

The University of Sheffield

School of Education

**Research submitted in part requirement of the
Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology
(DEdCPsy)**

Department of Education Studies

“If they can get it right why don't I?”

**Year Ten students' experiences of studying
in the free school meal achievement gap
an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.**



Claire Willott

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore how Year Ten students make sense of the experience of studying and achieving in academic subjects. Purposive homogenous sampling was used to select Year Ten students from the same school, eligible for free school meals and underachieving according to grade predictions based on end of key stage tests. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually, focusing on students' perceptions around three research questions:

- How do students interpret their experience of home (community and family) and its influence on study and achievement in academic subjects?
- How do students interpret their experience of school and its influence on study and achievement in academic subjects?
- How do students make sense of studying and achieving in academic subjects?

Interpretative Phenomenological analysis was chosen as the methodological framework for a detailed examination of six students' expressed experiences. A rich account of these experiences is given in the interpretative findings with eight superordinate themes emerging.

Most students perceived their parents to have expectations that they studied and achieved in academic subjects, but lacked the educational understanding and resources to help.

Students valued the pastoral care system and relationships with teachers, when they perceived them to be supportive to their learning and when teachers held them in good opinion. Active teaching approaches that supported autonomy were largely perceived as having positive effects on studying.

Students mostly associated negative emotions of frustration, confusion, anxiety and boredom with study in academic subjects; this often lead to decreased motivation.

The findings are discussed in the light of the motivation framework of Social Determination theory. Conclusions are drawn that have implications for school and Educational Psychology practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Table of contents	3
Table of figures	10
Chapter 1 Introduction	11
1.1 Background	11
1.2 Thesis Structure	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15
2.1 Overview	15
2.2 National statistics relating to the gap in achievement between students from high and low SES backgrounds.....	15
2.3 Areas of influence on student achievement	19
2.3.1 Community.....	20
2.3.2 Family	22
2.3.2.1 Family expectations for study and achievement	22
2.3.2.2 Family involvement with students' education.....	22
2.3.3 School	24
2.3.3.1 School Relationships (teacher/ student)	25
2.3.3.2 School Relationships (peers)	26
2.3.3.3 General Teaching approaches.....	27
2.3.4 Child	29
2.4 Student voice in the debate around academic achievement and low SES status.....	31
2.5 Rationale and focus of present study	33

Chapter 3: Methodology	37
3.1 Introduction	37
3.2 World view	38
3.3 Ontology	39
3.3 Epistemology	42
3.3.1 Phenomenology.....	42
3.3.2 Hermeneutics.....	44
3.3.3 Idiography	45
3.4 Methodology.....	46
3.4.1 IPA	46
3.4.2 Validity	47
3.4.3 Limitations of IPA	50
3.4.4 Other considered research methodologies.....	51
3.5 Procedures.....	52
3.5.1 Developing an interview schedule for semi-structured interviews.....	52
3.5.2 Pilot Study	54
3.5.3 Participants	55
3.5.4 Ethical considerations.....	57
3.5.5 Analysis of data	58
3.5.6 Generalisability	61
Chapter 4: Background Information and Findings	63
4.1 Background	63
4.1.1 Nicki.....	63
4.1.1.1 Initial impressions,	63
Table 1: summary of school assessments.....	61
4.1.1.2 Summary from Director of Inclusion	64

4.1.2 Laura	65
4.1.2.1 First Impressions	65
Table 2: summary of school assessments.....	63
4.1.2.2. Summary from Director of Inclusion	65
4.1.3 Jess	67
4.1.3.1 First Impressions	67
Table 3: summary of school assessments.....	65
4.1.3.2 Summary from Director of Inclusion	67
4.1.4 Alistair	68
4.1.4.1 First Impressions	68
Table 4: summary of school assessments.....	66
4.1.4.2 Summary from Director of Inclusion	68
4.1.5 Bradley	69
4.1.5.1 First Impressions	69
Table 5: summary of school assessments.....	67
4.1.5.2 Summary from Director of Inclusion	69
4.1.6. Jason	70
4.1.6.1. First Impressions	70
Table 6: summary of school assessments.....	68
4.1.6.2 Summary from Director of Inclusion	70
4.2 Findings.....	71
4.2.1 Research question: How do students interpret their experiences of home (community and family) and its influence on study and achievement?	74
4.2.1.1 Superordinate theme 1: expectation from family for study and achievement.....	74
4.2.1.2 Superordinate theme 2: influence of home (community and family) experiences on study and achievement.....	77

4.2.2 Research question: How do students interpret their experience of school and its influence on learning and achievement?	80
4.2.2.1 Superordinate theme 3: influence of school relationships on study and achievement	80
4.2.2.2 Superordinate theme 4 : influence of students' teaching experience on study and achievement	87
4.2.3. Research question: How do students make sense of their learning and achieving in academic subjects?	94
4.2.3.1. Superordinate theme 5: emotional aspects of study and achievement.....	94
4.2.3.2. Superordinate theme 6: response to GCSE pressure	101
4.2.3.3. Superordinate theme 7: Influence of internal motivation on study and achievement	107
4.2.3.4 Superordinate theme 8: aspirations.....	110

Chapter 5: Discussion 113

Self-determination theory (SDT)	113
5.1 Students' experiences of home (community and family) and its influence on study and achievement in academic subjects.....	115
5.1.1 Expectations from family for study and achievement	115
5.1.2 Influence of home (community and family) experience on study and achievement	117
5.1.2.1 Home (community and family) events as barriers to study.....	117
5.1.2.2 Attraction of home (family and community) based alternatives to study	118
5.1.2.3 Help and encouragement with study	118
5.2 Students' interpretations of their experiences of school and its influence on study and achievement	119
5.2.1 Influence of school relationships on study and achievement.....	119
5.2.1.1 Pastoral care	119
5.2.1.2 Teacher Pupil Relationships.....	121

5.2.1.3 Influence of Peers	122
5.2.2 Influence of students' teaching experience on study and achievement	123
5.2.2.1 Monotonous repetitive lessons	123
5.2.2.2 Autonomy in learning.....	123
5.2.2.3 Learning Challenge and attitude to homework.....	124
5.2.2.4 Interest in topic and active lesson style	126
5.3 How do students make sense of learning and achieving in academic subjects?	129
5.3.1 Emotional aspects of study and achievement.....	129
5.3.2 Response to GCSE pressure	130
5.3.3 Influence of Internal motivation	134
5.3.4 Aspirations.....	136

Chapter 6: Conclusions Recommendations and Limitations..... 139

6.1 Conclusions.....	139
6.1.1 Students' interpretations of their experiences of community and family and its influence on study and achievement in academic subjects.....	139
6.1.2 Students' interpretations of their experiences of school and its influence on study and achievement in academic subjects.....	140
6.1.3 How students make sense of studying and achieving in academic subjects.	141
6.2 Recommendations for schools	141
6.3 Recommendations for the educational psychology service.....	144
6.4 Limitations.....	146
6.5 Recommendations for future research	147
6.6 Final thoughts	148
References	151

Appendices	161
Appendix 1.....	161
Cartoons, attitude to study.....	163
Appendix 2.....	165
Interview Schedule	165
Appendix 3.....	167
Information for Parents of Students taking part in the research project .	167
Consent form for Participants and Parents/Guardians.....	169
Information for Students taking part in the research project	170
Consent form for Participants	172
Letter for parents who gave telephone consent.....	173
Appendix 4.....	175
Ethical approval letter	175
Appendix 5.....	177
Readability test tool results	177
Appendix 6.....	179
Interpreting UK National Curriculum Levels	179
Appendix 7.....	183
Table 7: sample page of interview transcript with analysis.....	181
Appendix 8.....	185
Table 8: superordinate theme 1, expectations from home (community and family) experiences on study and achievement.....	183
Appendix 9.....	189
Table 9: superordinate theme 2, home (community and family) experiences of study and achievement.....	187
Appendix 10.....	195
Table 10: superordinate theme 3, influence of school relationships on study and achievement.....	193

Appendix 11.....	205
Table 11: superordinate theme 4, influence of students teaching experience on study and achievement.....	203
Appendix 12.....	225
Table 12: superordinate theme 5, emotional aspects of study and achievement.....	223
Appendix 13.....	235
Table 13: superordinate theme 6, response to GCSE pressure.....	233
Appendix 14.....	247
Table 14: superordinate theme 7, influence of internal motivation on study and achievement.....	245
Appendix 15.....	253
Table 15: superordinate theme 8, aspirations.....	249

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Relative impact of FSM eligibility and prior attainment on progress made between key stage 2 and key stage 3 (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009, p. 40)	18
Figure 2: Overlapping spheres of influence model, Epstein (1990)	19
Figure 3: Graph showing FSM and non-FSM eligible students' achievement in formal assessment through school in blankshire and england.....	33
Figure 4: An overview of the philosophical foundations of this research study...	38
Figure 5: Successional view of causation (positivist).....	41
Figure 6: A critical realist view of causation.....	41
Figure 7: Overview and application of the six steps of IPA analysis (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 82 – 101).....	60
Figure 8: Overview of research questions, superordinate and subordinate themes, part 1	72
Figure 9: Overview of research questions, superordinate and subordinate themes, part 2.....	73
Figure 10: Diagram showing decreasing awareness of and control over decision to study or not.	79
Figure 11: Feelings students associated with the studying experience	96
Figure 12: Emotions and behaviour associated with frustration	97
Figure 13: Emotions and behaviour associated with confusion.....	98
Figure 14: Emotions and behaviour associated with long term work difficulties ..	99
Figure 15: Students' values and associated home expectations.....	108
Figure 16: The four stage process of integration (deci et al., p. 330 – 331)	115
Figure 17: The stages of interest development.....	127

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This research project is concerned with investigating how Year Ten students make sense of study and achievement in academic subjects. It focuses on the perspectives of students who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) and who are underachieving, according to GCSE predictions based on end of key stage test results earlier in their education. It explores students' experiences of the influence of home (community and family) and school on their study and achievement, as well as how they make sense of study and achievement for themselves.

1.1 BACKGROUND

A number of factors have contributed to my interest in this area. Firstly closing the achievement gap at school leaving age for vulnerable groups such as students eligible for FSM is a Children and Younger Adults service challenge and commitment in the authority in which I work. It was suggested I could, through my research, make a valuable contribution to this authority challenge.

Secondly as a science teacher in a secondary school I had experience of working with many students eligible for FSM, and honest reflection of my practice left me wondering how I could have supported them better, rather than becoming frustrated by, for example, their lack of engagement.

Finally, as I began this research project, my own children began embarking on GCSEs and I found myself reflecting upon and wondering why my own experiences of education at GCSE level were markedly different. I recognised that, as the first person in my extended family to aspire to higher education, my route through GCSEs to A levels and University was much more haphazard and unsupported than it has so far proved to be for my children.

After an initial review of the literature, I was struck by how, since the advent of compulsory schooling, an achievement gap had been identified between students from poor and rich backgrounds, yet in spite of extensive research little had changed. I also noticed that students' views were under-represented. As a Trainee Educational Psychologist I have come to highly value my role of representing the voice of the child, so an interpretative phenomenological

analysis (IPA) of students' experiences of study and achievement in academic subjects felt like an appropriate response to this authority initiated research challenge.

1.2 THESIS STRUCTURE

Chapter two, the literature review: this offers an analysis of both national and local statistics regarding the achievement gap between FSM and non FSM eligible students and a comprehensive and critical overview of key issues surrounding academic achievement. A summary at the close of the chapter highlights the three research questions.

Chapter three, the methodology: this details my world view and subsequent ontological and epistemological position and a rationale for the use of IPA rather than other methodologies. The procedures used in the study are also comprehensively outlined. Reflexive boxes are used within this chapter in order to enable me to make evident my own perceptions regarding the research methodology.

Chapter four, the findings: contextual information about participants is provided in line with IPA methodology (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Chapter 4 then presents the eight superordinate themes. A summary table begins each superordinate theme section and provides a visual representation of the composite subordinate themes and their prevalence across interviews. A conclusion summarises each section. Quotes from the six participants are used throughout the chapter, both to preserve voices and also to illustrate and support my interpretations.

Chapter five, the discussion: this considers how the interpretative account of the findings relates to literature, in particular, self-determination theory(Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Chapter six, conclusions and recommendations: this focuses on the overall implications for practice and in particular for Educational Psychologists (EP). Suggestions for further research are offered.

By providing reflexive boxes in the methodology section and owning my own perceptions and interpretations in the findings and discussion section, I aim to be as transparent as possible, constrained as I am by the medium of written

communication. I invite the reader to make their own informed decision as to the relevance of my own interpretations to their own experience and practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 OVERVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to give the reader an overview of the current literature pertaining to the barriers to academic achievement for students from white families of low socioeconomic status (SES)¹. It should be noted that the literature review has been written before, during and after the analysis of the interview data. This is in accordance with interpretative phenomenological analysis, the selected methodology.

I will, in section 2.2 outline the present day national statistics relating to the achievement gap between students from high and low SES backgrounds. Section 2.3 will outline the different areas of influence on a student's achievement and pay particular attention to home (community and family), school and student characteristics. In section 2.4 I will outline the importance and rationale of including student voices in the debate around the academic achievement of students from low SES backgrounds. Finally in section 2.5 I outline the focus and rationale of my current study.

2.2 NATIONAL STATISTICS RELATING TO THE GAP IN ACHIEVEMENT BETWEEN STUDENTS FROM HIGH AND LOW SES BACKGROUNDS

Statistics gathered over many decades show that students from high SES families tend to do better in academic subjects (Bernstein, 1971; Connolly, 2006; Ehrenberg, Goldhaber, & Brewer, 1995; D. E. Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998; Herrnstein, 1973; Ogbu, 1988; Terman, 1916). One of the findings from a synthesis of meta-analysis of 800+ studies, indicated that SES had a notable effect on academic performance (Hattie, 2009). A synthesis of meta-analyses combines data from different meta-analyses, (which are also a product of combining data from different studies), and although a popular and well respected design, there are difficulties. Some feel that combining data from disparate studies of different quality means that comparisons do not have

¹ Socioeconomic status (SES) is a measurement based on the combination of income, occupation and education. It is generally viewed as the social class of an individual family or group (American Psychological Association, 2007)

great validity, others point to the fact that meta-analyses tends to produce generalities largely at the expense of detail. Furthermore the studies used are essentially historic, and therefore do not provide an up-to-date picture of the issue in question. A synthesis of meta-analyses does, however, at the very least, provide a solid foundation regarding the overall effects of issues and approaches.

In the field of education, data is often collected comparing the attainment of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) with those not eligible for FSM (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009) Eligibility for FSM is dependent on whether a student's parents or carers are receiving particular benefits. It is an imperfect measure as it does not catch all students whose families are on a low income, but those that it does pick up all fit the criteria of low income families, and commonly also fit the criteria for low SES families. Thus it is still a useful and common tool used to analyse the impact of low SES (Hobbs & Vignoles, 2010).

The effect of family SES on student achievement, as defined by student eligibility for FSM, applies for all student groups and as the National Union of Teachers (2010, p. 1) stated:

the effect of social class on education for children of all ethnic backgrounds remains a neglected issue, despite its repercussions for millions of children and whole communities.

This is perhaps because often the debate focuses more around gender or ethnicity and this masks educational inequalities as a result of family SES. There are differences between ethnicity and gender, as highlighted in the government report "Deprivation and Education":

Ethnicity

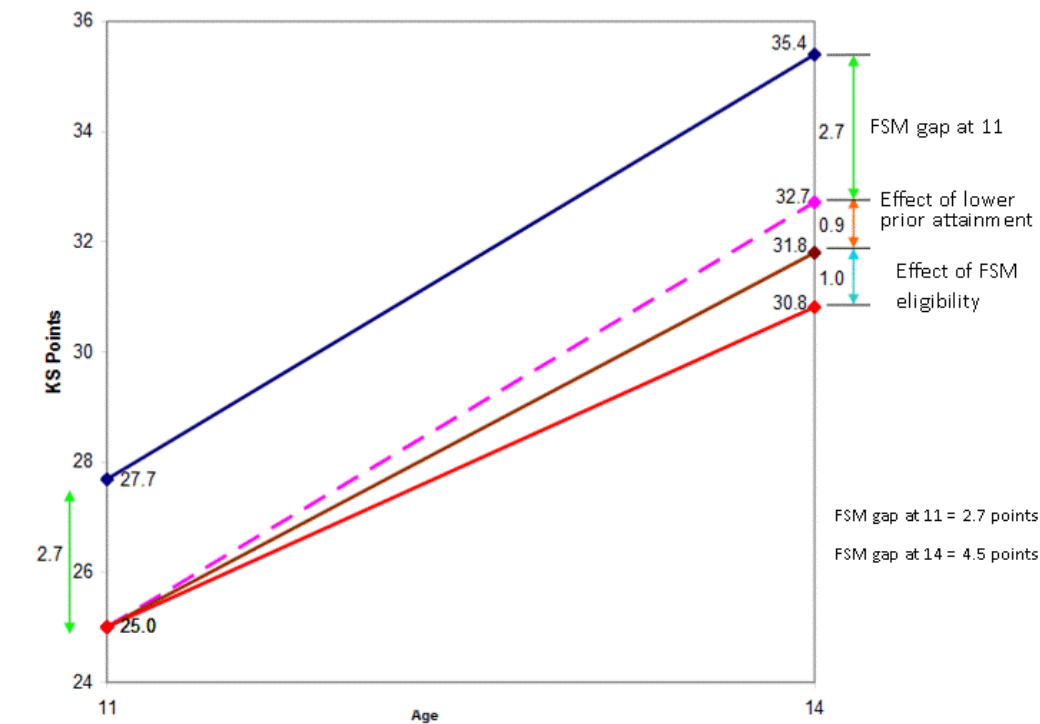
White British pupils have the widest FSM gap of 32 percentage points (apart from the relatively small Irish and White/Asian groups), White British FSM pupils are the lowest attaining group (after the Gypsy/Roma and Traveller groups) with only 17% achieving 5+ A*-C (including English and Maths) compared to the national average of 45% (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009, p. 41).

Gender

FSM girls perform better than FSM boys (40% achieved 5+ A*-C at GCSE in 2007 compared to 31% of FSM boys). Although FSM boys have lower attainment, deprivation appears to impact on boys and girls to a similar degree: both groups underperform their non-FSM counterparts (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009, p. 44).

These differences are, however, relatively small, when compared against SES. Differences between girl and boy achievement, for example, tend to be focused on crude comparisons between all boys and all girls (Epstein et al., 1998). This approach fails to appreciate that not all boys are underachieving; many boys (especially those of high SES) do well and not all girls are overachieving, low SES girls are notably underachieving.

The achievement gap between students eligible for FSM and those not eligible for FSM is shown on the graph overleaf:



- KEY**
- Typical Non FSM pupil
 - FSM pupil if they make the same progress as non-FSM
 - Non FSM pupil with same prior attainment as FSM pupil
 - Typical FSM pupil

Source: DSCF analysis of children recorded in the 2007 School Census who took Key Stage assessments in maintained mainstream secondary schools, including academies and City Technical Colleges.

FIGURE 1: RELATIVE IMPACT OF FSM ELIGIBILITY AND PRIOR ATTAINMENT ON PROGRESS MADE BETWEEN KEY STAGE 2 AND KEY STAGE 3 (DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES, 2009, P. 40)

These statistics highlight that pupils on FSM not only begin key stage three with lower prior attainment levels but also progress more slowly, such that the attainment gap is widened by the time they reach the end of key stage 3. Slower academic progress is typical even for those children eligible for FSM who begin key stage two with the same prior attainment as those children not eligible for FSM.

It is consequently unsurprising that Connolly (2006) found that children from higher professional backgrounds were over eight times more likely to gain five or more GCSEs grades A*-C than children from lower professional backgrounds.

2.3 AREAS OF INFLUENCE ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The gap in achievement between students of high and low SES is a complex one. The ecosystemic model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) is one useful way of viewing the different areas of influence on student achievement. However, in this study, Epstein's (1990) model has greater direct relevance to academic achievement:

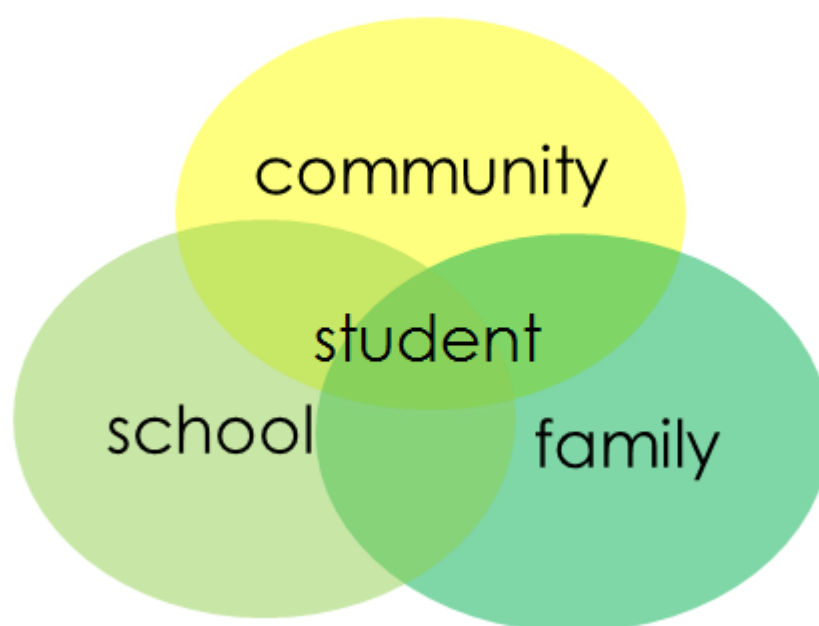


FIGURE 2: OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE MODEL, EPSTEIN (1990)

Epstein argues that the influence of school, family and community are integral to a student's academic development. However, she identifies that all too often these areas of influence are considered in isolation to each other, rather than as parts of a whole and argues that the greatest gains in student achievement occur when they are addressed together. I shall now attempt to unpack each area in turn.

2.3.1 COMMUNITY

Reay (2009) provides us with a sociological and anthropological perspective on the achievement gap between different SES groups, referring to the low SES group as "working class"; it is an expression particular to the United Kingdom (UK), but has parallel meaning to low SES.

Reay argues that the white working class bring a historic collective memory of inferiority to school, through parents and grandparents. Furthermore, white working class children are expected to choose between school pedagogic practices and local pedagogic practices, between popularity amongst their peer group or the difficult to achieve, successful learner status. This is especially true for working class boys (Reay, 2009) .

According to Reay (2009) educational experience either builds students up or deflates and marginalises them through normatively assessed academic success. Since working class students have little access to the material, cultural and psychological resources that support success in education they are disadvantaged and, as a consequence, this can lead to demoralisation and the development of an inferior or rejected identity. Reay highlights how working class students, across ethnicity, often feel alienated from their education and report a sense that they have little power over their outcomes and that they are not respected or valued within education.

In a similar vein, Evans (2006) provides an ethnographical analysis of educational failure in Bermondsey. She suggests learning is a social process and that what children learn depends upon the sorts of activities the significant adults in their lives expect them to apply their intelligence to. Evans argues that the middle classes equate happiness with educational success and the forging of a respectable professional career, and expect from their children: hard work, discipline and postponement of fun until work is complete. Whilst the working classes also value their child's happiness, they may not necessarily equate this with academic success. Rather the working class aim is largely for children to be people that their parents can depend on to work and earn. As a consequence, formal learning and caring are synonymous experiences for middle class children, but this is not the case for white working class children where formal education is considered solely the responsibility of school. Evans argues that consequently, schools, run by middle class professionals, require

working class children to learn to be middle class and adopt middle class values.

Evan's perspective, whilst richly descriptive, is focused on a few participants known to the author in a discrete area of London and provides more of a case study. This is not necessarily relevant or generalizable to the whole of this London area or to other areas of London or the United Kingdom.

Another strand of research related to community influences on students' academic performance is the effect of traumatic experiences, for example exposure to violence or neglect. Students who have experience of traumatic stress commonly develop five symptoms: re-experiencing (flashbacks & nightmares); avoidance (detachment, diminished affect and interest and evading possible traumatic reminders); arousal (hyperactivity, irritability and difficulty concentrating); internalising behaviours (anxiety and depression) and externalising behaviours (aggression and acting out) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Levine & Kline, 2006; Ogden, Minton, & Pain, 2006). Inevitably these symptoms have an effect on students' academic functioning (A. Cook et al., 2005; Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1998; Ogden, et al., 2006; Schwartz & Gorman, 2003). In a recent paper, the link between SES trauma and academic achievement was highlighted (Goodman, Miller, & West-Olatunji, 2012). The researchers found that lower SES students were more likely to experience traumatic stress and academic underachievement, and that traumatic stress per se predicts underachievement. Whilst the study used a norm-referenced data set, making the finding generalizable to the wider population, it is worth remembering that the study was American based and focused on children of primary school age. In addition, the study used indicators of trauma, based on observation of the five symptoms listed above, rather than a direct measure of trauma exposure. Hence an assumption was made, albeit based on literature pertaining to traumatic stress, that the five variables selected were measures of traumatic stress. Consequently the conclusion drawn that lower SES students are more likely to experience traumatic stress can only be a tentative one, as there is as yet no direct link between lower SES and an increase in traumatic experiences.

2.3.2 FAMILY

Of the six types of parental involvement outlined by Epstein (2001) , there are two strands of research pertaining to the influence of family on students' academic achievement that I will focus on in this review, family expectations for study and achievement, and family involvement with students' education.

2.3.2.1 FAMILY EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Family expectations for study and achievement have been shown to vary considerably between different SES groups, students from low SES backgrounds, although seeing the value of education, are likely to lack the self-belief that they can achieve and consequently have low aspirations for their future (Finlayson, 1971; Helling, 1996; Hirsch, 2007; Hong & Ho, 2005; Marjoribanks, 1997). A study completed by Hong and Ho (2005) looked at the different dimensions of parental involvement in children's education and concluded that parental aspirations enhanced children's aspirations, achievement and academic growth. They also identified that achievement was further assisted by communication between parents and children about their study; communication appeared to improve students' sense of control of their learning and, as a consequence, improve achievement. Conversely, when parents were more controlling, for example by monitoring students' homework or restricting time spent going out or watching television, this appeared to have a negative effect. Hong and Ho's study used data collected in the 1980 – 90's and therefore may not be generalizable to students today. It also relied on student reports of parental involvement, which is not a direct measurement of involvement, but, as Hong and Ho suggest, student perception of parental involvement may be more important than actual involvement.

2.3.2.2 FAMILY INVOLVEMENT WITH STUDENTS' EDUCATION.

Students from low SES backgrounds are more likely to have parents and carers who have low levels of education, and who may also have had unhelpful experiences of education themselves (Feinstein, Duckworth, & Sabates, 2004; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Melhuish et al., 2008). This can result in parents and carers having less familiarity and confidence with the school and the education of their children, and influences their involvement in their child's education and their expectations for their child's study and achievement.

Whilst there is evidence that many low SES parents do not see the value of becoming involved in their child's education (Harris & Goodall, 2008) those parents that want to be involved find it hard to know how best to do so. Clinton, Hattie and Dixon (2007) through a case study intervention in a cluster of schools in the most deprived area of New Zealand, identified that parents found the language of schools and learning a barrier to involvement. The introduction of a home school liaison person, computers in the home and homework centres, all served to enable parents to find out more about the school curriculum and what their children should be learning, and helped to break down some of the language barriers between home and school. Effects in student engagement, self-belief and, to a lesser extent achievement were found. This qualitative case-study is, however, limited in its generalizability especially as it involved students with Maori backgrounds,

Hill and Tyson (2009) conducted a meta-analysis to identify the types of parental involvement that were positively associated with achievement. They found that academic socialisation had the strongest positive association with achievement. Academic socialisation by parents includes:

- Communication of the value they place on education and their educational expectations for their children
- Interest and development in their children's aspirations for education and employment;
- Discussion of learning strategies
- Linking subject content from school to children's own interest.

Hill and Tyson conclude that academic socialisation is the most developmentally appropriate strategy for supporting young adolescents with autonomy, independence and internal motivation. The meta-analysis, however, does not provide any differentiation between different SES groups.

A study of schools in the Manchester area, which were perceived (by Ofsted²) to have high levels of parental engagement, looked at how schools engaged with hard-to-reach parents. Hard to reach was defined in the study as Parents who:

² Ofsted: the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in England

- Had very low levels of school engagement (non-attendance at school meetings, non-response to school communication)
- Had very high levels of inertia in overcoming perceived barriers to participation.
- Were largely of low SES

The study concluded that the following strategies were successful in involving such parents:

- Training programs for parents to help them communicate about and work directly on schoolwork with their children
- Helping parents recognise their partnership with teachers in their children's education.
- Helping parents to participate by giving them appropriate and meaningful roles in school decision making.
- Emphasising the value of parental involvement, and the improvement it makes to their child's achievement.

(Campbell, 2011)

This study is exploratory and relied upon subjective reports from headteachers. However, it indicates to me, together with the other two studies I have highlighted, that assisting parental engagement in learning is an area worthy of further focus in the future, especially at the secondary level. According to Cotton and Wiklund (1989) it is more difficult for parents to engage with secondary schools because : schools are often larger and further from home; their children have a large number of teachers; their children have a greater sense of their independence from their parents; the curriculum seems more specialised; teachers seem more distant (eg. no playground environment in which to talk informally).

2.3.3 SCHOOL

Regarding school influence on students' academic study and achievement, two strands of research, school relationships and teaching approaches, are pertinent.

2.3.3.1 SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS (TEACHER/ STUDENT)

The person-centred teaching approach stresses the importance of teacher empathy, unconditional positive regard, genuineness, non-directivity and the encouragement of critical thinking. Person-centred teacher student variables can be seen outworking in the classroom through teacher qualities of understanding, warmth and self-awareness, and through classroom activities where students are encouraged to regulate activities and to engage in deeper thinking rather than memory recall (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).

Cornelius-White (2007), conducted a meta-analysis which showed that the person-centred teacher variables of positive relationships, non-directivity, empathy, warmth, and the encouragement of thinking and learning were all associated with positive student outcomes. The meta-analysis necessitated an averaging across variables as there was diversity between studies; thus the study was only able to provide a broad descriptive picture. The correlation between teacher student relationships and student achievement may also have been bidirectional. However, this is not in variance to the original theories; Rogers, for example hypothesises reciprocity (1951).

Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort (2011) identified two further theories in addition to person centred teaching approaches, which also place an emphasis on teacher student relationships in relation to study and achievement:

1. Attachment theory posits that positive, sensitive and attuned relationships between a primary care-giver and child, promotes within the child, feelings of security and a subsequent desire for exploration of their environment (Ainsworth, 1978; Bowlby, 1988). An extended attachment perspective, suggests that similarly, when teachers are sensitive to the needs of students, they can serve as a secure base from which students can engage in learning activities and, as a result, support students in their achievement (Pianta, Nimetz, & Bennett, 1997).
2. Self-determination theory (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991) explains the importance of teacher student relationships by way of the fulfilment of the three fundamental psychological needs; relatedness, competence and autonomy. Teachers can support these needs by showing involvement, providing structure and supporting autonomy.

Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort (2011), identified the similarity in which teacher student relationships were operationalized within these two theories, namely through the person-centred teacher variables of empathy and warmth. Their meta-analysis sought to identify if the “empathy and warmth” subset of person-centred teacher variables was more strongly associated with student outcomes than other person-centred variables, they found this to be true. They also found that the converse was true, negative aspects of teacher student relationships such as conflict and distrust had negative effects on student outcomes. Students from low SES were shown to be more strongly influenced by the quality of the teacher student relationship. A limitation of the study, however, was that it relied solely on student reports (at secondary school age). Whilst these usually have high level of accuracy, there is a risk of bias; reports from multiple sources may have reduced this risk.

2.3.3.2 SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS (PEERS)

Friendships can play an important role in students' study and achievement, especially at secondary school when social relationships become particularly important. Peers can influence learning directly by, for example, tutoring and giving feedback, but also indirectly as they often involve support and caring and can ease conflict resolution, which in turn assists academic achievement. (Anderman & Anderman, 1999). There is some correlational evidence that students were negatively affected by peers if they were more performance orientated, i.e. focused on their performance in relation to others. Conversely, students were positively affected by peers if they were more achievement orientated, i.e. were more concerned about the intrinsic value of learning. (Levy-Tossman, Kaplan, & Assor, 2007)

However, there is unpredictability about the effects of peer friendships. Intimate friendships (where personal information is shared) between peers have been shown to be more influential than more superficial ones, and the influence of peers may be either beneficial or harmful to a student's academic achievement (Berndt, Laychak, & Park, 1990). Thus, having intimate friends at school can have positive or negative effects on achievement. However, in tension with this, evidence also suggests that low classroom peer acceptance can lead to a student's disengagement with learning and underachievement

(Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006); so, steering clear of the influence of peers, or being rejected by peers, may also lead to underachievement.

2.3.3.3 GENERAL TEACHING APPROACHES

Many studies have been completed into the effectiveness of the various teaching approaches in improving achievement and these have been synthesised by others (Hattie, 2009; Higgins, Kokotsaki, & Coe, 2011). I will briefly summarise below the areas Hattie evaluates and identifies as important to achievement: goal setting, teaching appropriate strategies, opportunities for practice and feedback.

1. Goal or target Setting

Atkinson (1958) showed that the highest level of effort occurred when the task was viewed as moderately difficult and that effort decreased when the task was viewed as too easy or too hard. Locke & Latham (2002) provide good evidence of the importance of goals in improving achievement. They showed that specific goals led to greater effort and higher performance from students than "do your best" goals. This is because "do your best" goals: are not specific, can be interpreted on a variety of levels, are easily attained, and are difficult to evaluate. Specific goals, however, inform students about the performance needed so they can direct and evaluate their efforts. There are two types of goals identified in literature, performance goals and mastery goals. A performance oriented student tends to be concerned with their ability and performance relative to others in their class, whereas a mastery oriented student is more likely to be focused on developing competence and making progress (Elliot & Dweck, 2007). Students with a more mastery orientated style of goal setting have been shown to have greater motivation and levels of achievement (Ames & Archer, 1988). Self-assessment and evaluation has also been shown to be of value. Martin (2006) argued that introducing a concept of "personal bests" can enhance student performance, much as it does with athletes. Personal best goals are by nature mastery focused. Ideally they need to be specific, challenging, focus on self-improvement and compete only against a student's previous performance.

2. Appropriate teaching strategies

According to Fullan, Hill, & Crévola (2006) the principles of effective teaching matter more than the methods per se. They suggest that it is the personalisation of the teaching that is important. Teachers need to have different strategies to use with individual students, and notice when and how to use them.

3. Practice

Opportunities for practice should increase opportunities to enhance mastery and fluency. Such approaches are far from those of “drill and practice” and crucially, to avoid boredom and disengagement they need to: involve feedback; extend experience; provide practice in a variety of contexts to facilitate transfer of learning; and be embedded in the context of deeper and conceptual understanding that is part of the wider learning experience (Péladeau, Forget, & Gagné, 2003).

4. Feedback

Hattie (2009) describes feedback as “amongst the most powerful influences on achievement”(p. 19). Feedback can be from teacher to student, but is equally powerful when it flows from student to teacher. Providing feedback is about providing information about performance on the task. It answers one or more of the following types of questions:

- Where am I going?
- How am I going?
- Where to next?

In an ideal learning environment the teacher and student are asking themselves, and seeking to answer these questions (Sadler, 1998). Furthermore, in concurrence with the concept of the zone of proximal development (Vygotskii & Cole, 1978), feedback is most effective if it is aimed at, or just beyond the level of the student's current level of work. It is also important that it is not aimed at a personal level, for example “you are a great student”, as this does not have the effect of enhancing performance, since when feedback draws attention to the self, failure has a high risk attached to it and students' try to avoid taking the risk', for example, of their “great student” status being affected by a poor performance. (P. Black & William, 1998). (For limitations of this synthesis of meta-analysis see section 2.2)

2.3.4 CHILD

Individual student qualities that have been shown to influence study and achievement include motivation, affect and aspirations.

There are many conceptualisations of motivation with quite a bit of overlap in theories, for example:

- Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986)
- Expectancy value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995)
- Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985)

It is beyond the scope of this review to go into any detail about the different theories. However one important concept contained in all the theories above in one form or another is self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). The self-efficacy of students (and parents) is often considered important in academic achievement research (Gutman & Akerman, 2008; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008; Valentine, DuBois, & Cooper, 2004). Self-efficacy refers to a student's judgments about their ability to perform a particular task in a particular situation. Students are more likely to show higher levels of effort and perseverance when they believe they are able to succeed. Self-efficacy measures can be as strong predictors of achievement as cognitive ability measures (Pajares & Kranzler, 1995). However, since Pajares & Kranzler's study is correlational, and the self-efficacy beliefs are inevitably formed on the skills and abilities a task involves, it is possible that a student's recorded self-efficacy beliefs and cognitive abilities are highly related.

In the field of emotions, whilst anxiety, particularly test anxiety has been well researched over decades (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002), the impact of wider emotions on learning has been largely neglected. Both Alpert and Haber (1960) and more recently Pekrun, et al. (2002) showed that anxiety correlated negatively with motivation to learn for some students but correlated positively for others. One hypothesis proposed was that for some students anxiety may diminish achievement by reducing intrinsic motivation and produce task-irrelevant thinking, however, other student's achievement may be supported by anxiety as it strengthens their extrinsic motivation, and this can improve performance on the rehearsal strategies usually required in tests.

More recently, the effect of emotions in academic settings on engagement and achievement has been explored. (Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2006; Pekrun, et al., 2002; Skinner, et al., 2008) A review of the evidence of the impact of emotions on children's learning, indicates that emotions:

- Alter brain dopamine levels affecting long term memory (Ashby & Isen, 1999),
- Direct attention and induce and sustain interest in a topic (Meinhardt & Pekrun, 2003)
- Trigger problem solving (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987)

Positive emotions such as enjoyment hope and pride are potential motivators for children, they encourage them to put effort into their work and become involved in the class. Similarly negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration and boredom lead to disaffection and a reduction in students' effort and persistence in classroom activity and withdrawal from it. Skinner, et al. (2008) showed how positive and negative emotions had a long term effect on behaviour, children who had lost their emotional enjoyment and interest, showed long-term reduced participation in academic tasks, and vice versa.

Pekrun et al (2002) also identify a further positive emotion of relief in academic situations. Whilst they find no correlation between relief and academic performance, I would suggest that a recovery phase after a (stressful) assessment task is important (Ogden, et al., 2006) and is likely to support performance on the following task. Pekrun, et al. (2002), also identify two types of negative emotions in academic settings:

1. Deactivating e.g. boredom and hopelessness
2. Activating e.g. anger, shame and anxiety

Negative deactivating emotions show a greater negative correlation to achievement than the activating negative emotion. The implication for schools is that, passive withdrawal behaviour (stemming from hopelessness and boredom) is likely to have the greatest effect on achievement outcomes, thus greater priority should be given to this problem. Whilst the evidence in the above studies is correlational, the influence of one on the other is none-the-less now well established.

Literature indicates that students' occupational aspirations are influenced by self-concept, which in turn is determined by student levels of self-esteem, locus of control (the extent to which students believe they can control events that happen to them) and educational aspirations (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000; Marjoribanks, 1984) (see section 2.3.2), furthermore socio-demographic factors including SES are also seen as important (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996; Lent, et al., 2000). A longitudinal study using national data indicated that SES had significant effects on aspirations whereas academic achievement and self-concept had only modest effects (Rojewski & Yang, 1997). However, as highlighted earlier in this review a student's SES is likely to influence both their academic achievement and their self-concept, so the variables are likely to be interconnected, perhaps via a mediator such as student motivation, as outlined earlier in this section.

2.4 STUDENT VOICE IN THE DEBATE AROUND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND LOW SES STATUS

From section 2.3, it will be apparent that there has been considerable research over many decades into the area of academic achievement and much includes the influence of low SES (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Ames & Archer, 1988; Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Atkinson, 1958; Bandura, 1986; Berndt, et al., 1990; Bernstein, 1971; P. Black & William, 1998; Buhs, et al., 2006; Campbell, 2011; Clinton, et al., 2007; Connolly, 2006; A. Cook, et al., 2005; Cornelius-White, 2007; Cotton & Wiklund, 1989; Deci, et al., 1991; Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Ehrenberg, et al., 1995; J. L. Epstein, 1990; Evans, 2006; Feinstein, et al., 2004; Finlayson, 1971; Fullan, et al., 2006; Goodman, et al., 2012; Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1998; Gutman & Akerman, 2008; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hattie, 2009; Helling, 1996; Herrnstein, 1973; Higgins, et al., 2011; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Hirsch, 2007; Hong & Ho, 2005; Lent, et al., 2000; Levine & Kline, 2006; Levy-Tossman, et al., 2007; Locke & Latham, 2002; Marjoribanks, 1997; Martin, 2006; Melhuish, et al., 2008; Ogbu, 1988; Ogden, et al., 2006; Pajares & Kranzler, 1995; Pekrun, et al., 2006; Pekrun, et al., 2002; Péladeau, et al., 2003; Pianta, et al., 1997; Reay, 2009; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Rojewski & Yang, 1997; Roorda, et al., 2011; Sadler, 1998; Schwartz & Gorman, 2003; Skinner, et al., 2008; Terman, 1916; Valentine, et al., 2004). Yet in spite of such a focus the issue still remains a crucial and

unresolved one. Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman of the Sutton Trust³, recently wrote that the inequalities facing FSM pupils in Britain remain stark and that still: "Too little is known about what works in raising the achievement of the poorest pupils (Education Endowment Foundation, 2011). The Government's pupil premium (Department for Education, 2011a) aims to raise achievement among disadvantaged children, and to reduce the attainment gap between the lowest to highest achieving students. The Sutton Trust Report recognises that spending more money on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds will not necessarily increase their achievement in academic subjects, and suggests that the way the money is spent is crucial (Higgins, et al., 2011).

