categorised the general level of reflective practice of the student cohort to be at what I termed a ‘shallow level’. I believe that the students were not using reflective findings to assess their teaching competency in a problem solving capacity. Thomas and Griggs (2011) said deep reflection should consider ‘does the reflection improve my teaching or does it enhance my pupils learning’ (2011, p.37). The students were aware of the children’s development and often documented this, but I believe they were less aware of their own. There was scant evidence of documentation in relation to changes in their professional practice as a result of reflection. The crux of this matter relates to the ideas of Dewey (1910) and his model of routine action as opposed to reflective action. Dewey based reflective action on ‘active persistent and careful consideration of teaching situations’ according to Thomas and Griggs, (2011, p.11) and the processes involved in problem solving. As I have argued throughout this research, the ITT students were often able to reflect on what had occurred or what they had found out in relation to their teaching pedagogy on the SMT programme. The students were however, less able to follow through their reflective ideas in relation to those findings, problem solve or relate findings to their professional accomplishments. Dewey (1910) was clear that it was ‘problem solving’ that was the ‘steady and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection’ (1910, p.11). It is therefore, not sufficient simply to reflect, students must then act on these reflections, when pertinent to do so.

Furlong and Maynard (1995) were critical of Dewey’s model of reflective action, stressing the complexity of teaching. Brown and McIntyre (1992) believed that trainee teachers needed to

gain in experience and practice, from more experienced practitioners and from other practitioners' ideas, in order to be able to reflect in depth or diagnose problems, with regard to teaching situations. The concept of 'practical theorising' was raised by Hagger and McIntyre who said that ITT students employ practical theorising as a means of 'both looking for attractive ideas for practice and subjecting these ideas to critical examination' (2006, p.58). It was this 'critical examination of practice', especially in relation to diagnosis of problems or problem solving that the ITT students on the SMT were not engaging with fully. This may have been due to their lack of pedagogical confidence as relatively inexperienced ITT students. There was also the tentative link that I made between the most reflective students, (Student A and Student B), whom I categorised as being the most emotionally literate. This is an area which would be interesting to explore in more depth in future research.

Students did not reflect on their successes - Although the students reflected on children's achievements on the SMT programme, they were reluctant to reflect upon the fact that it had been successful due to their input. They were able to state that they saw differences in the children's behaviour and general confidence for example, but not that the differences in behaviour and confidence were due to their support / nurture and general pedagogical approach to teaching the children. In fairness to the students, another factor to take into consideration here was the length of the programme, (which was a six week intervention). Nonetheless, as data in Chapter 4 conclude, there were examples of significant gains in children's levels of PSD/WB/EL even in the short six week timeframe, following implementation of the SMT programme by the student cohort.

Reflective practice is difficult to evidence - The students did reflect but it was often hard for them to quantify or qualify that reflection in a concrete way. Therefore, I found that students

engaged in reflective practice to a surface level. For example, students completed reflective diaries often the reflection was a summary of what had happened that day, rather than reflection on practice, with considerations for future practice. Students appreciated the concept of reflective practice, but often did not reflect or credit themselves with achievements as a result of this process. Students were reluctant to record their achievements and were often unable to vocalise achievements where they praised their own successes. This was an interesting finding as one of the central premises of the SMT programme was celebrating children's successes and building their self confidence and self esteem. The students were happy to undertake this idea in relation to the children they were teaching, but not in relation to their own achievements or growing professionalism. Further work is needed in order to set up robust systems in ITT pedagogy, to enable students to record students' reflective practice gains. The use of student reflective diaries as a mechanism for the recording of reflective data needs to be imbedded into ITT programmes as a matter of course.

5.5. Recommendations

From undertaking this research study I believe I have uncovered a range of issues which will benefit to my own professional practice and that of the ITT students that I train on subsequent ITT programmes. In order to facilitate reflection on a deeper level, further development of the teaching of observation methods is needed. Students need further targeted training in observation methods. Students need to be taught the importance of observing children and how this links to their reflective practice as a matter of course. Students should be taught a range of methods and then employ these 'to evaluate learners' progress' DCELLS/WAG (2009).

I will aim in future to introduce students to the concept of reflective practice on commencement of the ITT programme. Reflective Practice should then be taught to students in an ongoing way. Students must realise that becoming a reflective practitioner is an essential part of good quality professional practice (Pollard, 2005). Dedicated training for ITT students on reflective practice including its reason and rationale, must be more robust and must feature strongly across teaching of ITT Primary practice. Reflective practice needs to become embedded in students' professional thinking across all taught sessions. I would like to raise the profile of reflective practice within the school with more dedicated teaching time allotted to the discipline. I would also like students to engage with reflective practice in the form of new media such as 'blogging'.

Time needs to be set aside for training relating to PSD/WB/EL – I will continue to plan for dedicated teaching time to be available for PSD /WB/EL training for ITT students. In the academic year 2010/11, I facilitated a 'Thinking outside the box' session for all PGCE primary students. I aim to develop and expand upon these materials and the related aspects of PSD/WB/EL that 'Thinking outside the box' sessions encompass. Further development of Special Me Time materials would be an important next step. I have the raw materials to produce 'student' packs. These could be developed into an effective teaching tool for future students.

An annual conference to highlight the importance of PSD/WB/EL to share good practice related to PSD/WB/EL would be beneficial to both School of Education staff and students. School colleagues could be included and good practice could be shared.

The importance of continuing to support ITT students' well-being is in line with guidance from Estyn (2011). This is especially important as students may have to deal with difficult emotional situations in the school setting, whilst undertaking school experience. I aim to factor in more time in future teaching sessions for sharing and discussions. Looking at ways to recognise student stress and support students in stress management is also extremely pertinent. I would also like to look at how I can include 'coaching conversations' (Murray-Harvey, 1999) into tutor support for students.

It is particularly important that students continue to have dedicated sessions on child protection; this is essential in an environment where children's voices are paramount. If a child discloses information in the school setting which is related to a child protection aspect, students need to be completely clear on the next steps to be taken in this situation.

5.6. Dissemination of Research Findings

During the course of this research project I have attended a number of conferences as a speaker. My aim was to raise awareness of the importance of PSD/WB/EL in Foundation Phase pedagogy and how developing ITT students' use of reflective practice will support their professional development and understanding. I have contributed to conferences whereby I have disseminated information about my research findings relating to these areas, these are detailed further in the PDP section. I believe that this research has contributed to ITT professional practice and pedagogic theory. My findings on how students used reflective practice whilst implementing the SMT programme showed how there was a consistency between how I believed students would engage with the reflective process and the way in

which they perceived it. ITT pedagogy should support students' use of reflective practice and enable them to be aware of what good reflective practice looks like.

Within a teaching dynamic, the investigation of emotional literacy as an integral part of sound Foundation Phase pedagogy needs to be a feature for both teachers and children. ITT students need to be 'made more aware of the concept and application of emotional literacy so that they might communicate to their classes and individual children more consistently and effectively' (Rogers 2008, p. 275).

