**Appendix 10: Example of coding for reflective journals: ThA Identifying themes Phases 1 and 2**

**P1**

Day 1 Shell shocked by end of day. Not what expected at all. Very fast, too much too fast, academic level of pitch too high for level of course. From my starting point of what is ELSA – day not what I needed. Referral form given out today – why? Haven’t gained any skills, boundaries etc. yet so form inappropriate and daunting today. Colleague, [COLLEAGUE] felt the same. Went to see Head on return to school. Not interested in continuing if this is how it will be. [HEAD] made phone calls and reassured me day will be different.

Day 2 Better day today – still trying to pack too much in. Not enough time given to discussions and activities. Feel more useful if can discuss with school colleague so more real etc. Discussed actual children in the various schools with ideas of involvement etc. Makes theories real – good. Very interested in self esteem and can think of numerous children in my school but no diagnostic offered – so again left wanting more, unsure how to proceed – what I can do etc. Had idea of how to involve all TAs in very simple way and parents re out of school activities – to discuss with [COLLEAGUE] and [HEAD]. PM – Active listening – nothing new but never a bad thing to think about again and reflect on practice/ expectations etc. Not enough time again for activities. Overall good session – getting fired up now!

Day 3 Balance of theory and models and practicals getting better, though some tasks skimmed over –nowhere near completed and wanted to discuss with other on course. No time to feedback. Again many brought puppets in – not anything I’ve ever been involved in – ran out of time to so no play time – trying ideas, conversations with puppets. For me missed opportunity as no prior. Very interesting day however.

Day 4 Improving again – good day – good balance of theory, how that affects practice and ideas we could use. Involved with Autistic child so some prior knowledge for me. But good to hear theories and confirm what I know/don’t know. E.g. Fact books better than fiction – reading huge trigger with our child – will change his books. Have ideas for Social stories – will start this week! Again better discussion when sat with colleague from my school.

Second part – social skills training. Very interesting, good balance of theory/ what it looks like. But would have liked some ideas/ activities we could use with children. I would prefer more practical discussion/ ideas as can think of children we could work with immediately.

Day 5 Both new areas for me today – but on reflection some of my work with Neets in previous job used some of these skills. Not sure if I would be confident enough to run a circle of friends or PIKAT but like the idea of direct intervention to tackle is[trainer]s head on. Will need to read more on. Again would have liked hand-out of possible activities etc. New area – want more!

Didn’t realise we had some resources o this at [school] already – this keeps happening – but this not my usual role – I teach Numeracy! Perhaps before starting course it would have been useful to complete an audit of resources in our school. Perhaps a pre-course task for future courses but would need to be very specific. Concerns about time required by this role. Already fairly full as are all of us. Unsure if this good time of year as all will be busy.

Would have liked to have a go at writing a therapeutic story – new to me. But no time. Would not be confident to write any as not sure what/ how. Again the value of having 2 from our school. Good day.

Meeting with [HEAD] – general feedback, supervision requirement and who to accompany us on Day 6. Not sure regards Day 6 as [HEAD] out of school, and [Deputy] covering. Bit annoyed about this. I only work 3 days a week so this has been a substantial time commitment for me which has impacted on the children/ groups I work with.

Day 6 – good discussions with [DEPUTY] – who’s aware of ELSA from previous school. [Deputy] then to feedback to Head. Until [DEPUTY] arrived we are unsure if anyone coming or not. Not good enough. Undermined us and the course.

27/3 Meeting with [COLLEAGUE] and [HEAD] (colleague Elsa and head). Discussed current plans – for me 3 weeks 1:1 in FS with autistic child, [COLLEAGUE] friendship and social groups initially. Discussed ideas for intro to staff, the process etc. All ok. [COLLEAGUE] and myself to produce paperwork etc. Discussed ideas involving other TAs, parents and out of school activities (us to produce letter etc); [trainer] to come in re Self esteem (26/4); audit of current resources, locate in one place etc. [HEAD] happy at this stage for us to take it on and start work, etc. Good. Ready to get going.