The report identifies and evaluates many of the strategies and resources that are available to support children eligible for FSM (amongst other pupil premium criteria). However, what is lacking in the report and the research area as a whole is an exploration into how students from low-income families view achievement and what these students think and feel about studying and learning. Unless we attempt to explore students' perspectives as 'expert witnesses' our research will remain focused on the researchers' perspectives and be 'looking in from the outside'. In exploring students' experiences and perceptions, we may gain a deeper understanding of the problems and underlying factors of the attainment gap issue (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004)

One of the few studies to explore the views of white working class children and young people in England was carried out by Gillbourne & Kirton (2000). They explored the views of white working class boys in a predominantly white school in a deprived multi-cultural area of London. The boys perceived white working class disadvantage as a racial issue, with white students feeling victims, perceiving that their school was poorly funded compared to schools with more minority students. The views of children, as illustrated by this study, are likely to be affected by the particular circumstances of their immediate environment as well as the wider community. There has to date been little research on student perspectives in more rural areas of England. Students here face very different circumstances and challenges to those from a multi-cultural inner city. This is an area identified as an evidence gap by the Deprivation and Education Report, who hope that in the future there will be an answer the question: "Are there

³ The Sutton Trust aims to improve educational opportunities for young people from non-privileged backgrounds.

different challenges inherent to addressing poor attainment amongst deprived pupils in different contexts?" (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2009)

2.5 RATIONALE AND FOCUS OF PRESENT STUDY

This qualitative study is developed in conjunction with an Educational Psychology Service in a semi-rural part of England, (for reasons of confidentiality I have given it the name Blankshire). The graph below shows how in Blankshire the disparity in achievement between students eligible for FSM and those not eligible, although less marked at key stage 2 and 3, becomes somewhat greater at key stage 4 than in England as a whole:

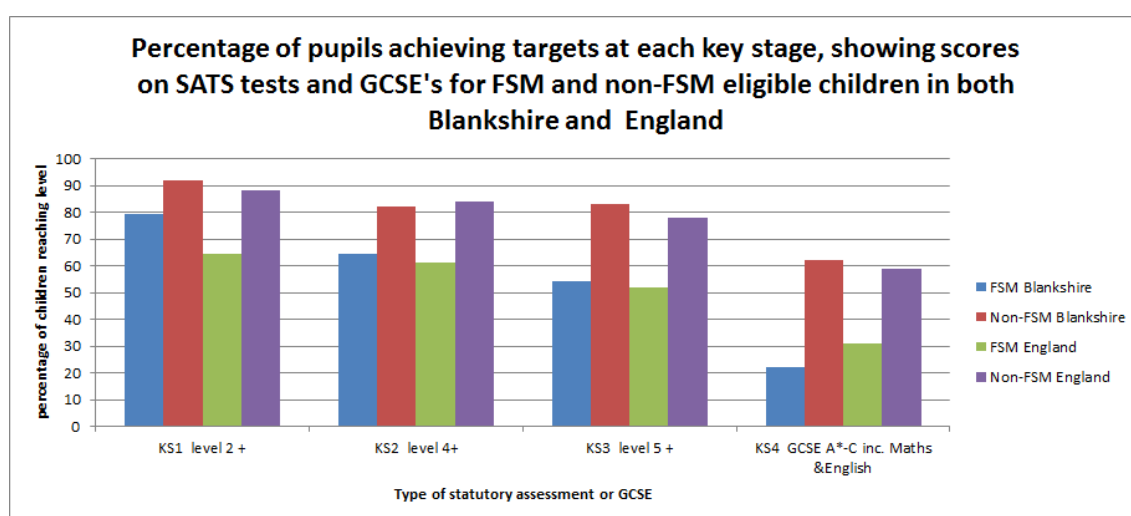
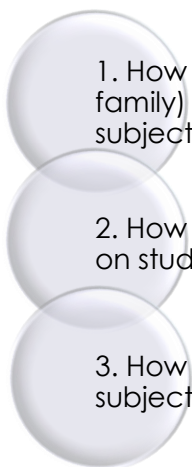


FIGURE 3: GRAPH SHOWING FSM AND NON-FSM ELIGIBLE STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN FORMAL ASSESSMENT THROUGH SCHOOL IN BLANKSHIRE AND ENGLAND

The focus of this study is on the achievement of white working class students; it excludes ethnic minority students. This is a reflection of the demographics of Blankshire where only 1.5% of the population are from ethnic minority groups compared to 9.1% across England (Office for National Statistics, 2009). Neither does the study differentiate between gender; there is no published data comparing FSM boys achievement with FSM girls in Blankshire, however the data showing the overall achievement difference between boys and girls at key stage 4 in Blankshire is smaller than that for the whole of England; 62.5% of girls achieve passes at GCSE level A*-C including maths and English, compared with 58.9% of boys (Office for National Statistics, 2009). Thus the gender difference in GCSE achievement is minor compared to the difference between students eligible for FSM and those not eligible for FSM.

This study provides an opportunity to develop an idiographic understanding of how Year Ten students eligible for free school meals think about their studying and achievement in academic subjects, how they describe educational experience and how they make sense of learning and achieving. It thus assists an understanding of a complex psycho-social phenomena and presents exciting possibilities of informing practice (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 215).

Informed by my literature review my research questions explore student experiences of Epstein's (1990) overlapping spheres of influence on the issue of study and achievement in academic subjects:

- 
1. How do students interpret their experience of home (community and family) and its influence on studying and achieving in academic subjects?
 2. How do students interpret their experience of school and its influence on studying and achieving in academic subjects?
 3. How do students make sense of learning and achieving in academic subjects?

Summary

The literature review examines extensive research in the area of academic achievement, particularly as it relates to students from families of Low SES.

Statistics gathered over many decades show that students from lower SES families tend to do worse in academic subjects than students from higher SES. The divergence between students from low SES and high SES backgrounds is considerably greater than the divergence between different ethnic groups and genders.

Epstein (2009) identifies overlapping spheres of influence of school, family and community on student achievement.

Influences of community include: community expectations for study and achievement, community views of education and the effect of witnessing or being involved in traumatic experiences on study and achievement.

Influences of family include: family expectations for study and achievement, involvement with student's education, familiarity with academic processes and language.

Influences of school include: teacher pupil relationships, peer relationships, teaching approaches

Within child influences include: motivation, affect and aspirations.

There is a need for the representation of student voices in the achievement and low SES debate, particularly of students living in more rural settings such as Blankshire.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methods are concerned with more than just techniques used, but involve our understanding of the world, what we take understanding to be and what we see as the purposes of understanding (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Morrison, 2007).

The overall methodological approach of this study was qualitative and exploratory in nature. I was interested in the "quality and texture" of experience and my aim was to understand more of "people's grasp of the world" (Willig, 2008, p. 9). My qualitative approach was inspired by Flyvberg (2006), amongst others, who suggested that:

Proof is hard to come by in social science because of the absence of hard theory, whereas learning is certainly possible. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 224)

Qualitative methodology can develop from a variety of epistemological and ontological positions. My own position results from my personal world view, so I shall begin this section by discussing my world view, before going on to explain how this has driven my ontological and epistemological approach to this research, influenced the methodology I have selected, the research questions I have formed and the techniques I have employed to answer these research questions. These will all be discussed in detail in this chapter but are summarised in Figure 4, although the process was inevitably somewhat iterative.

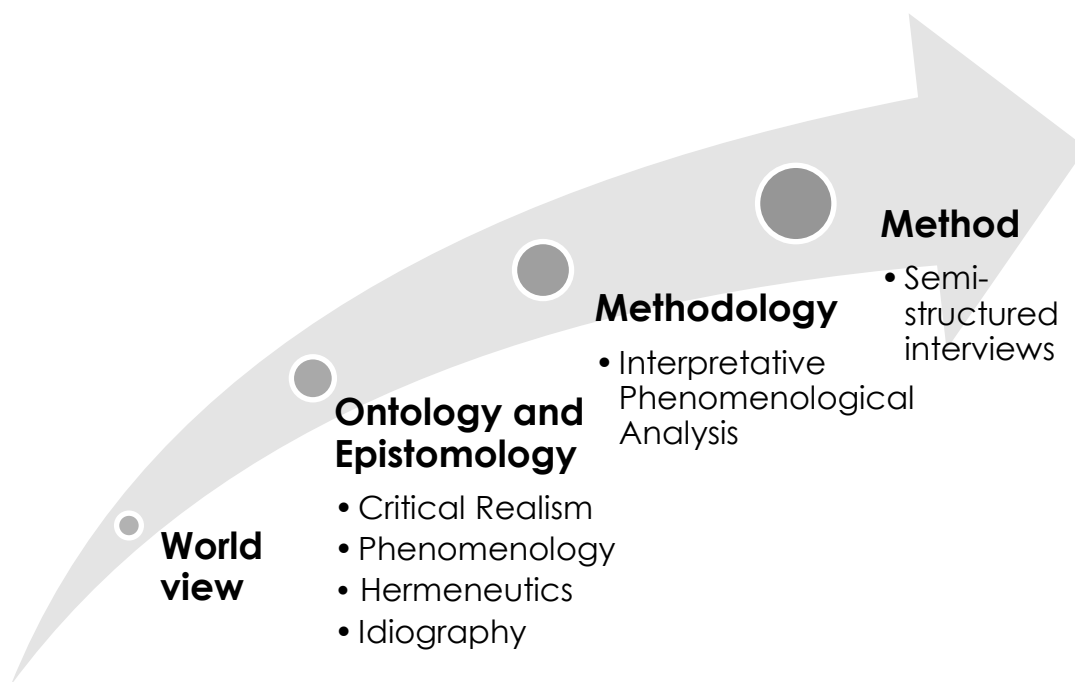


FIGURE 4: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

3.2 WORLD VIEW

My world view has developed from my personal history, my values and my experiences both personally and professionally. Personally I am influenced by my family upbringing and my personal response to it, my spirituality and my political and social views. Such influences lead me to a concern for social justice, in particular to seek to give a greater voice to the weaker, less heard members of society.

More specifically, I have three teenage children and am in the midst of helping them through their GCSE and A level exams, reflecting as I do on how different it is from my own experience, as the first person in my wider family to go on to higher education. Moreover, I am even more profoundly aware of the contrast between the experiences of my own children and those of my research participants.

Professionally, I am particularly influenced by the following:

- the holistic mentality of the Gestalt theorists (Perls, 1969) and their focus on the iterative. I recognise the inevitable cyclical nature of the planning needed to reach an intended outcome

- the concept of self-actualisation which suggests that all individuals are in a state of becoming, or in the process of growth throughout life and the facilitative nature of the core conditions of congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1995).
- the idea that people have responsibility for themselves and choice over their actions (Berne, 1964; Rowan, 1983), and that this provides hope and empowerment for individual change.
- the recognition of the need for an ecological understanding of a situation (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005) and an appreciation of the restrictions placed on an individual's choice by community, personal and family history, experience, culture, social norms and values, recognising the consequent need to work at the systemic level as well as the individual level (I hold this in tension with the previous bullet point).

3.3 ONTOLOGY

To explain my ontological position requires me to describe what I think exists, how I perceive the nature of the world and as a consequence what I think is there to know. It is important to discuss in this chapter as it is impossible to make no assumptions about the nature of world. Indeed I am aware that in describing ontology thus far I have used a qualifying phrase “what I think” and in doing so I have distanced myself from the ontology of positivism, which in its extreme form likens the acquisition of knowledge to discovering something which is already out there. However neither do I take the stance of radical relativism which holds the opinion that “there is no independently accessible thing constituting the meaning of a word” (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Morrison, 2007, p. 7). Rather I look to a third way between positivism and relativism which also supports my world view, critical realism. I believe reality exists independent of our knowledge of it, however, reality is not directly accessible we do not have a “God's eye view” (Willig, 2008, p. 7), rather our knowledge is mediated through the individual descriptions and discourses which are available, knowledge is also facilitated through conceptualisations (Sayer, 2000). As all knowledge of reality is historically, socially and culturally biased it is always fallible, however, knowledge is not equally fallible and the focus of research is to bring objects of study under closer scrutiny and produce better, more “truth like” descriptions. (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002).

Critical Realism developed as a critique of positivism (Harré, 1970), it is increasingly associated with Bhaskar (1989) who developed the philosophical language and parts of the philosophical tradition. He also emphasised the potential critical realism had to highlight flawed understandings, to fuel impetus for change and thus fulfil the emancipatory potential of social research (Robson, 2002, p. 41).

Critical realism has the following key beliefs about the nature of knowledge:

1. Intransitive and transitive

There is a difference between intransitive and transitive aspects of knowledge (Bhaskar, 1989). The world is independent of our thoughts about it. The world should not be conflated with our experience of it (Sayer, 2000, p. 11). When theories change (transitive) , it does not mean what they are about changes too (intransitive).

2. The real, the actual and the empirical

The real: whatever exists, regardless of whether it is an empirical object to us, its structures and powers, for example the ability to study. The actual: concerns what happens if the powers are activated, in this example the act of studying. The empirical: refers to the experience, in this case the experience of study. (Sayer, 2000, p. 12).

3. Stratification and Emergence

"the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (Aristotle, n.d.). In the social world people's roles and identities can only be described in relation to others, and cannot be explained at the individual level. For example the role of a teacher can only be explained in relation to students and vice versa. Due to our ability to interpret situations humans are particularly sensitive to their contexts; as a consequence, unlike objects of study in natural science which are more permanent, social science descriptions should not be expected to remain stable over time.

4. Causation

A critical realist perspective is concerned with what produces the events rather than the events themselves. Causation is not understood to be successional:

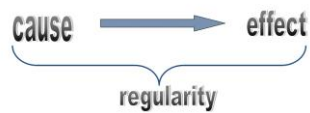


FIGURE 5: SUCCESSIONAL VIEW OF CAUSATION (POSITIVIST)

Explanation instead depends on identifying underlying causal mechanisms and how they work and what the activation conditions are. The future is open, things can go many different ways. A teacher's effectiveness at teaching an academic subject for example depends on many factors or mechanisms, which mutually interact:

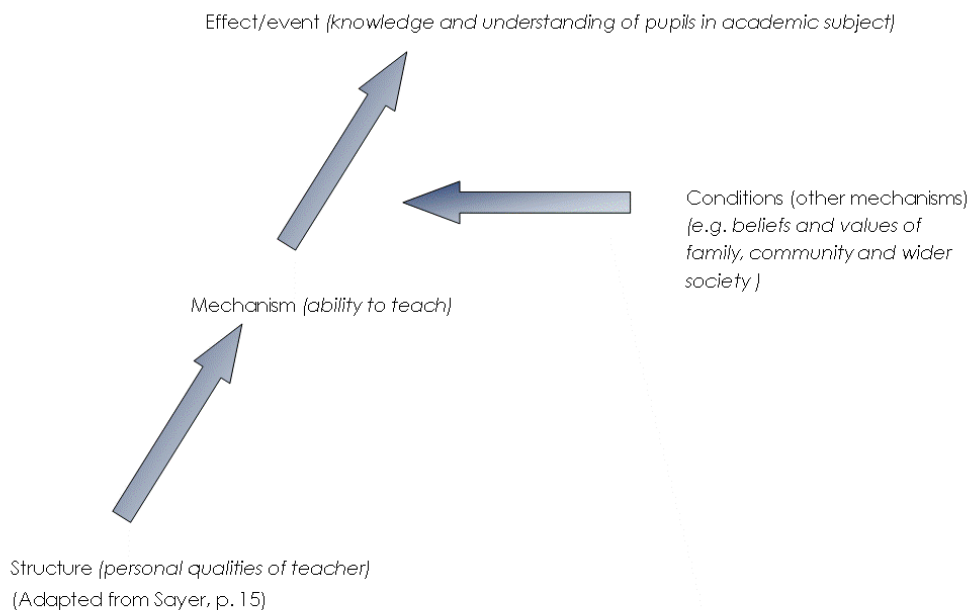


FIGURE 6: A CRITICAL REALIST VIEW OF CAUSATION

3.3 EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is philosophically entwined with ontology but concerns the slightly different perspective of what kind of things it is possible for us to find out (Willig, 2008) The epistemology (and in some respects the ontology) of this research is phenomenological and interpretative.

3.3.1 PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenological psychology is concerned with understanding lived experience, and consequently dovetails well both with my world view and a critical realist ontology that believes we can only know the social and often the physical world through the descriptions and discourses of individual experience. Founded by Husserl, phenomenological psychology was later developed by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre amongst others (Langdrige, 2007) insights relevant to my epistemology are included below.

Husserl's original focus moved away from the traditional, positivist one of subject and object, towards what is experienced and the way it is experienced. He argued for the need to go back to the essential features of human experience and to "bracket" or put to one side our assumptions, the things we take for granted, in order to experience a purer perception of the world (Smith, et al., 2009). The term bracket is borrowed from the mathematical function. Just like the contents of the brackets within equations are treated separately, so too are the assumptions and preconceptions of the participant; for example, bracketing out the perceived, remembered, judged and valued aspects of consciousness. Husserl suggests these progressive reductions or "epoché" of an experience lead towards the essence of the experience of a given phenomenon.

Heidegger, on the other hand, emphasised an existential view of a person as always being in context, or as he termed it "dasein" (often translated from the German as "being in the world") and questioned the possibility of gaining knowledge free from interpretation. Heidegger believed it was impossible to separate out the different semantic and somatic entities of which our world consists. He believed that we can only be understood in the context of our meaningful world and moreover, that our meaningful world is also an essential

part of us (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). Furthermore any discoveries that social researchers make are the result of the interaction between themselves and their subject matter, a phenomenon Heidegger described as inter-subjectivity (Heidegger & Stambaugh, 1996).

I share Heidegger's and Husserl's interest of individuals in their context, but support Heidegger's focus on the interpretative nature of knowledge. Sartre and Merleau-Ponty also view knowledge as inextricably interpretive. Sartre is significant to my epistemology because he adds a focus on the developmental nature of consciousness. In an existential way, he views humans as continually in the process of becoming (Sartre & Mairet, 1948). Sartre suggests humans strive to create a sense of self and meaning from their lived experiences, rather than acting from an unchanging core self. An individual is seen as having the freedom of choice and the associated responsibility for their actions. However, this freedom of choice needs to be viewed within the context of an individual's life, their history and the society in which they live, which influences things greatly. Merleau-Ponty also focuses on individual freedom but adds another important dimension, believing that it is our actions which make the world meaningful. He suggests we create our own freedom as we become committed to our actions. Both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty also stress the embodied nature of our freedom. Merleau-Ponty views the human body not as an object but rather a means of communicating with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 18). Thus the world becomes meaningful only through our perception of it and we can never share the entirety of another's experience, we can only observe and experience empathy for another.

In summary like Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty I take the view that we can never completely share an individual's experience and that it is impossible, as Husserl thought, to reduce this down to a pure experience through "epoché". Rather than attempt to bracket off my assumptions, I accept that, in research, I can only aim to get "experience close" (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 33). What I can know is as a consequence interpretative in nature. Accordingly I aim to utilise and develop skills of reflexivity, self-awareness and empathy in order to get as "experience close" as effectively as possible. It is to the important area of interpretation (hermeneutics) that I now turn.

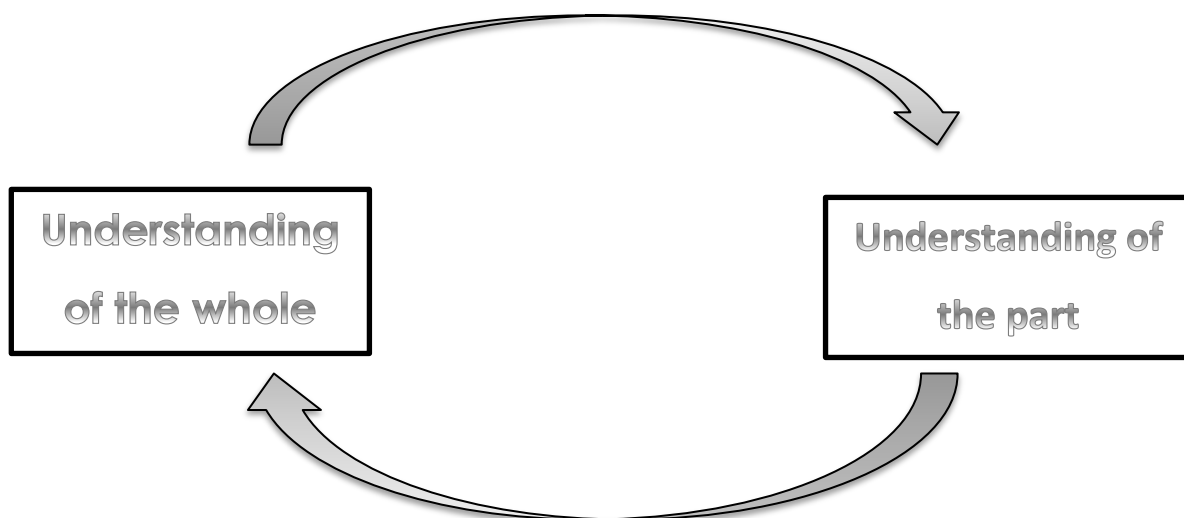
3.3.2 HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics was traditionally used for the interpretation of Biblical scripture, in phenomenological psychology it is concerned with the need to interpret and apply specific scientific method in that interpretation rather than just to describe. Heidegger along with Gadamer (1900 - 2002) and Ricoeur (1913 - 2005) have made important contributions to hermeneutic thinking that have relevance to this research.

For Heidegger, hermeneutics includes written, verbal and non-verbal forms of communication; it pertains to "an interpretation that is designed to grasp the understanding of the research participant" (Langdrige, 2007, p. 44). Heidegger emphasises that a researcher will bring a fore-structure based on prior experiences, assumptions and preconceptions, consequently self-awareness and reflexivity are important elements to consider in research. Following on from him, the philosopher Gadamer stressed that understanding is historically and culturally influenced. "For him, [] meaningful existence is a conversation leading towards mutual understanding" in a "fusion of horizons"(Langdrige, 2007, p. 42). As such speech and conversation are essential for mutual understanding. For Gadamer, like Heidegger, the focus needs to be on hermeneutic empathy and how language can be used to reveal something previously obscured. Ricoeur adds the concept of the "hermeneutics of suspicion" to the "hermeneutics of empathy". This concept parallels that of a model of interpretation often used in psychotherapy, an "attitude of curiosity", which seeks understanding by uncovering the layers of meaning, which may then lead to new insights. Ricoeur was also cautious about assigning the centrality of language in hermeneutics, suggesting that discourse cannot simply be reduced to the words that make it up and to do so would obscure its meaning. Finally Ricoeur extends Gadamer's idea of tradition (history and culture) to incorporate the possibility of a critique of ideology held in opposition to, yet interacting with that of tradition.

An important concept both in this study and in the bigger picture of hermeneutic psychology is that of the "hermeneutic circle" which is utilized by most hermeneutic phenomenologists. A fusion of the horizons is seen as moving

in a circular fashion (the hermeneutic circle) between the part and the whole, in a dynamic way:



For example, meaning on the word level is influenced by the meaning of the whole sentence and the meaning of the whole sentence is influenced by the collective meanings of individual words of which it consists.

There has been a significant increase in phenomenological research in the past 25 years, and many different approaches are used including, Descriptive Phenomenology, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Grounded theory, and Ethnography. This study adopts IPA as its methodology.

3.3.3 IDIOGRAPHY

Whilst the focus of much psychological research is on the “nomothetic” and concerned with making claims about people groups or populations, phenomenology is concerned with the particular, firstly in the sense of the detail, the thorough and systematic, in-depth analysis and secondly through a focus on interpreting particular phenomenological experiences which have been understood through particular people in a particular context. Phenomenology has a number of advantages comparable with those of case study. Cases can be useful in many ways. They are illustrative and seek to demonstrate existence not incidence (Yin, 2009). Moreover, in depth study of a case can reveal more insight through the detail than a broad but random experiment (Flyvbjerg, 2006). In addition a case study has the potential to

interrupt our thinking and challenge our assumptions, preconceptions and theories (Smith, et al., 2009).

Whilst making the case for case-study research, I suggest like Smith et al. (2009) that the particular and the general are entwined in a process that parallels the hermeneutic cycle; in studying the detail of the particular we are taken closer to the universal, as the universal consists of the particular and the particular tends to conform to the universal. At the level of the individual case this means as researchers, we come to recognise,

how at the deepest level we share a great deal with a person whose personal circumstances may, at face value, seem entirely separate and different from our own (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 32).

3.4 METHODOLOGY

3.4.1 IPA

IPA provides an appropriate methodology for my research questions in the light of my ontology and epistemology in the following ways:

“IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of individual lived experience and how individuals make sense of that experience” (Eatough & Smith, 2008).

IPA thus has its foundations in phenomenology and hermeneutics. IPA accepts that it is impossible to acquire direct access to the experience of a research participant. Following Heideggerian thinking, IPA recognises that inevitably the research will be a melding of the participant's experience, the researcher's and the interaction between the researcher and the participant. Thus IPA research will inevitably involve a double hermeneutic; essentially the researcher's interpretation of the participant's interpretation of the experience, at the moment when the experience is being investigated. Whilst IPA is involved in attaining a detailed account of an individual's experience, it accepts that this is an impossibility and rather aims to get “experience close”. For a researcher to get close to the participant's experience it is essential for them to be reflexive and to reflect upon what they are bringing to the research encounter, through feelings, judgments, thoughts and recollections.

IPA takes a collective view to different phenomenological thinking seeing their different emphases as complementary. Thus IPA suggests that:

“experience can be understood via an examination of the meanings which people impress upon it. These meanings, in turn, may illuminate the embodied, cognitive-affective and existential domains of psychology” (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 34).

IPA is also strongly influenced by hermeneutics, engaging with the “hermeneutics of empathy” as outlined by Heidegger and Gadamer and being influenced by Ricour’s “hermeneutics of suspicion”. They adopt a curious questioning attitude to ‘draw out’ or ‘disclose’ the meaning of the experience for a participant” (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 36). Whilst IPA researchers are seeking to understand what an experience is like from the participant’s perspective, they are also seeking to look at it from a different angle, to ask questions and puzzle over the things they are saying. Thus IPA research is both empathetic and questioning.

IPA focuses on the idiographic detail of each case. It usually requires a detailed analysis of each case, followed by a search for themes and patterns across the different cases.

the best IPA studies are concerned with the balance of convergence and divergence within the sample, presenting both shared themes but also pointing to the particular way in which these themes play out for individuals.

(Smith, 2011, p. 9)

Thus IPA has a focus on the particular, and whilst it provides the structure to move to more general claims across cases, it still allows individual claims and divergence to be illustrated.

3.4.2 VALIDITY

Validity can be described as the degree to which a piece of research is considered legitimate and convincing by others with a research interest. Can the finding be considered trustworthy and useful? (Yardley, 2008).

Whilst scientific methodological criteria for reliability and validity have traditionally been used to assess the quality of quantitative research, a growing number of qualitative researchers, whilst recognising the importance of validity

and quality in quantitative research, have contested the appropriateness of the same criteria being used in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Robson, 2002; Smith, et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000, 2008). Yardley presents four areas of consideration for assessing validity or as they term it quality. They are described in detail by Smith et al (2009):

- Sensitivity to context
- Commitment and rigour
- Transparency and coherence
- Impact and importance

Recently Smith applied Yardley's principles more directly to the growing body of IPA studies, he identifies the following criteria in good IPA research (Smith, 2011):

A clear focus:

- the study should look at a particular aspect rather than a broad coverage

Strong data:

- this requires a good interviewing technique which produces quality interview data. Good interviewing technique includes: developing rapport with the participant; developing a schedule; implementing the schedule flexibly and being led by the participant; listening attentively and probing for further detail at appropriate points; responding appropriately to non-verbal cues (Smith, et al., 2009).

Rigour:

- there should be clarity about the prevalence of a theme in the data, and the interview data should be well represented in the analysis, using extracts from the transcript. The reader should become aware of the breadth and depth of a theme from the extracts used, in addition the evidence base should be drawn proportionally from all participants.

Sufficient space should be given to elaboration of each theme:

- subsets of themes can be used in order to do justice to each theme.

The analysis should be interpretive:

- the researcher needs to go further than simply describe, but engage with the double hermeneutic, and try to make sense of the participant making sense of their experience.

The analysis should look at convergence and divergence:

- the researcher should look at both common themes and unique experiences.

The research needs to be well written:

- to enable the reader to engage with the narrative.

Whilst recognising that these criteria are not significantly different from more general criteria in qualitative research (Chamberlain, 2011), it provides an enhanced level of detail and application pertaining to the quality in IPA research for me to aspire to. Ultimately I feel it will help ensure the quality of this research.

3.4.3 LIMITATIONS OF IPA

IPA relies heavily on language, as a means of accessing participants' experiences; it therefore assumes that language is capable of capturing an experience. However it can be argued that language constructs reality, rather than describes it (Willig, 2008). I would argue with Smith et al. (2009) that our interpretations of experience are inevitably, "shaped, limited and enabled by language" (p. 194), a symbolic interactionist approach. Whilst language may be used to construct our reality, there is always the possibility to rework a construction to make sense of it.

Furthermore IPA relies heavily on language for data collection and participants can struggle to find the words to express their experiences, may not wish to disclose them, or may be keen to present themselves in a particular way. Thus our main access to participants' worlds is dependent on language and this is subjective, individual and is likely to differ across contexts.

Secondly, IPA is critiqued because it does not attempt to answer "why" questions, which, Willig (2008) feels, limits understanding of a phenomena. She suggests that if we are to answer why questions we need to go beyond sharing an experience with our participants and understand the conditions which gave rise to the experience. Whilst I take her point, I would suggest that "why" questions are most coherently answered only once experiences have been thoroughly explored. For example I recognise that the research arena around the academic underachievement of white FSM children is flush with theories attempting to answer "why" this might be, but has been less populated by studies focusing on how white students eligible for FSM experience study and achievement; I suggest this may be a factor in the largely static issue of academic underachievement in white FSM children over many years.

Thirdly IPA's focus on cognitions has been criticised. It was suggested that a concern with cognition would lead IPA to ascribe to participants a set of cognitions about the topic being discussed. Such a stance was considered counter to phenomenological philosophy and its rejection of mind body dualism (Willig, 2008). However, Smith et al. (2009) defend their perspective feeling they focus on cognitions in the sense of Bruner's (1990) meaning making branch of cognitive psychology, where cognitions are considered an aspect of 'being in the world' and therefore are not at odds with phenomenology. Consequently the role of a researcher is to sit alongside participants as they make sense of their experiences, but not to purport direct access to their thoughts. This is a role with which I am comfortable.

3.4.4 OTHER CONSIDERED RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Many different methodologies were considered. I chose a phenomenological approach over a discursive approach since I was more interested in understanding how people attribute meaning to their lived experience, rather than looking at the role of language in describing the person's experience, and focusing on interaction rather than content.

So while IPA and discourse analysis are both heavily linguistically based approaches and both are concerned with the close reading of participants' reports, their rationale is different. While IPA researchers talk to participants and analyse what they say in order to try to learn about how they are making sense of their experience, discourse analysts examine what participants say in order to learn about how they are constructing accounts of experience.

(Smith, 2011, pp. 4-5)

Within a phenomenological approach both Grounded Theory and Descriptive Phenomenology were considered. Grounded Theory and IPA have much in common, sharing a similar perspective and analytical techniques. Furthermore IPA follows Grounded Theory in its iterative approach. However, IPA was the better choice since I was more interested in the idiographic, and IPA pertains to uncover the detail and texture of an individual experience – the psychological world of the individual, whereas Grounded Theory aims to identify and illuminate social processes and theories which account for phenomena (Willig, 2008).

Descriptive Phenomenology and IPA have phenomenological roots that grow even closer together. Both focus on the idiographic experience. Descriptive Phenomenology, however, focuses on identifying the essence of the phenomenon through “epoché”(Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). The aim of “epoché” is, in a Husserlian way, to bracket off the researcher's pre-conceptions in order to experience the participant's world in a purer way. As such Descriptive Phenomenology suggests it is possible to view the participant's experience from a perspective transcended above normal human experience. As I expressed earlier in this section, I follow Heidegger's philosophy, believing we are ‘Daesein’ or “Being in the world” and as such cannot directly share the experience of another (Langdridge, 2007). Consequently the interpretative focus of IPA provided a better fit with my personal sense of ontology and epistemology.

3.5 PROCEDURES

This section of the chapter addresses the practical, ethical and validity aspects of the research.

3.5.1 DEVELOPING AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED

INTERVIEWS

IPA is best suited to a method of data collection which enables participants to offer a detailed personal account (including description, thoughts and feelings) of their experiences. Semi-structured one to one interviews have become a preferred approach to collect data. (Smith, et al., 2009). Semi-structured interviews have long been recognised as representing a compromise between flexibility and consistency (Langdridge, 2007). Consistency is achieved through the use of interview questions and prompts, which are open, and designed to illicit maximum possible information and cover the different aspects of the experience (Smith, et al., 2009). Flexibility is achieved by treating the schedule as a guide and not using it too rigidly. The researcher may allow the schedule to be completed in any order and to hold it as a secondary concern to the conversation that they have with the participant. The researcher can also follow up topics that are not on the schedule but that emerge during the conversation (Langdridge, 2007).

With the aim of forming a comfortable relationship with the students I was interviewing and to provide an undemanding icebreaking activity, I first developed an A4 sheet of clip art, with a degree of humour to it, showing different ways of studying (see appendix 1). I asked the participant to select picture(s) which reminded them most of themselves studying. I was also prepared to join in this task too, when appropriate and disclose my own study style in order to develop a more equal and relaxed relationship.

Subsequently I developed a selection of open questions “which do not make too many assumptions about the participants experience or concerns” (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 60). In order to help create a non-judgmental supportive environment and help to alleviate any anxiety students may feel about talking about study and achievement in academic subjects, I aimed to use the Rogerian core conditions, of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence (Rogers, 1951).

I also developed an interview schedule of questions to help enable participants to give a thorough account of their experience of learning in academic subjects. It was thematized, in order to address the three areas outlined in the research sub-questions. Thus it covered;

- Their views and experience of studying academic subjects
- Their interpretation of their experiences of school related to studying academic subjects.
- Their interpretation of their experiences of home (school and community) related to studying academic subjects.

(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Using the range of question types identified for in-depth interviews by Smith et al. (2009), it was possible to construct questions which gradually moved from those requiring more straightforward answers, such as narrative, descriptive or contrast responses through to those that required more reflective and evaluative responses or required a circular response, (e.g. What do you think your parents think about....) (see appendix 2 for full interview schedule). Smith et al. (2009) show how, in this way, it is possible to naturally progress from accounts of what occurred to how the participant construes or interprets the experience.

3.5.2 PILOT STUDY

An initial focus group of eleven students in year 9, 10 and 11 who were from different socio-economic backgrounds was carried out to check that the questions were appropriate and to inquire of the group if they felt any alternative or additional questions should be used (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The focus group identified a gap in the interview questions related to the third research question and a narrative question was added to the schedule (Smith, et al., 2009). Three pilot interviews were also completed to both test the recording devices and further test and learn the interview schedule. This led to the addition of further possible prompts. In these studies I recorded in my research diary my initial responses and practised transcribing and analysing the data as suggested by Smith et al. (2009) .

Reflection

On listening to the transcripts I noticed that sometimes my prompts and summaries could be leading and altered them accordingly. I also recognised the value of summarising and checking my understanding of what students were saying. As well as ensuring I was understanding them correctly, it also made it clear to students that I was listening and trying to understand what it was like to be in their shoes. I think this meant students felt like I was aiming to come alongside them rather than judge them and helped develop a warm open relationship between us. Finally I became aware that sometimes what felt like an eternal silence at the time of the interview proved to be much shorter than I remembered which encouraged me to persevere with them and learn to be more comfortable waiting for a response.

These pilot interviews also helped me to learn the schedule. I felt such familiarity with the schedule would allow the interview to flow more naturally and also to enable me to use it more flexibly. Flexibility was particularly important since much was still unknown about the participant's world.

Reflection

I was aware that in spite of such precautions and careful procedures the imbalance of power between me and the students, whilst hopefully reduced could never be eradicated. I was none-the-less encouraged by the willingness students appeared to have to tell me their story and the obvious pleasure some of them showed in helping me appreciate their perspectives and interpretations.

3.5.3 PARTICIPANTS

Six participants were selected to take part in the study, consistent with the recommended sample size of four to ten interviews for professional doctorates (Smith, et al., 2009), thus enabling detailed analysis of every interview and also for the "search for patterns across the cases" (Smith, 2011, p. 13).

The participants came from one school within a borough which had been identified as deprived within the region. The borough which the school serves is significantly worse than the England average for: deprivation, children in poverty and GCSE grades achieved (5 A*-C including English & Maths)(The Network of Public Health Observatories, 2012). Current statistics showed that 17% of the school were disadvantaged, compared with the England average of 14.7% and that only 27% of disadvantaged pupils⁴ were making expected progress in Maths and English compared with the England average for disadvantaged pupils of 54.3% in English and 44.2% in Maths (Department for Education, 2011b). The school had the lowest percentage attainment of GCSE grades A* - C by pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds in the region. As a consequence the school was a good example of an extreme case where the attainment gap situation is especially problematic and where, perhaps more insight can be obtained through the richness of its detail (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

⁴ Percentage of children eligible for FSM and children looked after (i.e. in the care of the local authority for at least six months)

Reflection

Although there were many advantages to using students from one school this was a hard decision for me to make, as I had originally approached four schools in the area, all of which had higher than average FSM pupils, to ensure a homogeneous sample. However the uptake of students interested in taking part and returning consent forms from the other schools was very low. It was only latterly that the uptake from the one school became greater than all the other schools combined and therefore sufficient on its own for my study. Consequently I made the decision to only use the interviews from this school. The only two students who had returned consent from other schools who I had also interviewed I used as pilot data.

I selected students from this school on the following criteria. Students:

- were currently in Year 10
- were claiming Free School Meals
- came from white British families
- had not progressed through the expected national curriculum levels as predicted from their end of key stage two test results in Maths English and Science, in at least two of these subject areas.

I did not attempt to control for gender. Existing literature suggests that both groups are underachieving in equal measure (Hattie, 2009), I did not want to narrow the themes emerging from my research by limiting it to participants of one gender. However, I decided I would aim to interview an equal number of girls and boys, so that if any divergence between the genders emerged I would have an equivalent amount of data for each gender which I could use in any comparisons.

A group of students were selected by the Director of Inclusion using the comprehensive tracking system employed at the school. The school uses both Cognitive Assessment Test (CAT) scores and those obtained from the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) type D calculations⁵ for target setting. The school's targets for students are set at the most aspirational level possible.

⁵ Type D assessment is based on pupils' prior attainment, age and sex, it includes a range of school context indicators and is also adjusted to be consistent with the performance of schools in the top quartile nationally.

The Director introduced students to the project. The school served an ex-coal mining community familiar with high levels of unemployment and poverty, so she did not feel that the FSM criteria had any negative associations and made this explicit. She did not, however, inform any students that they were eligible to take part because had made less progress than average on their end of key stage tests. Those students interested in taking part took consent forms and information leaflets for both themselves and their parents/carers (see appendix 3). The Director also explained how I would randomly select students if I received more consent forms than I needed.

Reflection

I was aware that I had spent hours thinking through and discussing with others whether it was appropriate to tell potential student participants they had been selected according to FSM eligibility. I was concerned that this could feel stigmatising and be off putting for students and parents. However, I recognised that the Director of Inclusion was much better placed and appropriately informed to make this decision about the students in her school than I was and so I took her advice. The uptake of students keen to participate was greater than the six I needed to interview and enabled me to select 3 male students and 3 female students. I was left wondering whether uptake at this school had been so much greater because they were told they had met the criteria of FSM and this made them feel more significant, so they were more inclined to tell me their story.

Thus students were selected purposively in accordance with the research aims, and it was not the intention that these students represented a broader population. As is recommended for good IPA research, I was interested in divergence as well as convergence in the sample. I aimed to look for shared themes, and also to identify and highlight the individual way these themes outworked in participants lived experience (Smith, 2011).

3.5.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics approval was granted from the Sheffield University Ethics review panel in October 2012 and is contained in appendix 4.

All students who agreed to participate in the research project were informed about all aspects of the project that might reasonably be expected to influence their decision to take part. Students were given an information sheet and consent form for themselves and their parents/carers to sign (appendix 3). This outlined the aims of the study, what to expect if they took part, confidentiality and anonymity in any publications. The information sheet for students was checked using the “readability test tool” (Simpson, 2010) which indicated it would be easily understood by 12 – 13 year olds so that reading and understanding written English did not hinder informed consent (see appendix 5 for details)

Whilst I did not consider it likely that there would be any adverse effects from the conversations participants had within the interviews, I was aware that it was a possibility. My previous experience working as a psychotherapist meant that I was confident I would have the skills necessary to support a student and ensure they remained safe during the interview should they become distressed, however, I also provided an appropriate contact person in school should the interviews raise any particular concerns with a participant and leave them with a need to talk things through further.

Immediately prior to the interview I highlighted to participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, and in particular that they could stop the interview at any point if they wished.

Reflection

In hindsight, I was very glad that I had not made an assumption that the topic of academic study would be safe for my participants and had put in these precautions; since it became apparent, either during the interview or afterwards when I gathered background information from the Director of Inclusion, that the majority of my participants had traumatic experiences which the interviews sometimes touched upon.

3.5.5 ANALYSIS OF DATA

After each interview I wrote notes about the interview, my immediate impressions, thoughts and reflections of the student and their story. I transcribed

each interview in order to immerse myself in the data and completed each transcript separately to preserve the individuality of each account. The transcriptions included non-verbal communication e.g. pauses and laughter in an attempt to represent the essence of the interaction.

I arranged the transcript into three column headings : transcript, initial noting and potential themes, according to the procedures outlined in Smith et al. (2009) (see appendix 7). The cyclical process (hermeneutic cycle) of the analysis was at the heart of this method both within a step and between them.