5.7. Further Research

As I have reached the conclusion of this research project, I have discovered that research is continuous and ongoing. I would like to continue my research into PSD/WB/EL. I would especially like to develop further programmes which will help my students to support young children in school, by developing tools which will engage children in dialogue and give them a voice. I would like to explore the concept of reflective practice further with students and the benefits this will have to their professional development and practice. Estyn (2011) have stressed the importance of an emphasis on the reflective practice model in ITT and say it should 'furnish evidence on how well trainees grow in confidence and develop self-evaluation skills' (2011, p.17).

This research process has been a thoroughly rewarding experience both personally and professionally. I believe the skills and knowledge I have gained on this journey will be essential in my role as a teacher and learner and in future research which I will embark upon.

5.8. Conclusion

The Rose Review (DSCF, 2009), an independent review of the primary curriculum in the UK, highlighted a need for ITT students to have a strong foundation and understanding of child development. It also supported ideas on the link between children's engagement and learning, built on solid foundations of self esteem and self confidence. Wetz (2010) wrote critically about the ITT training process in the UK in his report for the CfBT education trust. He implied that the training of UK ITT students should more closely mirror good ITT practice in Scandinavian countries. The Scandinavian model is based on multi-disciplinary practice and development of professional knowledge in a range of settings and an awareness of meeting the needs of the whole child' (2010, p.23). I believe this is crucial as is the need for holistic and reflective ITT practice.

Theories on reflective practice have been an integral part of this research project. As a teacher educator, it is my role to continue to develop ways to support ITT students to think and work reflectively. MacKinnon and Erickson (2002) proposed the notion of 'dispositions for enquiry' making the case for the development of reflective practice and reflective dialogue in ITT programmes. O'Hanlon (1996) agreed and said that ITT educators must examine the difficulties involved in transferring current understanding of reflection on practice. I believe I have demonstrated in this research project that the ITT students involved in the SMT programme were reflecting on their practice, but needed to continue this process by using this reflection to develop and then refine practice further. In effect, it was not sufficient for them to solely reflect upon their teaching, they needed to utilise that reflection as part of an ongoing structured process.

The use and implementation of an action research model during this research project enabled the researcher to reflect in detail on the ‘what, why and how’ of current ITT pedagogy in the CSOE. To demonstrate I have adapted Figure 1.2 from chapter 1 to show the ‘state of play’ regarding future avenues of reflection. The model demonstrates that I will employ future avenues of reflection, in order to improve future ITT provision in the CSOE. I also intend to share the ‘lessons of my project’ (Mac Naughton and Hughes, 2008), by disseminating knowledge gained, thus bringing together ‘theory, practice, data, analysis and conclusions’ (2008, p.224) by sharing findings with colleagues and publishing my findings in academic publications.

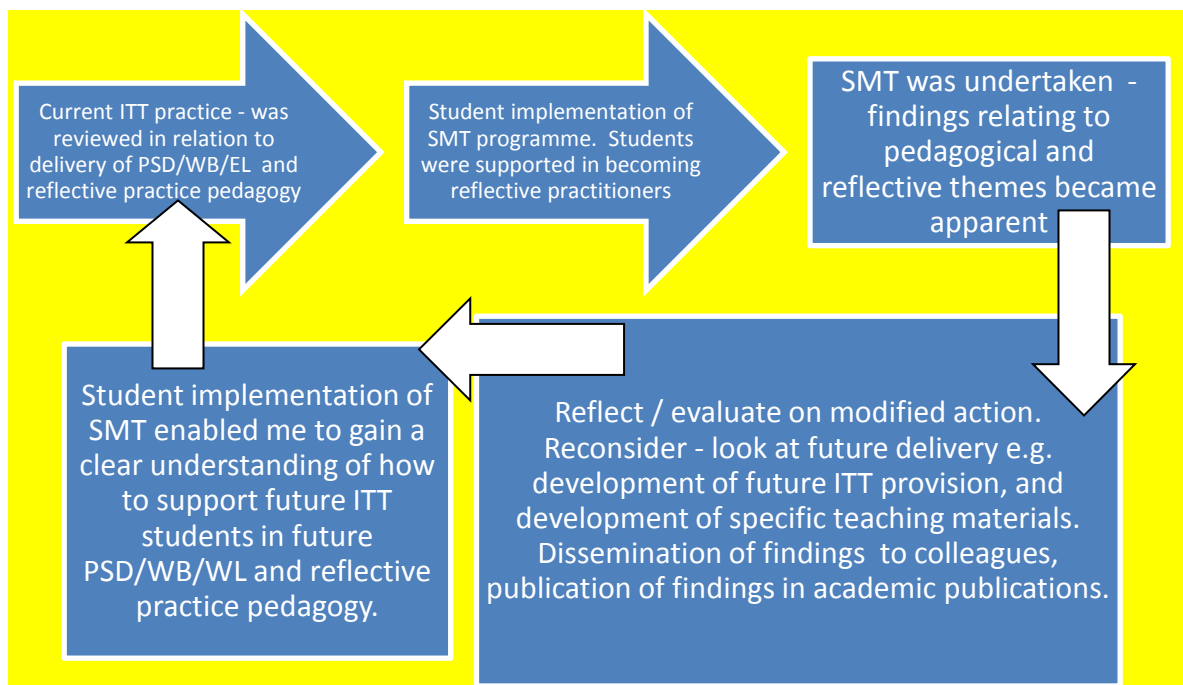


Figure 5.1. Action research in practice a reflection – based on Mc Niff et al. (2003, p. 58)

Finally, with regard to developing a reflective / holistic ethos with ITT students in future, I will remind them of McGregor and Cartwright’s (2011) ideas on reflective practice that, ‘thoughtful reflection methodically directed in turn, on varied aspects of pedagogical

performance can illuminate pathways to improve practice' (2011, p.249). This should be an ongoing aim for both students and their tutor.

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Susan Davis – EdD Research Timetable

Activity	Date
<p>Milestone 1:</p> <p>UWIC EdD paperwork</p> <p>Ethics pro-forma</p> <p>Research proposal pro-forma</p>	September 2006
Initial 'knowledge audit' PSD/WB and EL questionnaire to BA Year 2 and Year 3 students	27 th October 2006 and 22 nd November 2006
Pilot study / Implementation of Special Me Time in three Cardiff schools. School staff undertake a sample of activities.	January 2007
Analysis of pilot study – rewriting and reflection on pilot study – preparation of 'Special Me Time' programme for students	April – September 2007
Special Me Time training day for BA Year 3 and PGCE students. SMT activities and information given out.	10 th December 2007
Evaluation / Consolidation following the training day	December 2007
Research focus – implementation of 'Special Me Time' (placement A) BA and PGCE students in Cardiff Schools. Students on teaching practice.	w/b 7 th January 2008 until w/b 18 th February 2008. Six week period
Visit students on placement	w/b 7 th January 2008 until w/b 18 th February 2008
Evaluation / Reflection following first teaching block. Students de-brief and recording of their findings	February 2008
UWIC Foundation Phase conference: 'Exploring Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity in the Foundation Phase setting'	12 th April 2008
Evaluation / Consolidation following the UWIC Foundation Phase conference	April 2008