8/5 Just finished 3 weeks full time 1:1 with highly autistic FS child. Wow – what a learning curve. Had a great time. I produced lots of resources and stories as and when required, had successful school visit to a farm and child has settled into good work pattern. No longer in nappies – far less of an is[trainer] than originally thought but then I’m not phased by toileting at all. Social skills progressing as clearer how his adult should get stuck in and model interactions etc. Much easier to stay calm when understand him more and what makes him act up etc. Feel in much better position to support his usual 1:1. Quite a few changes –all planned and managed. Want to be involved in his end of year assessment and planning for next year. Good. School in better position to be ready for Sept. rather than it was this year. Happy to push this forward if feel not really moving.

8/5 First supervision session – very interesting to hear what others up to. Ideas for booklets/ resources etc. Concerned about TA making calls home to ‘reactive parent’. Feel myself and [COLLEAGUE] at [school] in much better position to be proactive and have some authority and autonomy with the Elsa as both HLTAs and not based in a classroom. Our position and standing in our school seems to be different to some of the others. This must impact on effectiveness. Flexibility is needed I feel for this role to work or to be seen as useful by teachers. Action: prepare resources, discuss possible transition work with 3 x Yr 6 children.

Perhaps participants should be HLTA or L2 or 3 TA who are not afraid to make decisions go and find staff, come up with and discuss ideas etc. If used to being directed and are less vocal and confident with teaching staff unsure how this can work unless you have a line manager who is equally involved as you. But then what is theirs/ your role?

24/5 Had slot at lunchtime teachers staff meeting to discuss Elsa role and procedure for referral. I am ready to get doing work now with more children than just the Autistic boy. Don’t want to lose any confidence etc. but pleased we have a procedure in place first.

1/6 [trainer] came in to see myself and [COLLEAGUE] to talk about self esteem diagnostics. Looked at resources, discussed differences, time constraints, appropriateness etc.

Discussed our progress and value we feel there is to having 2 Elsa’s at a school – bounce ideas, discuss referrals and actual work etc.

After meeting [COLLEAGUE] and [P1] looked at all referrals, discussed new ones, progress etc. [COLLEAGUE] to meet with particular teacher for further info etc. Good, the system seems to be working even though still in infancy.

4/6 Started work with 2 x year 6 – initially all about me – transition but then role play about friendship skills. Both well up for it. Will be good fun. They suggest they come out together while completing booklets then can role play together. As this is about friendships, I’m happy with this.

13/6 Attended Level 1 training on Autism – hopefully first of several, others next year. Nothing particularly new but made me realise I do know a lot now and am working in right direction with our Autistic boy in FS. Felt good. Sent on course as possibly another boy with Autism starting In Sept and again I will be involved in his care, education and supporting staff who work with him. Happy with this. Feel plans should be getting started for next year for current pupil. Written few stories starting a moving up booklet. All fired up again – fab!

19/6 Feel bit daunted today – some of concerns being asked to take on feel out of my comfort/ knowledge area. New referrals keep coming in, but not always using the paperwork. Need to tighten up on this. Lots of work started. Need to remember to start small and build relationship! Also I know I am a yes person – I don’t like to say no to anyone if it is something I can do – but need to remember boundaries of ELSA and that I work p/t!

21/6 delivered some informal training with both nursery nurses and a TA re working with our autistic boy, what to expect, triggers when goes wrong, what to do, strategies, expectations etc. Really so they can offer support or cover for 1:1 if a ‘bad’ day. Went ok. Though should have been delivered back in Autumn. Makes me realised how unready we were last Sept and how unsupported the 1:1 must have felt. Shame on us. Not good enough for TA or the child. Maybe to offer to other staff in prep for Sept and child moves to Yr1 and more visible and part of main school. Discuss with [HEAD].

22/6 [COLLEAGUE] met with Yr1 teacher to discuss new referral – child low independence – cloakroom, learning etc. So transition for yr2 etc. [COLLEAGUE] and I lots of discussion about possible intervention – good but soon became unclear where our role ends and the teachers begins. ELSA still new to school don’t want to get too stuck in and put teachers off accessing it. Decided to start with independence in cloakroom and discussions with mum.

26/6 I am producing a range of resources and am working with many children on range of concerns – good. But feel my colleague is not. First time that there being two of us has felt negative. Share of workload and actual work feels very uneven. Resources are very time consuming at present – but I seem to be doing them for both of us. Colleague not logging involvement on sheets as we agreed either. When Teachers have approached me about the referral unsure what to say. It appears colleague is only getting going on friendship/ social groups not 1:1 work. Groups were part of her usual role anyway. Will need conversation with colleague asap. Otherwise very enthused by range of concerns and activities involved in.