Step	Associated actions in analysis
1. Reading and re-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * listening to the recording whilst reading assisted the immersion process. Referring to my reflexive notes to be reminded of my immediate impressions. * slowing down and resisting the impulse to make easy reductions and summaries and delaying any reflections and observations (p. 82)
2. Initial noting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * examining the semantic content and language on an exploratory level. * remaining open minded and beginning to understand how a student made sense of study in academic subjects. Making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *<i>Descriptive comments (close to students explicit meaning, describing what the student said)</i> *<i>Linguistic comments (reflections on specific language used by the student)</i> *<i>Conceptual comments (unpacking implicit underlying meaning behind a text).</i>
3. Emergent themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Identifying possible themes, and clustering them together to form emergent themes. Reducing the data but retaining complexity, extracting what felt important from the transcript. * Grounding themes in the data as well as the concepts
4. Searching for connections across emergent themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * mapping the themes that fitted together and related to the research questions. * Physically cutting themes up and grouping on a large piece of paper
5. Moving to the next case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Analysing subsequent transcripts using, when appropriate, themes from the first. * Revisiting themes after each analysis and modifying in the light of greater reflection and familiarity.
6. Looking for patterns across the cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Collating emergent themes and revisiting step four . Keeping Sub-ordinate themes in mind, but revisiting emergent themes and any new connections when appropriate.

FIGURE 7: OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE SIX STEPS OF IPA ANALYSIS (SMITH, ET AL., 2009, P. 82 – 101)

Once all the emergent, sub-ordinate and super-ordinate themes had been created, a critical friend and EP colleague (familiar with IPA) considered the themes produced. This involved them examining the texts and asking for justifications for the themes.

Reflection

I found the analysis process both challenging and all-consuming. I have used many metaphors to describe the process. For me, in one way it was like knitting, once it had been started it was impossible to put down until it was finished, leaving it half complete would inevitably mean picking up the unfinished threads which would be much more difficult. In another way it was like completing a Rubic's cube as although it was really satisfying when the first side fitted together correctly, it became increasingly frustrating when, in order to get all the sides right the completed sides had to be undone. Finally it was like a crossword puzzle as it couldn't be rushed, sometimes a solution came only when it had been left for a while. Like all good puzzles it felt very satisfying when it was complete.

3.5.6 GENERALISABILITY

Since my epistemological position is Critical Realist, the issue of generalisability is somewhat extraneous, since my search is not for one truth, but rather a fuller understanding of the way a truth is expressed in these particular cases. Where appropriate, I look rather to "transferability" (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999), I do not claim that the experiences of Year 10 students on FSM and underachieving in academic subjects can be generalised to all others. Rather, if the details of the context are made explicit and any theory used is grounded securely in the data then the reader can judge how applicable it might be to wider situations. My aim is moreover to raise awareness of the experiences FSM students who are underachieving have of studying academic subjects and pose questions based on these experiences regarding future practice.

Summary

- ◊ World view: my positionality as a researcher.
- ◊ Ontology: Critical Realism (Bhaskar, 1989) reality exists independent of our knowledge of it, we can only know reality through the individual descriptions and discourses that are available, Research aims to give close scrutiny to objects of study in order to form as “truth like” descriptions as possible.
- ◊ Epistemology: Interpretative Phenomenology (Heidegger & Stambaugh, 1996; Langdridge, 2007). My analysis of students’ perceptions of their experiences will inescapably be interpretative.
- ◊ Methodology: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et al., 2009), this methodology explicitly accords with the inevitable double hermeneutic I believe will be present in my analysis. The issues surrounding validity and generalisability of this method are also covered.
- ◊ Procedures: semi-structured interviews of six year ten students, purposively sampled according to the following criteria: attending one particular secondary school; claiming FSM; making less than expected progress according to CAT tests and FFT type D predictions; from White British families.
- ◊ Ethical considerations: including informed consent, confidentiality and preventing harm.
- ◊ Data analysis: the making of interview transcripts and their analysis according to the procedures outlined by IPA (Smith et al., 2009)

CHAPTER 4: BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND FINDINGS

4.1 BACKGROUND

Before describing my findings I felt it important and in keeping with the idiographic style of IPA research to first highlight my initial impressions of each student and provide some background information. I collected the latter from school after completing the interviews so as to avoid influencing my first impressions.

4.1.1 NICKI

4.1.1.1 INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

At first Nicki appeared very nervous, looking tense and clutching her bag. I found it difficult to get her to talk at any length but what she said was relevant and often insightful, although she was very vague about her home life. Sometimes, before knowing her background, the things she said did not make sense to me. I recognised she was nervous and I did not probe too much, but I also wondered what she was not saying. There was a strong thread of determination to catch up missed work that I noticed running throughout her interview.

Cognitive Assessment Tests CAT Scores	Verbal Ability	67
	Non-verbal Ability	81
	Quantitative Reasoning	97
Key Stage 2 National Curriculum levels	Maths	3c
	English	3c
	Science	3c
Predicted General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Grade	Maths	D
	English	D
	Science	D
Working GCSE Grade	Maths	E
	English	E
	Science	D

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS AND TARGETS (SEE APPENDIX 6 FOR DETAILS OF CAT SCORES AND NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS).

4.1.1.2 SUMMARY FROM DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION

Nicki transferred to the school in the January of Year 10. She now lives with her mother and step-father after her father was imprisoned for grievous bodily harm. When Nicki lived with her father, her attendance at school was poor, but it has now improved. Her mother and step-father are concerned she may be abducted and are guarding her carefully; she is escorted to and from school. Nicki is quite a social girl, who is also keen to be liked by staff. She will follow staff around school, and needs lots of reassurance. Nicki is aware of her rights and insisted she had a reader and scribe in a recent exam.

4.1.2 LAURA

4.1.2.1 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Laura was very well presented; she wore make-up discreetly and seemed confident and articulate. Laura was open about her life, telling me about the impact on her study of domestic abuse from her step-father and of sexual abuse when she was stalked by a neighbour (who was also a good friend's father). Laura appeared very resilient and determined to get on with her life and study. Although Laura was very articulate and looked very confident, she told me she was having regular therapeutic sessions for her depression. Laura said she loved school, but struggled with the uniform and make-up rules, finding them depersonalising.

CAT Scores	Verbal Ability	78
	Non-verbal Ability	82
	Quantitative Reasoning	84
Key Stage 2 National Curriculum levels	Maths	3c
	English	3c
	Science	3c
Predicted GCSE Grade	Maths	D
	English	D
	Science	D
Working GCSE Grade	Maths	E
	English	D
	Science	E

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS AND TARGETS (SEE APPENDIX 6 FOR DETAILS OF CAT SCORES AND NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS).

4.1.2.2. SUMMARY FROM DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION

Laura had a very difficult time in her family and was regularly told she was worthless by her step-father and mother. Laura's mother was heavily controlled by her step-father and found it very hard to think for herself. At the request of School, a Family Support Worker became involved and helped to improve the situation. Last year Laura's mother gained enough confidence to separate from her husband.

Subsequently Laura's neighbour (her best friend's father) sent Laura sexually abusive text messages and began stalking her. Laura's family involved the police and the neighbour was sent to prison. A feud between the two neighbouring families began and Laura was physically attacked at school on a number of occasions. Laura remained at risk for the best part of a term attending school infrequently until these neighbours moved out of the area.

4.1.3 JESS

4.1.3.1 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Jess was well presented and articulate; she seemed relaxed and confident. It soon became apparent how frustrated Jess was with learning, in particular the speed at which she was expected to understand concepts. I got a strong sense of both Jess's work ethic and also her belief that she could never do enough to satisfy school. In addition to this it was apparent that stress and panic had a large part to play in Jess's underachievement in exams.

CAT Scores	Verbal Ability	100
	Non-verbal Ability	91
	Quantitative Reasoning	83
Key Stage 2 National Curriculum levels	Maths	3a
	English	4a
	Science	4c
Predicted GCSE Grade	Maths	C
	English	C
	Science	C
Working GCSE Grade	Maths	D
	English	C
	Science	D

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS AND TARGETS (SEE APPENDIX 6 FOR DETAILS OF CAT SCORES AND NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS).

4.1.3.2 SUMMARY FROM DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION

Jess had a difficult time when she dated a boy who was involved with drink and drugs and who was subsequently permanently excluded from school at the end of Year 9. Jess accessed counselling with "safe speak" (a RELATE group).

4.1.4 ALISTAIR

4.1.4.1 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Alistair was good looking and smartly dressed with the latest haircut. He appeared confident and laid back. Alistair gave the impression that learning was too much effort for him, and seemed more focused on becoming self-employed and joining in with his father's business or one like it. Alistair did not fit my expectations of a child eligible for FSM.

CAT Scores (see appendix)	Verbal Ability	97
	Non-verbal Ability	100
	Quantitative Reasoning	98
Key Stage 2 National Curriculum levels	Maths	5c
	English	4c
	Science	5b
Predicted GCSE Grade	Maths	B
	English	B
	Science	B
Working GCSE Grade	Maths	C
	English	C
	Science	E

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS AND TARGETS (SEE APPENDIX 6 FOR DETAILS OF CAT SCORES AND NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS).

4.1.4.2 SUMMARY FROM DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION

Alistair's parents were separated; he lived with his mother and older sister on an ex-council estate. Alistair seemed very switched off from schoolwork. On his recent work experience week he refused to sort out a pile of hangers and left work early on his three o'clock break.

4.1.5 BRADLEY

4.1.5.1 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Bradley wore very worn clothes that were too small for him. He had a cheeky smile, but his teeth needed professional attention. Bradley was very honest about his desire to do as little as possible at school and to be unnoticed by teachers. In spite of Bradley's attitude he preferred school to home.

CAT Scores (see appendix)	Verbal Ability	85
	Non-verbal Ability	91
	Quantitative Reasoning	88
Key Stage 2 National Curriculum levels	Maths	4c
	English	3c
	Science	4c
Predicted GCSE Grade	Maths	D
	English	D
	Science	D
Working GCSE Grade	Maths	E
	English	E
	Science	F

TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS AND TARGETS (SEE APPENDIX 6 FOR DETAILS OF CAT SCORES AND NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS).

4.1.5.2 SUMMARY FROM DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION

Bradley's family originally came from a coastal town, where Bradley's father was employed as a chef. All children in the family appeared neglected; they often attended school dirty and unkempt and could come to school with little or no lunch. Bradley had an older brother who was forced out of the house at 15 years old. School were concerned that a similar situation might arise with Bradley and he might be homeless by Christmas since, in the Director of Inclusion's opinion, Bradley's father needed to be the dominant male.

4.1.6. JASON

4.1.6.1. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Jason had very short hair and appeared a bit dishevelled. He was at ease talking and had interesting ideas and opinions that he was happy to share. There was a strong sense of the struggle Jason had concentrating and controlling his behaviour. Jason also had very critical self-talk and a strong desire to change his behaviour. Jason tended to focus on curtailing negative traits rather than encouraging any positive traits. Jason felt his family were distressed over his attitude and behaviour at school.

CAT Scores (see appendix)	Verbal Ability	78
	Non-verbal Ability	76
	Quantitative Reasoning	81
Key Stage 2 National Curriculum levels	Maths	4c
	English	3c
	Science	4c
Predicted GCSE Grade	Maths	D
	English	D
	Science	D
Working GCSE Grade	Maths	E
	English	F
	Science	G

TABLE 6: SUMMARY OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS AND TARGETS (SEE APPENDIX 6 FOR DETAILS OF CAT SCORES AND NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS).

4.1.6.2 SUMMARY FROM DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION

Jason could be challenging of everything teachers said to him and needed careful non-confrontational and respectful handling. Jason related well with his Head of House, but clashed with his form teacher.

Jason tended to get away with doing what he wanted at home, but was recently sacked by his Auntie on his work experience placement because he didn't do what he was supposed to.

4.2 FINDINGS

A total of eight super-ordinate themes emerged from the analysis. Seven of the eight themes were shared by every student, the eighth theme, home events, was shared by five of the six students. These themes will now be described in clusters around each research question, with reference to their prevalence. Quotes or line references (for illuminatory quotes contained in the appendix) were taken from at least half of the participants who referred to a subordinate theme in their interview. The aim was to illustrate divergence as well as convergence with these extracts, so as to illustrate both the breadth and depth of each theme (Smith, 2011). When interview extracts are used the interviewer's words are shown in italics. A table begins the start of each superordinate theme section; they show the composite subordinate themes and which students refer to each subordinate theme. Line numbers are shown in brackets, the quotes they refer to may be found in the appendix. The appendix number associated with each superordinate theme is shown at the start of each superordinate theme section.

I recognise that as these findings are both idiographic and all from students attending one particular school, it will doubtless be possible for school staff to identify individual students from the findings which follow in this chapter. Consequently my feedback to this school will only contain generalisations, as will any training I give to other schools in the authority (as part of the EPS contribution to the challenge of closing the FSM achievement gap). If I use an example, this will portray the "essence" of a student's comment but not personal details. In this way I consider that I will honour my promise of confidentiality to the students who took part in the study.

1. How do students interpret their experience of home (community and family) and its influence on study and achievement?

(i) Expectations from family for study and achievement

Voiced family expectations

Modelling from family

(ii) Influence of home (family and community) experiences on study and achievement

Home (family and community) events as barriers to study

Attraction of home (family and community) based alternatives to study

Help and encouragement with study

2. How do students interpret their experience of school and its influence on studying and achieving in academic subjects?

(i) Influence of school relationships on study and achievement

Pastoral care

Teacher pupil relationships

Influence of peers

(ii) Influence of teaching and learning experience on study and achievement

Monotonous repetitive lessons

Autonomy in learning

Learning challenge

Interest in topic

Active lesson style

Attitude to homework

FIGURE 8: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS, SUPERORDINATE AND SUBORDINATE THEMES, PART 1

3. How do students make sense of learning and achieving in academic subjects?

(i) Emotional aspects of study and achievement

Emotions negatively affecting learning

Emotions positively affecting learning

(ii) Response to GCSE pressure

Effect of exam pressure

Effect of pressure from targets

Effect of teacher expectations

Effect of competition and comparison with peers

(iii) Influence of internal motivation

Future value of academic curriculum

Personal values

Constructive self-talk

(iv) Influence of aspirations

Aspirations in schoolwork

Aspirations in future employment

Family encouragement of employment

aspirations

FIGURE 9: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS, SUPERORDINATE AND SUBORDINATE THEMES, PART 2

4.2.1 RESEARCH QUESTION: HOW DO STUDENTS INTERPRET THEIR EXPERIENCE OF HOME (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY) AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT?

4.2.1.1 SUPERORDINATE THEME 1: EXPECTATION FROM FAMILY FOR STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT (APPENDIX 8, P183)

WHAT STUDENTS UNDERSTAND ABOUT FAMILY EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDY, BOTH DIRECTLY THROUGH CONVERSATION AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH MODELLING

Subordinate Theme	Jess	Laura	Nicki	Jason	Alistair	Bradley
Voiced family expectations for study	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Modelling from family		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

4.2.1.1.1 VOICED FAMILY EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDY

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT WHICH HAD BEEN DIRECTLY COMMUNICATED TO STUDENTS BY FAMILY MEMBERS.

Four of the six students, said family expectations were an important influence, however, there was some divergence in their effect. For Jess and Alistair, expectations from home gave them permission to do less study:

like Mr I he gives you like a week and you've got to do a full project and it's hard and then you've got like your art homework and everything else, you can't do it unless you sit at home and do it all day, like some people would, I just do like an hour or something and then go out.

and your parents how do they feel about that?

Em ah my mum wouldn't think that I have to stay in all the time just doing my homework

no she wouldn't think that?

no, she'd rather me do some so I've still done some. (Alistair, 373 - 377)

You could describe this as a family study expectation that – “something is better than nothing”. However, I can't help but wonder whether Alistair's mother has compromised her expectations for Alistair's study, especially since Alistair reports his older sister worked hard and achieved good GCSE grades (442).

Jess reported that her family weren't pushing her and that they were always telling her “her best was good enough” (284). I formed the impression that their aim was emotionally targeted, to take the pressure off Jess, since she was anxious and upset by failing to meet schools expectations of her (268).

For Jason and Laura their home expectations were to study harder:

The same really they think I can do better, they know I can do better, they know I've got the potential to do better than I am and my mum and dad they just both want me to do as good as I can. (Jason, 310)

Whilst there is an expectation to perform better and a belief he is capable of more, the repetition of “better” tinges it with urgency for me, I get a sense of their anxiety led pressure for him to change his study behaviour.

For Laura the expectation from her mother to study harder (375) felt more emotionally directed. Laura seemed contained and reassured by her mother's involvement with her study.

4.2.1.1.2 MODELLING FROM FAMILY MEMBERS

INSIGHT GAINED BY STUDENTS ABOUT FAMILY EXPECTATIONS AROUND STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FAMILY ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR.

All but one student, Jess, talked about behaviour members of their family modelled.

For some this behaviour was directly modelled. For example, it was apparent that Alistair had learnt much from his father about working for himself and setting up a business.

so then you can choose your own work, like but, as my dad used to do, he used to work flooring and then get his own contract off that business, so then he did like his own thing from there. (405)

In a much vaguer way Bradley had got the idea of being a chef from his father (361), although, since his father was not currently working it could be argued that (although Bradley did not report this) an unemployment model was also part of Bradley's experience.

For other students (Jason and Laura) the behaviour their family modelled was held up as an example of how not to be. For example whilst Jason's family directly communicated the importance of studying hard, they also explained how they had not studied at school themselves. Jason had become part of the retelling of the "don't be like me" message:

yeah they're keen on me doing well at school and like my little brother he's turning out like me, messing about, not getting his work done but I were, like we've all spoke to him me and my mum and dad and said well you need to do well you don't need to make the mistakes that any of us made so, like messing about. (315)

CONCLUSION

STUDENTS ALL REPORT THAT FAMILIES COMMUNICATE, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, THE EXPECTATION THAT THEIR CHILDREN STUDY, ALBEIT TO VARYING EXTENTS, WITH ONE STUDENT RECEIVING MINIMAL INPUT. FAMILY EXPECTATIONS ARE USUALLY GENERAL RATHER THAN SPECIFIC; SOME STUDENTS HAD A FAMILY MEMBER WHO MODELLED STUDYING BEHAVIOUR OTHERS DID NOT BUT WERE ENCOURAGED TO BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY TO THEIR RELATIVES AND STUDY. SOMETIMES FAMILY CONCERN FOR STUDENTS' WELLBEING IS COMMUNICATED MORE STRONGLY THAN THEIR CONCERN FOR ACHIEVEMENT.

4.2.1.2 SUPERORDINATE THEME 2: INFLUENCE OF HOME (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY) EXPERIENCES ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT (APPENDIX 9, P187)

HOME (FAMILY OR COMMUNITY) SITUATIONS THAT EITHER COME BETWEEN OR HELP STUDENTS TO STUDY AND ACHIEVE.

Subordinate theme	Jess	Laura	Nicki	Jason	Alistair	Bradley
Home events getting in the way of study		✓	✓			✓
Attraction of home alternatives to study		✓			✓	✓
Help and encouragement with study from family	✓	✓	✓			

4.2.1.2.1 HOME (FAMILY OR COMMUNITY) EVENTS AS BARRIERS TO STUDY

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SITUATIONS THAT INTERFERED WITH STUDY

Three students talked about home events which together with the background information present examples of serious life events affecting study and achievement.

The neglect Bradley experiences at home is a chronic problem with a steady cumulative effect (see background information). He quite poignantly understates his situation:

I'd rather come to school to be honest

Because when you stay at home it is boring and just sat down at home doing nothing. (103 -105)

His study and achievement is no doubt affected in many ways. It is apparent in his interview that he has low expectations of life and has resultant low level demand and expectation on both school and himself (e.g. 88 – 101)

Nicki talked about her Mum and Dad fighting over her (see background information). Apart from the emotional effects of this acrimonious situation, she also faced time off school kept at home (81) and then a change of school part way through Year 10.

In contrast Laura spoke at length about the life experiences which had got in the way of her study:

- Domestic abuse

For seven year I had my stepdad control my life

I weren't allowed to have like, I weren't allowed to have crisps or chocolate or I weren't allowed to hang around with friends, I had to stay in and do housework and my homework and stuff like that. They were never allowed to help me. My mum, I were never allowed to talk to her, or interact with any of my brothers or sisters and I weren't allowed to go to see my Nan at weekends or anything like that, we weren't allowed in our own living room (45 -52).

- Sexual Abuse

and I've also got it because in December I had this, well I'm allowed to class him as a paedophile now, I had a paedophile texting me, it were my best mates dad who lives next door. (70)

Laura also spoke about memories of these life events:

but it's just like things, it just comes back in me head and starts repeating (106)

These memories were still impacting her study, both through her inability to concentrate (78) and time off school (66 & 118) in spite of the traumatic events she described being over six months ago.

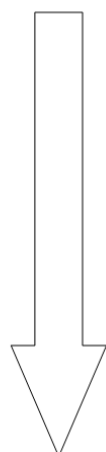
4.2.1.2.2 ATTRACTION OF HOME BASED (FAMILY AND COMMUNITY) ALTERNATIVES TO STUDY OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES STUDENTS PREFERRED TO STUDYING.

This was a subordinate theme in three student interviews. For Bradley and Alistair the attraction of football proved to be a preferred option to study whereas for

Jess it was the pull of social media and networking sites or actual face-to-face socialising with friends.

Students varied in both their awareness and sense of control over their decision.

Awareness and
control of decision



Laura: talked about social networking as a preferred choice and used the word "rather" (15)

Alistair: was aware that he had a choice but talked about it as if he had little control of his decision. "and then I have to go out" (13)

Bradley: seemed unaware there was a choice to make: "then I probably go home, have something to eat and drink and then go out and play football" (310)

FIGURE 10: DIAGRAM SHOWING DECREASING AWARENESS OF AND CONTROL OVER DECISION TO STUDY OR NOT.

4.2.1.2.3 HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT WITH STUDY

STUDENTS EXPERIENCES OF GETTING HELP WITH STUDY FROM FAMILY MEMBERS

This was one of only three subordinate themes where there was a difference between the genders. Only female students reported help and encouragement with study, but this help was limited. Jess's quote below describes well her issues around getting help from the family:

they're not amazing, sometimes they do different methods don't they in the olden days and they'll start trying to tell me another method and they'll say well I've interpreted it like this and.. (295)

It was thus apparent that even for the girls their families were limited by their own knowledge and learning. Nicki was the only student who felt her Mother was directly helpful in studying. She could help with one of her option subjects because she was also studying it at college (430 -432).

CONCLUSION

STUDENTS MORE COMMONLY REPORTED HOME EXPERIENCES WHICH INTERFERED WITH THEIR STUDY. BOYS DID NOT REPORT RECEIVING ANY PRACTICAL HELP WITH STUDY, AND GIRLS REPORTED THAT EVEN IF THEIR PARENTS WERE WILLING TO HELP, THEY DID NOT HAVE THE SKILLS TO DO SO.

4.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTION: HOW DO STUDENTS INTERPRET THEIR EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT?

4.2.2.1 SUPERORDINATE THEME 3: INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT (APPENDIX 10, P. 193)

THE EFFECT OF THE SCHOOL PASTORAL CARE SYSTEM AND STUDENTS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOTH TEACHERS AND PEERS ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT.

Subordinate theme	Jess	Laura	Nicki	Jason	Alistair	Bradley
Pastoral care	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Pupil – teacher relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Influence of peers		✓	✓	✓		✓

4.2.2.1.1 PASTORAL CARE

THE INFLUENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SCHOOL APPROACHES THAT HAD BEEN INTEGRATED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL (SOMETIMES ALSO INVOLVING OUTSIDE AGENCIES) FOR A STUDENT.

The school's pastoral care system was described positively by all of the four students that mentioned it. Their accounts show how powerful an integrated school approach can be.

BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES

Jason's good relationship with his Head of House had produced some very positive results:

With my em head of house, em, I got put on report for being disruptive and that and like not doing my work [] So she like e mailed around my teachers telling them it was better for me to sit alone and not be distracted (86 – 94)

Jason seems to have responded well to this pastoral intervention mainly because he was directly involved in the plan (90), from Jason's description I get the impression that his head of house took on more the role of a coach, working with him to produce his best performance, rather than taking up a critical stance. Her role of "Head of House" also enabled her to "join-up" (93-94) the work so that all Jason's subject teachers were involved in the scheme. Jason reported that his grades were going up as a consequence (76).

ACADEMIC ISSUES

Jess described the mentoring system that the school will put in place when she is in Year 11. Although Jess seems somewhat hopeless about her maths performance; "I think they're kind of getting I'm struggling but..."(262). The fact that pastoral care noticed that she was struggling in maths seemed to be an encouragement to her and fulfilled her reported need for more support (see background information).

SOCIAL ISSUES

Nicki described the support she had received when she transitioned to the school early in Year 10.

The importance of (relatively low demanding) teacher support at particularly difficult times, like mid-year transitions is I think reflected in Nicki's very fond opinion of Miss B (95 -99).

I do not think it would be being over dramatic to say that school's pastoral care system changed Laura's life for the better:

so you like the school because, because they help you?

Yeah and you can tell them anything they won't go telling anyone

Okay

And that's how I built up the courage to tell Miss S, she's amazing I can tell her anything [] and she like helps people who've got family problems and she's involved with the social worker er social services [] my mum had this like diary thing where we had to, she filled it in everyday, when he was having a go at us and Miss S er straightaway when she'd seen that diary, she straightaway phoned em the social workers to help us. (93 -104)

I feel the elements which made the pastoral care system helpful and effective for Laura were: confidentiality, patience (to wait until she was ready to talk), ability to access and negotiate intervention from other services and provision of a familiar point of contact for both her and her mother.

4.2.2.1.2 TEACHER PUPIL RELATIONSHIP

THE EFFECT OF STUDENTS WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR TEACHERS ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT.

All students talked about this theme at length. They gave positive and negative descriptions of its impact, and sometimes they provided examples of both.

POSITIVE

Students talked about three elements to the relationship being positive:

1. Familiarity

Three students talked about how just being used to a teacher helped study:

... it's fine, you get used to all the teachers, you know what they are like, so you can have a decent like friendship or relationship, so you get used to everything (Jason, 42)

2. Positive teacher attitude

Three students reported that with some teachers they didn't feel criticised or somehow inferior to other students for not understanding and this assisted learning:

Because she don't have a go at you if you're like struggling (Nicki., 207)

With Jason a positive teacher attitude also encouraged him to co-operate (78).

3. Teacher understanding of the way a student learnt

Four students talked about how, when teachers came alongside them to explain something in a way they might understand, this helped them "get it":

and he says I'm doing well and even he said I just need that little bit more time to get something. (Jess, 276)

NEGATIVE

A lack of teacher understanding of a student was not helpful towards study and achievement in the following ways:

1. Behaviour

Jason responds negatively to any confrontational talk that challenges his behaviour, it has the effect of him withdrawing from work and/or putting his energy into a "battle" with the teacher:

but like there's other things as well like when teachers have a go at you before, or something just goes wrong you'll get quite annoyed with it

Okay

and you'll just think, like, you can't be bothered with it really.[] Like if you're not doing your work or something they'll probably call you immature [] or like they'll say you need to start growing up and stuff like that

and that really gets you?

it gets most people angry, just like if we were to call them, say they needed to grow up they wouldn't like it.. (140 – 148)

I find it interesting that Jason is very critical of himself too, perhaps it is too much for him to cope with when a teacher agrees with his own (and his families) perception of himself.

2. Learning

I became quite entwined in Alistair's teacher pupil relationship issues. When he was brought to my interview room the head of inclusion, said in front of him, that she thought he would have some interesting things to say to me because he was really not into school these days. I referred to this interaction during our interview:

So Mrs H saying you're not into school at the moment what did she mean?

I don't know what she meant

Oh okay, that was news to you was it?... So school's alright?

Yeah [50 -53]

I got the impression that Alistair's withdrawal behaviour occurred when he did not understand and was often misunderstood as lack of interest (54 -57), indeed I misinterpreted Alistair's behaviour myself later in the interview:

I don't know, because I don't get any of it, like one lesson I could do something, and then another lesson, like in practicals, I don't get none of that. Like when you've got to put stuff together that's...

Yeah, you just muck around with things?

no I don't mess around I just put anything with anything to see if it works. (94 -96)

The assumption that Alistair is "not into school" because he is not engaging in a task must seriously impact his learning and achievement. In hindsight it seems to me that this withdrawal is Alistair's way of asking for help and for greater teacher input rather than less.

All three girls were affected in a similar way to Alistair when their lack of understanding affected their relationship with the teacher and they felt wrongly judged:

Not really, it's just like once they've explained it, they don't like explain it again and they'll just like have a go at you or something, for not listening. (Laura, 229)

The girls' responses seem to be to internalise their anger or anxiety and try to work it out themselves or zone out (Jess, 179). Nicki, perhaps helped by her status as a new student seeks out other teachers to help her (294).

Although Bradley talked relatively positively about his teachers, saying some are alright, he said the least of all students about his relationships with teachers. His aim seemed to be to keep the relationship as minimal as he could, so as to avoid being noticed and challenged to work. His strategy of behaving well and not putting his hand up seems to work well:

Yeah because everyone else I'm with put their hands up so he probably doesn't get time to come to me [laughs]. (338)

Being largely unknown by teachers must seriously impact Bradley's study and achievement.

4.2.2.1.3 INFLUENCE OF PEERS

THE EFFECT OF PEER RELATIONSHIPS ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT.

Some students reported being influenced by peers, either positively negatively or both (Jason Alistair Laura, Jess).

Yeah sometimes, I'm like, always getting on with my work, but sometimes there's people that will distract me and that. (22)

Other students ignored or actively resisted peer influences (Nicki, Bradley). Furthermore one student, Laura, experienced bullying.

a) Negative peer influence inhibited study, Jason seemed particularly effected:

but when people are distracting you, like you've got everyone messing about and stuff like that, you are just always frustrated, because you can't concentrate (Jason,34)

b) Positive peer influence and collaboration enhanced study (Laura 205, 233; Alistair, 58)

c) Resisting or ignoring peers, enabled study to happen in spite of others :

Well everybody calls me like a teacher's pet

Do they because?

I normally go up to them and ask for some work so I can do it at home

and how does that affect you?

I just normally ignore it. (Nicki, 370 -382)

Although Nicki reports putting up with name calling and working hard regardless, I wonder if this is because she is more concerned for teacher approval than peer approval, or whether she does not understand the effect her behaviour has on others and how to modify it.

d) Bullying

For Laura the effect of life events on some peer relationships became extreme, resulting in serious bullying and physical violence against her:

because, like, I didn't, I had a month of school at the beginning of December and then sometime in January where it all started to kick off again with the paedophile next door, with his brothers and sisters, er his daughters and sons and like because she was my best mate and she had an older sister [] she was like having a go at me saying that it was all my fault and I got it into me head thinking it were all my fault. (118 - 120)

The impact of two months out of school at the beginning of year 10 on her learning (regardless of any emotional effects) would have been significant.

CONCLUSION

THE PASTORAL CARE SYSTEM WAS VALUED BY ALL STUDENTS WHO HAD EXPERIENCE OF IT, STUDENTS FELT THE PASTORAL CARE PLAN WAS INTEGRATED (INVOLVING TEACHING STAFF AND SOMETIMES OTHER AGENCIES) AND FELT THEY WERE INVOLVED IN ITS DEVELOPMENT AND THAT IT HAD BEEN HELPFUL; MOREOVER, STUDENTS ALSO REPORTED AN INCREASED SENSE OF ACCEPTANCE AND VALUE WITHIN SCHOOL AND HAD DEVELOPED A POSITIVE VIEW OF SCHOOL.

STUDENTS' REPORTED A VARIETY OF FEELINGS ABOUT TEACHERS AND PEERS, NEGATIVE FEELINGS TOWARDS TEACHERS WERE ASSOCIATED WITH FEELING WRONGLY JUDGED, A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS WAS REPORTED TO IMPROVE STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT. PEER RELATIONSHIPS WERE VIEWED AS SUPPORTIVE IN ASSISTING COLLABORATIVE STUDY BUT COULD ALSO GET IN THE WAY OF STUDY, SOME STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO IGNORE PEERS WHILST OTHERS FELT CONSTANTLY INFLUENCED BY THEM.

4.2.2.2 SUPERORDINATE THEME 4 : INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT (APPENDIX 11, P. 203)

THE TEACHING EXPERIENCED BY STUDENTS AND THE EFFECT THEY FELT IT HAD ON THEIR LEARNING, INCLUDING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES, STYLE AND CONTENT OF LESSON AND EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER EXPLANATION.

Subordinate theme	Jess	Laura	Nicki	Jason	Alistair	Bradley
Frustrations in learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enjoyment of learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Repetition and monotony in learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Autonomy in learning	✓		✓		✓	✓
Learning challenge	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Interest in topic				✓	✓	✓
Active lesson Style	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Attitude to homework	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

All students described occasions when learning had been enjoyable and successful and when it had been boring, frustrating and ineffective, although there was considerable divergence as to the reasons why.

4.2.2.2.1 MONOTONOUS REPETITIVE LESSONS

LESSONS WHICH FOCUSED ON PRACTISING SKILLS OR USED SIMILAR LEARNING METHODS THROUGHOUT THE LESSON

An area where there was broad agreement from students was that learning was boring, frustrating and ineffective:

but then a boring lesson is just where you're copying of the board or writing out of the textbook all lesson and not doing anything. (Laura, 242)

Practice for GCSE exams increased the number of monotonous and repetitive lessons students felt they experienced. Furthermore underachievement and the subsequent requirement to retake modular exams increased repetition:

English it's just when you write and write loads of essays [] they just drag on for ages [] yeah and then if you don't get the grade you've got to do it all again [] I've had to redo about three of them [] yeah, and it's horrible [sigh] (Alistair, 121 -135)

Monotonous and repetitive lessons were described as inhibiting learning and increasing students' sense of dissatisfaction with their work.

because I know, literally I'll walk in and he'll say you're doing this, this and this today [], then he'll be like go to page such and such and copy it all out [], when I come out of a maths lesson I don't feel like I've learnt anything. [] I just, my ears just stop working because I get bored (Jess, 161, 179)

For a number of students it was lessons where teachers were attempting to improve their performance on a task that students were already familiar with that they found monotonous. There was a strong sense in student descriptions of time passing slowly, and a decrease in motivation to work.

4.2.2.2 AUTONOMY IN LEARNING

LESSONS WHERE STUDENTS WERE GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN LEARNING

When given autonomy, students' experienced both frustration and enjoyment dependent on the situation. Nicki describes frustration with her experience of being given autonomy (248), whereas Jason (470) and Bradley (220) described experiences involving autonomy that they enjoyed. Laura shows further insight into her experience of autonomy and provides examples of both positive and negative experiences:

Frustration:

in science I just think it's your notes, well they all say it's your notes, it's your book you do what you want in it. [] No, but my maths books just full of scribbles and crosses and scribbles and it's not very neat. It's got like loads of teacher's workings out where they've tried to explain it to me and made it even worse. (254, 258)

Success:

I just, I didn't get stuck, because it were like, it's basically my own opinion, but if I needed like any words, [] because like I forgot the word homage [] I thought it were 'o' something, but she told me that and then I were back on track so I were fine after

that, and she come and check my work, like, every two lessons and stuff like that.
(110 -116)

Students mostly experienced success when the autonomy they were given had sufficient supports and checks to reassure them that help was on hand and that they were not alone in their learning, however there was variety between how much support each student viewed as ideal.

4.2.2.2.3 LEARNING CHALLENGE

LESSONS WHERE STUDENTS WERE CHALLENGED TO PROBLEM SOLVE OR WORK AT A HIGHER LEVEL.

This also produced both positive and negative responses from pupils. Bradley had the most to say about the negative effects of challenge. He talked significantly more about this aspect of learning than any other in his interview. My exploration and interpretation of what he was saying, which I shared with him as we talked, revolved around my drawing of the following picture:

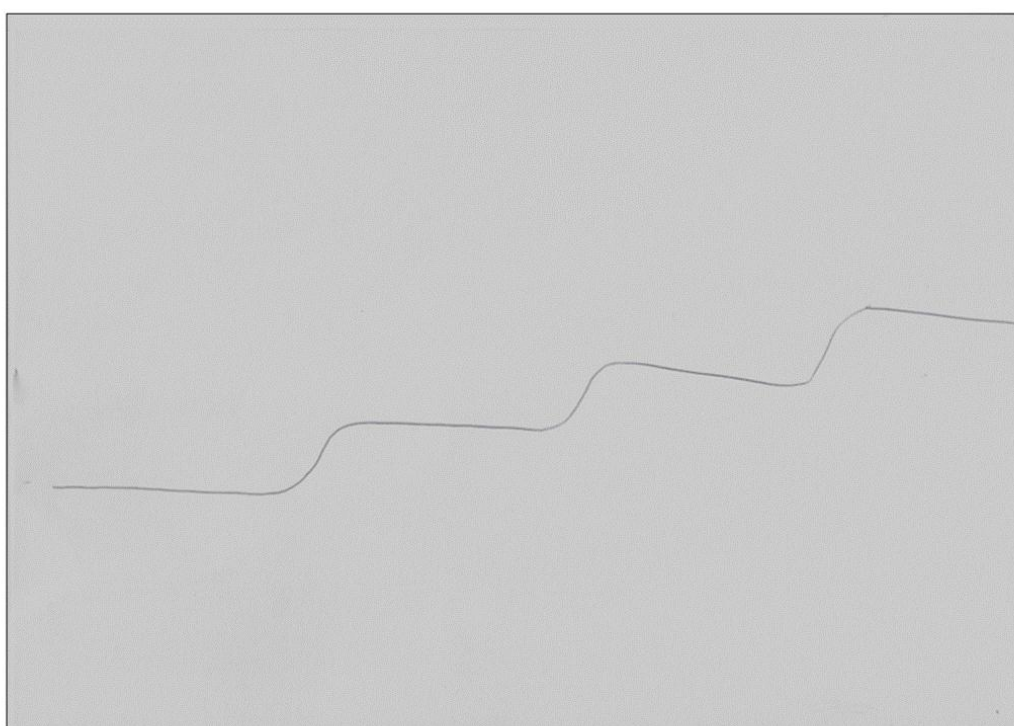


Bradley had realised in year 8 that putting his hand up in lesson meant he got a lot more attention and learning challenge. He described the effect of putting his hand up as increasing demands placed on him rather than helping him with it:

Yeah because then you like get asked more questions there is more to remember

(166)

When I offered the illustration above and suggested that to me it felt like he was describing climbing a hill with multiple summits stretching out beyond him of which he could see no end. There was a moment of connection between us and he laughed and when I asked said "It makes sense" (184). We also explored the "lower road" (not putting his hand up). I explained how from what he said this felt like a much nicer place for him to be, the equivalent of a stroll along a valley, to which he responded "yup" emphatically. We talked further about his strategy and I offered a third possibility:



Keeping with the mountain analogy I suggested the possibility of slower paced challenge – (one mountain summit per lesson) and asked his opinion. His response was "that would be fine" (198) I understood from this interaction that there were three things Bradley needed in place to study and achieve to his best potential. Firstly being aware of the learning challenge of a lesson, possibly even negotiating the challenge for the lesson with a teacher (knowing the hill he had to climb). Secondly the teacher support, as a response to hand raising, needed to work towards this goal for the lesson (rather than triggering another hill to climb). Finally Bradley needed some recovery time before progressing to the next hill.

Reflection

I was aware that when I explored with Bradley whether he experienced any learning challenge as too demanding, I suggested the possibility of slower paced challenge. In doing so I was reaching the limit of exploration and beginning of intervention. I noticed within myself a desire to use my EP skills and take Bradley further by establishing first with him and then his teachers, ways of providing learning challenge that was more suitable for him. I held these thoughts, and sat with the tension of living on the border between research and intervention.

Similar experiences emerged from the other four students who talked about learning challenge. Challenge was welcomed and had a positive impact on learning if it was appropriate i.e. just beyond their ability but otherwise had negative effects on students' perceived performance and motivation. For example Alistair in the top set for science in year 9 reported he "didn't get nothing in any lesson" (207), and Jess described the support she perceived she needed to face a learning challenge (29).

THE FOLLOWING TWO SUBORDINATE THEMES REPRESENT ELEMENTS OF LESSONS AND TEACHING WHERE PUPILS MOST COMMONLY FOUND LEARNING WAS SUCCESSFUL AND ENJOYABLE.

4.2.2.2.4 INTEREST IN THE TOPIC

LESSONS THAT CAPTURED STUDENTS' INTEREST

A theme only occurring in male student accounts. For example Jason gave a description of an English lesson about the horror genre in films:

Just like they've always got like scary noises in them, and all like screaming, or there is always someone who ends up getting killed and its always in a weird way, it's not how you think it would go, it's like, if you think about it, it's like it's never always the main characters that get killed, it's always someone else, that they are related to or close to that get killed, stuff like that, so it will be like harder for them, and frustrating. (60)

His account was animated and showed his interest but also his learning and medium to long term retention of the information. The illustration Jason used was that because it was interesting it would "drag you in more" (198) I thought

this was Jason's way of describing how his attention was captured by the topic. Interestingly Jason gave control of his attention to the topic rather than himself or the teacher. This is also true for Alistair (171) whilst Bradley gave it less importance but talked about some subjects being OK some of the time (88).

4.2.2.2.5 ACTIVE LESSON STYLE

LESSONS REQUIRING A VARIETY OF ACTIVITY OF STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY PRACTICAL, CREATIVE AND SOCIAL ONES

The girls and Bradley talked more about lesson style as important in successful learning. They preferred practical and creative lessons for example Nicki (169) with Laura also including social interaction (193). For them it appeared that the teaching style was perceived as assisting learning and achievement more than the topic. Laura expressed this well:

just like because people say like you learn more when you're having fun, and like that's what I love doing I just like love having fun all time, em just like working with partners, like doing practical's, but then that stuff is like copying out of textbook or off a board like you said, and I just hate them lessons. (199)

For Alistair and Jason the lesson style appeared less important. This may have been due to their ability to access an active style, for example, Jason, although reporting enjoyment in a social creative and practical lesson, could not control his attention and behaviour sufficiently well to access the lesson and Alistair despaired of understanding what was asked of him in practical lessons (94).