Second round of 'Special Me Time' (placement B) in Cardiff Schools. Students on second teaching block	w/b 28 th April 2008 until w/b 7 th July 2008 10 week period (PGCEs only)
'Special Me Time' final de-brief and sharing session	w/b 14 th July 2008
Evaluation / Reflection following second teaching block. Recording of student findings	July 2008
Milestone 2: Literature Review - write. Present literature review presentation as part of EdD assessment process	August 2008 - September 2009
Submit completed literature review	October 2009
Milestone 3: Research Design and Methodology – writing up	September 2009 – January 2010
Submit completed methodology	June 2010
Milestone 4: Evaluation of Methodology; Results Analysis; Conclusions	February – August 2010
Milestone 5: Writing EdD dissertation	August – November 2010
Present paper on EdD research at BERA 2010 student researcher conference	September 2010
Continue to refine / reflect and collate dissertation	October 2010 – August 2011
Mock Viva	August 2011
Amendments and consolidation and reflection phase	August 2011 – March 2012
Submit completed dissertation	April 2012
Viva	Summer 2012

Emotional Literacy / Personal Social Development and Well being Questionnaire

Instructions:

- Please answer the question below – if you wish to add further information to back up your answers use the reverse of this sheet.
- Please answer as fully as possible – questionnaire feedback will not be assessed in any way, will remain confidential and are for research purposes only.

Confidentiality / Ethical guidelines

- Throughout this research UWIC ethical guidelines will be adhered to
- You are under no obligation to complete this questionnaire
- Questionnaires will be dealt with confidentially
- Material generated will only be used for research purposes
- You will be asked if you wish to participate further in this research – you are under no obligation to do so
- If you do wish to participate further please complete your name and email address at the bottom of the sheet.

You will not be identified in any way – your name and email address will be kept confidentially and will not form part of the final findings etc.

Question 1

Have you heard of the term 'Emotional Literacy' ?

YES/NO please delete accordingly.

Question 2

If you answered yes to question 1 –

What do you understand by the term – 'Emotional Literacy' ?

Question 3

Are you familiar with Welsh Assembly Government Foundation Phase Policy on Personal and Social Development ?

YES/NO please delete accordingly

Question 4

If you answered yes to question 4 – what do you understand by the phrase – Personal and Social Development and Well-being? how have you gained this knowledge?

Question 5

Have your taught sessions at UWIC in Early Childhood Studies helped your understanding in the above concepts?

YES/NO

Question 6

In what way could UWIC Early Childhood Studies sessions have supported your understanding further?

Signed..... Programme..... Year..... Date.....

Are you happy to contribute further to this research YES/NO (if yes please add contact details)

UWIC EdD Research questionnaire. PGCE Foundation Phase cohort September 2007

Emotional Literacy / Personal Social Development and Well- being Questionnaire

Instructions:

- Please answer the question below – if you wish to add further information to back up your answers use the reverse of this sheet.
- Please answer as fully as possible – questionnaire feedback will not be assessed in any way, will remain confidential and are for research purposes only.

Confidentiality / Ethical guidelines

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- If you do wish to participate further please complete your name and email address at the bottom of the sheet.

You will not be identified in any way – your name and email address will be kept confidentially and will not form part of the final findings etc.

Question 1

Have you heard of the term 'Emotional Literacy' ?

YES/NO please delete accordingly.

Question 2

If you answered yes to question 1 –

What do you understand by the term – 'Emotional Literacy' ?

Question 3

Do you think it is important to teach children Personal and Social Development skills? – why?

Any other information you wish to add e.g. what would you like to learn in relation to the above etc.

Signed..... Programme..... Year..... Date.....

Are you happy to contribute further to this research YES/NO (if yes please add contact details)

Well-being o'meter

Name..... Date.....



Competency	Very Good	Good	Work in progress
Self esteem			
Optimism			
Managing emotions			
Empathy			
Handling relationships e.g.saying no!			

Reflection / Way forward:

Special Me Time - Training day

Date: Monday 10th December 2007

Venue: Cardiff Golf Club, Sherbourne Avenue, Cyncoed, Cardiff CF23 6SJ (www.cardiffgc.co.uk)

Time 10am – 4pm

Agenda

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 10.00 | Coffee, Welcome and Introductions |
| 10.15 | Emotional literacy(EL), Reason and Rationale |
| 11.15 | Nurturing your Emotional literacy |
| 12.15 | How do we Nurture young children's Emotional literacy / Personal and Social Development (PSD) ? |
| 1.00 | LUNCH |
| 1.45 | Assessing young children's EL / PSD ? Using Reflective Practice / Reflective Diaries to inform practice |
| 2.00 | Practical EL activities = Sandra Crozier – Circle time |
| 3.00 | The SMT programme – why, how, etc. and way forward |
| 4.00 | CLOSE and evaluations |

‘Special Me Time’

Programme Handbook



Programme Leader:

Susan Davis

Senior Lecturer School of Education

Contact details: sdavis@uwic.ac.uk tel: 02920 416545

Foreword

Hello and welcome to the 'Special Me Time' programme. I am really glad that you will be joining the programme. I really appreciate your support and interest and I do hope that your participation on the programme will be of benefit to you as a student as well as myself.

The programme is designed for you to use as you wish and I trust that the following guidance notes will help and support you in undertaking the programme activities. When working with young children it is always necessary to be responsive to their needs and therefore, the activities have been designed specifically with the intention that you use them as you wish. What I very much hope is that at the end of the programme we are able to share good practice and reflect on your experiences on the programme. I aim to visit you in placement as often as I can and I am always available to support you. I would like to stress the importance of keeping a reflective diary – to detail your experiences and I will point out again that this does not have to be an onerous task....quality rather than quantity is the ideal here – it is amazing how a few notes can make the difference to formative assessment.

Best wishes and enjoy the programme

Susan

Susan Davis, Senior Lecturer, School of Education

Contents page

Advice on confidentiality / ethical issues

Activities 1 -6

Personal and Social Development / Well being baseline information sheet

Reflective Diary information sheet

Special Me Time programme – activities evaluation sheet

Confidentiality / Ethical Issues

- Throughout the research UWIC ethical guidelines will be adhered to
- Ensure confidentiality by not using names of children / schools in your lesson plans / evaluation material
- Please familiarize yourselves with BERA guidance on confidentiality / ethics which is on the BERA website – <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines> A copy of the document – Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) gives much useful information.
- Please ensure that any material you gather in relation to children e.g. reflective diary excerpts, work products, etc. are kept securely.
- Avoid using photographs of children, unless you have had written permission from school / parents.

Special Me Time programme: Activity 1 Moral and Spiritual Development - 'Quietly appreciating beautiful things'



Age range: Nursery to year 2

Links to Foundation Phase (p.8) / Learning Objectives:

- Respond to ideas and questions enthusiastically, sensitively, creatively, and intuitively
- To experience quiet times and to develop inspirational and creative ideas.
- Ask questions about how and why special things should be treated with respect and respond personally.

You will need:

- A beautiful object – e.g. a photo, painting, shell, flowers etc.
- A small table /A Velvet or luxurious cloth to cover the table.
- A candle and matches (to soften the lighting)
- A quiet area in which to undertake the activity
- Meditation tape or classical tape / tape player

Group size:

- 4 – 6

Setting the scene:

- Make the time you have with the children as special as possible
- Allow them time to relax and settle into the activity
- Foster a sense of 'wonder'

Activity:

- Ask children to sit quietly and study the object on display and then close their eyes to help focus their thoughts.
- The activity will be child orientated – led by the children's responses.
- Pose some open questions to start – to explore the children's responses. e.g. what does the music remind you of? How does it make you feel? What can you see in the picture? Where do you find flowers like this? E.g. can you think of a time when you felt like the child in the picture
- Questions will depend on the children's mood and experiences.
- You can set the scene by making a quiet den – using old blankets or curtains, using comfy cushions, furnishings. The candles or dim lighting will further set the scene and should encourage the children to reflect and sit / lie quietly.
- The children can carefully touch, feel and pass round the object.

Differentiation:

- This will depend on the children's age and experiences and the objects you Provide. Level of support given level of questions

Extension activities: reading an inspirational tale.

- Just listening to music.
- Perfect peace – ask children to sit still and listen to a clock ticking for a few minutes – what were they thinking about.
- Take a nature walk – see how many different colours of leaves / flowers they can find.

Special Me Time programme: Activity 2 Personal Development - ‘Jam Sandwich tea party’



Age range: Nursery to year 2

Links to Foundation Phase (p.8) / Learning Objectives:

- Become independent in their personal hygiene needs and to be more aware of personal safety.
- To appreciate the importance of personal autonomy and co-operation skills
- To practice sharing / turn taking and social skills e.g. good manners

You will need:

- Bread , butter, jam, knives, plates etc.
- Cups for milk
- Surfaces to work on
- ‘Tea party’ tables set out with table cloths and flower in a vase etc. ‘café style’.
- Napkins
- Place cards

Group size:

- 4 – 6

Setting the scene:

- Make the time you have with the children as special as possible
- Explain to the children that they will be making the sandwiches and then sharing them / serving them to their friends.
- Explain the basic rules of hygiene when making the sandwiches.
- Support the children in sharing duties / equipment etc.
- Reinforce positive behaviour in the form of good table manners, use of please and thank you etc.

Activity:

1. Following hand washing, children will begin to make the sandwiches using the equipment provided. Children can also lay the ‘tea party’ tables.
2. When the sandwiches have been made the children will serve the sandwiches / drinks to their invited guests.
3. You can mix up the place cards to ensure that children mix outside their own friendship groups.
4. Children and guests to eat the sandwiches together. Facilitate conversations with the children.

Differentiation:

- This will depend on the children's age and experiences.
- Level of support given

Extension activities:

- reading a story to the children such as 'The Giant Jam Sandwich' by John Vernon Lord
- Confident writers could write invitations to the tea party. Emergent writers draw pictures
- You could invite special visitors to share tea / experiences.

Special Me Time Programme: EL / PSD / Well being: Activity 3 Personal Development - 'Tent adventure'



Age range: Nursery to year 2

Links to Foundation Phase (p.8) / Learning Objectives:

- Take risks and become confident explorers of the indoor and outdoor environments
- Become independent thinkers and learners.
- Show curiosity and develop positive attitudes to new experiences and learning.

You will need:

- A tent / or blanket draped over a table etc.
- Old mats to sit on
- Magnifying glasses
- Cut out and laminate 'footprints' human or bear / snowman etc. depending on the story you use.
- Blu tack to stick footprints around the classroom.
- 'exploring' outfits – e.g. hats, gloves macs etc.
- A book about exploring such as 'We're going on a bear hunt' or something similar

Group size:

- 4 – 6

Setting the scene:

- Explain to the children they are going on an adventure
- They will be going on an adventure around the school / nursery and exploring the 'terrain' and aiming to follow the 'footprints' of an explorer / bear / snowman who passed through the school that morning on the way to the North pole (or somewhere similar!)

Activity:

- Read a story such as 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Ask the children to imagine what it would be like to go on an adventure and to e.g. 'camp' out in their own tent.
- The activity will be child orientated – led by the children's responses.
- Find the first 'footprint' set the scene about the explorer / bear / snowman who passed through the nursery on the way to the North Pole – see if the children can follow the footprints.

- Pose some open questions to start – to explore the children’s responses. e.g. how will we know where to go? What do we need to be careful of? what should we wear?
- Questions / answers will depend on the children’s knowledge and experiences.
- The children should then follow the footprints which will lead around the indoors and into the outdoors. Utilize a range of situations, e.g. on top of climbing frame etc.
- They can use their magnifying glasses to locate the footprints and explore items of interest on the way – allow the children to explore on their own within the indoor / outdoor environment.
- Meanwhile you have set up the tent.
- Footprints can lead into / past the tent
- Children can then sit inside the tent and talk about their experiences and their adventure.

Differentiation:

- This will depend on the children’s age and experiences and the objects you provide / support given

Extension activities: Children could explore a particular focus e.g. mini beasts in the outdoors.

Special Me Time Programme: EL / PSD / Well being: Activity 4 Social Development - ‘Special Me’

Age range: Nursery to year 2

Links to Foundation Phase (p.8) / Learning Objectives:

- Develop a positive self – image and a sense of belonging as part of different communities and to have an understanding of their own Welsh identity.

You will need:

- Paper and art materials
- Cut out ‘people shapes’
- A display board
- Books such as Dorling Kindersley – ‘Children like me’ or laminated photos of children from other countries / communities etc.
- Resources such as flags, laminated pictures of e.g. the Millenium Stadium or local area etc.

Group size:

- 4 – 6

Setting the scene:

- Read / look at the books / photos detailing children’s lives in other countries.
- Talk about and explore the books / photos about other children
- Explore some of the resources related to Wales / Cardiff their local area

Activity:

- The children will be making a display board to reflect their lives.
- The display board can have focus points such as:
- My name is....
- I am Years old
- My birthday is in.....
- My favourite colour is...
- My favourite food is....
- My favourite book etc.
- The children will paint / decorate the ‘person’ in their own style. These ‘people’ will then be put



on the board.

and displayed to your taste.

Differentiation: This will depend on the children's age and experiences and the objects you

Provide/.Support given / questions asked etc.

Extension activities: Decorating the display board, making flags etc..

Special Me Time Programme: EL / PSD / Well being: Activity 5 Well – Being - 'I'm proud of myself – Mat'



Age range: Nursery to year 2

Links to Foundation Phase (p.8) / Learning Objectives:

- Value and contribute to their own well-being and to the well-being of others
- Be aware of their own feelings and develop the ability to express them in an appropriate way.
- Demonstrate care, respect and affection for other children, adults and their environment.

You will need:

- A special rug or mat
- A pin board
- A selection of rosettes pinned to the board – with inspirational messages such as 'nursery helper' or 'a good friend' etc.

Group size:

- 4 – 6

Setting the scene:

- Best to do this at the end of morning or session
- Sit the children in a semi circle.