4.2.2.2.6 ATTITUDE TO HOMEWORK

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOLWORK GIVEN TO DO AT HOME AND FEEDBACK GIVEN.

Students' attitude to homework was universally negative, some students reported that either they didn't get any, or were only given schoolwork to finish or revision. For those that did get homework it was commonly described as a low priority. Alistair (332) and Laura (327) also reported an inability to complete some homework because they just didn't understand it.

Jess shared interesting opinions of homework she described it as pointless and I felt made a good point when she said:

you get them projects, [] you just hand them in and then you get a mark back at end of it, it's like I don't get how it's going to help, doing a leaflet on diabetes, what's that gonna help me with? (226-8)

It appears to me she highlights two issues with homework, firstly the feedback she receives seems very inadequate, and secondly whilst information of diabetes may well be relevant to her GCSE and indeed later life, its relevance does not appear to have been sufficiently well communicated to her.

CONCLUSION

STUDENTS LINKED SUCCESS IN LEARNING WITH ENJOYMENT AND CONVERSELY LACK OF LEARNING WITH FRUSTRATION AND BOREDOM. MONOTONOUS AND REPETITIVE LESSONS WERE COMMONLY VIEWED AS INEFFECTIVE, PRACTICE FOR GCSEs AND REPETITION OF MODULE ASSESSMENTS WERE OFTEN GIVEN AS EXAMPLES.

AUTONOMY WITH LEARNING AND LEARNING CHALLENGE WERE VIEWED POSITIVELY BY STUDENTS ONLY IF THEY WERE TARGETED AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL FOR THEM.

BOTH LESSON CONTENT (FOR BOYS) AND AN ACTIVE LESSON STYLE WERE VIEWED AS IMPORTANT IN EFFECTIVE LEARNING, HOMEWORK WAS VIEWED AS IRRELEVANT.

4.2.3. RESEARCH QUESTION: HOW DO STUDENTS MAKE SENSE OF THEIR LEARNING AND ACHIEVING IN ACADEMIC SUBJECTS?

4.2.3.1. SUPERORDINATE THEME 5: EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT (APPENDIX 12, P. 223)

THE EMOTIONS STUDENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR EXPERIENCE OF STUDYING FOR ACADEMIC SUBJECTS.

Subordinate theme	Jess	Laura	Nicki	Jason	Alistair	Bradley
Emotions negatively affecting study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emotions positively affecting study	✓		✓		✓	

4.2.3.1.1 EMOTIONS NEGATIVELY AFFECTING STUDY

EMOTIONS THAT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON STUDENTS ATTITUDE TO AND ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

Students described negative emotions related to study much more frequently than they did positive emotions.

The pictures students associated with study were mostly negative and are shown below along with the words students used to describe the interpretations they had made about the pictures:

 <p>Jason Frustration and distraction</p>	 <p>Jess Frustration, anger, stress (also described confusion)</p>
 <p>Alistair Avoidance (run away), stress (also described confusion and frustration)</p>	 <p>Laura Confusion, distraction (talk instead of work)</p>
 <p>No picture</p> <p>Bradley avoidance , (stay out of the way.) hiding (also described confusion)</p>	 <p>Nicki Help, Collaboration, communication (Enjoyed study process but experienced work as boring) (also described frustration)</p>

FIGURE 11: FEELINGS STUDENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE STUDYING EXPERIENCE

Students commonly associated frustration and confusion with study:

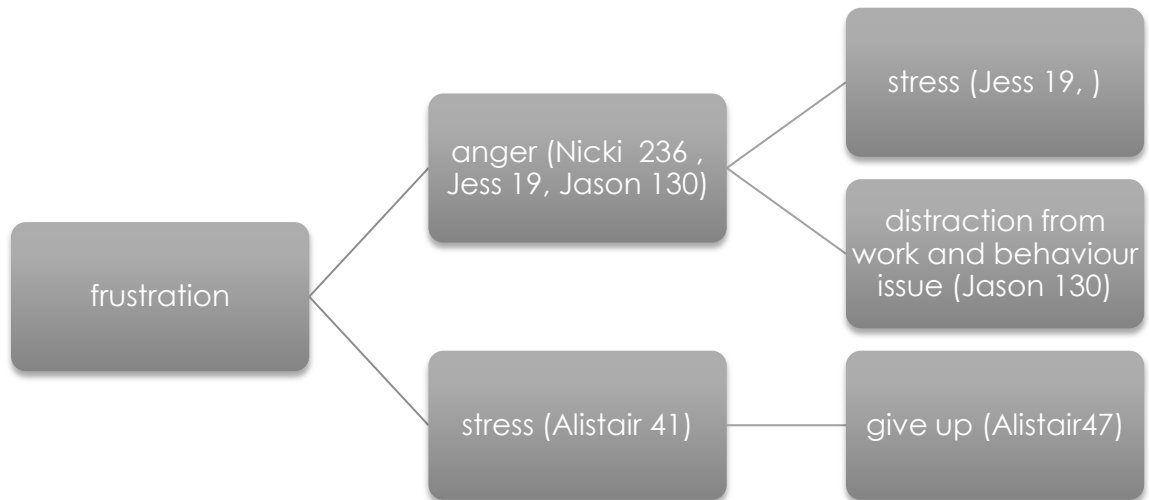


FIGURE 12: EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR ASSOCIATED WITH FRUSTRATION

Jason describes the spiral of emotions that result from his frustration with learning. Although he often attributes the cause of his frustration with a teacher or other pupils, he gives himself some responsibility for his resulting attitude and behaviour.

Yeah, like if I'm angry I'll just decide right I'm not in the mood, I'll just like, I'll work a bit and then get distracted and start talking to people and then it will like work up into arguments with teachers and stuff. (13)

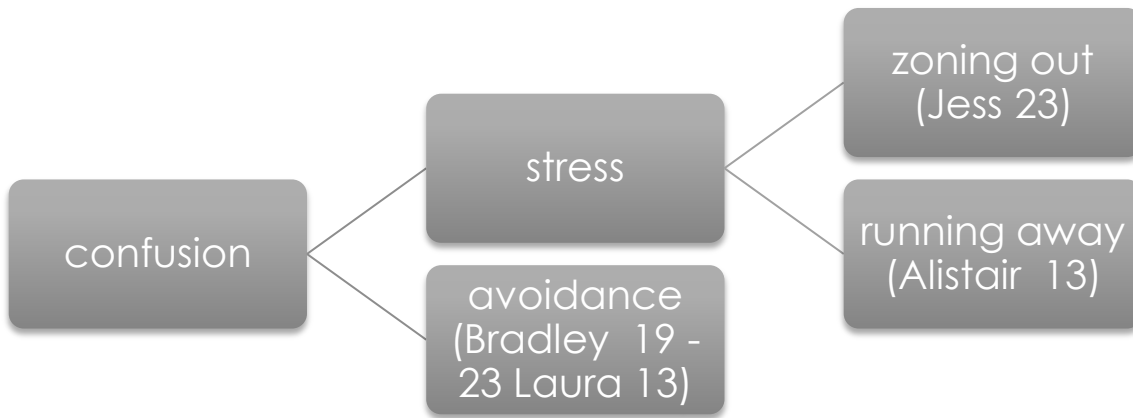


FIGURE 13: EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR ASSOCIATED WITH CONFUSION

Jess attributes her difficulties with learning and resultant confusion to the abilities of her teacher to explain:

Teachers like try explain and I get all myself in a muddle and I just, I don't think teachers really help, sometimes their like oh it's easy you can do it, and you know, like, well **I can't** (21)

I just switch off, I can't, I try and do it my own way and try and figure it out if teachers haven't, really, but most of the time I just switch off. (23)

Jess's coping strategy of switching off although successful in keeping her out of trouble, also keeps her out of a teacher's awareness that she still needs help. As a consequence, along with other avoidance strategies used by pupils, it is possibly the most worrying strategy students' use as a response to the emotions triggered by learning confusion.

Students also talked about the more significant emotional effects of long term difficulties with work:

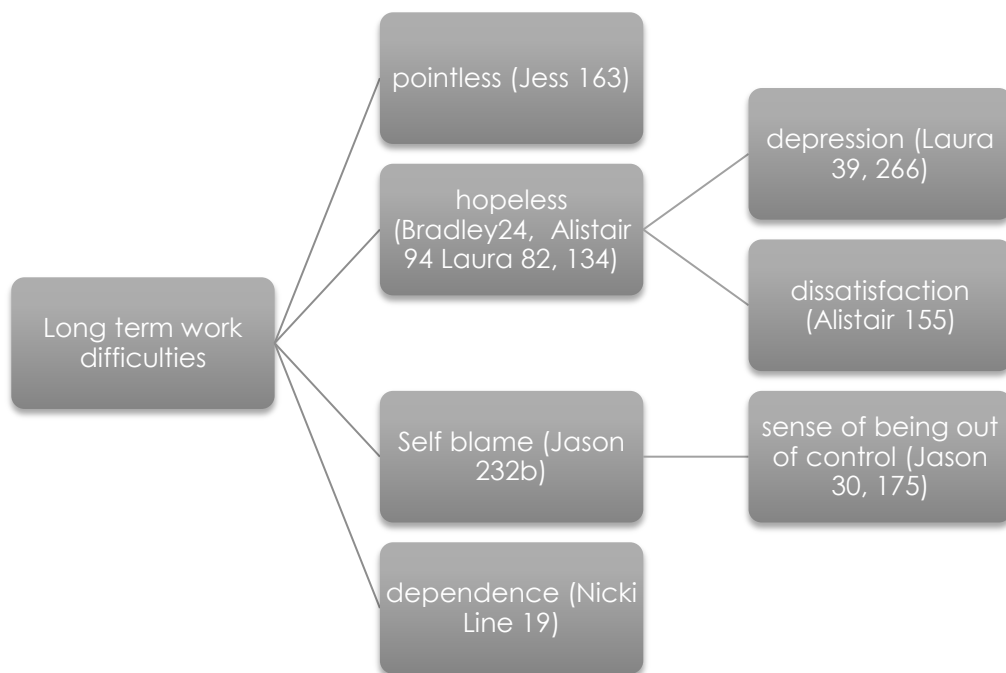


FIGURE 14: EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR ASSOCIATED WITH LONG TERM WORK DIFFICULTIES

Whilst the origins of students' difficulties in discrete incidents were usually perceived by students, at least in part, as external to them; the cumulative, long term effects produced internalised negative emotions affecting motivation and consequent learning and achievement:

like doing stuff, I think it's too late but...

what you mean it's too late

like it's too late to like do all my work again (Laura 80 -82)

I feel like it's a bit pointless to be sat in there... (Jess, 163)

I just sit there (Bradley, 60)

I don't know, because I don't get any of it. (Alistair, 94)

Well I feel in a way bad, because like when you are like angry and agitated you'll say something you don't want. (Jason, 175)

I can concentrate better with someone like, at the side of me or something. (Nicki, 19)

The emotions shared by students either highlight that they (at least some of the time) had given up with study and achievement and see it as unachievable, or have little confidence in their ability to be the independent learners they need to be to succeed in GCSE assessments. You could describe these using the following I messages:-

"I can't do it there's no point in trying"

"I can't be trusted to do this on my own"

4.2.3.1.2. EMOTIONS POSITIVELY AFFECTING STUDY

EMOTIONS THAT ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

Some students also talked about positive emotions. Both Jess and Alistair (23) talked about enjoyment and pride in successful learning, they both reported how this positive feedback encouraged their study.

I feel better after an English lesson, because like they tell me what I've done and like what grades time like working up to and I feel like oh my work is worth an A or my works worth an A*, and I feel really good. (Jess, 169 a)

Nicki's positive study emotions related more to the opportunity to work alongside her mother or a teacher (294). Given her ill ease in talking to me and her relatively low verbal ability CAT score I wonder whether this related more to an opportunity, supported by the structure of a task, for social interaction.

CONCLUSION

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS WERE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH FRUSTRATIONS AND CONFUSION WITH LEARNING AND POSITIVE EMOTIONS WITH SUCCESS IN LEARNING. DISCRETE EXPERIENCES ILLUSTRATING FRUSTRATION OR CONFUSION WERE USUALLY ATTRIBUTED TO A TEACHER, TEACHING STYLE, OR HOME CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER THE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF MULTIPLE EXPERIENCES WERE MORE LIKELY TO BE INTERNALISED.

4.2.3.2. SUPERORDINATE THEME 6: RESPONSE TO GCSE PRESSURE (APPENDIX 13, P. 233)

THE EFFECT OF THE PRESSURE OF GCSEs, EITHER FROM EXAMS/ASSESSMENT, TARGETS, TEACHER EXPECTATION OR PEER COMPETITION ON STUDENTS' STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT.

Subordinate theme	Jess	Laura	Nicki	Jason	Alistair	Bradley
Effect of GCSE pressure on mental health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Effect of pressure on exam performance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Teacher expectation	✓			✓	✓	✓
Effect of targets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Competition from other students	✓		✓		✓	

Different forms of pressure from GCSEs were experienced by all students; in particular they all reported being affected by the pressure of their targets and exams, however there was divergence between students about the effect of that pressure.

4.2.3.2.1 PRESSURE OF EXAMS

THE EFFECT OF EXAM PRESSURE ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH.

Laura had perhaps the most extreme negative reaction to exam pressure which triggered traumatic memories. Jess, however, also describes in a very similar way how her exam performance was debilitated by exam panic. It is interesting to see how very different situations can produce a similar result.

I just go all flustered and like hot and I think everything, I just forget everything and I'll sit down I'll get angry with myself cause I think oh I should know this. (Jess,72)

Hard, frustrating, it's alright, but like if I'm in an exam [] and I'll be like looking around to see if anyone is stood behind me, I don't know why and then if someone's stood behind me I won't be able to concentrate [] and stuff like that, you know because of paedophile, so I'm just like always looking around, I don't like teachers standing behind me, I'm just like can you move away [] It's just like, I feel like they're there, then I'll have to just have to keep turning around to see if they are watching me [] it's like when they're is stood behind me, I get frustrated

oh okay, because you want to get on with it and you can't

Yeah

are you frustrated with yourself or them

I'm not, I don't know, it's just like don't, I hate people standing behind me and that's what makes me put my head down to keep staring around instead of concentrating, so (Laura,288 -317)

For both these students it seemed to me that the pressure of exams caused thinking shut down, and then their frustration with themselves served to exacerbate the situation.

Alistair, Bradley and Nicki's performance in exams is negatively affected by pressure but less obviously so. Bradley reports that he would probably be worried and Nicki describes exams as boring and annoying and also suggests that the testing gets in the way of her learning. It is unclear whether Alistair's

under-performance in exams is the result of pressure or a reflection of his English language comprehension ability, or, perhaps more likely, a combination of the two. However, it has resulted in a negative exam retake cycle which knocked his confidence, his attitude and his expectations:

I'm confident when I'm in there. (266)

and then, it's just, sometimes after I've finished, when I check it, I know, I always somehow leave stupid mistakes in a lot of the papers. (270)

I thought I were understanding it and then I got a right rubbish mark [sighs]. (291)

At the other end of the spectrum exam pressure seems to improve Jason's performance as the anxiety it produces in him helps him to focus:

Yeah, like you really want to get them grades, but it's just you know you can do better, so it just makes you anxious and like nervous about what to do, so that's all(264)

and when you think about it just flies by, it's like you're getting your head into it, you're actually doing something so it just flies by, it is quite hard but if you know what you're doing you'll just try and do your best. (300)

4.2.3.2.2 PRESSURE OF TARGETS

THE EFFECTS OF PREDICTED GCSE GRADES ON PERFORMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH.

Students also described the effects of the pressure of targets. If targets were not well matched to students' perceived ability then they tended to ignore them, or create their own target:

Em, well I know I'm not going to get them, even if I tried really, really hard, in science, but in English, it's just like, when you are doing it, it's you can't really revise it, you can't revise English, you can, you can go over the book a bit and stuff like that and get your plan really good, but you can't revise the stuff that you are going to write so... [] I don't know I'm just going to aim for a C as long as it's a pass. (Alistair, 235, 248)

Some students (Laura, Nicki) were either shocked or determined to improve their targets and that helped focus them on their study:

yeah it's just looking at like stuff, it's like oh my God I wish I could do better than that so. (Laura, 371)

However more students (Alistair, Jason, Jess) appeared to respond with despondency,

It puts you down like if you don't feel like you're hitting your target, if you know that you're not hitting your target, you will get a bit wound up about it, like that you know you can do better, but you are not pushing yourself that hard. It's deciding to go the wrong way and do everything the wrong, at the wrong time. (Jason, 232)

Bradley paid no attention to targets:

I do my work and then if I get my grade I get my grade really (276).

Three students said they set themselves targets, they all seemed to use a similar strategy of breaking their goal down into steps:

and I try and do my best, to work up and like to try and get, in some subjects I'm working at D and by year 11 I will be at a C. (Jess,195)

4.2.3.2.3. TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

THE EFFECT OF PRESSURE FROM TEACHER EXPECTATIONS ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

The pressure from teachers caused a variety of responses. Jess who seemed very self-motivated to achieve her best described a particularly negative response to such pressure:

I don't think they think anyone works hard enough, unless they're getting A*, I think that's when they think oh yes she's worked hard it's because she's got an A* and it's kind of like they're trying to push you to get there and you're working your hardest and they just carry on pushing and pushing and pushing and it does my head in. (268)

Interestingly Bradley, who was much less focused on achievement, also responded badly to pressure:

yeah I put my hand up and then like after they helped me I wrote it down and then they kept coming over like every 5 minutes [laughs]

em what did that do to you how did you feel?

Annoyed [sighs] (133 -4)

Teacher expectations however did feel encouraging to some rather than pressurising.

but when you've got all your teachers telling you that you're capable of getting higher grades but your targets are lower grades, like you kind of push yourself to do better. (Jason, 237)

It seems teacher expectations are very influential; I get the impression from these interviews that they are taken more personally than grade targets and are consequently more difficult to dismiss. However, their effect can vary enormously depending on how they are perceived by students for example by how realistic students feel their teachers' expectations are. A student's sensitivity also influences how they will interpret a teacher's expectation and consequently how tough a teacher's approach needs to be for maximum effect.

4.2.3.2.4. COMPETITION FROM OTHER STUDENTS

THE EFFECT OF COMPETITION AND COMPARISON WITH PEERS ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH.

The effect of mostly implicit competition from other students completing similar tasks seemed to have a largely negative effect on the 3 students who mentioned this, Nicki (300), Alistair (163) and Jess:

It annoys me as well because lesson like there'll be people sat getting it and going through all the questions in 10 min, going sir I've done and I'm not even getting like the first question right, so it makes me feel a bit, a bit horrible, because it's like well if they get it right why don't I get it, huh. (173)

I tried to imagine what it must be like to be in their shoes and found I felt the whole range of negative emotions that they had described to me and felt very demotivated. On reflection I recognised how resilient they had all been in persevering with their study.

CONCLUSION

ALL STUDENTS DESCRIBED EXPERIENCING PRESSURE FROM GCSE EXAMS. STUDENTS COULD EXPERIENCE ENHANCED, REDUCED OR TYPICAL PERFORMANCE UNDER EXAM PRESSURE. EXAMS TRIGGERED STRESS BEHAVIOUR FOR SOME STUDENTS AND THEY DESCRIBED RESULTANT DIFFICULTY THINKING.

STUDENT RESPONSE TO SCHOOL GCSE TARGETS VARIED DEPENDING ON:

PERCEIVED ACHIEVABILITY: WHEN THE TARGET WAS MUCH GREATER THAN A STUDENTS' CURRENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE THEY TENDED TO BE DISREGARDED.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS: SOME STUDENTS RESPONDED TO TARGETS WITH DESPONDENCY WHILST OTHERS BECAME MOTIVATED TO DO BETTER,

STUDENTS RESPONSE TO TEACHER EXPECTATIONS VARIED ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS, TO BE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS NEEDED TO VARY THEIR STRATEGY DEPENDENT ON STUDENT SENSITIVITY.

STUDENTS OFTEN SHOWED RESILIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE IN THE FACE OF CONTINUAL UNFAVOURABLE COMPARISONS WITH CLASSMATES.

4.2.3.3. SUPERORDINATE THEME 7: INFLUENCE OF INTERNAL MOTIVATION ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT (APPENDIX 14, P. 245)

THE EFFECT OF A STUDENT'S PERSONAL SELF-TALK, VALUES AND OPINION OF RELEVANCE OF ACADEMIC LEARNING ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT.

Subordinate theme	Jess	Laura	Nicki	Jason	Alistair	Bradley
Future value of learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Personal values	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Constructive self-talk	✓	✓		✓		

4.2.3.3.1. FUTURE VALUE OF ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

STUDENTS' FEELINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE VALUE OF OBTAINING A GOOD GRADE AND THE CONTENT OF ACADEMIC SUBJECTS.

Whilst all students talked about the future value of learning what they viewed as useful varied. All students but Nicki talked about the usefulness of the basics in English and Maths, however, all struggled to see the relevance of more than this:

I think maths is pointless because when I get a use algebra again or like the area of a triangle and it's like when am I going to use it. English yeah because you need to know like your grammar and your spelling and stuff like that, I can understand that. Science it's like, why do you want to know what gas pops? (Laura,303)

Two students expressed a desire for subjects to be more obviously connected with future use. Alistair made the suggestion that GCSE physics should be more applied to life (458) having become aware, only through our interview (412 - 413), of the connection between the topic of circuits and his preferred career option of electrician.

In addition to subject content, three students (Nicki, 421; Jason, 270; Alistair, 480) referred to the use of academic subject in later life as a pathway to a better job. A good grade was worth achieving in order to access a better job regardless of subject content.

4.2.3.3.2. PERSONAL VALUES

STUDENTS UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL VALUES RELATED TO LEARNING.

Five of the six students referred to personal values, it was very apparent that these personal values came directly or indirectly through family expectations. The figure below shows my interpretations of the link between a student's personal values and the associated family expectations:

Student	Personal value	Home expectation
Jason	I should learn (335)	Do better (310)
Bradley	I get what I get (276)	Get on with it ? (inferred from lack of home interest in school)
Alistair	Do a bit (11)	Compromise (373)
Jess	Try hard (211)	You can only do your best (282)
Nicki	Catch up (298)	Catch up ? (inferred from moving school in January of year 10)
Laura	I can concentrate now (343)	You can study now (I'm here) (256)

FIGURE 15: STUDENTS' VALUES AND ASSOCIATED HOME EXPECTATIONS

4.2.3.3.3 CONSTRUCTIVE SELF-TALK

POSITIVE AND EMPOWERING WAYS STUDENTS' TALKED ABOUT THEIR STUDY STRATEGY

Four of the six students (the girls and Jason) had what I thought to be very constructive and empowering self-talk where personal responsibility was

central. Laura was particularly impressive in the way she took responsibility for her learning and refused to blame her circumstances:

I can concentrate, I'll be able to concentrate more, so, and also I've gone to hospital to get my depression sorted out and within school as well that will be all right so I'm just going to knuckle down. (369)

Similarly Jess was able to encourage herself and improve her confidence in her work by reminding herself of her successes (41), Nicki spoke of her self-belief and determination (278), and Jason talked of his determination to stop messing about (248). Overall these four students seemed to be doing their best to study, in spite of barriers brought about either by their abilities, characteristics and circumstances. I thought they showed great resilience.

CONCLUSION

STUDENTS GENERALLY FOUND IT HARD TO SEE THE FUTURE VALUE OF ACADEMIC LEARNING ASIDE FROM BASIC MATHS, ENGLISH AND SCIENCE. SOME FELT MORE APPLIED SUBJECTS WOULD HELP MOTIVATION. HOWEVER, MANY COULD SEE THE VALUE OF A GOOD GRADE IN AN ACADEMIC SUBJECT.

STUDENT VALUES WERE NOTICEABLY LINKED TO FAMILY EXPECTATIONS AND THOSE STUDENTS WITH POSITIVE VALUES TENDED TO FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN STUDY AND HAVE HELPFUL SELF-TALK.

STUDENTS WITH CONSTRUCTIVE SELF-TALK REPORTED GREATER MOTIVATION.

4.2.3.4 SUPERORDINATE THEME 8: ASPIRATIONS (APPENDIX 15, P.251)

STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIONS OF THEIR ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR SCHOOL WORK AND FUTURE EMPLOYMENT AND THEIR FAMILIES' ENCOURAGEMENT OF THESE ASPIRATIONS.

Subordinate theme	Jess	Laura	Nicki	Jason	Alistair	Bradley
Aspirations in school work	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Aspirations for future employment	✓	✓			✓	✓
Encouragement of employment aspirations	✓	✓				

The theme “aspirations” has many connections with all three research questions, but I have clustered it here with students' own constructions of learning and achieving, since this is its biggest connection, it is however, also heavily influenced by students' interpretations of their home and school experience.

4.2.3.4.1 ASPIRATIONS FOR SCHOOL WORK

STUDENTS' GOALS FOR GRADES IN THEIR GCSEs AND THEIR REASONING BEHIND THESE GOALS.

Aspirations for schoolwork followed a familiar pattern to students' values and home expectation themes (see figure 14). Jason's aim was to avoid retaking the subjects at college (242), Alistair (351), Laura (171) Jess (342) and Nicki (256) were aiming at particular grades, these were often personal rather than school targets and Bradley didn't appear bothered (276).

4.2.3.4.2 ASPIRATIONS IN FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

STUDENTS' DETAILED OR GENERAL AIMS FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

Employment aspirations varied considerably between students. Alistair and Jess had the best formed ideas about a future career. Both had input from their parents, although Alistair did not describe having a conversation with his father regarding work, he had, it seemed picked up a lot from him and also worked out ways he could work with his Dad and even take over his business!(420 -424) For both these students, GCSE grades were a potential stumbling block to accessing their career path (Alistair, 480.):

Well they want you to, to have at least like a D, so I'm trying to get a D so that I can get onto the course, because if I don't get onto the course I'll be upset. (Jess, 344)

Laura had a dream career of acting but also had back up plans as she knew acting would be difficult to succeed in. She was interested in doing something teaching related (influenced by her school arranged work experience) and had plans for college course (280).

Jason's aspiration was to avoid going on the dole, he spoke about this fervently. His aspiration was to avoid something rather than aim for something, in much the same way he approached study at school.

The other two students had more nebulous ideas. Bradley had a vague thought about becoming a chef and Nicki's focus seemed to be exclusively on catching up school work, rather than anything more long term.

4.2.3.4.3. ENCOURAGEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS BY FAMILY

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF HOW THEIR EMPLOYMENT AIMS WERE ENCOURAGED BY FAMILY.

Only girls reported verbal encouragement from family members in future career choices, although it could be argued that the information Alistair received from his father regarding self-employment must have involved conversations. Moreover the behaviour his father modelled could be framed as encouragement. Laura reported that her mum encouraged her by saying "I work good with children" (286) she seemed to use this as evidence she had realistic expectations and seemed to need the affirmation from someone close to her that she had appropriate qualities. Jess described her mum's active involvement in looking through college brochures and working out with her if a

particular course was a realistic goal (352). I am struck both with how supportive and helpful this feels and with how valuable, appropriately supportive parents can be at such a significant time of transition for students.

I also notice that Nicki and Bradley who did not report concrete future employment aspirations or Jason who had a negatively framed aspiration, did not report encouragement or modelling from family members. Family seems to be particularly important when students look at future employment possibilities, whereas teachers are a considerable influence on subject and grade aspirations.

CONCLUSION

STUDENTS REPORTED ASPIRATIONS IN THEIR SCHOOL WORK IN LINE WITH THEIR PERSONAL VALUES AND HOME EXPECTATIONS, SOMETIMES THEY WERE INFORMED BY FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS. STUDENTS FUTURE WORK ASPIRATIONS VARIED MARKEDLY IN DETAIL. STUDENTS WITH PARENTS WHO HAD ENCOURAGED EXPLORATION OF CAREER OPTIONS AND HELPED THEM IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CAREER PATHS, HAD MORE COMPREHENSIVE PLANS FOR THEIR FUTURE.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter will examine the findings and conclusions drawn from the superordinate themes clustered around each of the three research questions (see chapter 4) in light of relevant literature. Much of this literature has been previously mentioned, though some is newly presented, its relevance emerging only as the research process progressed.

Initially this discussion contained a broad range of theoretical perspectives including: social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986); humanistic psychology (Rowan, 1998); extended attachment theory (Pianta, et al., 1997); effective teaching strategies (synthesised by Hattie (2009)); achievement emotions (Pekrun, et al., 2002); resilience (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). However, as my reflections and thinking consolidated, one overarching theory emerged which, unlike all the others, encompassed the many different aspects I identified in the students' experiences and provided a helpful structure upon which to base this discussion; this framework was Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991; Deci, et al., 1991). As a consequence the chapter will begin by outlining this theory of motivation, before progressing to each superordinate theme and expanding upon the findings and conclusions and how this links with SDT and other relevant literature.

SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY (SDT)

SDT is a theory of motivation personality and development. It argues that:

- 1) People have a psychological need to be autonomous, competent and related to others. Competence encompasses understanding how to achieve a task or goal and self-efficacy, or belief in one's own ability to complete a task or reach a goal. Autonomy refers to being self-initiating and self-regulating. Relatedness involves developing secure and satisfying relationships with others.
- 2) Satisfaction of these three fundamental needs leads to internal motivation whereas inhibiting them leads to controlled motivation.

- 3) Internal motivation is voluntary and self-validated; it originates from within a person, and in a school setting it may include factors such as interests, curiosity, care and robust personal values. Controlled motivation is constrained by external factors; in a school setting it may include grades, rewards, evaluations and opinions of others. Controlled motivation may be compliant, defiant or lacking intentionality.
- 4) Social contexts such as home, school, culture and the economic system affect how these fundamental psychological needs are fulfilled. Social contexts also affect peoples' aspirations, whether these are more intrinsic or extrinsic, and as a consequence life outcomes.
- 5) Satisfying fundamental psychological needs enables internal motivation to develop and leads to both psychological health and effective performance.

Of particular relevance to the field of education is the SDT concept of internalisation. This is the process whereby students transform external motivational factors into internally regulated ones. SDT argues that people are motivated by autonomy, relatedness and competence to internalise and integrate socially useful but uninteresting activities and that the extent of this internalisation and integration is a consequence of the social context (1991, p. 329).

The four stage process is outlined below:

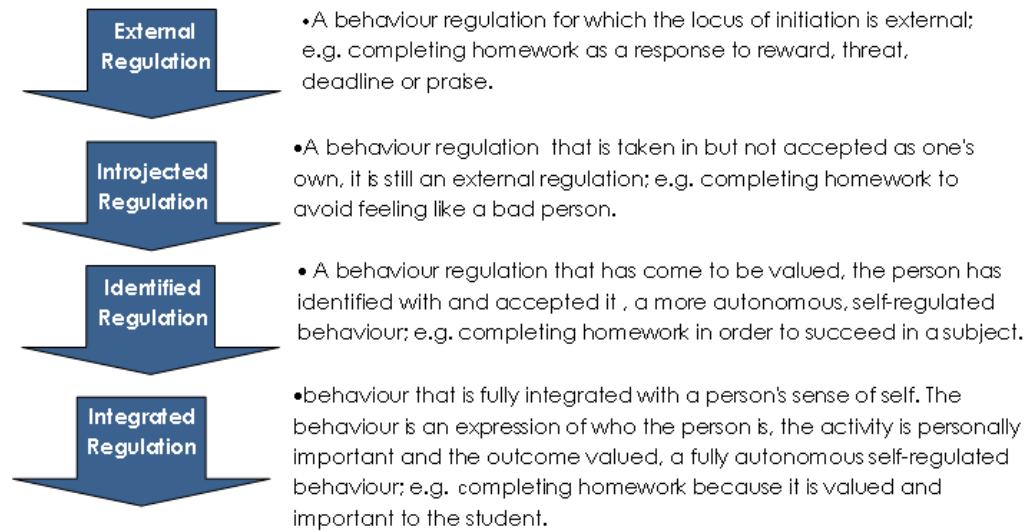


FIGURE 16: THE FOUR STAGE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION (DECI ET AL., P. 330 – 331)

Thus both intrinsic motivation and integrated regulation are similar as they are forms of internal motivation. However they are also discrete, as interest in the activity itself results in intrinsic motivation, whereas awareness of the personal significance of an activity results in integrated regulation. The process of integrated regulation has particular relevance to my interpretations of the students' interpretations of their experiences of studying and achieving in academic subjects. It is, I think, possible to track the development of this process within the students' interviews; I will develop this concept later in this chapter.

5.1 STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF HOME (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY) AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT IN ACADEMIC SUBJECTS.

5.1.1 EXPECTATIONS FROM FAMILY FOR STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

All students but Nicki reported that their parents fitted with the pattern of the majority of low SES families as described by Reay (2009) and do not have a successful academic school background. Reay also posits that parents with low SES do not value educational achievement; however, the interpretative findings suggest that the majority of students' parents continued to have

positive expectations for their children's study and achievement albeit to varying degrees (see section 4.2.1.1.1). Hong & Ho (2005) identified that family expectations and aspirations for schoolwork were the most important influence of parental involvement on children's achievement. It seemed, however, that for the students I interviewed having a family expectation to study and achieve was necessary but not sufficient to ensure academic achievement.

Students highlighted that parents only seemed able to provide expectation and aspirations for achievement. They did not report other aspects of academic socialisation defined by Hill and Tyson (2009) such as encouraging the joy and purpose of learning, discussing learning strategies or relating school work to a student's interests or current affairs. Since most parents had also explained to students their own struggles with school and learning it would be inappropriate to expect that without input parents would either realise this role or feel able to take it on as might parents with a history of academic success. In relation to SDT I would suggest that it is these aspects of academic socialisation that encourage the development of intrinsic motivation and internal regulation in learning. Parents help with the development of intrinsic motivation by encouraging interest in a topic and internal regulation by highlighting how academic subjects can be personally useful.

Clinton, Hattie, & Dixon (2007) found lower SES parents were not aware of the language of learning and school. They also suggest like Reay (2009) that for low SES students to be successful in school they must become fluent in both the language and culture of school and that of home. For example Jess's parents encourage her that "her best is good enough" (4.2.1.1.1). Their intention appears to be a laudable one, to reduce the stress Jess feels under and to support Jess's wellbeing. However, Jess does not seem to have any idea of what "her best" is or how she will know she has achieved it, so I wonder how effective it will be in reducing anxiety. Furthermore since she is already working as hard as she can, her parents "do your best" support does not give her any further strategies. To use myself as a contrast example, as a Trainee EP and Mother (see positionality), I would be wondering what other barriers there were to improving Jess's achievement and how I could help her with it? The big difference is that I am familiar with the language of learning and have enough self-efficacy to think I can help. Such a reflection starkly highlights inequalities.

Students also described experiences where the expectations their parents verbalised did not match the behaviour they modelled and this may be another factor in family expectations failing to improve achievement. For example in addition to those students reporting a “don’t be like me” form of modelling Alistair’s father whilst effectively modelling useful self-employment skills, had become successful without any qualifications and Alistair did not describe his father modelling study skills.

Complementing SDT, the Social Cognitive Model (Bandura, 1986) is concerned with the processes that direct behaviour. The Social Cognitive Model suggests that knowledge can be acquired through the observation of models. Furthermore Zimmerman & Kitsantas (2002) showed that modelling both improved students’ ability on a writing task and also better prepared them for learning at a self-regulatory level compared with students who were only given verbal instruction. Consequently I would suggest that a lack of parental modelling would make it more difficult for the students I interviewed to acquire appropriate study skills necessary for achievement. It may also impact on the development of self-regulatory learning. Interestingly Nicki who arguably had the strongest study ethic also had the only parent who modelled study behaviour, as her mother had begun a further education course.

5.1.2 INFLUENCE OF HOME (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY) EXPERIENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

5.1.2.1 HOME (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY) EVENTS AS BARRIERS TO STUDY

Within my small sample of six students there was the following daunting collection of stressful/traumatic experiences, either direct or indirect (through a close relationship): domestic abuse, sexual harassment, neglect, violent crime, prison, drug and alcohol issues. I find discussing underachievement in such circumstances troubling. I wonder how I or anyone would have fared in a similar situation, or how we can describe students who are coping with such circumstances and performing at any level at school as underachieving.

There is little research directly relating to the experience of traumatic events and academic achievement. However, there is a growing body of evidence on the effects of trauma on thinking. Memories of traumatic experiences can become intrusive to an individual; they may be triggered by many different

and unpredictable stimuli, often sensorimotor stimuli such as: sight, smell or sound. When triggered the fight flight freeze response is activated. This is an autonomic nervous reaction and as it occurs the frontal cortex shuts down, such that, an individual is unable access any cognitive thought until re-regulated (Ogden, et al., 2006). If students are regularly experiencing intrusive traumatic memories, their academic performance will be adversely affected (A. Cook, et al., 2005).

5.1.2.2 ATTRACTION OF HOME (FAMILY AND COMMUNITY) BASED ALTERNATIVES TO STUDY

For all of the three students that discussed the attractions of alternative activities to study there was a perception expressed that, to varying degrees they were unable to control their behaviour. From the perspective of SDT I would suggest that their motivation is largely external, and therefore has less effect on their behaviour when they are not in a classroom setting.

5.1.2.3 HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT WITH STUDY

Parents who, according to students, attempted to become involved in their learning, largely showed a lack of parental self-efficacy. This often left students feeling stuck and frustrated, so they too experienced, as a result, little belief in their ability either to access help or to help themselves. Research suggests that parents who have a belief in their ability to help in their children's education assist the development of self-efficacy in their children regarding education (Gutman & Akerman, 2008). I would suggest that the students I interviewed experienced that the reverse was also true – parents who had little belief in their ability to help in their child's education inadvertently helped cultivate self-inefficacy in their children.

Thus it seems most parents often had study expectations and interest in their child's achievement, but had not had the positive educational experiences themselves to be able to assist their children further. Indeed, for many parents strategies that were accessible to them and which they were more likely to use were supervisory and restrictive ones and these have been shown to have a negative effect on achievement (Hong & Ho, 2005).

5.2 STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THEIR EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

5.2.1 INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

5.2.1.1 PASTORAL CARE

- a) Integrated
- b) targeted

INTEGRATED

Two students described experiences of an integrated approach to their issue that was led by the pastoral care team; they were both very positive about the intervention and outcomes. Research on effective multi-agency working focuses largely on the agencies involved and as such is beyond the scope of this study.

For Laura the integrated approach involved her teachers and social care. A member of the pastoral care team who was also a member of the school's senior management team was the key worker. Initially the intervention involved just one member of the pastoral care team. Laura went on to describe the involvement of social care, in particular a Family Support Worker, who was involved in supporting Laura's mother to manage her family independently and who also helped Laura to negotiate any extra needs that she had in school. Finally Laura described the involvement of a therapist to support her in dealing with her depression. The pastoral care team were also able to facilitate therapeutic sessions within school, so Laura missed minimal lesson time.

Laura described the professionals' facilitative attitude, coming alongside and enabling her to tell her story at her own pace rather than placing themselves as the expert. I interpret Laura's description of such experiences as involving person-centred skills (Mearns, Thorne, & McLeod, 2013; Rogers, 1951, 1995) . Furthermore, not only did the professionals keep her conversations confidential but Laura was aware of the confidentiality (93-104) indicating this had been made explicit. Laura describes this as helping her to feel safe and I suggest she also felt more in control, an important factor in enabling honest disclosure (Culley & Bond, 2004).

Jason described how he devised a behaviour intervention with his head of year, which they both agreed would assist with his concentration in lessons. His head of year then facilitated an integrated approach by involving all the staff who taught Jason.

From the perspective of SDT, both Laura's description of facilitative person centred skills, and Jason's description of joint collaboration, highlights the positive impact of teachers' support of students' competence and autonomy through their (related) interactions. In Laura's case their support of autonomy competence and relatedness extended to her mother. Furthermore, there is the suggestion from these interviews that supporting Jason and Laura's competence, relatedness and autonomy in these social and behavioural issues also positively impacted self-regulatory learning for them (see section 5.3.3.2).

because at the end of the day like it's work, we like, we don't really like work, you'll not like work roughly at this age, well you won't really any age, but like it's just thinking you've got to do it so just go for it [Jason 288]

No, I know I got like Us and stuff like that because like I weren't here to do like revision, I was only here to do the exam and I weren't here to do the work either so, but I'm not going to just blame it on that, I'm I am really being in school to do it, so, and I wish I would have done revised more and asked school what I had to do to get what I needed [Laura 343]

These positive effects of the integrated response from pastoral care supports Epstein's (1990) view that when the areas of influence on a student are addressed together, the greatest gains are seen.

TARGETED

From Nicki and Jess's description of pastoral care I would suggest that the Pastoral Care Team acted in a targeted and informed way. This ensured that students accessed appropriate support at times of risk. Nicki reported input from pastoral care as she transitioned to the school earlier that year. Pratt & George (2006) highlight that the key success factor in transition is whether a child makes a friend within the first month of attending the new school. Thus the school's targeted input for Nicki was well placed and Nicki valued the input she had received (95-99). Similarly Jess had been given a maths mentor for year 11

and was appreciative that her support had been targeted at her greatest area of need (262).

5.2.1.2 TEACHER PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS

Students reported that if teachers held a positive attitude towards them, it improved their learning, motivation and behaviour. Conversely, teachers' negative judgments about pupils became barriers to learning, lowering students' motivation and engagement, increasing frustration and, in the long term, the student's sense of self-efficacy. My interpretation of student voiced perceptions is that negative judgments made by teachers that were not checked out for accuracy with the student, resulted in inaccurate or only partially accurate assumptions being made, (for examples see page 81 - 84 of chapter 4). As a consequence the learning needs of the student were not addressed and frustrations in both students and teachers resulted, producing negative spirals in both learning and/or behaviour.