- Put the rug at the front of the circle.
- This activity is a form of circle time – but the children get to showcase their achievements and decide who should have a rosette for that session

Activity:

1. The children will sit and discuss with you what they did that morning, what made them proud, happy etc.
2. Children can come up individually and stand on the mat – they then say one thing they did that they were proud of
3. You may need to support children in their choice of ‘achievement’
4. Rosettes can be set out on the pin board.
5. The child can choose a rosette to wear to demonstrate their achievement.
6. The other children can have a say in the process and may like to nominate each other for awards? (depending on age / development)
7. You will need more rosettes than children!
8. When the child has chosen the rosette the other children can clap – well, done!, well done!, clapping in front of their bodies and behind.
9. The child who has had the award can say, thank you!, thank you!, again clapping in front of the body and behind.

Differentiation:

- This will depend on the children’s age and experiences and the objects you provide. Support given / level of questioning / outcome of activity

Extension activity: Children can make their own rosettes

Special Me Time Programme: EL / PSD / Well being: Activity 6 Social Development - ‘What’s in the box’?



Age range: Nursery to year 2

Links to Foundation Phase (p.8) / Learning Objectives:

- Develop a positive self image
- Be aware of and respect the needs of others

You will need:

- A large beautifully wrapped box with a lid
- Inside the box glue in a small mirror
- A selection of small mirrors
- Mini boxes with lids
- Art materials and paper

Group size:

- 4 – 6

Setting the scene:

- Sit the children in a circle.
- Hold the box on your lap
- Explain to the children that this box is very special and it contains a secret.
- Inside the box is something very precious and valuable.

Activity:

1. Ask the children to guess what they think is inside the box.
2. Pass the box around
3. Ensure that the children treat the box with special care and take turns, no snatching etc.
4. While the children pass the box around (without opening it) ask them what they think is inside the box.
5. Next pass the box – they are allowed to open it this time – but not show their neighbour
6. When all have looked inside the box – ask the children what the precious and valuable ‘thing’ was inside!
7. You can then sit at a table and allow the children to explore with the mirrors they may want to make different faces in the mirrors – you could talk about feelings etc.
8. The children can then draw pictures of themselves and put the drawing into their special boxes, these can then be displayed.

Differentiation:

- This will depend on the children’s age and experiences and the objects you provide. Support given / level of questioning / outcome of activity

Extension activities: Boxes can be decorated

SMT Programme PSD/WB / EL - Baseline information sheet

Please find below instructions on how to complete your PSD/WB/EL baseline sheet.

General Information:

The sheet is designed so that you can colour in sections of the 'hearts' at the beginning of your SMT programme intervention and at the end of the programme.

There are also boxes in which you can complete very short notes. You should complete two baselines per child. You can add any notes or comments on the back of the sheet. You will also need to complete a reflective diary for the programme period. Information on how to complete your reflective diary will follow after this section.

How to complete your baseline sheet

- You will need to refer to your copy of the WAG Foundation Phase Framework for Children's learning Consultation Document (2007). The information pertinent to this study is on page 6 -9.
- Page 8 of the document details information about Personal and Social Development and Well being.
- Your baseline sheet reflects the key areas of the framework
- Skills – Personal Development, Social Development, Moral and Spiritual Development and Well Being.
- The children should also be given opportunities to develop skills detailed in the 'range' section at the bottom of the page.

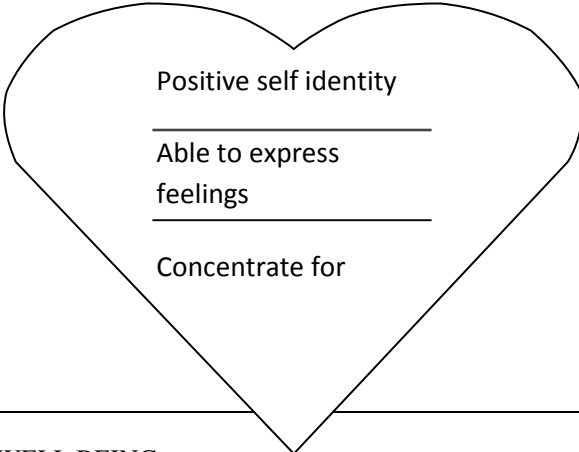
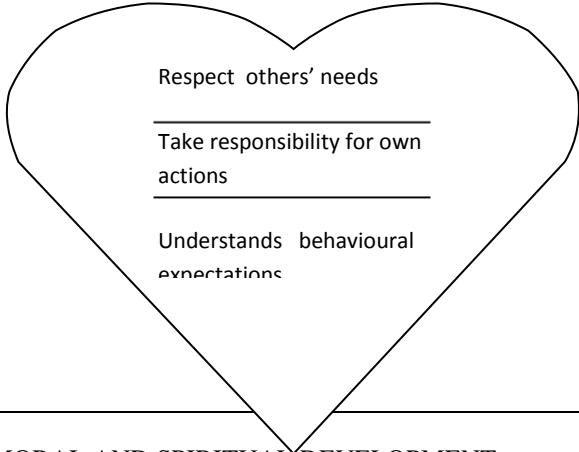
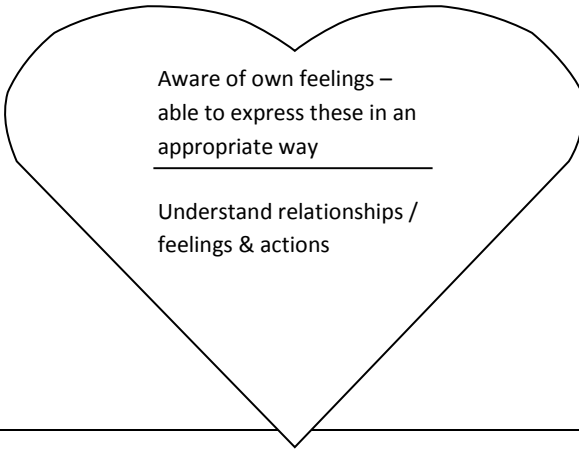
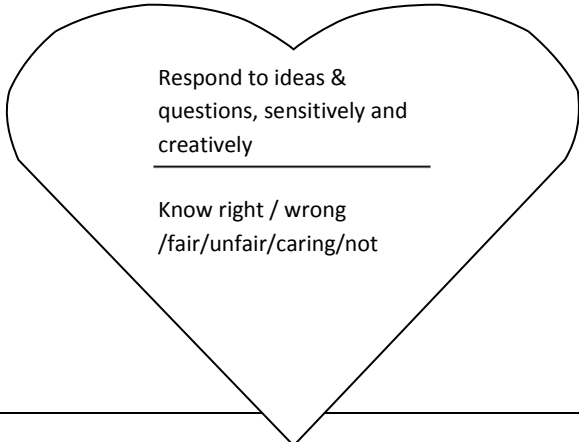
How the sheet is organised

- The sheet is divided into four areas: Personal Development, Social Development, Moral and Spiritual Development and Well Being.
- The 'hearts' on the sheet represent these four areas. You should colour in a section on the heart if you feel the child is competent in that area.
- The grid in the middle of the sheet is based on ideas by Goleman (1996) and his five original competencies of Emotional Intelligence.

I would also like you to think about 'positive dispositions' to learning Carr (2002) These ideas can go in the motivation column. I have kept the grid section deliberately small – you don't need to write a lot – you can put additional information on the back of the sheet if you wish. Your reflective diary can be used to jot down notes or interesting information.

SMT BASELINE ASSESSMENT SHEET

NAME..... DATE..... TERM.....