A teacher's ability to understand how a student learnt was also highly valued. When teachers showed empathy and worked alongside students to assist them with their learning struggles, students reported this improved their study and achievement. Conversely, students reported frustrations with teachers and disengagement from lessons when teachers repeated the explanations that students had not understood. It appears to me that some teachers expected that all students would be similar in their learning and did not respond to individual differences in learning, or differentiate work accordingly. This led to students' belief that teachers viewed them as deficient rather than recognising their teaching method was ineffective.

These findings relate to theoretical perspectives of extended attachment (Bowlby, 1988; Pianta, et al., 1997) and to two of the person-centred teacher student variables, unconditional positive regard and empathy (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994) and concurs with research that suggests a positive correlation between person-centred teacher variables and positive achievement and attitude outcomes. (Cornelius-White, 2007; Roorda, et al., 2011). From an SDT viewpoint it can be explained with regard to how well the student teacher relationship supports a student's sense of competence relatedness and

autonomy. When teachers support a student's sense of competence by providing alternative explanations to help them understand, according to SDT this will have improved their competence and as a consequence their motivation. Furthermore when teachers supported competence by coming alongside and helping students to complete a task for themselves, they also supported a student's sense of autonomy and relatedness, for example:

She like sometimes gives you hints like saying you've done that wrong do the opposite [Nicki 244]

According to SDT this assists the development of intrinsic motivation which in turn improves the quality of academic performance (Deci, et al., 1991) .

The strategy which was also identified in this theme; students minimising relationships with teachers to avoid effort will be discussed later in section 5.2.2.3 as it also relates to the theme of learning challenge.

5.2.1.3 INFLUENCE OF PEERS

These findings suggest that, for most students, the effects of peer relationships could be positive, negative or both. This concurs with evidence from other researchers showing that the peers can increase or decrease student motivation depending on the attitudes and values of the peers with whom students spend most time (Berndt, et al., 1990). However, it also highlighted a divergence with research as these students' friendships did not always fit neatly into positive or negative categories as students' reported peers who could sometimes help and sometimes hinder them in academic achievement.

For the two students who did not report being influenced by others I wonder if their reported independence and detachment from peers is a product of low classroom peer acceptance as outlined in the literature review and a factor in Bradley's reported disengagement from school (Buhs, et al., 2006). However, it is not sufficiently covered in their interviews to be anything other than a tentative interpretation. Indeed an equally possible interpretation of Nicki's behaviour is that she shows high levels of self-regulation and as a consequence is likely to improve her academic performance (Kuhnle, Hofer, & Kilian, 2011).

Finally one student reported incidents of bullying affecting her at school. It is beyond the scope of this study to cover this experience in any depth. However,

the brief description that Laura gave of effects of the bullying she experienced concurs with research. Amongst a spectrum of effects on victims it concludes that: the academic achievement of victims suffers as their anxiety leads to reduced school attendance (McNamara & McNamara, 1997); victims often have attention difficulties (Kumpulainen, Räsänen, & Puura, 2001); victims experience periods of depression (Olweus, 1993). In Laura's case it is, however, impossible to isolate the effects of school bullying from the other traumatic experiences she had out of school and it is also possible that the effects were cumulative.

5.2.2 INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

5.2.2.1 MONOTONOUS REPETITIVE LESSONS

Lessons that students described as monotonous and repetitive were often associated with GCSE practice. Students described GCSE practice as completing tasks individually from a book, or the questions from a past exam paper (Laura, 188).

The strategy of repeating relevant tasks to improve exam performance seems to be counterproductive for the students in this study. Students reported an existing inability to complete GCSE tasks well, and did not think they improved from the further opportunities to do so.

so would practice exams helped do you think, if you did quite well in your mock exam?

I don't know, because, like they are all different questions and you could do like loads of practice exams and then it will come to the real one and it's nothing like it.
(Jess 93 -4)

These practice lessons did not appear to have any of the effective features outlined by Péladeau, et al. (2003) but, since they were overwhelmingly perceived as boring by students, seemed to follow more of the standard drill and practice routines.

5.2.2.2 AUTONOMY IN LEARNING

According to SDT, autonomy is one of three fundamental human needs, and satisfying this need along with competence and relatedness leads to increased

intrinsic motivation and regulation. Interestingly, students in this study described autonomy both positively and negatively, I wonder if this divergence relates to the other SDT needs, relatedness and competence remaining unfulfilled.

Skinner, et al.,(2008) suggest that teacher support improves students' sense of autonomy. From students' accounts in this study I infer that sometimes teachers simply removed support with the aim of developing autonomy. Often this was counterproductive, producing feelings of anxiety or disaffection in students which became barriers to learning. Rather, the development of autonomy often required the careful structuring of tasks so that a student could experience success and develop confidence. For some students it also involved working alongside a teacher or peer.

What was also apparent from these interviews is that students' voiced perceptions of the support they needed were well differentiated. Students requested different levels of support, but also individual students perceived the need for different levels of support in different subjects. Since the support of autonomy that students perceive they need is so individual perhaps:

Patterns of disengagement and disaffection may be diagnostic of a student's feelings of relatedness, competence and autonomy" (Skinner, et al., 2008, p. 779)

For example, Alistair's apparent disengagement with school, according to the perceptions of the Director for Inclusion (p. 67), is perhaps a reflection of his need for support from teachers in the development of autonomy, relatedness and competence. A potential way forward could be to use disengagement and anxiety as indicators of the possible motivational supports Alistair may benefit from.

5.2.2.3 LEARNING CHALLENGE AND ATTITUDE TO HOMEWORK

I have combined the themes from section 4.2.2.2.3 and 4.2.2.2.6 as there is a lot of overlap in discussion area. Homework is perhaps best considered as an example of learning challenge.

Learning challenge was insightfully described by Bradley. In his interview, he highlights important dimensions to the issue of learning goals which he perceives as unknown and endless. Although he is perhaps extreme in his views, they were consistent with other students less extreme positions. Bradley's

perceived need to know his learning challenge also corresponds to findings from other studies; for example Locke and Latham (2002) found that clear learning goals are directly linked to enhanced performance, as they lead to a clearer picture of success, especially if students are involved in the goal setting. Furthermore Hattie describes the effect of goals in relation to self-learning and self-assessment in a way that relates closely to the picture Bradley painted:

Students have a reasonable understanding of where they are at, where they are going, what they will look like when they get there and where they will go next. (Hattie, 2009, p. 165)

Other students in this study also described the disaffection and lack of commitment they felt if the learning goals were perceived as too challenging or not well supported. According to Locke and Latham (2002) the challenge should not be too difficult so that the goal is seen as unattainable. Furthermore they also found when setting a learning challenge that it was important to take into account students' sense of self-efficacy as well as their competence. Finally, they argue that ideally teachers need to: set appropriate challenges for students, encourage them to commit to the challenges, support them in achieving the challenges and provide feedback of successful learning.

From my interpretation of students' experiences I propose that, in particular, these students need to experience feedback from teachers of successful study, to help improve their self-efficacy:

I just feel like I've learned something and I'm doing something and it's just nice to like look at something and think oh I can do that and then teacher's like oh yeah you got it all right well done and it's quite nice to hear that you done it all right and you know what you're doing for once. [Yeah, laughs] (Jess 35)

This is important since there are only a few occasions in the students' accounts when they experience success, teachers need to maximise students' successful achievements, to pause with them and celebrate, before moving on to the next challenge.

Homework is, I think, the best example in this study of the negative effects of a learning challenge on performance due to the lack of moderating factors (Locke & Latham, 2002). Students associated little importance to the goal of

completing homework, and it was completed largely as a result of external motivation:

oh, so you do that, because you don't want to end up in trouble.

Trouble [emphasised]

is that an understatement [laughs]

that's an understatement

tell me about it

oh he'd go mad (Alistair 304 -309)

Students universally saw no point or relevance to the tasks they were given for homework. They did not identify any homework goals which related to work in school, nor did they perceive any meaningful feedback from the teacher on completion. Homework tasks would be significantly improved if they were obviously linked to GCSE work in class and if feedback was more detailed and goal directed. However, for these students, their parents are usually unable to support homework. This means that even with an obvious goal and good feedback, there would still be a danger that homework would reinforce a student's perception that they could not learn by themselves and decrease their self-efficacy and motivation. Alternative support from school would need to be in place to enable them to access appropriate help in their learning as easily as their peers with academically successful parents who are able to ask parents for help.

5.2.2.4 INTEREST IN TOPIC AND ACTIVE LESSON STYLE

I have linked themes 4.2.2.2.4 and 4.2.2.2.5 in the results section together, since my interpretation of students' experiences of interest in topic and lesson style parallels research pertaining to interest. I suggest that lesson style can be likened to situational interest whereas interest in topic may be likened to individual interest

According to Hidi and Renninger (2006) interest develops by a four stage process and moves from:



FIGURE 17: THE STAGES OF INTEREST DEVELOPMENT

The two early situational phases of interest development are considered to mediate the later individual phases of interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). This development of interest from situational to individually situated, mirrors that described in SDT regarding development of regulation from external to integrated.

Alistair is I think the only student who definitely describes an individual interest in a subject i.e. a more stable long term disposition to Maths. Although Jason (p216) also talks about interest in the subject, I am cautious about describing this as a stable interest, as it seems to be lesson specific. I interpret his interest to have still been stimulated by the style of presentation of the subject in the lesson. Bradley describes an interest in cookery but his interest in the topic is limited and he says too little about it to be able to interpret his interest as individual or situational.

Situational interest, described by other students and included in the theme of lesson style, is perhaps of more interest in this study, in that it sheds further insight into learning environments which assist the development of interest. There is limited research into learning environments that are described as stimulating and/or sustaining of interest, for these six students the following factors were referred to:

Learning environment	Example of student description
Creative	Bradley 109 Jess 108
Periods of one to one tuition	Jess 29, Nicki 19
Practical activities	Laura 199, Alistair 456, Jess 177
Co-operative group work	Jason 50, Laura 193
Computers	Nicki 169, Bradley 388
Project work	Bradley 220, Jason 52
Puzzles	Alistair 171

In line with Pekrun, et al.'s study (2002) there appears to be both an affective and a cognitive element used in student descriptions of interest. Alistair is one example:

I just enjoy maths, like compared to everything else, (169)

yeah, but like when you do graphs and stuff like that , I like working it out. (171)

This position is also supported by neuroscientific research which posits that learning, attention and memory are deeply interconnected with the process of emotion (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007)

Research in the field of music also suggests that conditions that support positive emotional responses are key in both developing an initial interest, and in maintaining an interest. Additionally, it has been shown that teacher support of students' sense of self-efficacy is also important with interest development. It is

needed to help the transition from external support to self-support (Sosniak, 1990).

Students in this study reported enjoyment of active lessons (practical and creative) requiring group co-operation, suggesting that these conditions promote positive emotional responses which increase situational interest. However, Jason, although citing active co-operative lessons as increasing his enjoyment of learning, also described an inability to regulate his emotions in most active and co-operative lessons. This must impact on his interest and learning and also points to a priority need to teach students how to regulate emotions as a prerequisite to learning. Scaffolding learning with one to one support or group work, for those students who find it easier to work with peers, appears to help students with sustaining interest by improving self-efficacy (see section 5.2.2.2).

Much of the research of interest development follows a familiar pattern to SDT, with the important addition of positive affect to the fundamental needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness, and this will be discussed further in the next section.

5.3 HOW DO STUDENTS MAKE SENSE OF LEARNING AND ACHIEVING IN ACADEMIC SUBJECTS?

5.3.1 EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Students described positive emotions associated with learning during the interview such as, enjoyment, interest and pride in their school experience, but when given a menu of pictures (see p161) all but one student chose pictures illustrating negative emotions associated with learning, such as: anxiety, frustration, confusion and boredom. I suggest this implies negative emotions are more common experiences for the students than positive ones. The emotions students used to describe the pictures concur with research into emotions associated with engagement and disaffection in learning (Pekrun, et al., 2002; Skinner, et al., 2008). Alienated emotions of frustration and anger and pressured emotions of anxiety outlined by Skinner et al. (2008) were common in students' accounts. Although for Jason these three emotions resulted in

disruption, it mostly prompted withdrawal from teachers in other accounts. Students described how, if they were not disruptive, they remained on the edge of teacher attention and were able to zone out. It is this sort of behaviour that was highlighted by Finn, Pannozzo, & Voelkl (1995) as a significant factor in underachievement, more so than disruption.

Of further interest is the long term effect of such experiences on students. My own interpretation of students' interpretations of their learning experiences was that multiple events inducing negative emotions became introjections or internalised negative self-beliefs that students held about themselves regarding learning. In agreement with the findings from Skinner (2008), I suggest that as a consequence students' expect new learning environments to produce frustration, anger and/or anxiety and readily respond with withdrawal or disruption as new experiences are interpreted in light of these beliefs. Thus the chance of future successful enjoyable learning becomes more unlikely.

My interpretations for this study lead me to agree that emotions play a significant role in classroom motivation and learning. As a result, it is essential to create positive emotional experiences in the classroom of enjoyment, interest and pride, in order to improve student achievement (Meyer & Turner, 2006; Seligman, et al., 2009; Skinner, et al., 2008).

5.3.2 RESPONSE TO GCSE PRESSURE

GCSE pressure was experienced by students in the following different forms:

- aspirational GCSE targets and teacher expectations
- exam anxiety
- competition from other students

5.3.2.1 EFFECT OF EXAM PRESSURE

The effect of exam pressure seemed to produce divergent accounts of emotional and performance effects, both Alpert and Haber (1960) and Pekrun, et al. (2002) differentiated between facilitating and debilitating anxiety and student accounts in this study provide descriptions of both. Two of the girls expressed definite debilitating exam anxiety following a similar pattern to research suggesting that girls are more effected than boys by exam anxiety (Cassady & Johnson, 2002; Zeidner, 1998). The effects of test anxiety described by these two students followed a pattern outlined by Zeidner (1998) and

Cassady et al. (2002), which involved a sequence of: emotionality or physiological arousal; unhelpful cognitions such as worry or dread and poor concentration "going blank" or "freezing"; and struggling with focus due to unhelpful emotional interjects e.g. self-blame, anger or feeling hopeless. However, the intention of this study was qualitative and idiographic so I would not wish to make any generalisations about an anxiety gender divide. I also suggest that although Alistair's description of exam anxiety is not directly expressed it is implicit within his account.

Jason described a facilitative anxiety that increased his drive and improved his concentration in exams. For example he described time as flying by and suggested that his concentration was higher than he expected.

These six student accounts describe a range of responses to exam anxiety. I would suggest that since the majority of GCSE marks are achieved through success in end of module exams, they do not provide a level playing field for these six students. Moreover the implication of the proposed government changes to GCSE assessment will reduce assessment by coursework and therefore increase this inequality. In an age where man is able to design Paralympic races so that athletes of a variety of disabilities can run with parity, I suggest it must be possible to provide equivalent alternative assessment styles in academic assessments. It seems particularly important to do so when future career options are heavily dependent upon successful GCSE results.

5.3.2.2 EFFECT OF GCSE TARGETS AND TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

Half of the students interviewed experienced aspirational GCSE targets as negative factors associated with their academic study. The targets were perceived as unachievable and for some students this affected their sense of self-efficacy. Teacher expectations of students only seemed to reinforce these aspirational grades and added to student frustrations of what they perceived as a mismatch between school's expectations for their academic performance and their self-evaluation of their academic ability.

Jess is one of many examples:

I just, I don't know, I don't think they know how I'm going to get a C, I don't understand how they think, how I've been predicted Cs in everything and some

people have got like Ds in everything, I just don't get why we've been predicted like certain grades (210)

Jess's CAT scores indicate that her verbal abilities are greater than her quantitative reasoning abilities (see p. 66). This concurs with her description of her performance to date on English and Maths modules and her results on end of key stage 2 SAT tests. She also reports doing well at English and badly in Maths GCSE assessment. However, her aspirational grades are 3 C's (see section 4.1 for a comparison of other student past results and GCSE target grades). The school's policy is to use students' most aspirational predictions for GCSE grades as their targets. The consequences of this policy are that much of the attainment information collected for a student is ignored and broad undifferentiated predictions are given.

My interpretation of Jess's experience is that she perceives that a C in maths is unobtainable, loses self-efficacy and disengages from what she perceives as an unobtainable goal. This view of Jess's behaviour concurs with research outlined in 5.2.2.3 learning challenge and attitude to homework. However what is also interesting is that Jess, faced with what she perceives as an unachievable goal, reverts to a different motivation strategy reinforced by her parents. Whilst not ideal for academic study and achievement (see section 5.1.1), this goal will ensure that Jess receives positive feedback from her parents and will, as a consequence, support her emotional well-being and maintain a better level of motivation than the alternative Maths target which she perceives as unachievable.

Jess proceeded to impress me with her resilient attitude to her school targets. Alongside her "try your best" strategy she also showed, according to SDT, intrinsic motivation and regulation by setting herself targets:

no [laughs] but I'm trying my hardest, to try and get at least a D, I think I'm on a E, so I'm going to try and work up for a D and then like trying, when I'm in year 11 once I've got a D, work up slowly to get a C, because I'd rather have a D than a C, I think, because I don't want to push myself too hard, to think oh I've got to get a C, [199]

It is worth adding at this point, that student estimates of their own performance have been shown to be reasonably accurate (Kuncel, Credé, & Thomas, 2005) and consequently I suggest that Jess's estimates of the grades she could

achieve are more accurate than her aspirational grade predictions. I suspect that if teachers worked together with Jess, using her own self-evaluations for her GCSE grades, they could improve her achievement and motivation towards maths.

However, in contrast, for three of the students (Jason, Laura and Nicki) their predicted grades appeared to motivate them into, at least a spoken resolution to study harder. These students' accounts appear discordant with the above research, since their aspirations were not just to achieve their predictions but to better them. Their predicted grades, in spite of the previously noted limitations, seem to have improved these students' attitude to study. From the background information and interviews I suggest that in all three cases there was an improvement in their behavioural or home circumstances which previously had a negative influence on academic performance. As a consequence I interpret students' improved circumstances to have increased their experience of relatedness autonomy and competence, which in turn increased motivation for academic study. For Jason there was a new integrated behaviour plan, in which he had input, to assist with his concentration and for Laura and Nicki there was an improvement in their home environment, which was having a positive effect on their learning and/or concentration.

To understand the reason behind school's seemingly misguided and unhelpful aspirational targets, it is worth considering the accountability and pressure the school and the teachers are under to increase student performance. Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner, & Kauffman(1982) argue that when teachers are pressured or controlled by superiors or the system they are likely to take greater control of their students. They later suggest that successive American Governments tend to exert increasing amounts of accountability and pressure on schools in order to improve academic attainment. However, since this leads teachers to be more controlling, it can be counterproductive for the development of student autonomy relatedness and competence, and as a consequence adversely affect student achievement. (Deci, et al., 1991) . I suggest that over the last twenty years the same can be said of England.

5.3.2.3 EFFECT OF COMPETITION AND COMPARISON WITH PEERS

Students' reports indicate gradual erosion in their sense of their own competence and motivation, as a result of comparisons with other students, in a setting where most evaluation is normative. A focus on mastery goals rather than achievement goals (Ames & Archer, 1988) and introducing the concept of personal bests (Martin, 2006) as discussed in Chapter 2 would, I think, go some way to improving this outcome, as students would be focused on competing against his or her own previous performance.

5.3.3 INFLUENCE OF INTERNAL MOTIVATION

5.3.3.1 FUTURE VALUE OF ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

Students struggled to see the future value of the school's academic curriculum. Although basic reading writing and mathematical skills were valued, academic subject content was largely seen as irrelevant to later life and future employment and this decreased motivation. Students mostly expressed a desire for subjects to be more applied to "real life".

Application to life is I think a sentiment shared by Hattie (2009) when he suggests the need to develop students' understandings of reality. He proposes that there is a need to balance learning that requires a reliance of remembering surface knowledge, with learning that develops deep thinking skills, he considers the ultimate consequence of these two types of learning is that students develop ways of understanding reality. Hattie goes onto elaborate saying that:

When students can move from idea to ideas and then relate and elaborate on them we have learning (p. 29)

However, most academic curricula and subsequent exam questions relate to surface knowledge and as a consequence teachers' response to the demands of the high-stake GCSE curriculum is to emphasise surface knowledge.

I suggest that applying academic concepts to real life, whilst making learning more relevant for students could also prove an appropriate way of developing deeper understanding of a concept. A basic idea can be related to students existing understanding of life and elaborated upon. For example, to use Alistair (p. 252) as an example; as a former science teacher I recognise that the GCSE

syllabus requires that students apply the principles of basic electrical circuits to practical situations; however, this is one small detail in an extensive theory led curriculum. It seems to me there is still a need for a greater focus on practical application. Students could first learn specifically relevant knowledge and skills, and then relate and elaborate the information to life. In the example illustrated earlier students, having learnt some of the basic theory related to circuits, could problem solve household electrical issues by using parallel and series circuits appropriately, rather than having the theory and application explained to them. I suggest that this is at least as important as, for example, learning the symbols for the different components in a diagram of an electric circuit. The difficulty with this approach is that deep and conceptual understanding is much more difficult to test using existing assessment styles. However, at its best, this way of approaching the curricula would result in an academic curriculum, which students would be more likely to appreciate the relevance of and be more able to integrate with their life. Moreover students' motivation for learning could potentially relate not just to the external motivator of an appropriate grade for their chosen employment goal, but to the more internal motivation of the value of the subject per se.

5.3.3.2 PERSONAL VALUES AND CONSTRUCTIVE SELF-TALK

In one sense students' internally regulated motivation for study and achievement in academic subjects is, by definition of their underachievement, limited. However I would suggest that, as proposed by SDT, students' descriptions of their personal values shows a level of self-regulation (see figure 16, p114), even though these are not ideally suited to academic achievement. Section 4.2.3.3.2 maps how I interpret external motivators and regulators endorsed by family and/or school have been personalised (internalised and integrated) by students. I interpret all students to have introjected regulation, e.g. Jason does not completely identify with his "I should learn" value since it does not stop him misbehaving regularly. Other students seem to have developed to an identified regulation e.g. Laura's "do my best" seems integrated into many different areas of her life.

Furthermore four students used constructive self-talk in their interviews in a way that indicated perseverance and a degree of resilience to their circumstances (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). They showed the development of self-motivation and regulation to achieve in spite of their circumstances (see

section 4.2.3.3.3). Unlike the other students, these students described being supported by the pastoral care system in a way that supported their three fundamental needs identified by SDT: autonomy relatedness and competence (see section 4.2.2.1.1). It seemed that, as predicted by SDT, when adults provide opportunities for students to experience autonomy relatedness and competence they are more likely to develop self-motivation and regulation. Furthermore the self-motivation and regulation that developed proved robust enough for students to attempt to overcome some of the obstacles in life, blocking their academic study and achievement.

5.3.4 ASPIRATIONS

5.3.4.1 ASPIRATIONS FOR SCHOOLWORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Students' employment aspirations followed a similar pattern to their schoolwork aspirations. Laura, Alistair and Jess were noticeably influenced by their personal values and self-concept as suggested by (Lent, et al., 2000) but doubted their ability to succeed (self-efficacy). Self-efficacy (an aspect of competence) plays an important part in the formation of aspirations as self-efficacy judgments are more goal and situation specific and thus influence aspirational choices (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) Laura, Alistair and Jess describe misgivings about their self-efficacy for achieving their desired employment aspirations. Their employment aspirations require GCSE grades and their previous experience of study and achievement raises doubt that they will achieve the grades they need. For Jess and Alistair there is an added dimension of frustration in their ability to reach their employment goals. They are both aware that they have the necessary capabilities, but have no control of the education system which requires specific GCSE grades in order to access the relevant training, and this becomes demoralising for them. This concurs with Bandura (1986) who proposes that both self-efficacy and a sense of control over significant aspects of life are key motivators of behaviour.

Jason's motivation continues to be fuelled by avoiding undesirable outcomes, and Bradley's is powered by avoiding effort and attention, and as such they can be described as having avoidance motivation. From an SDT perspective, avoiding undesirable outcomes is not something one is intrinsically drawn to or excited about but something externally forced or pressured to do and is therefore a controlled motivation. Consequently avoidance motivation has

little emotional satisfaction, it reduces self-regulatory processes (Oertig et al., 2012) and is therefore much less likely to have a positive effect on academic study and achievement.

5.3.4.2 FAMILY ENCOURAGEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS

For some students I think it is possible to see positive parental influence on their children's autonomy and competence regarding possible future employment. Those students that talked about parent encouragement gave examples of how their parents, either through providing appropriate role models, or giving appropriate encouragement of children's employment aspirations, supported their goals. It seemed to me that within my homogenous group of students a divide became apparent. For some students, whilst their parents may not have succeeded in education, they had since succeeded in employment. When parents had succeeded, the support they were able to give (of their children's autonomy and competence) was perceived by their children as a firm foundation from which to venture forth into the next stage of life. Those who did not perceive successful parent employment were less secure in their aspirations.

Summary

Findings suggest students' interpretations of their experiences of home and school have a significant impact on their personal values. Using SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985,1991) I have shown how student experiences of autonomy, relatedness and competence support the development of self-motivation and self-regulation and in turn academic achievement.

STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THEIR EXPERIENCE OF HOME (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY) AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT.

I discuss my interpretations of students' expressed perceptions that their family mostly expected them to study and achieve in academic subjects, but that these expectations had limited effects due to: parents unfamiliarity with the language of education, incongruous modelling and lack of parental self-efficacy. Home (community and family) often produced distractions to study and achievement and decreased study and academic performance. In particular, events that produced traumatic responses, interfered with cognitive processes.

STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THEIR EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT.

Students described pastoral care as having a positive effect on their emotional and behavioural issues and I also interpret that it had a positive effect on study and achievement. Pastoral care was well targeted and well integrated both within school and also with outside agencies. Teacher relationships were valued and assisted students' study and achievement, when they contained qualities of empathy and unconditional positive regard (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). Peer relationships could be both supportive or destructive, especially for students who reported being easily influenced by others.

Lessons where GCSE practice occurred were universally viewed as monotonous and boring and lacked effective teaching strategies. Autonomy in learning required, teacher support individualised to a student, to ensure they experienced success and developed self-efficacy. Learning challenge needed careful management, it was important for students to: know what their goals were, be involved in setting them and receive feedback about their progress. Interest in learning was largely situational and was linked to positive emotion and self-efficacy.

HOW STUDENTS MAKE SENSE OF LEARNING AND ACHIEVING IN ACADEMIC SUBJECTS

Students mostly perceived negative emotions were associated with their study and achievement. This resulted in negative self-beliefs regarding learning and produced disengagement and underachievement in learning. Pressure from GCSEs had divergent effects on students affect and achievement, it impacted performance in exams unequally. All students developed a level of internal motivation, but it was not usually best suited to academic achievement. Students who had experienced teacher support of their autonomy, relatedness and performance, all showed resilience in the face of barriers to academic achievement. Employment aspirations were largely informed by aspirations for schoolwork, and student self-concept, of which self-efficacy was an important dimension.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to examine students' voiced perceptions, understandings and interpretations of their experiences of studying and achieving in academic subjects. The students interviewed all came from one school located in an ex-coalmining town with multi-generational unemployment and with a higher than average level of deprivation and students eligible for free school meals. All the students interviewed were claiming free school meals and were also underachieving according to the school's explicit comprehensive tracking system. The aim of the study was to capture what it was like to live in such a situation. The following key points have emerged from my interpretation of student interviews in relation to the research questions:

6.1.1 STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THEIR EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY

AND FAMILY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT IN ACADEMIC

SUBJECTS

- Most students perceived their parents as having expectations that they study and achieve in academic subjects, but also were aware that their parents did not have positive educational experiences. This resulted in parents being unable to model their own academic study and achievement, making it harder for students to learn appropriate study strategies (5.1.1)
- Students perceived that parents gave limited or no help with academic study and this affected their intrinsic motivation and internal regulation for academic study and achievement. Parents' inability to support students' academic socialisation and their awareness of the language of school were seen as particular barriers (5.1.1).
- Four out of six students reported stressful or traumatic experiences occurring within the family or the wider home setting and this affected their study and achievement in academic subjects (5.1.2).

6.1.2 STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THEIR EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT IN ACADEMIC SUBJECTS.

- The work of the Pastoral Care Team was integrated and targeted. Its collaborative and facilitative style of work increased students' internal motivation and integrated regulation and improved their academic performance (5.2.1.1).
- Students were motivated to study by teachers who held positive attitudes towards them and were demotivated by teachers who they perceived held negative judgments about them (5.2.1.2).
- Students could be both supported and distracted by peers depending on the situation. Bullying was an issue for one student and this affected her school attendance and emotional wellbeing (5.2.1.3).
- Lessons which were aimed at GCSE practice were described as monotonous and repetitive. Students did not think that GCSE practice improved their performance and gained little insight into how they learnt best (5.2.2.1).
- Students perceived autonomy as helpful to study only if they felt appropriately guided and supported; otherwise, unsupported autonomy seemed to increase levels of disengagement (5.2.2.2).
- Learning, challenge and homework was largely perceived as demotivating, but could be perceived as satisfying if the following conditions were met: goals were explicit and appropriate; teachers were supportive; and teachers provided positive feedback of successful learning (5.2.2.3).
- Students developed interest in study through their enjoyment of lessons. (5.2.2.4)

6.1.3 HOW STUDENTS MAKE SENSE OF STUDYING AND ACHIEVING IN

ACADEMIC SUBJECTS.

- Students mostly associated negative emotions of: anxiety, frustration confusion and boredom with studying academic subjects which affected their engagement in lessons and subsequent achievement (5.3.1).
- Unless there were mitigating external circumstances, students perceived grade targets to be unachievable and found them demotivating. Most students set themselves what they considered were more appropriate targets (5.3.2.2).
- Students' reflections of their response to GCSE pressure were divergent; it could either improve or reduce their performance (5.3.2.1).
- Negative comparisons with other students decreased motivation (5.3.2.3).
- The academic curriculum was not perceived to be useful in later life, but a good grade in the subject was perceived as useful (5.3.3.1).
- Students had developed a level of internal motivation for study although it was not always ideally suited for achievement (5.3.3.2).
- Those students, who had successfully formulated personal aspirations which they considered they had the appropriate skills for, were likely to be frustrated by their failure to achieve the GCSE grades required to access a course (5.3.4.1).

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Whilst this study was based on a small sample, some key points have emerged which may help to inform practice. These are as follows:

- Students value their parents' opinions and are aware that their parents want them to do well (better than they did) at school.
- Parents from low SES backgrounds who have little positive experience of academic achievement need help in learning how to support their children with their study. Schools could explore ways to make it easier for parents to participate in their children's education and underline the value of parental partnership with school (see 2.3.2.2 for some practical ideas). The help schools give parents should not just focus around subject knowledge, but rather incorporate:

- Help in understanding the language and the teaching methods used in school.
- Information about the different ways in which we learn and strategies to help their children see how academic curriculum can relate to their interests and real life.
- Help parents identify possible avenues where they can explore their own interests and find enjoyment in learning.
- The development of autonomy and competence supporting parenting styles has been shown to improve school grades and achievement (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989).
- Students from low SES backgrounds frequently experience stressful or traumatic situations either in their family or their neighbourhood. The Pastoral Care Team's approach was targeted and integrated; their collaborative and facilitative style of support for students and parents through such issues is a successful model which could be replicated, as it improved both student wellbeing and motivation for academic study (5.2.1.1).

Students from low SES backgrounds tended to develop limited internal motivation and integrated regulation and would benefit from the following strategies which would also have wider school benefits:

- Teachers could be relieved of the pressure they are under to improve overall school grades, so that they in turn are in a better position to focus on the individualised support students need to develop autonomy (5.2.2.2; 5.3.2.2.).
- Teachers could be encouraged to develop person-centred classroom management skills especially empathy (understanding) and unconditional positive regard (warmth) in order to encourage motivation and engagement in study (2.3.3.1; 5.2.1.2).
- Rather than see disengagement solely as a sign of a student's lack of interest over which they have no control, teachers could consider that it may be an indication that a student requires further support of their competence autonomy and/or relatedness and act accordingly.

- Teachers could be encouraged to notice and act when they detect any sign of demotivation and disengagement from study in students, even if this does not disrupt classroom management. This is important since disengagement from study is an indication of the need for greater support in the development of students' autonomy competence and relatedness in learning and a significant factor in student underachievement (5.2.2.2; 5.3.1).
- When possible teachers could learn to use a style more supportive of autonomy, and highlight to students that they have a voice and a choice rather than control. As autonomy supportive lessons have been shown to have the extrinsic motivation needed for engagement and optimal learning this in turn makes it more likely they will internalise extrinsic motivation, and continue to pursue useful but not intrinsically interesting or enjoyable learning tasks. (A. E. Black & Deci, 2000; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).
- When students find important learning tasks uninteresting, teachers could also learn to acknowledge students' feelings and perceptions, so that students are more likely to internally regulate because they know it is of personal value (5.2.2.2; p114). Giving (an autonomy supporting) meaningful rationale of why a learning task is useful also supports student internalisation (Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2002).
- Teachers could develop strategies to support active collaborative and facilitative lesson experiences students; these are the lesson styles in which students reported experiencing the learning as enjoyable and enjoyment helps develop interest (5.2.2.4).
- GCSE practice sessions could incorporate: feedback, extended experience and be embedded in different contexts (2.3.3.3; 5.2.2.3). Feedback should focus on efficacy more than evaluation so that it provides relevant information about mastering the task (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Mastery learning approaches e.g. precision teaching (Lindsley, 1990) have already been developed that incorporate some of these areas. They focus on learning small units of well-defined knowledge, with high levels of teacher feedback and correction. They aim to develop fluency in a skill by extending students experiences of the skill and for learning to be transferred into different learning contexts. This strategy could be used and adapted for GCSE revision lessons. Peer tutoring

could also be utilized; it has been shown to be effective for both those tutoring and those being tutored (S. B. Cook, Scruggs, Mastropieri, & Casto, 1985). It also supports active collaboration and relatedness.

- Teachers could develop a variety of ways of assisting students with their study so that they are able to respond to individual learning needs using alternative strategies e.g. metacognition or thinking about thinking (Flavell, 1979) may be a helpful structure as it gives students ways of monitoring and controlling their thinking. Students can gain insights into factors that may affect their: performance, knowledge about strategies and knowledge about when to use strategies. Furthermore they can plan their strategies, monitor and evaluate their performance and adapt the strategy as necessary. Approaches such as these support competence, tasks become optimally challenging and positively impact school grades and achievement (Niemi & Ryan, 2009).
- Grade targets could be established in collaboration with students and regularly reviewed in light of current performance. Detailed goals and feedback, which outlines a student's success and their appropriate next improvements, could be used, as they are of added benefit (5.2.2.3).
- Teachers could aim to develop a classroom culture of achieving personal bests so students focus on competing against themselves rather than other students (5.3.2.3).
- Exam boards could detail alternative parallel routes to equivalent GCSE assessment, so that students are able to choose between exam based or monitored classroom based assessment, and thus give all students an equal opportunity to succeed (5.3.2.1).
- The relevance of academic subjects to future life should be highlighted in syllabus content, so that these subjects may be valued for their content and not just the grade by which students' access future possibilities (5.3.3.1).

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

EPs are well placed to support teachers in helping underachieving students like those in this study. I shall use Bradley as an example to illustrate some of the ways in which EP skills could be utilized.

Bradley has a high level of demotivation and improving it is likely to be a long term project. However, my interview with him provided a non-judgmental, empathetic and safe environment (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994) where he was able to reflect on his behaviour at school. This could have formed the beginning of an intervention. During the interview we identified together his dislike of endless challenge, and I had begun to explore alternative options with him. Bradley had then identified teacher strategies that would help him engage more with his learning.

The information we gathered could help establish a basis for some collaborative work between the pastoral care team and Bradley. They could for example establish a contract where:

- Learning goals for a lesson for Bradley were established with him at the start, which were at or just beyond his current level of performance (Locke & Latham, 2002).
- Bradley was encouraged to set the pace of his work (Skinner, et al., 2008)
- It was agreed that If Bradley put his hand up the teacher would only respond by helping with his question and not introduce anything further (Skinner, et al., 2008).
- Bradley and the pastoral care team agree to review his progress and set new personal best goals together every half-term (Martin, 2006).

If disengagement and demotivation are noticed, this could be seen as a trigger for further action. Strategies that the EP could be involved in could include completing a functional behaviour assessment (FBA) (Barnhill, 2005). FBAs are usually used for students with challenging behaviours, however, since they work from the premise that all behaviour serves a function or purpose, I suggest they may also be helpful with disengaged behaviour. The pictures I developed for the interviews could be expanded to help structure the functional analysis with Bradley. An EP could also lead a Multi-element Plan (LaVigna & Willis, 1995) , or a solution focused consultation (De Shazer, 1985) with significant adults, e.g. those teaching Bradley and parents, this would help to integrate strategies and improve outcomes (J. L. Epstein, 1990) .

Further general recommendations for EPs:

EPs could be involved in relevant training around concepts outlined in for example: person centred classrooms (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994), precision teaching (Lindsley, 1990), meta-cognition (Flavell, 1979). They could also emphasise the value of parental involvement in student achievement (Campbell, 2011).

EPs are frequently involved in developing and delivering parenting courses for new parents, they could also be involved in developing and delivering a "parenting teenagers" course.

Student assessments could, where appropriate, cover the areas of autonomy competence and relatedness, and recommendations could also focus on appropriate supports for individual students in these areas.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

As a consequence of my chosen methodology of IPA, the results only represent my interpretations of six Year Ten students' expressed perceptions of their own experiences of studying and achieving in academic subjects. They cannot be transferred to other Year Ten students. Furthermore I rely upon the reader to formulate for themselves how my results may be applied to other students and/or another setting, and this leaves the results open to misinterpretation or misuse.

As the approach of IPA is subjective and interpretative, it can make the process of analysis difficult to scrutinise. However, I have provided the reader with information concerning the research procedure and the researcher's positionality; I have also provided examples of illuminatory quotes. Further quotes associated with each superordinate theme and an example of an annotated transcript has been provided in the appendix. I have also sought out regular consultations with my research tutor, and colleagues familiar with IPA, given them my transcripts for inspection and invited them to check and comment on the appropriateness of my interpretations.

I use psychological concepts, particularly SDT, in my discussion to give the reader an understanding of the concepts that I generated as I interpreted students perceptions. Whilst this deepened my interpretations it also meant I

introduced psychological meaning rather than responding to students' interpretations. I have, as a response frequently rechecked my transcripts and checked my interpretations were appropriately grounded in the data. I have also provided the reader with a broad selection of illuminatory quotes so they have information with which they may reflect on themselves.

The IPA approach meant I was dependent on students' ability to express themselves and sometimes I suspect they found this difficult. Whilst I was able to use drawings and pictures to assist students to express themselves, some students' descriptions of their experiences were still less rich than others, due to their ability to articulate their experiences. I was also aware of the power in balance between myself and the students, and recognise that students may have been selective, or guarded about sharing their experiences with me. I tried to counter this by stressing my position as a student EP, the value I placed on their experiences and interpretations and the confidentiality of their interviews.

My interpretations of students' interpretations of their experiences relied upon the voice recordings of interviews and the subsequent transcripts I made in order to analyse them. I recognise that this procedure gave greater priority to verbal, spoken and written, forms of communication. I attempted to redress the bias towards verbal forms of communication by listening to the recordings at each level of analysis of the transcripts, in order to have greater awareness of intonation, hesitation and some other forms of non-verbal communication. However, much non-verbal communication will inevitably have been lost. Whilst I recognise this as a limitation to my IPA study, I also suggest that it is an overarching limitation of phenomenological research, since researchers are inevitably constrained to describe the experience they have studied through the use of written language. I suggest that whilst biased towards language based forms of communication IPA is still an endeavour worth pursuing, particularly as this limitation reflects a natural life limitation associated with communicating an experience.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I examined six Year Ten students' perceptions of studying in academic subjects using IPA. The six students were all eligible for FSM and were underachieving as defined by their predicted performance from their end of key stage test results

and Fisher Family Scores. Throughout the research process many possibilities emerged as possibilities for future research. Future research could:

- Investigate how different student groups experience studying and achieving in academic subjects. For example students with parents who have completed degree courses and students who are eligible for FSM and are achieving as defined by their predicted performance from their end of key stage test results and Fisher Family Scores.
- Investigate the perceptions of a similar group of students but use a larger sample, for example by using a Q sort analysis or a questionnaire to examine general perceptions of studying and achieving in academic subjects.
- Investigate how professionals such as EPs can work in partnership with mainstream schools in order to support them in improving students' motivation and also evaluate the outcomes.
- Focus on parents' experiences of school, and their perceived needs to help support their children's academic performance, and strategies that help them engage with school and learning.
- Focus in more detail on one of the super-ordinate themes identified in this study and explore student perceptions in more detail, for example the types and effect of pressure on students from school and home and under current economic and political constraints.

6.6 FINAL THOUGHTS

This study represents the end of a three year journey of study for me. I am aware that for the students in my study, their journey through to GCSE exams is also nearing an end. I wonder about their results, and hope the best for them, but am concerned all will not be well, and that this will lead to future barriers for them in life. Philosophically, this study has given me a greater awareness of the inherent (often subtle) inequalities prevalent in our education system and leads me to question how these inequalities could be reduced. If an education system was more supportive of students' autonomy, competence and relatedness and more responsive to students' disaffection and disengagement what could this mean for student achievement?

I am also mindful of the high incidents of traumatic experiences that were reported by these six students and do question how, given these circumstances

and what we now know about the effects of trauma on learning, they are still labelled as underachieving.

I wonder how the country's sustained poor economic climate is now affecting student motivation and engagement with school; it is likely that the external motivation to work hard to avoid the dole or get a better job is waning, particularly in light of the sustained high youth unemployment.

Finally with a normative education system there are always going to be over and underachievers.

We cannot all succeed academically. If we did, what counts now as educational success would lose its value. (Reay, 2009, p. 24)

As a consequence I cannot see an outcome under the current education system that would reduce the achievement gap without an associated outcry regarding the simplification of GCSE content. Since, if the achievement gap was reduced between FSM and non FSM students, more students would achieve 5 GCSEs grade A*- C. Examinations would therefore ultimately need to become more focused on assessing competence and less focused on assessing relative performance (Elliot & Dweck, 2007). This is a radical change and, although it is a change which I personally feel should be encouraged, it is also a change that I doubt politicians and society are yet ready to embrace.

I hope that what I have learnt in this study will make me more attentive to the difficulties with study and achievement that students experience and more insightful and creative in the ways I support teachers and schools. Finally when I see disaffection and disengagement in these students I perceive bleakness amongst adults involved with them. By encouraging self-regulation and self-motivation through the support of students' autonomy competence and relatedness, I can now glimpse a possible pathway forward for students and hold hope that positive change is possible, both for the students in this study and many others like them. However, I am all too aware that, whilst this can make a difference at an individual level, it would also be necessary to tackle family and community issues, for example, the traumatic, family and community situations that these students experience and at a society level it would be necessary to influence education and social policy.

REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, M. D. (1978). *Patterns of attachment*. Hillsdale, N.J.; New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates ; distributed by Halsted Press Division of J. Wiley.
- Alpert, R., & Haber, R. N. (1960). Anxiety in academic achievement situations. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 61(2), 207.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders : DSM-IV-TR*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- American Psychological Association. (2007). Report of the APA task force on socioeconomic status. *Washington, DC: Author*.
- Ames, C., & Archer, J. (1988). Achievement goals in the classroom: Students' learning strategies and motivation processes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(3), 260.
- Anderman, L. H., & Anderman, E. M. (1999). Social Predictors of Changes in Students' Achievement Goal Orientations. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 24(1), 21-37. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1998.0978>
- Aristotle. (n.d.) Retrieved 1st October 2012, from FamousQuotes.com.
- Ashby, F. G., & Isen, A. M. (1999). A neuropsychological theory of positive affect and its influence on cognition. *Psychological review*, 106(3), 529.
- Atkinson, J. W. (1958). Towards experimental analysis of human motivation in terms of motives, expectancies, and incentives. In J. Atkinson (Ed.), *Motives in fantasy, action and society* (pp. 288-305). Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action : a social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Barnhill, G. P. (2005). Functional behavioral assessment in schools. *Intervention in school and clinic*, 40(3), 131-143.
- Berndt, T., Laychak, A., & Park, K. (1990). Friends' influence on adolescents' academic achievement motivation: An experimental study. *Journal of educational psychology* 82(4), 664.
- Berne, E. M. (1964). *Games People Play: The basic handbook of transactional analysis*. New York: Grove Press.
- Bernstein, B. B. (1971). *Class, codes and control*. London: Routledge and K. Paul.
- Bhaskar, R. (1989). *Reclaiming reality : a critical introduction to contemporary philosophy*. London; New York: Verso.

- Biggerstaff, D., & Thompson, A. R. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A qualitative methodology of choice in healthcare research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 5(3), 214-224.
- Black, A. E., & Deci, E. L. (2000). The effects of instructors' autonomy support and students' autonomous motivation on learning organic chemistry: A self-determination theory perspective. *Science education*, 84(6), 740-756.
- Black, P., & William, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 5(1), 7-74.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Clinical applications of attachment theory* (Vol. 393): Psychology Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development*. New York: J. Wiley.
- Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Buhs, E., Ladd, G., & Herald, S. (2006). Peer Exclusion and Victimization: Processes That Mediate the Relation Between Peer Group Rejection and Children's Classroom Engagement and Achievement? *Journal of educational psychology*, 98(1), 1 - 13.
- Campbell, C. (2011). *How to involve hard-to-reach parents: encouraging meaningful parental involvement with schools*: National College for School Leadership.
- Cassady, J. C., & Johnson, R. E. (2002). Cognitive test anxiety and academic performance. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 27(2), 270-295.
- Chamberlain, K. (2011). Troubling methodology. *Health Psychology Review*, 5(1), 48-54.
- Clinton, J., Hattie, J., & Dixon, R. (2007). *Evaluation of the Flaxmere Project: When families learn the language of school*. Wellington, N.Z.: Ministry of Education, New Zealand.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K., & Morrison, K. R. B. (2007). *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Connolly, P. (2006). The Effects of Social Class and Ethnicity on Gender Differences in GCSE Attainment: A Secondary Analysis of the Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales 1997-2001. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(1), 3-21.
- Cook, A., Spinazzola, J., Ford, J., Lanktree, C., Blaustein, M., Cloitre, M., . . . Mallah, K. (2005). Complex Trauma. *Psychiatric Annals*, 35(5).
- Cook, S. B., Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A., & Casto, G. C. (1985). Handicapped students as tutors. *The Journal of Special Education*, 19(4), 483-492.

- Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Learner-Centered Teacher-Student Relationships Are Effective: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 113-143. doi: 10.2307/4624889
- Cotton, K., & Wikelund, K. R. (1989). Parent involvement in education. *School Improvement Research Series*, 6.
- Culley, S., & Bond, T. (2004). *Integrative counselling skills in action*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. C. (2002). *Explaining society: Critical realism in the social sciences*: Psychology Press.
- De Shazer, S. (1985). *Keys to solution in brief therapy*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*: Springer.
- Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (1991). *A motivational approach to self: Integration in personality*. Paper presented at the Nebraska symposium on motivation.
- Deci, E., Spiegel, N. H., Ryan, R. M., Koestner, R., & Kauffman, M. (1982). Effects of performance standards on teaching styles: Behavior of controlling teachers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74(6), 852.
- Deci, E., Vallerand, R., Pelletier, L., & Ryan, R. (1991). Motivation and education: The self-determination perspective. *Educational Psychologist*, 26(3-4), 325-346.
- Department for Children Schools and Families. (2009). *Deprivation and Education - The Evidence on Pupils in England: Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4*. London: Schools Analysis and Research Division, Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- Department for Education. (2011a). *Pupil Premium - what you need to know*. London: Crown copyright.
- Department for Education. (2011b). *School and Local Statistics* Retrieved 26th October, 2012, from <http://www.education.gov.uk/cgi-bin/schools/performance/>
- Eatough, V., & Smith, J. A. (2008). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis In C. Willig & W. Stainton Rogers (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 179-194). London: SAGE publications.
- Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (1995). In the mind of the actor: The structure of adolescents' achievement task values and expectancy-related beliefs.
- Education Endowment Foundation. (2011). *Challenge for the new Education Endowment Foundation laid bare, Poorest students half as likely to meet basic standards* Retrieved 5 March, 2012, from <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/challenge-for-the-new-education-endowment-foundation-laid-bare>

- Ehrenberg, R. G., Goldhaber, D. D., & Brewer, D. J. (1995). Do Teachers' Race, Gender, and Ethnicity Matter?: Evidence from NELS88. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 48, 547-561.
- Elliot, A. J., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). *Handbook of competence and motivation*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Elliott, R., Fischer, C. T., & Rennie, D. L. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 38(3), 215-229.
- Epstein, D. E., Elwood, J. E., Hey, V. E., & Maw, J. E. (1998). *Failing Boys? Issues in Gender and Achievement*: Taylor & Francis Inc., Orders and Customer Service, 7625 Empire Drive, Florence, KY 41042 (\$17.99). Tel: 800-634-7064 (Toll Free); Fax: 800-248-4724 (Toll Free); e-mail: cserve@routledge-ny.com; Web site: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/books/default.html>.
- Epstein, J. L. (1990). School and family connections. *Marriage & Family Review*, 15(1-2), 99-126.
- Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*: ERIC.
- Evans, G. (2006). *Educational failure and working class white children in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Feinstein, L., Duckworth, K., & Sabates, R. (2004). A model of the inter-generational transmission of educational success.
- Finlayson, D. S. (1971). Parental aspirations and the educational achievement of children. *Educational Research*, 14(1), 61-64.
- Finn, J. D., Pannozzo, G. M., & Voelkl, K. E. (1995). Disruptive and inattentive-withdrawn behavior and achievement among fourth graders. *The Elementary School Journal*, 421-434.
- Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive–developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906.
- Flutter, J., & Rudduck, J. (2004). *Consulting pupils: what's in it for schools?* London: Routledge Falmer.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245.
- Fullan, M., Hill, P., & Crévola, C. (2006). *Breakthrough*: Corwin Press Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Gillborn, D., & Kirton, A. (2000). WHITE HEAT: racism, under-achievement and white working-class boys. *International journal of inclusive education*, 4(4), 271-288.
- Giorgi, A., & Giorgi, B. (2008). Phenomenological Psychology. In C. Willig & W. Stainton Rogers (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 165-178). London: SAGE publications.

- Goodman, R. D., Miller, M. D., & West-Olatunji, C. A. (2012). Traumatic stress, socioeconomic status, and academic achievement among primary school students. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 4(3), 252.
- Graham-Bermann, S. A., & Levendosky, A. A. (1998). Traumatic stress symptoms in children of battered women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13(1), 111-128.
- Grolnick, W. S., & Ryan, R. M. (1987). Autonomy in children's learning: An experimental and individual difference investigation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52(5), 890-898.
- Grolnick, W. S., & Ryan, R. M. (1989). Parent styles associated with children's self-regulation and competence in school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81(2), 143-154.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (Vol. 75): Sage Publications, Incorporated.
- Gutman, L. M., & Akerman, R. (2008). *Determinants of aspirations* (Vol. 27): Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Harré, R. (1970). *The principles of scientific thinking*: Macmillan London.
- Harris, A., & Goodall, J. (2008). Do parents know they matter? Engaging all parents in learning. *Educational Research*, 50(3), 277-289.
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning : a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.
- Heidegger, M., & Stambaugh, J. (1996). *Being and time : a translation of Sein und Zeit*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Helling, M. K. (1996). School-home communication and parental expectations. *School Community Journal*, 6, 81-100.
- Herrnstein, R. J. (1973). *IQ in the Meritocracy*. Boston: Atlantic Little, Brown.
- Hidi, S., & Renninger, K. A. (2006). The four-phase model of interest development. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(2), 111-127.
- Higgins, S., Kokotsaki, D., & Coe, R. (2011, 17.1.2012). Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning Summary for Schools Spending the Pupil Premium Retrieved 17 January, 2012, from <http://www.suttontrust.com/public/documents/toolkit-summary-final-r-2-.pdf>
- Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: a meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental psychology*, 45(3), 740.
- Hirsch, D. (2007). Experiences of poverty and educational disadvantage. *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*. York, North Yorkshire, UK. Retrieved, 27.

- Hobbs, G., & Vignoles, A. (2010). Is children's free school meal 'eligibility' a good proxy for family income? *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(4), 673-690.
- Hong, S., & Ho, H. Z. (2005). Direct and Indirect Longitudinal Effects of Parental Involvement on Student Achievement: Second-Order Latent Growth Modeling Across Ethnic Groups. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 97(1), 32.
- Hotchkiss, L., & Borow, H. (1996). Sociological perspective on work and career development. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (Vol. 3, pp. 281-334). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Immordino-Yang, M. H., & Damasio, A. (2007). We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 1(1), 3-10.
- Isen, A. M., Daubman, K. A., & Nowicki, G. P. (1987). Positive affect facilitates creative problem solving. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52(6), 1122.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. (2000). *Focus Groups, a Practical Guide for Applied Research*. London: Sage.
- Kuhnle, C., Hofer, M., & Kilian, B. (2011). Self-control as predictor of school grades, life balance, and flow in adolescents. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*.
- Kumpulainen, K., Räsänen, E., & Puura, K. (2001). Psychiatric disorders and the use of mental health services among children involved in bullying. *Aggressive Behavior*, 27(2), 102-110.
- Kuncel, N. R., Credé, M., & Thomas, L. L. (2005). The validity of self-reported grade point averages, class ranks, and test scores: A meta-analysis and review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(1), 63-82.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews : learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Langdridge, D. (2007). *Phenomenological Psychology*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 102-120.
- LaVigna, G., & Willis, T. (1995). Challenging behaviour: a model for breaking the barriers to social and community integration. *Positive Practices*, 1(1), 8-15.
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (2000). Contextual supports and barriers to career choice: A social cognitive analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 47(1), 36.

- Levine, P. A., & Kline, M. (2006). *Trauma through a child's eyes : awakening the ordinary miracle of healing*. Berkeley, Calif.: North Atlantic Books.
- Levy-Tossman, I., Kaplan, A., & Assor, A. (2007). Academic goal orientations, multiple goal profiles, and friendship intimacy among early adolescents. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 32*(2), 231-252.
- Lindsley, O. (1990). Our aims, discoveries, failures, and problem. *Journal of Precision Teaching, 7*(2), 7-17.
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist, 57*(9), 705.
- Marjoribanks, K. (1984). Ethnicity, family environment and adolescents' aspirations: A follow-up study. *The Journal of Educational Research, 166*-171.
- Marjoribanks, K. (1997). Family contexts, immediate settings, and adolescents' aspirations. *Journal of applied developmental psychology, 18*(1), 119-132.
- Martin, A. J. (2006). Personal bests (PBs): A proposed multidimensional model and empirical analysis. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 76*(4), 803-825.
- McNamara, B. E., & McNamara, F. J. (1997). *Keys to dealing with bullies*. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Barron's.
- Mearns, D., Thorne, B., & McLeod, J. (2013). *Person-centred counselling in action*. London: SAGE.
- Meinhardt, J., & Pekrun, R. (2003). Attentional resource allocation to emotional events: An ERP study. *Cognition & emotion, 17*(3), 477-500.
- Melhuish, E. C., Phan, M. B., Sylva, K., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2008). Effects of the home learning environment and preschool center experience upon literacy and numeracy development in early primary school. *Journal of Social Issues, 64*(1), 95-114.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002). *Phenomenology of perception*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Meyer, D. K., & Turner, J. C. (2006). Re-conceptualizing emotion and motivation to learn in classroom contexts. *Educational Psychology Review, 18*(4), 377-390.
- National Union of Teachers. (2010). Opening Locked Doors - Educational achievement and white working class young people Retrieved 15 November, 2011, from <http://www.teachers.org.uk/files/White%20Working%20Class.pdf>
- Nelson, G. B., & Prilleltensky, I. (2005). *Community psychology : in pursuit of liberation and well-being*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

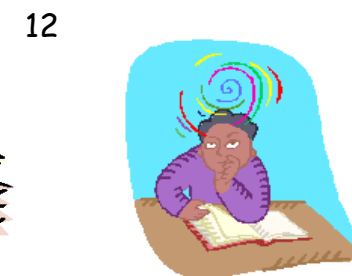
- Niemiec, C. P., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom Applying self-determination theory to educational practice. *Theory and Research in Education*, 7(2), 133-144.
- Oertig, D., Schüler, J., Schnelle, J., Brandstätter, V., Roskes, M., & Elliot, A. J. (2012). Avoidance goal pursuit depletes self-regulatory resources. *Journal of Personality*.
- Office for National Statistics. (2009). Neighbourhood Statistics. *Data and support* Retrieved 29.11.11, from <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html>
- Ogbu, J. U. (1988). Cultural diversity and human development. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 1988(42), 11-28.
- Ogden, P., Minton, K., & Pain, C. (2006). *Trauma and the body : a sensorimotor approach to psychotherapy*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school : what we know and what we can do*. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, USA: Blackwell.
- Pajares, F., & Kranzler, J. (1995). Self-efficacy beliefs and general mental ability in mathematical problem-solving. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 20(4), 426-443.
- Pekrun, R., Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A. (2006). Achievement Goals and Discrete Achievement Emotions: A Theoretical Model and Prospective Test. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(3), 583-597.
- Pekrun, R., Goetz, T., Titz, W., & Perry, R. P. (2002). Academic emotions in students' self-regulated learning and achievement: A program of qualitative and quantitative research. *Educational Psychologist*, 37(2), 91-105.
- Péladeau, N., Forget, J., & Gagné, F. (2003). Effect of paced and unpaced practice on skill application and retention: How much is enough? *American educational research journal*, 40(3), 769-801.
- Perls, F. S. (1969). *Gestalt therapy verbatim*. Lafayette, Calif.: Real People Press.
- Pianta, R. C., Nimetz, S. L., & Bennett, E. (1997). Mother-child relationships, teacher-child relationships, and school outcomes in preschool and kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 12(3), 263-280.
- Pintrich, P. R., & Schunk, D. H. (2002). *Motivation in education*: Prentice Hall.
- Pratt, S., & George, R. (2006). Transferring friendship: girls' and boys' friendships in the transition from primary to secondary school. *Children & society*, 19(1), 16-26.
- Reay, D. (2009). Making sense of white working class educational underachievement. In K. P. Sveinsson (Ed.), *Who cares about the white working class?* (pp. 23-28). London: Runnymede Trust.

- Reeve, J., Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (2002). Self-determination theory applied to educational settings. *Handbook of self-determination research, 2*, 183-204.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research : a resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Oxford, UK; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy; its current practice, implications, and theory*. London: Constable and Robinson Ltd.
- Rogers, C. R. (1995). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. .
- Rogers, C. R., & Freiberg, H. J. (1994). *Freedom to learn*. New York; Toronto; New York: Merrill ; Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; Maxwell Macmillan International.
- Rojewski, J. W., & Yang, B. (1997). Longitudinal analysis of select influences on adolescents' occupational aspirations. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*.
- Roorda, D. L., Koomen, H. M. Y., Spilt, J. L., & Oort, F. J. (2011). The Influence of Affective Teacher–Student Relationships on Students' School Engagement and Achievement A Meta-Analytic Approach. *Review of Educational Research, 81* (4), 493-529.
- Rowan, J. (1983). *The reality game : a guide to humanistic counselling and therapy*. London; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Rowan, J. (1998). *The reality game: a guide to humanistic counselling and psychotherapy*. London: Routledge.
- Sadler, D. R. (1998). Formative assessment: revisiting the territory. *Assessment in education, 5*(1), 77-84.
- Sartre, J.-P., & Mairé, P. (1948). *Existentialism and humanism*. London: Methuen.
- Sayer, A. (2000). *Realism and social science*: Sage Publications Limited.
- Schwartz, D., & Gorman, A. H. (2003). Community violence exposure and children's academic functioning. *Journal of Educational Psychology; Journal of Educational Psychology, 95*(1), 163.
- Seligman, M., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive Psychology: An Introduction. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 5-14.
- Seligman, M., Ernst, R. M., Gillham, J., Reivich, K., & Linkins, M. (2009). Positive education: Positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education, 35*(3), 293-311.
- Skinner, E., Furrer, C., Marchand, G., & Kindermann, T. (2008). Engagement and Disaffection in the Classroom: Part of a Larger Motivational Dynamic? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*(4), 765-781.
- Smith, J. A. (2011). Evaluating the contribution of interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Health Psychology Review, 5*(1), 9-27.

- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Sosniak, L. (1990). The tortoise, the hare, and the development of talent. In M. J. A. Howe (Ed.), *Encouraging the development of exceptional skills and talents*. Leicester: British Psychological Society.
- Terman, L. M. (1916). *The measurement of intelligence : an explanation of and a complete guide for the use of the Stanford revision and extension of the Binet-Simon intelligence scale*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- The Network of Public Health Observatories. (2012). Health Profiles Retrieved 26th October 2012, from www.healthprofiles.info
- Valentine, J. C., DuBois, D. L., & Cooper, H. (2004). The relation between self-beliefs and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review. *Educational Psychologist*, 39(2), 111-133.
- Vygotskii, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society : the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology adventures in theory and method*. Maidenhead, England; New York: McGraw Hill/Open University Press.
- Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and Health*, 15(2), 215-228.
- Yardley, L. (2008). Demonstrating validity in qualitative psychology. *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*, 2, 235-251.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research : design and methods*. Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Zeidner, M. (1998). *Test anxiety the state of the art*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Kitsantas, A. (2002). Acquiring writing revision and self-regulatory skill through observation and emulation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94(4), 660.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CARTOONS, ATTITUDE TO STUDY



APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Questions are colour coded in accordance with which research question they are targeted to cover:

1. How do students' understand their experience of family and its influence on studying and achieving in academic subjects?
2. How do students' understand their experience of school and its influence on studying and achieving in academic subjects?
3. How do students' make sense of learning and achieving in academic subjects?

(Possible prompts are shown using lettered sub-questions.)

- 1) Which picture(s) if any most remind you of yourself when you are studying? (*narrative*)
 - a. What's it like for you to study for a test/GCSE module?
 - b. What's it like if studying goes well and when it goes badly?
- 2) Can you tell me a bit about your school and what it is like for you (t)here at the moment (*descriptive*)
- 3) Can you tell me about a Science, English or Maths lesson that you remember? (*narrative-descriptive*)
 - a. Can you tell me about one you did/didn't enjoy (opposite to example already given)? (*narrative-descriptive*)
 - b. What was the difference between them for you? (*contrast*)
- 4) What do you think it is about a lesson that encourages you to study? (*evaluative*)
 - a. What discourages you (*contrast/evaluative*)?
 - b. Can you tell me what it's like to have attainment targets to achieve in these academic lessons? (*narrative*)
 - c. What effect do the targets have for you in these lessons? (*evaluative*)

- 5) What's homework like for you?
- 6) What do you think your teachers think about your study in Maths, English and Science? *(circular)*
 - a. What do you think your family thinks about your work in academic subjects? *(circular)*
- 7) How useful, if at all, do you think academic subjects will be for you in the future? *(evaluative)*
- 8) What do you think your family thinks about how important (if at all) academic subjects are? *(circular)*
- 9) If you could change only one thing about academic subjects what would it be *(evaluative)*
If you could keep only one thing about academic subjects what would it be? *(evaluative)*
- 10) What do you think life would be if you (no one) had to study academic subjects unless they wanted to? *(comparative)*

APPENDIX 3

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS TAKING PART IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Hello, my name is Claire Willott, I am an Educational Psychology student in Blankshire, as part of my training I carry out a research project. I would like to invite your child to take part in my research project, it is about year 10 students' experiences of studying and achieving in academic subjects (e.g. Maths, English and Science). This sheet explains more about the project and what to expect.

The aim of the project

The aim of this project is to explore the experiences that year 10 students have of studying and achieving in academic subjects. Gaining such information can help us understand more about what helps and hinders learning in these subjects for some students.

What will happen if my child takes part?

I will arrange a time to meet with your child during school and have a conversation with them about their experiences and views of studying academic subjects. This conversation will last about an hour.

Does my child have to take part?

It is up to you and your child to decide whether they can take part. You can change your mind about your child participating at any time and you do not have to say why, your child can also change their mind about participating at any time. **If your child does take part you will all need to sign the consent form attached.** The project is not part of any of your child's school work requirements and whether they take part or not will not affect their school work

.

How will the information about me be used?

All the information your child shares will be kept private and confidential. No information about them will be passed onto anyone else including school. However, if they share information that they or someone else was at risk of actual harm, I will need to tell their pastoral teacher.

How will the information I give be recorded?

My conversation with your child will be recorded on a digital recorder. I will also make a transcript of our conversation. The recording of our conversation and transcript will be kept securely. I will destroy the recording and transcript when the research project is complete.

What will happen to the results of the project?

I will write up the project findings in the summer of 2013. To protect anonymity all the names of the student participants will be changed. Articles about the study may be published in journals after this date but student participants will remain anonymous.

Who do I contact if I need more information?

If you have any further questions or would like to talk more about the project please contact me at:

----- Educational Psychology Service

Tel

Email

My supervisor for the research project is xxxxxxxx who can be contacted on:-

Tel:

Email:

I can also be contacted through your child's teacher Ms/Mr ?

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS AND PARENT'S/GUARDIANS

Working title of project: *An investigation into year 10 students' experiences of studying and achieving in academic subjects.*

Name of researcher: *Claire Willott*

Trainee Educational Psychologist

----- Educational Psychology Service

The researcher has been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

Please tick

below

I have read the information sheet for the above project and have had opportunity to ask any questions I needed.

I understand that my child taking part in this project is voluntary, and that they are free to withdraw at any time.

I understand that all information my child shares will be treated confidentially and anything they say will be made anonymous.

I agree for them to take part in the research project, and for the researcher to have access to the information they share.

Name of participant.....

Name of participant's parent/guardian

Date..... Signature.....

Name of researcher

Date.....Signature.....

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS TAKING PART IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Hello, my name is Claire Willott, I am an Educational Psychology student in Blankshire, as part of my training I carry out a research project. I would like to invite you to take part in my research project, it is about year 10 students' experiences of studying and achieving in academic subjects (e.g. Maths, English and Science). This sheet explains more about the project and what to expect, if you would like to take part, please read on.

What the project is about

Schools think that studying academic subjects is very important, and gaining GCSE's in academic subjects is helpful for getting future jobs and careers. The aim of this project is to explore your views and experiences of what it is like to study academic subjects at school. The information I gather could help me to understand more about what can help and what can get in the way of learning in academic subjects for some pupils.

What will happen if I take part?

I will arrange a time to meet with you at school and then I will have a conversation with you about your experiences and views of studying. Our conversation will last about one hour.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part. You can change your mind about taking part at any time and you do not have to say why. It will not affect you or your work at school. If you do take part you will need to sign a consent form. Your parents will also need to agree to you taking part and sign the consent form too.

How will the information about me be used?

All information about you will be kept private and confidential. No information about you will be passed onto anyone else including school. However, if information was shared that you or someone else was at risk of actual harm, I would need to tell your pastoral teacher.

How will the information I give be recorded?

Our conversation will be recorded on a digital recorder. I will also make a typed copy of our conversation. The recording of our conversation and typed copy will be kept securely. I will destroy these when the research project has finished.

What will happen to the results of the project?

I will write the project finding up in the summer of 2013. I will change the names of all the students who took part in the project so it will not be possible to identify you. If I ever write anything else about my project I will always keep your identity secret.

Who do I contact if I need more information?

If you have any further questions or would like to talk more about the project please contact me at:

----- Educational Psychology Service

Tel:-

Email:

My supervisor for the research project is xxxxxxxx who can be contacted on:-

Tel:

Email:

You can also contact me via your teacher Ms/Mr ?

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Working title of project: **An investigation into year 10 students' experiences of studying and achieving in academic subjects.**

Name of researcher: **Claire Willott**

Trainee Educational Psychologist

----- Educational Psychology Service

The researcher has been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

Please tick

below

I have read the information sheet for the above project and have had opportunity to ask any questions I needed.

I understand that taking part in this project is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw at any time.

I understand that all information I share will be treated confidentially and anything I say will be made anonymous.

I agree to take part in the research project, and for the researcher to have access to the information I share.

Name of participant

Date..... Signature.....

Name of researcher

Date..... Signature.....

LETTER FOR PARENTS WHO GAVE TELEPHONE CONSENT

For one participant the Director of Inclusion obtained consent from the student in writing and telephone consent from her parents. (This was her normal practice when working with the school Educational Psychologist). I sent the participant's parents the following letter together with the information sheet as a follow up:

Dear Parent,

Thank you for allowing your child to take part in an interview for my research project. I enclose an information sheet explaining more about my project, it contains details about the project that you previously discussed with Mrs H when you gave telephone consent for your child to participate. A copy of this sheet was also sent home with your child.

Should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Claire Willott

APPENDIX 4

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

Claire Willott
DEdCPsy

Head of School
Professor Jackie Marsh

Department of Educational Studies
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield
S10 2JA

14 August 2013

Telephone: +44 (0)114 222 8096
Email: DEdCPsy@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Claire

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

An investigation into year 10 students' experiences of studying and achieving in academic subjects.

Thank you for submitting your ethics application. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely



Dr Simon Warren

Chair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel

cc Dr P.Bennett

APPENDIX 5

READABILITY TEST TOOL RESULTS

[Readability Test Bookmarklet](#)



The Readability Test Tool

Let's make the unreadable readable







Readability Test Results

This page has an average [grade level](#) of about 7.
It should be easily understood by 12 to 13 year olds.

[Tweet this result!](#)

 Like  335 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

Readability Indices

Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease	73.1	
Flesch Kincaid Grade Level	6.6	
Gunning Fog Score	8.2	
SMOG Index	6.4	
Coleman Liau Index	9.7	
Automated Readability Index	6	

Text Statistics

No. of sentences	38
No. of words	534
No. of complex words	43
Percent of complex words	8.05%
Average words per sentence	14.05
Average syllables per word	1.41

What do these results mean?

What do these results mean?

The indicator bars give a visual guide for the readability of the text. Red is a low readability score. Green is easily readable.

Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease

Based on a 0-100 scale. A high score means the text is easier to read. Low scores suggest the text is complicated to understand.

$$206.835 - 1.015 \times (\text{words/sentences}) - 84.6 \times (\text{syllables/words})$$

A value between 60 and 80 should be easy for a 12 to 15 year old to understand.

Grade Level indicators

These equate the readability of the text to the US schools grade level system.

Flesch Kincaid Grade Level

$$0.39 \times (\text{words/sentences}) + 11.8 \times (\text{syllables/words}) - 15.59$$

Gunning Fog Score

$$0.4 \times ((\text{words/sentences}) + 100 \times (\text{complexWords/words}))$$

SMOG Index

$$1.0430 \times \sqrt{30 \times \text{complexWords/sentences}} + 3.1291$$

Coleman Liau Index

$$5.89 \times (\text{characters/words}) - 0.3 \times (\text{sentences/words}) - 15.8$$

Automated Readability Index (ARI)

$$4.71 \times (\text{characters/words}) + 0.5 \times (\text{words/sentences}) - 21.43$$

Coleman Liau and ARI rely on counting characters, words and sentence. The other indices consider number of syllables and complex words (polysyllabics - with 3 or more syllables) too. Opinions vary on which type are the most accurate. It is more difficult to automate the counting of syllable as the English language does not comply to strict standards!

Copyright © 2009-2010 [David Simpson](#). All rights reserved.

[Readability Test](#).

Taken from: Simpson. (2010.) *The readability test tool*. Retrieved from <http://www.read-able.com/>

APPENDIX 6

INTERPRETING UK NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS

There are 8 main national curriculum levels, which are followed by the letters a, b or c:

The basic guidelines in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Levels are:

By the end of Year 2 - A child should be at a level 2 in order to be in the average band

By the end of Year 3 - A child should be working somewhere between level 2a and 3b in order to be in the average band

By the end of Year 4 - A child should be working at a level 3 in order to be in the average band

By the end of Year 5 - A child should be somewhere between level 3b and 4c in order to be average

By the end of Year 6 - A child should be working at level 4 in order to be in the average band

The letters that follow show further differentiation of ability:

c - this is to show that a child has only just started to work at this level, so has yet to grasp all of the concepts contained within that level

b - this means that a child is working comfortably within the level

a - this indicates that a child has reached the top of the level and is ready to move on to the next level.

The National Curriculum progress target set is to go up a whole level every 2 years, so each year a child should be progressing by 1.5 sublevels.

A child who gets a level 7 at the end of Year 9 is often projected to get a Grade C in their GCSEs, but this will vary.

Liat Hughes Joshi. (2013). *Decoding your child's school report: Our guide to National Curriculum primary school levels and assessments*. Retrieved from <http://www.parentdish.co.uk/2011/07/06/decoding-your-childs-school-report-national-curriculum-school-levels-assessments/>

Cognitive Assessment Test (CAT) scores

The test as a whole assesses an individual's ability to manipulate and reason with three different types of symbols: words, quantities and spatial patterns, each of which plays an important part in human thought. A section, called a test battery, of the complete CAT test is devoted to each of these ways of reasoning.

Children are found to have different preferences among these three styles of reasoning. Some prefer verbal reasoning, some reasoning with numbers and some abstract reasoning with shapes and patterns. By looking at a child's performances in each battery compared to the others, information can be gathered about which of these he or she may be better at, and for which he or she may need additional support.

Verbal, Quantitative and Non-verbal aspects of test

The verbal reasoning battery assesses reasoning processes using the medium of words; the quantitative test battery assesses the same processes but use numbers as the symbols. The non-verbal battery again tests reasoning processes but use shapes and figures. As the non-verbal subtests require no knowledge of the English language or the number system, they are particularly useful when assessing children with poor English language skills, or disaffected pupils who may have failed to achieve in academic work through low motivation. Also, they are very important for gaining a full assessment of the abilities of pupils who have a greater ability to think in images than in words or numbers, and who may prove to have particular aptitude for subjects like science, mathematics and design/technology.

Interpreting CAT scores

1. Interpreting the difference in a pupil's standard scores on the three batteries.

In most cases the three standard age scores (verbal, quantitative and non-verbal) will be broadly in-line with each other. Scores will rarely be exactly equal and there has to be a difference of 10 or more standard

age score (SAS) points between a pupil's score on any two tests before the difference would be considered statistically significant.

2. Interpreting overall CAT scores.

Pupils with a mean CAT score of 99 or above have a greater than 50% probability of achieving 5+ GCSE A*-C grades, i.e. they are more likely than unlikely to achieve 5+ A*-C grades.

The indicators are not precise; they indicate the outcomes expected for students with a particular CAT score making average progress in the typical secondary school. They come with a margin of error, which reflects the differences in progress that may be made by different pupils in different schools or circumstances. The subject indicators come with a margin of error of at least plus or minus one grade.

GL Education Group. (2012). *CAT3 Cognitive ability tests Third Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/products/cat-cognitive-abilities-test/cat-cognitive-abilities-test-faqs>

APPENDIX 7

TABLE 7: SAMPLE PAGE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT WITH ANALYSIS

Transcript	initial analysis	potential theme	line	emergent themes
sometimes I get stressed if I get confused. <i>Uh huh</i>	confusion prompts anxiety and stress	anxiety of study	9	study as stressful
but sometimes I just get it straightaway.	sometimes study straightforward	study as possible	11	pride in achievement
<i>Oh okay it's like, it's a bit weird</i>			12	
<i>so there's different ones that fit you?</i>			14	
Sometimes I get like really confused and then I get stressed cause I'm confused and then but sometimes I just look at it and I can do it straightaway.	cycle of confusion and stress does stress add to confusion, upset thinking, understanding is surprising, repetition of and then emphasises cycle. Sometimes just understands	confusion stress cycle	15	confusion, stress in understanding
<i>Right, those are the good times? Yeah [laughs]</i>			16	
<i>sure, so what happens to you when you get stressed?</i>			18	
I just get myself all worked up and angry and uptight	stress leads to tension and anger. "I just get myself" minimising anger? owning or blaming self for getting angry?"	stress prompting tension and anger	19	anxiety and anger
<i>so when you get angry what you do?</i>				
Teachers like try explain and I get myself all in a muddle and I just, I don't think teachers really help, sometimes their like oh it's easy you can do it, and you know, like, well I can't	muddles herself, teacher's don't help, minimising her issue makes her resistant. Does past failure affect her thinking, used to being in a muddle and teachers failing to make it clear, puts her in a difficult place, not receptive to input, frustration with teachers repetition of "I get myself" and "just" emphasises self blame/owning	unhelpful attitude from some teachers	21	teacher's understanding of learning need
<i>and that makes you really, get really frustrated, so do you end up in a disagreement with the teacher or do you just switch off?</i>			22	
I just switch off, I can't, I try and do it my own way and try and figure it out if teachers haven't really but most of the time I just switch off.	break down of teacher pupil helping relationship so attempts to work out for herself, but ends up disengaging. I just; I can't; I try; but - emphasises her learning attempts, she tries, then gives up	zoning out of teacher explanation	23	disengagement from study

KEY: Linguistic comments conceptual comments exploratory comments

APPENDIX 8

TABLE 8: SUPERORDINATE THEME 1, EXPECTATIONS FROM HOME (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY) EXPERIENCES ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Name	Transcript	line	emergent theme	subordinate theme
Alistair	so I do quite a bit home, but sometimes you get too much homework	371	family expectation for study	family expectations
Alistair	yeah and they expect you to do it all, like, when you've got like Mr I he gives you like a week and you've got to do a full project and it's hard and then you've got like your art homework and everything else, you can't do it unless you sit at home and do it all day, like some people would, I just do like an hour or summthing and then go out	373	expectation for study	family expectation/attitude to homework
Alistair	<i>and your parents, how do they feel about that?</i>	374		family expectations
Alistair	Em ah my mum wouldn't think that I have to stay in all the time just doing my homework	375	family expectation for study	family expectations
Alistair	<i>no she wouldn't think that</i>	376		family expectations
Alistair	no, she'd rather me do some so I've still done some	376	family expectaions for study	family expectations
Alistair	because she'd don't want me to be just like some people, just sat in the house doing all the time, so	377	family expectation for study	family expectations
Alistair	She weren't happy when I got them grades in science	381	family expectations for grades	family expectations
Alistair	so then you can choose your own work, like but, as my dad used to do, he used to work flooring and then get his own contract of that business, so then he did like his own thing from there	405	father role model for work	modelling from family
Alistair	but now he's got his own business and he does contracts when works starts to... so he's always got it really, like if he hasn't got like owt on his own business he can do something for his other business.	407	father role model for work	modelling from family

Alistair	Yeah, but I wouldn't want to do what he's done	409	father role model for work	modelling from family
Alistair	<i>Yeah, so did I ask you how your, yes I did, your mum thinks, does your mum think academic subjects are important, your mum and dad?</i>	439		family expectations
Alistair	Yeah,	440	family expectations for study	family expectations
Alistair	Yeah because my sister got good grades and then she's done a, she wanted to go to university to do medicines in science	442	family expectation for grades	family expectations
Alistair	but he started off with my, his grandad, so it's just carried on and he started his business off in the last two years and that's done quite well because every time he's been working he's gave them out [?business card]	482	father role model for work	modelling from family
Bradley	Don't know	348	no family interest in study	modelling from family
Bradley	<i>right, would you like to be a chef?</i>	361	following dad's interest	modelling from family
Bradley	Yeah	362		modelling from family
Bradley	<i>Oh, good, em, so you think academic subjects might be useful, science anyway a bit, do you think your family think it is important, these academic subjects and your future?</i>	395		family expectations
Bradley	Probably	396		family expectations
Bradley	<i>But you don't really know?</i>	397		family expectations
Bradley	No	398		family expectations
Jason	The same really they think I can do better, they know I can do better, they know I've got the potential to do better than I am and my mum and dad they just both want me to do as good as I can	310	family expectations	family expectations


Jason	yeah they want me to do my best, they want me to do better than they did, to actually do something with my life so	313	don't be like me	family expectations
Jason	yeah they're keen on me doing well at school and like my little brother he's turning out like me, messing about, not getting his work done but I were, like we've all spoke to him me and my mum and dad and said well you need to do well you don't need to make the mistakes that any of us made so, like messing about	315	Don't be like me	family expectations
Jason	then my dad he didn't get basically, he had the chance but he didn't take it, because my grandfather was ill, my granddad, so he had to look after him and that while my nana and that were at work, and that was the time of his exams so	319	don't be like me	modelling from family
Jason	so he didn't really get any good grades, apart from the ones he got from doing his coursework and stuff	321		modelling from family
Jason	one of them's a teacher, one of them's a photographer and like , like they've all got really good grades, and they, they're just telling you that they are really important, you need to get them done, and the sooner you get them done the better. Cos like if you pass in maths and English before, like, year 11, you won't have to do it in year 11 and you like can do something else, so there's something else to look forward to, to work for like that, so	344	modelling work behaviour	modelling from family
Jess	My mum just says try my best, and they'll be proud like whatever	282	family value can only try hard	family expectations
Jess	I don't think they think anyone works hard enough, unless they're getting A*, I think that's when they think oh yes she's worked hard it's because she's got an A* and it's kind of like they're trying to push you to get there and you're working your hardest and they just carry on pushing and pushing and pushing and it does my head in.	268	anxiety	teacher expectations
Jess	they're not pushing me or, they're not making me do stuff that, they're like your best is good enough for us.	284	family value can only try hard	family expectations
Jess	Because they can tell from like my work and stuff	299	family value can only try hard	family expectations
Laura	my mum will make me anyway, or she'll make me do stuff on computer to make me revise	256	family expectations	family expectations

Laura	she don't want me to be behind with my work, because my other sister, she's got all A's and Bs and Cs and that, but she's got like that Asperger's syndrome, and people say that the most clever have got that but I don't know	258	family expectations	family expectations
Laura	She's well my dad weren't exactly clever because he never went to school, my mum's not exactly clever she never went to school, so then she's just like wants to send me to school all the time, to try and get my grades up, and no matter how I trying get off school	373	family expectations	family expectations
Laura	My family wants me to like do well so	397	family expectations to study	family expectations
Laura	Yeah, because my mum wishes that she'd gone to school and did better in her time in school, now because she's a carer, er, full-time carer	399	don't be like me	modelling from family
Nicki	It's alright I just, sometime shut my ears like my mum does, because sometimes I normally argue with my stepdad and all she does is ignores us.	384	modelling "ignoring others" behaviour	modelling from family
Nicki	My mum is doing a course for health and social	430	modelling study	modelling from family

APPENDIX 9

TABLE 9: SUPERORDINATE THEME 2, HOME (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY) EXPERIENCES OF STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Name	transcript	line	emergent theme	subordinate theme
Alistair	the most important bits, then I have to go out.	13	pull of alternatives to study	attraction of alternatives to study
Alistair	Yeah go and play football	15	pull of football	attraction of alternatives to study
Bradley	[Sighs], some of the lesson sometimes are alright	88	indifference	enjoyment of learning
Bradley	<i>is there anything else that is alright at school?</i>	94		
Bradley	Not really	95	indifference	enjoyment of school
Bradley	<i>the other kids?</i>	96		enjoyment of school
Bradley	Nothing really,	97	indifference	influence of peers
Bradley	I'd rather come to school to be honest	103	unstimulating home environment	home events
Bradley	Because when you stay at home it is boring and just sat down at home doing nothing.	105	unstimulating home environment	home events