<p>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</p>  <p>Positive self identity _____</p> <p>Able to express feelings _____</p> <p>Concentrate for</p>	<p>SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</p>  <p>Respect others' needs _____</p> <p>Take responsibility for own actions _____</p> <p>Understands behavioural expectations</p>
<p>WELL BEING</p>  <p>Aware of own feelings – able to express these in an appropriate way _____</p> <p>Understand relationships / feelings & actions</p>	<p>MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT</p>  <p>Respond to ideas & questions, sensitively and creatively _____</p> <p>Know right / wrong /fair/unfair/caring/not</p>

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Self awareness			
Self regulation			
Motivation / Positive attitude			
Empathy			
Social Skills			

Special Me Time Programme: Reflective Diary Information sheet



Your reflective diary should be completed during the SMT programme period. The reflective diary should not be an onerous task – and will serve a number of purposes.

1. To record your thoughts
2. To record your actions
3. To record your reflections – in relation to PSD/WB/EL in your setting and in relation to the children you are working with.

As Schon (1988) said you are evidencing your professional knowledge and demonstrating 'knowing in action' e.g. recording your ideas.

The reflective diary will help your professional practice in a number of ways:

- It will help your professional knowledge /It will help your professional 'growth'
- Increase your confidence / self awareness
- Give you a broader understanding of e.g. PSD/WB/EL and the children you are teaching /observing / assessing
- It can be used as an appendix in your UWIC assessment file as evidence of different types of assessment.

What should I put in my reflective diary?

- Don't forget to put the date above each entry
- You don't need to write reams...a few lines are often sufficient
- You should jot down any events, interesting things that have happened, how you feel etc. don't forget your own Emotional Literacy
- You will also use the diary for assessment and observations

Other things **you may** wish to add....

- Your approaches to teaching and learning in relation to PSD/WB/EL
- Any records of children's development
- Planning ideas / reflections
- Strategies
- Short notes / Evaluations of teaching sessions
- Any meetings with staff / parents
- Professional development e.g. courses / inset attended

- Self assessment in relation to PSD/WB/EL

Remember the reflective diary can be as detailed or as brief as you like.

Please rate the activities from 1 – 10 (10 being the highest) for each of the criteria

Activity 1 – Quietly appreciating beautiful things

Relevance to FP curriculum	
Relevance to EL / PSD	
Ease of use	
Children were engaged in activity	
Children benefited from the activity	
The activity supported EL / PSD	
Activity was pitched at the right level	

General Comments:

What I liked about the activity	
What I didn't like	
What I would change / do differently	

Activity 2 – Jam sandwich tea party

Relevance to FP curriculum	
Relevance to EL / PSD	
Ease of use	
Children were engaged in activity	
Children benefited from the activity	
The activity supported EL / PSD	

General Comments

What I liked about the activity	
What I didn't like	
What I would change / do differently	

Activity 3 – Tent adventure

Relevance to FP curriculum	
Relevance to EL / PSD	
Ease of use	
Children were engaged in activity	
Children benefited from the activity	
The activity supported EL / PSD	

General Comments

What I liked about the activity	
What I didn't like	
What I would change / do differently	

Activity 4 – Special me

Relevance to FP curriculum	
Relevance to EL / PSD	
Ease of use	
Children were engaged in activity	
Children benefited from the activity	
The activity supported EL / PSD	

General Comments

What I liked about the activity	
What I didn't like	
What I would change / do differently	

Activity 5 – proud rug

Relevance to FP curriculum	
Relevance to EL / PSD	
Ease of use	
Children were engaged in activity	
Children benefited from the activity	
The activity supported EL / PSD	

General Comments

What I liked about the activity	
What I didn't like	
What I would change / do differently	

Activity 6 – What’s in the box?

Relevance to FP curriculum	
Relevance to EL / PSD	
Ease of use	
Children were engaged in activity	
Children benefited from the activity	
The activity supported EL / PSD	

General Comments

What I liked about the activity	
What I didn’t like	
What I would change / do differently	

EdD - RESEARCH STUDY - Special Me Time an Emotional Literacy and Reflective Practice research study. Ethical considerations.

I am undertaking an EdD research study in the Cardiff School of Education. This study will look at developing teaching strategies which effectively support young children's Emotional Literacy (EL) in the Foundation Phase setting and investigate students' use of reflective practice.

Welsh Assembly Government have stressed the importance of this area, saying 'Children's Personal and Social Well-Being is at the heart of the Foundation Phase and should be developed across the curriculum' (2004:6) Young children's development is inextricably bound to their feelings of self worth and self esteem. How children view themselves, affects their relationships and how they react in certain situations. Foundation Phase ITT students need to be aware of the importance of nurturing EL and especially in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) Foundation Phase area of learning entitled 'Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity'.

For Foundation Phase students, a study into ways of supporting and teaching EL skills and strategies may prove particularly useful. It will also be of interest to them as future teachers.

I am seeking volunteers to be part of this stage of the study. Your involvement will be either:

- a. The completion of a questionnaire to provide background information for the investigation.
- b. To become a member of a focus group – which will discuss aspects of the study as they arise. I envisage the focus group will meet three times per academic year for about 1 hour.
- c. To become a member of a placement trial, commencing in the Spring term 2008 – this will involve the following: To undertake an initial baseline of EL in your setting. To teach a series of six EL / PSD activities with children in your placement setting. These activities / session plans will be given to you. To evaluate each session. To keep a reflective journal detailing any changes in the children you are working with. You will be supported fully during this process. You will receive additional training, in the form of a training day (Dec 2007); support from the researcher (Susan Davis) and support from a school mentor who will be part of this study.

I will ensure that these activities will not be too onerous. I appreciate that you are entering a period of intense work and study as part of your BA/ PGCE programme. However, the research findings that become evident as a result of this study should be of benefit to your professional practice and that of the BA/PGCE Foundation Phase cohort. It will also inform teaching and learning in relation to next years Foundation Phase students.

I anticipate that this phase of the study will be completed by Summer 2008. The research findings will form part of my doctoral research. Thank you.

Susan Davis

Senior Lecturer in Early Years

School of Education

UWIC

Tel: 02920 416545 sdavis@uwic.ac.uk

This study will be undertaken in full accordance with UWIC ethical guidelines and also the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines (2004).

- You will be informed at all stages of the research of the purposes and nature of the study.
- Material generated by the study will be used only for the purposes of research.
- Your views and any data obtained as a result of the study will be treated as confidential.
- All names and school / nursery names will be omitted from the final research.
- Your identity will not be disclosed unless you agree to waive that right.
- Every effort will be taken to ensure that no part of the research will be to the detriment or the welfare of the participants.
- Efforts will be made to minimise the time and effort required by participants to take part in the study.
- There is no obligation for you to take part in the study.
- You can withdraw at any time from the study and for whatever reason.

I would like to take part in this research.

Name.....

Contact details.....

Date.....

I would like to undertake the following:

a. Complete research questionnaires	Yes / No
b. To become a member of a focus group	Yes / No
c. To become a member of the placement trial.	Yes / No

Please sign below to show that you have read this information sheet and have

understood the ethical considerations.

Name.....

Signed.....

Date.....

References:

Welsh Assembly Government (2004) Foundation Phase, A Draft Framework for children's learning

School address

Date

Dear..... Name of Head teacher

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE (EdD) RESEARCH STUDY – SPECIAL ME TIME PROGRAMME

I am a senior lecturer in Early Years here within the Cardiff School of Education. I am undertaking research as part of my studies on the Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD). This study will look at developing students' knowledge of Personal and Social Development (PSD), Well Being (WB) and Emotional Literacy during a targeted Emotional Literacy programme called Special Me Time (SMT). SMT is designed to be carried out by the students with children in the Foundation Phase. The programme is six weeks duration and will form part of everyday teaching and learning in relation to PSD and WB.

Students will carry out the programme and reflect in relation to the delivery of the programme. I have enclosed a copy of the SMT programme handbook for further information. All programme material will remain confidential and students will adhere to BERA principles on research ethics throughout the programme.

I have asked for student volunteers to take part in the the programme and your ITT student..... has expressed an interest in becoming a member of the programme cohort. This will involve the student in a variety of activities which will be as follows:

- To become a member of the SMT programme commencing in the spring term 2008
- To undertake an individual baseline of children in the placement classroom
- The students will evaluate each SMT session
- Students will be asked to keep a reflective diary
- Students will be supported fully during the process e.g. SMT programme students have already received additional training in the form of a training day and have received a programme handbook
- Students will be supported by myself as the programme leader during the programme.

I will ensure that the SMT programme activities will not be too onerous. I appreciate the students are entering a period of intense work and study as part of their BA/PGCE programme. However, I

believe that the research will be of immense benefit to their personal and professional practice and also that of the BA/PGCE cohort. I also hope that your school will benefit from the students enhanced knowledge, which will in turn also benefit the children in your school.

I anticipate that the SMT programme will be completed by Summer 2008. The research findings will form part of my doctoral research. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Would you please complete the attached proforma and send back to me in the pre-paid envelope attached.

Thank you for your support

Yours sincerely

Susan Davis

Senior Lecturer, School of Education

.....

SMT Programme Research

Name of Head teacher

Name of
School.....
.....

I agree to ITT student..... completing
SMT programme research in my school.

I am happy to contribute further to the research project e.g. be interviewed / complete questionnaires etc.
YES/NO please delete accordingly.

Signed.....

Date.....

Transcript of interview with Student A - Nursery school – Vale of Glamorgan 23 May 2008

SD Tell me how you have got on in this school and some of the things you have been doing – in relation to SMT and PSD/WB/EL?

Student A The children are very diverse. It is a completely different placement to the one I was in before.

SD How many children do you have here?

Student A 78

Student A In the morning they are generally always in – in the afternoon you generally have at least 10 not in. In the nursery. Afternoon children are not regular attenders and that is going to affect how they are emotionally with the other children, as they don't have the same breadth of experiences.

Student A One little girl has been away for two weeks. M is in sometimes but not always.

SD You carried out the same activities on 'Special Me Time' as you did on your other placement – what did you find from your evaluations?

Student A Different age this time – nursery not reception. My morning group are going to school in September. The children are all very different. Interesting the nursery children are better at sitting and listening than my reception children in the last placement.

SD Any idea why?

Student A Yes there were more speech and language issues in my last placement. Even though this school is more socio-economically mixed. We can't have fuss as there are 39 who all sit and listen to registration, very structured here, very formal. The children seem to take to it.

Student A The class teacher has very high expectations, eg. Taking shoes and socks off for PE. The school seems to be enforcing a level of independence...they expect a lot. If I had been in this class first and then gone to reception, my expectations would have been higher for the reception children.

SD Expectations are key really?

Student A Yes zero tolerance of fussing... lots of positive praise. If children are fussing you sit down and discuss it.

SD I've noticed they wear a uniform in the nursery – that's very formal isn't it? Do you think that makes a difference?

Student A Yes but it's mostly because they won't mess up their clothes. But, yes if you see a child in uniform then maybe your expectations of them are different.?

SD So what about you...you have come on quite a journey with all this PSD/WB and EL ... how would you say your knowledge and the things you have learned... how would you say it has changed you as a practitioner?

Student A I like circle time – I have never done that before...it does show the children how to listen and respect each other... they like it... they like that people are listening to them. Its all about respecting each other. As time has gone on you tend to do things more naturally, rather than at the beginning... you are thinking to yourself how should I do this? I didn't know anything about EL before, but I have learned an awful lot, although SMT are specific activities it comes into so much more, listening and respecting each other... look at the speaker, it comes into every day life really.

SD Would you say that you almost do it unconsciously?

Student A Yes I think so..it's just terminology, such as don't kick that boy... I would now say... 'are those happy feet' its just terminology, but it makes the situation so much more positive. My last placement was so much more positive praise. I have to work harder here to implement the strategies.

SD What are the behaviour management strategies like here in this placement.

Student A To be honest there is a bit of shouting, which I don't really agree with – I know you have to be firm, but personally I don't feel that there is any room for shouting, with children of this age. There are ways of doing things – the children do respond well to praise. Making them look at things from the outside. Its about getting children to think differently.

SD You are coming to the end of your teaching time with us ... what do you think you will take on with you into your teaching career, following on from 'Special Me Time'?

Student A I will definitely use it – I will be using it not only with younger children but with whatever age group I end up working with. It is so important to sit down and talk about your feelings – older children may not consider themselves to be special – they may not have those inner thought processes they find it, difficult to look within themselves. It doesn't matter where I end up I will take the ideas I have gained from doing 'Special Me Time' with me. But definitely in the FP – I think it should definitely be timetabled other wise it may become something or nothing. I intend to plan for it to happen.

SD You have run SMT each week

Student A Yes I planned it in as a session each week. For me the children- understand what it will be...either circle time or listening...

SD Do you think the class teacher may carry it on when you have left?

Student A I don't think so... she hasn't embraced it as much as the class teacher in my last school. Although she has seen that it is at the heart of the FP. She sees it maybe in a different way because of the number 78 children.

SD It needs to be carried on with the children once you have started

Student A For me something tangible is making it special for the children. I use a zippy toy to facilitate and always use lots of special things.

SD How can you develop this SMT further ...as you have completed 2 placements?

Student A I hope you carry it on with next year's students. It has been such a pleasure and benefit to me. I didn't find it onerous – I just used it as part of my week, my practice so I have found it didn't impact on my work load too much. Yes I have really enjoyed it and I know the children have gained so much from it in respect to the way they now listen, and take account of other children's feelings.

SD Thank you Student A

Transcript of interview with Student C – Reception class, Mid Glamorgan. 5th May 2008.

SD Tell me some of the things you have implemented from the SMT programme since you have been here.

Student C I've done 'What's in the box' we did it in the Welsh session with a class book.

SD How did it go?

Student C The children loved the activity and I have been working hard with them on sitting and listening.

SD How have you found this placement experience, compared to your last school? What emphasis do they put on PSD/WB/EL ?

Student C Well, the children are a lot more confident here.

SD OK, what would you put that down to?

Student C I would definitely say it is down to the Foundation Phase ethos. Its just a different way of working. The staff here are very motivated, they bring in ideas, it has a different 'feel' about it.