Bradley	I probably go home, have something to eat and then a drink and then go out and play football	310	family interest in football	attraction of alternatives to study
Jess	Yeah, they know I'm struggling in maths and stuff like that and they try and help me at home with it but sometimes it's just I can't be bothered after a day at school to sit and do hours of maths.	286	family help with homework when can	help and encouragement with study
Jess	they're not amazing, sometimes they do different methods don't they in the olden days and they'll start trying to tell me another method and they'll say well I've interpreted it like this and..	295	family can't always help with homework	help and encouragement with study
Laura	em, like that one, I would rather talk and stuff and not do my homework.	15	preference for socialisation	attraction of alternatives to study
Laura	Yeah, just like trying to think of it because, I'll ask my mum, but then my stepdad used to have a go at me, so then I didn't get any help at home.	27	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	but now my mum helps me 	29	family help with homework when can	help and encouragement with study
Laura	Yeah, he used to domestic abu... domestic abuse us	33	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	For seven year I had my stepdad control my life	45	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	I weren't allowed to have like, I weren't allowed to have crisps or chocolate or I weren't allowed to hang around with friends, I had to stay in and do housework in my homework and stuff like that.	47	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	They were never allowed to help me.	48	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	My mum, I were never allowed to talk to her	50	Traumatic events	life events

Laura	or interact with any of my brothers or sisters and I weren't allowed to go to see my Nan at weekends or anything like that, we weren't allowed in our own living room.	52	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	so, we weren't allowed TV we weren't allowed mobile phones, but then I told Miss S a year Fri.. this Friday and he's been gone since then.	52	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	So I know it feels like, it don't feel like a year it only feels like a couple of months	56	traumatic memories	life events
Laura	It's amazing, I've been able to talk to my mum about anything	60	help and encouragement with study	help and encouragement with study
Laura	and I've also got it because in December I had this, well I'm allowed to class him as a paedophile now, I had a paedophile texting me, it were my best mates dad who lives next door	62	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	because, like, I didn't, I had a month of school at the beginning of December and then sometime in January where it all started to kick off again with the paedophile next door, with his brothers and sisters, er his daughters and sons and like because she was my best mate and she had an older sister	66	bullying	influence of peers
Laura	but it's just like things, it just comes back in me head and starts repeating	70	traumatic memories	life events
Laura	yeah, but like he's gone now from next door, my stepdad's gone, so now I'm just clearing my head, trying to clear me head and start fresh	78	positive self talk	constructive self-talk
Laura	we weren't allowed anything really, but there's my older sister my youngest brother and my younger sister, but the reason why we weren't allowed in the living room is because I had a newborn baby, like four years ago, and then she's just got diagnosed with severe autism, but we haven't been allowed in our living room for a four year, five year so. It all started when they got married, like all bad parts in it and then he moved in and, [pause] I hated him, my family hated him	106	Traumatic events	life events

Laura	but he mostly on at me all the time because I liked to go out and enjoy myself with my friends.	108	Traumatic events	life events
Laura	because, like, I didn't, I had a month of school at the beginning of December and then sometime in January where it all started to kick off again with the paedophile next door, with his brothers and sisters, er his daughters and sons and like because she was my best mate and she had an older sister	118	bullying	influence of peers
Laura	no, they've all moved to C now so they're not living next door either and we're having a fresh start we might be moving to S	128	traumatic memories	life events
Laura	so it will be no memories	130	traumatic memories	life events
Laura	because I'd rather go out with friends than revise, but I'm not doing that no more, I'm going to either revise then go out	254	preference for socialisation	attraction of alternatives to study
Laura	so I can like catch up on it and she'd rather I stay behind at school, but I don't like staying behind I don't know why	377	help and encouragement with study	help and encouragement with study
Nicki	Because when I'm at home, my mum helps me.	5	help and encouragement with study	help and encouragement with study
Nicki	yeah, sometimes when I go home I ask my mom to remind me stuff.	34	help with study	help and encouragement with study
Nicki	Because my mum and dad were fighting over me	71	stressful life events	life events
Nicki	because I wanted to live with my mum, my dad wanted me to live with him and I just got stuck in the middle	73	stressful life events	life events
Nicki	Yeah, kind of	79	stressful life events	life events

Nicki	no, I really wanted to move because I was stuck in the same four walls every day	81	stressful life events	life events
Nicki	I felt a bit nervous	91	stressful life events	life events
Nicki	Yeah, they don't like to disturb me	405	quiet to help study	help and encouragement with study
Nicki	so if I need some help with it then she could help me so	432	help with homework	help and encouragement with study

APPENDIX 10

TABLE 10: SUPERORDINATE THEME 3, INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Name	Transcript	line	Emergent theme	Subordinate theme
Alistair	<i>Oh okay, so why is it different in maths?</i>	67	pupil/teacher co-operation	pupil/teacher relationship
Alistair	Because I like it	68	pupil/teacher co-operation	pupil/teacher relationship
Alistair	<i>would other students be able to help</i>	71	pupil/teacher co-operation	pupil/teacher relationship
Alistair	not really	72	pupil/teacher co-operation	pupil/teacher relationship
Alistair	Yeah, it depends though because our old science teacher I didn't like at all	80	pupil/teacher co-operation	pupil/teacher relationship
Alistair	I don't know, because I don't get any of it, like one lesson I could do something, and then another lesson, like in practicals, I don't get none of that. Like when you've got to put stuff together that's...	94	study as hopeless	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	<i>Yeah, you just muck around with things</i>	95	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Alistair	no I don't mess around I just put anything with anything to see if it works	96	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Alistair	<i>oh okay yeah, you experiment</i>	97	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship

Alistair	<i>aha, right so you're not very sure what the teachers think</i>	366	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Alistair	No	367	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	<i>right, would you put your hand up?</i>	28		pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	Probably not [laughs]	29	avoidance of teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	<i>[pause]</i>	39		pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	You get more attention	40	avoidance of teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	and if you like put your hand up once they keep on coming over to check and see if you're all right	42	avoidance of teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	Some people are alright, some people aren't	97	peer friendships	influence of peers
Bradley	<i>okay and the teachers</i>	100		pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	same again, some of them are alright and some are a bit...	101	familiarity with teachers	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	<i>and other some kids that make it worth coming to school?</i>	116	peer friendships	influence of peers
Bradley	Some, yeah	117	peer friendships	influence of peers
Bradley	<i>you've got a few friends?</i>	118		influence of peers
Bradley	Yeah	119	peer friendships	influence of peers
Bradley	Nothing really,	284	resists peer pressure	influence of peers

Bradley	I don't know	332	avoidance of teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	Yeah because everyone else I'm with put their hands up so he probably doesn't get time to come to me [laughs].	338	avoidance of teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	<i>I get you, okay, so you're just sort of a bit of a shadowy person in the class...</i>	339		pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	Yeah	340	avoidance of teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	<i>Who people don't know, because you keep a low profile</i>	341		pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	Yeah [laughs]	342	avoidance of teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	<i>I get you, so they don't think they know about your work in maths English or science, and that's the wayl you like it?</i>	343		pupil/teacher relationship
Bradley	Yeah [both laugh]	344	avoidance of teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Yeah sometimes, I'm like, always getting on with my work, but sometimes there's people that will distract me and that.	22	inability to resist negative influence of peers	influence of peers
Jason	but when people are distracting you, like you've got everyone messing about and stuff like that, you are just always frustrated, because you can't concentrate	34	inability to resist negative influence of peers	influence of peers
Jason	It's alright it's good, and like I'm used to being here, I like most of the teachers...	40	familiarity with teachers	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Em you just get used to it really, like you are not used to it at first, but, soon as you come up you get used to it, it's fine, you get used to all the teachers, you know what they are like, so you can have a decent like friendship or relationship, so you get used to everything	42	familiarity with teachers	pupil/teacher relationship

Jason	Yeah, it's like you know where to find things as well, and like you get more close to people, it's just a way, it's just a way forward really.	44	familiarity with teachers	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Yeah, it was more, like I was sat outside because like if I get distracted, it's harder for me to get put off then. I sit outside and then...	68	voluntary separation from peers	influence of peers
Jason	Yeah, it's like quiet no one comes out.	74	voluntary separation from peers	influence of peers
Jason	Like I'd probably get distracted, by some people not all the time, but otherwise just fine. But it's like most of my teachers say if I don't get distracted I'm capable of getting like C's B's and stuff like that, so I just think it's better to sit on my own and try and get a better grade.	76	motivation	Teacher expectation
Jason	Well like I were just sitting inside at first and then my friends start talking to me and then Miss said do you want to sit outside, so I said yeah and I just went and sat outside.	78	co-operation with teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Yeah all of my teachers that I have know, I don't think everyone else, but...	82	powerful positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Jason	With my em head of house, em, I got put on report for being disruptive and that and like not doing my work	86	powerful positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Jason	So she like e mailed around my teachers telling them it was better for me to sit alone and not be distracted	88	powerful positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Jason	I was involved because my teacher asked me if I wanted to and then she said yeah she'd e mail all the teachers about it so...	90	co-operation with teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	<i>Oh that sounds great, so now, have I got this right, every time you're looking distracted a teacher will ask you if you want to go and sit outside.</i>	93		
Jason	Most of them will it's like it depends if it's something I need to listen to or not.	94		

Jason	Well most of the time they will ask if I want to.	96	co-operation with teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	it were like it were just a mixture of physics topics and like my friend asked me to like put a crisp oh not a crisp packet a sweet wrapper in the bin and my teacher thought I'd been eating it because I put it in the bin, so I got told off for that.	104	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	and I had someone to come and see me about it and then I had to go and work in another classroom, but then he found out it wasn't my fault and then were alright now. So	106	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Well it was just like, we were just talking about it, and then he was asking me if it was mine, but he kept thinking it was and then	108	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	it got into like an argument kind of and then he turned around and just called someone from like the senior management team to come in and speak to me and that and then they moved me to another classroom for the rest of that lesson.	112	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Well it didn't, like, I don't know if he still thinks it were me or not, we didn't resolve it we just like worked past it. Like I just got... after that when I went I were back in the classroom I just got on with my work, tried to do my best and then it's not been mentioned since.	122	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	but like there's other things as well like when teachers have a go at you before, or something just goes wrong you'll get quite annoyed with it	140	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	and you'll just think, like, you can't be bothered with it really.	142	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Like if you're not doing your work or something they'll probably call you immature	144	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	or like they'll say you need to start growing up and stuff like that	146	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	it gets most people angry, just like if we were to call them, say they needed to grow up they wouldn't like it..	148	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Yeah, and then it just like carries on and on and on	168	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship

Jason	and like you can say something you don't want, and it can just go completely the wrong way and like they could feel bad for me	177	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Jason	Just, calming down, like, talking to my mates, having a laugh, just like takes everything out of my head I just forget about it.	190	helpful peer relationships	influence of peers
Jason	because, like, no teachers getting on at you, so you can just like ease out and stuff like that	194	helpful peer relationships	influence of peers
Jason	Like sometimes your friends will be like, oh there's no need to do that and stuff like that and you'll be like wanting to follow them and not be like called weird and stuff, so you just go that way...	212	inability to resist negative influence of peers	influence of peers
Jess	Teachers like try explain and I get myself all in a muddle and I just, I don't think teachers really help, sometimes their like oh it's easy you can do it, and you know, like, well I can't	21	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Jess	then when it comes to the questions, I put my hand up and say sir I don't get it. He'll just go through the example again, he'll just like rush through it and he'll be like look that's what you do it this this and this and it's not really like right will do an example together and I'll show you.	130	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Jess	Yeah, I'd rather have something like that, so I can, he can be like we'll do an example and then I'll give you a question and I'll sit here while you work it out and we'll like work through it together, rather than just be like you do this this this and this, now do the questions	136	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Jess	I end up like being stuck on like question two and then I'll put my hand up and he'll just, he'll just come over and he'll just be like you do this, this and this look and then he'll start doing something different, completely to what he showed me and then I'll get confused, completely confused and I just tell him to go away	138	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Jess	I just, my ears just stop working because I get bored	179		repetition and monotony in learning
Jess	I don't think they pay attention, I think the only one they pay attention to is English	252	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship

Jess	I think maths know I'm struggling, because in year 11 we get a mentor, kind of thing, and my mentor's maths teacher, so I think they kind of know that I'm struggling with maths and that's why I've got a maths mentor, and stuff like that.	262	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Jess	They just like, someone to talk to about your exams and stuff like that	264	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Jess	and like if you're struggling or you think that you need some more revision in a certain subject and they think you need anything, something like that and I've got a maths teacher, so, I think they're kind of getting I'm struggling, but...	266	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Jess	I think my English teacher's surprised with my... and my science teacher's proud, because he says I've gone from like working quite, like not getting a lot to going up to a, to getting like a high end D nearly a C.	274	encouragement by teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Jess	and he says I'm doing well and even he said I just need that little bit more time to get something.	276	encouragement by teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Jess	yeah, but it's just maths, that I think they know I'm struggling with, but they don't, I don't think they know what to do, to like help me, because you're, I don't, I don't know if it's the teacher or, but, or if it's just me that doesn't like maths.	278	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Laura	so then I told Miss S and she got rid of him but now my grades are starting to build up again	35	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Laura	I had some trouble at school with it	66	bullying	influence of peers
Laura	but then school managed to sort it all out	68	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Laura	and I'm having help, I was having help during school and it's been really good and then they've allowed my people from the hospital to come in and talk to me during school instead of me going, travelling all the way there	86	positive influence of pastoral care	pupil/teacher relationship
Laura	that's why I like this school because it's not like they don't help you with stuff they like talk to you about things	90	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care

Laura	Yeah and you can tell them anything they won't go telling anyone	94	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Laura	And that's how I built up the courage to tell Miss S, she's amazing I can tell her anything	96	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Laura	and she like helps people who've got family problems and she's involved with the social worker er social services	102	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Laura	my mum had this like diary thing where we had to, she filled it in everyday, when he was having a go at us and Miss S er straightaway when she'd seen that diary, she straightaway phoned em the social workers to help us.	104	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Laura	because, like, I didn't, I had a month of school at the beginning of December and then sometime in January where it all started to kick off again with the paedophile next door, with his brothers and sisters, er his daughters and sons and like because she was my best mate and she had an older sister	118	bullying	influence of peers
Laura	she was like having a go at me saying that it was all my fault and I got it into me head thinking it were on my fault	120	bullying	influence of peers
Laura	Yet perfectly fine,	160	peer friendships	influence of peers
Laura	I actually do love this school but it's just like you're not allowed your hair, like how you want it and earrings and stuff like that that's what just, all that apart from that I'd love it	163	Attitude to school	pupil/teacher relationship
Laura	Yeah but like I'll ask my par... Like three before me I think it is, where you have to ask someone, you have to try and do it yourself and then you ask a teacher	205	helpful peer relationships	influence of peers
Laura	so then I asked my friend and then me and my mates work together to do it, or I have to ask teacher, but I don't like asking so I just like to try and do it myself	207	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Laura	<i>yeah so you tend to ask your friends and you try not to ask the teacher</i>	218	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Laura	so, that's what all my reports say, but I have to ask, like teachers, but...	225	understanding of learning need from teacher	pupil/teacher relationship

Laura	Not really, it's just like once they've explained it, they don't like explain it again and they'll just like have a go at you or something, for not listening	229	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Laura	Yeah, or I'd ask my mate, what's answer or can you help me what do I do, before I ask teacher because I don't want teachers to just say oh ask someone, or look around the room, or it's on the board so, but that's if I'm not concentrating.	233	helpful peer relationships	influence of peers
Laura	Well within, since I've been in years seven er from beginning of year seven till year 10, to say I've like had warnings on the board for being naughty I've only got sent out twice	235	pupil/teacher co-operation	pupil/teacher relationship
Laura	Not sure, because like everyone got their exam results and I didn't bother going back to the teacher and asking them how I was doing so I just left it	341	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	but Mrs B was the best teacher ever	95	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Nicki	because she looked after me and made sure I was doing the right things and everything	99	positive influence of pastoral care	pastoral care
Nicki	Abigail R, Kim, Bernette, Beth, Nicole, Martin, his brother Shane, I've got loads	105	peer friendships	influence of peers
Nicki	Like if you're stuck or your..... she comes and sits next to you.	191	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	She like, I do something and she says no that's wrong do it the other way.	193	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	Because she don't have a go at you if you're like struggling	207	pupil/teacher discord	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	<i>you don't feel bad at not getting something?</i>	210	teacher encouragement	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	Yeah, he's a bit boring and he tells you to, like, do something and if you don't understand it then you put your hand up and he, all he does is says get on, he don't help you.	234	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship

Nicki	She like sometimes gives you hints like saying you've done that wrong do the opposite	244	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	and like if you don't understand it properly she comes and sits next to you	246	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	I just go to a different teacher and ask them to help me.	294	determination	emotions positively affecting study
Nicki	Yeah science I can go up to science block which is orange, for maths I could go up to pink block and for English I can go to, either blue or yellow block.	304	positive influence of pastoral care	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	I don't know I ain't really asked them,	346	teacher's understanding of learning need	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	because when I came I had Miss W then it changed to Mr J then a different teacher then Mr S	350	familiarity with teacher	pupil/teacher relationship
Nicki	Well everybody calls me like a teacher's pet	370	resist peer pressure	influence of peers
Nicki	<i>Do they because?</i>	371		influence of peers
Nicki	I normally go up to them and ask for some work so I can do it at home	372		influence of peers
Nicki	<i>okay brilliant, so they call you a teacher's pet, because you're determined, well I'd say determined when you might call it another thing, because you want to get extra work and do well</i>	379		influence of peers
Nicki	Yeah	380		influence of peers
Nicki	<i>and how does that affect you?</i>	381		influence of peers
Nicki	I just normally ignore it	382	resist peer pressure	influence of peers

APPENDIX 11

TABLE 11: SUPERORDINATE THEME 4, INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS TEACHING EXPERIENCE ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

name	transcript	Line	emergent theme	subordinate theme
Alistair	Em, science, just most lessons, I don't understand it and then English it's just when you write and write loads of essays	119	repetition and monotony	repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	they just drag on for ages	121	boredom	repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	yeah and then if you don't get the grade you've got to do it all again	125	repetitive tasks	repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	yeah, and it's horrible [sigh]	135	disengagement	repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	but after, you don't read the book again, so you've just got to do it from what you remember.	139	repetition inhibiting learning	repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	so you're probably not going to get the grade that you need if you can't remember.	143	repetition inhibiting learning	repetition and monotony in

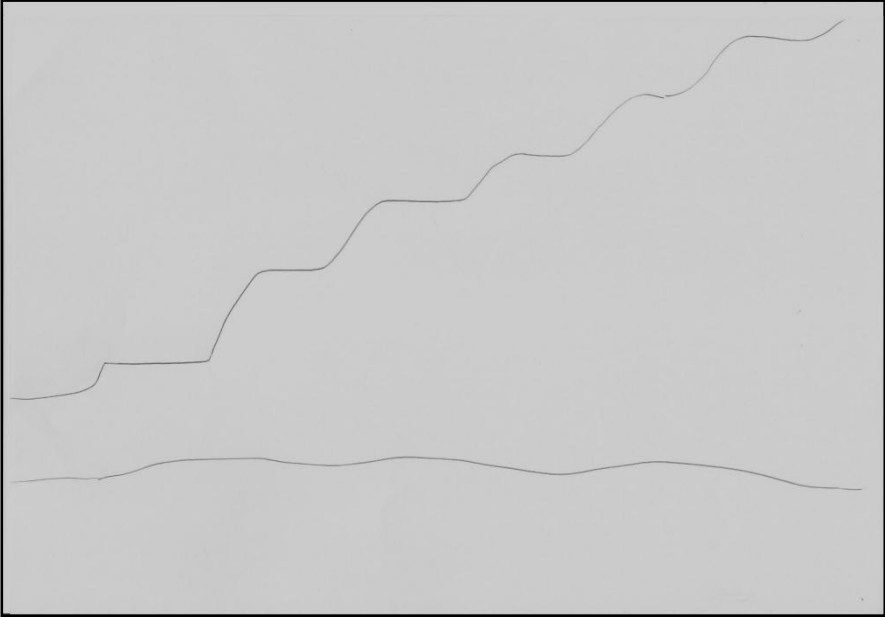
				learning
Alistair	<i>so it's the subject matter that's different?</i>	170		interest in topic
Alistair	yeah, but like when you do graphs and stuff like that , I like working it out.	171	interest in maths	interest in topic
Alistair	Okay	172		interest in topic
Alistair	but in English you just write ...	173	repetitive tasks	interest in topic
Alistair	It's just right annoying when they teaching it you, because it's boring	181	boredom	repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	instead of just like writing loads and loads, lesson after lesson.	187	repetitive tasks	repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	<i>Mmm hmm.... So English would be more enjoyable if it was shorter amounts of writing?</i>	188		repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	Yeah and, like when you're, instead of doing the same thing all the time	189	repetition and monotony	repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	yeah, and in science it's like you do some stuff, but you just do it again but it's a lot harder.	199		repetition and monotony in learning
Alistair	no because that will right hard, because I was in top top set and me and my mate that sat next to me, we just didn't get nothing in any lesson, because it were right hard, but people who are in that group they got like As and A* in this exam and I got two Us, so	207	comparison with others	learning challenge

Alistair	I don't do much of it, I only do geography because I've got Mr I [Headteacher]	301	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	<i>Oh</i>	302	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	[laughs]	303		attitude to homework
Alistair	<i>oh, so you do that, because you don't want to end up in trouble.</i>	304		attitude to homework
Alistair	Trouble [emphasised]	305	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	<i>is that an understatement [laughs]</i>	306		attitude to homework
Alistair	that's an understatement	307		attitude to homework
Alistair	<i>tell me about it</i>	308		attitude to homework
Alistair	oh he'd go mad	309	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	<i>does he?</i>	310		attitude to homework
Alistair	Like even if you do it and you get some of it wrong or you like on one of them like I did it all, but I missed one question out because the way he did the questions it like, all the questions were in one big paragraph and then I did them on Sunday and then I went back to it and I missed one out and he weren't happy	311	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework

Alistair	<i>okay, so you make sure you do the homework</i>	312		attitude to homework
Alistair	yeah, I make sure I do that one, and maths, but we haven't had maths in ages because we're just doing revision for our exams	313	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	<i>yeah, you do maths because you like it?</i>	314		attitude to homework
Alistair	No cause, they'll go mad	315		attitude to homework
Alistair	Yeah, but she, in maths, if you don't do it you'll just have to stay behind and do it so I just do it anyway.	317	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	<i>So what about Mr I, what does he make you do?</i>	318		attitude to homework
Alistair	Oh he'd just shouts, he's scary	319	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	[Laughs] <i>is he very scary</i>	320		attitude to homework
Alistair	He's very scary	321	external motivation to complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	Yeah, but in, what's it called, science I don't do it, but most of the time they just say you've got this homework, but I'm just like don't do it, because I wouldn't understand if I tried to do it anyway	332	cannot complete	attitude to homework
Alistair	yeah and they expect you to do it all, like, when you've got like Mr I he gives you like a week and you've got to do a full project and it's hard and then you've got like your art homework and everything else, you can't do it unless you sit at home and do it all day, like some people would, I just do like an hour or summthing and then go out	373		attitude to homework

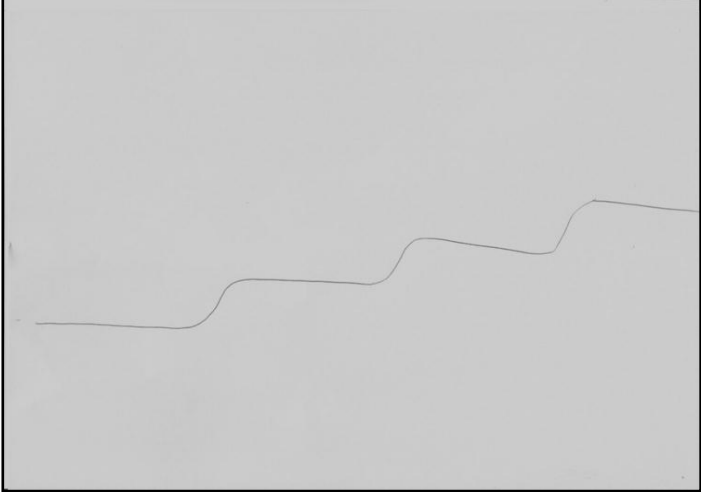
Alistair	<i>so you'd like to make it..., Yeah okay so that's one thing you like to change, if you had to keep one thing, if you could only keep one thing what would you keep?</i>	467		Autonomy in learning
Alistair	Em, in English where you like do your own thing when you're planning to do like role-play or something	470	plan work in lesson	autonomy in learning
Alistair	<i>Yeah</i>	471		autonomy in learning
Alistair	instead of them being there all the time you can just go off and do it and then come back and do what you need to	472	plan work in lesson	autonomy in learning
Bradley	[Sighs], some of the lesson sometimes are alright	88	indifference	interest in topic
Bradley	<i>Aha, so those are the subjects you like, so what you do in music?</i>	108		interest in topic
Bradley	Well at the minute we got to write our own song.	109	creativity	interest in topic
Bradley	<i>Yeah</i>	110		interest in topic
Bradley	well not song just like piece of music for GCSE	111	creativity	interest in topic
Bradley	<i>Right so you're composing a song</i>	112		interest in topic
Bradley	<i>Yeah</i>	113		interest in topic
Bradley	<i>Good, that sounds interesting, mmh so those subjects make it worth coming to school?</i>	114		interest in topic
Bradley	<i>Yeah</i>	115		interest in topic
Bradley	[pause] because mostly I just like to try and get on with it myself and not them keep coming over all the time.	136	avoidance of	learning

			challenge	challenge
Bradley	<i>but you'd rather be left alone?</i>	153		autonomy of learning
Bradley	Yeah [laughs]	154	avoidance of challenge	autonomy of learning
Bradley	<i>and you work out what you can work out and leave what you can't</i>	155	work independently	autonomy of learning
Bradley	yeah, then just like go onto the next one.	156	working alone	autonomy of learning
Bradley	<i>Right, okay, you don't like being pushed?</i>	157		learning challenge
Bradley	No	158	avoidance of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>to try and understand more?</i>	159		learning challenge
Bradley	No [laughs]	160		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>not at all, you said that quite strongly</i>	161		learning challenge
Bradley	yeah [laughs]	162	avoidance of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>what goes with being pushed to try and understand more you?</i>	163		learning challenge
Bradley	Erm, I'm not sure really,[pause] I'm not really entirely sure	164		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>you're not sure what it means, oh that's interesting isn't it don't you like about understanding more?</i>	165		learning challenge

Bradley	Yeah because then you like get asked more questions there is more to remember	166	avoidance of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>Oh, so it feels like, and we try and let me try and draw a picture, you like pictures don't you</i>	167		learning challenge
Bradley		168		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>So it's sort of like, so you go along like this quite happily</i>	169	avoidance of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah [laughs]	170		learning challenge

Bradley	<i>and you're quite happy to do that, and nice walk in the park?</i>	171		learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah [laughs]	172	avoidance of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>not too stressful, but if you get, it's like they push you up a hill, and that's okay they push you up that hill</i>	173		learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah	174		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>but then there's another one here and another one here and another one here and another one here, is that what it feels like?</i>	175		learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah [sense of recognition in voice and laughs a lot]	176	avoidance of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>okay I get you, it's much easier just wander along this bit here and it's not worth going up the first one, because you know there'll be another one..</i>	177	enjoyment of learning at own pace	learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah	178		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>here, got you.[laughs] okay, yes so that sense of moving on, your quite, you seem quite happy along this pathway</i>	179		learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah	180	enjoyment of learning at own pace	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>and that's where you'd rather stay?</i>	181		learning challenge
Bradley	Yup	182	enjoyment of learning at own pace	learning challenge

Bradley	<i>is that right, you seem very very happy there, and you're just wander along by the river on the lower ground (we are in Blankshire aren't we) rather than go up the hills. Okay, does that make sense or is that just me being crazy?</i>	183		learning challenge
Bradley	It makes sense [laughs]	184		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>Oh good, good alright then, so a lesson you didn't enjoy was way were forced to try and go up the hill</i>	185	dislike of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	yeah yeah	186		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>Again</i>	187		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>and again okay what would it be like, if you've made that one hill and then you are allowed to carry on.</i>	188		learning challenge

Bradley		197		learning challenge
Bradley	It would be fine	198	limited challenge ok	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>okay that's interesting, what about in another week, if they tried another hill, so if the pace was slower?</i>	199		learning challenge
Bradley	Em [pause]	200		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>What do you think about that?</i>	201		learning challenge
Bradley	[Pause]	202		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>Yeah so if you, in that one lesson you'd just had that, you'd put your hand up, you'd worked one thing out,</i>	203		learning

				challenge
Bradley	Yeah	204		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>and then that was it, that was your challenge that lesson</i>	205		learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah	206		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>that would be okay?</i>	207		learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah	208	limited challenge ok	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>and then if there was another lesson and you had one challenge, would that be alright</i>	209		learning challenge
Bradley	Yeah	210		learning challenge
Bradley	<i>but it's the fact that it feels like there's more and more and more</i>	211		learning challenge
Bradley	yeah [emphatically]	212	endless challenge not ok	learning challenge
Bradley	[Sighs] when I were like just like halfway through year eight.	214	avoidance of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	yeah because I used my hand up all the time at first	216	avoidance of challenge	learning challenge
Bradley	<i>Right okay, oh that's really interesting, okay, so what would be a good lesson for you, that you can remember.</i>	219		autonomy of learning
Bradley	Em, like in science, we had to do like a poster last week, they just like printed some posters off, put it on the table and that's it, takes some information and ideas from there until the end of the lesson and that were it .	220	enjoyment of autonomy	autonomy of learning

Bradley	Yeah and then teachers don't come over and like make sure you're up to speed	226	learning at own pace	autonomy of learning
Bradley	<i>Okay so it felt relaxed?</i>	227		autonomy of learning
Bradley	Yeah,	228		autonomy of learning
Bradley	<i>okay, to work harder, you probably did quite a lot of work on that poster I would think, what do you think?</i>	233		autonomy of learning
Bradley	Well, I filled one side an A3 and half an A4 so...	234	working productively at own pace	autonomy of learning
Bradley	<i>right okay yeah, good, how about homework?</i>	295		attitude to homework
Bradley	[Laughs]	296		attitude to homework
Bradley	<i>I love your expression, what homework, no, do you ever do homework?</i>	297		attitude to homework
Bradley	Sometimes, but I don't really get time most of the time,	298	lack of homework	attitude to homework
Bradley	because I like to take my work home from school and like finish that and then I don't get time to do my homework.	300	finishing schoolwork	attitude to homework
Bradley	<i>So you actually have to do the work we haven't done in class at home?</i>	301		attitude to homework
Bradley	Yeah sometimes	302	finishing schoolwork	attitude to homework
Bradley	<i>okay, and you don't get to do your homework often</i>	303		attitude to homework

Bradley	yup, but now they put it on school website so	304		attitude to homework
Bradley	<i>the homework, so that you could do it</i>	305		attitude to homework
Bradley	yeah	306		attitude to homework
Bradley	<i>so what happens then with homework, or work we've got finish at home when do you do it, you get home from school and then what happens?</i>	307		attitude to homework
Bradley	Usually I leave it until the last week	308	low priority	attitude to homework
Bradley	Whenever I get time	320	low priority	attitude to homework
Jason	And it's like putting, you've got to write an investigation, it's called an investigation, and you've got to write like how, when it was brought out what the, like, I forgot what it's called what's in the film what you always get in a horror film...	52	interest in creative topic	interest in topic
Jason	Just like they've always got like scary noises in them, and all like screaming, or there is always someone who ends up getting killed and its always in a weird way, it's not how you think it would go, it's like, if you think about it, it's like it's never always the main characters that get killed, it's always someone else, that they are related to or close to that get killed, stuff like that, so it will be like harder for them, and frustrating.	60	interest in creative topic	interest in topic
Jason	Yeah, it's a good topic to base a film on, because there's loads to talk about and you can explain it more than other films so.	66	interest in topic	interest in topic
Jason	If you like it or not, if you don't really like it, you'll be like, oh I don't really need to do that, but if not....	196	disengagement when not interested	interest in topic
Jason	there's more interest in it, if you like it, you're like, you are more interested it will drag you in more and if you don't like it, it will be like wanting to push you away	198	engagement when interested	interest in lesson

Jason	like, you won't like it, like you're just think oh you don't need to do this, when it actually matters but, well, like, just that really.	200	disengagement when not interested in lesson	interest in lesson
Jason	<i>Right okay, how about the teacher does that have any impact on whether you enjoy a lesson or not?</i>	201		repetition and monotony in learning
Jason	<i>[Shakes head]</i>	202		repetition and monotony in learning
Jason	<i>it really is what you're doing that matters</i>	203		repetition and monotony in learning
Jason	yeah kind of it has got a bit of an effect, but apart from that it's just about the lesson.	204	boring lesson leads to disengagement	interest in lesson
Jason	<i>do you do stuff at home for your coursework?</i>	271		attitude to homework
Jason	Like we'll get something every so often, but it's mostly just put into lessons and if we don't finish it we can take it home and finish off at home	274	finishing schoolwork	attitude to homework
Jason	<i>oh okay</i>	275		attitude to homework
Jason	if we know what we're doing	276	lack of homework	attitude to homework
Jason	And I've got an example often it's like coursework mixing with homework, you've got to revise and stuff that's basically it	280	Focused on work at home with purpose	attitude to homework

Jess	I'd rather get it, I'd rather have it like, someone sit with me for an extra 10 minutes and explain it a bit more and then I get it so I can get on with it	29	support needed for learning challenge	learning challenge
Jess	or it's nice to look at a sheet and think oh I can do that and get on with it and do it rather than looking at a sheet and thinking, oh, I don't know what to do.	31	pride in ability to achieve unaided	autonomy in learning
Jess	I just feel like I've learned something and I'm doing something and it's just nice to like look at something and think oh I can do that and then teacher's like oh yeah you got it all right well done and it's quite nice to hear that you done it all right and you know what you doing for once.[Yeah, laughs]	35	pride in ability to achieve unaided	autonomy in learning
Jess	I don't know, because, like they are all different questions and you could do like loads of practice exams and then it will come to the real one and it's nothing like it.	94	GCSE practice	repetition and monotony of learning
Jess	I like English, because we've been doing media studies, and I quite enjoy it, because we've been doing magazines, we've made our own magazine covers, and then we've had to write an evaluation about it. I found that quite easy and then we've done a horror controlled assessment, where we've had to watch clips of horror and I've quite enjoyed that, because it were my own work and I could take it at my own pace, I didn't have to like finish it by a certain...	108	enjoyment of learning at own pace	autonomy in learning
Jess	No like I could do it at my own pace and I had someone there to like help me if I needed or if I got stuck, so I quite like English	110	enjoyment of learning at own pace	learning challenge
Jess	I just, I didn't get stuck, because it were like, it's basically my own opinion, but if I is needed like any words, so like if I couldn't put a sentence together and I needed that one word and I couldn't remember what it were, she'd like, because like I forgot the word homage	112	support needed for learning challenge	learning challenge
Jess	and I forgot what it were, I had forgotten what omer, I thought it worked 'o' something, but she told me that and then I were back on track.	114	support needed for learning challenge	learning challenge
Jess	so I were fine after that, and she come and check my work, like, every two lessons and stuff like that.	116	support needed for learning challenge	learning challenge

Jess	Yeah, well I would've wrote something completely different down.	118	support needed for learning challenge	learning challenge
Jess	no way, maths, we did a GCSE exam and I got to retake it because I got U. I got six marks out of the whole paper [laughs]. I couldn't do it, I knew I couldn't have done it, but, I don't like maths, because basically all we ever do, is he shows us how to do it on the board and we get 1 million questions to do in a book and I don't feel like I'm learning anything by doing equations out of a book, and like him just showing us one example on the board I'd rather him do like four example's, then do one together as a class, then do a couple out of the book, but	124	GCSE practice	repetition and monotony of learning
Jess	I end up just looking through book, to try to find an example to see if it like helps.	143	own solution as compromise	autonomy in learning
Jess	Just carry on with questions as good as I can and if I can't do them then, I'll just try my best and do what I do	145	own solution as compromise	autonomy in learning
Jess	[groans] annoying, because I know, literally I'll walk in and he'll say you're doing this, this and this today and will go in he'll do a couple of examples on board, he'll do like an easy example then he'll do a hard example, then he'll be like go to page such and such and copy it all out and then writing and all, I don't feel like, when I come out of a maths lesson I don't feel like I've learnt anything.	161	repetitive tasks	repetition and monotony of learning
Jess	I just, my ears just stop working because I get bored	179	disengagement	repetition and monotony of learning
Jess	Yeah, because I can't be doing with people talking for ages, I can't be doing with copying out of a book for like pages and pages, it just bores me, I'd rather have something like to do like, you've got to do like a cutting and sticking sheet and you've got to like, do like different things every lesson.	183	boredom of repetitive tasks	repetition and monotony of learning
Jess	you get them projects, I think they're stupid.	226	pointless	attitude to homework
Jess	Cause, then not I don't think, you just hand them in and then you get a mark back at end of it, it's like I don't get how it's going to help, doing a leaflet on diabetes, what's that gonna help me with?	228	pointless	attitude to homework
Jess	and it's like do a leaflet on solar system, it's like how's that going to take me six hours? Pointless	234	pointless	attitude to

				homework
Jess	No, it's just like do task 2.3 and it's something about diabetes or something like that and your like uh	238	pointless	attitude to homework
Jess	I do it, but, I just think it's pointless because...	240	pointless	attitude to homework
Jess	I don't see why we've got to take work home when work at school six hours a day.	242	pointless	attitude to homework
Jess	Not a lot, but I'd rather just be not having the stress of oh I've got to do homework when I get home from school, when I've been at school six hours.	246	stress	attitude to homework
Jess	Yeah I just want time, I've been at school for six hours, then I come home knowing I've got to spend at least an hour doing something else for school, when I could be doing nothing.	248	pointless	attitude to homework
Jess	Yeah I'd rather be doing nothing, I'd rather sit their bored than doing homework [laughs]	250		attitude to homework
Jess	in science I just think it's your notes, well they all say it's your notes, it's your book you do what you want in it.	254	own notes	autonomy in learning
Jess	so it's like you do what you want, it's your notes you write down what you think you need to write down and stuff like that. They hardly ever mark them and maths they hardly ever look at them.	256	own notes	autonomy in learning
Jess	No, but my maths books just full of scribbles and crosses and scribbles and it's not very neat. It's got like loads of teachers workings out where they've tried to explain it to me and made it even worse	258	own notes	autonomy in learning
Jess	I think once you get into year 10, it's like your revision book, it's your notes, you do what you want. I think they're not too, like it's your responsibility, kind of thing.	260	own notes	autonomy in learning
Jess	Yes because it's my own opinion.	360	own opinion	autonomy in learning
Laura	Em, not really, in maths when we were doing just like practising for the exams but I guess you have to do that	188	boredom with repetitive, monotonous lessons	repetition and monotony in learning

Laura	but then a boring lesson is just where you're copying of the board or writing out of the textbook all lesson and not doing anything.	242	boredom with notetaking and copying	repetition and monotony in learning
Laura	I haven't had any for ages, know because I'm in year 10 it's mostly coursework, apart from I do coursework in school now	321		attitude to homework
Laura	no I might have some sheets to do in French, but I just go on Google translate and try and do it because I haven't got a clue	327	cannot complete homework	attitude to homework
Nicki	<i>So can you tell me a little bit about what it's like for you at school.</i>	42		repetition and monotony in learning
Nicki	Em, it sometimes boring in ICT, but I get used to it though	43	boredom	repetition and monotony in learning
Nicki	<i>so do you like school or do you not like school or are you not bothered?</i>	44		repetition and monotony in learning
Nicki	not really bothered,	45	disengagement	repetition and monotony in learning
Nicki	<i>so you don't really have a strong feeling</i>	46		repetition and monotony in learning
Nicki	no, sometimes when I wake up I normally think why on earth do I have to go to school, why was school invented?	47	disengagement	repetition and monotony in learning

Nicki	<i>Oh do you, so you're not keen to come to school</i>	48		repetition and monotony in learning
Nicki	not some mornings,	49	disengagement	repetition and monotony in learning
Nicki	<i>haven't you, mmm, very good, so can you tell me what a good lesson is like, can you remember a good lesson?</i>	160		learning challenge
Nicki	When we get to watch movies in the lesson	161	prefers no challenge	learning challenge
Nicki	<i>Aha, you like that, can you tell me a bit about what makes a lesson good... Or can you remember...?</i>	162		learning challenge
Nicki	You just sit there and get comfy and normally fall asleep [laughs]	163	prefers no challenge	learning challenge
Nicki	He would just tell you to get on with it and you'll have to find it yourself.	248	find out yourself	autonomy in learning
Nicki	I Aint really had that much, so they'll be alright.	388		attitude to homework
Nicki	<i>Do you like doing homework?</i>	389		attitude to homework
Nicki	Not really	390	dislike of homework	attitude to homework
Nicki	<i>so you're okay with not having much?</i>	391		attitude to homework
Nicki	Yeah	392		attitude to homework
Nicki	<i>but then you ask the extra work?</i>	393		attitude to

				homework
Nicki	Because then I can like get up to speed.	394	Focused on work at home with purpose	attitude to homework
Nicki	<i>Okay, so do you do that at home?</i>	395		attitude to homework
Nicki	<i>but that's motivated by you rather than being given by the teacher</i>	395		attitude to homework
Nicki	<i>is that the difference?</i>	396		attitude to homework
Nicki	No, because you don't have a specific time	399	Focused on work at home with purpose	attitude to homework