SD OK, so how do you quantify the differences? What are your reflections?

Student C Well, in my last school when we did 'The Bear Hunt', from SMT programme, the children were a lot more apprehensive. I know K was apprehensive today at the start , but she is not normally like that. The children here are used to exploring. In my last school they were more reserved, they needed me to support them much more, however, they did enjoy it just as much in the end. It took a bit more time for them to get into it.

SD So you had to nurture and support them more?

Student C Yes

SD Do you think that you have made a difference to the children's PSD/WB/EL here?

Student C Well I think the staff make a difference here to children's PSD/WB/EL. Here its very much more learning by doing and experiencing things for themselves. In my last school, also, working together was quite challenging for the children, they needed time to get used to things. In this school, the staff very much instil an independent way of thinking in the children. My last class was also much more formal. It was a mixed R/Yr1 class and it was more formal.

SD So do you think it's the teaching ethos that empowers children? do you think you have made a difference to the children?

Student C Well the children are very confident, Especially when we do things like PSD they are very willing to do things like 'show and tell' the children are very willing to share things with the others. One child will happily stand in front of the others and tell them things.

SD OK, what about pre-school? What opportunities do the children have before they come into the nursery for example?

Student C Children are able to come into the nursery two afternoons a week from time the time they are two and a half. So they start them really early. This helps their independence and confidence from the word go really!

SD OK that really interesting. How does the socio-economic area of this school compare to your last school?

Student C It's a more affluent area, but it's still not a very affluent area. But, compared to my last school they have got a little bit more. But, I really feel the difference in the children's PSD/WB/EL is really down to the school's influence here. When I see the parents collecting the children, the way the parents are with them is completely different to what I see them like in school. I feel a lot of the parents 'molly coddle' them, but in school children are completely different.

SD So finally E do you think you have made a difference to the children's PSD/WB/EL since you have been teaching them? What are your reflections?

Student C I don't know if it is me..well, they were very EL to start with, but I suppose I have supported that process.

SD OK thank you Student C.

END OF SPECIAL ME TIME QUESTIONNAIRE June 2008

NAME..... Date.....

Thank you for your participation in the programme – I do hope that you have gained both personally and professionally from being a member of the research project. Please answer the questions below as fully as you can.

Q1. What did you learn / gain from undertaking the SMT programme? Do you believe you have grown as a professional?

Q2. What were your main findings/ reflections on carrying out the programme?

Q3. What would you do differently next time?

Q4. Did you feel you have sufficient training / knowledge in order to carry out the SMT programme? Has your knowledge of PSD/WB/EL pedagogy improved?

Q5. What will you remember most about SMT?

Q6. Did SMT make any difference to particular children?

Q7. Was children's PSD/WB/EL was improved as a result of implementing SMT yes/no/maybe can you give an example?

Analysis of themes using Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system - Example = Student C

The 5 main themes in thematic analysis of students' engagement with SMT programme / knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and reflective practice – Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system

Numerical code	Perceived themes	Colour code	Number of references to themes
1	Student reflection / reflective practice evident		
2	Student knowledge / student confidence		
3	Teaching and pedagogy		
4	Student's professional judgements / perceptions of children's PSD/WB/EL		
5	Perceived improvements to professional practice / growth as a professional		

Example =Student C Tally chart relating to number of references to themes in Davis (2011) 5 point analysis system

Example =Student C Primary material scrutinised	Number of references to theme 1	Number of references to theme 2	Number of references to theme 3	Number of references to theme 4	Number of references to theme 5
Reflective diary	6	0	8	11	0
Baseline assessments	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Photos / work products	0	0	0	0	0
Planning / session evaluations	1	2	4	1	0
Other material	1	1	2	1	0
total	8	3	14	13	0

Student C notes on primary material scrutinised	
Reflective diary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 pages completed • 6 sessions documented • Writing was very descriptive and not analytical. It gave a clear overview of what had occurred but did not show evidence of a depth of reflection. • Children's ability in relation to PSD/WB/EL was clearly documented by Student C, but she does not evidence in her diary her ideas on 'next steps' or a way forward to support children in future to a sufficient extent.
Photos / work products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some photographs were submitted, showing the children undertaking their jam sandwich making. The photos are not annotated and do not have any reflective commentary attached to them.
Planning / session evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student C submitted clear planning for 5 sessions. The planning did not show any progression, i.e. week 3 did not especially correspond to week 2. The planning seemed to stand alone, thus not showing reflection from one session to the next. • Evaluations although detailed, again did not link to the previous session / previous learning. The session on 23.01.08 Jam sandwich activity, I believe the student viewed this more as a cookery session rather than a PSD/WB/EL focus. Her evaluations were focused on the children's technical ability in relation to sandwich making. Implications for future teaching and learning stated 'I don't think I could amend this lesson plan at all'. Student C (23.01.08). I believe, this shows a lack of deep reflection as her learning evaluations stated 'In general the boys HJ, DA, and JG got tired of serving in the café and ended up propping up the bar. Only LW was attentive of her guests until the end' Student C (23.01.08) This shows that some children may not have gained as much from the activity as others. This situation ideally needed to be addressed in the next session, but this was not the case, due to the disjointed way in which the sessions were planned and evaluated without a constant, reflective theme.
Other material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I evaluated one of Student C's sessions in school. Undertook a semi structured interview with her and she completed an end of SMT questionnaire. It was obvious from scrutiny of this material that student C was a very committed and professional student. She had a sound knowledge of PSD/WB/EL and was an intuitive teacher. I believe that she was a reflective practitioner but was less able to document her practice and use work products e.g. lesson plans as a reflective focus. Her reflection was instinctive and often 'on the spot'. Thus making it difficult for me to document formally. Student C was also a very unassuming, modest student and was very reluctant to admit to any pedagogical achievements on her part.

Student comments from evaluations of national PSD/WB/EL conference

7. What impact do you consider this conference will have on your practice?

- 'I will be taking away activities and ideas and good philosophies for life and teaching'
- 'Will take lots on board'
- 'I have become aware of the importance of Emotional Literacy to both the learner and the teacher'
- 'Will take many of the ideas / resources into my practice'
- 'Much to think about'
- 'Made me more aware of emotional intelligence and how to relate this to children in class'
- 'Having taken a place on the SMT programme, the day has confirmed my belief in its importance'
- 'I will take all aspects of the conference especially the importance of talking about emotions with the children and not hiding from them'
- 'It has informed me greatly and has given me plenty of ideas to take into school'
- 'More thoughtful towards children in class'
- 'Much more aware of the subtle indications children can give and the much larger reason for these behaviours'
- 'Feel more confident to teach circle time'
- 'It will enable me to reflect on how my feelings impact on the children's confidence and self esteem'
- 'I will have more consideration for this aspect of the Foundation Phase and see it now as central'
- 'It will impact hugely as many tips and techniques will become useful in practice. Very excited to try them out on placement'
- 'Ideas'
- 'It has given me useful ideas to take with me for my future practice in all areas of the Foundation Phase'
- 'Practical ideas to implement'
- 'I will use the ideas in class. Very interesting, helps you gain a positive attitude to teaching children'