APPENDIX 12

TABLE 12: SUPERORDINATE THEME 5, EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

name	transcript	Line	emergent theme	subordinate theme
Alistair	Em, I'm not sure, that one	5	avoidance of study	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	the most important bits, then I have to go out.	13	pull of alternatives to study	attraction of alternatives to study
Alistair	Yeah, like the stuff I'm not sure of, or I've forgotten	17	prioritisation	emotions positively affecting study
Alistair	Well maths is alright, cause I like maths.	23	enjoyment	emotions positively affecting study
Alistair	no, I like stuff they do but...	27	enjoyment	emotions positively affecting study
Alistair	I just watch videos of it	31	study as compromise	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	It's alright, in a way, but I get stressed with it right easy	41	study as stressful	emotions negatively affecting study



Alistair	I don't know, it's like work that you don't understand	43	study as stressful	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	I don't know, I just leave it, stop doing it	47	study as stressful	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	All of it, it's right complicated, I don't get none of it	90	study as confusing	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	I don't know, because I don't get any of it, like one lesson I could do something, and then another lesson, like in practicals, I don't get none of that. Like when you've got to put stuff together that's...	94	study as hopeless	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	I don't get what order it's in though, like with all the rays, that's right	108	study as hopeless	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	I don't really know I just, I don't know about English...	151	study as hopeless	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	Yeah, but once I've wrote it, I want to change it	153	dissatisfaction with work	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	or, I want to add right loads to it, and the lesson after that I want to change it again, so it takes ages.	155	dissatisfaction with work	emotions negatively affecting study
Alistair	<i>What would help you work harder?</i>	184		emotions positively affecting study


Alistair	If it's more enjoyable	185	enjoyment	emotions positively affecting study
Alistair	my sister is always been clever though, she's always been the smartest one out of all of us so	452	study as hopeless	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	Not sure really	12	avoidance of study	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	I'd probably just sit there	19	avoidance of study	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	I just sit there and just start looking at it again	21	avoidance of study	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	<i>Right and would you be trying to work it out or would you just be like I can't do it?</i>	22	hopelessness	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	Yeah [laughs]	23	hopelessness	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	<i>Okay, would that be a little bit of hopelessness about the fact that you can do it.</i>	24	hopelessness	emotions negatively affecting study

Bradley	Yeah	25	hopelessness	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	<i>You'd just be sat there, but quietly waiting do you think, or would you be making...</i>	26		emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	I'd just be that there quiet	27	avoidance of study	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	<i>so what do you do if you're not working, can you chat or just...</i>	59		emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	I just sit there	60	avoidance of study	emotions negatively affecting study
Bradley	no I just, like, draw in my book	62	avoidance of study	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	well it's like a bit frustrated	14	sense of anger and frustration	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	and like not always concentrating.	16	little control with distractions	emotions negatively affecting study

Jason	Like, being distracted is not always something you want.	30	inability to resist negative influence of peers	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	Yeah, like if I'm angry I'll just decide right I'm not in the mood, I'll just like, I'll work a bit and then get distracted and start talking to people and then it will like work up into arguments with teachers and stuff	130	Anger	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	Once or twice a week, like, 25% of the week	134	Anger	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	Well I feel in a way bad, because like when you are like angry and agitated you'll say something you don't want	175	sense of anger and frustration	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	Yeah, like it carries on with me, like if I get annoyed once I'll possibly be annoyed that the rest of the day, half of the day, something	180	anger	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	yeah, I'm more snappy when I'm angry and stuff, I've got a feeling to say something back.	184	anger	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	Sometimes I will come to school snappy, like if I've had an argument with my friend out of school, or something has gone wrong at home. I'll probably get a bit snappy but, otherwise it's just mostly school.	186	anger	emotions negatively affecting study
Jason	It puts you down like if you don't feel like you're hitting your target, if you know that you're not hitting your target, you will get a bit wound up about it, like that you know you can do better, but you are not pushing yourself that hard. It's deciding to go the wrong way and do everything the wrong, at the wrong time.	232	self blame for not reaching target	emotions negatively affecting study

Jess	I get confused a lot	7	study as confusing	emotions negatively affecting study and achievement
Jess	sometimes I get stressed if I get confused.	9	study as stressful	emotions negatively affecting study and achievement
jess	but sometimes I just get it straightaway.	11	pride in achievement	emotions positively affecting study and achievement
Jess	Sometimes I get like really confused and then I get stressed cause I'm confused and then but sometimes I just look at it and I can do it straightaway.	15	confusion, stress, understanding aspects of study	emotions negatively affecting study and achievement
Jess	I just get myself all worked up and angry and uptight	19	anxiety and anger	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	Teachers like try explain and I get all myself in a muddle and I just, I don't think teachers really help, sometimes their like oh it's easy you can do it, and you know, like, well I can't	21	teacher understanding of learning need	teacher pupil relationship
jess	I just switch off, I can't, I try and do it my own way and try and figure it out if teachers haven't really but most of the time I just switch off.	23	zoning out	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health

Jess	I copy it all out, and I sit there, I look at the board, look at the book and I'm thinking oh God I don't get this.	128	anger	emotions negatively affecting study and achievement
jess	I feel like it's a bit pointless to be sat in there...	163	hopelessness	emotions negatively affecting study and achievement
Jess	I feel better after an English lesson, because like they tell me what I've done and like what grades time like working up to and I feel like oh my work is worth an A or my works worth an A*, and I feel really good; but after maths, I'm like ohh, no, I don't feel like I've done anything and it's just, I don't see the point in sitting there.	169	pride in achievement	emotions positively affecting study and achievement
jess	Yeah and I've done I'm doing right now, and I'm doing absolutely fine in English, I'm doing better than I expected and English, I didn't think I could get an A*, As and Bs.	242	pride in achievement	emotions positively affecting study and achievement
Laura	That one when I don't know what to do	9	study as confusion	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	and I'm confused	11	study as confusion	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	but I do have a case called hypermobility where it will involve all my joints what makes me tired after school anyway	19	study as unmotivating	Emotions negatively affecting learning

Laura	All the time, I just never know what I'm doing on my own like	25	study as confusion	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	And like things without, like I have too much on my mind, where I have depression as well so.	39	depression	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	like doing stuff, I think it's too late but	80	study as hopeless	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	<i>what you mean it's too late?</i>	81	study as hopeless	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	like it's too late to like do all my work again	82	study as hopeless	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	she was like having a go at me saying that it was all my fault and I got it into me head thinking it were on my fault	120	self-blame	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	and I just got all that on top of me 	122	self-blame	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	It's alright, all my coursework is going on top of me at the minute, but....	134	study as hopeless	Emotions negatively affecting learning

Laura	that made my depression worse and all, I had a couple of days off school because I couldn't get to school so	266	depression	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Laura	I got right nervous and I was like I don't want to know	347	study as stressful	Emotions negatively affecting learning
Nicki	It's normally like that one there	9	study as collaboration	emotions positively affecting study and achievement
Nicki	It's a bit boring like sometimes	11	study as un motivating	emotions negatively affecting study
Nicki	And a bit tired	13	study as un motivating	emotions negatively affecting study
Nicki	I can concentrate better with someone like, at the side of me or something.	19	support in learning	support of social interaction
Nicki	I forget things	21	study as un motivating	emotions negatively affecting study
Nicki	Like if someone told me like yesterday that I had like a meeting, I'd forget until they come back to me.	25	study as un motivating	emotions negatively affecting study



Nicki	Angry, I'm meant to have had him last lesson but he wasn't here so I had Miss J...	236	study as stressful	emotions negatively affecting study
Nicki	I just go to a different teacher and ask them to help me.	294	determination	emotions positively affecting study and achievement

APPENDIX 13

TABLE 13: SUPERORDINATE THEME 6, RESPONSE TO GCSE PRESSURE

name	Transcript	Line	emergent theme	subordinate theme
Alistair	Yeah, because like when some people read it out and it's like right good then you want to change yours	163	comparison with others	effect of competition and challenge
Alistair	no because that will right hard, because I was in top top set and me and my mate that sat next to me, we just didn't get nothing in any lesson, because it were right hard, but people who are in that group they got like As and A* in this exam and I got two Us, so	207	comparison with others	effect of competition and challenge
Alistair	I think in maths I can get a B. And in English, I could in some things, but I'm more likely to get a C, but in science I'm not even going to get a C, because the highest I can get is a C and that is not going to happen.	233	unachievable targets	effect of targets
Alistair	Em, well I know I'm not going to get them, even if I tried really, really hard, in science, but in English, it's just like, when you are doing it, it's you can't really revise it, you can't revise English, you can, you can go over the book a bit and stuff like that and get your plan really good, but you can't revise the stuff that you are going to write so...	235	unachievable targets	effect of targets
Alistair	I don't know I'm just going to aim for a C as long as it's a pass,	248	own targets	effect of targets
Alistair	yeah but a Ds not that bad	250	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Alistair	but I'd rather get a C	252	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Alistair	<i>yeah, sure, what are you going to do about science?</i>	253		effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Alistair	Oh I don't even know, straight off	254	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Alistair	because I know I won't get a C, so try and go for a D in both of them, because that's better than a U.	256	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure

				on mental health
Alistair	Yeah, and you can only have one retake	258	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Alistair	and I think, I think I've done both of them, I had right loads of exams in a short amount of time so I don't know which, I forgot which ones I've done I know I've done, like, geography and all them	262	overwhelmed	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Alistair	I'm confident when I'm in there,	266	initial confidence	effect of pressure on exam performance
Alistair	I'm not that bothered about them	268	initial confidence	effect of pressure on exam performance
Alistair	and then, it's just, sometimes after I've finished, when I check it, I know, I always somehow leave stupid mistakes in a lot of the papers	270	misreading questions	effect of pressure on exam performance
Alistair	yeah, I can see I've done them but, I change them, but, I don't know, in some questions it's like right at the beginning and it's like a big like 8 mark question.	273	misreading question -panic	effect of pressure on exam performance
Alistair	yeah, I can see I've done them but, I change them, but, I don't know, in some questions it's like right at the beginning and it's like a big like 8 mark question.	273	misreading question -panic	effect of pressure on exam performance
Alistair	Not reading it right	277	misreading question	effect of pressure on exam performance
Alistair	like in science, when I were doing my first exam	289	disappointment	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Alistair	I thought I were understanding it and then I got a right rubbish mark [sighs].	291	reduced confidence	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Alistair	In maths I think I've tried to, I've got to do a little bit more before exam and then in English	345	study expectations	teacher expectations
Alistair	if I get a C or a D in that I should have passed it, because I've resit this, I've resit unit two and I think I got a B in it	349	own targets	effect of targets
Alistair	<i>so they think you should be trying a little bit harder in maths?</i>	354	study expectations	teacher expectations
Alistair	I don't think in lessons, because I do it all in lessons	355	study expectations	teacher expectations
Alistair	I think out of school	357	study expectations	teacher expectations

Alistair	Em, science, I don't know, because some lessons I do get it and like today I did two pages of work	359	study expectations	teacher expectations
Alistair	but a lot of science is just like copying off board and then he just says to you you've got to revise at home	361	amotivation	teacher expectations
Alistair	which I'm not going to do	363	amotivation	teacher expectations
Bradley	[exhale] erm, [pause] teachers keep on coming over and asking me, to see like if you're all right with your work and if you say yeah they say like work that out work this out.	52	study expectations	teacher expectations
Bradley	I put my hand up once because I didn't get a question and then the teacher just kept coming over every 5 minutes [pause]	128	study expectations	teacher expectations
Bradley	yeah I put my hand up and then like after they helped me I wrote it down and then they kept coming over like every 5 minutes [laughs]	133	study expectations	teacher expectations
Bradley	<i>em what did that do to you how did you feel?</i> Annoyed [sighs]	134	annoyance	teacher expectations
Bradley	<i>okay so you were annoyed because...</i>	135	annoyance	teacher expectations
Bradley	I just like have to work quicker harder	140	study expectations	teacher expectations
Bradley	<i>Yeah, so it felt like pressure?</i>	141		teacher expectations
Bradley	Yeah	142	pressure	teacher expectations
Bradley	No	268	unsure if on target	effect of targets
Bradley	<i>Okay, so whether you're on target or not does that help encourage you?</i>	269		effect of targets
Bradley	No, no	270	disregard for targets	effect of targets
Bradley	<i>so you're just working in parallel to everything that is going along and school is that fair?</i>	271		effect of targets
Bradley	Umm	272	disregard for targets	effect of targets
Bradley	<i>is that fair, is that right, you're just doing your thing?</i>	273		effect of targets
Bradley	Yeah	274	disregard for targets	effect of targets
Bradley	I do my work and then if I get my grade I get my grade really	276	indifference to targets	effect of targets
Bradley	<i>but, yeah, so if somebody gives you too big a challenge what would that do, or too much challenge?</i>	289		teacher expectations
Bradley	I probably wouldn't get all the work finished or something	290	external motivation	teacher expectations
Bradley	[so if somebody gives you too big a challenge what would that do, or too much challenge? Lline	293		effect of GCSE pressure

	289] right, would you be worried?			on mental health
Bradley	<i>right, would you be worried?</i>	293	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Bradley	Probably	294	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Bradley	That I've got to do more in the next lesson	345	study expectations	teacher expectations
Bradley	<i>does it mean you have to work harder, or does it make you anxious or...?</i>			teacher expectations
Jason	Like I'd probably get distracted, by some people not all the time, but otherwise just fine. But it's like most of my teachers say if I don't get distracted I'm capable of getting like C's B's and stuff like that, so I just think it's better to sit on my own and try and get a better grade.	76	grade expectations	teacher expectations
Jason	<i>so that might help, school rules, how about, em, your attainment targets, I can't think of the right word for that, you know you told me you could get a C or D or even a B</i>	223	own targets	effect of targets
Jason	right, most of my targets are Ds and Cs	224	school target	effect of targets
Jason	Cos like I've always messed about in my lessons and that...	226	reasoning around targets	effect of targets
Jason	Yeah your teachers will tell you, like when we have exams if we don't reach our target the teachers will tell us.	228	pressure of targets	effect of targets
Jason	It doesn't it, can put you down, but apart from that...	230	emotional affect of target	effect of targets
Jason	It puts you down like if you don't feel like you're hitting your target, if you know that you're not hitting your target, you will get a bit wound up about it, like that you know you can do better, but you are not pushing yourself that hard. It's deciding to go the wrong way and do everything the wrong, at the wrong time.	232	emotional affect of target	effect of targets
Jason	It can encourage me, because like if I don't reach my target, you're thinking I've got to do better than this, you know you can do better,	236	motivation of low marks/targets	effect of targets
Jason	but when you've got all your teachers telling you that you're capable of getting higher grades but your targets are lower grades, like you kind of push yourself to do better,	237	motivation	teacher expectations

Jason	yeah I just think that if you don't change that you are messing your whole life up, your whole life depends on your school and like all my friends and family, well not my friends like all my family have been telling me that all my life, but it's just like oh yeah, I know what, I know what's happening and like you think you're right when you're not and you just mess everything up for it yourself.	250	frustration with own behaviour	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jason	It is quite like.... It's not upsetting, it's agitating.	262	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jason	Yeah, like you really want to get them grades, but it's just you know you can do better, so it just makes you anxious and like nervous about what to do, so that's all	264	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jason	I wouldn't say I like em, but I wouldn't say I hate them	284		effect of pressure on GCSE performance
Jason	it's like at the end of the day it's just like doing like your teachers can tell you whether you can sit down for an hour and do a piece of paper, if you do it's just basically like being in a classroom but with more people, like you're not necessarily going to like it	286	pressure improving concentration	effect of pressure on GCSE performance
Jason	because at the end of the day like it's work, we like, we don't really like work, you'll not like work roughly at this age, well you won't really any age, but like it's just thinking you've got to do it so just go for it	288	sense of endurance	effect of pressure on GCSE performance
Jason	just try your best and you hope for the best really	290	hope of success	effect of pressure on GCSE performance
Jason	well they're not as hard as I'd expected, but they're still quite hard	298		effect of pressure on GCSE performance
Jason	and when you think about it just flies by, it's like you're getting your head into it, you're actually doing something so it just flies by, it is quite hard but if you know what you're doing you'll just try and do your best.	300	pressure improving concentration	effect of pressure on GCSE performance
Jason	I don't think, they think that I'm pushing myself to the limit, I think they think that I'm messing about and I'm not doing my best or anything like that	304	study expectations	teacher expectations

Jason	they possibly think that I can do better, well they all said that to me I can do better, but they saying you just mess about quite a bit and you need to push yourself more, then you'll be able to do it, so that's what I've been told	306	study expectations	teacher expectations
Jason	they possibly think that I can do better, well they all said that to me I can do better, but they saying you just mess about quite a bit and you need to push yourself more, then you'll be able to do it, so that's what I've been told	306	motivation	teacher expectations
Jason	I'm not, I don't know, it's just like don't, hate people standing behind me	317	frustration with own behaviour	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jason	You think oh I don't really want to do it, but once you get there you've got to do it really or else you're in trouble, so you just like oh get on	337	pressure improving concentration	effect of pressure on GCSE performance
Jess	I just get myself all worked up and angry and uptight	19	anxiety and anger	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	I just get myself all worked up and angry and uptight	19	anxiety and anger	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	Em it's alright, I'm doing alright but it's just like, because you know we're in year 10 and we've had like exams early, I've had quite a lot of pressure and I don't, I don't think we've had enough time because like we did this maths unit, and we hadn't, not maths sorry science, and we had six weeks to learn everything and have a proper GCSE exam at the end and it were like, I don't think we had enough time and they were putting too much pressure on us, they were like we need a good mark we need to do this this this and this and you need to be able to do this this this and this. And I just...	46	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	but they all thought we were ready but I thought... and it's like with maths I don't think we have enough time to learn that either	50	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	I'm not very good at maths at the start but, having an exam like four months down the line, that's actually going to count...	52	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health

Jess	I mean some of them, yeah, that are like quite, what are they called, like quite, not, they're more like ready, they're more like, but some people that, it's just like, it's nice to have a year doing revision and learning things, so when you do go into year 11 and you have all your exams you are just re-capping it so you've got a bit more knowledge but with exams like at the end of every term and they're wanting you to like get C's and above and it's like I can't and even if I do do revision it's just a bit, I still think it's too fast.	58	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	No, I don't feel like I'm ready and I end up going in panicking.	64	panic	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	Yeah I'm really bad at panicking in exams I get myself all worked up, I end up getting migraines and everything.	68	panic and migranes	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	Not very well, but I'm getting a bit better, since I've done a few, I'm not panicking as much, but I still do panic a bit.	70	panic	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	I just go all flustered and like hot and I think everything, I just forget everything and I'll sit down I'll get angry with myself cause I think oh I should know this,	72	thinking shut down	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Jess	I'm getting As and Bs in my coursework	78	thinking shut down	effect of pressure on exam performance
Jess	and in exams I'm getting Ds and Es.	82	thinking shut down	effect of pressure on exam performance
Jess	I think they think that we are just going to magically pick everything up and think yeah they're going to do it, but really we can't. I mean some people can, don't get me wrong some people probably can	86	unachievable targets	effect of targets
Jess	Well I took quite a lot, I think I've only got a few, I think I've got another, not a lot to do, but with my business studies, cause I've been, we've, I've been doing it right through year 10 because it were my option, I'm getting better, more confident with that, so when it comes to the exam I should be ready and I won't be panicking because I know everything	90	confidence helps thinking	effect of pressure on exam performance

Jess	and I think they shouldn't put as much pressure on me to like get like Cs and Ds and stuff like that	100	unachievable targets	effect of targets
Jess	It gets me upset sometimes, I feel like I'm not doing my best even though I am and my best isn't good enough because I'm not getting good marks, it's not very nice sometimes.	102	unachievable targets	effect of targets
Jess	It annoys me as well because lesson like there'll be people sat getting it and going through all the questions in 10 min, going sir I've done and I'm not even getting like the first question right, so it makes me feel a bit, a bit horrible, because it's like well if they get it right why don't I get it, huh.	173	comparison with others	effect of competition
Jess	and I try and do my best, to work up and like to try and get, in some subjects I'm working at D and by year 11 I will be at a C	195	own targets	effect of targets
Jess	no [laughs] but I'm trying my hardest, to try and get at least a D, I think I'm on a E, so I'm going to try and work up for a D and then like trying, when I'm in year 11 once I've got a D, work up slowly to get a C, because I'd rather have a D than a C, I think, because I don't want to push myself too hard, to think oh I've got to get a C, because I haven't.	199	own targets	effect of targets
Jess	I just, I don't know, I don't think they know how I'm going to get a C, I don't understand how they think, how I've been predicted Cs in everything and some people have got like Ds in everything, I just don't get why we've been predicted like certain grades, I think you should just like wait till end of year 11 and know what grades you got and work at your best and then see what grades you get at the end, not think oh I've got to work up for a C. I'd rather like, not to know what I'm predicted, and just do my best.	201	unachievable targets	effect of targets
Jess	have teachers on at you, like, oh yeah your predicted a C, you're not working hard enough and like well I am working hard enough, I'm doing my best, then it's like...	205	grade and study expectations	teacher's expectation
Jess	<i>Does it feel then that your best isn't good enough?</i>	206	grade expectations	teacher's expectation
Jess	Yeah, and I don't like feeling like that	207	grade expectations	teacher's expectation
Jess	because I'm doing my best, and if my best isn't good enough for them then what can I do?	209	study expectations	teacher's expectation
Jess	I don't think it's nice when teachers say, you're working, your targets of B and you're only working at a D and it's like you're not working hard enough, when probably you are working hard enough.	217	unachievable targets	effect of targets
Jess	No, some people probably like knowing what grade they want to get.	219	motivating for some	effect of targets

Jess	I don't think they think anyone works hard enough, unless they're getting A*, I think that's when they think oh yes she's worked hard it's because she's got an A* and it's kind of like they're trying to push you to get there and you're working your hardest and they just carry on pushing and pushing and pushing and it does my head in.	268	grade and study expectations	teacher's expectation
Laura	em, because I haven't been here and I haven't been doing my work for exams because I've been off, I'm only achieving like level Ds at minute, but I'm trying to get them higher and higher up as I can	250	motivation of low targets	effect of targets
Laura	Yeah, I've got quite a lot, it's just like, like in your books and that where they have to put all together to mark it, because I haven't been there for them lessons, they haven't been able to mark it, so I've got a lower grade and stuff like that. In my exam is it just goes in one ear and out of the other, so I just need to go to more classes where like you have to revise more, so	252	motivation of low targets	effect of targets
Laura	Hard, frustrating, it's alright, but like if I'm in an exam	288	frustration with own behaviour	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Laura	and I'll be like looking around to see if anyone is stood behind me, I don't know why and then if someone's stood behind me I won't be able to concentrate	290	past trauma affecting exams	effect of pressure on exam performance
Laura	and stuff like that, you know because of paedophile, so I'm just like always looking around, I don't like teachers standing behind me, I'm just like can you move away	292	past trauma affecting exams	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Laura	It's just like, I feel like they're there, then I'll have to just have to keep turning around to see if they are watching me	307	past trauma affecting exams	effect of pressure on exam performance
Laura	it's like when there is stood behind me, I get frustrated	313	frustration with own behaviour	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Laura	it's like when there is stood behind me, I get frustrated	313	frustration	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Laura	<i>oh okay, because you want to get on with it and you can't</i>	314		effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Laura	yeah	315	frustration with own behaviour	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health

Laura	<i>are you frustrated with yourself or them</i>	316		effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Laura	I'm not, I don't know, it's just like don't, hate people standing behind me	317	frustration	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Laura	and that's what makes me put my head down to keep staring around instead of concentrating, so	319	thinking shut down	effect of pressure on exam performance
Laura	Yeah I'm going to make them all different, like try and do my best and try and get higher grades instead of them low ones	357	motivation of low targets	effect of targets
Laura	Concentrate, revise more at home and not go out with my friends or go on facebook.	359	motivation of low targets	effect of targets
Laura	Yeah and I'm going to like get my head together and do it in class and like revise, go to after-school classes and stuff like that	361	motivation of low targets	effect of targets
Laura	It's just like seeing, just like thinking that I've got bad results or like what I'm predicted, I'd rather be like higher than what I'm predicted and then it's because I haven't concentrated	365	motivation of low targets	effect of targets
Laura	yeah it's just looking at like stuff, it's like oh my God I wish I could do better than that so	371	motivation of low targets	effect of targets
Nicki	Maths because I get, because we have to work through the books and I'm the one who finishes it	127	comparison with others	effect of competition
Nicki	I get a bit of stressed sometimes, but I have to live with it	135	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Nicki	Because sometimes I know I take it out on other people	139	anxiety	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Nicki	Like if someone said "what's wrong with you today" I'd say nothing gets you what's wrong.	141		effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Nicki	Nothing, I start to calm down.	144	anger	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Nicki	no sometimes if I'm angry or something I'll go and talk to the teacher	146	anger	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health
Nicki	I just like start to calm down when the teacher talks to me.	155	anger	effect of GCSE pressure on mental health

Nicki	Does Mr O, apparently he's an ICT teacher, but he's not really, because he teaches us different, because all the other lessons like they are well ahead like on level III and the ones what Mr O has is on like level I.	221	comparison with others	effect of competition
Nicki	<i>Right, mmmh what do you think it is about a lesson that encourages you to work and study?</i>	251		effect of targets
Nicki	To get better grades	252	own targets	effect of targets
Nicki	<i>so tell me a bit about the grades and your targets</i>	255		effect of targets
Nicki	<i>so when you say higher grades, which ones are you trying to get, what grade are you trying to get in maths English and science?</i>	257		effect of targets
Nicki	About Cs Bs	258	own targets	effect of targets
Nicki	<i>that's what they want you to try and get, is that your prediction or...</i>	259		effect of targets
Nicki	I think I could get that but the others don't think that I could.	260	own targets	effect of targets
Nicki	<i>So what do they think?</i>	261		effect of targets
Nicki	Ds	262	school targets	effect of targets
Nicki	<i>okay so you got Ds for maths English and science have you?</i>	263		effect of targets
Nicki	<i>you're pleased, yeah, I mean I think if you joined the school in January that is really impressive to be on target, what do you think?</i>	263		effect of targets
Nicki	I don't know them,	264	unsure of targets	effect of targets
Nicki	<i>oh okay</i>	265		effect of targets
Nicki	I just think that I could get them	266	own targets	effect of targets
Nicki	Think so, because if you're on target you get to like move up into a different class.	268	unsure if on target	effect of targets
Nicki	because, like everybody's like far in front and I'm like behind	300	comparison with others	effect of competition and challenge
Nicki	boring because you're not allowed to talk	324	dislike of exam conditions	effect of pressure on exam performance

Nicki	you get like paperwork and everything and you're only allowed to write in blue, I mean black	336	dislike of exam conditions	effect of pressure on exam performance
Nicki	they think that I could do a bit better, but I met my target which I don't know what it is.	358	unsure of targets	effect of targets
Nicki	the teachers told us that we've met our targets and, but they're not telling us what our targets are	360	unsure of targets	effect of targets
Nicki	<i>okay, right, so how do you feel about the fact that you met your target, is that good bad, irrelevant?</i>	361		effect of targets
Nicki	Good	362	motivation of reaching target	effect of targets
Nicki	I think it's alright	364	motivation of reaching target	effect of targets

APPENDIX 14

TABLE 14: SUPERORDINATE THEME 7, INFLUENCE OF INTERNAL MOTIVATION ON STUDY AND ACHIEVEMENT

name	transcript	Line	emergent theme	subordinate theme
Alistair	Er, I do a bit, a bit of it	11	do a bit	personal values
Alistair	but then English you'll use, like the language one	197	value of basics	future value of learning
Alistair	Well I think, like science some of the stuff you do in science, you are never going to use, same as some things in maths like algebra, you're not going to use algebra	395	not necessary in future	future value of learning
Alistair	or the writing one you'll use, depending what you do	399	value of basics	future value of learning
Alistair	<i>oh okay, that's a bit sciency, electrician?</i>	412	unaware of use	future value of learning
Alistair	Is it, I'm not doing that then	413	unaware of use	future value of learning
Alistair	Em like when you're revising for science do it a bit more practical, because we've only had like four practical is all year and it's not been that enjoyable, I learn more stuff from that as well	456	unaware of use	future value of learning
Alistair	yeah, like when you're learning about circuits and stuff and light just like that	458	unaware of use	future value of learning
Alistair	yeah, because I forget about it next week	462		future value of learning
Alistair	because, people will be getting better things if they did them because, I don't know cause like, you've got to do some subjects that you are probably not going to use, like science, some things are that you have to use, but	480	use of basics	future value of learning

	then like some of the basics, like when you're going into detail to get all these grades, you might not even need it. Like when my dad set up he only needed maths and English, because he wouldn't need science			
Bradley	I do my work and then if I get my grade I get my grade really	276	I get what I get	personal values
Bradley	Em, quite useful	356	value of subject	future value of learning
Bradley	Em well I've done one exam, for my cooking, and I think I got another one when I come back so.	364	value of subject	future value of learning
Bradley	[pause] I'd like to swap maths for an extra PE lesson	402	not necessary in future	future value of learning
Bradley	probably be a bit limiting,	420	value of subject	future value of learning
Bradley	<i>Yeah, you like science don't you is that right, but even in science is probably some stuff that you could do without</i>	443	value of subject	future value of learning
Jason	like, you want to get on with your lessons and like just try and do well	32	constructive self-talk	constructive self talk
Jason	I think I'm just going to knuckle down more, stop messing about	248	constructive self-talk	constructive self talk
Jason	most of it's put into schoolwork, because it's about them topics so we just do that, it's like learning us more and like getting us good grades, better grades	270	value of grade	future value of learning
Jason	yeah, it's like they're spending their time and effort on us and like this is what I've been told by them like they spend their time and effort with us for our benefit and like some people throw it back in their face some people like accept it, like I'm just saying they give up time to teach us we should give up time to learn, so that's basically it	308	I should learn	personal values
Jason	yeah you need maths and English from most jobs.	327	value of subject in future life	future value of learning

Jason	I don't think we need to learn everything, like, that we do, I think there is a bit that we could miss out	331	not necessary in future	future value of learning
Jason	but at the end of the day, it's not our choice really	333	not necessary in future	future value of learning
Jason	we do what we do, they try and help us we should just like take it in and learn	335	I should learn	personal values
Jason	I think they think they're fairly important, like my mum's side of the family, like her sister, her niece, my cousin they've all got good grades	342	value of grade	future value of learning
Jason	Like, I don't think you need to learn everything that's in there and like most people don't	354	not necessary in future	future value of learning
Jason	I think I'd keep the most important things, the most important so like you're reading and writing, you're adding, you're subtracting, like your times, and your, your divide stuff like that	366	value of subject	future value of learning
Jason	I think it would be a lot harder, because basically you won't be able to read or write properly, you wouldn't be able to add subtract and stuff like that, you wouldn't know the basics and stuff so you just be like left there to figure out on your own which could take years really without any help so	376	value of basics	future value of learning
Jess	<i>Yeah, so when you get it right it just feels like...?</i>	40		constructive self talk
Jess	I've actually learnt something and I've done well	41	self worth	constructive self talk
Jess	<i>so you just keep trying, just keep concentrating, it's not likely get distracted, you just keep trying and keep trying?</i>	148	try hard	personal values
Jess	I just like try and do it my own way and try and use my own resources to try and help.	151	try hard	personal values
Jess	I'm just going to try my best, and what I get at end is what I get at end, I've tried my best.	211	try hard	personal values
Jess	yeah, so long as I know I've tried my best I'll be fine. Because I go, I go into my maths exams and I think I'm going to do it, then I'll take up all the time needed and I'll do every single question and I'll even just put just little workings out, I know how to do the working out, but, like I forget how to do the sum or something like that, I'll still trying get a couple of marks because it could be like difference between a D and a C but...	213	try hard	personal values
Jess	When I'm doing all right in science, but I were struggling a bit in science, but now I've started, like I've done some after-school sessions and I've done	270	try hard	personal values

Jess	I think maths is pointless because when I get a use algebra again or like the area of a triangle and it's like when am I going to use it. English yeah because you need to know like your grammar and your spelling and stuff like that I can understand that. Science it's like, why you want to know what gas pops	303	use of basics	future value of learning
Jess	I'm alright at that, and timesing and dividing it's when they bring in decimals and fractions and	311	use of basics	future value of learning
Jess	I think percentages would, and like fractions and stuff like that, like if you work in a shop or something like that then yeah, I think they should like to do a bit more like maths solving problems if that makes sense, like real-life problems, so like such and such such and such and you like work out as if it were like a real-life situation. I think that would help	313	unaware of use	future value of learning
Jess	I think that's pointless, writing essays and controlled assessments all the time, I guess it gets you a grade doesn't it and it helps you like practice like stuff.	331	not necessary in future	future value of learning
Jess	But what I want to do has got nothing to do with English or science.	333	not necessary in future	future value of learning
Jess	Make them more like real life, have more things to do that you're going to use in your later life, add more of them.	354	unaware of use	future value of learning
Jess	I don't know, I think more people, I think people would actually like, if they wanted to, I'd want to do it, just like get to know something, but I think some people, like that mess around and like, they'd end up doing nothing with their lives and there'd be like more people on the dole and stuff like that	374		future value of learning
Jess	I'd like to keep them but I'd just like to change what they do in them	376		future value of learning
Laura	yeah, but like he's gone now from next door, my stepdad's gone, so now I'm just clearing my head, trying to clear me head and start fresh	78	positive self talk	constructive self-talk
Laura	so I'm just going to, like, do bits at a time.	84	constructive self talk	constructive self-talk

Laura	but now they've moved this school and everything I'm concentrating more in class	124	constructive self talk	constructive self-talk
Laura	It just feels to me like I need to keep my act together and concentrate more, because in like years seven and eight and nine I weren't concentrating in lessons, I'd rather sit there and mess about and talk to my mates, but now I'd rather concentrate, get my grades up and then leave school and get a job and stuff like that	272	I can concentrate now	personal values
Laura	No, I know I got like Us and stuff like that because like I weren't here to do like revision, I was only here to do the exam and I weren't here to do the work either so, but I'm not going to just blame it on that, I'm I am really being in school to do it, so, and I wish I would have done revised more and asked school what I had to do to get what I needed	343	I can concentrate now	personal values
Laura	I can concentrate, I'll be able to concentrate more, so, and also I've gone to hospital to get my depression sorted out and within school as well that will be all right so I'm just going to knuckle down	369	constructive self talk	constructive self-talk
Laura	I'm not sure about maths, but I'm all right with maths anyway, science, I don't know and English I think I'll be able to have to do it for like coursework, my coursework within college	383	value of subject in future life	future value of learning
Laura	<i>You didn't you that's great, so to think getting good grades in maths English and science is going to be useful?</i>	390	value of grade in future life	future value of learning
Laura	Yeah, I don't know about French though, oh I hate it	391	value of grade in future life	future value of learning
Nicki	<i>Yeah okay, so you're settling in at school and how was it joining in January, when they'd already started on their GCSEs?</i>	112		personal values
Nicki	A bit difficult but I caught up very quick	113	catch up	personal values
Nicki	If like I believe in myself that I can do it I could.	278	self-belief	constructive self-talk
Nicki	Yeah, normally dinners, I normally have something to eat then I go up to orange block to do some health and social catch up.	298	catch up	personal values
Nicki	<i>So how often do you (oh you are making me yawn too) [laughs]go up to do that in a week</i>	307	catch up	personal values
Nicki	normally go like every single day	308	catch up	personal values
Nicki	<i>okay, and they just let you get on with it, so how much studying would you do at home?</i>	410	catch up	personal values

Nicki	I've got a health and social book, and I've nearly finished like unit two	411	catch up	personal values
Nicki	<i>so how many hours they would you do after school?</i>	412	catch up	personal values
Nicki	As soon as I get in till about eight or nine o'clock	413	catch up	personal values
Nicki	<i>Wow, so you work really hard then, is that every day?</i>	414		personal values
Nicki	Sometimes, normally do it like Mondays Thursdays and Fridays, Mondays Wednesdays and Fridays.	415	catch up	personal values
Nicki	<i>Okay, just to catch up</i>	416	catch up	personal values
Nicki	Yeah	417	catch up	personal values
Nicki	<i>Mmh, okay so they just let you get on with it, how useful do you think em academic subjects are going to be for you in the future?</i>	418		future value of learning
Nicki	I'm not really sure	419	unaware of use	future value of learning
Nicki	<i>so, what you doing all this work for then?</i>	420	value of grade	future value of learning
Nicki	So I can pass my GCSEs	421	value of grade	future value of learning
Nicki	<i>Right so you want to pass them because?</i>	422	value of grade	future value of learning
Nicki	I want to get like a better job	423	value of grade	future value of learning
Nicki	Yes, you have to put it on your CV	426	value of grade	future value of learning

APPENDIX 15

TABLE 15: SUPERORDINATE THEME 8, ASPIRATIONS

Name	Transcript	Line	Emergent theme	Superordinate theme
Alistair	yeah but a Ds not that bad	250	anxiety	aspirations for schoolwork
Alistair	but I'd rather get a C	252	anxiety	aspirations for schoolwork
Alistair	because I know I won't get a C, so try and go for a D in both of them, because that's better than a U.	256	anxiety	aspirations for schoolwork
Alistair	that means I would've had a B for that one a C for unit one and then if I get a D it should round up to a C, so	351		aspirations for schoolwork
Alistair	because I want, like when I leave I just want to do something, where you're not sat in an office you're going out and doing stuff	401	identified personal employment preference	aspirations for future employment
Alistair	Em, I don't know really, I'd rather be, like do you know where you're self-employed, I'd rather do that	403	identified personal employment preference	aspirations for future employment
Alistair	yeah, like I'd like to be an electrician or plumbing or something like that	411	ideas of area of work	aspirations for future employment

Alistair	but like as I'm, say if I go to college, days that I don't go, because you don't have to go every day do you?	420	route to training	aspirations for future employment
Alistair	so if I don't get what I need to do, plus he's getting on a bit now, then I could do what he does, with who he was working with	424	route to business	aspirations for future employment
Alistair	I don't think it will be full-time though, because like, in summertime because he's doing flooring, he don't get that much but in winter like, coming up to Christmas he'll get loads of work	430	route to funding trainin	aspirations for future employment
Alistair	but he gets quite a lot of money for it	436	route to business	aspirations for future employment
Alistair	because, people will be getting better things if they did them because, I don't know cause like, you've got to do some subjects that you are probably not going to use, like science, some things are that you have to use, but then like some of the basics, like when you're going into detail to get all these grades, you might not even need it. Like when my dad set up he only needed maths and English, because he wouldn't need science	480		future value of learning
Bradley	I do my work and then if I get my grade I get my grade really	276	Indifferent aspirations	personal values
Bradley	Say like if I want to do cooking when I'm older, science could help me with that, like mixtures and everything.	258	aspirations for future work	aspirations for future employment
Jason	No, in lessons, I've not got anything in and I've just got bad results, I've got one more chance to make it better, unless I retake them at college, I've got one more chance at school	242	aspiration for grade	aspirations for schoolwork
Jason	and you just think, that if you want a decent job, you've got to get good grades, like you can't just sit there messing about, you've got to put yourself to it, if you don't like it you don't like it you just got to do it either way. It's like otherwise basically you'll be on the dole for the rest of your life you'll be a nobody.	244	Aspirations for grades	aspirations for future employment

Jess	I want to be a hairdresser	335	ideas of area of work	aspirations for future employment
Jess	so I don't see how I need, like, I might need maths to give what change you want.	337		aspirations for schoolwork
Jess	but, I'm sure you've got till to do that	339		aspirations for schoolwork
Jess	<i>so you want to do hairdressing, and do you need maths and English for that?</i>	341		aspirations for future employment
Jess	Yes but the highest grade you need is a D	342	aspiration for grade	aspirations for schoolwork
Jess	Well they want you to, to have at least like a D, so I'm trying to get a D so that I can get onto the course, because if I don't get onto the course I'll be upset	344	aspiration for grade	aspirations in schoolwork
Jess	I don't see why you need high grades to get on college courses anyway, I just think you need like an interest in it, and a high interest in doing it, to be able to do it, because if there's someone who wants to go on a course and they don't get the grade needed, then there are a bit bummed because like they can't do it and they get upset and I don't think like, if they've wanted to do all their life it's not really fair to base it on one grade.	346	route to training	aspirations for future employment
Jess	I don't know, they don't really mention anything	348	encouragement to try her best	encouragement of aspirations
Jess	I don't know, they don't really say a lot they say like try, they say like try and do your best in maths English and science, but they aren't too like bothered like, I don't think.	350	encouragement to try her best	encouragement of aspirations
Jess	Yeah, because me and my mum look at like college brochures and stuff like that and I'll be like looking at all the courses and all write down what grades I need and get my target sheet out and I'll be like, well I'm working at this so I'm getting alright, so...	352	route to training	encouragement of aspirations

Laura	Em we like just act out in front of the class, I forgot what we did last time, but I got a level 8 on it when I was in year 9 and I got top, highest in the class and I want to be an actress anyway so	171	School success influencing aspirations	aspirations for schoolwork
Laura	Em we like just act out in front of the class, I forgot what we did last time, but I got a level 8 on it when I was in year 9 and I got top, highest in the class and I want to be an actress anyway so	171	School success influencing aspirations	aspirations for future employment
Laura	Yeah, I want to work with either disabled children or like disabled adults, like take them out, to like shopping and old people because I like looking after my Nan	274	job aspirations	aspirations for future employment
Laura	so, but I'd also like to like be a teaching assistant, because in my work experience I worked at H primary	276	job aspirations	aspirations for future employment
Laura	Em my dream job is to be an actress but I don't know if that would work, so I'm doing health and social at school and then I'm going to go and study year another year in college and then I'll go on and do my acting and stuff so	280	job aspirations	aspirations for future employment
Laura	I've always wanted this plan for years	284	job aspirations	aspirations for future employment
Laura	and my mum says I work good with children so	286	Encouragement of aspirations by others	encouragement of aspirations
Laura	I'm not sure, I know I got I think it were a C in my coursework, er I think it were a couple of weeks ago, but I'm predicted a D. So I'm glad I got higher than what I got.	389	aspiration for grade	aspirations in school work
Nicki	I'm trying to get, like high, higher grades	256	aspiration for grade	aspirations for schoolwork

